



*A Ministry Exhibiting
A Spirit of Excellence!*

*2021 Theme:
We Are Stronger Together - Ecclesiastes 4:9*

Christmas Message from the Pastor



'TIS THE SEASON...

This is a wonderful time of year, and we have much to be thankful for. The Advent season is a four-week period before Christmas, November 28th through December 24th that celebrates the anticipation and coming of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. The origin of "advent" is from the Latin word "adventus" which simply translates "coming" or "arrival". Not only is the Christian meaning for preparation and celebration is the coming of Jesus Christ, His birth at Christmas, but also to celebrate the new life when someone accepts Jesus Christ as their Savior; and lastly, the anticipation of Jesus' second coming or return.

I want to encourage you to spend time in prayer this Advent season and be thankful for the Gift of Salvation given by our Heavenly Father in God's son, Jesus Christ. Open your hearts and allow the gift of light, love and life to take on new meaning. It is my prayer that during this season you will remember that you have been prepared for good work and that you are a gift from God.

Thank you for your continued support to this Ministry and the community. Have a wonderful Christmas season and I look forward to seeing and serving with you in the new year.



*We Are Stronger Together,
Pastor Luke E. Torian*

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Singles Ministry Presents: Angel Tree Christmas



This Ministry activity will be VIRTUAL for 2021

- Volunteers needed to purchase gifts
- For additional information, please contact Tina Coates at angeltree@firstmountzionbc.org

The Ministry of



A Young Adult Spiritual Growth Session

Tuesday December 7, 2021
7:30 PM (Via Zoom)

This month's topic:
"Hearing God Through Everyday Life"

Speaker:
Rev. Cozy Bailey

For Zoom Information Please Email
TheCore@FirstMountZionBC.org



ANGEL TREE PRISON FELLOWSHIP

Angel Tree Prison Fellowship will be held VIRTUALLY for purchasing gifts. For more information contact Tina Coates at:

angeltree@firstmountzionbc.org



Happy Holidays from the Trustee Ministry

GOD, FAITH AND COVID-19

Our youth, parents and spiritual guides welcomed Dr. Pat Fosarelli (MD, D. Min.) into our community last month for a vital occasion to see friends, to build faith, and to experience God. As a parent, I felt like the conversation affirmed facts, dispelled myths and eased anxiety.

Dr. Fosarelli is uniquely qualified to discuss this topic. In case you weren't aware, Dr. Fosarelli currently serves as an Associate Professor of Pediatrics at Johns Hopkins University and Associate Dean of the Ecumenical Institute at St. Mary's Seminary and University in Baltimore. We gathered for a presentation and conversation with Dr. Pat Fosarelli, author of "How to Talk to Children and Teens About COVID-19", to discuss themes like God, faith and COVID-19. Some of our questions were:

- ◆ Is God trying to tell us something through this COVID crisis? If so, what?
- ◆ What has been your greatest challenge during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- ◆ How long does it take for COVID to take over the body?
- ◆ Will we ever get to stop wearing masks?
- ◆ Will I need a booster shot?

No questions were too silly or too serious. We even contemplated why doesn't God stop the coronavirus? While I don't have the space to recount the details of our dialogue, here are a few lessons learned during this time:

- ◆ Care about everyone in the world, not just us;
- ◆ Don't waste time a single day;
- ◆ Lean on God;
- ◆ You're not in control, only God is...

What would you add to this list? COVID-19 has changed our lives and presented us with many questions. The FMZ Youth Ministry is here to support youth and parents through life's perplexing questions and difficult times. Connect with me at jmccneill@firstmountzionbc.org or (703) 670-0184.

Reverend John T. McNeill
Youth Minister

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to the faithful congregation of First Mount Zion Baptist Church. As we close out 2021, the Trustee Ministry would like to thank the congregation for their support. We paid the Church off in September, paved the parking lot, and completed other projects this year because of your generous giving.

God's great love has enabled all of us to go on through COVID-19 and the many other challenges we faced in 2021. As stated in Lamentations 3:22-23 – "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." It is because of His provisions that are provided through family and friends that we were not consumed by the many trials. In 2021 and beyond, we are Stronger Together!

As we enter 2022, let's continue to support our Church and each other. God will continue to heal us with His grace. Let's surrender to His will and watch the awesome things He will do for all of us.

Again, Happy Holidays from the Trustee Ministry and may God continue to bless the congregation of First Mount Zion Baptist Church.



Trustee James Simpson
Chairman



The Pastor's Aide Ministry would like to publicly thank each and everyone of you for your support of our Pastor and his Family, our Assistant Pastor, and all the Associate Ministers during this year. Even though the pandemic continued to wreak havoc and we were unable to worship together in the sanctuary, for the most part, you still found a way to bless them. It is through your kindness that during a challenging year, this congregation continued to share the greatest gift of all - love.

May Almighty God bless, keep and protect each and every one of you!

We also take this opportunity to wish everyone - -





Thank You in advance for the victory and for Your great faithfulness and new mercies every day!

In Jesus Name we pray and say thanks!

Continue to pray for our families, churches, nation and world. More than ever, we need to be united and fervent in praying for our nation.

