

Hills Christian Alliance Church Newsletter

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Rejoice in God, Live for the Lord

August 2020, Issue No. 38

Pastor's Sharing – Live for the Lord

Rev Almon Li
Senior Pastor

When brothers and sisters read this article, I think the elections of deacons and elders have been completed. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to encourage them to serve the church with all their strength, and to love God and their neighbours.

The church theme of this year is "Live for the Lord". I want to urge the deacons and the elders to become role models for the flock and to live for the Lord. A believer who is living for the Lord will have the following characteristics:

1. A Life as a Living Sacrifice

In Romans 12:1, Paul teaches us that "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship." The Bible reminds believers that they should present their bodies to the Lord as a living sacrifice. God does not ask us to burn ourselves as a sacrifice, but wants us to be a living sacrifice to Him. What God wants is not a dead sacrifice, but a living one, that means He wants us to live for Him.

In the last issue of quarterly newsletter, I mentioned "live for the Lord" is that we surrender everything in our life to Jesus, and then go wherever He sends us and uses us. Live according to His will, His commands and His teachings. In Old Testament times, offering to God was to kill an animal (such as bull, sheep, pigeon, etc) and to burn it on the altar. The sacrificial animal foreshadowed the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Son of God for the sins of humanity. In New Testament times, the Lord Jesus was the lamb of sin offering sacrificed as atonement for our sins which prefigured in the Old Testament and the salvation of God is fulfilled in Him.

Therefore, for those of us who believe in the Lord, our sins have been forgiven, there is no more need to

offer sacrifices to God. However, Paul the Apostle reminds us that since we have been redeemed by the Lord with a high price which is His own life, we should respond to God's love with a grateful heart by offering ourselves to God as a living sacrifice and living for Him.

2. A Life of Thanksgiving

Since we have been redeemed with a high price which is the life of the Lord, we should be delighted to live for Him and to please Him in return for His grace. Although we used to live for ourselves or for others before, now we should be grateful to God, live for Him and glorify His name because God's grace has been given to us, we are saved by the Lord and are exempt from the judgment in future. Moreover, the grace of eternal life is given to us and we are called children of God.

We should examine ourselves: do we let Jesus be our Lord, or are we still the master of ourselves? If we do not let the Lord manage our lives, how can we manifest the Lord's abundant life in our lives? No wonder why many Christians, who though believe in Jesus for many years, are not transformed by God's power. They are still weak and are led into sin by temptation. They have disputes with others because of bad temper, and they also do all the evil they can.

Brothers and sisters, we should renew ourselves by the Holy Spirit daily and live for the Lord because this is the attitude that a grateful person should have.

3. A Life of Mission

Everyone needs a mission from God so that he/she can live a meaningful and wonderful life. God has created each of us in a way that is unique and special. He gives us different DNA, gifts, abilities, talents and interests in order for us to fulfil the mission that He wants us to fulfil.

In the last issue, I mentioned what a mission is – that is to love and to serve others, to preach the gospel, to nurture the believers to become Christ’s disciples who are willing to live for the Lord. When a person refuses to live his/her mission, his/her life will become futile, empty and meaningless. In fact, the tragedy in life is not death, but a life without a purpose and meaning.

Brothers and sisters, today we have experienced the salvation of Christ Jesus, therefore, we should live for the Lord and live out the unique mission through the spiritual gifts that God has given us so as to build the church, to expand the kingdom of God, and to glorify His name.

4. A Life of Serving Others

A believer who lives for the Lord should be a believer who likes to serve others. In 1 Corinthians 9:19, it says, "Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible." Because of his love to God, Paul is willing to serve others, even those who are bad and disrespectful to him. In fact, there are a lot of people

around us who make us feel uncomfortable. But if we love God, we should serve them as well.

As Christ Jesus has set an example for us, though He knew that Judas would betray him, He still washed his feet. Mother Teresa once said, "It is very easy to help the poor on the road, but it is very difficult to take care of the wicked at home." On many occasions, it is easy for us to say “we love God”, but very difficult for us to love others, especially those who know us well but treat us badly.

I pray to God to help us, not only the leaders of the church (the newly elected elders and deacons, reverend, pastors and workers), but all the brothers and sisters, be able to learn persistently to live for the Lord in our daily lives, and then gradually live out “a life as a living sacrifice”, “a life of thanksgiving”, “a life of mission” and “a life of serving others”. Amen.

