

# IN TOUCH

Issue 043

*a light in the darkness;  
a Christmas for our city*

ST JOHN'S CATHEDRAL

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# DEAN'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

These past days have been heavy for our city, as we mourn the tragic loss of life in the Tai Po fire. In moments like these, words may feel inadequate, yet we hold firmly to the promise that God is close to the brokenhearted. We pray for those who died, for the injured, and for all the affected—that they may feel the warmth of community and the peace that transcends understanding. Even in sorrow, we are not alone.

Within our own Cathedral family, we are also experiencing a season of transition—this involves bidding farewell to our dear Executive Administrator, Thomas, and our Chaplain, Fr Amos Poon. At the same time, we are welcoming our new LEC Centre Supervisor, David Lam; our new Chaplain, Fr Francis Yu; and we are grateful that our respected Chaplain, Fr Robert Martin, is becoming full-time in our Cathedral.

Time flies, and this is already the end of our liturgical year. The theme of our Cathedral for the year 2026 will be: *'A Loving Church; A Caring Church'*. In a broken and severely divided world like ours today, we all need the grace of God to ensure we, as Christians, can live as witnesses according to what Christ our Lord teaches us. In 2025, we have worked diligently to make the Cathedral a place with a hospitable and welcoming atmosphere. I have received positive feedback from visitors from all around the world in this respect. Now, I pray that this can be sustained with the new theme in 2026. Let us work hand in hand for this annual theme.

Regarding the welcoming of different friends and guests, the Michaelmas Fair 2025 that took place on Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> October has surely been one piece of evidence for fulfilling our annual theme this year. I must express my heartiest gratitude to this year's guest of honour, Ms Grace Fung, together with Bishop Matthias Der, for gracing our annual Cathedral event. Appreciation must also be given to our chairman this year, Professor Marques Ng, and the devoted committees who contributed so much to make the Michaelmas Fair a huge success. I am now looking forward to the Michaelmas Fair 2026 and also to your presence and support.

A significant achievement of the past 3 months was the completion of work on the altar and high altar. Now, with the space cleared, the Cathedral has been restored to its full sacred serenity, perfectly prepared for the important seasons of Advent and Christmas.

When I was typing this message, I was in fact on my way flying back from Chiang Mai after finishing the CCA (Christian Conference of Asia) Executive Committee meeting. As I said farewell to the other ExCo members—leaders of churches from across Asia—we were already exchanging 'Merry Christmas' wishes. As we move forward, let us carry with us both the joy of the season and the affection of these recent days. In times of loss and in times of celebration, may we remember to care for one another—and also to tend gently to our own hearts. Christmas reminds us that God entered our world in vulnerability and love, and remains present in every trial and new beginning.

May the coming Christmas bring you comfort and hope, and may the New Year be blessed with the sustaining gifts of the Holy Spirit. Please take good care of yourselves and each other.

Love from Dean KK



各位朋友：

這些日子，我們的城市籠罩在沉重的哀傷之中，為大埔火災中不幸逝去的生命默哀。在這令人心碎的時刻，一切言語都顯得乏力，但我們仍深信，上帝與哀傷的人同在。我們為所有遇難者、傷者及受影響的市民禱告，願他們能在社群的支持中得著慰藉，並尋獲心靈深處的平安。即使面對苦難，我們並不孤單。

與此同時，座堂這個大家庭，也正經歷人事上的變動。其中既有送別好同工的依依不捨，也有歡迎新同事的喜悅。我們即將向親愛的座堂行政主任李子夏先生（Thomas）及潘正行牧師道別；同時，也欣然迎接生命啟進中心新主管林志榮先生（David）、新任余鋒倫牧師，並感恩我們敬重的馬若斌牧師將全職在座堂服侍。

時光飛逝，轉眼禮儀年已接近尾聲。在2026年，座堂將以「愛滿關懷屬靈家」作為年度主題。在這個破碎與分裂仍舊存在的世界中，我們更需要上帝的恩典，幫助我們依循主的教導，活出基督徒的見證。在2025年，我們努力讓座堂成為充滿熱情好客的地方，我也收到來自世界各地訪客的正向回饋。我衷心期盼，這份精神能在2026年的新主題下延續下去，讓我們共同為這年度主題齊心努力。

於10月25日（星期六）舉行的「聖約翰座堂賣物會2025」，正是本堂實踐2025年年度主題「好客迎主內」的美好例證。我要特別感謝今年的主禮嘉賓馮淑恩女士和謝子和主教，他們的蒞臨為這場年度盛事增添光彩。同時，也衷心感激今年的賣物會主席吳碩南教授以及盡心付出的委員會同仁，他們的貢獻成就了本次賣物會的圓滿成功。我已經開始期待2026年的賣物會，並誠盼各位繼續參與和支持。

過去三個月的一項重要成果，是聖壇與高聖壇上方的維修工程已順利完成。如今空間恢復開闊，座堂重現完整的莊嚴與寧靜，為即將到來的將臨期與聖誕節期做好了準備。

在我撰寫這篇文章時，正在從清邁返港的航班上——我剛參加了亞洲基督教議會（CCA）執行委員會會議。與來自亞洲各地教會領袖道別時，我們已彼此預祝「聖誕快樂」。面對未來，願我們懷抱這節期的喜樂，也銘記這座城市在困難中顯露的互助與溫情。就算正經歷失去，但願我們能彼此關懷，也學懂照顧自己的心靈。聖誕提醒我們，上帝以謙卑與慈愛進入人間，並在每個艱難時刻與新的開始中，與我們同行。

願這將臨的聖誕為你們帶來安慰與盼望，也願新的一年滿載聖靈所賜的平安與力量。請務必好好照顧自己，並互相守望。

座堂主任牧師  
陳國強謹啟





A SERVICE OF PRAYER AND HOPE FOR  
THE WANG FUK COURT COMMUNITY







*Brothers and sisters,  
our home, Hong Kong,  
is indeed a city in mourning.  
With sorrow and confusion,  
we come together before God to pray:  
for those who tragically died,  
for the injured, and for all who mourn.  
May they be enfolded  
in our heavenly Father's love,  
find courage in his grace,  
confidence in his goodness,  
and the strength they need  
for the days ahead. Amen.*





# *A Farewell to Fr Amos*

## AFTER 6 YEARS OF UNSCRIPTED MINISTRY

Text by / **NATASHA NGAN**  
Communications Officer

Come the end of December, the Revd Amos Poon will say goodbye to his role as Cathedral Chaplain at St John's Cathedral, ready to start his next chapter at HKSKH Crown of Thorns Church. Sitting down to talk about his 6 years here, he didn't just list events; he shared a story of personal doubts, small kindnesses, and learning that growth often starts just outside your comfort zone.

His very posting to St John's felt like a reply to an old prayer. Years earlier, at his previous parish, he'd watched a man give a captivating 45-minute talk in fluent, unscripted English. 'I remember thinking, if I could ever do that, it would be amazing', Fr Amos admits with a smile. He quietly wished for that ability.

He got his answer, but not in the way he expected. The Bishop sent him to St John's, knowing the role would require him to preach and minister in English. It was a daunting prospect. He later found out that the impressive speaker from all those years ago was none other than Bishop Matthias Der. 'It's funny', Fr Amos reflects. 'God has a habit of answering our prayers in ways that surprise us, usually by giving us a chance to grow into them, not a sudden gift'.

He remembers clearly the nervousness of his first week. It was softened by a small act of kindness. The late council member Tom Bispham, seeing the new chaplain in line before a service, leaned over and simply said, 'Welcome to St John's'. That moment of warmth meant the world.

Then, the ground shifted. Just days later, COVID-19 shut the cathedral's doors. 'It was so sudden', he says. 'I'd had maybe 2 Sundays with everyone, and then we were closed'. Isolated from his new flock, he still tried to connect, sending messages to parishioners he barely knew. With time on his hands, he even started a 40-day YouTube series, teaching the origami he loved, just to feel like he was reaching someone.

