



Jericho Road

This Journey features writings of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. *The Jericho Road* is an especially fitting resource this year as we celebrate the life of King. We recall "The Jericho Road" from the Good Samaritan parable, which King highlighted most notably in his final speech on April 3, 1968, in support of Memphis sanitation workers. He had an acute awareness of the "dangerous road" that he was on and of the steep sacrifice required for those wishing to see the American landscape of racial injustice repaved with promise. Themes from King's work over the last six years of his life provide a deep pathway for study, prayer, and action. Individuals, small groups, and congregations are invited to travel *The Jericho Road* and reflect on what it means to work for King's Beloved Community today.



As you travel through this resource, there are mile markers that will guide you. They are the year and month of each of the accompanying writings.

Binding the Wounds of the Broken

Based on Dr. King's "[On Being a Good Neighbor](#)" essay

MILE

1
9
6
3
-3

The Parable of the Good Samaritan Luke 10:25-37

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live."

But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

By Rev. Claire Matheny, Associate Pastor of St. Paul's UMC in Kensington

Jesus plunked me on the Jericho Road. As I was reading this essay two days after Christmas, a stranger called in need of rent assistance. Here was a dire life situation. If he did not receive help by the end of the day, his family would be out on the street. The caller was not a member of our community. What if he was "a faker," as King describes, someone out to take advantage of the one who might provide aid? I asked the usual questions for our referrals, providing names of other organizations that might be able to assist him.

It seems that both the caller and I are waiting for the "Good Samaritan"—he from his desperation, and me out of my hopelessness. As Dr. Christena Cleveland outlines in "The Privilege of Hopelessness," [<http://www.christenacleveland.com/blogarchive/2015/12/the-privilege-of-hopelessness>] privileged hopelessness births systemic distance: *if I am unlikely to solve an injustice, why jeopardize my own status and comfort?*

King calls us to reverse the question. *If I do not risk my own status or comfort, what will happen to the caller facing eviction? What will happen to the victims of unjust systems?* King invites more hope from privileged people, especially what we today recognize as "good" white people. But Jesus' Samaritan parable is not an invitation for "good" people to swoop in with aid to prove the worthiness of their culture or race. When blood is on the pavement, Christ urges whoever is walking by to operate out of an elevated compassion, willing to sacrifice

social expectation and convenience to save a neighbor.

King was assassinated while ministering to sanitation strikers in my hometown of Memphis. He worked at the intersections of racial oppression on behalf of those with diminished opportunity for safe passage. As he looked out on the white church, he saw that disengagement can rob as fiercely as the billy club. He understood saving help from the valley's floor is altruism *and* equity, binding wounds *and* improving opportunities for the disinherited through just law.

No other organization waits in the wings with the solution to great inequality. There is simply the gospel that has mercy on the fallen and the fakers, the desperate and the privileged. There is Christ who healed the sick and upturned tables. There is King's continued invitation to improve disparate traveling conditions. There is the inconvenient opportunity to assist the next neighbor who calls.



Crosswalk

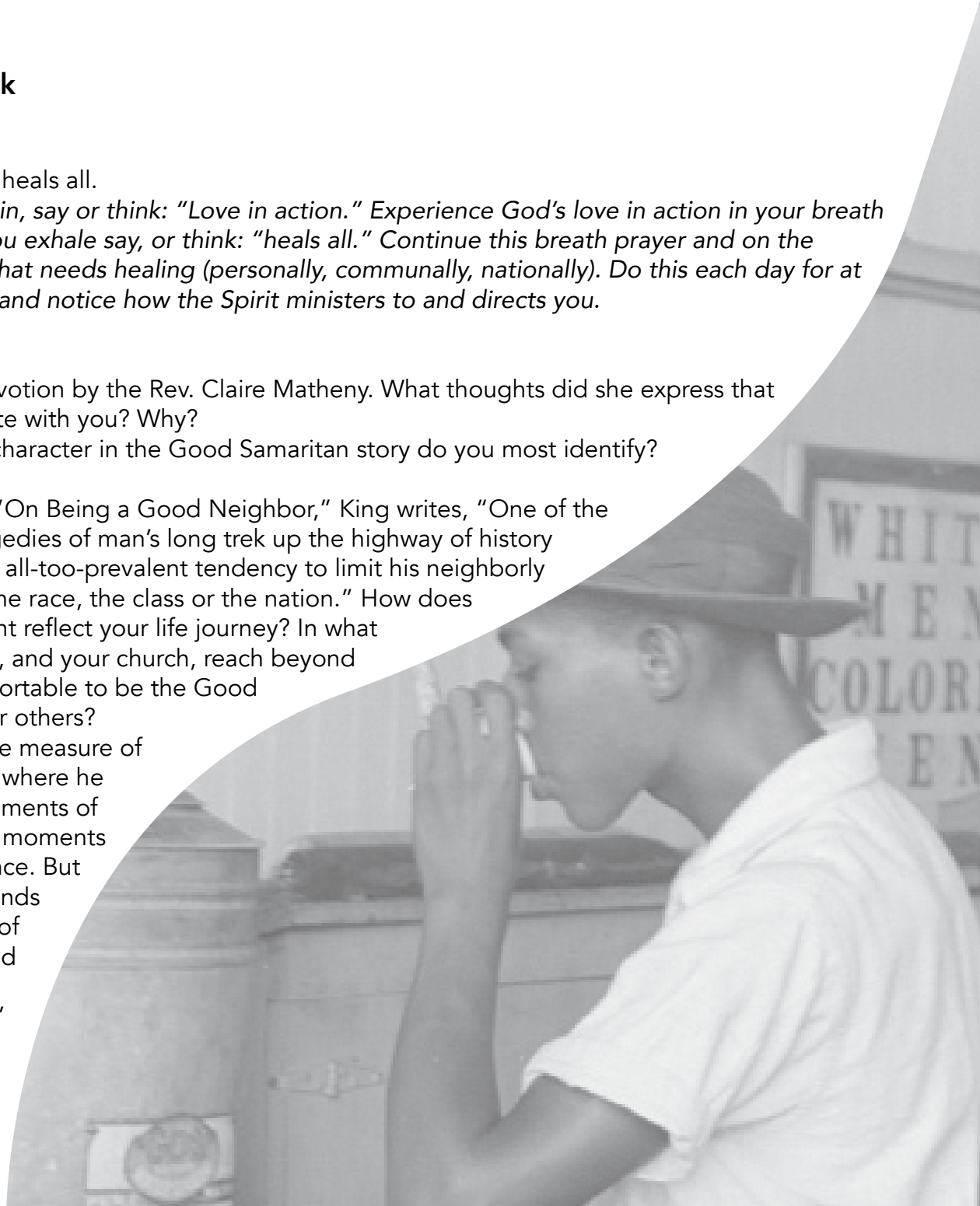
Breathe

Love in action...heals all.

As you breathe in, say or think: "Love in action." Experience God's love in action in your breath and body. As you exhale say, or think: "heals all." Continue this breath prayer and on the exhale, name what needs healing (personally, communally, nationally). Do this each day for at least 2 minutes and notice how the Spirit ministers to and directs you.

Reflect

1. Read the devotion by the Rev. Claire Matheny. What thoughts did she express that most resonate with you? Why?
2. With which character in the Good Samaritan story do you most identify? Why?
3. In his essay "On Being a Good Neighbor," King writes, "One of the greatest tragedies of man's long trek up the highway of history has been his all-too-prevalent tendency to limit his neighborly concern to the race, the class or the nation." How does this statement reflect your life journey? In what ways do you, and your church, reach beyond what is comfortable to be the Good Samaritan for others?
4. "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and moments of convenience. But where he stands in moments of challenge and moments of controversy," King wrote. In your faith life, what



role does courage play? In what ways have you, or do you wish you could, stand bravely?

