

Connections

A publication to inform, involve, and unite the BCEC extended church family

Spring 2025, Issue 55

Reflecting on My First 90 Days

By Senior Pastor Tom Lee



Praise God! Greetings and blessings upon blessings in Christ Jesus.

What a wonderful way to begin the new year and launch a new chapter in my life — and in the life of BCEC — together. From the very first moment at the Chinese New Year's Day prayer meeting, seeing so many old and new faces, I felt like the prodigal son returning home — welcomed with

open arms and smiling faces. Praise the Lord for His calling and the warm welcome back to BCEC, my spiritual mother church, and the church where I have served for 30-some years.

Thanks be to God for the love, well wishes, and prayers I have received, especially during the Senior Pastor Installation service, where so many BCEC brothers and sisters packed the JQES auditorium and cafeteria. Together, we celebrated God's faithfulness over the past six decades and looked forward in faith to this new chapter. I am truly humbled and honored to be called as your next lead under-shepherd, following in the footsteps of faithful pas-

tors before me — Pastor Tan, Pastor Fung, Pastor Steve, and Pastor Daniel.

I have been especially encouraged by the joy, love, heartfelt worship, and deep dedication among our brothers and sisters. Visiting every congregation and many fellowships across both campuses and languages has been such a blessing. With the exception of one snowy Sunday in Chinatown Cantonese, I have had the joy of preaching in every worship service. What moves me deeply is the love our members have for one another and their sincere devotion to our Heavenly Father.

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PASTOR TOM: My First 90 Days

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Truly, we are a richly blessed flock.

What a joy it was to participate in the various Lunar New Year celebrations! From the Newton Mandarin dinner and talent show, to the delightful 10-course banquet with Hong Kong-style entertainment (including a giant snake!), to the roasted whole pig feast in Chinatown — each was a reflection of our vibrant, joyful community.

I am also deeply grateful for the enthusiastic teamwork among our deacons, elders, staff, and ministry teams. The overnight Deacons Retreat was a wonderful time of worship, sharing, fellowship, and ministry planning! The Elders and Visioning Team are working prayerfully together for God's future for BCEC, which gives me much hope and joy. Every Tuesday, I'm uplifted by staff sharing their spiritual journeys and "God-sightings." It brings a spiritual lift to our week.

It is a joy to witness the bustling Newton Campus on Friday nights and Sunday mornings, the many people fellowshiping between services at JQES, and the 120 lunches served weekly. Our weekday Project Destiny volunteers for middle and high schoolers, the dedication of staff, and the Community English Classes on Saturdays — each is a testimony to how God is at work at BCEC. All our Sunday worship services, Sunday School classes, fellowships, and outreach ministries bless my soul and bring Christ glory.

Naming Our Reality, Embracing Our Mission

One of a leader's roles is to help describe

Visiting every congregation and many fellowships across both campuses and languages has been such a blessing.

reality. These first 90 days have been full of discovery — seeing how God loves us, how we love one another, and how that love overflows to our friends, families, neighbors, and the world.

It has also meant beginning to understand the complexities and challenges of operating as a multilingual, multi-congregational, multicultural, multi-generational, multi-site family. We are navigating the post-pandemic landscape, adapting to a rapidly changing community environment, and discerning internal dynamics with humility and wisdom.

In light of this, our leadership comprising the Board of Elders and Board of Deacons has launched a *Vision Discernment Process* — a yearlong journey to prayerfully seek God's preferred future for BCEC. In partnership with seasoned church vision navigator Jim Randall of Auxano.com, we will walk through five key stages:

1. *Pumpkin Jars*: Identifying current challenges and daring to dream God-sized "What if..." possibilities.
2. *Kingdom Concept*: Discerning BCEC's unique contribution to God's Kingdom based on the following:

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- a. The characteristics of our local community
 - b. Our unique gifts and spiritual families
 - c. The passions and convictions of our leaders
3. *Vision Frame*: Articulating our mission, core values, strategies (including campus roles and Chinatown expansion), and discipleship markers.
 4. *Vision Proper*: Painting a clear picture of mountaintops we are called to reach and milestones along the journey.
 5. *Living It Out*: Integrating the vision through discipleship, leadership development, intentional communication, reproducible processes, compelling ministry environments, and a God-honoring culture.

Please join us in this process through surveys, gatherings, prayer, and input, as we discern together God's good and perfectly timed plans for our church.

Unified Teaching and Celebration

I am thrilled that we launched our first churchwide coordinated preaching series "*Behold Your Lamb-King*" during Lent and Easter. All six congregations reflected on the same Scripture passages and themes — Service, Humility, Sacrifice, and Victory — preached by pastors who prepared together. What a joy to know we were united in heart and mind, lifting up Jesus, our Risen Lamb-King.

