

Winter 2024–Spring 2025 Issue



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.”

Pastor's Words

Going With The Flow

Pastor David Rim



***Living Spring* | Winter 2024 – Spring 2025**

Pastor's Words

By Pastor David Rim

Going With The Flow

Many years ago the British wanted to build a golf course in Calcutta, India. This was not an easy project to conjure up. But bringing a little civilization to this backward land seemed worth it. So, they started to plan. Laid out the course. The fairways and the greens. Even a clubhouse. What's a respectable golf course without some place to mingle and drink? Share tall tales. Make connections.

After all the labor and the reshaping of the landscape, their vanity project was finally finished. They were exceptionally pleased with themselves. British engineering at its best. Time to enjoy. At least that's what they thought.

When the first foursome teed off from the first hole, something unexpected occurred. Something they did not plan on. To say the least. Monkeys. These rascally creatures did not want to just be speculators, they wanted to be participants. What's a game if they can't play? So, each time a player hit a ball, they would jump out of a tree, chase down the ball like a game of fetch, then fling it in whatever direction struck their fancy. Talk about a nuisance!

At first, the British tried the kind and gentle approach. Talk to them. Shoo them away. It was, after all, kind of cute. But when that didn't work, they built a barrier. Wall them off. A high fence. All around the course. But these monkeys had a knack for climbing things. Who knew? Well, the builders were not deterred. After all, for a nation that had conquered nearly one fourth of the entire world, this was another day in the park.

Thus, they decided to relocate these monkeys. Capture them and rezone them to another area. But there were just so many of them. What do you do?

There are times in life when you just need to go with the flow. Put on a smile, admit defeat, and adjust. And that's what they did. They wrote a new rule into their version of golf at this particular club. It read: "You have to play the ball where the monkey drops it."

Perhaps you can sympathize. Sometimes our lives feel like this golf course. Lots of planning. Great effort to bring it to life. And yet, things just don't pan out the way you had envisioned. Not exactly. Sometimes not even close. Could be a new job. Walking down the aisle. Raising a child. The college you had hoped to get in. Perhaps retirement. Just when everything seems perfect, it feels like a monkey comes along and picks up that dream and throws it in whatever direction strikes its fancy. What do you do?

I wonder if the disciples had felt this way. They were part of the inaugural class of God's kingdom project. Getting in on the ground floor. An enterprise with the highest backing. How can it fail? All the pieces were in place. The Messiah. The Message. And the Messengers. Twelve of them. One for each of the twelve tribes. Everything just right.

That is, until Judas picks up that golf ball and throws it in a direction no one expected. Judas of all people. My guess is that you put the one everyone trusted the most as the keeper of the funds. Only clean hands should touch cash. But of all people, Judas has betrayed the future King. Hand delivered him to his enemies. And not just Jesus, but all who followed him. Judas had betrayed them all. Talk about an unexpected contingency. Crushed spirits.

Yet several weeks later, we find these same individuals in a room writing a new rule. Wherever the ball drops, that's where we'll play. Lose a disciple. Cast lots. Find a replacement. From eleven, that most uneven of numbers, to twelve, the number of completion. Back to a dozen. Why the change?

We catch a glimpse of their mindset in Peter's pep talk to his teammates in Acts 1:15-26. Peter doesn't pull any punches. "Look brothers. I get it. One who was considered an insider was the very leak. One who served together with us in the ministry was the traitor. The one we trusted with our finances led our Jesus into hands that were itching to destroy him. But it is all right. We will simply go with the flow. Replace Judas with one of the seventy who had been with us from the beginning. We will let the Lord guide in that choice. For this unexpected twist of turns had to occur because **"the Scripture had to be fulfilled."**

What a foundational truth to build our lives around. For while we cannot account for all the contingencies of life, there is One who has foreseen every single monkey that crosses our path. No matter where that ball lands, He is already there. Nothing surprises him. For He had laid out a course that had already taken into account this deviation way before the thought had even entered into Judas's mind. And the best truth of all: He has our back. And this is His promise. That even though life may have more zigzag than we had planned, we will, at the end of the day, complete the final hole.

There is no better place to go in the summer than the beach. Especially if you are a water person. But there's a warning. You can see it posted every few yards along the paths that lead you to that vast ocean: **Warning. Possible Rip Tides. Swim with Caution.**

I never experienced a rip tide. Heard of them. These are currents that flow from the shore out into the sea. When caught in one it feels like a fast moving escalator that kidnaps you and sweeps you away from your loved ones. And for the inexperienced, panic strikes. Fight or flight instinct kicks in. And you start fighting against the current towards safety. Towards land. But this is the wrong strategy. There are two options. If you have the strength, swim parallel to the beach. Or, just go with the flow. The current will die down and you will be free to swim back. Counterintuitive? Of course. Our gut reaction is to take matters into our own hands. Take greater control. Work harder. More detailed plans. But for us followers of the one who constructed the world and planned for every possible contingency, sometimes the wisest move we can make is to go with the flow. Allow the current of his sovereignty carry us along. For while we may not know the twists and turns, we do know our final destination.

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Newsletter

2024 Christmas Eve Combined Worship Service and Special Programs

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men." — Luke 2:14

We thank God for His grace as the Chinese Christian Church of Greater Washington DC gathered for the 2024 Christmas Eve Combined Worship Service, joyfully welcoming this blessed and joyous night. On this special occasion, we expressed our gratitude by reflecting on the love and salvation brought by the birth of our Lord Jesus. Through music, reading of the Scripture, skits, and songs, we praised His glory.

The service featured a diverse and moving program, with each segment deeply touching. Brother Kevin Ye served as the bilingual host, seamlessly alternating between Chinese and English, bringing new energy and enthusiasm to the event. We are grateful for the participation of various fellowships and the Youth Fellowship, who helped us

revisit the prophecies and events of our Savior's birth through the sharing of scripture from Isaiah, Luke, and Matthew. Our brothers and sisters' performances warmed our hearts and filled this peaceful night with love.

A particularly inspiring segment was the poetry reading of *The Life of Christ*, presented by the Mark Fellowship and Unity Youth Fellowship. This led us to reflect on the great deeds surrounding Jesus' birth, allowing us to deeply experience God's selfless and supreme love for us.



Carmel Fellowship presented a humorous skit based on *The BIG BIG BIG Christmas*, a children's story about how God--the one who made all things and who is greater than the entire universe--became a tiny baby named Jesus, born in a manger on the very first Christmas. Why? Because only He could do the big job of saving us. As the angel told Joseph, Mary "will give birth to a son... name Him Jesus, because He will save his

people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). The Fellowship concluded their presentation by inviting everyone to sing the children’s song “My God Is So Big!”