We pray for traveling mercies for all who travel. Have a safe and blessed month!

COUNT IT ALL JOY

Scripture:

James 1:2-4 NKJV

[2] My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, [3] knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. [4] But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

James 1:2-4 AMPC

[2] Consider it wholly joyful, my brethren, whenever you are enveloped in or encounter trials of any sort or fall into various temptations. [3] Be assured and understand that the trial and proving of your faith bring out endurance and steadfastness and patience. [4] But let endurance and steadfastness and patience have full play and do a thorough work, so that you may be [people] perfectly and fully developed [with no defects], lacking in nothing.

James 1:2-4 MSG

Consider it a sheer gift, friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors. So, don't try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way.

Prayer:

Lord, we love You and adore You. Thank You for Your sustaining grace that allows us to persevere through long seasons of challenges. Sometimes we get weary and feel that we can't go on any longer, but You give us that extra measure of grace to take the next step. As we continue to persevere one step at a time, we can cross that finish line with a strong finish and strong faith. May we continue to trust You and patiently wait for our victory and deliverance to be manifested.

*Submitted by The Noon Prayer Team:
Deaconess Pamela Ford
Sister Carol-Ann Benjamin
Reverend Maxine Thompson*



The Seniors' Ministry met by Zoom on 11/17/21. The Ministry celebrated all its members who received their heavenly wings since March 2019. It was heartwarming to remember the faces of all those we miss so dearly. Family members and Seniors' Ministry members had the opportunity to share fond memories and to learn more about those who have transitioned. It was a true celebration and the ceremony provided an opportunity for Seniors' Ministry members to say goodbye. At the end of the presentation, Deacon Ronald Cooper graced us with a song, He's Been Faithful.

We thank Rev. Torian and Dr. Holley for their wholehearted support of this Ministry. We also thank Deacon and Deaconess Tribble for a fervent devotional period.

*Sister Shirley Hardy
Seniors' Ministry Leader*





December 5, 2021
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LEADERSHIP

THE CHAPLAIN'S CORNER



"Happy early CHRISTmas, FMZ Family!!" Please see the FMZ Leadership First Friday Prayer and Fasting Devotional from November.

The October sub-title was "God, What's Going On!?" Interesting enough, the saying "what's going on?" came up at the October 30th Men's Ministry Zoom Conference. So here we go!! The first speaker said Marvin Gaye asked the question, "what's going on?" We should ask: 1. What's going on? 2. Why is it going on? and better; 3. What's next? He also said we must Live by Godly Principle; Obligate ourselves to your community/church; Validate our Faith through our service, action, and word, and Engage life each day through Faith, confidence, and purpose, and be an example for others to follow.

The second speaker asked the question, What is our response to "What's going on around us". He said we needed to (1) Get our Devotion together; (2) Get our Desire right. and (3) Get our Decision right!! (Joshua 24:14-15). And then the Pastor wrapped it up by saying to the men on the Zoom conference.... "Keep it going on!!"

Talk it over: Wow!! Lots of "goings on's !!!" So where do we GO from here??? Let's try scripture, Hebrew 13:1-6 (NLT)!! 13: (1) Keep on loving each other as brothers and sisters. (2) Don't forget to show hospitality to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it! (3) Remember those in prison, as if you were there yourself. Remember also those being mistreated, ask if you felt their pain in your own bodies. And how about this we must (1) Present our bodies daily as living sacrifices (Rom 12:1); (2) Hunger and thirst after righteousness daily (Matt.5:6), and (3) Choose to serve God 'til Jesus come (Matt. 24:9-14)!!

Finally, my Brethren and "Sisteren," we must listen to the Voice of God, through God's Word and Holy Spirit (The Teacher). No matter "What is going on!!" God's got it!!! Jesus said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you!" Once again, the Pastor said to "keep it going on!!" Now, we ALL should have confirmation in our assignment!! Matthew 28:19 (The Great Commission) "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations (Love), baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Love), 20. teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you (Love); and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age (Love)." Amen. Amen and Amen!!

Other Supporting Scripture: Matt. 5:15-16; Ps. 34; Heb. 13:5; I Cor. 13

Meditational Song(s): Our own, Tony Craddock Jr., "What's Going On" performed at the FMZ Oct 30, Men's Zoom Conference! <https://youtu.be/RMrzROstavn>

Deacon Ron Cooper
on behalf of the FMZ Leadership Chaplains



"JOY TO THE WORLD"

What are you looking forward to this Christmas season? Spending time with family and friends or in solitude? Preparing meals for yourself, family, or a large group, or not having to cook? Watching your favorite movies and sporting events? Watching young children (and adults) get excited about the season? Serving others? Or taking time to simply Selah? Feel free to add your own.

This time of year brings a unique opportunity to reflect - to think about what has been, what is, and what lies ahead as the new year approaches. We have had to learn to pivot, adapt and transform, sometimes several times a day. Perhaps there have been seasons of sadness and moments of pain. Yet, in the midst, there have been times of joy. However, no matter where we are or where we have been, we have a God who is always with us. God does not promise that our faith walk will be free of challenges. But, God promises to love us, comfort us, guide us, and fight for us.

