



THE SANCTUARY AT KINGDOM SQUARE

TSAKS National News

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WITH TSAKS NATION

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Mission Statement... Our mission is to promote the spread of the Gospel, the winning of souls to Jesus Christ, the changing of lives, and establishing the presence of the Lord in the world through evangelizing, biblical teaching, economic development, and community outreach. With faith in Almighty God, we seek to be a church preparing born-again believers for the Kingdom of God.

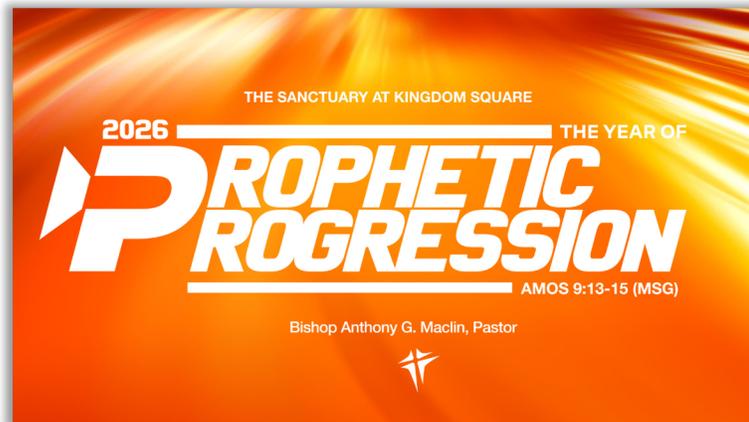
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The Year of Prophetic Progression

*A Journey Through the Book of AMOS
(and other books of the Bible that speak on SOCIAL JUSTICE)*

by JC McCreary



“But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!”
Amos: 5:24 NIV

The prophecy of Amos is characterized by great boldness coupled with great tact. The prophet gains the attention of his audience by pronouncing judgement on Israel's enemies before delivering the main burden of judgment against Israel herself. In the delivery of his prophecy, he is very courageous while being unusually stern and severe.

KJV Introduction to the Book of AMOS

This year on our journey through Prophetic Progression, both Bishop Maclin and Pastor B reminded us that as God's people we must remember that God judges us first. Not the so-called evil men and questionable women in the news that we all love to hate! The people in the church shouting Amen and Hallelujah who identify themselves as deacon so and so and sister what's her face. The ones who have one foot in and the other dangling dangerously out the door. You know, those of us who profess to love God but cannot tolerate each other. We will be judged first. Church folk like to focus on God's blessings and His benefits. But Amos reminds us that we are not excluded from His wrath!

“Seek the Lord and live, or he will sweep through the tribes of Joseph like a fire; it will devour them, and Bethel will have no one to quench it.” Amos 5:6 NIV

Prophetic Progression—continued

We learned about the major and minor Prophets of the Bible and of the themes for their writings.

Note: Some secular searches did not include Lamentations.

Major Prophets	THEMES
Isaiah	Judgement
Jeremiah	Repentance
Lamentations	Hope
Ezekiel	Messianic future found in Jesus Christ
Daniel	

Minor Prophets	THEMES
Hosea	Specific Historic Events
Joel	The Judgement that Almighty God pours out in response
Amos	
Obadiah	
Jonah	
Micah	
Nahum	
Habakkuk	
Zephaniah	
Haggai	
Zachariah	
Malachi	

Social Justice in the Church
SOCIAL JUSTICE—

Surely we cannot think that we are doing all that we need to do or all that is required of us, and forget about social justice. Throughout the book of Amos, we are reminded of this. We must include themes of social justice in the church. We cannot ignore the needs of some to meet the needs of a chosen few. But, we cannot exclude people from whom God loves. God loves everyone—all of us. If God loves everyone, Scripture tells us that we must love everyone as well.

“There are those who turn justice into bitterness and cast righteousness to the ground” Amos 5:7 NIV

As we continue our year of Prophetic Progression we must commit to continuing our study into AMOS and what he had to say. Remembering the warnings for God’s people when they fall short of Social Justice (inclusion for all). By the way, are you doing your part?

