



Council of Bishops

African Methodist Episcopal Church

May 21, 2020

The Council of Bishops of the African Methodist Episcopal Church is proud of our Presiding Elders, Pastors, ministerial staff's and members who obeyed the shut in. Yet, in spite of all states opening up in some form, the fact is the danger to the people and communities we serve is not over. The global pandemic is still reeking havoc globally and in the United States. From Cape Town South Africa, to Haiti, to Brazil, to California, the numbers of infections and deaths continue to rise. The danger is not over – keep hope alive.

The Council recently read an article that disturbed us greatly. On Mother's Day 2020, a church held a business as usual Mother's Day service, later AP ran the headline: Over 180 People Exposed To Virus at California Church. All of them were asked by the Public Health Department to self quarantine. The danger is not over – keep hope alive.

We all remember the number of our ecumenical Brothers and Sisters who, before the shut down was enforced, vowed that they would never stop having their traditional worship and meetings. Now we grieve their loss with their families, denominations and communities. The danger is not over – keep hope alive.

When one considers that many people in the communities we serve find themselves still in the at risk category, young and old, we must be aware of this statement of a prominent African American journalist: "For many Black people, to reopen now is an invitation to die." In fact, For black, brown, indigenous and poor people to be alive during this global pandemic is to be at risk. The danger is not over – keep hope alive.

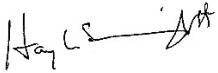
The thief who has come to steal, kill and destroy is not finished with the world or the church. We must not risk the lives of our people. We must not risk the life of our beloved African Methodist Episcopal Church. We must come up with a re-entry plan that will strengthen our people, our churches and our global communities. We must come up with a plan that will help the people, heal the people and give hope to the people. Our extraordinary African Methodist Episcopal Church

has come up with such a plan. It will be presented to the entire church soon. The danger is not over – keep hope alive.

Finally, the scientist tell us that without testing, tracing and a COVID-19 inoculation that is available for everybody we should not be quick to reopen. So we are clear, the doors of the church are still open, it is the doors of the church building that are closed until we can go back protecting the lives and health of all those who come into our church buildings. Science tells us the danger is not over, faith tells us to keep hope alive.

The Best Is Yet To Come,

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Harry L. Seawright', with a stylized flourish at the end.

The Right Reverend Harry L. Seawright

President

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