



A Ministry Exhibiting A Spirit of Excellence!

Message from the Pastor



To My Beloved First Mount Zion Baptist Church, Family, Friends, and Community,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

In the words of the Apostle Paul, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you" (Philippians 1:3). I want to take this moment to express my heartfelt gratitude for your unwavering support, prayers, and love. Your faithfulness and dedication to the ministry have been a source of strength and encouragement to me personally and to our entire Church family.

Every act of kindness, every word of encouragement, every hug and every prayer lifted on my behalf and for my family reminds me of the goodness of God in my life. Truly, I am blessed to serve alongside such a devoted and compassionate congregation.

To the Pastoral Installation Committee and all who have served in any capacity to make this a wonderful and memorable event, thank you! To my family thank you for your prayers, encouragement and covering 24/7/365! I love you to the moon and beyond!

As we continue to walk together in faith, let us remain steadfast in our vision: "Sharing the Light: From the Promise, to Pentecost, to Points Around the World." Your commitment makes this vision possible, and together, we are making a lasting impact for the Kingdom of God.

Please know that I am deeply grateful to each of you, and I mean that from the depths of my heart! May the Lord richly bless you for all that you do in His name.

*Peace and Blessings,
Reverend Dr. Sandra K. James
Pastor*

PASTOR, STAFF, AND LEADERSHIP

Reverend Dr. Sandra K. James, Pastor
Renee Woolfolk, Church Business Administrator
James Simpson, Chair, Trustee Ministry
Kavin D. Johnson, Chair, Deacon Ministry
Vietta Williams, Chair, Deaconess Ministry

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**Welcome to our
new members!**

We're glad you're here!



GIVE THE GIFT OF JESUS “LIGHT”

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Who-

ever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life.” (John 8:12)

During this Advent Season, we are reminded that the baby born in a “lowly” manger whose birth we celebrate, grew up to be our Savior and the “light of the world.”

Jesus the Christ is considered by many to be the most significant “person” in history. His impact spans centuries and His life and message continue to influence people of various races, ethnicities, nationalities and religions.

“Scapegoating” and the distrust of people who are considered “other” seem to be at an all-time high, while the care for and appreciation of the worth and dignity of all people seem to be at an all-time low. Because of this, Jesus’ “light” is needed more than ever.

Recently, our youth group meeting topic was “You are the Light” and was presented by Pastor James. She queried youth on what it means to be a “light” and encouraged them to continue to let the light of Christ’s love and influence shine through them.

Jesus’ “light” can still transform lives and Jesus needs those we who believe in Him to let our lights shine in the world. There is no minimum age requirement for letting your light shine and it can be shown in various ways. Sometimes it can be shown by giving someone a smile or a word of encouragement. It can also be shown by assisting someone with material needs.

I encourage our young and young at heart to celebrate Christ’s birth now and throughout the year by sharing the gift of the “light of Christ’s love” with someone who needs it.

All youth in grades 6-12 are invited to join us as we shine our lights with each other, our church family and the community.

*Submitted by
Reverend Beverly Jiggetts
Youth Minister*



**YOUTH
DECORATED
LED TEA
LIGHT HOLDERS
TO REMIND
THEM
“THEY ARE
THE LIGHT.”**



YOUTH CLOTHING GIVE-AWAY CLOSET AND COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITY



The Youth Clothing Give-Away Closet has new and gently used free clothing for youth. It is located in Room 156 (next to the Barber Shop). Confidential shopping is by appointment only. The store is open on 4th Sundays following the 11 a.m. Worship Service. Community Service hours can be earned by working in the store.

POC: Deaconess Ledora Akanni, Akanni.ledora@yahoo.com





ANNOUNCEMENT

FIRST FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2025

Youth in grades 6-12 who are **FMZBC members**, are invited to join the Youth Ministry to see the "Black Nativity" Play at Hylton Memorial Performing Arts Center on Friday, December 5, 2025, at 7:30 p.m. **No COST to you!!** Transportation is provided. Departing from First Mount Zion at 6:00 p.m. Returning at 10:00 p.m.

Permission Slip is required. Use the link to [FMZ Youth Ministry Trip to Black Nativity Play](#) Space is limited!

YOUTH MINISTRY WINTER OUTING

The Youth will be going to the Museum of the Bible, including the "All Creation Sings" and "Washington Revelations" experiences, followed by lunch, on

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2025

Transportation departs FMZBC at 7:45 a.m. and returns at 4:00 p.m. Cost is \$25.00 which covers museum ticket and transportation. Youth will need to pay for their lunch at the Springfield Town Center Food Court.

Permission slip is required. Access using the link.

[Permission Slip for Museum of the Bible Trip](#)

Space is limited!



YOUTH BIBLE STUDY

Youth Bible Study is **every Wednesday** in person and via ZOOM in the Executive Conference Room from 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Below is the new registration link. You only need to register once.

[Click Here to Register for Youth Bible Study](#)



Logan playing the Upright Base Violin

FMZBC family, please join us in celebrating Logan Gerard Patton. His parents, John and Marlene Patton, are very proud of Logan for all that he does selflessly and as an eighth-grade student.

Logan attends Lake Ridge Middle School. For the past three years, he has been a competitive swimmer for both the Lake Ridge Barracudas and for the Occoquan Swim Academy, a USA Swim Team. This summer Logan was awarded the Barracuda Coaches Award for his contribution to the team.

Logan has been studying Taekwondo since he was seven years old. He currently holds a blackbelt, and is working on his second blackbelt designation. Logan was selected to participate in the Taekwondo leadership program to become a junior instructor in the Certified Instructor Training program.

Logan began learning the upright Bass violin in the fifth grade. Currently, Logan is part of the Lake Ridge Middle School Orchestra. In October of 2025, Logan was inducted into the Tri-M Music Honor Society. This honor society requires members to do performances throughout Virginia, maintain an A or B average in all classes, and participate in community service activities.

Lastly, Logan has served as a Junior Usher at First Mount Zion for the last two years. He enjoys his usher's duties, and we are thrilled that he has chosen to serve the church in this way.

Family, please commend Logan for letting his light shine at First Mount Zion and in the community. Please pray with his family that he maintains this determination throughout his life.

*Submitted for
John and Marlene Patton
by Reverend Beverly Jiggetts
Youth Minister*



Logan breaking a board during Tae Kwan Do testing



Logan with Pastor James



Logan swimming the back stroke

COME LET US ADORE HIM!!!

