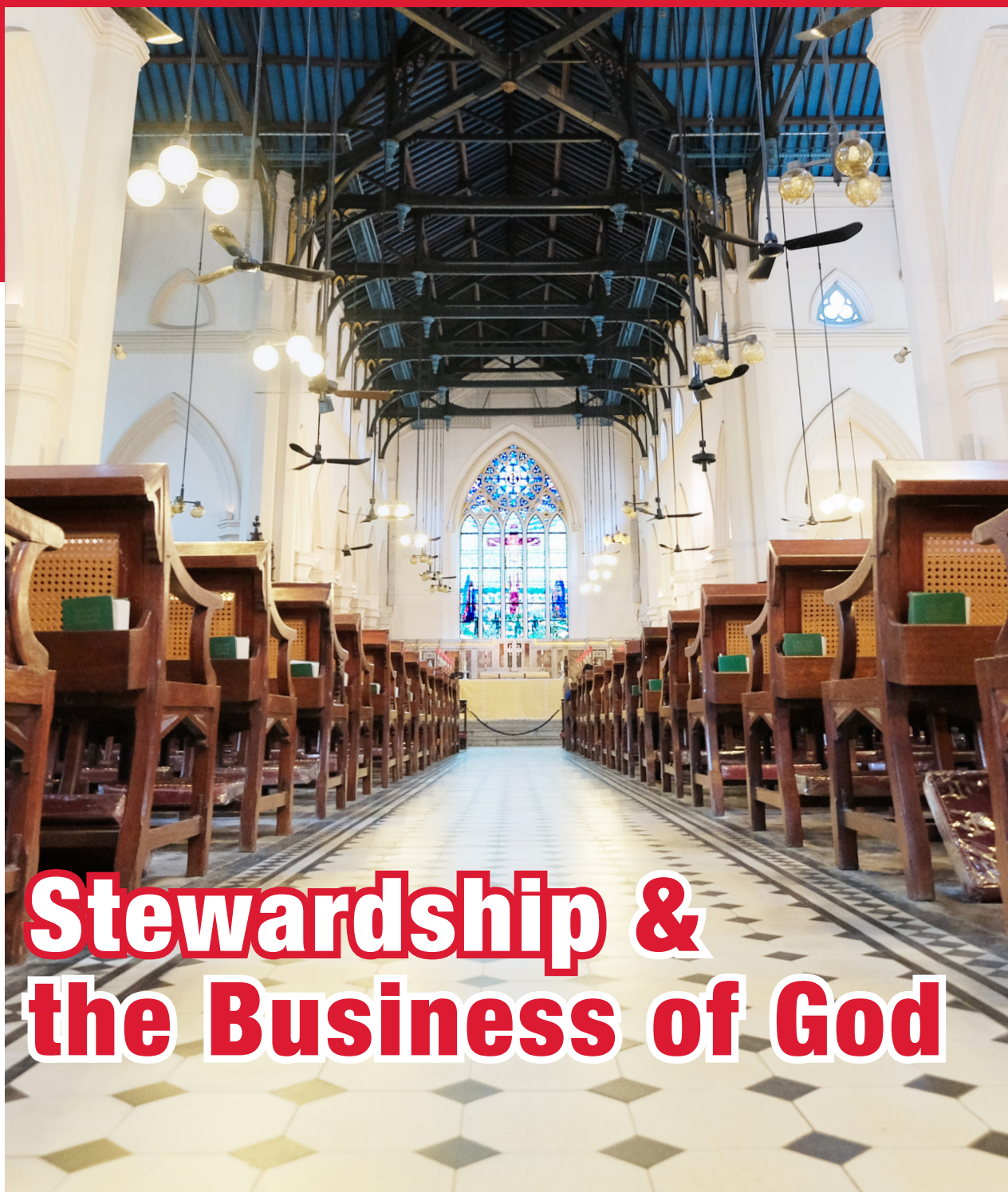


In Touch

The Cathedral Magazine - Autumn Edition 2023



Stewardship & the Business of God

ST JOHN'S CATHEDRAL HONG KONG
Diocese of HK Island Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui
香港聖公會聖約翰座堂

In Touch

ISSUE 035

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The Revd Canon Peter Koon

The Revd Sharon Langbis

The Revd Robert Martin

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

The Revd Will Newman

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

The Revd Amos Poon

The Revd Mark Rogers

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

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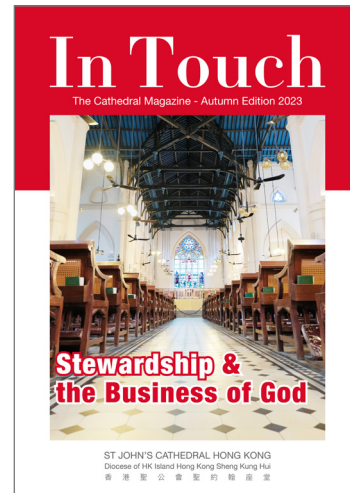
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Dean's Message

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

Greetings to you in the heat of this mid-summer.

Time flies! The summer vacation for most students and teachers in Hong Kong has just come to an end. As I am writing this message, a lot of our parishioners and Cathedral staff members are taking a break in various parts of the world. So, it is good to have a little wrap-up of the past few months of life and ministries in St John's.

The first meeting of the Cathedral Council for the year took place on 4th May, right after our 2023 Annual Church Meeting, which was held successfully on Sunday 30th April. New members of leadership have been elected. Craig Lindsay was newly elected as a trustee of the Cathedral while Frank Lang and Lee Clubb were both elected as new members to the Cathedral Council. Wallace Lai and Marlon Sanchez were both newly co-opted as Council members representing Emmanuel Church and St Stephen's Chapel, respectively. Koon G Chiu is our new Honorary Secretary, while Margaret Sang is our new Honorary Treasurer. We welcome all the new members into the Cathedral Council.

