



Pastor Tammy's Ponderings



Mothers: A Gift from Above

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. (James 1:17)

Like this text says, mothers are God's good and perfect gift to us. Whether they're spiritual moms, biological moms, adoptive moms or soon-to-be moms, they are special in God's sight and certainly special to their immediate families and their communities. Every mother's life is a testament to grace — a living, breathing reminder that God places extraordinary love into ordinary hands.

A Faith That Anchors

At the heart of every Godly mother is a faith that does not waver. It is that faith that steadies the home during uncertain seasons, that whispers scripture over children - whether young or old, and that intercedes in the quiet hours of the night. A mother's strong faith is not simply a personal virtue — it is a torch she passes to every life she touches. Her prayers become the spiritual inheritance her children carry long after they are grown, a legacy more valuable than any treasure on Earth.

A Love that Reaches Beyond

Godly motherhood does not stay within the walls of one's home. A mother's love is expensive - it reaches the neighbor's child who needs a safe place, the student who longs for encouragement, the young adult searching for direction. It is important to remember that women and mother figures may not have given birth to children themselves, yet it is so important for women who love the Lord to share their wisdom and prayers with any and all children God places in their path. A kind word, an open door, a warm meal, a listening ear — these are the sacred acts of a woman walking in her calling.

A Sacred Calling

As we prepare to celebrate Mother's Day, let's remember that motherhood — whether lived out in a nursery, a neighborhood, or in nurturing hearts — is a sacred calling deeply cherished by God. We are grateful because God sees, equips, and honors women in every stage of their journey. He sees the mother who is weary. He honors the woman who gives of herself quietly and consistently. He equips those who feel unqualified, whispering gently, "I chose you for this."

So, today, pray for mothers everywhere, that she would feel deeply loved, spiritually strengthened and joyfully celebrated. Pray for the biological mother, the foster mother, the spiritual mother, the grandmother who steps in, and the woman pouring into lives every single day. May they each know — without a shadow of a doubt — that they are seen by God and celebrated by the hearts they have shaped.

Season of Continued Blessing: Welcoming Back Our Pastors

We are filled with joy and gratitude to share the wonderful news that Pastor Tammy Ingram and Associate Pastor Torey Haynes have been reappointed to serve Saint Matthews UMC for another year.

Their commitment to our spiritual growth and their heart for our community has been evident in every service, meeting and quiet moment of pastoral care. As they prepare for this new year of ministry, let us surround them with our prayers, our support and our continued partnership.

We look forward to all that God has in store for Saint Matthews under their guidance and visionary leadership. Please take a moment to personally welcome them back and express your appreciation for their commitment to our church family as we begin this next chapter together. Welcome back, Pastor Tammy and Pastor Torey!

Submitted by: The Messenger Newsletter Staff

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ISSUE 51

May, 2026

A Woman Worthy of Honor



Some of the most formative lessons in life are not taught in classrooms, they were lived out in the daily rhythms of a faithful woman's home. My Grandma was that kind of woman. She understood that faith is not something you simply believe; it is something you practice. Sunday mornings were never optional. The church doors opened, and we were there, not out of obligation, but because she knew that gathering with the people of God was how a family stayed rooted. She modeled prayer not as a last resort, but as a first response, carving out space each day to commune with the One she trusted above all else. In a world full of noise, she built a household around the quiet, steady discipline of seeking God.

The Means of Grace were not just something my grandmother practiced when times were tough. They were embedded into everyday life as practices that uplifted the family, shaped our lives and guided her decision making. I would not learn until years later why spiritual practices were so important. I would probably attribute many of her practices to why I am who I am today.

Her wisdom extended beyond the walls of the sanctuary. One piece of counsel she returned to again and again was deceptively simple: choose your friends wisely. She knew that community shapes character, that the company we keep either draws us closer to God or pulls us further away. She was not just raising children; she was cultivating souls. She was the first pastor I ever knew, even when I had no words for it. Though she is no longer with us, her legacy lives on in every prayer offered, every Sunday kept, and every intentional choice made to walk in good company. This Mother's Day season, I am grateful for a Grandma whose faith was not inherited from a creed but carried in her bones and lovingly passed down to those of us who watched her live it.

