



25th Pastoral Anniversary Commemorative Edition

A Ministry Exhibiting a Spirit of Excellence!

2020 Theme: *Living in God's Assurance—Isaiah 41:10*

Message from the Pastor

What's INSIDE



*Happy
Father's Day:
Fatherhood is a
Privilege!*



Genesis 18:19 *For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just, so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what He has promised him.*

Abraham was known as a “father of many nations” and we read of his struggles and challenges as a father. Yet he trusted God! A father is responsible for bringing his children up in the ways of the Lord, to discipline and to encourage, comfort, love and instruct them. God made you a father for a purpose and plan. It is a privilege that is not for the faint of heart. God's Word instructs us in the lessons of fatherhood. We are encouraged to follow the examples of our heavenly Father and when we do not get it right, we seek God for forgiveness and a second chance.

On this Father's Day, I pray that we will set good godly examples for our children, making it easy for them to honor and love us. Malachi 4:6 says...*“And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers”*...that is the privilege and the blessing making every day a Happy Father's Day.

Happy Father's Day to all the fathers, grandfathers, uncles, brothers, and men at First Mount Zion Baptist Church! We honor you for living righteously, walking in integrity as you serve to steward the lives of the children you and your loved ones have borne into this world or adopted. It takes a special man to be a father to the fatherless and a defender of widows--and your sacrifices have not gone unseen. We recognize all those fathers who have been or are currently serving in leadership roles and have impacted their children enough that they, too, are following in their footsteps in blessing others through their servant-leadership. You are loved. You are admired. May today bring you joy, and may God reward you one-hundred fold for all that you have done!!

Reminder:

During July and August ministry programs will take a break

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Journey to Joy



“Your Journey from Mourning to Joy.”

Help & Encouragement • Weekly Seminars • Support Group

Session: 12 “Heaven”

June 8, 2020 7:00pm

Death hurts...We help.

Contact Maria Simpson at maria1723@verizon.net

*Living in God's Assurance,
Pastor Luke E. Torian*



Celebrating the 25th Pastoral Anniversary of Dr. Luke E. Torian

Servant of God Determined to do God's Will

While we could not celebrate our Pastor's 25th Anniversary in a manner befitting his stature because of COVID-19 and social distancing, the Pastor's Anniversary Committee consisting of Dr. Sandra K. James, Trustee James Simpson, Trustee Oscar Dailey, Deacon Vannie Parker, Deacon Lloyd Cox, Deacon Michell Clark, Deaconess Tina Coates, Deaconess Cynthia Brown, Sis. Pamela Sessoms and Sis. Oonagh Bell, found a way during the month of May, to still celebrate him on each Sunday, first by lifting him up in prayer, and then by sharing with him and the congregation a little bit of how we felt about his **History**, his **Labor**, his **Life** and his **Legacy**. We culminated the Sunday acknowledgements on the fifth Sunday with a compilation of his accomplishments in Ministry, presenting him with a commemorative plaque as a token of our appreciation for his service.

We also celebrated his birthday, presenting him with gift cards and a personal gift from the Pastor's Aide Ministry, and we honored his elegant wife, Sister Clarice Torian, presenting her with a beautiful floral arrangement and recognized his daughter, Constance, with a lovely corsage. We forwarded an electronic greeting card bearing over 350 entries with well-wishes to our Pastor, shared comments made on social media #PT25, debuted our Virtual Choir and showcased our *Faces in the Pews* from over 400 members, all as a demonstration of our affection for our Pastor, and we culminated the celebration with a "drive-thru" with over 100 cars participating, all displaying our affection with gifts, cards, flowers, art works, balloons, and the like. It was an amazing success and we applaud all those who participated!

Our Church history details that on April 1, 1995, we called Dr. Luke E. Torian to serve as our Pastor. He accepted the call and took the reins on May 1, 1995 as the full-time Pastor-elect. On the first Sunday in June, 1995, 25 years ago, Dr. Luke E. Torian was officially installed as the Pastor and continues to serve in that capacity.

There were many accomplishments over the years. The Ministry flourished under his dynamic leadership as he melded both ministry and community activities. He implemented VISION-98 which included resuscitating former ministries, combining others, and creating new ones, and we recognize the role he plays in this Church to which he is divinely assigned.

First Mount Zion had already built two buildings in the preceding fifty years under the former leadership and now, the miracle assigned to his leadership allowed for the construction of the FMZBC Campus! Nobody but GOD could manifest that, and no man could do these things except GOD be with him.

So, enthusiastically we say . . . Thank you, Pastor Torian, for your commitment, your dedication, your love, your honesty, your transparency, and most importantly, your continued desire to live in God's assurance, being confident of this very thing, that **HE** who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ!

God Bless You and We Love You! Happy 25th Anniversary!!



SOME OF THE SUCCESSES AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROJECTS INSTITUTED OR CONTINUED BY DR. LUKE E. TORIAN

- Over the past 25 years, 3,494 New Members joined the Ministry, 1,352 Baptisms and 177 Baby Dedications were performed; a true testament to what God is doing in this Ministry;
- Coordinated and participated in youth mission trips to Nassau, Bahamas and Montego Bay, Jamaica;
- Sponsored the Mary Elizabeth Ministry, mentoring local community teen mothers and fathers;
- Provides ministry and outreach to youth incarcerated in Juvenile Detention facilities in Prince William County;
- Served as a founding member of VOICE - Virginians Organized for Interfaith Community Engagement. The goals are advocating for affordable housing, strengthening public education, and combating intolerance and injustices against immigrants;
- Serves as the host site and distribution center for SHARE, providing quality groceries for substantially reduced savings to participants;
- Provided food and shelter for Prince William County victims devastated by the 2012 Tropical Storm Lee;
- Provided on-the-ground relief in support of those affected by the 2010 Haitian earthquake;
- Sponsored the Feed My Starving Children program for three consecutive years resulting in the preparation of over 200,000 special meals each year for children living in Haiti;
- Implemented an intramural basketball league for high school boys;
- Continuing a faith-based, long-term relationship with the Rio Hondo Preparatory School, Arcadia, CA—a relationship that has extended over 40 years;
- Serves as active participant in Prince William County Ministerial Association participating in ecumenical services and bringing together pastors of all faiths to fellowship, support and pray for each other; and
- Participates in the Taste of Heaven at the Hylton Chapel with an estimated 45 churches and over 5,000 persons in attendance.

