



New church for Upper Room House of Worship in Spring Valley opens

BY: Keith S. Shikowitz, Editor in Chief/Investigative Reporter

There are times when a building gets so old and needs too much in the way of repairs to make it not worth doing. The only thing to do at that point is tear it down and start from scratch. This is what the situation was with the Upper Room House of Worship. On September 10, 2026, the new Upper Room House of Worship was unveiled, and the ribbon was cut officially opening it for business.

Reverend and founder Teresa Darden opened the ceremony. "Thank you, thank you, thank you all for coming out today. I believe we have on our program, we're going to, have an opening song, and we hope that you all will sing it with us on today as we give God praise and we thank Him for this beautiful, wonderful building that He has blessed us with, and we are so grateful. Amen."

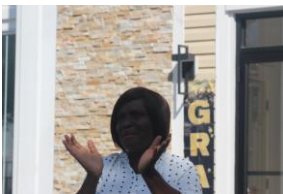


Reverend Teresa Darden

"We want to sing a little something that maybe you all know."

https://youtu.be/gMyOM6_TbCI

She continued, "I know we have a lot of important people with us because you all are important to us. We are so grateful to be in this wonderful, beautiful Village of Spring Valley. We are so grateful. That our community receives us. We're so grateful that we could put our hands to the plow to serve because that what we are here to do. A lot of times people think because you're in a leadership position that you sit back, but myself, I firmly believe being a leader you're the first partaker of whatsoever that goes on in the community and whatever your mission and whatever your goal is, so I'm so grateful to God that He has allowed me to be able to do that. But at this time, we're going to get ready to have our prayer, and I'm going to ask our minister, Arlene Smith, to come up and to grace us with a prayer today."



Minister Smith

Minister Smith took to the podium. "Thank you. Praise the Lord. Today is a joyous day. Let us pray. Father God, we thank you for this day, Lord God. This is the day that you have made. Oh God, and we are going to rejoice, and we are glad in it. Thank you, Lord, for this day."

Praise the Lord. We thank you, Lord God for every trials. We thank you for every journey, Lord God, that we have been through. Oh God, where you brought us this day."

"Oh God, and all honor and all glory belongs to you. We thank you for each and every one that's here to celebrate with us today, Lord God. We thank you, Lord God for them taking time out of their busy schedule just to come and celebrate with us. Oh God, we thank you for them and we give you the praise and the honor and the glory. Help us to have a good time with you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Glory to God."

Minister, Gloria Miller came up and did a scripture reading from book of Nehemiah, Chapter 6, verses 1 through 4.

Reverend Darden explained to the people present that they've been in this process for almost 10 years to get this new building. She praised God for making it happen.

There's a lot of important people with us on today, and we want to hear from you all. We also, in the order that we have here is from the Upper Room House of Worship, We would like to hear from them.

Before they came to speak, Darden gave a history of the Church.

<https://youtu.be/LBMkYY9ifSQ>

"While I'm standing here, you know, I have a good, good, very good, very good friend of mine, like a father to me and that is Mr. Meyer. I thank God for him because I can remember because, all the time we always have like the toy drive and the backpacks and, and it was one winter we had Christmas and I tell the church about Mr. Meyer all the time. I said that you know what, he's a strong soldier because he stayed here with us and it was cold that night. Him and his little wife, Miss Elliot, and I believe they sat right there at the front of the door, and they act like it was a whole cathedral. They didn't shun us. They came to help us and help they did. They didn't shun us, they didn't put us down or snub their nose down on us, but they came in, they joined in." She continued.

"He said how he enjoyed the service and he enjoyed just seeing us give to the community like we do. From that day to this one, this man sitting there has been such a tremendous blessing to this ministry. I thank God because when you know that people, and I'm just saying. Mr. Meyer, you know your status when people are in a prestigious position, he sat with us like he was, I know them legs and feet had been cold because we was cold but we had a, we had our second drive through live Christmas play with the animals and everything, and it was beautiful."

