

**John 4:13-14**

**13 Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again,**

**14 but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."**

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## Editor's Note

To keep up with the times, the Chinese Christian Church of Greater Washington, DC (CCCGW) is transitioning its Living Spring Journal to a brand new digital format, beginning with the June 20, 2024 issue. Through this modernized medium we aim to share stories of church life and faith in hopes of strengthening our relationships with each other and our cohesion as a church. The Journal is also our bridge for communicating with others beyond our church.

The digital Journal builds on a long history at CCCGW. To this day, our church library still holds some early issues, including several from the 1970s. In those early days when computers were not yet widely available, the publication was carefully crafted under spartan conditions, with each cover hand-drawn, the content in Chinese hand-written, and the content in English typed out on manual typewriters. The Journal shared insights into faith, spiritual growth, church life, and personal testimonies, all of which were highly treasured by our church community. The 1980s saw the formal introduction of the Living Spring Journal; its long record of the real-life experiences of brothers and sisters in the church—their struggles, victories, and spiritual growth—has left us a rich legacy of testimony to God's grace, power, and glory in the lives of His people.



In the new digital format, the Journal will continue to uphold the principle of glorifying God and benefiting its readers. It aspires not only to share information but also to enhance communication among church members and with others farther afield. The Journal will include content in both Chinese and English and highlight recent activities and events at CCCGW, announcements of major upcoming events, and new ministries or initiatives. It will also feature testimonies from members of our congregation on their spiritual walk with the Lord and their personal growth in faith. We also hope to showcase faith-related artwork, particularly by our children and youth, and to recommend good books. With permission from the artists, we plan to feature the artwork on our church website. We long to see more of our church members take advantage of this channel to share their stories for mutual encouragement, so that we can savor together the abundant grace and love of God in our lives.

The Journal will be published quarterly, perhaps more often if more brothers and sisters sign up for this ministry by joining the website and editorial teams. We will continue to optimize and update this electronic Journal to meet your needs and expectations. Please send us your feedback and suggestions, and do continue to follow us so that together we can witness the growth of this Journal, and rejoice at its progress. We hope this publication will inspire you, warm your heart, and lead us all to praise God for His goodness.

May the grace of the Lord be with you,

The Church Journal Editorial Team

## **CCCGW News**

### **MFUGE Camp**

On June 17, a group of 14 teens and 3 adult chaperones went with the backing of CCCGW to a week-long MFUGE (Mission Fuge) camp for teenagers at Eastern

University near Philadelphia. This year's theme was "Revival Generation." During the week, our teenagers joined with other campers in their chosen activity track, and provided on-site services to local communities, doing anything from playing with children, to boxing cans at a food pantry, to cleaning an elderly neighbor's yard. Our students also participated in Bible study and worship, heard sermons from Pastor Mark Turner, a minister in the Philadelphia area, and engaged in recreational activities. It was a life-changing week for many in our group.







Here is a video made by **Daniel (age 17)**:

[https://youtu.be/4xqgplzr2Fc?si=dBROA\\_nZYORbXJxm](https://youtu.be/4xqgplzr2Fc?si=dBROA_nZYORbXJxm)

Here is a reflection recorded by **Jerry (age 18)**:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cmFeVB1cKZwhakZYNdc1edJwX0NzSn1/view?usp=sharing>

Below are additional reflections.

**Sarah (age 17):** I was in the Social track which featured a mix of activities from the other tracks. My group cleaned churches, packed food boxes, and helped with a block party. These experiences opened our eyes to the need for God in these places, and gave us a chance to offer practical help to the community. Though we were only there for a short time, we tried to be a blessing to the people we served. We learned so much

about what it meant to be a Revival Generation! Overall, it was an amazing experience, and I would like to thank everyone for helping make the trip possible!

**Sheryl (age 12):** Fuge camp was a life changing experience. Helping out people at site, being treated to delicious meals daily, and most importantly, learning about the Bible all made the experience worthwhile. At my site, I loved being a music teacher and using chalk to draw with the kids, and at the dining hall the food was honestly beautiful. In terms of learning about the Bible, Pastor Mark's words were enlightening and helped me reach a spiritual high. The Mega relay, the speeches, the songs, and the whole camp was dedicated to this single purpose, and it was what made Fuge camps so very memorable.

Furthermore, Fuge camp was an experience that I'd love to have again and again! The atmosphere and friends I made were things I wouldn't lose, and everything was so special. No matter what happened, my chin was held high walking into the next day filled with more of everything I held dear. I will forever cherish Fuge camp, and I wish next year's campers a happy trip!



**Josie (age 17):** This was my fourth year going to MFUGE. I love going because of the atmosphere. It's cool to see how churches from around the country can come together and celebrate God. Throughout the week, we participate in worship, sermons, Bible study, church group time, nightlife, and of course, volunteer work. I love the worship because everyone isn't worried about how they look or sound, but focused on what the songs are telling us or just being present in the moment. During worship, I feel God's presence the most.

This year's theme was Revival Generation, and the sermons and the Bible studies focused on the book of Jonah. We learned that the start of revival is prayer. Establishing a relationship with God is a two-way relationship. We must want to talk to God, and make the effort to do so. In church group time, we connected as a church and shared what we did that day and what we could pray for each other or someone we had met. This year's nightlife was a silent disco, and it was so much fun. Our Bible study groups were a mix of people from all the churches. Each group was given a specific track. My



group's track was Social. During the week, we packed food boxes with the Share Food Program, cleaned two churches in Kensington, and helped a family with a block party. It was unbelievably hot, but God blessed us as we remained indoors most of the time and had just enough energy despite not getting enough sleep. Although there weren't many chances to directly evangelize God's word, through our actions, the people we helped could tell we were doing God's work. One of Pastor Mark's closing prayers stuck with me, and I hope it sticks with you as well: "Everything I lack, would You (God) make me?"

**Jesse (age 16):** This year was the first year that I was able to participate in MFUGE, and it was a transformative experience. One of the biggest takeaways for me was that revival is not just an emotional high or temporary feeling, but is the spiritual awakening of God's people to their true nature and purpose. To truly experience revival, we must surrender our lives for the purpose that God gave us rather than simply placing Him at the top of our priority list. Throughout the week, this message repeatedly presented itself to me through each activity.

