

The Fierce Urgency of Now: A Service for Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day January 18, 2026



Bethany Lutheran Church
2515 Madison Ave., Burlington, IA
Phone: (319) 752-3621
www.bethanyburlington.org

*Bethany's Mission Statement: Reaching out in Worship, Fellowship, Learning
and Love - we are God's people.*

We are so glad you chose to worship with us this morning. We hope
everyone
feels welcome as we strive to serve and strengthen each other in faith
toward God and in love toward all. Now, as you wait for the service to begin,
please relax, enjoy the music, and quiet your heart before God.

The Fierce Urgency of Now: A Service for Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day

ELW indicates that hymns or liturgy are taken from Evangelical Lutheran Worship-red hymnal

PRELUDE

Welcome, Birthday/Anniversary Bank
(money given to Bethany's Human Concerns Fund)

We Gather to Acknowledge God's Presence

In our polarized times, let us remember the Christian's call to love God and neighbor as ourselves. The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. faithfully called white Christian churches to stand with people of color in the righteous struggle for peace and justice in all the earth. Today, as much as ever, we are in need of the prophetic voices of God's people, calling for the dismantling of white supremacy and individual, corporate, and institutional racism. Racism is a sin, and today we repent, committing to words and deeds that will uphold our beloved communities.

(Please Stand)

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS with excerpts from *Letter from Birmingham Jail*

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God
and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: On this day, we confess we have not always done our part to ensure that all
of your children are treated with equity and fairness.

C: Lord, have mercy upon us.

P: We confess that we dwell in moderation.

C: Make us more devoted to justice than order.

P: We confess that we prefer negative peace
and the absence of tension.

**C: Make us pursue positive peace
and the presence of justice.**

P: We confess that we strive to set a comfortable timetable
for our siblings' liberation.

**C: Make us seize the fierce urgency of now,
that all may live in freedom.**

P: We confess that our shallow understanding
and lukewarm acceptance of our neighbors' calls for justice
have fallen short of your commandment
to love God and neighbor as ourselves.

**C: Let us arise in the power of the Holy Spirit,
committed to nonviolent, direct action, alongside our
siblings of color, for the sake of Christ. Amen.**

P: Beloveds, hear this good news!

God, who is an extremist for love, forgives us all our sin.
Sent out to love our enemies, let us bless those who curse us,
do good to those who hate us,
and pray for those who spitefully use and persecute us.
In the name of the † one God, triune and eternal, we say,

**C: Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise, so help me God.
Amen!**

1 God is here! As we your peo - ple meet to of - fer
 2 Here are sym - bols to re - mind us of our life - long
 3 Here our chil - dren find a wel - come in the Shep - herd's
 4 Lord of all, of church and king - dom, in an age of

praise and prayer, may we find in full - er mea - sure
 need of grace; here are ta - ble, font, and pul - pit;
 flock and fold; here as bread and wine are tak - en,
 change and doubt, keep us faith - ful to the gos - pel;

what it is in Christ we share. Here, as in the
 here the cross has cen - tral place. Here in hon - es -
 Christ sus - tains us as of old. Here the ser - vants
 help us work your pur - pose out. Here, in this day's

world a - round us, all our var - ied skills and arts
 ty of preach - ing, here in si - lence, as in speech,
 the Ser - vant seek in wor - ship to ex - plore
 ded - i - ca - tion, all we have to give, re - ceive;

wait the com - ing of the Spir - it in - to o - pen minds and hearts.
 here, in new - ness and re - new - al, God the Spir - it comes to each.
 what it means in dai - ly liv - ing to be - lieve and to a - dore.
 we, who can - not live with - out you, we a - dore you! We be - lieve!

GATHERING PRAYER

We gather today to celebrate Jesus, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. Jesus is a light unto the nations. Let us come and see, as we follow him in the pursuit of justice and peace for all people! Amen.