"MY GOD, MY TESTIMONY"



It was June 2025, and I had my annual vision screening. My optometrist found pressure behind both eyes and after many screenings, I heard these words: "You have a brain tumor". A benign mass was found behind my right eye the size of a golf ball, however, I was a-symptomatic and was experiencing no pain. But despite the news, a sense of calm and peace came over me

as I heard the words "God's got me" and knew that God would see me through this storm.

During my hospital stay, I had a great care team. With each medical staff I came in contact, I greeted them with a smile and informed them: "I am blessed; I'm not afraid because God's got me!" Some of them even returned the sentiment and told me "Yes, He does." God continued to walk with me throughout the whole process. He gave me scriptures that applied to me during our family devotional. He also surrounded me with family and friends who visited, called and sent prayers and well wishes.

My experience was nothing but God's goodness, mercy and timing. On Friday, I was admitted to the hospital and on Monday I had surgery. The surgery was a success as God guided the neurosurgeon's hands to remove all of the tumor - praise God! On Wednesday, I was discharged due to my successful surgery. On Sunday, I returned to church. This was my goal, and I have been attending every Sunday since then.

I am thankful to those whom God placed in my life to be with me on my road to recovery - to my wonderful husband, Stacy, and our awesome young adult children - Sadara and Stacy II - all of whom have been great caregivers to me at home. Also, to my mother, sisters, mother-in-law, aunt and uncle, cousins and friends; our FMZ Zone B leadership-Deacon/Deaconess Barnes, Deaconess Ford and Deacon Ojumu and Deaconess Amiker, as well as Pastor James.

I am a living witness to God's saving grace. I am back at work, feeling well and doing well. He has been in control and with me every step of the way. God IS.... a healer, deliverer, doctor, waymaker and head of my life. My message to you is to get your regular check-ups and annual exams. My hope is that through my faith, others may see the God in me. My testimony is that I am a living witness of what God can do in our lives when we put our hope and trust in Him to see us through.

"Trust in the Lord with all of thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding; in all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your path." ~ Proverbs 3: 5 -6

*Submitted by
Sister Tara Funches
Zone B*

thank you

As we come to the close of another successful year of publishing the monthly newsletter, the Communications & Publicity Ministry (CPM) Team could not let the year end without thanking all of you – the contributors and the readers!

We are truly grateful for everyone who faithfully penned the spiritually uplifting articles, words of encouragement, the good news announcements, the noteworthy achievements of the young and old, the photographers, those who preserved and educated a new generation about our "Black History," and/or contributed in any way to helping us document the many current events in the life of First Mount Zion throughout the year. We could not have done it without you. Your contributions have been vital to our success, and we truly appreciate having you partner with us in this labor of love.

Thank you for helping us preserve our Church history for generations to come. And, don't forget, we look forward to partnering with you again in the New Year.

God Bless!

*Deacon Joseph Boutte, Chair
Sister Oonagh Bell
Brother Benson Blake
Trustee Alfranda Durr
Dr. Sandra Flowers
Brother James Gaskins
Brother Lavell Lucas
Deaconess Mary Lively
Sister Sylvia Moore
Reverend Kathy Russell
Deaconess Claudia Woolfolk*

Newsletter Team

May the beautiful
memories of a special
loved one bring you
comfort and solace
during this time.
Brighter days are ahead.

With deepest
Sympathy

**TO ALL THOSE WHO HAVE LOST
LOVED ONES DURING THIS PAST YEAR,
PLEASE KNOW THAT WE ARE PRAYING
FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY THAT
GOD WILL COMFORT AND KEEP YOU**



2026 TRUSTEE MINISTRY OFFICERS

- Chair – Trustee Renae Allen
- Vice Chair – Trustee Pamela Sessoms
- Chaplain – Trustee Al Durr
- Secretary – Trustee Willie Davis



Trustee Renae Allen



Trustee Pamela Sessoms



Trustee Alfranda Durr



Trustee Willie Davis

TRUSTED TO OVERSEE



2026 DEACON MINISTRY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- **Chair:** Deacon Kevin D. Johnson
- **Vice Chair, Operations:** Deacon Gresham Harkless, Sr.
- **Vice Chair, Communication, Education, & Policy (CEP):** Deacon Andre Robinson
- **Secretary:** Deacon Ernest Hughes
- **Assistant Secretary:** Deacon Joseph Donnell Wright, III
- **Chaplain:** Deacon Everett L. Griggs, Sr.
- **Assistant Chaplain:** Deacon Keith Holmes



Deacon Kevin Johnson



Deacon Gresham Harkless



Deacon Andre Robinson



Deacon Ernest Hughes



Deacon Joseph Donnell Wright, III



Deacon Everett Griggs



Deacon Keith Holmes

ORDAINED TO SERVE

2026 DEACONESS MINISTRY OFFICERS

- **Chairperson** - Deaconess Vietta Williams
- **1st Vice-Chair of Operations** - Deaconess Cathy Harkless
- **2nd Vice Chair of Policy, Programs and Development** - Deaconess Carmia Salcedo
- **Secretary** - Deaconess Chrissetta Hughes
- **Assistant Secretary** - Deaconess Debbie Singleton
- **Chaplain** - Deaconess Debbie Tribble
- **Assistant Chaplain** - Deaconess Rosemary Creekmur



Deaconess Vietta Williams



Deaconess Cathy Harkless



Deaconess Carmia Salcedo



Deaconess Chrissetta Hughes



Deaconess Debbie Singleton



Deaconess Debbie Tribble



Deaconess Rosemary Creekmur

CONSECRATED TO SERVE

Holiday greetings from Leadership!!!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

A Season of Hope, Joy, and Love



As we close out 2025, the Trustee Ministry would like to thank the congregation for their support. We all have dealt with many issues in 2025 from the loss of family members, price increases in groceries and gas, government shut down and many other things. The Trustee Ministry thanks you for how you continued to support FMZBC with your generous giving through regular and special offerings. We also want to thank you for your aid to those struggling during the holidays and those impacted by this unpredictable economy.

God's great love, grace and mercy have enabled all of us to face many challenges in 2025 – HE IS ABLE! As stated in Psalm 46:1 "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble." When we feel stressed or anxious, we should remember Isaiah 41:10 "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand". We serve a righteous God. As the old saying goes, "Greater is He that is in me (us) than he that is in the world."

As we enter 2026, under new leadership - the Rev. Dr. Sandra James. Let's support our Pastor, 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 2026; however, we do know our God will have His "loving arms around all of us". Philippians 4:6 says, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God". If we collectively and individually follow this scripture, we can look forward to the blessings God has in store for us in the new year!