Why is the study of the book of Amos so important? The answer is because it covers so much of what is going on in our world and in our nation at this time. Racism, Abuse of Power, Neglect of the less fortunate, Separation based on class and Economic Capacity

This is what the Lord says: “For three sins of Israel, even for four, I will not relent. They sell the innocent for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals.” Amos:2:6 NIV



Celebrating the Hidden Figures at TSAKS during Black History Month

We often think of famous people as those we see on television, in movies, on the radio, or on a stage but there are so many remarkable individuals who have made and are still making a great impact quietly and faithfully every day, especially right here in our church! This month we share stories of our **Hidden Figures** that will enlighten you, empower you, and move you to want to leave your mark in this world too.

History • His-Story

Her-Story • Your Story

OUR STORY • Our Voices!

A Hidden Figure of The Sanctuary

Sister Vanessa Colston

HER-STORY

*God has truly been good to me. I consider myself blessed and highly favored. I don't believe my journey has been any more difficult than anyone else's. I've experienced mountaintop moments and valley seasons. Of course, I prefer the mountaintops, but **whatever my lot, I've learned to lean on the Lord.***

I am the second of three daughters born to former Pastor Abraham Colston and First Lady Theora Colston. I consider myself a native Washingtonian, although I have lived throughout the DMV area, as well as in Boston, Massachusetts, and Greenville, Mississippi. Professionally, I am a retired Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker, holding a Master's in Social Work and a Master's in African American Studies. My education and career allowed me to serve others in meaningful ways, which has always been important to me.

*My family has played a foundational role in shaping who I am. I deeply respect my mother. She married a cool Army veteran who later pivoted to ministry, and for many years she was the primary breadwinner. Yet she never made my father feel less than a man. She raised a special needs daughter, often in my father's absence as he faithfully fulfilled his pastoral duties. Even later in life, though she was already a nurse, she returned to school to earn a degree in counseling, (her coursework was not completed) inspired by her volunteer work at the Edward C. Mazique Parent Child Center, which was the first parent child center in Washington, D.C. My father carried himself as a proud Black man. He modeled fiscal responsibility, growing up with very little yet leaving my mother with no bills and no mortgage when he passed. He was committed to God and to the Glendale Ministry. From both of my parents, I learned about **love, family, commitment, sacrifice, compromise, and staying connected to God.***

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Perhaps one of the greatest influences in my life has been my younger sister, Terrell. She taught me unconditional love and the ability to see the good in everyone. My older sister, Sheela, reminded me that things don't always have to be done my way—as long as they're done correctly (I can admit I can be a little controlling!). I've also been blessed with lifelong friendships. My two best friends of over 60 years, Sharon and Roz, have always been there for me in my valley experiences reminding me 'when you can't hear God's voice, trust His plan.' Mrs. Conway, my high school English teacher, introduced me to theater and the arts. Glendale Church modeled what it looks like for families to love, support, forgive, worship, fellowship, and truly enjoy one another. And through my sorority, Delta Sigma Theta, I learned the value of sisterhood and community service including volunteering at Framingham's Women's Correctional Center.

Life has presented real challenges. I have cared for family members during medical crises and underwent my own double lung transplant in 2018. Advocating for those who cannot advocate for themselves—especially securing a safe, loving long-term care placement for my sister—tested my faith deeply. There were moments when I asked God if He was still there. Personally and professionally, I experienced both overt and covert racism and sexism in South Boston and Roxbury Massachusetts, Greenville, Mississippi, and even the DMV. I have navigated racial tensions and faced denial of opportunities, and witnessed painful injustice. In Mississippi, I saw firsthand the consequences of hatred and segregation. Even during my father's pastorate in Virginia, there were places we could not stop to eat because African Americans were not welcomed. In the early 60's, Dad, Trustee Jolee Williams, and several other local ministers traveled by train to

Alabama to join Dr. King's march. They were met with indignity, and anger by a group of white men. They were spat upon by an elderly white woman as they stepped off a train with Dr. King and were told to "go home." Those experiences strengthened my belief in social action—whether through protest, financial support, journalism, or education.

