

*Celebrating*  
THE LIFE &  
LEGACY OF



ALPHA  
10.11.1926

*The Very Reverend Dr.*  
**ROBERT L.  
BURGESS**

OMEGA  
7.14.2025

FRIDAY, JULY 25, 2025

ZION CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST  
312 GRAND AVENUE, FREEPORT, NY 11520 | BISHOP FRANK A. WHITE, HOST PASTOR

# THE ORDER OF WORSHIP & CELEBRATION FOR

## *Overseer* ROBERT L. BURGESS

**\* | Where indicated, please stand**

Musical Prelude	A Medley of Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs
*The Great Processional	The Cross Bearer, The Visiting Prelates, The Adjutant Bishop, The Eulogist, The Officiant, The Burgess Family
The Necrology & Removal of Episcopal Insignia	Bishop Shawn R. Mason II
The Final Act of Honor	The Burgess Family
The Sealing of the Bier	The Grandsons
*The Call To Worship	Psalm 100 Responsive Reading
Song of Praise	RLB Memorial Ensemble
*The Prayer of Comfort	Pastor Terrance Daye
A Lesson From The Old Testament Reading	Isaiah 25:1-9 Pastor Neil Allen
A Reading From The Epistles	Revelation 21:1-7
*The Hymn of Victory	"Farther Along" Bishop Delbert Dove
Resolutions and Acknowledgements of Cards	Pastor Doreen Bullard
Civic Reflections	Madeline Quintyne Mcconney Town of Babylon Representative
Ecumenical Reflections	*2 Minutes, please. Bishop Walter C. Willie, Jr.   Rev. Valdimar Slater
Musical Tribute	Evangelist Valerie Boyd
Ecumenical Reflections	*2 Minutes, please. Apostle J. Raymond Mackey   Dr. Gina Talbert   Bishop Andy C. Lewter



The Founder's Legacy

Video Presentation

Song of Triumph

"When the Battle Is Over"

RLB Memorial Ensemble

Words of Appreciation

Elder Lynn Godwin | Grace Community Church Leadership  
Sister Sandy Quedraogo | Women's Fellowship  
Deacon Willie Lanham | Men's Fellowship

Words of Honor

The Burgess Family

This Is My Story (Obituary)

Video Presentation

The Lord Thy God/O The Glory

Min. Malissa Redmond

### INTRODUCTION OF THE EULOGIST

Song of Preparation

"The Heavens Are Telling"

RLB Memorial Ensemble

The Eulogy

Elder Leon Byrd  
Victory Tabernacle Church | Raleigh, North Carolina

\* The Benediction & Recessional \*







# *From Our Hearts to Dad*

With profound gratitude to our Heavenly Father, we celebrate the extraordinary gift it has been to live with, learn from, grow and model ourselves after such an exceptional man. From our earliest steps to our journeys into adulthood, we witnessed firsthand the many roles you so faithfully embraced: first and foremost as a devoted husband to Mom, and as our loving, protective father. You were a dedicated bacteriologist, NYC health inspector, community civic leader, deacon, Sunday School teacher and superintendent, minister, mentor, pastor, administrator—and, until the very end, our beloved Overseer.

Thank you for your unwavering perseverance, clear vision, exemplary leadership, steadfast integrity, and faithful obedience to the Word of God. Through every storm, you displayed strength and grace, leading with an anointing that established you as a true patriarch in Christ. We have always depended on your love, your fervent prayers, and your timeless wisdom, which we will continue to take with us through the seasons of our lives.

And now, as we reflect on the many titles you have carried and fulfilled with honor, one name remains our greatest treasure. We were blessed beyond measure to call you, “Daddy.”

Rest well, and we'll see you in Glory.

*With all our love,*  
Your Girls—Alexia, Robyn, and Cheryl





# *The Obituary*

— THIS IS MY STORY —

## ***CHAPTER 1: THE BEGINNING***

Rev. Dr. Robert L. Burgess was born October 11, 1926, in Belhaven, North Carolina. He was the first son and the second of four children born to James and Georgia Burgess. He attended and graduated from the local schools in his hometown. During World War II, he proudly served in the United States Army from 1945 to 1946, stationed in Fürth, Germany.

