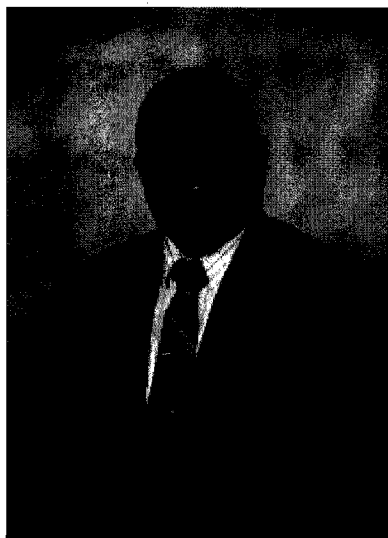


A HOMEGOING CELEBRATION HONORING

Pastor Walter Thomas Alford, Sr.

Sunrise: September 18, 1911

Sunset: December 28, 2001



"The steps of a Good man are ordered by the Lord, and He delighteth in his way."

Psalms 37:23

Friday, January 4, 2002 • 1:00 P.M.

The Church of God
(Services held at First Baptist Church)
104 Home Avenue
Hartsville, South Carolina 29550
Robert Kline, Pastor

Officiating Pastor, Ragen Mitchell
Bishopville Church of God

Chairman of the Presbytery of the Church of God for the State of South Carolina



50th Wedding Anniversary

“What A Mighty God We Serve!”

Today although saddened by my loss, I am thankful for 69 years of unity. We shared many blessed events and our home was filled with love. Our Children, grands and great grands have been a blessing and I know that they will continue to love and honor God and me and also respect your memory.

Rest my dearly beloved and I will greet you “in the morning.”

Love,
Your Wife

Where Can I Find A Righteous Man?

Could I weigh him with his words and deed?

Is there just one to fulfill my needs?

*A congregation that can sing, opening heavens door
Angels sing a refrain, where can I find a righteous man?*

He must see beyond fear and hold firm.

*To my will he must bend,
A faithful soul I can depend*

A watchman on the wall seeking the lost

A workman who'll count the cost

Prayer on bended knees 'tis my son talking straight to me

*A righteous man is not to Please
He is assigned not by you but by
Me*

*You've worked both day and night
Now Beulah land is soon in sight*

There has been a time to rest yet labor is not over, still a word to share

Now one last task I have for you

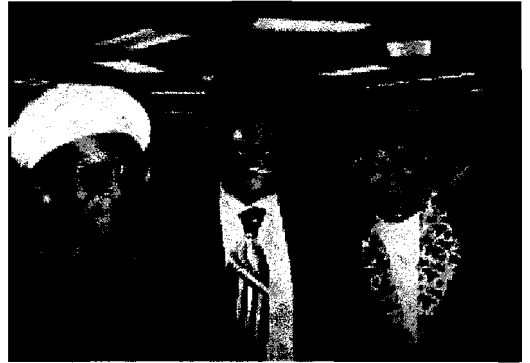
*I have one sheep, still to find
Seek that lamb out
Child of mine*

*Now come home, Shepherd of mine,
For you truly are
One who was called to my vineyard; and now in
Eternal rest*

