

**CMBA Moves Live MLK Day Observance to Recorded Podcast**

CMBA will hold its 2021 Martin Luther King (MLK) Day Celebration service virtually in response to the steady increase in COVID-19 cases across the Midlands. Originally planned as a live and livestreamed event, the MLK Day observance will still include scheduled guest Dr. David Goatley as part of a group dialogue with Rev. Andre Rogers, CMBA Executive Director George Bullard and several members of an unofficial CMBA racial reconciliation panel. Participants may access the premiere of the video podcast through the CMBA website or Facebook page on Monday, Jan. 18, at 6 p.m.

“The MLK celebration is an important part of our year as an association. We seek to reconcile everyone to Christ and to one another. Therefore, we feel racial reconciliation is an important part of what we do and the MLK celebration is a significant annual event to express our commitment. The spread of the pandemic does not make it ethically wise to conduct an on-site celebration. A video podcast will allow us to hear from my long-time friend David Goatley and to hear the passion and perspectives of our racial reconciliation panel,” explains Bullard.

Rogers is a CMBA ministry mobilizer and pastor of Concord Fellowship Baptist, which was to serve as the host site for the event. Rogers affirms the decision to hold the celebration virtually and says he looks forward to the annual recognition of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s leadership and life’s work.

“The podcast will allow CMBA to continue the discussion about racial inequalities in America in a safe way. Unlike our previous MLK celebrations, people who may not feel comfortable leaving their homes during the pandemic can tune in. In other words, people can listen to the podcast anytime from the comfort of their homes giving more individuals the opportunity to commemorate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with CMBA than ever before,” Rogers says.

Goatley’s participation is expected to provide insights on issues related to racial reconciliation and ministry partnerships among churches. Goatley serves as associate dean for vocational formation and Christian witness, director of the office of black studies and is a research professor of theology and black church studies at Duke Divinity School. He previously served for 20 years as the executive secretary-treasurer of the Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Society and in various roles with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Goatley is also a friend to CMBA.

“I want our association to get to know David Goatley, as we will have more contact with him over the next several years. He will be facilitating a Lilly Endowment funded project that includes black and white CMBA churches in Fairfield County, lower Richland County and portions of Kershaw County serving together in vital missional efforts,” Bullard says.

“Dr. Goatley is committed to the gospel being shared throughout the world while not ignoring issues in America. He shares a message of hope and taking action to end systemic injustices throughout the nation. He is a world class leader in taking action against inequalities,” adds Rogers.

Participants should expect to hear viewpoints from the collective panel on the recent SBC statement addressing race relations, current issues related to this in the Midlands as well as opportunities for CMBA churches to partner and build relationships within the African American community.

For his part, Rogers hopes that churches will continue to have consistent discussions about racism and inequalities moving forward. “I also hope to hear about more individuals making friendships with people who do not look like them to promote a community of love and fellowship that will last for many, many years to come. I dream about more churches praying, worshipping, and doing ministry together in efforts to promote the creation of more multicultural and multiethnic churches. Through prayer and love for one another, CMBA churches will grow stronger together.”