

## Unification Church members in the USA celebrate the first anniversary of Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon's ascension

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*The WestRock community took a group photo at East Garden after the commemoration event of Rev. Moon's First Anniversary of his ascension.*

In all parts of the United States commemorative ceremonies were held to recognize the life, vision and the works of Rev. Sun Myung Moon, also known as Father Moon. As a result of the variety of pictures and reports from across the country, Unification News will separately review the *Seonghwa* celebrations in the western and eastern United States.

### Seonghwa Anniversary Events in the Eastern United States



*Susan Bouachri shared her testimony about how Rev. Moon touched her life.*

The **WestRock Family Church** in Tarrytown, New York celebrated the anniversary of Rev. Moon's passing with their Sunday Service on August 25, 2013 at East Garden, the former residence—turned church facility—of Rev. and Mrs. Moon when they lived in Tarrytown. The congregation sang worship- and Holy Songs in the East Garden Main Room. Susan Bouachri was one of four Unificationists who shared testimonies about "How True Father Touched My Life." Afterwards, the gathering savored a singing contest led by Justin Okamoto, the Young Adult Pastor, followed by youth entertainment, which included the lovely violin performance from Tiara Borneman and Marina Karr. (Check out the WestRock Facebook page for more photos from this event.)

In New York City, **the Unification Church NYC** held a special Sunday Service in which the usual rows of chairs in the worship hall were replaced with karate mats covered with white sheets. "We had people of all ages and a few guests," Pastor Andrew Love wrote to Unification News. "My Dad was there with his friend, so I saw the need to make everything super guest friendly." Singing of holy songs started the event, and Pastor Love briefly explained about the origin of the songs. "The spirit was pretty high, because our band played the songs really loudly, and the audience sang loudly to match the volume," he

wrote. Then videos about Rev. Moon's life were presented. Pastor Love gave a message about how belief in God and True Parents is only possible with action, because faith is proactive. He said of his message, "The purpose was to remind everyone that while True Father was a great man, his legacy is only as great as we can become. That takes the concept of True Father out of the clouds and into our lives." The congregation then participated in a quiz game about True Father's life, and the prizes were True Parents trading cards. Then, an abundant potluck lunch was shared, and Pastor Love commented, "It was a true miracle of culinary proportions."



*Hundreds of people from the New Jersey church gathered at the main hall in Camp Sunrise to commemorate the first anniversary of Rev. Moon's passing.*

The **Unification Church in New Jersey** held a special service in the peaceful setting of Camp Sunrise in the Harriman State Park, New York. Young Unificationists led the holy songs as the congregation sang along. Dr. Ann Iparraguirre, the District Pastor of New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware, gave the main message to commemorate the first anniversary of Rev. Moon's passing. After the service, the congregation thoroughly enjoyed a vast array of food prepared by the hard-working kitchen team. (View photos of the event at the Unification Church New Jersey's Facebook page.)



*The Camp Sunrise kitchen staff worked hard to prepare food for hundreds of people while wearing a smile on their faces.*



*The Boston Family Church participated in the live broadcast from Korea.*



*Young adults from the Worcester Family church led the singing.*



*The Bridgeport Family Church gathered at the University of Bridgeport.*

In the Northeast, **the Boston Family church** settled into its Beacon Hill church building to tune in and watch the live broadcast of the anniversary ceremony in Korea. The **Worcester Family Church** gathered at the Martin Luther King, Jr., building, where the young-adult Unificationists led the singing, members of the congregation gave testimonies of Rev. Moon, and the entire community watched the live broadcast. The **Bridgeport Family Church** held an Ascension Anniversary Ceremony at the University of Bridgeport.



*Unificationists and friends in South Carolina gathered together on August 24th to commemorate the first anniversary of Rev. Moon's passing.*

The **Charlotte Unification Church Family in North Carolina** had a memorable commemoration last Sunday with special visitors such as Imam John Ramadan and his wife, according to the Facebook page. The message on Facebook added, "Two video's on True Father's Life helped us all to connect and feel the high Spirit of the occasion. The Imam gave a few words reflecting on Sun Myung Moon as a Man of God and his impressions of us, the Unification Church-Members as good people that stand out in their sincerity for God."



*Special friends from interfaith projects joined in the celebration at the Alabama/Mississippi event.*

In the Southern region, **South Carolina** held a celebration on August 24, 2013 attended by 19 American Clergy Leadership Conference (ACLC) Pastors and some of their members. "The spirit was very high and holy, especially while watching the video explaining our True Father's life course until he ascended," reported Rev. Enzo LaRocca. "The blessed members and guests were deeply moved and inspired to

continue to work with True Parents attending them centering on True Mother's leadership. "



*The young people from Orlando, Florida reflected on the stories their parents told after the anniversary celebration.*

In **Orlando, Florida** all the members showed up Sunday to watch True Father's life through a slideshow, followed by the video broadcast from Korea. Afterwards the members shared stories of their personal encounters with True Father.



