



FAITH LEADERS RELEASE STATEMENT ON COVID-19

Memphis, Tenn. April 28, 2020. FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE. Today a group of fifteen clergy, representing major dioceses and congregations in West Tennessee, together released a joint statement to address the current state of the COVID-19 crisis. These collaborative faith leaders call for a moral, thoughtful approach to move the community forward instead one driven solely by political, economic or even health concerns.

“Memphis is a city where matters of faith touch every aspect of our communal life. We do not presume to speak for all clergy in the city and surrounding areas, but we hope that our voices reflect the wide and deep fabric of Memphis and West Tennessee’s congregational life.”

In the statement, they identify four guiding principles:

1. We will rely on the medical and scientific community as our primary resource for information.
2. We will work collaboratively to responsibly care for those who contract COVID-19.
3. We will collaborate to determine when returning to in-person worship is possible.
4. We will continue to speak up.

All faith leaders in Memphis and West Tennessee are invited to sign the Clergy COVID-19 Response Statement and support the guiding principles. To sign, complete a brief form on ChurchHealth.org/fce.

The signors to the letter include:

Imam Anwar Arafat, Islamic Center of Tennessee
Bishop Linwood Dillard, Citadel of Deliverance COGIC
Bishop William T. McAlilly, Nashville Episcopal Area, UMC
Rabbi Micah D. Greenstein, Temple Israel
Scott Morris, MD, MDiv Church Health
Bishop Phoebe Roaf, Episcopal Diocese of West Tennessee
Pastor John Siebeling, The Life Church
Rev. Deborah B. Smith, Metro District, UMC
Rev. Rufus Smith, Hope Church Memphis
Rev. Dr. Stacy L. Spencer, New Direction Christian Church
Rev. Dr. Shane Stanford, Christ United Methodist Church
Rev. Dr. Gina M. Stewart, Christ Missionary Baptist Church
Bishop David P. Talley, Catholic Diocese of Memphis
Rev. Dr. J. Lawrence Turner, Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church
Rev. Scott Walters, Calvary Episcopal Church

The full statement is attached.



About Church Health:

Founded in 1987, Church Health is a faith-based, non-profit organization located in Memphis, Tennessee that provides comprehensive health care and health services to uninsured and underserved individuals in Shelby County, Tennessee. Church Health extends training, education and outreach to countless individuals and organizations to foster physical, emotional and spiritual well-being among patients, participants, families and the community at-large. In March 2020, in the face of the coronavirus pandemic, Church Health convened the Memphis Clergy COVID-19 Response network, consisting of more than 400 faith leaders across the Mid-South.

For more information, visit ChurchHealth.org/fce.

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