5. According to King, "It is not enough to aid the wounded man on the Jericho Road. It is also necessary to change the conditions of the road which made the robbery possible." What is one of the Jericho Roads in your community?

Create

Using paint, photography, poetry, music or the artistic media of your choice, create an illustration of justice or of a "garment of destiny." Share your creation at facebook.com/BWCUMC

Lead

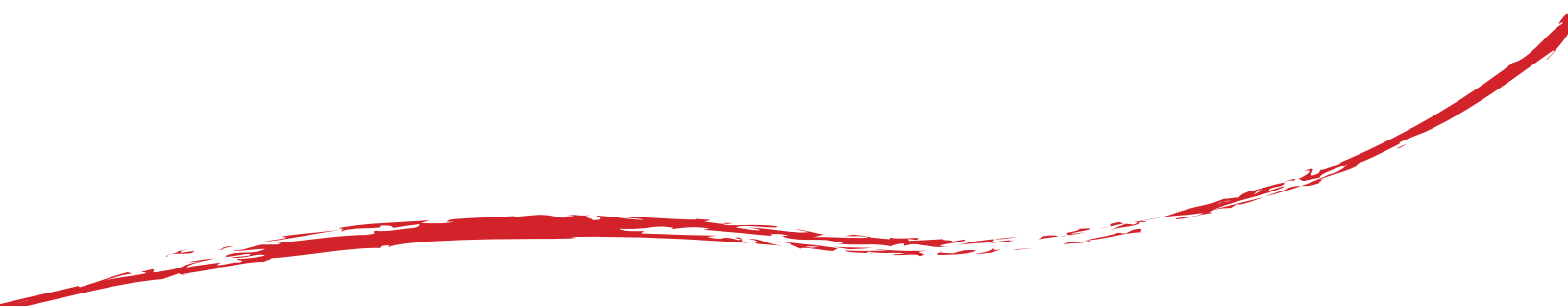
Great leaders demonstrate and describe persistent concern for the welfare and wellbeing of others more than concern for preserving their own position and power. Our character as Christ-followers is formed when we seek to love as Jesus loves. This includes what King describes as universal (for all of humanity), dangerous (without regard for impact on self) and excessive (beyond the call of duty) altruism. As a leader who seeks to follow Christ, we must shift our question from "If I help, what will happen to me?" to "If I don't help, what will happen to them?" Wisdom is knowing what is truly helpful versus what builds dependency or erodes agency. Great leaders are great neighbors.

Navigate

At this stop along the journey, ask God to help you name your destination. How will you testify to the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on or around April 4? You could plan your own tribute (See the resource section to generate ideas), or identify something being planned by a community partner.

Pray

Merciful and Transformational God, who fills this atmosphere: we acknowledge your presence and love for your creation. Anoint us with the power of Your Holy Spirit and call us with every breath into deeper places of compassion and service for your people. Direct our footsteps into places and actions that evoke your kingdom on earth as it is in heaven and remind us of those actions that we can take as empowered by your Spirit to systemically transform The Jericho Roads among us. Transform us — our mindsets, our desires, and appetites, until they wholly reflect yours. You are the God who is with us and we desire to forever follow you. One body, we are. One God, we serve. In Jesus' Name, we pray. Amen.



"The Samaritan used his hands to bind up the wounds of the robbed man's body, and he also released an overflowing love to bind up the wounds of his broken spirit."

Cry Tears of Love

Based on Dr. King's ["Letter from a Birmingham Jail"](#)

MILE
1
9
6
3
-4

Isaiah 40:1-5

*Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that she has served her term,
that her penalty is paid,
that she has received from the Lord's hand
double for all her sins.*

A voice cries out:

*"In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.
Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."*

By the Rev. Louis Shockley, Retired Baltimore-Washington Conference Elder

On April 16, 1963, Martin Luther King Jr. responded to criticism from eight prominent, liberal, white Alabama clergy. Those eight had published an open letter to King calling on him to allow the battle of integration to continue in the local and federal courts, and warned King that his nonviolent resistance demonstrations would have the effect of inciting civil disturbances.

On April 12, 1963, King was arrested for violating a judge's order to cease demonstrations in Birmingham, Ala. While in jail, he sat down and wrote a response to the criticism that had been published in a local newspaper. First, he thanked the pastors for their concern and assured them that he would not have been in the city had he not received an invitation from the African American representatives of the community.

Then he offered these words: "I'm in Birmingham because injustice is here. Just as prophets of the eighth century left little villages and carried their 'thus saith the Lord' far beyond their backroad boundaries of their hometowns... Like Paul, I must constantly respond to the Macedonia call for aid: injustice anywhere is a threat of injustice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of

*"Yes, I see the church
as the body of Christ.
But, oh! How we have
blemished and scarred
that body through social
neglect and fear of
being nonconformists."*

destiny. What ever affects one directly affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford to live with the narrow provincial outside agitator idea; anyone who lives in the United States can never be considered an outsider anywhere in this country."

King goes on to say that there are three basic steps in any campaign of resistance: 1) collection of facts to determine whether injustices are alive; 2) negotiation; and 3) self-purification for direct action.

In this 21st century, we find ourselves faced with many issues of injustice and social concerns for all who want the voice of God to be the dominant voice in our lives. But I think the most important lesson to be learned from King's letter is centered around the issue of any actions taken breaking the laws of this country. In King's own words, "You express a great deal of anxiety over our willingness to break laws. This is certainly a legitimate concern... One may well ask: how can you advocate breaking some laws and obeying others? The answer is found in the fact that there are two types of law: there are just and there are unjust laws. I would agree with St. Augustine that an unjust law is no law at all. How does one determine when a law is just or unjust? A just law is a man-made code that squares with the moral law or law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law. ... Any law that uplifts human personality is just. Any law that degrades human personality is unjust."

My good sisters and brothers of the faith, the letter from the Birmingham Jail is calling us to action today. What will be our response?



Crosswalk

Breathe

Love in action...changes things.

As you breathe in, say or think: "Love in action." Experience God's love in action in your breath and body. As you exhale, say or think: "changes things." Continue this breath prayer and on the exhale, name what needs changing (for you, your family, your congregation, your neighborhood, our denomination, our country, our world). Do this each day for at least 3 minutes. Notice how the Spirit ministers to and directs you.

Reflect

1. What thoughts from Rev. Shockley's devotion resonate most with you? Why?
2. By what standard do you judge whether a law is "just" or "unjust"?
3. In your daily living, how are you called to "prepare the way of the Lord?"
4. In his letter from a Birmingham jail, King penned several passages that have inspired people over the decades: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. ... Freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor, it must be demanded by the oppressed. ... Justice too long delayed is justice denied." What role does the idea of justice play in your daily life?
How are ideas about justice lived out in your faith community? In what way will you take a stand for justice this Lent?
5. In this letter, King confesses: "I have reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in the stride toward freedom is not the White Citizens Councilor or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate who is more devoted to order than to justice, who prefers a negative peace,

which is the absence of tension, to the positive peace, which is the presence of justice..." In what areas of your life and ministry are you willing to settle for an absence of tension, rather than the presence of justice? How often do you believe church leaders continue this practice? What might be done, in your opinion, to address this spirit of compromise?

6. King calls on people of faith to not be thermometers, recording the ideas and principles of popular opinion, but to be thermostats that transform the mores of society. What is one way you could be a thermostat this Lent?

