

## **The God Who Reigns Over Our Lives**

Pastor Zhao Yu

As we enter the annual season of thanksgiving, we are reminded that another year is drawing to a close. At the same time, the Christmas season is upon us, filling our hearts with hope.

This year's Thanksgiving has truly been one of abundant blessings. We witnessed a breakthrough in evangelism through our fall Happiness Group ministry, with 15 brothers and sisters committing to follow Christ—11 through in-person gatherings and 4 online.

During the Thanksgiving Sunday combined worship service, we celebrated the baptism of 9 brothers and sisters. Their ages ranged from the youngest, a one-year-old boy, to the oldest, a sister in her seventies. Additionally, 3 brothers and sisters officially joined our church family through transfer of membership. All of this is a testament to God's abundant grace.

We also saw God's care for those among us who were physically unwell. We lifted them up in prayer and blessing, and through God's grace and the help of medical treatment, many have recovered. Isn't this a reflection of the seasons of life itself? Even as Christians, we experience the highs and lows of life: moments of strength and weakness, times of ease and difficulty, seasons of fulfillment and frustration, victories and defeats.

In the church, we witness the joy of newborn babies entering the world and the bittersweet farewell of elders returning to their heavenly home. While we feel sadness at their passing, we are also filled with hope. This is the journey of life. Maintaining an optimistic heart, facing challenges without fear, and responding to life's uncertainties with calm composure—aren't these the lessons that life teaches us?

Recently, I came across a short essay that deeply inspired me. It felt as though a lightbulb went off in my mind, clearing away many of the frustrations and entanglements in my life. The essay begins like this:

*People survived September 11<sup>th</sup>, and here is why they are alive today. A woman was late because her alarm didn't go off on time. Another man survived because it was his turn to bring donuts. Someone else was delayed due to being stuck in a long traffic jam on the New Jersey Turnpike. A woman spilled coffee on her clothes and needed time to change. One person's car simply wouldn't start that morning. A man wore a new pair of shoes, got a blister, and stopped in a pharmacy for a plaster. That's why he is alive now.*

*And when I get stuck in the traffic, don't make it into the elevator, come back to answer the phone. When all these little things happened that annoy me, I think to myself that in that moment I am exactly where God wants me to be. The next time you feel like the morning is going wrong, the kids are slow to get dressed, you can't find your car keys, you are standing at every stop light. Don't get angry or upset. You are not late, you are not early, you are very much on time.*

Yes! You are a child of God, and your life is firmly held in His hands. Every moment of your existence is under His sovereign control. While you may have your own plans and aspirations, those seemingly unexpected detours in life are not mere coincidences. God reigns as King over your life. When you feel overwhelmed by things beyond your control, you can let go and entrust them to God, allowing Him to take over.

Whether it's your work, identity, spouse, children, health, achievements, future, or the valleys of discouragement, tears, doubts, complaints, or even your weaknesses, intelligence, and emotional strength—God knows it all. Every expression, every action—nothing escapes His care. As the Bible says, "Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered" (Matthew 10:30).

As our church journal *Living Spring* resumes quarterly online publication, our hearts are filled with joy and gratitude. We rejoice in witnessing God's guidance and blessings

together. For 66 years, God has used our church to testify for Him in the Greater Washington area, serving as a golden lampstand. We eagerly anticipate seeing even greater, even fresher, and even more beautiful testimonies that proclaim the mighty works of our God.

## Apple Picking in Autumn: Sharing Harvest and Fellowship

We thank God for this bountiful autumn season! On October 5, the church's English and Chinese congregations joined together for an apple-picking event at the beautiful Homestead Farm. Around 60 to 70 brothers, sisters, and friends enjoyed this wonderful day outdoors.

The day was bright and sunny with pleasant temperatures, and the farm was full of life and energy. People pushed carts and carried baskets to and fro, navigating their way through pumpkin patches and past the sheep pen on their way to the apple orchard. As they picked apples, many tasted the fresh fruit, greeted familiar faces, and enjoyed lively conversation filled with laughter. The orchard offered a wide variety of apples—Fuji, Macintosh, Crimson Crisp, Honey Crisp, and Cameo—making for an impressive selection. The children especially had a great time: little Abigail proudly held an apple bigger than her face, while Xiao Shitou eagerly gnawed on an apple with his new baby teeth! Some families also enjoyed the farm's hayride experience with their kids.





After apple picking, everyone gathered under a pavilion to rest, share packed lunches, and enjoy the warmth of fellowship. Many commented that it was a rare and joyful chance to connect with others they don't often have time to talk to at church. Though the farm no longer offers lunch items for purchase, some suggested that knowing in advance could help everyone prepare accordingly next time.



The event left behind many heartwarming memories: Charles used his apples to bake an apple pie when he got home, Hannah brought back some apples to share with her grandmother; and Mrs. Maria, as in years past, bought plenty of apples to share the harvest with her four sisters, becoming her family's "Apple Ambassador."

The day allowed everyone to experience God's abundant blessings and the warmth of fellowship, returning home with hearts and baskets full and already looking forward to the next gathering.

