



## Press Release

### For Immediate Release

#### **First Mount Zion Baptist Church to Celebrate the Installation of Reverend Doctor Sandra K. James as Its 11th Pastor — and First Female Pastor in Church History**



**Dumfries, VA — October 5, 2025—** First Mount Zion Baptist Church (FMZBC), one of the oldest and most historic churches in Prince William County, will celebrate a landmark moment in its 158 plus year history with the Installation Service of **Rev. Dr. Sandra K. James** as its **11th Pastor** on **Saturday, November 22, 2025, at 2:00 p.m.**

Dr. James makes history as the first female pastor of First Mount Zion, following a legacy of strong pastoral leadership that has guided the church since its founding shortly after the Civil War. She is also uniquely positioned for this new season of leadership, having served faithfully for more than two decades as the church's longest-serving Assistant Pastor and, most recently, as its first Acting Pastor.

#### **A Historic Church, A Historic Moment**

Founded in 1867 by formerly enslaved men and women determined to build a place of worship and community, First Mount Zion has long stood as a beacon of faith, resilience, and service in Dumfries and throughout Northern Virginia. From its humble beginnings as a gathering of believers, FMZBC has grown into a thriving congregation of thousands, known for its ministries of worship, discipleship, outreach, and justice. Guided by its mission to **“To connect people who have a desire to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ”**, FMZBC continues to be a spiritual home and community leader in Prince William County and beyond.

Dr. James' installation marks a new chapter in that legacy. She now joins the distinguished line of FMZBC pastors — becoming the 11th Pastor to be formally installed. Her leadership builds on the strong foundation of those who came before, while bringing fresh vision to meet the challenges and opportunities of today.

#### **About Rev. Dr. Sandra K. James**

Rev. Dr. Sandra K. James has faithfully served First Mount Zion for more than twenty-five years, first as Assistant Pastor, providing guidance in preaching, teaching, pastoral care,



and ministry development. In 2024, she made history as the first appointed Acting Pastor, leading FMZBC with wisdom, stability, and grace during a pivotal transition period.

A dynamic preacher and teacher, Dr. James is deeply committed to spiritual growth, community engagement, congregational care, and operational effectiveness — the four strategic priorities she has outlined for FMZBC's future. Her ministry reflects a balance of tradition and innovation, rooted in the Gospel while responsive to the needs of today's church and community. Dr. James brings with her a plethora of leadership skills based on her 23 plus years of faithful military service to our country where she retired as a Lieutenant Colonel.

### **Installation Service & Celebration**

The Installation Service will be held on Saturday, November 22, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. at First Mount Zion Baptist Church, 16622 Dumfries Road, Dumfries, VA 22025. A reception and additional celebratory activities will follow.

Members, friends, and the wider community are invited to join in this historic occasion as we honor God's faithfulness and welcome the next season of leadership at FMZBC under Rev. Dr. James.

### **Media Contact:**

Dr. Joseph (Joe) Boutte  
Communications and Publicity Ministry  
First Mount Zion Baptist Church | [www.fmzbc.com](http://www.fmzbc.com)  
16622 Dumfries Road, Dumfries, VA 22025  
703-670-0184 | [CPM@FirstMountZionBC.org](mailto:CPM@FirstMountZionBC.org)