



Message from the Acting Pastor



THE CHURCH IS STILL THE CHURCH

(Based on *Hebrews 10:22-25*)

As I reflected on Hebrews 10:22-25, I felt a deep urgency to remind the body of Christ: *the church is still the church*. Despite the challenges we've faced—whether a global pandemic, personal struggles, or shifting priorities—the essence and mission of the church remain unchanged. The Word of God calls us to return to in-person worship and fellowship, and in this passage, we find four powerful exhortations that guide us back to what truly matters.

First, we are called to “*draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith*” (v. 22). Beloved, while personal devotion is critical, there is something irreplaceable about gathering together to worship. When we join as the body of Christ, we experience God’s presence in a way that strengthens and unites us. It’s not just about showing up—it’s about coming before God with sincere hearts, renewing our faith, and supporting one another in our spiritual journeys.

Second, we are encouraged to “*hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering*” (v. 23). Let me ask you: where do you find your hope? In a chaotic world, we need the consistent reminder that our hope is in Christ, who is faithful and unchanging. Gathering as a church anchors us in that hope. Through preaching, prayer, and testimonies, we are reminded that God’s promises never fail.

Third, the writer of Hebrews challenges us to “*consider how to stir up one another to love and good works*” (v. 24). The church is not just a place to receive—it’s a place to give, to grow, and to serve. When we isolate ourselves, we miss the chance to inspire and be inspired. But when we come together, we find encouragement to live out our faith in tangible ways, loving others and doing good in the name of Christ.

Finally, the passage urges us to “*not neglect meeting together*” (v. 25). I know it’s tempting to stay home and tune in online—it’s convenient and comfortable. But church is more than a livestream. It’s a community, a family, and a place of accountability. Coming together for worship may not be convenient but it is necessary. The gathered church is where we encourage one another, prepare for Christ’s return, and grow in love for God and His people.

My prayer is simple: let us return, renew, and reconnect. The church is still the church—because Christ is still the Head. Will you come back and be part of what God is doing? I look forward to seeing you in worship soon.

Yours in Christ,
Dr. Sandra K. James, AP

In the Spotlight

At First Mount Zion, we are blessed with a congregation rich in talent and knowledge and, most importantly, a willingness to serve. To celebrate service, which is one of the features of our 4-Step Strategy of Worship, Study, Stewardship, and Service, our Messenger newsletter will feature, monthly, members who have been recommended for their positive impact, as well as those ministries quietly making significant contributions. Our aim is to acknowledge the contributions of all our members. We invite everyone to share the names of individuals or ministries that have positively influenced others or are deserving of recognition. Our diverse talents and service to God and each other are our strength, embodying the spirit of 1 Corinthians 12:12 NLT: Just as “the human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ.” And, so it is with us as a body of believers in Christ and members of First Mount Zion.

We look forward to receiving your submissions and thank you in advance for doing so. Please send your submissions to: cpm@firstmountzionbc.org

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HOLIDAY OFFICE CLOSURE
The office will be closed on
Monday, February 17, 2025

there's
BLACK
BRILLIANCE
stitched into our essence,
PURE, POWERFUL,
& unapologetic.

Youth Ministry on BLAST-- In A Good Way!

LOVE LIKE JESUS LOVES!!

Many people celebrate "Valentine's Day." On this day, we are encouraged to show love to "special people" through "purchased" gifts like flowers, jewelry and candy. Some women now celebrate "Galentine's Day" to show love for their female friends. These celebrations of "love" take place across generations. A market research company found most Gen Zer's and Millennials celebrate Valentine's Day. There are Valentine's Day Cards specifically marketed to Gen Alpha by using common Gen Alpha slang words.

Rather than just showing love on one day, Jesus calls us to show love to others every day. In John 13:34-35 (NKJV), He tells us how to love fellow believers:

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵ By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Jesus' idea of showing "love" to others was not new. However, having "love" be the distinguishing factor that defined Christians was new. Previously, groups were defined by things like religion (i.e., Jew vs Gentile) or legal status (i.e., slave vs. free). Jesus said believers should be defined by "love." It would be through the love they showed to each other that other people would identify them as Christians. Further, the love they showed to one another was love "as I (Jesus) have loved you." Jesus demonstrated love that was sacrificial, forgiving, patient and willing to serve. In John 13:5, Jesus washed all the disciples' feet. Ultimately, He showed his love for us by sacrificing His life for our sins.

Loving as Jesus commands us to love is not always easy. We may disagree with fellow Christians. But be it in a transitional period or when our faith community faces other challenges, we are to love "as Jesus loved us." As our youth grow in their faith, they are watching us as their example of Christian "love" toward one another. Let's follow the "new" command that Jesus gave, which was to love one another as He loved us.



Submitted by
Reverend Beverly Jiggetts
Youth Minister

FEBRUARY FIRST FRIDAY
FEBRUARY 7, 2025



2 members of the "Black Voices" team blessed us with worship music during the "Black Voices Worship Experience" at Mt. Zion Baptist Church, January 15, 2025

Black Voices team member joins Aidan and Courbin in a picture



FMZ Youth-Aidian, Courbin, Aniyah and Savannah with Sister Malinda Stewart and Sister Geronda Gillens are joyful after the Black Voices Worship Experience.

For more information you can scan the top QR code below

Virginia Tech Summer STEM Info Session

Contact Info
Kim Lester
540-231-7337
Kimm61@vt.edu



Our Programs:

- Learn about STEM in fun, hands on ways with VT faculty and students
- Current 6th - 11th graders
- 3 days - 2 weeks long
- Residential
- Costs vary, but scholarships are available!

Presenters:

- Dr. Vicki Corbin, Assistant Dean for Outreach and Student Engagement, College of Science
- Dr. Kim Lester, Center for the Enhancement of Engineering Diversity Director Pre-college Programs
- Mr. Perry Martin, Director Pathways for Future Engineers
- Ms. Ariana Wyatt, School of Architecture

Zoom Link: bit.ly/49OYIGH



Join us on
January 22, 2025
7PM to 8PM
via Zoom

Sponsored by
Carla Winbush,
President,
CTW LLC



Bible Study will be held on Wednesdays, **VIRTUALLY**
7:30-8:30 pm.

To attend: Go to the FMZ website and click on the "**Ministries**" tab. On the dropdown, click on "**Youth Ministry**."

This brings up the Youth Ministry page. Click on Bible Study and the Registration link appears. Complete the registration information and you will then receive the Zoom link and passcode. You only need to register once.