A New Chinatown Sunday Venue

We are also excited about the upcoming Chinatown worship services move to Josiah Quincy Upper School (JQUS), likely this early summer. When BCEC offered the 249 Harrison Avenue building to the city for construction of

a new, state-of-the-art \$250 million facility, we were blessed with financial compensation and three years of rent-free usage at the new JQUS.

By God's grace, we are preparing and training for this transition. Lord willing, many ministries will move into JQUS over the summer and welcome our community this fall. Special thanks to the Josiah Quincy Elementary School administration for hosting and partnering with us these past 20 years. We look forward to continued and deepening partnership into the future. We are appreciative to the many dedicated volunteers making this complex move possible — and thanks to God for paving the way. Please pray for our hoped-for move, for deepening JQES and JQUS partnerships, and for the LORD to bless their faculty, students, and families.

In Closing

It is a deep joy and sacred honor to be called home to serve as your lead under-shepherd. I look forward to seeing BCEC continue to grow — not only as an effective vision-driven organization, but as a joyful, loving organism, the living family of Christ. Let's press on together to maximize the strengths and opportunities He has given us, while trusting Him to guide us through every challenge.

All for Christ's glory, our joy, and the good of the world.

"Great Is Thy Faithfulness" (Lamentations 3 - KJV)

With love in Christ,
Pastor Tom

Pastor Tom Lee's Home Church Joyfully Celebrates His Return

By the Connections Editorial Team



Pastor Tom Lee's installation as senior pastor took place on January 26 at the Josiah Quincy Elementary School.

Boston Chinese Evangelical Church welcomed Pastor Tom Lee's return as senior pastor on January 26 at the Josiah Quincy Elementary School, with a telecast to the BCEC Newton Campus.

Senior Pastor Lee spoke about coming to Christ as a youth at BCEC, then entering the ministry full-time at BCEC and Grace Chapel.

Local church leaders prayed at the installation ceremony and Boston politicians attended as well. The ceremony ended with fresh fruit cakes and a potluck of treats for congregants and guests to enjoy.

How My Sabbatical Blessed Me with a Season of Renewal

By Pastor Barry Lam



Pastor Barry Lam enjoyed quality time with his wife and three children during his sabbatical in 2024.

I can't thank God enough for the six months (April to September 2024) sabbatical He's given me — a sabbatical that feels like a personal and customized gift from Him, just when I needed it most. I also want to extend my heartfelt thanks to my church family — church leaders, my ministry leaders, brothers, and sisters — who have upheld me with their prayers and steadfast faithfulness in their serving roles.

My sabbatical was a transformative season of renewal, intentionally designed to reconnect with God, my family, and my purpose in ministry. One of the most impactful experiences was participating in a short-term missions trip to Mexicali, Mexico. There, I served alongside brothers and sisters from other churches and local leaders. We engaged in community outreach at a women's shelter, visited orphanages, and supported local church evangelism. The vi-

brant faith of the people I met, despite their challenges, rekindled my own spiritual fervor. It was a humbling reminder of God's presence in every corner of the world and a call to trust Him more deeply in my own life. This hands-on service stretched me beyond my comfort zone, and reaffirmed my commitment to living out my faith actively.

To broaden my understanding of worship and ministry, I was able to visit 10 different churches both within the United States and outside the United States. Each congregation offered a unique expression of faith — some with exultant praise, others with quiet reverence. I observed their approaches to preaching, community building, and care, gathering insights that I hope to weave into my own ministry work. These visits sparked fresh ideas and deepened my appreciation for the diversity within the body of Christ, inspiring me to lead with

greater openness and creativity. The experiences also touched my heart, revealing how God's people faithfully serve in their local churches despite the unique challenges each one faces.

Family reconnection was another cornerstone of my sabbatical. I intentionally carved out more time and space for my children. Whether through conversations, play, or simply being together, I sought to strengthen our bond and create memories that reflect love and faith. This shift brought joy and a renewed sense of purpose as a parent, particularly when they are all entering adolescence. Equally meaningful was a retreat I took with my wife. We set aside time to worship, pray, seek, and listen to God. We also spent quality time reflecting on our own lives. Together, we sought God's guidance for our marriage and family, journaling our thoughts and dreams. This retreat was a sacred pause, allowing us to realign our hearts with each other and with God. It reminded us of the spiritual foundation that sustains our partnership, and we emerged with a deeper unity and gratitude.

To better equip myself for ministry, I pursued an online mental health coaching certificate from Light University. This course provided practical training in supporting people's mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. I learned techniques for active listening, identifying distress, and offering compassionate guidance — skills that complement my pastoral calling. The curriculum emphasized holistic care, blending psychological insights with spiritual sensitivity. I feel more confident now in walking alongside others through their struggles, whether they face anxiety, grief, or spiritual doubt. This learning experience has

Family reconnection was another cornerstone of my sabbatical.



