



Graceland

CBCSD Newsletter # 25

July 19th, 2020

***But the land you are crossing the Jordan to take possession of ...
is a land of the Lord your God cares for; the eyes of the
Lord your God are continually on it...***

(Deuteronomy 11:11-12)

Words from the Editor:

Dear brothers and sisters:

God's thoughts are higher than ours. Through the days of the Stay at Home order in the past few months, many new and beautiful things have been accomplished, including: through various online platforms, we have live streaming of Sunday worship, fellowships, small groups, Sunday school, training, etc. Not only has the number of participants increased, but we also have positive feedback from brothers and sisters. Many brothers and sisters, as salt and light, have blessed the community with various love actions; and some families enjoy more parent-child moments to create beautiful and memorable memories. Hope that we can have new visions from God in the epidemic, continue to do new things for Him. Be blessed, and make more people blessed as well !

New Visions Amid COVID-19

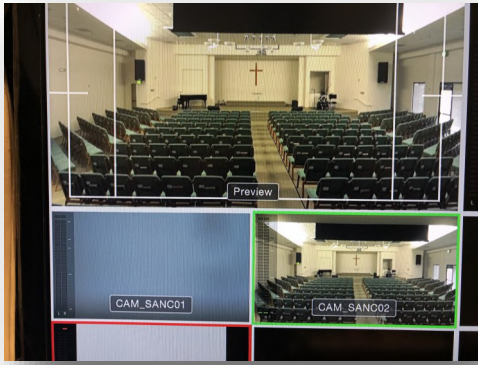


Internet & Multimedia and Church Ministry

**By Pastor Edward Chiu,
Executive & Church Planting Pastor**

That day was April 19, 2020. I came to church on time to do an online worship live broadcast (actually it was a "simulated live" broadcast with recorded videos). We used to use Zoom as a platform to redirect the signals to our streaming server. Since the outcome was not satisfactory, I decided to use another software, OBS, to stream worship directly. Although it was the first time the setup was used live on Sunday, I felt quite confi-

dent because of some tests were done before. The Mandarin worship started at 8:55 which began with praise worship. After more than ten minutes, the live broadcast screen suddenly stopped. Only then did I realize that the OBS stopped working and disappeared without warning! I immediately restarted the software and streamed the praise worship and preaching. Unfortunately, the problem appeared again and



again. A series of remedial actions followed, but nothing helped. We finally decided to broadcast the worship

again that night. I felt very embarrassed and blamed myself that day. Why on earth could such a big mistake be made?

Because of the outbreak of coronavirus, the government issued the "Stay at Home" order. The church needs to stream worship on the Internet. Artur Leung and I are the main co-workers of the online streaming operation and related ministries. In fact, I did not know much about streaming before the epidemic. In the past few months, with grateful appreciation to Artur for his guidance and brothers and sisters for their patience, I started to master streaming, video recording, video editing, online meetings, etc. which enable the church to use the Internet and multimedia as a ministry platform. The Internet and multimedia platform is not new to the church, but it is when used as the main tool! In the past, when preparing for a church event, although we would consider putting the event on the Internet, the resources, and priorities (physical vs online) were not comparable to now. The theme of the church for this year is "New Vision, New Mission." God miraculously removes all the usual practices and effective platforms and tools, opens our eyes, and tells us to stop staying in the past and take on the new things. Today we put worship, Sunday school, fellowship groups, prayer meetings, gospel talks, pastoral devotionals etc. on the Internet. This is

merely the first step in using the Internet and multimedia as a ministry platform. When we first developed hybrid cars, we hoped that cars could save fuel and reduce the environmental impact. However, in recent years, some expensive cars have switched to hybrid technology. Although it is slightly fuel-efficient, the most important goal is to increase the horsepower of the car. The epidemic will surely pass, and both physical worship and meetings will start again. We need to think about how to combine the physical and online platforms to improve the quality and quantity of church ministry, so as to lead more people to know and worship the Lord.

