



## Rev. Thomas Williams

May 30, 2017

"All the days of my hard service I will wait, Till my change comes."

Job 14:14

Pastor, preacher, advisor, chaplain, and teacher are among the many appellations that defined Reverend Thomas Williams during forty-three years of Christian ministry. His path was an evolution from the streets of New York City, where he was born and spent the early part of his life. His parents, Hope Allen and Thomas Schreiner entrusted him to the care of his mother's Aunt Roberta and her husband, Silas Williams, who adopted him as a boy. Together, they provided a loving home and directed his formative years. At fourteen, Thomas joined Mother Bethel A.M.E. Church and sang in the Young Adult Choir. Little did he know of what God had in store for his life.

As a young man, he enlisted in the army, serving in China, Burma, and India during World War II. He was Honorably Discharged in April, 1945. Upon his return to the states, Thomas became the first black electrician with the Pennsylvania Railroad, working out of Penn Station. Yet, he remained oblivious to what lie ahead. On Easter Sunday, 1948, he visited St. Paul Community Church in Manhattan, a decision that would shape the rest of his life. Through the guidance of Pastor Hale B. Thompson, and Reverend Joseph E. Thompson, his son, God's plan for the future Reverend Williams was revealed. His call to the ministry was a process---Class Leader, Steward,

Evangelist---until he was joyfully ordained to the Eldership on June 3, 1963. He went on to supplement his church experience with formal training, earning a Bachelor of Arts at Shelton College and a Bachelor in Theology at Temple Theological College. Subsequently, he was appointed Assistant Pastor in charge of Youth, Education, and Recreational Programming at the Church on the Hill A.M.E. Zion.

Eventually, Rev. Williams relocated to New Jersey. His marriage to the late Lystra Jones resulted in the adoption of her beautiful daughter, Lycia, and the birth of his beloved Elena. He is still known as "Daddy" to Lystra's great niece, Trina, whom he helped to raise.

Combining ministerial and community work, Rev. Williams served in the following capacities:

Executive Secretary for the Shiloh Baptist Association of New Jersey  
Sunday School Expositor for the Baptist Minister's Conference of Newark and Vicinity

Assistant Pastor at the New Christian Missionary Baptist Church in Paterson  
Assistant Pastor, Salem Baptist Church in Jersey City

Regional Convener for the Opportunities Industrialization Centers (OIC) of Hudson County

President of the Board of Directors of the Hudson County Urban League

Pastor, New Bethel Baptist Church, Jersey City

Pastor, First Baptist Church of Teaneck

Member, Teaneck Planning Board

President, Black Clergy Council of Englewood and Vicinity

While serving as Executive Director of the Salem-Lafayette Housing Holding Company and Hudson County OIC, Rev. Williams scored important victories for low-income residents of Jersey City. His supervision of a \$17.5 million development, the first of its kind in the area, provided affordable and critically-

needed housing. Next, he established a vocational school for underprivileged adults, personally developing the curriculum for classroom instruction, securing placement, and managing on-the-job training. The efforts of Rev. Williams and his colleagues represented an historic contribution to the revitalization of the community.

As Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Teaneck, he inspired his congregation to embrace his tradition of social activism. His multi-cultural Christmas services attracted senior citizens from neighboring towns. Over time, his Culinary Committee branched out to the prison population, where First Baptist partnered with the Hackensack Sheriff's Department to provide Thanksgiving meals and services at the jail. In 1982, Rev. Williams was selected by the Bergen County Chosen Freeholders to serve as a Protestant Chaplain. His ministry at the Sheriff's Department was expanded to include worship services, Bible study, and counseling sessions. Always going above and beyond, he made himself available 24/7 to assist with bereavement notifications. His Christian outreach included Bergen Regional and Holy Name hospitals, the Teaneck Fire Department, and the Juvenile Detention Center and Intermediate Care Facility at Rockleigh. In 1985, Rev. Williams completed a Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) program at Christ Hospital in Jersey City to supplement his training in institutional ministry.

In 1994, he married his best friend, Candace, in a "Wedding By the Sea" on a beautiful October day. The sea would set the backdrop for their marriage, as they took day trips to Avon and Long Branch, vacationed in Key West and Hawaii, or relaxed on their oceanfront balcony along the Delmarva coast. At every opportunity, Candace reminded her husband. "I will never again look at God's ocean without thinking of you."

Rev. Williams' resume is vast, his accomplishments numerous. To include all

of his lifetime achievements would prove an impossible task. Over the years, he amassed a collection of keepsakes from grateful inmates who sought hope during difficult times. He was keenly aware of the social issues that result in the incarceration of far too many of our youth. His prayer was that his written sermonettes would be inscribed upon the hearts of the next generation. He understood adversity. In his latter years, his health upended his active ministry. Yet his life was a testament of his faith in a God who overcomes obstacles. Rev. Williams has overcome. He is at peace and receiving a well-earned rest. Let us not be selfish and wish he was still here. Rather, let us look forward to that day when we will see him again----walking, talking, and praising God.

Until then, he will be dearly missed by his loving wife, Candace, daughter Lycia Yvette Taylor, her husband, Rev. Howard Taylor, daughter Elena Marie Williams, Trina Nakia Anderson, granddaughter Ashley Yvonne Sherrill, her husband, Samuel Sherrill, granddaughters Kristen Nicole Butler and Leilah Ivery Blain, sisters-in-law Sharon Brunson, Michelle Culbert, and Dawn Culbert, a special niece by marriage, Tanise Nicole Springer, her husband, Derrell Springer, cherished friend Inez Parks, and a host of relatives and acquaintances.

For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth;  
And after my skin is destroyed, this I know,  
That in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself. And my eyes  
shall behold, and not another... Job 19: 25-27

# Cemetery Details

## Brigadier General William C. Doyle Veterans Memorial Cemetery

350 Provinceline Road  
Wrightstown, NJ 08562

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUN 5. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Mt. Olive Baptist Church  
260 Central Avenue  
Hackensack, NJ 07601  
<http://www.mountolivebaptist.org>

## Service

JUN 5. 7:00 PM (ET)

Mt. Olive Baptist Church  
260 Central Avenue  
Hackensack, NJ 07601  
<http://www.mountolivebaptist.org>

# Tribute Wall



“ *Rev. Thomas Williams*

October 08, 2023 at 09:59 PM



“ *Rev. Thomas Williams*

October 08, 2023 at 06:27 PM



“ *Rev. Thomas Williams*

August 30, 2022 at 02:48 PM



“ *Such a nice gentleman always smiling the first few years i encounter mr. Williams in the dining room with he's wife Candace such a lovely couple may God bring comfort in these difficult time for the family. May he bring strength for Candace.*

**Raimy** - June 05, 2017 at 09:47 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Rev. Thomas Williams.*



June 03, 2017 at 08:33 PM