I am proud of many accomplishments. **Purchasing my own home as a single 30-year-old Black woman was significant. Opening my clinical practice, Brightside, was another proud milestone.** My work at Paul Robeson School strengthened children and families and offered hope. In Boston, I provided health care and self-esteem support to women often overlooked and judged by society. I'm also proud of **my adventurous spirit.** I have pursued music and athletics—playing piano, organ, and accordion; horseback riding, tennis, ice skating, skiing, collegiate bowling, and even skydiving—despite not always being proficient. I performed a comedy monologue at a comedy club, worked with a boa constrictor named Delilah, led trainings at Logan Airport for individuals afraid of flying, and conducted behind-the-scenes tours showing the creative (and unfortunate) ways people attempted to smuggle drugs into Boston. I've truly lived life.

The lessons that have guided me are **simple but powerful:** stay connected to God. Hold on to what you build. Work together. Compromise. Love unconditionally. And remember that being a Christian doesn't have to be boring, nor does it have to be on display for everyone to see. I've lived fully, imperfectly, and faithfully. Life hasn't been perfect, and neither have I. Sometimes I joke that I may be a better Christian than Baptist! But overall, I am proud of the life I've lived and grateful for every mountain, every valley, and every lesson along the way.

“The lessons that have guided me are simple but powerful: stay connected to God. Hold on to what you build. Work together. Compromise. Love unconditionally.”

A Hidden Figure of The Sanctuary

Minister Maurice Scott

HIS-STORY

When I reflect on my life, I would describe myself as someone deeply grounded in faith, service, and growth. Many of the experiences that shaped me began early on, when I was entrusted with responsibility both personally and professionally. Those moments taught me discipline, accountability, and perseverance. I learned quickly that growth doesn't happen by accident; it comes through commitment, consistency, and the willingness to rise to the occasion.

Serving others has been a constant thread throughout my journey. Whether through ministry, leadership, or community-focused work, I've learned the importance of listening well, leading with empathy, and remaining adaptable in changing environments. Life's challenges have also shaped me in powerful ways. There were seasons of uncertainty, responsibility, and change that tested my patience and confidence. At times, progress felt slow and outcomes unclear. But through prayer, reflection, and the support of trusted mentors, family, and community, I learned to keep moving forward. Those seasons strengthened my resilience and reminded me that purpose is often revealed through pressure.

Looking back, I'm most proud of the moments when consistency and faithfulness mattered more than recognition. Some of my proudest accomplishments didn't come with applause; they came from showing up when it was difficult, staying the course during transitions, and being dependable when others were counting on me. I'm especially grateful for the relationships I've built at TSAKS and Chick-fil-A (District Heights), and for the trust that has developed over time. Mentoring others, strengthening teams, and contributing behind the scenes may not always be visible work, but it is meaningful work. I also take pride in my personal growth; learning from setbacks, becoming more intentional in my leadership, and allowing challenges to refine rather than define me.

Several people have played foundational roles in shaping who I am today. My mother, Sharon Scott, and my father, Wayne Jones, instilled in me the importance of faith, integrity, and perseverance. From them, I learned to stay grounded and committed, even when the path is not easy. I've also been deeply influenced by leaders like Bishop Anthony G. Maclin, who has taught me how to lead with humility, think strategically, and take responsibility for my actions. Through mentors, peers, and colleagues, I've learned the power of teamwork, accountability, and mutual support. Each relationship has contributed lessons that continue to guide how I approach leadership and service.

Over the years, several values have remained constant in guiding my decisions. Integrity is foundational; doing what is right even when it is unseen or inconvenient. Faith provides perspective in both success and setback, teaching me patience and humility. Consistency reminds me to show up and follow through, and service keeps me focused on purpose beyond myself. Together, these principles shape not only what I do, but how I do it.



**“
Faith
provides
perspective
in both
success and
setback,
teaching me
patience and
humility.
”**

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If I could leave one message for younger generations, it would be this: value character over visibility. Don't rush success or measure your worth by attention or comparison. Focus on being disciplined, consistent, and faithful in whatever season you're in. Stay teachable. Be willing to

grow, even when feedback is uncomfortable. Life's challenges can either discourage you or develop you; choose to let them shape you. Purpose unfolds over time. Trust the process, stay rooted in your values, and remember that small, steady steps today can open doors tomorrow that you cannot yet see.

