

Healing the Heart of America -- A Model for Uniting your Community

Ron Pappalardo
November 1, 2017



After the November 2016 election, my son Gabriel, who is a doctor of psychology, asked me to do anything I could to moderate the tension and division that remained among the people. I came up with the idea to hold an event I called "Healing the Heart of America." My goal was to hold up a model or example of political, religious, and racial unity that anyone could copy. I felt that the "glue" that could bring this about was prayer – that the Spirit behind our national motto "In God We Trust" was the only thing that could heal our community.

I received an inspiration to first put together a prayer team that consisted of members of different faiths, political backgrounds, and races. I asked them to simply pray that the will of God be advanced by the event, and that it would result in the "highest good."

Next, my wife Connie and I rented a large meeting room in our downtown Arts Center.

One by one, I received a commitment from my children to participate. At the event, my son Gabriel gave a 10 minute talk, my son Ari performed The National Anthem and America the Beautiful and my daughter Nadia brought one of her friends as a guest – a total family affair.

We gave ourselves two months to work and got started. I contacted a friend who was a Republican city council member, and got his commitment to participate. He referred me to a Democrat council member who also agreed.

I designed a flyer, and had a thousand copies printed. Connie and I visited churches, mosques, and temples to spread the word. We obtained commitments from representatives of five major faith traditions to offer opening prayers at the event.

We contacted everyone we knew personally by email, Facebook message, and personal phone calls. This turned out to be by far the most effective method. One by one, people started registering for the event, usually just two or three a day.

On the day of the event, I was thrilled that more people showed up than I expected. We had seventy participants; we had to put out more chairs to accommodate everyone.

We began with a candle-lighting ceremony. The two city council members joined hands with me as we lit a "Candle of Unity." Then, one by one, the leaders from the five great faith traditions offered opening prayers.

After I gave my talk, I invited the religious leaders to come back on stage to lead the assembly in a group

prayer. With input from Facebook friends, I had composed an inter-faith prayer, which volunteers now distributed to all the participants. (Scroll down to the end to see the prayer.) In my view, this was the most important part of the program. Imagine a stage with leaders from Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism all reciting the same prayer together, leading a group in unison that included Democrats and Republicans; Black, White and Asian; and a multitude of religious backgrounds. (See photos) The result was an atmosphere of unity and love. One participant wrote to me later – "I felt a holy atmosphere and certainly connecting to God's heart is the only way forward for America, and the entire human family."

I was so deeply moved and grateful to be a part of this. I hope that the unifying spirit generated by this small event will ripple out and affect other communities across our great nation. God Bless America!

Prayer for National Healing and Reconciliation

Dear God,

We come together as a community to ask for your help and guidance.

We open our hearts and minds to you in hopes that we can hear your voice.

We ask that you will forgive our mistakes, and we ask that you will help us find a forgiving heart towards anyone from whom we are withholding our love.

Please teach us to love one another as brothers and sisters of the same human family.

Please help us to love and respect each other regardless of our differences of opinion.

Please give wisdom to our religious leaders in their efforts to guide our people.

Please guide and protect our political leaders, including our President Donald Trump, our Democrat leaders Representative Nancy Pelosi and Senator Charles Schumer, and our Republican leaders Representative Paul Ryan and Senator Mitch McConnell.

Please help those who are struggling with fear, anger, or unforgiveness to be liberated and healed in their hearts and minds. Please help them to know your love for them.

We pray that all the people of the world can live in peace and prosperity.

Thank you for blessing and protecting our nation for so many years.

Thank you for helping us in our lives.

Please guide us so we can find your presence in our daily lives, and live in such a way as to create the highest good for ourselves and everyone we come into contact with.

Amen.