The real test came later, when he was asked to lead the English Bible study and serve as chaplain to the choir. Leading a deep theological discussion in a language he still found challenging was terrifying. 'At first, I scripted everything', he confesses, laughing. 'I'd talk for the full 90 minutes so no one could ask me a question I hadn't written an answer for'!





He pushed himself, starting small: sharing unscripted thoughts at Wednesday Eucharists, giving short reflections during choir breaks. The work was slow, but the moments of breakthrough felt huge. Last year, he realised he'd just spoken for 45 minutes in English without a single note. Then, this year, when a scheduled preacher didn't show up minutes before a service, Fr Amos had to invent a sermon on the spot. 'My heart was pounding, but I did it', he says. 'You don't grow by staying where you're comfortable'.

His diverse portfolio—spanning Chinese Ministry, Cathedral Choir, the vibrant Among Us youth fellowship, and oversight of the Life Enrichment Centre—became the practical expression of his vision for St John's as a true 'international church'. 'An international church is not only about languages', he explains. 'It's about being a place where anyone can walk in and feel this is a home for them. That only happens when you truly listen to people'.

This focus on personal connection, rather than just running programmes, is what matters most to him. It's what made a recent moment so special. A council member, someone he'd worked with but didn't know very well, came to him. 'He told me, "We're really going to miss you here, Amos"', Fr Amos recalls. His voice softens. 'That meant a lot. To feel that your presence mattered personally to someone...that is what it's all about'.

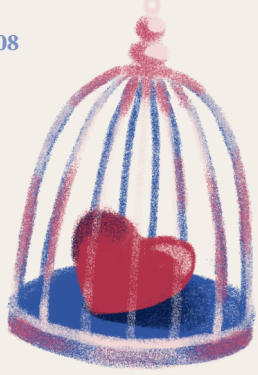
As he packs his office, his mind is full of snapshots: a wedding with only 5 people during a COVID wave, the youth group slowly blossoming from an idea into a lively family. What does he hope people remember?

Not any single achievement, he says. He hopes they simply remember he was there. "I hope I was 'always present'", he says. 'And I pray that for everyone who comes to St John's, it feels like a second home—a place where you find God by finding you are accepted, just as you are'.

Taking this spirit with him to Tsuen Wan, Fr Amos leaves behind a simple lesson, lived out over 6 years: that faith is often found not in the spectacular, but in showing up, listening closely, and having the courage to step into the unfamiliar, one small, human moment at a time.







# A Network of Safety:

*Providing support to those in need,  
one safety net at a time*

Text by / **DRALEX LI**  
Director of St John's Cathedral  
Counselling Service

In the teachings of Christ, we are called to bear one another's burdens, as stated in Galatians 6.2. We pray for one another, share in each other's joys, and strive to offer comfort in times of hardship. Yet, sometimes, the deepest struggles, such as those involving suicidal thoughts, can leave us feeling uncertain and ill-equipped to help, afraid of making things worse. We want to be able to support our community, but we haven't been taught how to listen effectively and respond in a way that can save lives.

This is where an important training programme recognised by the World Health Organisation, called safeTALK, comes in. safeTALK was developed by LivingWorks. It's a course that is both practical and powerful, helping us to live out our call to be Christ's hands and feet in a world where many are hurting and struggling.

## So, what is safeTALK?

safeTALK is a 4-hour training session that equips anyone to be a 'suicide-alert helper'. The training does not make you a mental health counsellor or a psychologist, but it equips people from all walks of life to recognise when someone is having thoughts of suicide and how to connect them with the professional help they need.

This is especially important, as those having suicidal thoughts often first come into contact with people in their community rather than a mental health professional. Just as the Good Samaritan didn't pass by the wounded man but stopped to offer practical aid, safeTALK teaches us how to stop and offer a specific kind of aid to those in emotional and spiritual danger.

## Should the Church be concerned about suicide prevention?

Why do we promote suicide prevention through our outreach ministry, you might wonder? The difficult truth is that mental health challenges and moments of deep despair do not discriminate. They can affect our elders, our youth group members, our choir singers, and anyone sitting in the pews on Sunday morning. We want to ensure that our Cathedral can be a safe place to be honest about our struggles.

By embracing safeTALK training, we are:

- Breaking the silence and replacing fear and stigma with knowledge and compassion
- Creating a culture where it's okay to not be okay, and where asking for help is seen as a sign of strength
- Building a network of safety where we become a community that is genuinely alert and ready to support one another



## What Does safeTALK Teach Us?

The training is built on 4 core steps, easily remembered as TALK:

- **Tell:** Learn to recognise the subtle and not-so-subtle signs that someone may be considering suicide
- **Ask:** Overcome the fear of the question by learning how to directly, kindly, and respectfully ask, 'Are you thinking about suicide?' This does not put ideas in someone's head but rather offers a lifeline to those in need
- **Listen:** Discover how to listen without judgement, with full attention, and with genuine empathy. Being truly heard becomes the first step toward healing
- **Keep Safe:** Learn how to secure someone's safety for now and connect them to the next level of support, whether it's a pastor, a helpline, or a mental health professional

## Next Steps

If you would like to be part of building a more suicide-safer community for your teams, businesses, or organisations, please contact St John's Cathedral Counselling Service to learn more about safeTALK and how we can bring it to the Hong Kong community.

If you are struggling, please know you are not alone. Reach out to the clergy, a trusted friend, or St John's Cathedral Counselling Service.







# Between Volunteer Team

Text by / ROONEY CHOW  
Social Service Officer

At the Life Enrichment Centre (LEC), our Between Volunteer Team, consisting of passionate youth from local middle schools, universities, and the Cathedral congregation, has made an incredible difference in the community this year. As the youth volunteer team of the LEC, we have engaged in a variety of activities aimed at uplifting the lives of those around us.

This year, our dedicated team organised 72 volunteer activities, serving over 2,800 individuals from various backgrounds. Our efforts included providing care for abandoned animals, supporting students with special educational needs, visiting the elderly, and aiding socially disadvantaged individuals. Furthermore, we actively contributed to the church community through events such as the Michaelmas Fair, the ACR Concert, and Outreach Sunday. By embracing these diverse roles, our volunteers have gained invaluable experiences and strengthened their connections within both the local community and the church.

One of the highlights of our year was our trip to Hong Kong Disneyland, for which we obtained 40 complimentary tickets. This memorable afternoon allowed our volunteers to bring underprivileged students from Tung Chung to enjoy the magic of Disney, creating joyful memories and fostering a sense of inclusion and happiness.

Another significant event was the 'Heroes Among Us' Gala Dinner, celebrating LEC's 7<sup>th</sup> anniversary. With over 90 guests and volunteers in attendance, the evening was not only a celebration of our achievements but also an opportunity for attendees to dress as their heroes, fostering inspiration and appreciation.

Through these initiatives, we continue to build a stronger, more compassionate community. Together, we can promote volunteerism in our community and church, creating lasting impacts and bringing hope to those in need!



**Leslie Au**

(New volunteer, 2025 entry)

I have been participating in the Between Volunteer Team for nearly a year. I am very grateful that the Cathedral has given me many opportunities to fully realise my potential in contacting and helping others. During this period, I have participated in various volunteer activities, including serving visually impaired individuals and assisting the elderly. These experiences have been invaluable to me. While helping others, my heart has also been enriched. I have learned how to better serve others through volunteering. Through the volunteer training, I was able to interact with other volunteers, make more friends, and build my self-confidence and interpersonal skills.



**Easton Chan**

(Highest volunteering service hours in 2025)

I have been volunteering with the Between Volunteer Team at the LEC for the past 2 years. This experience has been meaningful, going beyond merely dedicating my passion to social service. It is about connecting with people in the community, learning from them, and growing shoulder to shoulder. Every visit, every activity, and every smile reminds me of the power of empathy and the importance of connection between people.

I have supported a wide range of service users, from the elderly to individuals with disabilities and SEN students. I have learned to put myself in others' shoes and to listen with patience and sincerity. These experiences have strengthened my confidence, especially in communication and teamwork.