Create

King's letter was written in response to a statement of concern issued by eight religious leaders who urged caution when dealing with law enforcement. If you were to write a Lenten letter to the religious leaders of your community, what might it say? Share your letters at facebook.com/BWCUMC

Lead

Great leaders create and operate within constructive tension between what is and what must be (i.e., God's preferred future). Tension is a part of any change effort — especially when challenging the status quo. Leaders who are aren't comfortable with tension may have to fight the urge to placate and/or appease which are both tactics that reduces tension. On the other hand, tension without hope and a plan can be destructive and tear apart the relational fabric of any group. A great leader doesn't get trapped into either-or thinking, but lifts up a third way that can build a collective path forward.

Navigate

Identify your plan for bringing people with you to the destination you chose last week. Think about friends, family, faith communities and other community organizations that are partners or could be partners in an ongoing effort to bring beloved community into being.

Pray

God who ever calls us to challenge the injustices of this world and affect positive peace in every place: we praise your Holy Name. We thank you for being the Just God who is WITH us through every season of our lives. You are the first WORD and the last WORD in creation. You are the Almighty God who teaches us to glorify you in all our ways. So, by the power of Your Holy Spirit, continue to strengthen us as You call us to be agents of hope and justice in this world — to speak truth to power. Open our mouths and give us your words for such a time as this. Give us a unifying mission and a prophetic and bold witness that calls ourselves, communities, and nations deeper into your will. It is our desire to glorify your Righteous Name. You are God. We trust you and we thank you for allowing humanity to exist in the power of this creative moment. Work your wonders in, beyond and in spite of us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.



POLICE DEPT
BIRMINGHAM ALA

Dream Dreams

Based on Dr. King's "[I Have a Dream](#)" speech

MILE

1
9
6
3
.8

Joel 2:28-34

Then afterwards

*I will pour out my spirit on all flesh;
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
your old men shall dream dreams,
and your young men shall see visions.*

*Even on the male and female slaves,
in those days, I will pour out my spirit.*

*I will show portents in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke.
The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and terrible
day of the Lord comes. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved; for
in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the Lord has said, and
among the survivors shall be those whom the Lord calls.*

By the Revs. William and Chris Holmes

Rev. William Holmes is a retired pastor in the Baltimore-Washington Conference; the Rev. Chris Holmes is the founder of Holmes Coaching Group.

At the moment, the only way for a white majority to pay tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is to acknowledge the continued presence of racism in our society and in our own unconscious, racist reflexes — involuntary as those reflexes may be.

This is being written by a couple of white guys: a father and son who have never been unreasonably detained by the police or been worried about skin color affecting our employment, or been demeaned by people using racial epithets and insults. But we have African-American friends for whom these incidents are frequent, and only on rare occasions are we conscious of our own racist, discriminating natures.

Only by acknowledging a subtle and not so subtle racism around us and within us, can we hope to root it out and truly honor the legacy of Dr. King.

The Prophet Joel reminds us that when God's spirit comes in full force, there will be prophecies, dreams and visions from men and women of all ages. King was the timely broker of the full force of God's spirit in his eloquent "I Have a Dream" speech delivered in the nation's capital in 1963 at the height of the Civil Rights Movement.

In the opening paragraphs of that speech, King laments the lack of progress made over the previous 100 years since the Proclamation of Emancipation for persons of color. Now, here we are another half century later, and there is still a long way to go. We still wait, and work, for the time when "freedom shall ring from every mountain top." This dreaming has gone on for a long time, and there is so much further to go.

In light of this, perhaps the most helpful reminder from the "I Have a Dream" speech for us today is the part about not giving up. King declares, "Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive ... Let us not wallow in the valley of despair."

King's message, at heart, is the Christian message, endeavoring freedom for all God's people. And with other dreamers of faith, we will "not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream."



Crosswalk

Breathe

Love in action...show me Your dream.

As you breathe in, say or think: "Love in action." Experience God's love in action in your breath and body. As you exhale, say or think: "show me Your dream." Continue this breath prayer and on the exhale, release dreams that you have had for yourself to make space for the dream that God has for you. Do this each day for at least 4 minutes. Notice how the Spirit ministers to and directs you.

Reflect

1. The Revs. William and Chris Holmes, father and son, reflect on King's "I Have a Dream" speech delivered in Washington, D.C. How do their thoughts resonate with your own? What dream does this devotion inspire within you?
2. Read the passage from Joel and consider: How do you see the God's spirit at work today?
3. In this speech, King reflects back on history and reminds America of "the fierce urgency of now." Where do you see "urgency" in this nation's struggle against racism?
4. With faith, King said, "we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope." What does this metaphor mean to you? What are the specific stones of hope you wish or work for?

Create

In this 1963 speech, King mentions his dream of how his "four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character." Write a letter to the children of your church sharing your dreams for them. Share your letters at facebook.com/BWCUMC

Lead

Great leaders create a sense of urgency, clarity about current reality and a compelling vision of what can be. In this speech, King doesn't start with his dream, but with spelling out the urgent need to address current reality. His assessment of current reality is thorough and unblinking. When leaders do an honest assessment of current reality that puts words to what the people are experiencing, credibility and urgency are created. When leaders paint a picture of the vision, momentum toward change is created. In places where change has been slow in coming or when people no longer feel confident in their ability to make the change happen, a leader must also paint the picture of a hopeful future so that neither discouragement nor despair takes over.

*"I have a dream
that one day
on the red hills
of Georgia, the
sons of former
slaves and the
sons of former
slave owners will
be able to sit
down together
at the table of
brotherhood."*

Navigate

Implement your plan of invitation from last week with your planning partners. Remember, email alone is not an invitation for people who you haven't already had a conversation with. Face-to-face is best (with a video chat as the next best thing) so that others might catch the dream.

Pray

Vision-Caster, Reconciler, Trailblazer, Mighty Dreamer, who is The Way and whose Name is Good God: reveal yourself and stir up your good gifts, visions, and dreams in and beyond us. You have empowered us to dream once again. Enliven us to cast a holy and bold vision for communities, churches, nations, government, and systems that positively influence the lives of your people. Speak Your words of life into persons and places of despair. It is our desire to reflect your image and vision of perfect love. So, perfect yourself in us and in the world. Embolden us in the audacity of this moment to plainly write your vision so that persons are revived by your work among us. We praise you for the blueprint of your Holy Word and the momentum of your Holy Spirit. You are the Way. You are the Truth and you are the Life. Thank you for leading us and for making us One so that your name may be glorified in all the earth. In the power of your Name, we offer this prayer. Amen.

Created by Baltimore-Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church.



Raise Justice from the Dust

Based on King's [acceptance speech for the Nobel Peace Prize](#).

MILE
1
9
6
4
.12

Luke 17:1-6
Jesus said to his disciples, "Occasions for stumbling are bound to come, but woe to anyone by whom they come! It would be better for you if a millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea than for you to cause one of these little ones to stumble. Be on your guard! If another disciple sins, you must rebuke the offender, and if there is repentance, you must forgive. And if the same person sins against you seven times a day, and turns back to you seven times and says, 'I repent,' you must forgive."

The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" The Lord replied, "If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you."

By Rev. Lillian Smith, Pastor of Cheverly UMC in Cheverly.

"I refuse to accept the idea that the 'isness' of man's present nature makes him morally incapable of reaching up for the eternal 'oughtness' that forever confronts him."

It is hard to believe that Dr. King was assassinated 50 years ago. We have benefited from what he and others did for justice. Our country is increasingly multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-lingual. As is the case in the town of Cheverly, where I minister, many of our neighborhoods reflect diverse populations. Our children's social networks span the entire globe. As I write, seated in an area mall, I'm surrounded by God's beautiful multi-colored people.

