

True Parents' Birthday Celebrated in the USA

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Las Vegas, NV

The Las Vegas Family Church (LVFC) celebrated True Parents' Birthday at the Cheon Hwa Gung on Saturday February 13, 2016. To lead up to the main BBQ picnic, the core outreach team had been witnessing for the past ten days, visiting stores, passing out invitations and going around the neighborhood door-to-door. Shine City Project held their weekly service at a local home and family business. CARP hosted an event called "Lean On Me" designed to develop true elder sibling and younger sibling relationships. After the morning events, over 40 guests and 100 Unificationists came to the BBQ picnic to visit and celebrate the occasion.

CARP Las Vegas together with University of Las Vegas (UNLV) college students also hosted its first "Lean On Me" event. Together with local Unificationist youth, high school students were invited to an exciting morning of icebreakers and team building activities. The program was inspired to celebrate the birthday of True Parents by developing true elder and younger relationships between high school students and college students. High school students were given the opportunity to share openly about their experiences with friendships. Many were moved and expressed their gratitude to have college students who are willing to listen and support them. CARP Las Vegas hopes this can be the foundation to establish HARP in Las Vegas high schools, a program True Father envisioned to educate young people.

Inside the Cheon Hwa Gung sanctuary, the LVFC presented an exhibit on the history of True Parents with a video presentation as well as a display and bookstore. Besides books, participants could also purchase a new T-Shirt printed with True Mother's quote of: We are "Brothers and Sisters who Realize the Dream."

Mimi Morse, President of FEEF, invited VIPs from the local Las Vegas Korean Association to visit the Cheon Hwa Gung for the first time. They were impressed by how beautiful the place was and enjoyed the festivities. Reverend Andy Compton answered many questions about True Father's life and Unificationist beliefs and traditions. Mimi Morse explained, "I want to give them a good impression of True Father, that we are not strange people because our church is different."

UPF, WFWP and local Unificationists felt the freedom to invite guests of all ages. Throughout the day, guests and neighbors visited with their families and enjoyed the food and fellowship with other community members. Reverend Compton also gave an introduction to True Parents before they cut the cake and took a group picture. The celebration was an excellent way for Unificationists to introduce True Parents and the LVFC to their guests.

Families with young children were especially invited to come and celebrate True Parents' Birthday together. The LVFC rented a bounce house jumper for the younger kids to enjoy. During the celebration, the parents felt free to sit down and eat while their children could play games and run around the beautiful yard at Cheon Hwa Gung. Different activities including dodgeball, volleyball and even striking the piñata was organized by the LVFC.

The LVFC also organized live entertainment during the BBQ Picnic. Angelica, a local CARP student, had the confidence to invite her friend from class to come and perform for True Parents' Birthday. Other young Unificationists also showcased their musical talents. The birthday festivities were a wonderful

opportunity for outreach and to introduce others to True Parents.

Kona, HI



Nine guests joined a celebration of the birthday of True Parents at the Kona Family Church on Friday night. Dr. Sam Masilamoney gave the main message, sharing about his experience with True Parents. They had a special dinner cooked by Chef Kyoji Sano and his wife Masako. After dinner and entertainment, the group watched the True Parents' Birthday video, followed by sharing and testimonies. The evening was also a chance to share in celebrating one of the guests' 90th birthday. The congregation had two celebration cakes and enjoyed a festive evening.

Bridgeport, CT



Wanting to take advantage of the President's Day weekend, the local community planned three events on Saturday, Sunday and Monday to commemorate the birth of our True Parents.

On Saturday, the WFWP local chapter had a fundraiser that included children's dances, a fashion show, exquisite hors d'oeuvres, mocktails and a silent auction. The report on the work done in various schools of Africa and the progress they are making was quite moving.

"Education is more important than any other aid we could give," said Keiko Breland, a long-time supporter. "Education lasts a lifetime and helps girls, especially, avoid abuse and AIDS and provides for their future. Some schools have even received national awards." To recognize True Parents' investment, a

birthday cake was presented and participants sang “Happy Birthday”.

