

Elizabeth, NJ Family Church Jersey inaugurated Emiljun Rapada as its pastor

Demian Dunkley
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The Elizabeth Family Church of New Jersey inaugurated a new pastor this past Independence Day Weekend in a heartwarming and inspiring ceremony led by Rev. Demian Dunkley, President of the Family Federation for a Heavenly USA.

The new pastor, Rev. Emiljun Rapada, brings fresh ideas to a rapidly-growing and vibrant community. "Pastor EJ," as he is affectionately called, emigrated from the Philippines to the United States in 2005 along with his wife, Christine Mourad. Before taking on his new role as spiritual leader of the seven-year-old congregation, he served as the Assistant Pastor for two years. Prior to that, Pastor EJ worked as both the Education Director and Youth Pastor.

Pastor EJ fondly accepts the mission initiated by his predecessor, Pastor Darryl Franklin, a long-time resident of Elizabeth and member of the founding families who established the Elizabeth community in 2013. Today, the community includes more than 40 families from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

In his acceptance speech, Pastor EJ thanked everyone for their trust and all-out support for the new mission and established three priorities for the community moving forward. The first priority is to give the Marriage Blessing Ceremony to 430 couples and to give the Blessing Ceremony to 430 generations of ancestors, thereby liberating them in the spiritual world. His second priority is to empower younger generations in the community, which constitutes half of the congregation. Finally, in a nod to the majority Latino population of Elizabeth, Pastor EJ explained his hopes to establish a strong Latino Ministry.

During the inauguration, Demian updated the audience on the past rallies True Mother attended, including the recently-concluded Unity Festival which took place in Las Vegas on June 22. Demian encouraged members to continue to strive for unity in attendance of True Mother. He asked the Elizabeth Community to support the Providence through prayers and donations, and to stay updated on current events by watching the live broadcasts until Foundation Day 2020.

In his message, Demian stressed that the most important and absolute responsibility of the members of the Unification movement is to be one with True Parents, thus sparking the fire that will save America.

Pastor Franklin and his wife, Sara, were given a plaque of appreciation as well as a bouquet of flowers. Congratulatory remarks were given by Bishop Rosemund Trotman, a Christian clergy member from the Association of Christian Evangelists, and Rev. Thomas Baldwin, Community Leader of the Family Federation in Pittsburgh.

It is with great hope that with younger leadership new and creative ideas may be introduced to answer True Parents' call for peace and unification, starting with the restoration of Elizabeth and ending with national restoration by 2020.