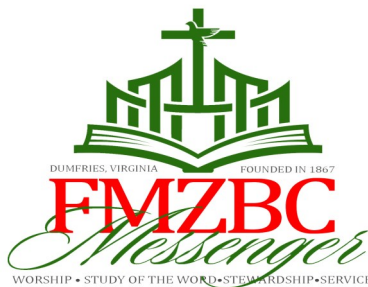


The Magic of
Christmas
is not in the presents
but in *His* presence



2023 Theme:

From Generation to Generation, Growing Deeper, Growing Stronger, Reaching Higher

"Remember the days of old, Consider the years of many generations. Ask your father and he will show you; Your elders, and they will tell you, . . ."

Deuteronomy 32:7

A Ministry Exhibiting A Spirit of Excellence!

Christmas Message from the Pastor



Hello FMZ Family:

As we look forward to celebrating the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, I want to take some time and reflect upon the twenty-eight Christmas celebrations Clarice, Constance and I have shared with you.

Through belief in the one who was born on Christmas morning, prayers and dreams do come true. It has been my privilege to remind each of us that Christ was born so that we may have life, abundant life, and eternal life. We have come together over the last twenty-eight Christmas' celebrating God's most precious gift to the world. In God's gift to us, He has taught us to be a gift to others.

Thank you for allowing the Torians over the years to share in so many Christmas meals, musicals, and Christmas morning worship services.

A star from the east tells us a child has been born and his name is **JESUS!**

Merry Christmas!

Pastor Luke E. Torian



TWO GENEROUS CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR SHARE MINISTRY

The Xi Alpha Lambda (XAL) Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.
donated \$5,000.00

Northern Virginia Alumni Chapter of North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, Phillip Foust Chapter, donated \$2,818.91

COME JOIN OUR

BIBLE

Study

JOIN US IN PERSON ON
WEDNESDAYS AT
11:00AM (GYM)
7:30PM (CHAPEL)

... AND ...

**IF YOU TRULY CANNOT BE
PHYSICALLY WITH US, THEN
JOIN US ONLINE ON OUR WEBSITE AT**

www.fmzbc.com

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

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

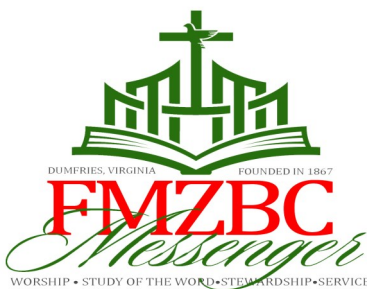
Study handouts are available online:
<https://firstmountzionbc.org/bible-study-handouts/>



WELCOME
WELCOME

**New
Members!**

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Deuteronomy 32:7



Dear Dr. Torian:

We are writing this letter to express our gratitude and appreciation for the many years of consistent service you have provided as our Pastor. Your unwavering commitment and dedication to spreading the word of God have been an inspiration to all of us. Your guidance and wisdom have been invaluable, and your passion for ministry has touched the hearts of many.

As you prepare to retire from your pastoral duties, we want to thank you for the countless hours you have spent nurturing our faith and guiding us on our spiritual journeys. Your sermons, counseling sessions, and acts of kindness, have profoundly impacted so many people. Your unwavering faith and strong leadership have helped our Church community grow and flourish. Thank you for your many nuggets of wisdom, sound counsel, standard of integrity, your example of strong leadership, and for allowing us the privilege to serve with you. Your devotion to God and the work of the Church have been an inspiration to us all. Your willingness to listen, encourage, and support us through good times and bad, has been a true testament to your Call as a servant of God. Your leadership and guidance have been invaluable, and even though we may not have always been in agreement on one issue or another, we are still grateful for the many ways in which you have served our Church over the years.

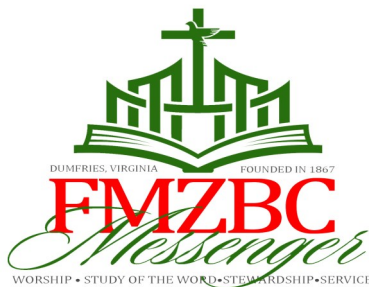
In addition to sharing the Word of God with us, you have spent many hours studying and preparing. You also visited us during both crisis moments as well as times of great joy. In addition, you have dedicated babies and grieved with us as we have buried loved ones. You have stood at the altar "tying the knot" for couples who pledge their love, and at that same altar, you have also stood as others gave their lives to Christ for the first time; not to mention the many hospital beds you visited as you prayed for your members and their families.

So, Pastor, as you embark on this new chapter in your life, we pray that you will continue to be blessed with good health, happiness, and a sense of fulfillment. You will be greatly missed, but we know that your legacy will continue to live on in the hearts of all those you have touched.

Once again, we thank you for 28-1/2 years of service and dedication to our Church and community. May God bless you and your family as you move forward into this exciting new phase of your life, and may you find peace, joy, and happiness in your retirement years.

*With gratitude and deep affection,
Pastor's Aide Ministry*

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Youth Ministry



First Mount Zion Family, please join Chekita Hamilton in celebrating her son, *Gabriel Alexander Hamilton*. On October 13, 2023, Gabriel competed in an oratorical competition hosted by the Manassas-Woodbridge Chapter of Jack and Jill of America, Incorporated. Before a crowd of more than 800 mothers and teens and the competition judges (*Dr. Joseph Boutte, Supervisor Margaret Angela Franklin, and Attorney Robert L. Jenkins, Jr.*). Gabriel delivered his speech entitled **"Stronger, Get Used to Me; United, Get Used to Us."** Two weeks later, he was announced as the winner of the Division 1 Category for 13-15 olds. Because of this win, Gabriel will represent the Manassas-Woodbridge Chapter of Jack and Jill, Incorporated at the Teen Conference in Boston in March of 2024.



