

FFWPU Arkansas Interfaith Program Includes Prayers and Support for Turkey

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Photos courtesy of Rev. John Jackson and Binod Paudel

Unificationists in Arkansas continue to pray and offer support after a major 7.8 magnitude earthquake devastated southern and central Turkey, and parts of northern and western Syria, in early February. The Little Rock community recently held a powerful interfaith program that brought together people of various backgrounds, including Christians and Muslims, who prayed for the victims and their families.



"Little Rock is a small community with just a few people, but they're putting together an amazing interfaith program and uniting different people," said Rev. John Jackson, FFWPU USA South regional director, during a March 28 leaders' report.

Some 40 participants gathered at the Arkansas Culture and Dialogue Center in March for the program organized by Unificationist pastors Anton and Miri Friedman, who were appointed the movement's Arkansas state leaders in March 2021. Guests heard from a panel of religious leaders, who discussed efforts toward global peace, and engaged in interfaith study with roundtable discussions addressing different elements of each represented faith.

"People got to meet each other and openly share about their faith, and also got to know one another more personally and really build a community," said Rev. Jackson. "I'm really proud of the Arkansas community for hosting this fantastic program...and their prayers for the earthquake victims."

The catastrophic event caused massive damage and displaced more than 850,000 children in Turkey and Syria, according to world news [reports](#). Nearly two million people in Turkey have since sought shelter in

tents and temporary housing, while some 500,000 people in Syria remain homeless. Unificationist Binod Paudel, national leader of Turkey and its UPF chapter, said preparations were quickly made for about a hundred families in the Hatay province after the earthquake struck.



"All of our holy community members and ambassadors for peace were safe," said Paudel. "We've distributed blankets, tents, clothing, and food, [and] five generators for electricity and medical first aid...We continue to support and encourage people to be strong and hopeful."

Paudel, who called the aftermath a heartbreaking situation, described the destruction as "horrible, and [beyond] imagination." However, he also noted people remain hopeful that circumstances will improve as he expressed gratitude for continued prayers and support.



Rev. Jackson said, as one global family, this is what Unificationism is all about - uniting and supporting our brothers and sisters all over the world through our prayers and such interfaith programs.

You can donate to the official earthquake relief campaign organized by the movement's Europe-Middle East (EUME) headquarters [here](#).