

ISSUE 037

# INTOUCH

## *The Year of Peace*

ST JOHN'S CATHEDRAL

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# DEAN'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

Peace be with you!

The ebb and flow of tides, and the coming and going of people are all natural features of the creation of God.

Our Cathedral has passed through several months of storms and waves, experiencing a trend of human resources challenges as well as personnel changes. We bid farewell to the Revd Mark Rogers, Cathedral Chaplain and Priest-in-Charge of Discovery Bay Church, who has served our Cathedral community diligently for 15 years. We also said goodbye to our Communications Officer Evelyn Chan, who left Hong Kong; our long-service caretaker Shirley Ng, who turned a new page in her life; our Administrative Assistant Bowie Yu, who went abroad for further studies; our Music Officer King Chan, and other staff members. Although it is always sad to say goodbye, we wish all these staff members a blessed life by the grace and mercy of the loving God.

Right now, we are in the process of recruiting a new clergy for Discovery Bay Church and Chaplain of our Cathedral. Please pray for all potential candidates and members of the Search Committee. In the meantime, we welcome our new Communications Officer Natasha Ngan, Administrative Assistant Scarlett Lee, Music Officer Coman Sheung, and other members into our big family of the Cathedral Community.

While the Cathedral is full of ups and downs in terms of human resource management, we are also filled with moments of thanksgiving to our Triune God. During Lent and Easter, we enjoyed having guest preachers in our Cathedral, including the Very Revd Canon Professor Martyn Percy, the Revd Professor John Kater, and the Revd Desmond Cox. On the evening of Palm Sunday, we enjoyed a time to give thanks to God for the Vespers with St John Passion by J.S. Bach. Our Cathedral Choir, together with renowned local and global musicians, participated in this grand occasion as a part of our celebration of the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our Cathedral.

The Annual Church Meeting was successfully held on Sunday 28 April. Craig Lindsay and Ting-Kin Cheung were elected as the Trustees for this year. At our Council meeting in May, Martin Matsui and Margaret Sang were elected as the Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer respectively. Also, five new Council members were welcomed into this year's Council. Please pray for all these humble servants in our Cathedral community.

After Trinity Sunday, we have entered Ordinary time—a time to gather our potential energy for our preparation for the Cathedral anniversary. We are looking forward to the Thanksgiving Service for the celebration of the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of St John's Cathedral in September. Please reserve the time to celebrate together with sisters and brothers of the Cathedral.

May the Triune God bless all of us.

Love to you all,  
Dean KK



各位朋友：

主內平安！

潮起潮落，人來人往，是上帝所創造的定律。

過去數月我們座堂經歷了一些風波起伏，面臨著人事變動和人力資源上的挑戰。我們告別了服務15年的座堂堂牧及愉景灣堂主理聖品羅哲思牧師，道別了離港的傳訊主任陳佩玲（Evelyn）、展開人生新篇章的資深工友吳麗慧（Shirley）、前往海外深造的行政助理庾寶兒（Bowie），以及音樂幹事陳曉峰（King）等員工。儘管道別總是令人難過，我們祝願他們繼續蒙上帝的恩典，領受幸福的生活。

目前我們正在為愉景灣堂招聘請主理聖品兼座堂堂牧，請為所有候選人和遴選委員會成員祈禱。與此同時，我們歡迎新加入的傳訊主任顏昭彤（Natasha）、行政助理李慧儀（Scarlett）、音樂幹事相全（Coman）及其他新成員，成為座堂的一份子。

儘管座堂在人力資源方面經歷了各種起伏，我們依然充滿感恩。在大齋期和復活節期間，我們邀請了柏慕田牧師、紀約翰牧師和郭得民牧師證道。在棕枝主日的晚上，座堂詩班亦聯同本地和海外著名音樂家一同為晚禱崇拜演奏，慶祝座堂175周年堂慶。

座堂今年的周年大會於4月28日的主日順利舉行。林善祺和張鼎堅兩位弟兄當選為本年度的信託人。在5月的堂議會會議上，松本馨弟兄和沈培娜姊妹分別當選為義務秘書和義務司庫。我們亦歡迎了5名新加入的堂議會成員，讓我們為這些獻身服務座堂的弟兄姊妹祈禱。

三一主日後，我們正式踏入常年期，正好為座堂堂慶作準備。我們熱切期待將在9月舉行、慶祝座堂175周年堂慶的感恩崇拜。屆時敬請抽空出席，與座堂的兄姊分享主內情誼。

願三一上帝祝福我們。

主佑！

座堂主任牧師  
陳國強謹啟



# SEARCHING FOR PEACE

THE WORLD CANNOT GIVE

Text by / JOHN TANNER

*'Peace is not merely the absence of some negative force—war, tensions, confusion—but it is the presence of some positive force—justice, goodwill, the power of the kingdom of God.'*—Martin Luther King, Jr, 'When Peace Becomes Obnoxious' (sermon delivered in March 1956)

Almost every week for the past two years, St John's Cathedral has been holding Prayers for Peace on Zoom. The prayer group was initially launched in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. However, since then the group has expanded its focus to include other conflicts making international headlines, to include the civil wars in Syria, Myanmar, Somalia and Sudan, and—of course—the conflict raging between Israel and Hamas since October 2023.

In fact, those specific conflicts are just the tip of the proverbial iceberg. The Geneva Academy of Humanitarian International Law says it currently monitors over 110 armed conflicts around the world. In January 2023, United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed told the UN Security Council that the world is facing the highest number of violent conflicts since the Second World War.

With the news increasingly saturated with stories of war, conflict, and horrific violence, it's perhaps no surprise that this year's annual theme for St John's Cathedral is 'The Year of Peace: Peace That the World Cannot Give'. However, read those words carefully, and you may see that the theme is more than simply a call for the laying down of weapons. When we talk about 'peace that the world cannot give', we're talking about peace from a Biblical and Christian perspective in which peace is not merely the opposite of war, but something far greater, powerful and personal.

To have a richer understanding of this theme, it's worth pausing for a moment to ask two basic questions: (1) What exactly do we mean by 'peace' from a Christian viewpoint? and (2) Why specify that the world is incapable of giving us that peace?



Photo by / MICHAEL LUU

## PEACE FROM A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

The Very Revd Kwok-keung (KK) Chan, Dean of St John's Cathedral, says a good starting place to understand the overall Biblical definition of peace is the Hebrew word *shalom*. The literal translation of *shalom* is 'peace', but the concept behind it is a more holistic peace from God that not only protects against wars with other tribes and nations, but also quarrels and conflicts all the way down to the personal level. *Shalom* isn't just about the end of conflict—it's also about reconciliation with God and each other so that the wholeness of the community is restored.

The New Testament builds and expands on this idea of *shalom* in several ways. Dean KK points to John's gospel, when the newly resurrected Jesus appears to his disciples in the locked room, and his first words to them are: 'Peace be with you!' (John 20. 19) Thomas is not there, and when Jesus returns a week later, he says the same thing to him: 'Peace be with you!' (John 20. 26)

'This peace comes after the resurrection of Christ Jesus, and it is a gift to all his very close disciples, and all those who are behind the locked doors because they were afraid of those who may take their lives,' he explains. 'So, this peace is really a peace that has victory over death and can even be stronger than death, and all the earthly limitations of human beings that we face every day'.

The Revd Will Newman of St Stephen's Chapel, Stanley, says that for him, one key to understanding the Biblical definition of peace can be found in St Paul's letter to the Philippians: *'The peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.'* (Philippians 4. 7)

'The peace that Jesus gives is a peace that lasts,' he says. 'Human peace in the world is temporary, because sooner or later we start conflicts again. But the peace that God gives is a peace that survived dying on the cross. It's a peace that never ends'.

