



Council of Bishops African Methodist Episcopal Church

March 31, 2020

To The Connectional Church:

In light of the uncertainty around the spread and management of the novel coronavirus pandemic, Covid-19, the leadership of the African Methodist Episcopal Church has rightly placed the health and well-being of our members as the fundamental priority. Thus, it has been determined that it is wise and prudent to reschedule the 51st General Conference. The results of a series of conversations with officials in Orange County and the Convention Center, and several meetings with the Bishops, and the most recent meeting of the General Conference Commission, a decision has been made to postpone the General Conference. We are currently considering alternative dates in collaboration with the Convention Center and Officials in Orange County/Orlando that will also include dates in 2021. A date certain will be announced within the next few weeks — when all hotel and Convention Center negotiations are complete.

Worldwide, COVID-19 has infected more than 800,000 confirmed cases and finding new victims to assault every day. As of this writing, more than 39,000 people have died. The necrology is growing exponentially daily. Florida is now listed as a “hotspot” with more than 5,000 confirmed cases. By Executive Order, Orange County Mayor, Jerry Demings, has issued a “stay-at-home” order.

Our utmost concern is for the safety and health of the AMEC family as we would potentially gather for our quadrennial meeting, as well as an overarching concern for public health around the globe, especially as it pertains to the novel coronavirus. We are committed to following the policies mandated by official government agencies, and the protocols of best practices to flatten the curve of new cases determined by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Concerning our General Conference, all manner of possibilities are being considered.. Also being considered is the economic impact that a shortened General Conference Program might have as a long-term benefit to the denomination, for the local church, and for delegates, alternates and observers attending the Conference. All considerations, however, must include the full participation of Districts 14 — 20.

Please pray for the health of the world, the nations, and the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Right Reverend Harry L. Seawright

President

Council of Bishops