

We have all been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. As you know by now, HDS and Harvard are transitioning to online classes in order to minimize the possibility of transmission. We take this unprecedented step because the health and well-being of everyone in our community—and all those whose lives they touch—is our greatest concern.

We also care deeply about the wellness of the School's extended community—especially those on the “front lines” of the pandemic. As religious leaders, chaplains, nonprofit managers, and even public health officials, our HDS alumni and friends are helping to coordinate the response to the Coronavirus, to prevent its expansion, and to provide resources and comfort to those affected by the outbreak. They're making a world of difference. And so are you.

I encourage everyone in the HDS community to visit the [School's Coronavirus page](#) for updates on the University's response. You will also find links there to the latest information on prevention measures and more from Harvard's T.H. Chan School of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Above all, I urge you to reach out to each other. The greatest benefit of the HDS experience isn't what you learn in the classroom but the relationships you form with classmates, friends, and colleagues. I hear similar thoughts from everyone engaged in our HDS community: Those bonds endure.

The Rev. Gloria White-Hammond, MDiv '97, the School's Swartz Resident Practitioner in Ministry Studies, often uses a term she learned during her work in Africa with formerly enslaved women and girls: “Sawabona.” It means “I see you.” At this difficult time, I want you to know that all of us at HDS see you. We are thinking of you. And like you, we will do whatever we can to help.

*Sawabona.*

David N. Hempton  
Dean of the Faculty of Divinity