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

*Trustee Ministry
Trustee James Simpson, Chair*

Dear First Mount Zion Baptist Church Congregation,

As we commemorate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the Deacon Ministry wishes to extend its most sincere greetings and heartfelt blessings to our Church family.

The Christmas season is a sacred period of reflection, gratitude, and rejoicing in the boundless love that God has bestowed upon us through His Son. This festive time invites us to embrace hope, to share joy, and to practice kindness both within our Church family and beyond our Church walls.

During this year's celebrations in worship, fellowship, and service, let us be ever mindful of the profound meaning of Christmas. May we draw strength from our faith, comfort from our unity, and inspiration from the exemplary humility and compassion demonstrated by Christ. Let us encourage and uplift one another, extend our hands to those in need, and make space in our hearts for the peace that God provides.

The Deacon Ministry expresses its deep gratitude for your prayers, your unwavering support, and your partnership in the collective service of God and one another. It is our earnest prayer that your homes are filled with joy, your hearts with love, and your lives with the abundant blessings that arise from knowing Christ. May the light of His miraculous birth shine upon each of you. May we celebrate the season with the spirit of Christmas, which is His peace, the miracle of Christmas which is hope for the future, and the heart of Christmas which is love shared among all who believe in His birth. *"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and this name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace"* (Isaiah 9:6).

We wish you a most joyous Christmas and a New Year of peace and prosperity.

*With sincere respect and devotion,
Deacon Ministry
Deacon Kevin D. Johnson, Chair*



Holiday greetings from Leadership

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM THE DEACONESS MINISTRY



Grace and peace to each of you during this blessed Christmas season!

On behalf of the Deaconess Ministry, I extend heartfelt Christmas wishes to each of you, praying your holiday season is blessed with everlasting hope, warmth, assurance, and abiding presence of Our Lord.

Scripture tells us in *Luke 2:10–11* that the angel declared, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy... For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.” This message is not simply a historical remembrance—it is a living reminder that God Himself stepped into our human story to bring light, peace, and redemption to every willing heart.

During the Christmas season, we often think about gifts, gatherings, and traditions. But for many of us, Christmas also carries a deeply personal meaning—one that speaks to God’s presence in our own lives. For me, the birth of our Lord represents God’s promise fulfilled, even in moments when we cannot see the full path ahead. It is a time to reflect on the Sovereignty of Our Lord and His everlasting power to proclaim His love and peace to us all. God is always with us no matter what – during both the joyful and challenging times and in quiet moments of prayerful reflection.

The First Mount Zion family has much to be grateful for this year. Our Lord has turned the page to the next chapter in our 158+ year history with the blessed installation of a new pastor along with new opportunities and renewed purpose to serve Him and His people all over the world. On behalf of every Deaconess at FMZBC, it is our joy to serve, support, and uplift you and your families – no matter the occasion, with encouragement, strength and love. We look forward to continuing that work with hearts filled with gratitude and expectation of His Best for us all.

Our Christmas prayer is simply this:

May the peace and love of God that filled the Holy Manger fill each of our hearts and surround our homes, our families and our friends; May the abundant joy that filled the shepherds’ hearts as they were guided by a Holy Star fill our spirits and help us all remember the true meaning of Christmas; And may the love that came down from Heaven on that Holy Night draw us all even closer to Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and to one another.

“For unto us a child is born, to us a Son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace!” (Isaiah 9:6)

Praise the Lord Saints! His Mercy Endureth forever!

Merry Christmas! — May His light shine brightly in you and through you to the world reminding everyone that He Lives and He Reigns forever and ever! The Best is Yet to Come!

With love and blessings,

*Deaconess Ministry
Deaconess Vietta Williams, Chair*

Holiday Message from the Business Administrator



DEAR FIRST MOUNT ZION FAMILY,

As we celebrate this joyous Christmas season, the Church Operations Staff would like to express our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to our beloved congregation. Your faithfulness, encouragement, and continued support throughout the year have been a true blessing to us and to the work of ministry.

During this season of giving, we are reminded of God’s greatest gift—His Son, Jesus Christ—and of how beautifully His love shines through each of you. Your generosity, service, and steadfast commitment make it possible for us to serve with excellence and to help create a welcoming environment where all can experience the love of Christ.

Thank you for your partnership, your prayers, and your trust. May this Christmas fill your hearts with peace, your homes with joy, and your lives with the abiding presence of our Savior. We look forward to continuing to walk together in faith, love, and service in the coming year.

With sincere appreciation and Christmas blessings,

*Sister Renee Woolfolk
Business Administrator
and the FMZBC Operations Staff*

*“Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!”
— 2 Corinthians 9:15 (NIV)*

MEN'S MINISTRY FELLOWSHIP: GRACE AND MERCY

The First Mount Zion Baptist Church Men's Ministry gathered for its November 2025 fellowship, a morning of faith, fellowship, and joy shared among brothers in Christ.

Brother James Gaskins, Director, served as the fellowship Master of Ceremony. The session began with an opening prayer, setting a reverent tone for the day. The men then enjoyed a hearty breakfast in The Grain of Heaven, where conversation flowed freely with laughter, stories, and friendly banter that reflected the close bonds within the Ministry.

After breakfast, the brothers moved to the Chapel, where the morning continued with a special musical moment. Brother Lavell Lucas shared an original song inspired by his mother, a heartfelt offering that deeply moved everyone present. The song's message of love and faith resonated strongly, drawing warm appreciation from the men.

Following the song, announcements were shared, and Brother Neal Patterson led the group in a spirited rendition of the birthday song to celebrate the November birthdays. Joy and gratitude filled the room as the brothers clapped and sang in unity.

The highlight of the morning was an interactive session led by Rev. Kevin Mickie, who spoke on grace and mercy from 2 Corinthians 12:9:

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

Rev. Mickie guided a dynamic discussion, encouraging reflection on how God's grace strengthens believers amid life's weaknesses and challenges. The conversation invited each man to share personal insights and testimonies about how mercy and grace shape their daily walk with Christ. The men were even provided a take home assignment to work on their SWOC assessment.

Strengths
Weaknesses
Opportunities
Challenges

The Fellowship concluded in prayer and the recitation of the Men's Ministry Motto, led with enthusiasm by Deacon Everett Griggs:

*"Teach the Word in the home;
With a consecrated heart;
Following the footsteps of our Savior;
Leading all men to God."*

The November Fellowship embodied the spirit of brotherhood, worship, encouragement, and transparency that defines the Men's Ministry—reminding all in attendance that God's grace truly is sufficient, and His power works best when we walk humbly together in faith.

