

Messenger



SPRING 2026

“Stepping Forward in Faith”

VOL. 40 NO. 1

Theme: “Stepping Forward in Faith”

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

(Joshua 1:9) (NKJV)

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FROM THE PASTOR’S DESK . . .

by Rev. Dr. Vonda Batts,
Executive Minister (MPBC)



(Joshua 1:9) (NKJV)

Our theme, “Stepping Forward in Faith,” reminds us that God often calls His people to move before we see the full picture. In Joshua 1:9 (NKJV), the Lord declares: “*Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.*” These words are both a promise and a charge. As a church family, we are reminded that stepping forward requires courage, obedience, and trust in the One who walks with us every step of the way.

As we began the year, our congregation paused to honor the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. During our celebration on January 18, we were blessed by a powerful testimonial video from Sister Eloise Clarke, who shared what Dr. King’s witness and leadership have meant to her and the profound impact his life has had on her journey of faith. The celebration also included a moving tribute video that reminded us that the struggle for justice, dignity, and love continues—and that people of faith must always be willing to step forward with courage.

In February, we moved boldly into Black History Month, aligning our observance with our annual theme. Under Pastor Johnson’s leadership, we embarked on a powerful month-long journey that honored our heritage while preparing us for the future God is calling us to build. Each Sunday featured a testimonial video highlighting a “living legend” within our congregation—faithful servants whose lives bear witness to God’s sustaining grace. We were inspired by the stories of Trustee Norman Johnson, Sister Aaronita Brown, Trustee Tyrone Bradley, and Trustee Ian Tomlinson, each sharing how God has carried them through seasons of challenge, growth, and victory.

Throughout the month, we explored four areas of growth—each representing a step forward rooted in faith, resilience, and the legacy of those who came before us:

- Week of February 1 — Faith: Stepping Forward Spiritually
- Week of February 8 — Finance: Stepping Forward Economically

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK . . . (Continued)

- Week of February 15 — Food: Stepping Forward in Fellowship
- Week of February 22 — Mental Fitness: Stepping Forward in Wholeness

This month was more than a reflection on the past—it was a movement toward the future. It was more than a celebration—it was a call to action for each of us to walk boldly in the purpose God has set before us.

Our spiritual journey continued as the church entered a sacred season of 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting, beginning on Ash Wednesday and concluding on March 10. Each morning at 6:30 a.m., members gathered for a brief but powerful time of prayer led by the ministers of Mount Pleasant Baptist Church. God moved in undeniable ways during this consecrated time. Hearts were encouraged, faith was strengthened, and our sense of unity as a church family deepened. With an average of 38 participants—and as many as 48 on some mornings—it was clear that there is a spiritual hunger among God's people to seek His presence and guidance.

We also celebrate that Pastor Johnson and the Know the Truth Ministries recently embarked on a mission journey to South Africa, continuing the work of sharing the Gospel and building connections beyond our local community. We pray for God's continued blessing and impact upon this important ministry.

Now, as we move forward into the Easter season, Pastor Johnson is preparing a powerful series of messages under the theme "The Road to Calvary." On March 15, we heard "The Table That Transformed Everything" from Luke 22:14–20, followed on March 22 by "The Cross That Changed Everything" from John 19:16–30. On Palm Sunday, March 29, we will celebrate Missionary Day, with the message brought by Rev. Joyce Howard.

Finally, we invite our entire church family to gather in great expectation on Easter Sunday, April 5, as we celebrate the risen Savior. Let us come ready to worship with joy, to rejoice in the victory of the Resurrection, and to be renewed in the hope that because Christ lives, we too can step forward in faith, courage, and purpose.

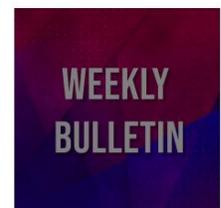
Mount Pleasant, the Lord continues to lead us forward. May we remain strong and courageous, trusting that wherever God calls us to go, He is already there.

