

2013 YOUTH/ENGLISH MINISTRY

The year just passed represents the completion of the 12th year of the Youth/English Ministry as we know it today. It has been more obvious than ever before that our great God has been very much involved, involving so many volunteers who have worked tirelessly with our youth in cooperation with the entire Church leadership. It is obvious to us that the Spirit of God is actively at work among this effort for which we are humbled and overjoyed!

Worship (Mr. Woodrow)

Sunday Worship has continued to serve as the major focal point of our week, with 30-40 gathering most Sunday's, including not only our youth but young adults of college and "post-college" age, as well as some parents and other adults who have become a regular part of this special occasion.

This year we continued teaching from Matthew, Chapters 5-7, known as the "Sermon on the Mount" under the title, "Equipped for Every Good Work". Much of the Christian Community considers to teaching of Christ as "the greatest sermon every preached" and it has served to challenge each of us, with Christ focusing primarily upon "the heart". This series concluded with a review of the major points of emphasis on January 5, 2014.

Praise Team (Ivan Yu)

Reflecting on this past year, we want to thank and praise God for how He has worked in the Praise Team ministry and provided for us when we had needs. God was glorified each Sunday as the Praise Team led the congregation into worshipping Him in Spirit and in Truth. In addition, we saw spiritual growth in each of the members as we continued our monthly seminar study of corporate worship and witnessed the fruit of new worship leaders.

With the departure of Joyce and Joanne Tseng in June to continue their graduate and undergraduate studies in Buffalo, we prayed for the functionality of the Praise Team ministry during the summer due to a smaller team and the unavailability of members and leaders. Thankfully, God answered our prayers as He worked in the hearts of Alicia Chen, William Wang, and Emily Zhang to step up as new worship leaders in the summer despite their initial fears and uncertainty.

At the beginning of the new school year in September, God provided and blessed us with six new members who are willing to serve whole-hearted. These new members were not only well-accepted, but instantly welcomed, nurtured, disciplined and involved in this weekly ministry of worship. Our team doubled in size to 12 members, the largest group in Praise Team history, dating back to July of 2002. In December, Alicia Chen began serving as the new Praise Team Coordinator as Ivan Yu passed on the baton so he could focus on his seminary studies and other ministries in the church. This year, we learned that God is faithful and will always provide when we seek Him. May we worship and glorify God for who He is and what He has done!

Guest speakers

Starting Fall 2013, we began to invite guest speakers to preach on Sunday roughly once every month. This practice has been implemented in the Chinese service since 2011, and is now implemented in the English service as well. All guest speakers were recommended by the members of CCCGA and then approved by the Board of Deacons.

Richard Van Luik from Loudonville Christian Church (LCC), who has been involved in the English Bible study of Sunny Fellowship since 2008, spoke in September. Sunny Shih, our past Praise Team leader at CCCGA and now an Associate Pastor at Queens Taiwanese Evangelical Church, spoke in November. Rev. Bruce Johnson from Clifton Park Center Baptist Church, where our Clifton Park Fellowship meets every Friday night, spoke in early December. Rooney Belizaire, a seminary student at Mid America Baptist Theological Seminary who attends LCC, spoke at the end of December.

Education

Junior Sunday School (Caiyun Chen)

This year's junior Sunday school continued to be led/coordinated by Caiyun Chen, with a rotating teaching schedule shared with Richard Wu and Tracy Zhang. Using Regular Baptist Press' junior high Sunday school series "Living My Faith", we covered the quarterly materials of "Growing Spiritually", "The Gospel of Mark" and "The Church". Each week, the students are required to finish their homework ahead of time as a preparation for the Sunday's class. Each class on Sunday usually begins with prayer, followed by a study and discussion of related Bible passages, scripture memorization, activities in smaller groups, and finishes with prayers. There have been 8-10 students in attendance on average.

Junior high years are a time when most students start to develop a personal relationship with God, and we are thankful to see several of them have committed to follow Christ and to walk with Him in their daily lives. We continue to pray for the Spirit's work in all of them so that they will grow in the knowledge and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and live a life of righteousness in obedience to Him.

High School Sunday School (Mrs. Woodrow)

The High School/College Group was taught primarily by Mrs. Woodrow, assisted by a number of high school and college students throughout the year. The theme this year focused upon the question, "Who Does God Say That I Am?" This involved the many Scriptures that point to the personal identity of each individual who seeks to know and follow after Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

College and Career Sunday School (Huiping Zhang, Ivan Yu)

Realizing the need of our college students (primarily RPI undergraduate and graduate students), we prayed about the possibility of starting a college/career Sunday school, and piloted the program among our returning college students during summer by studying "The Purpose Driven Life" by Rick Warren. In September, with the returning of our RPI students, we started this class. Our desire is to build relationships under a small group setting, while encouraging and challenging each other for a closer relationship with God. The attendance varied from 3-8 depending on the students' church attendance, but we praise the Lord that a couple of them attended very regularly, and one of them invited Jesus into her life in December. Praise the Lord for His faithful work and the encouragement He graciously showed us. We continue to pray that God will continue to work in these students' hearts that they may grow in the Lord and develop a stronger commitment to follow Christ and to love and serve Him in God's house.