Mother Sharon Langbis also points to Philippians in her reflections on true peace, focusing on its obvious effect on St Paul himself.

'Paul writes, *"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!"* (Philippians 4. 4), and this is amazing to me because he was in prison when he wrote that letter,' she says. 'If you go to prison, you will naturally be very angry—you hate everyone, or at least you hate the person who put you in prison. But Paul always says, "Rejoice in the Lord", so he actually has a very secure mind—he's at peace with the Lord, and at peace with himself'.

When we think of peace in this way, it becomes fairly obvious that the world is incapable of providing it all on its own. And the reason is relatively straightforward: the world—which includes us humans—is too broken by sin and evil.

Dean KK points to the fruits of human sin—selfishness, self-centeredness, and weakness in the face of temptation—that lead us to turn from God. 'When we are putting ourselves in a higher place than God or our risen Lord Jesus, then true peace might not be possible'.

Revd Sharon agrees. 'When we talk about "the world", remember that the world was created by God and it was good, but then it was destroyed by evil, sin, hatred, and chaos'.

That's why the world alone is incapable of giving us this peace, she says. 'We always talk about peace, and we say, "peace be with you", but deep inside of us, there is no peace. How can you give something that you don't have?'



## COMMITMENT TO PEACE

In other words, true peace really starts inside each of us when we turn to God and let his peace work in us and through us.

But where do we start, apart from asking God to help us embrace is peace that surpasses all understanding?

Naturally there's no easy answer, and the answer will be different for everyone. Daily meditation and prayer are always a good start. St John's offers activities like lunchtime meditation activities on Mondays, Peace Prayers and interfaith dialogue, as well as counselling services. Taizé services, which are held on the fourth Sunday of every month, are also highly recommended as they are designed to include extended peaceful silences to create the stillness necessary to feel God's presence.

But at the end of the day, it's really about committing yourself to peace.

Will cites a quote from Dutch-born American clergyman and political activist A. J. Muste: 'There is no way to peace; peace is the way.' Put another way, peace is not a strategy, but rather a personal commitment.

'You just have to commit yourself to peace,' he says. 'When we do that, when we are peaceful within ourselves, peace spreads from us to the world around us'.

That's why open dialogue and active listening are also key components to true peace. Dean KK points to St John's interfaith dialogue as an example. 'Speaking and listening to one another to enhance mutual interfaith understanding can really promote peace, at least between the different religious faiths,' he says.

Will agrees. 'I think it's really important that we don't just keep to our own places and our own ways. Interfaith is great because you're not only learning from other people about their faith—you also learn more about your faith, because people will ask you, "Why do you believe this?" and "What do you do about that?" And it makes you think more deeply about your own faith'.

However, he says, 'While there are all kinds of activities for peace, there's no substitute for the daily attempt, the daily desire to practice peace in our lives'.





Opening Ceremony (24/2) at Central Market



Closing Ceremony (2/3) at Li Hall

# ‘LIGHTEN OUR DARKNESS’ SMARTPHONE INCLUSIVE PHOTOGRAPHY & STORYTELLING EXHIBITION

Text by / NATALIE NG  
Between volunteer

St John's Cathedral Life Enrichment Centre (LEC) is thrilled to share the remarkable success of the 'Lighten Our Darkness' Smartphone Inclusive Photography & Storytelling Exhibition, which took place with great acclaim at the G/F, Oasis, Central Market from 23-25 February 2024, and then in Li Hall at St John's Cathedral from 1-2 March 2024. Over the course of these five days, the exhibitions welcomed over 1,200 visitors, who were captivated by the powerful narratives and diverse perspectives on display.



Photo taken by one of the photographers, Kyoya



Every photo is accompanied with audio description and tactile graphic

'Inspiring, isn't it?' a voice suddenly said beside me.

'Sorry? Oh yeah, it is,' I smiled at the stranger.

The magnetic field of art had brought me a new friend, another fellow volunteer named Billy. He reached down, pressed a button, and soon the photograph began speaking to me. I tried to figure out the curious voice—it was giving out instructions. To me? No. To the photographer? It seemed so. And soon I realised that they in fact weren't instructions, but descriptions. The voice was describing the image within the lens, before the photograph was even taken. Curiouser and curiouser. I was intrigued. I soon realised that just about anyone could experience the gallery—because provided was not only a visual image, but also braille text for the visually impaired, as well as an audio description.

As I stepped into a picturesque gallery situated in the heart of Hong Kong, a frenzy of laughter and smiles immediately surrounded me. Although the spring warmth was frozen in a timeless collection of photographs displayed, I felt every buzz and joke, every push and shove, every awe-inspiring look, and every story that was situated within the frame.

The foundation of this extraordinary project was laid in November 2023, when LEC embarked on a mission with the Hong Kong Society for the Blind and the Adolescent Medical Centre of Queen Elizabeth Hospital (the supporting organisations for the project) to create a platform that would embrace inclusivity, empower individuals, and amplify their voices through the art of smartphone photography and storytelling. Two photography workshops and a series of outing activities were organised in Shek Kip Mei, providing invaluable opportunities for 21 participants with varying physical conditions and backgrounds to explore their creativity and hone their skills.

I clumsily stumbled around the open-space gallery before landing by a photograph under the limelight—captured in a single shot was a glowing lightbulb surrounded by utter darkness. 'Lighten our darkness. Lighten our darkness.' The theme rang in my head and rolled off my tongue in a murmur. These photographers, against all odds and living a life in the dark, found friendship, happiness, joy, hope, and light through a collective love of art. One such photographer, Kyoya, held on to her love for cartoons and imagination, and produced a graphic artwork deserving of recognition.





Opening speech from the Rt Revd Dr Matthias Der



Photography instructor and curator, Mr Kevin Leung



Singing performance by teenager from Once Theatre and visually impaired participant



Instrumental performance by visually impaired participants



Participants' sharing session

Billy continued showing me around when the opening ceremony began and heaps of the participants' families took their seats, beaming with a coalescence of bliss and pride. Throughout the ceremony, many kind words were shared, each anecdote filled with passion and love. But I'll leave you with the same words that have stuck with me, for weeks after, and perhaps for many years to come:

'No matter who you are, everyone has obstacles in life. When you use bravery and courage to step over these obstacles, you will be faced with more bliss than you have ever known.'—The Rt Revd Dr Matthias Der.

The success of this exhibition is attributed to Mr Kevin Leung, an esteemed photography instructor and curator. His patience, expertise, and unwavering dedication were instrumental in guiding the participants on this transformative journey. With his guidance, individuals ranging from teenagers to the elderly, and including people with visual impairments, mobility challenges, chronic illnesses, and other circumstances, discovered new ways to express themselves and share their stories through the lens of a smartphone.

The success of this project would not have been possible without the abundant assistance and commitment of the volunteer team *Between*, which mobilised a group of caring volunteers who selflessly devoted their time and energy to ensure the smooth running of the entire project. Their collective effort—alongside the generous support from the donors, the invaluable assistance from St John's Cathedral's congregation and LEC volunteers, PricewaterhouseCoopers Hong Kong (PwC), Life Enrichment Centre Teens Drama Project (Once Theatre), and the Youth Ministry (Among Us)—was a testament to the power of love, compassion, and community.

