

pivotnow[®]

THE PIVOT MINISTRY NEWSLETTER

Spring Graduates Celebrate Growth and Resilience

Pivot's spring graduation took place on May 15, 2026 at St. Peter's Church and World Outreach Center in Winston-Salem. Four graduates were honored and celebrated by their families and friends: **Left to right: Heather Hawks, Daisy Garcia, Paris Sturdivant, and Deshika McCullough.** Graduation Certificates



were presented by Pivot Executive Director **Rev. Joanne Henley**, far left, and Director of Programming and Community Engagement **Michelle Minnich**.



Dr. Timogi Jackson, Keynote Speaker, addressed the graduates with a message titled "I Know What I 'No.'" She reminded the audience of the power of saying "No," a word we all learned as toddlers. However, as adults, many forget that power and let people, places, and bad habits exhaust us. Saying "No" can encourage independence from what holds us back, teach us to set



boundaries, and teach others how to treat us. Near the end of her speech, Dr. Timogi had the audience practice saying "NO!" back to her, getting louder and more enthusiastic each time.

Dr. Timogi Jackson, a graduate of United Cornerstone University, is a transformational leader, speaker, author, and executive strategist.



Right: Thank you to Flutist Kimberly Gleason for providing processional music for the ceremony. Kimberly, a Pivot graduate, earned a BA in music and is working on her master's degree in Trauma, Resilience, and Self-Care Strategies.



Left: Minister Denise Daniel, Pastoral Director at St. Peter's Church and World Outreach Center and Pivot volunteer, welcomed the graduates, guests, and families to the graduation. She offered a prayer to begin the ceremony.

Right: Pivot graduate and former Administrative Coordinator Ivonne Guerra reflected on her journey since graduating from the program. She encouraged donations to Pivot Ministries to help the program continue and flourish. Ivonne has recently taken a position as a Bilingual Career Navigator at Goodwill Industries.





Daisy Garcia

"I came in one way, but I'm leaving transformed. God has healed places in my life, and I've learned that my past does not define my future."



Daisy and her mentor Miah Gaudet.

Heather Hawkins

"I have learned who I am – how to pivot my thoughts, words, and actions so they align with my values, my beliefs, and who I am meant to be."

Heather read an original poem as part of her graduation speech.



Heather and her mentor Susan David.



From Our Graduates... How Pivot Has Changed Their Lives...

Deshika McCullough

"I've learned to forgive and let my past be my past so I can live a peaceful life. I know God is not done with me."



Deshika and her mentor Valerie Wilson.



Paris and her mentor Monica Wilson.

Paris Sturdivant

*I celebrate me
For the woman I became
Through the hurt,
through the pain
I still found my way, hey
I celebrate me
And I won't apologize
Every step I took
Got me to this life...*



*Just hold on
You gon' be all right
Celebrate you...*

*-from Celebrate Me by IngaRose
As part of the ceremony, Paris sang along with "Celebrate Me," a song she had shared with her classmates during the semester as encouragement.*



Members of Pivot's 12th Graduating Class were proud to move their tassels to the left side after their hard work and graduation ceremony.



Graduates decorated the table in front of the stage with items inspired by their participation in class and the support of family and friends, including vision boards, inspirational quotes, and meaningful photos.

One Story at a Time...

Twice a year our graduation ceremony unveils the story of impact created by Pivot's community of class participants and graduates, instructors, mentors, and supporters of every type. Each graduate shares her story and receives well deserved applause! Each story represents the collective impact of your prayers and instruction, mentorship and contributions, lunch sponsorship and conversations, board service and resource development, volunteer organizing, event planning and more.

Thank you for trusting Pivot with your story, time, and resources. Thank you for working together to empower women in our community for better life and work opportunities! Thank you for contributing to this award winning community and our mission! **You make Pivot possible!**

Rev. Joanne Henley, Executive Director

Save These Dates!

Fall Semester Starts August 13

To join the class or refer someone go to pivotnow.org/join

To sign-up to provide lunch go to signupgenius.com/go/10C0F49ABAF2AA5FDC16-63677051-pivot#

**Fall Graduation is Monday, November 30
6:00 pm at Ardmore Baptist Church**

Pivot phone: 336-725-8767, ext. 131

Get Involved with Pivot!

