

FFWPU UK: Celebrating the Lives of Our Dear Ascended Brothers and Sisters

Michael Balcomb
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A Testimony From The Annual Memorial Service Celebrating the Lives of Our Dear Brothers and Sisters Who Ascended to the Spiritual World

Brothers and sisters from around the country gathered on Saturday 14th August at the Holy Oak Memorial Woodland in Stanton Fitzwarren. They came together to remember and celebrate the lives of their beloved relatives who ascended to the spiritual world.

The service was uplifting and high-spirited. It was so good to see each other, not on our computer screen in the confine of our homes, but in the tangible reality of this beautiful and peaceful environment of the Holy Oak Memorial Woodland, close to our loved ones' Wonjeon.

The service took place half-in and half-out of the building, on the site. Betty R. guided the congregation through the service starting with an opening prayer and holy songs accompanied by Ron G. on his guitar. The united voices of our brothers and sisters resonated in the place and must have surely reached Heaven, inviting our relatives to be with us.



Testimonies by David F and Annie R. followed. Both spoke about their love for their spouses and how they still feel their presence and guidance in their lives. David mentioned: "Please show your love and appreciation to your spouse when he/she is still with you on this earth". Jeff then played on his flute a lullaby that his mother used to sing to him when he was a baby. This created a lovely atmosphere before the reading and message from Dr. Mike Balcomb, the full recording of which is available to watch below:

Mike mentioned the upcoming 9th anniversary of True Father's Seonghwa, and recalled some of his personal experiences with him, namely when guests were invited to a banquet and had to wait several hours listening to True Father before they could eat. Roses were then offered to each bereaved family present, and Franklin F. remembered and mentioned the names of our brothers and sisters who have

ascended. They are our heroes, our champions, and we will never forget them. Despite many challenges, they responded to the call of Heaven, and gave their youth and lives to follow and work together with our True Parents.



Françoise M. then gave a report on the Seonghwa Ministry, how it came to be and how it developed over the years. The uniqueness of our Seonghwa Ministry in the UK is that the ministry is not just focused on the support during the Seonghwa ceremony and the burial itself, but also on the importance of the aftercare for our bereaved families. Bereavement does not stop after the Seonghwa ceremony, it is a lifelong journey. After the offering and the closing prayer from Mrs. Fumiko Balcomb, members visited their loved ones' Wonjeon, where they laid their flowers and spent some time in reflection and prayer. The afternoon was spent sharing lunch together and catching up with each other.



We would like to thank everyone who came and all those who helped to organise the service. A special thanks goes to Dr. and Mrs. Balcomb for taking the time to be with us on this occasion. We would like also to recognise and thank Keiko for her hospitality and for welcoming us to this beautiful holy place of the Holy Oak Memorial Woodland.

- Françoise M.