### **CCCGW Missions Month / Annual Missions Conference**

*"...The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." — John 4:35-36*

In the golden month of October, when the harvest season is in full swing, Chinese Christian Church of Greater Washington DC celebrates Missions Month. From October 11-13, 2024 the church held its annual Missions Conference, featuring a series of lectures focused on practical ways to fulfill God's Great Commission. For this year's conference, CCCGW invited several leaders from *China Outreach Ministries*, an organization dedicated primarily to campus ministry. These leaders shared their ministry

experiences, inspiring the congregation to join in God's work by spreading the Gospel, living out their faith, and reexamining the church's role within the community. The ultimate hope is for each believer to serve as a living testimony to Christ's love.

Reverend Daniel Su, president of China Outreach Ministries, served as the keynote speaker, offering profound and valuable insights. In his lectures, Rev. Su emphasized that mission work is a vital calling entrusted to the church by God. Every Christian is called to engage in missions, bearing the responsibility to share the Gospel. Evangelism, he noted, is not solely about words but is powerfully conveyed through the actions and testimonies of believers, allowing others to experience the love of Christ in their daily lives.



In one of his sessions, Rev. Su explored the theme, *"Understanding God's Heart through the Great Commission and the Great Commandment,"* highlighting the close relationship between the two. He encouraged the audience not to feel overwhelmed by the phrase "Great Commission," reminding them that every significant endeavor begins with small steps. We can start by helping and influencing others through small acts within our reach. Expanding on this, he explained that Jesus instructs us to *"love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and*

*with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'*" (Luke 10:27). Rev. Su emphasized that this is not only the Great Commandment but also the heart of the Great Commission. He reminded the congregation that the greatest challenge is fully dedicating ourselves to love God with all that we are. Only when we place God at the center of our lives can we genuinely love others with His boundless love and carry out the Great Commission.

To further inspire the congregation, Rev. Su shared examples from the lives of Hudson Taylor and Mother Teresa. He explained that Hudson Taylor's greatness as a missionary lay not in his strategies but in his profound love for God and his dedication to making Jesus the center of his life. It was God's love that compelled him to share the Gospel and obey God's commands. Similarly, Mother Teresa's service was driven by her conviction that she saw Jesus in every person she helped. "I see Jesus in everyone," she would say. "This is the hungry Jesus—I must feed him; this is the sick Jesus—I must care for him; this is the leprous Jesus—I must clean him..." Loving God, Rev. Su explained, means viewing others through God's eyes and transforming that love into concrete acts of compassion. When we love God deeply, our natural response is to share the Gospel, which aligns perfectly with God's heart.

Additionally, the conference invited Pastor Tian Yongming and missionary Chen Meiyun, who have long been engaged in campus ministry, to share how they reach out to the younger generation in local universities. Their experience deeply inspired many in the congregation. Below are some reflections from attendees of the workshops:

**Sister Yin Yin:**

In the session on October 12, Pastor Tian Yongming shared how he responded to God's calling in faith. In 2013, he felt God's leading to leave New Mexico and step into full-time ministry. It was only last year that he and his family finally moved to Virginia to serve full-time, focusing on youth evangelism. During those ten years of waiting, he experienced God's promises and unfailing faithfulness.

When we are uncertain about God's calling, Brother Tian encouraged us to follow the "Mary Principle": like Mary, who "treasured these things and pondered them in her heart" (Luke 2:19), we should hold onto God's words with faith, trusting that in time, His purpose will become clear. He also shared that when he decided to leave his job to pursue ministry, his family's income immediately dropped by 60%. Yet, he reminded us that when we are confident in God's call, we must take that "Leap of Faith", boldly answering His invitation.

### **Brother Chen Xingfu and Sister Zhao Yang:**

With over 20 years of ministry experience, Missionary Chen Meiyun provided a deep analysis of the opportunities and challenges in evangelizing to Gen Z students. She encouraged believers to reach the hearts of this younger generation through genuine love and action. Her sharing offered many valuable insights:

1. **Integrating the Great Commission into daily life:** Christians are familiar with the "Great Commission", but evangelism and spreading the Gospel should be reflected in our daily lives. This fresh perspective deeply encouraged us!
2. **Anyone can be a missionary:** You don't need a special background, training, skills, or talents—if you respond to God's call and are willing to serve, any believer can be a missionary.
3. **Unwavering faith:** Campus ministry requires long-term commitment and enduring faith in the Lord. We often expect immediate results from evangelistic events, and when the outcome doesn't meet our expectations, we may feel discouraged and question whether our efforts are worth it. However, missionaries face daily opposition, resistance, and challenges, and it is their steadfast faith in the Gospel that sustains them.
4. **Taking action:** Let us cast aside our worries, step forward boldly, and no longer hesitate. We must co-labor with the Lord, trusting that He will provide all we need.
5. **Learning from challenges:** Sister Chen shared the difficulties she and her co-workers face on the mission front. Her testimony not only didn't discourage us but instead encouraged us to recognize the abundant work to be done in the

mission field, motivating us to serve the Lord more willingly. Challenges are opportunities for God's blessings, allowing us to learn humility and recognize our limitations, relying on God's wisdom and power to overcome them.

