

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS OF COMFORT

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
That any friend could say. Perhaps you were not there at all,
Just thought of us that day. Whatever the part you played
To console our hearts, We thank you so much,
Whatever the part.



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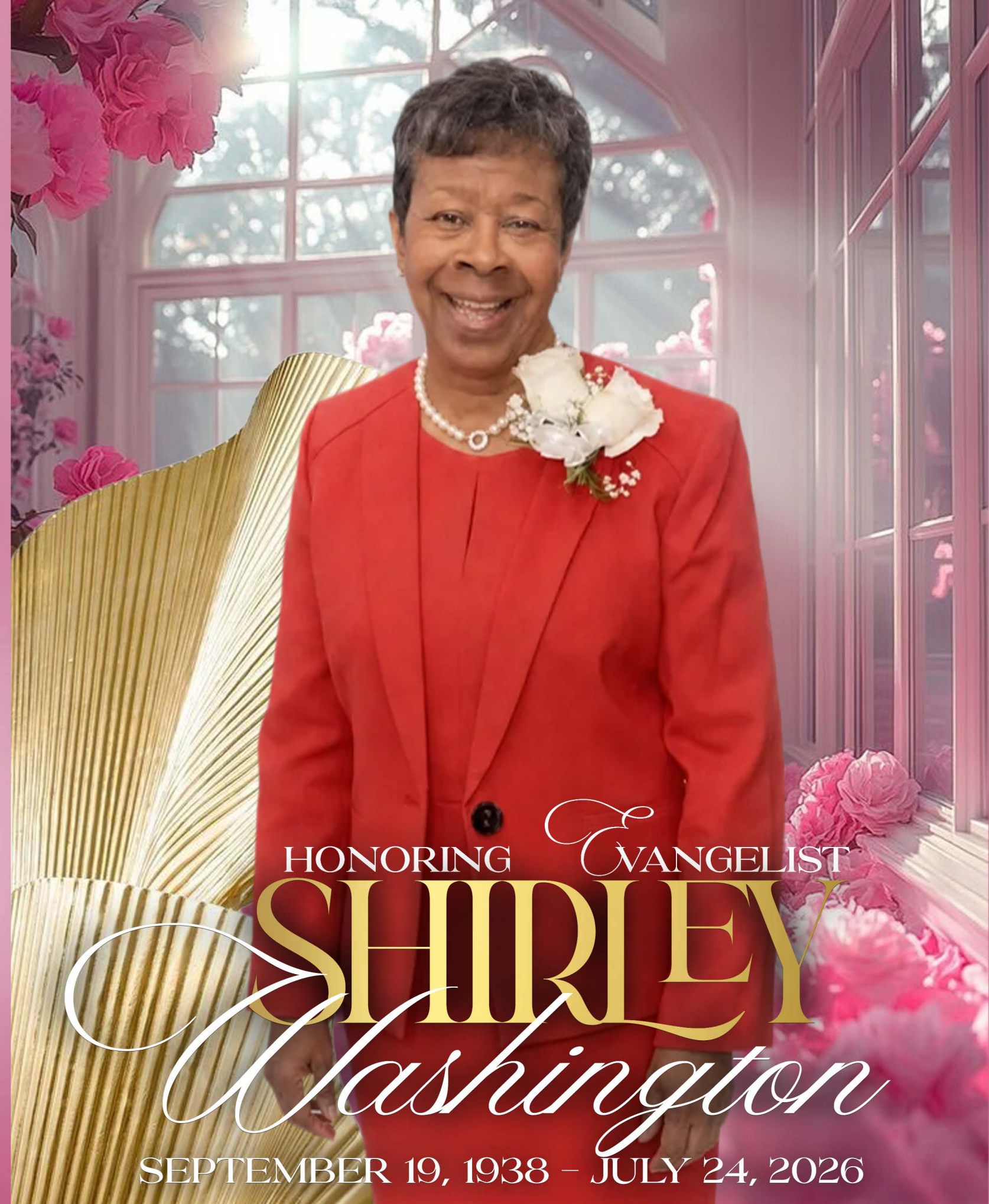
ARRIVAL
SEPTEMBER 19, 1938

DEPARTURE
JULY 24, 2026



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HONORING EVANGELIST
SHIRLEY
Washington
SEPTEMBER 19, 1938 – JULY 24, 2026

REMEMBERING HER LIFE

Shirley (Johnson) Washington was born in Franklin, Virginia on September 19, 1938, to the late English Johnson, Sr. and Lela Mae Johnson. She was the oldest girl of 8 children.

She was preceded in death by her mother and father (mentioned above) and siblings; Theodore B. Johnson, Juanita Ellison, English J. Johnson, Jr., Mary A. Smith, Buddy Johnson, Ruth (Pearman) Wiggins and Dr. Alvin Harris.

Church was a big part of her family’s life. Shirley attended Piney Grove Baptist Church; where she was baptized at the age of 13.

Her early education began at Camptown Elementary School, followed by three years at Smithfield High School. Due to segregation, Shirley and her close-knit group of friends were separated—it was a painful moment in her life. She completed her senior year at Windsor High School in Windsor, Virginia, where she also played basketball, a sport she loved.

On the day she graduated, Shirley made a bold and hopeful decision: she left Virginia and headed north to New Jersey, where she would build her life and legacy. Her first job was as an aide in the Pediatric Department at Beth Israel Hospital, caring for babies with the gentle, nurturing spirit that came naturally to her.

