



March 1, 2026

Volume 22, Issue 3



2026 THEME:

GENERATION TO GENERATION

ONE LORD, ONE CHURCH, ONE FUTURE

Psalm 145:4

Message from the Pastor

Beloved First Mount Zion Family,

During our worship on the last Sunday of Black History Month, we reflected on a simple but powerful question: What happens when God posts a job opening? Drawing from Romans 12:6–8, we were reminded that God has already equipped every believer with gifts meant to be used in service to others and for the strengthening of His church.



The Apostle Paul teaches that we are one body with many members, each given different gifts by God's grace. Some are called to teach, encourage, lead, give, show mercy, or serve in countless other ways. Whatever gift God has placed within you, Scripture gives clear instruction — *use it*.

There is a difference between volunteering and serving. Volunteering often fits our convenience, but true service flows from the heart and responds to God's calling. Jesus Himself modeled this for us. He came not to be served, but to serve, and ultimately served His way to the cross for our salvation.

Service is not simply about filling positions in the church. It is about faithful stewardship of the manifold grace God has given each of us. When we serve, we grow spiritually, build meaningful relationships, discover our gifts, and help create a church community marked by love, encouragement, and unity.

As we enter this Lenten season — a time when many focus on giving things up — I challenged us instead to **take something up**: a heart of love, a spirit of service, generosity toward one another, and renewed kindness within our church family and community.

At First Mount Zion, there is truly a place for everyone. With many ministries serving children, youth, adults, seniors, worship, hospitality, education, outreach, and care for others, the only thing missing is you.

My encouragement is simple: **choose at least one place to serve**. Stay connected. Meet someone new. Walk alongside one another as family in Christ. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you to where your gifts can make a difference. We had a wonderful time of fellowship and sign-ups after service. Thank you for exploring the opportunities at our Ministry Roundup/Sign-Up. If you didn't find your ministry, give me a call!

Let this be our prayer together:

Lord, make me a servant. Use my gifts for Your glory.

There is room for you — and God is calling.

Don't forget to join us for worship March 8th at 11:00am as we celebrate Women's History Month with our 100+ voices Women History Month Choir.

Rev. Dr. Sandra K. James
Pastor

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MODELING LOVE

³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat," Matt 25:35A

Last month, many people celebrated Valentine's Day. In recent years, people have rejected the idea of Valentine's Day as only for those who are in a romantic relationship and have begun to celebrate other kinds of "Love" on and around the day. "Galentine's Day" celebrates female friendships and platonic love. "Palentines" days celebrates all our friends or "pals." Then there's "Quirkyalone Day." "The day can be celebrated by anyone who believes they can be whole alone, is comfortable with being on their own, and enjoys solid relationships that allow freedom." (<https://nationaltoday.com/quirkyalone-day>).

Jesus taught and modeled a different idea about what "love" is and how to show it. In Mark 10:45 he says, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Jesus not only asks his followers to show love by celebrating those we know, but to extend ourselves and show love to those we don't know by serving them and not expecting anything in return.

Many leaders we recognize during Women History's Month understood Jesus' idea about love. They made personal sacrifices and sometimes put themselves in harm's way to work for the freedoms, rights and dignity of others. Providing food for someone who is hungry is another way to do express God's love to others.

"From Generation to Generation" the FMZBC Youth Ministry thanks the congregation and leadership for helping us to show the love of Christ to those with "food insecurity" during the month of February by supporting our February "Month of Love" food drive. At the time of this writing, with your support we have donated 567 lbs. of food to the ACTS (Action Through Community Service) of Prince William County's food pantry. We will update the congregation with the total amount of food donated when the drive is complete. Again, thank you for helping us continue the legacy of service Jesus and other Female leaders we honor during Women's History Month modeled with this first ever "Month of Love" food drive.

Submitted by
Reverend Dr. Beverly Jiggetts
Youth Minister



Anthony and Taylor Ragin pose with Rev. Jiggetts Feb. 1, 2026 after collecting food donations for the Youth Ministry "Month of Love" Food Drive



Courbin and Jamir pose at the donation table Feb. 7, 2026 with food donations from the Youth Ministry "Month of Love" Food Drive



First contribution of food from the "Month of Love" Drive to be taken to the ACTS Food Pantry



Teams compete in the "Noodle" Race First Friday, Feb. 6, 2026

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SAREE GRIMES DIRECTORIAL DEBUT AT ALLIANCE THEATER



SaRee Grimes makes her directorial debut as Assistant Director for the play *FIRES, OHIO* at the renowned Alliance Theatre in Atlanta, Georgia. Founded in 1968, the Alliance Theatre is the leading producing theatre in the Southeast, reaching more than 165,000 patrons annually. The Alliance delivers powerful programming that challenges adult and youth audiences to think critically and care deeply. Inspired by the classic family drama *Uncle Vanya*, *FIRES, OHIO* updates a beloved story for our painfully absurd present, taking a hilarious and heartfelt look at the natural (and personal) disasters that transform our everyday lives.

For SaRee, the stage has been a place of belonging. Since childhood, she was captivated by how stories came to life through performance—whether it was movement, voice, or emotion, she felt most seen when on stage. This love for performance didn't just inspire her to act; it ignited a broader passion for creating and sharing stories in all forms. Watching Broadway shows and films, SaRee realized she didn't just want to participate in stories, but to shape them behind the scenes. This desire led her to explore producing, directing, and content creation; tools she now uses to communicate with the world around her.

SaRee is a 2025 cum laude graduate from Spelman College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Theatre and Performance and a minor in Entrepreneurship & Innovation. Each year, Spelman selects three seniors to intern with the Alliance as a part of a partnership with Spelman's Leadership Fellows Program. At the conclusion of each year, the Alliance selects one of the interns to receive a full-time, two-year fellowship at the Theatre in an area of artistic and executive leadership. SaRee was selected from a competitive application process and is serving her first year under the Spelman Leadership Fellowship program.