MPBC Connect

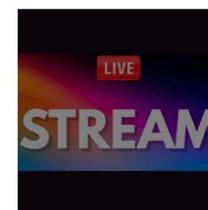
Visit our website at www.mtpleasantbc.org to stay connected.



Give Online



Bulletin



Live Stream



The Heart's Cry Podcast

Inspirations



Tomorrow's Way

Contributed By Sister Anita Johnson (MPBC)

I know not if tomorrow's way
Be steep or rough;
But when His hand is guiding me,
That is enough.
And so, although the veil has hid
Tomorrow's way,
I walk with perfect faith and trust,
Through each today.

The love of God has hung a veil
Around tomorrow.
That we may not its beauty see
Nor trouble borrow.
But, oh, 'tis sweeter far, to trust
His unseen hand,
And know that all the paths of life,
His wisdom planned.

~Author Unknown

Faith

Contributed By Sister Anita Johnson (MPBC)

Faith looks across the storm –
It does not doubt
Or stop to look at clouds
And things without.

Faith does not question why
When all His ways
Are hard to understand,
But trusts and prays.

It seeks the greatest gift
And asks not sight;
It does not need to see –
He is its light.

Above the tempest's roar
It hears His voice;
And, with its hands in His,
Faith can rejoice.

It fears no cloud, or wind
That it can bring;
Faith looks across the storm
And still can sing.

~Author Unknown



Theme: "Ministry on the Move" (Philippians 3:14) →

Dear Ministry Member and Fellow Christian,

Greetings to all!

We pray that all is well. Please know we are here for you. We ask for your continued prayers and thank you for your continued support. We need you! If your address and/or other pertinent information has changed, please send Sister Anita Johnson, MPBC Church Clerk, an email to clerk@mtpleasantbc.org.

A virtual meeting will be scheduled to discuss the calendar of events for our CCM for 2026. Activities suggestions are welcomed. Also, a MPBC Pictorial Directory will be published in 2026. Look for future church announcements to schedule your photo session. If you **do not** want your picture, name, address or phone number printed in the directory, please let us know.

We want to extend a welcome to our new ministry members and greetings to ministry members who have celebrated and/or are celebrating a birthday, wedding anniversary, retirement or any other celebratory event in March, April and May.

God bless you, continue to keep safe.

Deacon Karl Henderson, Deaconess Karin Henderson, Deacon James Cook and Deaconess Marlene Fields; Ministerial Team: Minister Myra Cook. Minister Angela Sheppard, and Minister Jennifer Madison
(Prince William/Stafford/Spotsylvania/Caroline Counties and Lorton (PWSSC&L) CCM)

—Thought for the spring—

“Where flowers bloom so does hope” – Lady Bird Johnson



Word Search

SPRING

WORD SEARCH

A	U	H	B	B	N	D	Q	H	R	P	M	O	T	U	F	X	U	P	R
S	W	O	K	U	E	U	R	J	K	O	S	L	M	Q	D	P	K	B	T
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BLOOM

APRIL

TULIPS

BUNNY

BUTTERFLY

CHIRP

DAFFODIL

FLOWERS

GREEN

GROW

SEEDS

RAIN

SUNSHINE

BLOSSOM

CHICK

GRASS

SHOWERS

EGGS

GARDEN

CATERPILLAR

MPBC FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

Notes & News

SPRING 2026 EDITION



THANK YOU!

A special thanks to all who attended and supported MPBC Federal Credit Union's Annual Meeting held virtually on February 23rd. The Credit Union's accomplishments were presented, open positions were nominated and voted upon, and we welcomed Bridie Timbers as a new member on the Board of Directors!

Congratulations to the seven winners of the raffle prize drawings:

- \$25 deposits to share accounts: Brenda Bowie, Willie Pittard, Irene Stith-Coleman
- \$50 Gas 'n Groceries Gift Cards: Jeanette Devins, Judy Pelham
- \$100 Gift Card: Gertrude Murray
- Deluxe Wizard's Game Package: Annette Ford-Johnson

Cheers to another successful annual meeting and we look forward to seeing you next year!

