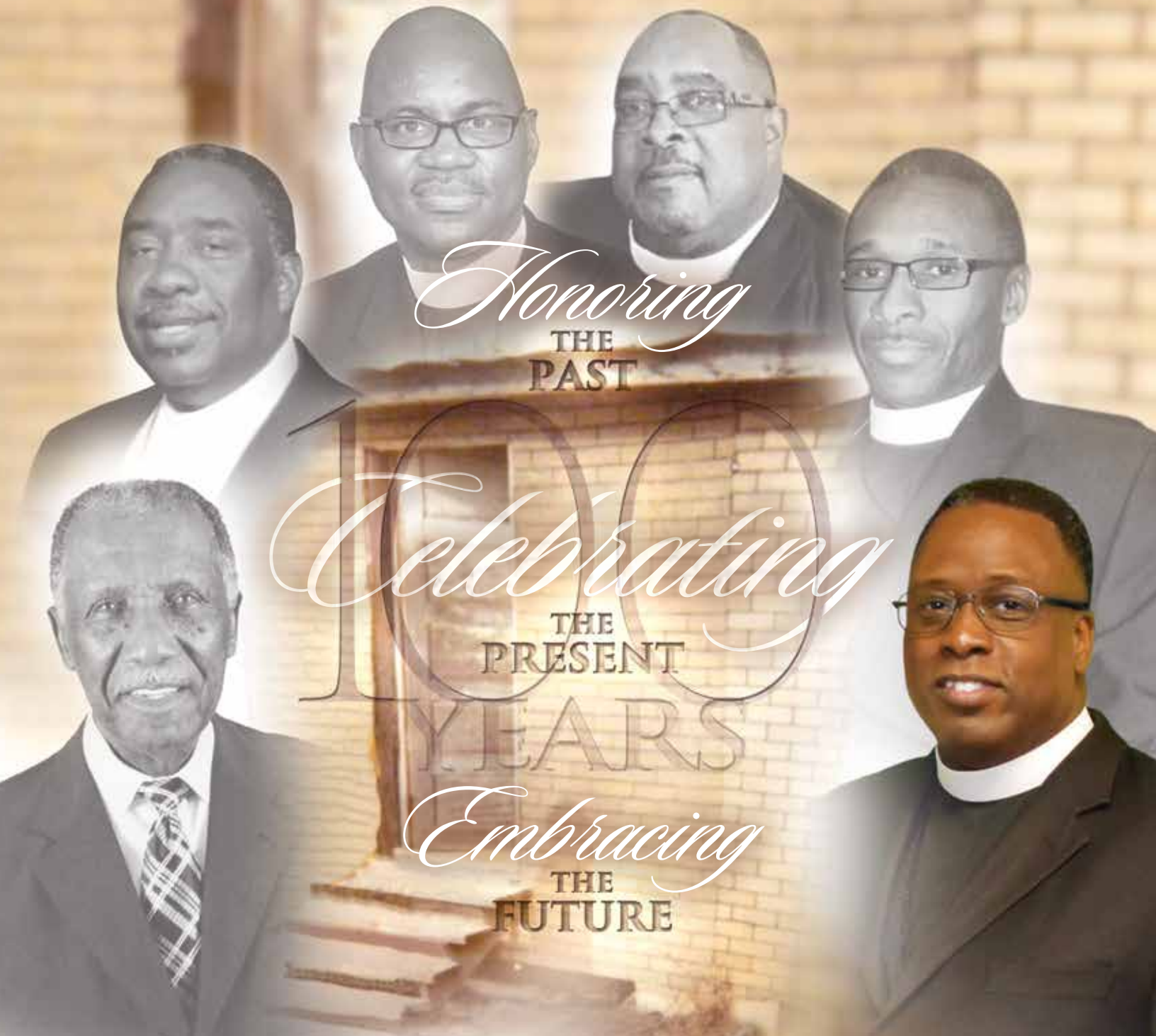


# LEGACY

Mars Hill Church of God in Christ 2023



*Honoring*  
THE  
PAST

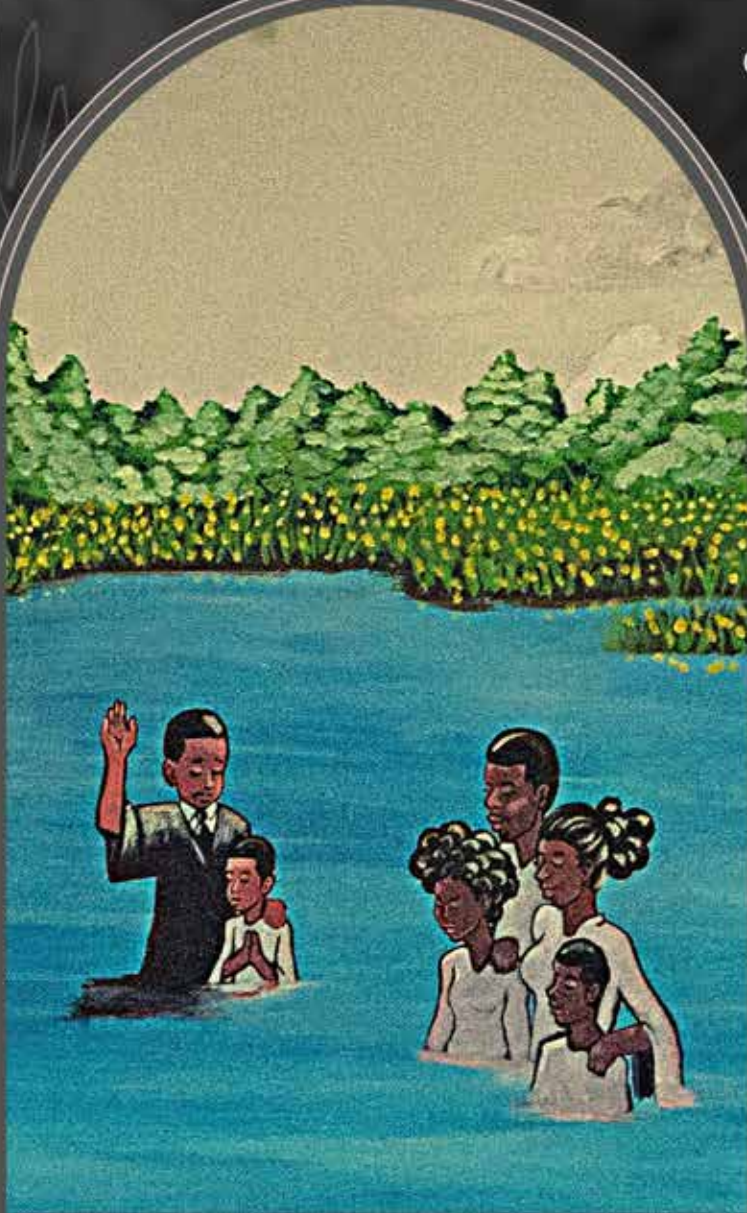
*Celebrating*  
THE  
PRESENT  
YEARS

*Embracing*  
THE  
FUTURE

# MISSION

## STATEMENT

"TO SHARE THE  
GOSPEL MESSAGE  
THAT WILL  
MAKE BELIEVERS  
OUT OF  
NON-BELIEVERS  
AND MAKE  
KINGDOM  
DISCIPLES  
OUT OF  
BELIEVERS."





*Greetings*  
FROM  
**PASTOR & FIRST LADY**

*And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you,  
and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;  
And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake..."*  
Thessalonians 5:12-13(a)

My Brothers and Sisters, Grace and peace, be unto you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We give thanks to God for each of you that are reading and experiencing our first publication of this magnitude.

As we commemorate the legacy of our past leaders and parishioners, we are inspired to remain committed to the work of the Lord: by living submitted and obedient lives to the will of our Heavenly Father, through our Savior Jesus Christ. It is our endeavor to honor those that are currently living and laboring for the Lord, but also by paying homage to those that lived, labored, and laid a strong spiritual foundation before us. Though they have gone from labor to reward, the fruit of their work remains and will not be forgotten. It is through their commitment that we as a church are able to minister beyond our walls and touch lives in the surrounding communities; fulfilling the Great Commission (Matthew 16: 18-20).

This is our 100th year of existence, and we are honored to partake in the centennial celebration of the history of our church, Mars Hill Church of God in Christ. It is our earnest prayer that our efforts will ensure that the godly legacy of our church continues into future generations.

Yours in Christ

Pastor Porter Ross, Jr.

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## A publication of:

Mars Hill Church of God in Christ  
Elder Porter Ross, Jr., *Pastor*



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FUTURE

# 2023 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## 01 January

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

## 02 February

29	30	31	1	2	3	4
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19	20	21	22	23	24	25
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## 03 March

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## 04 April

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## 05 May

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## 06 June

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## 07 July

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28	29	30	31			

## 08 August

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27	28	29	30	31		

JULY 21-23, 2023 • CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

AUGUST 20, 2023 • WOMEN'S DAY PROGRAM

OCTOBER 15, 2023  
PASTOR & FIRST LADY'S APPRECIATION

OCTOBER 22, 2023  
BREAST CANCER AWARENESS PROGRAM

DECEMBER 11-15, 2023  
COMMUNITY BASKET GIVEAWAY

DECEMBER 17, 2023  
CHRISTMAS FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

FEBRUARY 26, 2023 • BLACK HISTORY PROGRAM

APRIL 9, 2023 • EASTER PROGRAM

APRIL 22, 2023 • PRAYER BREAKFAST

MAY 14, 2023 • MOTHER'S DAY PROGRAM

MAY 28, 2023 • PENTECOST SUNDAY SERVICE

JUNE 18, 2023 • MEN'S DAY PROGRAM

## 09 September

27	28	29	30	31	1	2
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10	11	12	13	14	15	16
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## 10 October

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29	30	31				

## 11 November

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26	27	28	29	30		

## 12 December

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3	4	5	6	7	8	9
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24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						



**MARS HILL**  
**CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST**

**I CAN DO ALL THINGS  
THROUGH CHRIST  
WHO STRENGTHENS ME**

SUNDAY SCHOOL 10 AM PRAYER & BIBLE BAND WED 7 PM  
WORSHIP SUNDAYS 11:30 PM



PASTOR:  
Elder Porter Ross Jr.



# LEGACY

*Past*

# Celebrating 100 Years

*Contributors: The Late Pastor Stanley Gipson, Sister Lashonna Clemons, Brother Billie Horne, Church Mothers' Board, Sister Sharon Cole, Deacon Gregory Clemons, District Missionary Rosie Harris*

The rich tradition of Mars Hill Church of God in Christ began in 1923 under the leadership of Superintendent McDowell during a mighty move of God that swept through Neshoba County, MS. Given the turbulent social times of the time, it was no surprise that finding a place to house the group of "Sanctified," "Holy Rollers" was difficult, so the first church services were held in a house owned by Douglas Warren on Highway 486. (MS). During this time, Mars Hill faced challenges such as men throwing rocks on the rooftop during bible study, but the mothers of the church remained determined to teach the Word of God.

