



THIRD EPISCOPAL DISTRICT  
AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
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*The Right Reverend Frank Madison Reid, 199, Presiding Prelate*  
*Marlaa' Reid, Episcopal Supervisor*

July 17, 2020

Dear Team Third,

Today in Ohio the number of COVID-19 Cases hit a new record high. I have heard that some of our 3rd District churches now have members who are recovering from COVID. One of our churches has lost a member to the virus. In the last 7 days, things have gone from bad to worse, with a new surge to start in September.

In the midst of a national growth in infections, including the states that make up the Third Episcopal District, I now discover that there is a spiritual virus that is causing challenges within the District. This virus is just as divisive and destructive to our District as COVID-19 is to a human body.

I am aware that some of our churches have been defying the Third District April 2020 rules and regulations from the beginning. I am also aware that when it appeared that the COVID numbers were decreasing, we allowed some churches to hold funerals under extremely strict rules that obeyed every scientific standard to make sure that the people were safe. Now, our District is edging closer into the valley of the shadow of death.

The reason that there is a national surge in numbers is because cities and states went back too soon. They went back to business as usual because profits were more important than the safety of people and communities. Now some churches want to use a couple of EXCEPTIONS, that took place under extreme strict scientific standards, to get back to business as usual.

These churches use comparisons, and their economic needs as reasons why they should be able to have church the way they want, when they want. In this new season of CORONAVIRUS destruction, they want to go back to carnal church habits that are infecting more people than ever. Therefore, starting today:

1. Please go back to the April letter from the Episcopal Office knowing that there are NO exceptions.
2. Do not call me or your Presiding Elder asking for exceptions. The April letter is in full force until you hear otherwise. It may have to get stricter depending on what happens in the next week or so.
3. If you choose to defy the rules laid out in the April email, including points 1 and 2 above, you will be referred to ministerial efficiency for putting the lives of your church members and community in jeopardy.
4. Beloved, things are worse now than they were in April, May, and June. Most of our members are still in the at-risk group. The proportion of COVID infections and deaths in our communities are off the chart.

5. Businesses that were opened are now having to close. Cities are thinking about shutting down again and the World Health Agency now says it may be the summer of 2022 before things return half-way to normal. WE MUST NOT GO BACKWARDS! WE MUST GO FORWARD IN FAITH!

6. What can we do? We can love and minister to our communities in new and creative ways. We can pray and ask the Holy Spirit to fill us with the fullness of God so we can encourage, equip and empower our people to trust God and grow the church of Christ in this very difficult season. We can ask God to stretch our thinking and actions outside of our church comfort zones so we can serve the present age.

Finally, we are in this together. If we keep turning on each other we will weaken our District, our churches and communities. If we turn to each other in Christian love and unity, the Third Episcopal District will emerge from this stronger, wiser and better.

Love Never Fails,  
Team Reid, III