

JOYFUL CELEBRATION

Arrival April 23, 1969

Departure August 6, 2023

THE
LIFE OF

Saturday
August
19
2023

Viewing 10-11AM

Service 11AM

NEVER
FORGOTTEN
FOREVER IN
OUR HEARTS

Stephanie Castro



The Historic Charles Street
African Methodist Episcopal Church
551 Warren Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02121

For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. - Phil. 1:21

REVERAND DR. STEPHANIE DENISE CASTRO

The Right Reverend Julius H. McAllister, Sr., Presiding
Bishop and Eulogist
The First Episcopal District

Mother Joan Marla McAllister, Episcopal Supervisor
The First Episcopal District

The Reverend Jocelyn K. Hart Lovelace, Presiding Elder
and Officiant
New England Annual Conference

Brother Eddie Lovelace, Convention Consultant

The Reverend Dr. Gregory G. Groover, Sr., Senior Pastor
and Host

The Reverend Dr. Pedro Angelo Castro, Jr., Widower



Live Streaming Available:
* Grant AME - Boston (Facebook Live) *
Zoom ID 981 0735 7129



THE ORDER OF WORSHIP

Presiding Elder Jocelyn K. Hart Lovelace, Officiant
Boston Hartford District – New England Annual Conference

The Processional:

Total Praise
Richard Smallwood

The Opening Doxology:

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen. Amen. Amen

The Hymn of Praise:

“My Hope is Built”
My hope is built on nothing less
than Jesus’ blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
but wholly lean on Jesus’ name.

When darkness veils his lovely face,
I rest on his unchanging grace;
in every high and stormy gale,
my anchor holds within the veil.

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand:
all other ground is sinking sand;
all other ground is sinking sand.

His oath, his covenant, his blood,
support me in the whelming flood;
when all around my soul gives way,
he then is all my hope and stay.

Refrain:
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand:
all other ground is sinking sand;
all other ground is sinking sand.

When he shall come with trumpet sound,
O may I then in him be found:
dressed in his righteousness alone,
faultless to stand before the throne.

Refrain:

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand:
all other ground is sinking sand;
all other ground is sinking sand.

The Prayer of Comfort:

Reverend Dr. Alvan N. Johnson, Jr.

The Sacred Scriptures:

Old Testament: II Kings 4:1-7 NIV – Rev. Dr. Richard Clarke

The wife of a man from the company of the prophets cried out to Elisha, “Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that he revered the Lord. But now his creditor is coming to take my two boys as his slaves.”

2 Elisha replied to her, “How can I help you? Tell me, what do you have in your house?”

“Your servant has nothing there at all,” she said, “except a small jar of olive oil.”

3 Elisha said, “Go around and ask all your neighbors for empty jars. Don’t ask for just a few. 4 Then go inside and shut the door behind you and your sons. Pour oil into all the jars, and as each is filled, put it to one side.”

5 She left him and shut the door behind her and her sons. They brought the jars to her and she kept pouring. 6 When all the jars were full, she said to her son, “Bring me another one.”

But he replied, “There is not a jar left.” Then the oil stopped flowing.

7 She went and told the man of God, and he said, “Go, sell the oil and pay your debts. You and your sons can live on what is left.

New Testament:

Hebrews 11:1-6 NIV – Rev. Donna George

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. 2 This is what the ancients were commended for.

3 By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

4 By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.

5 By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: “He could not be found, because God had taken him away.”[a] For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. 6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

A Musical Selection: The Historic Charles Street Voices of Deliverance

Tributes:

Reverend Dr. Faye Banks Taylor
Presiding Elder, Albany - Kingston District

Reverend Dr. Gregory G. Groover, Sr.
Senior Pastor, Historic Charles Street AME Church
Reverend Richard H. Worthy and Reverend Vera Worthy
Retired Presiding Elder – Wilmington District and Former District Consultant

Reverend Adunnola Waterman French
First Episcopal District – Women in Ministry

Reverend Janine Dailey
Coordinator, New England Annual Conference Women in Ministry

Elder Melvin Baker
Historically Black Church Chaplain, Hendricks Chapel, Syracuse University

