



TOWNtalk

NEWSLETTER FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL
VOLUME 19 ISSUE 3 • JANUARY 2023

Reframing the Narrative

CELEBRATING DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated April 4, 1968, in Memphis, TN. The final speech he gave publicly was to striking sanitation workers less than 24 hours before his death. Here is an excerpt from that speech, "I've Been to the Mountaintop."

Strangely enough, I would turn to the Almighty, and say, "If you allow me to live just a few years in the second half of the twentieth century, I will be happy." Now that's a strange statement to make, because the world is all messed up. The nation is sick. Trouble is in the land. Confusion all around. That's a strange statement. But I know, somehow, that only when it is dark enough, can you

see the stars. And I see God working in this period of the twentieth century in a way that men, in some strange way, are responding—something is happening in our world. The masses of people are rising up. And wherever they are assembled today, whether they are in Johannesburg, South Africa; Nairobi, Kenya; Accra, Ghana; New York City; Atlanta, Georgia; Jackson, Mississippi; or Memphis, Tennessee—the cry is always the same—"We want to be free."

And another reason that I'm happy to live in this period is that we have been forced to a point where we're going to have to grapple with the problems that men have been trying



to grapple with through history, but the demands didn't force them to do it. Survival demands that we grapple with them. Men, for years now, have been talking about war and peace. But now, no longer can they just talk about it. It is no longer a choice between violence and nonviolence in this world; it's nonviolence or nonexistence.

That is where we are today. And also in the human rights revolution, if something isn't done, and in a hurry, to bring the colored peoples of the world out of their long years of poverty, their long years of hurt and neglect, the whole world is doomed. Now, I'm just happy that God has allowed me to live in this period, to see what is unfolding. And I'm happy that he's allowed me to be in Memphis.

I can remember, I can remember when Negroes were just going around as Ralph has said, so often, scratching where they didn't itch, and laughing when they were not tickled. But that day is all over. We mean business now, and we are determined to gain our rightful place in

26th Annual Employee Celebration Program

11:30 a.m. Friday, January 13, 2023

Hargraves Gym, 216 N. Roberson St.

- **Welcome:** Lance Norris
- **History of the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday (video):** Town Employees
- **My God is Awesome:** Chapel Hill Mass Choir led by Michelle Sykes-Parker
- **Chapel Hill Poet Laureate:** Chapel Hill Poet Laureate Cortland Gilliam
- **Guest Speaker:** Myles Jackson
- **Guest Speaker:** Kim Norris
- **I Need You to Survive:** Chapel Hill Mass Choir led by Michelle Sykes-Parker
- **Interim Town Manager's Remarks** Chris Blue
- **Lift Every Voice and Sing:** Everyone
- **Adjournment:** Joe McMiller

If you can't make it to Hargraves for the employee celebration, you can watch the event streamed live at youtube.com/@ChapelHillGovstreams

(continued on p. 2)

Honoring the Life and Legacy

Principles of Dr. King

Brotherhood

Dr. King preached and practiced a philosophy of racial integration and would not give ground when faced with the call for separatism. He said: "When I speak of integration, I don't mean a romantic mixing of colors, I mean a real sharing of power and responsibility."

Action

Between 1955 and 1968, Martin Luther King Jr. helped change America. He brought to the world's attention how unfairly blacks were treated. He had the help of millions of Americans, but his strong leadership and unprecedented power of speech gave people the faith and courage to keep working peacefully even when others did not.

Justice

Martin Luther King Jr. made it clear that we all share a human and moral responsibility to join hands as brothers and sisters in the quest for social justice. What turned out to be his final protest march was a gathering of striking garbage workers in Memphis, Tenn.

Non Violence

In 1964, Dr. King became the youngest person ever to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. (He was 35.) King promptly announced that he would turn over all of the money he received along with the award (\$54,123) to help advance the civil rights movement.

Morality

"The time is always right to do what is right."

—Martin Luther King Jr.

Excerpt from "I've Been to the Mountaintop"

(continued from p 1)

God's world.

We aren't engaged in any negative protest and in any negative arguments with anybody. We are saying that we are determined to be men. We are determined to be people. We are saying that we are God's children. And that we don't have to live like we are forced to live.