On Sunday, a celebratory Sunday Service was held in which Pastor Abe Deshotel and band members played and sang moving songs together. It really touched the audience’s heart. The message was given by Katharina Zambon on “The Power of Decision.” Katharina was the first person to join the Unification movement in Paraguay and she told some funny stories about that time and even some times when she doubted her decision to join. The takeaway was that True Father and True Mother made powerful decisions to follow God and lead our movement. We are all beneficiaries of those fateful decisions.

Service was followed by a potluck lunch organized by Atsuko Giampaoli and a group of Kodan sisters. Due to a lack of space in the University Building, lunch was served on the stage of the Mertens Theatre, giving a festive feel to the meal.

The program ended with a rousing live band who led everyone in square dancing, line dancing, swing and waltz. The participants, including four guests, truly enjoyed themselves and gleefully wished each other a “Happy True Parents’ Birthday.”

The festivities continued on Monday evening with a Showcase of the Art and Mind where local talent displayed their abilities in art, speech and song under the theme “living for the sake of others.” Cash prizes were awarded.

Pastor Mika Deshotel and her team felt it was a good start in highlighting this Holy Day and look forward to expanding on it in the years ahead.

Dallas, TX



The Dallas Family Federation celebrated True Heavenly Parent’s day and True Parents’ Birthday on February 7, 2016. Korean Evangelical Association (KEA) and Family Federation members joined to bring 165 brothers and sisters together to celebrate the Holy Days. The sanctuary was filled with the presence of God, and there was a sweet, joyful spirit in the room. The Dallas Family Church Band lead the congregation in singing three holy songs, and Rev. Jin Hyung Lee led everyone in reading the Family Pledge. Rev. Dr. Mark and Yuri Hernandez offered the Heavenly Parent’s Day prayer.

Rev. John Jackson, Pastor of the Dallas Family Church, read selections from the Cham Bum Gyeong on the topic of Heavenly Parent’s and True Parents’ sacrifice to bring about the First God’s Day in 1968. He also read a scripture about God’s ideal being manifested on earth through the love of True Parents. He shared the importance of the gift of the Word of God and spoke about the Cham Bum Gyeong and all of the books that contain True Parents’ words. After the sermon, the contents of the offering table was shared with the whole congregation.

Rev. Jackson also called up a few couples as representatives of the congregation, and gave each of them a copy of the Cham Bum Gyeong. Everyone was so moved by the gesture.

A local TV personality, Ester Davis, was in the audience and said she loved everything about the service. She asked Rev. Jackson to give her special greetings and thanks to True Mother. It was a great day of cheer and blessings.

Clifton, NJ

The Clifton Family Church held their True Parents’ Birthday celebration on February 13. Despite the coldest weather to hit New Jersey this year, a huge crowd showed up for the celebration. It made the service joyful and heartwarming. The families gathered clapped and cheered throughout the service. The Holy Day message was especially inspiring. The speaker, Mr. Steve Sprague, explained the importance of

celebrating True Parents' Birthday. Just as America recognizes George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthdays because they played an important role in our nation's history, True Parents should also be recognized with that same feeling.



To commemorate True Parents' Birthday, the local Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles (CARP) Chapter hosted a service project called Global Citizens' Service Project where members cleaned up the city for one hour. It was a frigid hour as participants returned with stiff, cold hands, but everyone said it was well worth it, and a great way to honor the day.

Little Rock, AR



The Arkansas Birthday celebration was held at the FFWPU Center in Little Rock, Arkansas at 11 AM. Nineteen people were in attendance including two guests. Rev. Bruce Biggin gave the keynote address and shared about the significance of the day. He said that we are celebrating True Parent's Birthday on an international level and that we ought to consider the contributions they have made to God and His providence and to the world in bringing about world peace and reconciliation.