Our history of diligent pioneers includes Mother Edice Slaughter, Mother Callie Clemons, Mother Howard Johnson, Mother Bernice Wilson, Mother Winnie Hodge, Sister Allean Rush, Mother Estella Houston, Mother Arceola Harris, Mother Pearleava Miller, Mother Carrie Seales, and Mother Sally Marsh. It is through the faithfulness of these holy women of God that Mars Hill was blessed, and the first official church was erected on a pasture owned by Mr. Tom Lowery. Praise the Lord!

The Pastoral Legacy of Mars Hill includes Elder Couledge, Elder Butler, Elder Bates, Elder



**MOTHER  
EDICE SLAUGHTER**



**MOTHER  
HOWARD JOHNSON**



**MOTHER  
BERNICE WILSON**



**MOTHER  
WINNIE HODGE**



**SISTER  
ALLEAN RUSH**



**MOTHER  
ESTELLA HOUSTON**



**MOTHER  
ARCEOLA HARRIS**



**MOTHER  
PEARLEAVA MILLER**



**MOTHER  
CARRIE SEALES**





**ELDER  
MCPAYTON**



**SUPERINTENDENT  
J.E. EATON**



**SUPERINTENDENT  
GEORGE MURRAY**

McPayton, Elder J.D. Jones, Elder C.H. Sharpe, Superintendent J.E. Eaton (interim), and Superintendent George Murray. The forefathers of Mars Hill laid the foundation and legacy that continues to impact and influence the faithfulness of our members and the community. While much is not known of the daily lives of these men of God, we do

know that their efforts were not in vain.

The foremothers of Mars Hill were diligent and willing in the work of the ministry through prayer, bible study, and missions. Their contributions set a standard for women of God in the church and community. Foremothers including Mother Clara Bell Clemons, Mother Hodge, Mother Callie Clemons, and others worked together in unity, and their harvest helped the church continue to flourish.



**SUPERINTENDENT  
ISAAC HARRIS**

In 1969, Mars Hill welcomed its eighth pastor, the young Elder Isaac Harris. As a young father, his heart for the youth overflowed in the ministry and his mission to save the youth was embraced and the church grew mightily. Members would often leave the services saying, “Oh, what a time did the saints have!”. Praise in song and dance would go on for hours with Brother Slaughter playing the guitar and Msn. Harris and the church mothers singing Songs of Zion. During this time of exponential growth, the church grew via word-of-mouth and people would stand outside of the doors and windows to hear the members sing. People from all walks of life would come for the worship experience that for many were new and wonderful, a glorious time in the Lord. Pastor Harris would conduct revivals to help carry out the commission of preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. The church grounds were saturated with prayer and the

anointing of God could be felt by simply walking on the grounds.

During his second year of pastoral leadership, Pastor Harris was burdened by the physical condition of the church building and committed to not receiving another Pastoral Appreciation program until a new facility was completed. Shortly after this declaration, he led the church in a search for land while encouraging all members that were sharecroppers to purchase their own land and build houses. His wisdom in leadership was not only a blessing to the church but to the daily lives of its members and many became first-time homeowners. Fundraisers were held in preparation for the future: a new church edifice. His instructions were meticulous and missioned, including the directives regarding donations and fundraisers; no fish fries, chicken plates, or cold iced tea fundraisers.

Pastor Harris' leadership and character in the church and community garnered the help of many who gave generously through Church rallies, which were uplifting and encouraging to all who attended. The power of God moved in the hearts of the church members and "the spirit of giving" flowed within the community and throughout the county.

During this time, the brothers of the church agreed to apply for a bank loan as a ready response to their commitment to the vision of building a house for God. With God's favor before them, they successfully secured the loan. Purchasing land and ground-breaking began. The Mars Hill family faced many challenges during the new construction, but through faith and perseverance, they completed the new edifice eight months after the ground-breaking day (1975). The new edifice included two restrooms and a small dining room.

Pastor Harris accepted the call to compel men to Christ and increased evangelism through community outreach, producing an influx of church growth among young adults. Members of Mars Hill referred to this as "when the sheep begat sheep". With yet another influx of church growth from within the community; the church now needed to expand the building to accommodate the people.

On August 13, 1993, an additional acre of land was purchased with new additions beginning in September of '95. New additions included the main sanctuary, two front lobby restrooms, and a rectory (pastoral housing). Further renovations and additions in '97 consisted of the dining hall, church exterior (updated to brick), new carpet installation, and several maintenance projects. The people kept coming and the church continued to grow.

Within a short period of time, the church purchased additional land, bringing its land assets to over five (5) acres including the church cemetery. The addition of the church cemetery prompted county contributions (culvert installations) creating easier and more efficient access.



*Mother Hodge was recorded as the first person to be buried in the cemetery.*

Pastor Harris worked with local officials, businesses, and members of the community in completing other projects/additions including paving the church parking lot (financial contribution of Mother Willie Yarell) and the donation of a piano. New church pews were purchased (donated old pews to another church), and community members discounted

construction resources along with numerous financial contributions.

Local hospital workers would often call on the members of Mars Hill to pray for those dealing with health challenges and their testimonies of healing soon spread across the county. As Pastor Harris would often say, "It's not about a shout and a dance, but how you live in the community that makes a difference."

Under the leadership and administration of Superintendent Isaac Harris, Mars Hill experienced unsurmountable church growth, development, and land acquisitions that continue to serve as a blessing for the church and community.

In January 2006, Mars Hill pastor and members stood in agreement to pay off the church mortgage; this bond of unity in the faith resulted in an early pay-off and substantial savings for the church.

**Superintendent Stanley Harris (2010 - 2016)**

Superintendent Stanley Harris was appointed as pastor of Mars Hill in 2010, after the passing of his father Superintendent Isaac Harris. He continued his father's legacy by increasing church assets with the purchase and addition of ten (10) acres of land.



**SUPERINTENDENT STANLEY HARRIS**

**Elder Melvin Roberson (2016 -2019)**

Elder Melvin Roberson became the Pastor in 2016 and continued to grow and develop the church. He accomplished great things spiritually during his pastoral years at Mars Hill. Many souls were delivered, and lives were changed under his leadership. He passed shortly after his third pastoral appreciation.



**ELDER MELVIN ROBERSON**

**Elder Stanley Gipson (2020 - 2021)**

Elder Stanley Gipson was appointed Pastor in February 2020, one month before the global COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of its global impact federal, state, and city/county guidelines were introduced for large gatherings. Mars Hill along with countless churches across the globe were challenged to take the gospel online. Under the leadership of Elder Gipson Mars Hill enters the digital era incorporating technology to broadcast all church services/events hosted via conference calls, Zoom, and social media.



**ELDER STANLEY GIPSON**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing guidelines, church services were later held outside on the church grounds. Pastor Gipson's sincerity in sharing God's Word could be heard throughout the community encouraging a renewed



commitment to faith. These “parking lot services” were anointed with the power of God and ushered in yet another expansion of the church.

Following the leadership example of our pioneers, Pastor Gipson began church renovations during the winter of 2020 for new flooring and cosmetic updates (walls, trim/borders) great and you could tell that the grounds were anointed as the messages were delivered. The next big renovation of the church also came while Pastor Stanley Gipson was pastoring in the winter of 2020. Due to a harsh winter storm, a pipe burst in the church

dining room area. Pastor Gipson put together a team, and it was decided to redo the church floors, remove the wood paneling, and paint the walls. New trim and borders were installed throughout the church as well. Pastor Gipson was excited to add his “signature piece”, a wall mural by Justin Ransburg (2021) depicting a beautiful outdoor scene of a family baptism; the flowers and trees seen in the painting represent the flowers and trees you can see in the fields around the church. Pastor Gipson would often say, “When God looks at us, He sees the beauty in us just like the beauty in the flowers around us”. Pastor Gipson passed in May 2021 shortly after his first year as Pastor.

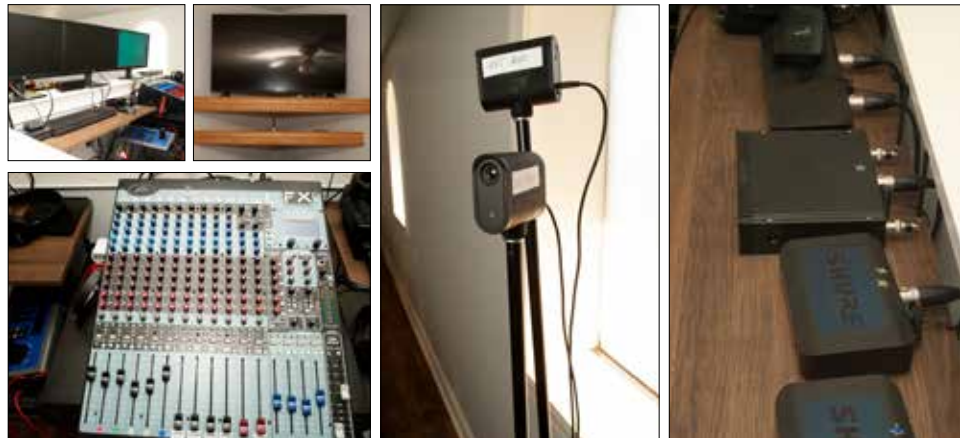


**Elder Porter Ross, Jr**  
**(2021 -**

Our current pastor, Elder Porter Ross Jr., was appointed in October 2021. With the continuance of the global pandemic, Pastor Ross quickly initiated necessary technology updates and developed strategic ways to continue in-person services in compliance with COVID safety guidelines. Updates included monitors in the fellowship hall and sanctuary for live-streaming services as well as new PCs, cameras, and microphones that were vital in this new era of worship. He updated the church by-laws, church handbook, and completed the set-up of the financial management and reporting system.



**ELDER  
PORTER ROSS, JR.**



Pastor Ross has a vision to claim the harvest of souls that God has ordained. It was prophesied that he would preach to the multitudes, a community without walls. Following the leading of God, Pastor Ross is building a team at Mars Hill to bring the vision into fruition. He has updated the church logo to reflect that vision. He has challenged the church to take the training

and wisdom that has been poured into us over the years and sow into those within the circles of our influence, fulfilling the new church motto - "Building God's Kingdom: One Life at a Time". He has plans to use the church van to pick up community youth and bring them to service to minister to them. There are also plans to give back to the community through the "Fill the Fridge" ministry at local schools. He has plans to invest in audio and video equipment in pursuit of media excellence, as our ministry reaches beyond the walls of the church through web and social media. He plans to partner with civic entities to reach and minister to those in need.

Pastor Ross was led to create a church magazine, entitled "Legacy" to pay homage to the pioneers, leaders, and members that have and still are contributing to the ministry at Mars Hill.

Mars Hill was established in 1923. This year we are celebrating our centennial (2023). Pastor Ross and the Mars Hill family honor our forefathers and foremothers who have pioneered the way. We celebrate their commitment and sacrifice in laying a solid foundation upon which we can continue to build.

MARS HILL  
*Memories*









A black and white portrait of Superintendent George Murray, an elderly man with a mustache, wearing a suit and tie. The portrait is the background of the page.