From a previous marriage, she welcomed two beautiful daughters, Robyn and Karen, who remained the center of her world.

Shirley later began a long and dedicated career with the American Baptist Churches of America in East Orange, New Jersey serving as a Switchboard Operator and Bookkeeper for more than 25 years. After retiring from A.B.C, she continued her commitment to service by working as a Secretary at Bethany Baptist Church in Newark, New Jersey. Even after full retirement, Shirley’s heart for helping others never dimmed. Being a Breast Cancer Survivor herself, she volunteered at the St. Barnabas Ambulatory Care Center in Livingston, New Jersey, offering her time and compassion until the onset of the Covid pandemic.

Shirley’s life was defined by faith, family, service and strength. She carried herself with grace, she loved deeply, and touched countless lives through her work, her kindness, and her unwavering dedication to others.

In 1971, Shirley joined Faith Temple Church on 4th Avenue in East Orange under the leadership of Bishop Milton A. Hobbs, where she surrendered her life FULLY to the Lord. Shirley once said, “As hard as I lived and partied in the world, I going to live even harder for Jesus.” And she did. Her first ministry was the Faith Temple Choir. It was there she earned the affectionate nickname “Sweet Polly” from the church’s maestro of music, Bro. Lloyd (Preston) Parchment. She sang not for applause, but for the glory of God, lifting hearts every time she opened her mouth.

Beyond the choir, Shirley served faithfully as President of the Pastor’s Aide Committee for several years at which time became Faith Temple New Hope Church. Her leadership was steady, compassionate, and rooted in service.

In 1977, Shirley met and married the now Pastor Joseph Washington, Jr., who lovingly called her “Sister Girl.” Their union was blessed with the birth of their son, “The Prince” Michael Andrew Washington—though she loved all her children deeply—“the prince” LOL, held a special place in her heart.

Together, Pastor Washington and Minister Shirley served in ministry at Bordentown Juvenile Medium Security Facility, where more than 60 inmates were baptized in Jesus’ Name under their leadership. Their work changed lives, restored hope, and brought the gospel into places often forgotten.

Later, God called them to establish The Gospel of Christ Ministries of East Orange, Inc., where she served faithfully with her husband for 21 years. Now, Minister Shirley served beside her husband with grace, strength, and unwavering devotion.

Shirley’s gifts extended far beyond the pulpit. She was known for her famous 7-up cake. She loved to dance and shared that joy with her daughters at the Marie Widley School of Dance in East Orange. She also had a natural talent for modeling—she was poised, elegant, and radiant. And when she laced up her roller skates, you knew to move aside. Shirley could skate until the sun went down and came back up again. It was one of her purest joys.

Minister Shirley Washington leaves behind a legacy of faith, family, and love. She is celebrated by her devoted husband of 49 years, Pastor Joseph Washington, Jr.; daughters Robyn Brantley, Karen Cruse (Clarence); son Michael Washington (Barbara); grandchildren: Antoine Collins (Denise), Addison Stewart III, Asyah Hood (Cedric), Ashley Cruse, Christopher Cruse, Chyna Cruse, Zya Washington, Malia Washington, Denise Baynard, Tameeah Browne (bonus granddaughter), Ranai Jones (bonus granddaughter); greatgrandchildren: Azhan Collins, Zakari Cruse, Cassandra Hood, Zenae HarrisCruse, Malakai Cruse and Zion HarrisCruse; godchildren: Michael Maynard and Bianca Mayes. Her best friend since grade school, Rose Robinson, along with a host of nieces, nephews, adopted spiritual sons and daughters, friends, and former coworkers who loved her dearly.

Minister Shirley Washington lived a life of purpose, joy, and devotion. She sang, she danced, she served, she loved—and she left an imprint on every life she touched. She will truly be missed.

We, the family of Shirley Washington, acknowledge with heartfelt gratitude and appreciation, the many comforting expressions of love extended to us; messages of sympathy, words of encouragement and all other acts of kindness exhibited through prayer, visitation, and cards to name just a few. Each expression gave us strength and hope during this difficult time.

May the Lord bless each of you.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Saturday, August 1, 2026
12:00 pm
Bethlehem Judah Christian Fellowship
83 Galloping Hill Road, Elizabeth, NJ 07208

MISTRESS OF CEREMONY
Sis. Barbara Washington

OPENING SONG
Pastor Kisha Cohen
Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Dover, NJ
I Love to Praise Him (Song)

SCRIPTURE READING
Old Testament
Min. Michael Mayes

NEW TESTAMENT
Sis. Rochelle Turner

PRAYER OF COMFORT
Pastor Jamal Brantley

MUSICAL SELECTION

POEM
Antoine Collins-Eldest Grandson

WORDS OF LOVE
Azahn Collins – Great grandson

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & RESOLUTIONS
Pastor Yvette Anderson

OBITUARY

REFLECTIONS

REFLECTIONS
The Family
Rose Robinson – Lifelong Friend

SELECTION
Pastor Kisha Cohen
Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Dover, NJ

EULOGY
Bishop Rudy Santiago
New Life International Church
Cresco, PA

FINAL VIEWING

CALL OF SAIVATION

BENEDICTION/RECESSIONAL

INTERMENT

