

CELEBRATION OF LIFE

Rev. Dr. Donald E. Thurston, affectionately known as Donald, departed this life peacefully on August 22, 2022, while at home with his wife Sophonia, the love of his life. Donald was born on December 15, 1960, to the late Eugene W. Thurston Jr. and Julia B. Thurston. He was a native Washingtonian. He was the youngest of three children.

HIS EDUCATION

Donald was educated in the District of Columbia public school system. After graduating from Eastern High School, he earned an Associate Degree in Information Technology from the University of the District of Columbia; he continued his studies in IT at Strayer University earning a Bachelor's Degree in Information Technology. He earned his Master's and Doctorate Degrees in Theological Studies from the Chesapeake Bible College and Seminary where he graduated with honors. He completed additional clergy studies at Full Gospel A.M.E. Zion Church.

HIS FAMILY LIFE

Donald met his beloved wife Sophonia Dinkins at the University of the District of Columbia in 1979. On December 11, 1981, they were united in holy matrimony. Donald and Sophonia were married for 40 years. His life revolved around his beloved wife and two beautiful daughters Katrina and Kristina of whom he adored. He was a very devoted son who loved, respected and cared for his parents. He had fun with his sister pretending to be his teacher and making him do extra school work. He appreciated his big brother who always gave him sound advice encouraging him to reach new heights.

HIS MINISTRY LIFE

Donald accepted Jesus as his Lord and Savior when he was a young boy at the Upper Room Baptist church in Washington, D.C. God called him into ministry in December 1981 through an audible encounter. God asked him, "Will you go?" Donald replied, "Yes I will go!" From that point on, he was dedicated to serving the Lord with all his heart. He joined his wife's church Corinth Baptist and served as a deacon. From there, he led his family down the aisle at Full Gospel A.M.E. Zion Church to become members. His family continued to grow in the Lord. Donald served as superintendent of the church school along with his wife. He served on the Christian Board of Education. He also served as a class leader, a volunteer leader for the youth summer camp; and as a member of the men's fellowship. He was an instructor in the Steven K. Wright School of Ministry. He developed and taught a class with his wife called, Through the Bible Teachings.

Donald was ordained by Bishop Richard K. Thompson, Mid-Atlantic II Episcopal District, as a Deacon and Elder at Judah Temple A.M.E. Zion Church. Shortly thereafter, he received a pastoral assignment at St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. He served as a committed compassionate Pastor for 3 years during the 2013-2016 conference years. Upon completion of his ministry at St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church he returned to his ministerial assignment at Judah Temple A.M.E. Zion Church where he faithfully served. Due to his failing health, in 2021, he was retired from ministry by Bishop W. Darin Moore.

HIS LIFE AS A CIVIL SERVANT

Donald retired from the Department of Treasury as an Information Technology Specialist after 37 years of service in the Federal Government. He found favor with many of his colleagues impacting the lives of all he came in contact with by his lifestyle. He was an employee that was honored for his outstanding work ethics.

REVEREND DR. DONALD THURSTON "THE MAN"

Donald was a man of integrity, a leader who led by example, a man of God, who was often referred to as "a man's man." He enjoyed fishing; was an avid reader; was laid back, friendly and had fun telling funny jokes. He was a loving uncle, brother, cousin, father who always provided insight wisdom and infinite love. He was a true friend who stopped at nothing to help his family and friends.

A CELEBRATION OF LEGACY

Donald leaves to cherish his loving memory and celebrate his legacy; his beloved and devoted wife Rev. Dr. Sophonia; his mother Julia Thurston; two daughters Katrina Johnson (Andre) and Kristina Gamble (Charlie III); five grandchildren Andre Jr, Aliyah, Amanda, Anaya (in love) and Desmond (in love); his siblings brother Ronald (Bernadette), sister Diana (Jeremiah); sisters-in-law Rovenia Dinkins, Louise Dinkins, Angela Holley (James), one goddaughter Sophia Dacus; and a host of other family and friends.