English translation: Eve Wong

Worship Service

Paul Chan

Worship Ministry Director

A few years ago, I met the team of Grace Melodia which is often invited to lead worship in large-scale evangelistic meetings and worship training camps, to write songs, etc. On one occasion, on behalf of our church, I invited them to serve us for a whole day, including leading our Sunday worship, a worship seminar, and a training session. The committee members of Grace Melodia invited me to have a meeting with them in which they accepted my suggestions to select the songs that were familiar by our congregations and in accordance with the components of adoration, praise, thanksgiving and response in the process of worship. The first part of the songs we selected were "Never Stop Praising You", "The Glory of God", "Down from His Glory" and "Thirst for You" which helped us worship God together in one spirit. After the sermon, we had “Surrender to God” as a response which was related to the topic of the sermon – “God is seeking true worshippers”. At the end of the service, we selected “The Dearest Echo” which is written by Grace Melodia.

On that day, the worship team of Grace Melodia had 8 members including the vocalists, the keyboardist, the guitarist, the drummer and the wind instrument player. Then in the worship seminar, we had question-and-answer (Q&A) discussions about the difference between singing contemporary and traditional songs. After the discussions, brothers and sisters more understood that, as believers, the heart

and the attitude of worshipping God is the most important. The form of worship and the selection of songs are secondary.

“The true worshippers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks.”(John 4:23)



In the afternoon, there were 25 members of the 3 congregations attended the worship training which was led by two speakers, who were the drummer and the keyboardist of the worship in the morning. One of the speakers frankly said, "I did not like the other speaker who now sits next to me at first, and whenever I saw his face, I hated him." However, after a period of time, this speaker knew that it was wrong. Then he confessed to God and decided to apologize to the brother. (I guessed he was jealous of the other’s talents!) Since then, they have become close

comrades. The other speaker then responded that if there were gaps in relationships among team members, it should be resolved as soon as possible. Otherwise, there would be no team spirit for them to serve well together in worship ministry. Due to the time limit, there was no individual training arranged. He then suggested 3 worship teams of the 3 congregations had rehearsals separately as demonstrations. After that, valuable advices were given.

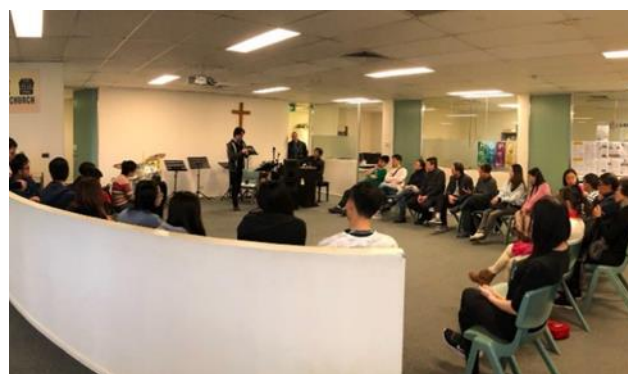
Remember that in a meeting with the committee of Grace Melodia, this speaker shared that there were two musicians in the worship team of his church. The first one was very experienced, but because of his pride, it was not easy to communicate with him, so it was difficult for him to cooperate with other team members. The other one was humble and willing to learn, though he was inexperienced, he could work with other team members in harmony.

A true worshipper is someone who is willing to commit himself to God and serve Him through worship and praise. Of course, with respect to music and singing, working hard, persistent learning and practice are essential. But spiritual renewal, godly attitude in everyday life and close relationship with

the Lord are also needed. If a worshipper does not have a personal intimate relationship with the Lord, it is impossible for him to serve well in worship for a long time. He must always read the Bible, pray to God and seek His guidance in different aspects of life, such as work, family and ministry. Therefore, for those who serve in worship, they must live a life of worship and whatever they do or say, they should have such an attitude.

“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”(1 Corinthians 10:31)

English translation: Eve Wong



Church amid the Pandemic [Note]

The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD is enthroned as King forever.” (Psalm 29:10)

In response to the coronavirus pandemic, the Government has progressively introduced social distancing rules. In order to comply with the government rules, our church has stopped all in-person services, gatherings, visitations and activities since end March until further notice. Apart from live streamed services, a series of actions/measures have also been taken by our church so that pastoral care and church operations can somehow be maintained. Appended below is a summary of these measures and actions:

Preventive Measures

- Two guidelines on best-hygiene practices issued to the congregations by mail on 7 February and 13 March 2022 respectively.
- Tables and chairs disinfected before the on-site Sunday services held on 15 March and 22 March.
- One hand dryer installed on 25 March in each of the 3 toilets in the Church Building.