Growing in Faith, Leadership and Prayer

Our Children and Youth Ministries have had an exciting and fruitful season! On Friday, April 25, a group of our young people had the opportunity to participate in the Unified Workshop, held at Hood Theological Seminary. Leadership teams from the Conference Council on Youth Ministry, Harambee and the Conference Justice and Reconciliation Team led the workshop. During the workshop, the youth engaged in a meaningful leadership assessment, identifying their individual strengths and developing a personal action plan to enhance their leadership qualities. They also participated in team-building activities that helped them get to know youth from other churches and backgrounds. It was a powerful experience that reminded us that God is raising leaders right here within the walls of Saint Matthews.

In Sunday School, our children and youth are just as engaged. In preparation for the National Day of Prayer, 25 children and youth took time to write original prayers that will be lifted before God and the congregation. These prayers will be featured at our National Day of Prayer service on Thursday, May 7, at 6 PM. They will not be openly shared but will be a part of the many prayers submitted to our prayer box. We invite the entire Saint Matthews family to come out and intercede on behalf of our community, our nation and our world. We are so proud of the faith, courage and commitment our young people continue to demonstrate. Keep them lifted in prayer as they grow in grace and leadership!



THE STRONG WOMAN VS. THE WOMAN OF STRENGTH

A strong woman works out every day to keep her body in shape . . .

But a woman of strength kneels in prayer to keep her soul in shape.

A strong woman isn't afraid of anything . . .

But a woman of strength shows courage in the midst of her fear.

A strong woman won't let anyone get the best of her . . .

But a woman of strength gives the best of her to everyone.

A strong woman walks sure footedly . . .

But a woman of strength knows God will catch her when she falls.

A strong woman wears the look of confidence on her face . . .

But a woman of strength wears grace.

A strong woman has faith that she is strong enough for the journey . . .

But a woman of strength has faith that it is in the journey that she will become strong.

Submitted by Myra Waddell

I Can Still Hear My Mother's Voice

Blessed Assurance, Jesus is mine;
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior, all the day long.

This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior, all the day long. 1

At Saint Matthew, the choir stand feels
different today,
Missing the voice that taught me to watch
and to pray.
The first Sunday comes with a quiet, longing
ache,
and the Second follows, heavy for memory's
sake.

Perfect submission, perfect delight,
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
Angels descending bring from above
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love. 2

Two Sundays a month, you stood proud in
your place,
With the light of the Spirit reflecting your
face,
A year has gone by, but the song hasn't
died,
It lives in the sanctuary, right by my side.

Perfect submission, all is at rest
I in my Savior am happy and blest;
Watching and waiting, looking above,
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love. 3

Though your seat in the choir has been
empty this year,
In the heart of Saint Matthews, your voice
is still clear!

This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior, all the day long.
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior, all the day long. 4

Forever love, Cheryl R. Little
"Blessed Assurance" Lyrics by Fanny Crosby

IT IS HISTORY:

“You’ve Come a Long Way Baby”



A familiar 1968 television commercial depicted a modern woman wearing a pant suit. She was branded as confident, small in stature, wore make-up, a short sassy hairdo, and was bold enough to engage in unhealthy smoking. For centuries women struggled with societal TABOOS, religious and social, that dictated our diet, habits, education, dress, behavior and worship, to how many steps a woman would walk behind one’s husband. Read a few of them.

“Mandatory Head Coverings-Assyrian Law: One of the earliest records of [mandatory headscarves](#) dates to the 13th Century BC, where they were legally required for "respectable" women. Failure to do so meant a loss of status; but for slaves or scorned women the penalty was 50 lashes with a rod and having liquid pitch (tar) poured over her head.”

“Western History: Head coverings were standard for married women in Europe from the Middle Ages through the early 20th century as a sign of modesty and religious piety. Penalties ranged from church censure and regulations to physical punishments like head shaving, evolving into a loss of respectability by the early 1900s “(Wikipedia).

-Today women decide to wear a hat or not: her head may be bald, or hair is coifed in curly/straight/braided/long and short styles and comes in many colors like Jacob’s coat.

“Food Taboos: These were frequently tied to ritual purity and status. In [Ancient Hawaii's kapu system](#), women were barred from eating "sacred" foods like pork, coconuts, and many varieties of bananas faced immediate execution, often by methods such as strangulation or drowning.” (Ovid/Nutrition Today 9-10/2024).

Today, shaming, guilt, and punishments for food consumption and overeating is often framed as a sin against health, leading to public shaming and internalized guilt, rather than a sin against God.

