



NINTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

THE NINTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT OF THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Encouraging, Empowering & Enabling the People of God

1500 Daniel Payne Drive | Birmingham, AL 35214

Office: 205-326-4499 | Fax: 205-326-4434 | www.ninthamechurch.org

Bishop Harry L. Seawright, Presiding Prelate | Reverend Sherita M. Seawright, WMS Episcopal Supervisor

March 13, 2021

Dear Ninth Episcopal District Family,

I greet you in the Name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ. We have come through one year of the pandemic, braving the challenges of the Coronavirus, Covid 19, the illness of loved ones, the passing of family members as well as persons in our Episcopal District. We survived the closing of church buildings, curtailing of activities, and making adjustments we never dreamed of making. Yet with all that has transpired, we have remained resilient and consistent in our commitment to God, our faith in worship and stewardship, and faithfulness to the call and mission of our ministries.

God gave us the opportunity to grow closer to our families and heightened our creativity through worship, using technology and extending outreach ministries. Many of you participated in food giveaways and hot meals distribution, operated food pantries, clothes closets, tutorial programs, and offering programs of encouragement and support to those in need. For all of this, I commend you.

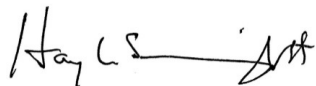
Ninth District, I celebrate your work and fortitude and thank God daily for your commitment to God and to the Ninth Episcopal District. Many of you are asking, “When may we go back into the church building?” As of this date, with many people having received the vaccine and the downturn in the number of new coronavirus cases, I authorize you to reopen your church buildings ***under the following minimal guidelines*** that will help you in making decisions about reopening your specific church facilities.

- Follow the guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the AME Church International Health Commission, amehealthcommission.org, and the Ninth Episcopal District, ninthdistrictame.org.
- Practice social distancing: maintain 6 feet of distance in all seating arrangements.
- Wear a mask at all times.
- Practice all sanitary conditions (handwashing, cleaning of mics, and surfaces, sanitizing each building after every service), etc.
- All attendees at all events must sign a waiver that relieves all levels of the AME Church of any responsibility in the health and well-being, including contracting Covid 19, of persons who attend any service or event. *Get the waiver from the Ninth District website.*
- The maximum number of people allowed to worship will depend on your building’s having enough space to keep people 6 feet apart.

Please encourage each other to get vaccinated against this virus. Rev. Sherita and I praise God that we are well after receiving both doses of the Pfizer vaccine. As state governments relax safety protocols, please continue to wear your masks, practice all sanitary guidelines, and social distancing. Be careful in *all group gatherings*, and use technology to your advantage for meetings, worship, church school, bible study and prayer meetings. Open the church buildings at least once a week to allow air to circulate. Remember to check ceilings, floors, and walls for leaks, etc.

You are in our prayers for much success as we continue to move forward in faith.

Because of Christ, I am,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Harry L. Seawright". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Bishop Harry L. Seawright
Presiding Prelate of the 9th Episcopal District