Please have a Bible with you.





In January 2025, I attended the homegoing celebration for the oldest member of my family. She lived to the blessed age of 103 years old; and, remarkably, her husband was 101 when he passed in 2017. Born in 1916 and 1921, respectively, they witnessed 204 years of life and lived through an incredible amount of change as part of a generation that labored to build America.

I share the story of my family to highlight the 2025 Black History Month theme: "African Americans and Labor." As we recognize the importance of this year's theme, take some time to research your rich family histories or talk to your family members, both young and old. Through those discussions, we can pass on the stories and history that is deep inside of our blood lines. We as a people have a legacy of labor that has contributed so much to our communities, our country, and the world.

When recounting the lives of two pillars in my family, I found that they were like "Forrest Gump"—their lives were a distinct patch on the American quilt. Together, they held a long list of jobs to include serving as farm hands, a house maid and janitor, a Korean War Era soldier, a beautician, salespeople, and a naval pipe fitter, and had amazing experiences as vaudeville performers and learning to fly with Tuskegee Airmen. They also labored in the community as members of the Order of Eastern Stars and the Masons. Not only did they craft interesting "resumes" in the workplace and community, but they also built a legacy of service in God's kingdom as they labored in the vineyard on the Usher Board, in Sunday School, on the Pastor's Aide, and with the Trustee Ministry.

Proverbs 13:22 emphasizes the importance of leaving a legacy for future generations. While I am amazed by the legacy my two family members left, I am sure my experience is not unique, as I believe we all have stores of strength and resilience in our families that we just need to take the time to capture. That said, I challenge you to ask some questions and appreciate your genealogy and embrace the wonderful "patches" that have contributed to the beauty of your families and the broader African American community. I also leave us all with the question, *"How will I labor in God's vineyard to contribute to the legacy of my family today?"*

*Humbly Submitted,
Deaconess Kishema Tapp*

**"Every great dream begins with a dreamer.
Always remember, you have within you the
strength, the patience, and the passion to
reach for the stars to change the world."**

—Harriet Tubman

REMEMBER THE TREASURE IN YOUR JAR OF CLAY

"But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us." 2 Corinthians 4:7 (ESV)

Recently I visited a pottery store, looking for a special gift. Marveling at the beautiful pieces crafted by local artisans, I quickly found the perfect item — some golden-glazed, wood-fired mugs. As I left the store, a sign on a small shed caught my attention: "Tired and Flawed Pots." I chuckled to myself, appreciating the honesty of whoever posted the sign.

At first glance, the pottery in the shed looked similar to the pieces inside the store. But when I looked closer, I noticed these vessels were chipped, misshapen or imperfect in some way. For whatever reason, the potter had deemed them unworthy of a place in the main store.

I sometimes wonder if God sees me that way. Am I too tired, flawed and weak to be valued by Him? When my failings and sinful nature frustrate me, I'm tempted to believe the lie that I'm not good enough or that He will put me on the shelf in the shed. But I'm learning the opposite is true.

In the ancient world, clay jars were symbolic of human weakness. In Paul's letter to the Corinthians, he reminds us that God chooses clay jars to fill with His treasure — the Good News of Jesus Christ: *"But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us" (2 Corinthians 4:7).*

As followers of Jesus:

1. Each of us is a clay jar.
2. Each of us has this treasure — the power of the gospel.
3. The power of the treasure belongs to God, not us. God shows His power through us, the clay jars.

Paul's words encourage us to be content with our weaknesses and hardships, even boasting of them. God told Paul, *"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness,"* so Paul said, *"Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:9-10, ESV).*

Friend, if you're feeling weak and discouraged, remember this truth: God has given you His treasure in your weakness, and He'll shine His power through it. Your weakness may be the very thing God will use to bring others to Him. We can choose to bring our weaknesses to Jesus in **prayer** instead of becoming frustrated by them or letting them trip us up. When our focus is on sharing the treasure, not the clay jar, those around us will see the surpassing power of God.

Loving Father, thank You for giving me the treasure of Jesus in my clay jar. When I feel weak and unworthy, remind me that You choose weak vessels to fill with Your power. Help me to focus on the treasure and not on myself. Please shine through me! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

*Lisa Lenning
COMPEL Pro Member*

Associate Ministers

ENCOURAGEMENT AND ASSURANCE FOR THE SOUL

UNCOVERING THE "BLACK" PRESENCE IN THE BIBLE

From the Civil Rights Movement to the Black Lives Matter Movement, the spotlight is on black people. From what we've invented to what major roles black people have played in the making of the United States of America to contributions to the world, more and more people want to know what we are all about. Many people, especially of African and American descent, have wondered whether "Black" people are represented in the Bible. Well, let's see. No where in the Bible are people referred to as "the black race". Race and racism are not mentioned in the Bible. Race and racism are terms that did not exist during those times but originated in modern times.



The first book of the Bible, Genesis, does not state what "color" or "race" God made the first human, which was a male. God named that first man Adam, which in Hebrew means, human, ruddy in color. It does state, *"And God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."* Genesis 1:26a NKJV. God is spirit, not flesh and blood like humankind, so our image and likeness of God is spiritual, our spirit is what is to look like God. We are to strive to think, conduct ourselves, and talk like Jesus. It is His example that we are given in the New Testament as who we should emulate.

Skin color, somehow, over the years has become important to a lot of people, but not to God. God's focus is on the hearts of humankind no matter the color of our skin. Would it surprise you to know that people of color are mentioned throughout the Bible? Some degree of pigmentation, melanin, is found in the skin of those mentioned in the Bible. See below for some examples of people of color found in the Bible.

Below is an excerpt from a longer article by Dr. Cain Hope Felder, Professor of New Testament Language and Literature at the Howard University School of Divinity in Washington D.C. <https://bibleresources.americanbible.org/resource/blacks-in-biblical-antiquity>:

"Nimrod, son of Cush," the first on earth to become a mighty warrior." Nimrod is also credited with founding and ruling the principal cities of Mesopotamia (Genesis 10:8-12).

Hagar, the Egyptian maid of Sarah (Genesis 16; 21:8-21). If Abraham had had his way, Hagar would have become the fore-bearer of the covenant people (Genesis 17:18).

Asenath, daughter of Potiphera, priest of On (Heliopolis), wife of Joseph and mother of Ephraim and Manasseh (Genesis 41:45, 51, 52; 46:20), whom Jacob claimed and adopted. (Genesis 48).