Reverend Dr. Marjorie Jones
Spiritual Mother

Dr. Gloria Mayfield Banks
Retired National Mary Kay Executive Director

Dr. Lauren Murdock
Principal, Orchard Gardens K-8 School – Boston, MA

Miss Jomila Smith
Principal, Boston Public Schools

Sister Sheila Grant
Vice Chairperson, Grant AMEC Steward Board

Brother Charles Pelote
Grant AMEC Steward

Sister Claudia Stewart
Armor Barrier

Mrs. Inesita Santos
Personal Best Friend

Sis. Angelina Castro
Sister-in-Law

Jaden Billings
Nephew

Mr. Khaivon Castro
Son

Reverend Dr. Stephanie Denise Castro
Obituary

Church Resolution:

Reverend Donna George and Sis. Sheila Grant

Executive Minister to the Pastor and Vice Chairperson, Steward Board

Obituary:

Sis. Anita Moore

Acknowledgements:

Reverend Sharel Roberson

Solo:

Phaedra Butler

“Take Me To The King” by Tamela Mann

The Eulogy

Bishop Julius Harrison McAllister, Sr. Eulogist

Presiding Prelate, First Episcopal District, African Methodist Episcopal Church

The Recessional:

“I’ll Fly Away” by Hezekiah Walker

Interment

Forest Hills Cemetery

95 Forest Hills Avenue, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts 02130

Repast

The Sons of Italy

120 Quarry Street, Quincy, Massachusetts 02169

Rev. Dr. Stephanie Denise Castro was born on April 23, 1969, in Boston, Massachusetts, to Albert Kinnitt, Jr. and Shirley Kinnitt Billings. She departed this life on August 6, 2023, in Boston, Massachusetts, surrounded by family and friends.

In her childhood years, she attended Lexington Public Schools, where she graduated in 1987. She attended the University of Bridgeport in Connecticut, where she earned a bachelor’s degree, with a concentration in Marketing, in 1991, followed by a Master of Science Degree, with a concentration in Education, in 1992. Rev. Dr. Stephanie graduated as Valedictorian of Payne Theological Seminary where she obtained her Master of Divinity degree in 2011. On December 3, 2022, Rev. Dr. Stephanie received an honorary Ph.D. in Business Administration and a Certified Coaching Certificate, from the Trinity International University of Ambassadors in Atlanta, GA. It is an honor that she held dearly.

Rev. Dr. Stephanie was a lifelong educator. She was a proud teacher, both locally and internationally. She served in a variety of schools, including the Patrick F. Gavin Middle school from which she retired. Teaching in both the Randolph and Boston Public School systems, Dr. Stephanie served faithfully as an S1/S2 English Teacher and Year Head at the prestigious Cedar Bridge Academy in Bermuda, for nearly six years. Prior to her demise, she served as an Instructional Coach at the Orchard Gardens Pilot School in Roxbury, Massachusetts. Rev. Dr. Stephanie Castro was ordained an Itinerant Elder in the AME Church on March 10, 2012, by the Right Reverend Bishop Carolyn Tyler-Guidry at the 126th Session of the Bermuda Annual Conference. Her ministry has spanned 24 years, three annual conferences, and four churches: The Historic Charles Street AMEC in Boston, her home church; Vernon Temple AMEC in Bermuda; Fellowship AMEC in Syracuse, NY; and Grant AMEC in Roxbury. At each church, she was adaptable and supportive, operating effectively various capacities in service of the church and community.

On November 4, 2006, Rev. Dr. Stephanie was blessed to marry the Rev. Dr. Pedro Angelo Castro, Jr. This was a day she would never forget; for truly, God sent her a gem, and an additional blessing to share a blended family of 3 children: Khaivon, Chantelle, Jasmyn, and two grandchildren, Skylah, and Camren. Rev. Pedro was assigned the pastoral charge of Vernon Temple AME Church in Southampton, Bermuda at the seat of the First Episcopal District, Christian Education Congress in Dover, Delaware. Upon Rev. Stephanie’s arrival at Vernon Temple AME Church, she was appointed as the Minister to Children, Youth and Young Adults, where she served with power and grace! She also served on the Ministerial Team. Together they designed a marketplace ministry that focused on family, education, business, community services, and government. “Power Breakfast,” a morning devotional service held daily at Cedar Bridge Academy Secondary School from 7:15 – 7:45 am, grew tremendously; and more than 200 students were blessed by this daily morning devotional experience.

