

In Touch

The Cathedral Magazine - Summer Edition

ST JOHN'S CATHEDRAL HONG KONG

Diocese of Hong Kong Island Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui

香港聖公會聖約翰座堂



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ACC-17 DELEGATES GATHERING FOR THE BEST OF REASONS



Anglican leaders from around the world – including seven Archbishops or Primates – gathered in Hong Kong from 28th April to 5th May 2019 for ACC-17 meetings. The Opening and Closing Services were held at St John's Cathedral. Read the full story on page 4 and page 5. (Photos by Conrad Yu & Olddog Wai)

In Touch

St John's Cathedral continues to celebrate its 170th anniversary with the theme 'Faith in the City'. In this issue, In Touch covers St John's third Pilgrimage through the Cathedral – 'Faith in the City: Rediscovering Our Roots in St John's'. Being the mother church of the Diocese of Hong Kong Island, St John's Cathedral welcomed Christians throughout the Diocese and from parishes all over Hong Kong to tour around the Cathedral.

We also give a heads-up on the forthcoming celebrations, which include a special 'Blessing Hong Kong' service to thank God for the many blessings upon the life of Hong Kong and the Cathedral, and the grand finale – the Thanksgiving Service and Gala Dinner – with Presiding Bishop Michael Curry being the guest preacher.

Since St John's Cathedral launched the 170th anniversary celebration, St John's keeps mentioning the theme 'Faith in the City'. It may sound familiar to many of us, but do you know what it is really about?

As Dean Matthias writes in the Dean's Message, 'Faith in the City' conveys to us that God is here. Our iconic Cathedral and her ministry are the visible signs of God's presence in the city. It also calls us to transform our community into a city which reflects the reality of God's kingdom, where his will is being fulfilled.

'Faith in the City' brings us both a comfort and a challenge. While we are celebrating the Cathedral's 170th anniversary, are we ready to take up the challenge? The challenge to us as a faith community is to help the city of Hong Kong be pleasing to God and to be full of mercy, justice and grace.

As we get involved in the wider community, let us also care about the people in need around the world. Let us remember the victims of the Sri Lankan Easter attacks. Let us not forget the people in the dioceses of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, after Tropical Cyclone Idai made landfall near Beira City in mid-March, causing human losses and massive destruction of infrastructure and households. Praying for them would be a help. The Most Revd Dr Thabo Makgoba, Archbishop and Primate of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, has made an appeal for Mozambique and the dioceses. More details can be found on the YouTube channel 'Anglican MediaSA'.

We are constantly on the lookout for stories involving St John's and the daughter churches. If you think you know of people or events past, present, or to come that would suit our pages, please be in contact with the Editor on:

communications@stjohnscathedral.org.hk

We Need Your Help to Save The Environment

A little step by all of us can make a sea change to our environment. The Joint Ministry Committee of St John's Cathedral has decided that St John's will use less plastic in the Cathedral grounds. To stop using plastic utensils is the first target.

In response to the appeal, *In Touch* would like to invite our readers to join us in protecting the environment. There are two ways to get involved:

1. Pick up the magazine at the Cathedral

The Cathedral Office keeps a subscription list of *In Touch* and mails hard copies of the magazine to readers and parishioners quarterly. If you choose to pick up the magazine at St John's Cathedral, less plastic bags will be used for delivery. Please inform us by filling out and returning the form below to the Cathedral Office if you would like to unsubscribe from the mailing list.

For those who wish to continue receiving *In Touch* by mail, we wish to assure you that the Cathedral Office uses biodegradable plastic bags, and the bags are 100% degradable.

2. Read the magazine online

Starting from 2017, the *In Touch* editorial team has been exploring the possibilities of digital publishing. In 2018, we have started publishing *In Touch* on Issuu, an online digital publishing platform, which provides readers with a more convenient reading experience, regardless of the mobile devices or computers they are using.

The link to the online version of *In Touch* is posted on the cathedral website. For more details, visit the cathedral website: <http://www.stjohnscathedral.org.hk/>.

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Do You Know?

A single copy of *In Touch* costs \$22 (for printing and postage). We value the support of *In Touch* readers. Make a recurring commitment to support *In Touch* long-term or a single contribution as and when you feel like it. You could make a gift

to us by cheque, credit card, or direct deposit. Please contact the Cathedral Office for details.

Tel: (852) 2523 4157. Email: general@stjohnscathedral.org.hk

THE DEAN'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

Peace be with you all!

The theme for the 170th anniversary celebration of St John's Cathedral is 'Faith in the City'. What is this really about?

St John's Cathedral is located at the heart of Hong Kong, within the financial district and government centre of our city. Since day one, this Cathedral has aimed to walk with all the people of Hong Kong, through the love of Jesus Christ. One good reminder of this important mission is the depiction in the north transept stained glass window. It describes how Hong Kong, a humble Chinese fishing village, evolved into an international and metropolitan harbour. St John's has walked along with the people of Hong Kong over the past 170 years in her moments of glories and struggles, with Jesus Christ being the Lord calming the storms of that particular era.

'Faith in the City' conveys to us that God is here. The Christian faith upholds the incarnational theology believing that God not only loves his people here and now but that he is present in their midst. Our iconic Cathedral and her ministry are the visible signs of God's presence in the city. We believe that the Christian faith brings a sense of hope, meaning, peace and joy in life to all those who follow and believe in Jesus Christ. One provision is that the Cathedral doors are open every day, even on statutory holidays. This is possible thanks to the Cathedral minders, a team of parishioners who give up their own holiday and volunteer to man the Cathedral, to keep the doors open so people can come for a visit or a time of prayer. We want people to know that St John's Cathedral is here for them because God is here for us.

Furthermore, the theme 'Faith in the City' calls us to transform our community into a city which reflects the reality of God's kingdom where his wills are being fulfilled. While we can celebrate and enjoy Hong Kong's diversity, vibrancy, and efficiency without much difficulty, we should also be greatly concerned about the disparity between the rich and the poor, the deepening polarisation among different sectors, the yearning for a brighter future among youth, and the surging rate of suicide, just to name a few of the social issues. The prophets in the Old Testament have harsh criticisms of any community where these issues have become a norm. There is much for us to do as a faith community to help make the city of Hong Kong pleasing to God, who asks that our city should be full of mercy, justice and grace.

While we journey for another 170 years with the people of Hong Kong, God has entrusted us with a great task. 'Faith in the City' is a slogan which brings us both a comfort and a challenge. With God's help, we shall proceed boldly. God bless us all and God bless St John's Cathedral.