Gabriel, 14, is an active First Mount Zion Youth Ministry participant. He is a 9th grader at Osborn Park High School where he is currently enrolled in the Biotechnology and Engineering Program. We congratulate Gabriel for this wonderful accomplishment and continue to pray for his success at the Teen Conference in March.

Submitted by
Reverend Dr. Beverly Jiggetts



Youth Ministry December outing to the **"Step Afrika"** Holiday Musical Stage Production at Arena Stage on Friday, December 15, 2023. We will depart from FMZ at 6:15 pm. This free outing is for FMZ members only in grades 6-12. Space is limited. RSVP to Rev. Jiggetts at bjiggetts@firstmountzionbc.org by **Monday, December 11, 2023**. We will not have "First Friday" in December.

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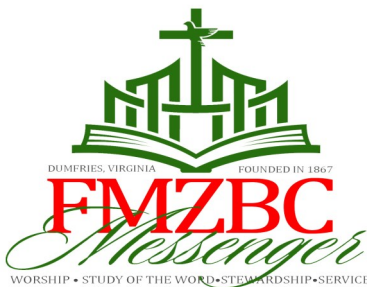
Happy Wedding Anniversary



To all those celebrating in December!



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ONLINE/IN-PERSON EVENTS

BIBLE STUDY: Adults please join us, in person, on Wednesdays at 11:00 a.m. (in the Gym) and 7:30 p.m. (in the Chapel), or on our website - www.fmzbc.com, or online via YouTube and Facebook.

Youth attend in person or via ZOOM. For ZOOM, please register using the following link:

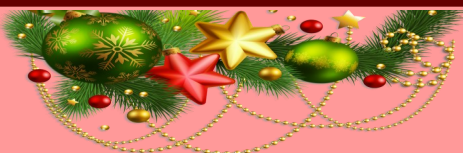
<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/tZAsceurjkuH9Rm8sk243fTqpjWk-btSxI>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

YOUTH MINISTRY

Servants Wanted!! If you have a heart for working with our Youth Ministry, please contact Reverend Beverly Jiggetts at: bjiggetts@firstmountzionbc.org

Youth Bible Study is held in the Executive Conference Room on the 3rd floor, from 7:40-8:30 p.m. It can also be accessed via Zoom. To attend via Zoom, please register online. Join us as we do "Bible Study for life."



ONLINE/IN-PERSON EVENTS

Join the **Women's Ministry** Via Zoom for their **HALF HOUR OF POWER** — 7:00 p.m. - December 5th, 12th, and 19th. There is a blessing waiting for you!!!

MEN'S BREAKFAST FELLOWSHIP...In-Person Only

Saturday, December 9, 2023

8:00 AM — 10:30 AM

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Luke E. Torian

Join/Follow us on Facebook at:

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

IT (Information Technology) Help Desk needs your help. In support of FMZ Ministry meetings, volunteers with an AV or IT background are needed to provide AV or IT helpdesk support when needed. If interested please contact Renee Woolfolk at rwoolfolk@firstmountzionbc.org. Have questions about ZOOM or OFFICE365? Need an Email or password reset? Please email us for assistance with your questions to include FMZ email address password resets.

NOTICES: Please check the FMZ website regularly for a complete listing of Ministry activities and updates regarding weather closings during office hours. As always, during these times of uncertainty, safety is of the utmost importance as we do our best to keep the congregation connected and informed while maintaining the health and welfare of all. Please check your email and the Church website for regular updates. Looking forward to your return (if you have not already done so).

SUBMISSION OF WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRs

Announcements and weekly PRs are due by the close of business each Tuesday. Any submissions after the deadline will be processed the following week.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Are **YOU** looking for a way to serve others? Are you in need of volunteer hours or simply want to support the Ministry activities of the Church helping with event set-ups and break-downs? Please contact Ernest Robbins, Facilities Manager, at:

erobbins@firstmountzionbc.org

or, if you would prefer to serve in food service with the Grain of Heaven, contact Sherise Campbell, Food Service Director, at

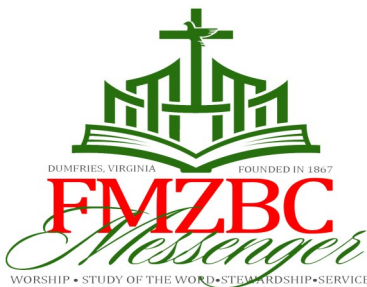
scampbell@firstmountzionbc.org

and, if you choose to volunteer in the Audio Visual Ministry, which includes Wednesday night Bible Study, Sunday Worship, Homegoing Services, Weddings, and other Ministry Activities, please contact Renee Woolfolk at:

rwoolfolk@firstmountzionbc.org

FMZ Print Shop: Volunteers are needed to print large format posters for Ministry events. If you are interested and/or have experience, please contact Walter Holmes, Assistant Facilities Manager at wholmes@firstmountzionbc.org.

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Holiday greetings from leadership!!!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

to the faithful congregation of First Mount Zion Baptist Church. As we close out 2023, the Trustee Ministry and our families would like to thank the congregation for their support. Your generous giving has made it possible for FMZBC to support many families in Prince William County in 2023. Thank you for all you are doing to help those that are in need.

God's great love, grace, and mercy have enabled all of us to face many challenges in 2023. 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. His goodness has allowed all of us to be renewed and refreshed every day.

As we enter 2024, 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. None of us knows what will happen in 2024; we are living in an uncertain world; however, God's love, grace, and mercy, will sustain you and your families through all the challenges that may come your way. As my mother has said on many occasions "God is my comforter and way-maker."

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

*Trustee Ministry
Trustee James Simpson,
Chair*

FROM THE GARDEN OF EDEN TO A MANGER IN BETHLEHEM

The season of advent is upon us once again. In just a few days we will deck our halls and trim trees and do a host of other things as we tell the story, anew, of the celebrated birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ.