I was in the Social track for the site activities. My group's ministry was especially meaningful because Philadelphia is a city with significantly higher crime rates and one of the highest poverty rates in the US. I conversed with children and adults about the gospel, helped out at local elementary schools, joined others in hosting community-building events at parks, and assisted with construction and yard work. Through my experiences at each site, I realized how wonderful it is to spread God's word to others. I also saw how important it was because many people, especially in areas with high populations of non-believers, may not have the opportunity to learn about God's word.

Aside from our work at site, I also was able to further my relationship with God through worship service, Bible study, and the camp pastor's sermons. Every experience was meaningful and glorified God. Overall, MFUGE was fun, exciting, and full of energy, and I will definitely come back next year, if possible.



**Sonia (age 16):** My first Mfuge completely reshaped the way I viewed my faith and how I interacted with the world. However, as the event faded and the school year progressed into fall, I found myself losing sight of the spark of faith it ignited. By the end of that school year, I had descended to a point where I was doubting whether I was a Christian at all. This year's MFuge experience made me realize that rather than losing my faith, I had been neglecting to deepen it. This distinction was simple, but eye-opening.

The community service we did was incredibly rewarding too. I spent the week making chalk art sharing messages of God's love and playing with children lacking the privileges we often take for granted.

Overall, this was an invaluable experience that widened my view of the world and inspired in me a desire to serve others.

**Chloe (age 18):** At every MFUGE, I look forward most to the worship. I'm somebody who is moved by music. Everything that goes into worship touches my heart. This year, it was the Mission's Night worship that really got to me. From writing the names of the people I love who don't know God to the lyrics of Christ Be Magnified, that evening's worship hit me hard: *"I won't bow to idols, I'll stand strong and worship You. And if it puts me in the fire, I'll rejoice 'cause You're there too. I won't be formed by feelings, I hold fast to what is true. If the cross brings transformation then I'll be crucified with You."*

Pastor Mark Turner did a great job with the message every evening. We learned about prayer, confession, repentance, salvation, and more. He preached from the book of Jonah. Some of the notes I took were: material success does not equal righteousness; salvation is not a negotiation but a surrender; actual comfort is not found in the absence of pain but in the fulfillment of Christ; don't give God 100% only 20% of the time; fill up on the Spirit so that it naturally flows out of you; and there's no end to the forgiveness we should offer because there's no end to the grace we have received.



**Shawny (Teens Group Coordinator):**

During a GGAN (Guy Girl Appreciation Night) many years ago, I remember it was Charles Yang who said, "This is a rehearsal for heaven." It was because all of us were there to worship the Lord and love each other. I believe that MFUGE is another "Rehearsal for Heaven." We all come to MFUGE to worship God and to serve together.

There are students and adults from many different states and backgrounds. What I really liked about this year's camp is the unity and the care and support the students showed for each other.

There was a Variety Show in the middle of the week. This is basically a talent show where students from different churches perform some kind of skill or talent. Sophie from our Teens Group performed gymnastics. There were teens from other churches who sang, told jokes, and did interpretive motions to music. Some of the performers made mistakes during their performance. One girl started singing her song, and then stopped and had to start over, which is really embarrassing for a performer. But throughout the entire show, the level of encouragement and support from the audience was really incredible. When the student who started over finished her song, everyone cheered even louder than before. That's the kind of love we should have for each other in the family of God. Even when we make a mistake or mess up, no one will laugh or make fun of us or judge us, but they will lift us and cheer us on. That is how we love and care for each other in the kingdom of heaven.

Pastor Mark preached from the Book of Jonah. The first day was Jonah 1, the second day was Jonah 2, and so on. By the end of the week Jonah is like one of my favorite books of the Bible! What really struck me was Jonah 2 when he is inside the fish and he prays a desperate prayer to God. At the end he says, "Salvation belongs to the Lord." I experienced the truth of this statement at MFUGE. For many years, I have enjoyed serving in the Teens Group, but the truth is, some years are harder than others. I told the teens on the first night: This year, I've been doing a lot by my own knowledge and power. I come unprepared on Friday nights. I haven't been praying or seeking God, and they deserve better. They deserve a youth pastor who will pray for them and check in on them. Thankfully, God is greater than me or any youth pastor. Salvation belongs to the Lord. He saved Jonah and the people of Ninevah. He can save the lives of many in spite of his weak servants like Jonah and myself.



## **The Church Family Retreat Concludes Successfully**

"Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." (Psalm 46:10)

God calls us to rest—to step away from our busyness, quiet our hearts before Him, and reflect on ourselves, that we may be renewed in His strength. This is the essence of a Christian retreat. During this time dedicated to God, we place ourselves entirely before Him, experiencing His presence, drawing near to Him, and encountering Him in a profound way.

The Chinese Christian Church of Greater Washington DC (CCCGW) held its annual summer retreat on July 12 to July 14, 2024, offering brothers and sisters an opportunity to step away from the demands of daily life and focus on their spiritual growth. As in previous years, the retreat took place on the picturesque campus of Messiah University in Pennsylvania, a serene setting for spiritual reflection. About 120 participants attended this year's retreat, including both believers and seekers, coming together to explore how to embody the Christian faith in every aspect of their lives. Only by living out our faith can we truly become disciples of the Lord, serving as the light and salt of the world.

Throughout the retreat, participants were spiritually nourished through joint sessions, language-specific workshops, morning devotions, and combined worship services, all of which facilitated a deep encounter with God's presence. Through fellowship, group sharing, and prayer meetings, brothers and sisters opened their hearts, shared their faith journeys, and prayed for one another, fostering a sense of unity and mutual edification. This unity is what pleases the Lord—He delights in our fellowship, mutual encouragement, and growth together in Christ.

The retreat featured insightful teachings from Reverend Shusheng Jonathan Siah and his wife, Dorcas, who guided participants through practical ways to live out their faith in daily life. Meanwhile, Pastor Tony Chung, the English-speaking speaker, addressed the challenges and opportunities of cultivating faith in a multicultural context, emphasizing that truth sets us free from the shame of failure within diverse cultural expectations.

Additionally, Jessica Man delivered a special seminar on living out the Christian faith within the Asian American church, highlighting the impact of the church family in our faith amidst cultural differences.



The retreat also included special activities, such as "Family Fun Night," a highlight of the first evening. Organized by Brother Tony Woo, this event brought together participants of all ages for an evening of fun-filled team games and a volleyball match that filled the room with laughter and joy. The warm and welcoming atmosphere continued late into the night, when the Living Water Fellowship and Carmel Fellowship prepared a delightful late-night snack, featuring fresh peaches, corn, tea eggs, cold noodles, snacks, and watermelon, along with the children's favorite—instant noodles.



