

# In Touch

The Cathedral Magazine - Summer Edition

## 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



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## Cathedral Interior Gets a Big 'Lick of Paint'

By Staff Reporter

It has not been done for 20 years but the last three months have seen the inside of the Cathedral painted from end to end. The mould, the staining and the peeling paint, a transfixing feature of some corners, have been removed in strokes.

The progress of the work has been circular. The bamboo scaffolding has worked its way round the walls, allowing services to continue as normal.

Those seated in the nave aisle chairs, next to the windows, have had some sense of what it was like to worship in the mat shed church used before the Cathedral opened in 1849.

The Government's Antiquities and Monuments Office only assists St John's financially in keeping its Grade 1 building actually standing.

Indoor paint jobs, though vital, do not fall into that category. Half of the \$2 million cost of the job will come out of the Cathedral Endowment Fund. The other \$1 million must come out of our own pockets. Already, over \$260,000 of that has been put into the envelopes set out for us every Sunday. Along with the Garden redesign, the indoor restoration of both church and Li Hall will be celebrated at the Dedication Festival on 18th September.



The East Window with scaffolding.

*Read full report on page 4 – 6.*

## A Service of Reconciliation at St John's

By Stuart Wolfendale

Reconciliation, unity and equality were themes of an unusual service held at St John's at lunchtime on 17th June. In reaction to the massacre in Orlando a few days before, an act of worship was held by the Cathedral to bring together very different members of the Hong Kong community to demonstrate and pray for the unity which is felt amongst them against confrontation, hatred and persecution.

The service was organised and the liturgy written at very short notice. In the beginning, it came out of a Whatsapp 'chat' between a diplomat, a writer and a priest. In the end, more than 200 people who were Christian, Buddhist, Muslim, Jewish, and of no religion, who were gay and straight, who were there as officials, religious and activist leaders and as individuals, joined in a liturgy of prayer and music which expressed love and commitment.

Men and women of widely varying philosophies lit candles together in a service which was an expression of the Cathedral's mission and its purpose as a church for all in the city.

*Read full report on page 28.*



The Chief Imam of Hong Kong (right) lit a candle, watched by the Consul General of Canada and the former Consul General of the US.



# In Touch

*In Touch* took a break after our last edition in March. When we said goodbye to the organising powers and creative flair of founding editor Fr Nigel Gibson, we decided the magazine should catch its breath and wait for the arrival of our new Communications Officer, Maggie Chan, who is also our new editor. There is more about her and the Bookstore's new manager Sandy Villamil in the following pages.

The magazine has kept an eye on events at St John's in the interim. In this edition, we include details on happenings of weeks ago, whilst we were away, not just because they are worthy of mention but because they show how much can happen in the Cathedral over six months and how important St John's can be, not just to our congregations, but to the city.

We report that, moved by the massacre in Orlando, Florida, there was a sudden confluence of feeling among some St John's members that it was time for a service of reconciliation and unity to commit to where we stood in our community. At very short notice, this brought Hong Kong people from across professions, faiths and sexuality to be together in the Cathedral and which we report on. We feature too the annual Service of Dedication of St John Ambulance, of which there will be at least as many officers who are of other beliefs as there are Christians yet who come naturally to St John's to give thanks.

The Cathedral also demonstrated its international involvement as a city church by hosting, this year, the annual International Deans' and Rectors' Conference. A special moment in that gathering was a visit to people living in subdivided flats in the diocese. St John's involvement in that and an update on our part in the alleviation of poverty locally is picked up on in an article by Fr Mark Rogers.

Our obligation and dedication to our historical church building is documented in an article on the repainting of the interior of the Cathedral, which is just being completed. Amongst other things, it is an interesting pictorial record of the use of bamboo scaffolding for interior renovation. The painting is also for the thousands in the city who sit in our precincts every month and who use the Garden. The St John's compound is a spiritual and atmospheric lung for Central and

this will be celebrated in the Dedication Festival ceremony for Garden, stained glass windows and painting project to be held on 18 September and to be given full coverage in our next edition.

In this issue, we have a fair spread of articles on St John's Outreach ministries. We feature the lives and work of some of those involved with Helpers for Domestic Helpers and include a farewell to its Chairwoman of the Board, Alex Barr. HIV Education Centre held a Youth Festival at St John's with the Archbishop as a guest and Mission For Migrant Workers went outdoors too, with scores of booths in the grounds, to give advice and assistance to foreign domestic workers who were also caregivers.

Outreach to the world made a longer stretch with a trip by a team, led by the Dean, to the diocese of Toungoo in Myanmar with which St John's is establishing a connection. We publish the touching and enlightening reminiscences of the four team members. More will be written about this new link in the next edition after a party from the diocese has visited St John's.

Barely an issue can pass without the centrality of music to the Cathedral's life being evident. This issue we record the 10th anniversary of the extraordinarily successful and well sustained Children's Choir which was marked by a concert in the Cathedral. Attendance surpassed expectations. The three bishops of the HKSKH were in the front row.

In this issue, Dr Mark Gandolfi carries on with his features on marriage from earlier editions, highlighting the five languages of apology this time. The now Revd Dr Stephen Cherry, who came to preach in 2014 on a sabbatical, returned too as Dean of King's College Cambridge to give a talk to 'Christians in Central' on his latest book on sin, and to answer our own questions on the subject.

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



Geoffrey and his mother

## Emmanuel's Home Grown Olympian

By Stuart Wolfendale

Our daughter church at Pokfulam had somebody to be proud of in the 2016 Olympic Games, in Rio de Janeiro. Geoffrey Cheah, a member the Emmanuel congregation, was one of the Hong Kong Swimming Team which represented the SAR in the Rio Games. Geoffrey's mother and father, James and Kathy, are regular members of Emmanuel.

Geoffrey, an Asian Games medalist, was the only male member of the Rio team

and took part in the 50m free style event. Geoffrey won his heat but not with a time that could get him into the semi-final. In what could be considered courageous and conscientious in a newcomer to international sport, he spoke out in an interview with Apple Daily against drug using competitors. 'I am pretty sad and upset,' Geoffrey said. 'It just feels like some people don't respect the anti-doping rules and feel like they are above them.'

# THE DEAN'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

Greetings! I trust you have had a good and refreshing summer. When you returned to St John's Cathedral, you must have been surprised by what you saw. The interior of the Cathedral has just been repainted after more than 20 years. The fresh look brings forth a sense of energy and warm welcome to worshippers and visitors alike. The newly renovated North Garden has also been completed after 6 months of construction. The lush greenery, the beautifully decorated labyrinth and the wide open space truly proclaim that this is an oasis in the hustle and bustle of Central. All those who come to enjoy their lunch break, a friendly conversation or a quiet meditation in our new garden will find peace and refreshment, for sure. Do join us when we dedicate these two major achievements at our Dedication Festival on Sunday, 18th September!

These transformations of our facility correspond perfectly to our newly approved mission statement of the Cathedral.

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

"No vision, no future" someone wise once said. The mission statement captures what we are about and the things we are striving for as a faith community. It helps us to focus our priorities ahead and to reinforce our core values. I encourage all St John's people to know this by heart and use it as a guide post for our common journey.

What is our mission at St John's Cathedral? First of all, we strive to make this a place where people can experience God's love, presence and power. God is moving and working among us, and extending His grace through us. Secondly, welcome and hospitality have always been key elements at St John's. People from all walks of life have visited and many have made their home at our Cathedral thanks to the openness and generosity we extend to all. We do welcome and treasure all people. In addition, St John's endeavours to bring people to follow Christ as disciples since that is what Christ calls us to do. Last but not least, through St John's, we pray that people's lives will be transformed through our worship services, outreach programmes, nurture courses and pastoral care. Christ came to give life and give it abundantly (John 10). It is worth asking, "How are we changing lives through Christ? How can we help all those whom we encounter to experience such abundant life in Christ? What can I do personally to make St John's a place of welcome?"

I do believe the mission statement will help us crystallise our efforts and directions as the body of Christ here in Hong Kong. God has given us a great heritage, how do we move it forward? This is a task given to us and is shared by all of us. I invite you to be active participants in celebrating and extending the mission of our Cathedral.

Before I close, I would like to warmly welcome the following new staff to the cathedral. Sandy Villamil, our new bookstore manager since March, has brought in fresh energy and vision to the bookstore ministry. Maggie Chan, our first Communications Officer who arrived in June, has enhanced much on the communications and publicity front. In a few weeks, we will welcome Adam Mok, the newly appointed Cathedral Pastoral Assistant, who will be providing a helping hand to our common work, focusing on university ministry, nurture programs and pastoral care. With this new blood, our future looks even brighter.

I am grateful to God for St John's and for all of you and do look forward to our exciting future ahead. God bless you all.