HOLY MEN APPOINTED BY GOD

SUPERINTENDENT  
GEORGE

*Murray*  
1950-1969

## HOLY MEN APPOINTED BY GOD

*By Supervisor Frankie Davis-Murray*

Superintendent George Murray committed his life to Christ at an early age, and accepted his call to the gospel ministry in the late 1950's. He was appointed Pastor of Mars Hill Church of God in Christ in the late 1950's. He loved the church with all of his heart and served the church with distinction. Over a period of years, Superintendent Murray prayerfully pastored the following churches: Walnut Grove Church of God in Christ, Anderson Temple Church of God in Christ, Murray Chapel Church of God in Christ, and St. John Church of God in Christ. He was a spiritual and dependable leader who loved serving to the best of his ability. He worked untiringly; drawing, leading, and guiding mankind to the fold of Christ; encouraging them to live together in love and unity. Superintendent Murray was destined to be a builder; as evidenced in the lives that he spiritually nurtured, and the edifices that he expertly built. Each of his duties and responsibilities as a contractor of dwellings was executed with precise skill and deep concern. Growing up in a family of nine children, he developed a strong spirit of independence in thought and deed. Economic independence combined with strong Christian values, enabled him to persevere in most situations. Defiance of cowardice and laziness became a hallmark for Superintendent Murray and for men and women following his path. He was a guiding light and a beacon for all to follow.

Superintendent Murray reflected the following words of wisdom:

**This above all:**

“To thine own self be true, And it must follow as the night the day,  
thou canst not then be false to any man.”

HOLY MEN APPOINTED BY GOD

SUPERINTENDENT  
ISAAC

*Harris*

1969-2010

## HOLY MEN APPOINTED BY GOD

*By Calandra Curry*

Superintendent Isaac Harris was saved, sanctified, and filled with the Holy Ghost at the age of fourteen and was anointed and called to preach at fifteen. Superintendent was ordained as an Elder in 1967 under the Late Jurisdictional Prelate Bishop Theodore Davis. In 1969, at the age of 28, he was appointed as Pastor of the Mars Hill COGIC in Philadelphia, MS.

Elder Isaac Harris was a man of vision and progression and desired to see everyone living prosperous lives; naturally and spiritually. He would often quote: "You must live a balanced life- first natural and then spiritual." When seeing the condition of the church and the lifestyle of the members, God's people, Pastor Harris became disturbed. Mars Hill was dilapidated and located on the property of Caucasian landowners in a pasture. Moreover, many of the members lived on property owned by Caucasian landowners and were Sharecroppers.

Pastor Harris made a conscious decision to make a difference in the community. After two years of receiving Pastoral Appreciations, Elder Harris spoke by faith and declared that he would not accept another Appreciation until a new House of Worship was built. He prophetically spoke and said, "We're going to purchase land and build God a House, and I want all of you to become homeowners and taxpayers!". In 1971, the land was acquired off Highway 486, now Road 737. In 1973, the new concrete-blocked building, Mars Hill Church of God in Christ was erected with two bathrooms and a small dining area. Not only did God bless the saints to build a new church edifice with enough land for a cemetery and future expansions, but the members also purchased land and built houses in the community. The Mars Hill Church Family grew, and souls were added to the kingdom as God gave the increase. During Pastor Harris's tenure, there were several renovation projects, but the next major renovation took place in 1998.

## HOLY MEN APPOINTED BY GOD

Renovations included the bricking of the church, upgrading the sanctuary, addition of the Pastor's Office and Bedroom, the addition of a Finance Office with computers and modern technology, and a new dining area and kitchen. He also purchased the Mars Hill COGIC sign, which is currently standing. Pastor Harris and the members paid off the church's mortgage in 2006, one year earlier than agreed.

Pastor Harris was always attending conventions, reading, and studying to ensure that he offered the people the best available information and opportunities for growth and development. He would say, "If you don't go, you won't grow." He was also a strong advocate for education. He made certain that the adult members, especially officers, were provided training to better operate in their positions or ministries. He also encouraged all school-aged members to attend college and acquire higher degrees. He was the first example of this by sending all six of his children to college. Moreover, he would give financially to

encourage and support the church's college students.

Pastor Harris was a visionary and was constantly developing initiatives to build the family, church, and community. During his tenure as Pastor he upgraded the Finance Department to comply with the IRS status for churches. The church attained a 501C3 tax status with a tax ID number. He also changed the three-member Board of Trustees to a Board of five members. Pastor Harris implemented several other projects, including organizing a Food and Clothing Pantry Ministry, organizing an outreach bus ministry, updating the organizational structure of the church's auxiliaries, developing a church handbook with bylaws and procedures, implementing a "New Members" Orientation Class, and organizing a Vacation Bible School. To list all initiatives and accomplishments Pastor Harris implemented during his forty-year (40) tenure would be impossible. However, the most important details of his life and pastorate are that he was an anointed man of God who exhibited honesty and integrity

## HOLY MEN APPOINTED BY GOD

at home, in his community, and at church. He could relate to people of all races, ages, and backgrounds, in and outside the church. Many were miraculously healed, delivered, and set free. Elder Isaac Harris believed in holy living! He would say, "If you don't church, you're going to devil." Pastor Harris served in many capacities in the church - District Superintendent, Jurisdictional and Regional Chairman of the Pastors and Elders Council, and Administrative Assistant to Bishop Hollis Musgrove—to name a few. He also pastored, built, and upgraded churches during his years in ministry, including the Center Hill Church of God in Christ in Louisville, MS, which he also pastored until his demise. However, with all of his extra responsibilities, he never neglected his pastoral duties at Mars Hill. Pastor Harris was a firm but compassionate and understanding leader.

Because of the far-reaching vision and innovativeness of Superintendent Harris, the church grew. Superintendent Isaac Harris was indeed one of God's Anointed ones, a didactical and dynamic preacher. He was known for his

booming voice, convicting messages and prayers, and God-inspired songs often composed after preaching a life-changing sermon. He gave more of himself than most people could ever dream. He was a great man of humility, a true believer of true holiness, a Preacher of righteousness, a Servant Leader unto the end. In 2003, Superintendent Harris experienced several strokes, leaving him physically handicapped. Throughout the years of his affliction, he continued to serve with the approval of Bishop Hollis Musgrove. He maintained order, respect, and accountability even during his times of illness. Bishop Musgrove stated, "Superintendent Harris does more in supporting the Jurisdiction, with his affliction than those who are well." Superintendent Isaac Harris was a family man who loved and was married for over fifty (50) years to his wife, Missionary Rosie Harris. He, his wife, and six (6) children worked diligently in ministry together, serving God's people in whatever areas needed. Superintendent Isaac Harris worked faithfully until death. He transitioned this life on August 15, 2010, leaving a rich legacy behind.

A black and white portrait of a man with glasses and a clerical collar, looking directly at the camera. The image is semi-transparent, allowing text to be overlaid.

HOLY MEN APPOINTED BY GOD

SUPERINTENDENT  
**STANLEY**  
*Harris*  
2010-2015



## HOLY MEN APPOINTED BY GOD

*By Sister Stephanie Harris-Martin*

Superintendent Stanley Harris was born on October 8, 1964, in Louisville, Mississippi, to the late Superintendent Isaac and District Missionary Rosie Mitchell Harris. He is the only son in a family of six. He grew up in the Pleasant Grove Community, and was a member of the Mt. Olive Church of God in Christ under the late Elder G.W. Harris. He later joined the Mars Hill Church of God in Christ, in Philadelphia, Mississippi to work in the ministry with his father. Pastor Harris participated in YPWW, Sunday School and other church activities. He was a choir director, song leader, praise leader, and a musician. His instrument of choice was the trombone.

Superintendent Stanley Harris graduated with honors from Louisville High School in 1982. He attended and graduated (1986) Summa Cum Laude from Alcorn State University in Lorman, Mississippi with a degree in Economics. He continued graduate studies at Princeton University, University of Florida's Graduate School of Business, and Jackson State University's Public Policy Program. He moved to Atlanta, Georgia in 1986. He joined the New Life Church of God in Christ under the leadership of Bishop Joseph Hogan. Being a minister of the Gospel, he worked diligently in the ministry, serving faithfully in many capacities.

Superintendent Harris moved back to Mississippi in 1996 and continued to work in the ministry. Under the leadership of Bishop Hollis Musgrove, he served as Jurisdictional AIM Secretary for 13 years, Coordinator for Pastors and Elders Conference for 12 years, and Assistant within the Jurisdictional Financial Secretary's office for 10 years. He became an ordained Elder in 2004, and was appointed Pastor of Mars Hill Church of God in Christ in 2010. Later he was appointed as Superintendent of District Twelve in 2015. He was employed with the State of

Mississippi Division of Medicaid in 1997 where he remained until his death.

Superintendent Stanley Harris worked faithfully with his father, the late Superintendent Isaac Harris. He was a man with a vision. As Pastor of the Mars Hill Church of God in Christ, he implemented "Vision 2011 and Beyond: Building on a Sure Foundation".

During his tenure he accomplished the following:

- Acquired property at Hwy 486 and Road 737, and additional adjacent property.
- Purchased recording (DVD/CD) devices for recording services, and prepared appropriate place for these devices.
- Cleared property of under growth and some trees to allow view of the church from Hwy 486.
- Purchased 20+ passenger church bus.

As District Twelve Chairman, Pastor Harris was instrumental in coordinating and organizing the relief effort for tornado victims in the town of Louisville, Mississippi. He was a Game Changer, Visionary, Innovator, Goal Setter, Anointed Preacher, Saved and Holy Ghost filled.

Superintendent Harris was married to Lady Stephanie Harris and together had four children. He was very serious about his role as a husband and father. He loved his wife and children wholeheartedly and always put them before himself. He taught his children to love God and to strive to be the best in all of their endeavors.

A great teacher and anointed preacher of the Gospel, Superintendent Harris served faithfully until he transcended.



HOLY MEN APPOINTED BY GOD

PASTOR  
MELVIN  
*Roberson*

MAY 2016 - NOVEMBER 2019

*By Sister Faye Russell*

**P**astor Melvin Roberson served as pastor of Mars Hill Church of God in Christ from May 2016 to November 2019. A native of Louisville, Mississippi, he grew up in the city of St. Louis, Missouri. He was the son of the late Hezzie and Blondine Roberson.

He was a member of the Fountain Temple Church of God in Christ under the leadership of Elder Horace Beverly. Elder Roberson was saved at the early age of 12 and was filled with the Holy Ghost. Shortly after receiving the Holy Ghost, he was called into the ministry of preaching the Gospel and he preached his first sermon at the age of 12. The late Superintendent Isaac Harris was his mentor and an inspiration to him in his walk with Christ.

He was married to Sister Joyce Stone Roberson. They were the parents of 6 children. In 2010, he and his wife moved back to Mississippi.



He was appointed Pastor of the Mars Hill Church of God in Christ in May 2016 by Bishop Daniel T. Littleton, Jurisdictional Prelate, Mississippi Southern First Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction. He continued to carry on the vision of the former Pastor, the late Superintendent Stanley Harris. Elder Roberson was a man of faith and prayer. He held 3 night “shut-ins” and the Saints prayed through night. Through these “shut-ins”, souls were delivered and set free. Chains of depression were loosed, and the saints were renewed. He was a Pastor who had a heart for God’s people, He ministered to those in need of healing of the mind, body, and soul.

A black and white portrait of Elder Stanley Gibson, a man with glasses and a mustache, wearing a clerical collar. The portrait is the background of the page.