Moses' Cushite wife (Numbers 12:1). She was probably Zipporah of the Kenite clan of the Midianites (Exodus 2:21-23). If Moses' Cushite wife is indeed Zipporah, then her father, Jethro, (also called Reuel), would also have been an African. Since Jethro was the priest of Midian (Exodus 2:16; 3:1; 18:1) and the mountain of God where Moses was called, was located in Midian (Exodus 3:1; 18:5), and Jethro presided at a meal where Aaron and the elders of Israel were guests (Exodus 18:12), the Kenites may have been the

original worshipers of God by the name of the LORD, that is Yahweh (YHWH). Jethro also instructed Moses in the governance of the newly liberated Israelites (Exodus 8:13-27).

Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron and a high priest (Exodus 6:25). The name, Phinehas, is Egyptian and means literally, "The Nubian," or "The Dark-skinned One."

The "mixed multitude that accompanied the Israelites" when they left Egypt undoubtedly included various Africans and Asian peoples (Exodus 12:38).

The unnamed Cushite soldier in David's army. He bore the news of Absalom's death to David, and, in contrast to Ahimaaz, had the courage to tell David the truth about Absalom (2 Samuel 18:21, 31, 32).

Solomon's Egyptian wife. She was an Egyptian princess and by his marriage to her, Solomon sealed an alliance with Egypt. (1 Kings 3:1; 11:1).

The Queen of Sheba. She ruled a kingdom that included territory in both Arabia and Africa. When she visited Solomon, she was accorded the dignity and status of a head of state (1 Kings 10:1-13).

Matthew 1:1-14 - The genealogy of Jesus, in which four Afro-Asiatic women are included: Rahab, Tamar, Ruth, and Bathsheba.

- Matthew 2:13-18 - Out of Egypt (Africa) have I called my son (see Hosea 11:1).
- Matthew 12:42 - The Queen of the South, meaning "the Queen of Sheba" (parallel reference in Luke 11:31; compare 1 Kings 10:1-10 and 2 Chronicles 9:1-9).
- Matthew 27:32 - Simon of Cyrene compelled to carry the cross (parallel accounts in Mark 15:21 and Luke 23:26).
- Mark 1:3 - Note the mentioning of "the wilderness" or desert as a reminder of the geographical context for the gospel and most of the biblical narratives.
- Luke 13:29 - Luke instructs us through his more inclusive editing of Jesus' sayings found in Matthew 8:11. Here, Luke adds "north and south," thereby underscoring the Lukan universalism of both the gospel and the plan of salvation.
- Luke 19:41-44 - Jesus weeps over the city and initiates change.

As the Holy Scriptures testify, all people of faith are "one in Christ Jesus" and "heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:28,29). And as the apostle Paul stated, "From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us" (2 Corinthians 5:16-19). Thus, the Word of God shows itself to be a truly universal, inclusive, and multicultural message of salvation for the human race." (American Bible Society, 2024)

Considering the evidence contained in this article, "black" presence in the Bible is noted. As stated in the Bible, human beings were called either tribes or nations. Not black or white. In celebration of Black History Month, we recognize that "Black" people had significant roles in biblical times. We continue today to have significant roles and make major contributions for the good of humankind. Let us rejoice and be thankful to God for where He has brought us from and for what God has allowed us to accomplish through the years. If it had not been for the Lord who was on our side...The main thing to focus on is that all of humankind was "... fearfully and wonderfully made..." (Psalm 139:14 NKJV) by our Creator in heaven, in His image and likeness.

Dr. Cain Hope Felder, Professor of New Testament Language and Literature at the Howard University School of Divinity in Washington D.C. cites the foregoing scriptures that "uncover" people of color in the Bible.

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Submitted by
Reverend Kathy Russell

CAPTURING MINISTRY MOMENTS...



FMZ in action. Share what's been going on in YOUR Ministry! Photos will be incorporated into the weekly Bible Study and Sunday Worship Countdown. Click on the link below and follow the directions in order to share your photos.

[Capturing Ministry Moments](#)

Children's Church

Open First & Second Sunday in February

Location: Kid's Kingdom on 2nd Floor



Contacts:

Rev. Dr. Tracey Dawkins Holley
THolley@firstmountzionbc.org
Stephany Stewart
StephanyStewart@yahoo.com

Adult & Teen (13 and older)

Volunteers Needed



"P. U.S. H."
(Pray Until Something Supernatural Happens)
The Men's & Women's Ministries
will be hosting their
Joint Prayer Fellowship
February 8, 2025
9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
Continental Breakfast
9:00 a.m. - 09:55 a.m.
Prayer Fellowship
10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Reverend Robert Jones
Reverend Dr. Tracey Dawkins Holley
Fellowship will be In person and on FMZ virtual platforms. More Information to Come

VISION: Sharing the Light: From the Promise, to Pentecost, to Points Around the World!



ACADEMIC EDUCATION MINISTRY

The First Mount Zion Baptist Church (FMZBC) and Hinkitch Bell Memorial Scholarship applications are paperless for the 2025 academic year. All 2025

graduating high school seniors who plan to attend an institution of higher learning can now apply for the scholarships exclusively online. For 2025, students are required to participate in a FMZBC Ministry for at least six months prior to the due date to qualify for the FMZBC Scholarship. Students can apply online at the Church's website:

<https://firstmountzionbc.org>

Once on the website, navigate to the Resources Tab, Scholarships – New, and select 2025 FMZBC and Bell Scholarship Program. The deadline for submitting the Scholarship applications with attachments is 4:30 PM, April 01, 2025.

POC: Brother Gerry Griffin, Chair, AEM
Email: AEM@FirstMountZionBC.org

or

Sister Sandra Grimes, Scholarship Committee Chair
Email: AEM@FirstMountZionBC.org



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Here are currently available volunteer opportunities. If you are interested, please contact the individuals listed below.

