

WFWP and ACLC WIM New Jersey honor all the Mothers of the Church

Denneze Nelson
March 19, 2017



On March 19, 2017, a special ceremony was held at the Deliverance Jesus Is Coming Church, located in Irvington, New Jersey, to honor all the “mothers” of the church—elder ladies ranging in age from their 70s to their 90s.

Patricia Lofton, who attends that church, formed the idea for the ceremony after Denneze Nelson, the chair of Women’s Federation for World Peace (WFWP) in New Jersey, asked about her plans for Women’s History Month. Patricia, a “Herstory” honoree at the 24th WFWP National Assembly, held in New Jersey in November 2016, is very involved with teaching character education and Sunday school classes to children in Irvington.

Denneze recommended to Patricia that maybe WFWP could honor the outstanding women in her church. Patricia took the idea to the church’s senior pastor, Bishop James Everett, and his wife, Pastor Vanessa Everett. The bishop and his wife agreed, and a date was set for March 19, 2017.

As the discussions for the event increased, Denneze explained to Patricia about the Bridge of Peace ceremony and the Holy Marriage Blessing. Patricia loved the idea of both programs. Her church decided against the Bridge of Peace in a Sunday Service but agreed to give Holy Wine and the Marriage Blessing as well as a certificate to honor these elder women for their long years of service to God and the church.

WFWP New Jersey team members immediately reached out to the Women in Ministry team of the American Clergy Leadership Conference (ACLC WIM) to work together to make this event happen.

Although Patricia had undergone breast cancer surgery only five days before the event, she came to the church that Sunday to make the event happen. She had especially requested to focus on the elder mothers

in the church. As though guided by the spirit, she mentioned that because these women were in the last years of their lives, more than anyone else they deserved to be appreciated and they should receive the Blessing. Patricia submitted a list of their names and informed Denneze that all these ladies' husbands were already deceased. All of the ladies had been married for over 30 years.

On the day of the event, the spirit in the Deliverance Jesus Is Coming Church was very open and welcoming. Wonderful music was performed, and Scripture was read aloud. Then the service paused, and Patricia Lofton was called to introduce Chairwoman Denneze Nelson, giving a rousing talk about her experience with WFWP. Chairwoman Denneze Nelson gave a speech introducing WFWP, ACLC and True Parents.

Rev. Kathleen Sato gave a message about ACLC and the ceremony. Mrs. Joy Lascari read the vows on behalf of the women in a truly moving moment. WFWP leaders Mrs. Michiyo Rurup and Mrs. Luella Santelli served as attendants to the women distributing the Holy Wine.

Chairwomen of WFWP satellite chapters, Mrs. Cynthia Nakai and Mrs. Claire Haider, and other guests created a spirit of love and sisterhood by embracing the visiting evangelists and other deacons and elders. The message from a prominent evangelist was powerful, and she spontaneously invited Rev. Hitoshi Onishi, head of ACLC in New Jersey, to come up and share a moment of feeling the spirit with her.

At the time of the drinking of the Holy Wine, all of the elders and their spouses, deacons and others sitting on the stage in the pulpit area joined the women and took cups to drink the Holy Wine, a surprising and heartfelt moment. Overall the ceremony was not as traditional as a FFWPU ceremony, but in their own way, the elder women of the Deliverance Jesus Is Coming Church opened a door for their church to take one step closer.

Mother Thelma Staples, age 90, sent a card of gratitude afterward, in which she wrote, "You don't know what you have done for me. From the bottom of my heart, I thank you so much!"