



2026

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Issue 55

Pastor Tammy's Ponderings



I love hymns! Whether joyful and spirited or gentle and reflective, the hymns I grew up singing are woven into my faith. From our rich Wesleyan heritage to beloved songs such as “Amazing Grace,” “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” and “Victory in Jesus,” these melodies live deep within my spirit.

But one of my absolute favorites is “God Will Take Care of You.” Oh, my sisters and brothers, these words can quiet an anxious heart, comfort a hurting soul, and ease a troubled mind. Listen again to the first verse and refrain: *Be not dismayed whate’er betide, God will take care of you; beneath his wings of love abide, God will take care of you. God will take care of you, through every day, o’er all the way; he will take care of you, God will take care of you.*

Civilla D. Martin wrote these words in 1904 during a time of illness, and her husband composed the music. One early account tells of her husband considering canceling a preaching engagement because of concern for her. Their young son responded with a simple question: Could they trust God to care for his mother while his father went to preach? Though historical accounts differ on the details, the hymn’s enduring message is clear: we can entrust ourselves to God’s care.

That message brings me to a question for each of us: **Do we trust God?**

I know some of you are carrying heavy burdens. Family concerns, health challenges, financial pressures, and unanswered questions can make for long, sleepless nights. Those concerns are

real, and I do not take them lightly. Yet even in the midst of them, the question remains: Do we trust God to hear our prayers, provide for our needs, and sustain us through whatever comes? As I ask you, I must also ask myself. It is easy to preach about faith, sing about faith, and encourage someone else to have faith. But when uncertainty arrives at our own doorstep, will we live what we proclaim?

I believe, with God’s help, we can. The Scriptures show us how.

In **Matthew 17:20**, Jesus teaches His disciples about faith the size of a mustard seed. What a comforting reminder that we do not have to begin with towering confidence! We can bring our small, sincere faith to an almighty God. The power rests in the One we trust. Mustard-seed faith does not mean that every circumstance will unfold exactly as we desire. It means we refuse to make our circumstances the measure of God’s ability. We pray, obey, and take the next faithful step, trusting God with what we cannot control. The mountain may be beyond our strength, but it is never beyond God’s power.

And what about those moments when our faith feels fragile?

In **Mark 9:24**, a desperate father cries out to Jesus, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!” His child needs help, and this father brings Jesus both his belief and his struggle to believe. What an honest prayer! Sometimes that is our prayer, too: “Lord, I know You are able, but I am afraid. I believe You will care for me, but I cannot see the way forward. Help me trust You.” We do not have to hide those feelings from God. We can bring our trembling hearts directly to Him. Asking God to strengthen our faith is itself an act of faith. The God who provides for our needs can also provide the strength we need to keep trusting.

In **1 Peter 1:7**, we learn that genuine faith is more precious than gold. Peter writes to believers enduring trials and describes faith being tested as gold is tested by fire. These words do not make suffering easy, nor do they require us to pretend that pain is pleasant. They remind us that hardship does not mean God has abandoned us. Even there, God can deepen our trust and strengthen our perseverance.

Sometimes we discover God’s provision through an unexpected answer. Sometimes we recognize it in strength to face another day, peace in the middle of uncertainty, or someone who helps us carry the load. As we experience God’s sustaining grace, faith becomes more than something we talk about. It becomes something we have learned to live.

Finally, **Colossians 2:6–7** calls us to continue walking in Christ, rooted and built up in Him, established in faith, and overflowing with thanksgiving. Faith grows as we stay close to Jesus. Like a tree drawing nourishment through its roots, we draw spiritual strength through prayer, Scripture, worship, and fellowship. These daily practices help us remember who God is when life becomes unsettled.

My sisters and brothers, bring God your mustard-seed faith, your honest questions, and your weary heart. Stay rooted in Christ and keep taking the next faithful step. **We may not know how God will provide, but we know the One in whom we have placed our trust. Through every day, o’er all the way—God will take care of you!**

Rev. Tamara Ingram, Senior Pastor

PASTOR TOREY UNPLUGGED

The Harvest Is Plentiful, and We Are the Laborers



Every day I drive around Greensboro, whether it's to get gas, go to the grocery store, take Hezekiah to the park or the museum, or go out with my wife. And every day I notice the same thing: new homes, new apartments, and more and more people on the road. About 308,700 people now live in Greensboro, North Carolina (U.S. Census Bureau, QuickFacts, July 2025 estimate). The harvest is plentiful, and we are the laborers.

So, the question for Saint Matthews is this: How do we build meaningful community while reaching out to people who long to belong to a place where they can serve and to those who need our service?