The Latin translation of the word for Advent is 'coming.' The season of Advent gives us a glimpse of the hope and joy to come, where the impossible is somehow possible. That somehow, the Christ child would be born in obscure surroundings to young parents, who encountered an angel they'd never seen before who told them that their baby would be the savior of the world. That Jesus Christ would come into the world to be with us. The birth of Emmanuel signifies the promise that "God is with us." It's all possible because the one who brings joy has come. This is a sign of hope for us all that there is a greater joy waiting for us.

In this season and beyond, I invite you to pause, give thanks and praise God for the joy of the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ, his miraculous arrival, and birth in the world. "Joy to the world, the Lord is come, Let earth receive her King. Let every heart prepare Him room, and heaven and nature sing."

Submitted by
Reverend Tarra L. Taylor



POSITIVES FROM THE BLACK HISTORY CORNER

Spiritual journeys or pilgrimages are ripe sources of nourishment for the soul. A recent one centered on three cities in Alabama that were infamous for their stubborn and graphic occasions where human dignity and value collided with violence and racial tensions. Any attempt to accurately describe the horrors of the day would fail. Montgomery was the site of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, a success Christian-led Movement that was initiated by Rosa Parks and ultimately led by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Selma's Edmund Pettis Bridge was the site of "Bloody Sunday," when law enforcement officers brutally attacked peacefully voting rights advocates. And then, Birmingham demands my study and prayerful consideration due to the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church and the Children's Crusades. The bombing resulted in the death of four girls and many injuries. The Crusades centered around teenagers and children who were jailed as a part of strategy to overwhelm the system and to expose its indiscriminate horror. As I look at this with fresh eyes, the biblical mandate to "love your enemies" takes new meaning. Let's discuss it.

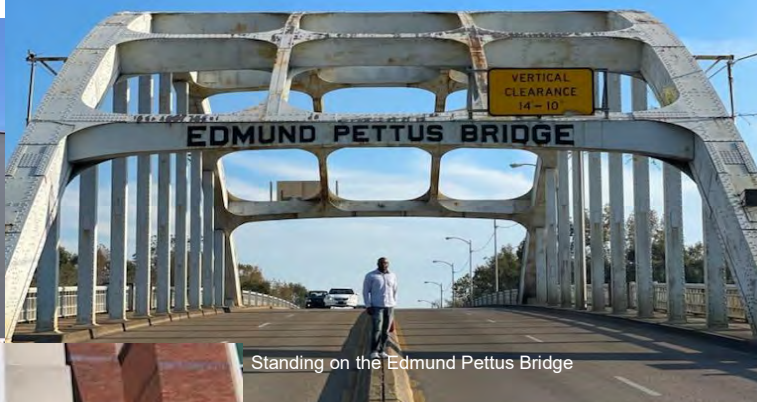
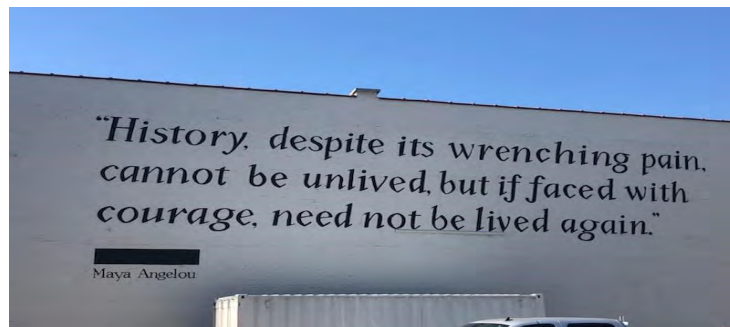
Submitted by
Reverend John T. McNeill



A Replica of Rosa Park's Bus at the Time of Her Arrest



Rev. Martin Luther King's Parsonage/Home



Standing on the Edmund Pettus Bridge

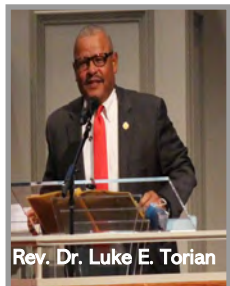




**“KEEP YOUR EYES ON GOD,
HE IS THE JOY
IN YOUR STORM!”**

**Women's Ministry
Concert/Conference 2021**

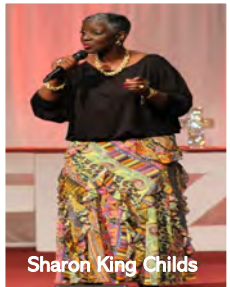
Glory, Glory, Glory Hallelujah! Let us Praise God for an awesome Women's Ministry Concert on Friday November 5th. Our theme was "Keep Your Eyes on GOD, He is the JOY in Your Storm". The concert was viewed by way of FMZ Live Stream, Facebook, YouTube, and some members who attended. We had an awesome time praising the Lord through song and dance with music from some phenomenal singers and a powerful mime salute/performance.



