



July 22, 2020

### ***REMEMBERING THE FAITH OF JOHN LEWIS***

In the midst of the mounting losses from this deadly pandemic, I mourn for the loss of John Lewis, congressional representative, civil rights leader, and Baptist preacher. Lewis was in seminary when he joined the Freedom Rider movement. He was the youngest speaker at the 1963 March on Washington, and he was nearly murdered while trying to cross the Edmund Pettis bridge to begin the march to Selma. Through it all, his Christian faith sustained him.

In 2004, Congressman Lewis was [interviewed for the PBS television program Religion and Ethics Newsweekly](#). In his reflections, he made clear that religious faith was at the core of the civil rights movement. Here are some excerpts:

*“I’m deeply concerned that many people today fail to recognize that the movement was built on deep-seated religious convictions. And the movement grew out of a sense of faith — faith in God and faith in one’s fellow human beings.”*

*“At a very early stage of the movement, I accepted the teaching of Jesus, the way of love, the way of nonviolence, the spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation. The idea that hate is too heavy a burden to bear. I don’t want to go down that road. I’ve seen too much hate, seen too much violence. And I know love is a better way.”*

*“Sometimes when I look back and think about it, how did we do what we did? How did we succeed? We didn’t have a Web site. We didn’t have a cellular telephone. But I felt when we were sitting in at those lunch counter stools, or going on the Freedom Ride, or marching from Selma to Montgomery, there was a power and a force. God Almighty was there with us.”*

John Lewis, Christian preacher in word and deed.  
Rest in peace, and rise in glory.

Peace,

Rev. Dr. Matthew Wooster  
Senior Minister