ADMINISTRATION

Receptionist and IT support for ministry meetings:

Contact Sis. Renee Woolfolk, Church Business Administrator
rwoolfolk@firstmountzionbc.org

AUDIO-VISUAL MINISTRY

Camera operators/graphic designers/video editors

Contact Bro. Dijae North, Audio-Visual Director
dnorth@firstmountzionbc.org

FACILITIES DEPARTMENT (Poster Print Shop)

Creating and producing posters for Ministry Events

Contact Bro. Walter Holmes
wholmes@firstmountzionbc.org

GRAIN OF HEAVEN

Food servers/help with set-up/dish washers

Contact Sherise Campbell, Food Service Director
scampbell@firstmountzionbc.org

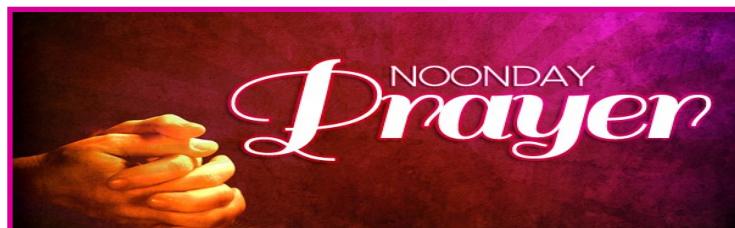
Your Service is greatly appreciated!!!



DEAF MINISTRY: ASL (American Sign Language) Interpreters are onsite each Sunday during the 11am worship service and at the monthly Deaf Ministry ZOOM meetings.

The next meeting is February 10, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. POC for the ZOOM link is:

Deaconess Pamela Ford
fmzdeafministry@firstmountzionbc.org



FITNESS-IN-PLACE

FEBRUARY IS
HEART HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH!

WE ARE THE WORK OF GOD'S HAND

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, you are Jehovah Rapha, our Great Physician and Healer. Many of your people are struggling with pain and sickness and other health issues. Lord God, wrap us in your arms and touch us with your healing hands so that they might find relief. Above all, grant us the grace to acknowledge your will and to know that whatever you do, it is because you love us."

Lord, bless those who mourn, bless them with the comfort of your love that they may face each day with hope and the certainty that nothing can destroy the good that You have given them.

Lord God, we lift the Caregivers up to you and I ask that you provide them with your grace, love, peace and strength as they face each new day.

Father, we boldly come to you asking that you release your people from bondage and strongholds of the enemy. Take away any darkness, drugs, alcohol, witchcraft, or demons or whatever tries to separate them from you. Open our eyes, help us to see your love, peace, and strength for each new day. Deliver us from all forms of evil Lord, right now in the name of Jesus.

Scripture:

Isaiah 64:8 NKJV

But now, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our Potter; And we are the work of your hand.

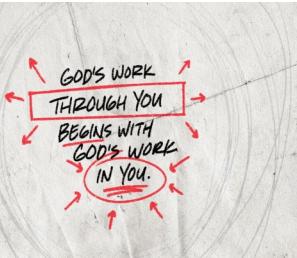
Isaiah 64:8 AMPC

Yet, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our Potter, and we all are the work of your hand.

Isaiah 64:8 MSG

Still, GOD, you are our Father. We are the clay and you are our Potter: All of us are what you made us.

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



Noon Prayer Team
Sister Carol-Ann Benjamin
Deaconess Pamela Ford
Reverend Maxine Thompson

According to the CDC "[Heart disease, cancer, and stroke are the leading causes of death for African Americans.](#)" (click on the link for more info.)

Why? CDC states:

- African Americans are nearly 1.3 times as likely to have obesity.
- African Americans eat fewer vegetables than other racial/ethnic groups.
- More than half (56%) of African American adults 18 years of age and older do not meet the aerobic component of the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines.

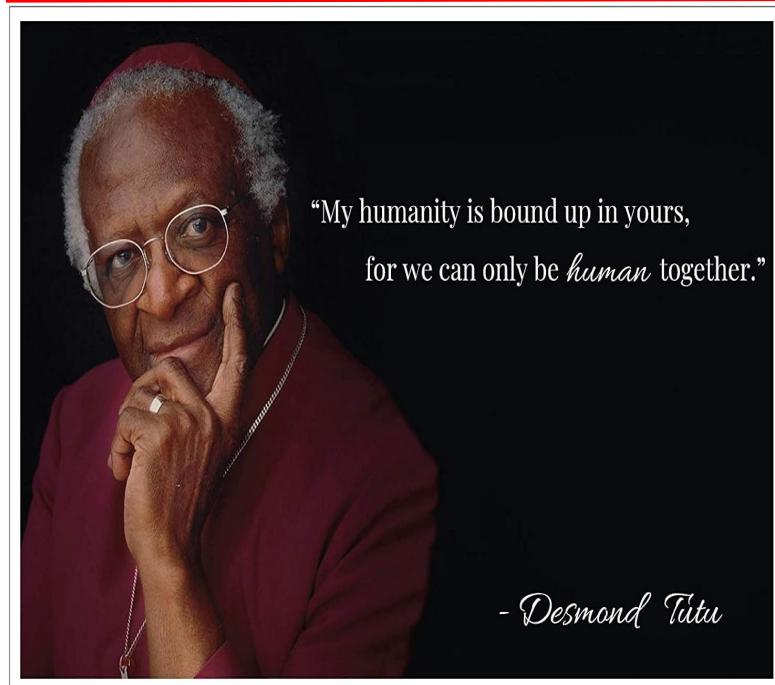
What You Can Do to Improve Your Health: (click on the link to learn how.)

Eat More Vegetables! (Click on the link to learn how.) People who eat more vegetables as part of an overall healthy diet are more likely to have a reduced risk of some chronic diseases.

Exercise regularly! (Click on the link to learn how.) According to the US Department of Health and Human services, adults need 150 minutes of moderate exercise each week. A great way to get started is walking.

Wait upon the Lord! *"But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."* Isaiah 40:31

Sister Lori Valkenburg
Fitness Director





SERVICE: A GRIGGS FAMILY TRADITION

In a recent state of the State speech by Arizona governor, Katie Hobbs, one of the most moving moments in the Governor's address was the recognition of Staff Sergeant Everett Griggs, a dedicated member of the Arizona National Guard and veteran of the United States Air Force. Staff Sergeant Griggs, the son of Deacon Everett Griggs Sr., has proudly served Arizona for 17 years, playing a vital role in the critical mission of Task Force SAFE to protect the state's borders.

The Governor emphasized how personal this mission is for Staff Sergeant Griggs, who is committed not only to his duty but also to the safety of his family and neighbors. With the support of his wife Shauna and their three children — Preston, Everett III, and Peyton — Staff Sergeant Griggs exemplifies what it means to serve with honor and dedication. His story, grounded in service and family, highlights the importance of the ongoing fight against the fentanyl crisis and the dangerous threats posed by cartels.

The community takes pride in the service of Staff Sergeant Griggs and recognizes the legacy of integrity and service carried on from his father, Deacon Everett Griggs, Sr.