"Where there is strife, there is pride, but wisdom is found in those who take advice." - Proverbs 13:10 (NIV)

The Book of Acts of the New Testament talks about Apollo. He was a gifted evangelist. But at first, he only knew about John's baptism. Thus, Priscilla and Aquila, acted as mentors, taught Apollo. Apollo was humble and he was now well equipped with the truth. He was later greatly used by the Lord. When we want to respond to God and do new things with new vision, we may encounter shortcomings like mine on April 19, or as in the case of Apollo. Let us learn with humility, listen to others, and rely on God. Our ministry will take to the next level. ♦





The Days in the Ark

By Li Bai, Central Campus

And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives entered the ark to escape the waters of the flood. (Gen 7:7)

The waters flooded the earth for a hundred and fifty days.

(Gen 7:24)

The Bible records Noah's family, who took a variety of animals into the Ark and stayed there for more than 100 days. Finally, I have experienced those words. Ever since "stay-at-home" took hold, I have started an isolated life, much like living on the Ark. Only now have I had a taste of how hard it was for Noah's family to live on the Ark.

I served in the Children's Ministry for more than 15 years. By now, I am basically the head of the kids. I am energetic and can't stay still for even a minute, making isolated life almost unbearable. To make things worse, I missed the children so much. I tried to set up a WeChat group, Auntie Li's Group, with parents and coworkers. In the beginning, we just shared some small games to help the parents occupy their kids. Surprisingly, it was very well received. On Sunday, I joined "leading forward" online Sunday schools for elementary kids and found out that all those children were capable with online meeting technology. Then it occurred to me that we could continue Sunday school through the internet. Pastor Angela called me and supported my idea.

At first, both the kids and I were very disappointed that we couldn't celebrate Easter like before. However, since we started having online Sunday school, I could spend time with the kids,

learning the resurrection story and giving thanks to God for this new life. The Saturday before Easter, I was busy preparing colored eggs and crafts, turning them into gift packets. I invited the parents in the WeChat group to stop by my house to pick them up, so that their kids could still have an egg hunt at their house. Many parents left gifts for me too when they came to pick up. I was tired that day but felt satisfied and rewarded.

We started online Sunday school on the third week of lockdown. Sunday school on the Ark has brought joy and energy to both the kids and me.

We do not know how long the days on the ark will be. But it doesn't matter. God will leave a rainbow, and we will come out again. Previously, parents had been busy with work and had no time for their kids. During these days on the ark, we can finally spend some time with our kids. God does everything for the benefit of us in many different circumstances.

The days on the ark will eventually pass. Whatever we have done today will become part of our fond memories tomorrow. ♦



The Light from My Window

By Yifan Tian, Main Campus

Due to the onset of COVID-19, March 13 turned out to be the last day my kids physically attended school this year, and I found myself having to adjust to the new normal of having kids home 24/7. The daily news was bombarded with statistics of new COVID cases and images of empty store shelves -- astonishing scenes left after people's panic shopping for toilet paper. For the first time in my life, I witnessed the closing of churches, parks, and other public venues. People were living in varying degrees of anxiety, desperation, and fear, myself included. Thank God, we know He will always be with us despite what He puts us through.

One day, I happened to come across an online discussion by a group of moms on ideas to celebrate this "extraordinary" Easter. Most were dismayed at the loss of traditional egg hunting activities, some suggested various crafts as alternatives to keep kids engaged. When one family shared pictures of them drawing a cross on their window, my heart felt a sudden surge of warmth, so warm that it unleashed all the mixed feelings accumulated deep down inside of me. At a time when our hearts were overshadowed by the darkness of fear and confusion, the sight of a cross became even more prominent as if it were a lighthouse beaming with God's signal of love. That reminded me of Matthew 5:14-16:

"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on a stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your goodness and praise your Father in heaven."

