

The House of the Lord^R

Bishop F. Josephus Johnson II
Organizer and Senior Pastor



CELEBRATION



Sunday, July 30, 2017 | 10:30am

We certainly thank God for all that He has done in and through The House of the Lord during the past 43 years! It is the Lord's doing and it is certainly marvelous in our eyes. As Bishop Johnson has stated, what has happened in and through this church could not have happened through one person alone, and we should never forget those who have played a part in helping us get to where we are today. We are reminded about

Purpose

the importance of this when we reflect on a truth found in God's word — that the harvest is plenti-

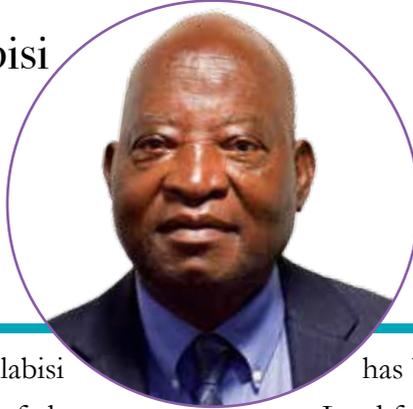
ful, but the workers are few. One of the richest blessings God has bestowed upon THOTL are faithful servants to shoulder the great weight of ministry.

As we continue to move toward our future, we want to begin the process of recognizing and celebrating faithful leadership and service that has occurred during our rich history. So much has been seen, but so much more has been unseen. To that end, the Ministry Hall of Faith has been established as a peer-nominated award to recognize long-standing members for their faithfulness not only to God, but also to our church and its members.

Well done, good and faithful servants! We thank you for being steadfast, unmovable and always abounding in the work of the Lord!

Community

Oladele Olabisi



Bro. Oladele Olabisi has been a member of The House of the Lord for 25 years. For 18 years he has been serving youth through the game of soccer as founder of the Akron Inner City Soccer Club. The most enjoyable part of this ministry for him is seeing the children happy and seeing them smile. Oladele was born in Nigeria and came to the United States to study Chemistry. He works for PPG Industries and has been married for 32 years to his wife Judy. They have four children. Oladele started the youth program as a way to get his own children involved in soccer because he thought it was important to see more children of color engaged in the game. His program has touched the lives of many young people. Through his programs, young people learn greater self-awareness, increase their social skills and engage in regular exercise. He has managed to stay faithful to his ministry by seeing the advantages the program has provided for the children and for the community. Oladele's message to future generations is "Be faithful, love yourself and love your neighbors and be kind to each other."

JACK MADDEN



Bro. Jack Madden has been a member of The House of the Lord since 1996. He is a veteran of the U.S. Air Force (24 years) and has lived in Korea, Germany and Iran. He has participated in the lay counseling ministry, small group ministry, Boy Scouts, Rites of Passage Ministry for young men, and was a church school teacher. Jack is also a graduate of Logos Bible Institute and believes that prayer and focus can “help us remain faithful.” He enjoys getting to know and work with different people, which his service to the church has allowed him to do. These days, he spends his time serving his family. His ministry is to his “Aunt Bea,” who he drives to her appointments. Jack’s mother is 98 years old, and his mother-in-law, who he proudly declares is his best friend, is 100. Jack’s message to future generations is to put God first and remember where you came from.

Sis. Gloria Williams has been a member of The House of the Lord for 35 years. She decided to visit the church one day after seeing a crowd of people walking into the church for service. She has been a member of the church ever since. She is a member of the Prison Ministry (since 1985), meeting weekly at the Summit County Jail. Gloria was also a member of the Choir, and she ministers at the Haven of Rest and local nursing homes. She is also an artist and enjoys creating art to fit the lessons taught through the Prison Ministry. She spends several hours each week preparing her artwork and prays for God's inspiration to guide her. The most enjoyable part of ministry for Gloria is seeing the change in people to whom she has ministered over the years. She believes, "He gave me a new family." Terry and Roberta Pluto have been faithful and Godly friends and she credits them with her ability to remain faithful in her ministries. Her message to future generations: "Stay out the kitchen and let God do the cooking."