*Know that all you were able to touch
I will bless.*

*Authored by Leon Stanley Yarbrough
Eldest Grandson*

***Memorable Highlights From the Life of a
Legendary Man
BY
His Family***



- Many are called but few are chosen. Nonetheless, when you meet a chosen one you will know it and Reverend Walter T. Alford, Sr. was such a man. He was indeed a chosen vessel of the Lord, an illumination of his Heavenly Father. Certainly, he walked in the pathway of righteousness.
- His immediate family and childhood friends best knew Walter, as “Bubba” and he never once attempted to restrict them from calling him by that name.
- In his youth, he was a faithful obedient son who willingly accepted responsibility for any task given him. He would work side-by-side with his father, laboring in the fields of the farmland, taking pride in his ability to pick cotton above the expected weight levels for someone his age. He was known for his physical strength.
- He learned to apply the principles of honesty, integrity and commitment to his duties, as a farmers’ son and routinely applied them in all that he endeavored to achieve as a young man. His immediate family came to depend on him as a leader that they could trust to keep his word and hold them accountable to do likewise.
- He came from a family of singers. He and his brothers and sisters would amuse themselves by singing after they worked together in the fields all day. They traveled throughout the church community singing for services and special programs on the weekend; they were known for their quartet singing.
- As a young family man who worked farmland as a sharecropper, he took jobs away from home working at the Santee Cooper River and the Florence Airport, in order to provide for his wife and children when the farm did not produce. While he was away during the week, his family missed him and they awaited his return on weekends with great anticipation. Each time he left to go back to work their hearts were deeply saddened.
- He knew no fear. He would reach down and take hold of a rattlesnake and raise it over his head with its head pinched between his thumb and forefinger of one hand and the snapping rattles pinched in the other. At the sound of the gasp of onlookers he would quickly snap the back of the snake in the air, disabling it. His young children always boasted how brave their father was to other children. To them he was the “greatest” daddy around.
- He was known as a firm disciplinarian. Yet he did not do much spanking. His verbal chastisements could provoke more tears and remorse than his belt. He would always challenge the conscience of his children by reminding them of what was expected of them. Disappointing their father was not something they enjoyed.
- Remarkably, as a young father he frequently walked for measurable distances on his hands with both legs stretched upward into the air, turning and backing to impress his children with his ability to balance his weight on his hands. Watching him walk on his hands was really a sight to see.
- He was the “king” in his castle (home). When he was farming, at the end of a long day of working in the fields, he would come in covered with dust and dirt but he was always comforted by the welcome of his wife and children. His “queen” would give the command to some of the children to bathe their fathers feet while he sat in his chair gathering his thoughts and allowing the fatigue to dissipate from his body.
- When his children talked about him each of them preferenced their comments with “My Daddy” as if they were his only child. He always told them that even though he had ten children...no two were alike. He tailored his relationship with each of his children to meet the unique needs of that child, and that never changed.

- This caring man was filled with compassion for people. He was genuinely interested in the well being of others. He was never too busy or too tired to respond to the call of those who needed him to come to their aid. He listened to every concern as if it was the only concern that he was dealing with. He never met a person that he could not relate to. He always believed that you could show kindness to anyone and you should do no less than speak to people you meet along life's way.
- He had a consistent message for all young people. He encouraged them to seek after God; prepare for life's work; be true to your word and earn the trust of others; and never cease to learn. He was highly honored, as a father (surrogate to many fatherless families), grandfather, brother, uncle, friend, Pastor, community-worker. He taught that there were three essential decisions to make in life: whom you choose to serve as Master, your life's occupation and whom you will marry. His counsel to the young was often given with these decisions in mind.
- Before 911-Fire Emergency, his brother Aaron's house was engulfed in flames and his infant son faced certain death as flames licked his crib. "Bubba" hearing the cries of his sister-in-law ran straight into the fully engaged house and snatched the infant child from the crib...with the blanket already scorched from the intense heat. He wasted no time exiting out the back door. As his feet touched the ground the house crumbled into a pile of rubble. This amazing man gave no thought to his own safety. Nor did he boast of the event ... He didn't even talk about it much after it happened.
- He taught his children how to study the Bible by using "search and find" assignments. He would tell them to find something in the Bible ... giving them very few hints. No one could render help to the others, if they completed the assignment first they reported directly to him. The children found this method of teaching interesting and they eagerly participated. The lessons learned were lasting because all of his children are knowledgeable of the scriptures.
- He was a self-taught man who mastered the scriptures and studied diligently to expand his realm of academics in other subject areas. He was not intimidated by the highly educated. He often baffled them with his ability to have dialogue on a wide variety of topics.
- He was a father-in-law who announced to his new son or daughter "whatever is ours is yours and if you ever need anything just let me know." He was a father to all...young and old...A man to be admired and proud to have had the opportunity to call him Daddy. He will never be forgotten.
- As a grandfather he would regularly cast a shadow the length of a Redwood tree when his teenage grandsons observed him in action, e.g. carrying a 100 lb. bag of cement. They always marveled at his strength and thought, "what a man."
- His friends appreciated his wise counsel. He would encourage them to listen to their children, saying "we have to listen to our children, we ain't always right". When his friends preceded him in death, he stepped in to provide their children a father's love and support. In many cases, he had a longer period to influence their children's development than their natural fathers had. His home was the home of many fatherless children, who called him "Daddy."
- The Pastor was devoted to his congregants. He kept their confidence in times of trouble; he shared their sorrows and their joys; he loved their families and was always available in time of need. You could depend on him to keep a confidence.
- Pastor Alford realized that death would greet him as it had greeted others. He worked so that he would be ready to go back with the Lord. He made plans to be with his God by studying and obeying the "word." He also made his funeral arrangements so that family members would be spared unnecessary pain. He met with "Sam" at least three times to be sure all details and necessary arrangements were written down. He wanted to make sure his wishes were honored.