DELEGATE LUKE E. TORIAN'S LEGISLATIVE EFFORTS AND SUCCESSES

Delegate Torian was elected to represent the 52nd District in the Virginia House of Delegates in 2009 and has championed causes in a myriad of areas, working tirelessly especially in those areas that affect our community-at-large. This year, Dr. Torian was appointed the first African American to Chair Virginia's Appropriation Committee. Some of his past accomplishments focused on:

- ◆ Higher education institutions
- ◆ Staffing ratios for school nurses and school personnel
- ◆ Administration of Epi Pens to youth in outdoor educational programs
- ◆ Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program
- ◆ Medical assistance services (long-term care eligibility, screening, reporting)
- ◆ Nursing homes and assisted living facilities
- ◆ Crisis and emergency management
- ◆ Personal Property Tax Relief Act
- ◆ Providing regulatory flexibility to Defense contractors
- ◆ Review approval or denial of application by local government for family day homes
- ◆ Mandated that VRS convene a work group to encourage and facilitate retirement savings
- ◆ Instituted policies prohibiting abusive work environment
- ◆ Requested Christopher Newport University to lead a study on state-run retirement savings plans for people without employer provided plans
- ◆ Prohibiting use of handheld personal communication devices while driving
- ◆ Voted to pass a constitutional amendment to restore civil rights if person has served full sentence
- ◆ He was also instrumental in setting up community forums dealing with Town Hall on Police and Community Relations; Clergy and Law Enforcement Community Dialogue; Second Chance/Restorative Justice Community Forum; Department of Veterans Affairs Town Hall



Tribute to our First Lady, Sister Clarice Torian

First Lady Torian, we honor you today. You are the Leaning Post whom God has placed to stand beside our Pastor offering him encouragement and, if necessary, constructive criticism, which allow him to lead with as few distractions as possible. We are well aware that when God called Pastor Torian, you were included in the equation and we recognize that, outside of God, you play the biggest role in the life and success of our Pastor. We know you to be biblically astute, someone he uses as a sounding board when in the process of exegesis of a passage, to get solid feedback; you are a psychological whiz, because you understand people; you are very conscious of the fact that we are all different, you give sound advice, like we should investigate before we insinuate. Though demands are never-ending and recognitions are few, your smiles are ever present, never stale, each one new. We watch you hold your peace in situations that can be uncomfortable, but when you do respond, you give the right response.

Thank you, First Lady Torian, for your steadfastness and for your love of God, our Pastor and this Ministry. May the Lord continue to use you as that positive influence in our lives to graciously stand for truth and continue faithfully in loving, serving, witnessing, and being a burden-bearing friend to God's people. We truly appreciate the different roles you play as the Pastor's Wife. It is clear that you intend to stand on God's Word because that is where you believe from whence your strength will come. We are sure there are nights you don't sleep because your husband is tossing and turning and sweating in agony over unresolved Church conflicts; we are sure there are times you have cried with him as you felt his pain; we are sure there were dark days, but you withstood the test of time because, in the midst of it all, you knew that God was right there; and we are also sure there were, and perhaps still are, times when you prayed for your daughter until you had no words left and God answered those prayers. We know that you, too, have troubles and sometimes might feel all alone, unable to share your heart with anyone, but yet you remain the constant in Pastor's life. You are the one on whom he lays his head at night after a long and disappointing day, or just needing some TLC, you know what we mean.

On the flip side, we cannot even fathom the joy you experience over a lost sheep being found when your husband preaches a life-saving message; what satisfaction you get in knowing God uses you and your husband to care for His Flock, to weep with those who weep and to rejoice with those who rejoice. Could anything be more meaningful than leading the lost to eternity? It's worth it. Please be assured that your life and your ministry matter. The Apostle Paul must have had you in mind when he said, "Not that we are adequate to think anything of ourselves, but our adequacy is of God". You have demonstrated by your humility and sweet spirit that you do not count yourself as being better than anyone, but rather that anything and everything that you are, have accomplished, or will ever hope to be, is only because of God. We all are inadequate. None of us is worthy or capable of this incredible calling from God, but if you continue to abide in Him, and we have no doubt that you will, **NO GOOD THING** will He withhold from you. So, to you we say . . .

*Happy 25th Anniversary, First Lady Clarice Torian,
know that God is well-pleased with your service.
We love you!*

And to you, Constance, thank you for being the lightning rod that strikes the post who, together, energize our Pastor to come to this Temple daily to serve others. May God bless you abundantly!

*The First Mount Zion Family
May 31, 2020*





Celebrating Our First Family





Rev. John McNeill, Jr.

Message to Our Youth



Faithful Adaption

2 And again He entered Capernaum after some days, and it was heard that He was in the house. 3 Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive them, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them. 4 Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men. 5 And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying. 6 When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you." Mark 2:2-5

My favorite novel is Zora Neale Hurston's "Their Eyes Were Watching God." To me, it's a compelling and enjoyable story that doesn't get stale or grow old because its central character is on a life-long journey towards love, personal fulfilment and community development. Some would probably call me extreme or say, "I'm doing too much." Let me explain. I have read the book a few times; I've memorized the opening page and the story's plot. I've seen two live performance versions -- plays; I've seen a movie version and the made-for-network-tv version that was produced by Oprah Winfrey and starred Hallie Berry. In other words, I have read the book so many times that I know when someone comes close to the original book -- a faithful adaption -- or makes any changes and takes director's privilege -- an unfaithful adaption -- to the Hurston's book.

The four men in our story have the clear mission to carry their companion who is paralyzed, who is in need to encounter Jesus. The four men reach the house where Jesus preached and noticed that the house was crowded. The four men could not get close to Jesus because the crowd obstructed their anticipated way or the path towards being with Jesus. Mark doesn't provide any details of the conversation between the four men, whether they were discouraged or encouraged. We just don't know. But what we do know is that the four men had to determine how to complete their mission and work together to accomplish it. The four men had to faithfully adapt to their current situation. Again, they had to remain focused on the mission of ensuring that their paralyzed companion would encounter Jesus.

We, young believers in Christ, can relate to the four men's experience and mission. In a way COVID-19 and all the responsible precautions obstructs our way to the house of worship, First Mount Zion. We can't meet with church family and friends to worship and for ministry occasions in our usual way. Consider your life and how can you encounter Jesus at home, at church, in our vehicles or through technology. We must faithfully adapt. We must discern how to live with and for Christ in this different and abnormal context caused by COVID-19.

What roof must you uncover to encounter Jesus now and as the pandemic fades? What creative ways can you use to encounter and please Jesus? Bible reading? Prayer? Helping others?