Rev. Dr. Luke E. Torian

**THE WOMEN'S MINISTRY (WM)
HOSTED A
CONCERT ON
NOVEMBER 5, 2021**

The evening opened with the Women's Ministry Co-Director, Gwen L Holland, welcoming everyone, followed by Mistress of Ceremony, Oonagh Bell, who did an awesome job keeping the program moving. She involved everyone with an experience that made you excited in anticipation of each guest performer, and at times had you on the edge of your seat, keeping you totally engaged throughout the evening, as we gave God all the Glory, Honor and Praise!



Sharon King Childs



Gene Collins



Stacey Griggs



Jonathan Randal



Sharna White



Zoe

The FMZ Family singers were our opening acts, beginning with Stacey Griggs who rendered an anointed singing of "Breath on Me Holy Spirit" and "I Won't Complain", bringing tears of comfort to our souls as we lifted our hands in praises to God. She was followed by Gene Collins, whose soulful, and commanding voice had us up moving, clapping, and praising the Lord with his renditions of "Lord I Thank You" and "His Eye Is on the Sparrow". He then gave way to our first guest performer, CD Porter, who encouraged our participation while he sang beautiful, angelic melodies that spoke of how we ought to be "Grateful for God's Love", opining that just one word from Him will fill our hearts and show us that His Love remains the same, even through the storm. Our next guest performer, Zoe Battle, mimed her heartfelt, dynamic, and anointed praises to God from the song "It's in the Room". The next voice we heard from was FMZ's Sharon King Childs, whose powerful and anointed voice had us up singing, clapping, and dancing to the Lord while the spirit moved in her, as she moved around the stage singing, "Change Me", and "I Love the Lord". FMZ's Jonathan Randal followed with his sweet melodic and soothing tone, singing "Wherever I Go" and "Jesus' Children of America". Our second guest performer, Sharna White, closed out the Concert with "Hosanna", "I am", and "Jehovah Jireh". We were up praising God, and singing along with her divine, glorious, anointed voice.