In Matthew 9, Jesus doesn't tell us to recruit people. He tells us to ask the Lord of the harvest to send them. People come when they see our good works and hear the gospel message of love. So, when someone walks through the doors of Saint Matthews, do they feel welcome, loved, and safe? Do they experience deep connection? This is the work for which we must prepare ourselves for: to genuinely and habitually care for one another, sit with one another, and build relationships through presence, service, and growing together.

I often think about what keeps us from stepping into roles of service and taking on the responsibility of building community. It's layered, but I believe it begins with helping one another feel equipped to thrive, both in our own lives and as a community. Where do you see a need, and how can we help each other grow? Financial literacy, tools for caring for ourselves, cooking classes, and childcare are just a few of the things people are weighing when they ask what is my capacity to serve?

I've watched a colleague say yes. A young woman who recently joined our youth ministry cohort has a family and a career, and she still said yes. I've seen her thrive, find joy in community, and lead, and she is not serving alone. Remembering that we don't serve alone is important. Just as important is finding our own area of passion and interest, so the body of Christ can function and serve one another and our communities.

If you're reading this and thinking there is no way I have time for another responsibility, hear me: everyone has a place. Where do you see a place at Saint Matthews that could benefit from your expertise or passion? Yes, you will need balance and boundaries. But Saint Matthews needs you, and our community needs your smile, gifts, talents, and service. So, create rhythms to care for yourself. Show up. Then find ways to care for others.

Because the harvest is plentiful, and we are the laborers.



CHILDREN'S SABBATH OCTOBER 25, 2026

The 2026 theme for the interfaith [Children's Sabbaths Celebration](#) hosted by the Children's Defense Fund is "A Little Child Shall Lead Them" (based on Isaiah 11:6), with an overarching inspiration of *"Begin Again! Roots, Sacred Rhetoric, and Revolutionary Mothering"*.

On behalf of the Saint Matthews United Methodist Church Ad Hoc Committee, I am writing to share an important policy update regarding food service at all church-sponsored functions.

To ensure safety and quality standards, food prepared or cooked in personal residences may not be served at church events. All food for Saint Matthews UMC events must adhere to the following guidelines:

- Prepared and cooked on-site in the church kitchen with a designated kitchen manager on duty:
- Catered by a licensed vendor: or
- Purchased directly from a retail establishment.

Please note that while Saint Matthews is not responsible for non-member groups hosting events on church grounds, these groups are strongly encouraged to follow the same catering and retail guidelines.



Thank you for your cooperation and dedication to keeping our community safe.

Warm regards,

Hoyte Phifer Ad Hoc Committee Chair



GUILFORD COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

EARLY VOTING

November 3, 2026 General Election



EARLY VOTING
October 15–October 31, 2026



SCAN QR CODE FOR:

- ✓ Directions
- ✓ Election Updates
- ✓ Interactive Map
- ✓ Sample Ballot
- ✓ Site Information
- ✓ Voter Registration

NEED MORE INFORMATION?
www.guilfordelections.org
336-641-3836

EARLY VOTING SCHEDULE	
DATES	HOURS
Thurs., Oct. 15 & Fri., Oct. 16	8:00 AM - 7:30 PM
Sat., October 17 - Sun., Oct. 18	CLOSED
Mon., Oct. 19 - Fri., Oct. 23	8:00 AM - 7:30 PM
Sat., Oct. 24 & Sun., Oct. 25	10:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Mon., Oct. 26 - Fri., Oct. 30	8:00 AM - 7:30 PM
Sat., Oct. 31 (Final Day)	8:00 AM - 3:00 PM



★ ELECTION DAY ★

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2026

Vote at your assigned precinct

6:30 AM–7:30 PM



Click on this link for a fall word search puzzle
<https://share.google/images/j0KXtqi4IHm4FWlIq>



Breast Cancer and African American Women

Committee on Health and Welfare
Submitted By Karlah Y. Burton, CNMT



Breast Cancer is the most fatal health issue for African American women. Although the occurrence rate is slightly lower than that of Caucasian women, African American women are 42% more likely to die from the disease.

Black women under the age of 35 acquire breast cancer at two times the rate of white women and die from breast cancer three times as often.

Here are some additional facts. As of 2019, breast cancer was the most commonly diagnosed cancer among African American women with a total estimated 33,840 original cases (non-race specific), 12.5% per Black women and 15.5% of all breast cancer deaths.

Breast cancer should not be a death sentence. Why are African American women dying? Oftentimes there exists the fear of cancer diagnosis and, therefore, a tendency to avoid screening. Statistically, Black women have less access to healthcare or health insurance so they may have a lower frequency of and longer intervals between mammograms.