A Hidden Figure of The Sanctuary

Deacon Brenda Bell

HER-STORY



I am the seventh child of Rev. Thomas and Mother Janie Long. I was born in 1954. My parents were blessed with five (5) boys and three (3) girls. We were raised by wonderful God-fearing parents who taught us that the most important thing in life is love -- the love for God, the love of God, and the love for family. My father was one of the sons of Glendale Baptist Church and he also pastored Greater Zion Baptist Church in Ashburn, VA. My parents were members of Glendale Baptist Church, which is now The Sanctuary at Kingdom Square (TSAKS). Glendale was our neighborhood church and we would only have to walk around the corner to worship. We worshiped with Glendale whenever my father was not at the church that he pastored. Back in my day of growing up, country churches usually only held services on two (2) Sundays out of the month. So, this made it easier because we would have to travel to Ashburn, VA. I was part of the Sunday School and received my early spiritual education at the Glendale Baptist Church. I am a graduate of Spingarn Senior High School and later attended Norfolk State College now Norfolk State University. I later graduated from Columbia Union College with a BS in Business Administration. I retired as Executive Administrator from Verizon in 2006 after 30 years of service.

Some of the things I am really so pleased about is that I was able to start the Scouting Ministry at our church through Glendale. I had asked the Pastor if we could have Girl Scouts at the church and he told me to find out what I needed to do. I did the research and then recruited some ladies to come and be a part of the Scouting Ministry. I set up our training through the Girl Scouts Council of Nations Capital. I was the first Girl Scouts Coordinator at the church. We were able to take the girls on camping trips. After doing this, I saw a need for the Boy Scouts Ministry. So, I did the research and then started the Ministry we had. I recruited my brother. He was one of the first men to work with the Boy Scouts. When I could not get enough men to accompany us on the camping trips, I took the camping training through the Girls Scouts but was able to use that training to take the boys on their first camping trip. It was me and several other women because we did not have any men that stepped up to do it. I was the Boy Scout Commissioner in DC. While serving as a Scout leader, I had nine (9) girls get the Girl Scouts Gold Award, which was something that we had never done before. It's the highest award in Girl Scouts. I have been a troop leader for all the levels of scouting. I am so proud because I have girls that have come out of our troops that are now doctors, lawyers, in politics and even

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others that are now Girl Scouts leaders. They are working at the church as Girl Scouts leaders. Our girls have traveled to Mexico, Japan, and even Switzerland. We gave them opportunities that parents wouldn't have necessarily given them during that period.

Minister Anthony Holmes, who was the Youth and Teen Minister, worked with our youth. One weekend, I volunteered and went with them on a youth retreat down to Solomons Island. It was such a wonderful experience. I actually did all the cooking for the retreat.

Out of all my lifetime, my experiences with Glendale Baptist Church and TSAKS hold my fondest memories because I saw so much. I see the progress that we have made in our church. I thank God for our Pastor because he allows us to grow and to experience different things. Going through the succession process has really shown me that my pastor has grown a lot. When Pastor first came to us, he was old school. He was the youngest old pastor I had ever seen. He had an old mindset. I remember that he wouldn't even let us wear pants in the sanctuary. And he did not believe in a woman preaching. So, I have been with him since the beginning when he came and I was there way before he came to Glendale Baptist Church and he has grown so much. The church has grown so much.

My mom and dad had a very positive impact on me. I saw how my mom treated my dad as a wife. I saw how she carried herself as a First Lady. I saw my dad's compassion for his ministry. I remember when my dad came home from church and he had received an offering from the church an envelope of change, pennies, nickels and quarters- he didn't do it for the money. I saw how his love for what he was doing changed lives. Even though he worked two jobs to take care of his family, he was also a Pastor. He didn't do it for fame or fortune. It was for the fact that he changed lives, he made people happy, and he was just doing what God called him to do. I saw how his love for what he was doing had such an impact and made me have that same feeling when I

started working in the church.

I was ordained as a Deacon in 2013, and loved working with our team. I am training about four (4) Deacons In Training (DIT). My baby brother, Eugene Long, is one of them in training. My gift from God is Administration. I love education and teaching. I love putting processes in place and following through with them. One of my rewards is seeing the deacons I have trained continue to grow and be elevated in the ministry. I trained Kevin Thomas who was one of the younger Deacons. I trained him and he is an ordained pastor. I get joy out of what I do. There have been challenges and sometimes they made me question myself, but God reminded me and reaffirmed to me that man did not call me to do what I do. God called me to do it.

