

UPF USA January Bridgebuilder Newsletter

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UPF USA BRIDGEBUILDER NEWSLETTER

January 2026

A monthly snapshot of peace stories, insight, and inspiration.

Peace Practice: Interfaith Harmony Week

“Lasting peace requires harmony and cooperation among religions. Believers of all faith traditions should work together in love and respect, for the sake of fulfilling the Will of our Heavenly Parent,” affirms Rev. Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon.

This vision resonates deeply with the spirit of the United Nations World Interfaith Harmony Week, observed each year in early February, which invites people of all faiths to reaffirm the shared moral foundations of peace through love of God and love of neighbor. For the Universal Peace Federation, this observance reflects a decades-long commitment to

interreligious cooperation championed by its founders, Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Rev. Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, who consistently taught that faith must serve the common good. Through dialogue, education, and service, UPF continues to advance a culture of peace in which religious diversity becomes a source of unity, moral leadership, and shared responsibility for humanity as one family under God.



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True Family Values in Action: A New Year of Hope Begins in Chicago

Chicago kicked off the New Year with joy and unity at the 25th True Family Values Awards Prayer Luncheon, held at the historic Cosmopolitan Community Church. The milestone gathering brought together ACLC and Family Federation members to welcome Dr. and Mrs. Achille Acolatse on their first visit to Chicago since Dr. Achille's appointment as ACLC National

Chairman. His heartfelt keynote, blending Scripture, True Family Values, and joyful expressions of marital love, set a beautiful tone for the day.

Supported by Dr. Ki Hoon Kim, WCLC Chairman, the program honored three community leaders with True Family Values Awards and appointed 17 Ambassadors for Peace. Despite cold weather, the spirit inside was warm and uplifting, as faith leaders, Women in Ministry, and dedicated volunteers came together to celebrate love, service, and renewed hope, deepening relationships centered on Heavenly Parent and Holy Mother Han.



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Ambassador for Peace Spotlight

Jeremy McNally



Jeremy McNally exemplifies the spirit of the Ambassadors for Peace program through his commitment to service, leadership, and community empowerment. Alongside his son, Aiden, he co-founded The Relief Alliance, a nonprofit dedicated to rehabilitating the homeless while also developing youth programs that connect teens to their communities and teach essential life skills. A top-of-his-class full-stack software engineer and author of *How to Unlock Your Inner Drive*, Jeremy brings excellence from the tech world into service, volunteering his time to teach children robotics and coding, efforts recognized by state and local leaders across New Hampshire. By nominating 20 individuals for appointment as Ambassadors for Peace, Jeremy has multiplied his impact, helping UPF identify and uplift leaders who are already building peace through action, mentorship, and service at the grassroots level.

[Read Full Bio](#)

Lighting Candles, Building Bridges: Indiana Calls for Unity

On January 10, 2026, the Indianapolis Chapter of UPF-USA co-hosted the Light of Hope Religious Freedom Forum, bringing together Hindu, Muslim, Christian, and interfaith leaders for a powerful conversation on unity and mutual support. Five faith representatives shared perspectives on healing division, highlighted by a moving candle-lighting ceremony symbolizing God's truth and love overcoming darkness across all traditions.

The evening also marked a special Peace Starts With Me Alliance milestone with the installation of Imam Mikal Saahir as a new Ambassador for Peace, joining fellow Ambassador Bibi Bahrami. Moments of quiet solidarity, such as Imam Saahir requesting a photo beside True Parents after learning of Holy Mother Han's situation, and other clergy offering spontaneous prayers for her protection, underscored the forum's deeper impact. The event affirmed that interfaith cooperation is touching hearts and building peace in meaningful and lasting ways.



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Interfaith Harmony Week: Building Peace Where Faith Meets the Common Good

Each year, the United Nations World Interfaith Harmony Week invites the global community to pause and reflect on a simple yet transformative truth: peace becomes possible when people of faith choose cooperation over conflict and understanding over fear. Observed annually during the first week of February, Interfaith Harmony Week calls attention to the shared moral foundations that unite religious traditions, love of God and love of neighbor, or love of the good and love of neighbor, expressed through diverse beliefs yet grounded in common purpose.



