

THE INSPIRATION

Mount Pleasant Baptist Church

A Mount Pleasant Baptist Church Publication

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Advent

The Season of Hope and Expectation



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MPBC Weekly Learning Opportunities



Noon Day Prayer
Via Free Conference Call
Dial Number

(712) 832-7000

Access Code 7928416#

*Please make sure your phone is on
mute. There is no need to announce
yourself.*

Sunday Morning Word Fuel
(2 classes, in-Person and
Zoom

Time Change 8:30 AM

Monday Night Bible Study via
Zoom 7:00 PM

Tuesday Seniors Prayer & Con-
versation 10:30 AM
Resumes in January

Wednesday Night
Word Fuel
Resumes in January

*** Check Realm for Zoom
Information**

Upcoming Events

Relaunch of MPBC Dancers of Faith
Bridge Christmas Performance
Usher's Day



Rev, Dr. Kevin Donalson, Sr.

From The Pastor's Desk

I can't believe we are bringing another year to a close. It seems like just yesterday that we were bringing in 2025. The words "time is filled with swift transition" are real.

As we bring this year to a close my question is what have you done in 2025 that has been a blessing to the Kingdom?

Have you helped someone?

Have you served God faithfully?

Have you grown spiritually?

Have you participated in outreach?

Have you brought someone to Christ?

These are the reflections that are important as we prepare to go into another year. 2 Corinthians 13:5 says, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"

Paul is urging believers to self-reflect on their spiritual condition, authenticity, and genuine indwelling of Christ, rather than relying on others' approval or mere outward appearance. It doesn't matter what title you hold. It doesn't matter how you think about yourself. It doesn't even matter what other people say about you. What does God think? Can God look at your works in 2025 and say "Job well done"?

Whatever the answer is, 2026 is another opportunity to make it right or make it better. I don't know about you but I am excited that God has given me another chance.

Call To Prayer

Feeling a deep sense of need, on September 17, 2025, a special “Call to Prayer” service was held at Mt. Pleasant. The session included prayers for: the Healing of our Nation, Unity in our Nation, the World, Justice, Our Young People, Immigrants, Protection from Violence, Government Workers and Jobs, Families, the Least of These, the Sick, Our Government Leaders, Wisdom, Hope, the Global Church, and Mt Pleasant Baptist Church.

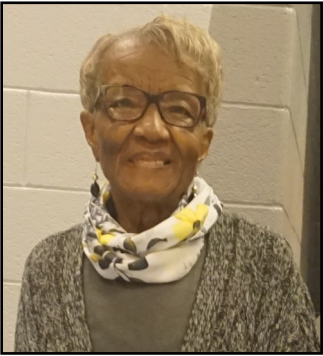
With musical interludes by our Director of Music and Arts, Brother Rafeal Ross, the prayers were offered by Deacon Ross Simms, Deacon George DeShields, Sister Deneen Davis, Deacon Tony Aghayere, Sister Christian Jones, Deaconess Cherise Simms, Brother Samuel Synder, Rev Walter Johnson, Deacon Keith Million, Deaconess Mona Benbow, Rev. Lisa Howard, Rev. Denise Synder, Deaconess Allison Bowden, Rev. Felicia Croom, Minister Nicole Ellis, Deaconess NaTosha Clemons, Deacon Antonio Clemons, with final prayer and Thank You to God by our Senior Pastor Rev. Dr. Kevin E. Donalson, Sr.

“It is written,” he said to them, “My house will be called a house of prayer”. Matthew 21:13a NIV. “If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.” 2 Chronicles 7:14 NIV.



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Member Spotlight



When speaking of Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church lineage, a few names come to mind, one of whom is **Vernell Elaine White Ellis**. Mother Ellis was born and raised in Fairfax County, living in this area all her life. The only child of Margaret and Harvey White, she began attending Mt. Pleasant as a child and was baptized in Horse Pen Creek when she was in her teens. "There was no baptismal pool at the white wooden church, so you came to church in whatever clothing you were to be baptized in, went down the road to the creek for baptism then changed to dry clothes and attended service. There was no separate room inside the church to use to change clothes. Some people lived close enough to be able to go home and put on dry clothes."

She attended Floris Elementary School, which was located on what is near property now owned by Mt. Pleasant, going on to Manassas Industrial High School for Colored Youth. After graduating, she worked at SAI (now SAIC) for 21 years, while being a wife and raising her four children. She retired fully in 1994 but continued to work at various jobs and take classes such as typing and cake decorating.