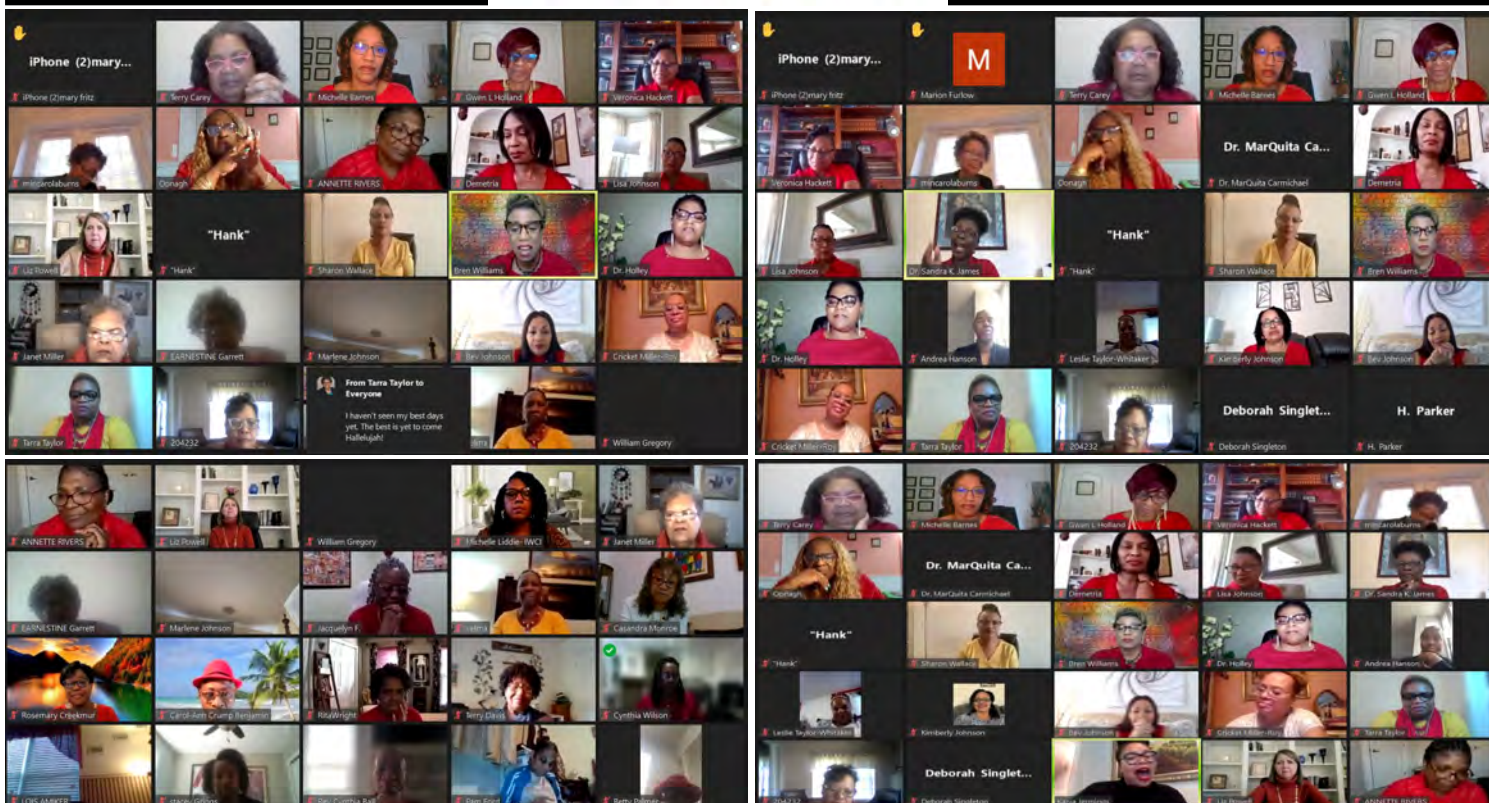
CD Porter

Glory to God, He is our Provider! Throughout the evening you could feel the presence of the Lord in the Sanctuary, and I believe also that he was in your homes as you watched from your Cyber sanctuary. God was in the atmosphere, and I pray that He touched your hearts with each breath you took. God's mercies never cease, and His love is never ending!

*Sister Gwen L Holland
Women's Ministry Co-Director*



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The Women's Ministry (WM) concluded our 2-day Ministry event with a conference via Zoom on Nov 6th. The ladies showed up looking lovely in their red and gold to support our conference colors. We surprisingly had a few men from the Men's Ministry join us for this blessed time in the Lord.

The morning began with a video, "Never Lost a Battle" by CeCe Winans. This selection set the tone by reminding us that our God is still in control, and He can do all things but fail. Our Mistress of Ceremony, Demetria Cobb, did an amazing job as she lovingly and encouragingly led us through the morning. She opened and ushered in the presence of the Lord by instructing us to take ourselves off mute and give God praise for 30 seconds. The day included scripture readings that were gracefully read by Betty Palmer, Terry Carey, and Michelle Barnes. Rev. Sharon Wallace opened the conference with a Spirit-filled prayer. The WM Co-Director, Gwen L. Holland, provided warm and welcoming introductions for all three of our guest speakers. The day also included praise and worship selections that were beautifully rendered by Breh Stevens Mitchell, Evangelist Beverly Johnson, and Psalmist Cynthia Wilson.

Our 1st guest speaker, Rev. Dr. Brennetta Williams, delivered a powerful message encouraging us to "Keep Your Focus Fixed on God." She reminded us that we can have joy despite the challenges we are going through. She gave

example of the Israelites seeing the vision and then walking in the victory. (Deuteronomy 31:6) They were at their "in-between place" of promise and possession. The "in-between place" is where we lose focus. She encouraged us, while experiencing the "in-between place," to "Keep our Eyes Fixed on God." She reminded us to "Worship While We Wait." Dr. Williams instructed us to type that affirmation of faith in the chat. We need to declare that we haven't seen our best days yet. She went on to tell us of how Moses reminded the Israelites to go back to the promises of God and how He had done all He said He would do. She said we must position ourselves to receive the promise. We have to continue to pursue the promise. We have to be courageous while waiting for the promise to come to pass. Dr. Williams had us proclaim that "We are Winning Women!" We have to allow our faith to override our fear. God is with us and His presence gives us peace, protection and power. When God gives you a promise, you can take it to the bank and cash it! She concluded by saying that if you "Keep Your Focus on God," your joy will be complete.

During Part II of our conference, we had the pleasure of hearing a very inspirational testimony by our beloved Assistant Pastor, Rev. Dr. Sandra K. James. She started off by saying "This Is the Day That the Lord Has Made, Let Us Rejoice and Be Glad in It!" Dr. James shared how the Lord has been good to her while being a caregiver for her mother and through her experience with death of family members.



She shared that she and her family contracted COVID-19. The Lord kept her and her family in the midst of the pain and suffering. Through it all she trusted God in knowing that the prayers of the righteous availed much. They all survived! She proclaimed, *"I don't look like what I've been through. Had it not been for the Lord on my side, where would I be? My soul shouts hallelujah!"* She ended her testimony with the same way that she started it. *"This Is the Day That the Lord Has Made, Let Us Rejoice and Be Glad in It!"*

Our 2nd guest speaker, Rev. Kaiya Jennings, also delivered a powerful message entitled *"God Masters in Making a Way."* She gave the example of being stuck in 95 traffic on her way to an event. She experienced within herself impatience and frustration because she had somewhere to be. All of a sudden her GPS spoke letting her know there was another route she could take. What a relief! When we are faced with obstacles, the Lord will make a highway for you to get around it. When the mountain shows up in your life, *"God Masters in Making a Way."* Rev. Jennings expressed that God puts a hedge of protection around His people, protecting us from dangers both seen and unseen. He will never permit the righteous to be moved. (Psalm 55:22). She said that we need to understand that our God has the ability to step into time and space and make a miracle happen just for us. We serve a God that will keep His promises. His Word will not return back void. He may not come when you want Him to, but He's always on time. Rev. Jennings ended by encouraging us to trust in God and wait on Him; He will show up and do what we need Him to do, because *"God Masters in Making a Way."*

As we entered Part III, the final stages of our conference, we watched a very encouraging *"Keep Your Eyes on God,"* PowerPoint created by Gwen L. Holland. The presentation highlighted many of God's promises. Choosing to stand on God's promises is what will get us through the storms.