While having new intakes, we have to bid farewell to some people in the Cathedral community. In June, one of our most experienced Council members, Tom Bispham, left Hong Kong for good. We were saddened to hear that he passed away on 29th July 2023 in Massachusetts, US. Our hearts go out to his wife, Barbara and his family. May he rest in peace and rise in glory. Let's continue praying for Tom, Barbara and their family members.

The Stewardship Campaign 2023 will soon be launched for the Cathedral and its three daughter churches. The committee is now preparing for a Stewardship Sunday in late October. A promotional booklet is also in the process of editing and printing. Activities related to the Stewardship Campaign will also be organised. Please stay tuned.

This year marks the 25th Anniversary of the Inauguration of the Province of Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui. We are grateful that quite a number of our Cathedral members participated in or attended the Silver Jubilee Concert on 18th July in the Concert Hall of Hong Kong Cultural Centre. The celebration was graced by our guest conductor, Timothy Brown, who led the joint churches and schools' choir and orchestra in playing the 'Mass of the Children' composed by his good friend, John Rutter. Please join the other Silver Jubilee celebrations in October and November, so as to give thanks for all the blessings of God.

St Paul says, 'Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.' (Colossians 3.17)

Lovingly yours,
Dean KK



各位主內弟兄姊妹：

在盛夏暑熱當中，願大家平安！

日月如梭，大部份師生的暑假已到尾聲。執筆之際，許多教友及座堂同工正身處世界各地休假，這正好是時候讓我們為過去數月的座堂生活和事工作一個小小的總結。

緊接着四月三十日舉行的 2023 座堂周年大會，本年度首次的座堂議會會議於五月四日正式展開。我們為座堂選出新的領導班子，包括由林善祺弟兄擔任信託人，以及選出梁衍德和 Lee Clubb 兩位弟兄作座堂議會的新成員。另外，代表以馬內利堂的賴緯樂弟兄及代表聖士提反堂的 Marlon Sanchez 弟兄則成為今屆的座堂議會兩位增選成員。今年的義務秘書由趙貫之弟兄出任，而義務司庫是沈培娜姊妹。讓我們一同歡迎各位座堂議會的新成員。

在迎新的同時，我們也依依送別一些教友，當中包括元老級座堂議會議員的 Tom Bispham；他和家人於六月回到美國居住。遺憾地，我們得悉他於七月二十九日在麻省離世。我們懷着沉重的心情向其妻子 Barbara 及家人致以深切慰問，願 Tom 安息主懷。讓我們繼續為 Tom、Barbara 及其家人禱告。

2023 年度的座堂管家計劃即將啟動，冀盼座堂及三家附屬教堂的教友都積極參與。負責的委員會正為十月底舉行的專題主日作準備，亦會製作一本小冊子，以及舉辦連串精彩活動，請大家留意相關消息。

今年是香港聖公會教省成立 25 周年紀念，感恩不少座堂的弟兄姊妹都出席了七月十八日假香港文化中心音樂廳舉行的「香港聖公會教省成立銀禧音樂會」，並欣賞到客席指揮白慕德先生 (Timothy Brown) 帶領教會和學校的聯合詩班，在管弦樂團的演奏下唱出盧特的《兒童彌撒曲》。希望大家繼續支持在十月和十一月舉行的其他慶祝活動，一同為上帝所賜的祝福獻上感恩。

正如聖保羅說：「你們無論做甚麼，或說話或行事，都要奉主耶穌的名，藉著他感謝上帝。」（歌羅西書 3 章 17 節）

座堂主任牧師
陳國強謹啟

Stewardship Campaign 2023: The official FAQ

St John's has launched a new Stewardship Campaign this year for the Cathedral and its three daughter churches: Emmanuel Church, St Stephen's Chapel and Discovery Bay Church.

When church leaders start talking about 'stewardship', many people naturally think it's time to reach for their chequebooks. Which is technically true, but money is only one aspect of stewardship – there are many others. This handy FAQ explains all!

Why is St John's launching a new stewardship campaign?

The easy answer is that the last stewardship campaign at St John's was in 2016, so it's good to refresh the spirit of stewardship in the church.

However, there are more practical reasons. For a start, a lot has happened in the last seven years. The social turmoil of 2019 and the resulting political changes are an obvious example, but the COVID-19 pandemic has perhaps had a larger and more sustained direct impact on the church. During three years of ever-changing government rules and restrictions, churches across Hong Kong were forced to close for months at a time. During the times they were open, they often had to operate at reduced capacities. Fellowship activities were disrupted, to include gathering for coffee after the service. Meanwhile, many people in Hong Kong are migrating overseas, and the local and global economy is struggling to recover from the impact of COVID-19.

As we get back on track after the pandemic and new members start to arrive, now is a good time to launch a new stewardship campaign to remind ourselves of the generous response we can give to God for his goodness.

Which brings us to the next obvious question in this FAQ:

What does 'stewardship' actually mean from a Christian perspective?

Many Christians understand stewardship as financial support for the church, but that doesn't really get to the heart of what stewardship actually is.

From a theological perspective, stewardship is a responsibility in Christian faith as well as an honour gifted by God to all who believe in him. When God created the heaven and earth and all the beings and the living creatures in the world, he assigned and empowered humanity to be stewards, taking great care of all the beings on earth, so that we can enjoy everything he created.

