

2018-2019 | Annual Report

# Seek the Peace of the **City**



Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper. Jeremiah 29:7 (NIV)

Chinatown Campus: 120 Shawmut Avenue, Boston, MA 02118 (617)426-5711  
Newton Campus: 218 Walnut Street, Newton, MA 02460 (617)243-0100  
<http://www.bcec.net>

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## REPORT FROM THE BOARD OF ELDERS

### PASTOR STEVEN CHIN

The Board of Elders (BOE) is the highest ruling body in BCEC. It is “responsible for carrying out the purpose of BCEC by overseeing the spiritual growth of BCEC through articulating and teaching Biblical doctrines; providing discipleship training and discipline; developing vision, philosophy of ministry, and strategic long-term plans for the ministry of BCEC; and determining the staffing needs.” The BOE generally meets on the first and third Thursday nights of the month, usually for at least four hours each meeting.

The BOE is currently composed of 11 members: 7 elders who are vocational pastors and 4 who are lay elders. The pastors are Pastors Steven Chin, Daniel Chan, Kenneth Kwong, Enoch Liao, Andy Su, Barry Lam, and Ken Liu. The lay elders are Brian Hui, Chuk-lam Yuen, Jack Lee, and Bak Fun Wong. (Pastor Daniel Chan and Pastor Andy Su were on sabbatical for parts of the year.) The Chairman of the Board of Deacons (BOD), Anthony Lai, regularly attended to increase communication.



The BOE carefully considered two major decisions (Senior Pastor succession and Chinatown facilities) that face the church and could affect the church for years to come.

- **PERSONNEL**, including developing a short-term and long-term hiring plan, considering different governance structures, assessing the coming challenges for the church, initiating a process for new pastors and

elders, and beginning the Senior Pastor succession process (including planning for the process, appointing the members of the Job Description Committee and the Search Committee, and making provisions for an acting Senior Pastor). As of the writing of this report, the BOE is waiting for the process to be completed before a decision is made on the next Senior Pastor.

- **EXPANSION PLANNING**, especially for our facilities needs in Chinatown where five different buildings are currently used. Aspects of Chinatown facilities planning include assessing the impact of the sale of 249 Harrison Ave. on the ministry in Chinatown, reviewing the input from members through many town hall meetings, making the decision to sell 249 Harrison Ave. to the City of Boston, and assessing various models to consolidate ministries at 120 Shawmut Ave. As of the writing of this report, no one direction was discerned by the BOE.
- **TEAM BUILDING** and learning by meeting together with the BOD for an all-day leadership retreat with Rev. Steve Viars from Indiana as guest speaker.

The BOE is composed of elders who love the Lord and BCEC but come with different cultures, perspectives, and values. Please

continue to pray for the BOE that it will, with unity, discern the Lord's leading in some important decisions in the coming days.

## REPORT FROM THE BOARD OF DEACONS

KEVIN FONG

On behalf of the Board of Deacons, I give thanks to our glorious God for He has been faithful in leading us throughout this past year of change at BCEC. As you all know, the two major changes are the sale of our 249 Harrison Ave. property to the City of Boston and the retirement of our Senior Pastor, Steven Chin. Preparing for these changes involved much prayer, study, and thoughtful discernment by our staff, deacons, elders, as well as our congregation. We thank all of you for your hard work, dedication, prayers, and support.

We believe our amazing God has even more wonderful and incredible ministry opportunities for us, as we continue to seek the peace of the city. In His love, our God is continuously working to change the hearts and minds of people here in the Greater Boston area and throughout the world. In addition, He calls all seven of our congregations to minister alongside Him. As a result, as we move forward, we know there will be more



changes and more important decisions to be made. Our search for a Senior Pastor has started. In addition, a decision on expanding BCEC's Chinatown Campus facilities lies ahead. Furthermore, our ministries will adapt and find new, innovative ways to reach and disciple people, as the culture in which we live continues to shift. Please continue to seek the Lord and His grace and guidance for His church.

The members of the BOD for this year are as follows:

- Anthony Lai — Chairperson

- Kevin Fong — Vice Chairperson
- Julia Zhu — Secretary
- Billy Ng — Accountant
- Tierry Tzau — Accountant
- Siu Yu — Treasurer
- Emily Ho — Treasurer
- Katarina Ng — Personnel
- Charlotte Lai — Personnel
- Samuel Lok — Facilities
- David Cheng — Chinatown General Affairs
- Paul Lam — Newton General Affairs
- Edward Lau — Information Technology

## REPORT FROM THE SENIOR PASTOR

### PASTOR STEVEN CHIN

This will be my last annual report as Senior Pastor. With my retirement at the end of October 2019, it has been one of my desires in the past few years to leave the church in a good position for the future. In this past year, I can say some things were achieved, but other things are still in flux.

As of the writing of this report, the new Senior Pastor has not been chosen yet. A longer, more thorough process was decided upon by the leaders. I am trusting the Lord will guide the process, so that the person the Lord wants will be chosen.

In some sense, in our large, complex church, the change in Senior Pastor will not be missed immediately. Unlike other senior pastors, I have not been the main preacher at all seven worship services. So, for most members, they will not see much change in the short term. With my language limitations, I have seen my role as Senior Pastor more as one who brings a large, diverse church body together.

The Lord has blessed our church with a hardworking and godly pastoral staff team that has worked together in unity for many years. We also have dedicated lay leaders. As other churches have struggled in this area of unity, BCEC has been blessed to have harmony in its leadership. It does not mean they always agree as the leaders come from different perspectives. However, they, sincerely and respectfully, try to discern God's will and to do what is best for the church. We need to continue to be "eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," as Paul writes in Ephesians 4:3 (ESV).

