

Hebrews 11:8-10

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.

# Journey Ahead.

English Version  
英文版



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## REPORT FROM THE SENIOR PASTOR AND BOARD OF ELDERS

### PASTOR DANIEL CHAN

In anticipation for Pastor Steve's retirement at the end of October 2019, BCEC planned to appoint a person to lead the pastoral staff before a successor was chosen. The Board of Elders and Board of Deacons decided to appoint the next senior person in the pastoral staff to take up the role. Hence, I was asked to be the acting senior pastor from November 1, 2019.

In the past ten months, I have learned a lot in my new position. My previous role was to oversee the Chinese ministries and support Pastor Steve's agenda. Now, I am responsible to oversee the whole church. An obvious change is more administrative tasks, more meetings, more public relationship matters, and more decisions to make. However, I thank the Lord for a faithful and reliable staff. In this period of transition, my colleagues are quite supportive. Pastor Kenneth Kwong has stepped up to lead the Chinese staff meeting for me, and Pastor

Enoch continues to lead the English staff meeting. In February this year, Minister Ben Wong was hired as an Assistant to the Pastor for the Chinese Ministry. Then, in June, Minister Ryan So was hired as the English College and Young Adult Ministry Director. They both became permanent staff after completing more than a year of residency and going through a hiring process. At the end of August this year, Brother Sam Ng completed his internship at the church and will focus on finishing his seminary studies at Gordon-Conwell. We thank him for his contributions in the past year.

The spreading of the pandemic has led BCEC to move all church ministries online since March 15, 2020. This required a lot of learning and adjustment for our staff and our members. Nevertheless, we are thankful that



God has provided us with a group of members who are familiar with media production and editing. Now every Sunday, we can provide for our members two Mandarin services, two English services, and one Cantonese service through pre-recorded videos or live streaming. It is difficult to know the number of people who attended our online services during the pandemic. However, we know that in the past few months, the total number of "hits" that watch our services each Sunday ranges from 900 to 1100. Assuming some hits were watched by a couple or a family, the number is in line with the number of attendees before the pandemic. Some of our older members do not have the skill or equipment to access

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the videos. They are the ones who need individual caring. Fortunately, even they are now learning to participate in fellowship using conference calls.

Like many organizations, we are now using platforms like Zoom to conduct fellowships, Sunday School, small group gatherings, prayer meetings, seminars, retreats, Project Destiny, Community English Classes, memorial services, and all sorts of meetings. We also organized at least three evangelistic meetings. Each of them has resulted in people making decisions to become Christians. In addition, we have not forgotten to serve the community during this time. We worked with the City of Boston to distribute grocery packages. We worked with Boston Public Schools to distribute free lunches. We worked with the Red Cross to host two blood drives. During the pandemic, many wedding plans were disrupted because of government restrictions on the number of attendees. We

worked with wedding parties to provide live streaming of the ceremony, so that relatives and friends can watch the ceremony at home. In summary, we have learned to be creative to overcome disruptions caused by the pandemic.

Another role I have taken on this year is to chair Board of Elders meetings. There are ten members in the BOE. They all love the Lord and His church. On top of their job to teach and to shepherd, they faithfully meet together two times every month to talk about BCEC ministries. The BOE works with the Board of Deacons and the pastoral staff to lead the church. An important task of the BOE is to watch over and to improve

the spiritual health of the church. However, this task is difficult to quantify. After taking up leadership of the BOE, I realize that many of its jobs require a lot of thinking. I pray that in the coming years, the BOE will continue to discern God's mission and direction for BCEC. In a changing world such as ours, may our church become a spiritual community that is faithful to proclaim the gospel and make disciples for Christ.



## REPORT FROM THE BOARD OF DEACONS

### KEVIN FONG

Our Lord is faithful forever, perfect in love, and sovereign over us. He is with us, sanctifying us, and teaching us to trust. Even what the enemy means for evil, our Lord turns it for our good. His plans are still to prosper us. He has not forgotten us.

Our Lord faithfully provided us with Pastor Daniel as our next Senior Pastor and Ben Wong and Ryan So as new pastoral staff. During this time of change, He taught us all new ways to proclaim Him to believers and non-believers alike. Led by the Spirit, our pastoral staff and members worked to move our worship services, fellowships, small groups, retreats, Project Destiny, and other ministries online to share God's word and to bring love and hope to many.

Our Lord faithfully met all our financial needs through our members, as He has done for the past 59 years. Although many members were affected by the pandemic, they continued to give generously, and our General Fund had a surplus for the fiscal year.



