

Service of Thanksgiving for the Life of



Esther Victoria Ebanks

1st September 1940 – 9th March 2024

Boatswain Bay Presbyterian Church

West Bay, Grand Cayman

Wednesday, 20th March 2024 at 4:00 p.m.

Officiating Ministers:

Pastor James Pedley

Pastor Gareth Haylock

Musicians: Dr. & Mrs. Curtis Barnett

Tech Team: Langlie Powery, Mark Hunte & Tommy O. Ebanks, Jr.

Order of Service

Opening Remarks: Pastor James Pedley
Opening Prayer: Pastor James Pedley
Hymn: Marvelous Grace Of Our Loving Lord Congregation
Scripture: Romans 8:18-39 Mr. Raphael Powery
Hymn: Surely Goodness And Mercy Congregation
Tribute from Children in Song: Mrs. Daphne Orrett
A Tribute to the Life of Esther Victoria Ebanks: Pastor Gareth Haylock
Hymn: It Is Well With My Soul Congregation
Sermon: Pastor James Pedley
Hymn: He Hideth My Soul Congregation
Closing Prayer:..... Pastor James Pedley
Closing Hymn: This World Is Not My Home Congregation

Pallbearers

Mr. Don Rivers
Mr. Evans Rivers
Mr. Rory Barrett

Mr. David Powery
Mr. Raphael Powery
Mr. Justin Miller

Ushers

Ms. Eziethamae Bodden
Ms. Renee Ebanks

Mr. Darley Powery
Mr. Dominique Ebanks

Guest Book Attendants

Ms. Bethany Powery

Miss Ileann Powery





A Tribute to the Life of Esther Victoria Ebanks

On Sunday, 1st September, a joyful grandfather, Mr. Uriah Powery, gave the name Esther Victoria (called by her second name, Victoria) to his granddaughter, born to his son Joseph Jude and Ella Aletha. This adorable baby girl not only bore the names of famous queens but possessed the heart and quiet dignity befitting a queen. Galatians 5:34 lists the qualities witnessed in Victoria's deportment: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. Little Victoria thrived in the privilege of being the first grandchild on the maternal side of her family and soaked up the wisdom of her elders, as if instinctively knowing she would soon take on the role of nurturer and caregiver for the eight siblings that followed her.

Victoria fondly remembered her twin grandaunts, Helen, and Bunny, who were influential in her early care, especially after the traumatic events surrounding the birth of her first sibling, Creswell. This distressing event which nearly claimed his life and the life of their mother, was forever etched in Victoria's memory, making Creswell especially dear to her heart. Siblings Annadean, Creston, Marion (known by her middle name Koneray), Carlton (nicknamed Chucky), and Erlene arrived in due time, and by the time Collie and Ella K. joined the family, Victoria was a mother with 2 children, Esther and Rubert (known as 'Lonnie') with a third, Lydia, on the way. By the time Victoria welcomed her last two children, Steven, and Rebecca (known as 'Becky'), her parents' family had stopped growing but her siblings, Creswell and Annadean had also entered parenthood.

Victoria was an avid reader and quick learner. She began attending Teacher Redley Powery's school at the age of seven and later Teacher Beulah Smith's school, going on as far as was standard in those days. In her adult years, Victoria enrolled in various courses to better equip herself. She taught her children long before they started attending school. While caring for her family, Victoria recited bible verses and sage poetry, and sang choruses and hymns, embedding these gems in her children's memories. Greatly admiring the discipline possessed by her teachers, their influence shaped Victoria's approach to keeping her family in check. When Collie would go to her house on Saturdays to play with his nephew Lonnie, his sister Victoria would admonish the boys to "not trouble Uncle Abel's fowls!" And later when her grandsons Robert, Evans, and Rory became a bit too rowdy, Victoria would scold them to "come down from that tree before unna get killed!" Or "stop playing so rough." Words spoken from love.

Not only beautiful on the inside, Victoria, was also a pretty girl, and it was during childhood that she caught the eye of the boy who would eventually become her husband. Though he confessed to being smitten by her from childhood, she later recalled to her children in her usual cool manner that while she grew up knowing Rupert, he was no different than any other boy around at that time; her interest was in learning skills she could use to make life better for her family. One of those interests was photography. The fact that she owned a camera back in the 1950s revealed the creative interests Victoria held. Her children would later be amazed at their mother's natural creative eye as she captured images with their cameras. Reflecting on Victoria's wedding day, Annadean recalls that it was Victoria's small camera that was used to take the wedding pictures.