We Listen to God's Word

(Please be seated)

FIRST READING

Isaiah 49:1-7

- ¹ Listen to me, O coastlands;
pay attention, you peoples from far away!
The Lord called me before I was born;
while I was in my mother's womb he named me.
- ² He made my mouth like a sharp sword;
in the shadow of his hand he hid me;
he made me a polished arrow;
in his quiver he hid me away.
- ³ And he said to me, "You are my servant,
Israel, in whom I will be glorified."
- ⁴ But I said, "I have labored in vain;
I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity;
yet surely my cause is with the Lord
and my reward with my God."
- ⁵ And now the Lord says,
who formed me in the womb to be his servant,
to bring Jacob back to him,
and that Israel might be gathered to him,
for I am honored in the sight of the Lord,
and my God has become my strength—
- ⁶ he says,
"It is too light a thing that you should be my servant
to raise up the tribes of Jacob
and to restore the survivors of Israel;
I will give you as a light to the nations,
that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."
- ⁷ Thus says the Lord,
the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One,
to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nations,
the slave of rulers,
"Kings shall see and stand up;
princes, and they shall prostrate themselves,
because of the Lord, who is faithful,
the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you."

L: Word of God, word of life.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM (*read responsively*)

Psalm 40:1-11

P: I waited patiently for the Lord;
he inclined to me and heard my cry.

C: **He drew me up from the desolate pit,
out of the miry bog,
and set my feet upon a rock,
making my steps secure.**

P: He put a new song in my mouth,
a song of praise to our God.
Many will see and fear
and put their trust in the Lord.

C: **Happy are those who make
the Lord their trust,
who do not turn to the proud,
to those who go astray after false gods.**

L: You have multiplied, O Lord my God,
your wondrous deeds and your thoughts toward us;
none can compare with you.
Were I to proclaim and tell of them,
they would be more than can be counted.

C: **Sacrifice and offering you do not desire,
but you have given me an open ear.
Burnt offering and sin offering
you have not required.**

L: Then I said, "Here I am;
in the scroll of the book it is written of me.

C: **I delight to do your will, O my God;
your law is within my heart."**

L: I have told the glad news of deliverance
in the great congregation;
see, I have not restrained my lips,
as you know, O Lord.

C: **I have not hidden your saving help within my heart;
I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation;
I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness
from the great congregation.**

L: Do not, O Lord, withhold
your mercy from me;
let your steadfast love and your faithfulness
keep me safe forever.

(Please be seated)

SECOND READING

1 Corinthians 1:1-9

¹ Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes,

² To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:

³ Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴ I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵ for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind ⁶ just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you ⁷ so that you are not lacking in any gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁸ He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ God is faithful, by whom you were called into the partnership of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

L: Word of God, word of life.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

“Halle, Halle, Hallelujah”

ELW Hymn 172

Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le, hal - le, hal -
- le - lu - jah. Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le -
lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah.

P: The Gospel according to John the 1st chapter.

C: **Glory to you, O Lord**

GOSPEL

John 1:29-42

²⁹The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, “Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰This is he of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.’ ³¹I myself did not know him, but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel.” ³²And John testified, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. ³³I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ ³⁴And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Chosen One.”

³⁵The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, ³⁶and as he watched Jesus walk by he exclaimed, “Look, here is the Lamb of God!” ³⁷The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. ³⁸When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, “What are you looking for?” They said to him, “Rabbi” (which translated means Teacher), “where are you staying?” ³⁹He said to them, “Come and see.” They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o’clock in the afternoon. ⁴⁰One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. ⁴¹He first found his brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated Anointed). ⁴²He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas” (which is translated Peter).