Throughout the year, He taught all of us to adapt to change by trusting in Him to carry us as we had to learn to serve in new ways. Our deacon board faced some significant decisions this past year, and God honored all our decisions with His blessings. Due to the pandemic, we had to adjust how we meet and vote as a BCEC congregation. The result

was that more members voted than ever before. Our Lord is good.

I thank our deacons for their dedication and faithful service this past year.

## ENGLISH MINISTRIES OVERVIEW

### PASTOR ENOCH LIAO

A pandemic has allowed all of our congregations to work even more closely together. I am all the more grateful that we have multiple congregations per language. We thank God for the partnership we have in our diverse and multi-congregational church family.

With the retirement of Pastor Steve Chin, I miss seeing him daily and working closely with him. Yet I have also enjoyed spending more time working more closely with Pastor Daniel and Pastor Kenneth.

During this past year, many people have asked me about my thoughts for the next season of BCEC as we waited on the Lord for a new Senior Pastor. My answer was usually this: no matter who the Lord calls to be our next Senior Pastor, my job remains the same. I hope to lead the English ministries to be ready to follow God and to support whoever God calls to be our next Senior Pastor.

As I write this, our church membership has affirmed what both the Board of Elders and the Board of Deacons believe to be God's leading: that God is calling Pastor Daniel to be our Senior Pastor for the coming season in the life of BCEC.

As we embark on a new church theme of "Journey Ahead," may we remember that it is Christ whom we are following. May that knowledge comfort and strengthen us to joyful obedience to Christ. And may BCEC continue to be used by God to love our neighbors like ourselves and to love the Lord our God with all we are.

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## CHINESE MINISTRIES OVERVIEW

PASTOR KENNETH KWONG

I felt kind of inexperienced as I started to write this article. It is the first time for me to write a report on the entire Chinese congregation of our church. Many things happened this past year. The outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, as well as internal and external political unrests in the United States have all attributed to the problems that we had to face, as we shepherd our Chinese congregation. How to stand firm and how to expand our ministries are the challenges the Chinese congregational staff are encountering.

For the past few months, quite a number of our congregational members passed away. Due to the restriction on social gatherings, their funerals had to be simplified. As their pastor, I felt regretful that I was unable to properly say goodbye to them. Under the same restriction, our visitation ministry and fellowships were also greatly impacted.

During the pandemic, our ministries have to either meet online or be temporarily suspended. This will inevitably impact the long-term development of our church. For example, should we continue to have online worship services after the church is reopened? Should we have online worship services available only to the homebound, or should we expand this option to include the rest of the congregation? Would this availability make the congregation less likely to attend in-person worship? In addition, how much manpower and resources would we need in order to support both forms of worship? When faced with insufficient manpower, how are we going to allocate the resources? These are some of the issues that need to be addressed.

Even though the online ministries have created new challenges, by God's grace, we have also experienced a pleasant surprise,

which is the success of online evangelism. Thus far, the Chinese congregation has organized two evangelistic meetings on the Zoom virtual meeting platform. The number of participants we had was more than that of any in-person evangelistic meetings that we had organized in the past. However, we also found out that for such meetings, the follow-up work is more difficult than before. Our challenge is to make good use of the virtual meeting space without being limited by it. Breakthrough in follow-up work is still needed.

As people are under tremendous pressure, our visiting and caring ministries are being tested, too. Due to the pandemic, employment and steady income are no longer guaranteed. Race relations in the United States are strained and with the coming of the presidential election, the future is unclear. All these have contributed to an

increase in the need for the caring ministry. At present, these can only be offered by phone or online. Although this may not be the most effective way, we can only try our best. Please remember to pray for the weak.

Furthermore, during the pandemic, the church is called upon to be a beacon of light and hope to others. Let us work hard in unity, continue the ministries of our church, and spread the gospel during these difficult, uncertain times. May we be good stewards of all the resources that God has given us by using any means to be channels of blessing to our neighbors. May we also continue to pray for peace in our city. Personally, I hope that by this time next year, the global pandemic will be behind us, and we will be counting our blessings and giving glory to Jesus Christ. May God continue to keep everyone safe and healthy. Amen.



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## COMMUNITY OUTREACH DURING COVID-19

### MINISTER STEVE LIU

BCEC has been blessed to be able to serve as Jesus' hands and feet during the pandemic. When we embarked on the theme, "Seek the Peace of the City," almost two years ago, we did not know what kind of opportunities God would present. While the pastoral staff and the Social Responsibility Committee dreamed and planned, it wasn't until this year's pandemic began in March that many doors closed and new doors opened up. We saw a mini explosion of activity occur in a short amount of time, much of it outside our usual comfortable paradigms of Christian non-profit partnerships. Here is a brief snapshot of how God has led us to physically serve our communities during this online period.