*Submitted by
Deacon Joseph P. Boutte*



*Thank
you!*

*Thank
you!*

To our FMZ Family...

Our sincere and heartfelt thanks for your generous financial contributions towards the Share Ministry. Your willingness to share your resources reflects the true spirit of our ministry and the love of Christ. Because of your kindness, we are able to provide essential nourishment to families and individuals in our community who are facing difficult times. Every contribution, no matter the size, makes a tangible difference—it translates directly into meals, hope, and comfort for our neighbors.

Thank you for being the hands and feet of service and for demonstrating such compassion. May God bless you richly for your generosity and faithfulness.

The Christmas season provides us another opportunity to give, so please help your Zone Leaders identify families in our congregation and community who would appreciate a SHARE package.





PAY HEED TO HIM THAT IS APPROACHING

As the leaves fall and the air grows crisp, we find ourselves on the cusp of the holy season of Advent. This is not merely a countdown to Christmas Day, but a time to focus our hearts upon the celebration of the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Rather than allowing the four weeks before Christmas to devolve into a hurried scramble of anxiety and worry, let's use December as an opportunity to recenter ourselves on the true reason for this blessed season.

All too often, in our eagerness to complete exhaustive holiday to-do lists, we risk arriving at the fourth week of Advent looking outwardly prepared—we have done all the tasks—but inwardly, we have failed to make room in our schedules or our hearts for the gift of Jesus. We may find ourselves depleted on December 25th, wondering where we put God amid all the rushing and doing.

This year, we can resist those impulses. Our Advent preparation is not meant to be found in the perfect tree or the fully-checked shopping list, but in the quiet, expectant readiness of our souls.

Advent is a special and sacred time to “pay heed to Him who is approaching.” It is a season of hopeful waiting, of spiritual preparation, and of joyful anticipation. We each have God-given opportunities to prepare our hearts for the season in a multitude of ways: prayer and supplication, worship and praise, service to others, studying God's word...the list is never ending. The Holy Scripture reminds us:

“Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.”
James 4:8

“I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me.” Proverbs 8:17

“And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.” Jeremiah 29:13

How will you intentionally respond to His call to draw near this Advent? In what ways could you spend the Advent season paying heed to Him who is approaching? Perhaps you could dedicate more time to prayer, commit to an Advent devotional, or choose specific act of service each week of Advent.

This year, my personal plan is to use the first 24 days of December to reread the 24 chapters of the Book of Luke. The meticulous historian, Luke, provides a complete and

beautiful account of Jesus' life, beginning with the birth of John the Baptist, offering a detailed account of the Nativity, and highlighting powerful themes of hope, justice, celebration, and excitement about the coming Messiah.

Our commitment to intentional preparation will be repaid with blessings far richer than any earthly gift. When we intentionally draw near to God, a few of the rewards we may reap are:

- Increased faith and strengthened resolve
- Calmed fears and rest in His perfect peace
- Strength drawn from the wellspring of His presence
- Bearing fruit for His Kingdom
- Rejoicing in Him with unending spiritual joy
- Knowing God better and becoming more like Him

The beloved hymn, “Joy to the World,” carries a powerful, simple command: “Let every heart prepare Him room.”

How can we pay heed and prepare room for our King this Advent season?

*Submitted by
Deaconess Kishema Tapp*

SHOUT OUT TO THE GRAIN OF HEAVEN AND THE INCREDIBLE SERVANTS WHO SERVE!!!

THE SENIORS' MINISTRY WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THE TIME TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE GRAIN OF HEAVEN FOR THE ABSOLUTELY DELICIOUS AND DELECTABLE FOODS PREPARED FOR THE SENIORS AT THEIR NOVEMBER FELLOWSHIP. ALL WE CAN SAY IS

THANK YOU . . .

THANK YOU . . .

THANK YOU!!!

YOU ARE AMAZING AND WE DO NOT SAY IT ENOUGH.

SENIORS' MINISTRY LEADERSHIP TEAM

VOLUNTEER SCREENING

Click Here
[Screening Forms](#)

Contact Sister Brenda Byrd at 571-237-0111
byrdbj@comcast.net



YOUR BEAUTY AND LOVE CHASE AFTER ME

I pray that this finds everyone doing well and staying safe. Continue to pray wherever you are during the noon hour.

Scripture:

Psalm 23:6 MSG

Your beauty and love chase after me every day of my life. I am back home in the house of GOD for the rest of my life.

Psalm 23:6 NKJV

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.

Psalm 23:6 AMPC

Surely or only goodness, mercy, and unfailing love shall follow me all the days of my life, and through the length of my days the house of the Lord [and His presence] shall be my dwelling place.

Devotional: "Taste and See" - <https://dailybible.co/p/MzBxYp913/>

Praise and Worship Song: "CeCe Winans - Goodness of God" <https://youtu.be/9sE5kEnitqE>

Prayer:

"Lord, thank you for your goodness, grace, and mercy throughout during many hours of prayer, planning and preparation for this milestone in the history of First Mount Zion Baptist church (FMZ). We are thanking and praising you as we look forward to a wonderful and blessed time of celebration of the birth of Christ and the beginning of a new era in the life of our church. We thank and praise you for your blessings and faithfulness to FMZ over the years and especially now into a new season of blessings and challenges.

We pray for your continued blessings, anointing, peace, grace, wisdom, direction, protection, favor, strength and good health for our church family. Allow the leadership to hear your voice clearly and make good choices so that our will aligns with your will. We pray for a fresh anointing and clear vision and direction as we move forward. May we as leaders and members pray for and support this ministry to your people. May we be the light in the community that guides the world toward you especially in challenging times. Let the glory of the Lord rise among us, in Jesus' name we pray and give thanks. Amen!

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

FAITH AND THANKFULNESS



Greeting my brothers and sisters, I know that life has been challenging for many of us during these trying times. So many of us are feeling the effects of the political changes and decisions. The economic upheaval, the federal layoffs, and the overall uncertainty. We have all been impacted by it, either directly or indirectly, through our family members or friends.

Well, fellow saints, in Ephesians chapter 6, we are instructed to put on "the full armor of God." In verse 16, it says, "Above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one." (NKJV). Beloved, we are not exempt from the adversities of life, but we must continue to keep our faith in the God of our salvation, the God who loves us.

One of the Hebrew names for God is "Yahweh Chesed", which is "God of Loyal Love." God loved us so much that He gave His only Son for us, and we can trust Him to be with us through whatever we face in life. Isaiah 54:10 says, "Though mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken." (NKJV). Beloved, the word love used in this verse is not just a feeling. It is an action. It intervenes on behalf of our loved ones and comes to the rescue. God is faithful and will act on our behalf.