Although it is not typically used in early staging due to a higher risk of false positive results, there is a procedure known as PET/CT imaging that helps diagnosis and stage breast cancer. Patients receive an injection of a safe, radioactive tracer (sugar solution into a vein). The PET scan shows metabolic activity as rapidly dividing cancer cells absorb more of the sugar in that they need extra energy as compared to normal cells. The signals detected by the imaging scanner (radioactivity) are then used to create 3D pictures, highlighting active areas of disease. The CT portion provides detailed structural images. Doctors will also order a PET-CT Scan,

- To determine whether **advanced** or **triple-negative breast cancer** has spread to distant lymph nodes, lungs, or liver (staging).
- Monitor current treatment plan
- To check for recurrence:

For more information, contact
Sisters Network, Inc. (National Headquarters)
website: www.sistersnetworkinc.com
9688 Westheimer Road Suite 1200-132
Houston, TX 77063
email: infonet@sistersnetworkinc.org;
(713) 781 0255

Sisters Network, Greensboro,
Brenda Ray, President
PO Box 20304
Greensboro, NC 27420
(336) 272 0092
email: greensboro@sistersnetworkinc.org

Sisters Network Inc. is a leading voice for African American breast cancer survivors. It is the only national African American breast cancer survivorship organization in the US.

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS

By Karlah Burton, Creation Care Ministry General Board of
Global Ministries, UMC Earthkeeper



If you are interested in serving as part of the Creation Care Ministry, please let us know. The raised beds currently in use need to be cleared (except for the large flower

bed and another taller bed), along with weeding, tidying, and otherwise preparing the area for late fall/winter season dormancy.

In 2027, we will be upstarting our community garden project and will need garden volunteers! Other activities will include Adopt-A-Street clean ups, planning for a creation care themed program (e.g. Earth Day or Season of Creation/Creation in Christ Sunday) along with other action items in accordance with the WNCC Green Church Initiative, [WNCCGClone-6a.pdf](https://www.wncc.org/creation-care/creation-care-initiative).

A heartfelt word of thanks to all who have volunteered or served as part of the SMUMC Creation Care Ministry since it was established in 2020! As of 2023, Saint Matthews UMC is a commissioned Green Church as designated by the Western NC Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church! We want to hear your ideas! Thank you for your continued prayers, gifts, and kind words!

Creation will sing to the King (excerpt)

Dear Eternal King.
Your Glory Fills all the Earth.
Creation will Sing.
--author unknown

"God deserves our praise and worship. His glory fills all the earth. As creatures, we are to sing and rejoice. For the Lord is good. His love endures forever." Psalm 136



A Journey Home: Jaxen and Kristine’s Journey to Ghana

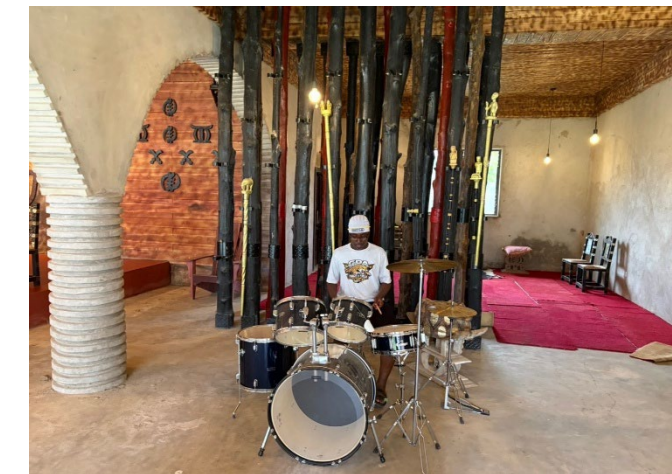


This year, two members of our Saint Matthews church family embarked on a meaningful journey to Ghana, West Africa—one returning to a place that had already captured his heart, while the other experienced the Motherland for the very first time.

Jaxen Jamison, grandson of Dr. Pamela Moye, returned to Ghana, continuing a journey of cultural and spiritual connection that began during his first visit. That earlier experience deepened his appreciation for his African heritage, his faith, and the beauty and warmth of the Ghanaian people. He was especially moved by the sense of freedom he experienced and by witnessing people of different faiths living together in harmony. His love for Ghana also inspired him to give back and serve others.