There were challenges where it was hard for parents to support our efforts, but we also had great support, especially during the times with the Girl Scouts. Deacon Anderson was chairman, and he would always sponsor a youth. Trustee Catherine Coleman would also help us to get things needed for the Scouts Ministry.

One lesson I learned is that no matter where you are or whatever you do, you must always put God first. Also, we should listen more and speak less. I would tell the younger generation that they should have big dreams, and they can't just dream about the things they see around them. A lot of our kids are trapped because they are not experiencing things outside of their communities or outside of what they see. They should want to learn and do more. There are more areas than just Northeast and Southeast, DC. I would also tell them to keep God first in their lives and to have a true relationship with God. I don't mean anything like what their mom had. They must have a one on one relationship with God. And yes, our children are going to go off on their own different paths, but God is going to put them back on the right path. The Bible says, 'Train up a child...'. I would tell the parents to make sure they teach their children at a young age who God is.

“...no matter where you are or whatever you do, you must always put God first.”

A Hidden Figure of the Sanctuary

Sister Deborah Faison

HER-STORY

I grew up in a rural town called Pottstown, Pennsylvania. I lived in the projects in a section called Penn Village. Our neighborhood was a mix of Black and white families. At that time, I had seven siblings, and I was the sixth out of eight. Later, in the 1970s, I gained a bonus sister.

As I look back on my life, I realize I was truly a Daddy's girl. I loved my father dearly. My mom stayed home to care for us while my dad worked three jobs. Even with all that work, he still made time for each of us. We lived a well-structured life. We didn't have much, and we had our share of problems and flaws, but one thing I always knew was that we had love. Our home was filled with love, and that is something I will never forget about my upbringing.

Even though we lived in the projects, my parents taught us to respect our elders and help those in need. My father often talked to us about family and the importance of taking care of one another. He also took us to church and taught us about God and the Bible. At nine years old, I didn't fully understand what it all meant.

When my father passed away in 1966, everything changed. His death was hard on our entire family, and I missed him deeply. I watched my mother take one whole chicken and stretch it into a full meal for our family. She had never worked outside the home before, but she stepped up and did whatever she had to do to take care of us. She learned how to be an entrepreneur. She cleaned people's homes, ironed clothes, and cooked and sold dinners for men who worked construction in the neighborhood. Seeing my mother struggle like that made me want to help. At the age of 13, I got my first job at the library, earning \$1.40 an hour. I was so proud because I knew I could help my mom. No matter how small it seemed, I gladly gave her every penny. My two older brothers, who were still in high school, also worked to help support the household.

After graduating from high school, my life began to take a different turn. I made some foolish choices and married at a very young age. Sadly, I found myself in a relationship that involved verbal and physical abuse. I knew that was not what marriage was supposed to be, especially after witnessing what I saw in my home between my mom and dad.

Looking back, I can see how many people helped shape me along the way. My gym teacher and coach, Ms. Whistler, constantly encouraged me and became a mentor in my life. I also had an uncle who was a deacon and instilled Christ in me. There are two women I am still in touch with today who knew me as a baby—Grace Clayton and Lillie Martin. They helped to shape me into who I am today. Both are now in their mid-nineties and continue to pour wisdom and encouragement into my life.

My grandmother also played a major role in my life. After I had been living in Maryland for about two years, she told me I needed a real relationship with Christ and that I had to turn my life over to Jesus. I knew I needed Him, but at that time I wasn't ready. I wanted to live life on my own terms and move past my pain. Before my grandmother closed her eyes, little did I realize that I had finally given my life to Christ. Even then, I wasn't fully committed to Christ, so I continued to face struggles, heartache, and pain, but I never forgot



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what my grandmother told me. She said I would not make it in life living the way I was without Him. She made it clear that if I wanted to succeed in life, I would have to fully give my life to Christ. At the time, I was “straddling the fence,” but her words stayed with me.

In my twenties, after moving to Maryland and leaving an abusive situation, I faced some difficult seasons. I made poor choices, and my mother often told me things I didn’t want to hear. She believed in tough love. There were times when I wanted her to console me, but instead she reminded me that I had to take my life back and decide what I wanted to do with it. That tough love led me back to church, which had always been my safe place. When I fully gave my life to Christ, I finally found the peace I had been searching for. That is when my life truly began to shift.