Our 3rd guest speaker, Rev. Dr. MarQuita Carmichael, closed out our conference with a powerful Word. She ministered to us about the Disciples being on the boat during a bad storm. Some of them were fishermen and knew what to do so they shouldn't have been shaken up by the storm, but they were. They cried out to each other in their panicking. Afterwards, they went to Jesus who was asleep in the boat. Dr. Carmichael encouraged us by telling us that we don't have to cry out like the Disciples did, but remind ourselves that God hasn't forgotten about us, so have faith. Keep God as the *"Center of our Joy,"* as she referenced the song sung earlier by Breh. We need to get in formation and assume the posture of prayer. She reminded us that God has planted Himself in the center of our heart, our soul, and in our storm. God speaks to the storm, not the people. Dr. Carmichael encouraged us by telling us that we are God's greatest joy. We are the carriers of His truth. We are the salt that gives the world its flavor. She reminded us that "They that

wait on the Lord, shall renew their strength." (Isaiah 40:31). In closing, Dr. Carmichael told us to "Walk together children, don't you get weary. The Lord knows where you are and the Lord is concerned about you. The Lord is everlasting and there is Nobody Greater;" referencing a song sang during the conference by Psalmist Wilson.

Before closing, Rev. Maxine Thompson gave the invitation to Christian Discipleship and prayed for those that are lost and haven't accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Our conference was full of praise, worship, and thanksgiving from beginning to end. I provided the following words of encouragement in closing: *"The best way to face challenges is to deal with them one day at a time. Sometimes our trials can seem overwhelming and almost impossible to get through, but we must lean not on our own understanding, trust in the Lord, read and meditate on the Word of God and stay in prayer. The Bible tells us to rejoice always, pray without ceasing and in everything give thanks. Keep Your Eyes on God, He is the Joy in Your Storm."*

Rev. Dr. Tracey Dawkins Holley continually gave thanks as her heart was full of thanksgiving and praise for all that had taken place over the 2-day WM events. She was heartfelt in her appreciation for everyone that took part in planning, executing, and sharing during the concert and conference. Rev. Dr. Sandra K. James ended the conference with a powerful prayer that covered and blessed us all. To God be the glory!

Sister Veronica D. Hackett
Women's Ministry Director

COME JOIN OUR
BIBLE
Study

WEDNESDAY NIGHT AT 7:30PM.

**ADVENT:
OUR HOPE HAS COME**

FMZ/Life Stream:
<https://live.lifestream.tv/first-mount-zion-baptist-church>

Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/fmzbcumfries>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzFC03nn-QRn0bzNDEefeGQ>

Study handouts are available online:
<https://firstmountzionbc.org/bible-study-handouts/>



December 5, 2021
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Jesus is the Reason for the Season

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT THE CHRISTMAS SEASON, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF?

It might be decorating the house and front yard with garland, lights, or wreaths to make everyone who comes to your home feel welcomed. It might be searching the internet or going out to the department stores to buy family gifts. Maybe you remember making Christmas cookies or building gingerbread houses. Maybe you remember the whole family gathered in your grandmother's tiny kitchen and absorbing all the delicious aromas from cooking the family dinner. Maybe you remember dads and granddads hidden away in the basement, debating how to assemble those toys with a gazillion pieces and that small allen wrench. Maybe you hear your favorite Christmas carols or feel the warmth that comes from spending time with loved ones.



Christmas memories vary from family to family. What's important is that these memories bring us closer together and remind us of what's important: the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

When we focus on Jesus Christ and His gospel for our salvation, we feel joy regardless of what's happening (or not happening) in our lives. We feel this joy at Christmas because we are living witnesses that the same Lord Jesus whose birth we celebrate at Christmas is coming again, Hallelujah! Simple adornments, spectacular adornments, or no adornments at all bring forth the same clarion call:

"Jesus is the reason for the season. He is the purpose of it all."

The things we do create precious memories, warm our hearts, and help us remember that Christmas' greatest gift is not found under a tree, rather it is found on a tree. As we remember Christmas, let us sing psalms of praise and worship the One who gives the true meaning to Christmas. Come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

The Deaconess Ministry exalts the name of Jesus, the Christ as we celebrate Christmas 2021, another Advent season of "Preparation," "Hope," "Joy," "Peace," and most importantly, "Love."

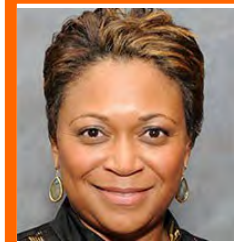
Submitted by
Deaconess Lynell Manning
FMZBC Deaconess Ministry

For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.
Luke 2:11 NKJV

MEN'S MINISTRY FELLOWSHIP



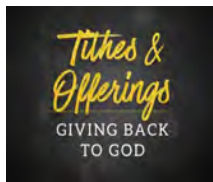
Join our Men's Ministry ZOOM Meeting and Fellowship with us on Saturday, December 11, 2021, at 9:00 AM, as we discover the message "Brotherly Love". This is based on the Book of Romans 12:10-13, which says: "Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality." Our speaker of the day will be our very own, Rev. Gillis Taylor, who will bring a DYNAMIC message that will fill our spirits and minds! We pray you seize this opportunity to Glorify GOD thru this online fellowship with your time and service. We look forward to seeing you Mighty Men of GOD online.