Dean Matthias +



各位：

願你們平安！

聖約翰座堂成立170周年的慶祝主題是「信在城中」，到底「信在城中」有何含意？

聖約翰座堂位處香港的金融中心地帶，坐落商廈群及政府的辦公室之間。自落成啟用起，座堂一直希望以耶穌基督的愛與香港人同行，座堂北翼的彩繪玻璃窗戶正好提醒我們，座堂肩負如此使命——彩繪玻璃窗戶上，描繪了香港如何由一條小漁村變成國際大都會。在過去170年中，無論順境或逆境，座堂也與香港人一起走過，其中有耶穌基督平靜一切的風和浪。

「信在城中」，一方面意味着上帝與我們同在。基督信仰高舉道成肉身的神學，相信上帝不在此時此刻愛世人，更臨到他們中間。

聖約翰座堂的標誌性建築及各項事工，正是外在可見的標記，見證上帝臨在於香江。我們相信，基督信仰可為所有相信及跟隨耶穌基督的人帶來希望、意義及人生中的喜樂。為此，座堂每日開放予公眾使用，公眾假期亦不例外。座堂得以於公眾假期開放，有賴一支由熱心教友組成的義工團隊，他們甘願獻上寶貴的私人時間，輪流於公眾假期看管座堂，以便遊人或市民參觀或祈禱。聖約翰座堂全年無休，正是希望公眾知道，座堂歡迎所有人到來，就如上帝歡迎所有人到祂跟前來。

「信在城中」，另一方面提醒我們要走進人群，行出上帝的旨意，讓人從中窺見上帝的國。

香港社會多元化、充滿活力、效率高，令我們引以為傲。然而，我們也應該關注香港的社會問題，例如貧富懸殊、持份者的意見愈來愈呈現兩極化、年輕人嚮往更美好的將來，以及自殺率飆升等。在舊約中，社會問題一旦成為常態，往往受到先知嚴厲批評。上帝期望我們的城市充滿仁慈、公義及憐憫，我們作為信仰群體，尚有許多工作要做，以求令香港成為合上帝心意的城市。

放眼未來，當我們與香港人再同行170周年，請謹記上帝已把大使命託付予我們。「信在城中」這句口號既是勉勵，也是挑戰。有上帝的幫助，就讓我們勇敢邁步向前行。願上帝祝福我們所有人、祝福聖約翰座堂。

座堂主任牧師
謝子和 謹啟

Anglican Leaders Gather at St John's

TEXT BY/ MAGGIE CHAN

PHOTOS BY/ CONRAD YU & OLDDOG WAI



The 17th meeting of the triennial Anglican Consultative Council (ACC-17), one of four 'instruments' of the Anglican Communion, opened and closed with special services at St John's Cathedral. The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd and Rt Hon Justin Welby, struck a ceremonial gong at the end of the Opening Eucharist to symbolise the opening of the ACC-17 meeting.

Anglican leaders from around the world – including seven Archbishops or Primates – gathered in Hong Kong from 28th April to 5th May 2019 for ACC-17 meetings. ACC's role is to 'facilitate the co-operative work of the churches of the Anglican Communion, exchanging information between the provinces and churches, and help to co-ordinate common action'. The week of meetings will shape the Communion's international work in the coming years.

At the meetings, the delegates were presented with draft intentional safeguarding guidelines prepared by the Anglican Communion's Safe Church Commission. They also discussed a range of issues, including Intentional Discipleship; the Communion's work at the United Nations; women in church, and society and ecumenical matters.

'The theme of this ACC is "Equipping God's People: Going Deeper in Intentional Discipleship"', Archbishop Justin said. 'Let us pray that the Lord will empower us with his Holy Spirit that we may be faithful to this calling.'

The Most Revd Dr Paul Kwong, who is the elected Chair of the ACC in addition to his role as Archbishop and Primate of the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui, said, 'It is my honour to formally welcome all ACC delegates to the Province of Hong Kong and Macau.'

'Hong Kong literally means "fragrant harbour" and was named this because of the spice trade in the old days. I believe that



a disciple gives off the “Fragrance of Christ” in daily life. My prayer is that ACC-17 can help our Anglican Communion to become a giver of the “Fragrance of Christ” to the world.’

The President of the Opening Eucharist on 28th April was Archbishop Paul, and the preacher was Archbishop Justin. In the Closing Eucharist on 5th May, Archbishop Justin presided and Archbishop Paul preached.

During his sermon at the Opening Eucharist, Archbishop Justin said, ‘Witness calls us to discipleship at home, at work, in every place and moment so that the body of Christ grows. And seeing growth, we become more confident, more open to God’s Spirit, more gripped by revelation and the cycle repeats itself.

‘To be visibly the body of Christ to our threatening, suffering and war-torn world. Visibly serving, visibly disagreeing well, visible witness to the hope that drives us to know that through his spirit, God is preparing healing for the creation, and hope for peace. And we, the Christians of this world, we are his agents to witness in that work.’

In the Closing Eucharist, Archbishop Paul said, ‘We are gathered here for the best of reasons, just as leaders and representatives of the Anglican Communion have gathered in Hong Kong for the best of reasons. We have come to celebrate, to remember, to participate, just as delegates to ACC-17 have done. We have come to find a way through some of the frustrations and disappointments, and worse, that life – and a conference – gives to us.’

After a time of prayer, Archbishop Justin commissioned the members, the Standing Committee and the Staff of the ACC to work together to advance God’s mission worldwide.

During the Opening and Closing services, the congregation – which included members of the diplomatic corps, leaders of other Christian denominations, and ACC delegates – sang hymns with the St John’s Cathedral Choir (at the Opening Eucharist) and HKSCH Collegium Musicum Sacrum (at the Closing Eucharist), which were conducted by Provincial Music Director of HKSCH Felix Yeung.

ACC is one of four of ‘instruments’ of the Anglican Communion. The others are the Lambeth Conference, the Primates’ Meeting, and the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The services were live-streamed on the Anglican Communion’s YouTube channel and the Opening Service was broadcast by RTHK.