On Saturday afternoon, participants had the freedom to choose between watching a movie, swimming, engaging in sports, or simply enjoying a time of relaxation and fellowship. Despite her illness, Mrs. Dorcas Siah graciously offered marriage counseling services during her free time, demonstrating her selfless dedication to the spiritual well-being of others. Some sisters suggested adding more workshops on Saturday afternoons in future retreats to better meet spiritual growth needs.

On the final day of the retreat, Reverend Siah delivered a powerful sermon on "The Cost of Following Jesus" during the joint worship service. He provided a deep analysis of the challenges and glory that come with being a Christian and encouraged everyone to consider how to take up their cross, separate themselves from the world, and follow Christ faithfully on the path to eternal life.



This year's summer retreat was rich and diverse in content, and many brothers and sisters greatly benefited from it. They recognized the importance of regular retreats, where they can focus solely on God, listen to and reflect on His word, and examine their spiritual lives under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. For seekers, the retreat was quite enlightening as well. A graduate student from the University of Maryland, Tang Yulin, shared that although she is still exploring the Christian faith, she learned a lot from the

workshops. More importantly, her three-day stay with a Christian sister left a lasting impression on her as she witnessed the genuine faith and piety of a devoted believer. This testimony of living faith truly echoed the theme of our retreat.

We thank God for providing this invaluable opportunity for spiritual renewal, where each participant was strengthened and built up in God's love and truth. It was also a chance to reflect on our work, service, and life, to ensure that we have not lost our way or forgotten our first love for the Lord and for others. May we continue to seek the Lord's renewal and live for Him alone!

### **Pastor Rim's Daughter Weds, Sharing the Joy with CCCGW Congregation**

With gratitude for God's grace, Katie, the daughter of Pastor David Rim of the English Congregation, married her husband, Samuel Chen, in June, marking the beginning of a new chapter in their lives. On Sunday, July 28, accompanied by their parents, the newlywed couple came to CCCGW to share their immense joy with their brothers and sisters in Christ. In an atmosphere filled with love and gratitude, the entire congregation witnessed the couple's beautiful and joyous moment.

After the Sunday service, both families prepared a bountiful lunch and a beautiful wedding cake for the church members, bringing everyone together in celebration under the love of the Lord. Pastor Daniel Zhao offered his sincere blessings for the couple, praying that they grow in love and support for one another through God's grace. He also prayed that their marriage would be centered on Christ, with His love as their foundation, lasting for all eternity.





We sincerely wish Katie and Samuel a marriage blessed by God's grace, filled with joy and peace. May they draw strength from the Lord's love as they walk hand in hand toward an even brighter future.

### **University Students Airport Pickup and Caring Ministry**

As the new academic year began, our church launched the University Students Airport Pickup and Caring Ministry (USAPC) once again. This year's airport pickup activities started in July and continued through the end of August, successfully assisting many new students from China and other regions, welcoming them warmly and with thoughtful care as they arrived in a foreign land.

This is the second time CCCGW held this event since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. This year, a total of 24 dedicated volunteers from both the Chinese and English congregations worked together to welcome over 30 new students—double the number from last year. This increase reflects our church's unwavering commitment and ongoing efforts to care for new students.



The services provided by our volunteers extended far beyond airport pickups. They also assisted students with shopping, opening bank accounts, handling various formalities, and offering temporary accommodation, addressing many of the challenges these students face upon their arrival. The volunteers selflessly dedicated their time, often sacrificing personal and family time, and even working through the night and adverse

weather conditions; they prioritized the students' needs. We pray that the Lord will remember the love and dedication of these brothers and sisters, whose selfless contributions made this ministry possible.

The new students were deeply moved by the church's warm reception and support. Inspired by the church's welcoming atmosphere and unconditional love, many of them are eager to explore the church further and participate in fellowship groups, Happiness Groups, and Sunday worship services.







Sister Yin Yin, the deacon of the Evangelism Department and the organizer of this year's pickup service, emphasized that the church's mission extends beyond just providing airport pickups. We are committed to providing care for these new students, staying in touch with them, attending to their needs, and most importantly, caring for their souls. Our hope is to bring these students closer to God so they may come to know Jesus, understand the Christian faith, and receive the gift of salvation and eternal blessings.

To strengthen our connection with the new students, the church held a welcome event on Saturday, September 21st. This event served as an essential part of our student outreach ministry by providing a platform for new students to learn more about the church and make new friends. These welcome events often result in many new names being added to our activities. Each name represents a young life that needs the seed of the Gospel; to be nurtured with love and patiently guided as it grows. We pray that God will help us see the preciousness of every soul's salvation and empower us to spread Jesus' love, allowing more people to experience His great love and the abundant life He offers!





### **Celebrating the 66th Anniversary of CCCGW**

We give thanks to God for His grace and guidance as the Chinese Christian Church of Greater Washington (CCCGW) celebrates 66 years of blessings! The church traces its origins to a Bible study group formed by Christian students from Hong Kong and Taiwan. It was officially established on August 31, 1958, with the first Sunday worship service held at 5709 16th Street NW, Washington, D.C., under the name "Washington Mandarin Worship Hall"—the first Mandarin-speaking congregation in the greater Washington area. In 1969, the church acquired its current location, and by March 1971, the building was completed and renamed "Chinese Christian Church of Greater Washington." Since then, the church has faithfully witnessed God's grace, served believers, and spread the gospel.

On Sunday, September 8, CCCGW celebrated its 66th anniversary with a special worship service filled with praise, prayer, and the preaching of God's Word. This year also marks the 10th pastoral anniversary of Pastor Daniel Zhao of the Chinese congregation, adding even deeper significance to the event. Through Pastor Zhao's decade of faithful ministry, the church has grown stronger in faith and continues to experience God's abundant grace and blessings.