GLORIA WILLIAMS

Leadership

**JAMES
SHROPSHIRE, JR.**



Bro. James Shropshire, Jr. has been a member for 36 years. During this time he has served in the Audio and Tape Ministry (6 years), Scouting Ministry (7 years) and as an usher (36 years). He continues to serve in the capacity of head usher and has done so faithfully for more than 25 years. As a servant leader, James ensures that his fellow Usher Board members are well-equipped to display kindness and willingly provide help. Leading by example, he has made himself available to ushers every Sunday and every Wednesday for years. James enjoys the bonds of love, fellowship and relationships that have been created over the years in ministry. For James, the Usher Ministry doesn't happen only on Sundays but in the acts of love as he visits team members in the hospital, provides transportation, encourages team members and prays for them. He has been able to remain faithful as he learned from an early age that his "convictions had to be his own" and to "serve and work out of the calling that was given (him)." James is also an active member of the Interdenominational Church Ushers — Akron (ICUA), where he serves as treasurer, trustee, and chair of the Scholarship Committee and School of Ushers. He received the ICUA Usher of the Year award in 2015. He encourages the future generations to "Keep the faith and trust in God!"

Pastor Linda C. Isaiah has been a member for 38 years. She came to The House of the Lord as a college student after being invited by Pastor Dennis Butts, Sr.'s grandmother. As soon as she arrived, Linda could feel that "this was the place for me." She has been involved in the Choir, Altar Workers, planning women's conferences, the church Education Board, church picnic planning, and she still serves as department head of the church Nursery. Linda's newest step of faith includes LCI Ministries, where she unleashes hope to women who are hurting. Her ministry reach also extends beyond the walls of the church through her role on the Summa Health Board and Pregnancy Solutions, which works to decrease infant mortality. The most enjoyable part of ministry for Linda has been building long-lasting faith relationships, helping and encouraging women, and watching children in the Nursery grow, become saved and even become preachers and deacons. Challenges have been there, but the DNA of her family has allowed her to continue. Satan had her on his hit list, but God had another plan and instead turned her misery into ministry. She is blessed to serve as an example of faithfulness even when wounded. Linda encourages the future generations to know and understand that it's not about programs but relationships and above all else in the face of difficulty that will come — be found to be faithful.



LINDA C. ISAIAH

SHEILA P. WATKINS



Min. Sheila P. Watkins has been a member of The House of the Lord for more than 40 years. Invited by Pastor Dennis Butts, Sr., she came one Sunday and never left. She has been involved in many ministries over the years, including the Christian Education Ministry. She established the Children's Choir, she was a member of the Evangelism Ministry, Drama Ministry, and Teacher Training Ministry. She loves the idea of teaching people. Sheila says, "If you know something and you don't share it with others, then why know it?" She enjoys crafting, cooking and spending time sharing her knowledge with others — including the message of the Gospel. She is the author of *Still Standing on the Word of God*, a story of her life after she almost lost it due to illness. Her message to future generations is "When you look back on your life and look forward, learn how to go to the Lord first, don't always get stuck on what you see now. There are a lot of things in life that can fool you into thinking there is no life after today. There are many ways out and you have many options if you look to the Lord first." Sheila continues to be a role model for others by doing exactly what she teaches, by living the Word.

Legacy

DENNIS K.
BUTTS, SR.



