

Westminster Abbey



Rediscovering Justice:

A Service of Hope
on the 50th anniversary
of the death of

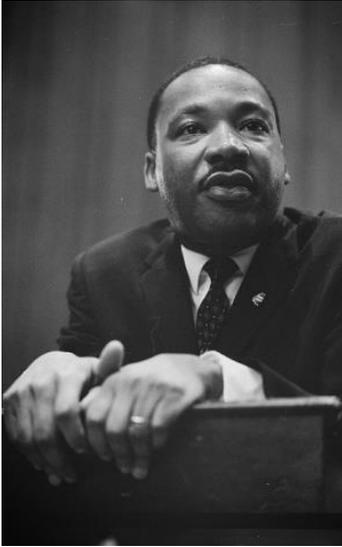
The Reverend Dr Martin Luther King Jr

15th January 1929–4th April 1968



Wednesday 4th April 2018
noon

REVD DR MARTIN LUTHER KING JR AND JUSTICE



Martin Luther King Junior (MLK) was born in Atlanta, Georgia on 15th January 1929, to Michael King, a pastor at Ebenezer Baptist Church, and Alberta (Williams) King, the daughter of a Baptist preacher. Like many African-Americans at that time, the young MLK had to endure the cruel segregation that blighted every aspect of black people's lives in the southern United States.

MLK excelled as a scholar: at fifteen he enrolled at the prestigious Morehouse College and graduated from the male-only university in 1948. King completed his education at Boston University, obtaining a PhD in Systematic Theology, in 1955. It was while at Boston that he met and married, Coretta Scott (King), with whom he would have four children.

In 1954, he became pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, where, the following year, he led a successful year-long boycott of the city's segregated buses. Dr King went on to establish the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) which, over the following decade, utilised marches, boycotts, sit-ins, and other acts of non-violent civil disobedience to challenge inequality. The highlight of this campaign was the 'March on Washington' in 1963, where he delivered his historic 'I Have a Dream' speech. The following year, Dr King was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, Norway.

By 1965, Dr King began to publicly criticise his country's involvement in Vietnam, a war that formed part of the 'triple evils' of militarism, racism, and poverty, which hindered the creation of his 'Beloved Community'. He also switched the SCLC's focus to the northern US cities, where a subtle form of racism also disadvantaged African-Americans.

In late 1967, Dr King agreed to embark on 'The Poor People's March', a protest against poverty that was planned for the spring of 1968. Dr King never lived to realise this dream—he was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee, on 4th April 1968. He was in the city to fight for the employment rights of African-American sanitation workers. His funeral took place several days later at Ebenezer Baptist Church, which he had co-pastored with his father on his return to Atlanta in 1960.

Richard Reddie, Deputy Head of London Region, Christian Aid

CHRISTIAN AID AND JUSTICE

As a Christian organisation, Christian Aid believes every one of us is created in the image of God and deserves respect and care, and the opportunity to live a life of peace, dignity, and worth.

In a world with such wealth as ours, justice requires that no one should go without food, shelter, security, or any of the other essential services we all need.

We work alongside and with people of all faiths and none, as well as with churches and other organisations, to promote sustainable development, strive for social justice, and pursue our vision of a world without poverty.

In thirty-seven countries, we support poor and marginalised people, whatever their beliefs, sexuality, gender, and ethnicity, to lift themselves out of poverty.

We do this by tackling both the causes and the symptoms of poverty so that everyone can achieve equality, dignity, and justice.

The Reverend Dr Martin Luther King Jr shared our commitment to justice and equality and this led us to support his work in the 1950s. On his occasional visits to London, he prioritised visits to Christian Aid's offices, shared with the then British Council of Churches, and we assisted him in his public relations. In 1964 we organised his UK appointments when he was stopped here on his way to Oslo, Norway, to collect his Nobel Peace Prize.

He found a champion in our first director, Janet Lacey, who led Christian Aid—and the World Council of Churches (WCC)—in raising funds to assist the civil rights movement in the 1960s.

One such activity was supporting the Delta Ministry, a church-based project in Mississippi that encouraged voter registration, greater political involvement, and offered economic aid to African-Americans. In October 1965 Janet Lacey visited this project, reporting her findings to the WCC. She made a second visit in December 1968, after Dr King's assassination, to assess the impact of the Ministry's work among these poor communities.