As we reflect on these 66 years, our hearts are full of gratitude. Despite the trials, challenges, and temptations the church has faced, God's grace has sustained us. His guiding hand has always been upon us, leading the church through difficult times. Together, the congregation has worked in unity to grow the ministry and expand outreach efforts. From airport pick-up services for Chinese students to various "Happiness Group" activities, the church has actively shared God's love and truth. Through the selfless dedication of our brothers and sisters, the church has become a living testimony of Christ's love, bringing the gospel into more lives. Over the years, whether through the expansion of church facilities, the development of pastoral care, or navigating societal changes, the church has remained steadfast in God's Word and found joy in following His lead. As Psalm 127:1 says, "Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain." Every step of the church's journey has displayed God's grace and faithfulness.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the church was forced to suspend in-person gatherings for over a year and a half. Traditional forms of worship and fellowship were heavily restricted, yet God's face never turned away from us. His hand continued to bless us, and the hearts of the congregation remained fervent for Him. Through online Bible studies, worship services, devotionals, and prayer meetings, the church provided spiritual, emotional, and relational support during the pandemic. At the same time, we reached out to serve the vulnerable, demonstrating Christ's love in tangible ways. Even in the most challenging times, the congregation remained united in faith and committed to spreading the gospel. By God's grace, around 20 people have been baptized each year, showing the unstoppable growth of the gospel and the enduring faithfulness of our Lord. Since the resumption of in-person worship in August 2021, attendance has grown

to nearly 200, and Bible study groups have gradually resumed in-person meetings, with some incorporating a hybrid format. Longtime member Marshall Lih shared with joy and gratitude: "Through online gatherings, we've been able to transcend distances and share the gospel with people around the world. God's grace is truly amazing!"

As we commemorate the church's 66th anniversary and Pastor Daniel Zhao's 10th pastoral anniversary, the church has prepared a special celebration with abundant refreshments, a free Love Feast, and a custom-made anniversary cake to mark these two important milestones.



At this 66-year milestone, we are not only thankful for God's blessings in the past, but also look forward to the future with hope. This year, the church has chosen the theme, "From Faith to Living Out Faith", encouraging us to continue finding joy in God, loving Him, others, the church, and actively advancing the gospel. The mission of the church remains clear: "Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:19). We pray that God will continue to help us remain steadfast in faith and become the light and salt of this generation, leading more people to know the salvation of Jesus Christ.

Sister Kelly Kong, who joined the church two years ago, shared her thoughts: "I thank the Lord for allowing someone as undeserving as me to partake in His glory and grace. Though I don't know everything this church has been through in the past 66 years, I

know that the pierced hands of Jesus have always upheld you, me, and everyone here. His Spirit has continually guided us to walk with Him."

To God be all the glory, forever and ever!

## Celebrating Pastor Daniel Zhao's 10th Pastoral Anniversary

Since 2014, Pastor Daniel Zhao has served as the pastor of the Chinese congregation at the Chinese Christian Church of Greater Washington, D.C. (CCCGW). With a deep spiritual life, faithful service, and a sincere shepherd's heart, he has led the church and its members on a journey of faith. Looking back over the past decade, God's grace, love, and power are evident in every step.

Pastor Zhao was born and raised in a Christian family and accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior at the age of 15. He was called by God in 1983 and earned his B.A. and M.Div. in 1990. He was ordained in 1995 and received his Ph.D. from Luther Seminary in 2007. Ten years ago, Pastor Zhao responded to God's call and began his ministry at CCCGW on September 7, 2014. With passion and dedication, he actively participated in various ministries, working closely with church co-workers to establish several Chinese and English fellowships and expand evangelistic efforts, all with the goal of bringing the gospel to the Chinese community in North America.





Over the past ten years, Pastor Zhao has not only diligently prepared sermons, Sunday school classes, and discipleship training programs, but also provided valuable guidance in fellowship Bible studies, visitations, and pastoral care to meet the spiritual needs of the congregation. Additionally, he has actively expanded evangelism outreach, launching multiple cycles of Happiness Groups focused on sharing the gospel, visiting seekers, and leading brothers and sisters on overseas mission trips. Whether in preaching, counseling, discipleship training, evangelism, or leadership development, Pastor Zhao's teachings and leadership have profoundly impacted many lives. His wife, Enlin Peng, has also fully supported him, by not only leading the women's fellowship but also consistently caring for the church family, especially by offering prayers for those who are weak or in need, becoming a strong pillar of support for Pastor Zhao.

During his ten years of service, Pastor Zhao has faced numerous challenges, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, which significantly impacted the church's dynamics, gathering patterns, and congregation. For an extended period, in-person services were suspended, and worship, sermons, and fellowship meetings moved online, presenting many pastoral and spiritual challenges, as well as resulting in the inevitable loss of some members. However, we thank God for His grace and strength, which proved sufficient during this difficult time. Despite the hardships, God worked all things together for good, enabling the church to continue pastoral care through online platforms and maintain close connections among the congregation, with members praying for and serving one another. By the end of 2022, the church resumed in-person services and quickly revived its ministries, including outreach programs such as Happiness Groups, through which many Chinese families have heard and come to know the gospel.

In his sermon on September 8, Pastor Zhao reflected on his journey of service over the past decade. He shared how his family has witnessed God's amazing love and faithfulness and how, through the prayers and love of the congregation, they have served together in unity. Despite moments of weariness, he thanked God for His complete protection, which has enabled them to persevere in His grace and continue walking the path of ministry He has set before them.



Let us offer our heartfelt thanks to God for Pastor Zhao's faithful service and look forward to the church courageously stepping forward on the spiritual path under his leadership, as well as that of the English congregation pastor and the church's Official Board. We trust that God will continue to use Pastor Zhao mightily in the years to come, leading the church into even greater spiritual and ministry growth.

# Welcome to our Fellowship

## The Unity Family Fellowship (English Version)

***“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30)***

As I have gotten older, I have been doing some reflecting. The greatest regret I have is that when I was in my 30's and 40's, I did not grow as much as I should have in the Word of God. If I had followed Jesus more closely with more passion, I would have been a better husband and father, and maybe a better child and sibling too. Also, looking back, I have realized how much I was struggling in my 'normal' daily life when our family was young, with a lot of stress, confusion, emotions, temptations, etc. And I am quite sure that I am not alone in that. Younger husbands/wives and parents often are very emotional when they start to share the struggles in their lives.

That is why we need a Family Fellowship. Young families need support from each of us, not only for the challenges in their daily lives, but also for spiritual growth during this busy period of life. It is a blessing for all of us. A close relationship with God is essential for a healthy marriage and raising God-loving kids. A victorious family life is a great, if not the greatest testimony through which Christians can glorify God.

The Family Fellowship was created at the end of last year. We meet at 1:30PM at church on the first and third Sundays of each month. Currently, we are going through the book called **“Spiritual Depression – Its Causes and Cure”** 《屬靈爭戰：低谷》By Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899 – 1981). The book uses Bible stories and teachings to explain why we, as Christians, are often not living a joyful life and that is not a good testimony of Jesus Christ.