After participating in various events, I have realised that making a difference or helping others doesn't require something grand. All it takes is a willing heart. I am truly grateful to be a part of the Between Volunteer Team, and I look forward to continuing my journey of service and growth!



Scan the QR code  
and join Between  
Volunteer Team!



# THE DIVINE TOUCH

**Hark the Angel's Sing!**  
Which Christmas songs  
(or songs over Christmas)  
touches you most? Let us  
share our favourite tunes!

ANDREW LIM



Is *The Angelus* a Christmas carol? In many ways, yes, because the Marian devotion is deeply linked to the mystery at the heart of Christmas: The Incarnation of Christ. This arrangement, often heard in Anglo-Catholic parishes, is by Shane Fletcher, former Director of Music at St Mary's, Bourne Street.

We recall the Annunciation, honour the Blessed Virgin Mary's acceptance, reflect on Christ's physical presence, and ask for Mary's intercession. The devotion ends with a collect on Christ's Passion, a reminder that Christmas and Easter are inseparable. Such a timely reminder that Christmas is only the beginning of His mission on Earth!

*The Angelus* invites us to journey with Mary from the Annunciation the Nativity, meditating on the miracle of God entering our world. 'The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.' What better way to celebrate the Incarnation of Christ than to honour His Mother, the Theotokos?

The Angelus

1.07 ————— -1.49



Every Christmas, new songs fill the air, but beyond the music lies a deeper message. Christmas is not only a season of lights and gifts but the celebration of God's greatest gift, the birth of Jesus Christ. In the middle of exams and daily stress, I often forget this truth. Yet Christmas reminds me to pause and let Christ's peace fill my heart again.

The season reminds me to reflect on His love, a love that entered a broken world to bring light and salvation. It reminds me that true joy is not found in presents or romance, but in the presence of God. Through His birth, we are reminded to love others, to forgive, and to serve with compassion.

In this Christmas season, I hope to remember that 'It is truly a blessing to gather together at Christmas'. Merry Christmas, and welcome to His birthday party!

KAMMURI LEE



12 Mirror

1.07 ————— -1.49



MORITZ LEUNG



A Christmas Festival

L. Anderson

1.07 ————— -1.49



*A Christmas Festival* is an orchestral music that includes lots of well-known Christmas. I was delighted to play this piece with some of my friends in an orchestra.

We were rehearsing for this piece before the pandemic and our performance got delayed because of it. It reminds me of how the pandemic changed our lives in those years. Telling us that we should always be grateful for our daily lives, as ordinary and routine events may not always be possible.

When I was a child, I always listened to those Christmas songs in school and in church. As I grow up, there seem to be less Christmas celebration events around me. Lots of things in this world may shift your focus away from the celebratory atmosphere. Let us embrace the Christmas season with gratitude and joy. Enjoy Christmas like how it was when we were children.



*'Let him pluck thee a cherry that brought thee with child.'*

Skeptical, suspicious, perhaps feeling betrayed or even spiteful, that was the instinctive reaction of Joseph when he walked pass a cherry orchard while being told by Mary about the great news of her pregnancy.

Traces of its melody found as far back as the early 15<sup>th</sup> century, *The Cherry Tree Carol* is probably one of oldest songs about the birth of Jesus sung nowadays with somewhat varying versions of lyrics that were reinvented through time.

Has it occurred to you, every now and then, that a sweet moment turned sour because of, if given the chance to think again, a not-really-worth-it perception? That a simple request to celebrate being refused a bit too foolishly instinctively?

Indulge ourselves in the celebration of the arrival of our Saviour. Offer to be the cherry on top when you spread the good news.



JASON WONG

### The Cherry Tree Carol

1.07 ————— -1.49



ELLA TAM



### You Are Not Alone

1.07 ————— -1.49



Happy birthday, Jesus!! On Jesus' birthday party, we, as Christians, fill our Cathedral with multiple Eucharists, hymns, and joy. The Cathedral is large enough to accommodate hundreds of us at a time, allowing us to share this joyous occasion.

The Cathedral is large, yet it still seems too small to celebrate the birthday of the Saviour of the world! Where would be a larger, more splendid venue to hold the birthday party? A ballroom? A cruise? What about the world, for where Jesus himself came?

Holding Jesus' birthday party in the world is a response to his wondrous agape which once deeply touched our hearts. The party could happen when you remember the people sleeping on the streets. It could happen when you reach out to someone brand new. It could happen when you make someone not alone anymore. It happens when love is shared with anyone in the world!

The first Christmas song I learned and still remember is *Santa Claus is Coming to Town*. Its lyrics carry both an upbeat promise and a stern warning to children to behave while waiting for Santa. The repeated 'You better...' hammers home the conditions for landing on the 'nice' list. Maybe it's just a clever adult trick to keep kids from causing trouble—or to get them to bed early so the adults can have their own fun on Christmas Eve.

Growing up, we realise conditional rewards are everywhere: grades for scholarships, KPIs for keeping our jobs, mileage targets for extra perks. Almost everything good seems to come with strings attached.

As Christians, however, we are offered one breathtakingly unconditional gift: our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. In spite of our sins, he came among us and died for us. Christmas celebrates that gift.



JEREMY HSU

### Santa Claus Is Coming To Town

1.07 ————— -1.49



# AMONG US

Text by/  
WIEAN AU,  
JEREMY HSU,  
KAMMURI LEE,  
MORITZ LEUNG,  
ANDREW LIM,  
ELLA TAM,  
& JASON WONG



# SEE YOU LATER, THOMAS

...and thanks for everything

Text by / NATASHANGAN  
Communications Officer

It feels strange to be writing this. For so long, Thomas was just...there. A face you'd see in the office, a voice in the choir stall, someone you could always nod hello to in the Cathedral Garden. His presence was as much a part of the place as the stone itself.

Ask him about his time here, and stories surface. Not of grand milestones, but of small, honest moments that pieced together, tell you exactly what these years have meant.



It all started quite simply, with music. He first walked through our doors in November 2010, drawn by the sound of Choral Mattins. 'I was surprised', he admits. 'It was so elaborate. You don't hear it like that everywhere, even back in the UK'. When asked if he pictured himself still here over a decade later, he laughed. 'Absolutely not. I thought I might sing with the choir for a bit, but work here? I didn't see that coming'.

Anyone who's been around the Cathedral knows Thomas's role put him where the bizarre and the beautiful met. There were wedding flower requests that could 'fill the church completely', or last-minute pleas to somehow 'squeeze in' one more guest. But the memory that sticks with him is quieter. He once found an elderly man sheltering in the garden, who'd been kicked out of his care home. 'He just wanted to stay', Thomas said. 'I managed to link him up with a social worker in the end, get him somewhere safe. That stays with you'.

He's seen every corner of this building, but his favourite spot is the very top of the bell tower. 'I climbed it a few years back', he told me. 'To see the skyline from there... and to think that once, this was the highest point on the island. It gives you a feeling you can't get anywhere else'.

For years, Thomas has lived 2 lives here: the Executive Administrator solving a hundred daily puzzles, and the chorister seeking something sacred. 'They never quite came together for me', he confessed. 'Singing is where I feel close to God. The admin work...that's problem-solving. It's a different part of me'. But he did find moments where the 2 worlds aligned. 'The Carol Service', he said without hesitation. 'When the nave is dark and everyone's holding their candles. You're singing, and the sound rises in that atmosphere... that's when you know exactly why you're here'.







His stories of people are what truly define his time here. There was the visitor, terrified and speaking only Chinese, who believed she was troubled by something dark. Thomas translated for Fr Robert. 'Her whole face, her voice... changed. It was frightening', he recalled. So much so, that before travelling that night, he asked for a blessing at the High Altar. 'For a bit of peace of mind', he shrugged, smiling.

