



## Rev. Ray C Bearden

October 1, 1953 - February 19, 2026

Rev. Ray Conrad Bearden, age 72, of Orlando, Florida passed away on February 19, 2026 in Orlando, Florida. He is survived by his wife of 43 years, Gina Long Bearden, his four daughters: Stephanie (Bearden) Houde, Rebecca (Bearden) Dawson, Melissa (Bearden) Becker and Christina (Bearden) Whyte; his four sons-in-law: Michael Houde, Jr., Robert Dawson III, Spencer Becker and Nathaniel Whyte; his six grandchildren, Amelie Houde, Samson Becker, Raelyn Becker, Aurora Houde, Ezra Houde and Sophie Whyte; as well as his brother, Carter Bearden, Jr. (Gene) and sister, Sharon George. He was preceded in death by his parents, Rev. Carter E. Bearden, Sr. and Wanda Parker Bearden.

Ray was a dedicated pastor for over 45 years, serving the congregations at the First Baptist Church of Shreveport Deaf Mission in Louisiana, the First Baptist Church of Alexandria Deaf Congregation in Virginia, and most recently interim pastor at Delaney Street Baptist Church in Orlando, Florida. Most notably, he was the devoted and cherished pastor of First Baptist Church of Woodbridge, Virginia, for 24 years.

Ray was born October 1, 1953 in New Orleans, Louisiana and spent his childhood in Decatur, Georgia. He graduated from Baylor University in 1975 and attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Ray was an avid runner, running his first marathon (The Marine Corps Marathon) to celebrate

his 50th birthday. He spent some of his retirement years working at Walt Disney World, a lifelong dream he often shared with friends and family and one of Ray's favorite places. He was known for his love of desserts, especially ice cream, saying "Life is short, eat dessert first!". Ray was gregarious and loved people deeply. He will be dearly missed by all who had the privilege of knowing him.

A Celebration of Life Memorial Service will be held on Saturday, February 21 at 3 PM at Spring of Life UMC (11101 Moss Park Rd, Orlando, FL 32832), all are welcome to attend.

A second Celebration of Life will be held on Saturday, April 25, 2026, at 2:00 PM at the First Baptist Church of Woodbridge in Virginia. This is Ray's "home church", where he last served as pastor for over 24 years prior to his retirement. All are welcome to attend.

# Previous Events

## Celebration of Life

FEB **21**. 3:00 PM (ET)

Spring of Life United Methodist Church  
11101 Moss Park Road  
Orlando, FL 32832

# Tribute Wall

CS

“ It was because of you, Pastor Ray, my family looked forward to hearing the word of God from His most beloved servant. You will be missed dearly. I love you, Pastor Ray. Rest in heavenly peace.

Chanda Sloan - March 22 at 11:56 AM

DJ

“ Ray was a gifted pastor to the deaf my father knew his dad very well Carter in deaf ministry many years ago he was great in voicing fir Clifford bruffry deaf Bible study many years ago we watched him on video at fbc gulfport Ms in our deaf church Ray will be missed and I know there's great rejoicing in heaven now with all those great deaf pastors and leaders and prayers go to the family Darlene hill Jezek and family deaf interpreter and soda

Darlene Jezek - March 16 at 02:57 AM

VT

“ Rev. Ray C. Bearden was a kind, humble, and faithful servant of God whose ministry touched countless lives. For many years, his Sunday preaching inspired faith, hope, and spiritual growth within our congregation. Those who knew him remember his gentle spirit, sincere devotion, and Christ-like love for all. He will be deeply missed, but his legacy of faith and service will live on in our hearts. -  
- Victor Thambu FBCW , Woodbridge

Victor Thambu - March 03 at 09:07 PM

JP

“ While we attended the First Baptist Church in Woodbridge, VA, I saw Ray as a humble and gentle man which was such an example of Jesus.

Judy Provencher - March 01 at 02:56 PM

CF

“ *Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family.*

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**Crusselle Freeman** - February 24 at 08:13 PM

TM

“ *Thank you Pastor Ray and family for pouring into my family while we lived in Woodbridge. Your footprints and love are stamped onto our hearts! 💕💕 We are praying for comfort, peace, and love.*

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**Tiffany Moore** - February 24 at 09:27 AM

CP

“ I was deeply saddened to learn that Rev. Ray has passed. I met him during a women’s Bible study group, and I immediately liked him. He was so kind, friendly, and easy to talk to — the kind of person who made you feel comfortable and heard.

As I began attending Sunday School and TJ services, he truly won me over. I learned so much from him. No matter what question I asked, he would thoughtfully share his wisdom and insight. He never seemed rushed — he simply shared and shared, always with patience and heart. I once told him I wished I could put him in my back pocket because his guidance meant that much to me.

I missed him and Gina when he retired, but I was so happy knowing he was in his “happy place” near Disney, enjoying that season of life.

I am incredibly thankful to have known Rev. Ray Bearden. His kindness, faith, and gentle spirit made a lasting impact on me, and I will always carry those memories with gratitude.

Keeping Gina and the family in my prayers during this difficult time.

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**Carolyn J Parker** - February 23 at 09:08 PM



“ Just now finding out about Ray’s passing. He was such a kind and loving man and Pastor. I remember him in my early days of ministry under Reverend Danny Bice. We would often see him at the Texas Baptist conference for the Deaf events and athletic events. He was a rock. His parents were such a blessing to both my family, and Lillian Beard. I remember Ray coming to visit Grandma Beard several times, and the love they shared. My brother knew him at Baylor and loved him also. So thankful for such a light in such a dark world and such a vibrant witness to both hearing and Deaf worlds.

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**Becky Stephens** - February 23 at 02:14 PM

AN

“ Pastor Ray was the kindest person I knew! He was a good friend and husband and father and grandfather! You could count on him for anything. He was a blessing to my family and many others. He will be missed but we know God had taken an angel to heaven. God said well done my servant!!❤️❤️❤️

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**Ann Neff** - February 22 at 06:10 PM

SB

“ Ray was a wonderful neighbor and friend for the past 29 years. We have many wonderful memories of our chats over the backyard fence and our daughters growing up together in the neighborhood. Ray and the family also played a part in our faith journey, as I am sure so many people could say - he spread the love of Christ wherever he went! We will miss you, Ray, but we know this is only farewell for a little while... Our love and prayers are with Gina and the girls.

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**Sharon Borsari** - February 22 at 02:51 PM

KD

“ I will never forget his sermon on the origins of the song Amazing Grace. Changed me forever! My heart is so grateful!!

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**Kristy Dunaway** - February 22 at 02:47 PM

LC

“ Pastor Ray impacted my life in several important ways. For example, one Sunday he pulled me aside and asked me to build a partnership between our church with a mission to the Middle East, which I would soon discover to be God's calling on my life. Also, once at a funeral, Pastor Ray was speaking and He said that death reminds us that we all want "more." We want more after our loved ones die. We wish we had more time. But because of Jesus, who took the punishment for our sin and rose again, we have confident, eternal hope. We can have "more." So many of His words echo through our souls, lives and hearts. Many blessings to Ray's wife, Gina, for her resolve and faithfulness up until the end of Ray's earthly days. The same goes for His children and grandchildren; they surrounded Him with love.

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**Lauren Craft** - February 22 at 02:44 PM

PZ

“ Pastor Ray was such a blessing to our church, always there to encourage us and provide help when needed. Know God will say job well done

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**Phyllis Louise Zuraski** - February 21 at 09:43 AM