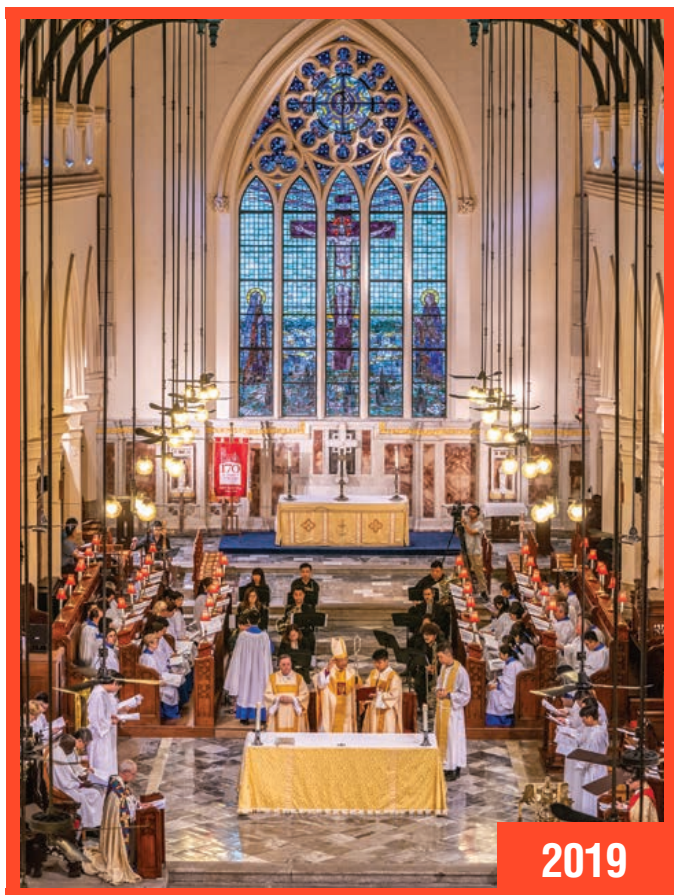


YouTube URL

Opening Eucharist:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Zkaa02urW4

Closing Eucharist:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UrROy2CRA5s>

CATHEDRAL IN THE REVIEW: ACC IN 2002 (2002 VS 2019)



2019

St John's Cathedral had the privilege of hosting the Opening Eucharist of the Anglican Consultative Council in 2002 and 2019.

The Autumn Edition of St John's Review in 2002 featured the theme song of the 12th meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council.

The hymn was written by the Revd Matthew Vernon, the then Chaplain of St John's Cathedral and Priest-in-charge of Emmanuel Church. It was sung by all present at the Opening Eucharist on 15th September 2002.

Almost 17 years after the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui (HKSCH) first hosted the ACC, the Opening Eucharist of the ACC was held in St John's Cathedral again.

During the Opening Eucharist of ACC-17 in 2019, The St John's Cathedral Choir, conducted by our Director of Music Felix Yeung, sang the anthem 'Sing ye to the Lord' by Edward Bairstow. The congregation also sang hymns including 'Light's Glittering Morn Bedecks the Sky', 'Ye Choirs of New Jerusalem', 'Alleluia, Sing to Jesus', and 'Praise to the Lord, the Almighty'.



"For the Life of the World"

Theme Song of Anglican Consultative Council 12th Meeting

Editor's Note: This hymn was written by written by St. John and Emmanuel's own Rev. Matthew Vernon.

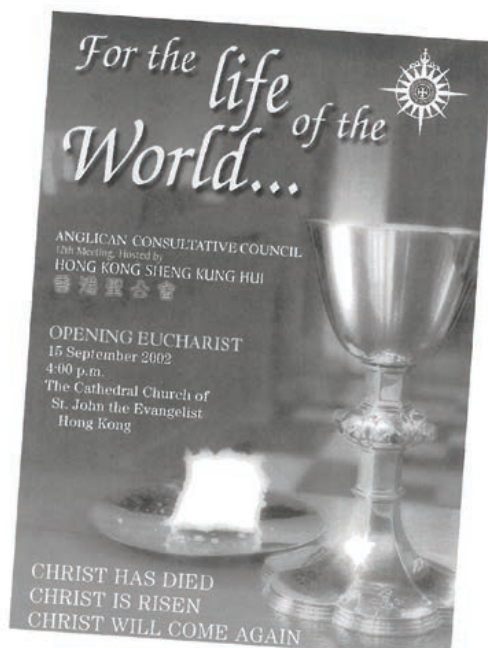
It was sung by all present at the opening Eucharist Sunday afternoon, September 15th.

At the request of the Archbishop of Canterbury, it was immediately sung again.

God of life, God of joy,
You rouse the weary heart.
God of hope, God of justice,
You break the chains that bind.
God of faith, God of peace,
You calm the troubled soul.
In you all people shall meet
And find their salvation.

May your church show the way
To build your kingdom on earth.
Reaching out to the broken,
The fearful or oppressed.
May our lives show to all
The unity you bring.
So that your peace and love may grow
In ev'ry nation.

Inspire our songs of love for all the world
A love that breaks all barriers down.
Enrich our stories of the risen Lord,
Jesus, who lived and died,
So all may have life.



2002



A SAFE CHURCH FOR CHILDREN

TEXT BY/ THE REVD WILL NEWMAN
PHOTOS BY/ FELIX CHAN

For some time St John's Cathedral has been working to develop a Child Protection Policy and Manual, and in March the Cathedral Council approved the final draft. We now have a policy for the Cathedral and daughter churches, and we are the first Anglican church in Hong Kong to have such a policy.

You may ask why do we need it? Has there been some secret scandal? The answer is no. However, the awful and tragic stories of abuse being uncovered in churches around the world show that it can happen anywhere. Our new Child Protection Policy is designed to minimise the chances of anything similar ever happening in our churches, and to ensure that our children are as safe as possible in church. The policy also applies to our Outreach Ministries and church-organised events.

Putting the policy into practice

How are we putting the policy into practice? The first step is that the Cathedral is appointing a Child Protection Coordinator and deputy, and each daughter church is appointing a Child Protection Officer and deputy to implement the policy, working with the clergy.

All staff and volunteers who work with children (age up to 18) must register with the Cathedral Office, and sign a form declaring that they have read the policy and agree to abide by it.

They will be required to complete a Self-Declaration Form, stating whether they have ever sexually abused a child, been convicted in a court of law for any inappropriate conduct towards children, or displayed any propensity for the same. They must also declare if they have served in another church within the past five years, to facilitate due diligence checks.

They will also be required to provide two referees who can vouch for their suitability to work with children.

In addition, they will be required to attend annual briefings and training sessions arranged by the Child Protection Coordinator.

Two key issues

These forms to complete and the annual training are important, but more importantly on a day-to-day basis are the Child Safe Practices, which are included within the policy. These include guidance on matters such as appropriate and inappropriate speech and touch. The two key issues for us in Child Safe Practices are visibility, and minimising one adult-one child situations, when there are easier opportunities for abuse. In individual tuition (such as music lessons), the child's parents must be invited to sit in on the lesson, which must be in a space that is visible from outside. This is for the teacher's protection as well as the child's. Where children are in groups (such as Sunday School, Junior Choir, etc), it is required that at least two adults (or an adult and an older teenager) have to be present. At least one of the adults must be a staff member or volunteer who is registered with the Cathedral Office and has completed the forms and training required in the policy.