Everyone, whether you are married or not, young or 'old', you are all welcome! We are sure we can grow together!

If you have any questions, please contact Xin Jing/Yafei Chai.

Blessings!

Xingfu Chen, Yang Zhao





# CCCGW Stories

## Personal Testimony

### My Faith Journey-Elder Stanley Chan

Forty-nine years ago, I received Christ as an 18-year-old at a Christian summer camp in Hong Kong. The camp greatly impacted my life, in ways that probably resonate with the experience of some of our CCCGW teens who went to the MFUGE summer camp this year.

I was deeply touched by the teens' reports of their experience. Some accepted the Lord as their personal Savior, and all received solid Bible teaching led by MFUGE staff, engaged in activity planning for each day, and participated in various service projects. The camp opened their eyes to opportunities to serve the local community and showed them how to live each day on a mission for the Lord. The program challenged and stretched them individually, and also helped them bond over dinner, worship, fellowship, and group devotions. I am grateful that our church supported the teens through prayer, fund-raising, and transportation.

Participating in a youth Christian summer camp can be a powerful and transformative experience. Reflecting on my own experience all those years ago, the following benefits are especially precious:

1. **Spiritual Renewal.** The camp provided a dedicated time and space for me to focus on my relationship with God. Through worship, prayer, and Bible study, I often experience a deep sense of spiritual renewal and connection.

2. **Personal Reflection.** The camp offered opportunities for personal reflection and introspection. I was encouraged to examine my faith, values, and beliefs, and to consider how I might grow in my relationship with God.

3. **Fellowship and Community.** The camp fostered a sense of community and belonging. I had the chance to connect with other young people and learn about their faith and values. This sense of fellowship was both encouraging and uplifting.

4. **Learning and Teaching.** The camp included teaching sessions where experienced leaders or speakers shared insights and wisdom from the Bible. These sessions provided opportunities for me to learn and grow in my faith.

5. **Worship and Praise.** The camp included times of worship and praise during which I joined others to sing songs of worship and express my love and gratitude to God. These times of worship were incredibly uplifting and inspiring.

6. **Service and Outreach.** The camp incorporated activities to help me put faith into action through community service projects, evangelism, or mission work. These experiences enriched my understanding and inspired me to live out my beliefs in practical ways.

7. **Deepened Faith and Commitment.** The camp deepened my faith and renewed my commitment to live as a disciple of Christ. It inspired me to make positive changes in my life and

to actively pursue a closer relationship with God.

Since that first summer camp, I have attended other similar camps, the most recent being CCCGW's Family Retreat in July 2024. The retreat was very special to me because the keynote speakers for the Chinese congregation, Pastor Siah and his wife, sister Dorcas, shared with me CCCGW's history of developing pastors, ministers, and elders from among our members. I am a beneficiary of this effort, and I am grateful to have been equipped to serve as an elder at CCCGW for over 12 years now.

I encourage and pray that some of our younger church members would listen for, and accept the Lord's call to join the Pastoral team. Here's my understanding of God's call for you to serve in a Pastoral/Eldership Role at CCCGW:

1. **Prayer and Reflection:** You should engage in regular prayer and reflection to seek God's direction and clarity about your call to ministry.
2. **Biblical Foundation:** You should set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity. Living a life of faithfulness and integrity can serve as a powerful testimony to others, and validate your call to pastoral ministry.
3. **Gifts and Passion:** You may feel a strong passion for preaching, teaching, and shepherding others. These gifts, when nurtured, can grow into effective pastoral leadership.
4. **Mentorship and Guidance:** You will be mentored by experienced pastors and church leaders who will provide you with spiritual guidance, practical training, and support as you explore your calling.
5. **Training and Education:** You will be encouraged to pursue theological education and ministry training to help you prepare for pastoral responsibilities. This can include formal seminary education or informal study and service experiences.
6. **Leadership Opportunities:** You will be given opportunities to lead worship services, teach Sunday school, or engage in outreach to help you develop your pastoral skills and confirm your calling.
7. **Community Support:** You will be part of a supportive church community whose members can affirm and encourage you by recognizing your potential, and offering prayer and resources for your growth.

# CCCGW Stories

## Personal Testimony

### A Life Changing Decision - Grace Wang's Testimony

I'm a baby Christian, reborn 2 years and 8 months ago now, through the ministry of CCCGW's Happiness Group in the Fall of 2021.

During the past two years, my life has changed dramatically, from knowing nothing about God, to learning to invite him into all aspects of my life—marriage, parenting, and career.

Let me start my testimony from the moment I prayed in public, on the evening of October 9, 2021, to accept Jesus as my Savior and to follow him. Up to that point, I lived like everyone else, pursuing my own plans and life goals. I had no idea that I would be making such a big decision that evening. Yet after attending the Happiness Group, getting to hear about God, and starting to pray, I felt something had changed. A peace came over me that I had never experienced before. That is why I raised my hand to follow Jesus that night after Pastor Daniel asked if anyone decided to follow Jesus. I was not entirely sure what exactly had changed, and what this experience meant for me. I did not sleep well that night because I kept thinking about my decision. Many mornings thereafter, I asked myself, "Am I now really a Christian?"

I mulled over my decision for almost a month, telling no one about it, not even my family. Eventually, I had to tell my husband, because I wanted him to bring my kids to witness my upcoming baptism ceremony at CCCGW.

I wasn't sure how my husband would react when I was about to tell him about my decision. I thought he might ask me why I believed in Jesus. I didn't know how I would answer him. But I felt sure that whatever he asked and however I answered, nothing would stop me from getting baptized. So, one day, I stepped into his home office and announced to him, "I have decided to follow Jesus, and I will be baptized on Thanksgiving." To my surprise, he looked at me and responded calmly, "That is a good thing." I was taken aback, and it was then my turn to ask him, "Aren't you going to ask me why I've decided to become a Christian?" He said, "No, because I also believe in God." I was truly shocked: during our 10 years of marriage, I never saw him read the Bible, pray, or attend church on his own. When I first arrived in the US and wanted to go to church, he would follow me there without saying anything about his belief in God.

