

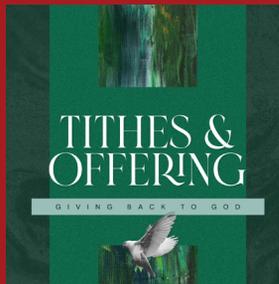


Hope  
Love  
Peace  
Joy

## IN THIS ISSUE



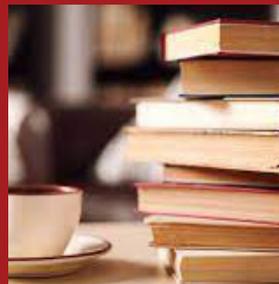
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## A Pastoral Letter at Christmas



**G**reetings of Advent, Beloved. As the calendar year hastens to its conclusion, I share with you an overwhelming feeling of gratitude. First, I am grateful to God for His faithfulness towards us. Never should we think too little of daily mercies which attend us nor must we ever downplay the abundant measure of grace poured upon us so freely. These favors are signs of God's covenant loyalty and unbreakable commitment to us as His redeemed. Put another way, they mark us as His own. What a splendid thing!

Similarly, I wish to express thankfulness to you, my faith family here at First Baptist. Indeed, the joy of sharing in ministry with so fine a people is renewed in this holy season. Though the demands of the pastorate are burdensome, with some seasons being more difficult than others both in emotion and spirit, there remains an enduring honor in being your minister. I am come to know deep bonds of connection that transcend mere longevity, a kinship grounded in mutuality and a common interest in serving God and people. I see it demonstrated in outreach to neighbors as we willingly extend our love as a congregation beyond the property line. I witness it in the welcoming embrace we give to college students who come to find a home for their souls as they study in our city. I sense it with every new disciple who makes known their intent to join our family and become a part of our witness. Yes, these are signs that God is with us, still stirring in our

midst and revealing His purpose. In that, we share a collective thanksgiving. I am confident also that you would join me in conveying appreciation to the church staff for their incredible work during the year. Each member of the team has performed above and beyond their scope of duties to fulfill the mission of the congregation and facilitate our ministries. Their talents are extraordinary and their willingness to join in any effort to accomplish tasks, complete projects, or execute events is unmatched. Likewise, I commend all volunteers who have been simply invaluable to this work all year long. Ministry is the work of the people and we have faithful servants who can be mobilized and dispatched for just that purpose. Thank you for making yourselves available to serve and join in the cause.

Every service and ministry that we sustain sets aflame within us an inextinguishable light of hope. That hope is desperately needed in the world, especially during the days of December. When we come to this point, some of us gladly celebrate what the passing year has given – blessings, promotions, successes – even as others in our midst have reason to lament what has been – loss, suffering, and brokenness. But, whether we identify with the blessed or count ourselves among the unfortunate, we are present in this holy season of waiting together. It may not seem much to those who think they can afford to take people for

granted, but for those of us who have learned lessons from the pandemic, we know how important it is to be connected to relationships of nurture and care.

As the words of the prophet Isaiah are rehearsed with great urgency: Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God (Isa. 40:1), we assume the ministry of hope-dealing to people beleaguered by punishment and pain. We bear witness to all around us that God can be heard speaking pardon and renewal. The sound of His voice breaks through the barrier of silence and isolation, giving hope to those who have given up on hearing anything worth listening to. This is what Advent and Christmas are all about, hearing anew an ancient message of peace.

We need not look too far to find someone needing this message, for they sit right next to us; or they are members of our family; or they are our colleagues and coworkers; or they are our friends. Wherever we encounter them, in whatever condition they permit us to touch their pain, we bring a witness of reconciliation that God intends. God be praised for holy work!

My family and I extend to you our best wishes for a Happy Christmas and a time of renewal in hope, peace, joy and love. Our affection is constant for you and your families.

# Surviving the Holidays

Written by Brother Jonathan Williams

**E**xperiencing the holidays after the passing of a loved one is quite often the hardest. Most families seek and find comfort in the familiar and incorporate a time of remembrance into their holiday celebrations. But all too often, many also find the memories contained within the traditions too painful to enjoy. Holiday traditions and the happiness of others can also make grieving individuals feel isolated and alone. There are ways to cope with holiday grief and to feel more supported through the season.

