

2016 CCCGA ENGLISH MINISTRY ANNUAL REPORT

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Praise God for another year of ministry at CCCGA! We are happy to share about what He has done in the English Ministry this past year. Just as He had been faithful to us in the past, we trust that He will continue to be faithful as our church grows and preaches the Gospel to more people.

In Christ,
Pastor Ivan Yu and Zhaolin Cheng

Worship

English Worship Service

During the weekly English worship services, leaders continue to put Christ in the center of our worship in song and preaching. Major themes of our preaching this year include church order, church membership, discipleship, missions, faith, and apologetics. To see a complete list of sermons preached this year, please go to the 2016 tab in the sermons page of the church website here: <https://goo.gl/zA2LKL>

This summer, a worship service team was formed to take care of the important roles such as presiders and ushers. We have recently seen a growth in attendance and visitors to the English worship service of up to 50 people. To accommodate for this growth, we began to seat members in the first few rows of both sides of the pews in the sanctuary instead of just one side. Please continue to pray for the growth of our church not only in numbers, but also in spiritual formation as the Gospel is preached.

Guest speakers

The following guest speakers were invited to preach during the English worship services in 2016: **Dr. Michael Haggard** (Director of Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary – Northeast Branch); **Kevin Rogers** (Associate Pastor of Open Arms Church); **Daniel Ferritto** (Pastor of One Body in Christ Baptist Church); **Dr. Wayne Cornett** (Professor of Greek and New Testament at Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary – Northeast Branch); **Pastor Philip Woodrow**.

Praise Team

This year marked the fourteenth year since the CCCGA Praise Team was officially established in the summer of 2002. The Praise Team seeks to faithfully lead the congregation in the worship of our God during the English Worship Service, Joint Service, and other church events. William Wang had been serving as the Praise Team Coordinator from June of 2015 to May of 2016 during his senior year of high school before leaving for college. We thank him for his faithful leadership. William along with Pastor Ivan introduced Dennis Pu as the new Praise Team Coordinator along with the responsibilities.

The Praise Team leadership of the 2016-2017 school year include Dennis Pu, Sophia Hsia, Louise Xie, and Cecilia Lu. These leaders rotate the responsibilities in leading and preparing for worship service each Sunday. Other members include Helen Yang, Iris Pu, Paul Tan, Dylan Tai, Zachary Chiu, and Samantha Lee.

The Praise Team formally established the Tech Team the beginning of the 2016 school semester. Duties of the Tech Team include sound operation, maintenance and troubleshooting of the sound system, and running worship slides for the Praise Team. Members of the Tech Team include Albert Chang (Tech Team Leader), Edward Lo, Keith Zhang, and Ian Lee.

Like previous years, the Praise Team continues to have monthly gatherings at the church for training. The Training Sessions for this year will focus on how to be an effective worship leader.

Slight changes were made to the format of Saturday rehearsals. Instead of having a devotional time before rehearsal, there is a time of sharing and prayer. Starting in the new year, Praise Team rehearsals will shift to morning rehearsals instead of the afternoon. In addition, Dennis will be meeting with the Praise Team leaders outside of the church setting to fellowship and obtain feedback on the team and leadership.

On 2/19, Praise Team hosted a church-wide worship night. The theme is “Built on the Cornerstone” (建造在房角石上) based on Ephesians 2:18-22. It was a reminder that the foundation of the church is Jesus Christ, the Cornerstone. For the first time, the Chinese Choir joined the Praise Team in leading bilingual worship together. We hope that this will be a new tradition we do as a church every year! Read more about the worship night here:

<http://wp.me/p4b9du-ku>

Education

Junior High Sunday School

This year’s Junior high Sunday school classes were taught by Mhinnie Tolentino, Tracy Zhang and Caiyun Chen. From January to August the classes were divided into a boys class and girls class. The boys’ class used Regular Baptist Press’s Junior High series “Spiritual Conflict” from January to May. This course develops the theme of the conflict between God and Satan and how this conflict plays out in the lives of believers as they must decide between various courses of

action. From June to August the boys' class used the series "Essential Bible Truth". This course is a survey of basic Bible doctrines, including Bible, God, man, sin, Satan, angels, salvation, church and end times. The girls' class used the series "Spiritual Conflicts" from January to August, while six girls attended Mr. Woodrow's baptism class from March to April. From September to December, the classes divided into two with boys and girls together after three sixth graders joined. They used the series "Character Building". This course uses Bible characters like Rahab, Caleb, Daniel, Lydia and Silas to help teens today know how to develop Christlikeness.