And that's all this whole thing is about. We aren't engaged in any negative protest and in any negative arguments with anybody. We are saying that we are determined to be men. We are determined to be people. We are saying that we are God's children. And that we don't have to live like we are forced to live.

Now, what does all of this mean in this great period of history? It means that we've got to stay together. We've got to stay together and maintain unity. You know, whenever Pharaoh wanted to prolong the period of slavery in Egypt, he had a favorite, favorite formula for doing it. What was that? He kept the slaves fighting among themselves. But whenever the slaves get together, something happens in Pharaoh's court, and he cannot hold the slaves in slavery. When the slaves get together, that's the beginning of getting out of slavery. Now let us maintain unity.

To read the full transcript of the speech "I've Been to the Mountaintop" at afscme.org/about/history/mlk/mountaintop.



DID YOU KNOW: Dr. King visited Chapel Hill in May 1960. He is pictured here speaking in the Hargraves Community Center.

History of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Martin Luther King Jr. Celebrations from the Past

Want to look back at Martin Luther King Jr Employee Celebrations from years past? Visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nthf2Tkmavl&list=PLotTAw-cDTXJwD8Crz8TeMwwhOKZFYiF9>.

Learn More

The Chapel Hill Public Library has a wide variety of publications about the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. Find out more about his life and the Civil Rights Movement through movies, books, eBooks, and audiobooks.

You can check things out to take home using the Library's lockers at University Place or download them to your personal device. Visit the library's website at chapelhillpubliclibrary.org, or ask a librarian for a recommendation. And remember, all Town employees can get a free library card, no matter where they live.

Documenting Local Stories

In the spring of 2016, the Orange County Training School/Lincoln Alumni Association began a partnership with Chapel Hill Public Library to collect, record, and document stories of the local Black community that had previously been untold.

The methodology is based upon the critical oral histories technique that was developed at the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University. The goal is to amplify history that is accessible, equitable, and relevant to today's world, that centers on the people who lived it.

To hear more from the amazing women of the civil rights movement and to learn about Chapel Hill history, listen to Re/Collecting Chapel Hill, a community history podcast by the Chapel Hill Public Library at ChapelHillHistory.org.



Former Mayor Howard Lee (2015)



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. speaks at Hargraves Community Center on a visit to Chapel Hill in May 1960.



Community Honors Dr. King

Celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with events happening around our area.

Saturday, January 14

Celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Carrboro Century Center, 1-3 p.m. | [MORE INFO](#)

MLK: Celebrating the Legacy Through the Arts

2-5 p.m., W.D. Hill Recreation Center, 1308 Fayetteville St., Durham | [MORE INFO](#)

Sunday, January 15

University/Community Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Banquet

6 p.m., UNC Friday Center | [MORE INFO](#)
Keynote Speaker Dr. Leah Cox; Price: \$40

Monday, January 16

43rd Annual Triangle Martin Luther King, Jr. Interfaith Prayer Breakfast

7-9 a.m., Sheraton Imperial Hotel, 4700 Emperor Blvd., Durham | [MORE INFO](#)
Keynote Speaker: Reverend Doctor Gregory M. Howard

MLK Commemoration Service

11 a.m.-12:30 p.m., First Baptist Church, 106 N Roberson St, Chapel Hill | [MORE INFO](#)

MLK Jr. Day of Service: Strike! Against Hunger Food Drive

3-5 p.m., Mardi Gras Bowling Alley | [MORE INFO](#)

Book Harvest Dream Big Book Drive and Community Celebration

1-4 p.m. Golden Belt Campus, 800 Taylor St., Durham
[MORE INFO](#)

Triangle Martin Luther King, Jr. Committee Virtual Prayer Breakfast, Noon Observance, and Evening Musical

[MORE INFO](#)



Did You Know?

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday has been observed as a U.S. federal holiday since 1986. Chapel Hill has observed the day as a town holiday since 1984. Chapel Hill was one of the first communities in North Carolina to declare Martin Luther King Jr. Day a municipal holiday.

Wednesday, January 18

MLK Jr. Lecture and Awards Ceremony

6 p.m., James and Susan Moeser Auditorium in UNC-Chapel Hill Hill Hall. Free and open to the public | [MORE INFO](#)

Sunday, January 22

MLK Jr. Unity Café

5:30-7:30 p.m., UNC-Chapel Hill Carolina Union Auditorium.
[Register Online](#)