‘We all have a role to play to create an environment in which all people are nurtured and cared for with love and respect.’



The policy also sets out in detail the steps to be taken in the event of suspected child abuse, beginning most importantly with making sure that the child is safe. There are clear instructions about who should be informed, and about the prompt formation of a team to investigate. The team would include the Dean, Priest in Charge (at a daughter church), Child Protection Coordinator and Officer, and the leader of the children’s ministry involved. If any of these was suspected of committing the abuse, a deputy would take their place. It goes without saying that we hope and pray that these procedures will never be needed in practice.

You may be wondering why we want to go into such detail in *In Touch*. Why not just leave it to the staff and volunteers who work with children? It is important that the policy is widely known about and the main features of the policy are understood by us all indeed. If we are all aware of the issue, that would make it less likely for an abuser to do something bad without being detected. As Dean Matthias says in his foreword to the Policy:

‘I commend all members of our community to familiarise themselves with this Manual and to be diligent in fulfilling its requirements and

recommendations. We all have a role to play to create an environment in which all people are nurtured and cared for with love and respect. I thank you for your effort and cooperation in making this come true.’

In the coming months, all staff and volunteers working with children will be required to complete the forms and attend training, so that the policy can come into full effect on 1st January 2020.

Copies of the full Child Protection Policy and Manual for St John’s and the daughter churches are available on demand from the Cathedral Office.



- FAITH IN THE CITY -

The 170th Anniversary Celebration Continues

TEXT BY/ STAFF REPORTER
PHOTO BY/ CONRAD YU

St John's Cathedral continues to celebrate its 170th anniversary with the theme 'Faith in the City'. This month, on 30th June, St John's will hold a special service 'Blessing Hong Kong' to thank God for the many blessings upon the life of Hong Kong and the Cathedral. November 2019 will see the grand finale of the celebration, the Thanksgiving Service with the Episcopal Church's Presiding Bishop Michael Curry being the guest preacher and the Gala Dinner.

This year marks St John's Cathedral's 170th anniversary. St John's launched the year-long celebration on 2nd December 2018, Advent Sunday, and organised various services and events. Highlights included the Marriage Thanksgiving Service, St John's Carnival, and St John's Public Lecture series.

Looking ahead, St John's Cathedral invites congregation members and friends of St John's to the 'Blessing Hong Kong' Service, to pray for the Church and all the people of Hong Kong, and pray that the city will be blessed with peace, justice and prosperity.

The grand finale, the Thanksgiving Service and the Gala Dinner, will be held on 24th November 2019, the feast of Christ the King. The Archbishop and Primate of the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui, the Most Revd Dr Paul Kwong, will preside at the Thanksgiving Service and the Presiding Bishop and Primate of the US Episcopal Church, the Most Revd Michael Curry, will preach.

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry is the first African-American to head the US Episcopal Church. Many were impressed by his sermon at the wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle in May 2018, (which had a global audience of two billion), and heard him proclaim the power of God's love. Throughout his ministry, Presiding Bishop Curry has been active in issues of social justice, reconciliation, speaking out on immigration policy, and marriage equality.

The Thanksgiving Service will start at 5.00 pm, followed by the Gala Dinner at 7.00 pm. It will be a time to give thanks to God, pray for the Church, and enjoy fellowship with each other. Save the date for the Thanksgiving Service and the Gala Dinner!

A planning committee has been set up for the 170th anniversary celebration. Rita Chan and John Li are the Chairs of the committee. Committee members include the Very Revd Matthias Der, the Revd Robert Martin, Rachel Cartland, Patrick Fung, Vincent Leung, and Maggie Chan.

170th Anniversary Celebration Diary

30th June (Sun), 5.00pm
'Blessing Hong Kong' Service

24th November (Sun)
Christ the King

5.00 pm
Thanksgiving Service

7.00 pm
Gala Dinner

Venue: Metropol Restaurant
(名都酒樓), Admiralty

Watch Online: Public Lecture Series with The Rt Revd Professor N T Wright

Videos of the three public lectures delivered by the Rt Revd Professor NT Wright are available on YouTube now. Visit the cathedral website (www.stjohnscathedral.org.hk) and watch the videos online.

Lecture 1:

The Bible's Challenge to Today's World: How does the Bible Speak Truth to Power and Money Today?

Lecture 2:

Living in God's Moment: Becoming Truly Human in a Demanding World

Lecture 3:

Rethinking Heaven, Hell and the New Creation

History of St John's Cathedral

PART FOUR

TEXT BY/ STUART WOLFENDALE

1981

A New Roof

Termites – white ants – had destroyed the timber work of the Cathedral's roof and in February 1981, a complete replacement was needed. The congregation had to evacuate the church entirely and worship in what is now the Li Hall. For the new roof, Spanish tiles were overlaid on Japanese plywood and Malaysian hardwood. Every Tuesday representatives of the contractors prayed in the Cathedral for a safe completion. The only casualties were some of the pews which were caught outside in the February rains. The job was done in nine months. The cost was nearly \$3 million of which one million came from the congregation and friends, and one million from companies.

1978

The Daughter Churches

In 1978, the chapel of St Stephen's College, which had close chaplaincy connections with St John's, was acting as a church for Anglicans on the south side with a priest-in-charge, and had 15 families attending. The first parish communion at Emmanuel Church, Pokfulam was held in October 1980. Worship was at St John's College, and the intention was to draw people from the growing expatriate population in that area. In Discovery Bay, there was an international church for the expanding non-Roman Catholic population, but organisation was lacking, and Anglicans there persuaded the Cathedral to establish a daughter church in 1990.

1987

End of Empire

Governor Sir Edward Youde, (who died of a heart attack in Beijing negotiating the Joint Agreement), was given a royal ceremonial funeral, a rare honour granted by the British sovereign. This was held in St John's in December 1987. There were full military honours and a foot procession, to a slow march, from Government House down to the Cathedral, with the coffin borne on a gun carriage. Within a church built by governors who started the colony, the governor who arranged its end was bidden farewell. A plaque to him from the Hong Kong Civil Service is on the wall in the nave.



1984 - 1995

Expansion of Outreach

In 1984 , the St John's Counseling Service, (started in 1981 with one clergy professional), had expanded and was put under a management committee. In 1983, the Mission for Migrant Workers was adopted by St John's by giving it accommodation for its two missionaries and a meeting place in the Cathedral. Helpers for Domestic Helpers began providing legal advice on employment and immigration from lawyers in the congregation in 1991. In 1995, the HIV Drop-In Centre was opened and became the first faith based service for AIDS sufferers, developing into HIV/AIDS Education Centre the following year. The oldest surviving outreach ministry was CLARES, which had developed from the Women's League in 1963.