I am reminded of Job, a powerful example of unwavering faith in the midst of great adversity. Despite experiencing tremendous loss, Job's response is instructive to us all. In Job 1:21, after humbling himself before God, the Bible records his words: "...Blessed be the name of the Lord." He worshiped God. Yes, my brothers and sisters trouble comes, but do not be dismayed, because we are more than conquerors through Him that loves us. Pastor Rick Warren says, "God's love is like an ocean; you can see its beginning, but not its end." God works all things together for our good.

*Submitted by
Reverend Robert Jones*





The First Mount Zion Seniors' Ministry Leadership Team presented an awesome celebratory program during their monthly Fellowship on Wednesday, November 19, 2025, with a triple-header in honor of Veterans Day, Caretakers' Month, and Thanksgiving! We had in excess of 150 Seniors, all filled with an attitude of gratitude as we reflected on what God has done for us down through the years and continues to do for all of us. The Gym was beautifully decorated by Bro. Bassie McCain and his team and, as always, Sis. Pauline Hunter and Sis. Doris Johnson had two Veterans' Memorabilia tables, wonderfully laid out, displaying photos of veterans as well as memorabilia shared by members to add to the occasion.

Our theme was: "Grateful Hearts, Faithful Service: Honoring Our Veterans, Thanking Our God" using John 15:13 – (NIV) as our guide: "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends." This Fellowship was a Celebration of Service, Sacrifice and Spirit.

It opened with a heartfelt prayer offered by Sister Betty Gibbons who also blessed the food. The Scripture reading was done by Sister Joyce Willis and Brother Cardell Hunter welcomed the Seniors and their guests. He noted that this Fellowship was in celebration of three different things...Caregivers, Veterans, and, of course, Thanksgiving.

The November birthdays and anniversaries were recognized by Brother Neal Patterson as we sang in concert to the celebrants.

The program took off with a bang as Sis. Loretta Archie shared a word of encouragement and tribute to those who are Caregivers, letting them know that they are not alone and that their labor was not in vain. To that end, she enthusiastically invited members to consider the Caring for the Caregiver Small Group, which offers encouragement, prayer, shared wisdom, and a place to speak openly about the challenges and joys of caring for loved ones. Upon arrival, all caregivers received magnets specifically created for them.

A delicious lunch was served by the Grain of Heaven. We feasted on Cornish hens, mac and cheese, incredible candied yams along with stuffing and collard greens. Cheesecake for dessert topped off the luncheon, and iced tea helped wash everything down! What a lunch!! Sis. Sherise Campbell and her team outdid themselves and we are giving a **BIG SHOUT OUT** to the Grain!!

With our bodies refueled, we were treated to an incredible message of hope from Rev. Dr. Tracey Dawkins Holley, Minister of Christian Education, that had attendees clapping, on their feet, and feeling extremely blessed. Dr. Holley shared one verse, which was 1 Thessalonians 5:18, which simply states, **"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."** Dr. Holley reminded everyone to not only thank God for what He has done for them, but to thank God simply for who He is! Dr. Holley shared that we can thank God **IN** all things, knowing that God is with us **IN** our good times and our bad times; **IN** our disappointments

our celebrations; **IN** our sickness and our healing. This Thanksgiving message resonated with everyone, leaving us feeling encouraged and reminding us that giving thanks in all circumstance is indeed the will of God for our lives.

Dr. Boykin followed with announcements informing the Seniors of the upcoming events, including mental health Zoom call on December 4, 2025, at 2:00 p.m., and our December Fellowship on December 17, 2025, at Noon, which we have called **"SENIORS WITH THEIR BOOTS ON THE GROUND!"** Join us dressed in your glitz and show your stuff...all are welcome!

A medley of military songs was played, along with a partial clip of Sis. Cricket's brother, Sis. Edna's son and Sis. Janet Miller's husband, Henry Miller, who is now deceased. In the clip, Mr. Miller was being interviewed about his experiences in Vietnam as a Black soldier. The actual file is housed in the Library of Congress for anyone to listen to in its entirety. Two special presentations were made by Deacon Ronald Cooper in recognition of the contributions Bro. Doug Earle and Dea. Dennis Roney made during the Vietnam era but were never recognized. This recognition was possible, thanks to the Top Ladies of Distinction, Inc., Dale City - Prince William County Chapter, along with other Veterans from Prince William County who helped make this recognition possible. Since neither Bro. Earle nor Dea. Roney was able to attend the Top Ladies of Distinction's program, the programmers allowed us to recognize them during our fellowship. Of course, we were honored to do this for two of our long-standing members, and they were appreciative of the recognition.

Sis. Oonagh Bell then paid a resounding tribute to the military spouses, following which the Veterans and their spouses were presented with both a printed tribute as well as a poem entitled "The Soldier," both as a powerful reminder of the contributions they have made and what their contributions have allowed this country and its people to be able to do, including the freedom to do it.

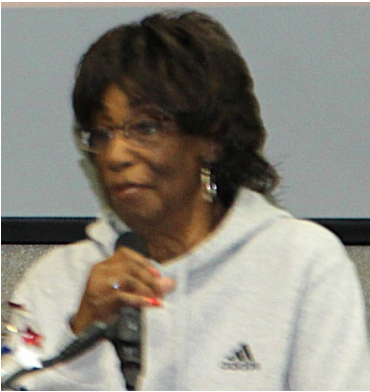
The Fellowship concluded with Dr. Holley giving the invitation to discipleship and membership, followed by a special treat of an instrumental saxophone rendition of "Amazing Grace" by Deacon Cooper, which took us over the top. Dr. Holley then gave the benediction, and we left full of thanksgiving and looking forward to another great Fellowship in December as we close out 2025. See you there!!!

Thanks to ALL of you who support the Seniors' Ministry. We look forward to continuing our relationship as God continues to grow the Ministry!

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL!!!!

*Humbly submitted,
Seniors' Ministry Leadership Team*

*Merry
Christmas*



**THANKING GOD IN ALL THINGS —
GREAT OR SMALL!!**

Grief is usually thought of as a response to the loss of a loved one through death. Many people are unaware of the many kinds of losses that evoke grief. The result of this misunderstanding is that some of us have experienced lengthened suffering from unrecognized or incomplete grief.



We cannot recover from the symptoms of grief if we do not recognize our Loss. Experiencing a loss requires a process that helps us express feelings of despair, vulnerability, and disorientation. When our emotions are buried or go beneath the surface, we may be unaware of

how the loss affects our lives and relationships.