Reverend John C. McNeill, Jr.
Youth Minister

Associate Ministers

Encouragement and Assurance for the Soul

WE SEE YOU BROTHER! HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

*"The righteous man walks in his integrity;
His children are blessed after him." (Proverbs 20:7, NKJV)*

Integrity is an important characteristic of being a father. Some of us have demonstrated integrity most of our lives. There are men who lacked integrity, honesty, uprightness, and strong moral principles that walked away. God's intent for creating a family begins with marriage between a man and a woman, then children, but marriage isn't necessary to become a father. It's not necessary to have biological offspring to be a father. Some of us have become fathers to the fatherless. Because we made a baby, it doesn't make us a father, we just reproduced! Being a father is from the heart, it takes unselfish sacrifice, self-discipline, it takes time, and a lot of patience. Being a father is from the heart. It takes unselfish sacrifice, self-discipline; it takes time and a lot of patience. Being a father is a loving commitment; it is accepting or taking responsibility for that God-given life that looks back at you with love and adoration.

We see you brother! This Father's Day let's celebrate the fathers who walked a hard road. The ones who through much adversity maintained a presence and are present in their children's lives. You can be a father and see your child every day and not have a presence or be present in their lives. There are fathers who don't see their children daily but are present and have a presence in the lives of their children. **We see you brother!** All of us know at least one father in this category: The battle-worn, weary father who walks through briars and thickets for his children, hostile divorces, bitter ex-wives, ungracious children, humiliation, false accusations and overall ill-intent. Because of their integrity, they remind us of the old Timex commercial; *"Takes a Licking and Keeps on Ticking."* We do not celebrate meeting our requirements as a parent: providing food, clothing, shelter, and support. We are recognizing the fact that your journey as a father isn't as easy as some, but you are determined to hang in there.

We see you brother! On Father's Day, we seldom recognize the brothers who would love to see their children and cannot. They do the right things, they are present, they participate and have a presence in their children's lives. Let's recognize them for not giving up, for hanging tough, and representing God in their children's lives. Because they demonstrate to them through their integrity, no matter how hard it becomes; as David told Solomon, *"Be strong and of good courage, and do it; do not fear nor be dismayed, for the Lord God, my God, will be with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you, until you have finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord."* (1 Chronicles 28:20, NKJV) Their children can believe two things; first, God will not leave them nor forsake them; second, neither will you!

We see you brother! More importantly, God sees you! Be blessed!

Reverend Gillis M. Taylor

The MESSENGER

June 7, 2020
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Deaconess Ministry

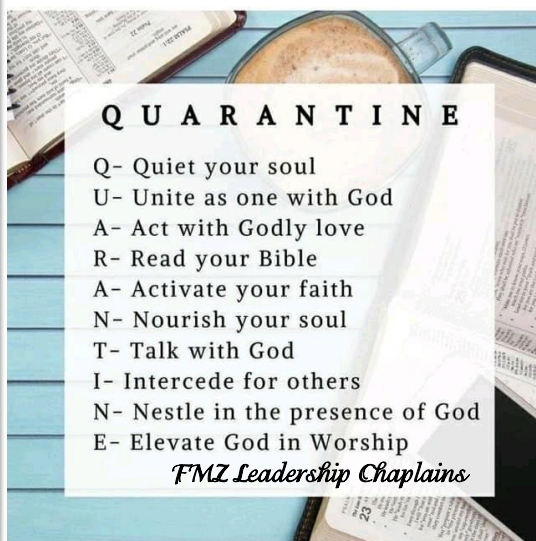


"A father is neither an anchor to hold us back, nor a sail to take us there, but a guiding light whose love shows us the way."

LEADERSHIP CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Greetings FMZ Family!

In light of our current new normal, we thought we would simply offer this acrostic for "QUARANTINE" to perhaps, help calm our souls.....in "such a time as this!" We particularly like the letter "I" that calls us to intercede daily for each other! Selah



What Makes a Dad

God took the strength of a mountain,
The majesty of a tree,
The warmth of a summer sun,
The calm of a quiet sea,
The generous soul of nature,
The comforting arm of night,
The wisdom of the ages,
The power of the eagle's flight,
The joy of a morning in spring,
The faith of a mustard seed,
The patience of eternity,
The depth of a family need,
Then God combined these qualities,
When there was nothing more to add,
He knew His masterpiece was complete,
And so, He called it...Dad.

Author Unknown

Submitted by Deaconess Doris Sessoms



LEST WE FORGET!

Memorial Day, a time when those of us still in the land of the living remember those who have sacrificed for us. It is a day to remember and honor not only our veterans, but all who sacrificed so that we who still remain can enjoy the benefits of their largesse!

First, we honor those who gave their lives for this country and the ideals for which it stands. They are the special ones. As the good book says, and I paraphrase, there is no greater love than when a man lays down his life for a friend. In honoring them we honor ourselves, for they are the better part of us.

We honor also those who have returned from the battle, many broken and scarred for life. Their sacrifices continue even as they struggle to readjust and live in a country, that more often than not, has failed to show its gratitude.

Let us also not forget to honor those husbands and wives, parents and grandparents, uncles, aunts, other family members and friends who also sacrificed for us so that we could be better off than they were. They, too, gave their lives, not in military battles but in the wars of life's vicissitudes. They labored without recognition or fanfare knowing that their greatest contribution was going to be through us, the benefactors of their selfless sacrifice.

Let us therefore pause to honor both the living and the dead, the remembered and the forgotten, the loved and the unloved!

Thank you!

Dr. Ryle A. Bell

Ministries' Meeting Schedules



During the COVID-19 pandemic our Ministry Schedule for meetings and activities at the Church has been curtailed for safety and health reasons. Please refer to our Website for the most current information on Ministry virtual meetings.

For additional Activities and Events:
http://bit.ly/FMZ_Calendar

Join us live on the Website, Facebook, and conference calls on Wednesday nights at 7:30 p.m., Sunday mornings at 9:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. We will resume our normal schedule when safe. Check the Website for updates.



WARRIORS OF LOVE



Warriors of Love are continuing our study, encouragement and fellowship through Zoom!

During these times of COVID-19, we are grateful there are ways for us to stay connected as followers of JESUS CHRIST! We are family, and we look forward to our time together as we grow and share through each monthly meeting.