The Grief Share ministry will be offering a safe space to find comfort, as well as answers, through our Hope for the Holidays – Surviving the Holiday Blues virtual seminar. The National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI) defines the holiday blues as “temporary feelings of anxiety or depression during the holidays that can be associated with extra stress, unrealistic expectations, or even memories that accompany the season.” Symptoms can

include fatigue, tension, loneliness, frustration, sadness, and a sense of loss.

If you or someone you know are experiencing these or similar feelings in any form this holiday season, know that you are not alone. The reality is that many people do struggle around the holiday season. In NAMI’s survey on the holiday blues, 64% of those surveyed reported that they are affected and 24% reported that they were “affected a lot.”

To find help in dealing with the holiday blues, we encourage you to attend this seminar by registering via Realm or calling the church office. The facilitator will be Dr. Amanda Ragland, Executive Director of The Vine Pastoral Counseling Center, and a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist with more than 20 years of experience; ministering emotional healing with the love and grace of Christ to individuals, couples, families, and congregations.

YOU ARE INVITED TO OUR  
**HOPE** *for the*  
**HOLIDAYS**  
SURVIVING THE HOLIDAY BLUES VIRTUAL SEMINAR  
**Monday, December 5, 2022, 6:30p.m. – 8p.m.**  
**Facilitator: Dr. Amanda Ragland**  
The Vine Pastoral Counseling Center  
REGISTER VIA REALM OR BY SCANNING THE QR CODE

FMBC NEW DISCIPLE MEMBERS & VOLUNTEERS

# Christmas Fellowship

DECEMBER 14, 2022

6:00 PM

FMBC GYMNASIUM



-----  
WEAR YOUR FESTIVE HOLIDAY ATTIRE  
MASK REQUIRED



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH &  
FIRST MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

## Christmas Service

TINSEL TRAIL  
BIG SPRING PARK  
200 CHURCH ST SW  
HUNTSVILLE, AL 35801

DECEMBER 24, 2022  
SERICES FROM 6:00PM- 8:00PM  
(EVERY 30 MINUTES)

BRING YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS!





# JRS CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER AND ACADEMY

by Dr. Tammy Alexander, Interim Head of School



**It's** beginning to look a lot like Christmas everywhere you go and that includes the JRS CDCA. We are finishing our first semester and coming to the end of 2022. We certainly have had a semester of getting into good trouble.



Our Pre K4- 5th grade scholars are gearing up for the 2nd round of MAP testing. This mid-year assessment will provide both teachers and parents growth data during the last 18 weeks. Teachers will use this information to adjust their teaching strategies while parents will use these results to assist their children at home.



It's Spelling Bee time at JRS CDCA. Class winners will compete for the

title of the 2023 JRS CDCA school champion. Congratulations to the following classroom winners: Londyn Acklin (1st grade), Jamari Byers (2nd grade), Londin Lacy (3rd grade), Camille Stokes (4th/5th grade), Tailyn Turner (4th/5th grade).

With the academic work out of the way (sort of), days will be filled with the final rehearsals for our Annual Christmas Play. This year, we are presenting a musical. Ms. Stokes, our 2nd grade teacher, will be leading this production. Join us in person or virtually on December 15th at 6:30 pm.



During this season of giving, we are helping our scholars to learn the importance of the season. We are collecting socks and gloves for those in Huntsville who are in need. Please drop your donations off at the school office or during Sunday morning worship. We will share the gifts with the homeless population.



It really is looking a lot like CHRISTmas. In every classroom as well as during chapel, the stories of the birth of Christ are being shared. We join the angels as they announce the birth of the Messiah (that's what our Christmas musical is all about). We follow the shepherds as they learn lessons from the Good Shepherd, and we journey with the Magi to celebrate the King of Kings. During this Advent Season we are learning that the baby in the manger grew up and became our Savior. So, from the JRS CDCA family to yours Merry Christmas! We pray for each of you a 2023 filled with blessings upon blessings.