The Youth Fellowship’s performance, *A Beautiful New Christmas*, vividly portrayed the significance of Christ’s coming, helping us understand how His love touches hearts and warms every life.

The Adult Choir, Youth Fellowship, and all participants offered classic hymns like *Away in a Manger*, praising God’s wondrous salvation. Particularly moving were the performances of *O Holy Night* and *Gesu Bambino* by the husband-and-wife vocal duo, Sister Bai Haibo and Brother Chu Hongfa, accompanied by Dr. Gong Ke on the piano. Their angelic voices deeply touched the soul of every listener.





We are also grateful to Pastor Daniel Zhao for his message, *The True Christmas Gift*, which helped us understand the true meaning of Christmas—a gift from heaven, filled with grace and eternal hope. The Jia Mei Sisters Fellowship responded to the pastor's message and the Christmas theme with a song and dance performance of *A Gift*,

declaring that the Son of Man, our Lord Jesus, is the most wonderful gift of all! Among the twelve participating sisters, four had just been baptized during Thanksgiving, including ten-year-old Emilia. With her wholehearted and devoted performance, she testified to everyone that she had received this most precious and beautiful gift—and urged those who had yet to receive it not to miss out!



Additionally, the dance performance *The Most Beautiful Blessing* by the Martha Fellowship added a vibrant highlight to the evening. A special mention goes to Sister Chen Chen's sons, Benedict and Timothy, who, under the careful guidance of Sister Qin Tianhong, delivered the program's narration in flawless Chinese, earning warm applause and cheers. The harmonious melodies of piano and violin intertwined beautifully, complementing the choreography and heartfelt singing. Together, they

reminded us how God accompanies us through all of life's highs and lows, bestowing His most beautiful blessings on each of His children—like stars, like flowing water, never ceasing.





At the close of the program, we lit candles to the gentle melody of *Silent Night*, blessing one another and feeling the warmth of God's love flow through the church.



May we continue to remember the birth of our Lord Jesus during this Christmas season, living out His love and sharing this true light with those around us. As the service concluded, the congregation dimmed the lights, lit candles, and joined together in singing *Silent Night*, praising God for the peace and joy He brings.

We thank all those who participated in the preparation, performance, and worship, as your dedication and unity made this evening so beautiful and moving! May God's grace and peace overflow in every corner of our lives, through our fellowship and worship in Him.

2025 Deacon Installation

On January 5, 2025, the Chinese Christian Church of Greater Washington DC (CCCGW) held its annual deacon installation ceremony during the first Sunday service of the new year. In an atmosphere filled with prayers and blessings, the congregation witnessed a group of devoted servants accepting their mission to serve in God's house, committing to build unity with fellow believers and to serve one another.

This year, several deacons remained steadfast in their dedication to their respective roles:

- Chairperson of the Deacon Board: **Brother Steve Lee**
- Treasury: **Brother Xingfu Chen**
- Training: **Sister Ada O'Donnell**
- Maintenance: **Brother Shao C. Yang**
- Service: **Brother Kevin Yinong Wang**
- Ushering: **Sister Xumei Ren**
- Caring: **Sister Lin Xie**

Their hard work over the past year has been evident, and they continue to shoulder both spiritual and administrative responsibilities.

Simultaneously, God has raised new servants to join the deacon team, injecting fresh vitality into the church:

- Vice Chair: **Brother Sixun Yang**,
- OB Secretary: **Sister Grace Wang**
- Education: **Brother Shu-peng Ho**
- Evangelism: **Brother Jacob Zhigang Jia**
- Missions: **Brother Xuelong Wang**

May God grant them wisdom and strength, so that they may be full of grace in their service, leading the church to be rooted in God's word and to grow in love.

Looking back over the past year, we are filled with gratitude for the 2024 deacons' hard work and dedication in their respective positions, which have allowed the church to progress steadily in both spiritual and ministry aspects. As we look forward to the new year, we pray in unity, asking God to personally use the 2025 deacon team, making them a blessing to the church, bearing fruit in good works, and bringing about spiritual growth and revival.

May God lead this group of faithful servants to serve humbly in His temple, allowing Christ's love to shine through them into more lives. May we build together in unity, glorifying the Lord's name!



2025 First Congregational Meeting

The Chinese Christian Church of Greater Washington DC held its first congregational meeting of 2025 on the afternoon of January 26. During the meeting, the pastors, elders, and deacons presented reports on the Chinese, English, and youth and children's ministries, and the church approved the 2025 operating budget, mission budget, and salary adjustments for church staff. Below are the key highlights:

Chinese Ministry Report (Pastor Daniel Zhao)

2024 Review:

- Sunday sermons were preached based on the church theme "From Believing to Living."
- There was a combined Chinese-English worship service on Christmas Eve.

- Thanksgiving Sunday featured a combined worship service, baptisms, and membership transfers.
- The Happy Group Ministry went well.
- Elderly members and those in need were visited, occasionally with my wife
- Daily morning devotions continued.
- The church participated in the CMC mission conference in Baltimore.
- A visit was made to a car accident survivor, leading him to faith in Christ.
- The Sisters' Fellowship changed its meeting time from Tuesday mornings to Thursday evenings.

Changes in Fellowship Locations:

Beginning in January 2025, Mark Fellowship and Genesis Fellowship will meet at St. James Episcopal Church in Potomac. This change accommodates the growing number of new believers from the Happiness Group, as hosting such a large gathering in individual homes has become challenging. Additionally, there is a shortage of mature leaders to facilitate smaller groups. This move also aims to establish a foundation for the church's future outreach in the local community. The arrangement will be trialed for eight months, with an evaluation at the congregational meeting in October.

Plans for 2025:

- Preparation for a short-term mission trip to Honduras is underway.
- The Happiness Group will relaunch in February, with plans for baptisms on Easter.
- The speaker for the 2025 Summer Retreat is being invited.
- An elder training class is scheduled for this year.

English Ministry Report (Pastor David Rim)

Plans for 2025:

- We will continue our series on "The Sermon on the Mount" throughout the coming year.

- Sunday School will focus on teachings on Spiritual Disciplines for the coming year.
- Two couples are currently receiving pre-marital counseling.
- Nine men have signed up for an overnight prayer retreat from January 31 to February 1.
- My wife and I will continue meeting with people as needs arise.

