

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024

Remarks at Mount Airy Church of God in Christ in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
July 7, 2024

The President. Hello, hello, hello. It's good to be home. Please, please sit down. Thank you.

Audience member. Let's go, Joe!

The President. Well, Bishop, I you—[*applause*]. Bishop Morris, thanks for keeping me in my seat. [*Laughter*] And I want to thank you for—you know, I said to the bishop, "It's good to be home."

And please sit down. [*Laughter*]

I got my start in public life—never intending to run for office—as a public defender in the civil rights movement. And I was no great shakes, but I worked hard in Delaware.

And I used to go to 7:30 mass at my church, and then I would show up Reverend Beaman's—now Bishop Beaman—church—AME church in Wilmington. Get ready to go out and to make the plans for what we were going to do to change the situation. So it really is good to be home.

You know, Bishop Felton, thanks for that introduction and moving sermon. And thank you to this incredible congregation for welcoming me as you have. It really means—[*inaudible*].

Across the way, in Delaware, I attended morning Mass in my church and head to Sunday services at a Black church, as I said early on. I've always felt the power of your faith, in good times and in the tough times. The fact is, as Scripture says, "All things work together for good"—[*applause*]"to those who love God and are called according to his purpose."

Our purpose is to serve others. That's our purpose. To know everyone is entitled to be treated with dignity and respect. To know faith without works is dead.

We're all called to be doers of the world. In this Nation, that means keeping our eyes on the north star. The very idea of America—that we're all created equal in the image of God and deserve to be treated with dignity and respect our entire lives.

We've never fully lived up to that, but we've never fully walked away from it either. And that's because of you and generations before you who led the church from slavery to freedom, always praying, always believing that joy cometh in the morning. You've never given up.

In my life and as your President, I've tried to walk my faith. To get us through the pandemic that claimed a million loved ones and left 8 million people with an empty chair at dinner or breakfast because of someone they lost.

To ensure that the economy has the lowest Black unemployment and more Black small businesses in decades. To rebuild and ensure Black America has the peace of mind that comes with health care for everybody.

To ensure you can follow your dreams without the burden of student debt. To make housing affordable, help more Black families build wealth and pass it on to future generations.

To keep our communities safe by getting weapons of war off our streets. To give hate no safe harbor.

And while there are those who want to erase history, Kamala and I want to make it. Because Black history is American history.

Of course, there's more to do to deliver jobs and justice. There's more to do. But above all, we need to protect our rights, the rights of all Americans, to make sure democracy works for you.

Folks, I know with every fiber of my being—I know I'm—only look like I'm 40 years old, but I've been around a little bit. *[Laughter]* The Bishop and I were talking about that. It's heck turning 40.

But all kidding aside, you know, I've been doing this a long time. And I, honest to God, have never been more optimistic about America's future if we stick together. No, I really mean it.

Audience member. You can do it, Joe!

The President. Here's what else I've learned and many of you have learned. You walk your faith as well. We're all imperfect beings. We don't know where or what fate will deliver us to or when.

What we do know is that we can seek a life of light, hope, love, and truth no matter what. We can seek that life. Take all of our experiences and give everything we have to work together. Because when we do, you can't stop us. I really—I mean this sincerely.

I'm about to host the NATO nations in Washington. We've put them together. We've done—the world is looking to us. Not a joke. The world is looking to America, not to carry their burden, but to lead their hopes.

Ladies and gentlemen, I'm not—I'm going to be inclined to go on longer than I should here, so I'm not going to. But I just want to say, look, I think that we just have to work together.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I believe when I ran the first time for President, I said something basic. I said we have to bring back dignity and hope in America, number one. Number two, we have to give working class and middle class people like the family I came from a shot and build the economy from the middle out and the bottom up, not the top down. And thirdly, we must unite America again.

That's my goal. That's what we're going to do.

God bless you all, and may God protect our troops. Thank you, thank you, thank you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:47 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Ernest C. Morris, Sr., bishop and founder, and J. Louis Felton, bishop, Mount Airy Church of God in Christ; Silvester S. Beaman, Chair, President's Advisory Council on African Diaspora Engagement, in his former capacity as pastor of the Bethel AME Church in Wilmington, DE; and Vice President Kamala D. Harris. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 8.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Mount Airy Church of God in Christ in Philadelphia, PA.

Locations: Philadelphia, PA.

Names: Beaman, Silvester S.; Felton, J. Louis; Harris, Kamala D.; Morris, Ernest C., Sr.

Subjects: Civil rights movement; COVID-19 pandemic; Federal student loans, partial forgiveness; Gun violence, prevention efforts; Health insurance, access and availability; Housing, affordability and access; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Pennsylvania, Mount Airy Church of God in Christ in Philadelphia; Pennsylvania, President's visit; Small businesses, promotion efforts; Unemployment rate; Vice President.

DCPD Number: DCPD202400575.