COMMUNICATIONS

August 11, 2026 | Articles | Holy Oak Memorial Woodland, Memorial Service, Seonghwa Caring Ministry, Seonghwa Ministry

Annual Memorial Service 2026: A Day For Remembering

We journeyed from across the country on this special day of the year for our Annual Memorial Service. We came together to remember our dear ascended brothers and sisters. The sun was shining, and we sat together in this most beautiful and holy place at the Holy Oak Memorial Woodland in Stanton Fitzwarren.

Our brother Franklin warmly welcomed us all and guided us through the service. We counted around 100 brothers and sisters in attendance, including our Continental Director for EUME, Dr Mike and Fumiko Balcomb, and our UK national leaders, Bogdan and Yoshiko Pammer. The singing of "10,000 Reasons" and "Way Maker" prepared our hearts for the service as we expressed our gratitude toward our Heavenly Parent for all the blessings bestowed upon us.

Our dear sister Joanna shared a moving testimony about her daughter Sandra, who was born with congenital heart disease and was not expected to live very long. Joanna and her family invested a great deal of love and attention into caring for all of Sandra's medical needs. Joanna loves her daughter deeply and missed her greatly when she ascended. She was comforted by a dream of going shopping with her perfectly healthy daughter. Later, Sandra was Blessed. Joanna was grateful for the support she received and for the life of her precious daughter.

The service continued with two solos: one from Betty, who sang "Bridge over Troubled Water", and the other from Bernard, who performed "Times", one of his recent compositions in memory of his beloved wife, Masako.

After a chosen reading, Yoshiko gave the main message of the day, "Becoming One in Love". Starting with the Family Pledge about the unification of the physical and spiritual worlds, she spoke about moving on after the passing of our loved ones. We should not remain "stuck" in our sadness and grief, but we should also not move on too quickly and lose our precious connection to our loved ones. We can continue that relationship even though that person has moved on. Yoshiko recalled that it has now been two years since her mum ascended; in her memory, she had prepared a special Japanese dish that brought her closer to her mum. Yoshiko read some of True Parents' words: "To be born in love, raised in love, live in love, and to die in love makes us grateful for our life..." She wished her mum could have lived longer to spend more time with her grandchildren, passing on her love and wisdom. Yoshiko understood then that it was now her turn to give to her children what she had received from her mum.

After this moving message from our sister Yoshiko, Franklin invited us to spend some time in reflection, also including in our thoughts the six members who have ascended since our last memorial service in 2025: Mavis Lockwood, Carmela Lim, Alexander Herzer, Hildegard Bain, Gordon Franklin, and Giovanni Gambula.

After the collection, Françoise, Chair of the Seonghwa Caring Ministry, spoke about the various activities of the ministry. She mentioned that each time one of the six members ascended since last year, the ministry did their best to support the bereaved families by attending vigils and Seonghwa ceremonies, as well as sending cards and flowers. She especially thanked Franklin for always being available to support the pastors in conducting Seonghwa ceremonies and caring for bereaved families. The ministry was also able to give advice regarding the creation of a Memorial Garden in Camberg. In May, the ministry hosted a webinar on "Suicide Awareness and Prevention" with our sister, Margoth Tove Kalstad, as the main speaker. She shared some of her experiences and best practices as a senior volunteer at an SOS suicide prevention hotline. Members joined the webinar from all over Europe and the Middle East. Françoise thanked Kumiko for managing the Holy Oak Memorial Woodland, often on her own. She also thanked her committee, which grew this year from eight members to nine. She welcomed Andi, a brother who works as a paramedic in the London Ambulance Service and has an interest in palliative care.

The whole Seonghwa Caring Ministry team was then invited by Bogdan and Yoshiko to receive a gift of recognition and appreciation for their work.

Roses were given to everyone, and Dr and Mrs Balcomb concluded the service with a resonant prayer.

Afterwards, a group photo was taken, and everyone was invited to visit the Holy Ground and the wonjeon. Walking around the wonjeon, we reminded ourselves of all our amazing brothers and sisters who came before us and laid the foundation for our movement in the UK.

We then came together to share a potluck lunch and conversations that continued for the rest of the afternoon.

We had a wonderful Memorial Service. We all felt uplifted and inspired by the holy atmosphere created in this beautiful and sacred place.

Many thanks to all our members who contributed to an inspiring and uplifting Memorial Service.

The Memorial service was organised by the Seonghwa Caring Ministry and the Holy Oak Memorial Woodland committee.

Photos by David R. and Pascal M.

Video by Esther S.

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Annual Memorial Service 2026

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Dear brothers and sisters, We would like to invite you to our annual Memorial service on Sunday 9th August at the Holy Oak Memorial Woodland

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Communications | 13 April 2026

The Seonghwa Caring Ministry would like to invite you to a webinar on suicide awareness and prevention. This is a most concerning situation which affects

Preparing For Our Eternal Life – Practical Guidance

Communications | 10 November 2025

On November 1st, the Seonghwa Caring Ministry hosted a webinar on 'Preparing for our Eternal Life – Practical Guidance'. Franklin F. was the facilitator. He

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