'Lighten Our Darkness' Smartphone Inclusive Photography & Storytelling Exhibition has illuminated the lives of both participants and visitors, fostering a sense of connection, empathy, and understanding. The exhibition garnered significant attention from the media, with HK01, MingPao, and Echo conducting interviews with our visually impaired participants. These interviews provided a platform for the participants to share their work, experiences, and insights, offering a unique perspective on the power of art and the importance of inclusivity.

'Inspiring, isn't it?'



Visitors can write down their feelings on the reflection board



# Children's Worship Service

## SHAPES THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH

Jesus welcomed children and said, *'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.'* (Luke 18. 16) Children's ministry is a vital part of any church community, as it helps children learn about God, and establish a personal relationship with him. The way in which the word of God is shared and celebrated in the lives of children today, will shape the future life of the Church.

St John's Cathedral Sunday School is a part of the Cathedral's children outreach programme with over 150 registered students. It caters to children from as young as 2.5 years old up to teenagers. The children are spread across seven different class groups based on their ages. The classes are curated towards each age group based on their ability to absorb and understand the Bible, and develop religious awareness. Importantly, we recognise that all children possess a natural ability to relate to religion, and we adapt the class experiences to nurture that ability. This religious experience even at a young age can have a profound impact on each child.

To improve and broaden the students religious experience, St John's Cathedral Sunday School started a Children's Worship Service in January 2024. The service takes place on the second Sunday of every month. This is an opportunity for children across all age groups to gather and participate in a liturgical worship service together as a community. The ambition of this service is to help them experience, understand, and appreciate the Christian liturgy and Holy Eucharist as fully as their age and development permits. The order of service is curated to provide the children with an authentic and concurrent celebration of the same, yet adapted, Liturgy of the Word that adults experience. The children will be guided how to spiritually prepare themselves for the Holy Eucharist and learn its importance in the spiritual development of all.







Some of the most basic questions the Sunday School Children's Worship Service seeks to address is: (1) why we go to Church on Sunday, (2) what is the Holy Eucharist, and (3) what is the rationale behind Church liturgical order that we always follow during a service. The overall theme can be simplified into the significance of God's love for us all, and what Jesus' sacrifice on the cross and his resurrection is to our Christian Faith.

As part of the Children's Worship Service, we explore with the children:

- a) God's plan for our salvation, and how it is fulfilled in the passion, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ;
- b) The Holy Eucharist, and its relation to Jesus' Body and Blood that was sacrificed for all our sins;
- c) The importance of preparing our minds to receive the Holy Eucharist and the need to be respectful during the Holy Eucharist.



During the Children's Service, the children are encouraged to ask questions, and we provide context and answers to what can be very pointed yet fundamental questions that anyone could have about faith and God. A simple tenet that is emphasised is the importance of showing reverence to God, and being respectful while we are praising and worshipping him. It is also critical to connect the Holy Eucharist to daily life and instil a habit of bringing Jesus with them everywhere they go. Finally, we encourage children to take a moment to thank Jesus for sharing his love for us, and reflect on their experience at Sunday School, how it makes them feel and what have they learned.



The primary beneficiaries of the Children's Worship Service are, of course, the children. They are given an increased opportunity to come to a full, active, and conscious participation in the Liturgy of the Word according to their spiritual capacity. However, the benefits also extend towards the broader church community. This service depends on adult volunteers of the church community to conduct the worship service. The adults who are given the responsibility for leading and participating in the liturgy as part of the worship service are themselves, nourished by the Word they proclaim as they prepare for the service, and are forced to ask questions of themselves about their own faith. As Jesus said in Matthew 18. 3 *'And he said: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."*

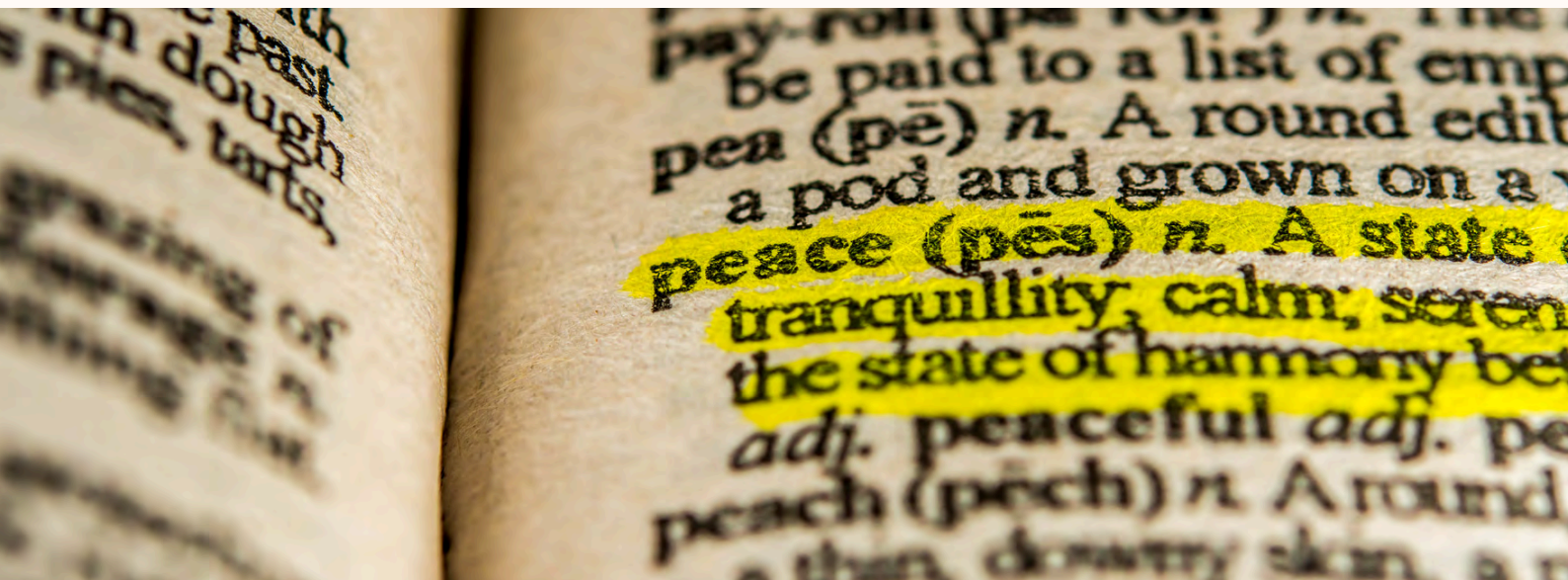
Therefore, as children grow in love for the Word of God within a supportive church community, the positive effect on their lives spreads to everyone around them.



# Shalom!

## Peace be with you!

*'And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension,  
will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.'* (Philippians 4. 7)



Text by / GLEN VILLAMIL

I have been volunteering at St John's Cathedral Bookstore for nearly eight years since the arrival of our Bookstore Manager, Sandy. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Sandy, Bishop Matthias Der, Dean KK, and the Bookstore Committee for allowing me to volunteer at the Cathedral Bookstore. As the years went by, I did not realise how I had become more and more acquainted with the staff, volunteers, the clergy of the Cathedral, and some visitors from other Anglican parishes, some of whom I had known for more than two decades even before I joined the Bookstore.

Out of my expectation, I was invited to write a short article about 'Peace'. Proverbs 3. 1-2 says, *'My son, do not forget my law, but let your heart guard my commandments; for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you.'*

The first question to ask is, 'Do I find peace?' Do I find peace in my family, among friends, and community? Do I find peace in the church, my workplace, or within the parish?

