



Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday January 21, 2008

What is the best way to honor the legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King? How would the civil rights leader, activist and clergyman want people to remember him?

In 1994, the United States Congress answered that question when it passed the King Holiday and Service Act, designating the third Monday in January as a national Day of Service. The Act asked Americans to see the day not just as time off from work or school, but as an opportunity to honor King's legacy by taking part in community service projects. In short, they were asked to "make it a day on, not a day off."

On January 21, 2008 millions of Americans across the country—including many Episcopalians-- will conduct food drives, paint schools and community centers, recruit mentors for needy youth, and bring meals to homebound neighbors, among many other projects.

For 2008, in recognition of the 40th anniversary of Dr. King's death, the Corporation for National Community Service, a government agency charged with carrying out the service aspect of MLK Day, has announced a new initiative: "40 Days of Nonviolence: Building the Beloved Community." This year, King Day of Service will kick off 40 days during which families, schools, faith communities, and other organizations will plan service projects and educational activities promoting Dr. King's message of nonviolence and social justice. (For more information, visit www.mlkday.gov/about/beloved_community.)

The King Day of Service brings together people who might not ordinarily meet, breaks down barriers, leads to better understanding and ongoing relationships, and gives organizations an opportunity to recruit new volunteers for their work.

Participation in the King Day of Service has grown steadily over the past decade, with hundreds of thousands of Americans each year engaging in projects. Episcopal congregations throughout the nation will take part this year in the Day of Service, many of them in cooperation with other churches and community organizations.

Information and photos from the Corporation for National Community Service.



St. David's Church in Wayne, Penn., annually honors MLK Day by taking part in the Day of Service. In 2008, members of the parish will work at various senior service projects and food programs for the homeless, as well as a local medical clinic.



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Events

Congregations and dioceses throughout the Church will commemorate the holiday honoring Dr. Martin Luther King with special events. Several of these events are listed below by the diocese in which they will occur.

California

Sunday – Monday, January 20 - 21

Nightwatch: A Celebration of Martin Luther King Jr.

Grace Cathedral, San Francisco

Youth (grades 6 – 12) from across the Bay Area will gather for an overnight event. Information: www.diocal.org or 415-749-6356

Connecticut

Sunday, January 20, 4 – 6 pm

17th annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Commemoration of Litchfield County Trinity Episcopal Church, Torrington

Speakers include Dr. Bernard LaFayette, Jr., director, Center For Nonviolence and Peace Studies, University of Rhode Island. Sankofa Kuumba Dancers and Drummers and Peace is Possible Chorus. Cosponsored by Connecticut Center for Nonviolence (www.ctnonviolence.org) and Community Foundation of Northwest Connecticut.

Indianapolis (Indiana)

Monday, January 21, 10:30 am

Interfaith Prayer Service

Christ Church Cathedral, Indianapolis

Service will precede a “Justice for Janitors” march, showing support for Indianapolis low-wage workers. Information: <http://www.indydio.org>

Los Angeles (California)

Monday, January 21, 10 am

Annual diocesan Martin Luther King Day Observance

Cathedral Center of St. Paul, Los Angeles

Keynote speaker: the Rev. Dr. Dorsey O. Blake, pastor of the Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples in San Francisco and dean of the faculty at Starr King School for the Ministry in Berkeley, Calif. Music by The Episcopal Chorale, Canon Charles Cheatham, director. Information: 213.482.2040.

Missouri

Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Celebration Service

Tuesday, January 22, 6:30 pm

Christ Church, Rolla

Speaker: the Rev. Emery Washington, retired

Episcopal priest, ecumenical and interreligious officer and member of the Commission on Dismantling Racism in the Diocese of Missouri. Presented in cooperation with the Missouri University of Science & Technology. Information: econnection.mst.edu/2008/01/christ_episcopal_church_to_hos.html

New Jersey

Sunday, January 20, 10:30 am

Celebration of Dr. King’s Life and Legacy

St. George’s Church, Maplewood

Sponsored by the Absalom Jones Committee on Black History & Culture. Guest preacher: parishioner Chibunna Chimezie. Followed by round table discussion, featuring parishioners speaking about Dr. King’s influence on their lives and the lives of all Americans. Information: www.stgeorges-maplewood.org

New Hampshire

Sunday, January 27, 4 pm

MLK Spiritual Celebration: Soul and Spirit of Democracy

St. George’s Church, Durham

Part of “Holler if You Hear Me: Race, Culture, and Democracy” weeklong series sponsored by the University of New Hampshire. A spirited gathering featuring songs, drumming, a Chautauqua presentation, music, poetry, dance, and a candle-lighting in remembrance of Dr King. Information: http://www.unh.edu/diversity/mlk_celebration.html

Olympia (Washington)

Monday, January 21

“Blessed by the Peacemakers,” a community gathering

St. Augustine’s in-the-Woods, Freeland, Woodby Island

Featured speaker: Carla Robinson of the Diocese of Olympia Anti-Racism Task Force and African American Committee. Readings from letters written by college students and sharecroppers during Freedom Summer of 1964 (Letters from Mississippi) interspersed with excerpts from Dr. King’s sermons, public speeches and writings, and gospel music of Southern churches and the Civil Rights movement. Information: www.staugustinesepiscopalchurch.org



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