

Ask Your Angels

BY JASON ABERNATHY AKA "BOY"

Our mother's smile had a way of choosing you. It never asked permission—it simply entered the room before she did, warming the air like morning light through the blinds. It wasn't for show; never that. It was a quiet kind of brightness, a reminder of how good it feels simply to belong. Our father would laugh and say, "Your mother made another friend." He was right. Strangers rarely stayed strangers long.

Her hands were never still—turning clay into bowls, shaping dolls that seemed to breathe once she let them go. Not stitched, but molded, with faces crafted gently from her fingertips like small lives waiting to bloom. Curiosity lived in those fingertips. It walked her into Princeton when some doubted she belonged. She studied until the words felt true, earned her Master's in theology, and brought it all home—to Hough—where she taught the neighborhood that raised her.

She did not preach at you; she taught with you. Faith at the table, notes in the margins. She set Christianity beside Buddhism, Taoism, and Islam—not to undo her own belief, but to strengthen its listening. She traveled to Israel, sat at two tables, Israeli and Palestinian, and carried back stories of shared bread and shared breath. At Hough she taught with the same heart—not from above, but beside her students. Scripture was never a wall to her; it was a door, and she kept it open wide enough for everyone.

For fifty-seven years she and our father kept time together, trading care the way partners trade steps in a dance. They laughed like it mattered—because it did. They played cards and kept score by the months: August eight games, September nine, their gentle trash talk softened by love. Her circle was always widening—Tonya, who was not only her best friend but as close as a daughter; Veta and Sha, whose steady care made them family; and in her last days, Ty, Aunt Janice, and many others who kept watch in love. Anthony came even in the busyness of July, speaking of his three girls—the same girls she once took yarn shopping, laughing through the stores. That memory lit her spirit again, a small spark of joy carried back into the room.

And always, Kelly—the daughter who could talk with her about anything, with no locked doors and no guarded words. Her love spilled wide for Jordan and Jadon, and for every niece and nephew, each one carrying a piece of her pride. When dementia came, it came like fog. But she did not disappear inside it. She turned lighthouse—steady, patient—still gathering people in the nursing home for Bible study, still letting her faith cut a clean, quiet path through the gray. Memory may slip, but faith remembers.

Again, fifty-seven years with our father shined through—an ordinary love made extraordinary, even in the fog of dementia. After he passed, she spoke of him often, as if he had only stepped out for a while, still searching for her and remarking, "He must not know where I am." In her last months she called softly to her people—her sisters Ora and Ruby, her brother Ulysses, and her parents—names lifted like prayer, because love remembers what time cannot erase.

