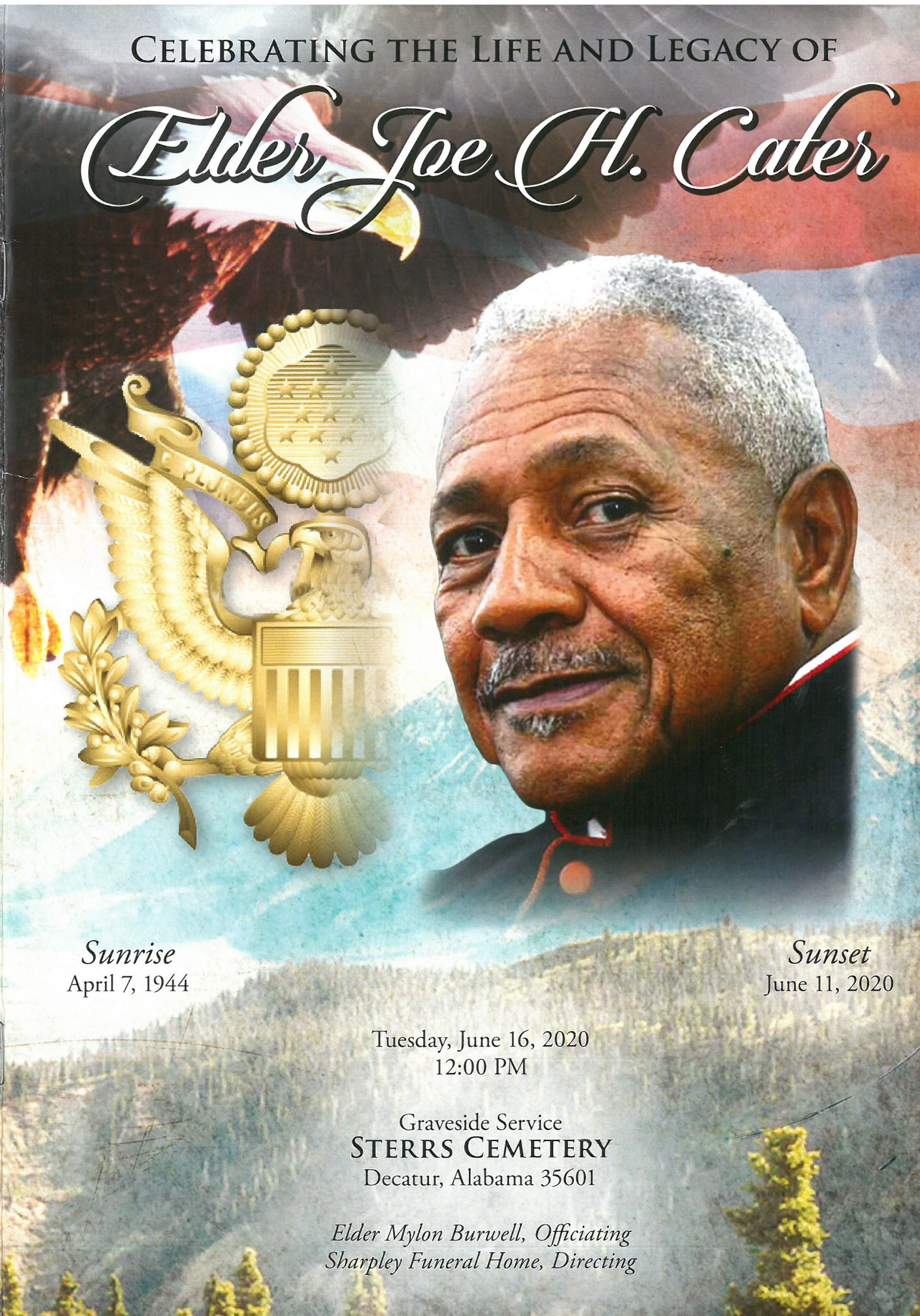
Celebrating the Life and Legacy of

Elder Joe H. Cater



Sunrise
April 7, 1944

Sunset
June 11, 2020

Tuesday, June 16, 2020
12:00 PM

Graveside Service
STERRS CEMETERY
Decatur, Alabama 35601

Elder Mylon Burwell, Officiating
Sharpley Funeral Home, Directing

Celebrating the Life of

Elder Joe H. Cater

April 7, 1944 – June 11, 2020

Joe Homer Cater was born on April 7, 1944, to the late Job and Ella Lee Cater in Morgan County. He departed this life on June 11, 2020, at Huntsville Hospital Decatur General Campus.

