



## Pastor Christopher J. Wathen

January 4, 1947 - December 10, 2024

Psalms 37:23-27 NKJV. The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD, and He delights in his way.

Christopher Joseph Wathen (AKA Papa Chris) He was a born-again Christian, baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit. He was a man of distinction. One who feared the Lord and skewed evil. He was a man whose delight was in the law of the Lord and in His law did he meditate day and night. He was like a tree that was planted by the rivers of water and brought forth fruit in his season. He was born January 4, 1947 at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit Michigan to the union of Joseph Lawrence Wathen and Hattie Mae Wathen. He was the first born of three children. Chris was raised in the A.M.E. churches (Ebenezer, St. Stephens, and People's Community) before transitioning through the baptismal waters at Greater Grace Temple. As a Minister under Bishop David Ellis, Pastor Chris, in 1980, organized and participated in the Washington for Jesus Project with Dr. Ann Walker, through this project, Youth Leaders were organized.

He received the call for ministry and held ministerial positions at Greater Grace Temple under the leadership of the late Bishop David L. Ellis, Sr. Then Elder Chris led the charge for the 24 hour chain prayer for the new Pastor Bishop Charles H. Ellis, III. While serving he became an ordained minister through the Pentecostal Assemblies of the world. Christopher and May were united in holy matrimony on February 6, 1971 at Greater Grace Temple. The

Wathen's began a joining of backgrounds as they developed a loving marriage. 6 years after their beginnings, they were blessed with their first born, Tanisha Michelle, Christopher Joseph II, and Elizabeth Marie closed the biological child bearing season. Kenaye Ashley was an added baby blessed to our loving family.

The Wathen's now have 5 grandchildren. Following the passing of Bishop David L. Ellis, Elder Wathen was called to the Pastorate and the Wathen's relocated to Saginaw, Mi, where they continued to minister to couples, singles, families, and those addicted to drugs. To date, the Wathen's have 50+ years of combined experiences working in the Education System with Preschool through adult students. He pastored Bethlehem Temple and became employed by the Saginaw Public School System. He also was the GED preparation instructor for Michigan works and in Saginaw Valley resource center in those positions to develop curricular and resources to support hands-on learning and facilitated academic support through problem-solving and integrated academic components through coaching and co-teaching. While employed by the Saginaw Public School System he served the educational community as a math teacher and behavior interventionist. He retired from it in May 2023. He also served the Educational Community as an Adjunct Professor at Saginaw Valley State University.

He was an Executive Director of The Restoration Community Outreach, was a senior pastor and ordained founder of Bethesda ministries and Rehma ministries. Under those ministries, he brought the spiritual component to the therapeutic community of the Odyssey House. He worked with a collaboration of Pastors Called the Church of Saginaw and was the Educational Specialist for the Boy Scouts of America while working with Americorps. He later became a Youth Leader at New Beginnings Deliverance Ministry, Pastored by Roy and Evelyn Baldwin where he was instrumental in helping to start the One Week One Street Community Development Project. He later went on to

support the New Identity International Ministries, Pastored by Obed Thompson, Jr. where he worked to build and support the Impact Youth Center.

On Tuesday December 10, 2024, Pastor Chris made his transition from labor to reward while at home in the loving arms of his family. He leaves to cherish his memory: his wife, Mother May D. Wathen, his brother Lanford Wathen, three daughters Tanisha Heard, Elizabeth Wathen, Kenaye Carter, 5 grandchildren Canaan Wathen, Markel Heard. Markwe' Heard, Samara Castellano, Christian Jones, and two Nephews Tony Tanner and Stephen Shimoniak, and a host of other friends, family and loved ones. His parents and sister all preceded him in death.

Celebration of Life Service to be held Saturday, January 4, 2025 at 12:00 P.M. at Christ Image Community Church, 5501 Gratiot Rd., Saginaw, MI 48601. Pastor Eugene Burton, Host and Pastor Obed Thompson, officiate.