## ***CHAPTER 2: COLLEGE AND MEETING HIS BRIDE***

Following his honorable discharge, Rev. Dr. Robert L. Burgess attended Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina. While there, he became a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity (Beta Rho Chapter), the University Chorale Society, and the Veterans Club. He graduated in 1951. Shortly afterward, he moved to New York City and married his college sweetheart, Jacqueline Church, in August 1953. Over the next twelve years, they relocated from Harlem to St. Albans, Queens, eventually settling in Amityville, New York.

## ***CHAPTER 3: WORK AND EARLY CIVIC INVOLVEMENT***

Rev. Dr. Robert L. Burgess began his professional career as a Laboratory Bacteriologist and later served in the New York City Department of Health as a Health Inspector for over 30 years. During that period, he also pursued studies at Syracuse University through the Department of Continuing Education.

As a young homeowner in North Amityville, he became an advocate for civil rights and equal opportunity. As president of the Darrynane Civic Association, he led efforts that included legal battles against the Town of Babylon, challenging discriminatory down-zoning practices. His efforts ultimately took him to the New York State Supreme Court in pursuit of justice for his community.

## ***CHAPTER 4: EARLY MINISTRY YEARS***

In 1966, Rev. Dr. Robert L. Burgess and his wife joined Bethel A.M.E. Church in Copiague, New York. There, he served faithfully as a Sunday School teacher, Superintendent of Sunday School, and Church Steward. In 1974, he accepted the call to ministry, a decision that would become the defining journey of his life.

He prepared for ministry through studies at New York Theological Seminary and the First District Institute of the A.M.E. Church. He was ordained an A.M.E. Minister by Bishop Allen Hilderbrand and served under Rev. Simon P. Bouie, later becoming Associate Pastor under Rev. Floyd Black.

## ***CHAPTER 5: PASTORAL YEARS AND CIVIC IMPACT***

In February of 1984, Rev. Dr. Robert L. Burgess founded Grace Community Church in Amityville alongside a dedicated core of founding members. The church worshipped in various locations—including Wyandanch Daycare Center, Ace Community Center, Goode Funeral Home, and Bethesda Seventh Day Adventist Church—before breaking ground on its own church building. The groundbreaking service was officiated by Bishop Frank O. White.

Under Rev. Dr. Robert L. Burgess's leadership, Grace Community Church flourished. The church grew in membership and became a beacon of faith, compassion, and outreach, ministering to the sick, the poor, the bereaved, and the imprisoned.



During this time, Rev. Dr. Robert L. Burgess served on the African American Advisory Board of Suffolk County under County Executives Robert Gaffney and Steve Levy. He also founded the Ad Hoc Committee to challenge discriminatory lending practices by banks toward churches, particularly those with predominantly African American congregations. His advocacy helped bring greater access to financial support for many churches.

On October 24, 2015, Rev. Dr. Robert L. Burgess passed the mantle of pastoral leadership to his daughter, Rev. Alexia Burgess Huart, and was elevated to the esteemed office of Overseer. Overseer Rev. Dr. Robert L. Burgess continued to teach, preach, and mentor with grace and wisdom in his later years.

## ***CHAPTER 6: THE HOBBYIST***

Overseer Rev. Dr. Robert L. Burgess lived life with a passion for learning, travel, and creativity. He traveled extensively, visiting Ghana, South Korea, France, England, Spain, Italy, and numerous Caribbean islands.

His love for photography began during college, where he served as yearbook photo editor. That passion carried through his life as he captured countless family moments through photos and home videos. He was also an avid gardener, often tending to his yard on Saturday mornings.

His greatest recreational joy, however, was fishing. He cherished his time on the Atlantic Ocean with his fishing buddies, where laughter, reflection, and companionship filled many peaceful days.

