PASTORS ADAPT

BLACK CHURCHES & THE CORONAVIRUS

By Aswad Walker

Historically, in times of uncertainty and challenge, our faith communities have provided members with a level of blessed assurance. The current coronavirus crisis is no different. Here, area faith leaders share how their churches are meeting the needs of their congregations.

PASTOR RALPH DOUGLAS WEST
The Church Without Walls

Q: ENCOURAGING WORDS FOR HOUSTONIANS?

For the faith community, sacred and secular, things will improve, get better, and return. For a while, we have to live with a different kind of normalcy. For the church community specifically, we have 3,200 years of history. We’ve been through crusades, wars, pandemics, racism, Jim Crow, depressions, recessions, etc., and the church still goes on. Nothing has stopped the church. The church will go on, move forward, and the gates of hell shall not prevail. God will take care. The church is in His hands.

PASTOR D.Z. COFIELD
Good Hope Missionary Baptist Church

Q: ENCOURAGING WORDS FOR HOUSTONIANS?

Stay in. Make sure you follow the directions of the CDC by practicing social distancing and personal hygiene. This is important for our seniors, but it’s applicable to everyone. Stay connected. Take the time to reconnect and reconnect to family and friends. Stay calm. This is a very stressful and anxious time, and you need to realize stress is not what you go through, but how you respond to what you’re going through. Stay connected. We are encouraged and use this time to disengage as a gift. In the midst of it all, put your faith and trust in God. He will see you through.

PASTOR CALONGI JONES
Shrine of the Black Madonna

Q: ENCOURAGING WORDS FOR HOUSTONIANS?

We are a surviving people, and we have always proved throughout history to prevail against impossible odds. In this unique protective. We are the Shrine of the Black Madonna of the Pan-African Orthodox Christian Church love you, and we are ready to serve the community at call.

PASTOR KALONGI JONES
Shrine of the Black Madonna

Q: WHAT IS THE CHURCH CORONAVIRUS STRATEGY?

Our strategy can be summarized in the phrase, “Maintaining Spiritual Connectivity While Practicing Social Distancing.” While we work to comply with the ever-changing CDC guidelines for social interaction, we view the life of faith as essential to a person’s emotional and spiritual well-being. As part of a body of believers, we are committed to staying connected with our members, who are in need and practicing social distancing. In an effort to keep our at-risk members safe from the virus, our Membership Team along with the Houston Food Bank through our nonprofit (Hope for Families), is providing them with essentials and distributing food to those in need.

EASTER PLANS:
- Streaming worship: Sundays, 8 a.m., 10 a.m., ChurchStreaming.tv, mobile app (I AM HOPE), Facebook (Good Hope MBC), YouTube Live (Good Hope), IGTV, www.goodhope.org

PASTOR LINDA DAVIS
Boynton United Methodist Church

Q: ENCOURAGING WORDS FOR HOUSTONIANS?

I know that there seems to be bad news everywhere, but there is still good news for the believer. God is still on the throne and we will get through this by faith. Continue to use wisdom by taking the necessary precautions and pray the promise of protection found in Psalm 91 over you and your family. Exercise your faith over your fears!

Q: WHAT IS THE CHURCH CORONAVIRUS STRATEGY?

We are taking things week-by-week. We are encouraging our congregation to take things easy and play it safe. We know that our lives have been radically changed due to the COVID-19 virus. We are following the instructions of our local and federal government of no gatherings of more than 10 persons. Therefore, we are taking care of the business of the church by meeting via conference calls, Zoom, and a lot of emails. We’re also participating in the conference calls that are being held by our Bishop Scott Jones of the Texas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church and Houston Methodist Hospital in which we receive updates on the COVID-19 virus and how it affects us all locally and globally.

EASTER PLANS:
- Streaming worship: Sunday: 10:30 a.m., Facebook (Boynton Chapel UMC-Houston)

PASTORS RUDY & JUANITA RASMUS
St. Johns Downtown

Q: ENCOURAGING WORDS FOR HOUSTONIANS?

Here’s a mental protocol as we are “Learning to Be!” BREATHE in through your nose, whole deeply and slowly. BREATHE out through your mouth and slowly. This allows you to release tension. PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR THOUGHTS. You choose to spiral down, or you can choose to spiral up! Choose life! Be kind to yourself. Be the adult to reassure your inner child that all shall be well. Access the Divine living and breathing in you. You can get more tips for “Learning to Be: Finding Your Center After the Bottom Falls Out,” my Juanita Campbell Rasmus new book available on Amazon.

Q: WHAT IS THE CHURCH CORONAVIRUS STRATEGY?

The Pan-African Orthodox Christian Church was built to deal with community crisis. The fellowship of the church is centered on community engagement and partnership. Our strategy is to stay in constant contact through email, telephone, and social media with our members and the surrounding Black communities. We have an emergency response team prepared and ready to serve our members and the surrounding Black communities. We have an emergency response team prepared and ready to serve our members and the surrounding Black communities. We are a surviving people, and we have always proved throughout history to prevail against impossible odds. In this unique protective. We are the Shrine of the Black Madonna of the Pan-African Orthodox Christian Church love you, and we are ready to serve the community at call.

EASTER PLANS:
- National combined live service

PASTORS RUDY & JUANITA RASMUS
St. Johns Downtown

Q: WHAT IS THE CHURCH CORONAVIRUS STRATEGY?

Several years ago, we began to see a drop in church attendance and began asking the hard questions like, “What is the future for the church?” During that time, I was completing a doctorate and research on Black millennial culture. We began taking steps toward creating an online presence and realized there were more people watching the services online than there ever was in the actual building. The onset of the pandemic only confirmed this fact and we found ourselves prepared for what was to come...

EASTER PLANS:
- Streaming worship: Sundays, 10 a.m., Facebook (St. John’s Downtown) www.stjohnsdowntown.org

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Boynton United Methodist Church

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EASTER PLANS:
- Streaming worship: Saturday food pantry & Easter bags for kids

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Boynton United Methodist Church

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