However, stewardship is not merely an assignment from God. It's an expression of our gratitude to God for everything he has done and continues to do for us. The Revd Will Newman of St Stephen's Chapel, Stanley sums it up thusly: 'Stewardship is the response of a grateful heart to God, for all that we have received.'

Think of it this way: God's grace is freely given to us, even though we may not deserve it. If we receive without giving, how ungrateful is that? Stewardship is how we give back for what we have received.

How does stewardship boost our Christian spiritual life?

Stewardship enlarges our spiritual life in a couple of ways. For a start, it reminds us that we are merely stewards for God. Everything on earth and in heaven belongs to God, not us. We are merely the managers or caretakers of all the things that belong to him.

Also, the responsibility of being stewards of the world requires us to devote ourselves fully to this God-given role. Our spiritual growth as Christians provides us the energy and motivation to live out our lives as good witnesses to God.

Our acts of stewardship remind us of all this, and keep our Christian lives in proper perspective.

What are some examples of stewardship?

Stewardship is a broad concept that includes care for the church, the world, those in need, and for creation and the environment, as well as financial support.

So, in addition to regular financial donations to the church (whether that's monthly autopayments from the bank or putting money in the bag during the offertory hymn), we can also donate our time and talents. We can attend weekly services, join fellowship groups, join the Servers Guild or volunteer to help at various ministries, among other things. Whatever we do, we should do it as a humble servant in the Cathedral community, fulfilling whatever roles God invites us to play.

Okay, so what specific opportunities are there for stewardship at St John's?

I'm so glad you asked! There's a wide variety of opportunities to give back to God at St John's and the daughter churches. Aside from financial giving, here are some other roles you can play:

- Servers, musicians, sidesmen, welcomers and all who make our worship beautiful with hearts, hands and voices.
- Sunday school teachers, Bible study leaders, and all who give their time to nurture faith and encourage spiritual growth.
- Volunteers for various ministry programmes, such as working with young people in Life Enrichment Centre (LEC), joining Poverty Alleviation programmes, or visiting prisoners, etc.



How can we think differently about stewardship, both for the church and our own spiritual growth?

Apart from widening our understanding of what stewardship is, we can also expand our concept of the church as a facilitator of stewardship.

Put simply, says Will, the church is a business and we are in God's business, which is the business of holiness.

'In many of Jesus' parables there's a steward whose task is to implement the plans given by the Lord or Master or King,' he explains. 'We are stewards and Jesus is the Master, and our task individually and as a church is to put God's business plan into operation.'

God's business may be illustrated by three of Jesus' parables:

- Compassion (illustrated by the Good Samaritan)
- Forgiveness (illustrated by the Prodigal Son)
- Generosity (illustrated by the Workers in the Vineyard)

'Compassion, Forgiveness, Generosity – that's the business of holiness, and it's where the church and each one of us can be stewards for God,' says Will.

We can also think of stewardship as a way to fan the flames of our faith and build up the community of Christ, says the Very Revd Kwok-keung Chan.

'The Stewardship Campaign is an opportunity to unite sisters and brothers of St John's Cathedral and the three daughter churches to work together for the mission of God, and re-ignite the fire of mission in every sister and brother in Christ,' the Dean says. 'Especially for newcomers, whether they are newly baptised or confirmed, or just started worshipping in our Cathedral community, they will be strengthened by our sense of belonging to this community.'

 John Tanner

Growing to Serve - Chinese Ministry of St John's Cathedral

Welcome to our Chinese Ministry!

As part of the international community at the Cathedral, the Chinese Ministry recognises the importance of catering to its members' linguistic and cultural needs, aiming to provide services and pastoral care for parishioners more at home when communicating in Cantonese or Mandarin. Before looking at specific initiatives and activities, it is essential to understand the origins of the Chinese services at the Cathedral.

History & Now

The Mandarin service was established in the 1980s, a historical junction in Hong Kong's history as the Sino-British Joint Declaration was signed in 1984, paving the way for the handover of Hong Kong to China in 1997. The Revd Samuel Wu and a group of laypeople recognised the growing importance of Mandarin as a medium of communication in Hong Kong and initiated the service.



Courtesy of the Sun Family

The Cantonese Service at St John's Cathedral was established in the early 2000s in response to the needs of parishioners unable to attend Sunday services due to schedule arrangements. The Diocese recognised their needs and introduced the Anticipated Saturday Evening Service, providing an alternative to services in their own parishes on Sundays. Initially, the service was celebrated by different priests from the Diocese. However, over the past decade, under the leadership of the Revd Canon Peter Koon, the priest-in-charge of the Chinese Ministry, the Cantonese Service has gradually become an integrated part of our Cathedral community.

Thanks to the priests' hard work serving the Chinese Ministry, the Cantonese and Mandarin services are now equivalent to a small-sized parish. Despite social movements, the pandemic and increased migration, the average attendance for the Cantonese Anticipated Service is around 120 and for the Mandarin Service, around 60. Live-streaming during the pandemic helped evangelise the gospel to people often out of reach. For example, a Taiwanese family joined our Mandarin service two years ago after watching our services online during the COVID-19 outbreak. Live-streaming allowed them to connect with our community and participate in our services from afar, ultimately drawing them to the heart of our congregation.

Activities & Fellowships

The Chinese Ministry brings together fellow worshippers, study groups and Sunday school students. Led by one of our priests, the Bible Study Group meets on Wednesdays for discussions and communal prayer in a reflective space for connecting with God.

