

## FFWPU USA: Ohio Family Church, A Model Church Of The Unification Movement

Gloria Laurent  
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*Photo courtesy of Ohio Family Church*

"Our slogan in Ohio is 'With God, all things are possible,'" said state leader Gloria Laurent, who recently outlined great success in five key areas of the Columbus community - widely viewed as a model church of the Unification movement in the Midwest.

Ohio's centrally located capital of Columbus is home to just under a million people, including a growing number of young Unificationist families. Laurent, who was appointed the movement's state leader in summer 2021, said the community has seen an increase in weekly membership and engagement; participation of new members and guests; development of local leadership; stronger preparation for the Marriage Blessing; as well as increased income growth from tithing and better property management.

During a Feb. 28 leaders' meeting, Laurent said the strong outcomes are tied to the community's ambitious goals that are part of a strategic regional plan, and broader national initiative. The Ohio Family Church recently saw seven new members commit to full time involvement, she said, just shy of their 10-person goal. They are also on track to meet a target of 150 people for weekly Sunday service attendance. "We have a hundred people at present," said Laurent, "but the activities that our members engage in [make this goal attainable]."

Then there's the local Online Holy Community (OHC), which Laurent said has "ongoing [public] outreach and inreach of members" through visiting local ministers and various campuses of Unificationist college students, among other avenues. "[We're] praying together," she said, "and we have a Zoom [meeting to] read the Divine Principle every day." These efforts have brought six students, two OHC participants, and five ministers who all study the Divine Principle consistently, Laurent said.

Another focal point has been the community's young leaders and couples. Family "trinity" gatherings, movie nights, pancake breakfasts, and Hoon Dok Hae have strengthened community relationships all around while cultivating a greater sense of unity. In turn, tithing and property management goals are within reach through such teamwork.

With dedicated outreach organizers, a youth ministry leader, and a care ministry coordinator working together to advance the community's growth, local youth have been engaged in meetings regularly, and consistent support has been provided for nine local blessing candidates and five people currently in the blessing process. Laurent attributes these results to the community's continued investment and faith in God and True Parents, and said "raising up leadership with knowing the passion of each community member" has left her feeling inspired and hopeful for the future.

The success in Columbus has encouraged other Unificationist leaders as well. "[I'm] deeply moved by how [Laurent] knows each person [and] what they're excited about and how they want to serve," said Joshua Holmes, Young Christian Leadership Conference (YCLC), National Director. "That [shows] great care and understanding of leadership."