Celebration of the Birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
January 15, 2016

Reader #1
Opening Introduction – The Beloved Community

Everyone is familiar with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech delivered at the Lincoln Memorial on August 28, 1963. What exactly did Dr. King mean when he spoke about his Dream? Well, central to everything Dr. King wrote and spoke about was the Beloved Community. That was his Dream. The Beloved Community is one of love and justice. The human family is joined in solidarity, so what affects you also affects me. I think we can see this if we think for a minute about the children killed in violent acts across our world. We mourn the loss of these dear children but we also think about our own dear children, for some, sons and daughters or grandchildren and, for others, nieces and nephews. We realized that any one of those children could have been one of our own. We breathed a sigh of relief but we also prayed for those families. That is what solidarity is all about – a deep compassion and identification with those in the Beloved Community.

So today we gather as a community, mindful of our place within the global Beloved Community. We remember and offer prayers for those in our world community who suffer from violence, war, human trafficking, loss of a loved one to violence, and we stand together knowing that we are all part of the human family – the Beloved Community.

Together

O, God, we thank you for inviting us to be part of the Beloved Community. We accept the challenge to live lives of love and justice. We ask you to help us in our relationships each day to be conscious of this call to mercy, love and justice. Amen.

Reader #2

Service is another hallmark of the Beloved Community. All of us share our gifts through a variety of services: compassionate caregivers, administrators, maintenance workers, food service employees, teachers, and so many other signs of loving service.

Together

O, Loving God, we thank you for your call to serve one another. May we never tire in our efforts to be of service to all your people. We ask your special blessing on those who selflessly serve.
Reader #3

As members of the Beloved Community we pray for one another and for the needs of our world. Dr. King was an advocate for nonviolence (mention any prayers or petitions you wish to remember at this time). We join our prayers with all those throughout our world community and we pray for an end to the violence in our society.

Closing Prayer

O, God, throughout the scriptures and human history you give us people to remind us of our need to be in community with others. We thank you for the life of Martin Luther King, Jr., whose witness to peace and the Beloved Community inspires us. We ask for your grace and blessing as we strive to be in solidarity with all your people. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our brother.
Amen.
**Response #1**  
O, God, we thank you for inviting us to be part of the Beloved Community. We accept the challenge to live lives of love and justice. We ask you to help us in our relationships each day to be conscious of this call to mercy, love and justice. Amen.

**Response #2**  
O, Loving God, we thank you for your call to serve one another. May we never tire in our efforts to be of service to all your people. We ask your special blessing on those who selflessly serve.

**Response #3 – Closing Prayer**

O, God, throughout the scriptures and human history you give us people to remind us of our need to be in community with others. We thank you for the life of Martin Luther King, Jr., whose witness to peace and the Beloved Community inspires us. We ask for your grace and blessing as we strive to be in solidarity with all your people. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our brother.  
Amen.