Our weekends are hectic, beginning with the Women's League, which organises a weekly worship dance group every Saturday afternoon. This community dancing with hymns provides participants with a unique and uplifting form of exercise. In addition, the Women's League started a prayer group during the pandemic every Sunday after the Mandarin service, supporting one another in challenging times.

Following the worship dance, the Andrew Fellowship, led by laypeople every Saturday from 4.00pm to 5.30pm in the Harold Smyth Room, offers more Bible study, hymn singing and sharing over tea and coffee, encouraging community members to gather, connect and engage.



After the Cantonese service, which starts at 6.00pm, the parents and kids fellowship every month or two months focuses on issues of interest, particularly for families and secondary and primary school principals who are invited to speak on issues related to parenting and education, emotions and the use of mobile phones. In addition, the fellowship celebrates Easter, Christmas and Mid-Autumn Festival, and we have even organised a mini-concert for kids to perform in public before cheering audiences. We hope this fellowship can support families and create a sense of community.

During the Cantonese service, dedicated teachers lead the Sunday school classes in the Harold Smyth Room. This group is referred to as 'Little Soldiers for Christ' (基督小精兵) instead of Sunday school as the classes don't take place on a Sunday! The teachers provide a nurturing and engaging environment for children to learn about their faith and develop their relationship with God through interactive activities and lessons.



If Saturday is a busy day for Cantonese service members, Sunday is equally busy for members of the Mandarin service. Thanks to many dedicated members, the Mandarin choir practices every week and leads the congregation in hymns and praise during services, which requires a significant amount of time and effort from choir members, all of whom are committed to enhancing the experience of the Mandarin service through their beautiful music and voices.

Following the Mandarin service each week, there is a Mandarin Welcomers' time where congregation members can enjoy refreshments. This social time is essential for growing the congregation, as Jesus commanded us to love God and one another. After we have worshipped God

during the service, it is a time for us to connect, share our needs and commit to listening to others, building relationships and supporting each other.

Chinese Ministry & St John's Cathedral

The Chinese Ministry bridges the church and the wider community, particularly as a connecting point for local schools in our Cathedral parish. Kindergartens and primary schools occasionally bring their choirs to sing at our services, and many parents attend. Additionally, the Chinese services serve as a training ground for servers. In recent years, many congregation members have taken the initiative to join the Servers Guild. These members serve in the Chinese services and assist in the main services on Sundays and even on significant feast days, demonstrating the importance of togetherness among all ministries at St John's Cathedral.

Looking to the future, the Chinese Ministry will continue to serve the needs of Chinese-speaking members at our international Cathedral. As the border between Hong Kong and Mainland China reopens following the pandemic, further efforts will be made to re-ignite the Mandarin congregation. We aim to reach out to university students from the mainland and those who come to Hong Kong for work. We hope that by serving together, we can empower our parishioners to contribute to the broader church and foster a greater sense of belonging.

As Philippians 2.4 reminds us, 'Let each of you look not to your interests but to the interests of others.' So, let's build a more inclusive community for all members now and in the future.



The Revd Amos Poon



St. John's Cathedral
Counselling Service

Reviewing the Mental Health Needs of Our Society

Traditionally, mental health has often been overlooked, with the priority focused on physical health and ailments. In recent years, the importance of mental health has started to become recognised and seen as a crucial aspect of overall well-being. In a place such as Hong Kong, mental health has been neglected for a long time. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought the mental health crisis to the forefront, highlighting how the demand for mental health support is far greater than the supply. Through our support from St John's Cathedral Counselling Service for the community, we have been able to observe how Hong Kong's mental health crisis affects people of all ages and backgrounds and is caused by social, cultural and economic factors.

The mental health crisis in Hong Kong has been an evolving concern that affects a significant portion of the population. According to Mind HK, which recently commissioned a survey of 1,000 randomly selected adults, almost 38% of respondents said their mental health has gotten worse since January 2022. Worryingly, over 50% of respondents scored lower than 52 out of 100 on the World Health Organisation Five Well-Being Index (WHO-5), indicating 'poor' overall mental well-being.

Nearly half of respondents reported symptoms of mild to severe depression, with almost 20% reporting moderate to severe symptoms of depression. More than 41% surveyed reported symptoms of mild to severe anxiety, and 13.7% showed symptoms of moderate to severe anxiety. Understandably, this has contributed to conflicts in families and relationships, as well as in the school and work spheres.

One of the well-known issues faced by Hong Kong people is the city's hectic pace and long hours of work expected not only from employees, but also from students. The stress resulting from this lifestyle has contributed to the rise of diagnoses of anxiety, depression and burnout. The unspoken expectation is that there is a lifestyle that everyone aspires towards that is associated with wealth and materialism, but the pressure to meet that expectation has contributed to the ambivalence and despondency of people in Hong Kong.

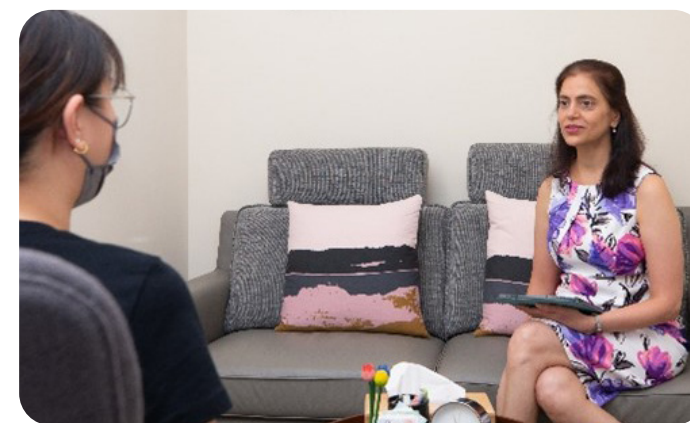
Whilst mental health awareness has improved in recent years, there is still a significant lack of awareness and education about mental health, while those with mental health issues are stigmatised and feared. This leads to a resistance towards seeking help, due to fear of discrimination. Recent violent crimes in Hong Kong have often been attributed to those with mental health issues, even though statistics have shown that those

with mental health issues are much more likely to be the victim rather than the perpetrator of violence.

