



African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
3225 West Sugar Creek Road, Charlotte, North Carolina 28269

Wait patiently for the LORD. Be brave and courageous. Yes, wait patiently for the LORD. Psalm 27:14 NLT

We are aware of the directive from the President of the United States insisting Governors allow churches to open for worship. Ironically, the death toll in America is projected to reach one hundred thousand this weekend. Most of the deaths will be people whose pigmentation is filled with an abundance of melanin. We concur with the President's statement, "church is essential to the psyche and we need more prayer and not less."

However, our ecclesiology is extremely different. Church is not confined to a building and neither is it limited to in-person gatherings. The church scattered is as effective and impactful, in some instances more, as the church gathered. Neither is prayer spatial or bound to a time slot. We are proponents of perpetual prayer.

We are urging our pastors and people to not assemble indoors until further notice. Our concern is the health and well-being of our congregants and all people. Without question, COVID-19 has overwhelmed this world. Too much is still unknown about how the coronavirus spreads and how it can be treated. While some locations are just beginning to experience a downturn in cases and deaths, it is too early to rush back to church. As Christians, we have a responsibility to care for one another and look out for those most at risk of getting sick or losing their lives from this virus. Scientists and the medical professionals are baffled by the influence of coronavirus.

We are not alone in our position. The National Council of Churches, USA is urging churches to exercise extreme caution when deciding whether or not to open its doors for services Memorial Day weekend and in the near future. Churches have been reported to be a source of outbreaks of the coronavirus and opening prematurely could have deadly consequences.

Several church leaders have sought to defy the ordinances and policies suggested by health and government officials. Unfortunately, due to their defiance, parishioners have been infected and some have died. At least two (2) congregations (Catoosa Baptist Tabernacle, Ringgold, GA and the Holy Ghost Church in Houston, TX) have closed their doors again after reopening at the end of April and the beginning of May 2020. Several of their parishioners have tested positive for COVID-19, and one of the church leaders died. This is just two examples of many.

Rather than hastily go back to having church in-person, we join the National Council of Churches and other faith groups in urging congregations to make sure they have a solid strategy for opening safely. In anticipation of returning to our sacred spaces, the Board of Bishops has formed a Faith and Order Task Force to develop pragmatic guidelines. However, until then, demonstrate patience and wait on the Lord.

We concur with Bishop Kenneth Monroe's message, to embrace "A Place Called Wait." Whether we have come to realize it or not, such a place, allows us to rest in the Lord. Not only can we find rest in the Lord, but "A Place Called Wait," allows us time for reflection. Ultimately, we will be led by God to restoration. Thank you for adhering to these directives. Continue to stay focused, serve faithfully and stand firm. May God's choicest blessings be upon you!



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Bishop George E. Battle, Jr., Senior Bishop

Bishop Kenneth Monroe
Bishop Darryl Starnes
Bishop Dennis V. Proctor
Bishop Mildred Bonnie Hines
Bishop W. Darin Moore
Bishop Seth O. Lartey
Bishop Michael Angelo Frencher Sr.
Bishop George D. Crenshaw
Bishop Hilliard Dogbe
Bishop U.U. Effiong
Bishop George W.C. Walker, Sr.
Bishop S. Chuka Ekeman, Sr.
Bishop Joseph Johnson
Bishop Marshall H. Strickland
Bishop Nathaniel Jarrett
Bishop Warren M. Brown
Bishop Louis Hunter

Anointed to Serve,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Staccato Powell'.

Staccato Powell
Episcopal Servant of the Most High
President, Board of Bishops