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“Governor Lemanu Takes Part in the Church of Latter Day Saints Pago Pago Temple Groundbreaking.”

On Saturday, October 30, 2021, Governor Lemanu and First Lady took part in the official groundbreaking ceremony to construct the Pago Pago Temple of the Church of Latter-Day Saints in Ottoville, Tafuna.

On April 7, 2019, the President of the Church of Latter-Day Saints, Russell M. Nelson, announced at the 189th Annual General Conference the plans for the temple to be built in Pago Pago, American Samoa. At the time, the population of American Samoa had grown to 56,000 people, including 16,390 members of the Church organized into five stakes.

The official rendering of the Temple design was released on August 14, 2020. Its initial design is for a 17000 square foot structure, single-story, single attached spire, two instruction rooms, and two sealing rooms. The property will also have a “separate distribution center and dwellings for the Temple President, matron, and missionaries.”

The official groundbreaking ceremony held on October 31, 2021, marks the beginning of the construction phase for the temple. It will be American Samoa’s first temple and the second in the Samoan islands.

Emeritus General Authority Elder O. Vincent Haleck stated during the ceremony, “Today is a fulfillment of the fruits of the sacrifice of so many of our church members, young and old, for decades, many have made the journey to Samoa. They wanted to show the Lord the fruits of their faith. Many are no longer with us as they have made their transition to the spiritual world.” He continued, “In his own time, the Lord has now inspired the President, Prophet of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Russell M. Nelson, to locate a Temple here in American Samoa. I testify that President Nelson received that inspiration and direction from the Lord to build a Temple in American Samoa. We turn the soil today to symbolically show the Lord that we are fulfilling his will to build his holy house...Not only to break ground but to turn our hearts to him, to God.” A temple to the Church of Latter-Day Saints is to be the “house of the Lord” and the most sacred places of worship on the earth. This is where only members of the Church are

allowed to enter and where they will display their faithfulness to the Lord and take part in only the most sacred ordinances.

Elder K. Brett Nattress, a General Authority Seventy and member of the Pacific Area Presidency, gave the keynote address. He began with the story of the elder Otto Haleck being sealed in the temple with his family at 82. He mentioned, "...Otto told his kids, I should have done this earlier. See, it is never too late." He also stated in his remarks as he remembered what President Nelson shared with him, "...what a great legacy we have of faithful living of the gospel of devoted discipleship. I am grateful for all who have gone before, and for the prophet President Russel M. Nelson, who in April 2019, made a prophetic announcement that there would be a Temple built here in American Samoa." He also continued to remark how President Nelson also talked to him about the "crowning life-changing ordinance" and "what it means to be armed with priestly power." He continued that the temple will help those understand Temple ordinances, and prepare the members to "...be able to part the veil between heaven and earth, and live prayerfully. You will know how to better receive direction from heaven."

Honorable Governor and First Lady, Honorable President of the Senate and Faletua, Honorable Speaker of the House and Faletua, Representatives of the House and Senators, and representatives of the US Congresswomen Uifaatali's American Samoa Office were among over 200 special guests that were in attendance at this invitation-only event. There was a brief pre-meeting to formally introduce church leadership, and the church service began promptly at 10:00 AM. Immediately after, attendees proceeded to the site of the temple groundbreaking ceremony.

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Temple Rendering, Pago Pago, American Samoa 2024 (PC: Office of the Governor)



Elder O. Vincent Haleck (First Counsellor in the Pacific Area Presidency of the Church) and President Adney Marion Reid (Pago Pago American Samoa West Stake) look on as Elder K. Brett Nattress (General Authority Seventy) greets the Honorable Governor and First Lady. (PC: Sam Solaita)



Governor Lemanu and First Lady Ella (Center) among special guests during the official Church of Latter Day Saints Pogo Pago American Samoa Temple in Ottoville, Tafuna on Saturday October 31, 2021.
(PC: Sam Solaita)