Obituary

In the tradition of a devoted life in the service of the Lord, Pastor Walter Thomas Alford, Sr. made his annual trip, for the last time, to the Church of God Campgrounds in Augusta, Georgia on December 28, 2001. At approximately 11:30 AM he was called to perform his final duty standing in the vestibule of the Forest Street Church of God, to minister to a lost soul that expressed a great desire to be set free from the burden of sin and experience the joy of salvation. In his humble obedient way, this spiritual giant labored to win the soul of a young woman for the Lord and as he prayed the Lord looked upon His faithful servant and ushered him into His presence. For, "to be absence from the body is to be presence with the Lord". When the death Angel came at 11:40 AM Pastor Alford was walking with the Lord and now he will be no more...on this side of Heaven.

On September 18, 1911 Walter Thomas Alford was born to Jesse Thomas and Susanna Mack Alford. He was the second of seven children born to this union. His mother died when he was nine years old. His immediate family affectionately called him "Bubba" and soon it was the name that others in the community came to call him, as well. He distinguished himself among his siblings early in life, as being different. By age fifteen, this different quality was manifested through his conversion to Christ. He started his Christian walk with absolute resolve to serve the Lord with a faithful heart. He became an avid reader of God's Word and read the Bible in its entirety right from the start... as a youth. He began his service in the Vineyard of the Lord in the Methodist church as a Sunday school teacher, choir member, and church secretary at the Sandy Grove Methodist Church for two years. Then he moved his membership to Emanuel AME Church where he served in the same positions for the next two years. His study of God's Word lead him to the Church of God Reformation Movement, headquarters in Anderson, Indiana in 1931. Thereafter, he proclaimed that this change led him to fully embrace God's Word, which reads "Be ye holy, for I AM Holy, and Without Holiness no man shall see the Lord." This marked the beginning of a great servant of the Lord...called to be a Saint. He continued to show forth a remarkable understanding of God's Word, always lending his spiritual ears to the voice of the Lord. He truly accepted the fact that it was the Holy Spirit who leads and directs God's children in to all truth and reveals the deep understanding of His Word. Walter's ability to discern and teach God's Word even as a youth amazed those who came to know him. It was a marvel that he continued to read the Bible from cover to cover with astounding recall of book, chapter and verse. He thoroughly enjoyed learning on every level and he invested the time to become a well-rounded self-taught individual.

While still a teenager, Walter began to pray to the Lord for his helpmate. He often shared the story of how he put several fleece before God to get confirmation on who would become his bride. Eventually, by age 21, he was satisfied that he had received his answer from the Lord and on September 3, 1932, he married the former Lillie Bell Franklin and God blessed this union with ten children... five girls and five boys. As a young family man he resided in Lamar, South Carolina and situated himself with the Lamar Church of God serving in the capacity of Sunday school superintendent, youth leader, teacher and janitor. After a period of time, he moved his family to Timmonsville, South Carolina and joined with other pioneers of the faith to build the Timmonsville Church of God edifice. His leadership abilities continued to be used there as he served as the assistant Superintendent, choir leader and youth leader positions. Because of his faithful service, he was an inspiration for many people in that fellowship as they grew in number and spiritual maturity.