This time, Jaxen shared the journey with Kristine McNeill, daughter of George McNeill and Lydia McNeill, who traveled to Ghana for the first time. For Kristine, the trip offered an opportunity to experience Ghana’s history, culture, traditions, spirituality, and people firsthand. Together, Jaxen and Kristine walked upon the land of their ancestors and



experienced the powerful connections between Africa and the African Diaspora.

One particularly meaningful moment came when both participated in a traditional naming ceremony. by Ghanaian culture and tradition, they received names that reflected the circumstances of their births as well as qualities of special significance.

Jaxen received the name Kwame Serto — Kwame, meaning born on Saturday, and Serto, meaning Power. Kristine received the name Afi Fafali — Afi, meaning born on Friday, and Fafali, meaning Peace. In that sacred moment, their new names became more than words. They represented heritage, identity, belonging, and a tangible connection between generations separated by history yet reunited through culture.

Their journey reminded them that traveling to Ghana was about much more than visiting another country. It became an opportunity to learn, serve, remember, reconnect, and return transformed.

Jaxen and Kristine returned home carrying more than photographs and souvenirs. They returned with stories, memories, lessons, new names, and a deeper connection to their heritage. We thank God for watching over Kwame Serto and Afi Fafali as they journeyed to the Motherland and returned home carrying a little more of Ghana—and a deeper understanding of themselves — in their hearts.

“The Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.” — Psalm 121:8





Congratulations to Vallerie Boger Bass for her great accomplishment of service in which she received a check for \$1,500.



HONORING OUR ST. MATTHEWS LIVING LEGACIES

As we celebrate the 160th church anniversary, we give special honor to our seasoned seniors, whose lifelong faith, devotion, and wisdom continue to serve as the bedrock of our congregation. We give thanks for their enduring legacy and pray for God's continued blessings upon them.

- Honora Brown
- Margaret Burton
- Esther Carter Buie
- Rev. James A. Curry
- Howard Drake
- Ouida Rush Hodnett
- Coley Hooker
- Peggie Horton
- Mary Scarlette
- Annye ‘Pete’ Wright

[Submitted by Wanda Edgerton based on Safe Sanctuary forms received]



Congratulations to Gwendolyn Poole for her poem, “*Yesteryear in the Valley*,” which placed 3rd in the annual Blue Nib writing contest hosted by the Blue Ridge Writers of Charlottesville, Virginia. Gwen has been a member of the Blue Ridge Writers and the Virginia Writers Club for 10 years. She has had several of her short stories and poems published in the BRW and VWC journals. One of Gwen’s historical fiction stories, “*If God Gave Me Wings*,” was published in the 2017 Skyline Journal. Because “*Yesteryear in the Valley*” placed in this year’s contest, it will be published in the 2026 Journal of the Virginia Writers Club.

THE PORCELAIN DOLL

The Porcelain doll, oh how pretty she is with her brown painted skin and polished glass. A gorgeous creation in a bright pink dress coated with sketches of the past. Oh, how she sits on the vanity, ready to be used, be touched, and felt.

Oh, how she watches her life go by without even a scream, a whisper, or cry for help! Although gorgeous and clean to the touch, Her hollowed insides murmured to angels in secret and in trust. Yes, she is empty, she's crushed, and impure, But she is hopeful, longing, trusting yet unsure.

She is waiting for something to fill her with excitement, joy, peace, and the cure. She is waiting for greatness to show her its lightness, its rest, and safe secure. St. Matthews, we are all porcelain dolls, breathtaking, and structured yet alone on our shelves. We are the porcelain dolls, who refuse to look inside ourselves. Is it because we're afraid that we're cracked, chipped, or even slightly broken? Is it because we know the concealed tears, thoughts, emotions, and words that were left unspoken?

Church, we are porcelain dolls, made by the finest creator, we are his children, his most prized possession, His actors are on center stage in the highest theater. But what's on the inside? What are we keeping buried deep down? Is it a whisper, an echo, or a major sound? It's his voice, his calling, his spirit and his words. It's him whispering, daughter, son, when will I be heard?

When will you let me fill that hollow emptiness with my power? When will you let me mend your fractured hearts stitch by stitch every hour? Yes, you are my porcelain dolls, my most prized possessions, Yes, you are my poised, elegant creations, but you are also my spiritual weapons.

You are my Shields of faith, because you shall not be persuaded by the wicked. You are my swords of the spirit, because you cut off the head of the enemy until his dark soul is sickened. Furthermore, you are my sandals of peace, because where you walk my spirit shall follow. You are also my breast plates of righteousness, because I will protect the heart that the depression tried to swallow.