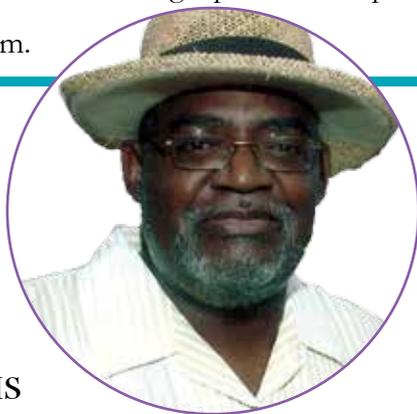
Pastor Dennis K. Butts, Sr. was a member of The House of the Lord for 42 years and served full-time as a Staff Pastor for 36 years. He acknowledged his call to the ministry in August 1974, was ordained as a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ in April of 1978, and in January of 1980, he left his job at Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co., to work full time in the ministry as a Staff Pastor. He was affectionately referred to as the “People’s Pastor” and his responsibilities included preaching, teaching, funerals, weddings, baby dedications and water baptisms. Pastor Butts also served under Bishop Joey as Pastor of Visitation and Special Ministries, President of the Beth-el Fellowship of Visionary Churches and was the Co-Executive Director of the Love Akron Network. Pastor Butts married his childhood sweetheart and the love of his life, Sis. Jewrusha V. Butts, and they remained married for 42 years. He enjoyed gospel music, singing, traveling and conducting seminars in the area of marriage and family, men’s retreats and personal leadership development. Most of all he loved God, his family, preaching and teaching the Word of God, encountering God through genuine worship and ministering to hurting people at their level of need whenever the need would arise — be it early morning or late at night Pastor Butts would be there.

MAMIE GARDNER



Min. Mamie Gardner had been a member of The House of the Lord since the 1970s. She attended the very first service at the Brown Street location after receiving an invitation from Min. Sheila Watkins. Mamie became a member that very day. She served in ministry for more than 30 years, including teaching church school classes, as Trustee Board member, teaching the Married Couples Ministry, teaching in the Women Designed by God Sunday school class, and she served on the board for the Emmanuel Christian Academy. Mamie enjoyed being around people and encouraging others. After the death of her daughter from juvenile diabetes, Mamie honored her by founding the Monica Gardner Legacy Diabetes Program in 2010 to bring awareness to the struggles of diabetes. This program has provided free training for patients with diabetes along with their caretakers. Private physicians, dentists, personal trainers, ophthalmologists and dieticians give their services through the church by way of Summa Health System and the American Diabetes Association. Her husband, Deacon Morris Gardner, believes that if Mamie could say one thing to future generations, it would be for them to get involved and to be willing to sacrifice in helping to make the ministry you are involved in successful.

Elder Robin Harris faithfully served at The House of the Lord for nearly 30 years. He served as a youth leader, Sunday school teacher and as the director of the New Beginnings Ministry. He is credited with starting the New Beginnings Class that blessed so many over the years. He loved being involved in the church, being with people, and he loved to laugh and joke. His wife, Min. Ruth Harris believes that if given an opportunity to send a message to future generations, “Elder Harris would probably tell the youth to develop a relationship with Christ, get in a bible-based church, and fall in love with God.” As a result of Elder Harris’ love, faithfulness and loyalty to God and his ministries, the impact he has had and still has is demonstrated by the numerous graduates from the New Beginnings classes that are now involved in ministries throughout the church. The New Beginnings class is still having a positive and powerful impact for the Kingdom.



