

EXPRESSION

SJCAOC



| Feature Story

Ascension at Grace

The feeling of stepping inside Grace Cathedral is awe inspiring. With its dramatic architecture and calming shades of blue and purple, there's an instant feeling of peace that comes over you, making one mindful that it was the Great His Excellency Duke Ellington, who had in the 1960's with his series of sacred concerts consecrated this space in the sound of Body And Soul.

In the vast sanctuary you see the stained glass windows, the altar, the arches, and you realize that the incomparable music of St. John Coltrane will be played in this place by those who recognize and know him as Sri Rama Ohnedaruth, the mighty mystic known as John Coltrane, Saint John Will-I-Am Coltrane, who was given by God Almighty, the means and the privilege to make others happy through this anointed sound.

It is in this same spirit and shared intention the presiding Bishop, Her Excellency Wanika Stephens D. D., The Ministers of Sound, Voices of Compassion, Co-founding Archbishops Franzo and Marina King (Apostles of Coltrane Consciousness,) and esteemed guests, set out to make a joyful noise unto the Lord. The hallowed atmosphere was magnified as this gathering was a celebration of the ascension day of St. John Coltrane and Our Lady of Day Billie Holiday.

The Saint John Coltrane African Orthodox Church observes July 17, the anniversary of Saint John Coltrane's passing in 1967, as his Ascension Day. Here, "ascension" does not refer to the Ascension of Jesus Christ, an event unique to our Lord, but expresses our understanding of Coltrane's

| Serving in the Spirit

Kenny Annis

In this issue, we spotlight Kenny Annis, who generously volunteered his time and expertise to design and manage the sound for our event at Grace Cathedral. Kenny also recorded the evening, and we look forward to sharing that recording with the public soon.

| Don't Miss



September 11 - Coltrane Arts Ensemble will be at Flower Piano on September 11, 2026 at 1:30 PM. S.F. Golden Gate Park Botanical Gardens

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Ascension at Grace contd.

departure from this earthly life and entrance into eternal life with God.

The evening was graced with the presence of amazing elders, the magnificent Ann Mack and Dr. Hardiman, who speak the language of jazz so well, lending a touch of seasoned artistry to the evening.

Deacon elect Jacob Slocum joined us on baritone saxophone, all the way from Chicago. The baritone was magnificent, its deep, resonant tones seeming to rise from the very floor of the cathedral. On piano we had the very gifted Grant Levin who seemed to know exactly when to step forward and when to leave space, adding bright, tasteful touches throughout the service. During the offering, the sanctuary belonged to the sound of his piano alone as he gave us a beautiful rendition of Coltrane's "Lonnie's Lament." The church ensemble, featuring Rev. Wanika Stephens on bass, Archpriest Franzo King Jr. and Archbishop King on tenor saxophones, and Karl Nueckel on drums, were simply outstanding. Adanna Uzoigwe soared with her violin, and Rev. Arthur Trotter,

Deacon Franzo King III, and Miles Stephens played congas. The church ensemble was at its best, tight, responsive, listening to one another and playing with the energy and interplay that calls to mind the John Coltrane Quartet.

"Spiritual" reached a breathtaking height when the piano fell away, leaving bass, drums, and Rev. King's saxophone to deepen the prayer and carry the congregation higher. The choir (Rev. Mother Marina King, Rev. Gloria Fisher, Rev. Donna Uzoigwe, Deacon Stephen Berenato, and Erinne Johnson) offered "The Lord's Prayer" and "Equinox," led by Dr. LaVette King, who sang original lyrics telling the story of Coltrane's spiritual awakening and weaving his God-centered song titles into the story. Keynote speaker Dr. Nick Baham wove together a story of Black love in San Francisco, the church's history and struggles amid gentrification, and its continuing mission to spread love through the music and message of John Coltrane, while Archbishop Franzo King and Rev. Mother Marina King shared

words born and testimony of their decades-long journey with this anointed sound and ministry.

As we approach September 23, 2026, the 100th anniversary of John Coltrane's birth, the celebration at Grace felt both like a remembrance and a beginning. Nearly six decades after his passing, Coltrane's spiritual legacy continues to reach new ears and new generations. The Saint John Coltrane Church remains committed to carrying that legacy forward from its home in San Francisco to listeners around the world. The sacred sound that filled Grace Cathedral that evening did not end when the final note was played. The listening, the praise and the ministry continue.