Unresolved grief and misunderstood emotions can cause depression for years. In Viktor Frankl's book, *Man's Search for Meaning*, Frankl highlighted a man who had suffered from severe depression for two years after the death of his wife. The man said he could not overcome the loss of his wife whom he had loved above all. Frankl asked the man this specific question: "What would have happened if you had died first, and your wife would have had to survive you?" The man said if he had died before his wife, she would have suffered greatly and that would have been terrible and unbearable for her. The man shook Frankl's hand and left. The man discerned from that question that "the meaning for his suffering was to spare his wife from suffering". When we discover meaning or purpose in our grief, we can begin to accept the reality of the loss and gently adjust to life without the person or whatever we have lost.

Grief can arise from many experiences beyond the physical death of a loved one. Examples include:

- (1) Divorce or romantic breakup or relationship with a friend; (2) Loss or impairment of a body function; (3) Job loss or career disruption; (4) Illnesses — mental or physical, whether personal or affecting a family member; (5) Major moves or relocation; (6) Loss of trust — such as infidelity, substance abuse, or betrayal by a partner or parent; (7) Loss of safety or bodily control — including experiences of physical or sexual assault; (8) Other significant losses — such as the death of a friend or colleague, miscarriage, or the loss of a pet.

Grieving losses is an important step toward restoring balance. According to Elaine Childs-Gowell, PhD, author of *Good Grief Rituals*, we need to grieve the old losses. Otherwise, when we are faced with a new loss, we will have to use our energy to face the past as well as the current loss.

Think of a Loss History Graph as a snapshot of the losses you've faced. By laying them out visually, it helps you spot patterns, understand how those events shaped you, and rediscover experiences you may have tucked away.

Frankl, V.E. (2006). Man's Search For Meaning. Boston, MA: Beacon Press

James, W.J., Friedman, R. (2009) *The Grief Recovery Handbook*. New York, NY: Harper-Collins.

The Grief Recovery Method Guide for Loss: griefrecoverymethod.com (downloaded 2/21/18)

Submitted by

Associate Minister

Reverend Juanita Stokes, MA, LPC, NCC, MARS

Licensed Professional Counselor

FITNESS-IN-PLACE

HOLIDAY FITNESS SURVIVAL GUIDE!

Stay on track, celebrate wholeheartedly, and step into January feeling confident, strong, and ahead of the curve

A) Plan Time for Exercise: If you know you're going to a party, schedule a workout earlier in the day. **Proverbs 21:5** *"The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance"*.

B) Aim for Balance not Restriction: Eat the pie, just don't eat the whole pie. Enjoy the wine, just don't drink the whole bottle. *Proverbs 11:1 "A false balance is abomination to the Lord: but a just weight is his delight".*

C) Plan Your Recovery: Stay hydrated, get proper sleep, indulge in a sauna, or get a massage. *Exodus 23:12 “Six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest”*

D) Don't Wait Until January: Keep some fitness habits alive now and you'll start 2026 ahead of the curve, not scrambling with the resolution crowd. *Hebrews 12:11 "For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit".*

E) It is Not About Perfection: It is about progress. Every workout you fit in between parties, every mindful meal you enjoy, every recovery session you take for yourself is a choice that compounds into strength and resilience. These moments add up, and when 2026 begins, you won't be getting back on track, you will already be moving forward. ***Philippians 3:12 “Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me”.***

For information on FMZBC's Fit by God Fitness Complex click on the [Fitness Calendar](#).

Sister Lori Valkenburg
Fitness Director



Grace & Peace! The Women's Ministry hosted our November Fellowship on November 8th, with the theme, "The Positive Power of Godly Wisdom!" God showed up through the anointed words spoken by each guest speaker, and the beautiful, sweet songs of praise.

CARING FOR THE CAREGIVER AND ALZHEIMERS CAREGIVER SMALL GROUPS OF SUPPORT, STRENGTH, AND SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

At FMZBC, we recognize that caregiving is an act of love that can also be physically draining, emotionally heavy, and spiritually complex. Caregivers often balance countless roles — advocate, nurse, driver, encourager — while quietly carrying the weight of someone else's needs. Too often, the caregiver's own well-being is overlooked.

The [Caring for the Caregiver Small Group](#) provides a safe and faith-centered space for those who serve in this vital role. Listed among FMZBC's Small Groups, this ministry exists to pour back into those who pour out so much. The group offers encouragement, prayer, shared wisdom, and a place to speak openly about the challenges and joys of caring for loved ones.

FMZBC also supports caregivers through virtual [Alzheimer's Caregiver](#) groups, which meet online every 2nd and 4th Wednesday at 11:00 a.m. Led by Deacon Andrew Walker and Deaconess Bella Feters, these sessions provide education, spiritual grounding, and fellowship for those caring for individuals with memory-related conditions.

Caregiver burden is real. Studies consistently show increased stress, fatigue, isolation, and health challenges among caregivers. Many feel guilty about needing rest or asking for help, yet Scripture reminds us of the importance of tending to our own souls. Galatians 6:2 teaches us to "bear one another's burdens," and that includes lifting up those who quietly serve behind the scenes.

This ministry helps caregivers understand that they do not have to walk their journey alone. Through conversation, prayer, and practical support, participants gain strength, insight, and renewed hope.

If you are a caregiver, or know someone who is, consider joining or inviting them to connect with this essential ministry. And if you are not a caregiver but want to support them, a simple act of kindness — a meal, a visit, a listening ear — can make a profound difference.

At FMZBC, we are committed to caring for the ones who care for others.

[Alzheimer's Caregiver's Support Groups 1 & 3 - FMZBC](#)

[Caring for the Caregiver - FMZBC](#)

We opened the fellowship with a beautiful Praise & Worship/Praise Dance song by Selah Soul "Keeper of My Way." This was followed by Deaconess Norma Fields encouraging us with a story regarding Jenny Wilson, who was a strong, women of faith who wrote thousands of Christian Hymns, including the familiar song, "Hold To God's Unchanging Hands." Deaconess Fields also encouraged us with several scripture references, including Isaiah 41:10 & Palms 89:13. We are to be reminded of how strong and faithful God is no matter what is going on. God will hold us with His righteous right hand, as long as we hold on to His unchanging hand!

We were then blessed with beautiful musical selections from Sister Annette White singing "Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah" and Sister Stacey Griggs singing "Alabaster Box." These songs allowed us to feel the loving presence of God. In addition to the songs, two videos moved our spirits, "Clothed With Strength And Dignity/I Am Fearfully & Wonderfully Made" and "Woman of Strength (Letitia Kinnear)."

