

In loving

MEMORY



Ethel Lavel Bennett

April 19, 1936 ~ July 16, 2025



August 1
Twenty Twenty-Five
At Ten O'Clock
In The Morning

Greenlawn Funeral Home Southwest
Bakersfield, California



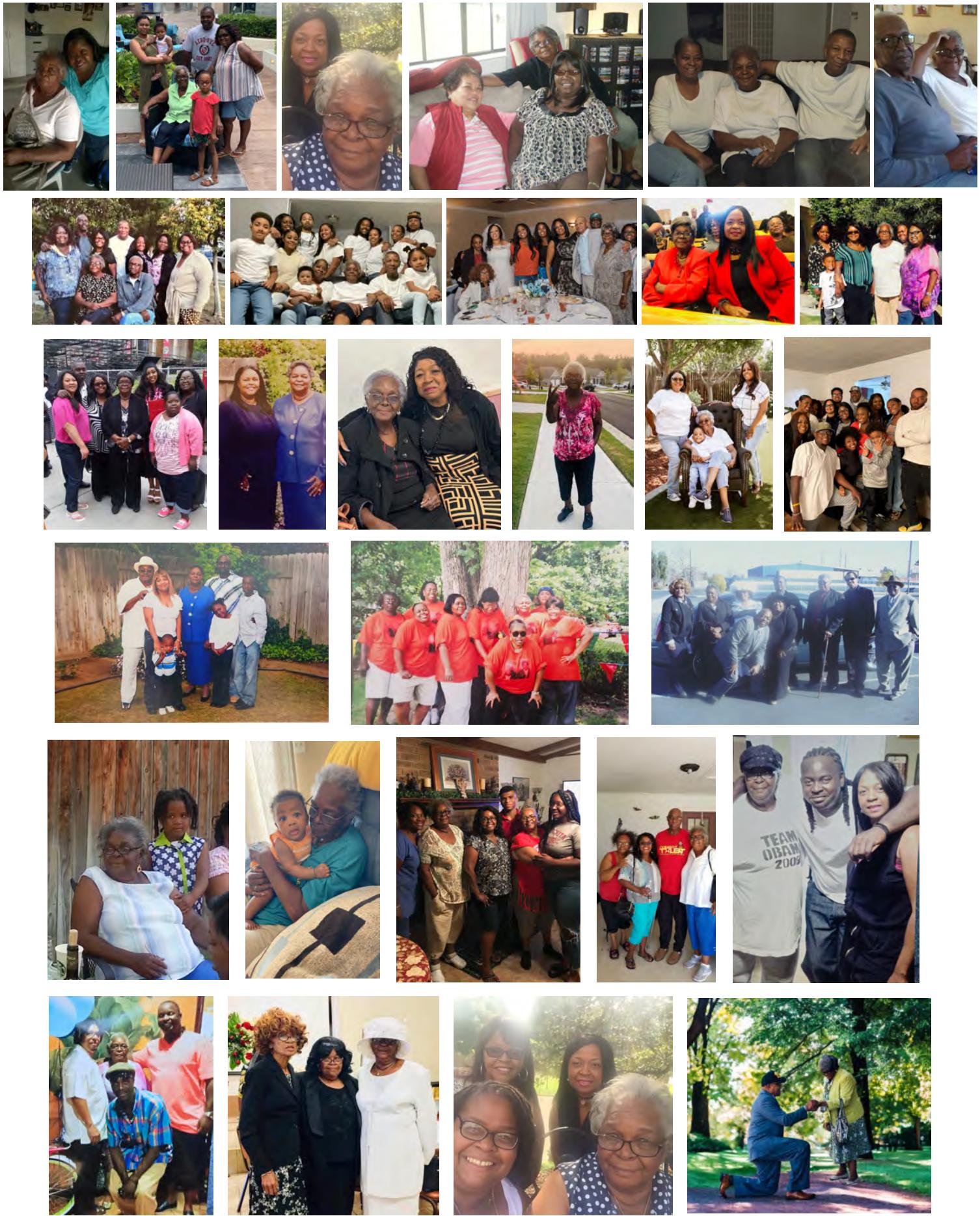
Pastor Donald Allen, Officiating

ORDER OF SERVICE



Processional	Musician
Scripture Reading		
Old Testament.....		Pastor Eddie Andrews
New Testament.....		Pastor Donald Allen
Prayer		
Selection	<i>I Trust in God</i>	Union Baptist Church
Acknowledgements & Cards		
Resolutions		
Reflections (Family)		
		Alisha Earnest
		William Level
Selection		
Remarks		
As a Mentor		Brenda Lemon
As an Aunt		Lois Johnson
As a Friend		Queen Edwards
As a Church Mother		Yvonne Turner
		Deacon Alton Gordon
Obituary		
Video Presentation		
<i>The Life and Legacy of Ethel Level Bennett</i>		
Selection		Guest Vocalist
Words of Comfort		
		Rev. William Cleveland, Pastor
		Bellview Baptist Church &
		St. John Baptist Church Monroe, Louisiana
Recessional		
<i>"I Pray We'll All Be Ready"</i>		





TRIBUTE

I will miss Grandma Level so much. In the last several years of her life, we didn't talk as much as I wish we had. Life happened. I kept thinking, "I'll call her next week," and somehow next week became next month... and then more time passed. We always think we have more time. But time—time is so special. So instead of focusing on the time I missed, I want to honor the time we did have.

Almost every summer when I was a kid, I'd visit her. I still remember that bubbling feeling in my stomach when we passed the grapevines—I knew we were close. That feeling of excitement, of joy. It's still one of my favorite memories, because truthfully, I didn't have many good ones growing up. I had to grow up fast. But those summers? They were magic.

Grandma would always make food I loved. I'd ask, "Grandma, is there onions in this?" and she'd say, "No baby, no onions." I'd take a bite and say, "Grandma, there are onions in this!" She'd act shocked every time, and I believed her and thought someone must've snuck onions in this. Now, here I am—hiding vegetables from my own kids the same way. Funny how love repeats itself in our lives.