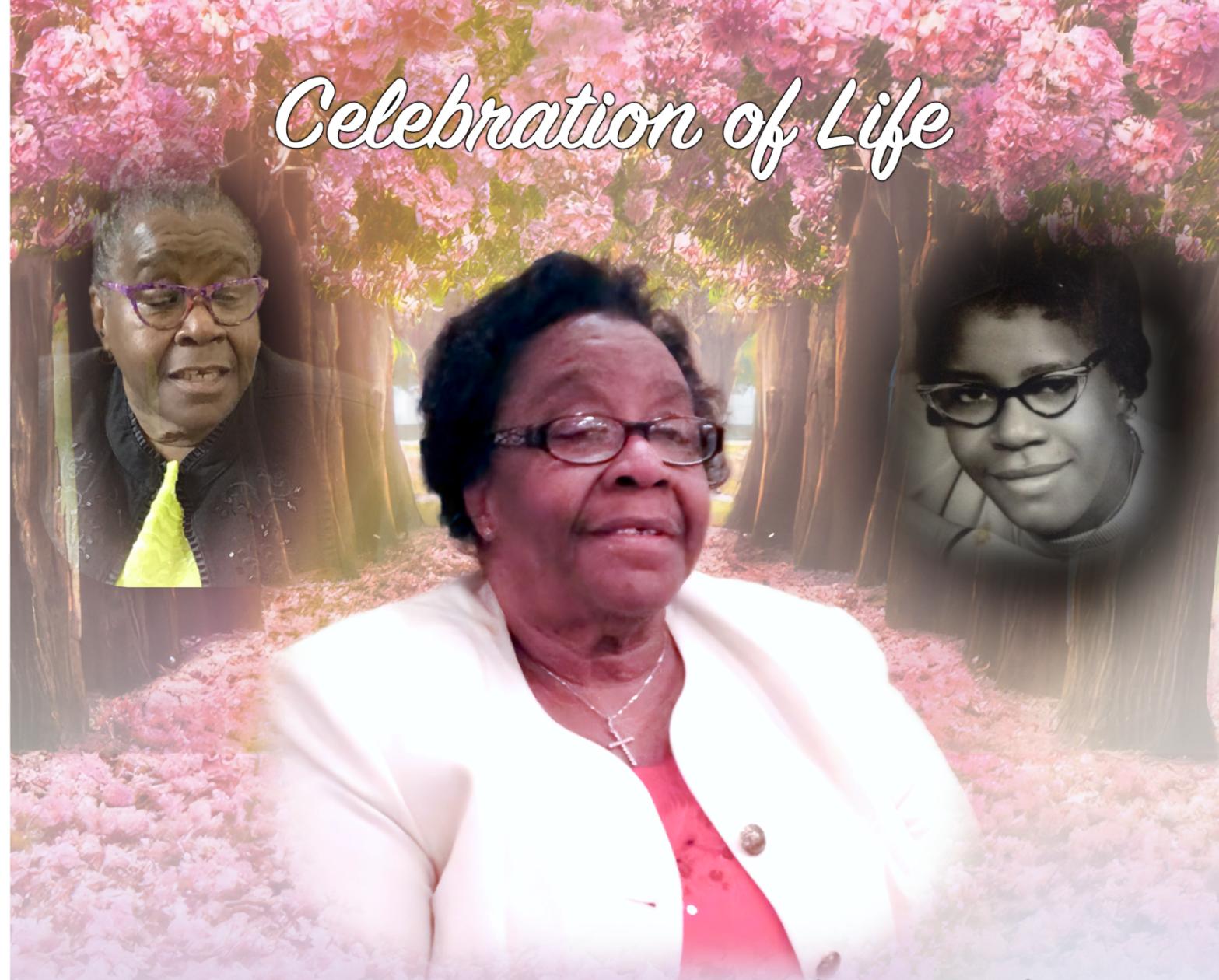
When we were children and lost things—keys, courage, or the thread of a day—she would smile and tell us, "Ask your angels." And somehow, the missing returned. Now we are the ones who are lost. And yet, if we listen, we still hear her—gentle, steady, like morning through fog: "Ask your angels." Because the angel we ask for now is her. And love, once it finds you, always finds you again.

Services of Comfort entrusted to:

Watson's Funeral Home
www.WatsonFuneralHome.com
10913 Superior Ave. ~ Cleveland, Ohio 44106
Telephone (216) 721-0066



Celebration of Life



Rev. Lucille Elaine Abernathy

MARCH 8, 1944 - AUGUST 10, 2025

Friday, August 29, 2025
Celebration of Life: 12:00 pm

Lee Road Baptist Church
3970 Lee Road - Cleveland, Oh 44128

Order of Service

Musical Prelude	Mr. Michael Jester Ms. Regina Foster
Processional.....	
Family Visitation	12:00 PM – 12:30 PM
Introduction of Celebration.....	Rev. Dr. James P. Quincy III
Old Testament	Rev. Jacqueline Bailey
New Testament.....	Rev. LaWhaymon White
Prayer of Comfort.....	Rev. Dr. James P. Quincy III
Song of Praise.....	Ms. Regina Foster
Poem	“Ask Your Angels”, Mrs. Traci Simmons
Tributes:	The Believers Academy Bible Study Min. Marjorie Bryant Ms. Betty Cross
Family Tributes.....	Mr. Jadon Porch Min. Kelly Abernathy
Abernathy Family Proclamation.....	Mrs. Ora White
Acknowledgements & Resolutions	Ms. Angela Young
Obituary	Dr. Yolanda Thigpen
Song of Praise.....	Rev. Tonya Fields
Eulogy.....	Rev. Dr. James P. Quincy III
Recessional	Every Praise

INTERMENT

Ohio Western Reserve National Cemetery
10175 Rawiga Road – Rittman, OH 44270

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The family of Rev. Lucille E. Abernathy wishes to express their heartfelt gratitude for your kindness, words of encouragement, prayers and unwavering support during this very difficult time. Your generosity, presence and compassion have been a true source of comfort.



