



**THE ABYSSINIAN BAPTIST CHURCH IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Reverend Dr. S. Raschaad Hoggard – Executive Minister

Reverend Janine Myrick – Pulpit Associate

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2023 • 10:00 AM**

**CALL TO WORSHIP • THE LORD’S PRAYER**

**OPENING HYMN**

*Come Thou Long Expected Jesus # 257- Cathedral Choir*

**CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER/CHORAL RESPONSE**

*Healing - Cathedral Choir*

**ANTHEM**

*Here’s One*

**PASTORAL EMPHASIS • ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

**OFFERTORY APPEAL | OFFERTORY PRAYER**

**DOXOLOGY**

**SCRIPTURE**

**MEDITATION**

*Safety - Cathedral Choir*

**MESSAGE**

**INVITATION**

**FINAL MINISTERIAL REMARKS**

**CLOSING SELECTION**

*Come Thou Almighty King - Cathedral Choir*

**BENEDICTION**

*We thank GOD for your presence in this Sunday worship experience. Visit [abyssinian.org](http://abyssinian.org) for information about our prayer and worship opportunities, ministry programs, special observances, and cultural/community news & events.*

# WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

A SERIES DEVELOPED BY THE ABYSSINIAN ARCHIVES & HISTORY MINISTRY THAT HIGHLIGHTS THE WONDERFUL PEOPLE WHO CONTRIBUTE TO THE "STORY" OF OUR CHURCH

## **WELCOME TO THE PEOPLE OF ABYSSINIAN! Walteen Whitfield: What's Your Story?**



Lifelong Harlem resident, Walteen Whitfield, joined The Abyssinian Baptist Church in 1989. She still remembers one particular sermon Reverend Dr. Calvin O. Butts, III preached: "What Would My Church Be, If Every Member Thought Like Me." Walteen says "Well, I was so inspired by that sermon, I decided to join ministries and dedicate my life to The Abyssinian Baptist Church. At first I joined the Wednesday Night Ushers. Prayer service was held in the Vestry then, and we were duty ushers each 4th Sunday."

Walteen went on to become President of that board, which evolved into present-day True Spirit Usher Board. Her distinguished service that followed is inspiring: member of Abyssinian's Missionary and Scholarship Ministries, Cotillion Committee Chair, and Co-Chair of Women's Day committee. While reminiscing about her service to the church, Walteen said, "Remember the \$2.00 Patron's Memorial? Well, back then each ministry had a day in the kitchen, which Deacon Allen Mintz ran. Collard greens and chicken had to be cleaned each Sunday."

Walteen also remembers growing up in Harlem and the first year of open enrollment of schools in NYC, which allowed her to attend JHS 117, and then graduate from William Howard Taft H.S. in the Bronx. During her early years, Walteen became a Debutante, coming out at the New York Statler Hilton Hotel. That experience came in handy when she worked with young ladies preparing them to become Debutantes during her service on Abyssinian's Cotillion Committee.

Sister Whitfield worked for the Telephone company, and then Western Union from 1968 to 1992, when that company made massive layoffs. It was at the unemployment office where Walteen used her ingenuity and self-worth to get her next job. The unemployment clerk would often ask "Have you been looking for work?" To which Walteen responded, "how did you get this job?" The answer to that question led Walteen to the New York State Insurance Fund, just two weeks later.

After 32 years and several promotions at the Insurance Fund, Walteen retired in 2004. Rev. Butts attended her retirement event, and asked her to work in the Stewardship Office at Abyssinian, which she did for 20 years! In addition to facilitating the mailing of members' Year-End statements, Sister Whitfield also coordinated trips to the National Baptist Convention from 2005-2019, making plane, hotel, and restaurant reservations for church members and Harlem residents attending NBC, USA, Inc. conventions in Birmingham, New Orleans, Atlanta, Orlando, and Denver.

Walteen says "I believe Reverend Butts knew I could organize...he saw something in me that I didn't see in myself, and I had his trust." It was that trust that led Reverend Butts to choose Walteen to coordinate Abyssinian's travel to the Motherland, Ethiopia. Sister Whitfield reminisced, "Reverend Butts instructed me to first visit Ethiopia, secure a capable Ethiopian travel guide, and begin the arduous task of transporting a group of 162 people, including church and community members and the Chancel Choir. The pilgrimage included visits to several regions of Ethiopia.

Walteen recalls, "of the many highlights during this historic visit, dinner at the President's Palace in Addis Ababa stood out. We each practically had our own waiter. Another high point of the trip was our visit to Holy Trinity Cathedral where Reverend Butts placed a commemorative plaque at the tomb of Haile Selassie, the late Emperor of Ethiopia when it was known as Abyssinia."

During both her long professional career and service to Abyssinian, Walteen raised one daughter, Doris Davis. Finally, she says "Abyssinian was a blessing in my life, all of the things which were afforded me."

That is Walteen Whitfield, and ***This Is Her Story.***