In February, SRC was concerned for Wuhan and looked for ways to help our church to give. But we quickly realized that the problem would soon be in our own backyard. As soon as the outbreak and lockdown occurred in March, we researched ways to contribute locally in response to the health crisis, as

well as the economic and social upheaval that we were seeing. That ended up being the Boston Resiliency Fund, organized by the City of Boston to fund programs supporting people impacted by COVID-19. Praise the Lord! Through a special collection, we were able to contribute around \$30,000 to the city's recovery efforts.

Around the same time, a group of brothers and sisters from our Mandarin fellowships got in touch with us about contributing PPE to hospitals. We were introduced to a network of church members who had masks and other supplies ready. That's how Pastor Ken Liu, Pastor Barry Lam, and I found ourselves sitting outside the Newton Campus church one chilly March evening, waiting for cars to drop off boxes of PPE. At that time, it felt rare to see others from church, and we struggled to identify each masked, shadowy person approaching from their cars. Throughout the spring, while highways were still empty, SRC Committee members drove long distances

to pick up masks, shields, and other supplies, many of which were handmade. During each pickup, we noticed that many donors were nervous about having physical proximity, but God's love spurred them on to take caring action. Then, each week, one of us would drop off the collected equipment at Tufts Medical Center's loading dock. By May, we had donated more than 4,000 masks and additional other supplies so that hospital patients and staff could be protected against infection.

In April, we began serving school meals to the community through a partnership with Boston Public Schools. When school shut down in March, I emailed the executive director of BPS Food and Nutrition Services to see if BCEC could help. When I volunteered at Blackstone Elementary the next day, that director whom I had emailed was also there! We talked about the needs in our part of the city and started the process to operate a site at 120 Shawmut Ave. Then we recruited

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volunteers, moved in refrigerators, set up licenses, and learned to do the paperwork. Although it started slow, we became one of the largest BPS serving sites in the city, serving up to 2,000 meals each day, with daily lines wrapping around the building! Three days a week, we received two trucks, stored meals, packed meals, and served meals — lots of heavy lifting, assembly teamwork, and logistics. Once, just before meal distribution started, a construction crane fell through the roof of our building — but rather than cancel, our volunteers moved several refrigerators out into the street, connected to a neighbor's power line, and continued to serve meals from the outside! Altogether over 30 BCEC volunteers from various congregations have served around 70,000 meals to our neighborhood. A few times, we heard comments like: "You believe in Jesus, right?" And "Thank you, I know that this church cares about our fellow Chinese people." We're grateful for the relationships we have formed with our neighbors and also with the dedicated staff at the BPS FNS Department, as well as our faithful volunteers who come to serve week after week.

Another example comes from Newton, where Pastor Barry and Pastor Ken had the idea to host a blood drive, which soon became three: in May, August, and October. A team worked to recruit helpers and donors and worked alongside the Red Cross to collect around 70 units of blood, which could be used to save 210 lives! During the drive, we not only reconnected with brothers and sisters while giving blood, but we also had the opportunity to share with neighbors about the reason for the hope we have in Christ, as well as to be a witness toward the hard-working Red Cross staff.

Some other BCEC efforts during the pandemic include:

- Grocery deliveries in partnership with the WangYMCA of Chinatown
- Project Destiny Summer Camp online, serving youth and families locally and regionally
- Project Destiny Autumn to Spring online home-bases for local youth
- Project Destiny Back-to-School English Enrichment camp for English-language-learners
- ESL and Citizenship Class online

- Vacation Bible School outreach week online
- 100 Backpacks donated to schools in Chelsea, one of our worst COVID-impacted cities
- Diaper drive for distribution through Chelsea CommunityConnections

We still have a long way to go in sharing God's peace, justice, and love, but I find it very encouraging to observe the patience of our church towards online gatherings, and that whenever we have gathered in person, it was most often to care for our neighbors' needs in the name of Jesus. I'm grateful for the ways that the Holy Spirit has shown us new ways to seek the peace of the city during some very challenging times. As we head into a new uncertain year, let us pray that He will continue to give our church more wisdom and love to be salt and light in the journey ahead.