RECHARGE RALLY:

This two-night event will feature powerful messages and worship designed to reach the younger generation—both teens and young adults under 30. However, it is open to everyone who desires to be blessed and to support the next generation.

While CCCGW is hosting the event, we are working with several churches to expand outreach and encourage broader participation.

Our guest speaker, Steve Kim, is a former gang member who found new life in Christ. He founded *Project Kinship*, a ministry dedicated to helping gang members break free from their past through the transformative power of Christ. Steve will be joined by four individuals who have personally experienced this redemption, and they will share their powerful testimonies.

Youth Ministry Report (Pastor David Rim)

Winter Camp:

Held from February 28 to March 2, participants included Annie, Josie, Halle, Elon, and Tom, with Shawny and Halle's mother, Michelle, leading and driving.

MFuge Summer Camp:

Scheduled for June 23-28, 2025, with registration now open. Youth are encouraged to participate.

Youth Pastor Recruitment Progress:

The hiring committee has reposted the position on ChurchStaffing.com and is awaiting resumes from potential candidates.

Elder Board Report

Main Plans for 2025

- Annual Theme: "Rooted and Grounded in Love" (Ephesians 3:17).
- The keynote speakers for the 2025 Summer Retreat have been confirmed. Rev. Lambert Lee (Chinese Strategy Alliance) will speak for the Chinese service, while Keith McLaughlin will be the speaker for the English service.
- Annual Missions Conference: Keynote speaker is Betty Chou (Go and Love Foundation).

In 2025, the elders of the church have taken on diverse and significant responsibilities, overseeing the development and management of various ministry departments:

Elder Board Leadership and Oversight Responsibilities

- **Elder Board Chairperson:** Elder Stanley Chan
- **Chinese Service Oversight:** Pastor Daniel Zhao, Elder Stanley Chan
- **English Service Oversight:** Pastor David Rim, Elder Kok-Eam Khor
- **Youth Ministry Oversight:** Pastor David Rim
- **Missions Ministry Oversight:** Elder Stanley Chan, Pastor Daniel Zhao
- **Education Ministry Oversight:** Pastor Daniel Zhao, Pastor David Rim
- **Evangelism Ministry Oversight:** Pastor Daniel Zhao, Pastor David Rim
- **Fellowships Ministry Oversight:** Pastor Daniel Zhao, Pastor David Rim, Elder Stanley Chan, Elder Kok-Eam Khor
- **Worship Oversight:** Pastor Daniel Zhao, Pastor David Rim
- **Church Administration Oversight:** Elder Stanley Chan
- **Caring Ministry Oversight:** Pastor Daniel Zhao, Pastor David Rim, Elder Stanley Chan, Elder Kok-Eam Khor
- **Special Program/Event Arrangement:** Pastor Daniel Zhao, Pastor David Rim

Official Board Report

Past Events Review:

- Thanksgiving events included worship and breakfast, a Thanksgiving dinner with testimony sharing, and baptisms. Other events included *Sight & Sound's Bible Theater: Daniel* and the Christmas Eve worship service.

Official Board Initiatives / Focus

- Increase church member involvement in church ministries, including strengthening collaboration within CCCGW departments, enhancing evangelism efforts, and expanding missions engagement
- Focus on the Youth Minister search
- Focus on Children's Ministry
- Improve church communications

Other Initiatives:

- Upgrade sanctuary audio and video systems
- Consider moving the summer retreat to Memorial Day Weekend to increase participation and allow for more flexibility in scheduling short-term mission trips

Upcoming Key Events

- **Recharge Rally:** February 7-8
- **Chinese New Year Celebration Outreach:** February 15
- **Spring Walk and Brunch:** April 5
- **Good Friday Evening Worship:** April 18, 7:30 PM
- **Easter Sunday Combined Worship and Baptism/Membership Transfer Ceremony:** April 20
- **Church Picnic:** June 7
- **Summer Retreat:** July 11-13
- **Sight and Sound: Noah's Ark:** September 20
- **Apple Picking:** October 4
- **Harvest Festival:** October 31

May the Lord guide the church to continue growing in the new year, building one another up, serving in love, and bearing witness to His grace!

Friday Dinner Donation Box

To encourage greater participation and lighten the load on volunteers, the church has set up a donation box for Friday dinners. An additional offering of \$10 to \$20 per week will help ease the burden of meal preparation, enabling our team to provide more abundant meals within the same budget and bless more people. We sincerely invite everyone to give freely out of love and join us in supporting this ministry!

Motion Passed: 2025 Operating and Mission Budgets

After prayer and discussion, the church officially approved the 2025 operating and mission budgets. This approval represents not only a financial plan but also a commitment to God's kingdom work. May we faithfully steward the resources He has entrusted to us, supporting the growth of church ministries and actively engaging in the mission to spread the gospel. May God guide the church as we continue to move forward in His will, becoming a blessing to many!

Motion Passed: 2025 Salary Adjustments for Church Staff and Contractors

After prayer and careful consideration, the church approved the salary adjustment plan for staff and contractors in 2025, ensuring stability and growth in the church's human resources. May God provide strength and provision to enable the staff to serve faithfully and glorify His name!

Recharging Our Souls: A Winter Rally

Over the weekend of February 7–8, the Chinese Christian Church of Greater Washington, D.C., had the privilege of hosting a number of guests in our area. We welcomed them into our sanctuary with the hope that we would all encounter God in a fresh and transformative way. To this end, we invited Steven Kim, a former drug addict transformed by God, who now leads Project Kinship—a ministry dedicated to helping

those caught in gang life and the cruelty of violence. What began as a two-person act of faith has grown into a thriving ministry with 120 dedicated members.





On the first night, Steven shared how pain in our lives, when left unredeemed by God's grace, can have a devastating effect—inevitably being passed on to others. Simply put, pain is either transformed or transmitted. Those who suffer can, in turn, become those who inflict suffering—the recipients becoming the perpetrators.

What is the hope for those in pain? How can the cycle be broken before our loved ones bear the weight of our burdens? The answer lies in another question: *What is the shape of God's heart?* What does it look like? Some in the audience responded with "the cross" or "as large as the universe." All good answers—perhaps glimpses of what Steven had in mind: **perfect love**. Why perfect love? Because *perfect love casts out fear* (1 John 4:18). In God's love, there is no fear—only peace, joy, and rest.

One of the testimonies shared that first night was from Brother Joseph. Built like a teddy bear, he hugs like one too—and he sees it as his ministry to bring grace and hope through hugs. For 34 years, he was in and out of prison, stuck in a gang, taking and selling drugs. Then one day, he walked into a Salvation Army center and experienced perfect love, the kind that is free of fear because of how he was treated. This love

transformed his life from wasting away in a cell to earning an undergraduate degree, a master's in social work, and hopes for a doctorate. Now, he offers hope to young men and women who were once imprisoned as he was.