Theosis (becoming like God) **vs. Expansion:** While ancient spiritual practices involved [emptying the self](#), modern body enhancement often seeks to *expand* the self to meet a perfect, digital ideal. (Ron Cole-Turner’s 2018 paper, “*Theosis and Human Enhancement*”).
Stewardship vs. Ownership: Based on **1 Corinthians 6:19-20**, Christians are taught that their [bodies are temples](#) of the Holy Spirit and belong to God. This implies stewardship (care) rather than absolute ownership (doing as one pleases). My, things change!

Eve got the ball rolling with her fig leaves **B-U-T** men and women expanded exterior changes, created restrictive rituals, and punitive laws over centuries. There is GOOD NEWS: **Isaiah 55:8-9** (NIV) “*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,*” declares the Lord”. Yes, there is Digital Panopticon saturation where social media platforms act as a constant [source of body surveillance](#), blasting out likes and comments that serve as the modern equivalent of public approval or humiliation **B – U – T** what does God require? (**Micah 6:8**) “*He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God*” (NIV). It emphasizes ethical living—justice, kindness, and humility—over mere ritualistic sacrifice, food and clothing restrictions, and/or manmade rules.

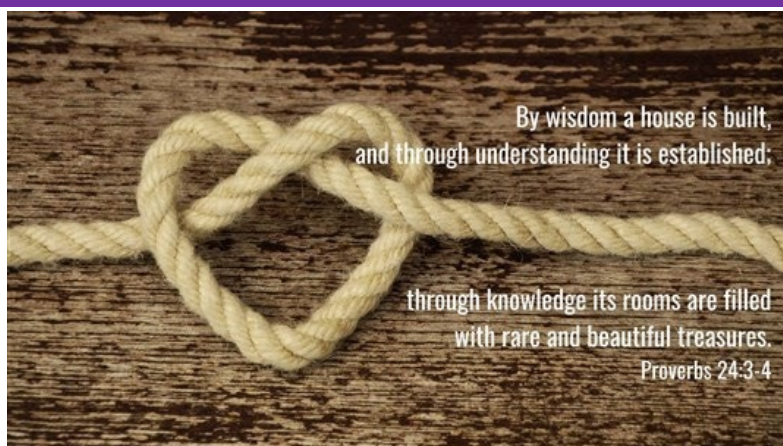
~**Act Justly** (Do Justice): Implies treating others with fairness, righteousness, and uprightness, ensuring equity in daily dealings.

~**Love Mercy** (Kindness): means to show active compassion, kindness, and grace to others.

~**Walk Humbly** with Your God: Involves living in a personal relationship with God, characterized by reliance, gratitude, and obedience rather than **pride** (AI), and the women said, Thank You Jesus. Amen!

HAPPY MOTHER’S DAY!

A & H Ministry, E. A. McGirt, 5/2026



By wisdom a house is built,
and through understanding it is established;

through knowledge its rooms are filled
with rare and beautiful treasures.
Proverbs 24:3-4

MOTHERS SEE CLEARLY THROUGH THE EYES OF HISTORY

African American women know that history is often repeated; however, Maya Angelou said it best, *"When someone shows you who they are, believe them the first time. People know themselves much better than you do. That's why it's important to stop expecting them to be something other than who they are."*

"While the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) reportedly removed some historic race and ethnicity data from public access in early 2025, analysis from organizations like the [National Women's Law Center \(NWLC\)](#) identifies that women and people of color are **FIRED** disproportionately (a few resigned), from federal and private sector jobs. The estimated job loss percentage of the female workforce by demographic as of 2025-26 was:

AFRICAN-AM - 374,000, 22%	HISPANIC - 163,000, 10%	ASIAN - 95,000, 6%	NATIVE AM - 64,000, 4%
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*Black women's employment fell by 1.4 percentage points in 2025, one of the sharpest declines in 25 years." "Studies have shown that the nation's labor force is 78 percent Caucasian, 13 percent African American, 6 percent Asian, 2 percent Biracial, and 1 percent Native American. Moreover, people of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, who are of any race, represented 17% of the workforce." (EEOC Report-Women in the Federal Sector/2023)

The loss of federal employment for AF-American women has significantly strained the financial stability of these institutions: Black families, churches, schools and the court system--where many legal claims filed relate to unconstitutional retaliation for exercising one's First Amendment rights. "Because federal employment has historically been a critical path to the middle class for African-American families, the sudden loss of these high-quality jobs has directly impacted congregational giving such as **Lower Giving Levels**: Data from 2025 indicates that **AF-American pastors (41%)** are significantly more likely than white pastors (26%) to report that church giving is **below budgeted levels** according to reports from *Lifeway Research*. There is an increased demand for emergency financial assistance for housing, medicines, utilities, food, gas and more."