One of my proudest accomplishments was going back to school at the age of 23 to pursue a career in the medical field. That experience taught me that it is never too late to continue your education and pursue something better for yourself.

Throughout my life, God placed many strong

women around me who offered wisdom and encouragement. Women like Eleanor Davis, my Godmother, and Mother Logan greatly influenced me. Now that I am retired, I often reflect on the memories I shared with them. I look at their pictures and smile, thanking God for allowing them to be part of my journey. Today, I find joy in the simple things and in the beauty of God’s creation. I am focused on fulfilling the assignment God has for me. I feel deeply blessed, not because of material things, but because of the gratitude and richness I carry in my heart through Christ.

To the younger generation, I would say this: we all have choices. If we choose to do what is right, good things will follow. If we make poor choices, we don’t have to run from them. We can take responsibility and understand that we do not have to stay stuck. We can get up and start again. Be patient with yourself and let go of the things you wish you had done differently. Big things are not achieved all at once, but one day at a time. There have been times in my life when I had to walk alone, but I was never truly alone, because God has always been with me—and He always will be.

“

There have been times in my life when I had to walk alone, but I was never truly alone, because God has always been with me—and He always will be.

”

A Hidden Figure of The Sanctuary

Deacon John Addison

HIS-STORY



(Prologue - Black history is not only found in textbooks or famous speeches. Sometimes it lives quietly among us—in the faithful servants who show up year after year, generation after generation, doing the work of God with humility and dedication. **Deacon Emeritus John Addison** is one of those living legacies. At 95 years young, he is the oldest living deacon of The Sanctuary and has faithfully served on the Deacon Board for more than 40 years at Glendale Baptist Church and The Sanctuary. In addition to his spiritual leadership, he has served the church through security and custodial duties, always willing to help. With over 33 years of civil service and more than 65 years on the Lord’s battlefield, Deacon Addison’s life is a testimony of quiet strength, and he does not seem to be slowing down.)

I was born and raised in Warrenton, Virginia. I was just a young country boy growing up on a farm. My father was the head farmer at Manassas High School, so farming and hard work were a part of everyday life. Life on the farm taught me responsibility early. There were animals to care for, land to tend to, and chores that had to be done. As a young child, we did go to church, but not as often as some families did because our home church was a distance away in Manassas. Still, my parents made sure we understood the importance of God. They were very strict and taught me how to live right. Those early lessons stayed with me throughout my life.

In 1972, I moved with my job to Washington, D.C. Soon after arriving, I joined Glendale Baptist Church under the leadership of Pastor Abraham L. Colston. As a young child, I just went to church. It was not until I got a little older that I really got more involved in the church and developed a relationship with God.

Several people have played important roles in shaping my life. One of them was Pastor Tyler from Virginia. I met him sometime in the late 1950s. I only knew him for a short time before he passed, but he made a lasting impression on me. He taught me many important lessons about faith while I was still a young man. My parents were also very important influences in my life. They taught me discipline and respect.

When I came to Washington D.C., Reverend Joseph Spann was the pastor of Little Zion Baptist Church. Jean Nickens also played a very important role in my life. After I came out of the military, she was the one who recommended me for the Deacon Board in 1954. That recommendation started a journey of service that would last for decades.



“... God will always bring you back. If you stay close to Him, He will guide your steps and carry you through whatever comes your way.”

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Another person who has meant a great deal to me is Bishop Anthony G. Maclin. I have known him for more than forty years, since the time he first came to Glendale. I was actually on the committee that interviewed him when the church was searching for a new pastor. Over the years, Pastor Maclin and I have walked alongside one another in ministry. When he arrived, I was already serving as a deacon and also working as the custodian of the church. Through many conversations and years of fellowship, we built a strong bond.

I also have a very special relationship with Nancy Newbold. I met Nancy at the church when we were celebrating the grand opening of the Life Center Building on Central Avenue. Over the past thirty years, our relationship has grown into something beautiful. We have come together as ‘father and daughter’, and she has been a great blessing in my life.