L-R: Major General Muehlenbeck, Mrs. Shuana Griggs, Governor Katie Hobbs, and Staff Sergeant Everett Griggs Jr.



VIA ZOOM
FACEBOOK
AND ON-LINE
STREAMING

MEET US THERE!!!

DURING THE WINTER
MONTHS, BIBLE STUDY
WILL BE HELD ON LINE
ON WEDNESDAYS:

SENIORS AT 11 A.M.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP
AT 7:30 P.M.

To all those celebrating
in February!

Happy Birthday!



Celebrating the 58 Nations of Africa

The Long Journey Started on these shores. . .

THEIR
HISTORY . . .



...
IS
OUR
HISTORY!!

THE BLACK HISTORY THEME FOR
2025
CELEBRATES
“AFRICAN AMERICANS
AND LABOR”

The 2025 Black History Month theme, "African Americans and Labor," is a powerful reflection on the pivotal role that the hard work of African Americans has played in shaping our country's history. This theme underscores the diverse and significant ways in which labor—whether voluntary or involuntary, skilled or unskilled—has been at the core of the Black American experience. From the agricultural labor of enslaved Africans, which was foundational to the economic systems of this country, to the prosperous establishment of "Black Wall Street" which was a demonstration of the brilliance and resilient abilities of black corporate collaboration, this theme highlights how work has been central to both survival and empowerment.

This year's theme also touches on how self-help strategies and entrepreneurship in Black communities have provided avenues for economic autonomy and resilience as embraced by the Kwanzaa Principle of "Ujamaa" (cooperative economics). The role of organized labor in challenging both economic and social injustices is highlighted, showcasing how collective action among Black workers has been instrumental in advancing social and political rights. This is a time of reflection on the importance of the Principle of "Ujima" (collective work and responsibility).

By focusing on "African Americans and Labor," Black History Month in 2025 aims to celebrate and honor these profound contributions, shedding light on how work, both historically and present-day, continues to shape the identity, culture, and economic status of our communities. Let this time of reflection and celebration empower us towards a bright and successful future as we continue to walk and work in our "Nia" (purpose).

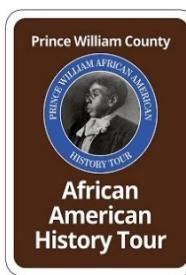
*If you don't know your history,
you can't know your future.*
-- Lenny Henry

HONORING AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY IN PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY

At First Mount Zion Baptist Church, we are proud to stand as a pillar of faith and community in Prince William County, a region steeped in African American history. Established in 1867, our church emerged from the dreams of freed African Americans seeking a place to worship, learn, and grow. Over 150 years later, we continue to honor that legacy by uplifting our community and celebrating the rich history of African Americans in this area.

Prince William County is home to numerous landmarks and resources that shed light on the African American experience. For those seeking to delve deeper into our shared history, we encourage you to visit the **Prince William County Historic Preservation Division**. Sites such as the **Lucasville School**, one of the few remaining one-room schools for African American children, offer a glimpse into the challenges and triumphs of education during segregation. The **Jennie Dean Memorial**, located in Manassas, commemorates the life and work of Reverend Jennie S. Dean, whose vision for the Industrial School changed countless lives.

First Mount Zion continues this legacy of empowerment and education through our current resources and events. Our **Christian Education Ministry** delves into historical and contemporary issues affecting African Americans in Sunday School. The **Generations: Histories and Legacies Small Group** helps members in starting and advancing their genealogy research. Each February, we host events for **Black History Month**, including guest speakers, historical exhibits, and special services that highlight the contributions of African Americans in faith, culture, and society. We conduct Black History 365 through highlighting and amplifying history all year.



Additionally, the **Prince William County African American History Trail** is an excellent way to explore local landmarks, including churches, cemeteries, and other sites that tell the story of resilience and faith. The trail includes stops at historical Black communities such as Thoroughfare, a post-Civil War settlement, and areas connected to the Underground Railroad. First Mount Zion is number 11 on the trail.

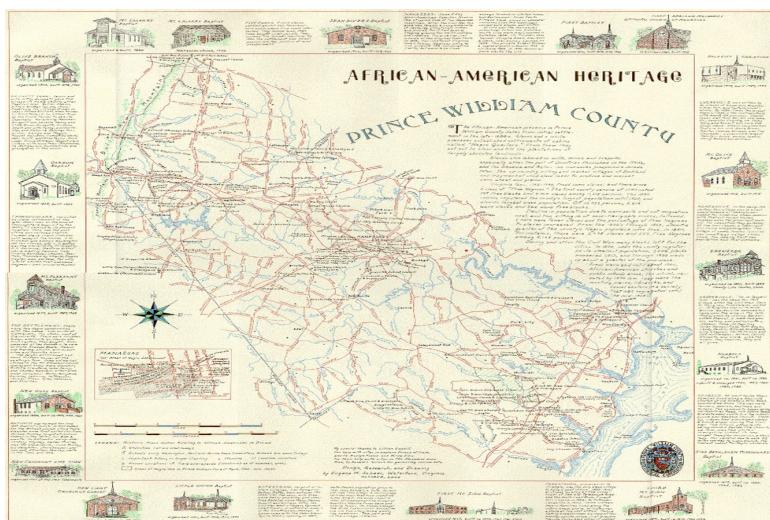
Among these significant sites is the **Dumfries Slave Cemetery**, a sacred space honoring the lives of enslaved individuals who were laid to rest there. Members of our congregation, led by **Deacon Anthony Fields and Deaconess Norma Fields**, founded a non-profit organization dedicated to amplifying the history of this cemetery. Through their leadership, an historical marker has been established, and ongoing care and maintenance of this hallowed ground ensure its preservation for future generations.

As a congregation, we encourage citizens to take advantage of these opportunities to learn more about our collective history. Whether through visiting local museums, such as the **Manassas Museum**, or joining us for educational programs and community initiatives, we invite you to honor the past while building a brighter future.



Deaconess/County Supervisor Andrea Bailey at the unveiling of the Dumfries Slave and Free African-American Cemetery

At First Mount Zion, we are committed to preserving the legacy of those who came before us, living out our vision of "Sharing the Light from the Promise to Pentecost and Points around the world" as we serve God and our community. We celebrate Black History 365 (BH365) by highlighting and amplifying the lives, contributions, and achievements of the African Diaspora throughout the year. Let us continue to celebrate and share the powerful story of African American history in Prince William County and the world. Together, we ensure that these stories remain alive for generations to come.