Social and economic pressures such as cost of living and density might also have contributed to the mental health crisis in Hong Kong. Interventions for mental health issues are often delayed due to a long waiting list at the local hospital and the high cost of private health services.

Whilst we cannot eradicate the problem, we can work to address it in a multifaceted way. We need to increase awareness and education about mental health through public awareness campaigns, provide mental health education in schools and workplaces, and train healthcare professionals to identify and treat mental health issues. At St John's Cathedral Counselling Service, we have been part of many initiatives that provide mental health support for the Hong Kong community, including being a training site for counsellors and psychologists, participating in pilot studies to bring more accessibility to mental health services, and providing crisis as well as educational support.

We can all do our part to reduce the stigma associated with mental health issues, promote open discussions about mental health and encourage those struggling to seek help. Our service is professional, caring and affordable. As part of our mission, we also offer up to 20% of the sessions we conduct each year pro bono or at low fees to help the community.



By acknowledging the mental health crisis in Hong Kong as a concern that needs to be addressed, we are on our way towards improvement. As a caring community, you can contribute to a better mental health society by showing love and care to your family members, friends, colleagues and neighbours. Even small actions such as helping someone who needs assistance on the street or giving a seat to someone on public transport can promote the sense of a caring community.

If you know of someone who needs mental health support, you can contact our Counselling Service via email at info@sjccs.hk or phone at 2525 7207. With these measures, we can create a healthier and happier society in Hong Kong.

 Dr Elda Chan

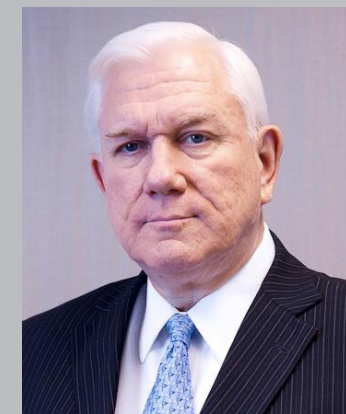
 Michael Luu, St John's Cathedral Counselling Service

In Remembrance of the late Mr Tom Bispham

It is with profound sadness that the members of St John's Cathedral mourn the passing of our Council member, Tom Bispham, who passed away in Massachusetts, US on Saturday 29th July 2023.

Tom was one of the most devoted and long-serving Council members,

a Sidesman, Eucharistic Minister, Reader, Intercessor and Treasurer of the Michaelmas Fair at St John's Cathedral. And he was also a good friend of many in our Cathedral community. He will be sorely missed and fondly remembered. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife Barbara and his family. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.



LEC Carnival Shares Drug Prevention Ideas

The Teens Talk 2: 'Sensory Stories' Fun Carnival x Anti-drug Ambassador Campaign: Booth Design Contest was held by Life Enrichment Centre (LEC) as commissioned by the Narcotics Division of the Security Bureau of the HKSAR Government on 27th May 2023. On that day, the radiant sun cast its warm glow on 300 ardent participants and spectators. This carnival not only emanated an atmosphere of elation but also resonated with a deeper purpose - the advocacy for drug prevention. The innovative contest successfully combined amusement with education, resulting in an event that was both enjoyable and edifying. The ingenious aspect of these activities was that they were tailored to stimulate the participants' senses while promoting drug awareness.



At the heart of the carnival were nine booths, each carrying its own distinct identity. The booths were meticulously prepared and managed by students from Victoria Shanghai Academy, Hong Kong True Light College, Man Kiu Association Primary School, Lady MacLehose Centre - Services for Ethnic Minorities Unit, St Stephen's College, and Islamic Kasim Tuet Memorial College, who exhibited an infectious enthusiasm that imbued the entire gathering. Reflecting the central theme of drug prevention, the booths hosted a variety of engaging games that served as a poignant reminder of the significance of our senses in leading a healthy and fulfilling life - a privilege that drug abuse jeopardises.

The young scholars, tasked with crafting these games, utilised their creativity and analytical skills to devise challenges that would leave a lasting impression. Participants were not just passively receiving information about drug prevention but actively immersing themselves in experiences that amplified the message, from puzzles

that tested their cognitive agility under simulated drug influence to sensory activities such as Expressive Arts, twisting balloons and face painting. Such activities underscored the harmful physical effects of drugs, as each game was designed to enhance understanding through interactive participation.



Students, teachers, and parents participating at the opening ceremony.

However, the carnival wasn't just about games. At its core, it served as a platform for fostering dialogue about the pernicious effects of drugs on individuals and communities. Spearheading the event were three eminent personalities invited to serve as judges: Dr Elda Chan (Director of St John's Counselling Service), the Revd Amos Poon (Chaplain of LEC), Miss Vanice Chan (Service Coordinator of LEC), and Miss Cynthia Abdon (General Manager of Mission For Migrant Workers). Each brought a unique perspective to the table and shed a light on the societal implications of drug use and addiction.



Two students – Matthew and Chris from Lok Sin Tong Ku Chiu Man Secondary School – conducted interviews with participants. One of the parents said, 'I was late for today's event, but I still enjoyed the process. My child was able to eat, play, and learn along the carnival. My favorite part was drawing. The children are excited too. We hope that the event could last longer.'