High School Sunday School

From January to May, Mrs. Woodrow taught the High School class. The focus of the time together had been, "Who does God say that I am?" For example, in Luke 1:36, the Angel Gabriel, in informing Mary of her pregnancy, said of her relative, Elizabeth, "...She, who was called barren is in her sixth month." As far as the world and even her husband, were concerned, she was barren! Yet, that was not what God said of her! She was anything but barren! So she secluded herself from them, so that what God said of her, the Word of the Lord, would sink in. It is so very easy to describe ourselves as our circumstances dictate, at any given moment. But we know that is constantly changing. This means we should daily call upon, and apply the "Word of the Lord" to our circumstances. We reminded ourselves each week that we must meditate on the Word of the Lord day and night. This is a lifelong assignment!

During the summer, the High School and Foundations college and young adult Sunday Schools were combined. We learned about various forms of idolatry including control idolatry, power, comfort and approval. These forms of idolatry often influence the way we live out our lives for Christ and can replace Christ as the center focus of what we do. The class examined the dangers of each idol and examples of what they look like in our everyday routine and ways to overcome them. At the end of each class, students would break into discussion groups to share their experiences and struggles which each form of idolatry and pray for one another. Collectively, we need God and each other to help overcome our deepest sins caused when we replace God for something else.

From September to December, the High School and Foundations Sunday School classes were combined again. This semester's class focused on Apologetics, which is the defense of the Christian faith. The topics covered were "Introduction to Apologetics", "Arguments for God's Existence", "Problem of Evil and Suffering", "God vs. Evolution", "The Reliability of Scripture (Old and New Testament)", "Resurrection of Christ", "The Historicity of Jesus", "Is Jesus Really the Only Way?", and "Ambassadors for Christ". By exposing these topics, we hope the students are able to answer unbelievers' logical and philosophical questioning on the existence of God, the authentication of Bible, and the uniqueness of Jesus. The class was provided video teaching followed by a few small group discussions. The video teaching presented most popular questioning strategies and schemes from unbelievers. For example, the class of "The Reliability of New Testament" demonstrated critics would question Christians on the motives of the Bible writers. The speaker first presented the fallacy of the questioning argument, and then provided strong arguments for why the Bible was not written on biased motives.

Foundations (College and Young Adult)

This year, the Foundations fellowship is joined by a handful of new freshmen primarily from RPI. The active number of college students attending has increased to approximately 15 students in addition to a few working professionals and the supporting leadership of the fellowship. From January to May, we wrapped up our book study on Henry Cloud and John Townsend's book *How People Grow*. We learned about the aspects of discipleship, learning to forgive and seek forgiveness from each other, and learning to be vulnerable despite today's society to maintain individualistic pride. We also read and discussed about how to deal with each others' sins while remaining a supportive brother or sister in Christ and how to direct one another towards God. In our learning, we met a couple times as a fellowship outside the church to commune and get to know each other. The on-campus fellowships such as CRU (which many of the students are part of) has also been a key factor to fostering strong bonds between the college students that attend Foundations. As discussed earlier, during second half of the year, the Sunday School class was combined with the High School to study the topic of Apologetics.

Christian Nurture

Mustard Seed Fellowship (Youth)

By the grace of God, the Mustard Seed Youth Fellowship continues with an average attendance of about 20 high school (HS) and junior high school (JHS) students every week. God has given us more coworkers this year, and we are thankful for the privilege of partaking in this ministry with Zhaolin Cheng, Dennis Pu, David Shieh, Ivan Yu, Tracy and Huiping Zhang. We thank God also for Emily Zhang and Alicia Chen who serve as small group leaders whenever they are back from college.

We meet from 7:00 to 9:00pm on Fridays at church in a slightly changed format this year: starting with icebreaker games, followed by worship time, both led by our HS students, and devoting the next hour or so on Bible study or topical discussion. We are thankful for the newly remodeled youth room, the new piano and TV set that allow us to worship in a more reverent manner. With all the faithful coworkers God has called into this ministry, we were able to implement five small groups: HS boys, HS girls, JHS girls and 2 group of JHS boys. Our desire is to develop stronger relationships between the leaders and student and among the students.