LOANS AVAILABLE FOR YOU

Are you in need of a low-interest loan? Look to your MPBC FCU first for your small loan needs where you can **apply for an MPBC FCU Signature loan up to \$10,000**. Contact the Credit Union for more details.

TAX DAY REMINDER

Don't forget! The filing deadline to submit 2025 federal tax returns and pay tax owed is Monday, April 15, 2026.

This date is also the deadline to file for a tax extension. Remember, a tax extension gives you more time to submit your return, not pay your taxes.

52-WEEK SAVINGS CHALLENGE CHECK-IN

At the beginning of the year, the Credit Union launched a 52-week savings challenge to members and we want to take a moment to check-in to know how you are you doing with your savings. It's not too late to join this challenge if you are interested.

Please visit <https://mtpleasantbc.org/credit-union> to learn how you can participate and download the free, savings tracker charts there to help you keep track of your savings deposits.



OPERATION STATUS



We are open for business on Sunday mornings! Operating hours are from 8:45 AM - 10:00 AM. Weekday appointments are available by request.

CONTACT US:

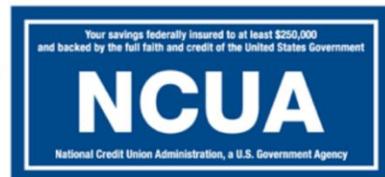
MPBC Federal Credit Union

P.O. Box 11146
Alexandria, VA 22312

(703) 256-4802

mpbcfcu@mtpleasantbc.org

www.mtpleasantbc.org/credit-union



We are YOUR Credit Union.
Thanks for your business.

MINISTER'S



“Stepping Forward in Faith”

by Rev. Penni Ford (MPBC)

“Be strong and courageous... for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”
(Joshua 1:9) (NIV)

As the people of God, we all encounter seasons when we find ourselves standing at the edge of something new. Behind us may be a familiar place — routines we have grown comfortable with, challenges we have already survived, or even wilderness experiences that stretched our faith. Before us lies opportunity, growth, responsibility, and promise.

When Joshua prepared to lead Israel into the Promised Land, God did not offer a gentle suggestion. He gave a clear command: *Be strong and courageous*. Joshua had never led a nation into battle on this scale. He was stepping into leadership after Moses. The weight of that assignment could have been overwhelming. Yet God anchored Joshua’s courage in one powerful truth — *“for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”*

That same assurance strengthens us today.

There are moments when fear quietly tries to influence our decisions. It tells us to wait, to hesitate, or to stay where it feels safe. It questions whether we are prepared, qualified, or capable. But faith reminds us that our confidence is not built on our résumé, our resources, or our recognition. Our confidence is built on God’s presence.

At Mount Pleasant, we are continually called to move forward — forward in ministry, forward in service, forward in spiritual maturity. Growth requires movement. Obedience requires action. We cannot embrace new blessings while holding tightly to old fears.

Courage does not mean the absence of uncertainty. It means trusting God enough to move even when we do not see the full picture. When we take a step in faith, God provides strength for that step. When we accept the assignment He gives, He supplies the grace to fulfill it.

Let this be a season where we choose faith over fear, commitment over comfort, and obedience over hesitation. The same God who instructed Joshua continues to speak to His people: *Be strong. Be courageous. I am with you.*

Prayer

Father, in Jesus’ name, we thank You for Your abiding presence. Strengthen our hearts, steady our steps, and help us to walk boldly in obedience. Remove fear, renew our confidence, and remind us that You are with us in every season. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

MPBC News and Events

YOUNG ADULT GROWING IN GRADE SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS

Join Us! **MAR 29**

IN-PERSON "CHAT & CHEW" Fellowship

8:30 AM - 9:45 AM

LOCATION: MPBC FELLOWSHIP HALL, 6477 LINCOLNIA ROAD, ALEXANDRIA, VA 22312

INVITING AGES 18-45

EVERY LAST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH. SPECIFIC DETAILS PROVIDED VIA EMAILS AND INVITATIONS.