## ***CHAPTER 7: THE FINAL CHAPTER***

Overseer Rev. Dr. Robert L. Burgess leaves behind a legacy of faith, service, and love. He is survived by his devoted wife of over 71 years, Jacqueline. Together, they raised three daughters: Pastor Alexia Burgess, Rev. Robyn L. Walton (Jeffrey), and Mrs. Cheryl A. Johnson (Derek).

He is the cherished grandfather of eight: Lavelle Evans (predeceased), Yandrea, Michelle, Jeffrey, Derek, Jordan, Deryca, and Desrae (Colin); and the great-grandfather of five: Jayden, Sélah, Joni, Kaysen, and Railynn.

He was preceded in death by his beloved parents and all his siblings. With his passing, a chapter closes—a patriarch and cornerstone of the Burgess family. His life spanned nearly a century, carrying with it the stories, sacrifices, and strength of those who came before. Overseer Rev. Dr. Robert L. Burgess's legacy lives on in every life he touched, every sermon he preached, and every seed of justice he sowed. His was a life well lived, to the glory of God.

We chose to tell his story in chapters because God was present in every part—guiding, shaping, and sustaining him along the way. A faithful life doesn't just happen; it's lived on purpose, with grace in each season. We all have a story—may we live ours in a way that honors the Author.





# Grandfather

My Dear Grandfather, I'm really going to miss our Sunday dinners out with family, handing you the check with the biggest smile, just like always. I'll cherish the memories of you waking me up, asking if I want to go to IHOP, sharing those simple yet special moments that meant so much. Thank you for handling all of my cars and for your unwavering support in helping me start my business. Your prayers and encouragement for its success meant the world to me, and I know you are always here in spirit.

Now that there's no you, I find myself asking, What do we do now? But I know that we will honor your legacy by implementing all that you have taught us—your wisdom, kindness, and strength.

*Until we see you again in heaven, I'll be here, missing you deeply but forever grateful for the time we shared.*

Love always, Yandrea

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Thank you for showing me what family is about and who God truly is. Thank you for always loving me no matter what and making sure people knew and understood I was your granddaughter. You were a phenomenal man who gave so much to family and the community. I am forever grateful for every hymn I learned and the love I grew for the lord. You will be missed tremendously and we love you always! *I may have been born a Huart but I have Burgess in my heart and soul.*

Michelle

---

Pop, I've had the privilege to watch you for my entire life. You have been my blueprint. I went from picking out your robes as a child to having you christen and bless my own children. And I'm so grateful that they got to know you and have you love on them. They were crazy about you. You were always Se's first stop when she would get to the house.

I've watched you love our church, our community, but most of all I've witnessed you take care of our entire family. You carried that load with such grace, honor, and dignity. Thank you for being the same every day as you were on Sundays, standing behind that podium. *Integrity and character truly defined you.* And I was so glad that we were all able to come together and celebrate you and tell you how much you mean to us, how much you mean to me.

Not long ago, I told you that you won, you beat the game. You came from such humble beginnings, and you and Grandma built something that will outlast you both—a legacy. To say I will miss you will be the understatement of my life.

Your Grandson JJ.

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Grandpa, Words would never be able to explain how much you mean to me. *There literally would be no me without you.* You telling me that you are proud of me for the man I've become will always be with me. I love you forever. My army inspiration. To my GUY! I love you

Jordan

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Grandpa, you were such an important role model in our family and really set a positive example for all of us. *I've looked up to you and have always been truly in awe of your dedication to living your life by the word of God.* I will never forget your love, intelligence, poise, endless wisdom, and all the great advice you've given to me over the years. You will be enormously missed, and I hope you are smiling down on us from Heaven.

Love, Derek Jr.

Grandpa, July 11th was your Homecoming Day—your day of all days. After your long and courageous battle with cancer, you've now received the Ultimate Reward. Though we knew this day was coming, it still doesn't feel real. It's hard to believe you're truly gone.

