

## Rev. Dr. Michael Balcomb opens new Elizabeth NJ Family Church

E J Rapada  
December 8, 2014



*Old Elizabeth Family Church location at 1070  
Anna St. Elizabeth NJ.*



*New Elizabeth Family Church location at 1139  
Elizabeth Ave. Elizabeth NJ 07201.*

**Elizabeth, New Jersey** – On December 8th, the weather was in the lower 30's but that wasn't an issue for more than 200 congregants and guests who were anxiously waiting by the door of the new church facility of the Elizabeth Family Church to be inaugurated located at 1139 Elizabeth Avenue, Elizabeth NJ 07201.

Rev. Dr. Michael Balcomb, the National President of Family Federation for World Peace and Unification Church (FFWPU) USA with his wife, Fumiko, along with Rev. David Rendel, the National Director of Operations of FFWPU USA and Rev. Greg Agulan, the Pastor of Elizabeth Family Church with his wife Yuka led in cutting the ceremonial ribbon to signal the official use of the new location.

A year ago, families in the church in Elizabeth, NJ, through the leadership of Dr. Ann and Bishop Pablo I., district pastors of district 3 (NJ, PA and DE) centering on the vision of Dr. Michael Balcomb to establish 500 local churches across America decided to come together and plant a new church, which is now the Elizabeth Family Church.

The first Sunday Service was held on February 24, 2013 in the basement of Pastor Greg Agulan's residence. Around 50 people attended this service, which quickly doubled by the end of the first month. Interestingly, families who rarely attend service at the Clifton Family Church started attending the 1PM Service in Elizabeth. Major Holy Days and church special events and ceremonies were also hosted and celebrated.



*Elizabeth Family Church Organizing Committee with Dr. & Mrs. Balcomb and Rev. Rendel.*

As the summer approached, more families and new guests regularly attended the church and space to accommodate everyone became a major concern. This prompted the local pastor and members of the organizing committee to commence on a 40-day prayer condition to find a new facility for worship service and fellowship as well as a place to educate families and to conduct other evangelical works.

Meanwhile, on October 27th, through the recommendation of Dr. Ann I., the Elizabeth Family Church was officially recognized by Dr. Michael Balcomb as a new local church in the state of New Jersey contributing to the fulfillment of Dr. Hak Ja Han's Vision 2020 project to grow the church.

On November 27th, one month after its acknowledgment as a local church, a 2-year lease agreement was signed on the new church facility. To support the rent, each family made voluntary monthly pledges on top of their regular tithe and Sunday offering as a display of their unity, commitment and sense of ownership. Also, groups of families were assigned one Sunday in every month to bring their ethnic dishes to be shared during fellowship time.

Prior to the inauguration ceremony, Dr. Balcomb sanctified the entire 2,400 square-foot facility which includes a multi-purpose hall that also serves as the sanctuary, two rooms that serve as a Sunday School and nursery areas, a room for audio/visual equipment, a room that serves as a provisional kitchen and pantry, and another room for storage. The church is located on the major thoroughfare of uptown Elizabeth City adjacent to the public library and several government offices, nestled amongst Christian churches in all directions and a walking distance from the Elizabeth train station.

The event was also attended by several Unificationist-based organizations such as the Filipino International Community of America (FICA) led by its current President, Mrs. Joy Theriot who also delivered congratulatory remarks and by the African New Hope Association (ANHA) led by its current President Rev. Alain Tamelessio and other community organizations like the Team United Maharlika Foundation led by its President Mr. Rene Ballenas and the ABBBA Foundation led by Rev. Rey Ledda.

During his sermon, Dr. Balcomb encouraged the members, supporters and guests of the Elizabeth Family Church to increase its current church attendees from 100 to 500 by the end of 2014.

With the opening of a bigger facility, many families were very excited to create their own small groups and ministries like Mommy's Group, Youth Ministry, Health Club and a Counselling Service to name a few.

The Elizabeth Family Church adopted its own vision and mission during its General Assembly in June 2013 to guide its ministry as follows:



*The Elizabeth Family Church congregation.*

#### **Elizabeth Family Church Vision:**

“To inherit the true love of Heavenly Parent and True Parents, establish an authentic relationship among brothers and sisters, and build an ideal world through ideal families.”

#### **Elizabeth Family Church Mission Statement:**

“Elizabeth Family Church is an international, interracial and intercultural community comprised of families striving to embody God's ideal of true love and establish a beloved community which seeks to embrace and harmonize with all people and fellowship with all faiths.”

In order to properly respond to and manage all of these local ministries as well as to align to the national goal and Mother Moon's Vision 2020 project, the organizing committee through the leadership of Pastor Greg Agulan will embark into a 2-Day Retreat and Strategic Planning by mid-January 2014.

Finally, we thank all Blessed Central Families of the Elizabeth Family Church who supported and sincerely prayed for this historical milestone, especially Pastor Greg Agulan and the members of the organizing committee who work tirelessly and in voluntary capacity, namely Rev. Manuel Vargas (Assistant Pastor and Property Coordinator), Rev. Mabau Ilemabila (Program Coordinator), Mrs. Christine Rapada (Communications Director), Mr. Mathieu Mukanda (Bookkeeper), Rev. Emiljun Rapada (Education Director and Co-Program Coordinator), Mrs. Doris De Sousa (Sunday School Coordinator), Mrs. Joy De Souza (Witnessing and Prayer Ministry), Rev. Elece McKnight (Outreach Coordinator), Mr. Daryl Franklin (Music Ministry), Mrs. Yuka Agulan (Hospitality and Food Coordinator), Mr. Tony Appia and Mrs. Lourdes Dos Santos (Witnessing and Vision 2020 Coordinator).

Below are some reflections from attendees:

*“The new church is strategically located where I can easily commute from my home in Brooklyn. I wish I could have brought other people today to have this amazing experience”.*

*“Thank you for inviting me today. Sometimes we have to attend an event like this in order to hear God's*

*message. I feel the sermon was intended for me.”*

*“Even though we belong to another church but we will definitely come back to this church”.*

*“I live in South Jersey and it takes me hours to get to Clifton Church to attend Sunday Service. Now with the establishment of Elizabeth Family Church, it will save me more time and will definitely attend church more often”.*

*“I think we need to move to a bigger church sooner”*