HOLY MEN APPOINTED BY GOD

ELDER  
STANLEY  
*Gibson*

FEBRUARY 2020 - MAY 2021

## HOLY MEN APPOINTED BY GOD

*By Sister Pamela Hudson*

Elder Stanley Dewayne Gipson was born on November 20, 1966, the fourth of six children to the late Roy Dwight Gipson and Mother Winnie L. Gipson. He grew up in the Poplar Springs Community and was educated in the Neshoba County School District in Philadelphia, MS and graduated from Neshoba Central High School in 1984. He attended and graduated (1988) Cum Laude from Alcorn State University in Lorman, MS with a degree in Business Administration and Accounting. Elder Gipson was employed with the Mississippi Department of Education for over 18+ years where he served as School Finance Officer and Director of Procurement for many years. In 2003, his gift and skills in financial management afforded him to be elevated to Bureau Director of Grants Management.

From his youth, Elder Gipson was a faithful and devoted member of Mars Hill Church of God in Christ in Philadelphia, MS. Later in life he joined Center Hill Church of God in Christ in Louisville, MS. He was blessed to have served under the leadership of the late Superintendent Isaac Harris at both churches. After graduating college and pursuing his professional career, Elder Gipson relocated to Jackson, Mississippi and became a member of Davis Temple Church of God in Christ where he served under the leadership of Superintendent Larry Weems. It was under the leadership of Superintendent Larry Weems that Elder Gipson accepted his calling into the ministry and was ordained as an Elder within the Church Of God In Christ, Inc. in July 2009 under the leadership of the late Bishop Hollis Musgrove. Faithful to his calling, Elder Gipson enjoyed teaching and preaching within his local assembly.

On February 27, 2020, Bishop Daniel Titus Littleton recognized the faithfulness and dedication of Elder Stanley Gipson and provided him the opportunity to return home by appointing him Pastor of Mars Hill Church of God in Christ in Philadelphia, MS. True to his passion, he served faithfully as a great teacher and preacher of the Gospel. He loved his church family and prayed for every member to grow both spiritually and naturally. Elder Gipson came in working. He developed the church's vision and mission statement; designed the church logo; and developed the church's web page. Not deterred by the COVID pandemic, Elder Gipson successfully ensured that worship services continued by implementing parking lot service, as well as Sunday School and Bible Study through the use of video technology. It was also under his tenure that the remodeling of the church began. Elder Gipson truly worked faithfully until his day was done. Because of the influence he had on the congregation and the legacy he left, his work has continued to manifest.

Elder Gipson was the devoted husband of Lady Tonya Gipson. He was also the loving father of three sons (Julius, Brayden, Bryce) and one daughter (Amaris). It was his delight to teach them the love of God and fellowman.

Elder Gipson could often be heard quoting a few of his favorite scriptures from Isaiah 43:2, Jeremiah 29:11 and Philippians 4:13. He took pleasure in inspiring the congregation through his God-breathed sermons like "Look Up and Live," "How Is Your Spiritual Stamina?," "Do Not Make the Same Miscalculations," and "Nevertheless at Thy Word, I Will." Elder Gipson's greatest desire was for people to enjoy heaven on earth but more importantly that their souls be saved. He reminded us often that if God did it before, He can do it again.

WE Celebrate  
OUR FORMER  
FIRST  
Ladies

It is with sincere gratitude that we say,  
“Thank You”, to our Former First Ladies!

Thank you for leading by example and for making life more beautiful for others. You have taught us to be fearless; that there is no limit in what we can achieve through Christ.  
(Philippians 4:13)

You continue to make the world a better place for those around you; and your guidance and wisdom are deeply appreciated. We pray that your days will be delightful and God will continue to lead you!

*“The Lord bless thee, and keep thee;  
The Lord make His face shine upon thee  
and be gracious unto thee.”*

Number 6:24-25

WE ARE FOREVER GRATEFUL,

Mars Hill Church Of God In Christ Church Family



JURISDICTIONAL SUPERVISOR  
*Frankie D. Murray*



DISTRICT MISSIONARY  
*Rosie Harris*



FORMER FIRST LADY  
*Stephanie Harris Martin*



FORMER FIRST LADY  
*Joyce Roberson*



FORMER FIRST LADY  
*Tonya Gipson*

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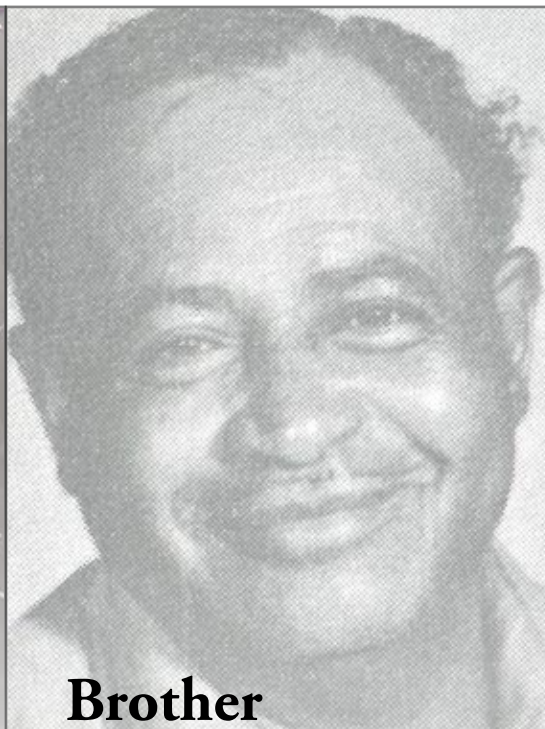
## PAST LAY MEMBERS

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### **Sister Annie Seales**

Sister Annie Seales was born in 1928 in Neshoba County, Mississippi. She was converted and joined the church at an early age, but moved to New York. She returned to Mississippi later in life and joined the Mars Hill Church of God in Christ where she served faithfully. She never refused to help with any worthy cause, never forgot her church, and seemed to always have the welfare of the church on her mind.



### **Brother John C. Seales**

Brother John C. Seales was born in Philadelphia, Mississippi in 1922. Later he moved to New York. Upon his return to Mississippi, he joined the Mars Hill Church of God in Christ where he was a faithful member. He was President of the Usher Board and served as the President of District Number 9 Usher Board.



### **Mother Carrie Miller Seales**

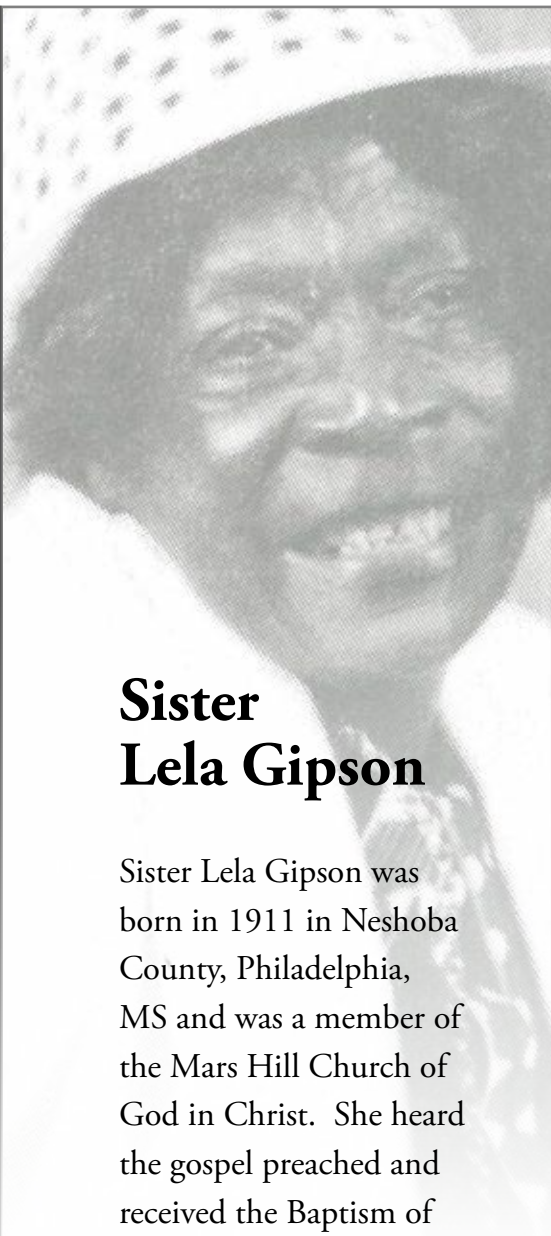
Mother Seales was a devoted member of Mars Hill Church of God In Christ where she served as Home & Foreign Mission Treasurer and Church Mother.



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## PAST LAY MEMBERS

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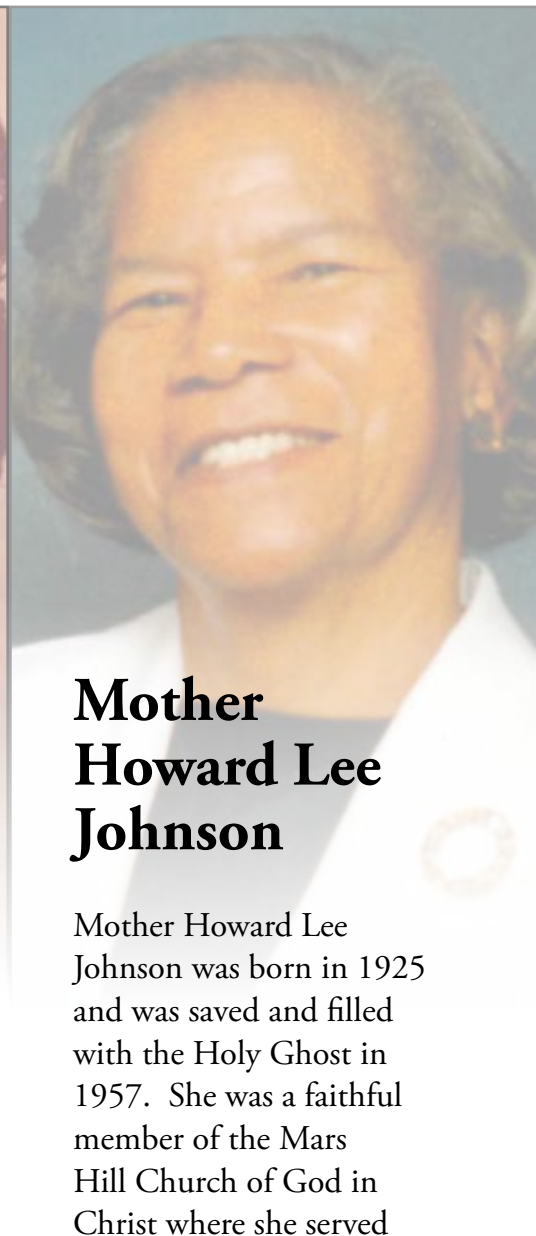
### **Sister Lela Gipson**

Sister Lela Gipson was born in 1911 in Neshoba County, Philadelphia, MS and was a member of the Mars Hill Church of God in Christ. She heard the gospel preached and received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost while at Mars Hill. For years she served as a Bible Band Teacher and Church Secretary. She loved the Lord and served faithfully.



