

President Staccato Powell

*Presiding Prelate, Western Episcopal District and President of the Board of Bishops
African American Methodist Zion Church*



March 5, 2020 –

CORONAVIRUS

STATEMENT FROM PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF BISHOPS

With the blessing of the Board of Bishops of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the President of the Board Church, Right Reverend Staccato Powell makes the following statement:

“The Holy Spirit forms and knits us together with other believers throughout the world, working with us and through us to fulfill the saving dispensation. Nothing can affect or change this sacred mystery. Indeed, according to the testimony of the Lord himself, he has established the Church and the very gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Mt 16:17

In recent days, the outbreak of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), continues to generate interest in the media and cause feelings of fear and anxiety within society and our communities. The situation as it exists requires our churches and communities to be vigilant in keeping our people safe.

The best advice for churches is to adopt common sense measures: members of the Church should become familiar with the symptoms of the Coronavirus (fever, cough, shortness of breath), and, if these symptoms present themselves, they should seek medical help immediately and shelter in place. In order to prevent the spread of this virus, again, the best advice is to adopt common sense practices: wash hands thoroughly and frequently, cover your coughs and sneezes, and avoid sharing personal items. Additionally, ensure the routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces and objects.

Within the United States, Washington State has been declared the epicenter of coronavirus. Cities and communities where this virus is discovered, the

Bishop of the episcopal district should be consulted to adopt additional temporary measures, such as cancellation of worship services, to prevent the spread of disease in the context of gatherings.

Please note that in our efforts, we should pay special attention to those who might be at risk of more serious complications from this virus: the young, the elderly, and those who already have respiratory or cardiac illnesses.

Perhaps the most prudent action that individuals and communities can take in addition to what is listed is to visit the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov) website.

We encourage all Christians to pray fervently that our Lord may comfort and heal those already affected by this virus, and grant strength and wisdom to those working to combat and control the virus. Please be reminded that plans and preparation to combat the spread of the virus should not inadvertently serve to isolate or stigmatize members of our communities. In fact, our common work should be an opportunity to come together, being united in purpose, and care for those who in need in imitation of our Great Physician of souls and bodies.

May our Lord, the Physician of our souls and bodies, grant us protection, health, and peace!

Anointed to Serve,



Staccato Powell
Episcopal Servant of the Most High
Western Episcopal District AME Zion Church
President, Board of Bishop