We finished studying the Corinthians that were started in year 2015, and studied the book of Esther in the summer. In between Bible studies, we watched three video series with focused on "Surrender" (Francis Chan), "I Am: Getting to Know God" (David Nasser) and "Awaken" (D. A. Horton). Our students' response to the first Old Testament book study was very positive, and many found the topical video series helpful to address specific problems they face. Our prayer is that through continued study of the Scripture, we will learn who God is and what He has done, and through topical discussions, we will together learn how to trust in the Lord and experience His grace, kindness, power and help in our lives.

In addition to these more formal Bible study and topical discussion nights, we also spent some special ones watching movies (“War room”, “Woodlawn” and “God’s Not Dead 2”), playing board games, celebrating Chinese New Year and Thanksgiving together and packing shoe boxes for Christmas Operation Child.

Please pray for us as leaders that we will have the heart of Christ in loving and leading these students, and the student will have a desire for the things of the Lord, and together our hearts and minds will be transformed by Christ.

2016 CCCGA Retreat

From May 20 to 22, CCCGA had its sixth annual retreat held at Grace Manor Retreat Center. The guest speaker for the English Ministry was Pastor Enoch Liao, from Boston Chinese Evangelical Church. Our retreat theme was called “Times of Refreshing”. Pastor Enoch preached four messages on how God will bring refreshment into our busy lives that we can see His wisdom, goodness, and our joyful need to follow Him. Through these messages, we learned about the brevity of our lives, the difference between boastful and godly planning, the importance of keeping the Sabbath, and the immutability of God. These messages may be streamed or downloaded here: <http://wp.me/p4b9du-nz>

Missions

2016 Mexico Short-Terms Missions Trip

For the first time, CCCGA sent a team on a short-term missions trip to Tijuana, Mexico from July 17-24 with YUGO Ministries. This team consisted of Pastor Ivan Yu, Cecilia Lu, Louise Xie, Keith Zhang, and Mhinnie Tolentino. During this week, they served at a local Mexican church by organizing a VBS, feeding program, and an evangelical worship service to present the Gospel message. Prior to the trip, six training sessions were held the first half of the year to prepare. Updates about this missions trip may be read here: <https://goo.gl/4R07FB>

CCCGA decided that we will participate in this short-term missions trip to Mexico once every two summers.

2016 Evangelical Meeting

During the first weekend of November, CCCGA had an evangelical meeting to present the Gospel message to the nonbelieving friends and family we invite and renew the hearts and commitment of believers to live for Jesus Christ as His disciples. Dr. Wayne Cornett, professor of Greek and New Testament of the Northeast Branch of Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary was the guest speaker for the English congregation. Through his preaching, two visitors accepted Jesus as their personal Savior that weekend. Dr. Cornett’s messages may be streamed or downloaded here: <http://wp.me/p4b9du-qc>

Community Service Ministry

The Community Service Ministry is intended to provide youth with an opportunity to serve the community and put faith into action. In the beginning of 2016, Tong Wang and Yuhong Tian, began to lead this ministry and organized five community services.

2016 Service Projects:

- 2/17 Volunteering at City Mission of Schenectady – Organizing clothing and shoe donation
- 3/26 Church Cleaning
- 5/14 Decorating for Mr. and Mrs. Woodrow Retirement Celebration
- 6/25 Weeding at Patroon Land Farm.
- 8/27 Harvesting Tomatoes at Patroon Land Farm.

In addition, Youth kids designed and decorated a bulletin board that showed pictures and thank-you letters from our previous community services. This bulletin board is on the hallway of our church's basement.

If you have any suggestion for community service projects in 2017, please feel free to send an email to tong_wang98@msn.com or tianyhle@gmail.com. In addition, please pray for us that more students, especially high school students, will be able to attend the community service in 2017.

Miscellaneous

Congratulations to Krystal Li who was baptized this past Easter and Joanna Chen, Tina Pan, Joshua Wu, and Ethan Zhang who were baptized this past Thanksgiving!

Congratulations to Angie Liu and William Wang for graduating high school this past year and finishing their first semester of college!

We thank Phil and Blossom Woodrow after 15 years of faithful service as a pastor and a Sunday School teacher in the English Ministry. On 5/15, we had a farewell event for them. It was a great time of sharing and remembering all of the good memories God had given us. May God continue to bless them! A thank you video made for them may be viewed here:

<https://goo.gl/bQ9DKn>

On June 1, 2016, Ivan Yu started full-time as the English Pastor after serving as an intern since January 2014.

Zhaolin Cheng completed his first year serving as the English deacon.