



# Connectional Lay Organization of the African Methodist Episcopal Church

## THE COVID – 19 PANDEMIC OUTBREAK

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The Lay Organization acknowledges that the COVID – 19 is a global pandemic which needs to be taken seriously. The Council of Bishops of the AME Church “expressed its deepest concern for the safety and health of our membership caused by the novel coronavirus or COVID-19.” The Council of Bishops further noted that “the disease is disrupting our congregants’ lives in multiple ways, threatening our physical, spiritual and economic health.”

As a result, the call on the connectional church is to adhere to the rules and regulations as prescribed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and other protocols as laid down by the health authorities and government authorities in the various countries. Most countries have declared the COVID–19 a national state of disaster and have called for in certain areas total shutdowns/ “shelter in place.” Kindly observe and implement the directives that emanate from our respective countries. As faith-based believers, we also should not be governed by fear –because God’s love will cast out all the fears that has gripped the globe. God’s assurance is evident in the book of Prophet Isaiah 41:10, when God said “*So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*”

To help the congregants get through this difficult period, the Connectional Lay Organization, is called upon to fulfil their mandate of training and education to support all efforts and messaging by the AME Church. A collection of literature - both written and visual has been provided by the connectional church. The AMEC Health Commission provided vital resource materials pertaining to our health and well – being, while the Christian Recorder (TCR) continues to serve as a useful communication tool to keep us informed of connectional matters during these shutdowns/ “shelter in place.” We also recommend the continued use of Lay Organization resources such as the study guide and Book of Devotions for study at home.

With these credible resources at our disposal, we request members of the Connectional Lay Organization to utilize alternative communication platforms (such as digital and online) to further disseminate the AMEC resource materials to re-educate our congregants on how to minimize the chances as well as mitigate the risk of contracting the virus, which includes practising good hygiene (constant washing of hands, avoiding touching (such as hand - shakes and hugging), practicing social distancing, but most importantly, to communicate well with our members when it comes to the churches’ commitment to keep the congregants healthy – all these efforts in pursuit of the core mandate of the lay organization of educating and training to capacitate our members. For the safety and well-being of our valued members, during this time, we recommend any scheduled in-person lay meetings/gatherings at all levels be postponed.

In conclusion, as the Connectional Lay Organization, we join the connectional church to **“PUSH – Pray Until Something Happens” – Pray for God’s merciful intervention!** We pray for healing for those who are infected with the virus and their families – to pray for the world and the universe to the slowing down and ultimate end to this virus. We will pray for the world’s health system, the healthcare practitioners, for their safety as they provide care to others. We must not cease to pray for the world leaders, different governments, – for wisdom, but most importantly, pray for those in our churches for God’s strength and for those whose livelihoods that has been affected negatively by the economic impact of the virus. Through our words and deeds – we believe that we shall overpower this novel virus.

**“We are in this together”**

**Strong in Unity and Love,**

**BROTHER MA MAKITI**

**PRESIDENT – CONNECTIONAL LAY ORGANIZATION**