# STAFF LIST

## Senior Pastor: Daniel Chan

### English Ministry Staff:

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| Enoch Liao  | Assistant Pastor                               |
| Ken Liu     | Assistant Pastor                               |
| Calvin Chu  | Student Ministries Director                    |
| Lorraine Ho | Children's Ministries Director                 |
| Steve Liu   | Director of Project Destiny Ministries         |
| Saul Lee    | Student Ministries Director                    |
| Ryan So     | Director of Young Adult and College Ministries |
| Kirklín Lee | English Intern                                 |
| Steven Chin | Pastor Emeritus                                |



### Chinese Ministry Staff:

|               |                                 |
|---------------|---------------------------------|
| Daniel Chan   | Senior Pastor                   |
| Kenneth Kwong | Assistant Pastor                |
| Andy Su       | Assistant Pastor                |
| Barry Lam     | Assistant Pastor                |
| Dora Lam      | Assistant to the Pastor         |
| Ben Wong      | Assistant to the Pastor         |
| Patrick Lin   | Interim Assistant to the Pastor |
| Jacob Fung    | Pastor Emeritus                 |



### Operations Support Staff:

|               |                              |
|---------------|------------------------------|
| Helena Fong   | Office Manager               |
| Dennis Chin   | Operations Manager           |
| Kwok Wah Wong | Maintenance Technician       |
| Connie Ho     | Secretary (Chinatown Campus) |
| Lillian Te    | Secretary (Newton Campus)    |

## CHINATOWN CANTONESE 2<sup>ND</sup> CONGREGATION

### MINISTER DORA LAM

The past year was undoubtedly full of ups and downs. Since the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2019, it has spread globally. By the middle of March 2020, our church moved activities and worship to online instead of in-person.

Usage of modern media technology has been a great challenge to our congregation as it is composed primarily of middle-aged and elderly members. We thank God that through the help and the patience of the younger generation, as well as the humility and the willingness of the older generation to learn, we have been able to overcome several obstacles. Let us continue to focus on Christ and to submit ourselves to prayer, unity, and caring and supporting one another. Let us fulfill the calling of Christ as a church.

In just eight months, from December last year to July this year, fifteen of our congregation have gone to be with the Lord. I

would like to extend my condolences to their families.

With the scheduled move out of 249 Harrison Ave. in July next year, identifying the meeting place for our worship service and the Women's Fellowship became a priority. Thanks be to God, after discussion from various quarters, the proposal of combining the 2nd and 3rd Cantonese Worship Services was put forward, and the implementation of this plan has been initiated.

The pastoral team for the Cantonese 2nd Service has undergone considerable changes last year. Pastor Daniel Chan had been transferred to the post of Acting Senior Pastor. Minister Ben Wong joined the team and Pastor Kenneth Kwong took over the responsibility of coordinating the Chinese congregations of our church. Thank God that all the co-workers, elders, and members of the congregation committed themselves to

the work of God, so that the mission of the church could be continued. Pastor Daniel now meets with the 2nd Cantonese congregation after worship service every Sunday through the Zoom platform, enabling the participants to have a deeper understanding of the needs of the church, as well as to share and pray for one another. At the writing of this article, Pastor Daniel has been nominated for the post of Senior Pastor, and Minister Dora Lam is considering retirement next year. Please pray for God's provision.

As the church continues to face the epidemic, please pray that we can find a balance between safety and commitment. Let us follow the government's guidelines to restore a safe in-person worship in stages, and at the same time continue preaching the gospel of our God Almighty.

I have a few words on the expansion of our church. In the secular world, a well done job

must be a completed job. King David wanted to build a temple for God, yet God did not want him to do it. Although David was not chosen by God for this task, his name was still included in the thanksgiving when the Temple was installed. (2 Chronicles 6:7-9) Therefore, in the eyes of God, a job well done does not necessarily require a job to be completed. As we serve God, may we remember that the Lord examines our hearts. Let the Holy Spirit work through us and let us not worry about our strengths or weaknesses. Instead, we should rely on God's word in order to draw others to Christ, and God will accomplish great things for His name. "May Yahweh, the God of Israel, be praised."



## CHINATOWN CANTONESE 3<sup>RD</sup> CONGREGATION PASTOR KENNETH KWONG

I never thought that writing the annual report for the Cantonese 3rd Service in Chinatown would lead me to several reflections. The outbreak of the COVID-19 epidemic has led me to reexamine many concepts that I had always taken for granted: What should be the relationship between Christians? How important is meeting one another weekly in worship service? What is the difference between individual and corporate worship? I would like to share a little bit of my insights here.

The Chinatown Cantonese 3rd Service has been transferred to the Zoom platform since mid-March due to the pandemic. Every Sunday at 11 a.m., brothers and sisters can log in to greet one another and chat for a while. Five minutes before the start of the service, we broadcast a song to prepare our hearts for worship. At 11:15 a.m., the worship video will be started, so that we can worship

together. After the worship is over, everyone will stay around for fellowship before leaving. We tried to keep the mode of participation as close to what we had before as possible. However, to my disappointment, the number of participants is only about one-fifth of our congregation.

