



A Ministry Exhibiting A Spirit of Excellence!

2020 Theme:

Living in God's Assurance - Isaiah 41:10

Christmas Message from the Pastor



YOU ARE A GIFT

"And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." 1 John 5:11

As we come to the end of this year, I am thankful for each of you. Thankful for your continued faithfulness to the Ministry and support of each other as we live out life as we currently know it. In spite of everything that is going on, this is still a time of great celebration. Although families may not be able to physically gather together, I encourage you to be creative and continue your celebratory moments. In a year of great uncertainty there is a gift of constant comfort and joy in the faithfulness of God.

As we enter the season of Advent which begins November 29 through December 24, I continue to be thankful for each of you as gifts from God. Advent is a season observed in most denominations as a time of expectant waiting and preparation for both the celebration of the Nativity of Christ at Christmas and the return of Christ at the Second Coming. Advent for the Christian is also a time of reflection. Christmas is a time when we celebrate the Greatest Gift in the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Over the years, I have come to appreciate Christmas for many reasons, but this year I am especially thankful for each of you. For your service to God and to the people of God. In a world that is too much for us to bear alone, Christ has come to bring us the gift of entering into a relationship with Him, which is the greatest gift. As we count down these final days of 2020, I pray that you have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

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

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Message from the Pastor	1
Harvest Fest	1, 12
Message to our Youth	2
Sunday School Extended	2
Noon Day Prayer	3
News from the Seniors' Ministry	3
Leadership Chaplains' Corner	4
Encouragement and Assurance for the Soul	4
Kids Kingdom	5
COVID-19 Testing	5
From the desk of the CBA	6
Women's Ministry	7-8
Message from the Deaconess Ministry	9
Message from the Pastor's Aide Ministry	9
Advent	10
Share Ministry Thank You	11
Organizations Supported by FMZBC	13-14



On a beautiful Saturday afternoon, First Mount Zion hosted the Socially Distant Harvest Festival. The community and congregation showed up, and there were appearances by many princesses, Captain Americas, citizens of Wakanda, bumblebees, good witches, FBI agents, pint-sized doctors, and a host of colorful characters. These beautiful people created new family memories, picked up a wide array of treats, and celebrated the Harvest Fest in grand style. Here are a few of the memories. Thank you to our Harvest Fest Chair, Courtney Holeman, and all the members that made this community event a true treat for the youth and youthful.



-- cont'd on page 12



MESSAGE TO OUR YOUTH

ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS, GOD!

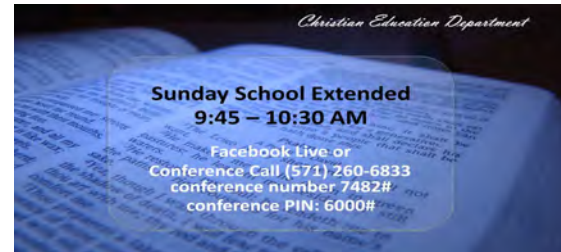
So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. -- 1 Cor. 10:31 NIV

Revered theologian and author of *Purity of Heart Is To Will One Thing*, Soren Kierkegaard, once said: "Youth are never too young to take hold of the truth or for the truth to take hold of them." His words performed spiritual surgery on my heart and transformed how I viewed my context for ministry at home, in my community and in my church. We, parents and youth leaders, pray and hope that the children and youth in our care will take hold of the Truth, Jesus Christ, and other edifying truths, at an early age.

My seven-year-old son, John III, surprised me this month with his profound and meaningful adaptation of an old child's game. John said, "Dad, let's play Rock, Paper, Scissors." I said, "Yes." He proceeded to introduce the game saying, "Rock, paper, scissors, shoot! Anything you want to do!" Everything was normal to this point. Well, if you're not familiar with the game, the rules are simple: rock crushes or beats scissors; scissors cuts or beats paper; and paper covers rock. A few of my family members who were present turned to see the outcome or to see me lose in a child's game. Well, I made a fist to represent the rock. Simultaneously, John held his hand high above his head with his fingers spread and shouted, "God." That day, Rock, Paper, Scissors became more than a game. That day, a young theologian embodied Kierkegaard's words, embraced what he had been taught at home and at church, and executed an eternal spiritual truth. God is sovereign, above all and should be glorified. When we learn of, or encounter the truth, we ought to strive for the wisdom to know how and when to apply it within our lives.