Administration and Finance

- All salaried pastors/workers worked from home on partial basis.
- Meetings of the Deacon Board and Advisory Committees held through ZOOM.
- AGM postponed to 2 August 2020.
- Congregations encouraged to give their offerings through e-transfer. Guidelines provided in the Bulletin.
- Joined two Government’s financial assistance programs for business.

Pastoral Care

- Two pastoral letters issued by Rev. Li on 20 and 26 March respectively, informing the congregants of the church’s latest measures and encouraging them to trust in God amid the pandemic.
- Congregants encouraged to care for each other during the pandemic and to approach the pastors for necessary support.
- Church Prayer meetings held through ZOOM.
- The Mandarin congregation being cared for through WeChat or by phone.
- As from 25 April, home visits to senior members conducted by Paul.

- A song “Praise in the Pandemic” created and uploaded to the “You Tube” by the One Talent Music Ministry, to encourage congregants to remain faithful to God.
- DIY cotton masks produced by the Family Ministry for distribution by the church to those members and relatives in need of masks.
- A bible study group for young mothers, called “Lydia”, formed by the Family Ministry.

Cell Groups and Fellowships

- Fellowships and cell groups encouraged to continue holding their gatherings through on-line meeting apps (such as ZOOM); group leaders to care for their members through electronic means.
- Pre-study meetings for cell group leaders held through ZOOM.
- Mandarin brothers and sisters cared for each other through various chat groups.

On-line Services

- From 29 March onward, Sunday services of the Cantonese, Mandarin and English Congregations live streamed real time through the Facebook. Only workers on duty allowed to be present.
- Weekly Bulletins by mail to congregants on each Saturday.



Suspension of Church Activities

All in-person church gatherings and activities suspended until further notice.

Communication with Members

Church updates and courses announced through the church’s Facebook Page.

On-line Bible Study/Courses

- “Study II Corinthians”: Videos on II Corinthians uploaded to our church’s Facebook Page for participants and interested members.
- 43 Cantonese and 27 Mandarin members joined the “Pentateuch” bible reading campaign.

Thanks to all church leaders and members (e.g. Worship Team, Multi-media Department) for their faithful services in their respective ministries during the pandemic so that church operations can be maintained, the congregants can peacefully join the Sunday services at home and be cared for.

With further easing of social restrictions, limited in-person services have been resumed gradually since 14 June while live streaming is still provided.

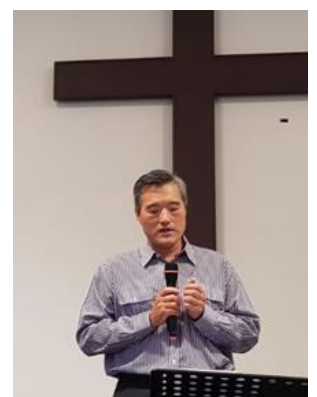
[Note: This summary mainly provides information regarding the Cantonese and Mandarin Congregations up to 31 May. For more information about the English Congregation, please refer to Pastor Fredrick’s article in this Issue.]

How English Congregation is Travelling through the Rough Waters Pastor Fredrick Song

As I am writing this article in the middle of June 2020, we are slowly coming out of the turbulent and chaotic time of COVID-19. Obviously by the time this is published and to be read by you, one cannot be certain of how our world have been changed or what shape it would be in. But nevertheless, this is the testimony of English Congregation during the most devastating time of our lives.

As we are travelling through this pandemic, one cannot help but to see how our Lord has prepared this congregation way before the pandemic was upon us and has been carrying us along through the storm of Coronavirus. Indeed, we have been experiencing what King David proclaimed in Psalm 18, “The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies.”

In the beginning of the year 2020, our Lord prepared our hearts and minds with the sermon series, ‘Sailing Through the Rough World’ from the first epistle of Peter. Although we had no idea what was coming in our near future but now, we can clearly see that was exactly what we needed



to hear to get ready for the upcoming season. Living as an alien in this world is very much like how we have to adopt to new challenges and ever-changing rules and regulations and knowing where to place our anchors, in our Lord Jesus Christ has been one certainty that never changed.

Once the full lockdown was ordered, English Congregation, just like any other congregations, had to adopt to the new format of worship and

communicate with others in all our ministries. Flashlight, Youth group had to be swiftly moved to online using Zoom and also all the other meetings and gatherings also had to move to online. Particularly the preparation for the Sunday service posed many challenges since we had to learn how set up cameras and other technical stuff. Surely there were many challenges and what seemed to be unnecessary complications.

