

# SHARING YOUR CONGREGATION'S STORY: WHY IT MATTERS AND HOW TO DO IT

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Editor, The Christian Recorder



- Begun in 1848 as The Christian Herald
- Name changed in 1852; originally based in Philadelphia
- Oldest Black-owned periodical in continuous publication
- Noted for post Civil War ads placed by former slaves
- Southwestern Christian Recorder and Western Christian Recorder briefly existed as regional publications



A. M. E. BOOK CONCERN,



# LAYOUT FOR PRESENTATION

- Introduction
- Scripture: John 21:25
- “What is my story?”
- “How do I tell my story?”
- “Who will listen to my story?”
- Case Study: St. John AME Church and the 2020 Nashville Tornado
- Conclusion

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# SCRIPTURE

*“But there are also many other things that Jesus did; if every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.”*

John 21:25 (NRSVue)

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# “WHAT IS MY STORY?”

## What we do for our local church family

- Annual Days
- Celebrating Scholarships
- Highlighting achievements of members

## What we do for our community

- Foodbanks
- Outreach with seniors
- Partnerships with schools

## What we do with our broader faith family

- Ecumenical events
- Interfaith partnerships

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# “HOW DO I TELL MY STORY?”

- Remember the five key questions in journalism:
  - Who?
  - What?
  - When?
  - Where?
  - Why?
- Be like Jude—short and memorable.
  - Under 600 words
  - Quotes from at least 2-3 members
- A picture really IS worth 1000 words
  - Photos of 3 Megapixels or more (check your cell phone)
  - Balance action and posing
- Understand how to use Social Media
  - Beware the echo chamber
  - Facebook vs. Instagram vs. TikTok vs. Snapchat vs...

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# “WHO WILL LISTEN TO MY STORY?”

- Start at home
  - UM News and Annual Conference Communications Networks
  - Other Pan-Methodist and Ecumenical partners
- Local newspapers
  - Find the religion reporter or the community affairs person
  - Don't overlook ethnic media
- TV Stations
  - Find the community reporter and develop a relationship
  - Public Access TV
- YouTubers and Blogs
- National News Wires and Releases

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# MARCH 2-3, 2020 TORANADO IN NASHVILLE, TENNESEE



# CASE STUDY: ST. JOHN AME CHURCH AND 2020 NASHVILLE TORNADO

- “What was the story?”
  - March 2-3 a tornado ripped through the northern part of Davidson County and destroyed St. John AME Church
- “How do we tell the story?”
  - Received national coverage from the *NY Times*, *Washington Post* and many local outlets
  - Maintained a relationship and wanted to share the “Decommissioning” as part of OUR story
- “Who will listen to our story?”
  - Prepared a press release to local TV Stations and news papers
  - Used member contacts
  - Reached out to the Mayor and local Councilperson

# DECONSECRATION SERVICE ON JUNE 26, 2020

**JUNE 26 2020 9:30 AM**

## ST. JOHN AME CHURCH

"The Mother Church of African Methodism In Tennessee"

# Deconsecration

SERVICE

Social Distancing Observed - Mask Provided



Rev. Lisa Hammonds  
Pastor



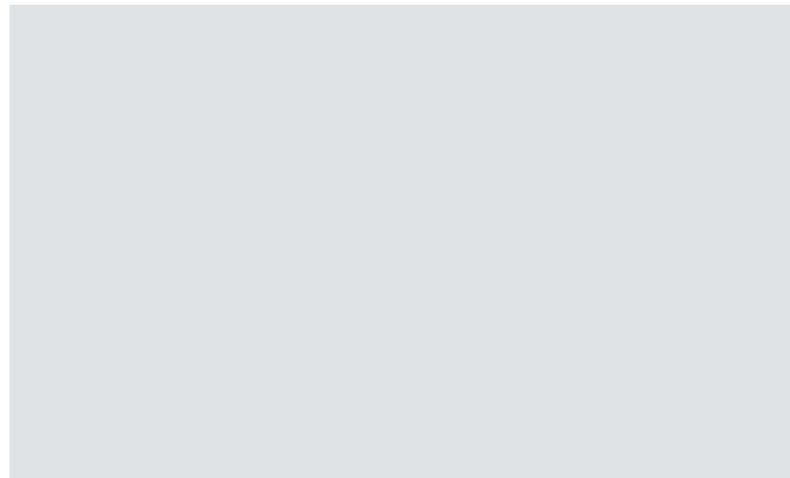
Bishop Jeffrey N. Leath  
Presiding Bishop



Mayor John Cooper  
Metropolitan Nashville

St. John AME Church  
1822 Formosa St  
Nashville, TN 37208

STREAM LIVE ON FACEBOOK OR ZOOM  
<https://www.facebook.com/stjohnamenashville>  
Join Zoom Meeting ID: 861 7541 9444  
Or call in to 312-626-6799  
Access code 8617541944



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# CONCLUSIO N

Our churches have untold stories that can be shared to encourage our congregation and to promote evangelism. Our job is to tell as many of these stories as we can.

Don't be afraid to tell your story. Even if only one person reads it, it's one more who knows about it.

Don't undervalue your story. We have more to share than we think.

THANK  
YOU!

John Thomas III

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