

Supt. Walter Louis Williams Sr.

September 15, 1936 - January 19, 2026

***NOTE: FROM LABOR TO REWARD: THE JURISDICTIONAL HOMEGOING CELEBRATION OF LIFE AND LEGACY SERVICE FOR SUPERINTENDENT WALTER WILLIAMS, SR. SATURDAY, JANUARY 31, 2026 AT HOLY TEMPLE CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST. PLEASE SEE VISITATION & SERVICE TIMES AND LOCATION FOR FRIDAY, JANUARY 30, 2026 & SATURDAY, JANUARY 31, 2026 LISTED BELOW

***MASKS AND HAND SANITIZER WILL BE PROVIDED BY REQUEST.

Born to Henry Lee Mack Williams and Leana Williams on September 15, 1936 in Ullin, Illinois, Walter was the youngest of seven children, Amos, Moses, Charles, Mary, Deborah, and Rebecca all of which have preceded him to glory.

Superintendent Walter Williams Sr., a devoted husband, father, and a pillar of faith in the Kalamazoo community, transitioned from labor to reward on Monday, January 19, 2026. Passing on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, his departure serves as a poetic testament to a life dedicated to values of faith, family and fellowship.

A resident of Kalamazoo for many years, Walter Williams Sr. was a man of

profound influence and unshakeable conviction. He was united in holy matrimony to his beloved wife, Bessie Williams, in 1960. For 65 1/2 years, they stood as partners in life and ministry, modeling a love that endured all seasons.

Superintendent Williams was known not just for his title, but for his heart. Some may remember how in his younger years he was a gifted musician. He was known for playing the piano and singing with a passion that could lift any spirit. He would often be called upon to sing one of his favorite hymns, "If I Can Help Somebody," embodying the lyrics he sang so often: "If I can help somebody, as I pass along... then my living shall not be in vain."

In his own backyard, he once launched a legendary "Backyard Bible School." It became a neighborhood beacon where children memorized the Lord's Prayer and Ten Commandments to earn silver dollar chains, planting seeds of faith in the next generation. This was the springboard that launched him into pastorship.

In 1976 Walter Williams Sr. founded the Rock of Ages Church of God In Christ in Kalamazoo, Michigan. A church where he and wife Bessie worked tirelessly to bring the light of Jesus to their surroundings. Well known for feeding people delicious meals and the Word of God, Rock of Ages became a real blessing to the community of Kalamazoo.

In later years Pastor Williams was promoted to superintendent for the Twelfth Gate District. In addition, he was appointed by Bishop Aaron I. Milton to the board of Jurisdictional Executive Council of Michigan Southwest #4 Jurisdiction.

To his family, Walter Williams Sr. was a rock of unconditional love. He was a father who believed in redemption and grace, famously declaring of his son, "I

loved him then, and I love him now." His support never wavered, and his home was always a sanctuary of welcome and forgiveness. His love for ALL of his children was rock solid; as it was for his entire family.

He leaves to cherish his memory his devoted wife of 66 years, Bessie Williams; his children, Walter (Christina) Williams Jr.; Michael Lloyd Williams; and Joyce (Jeffrey) Payne; Kamisha Williams; Charlie Williams; and Rashi Williams. Many loving grandchildren, Genice (Zamauri) Hamilton; Victor (Morgan) Payne; Christian Payne; Christopher Rose; Celeste Rose; Brittany Grayson; Michael Williams; Sekeyah Williams; Sebastian Williams (deceased); Antonio Williams; great grandchildren; and a host of nieces, nephews, church members, and friends throughout the city of Kalamazoo and beyond.

Cemetery Details

Riverside Cemetery

1015 Gull Rd
Kalamazoo, MI 49048-1733
(269) 337-8227

Previous Events

Visitation For Family & Friends

JAN 30. 6:00 PM - 6:30 PM (ET)

Holy Temple Church Of God In Christ
1420 E. Michigan Avenue
Kalamazoo, MI

The Local and District Service

JAN 30. 6:30 PM (ET)

Holy Temple Church Of God In Christ
1420 E. Michigan Avenue
Kalamazoo, MI

Public Viewing For Family and Friends

JAN 31. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Holy Temple Church Of God In Christ
1420 E. Michigan Avenue
Kalamazoo, MI

The Jurisdictional Homegoing Celebration Of Life & Legacy Service

JAN 31. 11:00 AM (ET)

Holy Temple Church Of God In Christ
1420 E. Michigan Avenue
Kalamazoo, MI

Tribute Wall



“ Harper Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Supt. Walter Louis Williams Sr.



Harper Funeral Home - January 29 at 06:05 PM

EH

*Supt. Elder Williams, you were a true soldier in the army for the Lord. I remember the days at Rock of Ages during bible study. You were definitely big on having the kids give a testimony or calling on some of us to sing. I also remember all the times helping Mother Hill in the kitchen baking you a chocolate cake before a holiday or her having us call you in the middle of the night on the phone to start praying and having church over the phone 🙏 Thank you for many life lessons!
Erica (Hill) Hicks*

Erica Hicks - February 08 at 12:55 AM

EN

There are so many wonderful memories that my family and I have of Superintendent Williams, Mother Williams, and the Rock of Ages family. We shared so many precious moments in Sunday School, Sunday Worship services, Y.P.W.W., and Sunshine Band.