Then there was Mrs June Lee. Just days before she passed away, and in failing health, she came to his office. 'She insisted I help her write her speech for the Michaelmas Fair. Her calmness, her strength...she was like a grandmother to me. That quiet determination to do what's right—I'll carry that forever'.

That word, 'family', came up again and again. 'You feel looked after here', he said. 'It's the staff, the clergy, the choir, people in the pews...we're a proper community. We work together, and we care for each other'.



So, what will he miss? 'The people. Without a doubt, the people'. And what will he take? 'A sense that I got to be part of something much bigger than I ever planned. To help look after this history, this building, this community...it turned into something extraordinary. It surpassed anything I'd dreamed of'.

Thomas, from all of us—thank you. For your steady hand, your kindness, and the music you sang, both in song and in spirit. You've left your mark on this place, and on all of us. We'll miss you terribly.







# ST JOHN'S CATHEDRAL Michaelmas Fair JOY IN UNITY 喜樂同行



This is the day the Lord has made:  
We will rejoice and be glad in it.

Psalm 118.24

Text by / MARQUES NG  
Chairman of Michaelmas Fair 2025

At each year's St John's Cathedral Fair, the late honorary patron Mrs June Li would lovingly open the day's festivities with this psalm—a testament to the fair's significance for generations of parishioners. This deeply traditional and meaningful event has evolved from its origins as a simple fair into a year-round fundraising campaign, uniting cathedral members whilst raising funds for ministries both within and beyond our walls, serving as a splendid opportunity for evangelism. Let us reflect on how this tradition of over 80 years has been carried forward, fulfilling its unique role across changing times.



## Early Origins

The concept of organising a fair was first proposed in 1937 by a group of devoted cathedral congregants. They initially planned a large fête with numerous charity stalls, organised and operated by the Cathedral Women's League, featuring various games and activities to raise funds for cathedral ministries. However, due to numerous uncertainties at the time—such as natural disasters, an epidemic, refugee influxes, and soaring prices—the fair, which was originally scheduled for October, was postponed to December and scaled down to a modest charity sale called a 'Sale of Work'.

The following year, congregants again organised this major event, formally naming it the 'Cathedral Michaelmas Fair'. The origin of the 'Michaelmas' name remains unclear. Some trace it to a medieval custom where farmers, after the annual harvest around the feast day of St Michael and All Angels on 29 September, would seek employment for the coming year at town markets. This tradition gradually evolved into autumn fairs named after Michaelmas across various regions. Since 1938, St John's Cathedral has held this major charitable and entertaining event on the last Saturday of October each year, except during the hiatus from 1940 to 1947 due to the war.



Michaelmas Fair in the 50s



Guests and the Dean



Kids riding pony outside  
Central Government Offices



A fair full of fun activities





## Evolving Traditions

The early Cathedral Fair was an annual highlight for the British community in Hong Kong. Programmes from the 1950s show the committee members included prominent expatriates, and the Governor was invited as the fair's honorary patron. The fair offered diverse activities for all ages: live performances, charity stalls, second-hand goods, lucky draws, game booths, and even a bar and tea café. Women contributed handmade crafts and traditional English baked goods for sale, with fruit cakes and Christmas puddings being particularly popular. Cathedral groups also ran game stalls for children, many featuring a distinct British character, like the 'Coconut Shy' stall long operated by the Servers' Guild—a game which is said to have gained popularity in Britain during the 1890s.

The fair's prominence was reflected in its sponsor list, receiving strong support from major companies and organisations. For instance, the Royal Army Service Corps provided ponies for visitors to ride in the Cathedral Garden. Interestingly, before public health awareness about smoking was widespread, the fair even featured British-American Tobacco as a sponsor, which offered premium cigarettes as prizes at the dart-throwing booth.



## A Unifying Fellowship

As society and demographics changed, the Cathedral's role gradually evolved. The Cathedral Fair transformed from an event for a specific community into an opportunity to unite congregants, cathedral schools, and social service organisations. The organising committee now comprises congregants of diverse nationalities, and the fair actively involves many Anglican institutions, including local schools, St James' Settlement, and the S.K.H. Mrs MacLehose Centre. Though times change, congregants strive to preserve the fair's traditional character—many classic activities can still be enjoyed today. Visitors come specially for the homemade jams, anticipate socialising in the Beer & Wine Garden, and donate books and stamps each summer. The White Elephant stall always draws queues on fair day. This enduring legacy, sustained through the dedication of successive committees, cathedral members, and participating groups, has kept the fair's spirit alive since 1937.

The fair's activities have also expanded beyond October to accommodate different groups. The annual spring sponsored walk attracts over 500 participants, including congregants, teachers, and students, who enjoy striving to be the first to reach Victoria Peak. Some students have been deeply moved by the cathedral family's warmth during the post-walk luncheons. Recent years have introduced mid-year fundraisers like dumpling-making classes, concerts, and the eagerly awaited Family Fun Night charity supper. These gatherings offer opportunities for fellowship and for inviting friends to experience church life. As this year's fair chaplain, Fr Robert Martin, reminds us, the Cathedral Fair today is a fellowship initiative led by congregants, blending fundraising, community-building, and evangelism.



# Carrying the Torch Forward

As this year's fair committee chairman, I've witnessed both challenges and blessings in building this fellowship. During the pandemic, activities were scaled down or moved online, but we've now returned to normal operations, seeing God's faithful guidance throughout. Additionally, with the cathedral comprising diverse cultural and national groups, along with other participating organisations, the committee continually works to connect everyone together. Yet God's provision is always sufficient. I recall last year's fair coinciding with a typhoon; although the event was officially cancelled, congregants returned to the cathedral in the afternoon after the signal was lowered, sharing prepared goods and food, and turning the day into a precious, unplanned fellowship.

Whilst the fair must adapt in form and content to the times, what must never change—besides certain cherished traditions—is the spirit of unity and responsiveness among brothers and sisters. The turnout of our parishioners on 25 October this year was heartwarming. We were thrilled to have over 40 stalls and 12 performing groups contribute to the success of the fair.

## Heart Witness

♥ Alexander Kwan, a lifelong cathedral chorister, has witnessed the fair's evolution over 50 years. His choir fellowship previously ran lucky dips, 'Wheel of Fortune', and game booths. Alexander recalls that in the 1950s–60s, before Central's skyscrapers were built, the fair extended into Murray Parade Ground (now Cheung Kong Center) and the Central Government Offices garden. It was once one of Hong Kong's largest fêtes, featuring not only popular charity and second-hand stalls but also special attractions for children—including a temporary cable car shuttling between the cathedral and government offices! Unique homemade items and affordable second-hand treasures attracted congregants from other parishes, local residents, and office workers. Alexander believes the fair has played a vital role in uniting the community as an important outreach ministry.



♥ Yvette Li, this year's fair vice-chair, is Mrs June Li's granddaughter. She fondly recalls her grandmother's love for festive touches: 'Grandma invited my younger brother to dress as a clown at the fair. Seeing him in costume was very funny! She also had children dress as Spider-Man and Beauty and the Beast characters, handing out sweets around the fairground—creating a joyful atmosphere and making it a meaningful family effort'. Since her grandmother's passing, Yvette has continued her legacy, making traditional jams and baked goods so congregants can still enjoy 'Auntie June's Home Produce'. At a recent spring sale, her items sold out within 15 minutes—a touching tribute to a beloved tradition.



## Do You Know?

**Early fair programmes included a 'Do You Know?' column sharing cathedral anecdotes. Let's revisit some lesser-known facts about St John's Cathedral:**

At one time the Cathedral, in accordance with ancient custom, was never locked—until one morning the clergy discovered that the Cross and the Candlesticks from the High Altar had been stolen. Recovering stolen property in those days was fairly simple if one were quick enough! They hurried to 'Cat Street' and redeemed the sacred ornaments very reasonably, since the dealer not only realised where they had been stolen from, but also perceived that their golden sheen came from well-polished brass, not the solid gold that the thief had hopefully imagined!