For quite a while after I became a Christian, I wondered why my husband never mentioned God to me. This is the most awesome thing that happened in my life. For me, the hardest part is to believe in a God I have never met in person. Yet, I do feel his existence through the peace I had never been able to find on my own and the help I received that could only be described as miraculous. C.S. Lewis once said, "Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, is of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important." I am amazed my husband never bothered to tell me this most important thing about the universe. As a new Christian, I wanted to tell everyone I know that God really exists. I started to tell my family and friends my belief. That was when I started to realize - it is not quite easy to share the good news of knowing God, especially family members. I am very close to my sister, we share everything. Even so, after I repeatedly told my sister about God, she protested, saying "If you don't stop, I'll not talk to you anymore." My effort seemed to have ended in failure. I was confused. Yet, God

patiently guided me through the journey. I started to learn how to be humble, obedient, more patient, and quieter—qualities that are all still a work-in-progress in me. During the two years communicating with my sister about God, I learned to stop pursuing the pleasure of presenting a strong argument and to let go of feeling frustrated when my plans did not work. I just needed to do my best every day, knowing that the result of my efforts and what happens tomorrow are all in God's good hands. Two years later, on the exact night when I first began drafting this testimony, my sister called me to pray for her. She told me that she wanted to know more about God, read the Bible and go to church. I started to understand a little more that God uses us to spread the gospel, not because he relies on us, but instead, because he wants us to experience the journey with him to share the grace we received with other people. I believe he wants to train me to be a better person, a person more like Jesus. "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." I also started to understand a little more about why my husband did not spread the gospel to me. God reminded me that someone did try to spread the gospel to me and I walked away. Yes, Christianity is the most important thing about the universe. But in order to start on that journey towards Christianity, people must determine to pursue as a priority to get to know more about God. I used to prioritize things other than God. I am very grateful that God found me, opened my heart to pursue the truth. I became his daughter, started going to church and continued my journey experiencing a new life with God.

For half a year after I was baptized, I attended church alone. I had no idea when my family would accompany me, but God knew. He knew that my husband is the kind of man who honored holidays. So, on Mother's Day in 2022, when he asked me where I'd like to go that day, I replied that since it was a Sunday I'd like to go to church. That's how my husband, the kids, and I found ourselves attending church together that day. My husband's heart was touched by Pastor Rim's day-school discussion and continued to attend church regularly since that first Sunday. My kids used to have a choice to stay home with daddy or attend church with mommy. They used to choose to stay home. After that Mother's Day, they have also been coming to church regularly and attending the kids' Sunday school. I thought it would be just a "have-to-do" thing for them since they must follow their parents. But God had an even greater plan, a plan in detail step by step, for every one of us, more than what I asked or imagined.

The next year, in February, 2023, on a regular Sunday after church, each of my kids told me, "Mom, I want to be baptized." I was, of course, excited, but given my own experience and my husband's faith journey, I thought I should give them more years to make such an important decision. I tried to hide my excitement. I asked them, "Why do you want to be baptized?" Of their many reasons, one was particularly striking: "I want to be God's daughter and follow his wisdom." Thanks to CCCGW's Sunday school teachers, my kids had a far more mature understanding than what I had when I decided to follow Jesus! But still, I tried to be calm, saying "This is very nice. Let's sleep on it." That night, my girls volunteered to pray for the first time. It was a beautiful prayer, hearing them tell God that they want to be his daughters. I thought they would forget about their prayer the next day. But for the next three days, the first words out of their mouths when they saw me, whether in the morning waking up or afternoon arriving home from school, was, "Mommy, I'm serious, I want to be baptized!" It was as if they knew I wanted to observe them more closely. The third day, a Wednesday, after they told me again, "I want to be baptized and please tell our Pastor!" I stopped hiding my excitement and called Pastor Daniel to tell him about Elizabeth and Samantha's big decisions. That Friday, at the Mark fellowship Bible study,

both showed they were very serious about following Jesus, and were exceptionally obedient that day, wearing what I told them to wear and doing what pastor Daniel, my husband and I told them to do.

Over the past two years, everything in our family—the relationship between me and my husband, and between me and my kids—had changed for the better in amazing ways. We’re working on new goals - more harmony, less arguments, better parenting in God’s wisdom. One night, we were so happy that I decided to flatter my kids, saying, “Sweeties, you’re perfect.” One of them looked at me and said, “Mommy, I’m not perfect, no one is perfect. I have sins.” Again, I was overwhelmed by my child’s response. I pretended to be calm, and said, “Ok, let me reorganize my sentence. Yes, you’re not perfect, but you’re perfectly loved.” She was then satisfied and said, “Yes, that’s right, I’m perfectly loved, just like the words in the song you like.” One of my favorite songs is: Perfectly Loved. So, I would like to end my testimony with its lyrics (Singer: Rachel Lampa):

Who said that you weren't beautiful, and that you didn't belong in your own skin?  
Who said that you were all alone, and that you're never gonna find love again?

So many little words, so many little lies that have followed you all your life.  
Looking for the truth, looking into your eyes, and you'll see it's been there the whole time.

In the hands of infinite, as the wounds of the world became his,  
See the kindness heaven has for you and how he has always been drawing you in,

So many open doors, so many miracles that have followed you all of your life,  
Looking for the truth, looking into your eyes, and you'll see it has been there the whole time.

You are not a problem, you are not a mistake, don't need fixing or solving, in the arms of his  
grace,  
You are perfectly human, made from the dust,  
You've got a heart, broken & scarred, yet perfectly loved.

Ooh, even when you were running, even when you were hiding,  
Never been a moment that you were not perfectly loved,  
When you barely believed it, when your eyes couldn't see it,  
Every single moment that you've always been perfectly loved.

Praise the Lord!

Grace Wang

7.21.2024



## How is a Good Father Made?

Written on Father's Day by Helen

### **"Fatherless" America**

In the 1960s, a U.S. census revealed that 9% of children came from single-parent households. By 2000, this figure had risen to 28%, meaning nearly one in three children came from single-parent homes. Statistics from 2022 show similar numbers, with 30% of children under 14 growing up in single-parent households. In China, 43% of first marriages end in divorce within 15 years, and around one million children experience the pain of parental separation each year (Note 1).

### **The Trauma of Fatherlessness**

Reports indicate that children abandoned by their fathers, or those with unsuccessful fathers, suffer significant emotional trauma. Not only are they more likely to be impoverished compared to children living with their fathers, but the lack of a positive father figure, witnessing parental arguments and divorce, deeply affects their emotional well-being. Consequently, they are more prone to emotional distress, low self-esteem, depression, isolation, and may resort to alcohol, promiscuity, gang involvement, legal troubles, drug abuse, and self-destructive behaviors to cope with their inner pain. They are also at risk of dropping out of school, developing negative views of marriage, struggling to maintain healthy relationships with the opposite sex, and becoming single parents themselves affecting their own children adversely.