This season of reflection is closely preceded by World Religion Day in January, forming a natural doorway into deeper interreligious engagement. Together, these observances remind societies that faith, when expressed with humility and integrity, can restore moral depth to public life and rebuild social trust in fractured communities. They also align closely with the United Nations' vision for peaceful, inclusive societies and strong partnerships, as outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals.

For the Universal Peace Federation (UPF), interfaith harmony is not a symbolic gesture or a once-a-year theme—it is a lifelong commitment. Since the early 1970s, UPF's founders, Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Rev. Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, invested tirelessly in creating spaces where religious leaders, scholars, and communities could encounter one another with respect and sincerity. Their vision was rooted in the belief that enduring peace requires moral leadership shaped by faith and expressed through service.

Rev. Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon has consistently affirmed this principle, stating:

"Lasting peace requires harmony and cooperation among religions. Believers of all faith traditions should work together in love and respect, for the sake of fulfilling the Will of our Heavenly Parent."

This conviction has guided UPF's interreligious efforts across generations. Rev. Sun Myung Moon modeled this spirit through groundbreaking initiatives such as the Assembly of the World's Religions, interfaith scholarly conferences, and educational institutions that welcomed clergy and academics from diverse traditions. His approach demonstrated that strong faith convictions need not lead to division, but can instead foster deeper courtesy, mutual learning, and shared responsibility for humanity's future.

Following Rev. Moon's passing, Rev. Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon has continued and expanded this legacy, strengthening UPF's interreligious work through new global structures such as the Interreligious Association for Peace and Development. Under her leadership, interfaith dialogue is intentionally linked with peacebuilding, development, and practical cooperation—ensuring that harmony is not merely discussed, but lived.

Interfaith Harmony Week challenges today's faith leaders, educators, youth, and public servants to move beyond rhetoric toward action. Hosting interfaith gatherings, engaging

in joint service projects, promoting religious literacy, and standing together during moments of tension are all tangible ways to embody harmony. When faith communities collaborate on the common good, they help transform diversity from a source of anxiety into a wellspring of wisdom.

UPF's Ambassadors for Peace are especially called during this season to model principled leadership—leadership that listens without surrendering conviction, serves without seeking dominance, and builds bridges where walls once stood. Whether through a small community dialogue or a shared act of compassion, these efforts affirm a hopeful vision: that humanity can learn to live as one family under God.

Interfaith Harmony Week is ultimately an invitation—to believe that peace is possible, to practice cooperation across difference, and to renew the moral courage needed to shape a more just and compassionate world.

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Ambassador for Peace

Spotlight: Jeremy McNally

The strength of the Ambassadors for Peace (AFP) program lies in its ability to recognize and elevate leaders who are already living out the values of service, innovation, and community transformation. Few examples illustrate this better than Jeremy McNally, whose commitment to uplifting others has created ripple effects across generations.

Together with his son, Aiden, Jeremy co-founded The Relief Alliance, a nonprofit dedicated to serving and rehabilitating individuals experiencing homelessness. What makes their work especially powerful is its intergenerational spirit—modeling compassion, responsibility, and civic engagement for young people while addressing urgent community needs. In parallel, Jeremy is helping to build a youth program designed to connect teenagers with their communities, equipping them with life skills and a sense of purpose at a critical stage of development.



Professionally, Jeremy brings the same excellence and intentionality to his career. A full-stack software engineer who graduated at the top of his class, he has served in numerous leadership roles including software development manager, team leader, project manager, and scrum master. He is also the author of *How to Unlock Your Inner Drive*, reflecting his passion for personal growth and leadership development.

Beyond his professional achievements, Jeremy dedicates his time to volunteering—teaching children robotics and coding, and opening doors to future opportunities in technology. His impact has drawn recognition from state and local leaders, including the New Hampshire Senate's Director for Policy and Projects, mayors, and school districts across the state.