P: The Gospel of our Lord

C: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

(Please be seated)

Sermon

Pastor Misha McFarland-Pollock

(Please Stand)

HYMN OF THE DAY

"I Want Jesus to Walk With Me"

ELW Hymn 325

1 I want Je - sus to walk with me;
2 In my tri - als, Lord, walk with me; walk with
3 When I'm in trou - ble, Lord, walk with me;

me; I want Je - sus to walk with me;
in my tri - als, Lord, walk with me; walk with
when I'm in trou - ble, Lord, walk with me;

me; all a - long my pil - grim jour - ney,
when my heart is al - most break - ing,
when my head is bowed in sor - row,

Lord, I want Je - sus to walk with me.
Lord, I want Je - sus to walk with me. walk with me.
Lord, I want Je - sus to walk with me.

We Respond to God's Word

THE APOSTLES' CREED (*unison*)

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.*
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

(Please be seated)

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH with excerpts from *I Have a Dream*

Following each petition, the assembly responds by singing "Lord, listen to your children praying" (ELW 752).



Lord, lis-ten to your chil-dren pray-ing, Lord, send your Spir-it in this place;

The musical notation consists of two staves: a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The melody is written in a simple, rhythmic style. The bass clef staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes.



Lord, lis-ten to your chil-dren pray-ing, send us love, send us pow'r, send us grace.

The musical notation continues with two staves, maintaining the same key signature and time signature as the first part. The melody and accompaniment are consistent in style.

As we follow Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

God of the dreamer, may the church rise up and live out our baptismal promise to work for justice and peace in all the world. May we be a great beckoning light of hope to all people who have been seared in the flames of withering injustice.

(sing) **Lord, listen to your children praying . . .**

God of the dreamer, help us to seek environmental justice in all the countries of your world. Where people of color have disproportionately borne the brunt of our sinfulness against creation, let us work toward equitable access to safe and healthy neighborhoods for all.

(sing) **Lord, listen to your children praying . . .**

God of the dreamer, bless every nation with leaders after your own heart. Cause us to notice those who are still languishing in the corners of our society, or who are exiles in their own lands.

(sing) **Lord, listen to your children praying . . .**

God of the dreamer, we know that all humans are impacted by the grievous sin of racism. May we each enjoy the riches of freedom and the security of justice. Kindle within us the fierce urgency of now, that we may walk together upon the sunlit paths of racial justice.

(sing) **Lord, listen to your children praying . . .**

God of the dreamer, we give thanks for the life and legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. We pray for all who grieve the untimely death of a loved one due to murder, police brutality, gun violence, or any other miscarriage of justice. May we cling tenaciously to the promise that in the kingdom of God, every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, the crooked places will be made straight, the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

(sing) **Lord, listen to your children praying . . .**

All these things we ask in full confidence, as we cry out prophetically:
Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last! Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: **And also with you.**

We Share in the Holy Meal

(Please Stand)

DIALOGUE

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: **We lift them to the Lord.**

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

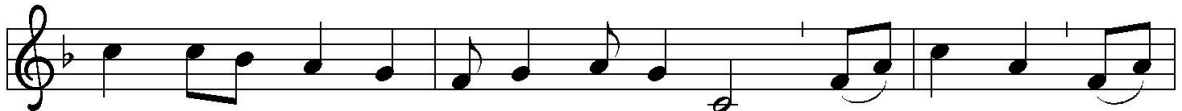
C: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

P: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy....

...we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,



heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -



san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who



comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

***Please turn to page 67 in the front of your hymnal for the Thanksgiving At The Table**

P: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

THE LORD'S PRAYER (*unison*)

**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,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! Come to the table; taste and see.

(Please be seated)

LAMB OF GOD

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace.

DISTRIBUTION BY INDIVIDUAL GLASSES

(Gluten-free wafers are available upon request.)

All who believe in the real presence of Christ in the sacrament are invited to commune. Children who do not commune are welcome to come for a blessing. You will be given a wafer. The glasses of dark liquid are wine; the middle ring is juice. There is a bowl of water if you would like to remember your baptism.