While great strides have been made, all is not well. Racism increases. A rally in Charlottesville, Va., and a prayer meeting at Mother Emmanuel AME Church in S.C., resulted in the death of numerous people. Both incidents were incited by racial hatred.

Seeds of racism sprout poison that spreads. We Christians can combat racism. We are God's light in the world. If we don't engage racist beliefs, what hope does the world have? May God forgive us and help us overcome prejudiced and racist tendencies.

Defined as "prejudice plus power," racism is a human construct that suggests the existence of various species of humans, with varying value assigned by color. There is only one human race. No one is to be judged by the color of his or her skin.

This mother of African-American boys and "other mother" of other young men of color, prays daily for their well-being and safety. Far too many of them fall prey to racial hatred. Too many boys, young men and adult males of color seem to be judged by the color of their skin, not the content of their character.

I'm holding out hope and working for change. I pray, "Lord, protect our boys and all children in schools. Replace violence, hatred and racism in our nation with your love, peace, and justice." Like Dr. King, I refuse to believe "that we are morally incapable of reaching up for the 'oughtness' that confronts us."

Let us work for change. Let us learn to love others as God does. May God's Holy Spirit trouble

"I believe that wounded justice, lying prostrate on the blood-flowing streets of our nations, can be lifted from the dust of shame to reign supreme among the children of men."

and convict us when we miss the mark and use us to work for the “beloved community.” So be it. Amen!



Crosswalk

Breathe

Love in Action... bring peace.

As you breathe in, say or think: “Love in action.” Experience God’s love in action in your breath and body. As you exhale, say or think: “bring peace.” Continue this breath prayer and on the exhale, name what needs peace (within you, your family, your congregation, your neighborhood, our denomination, our country, our world). Do this each day for at least 5 minutes. Notice how the Spirit ministers to and directs you.

Reflect

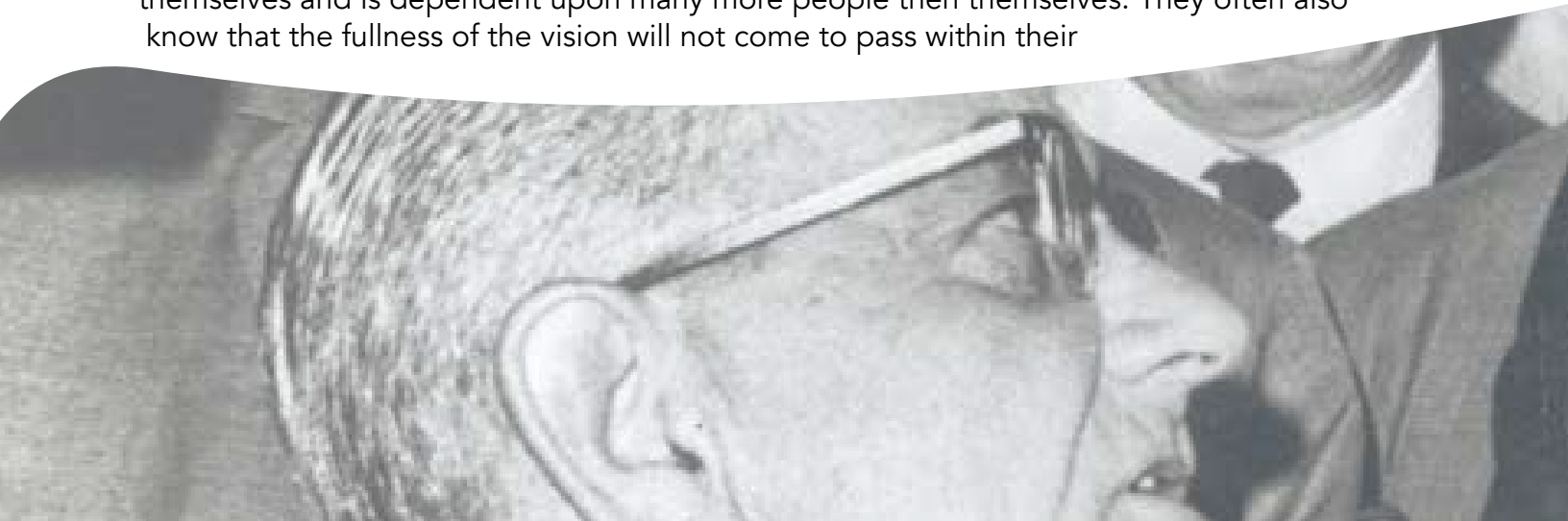
1. The Rev. Lillian Smith, one of the authors of the Northeastern Jurisdiction’s “[Call to Action for Racial Justice and Reconciliation](#),” reflects on King’s acceptance speech for the Noble Peace Prize. How do her thoughts resonate with your own?
2. What role does forgiveness and repentance play in your life? In your faith community? In what part of your life today do you need this kind of “faith like a mustard seed?”
3. In his Nobel acceptance speech, King talked about his audacious faith in the future of mankind and how he refuses to accept “the idea that the ‘isness’ of man’s present nature makes him morally incapable of reaching up for the eternal ‘oughtness’ that forever confronts him.” In what ideas do you have “audacious faith?” What “isness” in your community’s life are you excited about reaching upward and outward to change?
4. From your observations of history and current events, do you believe “nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time?” Why or why not?

Create

Write a “creative psalm of brotherhood,” a poem about peace, or a spoken word piece about something this speech conjures up in you. Share your writing at facebook.com/BWCUMC

Lead

Great leaders understand that they operate on behalf of their movements or organizations instead of behaving as though the movement or organization is there to support them. Christ-following leaders are humble trustees and curators of unconditional love, grace, mercy, peace, unity and justice. They understand that what they are being called to lead is greater than themselves and is dependent upon many more people than themselves. They often also know that the fullness of the vision will not come to pass within their



lifetime so they must prepare the ground for folks who will follow them in leadership and also find ways to celebrate progress in the midst of the struggle.

Navigate

Spend some time in deep prayer with those who are on this journey with you. Mark this time with praying through some scriptures, with hymns and with times of asking God to reveal God's vision for the destination selected for this leg of the journey. What adjustments to your planning do you need to make given this time of prayer?

Pray

Omnipresent Sojourner and Omnipotent God, who gives us a spirit of power, love, and a sound mind: we praise Your Holy Name and declare our faithfulness of Your Word. With You, all things are possible. With You, our strength is renewed daily to meet the opportunities and challenges of each day. Thank You for the gift of Your Almighty presence. Thank You for the gift of Your love that calls us to unconditionally love others. Thank You for being the Divine and Immutable Hope of the world that ever calls us to be salt and light in a world that may have forgotten its purpose and power for good. Thank You for breathing afresh on us in this moment. Shift us and the atmosphere by the power of Your Word until Your kingdom comes and Your Will is done on earth as it is in heaven. Every word You speak must come to pass. Speak Your Word. Speak, we wholeheartedly follow You. In Jesus' Name, we pray. Amen.

Created by Baltimore-Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church.