CONTACT: DEACONESS TASHA BROWN, SISTER BREANNA JONES

WWW.MTPLEASANTBC.ORG

A RESURRECTION CELEBRATION

THE ROAD TO GALVARY!

First Lady Robin Johnson, Pastor Rev. Dr. Carl M. Johnson

SUNDAY MARCH 29	PALM SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE 10AM Preached Word by: Rev. Joyce Howard	FRIDAY APRIL 03	GOOD FRIDAY WORSHIP SERVICE 7PM Seven Last Words presented by the Deacon Ministry	SUNDAY APRIL 05	EASTER SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE 10AM Preached Word by: Rev. Dr. Carl M. Johnson
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MOUNT PLEASANT BAPTIST CHURCH | 6477 LINCOLNIA ROAD, ALEXANDRIA, VA 22312 | PHONE: 703.256.1268

MARCH 29, 2026

Missionary SUNDAY 10AM

... Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you unto the end of the world. Amen. — Matthew 28:20

Do you think about and pray all evening, leaving them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. — Matthew 28:20

The Preached Word by: Rev. Joyce Howard

MOUNT PLEASANT BAPTIST CHURCH
6477 LINCOLNIA ROAD, ALEXANDRIA, VA 22312
(703) 256-1268 | www.mtpleasantbc.org

Rev. Dr. Carl M. Johnson, Pastor

7 LAST WORDS OF CHRIST

PRESENTED BY MPBC DEACONATE MINISTRY

- MAURICE EVANS (LUKE 23:34)
- JOHN WHITE (LUKE 23:34)
- MICHAEL HARDY (MARK 15:34)
- BARRY NEWSOME (JOHN 19:26-27)
- BLENN BLACKWELL (JOHN 19:28)
- JERALD STARK (JOHN 19:30)
- MICHAEL WILSON (LUKE 24:46)

Good Friday is a significant day for Christians that commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and his death at Calvary.

People gather together on Good Friday to remember and pray, reflecting on Jesus' sacrifice.

OBSERVING THE SACRED GOOD FRIDAY

FRIDAY, APRIL 3 @ 7PM

MOUNT PLEASANT BAPTIST CHURCH
6477 LINCOLNIA ROAD, ALEXANDRIA, VA 22312
703.256.1268 | WWW.MTPLEASANTBC.ORG
REV. DR. CARL M. JOHNSON, PASTOR

You are invited to join us on this solemn day.

IT'S TIME TO UPDATE!

MPBC PICTORIAL DIRECTORY

ATTENTION MPBC MEMBERS!

Please update your contact information by emailing clerk@mtpleasantbc.org.

Our congregation is growing, and it's the perfect time to create a refreshed pictorial directory—a keepsake you'll be proud to share with family and friends.

The Pictorial Team is ready to begin scheduling photo sessions, and we're counting on everyone to take part!

Watch for upcoming announcements so you can reserve your spot!

MOUNT PLEASANT BAPTIST CHURCH
6477 Lincolnia Road, Alexandria, VA 22312
Phone: 703.256.1268 | Rev. Dr. Carl M. Johnson, Pastor

"Hour of Prayer"

Saturday
April 4, 2026
8:00AM-9:00AM

Meeting ID: 866 2878 0518
Passcode: 398046

ATTENTION

IS YOUR CURRENT EMAIL ADDRESS ON FILE?
IS YOUR ADDRESS UP TO DATE?

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR CURRENT PREFERRED EMAIL AND MAILING ADDRESS TO THE CHURCH CLERK AT CLERK@MTPLEASANTBC.ORG (preferred) OR CALL THE CHURCH OFFICE AT 703.256.1268 ext. 16.

703.256.1268 ext 16

clerk@mtpleasantbc.org

www.mtpleasantbc.org

WE WANT TO STAY IN TOUCH!