# 2022 GIVING STATEMENTS

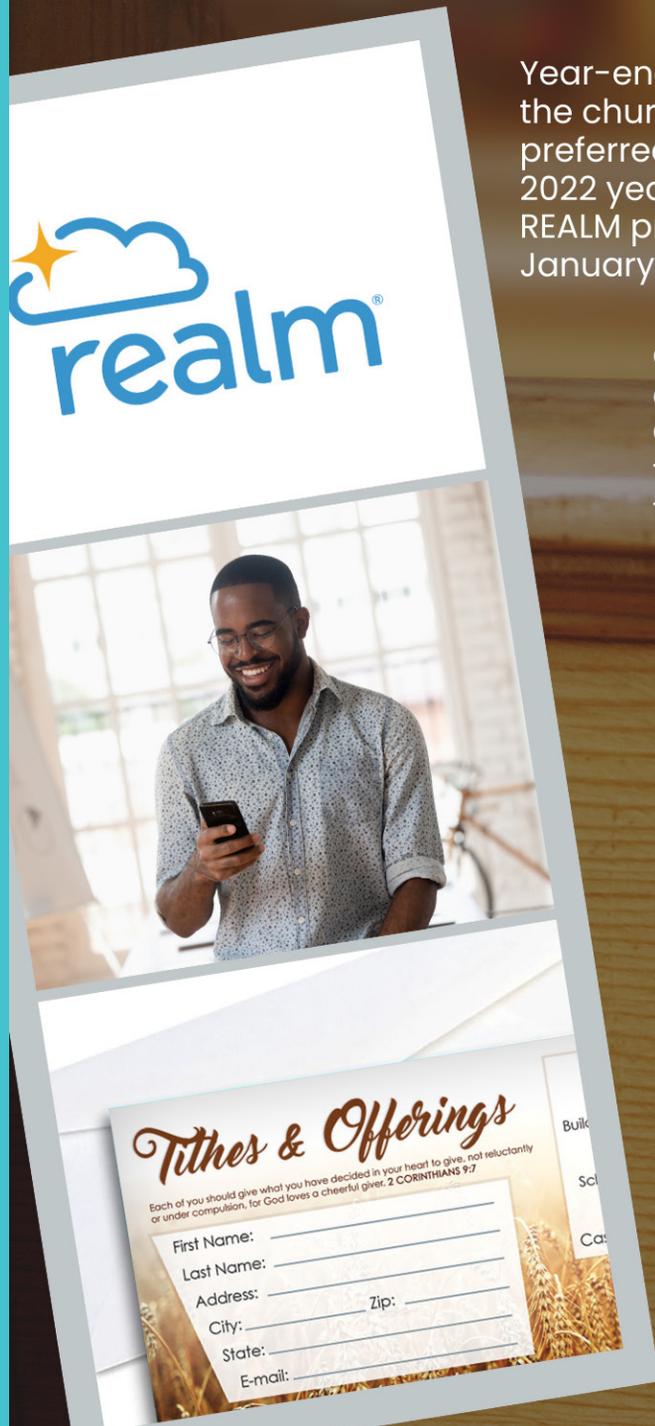
From the Desk of Tamica Baugh, FMBC Financial Comptroller

Year-end is fast approaching, and we want to ensure the church complies with upcoming tax deadlines. Our preferred delivery method will be email distribution for 2022 yearly giving statements. Please update your REALM profile with an active email address before January 15, 2023.

Giving contributions can be made via check or cash; and online through REALM or Givelify. For contributions to be counted towards your 2022 giving, please adhere to the following dates:

- For Realm online or text giving, please complete the transaction before 11:59p on 12/31/2022
- For Givelify online giving, please complete the transaction before 8:59p on 12/31/2022
- For mailed envelopes, the envelopes must be received in the Church Office by 12/29/2022
- For hand delivery, the envelopes must be received in the Church Office by 12/29/2022

For any questions or concerns, please contact Tamica Baugh, Financial Comptroller via email at [tbaugh@fmbc.org](mailto:tbaugh@fmbc.org) or phone at (256) 852-4318 ext. 212.





# FMBC FOUNDATION

Written by Sister Ovetta Hobson



*“The FMBC Foundation is a community partner committed to giving to organizations engaged in Christian missions, education and counseling.” This is the official mission statement of the FMBC Foundation that is affirmed at every Board gathering. The key phrase in our mission is “...community partner committed to giving...” This is undoubtedly the pledge that connects, enables, inspires, and propels the Foundation to positively impact our community through philanthropic acts.*

2022 has been a year of getting back to the Basics with the **ABC's: Affirming Academics, Building our Brand and Connecting with the Community!**

In keeping with our mission of education, the Foundation has Affirmed our position within the Academic arena by awarding grants to several Christian Education Academic institutions. Annual gifts were continued for **American Baptist College** and **Selma University** to aid the HBCUs in realizing their respective missions “to educate, graduate and prepare diverse students for Christian leadership, service and social justice in the world” and “to prepare men and women to be servant leaders throughout the world.” We also had the opportunity to endow a Scholarship at **Huntsville Bible College** in the name of the Foundation to generate investment income to support student scholarships in the Associate of Arts, Bachelor of Arts, Master of Ministry and Doctoral degree programs. The Foundation is also proud to have been strong supporters of projects with the **Huntsville Inner City Learning Center**, the **Union Chapel Christian Academy**, and the **Julius Richard Scruggs Child Development and Academy**. Christian Education remains at the forefront of the Foundation’s giving.