The outlook on expansion in Chinatown is also not clear as of the writing of this report. The Planned Development Area (PDA) was granted by the City of Boston in 2018. This zoning change allows the church to build up to 150 feet on 120 Shawmut Ave. Soon after, the city asked us to consider selling to it our original property at 249 Harrison Ave. We were not looking to sell the property,

but the city wanted to buy our property so that it could build a new school building for the Josiah Quincy Upper School. After much prayer and consideration, over 90% of the members at the special congregational meeting on May 5, 2019 voted to sell the property to the city.

It is interesting that the theme that we had chosen for last year and extended to this upcoming year is "Seek the Peace of the City," based on Jeremiah 29:7. We seek to bless the city. As it prospers, we too will prosper. The Quincy School has long been Chinatown's school. The sale of our property allows the Quincy Upper School to be located in Chinatown. It will allow community children to stay in the neighborhood for school throughout the duration of their elementary and secondary education. The new school building will be a focal point for various community activities.

Although the sale of 249 Harrison Ave. will bless the community, it does create some

uncertainty for our church. Our original building at 249 Harrison Ave., which opened in 1979, holds many memories. Yet it is remarkable that there was consensus to sell the property. The people recognized that the Lord has blessed us with the Newton Campus and with 120 Shawmut Ave. and that He will provide for the future even though it's not clear to us at this time. As of this writing, our leaders have not discerned together the direction the Lord wants us to go regarding any building project in Chinatown. We continue to pray and wait upon Him.

I also wish I could leave the church to the next senior pastor with rising attendance. Although the average weekly attendance in our 7 worship services grew ever so slightly from 1050 to 1054, it has essentially remained flat for the past 10 years. It has basically been around 1100 people plus or minus 50.

Compared to national trends that show church attendance declining, remaining stable can be seen as a good thing. Based on

a recent poll, Boston was ranked number two in the nation in terms of being most secular. Yet I see the Holy Spirit working, and I see our members seeking to share the gospel in many different ways. I have read or heard the amazing stories of how people have come to Christ. I can only say it has been the work of God.

So even though some congregations are aging and others experience people moving away, the Lord is drawing people to Himself and BCEC as well. We especially give thanks for the attendance growth at Newton Campus, as all three congregations exhibited attendance growth in the past year. We give thanks for the new pastoral staff team there that has blessed the church.

I also want to give thanks for the recent number of our members who are going to or have gone to seminary and are seeking to serve the Lord full time. As people give up lucrative career dreams, it shows the depth of the Lord's impact on their lives. We are glad

the Lord is raising a new generation of leaders to serve Him.

Yes, there are many unknowns in the future. Yes, there are many challenges in the future. But I can personally testify to God's mercy and grace and blessing over the past 42 years. The Lord is able to do much more than we can imagine as we trust in Him.

Let me close with this benediction.

Ephesians 3:20-21 (ESV):

*Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.*

## REPORT FROM THE ASSOCIATE PASTOR

PASTOR DANIEL CHAN

With a thankful heart for God's grace and the support from brothers and sisters, I enjoyed a six-month sabbatical leave from mid-October 2018 to mid-April 2019, focusing on writing a book. During this period, I frequently visited the library of Boston College to gather information for a book about several historical giants who took on the dual role of pastors and theologians at the same time and how their theological thinking was affected and expanded by their pastoral experience. However, because of the huge scale of this concept, I only managed to finish two of the more than ten subjects of my research. The remaining work will have to be completed at a later date.

After the end of my sabbatical, I immediately immersed myself in the decision-making process of the sale of the 249 Harrison Ave. building and other upcoming important issues of the church, such as the Chinatown church

expansion and the retirement arrangements of Pastor Steven Chin. Moreover, Pastor Andy Su started his sabbatical in May, so I had to add the role of pastor for our Chinatown Mandarin congregation to my job duties. Even though I had insufficient time for all these tasks, with support from various leaders in the Mandarin congregation, ministries are proceeding as normal.

Looking forward to the coming year, there will be considerable changes in pastoral staffing and facility use. Regarding staffing, Minister Ben Wong will soon be completing his one-year pastoral internship, and Minister Patrick Lin has completed his pastoral service for over a year. Both of them are preparing to serve full time. The Chinatown Cantonese congregation will need to add a staff position who will be in charge of care, evangelism, and Biblical teaching, while the Newton Mandarin campus will need someone to

replace the position left open when Minister Peter Wong left two years ago. As a result, we pray that God will guide us in making feasible arrangements for these positions.

After Pastor Steven Chin retires, I will temporarily be leading the pastoral teams of both English and Chinese congregations and presiding over meetings of the Board of Elders before we hire a new Senior Pastor. Please pray that I will have wisdom in my time management, so that I will help our church in making various important decisions in the coming year.

The table on the next page has the numbers for the average attendance at different Chinese congregations in the past year:

## OVERVIEW

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	8/1/2018 to 7/31/2019	8/1/2017 to 7/31/2018	8/1/2016 to 7/31/2017
Chinatown 2nd Service	225	222	237
Chinatown 3rd Service	147	150	161
Chinatown Mandarin	126	126	135
Newton Cantonese	134	134	140
Newton Mandarin	69	65	64
Total	701	697	737

Through September 2019, there were 26 people from the Chinese congregation who were baptized, compared to 27 in the previous year. In addition, there were 6 people who were baptized at the hospital or at home because of their illnesses.