She used to make me tell the same story over and over—one that most people didn't even find funny—but Grandma? She'd crack up like it was the first time, every single time. That was her love for me.

When I felt unsure of where I fit in—growing up in different cultures trying to understand where I belong, wondering if I belonged—Grandma would say, "You know I'm color blind. I can't even see none of that."

It made me feel like I was home, like I belonged right there with her.

And if it was Sunday? We were going to church—no questions asked. I didn't love it then, but now, I see it differently. I'm thankful for those moments, because even if I didn't know it, I was learning about Jesus through her. About faith, grace, and strength.

She was special. And she loved me in ways I still carry with me. I will always hold those memories in my heart—because she helped shape the good in me. I miss her deeply. But I am forever grateful for the summers, the onions, the laughter, and the love.

*Thank you for everything. Rest in Peace, Grandma
Love, Brittany*

Once blessed with a wonderful mother, twice blessed with you Mother Bennett, my mom gave me life, but you gave me your life with open arms, letting me know that I was your daughter, always thanking me for loving your son and being there for him, mother I got this.

Rest on my beautiful mother, Ruby

Childhood memories will always be filled with summers spent at your house, where imaginations ran wild or Sunday afternoons sneaking pieces of the world's best fried chicken before dinner was ready.

No matter what the world outside looked like, your home was a safe haven. That's what you were to so many of us: Home. Comfort. Love. Family. It's how it felt to be near you.

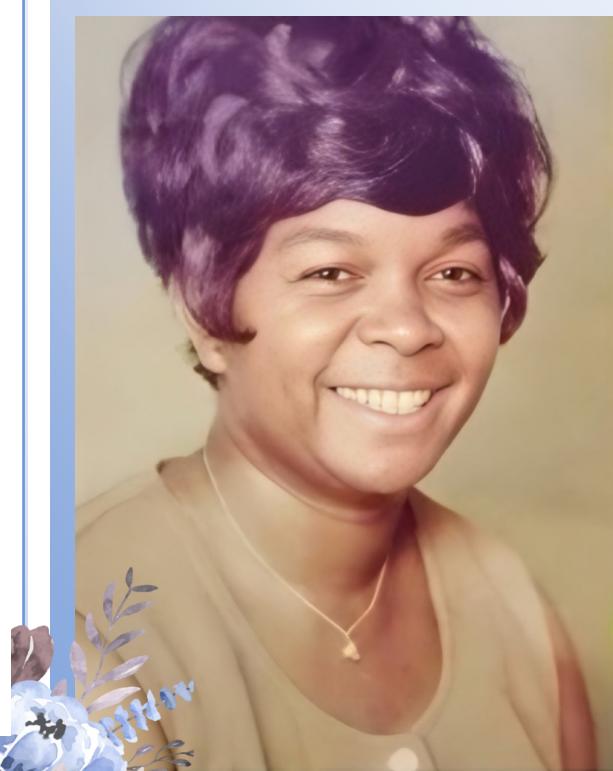
You spent more of your life as a mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother than anything else. And any mother can understand the kind of sacrifice that comes with that, but also the kind of gift it truly is.