Obviously, these questions are not to be answered in a straightforward way. Being a volunteer at the Cathedral Bookstore, I am occasionally enraged by small things, like many people are, but I must admit that I do find peace, joy, and laughter in this

workplace. I trust that it was God's plan for me to come here to keep his commandments since I started studying theology in Ming Hua Theological College 20 years ago, and to continue with the bookstore's work after my recent retirement.

I do believe that peace has always been among humanity's highest values in this turbulent world. Peace is a very important topic for everyone to know about, and that is why the International Day of Peace declared by the United Nations is observed annually around the world on 21 September, despite the ongoing wars in some parts of the world.

Some say that the word 'peace' means being in a place where no hatred exists, a place filled with love, care, and respect. And if there are conflicts, they can be handled peacefully. We tend to agree with this, or we simply view peace as an absence of dissension, violence, or war. Without peace, it doesn't seem possible to achieve the necessary levels of trust and cooperation to manage disputes or adapt to changes in our lives.

One way to understand the true meaning of peace is to think of its opposite. In this case, some say that the opposite of 'peace' is not 'war', but 'fear'. Conflict occurs when two people interact with each other, and perceive incompatible differences or threats to their resources. So when two people or groups get into a fight or an argument, they are not simply angry with each other—they are actually fearful of the threat of something, whether it is real or perceived.



Of course, it is easier said than done to choose peace over conflict. To minimise conflicts or to reconcile with others, we can let God speak to that fear so that we might be healed and ruled by his peace. If we can show consideration for others, and not be so self-centred and self-absorbed, peace will exist.

God has conveyed the truth to us with various messages. One of the strong messages that touches my heart is this quote from Mother Teresa: *'If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.'*

Even for Christians, we sometimes forget this, especially as we grow older, and become more stubborn on specific matters, which may lead to us growing more irritable, and impatient with matters and peoples around. In these moments, we probably have forgotten that we are indebted to God who has paid the debt for our sins by sacrificing his only son Jesus Christ. The debt of our sins was too much for us to be able to pay, and yet Christ died for our sins to show God's love towards us.

Are we still willing to sacrifice for others? Are we still willing to love our neighbour and our enemy, as Jesus specifically told us to do? Perhaps it's time to reflect and renew our faith by trusting God alone, even in difficult times. We can start by remembering what Scripture tells us.

*'When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, nor will the flame burn you.'* (Isaiah 43. 2)

*'The steadfast of mind You will keep in perfect peace because he trusts in You. Trust in Yahweh forever, for in Yah—Yahweh Himself—we have an everlasting Rock'* (Isaiah 26. 3-4)

*'And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.'* (Philippians 4. 7)

This last verse signifies 'the peace of God' as a blessing from God, and is harmonious with his character when we submit to him. Again, this reminds us to submit ourselves to God.

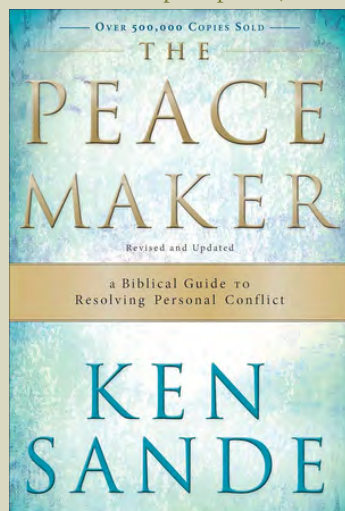
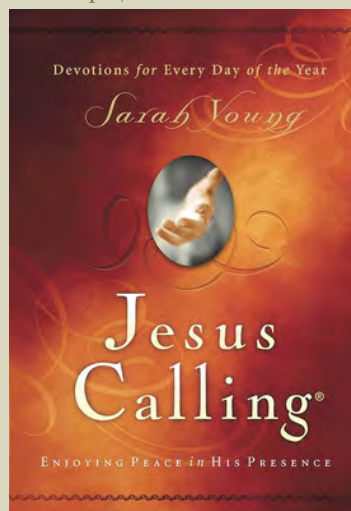
Lastly, we all know our limitations, but I believe there are small things that we can do. To act now, please allow me to recommend these slogans: 'Double S (SS)' and 'Triple T (TTT)'.

SS: Peace begins with a Sincere Smile (SS), so let's start doing this to the people around us and show everyone that the peace of God can overcome conflicts, disagreements, and violence!

TTT: Trust in God's power! Trust in the promises of God! Trust in God with all our heart! In difficult times, remember to keep God's commands as quoted above in Proverbs 3. 1-2 and pray constantly to him.

May God bless you and your loved ones!

To dive deeper, here are some recommended books on the topic of peace (all of which are available in the Cathedral Bookstore).





# CYNTHIA ABDON-TELLEZ REFLECTS ON WINNING THE INAUGURAL HOPE HERO AWARD

Text & Photo by / EVELYN CHAN

God has a plan for every one of us, including Cynthia Abdon-Tellez, General Manager of the Mission For Migrant Workers (MFMW) at St John's Cathedral. Trained as a social worker in her home country, Cynthia submitted herself to the mission and facilitated the establishment of the MFMW in 1981. She has remained instrumental to the support of migrant workers over the years, and was presented the first HOPE Hero Award in 2023 for her contributions.

Launched by HOPE—an impact NGO in the Philippines—the Award aims to recognise individuals for their dedication to enriching lives and bringing hope to others. Talking about this accolade, Cynthia said she was feeling nervous during the awards presentation, which was held virtually. 'It's a recognition of my work with the MFMW... it also gave me a chance to look back on what we have done'.

It all started four decades ago, when Cynthia was asked to go to Hong Kong for three months to work on a survey on potential missionary work of the church after her graduation. Upon her arrival in Hong Kong, she met with her fellow Filipinas and saw their needs. After three months, the Bishop called Cynthia and said, 'It took you three months to be convinced that something must be done'. This led to the big change in her career, as she was asked to take up the mission to support Filipino migrant workers. She was reluctant initially, but in the end responded to the call to support migrant workers.

'I am still very excited to do the work,' she says. 'The work with migrant workers is still very new, even though it's been going on for more than 40 years'.





Over the years, MFMW has been praised for empowering domestic workers in Hong Kong. However, Cynthia's eyes and mind have never been confined to Hong Kong in terms of helping migrants. Endorsed by then-Dean Stephen Sidebotham of St John's Cathedral, Cynthia feels proud of United Filipinos, an alliance of Filipino migrant organisations in Hong Kong established in 1985 to consolidate Filipino migrant workers, and promote their welfare and wellbeing. 'They now represent themselves to the government,' Cynthia says.

She recognises the need for socialisation among migrants, but she's more concerned about their rights. That's why the Alliance was formed, she says. 'People are very easy to come together, but not to think of their rights'.

Cynthia also worked to facilitate the formation of the International Migrants Alliance (IMA), a global alliance of organisations that speaks for migrant workers of different nationalities across the world. 'We cannot just speak for the migrant workers, they have to speak for themselves,' she says.

Cynthia was even more excited that the Chairperson of the alliance represented migrant workers at the United Nations in 2023. 'That's part of the empowerment we are trying to do'. Back to the MFMW, she adds, 'We are still having difficulties, but it's much better now in terms of finances'. Cynthia said they are still struggling sometimes, and she's hoping MFMW can set itself up to be more sustainable, particularly in view of her upcoming retirement.

St John's Cathedral has been known as a place where migrants can go for assistance and support. Cynthia appreciates that our congregation can be more proactive in approaching migrant workers who may not know what to do and what to say when they come to the church. 'It's good to be friendly with migrant workers'.