... from the desk of the
Church Business Administrator

Connection Points

Thank you to all who contributed to the weekly publication and circulation of Connection Points. I am thankful for how we have been able to maintain a connection through keeping the congregation up to date on ministry and operational activities. <https://firstmountzionbc.org/connection-points>



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>



Special thanks to all those volunteers 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!

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.

Sister Renee Woolfolk
Business Administrator



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, you may do so in person by coming to the office Monday - Friday, or on Sundays to the Leadership Desk in the Narthex. End of Year statements will be mailed to the address on record with the Church. Thank you!



COVID-19 PRE-SCREENING

We sincerely thank all those who have already shown proof of vaccination. Those who have not yet done so, if you prefer, you may come to the Church during office hours, Monday-Friday, thus eliminating a wait when you come to Worship Service. The verification of vaccination must be done in person. Please also note that we will still be taking your temperature on your arrival at the Check-In Stations.

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



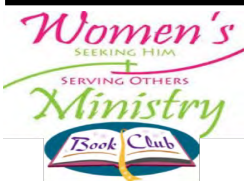
CHURCH MEETING

Saturday, December 4, 2021
10:00am
In person or live stream via FMZBC.COM

END OF YEAR

As we prepare to close out 2021 be mindful to submit any 2021 purchase requisition expenditures for processing no later than, Tuesday, December 21, 2021.





"SEASONS OF A WOMAN'S LIFE"

The Women's Ministry Book Club recently completed a five (5) week study on "Seasons of a Woman's Life," by Dr. Lois Evans. Even in a virtual setting (Zoom), the Holy Spirit did an incredible work of ushering the ladies into intimate conversations and allowing us to share testimonies. Our Father is an amazing, good-good Father who met us where we needed to be met in this study!

We are all familiar with celestial seasons: Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter. Similarly, are you aware that each of us has seasons in our lives? These seasons allow God to stretch us, minister to us, build us up, and test our character. To grow closer to the Lord in these seasons, we must first answer the call. The Call is to become one of God's disciples, which is the best decision we could ever make! Why does God call us? God calls us so that we might participate in His plan. He calls because He loves us. God has given all of us a purpose (Jeremiah 29:11). Sometimes we can struggle to see our purpose, but it's in those seasons that God reveals to us through His Word the specific plan for our lives.

The season of Spring is a time in which you start planting. You commit to fulfill God's plan for your life and your desire to be in communion with Him.

Summer is the season of growing. Growth always begins with obedience (John 14:15), "if you love me, you will keep My commandments." In the words of Dr. Evans, "Growth prepares us and creates capacity for what God is calling us to do. Obedience to God's plan is rarely easy to do. Many times, it may require us to do something we never wanted to do! It may mean wrestling with unruly emotions, or overcoming prejudices and preconceived notions." The first step of obedience is spending time with the Father in His Word through quiet time. Quiet time is time we set aside just to hear God's voice and become more familiar with Him and His Word. If we are not familiar with His Word, how can we know Him, His voice, or His plan for our lives? Many times, the Lord calls us to serve in this season. Sometimes that service can be in the form of things mundane or not in our comfort zone. This is a process of stretching us.

In the process of stretching, we learn the spiritual gifts that God has graced us with, which are different than our talents. Talent is having a natural aptitude or skill for something. The gifts the Holy Spirit endows us with are wisdom, faith, knowledge, faith, healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues, and interpretation of tongues (1 Corinthians 12:7-10 NKJV). These gifts, the Father bestows on us to further the kingdom and help us complete our ministries. FMZBC offers a spiritual gifts assessment. You can also find free assessments online. These assessments will help you understand how God may be using you in certain situations. More importantly, are you using your gifts? Are you allowing God to prepare you so that you can stand when the storms of life come your way? When God anoints us for life in His kingdom, we have to believe that He knows what He is doing and trust His timing in our season of growth as we go through the season of preparation.

As we learn how to utilize our gifts, we then reap the season of harvest, Fall. In this season, because we are reaping the bounty

we sowed, we can become complacent. We sit back and think our work is done...far from such! Our work is never done in the Kingdom of God. We simply go from one season to another. However, we can learn to become content. To be grateful or satisfied for what is, while still expectantly looking towards the future! "This is also a time when fear can creep in and is a spirit in which we must guard against." God tells us in His Word, "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1:9 NKJV). Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine! (Isaiah 43:1 NKJV). God tells us this because He knows that fear can paralyze us, make us afraid to step into our calling, and not share the Word with others. This is exactly what the enemy wants. Fear is a distraction the enemy uses to keep us from deepening our dependence and trust in our Heavenly Father. Fear will take your eyes off Jesus and make you feel as if you're sinking. But the Word tells us in (1 Timothy 1:7 NKJV), "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and a sound mind." When we give in to fear, we are no longer living the victorious life we were meant to live in Christ. Let your faith be bigger than your fear! We must **Believe** and **Act** like God is telling the truth! We often find ourselves having to be patient in this process, but no matter what season, we must learn to trust God and all the promises He has given us in His Word. Trust Him in the storms and trust Him when the storm has passed and the sun shines again. For the battle is not ours, but it's the Lord's. God's intentions for us as we allow Him and look to Him to work in our lives is probably best identified in this acronym:

Sovereignty of God
Elevation by God
Assistance from God
Submission to God
Opportunities from God
Needs met by God
Salvation by God

Do not give in to fear! Act in faith! Trust God and let Him do what He does best, which is to take care of the children He loves!

