

Dear Youth, Parents and Guardians of the FMZBC Family,

I, Rev. John C. McNeill, Jr., your new Youth Minister, write to express my appreciation for the welcome that I have received, to briefly introduce myself to you, and to offer a short word regarding my hopeful impressions about our future together.

I am elated to have joined the First Mt. Zion Baptist Church Family and pleased to have been embraced by the spirit of love and hospitality that abides here within this fellowship of baptized believers.

I am married to my love, the Reverend Starlette S. McNeill, and together we have a charming son, John, III. I am a graduate of both Lincoln University (Lincoln University, Pennsylvania) and Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School (Rochester, New York) where I received a Bachelor of Science degree in Health Science and a Master of Divinity degree (cum laude) respectively. I have also served as a hospital chaplain at the University of Rochester Medical Center and as the team captain for the District of Columbia Baptist Convention's Youth Ministry Initiative, serving as the principal planner for the annual youth summit. Notably, I have served for nine years as a middle school English and Social Studies teacher in the DC Public School System.

I enthusiastically look forward to the opportunity to share in and experience with you worship, service, stewardship and the study of God's Word. A great and good work has been done here at First Mount Zion Baptist Church, and I strongly desire to continue to build upon that foundation.

Youth have souls too. Satan does not wait until a young person becomes an adult to warp their perspective towards God, to insert difficult choices or to heap tragedies upon their lives. Thus, my chief goal, as the youth minister, is to create occasions for spiritually formative and transformative encounters with Jesus Christ, to provide support for spiritual growth and to present youth with foundational tools to sustain life-long fellowship with God. It is my prayer that we will experience God's love and grace amidst our laughing and learning together.

I would like to meet each one of you and to learn more about your interests. Please feel free to call me at the church between 8:30 am and 5:00 pm Monday – Friday on 703-670-0184. Or, you can email me at [jmcneill@FirstMountZionBC.org](mailto:jmcneill@FirstMountZionBC.org).

Sincerely,

Rev. McNeill, Youth Minister

First Mount Zion Baptist Church