Dive into Cynthia's video interview with HOPE:







*Maundy Thursday*



*Good Friday*









# The Light of Christ

Text by / FELIX YEUNG  
Photo by / MICHAEL LUU

'Therefore, heavenly Father, in the joy of this night, receive our evening sacrifice of praise, your Church's solemn offering; accept this Easter Candle, a flame divided but undimmed, a pillar of fire that glows to the honour of God. Let it mingle with lights of heaven and continue bravely burning to dispel the darkness of this night!' The final prayers in the *Exsultet*, the song of praise at Easter Vigil, have haunted clergy all these years as they nervously await the clergy rota for the Holy Week and see who is assigned to this difficult task of singing this solemn prayer on this 'most blessed of all nights'.



The focal point of the Easter Vigil, however, is not the singing of the *Exsultet*, but the Paschal Candle. According to *Common Worship: Times and Seasons*, the Candle symbolises 'Christ, the light of the world', and it 'should be placed in a prominent position from Easter Day until Pentecost, and it is traditional for it to be lit at all principal services during this period. It should also be used at baptism and may be used at funerals throughout the year.'

At the start of the Vigil, the Bishop, having blessed the new fire, marks the Paschal Candle with the Greek letters of *Alpha* (Α) and *Omega* (Ω), and the numbers of the current year in the space between the arms of the cross. To remind us of the five wounds of Christ at the crucifixion, incense studs are inserted into the four points and centre of the cross on the Candle. The blessed Candle is then carried into the church by the deacon, singing three times, 'The Light of Christ', as we respond 'Thanks be to God' each time. All our candles get our light from the flame of the Paschal Candle, and it is with this 'light of the world' that we listen to the words from the Old Testaments. The Paschal Candle is once again used to bless the waters of baptism.

In the past years, we have always ordered a nice sticker from our Cathedral Bookstore to decorate our Paschal Candle. We have a special treat this year from a Roman Catholic Franciscan brother, Francesco Li, whom I have known for years. His talents go beyond being a monk; among other things, he designs prayer cards, coats of arms, makes missals with very elegant covers, and the list goes on. Fr Robert Martin and I have always worried about the state of our Paschal Candle when it comes to the hottest months of the year. Our Candle tends to bend a lot because of the heat. In light of this, we decided to use an oil paschal candle for placing at the West Door, and only use the 'real' Paschal Candle during major services, baptisms and funerals. To decorate the 'fake' one, Francesco came to my mind.



Having discussed it with him, and also showing him symbols that are characteristic to our Cathedral building, Brother Francesco thought hard about how he could help us with this important task. In the early days of Lent this year, he asked me if we have a real candle for him to decorate, and I immediately said yes without seeing any graphic. After attending the Chrism Eucharist at the Catholic Cathedral on Maundy Thursday, Francesco came with some decorated wallpaper (yes he has painted the decoration on some unused wallpaper!), and some homemade incense studs painted gold, which makes them look like tiny Ferrero Rocher chocolates. As you all might have seen at Easter Vigil, his work made our Paschal Candle a real visual attraction, and this invites us to be drawn to Christ himself in the symbol of this beautiful Candle. This is also a sign of our shared love between Catholics and Anglicans. We look forward to seeing Br Francesco's work on our oil candle in the near future.







# GUARDIANS OF ST JOHN'S CATHEDRAL:

Text & Photo by / FRANK LANG

*The unsung heroes  
keeping our sacred  
space safe and  
accessible*

The heartbeat of St John's Cathedral is not just its stunning architecture or beautiful artifacts, but the dedicated individuals who work tirelessly behind the scenes to maintain and safeguard this sacred space. They are the church minders, volunteers who selflessly offer their time to ensure the security and accessibility of St John's, especially during public holidays and times when regular staff may be off duty.

Their role is indispensable, as minders play a crucial part in opening and closing the doors of St John's Cathedral, allowing parishioners and visitors to find solace, reflection, and spiritual connection. Their presence, often unnoticed, maintains the continuity of the cathedral's operations, ensuring its doors are open to all who seek comfort and guidance.

Minders also play a pivotal role in maintaining the security of the premises during off-peak hours, guaranteeing that the Cathedral remains a safe and welcoming sanctuary for all. Their watchful eyes and commitment to the preservation of this sacred space are a testament to their dedication and love for their faith community.

Furthermore, the minders' willingness to volunteer their time speaks volumes about their deep connection to our Cathedral, and their understanding of the importance of this place of worship. Their efforts contribute to the ongoing preservation of the building and its contents, ensuring that future generations can continue to appreciate and find inspiration within its walls.

As we reflect on the invaluable contributions of these unsung heroes, let us take a moment to express our heartfelt gratitude for the minder volunteers at our Cathedral. And the next time you step through the doors of St John's Cathedral, take a moment to offer a prayer of thanks for these extraordinary volunteers, whose unwavering commitment keeps our sacred space alive with the spirit of community, love, and faith. Their service is a reminder that the strength of our Cathedral lies not only in its physical structure but in the hearts and hands of those who selflessly offer their time and care to uphold its sanctity.







# The crucial contribution of sidesmen in cultivating the spiritual ambiance of church gatherings

Text by / **FRANK LANG**

As we come together for worship within the walls of our Cathedral, there is a palpable aura of warmth and hospitality that envelops us, thanks in large part to the steadfast dedication of our sidesmen. These unsung heroes hold a pivotal position in molding the overall essence of our church services, infusing their unique contributions that elevate the worship experience for all who participate.

At the forefront of their responsibilities, sidesmen serve as the friendly faces that extend a heartfelt welcome to congregants, setting the tone for a service imbued with inclusivity and acceptance from the very moment attendees step foot into our sacred sanctuary.

Beyond their role as ambassadors of hospitality, sidesmen diligently oversee the safety and well-being of our congregation, deftly managing the flow of attendees, guiding individuals to their seats with grace, and promptly addressing any unforeseen emergencies that may arise. Their vigilant presence provides a sense of reassurance and tranquility to worshippers throughout the service.

Moreover, the unsung efforts of sidesmen in upholding order and reverence during the service cannot be overlooked. From ensuring the seamless organisation of processions to maintaining decorum within the sanctuary, these individuals embody an aura of solemnity and respect that resonates with the sacred atmosphere of the church.

Central to their duties is the collection of offertory and donations on behalf of the church, a task that directly contributes to the sustenance of our ministry and operational needs. Through their meticulous handling of these crucial contributions, sidesmen play a vital role in supporting the spiritual and practical requirements of our church community.

In fostering a sense of fellowship and unity within our congregation, sidesmen serve as pillars of support and guidance for worshippers, offering a helping hand and a listening ear when necessary. Their presence cultivates a spirit of togetherness and camaraderie among congregants, enriching the communal fabric of our church.

Above all, the selfless dedication and unwavering commitment of sidesmen exemplify the virtues of service, humility, and devotion. Their invaluable contributions to the seamless functioning of our church services reflect a profound dedication to nurturing the spiritual well-being of our community and preserving the sanctity of our worship experience.