But even through these complications and difficulties, our Lord has been preparing our congregation to be used for his greater purpose and mighty plan. Our Lord raised the new leaders who would step up in the time of trouble and hardship and also opened up the new ways to engage with the people who would normally not be engaged with us. We have seen some new people to come and worship with us online from different parts of Australia which would have not been possible before. We also have seen those who have missed from our congregation for long a while but returned to worship the Lord with us.

Thus, in all, we surely experienced the grace of God in the time of trial and trouble by accomplishing his will and plan. In fact, the idea of Sunday Service streaming online has been initiated since a couple of years ago but we had been reluctant to start due to its technical demands. It only needed the global pandemic to move us to do what our Lord intended us to do and God aided us to heed his word and minister to the world. Surely through it, we all have been blessed by his mighty plan and wonderful ways.

By no means, I am certain that we have come out of this season or we have won over the battle with COVID-19, but looking through the times of the past, we can be certain that who is in control and surely we are in the good hands of our Lord. As long as we trust him and his love and power, we surely will testify to the whole world of how great he is.

Amen.

Cell Group Gatherings in the Pandemic – Sharing by Group Leaders

Hosea Group -- Daniel Li

“Now no one can look at the sun, bright as it is in the skies after the wind has swept them clean.”
(Job 37:21)

Under the attack of the COVID-19, people have been required to keep social distance. At the beginning we communicated through mail and then by phone. Later some members found out the up to 6 phones could be connected through WhatsApp for video meeting. Our first online cell-group meeting was held in March. Although we could not express as freely and adequately as we wanted, we were comforted much as eventually we could meet.

The presence of Zoom has made all members excited because up to 100 people can be connected and the quality is better and image clearer and more stable. Thank God for giving us such a good technology so that our fellowship and bible study can continue during the pandemic. Sometimes, we were touched by brothers and sisters who joined our bible study while having their dinners or being sleepy due to health problem.



During the pandemic, I have learnt that God's word not only is able to heal but also to satisfy us. Hallelujah.

Zechariah Group – Ruth Yu

Our group meets online through Zoom during the pandemic. Online meetings are indeed inferior than in-person ones and those present are confined to adult members.

In our gatherings, we continue to have worship, praying, sharing and bible study (on the Gospel of Matthew). As we have joined the “Pentateuch” Bible Reading Campaign, we would also share our views and problems related to the Genesis. All of us felt helpless that we had to work from home during the pandemic. However, we know that God will be with us regardless whether we are at good or bad times.

We have also shared how family members get along with one another when staying at home during the pandemic. Some members said alright while others expressed that they are still warming up. If a group member is not well physically, we can only pray for him or her online. Not until the easing of social restrictions in May could we visit these members and pray with them.

Malachi Group B – Agnes Lung

“... not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” (Hebrews 10:25)

Not only Sunday services should continue to be held, our group gatherings should also continue. With electronic technologies such as Zoom, we can keep on studying the Bible, listening God’s word, reflecting Jesus’ teachings, greeting one another and praying together. Although we do not have in-person contacts and there are various technical and operating difficulties causing us considerable set-up time before we can start our meeting each time, all members cherish each opportunity of gathering. In spite of the difficulties mentioned above, we come with a grateful

heart to meet one another through the online gathering.

Meeting online is remote but close for us. By the grace and guidance of the Holy Spirit, each of our online meetings completed smoothly. It is true that we can sit safely and comfortably at home; we still feel that online gatherings have certain shortcomings – technical problems, network limitations, problems in PowerPoint shows and unsynchronized sharing. Body languages cannot be observed or sensed. Having said that, we still have to thank God for such a great blessing that we have the opportunities to care for one another during this adverse situation i.e. the pandemic. Amen.

English translation: Sherwood Kwok

“Praise in the Pandemic”

"Praise in the Pandemic" is a song composed by brothers and sisters serving in "One Talent Music Ministry". This song is performed by brothers and sisters from the three congregations of HCAC and uploaded onto YouTube [<https://youtu.be/RFMC5hialW0>]. The purpose of this song is to encourage brothers and sisters to remain faithful to God even in the midst of a pandemic and hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering. Lyrics of the song are as follows:

[國語]

救主，看顧我們，
在這疫情中。
救主，全地之王，
讓我們仍然敬拜祢。
祢是至高永遠掌權者。
我們需要，天父已經早知道。
耶穌寶血，聖靈的引導，
使我們得勝。
讚美三一神。

[粵語]

我神，眷顧我們，
在這困境中。
祢仍帥領我們，
帶我出黑暗戰勝。
快來歌頌至高至善王。
疫情侵襲，
這事祢定已批准。
疫情幫助信心建立。
快齊來歌頌，真心的讚美。

[英語]

Thy will yet not my will.
May thy will be done.
Thy will yet not my will.
Follow Lord Jesus thy Son.
Seek God’s kingdom and His righteousness
All what we need will be added on to us.
See Christ’s glory through the Spirit.
We need to bow down.
Praise the Triune God.



