

# THE CHRISTIAN RECORDER

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## The Communion of Empty Hands: Words of Edification, Inspiration, and Instruction

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**Third Street Bethel AME Church Celebrates HBCU Day**

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**Mt. Moriah Community AME Church Dedication**

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**Where Do We Go?**

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**Necessary Silence**

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**Donald Trump Will Always Envy President Barack Obama**

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**AMEs Honored at SDPC**

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By Bishop Clement W. Fugh

In all likelihood, the Order preventing assemblies of more than 10 persons during the COVID-19 pandemic will still be in effect on Palm/Passion Sunday (Sunday, April 5th), and possibly through Holy Week and Easter Sunday (April 12th). First Sundays and Maundy Thursday are times when the Christian Community gathers in its most intimate fellowship at the Lord's Table for a meal of recollection and of thanksgiving, the center of the Church and its various acts of worship. How do we keep such an essential part of our fellowship viable while being responsive to prohibitions against assemblies and against visiting from home to home?

Allow me to share with you for inspiration and for practical instruction an Easter Sunday reading by Thomas G. Pettepiece, from *A Guide to Prayer for Ministers and Other Servants*, by Rueben P. Job and Norman Shawchuck.

*Today is Resurrection Sunday. My first Easter in prison. Surely the regime can't continue to keep almost 10,000 political prisoners in its gallows! In here, it is much easier to understand how the men in the Bible felt, stripping themselves of everything that was superfluous. Many of the prisoners have already heard that they have lost their homes, their furniture, and everything they owned. Our families are broken up. Many of our children are wandering the streets, their father in one prison, their mother in another. There is not a single cup. But a score of Christian prisoners experienced the joy of celebrating communion – without bread or wine. The communion of empty hands. The nonChristians said: 'We will help you; we will talk quietly so that you can meet.' Too dense a silence would have drawn the guards' attention as surely as the lone voice of the preacher. 'We have no bread, nor water to use instead of wine,' I told them, 'but we will act as though we had.' 'This meal in which we take part,' I said, "reminds us of the prison, the torture, the death and final victory of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The bread is the body which He gave for humanity. The fact that we have none represents very well the lack of bread in the hunger of so many millions of human beings. The wine, which we don't have today, is His blood and represents our dream of a united humanity, of a just society, without difference of race or class.' I held out my empty hand to the first person on my right and placed it over his open hand, and the same with the others: 'Take, eat, this is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' Afterward, all of us raised our hands to our mouth, receiving the body of Christ in silence. 'Take, drink, this is the blood of Christ which was shed to seal the new covenant of God with men. Let us give thanks, sure that Christ is here with us, strengthening us.' We gave thanks to God, and finally stood up and embraced each other.*

On the First Sunday, by whatever medium/platform you are using to engage and stay connected with your members, following the sermon, and the invitation to Christian discipleship, kneel at the Communion from which your members customarily receive the bread and the wine which represent the body and blood of Christ. Consecrate the elements. Then, in the Bidding, encourage all who will participate in the Communion of Empty Hands as though they actually had the bread and wine. Once the ban is lifted, at the first opportunity, when all of God's children get together, what a time, what a time, what a time!!!!

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## 11 COMMENTS

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**Kenneth Golphin**

MARCH 26, 2020 AT 8:08 PM

What a wonderful idea! I do plan to share this meditation at that time. Thank you Bishop Fugh!



**Jacqueline Martin**

MARCH 27, 2020 AT 1:37 AM

A great idea , most important ritual in the AME church. I am a stewardess at my church.Thanks



**Rev. Dr. Barbara Sargent Green**

MARCH 27, 2020 AT 8:01 AM

Thank you. This was informative and thought provoking. Sometimes we tend to forget there is a population who do not take communion on a consistent basis, because it is not available to them. I was wondering how this would be handled. I had a few thoughts, but this was certainly not one of them.



**Rev. Dr. Helen-Bolden Rogers**

MARCH 27, 2020 AT 6:04 PM

Rev.Dr.Helen M. Rogers (retired and former AME pastor)

Such an encouraging, innovative and creative approach; so imitative and honoring our CREATIVE God!

Thank you for sharing, for opening our hearts and minds to ingeniously celebrating the Eucharist. I must read soon.

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**Carolyn Snorton**

MARCH 27, 2020 AT 11:37 AM

Thank you Bishop from a fellow Nashvillan.

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**Rev. Patsy Brown**

MARCH 27, 2020 AT 8:19 AM

Thank you, Bishop Fugh!!! This was an eye-opener for a most memorable Communion service. I feel a congregation would really relish the memory of participating from their individual homes via technology in such a service of a Communion of Empty Hands!!!

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**Rev. Brenda B. Hector**

MARCH 27, 2020 AT 6:43 PM

Thank you, Bishop Fugh, This is very helpful for us as we enter into this season and for Communion Sunday. We the Body of Christ in UTAH appreciate all you do. May God bless you and keep you safe.

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**Morse Brown**

MARCH 29, 2020 AT 8:37 PM

Bishop Fugh, thanks. I am sharing this with my FB friends. I think this is an excellent idea.

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**Morse Brown**

MARCH 29, 2020 AT 8:39 PM

Bishop Fugh, thanks. I think this is excellent. I am sharing this.

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**Shirley Longmore**

MARCH 30, 2020 AT 3:57 PM

Thank you my Bishop. It stirred my soul and made my heart rejoice at the mere thought of participation.



**Sharyn Menzies**

APRIL 2, 2020 AT 10:02 PM

Thank you, Bishop Fugh, for sharing this enlightening, encouraging and inspiring insight of communion with, "empty hands!" Simply beautiful!

Comments are closed.

**TRANSLATOR**

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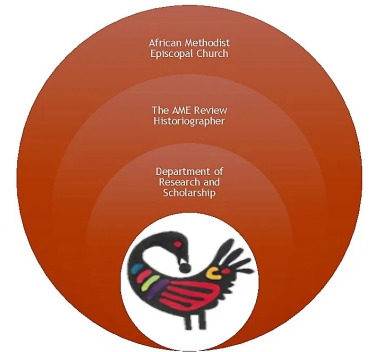
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