

*Jesus Is Lord!*  
A MEMORIAL SERVICE



DR. JOHN A. CHERRY

January 20, 1940 ~ February 16, 2019

Tuesday, February 26, 2019 | 11:00 a.m.

FROM THE HEART CHURCH MINISTRIES®

Bishop John A. Cherry, II - Episcopal Pastor

4949 Allentown Road, Suitland, Maryland 20746



## THIS IS MY STORY



*"I was blessed to be **born at the right time**, under grace and not under the law. I was blessed to be **born in the right place**, Choctaw County, Alabama in a country that allows me to preach Jesus."*

Pastor John A. Cherry was born on January 20, 1940 to Presiding Elder Joseph H. and Mrs. Lecester L. Cherry in Choctaw County, Alabama.

*"I was blessed to be **born in the right family**, to Presiding Elder Joseph and Mrs. Lecester Cherry, who left me with the greatest gift a parent can leave a child – a committed life."*

He was the youngest son of eight children and he had three brothers (Lebester, Archie and Robert) and four sisters (Josephine, Lettice, Jean and Deloris). As a young child, he traveled with his family to various churches in Alabama, as his father was an itinerant pastor. He was a "church mouse" growing up under the teachings of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.

*"My memory starts in a town called Evergreen, Alabama. That's the place where my schooling started. My oldest sister taught me my first three grades. I started out in a one room school and she taught first, second and third grades."*

Pastor Cherry was educated in Alabama through high school and spent three years in New York as a teen with his eldest sister, Josephine. He was a gifted young man and graduated from Booker T. Washington High School after returning to Montgomery, Alabama.

*"I had a great interest in music but the one I really had an interest for was the trombone. After high school, I went to college for two years and then was drafted into the military for two years. While there, I played in the U.S. Army Band, which was a very difficult band to get into, especially for a man of color."*

He attended and graduated from Alabama State University, receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree in Music with a concentration in Brass Instrumentation in 1966. Like many people of color from the South, he migrated to Washington, DC seeking employment. He developed a desire to go into business for himself and became a very successful business man. These businesses included furniture sales, jewelry sales and interior design.

Pastor Cherry was advised by a banker that he needed a wife to help stabilize his life. He was so focused on making money that he had not considered marriage. Soon thereafter, he was hired by Diana Paige Young to decorate her home. Everyone knows the story of her coming towards him at their first meeting "*in that yellow dress*". They married on March 8, 1969 and they were to celebrate their golden 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary this year.

Prior to ministry, Pastor and Mrs. Cherry and their two children enjoyed annual family trips, including ski trips to Vermont, motor home trips around the country including to Ocean City, Myrtle Beach, Disney World and to visit family. Pastor and Mrs. Cherry also had season tickets at RFK Stadium to see his beloved Washington Redskins play.

*“I was in church because of my parents. I felt an obligation and a duty to go to church. I felt an obligation and a duty to expose my children to a church life and that’s basically what it was, it was the church life. I thought it was good for me and I thought it would be good for my children. But that was it- I never thought about salvation how we teach it now- getting saved. I just felt I was alright. My dad was a Pastor.”*

The family also attended Trinity AME Zion Church in Washington, DC. When his father passed away in 1977, Pastor Cherry began to take his church membership more seriously. *“My mother came to town and she said, ‘In church you were born and in church you are going back.’”* It was his daughter Sharon’s love for the youth choir that kept him consistently in church. As a result, his life’s course was changed when he accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior on December 31, 1980.

*“It’s a miracle I got saved because what I was hearing didn’t minister to me. They were preaching about prosperity and I was in business, doing well. At a New Year’s Eve Service in 1980, the first New Year’s Eve Service I had ever attended in the Washington, DC area, I knew that night something just came over me and I knew I had to cave in to the Lord. I raised my hand and I stood up and said, ‘Tonight I want to confess Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. This night the old John is dead. I will not go into another year the way I was, I am a new creature in Christ.’ I knew then I had found the Lord.”*

Soon after getting saved, Pastor Cherry received the Baptism with the Holy Spirit and on March 19, 1981 he received a call from God, along with his wife, to start a church. The church and teaching ministry were established with a mission to build strong families by leading people to the Lord, one soul at a time, through a church that taught the people to love God, hate sin and love to give.