Obituary

A true star was born March 8, 1944 a bouncing baby girl with a twinkle in her eye in Hattiesburg, Mississippi to Ulysses Sr. & Ruther Mae McNair joining siblings Ruby, and Ulysses Jr. Later siblings Ora Dee, Alice Ruth & Willie Earl were added to the family. The latter two passed away as children.

From a young age, she devoted her life to Christ and was baptized as a child, beginning a lifelong journey of faith. Growing up at East Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Cleveland, Ohio, she was an active and devoted member whose heart for service touched many. Over the years, she faithfully attended and taught Sunday School, guided teens as the proud leader of Group 10, and contributed her gifts to various church groups and committees, leaving an indelible mark on the congregation she so deeply loved.

Lucille lived an extraordinary life rooted in faith and family. A loving and devoted wife, Lucille was married to her beloved husband, Garlen Abernathy Jr. who she lovingly referred to as her “Garlen Darlin” or “Cholley” for over 57 years providing unwavering love and support to one another throughout their time together. Their union was full of love and adventures few get to experience. To this beautiful union two wonderful and amazing children were born: Kelly Marie, and 22 months later Jason Garlen arrived and their party of four was complete. Years later, Lucille earned her most prized title as “Grandma” to Jordan & Jadon who brought so much joy and pride to her life, especially as she was blessed to attend both of their college graduations.

Travel was one of her greatest joys. While studying at Princeton, she visited Israel, an experience that touched her deeply ~ meeting Israelis and Palestinians alike while walking the streets of the Holy Land. Later, she and her devoted husband shared many cross-country adventures, driving from Cleveland to San Francisco, exploring Arizona’s Painted Desert and the breathtaking landscapes of Zion National Park in Utah, and making Niagara Falls & Toronto an annual family destination where laughter, love and new experiences awaited. Living over 500 miles from her daughter and grandsons, she was intent on making sure Jordan & Jadon knew them well, so they made regular visits throughout the year including Christmas, establishing traditions that lasted a lifetime.

To know Lucille was to witness a true Renaissance woman - gifted with many talents and a boundless creative spirit. She poured her heart into everything she did – preaching and teaching the Word of God, sharing her wisdom and faith generously. Shaping clay into art, painting life onto canvas, handcrafting beautiful dolls, creating delicious meals, sewing and crocheting treasures that will be cherished for years to come. Her many gifts were a reflection of her vibrant spirit, her deep love for detail and design, her deep faith, and her boundless love for family, friends, and community. Whatever she touched – whether hearts, minds, or materials – she transformed with grace and purpose.

Over the course of Lucille’s lifetime on earth, she worked for various companies and held several titles prior to ministry. She worked for Ohio Bell, Minnesota Fabrics, Holiday Inn and Cleveland Public Schools. At the age of 35, Lucille was called to ministry, at a time that female ministers were not commonplace or widely accepted or supported. The acceptance of her call led her to Bishop College in Dallas, Texas, where she received her Bachelors of Arts degree in Religion and Christian Education. She made history there becoming the first female president of Bishop College’s Lyceum (association of ministers). She continued her education by attending the prestigious Princeton Theological Seminary receiving a Masters of Divinity in Practical Theology and Pastoral Counseling. Her education also includes biblical studies in Jerusalem, Israel; Kent State University and Cuyahoga Community College.

In 1985 Rev. William Sanders and Lee Road Baptist Church made history in Cleveland, Ohio, when Rev. Abernathy was ordained as the first African American female in The Cleveland Baptist Association (CBA).