SaRee's time as a Theatre and Performance major at Spelman College marked a turning point in her creative aspirations. While initially focused on acting, her experiences at Spelman opened her eyes to the broader world of the arts. She learned the value of storytelling as a strategic tool and how the intersection of arts and entrepreneurship could change the landscape of entertainment. Spelman empowered her to grow as a multidisciplinary artist, blending creativity with business savvy. She left the program not only with acting skills but with a broader vision of her role in the industry and a confidence in her ability to shape narratives from the stage to the boardroom.

SaRee's biggest motivation is representation. She is driven by the idea that the stories she helps tell will open doors for others, especially Black girls with big dreams and limitless potential. She envisions a future where Black voices in entertainment are expansive, bold, and unstoppable. To young

creatives looking to carve their own paths in theatre, film, and television, SaRee offers this advice: "Stay curious, stay prepared, and never dim your light. Your journey doesn't have to look like anyone else's, and your voice matters in every room you enter." SaRee's journey is a powerful reminder that with prayer, passion, support from family and friends, and determination, anything is possible. As she continues to break barriers and create meaningful change, she is paving the way for the next generation of storytellers to follow in her footsteps.

SaRee is the daughter of Deacon Derrick and Sandra Grimes and has been a part of the FMZBC Zone M3 family since 2009. For more information on the Alliance Theatre and *FIRES, OHIO*, visit the website at <https://www.alliancetheatre.org/production/2025-26/fires-ohio/>



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Teams compete in the "Cone Challenge" First Friday, Feb. 6, 2026



Youth Teams "find the facts" in the Black History Scavenger Hunt, First Friday, February 6, 2026



Youth take a group photo after a night of fun at First Friday, Feb. 6, 2026



HIGH SCHOOL RETREAT

March 6-8, 2026

First Mount Zion, let's pray for all of our high school students (9th -12th grade), who will be attending the Retreat at the **Pine Creek Retreat Center in Gore, Virginia**. The theme is, **"It's About Time."** Let's pray that God will be glorified in all that they say and do and that the experience will be an unforgettable one!

Youth Clothing Give Away Closet:



The Youth Clothing Give Away Closet has new and gently used free clothing for youth. It is in Room 156. Confidential shopping is by appointment only.

Community Service Opportunity:



"Clothing Give Away" Store in Room 156 beside the Barber Shop. Community Service hours can be earned by working in the store.

POC:

Deaconess Ledora Akanni, Akanni_ledora@yahoo.com

YOUTH MINISTRY ON BLAST!

Highlight the amazing youth at First Mount Zion and their notable accomplishments. To have a youth profiled in this section, please send their name, picture, contact information, and accomplishments to Reverend Beverly Jiggetts at bjiggetts@firstmountzionbc.org.

Accomplishments can be in athletics, community service, scholastics, overcoming personal challenges, or simply a youth who needs encouragement.

GROUP MEETING

MARCH 15, 2026

12:30—2:00PM



SENIORS' MINISTRY COLLABORATION TO ASSEMBLE HYGIENE PACKS FOR THE MANASSAS HYPOTHERMIA SHELTER



MARCH 7, 2026

AT 7PM

EASTER HUNT

MARCH 21, 2026

10:00AM-12:30PM



ACADEMIC

EDUCATION MINISTRY



All 2026 graduating high school seniors who plan to attend an institution of higher learning can now apply for the **First Mount Zion Baptist Church (FMZBC) and Hinkitch Bell Memorial Scholarships**. 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 2026 FMZBC and Bell Scholarship Program.

The deadline for submitting both Scholarship applications with attachments is 4:30 PM, April 01, 2026.

Point of Contact: Brother Gerry Griffin, AEM Chair or Sister Sandra Grimes, Scholarship Committee Chair at AEM@FirstMountZionBC.org.



Bible Study will be held on Wednesdays, **VIRTUALLY ONLY** 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!



FMZBC
TRUSTEE MINISTRY
Stewardship · Integrity · Service

CHAMPION TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN CHURCH FINANCES

The Trustee Ministry is committed to upholding the highest standards of transparency and accountability in managing the Church's finances. Inspired by biblical teachings such as 1 Corinthians 4:2, which reminds us, "Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful," our Trustees view financial stewardship as a sacred responsibility. This commitment ensures that every dollar entrusted by members and donors is managed with integrity and diligence.

To safeguard FMZBC, our Church, and maintain YOUR, the congregation's trust, FMZ's Trustee Ministry has strong internal controls in place. These include multiple layers of review for all financial transactions, annual independent audit, and clearly defined reporting lines. By dividing responsibilities, such as keeping payment authorization separate from processing, we reduce errors and prevent misuse of funds. At each monthly Trustee Ministry Business meeting, financial reports are shared with Deacon and Deaconess representatives for questions and updates. Additionally, the Trustee Ministry gives quarterly updates at Joint Leadership Meetings and to the FMZ congregation during Church meetings in February, April, August, and December, further promoting transparency and trust.

We believe clear financial oversight honors God, protects our Church, and strengthens our community. Through continuous training, policy updates, and a culture of accountability, FMZ's Trustee Ministry strives to ensure that our Church's resources are used wisely and ethically for ministry, outreach, and the needs of our members.

Overall, the FMZ's Trustee Ministry believes transparency and collaboration will build trust and help our Church fulfill its mission: "To connect people who desire to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ."

*Humbly submitted in Transparency by
Trustee Renae Allen, Chair*

WE MUST NEVER FORGET THAT BLACK HISTORY IS AMERICAN HISTORY. THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF AFRICAN AMERICANS HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO OUR NATION'S GREATNESS.

- YVETTE CLARKE



ARE YOU LUCKY? OR ARE YOU BLESSED?



Ever heard the saying or have you ever said, "Good luck on that test," or "Good luck on your interview tomorrow," or "Good luck in the game – let's get that dub"? You may have even been told "You're so lucky!" But have you ever wondered what luck is?...

