



E Pluribus Unum...
(Out of many, one...)
Understanding and Healing
Long Island's Racial Divisions

"It is not possible to be in favor of justice for some people and not in favor of justice for all people."

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

**REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.
CELEBRATION AND CONCERT**

**A VIRTUAL PROGRAM SPONSORED BY
ABRAHAM'S TABLE OF LONG ISLAND**

Sunday, January 17, 2021 4:00-5:30PM

Abraham's Table of Long Island

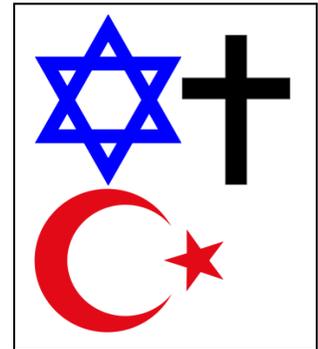
Islamic Association of Long Island; Islamic Center of Long Island; Long Island Council of Churches; Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal RC Church, Wyandanch; Suffolk Board of Rabbis; Suffolk Y Jewish Community Center; St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, Smithtown; St. Thomas More RC Church, Hauppauge; Temple Beth El, Huntington; Turkish Cultural Center Long Island



*“Our lives begin to end
the day we remain silent
about things that matter.”*

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

This 2021 virtual MLK interfaith service is focused on the national reckoning about America's "original sin" of racism that occurred following the murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020. May our prayers today unite us to understand and heal the deep racial divisions here on Long Island and in our Nation.



**Welcome and Centering Reflection:
A Call to Solidarity in This Time of COVID
A Statement by Pope Francis**

Dr. Richard Koubek, Chair, Abraham's Table of Long Island



"To come out of this crisis better, we have to recover the knowledge that as a people we have a shared destination. The pandemic has reminded us that no one is saved alone. What ties us to one another is what we commonly call solidarity. Solidarity is more than acts of generosity, important as they are; it is the call to embrace the reality that we are bound by bonds of reciprocity. On this solid foundation we can build a better, different, human future."

(Pope Francis Op Ed, *The New York Times*, Thanksgiving Day, November 26, 2020)

Anthem: *Somos el Mundo (We Are the World)*, Spanish Children's Choir, Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Church, Wyandanch, Deysi Hare, Director

***The Azaan - Muslim Call to Prayer*: Mustafu Akkaya, Turkish Cultural Center, Long Island**

Allah u Akbar, Allah u Akbar
-- Allah is most Great, Allah is most Great

Ash-hadu an-la Ilaha ill Allah - Ash-hadu an-la Ilaha ill Allah
-- I bear witness that there is no divinity but Allah

Ash-hadu an-na Muhammadan Rasulullah - Ash-hadu an-na Muhammadan Rasulullah
-- I bear witness that Muhammad is Allah's Messenger

-- Hasten to real success, Hasten to real success
-- Hayya la-l-faleah - Hayya la-l-faleah --- Hasten to the prayer, Hasten to the prayer

Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar
-- Allah is most Great, Allah is most Great

La Ilaha ill Allah

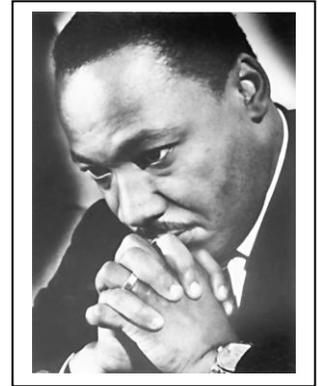
-- *There is no divinity but Allah*

-- *There is no divinity but Allah*

Opening Prayer

Leader: Bat-Sheva Slavin, Suffolk Y Jewish Community Center

Eternal source of love and justice, we gather here from many places, different traditions, and diverse experiences. We give thanks for the richness of our diversity and the treasured uniqueness of each one here. We also gather here, brought together by what unites us and makes us one — concern for our brothers and sisters in need who bear too many burdens.



ALL:

**The burden of too little food
Too much poverty
Too little education
Too much violence
Too little hope
Too much despair**

Leader: We gather here to ease the burdens and lift up the next generation.

