

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Gov. Mapp, A Lifelong Member Of The A.M.E Church, Extends Condolences To Charleston, S.C. Brethren

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ST. THOMAS -- Governor Kenneth Mapp expressed condolences on behalf of the people of the Virgin Islands to the Emmanuel A.M.E. Church congregation of Charleston over the weekend, following the shooting deaths of nine members of the church during Bible study last Wednesday.

In a letter to the Presiding Prelate of the 7th Episcopal District (South Carolina), Bishop Richard Franklin Norris, the Governor noted the rich history of that church, which was founded when the Free African Society established Bethel A.M.E. church in Philadelphia in 1794, as an alternative to racial abuse during worship.

Mapp praised the Emmanuel congregation for its resilience, given the many challenges it has faced in Charleston throughout its history. The governor assured the Bishop that the prayers of Virgin Islanders are with the victims and their families.

"My heart aches for my A.M.E. Brethren in Charleston. This is a senseless tragedy that no community should have to experience. It is unfathomable that someone would walk into a church when people are having a prayer meeting and take their lives," Mapp said. "My family has been involved in the AME church for generations. I cannot remember a time that has brought such sorrow. I rise in support of the Emmanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, the members, the Pastors and their Bishop."

The territory's leader has also written and expressed condolences on behalf of the people of the territory to Governor Nikki R. Haley and U.S. Senator Tim Scott, both of South Carolina. Governor Mapp and his family are lifelong members of Bethel A.M.E. Church on St. Croix, which is currently observing its 95th anniversary on the bigger of the three islands this week.