The Foundation continued to Build its Brand with increased awareness, intense internal development, and intentional strategic planning. Our brand and logo have become more recognizable within the community which has attracted diverse organizations that seek philanthropic giving. Brand recognition has also brought with it additional sources of monetary gifts to the Foundation to help ensure growth, viability, and expansion. In accordance with an update to the Bylaws in 2021 (which increased the number of Board members from 5 to 9) the Foundation welcomed Brothers Tracy Doughty and Jonathan Williams to its ranks and brought the total to 7 members. The Foundation convened its Annual Planning Retreat in November to devote time to closing action items, developing strategic plans, and visioning for the future. As a result of this retreat, the Foundation is geared up for further collaboration with the church and the community to strengthen current activities and broaden future endeavors. Out of this retreat, the Board members developed an official Vision Statement for the Foundation. Our Vision is to “Provide resources that create long-term positive impacts in our community and our world.” This vision certainly substantiates our mission to be a “...community partner committed to giving...” and constructs a conduit for even greater giving with a wider scope.

This year we have Connected with our Community through awarding grants to several deserving organizations in an effort to help continue their individual missions. The foundation awarded a grant to New Futures, Inc. family lodge shelter that supports homeless families looking to regain stability and reshape their lives. **New Futures** is the only homeless shelter in North Alabama that allows families to reside in a unit together to maintain healthy relationships as they seek out permanent housing and financial security. The Foundation provided a grant for the purchase of a trailer to be used when relocating families to permanent residences. **The AUM Foundation** was also a grant recipient this year. The grant was used for their Pathway 2 Success (P2S) Program designed for under-resourced female high school students in their senior

year. The purpose of the program is to allow the student to gain experience and insight into their career path, while also building life skills to aid them in breaking generational poverty and prepare them for the workforce. Funding was specifically used for the ACT prep project, a pillar of the P2S program which provides 10 sessions of personalized ACT tutoring for each person in the program. Historical data has shown that through these sessions, the young ladies have been able to improve their ACT scores by 2-7 points! The Foundation was also able to support the **LivOn Journey Camp** in their mission to help cancer survivors “connect with other survivors and become involved in spirit-lifting activities to assist in self-discovery and personal growth.” The grant will be used to fund a Journey Camp where 7 survivors will be able to join in fellowship with other survivors and work with professional coaches to experience mental, emotional, and spiritual healing. From these organizations, it is evident that the FMBC Foundation serves a diverse population with varying needs.

Since the Foundation was started in 2009, approximately **\$1,650,000** in grants have been awarded to deserving entities. This is a testament to the blessings of God and the strength of this ministry as we continue to live out our mission and strive toward our vision. We encourage our FMBC family and friends to consider donating to the Foundation to help us continue to “create long-term positive impacts in our community and our world.” More information about the Foundation and how to become a benefactor or a beneficiary can be found in the Foundation’s Brochure and on the church’s website at [www.fmbc.org/fmbc-foundation](http://www.fmbc.org/fmbc-foundation). Stay tuned for more highlights from the Foundation as we seek to expand our philanthropic giving in new arenas, with creative methods and a broader reach.

Ovetta Hobson, Chair  
Eddie Williams, Vice Chair  
Jocelyn Boustani, Secretary  
Tracy Doughty  
Charles Rice  
Florastein Stallworth  
Jonathan Williams  
Tommie Batts, Church Treasurer  
Tomekia Fuzzell, Staff Member/Administrator  
Dr. Julius R. Scruggs, Pastor Emeritus  
Dr. Don Darius Butler, Pastor

# FEEDING THE SOUL *(Because It's My Business)*

Written by Tabitha Brown

Reviewed by Sister LaDonna McCann

**W**ARNING : Reading this book "will make you wanna shout, hallelujah, thank you Jesus" and throw up both hands. It may also change some of your eating habits.