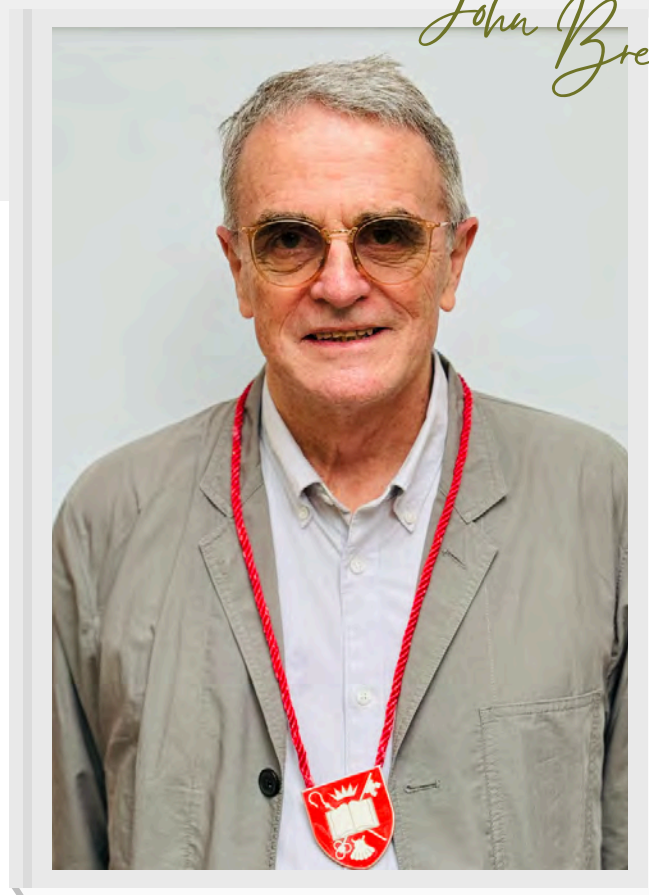
In essence, sidesmen fulfil a multifaceted role in shaping the sacred tapestry of our church services, enhancing the spiritual journey of congregants, and upholding the cherished customs and beliefs that define our cathedral community. We extend our deepest gratitude to these unsung heroes for their indispensable service and the indispensable role they play in fostering the vibrancy of our cathedral community.



**S**tepping into the fascinating world of the Cathedral's sidesmen, we were given a rare chance to talk to two long-time volunteers—John Breen and Susan King. Through their honest accounts, we learned not only about the important work they do, but also the personal stories behind their dedication to serving the church.

'The wish to contribute in a functional way initially motivated me to become a sidesman. Many of my good friends who are parishioners also serve as sidesmen. To me, the role of a sidesman is to facilitate a dignified and solemn service of worship. They ensure that the congregation is respectful to the clergy and their fellow parishioners, and to collect offerings in a procedurally proper way. The offertory is a significant element of this duty, as each parishioner contributes according to their means, and I find it very impressive to see some of our least advantaged congregation members making meaningful offerings.

Serving as a sidesman gives me a sense that I am being helpful and enabling the Cathedral parish to present an appeal to those who are unsure about Christianity. My journey of faith is deeply rooted in the collective commitment to regular worship services, stewardship, and participating in parish activities. I am always touched by those in the congregation who have taken extraordinary steps or efforts to join our worship. Whenever disabled people come to services, the encouragement and compassion shown to them by our clergy is an inspiration to us all. As the average age of our congregation creeps ever higher, the issue of ageing will be our collective challenge.'



*John Breen*



*Susan King*

'I initially took up the role of a sidesman as I was standing in for my father when he was unable to do his duties for a few months. It was during this time that I discovered the satisfaction I felt in helping with the various tasks on a Sunday and in meeting new people. I therefore decided to remain in the role.

Being a sidesman has helped me to build more relationships and create a deeper sense of belonging within the community. I now have the opportunity to interact with a wide range of people within the church community including the congregation, visitors, the clergy, and fellow sidesmen who assist at different services. I have enjoyed having casual chats with fellow congregants, as well as helping to provide them with any information they may need about service times and general questions about our beautiful cathedral.

Serving as a sidesman helps me to feel that I am contributing to the church community, helping to serve in my own small way. It has also provided me with invaluable opportunities for learning and discussing matters of faith, as well as fostering fellowship; the sidesmen have been lucky to meet with Fr Robert Martin on several occasions, which has prompted me to ask more questions, and contemplate views and understandings I may have had.

There are such a variety of different tasks that a sidesman performs before, during, and after the services. I feel really glad that I can help to provide a meaningful contribution to the smooth functioning of the church services. Becoming more involved has shown me the importance of people willing to contribute their time, talents, and resources to the mission and work of the cathedral. This active participation has deepened my understanding of the practices and traditions of the church.'





# Behind the Scenes of St John's Cathedral Original Teens Drama *'Love · Sink · Found'*

Text & Photo by / ONCE THEATRE  
St John's Cathedral Life Enrichment Centre

Thanks to our heavenly Father, the youth of St John's Cathedral successfully completed three performances of the drama 'Love · Sink · Found' at the Y Studio, Youth Square, Chai Wan for the second consecutive year on 4–5 November 2023.

St John's Cathedral Life Enrichment Centre launched its first expressive arts youth drama training programme in 2022, holding more than 10 workshops, day camps, drama trainings and rehearsals, and finally performed the musical 'Why Be Normal When You Could Be Happy' in October that year.

On 4 January 2023, a new organising committee was formed for the troupe, which was formally named 'Once Theatre'. The name is taken from the lyrics of the original song from our first musical in the hope that all troupe members will remember their original intention of joining the troupe, accept themselves and others, and cherish the learning opportunities of every performance.

'Love · Sink · Found' is Once Theatre's second youth drama. A quick explanation of the title: 'sink' as a verb means 'to fall, to become submerged and engulfed in obsession', whereas 'found' means 'to discover, to discern'.

'Everyone is obsessive at times, and obsession often makes people fall without realising it. Do you become obsessive because of your goals?'

From the opening ceremony in April 2023 to various drama and creative arts workshops, dance, and singing skills training, all troupe members worked hard together to produce the work. Indeed, everything—from the script, lyrics, and melody of the songs to costume design, stage management, and directing work—was all created by our teens! We are grateful that everyone supported and encouraged each other to persevere and complete the show.







'Half a year has swiftly passed, and in the blink of an eye, the theatrical production has been successfully completed. I am profoundly grateful for the unwavering support, collaborative efforts, and unwavering commitment of the entire team, both behind the scenes and on the stage,' says Roysee Ko, Project Assistant of the Teens Drama Project. 'The invaluable assistance provided by the stage management team during rehearsals, the meticulous procurement of props and costumes by the props and costume team, and the seamless coordination of makeup, lighting, and sound have truly elevated the overall performance'.

Ko adds: 'A special mention of gratitude is reserved for the dedicated actors who wholeheartedly participated in the intensive three-month workshop. Their unwavering dedication of time and energy is not to be overlooked. Witnessing their collective growth throughout the process has been immensely gratifying, and I am delighted to see them forge meaningful connections with like-minded individuals as they journey together on the path of artistic expression'.

Ko concludes, 'Finally, I must acknowledge that this experience has served as a catalyst for my personal growth. It has afforded me a deeper comprehension of the intricacies of theatrical troupe operations. Furthermore, it has prompted profound reflections on the essence of "love" within the context of our production. It serves as a poignant reminder to extend love and compassion towards others, while simultaneously nurturing a steadfast commitment to self-care and self-love'.

Drama performance is a channel for our teens to express their thoughts and feelings. We believe that the arts are not merely a hobby or a fancy dream. It in fact is an excellent way to connect our hearts and enhance our mental health wellbeing! We let the participants to slow down and talk with each other through different Creative Arts Workshops before many drama practices. Creative Arts is a journey of self-exploration. Through different art modalities, our teens can temporarily put down their endless schoolwork and participate in drawing, music, drama, movement, writing, etc. These activities facilitate growth, relieve stress, and help them discover their deepest thoughts.

One of our major goals is to create a trustworthy environment for our teens to express themselves with person-centred elements like genuineness, unconditional positive regard, and empathetic tuning. Church is a really safe place for youth to develop their potential.