They also interviewed one of the winners from the Booth Design Contest, who said, 'I was very grateful to be a part of such an explicit event. My teammates and I were very grateful to win in this meaningful event, which educated not only me but others in a creative way. I am looking forward to future events.'

As part of the Booth Design Contest, an award ceremony was held to recognise the best booths at the carnival. The



Families cooperating in booth events

award for the best booth was a trophy and a cash prize for the winning team. There were also prizes for second and third places, which included smaller trophies and cash rewards. The winning teams were all deserving of their prizes, as they demonstrated the creativity, talent, and dedication that make carnivals such a beloved and cherished tradition.

The success of 'Teens Talk 2': 'Sensory Stories' Fun Carnival x Anti-drug Ambassador Campaign: Booth Design Contest was evident in the way it harmoniously blended education with entertainment, creating a space where learning about serious societal issues felt less daunting and more engaging. The large turnout and the overwhelming positive feedback are a testament to the event's resounding success. Yet, perhaps the most significant triumph was the awareness it sparked among the attendees, invigorating a shared commitment to the fight against drug abuse.



Throughout the whole year, we organised five workshops for 70 students to educate them more about drug prevention using fun activities relating to their senses. We also held talks regarding drug prevention. Ten parents talks were held with over 200 participants. The parents found the talks to be informative and engaging, and many felt more empowered to talk to their children about drug use after attending the sessions. In addition to the parent talks, a series of 10 teacher talks was also held, with 155 people attending. Teachers received specialised training in drug prevention, and were passionate about helping their students make healthy choices.

In the end, the 'Teens Talk 2' anti-drug campaign contest was more than a carnival; it was an educational fiesta that propelled a critical message into the minds of its attendees. It underscored the power of interactive learning and the pivotal role that youngsters play in shaping societal attitudes towards pressing issues like drug abuse. As the sun set on the bustling day, the resonating echoes of the carnival seemed to declare, 'We stand united against drug abuse.'

MFMW Charity Walk 2023

The MFMW Charity Walk 2023 was held successfully on 11th June 2023 with over 300 individual participants. The Walk was the first of its kind that the MFMW had after three years of the COVID-19 pandemic with its aim to fundraise for the MFMW's continued operations to serve migrant workers in need and promote inclusion.

Cynthia started the ceremony by giving opening remarks to thank and welcome everyone. It was then followed by performances from the Overseas Nepali Workers Association (ONWA), the LIKHA Cultural Migrant Organization from the Philippines, and Enjoy Dancers LiPMI from Indonesia, each showcasing their unique culture.

Aside from announcing the winners of the Charity Walk 2023, the awards of Happy Homes Poetry Competition winners were also presented.



Every year, the Charity Walk gathers support for the Mission For Migrant Workers' continued operations. Each dollar raised will go to its programmes that support migrant workers in distress.

The MFMW would like to send our sincere thanks to all who supported the event, especially all who volunteered as officials and marshals of the day, our sponsor - FeedingHK - for providing over 500 bottles of water for our walkers, and the employees from the Bank of America, as well as teacher and students from the Hang Seng University of Hong Kong (HSUHK) Asian Studies for offering free activities for the participants alongside our programme.

Your contribution of any amount will help us support this vital, valuable and vulnerable section of our community!

We thank you and look forward to seeing you again!

Johannie Yan



The ending ceremony was held at the Peak Road Garden outside the Peak Galleria. For many participating migrant workers, it was the first time to be at the Victoria Peak. Although it was a hot, humid and rainy day, we saw lots of smiling faces congratulating each other for completing the walk!

Happy Homes Poetry Contest

The 'Happy Homes Hong Kong Poetry Contest 2023' was held as one of the many engagement activities of the Mission For Migrant Workers which specifically aimed to engaging the public and promoting mutual understanding, respect and fair treatment among employers and migrant domestic workers.

A total of eleven submissions were received, with four entries came from other Hong Kong communities and seven entries from migrant domestic workers. We had a panellist of three judges, and to make it more open, the entries were posted on

our Facebook page, where the community was able to pick the entry that resonated most with them. For us, everyone was a winner as the poems were worth the read.

The winners were announced during our Charity Walk which was held on 11th June. We are so thankful for everyone's participation, and hope to keep 'Building Harmonious Households; Sharing, Love, Appreciation, and Solidarity in Hong Kong'.

Visit our Facebook Page to read all the poems at @Happy Homes HK.

Johannie Yan



Happy Homes HK Poetry Contest 2023

Migrant Domestic Workers Category

Winning Entry



Happy Homes HK Poetry Contest 2023

Non-Migrant Domestic Workers Category

Winning Entry



‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’

These haunting words from Matthew 27.46 resonate deeply and stir profound emotions among Christians.

This is what some church members in Myanmar have told me they feel. Myanmar (also known as Burma) has endured a turbulent history, marked by tribal warfare, colonisation and military dictatorship, and there are still many serious challenges that face minority Christians (who number around 65,000 in a population of 54 million).

In February 2021, Myanmar became a unitary assembly-independent republic under a military junta (ending ten years of democratic transition). Since then, it is believed that more than 600,000 people have been displaced across the whole country, with more than 3 million people in dire need of humanitarian assistance. The devastating effects of COVID-19 have further exacerbated the situation, plunging the nation into despair.



A Bridge of Faith: The Hong Kong-Toungoo Connection

The Diocese of Hong Kong Island has had a link with the Diocese of Toungoo (one of nine dioceses in Myanmar) since 2007. It has 25 parishes, with around 40 priests and 126 catechists.

