

January 17, 2019

Bishops  
African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church  
500 8th Avenue South  
Nashville, TN 37203

Dear Bishops of the AME Church:

On behalf of the Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church, please accept our sincere condolences on the untimely death of Senior Bishop McKinley Young.

We are praying that God's comforting arms will encompass the AME Church and Bishop Young's family. We are also praying that God's grace will provide you with the strength needed at this time of bereavement.

The pain, the grief, and the feelings of helplessness can seem unbearable. Jesus knew the pain of losing someone in death, his friend Lazarus. The Bible tells us that Jesus joined Lazarus' relatives and friends as they grieved over this loss. Seeing them, Jesus was deeply moved. He "groaned in the spirit and became troubled." Then, as we know very well, "Jesus wept." (John 11:33, 35) Even though Jesus knew that he was about to resurrect Lazarus, still, he felt the pain and sorrow that death brings.

That is why we join you in mourning over Bishop Young's life. Not that we have no hope of seeing him again but because we feel the pain of his absence from this earthly existence.

Yet we know that a life in Christ does not end when the earthly journey is over. Just as Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, we are reminded of Jesus' promise: "I am the resurrection and I am life; those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die" (John 11:25). So, we are asking God to shower you with love that would sustain you and offer comfort as you remember our dear Bishop and colleague.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord, we continue to lift-up the people of the AME Church and the Young family in prayers.

Grace and peace,



Bishop Marcus Matthews  
Executive Secretary  
Council of Bishops  
The United Methodist Church



Rev. Dr. Jean Hawxhurst  
Ecumenical Staff Officer & Leadership Development  
Council of Bishops  
The United Methodist Church