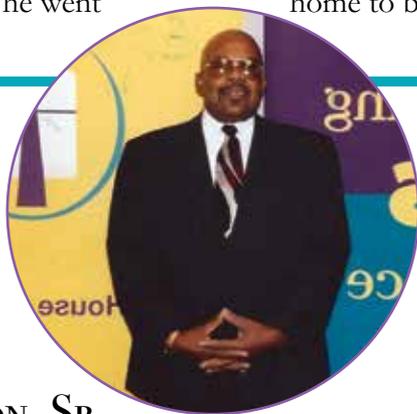
ROBIN HARRIS

EARNESTINE WATKINS



Min. Earnestine Watkins was a member of The House of the Lord from almost the beginning. Min. Sheila Watkins recalls, “When I first came to The House of the Lord, Min. Earnestine Watkins, my future mother-in-law, was my first touch. She was a Sunday school teacher for children. She would call and check on me every week.” Earnestine was a very methodical person, but she believed in the Word of God. She encouraged people to be well grounded in the Word and to be a disciple. She was kind-hearted and a giving person, always concerned about the well-being of others. During the church’s relocation to Brown Street, Earnestine helped families save the money needed to tithe in order to secure the property. She was extremely passionate about what she did and always worked to make sure others knew the Lord. Min. Sheila says, “Min. Earnestine’s message to future generations would probably be to give your all to Christ and stay steadfast and true to what the Word of God has given you to do.”

Deacon Wilbert Witherspoon, Sr., who we all knew affectionately as “Spoon,” became a member in 1983 after being invited by Pastor Marshall Brandon. Spoon was saved that very day and when he gave his heart to the Lord he gave it with full force. He was involved in ministry on many levels as he cut the grass and served on the Finance Committee. He was also in the Choir, was an usher and ordained deacon. Spoon loved ministry. He loved to love and to be loved. He was a giver and loved going out of his way to help. Being diagnosed with cancer didn’t stop him. He still ministered faithfully after becoming sick — even though the doctors didn’t give him a chance. Yet, God gave him 7 more years and he used them to reach so many others. Spoon started the church’s cancer support group — the Miriam Cancer Support Group — which was later expanded to help people with all forms of illnesses. Spoon worked with his wife Cheryl to bring the first Health Fair to the church. Spoon exemplified the life lessons that he shared with many: “Be strong or be gone.” He encouraged others not to quit no matter what they were going through and to get with someone who would lift them and not pull them down. Spoon served faithfully lifting others up until he went home to be with the Lord.



**WILBERT
WITHERSPOON, SR.**

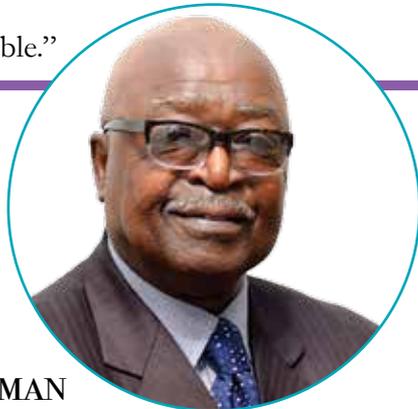
Service

JEWURSHA BUTTS



Sis. Jewrusha Butts has been a member of The House of the Lord for 42 faithful years. During those years, she has served in many different ministries including the Witness Ministry, Married Couples, Maintenance Team, Nursery worker, Women's Ministry (20 years) and she faithfully sings in the Choir. Jewrusha was one of the original members of church Choir and is the only remaining original member. She is also one of the original members of the Baptism Ministry, having started it 41 years ago. She is described as a person who is loyal, faithful, productive, generous, strong and full of love. Pastor Toni Dorazio says, "When you think of a virtuous woman of God, Sis. Jewrusha V. Butts certainly comes to mind. She has a devotion and loyalty to others that is impeccable." Jewrusha enjoys playing games, traveling and simply having fun with friends. But nothing gives her more joy than spending time with her 6 grandchildren: Makaya, Dennis III, Eli, Brielle, Olivia and Paul Jr. Her message to future generations is a simple, yet important one: "Be true to your commitments."

Deacon Jimmie Coleman has been a member of The House of the Lord since 1979. He has been a Deacon of the church since 1990 and is currently Head Deacon. Jimmie is responsible for directing and guiding fellow Deacons spiritually. Ever faithful, Jimmie has mowed the church lawn, locked the church up after services, taught marriage classes, participated in the prostate support group, and at one time, was head of the Finance Ministry. Jimmie states that he “enjoys watching how God works in people and how the Holy Spirit works in our church and our lives.” His first goal is always to be of service to the Lord and committed to God and the man of God. Jimmie’s message to future generations is to “stay faithful to God, always being accountable.”