In 1952, the young Alford family moved to Hartsville, S.C. and united with the Sixth Street Church of God where Walter Alford accepted positions of service as teacher and choir leader.

In 1955, after Reverend Ira Williams, the Pastor of the Sixth Street Church of God, passed away, Brother Walter Alford served the Church in the capacity of officiating lay minister of the gospel for one year. After many years of eluding the call on his life to preach the gospel, he finally surrendered in 1956 and was licensed and ordained by the S.C. State Presbytery of the Church of God. Later he accepted the call to the pastorate of the Sixth Street Church of God where he served as Pastor for 23 years. While pastoring he farmed for many years, until he decided to retire from farming and relocate his family homestead in the City limits of

Hartsville. At that time he began to work for Coker College as a landscaper.

In making his decision to retire from the Pastorate, he wrote in his letter of resignation, "Now, I really thank you for every act of kindness and hospitality that you have shown toward me and my family while striving to serve you. I have done the best that I could under every condition to help everyone from the smallest ones to the oldest ones. Whether you believe it or not, God knows that I did do my best... So I will close with Paul's statements: "Finally brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might (Ephesians 6:10) and, Finally brethren, farewell, be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace and the God of love and peace shall be with you (II Cor. 13: 11)."

His next pastorate was the Bishopville Church of God where he served for 24 years. When the time came to leave their service he reflected on his work and wrote, "And in the midst of it all, God blessed us in it with many blessings... at least I counted it so. So, now I trust that you enjoyed my stay here with you, as much as I did working together with you for the Lord's Kingdom, in striving to build it up in soul winning with God's help through the Holy Spirit. So stick together and love each other with fervent love, and by doing so, God will bless you in whatever you do." Pastor Alford was called to the pastorate of the Bennettsville Church of God in the Sand Hills of Bennettsville, S.C. and he served them with diligence and faithfulness for 18 years. When he decided to leave he submitted a letter of resignation that included these words, "I can call Heaven and earth to record that I have done all that I could to show you the right way... the best I could. We thank thee for the shared joys, successes and friendships that have blessed this Pastoral relationship. We remember in gratitude the bright hours of faith, the many examples of sacrifice, and the depths of love demonstrated, the spiritual recoveries made and the high moments when the Holy Spirit glowed within... *"Bless this Congregation with harmony, rekindle its vision and commit it anew to thy Mission."* He was later called back to serve this congregation as the interim Pastor in 1989 and was there until his passing. He had given notice earlier this year that December 30, 2001 would be his last Sunday there, as Pastor. A noteworthy occurrence was the fact that Pastor Alford managed to serve all three congregations concurrently for a period of time. It was a marvel to his family and many others that he actually had a system that allowed him to shepherd these congregations concurrently.

Pastor Alford was a man of great stature who served in various leadership roles that supported the work of the State of South Carolina Churches of God. One of his most important leadership positions was serving as the President of the Ministers Association, faithfully to every task for five years.

Those who shared and experienced the joys of life with him and survive to cherish his achievements and loving memories are: his wife of 69 years, Lillie Bell, eight children which includes five daughters, Jessie A. Stuckey (Maxie) of Washington, DC, Mary H. Yarborough of Aiken, SC, Gradye A. Stephen (Allen) of Paterson, NJ, Beverly Alford of District Heights, MD, three sons, Norman L. Alford (Carolyn) of Freeport, Bahamas, William E. Alford of Darlington, SC, Linda Alford, Florence, SC and Reginald D. Alford who resides with his parents and was with his father when the death angel arrived on Friday morning. (The two eldest sons preceded their father in death: Walter, Jr. and Willie Franklin Alford; four sisters, Ellen Pickett of Norfolk, VA, Alberta Mack of Timmons ville, SC, Minnie Lee George and Rosa Lee Hines of Hartsville, one brother, Dock Blyther of Lamar, SC., one Aunt Louise "Sweeter" Ashwood of Bennettsville; 18 grandchildren, 19 great-grandchildren and one great-great grandchild, two sisters-in-law, Johnnie Lee Alford of Wilmington, NC and Lillian Alford of Marion, SC; one brother-in-law, Joseph Scott of Baltimore, MD; and a host of nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