A particularly moving part of his testimony was his time in prison, where he kept a travel book filled with pictures of the National Mall and its monuments. He dreamed of visiting them one day. On this winter weekend, that dream became a reality as he and his friends finally stood in the places he had once only seen in pictures. That's perfect love!



The theme of the second evening centered on an essential aspect of this perfect love: it takes the initiative. This love does not wait. Like the white pieces on a chessboard, it makes the first move. As John reminds us, "We love because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

What a powerful truth—God loves first. No matter where we are in life, no matter what we have done or the messes we have made, He always loves us first. The implications are life-changing. God is not waiting for us to get our lives in order or to become good enough. Instead, He makes the first move and walks alongside us on the journey of transformation.

That night, Steven's wife, Prescilla, shared her testimony, and one simple yet profound truth resonated deeply: no matter how successful we become, life is never truly complete without God. All her life, she believed that financial stability would solve all problems. She eventually reached the top floor—becoming a high-ranking officer at a bank, working in a grand office with assistants at her command. Yet, despite all the status and comfort the world could offer, she found her life and marriage empty. She learned a profound truth: a full bank account cannot fill an empty soul—only God can.



Steven closed the rally with a deeply personal story about his mother's unwavering prayers. When he was lost in the world of drugs, she would take his clothes from his room to church revivals and rallies, asking pastors to lay hands on them and pray for his return to God. His life stands as a testimony not only to the grace of God but also to the power of a mother's persistent prayers.

The Rally speakers' testimonies were deeply inspiring, their stories a vivid reminder of the power of encountering God in a real and personal way. As one participant shared from personal experience, having the chance to hear authentic stories of faith and transformation first-hand can help strengthen a young person's own faith:

"As a college student growing up Southern Baptist in churches around the world, I had ample opportunities to meet missionaries, hear Christian speakers from different walks of life share their testimonies, and attend youth retreats where I met new friends. These experiences helped me relate to the world as a young Christian and kept my faith strong.

At the Recharge Rally I had the chance to meet Steven Kim and some of his team members from Project Kinship. Their love of community was felt through their sharing of hope and faith. They recounted their own struggles, victories, and personal encounters with God. Their stories made faith tangible, authentic and relatable, helping youth see that God is active, even in life's messiness, and that

they are not alone in their challenges. Young people crave genuine connections and real stories that show how faith operates in everyday life, not just in idealistic or polished ways. The speakers' vulnerability fostered trust, and showed that faith is not about perfection but about walking with God through every season."

Several teens and young adults also reflected:

"I liked that all of them shared a personal story."

"It is awesome how much Jesus can change someone's life."

"I liked hearing the testimonies and how the speakers wanted others to have a chance and be saved as well."

"I enjoyed hearing their backstories and how they didn't let that define them. They also used that to help others with similar experiences."

"It was nice to see people from different churches at the rally. I hope we get to connect with them more in the future. I liked the testimonies from Steve's guests. I especially liked the sentiment they shared that God was with them even in their darkest moments."

"The rally's theme was 'Real,' and it was all about how we can experience real life and freedom in Jesus. It was amazing to hear from the speaker, Steve. The times of worship were also very sweet. There was a time of prayer where people prayed together and for each other, ensuring that every person who attended was prayed for. It was really special to share that time of prayer with everyone, and I hope that praying regularly for each other can become a bigger part of our own church!"



The Recharge Rally reminded everyone that faith is not just about knowledge or tradition—it's about real encounters with God, genuine community, and transformed lives. Through powerful testimonies and heartfelt worship, hearts were stirred, faith was strengthened, and lives were changed. This weekend was a reminder that God is always at work—changing lives, restoring hope, and calling us into a deeper relationship with Him.

**Special thanks to Pastor David Rim for providing the event summary, to Michelle Watson for the photos, and to Sister Jennie Woo for compiling reflections from the CCCGW participants.*

Reflection on the Recharging Our Souls Rally

By Sheila Lee

The keynote speaker, Steve Kim, leads the “Project Kinship” project whose mission is to provide support and training to lives impacted by incarceration, gangs, and violence through hope, healing, and transformation. He knew Pastor David and Maria in California when he was just a youth. He and his wife and several co-workers came and shared their testimonies of ruined lives redeemed by Christ.

Their stories may seem to not apply to our lives, but we can relate to the same root cause that drives people to turn to drugs, which eventually destroys their lives and relationships. The common link is the experience of emotional, psychological, and physical pain in our past.

As I reflect on this, parents cannot be fully blamed as you realize they are only passing down how they were raised and how our grandparents were raised, etc. The cycle of abuse cannot be broken without the intervention of Christ coming into a family and breaking the chain. God can transform the family patterns and provide healing in broken lives.

The major theme of the conference was this: If we don’t transform our pain, we will transmit it. Even becoming a Christian will not make a difference until we forgive others from our past and ask God to heal us. As God gives us a new spirit and renews our mind, we are made whole. The alternative is to continue in our broken ways and pass on the pain to others, especially those closest to us.

I was amazed at the openness in the speakers’ transparency as they shared such deeply personal stories of painful moments in their lives. Steven shared about how he had overcome many obstacles to make it to college only to see his college life get ruined by drugs. It was not just the crisis in his youth where God redeemed his life. His wife later also shared about a painful situation in their lives. While amid a furious moment of arguments at a restaurant, they faced the end of their marriage. They asked

each other what was next. Steven said they each decided to Put God First. In this way, their marriage was saved.

Thanks to God for the testimonies of changed lives that make an impact for Christ. May we be inspired to also be wounded healers to others at our church.

Lunar New Year Dumpling Festival

To celebrate the Lunar New Year, the Chinese Christian Church of Greater Washington, D.C. hosted the **"Dumpling Festival"** on February 15, 2025. The event featured dumpling-making, a special New Year worship service, a fellowship meal, and engaging games. It was a joyful and heartwarming gathering that not only strengthened the spirit of service and collaboration among brothers and sisters in Christ, but also provided newcomers with a valuable opportunity to connect with the church and experience the Christian faith. Despite the rainy weather, the enthusiasm of the attendees remained undiminished, with over 200 church members and friends—both new and old—coming together to share in the festivities. The atmosphere was filled with joy and warmth, making for a lively and memorable celebration.

