



## BETHEL AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH LAY ORGANIZATION DEVOTIONAL | NOVEMBER 2024

501 West Orange Avenue | Tallahassee, Florida  
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### “Lovely Leaders!”

**“There is none other commandment greater than these.” – Mark 12:31b KJV**

In less than 5 days, citizens of the United States of America (U.S.) will elect their 46<sup>th</sup> Commander-In-Chief. This election will be unprecedented for a number of reasons. Americans will either elect a Black, woman as president or re-elect a twice-impeached, Klan-endorsed, convicted-felon as president. The agency, dignity and fate of Black and Indigenous People of Color, women, immigrants, the LGBTQIA community and impoverished people, hang in the balance. This week, alone, ballots were burned in Oregon. Virginia was given permission to resume its voter purge. Puerto Ricans were ridiculed as trash. Chauvinistic demagogues doubled-down on “protecting” (relegating) women’s reproductive health, and argued that upper and middle-class kids “become trans” for college admissions. On NPR’s *All Things Considered*, Mary Louise Kelly, cited a new American Psychological Association Study that finds almost 75% of Americans are currently suffering from election anxiety. It seems that American democracy could be at a precipice. How did America get to this point?

In 2015, Clark-Atlanta University Professor of Africana Studies, Dr. Daniel Omotosho Black published *The Coming: A Novel*. In this text, he accurately foreshadowed the impending woes of America within a Diasporic context by writing, “In the end, we fed and strengthened our own captors. We cannot claim naiveté. We cannot say we were people undeveloped. We cannot say there were no signs. We can say only that we did not heed them. Sound wisdom was as common to us as the evening breeze. We scoffed and shrugged at elders’ forewarning of a time of great tragedy and chaos. We did not believe them. We had learned to ignore our own gods. To take their goodness for granted. To believe that because of them, we were immune to external attack. So, we did not hear them. We heard only what we sought to hear. Now we hear it all, echoing in our regretful memories.” As Christians living in these perilous political times, Jesus provides the “sound wisdom” necessary to, not only survive, but overcome and excel.

The first Sunday in *Nubian* November is also the Twenty-Fourth Sunday After Pentecost on the Christian Liturgical Calendar. The concurrent Gospel reading is Mark 12:28-34, in Year B of the “Lectionary” found on page 795 of the *African Methodist Episcopal Church Hymnal*. In these seven verses, religious teachers question Jesus on the most important commandment, in hopes to entrap him for defiling Judaic law and custom. Jesus responds wisely, summing up the law with the answer of LOVE. Love God and Love your neighbor. “There is none other commandment greater than these.” (12:31b)

Another national leader, one of the wisest to ever live, King Solomon, wrote in Proverbs 9:10, that the “Fear of [Reverence for] the LORD is the foundation of wisdom. Knowledge of the Holy One results in good judgment.” A great leader’s love and adoration for God must be a priority. Furthermore, the Apostle Paul outlines the attributes of “Lovely leaders” in 1 Corinthians 13. If a leader does not have the love for God and his or her neighbor, he or she has become a “sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.”

As we continue to select leaders on ballots across the country, let us seriously consider the candidate who has a proven record of “Leading with Love.” An ever-growing number of evangelical Christians are supporting candidates who are calling for mass Gestapo-esque deportations, scholarly censorship, cruel and unusual state-sanctioned punishment, and the exclusive study of Western (White) canon/thought in K-20 public school systems. Dr. Daniel Black also wrote in *The Coming*, “Perhaps they live only in one realm. Yes, there’s the answer! They have only two eyes and as such cannot see how this realm prepares them for the next. And that realm for the next. And so on.” Open your heart to a new realm in Christ Jesus! Keep your third eye open! Be proactive and progressive! Select a LOVELY leader as your next president, and even if your LOVELY candidate does not win, YOU BE THE LOVELY LEADER that the world needs today!

**- Brother Kyle Harris, Ph.D., Contributor and Local Lay President**