Rev. Hill was pastor when she became a member of Mt. Pleasant. She went to church every Sunday (which was on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month). There were no designated ministries and no organized choir. Those who wanted to sing that Sunday merely showed up – no real rehearsal. "Things really started with Rev. Winters. He organized different groups." Over the years, Mother Ellis has seen a multitude of changes with respect to the physical structures of Mt. Pleasant, from the original wooden structure to the purchase of additional land across the street and building of a Fellowship Hall with a cooking facility, to the tearing down of that structure to build the red brick church with a Baptismal Pool, and to the move into our current facility. She has always been very active, singing in the Senior Choir and the Women of Praise, chairperson of the food committee, prepared the church bulletin, member of the Seniors Ministry and worked in many other capacities over the years.

Mother Ellis has a long lineage at Mt. Pleasant. Deacon Emeritus Phillip Bush was her uncle and Deacon Emeritus Louis White is her cousin.

Mother Ellis enjoys crafting, crochet, puzzles, and painting, among other things. When asked what personal accomplishment she is most proud of she stated that she "enjoys getting around and being with people."

She has many favorite scriptures. The first to come to mind was Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me". NKJV

We welcome Vohn Higginbotham as our new Musical Director. Glad to have you!



Branch of Love is back.



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159th Church Anniversary

The 159th celebration of the founding of Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church began with a One Night Revival on September 24th. Our preacher for the evening was Rev. Keith Norman, Senior Pastor of First Baptist Church Broad in Memphis, TN. His subject was "Keep This On Your Mind." Scripture focus 2 Timothy 1:1-7, 2:8 NIV.

On Friday the church was decorated to resemble a movie theater and the movie "Ruth and Boaz" was shown. Everyone enjoyed the movie and the atmosphere.

On Anniversary Sunday, (September 28) the service began with a parade of ministries to familiarize everyone with the various ministries of the church and their respective leaders. Pastor Donalson presented seven members of Mt. Pleasant with the first ever Super Servant Award. (See awardees on next page).

The sermon for the morning was delivered by Rev. Dr. Robert E. Young, Senior Pastor of Wayland Baptist Church in Baltimore, MD. He preached from the subject "Let's Stay Together", with scripture focus Ephesians 4:4-6.



Rev. Dr. Robert E. Young



Rev. Keith Norman



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159th Church Anniversary (continued)



Recipients of 2025 Super Servant Award
Christian Jones, Beverly Walker, Carl DeShazior, Cherise Simms,
Tania Russell, Lulu Jackson, and Mona Benbow (not pictured)

The Dancers of Faith perform during praise & worship on Anniversary Sunday



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Health Explosion October 11th and 12th

If you missed it, you missed it – our 2-day Health Explosion. Day 1 activities were on the church grounds with indoor and outdoor activities, which included a rock-climbing wall, step team performances, aerobic exercise, dance lessons, grief counseling and just hanging out under the tent. Sister Lulu Jackson was the first to climb all the way to the top of the rock-climbing wall!

Day 2 began with morning worship service held at Herndon Middle School. The musical instruments, electronics and media equipment were transported and set up there for service. Pastor Donalson preached from the subject “How to Have a Healthy Mind”, with scripture focus Philippians 2:5.

Following the worship service, the congregation followed Pastor Donalson as he led everyone through the halls to the school cafeteria. There tables were set up for wellness checks, information about healthcare offerings in our area, as well as a section for speakers/discussion on various subjects. Fairfax county Police provided photo ID cards for children.

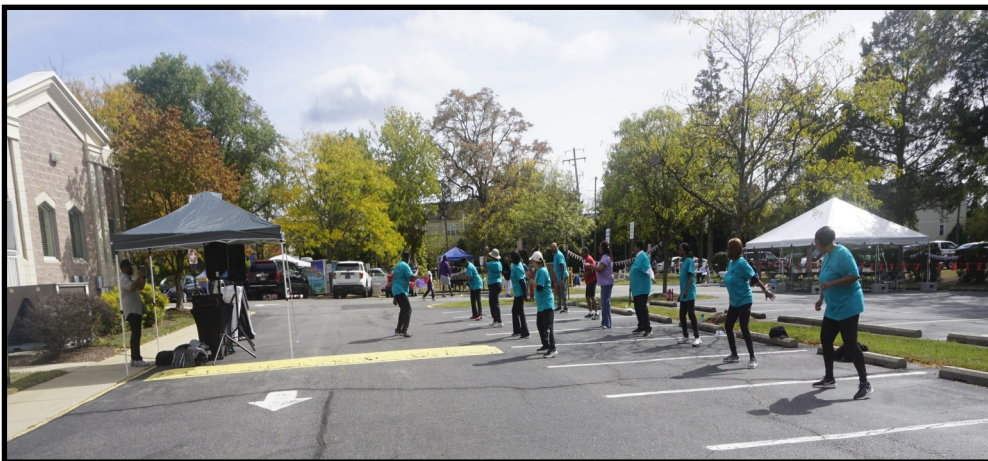
Thank you to every one and every ministry that played a part in making these two days a great experience.