Wishing you all a JOYOUS CHRISTMAS AND A HEALTHY AND HAPPY NEW YEAR and, remember, JESUS IS THE REASON FOR THE SEASON!

*Reverend John C. McNeill, Jr.
Youth Pastor*



Over the last eight months, the Sunday School Ministry, led by Rev. Gillis Taylor and Rev. Brian Woolfolk, with technical support from the Deacons' Ministry and Communications and Publicity Ministry, have collaborated to deliver Sunday School Extended. Our online Sunday School class is open to the community and world via Facebook Live and teleconferencing. Each Sunday from 9:45 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., the Sunday School leaders present a lively session that begins with uplifting praise music, shout outs to the attendees, and the enthusiastic participation of dozens of faithful Sunday School students. The leaders provide notes and commentary for study and extended interaction and learning each week. The numbers of students, online comments, questions, hearts, likes, amens, praising hands and other supporting emoticons increase each week. The students provide insights via chat and the interaction goes on throughout the week. Although we look forward to the time when we can safely join our regular classes in our classrooms, our Sunday School Extended sessions give the congregation the opportunity to continue fellowshiping and learning through multiple technical platforms.

Join Sunday School Extended on Facebook Live at:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/226891871828190/>

or dial in: 571-260-6833, Conference number 7482#, Pin 6000#

The Sunday School Extended Team





NOON PRAYER TIME

I pray that this finds everyone doing well and staying safe. Continue to pray wherever you are during the noon hour, or whenever you can get a break to pray.

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 NKJV

[9] And He said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

[10] Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Prayer by Jacquie Owens:

God of all knowledge and wisdom, the conduit to all peace; praise be to Your Holy Name. We lift our heart to You and pray for the people of all nations, irrespective of race, color or creed.

We pray for the disquieted souls of women and men. We pray for those who are sorrowful and lonely. We pray for the unloved; those who feel themselves unwanted; broken by life. We pray for ALL humanity. We pray for those in prisons, those in asylums; those who are bedridden at home or in a hospital; those who have a terminal illness; and for all of the caregivers who tend the sick. We pray for all of the families of people, asking that they be given the strength, endurance and resourcefulness to continue their quest. Cause new bonds of understanding and trust with neighbors to be formed, near and far. We pray that Your blessings and joy will rest upon the world, and that threads of grace and seeds of hope will spread and grow. In Jesus name,

Amen!

Submitted by Noon Prayer Team

Deaconess Pamela Ford
Sister Carol-Ann Benjamin
Reverend Maxine Wright Thompson

If you would like to receive the noon prayer email each Tuesday, please send a message to Reverend Thompson at maxinewt22@yahoo.com.



NEWS FROM SENIORS' MINISTRY

Although we have been unable to meet in person, Seniors' Ministry remains connected through monthly correspondences and our senior callers and leaders' diligent work. The Seniors' Ministry has grown to 154 members even though we are unable to meet in person. We are looking forward to the day we can convene again and fellowship together.

Seniors receive helpful correspondences of community activities directed especially to Senior Citizens. Brenda Carswell does an excellent job of keeping the Seniors informed of offerings through AARP. Other leadership of the Church are also diligent in transmitting helpful information to keep Seniors informed.

Seniors who thought they would never use modern-day technology participate in ZOOM meetings, Facebook Live, Bible Study, Sunday School Extended, small group meetings, Women's Conferences, and other meetings. We thank God for the ability to connect.

The Seniors' Ministry has a powerful prayer network. As we all face the uncertainty of COVID-19, we found by listing the names of Seniors' Ministry members and their family members, and lifting them in prayer, allows us to have real-time connectivity and support for each other.

The past eight months have been tough for many Seniors. We have seen many of our fellow members pass on to be with the Lord, but we hold faith, hope, and contentment knowing they were a child of God. and resting in eternal peace. We thank God for His grace and mercy and do not need to be disconsolate.

We thank God for divine intervention in getting us through this election season. Accolades to each Seniors' Ministry member who took their civic duty seriously and voted, either in person or through absentee ballot. We praise God for His guidance and decision on the outcome.

Seniors' Ministry will continue to be safe and follow the experts' guidelines until it is safe to meet again in person. Please pray for all members of the Seniors' Ministry.