### **Sister Willie Mae Yarrell**

Sister Willie Mae Yarrell joined the Mars Hill Church of God in Christ under the leadership of Superintendent Isaac Harris in 2000 after moving to Philadelphia from Ohio. She made a great contribution to the church by paying for the paving of the church's parking lot. Her wonderful act of kindness will always be remembered.



### **Mother Howard Lee Johnson**

Mother Howard Lee Johnson was born in 1925 and was saved and filled with the Holy Ghost in 1957. She was a faithful member of the Mars Hill Church of God in Christ where she served in several capacities. Mother Johnson was the Hospitality President, Card Class Teacher, Assistant Sunday School Teacher, YPWW Teacher, Bible Band Teacher, member of the Mother's Board, and member of the Usher's Board. She was truly a faithful servant while at Mars Hill COGIC.

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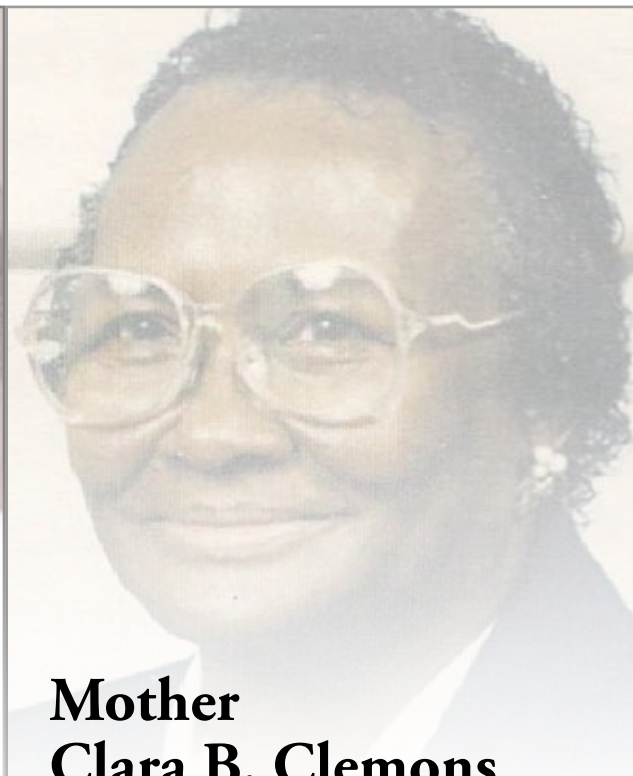
## PAST LAY MEMBERS

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### **Mother Estella Houston**

Mother Houston was a dedicated member of Mars Hill Church of God in Christ. She had a love for God and God's people. She loved to dance and praise God. She was faithful in her attendance and financial support. Mother Houston quilted by hand, and often gifted her beautiful quilts to members of the congregation. She often declared that she would praise God wherever she was, even at the White House.



### **Mother Clara B. Clemons**

Mother Clemons was the epitome of Christian service as she served the church in numerous capacities, including Church Mother, Sunday School Teacher and various other positions as needed. Her faithful service left an indelible imprint in the hearts and minds of those she loved and served. She exemplified Christ's example when He said, "Whosoever shall be great among you let him be your servant." She served and taught in the church for all of her adult life and saw the church in its early splendor, and provided much needed service and guidance in all facets. She demonstrated her love for God and the church by the quality and quantity of her service. For a woman so small in stature, she made a great and significant contribution to her family, church, and community. She was a great financial contributor to the church. Mother Clemons was a woman who loved to praise God. She was known for her love of playing the tambourine during church services. She loved people and would provide motherly counsel and guidance to all who came in contact with her. Mother Clara B. Clemons served the church faithfully, leaving a great legacy and lasting impact for those whom she loved.



### **Mother Bernice Lewis Wilson**

Mother Wilson was a devoted wife, mother, and grandmother. She lived to see 5 generations of her family. She was a homemaker who loved taking care of her family and others that came into her life. She received Christ in her life at an early age. She served in several capacities, including Adult and Young- Adults Sunday School Teacher, Prayer and Bible Band Teacher, Bible Band Treasurer, Y.P.W. Teacher, Head of the Mother's Board, and President of District Number Twelve Hospitality Department. Mother Wilson was a praiser. She loved praise, worship, and testimony service. She gave God her best and was a prayer warrior that had a great knowledge of the Bible. Mother Wilson had many favorite scriptures that she often quoted. She had a great love for her Pastors and church family.



### **Mother Johnnie B. Cole**

Mother Johnnie B. Cole joined Mars Hill COGIC in the latter part of the 1960's under the leadership of Superintendent Isaac and Missionary Rosie Harris and received the gift of the Holy Ghost. Mother Cole loved the Lord and was appointed as the Sunday School Secretary. She loved Sunday school and would ask some thought provoking questions that usually got the class motivated and talking on the lesson. She was a faithful member until the time of her illness. Even in her illness, she trusted that God would heal her. God did not heal her on this side, but she was healed and now living with Him. Mother Cole was a praying and fasting woman. She was kind, compassionate, and an encourager to those who were going through discouragement and heartache. She faced many difficult trials during her life, but she always had a joyful spirit. Mother Cole loved singing even though she could not carry a tune. She was a humble person and could laugh at herself as others laughed with her. She had a strong faith in her God and loved and worshiped him from her heart. She was a faithful member who was always at church when the church doors were open. Mother Johnnie B. Cole was a warrior, a soldier in the army of the Lord, and fought the good fight of faith.



### **Mother Arceola Harris**

Mother Arceola Harris was a dedicated member of Mars Hill Church of God in Christ. She served the church faithfully, always exemplifying the love of God. She served on the Mothers Board, Usher Board President, Prayer and Bible Band President, and President of the Kitchen Committee. She was concerned about every aspect of the church. She often told her testimony about how God provided for her to take care of her children as a single mother. When her eyesight no longer allowed to drive at night, she did not use this as an excuse not to attend church.

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## PAST LAY MEMBERS

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### **Mother Edice Slaughter**

Mother Edice Slaughter was an outstanding woman of God and a great pioneer at Mars Hill Church of God in Christ. She was a very active member, played the guitar, and directed a variety of plays and skits for the young people. Mother Slaughter was married to Brother Edmond Slaughter and served under several former pastors at Mars Hill Church of God in Christ. When revivalists would come to town, many of them stayed at Mother Slaughter and Brother Slaughter's Home. Mother Slaughter was well known for being a praying woman. Many souls were saved, and many members received the Holy Ghost during Mother Slaughter's prayers. It was said that she was very instrumental in carrying on the church services in the absence of a pastor. Mother Slaughter will always be remembered as a powerful and anointed woman of God.



### **Brother Charles Turner**

Brother Charles Turner became a member of Mars Hill Church of God in Christ on December 16, 1990. He served as the Men's Sunday School Teacher, Coordinator of the Men's Day Program, and Finance Committee Member. He was a dedicated and faithful member.



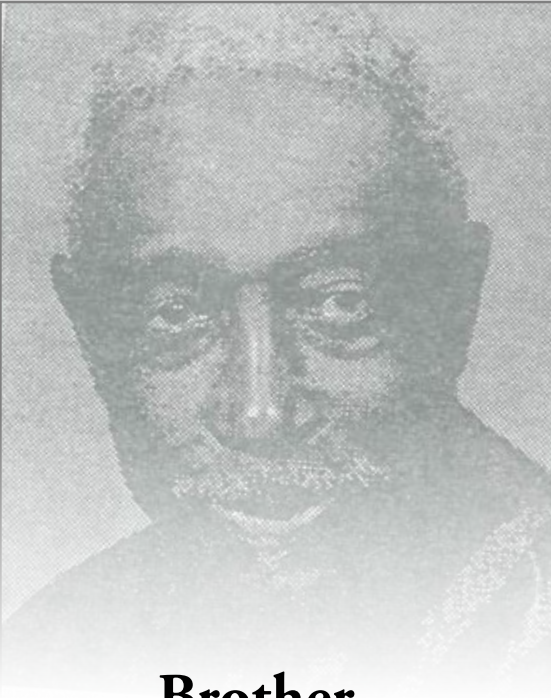
### **Minister Wilson Clemons**

Minister Wilson Clemons was a faithful and dedicated member of Mars Hill Church of God in Christ. He was married to the late Clara Bell Clemons. They were the parents of twelve children. He served as a minister and was ordained as an elder on March 7, 1975. He was also a member of the Trustee Board and served as Sunday School Superintendent. Minister Clemons played a vital role in the purchasing of the land where the current church is now located. He had previously purchased land to build a house for his family from the landowner and because of this he made contact about purchasing land for the church. His favorite scripture was *"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also"* (John 14:1-3). He often sang the song "Jesus Said It". Any time there was work being done or services being held, Minister Clemons was there to support and help. He served the church faithfully as long as his health permitted him to do so. Minister Clemons departed this life on November 8, 2010.

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## PAST LAY MEMBERS

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### **Brother T.J. Miller**

Brother T.J. Miller was married to Mother Pearleva Miller. He was a faithful and dedicated member of the Mars Hill Church of God in Christ. He was always willing to give his time to others to help them in any way that he could. He faithfully served as Treasurer.



### **Deacon Calvin Wilson**

In the spring of 1970, Calvin Wilson accepted Christ and joined the Mars Hill Church of God In Christ under the leadership of then Pastor Isaac Harris. He was baptized and later received the gift of the Holy Ghost. Later, he was appointed as a deacon. Positions he held were Adult Sunday School Teacher, Y.P.W.W. Teacher, Trustee Board Member, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, and District 12 Chairman of the Deacon Board. Deacon Wilson served at Mars Hill COGIC, the community, and his family faithfully until his death in June 1999.



### **Mother Winnie Rush-Hodge**

Mother Winnie Rush Hodge was a faithful and dedicated member of the Mars Hill Church of God in Christ. She served on the Mother's Board and loved to praise God. Mother Hodge was married to Brother Rudolph Hodge, and their home was always a place where ministers, evangelists, saints, family, and anyone else that came were welcomed with a warm smile and a fine-cooked meal. Their home was one of the main residences where Mars Hill's revivalists would reside when they were in town. She was happy to prepare meals for others in her home and loved cooking her special cakes and pies for church members. Brother Rudolph once said, "If Winnie cook it, anybody can eat it!" Mother Hodge loved caring for the saints and people in general. Mother Hodge didn't have any biological children of her own, but she truly was a loving, saintly mother to many.