The success of the event was made possible by the dedication and enthusiasm of fellowship members, who contributed to every aspect of the preparation—from promotions and venue decoration to making spring rolls and carefully preparing dumpling ingredients, kneading dough, seasoning fillings, wrapping dumplings, and cooking them. Additionally, the event's program planning and game arrangements reflected the church's spirit of unity and mutual service. A particularly moving aspect of the celebration was the selfless contributions of many elderly church members, who willingly took on some of the most demanding tasks, demonstrating Christ's love through their actions and setting a beautiful example for all.



At 4 p.m., the event officially began as everyone gathered to make dumplings, engage in conversation, and enjoy the warmth of fellowship in a lively and joyful atmosphere. This year's dumpling festival not only attracted many brothers and sisters from the church but also welcomed several international friends, some of whom brought their children along to experience the festive spirit of Chinese New Year firsthand.



Sister Yin Yin's two college friends attended the annual dumpling festival for the second consecutive year. They shared that they felt welcomed at the local church and were grateful to live in an open, inclusive, and diverse community where they could

experience different cultures. They thoroughly enjoyed the process of making dumplings and, even more so, the joy of sharing them together.

Additionally, Sister Tianhui Xu's college friend and her husband, both longtime Christians, greatly appreciated the warm and inviting atmosphere of the dumpling festival. This year, they also invited two friends who have not yet come to faith, bringing along beautifully designed aprons and rolling pins as they eagerly joined in the experience. Their enthusiastic participation added both fun and warmth to the event, making it an even more memorable gathering.



Testimony and Worship Service

Later, at 6:00 p.m., the New Year worship service commenced, featuring a heartfelt testimony from Sister Gu, whose life story deeply touched the audience. She recounted

the shadows cast over her childhood due to an abusive father and the many challenges and hardships she faced throughout her life. However, she testified to God's unceasing love, sharing how He placed kind-hearted friends, colleagues, and employers around her, helping her rise above her struggles. She candidly admitted to having once been trapped in sin, unable to break free, but through God's mercy and undeserved grace, she was redeemed. Through prayer and meditating on God's Word, she grew in faith and was ultimately freed from a spiritual bondage that had plagued her for nearly two decades. With gratitude, Sister Gu declared that it was Jesus Christ who bore her sins and shame on the cross, giving her the courage to stand before everyone and testify to God's miraculous grace. Her honesty, courage, and testimony of God's redemptive power profoundly moved the congregation.

Following the testimony, Pastor Daniel Zhao delivered a sermon on "Entering the Ark." He spoke on three key points: God's invitation, Noah's obedience, and the significance of the ark. He reminded the congregation that, in a world plagued by sin, Noah was considered righteous because he walked with God and was invited to enter the ark. This serves as a powerful reminder for us to fear and obey God in today's generation, where moral values are often distorted. Despite facing ridicule and the immense challenge of building the ark, Noah remained steadfast, displaying unwavering faith and obedience to God. The ark itself symbolizes the salvation found in Jesus Christ—the only refuge in the face of judgment. Pastor Zhao urged everyone to respond to God's call and enter the door of salvation while there is still time, encouraging believers to follow God's guidance in their lives.

Dumpling Festival and Cultural Performances

At 7:00 p.m., the dumpling banquet officially began, with attendees gathering to enjoy the dumplings they had made alongside a variety of carefully prepared side dishes from the Unity Family Fellowship. The evening continued with a series of lively performances.

The Chinese School Choir, composed of both children and adult students, opened with "Happy New Year" and "I Lift My Eyes to the Hills", bringing a festive atmosphere to the venue. Next, the Good News Ministry presented musical and theatrical performances. Sisters Xia Zhao and Hui Ma performed a beautiful soprano duet, "Bring Your Smile", accompanied by Sister Yalan Li on the piano. Following this, Brothers Peng Wang, Jian Guo, Ping Liu, and Heng Sun performed a lighthearted and humorous skit titled "Where is My Home?"—a comedic yet thought-provoking reflection on their early experiences of moving to the U.S. and their transformation through faith. The evening also featured a traditional Chinese music ensemble with Xiaoen Yu, Han Zhang, Shengyong Zhou, and Liping Zhang playing the erhu, drums, and gongs to perform classic pieces "Fengyang Flower Drum" and "Jasmine Flower". Their performance showcased deep artistic skill and added a strong cultural essence to the event.





The Good News Ministry, founded in 2004, has been dedicated to glorifying God and spreading the gospel through music and the arts for the past two decades. Traveling across the East Coast, they have used various art forms—including vocals, instrumental music, and drama—to share messages of faith, hope, and love, offering encouragement and comfort to many and serving as a beautiful testimony to God’s kingdom.

Children’s Activities and Interactive Sessions

To ensure that children experienced the joy of the festival while receiving spiritual nurturing, the church arranged special children’s activities, including paper cutting, lantern-making craft, and wood-snake painting. Additionally, there were Bible story sessions and worship sing-alongs, engaging nearly 30 children. Each child received a carefully prepared gospel gift bag, introducing them to the truths of the Christian faith in a joyful and meaningful way.



A highlight of the evening was the children's craft auction, which drew enthusiastic participation from attendees. The auction successfully raised \$50 for missions, helping children learn about generosity and transforming their love into tangible action.

The evening also featured interactive games and prize giveaways, adding excitement and surprises to the gathering. Pastors Daniel Zhao and David Rim led fun Q&A sessions, such as inviting couples married for over 50, 40, and 30 years to receive special gifts. One particularly entertaining moment came when they announced, "Anyone wearing red can claim a prize!"—which, given the occasion, led to a lively rush, as many attendees had dressed in festive red attire.

A particularly heartwarming sight was that all of the gifts of Bibles prepared by the church were eagerly taken by attendees, a testament to the deep spiritual hunger among the people. May God's Word take root and grow in every heart that received it!

Deacon Jacob Zhigang Jia from the Evangelism Ministry shared that next year's dumpling festival will feature a more detailed pre-event schedule for attendees,

continued testimony sharing from brothers and sisters, a wider selection of gifts, more interactive programs, and an expanded children's craft auction.

This year's "Dumpling Festival" allowed everyone to experience the Christian values of love, unity, and sharing in a profound way. Newcomers felt the warmth of a spiritual home, while church members deepened their bonds through fellowship and service, putting love into action. May God continue to lead us, uniting us in faith and strengthening our ministry, so that we may glorify Him together!

