

The Springfield Redeemer



“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” Matthew 18:20

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Reunion Brings Family Together By Roberta D’Amico

They came from Georgia, Florida, and Massachusetts to be together at the Jackie Cooley’s Willis Family Reunion at the Tru-Hilton Hotel in Chicopee where they congregated the weekend of July 19th to 21st. It was the 19th Family Reunion and this year was First Lady Jackie’s turn to host it, which of course included the help and support of her husband, our awesome Pastor C.S. Cooley! It was well attended, about 65 people.

The event began Friday night as people traveled from near and far to gather in the hotel lobby, to visit, play games, and eat (Pastor Cooley’s famous fried fish.) The food was good, but the important thing was to connect with family that hadn’t been together for a long time and also to meet new ones.

The next day there was a cook-out at Blunt Park in Springfield, where Pastor Cooley and others grilled some delicious hamburgers and hot dogs. Fortunately, there was a pavilion for shade from the hot sun!

Evening brought everyone back to the hotel for the banquet. The food was good home-cooking, but the affection for one another was especially warm.



At the banquet, Family Patriarchs were honored with framed Certificates. The honorees were James Willis and Johnny Passmore, both in their 80’s. Likewise the Family

Matriarchs were Helen Oliver and Christine Sands. Helen could not be present at this reunion, as she was in Alaska visiting her family there, but someone took her certificate to bring to her. She sent a message to all the family which was read to all; her prayer was that those in the younger generation will continue this wonderful tradition of getting together as family.

This was followed by recognition of some special people in the family, oldest and youngest, those who

traveled farthest, etc. There was also a raffle; prizes consisted of baskets of goodies and a “money hat.” All of the funds raised will go to the Children’s College Fund.



Highlights of the evening included an update from Bill Willis, the family historian. He has found some valuable document of family history, copies of which were included in the Program Packet given to each

attendee, death certificates of the family patriarchs and census records. Bill has worked hard to find these records as genealogical records for African-American families were scarce and virtually non-existent before the 1860’s! So, kudos to Bill and his wife Mignon. The Atlanta International Airport has a Wall of Honor to remember the military, and thanks to Mignon’s efforts, the Willis family name is on it!

Finally, Pastor Cooley spoke briefly, first about the Holy Grounds Coffee House and the work with the students. He mentioned how society is losing value for our elders, but how we need those who know the way, to show the next generation the way! This was in keeping with the Theme of the event: *“We may not have it all together, but together we have it all!”*

The final meeting was Sunday morning, with a worship service at the Tru-Hilton Banquet Hall. Jackie Cooley’s nephew Malcolm Willis preached to an amazing crowd of at least 150 people. Many were local friends and family who came to join the Reunion Attendees! Rev. Malcolm had car trouble getting there, but the Family took the opportunity to show their love and unity by helping him get it repaired, showing a family truly filled with the Presence of God.

Pastor Roberto's Ministry Grows

On Sundays at Holy Grounds Coffee House, things are booming! By 10 o'clock on Sunday morning July 14, 2019, seats are filling up as Pastor Roberto Quinones prepares to start the morning service. Typically, all the seats are filled, so there are 20 - 30 people coming. Pastor Roberto likes to lead the service from the back of the room, so all the chairs are set up in rows facing the back. The room was full of people who came to worship and hear the Word, the Holy Spirit was evident, and it was reminiscent of the early years of Holy Grounds when Pastor Scott Lively would preach on Sundays.

Some of the people coming are from other area churches; others have no other church except Holy Grounds. Some just come in off the street. Some bring their children. The service starts with the congregation singing some songs with the words on the computer screen, followed by announcements and the offering. Pastor Roberto preached on "Sowing and Reaping," especially being patient while waiting to reap the harvest. He is excited about preaching God's Word.

At the end of the service, Pastor Roberto invited anyone who wanted prayer to come up, and most of the people lined up to get prayer for their many needs. After

prayer they had fellowship and several people cooked a delicious meal for all. On this Sunday, Manny had cooked Spanish rice to go with the meal. Everybody got their food and then sat together at the tables, even the occasional person who came in late and missed the service! It is just like Sunday dinner at Grandma's, like we used to have or wish we had! Pastor Roberto likes to sit at the table and chat with the people, Pastor Kim is usually running around serving, Minister Renee's ministry is cooking! This work is now just beginning, a work in progress, but God is doing amazing things.

For a few years now, we at Redemption Gate Missions have been praying for God to send us a husband and wife team to join the ministry here, so praise His Name for the awesome way He answers! They are not just gifted but a gift to us, always encouraging, always enthusiastic, always trusting that God has a plan – and it will be good! What a blessing they are to us here; they are so real, so compassionate. There is an amazing unity here at Holy Grounds, between people of different colors, different cultures, different denominations, ages, and social/economic backgrounds. We are one in Christ, we are family, and God is glorified!

Update on Coffee House II

Please continue to pray for God's direction as we move forward with Coffee House 2. Pastor will be meeting with the architect Steve Jablonski to determine which would be better, a steel building or the traditional type building.

Meanwhile, we are still raising funds for the project. Pastor Scott is planning on coming in August to talk about having a major fundraiser, possibly at Bethany Church.

Our prayer request is especially for a major investor who will catch the vision that God has given us!

Bible Study Group on Tuesday evenings

We invite you men to come and join this study. It would be an opportunity to study God's Word together, see for yourself what the Coffee House is like (if you haven't been there before), and get to know our new pastor. Meet at Holy Grounds Coffee House at 6:30 p.m. Learn how God's strength is made perfect in our weakness!



SAVE THE DATE!

Family Day coming! August 24th, at 191 Walnut Street!!

ONGOING EVENTS

SUNDAY SERVICES: 8 a.m. Redemption Gate Church with Pastor Brian Greene; 10 a.m.-Motivated by Faith with Pastors Roberto & Kim.

MONDAY – FRIDAY: Morning Bible Study at 7:30 a.m.

TUESDAY – Calling All men – 6:30 p.m. – for Meeting and Fellowship!

WEDNESDAY – Trust Jesus Recovery at 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

THURSDAY: Women's Bible Study 1:00 p.m.; FIAT 2nd and 4th Thursday 7 p.m.

1ST SATURDAY: August 3, "Marriage with God" 4 to 6 p.m.

SATURDAY NIGHT: No Open Mics for now.