Through various collaborative efforts, including St John's Cathedral (SJC), Compass Rose and The Amity Foundation, these connections have sought to uplift the people of Toungoo. Numerous initiatives have taken place, from training locals to building water facilities, and finding volunteers to teach English. Also, a group of 16 people from SJC and St Stephen's Chapel, Stanley – including Bishop Matthias Der (then Dean of St John's Cathedral), the Revd Will Newman and Felix Yeung – attended the installation of the new Bishop of Toungoo in 2019.



I have visited Myanmar several times. The second time was in 2016, when I was invited to join Bishop Matthias and two others on an exploratory tour to Toungoo. This trip gave us an opportunity to see how a different Asian Christian ministry operates in a country with significantly less resources than Hong Kong, as well as share and learn from each other's experiences and develop closer ties.

The parishes are spread widely across the Diocese, but many villages have been 'no-go areas' for decades. Fortunately, in 2016, it was safe enough for us to visit many pre-schools, youth hostels, theological colleges, villages, private homes and churches. The desire to speak better English resonated strongly in locals, which inspired me to return to Toungoo to help them do just that!



It was fascinating spending over six months (spread between 2017 and 2020) living amongst the locals, learning about their culture, lives, hopes and challenges. Myanmar people are friendly, hospitable, generous and community-spirited – they have been making incredible efforts with few resources to provide a better life for their children.

I have also visited other parts of the country, and these experiences have left long lasting memories with me, leading to a very strong and close friendship with the people and the country.

Myanmar's Desperate Cry for Help

Tragically, since my last visit in March 2020, Myanmar has plunged into an acute state of emergency. The country faces the dire consequences of long-standing ethnic conflicts and ongoing civil war, resulting in the displacement of countless innocent lives. Homes and possessions have been destroyed, leaving families with nothing but the clothes on their backs. Many have sought refuge in churches or halls, whilst others live in displacement camps, desperately seeking aid from any available source.



The uncertainty and fear have taken a toll on the nation, with restrictions on movement and daily threats adding to the atmosphere of chaos. The local currency has collapsed, food prices are soaring and job opportunities are dwindling. The Christians of Myanmar exemplify unwavering faith in God, even in the face of adversity. However, the potential for a downward spiral looms, pushing people into dark places, prompting the cry from Matthew 27.46.

There are currently around 1,800 displaced church members who have left their homes in one part of the Diocese to find sanctuary in another. They desperately need emergency assistance. Even based on the meagre amount of US\$0.50 per person for basic food, water and shelter, this amounts to around **US\$900** per day, which is a massive challenge and huge strain for the Diocese.



To cope with the enormous turmoil, the Bishop of Toungoo and his team have established a Diocesan Relief Committee to help with basic needs (such as food, water, shelter and health, as well as mental and spiritual support).

A Resilient Faith Amidst Adversity

I am inspired by **people who have so little, helping those with even less** when they live in an utterly devastating and frightening environment. Their Christian

spirit remains steadfast and their determination to draw solace and camaraderie from singing, running pre-schools, Sunday schools, Youth Association and Mother's Union is astounding.

The trauma and hardships they face daily raises questions of faith, yet many still find strength in prayer, turning to God even in the midst of their own suffering. The Diocese has deep gratitude for those connected with them in dedication and faith, believing that the blessing of the Lord continues to shine on them.

Standing Together: Supporting Myanmar's Christians

Even within such despondency, there are glimmers of hope - the delight I feel when receiving a message from any of my friends in Myanmar; the fact that the pre-schools and churches are open again; the relief that Western Union is still functioning so that I can transfer donations direct to the Diocese, contributing to the US\$900 needed every day to support the displaced people; and the hope that I may one day return to continue my teaching.

If you wish to support the cause, please write a cheque to 'St John's Cathedral' and either deliver in person or mail to:

The Executive Administrator, St John's Cathedral, 4-8 Garden Road, Central, Hong Kong

You may also use the online system with the credit card:



<https://www.stjohnscathedral.org.hk/Donation/default.aspx?lang=1>

It will be very helpful if you will enter 'Toungoo Appeal' in the reference for all these donating methods.

Finally, I invite all readers to include the following prayer this week (which comes from the pew bulletin of St John's Cathedral):

We pray for our link Diocese of Toungoo in Myanmar;
For Bishop Saw Sheesho;

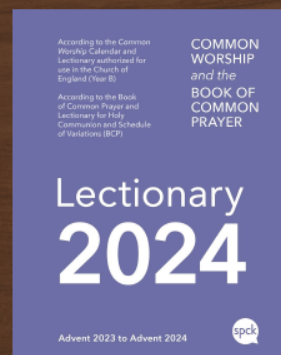
For congregation members killed in the civil war
And 1,800 villagers whose homes have been destroyed
And who are now living in churches and church halls.
Give thanks for the faith of the Church in these terrible times.

May we stand together in solidarity with the Diocese of Toungoo and pray for their safety, well-being and the eventual restoration of peace.

