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Life at St Andrew's

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Vicar's Report

Few things are viewed in more contrasting ways than the church.

On the one hand, there's the way people today think of the church. It has a mixed record throughout history: a lot that's good, but also a lot that's bad. People on the outside of church often see it as unimpressive, irrelevant, and antiquated. People on the inside can see church as a hard slog: a lot of work with little reward. At times, churches can be places of pain, even for mature Christians.

On the other hand, there's the way the Bible sees church. Jesus loves his church like his bride, giving up his life for her (Eph. 5:25). Church is a spiritual house, a chosen people, God's special possession, and recipients of God's mercy (1 Peter 2:5, 9-10). Church is the means through which Jesus reaches the world with his gospel (Matt. 28:19-20). Jesus builds his church, and not even death will overcome it (Matt 16: 18). You cannot overestimate the importance of the church in God's plan for humanity.

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Just as we've been welcomed by God in Christ, let's welcome one another

What does this mean for us, God's community of ordinary people gathered at St Andrew's? It means that we are more loved by God than we can imagine. We're close to his heart and always on his mind. Our purpose is incredible. For over 115 years, we've been a community used by God to proclaim Christ to our city and to build one another up in faith. As articulated by our vision statement, "We are a community devoted to Jesus Christ, who share his gospel, calling on people to follow him, and seek the flourishing of Hong Kong."

What has this looked like over the past year?

Firstly, there's been our ministry of connecting. We've sought to connect people to Christ and connect people to community. Our church is well located. We get lots of people visiting us on Sundays. It's always such a delight to meet newcomers and to hear their stories, whether they're exploring faith or looking for a new church home. Over the past year, we've sought to improve the way we connect with people by building a new, more newcomer-friendly website. We've resumed monthly morning teas on Sundays, held regular newcomer lunches, updated our Partnership course, and held

many events to help build that sense of community that we missed during COVID.

Secondly, there's the ministry of building people in Christ. God's people are built up through God's word. We aim to teach the Bible deeply at our Sunday services. We encourage our people to attend Growth Groups, where they can learn from the Bible, be supported in faith, receive practical care, and develop deep spiritual friendships. These groups are the backbone of our church. Supporting group leaders and multiplying groups is a significant ministry commitment. We also encourage our people to use their gifts through serving either in a church ministry, or with one of our church mission partners around the city. We believe that serving not only shares the love of Jesus with others but also builds faith and maturity in ourselves. During the year, we conducted a survey to get to know you better. Those attending a Growth Group are twice as likely to be experiencing spiritual growth, and those involved in volunteering are five times more likely to be experiencing spiritual growth.

Over the coming year, we want to encourage our people to make the following commitments:

First, everybody as a welcomer. Just as we've been welcomed by God in Christ, let's welcome one another. That means being active in inviting people to church, being intentional in getting to know others, and exercising hospitality. We each have a role to play in growing depth and intimacy in our community.

Second, embrace change. The gospel is a summons to respond to Jesus. This means a life of repentance, turning away from our idols, and seeking to become transformed in the likeness of our Saviour. God has given church as the context for this change. We need one another.

Third, commit to gospel faithfulness. Use what God has given you for his purposes as you explore how the gospel should shape every part of your life. We want to be a community that spurs one another onward in good works.

Thank you for the part that you're playing in our community. It's my prayer that you'll be encouraged by reading this report, be steadfast in praying for our church, and be committed to growing in Christ in fellowship with his people.

Revd. Alex McCoy

Vicar



Discipleship

As Christians we are invited both to see how wonderful Jesus is, and to have our lives transformed so that we become more like him. Growing in our knowledge and love of God is the ongoing journey of Christian discipleship and maturity. In the last year, St. Andrew's has continued to organise groups, programs, and events that foster Christ-centred relationships and spiritual growth across our church family.

Growth Groups

Although Sunday services play a central role in our weekly rhythm of worship, it is not easy to build deep friendships if we only see others in a large gathering. Our collection of Growth Group gatherings (including Wednesday nights, Home4U, Oxygen, and groups from men and women) provides church members the opportunity to connect with other Christians in a smaller setting. Through regularly studying the Bible and praying together, Growth Groups are great places to form deeper friendships and to share pastoral care for one another. Groups also build community through the many informal social activities that groups organise for themselves or in conjunction with other groups, as well as by volunteering together at church and with our local mission partners.

Over 300 church members make up the more than 40 groups that meet, mostly each week, on-site at St. Andrew's or hosted in church members' homes. Throughout the year, we have a steady influx of new members interested in joining groups as they come through the monthly Partnership course. This leaves us with the happy challenge of needing to increase capacity by identifying and training up new group leaders. We look forward to growing this ministry in the year ahead and hope every member of St. Andrew's will consider joining a group!

