

**General Conference of Grand Councils  
Royal and Select Masters  
Prince Hall Affiliation, U.S.A. & Bahamas**



**General Conference Grand Thrice Illustrious Grand Master  
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*My victory and honor come from God alone. He is my refuge, a rock where no enemy can reach me.  
Psalm 62:7*

**16 March 2020**

**TO: GC Deputy Master Fredrick Joyner, GC Principal Conductor of the Works Joel Mends, Elected and Appointed General Conference Grand Officers, Past General Conference Grand Officers, Affiliated Jurisdiction Grand Council Officers and Most Illustrious Companions, General Conference Royal Grand Perfect Matron Patricia Watkins, General Conference Royal Grand Chief Advisor Michael Thomas, Royal Grand Perfect Matrons, Royal Grand Chief Advisors, Past Royal Grand Perfect Matrons, Past Royal Grand Chief Advisors, Officers and Members of the Jurisdictional Grand Courts, Ladies of the Circle of Perfection:**

**Greetings All,**

**I pray all are in good health and enjoying the bountiful blessings of our Creator. We have been closely monitoring the spread of COVID-19 novel Coronavirus as an emerging contagious respiratory disease. Our conference is about 45 days away and the number of infections being reported across the country is increasing daily. Across the Prince Hall family many jurisdictions have cancelled / postponed all scheduled events and suspended all travel outside of the jurisdiction until further notice.**

**Of particular concern to our leadership, many of our members slated to attend the conference are from states where the virus has been spreading more rapidly and we have a number of members who are older and have health concerns, which puts them in high-risk categories based on the information known at this time. Also given the close proximity to others when riding the elevators it would be difficult to minimize exposure with the best disinfecting practices.**

**In light of these health concerns, growing uncertainty across the country and the President's declaration of this being a "National Emergency", our leadership team held a conference call earlier this week and we feel that it is best for our members and others staying in the hotel that we cancel our General Grand Assembly for the year 2020. While we are extremely disappointed with this decision, we believe it is for the greater good of all as your health and safety are of paramount importance to us.**



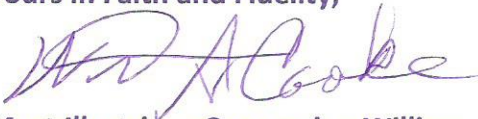
Presently the hotel is conducting business as usual, with additional focus on cleaning and sanitation practices. However, we have been in ongoing discussions with the Holliday Inn regarding our Conference and the hotel will be providing full refunds to anyone who has booked a room under our block. Please call 888 465 4329 to cancel your room and be sure to maintain your cancellation number. If you have any concerns with the hotel, please contact our Convention Coordinator Charlie Alexander @ 804 683 5576 and he will work to resolve your concern. **DO NOT CONTACT THE HOTEL.** If your card has not been charged, please continue to monitor your account regularly. Those who made reservations with the Hampton Inn may contact the hotel directly at the same number used to make your reservation.

Lastly, although our conference has been cancelled, the business of the General Grand Conference continues; please ensure a copy of all reports which would have gone in the reports booklet are sent to both me and the and the General Conference Recorder. Also all jurisdictional affiliation fees, membership fees and reports are due by the deadlines noted in the proclamation. Any Grand Council wishing to be considered for Grand Council of the year should submit the required paperwork to M.I.C. Kenneth Barkley @ [kennethmbarkley@gmail.com](mailto:kennethmbarkley@gmail.com) by the deadline listed in the announcement.

Whether you are at home or traveling, everyone can do their part to help respond to this emerging public health threat. The World Health Organization recommends practicing good hygiene to protect yourself against infection by washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. Cover your coughs and sneezes and maintain distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing. Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care. Frequently clean touched surfaces and objects daily. Lastly, stay informed by frequently going to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the World Health Organization's websites for up to date information along with information being provided locally.

In closing, I leave you with these two verses of scripture: Luke 21:11 & Matthew 24:44, **There will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences. And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.**

Yours in Faith and Fidelity,



**Most Illustrious Companion William A. Cooke, KYGCH**  
**General Conference Grand Thrice Illustrious Grand Master**