Today, I'm comforted knowing your suffering is over, and that you're whole and rejoicing in heaven with your Father. I miss you more than words can say. You weren't just my Grandpa—you were my hero, a spiritual giant, and a legacy in motion. Your life's impact continues to shine through each one of us who loved you. Thank you, Jesus, for the honor of knowing him for these thirty years. I love you, Grandpa—always.

Deryca

---

Grandpa, you are missed, loved, and never forgotten.

I learned many lessons from you, some through words and many through the way you lived. *You reminded me to cherish my loved ones and community, and never lose sight of what truly matters in this life.* I'm grateful that I was able to spend this past Father's Day with you, creating memories I'll have forever. Grandpa, may your soul rest peacefully in heaven.

Desrae

---

Grandpa, you are missed, loved, and never forgotten.

I learned many lessons from you, some through words and many through the way you lived. *You reminded me to cherish my loved ones and community, and never lose sight of what truly matters in this life.* I'm grateful that I was able to spend this past Father's Day with you, creating memories I'll have forever. Grandpa, may your soul rest peacefully in heaven.

Desrae

---

*I love you and miss you and wish you were still here to share butter pecan ice cream*

Jaysen

Grandpa I'm going to miss you. *I love you very much.*

Kaysen

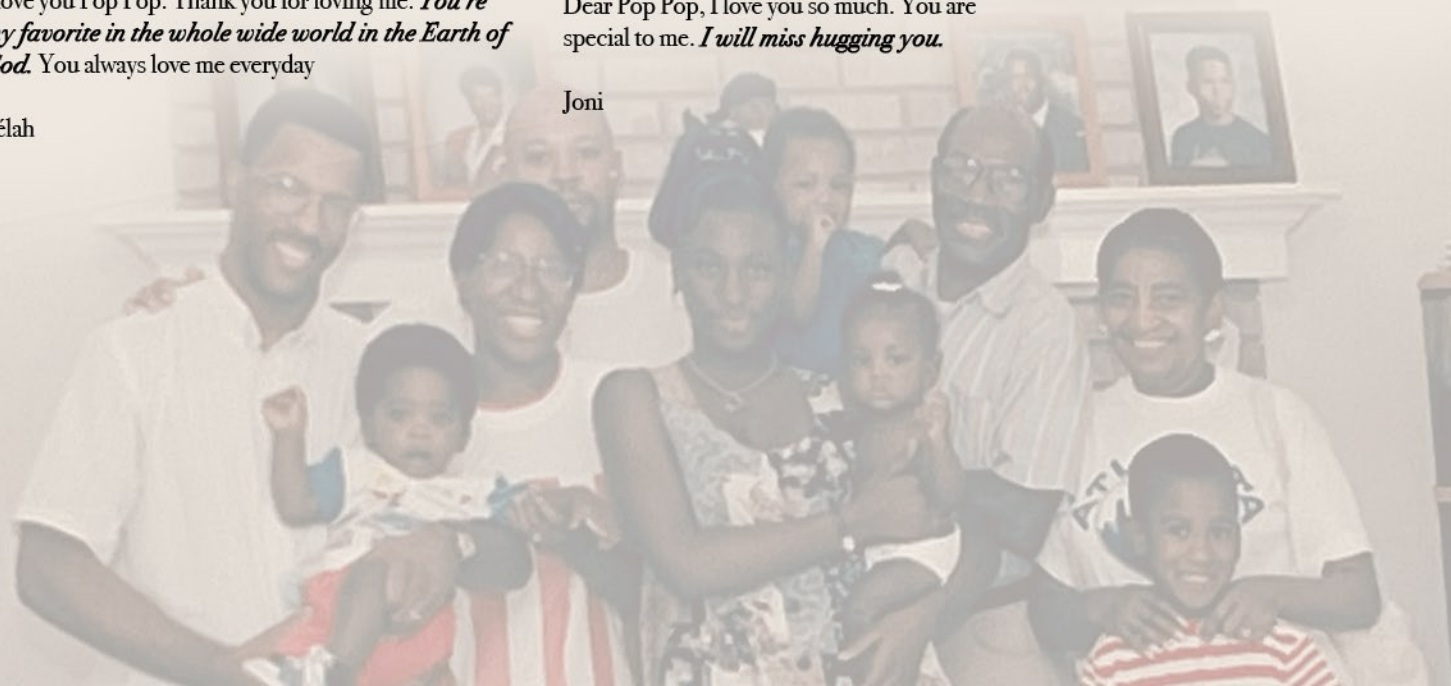
I love you Pop Pop. Thank you for loving me. *You're my favorite in the whole wide world in the Earth of God.* You always love me everyday

Sélah

Dear Pop Pop, I love you so much. You are special to me. *I will miss hugging you.*

Joni

Pop Pop











*Forever  
in our Hearts*



To everyone who took the time, made a sacrifice, or lent a helping hand to make today special — we deeply appreciate you. It was our heart's desire to honor Overseer Burgess with the highest regard, and your love, presence, and support have made that possible.

# Thank You

## *Special Thanks To:*

### **HOME VISITING NURSES**

Min Rhee  
Danny  
Melanie

### **HOST CHURCH**

Bishop Anthon White  
The Zion Cathedral Staff

### **FINAL ARRANGEMENTS**

Goode Funeral Home  
Heavenly Too Florist  
Grace Community Church Family &  
Ministerial Staff

### **GRAPHICS & PROGRAM**

Omega Celeste of Seventh + Lane

### **VOICE OVER**

Din Tolbert

### **RLB ENSEMBLE & BAND**

Brian K. Wright  
Briana Young  
D'Yonna Page  
Chris Anthony  
Candida Walker  
Jammal Graham  
David Moxy  
Daniel 'Flash' Revell  
James Joyner  
Sidney Antoine

### **SOLOISTS**

Evangelist Valerie Boyd  
Minister Malissa Redmond  
Bishop Delbert Dove

### **MINISTERIAL SUPPORT**

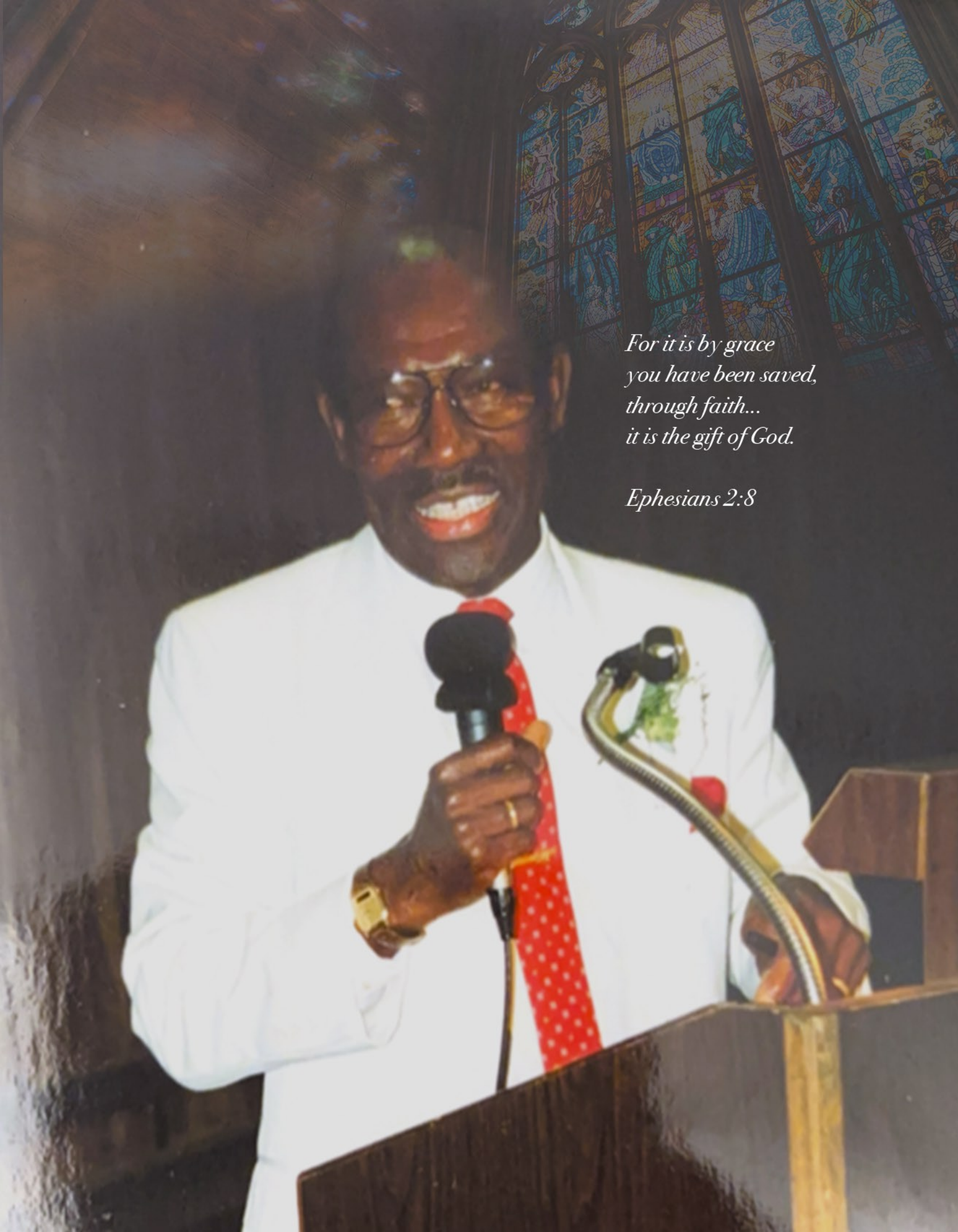
Rev. Dr. Keith Hayward  
Bishop Shawn R. Mason II  
Pastor Terrance Daye  
Pastor Neil Allen  
Pastor Doreen Bullard  
Bishop Willie  
Rev. Valdimar Slater  
Bishop James Raymond Mackey  
Dr. Gina Talbert  
Bishop Andy C. Lewter  
Rich Schaffer  
Madeline Quintyne Mcconney

Thank you for standing with us in this moment of remembrance. Your kindness will never be forgotten.

—*The Family of Overseer Burgess*