Oxygen

Oxygen, our young adults and university student's ministry, consists of 8 groups that meet on Thursday evenings. Like all the other groups, we focus on reading the Bible and building community. This year, we have been studying the Gospel of Mark, working through Jesus' life, ministry, and his death and resurrection. We also run monthly leaders' training and occasional seminars on different topics in life.

We also encourage our members to spend informal time together. Through group socials, days away, and an inter-church weekend away, we get to know one another better as we walk together in our Christian journey.

We are thankful for the spiritual growth God has given us throughout the last year, and we pray that God will continue to fill us with the fruit of righteousness through Christ.

Home4U

Home4U is our community of migrant domestic workers - a safe and welcoming space - a home away from home. They meet every Sunday afternoon to enjoy friendship, support, a meal, and Bible study. Alongside the regular weekly activities, Home4U also runs skills training, monthly birthday celebrations, great events and outings throughout the year. Above all, they seek to encourage one another to grow in their relationship with Jesus and one another. In the past year, many newcomers to Hong Kong have joined. They highly appreciate and value having Home4U as a family; it is of great support to them physically, mentally, and spiritually. They are also grateful for the skills training like dumpling making and baking. The Christmas Bring a Friend Day was a particular highlight, with a feast, fun games, and great laughs.

Women's Groups and Committee

Throughout the year, six Growth Groups have been meeting, welcoming new members, building friendships, and enjoying fellowship together. A seventh

group will hopefully be launched this year. As many grew in faith and compassion for others, there was a growing desire to serve as volunteers.

Meanwhile, the Women's Committee organised several events to encourage and support the women at St Andrew's: the EQUIP Conference in June, with a study on Haggai (plus lunch together); a delicious afternoon tea in September (with a wonderful testimony from Sue Lam); and an outreach event in December: the Winter Wreath Workshop. Tickets sold quickly, attendees enjoyed their time together, and all hope to see similar events in the future.

Men's Groups

The Thursday night men's group continues to thrive. Having welcomed several new faces over the last year, over 40 men now meet each week for fellowship as they study the Bible and pray together (and we must not forget the pizza!). In addition to their weekly gathering, there are events dotted across the year, from hikes to men's breakfasts, that give opportunities to invest in relationships with one another. The group is always happy to welcome new members.

Discipleship

Courses and Programs

Throughout the year, we aim to run various courses and programs to help church members to grow in Christian maturity, wherever they currently are on their journey of faith. For those who are looking to get more involved at St. Andrew's, our Partnership course continues to be the best place to start. Over the last year, about 100 people attended Partnership, most of whom then joined a Growth Group. As well

as the Ministry Apprentice Program (MAP) that we run in partnership with several other English-speaking churches, we were able to run short courses and training events such as Growing in Prayer and Introduction to the Bible. We hope to expand on the opportunities to explore different discipleship topics in the year ahead.

Rev. Leslie Siu

Associate Minister (Discipleship)





Outreach

The missionary Jim Elliot inspires us by saying, "Missionaries are very human folks, just doing what they are asked. Simply a bunch of nobodies trying to exalt Somebody."

At St Andrew's, we are an ordinary group of Christians, utterly dependent on God, seeking to exalt the name of Jesus Christ in Hong Kong. This means sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with the city as we seek its good. We do this in a many ways:

Christianity Explored. Our main evangelism course, Christianity Explored, has brought incredible joy. We've run it three times a year, gathering in person and studying the Gospel of Mark with over one hundred people. It's an excellent gateway for members to invite people to explore the gospel. Through the course, we have seen people come to faith, declare their faith through baptism, and join our groups. We're grateful for the dedicated leaders we've trained to carry out this essential work of evangelism and have trained four new leaders this year.

Honest Evangelism. We have been training our members to do evangelism through our Honest Evangelism course in August. This course helped us to be emboldened in sharing the gospel faithfully and clearly. Partnerships. We recognise our limitations as a church in serving the city. So, we ac-

tively support and partner with twelve local and international Christian organisations and four missionary families to share the love and message of Jesus. Our members have been inspirational in giving their time, resources and prayers to support and volunteer.

Community Engagement. We extend our care to Diocesan Girls School and Diocesan Girls Junior School, where we have the opportunity of leading Christian worship at assemblies each Thursday and Friday morning and leading retreats and parent groups. We also provide pastoral care and support for our refugee and asylum seeker members.

Mission Sunday. A big highlight was our annual Mission Sunday in January, when the International Director of CMS Australia, Rev. Peter Sholl, helped us think through Jesus' great commission from the Gospel of Matthew, while our local mission partners visited and shared about their work.

