

Spotlight on

A Life of Faith and Service:

Rev. Alonzo Patterson, Jr. at 88



Rev. Alonzo Patterson, Jr.

Coordinator of Alaska Ministries for American Baptist Home Mission Societies

At 88 years old, the Rev. Dr. Alonzo Patterson, Jr. reflects on a life defined by unwavering faith, tireless service, and a passion for growing God's Kingdom. "I'm still driven by my initial calling into the ministry and the opportunity to serve the Kingdom," Rev. Patterson said with quiet conviction.

Born in New Orleans in 1937, Rev. Patterson felt the Lord's call at the age of 12 while attending Sunday School at Greater Bethel Baptist Church. At 18, he married his first wife, Shirley, and joined the military. Together, they traveled around the country, engaging in missionary work with churches such as Trinity Missionary Baptist House in Honolulu, Hawaii, before settling in Alaska in 1962.

Stationed in Fairbanks, Rev. Patterson retired from the military in 1966. He then founded and served as pastor of Corinthians Baptist Church in Fairbanks, the first of many ministries he would lead. "When I first came to Alaska there were three ABCUSA churches," he recalled. "Now they're located in several cities and thriving."

Building Shiloh and Beyond

In November 1970, Rev. Patterson became the pastor of Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church (SMBC) in Anchorage, where he would serve for the next 47 years.

When Anchorage's downtown expansion forced Shiloh to relocate in 1974, Rev. Patterson led the groundbreaking for its current home on 20th Avenue. He didn't stop there, Shiloh grew to include an educational wing, a youth and family support center and the Martin Luther King Jr. Family Life Center.

Shirley, Rev. Patterson's first wife, served alongside him. Though not formally ordained, he insisted she was a minister in her own right. "She ministered to the people. Shirley helped children go to college and took care of soldiers," he said. "Wherever we were located we went about the mission of expanding the Kingdom."

Shirley went home to the Lord in October 2022.

Two years ago, Rev. Patterson remarried. His second wife, the Rev. Edwenia Brown Patterson, is also affiliated with ABCUSA and former Executive Minister of SMBC.

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"We met and chose to be partners," he explained. "She is as equally fabulous as Shirley. I must admit she is a great preacher. Some people don't always take to women preachers, but they need to learn to do so."

Shiloh's growth was only part of Rev. Patterson's vision. His commitment to ministry extended far beyond the walls of the church, shaping leaders and building communities across Alaska. That passion for developing others would define the next chapter of his life.

Mentor, Builder, Visionary

After retiring in 2017, Rev. Patterson was named Pastor Emeritus of Shiloh Baptist Church.

He continues his work as coordinator of Alaska Ministries for American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS), a role he has held since 1996. Rev. Patterson oversees mission development and general administration in Alaska, supports pastors and works to develop and

train new leadership for mission and ministry. Under his pastorate, Rev. Patterson licensed and ordained more than 57 pastors, 80 deacons and deaconesses and mentored hundreds of others.

“Pastor to pastor, I minister to the churches I have planted,” he noted. “I help ministers pursue education and training, guiding them toward fulfillment in ministry.”

Mentoring is how Rev. Patterson plans to spend the rest of his days until the Lord calls him Home. “It’s been a joy,” he disclosed. “I love the program.”

Rev. Patterson also ministers to Native bush communities by sharing the Gospel while supporting their way of life through fishing, sustainable use of natural resources, and teaching essential survival skills for living in Alaska.

Community Impact

Beyond the pulpit, Rev. Patterson founded Shiloh Community Development, Inc., a non-profit organization that provides mentoring, education, and other services to disadvantaged youth in Anchorage. He also launched Bridge Builders and Young Lions of America, a youth mentoring program.

His leadership extended to roles such as chairperson of the Alaskan State Board of Parole, chair of the Martin Luther Jr. Foundation of Alaska, the Alaska Black Leadership Conference, and the Greatland State Baptist Convention. In addition, he served as president of the board of directors for Shiloh Community Development, Inc. and director of Alaska Ministries for the Alaska Baptist Churches.