A photograph of a man with dark skin and glasses, smiling while speaking at a wooden podium. He is wearing a white dress shirt and a red tie with white polka dots. He holds a black microphone in his right hand. A gold watch is visible on his left wrist. The background features a large, colorful stained glass window with religious scenes. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

*For it is by grace  
you have been saved,  
through faith...  
it is the gift of God.*

*Ephesians 2:8*





# *A Shepherd's Journey*

IN HONOR OF OVERSEER ROBERT L. BURGESS

He heard the call—not loud, but clear,  
A whisper wrapped in scripture near.  
From borrowed rooms and sacred halls,  
He built a place where mercy calls.

With faith not measured brick by stone,  
He dreamed a church that felt like home.  
Grace Community—by name and deed,  
A house of healing, born from need.

He pastored hearts, not just the pews,  
He lifted burdens, preached good news.  
From Wyandanch to Amityville,  
His voice spoke peace, his hands stayed still.

He stood for justice, spoke with fire,  
Challenged banks to do what's right, not higher.  
He saw the walls that blocked the door,  
And fought so churches could do more.

And when the time to pass the flame,  
He did it humbly, not for fame.  
To his own daughter, strong and wise,  
He gave the church, and stepped aside.

Yet even then, he did not rest,  
He mentored still, he gave his best.  
A father, pastor, civic guide,  
A humble giant dignified.

Now heaven gains a voice, a song,  
But here on Earth, his works live on.  
The last of many, yet still the seed—  
He sowed in love, he met the need.

We rise in honor, not in grief—  
For such a life is not so brief.  
It echoes still in grace and truth,  
In every elder, child, and youth.