

MLK[👑] NOW

A Prophetic Witness for Our Time



MLK NOW 2026:

A PROPHETIC WITNESS FOR OUR TIME

Because the struggle—and the hope—continues.

Sunday, January 18, 2026 at 3:00 PM
The Riverside Church in the City of New York

MLK NOW is not simply a commemoration of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. It is a bold, living witness to his unfinished work. Through music, preaching, prayer, and embodied storytelling, this spectacular afternoon will honor Rev. Dr. King's radical vision for justice, dignity, and beloved community—and confront the forces still working to erase, distort, or silence that legacy today.

PRELUDE

Improvisation on We Shall Overcome

Carl Haywood

Dr. Nathaniel Gumbs, organ
Director of Music and Organist, The Riverside Church

WELCOME AND PRAYER

The Reverend Adriene Thorne
Senior Minister, The Riverside Church

HYMN

Lift Every Voice and Sing

LIFT EVERY VOICE

Lift every voice and sing
'till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of liberty.
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the listening skies;
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us;
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;
Facing the rising sun
Of our new day begun,
Let us march on 'till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod,
Bitter the chastening rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
Yet, with a steady beat,
Have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our parents sighed?
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered;
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,
Out from the gloomy past,
‘till now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years,
God of our silent tears,
Thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;
Thou who hast by thy might
Led us into the light;
Keep us forever in the path we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee;
Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;
Shadowed beneath thy hand
May we forever stand,
True to our God, true to our native land.

EMBODIED MLK SPEECH

Freddie Moore
Founder and Artistic Director, Footprints Dance Company
Faculty, The Ailey School

GREETINGS

The Very Reverend Lydia Kelsey Bucklin
President and Dean, The Episcopal Divinity School

MUSIC

The Unsung Collective
Dr. Tyrone Clinton, Founder and Artistic Director

Bring Me Your Dream
Steal Away
I Got A Song

Christopher Harris
arr. Deidre Robinson
Colin Lett

GUEST SPEAKER

The Reverend Canon Kelly Brown Douglas
Canon Theologian, Washington National Cathedral

INVITATION TO GIVE & SERVE

MUSIC

Vy Higgsinsen's Sing Harlem Choir
Ahmaya Knoelle Higginson, Director and Co-Founder

CALL TO ACTION

The Reverend Dr. Brandon Thomas Crowley
Director of Theological Education, The Episcopal Divinity School
Pastor, Myrtle Baptist Church

CLOSING SONG

We Win

Vincent Bohanan
Pastor, The Winners' Assembly
Stellar Award Winning Gospel Artist

Warren S.L. Hicks and The Alliance

We will fight and we will win.
We speak victory to every trial we're in.
We are overcomers by the blood of the lamb;
No longer defeated, we're winners now.

We always win, we always win,
No matter what may come my way, we always win.

We will fight,
We will win.
We will fight,
We will win (I'm victorious).
We will fight,
We will win (I'm a conquer).

We win, we win, we win.

BLESSING AND SENDING

The Reverend Adriene Thorne
The Very Reverend Lydia Kelsey Bucklin

This gathering is for all who believe Rev. Dr. King's dream still demands courage, clarity, and collective action—especially now. Thank you for coming to be nourished. Coming to be challenged. Coming to be reminded that the arc of the moral universe only bends toward justice when we bend it together.



THE RIVERSIDE CHURCH
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK