



**The Rt. Reverend Reginald T. Jackson**  
*Presiding Bishop*

**EPISCOPAL OFFICE**  
250 Williams Street, Suite 2115  
Atlanta, GA 30303



March 16, 2020

To: Sixth Episcopal District  
Fr: Reginald T. Jackson, Bishop  
Re: Adjustments Due to Coronavirus

The impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic is changing every day, requiring government, business, individuals and yes, faith organizations to make adjustments. A national state of emergency was declared last week, and governors in many states have issued orders in an attempt to curtail the spread of the virus.

Let me assure you that my first priority is the safety and well-being of the congregants and churches of the Sixth Episcopal District. I urge everyone to follow the precautions and directions provided by the Center for Disease Control (CDC). These were listed in my previous memo. They include:

1. Washing our hands daily. Washing should be at least twenty seconds.
2. Not shaking hands or hugging. Either wave or give an elbow bump.
3. Try to keep six feet from people in public places.
4. Cover mouth with inside of elbow or tissue when coughing.
5. Wipe down phones, counters, and other places before and after using.
6. Senior citizens and those with pre-conditions that reduce the immune system should refrain from crowds.

Because the United States was not prepared for this virus, and test kits are just now being made available, experts believe the number of people infected by the virus will skyrocket. As a result, the CDC has issued an advisory that there should be no gathering of crowds of more than 50 people, and the national administration is expected to issue an order to this affect. Further restaurants, retail stores and other entities are being required to close, and some states have instituted curfews.

In an effort to keep congregants and our churches safe I am taking the following actions:

1. The Sixth District Office will be closed until further notice.
2. The date for the Sixth District Delegation Meeting scheduled for March 21<sup>st</sup> is postponed and rescheduled for May 2<sup>nd</sup> at 10AM at St. Paul, Macon.

## ANNUAL CONFERENCES

SOUTH

SOUTHWEST

GEORGIA

AUGUSTA

MACON

ATLANTA-NORTH GEORGIA

3. The Georgia Conference will be postponed and tentatively rescheduled for May 7th to 8<sup>th</sup>.
4. The Augusta Conference will be postponed and tentatively rescheduled for May 13<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup>.

The Macon and Atlanta-North Georgia Conference dates will remain the same unless the Coronavirus necessitates the dates to be changed.

The Presiding Elders in the Georgia Conference were to have reported their budgets at the Southwest Conference on March 10<sup>th</sup>. The Presiding Elders in the Augusta Conference are to report on March 24<sup>th</sup>. Pastors in each of these conferences should have reported to their Presiding Elders by now. Presiding Elders in the Macon and Atlanta-North Georgia Conferences can retain their original reporting dates.

The CDC and state governors have issued recommendations and orders on the number of people who are allowed to gather. Governor Kemp has not issued any order as it relates to the State of Georgia. Mayor Bottoms of Atlanta has issued an order of not more than 250 people gathering in one place. I am leaving this decision up to each individual pastor in consultation with Board of Stewards, since they know their situation best. However, I recommend that churches that have service advise those who have pre-existing conditions which lessen the immune system not to attend or be in crowds. Additionally, congregants should be advised to elbow bump, but not to shake hands or hug and encourage the washing of hands. Provide hand sanitizer in the sanctuary if possible. Also, to try to leave some space while seated in the sanctuary.

Those congregations with more than 250 congregants should not exceed this number in the sanctuary, and if possible, provide other seating in the fellowship hall or other location in the church. Where available churches should also encourage congregants to stream services.

Pastors in all of our churches should encourage congregants who are not attending service to mail their tithes or contributions or to give online. Remind them that while the coronavirus continues, so too does the obligations of the church. Communication is very important. Our congregants will be supportive if they are kept informed.

I will provide updates as the situation warrants.