DISTRIBUTION HYMN

“God of Grace and God of Glory”

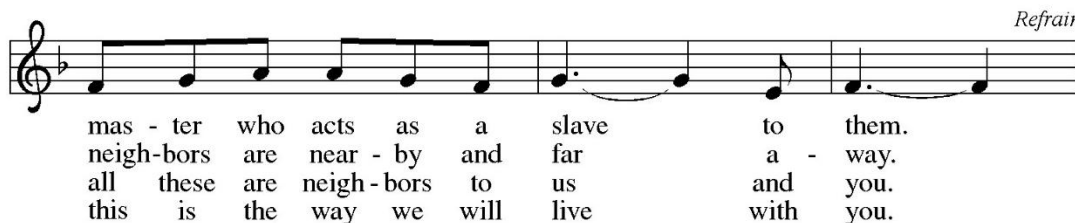
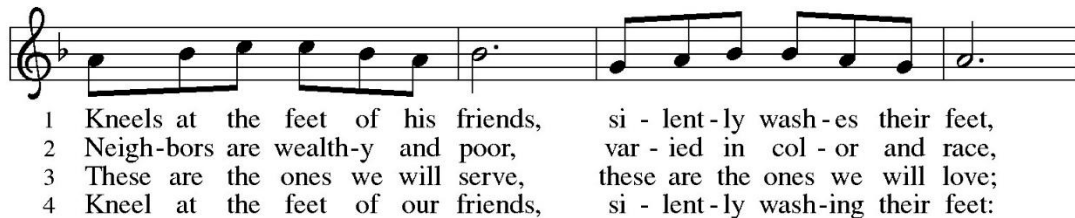
ELW Hymn 705

1 God of grace and God of glo - ry, on your peo - ple
2 Lo! The hosts of e - vil round us scorn the Christ, as -
3 Cure your chil - dren's war - ring mad - ness; bend our pride to
4 Save us from weak res - ig - na - tion to the e - vils

pour your pow'r; crown your an - cient chur - ch's sto - ry;
sail his ways! From the fears that long have bound us
your con - trol; shame our wan - ton, self - ish glad - ness,
we de - plore; let the gift of your sal - va - tion

bring its bud to glo - rious flow'r. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age
free our hearts to faith and praise. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age
rich in things and poor in soul. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,
be our glo - ry ev - er - more. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,

for the fac - ing of this hour, for the fac - ing of this hour.
for the liv - ing of these days, for the liv - ing of these days.
lest we miss your king - dom's goal, lest we miss your king - dom's goal.
serv - ing you whom we a - dore, serv - ing you whom we a - dore.



(Please Stand)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P: Radiant God, we have seen your glory in the face of Jesus Christ. In the sacrament of his body and blood you have drawn us to your heart. Send us from this table with delight, that our lives may reflect the beauty of your love, and bear witness to all we have seen and heard, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSING with excerpts from *I Have Been to the Mountaintop*

P: May the † triune God enable us to work tirelessly,
make sacrifices, and never give up until all people are free.
As we hear the words of God's prophet:
Rise up with greater readiness.
Stand with greater determination.
Move on in these powerful days.
And do God's will,
trusting that together we will get to the promised land!
And all God's people say,

C: Amen!

1 God be with you till we meet a-gain; by good coun-sels guide, up - hold you,
 2 God be with you till we meet a-gain; ho - ly wings se - cure - ly hide you,
 3 God be with you till we meet a-gain; when life's per - ils thick con-found you,

with a shep-herd's care en - fold you;
 dai - ly man - na still pro - vide you; God be with you till we meet a - gain.
 put un - fail - ing arms a - round you;

Refrain

Till we meet, till we meet, till we
 till we meet, till we meet a - gain,

meet at Je - sus' feet; till we meet, till we
 till we meet, till we meet, till we

meet, God be with you till we meet a - gain.
 meet a - gain,

DISMISSAL

P: Go in peace to love and serve.

