

# *Harvest Fellowship of Churches* *19<sup>th</sup> Annual Celebration*

**October 16, 2021**

By Darrell Minnich

This past October, in Bridgeport, CT, an historic HFC Annual Celebration took place! There was a good “in-person” representation from the HFC congregations present, as well as those watching on the Facebook Live feed! Following the opening worship, Bishop Henry Buckwalter shared various interesting historical facts



regarding his 23 years of service as the Primary Overseer of the New England churches, beginning with his *Eastern Mennonite Missions* appointment as the Regional Bishop, followed by the inception of HFC in 2003! Henry also invited Millie to share some thoughts and experiences of their years of ministry to HFC, which was a wonderful blessing to hear!

Bishop Henry then acknowledged the HFC Leadership Team, expressing his appreciation for their supportive ministry with him. Finally, he invited the other HFC Pastors and their wives to come forward and receive a Certificate of Service along with a copy of a special book (“*Tag Along*” by Mike Minter).

Bishop Henry reviewed the process he took for inviting Pastor Joshua (and his wife, Lauren) Miller to consider becoming the next Primary Bishop of HFC. This was an exciting process requiring multiple years, multiple steps, and multiple prayers! God was faithful throughout the journey!



Bishop Henry then preached the ordination message using Matthew 11:28-30, focusing on the “*yoke of Jesus*” and “*His rest,*” in which Joshua and Lauren may abide as they lead and minister as Primary Leader. Henry encouraged all to accept Christ’s invitation to “*Come to Jesus*” ... “*be yoked to Him,*” and “*experience His rest.*”

Following the ordination message, the HFC Pastors and their wives were invited to join Pastor Joshua and Lauren for a Prayer of Commitment and Installment, which was led by Bishop James Miller (Joshua’s father).



Bishop Joshua Miller then invited several to share words of appreciation for Bishop Henry. Bishop Jim Miller was first to share, focusing on the many years of Bishop Henry faithfully served. Jim ended with giving Bishop Henry and Millie a love gift from all the HFC congregations. Then June Minnich shared some words of appreciation for Sister Millie, followed by Bishop Lawrence Chiles, who shared kind words for both Henry and Joshua.

Next, Bishop Joshua preached his first message as the new HFC Bishop! His focus was on “*reaching the next generation,*” using Psalm 78:3-8 as his text. His main points for reaching the next generation included: 1) Reveal, 2) Retell and 3) Revive.

Following Bishop Joshua’s message, he installed Pastor Pedro and Amy Vasquez, from the Gospel Light congregation, as HFC Missions Coordinators.



## HFC Celebration Photos



From left to right, front row: Joshua\* and Lauren Miller, Andrea Miller, Millie and Henry Buckwalter, Amy Vasquez, Daniel and Okuba Tesfasselase; Second Row: James Miller\*, Gerald and Annie Soki, Lawum Kayamba\*, Pedro Vazquez, Mike and Deb Gaiotti, Trudy Guy; Third Row: Leonard\* and Anna Mary Burkholder, John and Janet Hannah, June and Darrell Minnich\*, Wes Holland, Ingrid and Winston Gordon, and Wendell Guy. (\* Indicates Oversight Team member.)



Sister Millie receiving flowers in appreciation for her years of service to HFC.



Joshua and Lauren Miller with their sons, Caleb (on left) and Andrew opening a gift from Bishop Henry and Millie!



A meal was served as part of the Celebration, with the food being provided by the Bridgeport congregations! It was a spectacular finish to a very special time together, especially after having to cancel in 2020 due to COVID.

*Note: A video of the Celebration can be viewed on the HFC Facebook page (look for the October 16<sup>th</sup> post). The photos herein were provided by Amanda Mui, a member of the Boston Chinese Church of Saving Grace.*