-Makeda Nueckel & Archbishop King



All Mothers Are From Cleveland

-For Reverend Mother Marina

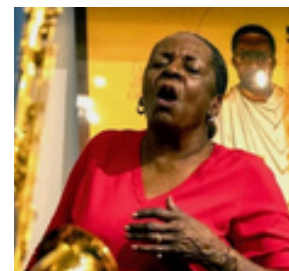
A poem by Solomon Rino

I like the way you walk in God's sneakers with your index finger raised to our mutual mind your smile just gleams Mother I studied your eyes and had a vision of you jumping and again jumping through an infinite ceiling returning right here to say, "Grace is given but must be earned when you reach Cleveland go door to door and say, 'Can I borrow a tambourine?'" Piled the tambourines mile high in my wheelbarrow wheeled down Cuyahoga until I heard you sing like an April breeze grew wings returned right here and replied, "All mothers are from Cleveland." We strive together in moonwalk to the mouth of the river where every woman thrives.

Mother Marina at 80: A Life of Love and Service

Reverend Mother Marina King, born Marina Lynn Robinson, reached a milestone birthday this year, turning 80 years of age. As co-founder, alongside His Eminence Archbishop Franzo King, her life represents decades of faithful service to the Church, its members, and its mission.

In this her 80th year, it's fitting to look back at the moment that changed the course of her life. In 1965, Marina and Franzo King went to hear John Coltrane perform live in San Francisco and experienced what they would later call a "sound baptism." What began as a night of music became a powerful encounter



with the presence of God and a spiritual awakening neither would forget. That moment planted a seed that would grow into a lifetime of ministry, love, and devotion and a calling to share the message they received through Coltrane's anointed sound. Over the decades, Rev. Mother Marina King has worn many hats in service to the ministry. As co-founder, worship leader, lead vocalist, (cont. pg. 3)

| Mother Marina contd.

business manager, administrator, merchandiser, prayer warrior, wife, mother, mentor, friend, and advocate, she has helped sustain the church in ways both seen and unseen. Her voice has been an enduring part of the Coltrane Liturgy, while her service has extended far beyond the sanctuary, from helping feed the community to caring for others and mentoring generations of young women. By standing, singing, praying, working, and serving alongside her, younger women have learned the traditions of the church and what it means to carry them forward. The impact of Mother Marina's life and service is all around us, in the women she has taught, the voices that sing the liturgy alongside her, the people she has cared for, and the ministry she continues to help

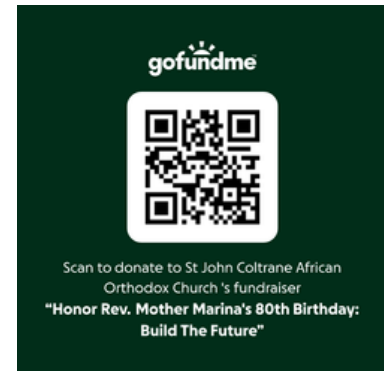
shape. And for so many who walk through the church doors for the first time, Mother Marina is someone they remember. Her warmth is genuine, her heart is open, and she has a beautiful way of making people feel welcomed and loved. She gives freely of herself, whether through a song, a prayer, a meal, an encouraging word, or simply taking the time to connect with someone who has come our way.

In honor of Mother Marina's 80th birthday, we are seeking to raise \$25,000 for the Saint John Coltrane Church Building Fund. After a lifetime of helping build and sustain this ministry, there could be no more fitting tribute than helping secure a permanent home where its work can continue and grow. Every gift made in her honor is an investment in the ministry

she has given so much of herself to, and in ensuring that it continues for generations to come.

-Makeda Nueckel

To donate use the QR code below:



| “Everyone Needs Bread”

I first came to the St. John Coltrane Church more than 30 years ago. I was living around the corner from the Church on Divisadero Street, when I met Father Freeman giving out bread in front one day. Father Freeman was one of the Elders at the Coltrane Church. He told me “Everyone needs bread.” I was surprised to hear ethereal and free music coming from the same spot the following Sunday. I put my ear to the door, and fell into the church, both physically and aurally. The music enveloped me, caused me to weep, and I felt a deep Spirit within it. After this, I began to attend more services, sing with the choir, and learn the lyrics and music of Liturgy of St. John Coltrane which we sing every Sunday. I also began listening to A Love Supreme. The music, singing the liturgy to Coltrane's compositions, and spiritual study at the Coltrane Church

changed my life. Archbishop King and Rev. Mother Marina taught me to serve, to be humble, and to praise God always and be grateful. They also taught me about being a Dear Listener, and listening to Coltrane daily. The listening itself, was a great lesson.