ALL:

**To ease hunger and improve nutrition
To increase family incomes and strengthen supports
To raise reading levels and improve schools
To raise children's hopes
And to lift their spirits**



Long Island Litany of Lament and Hope for Racial Justice

*People's responses (ALL) are the words of Dr.
Martin Luther King, Jr.*

(Sources of Long Island racism statistics: *Newsday*, October 20, 2020, "Traffic Stop Data Shows Disparities" by David Schwartz and Matt Clark; WSHU, June 8, 2020 "Black Lives Matter Protests Draw Supporters From Across Long Island," by J.D. Allen & Desiree D'Iorio; *Newsday*, April 14, 2020, "Blacks make up disproportionate share of Long Island coronavirus death statistics" by Olivia Winslow; *Newsday*, November, 17, 2019, "Long Island Divided" by Ann Choi, Keith Herbert, Olivia Winslow; Erase Racism, "A Decade of Change: Growing Segregation on Long Island"; The Urban League, "The State of Black Long Island Equity," 2017)

Reader: Fr. William Brisotti, Pastor Emeritus, Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Church, Wyandanch

An October 2020 *Newsday* study of police traffic stops found that “the Suffolk County Police Department subjected Black and Hispanic drivers to tougher enforcement actions than white motorists...stopping and then searching the minority drivers and their vehicles at higher rates than experienced by whites,” Blacks stopped more than four times and Hispanics twice as often as whites **[Pause]** What did Dr. King tell us?



ALL: “It is regrettable but true that in almost any session of our city, county and state courts one can see all of the injustices which the prophet Amos so bitterly decried and which he predicted would mean the ruin of [the Israelites’] once glorious civilization.”

Reader: Dr. Richard Koubek, Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Church, Wyandanch



On June 8th, NPR reported that peaceful Black Lives Matter protests continued in communities across Long Island over the weekend. Organized demonstrations called for unity against racial disparity in police violence. A caravan of over 1,000 demonstrators, led by the Long Island NAACP, gathered at the administrative buildings in Suffolk County. “This is about justice,” said Tracey Edwards, the group’s regional director. “You can be 100% pro-police and 100% against police misconduct.” ... **[Pause]** What did Dr. King tell us?

ALL: “History will have to record that the greatest tragedy of this period of social transition was not the strident clamor of the bad people, but the appalling silence of the good people.... A riot is the language of the unheard”.

Reader: David Knishkowy, Abraham’s Table of Long Island

In April, 2020, *Newsday* reported that Long Island's Black population made up a disproportionate share of coronavirus deaths. The percentage of Nassau County residents who died from the virus who were Black was 17%, which was higher than their share of the population — 11.7% . In Suffolk County, Black residents' share of coronavirus deaths was 11%, higher than their nearly 8% share of the county's population. ... [Pause] What did Dr. King tell us?



Long Islanders awaiting COVID tests

ALL: “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.... A right delayed is a right denied.”

Reader David Pinkowitz, Temple Beth Torah, Melville

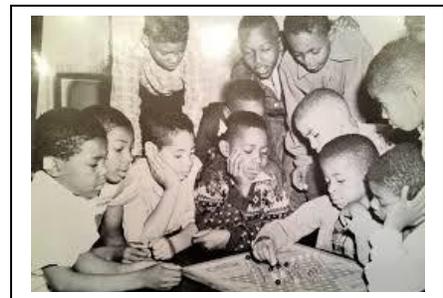


In 2019, *Newsday* reported that a three-year probe strongly indicated that house hunting in Long Island, one of the nation’s ten most segregated suburbs, poses substantial risks of discrimination, with Black buyers facing discrimination almost half the time they enlist brokers. Blacks and Hispanics were very often steered away from buying or renting homes in white communities... [Pause] What did Dr. King tell us?

ALL: “Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous struggle. And so, we must straighten our backs and work for our freedom.”

Reader: Alice Fossner, Dix Hills Jewish Center

A ten-year study of school segregation by Erase Racism found Long Island is heading in the wrong direction. At the same time our region is becoming more diverse, our schools are becoming more segregated. Black students continue to attend school districts that are extremely segregated, with little exposure to white students, while Latino and Asian students are increasingly attending more racially segregated school districts ... [Pause] What did Dr. King tell us?



ALL: “We do have a ... history of disappointment and broken promises.... We see a gulf between the promise and fulfillment. We don’t want to fool people any longer... We need a timetable, something very concrete.”

Reader: Kaitlyn Pawlukoje, Society of Friends

Discrimination in housing, education, health care and jobs has caused a serious gap between White and Black wealth on Long Island. For example, Black Long Islanders with a college education are paid \$8 an hour less than White college graduates. Blacks, who are about 11 percent of Long Island’s population, make up 26 percent of Long Island’s poor. An Urban League study found that if the Black-White wealth gap were closed, \$24 billion dollars could be added to the Long Island economy ... **[Pause]** What did Dr. King tell us?



ALL: “If I wish to compose or write or pray or preach well, I must be angry. Then all the blood in my veins is stirred, and my understanding is sharpened.”

ALL: “When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note in so far as her citizens of color are concerned.”

Anthem: *The Whole Entire World is a Very Narrow Bridge*, The Ari Notes Choir - Solomon Schechter Day School Long Island, Musical Director - Juliana Lencovski Stern.

Jewish, Christian and Muslim Reflections on Racism

Dr. King’s Vision of Love in an Unjust World - Agape

Reader: Dr, Raymond Russo, Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Church, Wyandanch

“Returning hate for hate multiplies hate, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that.... In speaking of love, we are not referring to some sentimental emotion. It would be nonsense to urge men to love their oppressors in an affectionate sense When we speak of loving those who oppose us ... we speak of a love which is expressed in the



Greek word Agape. Agape means nothing sentimental or basically affectionate; it means understanding, redeeming goodwill for all people, an overflowing love which seeks nothing in return.... Agape is the love of God operating in the human heart. The greatness of it is that you love every person, not for your sake but for his or her sake. And you love every person because God loves each person. Agape is a willingness to go to any length to restore community... And the only testing point for you to know whether you have real genuine love is that you love your enemy.... Therefore, if I respond to hate with a reciprocal hate I do nothing but intensify the cleavages of a broken community.... Within the best of us, there is some evil, and within the worst of us, there is some good. ... Discover the element of good in your enemy. And as you seek to hate him or her, find the center of goodness and place your attention there and you will take a new attitude.... Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend.... We must discover ... the redemptive power of love. And when we discover that we will be able to make of this old world a new world. We will be able to make people better. Love is the only way.”

(Composite statements by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr on the power of agapeic love.)

Jewish Reading: Steven Steinig, Dix Hills Jewish Center

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel



“Few of us seem to realize how insidious, how radical, how universal an evil racism is. Few of us realize that racism is man’s gravest threat to man ... There is an evil which most of us condone and are even guilty of: *indifference to evil*. We remain neutral, impartial, and not easily moved by the wrongs done unto other people. Indifference to evil is more insidious than evil itself; it is more universal, more contagious, more dangerous...Equality as a religious commandment goes beyond the principle of equality before the law. Equality as a religious commandment means *personal involvement*, fellowship, mutual reverence and concern...There are many

motivations by which prejudice is nourished, many reasons for despising the poor, for keeping the underprivileged in his place. However, the Bible insists that the interests of the poor have precedence over the interests of the rich. The prophets have a bias in favor of the poor...What we need is a total mobilization of heart, intelligence, and wealth for the purpose of love and justice. God is in search of man, waiting, hoping for man to do His will...What we need is the involvement of every one of us as individuals. What we need is *restlessness*, a constant awareness of the monstrosity of injustice...In the words of Pope John XXIII, when opening the Twenty first Ecumenical Council, “divine Providence is leading us to a new order of human relations.” History has made us all neighbors. The age of moral mediocrity and complacency has run out. This is a time for radical commitment, for radical action.”

(Excerpted speech by Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, prominent Jewish theologian and philosopher, delivered at the National Conference on Religion and Race, 1963)

**Christian Reading: Deacon Jean Dougherty, St. Andrew's
Lutheran Church, Smithtown**

Rev. Dr. William Barber



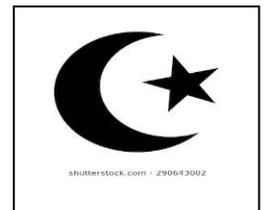
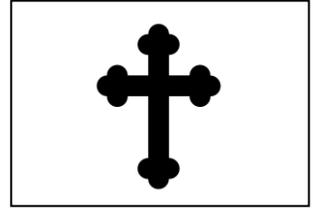
“We must tell the truth. The hardness of heart that we still see rejecting some people is not just the words of racism, but the works of racism. In fact, if you are not careful, you'll get caught up in the words of racism and miss the works of racism because some people who engage in the works of racism never use the words. But if we are honest about this past, we can see these same patterns repeating themselves in the present. I want you to

know today with no doubt in my mind that I believe ... when the hands that once picked cotton join Latino hands and progressive white hands, faith hands, and labor hands, Asian hands and Native American hands, poor hands and wealthy hands with a conscience, gay hands, straight hands and trans hands – when all those hands link up together, we can become an instrument of redemption and reconstruction.... Dr. King and a multicolored quilt of God's children invoked America's better angels, confident that the keys to our predicaments lay in the hearts of our people. None of our diverse faith traditions celebrate denying food to hungry children or devoting trillions to war and pennies to want. No moral vision embraces denial of health care to our fellow human beings. ... Our victories in the timeless cause of love and democracy have always required the devotion of thousands of ordinary people, local communities, grassroots groups, prophetic [congregations], and organizing traditions. The time has come to stand together and make a national call for a moral revival. “