IGN
In God's
Name
Step Team



Sister Lulu Jackson, first person to climb to the top



Exercise With Dea. Joe Pleasants and MPBC Fitness

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Health Explosion (continued) Day 2



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A Heartfelt Thanksgiving Outreach to Our Community

Hello Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church family, friends, and everyone reading this newsletter! We are delighted to share the wonderful success of our special Thanksgiving Outreach held on Tuesday, November 25th. This year, instead of our traditional pre-Thanksgiving service, we felt called to serve our community in a new and meaningful way.

A New Approach to Thanksgiving Ministry

Typically, November brings us together for a time of praise and worship. But with the challenges facing many in our community—ranging from the federal government shutdown to SNAP program impacts and broader economic hardships—we opened our church doors to offer something different: a warm Thanksgiving meal and an atmosphere of love, dignity, and fellowship.

Serving Our Neighbors With Joy

We welcomed about **40 guests**, including individuals from shelters, other churches, friends, family, and anyone in need. We were equally blessed with **40 dedicated volunteers**, creating a beautiful 1-to-1 ratio of service and support. The joy in the room was unmistakable—smiles, laughter, conversation, and the comfort of a shared meal filled the space.

From transportation provided by our church vans to the hands that prepared and served the food, every contribution helped make this outreach a true reflection of Christ's love in action.

A Strong Start to Our 2026 Community Focus

This successful event marks the beginning of our **focused outreach efforts for 2026**. We believe this is only the start of what God is calling us to do in the coming year.

We warmly invite you to participate the next time we host an opportunity like this. As Scripture reminds us, we are called to care for our brothers and sisters—especially those experiencing difficult times. Together, we can continue to be a beacon of hope and compassion in our community.

A Special Thank You

To every volunteer, every guest, and every person who supported this event through service, prayer, or presence—**thank you**. Your generosity made a real difference, and we look forward to serving alongside you again.

May God bless you richly, and may we continue to follow His lead as we love and serve our neighbors.



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Thanksgiving Outreach (continued)



For others in need, boxes of food to be prepared was picked up and distributed on Sunday, November 23rd.



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Men's Weekend

The FY25 Men's Weekend, Courageous Faith for Everyday Life, was a memorable gathering filled with abundant food, joyful fellowship, and meaningful connection. The weekend began on Thursday evening with a special Gumbo dinner, thoughtfully prepared by our own First Lady, Kimberly Donaldson, which set a warm and welcoming atmosphere prior to choir rehearsal.

On Friday night, the men came together for the annual bowling fellowship and friendly competition. This year, Michael Jones earned the distinction of Best Bowler for the 2025 Men's Weekend, securing both bragging rights and hearty congratulations from the brothers.

The celebration culminated on Sunday as the men filled the choir stand with heartfelt worship and praise to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The congregation was richly blessed by Pastor Oscar T. Moses, who delivered a powerful and encouraging message from Joshua 1:9 titled "Declaration from the Dugout: You Are Up." His word reminded every man present to rise with courage, strength, and faith.

We extend our sincere gratitude to all volunteers, Ministers, Directors, and the devoted MPBC staff whose labor of love made this Men's Weekend a success. May God continue to bless you abundantly for your service and commitment.



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S.E.E. Fundraisers

Each year, our Socio-Economic Ministry participates in athletic fundraisers for two important programs - Light the Night and Trot for Hunger. Light the Night, held at the Reston Town Center, is a one mile walk to raise funds for a cure for blood cancer. Trot for Hunger is a run sponsored by SOME (So Others Might Eat) held on Thanksgiving Day at Freedom Plaza in Washington, D.C. While the Mt. Pleasant Team exceeded our financial goal for Light the Night we were unable to meet our goal set for Trot for Hunger. It's not too late to contribute. See Sister Lulu Jackson if you would like to make a financial donation.



