



Greetings Friend,

Fifty years ago, this April, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke out against the War In Vietnam, a risky and polarizing move that was panned by many, both inside and outside the faith community. In that speech, he named the war as representing, “a far deeper malady within the American spirit” and called for this country to undertake a “true revolution of values,” one that would heal us as a nation and as a people.

Today, more than ever, days after we’ve dropped Tomahawk missiles on Syria, it’s clear to us, that we have yet to undergo this “revolution of values,” Dr. King called for. In fact, for too long, we as clergy, have remained resolutely neutral about addressing the greater wrongs before us—racism, xenophobia, classism, sexism and militarism.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu says, “If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality.”

We are standing at a crossroads as clergy, and as Americans. Daily, we are confronted with xenophobia, bigotry, and a rejection of the stranger. What role, will each of us play, in addressing these great wrongs today? How can we submit, within ourselves, individually and as leaders of our congregations, to God’s call to love one another? How are we willing to take up the mantle of Dr. King as healthcare, human rights, civil rights and our very foundation as a country that welcomes “...the huddled masses yearning to breathe free...” come under attack?

Dr. King predicted that without this “revolution of values,” nothing much would change, and we know this to be true. Our justice system is failing our Black and Brown brothers and sisters through mass incarceration, police brutality and the school to prison pipeline; our education system is short-changing poor and rural children and families, leaving them without the skills to contribute to our communities; law-abiding immigrants are being targeted and deported by ICE, often pushing American-born children into foster care; Muslims and Jews are being targeted by bigots burning down mosques and defiling cemeteries. And so far, 2017 has been a confluence of “march[es] without end”.

This challenging moment calls for us to begin a dialogue that can lift us up and light the way towards the highest callings of our faiths—to **love** one another, to bear **witness** to our challenges and to create a space for vulnerability that allows us to move beyond our individual boundaries and silos to **create community** with one another.

[CLICK HERE to JOIN US on Thursday, May 4th](#) to begin building the kind of deep relationships with one another these times require:

Empire or Resistance: A Clergy-Only Breakfast
presented by POWER Northeast & PICO National Network
May 4, 2017 8:30AM - 11AM
Keneseth Israel | 2227 W Chew Street | Allentown, PA 18104

Together, we will explore:

- What keeps us up at night?
- What’s at stake?

- How our various faith traditions call us to show up for the least of us?
- How to have difficult conversations with parishioners on what's going on in our country?
- How to begin to make our places of worship relevant again to those not in our pews?

"Confronted by [Dr. King's] fierce urgency of now," we believe this is the moment for clergy to stand together and begin the fight for King's revolution of values. By building Beloved Community together, we can begin to shift the character of the Lehigh Valley, from one where folks sit in the pews on days of worship, but forget the teachings of our faiths when confronted with issues that impact the very health and safety of our communities.

RSVP to Carrie.Santoro@powernortheast.org for the opportunity to wrestle with these critical questions and more. We must put our money where our mouths have been—valuing life over death, love over hate, peace above all else.

Looking forward to building the path to Beloved Community with you.

Sincerely,

Jude-Laure Denis
Executive Director
POWER Northeast

Rabbi Seth Phillips
Congregation
Keneseth Israel

Rabbi Melissa Simon
Hillel Director
Muhlenberg College

Rev. Dr. Gregory J. Edwards
Resurrected Life Community Church
Chair, POWER Northeast