

“Blessed Be the Peace Makers”

Celebrate the Witness of Martin Luther King Jr. with us on Jan. 16 at 1 p.m.

On Monday Jan. 16, the national holiday set aside to honor the nonviolent witness of Martin Luther King, Jr., the St. Augustine’s-in-the-Woods Episcopal Peace Fellowship will sponsor the seventh annual Whidbey Island community Martin Luther King “Blessed be the Peace Makers” event. The public is cordially invited to this free, non-denominational service, to be held at St. Augustine’s at 1 p.m., with complimentary sandwiches, vegetables, fruits and beverages served in Campbell Hall from 12 p.m. to 12:45 p.m. St. Augustine’s-in-the-Woods Episcopal Church is located at 5217 S. Honeymoon Bay Road in Freeland. Childcare will be provided and families with children are encouraged to attend.



The featured speaker at this year’s event will be Ora Houston, a dynamic African-American woman who has prominently served the Episcopal Church at every level. She is a member of St. James Episcopal Church in Austin, Texas, the church where the Right Rev. Gregory H. Rickel was rector before he was elected the Episcopal Bishop serving Western Washington. It is also the church attended by the Rev. Dr. William Seth Adams and the Rev. Amy Donohue-Adams for 14 years before they moved to Whidbey Island and joined St. Augustine’s this year. Ora

has served as Chair of the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Texas, has twice been a delegate to the National Convention, and is a prominent leader in the Union of Black Episcopalians.

She was educated in segregated public schools in Austin and has worked in the office of state Senator Gonzala Barrientos. She has received national recognition for her years of outstanding service as a social worker and community activist. She has testified before the state legislature, the county commission, and the city council.

For years her focus has been “giving voice to people who are not invited to the table and protecting the rights of all who are forced to the margins of our community.”



The singing of civil rights anthems and traditional African-American hymns will be part of the service. Karl Olsen, music director at Trinity Lutheran Church in Freeland, will again lead the singing. The service will include an interactive reading of a key event or events in the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 60s. A narrative text, read from the pulpit, will interact with readings from the pews by St. Augustine’s Episcopal Peace Fellowship members and St. Augustine’s youth.

This year's readings will feature the "Freedom Rides," celebrating the 50th anniversary of this important event in the struggle for equal rights and honoring the courage and sacrifices of the Freedom Riders. The event will conclude with a reading of the "I Have a Dream" speech and singing of "We Shall Overcome."

The annual "Blessed Are the Peace Makers" event has traditionally drawn a capacity audience. Attendees are encouraged to car-pool if possible.