IN  
*Memory*  
OF

Brother Cleothis Clemons  
Brother Edward Charles Clemons  
Sister Cora Grant  
Brother Swift Grant  
Sister Cennie Mae Greer  
Sister Willie Jimmerson  
Sister Sallie Marshall  
Sister Alice Jimmerson Milton  
Sister Allean Rush  
Sister Minnie Pearl Rush  
Brother Edmond Slaughter  
Sister Maggie Smith  
Brother James Lavell Gipson  
Brother Phillip Wilson  
Mother Edice Slaughter  
Sister Hattie Tanksley  
Deacon Ed Rush  
Brother Willie Woodrow Clemons  
Sister Callie L. Clemons  
Brother Rudolph Hodge  
Sister Ruby Miller  
Sister Patricia Cole  
Sister Vernita Wilson  
Sister Annie Seales

Brother John Seales  
Sister Bell Wilson  
Brother John Henry Cole  
Sister Johnnie B. Cole  
Brother Roy Dwight Gipson  
Sister Julie Holten  
Brother Ellis Smith  
Sister Lela Gipson  
Mother Estella Houston  
Mother Winnie Hodge  
Brother T. J. Miller  
Deacon Calvin Wilson  
Brother Glen Adams  
Brother Robert Johnson, Jr.  
Brother Gunner Marshall  
Mother Bernice Wilson  
Mother Arceola Harris  
Mother Pearleva Miller  
Mother Carrie Seales  
Brother Charles Turner  
Mother Howard Lee Johnson  
Sister Willie Yarrell  
Mother Clara Bell Clemons  
Minister Wilson Clemons  
Sister Annie Gipson  
Brother James R. Gipson  
Sister Betty McClinton  
Brother Jerome Rush





LEGACY  
*Present*



# MEET OUR PASTOR

Around the age of 12, young Brother Porter Ross, Jr. began to sense God's call to salvation. It happened at his childhood church, Liberal Trinity Church of God in Christ (Jackson, MS), under the leadership of the late Bishop Hollis Musgrove. During a Sunday evening service, Elder Timothy Curry asked, "Is there anyone here tonight that is not saved?" and young Brother Ross immediately stood up. Although he didn't fully comprehend salvation at the time, this marked a defining moment in his life as he became aware of the necessity of salvation.

As a small child, his mother had taught him to pray and during his adolescence, he would pray the Lord's Prayer, as found in Matthew 6:9-13. It was around this time that young Brother Ross began to cultivate his prayer life as a conversation with God; later realizing that God had cultivated within him a prayer ministry. He continued to grow in the things of God both naturally and spiritually.

Brother Ross graduated from Callaway High School (Jackson, MS) in 1987 and enrolled at Jackson State University (Jackson, MS), where he majored in Computer Science. He met and fell in love with Sister Sonya Winters there. They married a few years later and began their life together. Soon after, God blessed them with three sons.

In 1995, at the invitation of his mother, he attended a Sunday evening service at Family Life Church of God in Christ, under the leadership of the late Elder Herman Littleton, Sr. He joined the church that night and was saved and filled with the Holy Ghost shortly afterward.

## Deacon Ross served Family Life COGIC in the following capacities:

- Assistant Sunday School Superintendent
- Sunday School Superintendent
- Deacon
- Deacon's Board

Upon the passing of Elder Herman Littleton, Jr, the church merged with Greater Deliverance Church of



God In Christ (Byram, MS) under the leadership of Elder Daniel Littleton. It was here on December 5, 2008, that Deacon Ross accepted his call to the ministry.

## Minister Ross served at Greater Deliverance for 13

### years in the following capacities:

- Sunday School Superintendent
- Trustee Board member
- Administrative Team member
- Appreciation Committee member
- Media Ministry Team
- Chief Financial Officer Member
- District Chairman | District 15 Supt. J. T. Robinson, District Superintendent

On October 10th, 2021 Elder Ross was appointed as Pastor of Mars Hill Church of God in Christ by Bishop Daniel Littleton. Pastor Ross' leadership module has been a blessing continuing in the rich legacy of our leaders' past.

### Pastor Ross' initiatives to update the church administration and operations include:

- Update Church Bylaws · Church Handbook (Trustee Board)
- Annual Finance Reports for transparency in church finances (Finance Team)
- Rebrand Church's Online Presence (Media Team)

### Pastor Ross' concern for community outreach include:

- Expanding Outreach Ministry (Community & Civic Partnerships)

### Pastor Ross currently serves the Mississippi Southern First Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction in the following capacities:

- Jurisdictional Treasurer
- Jurisdictional Executive Board Member
- Jurisdictional Assistant Financial Secretary

Professionally, he is the Engineering Team Leader at Esco Corporation (Newton, MS). Pastor Ross has been married to his beautiful wife Lady Sonya Ross for 33 years, and together they have 3 sons, 2 granddaughters, and 1 grandson.

# MEET OUR FIRST LADY

First Lady Sonya Ross recalls attending church with her mother and recognizing the importance of righteousness and the lifestyle of holiness early in life. When she visited her grandma, she frequently overheard her singing gospel tunes. As young Sister Ross journeyed through her adolescent and teenage years, those memories guided her in her personal relationship with God.

After graduating high school, Sister Ross attended Jackson State University (Jackson, MS) majoring in Real Estate. It was at Jackson State, that she met her future husband, Porter Ross, Jr. They fell in love and were married a few years later. The newlyweds quickly adapted to family life, purchasing their first home and joining Family Life Church of God in Christ in 1995, under the late Elder Herman Littleton, Sr. Shortly after joining, Sister Ross gave her life to Christ and followed the footsteps of her mother and grandmother, raising their children in the admonition of God.

Sister Ross served faithfully at Family Life for eight years in the following capacities:

- Primary Class Sunday School
- Vacation Bible School Coordinator

Upon the passing of Elder Herman Littleton, Jr, the church merged with Greater Deliverance



Church of God in Christ (Byram, MS) under the leadership of Elder Daniel Littleton.

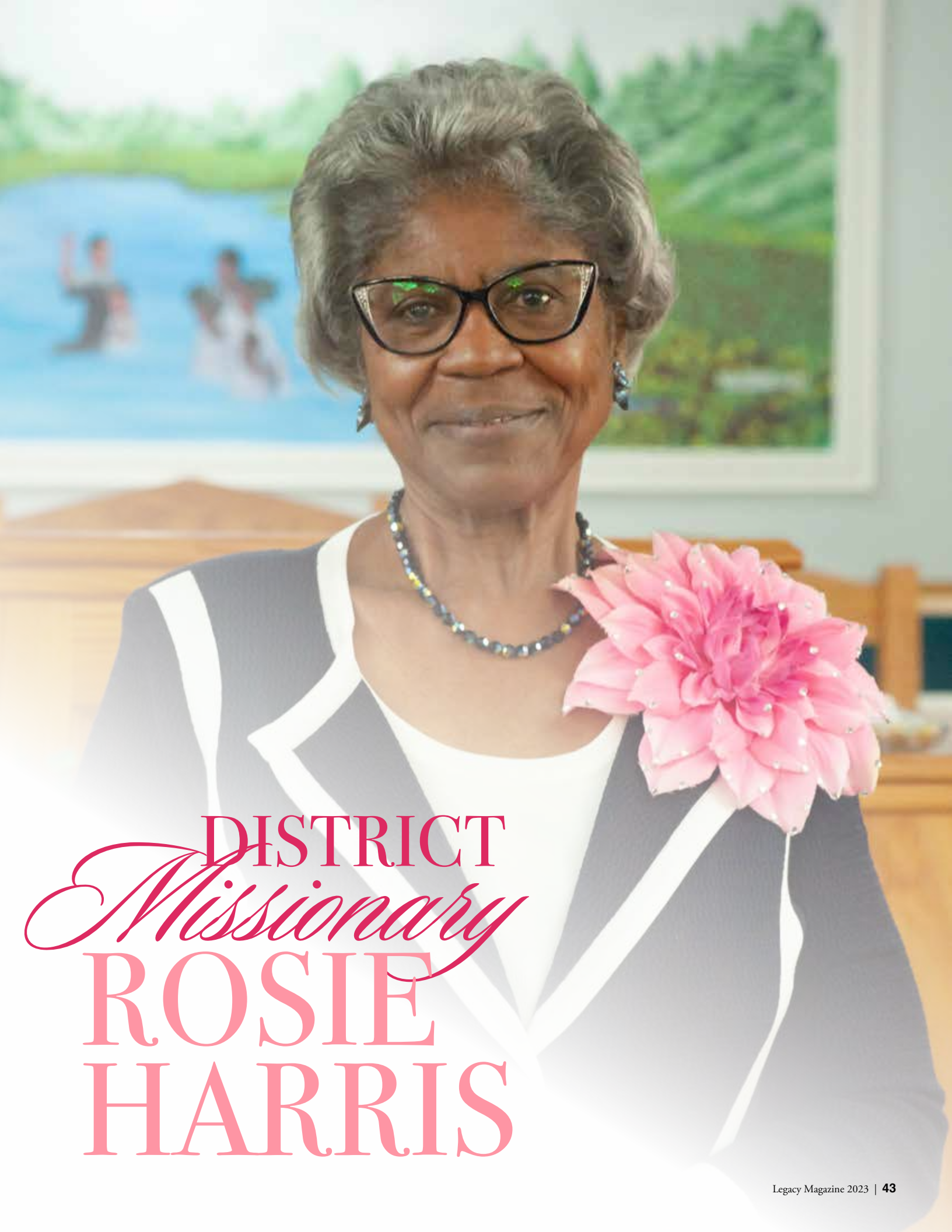
Sister Ross was immediately assigned to the Sunday

School Department as a Junior Class teacher after joining Greater Deliverance. She used her artistic abilities to create lesson-based projects to make learning more enjoyable for her students. She was also named Vacation Bible School Coordinator by Elder Littleton and quickly implemented expansions to the existing program to include adult sessions, a talent showcase, a celebration dinner, award presentations, and festival activities.

On October 10th, 2021 Elder Ross was appointed as Pastor of Mars Hill Church of God in Christ by Bishop Daniel Littleton, under the leadership of District Superintendent Eric Loving and District Missionary Rosie Harris.

Appointed by District Missionary Rosie Harris, Lady Ross currently serves District 12 - Department of Women as an Executive Board Member.

Lady Ross has been married to her husband, Pastor Porter Ross, Jr. for 33 years, and together they have 3 sons, 2 granddaughters, and 1 grandson.



DISTRICT  
*Missionary*  
ROSIE  
HARRIS

*Former First Lady,*  
Mars Hill Church of God in Christ  
Philadelphia, MS  
1969 – 2010

Sister Rosie Harris served with her husband, Superintendent Isaac Harris, at Mars Hill Church of God in Christ from 1969-2010. Sister Harris was twenty-five (25) years old when Pastor Harris was appointed to Mars Hill. Although she was young, she had been saved, sanctified, and filled with the Holy Ghost since age 11 and was no stranger to working in the ministry. She learned early in life how to share her husband with the people of God and maintain a healthy and balanced relationship. Moreover, she and her six children – Mavis, Jeanette, Rheta, Stanley, Geraldine, and Calandra – became a part of Pastor Harris’ ministry team and worked untiringly by his side as he ministered to God’s people.

Missionary Harris recounts her first encounter at Mars Hill as being filled with much love and enthusiasm. Upon arrival, two women graciously met her and Pastor Harris at their car. They introduced themselves as Mother Clara Bell Clemons and Mother Howard Lee Johnson. They later learned about the other church mothers, who at that time included

Mother Edice Slaughter, Mother Winnie Hodge, Mother Callie Clemons, and Mother Bernice Wilson. However, Mother Edice Slaughter was very ill and passed away immediately after Pastor Harris was assigned to the church. Missionary Harris was attracted to the older Mothers of the church and depended on them for wisdom, guidance, and covering as she matured as mother, wife, and First Lady.