Pastor Cherry preached his initial sermon in 1981 at Trinity AME Zion Church and started a Bible Study on April 28, 1981 in his home and this became the foundation of the church that he founded. The first church Sunday Worship Service was held in the store that was his business, on June 7, 1981. The church experienced uninterrupted growth and grew over the years and decades. On May 12, 1992 Pastor Cherry was given an honorary Doctor of Divinity certificate by Livingston College and on September 12, 1999 he was consecrated as the Episcopal Pastor of From the Heart Church Ministries Worldwide™ by Dr. Frederick K.C. Price.

*“My business acumen and experience under the anointing of the Holy Spirit have caused From the Heart Church Ministries® to grow from a small storefront church into a multiple-million dollar, worldwide Christian Church ministry. This evangelistic outreach ministry touches lives throughout the United States and abroad, where leadership and oversight are provided for churches around the world.”*

From the Heart Church Ministries Worldwide™ evolved from “FROM THE HEART MINISTRIES®, the Teaching Ministry of John and Diana Cherry” and “From the Heart Church Ministries, Inc.®” as a result of a Divine call from God to Dr. Cherry for him to leave his former denomination. He began teaching the Reformation message that God spoke to his heart that the church needed to be reformed. These teachings spread throughout the Body of Christ in the United States and around the world. Many pastors and leaders began to desire to be a part of the Reformation of the Church as a result of teachings like: *“It’s Time to Reform the Church,” “It’s Time to Gather the Flock,” “Feed the Flock of the Slaughter,” “Preach the Word,” “The Ministry of Kindness,” “Applying the Ministry of Kindness,” “The Power of Righteousness,” “Watchmen on the Walls,” “Resting in the Power of God,” “I Need Your Help,” “Wilt Thou Be Made Whole,” “Go Back Another Way,” “Forget Not All His Benefits,” “Change,” “In Nothing Be Terrified,” “Why Do the Heathen Rage,” “Understanding the Covenant,” “Finding Your Place in the Will of God,” “We Win, They Lose,” “Where is Your Faith,” “We Have Overcome,” “Try the Spirits,” “Arise and Go,” and “Rise and Live.”*

Under his leadership, there are From the Heart churches within the contiguous United States in addition to the Parent Church in: Atlanta, Charlotte, Chicago, Cincinnati, Dallas, Harrisburg in Pennsylvania, Houston, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Oklahoma City, Philadelphia, Pomona in California, Raleigh, Richmond, Tulsa and Waldorf in Maryland with expansion locations in Washington, District of Columbia, Fredericksburg, Virginia and Brooklyn, New York. Through his leadership there are also From the Heart churches abroad in: Canada, Eastern Europe, Ethiopia, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Italy, South Africa and Western Europe.

Dr. Cherry retired from the Pastorate in June of 2006 and from the Episcopacy on July 15, 2018. After thirty-seven years of ministering around the world, he was free to enjoy retirement with his loving wife. During this time, he could be found watching westerns, driving in the happy seat and taking his daily walks with a stop at the gym.

On February 16, 2019, Dr. Cherry laid down his earthly body and transitioned home to be with the Lord. He leaves to cherish his memory his wife of nearly 50 years, Reverend Diana P. Cherry; his daughter, Sharon Maria Mitchell; his son, Bishop John A. Cherry, II; his seven grandchildren: Renee Gina-Nicole (Mitchell) Moore [Kevin], William J. Mitchell, IV, Diana Maria Mitchell, Elisha Michelle (Pinkerton) Hunt [Sean], Abriona Marie Cherry, Aleah Michelle Cherry and John Abron Cherry, III; his brother, Reverend Robert C. Cherry [Elsie]; his sister, Deloris A. Cherry, his son-in-love, William J. Mitchell, III; his daughter-in-love, Reverend LaWanda M. Cherry; six great grandchildren; nephews, Pete Cherry and Dr. Robert Cherry; and a host of other family members. He was preceded in death by his loving parents, Presiding Elder and Mrs. Joseph H. Cherry; his brothers, Lebestor Cherry and Reverend Archie Cherry; and sisters, Josephine (Cherry) Hill, Lettice (Cherry) Palmer and Jean Cherry.