Are you interested in joining the Seniors' Ministry? Please contact:

Shirley Hardy
shirleybhardy@gmail.com
703-459-4321



LEADERSHIP THE CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Every first Friday of the month, your FMZ Trustee, Deaconess and Deacon Team, pray and fast over a chosen topic. Sharing nuggets from the November 6, 2020 Devotional below:

Prayer and Fasting Topic: "Not Cocky, but Confident, to walk in God's Integrity" "Such a time as this"

Source: Psalm 26

Lesson/Discussion: Psalm 26 Theme: Declaring loyalty to God. If we are genuinely committed to God, we can stand up to opposition and examination. Author: David, possibly written during the days of Absalom, his son's, rebellion against him"

Ps 26:1-3 In asking God to vindicate him, David was not claiming to be sinless—that is impossible for any human being to achieve. Instead, he was pleading with God to clear his name of the false charges made against him by his enemies. We also can ask God to examine us, trusting him to forgive our sins and clear our record according to his mercy."

Psalms 26 (NLT)

¹ Declare me innocent, O LORD, for I have acted with integrity; I have trusted in the LORD without wavering. ²Put me on trial, LORD, and cross-examine me. Test my motives and my heart. ³For I am always aware of your unfailing love, and I have lived according to your truth.

Seven Ways God can declare us "innocent," and we walk confidently in God's integrity:

We confess our sins to God, knowing God is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and cleanse us of from all unrighteousness!! (1 John 1:9)

We put on God's Whole Armor (Eph 6:10-18)

We dwell in God's "Secret Place" (Ps 91)

We love God with all our hearts, souls, minds, and bodies, and we love our neighbor as ourselves. (Mat 22:37-39)

We don't live by bread alone but by every Word that proceeds from God's mouth (Mat 4:4)

We present our bodies living sacrifices, wholly acceptable to God, which is our reasonable Worship and be not conformed to this world. (Rom 12:1-2)

We keep God's commandments (If you love Me, keep My commandments (John 14:15)

Supporting Scripture: And we are confident that God hears us whenever we ask for anything that pleases God!! 1 John 5:14 (NLT); Being confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you, will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ; Phil 1:6 (NKJV)

Supporting Song(s): You are a Mighty God (Morris Chapman)
<https://youtu.be/rUk-Xiii34>

Deacon Ren Cooper
on behalf of the FMZ Leadership Chaplains

Encouragement and Assurance for the Soul

JOY VS. HAPPINESS DURING THIS SEASON

"The spirit of a person will sustain them in sickness, but who can bear a broken spirit?" (Proverbs 18:14, NKJV)

Joy is a fruit of the spirit, Galatians 5:22-23. Have you ever noticed happiness is not a fruit of the spirit? We are moving into the season which for some is exciting, and glistens with hope for the new year. On the other side are those of us who find this time of year not as joyful as others. Let us be mindful of them.

Material things make us happy. Happiness is an externally driven emotion, based on situations, events, people, places, and things. Joy is stronger, and not as common as happiness, it is internal. Sometimes, we must push through "situations" to stay joyful. To be full of joy is to overcome temporary situations. As the cliché says, "trouble don't last always." We know the Lord has the situation under control, and we can say, the joy of the Lord is our strength. Joy brings strength with it.

Survivors of POW camps, concentrations camps, and people in solitary confinement had one thing in common, they never lost their joy. They found something to be thankful for and joyful to dwell on. Joy comes when we make peace with who we are, where we are, why we are, and are comfortable being alone. Only in that stillness can we find the joy that resides inside of us; dependent upon nothing external to have it. When we walk in our truth and the love of God, then we have settled into an abiding joy that is not rocked by external circumstances and situations. Our joy is not disrupted, our joy is truly in the Lord.

Reverend Gillis M. Taylor





KIDS' KINGDOM LEADS CHILDREN TO CHRIST

"But Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for such is the kingdom of heaven.'"
(Matthew 19:14 NKJV)



This pandemic can't stop God's work! During this time of social and physical distancing, streaming worship from home, ZOOM fellowships and yes, YouTube kids worship services, God is still moving and He is moving in the lives of our children.

During our first Kids' Kingdom YouTube worship service, held on September 20, little Ms. Saphire Hamilton, a 4th grader, shared with her family that she wanted to accept Jesus and be baptized. What a joy it was to hear Pastor Torian share the news that a child had accepted Christ from the virtual YouTube worship service. Even more joyous was bearing witness to Saphire's baptism.