A more startling report from 1987 by the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics shows that 70% of juvenile offenders were born into single-parent (fatherless) or otherwise broken homes (Note 2). According to the 2002 U.S. Department of Justice statistics, among 7,000 male inmates, 39% grew up without a father, with 46% having family members who were imprisoned and 20% having fathers who were also criminals. The statistics for

female offenders are even more alarming: 80% of offenders and 82% of teenage mothers come from fatherless families (Note 3). This clearly highlights the crucial role of fathers, which should not be underestimated.

### **What Makes a Good Father?**

So, how can one become a good father? A good father has many characteristics, but here are a few key ones:

#### **1. A Good Father is Law-Abiding and Upright**

As the saying goes, "The beam is not straight if the column is crooked." A good father must set a good example by being law-abiding and upright. He must lead a clean life, avoiding bad habits such as gambling, intoxication, drug use, and pornography. He should demonstrate integrity, kindness, and loyalty, setting a positive example for his children. If you want your children to be loving, you must be a loving and compassionate person yourself. If you want them to work hard, you must also be diligent in all things. If you want them to honor their parents, you must respect your own and your spouse's parents. If you want them to be honest, you must be a person of integrity.

#### **2. A Good Father Cherishes His Spouse and Protects His Marriage and Family**

It is often said that the best gift a father can give his children is to love their mother. In other words, a good father must first be a good husband. He cherishes his wife, committed to upholding his marriage vows through both poverty and wealth, sickness and health. He understands that infidelity is a major cause of marital breakdown, so he strives to protect his marriage and avoids the temptations of extramarital affairs. With the advancement of technology, social media has become a breeding ground for infidelity. Many seek excitement by interacting with new and old acquaintances online, which can lead to temptation and entanglement. Surprisingly, the world's largest social networking site, Facebook, has become a major disruptor of marriages in the U.S., with 20% of divorces linked to it (Note 4).

To ensure a happy marriage, remember to "guard your heart above all else." Be cautious about social interactions, especially with the opposite sex. If we are careless and flirt with temptation, we will fall into Satan's trap, leading to marital breakdown and regrets. Additionally, a good father is considerate of his wife's hard work, protects his family from hardship, and respects his spouse's family as well as his own. Remember, loving parents set a good example, and their guidance is most effective. In contrast, parents who quarrel and create conflicts make their children reluctant to return home, and their discipline lacks credibility.

### 3. A Good Father Balances Firmness with Kindness

A good father is kind-hearted, honest, and consistent in his actions. He is a role model who cannot be swayed by wealth or poverty and is unwavering in his principles. He is compassionate, open-minded, and visionary. When making decisions, he is willing to communicate openly with his family, listen to their opinions calmly, even if he does not always adopt their suggestions. As a result, his family respects and follows his decisions. Such a father is the true "head of the household."

## **How Should Parents Teach Their Children?**

### 1. Good Parents Are Fair and Impartial

Some parents show favoritism towards certain children based on their looks, intelligence, or academic performance, leading to biased rewards and punishments. Others may favor sons over daughters, especially in education, causing sibling discord and resentment. Some parents, unable to discipline their children, indulge them excessively, leading to spoiled behavior and legal troubles. For example, the murderer of Taiwanese celebrity Bai Bingbing's daughter, Chen, was excessively pampered by his grandmother and was eventually executed for murder.

## 2. Good Parents Teach According to Age and Administer Fair Rewards and Punishments

Parents should tailor their teaching to the child's age, focusing on character development such as reverence for God, respect for parents, respect for elders, honesty, integrity, love, and compassion. Good character and habits should be nurtured from a young age. As children grow older, parents should allow them to make decisions in certain matters to cultivate responsibility.

When teaching, parents should practice what they preach. Avoid making exaggerated threats or statements you cannot uphold, such as "If you do that again, I'll kill you." Children see through empty threats. Moreover, avoid having arguments with your spouse in front of the children, which may leave them confused. Parents should cooperate, sometimes taking turns to be the "bad cop" and the "good cop," focusing on the child's benefit and providing explanations, rather than personal attacks or rehashing old mistakes.

Discipline should be fair, avoiding punishment driven by anger or excessive physical punishment. Excessive corporal punishment, like hitting or using objects, is harmful and can cause serious injury. A case in point is a young Chinese mother who, in a fit of rage, slammed her daughter's head against a wall, causing fatal brain bleeding. The mother was later legally punished and lived with deep regret. If corporal punishment is necessary, use a rolled-up newspaper and only strike the hands, never the head or face, and never use objects to hit children. Punishment should be rare, focusing on counseling as children grow older. If parents make mistakes in discipline, they should apologize to their children, which fosters respect as only upright and brave parents would admit fault.

## 3. Good Parents are Kind and Encourage Gently

Good parents are understanding and tolerant, using kind words and encouragement. Harsh or demeaning language only pushes children towards self-destructive behavior.



Avoid calling children names like "idiot" or "fool," and never compare them to others, as it damages their self-esteem.

#### 4. Good Parents Invest Time in Their Children

Some parents are overly focused on work and neglect quality time with their children, believing that providing material wealth is sufficient. However, children value time spent with parents, understanding their challenges and aspirations. Good parents listen to their children, act as good friends, and engage in discussions, reasoning, and humor. During heart-to-heart conversations, remember to "be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger." Family meals, talks, walks, and weekend outings are valuable for building strong connections.

#### 5. Good Parents Teach According to Biblical Truths

In today's society, moral standards are often unclear with money, personal freedom, premarital sex, one-night stands, casual sex, cohabitation, and even issues like homosexuality and gender transition being normalized. Parents should use the unchanging truths of the Bible to teach their children, helping them discern right from wrong and live a life pleasing to God, full of justice, compassion, and beneficial to society. Parents should pray for their children and themselves, asking for wisdom to raise their God-given heritage. Remember, God is the true master of our children; parents are merely stewards. Therefore, do not impose your dreams on your children or make career and marriage decisions based on personal preferences. This could lead to a fractured parent-child relationship, which is very regrettable.

