

Bishop Ronald L. Godbee Sr. is a visionary leader, seasoned pastor, and spiritual architect whose ministry flows with prophetic clarity, pastoral compassion, and theological depth. For over three decades, he has proclaimed the Gospel with power and precision, shaping lives, leaders, and local communities through a ministry anchored in grace, truth, and transformation.

As the Lead Pastor of The River Church in Durham, North Carolina, Bishop Godbee has cultivated a Spirit-filled, inclusive, and community-driven congregation affectionately known as "the city's church." Under his leadership, The River has become a living embodiment of its vision from Ezekiel 47:9 — "Where the river flows, everything will live." Through worship, discipleship, and citywide outreach, The River continues to heal the heart of the city, serve its souls, and shape its future.

In addition to pastoring The River, Bishop Godbee serves as Presiding Prelate of The River Fellowship International (RFI) — a global network of churches and leaders committed to spiritual health, theological excellence, and sustainable leadership. Through RFI, he mentors pastors and emerging voices, helping them build ministries marked by authenticity, excellence, and integrity.

A native of Detroit, Michigan, Bishop Godbee began preaching at age 15 and was ordained at 22 at New Bethel Baptist Church under Pastor Robert Smith Jr. and Cleansing Springs MBC, under the late Pastor Ralph L. Godbee Sr. He later founded Inner Court Christian Center, a thriving congregation in Detroit, before being called to Durham, where he has pastored The River Church for over a decade. His journey — from serving faithfully under his father as an evangelist to becoming a respected voice of wisdom in the national church — reflects a deep commitment to servant leadership and the transformative power of grace.

Bishop Godbee's ministry is both scholarly and spiritual. He is a current Master of Divinity candidate at the Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology at Virginia Union University, where his academic focus bridges theology, justice, and pastoral care. His evolving theological framework integrates embedded, operational, and deliberative theology — always with an eye toward how the Gospel brings healing to humanity.

Beyond the pulpit, Bishop Godbee is the founder of Godbee Global, a leadership and mentoring platform dedicated to "sharing wisdom with the world one encounter at a time." Through Godbee Global, he provides coaching, mentorship, and spiritual formation for leaders in ministry, business, and community sectors.

A husband, father, and now grandfather, Bishop Godbee has been married for over 30 years to Lady Karla Godbee, his partner in life and ministry. Together they have three adult children — Kindale, Ronald Jr., and Kharrington — and one grandson, Koda

*Wherever his ministry flows, life follows.*