2011

A Cantonese Eucharist

There had been an anticipated Eucharist in Cantonese at the Cathedral on Saturday evening for some time. Its intention was to provide worship for those who could not get to church on Sunday. It was a responsibility of the diocese and a roster of clergy took the service. In 2011, the Cathedral took over the service, and built up St John's first regular Eucharist for a Cantonese speaking congregation. Numbers attending now average around 150. Members of the congregation have formed Bible study groups, and a Saturday School. They go on regular outings together, which have included trips to help the needy.

2005

The First Chinese Dean

The Revd Andrew Chan Au Ming, Provincial Secretary, previously parish priest who was educated at Ming Hua and Salisbury Theological Colleges was invited to become Dean of St John's Cathedral. He was installed as the first Chinese Dean in May 2005. It was a successful innovation because, though he was the first Chinese Dean, he did not become just Dean for the Chinese. He applied himself across the whole congregation with a management style that encouraged development in others. In purely ethnic terms, the appointment's value was that the Cathedral and the Province could speak in the same language to each other.

HOLY WEEK & EASTER 2019

PHOTOS BY / STAFF REPORTER & ECHO



Palm Sunday



The Service of Tenebrae



Maundy Thursday – Washing of the Feet



Maundy Thursday – Watch until Midnight



The Liturgy of Good Friday



Easter Vigil



Easter Day



A NEW MINISTRY

Welcoming the Revd Sharon Langbis

TEXT BY/ ANDREW ASHLEY
PHOTO BY/ STEPHEN LEE

The Revd Sharon Langbis was thrown in at the deep end when she began her ministry as a fulltime chaplain at St John's during the busiest time of the church's year. She was officially commissioned and welcomed on 10th March, the first Sunday of Lent, started leading Lenten study groups and just two weeks later, on 24th March, preached three sermons on one day. But it's all in a day's work for a cathedral chaplain.

In Touch talked to Sharon about her background, her call to the priesthood and her new ministry at St John's. In conversation, Sharon is modest and unassuming, reluctant to talk about herself. Her focus is clearly on her ministry and on serving her parishioners.

Sharon comes from Benguet, one of the provinces of Cordillera Administrative Region of Northern Luzon, an area where the Episcopal Church in the Philippines (ECP) is particularly strong. She was born into the ECP, a province of the Anglican Communion, and has been a member of the church all her life. An early sense of vocation was apparent. 'I had a curiosity about women priests while I was still in high school,' Sharon says.

There were role models within the ECP, which moved to the ordination of women earlier than some other parts of the Anglican Communion. The first woman priest, the wife of a bishop in the ECP, was ordained in 1986. Sharon contemplated going to seminary but her mother wasn't encouraging. 'But what will you do?' she asked. Sharon went to university instead.

Sharon has lived in Hong Kong before. She first came here in 2002, to take a position as a domestic worker. 'But I wasn't a very good domestic worker. I only lasted for six months!' Sharon says with her characteristic self-effacement. The sense of vocation remained, however,

and after she returned home to look for a job, the call came more insistently. When she heard a priest in Baguio announcing that more priests were needed in the ECP, Sharon answered the call.

After four years at St Andrew's Theological Seminary in Manila, Sharon was ordained deacon and spent the first two years of her ministry as a deacon intern. She was ordained priest in 2012, on 27th March – the day when the Rt Revd Charles Henry Brent is commemorated in the Episcopal Church's Liturgical Calendar.

Charles Brent was the first Bishop of what was then the Missionary District of the Philippine Islands and he is a source of great inspiration to Sharon. She becomes very animated when she talks of Bishop Brent: 'I love his principles. He was so ecumenical and he recognised the importance of the social gospel.'

Bishop Brent's ecumenism found practical expression in his refusal to proselytise Roman Catholics in the Philippines, as some other missionaries tried to do. He argued that '...proselytising from other Christian churches is hateful to our Lord' and focused on missionary work in areas that other churches had not reached. This is why the ECP is well represented in Sharon's home region of Northern Luzon.

In terms of the social gospel, Bishop Brent believed that the church was responsible for society as a whole and that the purpose of Christian mission was to renew 'the spiritual, social and economic life of a people'.

These themes are clearly apparent in Sharon's approach to her ministry. She sees her role as ministering to the large and growing Filipino congregation at St John's, regardless of which church they're from, as well as to the entire Cathedral and its people. 'We are a peaceful church,' Sharon says, 'and we want to unite all Filipinos worshipping here with us.'

As with Bishop Brent, Sharon focuses on both the spiritual and the social aspects of ministry. 'I really love to share the Gospel of our Lord in a simple, practical, humble way that people can understand,' she says. Sharon is already doing this as she assists Fr Dwight with bible studies on Saturdays

and Sundays.

Sharing the Gospel includes ministering to a wide range of needs. Sharon is looking forward to receiving training for work with HELP for Domestic Workers, one of St John's vital outreach ministries, and also to working with Bethune House, Migrant Women's Refuge. 'I love this practical aspect to ministry. It's very important and it keeps my feet on the ground.'

Sharon's modesty shines through when she talks about her move to St John's. She has had considerable experience of ministry, as rector of the clustered parish of St Augustine of Hippo, and St Margaret, a supply priest in Christ Church parish in Baguio and then as curate at Baguio's Cathedral of the Resurrection. But she freely admits that she felt some doubts when the possibility of serving in Hong Kong first came up. She recalls thinking, 'Will I fit in, am I qualified? And I don't have a PhD in theology!'

Sharon spent four days here in November 2018, meeting Dean Matthias and others at the Cathedral, and learning about St John's and the ministry to which she was being called. She returned to Baguio and prayed, 'Oh Lord, whatever your plan is for me ...' Three months later, Sharon received her visa and her new life in Hong Kong was about to begin.

Now Sharon has settled in and is enjoying her life and work at St John's. Something that she loves about the Cathedral is the beauty of the liturgy. The ECP is a little different in this respect, using the ECUSA Book of Common Prayer 1979, translated into Tagalog. 'Since being here, I've come to appreciate the variety and beauty of Anglican services,' Sharon says.

When she isn't working, Sharon relaxes by walking and watching movies. She finds people watching fascinating and has quickly realised that Hong Kong is an ideal spot for this. 'It's always very busy,' she says. 'There are so many people everywhere – on trams and buses, in the markets. I love watching them.'