We trust that this service and the symposium will embolden and inspire you to pursue justice and support charitable activities.

Mark Sturge, Head of England, London, Christian Aid

Members of the congregation are kindly requested to refrain from using private cameras, video, or sound recording equipment. Please ensure that mobile phones and other electronic devices are switched off.

The whole of the church is served by a hearing loop. Users should turn their hearing aid to the setting marked T.

The service is conducted by The Very Reverend Dr John Hall, Dean of Westminster.

The service is sung by the Martin Luther King Celebration Choir, comprised of members from IDMC, New Wine, Acquire, London Adventist Chorale, and the Kingdom Choirs, conducted by Karen Gibson and John Fisher, together with soloists Wayne Hernandez and Tracey Campbell.

The organ is played by Matthew Jorysz, Assistant Organist.

The organist plays:

A Meditation on ‘Brother James’s Air’ Harold Darke (1888–1976)

*Anguished American Easter, 1968 Thomas Kerr (1915–88)
composed as a reaction
to the death of Dr Martin Luther King Jr*

Folk Tune Percy Whitlock (1903–46)

The Deputy Lieutenant of Greater London, Colleen Harris MVO DL, is received at the Great West Door and conducted to her seat.

The Deputy Chief of Mission of the United States Embassy, Lewis Lukens, is received at the Great West Door.

The Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor of Westminster and Deputy High Steward, Councillor Ian Adams, is received at the Great West Door. All stand as he is conducted to his seat, and then sit.

His Royal Highness The Duke of Kent is received at the West Gate.

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ORDER OF SERVICE

All stand. The choir sings

THE ANTHEM

*during which wreaths are laid at the
Innocent Victims' Memorial and
beneath the statue of Martin Luther King Jr*

LET us turn our thoughts today
To Martin Luther King
And recognize that there are ties between us
All men and women
Living on the earth
Ties of hope and love
Of sister and brotherhood

That we are bound together
In our desire to see the world become
A place in which our children
Can grow free and strong

We are bound together
By the task that stands before us
And the road that lies ahead
We are bound and we are bound

There is a feeling like the clenching of a fist
There is a hunger in the centre of the chest
There is a passage through the darkness and the mist
And though the body sleeps the heart will never rest

Shed a little light, oh Lord
So that we can see
Just a little light, oh Lord
Wanna stand it on up
Stand it on up, oh Lord
Wanna walk it on down
Shed a little light, oh Lord

Can't get no light from the dollar bill
Don't give me no light from a TV screen
When I open my eyes I wanna drink my fill
From the well on the hill (do you know what I mean?)

Shed a little light
James Taylor (b 1948)

All sing

THE HYMN

during which the procession moves to places in the Sacrarium



THINE be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
endless is the vict'ry thou o'er death hast won;
angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,
kept the folded grave-clothes where thy body lay.

*Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
endless is the vict'ry thou o'er death hast won.*

Lo, Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb;
lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom;
let the Church with gladness hymns of triumph sing,
for her Lord now liveth, death hath lost its sting:

*Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
endless is the vict'ry thou o'er death hast won.*

No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of Life;
life is nought without thee: aid us in our strife,
make us more than conquerors through thy deathless love;
bring us safe through Jordan to thy home above:

*Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
endless is the vict'ry thou o'er death hast won.*

Maccabaeus 120 NEH
George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)

A toi la gloire, O Ressuscité! Edmond Budry (1854–1932)
translated by Richard Hoyle (1875–1939)

From the High Altar, The Very Reverend Dr John Hall, Dean of Westminster, gives

THE WELCOME *and* THE BIDDING

ON behalf of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster, I offer a warm welcome to Westminster Abbey as we come to give thanks for the life and work of the Reverend Dr Martin Luther King Jr, assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee, fifty years ago today.

A statue commemorating Martin Luther King was placed in a niche on the west front of the Abbey in 1998 alongside those of nine other 20th century Christian martyrs. On his 40th anniversary in 2008, we held here in Westminster, as well as a memorial service, a day conference with black, Asian, and minority ethnic young people to learn the lessons of his life and witness.

Today, working together with Christian Aid, we hope again to learn from the example of Martin Luther King and to commit ourselves afresh to keeping the dream alive of justice for all peoples under God and of peace in the world.