I had developed a love of Black Music (this was the name that I was taught at college by my professors for “Jazz.”) I hadn't heard much of it since moving to the West Coast, so the sound I heard at the Coltrane Church was familiar and welcoming to me. At that time, my favorite John Coltrane recordings were, *Dakar* and *The Cats*, which were both recorded in 1957, 2 days apart, with different musicians. My favorite song was “Velvet Scene” from *Dakar*. There was something in Coltrane's sound that distinguished him, I could always tell his sound. It spoke, and told a comforting personal message, of love and peace, that I could hear in that mystical sound. I later grew to love Coltrane's later

compositions through repeated listening. Coltrane's sound still comforts and fascinates me, all of it, in all ways. This year I was honored to have become one of the Sisters of Compassion, women who have dedicated their lives to prayer, service and Coltrane Consciousness. The Coltrane Liturgy and singing with the choir is a source of peace and joy in my life. Music can deliver the spirit without words. I believe that is why St. John Coltrane said that he believed in all religions, because he is telling us about God with ancient and global modes, scales and rhythms, and breathing his faith, his love, his essence, into his instrument. It's a visceral sensory experience, as the music doesn't speak to my intellect as much as it speaks to and dances with my heart and soul.

I am so grateful for St. John Coltrane and this Church. Thank you, God!

-Donna J Uzoigwe

A Century of St. John Coltrane

September 23, 2026, marks the 100th birthday of Saint John Will-I-Am Coltrane. A century since the birth of a man whose anointed sound continues to awaken hearts, lift souls, and inspire people throughout the world.

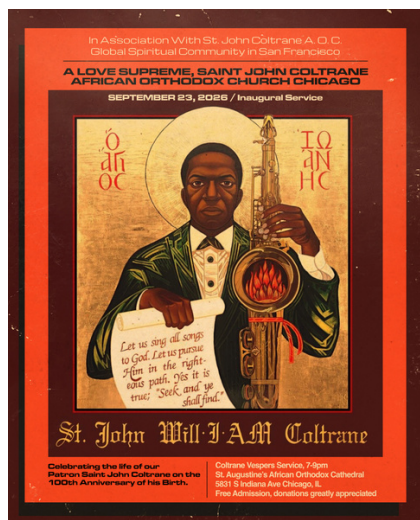
For the Saint John Coltrane AOC and Global Spiritual Community, this centennial is more than a commemoration of an extraordinary musician. It is a time to give thanks to Almighty God for the spiritual legacy entrusted to us through Saint John Coltrane and for the revelation that his music can be a force for love,

healing, and transformation.

For more than five decades, our church has heralded the spiritual legacy of Saint John Coltrane, carrying the message and anointed sound entrusted to this ministry into the world through worship, prayer, praise, service, and testimony. As we enter this centennial year, we honor not only the music Saint John Coltrane gave to the world, but also the spiritual intention that guided his life: to know God, to grow in love, and to be a force for good.

May this 100th birthday renew our commitment to carry Coltrane Consciousness forward, sharing this ministry with generations to come and

continuing the mission Saint John Coltrane so beautifully expressed: to make others happy through music.



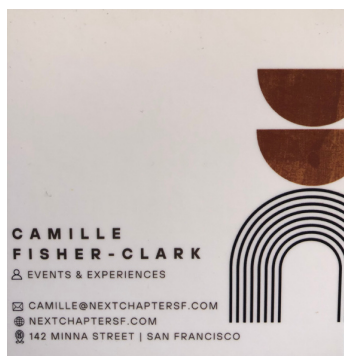
A LOVE SUPREME: SAINT JOHN COLTRANE AFRICAN ORTHODOX CHURCH CHICAGO.

In Association With St. John Coltrane A.O.C. Global Spiritual Community in San Francisco, we are gathering for our Inaugural Service to celebrate the life of our Patron Saint John Coltrane, on the 100th Anniversary of his Birth.

As part of this special occasion, we are thrilled to welcome Jacob Slocum to the Diaconate in the AOC! Event Details: Date: September 23, 2026, Service: Coltrane Vespers 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM, Location: St. Augustine's African Orthodox Cathedral, 5831 S Indiana Ave, Chicago, IL. *"Let us pursue Him in the righteous path. Yes it is true; 'Seek and ye shall find.'"* All are welcome to join us for this uplifting milestone service!

Community Partners:

We gratefully acknowledge the businesses and organizations whose support helps sustain our ministry and community.



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