Thank you for treating us like the treasure you believed we were. A part of you. A piece of your lasting legacy.

You showed us strength. You lived what it means to overcome.

Thank you for your example. And until we meet again, I promise not to take any wooden nickels.

Love you always, Erika



TRIBUTES

Mother,

I have many fond memories of visiting Mother Bennett's home and spending meaningful time with her, both there and at church events. She consistently provided unwavering support for all my endeavors. I distinctly recall that during my hospital stay, the first faces I saw upon waking were hers and my father's, offering great comfort. In that moment, I even asked her if I was alright, being so reassured was I by her presence.

Mother Bennett has been a significant part of my life for many years. I always addressed her as "Mother" or "Mother Bennett," never "Sister Bennett," as she truly embraced the role of a mother in my life and treated me as one of her own. She extended this care to my children and grandchildren, watching over them, caring for them, and providing support whenever needed—including babysitting my great-grandchild and ensuring their well-being. During my time in the hospital, she would check on me, she supported my family, kept my father informed and at ease even when he was far away.

Her kindness did not end at the hospital—she provided essentials for my return home and regularly visited to check on my recovery. Whenever my father visited California, we made it a point to see Mother Bennett, who welcomed us warmly and maintained a close relationship with our family.

I hold deep affection and respect for Mother Bennett. The moments we shared—whether attending church, enjoying meals together, or simply visiting by phone—our precious memories I will always treasure. Writing these words is bittersweet, as I am reminded of the profound impact she had on my life. Others may not fully understand the bond we shared, but to me, she was—and always will be—a beloved mother figure.

Mother Bennett's family has also been exceptionally kind to me and my loved ones. My children and grandchildren came to regard her as a grandmother, and I am sincerely grateful for the warmth and acceptance extended by her family. Though I am not her biological child, my connection with her is strong and genuine; she stole my heart like a mother, she loved me like a daughter, she always gave me the love I needed especially those times I missed my own mother who lived far away.

To the entire family, thank you for sharing Mother with me. From the bottom of my heart, I extend my deepest gratitude to Mother Bennett. Her memory will remain with me, and I will forever cherish the love and support she generously offered.

Your Daughter and First Lady, Denise Allen

A Tribute to My Grandmother

There are some people in this world whose light is so pure, so generous, that you feel it even when they're no longer physically present. My grandmother was one of those souls. A woman full of grace, compassion, and warmth, she had a heart big enough to hold the whole family—and still had room left to give to anyone in need.

She didn't just speak kindness, she lived it. Whether she was cooking for others, lending a hand, or simply offering a listening ear, she gave of herself without hesitation. Her faith, her strength, and her joy were the quiet glue that held so much together.

To me, she wasn't just Grandma—she was the one who lovingly called me "Deedee." Every time I heard that nickname, it came with a smile, a sense of belonging, and a feeling that I was deeply loved. I will carry that nickname in my heart forever—it was her special way of saying, "I see you, and I love you."

I'm going to miss her hugs, her laughter, and her gentle wisdom. But most of all, I'll miss her voice saying, "Hey Deedee," the way only she could.

Thank you, Grandma, for being a light in this world. Your legacy of love will live on through every life you touched—including mine. Rest well, and know you'll always be with me.

With all my love, Deedee

The Life of

Ethel Level-Bennett

April 19, 1936 ~ July 16, 2025

Ethel Level-Bennett was born on April 19, 1936, in Delhi, Louisiana to proud parents, Elijah and Betty Lou Cleveland.

She was the second born of twins, and the sixth child of sixteen.