He confessed hope in Christ at an early age and was baptized at Moulton Heights Missionary Baptist Church. He was a graduate of Morgan County Training School. Upon graduation, he enlisted to serve his country in the United States Army. While stationed in New York, he met the love of his life, Bennie (Pat) Cater, and was married on December 2, 1967.

Elder Cater wanted to raise his children in the south, and moved his family to Alabama, in 1972.

In 1984, God called him to preach the gospel. He preached his initial sermon at Moulton Heights Missionary Baptist Church. Many came from near and far to see and hear what a wonderful work the Lord had done. Elder Cater was the former Pastor of Flowerhill Freewill Baptist Church, where everlasting bonds of friendship and family were formed. He later joined St. Stephens Primitive Baptist Church under the leadership of the late Elder Eugene Lewis. While serving at St. Stephens Primitive Baptist Church, Elder Eugene Lewis mentored, taught, and encouraged "his boy" to dig in the bushes for the Word.

Elder Cater was a Bible Scholar and an excellent teacher of the word. Elder Cater was

formerly employed by Bowman Transportation and Champion Paper Mill.

In 1994, Elder Cater was installed as the Pastor at Bethlehem Primitive Baptist Church in Greenbrier, Alabama. He was a dedicated full-time Pastor to each of his members. No matter what time, no matter where he was, he was going to be there. Bethlehem, he loved you!

Elder Cater is preceded in death by his son, Joe Christopher Cater; his parents, Rev. Job and Ella Lee Cater; sister, Queen Nickerson; and brother, James Cater.

Elder Cater truly loved his family. This is something he strongly instilled in his children. He believed in having Sunday dinner together as a family. He also believed in greeting his family with a kiss and also upon leaving telling you he loved you and then another kiss.

Elder Cater leaves to cherish the fond lasting memories of a life well-lived to: his wife, the love of his life for 52 years, Mother Bennie (Pat) Cater; a son, Ronald L. (Connie) Cater; three daughters, Tracey L. Cater, Kimberly C. Pace, and Keisha Cater all of Decatur, AL; an adopted son, Torey Clay of McDonough, GA; his precious grandchildren, Devon Airness (Keisha) Cunningham of San Francisco, CA, Jasmine M. Cater of Decatur, AL, Taylor Cater of Huntsville, AL, Trenton Cater, and Jai C. Johnson of Decatur, AL; adopted grandson, Chancely Thomas of Decatur, AL; his great-grandchildren, Aaliyah Johnson of Houston, TX, Madison Orr, Elijah Chapman, and Connor Coffey all of Decatur, AL, and Koda Ferguson of Huntsville, AL; four sisters, Ruth (Sammy) Lee of Tifton, GA, Dr. Joyce (Dr. Edward) Irons of Atlanta, GA, Bernice Ayers of Decatur, AL, and Barbara Small of Smyrna, GA; six sisters-in-law, Anne Cater of Cleveland, OH, Francis Simpson, Lizzie Simpson, Mary Holiday, Rose Kyles, and Louise Simpson all of Belleville, AL; four brothers-in-law, Joe (Jean) Nickerson of Nashville, TN, Isaac Simpson, and Ray Simpson of Belleville, AL, and Richard (Diane) Simpson of Stone Mountain, GA; and a host of nieces, nephews, other relatives, and friends.

To Pat:
If Tomorrow Starts Without Me

If tomorrow starts without me,
and I'm not there to see,
if the sun should rise and find your eyes
all filled with tears for me;
I wish so much you wouldn't cry
the way you did today,
while thinking of the many things
we didn't get to say.

I know how much you love me,
as much as I love you,
and each time that you think of me,
I know you'll miss me too;
but if tomorrow starts without me,
please try to understand,
that an angel came and called my name,
and took me by the hand.
He said my place was ready,
in heaven far above,
and that I'd have to leave behind
all those I dearly love.

But as I turned to walk away,
a tear fell from my eye,
for all my life, I'd always thought,
I didn't want to die.
I had so much to live for,
so much left yet to do,
it seemed almost impossible,
that I was leaving you.
I thought of all the yesterdays,
the good ones and the bad,
I thought of all that we had shared,
and all the fun we had.

If I could relive yesterday,
just even for a while,
I'd say good-bye and kiss you
and maybe see you smile.

But then I fully realized,
that this could never be,
for emptiness and memories,
would take the place of me.