Sincerely yours

*Dean Matthias*



各位，大家好，盼望你們渡過了愉快輕鬆的暑假。當你回到聖約翰座堂時，相信你會眼前一亮：座堂的內牆在二十年來首度髹上新油漆，為教友及遊客帶來活力及新氣象；座堂花園完成為期六個月的美化及改善工程，花園的茂綠植物、供人踱步默想的明陣及開揚的公共空間，將花園打造為中環鬧市之中的綠州，而於花園享用午餐、閒聊或默想的朋友，可以在其中得著平安及心靈更新。現誠邀閣下在9月18日（星期日）的「祝聖周年紀念日」，與我們一同慶祝上述兩項工程的竣工！

座堂設施的更新，正好與座堂最近通過的使命宣言互相呼應：

***「聖約翰座堂滿載上帝的恩典，位於香港的中心，歡迎所有人士與我們一同以跟隨基督、轉化生命為己任。」***

某位智者曾說「沒有異象，就沒有未來」。座堂的使命宣言刻劃了我們的身份及作為信仰群體所奮鬥的目標，宣言亦幫助我們分清目標的優先次序，彰顯我們的核心價值。我鼓勵所有聖約翰座堂的教友熟讀使命宣言，讓宣言作為指引我們前路的明燈。

聖約翰座堂的使命是什麼？首先，我們致力令座堂成為讓人經歷上帝的愛、同在與大能之處，上帝在我們中間運行與作工，透過我們施予祂的恩典。其次，聖約翰座堂向來樂意歡迎及招待社會不同階層的人士，為他們營造開放及包容的氛圍，不少人因此決定以此為家。在聖約翰座堂，我們的大門為每一個人而開。

此外，聖約翰座堂致力領人歸主，作主門徒，回應主耶穌對我們的呼召。我們祈求上帝透過聖約翰座堂的崇拜、外展事工、牧養課程及牧養關懷，讓人的生命得以改變。「耶穌來了，是叫人得生命，並且得的更豐盛」（約翰福音10章）。我們應該問：我們如何可以透過耶穌改變他人的生命？我們該如何幫助與我們接觸的人，以致他們經歷基督賜予的豐盛人生？個人而言，我該如何令聖約翰座堂成為包容、接納他人的地方？

我深信，使命宣言可以幫助我們凝聚力量、指引方向，讓我們在香港這片土地上，做好基督肢體的職份。上帝給予我們豐厚的歷史傳統，我們該如何傳承？這是落在我們肩膀上的工作，人人有責，誠邀你與我們攜手，共同擁抱及傳揚座堂的使命。

最後，我謹誠摯歡迎聖約翰座堂的新同事，包括書店經理韋佩珊女士，她於今年3月上任，為書店事工帶來新動力、新氣象；座堂首設傳訊主任一職，由陳嘉婉小姐擔任，她自6月起成為我們的一份子，數月間已加強推行座堂在傳訊及宣傳方面的實務工作。數個星期後，我們將再增添新成員——座堂牧民助理莫冠文先生，他將會協助我們推行大學事工、培育及牧養關懷工作等。隨着三位新同事加入我們的團隊，座堂的發展前景更見明朗。

我為聖約翰座堂及各位向上帝獻上感恩，前面的路風光明媚，讓人期待。願主祝福你們每一位。

座堂主任牧師  
謝子和 謹啟





# An Inside Job

By Staff Reporter

Walking into St John's Cathedral during summertime, you will have seen scaffolding up inside the church as part of a project to redecorate the interior walls of the Cathedral and the Li Hall. A new inside face of the cathedral is imminent. *In Touch* has taken a closer look.

**T**he interior of the Cathedral has been looking rather tired for some time. In response, St John's began a project of repainting the interior walls of the Cathedral which were succumbing to 20 years of peeling and stains.

Bamboo scaffolding has been up in the cathedral, in stages, since the end of June. Last month it worked its way round to the perimeter and the west door, south door and north door of the cathedral were closed from time to time during weekdays.

Meanwhile, services were held as usual under bamboo arches and net awnings and the Cathedral managed to remain open as a place for worship, prayer and meditation throughout. The Cathedral Office told *In Touch*, that in order to

minimize the inconvenience caused to parishioners, instructions had been given to the contractor not to carry out works during service hours at weekends and to clean the Cathedral up on a daily basis, with more thorough cleaning work done on Fridays.

Announcements on the redecoration project were made during services and printed in pew sheets. Notices were also posted on bulletin boards, the Cathedral's doors and inside the Cathedral to remind visitors and parishioners to be aware of what was going on around them.

By the end of July, repainting work on the south side of the interior had been completed and scaffolding removed. By the end of summer, the major works in the Cathedral are expected to have

been completed. This work is costing approximately \$2,000,000. The Trustees will make available half the cost of the project from the Cathedral Endowment Fund. St John's has appealed for the remaining \$1,000,000 to be donated by parishioners and has distributed envelopes for donations.

As at mid-August, over \$260,000 has been raised for the redecoration project from among individual parishioners and St John's offers its heartfelt thanks for their generous support.

The Li Hall's walls have also been given a fresh look. The works in there took nearly four weeks. Scaffolding was erected in late June and removed on 22nd July.







**Interior** Bamboo scaffolding has been erected in the Cathedral.



**Garden** The Garden Project and the re-paving have been completed.

## Fellowship Fun Night

By Staff Reporter

Over 120 parishioners and guests attended the sold-out Fellowship Fun Night 2016 and enjoyed an evening with lots of laughter, chit-chatting and entertainment. With Fr Robert guest-starring as MC and auctioneer, and with the enthusiastic support from participants and auction bidders, the event raised a net total of over \$80,000 from ticket sales, donations and auction proceeds.

Great auction items at the Fellowship Fun Night included "Dinner with Chef Des" and "Lunch with the Dean", which realised \$10,000 and \$5,000 after keen competition in bidding.

Double magnums of "Donmaine Du Meix-foulot Mercurey 2009", a floral arrangement class conducted by Ruth Philipson, and a CD donated by Paul Phoenix, a Grammy Award-winning singer were also auctioned.

During the dinner, Paul Phoenix, who has 17 years of performing experience and has mentored The King's Singers, gave a solo performance of his beautiful voice. Other performers included the Pelicans and John Li who, together, made a joyful noise and brought a Capella pleasure to the audience.

The Fun Quiz was a real challenge for everybody – 6 video clips taken from wacky foreign language TV advertisements challenging everyone to guess the product being advertised with almost illogical answers – yet the fellows at Table 2 were able to get 5 answers correct out of 6, whilst many of the others had no clue!

Fellowship Fun Night is part of the Michaelmas Fair. The Michaelmas Fair Committee, chaired by Julianne Doe, offered thanks to all Cathedral staff, volunteers, donors, sponsors, auction bidders and participants for making it a great evening.



## St John Ambulance Brigade on Parade

By Staff Reporter



Hong Kong St John Ambulance Brigade Band paraded at St John's Cathedral with bagpipes and drums on the morning of 19th June, marking the commencement of the annual Service of Dedication for St John Ambulance.

The service was celebrated by The Revd Peter Koon and the preacher was The Revd Willam Wu Wai-ho.

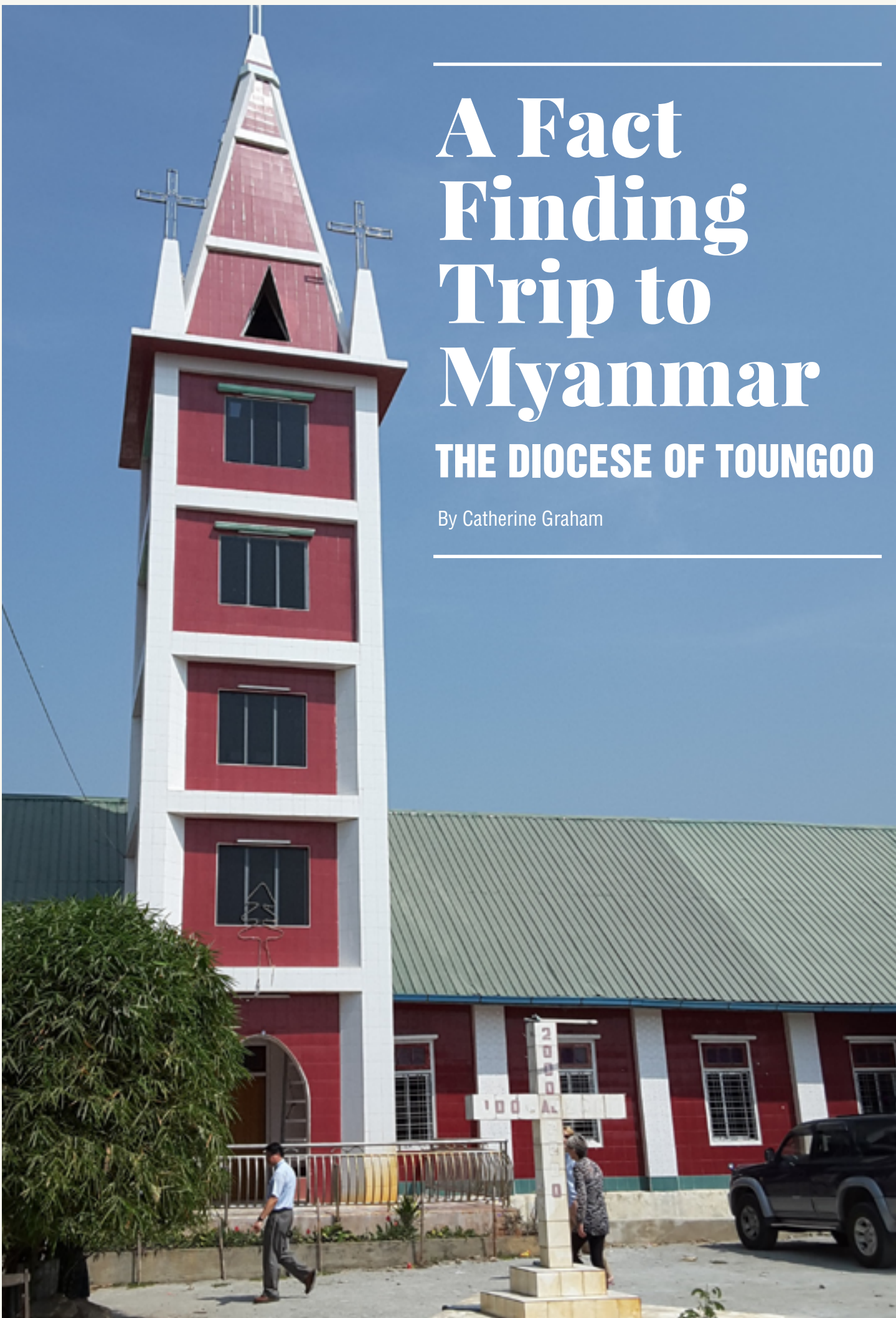
In his sermon, Fr Wai-ho associated the cross in the logo of St John Ambulance with Jesus on the Cross and that He has died for our sins. Fr Wai-ho reminded members in the Brigade to serve the community not only by providing first aid and ambulance services in emergency, but also by sharing Jesus Christ's love and care with others, irrespective of their nationality, race, political stance and sexual orientation.