Ethel accepted Jesus Christ as her Lord and Savior and was baptized at a young age, becoming a member of Seven Star Baptist Church in Delhi, Louisiana; under the leadership of Rev. D. L. McCall. She attended Esthertomb School for ages K-12 where she enjoyed learning and socializing. She grew up under the guidance of her parents, along with her siblings working hard as farm laborers.

In 1951, Ethel was united in holy matrimony with her childhood best friend Ennie Lee Level, Sr. To this union six children were born. In 1961 the family left the South and migrated to Wasco, California for better life opportunities.

After her first marriage dissolved, she later united in holy matrimony with Henry Bennett, her longtime companion. Their union was blessed with one daughter, Sophia Bennett Baker.

Ethel dedicated 35+ years of service in the healthcare field working as a Certified Nursing Assistant, Lead CNA, and CNA Trainer. She took great pride in caring for her patients and training others to do the same. She found joy in being a loving mother, cooking, sewing, gardening, and spending time with her extended family.

She was an avid sports fan; especially the L.A. Lakers and Golden State Warriors. She also loved family gatherings on weekends and holidays with her children. She enjoyed pouring into the lives of her grand & great-grandchildren by giving them sound advice on life issues.



O B I T U A R Y

Over the years Ethel loved Sunday School and she was a devoted and active church member. She happily served on the Usher Board, Mother's Board, Kitchen Staff and she was a prayer warrior and mother to many in the community.

We are eternally grateful for Ethel's remarkable legacy and the profound impact she had on our lives. Her love, her wisdom, her strength and infectious, joyful personality touched everyone who knew her.

On Wednesday, July 16, 2025 at approximately 1:24 p.m., with her family by her side; God called His daughter home. She peacefully transitioned from this life to be with her Heavenly Father.



She was preceded in death by her parents, Elijah and Betty Lou Cleveland; her husband Henry Bennett. Her siblings, Joe Cleveland, Josephine Jackson, William Cleveland, Lynell Cleveland, Jessie Jamison, Edward Cleveland (Ethel's twin), Betty Jackson, Roosevelt Cleveland, Leroy Cleveland, Dan Cleveland, Jack Cleveland, Bertha Cleveland, Anna Cleveland, and Billy Cleveland.

She will be greatly missed; however, her memory will live on forever in the hearts of her loving family. Ethel leaves to mourn, yet to celebrate her life; her first husband, Ennie Level, Sr., seven children: Mary Cleveland, Ennie Level, Jr., Cathy Thomas of Bakersfield; William Level of Nevada, Paula Mason (Randy) of Georgia; Carol Level, Sophia Baker (Charles) of Bakersfield; 19 grandchildren, 51 great-grandchildren, 36 great-great grandchildren.

Her siblings Mary Louise Griffin of Texas, Jack Cleveland of Chicago; two sisters-in-love, Mary Cleveland of Chicago and Ann Cleveland of Riverside, numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, friends and her beloved Union Baptist Church Family.

Though Ethel is no longer with us her lasting influence will forever inspire us. We are thankful for every moment shared and every lesson learned. Her extraordinary legacy will continue to live on in the hearts of her family and all who loved her.

It's Never Good-bye, But I'll See You Later
~ Mama

TRIBUTE

Today, we gather in the passing of our beloved Aunt Ethel not to mourn, but to celebrate the incredible light she brought into our lives. Aunt Ethel was a beacon of joy, she was vibrant, full of energy, and always radiating love. Her spunky spirit was something I personally cherished. I can honestly say I never once saw her angry. She had a gift for lifting others with her warmth and presence, and being around her always felt like a breath of fresh air. I left feeling full—spiritually, emotionally, and deeply connected—after spending time with the very roots of my bloodline. There's something sacred about being surrounded by those who carry the same legacy, the same strength, the same history. It fills you in places you didn't even know were empty.

Jeff: I remember when I introduced my wife Edelyn to my Aunt Ethel. My wife said right after we left that she felt welcomed and loved by her into our family. Aunt Ethel's cooking was unbelievable. During the holidays, she would always make sure I had plenty of food as well as leftovers to take home with me. She was a very devout Christian woman who often expressed her love for God and many of our conversation. My heart is deeply broken in her passing, but her joyful spirit will always live on in me.

Laveda: I remember when I first introduced Aunt Ethel to my husband Charles. At the time, we were in the middle of a fast. She didn't ask a single question or raise an eyebrow—she simply smiled and said she understood. She acknowledged that we were putting God first, and she told us how proud she was of us. That was who she was—understanding, supportive, and deeply rooted in faith. I love her for that.