Comparison: 1860-70's Black Codes/Pig Laws vs. 2025-2026 RIF

The table below illustrates how the strategies used in North Carolina after the Civil War compare to the modern RIF actions currently being debated in our courts. We've heard about this S.T.U.F.F and now see:

Strategy	NC Black Codes/Pig Laws & DEI	Modern RIF Action (2025-2026)
Targeted Employment	Denial of "skilled trades" (mechanics, artisans) to favor agricultural labor. Target-freedmen/former enslaves	Targeting federal DEI and civil rights roles—critical pipelines for the Black middle class, forcibly directing black women to favor lower tier jobs and pay.
Retaliatory Nature	Direct response to the 13 th Amendment and/ or Black emancipation, weaken (Freedom and the Vote) granted to enslaves and freedmen	Budget reduction actions via DODGE directed towards Black and Brown people to weaken their freedom, birthrights and the First Amendment rights; Cases pending

"Because Black workers—and especially Black women—**were** disproportionately represented in the federal workforce, this "labor control cut" triggered a "**BLACK RECESSION**" (Fortune/2025), characterized by sharp declines in household solvency, long-term economic disruptions, mental health, increased shadow debt, legal and constitutional challenges, while community and spiritual resilience seem somewhat fragile." Foremothers and fathers overcame Black Codes and Pig Laws created in 1865-67 and 1877 respectively, and we shall triumph against modern RIF actions imposed 2025-26. *"History repeats itself"* (Karl Marx-1852- 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte), is more than a quote, because we can recognize patterns from the past to understand the present so keep the affirming words of ECC. 1:9 (NIV) guide you: *"What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun."* Mothers historically have embraced difficult challenges so stay creative but obedient: Keep Your Faith in God; **NIV**-*"Seek First the Kingdom of Heaven"* (MATT 6:33), *"Love Your Neighbor as Yourself"* (MATT 22:39); *"Forgive as God has Forgiven You"* (EPH 4:32); *Pray Without Ceasing* (1 THES 5:16-17); and enjoy a Blessed MOTHER'S DAY season as "you" journey down pathways that lead to VICTORY!

Submitted by Religion and Race, P. Horton and A. McGirt

Navigating through Mental Health

What is Mental Health?

Mental health is very important to sustain momentum in life. It is a segment of behavioral health that contains our psychological, emotional, and social well-being. Our mental health allows us to cope with all sorts of things; it helps us to collaborate with others and also helps us to realize who we truly are. Which helps us to fulfill our purpose in life.

Risk Factors

Mental health can be targeted by certain risk factors. These risk factors can tamper with an individual's overall well-being. Some of these include lack of access to support, essential needs, unemployment, drugs/alcohol abuse and a lot of other risk factors that can negatively impact someone's mental security.

Steps to Good Mental Health

There are a variety of things that can be done to keep our mental health in good standing. Having a consistent prayer life and relationship with God, will help to keep the mind steady on the right path. Obtaining positive connections with individuals in your life, exercising, eating healthy and practicing self-care. Everyone is not the same and some things work better for others. It is all about how we utilize what works best for us.

Wrapping it all up

To summarize, mental health is important and helps when we challenge the negative with positive mental mechanisms. When we take the steps to follow good mental health strategies, it helps us to live better and fulfill the true purpose that is placed on our life. We are able to be more active and creative in different settings, whether it is in church, work, school or anything we are working towards for the better. We must take the right steps to gain and maintain a strong mental momentum. Having a consistent prayer life, exercising, eating healthy, and surrounding yourself with a positive community helps to maintain a good mental health status.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). *About mental health*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/mental-health/about/index.html>





CREATION CARE MINISTRY NEEDS VOLUNTEERS PLEASE!



Fellowship and Faith: A Night at the Barn Dinner Theatre

Laughter and song filled the air recently as a group of our United Methodist members gathered for a wonderful evening of fellowship at Greensboro's own Barn Dinner Theatre.

The group enjoyed the production of How Great Thou Art, a moving musical that resonated deeply with everyone in attendance. The performance centered on powerful themes of redemption and grace,

brought to life through a selection of beloved hymns and soul-stirring gospel music.

Before the curtain rose, members shared a delicious buffet meal, providing a perfect opportunity to catch up with old friends and welcome new faces. The combination of spiritual music and community connection made for an unforgettable night.

Events like these remind us of the joy found in gathering outside our sanctuary walls to support local the arts and strengthen our bonds of faith. Thank you to everyone who joined us for this special outing!