## REPORT FROM THE EXPANSION TASKFORCE

Jesus said, “For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you” (Matthew 17:20 – ESV).

Selling our 249 Harrison Ave. home and only permanent auditorium worship space in Chinatown seemed like moving mountains. How can we move out of Chinatown as a Chinatown church? How can we continue to worship? How can we continue our ministries in Chinatown? What is our plan for a new home and worship space?

While many of these questions are still on our minds, the church members came together and voted on the sale of 249 Harrison Ave. on May 5, 2019 after a series of town hall meetings and a period of prayer. More than 90% of our members voted to proceed with the sale despite all the uncertainties.

Many have reflected on how God has guided us through the many years of Chinatown Expansion. God has continued to

provide us access to space for our ministries and outreach. Members have continued to be flexible and accommodating for the ever-changing meeting spaces, along with the constant set up and tear down. Some recounted God’s blessing that we were able to purchase the land from the city at a low price to build our church 40 years ago.

Although the sale is now complete and we have received the funds of \$9.5 million from the sale, we are thankful that we have until June 2021 before we have to move out, providing the much-needed time for planning of the move. Even after the move in June 2021, we still have options for space in the Lincoln School and continued use of Josiah Quincy Elementary School for our worship and ministries. Below is the timeline of the future move:

- The city took ownership of the property in July 2019.
- We can stay in 249 Harrison Ave. until June 2021 rent free.

- We can continue to use Josiah Quincy Elementary School rent free until 2026.
- We have the option to use the Lincoln School auditorium on weekends beginning June 2021 rent free.
- We have the option to use Lincoln school exclusively beginning 2023 until 2026 rent free.
- We have the option to use the new high school after construction is completed until 2026 rent free.

For some in the congregation, the decision has more to do with sacrifices and seeing an opportunity for us to make a difference to the community by providing the land to build the much-needed high school. They see God has provided us a way to fulfill the needs of the City even if it means leaving our home without a plan for a new one. For others in the congregation, this decision is the first step in transitioning out of an older building, which has become less adequate for our needs.

## OVERVIEW

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As we look towards a new year of ministries, we ask that you continue to pray for our facility situation in Chinatown and the facility management team to be able to staff, maintain, and manage the five sites we utilize regularly. In addition, please pray for the planning of the 249 Harrison Ave. move out and the impacted ministries. Most importantly, we ask you to pray for the following items: 1. The church leadership reaches a compromise regarding the future facility plans in Chinatown. 2. God continues to guide the church and its leadership, as we continue to seek God's will for our outreach to the Chinatown and South End communities.

## STAFF LIST

### Senior Pastor: Steven Chin

#### English Ministry Staff:

Steven Chin	Senior Pastor
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	Pastoral Resident
Sam Ng	English Intern
Kirklin Lee	English Intern



#### Chinese Ministry Staff:

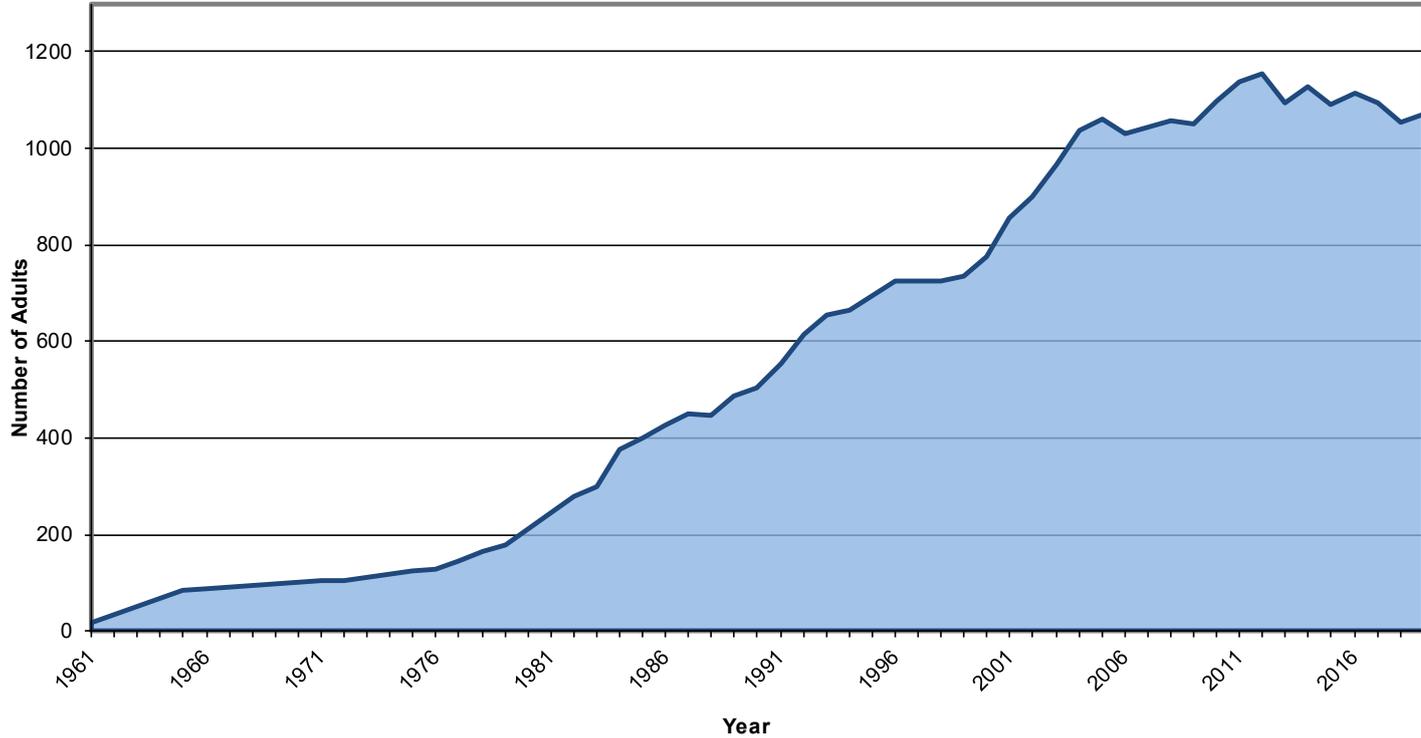
Daniel Chan	Associate Pastor
Kenneth Kwong	Assistant Pastor
Andy Su	Assistant Pastor
Barry Lam	Assistant Pastor
Dora Lam	Assistant to the Pastor
Patrick Lin	Interim Assistant to the Pastor
Jacob Fung	Pastor Emeritus
Ben Wong	Pastoral Resident