Additional Resources:

First Mount Zion Baptist Church: www.fmzbc.com

Prince William County Historic Preservation Division: www.pwcva.gov/history

Lucasville School: [https://www.pwcva.gov/department/historic-preservation/lucasville-school](http://www.pwcva.gov/department/historic-preservation/lucasville-school)

Jennie Dean Memorial: <http://www.manassascity.org/jenniedean>
Manassas Museum: [https://www.manassasva.gov/things_to_do/manassas_museum/black_history.php](http://www.manassasva.gov/things_to_do/manassas_museum/black_history.php)

Prince William County African American History Trail: [https://www.visitpwc.com/history/trails-tours/black-history/](http://www.visitpwc.com/history/trails-tours/black-history/)

Dumfries Slave Cemetery: [https://www.visitpwc.com/listing/dumfries-african-american-cemetery/1953/](http://www.visitpwc.com/listing/dumfries-african-american-cemetery/1953/)

Generations History and Legacies: [https://firstmountzionbc.org/directories/generations-history-and-legacies/](http://firstmountzionbc.org/directories/generations-history-and-legacies/)

These resources provide an excellent starting point to learn more about the inspiring legacy of African Americans in our county. Take time to explore them, engage with history, and celebrate the enduring impact of our community.



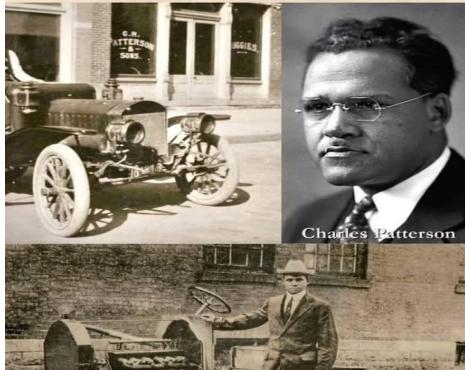
FREDERICK DOUGLAS PATTERSON was the first African American to build motorized cars. His father, Charles Rich Patterson, a former enslaved person, created C. R. Patterson and Sons Company, located in Greenfield, Ohio. Beginning in 1865, the company built fashionable carriages. Frederick Patterson inherited the company upon the death of his father and began building motorized vehicles. The first Patterson automobile, the Patterson-Greenfield, rolled off the line on September 23, 1915. Unfortunately, Henry Ford debuted the Model T on October 1, 1908 and by that point had captured most of the American car-buying market.

Named after the abolitionist Frederick Douglass, Patterson was born on September 17, 1871 in Greenfield, Ohio, the fourth of five children born to Josephine and Charles Richard. His four siblings were Mary, Catherine, Dolly, and Samuel. In 1888, Patterson attended Ohio State University where he played football and may have been the first Black player at the school on the varsity team. In his senior year, he left the university and taught school in Louisville, Kentucky for two years. His passion, however, lay in the family business so he moved home in 1897 and joined his father and brother Samuel at C.R. Patterson and Sons. When his father, the family patriarch, and head of the company died in 1910, Frederick assumed leadership of the business and began to gear up to produce the Patterson-Greenfield automobile.

The Patterson-Greenfield sold for \$850 and was reputed to be a higher quality automobile than Henry Ford's Model T, also known as a "Tin Lizzy." The Patterson-Greenfield car had a forty horsepower Continental four-cylinder engine and reached a top speed of fifty miles per hour. Unfortunately, the Model T had cornered the automobile market. Initially, it sold for \$825 in 1908 when introduced to the public, but by 1915, the year the first Patterson-Greenfield debuted, the price had decreased to \$360.

From 1915 to 1920, the company produced 150 Patterson vehicles of two styles, the two-door roadster and the big four-door touring car.

The Patterson-Greenfield Automobile



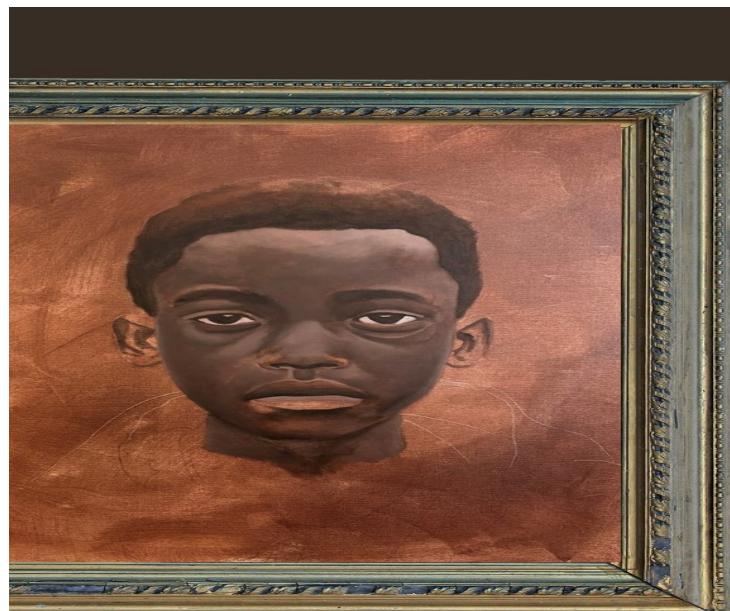
CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH . . . ENJOYING AFRICAN AMERICAN ART WITH PWCAC DST!

Join the Prince William County Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. on Saturday, February 1, from 6 – 8 p.m., as we host a free reception to celebrate the opening of the ARTfactory's Black History Month art exhibit.

William Kennedy's work, *Beyond the Surface*, will be displayed. In this exhibit, he aims to explore and express the emotional depth and complexity of black male figures. At the reception, meet William, see his exceptional art, hear him discuss his process and technique, and enjoy live music and refreshments.

The ARTfactory address is 9419 Battle Street, Manassas, VA 20110.

About the artist: Born in 1987 in Washington, DC, William Kennedy's creativity started at a young age when he began drawing everything around him. As a self-taught artist, he became a freelance designer and illustrator, working as such for the past 10 years. In 2022, he shifted to contemporary painting and portraiture, which has become his primary focus. Using acrylic on canvas and charcoal on paper/canvas, his work focuses on urban culture. His art has been exhibited in numerous galleries and museums, including the Brick Lane Gallery in London, the Liberal Arts Gallery in Michigan, and the New Bedford Art Museum and Narrows Center for the Arts in Massachusetts.