But Sharon probably won't have too much time for that. Her ministry at St John's is clearly going to keep her very busy.



ST JOHN'S CATHEDRAL PILGRIMAGE

TEXT BY / MARTIN MURRAY
PHOTOS BY / STEPHEN LEE





On Saturday the 30th of March, 2019 St John's Cathedral held its third Pilgrimage through St John's Cathedral. Pilgrims were given a choice of joining a guided pilgrim tour in Cantonese, Mandarin or English. The Revd William Wu Wai-ho once again led the planning, organisation and implementation of this activity, with the help of Cathedral staff, priests and parishioners under the leadership of the Dean, the Very Revd Matthias Der, who welcomed pilgrimage guides and pilgrims from parishes from all over Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories as they entered the Cathedral.



The pilgrimage started at the west door, proceeded to the font, and then down the nave up to the chancel steps to see the stained glass in the east, north, and south windows. They went on to the lectern and the Canterbury Cross, then back down and around to St Michael's Chapel.

It was inside the much visited St Michael's Chapel where an old altar reredos, which had previously gone more or less unnoticed, was discovered pretty much for the first time by many pilgrim guides and pilgrims. Our pilgrimage group first searched for it in its more traditional location behind the chapel's altar, only to later find it located behind and above the votive candle stand on the left-hand side of the chapel. This was the Sham Shui Po Reredos, a fairly small and simple reredos from a prison camp where military prisoners of war were interned during the Japanese occupation of the then British colony. It was made by prisoners of war from box lids and a brass crucifix found in a rubbish heap, with an inscription of a prayer of Richard of Chichester (1197 – 1253) added. An empty jam jar, like the one sitting on it, was all that was available to prisoners for putting fresh flowers in for decoration. Hope in times of trouble, as signified by this moving relic from bygone times, was just one of the many highlights of this Cathedral pilgrimage tour.



The pilgrims then went on to pray at the votive candle stand and the tabernacle for the reserved sacrament. They walked across to the icon of St John the Evangelist in the north transept, then back to the nave altar and up to the cathedra or bishop's throne, pastoral staff, and processional cross. They ended up at the high altar where a cathedral chaplain, the Revd Mark Rogers or the Revd Sharon Langbis, gave pilgrims a blessing. Many pilgrims were then eager to complete their pilgrimage by climbing up the Cathedral tower.

The afternoon pilgrimage proved to be far more than just a religious trivia tour for checking out whether you knew the difference between a chapel and chaplain, a cathedral and cathedra. It was above all a journey through some of the most significant periods of Our Lord's life and our congregation's life. The pilgrimage ended with pilgrims and pilgrimage guides spiritually refreshed from the hope and appreciation of beauty of those who have gone before us at St John's, and it was a wonderful way to celebrate St John's Cathedral's 170th year.



NAGASAKI PILGRIMAGE AND THE STORY 'SILENCE'



TEXT & PHOTOS BY/ THE REV. WILL NEWMAN

Nagasaki is the most Christian city in Japan. It's the area where St Francis Xavier, the first Christian missionary, arrived in 1549, and Christianity took root. It's also the setting for 'Silence', the powerful novel by Shusaku Endo. After I first saw the movie 'Silence' I rushed to write down all the questions it raised for me, challenging questions of faith, and how God works in the world.

In April this year, I led a pilgrimage to Nagasaki, organised by Ming Hua Theological College. Fearing that the missionaries were the vanguard of a European invasion, the Japanese authorities determined to root out Christianity. We visited the site of the first executions, where 26 Japanese and foreign Christians were martyred on a hillside in Nagasaki in February 1597. The youngest was a boy only 12 years old. It was deeply moving to be in that spot. Today there is a large memorial plaque, and a museum that tells their story.

However, the persecution did not destroy Christianity. For 250 years the Kakure Kirishitan, Hidden Christians, kept their faith alive in secret. They baptised their children, and prayed before statues that look like the goddess Guanyin, or Kanon in Japanese, but to them were the Virgin Mary. They orally passed down the bible stories and prayers their ancestors learnt from the Jesuit fathers.

We visited islands and remote villages, where the Hidden Christians took refuge, and museums telling their stories. The scenery is beautiful, although in those times they were often the poorest communities. We visited the first church built in 1865 when foreign missionaries returned. Christianity was still banned for Japanese, but a brave group of Japanese villagers came and knelt here and whispered to the astonished French priest, 'We are of the same heart as you.' The outside world assumed that Christianity had been totally eradicated in Japan, but this was the wonderful Easter moment, the revelation of new life emerging from the hidden darkness.

When we visited those islands and villages, we were welcomed into their beautiful churches, built after the Christians came out of hiding and rejoined the worldwide Church. The churches are loved and well used, and it was a joy to see flourishing Christian communities where once there was secrecy and fear.

On our last day, we visited the Peace Park and the Atomic Bomb Museum. Then we visited the tiny wooden house of Dr Takashi Nagai, an inspirational Catholic doctor who, although badly injured by the bomb, worked ceaselessly to care for others and then to writing and praying for peace.

A pilgrimage is a spiritual journey of discovery. So what did I discover? I started with many questions, and throughout our pilgrimage Matthew Jones from Ming Hua gave a series of challenging reflections, on Martyrdom, 'Silence', and the Atom Bomb. I ended not so much with answers to my questions, but with a sense of peace. After all the stories of darkness and suffering, we saw light and healing and new life.



FILIPINO CONGREGATION CELEBRATES 25th Anniversary

TEXT & PHOTOS BY / FILIPINO CONGREGATION,
ST JOHN'S CATHEDRAL

On 21st April 2019, Easter Day, the Filipino Congregation of St John's Cathedral celebrated its 25th anniversary in deference to the season of Lent.

The first Eucharist in Filipino at St John's Cathedral was actually one Sunday or two before Palm Sunday in 1994. It was held at what was then known as the Lady Chapel, now the High Altar area. There were around 30 communicants. Information about that service was channelled through the United Filipinos in Hong Kong (UNIFIL-HK), then an alliance of more than 20 foreign domestic workers' organisations. The notice also targeted members of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI) working in Hong Kong, and invited them to come to St John's, as the IFI is in Concordat with churches within the Anglican Communion.

Initially, there was some hesitation about starting a Eucharist in Filipino, which separated the Filipino congregation from the English-speaking congregation. It might be seen as discriminatory. However, the Eucharist was celebrated in the nave months later as the congregation grew. The then Dean was the Very Revd Chris Phillips and the then Bishop was the Rt Revd Peter Kwong Kong-kit, who was later elected the first Archbishop and Primate.