The low participation rate is understandable. Parents have to deal with their children's learning of the Bible while taking care of household chores. The busyness of Sunday mornings is conceivable. Their own worship may have to be postponed to the afternoon. The elderly may have difficulty using Zoom, and it is much easier for them to click onto the church's website and to watch it online over there. Young people love to have a flexible schedule, and they are already using other ways to communicate with their peers. Their social life is less affected by the

pandemic, and they probably do not feel as big a need to participate in a Zoom worship.

In addition to the above reasons, another possible factor is that we believe that the worship service is a time for us to get close to God alone, and it does not matter whether there are others around us participating. I believe this idea is very prevalent among us. If worship service is just a personal encounter with God, then what is the difference between quiet time and corporate worship? Are there benefits that we cannot gain through individual worship? Hebrews 10:24-25 (NIV) may give us a bit of an awakening:

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

We gather together to worship God and give Him the glory, but at the same time, we also gather together to see whether there are needs amongst other members. If there is, we can immediately respond with love and care. Help provided by a group of people is far more effective than by a single person. If we do not gather together regularly, it will be difficult for us to function as a group.

With the above analysis, we can see that our group connection is not something that is easy to come by, and in reality, it is actually something constantly being challenged. May God protect the church to get through the pandemic safely, and may He keep us united. I also would like to use this opportunity to express my thanks to all the brothers and sisters who serve and participate in our online worship service.



## CHINATOWN ENGLISH CONGREGATION

### PASTOR ENOCH LIAO

What can be said about what God is doing in the midst of a pandemic? In Galatians 4:13, the apostle Paul shared that because of a physical ailment he suffered, God led Paul to preach the gospel to the Galatians. This Scripture, and others like it, encourage me because it teaches that God can use anything to share the hope of Jesus Christ, even physical disease and suffering. Praise the Lord!

Speaking of suffering, we continued into a second year of a church theme on “Seek the Peace of the City.” For the Chinatown English Congregation, one expression of this theme was to study the book of Lamentations so as to learn how to “weep with those who weep” (Romans 12:15). Only God knew that our time preaching through a book on how to cry tears to God may prepare us for the pandemic we would find ourselves in. Again, God is good and can use anything to accomplish His purpose.

However, God’s purpose has not been derailed, even by a pandemic and the closing of much of society. We thank God for the staff and many, many brothers and sisters who volunteered their time to transition our ministries online. This year, our church has offered conferences, retreats, seminars, small groups, Sunday School classes, counseling, summer camp, and VBS online. While our buildings may have been closed temporarily, God’s church has not closed during this pandemic. The church, which is the people of God, has continued to find ways to worship God, edify believers, and reach out to others. I thank God for the opportunity to offer a live stream Sunday worship service every week.

Although our ministries moved online, we still were present in both campuses to love and serve our communities. I thank God for our staff and volunteers who organized distributing thousands of free meals in Chinatown, or blood drives at Newton



Campus. Moreover, we look forward to this coming year to seek God’s leading for how to share the hope of Christ in word and deed to our neighbors and communities of Chinatown and the South End.



This year saw a number of staffing changes. We honored Pastor Steven Chin as he retired. In addition, we welcomed Ryan So as our new Director of Young Adult and College Ministries. We thank the Lord for always providing in His perfect way and perfect time. Because that's the kind of God we have. This reminds me that no matter the changes in the world, in our church, in our lives, that God's Good Rule cannot be thwarted. May we continue to hold fast to the Rock that is Christ, even as it is Christ that is holding firmly onto us.

### **Chinatown English Children's Ministry**

(By Lorraine Ho)

Some may feel COVID-19 has put our lives and ministries upside down. The pandemic presses us to innovate and realize the important things in our lives.

Parents have the daunting task of working from home, as well as supporting and managing their child's online learning schedules. At the same time, God led us to recognize the main provider for the spiritual health of the children are their parents. Parents play a pivotal role in the discipleship of their children, and the church partners with parents to reinforce God's truths taught at home. To support our families, KidMin started circulating a monthly newsletter to provide content such as spiritual discipline and the relevant topic of racism.

So much of Children's Ministry is about physical interaction with the precious ones we serve. When we are forced to move ministries online, we quickly had to figure out effective ways to connect with the children without being with them physically.