And when I thought of worldly things,
I might miss come tomorrow,
I thought of you, and when I did,
my heart was filled with sorrow.
But when I walked through heaven's gates,
I felt so much at home.
When God looked down and smiled at me,
from His great golden throne,

He said, "This is eternity,
and all I've promised you.
Today your life on earth is past,
but here life starts anew.
I promise no tomorrow,
but today will always last,
and since each day is the same way,
there's no longing for the past.
You have been so faithful,
so trusting, and so true.
Though there were times
you did some things,
you knew you shouldn't do.
But you have been forgiven,
and now at last you're free.
So won't you come and take my hand,
and share my life with me?"

So if tomorrow starts without me,
don't think we're far apart,
for every time you think of me,
I'm right here, in your heart.

Love, Joe

Order of Celebration

Elder Mylon Burwell – Moderator

Indian Creek Primitive Baptist Church Association

Processional ..... The Cater Family

Military Honors

Opening Prayer ..... Elder David Robinson

Holy Scriptures

- Old Testament ..... Elder Ronnie Patton
- New Testament ..... Elder Kenneth Owens

Words of Comfort ..... Elder Benjamin Burt

Solo ..... Appointee

Expressions of Tribute

- As a Pastor ..... Deacon James Allen
- As a Friend ..... Brother Connie Twitty
- As a Father ..... Minister Tracey Cater
- As a Brother ..... Ruth Lee

Eulogy ..... Elder Mylon Burwell

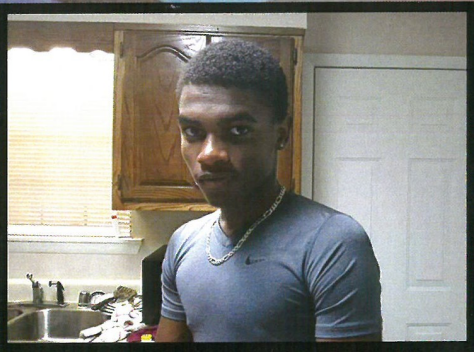
Song ..... Appointee

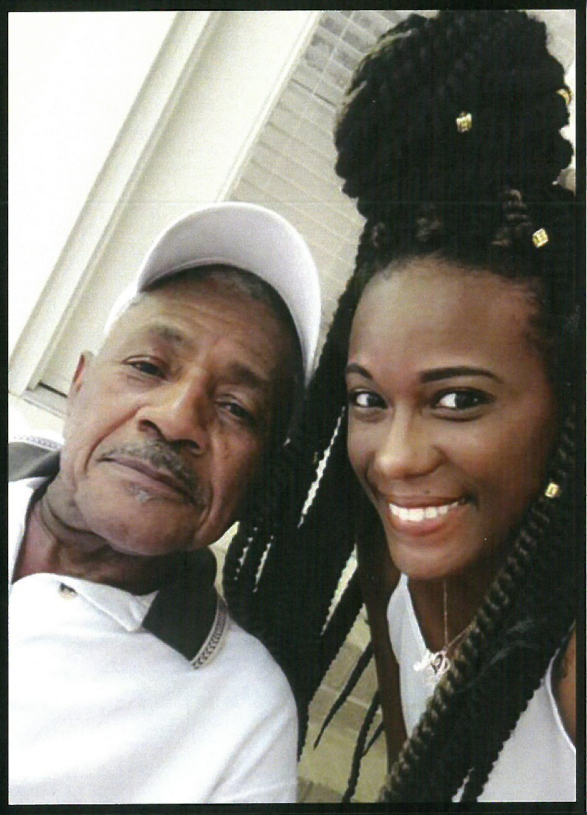
Closing Prayer ..... Appointee

Recessional ..... The Cater Family

ORDER OF CELEBRATION

Precious Memories





Precious Memories

PRECIOUS MEMORIES

Flower Attendants

Nieces/Cousins

Casket Bearers

Torey Clay
Jeffery Ayers
Gregory Simpson
Kevin Simpson
Maurice Ayers
Raymond Fields

Honorary Casket Bearers

Deacons of Bethlehem Primitive Baptist Church

Thank You

We wish to acknowledge with sincere gratitude the prayers, the many sincere expressions of sympathy, thoughtful deeds, and other acts of kindness. We are fortified by the knowledge that so many of you share our loss. As the bereavement continues, even beyond this day, we ask that your prayers on our behalf continue.

The Cater Family

In Memoriam Appreciation

We don't take it lightly that you have entrusted your loved one to us. We are confident and sincerely pray that our services have been satisfactory and comforting. We pray God bestows a blessing on each of you.

Most Respectfully,
Sharpley Funeral Home

Professional Services Entrusted To

Sharpley Funeral Home

410 Railroad St. NW
Decatur, Alabama 35601