Today the congregation consists of IFI members, as well as Christians



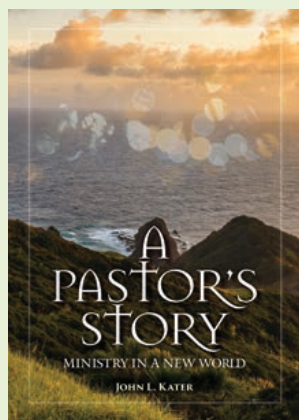
from various denominations. The congregation is different from those who attend the morning services. It is St John's way of reaching out to the wider migrants' community.

The 25th anniversary party was well attended. It was graced by Archbishop Emeritus Peter Kwong himself, (whose message encouraged and buoyed the spirits of the audience). The current Dean, the Very Revd Matthias Der, emphasised the importance of the Filipino congregation and St John's ministry alongside foreign domestic workers in Hong Kong. The Revd Mark Rogers and the Revd Sharon Langbis also extended their congratulations and good wishes to the Filipino Congregation.

Entertainment for the party was provided by Danny Fabella, a Filipino progressive singer, who has several CDs to his credit.

WHAT ARE WE READING?

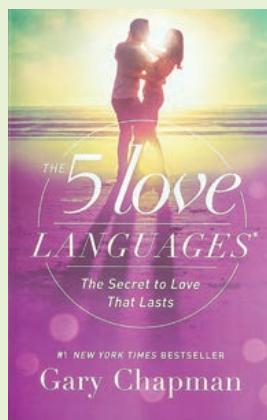
Book recommendations from the *In Touch* editorial team



A PASTOR'S STORY: MINISTRY IN A NEW WORLD

AUTHOR: JOHN KATER

In his newly launched book, the Revd Dr John Kater shares his reflections upon the life stories of the Church in Panama. He shows his affection for and commitment to those Panamanian people who have given him insight into how to be a Christian and a priest. He remains convinced that the experience of Christians in Latin America can play an important role in inspiring Christians in many other situations and in reshaping the life of the Church where it has become tired, comfortable and lifeless. But in order for that to happen, Christians in other parts of the world must first hear from Latin America.



THE 5 LOVE LANGUAGES: THE SECRET TO LOVE THAT LASTS

AUTHOR: GARY CHAPMAN

'The 5 Love Languages' is recommended to both new and long-term couples, and may be of particular interest for those preparing for marriage this summer. It teaches how couples individually best express love to one another, according to how they each best understand what it means to 'feel loved.' Though not explicitly a book about faith, the author Gary Chapman is a Christian, and this shines through in the way he helps readers to better care for their partners. It is very accessible, packed full of relevant examples, tips, and a survey readers can take to help them discover their love language.

GENERAL SECRETARY OF WCC'S VISIT



On 2nd May, St John's Cathedral received the Revd Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC), and Anthony Tong, Executive Director of Amity Foundation Hong Kong. Dean Matthias, Fr Franklin Lee, Mother Catherine Graham, Mother Sharon Langbis, and all the staff and volunteers gave Dr Olav a warm welcome. During his visit, Dr Olav talked to representatives of the Life Enrichment Centre, the Mission For Migrant Workers and HELP for Domestic Workers, and learned more about their work and ministry.

SPRING CLEANING THE CATHEDRAL



Mrs June Li led a group of volunteers to spring-clean the Cathedral interior on 11th April. Thanks to all volunteers for their time and good work!



HELP for Domestic Workers (HELP) were delighted to be presented a cheque for \$30,000 from the Hong Kong Welsh Male Voice Choir, after they chose HELP as their Charity of Choice for their biggest concert of the year, held on St David's Day at St John's Cathedral.

Pictured from left to right are Milly Bond, Fundraiser for HELP who is newly on board; the Revd Catherine Graham; Richard Tinlin, Treasurer of the Hong Kong Welsh Male Voice Choir; Nigel Sharman, Secretary of the Hong Kong Welsh Male Voice Choir, and volunteers of HELP Valerio Preisig and Phoenix Chan.

STAFF NEWS

INTERNATIONAL DEANS' AND RECTORS' CONFERENCE



Dean Matthias attended the annual International Deans' and Rectors' Conference from 22nd May to 26th May. For 13 years, St John's Cathedral has been part of the conference. This year, deans of cathedrals and rectors of historical churches located in the financial districts of major international cities gathered in Auckland, New Zealand for mutual support and learning. The conference was hosted by St Matthew-in-the-City.



In an official welcome section, the deans and rectors rubbed noses in a traditional Maori greeting known as 'hongi'. During the conference, they spent time in group discussions about common issues that they face, such as redeveloping the church facilities, ministering to the marginalised, the effect of an increasingly secular society, and pastoral care in an unstable political milieu. They also went on a tour of St Matthew-in-the-City and came to know more about the history of the church.

WELCOME NEW STAFF



EDWARD WONG Administrative Assistant

The Cathedral gives a warm welcome to Edward Wong who joined the Cathedral Office as Administrative Assistant in April.

The former Administrative Assistant Alice Lam, who had worked in the Cathedral Office for two years, decided to move on and take up a position in the government. The Cathedral Office bade a fond farewell to Alice. Executive Administrator Viola Ip thanked Alice for all the good work she had done.

Edward is assisting in administrative and communications work in the Cathedral Office by receiving phone calls, taking care of the reception desk, putting up posters on the bulletin boards and helping with designing promotional materials.

Edward has worked in a few non-government organisations over the years, providing administrative and liaison support to the office. In his leisure time, Edward enjoys taking sports photos, reading, watching films and TV programmes. He was raised a Catholic. He attends masses at a Catholic church near his home on Sundays.

LOOK FOR STORIES

We are constantly on the lookout for stories involving St John's and the daughter churches. If you think you know of events or people past, present or to come which would fit into our pages, please be in contact with the Editor on communications@stjohnscathedral.org.hk

Forthcoming Services at St John's & Daughter Churches

JUNE - AUGUST 2019



St John's Cathedral

4-8 Garden Road, Central, Hong Kong
Tel: 2523 4157
www.stjohnscathedral.org.hk

2nd June (Sunday): Outreach Sunday

(Sharing by outreach ministries for all Sunday services)

9th June (Sunday): Day of Pentecost (Whit Sunday)

9.00AM Worship For All

5.00PM Baptism & Confirmation

(Sunday services as normal)

16th June (Sunday): Trinity Sunday

9.00AM Sung Eucharist

6.00PM Evening Prayer in Taizé Style

(Sunday services as normal)

23rd June (Sunday): Corpus Christi

9.00AM Sung Eucharist

10.30AM Hong Kong St John Ambulance Brigade Annual Service of Dedication

11.45 AM Baptism & First Communion (Children)

6.00 PM Choral Evensong with Benediction

(Sunday services as normal)

29th June (Saturday): St Peter & St Paul, Apostles

12.00 NOON Sung Eucharist

30th June (Sunday)

5.00PM 'Blessing Hong Kong' Service

(Sunday services as normal)

14th July (Sunday) Sea Sunday

9.00AM Worship For All

(Sunday services as normal)

21st July (Sunday)

9.00 AM & 6.00 PM

Visit of Ottawa Christ Church Cathedral Girls' Choir

(Sunday services as normal)

28th July (Sunday)

11.45AM Baptism & First Communion (Children)

(Sunday services as normal)

6th August (Tuesday): The Transfiguration of Our Lord

7.30PM Sung Eucharist

15th August (Thursday): The Blessed Virgin Mary

7.30PM Sung Eucharist

said within themselves, This man blasphemeth.

