

# GROUND-BREAKING CEREMONY TO REBUILD HISTORIC POTOMAC AFRICAN-AMERICAN CHURCH

**POTOMAC, MD** — This Saturday, July 9, 2022, at 10 AM, Business, religious, community and civic leaders will celebrate the ground-breaking to save one of Montgomery County's oldest and most historic black churches, and to preserve the history and legacy of an important part of the County's rich African American history.

This groundbreaking highlights a three-year campaign to restore the Scotland AME Zion Church building, listed on the National Registry of Historic Sites, which was built by hand by members of the once-sprawling Scotland community and has stood as a beacon to its congregation for the past 117 years at 10902 Seven Locks Road in Potomac.

Speakers at this event include Bishop W. Darin Moore, MAED, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church; Marc Elrich, Montgomery County Executive; Sarah Rogers, Heritage Montgomery; Andrew Friedson, Montgomery Co. Council; Desmond Grimball, Design Architect; Alan Heard, Scotland Trustees Board Chair; and David Fraser-Hidalgo, Maryland State Delegate

The flash flood of July 7, 2019, three years ago this week, severely damaged the building and forced its congregation to worship elsewhere after the County condemned the building as unsafe. The little white wooden church that has stood by the side of the road for nearly a century had withstood the relocation of Seven Locks Road, Montgomery County actions that threatened its existence, runoff from surrounding developing aimed directly at the building, and aggressive plans by developers to eradicate the African American community and replace it with a community more fitting to Potomac's upscale image.

The flood three years ago seemed like the final blow to the beleaguered building and community. Discussion began over whether to find a new location not in a flood plain, or whether to join with an existing AME Church elsewhere in the county. It became apparent that a move from this location – where Black children not only were taught their faith but learned to read and write during school segregation -- would mean the end of the congregation, and the severing of historical ties.

Instead, the families of the church vowed to rebuild God's Temple on its original site (Ezra 2:68-69). The congregation, led by new pastor The Rev. Dr. Evalina Huggins, roused an outpouring of resources and support from state and local civic, religious, and business leaders, who bought in to the plan to rebuild the damaged historic structure and build a new church adjacent that can last another century. On hand Saturday will be some of the community leaders who have made this new vision possible. The campaign co-chairs are former Montgomery County Executive Ike Leggett and Joyce Siegel, who led the effort to save the church and the Scotland community when threatened by developers in the 1960s and '70s.

Both will be present Saturday and available for media interviews, as will members of the Scotland Community who are direct descendants of the freed enslaved Africans who founded the community after the civil war.

Please contact Erica Borgese at the Glenstone Museum ([erica.borgese@glenstone.com](mailto:erica.borgese@glenstone.com)) or Ken Cummins at (202) 438-3714 or [kennethvcummins@aol.com](mailto:kennethvcummins@aol.com) for more information and to arrange for interviews.