#### 6. Good Parents Give Their Best to Their Children

The best things in life are not money or pleasure, as these are fleeting and lack eternal value. The greatest and most precious gift is the salvation offered by Jesus Christ. Parents should not only accept Jesus Christ's salvation for themselves but also guide their children to God. I remember after my father came to faith, his life changed dramatically. He pursued truth diligently, delighted in daily devotions, read the Bible countless times, and committed to living according to the truth. He frequently wrote for the magazine "Direction" and encouraged his children, who are believers, to love the Lord more, constantly evangelizing to my older siblings. One winter evening, despite the bitter cold, my elderly father insisted that we go out with him to evangelize to my older sister, who had just finished work. Before leaving, he reminded us, "Speak less idly, and focus on evangelism." Later, my sister came to faith, and my father was filled with joy and gratitude. I cherish the times we worshiped together as a family (my mother had already passed away) and value my father's teachings and reminders about the preciousness of salvation. As the Bible says, "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). When children have the assurance of eternal life, forgiveness of sins, and the Holy Spirit dwelling within them as their constant help, their lives become meaningful and abundant, which is every parent's desire!

(Note 1 to Note 4, internet search)

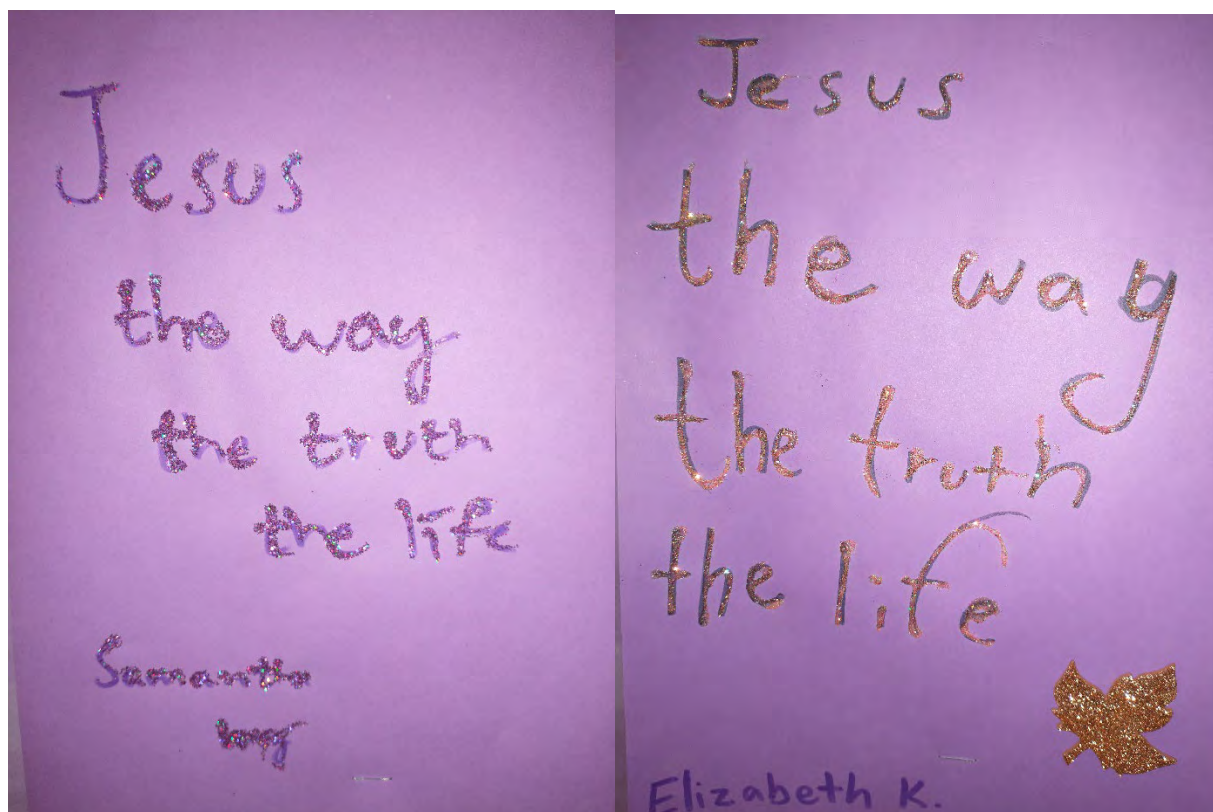
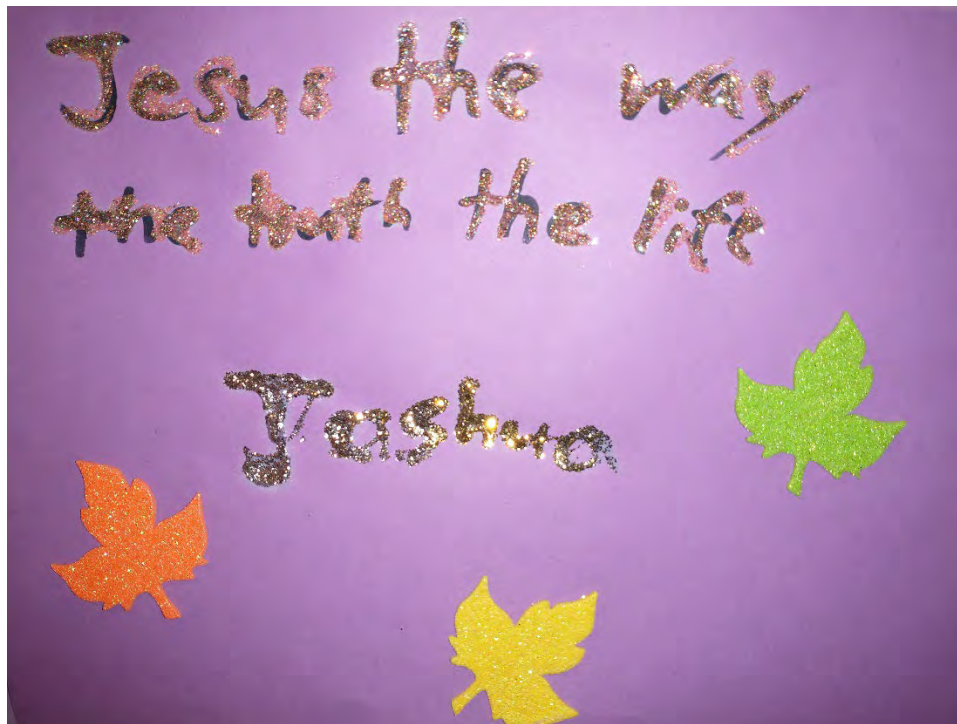
## Faith & Art

I will lift up my eyes to the hills



Credit by KK and Yin

Jesus: The way, the truth, the life





## Upcoming Events





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