4 And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?

5 For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk?

6 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.

7 And he arose, and departed to his house.

8 But when the multitudes saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power

20 * P And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment:

21 For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.

22 But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.

23 * And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise,

24 He said unto them, Give

CHAPTER 10.

1 Christ sendeth out his twelve apostles, enabling them with power to heal the sick, to give them their charge, to rebuke the devils, to comfort them against persecution, and to promise a blessing to those that receive them.

AND when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.

2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;

3 Philip, and Bartholomew; Tho-

St John's Cathedral

4-8 Garden Road, Central, Hong Kong

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Dean

The Very Revd Matthias Der

Cathedral Chaplains

The Revd Canon Dwight dela Torre

The Revd Catherine Graham

The Revd Canon Peter Koon

The Revd Sharon Langbis

The Revd Franklin Lee

The Revd Robert Martin
(Chaplain and Priest-in-Charge of
Emmanuel Church - Tel: 2523 4157)

The Revd Will Newman
(Chaplain and Priest-in-Charge of
St Stephen's Chapel - Tel: 2813 0408)

The Revd Mark Rogers
(Chaplain and Priest-in-Charge of
Discovery Bay Church - Tel: 2987 4210)

The Revd Wu Wai-ho

Cathedral Honorary Chaplain

The Revd Jenny Wong Nam

Executive Administrator

Viola Ip

Director of Music

Felix Yeung

Assistant Director of Music

Alan Tsang

Organist

Peter Yue

Sub-Organist

Jonathan Yip

Communications Officer

Maggie Chan

Verger

Ho Tat Hoi

Head Server

James Choo

Head Sidesman

Roger Cole

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Andrew Ashley

Anna Coles-Gale

Emmanuel Church Béthanie Chapel 139 Pok Fu Lam Road, Pok Fu Lam



Further information Tel: 2523 4157
www.emmanuel.org.hk

Every Sunday

10.15AM Sung Eucharist

St Stephen's Chapel 22 Tung Tau Wan Road, Stanley St Stephen's College



Further information Tel: 2813 0408
www.ststephen.org.hk

Every Sunday

9.30AM Sung Eucharist

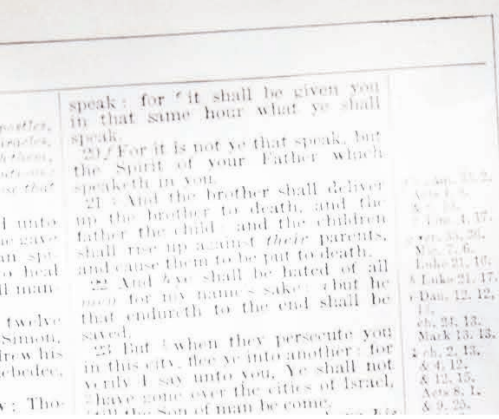
Discovery Bay Church SKH Wei Lun Primary School, Lautau



Further information Tel: 2987 4210
www.discoverybaychurch.org.hk

Every Sunday

10.00AM Sung Eucharist



ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING 2019



TEXT BY/ ANNA COLES-GALE PHOTOS BY / STAFF REPORTER

It was clear from this year's ACM that it has been another incredibly busy year for St John's, with clear gratitude felt for those had led and contributed to the various changes and projects which have been taking place. Dean Matthias highlighted this when he said there was a 'great sense of thanksgiving' and that 'God has looked after this Cathedral well'.

There was some initial disappointment when discussing finances: the economy last year was a roller coaster and so the investments made a substantial drop. However, God's grace was clear – for the seventh year in a row, there was still a surplus (albeit a smaller one than the previous year). There was also cause for celebration from the rise of generous giving marked by a 6.4% increase in stewardship, as well as the record high profits made by the Cathedral Bookstore.

One of the most important things, of course, is that all this allows St John's to continue its amazing work of ministry and outreach. The nurture programmes continue to thrive; over 50 adults were prepared for baptism through the 'Faith Begins' programme, and the first Cursillo retreat in Hong Kong was a success. A significant portion of the meeting was then spent in discussion of the new Life Enrichment Centre, marking a transition from the HIV Education Centre. The aim is to inspire confidence and values in young people, and uplift them in Christian care. More about the work of the ministry can be read about in the previous issue of In Touch. Another key change within a different ministry has been the appointment of the new Director of the Counselling Service, which the Dean helped to oversee.

Yet another change you may have heard of from within the walls of the Cathedral itself is the sounds of the new organ, installed last year. With 89 stops, it is one of the best in Hong Kong. The new powerful instrument has greatly enhanced the liturgical life of our Cathedral.

Later in the meeting, Mother Catherine gave an update on the new Safe Church policy, which has been adopted and is currently being implemented. The policy emphasises a duty of care to look after the young, old, and the vulnerable, with a particular focus on developing the code of practice to safeguard children. Catherine discussed how 'all of us together will promote a safer environment'. More about this policy can be read within this issue.

Looking to the future, there is much to look forward to. Key events in the coming year include the 'Blessing Hong Kong' service and the 170th anniversary Thanksgiving Service at which Presiding Bishop Michael Curry will preach. You may have heard him give a sermon during the wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan, and he preached before at the Cathedral on 19th February 2017. Something else being planned in the longer term is the redevelopment of the administration building and the Fanny Li Hall. A bigger space is needed which is user friendly and can accommodate and facilitate all kinds of ministry.

Full details of the Annual Report can be found on the cathedral website and in a printed version – it is truly a celebration of all that has occurred at St John's and its daughter churches, along with a sense of hope for the coming year.

“ *St John's Cathedral is a place of God's grace, welcoming all, following Christ and changing lives in the heart of Hong Kong.* ”