We will remember and remind others of how a young girl, who was favored by God, would become the mother of the Savior; we will remember of how she made her way to a crowded place called Bethlehem; we will recount how Mary and Joseph were unable to find a good, comfortable place to stay during the birth of Christ, and, we may even feel remorseful of their setting and condition as we visualize a mother giving birth to her child in a manger.

As we ponder all these things, let us remember that the journey to the manger began in the Garden of Eden. Although we do not normally tie these places together, they are divinely connected. For it was in a beautiful, picturesque garden that God created mankind and established His covenant with the father and mother of all creation. It was there that God asked one thing of mankind – be obedient.

As we know, mankind was not obedient, so thus the journey began from that beautiful garden to a crowded city, Bethlehem. The God who created that beautiful garden sent His only begotten son within Mary to a dusty, dank, smelly manger to give birth to the One who would give us another chance to live in a garden.

Brothers and sisters, may this Christmas remind each of us that God has always given us His best. May we, in return, give our best to everyone as we remember the journey from the Garden of Eden to the manger in Bethlehem.

*Deacon Ministry
Deacon Willie Brown, Chair*

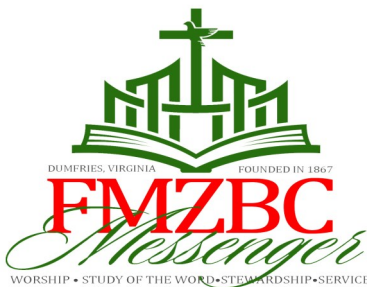
JESUS: THE BEST FRIEND AND GIFT OF ALL

Christmas. Oh, how I love this time of year. A time to celebrate the birth of Our Lord Christ and the new covenant of eternal love, grace, hope and promise that God Our Father established with His people as a result. The reminder of Our Lord Christ's birth so many centuries ago should not simply be a story to be told in December. It is a story that should be told every day of our lives because of our belief and acceptance of Him as our personal Lord and Savior. I like to think that Christmas is a perfect time for us to be reminded of the first and greatest commandment: *"we shall love the Lord our God with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our strength and with all our mind"* and the second commandment *"to love our neighbor as ourselves."* (Mark 12:30-31)

Christmas is a time to fondly remember family and friends that are near and dear to us. It is a time to reconnect with what truly matters and count all the magnificent blessings that God has graciously gifted us throughout the year. I remember when I was a child waking up before the sun rose to open the presents waiting for me under the Christmas tree that my parents gave me. It was blessed time indeed. However, as the years went by, the number of material gifts lessened and were replaced with gifts that truly mattered - love, peace, kindness, grace, mercy, good health, family, friends, church, work, and service. These gifts that God's bestows with grace overwhelm me each year and that's fine

Cont'd on page 6 - -

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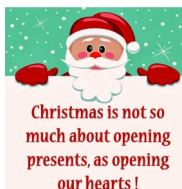
Deuteronomy 32:7

Message from the Deaconess Ministry (cont'd)

by me. These are the gifts that truly count for all of us. Fashion comes and goes. Cars and computers break down eventually. But the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard our hearts and minds through Jesus Christ (Philippians 4:7), is an even better gift! It is a gift to get a peaceful night's sleep. It is a gift when you know someone has prayed for you or remembered you with a phone call, text, e-mail, or card. It is a gift to open our eyes every day and breathe. It is a gift to know you have a purpose. Most importantly, it is a gift to have such a divine and loving Father who loves each one of us unconditionally. Beloved, let us remind one another that we are loved and that we matter as God's people. More importantly, let us call upon Our Lord for opportunities to bestow the gift of sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with others. What a blessed gift to receive and to give! Join me in celebrating the reason for the season – Our Lord Jesus Christ who paid the ultimate price for us and who will always be the best gift of all. Diamonds are not my best friend – Jesus is and will always be.

Merry Christmas FMZBC Family!

*The Deaconess Ministry
Deaconess Vietta Williams, Chair*



Heavenly Father,
May our Christmas season be
A time of reconciliation and
peace
May the love of Christ be with us
May His Peace surround us.

May our Christmas be a time
Of healing, giving and sharing
May Your spirit be with us
As we share and care in Jesus'
blessed birth,
Amen!

FITNESS-IN-PLACE

STRENGTHEN YOUR GLUTES!

It is common for people to want a nicer bottom, and a great advantage of strengthening this area of the body is a healthier lower back. Strengthening and balancing your muscles helps to reduce both pain and fatigue, which means you will feel better as well as look better.

Consider this [Marching Hip Bridge](#):



Lie face up, with knees bent, feet flat on the floor and hands to your side (start with palms down, for more of a challenge switch to palms up). Lift your hips up off the floor to create a straight line from your neck to your knees. Lift one foot off the floor to 90 degrees at the hip. Return the foot to the floor and then lift the opposite foot to 90 degrees; return to center. Keep the hips lifted and maintain a neutral pelvis as you alternate legs.

Challenge: Begin with a 5-minute walk to warm up, then perform three sets of 10-12 reps three days a week.

Announcement: The Fit by God Fitness Complex is now open Monday thru Thursday 9am to 4pm, Fridays and Saturdays 9am to 1pm. For questions, call the Fitness Center at 703-670-0225.

Sister Lori Valkenburg Fitness Director

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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.

Prayer:

Lord, thank you that "No weapon formed against us will prosper" because "Greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world" and "we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us". Jesus said, that in this world we will have tribulation, but we don't have to worry because He has overcome the world and we can also overcome. And thank you that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds.

We especially stand on your promises during these times when it seems that everything is out of control and there is no peace or hope for so many people. No matter what is going on around us, we know that in the end, we win because we are more than conquerors through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior and soon coming King!