Bishop Gale LeGrand Williams provided powerful and anointed words on the thought, "The Positive Power of Wisdom," based on 1 Corinthians 1:21-24, and then referenced additional scriptures that reminded us of the things that are positive and good for us. She reminded us that God is good and that we can rely on God's power and not our own. She encouraged our hearts by echoing the words, "God is a strong tower" and that we can have victory over conflict. She gave us examples of what the Wisdom of God will do for us and reassured us that wisdom is a gift from God and a day-by-day process in which we have to surrender our plans to God. The words spoken by Bishop Gale were truly a blessing to our souls.

What a wonderful fellowship it was! A sincere thank you to all who were a part of the program and those who were present. Truly, the fellowship was a success because of all your servant hearts. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge and say thank you to my technical support team (Siara Corprew, Michelle Washington-Barnes and Oonagh Bell).

To our November Birthday celebrants, Happy Birthday again! May God Bless you with many more! Thank you to our first time visitors. I am humbled by your presence. It was a pleasure having you be a part of our Fellowship. We pray that you were blessed and we look forward to seeing you again soon.

Mark your calendars for Saturday, December 13, 2025, for a Joint Women's and Men's Ministry Fellowship. More information to come.

Please invite someone to join us. Until then, remember "The Positive Power of Godly Wisdom!"

*Humblly,
Gwen L Holland
Women's Ministry Director*

FMZBC MINISTRIES PARTNER WITH BLANKETS OF LOVE TO BLESS VETERANS AND NEIGHBORS IN NEED

First Mount Zion Baptist Church joined forces with Blankets of Love Charity Corporation to host a meaningful Community Feeding event at the StreetLight Overnight Shelter on Veterans Day, Tuesday, November 11, 2025. Together, the ministries served more than 70 homeless Veterans and unhoused individuals, offering warm meals, hygiene kits, socks, and shoes.

In a powerful display of compassion and unity, FMZBC members donated more than 200 pairs of men's shoes, which were distributed both at the feeding event and at the Prince William County A.J. Ferlazzo Social Services Hypothermia Site. The FMZBC Veterans Ministry, Men's Choir, Civilian and Military Ministries, and Motorcycle Ministry all played a vital role—demonstrating the impact of faith in action when God's people come together to serve.

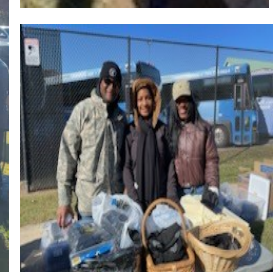
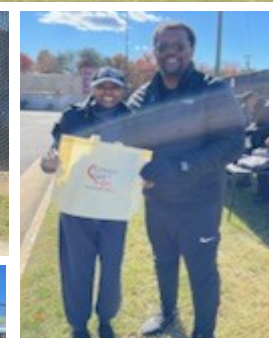
The outreach was held from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM at the StreetLight Overnight Shelter, a 47-bed facility supporting single adults year-round, with extended operations during extreme weather.

Blankets of Love Charity Corporation, a volunteer-driven 501(c)(3), continues its mission to assist veterans, individuals experiencing homelessness, and those in crisis by providing essentials such as food, blankets, toiletries, and hot meals across the southeastern region.

Meals for the event were provided by G & F Barbeque, a beloved family-owned business known throughout the DMV for its flavorful meats, homemade sides, and award-winning banana pudding.

This partnership reflects FMZBC's ongoing commitment to worship, stewardship, and good works that uplift our community—living out our vision and mission that includes sharing God's love through service.

*Submitted by
Sister Debra Graham
Events On A Dime, LLC*



First Mount Zion Baptist Church

BLACK HISTORY

LIVE IT

LEARN IT

MAKE IT

365 DAYS A YEAR



Long before the names Julia Child and Martha Stewart came about, there was **LENA RICHARD** from New Roads, Louisiana, born September 9, 1892. She was the first Black woman in America to host her own cooking television show. In the 1940's, Blacks were still facing a lot of discrimination, including finding jobs and having careers. Lena was able to achieve much success.

Not only was she on television, she also owned two restaurants, had a frozen food business, she wrote a cookbook that sold nationwide, and she opened her own culinary school to teach cooking and home economics to aspiring Black chefs.

Read more about this forgotten pioneer at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lena_Richard

She cleaned their houses. They never knew she was taking notes.

In 1850s San Francisco, a Black woman named **MARY ELLEN PLEASANT** moved through marble hallways like a ghost. She poured coffee. She folded linens. She was furniture to them—part of the décor. But while gold barons counted their fortunes, Pleasant was counting something else: information. Every stock tip. Every land deal. Every whispered secret about which bank was expanding, which railroad was coming, which property would triple in value. She absorbed it all. Then she disappeared into the background—and went to work.

Pleasant bought laundries. Boarding houses. Dairies. Restaurants. Real estate across the city. When racism blocked her name from appearing on deeds, she partnered with banker Thomas Bell, who held investments in trust while she pulled the strings. By the time anyone noticed, she had built an empire worth millions.

But money was never the endgame.



MARY ELLEN ("MAMMY") PLEASANT AS SEEN IN 1850
The first and only photograph taken after she had to leave jail

**THE BLACK HISTORY THEME FOR
2026 CELEBRATES**

**"A CENTURY OF BLACK HISTORY
COMMEMORATIONS"**

**Celebrating 100 years of recognizing
Black history and its impact on society.**

Pleasant funneled her fortune into the Underground Railroad, spiriting enslaved people to freedom. She handed John Brown \$30,000 for his raid on Harpers Ferry. When San Francisco's streetcars refused to let Black passengers board, she sued—and won, desegregating the system in 1868.

The city's elite turned on her. Newspapers called her a witch, a manipulator, a threat. They tried to bury her name in rumor and slander.

Her response?

"I'd rather be a corpse than a coward."

Mary Ellen Pleasant turned invisibility into her greatest weapon. She built wealth in a system designed to keep her poor. She bought freedom in a country built on slavery. She transformed silence into power.

She was an American entrepreneur, financier, real estate magnate and abolitionist. She was arguably the first self-made millionaire of African-American heritage, preceding Madam C. J. Walker by decades.

And then history tried to erase her completely. But you're reading this now. So it didn't work!!!