All remain standing. The Reverend Prebendary Rose Hudson-Wilkin, Chaplain to the Speaker of the House of Commons, leads from the Great Lectern

THE CONFESSION

LOVING, life-giving God, you have spoken to us, and called us to be your disciples. Too often we allow ourselves to be silenced by those who are indifferent to our insights and our experience.

**Forgive us and make us strong
to raise our voices in hope.**

We allow ourselves to be silenced by our own fear and self-doubt.

**Forgive us and make us strong
to raise our voices in hope.**

We allow ourselves to be silenced by the structures of power which dominate and determine our lives.

**Forgive us and make us strong
to raise our voices in hope.**

By our silence we allow the powers of injustice and death to have the last word.

**Forgive us and make us strong
to raise our voices in hope.**

May we be silent no longer, but raise our voices to share what we have seen and heard.

**It is Christ who meets us,
calls us by our name,
and sends us as his apostles.
Amen.**

The Dean gives

THE ABSOLUTION

MAY the God of love and power forgive you and free you from your sins, heal and strengthen you by his Spirit, and raise you to new life in Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

All sit. Wayne Hernandez and Tracey Campbell, soloists, sing

THE ANTHEM

MY faith looks up to thee, thou Lamb of Calvary,
Saviour divine!

Now hear me while I pray, take all my guilt away,
O let me from this day be wholly thine!

May thy rich grace impart strength to my fainting heart,
My zeal inspire!

As thou hast died for me, O may my love to thee
Pure, warm, and changeless be, a living fire!

While life's dark maze I tread, and griefs around me spread,
Be thou my guide;
Bid darkness turn to day, wipe sorrow's tears away,
Nor let me ever stray from thee aside.

Olivet 512 AHON
Lowell Mason (1792–1872)

My faith looks up to thee
Ray Palmer (1808–87)

THE TESTIMONIES

by

Dr R David Muir

*Senior Lecturer, University of Roehampton,
from the Nave Pulpit*

and

Amanda Khozi Mukwashi
*Chief Executive, Christian Aid,
from the Great Pulpit*

The choir sings

THE ANTHEM

THE higher you build your barriers, the taller I become.
The further you take my rights away, the faster I will run.
You can deny me; you can decide to turn your face away—
no matter, cause there's
Something inside so strong,
I know that I can make it,
though you're doing me wrong, so wrong.
You thought that my pride was gone, oh no!
There's something inside so strong.
Oh, something inside so strong.

The more you refuse to hear my voice, the louder I will sing.
You hide behind walls of Jericho; your lies will come tumbling.
Deny my place in time; you squander wealth that's mine;
my light will shine so brightly it will blind you,
because there's
Something inside so strong...

Brothers and sisters, when they insist we're just not good enough,
well, we know better:
just look them in the eye and say,
'We're gonna do it anyway',
because there's
Something inside so strong...

(Something Inside) So Strong
Labi Siffre (b 1945)

Baroness (Doreen) Lawrence of Clarendon reads from the Nave Pulpit

THE FIRST READING

ALAS for you who desire the day of the Lord!
Why do you want the day of the Lord?

It is darkness, not light;

as if someone fled from a lion,

and was met by a bear;

or went into the house and rested a hand against the wall,

and was bitten by a snake.

Is not the day of the Lord darkness, not light,

and gloom with no brightness in it?

I hate, I despise your festivals,

and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.

Even though you offer me your burnt-offerings and grain-offerings,

I will not accept them;

and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals

I will not look upon.

Take away from me the noise of your songs;

I will not listen to the melody of your harps.

But let justice roll down like waters,

and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Amos 5:18–24

Thanks be to God.

All remain seated for

THE HYMN



Soloist:

WE shall overcome, we shall overcome,
We shall overcome someday;
*Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We shall overcome someday.*

The choir sings:

We'll walk hand in hand, we'll walk hand in hand,
We'll walk hand in hand someday;
*Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We shall overcome someday.*

All stand to sing:

We are not alone, we are not alone
We are not alone today
*Oh, deep in my heart I do believe ,
We are not alone today.*

Deep in my heart I do believe,
We shall overcome someday.

traditional

All sit. Pastor Modupe Afolabi, National Administrator, Redeemed Christian Church of God UK, reads from the Great Lectern

THE SECOND READING

JESUS told his disciples 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?’

St Luke 18: 1–8

Thanks be to God.