Rev. Dr. Stehpanie assisted with the establishment of a registered Bermuda Government nonprofit entity, the Village Pride Community Center (VPCC), which hosted a Monday through Friday after-school tutorial program in the church's fellowship hall and the Reverend Erskine D. Simons Administrative Building. She also served as President of the Christian Women in Action Ministry, where she worked tirelessly with a team of women to expand the mission's reach to host several in-home study groups that were led by various church leaders who felt called to impact other women in and beyond the church. This strategy grew the number of women being exposed to weekly Bible study to more than 40 participants throughout the week. Reverend Dr. Stephanie was affectionately known as the Elect Lady of Vernon Temple AMEC. She warmed the hearts and spirits of Vernon Temple AMEC and the Island nation of Bermuda. Her charismatic smile and energy ignited a flame that continues to burn bright.

In June of 2012, she returned to Boston to pursue her career with Mary Kay Cosmetics after her 6-year teaching contract ended. The Reverend Dr. Stephanie wasted no time getting back in the swing of the business, naming her new unit "Chosen," earning a new vehicle and ascending to the ranks of Unit Director. She earned her first pink Cadillac in May 2015. Reverend Dr. Stephanie ultimately earned eleven vehicles throughout her Mary Kay career, including two pink Cadillacs. More recently, she was promoted to the rank of Senior Executive Sales Director. She enriched the lives of hundreds of men and women across the United States, Bermuda, and Canada!

Mary Kay Cosmetics is a faith-based business founded on the principles of God First, Family Second and Career Third; and without a doubt a perfect match for Reverend Dr. Stephanie as an anointed woman of God predestined to succeed.

When Reverend Dr. Stephanie returned to the United States to pursue her Mary Kay dream and help prepare the family's eventual return, she suggested that she and Pastor Castro launch a daily prayer call to maintain their marital and spiritual connection while apart. Pastor Castro agreed, and "Pink Power Prayer" (PPP) was birthed. Using the "Chosen Unit," and supporters, God refined and inspired men and women to join on Monday through Friday at 6 am for the study of God's Word and intercessory prayer. For nine years, this prayer call ministry became an integral part of their ministry in the Western New York Conference; and in June of 2013, an assignment to Fellowship AME Church in Syracuse, New York. The faithful members of Fellowship AME Church embraced "Operation 12 BOWS (Blessing Others with Surplus)" as they organized gleaning teams to pick surplus fruits and vegetables on seven area farms. The surplus was transported by truck and trailer into the Syracuse community, where the church was located, and given to more than seven-hundred families. Over fifty-three thousand pounds of produce blessed the tables of families in need.

After serving six faithful years as a Consultant in the Western New York Conference and the Elect Lady of Fellowship AME Church in Syracuse, they were assigned to Grant AME Church in Roxbury, Massachusetts. Together they continued to serve as a team bringing transformational ministry to the City of Boston. "Pink Power Prayer" was renamed "Fuel for the Soul;" and it continues to function as a spiritually healthy ministry that reinforces the church's vision at Grant AME Church. The vision is Prayer, Worship and the Study of God's Word. It does not yet appear what God has in store for His people in the City of Boston and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Reverend Dr. Stephanie's infectious personality helped to fuel the renaissance at Grant AME Church. In four years, the church has corrected serious infrastructure issues and vendor challenges.

In March 2021, Reverend Dr. Stephanie was diagnosed with triple negative breast cancer. While the journey was filled with many ups and downs, the joy Elect Lady exhibited gave her strength and inspired others! As a result of her journey, Rev. Dr. Stephanie was able to share how her faith made her unstoppable through a trial; and as she took pen to paper, she submitted her first published work in a bestselling anthology, "Your Faith Will Make You Unstoppable." Her solo book project entitled, "This Joy I Have: Discovering Joy on the Mountaintop and in the Valley," will be released in the coming months. This summary of life was written by Rev. Dr. Stephanie Castro as she went through her battles with cancer.