Missionary Harris served Mars Hill in many capacities and was instrumental in birthing and organizing several organizations and events. She served as the church musician and service leader during Pastor Harris’ initial years of service. She could be seen and heard singing and playing the piano on any given Sunday! She also organized the youth department, where extensive training on the “History of the Church of God in Christ,” “The Old and New Testament,” and “Doctrine, Policies, and Procedures of the Church of God in Christ” were offered. Sister Elden Clemons worked faithfully with her and served as the Local YPWW President. Mother Clara Bell Clemons and Deacon Calvin Wilson served as the Counselors for the youth department. Meetings were scheduled monthly, and it sparked a love for God and the church in the hearts of the young and old alike. Over two (2) generations of youth were trained and acquired the



knowledge needed to be productive, prosperous citizens and lovers of God. Sister Harris and Sister Elden Clemons even made provisions with help and support from the church to carry youth representatives to the Annual State YPWW Congress in Jackson, MS.

As Servant of the Church, she helped organize the Women's Department. Under her leadership was birthed the Annual Young Women's Christian Council Retreat, (YWCC) held annually at Lake Tiak O'Khata, in Louisville, MS. This retreat provided relaxation, training, and empowerment to the women from across the United States. It grew tremendously and exceeded all expectations. Many souls were blessed, encouraged, and restored. Guest came from near and far to experience the power of God in a setting that was inviting and free.

Pastor Harris established the Center and Mars Hill Ministries Food and Clothing Pantry Ministry. Missionary Harris was given the task to serve as CEO of the Ministry and was responsible for the complete operational set-up. Training was provided through Mississippi Food Network of Jackson, MS. Many people were blessed through this ministry with food and clothing throughout the communities of Winston and Neshoba Counties.

Missionary Harris was also the visionary of the "Total Woman Women's Conference," held annually each year to provide information, training, and empowerment sessions for the women of God. Sessions about mental health, abuse, financial planning, and many others were explored and discussed. Spiritual impartation and healing were experienced. The Lord's blessings and approval were greatly manifested, and the Conference flourished with sessions that empowered women naturally as well as spiritually.

Lady Harris also established a three days and nights Shut-in at the beginning of each year at both churches pastored by her husband. Souls were saved, restored, and filled with the Holy Ghost during the shut-ins.

While serving as Pastor's Wife at Mars Hill, she was elevated to many other positions— District and Jurisdictional to include:

1. District Chairlady of the District #2 Youth Department
2. District Secretary (Supt. J.A. Jones),
3. District Chairperson Women's Department of District #2 and
4. District Missionary of District #12, (newly formed district).

On the Jurisdictional Level, she was appointed as Jurisdictional Platform Marshal, President of the District Missionaries Board, Chairperson of Board of Examiners for the Licensure of

Aspiring Missionaries, and Administrative Assistant to Jurisdictional Supervisor of Women under the current Jurisdictional Supervision, Mother Frankie Davis Murry. Missionary Harris served faithfully with her beloved husband, Superintendent Isaac Harris, as First Lady for 41 years. They were the “A-Team!” It is impossible to share every detail that transpired in ministry over that 41-year time span. Missionary Harris, however, states that serving God alongside such an Astute, Loving, and Compassionate man, as her husband of 51 years, was one of the highest honors that she has ever been bestowed. Moreover, serving a group of people who loved God and treated the Harris family like they were a part of their birth families was a great pleasure and honor.

Life was not always easy, but through prayer, fasting, and communication, the church family stood together. The last seven years of ministry was very challenging, after Pastor Harris suffered several strokes, but God sustained the family and the church. Missionary Harris was a pillar of strength and consistency. She continued working in the ministry and offering God elevated praises during the many crises that were going on in her personal life. The Word of God was her Inspiration:

*“The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak*

*a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned. The Lord God hath opened mine ear to hear as the learned. The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting. For the Lord will help me, therefore, shall I not be confounded: therefore, have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.” Isaiah 50: 4-7*

*“For who is God save the Lord? Or who is a rock save our God? It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect. He maketh my feet like hinds’ feet, and setteth me upon my high places. He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms. Thou hath also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great.” Psalm 18:31-35*

*“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” Romans 8:28*

Even after the demise of her husband, Missionary Harris has remained a faithful member of the Mars Hill Church of God in Christ. She continues to praise God with every part of her being and loves working in ministry.





# ACLES

## *From God*

### BROTHER JEREMY'S “VICTORY OVER HODGKINS LYMPHOMA”

*By Sister Cole*

Jeremy was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma in October 2003. Before the diagnosis a large mass was discovered in his chest during a CT scan. Jeremy was immediately sent and admitted to Blair E. Batson Hospital. A biopsy was scheduled to determine the type of cancer. It was during the biopsy that Jeremy coded. According to the doctors, Jeremy had a 50/50 chance of survival. Jeremy was placed on a ventilator and admitted to ICU. The saints began to pray and intercede on Jeremy's behalf. A few days later, Jeremy's team of doctors informed his family that the diagnosis was Hodgkin's Lymphoma. A regimen of chemotherapy was started. After a few treatments, the mass began to

shrink. After about a month in ICU Jeremy was moved to a room on the pediatric cancer floor. After a few days, Jeremy coded again. The team of doctors then decided that he needed a tracheostomy and a breathing tube. After these procedures, Jeremy remained in the hospital and received rehabilitation services. After being in the hospital for about 2 ½ months, Jeremy's mother told the doctors that she was ready to take her baby home. The doctors began making the preparations for Jeremy to be released from the hospital. On the day that Jeremy was to be released, the doctors informed his parents that the cancer had returned. Jeremy needed to undergo radiation and chemotherapy treatments. It was decided by the



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## TESTIMONIES

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doctors and his parents that he needed to remain in the hospital while undergoing these treatments. Jeremy was released from the hospital in January 2004, after a three month stay. He left the hospital still not able to walk, talk, eat or care for himself. At home he continued to receive speech, physical and occupational therapy. Jeremy eventually was admitted to Methodist Rehabilitation Center for inpatient rehab. Jeremy's mobility continued to improve and he began using a device to help him communicate. During his stay at Methodist, Jeremy's speech began to return. His first word was "Mama". After about a month he was released from Methodist Rehabilitation Center and began outpatient therapy. After intense therapy and many prayers Jeremy learned to walk, talk, and care for himself! A few months later, his mom noticed a lymph node on his neck. The doctors performed a biopsy and

it was discovered that the cancer had returned once again. The team of doctors discussed Jeremy's case and decided that the best treatment plan was to undergo a stem cell transplant. Once again Jeremy had to endure both chemotherapy

**GOD  
IS A  
HEALER**

and radiation treatments. After these treatments, the cancer was in remission and Jeremy's stem cells were harvested for the treatment plan. The stem

cell transplant was performed in 2005. Jeremy has been cancer free since this treatment. Jeremiah 32:27 states: Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there anything too hard for me? Jeremy is living proof that there is nothing too hard for God. God is a healer!

### MOTHER ELDEN CLEMONS "VICTORY OVER CANCER"

**B**efore I received the diagnosis of cancer, the Lord put me in His Word in a way I can't explain! I would read and study God's Word over and over again. Sometimes, I would go by and just lay my hand on the bible. I knew that something in my life was about to change, but I didn't know what God was preparing me for.

One day, I asked God, "What are you telling me? What is it you want me to



do?" What are you preparing me for?" I asked Him this, but I didn't know that just a few days later on December 27, 2018,

I would be diagnosed with breast cancer. It was then that I knew what the preparation was for. It was for me to go through trusting Him, standing on faith, and believing in Him.

The first thing I thought about was "How am I going to tell my husband and children?" I thought for sure I was going to die. I remember Elder

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## TESTIMONIES

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Stanley Harris giving a testimony and it was for me in my time of going through. I remember how God worked for him and I began to tell God, "If you did it for Elder Stanley Harris, You can do it for me." By faith I realized what God had already done for me. He was with me back then, and He would be with me now.

There were times that I thought I couldn't go through all the tests the doctors had me doing. Some were uncomfortable but God allowed me to go through. It seemed like test after test, but Jesus would calm all my fears. In a quiet still voice, Jesus would let me know He was with me. He gave me strength and increased my faith. I continued to study the Word, fasted, and prayed daily. I stayed in the Word. I trusted God and He placed these scriptures in my heart: Jeremiah 29:13, Isaiah 53:5, Mark 11:24. I would read those scriptures daily and my faith, trust, and confidence in Christ grew stronger and stronger. I remembered His Word when He said, He would not leave me or forsake me. He would not put more on me than I could bear. Realizing that there is nothing too hard for God, I remembered that He is a Savior. Instead of worrying about what I had, I began to thank God for my life.

When I went in to do my biopsy, I thanked God for letting me go in and come out. God put a thankfulness praise

in my heart. He took away the fear and replaced it with a "Thank You" praise. He blessed me through the surgery. When I went in to surgery, there was no fear. My children were extremely supportive and they stayed with me all the way until it was over. That was a big help and very encouraging to me. My daughter especially was an encouragement to me. The Lord blessed me to come home, and I can't tell you how he blessed me. Things I didn't have to go through were even surprising to the Home Health Care nurses. I knew it was nobody but God that had blessed me in the way He did.

**HE  
TOOK  
AWAY  
THE  
FEAR**

When I went back for my check up, my doctor told me I would not have to have chemotherapy nor radiation! I had a "Thank You, JESUS" praise ceremony right there in the office with my daughter. A "Thank

You, JESUS" just continued to flow in and through me. I know how good God is and how He can work things out. If we have faith, trust, and praise Him while we are going through, we can see Him working in miraculous ways. It is nothing I did, because all the praise, honor, and glory belongs to God. When you hear me "Thanking Jesus", you just don't know it is something I can't explain! I thank God for my healing. I give Him all the praise and glory. All of it belongs to Jesus Christ, My Savior!

*Mother Elden Clemons*

### SISTER NETTIE PARKER “TRIUMPH OVER CANCER”

I would like to thank God for all that He has done and for Him keeping me through all these years! He deserves all the praise, honor, and glory! He is a keeper!

When I moved back to Philadelphia, MS, in 2017 I had two goals in mind. The first was to pay my tithes, and the second was to attend services at the church. Little did I know that God had a third plan for me, and that was, to beat cancer! As I think back, my parents had 8 children (four boys and four girls). Six out of the eight of us have been diagnosed with cancer. All four of my parents daughters and one son was diagnosed with breast cancer. One of my brothers was diagnosed with prostate cancer but has been a survivor for over 35 years. That means, five out of the eight were diagnosed with breast cancer and one with prostate cancer. That may seem overwhelming to others, but to God be the glory! Several of my siblings have died from cancer but I am so thankful that God is still keeping me.

In 2017, I felt a lump in my breast and could tell it was growing. I knew immediately it was cancer. I knew I would need a mammogram, but I thought about my older sister and my baby sister that had already died from breast cancer a couple of years earlier. Nevertheless, God was still in control. In June of 2017, I had a mammogram and a biopsy



performed. I remembered Mother Elden Clemons giving her testimony, and it was an encouragement and help to me. She would always answer my questions and I could count on her to laugh with me. Cancer can be very devastating but I never had a fear of dying. I remember talking to God and He truly sent me what I needed, “A mother and a friend”.