Pastor Barry Lam visited Mexican churches during his sabbatical.

enriched my approach, enabling me to minister with greater empathy and effectiveness.

In summary, this sabbatical was a gift of restoration and growth. I return with a revitalized connection to God through service and worship, a stronger connection to my family through intentional time, and enhanced tools to care for others' emotional and spiritual needs. I am eager to bring these renewed energies into my life and ministry, trusting God to guide the path ahead.

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Pastor Ken Liu and his family were celebrated before his sabbatical on February 23 at Boston Chinese Evangelical Church's Newton Campus.

BCEC Blesses Pastor Ken Liu Before Sabbatical

By the Connections Editorial Team

Pastor Ken Liu was sent off by Boston Chinese Evangelical Church's brothers and sisters for his sabbatical on February 23 at BCEC's Newton Campus.

BCEC Connections is a publication of Boston Chinese Evangelical Church. We would love to hear from you!

If you would like to help with this publication (writing, translation, or editing), please contact Ling-Mei Wong Leung at lingmeiwong@gmail.com.

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New Perspectives on Worship

By Isa Chui, Chinatown English



On the first day of worship, both my son and I were on the stage. Someone said, “What a special combination!” or “Did you miss those good old days of worship back then?” The fact was I was looking through the weekly bulletin, and my husband was the one who encouraged us to go and brought that idea to life. However, in a mom’s heart (me), it was a year to spend quality time with my son before he went to college, and I had this remote desire to learn how to play chords on a piano. Something in worship music always moves the hearts in my family and bonds us together.

I thought I was just going to sing and never knew I could be trained for piano. I learned piano decades ago in high school, but I never performed in a big setting. Not only that, who would want to teach an old dog new tricks? I am very thankful for my leader and team members who invest in

me.

God put me in a special situation. Now I am a mom, but I am also a learner. I have so much fun learning from team members who are younger. You can learn from anybody, regardless of age. Young people have amazing music skills and patience, don’t they? I am sure you can all agree.

The lack of words in worship is something new for me, but it might be something more familiar than I think. It was not until three years old that I learned to speak my first word “Mom.” I recall how God called me to step into many leadership positions. For decades, God taught me how to speak, outreach, and lead groups big or small, and even lead with singing decades ago when I was on the old worship team. But now, it is a time to worship in a new, interesting way, which is to lead without words.

“Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. To draw near to listen is better than to offer the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they are doing evil. Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven and you are on earth. Therefore let your words be few.” (Ecclesiastes 5:1-2 - ESV)

Truly, it is “...let your words be few.” Maybe it is how God created me and what I am supposed to do.

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WORSHIP: Seeing New Perspectives

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Maybe it is a season to draw near and listen.

Learning takes hard work and challenges me emotionally. In particular, I struggle with the desire to play well to help others worship. For many congregants, it is just another day of worship, no big deal. Not until I joined the worship team did I learn the detail that was put into it. Do you hear the special arrangements, the introduction, and the interludes? All that takes hard work. For me, an older participant at our church, I need much practice, since I was not born into this. The other day my husband told me to take a break after a day of practice because it was dinnertime, and I needed to prepare the meal. Practicing not only helps me in my skill, but it also helps me soak in the words, giving me an opportunity to appreciate the heart of Christ for us.

Stage fright is a big challenge I need to confront. The very first thing I recalled while on my first day on stage was that the piano pedal broke right before worship started. My heart sank in that moment, but I knew things like this often happen right before some amazing ministry, which has happened before on my mission trips. With this, I still have much to learn. One night before Sunday worship, I woke up having anxiety for the upcoming day. In my mind, the words “press the right key” went through my mind repeatedly. Through prayer, God reminded me that the day before, at the end of the rehearsal, our leader’s tiny daughter sent us out the door, waving goodbye and saying she would see me the next day at worship in the morning. Her kindness led me to greet her and affirmed her as my friend.

Previously, I applied some techniques from

**Only when we
realize His goodness
will we know how
to worship Him and
praise Him.**

psychology to soothe myself before worship, such as stretching or taking a good sip of my favorite drink, but that only helped to a certain extent. The effect of the adrenaline sometimes lasted two days after worship finished. However, this round, my perspective has changed. My focus shifted from a world full of expectations to this tiny friend out there enjoying our worship music and to Jesus being our friend. In the Christmas period last year, we were singing “Emmanuel” by Chris Tomlin. God is reminding me He is with me.

Centering on Jesus really calmed the storm. Everything was still and calm in me despite the times we had some crunch time leading up to Sunday. In the middle of one rehearsal, my leader whispered quietly, “Good job.” It made such an impression on me, and told me that I am truly progressing. Kind words go a long way.