JIMMIE COLEMAN

GWENDOLYN CUNNINGHAM



Sis. Gwendolyn Cunningham has been a member of The House of the Lord for 26 years. During that time, she was a church school teacher (12 years) and a member of the Prayer Ministry (18 years). She believes in her spirit that God called her to be a Prayer Warrior long before the Prayer Ministry began. Gwendolyn finds that the most enjoyable part of participating in ministry is the opportunity to direct people to know, grow and experience Jesus for themselves. “As he increases in their lives, I decrease,” she explains. She believes they come to learn that He can be depended on 24/7 and that He is the most trustworthy companion they will ever experience. She states, “I believe prayer should be a priority and foundation of every church. I know prayer is a powerful thing.” To grow in her faithfulness and overcome challenges, Gwendolyn spends many hours seeking God’s face in prayer and studying His word in devotion and praise. Her hope for future generations is that they come to know the greatness of God, how much Jesus loves them, and how He desires an ongoing relationship with each of them.

Pastor Toni Dorazio was invited to The House of the Lord on September 10, 1995 for Family & Friends Day. She recalls, “I was searching for someone to love me and when Bishop shared that Jesus loved me so much that He died for me, my tears flowed. I knew in my heart that Jesus was who I was looking for and I accepted Him as my Lord and Savior that very day.” Toni has been involved in the Greeters’ Ministry, the Finance Ministry, the Deacon Ministry, the Photography Ministry and was called to the Pastorate in February 2008. She finds the most enjoyable part of ministry is being with God’s people. “I love God’s people and would look so forward to seeing them from week to week.” Toni believes that when God called her to ministry, especially the Visitation Ministry, she knew in her heart that she was doing exactly what she was created to do. Her message for future generations: “It’s not over until God says it’s over. It’s a win/win situation. To stay on earth and bring God the utmost glory or be with Him in Heaven. Win/Win!”



TONI DORAZIO

VICKI GRANT



Sis. Vicki Grant has been a member for 41 years. She recalls the church feeling so warm and welcoming the first time she entered the doors. Vicki helped Sis. Mamie Gardner establish the first Nursery on Brown Street. She has remained faithful over the years while serving in the Choir, Baptism Ministry and church school — right by the side of her husband Art. Vicki's first passion is children. She has a unique ability to reach them when no one else can. Her greatest joy in ministry has been serving with her husband and seeing the growth in her Sunday School kids. She also finds joy reflecting on the relationships that have been built over the years and watching her children grow up with so many others in a loving environment. Vicki has been able to remain faithful, recognizing that her foundation is here and always will be. She encourages the future generations to be steadfast in God's word. Be faithful. "If God has called you here — stay. Don't get mad. People are people and they will hurt you. Sometimes we get fooled into thinking that there will always be an easy road in front of us, but that is not what we are here for. God wants us to learn from what we have had to go through as He continues to shape us into the people He wants us to be."

Bro. Arthur Grant has been a member for 41 years. He remembers visiting churches and coming to The House of the Lord after receiving a personal invitation from Pastor Joey Johnson. When Art walked in, “the Spirit of God said ‘This is home’ and I knew from that time that this is where I was supposed to be.” Art has experienced many firsts at the church. He was the first bass player, first Deacon, and part of the first church school program. His faithfulness is demonstrated as he is still serving in the Baptism Ministry, as bass player and teaching in the church school program, where he really shines. Many feel that his gifting is playing the bass, but he is quick to note “that is a talent that I worked to develop. My gifting and call is teaching children.” God told him to “lead the children to the pure water” and that is what he has been doing faithfully in the church school program — “helping children get a clear picture of who Jesus is and what He can do for their lives.” During times of difficulty he has focused on getting his relevance in Christ and what He has given him to do. Art encourages the future generations to “Find your place and be faithful when you find it. Trust God’s word and He will prove Himself to you.” Art knows this because he has experienced this in his own life and has found that God will never leave you or forsake you.



