



Dr. Ralph May,
Pastor Emeritus

Jan. 8, 1939 - Dec. 24, 2024

Dr. Ralph May, Pastor Emeritus, 85, of Morganton, NC passed away on Tuesday, December 24, 2024. He was born on January 8, 1939 in Arkansas to the late Winfred May and Flossie Stewart May. Dr. May started his pastoral duties at Riverside Baptist Church in Asheville where he served for six years. He then moved to Zion Baptist Church in Morganton where he served for twenty-seven years. He was a veteran of the US Air Force and was stationed in Germany. During his tenure at Zion Baptist he built three mission churches. He served for three years as the chaplain of the Oak Hill Fire Department and one year as chaplain of the Burke County Sheriff's Department. He was the lead pastor during the construction of Zion Baptist Church. He spent three years as Moderator for the Catawba Valley Baptist Association. He was an honor graduate of Fruitland Baptist Institute. He was a published author of "The Great Shepherd of the 23rd Psalm" and the song, "The Unashamed in 1995," which was later recorded by Quinton Mills. Dr. May received Pastor Emeritus from Zion Baptist Church in 2019.

In addition to his parents, Dr. May was preceded in death by his brothers, Jerry May, Walter May and Tommy May; and sister, Joyce Little.

He is survived by his wife of 63 years, Sandra Buckner May; son, Travis May (Leslie);

He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Sandra Buckner May, son, Travis May (Leslie), daughter, Scherrie May Vicks (Randy); grandchildren, Whitney Hovater, Mackenzie Golden, Austin Worley, and Kassidy Shelton; thirteen great-grandchildren; sisters, Carolyn May, Annette Cauthen, Patsy Jacobs, and Bessie Hampton; and many nieces, nephews, and cousins.

The family will receive friends from 1 to 3 p.m., Saturday, January 11, 2024 at Zion Baptist Church. The funeral will begin at 3 p.m. in the church with Rev. Keith Rose and Jimmy Fowler officiating. There will be a memory box in the vestibule of the church. If you have a special memory you would like to share with the family, please bring the note and place it there. Military honors will be provided by the US Air Force and the Caldwell County Veteran Honor Guard.

In lieu of flowers, the family has asked that you would please donate to cover expenses via [GoFundMe](#) or [Venmo](#).

Sossoman Funeral Home and Crematory Center is assisting the family with the arrangements.

Tribute Wall



–Anonymous



–Anonymous



–Anonymous



–Anonymous



–Anonymous

Ralph May will be truly missed by my wife Genise and Myself. He was a special friend and Mentor to me during my tenure as Minister of Music at Zion Baptist Church. I Loved Him like a brother. He was a Great Pastor with exceptional knowledge of the Bible and, Our Lord and Savior. Ralph and Sandra will always be in our Hearts and Minds. I know we will see Him in Heaven.

–Barry Mock



Sandra my heart goes out to you in this very difficult time. I always loved you and Ralph and have the best memories of time we spent together. Sending prayers.

–Susan Buckner

Sandra, Travis, Scherrie, and families. Rex and myself are sorry for the loss your family has just gone through. Pastor Ralph was part of mine, Rex's and the boys life. Our Riverside family was and will always be special for us. Pastor Ralph is now in the presence of his heavenly father. What a reunion that must have been. May you all know the smile he gave his LORD when he shut his eyes here and opened them there.

–Barbara Ingle



Sandra n family, I am in shock after seeing this news. I am so going to miss Ralph with all his wisdom and prayers.



God had such a great man today share his word and needs him in Heaven to help others. I will miss his calls asking about myself n mom. I knew when he called it was sincere and loving. I am so proud to have him in my life path with God. Prayers n love for all of you at this time.

–Roger Austin Hart