

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought into stark reality the health disparities impacting communities of color. Social determinants of health like housing, food security, and chronic stress lead to high blood pressure, diabetes and obesity – each dramatically increasing the impact of COVID-19. These factors, together with a history of distrust and inequity experienced within the health system means dramatically worse COVID-19 outcomes for Black communities.

As of February 2021, 1 in 645 Black Americans have died from COVID-19 (APM Research Labs), giving Blacks the second highest death rate - surpassed only by Indigenous Americans.

Now that COVID-19 vaccines are becoming more available we must address two issues: hesitancy and accessibility. We are united in boldly facing these issues by facilitating crucial conversations about vaccine safety and by partnering with each other and with health care organizations to increase access to the vaccine. We must make sure that technology, distance and lack of trusted information don't keep us from receiving a vaccine that will save our lives. In fact, in Orange County, only 10% of eligible Black residents have been vaccinated (OC Dept. of Health).

Our churches are united in supporting the cause to bring healthy equity and justice to the Black community. We stand in solidarity with one another and the community as we heed the call to help those who may otherwise go without. We are committed to being a united voice of hope and faith as we seek to serve, support and protect our families, friends and neighbors. We know that together we will make a stronger impact in ensuring that more people get vaccinated.

Through our congregations and by partnering with the Orange County Health Agency and Providence, we will host community prayer services, webinars and vaccine clinics that will increase information and access to the vaccine.

Please join us in this work and in supporting those communities most impacted by COVID-19.

In solidarity,



Reverend Kenneth C. Curry, Jr.  
Friendship Baptist Church  
<https://www.wearefriendship.church/>



Reverend Chineta Goodjoin  
New Hope Presbyterian Church  
<https://mynewhopepres.org/>



Pastor Reverend Delman Howard  
Johnson Chapel AME Church  
<https://johnsonchapelamesa.com/>



Pastor Ivan Pitts  
Second Baptist Church  
<https://sbc.family/>



Pastor Reverend Dr. Ralph Williamson  
Christ Our Redeemer AME Church  
<https://www.corchurch.org/>

#### **Additional Resources**

OC Health Agency <https://www.ochealthinfo.com/>  
Providence <https://www.providence.org/>  
CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/>