What is the hardest part about being on the music worship team? I would say it’s confronting my own mistakes after worship is done. Our leader would collect and review sound recordings from the room and from the livestream. He would give us honest feedback to move us along. I really appreciate him put-



Isa Chui (left) with her son Micah (second left) and worship team members Gabriel and Danielle Ha.

ting that kind of effort to nurture us, being real, and helping us be better. Sometimes, my mistakes would blend in with the music, but other times, it would be very prominent. The first few times, it took me a long time to prepare myself, so I could watch and listen to my own worship offerings, knowing I have made mistakes.

One incident just happened recently, and we knew we had issues during worship service. Our leader was greeted by Pastor Tom Lee after service in the lounge. He shared that a lady had approached him, letting him know that she felt the Holy Spirit moving in her because of the music. Our senior pastor actually thanked us for making the music! Thank God for who He is, because He can use whatever we give Him, with obvious mistakes or not. We have to accept that we are human and we make mistakes.

As I continue to be more like Christ, I am becoming a better version of myself. I do not want the mother-and-son team to be just a sensation or an image of a perfect team. This is more a distraction than focusing on God.

Trust does not relate to how perfect we are, as I often think that people would trust me if I perform perfectly. Trust is when we are lack-

ing. It's about trusting God in all things and that God will carry me through. We've all made mistakes, yet it is an awesome opportunity to grow and improve. We are learning to truly give ourselves to God.

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Romans 12:1-2 - ESV)

One cannot worship God without knowing God is for you and not against you, without knowing God is our friend, and without knowing His beauty. He is a magnificent king who gave His all to redeem us. Only when we realize His goodness will we then know how to worship Him and praise Him. That also means to turn away all other idols, whether it is something or someone you are not supposed to worship or be friends with — worship includes active obedience. Let us choose to be in His presence.



The 2024 winter outreach was held over three weekends in December, with 23 believers from five local Chinese churches.

Winter Local Mission

By John Wong, Newton Cantonese

This year's winter outreach was held over three weekends in December, with 23 believers from five local Chinese churches signing up to participate. Activities included evangelistic training, street preaching, caroling (in Chinatown and supermarkets), nursing home visits, elderly home visits, and Christmas celebrations. Praise God that, in some places the number of people we reach for the gospel was greater than expected, which reminds us once again that *"The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."* (Luke 10:2 - NIV)

According to responses collected this year, many participants in the summer and

winter missions felt that they benefited a lot. Some first-time participants had the opportunity to experience the joy of sharing the gospel, and even some experienced participants gained new insights. In addition, many leaders of the partnering churches felt that local short-term missions can help promote and improve existing outreach ministries, and they expressed a desire that Boston Short Term Mission will organize more evangelistic training and evangelistic activities. Glory to God!

Looking ahead, Boston Short Term Mission plans to register as a non-profit organization, hoping to more effectively help believers and local churches carry out gospel work. Please pray for vision and direction.

Cambodia Missions Team Reflects on God's Work

By Peter Wong, Macrin Tai, Peter Kwok, Eva Kwok, Christina Ho, Joanna Wong and Zenday Wong

Praise God for giving our church another opportunity to bless the Khmer people in Cambodia during the 2024 Christmas season! The 2024 Cambodia short-term missions team had seven team members from our church and one sister from a Canadian church.

We would like to share the reflections of our experiences during the trip. To God be the glory!

This was the third year we partnered with Galilee International US (GIU) and leaders from local church organizations to serve our

Lord by reaching more than 820 children and people in Phnom Penh (Cambodia's capital) and nearby villages. We are thankful that God used the partnership to expand His Kingdom's work in this Buddhist country.

There have been many gracious experiences we can recap from this trip, including the following:

1. Before the trip, our Cambodian driver was diagnosed with colon cancer. We prayed for God's healing, and miraculously, God cured him before the trip. As a result, we were overjoyed to have him take care of us throughout our journey.
2. God raised many brothers and sisters in the church to support the team through prayers and financial donations. We experienced fantastic teamwork among team members, as well as among different organizations. We felt going to Cambodia for a short-term missions trip was like a family gathering. By God's grace, we accomplished what God called us to do in unity. During this process, we created many wonderful, memorable experiences together.
3. This year, we witnessed the growth

of the ministries in the organizations that we partnered with, such as the one in the Wisdom Kindergarten. If it was not a holdback of sending 150 elementary school students from the school, we might have had to serve 600 children at the Wisdom Kindergarten Christmas party. I see God widely open the door for spreading the gospel in the field. It is hard to believe this kindergarten humbly began with six students, and it was persecuted by neighbors, which provided a unique opportunity to share the gospel 10 years ago. We celebrated the kindergarten's 10-year anniversary, and we were honored to present an underwater pump for fresh water to the students.