# Previous Events

## **Celebration of Life service**

JAN 4. 12:00 PM (ET)

Christ Image Community Church  
5501 Gratiot Road  
Saginaw, MI 48638

# Tribute Wall

JS

“ *Jerrold Rance Sr. lit a candle in memory of Pastor Christopher J. Wathen*



jerrold rance sr. - March 17, 2025 at 09:24 AM

MM

“ *Melleretha Moses-Johnson lit a candle in memory of Pastor Christopher J. Wathen*



Melleretha Moses-Johnson - January 04, 2025 at 03:47 PM

JM

“ *Condolences and prayers to the Wathen Family. May God give you all peace, comfort and strengthen Mother Mae Wathen and her family love you ❤️💜❤️💜 Pastor Jerry and Jeannie Morris*



Jeannie Morris - January 04, 2025 at 12:24 PM

CM

“ *Cheryl Morris lit a candle in memory of Pastor Christopher J. Wathen*



Cheryl Morris - January 04, 2025 at 11:11 AM

BH

“ *Betty Holmes lit a candle in memory of Pastor Christopher J. Wathen*



**Betty Holmes** - January 03, 2025 at 11:53 PM

EW

“ *Elder James Weston lit a candle in memory of Pastor Christopher J. Wathen*



**Elder James Weston** - January 03, 2025 at 08:59 AM

CB

“ *Clint Bryant lit a candle in memory of Pastor Christopher J. Wathen*



**Clint Bryant** - January 02, 2025 at 10:48 AM

DG

“ *My sincere condolences and prayers to the family. Pastor Wathen was a wonderful person who with a heart for children.*



**DELORES GILES** - January 02, 2025 at 09:05 AM

MW

“ *Mr. Wathen was a wonderful man and co-worker. I am a better person for having known him. Sending love and prayers to his family during this difficult time of bereavement.*  
*Donna Williams, Saginaw Public Schools, teacher*



**Mrs. Donna Williams** - January 01, 2025 at 06:37 PM

OG

“ *Olivette Gordon lit a candle in memory of Pastor Christopher J. Wathen*



**Olivette Gordon** - January 01, 2025 at 12:22 PM

SM

“ *Rest in Peace Pastor Wathen. I remember him and his wife as members of the Greater Grace Temple Radio Choir of Detroit, Mich. He carried himself in a manner that conveyed he was a true servant of God. May God give his family strength and courage during this sad time.*

**Sylvia Meniffee** - December 29, 2024 at 11:01 AM

MT

“ *Our sympathy to the entire Family. Prayers. The Townsends in Texas.*



**Milton and Catherine Townsend** - December 27, 2024 at 06:22 PM

MT

“ Milton And Catherine Townsend lit a candle in memory of Pastor Christopher J. Wathen



Milton and Catherine Townsend - December 27, 2024 at 06:19 PM

TJ

“ Tammy Johnson lit a candle in memory of Pastor Christopher J. Wathen



Tammy Johnson - December 26, 2024 at 03:29 PM

LP

“ Sincere Condolences and Prayers 🙏

Linda Ann Pritchett

Linda Ann Pritchett - December 21, 2024 at 02:14 PM

BW

“ Sending my sincere condolences and prayers to the family. Pastor Chris and May are wonderful people who have a heart for children.



Barbara Watkins - December 21, 2024 at 08:47 AM

CF

“ I knew Mr.Wathen as a Co-Worker of Saginaw Public School District. He was a straightforward, kind, person to have a intellectual conversation with. May he rest in peace.



Charles A. Sledge & Family - December 19, 2024 at 04:16 PM

CS

“ Colleen Smith lit a candle in memory of Pastor Christopher J. Wathen



Colleen Smith - December 19, 2024 at 10:54 AM

SB

“ Shonyrecca Booker sent a virtual gift in memory of Pastor Christopher J. Wathen



Shonyrecca Booker - December 18, 2024 at 08:12 PM

AN

“ Sending my deepest condolences to pastor Chris family.. mother Mae you are in my prayers.



Atosha Newsome - December 17, 2024 at 12:32 AM

JW

“ We'll remember Pastor Wathen as a great communicator, unifier, and a positive community member. We extend our prayers to the family and friends.