Always a practical person and a dutiful daughter, Victoria would lay her dreams aside to assist in caring for her family. Until adulthood, Koneray, Chucky, Erlene, Collie, and Ella K. considered Victoria as a second mother. Even after marrying and leaving home, Victoria's siblings would spend much of their childhoods with her and when they too became parents, she helped to take care of their children. For the first quarter of Victoria's life, Cayman had no electricity, no indoor plumbing, no telecommunications, and no paved roads. Moonlit nights were accompanied by swarms of mosquitoes.

As the eldest of nine, Victoria bore a heavy load of responsibility in assisting her parents in many ways, such as helping to grow ground provisions and tending to the family's cows and chickens, especially during the months that her father was at sea. These duties helped to cultivate Victoria's nursing ability and creativity.

To Victoria, Sunday School was as important as was the school for academics. Growing up, Victoria lovingly readied her siblings for service to the church. Koneray's hair was combed into long ringlets with pretty ribbons or barrettes; today, Koneray can often be seen tidying up the grounds of the church in readiness for worship. Victoria would sing Chucky to sleep with Sunday School songs; now his beautiful voice is distinctively heard in church. Erlene, the sibling Victoria considered her '16th birthday present' trained to teach Sunday School with Victoria as her guide. Victoria believed in providing spiritual nourishment to all in her care.

On the 17th of October 1957, Victoria married the man who had finally won her heart, Rupert Dydion Ebanks, and started a 13-year journey of producing a family of their own. Victoria and her husband, Rupert, faithfully took their children to church with them. Remaining close to their families of origin, their 5 children were always surrounded by a larger extended family network. Nearly five years after their last child's birth, they welcomed their first grandchild, Don Rivers. Victoria was an excellent nurse to her children and grandchildren. Never wasteful but believing in reusing or repurposing, Victoria creatively made necessary items for her family. Her home was a haven for many in the community and people often called in. Each one was shown the same respect and offered something from whatever she had prepared for her family's meal.

Victoria's firstborn, Esther, shared more than just her first name as her daughter was also instrumental in raising younger siblings. The small age gap between Victoria's youngest child and grandson meant that Don spent a great part of his time at his grandparents' home. Don always looked forward to 'Sunday dinna,' at 'Mama's' as he grew up calling his grandmother Victoria, although he consumed far more lemonade than food.

In the early eighties, when Victoria realized her maternal grandmother, Gozel, was experiencing a serious medical issue, she took her to her home to nurse her back to health. Supported by her husband and children, this short-term arrangement turned into a permanent living situation and Victoria continued to lovingly care for her grandmother until her passing 10+ years later. To her husband and children who witnessed the daily personal sacrifices Victoria made in the face of many challenges, it was difficult to comprehend how she managed it all, and with such grace. She is an unsung hero!

Victoria and Rupert poured all they had into raising their family. While Rupert worked to financially provide, Victoria occasionally took jobs outside the home to help make ends meet, working as a babysitter and housekeeper. As their children grew up and grandchildren were born, Victoria assisted in their upbringing as well. Her grandchildren Robert and Lydia (shortened to 'Lydi' to distinguish between the aunt and niece) spent their first years living with Papa and Gramma.

From birth, granddaughter Lydi was very attached to her Gramma. When Victoria and her husband planned a visit to their friends, Jim and Meredith Holt in Georgia, they insisted on taking Lydi along. While boarding the subway, Papa Rupert – in his usual friendly manner - stopped to greet the person standing by the door. Gramma Victoria remained slightly behind them, but she paused too to greet the person. Just as Lydi and Papa stepped into the subway the door closed, locking Gramma out. They worried about what would happen to Gramma. When they disembarked from the subway and made their way to where the Holts were waiting, to their surprise, Gramma was waiting for them too! They all had a nice laugh.