一千兩音樂事工

電子琴手: Reyland
國語女聲: Jocelyn, Phoebe
英語女聲: Grace
粵語男聲: Jamen, Stephen
音樂錄制: Fredrick
視象拍攝: Nathan
視象制作: Nathan
事工標誌設計: Jonathan
事工聯絡人: Phoebe

My name is Ammie and my husband is Edwin. Thank God for bringing us to the Mandarin Congregation of HCAC. Before HCAC, we attended Baulkham Hills Chinese Alliance Church where I got to know a sister in Christ who was a member of the Organising Committee of the Gospel Fellowship of Families (GFF). In 2016, this sister brought a few copies of the Anniversary issue of the GFF's publication to church. Upon reading this publication, I was deeply touched by the Holy Spirit, and on the following Sunday Service, I expressed my interest to serve in the GFF.



GFF holds its gatherings every third Saturday in the afternoon at Burwood Salvation Army and at these gatherings I become acquainted with Jenny and Reverend Li. Edwin started off by driving me to these gatherings only and since 2017 Edwin has also begun to participate in the GFF. From 2018, the GFF gatherings were moved to the annex of GracePoint Chinese Presbyterian Church where no musical instruments or audio equipment such as piano, amplifiers or mixers were in this hall. By the grace of God, the GFF was able to host our monthly gatherings and our special evening gatherings for Mother's Day, Father's Day and Christmas at GracePoint and for Edwin to be able to borrow necessary equipment for each gathering.

Every time we met Rev. Li at gatherings, he always checked up on us and asked about the equipment we were able to borrow, and we told him about our previous short-term missions in Dubbo. We continued to serve in the GFF. Edwin was responsible for bringing and setting up equipment and I served as pianist and majority of the time in kid's ministry. When Jenny started her internship at HCAC, she formally introduced us to Rev. Li and he recognises our long-term service and dedication.

During a gathering in July 2019, Rev. Li casually brought up in a conversation on the need of the Mandarin Congregation in HCAC. Edwin responded to this calling and offered his help. On a Saturday in August, we came in for a face-to-face sharing which Pastor Paul was also present. We talked about our time at Baulkham Hills Chinese Alliance Church, GFF and short-term mission trips to Dubbo. We have

always embraced the various learning opportunities at church and during outreach ministries, so when Jenny invited us to join the ministry of Harmonious Home, we went and got to know some brothers and sisters from HCAC. It was particularly heartening when we saw Phoebe, a sister previously from Baulkham Hills Chinese Alliance Church, in the group which kindled the idea to serve in HCAC.

Rev. Li suggested for us to first think and pray over this thought and reminded us to also have a discussion with the Senior Pastor of Baulkham Hills Chinese Alliance Church. We started to attend Sunday Services in HCAC and participated in 3C Café. It was a pleasure to meet Anna and other new friends. After that, Rev. Li invited Edwin and me to the Mandarin Congregation to help with the sound team, Kids Sunday School and as a pianist. We have since been observing and praying whether it is in the Lord's will for us to join HCAC.

August last year, I saw three signs from God which reaffirmed our calling to join and serve in HCAC. The first sign was meeting three sisters in Christ from HCAC on the street for several times. Then, I saw Edwin's willingness in serving the Mandarin Congregation of HCAC and self-consciously waking up early in the morning to get prepared for church. Lastly, we genuinely saw God leading us into serving and learning in HCAC. One day, we asked Rev. Philip Wong of Baulkham Hills Chinese Alliance Church and his wife to come to our house and told them of our decision to leave Baulkham Hills Chinese Alliance Church. They accepted and prayed for us.

Since September, we started to serve in the Mandarin Congregation of HCAC, with Edwin being in charge of sound and PowerPoint projection, and I assisting in Kids Sunday School. We and other brothers and sisters in Christ learn, love and care for each other like a family and serve one another with joy.

English translation: Iris Chau