THE ADDRESS

by

The Right Reverend Dr Karowei Dorgu
Bishop of Woolwich

The choir sings

THE ANTHEM

LORD I will lift mine eyes to the hills
Knowing my help is coming from you
Your peace you give me in time of the storm
You are the source of my strength
You are the strength of my life
I lift my hands in total praise to you.

You are the source of my strength
You are the strength of my life
I lift my hands in total praise to you. Amen.

Total Praise
Richard Smallwood (b 1948)

after Psalm 121

THE PRAYERS

The Reverend Mark Birch, Minor Canon and Sacrist, says:

In the power of the Spirit and in union with the risen Christ, let us pray to the Father.

All kneel or remain seated.

The Reverend Anthony Ball, Canon in Residence, says:

LET us give thanks for life and inspiration of Martin Luther King Jr: for his courage in the face of violence; for his faithfulness to the Gospel of peace; for his abiding dream of equality and justice for all; for the movement he inspired: for all who demand and defend civil rights across the world; for all who will not be silenced.

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Reverend Michaela Youngson, President-Elect, the Methodist Conference, says:

LET us pray for all vulnerable people: for the stranger and those who have been exploited; for those who have suffered the indignity of abuse, for the courageous, as well as the silenced #MeToos, for their unconditional justice, mercy and hope.

Let us also pray for all creation and this world God has made: for the effects of climate change, for the communities that are ravaged by famine, drought and conflicts, for oases to flourish in deserts and deserted places. Grant us compassion and care for our Eden.

Lord in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Bishop Donald Bolt, National Administrative Bishop, the New Testament Church of God, says:

LET us pray for every nation and for their leaders; for those who frame and uphold the law; for those who shape and influence public opinion; that the dignity and flourishing of every person may be upheld.

Let us also pray for the Church and its leaders, that it may be an example for other institutions to do justice and love mercy; for it to demonstrate God's love, welcome and embrace; for it to rediscover justice and walk humbly with God.

Lord in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

The Reverend Dr Hugh Osgood, President, Churches Together in England, and Moderator, the Free Churches Group, says:

LET us pray for Christian Aid and all who work for justice: that they will continually expose the scandal of poverty and inequality; that they will be fearless and courageous partners with the poor; for the conviction to stand and speak with those who seek justice; and for resources to support the hungry and those who thirst.

Let us also pray for ourselves, that our faith may motivate us afresh to dream and to act for justice in our day; to speak courageously and prophetically, to pray without ceasing, and to offer our lives in the service of God's kingdom.

Lord in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

The Sacrist says:

All these, our prayers and praises, let us offer to the Father in the words our Saviour has taught us.

OUR Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

All stand to sing

THE HYMN

during which a collection is taken in aid of Christian Aid



O LORD my God, when I in awesome wonder
consider all the works thy hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,
thy power throughout the universe displayed:
*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,
how great thou art, how great thou art!*
*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,
how great thou art, how great thou art!*

When through the woods and forest glades I wander,
and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;
when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur,
and hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze;

But when I think that God, his Son not sparing,
sent him to die—I scarce can take it in
that on the cross, our burden gladly bearing,
he bled and died to take away our sin;

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation
and take me home—what joy shall fill my heart!
Then shall I bow in humble adoration,
and there proclaim: My God, how great thou art!

How great thou art 262 CP
Swedish folk melody
arranged by Stuart K Hine

Russian hymn
translated by Stuart K Hine (1899–1989)

All remain standing. Noah Reddie reads from the Nave Pulpit

THE THIRD READING

DEAR Lord, I dream of a life where I can be all you have created me to be, where there is no limit to what I can do. Where my ambition is not called silly, where I can contribute to society, and where I can be free to love and serve you.

I dream of a community, where justice is practised, where human rights are observed, where racism does not exist, where leaders are honest and able, and where politicians are willing to listen.

I dream of a country, where girls and boys will have equal opportunity, not because of where they live or who their parents are, where it is safe to play and go to school, where knives, guns, and muggings do not ruin lives, and where hope is present and fear is gone.

I dream of a world, where all children experience safety, opportunity, and hope; where they are proud to be alive and where justice never fails.

adapted from Clementine Naita

All remain standing. The Dean leads

THE ACT OF COMMITMENT

Will you keep the dream alive, of justice for all peoples, without prejudice or favour?

We will.

Will you pray for those who frame and uphold our laws?