Our church has been discussing how to promote and expand campus ministry, and this session helped us reassess the meaning and methods of campus evangelism. We are now even more committed to engaging in the Lord's mission.

**Nick Tam:**

Missions Conference was a great experience for me. Rev. Su's experience and perspective were very insightful, and he offered a lot of wisdom about what it looks like to do missions, especially in the context of reaching young people, students in particular. He talked about the importance of building relationships--that it's not just about sharing the Gospel right away, but rather, there is a lot of value to investing in the life of the person and then seeking opportunities to share the Gospel. During this time of investing, we have the opportunity to live out the Gospel in front of the person, and the way that we live can be a powerful testimony. Rev. Su also mentioned that we are not able to save people on our own, but rather, we are called to be faithful and then to trust that the Lord will change hearts. For us, faithfulness isn't measured in the results, but in taking advantage of the opportunities that are presented to us. This perspective has been very helpful in making missions seem more approachable and less of an impossible task.

**Sheila Lee:**

At Rev. Daniel Su's workshop on "Evangelism as a Process," he asked about our experiences. He mentioned "Evangelism Explosion," a systematic program to share the Gospel in which an explicit invitation is made to non-Christians to accept Jesus as their personal Savior. Our church used that program years ago for follow-up visitation with newcomers to our church. I recall visiting a church friend's cousin who had come to our church for the first time. The cousin later confided to my friend that I had been very pushy! My friend assured her, "No, Sheila's not like that!" I'm glad I got the feedback. Rev. Su recounted one of his own experiences in evangelism. Over several years, he had been sharing the Gospel with someone who eventually did not respond to the invitation to

accept Jesus. It was only later, after this person had moved away, that Rev. Su heard that he had become a Christian and joined a church. Of course, there was joy, but Rev. Su admitted to having mixed feelings at the time. Today, he sees evangelism more as a process than as a point in time, citing several Bible passages to illustrate his understanding:

1. **Recognize that evangelism has stages and takes time.** (see *Mark 4:26-29*)
2. **Accept that we only take a part of someone's journey; others continue the process.** (see *1 Corinthians 3:6-9*)
3. **See each person's work as contributing to evangelism. Whatever you do for the Lord is never wasted. Harvest is building on the work of others.** (see *John 4:35-38*)
4. **Share without the expectation of conversion. It is not results that determine whether or not it is worth doing. God alone brings people to repentance.** (see *2 Peter 3:9*)
5. **Learn from the farmers who wait patiently rather than expect an instantaneous harvest.** (see *Ecclesiastes 11:6*)
6. **Engage in evangelism for the Lord and trust that He has a good plan.** (see *Philippians 1:6*)
7. **Know that as we spread God's word, His desires and purposes will be accomplished.** (see *Isaiah 55:10-11*)
8. **Build relationships first and have integrity in belief and life, which gives a platform for sharing the Gospel.** (see *1 Peter 3:15*)

**9. Trust in God's timing and his wisdom in granting people the freedom to make wrong choices. (see 2 Peter 3:9)**

**10. Believe that the Holy Spirit works to do God's will. (see John 16:8-9)**

These scriptures remind us that mission work is not accomplished in haste but requires patience and faith, waiting for God's perfect timing.

On the final Sunday of Missions Month, our church had the privilege of hosting Sister Christine Wong from the Chinese Mission Alliance. She shared her team's two decades of mission experience. Specializing in cross-cultural missions, they have carried the Gospel to over 20 countries, establishing 30 mission sites, and igniting a passion for the Great Commission, even in the most challenging environments.



Sister Wong recounted how their work has reached some of the world's most challenging regions: from the poverty-stricken and war-torn Middle East, across Africa's vast savannas, to the impoverished villages of Southeast Asia—including Nepal, Iraq, South Sudan, Uganda, Myanmar, Laos, and East Malaysia. Their mission is to reach

the "poorest," the "hardest," and the "least" visited places. In every country and in every task, their singular goal is to spread the Gospel and establish churches.

She also shared their efforts in Iraq and Syria, where they have been providing aid to refugees suffering from the devastation of war and displacement. In northern East Malaysia, they support sea nomads from the Philippines, assist their children, and have established HOST boarding schools. In South Sudan, they have taught local refugees how to plant mulberry trees for silk farming, planting over a million trees. This initiative has equipped refugees with valuable skills and work, enabling them to become self-sufficient while experiencing God's love in tangible ways.

Their stories are deeply moving and inspiring. This year's conference reignited the missionary passion in all of our hearts, encouraging us to respond to God's call and move forward in His mission. Wherever we are, may we continue to carry the spirit of the Great Commission, spreading Christ's love to the ends of the earth.

Before Jesus ascended, He gave His final command: "Go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19), and "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). This Great Commission continues to guide God's churches today. The fields are ripe for harvest, and God is calling us to be His laborers. Lift your eyes in faith and witness the great harvest that lies ahead!