CHRISTIAN WARRIORS

I am a member of the **Christian Warriors** Small Group, a study group. Even though I always wait until the last minute to read the materials, as is my procrastinating nature, I delve into the conversation during our meetings. It is an opportunity for fellowship and discussion, where every voice is heard and every opinion valued. Though we now meet through the Zoom platform, we haven't missed a beat, we are simply logging on instead of meeting up. We await the time when we can break bread again in person and do our community service projects. In the meantime, I look forward to our digital study as a respite from a strenuous week.

Jonathan Randal

WHERE IS GOD IN THE MOVIE?

Zooming In to Find GOD on the Big Screen!

The venue may have changed but the spirit and mission of finding GOD in the movie has not. We may not be eating buttery popcorn and sugary snacks in the lecture hall at First Mount Zion however, this group of Cinephiles has found a way to fellowship through technology. Going to the movies has never been



easier, the multitude of streaming platforms are numerous, and we have been using **Tubi**, a free movie service that allows us to pick various movies of **every genre** to watch from the comfort of our homes. Earlier this month we watched "**Saved**", a comical coming of age story about students attending an all Christian high school. After the viewing, the group came together on zoom to discuss the various aspects of the movie and how GOD could be seen interwoven throughout the movie. "This ministry propels me to view a story differently, to analyze characters and actions through a biblical lens; it allows me to learn from others who are more advanced in their Christian journey," states group member Kim Fitzgerald Lennon. The goal and focus of this Small Group are to allow members to find GOD in unexpected places. Even though we, as Christians, are taught that GOD is omnipresent, it can be a daunting task to find him in a movie about a robbery heist! Both Gwen Holland and Debbie Tribble agree "GOD within the movies has allowed me to open my eyes to other possibilities that sometimes we do not think of or see." "I look for GOD in all the movies I watch now." Many others have stated how they enjoy this time with their families both at church and at home. Finding GOD in the movies offers a respite in these uncertain times. It allows church members to come and fellowship through the gift of cinema and discussion, where learning happens by listening and valuing the diversity of ideas in a safe space. We invite you to come and join us on the first Friday's of each month to look for GOD in the movies. Just make sure you bring plenty of snacks to share, GOD loves a cheerful giver!

Facilitators:

*Deaconess Sharron Johnson
Brandi Johnson*





MATURING IN CHRIST

Prior to COVID-19, **Maturing in Christ** Small Group was meeting at Four Seasons in Dumfries, VA on the first Monday of the month from 7:00 - 9:00 pm. I chose the name for this group because the members that normally attend are up in age and mature in their understanding of God and Christ, His will and purpose for all mankind. We are a study group that has studied a wealth of material such as: Eight Big questions of Faith, I Want to Change... So Help Me, God!, Stewardship: Living a Life That Counts, James: Living the Christian Life 24/7 and so many more. We enjoy conversation about God and what He desires for our lives now and in the future. We look forward to the fellowship with one another where the atmosphere is always loving and encouraging to all.

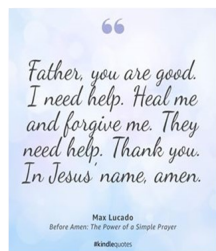
We are now meeting by phone conference and the members continue to be active and excited to hear one another's voice. COVID-19 is active right now but our God is still on the throne and in control.



Facilitator:

Sister Maria Simpson

FEARLESS



During shelter-in-place, **Fearless** Small Group continues to meet via Zoom to fellowship and continue our study of the book *Before Amen: The Power of a Simple Prayer* by Max Lucado. This study is even more timely as we share our experiences in coping with the pandemic and understanding how important remaining prayerful is during this time. As discussed in our April meeting, COVID-19 reminds us of the importance of prayer and that we are not in control. We rely on our faith for healing in these trying times; understanding that healing comes in God's time, not our own – not just with respect to the virus but in all situations. As in all issues of life, we must try to find the good – **the blessing**. COVID-19 has slowed us down, providing more time for reflection on our life, strengthening our relationship with God, and spending time with family. We remain **Fearless**, surrounded by the unlimited love God has for us and knowing that He is just a prayer away!



Facilitators:

*Deacon Michell Clark
Deaconess Doris Sessoms
Deaconess Adrienne Little
Sister Shirley Watson*

KINGDOM LIVING IN OUR CULTURE

The interest based small group, **Kingdom Living in Our Culture**, focuses on how Christians are to live in today's culture. "How are we to live in the world and not be of the world?", is the primary question. Topics such as justice, helping at-risk people, assisting marginalized populations, how Christianity can influence culture, and sexual immorality, have been discussed during our monthly sessions. Since we're all practicing social distancing, our recent sessions have been via teleconferencing. Scripture references, various readings, and a study guide serve as the basis for our discussions.

The upcoming semester will find us discussing such questions as "What does scripture say about how God's people should engage the culture around them?" "How can we help a person who is skeptical understand the Good News about Jesus?" "Do you see the church today as being countercultural?" "Why is it so hard for Christians to find the right balance between the demands of earthly citizenship and those of heavenly citizenship?" These, and other questions should generate exciting discussions as together we grow in our understanding and application of God's Word.

We hope you will be led to join us for the upcoming semester.

Facilitators:

*Deacon Robert Stanley
Deacon Marvin Watson
Deaconess Andrea Bryson*

Andrea Bryson
amelb184@verizon.net

IF YOU HAVE AN INTEREST IN STARTING A MEANINGFUL "SMALL GROUP", PLEASE CONTACT STEPHANIE M. CRADDOCK, SMALL GROUPS DIRECTOR, BY EMAIL AT SCRADDOCK@FIRSTMOUNTZIONBC.ORG OR 703-670-0184.



CARPENTERS FOR CHRIST "JOINING THE WOOD"

Jesus Comforts His Disciples. *"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. John 14:1.*

As we watched each of us join our second Online ZOOM call, I was encouraged that this is not a waste of time. We have become an extended family of believers willing to learn and share our experiences in life and how do we put these pieces of wood together; or how to install a RING doorbell. While each person could have skipped the call to watch Netflix and Hulu, we had a great time sharing with each other.

