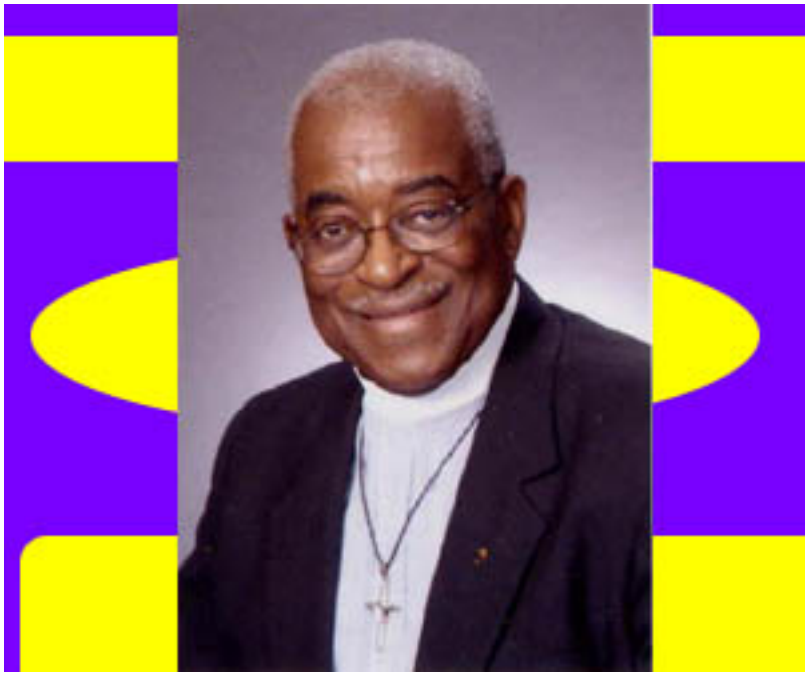

Pastor Preston has been married to the former Marian Ella Berryman for 50 years and they are the proud parents of four children, four grandchildren, and one great grandchild.

**By JAMES W. WADE III**
Staff Reporter

The Rev. Dr. Earl Preston will be retiring at the end of this month as the pastor of the Morning Star Baptist Church located at10250 Shaker Blvd.

Prestonhas been the leader of this flock for 35 years.

Not only has he had a passion to preach the word, Dr. Preston has always had a strong love for music. His experience in the church began at an early age by serving atShilohBaptistChurchas director of music until called to serve atOlivetInstitutionalBaptistChurch, where he joined under the late Dr. Odie M. Hoover.

It was during his high school years that he founded, organized, and directed the Prestonian

Choral Ensemble. This group of talented singers received calls to sing all over the city and was known both nationally and internationally.

The Prestonians continued to sing for fifty years. However, Dr. Preston received a call that the member of the ensemble did not hear… God “calling” him to preach. He wrestled with the Lord about his call to the ministry and was finally convinced that he had truly been called after a severe accident caused him to lay flat on his back for more than eleven days.

Prestonpreached his trial sermon on March 19, 1972.

He worked to become worthy of this great call then two years and 10 months later – on January 19, 1975 – he was ordained and licensed as Reverend Earl Preston, Jr., in Cincinnati, Ohio at the Mt. Sinai Baptist Church under the Pastorate of Rev. Ozell Freeman.

Prestonwas faithful and served at his home church until receiving another great call… The Morning Star Baptist Church, formerly under the leadership of Dr. Solomon L. Cole, called him on January 22, 1977 to be their pastor.

He preached his first sermon as “Pastor Preston” on February 6, 1977.

During the 35 years of pastorate at Morning Star Baptist Church, Preston has made numerous accomplishments to further theKingdomofGodthrough Morning Star, and in service to the community. He was the visionary and writer of the play “The Living Cross,” establishing The Youth Academy, constructing two homes on the corners of Parkwood andHelena, and giving away food during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday seasons.

The Toy Giveaway was established in conjunction with the Cleveland Police Department’s Cops for Kids and Christmas for the past 21 years.

As a visionary, Pastor Preston realized Morning Star’s potential and future endeavors could not

be housed in its existing location. He prayed, received instruction from God then began the search for a new worship center. The Parkwood Properties were sold and Morning Star's temporary worship location wasGlenvilleHigh School.

Many questioned his decisions. However,Prestonnever wavered in what he knew God had instructed him to do. On Sunday, December 17, 2000,Prestonand the Morning Star Baptist Church family moved into their new home at10250 Shaker Boulevardwhich they renovated to worship and give honor to God in the old Qua Buick showroom.

During his tenure, he added additional programs at the new location that included: The Hot Meals Program; the R.E.A.D. Literacy Program for adults and development of elementary computer skills; the acquisition of the WSEM Program designed for middle school children.

A native Clevelander, Earl Preston, Jr. was born April 30, 1931, to Esther Clack and Earl Preston, Sr. He attendedDykeElementary School,KennardJunior High School; andEastTechnicalHigh School. He furthered his education at the Cleveland School of Advertising; Cleveland Institute of Music;CaseWestern ReserveUniversityand American Institute of Banking.

His undergraduate studies were completed atClevelandStateUniversity. He received his Master of Arts Degree from Ashland Theological Seminary in 1980 and his Doctorate of Ministries degree from Trinity Theological Seminary in 1983.

Pastor Preston has been married to the former Marian Ella Berryman for 50 years and they are the proud parents of four children, four grandchildren, and one great grandchild.