We will.

Will you rediscover justice in your families, communities and in the life of this nation?

We will.

The Dean pronounces

THE BLESSING

GO forth into the world in peace; be of good courage; hold fast that which is good; render to no-one evil for evil; strengthen the faint-hearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honour all people; love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be amongst you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Go in the peace of Christ. Alleluia, alleluia!

Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia!

All remain standing as the procession moves to the west end of the Abbey Church.

Music after the service:

Fugue in E flat BWV 552ii

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

The bells of the Abbey Church are rung

Members of the Congregation are kindly requested to remain in their seats until directed to move by the Stewards

As you leave this afternoon, please take time outside the Great West Door to view the statue of Dr Martin Luther King Jr, situated in one of the niches surmounting the Door. It is one of a group of statues of martyrs of the twentieth century, commissioned by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster and unveiled in 1998.

THE BIBLE AND JUSTICE

The Christian scriptures are not silent or ambiguous in their call for justice. At times they can make uncomfortable reading: “When justice is done, it is a joy to the righteous but terror to evildoers” (Proverbs 21: 15). The prophet of old declared, “But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream (Amos 5: 24) and for a time King “David administered justice and equity to all his people” (2 Samuel 8: 16).

But what kind of justice is being spoken of?

When we hear of ‘justice’, instinctively we may think of that administered by law makers and the legal courts—but this is not the predominant biblical understanding. Instead, the scriptural theme of justice largely relates to our behaviour towards one another. It also represents a call to stand up straight and be in alignment, as in a military parade, with God as the “marker” or reference point, and model of just behaviour by his very nature.

Biblical justice also invokes a proactive and positive call for God’s people to effect his justice in the world—to bravely step past those notions we may have of fairness, of our superior worth and the undeserving other. It detests partiality and corruption, and calls for acts of charity towards the vulnerable and those on the margins of communities and societies.

The prophet Micah is unequivocal: The Lord requires us to “act justly, love mercy and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6: 8). Acting justly is linked to both compassion for others and to a developing relationship with God—it is about mutual interdependence and mutual flourishing. As Dr Martin Luther King Jr noted in his Nobel Lecture in 1964: “the rich must not ignore the poor because both rich and poor are tied in a single garment of destiny”.

In Jesus, we have a perfect example, as one called to be, and bring good news to the poor (Luke 4: 16–21). By acts of compassion, and direct challenges to the institutions of power, he demonstrated that we are all the more poorer when we are neglectful of all human flourishing.

In our lifetime, we too can “learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for those who parent alone” (Isaiah 1: 17).

Andrew Campbell, Regional and Church Engagement Project Officer, Christian Aid

CONTINUING THE JUSTICE JOURNEY WITH CHRISTIAN AID

Thank you for attending the service today, for your generous gifts and your support for the world's poorest communities and those who suffer from inequality and injustices. We look forward to welcoming those of you attending the Symposium to St Margaret's Church this afternoon where we will be exploring what justice looks like more fully.

Christian Aid works in some of the world's poorest communities in almost 40 countries at any one time. We act where there is greatest need, for and with those of all faiths and none, helping people to live a full life, free from poverty. We provide urgent, practical and effective assistance in tackling the effects of poverty as well as campaigning against its root causes.

We seek to follow the teaching of Jesus Christ, who commanded his followers, "you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, ... and your neighbour as yourself" (Matthew 22: 37–38). In so doing we are inspired to work for a better world.

We are an agency of the church and receive our mandate from 41 sponsoring denominations. Our essential purpose is to expose the scandal of poverty, to help in practical ways to root it out from the world, and to challenge and change structures and systems that favour the rich and powerful over the poor and marginalised.

Our core belief is that the world can and must be changed so that poverty is ended: this is what we stand for. Everything we do is about ending poverty and injustice: swiftly, effectively, sustainably.

We are a member of the ACT Alliance, a global coalition of more than 130 churches and church-related organisations that work together in humanitarian assistance, advocacy and development.

We would love you to stand with us in this endeavour. To find out how you can get involved, or to give us feedback and follow up on anything you have heard today, please contact us on 0207 5232321 or email london@Christian-aid.org

You can follow us on Twitter @CAID_newswire or visit our website www.christianaid.org.uk for more information.

Amanda Khozi Mukwashi, Chief Executive, Christian Aid