Tire Your Feet, Rest Your Souls

Based on King's [Address at the Conclusion of the Selma to Montgomery March](#)

MILE
1
9
6
5
3

Luke 12:22-31

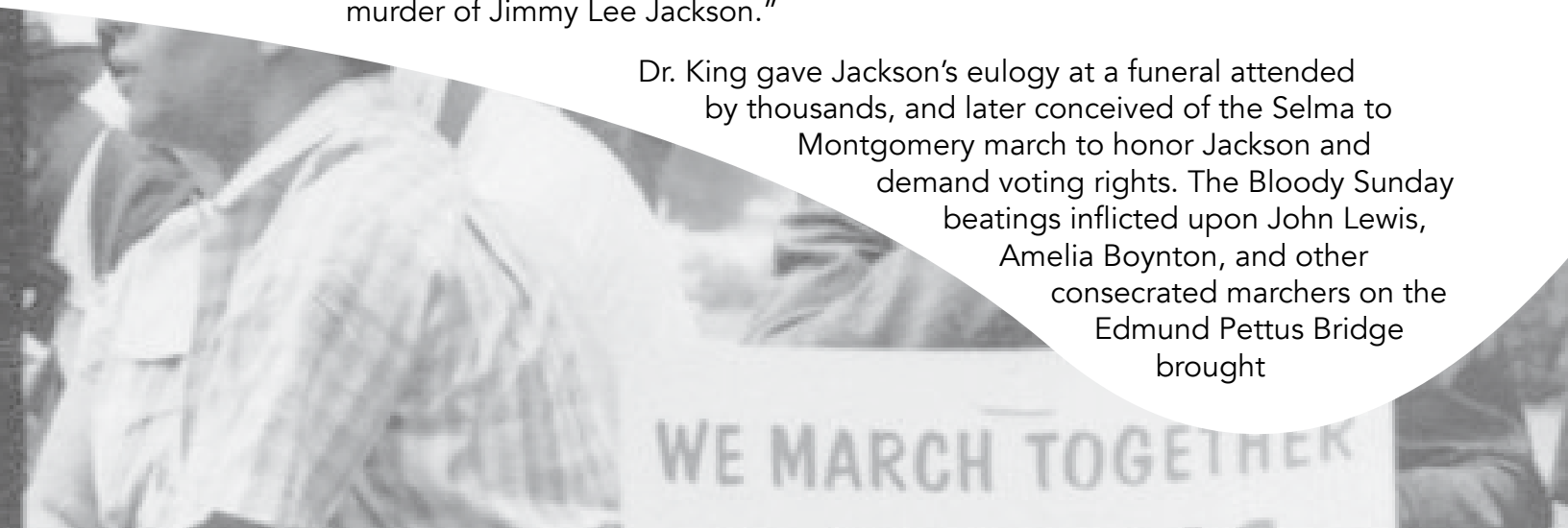
He said to his disciples, "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? If then you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you — you of little faith! And do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. For it is the nations of the world that strive after all these things, and your Father knows that you need them. Instead, strive for his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well."

By Marc Loud, Attorney and a member Emory Fellowship in Washington, D.C.

Before Selma, every state in the South was controlled by a group of men who never accepted their defeat at Gettysburg nor honored their surrender at Appomattox. Their outward refinement masked a seething doctrine of white supremacy, which Dr. King's Selma to Montgomery speech mocked as "normalcy." Blacks living under "normalcy" were never safe from the cow-whip, nightstick, cattle prod, lynching rope, burning cross or secret police. Because they were not accorded human dignity anywhere in the South, many African Americans left, including my mother and father, my father's brothers, and many extended family members.

But still there was Hope. Not all blacks left. Among those remaining were women and men who knew from history that the secret weapon against white supremacy was the ballot box. And they knew from Scripture to bring even their most difficult problems to God and trust Him. God moves mysteriously and on February 18, 1965, at Zion Methodist Church in tiny Marion, Alabama, God consecrated attendees at a prayer vigil to secure the ballot. Jimmie Lee Jackson. Amelia Boynton. John Lewis. Rev. CT Vivian. And just after the Benediction, Jimmie Lee Jackson was shot by state troopers for joining a march to free voting rights activist, James Orange. That was the context for the remarks in Dr. King's speech that "normalcy in Marion ... led to the brutal murder of Jimmy Lee Jackson."

Dr. King gave Jackson's eulogy at a funeral attended by thousands, and later conceived of the Selma to Montgomery march to honor Jackson and demand voting rights. The Bloody Sunday beatings inflicted upon John Lewis, Amelia Boynton, and other consecrated marchers on the Edmund Pettus Bridge brought



the evil of disenfranchisement directly under the glare of a united America. Every faith, region and race sent marchers to Selma. By the time supporters' tired feet reached Montgomery, over 25,000 Americans had joined the Selma march. God's consecration, King's leadership, and Jackson's sacrifice won passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The law gave blacks a nearly suppression-proof ballot. God is worthy of our trust.

But the men whose minds have not left Appomattox are still with us, this time attempting division through *Holder v. Shelby County*, discriminatory voter purges, early voting bans, and other deceptions. Still there is Hope. The journey from Tired Feet to Rested Souls always passes through Hope. We honor God with a message of Hope. America United.



Crosswalk

Breathe

Love in action...where should I march?

As you breathe in, say or think: "Love in action." Experience God's love in action in your breath and body. As you exhale, say or think: "where should I march?" Continue this breath prayer and on the exhale, release dreams that you have had for yourself to make space for the dream that God has for you. Do this each day for at least 6 minutes. Notice how the Spirit ministers to and directs you.

Reflect

1. In his devotion, Marc Loud wrote about the essential role of the ballot box in a just society. In your life, what role does voting play in public elections? Why is the right to fully participate in a democracy worth fighting, and even sometimes risking one's life, for? What are some of your other reflections on Loud's devotion?
2. How do faith and worry exist together in your life? How does Jesus' promise in this passage shape your thoughts about racism and justice in our culture today?
3. In his speech at the conclusion of the Selma-to-Montgomery March, King does not shy away from the ugliness and evil of white supremacy. He calls on those present to continue to march "until brotherhood becomes more than a meaningless word in an opening



"How long?
Not long,
because the
arc of the
moral universe
is long, but it
bends toward
justice."

prayer, but the order of the day on every legislative agenda."
In your community and in your life experiences, how do you see
white supremacy and privilege being lived out? How do you believe
your faith community can more actively oppose racism? What is your
response to Rev. King's call to "March!"

4. "How long will justice be crucified, and truth bear it?" King answered simply: "Not long. Not long, because the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." What are your thoughts on this response? What does it mean for you, personally, this Lent?

Create

In "Lift Every Voice," James Weldon Johnson spoke of African-American's journey toward justice.

"We have come over a way / That with the tears have been watered.

We have come treading our paths / Through the blood of the slaughtered.

Out of the gloomy past, / Till now we stand at last

Where the white gleam / Of our bright star is cast."

Using poetic language, music, a sermon, or some other form of artistic expression, explore and illustrate that "bright star" and what this justice journey means to you and to God. Share your creation at facebook.com/BWCUMC

Lead

Great leaders tell the whole story and help people find their place in it. Both Jesus and King were masterful storytellers who created new tapestries of understanding by making intangible concepts tangible and using everyday experiences to help people see their place in God's story. King's sweeping speech does a brilliant job of both encapsulating the journey to date and rooting people in God's promises and preferred future.

Navigate

Put the finishing touches on the plans you have made and solidify the commitment of those who have said they will go with you. Will you travel together or meet at a specific place? Do people need rides or other forms of help getting to the destination? Schedule a check-in call to serve as a reminder.

Pray

Drum Major God: your truth marches ahead of us on a narrow path that leads to eternal freedom. Enable us to discern the power of your presence and the wholeness of your truth. Speak to, for, and through us to free us from all that seeks to oppress your will for us. Empower us by the power of Your Holy Spirit to learn and to tell Your story — the whole story — with clarity, power and the transparency needed for persons to embrace the fullness of your great love. Help us to avoid easy fixes, easy solutions, and quick answers so that we may deeply consider the complexities of matters and not wound others. You are the Most High God and there is no one like you. You are the source of our strength and you are the hope of our salvation. Root us in your promises and ever sensitize us to the move and plan of your Spirit. We are following you and we praise you for your willingness to lead us. Let your anointing continue to fall and reshape our voices and lives. In Jesus' name we pray and serve. Amen.