Thank you in advance for the victory! In Jesus' name we pray and give thanks. Amen!

Scripture:

1 John 4:4 NKJV

You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

1 John 5:4 NKJV

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world - our faith.

1 John 4:4 AMPC

Little children, you are of God [you belong to Him] and have [already] defeated and overcome them [the agents of the antichrist], because He Who lives in you is greater (mightier) than he who is in the world.

1 John 5:4 AMPC

For whatever is born of God is victorious over the world; and this is the victory that conquers the world, even our faith.

Worship Song: "Overcomer" - <https://youtu.be/4GcUY8UKxqg>

Continue to pray for our families, churches, nation and the world.

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



"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.

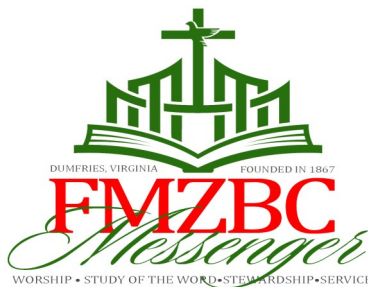
This time of year brings a unique opportunity to reflect- to think about what has been, what is and what lies ahead as the new year approaches. We have had to learn to pivot, adapt and transform, sometimes several times a day. Perhaps there have been seasons of sadness and moments of pain. Yet, in the 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 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."*

Rev. Tarra Taylor

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The First Mount Zion Seniors Ministry Leadership Team presented an awesome celebration of Veterans and Thanksgiving during their monthly fellowship on Wednesday, November 15, 2023. The Gym was full of happy Seniors enjoying the festivities. Our theme was: *In All Things Give Thanks* (Ephesians 5:20).

Sister Oonagh Bell opened the meeting by welcoming the Seniors and their guests, followed by a Scripture reading by Sister Dorothy Mann and prayer by Deaconess Norma Fields. Sis. Shirley Hardy reminded us of the occasion with a brief presentation from Psalms 100. The November birthdays and anniversaries were recognized by Sis. Hope Singleton and, much to our surprise, the Seniors received a visit from Pastor Torian, who offered us warm greetings and words of encouragement. After a delicious lunch, which was served by the Grain of Heaven, Sis. Joyce Peterson gave a spirited presentation on *What is a Veteran*, followed by a poem entitled "*A Salute to Veterans*".

In recognition of Veterans' Day, Sis. Pauline Hunter presented two great examples of those who served, and asked them to share their stories. Deacon Emeritus Ken Sessoms gave us an education on some of the successes gained and progress made during his service, and Sis. Mary Minor shared her experience as a Nurse in the Army. Both were very interesting and informative. Sis. Pauline Hunter and Sis. Doris Johnson also prepared a wonderful Veterans Memorabilia table for all to enjoy. Six of the seniors were asked to share what they were thankful for and their responses, though different in some ways, always ended with their gratitude to the Almighty for what He has done for them. It was a blessing to hear their responses which allowed us to see ourselves in so many of them. The Seniors then engaged in a game of musical trivia and winners were given medals. Everyone received a participation gift. At the conclusion, Rev. Dr. Tracey Holley shared personal greetings to the Seniors and the Fellowship was closed in prayer by Deacon Anthony Fields.

The Seniors' Ministry is seeking a new leader to take the helm in 2024 (as the Ministry year ends in June 2024 and Sis. Hardy will be stepping down). If you have any interest in filling that role beginning in September 2024, please contact Shirleybhardy@gmail.com if you would like an application packet.

Looking forward to a great New Year!

*Humbly submitted,
Sis. Shirley Hardy*





"Remember the days of old, Consider the years of many generations. Ask your father and he will show you; Your elders, and they will tell you, . . ."

Deuteronomy 32:7



What is Grief?

Grief is the response to loss. It's the emotional suffering you feel when something or someone you love is tak-

en away. Often, the pain of loss can feel overwhelming. You may experience all kinds of difficult and unexpected emotions from shock or anger to disbelief, guilt and profound sadness. The pain of grief can also disrupt your physical health, making it difficult to sleep, eat, or even think straight. These are normal reactions to loss—the more significant the loss, the more intense your grief will be.

You may associate grieving with the death of a loved one—which is often the cause of the most intense type of grief—but any loss can cause grief, including: Divorce or relationship breakup, loss of health, losing a job, loss of financial stability, a miscarriage, retirement, death of a pet, loss of a cherished dream, a loved one's serious illness, loss of a friendship, loss of safety after a trauma, selling the family home. Even subtle losses in life can trigger a sense of grief (e.g., you might grieve after moving away from home, graduating from college, or changing jobs).

Whatever your loss, it's personal to you—don't feel ashamed about how you feel, or believe that it's somehow only appropriate to grieve for certain things. If the person, animal, relationship, or situation was significant to you, it's normal to grieve the loss you're experiencing. Whatever the cause of your grief, there are healthy ways to cope with the pain.

Grief Recovery Helps.

Talking: Unresolved grief can lead to complications such as depression and other health problems. Talking to friends and/or family can be helpful. **Exercise:** Physical activity can be a powerful aid in the release of difficult emotions that accompany loss. Exercising allows for a reduction of aggressive feelings, a release of tension, anxiety, and depression. **Recording emotions:** Journaling can help release emotions and free the body

and soul of them. Write your own prayers or poems/psalms of lament. Artistic expression: For some grief is best expressed through art, music, dance, and so forth. This allows you to process the emotions of grief in a subconscious way that can be powerful and deep. Encouraging children to express feelings through drawing pictures, creating a collage of photos and written memories, or other creative activities can be a powerful tool for healing. Weeping or Sobbing: Allow yourself to cry. Washington Irving once said, there is sacredness in tears. They are the mark of power, not weakness. They are messengers of over-whelming grief, of deep and unspeakable love. Remember “Jesus Wept”. When Jesus saw all of the devastation in the lives of people who loved Lazarus, the scripture says “Jesus Wept” (John 11:30).

