



The love of a
FAMILY
is life's greatest blessing



Floral Bearers
 Granddaughters

Pall Bearers
 Grandsons

Note of Thanks

Thank you for your love and support during this difficult time. Please keep Mother Ethel Mae Johnson's family in your thoughts and prayers.
The Family

Arrangements Were Entrusted To:
 Gregory Funeral Service, Inc.
 601 N. York Street | Gastonia, North Carolina 28052
 704-867-4364
www.gregoryfuneralservice.com

Celebrating the Life and Legacy of Mother Ethel Mae Johnson

Sunrise
 April 21, 1933

Sunset
 January 18, 2025

Friendship Christian Church
 221 W. Bradley Street
 Gastonia, North Carolina

Saturday; January 25, 2025
 1:00 p.m.



Overseer Justin Ross-Hillard, Pastor
 Rev. James Young, Officiating
 Pastor, Riverview Holiness Church
 High Shoals, North Carolina

Obituary

Mother Ethel Mae Johnson, 91, of Port St. Lucie, FL., transitioned peacefully on January 18, 2025, with her youngest grandson, BaRae Stephen Draper Weary by her side.

Ethel attended Lockhart Elementary School in Union County, however, she showed herself to be a student of life. By the age of 9, young Ethel was able to bake homemade biscuits, sweet potato pies and cook entire meals. After losing her mother at the tender age of 11, Ethel moved to Alachua, Florida with her grandfather Bill Hill for a short period of time and moved back to Lockhart to live with her eldest sister Elizabeth Smith until she was married. She was indeed a survivor.

At the early age of 18, She was introduced to what she called “a tall pine” Melvin Watson.

They were married in York, SC. Together they had six children, Melvin Jr, Larry, Matthew, Taft, Crystal, and Robert. After her husband, Melvin Watson Sr died in 1965, she raised 5 boys and 1 girl alone as a single mother. She dedicated her life to God, living a holy life and impressed upon her children to do the same.

Throughout life, Ethel was a devoted wife, domestic engineer, loving mother, a caring grandmother, faithful friend, and a committee member of St. Matthews FBH Church from 1965 until her health failed. As a member she was a committed, dedicated, active & faithful church member. Mother J loved to dress in her hats and suits, and would dance all over the church. Mother J served as President of the Mother Board preparing the Holy Sacraments for communion, President of the Pastor’s Aide, and President of her favorite position, the Missionary Board. Mother Johnson was a devoted missionary and very domestic in helping others, she loved to cook, clean and help the sick and shut in. She would often travel to SC or Florida to become a caregiver for her family members. When her son Larry received his call to pastorship at Belmont St. Hannah later Faith Chapel, Mother J served faithfully.

In 2014, Mother Johnson moved to Florida to live with her son-in-love Lee Thomas and daughter, because of Alzheimer’s Disease. She always said “if I ever get sick and can’t take care of myself, I want to stay with Lee & Crystal. When it’s time for me to sleep away, do not try to bring me back, because I am going to be with Jesus.”

Mother J slept away peacefully, never experiencing any pain or suffering.

Ethel Mae Johnson was named the face of the Alzheimer’s Community for Port St Lucie, West Palm Beach and Okeechobee Counties in Florida. Mother J was loved and followed by many on Social Media, and adopted hundreds of Facebook grandchildren. Mother J goes viral often!

At the age of 91, Mother Johnson was the last surviving member of the Stroud family.

Mother Johnson was preceded in Death by her husband and the father of her children, Melvin Watson, Sr.; Father Jim Stroud, Sr., Mother Ethel Hill-Stroud; Eight brothers and two sisters: Robert, Andrew, Jim, Reese, Nelson, Charlie, Bynum & William Stroud Sr., Buvenia Haile and Elizabeth Smith.

She is survived by 6 Children, 5 sons Melvin Watson, Jr., Rev. Larry Watson (Mary) of Dallas, NC; Rev. Matthew Watson (Linda) of Columbia, SC; Taft Watson (Crystal) of Dallas, NC; Robert Lee Watson (Hermetta) of Gastonia, NC; one Daughter Crystal A. Thomas, (Leo) of Port St. Lucie, FL;

She also leaves to mourn her loss 21 grandchildren, 37 great-grandchildren, 9 Great-great-grandchildren,1 great grand dog Harrison Sky and a host of nieces and nephews, extended family, beloved church members and friends.



Order of Service

Processional Family and Friends

Selections Co-Pastor Phyllis Slaughter
River of Life Fellowship Christian Center, Charlotte, NC

Scripture
Old Testament Rev. Dr. Rodney Glover
Asst. Pastor, Deliverance Christian Center, Gastonia, NC
New Testament Rev. Ricky Alexander
Senior Pastor, Open Door Ministries, Gastonia, NC

Prayer of Comfort Apostle James Setzer
Pastor, Deliverance Christian Center, Gastonia, NC

Selection St. Matthew FBH Church Choir

Reading of Obituary Heaven Watson-Weary

Remarks (2 minutes, please)
Asie Black
Judy Robbins
Brenda Byrd
BaRae Weary
Robert Watson

Hymn Matthew Kelly

Resolution Antonia Bethune
First Lady; St. Matthew FBH Church, Gastonia, NC

Selection St. Matthew FBH Church Choir

Eulogy Elder Troy Bethune
Pastor; St. Matthew FBH Church, Gastonia, NC
Presiding Elder; Southwestern NC District

Recessional “I’ll Fly Away”

Musician Preston Watson

Interment
Hollywood Cemetery
Gastonia, North Carolina