We encourage all members of St Andrew's to be involved in the work of sharing the gospel of Jesus, as we scatter throughout the city and using what God has given each of us to point people to him.

Revd. Darren Pollock

Associate Minister (Evangelism & Mission)



Children's Ministry

In Children's Ministry, we often don't see the fruit of our labour. But at times, we see glimpses into what God is doing and how he is always at work in the lives of even children as young as two years old!

I was visiting a mom and her two-year-old at their home. They attended our mid-week Friendship Garden Playgroup, and the two-year-old had experienced a life-threatening cardiac arrest. After yet another scare and returning home from the hospital with the boy feeling miserable, fussy, and unwell, his mom, not yet a believer, shared this story with me. The son asked his mother to play songs about Jesus for him. He had learned about Jesus coming to our playgroup. She said that he calmed down as soon as he heard the songs about Jesus.

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It's such a privilege to share the love of Jesus to our children

In Children's ministry, we partner with parents to teach children about God's ways, nature, and character. Children are concrete learners. We model to them that God is a relational God who wants to have a relationship with them by building relationships with them ourselves. Children

also sniff out very quickly if you are faking your relationship with God. Therefore, we work at being authentic Christians, not pretending to know all the answers and be perfect, but sympathising with the children and acknowledging that sometimes life is hard and doesn't always make sense.

During a lesson teaching our older class about prayer, one ten-year-old boy full of emotion said: "I am angry with God". I had a pretty good idea of why he was angry with God. I replied saying, "Yes, I understand. It's okay to be angry with God. God can take your anger". I saw all his defences come down. We want children to feel safe and honest about their challenges, questions, and doubts about life and faith. When we are honest and faithfully point our children to him, God uses us and grows us in the knowledge of him.

It's such a privilege to share the love of Jesus to our children and see how God grows faith in them. My sincere thanks to all of our volunteers and teachers in assisting in this ministry.

Carol Strydom

Director of Children's Ministry



Youth Ministry

At ST.AND Youth, our mission is to provide a safe and enjoyable space for secondary school-aged youth to explore the gospel, grapple with important life questions, and build lasting friendships. For some of these young people, church participation is their primary Christian input, and for others, we have the privilege of supporting and building upon all that they are learning from their Christian family at home.

Following the 2022/2023 academic year, ST.AND Youth continued to meet regularly on Friday nights as well as Sunday mornings. As well as various social events, such as Lasertag, we also partnered with the youth team at Shatin Church for a joint Summer Retreat in Mui Wo. These opportunities outside of the regular weekly meetings are invaluable times to share fellowship and learning together.

The 2023/2024 academic year has been a year of transition for this area of St. Andrew's ministry. Ian Millar, who has been Youth Director at St. Andrew's for 5 years, stepped down from his role at the end of 2023 to return to Australia and pursue further studies. We are so thankful for his time here and the work he has done in building relationships with our young people and helping them to grow and mature as Christian disciples. While we wait for the appointment and arrival of a new Youth Director, we have

sadly not been able to resource the continuing of our Friday night gathering. However, ST.AND Youth continues to run a full programme on Sunday mornings with a wonderful team of volunteers who bring all their personality and gifts to serve the young people. We are extremely thankful for our dedicated leaders who give up their time week by week to be a part of this ministry.

A typical Sunday includes fun games and activities, a talk from the Bible, and lively discussion groups. There's also food, thanks to a generous team who bring yummy provisions each week! Since Ian's departure, we have been using a mixture of video teaching resources, as well as having teaching and testimony from volunteers from the ST.AND youth team.

We are encouraged by the many conversations we have with our young people each week, exploring questions of faith, and learning from the Scriptures. We're pleased to see God at work in their lives as they hear about Jesus and learn to follow him. Please keep praying that God, by his Spirit, would bear fruit in the lives of these young people. We long for each of them to commit to following Christ, enjoying his goodness and grace.

Youth Team

Elderly Ministry

"I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow" (1 Cor. 3:6). This ministry is six years old now, and despite the pandemic years, it has grown five times in size. Praise the Lord!

Silverzone

We have forty-five regular attendees at our Silverzone ministry, so we moved to a bigger venue last February to accommodate everyone. We gather every Sunday for worship and Bible teaching. There are two Bible study groups consisting of sixteen people that either meet online via Zoom or in person. I am grateful to see that our elderly members, despite their age, are eager to learn, listen to daily audio devotionals, and build a caring and praying community. They put their faith in action by serving others, such as making Christmas decorations and Easter crosses for our visitation team to share the gospel at the Lok Man elderly care home.