We are grateful to St John's Cathedral Life Enrichment Centre for starting and nurturing the group so that the life of each participant and volunteer has grown from the experience. And, of course, we need to thank our drama supervisor Jason Wong, and troupe consultant Alex Wong.

We would like to especially thank SKH St Paul's Church for their venue support of our group, and for supporting the mission of Life Enrichment Centre, which is to empower youths through providing a wide range of life education activities and programmes based on a holistic perspective for their physical, psychological, social, and spiritual needs.

*'Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.'* (Matt. 7. 7) This is the firm promise given by Jesus to his disciples, and it is the greatest blessing for every follower of the Lord in his or her life-long search for the truth. As long as one is willing to search, one will surely find it.





# MICHAELMAS FAIR 2024 WALKATHON:

## A Community Gathering Despite the Storms

Text & Photo by /  
**STAFF REPORTER**

Although the highly anticipated Michaelmas Fair 2024 Walkathon had to be cancelled due to unstable weather conditions, the spirit of community and dedication of our congregation shone through in a remarkable way.

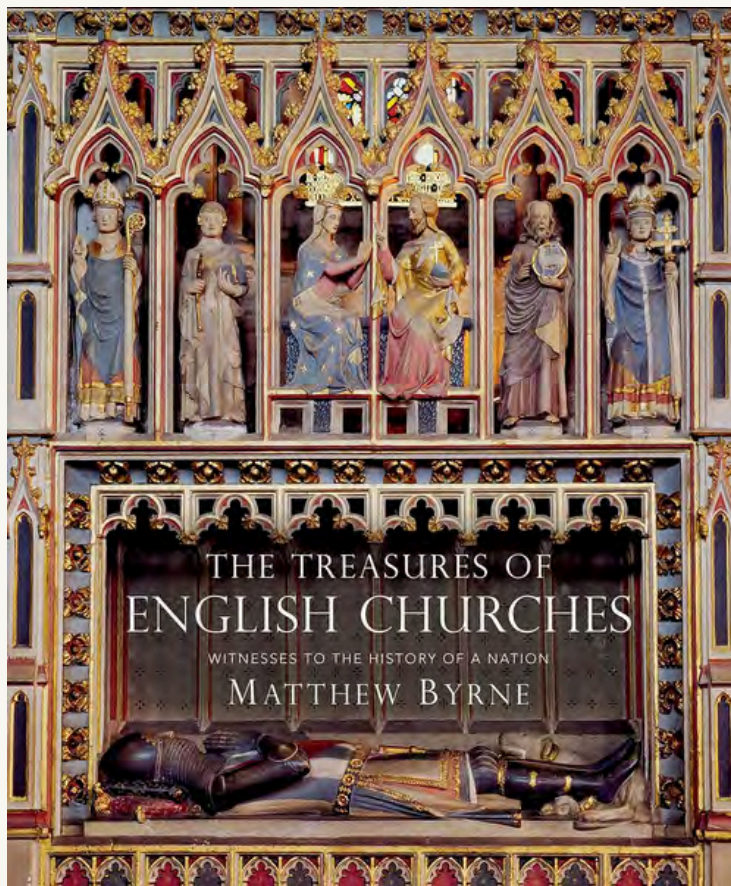
Despite the grey skies and unpredictable rain, we were deeply moved to see so many of our parishioners, as well as enthusiastic participants from local schools, come together in support of this important fundraising initiative. Your presence and willingness to brave the weather meant the world to us.

While the Walkathon itself could not proceed as planned, the congregation still gathered to enjoy a shared lunch, fostering the fellowship and camaraderie that lies at the heart of our church family. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to each and every person who made the effort to attend, rain or shine. Your dedication and passion for our shared mission is truly inspiring. Though the Walkathon may have been cancelled, the spirit of unity, service and faith that permeated the day will linger on, strengthening the bonds that unite us all.

As we look ahead to future events, we are filled with hope and excitement, knowing that we can count on the steadfast support of a congregation willing to come together, come what may. Thank you for being a part of this special day and for your continued involvement in the life of our beloved church.







# What are we reading?

## The Treasures of English Churches: Witnesses to the History of a Nation

*Matthew Byrne*

This celebration of some of the greatest art, architecture and furniture to be found in English churches offers a fascinating account of centuries of accumulated wealth, and is set off by a selection of breath-taking photographs by Matthew Byrne. It covers changing architectural styles across the centuries, and prominent examples of artistic work, including stained glass, rood screens, church monuments, and curious carvings.

This book is published in association with The National Churches Trust, a national, independent charity dedicated to supporting church buildings across the UK.

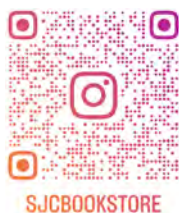
## Gwulo's Books: Old Hong Kong Photos and The Tales They Tell

*David Bellis*

In the 5 Volumes you'll find over 50,000 pages about old Hong Kong to explore, including over 30,000 photos. The content is added by a friendly community of people who enjoy sharing what we don't know about Hong Kong's history.



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# In Touch turns 10

Celebrating a Decade of Staying 'In Touch' at St John's Cathedral.

As we enter 2024, *In Touch* magazine proudly marks its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of keeping the St John's Cathedral community and beyond connected and informed. What began as a simple quarterly publication in the summer of 2014 has blossomed into an invaluable resource that chronicles the vibrant life and work of this historic institution.

Following in the footsteps of the previous St John's Review, the inaugural issue of *In Touch* set out with a clear mission to engage readers in the myriad activities, ministries, and stories unfolding within the cathedral walls and beyond. More than just a catalog of events, *In Touch* has strived to shine a light on the profound ways the spirit of Christ is alive and transforming lives, both in our local community and the world at large.

As we celebrate this milestone anniversary, we invite all those who have journeyed with us over the past 10 years to continue walking alongside us. Whether you've been a loyal reader since the beginning or are discovering *In Touch* for the first time, we welcome your feedback, contributions, and participation in shaping the next chapter of this beloved publication.

Here's to 10 more years of staying 'In Touch' with the vibrant life of St John's Cathedral!



## 'Unity Through Creativity' Logo Design Competition

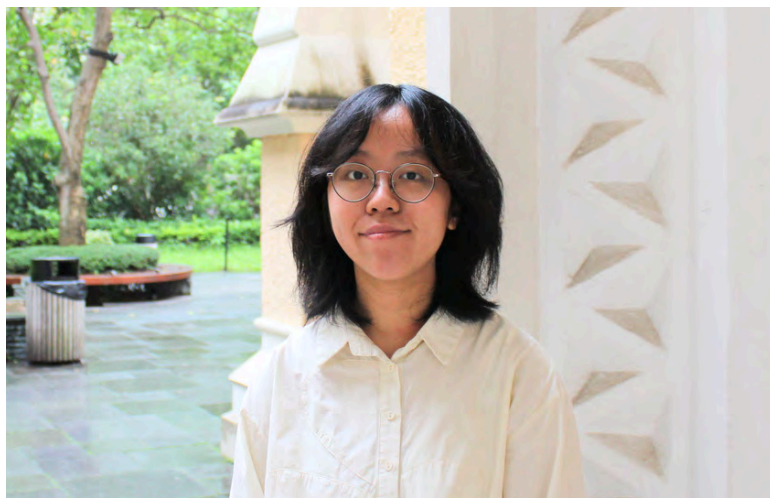


Introducing the winning logo of the 'Unity Through Creativity' Logo Design Competition for the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of St John's Cathedral! This captivating design captures the vibrant spirit of unity and creativity that defines the cathedral's community. With its harmonious blend of colors and shapes, it symbolises the cathedral's inclusive nature and forward-thinking approach. Inspired by the cathedral's rich heritage, this logo is a visual art that represents the congregation's shared faith and collective vision. Get ready to be inspired as we embark on a celebration that honours tradition while embracing the power of creativity!