A few weeks earlier, the Grand Council of the Order of St John met in Hong Kong from 27th to 28th May 2016. It was the first time that The St John Priory of Hong Kong hosted such a meeting since its inauguration as a Priory on 1 March 2015. An evening service was held in the Cathedral where the Archbishop, Dr Paul Kwong, was invested as a Commander and the Revd Peter Koon as an Officer of the Order by its Grand Prior, The Duke of Gloucester, cousin of Queen Elizabeth II.

In receipt of another honour, Fr Peter Koon, provincial secretary general and a chaplain to the Cathedral, was appointed an honorary canon of St George's Cathedral, in the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and the Middle East, by the Most Revd Suheil S. Dawani, the Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem.





# A Fact Finding Trip to Myanmar

## THE DIOCESE OF TOUNGOO

By Catherine Graham



It was a privilege to have the opportunity to visit and experience the work of the Diocese of Toungoo in the Anglican Church of the Province of Myanmar. Having worked as a world mission officer in the Diocese of Worcester in the Church of England for 5 years, with responsibility for developing our partnership with the Anglican Diocese of Peru, I was excited that St John's Cathedral was exploring the possibility of linking with another part of the Anglican Communion and that Dean Matthias had asked me to go on a fact finding trip.

In the few days that we were in the country, we had the opportunity to understand something of the breadth of ministry in the Diocese. We drove with Bishop John Wilme from Yangon to Toungoo and visited nearby parishes, kindergartens and St Peter's Bible School before Rita and I visited St George's Parish in the mountain for the weekend. Until the conflict ended between the tribespeople and the government, Bishop John had been unable to visit this parish for 20 years.

The drive was spectacular, climbing higher and higher until we reached to the top of Prayer Mountain on which was a huge cross and small places to worship. As we climbed the steps to the top, the view was stunning. It was an oasis of peace and quiet to admire the beauty of God's creation.

On the way, we passed female parishioners carrying bags of sand on their heads with which to build a bible school at the top. It was enriching and humbling when I saw the face of Christ in their joyful faces as they worked in the heat of the sun. I also saw God at work in that place, in a culture and context very different to our own in Hong Kong.

At St George's, I met with members of the Mothers Union, women who spoke

of the challenges in life especially during the conflict, and how they supported each other in the joys and sorrows of life in their community. The women told me their need for spectacles, the burden of alcoholism among some of their husbands and being unable to pay for their children's education.

Despite the difficulties they faced, I heard how they would host the Mother's Union Diocesan camp and provide care for all the women who attended, without any financial help from the Diocese. There, Rita and I saw the true meaning of the hospitality of the Gospel, women sharing the little things they had with others as they served their communities with such joy and hope.

I listened to how some of the women were trained as basic health workers through the Diocese, with the support of a grant from United Society (formerly known as USPG), a mission and development agency I used to work for.





The women would travel to the villages and use their basic training to help those who are sick and in need. Sometimes they will walk for two hours or more. They serve the community without any pay as the Diocese does not have the financial resources to support them. They truly understood the meaning of loving God and loving their neighbour, thereby showing the love of Christ. What is apparent is that they come from the same poor communities as those they serve.

Having no women priests in the Province, they expressed their joy at a woman priest coming to preach and spend time with them. The women asked many questions about St John's Cathedral and our ministry. Their joyful personalities shone through as we laughed and talked, and I saw people who trusted in God unconditionally, committed to proclaiming the Good News of the Gospel in word and deed. Prayer was central to their daily lives, and they prayed from the heart as they

engaged in God's mission locally, guided by the Holy Spirit and God's grace. They were a blessing to their communities and were building the kingdom of God, helping everyone regardless of their faith or ethnicity.

Engaging with the people of the Diocese of Toungoo was enriching and enabled us to see a bigger picture of the work of God's kingdom. It also made us think about how we at St John's Cathedral and our daughter churches engage in God's mission in Hong Kong. The greater question is, how do we help our congregations have a deeper relationship with God, understand that all we have comes from Him, and that it is upon Him that we depend?

My prayer is that we at St John's Cathedral may understand the Good News that is offered to us. Like the Christians in the Diocese of Toungoo, we can learn so much from each other about how God acts in our lives as we develop this partnership.



# Reflections On Myanmar Trip

"What sustained you when the Bishop was away travelling in the mountains visiting the parishes?" "It was prayer, constant prayers!" Mrs Elizabeth Wilme replied. The question came after the wife of the Bishop of Toungoo explained to me that Bishop John Wilme would travel on foot, alone, climbing mountain after mountain to see his people in this remote diocese in Myanmar.

It was not uncommon for Bishop John to embark on such a journey for 15 to 20 days at a time. Mrs Wilme would not hear from him or of his whereabouts or of his safety until his return. With the volatile tribal fighting a day-to-day occurrence in Myanmar, it is very dangerous to travel around, not to mention protecting oneself from other unexpected elements.

One way the Bishop protects himself is to travel in his cassock, even in the sweltering heat in Myanmar, to identify himself as a religious man, hoping that tribal soldiers would be kinder to people of faith. Most importantly, his attire demonstrates that the Bishop is on a mission to serve God and his people. One cannot imagine the

worries and anxiety that both the Bishop and his wife must have endured in such a demanding ministry.

That conversation was only one of the many exchanges that inspired me during our rewarding and thought-provoking visit to Toungoo. Submission, dedication, sacrifices, courage, faith and obedience are the characteristics I saw in so many of the people we met in the Diocese of Toungoo. From the ladies in the primitive villages to the well-attended Cathedral where I had the privilege of preaching, they have demonstrated such strong and genuine joy in trusting God in their lives.

The church and the people there have so little in terms of wealth, material goods and ministry resources compared to what we have in the affluent city of Hong Kong. Yet their trust in God and dedication to serving Him has so much to teach us.

I am very excited that St John's Cathedral is now in the process of formalising a relationship with the Diocese of Toungoo. Since our return, there has been a strong support from the cathedral congregation

to further this partnership. A prayer link has now been established with the Diocese of Toungoo. Two parishioners have sponsored two theological students for \$500 USD each for their priesthood and ministry training for one year.

**We look forward to receiving their delegations to us in October. I invite you to take the opportunity to meet the delegation and to hear their stories.** Though our contexts are different, this relationship will greatly enrich our faith journey and, in turn, strengthen our own walks in Christ, not to mention the joy we will receive in walking alongside fellow Anglican Christians in another part of the world.

**Dean Matthias**



It was an honour to be asked by The Dean to join this trip to the Diocese of Toungoo in Myanmar. I first went to Myanmar about 20 years ago and whilst the country was certainly not as open then as it is now, my vivid recollections of this predominantly Buddhist and picturesque country were of very friendly people, going about their daily lives in a simple but determined way, despite the military rule in place.

This trip was designed to give us an opportunity to see how a different Asian Christian ministry operates (in a country with significantly less resources than Hong Kong). How we can share and learn from each other's experiences and see how we might develop closer ties between us. It was clear, right from the outset, that Bishop John and his team of around 45 priests / catechists are extremely dedicated and lead their congregations in a selfless, moral and encouraging way. The parishes are spread widely across the Diocese and many of their villages have been 'no-go areas' for decades. Indeed Bishop John was only able to visit 2 of the villages for the first time in his 22 years as Bishop just a couple of years ago. And he still needs to walk about 2 to 3 hours in his cassock, in the sweltering heat, to reach some of them!

The changing political and economic situation in Myanmar is being watched very keenly by locals and foreigners alike. But being a tribal country, steeped in tradition, skepticism and historic grievances, through wars, colonization and military dictatorship, there are still many serious issues and challenges that face the minority Christians of Myanmar (around 65,000 in a population of over 50 million). I was left with a heartfelt admiration for Bishop John and his priests who dedicate their lives to support their congregations, sometimes in quite dangerous circumstances. They are determined to help provide a better standard of living through education to their people. We can learn so much from them. It was an inspirational visit.

**Debbie McGowan**



Visiting St Paul's Cathedral in Toungoo and St George's Church in Thandaunggyi was the highlights of the trip. There we met with their Sunday School teams with whom we shared our teaching experiences and ideas. Their sense of commitment and passion really impressed me.

Since Catherine had to preach in St George's Church, the two of us stayed overnight in a church house, which was built by the parishioners and was situated on the mountaintop. We watched the sunset before our dinner and the sunrise after our breakfast in the morning. I particularly enjoyed the serene atmosphere along with the mind-blowing mountain landscape.