Aunt Ethel was also a passionate fan of basketball, especially when it came to Kobe Bryant. If it was basketball season, you could be sure she was watching. And one thing was for sure—don't interrupt her while Kobe was on the court, and certainly don't speak ill of him unless you wanted a stern talking-to. Her love for Kobe was as fierce as her love for family.

Aunt Ethel will be missed more than words can express. She has now gained her wings, and I can just imagine her smiling as she reunites with loved ones who have gone before—my Dad, Auntie Anna, Auntie Betty, and Aunt Jessie and so on... Aunt Ethel, please give them all a big hug from us. Let them know we carry their memory with us every day.

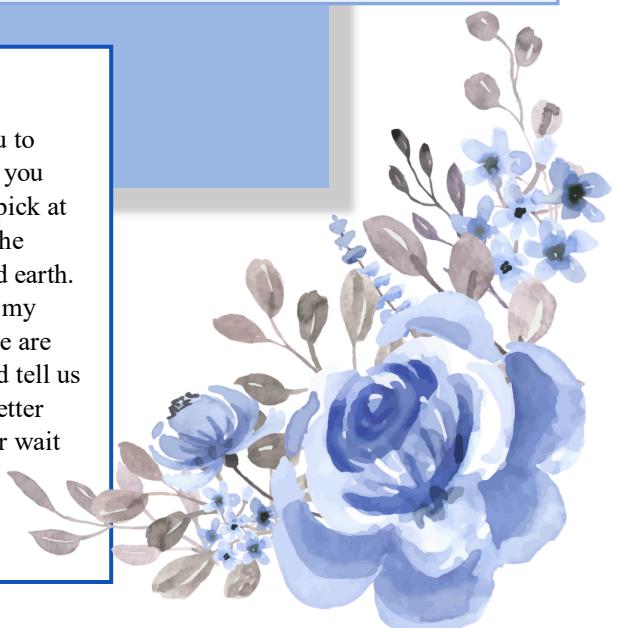
Now, you are free. No more pain, no more suffering—just peace, light, and love. Rest well, Auntie. We love you deeply, and your spirit will forever remain in our hearts.

Love You Always
Jeff and Laveda Cleveland

To My Wonderful Sister-In-Love and Aunt,

Although I wished for you to stay, our Father in heaven sent for you to come help him pray. I will never be the same without you. I know you whispered, "I finally gained my wings brother!" Only to help you pick at the other cowboys and Indians we used to play. But now we're at the Golden Gates and it's time we pray. Where it all begins heaven and earth. Until the very end I loved you then and I love you now. Please tell my dad and brother that we really miss them even more now. You three are together looking down on us. If you could share with us, you would tell us this place is not that bad. Although we talked on the phone, or by letter the truth of the matter, we could have done better. So, I will forever wait until the day when all our hearts can beat the same way.

Love Mary and Clara





A Tribute to My Grandmother

* From the Heart of Her Oldest Granddaughter *

There are some people who come into your life
and forever change the course of it —for me, that person was my grandmother.
As her oldest granddaughter, I was blessed to witness firsthand the depth of her love,
the strength of her spirit, and the quiet power of her prayers.

She wasn't just a grandmother to me—she was a guide, a nurturer, and a vessel of God's love on earth.

It was through her that I first met Jesus.

She didn't just talk about Him—she walked with Him.

And by watching her live, serve, and love, I learned what it meant to follow Him too.

I am who I am today because of her example.

She planted seeds of faith in me that have grown into the very foundation of my life.

Her kindness reached far beyond our family, but it was in the everyday moments that I felt her greatest love—her patience, her laughter, her bold correction, and the way she made you feel like you mattered. She gave without expecting anything in return, and she loved with a heart wide open. I will carry her lessons with me forever.

I will honor her with how I live. And I will always thank God that I had the privilege of being her granddaughter.

Rest well, Grandma. Until we meet again.

With Love,

Shannon

Tribute to My Mother

On July 16, 2025, at approximately 1:15 in the afternoon, our Heavenly Father was out watering flowers in His garden. As He looked around, He noticed that one particular flower had been in His garden for many years. She was always a kind and loving flower. That afternoon, He saw that she looked tired and a little worn out. At that moment, He reached down and picked her up.