## **CCCGW 2024 Third Congregational Meeting Minutes**

The Chinese Christian Church of Greater Washington, D.C. convened its third congregational meeting of the year on the afternoon of October 27. During the meeting, pastors, elders, and deacons delivered comprehensive reports, reflecting on ministry accomplishments and presenting plans for the Chinese, English, youth, and children's ministries. Key highlights are summarized below:

### **Chinese Ministry Report**

Pastor Daniel Zhao provided updates on the progress of the Happiness Groups initiative, which tailors outreach to seekers from diverse backgrounds:

- Youthful Vitality Group (led by Brother Jacob Jia): Celebrated the conversion of one seeker who accepted Jesus as his Savior.
- Walking with God Hiking Group (led by Sister Yin Yin): Successfully hosted a hiking event that attracted new students.
- Overcomers Happiness Group (led by Brother Xu Sihai): Welcomed 11 seekers to a seven-week gathering.

Gratefully, the Overcomers Happiness Group, also Mark Fellowship, witnessed 11 seekers make decisions for Christ, with most being baptized during the Thanksgiving Sunday service. Furthermore, a joint Bible study on Romans, conducted in partnership with the Friends of Genesis Fellowship, yielded abundant spiritual fruit, with 15 participants committing to Christ through online and in-person sessions.

Pastor Zhao also reported the following updates:

- Monthly prayer meetings now regularly attract about 30 attendees.
- He continues to visit elderly and ill members on a regular basis.
- The recruitment process for deacon candidates for 2025 has been completed.

Pastor Zhao encouraged the congregation to engage in upcoming year-end activities, including the **Sight & Sound** theater performance and the **Chinese Missions Convention (CMC)**. He also announced plans to launch a Sunday school discipleship training course in December.

As Mark Fellowship continues to grow, the elder and deacon boards have been discussing the need to expand meeting spaces. After careful deliberation, it was proposed to hold two to three monthly meetings at a local church while maintaining one to two family gatherings each month. St. James Episcopal Church has been identified as the top choice, offering a suitable time slot every Saturday evening from 7:00 to 10:00 PM, which will provide stable support for the fellowship's ongoing development.

Additionally, the deacon board approved the initiation of two practical community service ministries—Haircut Services and Basic Car Repair Services—demonstrating the church's commitment to loving and serving its neighbors.

**Haircut Ministry:** Led by skilled brothers and sisters, this ministry will primarily serve young professionals and students, addressing their practical needs while fostering connection and spiritual interaction within the community.

**Car Repair Ministry:** Headed by Brothers Kevin and Jerry, who bring extensive automotive repair experience from their time at Purdue University, this ministry will serve both the church and the surrounding community. The church's two-car garage will serve as the primary workspace, with preparations already underway to ensure its effective use.

These new ministries not only meet immediate practical needs but also create meaningful opportunities for the church to connect with the wider community, ultimately drawing more people to the gospel.

## **English Ministry Report**

Pastor David Rim provided updates on ongoing initiatives within the English ministry:

- **Monthly Prayer Meetings:** Held in members' homes during the last week of each month.
- **Women's Group Gatherings:** Regular meetings focused on sharing testimonies of Christian living.
- **Individual Meetings:** Pastor Rim and/or his wife, Maria, continue to meet with members individually based on their needs.

## **Youth Ministry Report**

Under Pastor Rim's leadership, the youth ministry holds weekly small group meetings focused on the theme of *Joy in Christian Living*. Monthly social activities, such as the

pumpkin carving night in October, have been well-received. Future plans for the youth ministry include:

- Hosting parent training sessions.
- Collaborating with local churches to enhance the youth ministry.
- Preparing for a winter retreat.

### **Elder Board Report**

Pastor Zhao announced that the speakers for the 2025 Summer Retreat have been confirmed:

- Chinese sessions: Rev. Yanguang Li, General Secretary of the Chinese Strategy Alliance.
- English sessions: Keith McLaughlin, Vice President of Counseling for Healing Ministries in Ohio.

Additionally, the elder board has launched a new elder training program and formed a committee to search for a new Children's Ministry Director. In the interim, Sister Grace Wei will continue serving as the acting director.

### **Deacon Board Report**

#### **Recent Activities:**

- Summer Retreat
- University Students Airport Pickup and Caring
- New Student Welcome Party
- Apple Picking
- Missions Conference
- Sanctuary AC Unit Replacement

#### **Upcoming Activities:**

- Thanksgiving Dinner and Sharing Night (November 29)

- Sight & Sound Theater Trip (December 21)
- Chinese Missions Convention (December 26-29)
- 2025 Summer Retreat (July 18-20)

The 2025 deacon nomination list was also approved, including new nominees:

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

The remaining deacons will continue their service.

## **Conclusion**

We thank God for His grace and guidance. As the church looks forward, we eagerly anticipate the abundant spiritual fruit these ministries will bear, all for His glory.

## **CCCGW Thanksgiving Highlights: Worship, Baptisms, Dinner and Sharing**

### **Thanksgiving Sunday Combined Worship and Baptism Service**

As Thanksgiving approached in 2024, the Chinese Christian Church of Greater Washington D.C. (CCCGW) celebrated a combined bilingual Sunday worship and baptism service on November 24. The service opened with heartfelt prayers and uplifting songs of praise, creating a reverent and joyful atmosphere. This was followed by a meaningful baptism ceremony, during which nine brothers and sisters publicly declared their faith through baptism.