*In Palm Coast, Florida 15 members participated in the celebration.*



*A member of the Palm Coast community made this cake for the celebration.*

There were 15 people at the celebration in **Palm Coast, Florida**. A talented Unificationist in the Palm Coast community made the cake.



*The Unificationists from Alabama and Mississippi gathered together to commemorate the first anniversary of Rev. Moon's passing.*

**The Unification Church of Alabama and Mississippi** held a joint celebration on August 24th and set the theme for the program as "Gratitude for how Rev. Moon had personally affected our lives here in Alabama and Mississippi," reported Rev. Teresa Yamane. Rev. Joshua Cotter, who had been Alabama's state leader for 10 years, served as the main speaker. Rev. Yamane wrote: "Father Moon's contributions to humanity were vast, and we chose especially to highlight three areas at this first [anniversary] event: his inspiration for our interfaith work, his inspiration for business, and especially his inspiration behind the Blessing." Pastor Yamane added: "The comments from the audience, and the speakers themselves, was that it was a beautiful, moving, educational, and inspirational event, honoring a man with a mind and

vision so huge and extraordinary, that it could only be a person chosen by God for this time. It had a powerful impact, due to the heart, prayers and unity of the Alabama and Mississippi members. From this program we have recognized again, the power of prayer, and have decided to add a focused time of prayer one hour before our Sunday Service from now on to pray for our True Parents, our families, and our guests, and the healing and growth of our Movement.”



*Members and guests partake in song and cake cutting in Atlanta, Georgia.*

**In Atlanta, Georgia**, the community held a youth picnic on Saturday August 24th, with 24 youth and 10 parents attending the sports activities, BBQ dinner and pastor’s talk about Rev. Moon. “For our Anniversary Service we had a total of 140 attendees,” reported Rev. Haruki Kimura. “There were 13 guests, five of whom were local VIPs. (Georgia State Rep. Sheila Jones; Former Georgia State Sen. Steen Miles; former Secretary of MLK Jr., Dr. Babs Phillips; Mrs. Richardean Anderson, CEO of Fulton Leadership Academy; and Minister Pamela Flanagan).”



*Georgia State Representative Sheila Jones gave short testimony about Rev. Moon.*

There was singing and praise, a video about Rev. Moon’s life, a violin performance from a young Unificationist, a recording of the ceremonies previously broadcasted and sharing of short testimonies from the local VIPs and Unificationists. “Those testimonies were very personal and touched the whole audience. There were songs and dances in between the testimonies, creating an uplifting, dynamic atmosphere,” according to Rev. Kimura. “After the service everyone enjoyed a delicious potluck lunch in the fellowship hall.”



*Members of the Chicago Family Church and guests place flowers to commemorate Rev. Moon’s passing.*



*The event in Chicago was filled with people whose lives were touched by Rev Moon.*

In Chicago, **the Chicago Family Church** and surrounding communities held an event titled “A Legacy of True Love: Honoring the Life of Rev. Sun Myung Moon through a Celebration of Our Memories.” The event served as a platform to celebrate Rev. Moon’s legacy and victories. Pastors from ACLC Chicago gave their testimonies about Rev. Moon, and one said, “There is no one who knows the heart of God and Jesus better than Father Moon does.”



*An offering table, customary to Korean tradition, was set up in the Prayer Room of the Windermere estate to commemorate the first anniversary Father Moon’s passing.*

### **Celebrations on the West Coast**



*The historic Windermere estate in Seattle, WA, the former home of Rev. and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon and*

*the current church headquarters for the Northwest Region, was the setting for the special commemorative celebration for Rev. Moon's First Year Anniversary of his Seonghwa (Ascension).*

In **Seattle, WA** a special commemorative celebration was held at the historic Windermere mansion during a beautiful sunny Sunday of August 25, 2013. Rev. Larry Krishnek gave a video report about the special celebration program of Father Moon's *Seonghwa* (Ascension) and said that Seattle Unificationists and friends from different religious organizations (American Clergy Leadership Conference, Women's Federation for World Peace, Universal Peace Federation, etc.) were successful in testifying about what Rev. Moon has done in his life and his contributions in Seattle. (Check out the Seattle church's Facebook page for more photos.)



