

Family Church of Connecticut's Annual Gathering of the Art and Mind Art Contest

Mika Deshotel
April 21, 2019



On Easter Sunday, April 21, Unificationists from the Family Church of Connecticut arrived at the University of Bridgeport for the Fourth Annual Gathering of the Art and Mind Art Contest and Awards Ceremony. The event was a celebration of the work of 13 different artists, whose original pieces included paintings, drawings, songs, animation, and poetry.

The organizing committee, comprised of five young Unificationists and one older Unificationist, chose to host the awards celebration after church on Easter Sunday because they felt it was the perfect day to highlight what Hyojeong (a heart of filial piety) looks like. Participants of all ages from as far away as Brazil, Las Vegas, and Los Angeles submitted entries according to this theme. At the awards ceremony, several of the artists received cash prizes for the originality of their work.

Before awarding the prizes, Chigo Ahunanya, the emcee of the event, explained the contest theme to the audience. "Hyojeong is about showing the love you have for your parents and family through the actions you take and the choices you make in caring and loving others. The word Hyojeong refers to the concept of attendance: not only attending our elders, but also God. It is about recognizing God's hope and dream for us, as individuals, and substantiating that hope and dream by the actions we make toward peace."

"I thought that an art contest highlighting positive values in the arts could inspire people," Connecticut Pastor Mika Deshotel explained. "We want people to catch the vision our True Parents have to promote a heavenly culture through the arts."

Connecticut Pastor Mika Deshotel was inspired to find a unique way to celebrate True Parents' birthday, so she implemented the annual contest in February 2016. For Unificationists, this past Easter was particularly special because it coincided with the weekend of True Parents' 59th Holy Wedding Anniversary.

Before the awards celebration, Pastor Deshotel gave the Easter Message and helped the audience connect to the concept of Hyojeong through Jesus and True Parents' examples. "If True Parents had not answered God's calling with a heart of Hyojeong, a heart of attending to God's dream, humanity would have no hope," she said. "Where would you or I be today without our True Parents?"

During her sermon, Pastor Deshotel mentioned that Earth Day, occurring on Easter Monday this year, is an opportunity to connect with having Hyojeong for creation. "In Los Angeles, just two weeks ago, our True Mother spoke once again about humanity's responsibility to respond to and care for our earth... An ultimate example of Hyojeong can be found when we reach out and care for one another as well as work to support the sustainability of this planet," said Pastor Deshotel. "Hyojeong includes care and respect, not only for God our creator, or our ancestors, but also for our future descendants."

"The hope of the Gathering of the Art and Mind project moving forward is that it can be adopted on a grander scale," said Pastor Deshotel. "It ties in nicely with the spring Hyojeong weekend events, including the [Peace Starts with Me Benefit Concert](#) and the [HJ FamilyFest](#) in the Northeast Region."