On display: Jan. 31 - Mar. 1, 2025

WILLIAM KENNEDY *Beyond the Surface*

ARTIST RECEPTION

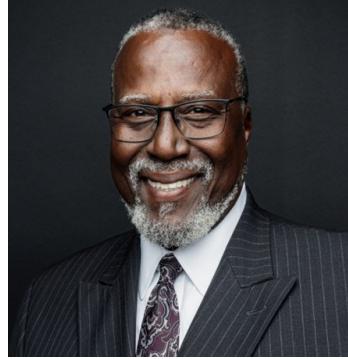
FEB. 1, 6 – 8 PM

9419 Battle St, Manassas, VA

sponsored by the Prince William County Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.
"Preserving Our Legacy Through Sustained Excellence"

ARTfactory





AL DURR: A JOURNEY OF SERVICE, FAITH, AND EXCELLENCE AT FMZBC

For Trustee Alfranda "Al" Durr, a 20-year member of First Mount Zion Baptist Church (FMZBC), excellence is more than a pursuit—it's a way of life rooted in faith, service, and community.

Born into a military family and having traveled the world, Al brings a unique perspective shaped by resilience, leadership, and a deep commitment to serving others.

Faith and Family Foundations

Al credits his military upbringing and 28 years of service, rising from Private to Lieutenant Colonel, for instilling discipline and a sense of duty. Married for over 22 years to his wife Robin, Al is the proud father of four independent young men. His spiritual journey has been enriched by small churches and FMZBC's unique ministries, which have provided him and his family a strong sense of belonging. "This is the place I'm supposed to be," he shares.

A turning point in Al's faith journey came as a teenager. Bullied and feeling out of place, he found acceptance through sports, particularly basketball and track. Surviving a devastating car accident in high school deepened his faith, leading him to testify during a Fellowship of Christian Athletes event. "Basketball changed my life, but God saved it," he says.

Professional Life and Ministry Impact

After a distinguished military career and 10 years in government service, Al founded ALD & Associates LLC to empower communities and organizations. His professional journey has informed his roles at FMZBC as an usher, trustee, and member of the Communications and Publicity Ministry, where he embodies servant leadership. "I want people to feel at home while in God's house," he says, whether through a warm greeting or ensuring the church's resources are managed with integrity.

Hobbies and Inspirations

Beyond FMZBC, Al enjoys traveling, spending time with family and friends, and golfing. He draws inspiration from his family and a desire to uplift those who feel overlooked. His favorite Bible verse, Proverbs 3:1-10, reminds him to trust in the Lord and remain steadfast in faith.

"I have created nothing really beautiful, really lasting, but if I can inspire one of these youngsters to develop the talent I know they possess, then my monument will be in their work." --- Augusta Savage

Lessons from Challenges

A pivotal challenge in Al's life was losing his younger brother to brain cancer. Through his brother's unwavering faith, even in the face of terminal illness, Al witnessed what true peace in God looks like. This experience continues to drive him and remind him of God's constant presence.

Vision for the Future

Al's goals are rooted in service: continuing his work for the Lord, growing his business, and striving to be the best version of himself. For those seeking to grow in faith, he advises, "Make time for the Lord and acknowledge Him in all you do. Don't just read the Bible—understand it and embrace it."

Al Durr's journey is a testament to the power of faith, family, and service, inspiring the FMZBC family to pursue excellence and live purposefully.



MEGAN MEADE TO GRADUATE SUMMA CUM LAUDE FROM LIBERTY UNIVERSITY



Congratulations to one of our Zone M2 members, Megan Meade, who is set to graduate from Liberty University in May 2025 after completing her studies in November 2024. She will be honored during the commencement ceremony for her outstanding academic achievements, graduating Summa Cum Laude, with an impressive GPA of 3.9 in Early Childhood Education.

Following her undergraduate success, Megan plans to pursue a Master's degree in education, furthering her commitment to shaping young minds and making a meaningful impact in the classroom.



DREAMS

Langston Hughes

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.



PULPIT COMMITTEE UPDATE

Message from the Pulpit Committee:

The Pulpit Committee is committed to keeping the FMZBC family informed as we continue the important work of seeking our next Pastor. To provide greater transparency, we have made detailed information about our process and progress available, including answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs). You can access this information through <https://firstmountzionbc.org/pulpit-transition-process-plan/>

We encourage you to review these updates and continue to keep the Pulpit Committee in your prayers as we seek God's guidance in this journey. Thank you for your support and patience as we move forward together in faith.

As we enter *Phase 5 – Interview and Further Assessment*, we seek your prayers for guidance, strength, and unity. Please join us for a dedicated time of prayer on Sunday, February 23, 2025, immediately following the service in the Chapel.

As always, please email us at pulpitcommittee@firstmountzionbc.org for any questions you may have.



Join us for a Prayer Circle.

When: **Sunday, February 23rd (4th Sunday)**
Time: **Immediately After Service**
Location: **Chapel**



Note: This time is for Prayer ONLY

Transition Plan Phases

- ✓ Phase 1 – Church Governance & Selecting a Pulpit Committee
- ✓ Phase 2 – Defining Requirements and Expectations
- ✓ Phase 3 – Search and Recruitment
- ✓ Phase 4 – Evaluating and Shortlisting

Phase 5 – Interview and Further Assessment

Phase 6 – Presentation to the Congregation

Phase 7 – Decision Making

Phase 8 – Transition and Installation

Do you have questions for us?

All questions must be submitted in writing to pulpitcommittee@firstmountzionbc.org in order to ensure appropriate and timely responses. A response will be provided within 24 hours, excluding weekends and holidays.

Note: Pulpit Committee's FAQ can be found on the Church Website. Credentials required.

FMZBC PULPIT COMMITTEE

Dear First Mount Zion Baptist Church Family,

What an extraordinary privilege united prayer is. What potential power prayer has.

As we continue in "Phase V" of the Pastoral Search for the next Under-Shepherd for First Mount Zion Baptist Church, we humbly ask for your dedicated prayers this week as we continue to move forward with the duties that each of you has entrusted to us.

In the book of James 1: 2-8, it says, 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. ⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. ⁶ But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways."

We are humbly asking for you to pray for the First Mount Zion Baptist Church's Pulpit Committee this week.

With Humble Sincerity,

The First Mount Zion Baptist Church Pulpit Committee

*...from the desk of the
Church Business Administrator
Sis. Renee Woolfolk*



PLEASE NOTE:

The office will be closed on Presidents' Day, **Monday, February 17, 2025**.