### **New to the ministry:**

Currently, we add online worship resources for the children to access every week via our church's website. We have had several Newsong Children's Choir online practices and produced a video to celebrate Easter. The keys to our successes in past Vacation Bible School (VBS) were human interactions and the atmosphere we built to appeal to all five senses. We had to innovate and learn new skills to reach kids this year, knowing they would thirst for fun and life-changing content after months of spending time in front of their screens doing online learning. In addition to Virtual VBS for church families and Virtual Community Outreach, we introduced a new way for families to reach out to children through Backyard VBS, where hosts invited a few guests to their homes for a more personal and in-person ministry.

## CHINATOWN MANDARIN CONGREGATION

### PASTOR ANDY SU

It is an amazing year that the Lord has led us through. We walked from last year's abundance into the valley of this year's pandemic as a family, sharing pains and difficulties, and walking on a path of grace together. Although challenges are not the same for everyone, we all seem to be in the same boat together, rowing together toward a better hometown in heaven. Indeed, during this voyage, some of our older sisters returned before us, and we feel as if they now stand at the sea of glass as they await us to join them. May we be able to fix our eyes more on Heaven and be eager to be with the Lord.

During this pandemic, we saw people living alone with difficulties, and we also saw people caring for and supporting each other in the body of Christ. In response to seeing the heavy burden of parents caring for kids at home, we started a parenting group to encourage each other and to grow together in adjusting family dynamics from parent to

child and husband to wife. Social distancing causes distance in our relationships with acquaintances, but it has led us to cherish our close friends. It has also made us cherish the fellowship of the body of Christ, yearn for God's words, and grow our anticipation of the Lord's return. Our Lord is using the pandemic to change the entire church, changing our usual distractions into attentiveness to Him. Holding Sunday worship service over Zoom has been meaningful for us to receive a glimpse of the Roman underground churches yearning more for the Lord. After service, we have had small group sharing in breakout rooms, where we testify of God's faithfulness and pray for each other. We have also used Zoom to visit the sick and to hold housewarming celebrations. Thank the Lord for guiding us on a new path and building a renewed church!





## NEWTON CANTONESE CONGREGATION

### PASTOR BARRY LAM

*“Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”* (1 Peter 5:6-7 – NIV)

At the beginning of this year, God had put these two verses on my heart. I couldn’t have anticipated then that as the coronavirus pandemic spread and wreaked havoc throughout the world, these two Bible verses would become my comfort and hope during the current affliction. Truly, we need to humble ourselves, because who could have predicted the things that have occurred in 2020, and who knows what tomorrow may hold? God does not ask us to be fully knowledgeable of what will happen tomorrow, but He does want us to know that no matter what, He cares for us. Therefore, we can cast our anxieties on Him, and rest under His mighty hand.

The pandemic pushed everyone to make changes to their lives in small and large

ways. Our church ministries also had to make many changes, including switching to online worship. Of course, online worship came with many limitations such as reduced human interactions, less “live” feel, and cybersecurity issues. At the same time, we discovered that online worship brought about many unexpected benefits. For example, some members who previously couldn’t join our in-person worship service could now participate online. Also, the frequency and size of small groups grew with the online format. We roughly estimate that approximately 100 (~70%) of the 140 Newton Cantonese regular attendees have participated in fellowship and small groups during the pandemic. Praise the Lord! I hope that we can continue to strengthen this type of small group ministry model, so that believers and seekers can both have spiritual companions and continue to grow together in Christ’s love.



In addition, Newton Cantonese also tried out online evangelism. Every Wednesday since April 1, we hosted WeTalk 800 in hopes of helping to support people during the pandemic physically, emotionally, and spiritually through the sharing of information and positivity, helping them see that the church cares, and preparing their hearts to receive the gospel. Although we did not have much resources, experience, or long-term planning, we simply saw the need, strengthened our hearts, and forged ahead. In June, we hosted for the first time an online evangelistic meeting during which

God worked wonderfully and led 400 people to participate, 10 lost brothers and sisters who had been away from church for a while attended, and 6 seekers came to Christ. We were overjoyed. There were attendees from other churches, other states, and even from Hong Kong. Before the pandemic, it would not have been easy to achieve this level of participation for in-person evangelistic meetings. That night, we all tasted and experienced an abundant feast prepared by our Lord.

Although we still cannot return to meeting in person, God's work has never stopped. I am thankful for brothers and sisters who serve with the production of our weekly online worship service, the Newton Cantonese choir who share heartfelt musical offerings, fellowship members and leaders for their faithful participation and leading, Adult Sunday School teachers and members who serve and participate weekly, the passion of the Evangelism Explosion students, and of

course, the Tuesday evening prayer warriors. Our Newton Cantonese congregation has witnessed the abundant grace of our Lord Jesus, the love of the Father, and the power and protection of the Holy Spirit. What touched me the most is seeing how this cruel pandemic in fact moved our brothers and sisters to love and care for one another even more. In the midst of gains and losses, everyone is supporting one another, walking alongside one another in unity, and learning to rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep. These experiences

allow us to learn to cherish what we have and be self-content. God's love never ceases.