Praise God that our church's Missions Committee decided to send another team to Cambodia this year to continue blessing the Khmer people. Will you pray for His guidance in your life and see whether you can also join the 2025 short-term missions team to witness God's work in this country?

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The Cambodia short-term missions team included (from left) Peter Kwok, Eva Kwok, Christina Ho, Joanna Wong, Macrin Tai, Minister Peter Wong and Zenday Wong of BCEC, along with a sister from a Canadian church.

CAMBODIA: Reflections

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The team had fellowship with the Children's Home kids.

Cambodia was at one point was greatly suffering from the horrible genocide, and now widely is welcoming peace from our Lord Jesus Christ.

—Minister Peter Wong

Christmas 2024 was my second short-term missions trip to Cambodia. I am grateful to be able to preach the gospel with local missionaries and believers again! Their passion and dedication to evangelism inspired me once again, and I also made a breakthrough in evangelism with my limited English!

I am grateful to see the local children, teachers, and college students I visited last year again. I have bonded with them, and I cherish all the interactions I had with them!

In particular, I was moved by our visit to see a girl who could not take care of herself. Her parents had both passed away, and her family had arranged for her to be taken care of by her elderly grandfather. She lived in a small shed.

When we visited her, she seemed to be unable to hear or see, and did not respond to our calls. When we gave her some cookies and put them in her hands, she didn't know how to eat them. It was not until we held her hand and put the cookies into her mouth that she slowly let go of her embarrassment and ate them. It was so heartbreaking! Thank God that the missionary was willing to follow up and contact her family later, so that she could be taken to Phnom Penh for a preliminary check-up. I hope she can receive proper treatment and care.

Although there are many poor and helpless people like this in Cambodia, God allows us to encounter and see their needs. If we can bring them a little warmth and help, it is indeed God's grace. May God use missionaries and local believers to continue to expand the Kingdom of God in the local area, preach the gospel to them, lead them into a life of hope, and renew their body and soul!

Before leaving, the college students and children asked us if we would visit them again next year. Although I told them, "I hope to go again," in my heart, I thought to myself, "Why shouldn't I go again!" I feel like we are God's messengers to bring the gospel and the blessings of the church to brothers and sisters in the local area, so that God's name may be glorified. What a blessing to serve God's people! Praise the Lord!

—Macrin Tai, Newton Cantonese

As we reflect on our time in Cambodia, we are filled with gratitude for the experiences, connections, and lessons learned. This



The Cambodia short-term missions team visited churches, orphanages, and schools to share God's love.

journey was not just about serving others, but it was also about witnessing God's work in a new environment and strengthening our faith along the way.

Even though this was our third time visiting Cambodia, God gave us new insights. We recalled one of the road trips was delayed due to new road construction, yet our team was able to carry out the activities in a flexible way. This experience reminded us that God's plans are always greater than ours, and His work continues even in the midst of challenges. When we arrived, we played similar games with the children in kindergarten and elementary school, but they continued to enjoy and cherish the time spent with us, as witnessed by their genuine smiles. Their joy reinforced our understanding that love and presence matter more than elaborate activities.

An impactful moment for us was worshipping with the college students. It was moving to see their enthusiasm and attentiveness during the service. The experience of worshipping in Khmer reminded us that God's love goes beyond language and cultural barriers. Their dedication to learning and growing in faith was inspiring, and we were blessed to be

God's love goes beyond language and cultural barriers.

a part of their journey.

Visiting families in the village was a humbling experience. We were encouraged by the increased number of families attending church, yet we also recognized the importance of continuous follow-up and discipleship. Engaging with them reminded us of the significance of long-term relationships in ministry, rather than just one-time encounters.

During the family visitation, we continued to visit a young girl we met last year. She does not have the ability to care for herself and is being taken care of by her grandfather, who can only provide food and water. It is heartwarming to see that the local missionary team will look into caring for this young girl.

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CAMBODIA: Reflections

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The Christmas party at the children's home was a highlight of the trip. The joy and excitement of the children, as they participated in activities and listened to the message of Christmas filled our hearts with warmth. It was a powerful reminder of how God's love can be shared through simple gestures of kindness and presence.

During our visit at the Children Home, we also met a local worship team member who could not see, yet God gave him the ability to play various musical instruments to serve Him. This encounter deeply touched us, and reaffirmed our belief that God's love and power are at work in Cambodia, equipping His people for His mission.

