

The Peale, Baltimore

Out of the Blocks Storytelling Series

Recorded by Aaron Henkin; Photographs and Music by Wendel Patrick

Produced for the *Out of the Blocks* website, created by the Peale, <https://ootb.thepeale.org/>

Out of the Blocks is supported by PRX and produced with grant funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Cohen Opportunity Fund, The Hoffberger Foundation, Patricia and Mark Joseph, The Shelter Foundation, The Kenneth S Battye Charitable Trust, The Sana and Andy Brooks Family Fund, The Muse Web Foundation, and the William G. Baker, Jr. Memorial Fund, creator of the Baker Artist Portfolios



Speaker 1 ([00:00](#)):

My name is Pastor Annette Matthews. My church is Refuge Way of the Cross, Church of Deliverance. We're located 2111 Edmondson Avenue. We are Pentecostal, so we like to sing, we like to shout, we like to clap good.

I heard this voice plain as I'm talking to you now. And only thing I can attribute it to is the voice of God. He said, "I want you in leadership."

Speaker 2 ([01:12](#)):

Do you remember your first sermon in front of a congregation?

Speaker 1 ([01:17](#)):

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Well, my initial sermon was, believe it or not, fear will destroy you, but faith will deliver you. And that was my sermon because I had such a spirit of fear, low self-esteem. I felt everybody could do it better than me. I can't do it. What's the purpose? And so that was my first sermon. Second Timothy, two, seven and eight. God has not given us a spirit of fear, but one of power, of love, and of a sound mind

Sometimes they say it's a thankless job and it's been actually a lonely walk. I have been challenged with my husband and sickness. My husband has been in the nursing facility for the last four years. He hasn't been there for me, but I've had to be there for him. And that has led me to question what is going on, why I've been faithful, God and I've served you. And I just don't understand. And actually I have not gotten an answer in all of these 23 years.

I've never lost a Sunday. But now I am in a place where I can't keep going. I don't have the sufficient help here. So my faith has been tested right in these last couple of years.

Speaker 2 ([03:06](#)):

How much longer do you predict that you have in this building?

Speaker 1 ([03:10](#)):

The beginning of 2017, that's the date that I've been given as far as the settlement, because we have had someone to... We've signed contracts that they will purchase the church. However, that does not seem to be going very well. But anyway, we're still here.

Speaker 2 ([03:28](#)):

What do you think your final sermon is going to be about before you guys leave this building?

Speaker 1 ([03:34](#)):

Oh, wow. It will probably be, I fought a good fight.

Recording ([03:40](#)):

This is heavy for my heart, amen that. Today we share in the loving memory of the late Reverend Dr. Roambi Matthews, overseer of this church and my husband. On Tuesday, the Lord called him home, praise God. So my husband is in a good company, hallelujah. And I was there every day possible, leaving from church and going immediately to the nursing home. And even when I woke up this morning and yesterday I was saying to myself, I don't know what I'm going to do after church today. I don't know what I'm going to do after church, because my Sundays have been spent with him.

But nevertheless, I'm still here. But I made the decision a few months ago that I could not continue carrying this heavy load, the load of the church and the ministry and the business aspects of it. And I was finding myself being burnt out. And I didn't want the people to suffer from that.

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So I made the decision to sell the building and close down the church. But how many know the ministry goes on because as I've taught you and told you and you know for yourself, that is in us, praise God.

Speaker 1 ([05:23](#)):

If you plant a seed, someone else may water that seed, but only God can give the increase.

God bless you. Thank you so much.