Everybody put on their costumes, and they worked in unity like we always do, and it was absolutely beautiful and the community came out and it was a blast. It was beautiful." Darden explained.

"So those are some of the things that I'm telling you that I can remember starting out from the living room to the check cashing to coming here to 118 Bethune Boulevard. In the building, it was an old building, and we worked with what we had and I can remember and I'm, I've got to tell you all this because I mean you might jump up but this is what drove us to where when we left this the old building. The reason we were outside of Missionary Melanie, she liked to say it all the time. She said, boy, those things like to drink up that milk. We had a hole up in the bottom of that basement. I'm telling you we had no other choice, but we had to come out of that building."

It got so bad that in the last before we did tear down the building, we were right here where we are now."

She said that one thing that everybody always knows about her is she loves outdoor events. This is her outdoor tent revival. That's right there at Central Park Memorial Park, that's where you will find them. They would be out before they had a building. Her former pastor, and I love him. He's gone on to glory, but he always taught them all. He said the whole world out there is your pulpit. Don't look at mine. So, the whole world is the pulpit. It's not the building; it's the people out here. Amen. It's coming out of those four walls and they're thankful for them.

Darden went on. "Let me tell you, because we come a mighty long way. We're thankful for the walls that the Lord has given us, but you best believe we will not be staying within the walls because we love being outside the walls. We love the people and we love this community. I love what the Lord, and how he planted us here because the reason I say the Lord planted us here because we started out, let me tell you, when, minister said just a cluster of us, just a handful of people that has kept this ministry going all these years that we have made a great impact in our community, we're doing what we love. We love putting our hands to a to the plow and not looking back."

“When you say upper room house of worship, that's who we are. We are a community of people right here. We want to stay right here where we are and be able to help those that we can. From myself starting out, the ministry started with the prison ministry, the jail ministry where actually the tent revival, from tent revival outside to in the inside those who are incarcerated, that's where the Lord has had me. I've been there 38 years now. I started out normally as a correction officer in my 1st 6 years, you know, and, and I'm still there as the chaplain, and I love what I do. I love people. I love it.” Darden stated.

She continued explaining how grateful she was for what the Lord has done for the Upper Room House of Worship. They've come a mighty long way, a mighty long way, and they're grateful and they want you all to come in and to continue to embrace them, continue to put your hands together with them, especially those that come to help them with the feeding of the hungry, to help them to help those in the backpacks and the Easter baskets and the toys during Christmas time. Just giving out every week the food and every week giving out clothing and diapers and whatever they can get their hands on to advance our community that's what they are here doing and that's what they desire to continue to do so they needed a place.

Pointing to the new building, “It wasn't so much that we wanted it to be so glamorous, but we say, you know, while we got our hands to the plow, why not make it look good because it's God's house. There you go. I could go all day because y'all know the preacher has to give.”

A number of people came up and sang the praises of Reverend Darden and the work she has done with the ministry. Spring Valley Mayor, Schenley Vital was among them.

<https://youtu.be/qhVbNdUO1tk>

After all of the speeches and praises were finished, it was time for the ribbon cutting.

https://youtu.be/_C-QOK0DiXE

Three days later, Reverend Darden held the first service in the new church. This was more like a religious rock concert instead of what one would call a solemn traditional church service. After some scripture readings, the music began and did not stop. The parishioners, numbering around 100, were up on their feet singing along with Darden as she bopped, sang and clapped at the pulpit along with other visiting pastors through a variety of energetic praises of God. There were some less enthusiastic and energetic songs, but they were just as meaningful. One such song was I give myself away.

<https://youtu.be/tkMfuM-79Hk>

The service was a mixture of high energy songs and speeches and solemn quiet reflective time. The parishioners were enthusiastic and joyful throughout the entirety of the service. After the service was completed, there was a catered dinner of stuffed flounder, chicken, rice, ziti, salad and vegetables waiting for them downstairs, in Doris Hall, named after Reverend Darden's mother who she praised for her being the lady she is today.

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