Why the Peak Tram begins half-way up Garden Road and not at sea-level? Because in 1909 the Church Body successfully protested against a proposal to erect steel trestles for carrying the Tram past the East end of the Cathedral.

Electric fans replaced the punkahs (operated by young coolie boys, who tied the strings to one big toe, lay back and sleepily wagged their foot) in 1921, after one preacher chose the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment for the text of his sermon!





# AN ADVENT MESSAGE OF GRATITUDE FROM

## *the Mission for Migrant Workers*

Text by / JOHANNIE TONG  
Community Relations Officer of MEMW

With hearts overflowing with gratitude as we enter the Christmas season, we pause to give thanks for our St John's Cathedral family and for all who have supported the Mission for Migrant Workers across the Hong Kong community. Together, we have made our 44<sup>th</sup> year truly blessed.

As we look toward 2026 and our 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we remember the call of Jesus to love the least and the last in our midst. We continue to offer essential services to migrant domestic workers in crisis at all times, trusting in the prayers and steadfast support of our community, near and far, to sustain our mission.

This year, we have witnessed many young volunteers serving in our office and beyond—on Sundays at our outreach, at the walk-in centre during the week, and in teaching language, arts, and crafts to residents of our shelter awaiting their cases. Our partnership with the Life Enrichment Centre (LEC) has deepened, as local youth and migrant workers alike have learned from one another, celebrating a shared community while learning about cultural differences with grace. Together we have provided training on scam prevention, empowering workers to guard themselves and the families they serve.

Our quarterly Give Care to Our Caregiver (GCC) outreach fairs remain among our greatest joys. These one-day events allow us to minister free services, including chiropractic care, acupuncture, dental checks, and massage—ensuring access to care that might otherwise be out of reach. This year, we have welcomed new partners who have enriched our offerings. We, together with the migrants we serve, look forward to our annual 4<sup>th</sup> quarter GCC at St John's Cathedral as we observe International Migrants Day on 18 December. It is a blessing to close the year at home, beside our Christmas tree of wishes, where migrants share their desires and receive a token of our love.

Our community of support extends beyond Hong Kong, as former interns and volunteers stay connected, inviting friends to join us. We rejoice in ecumenical partnership and in time spent with migrant-service colleagues during the recent International Migrants Alliance General Assembly—a gathering that was replete with reunions, testimonies on the ever-changing needs of migrant workers worldwide, and commitments to unite in service.

In this season of giving, we acknowledge that many migrant workers face a difficult holiday. For many, Christmas means being apart from family—missing the travel, gatherings, shared meals, and the gift of presence—while others long to be home. We pledge to be a warm and welcoming home for all who seek counsel, a compassionate embrace, and moments of joy and laughter amid longing. We celebrate with the migrants we serve, sharing comforting meals, simple gifts, and games, and lifting up favourite dishes from their homelands while reminding each other that we are not alone.

As 2025 draws to a close, we look forward to strengthening partnerships and deepening connections in the year ahead. We give heartfelt thanks to every migrant who has told friends of us, to the volunteers who tirelessly support our mission, to our St John's Cathedral family for being a beacon of light, and to our sponsors whose generosity makes our work possible. Your steadfast commitment testifies to the strength of our community. We eagerly anticipate continuing this important journey together, building a more inclusive and loving home for all God's people.





## TEENS SMART—

Healthy Teens Project  
2025

Text by / RAY WONG  
Project Officer of LEC

We are grateful to our heavenly Father for the successful completion of the 2025 Teens Smart Internship Programme. This internship was a core part of the 'Teens Smart-Healthy Teens Project', a 2-year initiative that remains ongoing. Organised by St John's Cathedral Life Enrichment Centre (LEC) and funded by the St John's Cathedral Endowment Fund, the project aims to promote the positive physical, psychological, social, and spiritual health of teenagers. To achieve this, the 'Teens Smart' project offers a variety of activities—including awareness talks, internship opportunities, healthy activities, and support groups—designed to prevent internet addiction and equip participants with the skills to lead healthier lives.

From the opening ceremony in May 2025 to a series of training sessions on working attitudes, communication, social skills, and healthy activities, the internship programme brought together 24 mentees and 9 mentors who worked diligently to prepare for the summer placement. These training sessions offered valuable opportunities for teenagers to deepen their understanding of society beyond school. Upon completing the preparatory phase, mentees embarked on internships at 6 different organisations during July and August: LEC, Stewards High Rock Centre, St John's Cathedral Bookstore, St Paul's Church, Foodpanda, and Mission For Migrant Workers. They served in a variety of roles—including bookstore assistant, campsite assistant, teen activities assistant, storekeeper, and office assistant. Through these experiences, they gained meaningful insights into organisational operations, strengthened their communication skills by engaging with diverse individuals in the workplace, and developed greater independence and problem-solving abilities.

In this programme, mentors accompanied mentees throughout the training sessions, offering guidance and suggestions. By sharing their own work and life experiences, the mentors provided encouragement and support that the teenagers agreed significantly boosted their confidence. Nearly all participants reported improved communication skills and a greater willingness to engage with people from different backgrounds.

We extend our sincere gratitude to all the participating organisations for their support and for providing a learning space for the mentees this summer. Not only did they offer valuable internship opportunities, but they also imparted essential work attitudes and skills, enabling the mentees to discover their strengths and interests in an encouraging environment. Witnessing their growth over the summer has been the most rewarding outcome for our centre. We hope this experience will continue to motivate them as they face future challenges.

Apart from the internship programme, we also organise a variety of activities for participants, such as sand art, leather crafting, ninja sports, terrarium workshops, and neon art sessions. Building on last year's success, the popular magic workshop and yoga experience have been incorporated into the internship programme, further strengthening the interaction and mutual understanding between mentors and mentees. These wellness-oriented initiatives offer young people meaningful opportunities to relax and explore interests beyond their screens, gently guiding them toward more balanced ways of spending their time.

Moreover, these activities are designed to foster self-expression, build confidence, and promote mental well-being. Through creative engagement and skill development, we aim to nurture social connectedness and gently encourage adolescents toward more balanced and purposeful lives.



# PARTICIPANTS' FEEDBACK

## Zoe Chan (Intern, LEC)

'This internship gave me a brand-new experience. Over the 12-day internship, I became familiar with the centre's operations and learned practical skills such as using Canva and laminating. I also discovered how to plan an event through the egg tart workshop—from drafting the initial plan and researching different recipes to conducting the final trial. The steps involved and the division of labour made me more confident in planning future events, and I came to appreciate the importance of early preparation. What impressed me most was the Among Us event held every Friday night. Through this activity, I met many people from different backgrounds and broadened my horizons.'



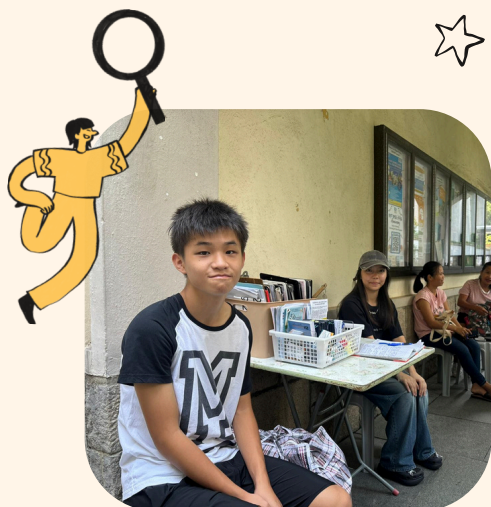
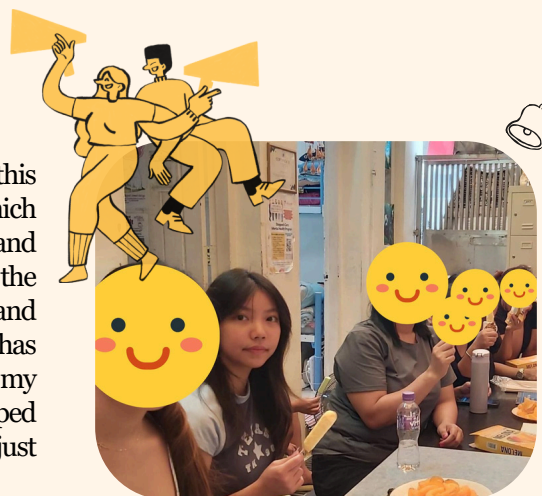
## Kai Kai Wu (Intern, LEC)

'Honestly, the month just flew by in the blink of an eye! Though brief, this experience was incredibly fulfilling—it felt like being thrown from the school comfort zone right into the real world. One especially memorable experience was helping run an egg tart baking workshop. I learned how to make them from online videos, bought tools and ingredients, wrote the plan, and followed through from start to finish. Throughout the process, I also became more aware of my own shortcomings and how I can improve. For example, I should be more proactive by asking. Communication is key: every time I finished a task, I needed to let the person who assigned it know so they could guide me or assign the next step based on my progress. All in all, even though it was only a month, this was truly a valuable life lesson. It gave me real insight into the workplace and helped me figure out my future path. The best part was meeting such great colleagues and realising that I've got what it takes!'