Several guests expressed their happiness to join in on the day. One guest, a 91 year-old Christian Pastor, was moved by the family pledge and asked to take a copy home. The other guest was a Muslim brother. He said that whenever he came to the church, even though he is Muslim, he feels a part of it, not like an outsider. He went to Korea in 2005

and deeply appreciates True Parents.

After a prayer, the congregation cut the ceremonial cake. The pastor also made a copy of True Father's poem, "Crown of Glory", and framed it as a gift for the guests.

The participants enjoyed a delicious meal of bulgogi and japchae after the service. They also watched a seven-minute video on True Parents' lives and heard testimonies from members of the community.

Columbus, OH

On Saturday morning, Unificationists in Ohio celebrated True Parents' Birthday with a Pledge Service at 8am. The families shared testimonies and reflections about True Parents.

Fred Schlichting shared how as a driver for Generation Peace Academy (GPA) he once witnessed the distress of the team members as they were driving to see True Parents and realized they were not going to make it in time because of severe weather. Despite their different backgrounds and places in life, they all had their this longing for their True Parents in common.

His father, Lothar Schlichting, offered a global perspective on True Parents' Birthday, since over this weekend the security conference in Munich, Germany gathered world leaders to finally resolve the

conflict in Syria.



On Sunday, UC Columbus and its guests hosted an elaborate celebration of True Parents' Birthday. The Universal Peace Federation (UPF) USA and Women's Peace Federation (WFP) USA representatives presented True Parents as visionaries with "ideas whose time has come" and people who have touched their lives and led by example.

Rachael Fall passionately recited True Father's poem, "Crown of Glory." The Sunday School children then recited a quote by True Father and each said a word to spell out the meaningful phrase: "The joy of parents comes from children and the joy of children comes from parents".

Members of the community then shared their personal testimonies, touching on the many aspects that True Parents have taught them.

After lunch, participants enjoyed entertainment and a new tradition of exchanging gifts in honor of True Parents.

Salt Lake City, UT



February is Interfaith Month in Salt Lake City and so the Salt Lake Family Church made their celebration

of True Parents' Birthday on Saturday, February 13th open to the public with a luncheon and entertainment. Pastors Mike and Wendy Stovall welcomed over thirty Unificationists and guests to the church with a short explanation of who True Parents are and their vision for families and an ideal nation.

A string quartet formed by the daughters of some of the families performed, "My Heart Will Go On," and the church's children's choir sang, "All the Lands that I've Loved."

A trio of Japanese sisters sang the song "Hometown," and then the True Parents' birthday video was shown. It was well received, and guests asked to view it again after lunch. Everyone enjoyed the potluck meal and the entertainment.

Minneapolis, MN



The Minneapolis Family Church organized a traditional 7am morning pledge service with an offering table to celebrate True Parents' Birthday on February 13th.

Pastor Denise emceed the service with about 40 participants gathered at the Minneapolis Family Church center. The keynote message, given by Unificationist Rosemary Yokoi, was about how True Father is still very much alive, though he is not with us physically anymore. Also, a beautiful congratulatory song was performed by Unificationist Rieko Clipper. Participants enjoyed traditional Korean dishes as breakfast and time to share with friends and family.

The congregation also offered a rainbow of 1,000 paper cranes to True Parents with the wish of realizing world peace. Many hands, young and old, participated and helped to complete the project.

One Unificationist, Jim Gavin, said, "We now have three young adults leading our church in Minnesota. Our celebration of True Parents' birthday was filled with sincere devotion and youthful energy. Our younger generation love True Parents and inspire us all!"

Charlotte, NC



Pastor Klaus Schick of Charlotte Family Church in North Carolina held an inspiring Sunday Service with representatives from four different church communities.