Reverend Dr. Stephanie D. Castro overcame sin and sickness in this world, for eternal life with God. She leaves the following family members to carry on and celebrate life:

Her loving husband, Reverend Dr. Pedro A. Castro, Jr. of Buffalo, New York; her loving parents, Mrs. Shirley Kinnitt Billings and Mr. Albert Kinnitt, Jr. both of Boston, Massachusetts; Stepmother, Mrs. June Kinnitt of Boston; Mother-in-law, Clara Castro of Buffalo; Son, Khaivon Brown Kinnitt Castro of Boston; Daughters, Chantelle Clemencia Castro of Atlanta, Georgia and Jasmyn Rose Castro of New York, NY; Brothers, Darnell Billings (Lissette) and Phillip Billings both of Boston; Sister, Sheila Billings of Boston; Sisters-in-law, Angelina Castro of Buffalo, and Tabitha Hairston (Carl) of Silver Springs, Maryland; Grandson, Camren Castro of Atlanta; Granddaughter Skylah Stefani Castro-Colon of Boston; Aunt Etwinda Murphy of Georgia; Godparents Mrs. Hazel Fulks of Boston, and Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Robinson (Cecelia) of Boston; Godchildren, Tahlia Denise Guzman and Anthony Thibodeaux of Boston, and a host of cousins, nieces, nephews, and other relatives and friends.

Reverend Dr. Stephanie Denise Castro: Entered into the mansion God custom designed for her to reside for all eternity. Amen.



Acknowledgements:

Perhaps you sent a lovely card or sat quietly in a chair.
Perhaps you sent a floral piece, if so, we saw it there.
Perhaps you spoke the kindest words, as any friend could say.
Perhaps you were not there at all, just thought of us that day.
Whatever you did to console our hearts, we thank you whatever the part.

Special Thanks

The Family of Rev. Dr. Stephanie Denise Castro

Jerry and Cecelia Robinson, Rev. Dr. Marjorie Jones, Rev. Richard and Rev. Vera Worthy, Rev. Dr. Marlowe V. N. Washington and Mira Washington, Sheila Grant, Dr. Gloria Mayfield Banks and the Mary Kay Majic Unit, Crisette Ellis, Robin Barnwell, Ebun Osaze, Tee Bolden, Deyara T. Morris, Rev. Dr. Faye Banks Taylor, Carolyn Williams, Rev. Adunnola Waterman French, Rev. Dr. Garland D. Davis, Melinda Jennings, Gloria Grant, Jill Symonds, Judy Simons, Jumaada Smith, Lori DePina, Inesita and Michael McKinney, Larelle Bryson, Claudia Stewart, Emily Guzman, Jomila Smith, Kennia Campbell, Nerissa Smith, Lisa Nesmith, Krystal Semper

Grant AME Church, Fuel for the Soul, the Historic Charles Street AME Church,
Vernon Temple AMEC - Bermuda

Dr. James P. Roseto, Dr. Carol Rosenberg, Oncology Support Team

AccentCare Inpatient Hospice Center – Milton, Massachusetts

Presiding Elder Jocelyn K. Hart Lovelace and Bro. Eddie Lovelace

Bishop Julius H. McAllister, Sr., and Mother Joan Marla McAllister

Pallbearers

Brother Khaivon Castro | Brother Deode Castro
Brother Darnell Billings | Brother Camren Castro
Brother Jerry Robinson | Brother Lamont Billings

Honorary Pallbearers

Jaiden Billings | Brother Gerald Thaxton, III

Interment

Forest Hills Cemetery
95 Forest Hills Avenue, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts 02130
617-524-0128
www.foresthillscemetery.co

Professional Services Entrusted To

Davis Funeral Homes, Incorporated
Ms. Rebecca Ridley, Proprietor
89 Walnut Avenue, Roxbury, Massachusetts 02119
617-427-0828
rebecca@davisofboston.com