

Lutheran Episcopal Advocacy Ministry of New Jersey
Weekly Witness | May 9, 2017

For many, the saving power of God is understood as a mystery and an expression of God's sovereignty that cannot be confined within our limited conceptions. One question with which we must still struggle is how to define the uniqueness of God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ in the light of such passages as "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6)

We recognize that scripture speaks with many voices about relationship with men and women of other religious traditions. . . . But as to our Christian discipleship, we live by a commitment to the Gospel. When Jesus was asked, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" he, referring to his Jewish tradition, answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:25-27). Love of God and love of neighbors cannot be separated. We rejoice in our common conviction that Jesus calls us to ministries of reconciliation. (From "[Interfaith Relations and the Churches: A Policy Statement of the National Council of Churches USA](#)")

Responding to God's love for us, we engage in listening, responding, and advocating with our neighbors in the model of Jesus. We celebrate modern-day followers who are making a public witness to faith by acts of reconciliation, compassion, and justice. Immediately, we think of the women throughout history who have played a part in this ministry: The women at the tomb and others in the Bible who were given a voice to share God's love; saints like Joan of Arc and Mother Teresa; activists and church leaders such as Coretta Scott King and the Rev. Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows. These women, through their public acts, have helped to build and strengthen God's Kingdom here on earth.

This past week I had the honor of meeting Mrs. Edith Savage Jennings. A native of Trenton, she has been working on civil rights issues for eighty years. Her first public act of faith, when she was thirteen years old, was to integrate the movie theatre in Trenton by sitting in the second row with several of her friends during a Saturday afternoon show. Public acts of justice take courage and faith, as Mrs. Jennings told us: "My faith reminds us that we are never alone, spiritually or physically, and that the arc of the moral universe bends toward justice." (Did I mention that she and Martin were very dear colleagues?)

Like the disciples, we may feel anxious or fearful in taking part in public acts of faith like those of Mrs. Savage Jennings. But Jesus promises to be alongside us through our journeys and work through us. It helps to hear the stories of those who have been faithful for many years; to learn again that God is with us and that a great cloud of witnesses has gone before us.

This week as part of your advocacy, try to read about, interview, or listen to a public witness and share the experience with your friends and family, and with us through social media.

Check out [One.org](#) to read about women who have changed the world.

Listen to podcasts from [Bold Cafe](#), an online magazine about faith, on [iTunes](#).

Ask your pastor/priest for a suggestion of a person of faith in your congregation who you could interview.

Then, reflect on what you hear. Ask yourself, what did you learn from the experience? When did you hear God's voice in the stories? How might this experience shape your witness? Consider posting the stories on [Story Corps](#) for others to experience.