I will give you such a hope and victory that will sail you through not just today, but tomorrow. But remember this, let your girdles of Truth remind you of all that I am, And let all creation bow and worship the lamb. And finally, the most important rule of all is to put on your helmets of salvation to protect you from my fire that's getting ready to fall. This fire was sent to burn away the pain.

This fire was sent to destroy the enemy's camp And take back what we've already claimed. I purified you in the fiery heat and brimstone my sharpest swords, As soft, dainty, and porcelain you may be, you are ready for war!



By: Kris Radcliffe Stephens
Bennett's Student Chaplin

"Happenings at the Crossroads "

October 18th--Combined Worship Service (Laity Sunday) at 10am. Charge Conference will follow immediately after the service.

TRUNK OR TREAT Saturday, **October 24th** @4pm – 6pm, Britton St. Parking Lot Donations are now being accepted: you may bring bags of individually wrapped candies to place in the designated receptacle in front of the multi-purpose office or submit a financial donation by selecting select other on your envelope/ online option and write in "Trunk or Treat". Thank you for your support.

Good Day St. Mathews Church, my name is Atiana Steward-Boxley, and I am a sophomore biology major from Washington State.

One of the things I love most about God is his intentionality. I love how he will use his people to move and act on his plans, but how this is only possible through faith. I'm going to be honest with you St. Mathews, I struggled to write this speech. I felt a message on my heart, but the words just weren't coming together. So I leaned on my GRK, God, Research, and my friend Kris. Upon my research, I discovered that though this space was occupied for St. Mathews in 1971, your legacy begins over 100 years prior in 1866 when a small community of black families not even a year after the emancipation came together and formed the Warnersville Methodist Episcopal Church. I had to pause here, and I said God, you mean to tell me a community of black people, only months after enduring centuries worth of something as horrific as slavery, turned around and said we got to give him praise. We have to recognize the blessing that is making it out of seemingly endless situations and build a house of worship so that we may commune with our God properly. What a sign of commitment and a testament to enduring faith even through some of the most severe trials.

Let me take it a step further, Bennett was founded in 1873 in your basement, only eight years after founding this church. The community came together again and agreed now it's time to mobilize, now it's time to educate and get educated. So they went and purchased an old plantation. What a full circle moment, a space that was once the grounds for such pain is now dedicated to the higher education of the very same people it tried to keep down. Remember how I said I love God's intentionality, you can't tell me that circle wasn't drawn by God, you can't tell me that this church and it's fruit of a College wasn't ordained by the MOST high. Because God can change your circumstance in an instant, and was once your wildest dreams can become your reality. But you must have FAITH. Faith that God is working in all things, that by placing your life in his hands even if you're only expecting a fish of possibility GOD will bring the ocean of opportunity at your feet so that we may all eat together. Are you still with me?

Fast forward to 1926, Bennett changed to an all girl's school in a time where no one else was doing this. In a time where every other institution was either Co-ed or mens only, God said let this be a space for my daughters to grow. And St. Mathews you said "and for your daughters it shall be" you didn't miss a beat, there was no wavering in support, no pulling of funds, no disaffiliation because God trusted you. You this once small community, that turned trouble into praise, illiteracy into degrees and gave it all to God. He trusted you to make the first all-girls HBCU in the country! And as we round the corner on our hundredth year as an all women college I look back on what Bennett college has become and what Bennett has done for black women and I am left in awe.

I wanted to encompass all that a Bennett woman is and I kept struggling to do our legacy justice but then God said to me. Bennett Belles are my swords, and Bennett college is the place in which I you. This is a space where God uses the fire of challenge, and the heat of getting an education as black women to shape us into swords ready to be wielded in order to enact change into his world. But that would happen if the small community of Warnersville Episcopal Church hadn't seen a vision of a church and a school, this reality wouldn't have been possible had God not been in the room saying to those community members "You don't know it yet but my daughter Atiana is going to need this , My Kris is going to need this, my Yolanda is going to need this, my daughters are going to need to be wielded in this forge so that they may be some of the greatest weapons in my armory. St. Mathews, I know I speak on behalf of all generations of Bennett Belles when I say we cannot thank you enough for all you've done for us and we hope that we can continue to be swords of God's light and a shining beacon on your legacy, Thank you.



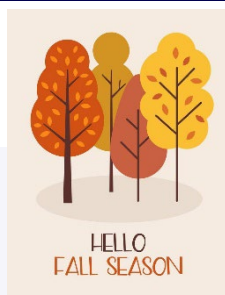




Deadline for November Newsletter articles is Sunday, Oct. 20. Theme is "Count Your Blessings." Send all articles and photos to Media Ministry at smumcgreensboro@gmail.com.



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