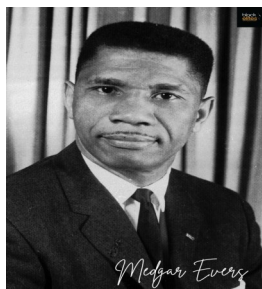
Check out her incredible story at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_Ellen_Pleasant

FMZBC JOB VACANCIES

**ASSISTANT PASTOR
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
FULL-TIME CUSTODIAL TECHNICIAN
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[Click Here for Additional Information](#)

Contact Renee Woolfolk, CBA,
to learn more, at
(703) 670-0184 or
rwoolfolk@firstmountzionbc.org



Remembering and Honoring **MEDGAR EVERS** – The Martyr for Justice

Medgar Evers, a fearless civil rights activist and World War II veteran, dedicated his life to dismantling segregation and fighting for the voting rights of Black Americans.

Born on July 2, 1925, in Decatur, Mississippi, Medgar experienced racism first-hand which prompted him to join the Army; however, that did not help the situation because during his time in the Army, he was even more angered by the segregation and mistreatment endured by African-American troops. Witnessing Black soldiers of the Free French Forces being treated as the equals of white troops, he once told a friend that *"When we get out of the Army, we're going to straighten this thing out!"*

After being discharged from the Army, Evers returned home, enrolled in college, earned his Bachelor of Arts degree, met and married Myrlie Beasley, and they had three children. The family later moved to Mound Bayou, Mississippi, a town developed by African Americans after the Civil War.

In 1954, as the NAACP's first field secretary in Mississippi, he investigated racial violence and worked tirelessly to end discrimination in education, employment, and public life. His assassination in 1963 outside his home in Jackson shocked the nation but also galvanized the Civil Rights Movement, turning his sacrifice into a symbol of courage and perseverance.

Evers' legacy lives on as a reminder that freedom and equality are worth every fight.

Read more about this "giant" at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medgar_Evers

GRAÇA MACHEL: THE ONLY WOMAN IN HISTORY TO MARRY TWO PRESIDENTS AND SERVE AS FIRST LADY OF TWO NATIONS



In the grand sweep of modern history, few lives embody grace and global impact quite like Graça Machel, the only woman to have served as First Lady of two different countries — Mozambique and South Africa.

Her journey, marked by love, loss, and leadership, tells the story of a woman who stood firmly in her own power while shaping the destinies of nations.

Born in 1945 in rural Mozambique, Machel's story begins far from the corridors of power. The youngest of six children, she lost her father before she was born, yet her mother instilled in her a fierce belief in education and self-determination. Her brilliance in school earned her a scholarship to the University of Lisbon in Portugal, where she joined the student movement against colonial rule.

From Liberation to Leadership

Upon returning home, Machel joined FRELIMO, the Mozambican Liberation Front, which was leading the fight for independence. It was there she met Samora Machel, a freedom fighter and future president. When Mozambique finally gained independence in 1975, the two married, becoming the nation's first First Couple.



As Mozambique's First Lady, Machel didn't limit herself to ceremonial roles. She became Minister for Education and Culture, spearheading one of the most ambitious education reform programs in Africa. Under her leadership, school enrollment — especially for girls — soared. She believed education was the most powerful weapon against poverty and colonial legacy.

Then, tragedy struck. In 1986, President Samora Machel died in a mysterious plane crash near the South African border — a loss that devastated both Graça and her country. Yet even in grief, she chose action.

Global Voice for Children and Women

Instead of retreating, Machel dedicated herself to global humanitarian work. Her groundbreaking UN report on the impact of armed conflict on children (1996) remains one of the most comprehensive studies ever conducted on the issue. She became a leading advocate for children's rights, especially in war-torn regions, and for the empowerment of women across Africa.

Her compassion and leadership caught the attention of another towering figure of African history, **Nelson Mandela**.

Love, Legacy, and the Making of History

Mandela and Machel met through their shared humanitarian work. Their friendship blossomed into love, and in 1998, they married, on Mandela's 80th birthday. Overnight, Machel made history again as the only woman to have served as First Lady of two sovereign nations.

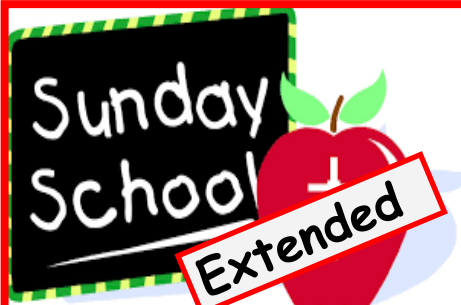


But even beside Mandela, Machel remained her own person, an accomplished leader in her own right. Together, they became symbols of forgiveness, partnership, and enduring love.

Today, at 78, Graça Machel continues to lead with quiet strength. Through the Graça Machel Trust, she champions women's leadership, children's welfare, and education across Africa. She has received global honors but remains deeply rooted in the values that shaped her life, integrity, service, and compassion.

Her story is not just about whom she married but what she made possible: the idea that a woman's influence can transform nations.

Graça Machel's legacy — spanning classrooms, war zones, and presidential palaces — proves she has done exactly that.



Each Sunday at 9:45 a.m. Check the monitors in the Narthex for classroom locations or via Zoom (registration required).

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

For those attending the class via Zoom, please [Register Here](#). We look forward to seeing you there.

[Sunday School Extended Lesson Handouts](#) class via ZOOM, please [use this link](#) to access materials!

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



Check Connection Point
for more information!

DEAF MINISTRY

American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters are onsite each Sunday during the 11:00 a.m. Worship Service. You may observe in-person and online at www.fmzbc.com. The monthly Zoom meetings are also held with an interpreter.

Have questions? Please email:
fmzdeafministry@firstmountzionbc.org



The last day to register for December SHARE packages is Sunday, December 7th. SHARE packages are \$23 for food valued between \$35 and \$45. POC: Thomas Bates, 703-772-8837. Distribution will be on December 20, 2025.

SUBMISSIONS FOR NEWSLETTER:

All members and/or ministries 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
Trustee Alfranda Durr
Dr. Sandra Flowers
Brother James Gaskins
Deaconess Mary Lively
Brother Lavell Lucas
Sister Sylvia Moore
Reverend Kathy Russell
Deaconess Claudia Woolfolk

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/>

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

Vimeo: vimeo.com/25203195

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

YouVersion Bible, Devotions, and

Prayers: [https://bit.ly/FMZBC-YouVersion Bible](https://bit.ly/FMZBC-YouVersionBible)

BlueSky - <https://bsky.app/profile/fmzbc.bsky.social>

Threads - <https://www.threads.com/@fmzbc>



LifeStream.tv

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