

*"Eat a bite of the Bible daily.  
It fills you up and strengthens you as you go" -*

-By the late Rev. Dr. Maria-Alma Rainey Copeland -

**Poem**

*Relish your past*

*Sanctify - Live a separated life unto Him*

*Call to forsake the mundane - Go for the spiritual*

*Give up your own agenda*

*Take up - Be Specific*

*Be humble*

*Do Good*

*Seek peace and pursue the fruit of the Spirit*

-By the late Rev. Dr. Maria-Alma Copeland-

## *In Gratitude*

With heartfelt gratitude and thankfulness, the Rainey Family would like to express our sincere appreciation to our many friends and extended family for the many ways of showing your love and sympathy during the loss of our loved one.

The Family



2425 West Franklin Boulevard | Gastonia, North Carolina 28052  
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# IN LOVING MEMORY



SUNRISE  
OCTOBER 13, 1931

SUNSET  
OCTOBER 10, 2025



*Reverend*  
**Dr. Maria-Alma Rainey  
COPELAND**

**Saturday  
November 1, 2025  
1:00 PM**

**Word of Power Ministries  
4010 Old York Road  
Gastonia, North Carolina 28054  
Apostle Dorothy Matthews, Pastor  
Apostle James Setzer, Sr., Eulogist**

# Moment of Sharing

Prelude	
Processional.....	Clergy and Family
Visitation.....	12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

## Order of Service

Minister Georgette Mays, New Reflection Ministries, Presiding

Opening Selection.....	“ What A Friend We Have In Jesus” .....	Congregational Hymn
Invocation.....	Minister Georgette Mays, New Reflection Ministries	
Old Testament.....	Psalm 37:4-5.....	Elder Avila Mattthew, Nephew
New Testament.....	John 14:1-4.....	Minister Tabatha Rainey Lynch, Great-niece
Prayer of Comfort.....	Minister Maria Woodard, Great-niece	
Musical Selection.....	Word of Power Ministries, Inc., Gastonia, NC	
Remarks.....	Lillian Williams, Friend	
	Annie Ruth Sanders, Cousin	
	Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., Resolution	
Reading of Letters		
Reading of Obituary.....	Jilda Easton, Niece	
Musical Selection.....		
Eulogy.....	Apostle James Setzer, Sr.	
	Deliverance Christian Center, Gastonia, NC	
Musical Selection.. ..	“How Great Thou Art” .....	Congregational Selection
Recessional		

## Interment

Gaston Memorial Cemetery  
Gastonia, North Carolina

## Floral Bearers

Raven Anderson, Shawntoya Floyd, Tabatha Rainey Lynch, Anita Rainey Ingram,  
Trelacia Surratt, Vanessa Smith, Olivia Smith

## Pall Bearers

Zylan Moore, Christyle Rainey, Yul Rainey, Aaron Sanders, Pedrian Tribble, Ray Tribble

## Rev. Dr. Maria-Alma Rainey Copeland

Reverend Dr. Maria-Alma Rainey Copeland born October 13, 1931 to Mason Jackson Addison Rainey, Sr. and Lily Alma Arleva Mobley Rainey departed her earthly life on October 10, 2025, days before what would have been her 94th birthday. Rev. Dr Copeland is most known for her love of God and her deep commitment to education. She is a graduate of Highland High School Class of 1949 and continued serving with their Alumni Association through 2017. Her favorite quote to which she named her Biography after is: **SOLI DEO GLORIA! (To God Alone the Glory!)**

**Educational Journey** - Rev. Dr Copeland obtained several degrees. Alaska Business College Anchorage Community College (Associates in Office Administration and Secretarial Science 1963), Pacific Lutheran University (B.A. in Religion/ Biblical Studies and Communication Arts/ Broadcast Journalism- 1979) Augsburg College, Minneapolis, Minnesota (1978 -1979) Macalester College, St Paul, Minnesota (Liberal Arts - 1979). Lutheran Northwestern Theological Seminary (Masters in Divinity, 1985.) St Joseph's Catholic Hospital- Clinical Pastoral Counseling Certification. Florida Junior College (Business courses) Jacksonville Mental Hospital (Certified Licensed Christian Counselor) Aquinas Seminary (Theology of Preaching- 1997) Eden Seminary, St Louis (Doctorate in Ministry- 1998) New Wine Ministries (Doctor of Divinity 2004) Cornerstone University, Lake Charles Louisiana (Ph.D in Christian Counseling 2009).

**Ministry Journey**- Rev Dr Copeland answered the call on her life in 1972 in Mainz, Germany where she served as the Chaplain for Mainz Military Community, 8th Infantry Division. She then became the Lay Chaplain (1975-1978) Fort Lewis. Followed by the Tacoma Lutheran Nursing Home Minister. Then the Associate Pastor Ebenezer A.M.E. Zion Church in Seattle (1977-1978). Followed by the United States Chaplaincy Corps, 106th Transportation Battalion. Rev Dr Copeland then gained employment with Fellowship Lutheran in Jacksonville, Florida Pastor (1985-1987). Followed by the Volunteer Pastor at MacClenny State Mental Hospital. She then became the Pastor at Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd (1985-1989) Followed by the Director of Multicultural Ministries at North Carolina Synod (1989 - 1991). Rev. Dr. Copeland then gained employment with Central States Synod St Louis Missouri (1991-1999.) In June of 1998, Rev. Dr. Copeland was the first African American Lutheran Pastor to be invited to the Minister's Interdenominational Conference at Hampton University. She is the Founder of Praying Effectively Always in Christ is Enough (P.E.A.C.E) which she established upon returning back to North Carolina. She also served as the Supply Pastor North Carolina Synod ELCA (2001) Beginning in 2000- Interim Pastor at several churches including: Lebanon Lutheran, New Jerusalem Churches, ELCA, Lexington NC.; Saint John's Evangelical Lutheran in Lenoir, NC.; and Mount Gilead Lutheran in Mount Pleasant, NC. Before ultimately retiring for health purposes.

**Career Journey** - After graduation from high school, she traveled to New York where she was able to work closely with Edna McGriff. After concluding her work with Ms. McGriff, Reverend Dr. Copeland started her career with the U.S. Federal Service where she worked fourteen years before devoting her life to Ministry work. She served as a Morning Talk Show host on WJAX providing morning devotions. Rev. Dr. Copeland also wrote for the Jacksonville Times as a guest writer for the religious news section. However, she found it important to note that one of her most treasured roles outside of Ministry is the work that she completed as a Volunteer Reading Teacher for 4th and 5th graders at Hanford Dole Elementary School, Salisbury, NC.

Rev. Dr. Maria- Alma Rainey Copeland is preceded in death by her parents Mr Mason Rainey, Sr. and Mrs. Arleva Rainey, her brother Mason Rainey, Jr., her sister Mary Alberta Mobley Mays, and her daughter Carla "Lollipop" Rainey Anderson.

Rev. Dr. Maria- Alma Rainey Copeland leaves to cherish her memories: her granddaughter Jaime Anderson. Her great grandchildren; Raven Anderson, Zylan Moore, Vanessa Smith, and Olivia Smith. Her sister, Apostle Dorothy Matthews (William). Her nieces and nephews: Marisa Matthews, Avila Matthews, Jilda Easton, Joi James, Ray Rainey, Yul Rainey, Christyle Rainey, and Ricky Rainey. A host of great nieces and nephews, cousins, and friends.

*Life on this side has ended, but life on the other side in eternity has just begun.*