MPBC Members Only

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM 2026

Applications and supporting documents must be submitted to scholarship@mtpleasantbc.org

www.mtpleasantbc.org

2026 AWARDS & SCHOLARSHIPS

Electronic submissions only. Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Application DEADLINE: **APRIL 12, 2026**

- ✓ Cara Gordon Distinguished Graduate
- ✓ Florence L.A. Jones Scholarship
- ✓ Savings Bond Award
- ✓ Scholarship Application
- ✓ Tuition Assistance Application

Public Safety Alert

For more information on Fentanyl, go to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) website.

One Pill Can Kill | DEA.gov

https://www.dea.gov/onepill

DEA United States Drug Enforcement Administration

Get Updates | Scam Alert | English | Español

Search DEA.gov

Who We Are | What We Do | Careers | Resources | Submit A Tip

ONE PILL CAN KILL

DEA Fentanyl Seizures in 2023

75,600,000+ Millions of Fentanyl Pills Seized

11,503+ lbs. Pounds of Fentanyl Powder Seized

In 2022, DEA seized more than 59.6 million fentanyl-laced fake pills and more than 13,300 pounds of fentanyl powder. The 2022 seizures are equivalent to more than 397 million lethal doses of fentanyl.

The 2023 fentanyl seizures represent over 360 million deadly doses.*

* 2 mg of fentanyl equates to a potentially deadly dose.

Public Safety Alert

Laboratory testing indicates 7 out of every 10 pills seized by DEA contain a lethal dose of fentanyl.

DEA has seized a record 74.5 million fentanyl pills to date in 2023, which already exceeds last year's totals of 58 million pills.

7 out of 10 DEA tested pills with fentanyl are potentially DEADLY



Brightly-Colored Fentanyl Used to Target Young Americans.

Ministry Opportunities

*“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works,
which God prepared beforehand ...”*

Ephesians 2:10

Mount Pleasant Church Ministry Leaders Email Info | 2026

ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE

(vacant)

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MINISTRY

Rev. Margaret Barr

CHURCH SCHOOL MINISTRY

Yvonne Bush

DEACON MINISTRY*

Deacon David Evans

DEACONESS MINISTRY*

Deaconess Sherri Morgan

DEAF SHALL HEAR THE WORD MINISTRY

Minister Jennifer Madison

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE MINISTRY

Min. Myra Cook

EVANGELISM MINISTRY

Deacon James Watson

EZEKIEL MISSIONARY MINISTRY

Yvette Collier

FLORAL MINISTRY

Trustee Constance Robinson

GIFTED TO SERVE MINISTRY

Tefera Baker-Warrick

GRIEF MINISTRY

Denise Mackie-Smith

HEALTH/WELLNESS UNIT

Phyllis Jordan

HOMELESS MINISTRY

Brenda Stroble

LITURGICAL DANCE MINISTRY

(vacant)

INTERPRETER MINISTRY

(vacant)

MEN'S MINISTRY (MMOV)

Michael Tyree

MPBC MESSENGER

Deaconess Karin Henderson

MUSIC MINISTRY COORDINATOR

Trevon Cook

NEW MEMBERS MINISTRY

Min. Derrick Allen

Deaconess Rita Jackson

NURSERY MINISTRY

Deaconess Allie Hollister

PINKETT/SHEPPARD MEMORIAL CLUB

Julie Washington

Mount Pleasant Church Ministry Leaders Email Info | 2026

PRAYER MINISTRY

Deaconess Marilyn McPherson

PRISON MINISTRY

Min. Percell Spinner

RISE MINISTRY

Min. Stephanie Gillus

SCHOLARSHIP MINISTRY

Trustee Billy Gregory

SENIOR ADULT MINISTRY

Merle Summers

TRUSTEE MINISTRY*

Trustee Tyrone Bradley

USHERS MINISTRY

Sandra C. Johnson

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP MINISTRY

Middie Brooks

YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY COORDINATORS

Co-Coordinator: Breanna Jones

Co-Coordinator: Khadeejah Honesty

YOUTH MINISTRY

(vacant)

***Members cannot join voluntarily.**

NOTE: To contact the ministry leader, call the Church Office at 703-256-1268.

