

Interfaith prayer service for MLK features Atlanta pastor

The Rev. Dr. Raphael Gamaliel Warnock, senior pastor of Atlanta's historic Ebenezer Baptist Church, spiritual home of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., will be the featured speaker at an ecumenical and interfaith prayer service April 12, 7 p.m., at the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen in Homeland.

The prayer service was organized by Archbishop William E. Lori and the Archdiocese of Baltimore to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Rev. King.

A special gospel choir including people from around the area will be led by Kenyatta Hardison, director of the Cardinal Shehan Choir of students who have been seen on television and recently performed at the anti-gun violence rally in Washington, D.C.

Rev. Warnock has served since 2005 as the senior pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church. The son of two Pentecostal pastors, Rev. Warnock responded to the call of ministry at a very early age, and at age 35, became the fifth and the youngest person ever called to the senior pastorate of Ebenezer Baptist Church, founded in 1886.

Rev. Warnock is a graduate of the Leadership Program sponsored by the Greater Baltimore Committee, a graduate of the Summer Leadership Institute of Harvard University and a graduate of Leadership Atlanta. He received a bachelor's degree in psychology from Morehouse College in Atlanta in 1991 and a master's of divinity from Union Theological Seminary in New York City.

Seeing his pastoral work as tied to the ministry of scholarship and the life of the mind, Rev. Warnock continued his graduate studies at Union, receiving master's and doctor of philosophy degrees in the field of systematic theology.

He is the author of "The Divided Mind of the Black Church: Theology, Piety and Public Witness" (NYU Press, 2014).

Archbishop Lori announced the prayer service to commemorate Rev. King's death in his pastoral reflection "The Enduring Power of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's Principles

of Nonviolence,” which was released Feb. 14.

In the pastoral letter, the archbishop said, “The wisdom of Dr. King’s teaching is both timely and important for our family of faith, the Archdiocese of Baltimore, and indeed for our whole society,” noting that the interfaith and ecumenical gathering would be held just after the anniversary of the civil rights leader’s assassination April 4, 1968.

“In preparation for that celebration and long afterward, however, we urgently need to retrieve, understand, embrace and put into practice his teaching and legacy,” Archbishop Lori said. “For, if in God’s grace we are to create the just, peaceful and compassionate society that Dr. King envisioned, we must undergo a lasting conversion of heart and mind and make a firm commitment to teach, learn and practice nonviolent direct action for social change.”

All are welcome to attend the prayer service. The cathedral is located at 5200 N. Charles St.

The prayer service will also be livestreamed on the archdiocesan Facebook page. Watch **here**.