Grief and Loss Resources

Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: 988; GriefShare.com; National Alliance for Grieving Children (Nacg.org); Divorce Care (divorcecare.org); Professional Therapy: BetterHelp.com; Check with your Employer - Employee Assistance Program (EAP)- Benefit program.

Sources

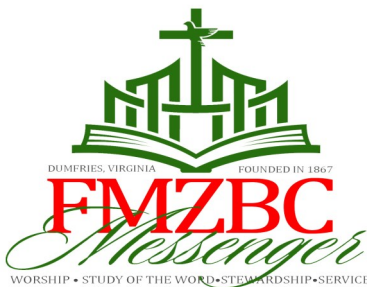
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Submitted by

*Rev. Juanita Stokes, MA, LPC, NCC, MARS
Licensed Professional Counselor
Associate Minister*



The Magic of
Christmas
is not in the presents
but in *His* presence



2023 Theme:

From Generation to Generation, Growing
Deeper, Growing Stronger, Reaching Higher

*"Remember the days of old, Consider the
years of many generations. Ask your father
and he will show you; Your elders, and they
will tell you, . . ."*

Deuteronomy 32:7

POSITIVES FROM THE BLACK

HISTORY

CORNER



CHARLES HAMILTON HOUSTON was one of the most important civil rights attorneys in American history. Known as "The Man Who Killed Jim Crow", he played a role in nearly every civil rights case before the Supreme Court between 1930 and Brown v. Board of Education, 1954. According to Houston, a lawyer, was an agent for social change—"either a social engineer or a parasite on society."

Houston was born in Washington, D.C., in 1895, the only child of William LePre Houston, a lawyer, and Mary Ethel Hamilton Houston, a former teacher and hairdresser. He attended "M" Street High School. At the age of nineteen, he graduated Magna Cum Laude with an honors degree in English and Phi Beta Kappa from Amherst College. The next two years he taught English at Howard University's Commercial College. At the age of 21, Charles Houston entered the first Black officers' training camp, Fort Des Moines, where he earned his commission as a First Lieutenant in the Infantry. The Army's unfair assignment of a number of Black infantry officers and disparaging reports regarding the ability of Blacks to train in the Special Services, however, offended and provoked Houston so much that he relinquished his rank and retrained to become a field artillery officer in the American Expeditionary forces. However, as a Second Lieutenant overseas, he encountered virulent racism practiced by Red Cross workers, white enlisted men and his fellow white officers. Houston later wrote:

"The hate and scorn showered on us [Black] officers by our fellow Americans convinced me that there was no sense in my dying for a world ruled by them. I made up my mind that if I got through this war, I would study law and use my time fighting for men who could not strike back."

In the fall of 1919, he entered Harvard Law School, and distinguished himself by being the first African-American to serve on the Harvard Law Review, earning his LL.B. with an honors average and receiving the Langdell Scholarship for further studies. Houston earned all "A"s in his fourth year of law studies. In 1923 he obtained his Doctorate in Juridical Science and was awarded the prestigious Sheldon Traveling Fellowship which allowed him to study civil law at the University of Madrid and sit as an observer in the courts of Spain, Italy, Greece, Tunisia and Algeria.

After returning to the U.S.A., Houston was admitted to the D.C. bar and joined forces with his father in practicing law; his father proudly renamed the office, "Houston & Houston". In addition to building a traditional private practice, Houston began teaching at the Howard University School of Law. He also served as the first special counsel to the NAACP and was involved with the majority of civil rights cases. He later joined Howard Law School's faculty, establishing a long-standing relationship between Howard Law School and Harvard Law School. While at Howard, he used his post to recruit talented students into the NAACP's legal efforts. In 1935, he left How-

ard to work full-time as an attorney for the NAACP. Houston struck upon the idea that unequal education was the Achilles heel of Jim Crow. By demonstrating the failure of states to even try to live up to the 1896 rule of "separate but equal," Houston hoped to finally overturn the Plessy v. Ferguson ruling that had given birth to that phrase.

Houston is the namesake of the Charles Houston Bar Association and the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice at Harvard Law School, which opened in the fall of 2005. In addition, there is a professorship at Harvard Law named after him. Houston died at the age of 54 on April 22, 1950, in Washington, D.C. That same year, he was posthumously awarded the NAACP's Spingarn Medal, the organization's highest honor. In 1958, the main building of the Howard University School of Law was dedicated as Charles Hamilton Houston Hall.

**"A people without the knowledge
of their past history, origin, and
culture is like a tree without roots."
— Marcus Garvey**

DOUGLAS C. WATSON was one of the first black aeronautical engineers in the United States. He spent 27 years with the Fairchild Republic Aviation Corporation in Farmingdale, L.I. working as a designer on both commercial and military aircraft and helping to develop the F-105 and F-84 jet fighters. He considered his role in the design of the long-range P-47N, a bomber escort, to be his major contribution to aviation. He also designed several private homes and commercial properties.



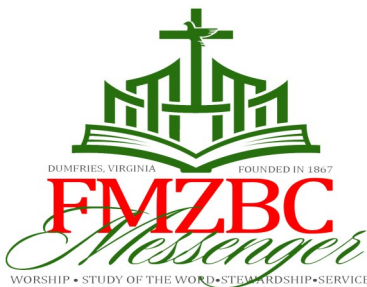
Mr. Watson received a bachelor's degree in 1941 and a master's degree in 1943 from New York University, both in aeronautical engineering, and later did advanced studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. When he first graduated from N.Y.U., Mr. Watson was the only black in his class, the third-ranking student in aeronautical engineering and winner of the Vought Medal for aeronautical design.