Luck is commonly viewed as a random chance. It suggests that events happen without reason (good or bad) simply because circumstances happened to align. When someone attributes success to luck, they often acknowledge that they could not control all the factors involved. Luck focuses on probability, timing, and coincidence. It implies that fortune can shift at any moment, and today's good outcome could easily have been tomorrow's disappointment. Some may view this perspective as comforting because it removes responsibility and meaning from events. If everything is lucky, then no deep explanation is required. However, it can also feel unstable. What chance gives, chance can take away.

A blessing, on the other hand, carries intentionality. It suggests that good things are not merely accidental, but purposeful and understood as gifts from God, divine favor, or the result of grace working through our fellow brother or sister and circumstances. When someone says they are blessed, they are not only recognizing the good in their life but also expressing gratitude and humility. Seeing life as a series of blessing shifts the focus from "what happened to me?" to "who sustained me?" Blessings emphasize relationship, stewardship, and thankfulness to our Heavenly Father, this invites reflection rather than coincidence.

The difference between luck and blessings is not always in the event itself, but in how the event is interpreted. Two people can experience the same outcome: surviving an accident, receiving a promotion, welcoming a child, one may call it luck while the other calls it a blessing, one feels fortunate and the other feels grateful. Gratitude changes the emotional weight of an experience. Luck celebrates outcomes. Blessings cultivate appreciation, responsibility and often compassion. Blessings don't deny hard work, struggle, or pain. Instead, they recognize that even in the difficulty, there can be provision, growth and meaning. Where luck asks, "What are the odds?" blessings ask "What is this teaching me? And "How can this be used?"

When life is seen through the lens of blessings, people are more likely to recognize God as our overseer and our unforeseen protector. This allows us to be faith walkers, perseverance drivers, and re-routes our love and gratitude to our all-knowing, all-seeing God. So, the next, time you see a four-leaf clover, and someone says, "Man you're lucky!" try responding "Thanks man, I'm blessed!"

Submitted by

Deaconess Chrissetta Hughes



HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH: A TRIBUTE FROM THE MEN OF THE DEACON MINISTRY

CELEBRATING THE RESILIENCE, SUSTAINABILITY, FAITH, AND LEADERSHIP OF WOMEN IN OUR CHURCH

This year's Women's History Month theme, "Leading the Change: Women Shaping a Sustainable Future," honors the visionaries among us—women whose dedication and resilience are transforming our present and building hope for generations to come. In every sphere—be it home, church, or society—women are at the forefront of meaningful change, championing justice, compassion, and stewardship for a better tomorrow.

Women's leadership is evident in the ways they nurture faith, advocate for equality, and encourage each of us to live with purpose. Whether by mentoring the next generation, fostering unity within our congregation, or modeling sustainable values in daily life, women are powerful agents of change. Their voices and actions weave the fabric of a more just and sustainable world.

As we reflect on this theme during Women's History Month, let us acknowledge and uplift the women whose courage and commitment guide our community forward. May we all be inspired to join hand-in-hand in this sacred work—leading the change, shaping a future where everyone can flourish.

As we enter Women's History Month, the men of the Deacon Ministry pause to reflect on and celebrate the extraordinary women who have helped shape First Mount Zion Baptist Church, our families, and our wider community. This is a special time to honor the legacy of women whose unwavering faith, compassion, and leadership continue to inspire and uplift us all.

Throughout history, women have been at the heart of the church's mission—serving, leading, teaching, and nurturing with grace and strength. From mothers and grandmothers who have passed down the faith, to sisters and daughters who lead with courage in today's world, we recognize and salute your invaluable contributions.

We are grateful for the women who serve tirelessly—whether in visible leadership roles or through quiet acts of kindness and support. Your prayers, wisdom, and resilience have helped carry First Mount Zion Baptist Church through challenges and triumphs alike. You share the support through your faith around which our community has been built.

During this month, we encourage everyone to not only acknowledge the historical achievements of women but also to honor those among us who continue to make history every day. Let us express our appreciation, listen to your voices, and commit to walking alongside you as brothers in Christ, advocating for justice, equality, and love.

To all the women in our congregation and beyond: thank you for your faithfulness, your leadership, and your unwavering spirit. The men of the Deacon Ministry celebrate you this month and always.

Deacon Kavin Johnson, Chair

CELEBRATING BLACK WOMANHOOD THIS WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

For Black women, Women's History Month isn't just a celebration of gender; it's a tribute to a specific, seasoned brand of resilience. It's about the "double-victory"—the relentless pursuit of progress at the intersection of womanhood and Blackness. It is to acknowledge that the history of the movement cannot be told without the hands that labored, the virtues destroyed, the voices that sang through the struggle, and the minds that engineered change while standing in the shadows of two worlds.

We stand on the foundation laid by women who refused to be told which "fight" was more important. Our history is paved by truth-tellers like Sojourner Truth, who reminded the world that "Ain't I a woman?" and Ida B. Wells, the fearless journalist and anti-lynching crusader who used her pen as a weapon against injustice. These women demanded both racial and gender justice. We stand on the backbone of strategy-makers like Septima Clark and Diane Nash, the architects of the Civil Rights Movement, who organized the front lines, while others took the microphones; we stand on the backbone of the modern pioneers, from the brilliance of Dr. Kizzmekia Corbett in immunology and NASA's black woman scientists depicted in "Hidden Figures," to the literary soul-searching of Toni Morrison, Nikki Giovanni and others.

As we celebrate our strength, we remember that we are not impregnable. For too long, the narrative has centered on how much we, as Black women, can endure. True celebration in 2026 should include prioritizing wellness by recognizing that "self-care" is a radical act of preservation, by creating spaces where Black girls can be creative, curious, and vulnerable without the weight of the world on their shoulders, seeing us not just as the "backbone" of the community, but as the visionaries at the head of the boardroom and the laboratory.

