

April 8, 1968

500 Take Part Here In Tribute to Dr. King



Staff Photo by Nelson Brooks

By WILLIAM LAKEMAN

A quiet three-block march and a packed memorial service in St. George's Episcopal Church were held here in tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. yesterday.

The largest demonstration of its type in Fredericksburg, it drew 330 participants at the start of the sidewalk processional at Mt. Zion Baptist Church and swelled to an estimated 500 at the hour-long memorial service.

Between a third and one-half of the participants were white in appeared to be one of the most integrated and ecumenical church services to be held here.

Highlighting the service was a reading of several of King's writings — in lieu of a sermon — by the Rev. Lawrence A. Davies, city councilman and pastor of Shiloh (Old Site) Baptist Church.

An offering taken for King's widow and children during the service totaled \$461.84.

The march, strung out in two's and three's some 200 yards long, was headed by a column of ministers that also included the chancellor and dean of Mary Washington College, Del. George C. Rawlings Jr. and city Mayor Josiah P. Rowe III.

Eight church members acted as marshals and city police confined their role to traffic control at the Princess Anne Street crossing in front of St. George's.

Chimes of the Fredericksburg Methodist Church accompanied the walk in bright, warm weather, and it was more like a Palm



Staff Photos by Nelson Brooks



Rev. L. A. Davies Reads King's Writings

Sunday parade than a march. A score of spectators watched quietly along the way.

Welcoming the throng at St. George's, the Rev. Thomas G. Faulkner, rector, termed the assassinated King "truly a disciple of Jesus Christ" and "the Ghandi of America."

"He stood for peace and harmony among men of all races," declared the Rev. E. Elwood Campbell, pastor of the First Christian Church, speaking for the executive committee of the Fredericksburg Area Ministerial Association.

Resolutions from the Fredericksburg Baptist Association and the Episcopal bishops of Virginia were read by Dr. Robert H. Shaw, rector of Trinity Episcopal Church, plus a letter of mourning with "several hundred signatures" from members of the Fredericksburg Baptist Church.

Participating in the service were the Rev. Rosser Muir, of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church; the Rev. J. Howard Cates of Fredericksburg Baptist Church; the Rev. Roger Poin-dexter of Mt. Pisgah Holiness Church, and the Rev. J. O. Mc-Morris, of Mt. Zion Baptist Church.

The readings by Davies included King's famous letter from a Birmingham jail, a speech on the plans for his poor people's march on Washington and a sermon on loving one's enemies, as well as the Nobel peace-prize winner's own statement on what kind of funeral he wished for himself.

The close was marked by an appeal from Mrs. Roger L. Ken-
vin, chairman of the Unitarian
Fellowship, not to let the spirit
of the memorial service be lost.

Support local organizations
like the Human Relations Coun-
cil, she urged, or write to con-
gressmen on behalf of the civil
rights bill and the presidential
riot commission's report.

She also noted that a peti-
tion, urging City Council to pass
an open-housing law, would be
circulating outside following the
service for signatures.

Thousands of Virginians, both
black and white, gathered
across the breadth of Virginia
Sunday.

They silently shuffled, with
funeral gait, through the down-
town streets of Danville and
Lynchburg.

They bowed their heads in
prayer in churches of many de-
nominations in Williamsburg,
Harrisonburg, and other com-
munities from the Tidewater to
the Blue Ridge.

It was without question, the
most fervent outpouring of re-
morse and respect for a Negro
ever witnessed in Virginia's long
history.

In Richmond, 7,000 persons
spilled across the lush green
lawn of the state capitol as a
succession of civic and religious
leaders eulogized Dr. King.

Some wept as a choir sang,
others politely applauded when
one minister exhorted those as-
sembled to press for open hous-
ing and equal rights for Ne-
groes.