May our Lord's church not fear the storms and continue to shine for Him by sharing the gospel of hope and making more disciples for Him.



## NEW COMMUNITY CONGREGATION (NEWTON ENGLISH)

PASTOR KEN LIU

It's odd to think about what life and ministry was like before the pandemic. As I reflect on those moments, I confess there is still a bit of grief. There is nothing that really replaces being proximate with others. I miss being present with you both in the context of congregational worship, but also in the day to day things of life that make life rich and meaningful.

At the beginning of this year, both English congregations began a sermon series in Lamentations, which was year two of our "Seek the Peace of the City" church theme. Admittedly for many of us, it was difficult at the time to directly connect with the themes of suffering, struggle, and lament. But in retrospect, I believe God was preparing us for what was to come. Concepts that seemed so distant and theoretical to our experiences all of a sudden became real and practical in a span of weeks. There were so many things we had to surrender. There

were many irretrievable losses. This invisible virus brought the whole world to its knees. On top of that, we saw another kind of virus infecting humanity as Asian Americans were blamed and targeted. We witnessed with horror the murder of George Floyd, once again highlighting that America's original sin of racism is alive and well, and continues to haunt us.

At times, the circumstances have been overwhelming to process. With a steady stream of bad news all around us, it was especially important for us to be there for each other. As a church, we needed to learn pretty quickly how to navigate life online to support and point each other to God for hope. For the most part, we were able to move most ministries online. Some ministries, such as children's ministry, proved to be more challenging, and continues to be the case. However, other ministries, such as



the student ministries, pivoted admirably to connect and create community online.

Most adult community groups were able to adapt online. Worship services continued to evolve over time. Initially, the services were pre-recorded. Several weeks later, we watched the service together through Zoom to create a greater sense of connection. After service, we continued to meet for "updates and prayer," where we processed with one another and prayed for the pressing needs

we were experiencing. Beyond praying for each other, we felt a need to intercede for our church, city, and nation. We continue to meet each Wednesday to do so. There are times when the urgency seems to fade, but it doesn't take very long for something else to happen to renew that sense of urgency to lament and intercede for our world.

As it has become more apparent that life will not return to "normal" for a long time, it



has forced me to think through what it means to be the church in times like these. I do believe that God can use these moments to drill down deeper what it means to be his people. Although we

cannot gather all together to worship in a building, there are things we can do to love God and neighbor in this new normal.

Partnering with the Red Cross reminded me that there are other ways we can bless and love our neighbors in tangible ways. With many public buildings and workplaces closed during the pandemic, many of the previously scheduled blood drives were canceled, which resulted in a blood shortage. Thankfully, we were able to open the doors of our church to host the event and provide volunteers. The wonderful donors from our church and community were able to give sixty-six units of life-saving blood between the two drives. Just as importantly, our team wanted to make sure that every person who entered through our doors would experience the welcome and love of Jesus. I was encouraged to see our church go the extra mile in making sure all the donors were cared for and loved. We also did our best to show our love and care for the Red Cross

staff. As first responders, I learned they were overworked, and many of them on the verge of burnout. When we presented flowers and ice cream at the end of the day to show our appreciation, I could tell many of them were visibly moved. It confirmed within me that in the midst of these tumultuous times, a little kindness and generosity can go a long way.

These experiences remind me that in times of crisis, there are always new opportunities to love and serve our neighbors. To prepare for this, we are starting a new sermon series at New Community this fall called, "New Habits for a New Normal: Creating space to love God and neighbor." Pray for us as we explore ways to leverage this moment in history to creatively love God and neighbor with new and fresh expressions of his kingdom. Rather than wait around for "normal" to return, I do believe it's time for us to rise up to create new ways to love our neighbors in this new normal.

## NEWTON MANDARIN CONGREGATION

### MINISTER PATRICK LIN

Despite unprecedented storms, scaled locally or globally, there was still unexpected peace and joy granted to us by our gracious God in the past year. Through these trials of various kinds, individually or collectively, we really had an opportunity to experience what the Bible says about the testing of our faith. It is a refinement to make us perfect, complete, and lacking in nothing<sup>1</sup>.

