

MOUNT GILEAD RETREAT VILLAGE · AT JOHNSTOWN

A Balm for Generations

A Case for Support



*“Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?
Why then is there no healing for the wound of my people?”*

— Jeremiah 8:22 (NLT)

We survived. We remember. We return. We heal. We build.

UNAPOLOGETICALLY CHRISTIAN. UNASHAMEDLY AFRICAN.

1479 W. Old Volney Road, Olmstead, Logan County, Kentucky
Mount Gilead Retreat Village Foundation, Inc. · themountgileadvillage.com

FOUNDED 1894 · ESTABLISHED 1906

The Ground Remembers

Mount Gilead Baptist Church has served Logan County for generations as a house of worship, prayer, and fellowship — a sacred witness to the faith and perseverance of African American Christians after Emancipation. The ground was deeded by Ben and Rachel Mills in 1906. The cemetery holds ancestors whose lives shaped this region, and the church belongs to the historic Union District Association of 37 Black Baptist churches across Kentucky and Tennessee.

The Great Migration & the Return Home

During the Great Migration, families left Logan County for Chicago, Detroit, Milwaukee, Indianapolis, and Memphis in search of opportunity, dignity, and safety. Yet Kentucky remained home. Each August, descendants return for the Eighth of August Jubilee, commemorating the region's delayed emancipation. Mount Gilead will become the sacred spiritual center of that return — a village of healing on the very ground where our ancestors prayed.

From Assin Manso to the Porch of Return

At Assin Manso in Ghana, enslaved Africans took their last bath before the Door of No Return. Where Assin Manso marked separation, Mount Gilead offers the Porch of Return: a place to move from fragmentation into wholeness, from silence into testimony, and from disconnection into belonging.

A New Generation of Caretakers

The remaining congregation, by resolution of its trustees, is transferring the property to the Mount Gilead Retreat Village Foundation so the church's mission continues under a new generation of caretakers. The great-granddaughter of the Mills founding family has committed the land by signed donation agreement. We are keeping faith with the founders.

THE FOUNDING FAMILIES

Spencer · Sydnor · Cage · Kimbrough · Mills · Bellamy

VISION & FOUNDATION

A Modern Balm in Gilead

To create a sacred village where spirituality, healing, Black history, family legacy, African diasporic memory, wellness, education, and communal restoration converge to transform generations.

Jesus restored bodies, dignity, community, identity, and belonging. Mount Gilead operates from the same conviction: healing is holy, rest is sacred, memory matters, land carries spiritual significance, liberation is biblical, and community is essential to human flourishing.

The Four Pillars

FAITH

Our Foundation

EDUCATION

Our Liberation

HERITAGE

Our Roots

COMMUNITY

Our Strength

Gye Nyame — 'Except for God.' The whole work rests under God's sovereignty.

Sankofa — 'Go back and get it.' Reclaiming heritage to move forward.

Nyame Dua — God's presence. Divine protection over the land and its people.

*“May the Lord our God be with us as he was with our ancestors;
may he never leave us or abandon us.”*

— 1 Kings 8:57 (NLT)

17.1 ACRES IN OLMSTEAD, KENTUCKY

What We Are Building

One intention governs the whole property: when someone arrives, they should feel that this place has been praying longer than they have been alive.



The Site Master Plan — sanctuary, retreat cabins, and memorial grounds across 17.1 acres.



The Balm House — a 3,000 sq ft sanctuary of wellness, sacred rest, and healing.

The sacred village zones: the restored 1894 sanctuary · the rebuilt Rosenwald Institute (Est. 1922) · the Balm House · four themed retreat cabins · the Woods Cathedral · the Gilead Remembrance Garden and cemetery grounds.

THE INVITATION

Build the First Two Cabins

Our first campaign is deliberately modest and immediately visible: build the first two retreat cabins. Each cabin costs \$125,000–\$175,000 all-in — home, foundation, deck, utilities, and furnishings. Two cabins launch the village for \$275,000–\$350,000, and retreat revenue then helps fund the next two. Your gift builds something that stands on sacred ground and earns income for the mission every year after.