(“We Are Called to Be a Movement” delivered June 3, 2018 at the National Cathedral Washington D.C. by Rev. Dr. William Barber, Co-Chair of The Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival)

Anthem: Soloist and Muslim Song TBD
Muslim Reading: Reader TBD

Selection on racism TBD by Mehmet



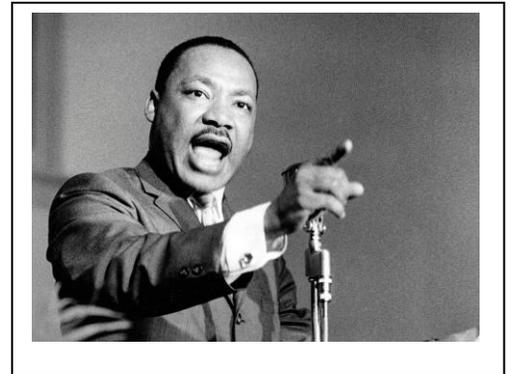
**Anthem: *On Eagle's Wings* (based on Psalm 91), Kristen Keller, Cantor,
Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Church, Wyandanch**

**Prayer by the People for the Courage to Act:
“We Cannot Merely Pray to You”**

(Adapted from Rabbi Jack Riemer)

David Pinkowitz, Temple Beth Torah, Melville

Dr. King told us: “Courage is an inner resolution to go forward despite obstacles.... There comes a time when we must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but one must take it because it is right.”



Leader: Ceyda Iyimaya, Turkish Cultural Center of Long Island

And let us now together recall Dr. King’s reminder to America and the world that we can build a more just Long Island because we have the resources but we must have the will ... and the courage to do so.

Leader: Fr. Bill Brisotti, Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Church, Wyandanch

We cannot merely pray to You, O God, to end war
For we know that You have made the world in a way
So that all of us must find our own path to peace,
Within ourselves and with our neighbors.



**ALL: “We cannot merely pray to You, O God, to
end hunger;
For you have already given us the resources
With which to feed the
entire world, if we would
only use them wisely.”**

Leader: Sadri Altinok, Turkish Cultural Center of Long Island

We cannot merely pray to You, O God, to root out our prejudices;
For You have already given us eyes
With which to see the good in all people,
If we would only use them rightly.

**ALL: “We cannot merely pray to You, O God, to end
despair; For You have already given us the power to
clear away slums and to give hope, if we would only
use our power justly.”**



**Leader: Mete Moran, Turkish Cultural Center
of Long Island**

We cannot merely pray to You, O God, to end
disease or hunger;
For You have already given us great minds
With which to search out cures and food and
healing,
If we could only use them constructively.



COVID food-pantry line, 2020

**ALL: “Therefore, we pray to You instead, O
God,
For strength, determination, and courage
To DO instead of just to pray,
To BECOME instead of merely to wish.”**

**Anthem: *Here I am Lord* (based on Isaiah 6), Kristen Keller, Cantor, Our Lady of
the Miraculous Medal Church, Wyandanch**



Final Charge: Tracey Edwards, Long Island Regional Director, NAACP

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once urged his listeners:

“Let us go out with divine dissatisfaction...

Let us be dissatisfied until the tragic walls that separate the outer city of wealth and comfort and the inner city of poverty and despair shall be crushed by the battering rams of the forces of justice.

“Let us go out this evening with that same divine dissatisfaction until that time when no child or adult lives in poverty and all people have justice; until no child—no child—feels the cruel slap of hunger, poverty, racism or prejudice, and every person is recognized and cherished as a beloved child of God.”

Commitment and Call to Action: Tracey Edwards

Concluding Remarks: Dr. Richard Koubek

ALL: *We Shall Overcome*, The Ari Notes Choir - Solomon Schechter Day School Long Island, Musical Director - Juliana Lencovski Stern. (3 times)

We shall overcome
We shall overcome
We shall overcome some day
Oh, deep in my heart
I do believe
We shall overcome some day.



**Rosa Parks,
Montgomery Alabama, 1955**

Acknowledgements

Special Thanks to the Abraham's Table Steering Committee

- **Richard Koubek, PhD, Chair, Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Church, Wyandanch**
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- **Alice Fossner, Dix Hills Jewish Center**
- **Mary Friedman, St. Thomas More RC Church, Hauppauge**
- **David Knishkowy, Abraham's Table of Long Island**
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- **Steven Steinig, Dix Hills Jewish Center**

**A copy of this MLK 2021 program can be downloaded at the
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www.abrahamstableli.org**