“... success isn’t measured by numbers or appearance. It’s rooted in faith, family, and authenticity.”



Rev. Patterson earned a B.A. degree in psychology from the University of Alaska, Anchorage and a D. Div. from the American Bible Institute, Kansas. Other recognitions include a center named in his honor in 2015 and U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan naming a week after him in October 2017.

Words of Wisdom for Young Pastors

After decades in ministry, Rev. Patterson has learned that success isn’t measured by numbers or appearance. It’s rooted in faith, family, and authenticity. His advice to young pastors reflects the wisdom of a lifetime spent serving God and guiding others.

- Family is your greatest strength. Build on it, especially in a remote area where connections are limited.
- Stay grounded in sound theology.
- Don’t forget to be human. Ministry isn’t always neat. It’s real and that’s where it matters.
- Minister for success, not appearances. Even if your congregation is small, build on what you have.

Anchored in Alaska

Anchorage has changed significantly since 1962, he said, from the skyline to attitudes about social issues, family roles, and race.

“When I first came to Alaska there were three ABCUSA churches,” he reported. “Now they’re located in several cities and thriving. Still sometimes the churches can’t survive because we lack population. Juno is the capital of Alaska, but still relatively small in terms of population.”

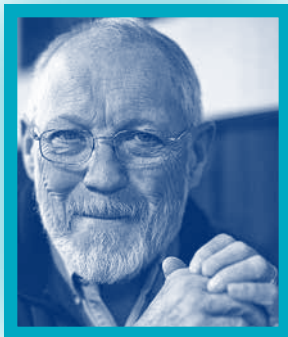
Rev. Patterson doesn’t plan to ever leave Alaska. “It’s beautiful here, even in the winter,” he said. “After being here for a while you adjust to the weather. I was raised in Mississippi and Louisiana. All I can say is you can put on enough clothes to keep warm, but you can’t take enough off to be cool.” He laughed.

Rev. Dr. Alonzo Patterson, Jr.’s life is a testament to what unwavering faith and dedicated service can accomplish. His legacy is one of faith, resilience, and vision, a beacon for those who seek to serve with purpose.

“I walked with God throughout the years. He brought me to this place. I want to serve here until the Lord takes me home,” he declared. And in those words, we find the heart of his story: a life lived for God, for people, and for the Kingdom.

In Memoriam

The Rev. E. Lee Anglin, 90, passed away peacefully on February 15, 2025, at Abe's Garden Community in Nashville, Tennessee. Lee, who lived a long full life with grace, kindness and a purposeful commitment to making the world (and himself) a little bit better every day, spent his last days surrounded by family and friends and love. As a student at Wake Forest College, Lee was third baseman when the school won the NCAA championship in 1955. At the time, he had dreams of becoming a professional baseball player, but his life changed direction when he was invited to become a student pastor for a small congregation in North Carolina. From that point on, Lee devoted his life to a ministry of growing and seeding churches, building communities, working for social justice, and loving people, especially Carol Anglin – his wife of 51 years.



In 47 years of ministry, Rev. Anglin served churches in North Carolina, New York, Texas, Colorado, Ohio, Indiana and England. As a pastor, Lee marched with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in Selma, Alabama, and actively fought for migrant worker rights in western New York.

While living in Colorado, he worked within hospice care helping families face death with grace and compassion. He also served as a police chaplain in Ohio and encouraged law enforcement officers and their families to live and work with faith and hope.

In retirement, Lee and Carol found a new home and community in Montana. They served for several years with a Christian ministry in Yellowstone National Park. Lee became a professional fly-fishing guide on the Yellowstone River and, later, a wildlife guide.

At the time of his death, Lee was an active and beloved member of GracePointe Church in Nashville. He was laid to rest in a private ceremony at Larkspur Conservation. Lee is preceded in death by his parents, Ernest Lee Anglin Sr. and Ethel Geneva Gilbert Anglin; sister, Geneva Lawson and; son, Stephen Bruce Anglin. He is survived by his spouse, Carol Walker Anglin; daughters, Brenda Huff (Ronn) and Karen Swingly.