It was a very joyful experience to have spent time with almost one hundred Sunday School children after the morning service at St George's Church. With the help of a local priest (Fr Philip) who acted as translator, I was able to talk with the children as well as tell stories to them. I was incredibly humbled when they sang me a hymn of praise in Burmese and, along with that, we also celebrated a girl's birthday. I was astounded and amazed by their attentiveness, responsiveness and good manners. They really touched me. May God's love and grace be with them always.

**Rita Chan**



# Devotion of Helping Domestic Workers

By Maggie Chan

Two devoted volunteers of Helpers for Domestic Helpers (HDH) outreach ministry are leaving Hong Kong this summer. Alex Barr, a long-time supporter of HDH who has recently stepped down as chairwoman of the Board of HDH, and Mary Grace Benhase, a voluntary worker at HDH over the past year, who has assisted in handling complaint cases of domestic workers at HDH.

*In Touch* invited them for an interview to reflect on their volunteering experience at HDH and how it has changed their lives.

Alex Barr is a barrister from the UK, a Board member of HDH since 2005 and its chairwoman from 2014 to 2016. Her work as a lawyer has brought her into contact with many people accused of wrong-doing and the injured. She has always been interested in helping people resolve legal problems, which has kept her active in helping domestic workers in Hong Kong for fifteen years.

"I have many vivid memories in HDH but one that stands out is that of a client, who was recovering from a serious illness, standing up in a crowded bar at a fundraiser for HDH and talking about her experience," Alex said. "She had endured so much very bravely, was missing her family but gave a great speech with dignity and humour."

As the former chairwoman of the Board, Alex noted that the challenge was still the demands of a heavy workload; a sense of so much to do and so little time to do it. This is not only because many cases can be extremely urgent: for example, a client who wishes to pursue her rights on termination of employment, but has limited time to do so. There seem to be so many issues that confront clients.

These issues include the evidential difficulties of proving that a worker may be the victim of human trafficking or debt bondage, the regular fleeing of foreign domestic workers by unscrupulous agencies and moneylenders, the reduced provision of shelters in a city where the cost of living is very high, and the difficulties confronting sick workers when they lose their jobs, often in contravention of the Hong Kong's discrimination laws.

"I hope I have brought empathy, imagination and intellectual rigour to case work at HDH and I enjoyed the challenge in researching cases and thinking about the wisest advice to give them and the best way to help them resolve their problems." Alex said.



The Revd Catherine Graham (left) and Mary Grace Benhase (right)

"I have certainly learned a great deal from my clients who deserve a great deal of respect for the dignified and cheerful way in which they conduct themselves even when everything around them seems to be so difficult," Alex added. "Working at HDH has also given me insight into other cultures and I have enjoyed learning about other traditions and customs. This has helped me to be more of a global citizen."

Meanwhile, in the eyes of newcomer Mary Grace Benhase, who arrived in Hong Kong last summer for the first time, helping domestic workers is an idea that she is unfamiliar with. "In the US, no one has domestic workers," she said.

Mary Grace's interest in legal work and womens' issues drew her to join the Young Adult Service Corps (YASC) programme sponsored by The Episcopal Church. After graduating from college, she flew over 8000 miles from the US to Hong Kong, and has been volunteering at St John's Cathedral and HDH for one year, something, she said, which has changed every part of her.

"My days at HDH never look the same. I worked in the office, interviewing clients and writing letters. I also accompanied clients to give statements to the police and accompanied clients

to their court hearings." She noted that sometimes she felt victorious when justice was served in court, that was one of her favourite moments at work.

"All of my co-workers at HDH are women. Most of them are volunteers with professional backgrounds – retired lawyers, solicitors, and executives, some professional moms taking time off for their kids—they are smart and driven but empathetic and compassionate. They treat our clients with care and respect." She expressed great admiration for them.

In her early twenties and as the youngest full-time worker at HDH, Mary Grace admitted that she still has much to learn from here and on her life-long journey. "I thought I knew some stuff before I came here but as it turns out, I know very little. Of life, hardship or suffering, I have limited experience. Listening can be more important than speaking. All I know is that I need to keep listening."

Alex will be back to Hong Kong from time to time. She has been asked to remain on the Board of HDH. While she is in the UK, she participates in discussion via e-channels, and help with documents and other paperwork. Mary Grace has returned to the US to continue her pursuit of purpose in life, ready for the next challenge.



Staff and Volunteers of HDH

## A 15-year Walk with HDH

In the fifteen years that Alex Barr has been involved with Helpers for Domestic Helpers, she has seen HDH growing from a small organisation into one that not only advises and champions the legal rights of foreign domestic workers, but also has become involved in local and international groups that seek to improve the working lives of those who do not have a political voice.

Alex Barr suggested HDH is at an interesting stage in its development now. "We have three hugely committed and talented members of staff, a group of dedicated and gifted Board members and volunteers, professional support not just from the legal sector but also from other disciplines. We work as a team and everyone brings a different set of gifts and talents to the work but we are united in a common cause."

She continues: "Thanks in particular to the work done by our staff, HDH plays a significant role in current debates concerning foreign domestic worker issues. I would hope that HDH continues to provide its outstanding service to its clients but also to focus on a number of carefully identified issues where our experience and expertise can make a real difference to the lives of our clients."

"We are enormously grateful to St John's for its support over the years but hope that the work we do complements the role of the Church in reaching out to the disadvantaged, the poor and needy." She told *In Touch*.



Alex Barr (left), Holly Allan (middle) and representatives of the Philippines Consulate General of Hong Kong (right)

### About HDH

Helpers for Domestic Helpers is an outreach ministry of St John's Cathedral and a non-profit organization that provides free advice and assistance on employment, immigration and human rights issues to domestic workers in Hong Kong.



# An Aspiring Leader

By Holly Allan, *Executive Director of Helpers for Domestic Helpers*



What makes a good leader? This is a question that has spawned numerous books and articles, has been a topic of discussion in countless seminars and enriched self-hailed leadership gurus around the world. What really makes a good leader?

As the Executive Director of Helpers for Domestic Helpers (HDH), one of the long running outreach programmes of St John's Cathedral, it is incumbent upon me along with our board of directors, to rally the HDH team in the fulfillment of our mission to empower domestic workers and facilitate their access to justice. Like many charities in Hong Kong, HDH operates with a limited budget and tries to maximize the contribution of volunteers and donors to enhance our capacity to meet the needs of our beneficiaries. However, responding to social needs requires not only tangible resources but a clear understanding of the problems, a well thought out strategic plan on how they could be addressed, and effective implementation.

To enable me to steer HDH in the right direction I strive to continually improve my knowledge and skills. So, I was quite pleased to have been selected this year as one of 25 leaders of reputable non-profit organisations in Hong Kong to participate in an NGO Leadership Programme sponsored by Operation Santa Clause and run by the Social Welfare Practice Research Centre of the Chinese University of Hong Kong. The programme, launched in 2015, brings together NGOs, the business sector and academia and aims to promote professional excellence among NGO executives by incorporating strategic thinking from the business perspective while "keeping humanistic sensitivity to the needs of vulnerable groups in society". Professionals from various disciplines shared their knowledge and experience in their respective fields, including human resources management, brand development, media strategy and fund raising, among others.

One of the things a good leader does, we were told, is to "inspire a shared vision". When leaders positively believe they can make a difference and enlist others in their dream, the organisation is positively energised. At HDH, volunteers are motivated by their belief in the cause and enthusiastically contribute time and resources because they want to make

a difference. Secondly, a good leader should "encourage the heart". When HDH clients' cases are positively resolved, volunteers' efforts are recognized and successes are celebrated together, engendering a sense of belonging.

The training programme also helped us to articulate the core values and principles that drive what we do as an organisation, the decisions we make and how we operate. Integrity, fairness and professionalism are what we value most and the guiding principles by which HDH operate.

Developing a culture of improvement through training and encouraging staff to think outside the box in finding solutions to problems were also emphasized in the leadership programme, something, we at HDH endeavour to practise. We are constantly evaluating and improving our processes to make it more efficient and to enhance our services.

Also discussed was the value of organisational branding, a timely lesson as we are currently re-designing our communication materials along with the HDH logo to better project who we are, what we stand for, our mission and vision, taking into consideration inputs from the various people involved.

In an increasingly highly technological world, creating a presence in social media to communicate with those involved is just as important as physical networking and it was fascinating to learn how much this fast changing realm continues to develop. It is almost impossible for a small organisation with little resources to keep up if it is to utilise the full potential of social media.

To round up the programme, each participant is invited to develop an innovative project that would fill a service gap in society or change public behaviour or attitude towards a certain issue. From the needs based approach of conceptualizing ideas to implementation and impact evaluation, the project must incorporate the knowledge and skills gained by the participants from the training. Based on a list of criteria, a panel of judges will select one project which will receive funding from the sponsors.

For over 25 years, HDH has been working to fill a gap in services available to

migrant domestic workers and respond to their need. However, we know more needs to be done. While the mission of HDH is to empower domestic workers and facilitate access to justice, our long term vision is for these workers to be seen positively as an integral part of Hong Kong society, contributing to its growth and enriching its culture. To this end, we need a holistic strategy that looks at the underlying issues that lead to prejudice against this marginalised population. In a polarised society like Hong Kong, changing public perceptions and attitudes towards migrant workers are a significant challenge that my project idea will seek to address.

As the NGO Leadership Programme comes to a close, I know that I have been enriched not only with the knowledge imparted by the mentors but also from connecting with like-minded individuals who are all so passionate about their cause, learning how they overcome their challenges, sharing best practices and supporting each other's advocacies.

So what makes a good leader? That is a question I will continually ask, and which I will always aspire to be the answer to.