Remember to please check the Church website (www.FMZBC.com) and voicemail for closings and cancellation during times of inclement weather. Notices are also posted to WTOP and WJLA.



FMZBC JOB VACANCIES

**YOUNG ADULT CHOIR DIRECTOR
FOOD SERVICE ASSISTANT
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT**

Please see detailed announcement and employment application at:

First Mount Zion Baptist Church Careers and Employment | Indeed.com

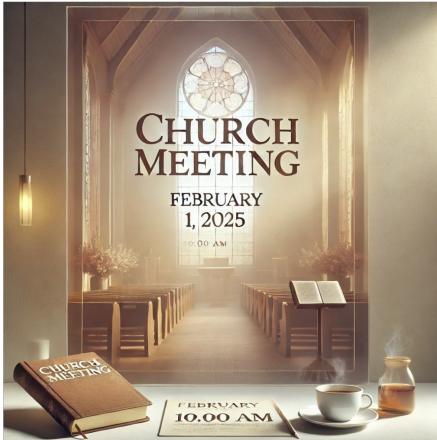
You may return the completed application and resume by email to:

employment@firstmountzionbc.org

or in person during office hours,
Monday through Thursday 9am-4pm
Fridays 9am-1pm.

Applications will also be accepted by mail.
Positions will remain open until filled.

First Mount Zion Baptist Church
16622 Dumfries Road
Dumfries, Virginia 22025
Attention: Renee Woolfolk
Church Business Administrator
rwoolfolk@firstmountzionbc.org



**Church Meeting
February 1, 2025
10:00am**

**Livestream at
www.fmqbc.com**

Voting Participants Must
Register Via **Zoom** before
February 1st.
Check Connection Points and
the Church Website for the
registration link

IT'S A NEW YEAR, BUT WE STILL NEED TO KNOW . . .

- ◆ your member number
- ◆ full name associated with your member number
- ◆ current mailing address
- ◆ phone number

Please use the following link to update your contact information. Please remember to also update your information in VANCO. As a registered user, you can make changes to your VANCO profile, giving schedule and password reset. In the event you are locked out, the system will refresh within 2-4 hours, and you will be able to reset your password. Final reminder, include your member number on your tithe envelope. Please feel free to contact the office to confirm your member number.

Member Name and Number:

It is important to confirm that you are using the correct member number and the correct corresponding name. One way to verify is to review your online giving account. You may also confirm your member number by calling the office, 703-670-0184.

Maintain the Connection:

Change of address or phone number? Updates may be made through the FMZ website using the following link: <https://form.jotform.com/12155242234>

VANCO ON-LINE GIVING

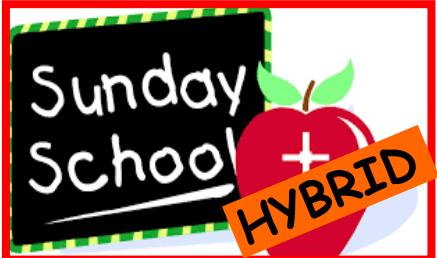
VANCO, FMZBC's on-line giving **and mobile app** platform, operates with an elevated level of security. As a result, access to users on the same network (FMZ IP address) will be blocked. When off site individual users may be denied access temporarily because of too many failed login attempts. After some time (up to 4 hours) the account will automatically reset to allow users to select the forgotten password option. To avoid this issue onsite please consider using the VANCO/FMZ mobile app for giving. As a Vanco registered user you should see this option when you sign in. You may also access the app using the following QR code.



You may give online using the following online giving link:

https://www.eservicepayments.com/cgi-bin/Vanco_ver3.vps?appver3=wWsk24ZWJSTZKsGd1RMKlg0BDvsSG3V1WQCPJNNxD8upkiY7JIDavDs0zUE7KG0nFx2NSo8LdUKGuGuF396vbc-jOdOpUgh5p9VUzbG-MUX6XHubq5Z7ap5JVmPErc4ZeYHCKCZhESjGNQmZ5B-6dxxaHzX-YjOncGsSrUtYU7E=&ver=3

Or access the link through the FMZBC website: [https://firstmountzionbc.org/](http://firstmountzionbc.org/) and click on **ONLINE GIVING** (VANCO) at any time. To avoid failed transaction fees, please regularly review your online giving account to ensure contact and payment sources are up to date. If you are interested in learning more about VANCO or have any questions as a VANCO online giver, please contact the front office (703) 670-0184.



SS-HYBRID IS HERE!!

Back Together Again!
(Ecclesiastes 4:9, GMT version)

"Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them." (Isaiah 42:9)

Join Sunday School Hybrid each Sunday in the Chapel. For those attending the class via ZOOM, please use the link below to register:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89762921587?pwd=>

We look forward to seeing you there!!

Sunday School Extended Lesson Guides Handouts are available for download from the FMZ website using the following link:

<https://firstmountzionbc.org/weekly-sunday-school-lessons/>

POC: Rev. Gillis Taylor
Sunday School Superintendent
SundaySchool@firstmountzionbc.org

ATTENTION!!!
PLEASE CHECK FMZ'S WEBSITE REGULARLY FOR A COMPLETE LISTING OF MINISTRY ACTIVITIES, AS WELL AS UPDATES REGARDING WEATHER CLOSINGS DURING OFFICE HOURS.



The last day to register for February SHARE packages is Sunday, February 9th. SHARE packages are \$23 for food valued between \$35 and \$45. POC: Thomas Bates, 703-772-8837. Distribution will be on February 22, 2025.

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 Mary Lively
Trustee Alfranda Durr
Dr. Sandra Flowers
Brother James Gaskins
Sister Sylvia Moore
Sister Roslyn Parker
Reverend Kathy Russell
Deaconess Claudia Woolfolk

Rev. Dr. Sandra K. James, Acting Pastor
Renee Woolfolk, Church Business Administrator
James Simpson, Chair, Trustee Ministry
Kavin Johnson, 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/fmzbcdumfries>
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/fmzbcdumfries

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

Linked In: [First Mount Zion Baptist Church, Dumfries VA | Groups | LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/First-Mount-Zion-Baptist-Church-Dumfries-VA-1)

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

YouVersion: <https://www.youversioninthebibble.com/bible>

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



Indeed: <https://www.indeed.com/cmp/First-Mount-Zion-Baptist-Church>