Mr. Watson was born to a family of achievers. In 1930, his father, the late Judge James S. Watson, was the first black man elected to what was then called the New York City Municipal Court. His younger brother, James L. Watson, is the senior judge of the United States Court of International Trade; Mr. Watson's late sister, Barbara Watson, was the nation's first black Assistant Secretary of State and later served as Ambassador to Malaysia.

Mr. Watson, who had suffered from emphysema for several years, died in his sleep at the age of 73. He was married to his wife of 45 years, Barbara; and they had two sons, Marc, of Montclair, N.J., and Craig, of Chicago; and four grandchildren.



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Deuteronomy 32:7



Glory to God! The Women's Ministry's November 4th Fellowship "**Women with F.A.I.T.H (Favor, Assurances, Identity, Trust, and Hope)**" was amazing! We were reminded that Faith, just the size of a mustard seed, can move mountains! Nothing is too hard for God! God's sweet presence was felt among everyone in attendance, the anointed guest speakers, and the heartfelt/soul piercing singing.

Our Fellowship started with a video praise dance to the song, / *Love the Lord*. Then, Soloist Jasmin Shelton rendered her precious, spirit-felt musical selection, *Trust in God*. It truly set the atmosphere and prepared our hearts to receive God's word by our first speaker.

Minister, First Lady Shaunda Joy Howerton, of Little Zion Baptist Church in Oak Grove, VA, placed our feet on solid ground, sharing from Psalm 27:14 (NLT). She spoke on the topic, *"While I Wait."* She reminded us that we should **believe**, while waiting on God to fulfill His promises. In the good and bad times, we must keep it moving! Do not be idle or passive, but be active. Faith without works is dead, and God is working all things for our good!

Her acronym for W.A.I.T was powerful:

W – Worship and Watch
A – Abide and Align
I – Introspect
T – Trust and Take Action

Deaconess Tina Coates encouraged everyone with her personal, generationally-instilled words of encouragement from her elder family members, that helped keep her grounded in God's Love and living out God's words. When we look back at the hard times, know that it is by God's grace that we made it through. We should place our hope in God fully!

Psalmist Cynthia Wilson blessed our hearts with her musical video *"It's Alright,"* which had us clapping our hands and stomping our feet. What a blessing!

Additionally, we were blessed with two videos that heightened our theme and reminded us that we are indeed Women of Faith!

Our Fellowship was brought home as we felt even more of God's presence and power, by Rev. Dr. Etoria V. Goggins, Pastor of the First African Methodist Episcopal Church of Manassas. Pastor Goggins blessed us as she shared from Genesis 1:26-27 (GW) *"Armed and Dangerous."* She reminded us that through the Holy Spirit we have Dominion, Power and Authority! God uses dark places to step us into the light. We

arm our tongue with positive words. In order to evolve, you have to get involved in yourself. In closing, Dr. Goggins reminded us of the notable African-American Women who were trailblazers, keeping the Faith through their journeys. We were reminded of Harriet Tubman to First Lady Michelle Obama, to Vice President Kamala Harris, and most recently, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson.

What an astounding fellowship we had. I pray that everyone was blessed beyond what they were expecting. A sincere "Thank You" to all who participated by sharing the Word, giving words of encouragement, singing a song of praise, doing acknowledgements of 1st time visitors/birthdays and giveaways, reading scriptures, and praying. Truly, the Fellowship was a success because of your servant hearts. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge and say "Thank You" to the Technical, Publicity, Administrative Support teams, and Women's Ministry Advisor.

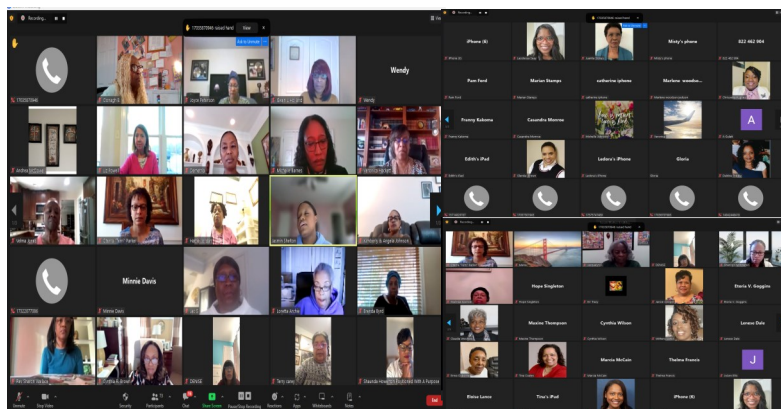
A heartfelt "Thank You" to Rev. Dr. Tracey Dawkins Holley for providing us with the Invitation to Christian Discipleship, Benediction, and for your continued support of the Women's Ministry. To our participants who celebrated birthdays in November and December, Happy Birthday again, and may God Bless you with many more.

To all first time visitors, we thank you for fellowshiping with us and invite you to join us again. We look forward to seeing you in December for our ½ Hour of Power (*Words of Encouragement for Your Soul*) via Zoom (12/5, 12/12 and 12/19) at 7 pm.

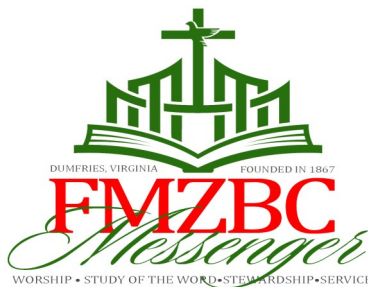
We invite every woman to attend our Fellowships and receive the blessing that God has for you!