In nominating 20 individuals for appointment as Ambassadors for Peace, Jeremy has extended this impact even further. His nominations reflect the heart of AFP: identifying everyday leaders who are building peace not only through words, but through consistent action, service, and mentorship. The AFP program plays a vital role in affirming such leadership, connecting changemakers, and inspiring others to step forward in service to the common good.

Jeremy McNally's work reminds us that peace is built locally, strengthened through partnership, and sustained by leaders willing to invest in people. Through the Ambassadors for Peace program, those efforts are recognized, multiplied, and woven into a global movement for lasting peace.

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True Family Values in Action: A New Year of Hope Begins in Chicago

Lighting Candles, Building Bridges: An Interfaith Call to Unity

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Lighting Candles, Building Bridges: An Interfaith Call to Unity

On Saturday, January 10, 2026, the Indianapolis Chapter of the Universal Peace Federation–USA co-hosted the Light of Hope Religious Freedom Forum in partnership with the Hindu Temple of Central Indiana, the Islamic Center of Muncie (IN), the Nur-Allah Mosque, and the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU). The forum brought together five faith leaders from diverse religious traditions for a thoughtful panel discussion focused on resolving differences among faiths and strengthening mutual support to foster unity.



The program was skillfully moderated by Dr. Madelene Alexander, a member of the Indianapolis Family Church and the Women's Federation for World Peace. Panelists included Dr. Vidya Kathik, representing the Hindu Temple of Central Indiana; Mrs. Bibi Bahrami, President of the Islamic Center of Muncie and founder of Afghan Women's and Kids' Educational Necessities (AWAKEN), offering a Middle Eastern Islamic perspective; and Imam Mikal Saahir, spiritual leader of the Nur-Allah Mosque, who shared insights from the African American Muslim experience.

Christopher Olson, a former missionary to Indonesia and South America for more than thirty years, represented FFWPU and spoke about sharing the love of True Parents through authentic relationships rather than doctrinal instruction alone. Pastor Robert Abendroth, co-pastor of the Indianapolis Family Church, provided an in-depth explanation of the situation facing Dr. Hak Ja Han, co-founder and spiritual leader of FFWPU, who is currently being held in South Korea without having been convicted of any crime.

The theme "Light of Hope" was chosen to reflect the universal symbolism of light as an expression of God's truth and love overcoming darkness—an image found across religious traditions such as Hanukkah in Judaism, Christmas in Christianity, and Diwali in Hinduism. This symbolism was brought to life through a candle-lighting ceremony. A central tall candle representing Holy Mother Han was placed at the center of the display, while each panelist entered carrying a candle symbolizing their faith. Following the discussion, audience members were invited to add their own candles, visually expressing unity among all faith communities.

The event also held special significance for the Peace Starts With Me Alliance, as Imam Mikal Saahir was formally installed as a new Ambassador for Peace. He joined fellow Ambassador Mrs. Bibi Bahrami, who received her AFP certificate more than two years ago. Although Imam Saahir is a student of Imam W. Deen Mohammed and could focus primarily on racial divisions in America, he instead embraces people of all races, religions, and ethnicities, working consistently throughout the community to promote unity and mutual respect.

Imam Saahir's response following the program offered a moving testament to the growing impact of the Peace Starts With Me Alliance. After learning about Holy Mother Han's situation, he asked his wife to take a photograph of him standing beside an image of True Parents—a quiet but deeply meaningful gesture. This experience echoed a separate occasion at another prayer meeting, where a Christian minister from Chicago

independently expressed sorrow upon hearing of Holy Mother Han's imprisonment and offered a public prayer for her safety and protection.

These moments reflect a broader and deeply encouraging trend: faith leaders across America are opening their hearts, responding with compassion, and standing in solidarity for peace and religious freedom. The Peace Starts With Me Alliance is clearly touching lives and inspiring unity at a profound level.

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