*“I was a man that simply obeyed God.”*



# ORDER OF SERVICE



**Processional of Clergy** ..... "Holy, Holy, Holy"  
Mass Choir

**Invocation**

**Congregational Hymn** ..... "Blessed Assurance"  
Mass Choir

**Scripture Reading**

Old Testament: Psalm 34:1-8 and Proverbs 3:5-7  
New Testament: Matthew 6:30-34

**Prayer**

**Selection**

**Remarks**

Reverend Diana P. Cherry (*Wife*)  
The Grandchildren  
Pastor Jeffrey V. Branson  
(*From the Heart Church Ministries of Philadelphia*)

**Acknowledgements**

**Obituary** - This is My Story (*Read Silently*)

**Song of Preparation** ..... "Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross"  
Mass Choir

**Message of Hope** ..... Bishop John A. Cherry, II (*Son*)  
Episcopal Pastor, From the Heart  
Church Ministries Worldwide™

**Call to Christ**

**Recessional**



## FAMILY TRIBUTES



*A Man Who Obeyed God!*

*John A. Cherry:*

*My husband, my friend, my “Baby”, my “Honey”,  
my “Love”, my “Sweetie”, my encourager, my  
supporter, my chastiser, my example, my teacher, my  
provider, my confidant – in the earth realm,  
my EVERYTHING!*

*He was a man of unfailing character, unchanging  
conduct and unwavering commitment to the faith!*

*I loved him, I respected him, I served him. I will never stop loving him and missing him.  
And, I love him too much and have been taught too well by him to allow my selfish  
emotions to be a blemish on the events that honor him as we “Celebrate His Life and  
Show Gratitude for His Legacy”.*

*John, no one loves and honors you as much as I do. This is not goodbye because I know I  
will see you again, without spot or wrinkle.*



*Wifey,  
Dee*

*I was blessed to have you 54 years, 7 months and 17 days. Thank you for teaching us how to love Jesus. For standing strong in the faith. For always teaching us who we are, whose we are and who we serve. You are a faithful man of God. You had the opportunity to see both of your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren having knowledge of Christ through your example. Words cannot express my loss right now. But realize, you are with some of the best. Say hello to Aunt Josephine, Uncle Archie, Ma and Pop Freeman. Love you Dad!*

Sharon

#### *A Farewell Note*

*Our brother always put God, family and church first in that order and he did it all without resentment, regardless of the situation he found himself confronted with. He had a giving heart, always willing to help when someone had a need. Without saying "I told you so", he was always above small talk. I would like to put him in this class, great minds speak of ideals, average minds talk about current events and small minds talk about people.*

*Now as a preacher of the Gospel, I want to thank you for your help through your teaching in making me a better brother and teacher! I have learned from your teaching how to respond when God says no and to accept no when it comes from man. For seventy-nine years you have been a blessing to me and my family. Our plans to observing our 60<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> anniversaries together was put on hold, but we will do it later and greater with our Father. See how good God is, He taught me how to accept no without resentment regardless of the situation.*

*In closing, prayer does not change the situation, but it changes the one who is praying. I thank the Lord for my baby brother and the change through God he has made on my life.*

With all my love,  
Robert

# CONGREGATIONAL HYMN

## Blessed Assurance

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine! Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!  
Heir of salvation, purchase of God, Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

### *Refrain:*

This is my story, this is my song, Praising my Savior all the day long;  
This is my story, this is my song, Praising my Savior all the day long.

Perfect submission, perfect delight, Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;  
Angels, descending, bring from above, Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

### *Refrain*

Perfect submission, all is at rest, I in my Savior am happy and blest,  
Watching and waiting, looking above, Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The entire Cherry family thanks all of you for your prayers, comfort, love and support. Your many acts of kindness and expressions of sympathy have been a blessing to us. May the Lord Jesus Christ bless and keep you in perfect peace! We would especially like to thank all of the doctors, nurses, technicians and medical staff of the MSICU at Inova Fairfax Hospital for your exceptional care and compassion.

## FLOWER BEARERS

*From the Heart local church pastor's wives*

### *Services entrusted to:*

Hodges and Edwards Funeral Home  
Suitland, Maryland

~ DR. JOHN A. CHERRY ~

*"A Man Who Obeyed God"*