Love Notes

*To my wife
All I want is to Love you forever*

All I want is to love you for the rest of my life... to wake up every morning with you by my side, knowing that no matter what happens, I'll be able to come home to your loving arms.

All I want is to share everything with you... to talk to you about our ideas, our dreams, the little everyday things that make us laugh, and the not-so-little things that we can't help worrying about.

*All I want is to give you my love... as a place you can always come to for acceptance or the simple comfort that silence brings, when things left unspoken can still be understood. All I want is to grow old with you... to watch our life unfold, our dreams, and one by one, come true.
All I want is to love you forever.
Donald*



*To my husband
Until the end of time*

My Lord God sent you from heaven to share a love that is true and rare. A love that is so truly pure that it completely filled my heart and soul.

*A love which joined us - you and me forever will our hearts be entwined until the end of time.
I will miss you! My love!!
Sophonia*



ORDER OF SERVICE

- Music Prelude
- Processional
- Presiding
Rev. Dr. Evalina Huggins Presiding Elder
- Invocation
Rev. Eartha Johnson
- Musical Selection
- Words of Encouragement
Bishop W. Darin Moore
- Scripture Reading
Old Testament - Psalm 23 Bishop Joseph A. Robinson
New Testament - II Timothy 4:6-8 Rev. Tony Bellamy
- Prayer of Comfort
Rev. Lorenzo Lyons
- Musical Selection
- Acknowledgements of Church Letters/Cards
Evangelist Cynthia Williams
- Obituary - Silent Reading
- Reflections (2 minutes)
Bro. James Fonville
Bro. Timothy Bing
Mrs. Irene Atuonwu (Green Pastures Residence)
Bro. Charlie Gamble
- Musical Selection/Message of Hope
"Jesus Is the Center of My Joy"
Pastor Scot C. Moore
- Invitation
Pastor Scot C. Moore
- Recessional



*Daddy,
You were the first to hold our hands and teach us to pray, the first to kiss our cheeks, the first to give advice and encourage us.*

You scrutinized the men in our lives and gave us away with approval.

You were an amazing father our hero, leader and the tower of strength for our family.

*We love you and will miss you!
Daughters - Katrina and Kristina*

PALLBEARERS

Men of Judah

FLOWER BEARERS

Deaconess Ministry

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS-EXPRESSIONS OF GRATITUDE

We are filled with gratitude from your outpouring expression of solicitude, love and support. The family would like to acknowledge and give sincere thanks to everyone for your prayers. To all those who traveled miles to share in the celebration we thank you. To those of you who have called us and/or sent flowers, cards and food we truly appreciate you. To all of our family and friends, we love and thank you for your ministry of presence. We would like to thank Chaplain Walker and associate chaplains and volunteers led by Wanda Howard at the University of Maryland Capital Region for all your support.

A SPECIAL THANKS TO

- The Judah Church Family for your support and hospitality
- Green Pastures Residence staff, facility and owner Mrs. Irene Atuonwu for your outstanding care and service.
- Cridge Assisted living home staff.
- Hospice of Chesapeake thank you for your expertise and outstanding service.

Please consider donating to the Alzheimer Association (www.alz.org)

INTERMENT

Heritage Memorial Cemetery
13472 Poplar Hill Rd, Waldorf, MD 20601

Arrangements entrusted to
J.B. JENKINS FUNERAL HOME, INC.
7474 Landover Road — Hyattsville, Maryland 20785
(301) 322-2300
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CELEBRATION OF LIFE REV. DR. DONALD E. THURSTON



December 15, 1960 – August 22, 2022

Saturday, September 3rd, 2022

VISITATION: 10:00 A.M. SERVICE: 11:00 A.M.

JUDAH TEMPLE A.M.E. ZION CHURCH
14500 Mount Oak Road
Mitchellville, Maryland 20721

Elder Scot C. Moore, Senior Pastor