On November 15, Saphire's parents, grandparents, and other family members were excited as she put on her white baptismal robe, cap, and let's not forget the mask, and stepped into the baptismal pool like a pro! As a surprise to her and in support of her new faith walk with Christ, Rev. Dr. Tracey Dawkins Holley, Minister of Christian Education and Kids' Kingdom monthly Worship Leader attended the Baptism. Dr. Holley said, "It was important for me to be here. I wanted Saphire to know how special she is to First Mount Zion and to the Lord, and what a special day this is in her life." Saphire's grandfather shared with Dr. Holley that he thought it would be "wonderful for her to see the Minister from the YouTube, where she accepted Christ, at her Baptism." What a beautiful day it was to celebrate such a beautiful young girl who now knows that Jesus will always be with her. Thank you to the Hamilton family for sharing this special moment with us. To God be the glory!



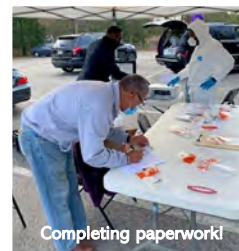
Saphire, after Baptism, with her family



Saphire with Dr. Holley

COVID-19 TESTING AT FIRST MOUNT ZION: PASTOR TORIAN LEADS BY EXAMPLE

There is an old adage, "do what I say, not what I do." This saying is intended to imply that one should follow the instructions given, even if the instructor doesn't follow them him or herself! Well, on November 21, our Pastor was not guilty of living up to this adage. Instead, he led by example, bringing his family for the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) testing hosted by First Mount Zion and administered by "Better To Know," a reputable organization providing a wide range of testing across the United States by an award-winning laboratory that never discloses or sells patient information to third parties.



Completing paperwork



Leading by example

"Better To Know" coordinators, Mr. Frank Simmons and Dr. Linda Coleman said, "we wanted to help the black community to get tested before Thanksgiving and show them there is no fear to do the test. So, we came to the largest black church to start. Then, we went to our home church, Mt. Pleasant of Herndon." Mr. Simmons, Dr. Coleman and their team are to be commended for their patience in handling an overflow of 300 people, most of who heard about the testing event

and just showed up without an appointment. Nevertheless, "Better To Know" didn't want to turn anyone away. Good thing they didn't because this event resulted in a staggering 70 "positive" results, which is almost 25% of those tested. These were 70 people who were able to make an informed decision about how to celebrate Thanksgiving and avoid putting others at risk. The overwhelming participation, which was four times the expected number, may have been a contributing factor in some lab results taking longer than the expected 48-72 hours turnaround.



Patiently waiting to be tested

Pastor Torian (seeing the number of cars and the people who were willing to be proactive with their health by taking the test) said, "it was an awesome day" and that he "looks forward to being able to host another testing opportunity."

Thank you to all who came out. We will continue to pray for our community, the nation, and all families impacted by a "positive" test during this event, as well as those impacted over the past 9 months. Continue to practice social/physical distancing, wear your masks, keep the faith, and remain hopeful!



Submitted by Rev. Dr. Tracey Dawkins Holley

Submitted by Rev. Dr. Tracey Dawkins Holley



Hours of Operation During Pandemic:

The Church Office is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Please continue to check our web-site at www.fmzbc.com for updated information.

In the event of closure due to inclement weather, you will be notified by your Zone Leader. Other resources include calling the Church at (703) 670-0184 to listen to the voicemail greeting or by visiting our website. You may also tune in to WTOP Radio 103.5 or watch WJLA Channel 7 or News Channel 8.

Members are encouraged to sign-up to receive an email notification by going to:

www.cancellations.com

...from the desk of the Church Business Administrator

Tithes & Offerings
GIVING BACK
TO GOD

During this pandemic, we can still support the Ministry by giving our Tithes and Offerings through these means:

Use our **ONLINE GIVING** at www.fmzbc.com, or access it using this link: <http://bit.ly/FMZ-Online-Giving>

Vanco is our online giving platform. When using a credit card, please check the expiration date, it is important to keep it current. It is problematic when online giving accounts are set up for recurring contributions and the credit card is expired.

OR via Mail to: First Mount Zion Baptist Church
16622 Dumfries, Road
Dumfries, VA 22025

OR you can schedule a time with your **Zone Leader** for pick up from your home!

Thank you in advance for your contributions.

Do we have your **PERSONAL INFORMATION**



If your personal information is not current, please access this link to update on line: <https://form.jotform.com/12155242234> or, if you prefer, please email your Zone leader, the Church Business Administrator (Sis. Renee Woolfolk) or Pastor Torian's Executive Assistant (Sis. Sylvia Moore) so that your current information can be correctly reflected in our records. This helps the Church and Leadership to communicate more effectively with you when required. Thank you!



