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In response to the crisis caused by the novel coronavirus in early 2020, VCU Massey Cancer Center and Virginia faith leaders united to arm our communities with the latest health information through an initiative called Facts & Faith Fridays. As the pandemic progressed, we continued to meet on a weekly or bi-weekly basis to address news headlines impacting the people we serve; it helped them make sense of what was happening and the role their faith could play through the uncertainty.

Today, as a united front, our Facts & Faith Fridays community is watching in horror at the events unfolding in Ukraine. We are heartbroken and must continue to not sit in silence. When Russia launched its invasion on February 24 and during subsequent attacks, innocent lives have been and will continue to be lost. For those of us who remember the Eastern Bloc era and younger generations, we realize these developments amount to a regression of progress made over the years. It is a tragedy for humanity.

While our regional faith-based community works to bridge the gaps between science and religion, we equally recognize that others do not have such opportunities. We lift up the innocent people of both Ukraine and Russia in prayer; may there be a swift resolution to the violence that is not only claiming lives but also changing the lives of survivors who will remember this terror for decades to come.

We stand with Ukraine and look towards our God for guidance and hope amidst the turmoil.

Sincerely,

Adam Bond  
Pastor  
Ebenezer Baptist Church

Alonza Lawrence  
Pastor  
Moore Street Baptist Church

Bishop Darryl Husband  
Pastor  
Mount Olivet Church

Bishop Dexter Cannon  
Pastor  
Grayland Baptist Church

Dr. Cheryl Ivey Green  
Executive Minister  
First Baptist Church of South Richmond

Chris Moore  
Pastor  
New Kingdom Christian Ministries

F. Todd Gray  
Pastor  
Fifth Street Baptist

Dr. Herbert L. Ponder, D. Min.  
Pastor  
Mount Tabor Baptist Church

Dr. Jerome C. Ross  
Pastor  
Providence Park Baptist Church

Dr. Lance D. Watson  
Pastor  
The Saint Paul's Baptist Church North

Larry Miles  
Community Organizer

Dr. Leo Whitaker  
Minister  
Baptist General Convention of Virginia

Rev. Linda C. Jenkins  
Pastor  
Grace and Peace Missionary Baptist Church

Louis R. Blakey Jr.  
Pastor  
New Canaan Worship Center

Rev. Martha Butts  
Pastor  
Fifth Street Baptist

Marvin L. Gilliam  
Pastor  
The Mount Carmel Baptist Church

Patricia Gould-Champ  
Pastor  
Faith Community Baptist Church

Rev. Pierce Williams  
Pastor  
First Union Baptist Church

Dr. Rodney Waller  
Pastor  
First African Baptist Church

Tyrone Nelson  
Pastor  
Sixth Mount Zion Baptist Church

Yvonne Bibbs  
Pastor  
Sixth Baptist Church

Rev. Zynora D. Manson  
Pastor  
Antioch Baptist Church

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*Facts & Faith Fridays is a partnership between VCU Massey Cancer Center and the African American faith-based community. Led by community leaders, Rudene Mercer Haynes, Rev. F. Todd Gray, and Robert A. Winn, M.D., the program was founded in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and has welcomed guests that include First Lady Jill Biden, Dr. Anthony Fauci, U.S. senators, and both current Gov. Youngkin and former Gov. Northam. Facts & Faith Fridays recognizes that faith leaders are trusted sources of accurate information and act as ambassadors for their communities. Participants work together to enhance the lives of their communities through participating in ongoing dialogues around COVID-19 & vaccine distribution, systemic racism and health inequity, cancer risks and prevention, medical myths and mistrust, and health resources in urban and rural communities. Learn more about the program and upcoming events at [masseycancercenter.org/fff](https://masseycancercenter.org/fff).*