## Poverty Alleviation Update

### Curry chicken, Cakes, Rakes and Being Chased

By Mark Rogers



In October last year, St John's Cathedral launched its poverty alleviation programme. Since then, each month, there has been an opportunity to volunteer in a variety of projects.

Eight times a group has prepared lunch for refugees at the Christian Action's Centre in Chung King Mansions. The most popular dish has been curry chicken.

Twice a group has worked with the HKSCH (Anglican) Welfare Council in the Western District in their care of poor seniors. On the first occasion, St John's hosted a Christmas buffet for 50 seniors and their families at a hotel. There was plenty of cake and delicious Christmas snacks. The group led Christmas party games and a sing-a-long. This was followed by a programme of writing down the life-stories of four seniors, culminating in a presentation of printed books to each senior, followed by a lunch buffet.

Food drives have supported Feeding Hong Kong which redistributes food to the poorest in our community.

More recently volunteers helped with gardening at the China Coast Community. The China Coast Community is a home for English-speaking seniors. It was established by a former Dean of St John's, Stephen Sidebotham. The raking, trimming and compost spreading was followed by a high tea with the residents.

Another group recently accompanied workers from the St Barnabas Society and Home on their weekly visit to sub-divided units in Sheung Wan. The group took food and friendship. It was an interesting exposure to the terrible living conditions of many in Hong Kong. Being chased out of one unit by a landlord brought alive the poverty issues that most of us just read about, but rarely experience.

I am grateful to all our partners who have worked with us: Christian Action, HKSCH Welfare Council, the China Coast Community and St Barnabas Society and Home.

Look out for further opportunities to volunteer!

I am also very thankful to all those who have volunteered. In all our actions we are giving immediate and substantial help to some of the most vulnerable people in our society. Moreover, just as importantly, we are also witnessing to, and spreading God's love. Indeed, perhaps even more significantly, we are being transformed more closely into the person of Christ.

In serving the poor we encounter Christ.





# A Skipping Performance

## You Won't Want to Skip By Staff Reporter



During The Youth Festival 2016, Hong Kong Skipper'Z – a team of energetic and gifted young people – gave a remarkably complex and agile skipping performance to promote youth education in HIV prevention.

The Youth Festival, held on 2nd July, was organised by St John's Cathedral HIV Education Centre and attracted hundreds of visitors. Besides the rope skipping performance, there was a variety of informative and entertaining programmes involving martial arts, drama, singing and piano performances. Booths displayed games, photography opportunities, mini-markets and provided educational information on HIV.

The Festival's highlight came when Guests of Honour, including the Archbishop, Dr Paul Kwong, joined hands with performers in singing "Stand by Me", in support of HIV-infected people and with the aim of building a "Zero New Infection, Zero Discrimination & Zero AIDS-related Death" society.

# Give Care to Caregivers

## By Staff Reporter



Give Care to Caregivers, a fiesta organised by The Mission For Migrant Workers (MFMW) in June, provided services for migrant domestic workers, Hong Kong's household caregivers.

While St John's Cathedral was in the middle of renovation, on 26 June, 13 service booths were quietly set up at 7:00 am on the newly renovated North Lawn. Another 18 booths on wellness were also ready for service. These included blood pressure-taking, blood glucose testing, reflexology and foot massage. There was skills training in fruit-carving, Tai Chi and basic Boxing, as well as sessions with an occupational therapist and a nurse, and games on women's reproductive health care and financial literacy. Last but not least, there was stress-releasing laughter yoga! Who'd want to miss that?



# Junior Choir

## 10th Anniversary Concert By Debbie McGowan

After organising the concert celebrating Raymond Fu's 37 years as Choirmaster, in June last year, I needed a few weeks over the summer to recover from all the preparation involved! A little part of me thought 'Never again!'

But that was last summer and it was with the usual 'beginning of term' enthusiasm that I joined last September the first class of the new term for the Children's Choir as their accompanist. The numbers of children in both the Junior and Intermediate classes has risen to nearly 50 since being founded by Mrs Shirley Fu in May 2006, and the quality, standard and complexity of what the children sing in the monthly All-Age Service has been steadily improving. It's great being part of a successful team and I was ready for the off!

A few weeks after the start of term, the Instructors, Accompanists and Helpers for the Children's Choir and Instrumental Ensemble met to agree our objectives for the coming year. When Shirley mentioned that in May 2016 it would be ten years since the Children's Choir had started and "wouldn't it be a great idea to have an anniversary concert to celebrate", everyone looked at me. And before I could stop myself, I had agreed to help organise another concert!

Once the musical programme had been decided by the conductors, it was clear we were going to need a cadre of people to help us whether it be for rehearsal rooms, communications, fund raising, invitations, stage management, photographers / recording / DVD production, refreshments, dress code and accessories, or design of the Founding members certificates and awards. There was no shortage of parents and friends willing to get involved. It was an eye-opener for me that, whilst people are often happy to assist, they don't always realise their help might be needed unless we actually ask them. Worth remembering for other situations perhaps? A tap on the right shoulder can work wonders!

There followed several months of intense activity – a project plan, several rehearsal schedules, dedicated children trying to learn a myriad of songs by heart, in English and Mandarin, a gaggle of parent helpers working out logistics, drummers drumming – and a partridge in a pear tree?

Almost like swans – a swimming, with flapping webbed feet under the surface, everything ultimately fell into place on 14th May! We were thrilled that Archbishop Paul and Bishops Andrew and Timothy were able to join The Dean and grace us with their presence.



The Cathedral was filled to near capacity with supportive families and friends and every single child gave of their all and sang or played their heart out. We were all so proud of them! A key message to the children on the day was to encourage them to keep up their singing as part of the journey with God and we pray that they do. It was a day for posterity, happy memories, waving scarves, clapping and clappers. By the way, if you weren't able to join us or would just like to relive the fun, you can acquire a DVD of the event, which is now on sale in the Cathedral bookstore.

Oh, how glad I am that I did get involved! It was a brilliant achievement by all the children, who delivered a musical standard that was probably well above people's expectations, and they really looked as though

they had fun. It was entirely fitting that Archbishop Paul, Bishop Andrew and the Dean were amongst many people who not only congratulated them and the Founding Members (Giuseppe Fu, Mimi Ho, Gwyneth Liu and June Rippon), but also Shirley for her loyalty and dedication over the past 10 years.

But you know as well as I do that these events and milestones don't happen without a huge amount of work behind the scenes. It was a very encouraging and enlightening experience for me to be reminded just how many people are prepared to give so generously of their time, ideas, expertise and resources to support the Children's Ministry.

Long may it continue.... But please don't ask me to organise another concert!





# St John's hosts International Conference

By Staff Reporter

International Deans' and Rectors' Conference 2016 saw clergy from eight major cities around the world gather in Hong Kong for mutual support and learning and, as part of a very full schedule, visit people living in poverty.

The conference, part of a regular series, was hosted this time by St John's Cathedral from 27 April to 1 May. The network of churches consists of St Mary-le-Bow in London, the UK; St John's Episcopal Church in Edinburgh, Scotland; St Matthew-in-the-City in Auckland, New Zealand; The American Cathedral in Paris, France; Trinity Wall Street in New York, the US; St James' Anglican Church in Sydney, Australia; St George's Cathedral in Cape Town, South Africa; and St John's Cathedral in Hong Kong.

One of the highlights of this year's conference was visiting elderly people living in sub-divided flats and public housing flats. Dean Matthias had scheduled the visits so that the deans and the rectors may have chances to

learn more about the poverty issue in the city, echoing the efforts made by St John's on poverty alleviation.

On the second day of the conference, all participants paid visits to elderly people living in sub-divided flats in Wan Chai – one flat approximates to size of a cupboard – and Lai Tak Tsuen, a public housing estate in Tai Hang. The members were amazed by this eye-opening experience. Throughout the conversations, the members showed their concern for the elderly people by listening to them intently and trying to put themselves in their shoes.

The members also toured St James' Settlement, visiting a workshop which provides rehabilitation services. They saw job training and social activities for people with mental disabilities, a centre designed for children with special educational needs, and a care support service centre serving elderly people with cognitive impairment and their caregivers.

After the visits, the members spent time in group discussions focused on common themes, including the ongoing impact of terrorism, the continuing repercussions from occupy movements, the effect of an increasingly secular society, the changing nature of work and the transient lifestyle of city dwellers, and the growing incidence of homelessness in cities.

The conference also featured a talk by Dr Philip Wickeri on the history and development of Christianity in mainland China, a dinner hosted by the Archbishop, Dr Paul Kwong, and a visit to Chi Lin Buddhist Nunnery.



The Deans and Rectors paid visit to elderly people living in sub-divided flats.

# St John's 36th Scouts off to Nepal

By Staff Reporter



St John's very own 36th Hong Kong Boy Scout Troop has just wrapped up a busy year of training, leading up to an expedition to Nepal later this summer to attempt the Annapurna Base Camp trek. Since September, Troop members have been training in rock climbing, abseiling, altitude first aid, fire-fighting, camping, orienteering and swimming ahead of this summer's adventure. They've also conditioned themselves by doing nearly a dozen camps and hikes in various types of terrain and weather.

The 36th Troop was formed in 1955. The thirty 11 to 16 year old members of the Troop are a diverse group, with a rainbow of races, languages, and religions drawn from international, ESF and local schools. They are one of only three Scout Troops in Hong Kong classified as Open, meaning you do not have to be affiliated with the sponsoring organisation to join.