ARTHUR GRANT

OSCAR JOHNSON



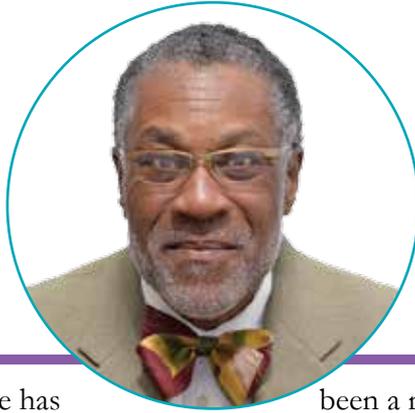
Bro. Oscar Johnson has been a member of The House of the Lord for more than 30 years. He explained, “I never thought what I was doing was important to anyone except to me. I was shocked and honored by the recognition.” Oscar has been a member of the Maintenance Crew Ministry for most of his time at the church. He enjoys people and the maintenance ministry was a way for him to give back to the church. He used to come on Saturdays, when the church had a large maintenance crew and Elder Johnson would always pray after the crew finished its work. Oscar recollects how Elder Johnson was an inspiration to so many people, and performed Oscar’s wedding at the end of a maintenance day. Oscar came to The House of the Lord through his wife Katherine, who invited him to attend. He credits his wife’s encouragement in helping him stay faithful to ministry and the church. “She is a faithful Christian As long as I am able, I will continue to be a part of the maintenance crew.” His message to future generations is, “Give back to the church and be active in church programs. There are a lot of things out there that tempt young people. The church needs to do its part like it used to and get the young people in and keep them.”

Sis. Joyce Johnson has been a member of The House of the Lord since the 1980s. She has four adult children and two grandchildren. God has blessed her with the gift of teaching — as a profession and a ministry. Joyce has served The House of the Lord family as an usher, Christian educator, interpreter for the deaf and as a special needs caretaker. Her gift of service and teaching is her passion and profession as she has been employed professionally as an educator for 36 years. Currently Joyce serves as an Intervention Specialist for Hearing Impaired students with the Akron Public Schools. An active member of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Inc., she embodies the sorority motto, “Greater Service, Greater Progress,” via service with Operation Big Book Bag, April Showers (for underserved pregnant mothers), GIFTS (Getting Involved For Tomorrows Sake, which provides winter clothing for children) and Making Strides Against Breast Cancer. Always faithful, Joyce states, “Life has a way of testing us through trials and tribulations that you least expect. Yet, believe and have faith that God has not left you nor will he ever leave you. Have faith in his word and his promises.”



JOYCE JOHNSON

ARTHUR LEE



Bro. Arthur Lee has been a member of The House of the Lord for approximately 39 years. During this time he has worked with the Information Booth/Welcome Center Ministry, led the Parking Lot Ministry (38 years), been part of the Choir (25 years), served in the Maintenance Ministry (4 years), participated in the Father and Son campouts (2 years), and has played a very active role in the Rites of Passage program (15 years). Art was very instrumental in bringing the Grief Recovery Program to the church and has continued playing a pivotal role in the Third Day Ministry for more than 22 years. It all started with Art sharing a book with Bishop Johnson and look what God has done! Advising, serving and helping others have been the most enjoyable part for Art while participating in ministries. Art reflects that “It’s a joy just having the opportunity to serve God and His people. In times of difficulty I focus on my calling and understanding my purpose in the context of the Kingdom.” Art’s message for future generations: “Be thankful, humble and joyful for the opportunities that God affords us” and the truth that resides in 2 Corinthians 1:2-5.