Interested in future fellowship outings? Keep an eye on the upcoming "Community Events" section of our newsletter for details on our next group excursion!

Submitted by Cynthia McCain

Orders will be placed and payment taken at table in the narthex between services and after 10am/11am.

ST. MATTHEWS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 160th ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE T-SHIRT SALE



ORDER DATES
05/17-05/31

\$15
(CASH ONLY—PAID AT TIME OF ORDER)

SIZES YOUTH XS-L & ADULT S-4XL

PICK-UP 06/14-06/28

DON'T MISS OUT!
RE-ORDERS NOT GUARANTEED.

Proceeds go to support the Fellowship Choir Holiday Concert.



United Women in Faith Spring Tea

On Saturday, April 18 the United Women in Faith (UWF) held its Annual Spring Tea and Membership Drive. Our 2026 theme was **"My Cup Runneth Over"** (Psalms 23:5). Each UWF

sub-group beautifully decorated their table in different spring colors with lovely tea sets and floral arrangements. The Program Committee Chairperson, Gail Haynie stated the Spring Tea was another successful event for the UWF. Around 70 ladies attended and our very own St Matthews member, Dr. Irish Spencer was the guest speaker. She shared thoughts from her book ***For Women, Watch Me Win***. After a delicious lunch, special entertainment was provided by Mr. Najm Muhammad, Saxophonist and student at NC A&T State University. Everyone truly enjoyed his performance. Najm is a very talented and gifted saxophonist.

Another addition to the tea this year was the Service Mission Project led by Michelle Thompson. Fifty personal hygiene bags were packed and donated for female students at one of our elementary Schools in the Guilford County Public School System. Door prizes were donated by Pleasantte Johnson.

A special thank you to the UWF Program Planning Committee, they all made sure another successful, fun and exciting tea was held. The committee included President Pam Moye, Gail Haynie, Karen Guy, Michelle Thompson, April Whitfield, Betsy Brown, Karla Burton, Voncile Ferguson, Shelia Matlock and Cheryl Little.



SPPRC Corner Staff Spotlight:
Kimberly Brown

1. How long have you worked for SMUMC?
a. **18 years**
2. Favorite book you've read in the past 3 years?
a. **Black History: The Un-Whitewashed Story of America by Michael Harriot**
3. How old were you when you started taking piano lessons?
a. **7 years old**
4. Favorite song to play that gives you a peaceful feeling?
a. **Spirit Song**
5. Last road trip was to what state?
a. **Virginia Beach**
6. Name a state you would consider moving to?
a. **Nowhere in the USA. I would live in Montreal, Quebec, Canada**



7. Favorite restaurant in Greensboro?
a. **Lucha Libre Ice Cream & Churros**
8. The vegetable I refuse to eat is _____.
a. **I love vegetables**
9. My favorite thing to do alone is _____.
a. **Travel**
10. What makes you smile?
a. **My daughter love and good food.**

SPPRC Corner Staff Spotlight:

Freddye Dixon

1. How long have you worked for SMUMC?
NOT QUITE A YEAR
2. What's your favorite time of the year?
CHRISTMAS
3. Which do you prefer Krispy Kreme or Dunkin Donuts?
NEITHER
4. Pet Peeve?
CONSISTENT TARDINESS
5. First song you learned to play by memory?
JESUS LOVES ME, THIS I KNOW
6. What's your home church?
MEMORIAL UMC, HIGH POINT
7. What scripture do read over and over?
JER 29:11 & PHIL 4:13
8. You retired from what profession?
CHORAL MUSIC EDUCATOR
9. What're two foods could you not survive without?
NOTHING COMES TO MIND
10. Last movie you saw?
WICKED



MUSIC! MOVEMENT! MEDITATION!

IT'S SPRING...

TIME FOR FUN WITH INSPIRING MUSIC, GENTLE MOVEMENT, AND MEDITATION
ON A WORD OF SCRIPTURE

WEDNESDAYS. APRIL 15 & .22 --- MAY 6 & .13 10:00 -

10:45 A.M. IN THE SANCTUARY

OPEN TO ALL SENIORS

CONTACT GWEN POOLE@ 836-7-1919 FOR QUESTIONS

A Liturgical Arts Ministry Program



Deadline for June/July Newsletter articles is MAY 20, 2026. Theme is "Summer Time: Rest, Renewal & Reflection." Send all articles & photos send to Media Ministry at smumcgreensboro@gmail.com.



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