



## AND HOW SHALL WE PROCEED?

### ACTIONS TO TAKE DURING ADVENT

*By: Reverend Bria Belim*

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#### **Proceed with Caution**

The word caution is defined as “to avoid mistakes.” In this advent season, we must proceed with caution to avoid making mistakes such as those that could lead our people to thinking that Christmas and Advent are the very same thing.

Remember, Advent is preparing for the first coming of Christ while anticipating the second coming and not just the birth of Christ. We celebrate the Birth of Jesus Christ during the Advent season. Proceed with Caution and remember Advent isn’t a celebration, it’s a time for preparation. Think of Advent as another Lent. Christmas is the celebration. Think of Christmas as another Easter.

May our worship services be Advent-focused, from the hymns to the litany to the preaching. Our *hope* is in Christ’s coming and Christ’s second coming that we will be found preceding with caution.

#### **Proceed with Fun**

Fun, fun, fun. This word that we love to hear in the midst of post-pandemic, in the midst of wars, chaos and unchartered times. When we have fun, we pause to let our minds be focused on something else.

While we prepare and look forward to the first coming of Christ, let us remember to make it fun. Fun for our youth, fun for our children and fun for our seniors of the church. Advent is a time where everyone has a common point of celebration. As we proceed with fun, we will be able to see the *joy* on the faces of everyone who will see Advent done in a different way following all that is going on. Let us preach and teach in ways that are fun and active.

## **Proceed with Inclusion**

Let's face it, inclusion is a word that is almost new to us. Coming from a ministerial staff of 17 with only two men, sometimes, the group can turn into a women's fellowship of ministers. It is important that as we go through this Advent season that we are including everyone in our planning, outreach, preaching, and teaching.

We all are blessed to have at least one young person in our church and some of us are blessed to have a fully active YPD in our churches. To fully prepare for Christ coming, we have to have every generation a part of our church participating. When everyone is able to participate, no one feels left out. Jesus said, "Let the Children come to me..." Prepare with *love* and proceed with inclusion.

## **Proceed with Humility and Authenticity**

Fellow clergy and pastors, I am encouraging you to BE YOURSELF! Just as the old saying goes, "be who you are." Please friends, do not try to do anything that will hurt you during this Advent season. Be yourself and let God use you! I encourage you to demonstrate your own Advent season journey with the church, the world, and your community. As you "be yourself," remember to be humble. Our walks are being viewed so we must *PROCEED WITH CAUTION, PROCEED WITH FUN, PROCEED WITH INCLUSION AND PROCEED WITH HUMILITY AND AUTHENTICITY* as we prepare in Hope, Love, Peace, and Joy.

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**The Reverend Bria Belim** serves as the Associate Pastor of the Charles Street African Methodist Episcopal Church in Boston, Massachusetts. Reverend Bria is a fourth generation AME church member, and an ordained Itinerant Elder in the AME Church. The passion behind her purpose, "I'm just out here in these streets trying to change lives"... or as her grandmother used to say... "If I can help someone along the way... my living won't be in vain!"