Our journey has always been communal. It's the "aunties," the "sister-friends," and the "matriarchs" who have turned meager resources into abundance for generations. Audre Lorde once said: "I am deliberate and afraid of nothing." So, when we celebrate ourselves this

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As we honor Women's History Month, we affirm that women are leading change by building sustainable systems of faith, justice, governance, and community. Their work reminds us of **Philippians 4:13**: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." And through their leadership, they strengthen us all.

Faithfully Submitted,

Reverend Marlene Johnson



LEADING THE CHANGE: WOMEN SHAPING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

This Women's History Month, the theme "Leading the Change: Women Shaping a Sustainable Future" calls us to broaden our understanding of sustainability not only as an environmental priority but as a holistic commitment to economic stability, community resilience, leadership succession, and intergenerational equity. As we reflect across history and into the present, women have carried the mantle of sustainable transformation, designing systems that uplift both people and the planet.

The Bible introduces us to women who modeled sustainability through courage, wisdom, and faithful stewardship. **Deborah**, a judge and prophetess, sustained a nation with strategic leadership and justice. **Esther** safeguarded her community's very survival, reminding us of the critical role women play in preserving future generations (**Esther 4:14**). **Mary Magdalene**, entrusted with proclaiming the Resurrection, helped sustain the spiritual foundation of the early church. These women demonstrate that sustaining communities is sacred work.

Today, women continue this legacy through leadership that strengthens institutions and expands opportunity. **Rev. Dr. Sandra K. James**, the **first female pastor in the 158-year history of First Mount Zion Baptist Church**, is leading her congregation into a new era marked by spiritual resilience, organizational continuity, and community impact. Her ministry embodies sustainability by nurturing both faith and forward-thinking leadership for generations to come.

In civic leadership, **Rep. Jasmine Crockett** of Texas is reshaping political sustainability by championing representation, democratic participation, and equitable policy. Her 2025 Senate bid energized statewide engagement and spotlighted the need for inclusive leadership in shaping the country's future.

On the national stage, **Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson**, the **first Black woman to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court**, strengthens the sustainability of American democracy through jurisprudence grounded in equity, constitutional integrity, and lived experience. Sworn in on June 30, 2022, her presence expands the court's intellectual and generational diversity.

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month, we aren't just looking at individual trophies. We are celebrating the collective lift. We are honoring the way we, as Black women, have consistently moved the needle for *everyone* — championing voting rights, eschewing bus transportation in support of Rosa, accompanying Martin and John Lewis as they put their lives on the line, fair housing, and education in ways that benefit the entire social fabric. We must also acknowledge the unique challenges we continue to face—health disparities, wage gaps, systemic bias—yet acknowledge our ability to rise with resilience.

To truly honor the legacy of Black women, we must not only celebrate accomplishments but we must also invest in the future. We must encourage young Black girls to see themselves as leaders, innovators, scholars, and change-makers. We must support Black women in leadership, in business, in ministry, and in every sphere where their voices are needed. We must invest in each other's vision by supporting Black-woman-owned startups and creative ventures; we must listen without interruption, recognizing that validation is a form of celebration; and when we speak on our experiences, we must listen to believe; we must listen to understand, not listen to criticize.

Women's month is more than just a calendar observance; it is a declaration that we matter. Our stories matter. Our contributions matter. Our lives matter. So, as we celebrate, may we do so with gratitude, reverence, and a renewed commitment to uplift, protect, and empower each other as we continue to shape our present and our future. Let us celebrate the Black woman as the ultimate alchemist—one who turns struggle into art, silence into song, and exclusion into a new, more inclusive world but, whatever we do, we must never allow ourselves to be marginalized and our history to be distorted!

Even as we do that, we must be careful not to degrade and denigrate our black men, for they are our husbands, sons, and siblings, and we need them beside us as we try to make a better world for all!





COME BOLDLY TO THE THRONE OF GRACE

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

Prayer:

When life's challenges and distractions cause us to grow weary, may we remember to stay anchored in you, Lord. May we NEVER give up as we do the work that you have called us to do. Knowing that it will work out for your glory and our good and nothing that we do for you is a waste of time. May we submit to you as you allow the challenges of life to cause us to grow stronger in our faith and relationship with you. Help us to let go of the things that you are leading us to let go of and embrace the things that you are calling us to embrace, even if it takes us out of our comfort zone. May we learn to trust you even if we do not understand why, knowing that you see the whole picture and what is best. More than anything, we want your perfect will to reign and for you to receive the greatest glory that you can from our lives.

"Lord, we thank you that even in our weaknesses and failures, you still choose to use us in fulfilling your will and plans for us. Your strength is perfect in our weaknesses. May we always seek your will above our own. In Jesus name, Amen.

Scripture:

Hebrews 4:16 NKJV

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 4:16 AMPC

Let us then fearlessly and confidently and boldly draw near to the throne of grace (the throne of God's unmerited favor), that we may receive mercy [for our failures] and find grace to help in good time for every need [appropriate help and well-timed help, coming just when we need it].

Hebrews 4:116 MSG

So let us walk right up to him and get what he is so ready to give. Take the mercy, accept the help.

Praise and Worship Song: "Through It All" - <https://youtu.be/Cvlxwc90BEI>

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

FITNESS-IN-PLACE

MARCH IN MARCH

March is a great time to start marching toward better health. Marching is a great form of exercise that can boost your physical and mental well-being. It promotes:

Cardiovascular Endurance: Regular, brisk marching increases heart rate and improves cardiovascular health.

Strength & Muscle Engagement: It strengthens hips, glutes, and legs, while engaging the core.

Balance & Coordination: Marching improves stability, which is crucial for reducing fall risks in older adults.

Low-Impact Exercise: Which is ideal for joint health.

Functional Mobility: It enhances everyday movements like walking, climbing stairs, and getting out of chairs.

Discipline & Focus: Marching is precise, rhythmic movements that enhance concentration & mental discipline.