We held two Cantonese Alpha courses in the past year, where eighteen people attended. We were blessed to see seven of them declare their faith through baptism. We're so thankful for the care and enthusiasm of our great team of volunteers.

Elderly Home Visits

In partnership with the SKH Lok Man

Integrated Service Centre, we continue to serve the deprived single-living elderly in To Kwa Wan. We are grateful to have gained sixteen new volunteers this year, and now we have a team of thirty-six members.

Over the years, we have had the privilege of visiting these elderly people, and we are pleased to share that most of them have been receptive to our efforts to share the gospel with them and offer prayers. Few of them have even attended the Cantonese Alpha course and Silverzone. Last July, we invited over fifty people from the Lok Man Centre to attend an outreach event at our church. The event received a positive response, and the attendees were grateful for the kindness and hospitality shown by our team.

As Acts 20 says, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." All volunteers who serve in the Elderly Ministry can attest to this truth. The greatest reward of our service is seeing the weak find hope and joy in Jesus. We would like to express our gratitude to all our volunteers for their unwavering commitment and passion to serve.

Juliana Wong

Pastoral Worker (Elderly Ministry)



Volunteering

As I reflect on the year, I look back most fondly on the times when we as a church community mingle and chat over mince pies or hot cross buns after our Christmas and Easter services. The musicians have treated us to beautiful music, and the gospel has been faithfully proclaimed. We enjoy fellowship with one another, and God is building his church.

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may God bless our efforts and bring many people to know him

Our Sunday services and special events do not happen without the hard work of our volunteers. We are so thankful for the 150 volunteers who welcome and serve refreshments, plus many more who bake, serve the elderly, and teach our youth and children Sunday by Sunday. God has given us each different gifts to serve him and his people.

As a church, we partner with a number of Christian organisations around our city. Over the last year, we have donated nearly \$30,000 worth of vouchers to people in need through our mission partners including Christian Action Centre for Refugees. Some Growth Groups regularly volunteer at the Home of Loving

Faithfulness to serve children and adults with special needs. Another group took part in the CEDAR Fund barefoot walk, raising nearly \$60,000 in support of their anti-human trafficking efforts.

Every week, individual volunteers from St Andrew's offer homework help to children from disadvantaged families at St Barnabas Society and Home. Every month, a team from St Andrew's helps run a Saturday kids club at Inner City Ministries and tell Nepalese children about Jesus. Other teams partner with Kun Sun Association, visiting people in prison and sharing the gospel with them.

After Mission Sunday earlier this year, a team from St Andrew's delivered 120 bags of rice, shared the gospel and prayed with street cleaners. New volunteers have also joined the monthly outreach to elderly people who live alone in To Kwa Wan. In the coming year, we hope there will be more opportunities to share the love of Jesus in both word and deed. As we use our time and energy, skills and resources to serve, may God bless our efforts and bring many people to know him.

Claudia Chan

Ministry Volunteers Coordinator

Creative Ministry

We believe in a creative God. At St. Andrew's, we want to worship him using the gifts and talents he has given us. Each member of our church is called to proclaim Jesus. Through our Creative Ministry, we strive to uplift, encourage, and strengthen our community to point people to Jesus.

Our Creative Team is responsible for organising all volunteers involved in Sunday services. Every week, we discover new and exciting opportunities to share the gospel. We take on visible roles such as leading musical worship, reading the Bible, and guiding corporate prayer. But there's also much that goes on behind the scenes, including photography, multimedia operation, music training, videography, and digital communications. Our team works closely with both staff and volunteers to adorn the gospel in beautiful and impactful ways.

We've enjoyed worshipping together each week, and throughout the year, we held special services, including contemplative services for Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, which brought our entire church community together to prepare our hearts and reflect on the work of our Saviour. We also celebrated the hope that the risen King brings at our Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday services. Additionally, we

celebrated the joy of the new-born King at our Carols By Candlelight Service and Christmas Eve Services.

During these services, we offered a mix of classical and contemporary music, with our musical ensemble and the St. Andrew's choir making a few appearances. At our all-age family services, we saw our children, youth, and Home4U ladies help to lead worship. It's been wonderful to see God's people come together to worship and glorify him!

We feel blessed to have the opportunity to worship our God creatively and are so grateful for over 150 regular volunteers who regularly serve our church each week. We couldn't do it without you! We're always looking for new volunteers and warmly welcome anyone interested in joining our team!

June Lee

Creative Ministries Associate Director

Leanne McCaughtry

Media & Communications Manager

Putonghua Ministry

The Putonghua congregation has been part of St Andrew's for over 20 years. We are very similar in culture and feel, but we just speak in a different language. Over the last year, we have seen a small increase in congregation attendance, reaching around 130 every Sunday.