Now to the lesson Chapter 6, "Joining the Wood" by Pastor H. Michael Brewer. Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit: *On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in Me, and I am in you. John 14:20.*

Carpentry requires two fundamental skills: shaping wood and joining wood. Any carpenter who can't put two pieces of wood together and make them stay may be in the wrong business. While nails may be our first choice for joining boards, nailing isn't always the best option. Not only are nails unattractive for finished work, they sometimes spilt the wood and often work loose over time. A joint often works better than a nail, just as it does today. Jesus likely used some of the various joints that wood workers still employ such as: tongue and groove and dove tails. For two boards to interlock, they must be shaped to fit each other. This practice of interlocking boards in a joint explains how the Bible teaches that we dwell in Christ and that Christ also dwells in us. Our Lord shapes us so that we are fitted and fastened to Him. We are joined to Christ and Christ is to us. Connected form of interlocking and enduring joints. We are never again alone, never forsaken and never abandoned. *Romans 8:38-39 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

In closing, do not forget to realize that God is your Father, and you are in Him and He is in you. This is the time to get some work done in your life, join some pieces in your life together. Now is the time to be productive in the time of this pandemic. When your identity is in question, trust in God's assurance to see you through.



Facilitator:

Brother Everett Griggs

GRILL MASTERS' CHALLENGE

It's that time of the year Ya'll!!! Time to plant flowers, trim the grass, make some lemonade, dust off the grill, and safely invite over friends and family and get to some Grilling!! In John 21:9, even Jesus took some time to prepare some coals, fish and bread for His newfound disciples and He had fellowship with them. Therefore, one could say that Jesus was the first Grill Master!! That's who we, as a group, continue to strive to be like as we reach and touch lives through preparing delicious and beautiful dishes on the grill, and oh, gain a little bragging rights, with brotherly and sisterly love of course!!

During our time of sharing and exploring through the Bible, we have found out how much the Bible amazingly relates to what we enjoy as a group.

As we began our Small Group semester, as any great grill master would do, we set out to see who could create "The Perfect Hot Dog!" We had a great time as we shared and found a great deal of information about hot dogs, and how we could make them beautiful and tasty.

Our group of grill masters have since moved on to Kebobs and other favorites, and I must say we have a great group of people with different levels of experience, but all are eager to learn. COVID-19 has slowed our group a bit because it's best to be close to each other to do what we do, but we continue to post information and pictures of our great successes on our Group Me App. Everyone, without a doubt, the **Grill Masters' Challenge** is still on and our Small Group remains strong as we continue to communicate, fellowship, and share God's Word through our grilling.

Summer Grilling Tips:

- Safety First
 1. Setup Grill a safe distance from your house (10 feet)
 2. Keep a water spray bottle nearby
 3. Clean and coat grill grates before cooking.
 4. Let coals go cold before discarding
- Make it enjoyable, not a task
- Make your food look good
- Invite friends and family (safely)
- Contact the Grill Masters' Small Group if you'd like to join, need information or grilling tips!

Facilitator:

Brother Walter Holmes





ALZHEIMER'S CAREGIVERS' SUPPORT

The purpose of the Alzheimer's **Caregivers' Support** Small Groups is to provide an opportunity for family members and caregivers to meet and develop a mutual support system that will help maintain the health and well-being of its members. People come to support groups looking for something; anything that can help relieve their burdens. We typically talk about looking for people who "really understand what they are going through" because many are experiencing similar circumstances. The groups are designed to provide emotional, educational, and social support for caregivers through regularly scheduled meetings. They help participants develop coping methods and encourage caregivers to maintain their personal, physical, and emotional health, as well as optimally care for the person requiring caregiver support. We have five outstanding and caring Certified Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group Facilitators:

Group 1 and 3 facilitators are Deacon Andy Walker and Deaconess Bella Feters. They meet twice a month on the second and fourth Wednesday at 11 a.m. in Stafford, Virginia.

Group 2 facilitators are Deaconess Carol Roney and Les Young. They meet twice a month on the second and fourth Tuesday at 7 p.m. at First Mount Zion. Our Small Groups Director also serves as a Certified Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group Facilitator. These support groups serve our church members, their families and the community. As certified support group facilitators, we have been blessed, along with other support group members, to help many caregivers and families become knowledgeable in various aspects of dealing with loved ones with Alzheimer's, and other related dementia's, along with other debilitating illnesses requiring caregiver support to include coping skills, sharing similar experiences, monetary benefits and entitlements, resources and aid that may be available.

Presently, our meetings are held via teleconferences and ZOOM due to COVID 19. Our time for caring and sharing is very important to us and those we serve. We look forward to our time together and are anchors for one another when things are rough, especially now while many cannot see or hug their loved ones in assisted living facilities or nursing homes. This is due to visitors being limited to only essential healthcare providers, which is for everyone's safety. If you're interested in joining one of our support groups, we are here for you.

Please contact our Small Groups Director below:

Stephanie M. Craddock,
FMZ - Small Groups Director
Certified Dementia Practitioner
Certified Alzheimer's Support Group
Facilitator
Alzheimer's Community Educator
Scraddock@firstmountzionbc.org
703-670-0184

RACE TO READ

Celebrate the greatest and latest small group ministry, **Race to Read**. Race to Read Children's Reading Club is the first and only school age reading group at First Mount Zion Baptist Church. It has been a wonderful experience for all of the first time participants. I absolutely love the children that make up this remarkable group.

Our first group meeting in March was nothing short of amazing. At the church, the readers were served dinner, played ice breakers, created book marks, and played Bible trivia. You'd be surprised how much of the Bible the children know. With March being National Women's History Month, it was only right that our first book was "Who is Michelle Obama"? Together we read two chapters and the readers eagerly volunteered to read. I felt so supported by the church by Sis. Craddock's presence and willingness to help out.



By the time our next meeting rolled around, we were practicing social distancing due to Covid-19. Our meetings were no longer held at the church, but rather in the comfort of our homes using the audio visual tool called ZOOM. So far, we've had two scheduled ZOOM meetings. We still meet once a month and our attendance is strong. Today we have 15 members. It took time for the children to adjust, but they are just as excited as I am. Instead of reading paperback books, we jumped right into reading eBooks. Where there's a will, there is a way. We continue to read eBooks, share ideas, learn from each other while finding inspiration throughout this whole process. We pray that Race to Read will inspire other children 3rd thru 5th grade to want to join this great reading club in the fall of 2020. Special thanks to Linda P. Allen, Stephanie Corprew, and Carrington Wright, who are my assistants. I love you all so very much. With God all things are possible!

Facilitator:

Sister Lela Reed





HUNGRY FOR THE WORD

In the spirit of the Prayer of Jabez where he asked God to expand his territory, the use of ZOOM App has allowed **Hungry For the Word** to do just that. In April we held our first small group meeting using the ZOOM platform and we discussed "Where we are finding comfort during these troubling times."

