

Los Angeles Family Church's 9th Seonghwa Memorial Festival for the ascended

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November, 4, 2017



On the evening of Saturday, November, 4, the Los Angeles Family Church held its ninth annual Seonghwa Memorial Festival to honor local family members and friends who have ascended into the spirit world. 40 people came together to carry on the tradition and share well wishes for their loved ones.

As guests arrived in the chapel, they were greeted by a beautifully-prepared offering table topped with flowers and fruits. Keith McCarthy, emcee, introduced the significance of the ceremony by explaining the three stages of human life. Rather than mourning the dead, Unificationists celebrate death as the beginning of the final, eternal stage of one's existence. To honor those in their eternal stage, the guests sang the Cheon Il Guk Anthem, as well as several holy songs. As the group sang, they felt the spirits of their loved ones and a chorus of angels fill the seats of the chapel.



Afterward, photos and video clips of the ascended members were projected on a slide show. Each photo reflected happy moments from a vibrant life. Reverend Young Tack Yang, the District Pastor, gave a message stressing the importance of keeping the Seonghwa memorial tradition alive in the community. Then Reverend Yang shared True Father's words on the true meaning of life on earth. Here is an excerpt from his message:

Brothers and Sisters! Have you heard that God is growing? What? What are you talking about? Yes! One day True Father mentioned about it clearly. "Even, God is growing." Are you crazy? God is absolute, omnipotent, omnipresent and perfect. How can a perfect God grow?

If we don't understand the attribute of love, we can never reach the ultimate answer to this question. So far, God has never had his own true children who perfected their character resembling God. Also, he has never had his own true grandchildren as the fruit of true love centered on God. So, that's why we have to offer our best loyalty and filial piety to God through our earthly life.



The words served as a reminder to all to live their daily lives in accordance with God. Afterwards, members offered flowers to their loved ones by placing them at the altar.

Then all 40 guests joined one another in a community dinner. There, members testified to the lives of those who had passed away. Each memory shared connected their hearts to the ones who were only there in spirit. It was clear that their lives had been filled with light and love.

The Los Angeles Family Church holds their memorial ceremony annually following All Saints' Day. Special thanks to the volunteers of the Seonghwa Ministry who make it possible, as well as to Reverend Yang and Pastor George, and to the families of Tom Akuzawa, Kenny Oiwa, and Keith McCarthy.

