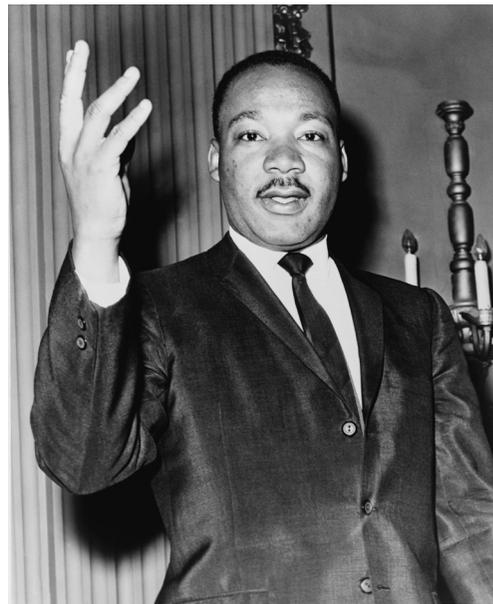


Martin Luther King Jr., renewer of society, martyr

- 1929 born in Atlanta, Georgia (January 15)
- 1953 began married life, during which he fathered four children
- 1954 became pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama
- 1955 became a leader in the African American civil rights movement
- 1963 wrote “Letter from Birmingham Jail” and delivered “I Have a Dream” speech
- 1964 received Nobel Peace Prize
- 1968 assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee (April 4)

A Baptist minister, Martin Luther King Jr. led the African American civil rights movement out of his passion for the poor and the disenfranchised, his dedication to nonviolence, and his devotion to Jesus. He modeled Christian nonviolent disobedience to unjust laws. His contributions to American society were recognized when in 1986 his birthday, January 15, was designated a federal holiday, now celebrated on the third Monday in January. An alternate date for his commemoration is his death day, April 4.



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Many photographs of King show him dressed in a dark suit and delivering a speech.



God is at work in his universe. He is not outside the world looking on with a sort of cold indifference. Here on all the roads of life, he is striving in our striving. Like an ever-loving Father, he is working through history for the salvation of his children. As we struggle to defeat the forces of evil, the God of the universe struggles with us. Evil dies on the seashore, not merely because of man’s endless struggle against it, but because of God’s power to defeat it.

—Martin Luther King Jr.

ON JANUARY 15

Sing “Let streams of living justice” (ELW 710), a hymn that cites many societal ills and prays for Christians to join together to bring about justice in the land.

Praise God for all Christians who have courageously led the march towards racial equality.

Pray for renewers of society

Holy and righteous God, you created us in your image. Grant us grace to contend fearlessly against evil and to make no peace with oppression. Help us, like your servant Martin Luther King Jr., to work for justice among people and nations, to the glory of your name, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen. (ELW, p. 60)

Pray for the Baptist churches.

Pray for an end to unjust laws.