We also are grateful that Minister Wong continues to organize opportunities, so that we can experience and understand more about Cambodia each year. This year, we had the opportunity to meet a school principal who was once a doctor in Hong Kong and immigrated to Cambodia to serve the local community based on God's calling. Visiting his school and listening to his inspiring story helped us see how God uses His servants in different ways to fulfill His purposes. We are also incredibly grateful for the hospitality and dedication of our local partners, especially GIU and Steven's team. Their commitment to the community and to God's mission was evident in everything they did. Their resilience and faith encouraged us to remain steadfast in our own spiritual walk.

Looking ahead, we hope to continue supporting the work in Cambodia through prayer, advocacy, and future visits. This short-term

God's love and power are at work in Cambodia, equipping His people for His mission.

missions trip has strengthened our faith and deepened our understanding of what it means to serve with humility and love. We return home with hearts full of gratitude and a renewed commitment to spreading God's light wherever we go.

—Peter and Eva Kwok, Newton Cantonese

Thanks, BCEC, for giving me the opportunity to be part of the Cambodia short-term missions team. In addition, thank you to our brothers and sisters for being part of it through prayers and financial support. Thanks, Minister Peter Wong, for leading this mission trip.

It was a rewarding trip. We were able to work with the local missionaries and leaders to reach out to more than 800 children in kindergarten, elementary school, high schools, college, children's home, and families in the villages to celebrate Christmas. Not only could we present them with Christmas gifts, the best part was sharing the gospel, so they could begin to understand the true meaning of Christmas. I am quite encouraged by those missionaries — their submission to God's calling to



Children held up gifts they received at the Christmas Party.

serve in Cambodia, as well as their willingness to make sacrifices to leave their homeland and be uncomfortable to serve in Cambodia. Cambodia is technically a third-world country, one of the poorest nations in the world where it lacks basic necessities — clean water, sanitation and hygiene, education, and health care.

Throughout this missions trip, God opened my eyes to experience His greatness and goodness for His kingdom in Cambodia. An interpreter shared one of the miracles he witnessed through a short-term missions trip in Singapore. They visited a villager who was blind. Through persistent prayers, he could see again. In addition, a doctor from Hong Kong left the medical field to establish a school that serves preschool to high school students, as well as starting a special program for middle-class families in Cambodia.

Moreover, a disabled girl who lost both her parents in the war, lived with her grandfather and uncle. When we visited her, she was alone in a hammock with dirty worn-out clothes, messy hair, an empty bowl, and a cup with dirty water. She was skinny with a bloated stomach (these are signs of malnutrition), and she was unresponsive to any of our greetings.

The Holy Spirit alerted me to get closer to her, hug her, comb and braid her hair, and treat her with dignity. She began to react. The next day, she was more responsive. Thank God! One of the local missionaries was able to help her get the medical care she needed after we departed.

Minister Peter has been doing much work in the missions field. He not only coordinates the missions teams to different countries — to allow brothers and sisters to experience God's work in those remote developing countries, but he also offers continuous support and resources for those missionaries. For example, the children at BCEC Mandarin Fellowship donated money to buy eggs for children's meal in Cambodia. The money that BCEC collected was donated to a children's home for renovations, so that they could provide a safer, nurturing environment for the children.

I am so grateful to be blessed materially and living in the United States. I am telling myself. When I am enjoying a full meal, I am thinking of those who are struggling to have their physiological needs met.

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CAMBODIA: Reflections

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How can God use me to be a blessing to others?

—Christina Ho, Newton Cantonese

I am truly grateful for the opportunity to participate in the 2024 Cambodia short-term mission trip. Serving alongside team members and missionaries, I witnessed their deep devotion to God and passion for missions. They not only live out the gospel through their actions, but they also remain steadfast in their faith despite many challenges. This experience has inspired me to reflect on my own faith and how I can embody the gospel in my daily life.

We visited four different mission fields, connecting with kindergarteners, university students, and even young professionals. I truly cherished the time spent with them and was grateful for the opportunity to serve together through music and worship. These moments of fellowship gave me a deeper appreciation for the dedication of the local leaders and allowed me to witness God's amazing work in various places.

This journey not only deepened my growth in service, but it also provided valuable insights into my life and spiritual journey. I hope to continue witnessing God's power in my daily life and living out His love.

—Joanna Wong, Newton Cantonese

Hi everyone! I am Zenday from the Newton Cantonese congregation. I would like to share my experience from a short-term mission trip to Cambodia, my first such trip and also my first visit to this country. It was quite

How important it is to share God's love with these children.

special to be able to see the local culture first hand.

The highlight for me was visiting a children's home and kindergarten. It took one to two hours for our team to travel to this site due to its remote location and the condition of the roads. The children do not get many visitors and were thrilled to see us. I was so touched by their sweet welcome and appreciation of the small gifts we brought them, such as stationery, books and snacks. I was thinking how comfortable my life is in a more prosperous country and how important it is to share God's love with these children.