then asked myself, "how could we let our light shine over our community without getting out of our house?" I wanted to tell people not to be afraid nor anxious as the love of God is still with us despite the trials we face today. I was also hopeful that people of all races would come to know our Creator if they have not already. God loves the world! In order to bring this message to the people around us, my kids and I decided to draw a cross, a heart, and a praying angel on one of our windows so that passers-by could see it every day and be comforted, encouraged, and rekindled with hope. More importantly, it would serve as a daily reminder for ourselves that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son. In my daily prayer, I always ask God to give me enough strength and wisdom to fulfill my duties as a wife and a mother, and to let our home remain a nest of love and not a battlefield even during this trying time as God's love resides here. It took us two weeks before the arrival of Easter to complete the drawings on the window. Both kids participated in the whole process. I was so grateful that our family got to interact and bond in such a special way. The images were brought to life every time the sun shone through the window. One day, a Caucasian mom dropped off some stuff at my house and texted me afterward that she was deeply touched by what she saw on our window. Praise be to our Lord! ♦





God Lead Watch Small Group Through the Spring 2020

By Jun Cui, Central Campus

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)



was greeting one another with warmth and passion. Ever since then, we couldn't stop! Every Friday's bible study has had full attendance. We even attracted new friends to join us online.

After a couple of weeks, to help alleviate the frustration and stress from the "Stay-at-Home" Order, we adjusted our meetings. We took a large portion of the time for sharing, when brothers and sisters could share their views on a week of bible reading, propose questions, and request for prayers. The sharing could also be nonspiritual advice, such as how to protect against the virus, how to shop online, and how to make meals. Through the variety of sharing, we experienced God's grace together. Through Zoom, we were able to share PPT, pictures, and videos, as it was not that easy to share during regular meeting time. We used Zoom's Breakout Room settings to divide groups up for discussion and prayer. This function allowed us to work as a prayer meeting.

We thank God for preparing such a platform for us. This is more than what we hoped for! God has done miracles. ♦

The spring of 2020 is flying by. Looking back on these months, I deeply resonated with these two verses.

Around the end of February, the pandemic began to affect our Watch small group's regular meetings. On February 28, there were only 6 brothers and sisters attending, barely half of our group. During that meeting, some sisters suggested that we moved online.

As the leader of the small group, I sensed that it was the right thing to do, but already I started to miss the sense of family that came with meeting in-person. Additionally, I worried that online meetings would whittle down attendance and the unity and passion in our small group.... As I worried, I turned to God to seek His guidance. After praying and exchanging ideas with the core coworkers, everyone seemed to have the same response. I was less worried and more encouraged. On March 6, we started the first Zoom meeting. All the brothers and sisters at home attended on time. Everyone





For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.
- Ephesians 2:10 (KJV) -

We are Family in Christ

By Lucy Chu, 45 Campus

Ephesians 2:10: "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

When COVID-19 escalated in Asia, instead of starting to prepare America with more masks and PPE, the US simply watched the fire burning from afar. Therefore, when the pandemic started exploding in the US, I heard that frontline healthcare workers had no masks to protect themselves, which prompted my concern. I spoke with my sisters in fellowship on how we, as a church, could do something to help our community, as we are asked to love our neighbors and spread the love and compassion of the Lord as what Proverbs 3:27 says, "Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to act." It reminded us that we needed to think of a way to help those healthcare workers.

At that very moment, my business friend in Taiwan was sending me masks, so I asked him to look for mask-making factories in mainland China to see if we could place a large order. Pastor Mingsheng supported our idea of fundraising for purchasing masks, so we started asking brothers and sisters about feasibility and donations. It was very well received, and we were able to raise more than \$800 in a couple of days. After confirming that the masks could be delivered to us by air within a week, we immediately placed an order of 300 KN95 masks and 300 surgical masks, which arrived on April 5.

In order to be efficient, we only did the fundraising Grace Fellowship and Joy Fellowship, and soon we raised \$3000. With this milestone, we decided to

place another order of 150 KN95 masks and 4,600 surgical masks. However, when we placed the order, the US changed its standard



on masks made in China. Given the circumstances of the mask shortage in the US, the CDC decided that KN95 could replace N95 while the FDA still did not allow masks made in China to be imported. Therefore, the factories in China were afraid to export because of the risks of being confiscated by customs, until two weeks later, when the US finally agreed that masks could be imported from China. Yet millions of supplies were waiting to be shipped to the US, so the waiting time increased to 2-3 weeks and the price of shipping surged. We could only pray, and pray again, that our masks would arrive on time, and that the fees would not be overcharged too much. We lifted it to God and trusted that God's work had its own timing.

