

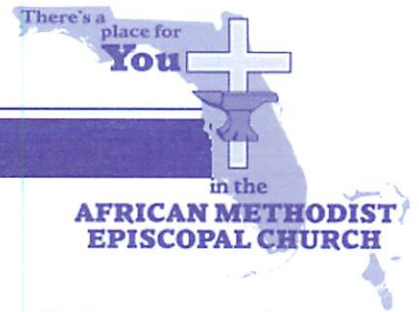
Office of the Bishop

AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH - 11TH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

BISHOP ADAM JEFFERSON RICHARDSON, JR.
Presiding Prelate

MRS. CONNIE S. RICHARDSON
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So far, it seems, we have “dodged a bullet” as the saying goes. Only by God’s grace, no one has gotten sick and thankfully no one has died for having attended a worship service or a funeral in one of our churches. We have been blessed. Only Dr. Judson Eneas, faithful member of Cousin-McPhee in Nassau, passed away after caring for one of his patients with coronavirus, according to the press.

Some weeks ago, I asked that for safety and legal considerations, that churches in the 11th Episcopal District **NOT** hold in-person worship services until further notice. However, we indicated that it would be permissible for selected church personnel/volunteers to gather for purposes of live-streaming or broadcasting prerecorded worship services. At the time, we believed that pastors would encourage “safe-distancing” between the people in the choir and/or praise team members. However, this is NOT happening, as I have observed from watching the services online. It’s dangerous!

Last week, I shared a TMZ article about Bishop Gerald O. Glenn who pastored the New Deliverance Evangelistic Church in Virginia. I listened to the bishop’s daughter, Mar-Gerie Crawley, being interviewed by Chris Cuomo on CNN a few nights ago. She and her family, and the whole congregation, are now under quarantine. They couldn’t even make arrangements for a funeral, or go view the body.

In that same posting, I mentioned the heavy price being paid by the Church of God in Christ, especially in the Michigan Jurisdiction. I meant no ill-will. Our own Council of Bishops has lifted the COGIC Family in our Council Conference Calls. Now, the Washington Post and other news outlets have reported the heavy toll among the ranks of COGIC leaders now deceased. We extend our sympathy to the COGIC Family.

DANGER LURKS CLOSER TO HOME. The Rev. Dr. Quan Glover was pastor of the Young Zion Baptist Church in St. Mary’s, Georgia (just over the Florida/Georgia line). He and his family made their home in Jacksonville. On March 29, he preached at his church; fewer than ten people were present. They practiced social distancing. Yet, two days later he became ill with COVID-19. He died on April 17 leaving a grieving wife, children and congregation. I am now asking YOU — Is it worth the risk?

Out of my heartfelt love for you, I am requiring that you no longer meet at the church for in-person worship events. Please find a different way to connect with congregants. Use previously recorded services. Use FaceBook Live from your home or from your office. Use Zoom or Skype or some other social media platform that will give people access to you and the ministry. But for legal and public health considerations meeting in-person is off-limits. Ask the people to contribute through the mail or through the various apps currently in vogue. But until the storm passes over, let’s be safe rather than sorry.

Concerning funerals, Graveside Services should be the norm, for the time being, allowing only ten persons to sit underneath the canopy. Perhaps family-only Memorials can be held in the church (if safe-distancing protocols can be observed — six feet apart). However, even in the cemetery, social-distancing should be strictly observed. If desired, families should consider having a more elaborate memorial service once the pandemic has passed to permit the community to celebrate the life of a loved one and to allow family members to travel from distances considered too far during the crisis. Some may consider this an overreaction and too extreme. Please allow me to remind you that Albany, Georgia is a hotspot because the community

turned out for two funerals served by the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Funeral Chapel. According to the media, Dougherty County officials believe that coronavirus was spread at the funerals.

Someone will ask, "Where's our faith?" Well, take another look at the story of the Passover as recorded in the Book of Exodus. In the moment of crisis, the night of pestilence, there were no Hebrew people wandering around outdoors, testing the limits of their faith. There was nothing to prove by being at the place of assembly in Goshen. Everyone was inside; at home; with family; *sheltering in place*.

Yours in His Service,

A. J. Richardson

Adam J. Richardson

Senior Bishop

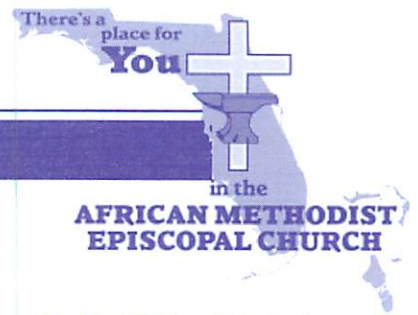
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May 19, 2020

Re: Important Information on COVID19

Dear Eleventh District Pastors and Leaders,

In collaboration with one of our community partners, Mayo Clinic Florida, this short informational flyer is being provided in response to questions posed by some church leaders. It is our plan to continue to provide these periodic updates on COVID19 and we want to be as specific as we can in responding to your questions and concerns.

To that end, please consider completing the survey that will allow us to know and address your needs for information. Please click on the link in the body of the email.

Yours In His Service,

Adam J. Richardson, Jr.

Senior Bishop



Center for Health Equity and Community Engagement Research (CHECER)

Several pastors and church leaders met with Mayo Clinic to discuss information about COVID-19 and its impact on the faith-based community as well as shared tips and guidelines. Here are the highlights from that discussion:

We know there is growing concern as the outbreak and impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to evolve. We want you to know that all of us at CHECER hope you and your family are safe and well during this very difficult time.