Our Cantonese outreach ministry continues to attract many unbelievers, averaging around 150 people every Sunday afternoon. We give thanks to God for the many volunteers who help make this resource-intensive ministry possible. Over the last year, we have seen around ten people come to faith through this ministry.

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are encouraged to see more people coming to Sunday services regularly and getting involved in Growth Groups

We have run the Putonghua Partnership course five times this year and are encouraged to see more people coming to Sunday services regularly and getting involved in Growth Groups. We give thanks that we have been able to start a mid-week

lunchtime Bible study in Central and one every Thursday at church.

We really want to invest in the children's ministry over the next year and pray that God can bring us a few servant-hearted people to minister to our youngest congregation members. Please continue to pray that we will have a desire to share the gospel with Putonghua speakers living in Hong Kong.

Ryan Muir

Director of Putonghua Ministry

Shatin Church

"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now..." (Phil 1:3-5).

In his book *Bad Religion*, Ross Douthat wrote, "In the 1950s, only 12 percent of teenagers identified with the statement, 'I am an important person.' A half century later, it was 80 percent." Obsessed with themselves, many people in the world live for self-pleasure, self-advancement, and self-fulfilment. Meanwhile, they have become more competitive, obsessive, and anxious. In trying to find themselves, they have become lost.

By contrast, our aim at Shatin Church is to nurture gospel partners. Gospel partners give themselves sacrificially in sharing the gospel and helping others to deepen their roots of faith. In losing their lives for the sake of the gospel, they find the life they have longed for.

I am thankful for the gospel partners God has sent to Shatin Anglican Church this year. Some have recently joined the church with their sleeves rolled up, ready to serve. Every time I remember them, I am filled with joy.

I am grateful for those who are slowly

becoming gospel partners. There are many who are joining our outreach ministries, inviting their friends or family to church for the first time, and prioritising small groups and the church. It's such a joy to see them grow.

God has called some to faith this year too. A handful of local secondary school students have enjoyed the church and are bringing their friends. There are those who are attending *Christianity Explored*, sincerely investigating the faith. We have just baptised seven people, and God willing, will baptise more this summer.

The church is slowly growing numerically too. There are lots of new people. 43% of our Sunday attendees have joined the church since the pandemic, that is to say, in the last three years. 25% have joined this year! While lots of people have emigrated away from Hong Kong, it's great to welcome new people.

Numerical growth, however, isn't the goal. Pray for us to be a church filled with gospel partners, who lose their life for the sake of the gospel to find it.

Revd. Heewoo Han

Minister-in-Charge, Shatin Anglican Church

Resurrection Church

Resurrection Church, a daughter church of St Andrews planted over 36 years ago, is committed to glorifying God by proclaiming the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in Sai Kung District and worshipping him with the whole of our lives. We meet on Sunday mornings at 10am in Hong Kong Academy, an international school in Sai Kung town. We are a small congregation who believes in the importance of a local church community for building real fellowship, growing in deep discipleship, and working together in effective mission.

Over the last year, we have seen God working among us in a number of ways. Our Kidzone has been growing in number, and our children have been growing in faith. Many church members have stepped into leadership in established ministries this year, and some have even developed new ministries to spread the gospel in our area. We even made a move from a smaller meeting space to a larger one within the school where we meet, because we were too often becoming overcrowded. Please join us in praying for God to do even more in us and through us.

One of the more notable aspects of 2023 was that, through the generosity of his people, God enabled us to purchase a small property to use as a church centre and

office in the middle of Sai Kung town. We know that God was with us because whole process - from presenting the idea to the congregation, to meeting our fundraising goal, to opening the space for use - all went much more quickly and easily than anyone could have anticipated. For the first time in our history, we now have a permanent space to use as a hub for evangelism and discipleship. We are holding Bible studies, evangelistic courses, playgroups for parents and toddlers, outreach meals for retirees, prayer meetings and small services, and all sorts of other small group gatherings there. Our prayer is that this God-given resource will enable many more people to come to know, love, and live for Jesus.

For these reasons, and many more besides, I believe our congregation is feeling joyful, united, and hopeful for the year ahead. We look forward to seeing God "do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us. To him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen" (Ephesians 3:20-21).

Please pray for us and, if possible, please join us!

Rev. Lucas Durant

Minister-in-Charge, Resurrection Church



**We are a community
devoted to Jesus
Christ, who share his
gospel, calling on
people to follow him,
& seek the flourishing
of Hong Kong.**



St Andrew's
KOWLOON