Our small group had been turning to family and friends, prayer circles, spouses, and religious programming (e.g. podcasts, sermons, etc.). Although we've been calling on our usual support network, we also realize current times have changed some of the places we look to for comfort, namely, our news outlets. It's challenging that we can't look to the news to get guidance and insight on the world around us. It has become difficult to watch, not because of the hard things we are seeing but because of the way that leaders are acting, and conspiracy theories that are being touted as the truth. It is equally as challenging that we can't assemble in our places of worship to get grounded. However, this pause has allowed us to remember that the church is where we are and the truth continues to be centered on the Word of God.

ZOOM was new to some of our group but we are blessed to have some ZOOM super users who suggested that we use the application to host new ideas. In addition to our normal meetings we opted to use ZOOM to host a virtual dinner party! Five families shared a wonderful Cinco de Mayo-themed meal - enchiladas, ceviche, nachos, tacos and all the fixings! The group used the virtual dinner party to discuss "What things will I continue and what things will I stop after quarantine is over?"

As we think about enlarging our territory and the world that will undoubtedly be changed by COVID-19, we believe God is calling us to hold firm to His word but to leverage technology and other forms of outreach to minister to those who are hungry for His truth.

COMMON THREADS SEWING

In the midst of the COVID-19 health crisis, The FMZ **Common Threads Sewing** Small Group members, under the leadership of Sis. Arnita Jordan, are busy putting their skills and sewing machines to work by making beautiful homemade face masks. This group is amongst numerous individuals who are using their gifts and talents to help serve those who are in need. This effort will be ongoing until there is no longer a need!

In the past, this group of willing hearts also made over 150 dresses for the young vulnerable girls in Africa. Those little dresses had a deeper meaning and were much more than clothing. The dresses given to those in need, were a reflection of Christ and His love. It planted seeds of hope that they mattered, and others cared.

They also made gorgeous adult bibs that were donated to local nursing homes. One of their projects for the upcoming 2020 fall semester will be the santi-panty, washable/reusable, feminine hygiene project for women in Africa.

On a personal note, this group has also learned how to make dresses, skirts, cardigans, totes and purses, hats, fancy sewing smocks, aprons, bible covers, television remote control holders and much more!!

This is an awesome group of wonderful hearts who are ready to serve! If you have a passion for sewing, or if you have a desire to learn, you are welcome to join this Small Group as they continue to make wonderful creations with their hands.

Please Contact:
Stephanie M. Craddock
Small Groups Director
Smcradd@firstmountzionbc.org
or 703-670-0184

Facilitator:

Sis. Arnita Jordan

EAGLES HEALTH AND NUTRITION

The **Eagles Health and Nutrition** Small Group serves as a tool to help empower each to play an active role in maintaining his or her own overall health status. We demonstrate this concept by emphasizing that this type of engagement will have a major impact on overall health. First and foremost, unless one is actively engaged, he or she will only, at best, be below true potential. So, we emphasize reaching maximum potential in a realistic fashion, while at the same time having fun with it. It's not all doom and gloom, but each person must develop commitment in order to attain true health benefits.

Nutrient classes (Carbs, Proteins, Fats, Vitamins, Minerals) are first discussed to allow one to have a better understanding of the impact of various food groups on the body and how the body uses them. All Carbs are not bad as they include our many fruits and vegetables packed with essential nutrients. We mention the important roles of proteins (producing enzymes needed to carry on cellular processes, helping build immune cells, helping with muscle mass, etc.). And healthier fats are important even for brain function and a host of other benefits. We discuss the importance of dietary fiber on gut health and overall health. Many dietary plans are discussed (Keto, Atkins, South Beach, Mediterranean, etc.). Many such diets are low carb and we discuss their true worth as well as compare low carb vs low fat. I also provide my own opinion from a biochemical viewpoint on the two plans, but each person is empowered to adopt his or her own plan.

Exercise is another key component of overall health status. One is encouraged to work with his or her doctor to discuss a feasible exercise regimen. But we discuss the biological benefits of exercise to include serving as a stress neutralizer, helping maintain blood pressure,

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maintaining weight control, increasing metabolism, increasing lung capacity and heart function, and increasing circulating endorphins to help produce a more relaxed state.

We also touch on the importance of getting proper sleep and rest. We discuss basic biology of DNA repair and that is done best with adequate rest. Chronic fatigue and lack of rest can lead to a more weakened immune system, which can cascade into a host of disease states, including various cancers, all of which may be avoided from occurring with proper care.

Finally, we look at understanding some of the basics on your annual physical medical report (A1C, Fasting Blood Sugar, HDL, LDL, Blood Pressure, GFR-Glomerular Filtration Rate, etc). These all play an important role in empowering each of us to play an active role in maintaining our own health status.

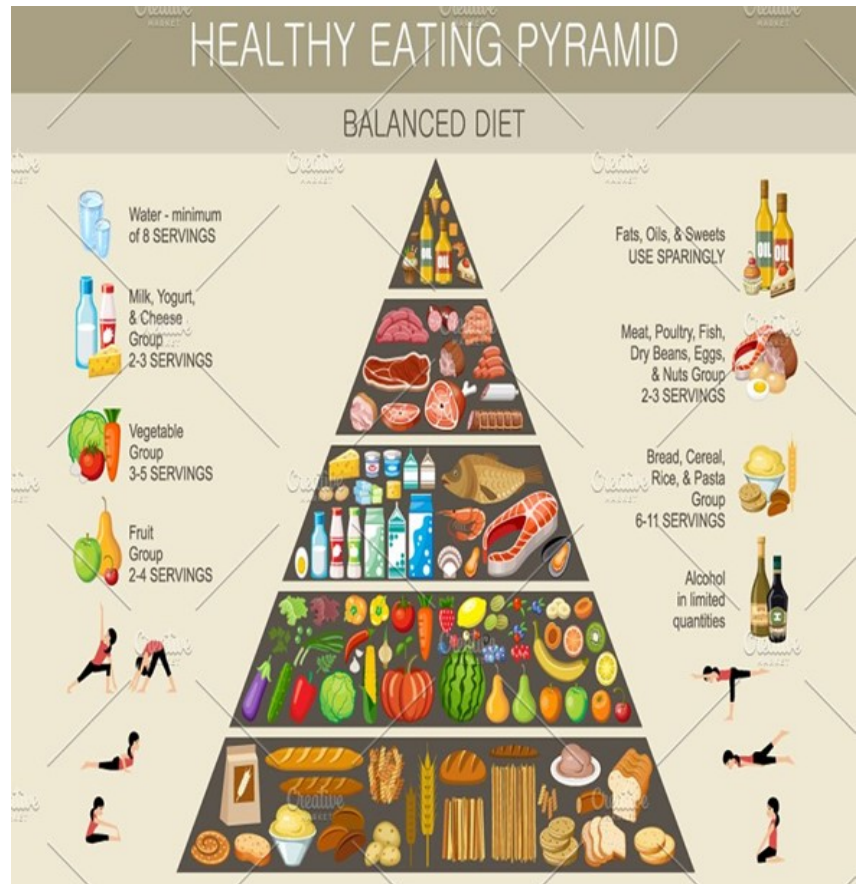
All are welcome to engage with us as we encourage each other to develop the commitment to be successful with managing our own long term and healthy lifestyle. Feel free to reach me at any time, should you have additional questions or need more information.