I read this book in a single day...both times I read it this year. It is exactly what the title states: food for the soul.

Honestly, it is like a bunch of little sermonettes (every heading and sub-heading is a potential sermon title).

Tabitha Brown takes southern hospitality to another level with her sweet way of speaking wisdom far beyond her years.

It all starts inside the book jacket.

## Smoothie Bowl by Tabitha Brown

### INGREDIENTS

Almond milk  
A banana  
Some frozen blueberries, strawberries, peaches, and mango, oh my! *(sometimes they come in a blend)*  
Shredded coconut  
Ground flaxseed  
Fresh strawberries  
Chopped pecans  
Maple syrup

### DIRECTIONS

Put the almond milk, banana, and frozen fruit in your blender and let it do its thing.  
Pour your berry mix into a bowl.  
Add some shredded coconut.  
Then a bit of ground flaxseed, because that's our business.

You get fired up before you even get to page 1! The book is described as down to earth, but it reminds me of the parables: "earthly stories with spiritual meanings".

Her stories focus on faith, family, and food. If you are familiar with Tabitha Brown, you know she has several known catch phrases. But if you're not familiar, she provides a list of them and their meanings.

My favorite two phrases are: THAT'S YOUR BUSINESS - defining yourself and being ok with that, and OHH, GOD I THANK YOU (self-explanatory). These two phrases resonate throughout the entire book.

From A Note from Tab to Acknowledgments, we are taken on a journey of self-discovery and

Add some fresh-cut strawberries.  
Some chopped pecans.  
A little more coconut, if that's what you like.  
Add some pure maple syrup on top.  
*My God, my God, do you see what you've done?*

Now, this is the part of the recipe that might be a little different that you're used to. You must take the smoothie bowl, hold it tight in your hands, and...go eat it outside.

*Yes, you read that right.*

*Yes, that's part of the recipe.*

Go on outside, if you can.  
Or head over to the cutest place in your house, honey.

Laugh a little bit.

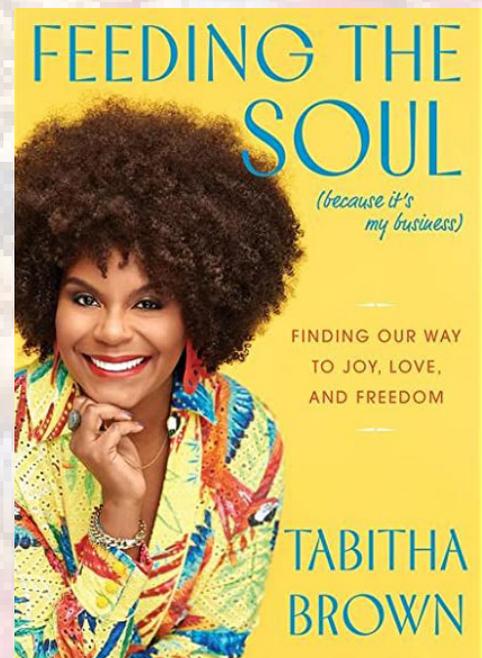
Have a little sassy attitude about yourself.

Don't you feel good?

spiritual awakening with Tabitha Brown through stories of faith, family, and food.

The thing I appreciated most is the frequent faith fill-ups without Bible beating. The Love of God comes shining through each paragraph. We are encouraged to establish a relationship with our Creator rather than practice hollow religion without living evidence of the God we claim to serve.

This book is an experience, and one I will return to again and again just so my soul can be fed, and I can say "Ohh, God I thank you...cause that's my business."



JOIN THE DEACONESS MINISTRY IN SUPPORT OF

# THE KING'S TABLE

FOOD DRIVE

EVERY FIRST SUNDAY

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
SEE A DEACONESS



**DROP OFF LOCATION**  
BIN IN THE BREEZEWAY

WE APPRECIATE OUR FMBC

*Volunteers*

First Missionary Baptist Church is blessed to have in our fold members who give of themselves cheerfully. Your compassion and kindness toward others is an inspiration to the staff and all members of our congregation