Like many people, I faced challenges growing up and as an adult. Growing up on the farm meant there wasn’t always much to do, and sometimes I got into a little trouble here and there—nothing serious, though, because my parents kept a close

eye on me. One of the biggest challenges I faced was being drafted into the military. It was the first time I had ever been away from my home and my family. My tour of duty took me all the way to Anchorage, Alaska. That was an entirely new experience for a young man who had grown up in rural Virginia. But after serving my two years, I returned home stronger and with a greater appreciation for life.

Over the years, the lessons that have stayed with me the most have come from my parents and from the pastors who guided me along the way. The greatest lesson I learned is to stay connected to God. He will always guide you the right way. If I could go back and speak to my younger self, I would give one simple piece of advice: ‘get right with God, and He will show you the way.’ And that is the same advice I would give to the younger generation today. There may be times in life when you stray away, but God will always bring you back. If you stay close to Him, He will guide your steps and carry you through whatever comes your way.

After all these years, I have learned that a life lived with God at the center is truly a life well lived.

A Hidden Figure of The Sanctuary

Deacon Minister George Sparrow

HIS-STORY

I am a native of Norfolk, Virginia, and I have been a dedicated member of the Glendale/Sanctuary family since 1997. I moved to Maryland in 1996, and church has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. My mother was a watchcare member—actually, we were all watchcare members when we first came to the church. I come from a lineage of deacons. My father was a deacon, and I often say I’m a DK (deacon’s kid, not a PK (preacher’s kid). I served as a deacon before being elevated to Minister in 2024.

There are many things I am proud of, but a few stand out in a special way. In 2009, I became the youngest ordained deacon in the church. Then, in October 2024, I was ordained as a minister. One of my most significant accomplishments, however, has been returning to college in October 2025 to pursue my Bachelor’s degree in Business Administration with a minor in Marketing and Finance. When I earn my degree, my parents will be able to look down from Heaven and say that all three of their children are college graduates.



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I originally paused my college education after my mother passed away and because I stepped in to help raise my nephew while one of my sisters was called to serve in the war. Life happened. But in the right time and the right season, God spoke to me and said, “George, go back and finish what you started.” My journey was delayed, but every delay is not a denial.

Throughout my life, many people have played instrumental roles in shaping who I am and who I am becoming. God is first and foremost. My parents laid a strong foundation, raising my siblings and me in the church and teaching us to let faith guide our lives. Bishop Maclin has been more than a spiritual father to me—he has been like an earthly father. He has been a powerful role model, not only as a preacher and pastor but also as a business mentor. When I first came to the church, I was impressed by how he led with excellence. He carried a business-minded presence that influenced many of my decisions and helped shape my own approach to leadership.

Other pillars of the church have also poured into my life—Deacon Claude Anderson, Mother Coleman, and Deacon Emeritus John Addison. Deacon Addison and Pastoral Assistant Garfield Burton helped me obtain my community service hours when we were at Glendale Church. So many young and seasoned members alike have invested in me, and I am grateful for each one.

I have faced my share of challenges. I lost my mother while I was in college. Nine years later, my sister passed away. Then, last year, my father transitioned. I also endured a very public and private divorce and experienced unemployment for about 18 months. These were major trials in my life. Yet through it all, my faith never wavered. I stayed grounded and rooted in God. I

have always tapped into Him. Someone once told me, “George, continue to sow seeds, and God will answer your prayers. He will make a way. He will provide.” That stayed with me. Whenever an opportunity to serve arises, 99% of the time my answer is yes. “Use me, Lord.”

There is one lesson that has stayed with me since childhood. My great-grandmother, Clara Hoggard, was very instrumental in my life. My aunt once shared a story about me as a toddler. My great-grandmother stood me up on her lap and said, “You want to talk like a man. You want to walk like a man. You stand up and be a man.” I have carried those words in my heart and mind ever since. That is where I get my nickname, “Man,” from. I strive to live up to what was spoken over my life.

There are many lessons my parents taught me that I now share with others:

- *Put God first*
- *Honor your parents*
- *Respect your elders*
- *Don’t forget where you come from*
- *Love everyone and hate no one*
- *Learn to forgive*
- *Stay humble*
- *Hard work pays off*
- *Leave a legacy*

These principles keep me grounded and remind me to stay anchored in God. Two scriptures that continually encourage me are Ecclesiastes 3:1: “To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven,” and Galatians 6:9: “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” I have truly seen the manifestation of God’s promises when I hold on to His Word.