CONGREGATIONAL CARE MINISTRY (CCM) by DEACON, DEACONESS, MINISTERIAL STAFF and ZIP CODE

Pastor Carl Johnson: Deacons, Deaconesses and Family, Out of Town Members

John White Kenneth and Rita Jackson Jerry and Rosie Brown Annette Colclough Marcia Gilbert-Gregory Rev. Dr. Vonda Batts Rev. Dwight Cokely	Karl and Karin Henderson James Cook Marlene Fields Min. Myra Cook Min. Angela Sheppard Min. Jennifer Madison	Jerald and Faye Stark Maurice Evans Gloria Giron Min. Stephanie Gillus Min. Leticia Watson Min. Eldred Williams Rev. Joyce Howard	Carlton Brown Amanda Brown Allie Hollister Dalton Martin Min. Bonita Easter Min. Linda Hayes Min. Percell Spinner	David Evans Michael and Sylvia Hardy Mattie Charles Tawanna Tillman Rev. Penni Ford Min. Henrietta Nelson Min. Antonio Rafael
DC and Maryland All Zip Codes	Prince Williams County (excluding Manassas and its independent cities) Lorton: 22079, 22199 Stafford, Spotsylvania, and Caroline Counties	Centreville, Chantilly Manassas, Sterling Nokesville, Herndon Reston, Fauquier, Warren and Loudoun Counties Fairfax: 22030, 22031, 22032, 22033, 22037 Vienna: 22180	Alexandria: 22312	Ft. Belvoir: 22060 Alexandria: 22301, 22302, 22303, 22305, 22306, 22307, 22308, 22309, 22310, 22313, 22314, 22315
Barry Newsome Glenn Blackwell Tasha Brown La' Tonia White Rev. Margaret Barr Rev. Chris White	Edward Robinson Bryant and Jacqueline Black Barbara White Rev. Cornella Carter-Taylor Min. Khadeejah Honesty	Robert Brooks Sherri Morgan Averil Tomlinson Rev. Brian Morgan Min. Mark Miller Min. Jackie Wrice Rev. Dr. Gerald Robinson	James and Jean Watson Michael Wilson Sherry Allen Susie Taylor Rev. Jessie Reynolds Min. Derrick Allen	Ronald Hampton Robert Smith Josephine Byrd Marilyn McPherson Karen White Min. Carl Hollister Min. Aleia Taylor Ellington
Alexandria: 22304, 22311	Arlington: All Zip Codes 22201, 22202, 22203 22204, 22205, 22206 22207, 22209, 22211, 22212	Burke: 22015 Fairfax: 22039 Springfield: 22150, 22151, 22152 22153	Annandale: 22003 McLean Merrifield	Falls Church and Bailey's Crossroads: 22041, 22042, 22043 22044, 22046

Revised: March 2026

Mount Pleasant Baptist Church
6477 Lincolnia Road
Alexandria, Virginia 22312
(703) 256-1268
Rev. Dr. Carl M. Johnson, Pastor



*email: secretary@mtpleasantbc.org
web site: www.mtpleasantbc.org*

MPBC Messenger Staff

Karin Henderson	Editor-in-Chief/ Designer
Eloise Clarke	Editor
Anita Johnson	Editor
Debbie Coles	Church News Reporter
Linda Hayes	Staff Writer/Contributor



VIRTUAL CHURCH CONFERENCE — APRIL 25, 2026 @ 5:00 PM

Vision Statement

“Building a vibrant, engaged faith community serving, growing, and transforming Lives.”
(1 Peter 4:10–11)

Mission Statement

“To grow a congregation of believers committed to the ministry of Worship, Evangelism, Missions, Discipleship, Service, and Fellowship with a heart for Prayer, Bible Study, and the Great Commission.” (Matthew 28:19–20)

Theme

“Stepping Forward in Faith” (Joshua 1:9)

Submission of articles to the **Messenger** — Please send articles via email attachment to:
mpbcnewsletter@mtpleasantbc.org.