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**Jimmie and Beverly Westbrook** - December 16, 2024 at 07:21 PM

LC

“ Larry & Carrie Campbell lit a candle in memory of Pastor Christopher J. Wathen



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**Larry & Carrie Campbell** - December 16, 2024 at 03:31 AM

LW

“ We love you Mother May and the family. So sorry to hear about Pastor Chris. Rest peacefully. 🙏🙏🙏 Lisa and grandson Jayden Williams



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**Lisa Williams** - December 15, 2024 at 03:37 PM



“ God bless you and family Pastor Mae Wathen. Our prayers are with you, family and friends ❤️

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**Phyllis Thorne** - December 15, 2024 at 07:49 AM

JC

“ Sending our love with prayer and condolences to Mother Mae and the family. We love you Papa Chris thanks for your love and wisdom. Mother Mae we here for you and the family..May God strengthen you all and keep you.. 🙏❤️🙏



Jeffrey and Dr.Lisa Carney - December 15, 2024 at 06:22 AM

TJ

“ I never knew Mr. Wathen as a pastor but as an awesome Co-worker right after Covid working at Herig. He loved his wife and children and were very proud of you all. A great man has fallen but I know he has raised someone up to continue his legacy. May God strengthen you all; giving you His peace at this hour and days to come.



Tina jamerson-Mata - December 14, 2024 at 06:19 AM

TF

“ T. Williams& Family sent a virtual gift in memory of Pastor Christopher J. Wathen



T. Williams& family - December 13, 2024 at 10:39 AM

T.

“ *T.Williams lit a candle in memory of Pastor Christopher J. Wathen*



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**T.Williams** - December 13, 2024 at 08:21 AM

DP

“ *Dorothy Price-Omar lit a candle in memory of Pastor Christopher J. Wathen*



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**Dorothy Price-Omar** - December 12, 2024 at 09:15 PM

MI

“ *Your family is in our thoughts and prayers.*



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**Marcia (Anthony) Jones&Jason Pringle II** - December 12, 2024 at 08:01 PM

SP

“ *My heartfelt condolence to the family of Pastor Wathen. He was such a kindhearted man of God. I remember years ago he came to the hospital often when my father was sick and he would pray for him. Thank God for his beautiful big beautiful smile, his kind heart, and his loving spirit. Rest in peace Pastor Chris.*



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**Shelaine Parrish** - December 12, 2024 at 01:02 PM

DM

“ Deatte McGlothin sent a virtual gift in memory of Pastor Christopher J. Wathen



Deatte McGlothin - December 12, 2024 at 06:54 AM

LV

“ Linda McClain Veasley lit a candle in memory of Pastor Christopher J. Wathen



Linda McClain Veasley - December 12, 2024 at 06:46 AM



“ Joanie Williams sent a virtual gift in memory of Pastor Christopher J. Wathen



Joanie Williams - December 12, 2024 at 12:53 AM

MD

“ May our Lord of comfort be with you during this time. As you think and remember your loved one, take comfort in knowing as a Christian, "To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord." To God be the Glory. Amen.



Marquetta Davis - December 12, 2024 at 12:02 AM

VS

“ Vanda Strode sent a virtual gift in memory of Pastor Christopher J. Wathen



Vanda Strode - December 11, 2024 at 10:34 PM

RT

“ Roselyn Johnson Turnage sent a virtual gift in memory of Pastor Christopher J. Wathen



Roselyn Johnson Turnage - December 11, 2024 at 04:34 PM

CP

“ Cheryl Kay Payton sent a virtual gift in memory of Pastor Christopher J. Wathen



Cheryl Kay Payton - December 11, 2024 at 09:12 AM

ML

“ Margie Baty Lawrence sent a virtual gift in memory of Pastor Christopher J. Wathen



Margie Baty Lawrence - December 11, 2024 at 08:01 AM

AP

“ *Al Pipkins lit a candle in memory of Pastor Christopher J. Wathen*



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**Al Pipkins** - December 10, 2024 at 06:21 PM