#### Support Staff:

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

**Average Weekly Worship Attendance**  
**1961 — 2019**  
**(as of 9/30/19)**



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

MINISTER DORA LAM

In 1979, our congregation started off with fewer than 200 people, with a majority of them coming from the grassroots level. With the unity of the entire church body, they strived to witness the love of our Lord and took on the mission of sharing the gospel. Miraculously, God helped BCEC build our first church building. Many years have gone by, and hundreds of brothers and sisters have been baptized or gotten married here. Some of us were also called and sent to the Newton Campus, to the Allston church-planting project, and even to the rest of the world, to carry on with the mission of “To Be a Blessing.”

At this time, the Cantonese 2nd Service is a community of around 200 worshippers. Many of them are elderly, but they are still active

in evangelism and in supporting the outreach ministry. We hope we may redouble our efforts in our discipleship endeavor, so that the seeds sown may flourish. We also look forward to growing in caring for the church members who are in need.

At our annual congregational meeting held this past May, we voted in favor of selling our church building located at 249 Harrison Ave. to the City of Boston for them to build a new school. It requires us to move out of our current worship location by 2021. Furthermore, our senior pastor, Steven Chin, will be retiring in October. These two issues of seeking a new worship location and adjusting to changes in the pastoral team are our congregation’s common concern and calls for our prayerful support. As we continue to

grow through these lessons of faith, may all members in the church continue to serve God with diligence, steadfastness, and unity. May we continue to witness for God, do great things in His name, and bring glory to Him.

## CONGREGATIONAL REPORTS



1) Brothers and sisters from Caleb Fellowship sang a song of Thanksgiving at worship service. 2) Caleb Fellowship helped prepare lunch for other brothers and sisters. 3) Fellowship singspiration time from the Women's Fellowship 4) Elder Brian Hui teaching the Book of Jeremiah at the Adult Cantonese Sunday School 5) Sisters from the Knitting Group reached out to the community with their knitted items at the August Moon Festival in Chinatown.

## CHINATOWN CANTONESE 3<sup>RD</sup> CONGREGATION

PASTOR KENNETH KWONG

In the twinkling of an eye, by the grace of God, another year passed by peacefully. First of all, as in previous years, I would like to express my thanks to all the leaders and members of the staff who have been serving with us. They served diligently in various leadership positions, departments, ministries, and fellowships, which allowed our church to grow steadily in this ever-changing world and also provided a place in Boston for Cantonese-speaking Chinese immigrants to come to know the truth, communicate with each other, and share their lives together.

In last year's annual report, I mentioned that both the leaders and our congregation have experienced a lot of pressure from family responsibilities. On one hand, they have to cope with earning a living, and on the other hand, they have to take care of the elderly or the sick in their family. It really is not easy. They have to rely on God's daily grace to overcome the daily challenges. Some of them have already seen how God has led them

through. Yet some of them are still waiting for God's answer. All of them have shown their obedience to God. Every step they took reflected their love for God. May we pray for each other and give glory to God.

The world never stops changing. This includes our church, our community, our country, and the world we live in. The building at 249 Harrison Ave. was sold to the City of Boston. Our senior pastor is retiring. All these happenings more or less impacted the third service. Those who participated in the outreach of Local Missions noted that more Chinese living in Chinatown speak Mandarin than Cantonese.

The arresting of the illegal immigrants, the mass shootings that occurred again and again, the uncertainty in the global economy, the political turmoil in Hong Kong, the China-US trade negotiations that have brought tension between the two countries, and global warming... How should we respond to all these situations? With the

advancement in communication technology and the popular usage of social media, the voice of the believers could spread far and wide. Our personal ideas could affect others tremendously. As a younger generation of the Cantonese congregation, we need to be mindful of our words and deeds. We have to maintain a harmonious relationship and live out Christ's love so others can recognize us as disciples of the Lord and can find hope and peace from God through us. Let us continue to pray for peace until all these turbulent situations pass away.

Worship Committee Members:

Tommy Choy, Shirley Chui, Winnie Lam, Ida Kwong, Sammy Zheng, and Pastor Kenneth Kwong

## CONGREGATIONAL REPORTS



- 1) Easter baptism
- 2-3) Adult Cantonese Sunday School
- 4) Joint Chinese Retreat
- 5) Sharing lunch at Pastor Steve's Retirement Celebration
- 6) J1 fellowship went to Boston Rescue Mission to serve the homeless and at-risk with food and love in August.