Early indications are that African Americans and Hispanics are disproportionately being affected by the virus and the illness it causes. Experts point to underlying medical conditions, including heart disease and diabetes, as one possible explanation for why minority populations are seeing high rates of sickness and death from COVID-19. These conditions are more common in black and Hispanic Americans. They also happen to be leading risk factors for severe illness from the coronavirus. (Yancy, C.W.; JAMA, 4/15/2020).

Tips for Handwashing

Mayo Clinic's Dr. Gregory Poland: Wash your hands while singing happy birthday to yourself, you get between the fingers, the fingertips, the thumb, you turn the water off with a paper towel, and you open the door to leave with a paper towel and dispose of the paper towel. That's how you wash your hands — ideally, with warm, soapy water.

Although our community events have been canceled until further notice we want to ensure that you stay informed. The top two questions we hear most from community members today are:

1. What is the treatment for COVID-19?

There is no approved treatment or drugs for COVID-19. However, many of the symptoms can be treated, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) for fever and body aches. There are several drugs being studied in several hundred clinical trials that are underway across the globe.

2. Is a COVID-19 vaccine available?

No. There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. Researchers are actively studying or developing vaccines. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.

- Social distancing restrictions (maintain 6 feet of distance between one another) still apply outdoors.
- Hand-washing is KEY! Use alcohol based hand-sanitizer when immediate hand-washing is not feasible.
- **The CDC is now recommending use of cloth masks when conducting essential activities in public places.**

COVID-19 Tips for Churches

Floyd Willis, M.D.

- Be mindful when allowing your congregation to re-enter your church. Although most sources have said the virus can travel 6 feet, the virus can also travel beyond 10 feet. Watch for media updates and involve your churches Healthcare/Wellness Ministry in this important decision.
- COVID19 test Positive?: There is no definitive answer as to when a person who tested positive is “most safe” and can be around people again. As a healthcare facility, the Mayo Clinic standard (in keeping with the Centers for Disease Control) is 14 days after the onset of the illness, no symptoms, and 2 negative nasal swabs, and person could consider returning to work.
- The Centers for Disease Control has on their website “Information for Faith-based organizations”. This is one of many places where church leader and churches can get information on getting through and then beyond this pandemic.

Tips for Pastors Managing Stress during COVID-19

Chaplain Tanya Foster

- Establish Boundaries – Pastors, honor your office hours. Your personal time, sleep, and family are valuable and sacred.
- Emotional Authenticity – Relationships are valuable. Find a core set of people you can be vulnerable with and express your authentic emotions.
- Take a Sabbath from screen time, but when you do plug in to social media and news be sure to connect with reliable sources.
- Remember, your church value is founded in Christ not the size of your congregation.

COVID-19 Myths and Facts

Can eating garlic help prevent infection with COVID-19?

Garlic will help only insofar as it makes social distancing easier. There is no evidence that shows garlic protects people from the virus.

Can I use my own hand sanitizer?

If you are not able to wash your hands with water, second best is hand sanitizer. However, it's important to use the right type and amount of hand sanitizer for it to be effective. You need a quarter- to a half dollar-size amount of hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. You can certainly try making your own, as there are many recipes online, including one from the World Health Organization.

Can spraying alcohol or chlorine on my body kill COVID-19?

You do not want to spray alcohol or chlorine on your body. These solutions are intended to be used on hard surfaces. For your body, use simple soap and water.

Can regularly rinsing your nose with saline help prevent infection with COVID-19, or will using these increase my chance of contracting COVID-19?

The nasal rinses have primarily been shown to be effective with sinusitis and allergies. There is no direct evidence that saline will prevent COVID-19 nor increase your risk of infection.

COVID-19 RESOURCES

- **Corona Virus COVID-19** <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLOZioxrlwCv3XMucYU8AmVR-C7R7vLnYEJ>
- **COVID-19 Symptom/Exposure Response** <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLOZioxrlwCv2a-lcSwENDxl4eysxv-IBEO>
- **CDC COVID-19 Screening Tool** <https://www.apple.com/covid19/>
- **Mayo Clinic COVID-19 Updates** <https://www.mayoclinic.org/coronavirus-covid-19>
- **CDC Information for Faith-based organizations** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/index.html>
- **U.S. Department of Health & Human Services** <https://www.hhs.gov/>
- **Novo Nordisk offers free 90-day insulin supply** <https://www.novonordisk-us.com/media/news-releases.html?122988>

10 ways to manage respiratory symptoms at home

If you have fever, cough, or shortness of breath, call your healthcare provider. They may tell you to manage your care from home. Follow these tips:

1. **Stay home** from work, school, and away from other public places. If you must go out, avoid using any kind of public transportation, ridesharing, or taxis.



2. **Monitor your symptoms** carefully. If your symptoms get worse, call your healthcare provider immediately.



3. **Get rest and stay hydrated.**



4. If you have a medical appointment, **call the healthcare provider** ahead of time and tell them that you have or may have COVID-19.



5. For medical emergencies, call 911 and **notify the dispatch personnel** that you have or may have COVID-19.



6. **Cover your cough and sneezes.**



7. **Wash your hands often** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.



8. As much as possible, **stay** in a specific room and **away from other people** in your home. Also, you should use a separate bathroom, if available. If you need to be around other people in or outside of the home, wear a facemask.



9. **Avoid sharing personal items** with other people in your household, like dishes, towels, and bedding.



10. **Clean all surfaces** that are touched often, like counters, tabletops, and doorknobs. Use household cleaning sprays or wipes according to the label instructions.