Stress Reduction: It can help reduce anxiety and stress.

Self-Esteem: The discipline involved can lead to increased confidence and a sense of accomplishment.

Getting Started: Start in a safe location free from hazards and wear comfortable clothing. You can stand and march in place, have a steady chair nearby for support if needed, or march while sitting in a chair. Focus on lifting your knees above your hips. Move at your own pace. Stop if you feel pain.

Challenge: Begin with a 10 second march for three sets with a 10 second rest in between three days a week. Questions call the Fit by God Fitness Center 703-670-0225 or click on the [Fitness Calendar](#) for event and hours.

*Sister Lori Valkenburg
Fitness Director*



Join us in worship **March 8th at 11:00am** as we celebrate

Women's History Month

Featuring the FMZBC 100 + voices

Women's History Month Choir

Rev. Dr. Sandra K. James, Pastor

[www. https://firstmountzionbc.org](https://firstmountzionbc.org)





A CENTURY OF BLACK HISTORY COMMEMORATIONS: ROOTED IN FAITH - RISING IN LEGACY

The Seniors' Ministry stepped into a living tapestry—woven with courage, stitched with resilience, and crowned with the unshakable faith of a people who refused to let history silence their shine. We put on more than a fashion show at our Fellowship on Wednesday, February 18, 2026, as we returned to in-house gatherings for the first time since our December Fellowship. The room was filled with anticipation for what was to come. It was a journey; A celebration; A testimony! Our theme was **“A Century of Black History Commemorations: Rooted in Faith: Rising in Legacy,”** standing on the Word of Psalm 145:14.

For one hundred years, we have marched, danced, prayed, and persevered our way through every season of change. And through it all, faith has been our anchor—holding us steady, lifting us higher, and reminding us that legacy is not just what we inherit, but what we boldly create. And, in the spirit of creation, our **“African American History as Seen Through Fashion (w/Trivia)”** was birthed as the brainchild of Dr. Keith Boykin, and assisted by members of the Leadership Team.

Our program started with a heartfelt prayer, and reading of the Scripture, by Deacon and Deaconess Marion and Doreather Seth. Dr. Boykin then welcomed the gathering and shared the Occasion. He was already dressed in his regalia, letting us know that there was more to come, and indeed there was. Our Comedian-in-Chief, Brother Neal Patterson, did his usual anniversary/birthday greetings and recognized our own Sister Edna Turner who turned 97 years old a few days before our Fellowship. Our Director, Sis. Oonagh Bell, then made some announcements of upcoming events and thanked all those who were able to bless the residents at the Birmingham Green Nursing Home with the many items they brought. She also encouraged the attendees to support our collaboration with the Youth Ministry as they bless the Hypothermia Shelter in Manassas with much-needed supplies. She paid a special tribute to Sister Maria Oguntokun who turned 100 years young on February 15, presenting her with a gift from the Seniors' Ministry at large.

As we waited on lunch, we did a little trivia about Sis. Maria which her daughter, Dr. Fola Parrish, shared with us. We had the opportunity to learn different things about this humble and gentle matriarch. It was a fun trivia exercise. Lunch, as always, was delish! We feasted on baked chicken, collards, candied yams and black-eyed peas. Lemon cake brought up the rear and we drank iced tea to our hearts' content. Then, it was showtime!

Models graced the runway wearing garments that echoed the royalty of our African origins, the dignity of our ancestors, the flair of our cultural revolutions, and the brilliance of our modern creators. Every look was a chapter. Every stride a declaration. Every color, pattern, and silhouette whispered the truth that we are still rising.

As we reflected on our history through style, we celebrated not just what was worn - - **African Attire; 1800's; Sunday Best;**

Harlem Renaissance; Dress to Impress; Military Uniforms; 1960's to Present - - but what it represented. It was a declaration of strength, dignity, culture, identity, resistance, creativity, and faith ... a badge of pride, and a silent protest. Each era told its own powerful story. As we looked back through the decades, we saw how style reflected the resilience of our people.

The Fellowship, narrated by our own Sister Pauline Hunter, honored a century of Black history — rooted in faith, rising in legacy, and shining with the promise of generations yet to come, proving that our spirits remained unbowed. We refuse to be invisible!!! Rachel Zoe once said, "Style is a way to say who you are without having to speak."

As 1 Samuel 16:7 reminds us, “Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.” And, throughout history, our outward appearance has always reflected an inward truth — faith in God, hope for tomorrow, and strength to persevere.

Our Fellowship ended with the singing of our Black National Anthem accompanied on the piano by our Minister of Music, Bro. Sylstea Sledge and, I might add, we did so with such luster and enthusiasm that it was evident that everyone was “feeling it!” Pastor Sandra K. James closed us out with a stirring prayer, acknowledging a particularly poignant verse from the Anthem which reminded us of where God has brought us from and our obligation to continue to remember ... and be faithful to God!

We especially thank our fearless models, who did so with a spirit of excellence. We continue to be grateful to Dr. Holley, Minister of Christian Education who was present for the fellowship and the staff at First Mount Zion for their untiring help and willingness to make things work for our Seniors' Ministry. We could not do this without you...the Facilities Department, the AV Ministry, the Grain of Heaven and, most importantly, the volunteers who serve us faithfully at every Fellowship. May Almighty God continue to bless you in your service to Him and others.

Humbly submitted by
Sister Oonagh M. Bell, Director



Mission: To connect people who have a desire to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.



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

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SENIORS' MINISTRY DONATION DRIVE: SHARING LOVE IN ACTION

With hearts full of compassion and hands ready to serve, our Seniors' Ministry recently led a wonderful donation drive to bless the residents of Birmingham Green Nursing Center. What began as a simple idea quickly became a beautiful demonstration of generosity, unity, and Christ-like love.

Our Seniors collected and donated an array of thoughtful items — from personal care products and cozy blankets to puzzle books, devotional materials, socks, and comforting treats. Each item was carefully chosen, not just to meet a need, but to remind every resident that they are remembered, valued, and deeply loved.