COVID-19 PRE-SCREENING

Help our Facilities Team help you by completing the COVID-19 Pre-Screening link prior to your arrival. Additionally, when you arrive, your temperature will be taken at any one of the Check-In Stations. Feel free to share with family and friends for any occasion that you plan to come to the Church. <https://forms.gle/ExhEgHS5uwZHEgbc9>



Special thanks to all those volunteers/willing workers who worked tirelessly, in any capacity, to help make things run smoothly during this pandemic. God sees ALL, and HE knows ALL, and HE will reward you openly! God bless you all!



**KIDS
KINGDOM**

**EVERY 3RD
SUNDAY OF THE
MONTH AT 11 A.M.
JOIN US!!!**



Women's Ministry Concert/Conference 2020

"GOD IS STILL AT WORK: ENCOURAGING WOMEN THROUGH TOUGH TIMES!"

Rev. Dr. Cynthia Hale closed us out with Psalm 23. She reminded us who our Shepherd is! We need to be empowered by who we are in Christ; "This I know!" We need to recite the affirmation, The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. This I know! I shall lack nothing! We need to trust, depend, and wait on the Lord.

The Women's Ministry (WM) hosted a concert on November 6, 2020. Our Mistress of Ceremony, *Demetria Cobb*, lead the evening, getting us excited from one performer to the next. The FMZBC Gospel Recording Artists sang songs of worship and praise to our Lord. We were all encouraged, and our spirits were uplifted by this talented group of women and men. We offer our special thanks to *Beverly Johnson*, *Charles McPhatter*, *Cynthia Wilson*, and *Phil Lynah* for gracing us with your gifts and talents. Following these dynamic performances, was the very gifted Spoken Word guru, *Rev. Ayo Morton*. Rev. Morton strategically places her words to encourage, educate, and empower all those under the sound of her voice. Our finale to end this wonderful conference was no stranger to FMZ. The well-known "Gospel Violinist" *Eric Taylor* closed out the concert with his refreshing and inspiring performances, to include the anointed rendition of "Total Praise," which left everyone in awe of God and the Holy Spirit that was evident in the space.

The concert was the kickoff to our WM conference held on November 7, 2020 via ZOOM. The message of hope was threaded throughout the agenda, reminding ladies that no matter what is going on in our lives and in the world around us, GOD IS STILL AT WORK! We received some powerful messages from our guest speakers. Pastor Etoria Goggins reminded us that God is working things out in our favor and that His hand is on our lives. "We are under his providential care." She encouraged us to continue to feed our mind and spirit with the Word of God. Rev. Dr. Tracey Dawkins Holley encouraged us with the topic, "You Must Go." Wherever God is leading you, be obedient and go! Trust God to do what He has promised you. God has gone before us and we must not lose sight of the fact that He has promised to never leave nor forsake us.

Thank you to Pastor, Rev. Dr. Luke E. Torian, and Rev. Dr. Tracey Dawkins Holley for always allowing our vision to develop into a reality. Thank you to Rev. Dr. Sandra K. James for always saying yes to wherever we ask you to serve. The WM is truly grateful for your leadership and continued support. My Co-Director, Gwen L. Holland and I are truly grateful to everyone who contributed to making the concert and conference a success. To God be the glory!

It takes great faith to look at hardships and suffering and say with confidence, I can have joy because I know God is working it out. No matter what it looks like, He's working it out for our good and for His glory. So, may the joy of the Lord continue to be your strength and never lose focus of the fact that GOD IS STILL AT WORK!

Be blessed and stay safe!

Veronica D. Hackett
Women's Ministry Director





Sis. Beverly Johnson



Bro. Charles McPhatter



Sis. Cynthia Wilson



Bro. Phil Lynah



Rev. Ayo Morton



Bro. Eric Taylor



Dr. Luke E. Torian
Pastor



Sis. Annette Rivers



Sis. Demetria Cobb





Some gifts never stop giving, and for that, the Pastor's Aide Ministry would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who participated in making Pastor's Torian's 25th Anniversary Celebration a tremendous success. While we were unable to formally celebrate Pastor Torian and his family due to the pandemic, we were still able to coordinate a drive-through event that allowed members the opportunity to show their love and appreciation for the Pastor and his family. We recognize that Pastor Torian and his family already thanked each of you, personally, for your gifts and support, however, the Pastor's Aide Ministry also wanted to thank each of you for your support and participation, and no deed went unnoticed. It is through your kindness that during a challenging year, this congregation was able to show our Pastor and his family the greatest gift of all - love.