Facilitator:

Brother Tony Ford

(571) 264-1154

acerpraises@yahoo.com



The Pastor's Aide Ministry and the Pastor's Anniversary Committee would like to take this opportunity to thank a few special people who helped to make the celebration of our Pastor a huge success.

To Brother Ernest Robbins, Brother Walter Holmes and your entire Team - You guys are the best. Your willingness to lend a hand wherever needed and to quell the fires that kept popping up unexpectedly, was noticed and very much appreciated. We thank God for all of you.

To the Prayer Ambassadors (Deacon Cooper, Trustee Nicole Johnson, Deaconess Ledora Akanni), and Deacon Lloyd Cox and Deaconess Mozelle Floyd who pulled it all together, we thank you for covering our Pastor and his Family.

To the Trustee Ministry (Trustee Simpson, Trustee Dailey and Trustee Doctor), the Deacon/Deaconess Ministry, and the Administrative Office (Sis. Renee Woolfolk, Sis. Sylvia Moore), and all those who worked behind the scenes of whom we were not aware, thank you!

To the Music Ministry/Audio Visual Ministry, Minister Sylstea Sledge and Brother Tommy Johnson, who worked tirelessly in pulling the Virtual Choir together, and Brother Benson Blake of the Photography Ministry, and their teams. Not only was the Virtual Choir product a masterpiece; the photographs taken were beautiful and were used for Faces in the Pews! We thank you all from the bottom of our hearts.

To the Parking Ministry who made the drive-through experience a smooth transition, words cannot express our thanks for your direction, your instruction and the kindness you showed to those participating. Thank you!

Last, but not least, Rev. Dr. Sandra K. James, You are exceptional! You were the voice of reason when we were headed off course and the balm in Gilead when we were howling! Thank you for your guidance; thank you for your love of our Pastor. Simply stated, **THANK YOU!!!**

First Mount Zion, we have seen too many victories to let defeat have the last word and we were determined to do God's Will in showing genuine love and support to our Pastor and First Family. TO GOD BE THE GLORY for all that HE has done . . . and the Lord continues to do great and marvelous things! Sorry COVID-19, you have the black eye!

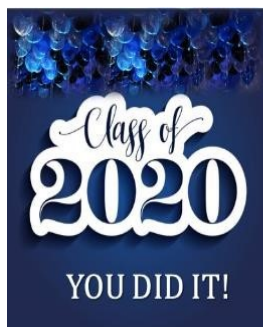
FMZ 2020 COLLEGE GRADUATES RECEIVE SURPRISE "DRIVE-BY"

It goes without saying that this year has been tragic in so many ways due to COVID-19. Lives have been lost, non-essential businesses shut down, Church buildings closed, and all major events cancelled or postponed, to include college commencement exercises. For college Seniors, having to leave campus abruptly, without farewells to friends and teachers, was very disappointing. But then, learning that their Commencements were cancelled was a painful reality to accept. After hearing this news, many organizations began to brainstorm ways to honor and recognize college graduates while adhering to social distancing guidelines.



How could FMZ bring a little joy into the lives of its college graduate members? Well, we had an idea: Why not ask college graduates to submit their names, addresses, school information, and the date their graduations would have been held. With this information in hand, a small delegation of 5-7 cars (consisting of our Young Adult Ministry - The CORE) would accompany Rev. Dr. Tracey Dawkins Holley, Minister of Christian Education, in a "Drive-by" to each home on our college students' graduation day to honk horns, present a custom-made yard sign, balloons, a graduation card and a small gift. What a joy it was to surprise these students, just to let them know that their FMZ family was thinking about them on their special day. Additionally, this recognition allowed The CORE an opportunity to personally invite these graduates to participate in the Young Adult Ministry.

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CONGRATULATIONS!

YOUR FMZBC FAMILY
IS PROUD OF YOU!CONGRATULATIONS!
CLASS OF 2020

YOU DID IT!

YOUR FMZBC FAMILY
IS PROUD OF YOU!CELEBRATE
CLASS OF
2020

FMZ 2020 COLLEGE GRADUATES RECEIVE SURPRISE “DRIVE-BY”

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All praises to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for the privilege and resources to be a blessing to one another. A big “thank you” to the following “drive-by” support team: Roconia Price, Donnell Wright, Cherelle Wright, Sade Akanni, Joseph D. Wright, Jr., Constance Wright, Lauren Craddock, Krystal McCray-Brown; Zevin Holley, Tony Craddock Jr., Danielle Craddock, Roslyn Parker, Danielle Blackshear, Rev. Dr. Tony Craddock, Sr., Stephanie Craddock, Zamari Holley, and Rev. Shelby Holley.

Most importantly, thank you to the following College graduates who submitted their information, allowing us to share in their special day: **Isaiah Woolfolk** (Old Dominion University, B.S. in Communications), **Zevin Holley** (Gannon University, B.S. in Business Administration), **Juliana Salcedo** (College of William & Mary, Dual B.S. in Biology and Chemistry), **Alexyss Johnson** (Virginia Commonwealth University, Dual B.A. in Cinema and African American Studies), **George Henderson** (Tuskegee University, B.A. in Communications), **Siara Corprew** (Longwood University, B.A. in Communications), **Jonelle Brown** (Christopher Newport University, B.A. in Spanish), **Nicholas Smith** (University of Virginia, B.S. in Systems Engineering) and **Michael Johnston** (University of Texas at Austin, B.A. in Liberal Arts).

