



Pastor's e-Note

Morristown United Methodist Church (4/4/2018)

Dear Good Friends,

I greet you all with the Easter Joy and Hope! Today marks the 50th anniversary of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination. I share with you the following pastoral letter from our Bishop John Schol:

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Fifty years ago today, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated for his faithful work toward racial justice and reconciliation. Today is a day of remembrance, mourning and recommitment.

Our nation has a varied record on race relations, particularly with African Americans. We have enslaved, tortured, murdered, segregated and harassed African Americans for centuries. As a nation and a church, we have rarely apologized, sought to change systems and attitudes, or addressed racism and the effects it has had on the lives of those who experienced it. Today, we remember the history of inequity and biased treatment of African Americans in our heritage.

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had a vision and inspired a movement for a better America. He sought equality for Black and White trash collectors. He prophesied about an end to war that was killing Asians, Hispanics, Blacks and Whites. He reached across America to understand the difficulties of urban and rural communities. He was for the human race. Today, we mourn his death at the age of 39 and wonder what more might have been accomplished through his leadership.

There has been progress along the way. Here in GNJ, we have more multi-racial and multi-cultural congregations and more cross-cultural appointments than we did 50 years ago and even eight years ago. Our leaders, particularly chairs of agencies and boards are more racially diverse. We are beginning to see more African American congregations growing in ministry and worshipers. We are gathering in our congregations and communities to be as Martin Luther King, Jr. called us to be, the beloved community. Yes, we have made progress. But we still encounter racism in our congregations, in GNJ and in our communities. We can do more to address our segregated public school system and to work toward eliminating the mass incarceration of African Americans and the continued killing of unarmed African Americans by a few police officers. Today, each of us needs to recommit to ending racism, to seeing everyone as our equal and to working for justice for all of God's people.

We all have a story of how we, or someone we know has been hurt, harmed or disadvantaged by a person of another race. What would it look like for each of us to have 100 stories about a positive relationship with a person of another race and begin to tell these stories every day? Let it begin with me and you. As we remember, mourn and recommit, let us continue to live into the dream of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to be the people who work toward ending racism and expanding the God's beloved community. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. followed the teaching and life of Jesus and his legacy lives on in the church and the world. Praise be to God!

**Spread the faith!
Bishop John Schol**

I want to thank Bishop Schol for his words of wisdom and committed leadership for racial justice and reconciliation. Let us give thanks to God for Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King—his life and witness. Let us deepen our commitment to the work of justice, reconciliation and love for all.

God bless you and see you in church.

Pastor Brandon