CCCGW Stories

Music and Faith in Sister Haibo Bai's Life

Music and Faith in Sister Haibo Bai's Life

At the Chinese Christian Church of Greater Washington, D.C., there is a couple whose voices are as heavenly as they are touching. Whether leading worship during Sunday services or performing special songs during important holidays like Thanksgiving or Christmas, Brother Hongfa Chu and Sister Haibo Bai's beautiful, expressive singing always leaves a deep and lasting impression. Their voices transport listeners into God's embrace, evoking deep emotion and awe. Especially Sister Haibo Bai, who was once an accomplished soprano, now uses her voice to serve God, channeling her talent into an expression of faith and dedication. How did her story of musical advancement and deepening faith and love for God unfold over the years?



Sister Haibo Bai has loved singing since she was a child. After graduating from high school, she joined a performance troupe and later pursued advanced studies at a music academy, where she earned first place in several competitions. With her exceptional musical talent and performance skills, she became a vocal instructor at Tianjin Conservatory of Music at a young age. Seeking to challenge herself and broaden her horizons, Haibo applied to and gained admission to the prestigious Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, known for educating some of the world's top musical talents with its highly competitive selection standards and intense curriculum.

When Haibo first arrived at Curtis, she faced significant challenges due to her older age, less advanced musical skills, and limited English proficiency. Her impressive

background in China seemed irrelevant in this school for prodigies, and her sense of self-worth collapsed. On top of the heavy academic load in music, she also had to learn Italian, German, and French, adding to her stress. Nevertheless, with relentless effort and dedication, she gradually overcame these challenges and earned the respect of her teachers and peers, showcasing her irreplaceable talents.

After graduation, Haibo Bai faced the choice of either continuing her studies or entering the workforce. Fortunately, she met Ms. Li Shuxin, a pianist and devout Christian. Ms. Li not only sponsored Haibo Bai's further studies but also invited her to perform on the stage of the opera company she founded. Haibo participated in ten opera productions, with *Madama Butterfly* being the most well-received. Her powerful performance moved countless audiences, marking it the peak of her artistic career.

Despite her notable success in music, Haibo still felt an inner emptiness and longed for a fulfilling family life. She began contemplating her role as a mother. However, after she became pregnant with twins, a sense of profound emptiness and insecurity overwhelmed her. Previously, Christian friends had shared the gospel with her, but she had resisted. During her pregnancy, her spiritual void gradually opened her heart. One day, she heard a sermon by Pastor Feng Bingcheng (Li Cheng), which deeply moved her, leading her to decide to be baptized and embrace Jesus Christ as her Savior.

Though Haibo's understanding of her new faith was limited, she actively participated in church service with great enthusiasm, including singing and leading hymns. Later, she became the artistic director of the Joyful Sound Ministry. With her achievements and professional expertise, she could have had a more prosperous career in China. Yet, in the U.S., due to financial pressures, she had to teach music, which prevented her from fully pursuing her singing career and showcasing her musical talents. This left her feeling frustrated and unfulfilled.

Soon after, Haibo's health took a turn for the worse, she was diagnosed with stage-one breast cancer. This unexpected life storm did not discourage her; instead, it deepened her experience of God's miraculous work in her life. During the process of two surgeries and three rounds of chemotherapy, she was never afraid of death. Instead, she felt her

relationship with God and Jesus Christ grow even closer. Through God's words, she understood that He is the sovereign Lord, and everything should be entrusted to Him.

Haibo shared, "The greatest blessing of believing in Jesus is knowing where my final destination lies." That period became the strongest phase of her spiritual life. Her following of Jesus grew even more intimate, and she experienced the love of the church family in a more tangible way. Whether through earnest prayers, financial support, or meals brought to her during chemotherapy, she felt surrounded by the love of Christ, which warmed her heart.

Throughout her cancer treatment, Haibo experienced God's power and guidance, which led her to submit more fully to His will. She began praying for other Christians with cancer, even for strangers, offering comfort and strengthening their faith. A friend, Yizeng Xu, said, "She felt worth having this illness because she became a blessing to others. Her suffering was not in vain. She was willing to pray for those who were physically weak, even in tears as she prayed, bringing God's word to them."

Today, Haibo continues to serve in church with her singing. In the past, she sang to pursue a personal career, but now she dedicates her talent to God's work. Her service is not only filled with peace but also brings inner fulfillment. Each time she performs or offers a song, her greatest desire is to witness more people coming to the Lord. This is her deepest calling and joy.



Haibo believes that the greatest blessing in life is knowing God. No matter what kind of person she is, God has accepted her and never abandoned her. Whether her life is on mountaintops or in the valleys, Jesus is her solid foundation. She is willing to rely totally on God, grow even closer to Him, and be content with seeing the fruit of her service. She knows that to become a person pleasing to God, she must do the work that He delights in.

Source:

Showers of Blessing Evangelistic Ministry (FM 104, Hong Kong Edition), *Relying on God* – Bai Haibo (Cantonese version).

For the video, please refer to:

 [恩雨之聲香港版 《倚靠》白海波 - 粵語](#)

Welcome to Our Church Fellowship

Becoming Mark in the New Era — Introduction to Mark Fellowship

The Men's Group in CCCGW's English Ministry

Becoming Mark in the New Era — Introduction to Mark Fellowship

I. Grateful for God's Provision — The Birth of Mark Fellowship

Mark Fellowship was established in January 2023, emerging from the third session of the Happiness Group evangelistic event hosted by the Chinese Christian Church of Greater Washington, D.C. (CCCGW) in the latter half of 2022. Under God's guidance, members from the Victorious Happiness Group, the former Christian Church in Clarksburg, and brothers and sisters from Potomac, Bethesda, Gaithersburg, and surrounding areas came together with one heart to form this new fellowship. By God's grace, Mark Fellowship has now celebrated its second anniversary and continues to grow and thrive.



The vision and mission of Mark Fellowship are to spread the gospel widely and lead people to Christ through effective evangelistic platforms such as the Happiness Group. Our fellowship primarily reaches out to seekers — individuals who are eager to know God, pursue truth, and explore the Christian faith. Regardless of age, background, or social status, we warmly welcome anyone who seeks to know the Lord and invites them to join us in the pursuit of truth and the knowledge of Christ.

Currently, the fellowship is led by brothers Si Hai Xu, Kun Zhang, and Xuelong Wang, with Bible study leaders including Pastor Daniel Zhao, Kun Zhang, Si Hai Xu, and Songping Wang. During the seventh session of the Happiness Group in 2024, God raised up even more co-workers to serve. Brothers Mark Lin and Shupeng Ho from Genesis Fellowship were invited to join as Bible study leaders, further strengthening and enriching the spiritual guidance of Mark Fellowship.

