

Groups to honor King

■ *Volunteers will restore the 80-year-old Mount Zion Baptist Church.*

by Jill Eckert

FOR THE POST

Honoring Martin Luther King Jr. will bring more to Athens than just a Monday without class.

OU's Center for Community Service, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc., the Office of Multicultural Programs and the Appalachian Access AmeriCorps Program will collaborate to praise King through a community service project.

The groups will work together to restore Mount Zion Baptist Church on Congress and Carpenter streets. The 80-year-old church is considered an African-American historical landmark.

"It's a historical site that's in need of preservation," said James Wynn, a volunteer mobilizer with the Center for Community Service.

The King project starts at 4:30 p.m. Sunday with a play by Patricia Thomas-Wilson titled "A New Life, A New Me, A New Word." Wilson is an Appalachian Access AmeriCorps member. It will be performed at the church.

After the play, volunteers will prepare for the restoration project by stripping wood and pulling carpet in the church.

At 8 a.m. Monday, the workers will return to the restoration. The volunteers will varnish the pews and floors, among other things.

"By restoring the church, we are bringing out one of the real messages of Martin Luther King, which is community service," said Nick Zefran, the program coordinator for the Appalachian Access AmeriCorps Program.

Marquita Flowers, a volunteer mobilizer with the Center for Community Service, said the group has been trying to

get other people involved.

"We've been trying to get in touch with different student organizations and local businesses," she said. "So far, we've gotten pretty good responses from the student organizations we contacted."

Alpha Phi Alpha will sponsor a Martin Luther King Day vigil at noon at the College Gate. The vigil will be followed by a march down Court Street, which will end at the church. At 1:30 p.m., the Gospel Voices of Faith choir will perform at the church, and the volunteers will continue to work on restoration.

On Dec. 30, 1959, King spoke in Athens during the 18th Ecumenical Student Conference on the Christian World Mission.

He delivered a speech, "The Church on the Frontier of Racial Tension," at the Templeton-Blackburn Alumni Memorial Auditorium.