

First, we can pray. We can pray for God's peace that passes understanding and guards our souls from fear and despair. We can pray for God's peace to surround our nation. We can pray for the safety of our elected officials and all who will be a part of keeping order over these days. We can pray for wisdom and that the "higher angels" of our human nature will prevail along with a remembrance of the ideals we embrace as a nation. Yes, the church is calling us to pray for our nation. The Presiding Bishop offers prayers you may want to use found here <https://episcopalchurch.org/posts/publicaffairs/epiphany-2021-call-prayer-our-nation-presiding-bishop-curry>

Our Diocese is calling for *Six Days of Prayer* based upon the reading on love from Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians in chapter 13. Remember love is patient and kind and not envious or boastful. Love prevails. You may link here for these prayers <http://www.thediocese.net/news/love-guides-us-six-days-of-prayer/>

And make your prayers more than words THIS SATURDAY, January 16, as we prepare for the Martin Luther King Day Observance on Monday. You may **prepare for this important day in our nation honoring this icon of American Democratic ideals and peace and Episcopal Church "saint" this Saturday in several ways:**

1. Participate in our Contactless Food Drive for the FCS Pantry from 9 a.m. to Noon on Saturday.
2. Come to the Historic Church to pray between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.
3. Stand in silent witness against racial injustice with our brothers and sisters from Falls Church (and organized by our good friends at Falls Church Presbyterian Church) at Noon on Broad Street, again, all on Saturday.

On Martin Luther King Day we have normally hosted the city's King Day Observance here at TFCE. Because of the pandemic this annual service will not take place in the form it has in the past. However, thanks to Associate Rector Matthew Dumont-Machowski and Children and Family Ministries Coordinator Lauren Breeden and many others, we will offer a recorded service of readings, prayers and music for Martin Luther King Day on our U-Tube channel and also linked through our Facebook page. Please find time to join us.

Finally, I am excited to let you know about a resource from The Episcopal Church just developed and to be released on Martin Luther King Day to help us engage in civil conversations with people with whom we disagree. I concur with Bishop Porter Taylor who has recently remarked "we can't continue to live this way." *What we can do* is join in work changing the hearts of people one by one, one neighbor at a time through holy and loving conversations. This campaign, entitled "[From Many, One,](#)" (from our Nation's motto *e pluribus unum*, "out of many, one") promotes a spiritual framework for us to engage in tough conversations with family, friends, and neighbors. To find out more, line here <https://www.episcopalnewsservice.org/2021/01/11/episcopal-churchs-from-many-one-aims-to-heal-americas-deep-divisions-one-conversation-at-a-time/>

Episcopalians are encouraged to invite others to join them in “conversations across difference” guided by four questions: Who do you love? What have you lost? Where does it hurt? And what do you dream?

These are questions affecting all of us, no matter our political persuasions, and they reject retribution, punishment and “othering.” Presiding Bishop Michael Curry says, “I have never been more profoundly aware of the need for passionate and practical commitment to the way of unselfish, sacrificial love that Jesus taught... Conversations with others across difference is not just a nice thing to do. It is a spiritual practice of love in action.”

The Rev’d Stephanie Spellers, the presiding bishop’s canon for evangelism, reconciliation and stewardship of creation told Episcopal News Service, “Watching the tragic upheaval in our nation’s Capitol, I was struck again by the urgency – and difficulty – of cutting through the vitriol, listening deeply, and growing authentic relationships across difference.”

We can do these things! ‘From Many, One’ won’t solve all the problems in our broken common life, but it’s one concrete way for each of us to practice the ministry of reconciliation that Jesus entrusted us. In hope, we participate in a way forward in the way each of us can, not spinning our wheels in the muck or despairing over matters beyond our control. I am hopeful seeing rise of a greater vision of our common humanity based upon transforming love and reconciliation, and that we are ALL in this together and related as children of one divine creator and sustainer of life. May God bless us everyone.

May we pray: *O God, you have made of one blood all the peoples of the earth, and sent your blessed son to preach peace to those who are far off and to those who are near: Grant that people everywhere may seek after you and find you; bring the nations into your fold; pour out your spirit upon all flesh; and hasten the coming of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.* (BCP p. 100)