Remember to Wait on God and to be Armed and Dangerous because we are **"Women with F.A.I.T.H (Favor, Assurances, Identity, Trust, and Hope)!"**

Humblly,
Gwen L Holland
Women's' Ministry Director



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Deuteronomy 32:7

ACADEMIC EDUCATION MINISTRY HOSTS COLLEGE TOUR FOR FMZ HIGH SCHOOLERS

The Academic Education Ministry, under the Christian Education Department, hosted a college tour for First Mount Zion highschoolers on Friday, November 10th. Seven youth started their Veterans Day weekend with a visit to institutions of higher learning located in Richmond vicinity. The first stop was Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) located in Richmond; and the second tour was Virginia State University (VSU), located in Petersburg, VA. The students were eager about the tours and excited to gain valuable insights about campus life and essential tips regarding the admissions process.

Upon arriving at VCU, the students joined a guided tour where we explored and heard about various dorms and room styles, the events held at Monroe Park, services offered at the James Branch Cabell Library and Hibbs Hall, just to name a few. We ended our tour at VCU with an "all-you-can-eat" buffet lunch at Shafer Dining Hall. From VCU, we traveled to Petersburg, Virginia to visit VSU. We arrived at the Welcome Center where Dutchess, our tour guide, greeted us. She walked us past the Daniel Gymnasium and onto Main Street where the "Divine Nine" are commemorated. She explained the importance of not stepping on the Trojan heads around campus and relayed what department was housed in each building as we walked by. The students enjoyed hearing how the dorms were spread across campus in relation to the dining hall location. The tour ended back at the VSU bookstore for some snacks before walking back to the Welcome Center.

It was a great tour experience! FMZ students were able to see the differences between the two schools as they contemplate the kind of college

environment that will best suit their needs, personalities, and fields of study. We are eager and looking forward to our next college tour, which will take place during Spring Break. Highschoolers, DON'T MISS THE NEXT ONE!

A special "thank you" to our AEM chaperones, Brother Gerry Griffin, Chair of the AEM; and Sister Nyokee "Kim" Crawford, AEM Co-Chair. For additional information regarding opportunities offered through the Academic Education Ministry, please email

AEM@firstmountzionbc.org.



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WINTER PREPAREDNESS

One of our members, *Yolanda C. Green*, cared enough about this Ministry and wanted us to share the information below with you in the hope that you will be blessed!

"Create a way and save the excuses. It's not about having time, it's about making time. If it matters, you will make time. "

Dominion Energy offers several programs that help our customers save money and improve the energy efficiency of their homes. For information about our energy-saving tips and programs, please visit our website or contact us so we can assist.

Start with these four changes to prepare for cooler temperatures ahead:

- Set the thermostat at 68 degrees or lower during cold months.
- Install a smart thermostat that automatically lowers the temperature overnight or while no one is at home.
- Caulk, seal and weather-strip around all seams, cracks, and openings – especially exterior doors and windows – to protect your home from drafts. Check air filters monthly and change them when dirty. Also, check ductwork for leaks and tears.
- Schedule a [virtual home energy audit](#) to find more home energy savings.

More energy conservation tips and programs can be found here: www.dominionenergy.com/virginia/save-energy.

In addition, several programs are available to help customers cover their winter heating costs:

EnergyShare Bill Payment Assistance

Dominion Energy Virginia's EnergyShare program offers up to \$600 in bill payment assistance from October 1 through May 31. The program is not income-based. Anyone needing help to pay heating bills may qualify for assistance. Individuals 60 and older, military veterans and people with disabilities may be eligible for additional assistance. For more info go to [Virginia 211](#).

EnergyShare Weatherization Programs

Customers who receive EnergyShare bill payment assistance may also be eligible to receive a free home energy assessment and free energy efficiency upgrades to help save on their energy costs.

Extended Payment Plans

We offer extended payment plans to help customers who've fallen behind on their electric bills. Eligible customers can make a 50% down payment on their past due bill and spread the remaining balance over 6 months. Customers may sign-in to their account online to see if they qualify.

Budget Billing

Our budget billing program helps customers avoid seasonal fluctuations with their energy bills. Monthly budget bill amounts are based on the average of the customer's previous 12 months of usage. Customers may sign-in to their account online to see if they qualify.

A full list of all Dominion Energy customer assistance options is available here: www.dominionenergy.com/virginia/billing/energy-assistance or by calling: 866-366-4357.

SAVE THE DATE

THE WOMEN'S MINISTRY REQUESTS
YOUR PRESENCE AT OUR
ANNUAL FELLOWSHIP
½ HOUR OF POWER
(WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT
FOR YOUR SOUL)

DECEMBER 5TH, 12TH, 19TH

VIA ZOOM

AT 7:00 P.M.

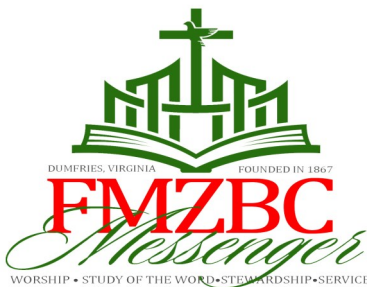
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THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

BE DETERMINED TO TRUST GOD TO
DELIVER YOU IN EVERY DIFFICULTY.
WE CAN LIVE VICTORIOUS LIVES.

REV. DR. LUKE E. TORIAN
FIRST MOUNT ZION BAPTIST CHURCH

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... from the desk of the
Church Business Administrator

CHURCH BUSINESS MEETING

Saturday, December 2, 2023, at 10am.

Your presence matters. In person attendance is encouraged.

END OF YEAR

As we prepare to close out 2023 be mindful to submit any 2023 purchase requisition expenditures for processing no later than, Tuesday, December 19, 2023.

DEAF MINISTRY:

ASL (American Sign Language) Interpreter onsite each Sunday during the 11am in person worship service and at the monthly Deaf Ministry ZOOM meetings.