Also, we would be remiss if we didn't recognize and thank the Anniversary Committee for their efforts in the initial planning and preparation to celebrate the Pastor's Anniversary, even though the COVID-19 Pandemic caused all planned activities to be cancelled. God bless each of you for your faithfulness and dedication in the service of the Lord.



The Pastor's Aide Ministry and FMZBC wish each of you . . .



**BUY ONE,
GET TWO
FREE**

You know it is the holiday season when nearly everywhere you look you find colorful advertisements boasting "great deals". Looking at the top of today's paper my attention was drawn to big bold letters screaming, "Buy One, Get One Free." On the next page, a similarly attentive ad with the headline, "Buy One, Get Two Free!"

Yet in all these good deals, there is one deal that continues to stand out. A deal that has stood out for nearly 2000 years, and a deal that does not require rainchecks or even getting up at 4:00 in the morning. If we were to give this deal a similar title, I am sure it would read something like, **"By One, Billions Free!"**

This deal of course, is salvation through Christ. Freedom from Satan's power, freedom from eternal punishment, and as a bonus, a personal relationship with God Himself (*John 8:36*). In essence, it is the only deal that lets you start over and be something even better (*2 Corinthians 5:17*). This amazing, life changing deal was paid for by God Himself, who came down to die for our sins.

This Christmas season, I ask you to share this **"Great Deal"** with others unashamedly (*Romans 1:16*) just like you would a great coupon in a newspaper. I ask you to share this wonderful coupon, the Gospel, with anyone and everyone, so that they too may know the joy that fills your life. (*Mark 16:15*).

Author Unknown.

*Submitted by
Deaconess Janice Cooper,
on behalf of the
Deaconess Ministry*





NOW YOU KNOW: ADVENT: WE WAIT FOR CHRIST

The Season of Advent for the year 2020 begins on November 29th - December 24th. Advent means "coming". There are three meanings of "coming" for Christians in Advent. The First and most thought of happened over 2000 years ago when Jesus came into the world as a baby to live and die for us as Savior of the world. The second coming is when we accept Jesus into our lives. The Third will happen in the future when Jesus returns as King of kings and Lord of lords. Advent candles readily demonstrate the strong contrast between darkness and light. In the Bible, Christ is referred to as the "Light of the World" contrasted with the darkness of sin.

THE FOUR WEEKS OF ADVENT During the first two weeks of Advent we light the first two purple candles. The Third Sunday of Advent is called Gaudete (Rejoice) Sunday. On this day we celebrate that our waiting for the birth of Jesus on Christmas day is almost over. Rose is a liturgical color that is used to signify joy, so we light the single pink candle on the third Sunday of Advent. Then on the fourth Sunday of Advent, the final purple candle is lit to mark the final week of prayer and penance as we wait expectantly for the soon-coming birth of the King of Kings.

The **1st Sunday of Advent** symbolizes Hope with the "Prophet's Candle" reminding us that Jesus is coming.

The **2nd Sunday of Advent** symbolizes Faith with the "Bethlehem Candle" reminding us of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem.

The **3rd Sunday of Advent** symbolizes Joy with the "Shepherd's Candle" reminding us of the Joy the world experienced at the coming birth of Jesus.

The **4th Sunday of Advent** symbolizes Peace with the "Angel's Candle" reminding us of the message of the angels: "Peace on Earth, Good Will Toward Men."

SHAPE: The circular shape of the wreath, without beginning or end, symbolizes God's complete and unending love for us—a love that sent His Son into the world to redeem us from the curse of sin. It also represents eternal life which becomes ours through faith in Jesus Christ.

NUMBER: The Advent Wreath traditionally holds four candles which are lit, one at a time, on each of the four Sundays of the Advent season. Each candle represents 1,000 years. Added together, the four candles symbolize the 4,000 years that humanity waited for the world's Savior—from Adam and Eve to Jesus, whose birth was foretold in the Old Testament.

Some Advent wreath traditions also include a fifth white "Christ" candle, symbolizing purity that is lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas day. Many circular wreaths can incorporate a white candle by adding a pillar candle to the wreath center.

COLOR: Violet is a liturgical color that is used to signify a time of prayer, penance, and sacrifice and is used during Advent and Lent. Advent, also called "little Lent," is the season where we spiritually wait in our "darkness" with hopeful expectation for our promised redemption, just as the whole world did before Christ's birth, and just as the whole world does now as we eagerly await his promised return.