I will always remember the unadulterated Word that Supt. Williams and Mother Bessie preached and taught. Those powerful messages and sound teachings were instilled in us and have helped our family grow strong in ministry today. Thank God for pioneers of the church like Supt. Williams, whose faithfulness laid such a strong foundation for so many.

I remember the wonderful revivals, and skits orchestrated by the youth, the choir and the band, and the countless prayers that were prayed—all under Supt. Williams' encouragement and instruction. His leadership and dedication left an indelible mark on our lives.

God has called one of His faithful soldiers home. The words of the song, "Send It On Down, Lord Send It On Down, Lord Send Your Holy Ghost Right On Down," keep ringing in my ears. It's almost as if I can hear Supt. Williams singing it even now.

May God continue to bless you, Mother Bessie, and the entire family during this time of transition.

*With much love,
Emily Nelson and Family*

Emily Nelson - February 25 at 12:31 AM

LJ

“*Leonza Hudson Jr. lit a candle for fond and special memories of Uncle Walter L. Williams Sr.
Gone to his eternal home, but remembered in my heart.*



Leonza Hudson Jr. - March 04 at 10:16 AM

RR

“ *Ruth Hudson Raines lit a candle in memory of Walter Williams*



Ruth Hudson Raines - February 04 at 07:30 AM

RJ

“ *Our sincere condolences and deepest sympathy are extended to the family at this time. God is too wise to error, and HE is too just to be unkind. You haven't loss anything when you know where he's at. Be strengthened, comforted and encouraged is my prayer.*

Rev. Mark G. Justice - February 01 at 03:59 PM

MW

“ *Mary Williams lit a candle in memory of Supt. Walter Louis Williams Sr.*



Mary Williams - January 31 at 10:43 PM

MB

“ *To the family: I only met him one time at the Gospel Barn in Hillsdale and I knew he was a special man just talking to him. God be with each of you as you ask God to give you peace and to be with his spirit. Myrna*

Myrna Bailey - January 30 at 07:35 PM

TA

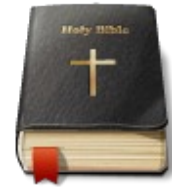
“ *Elder Williams was a true man of God. Backyard bible school, sunday school, Rock of Ages COGIC. So many memories of him and his family growing up. You will be truly missed. My condolences to the family. Tanya (Hill) Echols*



Tanya - January 30 at 11:07 AM

HF

“ *Helen Mills Brooks And Barbee Family sent a virtual gift in memory of Supt. Walter Louis Williams Sr.*



Helen Mills Brooks and Barbee family - January 30 at 10:50 AM

PG

“ *Pauline Mills Gardner lit a candle in memory of Supt. Walter Louis Williams Sr.*



Pauline Mills Gardner - January 30 at 10:12 AM

ML

“ *Malinda Ligon-Whitley lit a candle in memory of Supt. Walter Louis Williams Sr.*



Malinda Ligon-Whitley - January 30 at 12:37 AM

TN

“ *The Redmon Family - your nieces/nephews purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Supt. Walter Louis Williams Sr..*



The Redmon Family - your nieces/nephews - January 27 at 06:46 PM

TN

“ *The Redmon Family - your nieces/nephews planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Supt. Walter Louis Williams Sr..*

The Redmon Family - your nieces/nephews - January 27 at 06:46 PM

FF

“ *From The Grayson Family purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Supt. Walter Louis Williams Sr..*



From The Grayson Family - January 27 at 05:56 PM

SB

“ *Sharon Buchanan lit a candle in memory of Supt. Walter Louis Williams Sr.*



Sharon Buchanan - January 27 at 12:12 PM

KP

“ *Keysha Pratt lit a candle in memory of Supt. Walter Louis Williams Sr.*



Keysha Pratt - January 27 at 10:42 AM

DH

“ *...Having on occasion lived with my grandmother and my uncle Walter as a very young child; my memories are treasured .*

One particularly memorable story will always be my favorite. Grandmother in her attempt to calm my endless (5 year old) chatter asked uncle Walter to teach me a little a song to sing.

I loved it and within an afternoon I had the lyrics down to a science... the song was “Nobody’s fault but mine”.

I did so well that he was willing to teach me another song entitled “search me Lord “.

From the time I got up in the morning until grandmother prepared me for bed I could be heard singing my new songs.

My favorite Uncle Walter had taught me and everyone was invited to listen.

Yes I learned the lyrics , I had a bold presence with my delivery but I couldn’t carry a tune.

Grandma pulled me close and lovingly said “LaVerna Jesus loves your singing ; you keep singing to the Lord “.

Dny Wanyembo (LaVerna Hudson) - January 26 at 02:44 PM

DH

... father God, we prayerfully surrender to your will and your way.

Have no fear or doubt uncle Walter; we the called of Christ will all see you again.

Yes, soon and very soon we shall see the King.

Our most humble and humanly expressed condolences to you Aunt Bessie, Joyce Payne and your entire families.

BTW...

Family I can envision uncle Walter and my Mother, evangelist Rebecca Hudson saying , Walter tell everyone to get right and their house in order because heaven is so awesome.

Dny Wanyembo (LaVerna Hudson) - January 31 at 11:18 AM

JS

“ *Jytisha Streeter lit a candle in memory of Supt. Walter Louis Williams Sr.*



Jytisha Streeter - January 25 at 05:15 PM