Celebration of Triumph

Reverend Ragen Mitchell - *Officiating Minister*

Prelude Organist / Pianist

Processional Ministers, Pallbearers & Family

Selection - *"When We All Get To Heaven"* Mass Choir State Wide Churches

Greetings Reverend Robert Kline
Pastor of First Baptist Church

Hymn of Faith - *"In The Sweet By and By"* Choir

Readings of the Holy Scriptures

Old Testament - *Psalms 4:3-9* Minister Charles Makins
Sixth Street Church of God
Hartsville, SC

New Testament - *Romans 6:7-11* Reverend Bobby Damon

Prayer of Comfort *Daughter* - Lay Minister Beverly Alford

Musical Selection *"This World Is Not My Home"*

Tributes - *2 minutes please*

- Members of the Clergy
- Congregation of Pastorate
- Family

Musical Selection - *"Heaven Holds All To Me"* Sis. Jessie Stuckey

Tributes from Civic, Professional & Personal

- Mr. Louis Cannarella *former Mayor of Hartsville*
- Mr. Sawyer *Coker College*
- Reverend Bessie Covington *Gospel Twin*

Musical Selection

Acknowledgements Mrs. Ruth D. Fair

The Obituary Read Silently / Soft Music

Special Solo - "*May The Work I've Done Speak For Me*" Son - Reginald D. Alford

The Spoken Word Pastor Leo Dizzley
Saint Matthews Church of God
St. Matthews, SC

Benediction

Hymn of Destination..... "*When The Saints Go Marching In*"

Recessional Clergy, Family & Friends

Committal - Interment

Greenlawn Cemetery
Hartsville, South Carolina

Repast

Hartsville High School Cafeteria
703 Lewellyn Avenue
Hartsville, SC

"From My Heart"

*We'll the time came for us to go;
And as you guessed we loved you so.*

*We will meet again some other place;
To see us all together face to face.*

*I know your love for us will go on and on;
A very long time after we're gone.*

*Our love for you will never die,
And the joy we shared will stay forever by and by.*

*May God bless us everyone,
Till our time on earth has been done.*

*We had our time to laugh and cry,
But the time will come for us to die.*

*So on Judgment Day don't be late,
Cause I'll wait for you at Heaven's Gate.*

*Please remember I love you so,
But still I am sorry . . . I had to go.*

God Bless and Protect you always.

*Authored by
Deirdra "Dee Dee" Michelle Alford
Granddaughter*

Precious Memories



Flower Bearers

Church of God Ushers

Pall Bearers

Grandsons

Honorary Pallbearers

Nephews

Acknowledgements

We bless the name of the Lord, Our God, for friends such as you. As you prayed, visited, encouraged, gave of yourself in other ways or just thought of us . . . we were strengthened. All acts of kindness helped us to endure and comforted us in our loss. Your thoughtfulness will always be remembered and appreciated. We pray that God will continue to bless you in a very special manner.

The Alford Family

Special Thanks to the members of the First Baptist Church Family and Pastor Robert Kline for opening their doors in the time of our loss. Your show of love was appreciated and will always be remembered.

The Alford Family

*"Peace I Leave With You, My Peace I Give Unto You;
Not As The World Giveth, Give I Unto You.
Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled, Neither Let It Be Afraid."*

On behalf of Young & Young Funeral Home, it is our aim to uphold the highest standards of professionalism, dignity and sincerity with every family we serve. If this task has been met, then our aim has been accomplished.

Young & Young Funeral Home

711 S. 6th Street / P.O. Box 190
Hartsville, South Carolina 29551
Telephone 843-332-4188

The Charge

"I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man; And keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in His ways, to keep his statutes, and His commandments, and His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, withersoever thou turnest thyself. That the Lord may continue His word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth, with all their heart, and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (he said) a man on the throne of Israel."

I King 2:2-4

"Thus saith the Lord"

Pastor Walter Thomas Alford, Sr.