Fix the Road

Based on King's ["Beyond Vietnam"](#) speech

MILE
1
9
6
7
.4

Luke 18:1-8

Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, 'Grant me justice against my opponent.' For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, 'Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.'" And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

By the Rev. Alexis Brown, Campus minister at Howard University

Dr. King's prophetic speech of the revolution of values shares a broader perspective of how systematically America perpetuates evil through greed and subsequently through white supremacy. Many of us love Dr. King's speeches, and I have even heard folks who I vehemently disagree with him quote him. Folks, for example, who don't mind taxing the poor, eliminating healthcare, and cutting Social Security. I've pondered in prayer to God for them and asked, "are they serious?" I wondered if they truly know what Dr. King's speeches were all about, and how revolutionary they would look like to live into?

Every time I've cried out to God for answers, I heard the Spirit saying to me, "And where have you been revolutionary?" I wrote this poem during one of those reflective moments of understanding my own culpability into a system that cares more about material things than humanity. For it is the love of humanity and the earth that Jesus came to redeem, demonstrating to us who and what we should value. The ancient scriptures and the Gospel require radical revolutionists who decide to point the finger back to our own reflection, and dare live out a revolutionary life.

"If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday." Isaiah 58: 9-10

I met Jesus today

She was standing on the side of the road
With a sign begging for change
I stopped and gave Her
All the money I had in my purse
She was so excited and grateful
She kissed my hand

It wasn't an even exchange

I didn't offer much
But Her gratitude overwhelmed me with

Joy, then sadness
Could She be so happy with so little
For a moment there
I was hoping she didn't confuse my \$10
For a \$100
Then I left feeling as if I didn't do enough.

It wasn't an even exchange

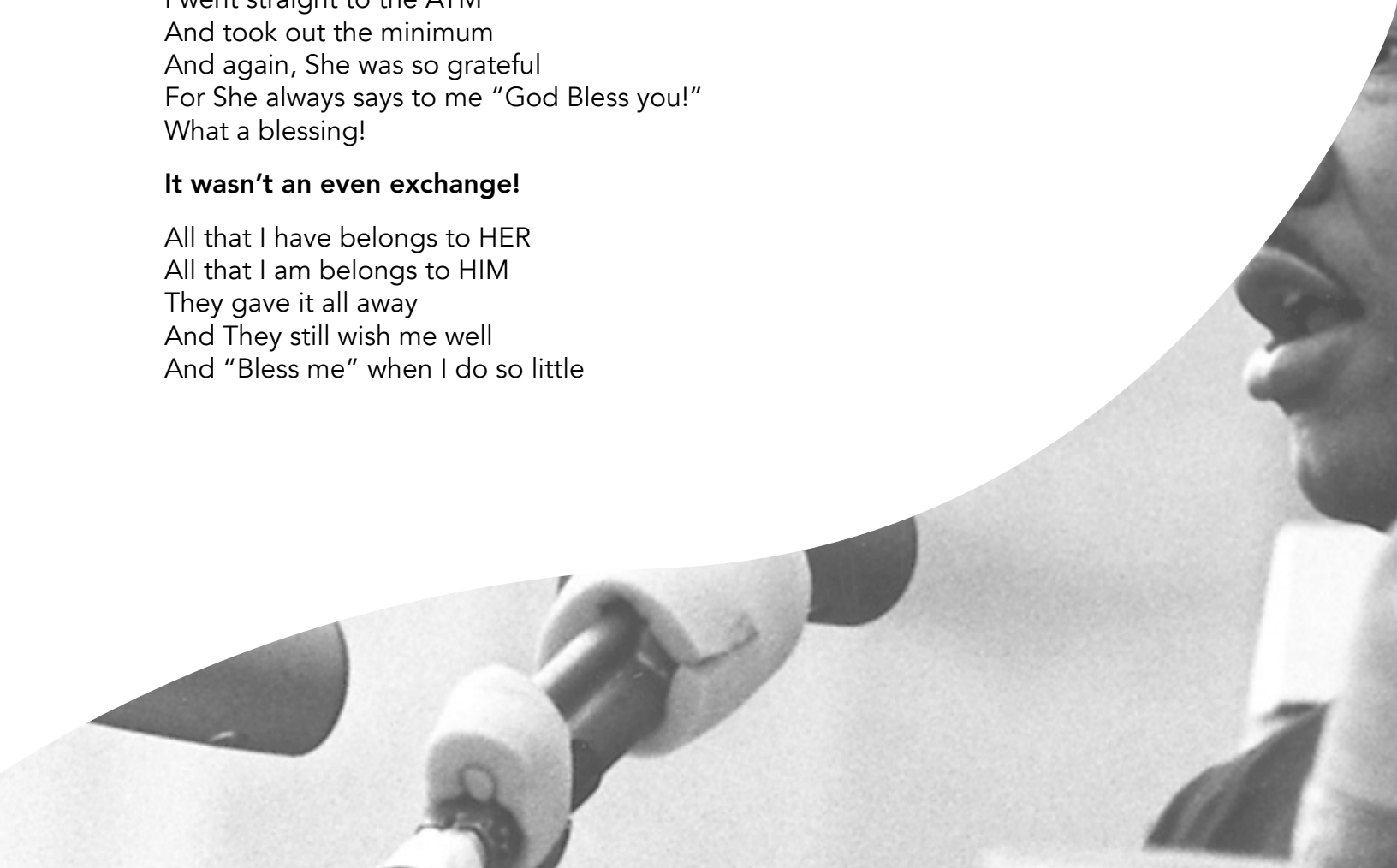
For She "blessed me."
I left with tears knowing I cannot repay
Her sacrifice.
I passed by Jesus today and didn't stop
He had a sign begging for help.
I had plans for my \$20.
Then I remembered how I wasted \$40
on an unnecessary gadget.
Oh, and that expensive coffee I just bought.
And yet He has nowhere to sleep
because he gave it all away.
I repented, and He Forgave me.

It wasn't an even exchange.

I met Jesus today
I didn't make an excuse as I drove by Her with
My Starbucks in my hand.
I went straight to the ATM
And took out the minimum
And again, She was so grateful
For She always says to me "God Bless you!"
What a blessing!

It wasn't an even exchange!

All that I have belongs to HER
All that I am belongs to HIM
They gave it all away
And They still wish me well
And "Bless me" when I do so little





Crosswalk

Breathe

Love in action... use me to fix the road.

As you breathe in, say or think: "Love in action." Experience God's love in action in your breath and body. As you exhale, say or think: "use me to fix the road." Continue this breath prayer and on the exhale, let go of excuses and fears and open yourself to receive instructions. Do this each day for at least 7 minutes. Notice how the Spirit ministers to and directs you.

Reflect

1. Read Rev. Brown's devotional. Reflect upon when you have been revolutionary for God.
2. What role does justice play in your faith? Do you see humanity's justice as distinct from God's justice? How so?
3. King called on Americans to "rapidly begin the shift from a thing-oriented society to a person-oriented society. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights, are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism and militarism are incapable of being conquered." Examine your own life. In what ways are you thing-oriented; in what ways are you person-oriented? What does your faith tell you about finding the proper balance between these two orientations?
4. In response to war, King suggested a genuine revolution of values with all-embracing, unconditional love at its center. While this might be seen as sentimental or weak, King said "I am speaking of that force which all of the great religions have seen as the supreme unifying principle of life. Love is somehow the key that unlocks the doors which leads to ultimate reality. ... God dwelleth in us and his love is perfected in us." How do you think adopting this spirit of love in personal, corporate and political situations would, or could, affect change? Is love the answer? Why or why not?