Naming Opportunities

Secret Garden — Couples Retreat Cabin	\$175,000
The Jubilee — Clergy Retreat Cabin	\$150,000
Sankofa — Heritage & Healing Cabin	\$150,000
Watchtower — Prayer Retreat Cabin	\$150,000
Group Lodge & Cohort House — sleeps 16–24 (Phase Two)	\$400,000–\$700,000
The Woods Cathedral — outdoor worship grove	Tiered
Heritage bricks & labyrinth tiles	Every level

Further opportunities include the Balm House, the Gilead Institute and Johnstown Black Family Archive, the Remembrance Garden, the amphitheater, the orchard, and founding-family giving circles. Every major donor of \$5,000 or more receives a handcrafted clay keepsake formed from the land itself.



The retreat cabin concept — 400–500 sq ft elevated tiny homes set among the trees.

FOUNDING PARTNER OPPORTUNITIES

Three Places Waiting for a Name



The Rosenwald Leadership & Heritage Center

Naming gift: \$1,000,000

Rebuilt from the legacy of the Rosenwald Schools (Est. 1922) — heritage exhibits, leadership workshops, library and archives, a storytelling porch, and a fellowship hall with a full commercial kitchen. Estimated project cost: \$600,000–\$1.2 million.



The Retreat Lodge

Lead naming gift: \$1,250,000

The heart of hospitality at Mount Gilead — great room, dining hall, hospitality kitchen, guest suites, and screened porch. Estimated project cost: \$2.5 million. Named spaces within the Lodge available from \$50,000–\$250,000.

THE LEGACY WALK — A GIFT AT EVERY LEVEL

Engraved heritage bricks at \$150 and family pavers at \$1,000–\$2,500 pave the walk that connects the sanctuary, the cemetery, and the village — every name set in stone.

The brick campaign funds the Walk itself and seeds the next project.

Project figures are planning estimates, subject to final design, contractor pricing, and Board approval.

Stewardship You Can Trust

Legal standing

Mount Gilead Retreat Village Corporation, a Kentucky nonprofit (KRS Chapter 273), recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) public charity effective May 27, 2026. Gifts are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

The land

Both parcels are committed by signed donation agreement from the Mills founding family. The site: 1479 W. Old Volney Road, Olmstead, Kentucky — 17.1 acres of gently rolling countryside.

Governance

A Board of Directors serving staggered three-year terms, meeting at least quarterly, under bylaws and a conflict-of-interest policy — governed by the values of dignity, justice, healing, stewardship, hospitality, and respect for ancestral legacy and sacred land.

Phased growth

Development proceeds in disciplined phases. We build only what the mission and the budget can sustain, and each phase funds the next through retreat and program revenue.

Leadership

Founded and led by Dr. Stacy L. Spencer, Board Chair and Vision Steward — Founding Senior Pastor of New Direction Christian Church, Memphis — serving with Lady Rhonda Spencer and a board drawn from the founding families and trusted professional partners.

*Donors fund sacred, income-producing spaces
with a story they can stand behind.*

A DECLARATION OF STEWARDSHIP

We acknowledge Mount Gilead as sacred ground entrusted to our family and community for spiritual restoration, cultural preservation, healing, education, and generational stewardship. We do this work with gratitude for those who came before, faithfulness to our present stewardship, and hope for generations yet to come. This land shall serve as a sanctuary, a place of remembrance, a center of learning, a house of healing, and a witness to faith, freedom, and resilience.

We survived. We remember. We return. We heal. We build.

*“Let each generation tell its children of your mighty acts;
let them proclaim your power.”*

— Psalm 145:4 (NLT)

JOIN THE CLOUD OF WITNESSES

Mount Gilead Retreat Village Foundation, Inc. — a 501(c)(3) public charity

themountgileadvillage.com

Dr. Stacy L. Spencer, Osofo · Lady Rhonda Spencer, Osofo Maame

UNAPOLOGETICALLY CHRISTIAN. UNASHAMEDLY AFRICAN.



Gloria Norine Cage Kimbrough

*"She is clothed with strength and dignity,
and she laughs without fear of the future."*

— Proverbs 31:25, NLT

MOUNT GILEAD RETREAT VILLAGE
CAGE & KIMBROUGH FAMILY LINEAGE