## CHINATOWN ENGLISH CONGREGATION

PASTOR ENOCH LIAO

### **Learning about Seeking the Peace**

Every year, the Lord seems to lead us in new, powerful, and unexpected ways. This past year, we embarked on the churchwide theme of “Seek the Peace of the City.” Every fellowship, small group, and ministry was encouraged to participate in some tangible way to seek the peace of our city of Boston and our neighborhood of Chinatown and South End.

### **Passing the Baton**

Of course, this year also marked a year of planning for the upcoming retirement of our beloved Senior Pastor Steven Chin. Although the Lord is inviting one long-time leader to step down, He has faithfully raised up new leaders in the form of pastoral staff to serve. This year we saw Ryan So serve as a pastoral resident, as well as pastoral interns Sam Ng and Kirklin Lee. Along with our regular permanent staff of Lorraine Chung, Calvin

Chu, and Steve Liu, the Chinatown English congregation was well served.

### **Congregation Stepping Up**

As time passes, I have observed brothers and sisters who were once children or teenagers in our congregation become trusted deacons and faithful ministry leaders in our church. We thank the Lord that one trend in our congregation seems to be more of these young adults putting down roots in the Boston area. Some are settling down in homes, others are starting families, while others have established themselves in their vocations. All of these have allowed many of our members to live or work closer to our church campuses than in the previous generation. We pray that this is the Lord positioning us to continue to serve Him here in Chinatown, South End, and Boston for many years to come.

### **Kingdom Partnerships**

I’m also grateful that the Lord allowed BCEC, through many of our leaders, to connect with other believers to make a wider kingdom impact. I’ve always admired Pastor Daniel Chan and our Chinese pastoral staff for taking the effort to convene and connect with other Chinese heritage church pastors in New England. This past year, BCEC was humbled to host multiple events for groups such as the Fellowship of Asian American Ministers and Ministries (FAAMM), as well as our first Chinese Heritage Church Pastors Colloquium, where we saw 25 pastors from around the country and some from other countries gather to seek the Lord’s face on how to build each other up. May the Lord continue to allow us to participate in these wider kingdom endeavors.

I pray daily that the Lord would allow BCEC to make an impact for His name. May it all be done in His love for His glory.

## CONGREGATIONAL REPORTS



- 1) Mena Lam sharing at The Table
- 2) English College Ministry building care packages for the homeless as a Social Responsibility project
- 3) College Retreat's theme was "Among the Ruins," with Matt Chin speaking.
- 4) Young Adult Retreat's theme was "Feelings & Faith: Engaging God from the Heart" and our guest speaker was Alasdair Groves, Director of the New England branch of Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation.
- 5) Children playing with instruments at Family Fellowship's weekly Summer Playgroup
- 6) Students participating in the 120 Shawmut Ave. Prayer Walk
- 7) Family Fellowship monthly meeting

## CHINATOWN MANDARIN CONGREGATION

PASTOR ANDY SU

During this past year, brothers and sisters served together wholeheartedly, and the year was marked by many firsts. It was the first time that a Mandarin Christmas Eve service was held at Chinatown Campus. In addition, it was the first time that Chinatown Mandarin coworkers led a Mandarin-Cantonese bilingual Good Friday service at Newton Campus. Furthermore, it was the first time that the Mandarin team led worship at the Joint Chinese Retreat from beginning to end. Each of these events involved months of preparation where brothers and sisters faithfully gathered every Sunday at 8 a.m. for worship practice. Although most of them are not professionally trained, by God's grace, they still offered up their utmost dedication and passion. Please pray for us that this deep commitment to serving, as modeled by these few faithful brothers and sisters, can little by little transform the culture of our fellowships and entire congregation.

During the Joint Chinese Retreat, our guest speaker, Pastor Peter Wu, encouraged us to build up a joyful and deeply committed church, which greatly inspired many of our Mandarin congregation brothers and sisters. As we entered the summer months, each fellowship took many excursions to enjoy together God's creation in the great outdoors, where we joyfully worshipped and wholeheartedly rejoiced. The fatigue and difficulties of our daily lives melted away in the light of His amazing grace poured out among us. In our weekly Bible studies, God's affirming kindness touched our hearts as we examined the characters in His Word, and the Holy Spirit worked in us to turn our sorrows into great joy. In Him, our highs and lows instead became a great symphony, and the incomparable joy wells upward into the main melody of our lives, resounding without ceasing.

Moreover, this was also the first year we collaborated with American brothers and

sisters in Quincy to hold English conversation classes. These gospel-filled brothers and sisters naturally bridged cultural divides and became not just English teachers, but also genuine spiritual counselors with whom the Chinese students could share their heart. The gospel friends also were deeply touched by their American teachers and willingly opened their hearts to come to know the wonderful, Good Shepherd through one-on-one conversations. We also shared with these American brothers and sisters how to make a variety of Asian cuisines, including dumplings, glutinous rice balls, and sushi hand rolls as our expression of gratitude for their tireless service. In return, they taught us how to prepare American-style pancakes. Sharing our respective cultures through food enabled the gospel to be more fully manifested in the details of daily life. This has been an amazing journey of East meets West, and through it, God showed us clearly how much these American brothers and sisters love us. By the

## CONGREGATIONAL REPORTS

strength of our Lord, we also ought to rise up and do likewise in serving both the Chinese and non-Chinese communities around us. God is teaching us that in the midst of these end times when nations are rising up against nations, we can instead be unified together with the American church to serve all nations and all people.