In addition to these undergraduate students, we had three Graduate School students who were acknowledged: Our very own Assistant Pastor, **Rev. Dr. Sandra K. James** (Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, D.Min. in Pastoral Theology), **Adrienne Marks** (The George Washington University, M.A. in Legislative Affairs), and **Alexis Johnston** (University of North Carolina Charlotte, M.S. in Chemistry). Our goal was not to take the place of the Commencement ceremonies for these students; after all, nothing could do that. We simply wanted them to know that we celebrate them and all that the Lord was doing in their lives. To God be all the glory for the great work these graduates have accomplished and for the resources available for First Mount Zion Christian Education Department to show our love.

FMZ ASSISTANT PASTOR AMONG 2020 GRADUATES



Hard work, and years of commitment to staying the course finally paid off as our Assistant Pastor, **Rev. Sandra K. James**, was among the graduating class of 2020. Rev. James completed her Doctoral of Ministry degree with a concentration in Pastoral Theology from the Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary's (GCTS) Charlotte, NC Campus. Like most institutions of higher learning this year, GCTS conferred its degrees upon the graduates in a virtual ceremony held on Saturday, May 9. The Dean of the Doctoral Program, Dr. David Currie, reminded those viewing the ceremony that “the Doctor of Ministry degree is a professional doctorate for those already in ministry, designed to nurture them as passionate, reflective practitioners.” With each name called, the Dean also read the student's dissertation or project title. Rev. James' dissertation title was, “Congregational Approaches for Christian Clergy and Church Leaders to Educate, Limit and Eliminate Domestic Violence Within a Christian Church Context.” The now, **Rev. Dr. Sandra K. James**, acknowledged that she was “ok not having a ceremony and [she] thanked God for allowing [her] to complete the work.” **Congratulations!**

CORONAVIRUS KEEPS SIBLING GRADUATES FROM MAKING IT BACK TO VIRGINIA

At the onset of the Coronavirus shutdown, many flights were cancelled and some students decided it was better to stay put than to risk traveling back to Virginia. Siblings, **Alexis and Michael Johnston, Jr.** were two of those students. Despite not being in Virginia, Dr. Holley, and the “drive-by” team surprised the family by still placing their balloons and yard signs at their home. Michael and Jacqueline Johnston, the parents, sent pictures to Michael and Alexis who relayed their appreciation for their FMZ family. Alexis Johnston, finished with a M.S. degree in Chemistry from the University of North Carolina Charlotte; and Michael Johnston, Jr. graduated with a B.A. degree in Liberal Arts from the University of Texas at Austin.

The Christian Education Department and FMZBC family celebrate with all of the 2020 graduates and wish them God's continued blessings as they enter a new chapter of their lives. To God be the glory!



CELEBRATE
CLASS of
2020



Submitted by
Rev. Dr. Tracey Dawkins Holley
Minister of Christian Education

The MESSENGER

June 7, 2020
Volume 16 • Issue 6



Due to the temporary closure of the Church because of the threat of the Coronavirus, all activities have been suspended. PLEASE BE SAFE AND CONTINUE TO ADHERE TO THE CDC GUIDELINES!

ON-LINE ACTIVITIES:

Weekly Youth Ministry Conference Calls Wednesday's conference call Middle School (6th – 8th Graders) Chat and Prayer Wednesdays from 2pm-2:30pm.

High School (9th-11th Graders) Chat and Prayer Wednesdays from 3 pm to 3:30 pm

Please dial **571-260-6833** and follow the audio prompts below:

Conference Number: 7482#
PIN:6000#

Weekly Zoom call - Senior (12th Graders Only) Chat and Prayer Thursdays from 2 pm to 2:30 pm Dial -in from your cell phone or electronic device by clicking the following Zoom link:

<https://zoom.us/j/250366652>.

POC: Reverend John McNeill
Youth Minister
703-670-0184
jmcneill@firstmountzionbc.org



All activities are postponed until further notice. Please contact the below-named individual for further information.

POC: Pamela Knight
singlesministry@firstmountzionbc.org



SHARE FOOD DISTRIBUTION FOR JUNE IS YET TO BE DETERMINED. PLEASE CALL BRO. THOMAS BATES AT 703-330-6371 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION!!

Join us in Bible Study

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS

Gospel of John, Chapters 18-21

Live Stream: www.FMZBC.com

Conference Call: (571) 260-6833

conference number: 7482#

conference PIN: 6000#

Facebook Live @ 7:30p

SUBMISSIONS FOR NEWSLETTER:

All members are encouraged to submit articles, photos, and events for inclusion in the Newsletter. Please be sure to clear all submissions with your Ministry Leader before sending to the Communications and Publicity Ministry. Submissions **should not exceed 300-350 words** and must be received no later than **12 noon on the 15th of each month** to be considered for the upcoming newsletter. Please note that we reserve the right to edit as necessary.

Submissions should be sent to:

cpm1@firstmountzionbc.org

or through our web form at:

http://bit.ly/FMZBC_Articles

We look forward to your participation!!

Thank you!

Communications and Publicity Ministry

Joseph Boutte, Chair

Oonagh Bell
Beverly Grant
Sylvia Moore

Benson Blake
James Hawkins
Rev. Kathy Russell
Claudia Woolfolk

Dr. Luke E. Torian, Pastor
Rev. Dr. Sandra K. James, Assistant Pastor
Sylvia Moore, Executive Assistant
Renee Woolfolk, Church Business Administrator
Chesley Doctor, Chair, Trustee Ministry
Jeffrey Manning, Chair, Deacon Ministry
Carole Roney, Chair, Deaconess Ministry

16622 Dumfries Road
Dumfries, Virginia 22025-1920
Telephone: 703-670-0184
Email: fmzbc@firstmountzionbc.org
Website: www.fmzbc.com

Sunday Worship Service Schedule

Adjusted for COVID-19 and online services

Sunday School – 9:45 AM (All Ages)

Worship Service – 11:00 AM

Wednesday Night Bible Study Schedule

Praise and Worship – 7:30 PM

Bible Study – 8:00 PM

Monthly Wednesday Worship Service Schedule (last Wednesday of each month)

Praise and Worship – 7:30 PM
Worship Service with Associate Ministers – 8:00 PM

Fifth Sunday Unity Worship Service Schedule

Sunday School – 8:30 AM
Worship Service – 10:00 AM

Connect with us on Social Media:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/fmzbcdumfries

Twitter: [@fmzbc1](https://twitter.com/fmzbc1)

Instagram: [@the_core_fmzbc](https://www.instagram.com/the_core_fmzbc)

Vimeo: vimeo.com/25203195

Linked In: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/1890924/>



The TRANSPORTATION MINISTRY has been temporarily suspended due to Covid-19 and will resume when full activities at the Church have been restored!