



February 12, 2018

## MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release

Contact Persons:

Lily Jones - (804) 698-1886

Amigo Wade - (804) 698-1862

Lindley Griffin - (804) 698-7450

### **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Beloved Community Conversations to be held across Virginia**

**Richmond, VA** - In 2018, fifty years after the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the Virginia Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission will remember his legacy and his influence in Virginia in a series of 12 Community Conversations held in each of the locations across the state that Dr. King visited. The Commission will join community leaders, religious leaders, historians, educators, and members of the community to reexamine Dr. King's time in the Commonwealth, reflect on his vision of a "Beloved Community" in that locality today, and ask, as Dr. King did in his final book, "Where do we go from here?" All events are free and open to the public.

The first Beloved Community Conversation will take place on March 1, 2018, at the Perkins Living and Learning Center at Virginia Union University in Richmond, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Commission Chair Senator Jennifer L. McClellan will moderate a panel discussion that includes Virginia Union graduate student Jamar A. Boyd II, Delegate Delores McQuinn (70<sup>th</sup> District), Benjamin Ragsdale, who was present when Dr. King visited Richmond, Rev. Dr. Jim Somerville of First Baptist Church in Richmond, Virginia Union Vice President Dr. Corey Walker, and Rev. Janie Walker of Richmond Hill.

The roundtables are part of the Commission's King in Virginia project, which is working to research, compile, and exhibit information on Dr. King's visits to Virginia. The dozens of visits Dr. King made to the state include significant time in Richmond, where he often spoke at Virginia Union University and lead a march on the Virginia State Capitol to urge the reopening of public schools that had closed in resistance to desegregation. Working with historians and researchers, as well as community members who have witnessed Dr. King's influence in Virginia firsthand, the *King in Virginia* project is assembling an archive, to be made publicly and permanently accessible online, that will document Dr. King's time in Virginia.

Future King in Virginia events will take place in Charlottesville (March 13 at the University of Virginia's Old Cabell Hall), Farmville (April 24 at First Baptist Church), Williamsburg (June 6 at First Baptist Church of Williamsburg), Danville, Hampton, Hopewell, Lynchburg, Newport News, Norfolk, Petersburg, and Suffolk. Details of each event will be announced as finalized.

The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission, a statutory and bipartisan agency of the Virginia General Assembly, was created in 1992 by the General Assembly to honor the legacy of Dr. King through educational, historical and cultural programs, public policy analysis, and public discourse on contemporary issues. In addition to leading the Commonwealth's commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Dr. King's assassination, the Commission is also constructing the Emancipation Proclamation and Freedom Monument on Brown's Island in Richmond, dedicated to the contributions of African American Virginians in the ongoing fight for freedom and civil rights. For more on the Commission's work, and for updates on the King in Virginia project, visit [mlkcommission.dls.virginia.gov](http://mlkcommission.dls.virginia.gov).