- Refer a participant (fall semester starts Aug. 13)
- Be a mentor (training starts Aug. 8)
- Provide & serve lunch to class (sign-up [here](https://pivotnow.org/join))
- Plan & participate in our graduation ceremony
- Join a Committee: Finance, Fundraising, Governance, or Human Resources

Pivot's **Volunteer Coordinator Christal Pinchback** will be glad to help you find a place of service! The next **Volunteer Orientation** is scheduled for Saturday, August 22. Visit pivotnow.org and click on the Volunteer tab, or email Volunteer@pivotnow.org to contact Christal.

Introducing Pivot's New Volunteer Coordinator!

Pivot is glad to introduce **Christal Pinchback** as



Volunteer Coordinator! Christal began volunteering with Pivot in February 2025, serving on our social media team. As our *volunteer* Volunteer Coordinator, Christal will reach out to potential volunteers and connect them with roles aligning their strengths and interests.

Professionally, Christal holds the role of Project and Budget Manager of the Graduate College at Winston Salem State University.

Interested in being a Pivot volunteer?

Go to: pivotnow.org/volunteer or email: volunteer@pivotnow.org.

Welcome New Pivot Board Members

Pivot Ministry is excited to welcome two new members to our Board of Directors, Dr. Leigh Fritz and Liz Shepard.

Dr. Leigh Fritz serves as Pharmacy Director at Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist High Point Medical Center in High Point, NC. Her commitment to Pivot is deeply connected to her faith and her passion for investing in women and families through encouragement, mentorship, and care. Leigh currently supports Pivot as a mentor. Through both her healthcare leadership and community service, she brings a thoughtful and compassionate perspective to the work of empowering women.



Liz R. Shepard, a Winston-Salem native, serves as Assistant Director for Academic Initiatives, Curriculum, and Assessment at Winston-Salem State University and is a co-founder of RebelEd Co. Her commitment to Pivot is rooted in building sustainable, community-centered solutions that help women feel supported, connected, and empowered. Liz also currently supports Pivot on the social media team and serves on the fundraising committee.



Please join us in welcoming Liz and Leigh to the Pivot Ministry Board. We are grateful for the leadership, heart, and experience they bring as we continue supporting women across our community!

Pivot Plus Brings Support and Connection

The PIVOT Plus team continues to provide support, encouragement, connection and opportunities to learn and grow. We met on May 2 with the theme “Room at the Table – Food for the Soul.” Tables were set with a place for each woman and time to get to know each other better. Minister Denise Daniel offered inspiring words about how we create room for connecting to God and others in our lives in ways that nourish our souls. She invited the women present to provide wisdom and ideas about maintaining focus. Graduates left knowing new people, committed to reducing the distraction of their phones, and aware of tools to reduce stress. Minister Daniel inspired all of us with her wisdom and love.

We also piloted a new **Pivot Plus Bible Study group** this spring, led by Pivot graduate **Dorothy Barnhill**. This group met every other week from April-June at The Enterprise Center, exploring women of the Bible, learning from each other different ways to view the same story. The Bible study group will take a break for the summer, but plan to join us this fall. More information to come!

What a joy it is to gather together as we move forward on this journey. If you would like to join the Pivot Plus volunteer team, please email volunteer@pivotnow.org. **Pivot graduates and community volunteers are welcome!**



Top 3 photos: May 2 “Room at the Table – Food for the Soul” Event
Above and right inset: Bible Study Group

Fundraising Committee Wins Award

Pivot Ministry’s **Fundraising Committee** was recognized with the **2026 Forsyth County Governor’s Volunteer Service Award for a Faith-Based Organization**. Coordinated locally by Hands On NWNC, this award recognizes individuals and organizations making meaningful contributions through volunteer service across Forsyth County.



Pivot’s Fundraising Committee plays a vital role in supporting the organization’s mission to transform the lives of women in Winston-Salem through education, mentoring, spiritual support, and practical resources. This dedicated committee of board and community

members contributed more than 650 volunteer hours in 2025 to help keep programming free and accessible.

For more information about the awards ceremony click here: [Award](#).



Back row l to r: Musette Nesbit, Carolyn Carpenter, Liz Shepard. **Front row l to r:** Sallye Liner, Chair; Betty Lou Vontsolos, Lori Timm, Vicki Miller, Bob Fly. **Not pictured:** Shannon Allen, Diane Joyner, Jamie Rorrer, and Jennifer Szescula.