## Jessica Quan (Intern, MFMW)

'I am very glad to have participated in LEC's internship experience programme this summer. Before the internship began, we attended several training sessions, which were both enriching and interesting. I learned a variety of essential social and professional skills for the workplace. Once the internship officially started, the supervisors at MFMW were very supportive, providing timely feedback and encouragement that helped me adapt more easily. Overall, this experience has been incredibly rewarding. I not only made new friends but also broadened my horizons and explored things beyond the regular classroom setting. It also helped me recognise my own value. So, if you're feeling lost about your future goals—just as I was at the beginning—this is an opportunity you definitely shouldn't miss!'



## Moses Leung (Intern, MFMW)

'There was a lot more than just office work. For example, I got the chance to attend the IFI celebration with many Filipinos, and the priest even explained the history of IFI to me. The highlight of the internship was definitely visiting the Bethune House and meeting the residents there. Being at the Bethune House really made me see the harsh reality that migrant workers have to experience. One of the residents told me that she faced physical abuse, discrimination, and was even required to work on holidays, which are important to domestic workers. I could really feel their struggles and felt sorry for what they had gone through. Despite all this, they still showed a bright smile every time we visited and always welcomed us to the shelter.'

Overall, I had a great experience being an intern at MFMW. I learned a lot about the situation of migrant workers, and I am very thankful that I had the chance to help them throughout the internship.'



# GROUNDING *in Grace*

Text by / THE REV. DREW COURTRIGHT

St John's mission statement reads as follows: 'St John's Cathedral is a place of God's grace, welcoming all, following Christ and changing lives in the heart of Hong Kong.' It is simple, elegant, profound, and accurate! But what does it truly mean to be a 'place of God's grace'? What is 'Grace'? This was the subject of our 'Grace in a Busy Week' series this past November, which included my talk, 'Grounded in Grace'. Over 3 Thursdays, I presented Grace—God's unmerited, one-way love for sinners—as both the foundation and the culmination of the Church and its mission. We explored how Grace impacts our spiritual lives, our relationships, and the Church's purpose in the world. In case you missed it, here is a brief summary.

The question 'What is Grace?' is best answered by reframing it. Not what, but WHO is Grace? The answer is Jesus Christ. Jesus is the embodiment of Grace. His one-way love for sinners is the very definition of Grace. Jesus illustrated Grace first through His teaching and healing ministry. Examples abound—the workers who only worked 1 hour receive a full day's wage; a little boy's snack feeds 5,000 men; Jesus chooses to dine with sinners and tax collectors; the seed is sown everywhere, even if most of it will not bear fruit; the shepherd leaves the 99 to search for the 1 lost sheep; the best wine (in abundance!) is saved for last; and 'the first shall be last, and the last shall be first'. How did people respond to Jesus' ministry of Grace for the least, the lost, and the last? They crucified him. But then he rose from the dead, and the same disciples who had abandoned Him suddenly realised the depth of God's Grace in Jesus Christ—that even in their sin, weakness, and fear, Christ gave His life as a ransom for many. The same is true for you and me, Jesus' followers today. We follow, we trust, we listen, and we believe. And then we sin, we fear, we doubt, we fail. We go back and forth from being lost and found, last and first, sinner and saint. Yet God's Grace remains. It is the rock upon which we build our flimsy houses of faith.



Our spiritual lives, grounded in grace, are therefore best summed up by the prayer from Mark 9.22-24 of the father whose son was possessed by a demon. He said to Jesus, 'if you can do anything, have pity on us and help us.' Jesus replied, "If you can?" Everything is possible for one who believes.' Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, 'I believe; help my unbelief.' Jesus knows we believe, and He knows we need help with our unbelief.



Knowing He is gracious to us, that ‘everything is possible for one who believes’, enables us to come back to Jesus when we are lost, trusting that His *‘mercies are new every morning’*—Lamentations 3.23, and that there is *‘more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over 99 righteous persons who do not need to repent’*—Luke 15.7. It only takes a mustard seed of faith to be covered in God’s Grace.

Understanding this about our own spiritual lives helps us to show that same kind of Grace in our relationships. How do we respond when someone messes up? What do we say and do when someone hurts us or something we care about? How did the Father respond when the Prodigal Son squandered his share of the inheritance and returned full of shame? He threw a party! Not because the Father agreed with or condoned the wayward actions—far from it!—but because his son was back. He had been lost and was now found. He had been dead and was now alive. When someone is lost in their own self-centredness (like the son in the distant country), there is not much we can do to change their ways. The Father does not chase after him, he does not try to fix or control him, and he certainly does not enable him. He watches and waits for a change of heart, and when the son returns, he does not scold or lecture him. Instead, he rejoices that the relationship is restored and lavishes him with love and grace. Have you ever been shown love and favour when you least deserved it? That is Grace. And I bet it made you *want* to be better, rather than simply feel you ought to be. That is what God’s Grace in Jesus Christ does for those who put their trust in Him. And then God uses us—people who have been renewed and reborn by His Grace—as instruments of that Grace in the world.

This is why the Church exists—to be the place where the message of God’s Grace in Jesus Christ is proclaimed and embodied by the power of the Holy Spirit through Word and Sacrament. Grace is the beginning of the Church. Peter denied Jesus 3 times, and then, after breakfast on the beach, the Risen Lord showed Peter Grace by letting him affirm 3 times that he loved Jesus. That is the ‘rock’ on which the Church was built: gracious favour for a fearful sinner. Grace is how Peter went from denying Christ to giving up his life to tell the world that Jesus rose from the dead and that there is new life for all who believe in Him. Everything about Church is about directing our attention and our hearts to this enabling word. From the architecture to the liturgy, the music to the stained glass, the bread and wine to the preached word—it is Grace, Grace, Grace. Because that is the only thing that makes the Church unique! Without Grace, we would simply be an historical society, a concert hall, a social services provider, or a community-building organisation. These are all aspects of Church life, but they must stem from and move towards God’s Grace. Sadly, churches that lose sight of this tend to become dominated by one of those aspects, to the detriment of the Good News of God’s Grace. When leadership puts the cart before the horse, we get off track, fast. No church is immune to this, which is why we must stay close to Grace. When we look at the plank in our own eye, when we recognise our continual need for God’s Grace like the tax collector, and when we humbly pray, ‘Lord, I believe; help my unbelief’, then we can, indeed, by God’s Grace, be a ‘place of God’s grace, welcoming all, following Christ and changing lives in the heart of Hong Kong.’





# MORE THAN A MEAL

## *The Curry Supper Builds Community*

Text by / FRANK LANG

Earlier this year, the Cathedral launched a simple yet heartfelt initiative—the Curry Supper—a time for parishioners to gather, share a meal, and strengthen our sense of community beyond Sunday worship. Held after the 5.00pm Evensong service, the idea was to offer an opportunity for fellowship across different congregations and for clergy and parishioners alike to serve one another in a spirit of warmth and friendship.

