

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

*January 19, 2018*

**ANNOUNCEMENT: PRESTIGIOUS, DYNAMIC ARIZONA PASTOR DIES - BISHOP ALEXIS A. THOMAS**

Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church is saddened to announce the death of Bishop Alexis A. Thomas, a distinguished member of the clergy, Pastor, husband and father, who passed away on January 18, 2018 at the young age of 50. Bishop Thomas, a child prodigy who preached his first sermon at the age of 7, transformed Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church, located at 1401 E Jefferson Street in Phoenix, Arizona, from a small congregation of 200 to one of the most prominent African-American ministries in the Southwest with over 4,000 members.

Bishop Thomas was a dynamic preacher and a passionate orator. He received his license to preach the gospel at the tender age of 7. After serving as an Associate Minister at the Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church, he was named Senior Pastor in 1984 at the age of 16, an historic event in the State of Arizona.

Bishop Thomas held a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biblical Studies from Southwestern Bible College in Phoenix, Arizona. Bishop Thomas authored and published his book titled "A Child Shall Lead Them" in 2005. His book chronicled the journey God had led him through in the first 36 years of his life and left the reader waiting to read the rest of his journey.

Alexis Andrew Thomas, the son of Hubert and the late Barbara Thomas, was born on November 9, 1967 in Chandler, Arizona. Bishop Thomas leaves behind his beloved wife of 13 years, Dr. Michele Thomas; five boys, Shimond, Remone, Jamell, and twin boys, Micah and Micaiah; father, Hubert; and brother, Dervin. He was preceded in death by his mother, Barbara; and, brothers, Andre and Timothy.

The Pilgrim Rest family celebrates the life of an extraordinary man of God. We join the community in mourning a devout, fun-loving and charismatic leader who committed his life to serving God and His people. He was led by the Holy Spirit to carry out the vision God had placed in his heart.

A homegoing service at Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church for Bishop Thomas is being planned. During this time of bereavement, we welcome your prayers and request that the privacy of the family is honored. For more information, please contact Pilgrim Rest at (602) 258-0831 or visit [www.pilgrimrestphx.org](http://www.pilgrimrestphx.org). May the Almighty God rest his soul in Eternal peace.