The newly baptized individuals spanned a wide age range, from a one-year-old boy to a sister in her seventies, reflecting the diversity and inclusivity of God's kingdom. Most of them came from the Mark Fellowship, which had recently concluded a fruitful seven-week Happiness Group outreach program. Remarkably, all eight seekers who

participated in the program decided to follow Christ, with eight receiving baptism during this service and one planning to be baptized next Easter.

The baptized individuals were: Brother Lucas Lin Wang, Sisters Wei Ying Hu, Jessie Guo, Qian Sun, Danna Liu, Hui Liu, LiFen Yao, Emilia Zhou, and Ting Yao. Their testimonies reflected lives transformed by God's abundant grace. May the Lord continue to guide and bless them as they grow in faith and become steadfast witnesses for Christ.







## A Thought-Provoking Sermon

Following worship and praise, Pastor David Rim of the English Ministry delivered a sermon titled *“The Other Side of the Question”* based on Luke 13:1-5. He addressed spiritual doubts that many wrestle with, such as, *“Why does God remain silent?”*, *“Why does He allow suffering?”*, and *“Why does He seem indifferent to evil?”*

Pastor Rim explored the struggles of biblical figures like David, Job, and Habakkuk, who questioned God amid their trials. He also referenced two tragic events mentioned by Jesus: the Galileans killed by Pilate and the 18 people crushed by the collapse of the tower in Siloam. Pastor Rim connected these biblical tragedies to modern-day occurrences, such as attacks on Christians during worship and Sunday school, to highlight the universal questions: *“God, where are You?”* and *“God, what are You doing?”*

As Pastor Rim explained, Jesus' response challenges conventional thinking. These tragedies are not punishments for sin but serve as reminders of the universality of sin and the necessity of repentance. Quoting Jesus' words, "Unless you repent, you too will all perish" (Luke 13:5), Pastor Rim emphasized the importance of shifting our focus from questioning God's actions to reflecting on our own lives: "Why am I still alive, able to experience grace and goodness in a broken world?"

He urged the congregation to recognize God's daily blessings—life, family, church, and the beauty of creation—as manifestations of His abundant grace. Pastor Rim reminded everyone that gratitude is not rooted in what we deserve, but in God's goodness, faithfulness, and love—the true essence of Thanksgiving.

## Welcoming New Members

As the service concluded, the church held a New Members Welcome Ceremony to acknowledge both the newly baptized and three additional members: HaiYing Zheng, Brother Jack D. Snider and Brother Kevin Seo who officially transferred their

membership to CCCGW. Prayers were offered for these brothers and sisters, asking for God's protection and guidance as they continue their journey of faith.



### **Fellowship and Celebration**

The lunch following Sunday worship was filled with warmth and joy, creating a wonderful opportunity for fellowship. This special meal was generously provided by two families: Sister Lifeng Wang, celebrating the second anniversary of her baptism, and Xuelong Wang and Qiaoya Lin, celebrating their son's first birthday. To mark the occasion, Xuelong and Qiaoya thoughtfully brought two beautiful cakes for their son's celebration. The lunch featured a delicious lamb dish, and the meal for the entire church was once again lovingly prepared by the Mark Fellowship.



## Thanksgiving Dinner and Testimony Sharing

On the evening of November 29, the church hosted its annual Thanksgiving dinner, welcoming a record attendance of approximately 200 brothers and sisters. The meal,

generously donated by an anonymous member, was offered free of charge to all attendees.

The dining hall was thoughtfully decorated with seasonal floral arrangements by Sister Julie Shiu and her team, creating a warm and festive atmosphere. The delightful meal featured a Chinese-style menu, including pork, chicken, vegetables, and stir-fried noodles. It not only filled physical appetites but also nurtured meaningful relationships and a shared sense of gratitude among all present.



After dinner, both the English and Chinese congregations gathered to share testimonies of God's grace. The English congregation began with a testimony from Sister Grace Wang, followed by a group testimony session in the main sanctuary. Meanwhile, the Chinese congregation, seated around tables in the dining hall, eagerly shared stories of God's work in their lives.

The testimonies encompassed a range of experiences, from life transformations and spiritual growth to miraculous protection and provision. Some shared how they came to faith through the quiet dedication of others, while others expressed gratitude for God's

guidance during times of trial. Each testimony was a moving reminder of God's faithfulness and abundant grace.



### **A Season of Thanksgiving**

As the evening came to a close, the congregation was reminded that gratitude is a daily response to God's blessings. From life's joys to its trials, His grace is ever-present, turning difficulties into testimonies of His power and love. May we continue to live as witnesses to His amazing grace, glorifying His name in all that we do.



## A Testimony of Thanksgiving

By Guozhang Yu

This Thanksgiving marks the 25th anniversary of my baptism and my decision to follow Christ. Reflecting on my journey of faith fills my heart with gratitude. I am thankful for God's sovereign choice, which guided me, an atheist, step by step into His family. I am also deeply grateful for His love, faithfulness, and protection throughout my life, as well as for the opportunity to study His Word and serve Him.

