

*A Celebration of Life for*

Sunrise  
September 25, 1932

Sunset  
January 4, 2014



*Rev. Thomasena K. Woodward*

*Service*

*Saturday, January 11, 2014 - 10:00 a.m.*

St. James AME Church  
588 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. • Newark, NJ  
*Rev. Ronald Slaughter, Pastor*



## Obituary



**Rev. Thomasena K. Woodward** affectionately known as Rev. Tommye was born on September 25, 1932 in Georgetown, South Carolina. She was the second born child of the late Robert Keith, Sr. and the former Annie Dukes. Five children (3 boys and 2 girls) were born to the union of her parents including James (deceased), Robert Jr., Joan (deceased) and Phillip.

At an early age Rev. Tommye joined Bethel AME Church and was a member of the Allen Stars Sunday School, ACE league and the youth choir. She was a member of the 1951 graduating class of Howard High School, Georgetown, SC. She graduated from South Carolina State College with a Bachelor's degree in Education in 1956.

Rev. Tommye began her teaching career in Georgetown, SC in 1956, where she taught for 3 years. In 1959, she moved to Newark, NJ, and taught at Charlton Elementary School. In 1961, she began teaching in Paterson, NJ where she would teach for a total of 37 years with 30 years at school #12 and 7 years at school #8. She retired from the Paterson Board of Education in June, 1995.

Rev. Tommye met the love of her life, William (Billy) Woodward while he was serving in the US Army and visiting his mother in Georgetown, SC. They were united in holy matrimony on November 29, 1958, in Georgetown, SC. Their marriage was blessed with a son, William K. Woodward her "one child" who was born in 1968. Over the years Tommye and Billy enjoyed their family and friends and often hosted social events. They made sure they traveled back to their roots with annual trips to Georgetown, SC with many members of the family. Their union lasted for 35 years until the passing of Billy in 1993.

The Woodward family has been associated with St. James AME Church since 1935. Upon her marriage she became a member of the church. Under the leadership of Rev. Dr. William Wately she was involved with the following Ministries: the Usher Board, Steward Board, Lay President, Conference Lay Organization, Chaplin at Clara Mass Hospital and Minister of the Sick and Shut In. Rev. Tommye became an Ordained Minister and received her Master's degree in Divinity from Drew University in 2001. In 2009, she was honored by St. James AME Church in recognition of 50 years of membership and in 2010, she was honored by the Precious Gems for her years of service.

Rev. Tommye was associated with Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc., and numerous bowling leagues as she was a semi pro bowler. She traveled the country with her bowling league which included many family and friends. Among her numerous travels with the church, she visited other churches and attended retreats and conferences. Her journey to Africa with the church was an unforgettable gift.

Rev. Thomasena K. Woodward was called home to glory at 9:15 a.m. on Saturday, January 4, 2014, at Horizon Manor, Upper Montclair, NJ. She went home in perfect peace in harmony...sleeping, dreaming...angelic.

She leaves to cherish her memory, her beloved son, William Kelly Woodward, her daughter-in-law, Gabrielle Woodward, her granddaughters, Noelle Woodward age 6, and Rielle Woodward age 3. She also leaves her siblings, her in-laws, her nieces and nephews and a host of other family and friends.

"There's a special place prepared for me when Jesus comes again, I will be with Him. True victory when he comes back for me with Him I'll be free."

"Let the elders who rule be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching." I Timothy 5:17



*Order of Service*



Rev. Ronald L. Slaughter, Officiating

Musical Prelude.....Rev. TJ Martin

Processional.....Clergy and Family

Opening Hymn.....“It Is Well”  
Rev. Marcia Sapp

Prayer of Comfort

Scripture Readings  
Old Testament  
New Testament

Solo .....“I Won't Complain”  
Sis. Gwendolyn Keith

Resolution and Acknowledgements.....Bro. Charles Watts

Remarks/Family Tribute ..... Bro. Jerome Woodward  
Sis. Sakeenah Clark

Obituary (Read Silently)

Solo.....“The Reason Why I Sing”  
Rev. Marcia Sapp

Eulogy.....Dr. Mary White Williams

Recessional.....Clergy and Family

**INTERMENT**  
Glendale Cemetery  
28 Hoover Avenue  
Bloomfield, New Jersey

A repast will immediately follow the Interment at  
St. James AME Church, 588 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, Newark, NJ



*Heaven's bells loudly rang on that glorious day, and angels sang their joyous songs when my sweet Tommye slipped away. Crystal snowflakes softly floated, covering New Jersey everywhere, as God's precious servant took flight through the air. Startled blackbirds of winter saluted her in their flight, as they saw my sweet Tommye wing her way out of sight. For at last my sweet Tommye is where she wanted to be, at home with her sweet Jesus, her daughter and her sweet Billy. And so today I feel blessed for all of our sweet memories, of all the joy and fun we had my sweet Tommye and me. Because of this, there is joy for her, no time for any sorrow, for I shall see my sweet Tommye again in Heaven.....Tomorrow. Poem by Naomi Huntley*

*Mom,*

*I would like to thank you for a childhood filled with love and happiness. As a child you always made me happy and surrounded me with family and friends. Your love and guidance has made it possible for me to be secure in who I am. You taught me how to treat people and the true definition of loyalty and respect. I watched you help people, pay their bills and give them a place to stay. I watched you pray and pray and pray and pray with people all through the night. You know all who you touched are paying tribute to you now. There will only be one Rev. Thomasena Imogene Keith Woodward, how lucky for me, I was your "one child." You will be forever missed, forever loved and never forgotten. When I need you I know all I have to do is look to the sky above and wait for the sunshine. Always, Kelly*

*Mother,*

*Thank you for your wisdom, for teaching me that things turn out exactly the way they are supposed to and to always go out on faith. Say hi to Aunt Chris and Heather, remember how we prayed. Forever, Gabrielle*

*Grandma,*

*You had to go, this we know but we are not exactly sure why. We are young and just begun to look towards the sky. For there you are and there you'll stay in all our time of need. We can pray to you and you'll help us through this we can believe. So you're not far just like the stars glowing up above, you'll be around and you'll come down so we can feel your love. Love, Noelle & Rielle*

*From all who called you Aunt Tommye, Sister, Sister-in-law, Rev. Tom, Imogene, Miss Keith, Mrs. Woodward and friend, thank you for opening your heart and your home. Thank you for living and loving to the fullest extent of your soul. For educating and teaching with patience and kindness, for sacrificing yourself for the sake of others. For your sweet smile and ability to love everyone and I mean EVERYONE! It is truly amazing that someone could touch so many lives in so many ways. You will always be missed.*

### *Acknowledgement*

*The family of the late **Rev. Thomasena K. Woodward** would like to take the opportunity to extend their sincere appreciation for the many kind expressions of sympathy extended to them during this time of bereavement. Our hearts are heavy, but the love and kindness that you have exhibited in your visits, your telephone calls, the flowers you sent, the food you prepared and your prayers have helped to ease the pain. A very special thank you to Carol Cotugno and the entire staff of Horizon Manor for all of your love and care. To the Woodward family, thank you for always being there.*

---

Professional Services by:

## **Whigham Funeral Home**

580 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. • Newark, New Jersey 07102  
973-622-6872

*Carolyn Whigham, Director*