Create

King was heavily criticized, even by some of his own supporters, for speaking out against the Vietnam War, but said, "A time comes when silence is betrayal." Speak your mind. Create a tweet, Facebook or Instagram post (#MLKbwc), or letter to editor that declares what you believe the world most needs to hear today. Share your thoughts at facebook.com/BWCUMC

Lead

Great leaders are consistently rooted and guided by their purpose and values. Integrity in a movement or organization comes from the consistency of its leaders' purpose and values. Said another way: the "why" needs to remain constant even as the "what" and "how" might need to be more flexible. In this speech, we hear recurring values expressed throughout King's career as he explains why he is speaking out against Vietnam. In doing so, he not only demonstrates the depth of his commitment to his core values, but his application of them across all lines of difference.

Navigate

As you and your compadres have journeyed on *The Jericho Road*, what next milestones do you see for yourselves? How are you being called to bridge the gap between the lessons of Jesus and how you are living that out on the Jericho Roads in your community? Are you being called to join an existing campaign for justice in your community, county, state or nationally? Will you register people to vote? What organization might you join with to help save the soul of your community, region or nation? What is God calling you to do that would result in “a bright day of justice?”

Pray

Eternal Lover of our souls and giver of Life: we praise your Holy Name. Thank you for the gift of life and for the gift of your love. Thank you for calling and equipping us to join you in your transformational work. Help us to move beyond the world as it is to envision, create and shape the world as you desire it to be. In the person of Jesus, love walked among us and called out injustice in conventional and unconventional spaces, including worship spaces and town squares. Love was on a mission to save us. Love challenged us to be the highest expression of all that is good. Love journeyed through the earth with great purpose, power, and intention. By the power of your love, permeate us with your love and teach us how to love like you. Refocus our attention on what it means to rightly and wholeheartedly love you, self, and neighbor. Reveal your purposes for each of us with each breath and allow our hearts to beat to your rhythm of will. We are yours. Holy Spirit, we trust you. Eternal God, we trust in you. Son of God, we wait on you. We are one body formed in the Name of Love that we offer this prayer so that Love may work its wonders in every person, region, and oppressive system of this present world. So be it. Amen.

Give Dangerously

Based on ["I've Been to the Mountaintop"](#) speech

MILE
1
9
6
8
3

John 13:1-17

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you." For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason, he said, "Not all of you are clean."

After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord — and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them."

By the Rev. C. Anthony Hunt, Pastor of Epworth Chapel UMC in Baltimore.

This year marks the 89th anniversary of the birth of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and the year when we observe the 50th anniversary of King's assigination on April 4, 1968, in Memphis, Tenn. At his death, King was in Memphis to advocate for the rights of striking garbage workers. This is not coincidental in that one of the pillars of his insistent striving toward justice in America was for addressing economic inequality — along with what he deemed to be the concomitant evils of racism and militarism.

On the night before his assassination, King was invited to Mason Temple Church of God in Christ to offer encouragement to protesters in the garbage worker's strike. In his remarks that night, in what has come to be known as the "I've Been to the Mountaintop" speech, he effectively reiterated his hope for an economically and socially just society.

"Well, I don't know what will happen now, we've got some difficult days ahead. But it really doesn't matter with me now, because I've been to the mountaintop ... I just want to do God's will."

Today, we might wonder what King would say to the church and society in light of where we find ourselves. To paint a picture of where society found itself in 1968, King shared the story of the Good Samaritan and offered a depiction of the Jericho road (Luke 10:25-37). He said that the "Jericho road is a dangerous road ... It's a winding, meandering road." If King were alive today, he might offer insight on what it means to give dangerously on the various Jericho roads that we must now travel. He might remind us that the altruism that the Good Samaritan demonstrated was universal, excessive and dangerous.

If Dr. King were with us today, he might also reiterate something else he said at Mason Temple on April 3, 1968: that to give dangerously means remaining cognizant that there is a certain collective force among those of us who are committed to living the sentiments of the prophet Micah to "love kindness, do justice and walk humbly with God." (Micah 6:8) King said, "For when people get caught up with that which is right, and they are willing to sacrifice for it, there is no stopping point short of victory."

Finally, King might remind us that with whatever circumstances we face as the church and society, we must never give up hoping, and that this hoping is tied to a persistent striving for *Beloved Community*. According to him, "Hope is the refusal to give up despite overwhelming odds."

Toward the conclusion of his remarks at Mason Temple, King said, "Well, I don't know what will happen now, we've got some difficult days ahead. But it really doesn't matter with me now, because I've been to the mountaintop... And I've looked over, and I've seen the Promised Land... Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord."

For King, a part of his dream (that I believe still holds today) was that there would be "hewn out of the mountain of despair, a stone of hope."

We must never stop imagining and dreaming of the "future with hope" (Jeremiah 29:11) that is God's will for the churches and society. Indeed, he might tell us that we should continue to heed the sentiments of the great poet Langston Hughes to –

Hold fast to dreams,
For when dreams die,
Life is a broken winged bird
That cannot fly.



Crosswalk

Breathe

Love in action... create beloved community.

As you breathe in, say or think: "Love in action." Experience God's love in action in your breath and body. As you exhale, say or think: "create beloved community." Continue this breath prayer and on the exhale, let go of instances where you have not exemplified servant leadership and open yourself to receive instructions. Do this each day for at least 8 minutes. Notice how the Spirit ministers to and directs you.

Reflect

1. Rev. C. Anthony Hunt has written books and taught several seminary courses that feature the ministry of King. As you read this devotion, which thoughts resonate most deeply with you? What questions does Hunt's writing evoke for you?
2. What insights into Jesus, and God's intentions did you gain from this devotion?

3. In addressing the 1,300 sanitation workers on strike, King said in his "I've Been to the Mountaintop" speech, that if they are to be allowed to live with dignity as God's children, they must maintain unity, and not become distracted. "Keep the issue where they are. The issue," he said, "is injustice." In today's culture, what issues distract us from focusing on injustice? How much energy, effort and courage does your faith community put into addressing issues of injustice? How relevant is your church?
4. King asks the people of Memphis and beyond to "develop a kind of dangerous unselfishness." Jesus praised the Good Samaritan, King said, because while on the Road to Jericho, the Samaritan "had the capacity to project the 'I' into the 'thou' and be concerned about his brother." In what ways might you practice generous empathy this Lent? In what ways will you "give dangerously?"

