

New York communities Districtwide Service at Camp Sunrise - Bless America

Edner Pierre-Louis
October 2, 2016



On Sunday, October 2, 2016, the communities of FFWPU District 2 (New York State) met at Camp Sunrise for the final districtwide service of the year. In spite of the chilly and overcast weather, people came from as far as Kingston in upstate New York to the outdoor service in Harriman State Park, north of New York City.

The main theme of the service was a call to embrace the four-year plan for FFWPU USA presented by FFWPU North America Continental Director, Dr. Ki Hoon Kim, as a framework to realize the multiple goals of Vision 2020, primarily giving the Marriage Blessing to 1 million Americans. On this point, Rev. Edner Pierre-Louis, the District 2 pastor, presented the main sermon.



The gathering was also an opportunity to thank and honor Justin Okamoto, the outgoing Belvedere Church assistant pastor, who soon will be moving with his wife to Japan. He took the podium for 15 minutes, thanking his parents, pastors he worked under and others who guided him over the years. We will miss this young pastor as we wish him and his wife many blessings on their life journey.



The opportunity was also taken to thank Rev. John Arias, who until now has been the pastor of the Latino Family Church of New York. His congregation offered the final song *Celebra La Vida* (“Celebrate Life”). Pastor Arias will soon be leaving New York to take up a new mission with the Las Vegas Family Church with an emphasis on the development and growth of the Hispanic ministry there. We wish him well, as he is well equipped as an educator and lecturer of the Divine Principle.

Rev. Rollain Muanda, the assistant pastor of Kingston Family Church, was the master of ceremonies for the service. Rev. Abdou Gaye, the pastor of Kingston Family Church, testified about the efforts of Kingston Unificationists to find a place that would accommodate their congregation and the many rejections they received before finding a place. Rev. Abdou said that the pastor who received them, a Pentecostal minister, testified that he and his wife had a dream in which a voice told them, “When a man named Abdou visits you, receive them well.” Rev. Abdou’s message was that we should persevere, as the Lord has already gone ahead to prepare a place for us.

Rev. Juanita Pierre-Louis of Harlem Family Church led the congregation in an opening prayer to heal. We thank the Belvedere Family Church, namely Dominic Barber and his team, for the technical preparations and the New York (City) Family Church Pastor Tanya Edwards and sister Nandi Bengu for the song selections. The musical offerings, led by sister Tina Zelada, were well rehearsed and presented with fervor.

FFWPU-USA Vice President Miilhan Stephens and his family were also there, representing National Headquarters.

And how can we forget sister Debra Grodner, manager of Camp Sunrise, who made the location very welcoming for us?