- 1) English Class Teacher Appreciation
- 2) Christmas Eve Chinatown Service
- 3) Brothers and sisters making dumplings at Emmanuel Fellowship
- 4) Paul Fellowship outing
- 5) Mandarin worship during the Joint Chinese Retreat
- 6) Sucai Fellowship outing

## NEWTON CANTONESE CONGREGATION

### PASTOR BARRY LAM

Recently, as I was reflecting and sharing with a sister in the Newton Cantonese congregation, my thoughts on one of the ministries from 2018 suddenly came to mind: “Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy!” (Psalm 126:5 - NIV). Indeed, during this past year, I was filled with joy and thanksgiving, as I saw brothers and sisters grow in faith, love, knowledge, and the gospel bearing fruit in their spiritual lives. I praise God, for He truly accomplished wonderful things among us. I am thankful for brothers and sisters who, in church and in their daily lives, willingly offered up their time, heart, mind, skills, and financial resources to glorify God, serve people, and build up our “Newton family.” In the midst of our serving and daily lives, we came face to face with many “Goliaths,” but God’s grace was sufficient for us, and He used these trials to help us overcome and mature. Together, we experienced our lives torn down and then rebuilt by God.

In prior Annual Reports, I was only able to mention a few ministries. This year, I want to take the opportunity to remember every single serving role in 2018. Although I cannot mention each of you by name, know that I am offering up a small prayer of thanksgiving, as I write down each of your roles:

- Sunday Worship: Worship team, choir, pianist, speaker, presider, scripture reader, announcer, usher, welcomers, audio/video staff, service coordinators, meal helpers, offering collectors, snack preparers, general affairs team, lunch preparers, We Sing musical worship planning committee, and helpers.
- Sunday School Committee and teachers
- Children’s Ministry: Children’s Sunday School Committee, teachers, assistants, nursery helpers, Junior Worship, and Vacation Bible School coworkers
- Outreach: Evangelism Explosion teachers and small group leaders, senior visitation team, short-term missions team, and local evangelism team

- Fellowships: All coworkers, small group leaders, and others who served
- Cantonese Marriage Enrichment Retreat: planning committee and small group leaders
- Chinese Joint Retreat Committee members and coworkers
- Stephen Ministry coworkers and cancer support group coworkers
- Table Tennis Outreach and Competition planning committee
- Elders, other coworkers, Missions Committee, Social Responsibility Committee, Deacons, and secretaries
- All the prayer warriors

It is by God’s grace that we can serve together to build up the body of Christ. In the upcoming year, here are some prayer requests for the Newton Cantonese congregation:

1. God will fan into flame our commitment and spiritual gifts to serve Him.
2. The reorganization of the worship and outreach committees to more effectively advance God’s Kingdom work.

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3. By God's grace, promote and establish healthy marriages and families.
4. Equip disciples to carry out Jesus' Great Commission.
5. Deeper love among brothers and sisters.

In my reflections, I see that God is fully present among us not only carrying out His amazing work, but also empathizing with our weaknesses. God truly does want to use us, though we are utterly unworthy, and give us grace and many various gifts to build up His Church.

As the psalmist once said, "The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy" (Psalm 126:3 – NIV).

- 1) Celebrating at the baptism of a brother from Newton Cantonese congregation
- 2) Brothers and sisters from Daniel Fellowship visiting a nursing home during the Christmas season
- 3) Evangelism Explosion Ministry team sharing at Daniel Fellowship
- 4) Adult Cantonese Sunday School
- 5) Enoch Fellowship celebrating Chinese New Year
- 6) Newton Chinese Choir



## NEW COMMUNITY CONGREGATION (NEWTON ENGLISH)

PASTOR KEN LIU

As I reflect upon this past year, I am grateful to God for blessing us in many ways. I am especially thankful for the new additions to our staff team and their seamless transition to life and ministry at BCEC. It's been a joy seeing Saul and Patrick use their many gifts to bless our church. One of my favorite memories from this past year was having all the pastoral staff and their families at our home for hot pot. There was a lot of joy and laughter that evening, and I am especially thankful to be a part of such a great team.

After half a year of planning and training, we finally launched our sermon-based community groups in the fall. It was encouraging to hear stories of groups growing closer to God and each other. We have seen some of our groups grow in number, so we are in the next phase of planning to multiply leaders so that we can multiply groups. One encouraging development was seeing our family community group draw new families to the point where we needed to find babysitters

to look after all the kiddos. As we head into year two, please pray that our groups will continue to mature and grow in our capacity to make disciples of all life stages.

Our theme this year was "Seek the Peace of the City." We kicked off the new year with a seven-part sermon series which set the stage for the year. Planning and executing the Prayer Walk for Newton helped us get to know our neighborhood better and learn about the different needs of our city. We also served with our neighbors through Newton Serves, which is an annual day of service for the city. We were able to mobilize 30 people to serve at different sites in Newton including the Food Pantry, Horace Mann Middle School, and the Auburndale Community Library. We also responded to the Newton Police Department's invitation to run a toiletry drive to support the work of Hope and Comfort, a nonprofit dedicated to supplying low-income youth with hygiene products.