Christian symbolism in our decorations and their meaning. The use of evergreens reminds us of our eternal life with Christ; pointy holly leaves and berries represents the crown of thorns from the Passion of Jesus and His precious blood; and pine cones symbolize Christ's Resurrection.

Peace, Blessings and Safety for a
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year,

Dr. Sandra K. James (AP)



**Merry Christmas
and best wishes
for a prosperous and healthy
New Year!**





First Mount Zion welcomes all **NEW MEMBERS** who have joined us during 2020. We feel blessed to have you as a part of our congregation and pray that, as God leads, you will associate yourself with a ministry in service to God, and make a difference in this indifferent world.

We love you at First Mount Zion and, again,

*WELCOME,
WELCOME, WELCOME!!!*



THANK YOU!

Thank you, FMZ Family, for your continual heart of compassion during the Thanksgiving holiday, which was exhibited even the more during this pandemic. As a result of your overwhelming generosity, we collected **\$27,000** for our Special Benevolent Offering and we were able to provide Share packages to 655 families. Also, we are grateful to the **90** SHARE Ministry Servants who worked diligently to package the groceries in advance so that when the families arrived to pick up, everything was ready for distribution. It was a great success! To GOD be the glory!

Now, as we enter the Christmas season, a time of giving, please help your Zone Leaders identify families in our congregation and community, who would appreciate a SHARE package. Names are due to Zone Leaders by December 15th. SHARE distribution will take place on December 21st, from 10AM – Noon.



*Thank
you!*

*From a few of the families
who received Thanksgiving
baskets:*

**To First Mount Zion Baptist Church
Family and Congregation:**

Thank you so much for the food for Thanksgiving. One family has a mother with children whose father left them after both parents lost jobs. The mother and the children are grateful for the assistance of food as they move ahead trusting in God and those who hear God and choose to be a blessing. Many, many thanks.

From a Senior Citizen: Thank you so much for the Thanksgiving basket of food that helps in times like these. Blessings to you and the church family for your gift.

I just wanted to let you know how appreciative these families are for the church's giving and your part in it. Thank you for making the way for me to pick up the food and take these baskets to them.



December 6, 2020
Volume 16 - Issue 13

-- cont'd from page 1





CONGRATULATIONS!!



Congrats to the Honorable Andrea O. Bailey for receiving this year's PLL Citizen of the Year award. She currently serves as the Potomac District Supervisor. Understanding the value and power of education, Supervisor Bailey has a Bachelor of Science degree in Media Studies from Webster University and a Master of Science degree in Human Resource Management and Development from National-Louis University. She is also a 20-year veteran of the corporate private sector with business acumen in business development, operational management, customer service, and human resource management.

ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTED BY FMZBC



In our November Newsletter, we shared with you a cursory glance of three of the organizations supported by our Ministry and, this month, as promised, we are featuring three more in an attempt to keep the Membership informed regarding the benevolent support our Ministry shares with many organizations. Please see a synopsis of what these organizations provide and, when you have time, please take a minute to view their websites and become more familiar with what your contributions provide for needy families.

Submitted by the Deacons' Ministry

THE CHILDREN'S HOME OF VIRGINIA BAPTIST, INC. (CHVB)



"A Legacy of Love," located in Petersburg, Virginia, The Children's Home of Virginia Baptist, Inc. ("The Home," formerly known as the "Virginia Negro Baptist Children's Home") was founded in 1947 by Dr. Charles S. Dodd as an orphanage for Black children. His inspiration came from two pivotal events – a promise he made to his wife and a call he responded to at the Petersburg General Hospital. The patient was a homeless, black child, who had been found by a Petersburg police officer. Dr. Dodd began the difficult journey to get a home started by giving the first financial donation of \$5,000.00, and enlisted the support of his pastor, some of his close friends, and several of the Baptist Associations/Conventions in the State of Virginia. This effort secured the first \$30,000.00 needed to get "The Home" started.

Since 1947, support has been ongoing and CHVB faithfully carries out its mission to serve God through family, children and youth service ministries, strengthening families and improving the quality of life. It stands as a true testament to "we are more than me," and demonstrates how much more we can accomplish when we work together for the good of others. FMZBC has partnered with CHVB in fulfilling its mission for many years. See the full history of Children's Home of Virginia Baptist at chvb.org



LOTT CAREY MISSION



Lott Carey works with the faith communities, sharing values and interests to help **"build a better world, touching lives with transforming love."** The Lott Carey movement was founded in 1897 by African American Baptists who were committed to a substantial international mission thrust – especially on the African continent. They believed that nothing should distract the church from executing its primary objective of advancing God's mission throughout the world. Since its founding as the Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Society, the organization has single-mindedly engaged in Christian missions around the world.