Weekday meetings are held on every second Wednesday at the Fanny Li Hall at the Cathedral but the 36th are essentially an outdoor Troop. They hold at least two weekend activities a month. At the Wednesday meetings they train in pioneering, firefighting, orienteering, campcraft, first aid, radio procedure, skills that allow them to make the most of it when they are outdoors. As well as the physical training, the weekend activities also include conservation, auto mechanics and aviation training so that members gain experience and complete badgework in these areas.

Members learn the importance of giving back to society. They help out at events throughout the year running endurance race checkpoints, marshaling walkathons, standing nightwatch and operating the famous sausage stand at the Cathedral's annual Michaelmas Fair.

The 36th is part of the global Scouting community. They participate in District, Territory-wide and International Scouting events. In recent years they have hiked through Corsica, Scotland, New Zealand and the Italian and French Alps. This year, it's Nepal.

The 36th are on the lookout for adult leaders. 'We welcome those with disciplined services and survival experience but enthusiasm and no experience at all will do just as well.' says Tony Watson, the Troop Leader. If the leader happens to be a parent of a Scout, the kid's term dues are reduced. 'We are really



keen to have women leaders,' says Tony. 'A lack of them has lately forced us to close some activities for female members.' They have been accepting girl members since 2012, the 'Powder Puff Patrol', as it is laddishly known, has grown to nearly 15% of Troop strength. They expect to graduate their first female Chief Scouts (equivalent of Commonwealth Queen Scout and US Eagle Scout) later this year.

'All you need to join is a sense of adventure' explains Tony. 'Our next Wednesday meeting is on **7th September at 18:00** in the Fanny Li Hall. Bring your Passport / HKID and a parent.'

'36th Hong Kong Troop' Facebook page is at:

[https://www.facebook.com/36thHKScoutTroop.SJD/?ref=aymt\\_homepage\\_panel](https://www.facebook.com/36thHKScoutTroop.SJD/?ref=aymt_homepage_panel)



# Exclusive: Meeting with Reverend Dr Stephen Cherry

By John Twist

The Revd Dr Stephen Cherry, Dean of King's College Cambridge and a well-known speaker and author has recently published *The Dark Side of the Soul*, which looks into how a modern individual can interpret personal sin and how it fits into the present world. He spoke to Christians in Central about the subject on 26 July after preaching in the Cathedral on 24 July.

In Touch caught up with him for an exclusive interview.

## Has Christianity defined sin to suit its own influence and agenda?

Dr Cherry: We need to understand that Christianity has a history and culture of a heavy handed message on conformity to laws. However it is a religion that is constantly refreshing itself, particularly in more modern informed times. Traditional heavy handedness can be both self-serving and corrupting and it is right to be suspicious of how sin is defined by organisations. However we need to always look forward and look to ourselves beyond this suspicion, learn in a positive way, not criticising others and not letting the failings of individuals and organisations stop us learning and making progress. When Christian organisations contradict each other, the contradictions are often transgressions of the laws and traditions that define sin of both and body and mind. It is not easy to make progress in these instances but we need to accept that people and organisations are products of traditional cultures and laws that they believe are virtuous and righteous. It is important to them to be loyal to these cultures.

## How do you see sin with regard to the terror attacks and the war in the Middle East? How we react to the perpetrators and to their actions?

Dr Cherry: I think it is important not to use our understanding of sin to create simple explanations of the behaviour of other people. Understanding sin is generally a process of introspection and self-understanding. People have things in common and therefore we can think that things that apply to us can also apply to other people. I might be trying to understand what would be happening to me if I found myself behaving in the way that caused those

dreadful circumstances. One of the factors in my book is exploring which of the vices and sins are most relevant. A significant number of these attacks are carried out by a known individual and understanding how they swing from feelings of importance to feelings of no importance is vital in understanding their motivation. The sin or sadness of isolation deriving from lack of social importance, a lack of patience and the need to solve things simply and decisively leads to acts of terrorism. If people are patient they do not commit acts of violence or terrorism.

## How do you think we should react to these acts of terrorism?

Dr Cherry: Of course we should feel compassion for the victims and look to providing care and facilities for them. We also need to provide security for society and an ongoing search to resolve the underlying problems. I see one of the inadequacies of democracy is that it is short term; the processes of politics and commerce have a too short a view. We need to provide longer visions of employment and social importance to give people valuable lives.

## How can we have a dialogue as Christians with IS and its allies?

Dr Cherry: It is hard to discuss with these organisation of which we have little understanding but who take credit for these actions in an opportunist way. As Christians we should always take the opportunity to talk and try to resolve conflicts no matter how futile. In many cases we find that there are discussions going on behind the scenes that do eventually lead to resolutions, so we should not give up hope.



## How did you decide on the subject matter of the Dark Side of the Soul?

Dr Cherry: Following on from my previous books, I became aware that it wasn't the problem of dealing with the large instances of and involvement in extreme sin that really concerned the majority of people. It was the pervading nature of the small things in life that sometimes were good but, taken slightly too far, fell into the realm of a sin that intruded into their lives. The majority of people rarely consider sin. Only when starting to consider their lives and understanding how to fit within Christian belief does the realisation of what sin is and the effect it has on everyday life become a problem. This problem- which can lead to people being stuck in their path to understanding Christian belief - is the challenge I looked at in writing *The Dark Side of the Soul*. What interested me most was how people's difficulty and extreme difficulty interacted with sin in the modern world. I therefore looked at the many types and ways that small sins can invade our lives and this eventually lead to each chapter in the book covering one aspect of influence of a sin.

## What do you expect your readers to gain from the book?

Dr Cherry: I hope people take away two things. Firstly, that the book is an introduction, a gateway to understanding how sin creeps into modern life; that the traditional Christian culture of extreme, heavy sin isn't a part of most people's lives but that many smaller light sins which are harder to understand but

which combined have just as large an effect. Secondly to explain that the larger number of lighter sins form a web that ties us down, inhibits us and traps us. The book covers many subjects, the middle six chapters of which cover different sins and the facets of sin that combine to make negativities in life. I hope the book will sensitise the reader to the small sins and how they can originate in what appears, on the surface, to be good.

## Are you working on a new book or project?

Dr Cherry: I am currently working on a short book encouraging young people to engage seriously with theology and look to study it in greater depth. I am responsible for directing theology studies for King's and when I looked at the range of books available as an introduction to the serious studying of theology. I realised that there was a need for a book that looked at the questions that are on teenagers minds and was also an over view of theology for the last few thousand years using a very short compass. Generally the subject is explained over specific periods in a detailed way. This new book will give an accessible overview to anybody who is intrigued by the subject, and motivate them to look at it in greater detail. The title of the book will be "God Curious" and will cover meaning, purpose, hope, creatively and the view of religion against the view of science. It will be particularly but not exclusively for younger people who fail to connect this questioning method with answers that are frequently given before

the questions are asked and who look at religion as glib and unsatisfying, which unfortunately is what religion without theology can often be.

## How you were finding your current visit and how it compared with your visit in 2014, your first to the region and just weeks before taking up your post at King's?

Dr Cherry: This visit is a quite different visit from the previous one which was a sabbatical and had no real agenda. That was basically to familiarise myself with the cultures of the region and how they assimilated with Christianity. This visit has several purposes: It's to support my choir, performing at the HKU this evening, to develop understanding of the King's College mission in Hong Kong and China, to show support for current artistic and cultural projects that are being developed between King's and organisations in China and there's my

personal interest in understanding the similarities between Christianity and Buddhism and how they can impact on life today.

## Do you think you will be visiting Hong Kong again soon?

Dr Cherry: I hope to visit again as the region is so intense and you meet people easily. With the commerce, political and cultural changes in the region becoming more influential internationally, there is a personal and college need to see and understand. The various religious dynamics within China are both encouraging and of concern as political views and dogma change. We as an institution and personally need to be involved.





# FORGIVE THE PAST ROUGH SEAS TO KEEP SEEKING SMOOTH WATERS TODAY

By Dr Mark L Gandolfi, Executive Director of St John's Cathedral Counselling Service

Our previous two articles for *In Touch* in 2016 were focused on marriages and partnerships; Heroes and Romance in January and Work Smart, Not Hard, For A Healthy Marriage in May. This article, Forgive the Past Rough Seas to Keep Seeking Smooth Waters Today, will hopefully provide readers a better understanding of how to expand our spiritual competency of forgiveness into a marital coping skill for resilience and well-being.



Mark L Gandolfi

Long before the onset of mental health and psychology, forgiving others has been highlighted throughout many religions and cultures. A passage in the Bible, Ephesians 4:32, says "be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you." In Buddhism, a common passage many practise in their daily meditation starts with forgiving one's self in order to forgive others. "When you find peace within yourself, you become the kind of person who can live at peace with others."

We note that cultures across the world also recognize the value forgiveness has for both relationship well-being and emotional well-being. Martin Luther King, Jr. pronounced that "forgiveness is not just an occasional act; it is an attitude." Reinhold Niebuhr, son of a German immigrant family, shared that "forgiveness is the final form of love." Mother Theresa was quoted as saying "if we really want to love we must learn how to forgive." The Japanese believed that forgiveness, omoiari, is one of the highest of honours or respect a person could give to another.

In psychology, forgiveness has long been seen as a coping skill or life skill that benefits both the person who has been harmed and the person who (intentionally or not) has harmed. It is not uncommon for relationships to experience conflict (harm) due to misunderstandings and disagreements. At St John's Cathedral Counselling Service outreach ministry's pre-marital programme, conflict and forgiveness is a key topic all couples complete to further strengthen their vows and better manage marital discord. Participants in our pre-marital and relationship counselling program further learn that marriage is never a perfect union, with an understanding that about 10% of the time in our intimate relationships, we will experience conflict and disappointments that can actually

strengthen a marriage, with the right dose of forgiveness, and not dissolve it. In other words, any good sailor will agree that "a smooth sea never made a good sailor."

