



Mrs. Mary Demowodoe Gbaa

July 25, 1952 - November 16, 2025

Mary Demowodoe Gbaa, 73, of Johnson City, Tennessee, went home to be with the Lord on November 16, 2025. She was born on July 25, 1952, in Peter Madeh Town, Margibi County, Liberia, to the late Jimmy Darvin and Tete Karr. Ma Mary was one of 11 children, and three of her siblings—Emmanuel, Frank, and Bob—passed away before her.

Ma Mary met her husband, Bishop Amos W. Gbaa Sr., in Monrovia, Montserrado County, Liberia. They were married for 53 years and were blessed with 15 children, both biological and adopted, as well as 59 grandchildren and 19 great-grandchildren. Their missionary work took them to England, Holland, and Singapore.

Even though she did not have formal schooling, Grandma became a licensed practical nurse and worked at Worldwide Clinic until the Liberian Civil War.

She was known for being strict but loving. Our parents often told stories about Grandma's care. One of them was that grandma made her children do most of the chores and would say, "I'd rather you work before someone says I'm making their children work." As for me, I didn't even know some of my uncles and aunties were not her biological children until I was older and heard them talk about their birth mothers. That was who Grandma was. She made everyone feel at home.

Grandma showed what it meant to be a great woman, wife, and mother. Her home was always open. She cared for many people who lived with her or passed through her home, and many of them are here today.

Grandma is survived by her loving husband, Bishop Amos W. Gbaa Sr.; three brothers; five sisters; fifteen children; fifty-nine grandchildren; nineteen great-grandchildren; and many nieces, nephews, cousins, and other relatives.

Grandma lived in Liberia until 1993, when her family began their journey to America. They traveled through the Ivory Coast and then to Ghana. While living at the Buduburam Refugee Camp, Grandma cooked and sold cooked bowls to help support her family.

In February 1998, she and her family arrived in the United States through the Lutheran Church Refugee Resettlement Program. They first landed in Chicago, Illinois, before moving to Westerly and later to Providence, Rhode Island. She lived there for about ten years. During that time, Grandma earned her driver's license and completed a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program. She later became a United States citizen with the help and encouragement of our grandpa.

In 2009, they moved to Johnson City, Tennessee, where she lived until November 16, 2025, at 5:20 p.m., when she was taken to be with the Lord at Johnson City Medical Center.

Many people called her Mom, Oldma, Mama, and "Bishop Mother." She was a caring woman who really loved the Lord. She enjoyed cooking, singing, dancing, and playing games on her phone.

Grandma also loved politics. She followed Liberian politics closely and

supported the CDC party. She knew more about politics than many of our parents. I often wonder what she could have become if she had gone to formal school. She was one of the smartest people I've ever known.

We all hope to have a mother who is kind, loving, and true. Grandma was that kind of mother. She guided us through both the hard times and the good times. She was the foundation of our family, and without her, it is hard to imagine what comes next.

We will miss her laugh, her smile, her generosity, her humor, and her jokes. We will miss her thoughts, her advice, and her guidance. We will miss her deeply.

One of our favorite memories is how happy Mom was whenever we all came home. She would say you have not visited if you went to her house and did not take a seat.

Another special family memory was that she would sneak food to feed her children while they were in timeout. One of the disciplinary actions by most parents in Africa, especially in Liberia, was to put the child in a timeout for a period, withholding their food for that time. But Grandma could not bear to see her children go without food. This would be done secretly so that Grandpa would not know. This is who she was as a mother.

Thank you all for being here today to honor our grandmother's life and legacy. She always prayed that she would not bury any of her children. It would have warmed her heart to see all of you here. We, the family, are truly grateful. Thank you. Rest In Peace, Grandma.

Previous Events

Visitation

DEC **19**. 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM (ET)

Birchette Mortuary & Cremation Service, Inc.
219 E Millard St
Johnson City, TN 37601
(423) 926-6013
mitchell@birchettemortuary.com
<https://birchettemortuary.com/>

Celebration of Life

DEC **20**. 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM (ET)

Bread of Life Fellowship
2308 Watauga Rd
Johnson City, TN 37601
<https://www.breadoflifejc.org>

Tribute Wall

RI

“ I will always remember Mary’s smile and how her face lit up the room with her laughter.
It was a pleasure and an honor to meet her, Amos, Peter and David.
Good memories in New England.

RIVER - April 23 at 12:16 AM

V.

“ V.Rollins lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Mary Demowodoe Gbaa



v.Rollins - December 12, 2025 at 11:25 AM

SA

“ Beautiful Mary, she was always smiling and full of love. Love the Gbaa family. They use to sing in church with their beautiful voices. (RI) sweet memories.
Love Sylvia.

Sylvia algier - December 08, 2025 at 08:03 PM

JO

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Joshua - December 08, 2025 at 06:45 PM

EC

*My condolences to the family rest in peace our beautiful aunty 💔 🙏
prayers 🙏*

Emma Collins - December 13, 2025 at 02:26 PM

VR

“ *Van Rollins lit a candle in memory of Mrs.
Mary Demowodoe Gbaa*



Van Rollins - December 06, 2025 at 12:50 PM

VR

“ *Van Rollins lit a candle in memory of Mrs.
Mary Demowodoe Gbaa*



Van Rollins - November 22, 2025 at 10:26 PM



“ *Pastor Joshua and family, Our heartfelt
prayers and sincere condolences to the
family. Louise our sweet girl. Hold on to the
precious memories we love you all.
Kelvin, Sanae and Kyasia*



Sanae Scott - November 22, 2025 at 12:37 PM

JT

“ Johnson City Medical Center, ICU Team planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mrs. Mary Demowodoe Gbaa.

Johnson City Medical Center, ICU Team - November 21, 2025 at 10:36 PM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Mrs. Mary Demowodoe Gbaa.



November 21, 2025 at 10:36 PM

CR

“ Praying for all



Clara “Faye” Hart Rutledge - November 21, 2025 at 07:03 PM

JA

“ Jaymon sent a virtual gift in memory of Mrs. Mary Demowodoe Gbaa



Jaymon - November 21, 2025 at 04:28 PM

TG

“ *Terea And Thomas Graham lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Mary Demowodoe Gbaa*



Terea and Thomas Graham - November 20, 2025 at 06:50 PM