We could truly testify that the “horizontal” relationship between brothers and sisters in the church was once again deeply built up by the grace of God through our lunch love-feast on Sundays. Some of those who were so loving and caring committed to serve others for half a year, and no one seem to be affected by the temporary change from in-person worship to online worship. However, many families and individuals deeply felt the vitality

and warmth of the congregation. Due to the pandemic outbreak, all physical gatherings had to be canceled, but God’s provision is far beyond our expectation. Although the steady number of participants does not indicate any impact, according to our online real-time gatherings in the past six months, there is gradual growth in the quality of spiritual life through some of the sharing and testimonies in Sunday School classes, prayer

meetings, and fellowship nights. In the midst of suffering, brothers and sisters are willing to look upon the Lord and to bear one another’s burdens<sup>2</sup>, which can also be clearly noticed from their prayers and gratitude. It is more encouraging that the “vertical” relationship with God from our midst, living in this world of hurt, has become stronger and closer.

Even though the relationship between major economies and powers in this world is



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<sup>1</sup> cf. James 1:2-4

<sup>2</sup> cf. Galatians 6:1-2



accelerating all the conflicts in their respective dreams and interests, the camps advocating capitalism or socialism are doing their best to dominate the world through authoritarian totalitarianism or liberal democracy. How can all ethnic groups lay down their own social and cultural burdens, oppose ideology, and create a fair and just society for the peace and coexistence of mankind? How could we Christians, in such a turbulent storm, run with endurance the race that is set before us<sup>3</sup>, rejoice for the marriage of the Lamb<sup>4</sup>, and prepare as a bride adorned for her husband<sup>5</sup>? We would like to affirm once more that the Lord is our confidence, and He is the head of the body, the church. Let us ask the Lord God Almighty for help, to renew the body

of the church, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, and to please God alone. Thus, we may live with trust and obedience, patience and love, and devout commitment in Christ. No matter what circumstances we will encounter, let us seek God's guidance by going to Him faithfully. This could mean stepping outside of our comfort zones, so we could bear the reproach He endured<sup>6</sup>. Let us rely on God by persevering to the very end,

entering the most holy place, and walking with Him all together!



<sup>3</sup> cf. Hebrews 12:1-2

<sup>4</sup> cf. Revelation 19:7-10

<sup>5</sup> cf. Revelation 21:1-2

<sup>6</sup> cf. Hebrews 13:13

## LIFE COMMUNITY GROUPS AND FELLOWSHIPS



Caleb Fellowship



Women's Fellowship



New Community Family Community Group



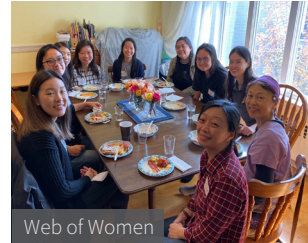
New Community Family Community Group



Joshua Couples Fellowship



Daniel Fellowship



Web of Women



Joshua 2 Fellowship



Sucai Fellowship



Peter Fellowship



Daniel Fellowship



Enoch Fellowship



Joshua 1 and Ruth Fellowship



Chinatown English College Group



Daniel Fellowship



Web of Women



Sucaai Fellowship



Emmanuel and Paul Fellowship



Ruth Fellowship



Daniel Fellowship



Enoch Fellowship

## CHILDREN'S, YOUTH, AND STUDENT MINISTRIES



Chinatown Children's Ministries



Newton Student's Ministries



Chinatown Children's Ministries



Chinatown Christmas Party



Chinese Youth Group



Newton Children's Sunday School



TWR and Teen Fellowship



Newton Nursery



TWR and Teen Fellowship



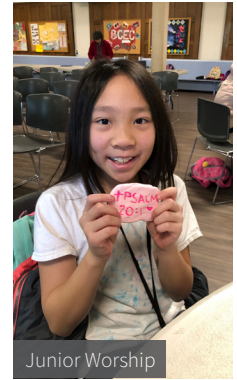
TWR and Teen Fellowship



Junior Worship



Chinese Youth Group



Junior Worship



Together In One Bucket



Newton Children's Sunday School



Chinatown Christmas Party



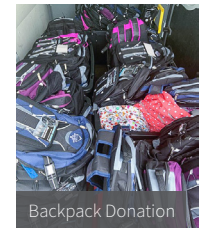
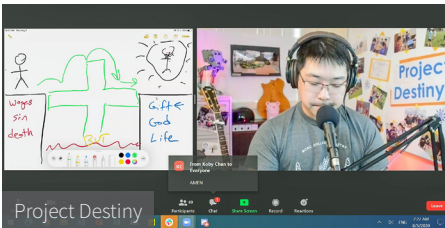
TWR and Teen Fellowship



Together In One Bucket

# MISSIONS AND OUTREACH





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