# NEW FACES

## *in the cathedral office*



### Scarlett Lee – Administrative Assistant

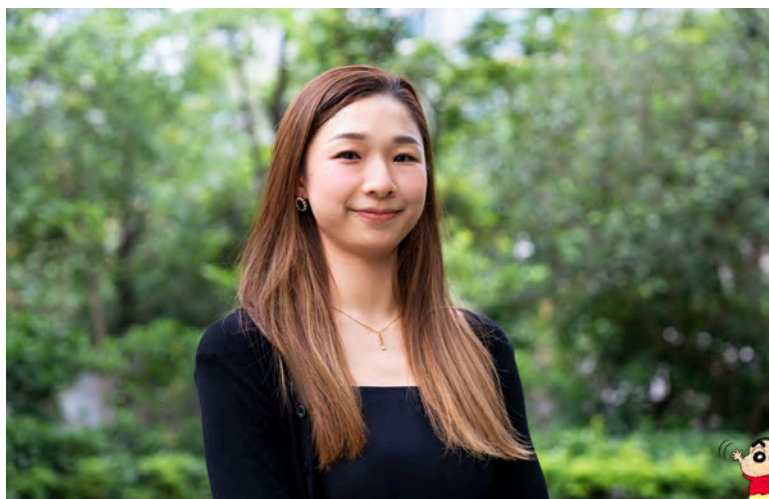
We are delighted to welcome Scarlett Lee, who joined us in February as our new Administrative Assistant. Scarlett steps into this role after we bid a fond farewell to our beloved colleague and friend, Bowie Yu, who has embarked on postgraduate studies in Japan.

For Scarlett, this position marks an exciting new chapter, as it is her very first role as a receptionist. She is eager to immerse herself in the Cathedral Office and looks forward to connecting with everyone. When she's not tending to her duties, Scarlett enjoys indulging in her favorite pastimes: binge-watching Netflix and listening to pop hits. Her infectious enthusiasm and warm personality are already making a positive impression around the office.

### Natasha Ngan – Communications Officer

We welcome Natasha Ngan, our new Communications Officer, who joined us in Holy Week this year. Previously, she was development officer of a fundraising department at a local private school, and worked at the University of Hong Kong before joining us. Besides designing and editing our *In Touch* magazine, Natasha will look after our social media and assist at our broadcast services.

Natasha is a proud alumna of SKH Lam Woo Memorial Secondary School, and we are thrilled to have her on board. We believe her expertise as well as her love for puppies and cats (and the Japanese cartoon Crayon Shin-chan!) will bring our community youthful energy and innovative ideas.



### Coman Sheung – Music Officer

We welcome Coman, our new Music Officer, who has been in the Cathedral Choir since April 2023. He has a degree in counselling and psychology, and is a very competent tenor and vocal coach. Coman quickly took on numerous solo singing roles at our services, including *O Holy Night* at Midnight Mass, as well as tenor solo in Bach's *St John Passion* and Good Friday Passion this Holy Week. He will be leading our Children's Choir, and actively participate in the music-making in our busy church routine. When not singing, Coman enjoys driving and reading about psychology.





# Major Services at St John's & Daughter Churches

## St John's Cathedral

4-8 Garden Road, Central, Hong Kong

**29  
JUN**

***Peter and Paul, Apostles***  
*12.00noon Sung Eucharist*

**30  
JUN**

***Celebrating Hong Kong***  
*5.00pm Sung Eucharist*

**6  
AUG**

***The Transfiguration  
of our Lord***  
*7.30pm Sung Eucharist*

**15  
AUG**

***The Blessed Virgin Mary***  
*7.30pm Sung Eucharist*

Tel: 2523 4157

Website:





# Discovery Bay Church

SKH Wei Lun Primary School, Lantau

***Every Sunday***

*10.00am Sung Eucharist*

Tel: 2987 4210

Website:



# Emmanuel Church

Béthanie Chapel  
139 Pok Fu Lam Road, Pok Fu Lam

***Every Sunday***

*10.15am Sung Eucharist*

Tel: 2523 4157

Website:



# St Stephen's Chapel

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

***Every Sunday***

*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  
(Acting Priest-in-Charge of Discovery Bay Church)

## Cathedral Chaplains

The Revd Canon Dwight dela Torre  
The Revd Canon Peter Koon  
The Revd Sharon Langbis  
The Revd Robert Martin CMC  
(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

## Cathedral Honorary Chaplains

The Revd Dr 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

## Head Server

James Choo

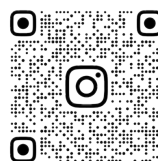
## Head Sidesman

Frank Lang

## In Touch Editorial Team

Natasha Ngan - Designer & Editor  
John Tanner

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# Annual Church Meeting 2024

Text & Photo by / STAFF REPORTER

St John's Cathedral in Hong Kong has weathered another eventful year, marked by both joy and sorrow. As the Annual Church Meeting approaches, our Dean, The Very Revd Kwok-keung (KK) Chan, reflected on the community's experiences in 2023-2024, a period of transition and resilience.

The Cathedral bade farewell to two beloved Council members, Mrs June Li and Mr Tom Bispham, whose passing left a deep void. 'They were so dear and intimate to the whole Cathedral community', Dean KK shares, 'and their contributions will be greatly missed'. Yet, amid the tears, the Cathedral team—trustees, treasurer, secretary, chapter members, staff, and dedicated volunteers—worked tirelessly to guide the community through the lingering effects of the pandemic and restore a sense of normalcy.

The year 2024 marks a significant milestone: the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Cathedral's first Anglican service held in 1849. To celebrate this rich legacy, the Cathedral organised a series of commemorative events, a Palm Sunday Vespers featuring Bach's *St John Passion* and a logo design competition. Upcoming events will include a choir tour to the UK, a Thanksgiving Sung Eucharist, and an exhibition showcasing the Cathedral's history.



'We are hoping that all these activities may help gather St John's sisters and brothers together and strengthen our sense of belonging to this spiritual home,' Dean KK explains.

As the Cathedral community emerged from the COVID pandemic's challenges, it witnessed a resurgence of normalcy. Parishioners resumed their travels for business, family, and personal reasons, while a notable number also emigrated from Hong Kong, reflecting the Cathedral's diverse and international nature. The Stewardship Campaign of 2023 was a success, with the community responding generously to the call to be good stewards of God's church.

The Cathedral also rekindled its ecumenical relationships, particularly with the neighbouring Roman Catholic Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, where the Revd Dominic Chan welcomed the St John's community for a memorable dinner. Baptisms and confirmations brought new members into the fold, as the Cathedral welcomed over 50 adults and 44 children or infants.

The Cathedral Council continued its diligent work, organising a Quiet Day and inviting the heads of the Cathedral's outreach ministries to share their experiences. These ministries, including the Mission for Migrant Workers, the Life Enrichment Centre, the Cathedral Bookstore, and the Counselling Service, have continued to serve the community with dedication and compassion.

As the Cathedral community looks ahead to the future, Dean KK reflects on the bittersweet tapestry of the past year, where 'laughter and tears intertwined to form the part of our history'. Through it all, the Cathedral remains steadfast, united in its mission to serve the Kingdom of God and celebrate its rich heritage, now in its 175<sup>th</sup> year.