 Debbie McGowan

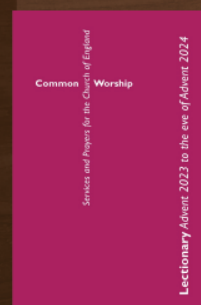
New Arrivals at Bookstore

Lectionary and Calendar for Year 2024

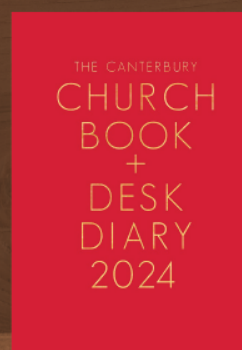


CW & BCP LECTIONARY 2024

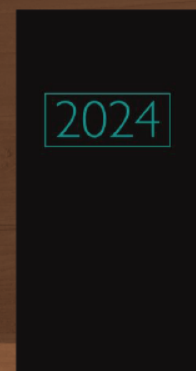
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CW LECTIONARY:
ADVENT 2023 TO
THE EVE OF ADVENT 2024



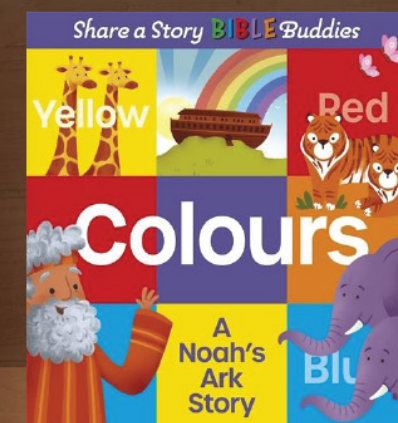
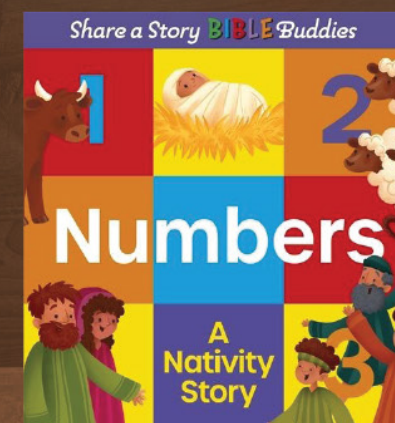
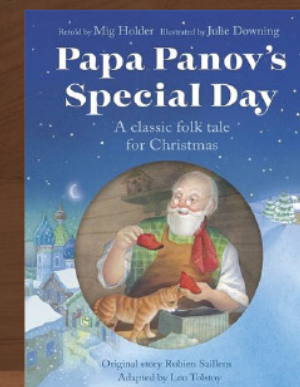
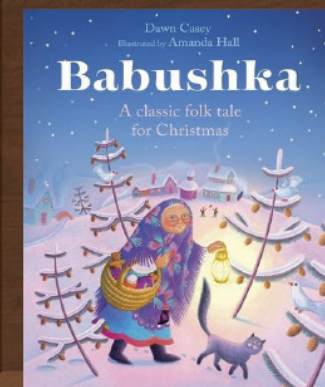
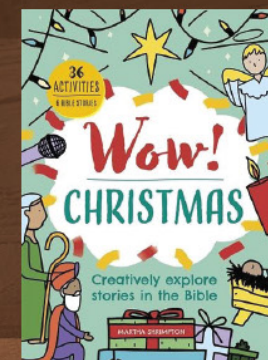
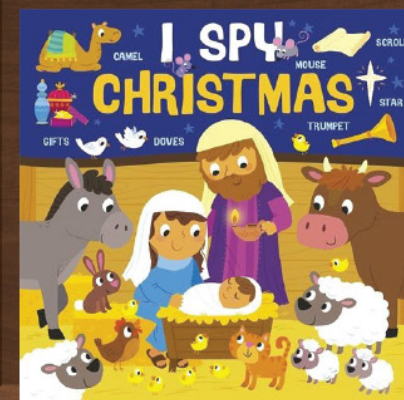
THE CANTERBURY CHURCH
BOOK & DESK DIARY 2024



CHURCH POCKET BOOK AND
DIARY 2024 WITH LECTIONARY



Christmas/Advent Books



Major Services

at St John's & Daughter Churches

St John's Cathedral

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

- 14 SEP

Holy Cross Day

7.30pm

Sung Eucharist
- 2 NOV

All Souls' Day

7.30pm

Sung Requiem
- 17 SEP

Dedication Festival

9.00am

Sung Eucharist
- 5 NOV

All Saints' Sunday

9.00am

Sung Eucharist

5.00pm

Choral Evensong with Benediction
- 29 SEP

St Michael & All Angels

7.30pm

Sung Eucharist
- 12 NOV

Remembrance Sunday

5.00pm

'For the Healing of the Nations'
- A Eucharist for Peace & Reconciliation
- 8 OCT

Harvest Thanksgiving

9.00am

'Count Your Blessings'
- A Eucharist of Thanksgiving
- 26 NOV

Christ the King

9.00am

Sung Eucharist

5.00pm

Sung Eucharist with Baptism and Confirmation
- 29 OCT

Stewardship Sunday

8.00am

Said Eucharist

9.00am

Sung Eucharist

10.30am

Sung Eucharist (Mandarin)

11.45am

Responsorial Eucharist

1.30pm

Sung Eucharist (Filipino)

5.00pm

Celtic Eucharist

Discovery Bay Church

SKH Wei Lun Primary School
Lantau
Tel: 5180 5106
URL: www.discoverybaychurch.org.hk

Every Sunday
10.00am Sung Eucharist

St Stephen's Chapel

St Stephen's College
22 Tung Tau Wan Road, Stanley
Tel: 2813 0408
URL: www.ststephen.org.hk

Every Sunday
10.00am Sung Eucharist

Emmanuel Church

Béthanie Chapel
139 Pok Fu Lam Road, Pok Fu Lam
Tel: 2523 4157
URL: www.emmanuel.org.hk

Every Sunday
10.30am Sung Eucharist

Please visit our website for the latest updates about service arrangements.



ST JOHN'S CATHEDRAL
聖公會聖約翰座堂

Be Friends with the Environment

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2. Read the magazine online

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