The Rev. Dr. Richard Edgar Visser, 88, of Providence Point Retirement Community, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, died at home on May 14, 2025. Born April 28, 1937, in

South Weymouth, Massachusetts, he was the son of Edgar and Marjorie (McPhee) Visser. On June 21, 1958, he wed Carol Edwards, now Rev. Carol Visser, with whom he enjoyed nearly 67 years of marriage. They were parents to sons, Brian (Lisa) Anglin and Christopher (Connie) Anglin.

He graduated from Hingham High School in 1954 and from Gordon College, Wenham, Massachusetts, in 1958 and 1959 with degrees in Bible-Greek and Church Music-Voice, respectively. Afterwards he earned degrees in Divinity and Christian



Education from the Gordon Divinity School (now Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary). Throughout his life he remained connected with Gordon College and would keep track of how many extended family members attended through the years (17 at last count).

He was ordained by the American Baptist Churches (ABCUSA) in 1962. His career spanned more than fifty years serving churches as senior pastor in Acton, Maine; Derry, New Hampshire; Warren, Pennsylvania; and Waynesburg, Pennsylvania, and on staff in Library, Pennsylvania, and St. Albans, West Virginia. In 1983 he earned a Doctor of Ministry degree from Asbury Theological Seminary. In 2016, he received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Waynesburg University. In retirement, he co-pastored churches with his wife Carol in Warren, Pennsylvania; Ogunquit, Maine; and Cape Neddick, Maine.

In addition to pastoral work, he volunteered in both the denomination and his community. During his 20-year pastorate at First Baptist Church, Waynesburg, Pennsylvania, where he was later Pastor Emeritus, he served as President of the ABC of Pennsylvania and Delaware, General Board member of both the ABCUSA and the Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board (MMBB) and chaired the American Baptist Leadership Institute of Western Pennsylvania.

Surviving along with his beloved wife are three sons, Andrew (Robin), Thomas (Valarie) and Peter; three brothers, Robert (Charlotte), David (Judy) and John (Linda), brother-in-law Reverend Kenneth Wallace, sister-in-law Diane Edwards, step-grandson Nicholas (Catherine) Lutes and great-grandchildren Levi, Emma and Aubrey, and many nieces and nephews.

The Rev. James O. Stallings went home to the Lord on April 28, 2025.

Rev. Stallings, the 14th Regional Minister of the American Baptist Churches of Metropolitan New York (ABCMNY), served as its Executive leader for 22 years before retiring in April of 2015.

Prior to coming to ABC Metro New York, Rev. Stallings served on the staff of National Ministries, now known as the American Baptist Home Mission Societies. Earlier in his career, he served the Antioch Baptist Church in Cleveland and was Executive Director of the Cleveland NAACP.



Rev. Stallings holds degrees from Morehouse College and Howard University Divinity School. He was a published author and spoke widely across the U.S. and the globe.

He served as the President of Flemister House, a residential program for persons with AIDS and other special needs. He engaged ABCMNY in a joint ministry, with the Haitian Baptist Convention and Baptists from England, in the development, construction and operation of the Hospital in Quartier Morin, located outside of Cape Haitien in Northern Haiti.

Rev. Stallings was inducted into the Martin Luther King Jr. International Board of Preachers of Morehouse College in 1989, and, in 2004, he received the Council of Churches of the City of New York's Extraordinary Leadership Award.

He is survived by his sister Catherine Stallings-Luckett, and his niece, Sandy Clemmons.

Celebrations

Rev. Dr. Wayne and Julie Paulsen Celebrate Their 60th Wedding Anniversary

The Rev. Dr. Wayne and Julie Paulsen of Wichita, Kansas, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on August 16, 2025, with a reception at Prairie Homestead. They were married on August 15, 1965, at Prairie Baptist Church in Overland Park, Kansas.