As an ordained American Baptist minister, Rev. Abernathy was given privilege of call in The United Church of Christ (UCC) and has served as pastor/teacher in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. She has written magazine articles; publications and curriculum for American Baptist Churches USA (ABC). She is also the author of “Believe: A Creative Biblical Solution For Financial Challenges”.

Rev. Abernathy has served on many boards, worked as an instructor, chaplain and pastor, in various denominations such as Presbyterian; American Baptist Churches USA (ABC) as well as The United Church of Christ (UCC). Most recently, she was the founder and dedicated teacher of The Believers Academy, which holds

weekly Bible Study along with her daughter Min. Kelly Abernathy. These amazing faithful and faith filled ladies have brought such joy and purpose to her life.

Rev. Abernathy was a well sought after workshop leader and creative consultant. She used her diverse educational and professional experiences, along with her artistic talents to bring healing & learning by utilizing preaching, teaching, counseling, and creativity. Her ministry has been one that builds bridges and is inclusive of all races, cultures and denominations.

Answering God’s call was one of her greatest joys, and her journey into ministry was so impactful that it is chronicled in Dr. William H. Meyer’s book, *The Irresistible Urge to Preach ~ A Collection of African American “Call” Stories*. Her testimony lives on, inspiring seminarians and preachers across the nation. Anyone who knew Rev. Abernathy knows she has been a pillar of faith, trusting the Lord in every aspect of her life. Every opportunity she got, she shared her faith and wanted people to believe that ALL things are possible with God.

After a brief yet valiant fight, Rev. Lucille Elaine Abernathy laid down her earthly struggles and in God’s perfect timing was called home on the morning of Sunday, August 10, 2025. Her faith was unshakable, and her foundation firmly rooted in God’s word. She has now found peace everlasting with her Heavenly Father.

Lucille was predeceased in death by her devoted husband of over 57 years, Garlen Abernathy Jr, who only five months earlier paved the way for their eternal reunion together again. Lucille was also predeceased by her parents Ulysses & Ruther Mae McNair, her brothers Ulysses McNair Jr. and Willie Earl McNair; her sister, Alice Ruth McNair; brothers-in-law Marconi Wright and Larry Abernathy.

Among those who will forever treasure her memory are her devoted son, Mr. Jason Garlen Abernathy and her dutiful daughter, Min. Kelly Abernathy, both with whom she shared an unbreakable bond as well as her best friend and most trusted confidant, Rev. Tonya Fields, who was truly a daughter, sister and friend rolled into one. The three of them with loving devotion cared for her during her final weeks. Her heart was fullest when surrounded by her two treasured grandsons, Jordan Porch and Jadon Porch, who brought boundless joy & laughter into her world and a source of pride.

Rev. Abernathy is also survived by her sisters, Ruby Wright and Ora D. McNair; her brother-in-law Timothy Abernathy (Janice) and sisters-in-law Jean Evans (Robert); Regina Abernathy and LaJean McNair; her nieces; Michelle “Miki” Wright (Derek), Nishon Wright, Lisa Wright, Paula McNair, Traci Simmons (Bruce) and Anise Robinson (Bryce). Her nephews; Eric McNair (Kathy), Michael “Frankie” McNair, Dawud “Chuckie” Muhammad (Phyllis), Ty Abernathy, Jonathan Evans (Kahrema), Troy Abernathy, Anthony Abernathy and Aaron Abernathy along with a host of great nieces & nephews, extended family members and cherished dear friends. In addition, her honorary granddaughter, Patricia Battle who held a special place in her heart; she was also blessed by the love of Veta Taylor, who was like a daughter to her along with her goddaughter, Shavauntae Taylor both of whose gentle care was a blessing in her final season. All of whom were touched by her presence and will carry forward her legacy of love, faith and wisdom.

Though our hearts are heavy, we find comfort in knowing that our mother and grandmother is now at peace, reunited with the love of her life and resting in the arms of her Savior. Her light will continue to shine brightly in the lives of all who knew and loved her.

“Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.”

Ecclesiastes 12:7 KJV