After a two-year hiatus, we sensed that it was time to bring Vacation Bible School back to the Newton Campus. We were able to mobilize more than 35 volunteers from different congregations at BCEC to serve 45 children and their families. Although most members of our volunteer base were young and inexperienced, we saw them rise to the occasion and grow in their capacity to love and lead. I'm especially thankful for the adult leaders who took time from their busy schedules to serve, mentor younger leaders, and connect with the families. The children and their families also responded to the call to love their neighbors and contributed several crates of food and supplies for the Newton Food Pantry. The VBS team is grateful for your prayers and support, and we are looking forward to 2020!

Looking ahead, I anticipate that we will need to make some adjustments to the rhythms of our congregational life. The youth ministry, especially on Friday nights, is growing in

## CONGREGATIONAL REPORTS

number, which is very encouraging! But this growth also means that there are greater needs, especially for adult counselors. Most of our community groups meet on Friday evenings, which makes it difficult, if not impossible, for people to be a part of both. Please pray for wisdom and creativity as we find ways to create space for those interested in serving with youth to also have a community group to grow in.

We also see the need on our campus to come alongside families in their journey of childrearing. We are setting up three events a year that address the most pressing challenges that families face from a gospel-centered perspective. Please pray for these efforts as we plan and execute these events.

Although there are many transitions ahead, especially with Pastor Steve's retirement, we are excited about what God is doing and what God will do in the coming years.



- 1) TIOB at Summit 2019 with the theme, "Rooted"
- 2) Newton Campus served the community with a toiletry drive. Officer Ferolito of the Newton Police Department and Pat Flaherty of Hope and Comfort dropped by church to pick up items collected.
- 3) Junior Worship kids showing off their Advent project
- 4) All Newton pastoral staff and family gathering for a hot pot dinner and team building
- 5) Women's Group working at the food pantry on Newton Serves Day
- 6) Vacation Bible School large group led by Eric Chan

## NEWTON MANDARIN CONGREGATION

### MINISTER PATRICK LIN

Dwelling in this well-established church family, we have received the steadfast love of our God the Lord Almighty, through the abundant love and kindness among the mature church members. Starting from a theological seminar last fall, an evangelistic meeting this spring, our annual Chinese Joint Retreat this June, a camping trip in summer, mingled with family ministry related symposiums, we have not only enjoyed great spiritual feasts, but also the joy of togetherness. This steadfast love of God inspires us to commit to our gracious Lord more and more and to grow spiritually in Christ day by day. This is truly a year full of love and grace, which is definitely worthy of so much more gratitude from the bottom of our hearts.

Even as the number of attendees participating in the worship service has become relatively stable, can our spiritual maturity and capacity to serve grow as well? I truly believe that living the life of a genuine

disciple could only be made through the grace of God alone. Among our congregation, most became believers as adults. However, they have chosen to serve diligently under the tremendous pressure of raising their families. The constructive renewal of each and every family has become our top priority. We remind them repeatedly to tend to their personal spiritual life and plan to focus our teaching on the attitude of servanthood. There are always challenges ahead and adjustments to be

made, such as to teachings through Sunday School and participation of love feasts in the Lord's days; however, the joy and peace from our gracious Lord has not diminished. It will be another year of continuous learning and growth, for God "put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all" (Ephesians 1:22b-23 – ESV).



## CONGREGATIONAL REPORTS



- 1) Small group Bible study
- 2) Our small group, Kindness, celebrating Mother's Day
- 3) Mandarin coworker ministry meeting
- 4) Friday night fellowship
- 5) Revelation theological seminar
- 6) Awana kids performing a musical offering for the Mandarin Adult Fellowship at the Awana Closing Ceremony

## LIFE COMMUNITY GROUPS AND FELLOWSHIPS



- 1) Enoch Fellowship singing at Newton Cantonese worship service
- 2) Caleb Fellowship celebrating Independence Day
- 3) Women's Fellowship monthly luncheon
- 4) Chinatown English College Ministry Team building bonds at the start of the school year at CMT Retreat
- 5) Ruth Fellowship meeting for the last time at 249 Harrison Ave. before moving to 120 Shawmut Ave.
- 6) Sisters from Ruth Fellowship enjoying a BBQ during the summer
- 7) Selfie Time at a Joshua 1 and Joshua 2 joint program
- 8) Members from Joshua 1 Fellowship leading worship during their visit to a senior house

## PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS



- 1) Newton English Women's Group making and enjoying their homemade wontons together
- 2) Prayer meeting in Daniel Fellowship
- 3) Joshua Couple Fellowship
- 4) Leaders of Chinatown English Adult Small Groups at their monthly meeting for prayer, vision, and training
- 5) Song of Songs Couples Fellowship summer outing
- 6) Chinatown English College Ministry staff
- 7) Peter Fellowship monthly meeting
- 8) Young adults from both English congregations at the Annual Young Adult Retreat

## CHILDREN'S, YOUTH, AND STUDENT MINISTRIES



- 1) TIOB (Newton Youth) celebrating the graduating class by handing them their gift: a yearbook to cherish their memories!
- 2-3) Joshua 2 Fellowship at their minicamp and home gathering
- 4) In Teacher Josh's and Teacher Moses's 6th, 7th, and 8th grade Youth Sunday School class, students are excited to learn more about how to share Christ's love through their daily words and deeds.
- 5) Newton Children's Sunday School has five classes for children from ages 2 to 6th grade. Children learn and know about God and His Word.
- 6) Newton Awana worship session
- 7-8) Newton Nursery



## PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS



- 1) Children from Newton Junior Worship showing off their Advent project
- 2-3) Over a hundred children are disciplined by volunteer teachers and assistants each week in Kids Worship, Sunday School classes, and our three nurseries.
- 4-6) Teens from Teens with a Reason (TWR) making dumplings together, hanging out at the mall, and playing group games at Base Camp
- 7) Students from Teen Fellowship hanging out after fellowship
- 8) A small group from Teen Fellowship doing a paint night

## MISSIONS AND OUTREACH



1) This past year, Stephen Ministry has cared for 11 individuals, and 6 of these caring relationships have been closed.