C: **Thanks be to God!**

POSTLUDE

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WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

Lector: Todd Chelf
Usher: Susan Swanson
Communion: Mark Rosenberg; Rachel Lindeen
Greeters: Sharon Martindale
Missionary Support: Open - New Sign-up sheet is up! Please stop on Sunday and choose your special date!
Altar Flowers: Bill Mundt - In Memory of Shirley Mundt
New Sign-up is up! Please stop on Sunday and choose your special date!
Remember in prayer: Eleonore Benninghoven; Genieve Hingst; Barb West

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*A Cry Room for infants is available up the stairs and to the right.  
There are Kids Celebrate children's bulletins available for youngsters  
who'd like to have their own reference to the lessons for this week.  
Ask our usher for help.*

*Please join us for coffee and donuts in the fellowship  
hall following the worship service. We would like to  
get to know you and offer our friendship.*

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ACTIVITIES FOR THE WEEK

Today: **The Fierce Urgency of Now:**
A Service for Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
9:00 a.m. Worship w/ Holy Communion
10:55 a.m. Lutheran Church of Hope Service

Wednesday: 6:30 p.m. Council Mtg.

Thursday: 9:30 a.m. Bible Study @ Messiah

Next Sunday: **Third Sunday after Epiphany-Joint Service @ Bethany**
9:00 a.m. Worship w/ Holy Communion
10:15 a.m. Annual Congregational Meeting
10:55 a.m. Lutheran Church of Hope Service

ANNUAL ALL-CONGREGATIONAL MEETING AND JOINT SERVICE

The Annual All-Congregational Meeting will take place on Sunday, January 25, immediately following worship service. This Sunday will also be a joint service with Messiah at Bethany.

ANNUAL REPORTS

Annual Reports will be out and available to pick up for your review for the Annual Meeting next Sunday, January 25!

JOINT SERVICES

As previously stated, we will have a joint service w/Messiah on Sunday, January 25 at Bethany. Also, we will be having a joint service at Messiah on Sunday, February 1!

COMMUNITY MARTIN LUTHER KING JR SERVICE

A Community Martin Luther King Jr. Service will be taking place on Monday, January 19 at The Loft in downtown Burlington at 5:00pm! Our wonderful Pastor Misha will be preaching at this service!

YOUTH LED CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS SERVICE

The Confirmation students will be leading a Confession & Forgiveness Service on Tuesday, January 27 at 7:00pm at Messiah! Please come hear what these kids have been working on!

FLOWER CHART

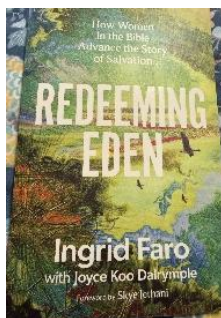
The new flower chart for this year is up and available! Lots of dates are still available! Please stop in the hallway on Sunday morning and choose your special date!

JANUARY OUTREACH DONATIONS

Food Pantry Donations for January will be: Items for easy meals (i.e. mac & cheese, etc..)

FEBRUARY PASTOR'S BOOK CLUB

Our February book club gathering will be Tuesday, February 10 @ 5:00 p.m., here at Bethany. All are invited to join us! For this month, we will be reading "Redeeming Eden" by Ingrid Faro!



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www.bethanyburlington.org

Office Hours

Monday-Wednesday-Friday - 9:00am-1:00pm
Tuesday & Thursday - 1:30pm-4:30pm

Pastor Misha's Office Hours

Bethany: Monday & Tuesday
Messiah: Wednesday & Thursday

**** Pastor Misha's hours vary in the office from week to week as she may be out of office on visits or other Pastor duties. Please call or text her to make an appointment or to see if she is in the office. ****

***Pastor Misha's contact info: 412-628-6382;
damisha.mcfarlandpollock@gmail.com***

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Our Staff

Rev. Misha McFarland-Pollock
Cory Byrne
Wendy Bell
Michelle Huppenbauer
Pam Crable

Pastor
Organist/Choir Director
Office Administrator
Financial Secretary
Custodian