Bro. Steve Parms has been a member of The House of the Lord since 1977. At the invitation of his sister and his best friend, he decided to visit the church. “Joining the church was one of the best things I’ve ever done,” he recalls. During his 30+ years of membership, Parms has been involved in the Maintenance Ministry, was an usher, a greeter, in the Choir, an Altar Worker and was on the Transportation Ministry. He was also a youth tutor. He and his wife, Twanna Parms, have been married for 33 years and have served together as teachers in the children’s Sunday school for most of those years. “When you see kids from past classes who now have children of their own, you know you’ve been doing this a long time,” he joked. Parms got involved in the children’s Sunday school at the urging of friends Vicki and Art Grant. Parms believes the most enjoyable thing about teaching is that the kids will tell you the truth. His advice to future generations is, “Make sure you read the Word for yourself. It’ll be the strongest backup you will have when you are out in the world. When you get in tough situations, it’ll help you know the right thing to do.”



STEVE PARMS

TWANNA PARMS



Sis. Twanna Parm has been a member of The House of the Lord since the 1980s when the church was on Brown Street. She was invited by her best friend to attend a service while on Thornton, and eventually became a member. She recalls, “I remember how I was able to understand the Word of God as taught by Bishop Joey. It was so clear and at the same time it was truly profound.” During her time at the church, Parm has been involved in the Pioneer Girls, was in the choir, was a greeter, worked in the Nursery and lead the Youth Drama Program. Along with her husband, Steve Parm, she’s been teaching in the children’s Sunday school for more than 30 years. “I love kids because there is always something to learn from them,” she says. Parm enjoys challenging the children to get engaged in the Word and will sometimes reward them with treats when they do. Her advice to future generations is “Always watch what you do. Others see God through us, so it is important to watch what you do and how you treat others.”

Mother Annie Robinson joined The House of The Lord in January 1982. She explained, “I couldn’t believe what I had heard about the church and decided to visit and have been attending ever since. It’s a joy to be at a place where you can serve the Lord and be a part of a ministry.” She says, “I didn’t need a title, God already gave me one when I accepted Him as my savior as a Christian.” She describes the years she has been at The House of Lord as being so encouraging. “The Lord has given me so many spiritual sons and daughters over the years.” Mother Robinson served on the Hospitality Committee, in the Choir, on the Women Designed by God team, and was the 6 o’clock “Sweet Hour of Prayer” leader. She has been described by many as a role model for all people as she lives out how to sacrificially live and represent Christ.



ANNIE ROBINSON

E. SUE VALENTINE



Sis. E. Sue Valentine joined The House of the Lord in 1981 when it was located in the former JC Penny building. During this time, Sue worked in the Nursery, as a greeter and in hospitality. Sue states “Working in hospitality allowed me the opportunity to do something that I loved and also to stay in the background because I am a shy person.” Sue recalls working closely with Pastor Dennis Butts, Sr., who always seemed to know when she was being challenged. “Pastor Butts told me to keep using the gift that God had given me and doing what I loved to do and one day I would be honored for what I loved to do and what I did well.” Her message for future generations is to develop a relationship with your leaders. “If I did not have the relationship with Bishop and Pastor Cathy that I have and have had for all of these years and knowing that they really do love me and want the best for me, I could have walked away. The both of them poured themselves into me and that kept me.” Her favorite scripture is Jeremiah 29:11. “No matter how hard things look or become I know that God has and will continue to have a plan for me, to give me a future and a hope and my hope is in Jesus Christ.”

Elder Theophilous Woods has been a member of The House of the Lord since the 1980s. Woods serves as the principle keyboardist at the church, he is a church Elder and currently serves as Chairman of the Trustee Board. While his music has made a huge impact at the church, his knowledge of finance and business has made an even greater impact and has been pivotal in helping the church grow. He was 3 years old when he started playing the piano and when an opening at the House of the Lord became available, Bishop recruited him to play for the church. Woods loves participating in the Music Ministry and considers all the musicians at the church his family. He believes he gets to live his dream every Sunday when playing for service. His advice to the next generation is, “Don’t miss service and don’t take it lightly. You have to come and you have to come consistently. Make it a priority. There is a blessing in it.”



THEOPHILOUS WOODS