My journey to faith is quite ordinary. It was God's love, expressed through the brothers and sisters in the church, that drew me to Him. When I arrived in Maryland in September 1996, a brother kindly gave me a ride to a fellowship meeting during my first week. At the time, I didn't know what a fellowship was or understand much of the content being shared, but I clearly remember the joy and warmth of the group, which kept me coming back.

Later, a campus ministry worker at the University of Maryland shared the gospel with me, encouraging me to seek God with an open mind rather than dismissing Him outright. He used Romans 1:19–20 to explain how God's existence is revealed through His creation, evident in our daily lives. He acknowledged that while he couldn't scientifically prove God's existence, atheists couldn't prove otherwise either. This perspective resonated with me, especially as I came to see that atheists often accept their beliefs without thorough questioning or reasoning.

I continued attending fellowship meetings and seeking the truth. Looking back, I don't recall much of the meeting content, but I clearly remember experiencing God's love and grace through the brothers and sisters during challenging times, such as pursuing my studies, finding a job, and obtaining my green card, legal residency, and eventually citizenship.

Toward the end of my studies, my wife, Tianhui, began working as a secretary at the church. Since her work authorization had not yet been approved, the church was unable to pay her a salary. Aware of our financial struggles, the brothers and sisters generously supported us, easing our burdens. When we expressed our gratitude, they humbly

attributed their kindness to God's love and encouraged us to pass on that love to others in need when we could. In October 1998, with only \$10 left after paying rent, God provided me with my first job. Truly, His grace was sufficient for us.

My job was in the rapidly growing internet industry, but soon the bubble burst in early 2000, leading to widespread layoffs across the industry. Despite this, God's faithfulness never wavered. When my first contract ended, my company arranged interviews for me and a colleague with a telecommunications company. However, there was only one position available. My colleague, a U.S. citizen with a Ph.D. and extensive experience, seemed far more qualified than I was—a foreigner on a temporary visa with just six months of work experience. Before the interview, I prayed in the parking lot, "Lord, You know my needs. If this job is Your will, please grant it to me." To my surprise, both the telecommunications company and another internet company offered me positions.

Uncertain about which to choose, I sought advice from a brother in the church. He said, "Choose the one that God has given you." Though he didn't know I had prayed, his words confirmed my choice of the telecommunications job, as it was the one I had specifically prayed for. In hindsight, this decision was God's perfect plan. When the dot-com bubble burst later in 2000, the internet company I didn't choose suffered significant losses.

In the spring of 1999, during a retreat at Deep Creek Lake with our Living Water fellowship, Pastor Yingyan Guo from the For All Saints Team Ministries invited me to accept Jesus as my Savior. Although I still knew little about the Christian faith, I had already experienced God's love, grace, faithfulness, and protection. Without needing further proof, I made the decision to follow Christ and was baptized in October of that year.

After becoming a believer, I continued to grow in faith, often drawing strength from Colossians 3:23: "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters." This verse inspired me to work diligently and with integrity, and God blessed my efforts. In the workplace, I enjoyed harmonious relationships and received raises without asking. Even during economic downturns,

God's protection was evident. Despite three rounds of layoffs at my company, I—a foreign worker on a visa—remained employed. By 2002, I received my green card, which stands as a testimony to God's provision.

Even during uncertain times, I felt peace in God's sovereignty. While waiting for my green card, I occasionally applied for other jobs as a precaution, but none responded. Yet, two weeks after receiving my green card, a friend unexpectedly asked if I was looking for a job. Without knowing my situation, he referred me to a company where I was quickly hired. I stayed there for nearly 15 years, enjoying stable work that allowed me to care for my family and serve in the church.

I am deeply thankful for God's amazing work in my life. Through both challenges and blessings, His grace and faithfulness have remained unwavering. I strive to rely more on Him, continually renewing my life through His guidance. I pray that my life bears witness to His grace, that my actions reflect His love, and that I remain a faithful servant of Christ. I trust that no matter what the future holds, as long as I follow Him, He will lead me on a path of blessing.

To God be the glory, forever and ever!

## A New Life — Alice's Testimony

As a college student in Appleton, Wisconsin, I believed that as long as I worked hard, the future would be under my control. In my junior year, an elderly man invited me to attend services at his church. I loved the wisdom of life in the pastor's sermons, but didn't see how the message of "salvation" connected to my life. Life was easy for me then, and I felt no immediate need for personal salvation. My elderly friend also didn't press me to know and accept Jesus into my life, perhaps to avoid pressuring me and overwhelming me with too much information. Still, I so enjoyed what I heard from the pastor that I started digging into the Bible verses he mentioned. Alas, I soon found myself bogged down for lack of guidance.

As time went on, I moved often between cities, and thus received few invitations to attend church and stopped going to services regularly. However, I bought a personal Bible and always kept it with me. Whenever I felt depressed, I would read small bits of it to gain insight for living. Although I read the Bible irregularly and without much understanding at first, the practice grew until I was soon reading chapter after chapter from the book of Matthew.