Our team also had conversations with college students and got to learn about their hopes and dreams. We didn't speak the Cambodian language, but managed to communicate with a combination of English, Putonghua, and body language.

It was through making Christmas manger crafts with the children that most moved me. Their enthusiasm and total focus caused me to feel even more burdened to show them what a loving God we have, and how much our group from far away cares about them.

Thank you for your prayers and financial support. My hope is that our sharing and upcoming activities will stir up your heart for missions, as an expression of your faith.

—Zenday Wong, Newton Cantonese



Minister Benny Chiu was commissioned on October 27, 2024 at Boston Chinese Evangelical Church's Chinatown Campus.

BCEC Commissions Minister Benny Chiu

By the Connections Editorial Team

Minister Benny Chiu was joyfully commissioned on October 27, 2024 at Boston Chinese Evangelical Church's Chinatown Campus. Minister Chiu spoke about his call into ministry. The pastors and elders then lifted their hands to bless him and his wife Uki.

BCEC Sends Help to Refugees

By Szechun Leung (Chinatown Cantonese)



When we see a need, do we act or not?
When God calls you to move, do you move?

Enough people wanted change when
they voted Donald Trump back into the White

House, and they got it! Whatever your political stance is, one cannot say that the current White House has been lazy. The executive orders are coming in fast and furious.

Personally, it pains me to see one change being the suspension of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program. More colloquially, you may have heard of it as the "refugee ban." We may not be impacted by these cuts, but there are many others who have been. It handles refugee settlement programs as part of its ministry.

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REFUGEES: Supporting the Stranger

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For over 40 years, the US government (and other donors) provided the funding to pay for rent, food and transportation during their first 90 days, while World Relief and their church partners come alongside refugees and their families to help them feel welcomed and cared for as they integrate into their communities. The refugee ban essentially killed off a major chunk of funding, and it went into effect almost immediately; more specifically, \$8 million of expected funding just went poof!

When funding is cut, what typically happens next? One is layoffs of staff members such as case managers and housing specialists. Other types of programs may also be cut entirely, such as ESL classes and employment programs. It is people's livelihoods at stake, and we are only talking about the refugees who have already stepped onto US soil. For those whose refugee papers were about to be reviewed and now told that they are no longer welcome, perhaps their lives may even be at stake, as political prisoners or asylum seekers.

If World Relief chose to cut its program and lay off staff, no one would blame them for doing so, even as lives are on the balance. Yet like many Christian stories, World Relief decided to do the atypical. They instead decided to ask its other donors to help with their \$8 million shortfall to continue their ministries. For us in particular, can people of faith who believe in Jesus' call to love and welcome the stranger step up — even if the government pulls out of its original promise to the refugees?

The SR Committee decided unanimously to respond to their call, using our Charity Fund

I pray that in all we do, we and our church can be the light of the world. City on a hill.

surplus to send \$10,000 to World Relief. Yes, we sent 0.125% of what World Relief needs to replenish its shortage even as \$10,000 was a good chunk of our surplus. But God never asked us to do everything all at once. He only asked us to give what we have! I remember the boy who was willing to offer his five loaves of bread and two fish for Jesus to feed five thousand men, not including women and children. Based on Biblical records, this was the only thing that the boy did during this miracle, and yet his single act was instrumental. We believe and pray our meager contribution can do the same.

What else can we do? We can continue praying for those who are affected by our latest political machinations, particularly those who are dependent on aid that was previously provided. We can seek to understand the nuance of various social issues and then reconcile our understanding of the Bible. We can care for people in need, as we are able. I pray that in all we do, we and our church can be the light of the world. City on a hill. Pillar of our communities.



Ben Wong, Larissa Wong, and Winnie Lam are all smiles, as they deliver 133 shoebox gifts to children through Operation Christmas Child.

BCEC Gathers More Than 100 Gifts for Operation Christmas Child

By the Social Responsibility Ministry

Last year, during the Thanksgiving holiday season, our church members once again enthusiastically participated in Operation Christmas Child (OCC), a ministry of Samaritan's Purse (www.samaritanspurse.org), an international Christian relief and evangelism organization. Through OCC, Samaritan's Purse aims to demonstrate God's love to children in need through distributing shoeboxes filled with toys, school supplies and personal care items. Various congregations and fellowships

across both campuses (Elim Fellowship, Together In One Bucket Newton, English Young adults of Chinatown, Chinatown Cantonese service and Chinatown Mandarin service) collectively packed and delivered 133 shoeboxes.

Praise God! Please pray that these shoeboxes will be utilized to bless each child and to spread the good news of Jesus to each child who receives a box.

