

Boston and Gloucester Family Churches' joint Sunday Service at Morning Garden

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The Boston and Gloucester Family Churches of Massachusetts gathered together at Morning Garden on May 7 to celebrate Earth Day and clean up the Morning Garden grounds. Shelley Watanabe gave the sermon, speaking on the themes of the Native Americans' respect for nature and True Father's recognition that the Natives and the settlers should have united when the latter first came to North America. The following reflection, contributed by David Stadelhofer, describes the joys and worthwhile challenges of the day in full.

The Boston Family Church had a joint Sunday Service with the Gloucester Family Church on Sunday, May 7, at the beautiful Morning Garden property. The pastors planned for this to be both a joint service and a joint clean-up of leaves and other debris around the main building and drive way. There were about 50 people in all. The caretakers of Morning Garden, Manuel and Sylvia Quesada, are burdened every year with a huge job of clean-up so we were happy to offer our help.



I felt that the Sunday service was especially beautiful. The sermon, the singing and sense of unity. After the service, we were originally scheduled to have lunch. But Manuel Quesada suddenly said, "Hey everyone, let's work for about one hour before eating so that we will all have a good appetite!" Nobody opposed the idea—externally, although I have to admit that I did want to first dig into the gorgeous lunch that was being prepared. (The aroma could not be missed). But I united just the same. I am glad that I did.

After going outside into the brisk weather, I soon began to feel really invigorated. The clean-up had already begun by the time I found a rake. I felt so uplifted. Maybe it was the combination of the beautiful scenery, the ocean breeze, and the sense of unity of all the community members pitching-in to clean up God's property and True Parents' property.

There must have been 30 people with rakes, brooms, garden tools, bundling branches, raking leaves, etc. Even a few young children were trying to rake leaves. How could I complain? There was a small tractor carting barrows of leaves off to the compost pile as well as Ron Busic's pickup truck doing the same. It was beautiful! Our members represented the world, white, black, Asian, European, men, women, children, young and old. Peggy Brewster, a registered nurse, advised us all to tuck our pants into our socks and she sprayed everyone's ankles with insect repellent because it is the season for deer ticks.



At first I felt that the cleaning was a little hectic. "Where do I put the leaves?" I asked myself. "We can never remove all of them with these tools." Somehow there was no sense of expectation from the people around me so I just tried my best. I grabbed whatever tool I could get. To me it was miraculous that soon things started to "click." The barrows and tarps started to get filled up faster and faster. The tractor and pickup truck started picking up and dropping off faster and faster. And the group I was working with started to work more efficiently as a team. After a little more than hour, the job was pretty much finished! Manuel said that we saved him about two-weeks of work!

In the end, I was glad that we were pushed to clean up before lunch. By the time we were finished, I did indeed have a good appetite and the food tasted all the more delicious. And I felt gratitude in my heart seeing the smiling face of our hostess, Sylvia Quesada, as she dished out the steaming mashed potatoes, rice, hot sliced ham, fruit, deserts, fresh-perked coffee and more.



Boston Family Church Pastor Catherine Ono suggested to everyone that we could do the same event every year on the second Sunday of May; many voiced their support for this idea. One good reason, she said, is because in Boston there is the annual Walk-For-Hunger event that is always scheduled for the second Sunday of May. On that day, it is almost impossible to find parking anywhere near the Boston Church. All the more reason to have a joint service in Gloucester, cleaning up and celebrating of the beauty of Mother Earth!