The factory had to ship the products from Guangzhou province to Hong Kong to be able to get on an airline. Finally, two big cases of masks arrived in San Diego on May 1. We contacted sister Laikwan Siu-Boyle right away at USCD and donated to them in the name of CBCSD. We finally made the long-anticipated donation of masks on that very noon at the front gate.



In the process of the order, thanks to many sisters' reminders about safety issues regarding the masks. We asked the factory to provide the safety documents and submitted them to UCSD for official approval. After they examined the first batch of masks and confirmed that they could accept it, we ordered the second batch.

I would like to thank a total of 27 brothers and sisters who donated, 22 from the 4S fellowship and 5 from other campuses. Special thanks to a brother

from 4S, Jie Wei, who moved to Shanghai two years ago and sent a case of masks to Pastor Mingsheng for the brothers and sisters here. 200 masks of his went to UCSD as well. Without the unity of everyone's efforts, we wouldn't be able to accomplish such a task. God will commemorate everyone. Finally, I would like to use Hebrews 13:16 to encourage us all, "And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased." ♦



Love Never Fails

By Anna Wan, Cantonese Congregation

Praise the Lord! Although homebound most of the time under the Stay at Home Order, I was constantly nourished and inspired by the daily devotional messages from the pastoral team and did a few things that I would never have done under normal circumstances. By doing those things, I was able to bring blessings to others as well as be blessed.

The devotional message from Pastor Wanda one day was about 1 Corinthians 13:8: "Love never fails." How do we live out the love from God during this COVID-19 pandemic? This question triggered quite a bit of reflection and self-examination. It so happened that Agape Fellowship initiated a "show your love" project during that same week with each member calling up and checking on a set number of the brothers and sisters in the church's directory. The sisters I called were all pleasantly surprised which filled me with joy too. Love is contagious. When I started to show my love to the people around me, they in turn showed theirs to the people around them, making it a complete "circle of love."

In the meantime, I was also pleasantly surprised and blessed by the loving gestures from others. Being a senior, I am considered "high risk" during this pandemic. Some sisters living in my neighborhood would deliver food to my door and then call me to go out and get it after they left. One day, just as I was about to go out and shop for groceries, a sister called to tell me that she delivered some food to me which turned out to be just what I needed. I was so grateful that God took care of my daily needs through these loving sisters.

God's words are so precious and faithful. When I take them to heart, repent, and respond with acts of love, such love would eventually flow like a circular current that never ceases. I pray that God will continue to use us so that His unfailing love will be able to reach more and more people. ♦





Turning a Little Personal Passion into a Big Passion to Serve God and People

By a Sister from Cantonese Congregation

During the initial phase of the Stay at Home Order, my daughter suggested that our family all go volunteering at the Food Bank. While the pandemic brought about a sudden surge in demand for food assistance, the number of volunteers available was drastically down. I was so glad to see my daughter's compassion and love for others, yet I hesitated due to concern over the risk associated with working at the Food Bank. The volunteer vacancies were all filled when we finally decided to register. Apparently, the repeated appeal by the Food Bank had drawn enough enthusiasm in the community. My daughter was a little disappointed while I breathed a sigh of relief. I asked God to forgive my weakness yet was still uneasy about not having the courage to help those in need.

I was so thankful when God gave me a second chance. When I saw "DIY reusable masks" in the list of personal protective equipment needed by the healthcare facilities, I immediately thought about making the masks by using my sewing machine. I mentioned this during a Zoom meeting with a few sisters who happened to know some essential workers in urgent need of such masks. I acted right away and made masks for them. One of the recipients was not a believer yet, however she was a participant of one of our Happiness Groups. They were all so happy when the masks were delivered.