*Members of Phoenix Unification community gathered at a local member's home to commemorate the first anniversary of Rev. Moon's passing.*

For the **Bay Area Family Church**, there was a one-week celebration of the life of Rev. Moon. "It seems hard to believe that already one year has passed since our True Father ascended to the heavenly realm," reported Rev. Kevin Thompson, pastor of the Bay Area Family Church. "To honor his legacy on earth we held a weeklong celebration at Bay Area Family Church which was filled with deep, sincere prayer, testimonies, song, laughter, heartfelt notes of love to True Parents and above all celebration of the incredible life of the man we all love so dearly."

The Bay Area Family church held a kick-off evening on Monday August 19, 2013 filled with testimonies and singing. Rev. Thompson wrote of Monday evening, "Each brother and sister shared deeply from the heart about their experiences with True Parents over the past 40 years or more. The testimonies were deeply moving and many tears were shed. In the end a prayer of repentance and new determination brought the evening to a close."

On Tuesday August 20th, young families organized an evening for their young children to remember Father Moon. After a testimony by Donald Bond and stories of fishing with Father Moon from Pastor Thompson the children each offered a flower in remembrance of Father. Then the children wrote a note or drew a picture to send to True Parents expressing their love for True Parents. "It was a wonderful age-appropriate way of involving even the youngest members of our community," wrote Rev. Thompson.

The Youth Ministry and Young Adults organized their own gathering to share and remember Rev. Moon on August 21st. The testimonies about gratitude from the young group of Unificationists were moving, according to Pastor Thompson, because "this young group of Unificationists are all the product of True Parent's Blessings and in a real way are a product of the True Love taught by True Parents. The evening was one of reflection and contemplation of how to carry on the legacy of True Parents and their own parents."

For the live broadcast from Korea on August 22, 2013 the church was "packed to the rafters."

On Saturday, August 23rd, the Bay Area Community dedicated its monthly Community of Faith Breakfast to the memory of Father Moon. Rev. Thompson reported the following: "Dr. Mose Durst, former President of HSA-UWC USA, was the keynote speaker, and he shared deeply from his heart of how Father Moon is the most important person in his life and then explained why that is so. He shared some of the deep things Father Moon taught him in life and to focus on what is important and to not get caught up in things that are of far less significance. He also shared how Father Moon taught him about

being a person of heavenly dignity, always giving his best for God. Rev. Jasper Lowery then shared that he saw Father Moon as a man of deep prayer, and everything he did was bathed in prayer. Rev Lowery wondered how he was fortunate enough to have been able to meet Father Moon, and he concluded that it was because of his own prayer life.”

The Sunday service at the Bay Area Family Church on August 25th was dedicated to testimonies of Father Moon from the congregation. After the service, there was a church picnic and games for kids. Many friends of the church were able to attend and celebrate.



*Naoko Hiraki gave a testimony about Father Moon's life and work and the impact he has had in her life.*

At the **Dallas Family Church**, more than 100 attendees, including many friends of the Unification movement, came out to commemorate Rev. Moon's *Seonghwa*(Ascension) anniversary. A historical speech by Rev. Moon was read with great emotion and clarity by three young Unificationists, according to Rev. Mark Hernandez, the pastor of the Dallas Family Church. There was a musical performance by the CARP Band. Next, distinguished guests gave tributes to Father Moon. Among the speakers were Columnist Mr. Mike Ghouse, who is a well-known guest on Sean Hannity's radio and TV program; Imam Marzuq Jaami, who thanked Father Moon for his legacy and trust to carry on the work of building the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth; Dr. Harold Edwards, the second highest ranking bishop of America's 3rd largest African American denomination – Church of the Living God; And Larry Hornbeck, scientist and Emmy-award winning engineer and inventor, who shared how he went from doubt-ridden to absolutely certain that Rev. Moon is the one man we were all awaiting.



*The Korean Family Church of Los Angeles held a separate celebration.*

In **Los Angeles**, testimonies were share by members about the impact of Father Moon's life and work.

The **Korean Family Church of Los Angeles** held an event to commemorate Rev. Moon's *Seonghwa* (Ascension).





*Unificationists in Las Vegas watch a film about the life and work of Rev. Moon during the anniversary celebration of his Seonghwa (Ascension).*

The **Unification Church in Las Vegas** also held a special celebration as well to commemorate the first anniversary of Rev. Moon's passing.

Unificationists in **Phoenix, Arizona** held a celebration in a cozy home filled with fellowship, sharing of testimonies, and good food.



*In Kona, Hawaii, Japanese missionaries offered a musical performance as part of the commemorative ceremony for Father Moon.*

In **Kona, Hawaii**, Unificationists organized “A Joyful Celebration of the Life and Work of Reverend Sun Myung Moon (1920-2010)” in which the congregation enjoyed a delightful meal, Japanese missionaries offered a musical performance, and testimonies were given by Betsy Jones, Bruce Brown and Kafu Keanaaina about their experiences with Father Moon.