"Come With Me, Daughter. Take Your Rest"

That flower was my mother.

Take Your Rest, Mary



"Still Listening"

Grandma—when God introduced you to me, I learned that day
that you alone were force to be reckoned with.

You became one of the most important influences in my life.

If it truly takes a village to raise a child, you were a pillar — a true matriarch.

Your strength, your wisdom, your love—they held so many of us together.
You carried so much on your shoulders, yet your arms were always open.

In the midst of a busy household, you still found time to listen.
Whenever I needed it, you gave me your attention, your care, and your quiet wisdom
—little gems that I still carry with me.

Thank you Grandma for living your testimony; for planting seeds to my salvation.

I love you for life!

Today I still listen to the soulful songs from church that stirs my faith in our Lord.
Songs you loved. Songs that echo your spirit.

As our journey with you here ends and you've gone on to glory, I will miss you deeply,
but I'll still be listening to those songs...and I will think of you every time.

Rest in Paradise Grandma! Love Jennifer

T R I B U T E S



The Legacy of Ethel Mae Level-Bennett

L E G A C Y

Mary Cleveland

Lamar Harrison (Jennifer)

Erika Morrison (Anthony): Autumn Morrison, Anthony Elijah Morrison
Lisa Greene (Larry): Leiana Greene, Londyn Greene
Destiny Harrison

Reginald Oats

Varina Oats
Jaylen Oats
Dontyonna Oats
Zion Oats
Isaiah Oats

Marisa Foreman

Ennie Level, Jr.

DeMon Level (Janette)

DeMon Level, Jr.: Leondre DeShawn Level
Eric Level: Eric Level, Jr., Noah Eli Level, Ryleigh Erica Level
Havyn Level
Shakur Level
Taliyah Level
Alyssa Level

Dimitrius S. Level (Kizzy)

Dimitrius Level, Jr.
Brittany Level
Ashaianna Level
Kianna Level
DaMion Level

Cathy Thomas

Jeremiah Thomas, III

Tyler Thomas
Taylor Thomas

Shanetra Battle (Pastor Sean)

Sanai James, Meya James, Jordan Battle, Chayse Battle, Jayden Battle
Sean Battle, Jr., Korri Battle, Kennedi Battle, Julian Battle

Candace Thomas

Tristan Thomas

William Level

Shannon Level Patterson

Brycen Hammond (Shakila): Braylon Hammond, Nalah Hammond
Destini Hammond: Kaydan Felton, Kyren Hammond, Kallie Felton

Brittany Level

Nichelle Level
Freddie Level
Hulk Level

Paula Mason (Randy)

Angelina Mason

Jared McQuirry, Leila McQuirry

Jasmine Mason Chung (Alex)

Aero Shay Chung

Carol Level

Ashley Smith (Jerry)
Janay Smith

Alisha Earnest (Michael)
Mayson Hanks

Kobe Stancil

Kylie Stancil

Sophia Baker (Charles)

Jordaun Bennett

Collin Baker

PALLBEARERS

Brycen Hammond
Chayse Battle
Collin Baker
DeMon Level
Dimitrius Level
Charles Baker

Jeremiah Thomas
Kobe Stancil
Lamar Harrison
Reginald Oats
Tyler Thomas
Randy Mason



HONORARY PALLBEARERS

Antoine Cleveland
Gary Jackson

Edward Cleveland
(Honored Posthumously)
Herman Jackson

Stanley Jamison
Steve Washington

Interment

Greenlawn Memorial Park Southwest
Lakeview Garden
2739 Panama Lane
Bakersfield, California 93313

Repast

(Immediately Following Burial)
People's Missionary Baptist Church
1451 Madison Street
Bakersfield, California 93307

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The family of Ethel Level Bennett would like to express our sincere appreciation
to everyone for your kind expression of sympathy.

We are deeply grateful and touched by the tremendous outpouring
of love and concern shown to us during this difficult time.

We truly thank and praise God for the strength, peace, and comfort
He has showered on us through each of you, our family and friends.

Your support, kindness and thoughtfulness is greatly appreciated and will always be remembered.

The Level Bennett Family

Funeral Entrusted To

Greenlawn Funeral Homes Southwest
2739 Panama Lane
Bakersfield, California 93313



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