“I have truly seen the manifestation of God’s promises when I hold on to His Word.”

A Hidden Figure of The Sanctuary

Reverend Mother Dorothy Ford

HER-STORY



When I look back over my life, I see the unmistakable hand of God in every season. I was born into a loving family with five (5) older siblings, and those early years shaped me in ways I did not fully understand at the time. I remember playing outside, jumping rope, laughing with neighborhood children, and playing “Mother May I.” Those moments built joy in me, but they also built resilience, discipline, and connection.

From ages eight to twelve, I was part of a Brownie troop that later merged into the Girl Scouts of America. The weekly meetings, the outdoor events, the Easter breaks and summer activities taught me responsibility, teamwork, and confidence. I did not know then that God was already shaping my leadership voice.

I attended a unique neighborhood elementary school where I was blessed to have the same teacher for grades four through six. Mrs. Marian Tennen saw something in me. She nurtured my communication skills and strengthened my ability to speak with clarity and conviction. That training would follow me throughout my life. As I grew older, I had to walk long distances to school, crossing over two (2) sets of train tracks, and later ride public transportation alone. Being the baby sister meant learning independence when my older siblings moved on. I learned early on how to stand on my own two (2) feet.



After high school, I attended a local Black-owned business college before beginning my career with a bureau of the Treasury Department. At that time, I had no idea how far that journey would be. During my early years of employment, I helped support my widowed mother, especially during her seasons of medical crisis. Most of my siblings had married and moved away, and my younger brother needed help getting through college. God positioned me to be a pillar in my family. It was not always easy, but I understood responsibility, and I embraced it.

My Federal career grew because I was willing to be stretched. I accepted challenge after challenge. I assisted in training operations, taught internal communication classes, and eventually traveled regionally and nationally to explain policy changes affecting government agencies and military disbursement activities. God expanded my territory. He also allowed me to speak to middle and high school students about career opportunities within the Treasury Department. What my elementary teacher planted in me years earlier began to bear fruit on a larger stage.

The larger stage included returning to school, but not just for an academic degree, but to become immersed in biblical studies for the real assignment on my life. God provided amazing instructors in the persons of biblical scholars. They introduced me to Christian Education, surveys of the Old Testament, and journeys through the New Testament. Not only did I glean from them, but I also met other wonderful students whom I also matriculated with because we shared a common interest in earning degrees in biblical studies.

The people who shaped my life are many. My parents laid my spiritual and moral foundation. My praying grandmother covered me. My sister Marsha continued to nurture

Continued on next page—

me well into adulthood. My aunt modeled excellence and poise. My Girl Scout leaders and teachers instilled discipline. My late husband, my son, and my daughter deepened my understanding of love and sacrifice. My lifelong friends respected my spiritual growth, even when obedience to God required me to walk differently. And those I serve alongside in ministry continue to sharpen me as they witness my daily commitment to God and to the teaching of His Word.

From them all, I learned this order: God first in all matters. Then family. Then friends. I learned that presence matters. Honesty and sincerity matters. And obedience matters most.

Life has presented challenges. Growing up first surrounded by siblings and later essentially as an only child, required adjustment. Caring for family during difficult seasons strengthened me. But what has sustained me is this: God provides daily presence, forgiveness, help, protection, peace, and comfort. Through Sunday School, midweek study, seminary, and discipleship training, I came to understand the active role of

the Holy Spirit in every step I take. I do not speak about faith lightly. I have lived it.

Now, born out of obedience, God allows me to encourage others to discover their divine identity in Christ. I believe firmly that every believer must use the spiritual gifts assigned to them to build up the Body of Christ. We are not called to sit. We are called to serve.

The lesson that has guided me most is simple and unshakable: God knows the blueprint of my entire life. Since He has never failed His children, I trust His plan for every breath and every step. Whatever He has next for me, I trust Him in advance.

To the younger generation, I say this with conviction: Desire to be a disciple of Christ early in your life. When you pursue the things of God, you gain a peace that surpasses understanding. That peace will guide your decisions, shape your relationships, protect your mind, and anchor your legacy for generations to come. Your life's trajectory will shift when God is your foundation.

I am not perfect. I have simply chosen to trust a perfect God. And because of that trust, I stand firm, I speak boldly, and I remain humble before Him.

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