

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Many of us have been thinking about the upcoming events that will be taking place this week. Tomorrow (Monday, January 18), is Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. As such, there will be events throughout the United States to commemorate the life and work of the Reverend Dr. King. Wednesday, is Inauguration Day.

I have heard about and watched some of the MLK worship services that are available online, and would like to encourage you to watch one or more of them. For example, the Martin Luther King Jr. Bishop's Commemoration Worship Service of the Southeastern ELCA Synod. It can be viewed on the synod's website (elca-ses.org), Facebook page, or on You Tube, today (Sunday) at 3 p.m., or any time thereafter. There is also an MLK service created by our United Methodist brothers and sisters in Christ, that you can watch. It is available on You Tube or on the Wisconsin Conference (wisconsinumc.org) website. The service features music from students of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) and a sermon by UMC Bishop LaTrelle Easterling.

This Wednesday (January 20), is Inauguration Day. Given the unrest and violence that occurred on January 6, 2021, in and around the Capitol building, many of us are uneasy about what might transpire on Wednesday. This is true not only in Washington, D.C., but in Madison, St. Paul, and other state capitols and government building sites around the country.

My sermon for today references the violence and unrest that occurred in and around the Capitol building in D.C. on January 6. In researching the events, I came across the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod's You Tube videos and website. Through these resources--two letters from Bishop Leila Ortiz (enclosed or attached)-- and my sermon, you too will hear about what occurred in an ELCA church on January 6, 2021.

At this time, I invite you to pray for the safety and well-being of our elected government officials, police officers, National Guard military members, and other persons who have been called to serve and protect. I also ask you to pray for clergy, lay leaders, and parishioners of ELCA and other churches in Washington, D.C., and capitol cities throughout the United States. The ELCA has encouraged church leaders in potentially volatile places to hold virtual services. Let us pray that the events of this week will be peaceful and non-violent, just as Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. would have encouraged.

Peace,

Pastor Cathy