Create

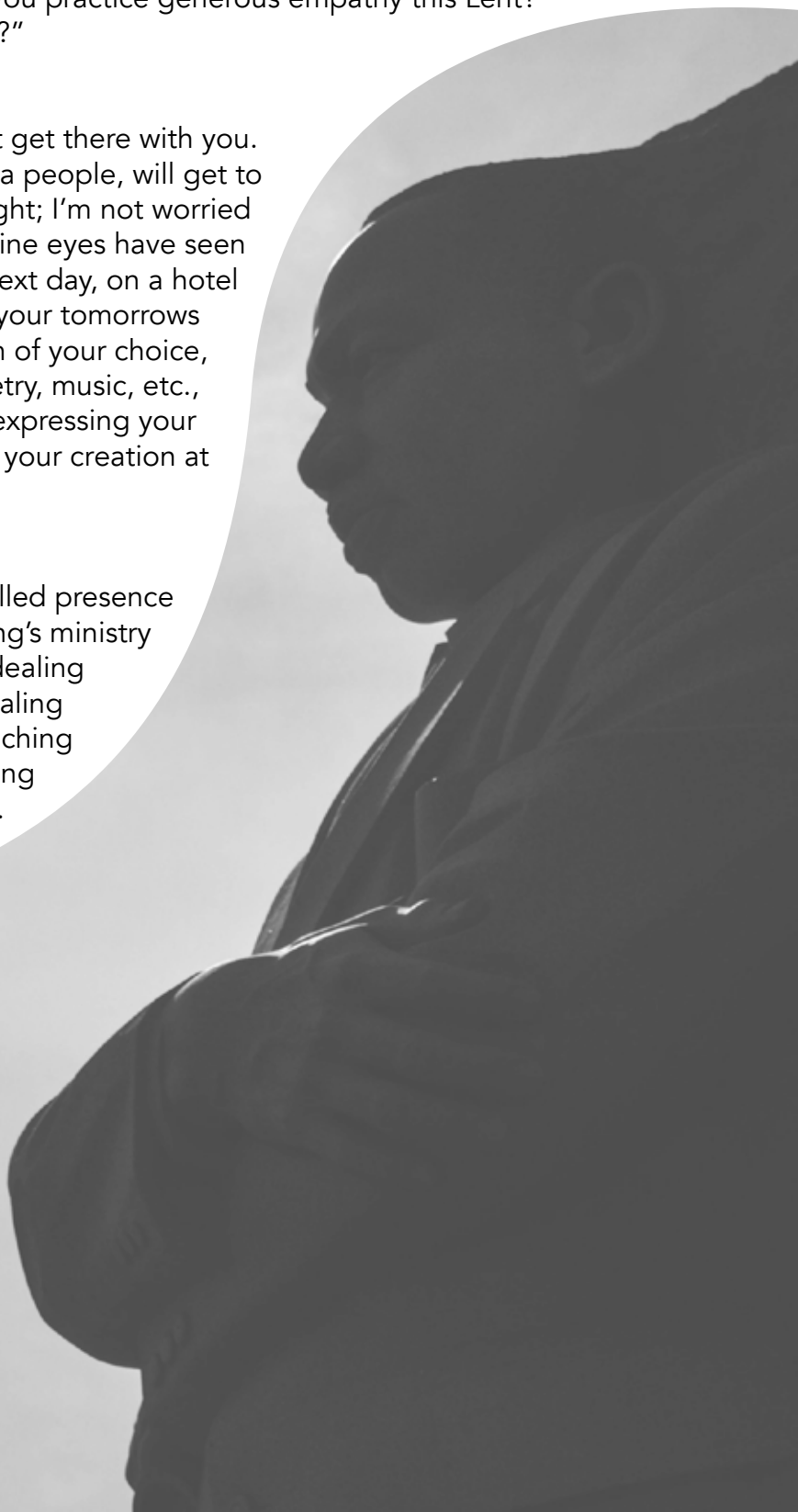
In closing this speech, King said, "I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land. And so, I'm happy tonight; I'm not worried about anything; I'm not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord." The next day, on a hotel balcony, King was shot and killed. Imagine your tomorrows are not promised. Using the artistic medium of your choice, such as drawing, photography, collage, poetry, music, etc., craft a message that will serve as a legacy, expressing your hopes for God's beloved community. Share your creation at facebook.com/BWCUMC

Lead

Great leaders exude a non-anxious, hope-filled presence in the midst of mess, tension and chaos. King's ministry was filled with challenging the status quo, dealing with resistance, organizing a movement, dealing with disagreements and dissention, and teaching people about peace and nonviolence to bring about change and navigating death threats.

Throughout it all, his faith allowed him to remain non-anxious even as he continued to push for justice and giving voice to the voiceless.

Faith, courage and resilience are required to show up as a non-anxious leader



especially while leading major change efforts.

Navigate

Celebrate confidently “that only when it is dark enough can you see the stars,” and that justice can rise from the dust.

Pray

Holy One: in the person of Jesus, you were born of a virgin and lived for us. Thank You. Great Healer: you were celebrated, criticized, called a demon, and ridiculed as you journeyed though the earth on a mission to save us. You healed the sick, fed the hungry and clothed those in need. You healed a woman at a well and a person at the gate called beautiful. You flipped over tables in the temple to emphatically announce that Your House shall be called the House of Prayer. You healed a woman with an issue of blood for over 17 years with one touch. You expanded physical and spiritual vision. Thank You. You revived Lazarus and Jairus’ daughter and proved your power over death. Thank You. You selected 12 disciples and had many followers and friends in your short lifetime. Yet, most of them betrayed and or abandoned you in your final hours. You were nailed to a cross to redeem us. Thank You. And, you ever pray for us — thank You. So, we thank you for all that you are and all that you’ve done for us. May we forever live in the power of Your focused light amidst the darkness of nights. Thank You. Thank You. Thank You, Amen.

Opportunities and Resources

for Keeping the King Legacy of Service, Advocacy, Love, and Nonviolence Alive

“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is: what are you doing for others?”

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

Learn more about Dr. King’s Life, the King Center, and read some of King’s Writings

- The King Center <http://www.thekingcenter.org/> — The Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change is dedicated to *educating the world on the life, legacy and teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., inspiring new generations to carry forward his unfinished work, strengthen causes and empower change-makers who are continuing his efforts today.*
- List of Books and Writings by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. <http://www.thekingcenter.org/books-bibliography>
- A Timeline of Major MLK Life Events <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-resources/major-king-events-chronology-1929-1968>

Learn more about organizations and efforts that promote justice in the spirit of King’s legacy and become an advocate

- Children’s Defense Fund <http://www.childrensdefense.org/?referrer=https://www.google.com/>
- Hate Won’t Win Movement <https://www.hatewontwinmovement.com/>
The “Hate Won’t Win Movement” was started in light of the church massacre that took place at Emmanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina, on June 17, 2015. Alana Simmons, the granddaughter of one of the victims, said, “It is my understanding that the purpose of this shooting was to initiate a race war. And although my grandfather and the other victims died at the hands of hate, they lived in love and they preached love, and their legacies will be love.” This vision is to witness to a humanity that openly and willingly works to create and sustain an equitable society for people of all races, religions, social classes, and orientations because of the love of thy neighbor.
- Help to Register Voters, <https://www.usa.gov/register-to-vote>
 - For Maryland, <https://voterservices.elections.maryland.gov/PollingPlaceSearch>
 - For the District of Columbia, <https://www.dcboe.org/home.asp?skip=Y>
 - For West Virginia, <http://sos.wv.gov/elections/pages/default.aspx>
- General Board of Church and Society Resources, <https://www.umcjustice.org/>
- General Commission on Religion and Race, <http://www.gcorr.org/>
- National Peace with Justice Grants, <http://www.gcorr.org/>
- Choosing Non-violence 365, <http://choosenonviolence.org/howtochoose>
- Principles of Nonviolence, <http://www.thekingcenter.org/glossary-nonviolence>

Consider organizing a Trip

- The Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial, <https://www.nps.gov/mlkm/index.htm>
- The National Museum of African American History and Culture, <https://nmaahc.si.edu/>, 1400 Constitution Ave., NW Washington, DC. 20560, A People's Story, A Nation's History

Learn more about ...

- Birmingham Civil Rights Institute (Birmingham), <https://www.bcri.org/>
- 16th Street Baptist Church (Birmingham), <http://16thstreetbaptist.org/>
- Southern Poverty Law Center, and Civil Rights Memorial (Montgomery), <https://www.splcenter.org/>
- Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church (Montgomery), <http://www.dexterkingmemorial.org/>
- The Dexter Parsonage Museum (Montgomery), <http://www.dexterkingmemorial.org/tours/parsonage-museum/>
- The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), <http://www.naacp.org/>
- Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, <http://www.history.com/topics/black-history/sncc>
- National Urban League, <http://nul.iamempowered.com/>
- Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), <http://www.congressofracialequality.org/>
- The Poor People's Campaign, <https://poorpeoplescampaign.org/index.php/poor-peoples-campaign-1968/>