II. Grateful for God's Guidance — The Growth of Mark Fellowship

Looking back over the past two years, we have witnessed God's amazing work in leading Mark Fellowship from nothing to something, from small to large. Between 2023

and 2024, under the guidance of Pastor Daniel Zhao, eight families — including the families of Si Hai Xu, Kun Zhang, Jiaqi Liu, Hongyan Xu, Peilin Cong, Lifeng Wang, and Grace Wang — faithfully served the Lord. They willingly offered themselves as God’s vessels, using their family homes as places of worship and gathering, actively spreading the gospel in their communities, schools, workplaces, and among friends.

As the evangelistic efforts expanded, the fellowship grew rapidly from an initial group of over 20 people to a large spiritual family of more than 50 members. To better facilitate the growing fellowship, Mark Fellowship established a co-worker team and a regular prayer group. The regular fellowship gathering and Bible study were set on Saturday evenings from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM. Besides participating in the church’s two annual Happiness Group evangelism events, fellowship members also strive to live out the gospel in their daily lives.







Starting in 2025, we felt God's calling to extend our ministry to the Potomac area by moving our weekly gatherings to St. James Episcopal Church. This strategic move aimed to reach more Chinese families in the area, inviting them to church and expanding God's kingdom. Additionally, our co-worker and prayer meetings were rescheduled from Thursday evenings to Tuesday evenings from 8:00 PM to 9:00 PM, allowing more members to participate.



III. Grateful for God's Leading — The Impact of Mark Fellowship

As a newly formed fellowship, many of our members are newly baptized believers who are still getting to know one another and establishing bonds of trust. To strengthen our spiritual growth and deepen our relationships, we intentionally create opportunities for meaningful interactions. These include testimony sharing during Happiness Group, small group prayer time, potluck meals, and opportunities to serve together in the church. Through these activities, members not only grow closer in everyday life but also build strong spiritual partnerships.

When someone faces difficulties in life, we support and help one another; when someone experiences spiritual weakness, we pray for and encourage one another. This Christ-centered love has taken deep root in Mark Fellowship and continues to bear fruit. We are committed to embodying God's love in our daily lives, workplaces, and relationships — not only among our church family but also toward those who do not yet know Christ.

We actively invite seekers to join our Happiness Groups, Bible studies, and Sunday services. By opening our homes for gatherings, we create a warm and welcoming space where friends can gradually develop a curiosity and hunger for God's truth. Our goal is that they will one day open their hearts to Christ.

Furthermore, we leverage both online and in-person platforms to expand our outreach beyond local boundaries, connecting with friends from both China and the U.S.. By doing so, we provide more opportunities for people to hear the gospel, witness God's miraculous work, and ultimately become citizens of God's kingdom. We firmly believe that God will continue to use Mark Fellowship to accomplish more amazing works — spreading the gospel, transforming lives, and bringing glory to His name.

IV. Grateful for God's Strength — The Ministry of Mark Fellowship

Mark Fellowship is deeply committed to raising up a strong spiritual army that can take on the sacred mission of evangelism. Our focus is not only on individual spiritual growth but also on the collective spiritual development of the entire fellowship. Pastor Zhao and

his wife lead by example, demonstrating a life of devotion and service. The fellowship leaders, brothers Si Hai Xu and Kun Zhang, have humbly stepped up to lead and serve, while brothers take turns leading Bible study and sisters offer heartfelt worship through songs.

During the Happiness Group seasons, members are encouraged to share their personal testimonies, proclaiming the wonders God has done in their lives. These real-life testimonies not only strengthen the faith of believers but also inspire seekers to pursue the truth of the gospel. It is through these powerful testimonies that the message of salvation continues to spread.

In addition to regular gatherings, Mark Fellowship members actively participate in various church ministries, including Stephen Ministry, ushering, kitchen service, and supporting various church events. This spirit of humble service has become a visible testimony of God's grace. In 2025, brothers Xuelong Wang and sister Grace Wang were called by God to serve as church deacons, modeling a heart of joyful and sacrificial service for the entire fellowship.

We thank God for transforming Mark Fellowship into a vibrant, energetic, and spiritually growing family, where each member serves with humility and dedication, making God's name known in the church and beyond.

V. Grateful for God's Grace — The Future of Mark Fellowship

Looking back on the past two years, Mark Fellowship has remained committed to the vision of fearing the Lord, following the Lord, and walking with the Lord. In these two years, we have successfully held four seasons of the Happiness Group evangelistic events, witnessing many seekers become believers, and many believers get baptized and become God's children.

As Mark Fellowship continues to grow, God continues to expand our mission field. On February 1, 2025, our church held the New Year Fellowship and Prayer Gathering at St. James Episcopal Church, with eight fellowships participating, including Martha Fellowship, Living Water Fellowship, Genesis Fellowship, Aijia Fellowship, Unity Young

Adult Fellowship, Unity Family Fellowship, Carmel Fellowship, and Mark Fellowship. On that day, we united in prayer, asking God to prosper His church, expand His kingdom, and grant Mark Fellowship a harvest of souls in the new mission field.

We deeply thank the Lord for His guidance and provision. After more than two years of growth and refining, Mark Fellowship has begun to flourish and bear fruit for the Lord. In the Thanksgiving Baptism Service of 2024, nine brothers and sisters were baptized, publicly declaring their faith and becoming children of God. All glory, praise, and thanksgiving belong to our Lord Jehovah!

Looking ahead, starting March 1, 2025, WCCC will launch the eighth Happiness Group session, and Mark Fellowship will continue to uphold its vision of working alongside the Lord and expanding His kingdom. We will actively invite more friends to join our gatherings, so they may come to know God, revere Him, and follow Him, ultimately experiencing the new life of grace and blessing in Christ. We trust that God will continue to lead us, enabling us to spread the gospel far and wide and witness more lives being saved for His kingdom. Amen!

**Special thanks to Sister Wendy Cao for providing a detailed introduction to Mark Fellowship and for sharing photos.*

The Men's Group in CCCGW's English Ministry

Led by Pastor David Rim, this Group brings brothers together for the vital purpose of fostering spiritual growth through fellowship and mutual encouragement. The Group meets on the last Saturday of each month at 9:00 AM for about an hour and a half. At present, the men are reading and discussing John Mark Comer's "Practicing the Way." Attendance ranges from six to twelve brothers.