One of the older mothers, who was about 90 years old, came from my previous church. Her name was Mother Carter, and she came to town with her two daughters to see me. One of the most amazing things she did was just hold me and rock me. She had no idea of how God used her to bless me. One of the things I said I needed in my prayers was, “God, I need a mother”. Yes, God saw my need and He provided just that. I began to walk and pray. My talks with God were amazing. He never allowed fear to set in or allowed me to worry. I can truly say it was well with my soul. One of Mother Carter’s daughters would walk with me and she just allowed me to talk. She didn’t say much. She just allowed me to talk, and she listened.

In July 2017, I received a shot, and when the surgeons took me to the operating room I began to think about the cross. The table in the operating room while I was laying on it reminded me of the cross. I was laying on it with my arms stretched out on each side and it reminded me of what Jesus had already done. Oh, what

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## TESTIMONIES

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Jesus did on the cross for us! What an amazing thing did He do on the cross for us. When I think back, I realized I never experience any pain and never got sick during the operation. The cancer was removed. It was gone, and I went home and could do things for myself. I am so grateful. One of the deacons and his wife, Deacon Freddie and Patricia Wilson came and fixed meals for me seven days. I am so thankful for that.

About two months later, I started having a few sick spells and some of them happened at church. Without hesitation, God again answered my prayers because even when I couldn't speak and say something was wrong, He sent someone to check on me and provided every need. Even something as small as Mother Hattie Horne giving me a piece of candy, while I was experiencing nausea and couldn't move, was a great act of kindness. God answered my prayers in those moments. Even though, I experience sick spells while taking the medications, I am so grateful to God that I never had to take Chemo.

Mother Elden Clemons gave me an assignment and her testimony and encouraging words helped me in more ways than I can say. I remember standing on God's Word. I stood on His promises. I began to say, "By His stripes, I am HEALED! I am HEALED! I shall live and not die! Yes, He is a keeper. He has kept and is keeping me! Lord I thank you for being a keeper!"

In July 2022, it was four years that I celebrated being a breast cancer survivor. I tell you, He will keep you! I have been blessed to see 80 years old and I am so thankful to God. I thank Him for His grace and His mercy. I thank Him for all His blessings and for a discerning spirit. When I was a branch manager at the credit union many years ago, there was an older woman about 75 years old that said, "Parker, Come here". She told me I was smiling everyday, dressed nice, and acted as if everything was ok but she knew I was hurting. She was right. During those days I had many things that

I was going through and was praying constantly for my children. Now, I can see that's one of the gifts that God has given me while at Mars Hill. When I first came, I could see that there were so many hurting young women, but He is using me to pray and to help encourage those young ladies now. I know He has me at Mars Hill for a reason. I was a First Lady of a church up north for

over 35 years, and God is allowing me to use my gifts received while there to now help others. "I thank you, God! My soul says, Yes. My heart says, Yes. My will says, Yes". As Revelations 12:11 reminds me, "I have overcome the enemy by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of my testimony".

The care, support, love, compassion, kindness, laughter and knowledge I encountered by God and Mars Hill members and leaders is beyond belief and has been life-giving." This is my TESTIMONY!

*Sister Nettie Parker*

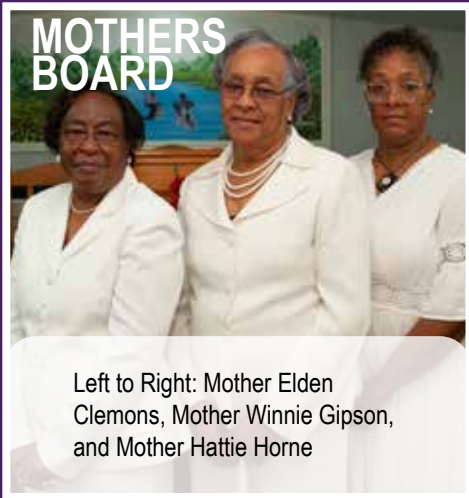




# MINISTRIES

IN

# *Action*



Left to Right: Mother Elden Clemons, Mother Winnie Gipson, and Mother Hattie Horne



Left to Right: Mother Winnie Gipson, Sister Frances Morris, Sister Latonya Smith, and Mother Hattie Horne



Left to Right: Deacon Freddie Wilson-Teacher, Sister Frances Morris-Teacher, Mother Elden Clemons-Teacher, Sister Brittnae Smith-Secretary, and Superintendent Gregory Clemons



Left to Right: Brother Shunewa Merrell, Sister Sanaa Merrell, and Brother Jaylon Brazzle



Left to Right: Marquez Jackson and Le'Marcus Fleming



Left to Right: Brother Billie Joe Horne, Deacon Freddie Wilson, Brother Junior Ray Clemons, Deacon Gregory Clemons and Brother Cleotha Cole (not pictured)

## FINANCE TEAM



Left to Right: Deacon Freddie Wilson, Sister Sharon Cole, and Deacon Gregory Clemons

## HOSPITALITY MINISTRY



Left to Right: Sister Patricia Wilson, Sister Frances Morris, and Sister Latonya Smith

## MISSIONARIES



Left to Right: Missionary Mary Charles and District Missionary Rosie Harris

## USHER BOARD



Left to Right: Junior Ray Clemons, Fred Evans, Leola Turner, Danette Clemons, and Earlene McBeath

## CHOIR



Left to Right: Pamela Hudson, Brittinae Smith, Shannon Brazzle, Vanessa Russell, Jimesha Russell, Le'Marcus Fleming, Deacon Greg Clemons,



## KITCHEN MINISTRY



Left to Right: Mother Winnie Gipson, Sister Patricia Wilson, and Mother Elden Clemons

## DEACONS



Left to Right: Deacon Freddie Wilson and Deacon Gregory Clemons

## NURSING UNIT AND HEALTH TEAM



Left to Right: Sister Shannon Brazzle, Mother Hattie Horne, Sister Faye Russell, Sister Lashonna Clemons, Sister Lakeisha Stafford, Sister Patricia Wilson

## YPWW MINISTRY



Left to Right: Sister Frances Morris and Sister Lakeisha Stafford



Marquez Jackson, Jeremy Cole, Lashonna Clemons, Sharon Cole, Tamia Hudson, Faye Russell, Lakeisha Stafford and Sanaa Merrell





LEGACY

*Future*



# JAYLON

*By Sister Lashonna Clemons*

Jaylon Brazzle graduated from Neshoba Central High School in May 2022 with special honors. He received the 1st Team Offense All Division- Rocket (Football) Award and was a member of the Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA). Jaylon is currently attending East Central Community College. He plans to complete his first two years at ECCC for football and academics. After graduating, he plans to pursue a Kinesiology degree at the University of Oregon. Jaylon is a well-rounded young man and is an active member of the tech team at Mars Hill Church of God in Christ.



# BRITTNAE

*By Sister Latonya Smith*

Brittnae Smith graduated from the Mississippi University for Women in Columbus, MS with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration. She plans to apply for admission to the Masters of Science Speech Language Pathology program in the spring of 2023. Upon completion of the Master's Program, Brittnae would like to provide care within healthcare and rehabilitation facilities. She has a belief that not only being educated in the care of clients, but also having patience and compassion for clients, will be major components in providing successful care. Brittnae currently serves as the Director of the Neshoba County Library in Philadelphia, MS, while continuing her education at the Mississippi University for Women.



# JIMESHA

*By Sister Jimesha Russell*

Jimesha Russell is a 2020 graduate of Neshoba Central High School in Philadelphia, MS. She is currently a junior at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg, MS. She is pursuing a degree in Medical Laboratory Sciences providing laboratory information and services needed for the diagnosis and treatment of patients. Jimesha also plans to further her education and receive an associate's degree in nursing.



# SANAA

*By Sister Lashonna Clemons*

Sanaa Merrell is a graduate of Neshoba Central High School's Class of 2021. In May of 2022, she graduated from East Central Community College's Cosmetology Program. After graduating from college, she immediately began working in a local beauty salon. She aims to build her clientele with the hopes of owning her own beauty shop in the near future. Sanaa is compassionate and has a great love for people. She has a caring spirit which has led her to do volunteer work at the local schools in Neshoba and Newton County. She also helps with special needs events in the community and loves to make people smile. Sanaa is active at Mars Hill Church Of God In Christ where she sings in the choir, assists in church audio and broadcasting, and performs Covid-19 health screenings as needed.



*By Pamela Hudson*

# TAMIA

Tamia Hudson is a 2020 special distinction honors graduate of Neshoba Central High School in Philadelphia, MS. She is currently a rising junior majoring in nursing at the wonderful Alcorn State University in Lorman MS. Tamia is a member of the National Honor Society, the Honor Student Organization, the Collegiate 100 Women of ASU, the Library Club, the ASU Campus Activities Board, and a former member of Alcorn State Concert Choir. While at Alcorn, Tamia has maintained a 4.0 GPA for her freshman and sophomore years. She was on the Dean's List during her freshman year, and a President's Scholar during her sophomore year. During the spring semester of 2022, Tamia was accepted into Alcorn's Nursing Program. She also became a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated. After graduating, Tamia plans to begin her career as a traveling nurse in all efforts to provide competent and compassionate service and care to every patient.



*By Lakeisha Stafford*

# TEVIA

Tevia Andreyia Simmons-Smith is a 2021 honors graduate of Neshoba Central High School in Philadelphia, MS. Tevia graduated 7th in her class out of 229 graduating students with a GPA of 4.24. Tevia is currently enrolled at Mississippi State University in Starkville, MS where she is majoring in Biomolecular Chemical Engineering. After graduating from Mississippi State, Tevia plans to either attend graduate school or specialize in the pharmaceutical industry.



# APPRECIATION FOR PASTOR PORTER & LADY SONYA ROSS



On October 16, 2022, we were honored to celebrate Pastor Porter Ross, Jr. and First Lady Sonya Ross 1<sup>st</sup> Year Pastoral Anniversary at the Mars Hill Church Of God In Christ, Philadelphia, MS.

As it is written, *“How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!”*  
Romans 10:15

Pastor and Lady Ross were celebrated for their leadership exemplified with a Spirit of Excellence.

They served faithfully and lead us throughout the year reminding us to “Remember God” with a desire to make us whole in every area of our lives. Their dedication and commitment has made a lasting impact.

Pastor and Lady Ross are committed to God’s vision for a better tomorrow and believe in demonstrating the life changing power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

**For that, we say, “Thank You”!**

**Pastor and Lady Ross, thank you for your ministry, guidance, care, compassion, support, encouragement, love, and laughter.**

**We look forward to many more years of dedicated leadership as you follow Christ.**

*With Grateful Hearts,  
Mars Hill Church Of God In Christ  
“A Community Church With a Kingdom  
Building Mentality”*



# PROGRESS & PLANS

## 2022



### New Members

- Sister Velma Barfield
- Brother Clint Turner

## 2023



### Training

- We are planning training sessions for our people to equip ourselves to do more effective ministry.



### Renovations

- We are planning to renovate our Sanctuary and Kitchen areas.



### Outreach

- We plan to expand our outreach into the surrounding communities and fulfill the Great Commission -



CELEBRATING 100 YEARS

# MARS HILL

CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST

BUILDING GOD'S KINGDOM: ONE LIFE AT A TIME

— ESTABLISHED 1923 —



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