All these small steps led to 2021, a very hard year for me. At home in Beijing that year, one marked by political repression, I kept a grueling schedule, working during the day at a Chinese tea shop and attending Zoom classes late into the night for my master's degree program at American University. In May and June, my employer at the tea shop came under investigation for fraud. I was devastated and became even more so when I later learned that the local government, instead of helping my employer, had sided with those who had tried to deceive and cheat her. Another calamity followed soon after: my beloved grandma passed away suddenly from stroke, and I traveled for several days and nights with a grieving heart to attend her funeral at my dad's home village.

After these stressful events, I returned to my routine of working at the tea shop and getting my schoolwork done. The fraud case was eventually settled in my employer's favor, and my grandma's funeral was respectfully arranged by my family. Everything seemed normal on the surface, but I began to feel a change coming over my heart and personality, one that I could not comprehend. People often describe the change as "gaining maturity" or "entering adulthood". But I hated it, for I felt a hardening of my heart, and I saw in myself a negative, unsmiling, cold and sarcastic person. I knew I was never like this, and now I suddenly didn't know who I was or who I was becoming. Some of the customers at the tea shop said I was finally getting to know the dark side of the world. Yet, in my heart, I knew this person wasn't me, and it certainly wasn't the person I wanted to become.

Amidst the confusion, I picked up reading the Bible again, this time with an even stronger yearning for its wisdom. I used to rely on Daoist texts, Confucian writings, and Buddhist scriptures for insights as well. But as I read the Bible, the Lord's words moved me in a way that I didn't fully understand, and I felt a growing personal relationship with God, one that I had found nowhere else. I also longed to attend church services again. Even though I was still hesitant to entrust myself fully to God, the Lord answered this longing with perfect timing and precision.

In August 2021 I moved to the D.C. area to complete my education, and discovered to my great astonishment that the Chinese Christian Church was just a 5-minute walk from my home! I came to the church on the very first Sunday after arriving in the U.S., and I was elated to learn about the worship services, the Sunday school classes, the fellowship groups, and the opportunities for Bible study.

How unfathomable is God's grace! At the darkest and most disorienting time in my life, He brought me into His household at CCCGW! Thanks to the love of brothers and sisters at our church, help from our pastors, and the Happiness Group ministry, I soon trusted God and prayed the Sinner's Prayer to receive Jesus as my personal Lord and Savior. I found comfort in Jesus and was finally able to leave behind the apathy, shame, and resentment that I had previously harbored against relatives, colleagues and friends. Jesus gently cleansed me of these sins with his love and sacrificial death. I changed my attitude and behavior toward others and felt myself waned from the mentality of repaying evil for evil.

My new life as a Christian has indeed given me a new beginning! I have regained my childlike kindness, innocence, and gentleness toward people and things, and I now live with incredible optimism. I no longer worry so much about the future, and have peace in all areas of my life, be it work or study. Even if things turn out differently than my expectation, I know I'll always find joy in God.

Thanksgiving 2024 was the third anniversary of my baptism at CCCGW. I have since transitioned from being a student to a working professional, from life as a young girl to that of a married woman, and from thinking only of myself to being a Christ-follower willing to serve the Lord and his people. I'm learning to discipline myself according to God's Word, to manifest His enduring love.

May our Lord continue to strengthen me, grow my love, wisdom and endurance, and use me as I follow Jesus Christ in offering myself as an instrument for His service.



### 馬太福音 5:14-16

14 你們是世上的光。城造在山上是不能隱藏的。  
15 人點燈，不放在斗底下，而是放在燈臺上，就照亮一家的人。  
16 你們的光也要這樣照在人前，叫他們看見你們的好行為，  
把榮耀歸給你們在天上的父。

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在過去教會曾經由兩組熱心的弟兄，姊妹組織成立用廣東話交流的廣東團契，

- 1). 迦密團契 - 由一班熱力充沛的青年，每星期五晚聚會，一同禱告，分享，唱讚美詩讚美神。其後因有更多由東南亞地區的基督徒參加，便開始轉用英語交流而廣東團契便暫告停止。
- 2). 以琳團契 - 由一班年長的弟兄，姊妹組成，後因為身體健康不便而解散。

在 2009 年底何燊長老應眾多弟兄，姊妹在屬靈的需要下，便成立一個廣東團契，命名為“真光團契”。由朱應昌弟兄負責。計有其他地區的華人教會參加，當時人數已達 18 人。每月一次（星期六晚），每次在不同弟兄姊妹家聚會。直到 2018 年因朱弟兄要搬到維州才解散。

疫情期間、趙牧師找了 Peter Leung 弟兄再組織真光團契，可是一直找不到一個理想的聚會時間和地點，也有在網路上聚會的技術問題。

疫情過後，說廣東話的弟兄，姊妹經常在主日飯桌上交流，有見於此，秘書 Alice (Peter Leung 的妻子) 及助道執事 Ada 再次召集弟兄，姊妹每月一次、聖餐主日飯後一時半到三點聚會。

現在參加的人數有十到十五人，當中有初信及信主幾十多年的，能夠用廣東話唱詩及禱告可以感受到過往快樂的時光。現在聚會是集中於屬靈分享、交通和分組禱告。求主帶領一個負責人來繼續興起這個真光團契。

2010 First Anniversary



2012



2024



## Mark Fellowship's Braised Lamb Stew

Every Sunday after the worship service, lunch at the Chinese Christian Church of Greater Washington D.C. has become a cherished tradition, providing a satisfying meal and a heartfelt expression of the church's love and care. Behind these delicious dishes are the tireless efforts of dedicated volunteers. The church's kitchen ministry is supported by members of various fellowships, who take turns preparing meals for around a hundred attendees. This enables both congregants and visitors to enjoy authentic Chinese cuisine infused with the warmth of home. We are deeply grateful for the devotion of these brothers and sisters, whose efforts turn each meal into both a culinary delight and a source of spiritual nourishment.