Why curry? Apart from being delicious and easy to prepare, it lends itself perfectly to a potluck-style gathering—everyone bringing a dish, a flavour, and a story to the table. The event began earlier this year with a Curry Supper hosted by the Servers and has grown steadily in both attendance and enthusiasm. Since then, suppers have been hosted by the clergy, the Servers, the Filipino Fellowship, the Evensong Choir, and most recently, the Sidesmen Guild, who hosted the 4<sup>th</sup> Curry Supper in grand style.

This latest gathering saw over 80 parishioners coming together—our largest turnout yet! It was a wonderful mix of people from different services and ministries, a visible reminder that it is God who provides and brings us together as one family in Christ. The tables were laden with a delightful variety of dishes—from spicy curries and hearty lasagne to fresh salads and irresistible desserts like apple crumble, bread and butter pudding, and ice cream. Beverages flowed just as generously, with everything from champagne and wine to Baileys and beer, as well as different soft drinks.

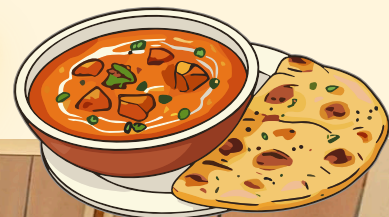
What stood out most was not only the abundance of food, the spirit of gratitude, service, and joy that filled the evening. Conversations and laughter filled the Harold Smyth Room long after the plates were cleared.



As we look back with thanksgiving, we also give thanks for every group that has hosted a Curry Supper so far, each adding their own flavour—literally and figuratively—to this growing tradition of fellowship. The Curry Supper has become a lovely reminder that God builds His community not only through worship, but also through simple acts of sharing, serving, and being together.

May we continue to meet, serve, and celebrate in His love in the year ahead.

**Keep calm &  
CURRY ON!**





# NEW FACES



## *in the Cathedral Office*

### **Daniel Kong – Verger**

I am delighted to have joined the team at St John's Cathedral in late October as the new Verger. I was confirmed as an Anglican here in 2016, having been baptized as an evangelical 2 years earlier. Of mixed Filipino-Chinese heritage, my journey at St John's began with the Pilipino ministry under the Revd Dwight dela Torre and the Revd Sharon Langbis. This later expanded to serving at daily Eucharists and, for the past 3 years, Sunday services.

Coming from my 'previous' life as a digital marketing expert, I find the transition to my current role as Head Verger to be a natural one. I believe the same standards of precision, commitment to quality service, and interpersonal communication skills are highly transferable and will help me excel in this new chapter of my church service.

## *in Life Enrichment Centre*

### **David Lam – Centre Supervisor of LEC**

Hi! I'm David, and since mid-October, it's been a joy to join the St John's Cathedral family as Centre Supervisor at the Life Enrichment Centre. With over a decade of experience in the social work field—especially in youth work—this new role is a meaningful continuation of my journey.

I'm a member of The Church of Christ in China Wanchai Church, and someone who finds joy in reading, swimming, and connecting with people. You'll often find me around the Cathedral—feel free to say hi, I'd love to chat!



### **Joyce Lee – Project Assistant**

Hello everyone! I'm Joyce. Love, connection, and authenticity are what light me up. At LEC, I'm part of the Once Vocal and Once Theatre teams as a project assistant. I believe arts are a powerful medium for self-expression and connection, and I'm thrilled to be part of this vibrant community.

I find great excitement in exploring possibilities around the world. Beyond drama, I'm an improviser and enjoy activities like karate, playing the piano, and running. You might encounter me in some unexpected scenarios! Feel free to kick off our friendship journey by saying 'hi'!





## Opening Ceremony

The SPCC Life Building Mentorship Project 2025–26 officially commenced with an Opening Ceremony attended by 43 participants. Present were our Dean, the Very Revd Kwok-keung Chan, and the Revd Amos Poon, our devoted church members who serve faithfully as mentors, the mentees together with their parents, and alumni from past years.

The alumni offered heartfelt reflections on their unforgettable experiences and valuable learnings from the mentorship journey. They also shared updates on their current school life and practical tips for navigating the challenges of Form 1, inspiring this year's mentees with wisdom, encouragement, and support.

In addition to the alumni sharing, interactive games were prepared to help participants get to know one another. The atmosphere was energetic, with mentees and mentors happily introducing themselves and expressing their creativity. They were divided into 4 groups and designed unique team flags that will symbolise their identity and spirit throughout this year's project.



We were honoured to have Ms Joanna Wong, one of our mentors, lead a 30-minute guided tour for the mentees and parents to explore the historic St John's Cathedral with its 176 years of history. She thoughtfully introduced the cathedral's rich heritage, highlighting its architectural features and spiritual significance, allowing participants to gain a deeper appreciation of this treasured landmark.

## Flyball Activity

On 1 November, we played flyball at the Indoor Game Hall of SPCC. Flyball is a new sport that combines elements of badminton, baseball, and tennis. It is suitable for all ages as it uses lightweight equipment, is easy to learn, and involves little physical contact. The instructors taught us how to control our strength and how to sway the ball in both straight and curved lines. We were then divided

# THE SPCC LIFE BUILDING MENTORSHIP PROJECT 2025-26

into pairs and 2 groups for practice. Participants felt satisfied when they successfully caught the ball with their rackets or at the cage door. After the practice, we played 3 matches to apply the skills we had learned and to foster team communication and spirit. Everyone enjoyed the activity and highlighted the importance of helping each other out.

## 'Among Us' Youth Ministry

The 'Among Us' Youth Ministry joyfully celebrated its 4<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in September! We are deeply grateful to witness our community continue to grow, as more young people in Hong Kong embrace their passion for Christianity and build friendships rooted in shared faith. With hearts full of hope and faith, we look forward not only to the next 4 years, but to countless years ahead filled with fellowship, growth, and God's abundant blessings.

Our youth ministry activities usually take place at the Cathedral, but from time to time we step beyond its walls to engage with the wider community and broaden members' experiences. On 24 October, we organised a citywalk-style activity that included visits to St Luke's Church and St Stephen's Church. At St Stephen's Church, we were honoured to be guided by the Revd Canon IP and the Revd Polly Wong, who shared deeper insights and introduced us to the beauty of its historical design, highlighting remarkable features such as the Stations of the Cross mural and the Crown of Thorns light.





# Cathedral News

## SJCCS AT THE HONG KONG MENTAL HEALTH CONFERENCE

Text by /  
DR ALEX LI  
Director of St. John's Cathedral Counselling Service

The Hong Kong Mental Health Conference 2025, organised by Mind HK (香港心聆), took place from 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> November 2025. The conference featured over 30 sessions with more than 110 speakers, addressing various subjects related to supporting mental health during life transitions.

It was a powerfully organised conference, and St John's Cathedral Counselling Service was honoured to be a supporting organisation among the many sponsors, academic partners, and community partners that contributed to its success.

When St John's Cathedral Counselling Service was offered the opportunity to help bring Professor Dixon Chibanda's vision of the Friendship Bench to Hong Kong through the Erin Hung Studio, it was an unmissable prospect.

Hearing Professor Chibanda speak passionately about the project he initiated in Zimbabwe over the past 20 years—training grandmothers to offer low-intensity therapy to the community from Friendship Benches—reminded us of the work being achieved by Mind HK's iACT programme here in our Hong Kong community.

Erin's artistic interpretation was unveiled as the 'Connection Bench' on the conference's opening day. The bench now has a permanent home in the waiting area of St John's Cathedral Counselling Service. We hope it will be enjoyed by all who visit us and trust our team with their mental health care.



## SIDESMEN GUILD FIRST AID TRAINING

Text by /  
FRANK LANG

Earlier in November, members of the Sidesmen Guild & Cathedral Minders took part in a first aid training workshop conducted by St John Ambulance at Li Hall. The 3-hour session combined essential principles with hands-on practice, helping participants strengthen skills for real-life emergencies.