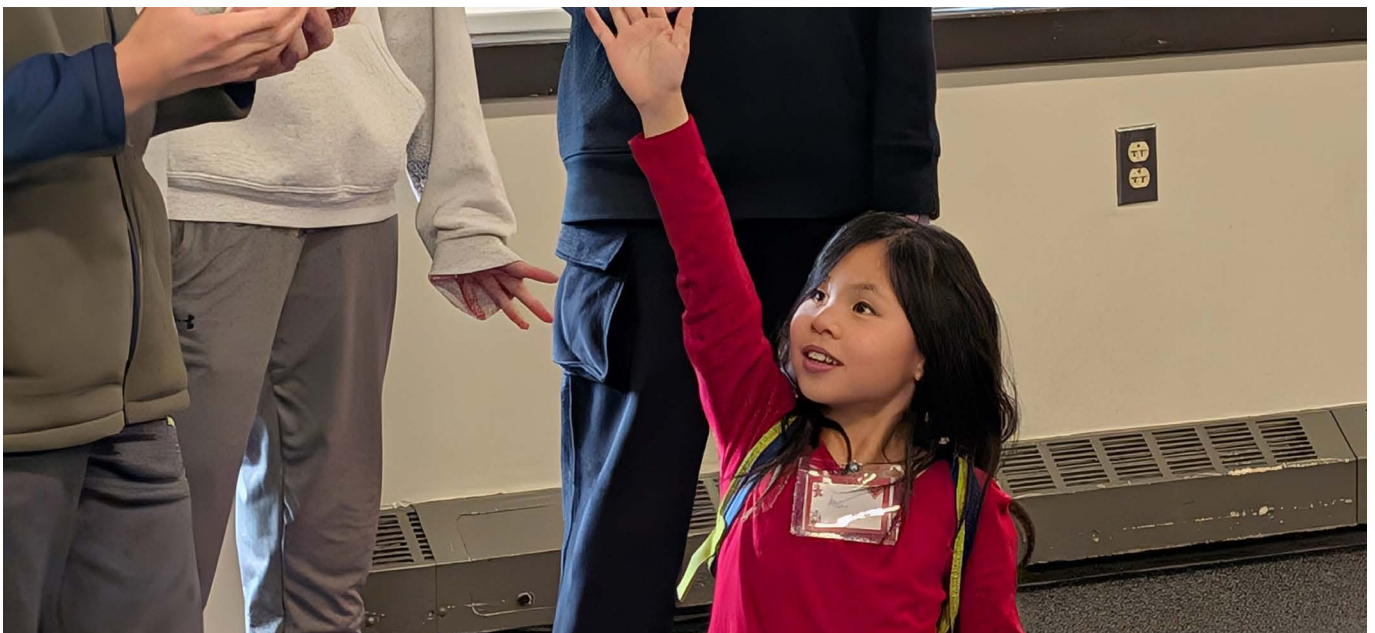
Chinatown Children Celebrate Christmas at BCEC

By the Connections Editorial Team



The children's Christmas party took place December 15, 2024 at BCEC's Chinatown Campus.

Boston Chinese Evangelical Church welcomed local children to the Chinatown Campus for a Christmas party on December 15, 2024. The children participated in a Nativity play, sharing the good news of Jesus's birth and how He is the reason for the season. Games, songs, and refreshments were enjoyed by all.



Games, songs, and refreshments were enjoyed by all.



The English College Ministry Retreat took place at Alton, New Hampshire, from March 7 to March 9.

College Retreat Warms Hearts Despite Wintry Cold

By the Connections Editorial Team

The English College Ministry Retreat took place at Alton, New Hampshire, from March 7 to March 9. Ministry Ryan So led the young men and women in drawing near to God, while having fellowship and fun together.

Deacons Gather and Pray at Retreat

By the Connections Editorial Team



The deacons retreat took place on February 17 at the Warren Conference Center and Inn in Ashland, MA. (From left) James Lam, Billy Ng, Wendy Yee, David Lee, Siu Yu, Vince Lau, Rob Huie, Ida Kwong, Tim So, Terri Mock, Christopher Ho, Peter Kwok and Winnie Lam-Wong.

The deacons of Boston Chinese Evangelical Church gathered for their annual retreat on February 17 at the Warren Conference Center and Inn in Ashland, MA.

Senior Pastor Tom Lee attended the retreat and shared his vision for BCEC with the deacons. The deacons enjoyed good food and sweet fellowship together.

BCEC Celebrates Baptism of Brothers and Sisters

By the Connections Editorial Team



Brother Kevin Huang was baptized by Pastor Steve Liu on December 8, 2024 at BCEC Newton Campus.

Baptisms for the English congregations took place on December 8, 2024 at Boston Chinese Evangelical Church's Newton Campus. May the blessings of the day fill their lives with joy and peace forever.



Baptisms for the Chinese congregation took place on the same day.