On October 20, Mark Fellowship prepared a special dish for the entire church: Braised Lamb Stew. This delicacy, rarely featured on the church's Sunday lunch menu, was met with unanimous praise for its tender meat, rich aroma, and savory broth. Curious about how this beloved classic dish was made? Let's take a closer look at its preparation.



Brother Yu Zhanquan and his wife, Sister Wang Lifeng, hail from Inner Mongolia, making them seasoned experts in lamb preparation. Together with Brother Wang Xuelong and the support of a dedicated team of over ten fellowship members, they

crafted this exceptional dish. Their efforts ensured it was rich in nutrition, tender in texture, and bursting with flavor. The result was a truly unique and cherished taste, deeply rooted in Chinese culinary tradition.

With the rising cost of groceries, selecting lamb—a relatively expensive ingredient—posed a significant challenge given the limited budget. However, by God's grace, Mark Fellowship discovered a reasonably priced whole lamb at Costco, enabling them to move forward with their plan. They creatively adapted the recipe using Sichuan-style hotpot techniques, resulting in a dish that was both unique and full of flavor.

On Saturday, Brother Zhang Kun purchased a whole lamb weighing over 30 pounds and began defrosting it in preparation for Sunday. By 9 a.m. on Sunday, the team started processing the meat. Thanks to the expert knife skills of Brothers Yu Zhanquan and Sun Qian, the lamb was portioned in just 30 minutes. The pieces were then soaked in cold water for 30–60 minutes to remove excess blood, effectively reducing the gamey flavor. Next, the lamb was blanched by boiling it in cold water with a splash of cooking wine and Sichuan peppercorns for 5–10 minutes. The foam was skimmed off, and the meat was rinsed before being set aside for further preparation.



### **Recipe for Braised Lamb Stew (courtesy of Brother Wang Xuelong)**

**Main ingredients:** Whole lamb from Costco, carrots

**Additional ingredients (Available at Chinese supermarkets):** Ginger, green onions, garlic, white peppercorns, star anise, Sichuan peppercorns, cinnamon sticks, dried chili peppers, bay leaves, cilantro

**Seasoning, sauces and spices:** Pixian bean paste, cooking wine, rock sugar, dark soy sauce, light soy sauce, white pepper powder, oyster sauce, salt

#### **Preparation Steps:**

- 1. Prepare the lamb:** Defrost the whole lamb in advance and cut it into large chunks. (For more details, please refer to the video demonstration by Brother Yu.)
- 2. Blanch the lamb:** Place lamb pieces in cold water with cooking wine and Sichuan peppercorns. Bring to a boil, simmer for 5–10 minutes, skim off foam, then rinse and set aside.

3. **Sauté the aromatics:** Heat oil in a pan and sauté garlic and ginger slices until fragrant. Add the lamb and stir-fry until it changes color, then incorporate cooking wine, Pixian bean paste, dried chilies, ginger, light soy sauce, and dark soy sauce. Mix well.
4. **Braise the lamb:** Transfer the lamb to a large pot and add goji berries, star anise, Sichuan peppercorns, and a cinnamon stick. Pour in boiling water and bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer. Cook on low heat for 60 minutes. Add oyster sauce, a small amount of rock sugar, and additional dark soy sauce if a deeper color is desired. Season with salt to taste.
5. **Add the vegetables:** Add the carrot chunks and continue simmering for another 60 minutes, or until the lamb is tender and the flavors have melded together.
6. **Garnish and serve:** Sprinkle with fresh cilantro and sesame seeds before serving. Enjoy!

The remaining lamb bones were used to make a flavorful soup with white radish, offering a fresh and distinct taste.

This Braised Lamb dish was more than just a culinary treat—it embodied the love and teamwork of the fellowship members. We sincerely thank them for their hard work and dedication, which allowed everyone in this church family to experience not only delicious food but also the warmth of God's love and the strength of unity.



# 最新活動預覽

**21**  
十二月

## SIGHT AND SOUND

劇場表演《但以理》

週六下午3點 賓夕法尼亞州蘭卡斯特



**24**  
十二月

## 聖誕前夕聯合崇拜聚會

週二下午7:30 華府中國教會

**26**  
十二月

## 華人差傳大會

AFCMINISTRY.ORG/CMC-EN

週四-週日 馬裡蘭州巴爾的摩

**05**  
一月

## 新年主日聯合崇拜

### 暨執事就職典禮

主日上午10:30 華府中國教會

**26**  
一月

## 年度第一次會眾大會

主日下午1:30 華府中國教會

**15**  
二月

## 中國新年 餃子宴

週六下午 華府中國教會



**基督教華府  
中國教會**

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