Topics included bleeding control, shock, heart attack response, fractures, burns, choking, and the recovery position. The practical training boosted confidence and preparedness among those responsible for the safety and care of the cathedral community.

## LAY MINISTERS FOR EUCHARIST TRAINING

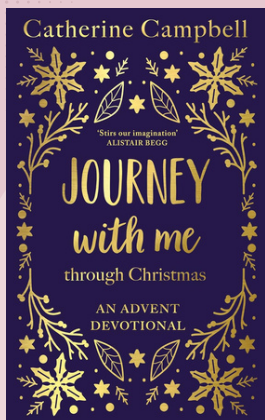
Fr Robert Martin led a special training session in November for parishioners serving as Lay Ministers for the Eucharist. The half-day programme explored the meaning and practice of the sacrament and Anglican teaching to deepen participants' understanding of grace and communion.

Through reflection and discussion, Fr Robert highlighted the themes of thanksgiving, remembrance, and self-offering at the heart of the Eucharist. Participants also considered the significance of giving communion and the diversity of those who receive it. The session closed with prayer and renewed commitment to serve faithfully at the Lord's Table.





# WHAT ARE WE reading?



## JOURNEY WITH ME THROUGH CHRISTMAS: AN ADVENT DEVOTIONAL CATHERINE CAMPBELL

In this 25-day Advent devotional, Catherine Campbell invites you to journey with her through the Christmas season.

Featuring her usual blend of biblical retelling, thought-provoking insights, and godly encouragement, *Journey With Me Through Christmas* accompanies you through the anticipation of the coming of Jesus Christ, leading you to a place of worship and hope.

## JOY TO THE WORLD CARRIE GRANT

In this joyful and surprising collection, award-winning broadcasters and musicians Carrie and David Grant open the songbook of Christmas—from ancient carols to modern chart-toppers.

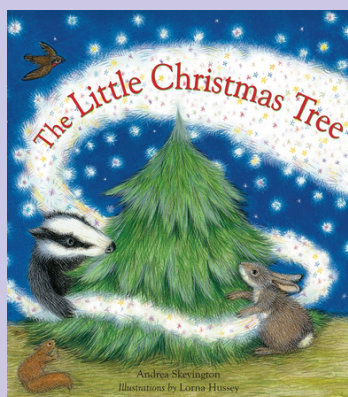
With behind-the-scenes stories, personal memories, and reflections on the hope at the heart of the season, this beautiful gift book will help you hear these songs in a whole new way—and remind you why they matter more than ever.



## THE LITTLE CHRISTMAS TREE ANDREA SKEVINGTON

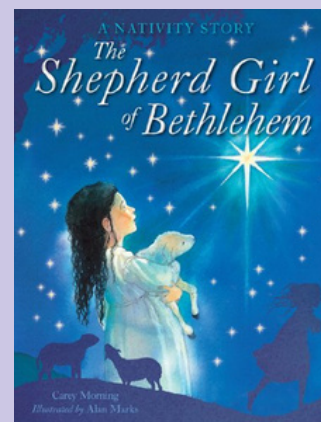
The grand, proud trees, oak, sycamore, and birch, are determined to fight the storm wind. But the little fir tree knows that it is more important to shelter the frightened birds and animals. When the storm wreaks destruction, she alone is unharmed. And far away, that very night, a baby is born in a manger.

The angels who herald the baby's birth scatter shimmering stars as they pass the forest. On which tree do the stars rest? The little fir tree, the one who had shown love. A beautiful picture book with a sparkly surprise on the last page!



## THE SHEPHERD GIRL OF BETHLEHEM: A NATIVITY STORY CAREY MORNING

A little shepherd girl loves her father greatly and adores spending time with him on the hillside, tending his flocks. But one night, he is called away and she can't find him. She anxiously searches high and low, eventually finding him at a stable in Bethlehem, where her journey ends with a most glorious discovery. Alan Marks' illustrations—crafted in detailed ink and deep watercolour washes—flow through the pages, taking the story toward its colourful and evocative end.



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# Discovery Bay Church

SKH Wei Lun Primary School, Lantau

## Christmas Eve

6.00pm

Christingle Service  
with Nativity Play

## Christmas Day

10.00am

Sung Eucharist

Tel: 2987 4210

Website:



# Emmanuel Church

Béthanie Chapel  
139 Pok Fu Lam Road, Pok Fu Lam

## Christmas Eve

10.00pm

Midnight Mass  
of the Nativity

## Christmas Day

10.30am

Family Eucharist  
with Carols

## The First Sunday of Christmas

10.30am

Sung Eucharist  
with Sunday School

Tel: 2523 4157

Website:



# St Stephen's Chapel

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

## Christmas Eve

5.00pm

Crib Service

11.00pm

Midnight Mass  
of the Nativity

## Christmas Day

10.00am

Sung Eucharist

Tel: 2813 0408

Website:



## St John's Cathedral

4-8 Garden Road, Central, Hong Kong

Tel: 2523 4157

Fax: 2521 7830

Email: [general@stjohnscathedral.org.hk](mailto:general@stjohnscathedral.org.hk)

## Dean

The Very Revd Kwok-keung Chan

## Cathedral Chaplains

The Revd Canon Dwight dela Torre

The Revd Canon Peter Koon

The Revd Sharon Langbis

The Revd Amos Poon

The Revd Drew Courtright

(Chaplain and Priest-in-Charge of Discovery Bay Church)

The Revd Robert Martin CMP

(Chaplain and Priest-in-Charge of Emmanuel Church)

The Revd Will Newman

(Chaplain and Priest-in-Charge of St Stephen's Chapel)

## Cathedral Honorary Chaplains

The Revd Professor Philip Wickeri

The Revd Polly Wong Heung-fong

## Executive Administrator

Thomas Li

## Director of Music

Felix Yeung

## Assistant Director of Music

Alan Tsang

## Organist

Jonathan Yip

## Communications Officer

Natasha Ngan

## Verger

Daniel Kong

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## Head Sidesman

Frank Lang

## In Touch Editorial Team

Natasha Ngan - Designer & Editor

Christine Tsang - Designer

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# Advent & Christmas

SUN 30 NOV

## THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

*(Sunday Services as normal)*

5.00PM | 'LOOKING FOR THE LIGHT'  
A SERVICE FOR THE BEGINNING OF ADVENT

SUN 7 DEC

## THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

*(Sunday Services as normal)*

SUN 14 DEC

## THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

*(Sunday Services as normal)*

5.00PM | 'BLUE CHRISTMAS' EUCHARIST  
A SERVICE FOR THOSE MOURNING A LOSS  
THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON

SAT 20 DEC

*(Sunday Services as normal)*

6.00PM | CHINESE CAROL SERVICE WITH EUCHARIST

SUN 21 DEC

## THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

*(Sunday Services as normal)*

9.00AM | SUNG EUCHARIST  
WITH NATIVITY PLAY

5.00PM | A FESTIVAL OF NINE LESSONS  
AND CAROLS

WED 24 DEC

## CHRISTMAS EVE

3.00PM | CRIB SERVICE

4.30PM | CHRISTINGLE SERVICE

*(The Cathedral will be closed from  
6.00pm for preparation)*

11.00PM | MIDNIGHT MASS OF THE NATIVITY  
AND BLESSING OF THE CRIB  
*(Admission ticket required)*

THU 25 DEC

## CHRISTMAS DAY

8.00AM | SAID EUCHARIST

9.00AM | SUNG EUCHARIST

10.30AM | SUNG EUCHARIST (MANDARIN)

11.45AM | RESPONSORIAL EUCHARIST  
WITH CAROLS

1.30PM | SUNG EUCHARIST (PHILIPPINO)

*(No Evening Service)*

WED 31 DEC

## NEW YEAR'S EVE

11.00PM | WATCHNIGHT EUCHARIST  
A SERVICE TO WELCOME THE NEW YEAR