A quick Google search on "solving conflict in marriages" will give you over 439,000 websites and links to browse. Book stores, libraries, magazine and online articles have thousands of "how to" resources for couples to work through their conflict. Most of the advice we have reviewed is realistic and helpful, some of it actually remind us that Dr. Google did not go to medical school. For example, the most concerning theme we see are the websites and other resources that imply "learn our techniques and never have conflict again!" If life, even marital life, could be that pure and simple. But it is not.

So how can a couple practice forgiveness that enhances their commitment and faith in each other? Borrowing from Gary D. Chapman's book *The Five Languages of Apology*, we believe that saying "I'm sorry" is simply not enough for both parties to heal after conflict. To the point, saying I'm sorry often comes across as a one-time event with little empathetic emotion whereas the five languages of apology is a comprehensive but easy to understand emotional healing process that allows couples to learn, grow and enhance their faith in marriage.

The first step in the process, expressing regret, is where we can say "I'm sorry." This requires not only saying those very simple words I'm sorry, but it also requires us to engage with empathy and try to understand how the other person is feeling to commence emotional healing. In other words, healing one who has anger may often be a different journey from that of one who is feeling sadness.

We can then proceed to the next step of the process, accepting responsibility, by acknowledging the behavior that caused the hurt. Simply saying "yeah I know I was wrong" and getting back to reading the newspaper is going to have very little impact on healing. But by taking ownership of the behaviour and exploring with each other what they have learned from that experience will often prevent the same harmful behaviour being repeated in the future.

This then allows the third step, making restitution, more genuine and easier to discuss in the marriage. This step encourages engagement and problem solving whereby the couple can explore how the harmful consequences can be reversed and both parties made whole. In short, a simple but meaningful question "how can I make it right" is an effective way of helping both parties develop a culture of collaboration with marital solutions.

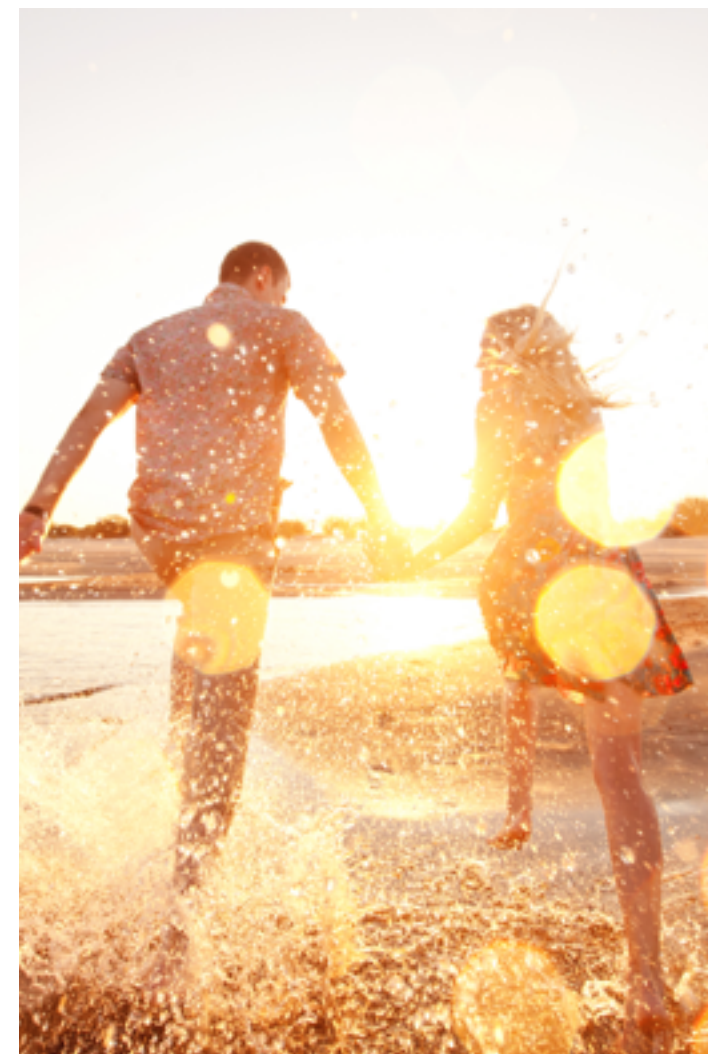
The fourth step, genuine repenting, is basically when a person who acted in a harmful way will seek out other means of communicating with their partner. "I promise not to do that again" is a start at this stage but this also requires a couple to learn new ways of communicating their disagreements and conflicts in less harmful language and behaviors. In other words, learn to accept the fact you can agree to disagree and go forward in kindness. Robin Sharman reminds us all that "rough seas make a strong sailor, tough times build greater people."

The fifth step, requesting forgiveness, restores the marriage and, as well, can bring new life into a marriage because the couple has worked through the four earlier processes of apology. "Yeah I forgive you" and going back to watching TV implies little sincerity to the process. Giving and receiving forgiveness will not take away all the pain and hurt the couple experienced from their conflict, but when there is genuine sincerity being experienced in seeking forgiveness, the relationship is on the path of healing.

A final note about this area of relationships. All five languages of apology may not have equal value. Some learn that their partner has more emotional investment in making restitution; another couple may have more connection with accepting responsibility. Take time with your partner to explore these five areas of apology, see which one (or ones) have the greater value but do remember to practice all five. A quote I have often used in counselling that comes from many insights into relationship counselling over the years is "Apologies and their behaviours are asking a heartfelt decision to live in the present even if the past still hurts, but for every 24 hours you live in the past, you just lost one day of a possible happy and healing life."

I cannot recall who once said "forgive others as quickly as you expect God to forgive you," but if we value our time and lives, the five languages of apology will expedite healing, increase learning and strengthen our lives and marriages. Now those rough seas don't seem so tough.

*Editor's Note: St John's Cathedral Counselling Service is a charitable ministry led by Dr Mark L Gandolfi. It allows over 55% of Cathedral members and Hong Kong residents who cannot afford mental health in the private practice mental health sector to receive high quality, very affordable, safe and professional services for individuals, couples and families. If the Counselling Service wasn't a charity with St John's then the needs of many thousands of people who visit the service would go unmet. Through In Touch, Dr Mark would like to offer his personal thanks and heartfelt appreciation to the army of counsellors and volunteers who work at the Counselling Service.*





## Church News



### Recognition for St John's Director of Music at Home and Abroad

Our home-grown Director of Music, Felix Yeung, has had his hands full receiving awards here and in the UK. In April, Felix was conferred the Young Artist Award 2015 (music category) in the Hong Kong Arts Development Awards, an annual flagship event on the local arts scene. The Young Artist Award aims to give formal recognition to up-and-coming artists with outstanding achievements. Besides the weekly sacred music he performs at the Cathedral, Felix is also an active

conductor and organist in Hong Kong's classical music world. Under Felix's baton, the local chamber choir Die Konzertisten has seen many notable performances in Hong Kong.

A month after this, Felix was in the Duke's Hall of the Royal Academy of Music in May, being made an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music (ARAM). Felix was in the Masters of Music programme of the Academy between 2009 and

2011, majoring in Choral Conducting. He received DipRAM, the premier-prix for an exceptional performance in his postgraduate final recital. Felix also undertook the pedagogy diploma in choral conducting, and received the Licentiate of the Royal Academy of Music (LRAM) with distinction. Let us extend our congratulations to Felix, and pray that he will continue to receive inspiration in serving God with beautiful music.

### A New Chapter Opens at Emmanuel

On the Feast of the Ascension, Thursday 5th May 2016, Archbishop Dr Paul Kwong, Bishop of Hong Kong Island, celebrated the Eucharist at Bethanie Chapel and licensed The Revd Robert Martin CMP as Priest-in-Charge of Emmanuel Church, Pokfulam. The homily was preached by Dean Matthias who thanked Fr Robert for taking on this extra ministry and encouraged the congregation to use this occasion as an opportunity to look forward and develop the ministry of Emmanuel in the Pokfulam area.

The liturgy for the licensing of a new priest is rich with symbolism and members of the congregation took an active part, presenting Fr Robert with the traditional instruments of priestly ministry: Water for the Sacrament of Baptism; a Bible to preach the word; Bread and Wine for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist; Holy

Oil for the Ministry of Healing; a Stole for the pastoral ministry and the Canons of the Diocese for our link with the wider Church. All are powerful symbols of the ministry of word, sacrament and pastoral care that every priest is called to. The Archbishop then blessed Fr Robert and licensed him to the ministry that he shares with the bishop in this community. It was a powerful witness of our joint ministry to be surrounded by members of the Cathedral clergy, along with lay representatives from St John's, St Stephen's and Discovery Bay Church. It was also a delight to have Canon Stephen Miller of the Mission to Seafarers with us, who came across the harbour from the West Kowloon Diocese.

True to the Emmanuel tradition of hospitality, the service was followed by a splendid reception at the back of church with ample refreshments provided by the 'ladies of the parish', complete with cake and champagne. It was encouraging to see that many people stayed for the refreshments and the sense of fellowship between the different communities which make up the Cathedral parish was inspiring.

The Emmanuel Community worships every Sunday in the beautiful Bethanie Chapel at 139 Pokfulam Road. Please do come and join us for our 10.15am Sung Eucharist. You will receive a warm welcome.