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Seasoned Saints Weekend



The MPBC Seniors Ministry celebrated a wonderful *Seasoned Saints Weekend* October 25-26, 2025. Our weekend celebration began Saturday with our Annual Fall Prayer Brunch which we've hosted for 20+ years.

The Seniors Ministry has consistently been an active, vibrant and impactful ministry here at Mount Pleasant for 29+ years. The progressive history of *The Journey of the Senior's Ministry from Vision to Legacy* was presented.

We honored **Rev. Helen Best**, the **Founder of our Seniors Ministry** and **Deacon Lester Best** who has supported Rev. Best, the Seniors Ministry, and Mount Pleasant Baptist Church for over 40+years. We are truly grateful for this loving couple who truly cares about God's people.

Seniors Ministry History – A Journey from Vision to Legacy

Sharing the history of the Seniors Ministry was a part of the overall Seasoned Saints Weekend. Our theme for the weekend, **"We're All In"** implies giving up one's own will and desires to align with the WILL of our ALMIGHTY GOD, (Matthew 16:24), from conception to birth to passing the torch to future generations. We want to keep our love for GOD and deep and loving respect for our elder seasoned saints in the forefront. We want to keep them engaged, connected, and contributing members of our church family.



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Seasoned Saints Weekend (Continued)



THE VISION

Early on, God gave Mother Helen Best a VISION which awakened in her the realization of her purpose. We all know how much she deeply loves and cares for her own family. GOD revealed that she also had a strong passion and deep desires in her heart to care for others, to care for the elders in such a way that builds them up, helps them to continue to see their own God-given purpose and potential even in their latter seasons and to reassure them they are valued. And she also used her gifts to teach and disciple others whom God puts in her path to do likewise.

Mid 1980s

In the mid 1980's Deaconess Helen Best would pick up some of the elderly ladies from time to time and take them to breakfast, to the mountains, to the shopping mall, to movie theater outings, mall walking, or sometimes just to the park to keep them from being idle with nothing to do. Some of the ladies during that time were: Mother Josiephine Corum, Mother Margaret White, Mother Frances Wilkerson, Sister Dorothy Bush, Mother Mable Newman, and Sister Lucy Coates.

Mid 1990s

The continuous and ongoing activities with the seniors was not only noticed but formally established as the **Senior Citizen's Ministry** at Mount Pleasant Baptist Church in 1996 under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the Pastoral Leadership of Rev Dr James L. Graham, Jr. This was some 10+ years later. Thank you Pastor Emeritus Graham for then having the wisdom to look amongst you and see who was already doing the work and for appointing Rev. Helen Best to lead the effort.

Some of the gatherings also turned into Bible Study sessions when one of our early teachers, Mother Theopolis Braxton insisted that Seniors should really study the Bible to show themselves approved unto God and to have something good to pass on to the next generation. It grew from a bible study where they went from house to house on the third Tuesday of each month with prayer, bible study and testimonies (partaking of some delicious food and fellowshiping together). It then moved to the senior's activity center and later moved into the church building, going from a once a month session to weekly bible study sessions.



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Seasoned Saints Weekend (Continued)

2000s

In 2001 Rev. Best was led to appoint seven young ladies to assist in preparing for Senior Citizen's Day. She called them "**Precious Jewels**" based on the book of Revelations. They have faithfully continued throughout the years to support and serve this ministry.

Thank God for people like Deacon Scott Keith who had a desire to see more seniors in church, so he and Rev. Best came up with a plan to go to Cameron Glen Nursing Home and pick up seniors and bring them to church. This led to the establishment of the Bus Ministry, with Rev. Leon Todd and Deacon Scott Keith driving on Sundays to pick up the nursing home residents and bring them to church.

There were others who were not mobile and could not leave the Nursing Home, so another plan was developed to take the church to them. Cameron Glen Ministry began out of this effort. A team of Ministers and Diaconate later joined the Seniors in this effort, conducting Service on the third Sunday of each month at 2:00 PM.

Our Senior's Activity Center was dedicated on Saturday, October 29, 2005. Every Saturday morning the terrific trio Rev. Helen Best, Deaconess Judy Jackson and Rev. Mary Alice Glenn began meeting to pray. This started to catch fire and Early Morning Prayer began at the church from 6am-8am. People would stop by on their way to work.