Victoria's quiet, easy-going nature were traits she shared with her brother Creston. They also shared a subtle yet profound sense of humour. When Victoria and Rupert were building their first house, Creston remembers going with them on Capt. Benson's truck to get sand and gravel from the Seven Mile Beach. Also loved for her gentleness and selflessness, Victoria's youngest grandchild, named after her grandmother and who keeps her hair long, "just like Gramma's," remembers fondly how softly and gently Gramma combed her hair and sang to her so beautifully. Victoria was a true mother, making her daughter-in-law feel like her favourite daughter-in-law (though she was her only one) and embracing her son-in-law Gary as a son.

Another common favourite memory of the grandchildren is how Gramma would so lovingly mix the best cup of Milo. Even when she could no longer walk well on her own, Gramma was still offering to mix that cup of Milo whenever they came by. Their grandchildren held a special place in Victoria's and Rupert's hearts. The couple's children are eternally grateful that their parents lived to experience the loving attention of their grandchildren who dutifully assisted in caring for them. Victoria also had the joy of bonding with her second great-grandchild, Khasar, who was born just 2 days before the sad passing of his great-grandfather Rupert in 2021.

Victoria and Rupert faced the devastating loss of their son Steven in 2015. Victoria's cognitive functioning declined drastically from this point. Throughout her challenges, Victoria maintained a grateful attitude and a beautiful smile. In 2021, her family sustained another heavy blow when her husband of 64 years passed away. Perhaps one positive aspect of dementia was that she did not always remember that Rupert had passed. She continued to call out to him, ask for him, look out for his arrival home, get aggravated when he was "staying out so long and can't seem to find his way back home." She often said she heard him call out to her or saw him. Her family went along with her, continuing to speak of him in the present as she did.

In late November 2023, Victoria began displaying signs resembling that of a stroke. After medical assessment, and based on the situation, there appeared nothing further that could be done for her medically. Fearing they were now facing the imminent death of their mother Victoria's children sought the help of an acupuncturist who had previously treated their father. Amazingly, from the very first acupuncture session, Victoria began to revive. Every major symptom began to reverse, and she became responsive. Each acupuncture session brought more gradual improvements. Her personality shone through, and she was able to communicate again, although more limited than before. Seeing her move, smile, make other facial expressions, sit up, and interact with others again, restored joy to the family. Her son Steven used to say, 'Where there's life there's hope' and this was certainly true for Victoria's acupuncture journey which facilitated a better quality of life during her last months.

On 8th March 2024, Victoria again presented with issues that were concerning. After being assessed by paramedics she was transported to Health City Hospital. Sadly, on 9th March 2024 around 11:20 a.m., with her children by her bedside, Victoria went peacefully to sleep. Her children are truly blessed to have had two extremely amazing people as parents who loved much, lived well, and laughed often. Victoria's well-lived life continues to comfort and strengthen her family as they grieve the loss of their queen, Esther Victoria. May her sweet soul rest in peace.



Left to keep her great memory alive are her children: Esther Rivers, Rubert (Lonnie) Ebanks, Lydia Barrett and her husband Gary, and Rebecca Ebanks; Daughter-in-law: Aida Ebanks; Grandchildren: Don Rivers and his spouse Janelle, Robert Rivers, Evans Rivers, Lydia Ebanks, Rory Barrett, and Victoria Ebanks; Greatgrandchildren: Annissa Sheow and Khasar Rivers.

Brothers: Creswell, Creston, Carlon, and Collie Powery and their spouses.

Sisters: Annadean Ebanks, Marion Miller, Erlene Hunte, and Ella K. Ebanks and their spouses.

Step-Grandchildren: Gregory, Andrae, and Krystle Barrett and their families.

Brothers-in-law: Varion Ebanks, Samuel Abel Powery; Sister-in-law: Loidell Carter

Beloved aunt, uncles, nieces, nephews, cousins,
dear friends in Cayman and overseas, and church family.



Victoria's Parting Phrase: "Let's continue to pray for one another!"

Acknowledgements

The family of Mrs. Esther Victoria Ebanks is grateful for your prayers and outpouring of love and support. Our thanks and gratitude also to Ms. Bridget Williams and Ms. Genetta Wilson, her caregivers; the caring staff at the CI Health Services Authority and the ICU of Health City;

Mr. Gavin Kervill of Cayman Physiotherapy; and Bodden Funeral Services.

God bless you all!