The organization bears the name of Rev. Lott Carey who was born enslaved in 1780 in Charles City County, Virginia. He became a disciple of Jesus in 1807, purchased his freedom in 1813, and led the first Baptist missionaries to Africa from the United States in 1821. His pioneering missionary team settled in Liberia, where he engaged in evangelism, education, and health care. Rev. Carey served as a well-respected and gifted missional and civic leader until his death in 1828. He was also the organizing pastor for the first Baptist church in Liberia – the Providence Baptist Church in Monrovia.

Lott Carey continues to extend Christian witness around the world through prayer partnership, financial support, and technical assistance, to indigenous communities who engage in ministries of evangelism, compassion, empowerment, and advocacy. It has partnered with Kids Against Hunger in their joint mission to "provide fully nutritious food to impoverished children and families around the world... and around the corner." FMZBC has partnered with Lott Carey in fulfilling its mission for many years. See the full Lott Carey story and history at lottcarey.org/

ACTION IN COMMUNITY THROUGH SERVICE (ACTS)



Hope – Relief – Self-Sufficiency! ACTS is an independent, private, nonprofit organization serving the residents of the Greater Prince William Area, including the City of Manassas and Manassas Park.

In 2019, ACTS celebrated a 50-Year historic milestone of service in Prince William County! Its founders began by addressing the most basic human needs of food and shelter established Prince William County's first food bank, set up a used furniture distribution system, and developed a homeless shelter in local churches. From these beginnings grew the Hunger Prevention Center, Thrift Store, utility assistance program, two homeless shelters, and a permanent housing program. Services now also include comprehensive prevention and intervention programs to address domestic violence, sexual abuse and assault, and suicide, as well as a 24-hour anonymous crisis telephone service. ACTS also provides education for the community on various topics associated with our services – for children, parents, caregivers, business and service industry professionals, government employees, and more. ACTS serves over 70,000 individuals in the region (not including training) every year, of which 12,000 are children.

ACTS' mission and vision are centered around fostering hope, providing relief, and promoting self-sufficiency; and creating a community where no one goes without or suffers alone. ACTS is an *integral part of our COMMUNITY, delivering SERVICE with COMPASSION, RESPECT, and EMPOWERING their Prince William area neighbors in crisis.* FMZBC has partnered with ACTS in fulfilling its mission for over 25 years. Visit the ACTS Website and learn more about their story and ongoing volunteer opportunities at <https://www.actspwc.org>



To all those celebrating in December, we wish you JOY, PEACE and HAPPINESS!!!



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

POC: Pamela Knight
singlesministry@firstmountzionbc.org



"THANK YOU" FROM THE CPM

The Communications and Publicity Ministry (CPM) would like to thank each and every ministry, individual, family, organization . . . anyone who has submitted information, articles, pictures, or poetry, to help make the FMZ Newsletter the success it continues to be. Please keep the information coming! We truly appreciate you all!!!

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:

cpm@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

Deacon Joseph Boutte, Chair
Benson Blake Oonagh Bell
Beverly Grant James Hawkins
Sylvia Moore Rev. Kathy Russell
Deaconess Claudia Woolfolk

Rev. Dr. Luke E. Torian, Pastor
Rev. Dr. Sandra K. James, Assistant Pastor
Sylvia Moore, Executive Assistant
Renee Woolfolk, Church Business
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Chesley Doctor, Chair, Trustee Ministry
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ADJUSTED SERVICE SCHEDULE DURING PANDEMIC

Sunday School – 9:45 AM (VIA FB, LIVE
STREAMING & CONFERENCE CALL-IN)

Worship Service – 11:00 AM ONLY (VIA
FB, LIVE STREAMING)

Wednesday Night Bible Study – 7:30 PM
(VIA FB, LIVE STREAMING &
CONFERENCE CALL-IN)

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



**THE TRANSPORTATION MINISTRY
HAS BEEN TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED
DUE TO COVID-19 AND
WILL RESUME WHEN
FULL ACTIVITIES AT THE CHURCH
HAVE BEEN RESTORED!**