

News Release: Martin Luther King, Jr., Day Celebration

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The Right Rev. William Swing, founder of the United Religions Initiative (URI), will be the featured speaker at the annual Martin Luther King, Jr., Day celebration on Monday, January 18, 2016, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., at the Lihue Neighborhood Center, 3353 Eono Street, in Lihue. The public is invited to the free event sponsored by the Interfaith Roundtable of Kauai (IROK).

The introductory speaker leading up to Rev. Swing's keynote address will be Kauai resident **Ishaq Mohammed**, a representative of Islam and a member of the Interfaith Roundtable, as well as a former professional wrestler. The theme of this year's King Day event is "Peace or Fear, What's in Your Heart?"

The celebration also will offer a free lunch, and music by **Michael and Carrie Fox**. After the meal, the audience will be invited to participate in small group discussions to share the meaning of King's legacy in their personal lives. **Annaleah Atkinson**, conflict resolution leader and a columnist for the *The Garden Island* newspaper, will organize the breakout sessions.

Bishop Swing had the original vision of URI in 1993 in response to an invitation from the United Nations, which asked him to host an interfaith service honoring the 50th anniversary of the signing of the UN Charter. Today, URI is a 700,000-member global grassroots interfaith network across 92 countries that cultivate peace and justice by engaging people to bridge religious and cultural differences and work together for the good of their communities and the world.

Bishop Swing served as the **Episcopal Bishop of California** from 1980 until his retirement in 2006. In that capacity, he was a national and international leader in response to the AIDS crisis; co-founded Episcopal Community Services to address San Francisco's homeless problem; and co-founded Community Bank of the Bay to support local businesses and the economy. (Source: www.uri.org).

This year's King Day also marks the **eleventh anniversary** of the formation of the Interfaith Roundtable of Kauai, a monthly gathering of representatives from a variety of faith groups from around the island dedicated to harmony and understanding. For more information on IROK go to www.interfaithroundtableofkauai.org; or call IROK Chairman Jeffrey Pears, 634-9992.

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