Baptism (Mr. Woodrow)

This year we conducted two separate Baptism Classes for inquirers among our Church Youth – one around Easter, the other during the Thanksgiving Season. This, as always, was a special time to share the Gospel Message and tying it in with Christ's command to baptize those who have received Him as their personal Savior and are prepared to make a commitment to Him as the Lord of their lives. Those being baptized and offering their personal testimonies this year included Iris Pu, Paul Tan and Helen Yang (on Easter Sunday); and Jessica Liu, Tiffany Liu and Lucia Sun (on Thanksgiving Sunday). We praise God for touching these young lives with the light of the Gospel and pray each will continue in the knowledge of Him who gave His all for them.

Christian Nurture

Bible Study (Huiping Zhang, Eric Ting, Ivan Yu)

This year marked the second year of the establishment of Youth/English Fellowship. We continue to meet every Friday night from 7 to 9 to sing praises and study Bible together. Knowing God through His Words is the focus of our Friday Bible Study. We also have special events from time to time, including Good Friday Special Meeting, Sharing night after the NY Summer Conference, Praise night, Game night, and Movie night.

In September, God blessed our church with another Fellowship group in Latham led by Eric and Eunice. On one hand, it's hard for us to see them leave; on the other hand, it's their submission to God's calling to serve in the Latham area. We thank God for their faithful service in the Youth/English ministry during the past one and half years.

Prayer Ministry (Chunxin Zhang, Ivan Yu)

This Group, led by "Auntie" Tracy Zhang, continues to dedicate itself to the ministry of prayer throughout the year, meeting regularly after lunch each Sunday. This year it has identified William Wang and Darren Wu who serve with Ivan and Tracy, rotating the leadership from week to week.

This Ministry also continues to recognize the 1st Sunday of each month as "Persecuted Church Sunday", with individuals volunteering to report on Christians around the globe who are regularly persecuted for their faith in Jesus Christ, either as a community, family or individually. This year, they also participated in the International Day of Prayer for the persecuted church on the first Sunday in November that involved both the Sunday school and the Worship Hour, and finished the year off with a year-end prayer meeting led by Ivan on December 31.

Activities (Chunxin Zhang)

With our energetic and creative young people, we tried to plan "activities" that would provide some fun and fellowship for them. Our goal for these activities is to encourage Christian fellowship among ourselves, reaching out to the lost world, and providing opportunities for our young people to serve God. Throughout the year, we invited the college students and praise team to skate at the HVCC Ice Arena, our juniors to volunteer at the Schenectary City Mission and Schenectady Inner City Ministry Food Pantry, all to hike and picnic at Moreau Lake State Park, to help with Mr. and Mrs. Woodrow's backyard project, to White Water Rafting in the Sacandaga River and picnic in Moreau Lake Park, and to attend Laura Story's concert at the Word of Life Bible Institute. In addition, we also had gathering after each baptism, upon

graduation and for Thanksgiving. We thank all the coworkers and parents who provided rides, food, prayers and support in every possible way to make all these happen.

In late November, we challenged the youth group to participate in the church-wide Christmas Eve service. After all, we thank God not only for their Gospel skit “Everything” that was well performed and received, but also for the faithfulness and diligence they had demonstrate in their practices. What encouraged us the most was the fact that these young people took their time to pray for themselves and the audience before and after each practice and before walking up the stage on that night! It was a blessing to witness God’s work among them, and we give God all the glory as He is the One who caused them to grow! Praise God!

Looking into year 2014, we continue to seek God and His wisdom in planning our activities, and especially want to challenge our youth to reach out to their peers and use such activities as a way to share God’s love with their friends. Please keep these young people in your prayers.

Retreat (John Burns, Huiping Zhang)

Our third retreat was held in Grace Manor from June 14th to June 16th. The guest speaker is John Burns, one of our supported missionaries in Asia. The theme is Life Education. This two-day retreat is a blessing for many youth participated.

Youth/English Pastor Search (Huiping Zhang)

We continued our search effort during the first half of the year and brought in Robert Stacey and his wife for an interview. Although the feedback was generally positive, there were quite some concerns as well. Robert eventually dropped his application.

Through many prayers and discussions, the search committee (Huiping Zhang, Pastor Hsia, Qi Tan, Xuming Wang, Eric Ting and Zewu Chen) decided to change the direction of Youth/English Pastor search. Instead of using common job posting and interview process, we would adapt the intern process and focus on leads through personal connections. The new process will be intertwined with guest speaker practice. For example, seminary students (e.g., from Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary or Nyack College) with good recommendation will be invited to speak on Sunday. If the feedback is good in general, we would interview him for an intern position. The future pastor will come from the intern process. Please continue to keep this matter in your prayer

Miscellaneous

We started our coworkers meeting this year, which included Mr. & Mrs. Woodrow, Mr. & Mrs. Zhang, Mr. & Mrs. Chen, Ivan Yu, Joyce Tseng and Sophia Hsia. It’s held twice in 2013, and will become quarterly in 2014. Joyce graduated this summer and left for Buffalo. We thank God for her faithful and passionate service in the Lord during the past five years. Ivan also graduated in December this year. He will start his Seminary study at Mid America and will be our Pastor Intern for the coming three years. May God bless him and his ministry here at CCCGA.

Mr. & Mrs. Woodrow

As in past years, there have been numerous opportunities to minister throughout the year on a personal level, both with youth and their families. This has been a special privilege for which we are grateful to share our love, hospitality and counsel.

Having undergone and fully recovered from major heart surgery early in the year, we praise God for His healing power and wish to the entire Church membership for their support and well wishes through this interesting experience. We have continued to appreciate the very relationship you have allowed us to enjoy over the past 12 years and look forward to working with you at your pleasure and for His glory until He provides the candidate of His choice.