

A Memorial Day Spiritual Observance at the Clifton Family Church in New Jersey

Carol Pobanz
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Memorial Day is a day to honor the lives of those who have died bravely defending our country. In parallel recognition, more than sixty brothers and sisters gathered on Memorial Day, May 25, 2015, at the Clifton Family Church in New Jersey. The event was an homage to the national observance of Memorial Day, but also to remember and celebrate the lives of those passed-on saints within the New Jersey Unification community who lived their lives engaged in the spiritual war led by God and our True Parents.

A twenty-foot-long, linen-covered table held the photos, name placards and food offerings for some thirty individuals being remembered. Gentle background music created a warm, embracing atmosphere for those attending.

During the hour-long service, prayers, songs, a musical offering and moving testimonies were shared by family and friends of the departed. Pastor Manoj Jacob gave his own family's testimony and reminded participants that we should not hesitate in expressing our love to those around us. He encouraged those gathered to strive toward the realization of the public aspirations and dreams of those who have passed on before us.

A short ceremony followed Pastor Manoj's sermon, allowing for each family to honor the legacy of its deceased loved one. In the ceremony, incense was lit and a flower was floated in a large bowl of water, symbolizing the freedom of the spirit in an eternal life of love. Finalizing the appreciation of each person, a chime was rung and a bow offered.

Of course, no memorial service in New Jersey would be complete without Rev. Hitoshi Onishi's rousing "Og Mansei" (victory) cheer to honor the holy lives being celebrated. Families enjoyed a luncheon together, and took time to visit the grave sites of loved ones nearby.

It was a moving experience for all involved. The Clifton Family Church hopes to make this memorial observance an annual event.