In 2006 Brother Ezekiel Pinkney was brought on to assist Rev. Best with the Senior's Ministry. He worked tirelessly with Rev. Best in whatever capacity was needed. Later after running her leg of the race when the Lord told her it was time to step down, Rev. Best passed the torch to Rev. Ezekiel Pinkney and he became the Director of the Seniors Ministry, with Rev. Best and Deacon Best transitioning to an advisory role and others coming alongside to help support the continued mission.

When Rev. Pinkney was tapped to move to a different assignment, the torch was passed on to Rev. Shirley Alexander. In 2017 she began to lead the Seniors Ministry. As a Precious Jewel herself she'd been sitting at the feet of Mother Best since 2001 gleaning every nugget she could, and assisting with the Seniors Ministry. Rev. Shirley did not realize that God was grooming her for such a time as this. Not only through assisting Mother Best but also through over 30 years of faithful and diligent service to MPBC. She's served in various ministries and capacities, including Hospitality Ministry, Beautification Ministry, Church Staff Administration, and Associate Minister. She was instrumental in establishing the Living Legacy program to ensure we recognize those individuals who have served selflessly for MPBC for 40+ years and some for lifetimes. She and her husband Raymond Alexander, Jr. helped design the Cross in the sanctuary over the baptismal pool. The Seasoned Saints are blessed recipients of her gifts and talents as she faithfully pours into this Ministry.

And the Ministry continues....After the COVID Shutdown was over and we were trying to return to a NEW NORMAL, Pastor Donalson asked the ministries conducting Bible Studies to return to the church. The Seniors Ministry was the first ones back to in-person Bible Study and have been continuing to meet weekly on Tuesday mornings.

Rev. Helen Best, because of your loving heart and faithfulness the LORD has blessed this ministry with continuity, disciplined transitioned leadership, ministry support and active, engaged and caring members. Mother Best, this is your legacy – you've set the standard high. Rev. Best and Deacon Best we honor you both. Deacon Best will say it's not him, but Mother. Yes Deacon Best GOD gave the Vision to Mother Best, but you have always been there throughout, always encouraging, always being supportive, always serving and advising. You've been **100% ALL IN**, every step of the way. The Vision was fulfilled, the Legacy is passing on, and thanks be unto our faithful GOD and HIS planting diligent people who catch the vision and run with it, **the Ministry continues**. Bless You Rev. Helen Best and Deacon Emeritus Lester Best for all you have done to serve our Seniors Ministry, the Mount Pleasant Baptist Church and the Kingdom of GOD!

Seasoned Saints Weekend (Continued)

Annual Fall Prayer Brunch



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International Missions Trip

During the month of November Pastor Donalson, along with Rev. Denise Synder and Capt. Sam Snyder, travelled to Kenya and Uganda where MPBC has built a school, several churches, and multiple water wells. This was our first trip back there since COVID. Before leaving, prayer for safe passage was given by Rev. Cal Spratley. Here are a few photos from this missions trip. Additional photos are on the MPBC Facebook page. Note: The gifting of a goat or chicken have significant cultural, social and economic meanings - often symbolizing respect, reconciliation and friendship.



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International Missions (continued)



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Get Your Article In The Next Newsletter. Deadline for the January-February issue is January 15th

The Inspiration Newsletter

The Inspiration newsletter is a bi-monthly publication for Mount Pleasant Baptist Church (MPBC) family, friends and the community. The goal for this publication is to provide our readers with timely and relevant information about what MPBC is doing to spread God's word.

Articles and questions may be submitted to Shellia McKan. Deadline to submit articles for the next issue is **January 15, 2026**.

We pray and hope that everyone will find the information in this issue informative and inspiring.
- God Bless.

Guidelines for submitting articles are:

1. All articles must be approved by your Ministry Director before submission.
2. Each article must be in a separate MS Word document in Arial font, 12 point.
3. Each article must contain a working title at the beginning of the document. The article itself should be **no more than 400 words**.
4. Articles should be written with correct spelling and grammar.
5. Articles should answer the following: Who, What, When, Where, and Why.
6. Be sure to include your contact information.
7. **Do not** embed photos, graphics or charts in the Word document. **Send each photo, graphic or chart as a separate attachment. Photos should be full size (do not reduce) in jpg or png format.** Contact Shellia McKan regarding photos being sent by cell phone.



Connect with us!