This outreach was more than a donation drive — it was ministry in motion. Our Seniors demonstrated that age does not limit purpose; in fact, it often deepens it. Their faith, compassion, and willingness to serve reflect the beauty of lives dedicated to caring for others.

We are so grateful for every member who made this effort a success. May this act of kindness inspire us all to continue being the hands and feet of Christ in our community. *“Let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.”* – 1 John 3:18

Our own Brother André Porter, who is the Director of Volunteer Services & Support Services at the facility, personally came to the Seniors' Ministry February fellowship to express his gratitude to the Seniors for all they had done. The Seniors believe that these gifts will cause smiles to light up faces, conversations to be shared, and hearts to be touched. Our intent was to remind the residents that they are not forgotten.

*Lovingly submitted,
Seniors Ministry Leadership Team
Sis. Oonagh M. Bell, Director*



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



MEN'S & WOMEN'S MINISTRY JOINT FELLOWSHIP

February is known as the month of Love! The Men's and Women's Ministry held a joint fellowship held on February 14th, with the theme, "**Love of**

God, Love of Self, & Love of Others (Rooted in Wholeness, Worth, and Worship)!" We experienced a beautiful and unforgettable move of God. The love of God was evident throughout the chapel and fellowship from start to finish and His Spirit moved powerfully among us as we came together in unity, joy and love.

Brother James Gaskins, Men's Ministry Director, and I, Gwen L. Holland, Women's Ministry Director, joyfully welcomed everyone into this sacred time of fellowship. The morning opened with a delightful continental breakfast prepared by Grain of Heaven, giving us the opportunity to break bread together, connect in fellowship, and ready our hearts, minds, and souls for the blessings God had prepared.

The atmosphere was set with a dynamic, heartfelt, powerful and spirit-filled Praise & Worship experience led by our Worship Praise Ensemble (WPE), who faithfully continued to pour out in uplifting songs and blessings that ministered to our souls throughout the program.

I had the honor of greeting everyone as we gathered in fellowship, after which Brother James Gaskins led the second portion of the program. Our beloved Pastor, Rev. Dr. Sandra K. James, then shared heartfelt opening remarks filled with wisdom, encouragement, and the abiding love of God.

We were then blessed by five powerful, anointed messages of Love:

- Rev. Gillis Taylor spoke on the Love of God, how He is Alpha & Omega and we will have everlasting life if we believe in Him. He reminded us that we can love someone but not like them.
- Deaconess Chair Vietta Williams spoke on the Love of God, and how He lives in each of us. She reminded us to not just carry the Bible but to carry out the Bible because love that does nothing is not love at all.
- Rev. Dr. Beverly Jiggetts spoke on Love of Self, acknowledging that we are spiritual leaders in our faith, but we do not do as well in our physical health. She added that we should not be a King and Queen of denial.
- Dr. Keith Boykin spoke on Love of Self, acknowledging that our bodies are a shell and it does not belong to us, it is rented. Preventive care is important and moderation is the key to loving yourself and your bodies.
- Rev. Cozy Bailey spoke on Love of Others, reminding us that we should speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves. He taught us the difference between equality and equity and how important it is to give people what they need, while exhibiting love, mercy and compassion. Christ is a beacon on justice demonstrating God's love.

We honored Black History month with a beautiful poem written by Angela Williams "Faith in Our History":

*"From chains and cries, our faith was born,
In darkest nights, God's hope was sworn.
Through whispered prayers and freedom songs,
We learned to trust where we belong.
The church stood firm, a sacred space,
Held by God's unending grace.
Because they prayed, because they stood,
We walk today—God still is good.
This Black History we proclaim:
More than pain, it tells His name"
The same great God who made us free,
Still writes our story—faithfully. Amen."*

Hallelujah! What a mighty time of fellowship we shared. Brother James Gaskins and I pray that everyone was truly blessed beyond their dreams. We extend our sincere gratitude to all who participated, those who shared the Word, prayed, read scripture, sang songs of praise, and played musical instruments. We also give heartfelt thanks to our Technical Support Team, Grain of Heaven, and Facilities. This fellowship was a success because of your servant hearts.

A heartfelt expression of gratitude to our Pastor, Rev. Dr. Sandra K. James for her steadfast leadership and continual support. We are also deeply thankful to Rev. Dr. Tracey Dawkins Holley, Minister of Christian Education and everyone who joined us, whether in person at FMZ or virtually. Your presence, worship, prayers, and spirit of unity helped make this fellowship a truly memorable and blessed experience. We give God praise for each of you!

Remember to always stay true to the "**Love of God, Love of Self, & Love of Others (Rooted in Wholeness, Worth, and Worship)!"**

From our hearts to yours, we pray that you carry the love of God with you, honor the love He has placed within you, and share the love of Christ freely with others.

Humbly submitted,

Gwen L. Holland

Women's Ministry Director



James Gaskins

Men's Ministry Director





First Mount Zion Baptist Church
BLACK HISTORY



365 DAYS A YEAR

**CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY
MONTH AT FIRST MOUNT ZION**

First Mount Zion Baptist Church observed Black History Month with reflection, worship, and renewed commitment to faith, heritage, and community impact.

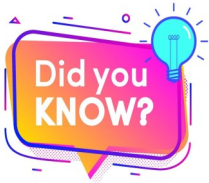
Throughout the month, our congregation honored the legacy of those whose faith, perseverance, and sacrifice shaped both the Church and the nation. Through worship, teaching moments, and congregational engagement, we were reminded that Black history is living history — a testimony of God's sustaining power across generations.

Our Social Media Engagement Team led by Sister Olivia James and members of the CORE provided some fun and interesting engagements in the narthex and from Pastor James throughout the month. The 40 Black History posters of people and events highlighted our history as well. These posters were designed by Brother Christopher Kennedy, who posted the posters throughout the building. We hope that these inspire and spur your interest to learn more and share with your family, friends, and neighbors.