### Welcoming new staff: Sandy and Maggie

#### Bookstore Manager: Sandy Villamil

As a gateway to St John's Cathedral for visitors from around the world, the Cathedral Bookstore has been given fresh energy and vision by its new manager Sandy Villamil who was appointed in March 2016.

The new manager has been a club management professional for two decades. With a wealth of experience in business and management, Sandy decided to take a leap in serving the church. The change didn't come all of a sudden. She has been under theological training (Bachelor of Divinity) as a part-time student of SKH Ming Hua Theological College since 2004 after returning to the Church in 2003.

Sandy doesn't know why she headed into the Anglican church, became a member of its congregation, studied Anglicanism and was finally appointed Bookstore Manager. She puts it down to God giving her life a purpose.

Sandy looks forward to welcoming customers, meeting them in the Bookstore and getting to know their needs. She is



also launching a series of social media platforms to let members of the public learn more about the Bookstore.

Sandy is a soccer fanatic and she watches all prime matches of FIFA and UEFA. Her favorite teams are FC Barcelona and Spanish National Team. She enjoys

reading, cooking, music and swimming. Sandy is married to Glen. They have a daughter Jeremy and three little dogs named GiGli, JherMana and SilasSeth. During their days off, the couple usually does some cooking, plays with the dogs and the piano, and enjoys family time together.

#### Communications Officer: Maggie Chan



The Cathedral welcomed its very first Communications Officer – Maggie Chan – in June 2016, a step forward to enhance the Cathedral's communications and publicity.

Maggie worked in the field of journalism and communications for a decade before joining St John's Cathedral office. As early as her college years, she envisioned serving God through working in the secular world as a follower of Christ.

After graduating from the School of Journalism and Communication, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Maggie started her career as a journalist and an editor in local newspapers, followed by years working in institutions and NGOs as communications personnel.

She is honoured to be chosen as part of the team in serving God and His people at this beautiful Cathedral with a rich history.

Following on from Father Nigel Gibson's efforts in watching over the complex web of Cathedral communications, she has much more to explore, to consolidate the previous efforts made and to further develop that web, not to mention her editorship of this magazine and workings with its amazing editorial team.

For her, there are opportunities and challenges ahead. She is eager to meet everyone here at St John's Cathedral, and she invites all of you to join hands in improving communications within our Cathedral and in the wider community.

In her leisure time, Maggie loves watching movies, reading books, writing and hiking. She enjoys having conversations with different people and she is curious about everything around her. Please don't be too surprised if you see her taking pictures around the Cathedral precincts with a SLR camera!



# Upcoming Services at St John's & Daughter Churches

## September – November 2016



### St John's Cathedral

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

## Major Celebrations

### 14th September (Wednesday): Holy Cross Day

19:30 Sung Eucharist with the Cathedral Choir

### 18th September (Sunday): Feast of Dedication

09:30 Joint Sung Eucharist & Blessing of the new Cathedral Garden by Archbishop Paul Kwong  
  
(This service will be conducted in English & Mandarin)

### 29th September (Thursday): St Michael & All Angels

19:30 Sung Eucharist with the Cathedral Choir

### 2nd October (Sunday): Harvest Thanksgiving

09:00 Sung Eucharist (RTHK Broadcast)  
  
11:45 All Age Worship with the Blessing of Animals

### 8th October (Saturday)

15:00 Pilgrimage through St John's Cathedral

### 9th October (Sunday) – 16th October (Sunday)

St John's Pilgrimage to China

### 26th October (Wednesday) – 2nd November (Wednesday)

09:00 Delegates from Diocese of Toungoo, Myanmar visit St John's

### 29th October (Saturday)

10:00 Michaelmas Fair  
16:00

### 30th October (Sunday): All Saints Sunday

09:00 Sung Eucharist with the Cathedral Choir

### 2nd November (Wednesday): All Souls Day

07:30 Sung Requiem Eucharist with choir & orchestra  
(Setting: Requiem by Gabriel Fauré)

### 8th November (Tuesday)

20:00 The HIV Charitable Concert – Spreading Care & Love

### 13th November (Sunday): Remembrance Sunday

18:00 Evening Remembrance Service

### 20th November (Sunday): Feast of Christ the King

09:00 Sung Eucharist with the Cathedral Choir

### 27th November (Sunday): Advent Sunday

18:00 The Advent Procession  
(A sequence of readings and music for the Advent Season)

**Emmanuel Church**  
**Béthanie Chapel**  
**139 Pok Fu Lam Road, Pokfulam**  
Further information Tel: 2523 4157  
www.emmanuel.org.hk

**Every Sunday**  
10:15 Sung Eucharist  
(except first Sunday of the month)

**First Sunday of the Month**  
10:15 Family Eucharist



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

**Regular Service**  
**Every Sunday**  
09:30 Sung Eucharist (except first Sunday of the month)  
(Sunday School for children age 3-12)



**First Sunday of the month**  
09:30 Family Eucharist (No Sunday School)

**Major Liturgical Celebrations**  
**2 October (Sunday): Harvest Thanksgiving**  
09:30 Family Eucharist with donation of Harvest Gifts

**30 October (Sunday): All Saints Sunday**  
09:30 Sung Eucharist

**13 November (Sunday): Remembrance Sunday**  
09:30 Sung Eucharist  
10:50 Wreath-laying and Act of Remembrance in Stanley Military Cemetery

**20 November (Sunday): Feast of Christ the King**  
09:30 Sung Eucharist

**27 November (Sunday): Advent Sunday**  
09:30 Sung Eucharist

**Discovery Bay Church**  
**SKH Wei Lun Primary School**  
Further information Tel: 2987 4210  
www.discoverybaychurch.org.hk

**Every Sunday**  
10:00 Sung Eucharist  
(except first Sunday of the month)

**First Sunday of the month**  
10:00 Family Eucharist



**St John's Cathedral**  
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Fax: (+852) 2521 7830  
E-mail: general@stjohnscathedral.org.hk  
Website: www.stjohnscathedral.org.hk  
Twitter: @StJohnsHK

**Dean**  
The Very Revd Matthias Der

**Cathedral Chaplains**  
The Revd Desmond Cox  
The Revd Dwight dela Torre  
The Revd Canon Peter Koon  
The Revd Robert Martin  
(Chaplain and Priest-in-Charge of Emmanuel Church - Tel: 2523 4157)  
The Revd Will Newman  
(Chaplain and Priest-in-Charge of St Stephen's Chapel - Tel: 2813 0408)  
The Revd Mark Rogers  
(Chaplain and Priest-in-Charge of Discovery Bay Church - Tel: 2987 4210)  
The Revd Catherine Graham  
The Revd Wu Wai Ho

**Cathedral Honorary Chaplains**  
The Revd John Chynchen  
The Revd Hugh Phillipson  
The Revd Jenny Wong Nam

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John Twist - Advisor

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**Assistant Director of Music**  
Alan Tsang

**Organist**  
Peter Yue

**Communications Officer**  
Maggie Chan

**Verger**  
Ho Tat Hoi

**Head Server**  
James Choo

**Head Sidesman**  
Roger Cole



# After Orlando; A Service of Reconciliation

By Stuart Wolfendale

A special, heartfelt and hopeful Service of Reconciliation, Unity and Equality was held in the Cathedral at lunchtime on 17 June to mark the massacre in Orlando the previous Sunday. In the days following the atrocity, there was a converging instinct among members of St John's that the Cathedral should respond to this dreadful occurrence, not only to remember those who died but to bear witness to how love can respond to hate.

As the Dean said in his welcome, "We turn our minds and hearts to all the walls that separate people, break communion, and tear apart lives and communities. Some walls are made of stone. Some are constructed of prejudice, intolerance and fear. Let us open our minds and hearts to hear the call to be peacemakers, advocates, and ministers of reconciliation."

Over two hundred people attended and there was a flood of messages in support from Hong Kong and overseas. Present were members of other denominations and faiths, members of the diplomatic corps and representatives and individuals from the LGBTI community, which had been the target of the Orlando shooting.

The service was conducted by Revd Robert Martin, who constructed the liturgy, and Revd Catherine Graham, with the Dean giving the final blessing. A very full Cathedral choir under Felix Yeung, Director of Music, had come together, at very short notice, to sing an anthem and support the congregation and the distinguished contralto Keityh Pun sang Pie Jesu from Faure's 'Requiem'. There were readings by the former US Consul General Clifford A. Hart, the Canadian Consul General Ian Burchett and the intercessions were led by Stuart Wolfendale.

An important point in the service was when the whole congregation could take part in the rich and almost boundless symbolism of lighting a candle. All prayed that the flames would take away hatred, burn down the walls of division, inspire us to embrace truth, give light for God's love in our hearts, test our feeble faith, feel each other's warmth, light our path and set our hearts aflame with hope.

Candle lighting was led, at the altar, by the US Consul General and Mr Billy Leung, representing the Pink Alliance in Hong Kong. Members of the congregation, including the Chief Imam of Hong Kong, Muhammed Arshad, came forward, one by one, to light a candle.

This was followed with a way forward; with an Act of Commitment in which, through responses, those present committed themselves to their common humanity and to being instruments of peace. The service ended with the people saying together the prayer of St Francis of Assisi, 'Lord make us instruments of your peace.'

There was a deep appreciation of the service's beauty, simplicity and message from all who were there, no matter their faith, if any, or the lives they live. St John's mission statement says we are '... a place of God's grace, welcoming all, following Christ, and changing lives in the heart of Hong Kong.' Let us hope that is what the Cathedral was living.

