

# Inspiration once again fills the Annual Alton Branch of N.A.A.C.P. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., service

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ALTON – The Alton Branch of the N.A.A.C.P. 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Commemoration service, was once again filled with inspiration.

The service is held each year in Alton to recognize the accomplishments of Dr. King and all he has done for the Civil Rights movement.

The theme of this year's NAACP Dr. King service at Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church on Amelia Street in Alton was "Breaking the Chains of Injustice." The theme was meant to evoke an understanding with what Dr. King, a man of peace, love, unity, action and the millions who marched with him felt so many years ago," said Andy Hightower, the NAACP of Alton branch president, and Joe Williams, the Martin Luther King Commemoration Service event chairperson.

"Although 51 years have passed since the assassination of Dr. King, we must recognize that we are still in the midst of a fight for equality for all," Hightower said. "We wanted to come together as one on this day to show our solidarity to Dr. King's dream of unity and peace."

Rev. Brandon A. Blake delivered the keynote address. Blake is the son of the late Pastor Napoleon and Mrs. Annie Blake. In October 2016, Pastor Brandon Blake was installed as pastor of the New Sunny Mount Missionary Baptist Church in St. Louis, MO.

He has named his core pastoral convictions as preaching, building families and communities and empowerment, things he touched on in his presentation Sunday.

The Riverbend Choir delivered several well-known songs during the program. The program started with music, including the “Lift Every Voice and Sing” gospel song, then the invocation by John W. Buford, pastor of Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church in Alton. Andy Hightower of the Alton Branch NAACP and Alton Mayor Brant Walker also extended a welcome. Rev. David Goins did an offertory prayer, followed by music and a skit by Leah Beacoat who presented 3 Purpose Coats Youth Troupe’s “Breaking The Chains Of Injustice” skit.

The 2019 MLK award recipient was Darrin Williams, pastor of New Beginnings Outreach International. Rita Young did an NAACP membership appeal, Rita Young delivered closing remarks and Joe Williams the closing remarks.

The event closed with the moving song, “We Shall Overcome” and Pastor Darrin Williams delivered the benediction.



[Steven Spencer also contributed to this story.](#)