Wayne and Julie often speak fondly of the churches where they served and the many cherished memories they've made along the way. They extend heartfelt thanks for the friendships, past and present, and support that has been a source of comfort to them over the years.

Rev. Dr. Richard and Lillian Barron Celebrate their 60th Wedding Anniversary

The Rev. Dr. Richard and Lillian Barron celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on August 28, 2025. The couple met in 1964 while they both were attending Andover Newton Theological School in Newton, Massachusetts. They were married a year later in Lillian's home church, First Baptist Church, Norwich, New York.

Since that time the couple has served churches in Margate City, New Jersey; Carnegie and Johnstown,



Pennsylvania; Port Dickinson, New York and Greenfield, Massachusetts. Lillian was an Early Childhood Education teacher and founded a pre-school in Port Dickinson, New York. The Barrons retired in 2005.

They have two children, Beth and Jay. Beth is married to Matthew Wolfer. Jay is married to Nicole Puccio, and they are the parents of fraternal twins, Evan and Larissa.

Rev. Richard leads worship services at United Church of Christ in Groton City, New York, a small rural congregation, on the first, third and fifth Sundays of the month. Richard also sings in the choir at the church where the Barrons are members in Ithaca, New York.

They are both active in the Newark Valley (New York) Historical Society and the First Baptist Church of Ithaca, New York. Richard is also a member and secretary of his local Lions Club and is an avid cyclist with the Southern Tier Bicycle Club.

Calling MMBB Centenarians

Do you know a current MMBB member who is celebrating a 100th birthday this year or has celebrated the century mark recently? We'd like to feature them in *News and Notes*. Send an email to communications@mmbb.org including their name, age, birthday and a highlight of their career or vocation.



Lifestyle

The Power of Everyday Gratitude: Finding Joy in Life's Small Moments

The moments that lift us up often aren't grand or dramatic. More often, they're found in the quiet, everyday details—a kind word from a stranger, your favorite song unexpectedly playing, or the sun breaking through after a weekend of rain. Life moves fast, and it's easy to overlook these small gifts. But when we pause and reflect, we're reminded of how powerful gratitude can be and how it transforms the ordinary into something meaningful.

Gratitude may not solve life's challenges, but it can lighten the burden of stress and help us navigate them with greater resilience. A 2003 study by psychologists Dr. Robert Emmons and Dr. Michael McCullough found that after 10 weeks of gratitude journaling, participants felt more optimistic, exercised more, and visited doctors less often.¹

Neuroscience research shows that expressing gratitude triggers the release of dopamine and serotonin—neurotransmitters that influence mood and emotions. These findings highlight how even small, intentional acts of gratitude can have a powerful impact on our well-being, without requiring much effort.

Here are a few simple practices to weave gratitude into your daily life.

Keep a journal. Start with writing three things you are grateful for each day or each week. Gratitude can be as simple as admiring a beautiful sunrise or as specific as appreciating a surprise phone call from a grandchild.

Use daily affirmations. Make daily affirmations part of your routine. Write them on sticky notes, in your planner, or display them on your phone. Take a quiet moment with your favorite tea or coffee to reflect and say them aloud. These simple practices can reinforce positive thinking and boost self-esteem.

Express intentional appreciation. Take a moment to text or call a friend or family member to let them know you're grateful for them. Sharing gratitude strengthens connections, spreads positivity, and might be just what someone needs to hear.

Count your blessings. Find a moment each day to reflect on the blessings in your life—big or small. This might mean giving thanks to the Lord for what you've been given or simply focusing on the positive aspects of your day. Practicing gratitude in this way helps us see life through a more thankful lens, revealing the everyday blessings that surround us.

Gratitude is a simple practice that can have positive effects on your wellbeing and outlook. By appreciating what we have, we cultivate a positive perspective on life and a sense of contentment that fosters resilience and builds a foundation for lasting mental and emotional well-being.

¹*Giving thanks can make you happier - Harvard Health*

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— Ralph Waldo Emerson

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— Colleen McSpirit-Brush, Editor

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