ACADEMIC EDUCATION MINISTRY:

Additional information and Scholarship Opportunities are available to FMZ High School Seniors, Juniors, and Parents/Guardians. If you are interested in receiving this information, please forward your email address to aem@firstmountzionbc.org and we will add you to the distribution list. Do not miss out!

Also, check out the Fall 2023 Edition of the **Scholarship Newsletter** if you want to know what is happening with the FMZ Scholarship, other available scholarships, and events. Just click the link below!!

<https://firstmountzionbc.org/scholarships-2/>

The AEM is also in need of the following:

Academic Education Ministry
Tutorial Program
2023-24 Volunteer Tutor Sign-Ups!

Tutors needed for French, Biology and Physics
Tutorial Sessions will be held via Zoom
Mondays beginning at 7:00 PM

Interested?!? Please sign-up at
AEM@FirstMountZionBC.org



CONNECTION POINTS:

Thanks to all who contributed to the publication and circulation of *Connection Points*. Through your efforts, we have continued to maintain a connection by keeping the congregation up-to-date on Ministry and operational activities.

And to all those volunteers who continue to work tirelessly, in any capacity, to help make our Ministry run smoothly, **WE THANK YOU!!!** We pray that God will continue to bless you as much as you have been a blessing to us!! Keep letting your light shine...You are greatly appreciated!

Sister Renee Woolfolk
Church Business Administrator



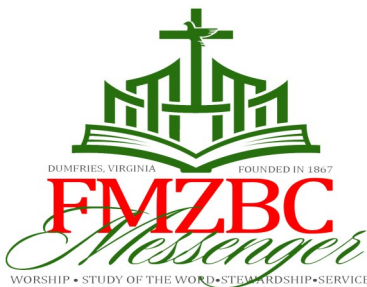
CHILDREN'S CHURCH:

IT'S BACK....CHILDREN'S MINISTRY/KIDS' KINGDOM WORSHIP FOR PREK TO FIFTH GRADERS ON

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2023
DURING THE 11 AM SERVICE

PLEASE CONTACT DR. TRACEY DAWKINS HOLLEY FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, AT THOLLEY@FIRSTMOUNTZIONBC.ORG OR SIS. STEPHANY STEWART AT STEPHANYSTEWART@YAHOO.COM. WE CANNOT WAIT TO SEE YOU!

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Deuteronomy 32:7



The Pastor's Aide Ministry would like to publicly thank every member for your support of our Pastor and his Family, our Assistant Pastor, and all the Associate Ministers during this year. Your acts of love and appreciation were a blessing to them and we are forever grateful for your support. Know that God is well-pleased with your efforts.

May Almighty God bless, keep, and protect each and every one of us as we continue to share the greatest gift of all - **LOVE**.

We would like to wish you all , a very. . .

Thank You

Thank you, FMZ Family, for continuously showing your love to those less fortunate during this time of Thanksgiving. It is indeed a blessing to worship with such an amazing group of saints who think it not robbery to share their blessings with others. Again, you have gone above and beyond what was asked of you and, for that, we are extremely grateful to all 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, another opportunity to give, please help your Zone Leaders identify families in our congregation and community, who would appreciate a SHARE package. The last day to register as well as submit names, is December 3, 2023. SHARE distribution will take place on December 16th, from 8:30AM – Noon.



First Mount Zion welcomes to our Family,
our Accounts Payable and Payroll Clerk,

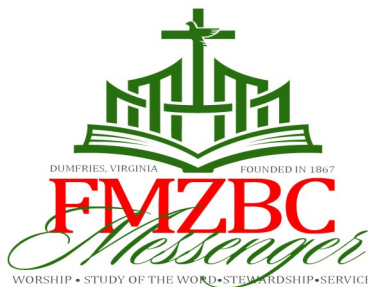
Ms. Vicky Borrer

She can be reached through the front office at extension 1107 or
by email, at vborrer@firstmountzionbc.org

Let's show her some LOVE!!!

EVERY GOOD
AND *perfect gift*
COMES FROM ABOVE...

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Sundays at 9:45 a.m. on ZOOM

Register in advance at
https://zoom.us/join/join?from=invite_code&code=upjlsH9VMx4eBFk3D3sIWl9YJZAF4
tJwrfu-

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



The last day to register for December SHARE packages is Sunday, December 3rd. SHARE packages are \$23 for food valued between \$35 and \$45. POC: Thomas Bates, 703-772-8837. Distribution will be on December 16, 2023, 8:30-Noon.

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!

CPM Team

Deacon Joseph Boutte, Chair
Sister Oonagh Bell
Brother Benson Blake
Deaconess Janice Cooper
Trustee Alfranda Durr
Dr. Sandra Flowers
Brother James Gaskins
Sister Sylvia Moore
Sister Roslyn Parker
Reverend Kathy Russell
Deaconess Claudia Woolfolk

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
Willie Brown, Chair, Deacon Ministry
Vieta Williams, Chair, Deaconess Ministry

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

SERVICE SCHEDULE

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/fmzbcumfries>

YouTube:

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

SOCIAL MEDIA CONNECTIONS

Connect with us on:

Lifestream:

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

Facebook: www.facebook.com/fmzbcumfries

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

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

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

YouVersion: https://bit.ly/FMZBC-YouVersion_Bible

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



LifeStream.tv



The Women's Ministry (WM) will be hosting a Recruitment on Sunday, December 3rd before and after Worship service. All women are considered part of the WM, however if you would like to be a servant, please stop by our table to obtain information about the various committees for which we have a need.

We also want to make sure you are receiving our emails which provide you with weekly words of encouragement and upcoming events. Please stop by our table, as we would love to meet you and just love upon you!

For more information, please contact WM Director, Gwen L Holland at Womensministry@firstmountzionbc.org.