

First Mt. Olive Freewill Baptist Church

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Bishop Oscar E. Brown, Senior Pastor

For Immediate Release

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FIRST MT OLIVE CHURCH NO LONGER INTERESTED IN HAMPTON GARDENS AREA Systemic Evil Displayed and Witnessed

(Baltimore, MD) May 20, 2011-Senior Pastor Bishop Oscar E. Brown and the First Mt Olive Freewill Baptist Church Family are no longer interested in pursuing the purchase of the Belvedere Community Christian Church property located in the Hampton Gardens Area. This decision was made as a result of an apparent systemic evil that was displayed and witnessed by the church representatives on Monday, May 16th.

On April 27th, the Building Committee of First Mt. Olive Church expressed an interest to the broker for the Belvedere Christian Church property. On Saturday, April 30th, the First Mt Olive Diaconate met and agreed to begin the due diligence concerning the property. The top priority before developing any plans or meeting with the County Executive was to invite the First Mt Olive Church Family to tour and to schedule a meeting with the Hampton Gardens community.

On May 8th, Bishop Brown received a certified letter from the Hampton Gardens Community Association. In this letter, the Board stated, "...we respectfully request a meeting with you and/or representatives of First Mt. Olive Freewill Baptist Church and members of our board in an effort to gain an understanding of what the church's intentions might be for the property should you decide to purchase". Bishop Brown called the contact to acknowledge receipt, express appreciation for the invitation, review the purpose, discuss attendees and to confirm a meeting date and time.

While en route to the meeting on May 16th, Bishop Brown and the Building Committee were met by 50+ signs displayed and witnessed others being posted that read, "NO MEGA CHURCH!" In contradiction to what was displayed and to First Mt. Olive group's dismay, the opening remarks to them as to the purpose of the meeting were consistent with the welcoming tone of the written invitation. Bishop Brown was appalled to hear these remarks after the clear unwelcomed display. He further inquired about the endorsement of the signs. The Board finally took responsibility for the production of the signs in order to "unify" the community's efforts.

It was later discovered that the systemic events leading to the date of the meeting posted on a website developed by the Board, preserveprovidence.wordpress.com, further supported the notion that the community and its board had drawn their conclusion BEFORE the scheduled meeting.

The First Mt. Olive representatives' intentions were pure and respectful. They understand that the least tension between church and community creates a powerful merger to perform ministry. Given this reality, they were hopeful that what they were led to believe to be an introductory and assessment meeting would give both the Hampton Gardens Association Board and First Mt. Olive more insight and considerations in determining next steps. Obviously, there were **two** agendas.

When asked for Bishop Brown's reaction to what was displayed and witnessed, he remarked with great conviction, "Unfortunately, the systemic evil would rather forge ahead in ignorance, offering an apology for mistakes made along the way, than to take time to study so that one can move forward in truth. My assignment is to find us a place. Anything else in this season is secondary. We thank the Belvedere Christian Church and Mr. Fred Archer for your time."

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