When I first started sewing masks, it was not all smooth sailing. I was very slow, yet God gave me the patience to stay focused one mask at a time while simultaneously praying for the person who would be wearing it. As I got more proficient, I was able to sew fast enough to donate the masks to healthcare facilities. I recently reconnected with a family who stopped going to church for quite some time. When I learned of their need for masks, I was glad that I could make some for them as well.

I would never have imagined that my little personal passion for sewing could one day turn into a bigger passion to serve God and people. I thank God for accepting me, weak as I was, and at the same time, giving me a new vision and new experience during this pandemic.

Editor's note: The writer of this article was one of the many sisters from Cantonese Congregation who contributed to the mask sewing project. They delivered a large number of masks to elders and frontline workers in healthcare facilities, nursing homes, and supermarkets. God's love was spread to every corner of the community through these sisters. May God remember their selfless dedication! ♦



Draw Me After You

By Bei Chen, Central campus



My family went to Brian Head for a ski trip during the Christmas of 2019. Because I don't ski, I ended up taking my family to the ski resort every morning, and then rode a shuttle back to the rental home. There, I spent time with God, worshipped, read the Bible, meditated on His word, prayed, and read my favorite books. Six hours would pass without notice. When the ski trip ended, I missed the solitude with God.

I yearned to know God more and strongly felt that we could lose anything but God's presence. I love food and making it. However, after coming down from the mountain, my taste buds changed. I preferred a simpler life, so that I could have more time to read the Bible, to contemplate His word, and to pray to Him with His word. At the beginning of this year, I started fasting and praying for

two days in a week, putting aside the strength from food and the flesh that I usually depend on, choosing instead to rely completely on His power in my weakness. Through this time of prayer, I broke my chains and found a new life. I oversee the monthly prayer meeting at Central Campus. Most of the time, looking at the number of attendants triggered internal struggles and judgment. In February, I prayed to God, "My Lord, even though there is only one person, me, at the prayer meeting, I will still be there, because you are there!"

Through the pandemic, I have seen so much of God's grace as He helps to equip His children. I serve at the restaurant workers' fellowship, which happens every other week. The restaurants have experienced a huge impact amid this pandemic. At the beginning of the lockdown, God gave this idea to me in a prayer: God's sheep cannot go without a shepherd. When I shared these thoughts with my coworkers, everyone agreed to have a weekly fellowship. Thank God, we had meetings with prayer, worship, messages, and sharing. There were many people in each meeting, and they are all prayer warriors. Many of the attendants are even from out of state. I see God's revival is coming!

LORD, DRAW ME AFTER YOU AND LET US RUN TOGETHER! ◆



Anecdotes during “Stay at Home”

By Emily Xu, Main campus



“Stay at Home” has brought so much joy and worry to our family. The joy belongs to my husband because he is naturally someone who prefers to stay home. But for me, facing three meals a day, two kids, and one

dog, it’s not joyful at all. However, things change.

laughed and comforted myself, “Luckily, even the virus wouldn’t want such a crazy middle-aged woman!” My husband stroked his own growing hair, saying, “No worries, after one month, I’ll transform myself from a typical engineer into an artist.” We definitely make a good pair.

It’s now the 8th week, and I have gradually found

Jojo has been enjoying free time by playing with flour like never before, whisking up some pleasantly surprising desserts for the table. I finally have time to train the girls to cook Chinese dishes every dinner. After the new rules for face covering, the girls decided to use old t-shirts to make masks. Looking at them making masks while reminiscing the funny things they did when they learned sewing from grandma, I saw the sisters bonding in this difficult situation.

Fun things happened with my husband as well. The other day, after I came back from walking the dog, my husband dissolved in laughter at the sight of me. The scarf I wore was covering half of my face, but the wind had swirled my hair into the replica of crazy middle-aged woman. I

Happiness is a choice!

happiness from the initial worries. It’s waking up to the aroma of just-out-of-the-oven bread; it’s making masks and dinner together with my girls; it’s the comfort you find through humor and laughing with someone in a bad situation; it’s also the warmth we exchange when neighbors and sisters drop off snacks, veggies, and masks at your door.

God reveals happiness to us in the goodness we see in each other. ♦



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