

MLK celebration features Peace March in Hermiston

By Tammy Malgesini
Go! Magazine

HERMISTON — John Carbage, president of the Hermiston Cultural Awareness Coalition, is looking forward to hosting the Martin Luther King Jr. Day Peace March.

"We call it a peace march because we want to promote peace in the land," he said. "We don't want to cause a divide — we want peace."

With planning underway to host the in-person program, Carbage said the event will begin Monday, Jan. 17, at 11 a.m. with a short walk through downtown Hermiston — starting and ending at the Hermiston First United Methodist Church, 191 E. Gladys Ave.

After the march and some words by city leaders, participants are invited to enter the church where the program will include a short scholarship presentation by the Hermiston Cultural Awareness Coalition, followed by Pastor Marlando Jordan's keynote address.

COVID-19 protocols require

those attending the program at the church to wear a face covering at all times. A mask will be provided for anyone who does not have one.

Carbage said the coalition always chooses a person of color who can share how the legacy and work of Martin Luther King Jr. has impacted their life. Jordan, who started preaching as a 14-year-old, became the youth pastor in 1996 at Word of Faith Center — now known as Sozo

Church — in Kennewick, Washington. He was called as senior pastor in 2015.

Driven with passion and enthusiasm, Jordan shares a message of faith, hope and love. In addition, he urges Christians to unite in an effort to heal the racial divide in our nation.

Pastor Patty Nance of the Hermiston United Methodist Church also highlights the importance of peace and inclusivity, which is why her congregation readily opens its doors to host the Martin Luther King Jr. Day program. King, she said, preached hope for a better tomorrow through nonviolent civil action.



Pastor
Marlando
Jordan



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian, File
John Carbage, president of the Hermiston Cultural Awareness Club, welcomes speakers to the podium at the Hermiston First United Methodist Church Monday, Jan. 20, 2020, as a part of the Annual Martin Luther King Jr. March.

King's efforts and the response of people marching in the streets, Nance said, helped

shine a spotlight on the teachings of Jesus Christ. And, she said, King's legacy has had a

lasting impact.

"Faith communities began to look at the inherent racism within their own walls," Nance said. "While it has been a slow and arduous journey, that glimmer of hope that King shared so long ago still burns bright in many of our faith communities."

While Carbage said progress has been made in regard to racial division, it's important to continue to be diligent in promoting peace. Continuing the work and remembering the nonviolent and peaceful leadership King stood for is paramount, he said.

"We don't want the past to repeat itself," Carbage said. "We want peace, even in Eastern Oregon and our small community of Hermiston."

People are invited to get involved with the Hermiston Cultural Awareness Coalition. It meets the second Saturday of each month at 2 p.m. at the Hermiston United Methodist Church. For more information, contact Carbage at 541-701-7073 or jcarbage@yahoo.com.

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