Some gathered on Sunday morning for a joyful and spirited celebration. After viewing a video and scripture readings presented by Don Bramwell, Pastor Klaus Schick offered some concluding thoughts about the meaning of this day. He said, “True Father is watching us and history will write about us. Let’s be aware of this and take care for each other’s spiritual well-being.”

Atlanta, GA



On Sunday, February 14th, the Atlanta Family Church and local KEA members and guests gathered together to celebrate the 49th True Heavenly Parent’s Day and True Parents’ Birthday. On Saturday, there was a flurry of activity as volunteers cleaned and decorated the building, prepared the offering table and beautiful flower arrangements in preparation for the celebration service.

As guests arrived on Sunday morning, they commented on the high spirit that they felt in the sanctuary. An American Clergy Leadership Conference (ACLC) minister who recently moved to the Atlanta area said that he was deeply moved by the service, especially the video presentation that expressed the vision of True Parents. He and his wife will be participating in the Foundation Day Marriage Blessing Ceremony next weekend.

Following the pledge service officiated by Rev. and Mrs. Haruki Kimura, Rev. Kyeong Lae Ko spoke deeply about following the example of our True Parents in our daily lives.

For many, the highlight of the service was the entertainment put together by the youth and young adults of the community. The children’s Sunday School, under the direction of Mrs. Shirley Mawejje, inspired everyone with three songs including two in Korean. The entertainment also included a modern-day take on the Good Samaritan, musical numbers and a fashion show.

While sharing a wonderful lunch together following the service, comments were heard how the celebration personified the message of our True Mother about cooperation and working together as one family under our Heavenly Parent.

Boston, MA



Over 200 Unificationists and friends gathered at the Boston Family Church to celebrate True Parents' Birthday. Families from Worcester, Gloucester, and New Hampshire joined in the event.

The Holy Day address was given by Pastor Heather Thalheimer of Faith Fushion in New Hampshire.

Her title was "Stand Up for God". The message used the award-winning movie "Bridge of Spies" as an allegory for the role of True Parents in liberating people from an evil world.

The music was provided by "New England All-Star Band" led by Nicholas Corley.

Participants enjoyed a greeting from the Ono family who came to the stage together to thank the community for support provided during the recent passing of their blessed daughter, Songja.

The community enjoyed a huge traditional Holy Day lunch including Korean food prepared by a team of church volunteers, plus potluck offerings by members of the community.

After lunch, the community enjoyed a one-hour entertainment program, featuring nine different acts including bands, dancers, and solo entertainers.

Then, at 2:30, everyone gathered for the annual Yute Tournament and Table Tennis Tournament. Over 80 competitors joined in for the Yute Tournament, competing for \$1,200 in prize money. The competition was loud, vicious and relentless. In the end, the all female teams took the prizes, and everyone had a good time participating and watching.

Milwaukee, WI



Unificationists in Milwaukee, Wisconsin came together for pledge, service, and a Yute game to celebrate True Parents' Birthday. A beautiful offering table was arranged for everyone to share and all enjoyed visiting with friends and family.

Seattle, WA

On Saturday, February 13, the Seattle Family Church celebrated the True Parents' Birthday at the Windermere Mansion. The house was filled with families. A few families from the KEA of Tacoma, WA also attended.

Following the recitation of the Family Pledge, little kids were excited to get invited to cut the celebration cake. Then, short excerpts from the Cham Bum Gyeong were read giving details about the birth of True Father and True Mother. The highlight of the pledge service was the True Parents' Birthday video tribute presentation narrated by FFWPU USA President, Dr. Michael Balcomb. Many attendees were moved by the video as it touched their hearts in gratitude to True Father and True Mother.



A wonderful Holy Day offering table was sincerely prepared with a king salmon, True Parents' favorite dish. After the service, everyone enjoyed the wonderful feast. The Seattle Family Church sent its best birthday wishes to True Parents with a group photo. On February 25, the Universal Peace Federation of Seattle will extend a True Parents birthday celebration with Ambassadors for Peace and friends at the Windermere Mansion.