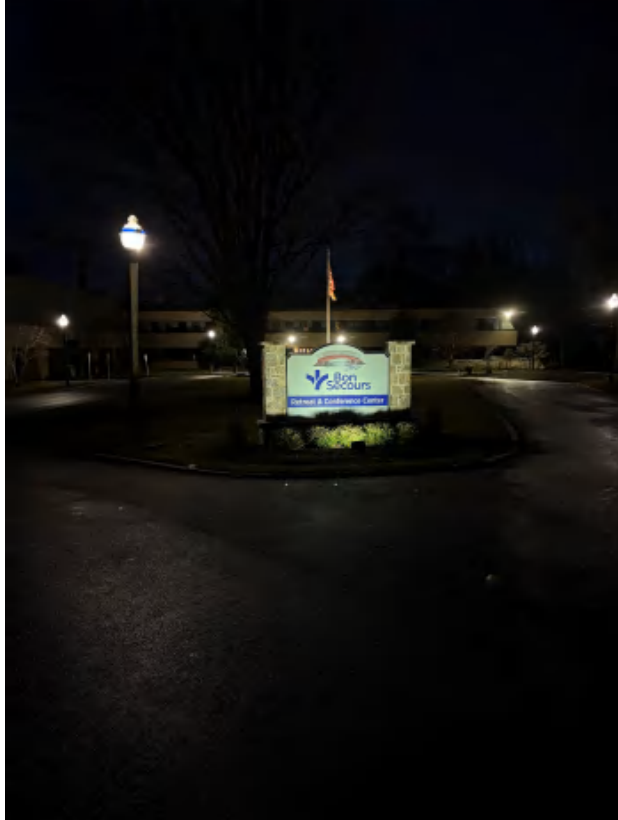
Each session begins with members sharing updates on personal challenges or concerns that could benefit from the group's prayers. Members may also offer insights

and encouragement regarding any issues raised. The discussion then shifts to a section of Comer's book, with Pastor Rim guiding the conversation and addressing any questions. It's not uncommon for the group to explore fundamental questions like "What does it mean to be a Christian?", "How can I possibly be like Jesus?", or "Am I going to heaven if I don't come close to being a saint?" Pastor Rim leads the group through Scripture, different theological perspectives, historical developments, and practical answers—keeping the discussion focused and engaging within the session's time frame. Through these discussions, members gain valuable insights to support their spiritual journeys.

So far, the group has covered "*Being with Jesus*" and is now beginning "*Becoming Like Him*" in Comer's book, but members are free to revisit any topics in any order. These meetings serve as a reminder that spiritual growth is not merely an individual pursuit but a communal journey, where we learn and grow together.

The Men's Retreat

As an extension of the Men's Group, a two-day, one-night retreat was held on January 31, 2025, at Bon Secours Retreat and Conference Center, about an hour north of where most attendees are located. Nine brothers participated, taking time for personal reflection in a peaceful environment dedicated to spiritual growth and extended group discussions.



During the retreat, Pastor Rim introduced a framework called *FDR* (Fears, Desires, Resentments), which he had referenced in his February 16 sermon on addiction. Each participant shared a personal struggle for which they sought prayer and support, along with their individual goals for the retreat. Just as in the regular meetings, members offered insights, encouragement, and testimonies of God's guidance in their lives. These discussions were so engaging that Pastor Rim had to wrap things up at 1 AM! The group reconvened the next morning for further reflection and concluded after lunch.

Many attendees found the retreat profoundly impactful and expressed eagerness for future gatherings. Brother Joel deJesus shared his experience:

"I really enjoyed our Men's Group retreat at Bon Secours RCC. As expected, our time together provided meaningful fellowship and prayer. I feel much closer to my church brothers, realizing that we share many of the same challenges and concerns, and I was truly blessed by our group prayers.

What I didn't expect was how fruitful the alone time would be. I was surprised by how much time Pastor David allotted for individual prayer, but the retreat center was perfect for that. Whether alone in my room, sitting in the beautiful chapel, walking through the prayer labyrinth, or hiking the trails, I spent quality time practicing solitude, reading Scripture, and walking and talking with God.

I would definitely go back and encourage anyone to attend a retreat there."

Brother Andrew Sy also shared his reflection:

"For me, the Men's Retreat was a great opportunity to step back, take stock, and reflect. There was a quiet chapel at the venue where I spent time reflecting on my current situation—things I feel grateful for and areas in my life where I sensed God calling me to pay more attention.

Another valuable part of the retreat was the sharing sessions. We provided encouragement and support to one another as we shared concerns about

our roles as providers for our families, as fathers raising and guiding our children in a godly way, and as husbands. A common theme that emerged was an acknowledgment of our shortcomings and a renewed resolve to become better husbands.

I heard that some of us spent personal time reading the Bible in our rooms, while others took prayerful walks through the woods. Overall, the venue and retreat format were excellent. If I were to make a suggestion, I think incorporating some dedicated time for reading Scripture together, along with a guided reflection on those passages, could be helpful. Personally, I sometimes struggle with spiritual discipline and find it difficult to stay focused when reading the Bible alone. A structured time for reflection could benefit those like me.

I praise God for the wonderful brothers in Christ."

Looking Ahead

As Pastor Rim continues to emphasize the importance of fostering a spiritually supportive church community, there are plans to expand these gatherings beyond the Men's Group. Inspired by the retreat's success, future retreats are being considered for a *Women's Group* and eventually a *Couples' Group*, ensuring that more members of the church can experience the power of communal spiritual growth.

Through the Men's Group and its retreats, participants are reminded that faith is not only about personal transformation but also about growing together in a shared journey of discipleship.

** Special thanks to Brother John Kong for providing the introduction to the men's group, and to Brothers Joel deJesus and Andrew Sy for sharing their insights and reflections on the men's group retreat.*

Upcoming Events

Upcoming Church Events

MAR HAPPINESS GROUP <i>Walk with God</i> <i>Once a month starting March</i>	MAR 1 - APR 12 HAPPINESS GROUP <i>Every Sat @7:30PM</i> <i>St.James Episcopal Church,</i> <i>11815 Seven Locks Rd,</i> <i>Potomac, MD</i>	APR 05 <i>Saturday</i> <i>Spring Walk and Brunch</i>
APR 18 <i>Good Friday Evening Service</i>	APR 20 <i>Easter Sunday Combined Service & Baptism</i>	JUN 07 <i>Saturday</i> <i>Church Picnic</i>
 Chinese Christian Church of Greater Washington, D.C		 JUN 29 <i>Sunday Afternoon</i> <i>2nd Congregational Meeting</i>

Editor's announcement

Read more

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