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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO DELIVERS REMARKS AT VIRTUAL MEETING
OF THE GREATER NEW YORK CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS
FOR “HOPE STILL LIVES”**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Thank you so much. Thank you, Dr. Smith. I appreciate what a kind and warm introduction, but I thank you even more for your leadership, which matters so much to the people of New York City as well. So, Dr. Smith, thank you. I'm so – I'm thrilled to be a part of this. The very fact that we are gathered together in the honor of an occasion like this, with a name like this – Hope Still Lives. The power of that idea alone moves me, because this is something that so many New Yorkers need to focus on right now. We've been through so much, because, let's face it – I want to be always straightforward when I gather with so many good friends – New Yorkers have been through so much, so much pain in so many families, and yet there is hope. There's hope, because we've seen such goodness at the same time. We've seen such compassion. We've seen people help each other. We've seen people fight back against the challenges. And this gathering makes me hopeful, because so many good people together – I have had such a blessed experience working closely with Seventh-day Adventist churches all over New York City. And I've come to know the community so well. And I've come to know the commitment to community, that commitment to health care. There's no place you're going to find more focus on ensuring that everyone gets the health care they need than in the Seventh-day Adventist community. That focus on education – you mentioned, doctor, that we brought back our schools, and I'm proud of that fact. I know this community cares deeply about always improving the education for the next generation. So, you know how important it is to have those schools back.

Look, everyone, there's a story being written here and every one of you is a part of it. And the fact you're gathering tonight is that is a sign of your commitment to your faith, but also to New York City. You're going to hear a lot of inspiring words tonight. I know that Ted Wilson's giving the keynote, that's going to be wonderful – and so many other leaders and voices. But here's why I say hope still lives, because look what we went through. We were the epicenter, unquestioned. Unfortunately, I wish – I wish I couldn't tell you this, but it's true. We were the number-one biggest problem, the epicenter of the crisis in the United States of America back in March and April. We then turned that situation around. In the course of the following months, we literally became one of the safest places in the United States, one of the healthiest places in the United States. We went from worst to first. Or, to put it in a more scriptural analogy – the first shall be last and the last shall be first. We proved by our actions, but as millions of people came together to wear those masks, to practice the social distancing, to shelter in place, to avoid even some of the gatherings, the faith gatherings that meant so much to us that we chose not to do in-person, we did virtually to protect each other – what a Herculean effort and what act of faith it was

together. 8 million people, so different in so many ways, but, really, who had something profoundly important in common, that we had to get through this together, and people supported each other. So, I know hope still lives because I have experienced it right here in the city and seeing this extraordinary transformation.

Now, we are fighting now a new challenge, this second wave bearing down on us. And one could immediately become not only concerned, but it could become a little dire – are we going to end up back in the same situation? Again, I want to assure everyone, tremendous efforts are being made to protect all New Yorkers, to prepare our hospitals, to make sure we don't have the same situation we did in the spring. In fact, we know our hospitals are handling things much better now. They have so much more information, so much more preparation than they ever had the chance to have in the spring. We also seen the strength of New Yorkers in dealing with this crisis. The discipline people have shown in practicing those smart health practices to keep each other safe, the tremendous devotion we've seen in so much of our community when we talk about our schools reopening – so many educators and staff members have made that happen. Look, you can look at example after example of the sort of extraordinary, rigorous commitment of New Yorkers. Even Election Day, in the middle of a pandemic, we saw the greatest turnout we have seen in generations. And I know, again, the SDA community is so committed to civic involvement. Every time people doubted the people of New York City, the people of New York City surprised them and showed something greater and stronger than ever could have been imagined.

So, here's where we go from here. We buckled down one more time, because now we have a vaccine coming. We know that this is the last phase of our battle against the coronavirus. We know the vaccine will change everything in a matter of months. In fact, doctor, you'll be pleased to know, the first vaccine could be arriving literally this month – the first doses. And it will take time to reach the millions and millions of people we need. But the fact that it is literally on our doorstep, what powerful a moment this is. So, everyone, I say, this is a perfect time to keep the faith. This is the perfect time to focus on the hope, because this is the beginning of the end of the crisis.

Now, the next months will be tough, but we've shown we've gone through so much worse and we overcame. And I'll finish with this one thought, because I think this is about not just how we overcome the virus, but where we go from here. Doctor, you mentioned the fight I've tried to wage against disparity and inequality. And so many members of the Seventh-day Adventist church have been shoulder-to-shoulder with me in that fight and I've appreciated that deeply. Well, here's how we need to think of it for the future, and it really comes from a conversation I had with someone a few weeks ago and they said to me – a little forlorn, a little worried – they said, do you think New York City will ever regain its past glory? And I said, wait a minute, think about this, this is the city that fought back from the depths of the coronavirus. This is the city reopened schools. This is the city that turned out in record numbers to vote. This is a city that keeps coming alive no matter what's thrown at us. I said, the question is not will we regain our past glory? The question is how we reach our greater glory. There is something even better up ahead, something better for everyone, something that is even more fair, and more just, and more inclusive of all New Yorkers. We can create a new and better city. Out of this crisis will come something even more amazing, and that's what we have to have faith in. So, thank you for the

chance to be with you, doctor, and all the people participating and viewing tonight – I love you all, I thank you all. God bless you all.

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