*“Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”*

*Matthew 5:16*



# Getting to Know Our Members

## Sister Zyan Watson



Sister Zyan Watson was baptized on October 2, 2022 when she decided to give her life to Christ. She is a sophomore at Sparkman High School as well as a captain of the Sparkman Varsity Dance Team. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with family and friends, and online shopping. Zyan has recently completed an assignment for her English 10 class where they pick and choose their favorite anthem. In addition, she chose her favorite song "Deliver Me" by Donald Lawrence. When presenting her anthem to the class, she explains her favorite lyrics and why the song is special to her. Zyan states that the song resonates with her new life and the words "Deliver Me" hit close to home as it describes her relationship with God. She has loved going to Bible Study, Sunday School, and reading the call to worship to the church family. She's also interested in Praise-N-Motion and the Media Ministry. What does Zyan adore about FMBC? She worships the energy in the sanctuary every Sunday morning, her pastor and first lady, and the joyful events that bring everyone together. Zyan knows that getting baptized was the best decision she's ever made. She now feels her connection growing stronger with God; her life is full and complete!



**Brother Patrick and Minister Heather Lewis have been members of First Missionary Baptist Church since November 2020. They are originally from New Jersey and have been living in Alabama for over 14 years. Patrick is a graduate of Rutgers University and he is very active in the local community. He is a member of the Huntsville Alumni Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Incorporated and the Greater Huntsville Chapter of the 100 Black Men of America, Incorporated. Heather is a graduate of Athens State University and a two-time post-graduate of Florida Institute of Technology. She is also very active in the local community, is the founder of AnotherChance Ministries, and a member of the Epsilon Gamma Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated.**

**When asked why they chose to join FMBC, the Lewises stated that they felt the spiritual anointing of our amazing Pastor Butler as well as the positive atmosphere of the church congregation. Patrick and Heather started listening to the online sermons of Dr. Don Darius Butler on Facebook during the initial phases of COVID-19, when most churches were closed due to the pandemic. They reached out to Dr. Butler in July 2020 and set up their initial meeting to inform him of their intentions and joined the congregation a few months later, in November 2020. They love the fact that FMBC gives hope to its members by teaching them how to apply Gods' Word to their everyday living. Patrick and Heather also love how FMBC encourages the importance of education and local outreach programs that help strengthen our local community.**

**Heather currently serves as an Associate Minister and Youth Volunteer and she loves the encouragement she receives from Dr. Butler, her peers in the Ministry and members of our church. Patrick is currently a Youth Volunteer who teaches Sunday School to our youth and teens, a member of our Men's Group and recently accepted his calling into the ministry. They both love motivating others to seek Gods' excellence in all that they do and love teaching His Holy Word.**

*The Lewises*

# FMBC MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS



Congratulations Sister Monica Montgomery on receiving the 2022 Better Business Bureau Torch Award for Ethics.



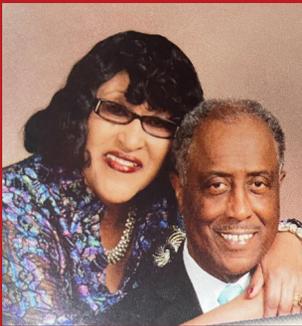
Brother James and Sister Shirley Wingfield celebrate their 28<sup>th</sup> anniversary December 4<sup>th</sup>



Brother Douglas and Minister Priscilla Montgomery celebrate their 46<sup>th</sup> anniversary December 19<sup>th</sup>



Brother Lincoln and Sister Fredonia Williams celebrate their 54<sup>th</sup> anniversary December 21<sup>st</sup>



Minister Melvin & Sister Janice Summerhill celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary December 29<sup>th</sup>

## WANT TO BE SHOWN IN THE COMMUNICATOR?

You can e-mail a picture and your information of an anniversary or accomplishment to [clynk@fmbc.org](mailto:clynk@fmbc.org)

## WOMEN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS

EVERY SUNDAY

08:15 AM - 9:00 AM

CLASS WILL MEET ON THE 2ND FLOOR ADMINISTRATIVE WING

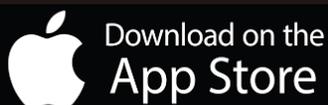


ALL WOMEN ARE WELCOME



# LET'S STAY CONNECTED

DOWNLOAD THE REALM APP TODAY



## GIVE VIA TEXT MESSAGE

Text 'FMBCHSV' and  
the amount you want to give  
to **73256**

- 1 Click the link
- 2 Complete your gift

## LET'S BE THE CHURCH... TOGETHER

- \*Update your personal information
- \*Communicate with groups
- \*Follow church announcements
- \*Look up members
- \*Manage giving
- \*Create and join events
- \*Birthday announcement