FFWPU Bay Area, California's Bridge of Peace Ceremony

Myrna Lapres
August 29, 2026

On the afternoon of Saturday, August 29, a moving program took place - The Bridge of Peace Ceremony. It was organized by the local Peace Alliance which included representatives of Women's Federation for World Peace - Myrna Lapres and Christine Froehlich, American Clergy Leadership Conference - Richard van Loon, Universal Peace Federation - Wayne Hankins, and a local Service for Peace - Markus von Euw, with the pastor of the Bay Area Family Church, Pastor Kouki Tamura serving as MC. The room was filled with almost 100 people, exceeding our expectations.

The program began with a couple of musical numbers and poems by several of our young WFWP women, Kienyen Rai, and Younng Joo Tanaka. Myrna Lapres, N CA WFWP representative, welcomed everyone, acknowledging that our event is connected with the International Day of Peace on September 21 even though we are hosting it a bit early. She clarified our theme of Peace Starts With Me and God as essential in finding higher ground on our peace journey. Ms. Lapres also introduced Father and Mother Moon as the founders of our representative organizations and champions of peace on so many levels.

Ms. Kaeleigh Moffitt, Peace Starts With Me Alliance Director, UPF USA President and Director of Public Affairs - FFWPU, spoke clearly and passionately about the history of peace building including the leadership example of Mandela and de Klerk of South Africa and of Rev. Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han forgiving their enemy, Kim-Il-Sung. She introduced the history of the Bridge of Peace, a signature project of WFWP.

Following a short video showing some of the historical Bridge of Peace crossings, we had four pairs introduce themselves and their reason(s) for crossing the bridge. They represented: a mother and adult

daughter, a Japanese American born in an internment camp and a white American, a Democrat, and a Republican, and a Native American and a white American.

After watching these pairs cross the bridge, Christine Froehlich introduced the Extending the Bridge portion of the program. Facilitators at each of the twelve tables guided conversations to reflect on how each of us extend the bridge into our own relationships, our families, and communities, answer questions like: What moved me today? How can I exercise a new level of respect for those different than myself? How can I be part of the solution?

The program ended with singing together "Let There Be Peace On Earth" followed by opportunities for anyone in the audience to cross the bridge together and networking with each other. Several of the comments that we received were:

Moved by the sharing of the bridge crossers - they shared honestly and vulnerably from their deepest heart

Love was part of everything

It was such a moving and beautiful program

We want to do this in our community of Sacramento

The event was supported by many in preparing the arch and flowers on the table - Monika Kellett, Mimi Nozawa, and Calissa Quillates, setting up the room - WFWP members, AV and Media - Andreas Haugen, Josh Buergi, and Stan Ivanenko, lovely refreshments presented to each table - Edna Munakata, Pem-Pem and Michael Okana, and Lydia Tanate.