You might be in a season of Winter, a season that might be challenging. However, this is a time to be still and lean into the Father and know that He is at work in it all. The Word tells us, "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty." (Psalm 91:1 NKJV). When we remember and trust that our Father really does have our back, no matter how bleak the situation may look, we can trust in the promises He has given us. "Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and whose hope is the Lord, for he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river; and will not fear when heat comes; But its leaf will be green and will not be anxious in the year of drought, nor will cease from yielding fruit." (Jeremiah 17:7-8).

As God's children, we will go through seasons of change. But remember our "Daddy" has our back! His promises are true and His Word does not return void. When we commune with Him daily, read His Word, serve with the gifts the Holy Spirit has endowed in us, it won't matter what season we're in because we know that He has a plan and purpose for our lives and we can be confident in His assurance.

Sister Lisa Johnson

Lead – Women's Ministry Book Club

Excerpts from Seasons of a Woman's life were used in this article



First Mount Zion welcomes all **NEW MEMBERS** who have joined us during 2021. 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!

Thank you, FMZ Family, for your continual heart of compassion during the Thanksgiving holiday, which was exhibited even the more during this pandemic. You have outdone yourselves and, for that, we are extremely grateful to all of you who supported, and continue to support, this worthy cause. As a result of your overwhelming generosity in our Special Benevolent Offering, we were able to provide Share packages to 1,000 families. We are so very grateful to the 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 11th. SHARE distribution will take place on December 21st, from 10AM – Noon.

FITNESS-IN-PLACE

FITNESS TIPS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Create new more active traditions...Try ice skating, snow tubing or building a snowman.

Invite a friend to walk, talk and shop the mall together... (Be Covid smart) Burn extra calories and reduce your stress levels together.

When shopping, park far away...This will reduce your stress levels and burn extra calories.

Eat in moderation...Don't try to lose weight or stick to a restrictive diet during the holidays...Enjoy your favorite foods but in small portions.

Spread out your meals....You don't have to eat everything at once...Eat dinner and then take a walk before sitting down for dessert.

Don't aim for perfection or place unrealistic demands on yourself...Enjoy the imperfections and laugh. It burns calories and reduces stress!

Merry Christmas!!

Announcement: The Fit by God Fitness Complex is now open for vaccinated members Monday thru Thursday 9am to 4pm and Fridays 9am to 1pm. Walking track, treadmills and more! Any questions call the Fitness Center at 703-670-0225.

*Sister Lori Valkenburg
Fitness Director*



Sundays at 9:45 a.m. on ZOOM

Register in advance at <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJwrfu-upjlsH9VMx4eB-Fk3D3siWI9YJZAF4>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email and information about joining, including the meeting link and dial-in phone number.



HEALTHIER FAMILIES + STRONGER COMMUNITY

The last day to register for December SHARE packages is Sunday, December 5th. SHARE packages are \$23 for food valued between \$35 and \$45. POC: Thomas Bates, 703-772-8837. Distribution will be on December 18, 2021.

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
Sister Oonagh Bell
Brother Benson Blake
Deacon James Hawkins
Sister Sylvia Moore
Reverend Kathy Russell
Deaconess Claudia Woolfolk



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

Rev. Dr. Luke E. Torian, Senior Pastor
Rev. Dr. Sandra K. James, Assistant Pastor
Sylvia Moore, Executive Assistant
Renee Woolfolk, Church Business Administrator
James Simpson, Chair, Trustee Ministry
Keith H. Holmes, Chair, Deacon Ministry
Cynthia Brown, Chair, Deaconess Ministry

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

UPDATED ADJUSTED SERVICE SCHEDULE DURING PANDEMIC

Sunday School
9:45 AM (VIA ZOOM & CALL-IN)
Worship Service - 11:00 AM (ONLY)
in Sanctuary or view us on line at

FMZ Life Stream:
<https://live.lifestream.tv/first-mount-zion-baptist-church>

Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/fmzbcDumfries>

YouTube:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzFCO3nn-QRnObzNDEefeGQ>

SOCIAL MEDIA CONNECTIONS

Connect with us on:

Lifestream:
<https://live.lifestream.tv/first-mount-zion-baptist-church>

Facebook: www.facebook.com/fmzbcDumfries

Instagram: @thecore_fmzbc

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

Twitter: @fmzbc1

Vimeo: vimeo.com.25203195

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/>