2-3) Newton Vacation Bible School served 45 children and their families. In collaboration with all congregations at Newton Campus, we collected over 400 items of food and toiletries for the Newton Food Pantry.

4-5) Children learned singing techniques, reading music, and handbells in Ensemble and Newsong Children Choir.

6) Chinatown English Web of Women assembling care packages for Route One Ministries

7) ESL/Citizenship Classes closing ceremony



## PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS



- 1) The Social Responsibility Committee hosted a movie night in January, showing the movie "Nefarious-Merchant of Souls," which is about human and sex trafficking.
- 2) We are thankful for a successful outreach through the ministry of Vacation Bible School for 60 plus elementary children from church families and the Chinatown community. Over 30 full and part-time volunteers made it possible for meaningful relationships to be built and Gospel seeds sown.
- 3) Outreach to our community at August Moon Festival in Chinatown
- 4-5) Project Destiny counselors and campers competing in PD Olympics and climbing Wachusett Mountain
- 6-7) Students from Project Destiny Autumn-to-Spring enjoying field trips to Canobie Lake Park and rock climbing
- 8) Praise God for the team of faithful and dedicated teachers in ESL/Citizenship Classes!



## JOINT EVENTS AND CELEBRATIONS



Joint Chinese Retreat:

1) Cantonese group picture 2) Mandarin group picture 3) Brothers from Peter Fellowship  
4) Couples from Song of Songs Fellowship 5) Members from Joshua 1 Fellowship

Annual Young Adult Retreat:

6) Young adults from our two English congregations gathered for a weekend in New Hampshire for fellowship, biblical teaching, and enjoying time together.



## PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS



- 1) Timothy Fellowship members leading an appreciation dinner for churchwide leader servants
- 2) The Marriage Thing is our annual marriage enrichment event for both English congregations. This past year, our guest speakers were Pastor Gaylord and Tina Tsuei of Austin Chinese Church.
- 3-4) All congregations at the Chinatown campus gathered to appreciate Pastor Steve and Nancy for their faithful service at BCEC for over 40 years.
- 5) New Year Prayer Meeting
- 6) Chinese Good Friday Service at Newton Campus

## CHINATOWN CARING MINISTRY

For many years, the Cantonese congregation's care ministry relies on our district group leaders, fellowships, prayer networks, prayer partners, and Stephen ministers. Their faithful commitment, their love for God, and their love for others all contributed.

In 2005, three cancer survivors started the Support Group for Cancer Patients. We met once every two months. In 2006, we opened this group to the local community, especially to the non-English speaking Chinese community as we realized that they lacked support. We had monthly meetings for 2.5 hours.

In 2016, our brothers and sisters started a core group, and we changed our name to Sailing with Grace Cancer Patients Support Ministry. Our purpose is to increase the knowledge on cancer within the Chinese community and to support to cancer patients and their families. Now, we meet every third Saturday of the month from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

In order to have a systematic study on cancer, we have invited several professionals to present different topics on cancer or on related issues, including the following: understanding lung cancer, colon cancer, Social Security benefits, public health insurance, easing the emotional impact on patients and their families, understanding breast cancer, Chinese healing methods on chronic diseases, and personal financial planning.

Through the support of small group leaders and Stephen Ministry, several participants in this group have received Christ. Glory be to God.



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## ELIM FELLOWSHIP

Elim Fellowship is composed of a group of brothers and sisters who are willing to participate and serve each other. However, they have to take care of their young children as well, and therefore, it is not easy for them to make any long-term commitments. So this year, the fellowship decided to set up functional teams to be responsible for different areas such as administration, song leading, Bible study, meals, child care and small groups. All members can decide for themselves their level of commitment according to their gifts, talents, and the amount of time they are available. With the help of the Internet, the



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members can communicate and work together effectively. Thank God for using this new approach, so the fellowship's ministry can continue, and all group members can participate.

In addition, the pursuit of God's Word by the group members is much appreciated. Each meeting of the Elim Fellowship is based on Bible Study. The study of the Minor Prophets helped us to apply their messages to our spiritual lives.

This group meets regularly on a monthly basis in order to have fellowship and pray for each other.

You and your spouse are welcome to join us if you are newlyweds.



1) Prayer walk 2) Annual camping trip

## MISSIONS COMMITTEE

The BCEC Missions Committee sent out short-term missions teams to Lebanon, Panama, Cambodia, and Minnesota this past year. There were also individual BCEC members going on short-term missions trips to Dominican Republic, East Asia, Turkey, Myanmar, Cambodia/Thailand, Alaska, and New Jersey. This group meets regularly on a monthly basis in order to have fellowship and pray for each other.



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**Coordinator:**

Julia Zhu

**Chinese Editors:**

Kelvin Li

Alex Lai

**English Editors:**

Joshua Chin

Vivian Chin

Danielle Ha

Veronica Lau

**Translation Staff:**

Wallace Hui

Emily Li

Glory Song

Ruoshi Sun

John Wong

Angela Yuen

**Cover Design:**

Wing Ngan

**Layout Design:**

Charlotte Lai

**Printing:**

Patrick Yeung