At FMZ, however, our commitment does not end in February. We embrace **Black History 365**, recognizing and celebrating our history all year long. Each edition of *The Messenger* includes articles and ministry highlights that reflect the richness of Black history throughout the year, not just during one month. Our Social Media Engagement Team will continue to create reels of the interactions inside our walls and in the community.

Members are also encouraged to explore our own story. To learn more about the history of First Mount Zion, visit the Archives located on the first floor, where our legacy is preserved for future generations.

Black History Month at FMZ was more than a commemoration — it was a reaffirmation that our history is sacred, our testimony is powerful, and our future is strengthened when we intentionally preserve and share our story.



**HISTORY OF FIRST MOUNT
ZION SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS**

JOHN E. TABOURN



The namesake for the second adult Sunday School Class established at First Mount Zion Baptist Church was the late Dea. John E. Tabourn. Dea. Tabourn was a well-known and respected member of the Church. A brief capsule of his life includes: 1) serving 28 years as a Dea.; 2) working approximately 12 years as Superintendent of the Sunday School; 3) serving as past Deacon Board Chairman; 4) serving as Deacon Aide to the Pastor; 5) managing

and publishing the weekly church bulletins, notices, and New Members' Handbook; 6) maintaining the Church's hymnal bulletin board.

Although very quiet and unassuming, Dea. Tabourn was a strong leader. His presence and demeanor commanded things be done in decency and order. His involvement within the community was just as prominent. For example, he distinguished himself as Treasurer of the Dumfries Magisterial Civic Association, served many years as a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, secretary of Triangle Masonic Lodge No. 293, as well as a member of the United Supreme Council 33. On Wednesday, 14 August 1991, Dea. John E. Tabourn died at age 72 after a brief illness. After reflecting on his faithfulness and distinguished record of service, the Church concluded that his total dedication to First Mount Zion's Sunday School and community warranted a Sunday School class being named in his honor. Therefore, in 1991, the Oscar Jackson class was divided to accommodate the creation of the John E. Tabourn adult class.

His daughter, Sister Joan Tabourn Hughes, has just reinstated her membership here at First Mount Zion, and we thank God for the legacy which her father left and the impact he made in this Ministry.

First Mount Zion Baptist Church

BLACK HISTORY

LIVE IT

LEARN IT

MAKE IT

365 DAYS A YEAR



Benita Fitzgerald Mosley

Olympic Champion,
Executive Leader

Jul 6, 1961 - Present

- Attended University of Tennessee
- First African American woman to win gold in the 100-meter hurdles (1984)
- Chief Executive Officer of the U. S. Center for SafeSport advancing it's mission of safety and support of all Olympic and Paralympic athletes, and fostering trust and respect within the organizations and the public
- Named one of Sports Illustrated's Top 100 Women in Sports
- Honored for her work in youth sports and Olympic leadership
- A street named in her honor, "Benita Fitzgerald Drive," Dale City, VA
- Fannie Fitzgerald Elementary, named for her Mother, is located on "Benita Fitzgerald Drive"



Fannie W. Fitzgerald

Educator, Trailblazer,
Advocate for Equal Education,
& Community Leader

Jul 27, 1930 - Apr 7, 2016

- Attended Virginia Union University and Columbia University
- Lifelong advocate for dignity, equality, and opportunity for every child
- One of "The Courageous Four" teachers who integrated Prince William County's all-while schools; and the first Elementary Supervisor
- Teacher and learning-disabilities specialist who continued serving children and families through volunteer work after retirement
- Fannie W. Fitzgerald Elementary School named in her honor
- The School, located on Benita Fitzgerald Drive, named for her daughter, Olympic Gold Medalist Benita Fitzgerald Mosley
- Celebrated for her historic role in school integration and educational excellence



APPLY ONLINE NOW



FMZ and Bell Scholarships

<https://firstmountzionbc.org>
Resources Tab
Scholarships - New



Deadline:

April 1, 2026, 4:30 PM

Questions: Email AEM@firstmountzionbc.org
Bro. Gerry Griffin, AEM Chair
Sis. Sandra Grimes, Scholarship Committee Chair

Welcome

New Members



Join us for a special time of fellowship and celebration entitled "Fearless Women, Faithful Legacy". This gathering honors the remarkable women whose courage, resilience, and unwavering faith continue to shape our church and inspire generations.

When: March 18, 2026
Where: The GYM
Time: Noon - 2:00pm

REGISTER AT SENIORSMINISTRY@FIRSTMOUNTZIONBC.ORG BY NOON, MARCH 10, 2026 OR CALL SIS. MARIA FITZGERALD AT 540.538.0702.



Historians note that one of the major mocambos (villages) within the federation was associated with her name, and that she was a matriarchal force in the consolidation of what was effectively a Black republic in colonial Brazil.

Mother and Ancestor of Resistance Icons

Aqualtune's legacy extends through her children. She gave birth to at least three children: Ganga Zumba, Ganga Zona, and Sabina, the latter of whom became the mother of Zumbi dos Palmares — arguably the most iconic leader of Palmares whose bravery against Portuguese imperial forces has been enshrined in Brazilian collective memory. Ganga Zumba would later assume leadership of the quilombo's central settlement, while Zumbi became one of the most celebrated symbols of resistance against slavery in the Americas.

The Legacy of Palmares: Freedom Against the Odds

Quilombo dos Palmares — also known as **Angola Janga** — was more than a refuge: it was a political and military entity. At its peak, its settlements housed perhaps tens of thousands of Africans, Native Americans and escaped slaves, and it successfully withstood repeated Portuguese military incursions for nearly a century.

Aqualtune's role in this story reminds us that resistance to slavery was not only about escape — it was also about building resilient, self-determined communities. Even though primary documentary evidence about Aqualtune's life remains limited and partly rooted in oral tradition, her presence in the lore of Palmares and in the genealogies of its leaders underscores her enduring importance in Afro-Brazilian history

Remembering Her Today

While figures like Zumbi are widely recognized in Brazil — with national holidays commemorating his legacy — Aqualtune's story has only recently received broader scholarly and cultural attention. Today, researchers, cultural institutions and activists highlight her as an example of African female leadership, military strategy and unwavering resilience in the face of both colonial conquest and the horrors of the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it!"

"By learning from history, we break destructive cycles and pave the way for a brighter, more informed future. Remembering the past is not just an academic exercise—it is a vital tool for shaping a better tomorrow."

-- George Santayana

REMEMBERING PRINCESS AQUALTUNE: THE AFRICAN ROYALTY SOLD INTO SLAVERY BUT ROSE TO BUILD A NATION



As we continue to commemorate Black History, it's important to recall not only the widely known figures of resistance but also those whose stories have been less celebrated yet deeply foundational. Before Harriet Tubman ever freed a soul... before Nat Turner led his revolt... there was Queen Aqualtune — a Kongo princess, a general, and a warrior, strategist and symbol of resilience in the face of conquest and enslavement.

From the Kingdom of Kongo to Colonial Brazil

According to historical traditions and oral history, Aqualtune was born a princess of the Kingdom of Kongo in the 17th century, the daughter of an unnamed Manikongo (king). She is said to have led an army of about 10,000 men and women in the Battle of Mbwila against Portuguese forces in 1665 — a fierce defense of her homeland during the height of European colonial expansion in Central Africa.

When the Kongo forces were defeated, Aqualtune was captured by Portuguese troops. Enslaved alongside many others from her community, she was transported across the Atlantic to Recife in colonial Brazil — a primary hub in the trans-Atlantic slave trade. There, she was sold into brutal conditions, reportedly as a slave breeder, a designation intended by slaveholders to extract reproductive labor from captives.

Escape and Leadership in Palmares

Despite the dehumanization of slavery, Aqualtune's leadership and strategic acumen endured. Pregnant and enslaved in the sugar-producing region near Porto Calvo, she heard stories of Quilombo dos Palmares, a sprawling community of runaways resisting colonial domination and slavery. According to tradition, she organized an escape with a group of captives and fled to Palmares, where her noble lineage and experience quickly elevated her to a position of authority. In Palmares, Aqualtune became a central figure in the political and military structures of the quilombo — a self-governing community organized around principles of freedom and collective defense.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Fasting
AND
Prayer

Fasting as a congregation will be every Wednesday
6:00am – 6:00pm
March 1 – April 1

2026 Fasting Guide can be accessed on our website

Dial in to join us for morning prayer
every Wednesday at 6:30am:
Call: 1-305-224-1968
Meeting ID: 88104299549
Password: 752600

DOWNLOAD THE “MY CHURCH” APP AND HAVE FMZ AT YOUR FINGERTIPS!



Stay connected to everything happening at First Mount Zion Baptist Church—right from your phone.

How to Download:

1. Go to your phone’s App Store (Apple or Google Play).
2. Search for “My Church App.”
3. Download the app.
4. Search for First Mount Zion Baptist Church.
5. Select it — and you’re in!

From announcements and events to giving and ministry updates,
FMZ information is now just a tap away!

NEW MEMBERS ORIENTATION CLASS

New Members' Classes are either on ZOOM or Hybrid (Room 211)

NMOC Class Schedule

March 1 - Stewardship — Trustee Oscar Dailey
March 8 - Zone Ministry — Zone Administrators

Deborah Holley is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting

Topic: NMOC Classes

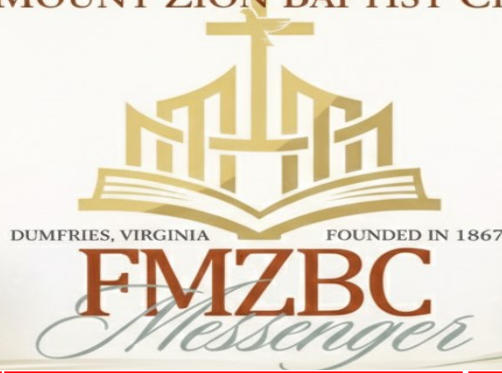
Time: Every Sunday, until March 8, 2026

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89080954183?pwd=8jxe4F5azyl4EcYpyNbYg9TC5XaaSA.1>

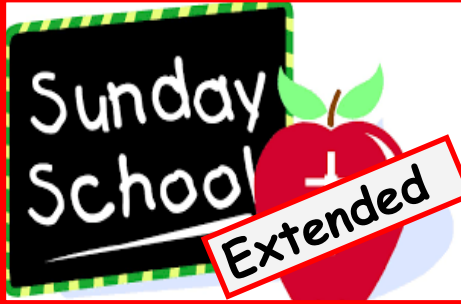
Meeting ID: 890 8095 4183 | Passcode: 386906

FIRST MOUNT ZION BAPTIST CHURCH



March 1, 2026

Volume 22, Issue 3



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

SERVICE SCHEDULE

Worship Service – 11:00 AM 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>



SHARE distribution:
March 21, 2026

POC: Thomas Bates
703-772-8837

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.

We look forward to your participation!! Thank you!

Email for our group is:

CPM1@firstmountzionbc.org

Communications and Publicity Ministry

Deacon Joseph Boutte, Chair
Sister Oonagh Bell, Messenger
Brother Benson Blake, Photography
Trustee Alfranda Durr, Trustee Oversight
Dr. Sandra Flowers
Brother Jonathan James, Social Media
Sister Olivia James, Social Media
Brother Chris Kennedy, Social Media
Deaconess Mary Lively
Brother Lavell Lucas
Sister Sylvia Moore
Reverend Kathy Russell
Deaconess Claudia Woolfolk

PASTOR, STAFF, AND LEADERSHIP

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

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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>



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