



# Good News for the Pews

November 1, 2017

A Quarterly for the English-Speaking Worshipping Community

Issue No. 13

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life. Can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?<sup>(b)</sup> <sup>33</sup> But strive first for the kingdom of God<sup>(c)</sup> and his<sup>(d)</sup> righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Matthew 6: 25, 27, 33)



In my sermon on September 10<sup>th</sup>, I used this quote from Jesus (where he also refers to the lilies of the field) to remind us that as Christians, we are invited to reorient ourselves with God at the center. In this passage, Jesus is not saying we should keep our heads in the sand and not be concerned about all that is happening in the world, but that when we reorient ourselves toward God (seeking first the kingdom/realm of God) we are more able to respond to the needs of the world from a centered state – which can actually lead us to find more creative solutions.

I am reminded again of the quote that Dave Miller found that I used in the sermon on both September 3<sup>rd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. It comes from Vivek Murphy, the U.S. Surgeon General from 2014 until Spring 2017

*I have long believed that there are fundamentally two forces or emotions that drive our decisions – love or fear. Love has its many manifestations: compassion, gratitude, kindness and joy. Fear often manifests in cynicism, anger, jealousy and anxiety. I worry that many of our communities are being driven by fear. It is partly because of the things we read about in the news that give us pause about the state of the world. And it's also because we haven't really prioritized cultivating positive emotions that emulate from love.*

(continued on page 2)

**From Pastor Kimberly** (continued from page 1)

While the passage from Matthew 6 has many different applications, based on the message of Jesus' ministry as a whole, I believe we can say with some confidence that one of the applications of this message is that Jesus invites us to respond from a place of love rather than fear – seeking to reorient ourselves toward God, asking what God may be doing in the big picture and how God calls us to respond.

As you know, our English worshipping community is entering a period of study and reflection through our participation in the process of Adaptive Leadership being offered by our Presbytery. I will not go into detail here, since I assume the specifics of that program have already been shared by the Adaptive Leadership team (and I am writing this in September, at the start of my sabbatical). The Adaptive Adventure experience, supported by our Presbytery through the organization PneuMatrix, is designed to give churches tools that can help them to respond to the changes that are happening in Christendom. Every church in America is facing decline in membership, changes in worship style, and seeking to figure out how to respond to a larger culture that does not always place much value in joining a church, where the word 'Christianity' is often seen in a negative rather than positive light.

We could hear such statistics and be tempted to respond in fear or anxiety or worry and seek then to think another 'technical fix' – such as a new program, will offer the solution, and then we will be able to get back to the way it 'used to be'. But the research behind Adaptive Change tells us that those responses can be very limited and may not take us toward our goal. In order to be relevant to society today, we must first study the changes that have been happening, and then learn how to adapt and provide creative solutions.

And to get to those creative solutions, we need to be responding from a God-centered place of creativity rather than fear. When we step back and look at the BIG picture, we can ask, from a spiritual place: 'What is God up to? What is the larger plan that God is bringing about? What new birth may come from these shifts and changes?'



(continued on page 3)

*From Pastor Kimberly (continued from page 2)*

When we look at scripture, we see that new birth always follows a time of chaos. The Israelites wandering in the desert for 40 years led to a whole new era in the Promised Land. After the death and resurrection of Christ, the early church experienced a whole new era at Pentecost with the coming of the Holy Spirit and the start of a new phase of religious life. In the middle of these shifts, things may have seemed bleak for the people of God, but once they entered into a new reality, there was great promise and new possibilities.

The good news about the process of Adaptive Leadership is that the point is not to throw out all that is old and start over, but the starting point of each adventure is to learn and affirm the DNA of each church – what is good and life-giving and does not need to change – so that any new ideas can be built on that foundation.

This is part of what the Adaptive Leadership team will be doing in the first three to six months of their time together. They will study and learn the concepts of Adaptive Leadership and they will seek to affirm what is in the ‘DNA’ of our church – what is essential and good and life giving that will not change – no matter what other adaptations may come in the future.

To do that, they will also be praying together, which is what we are all invited to do. In my sermon on September 10<sup>th</sup> I also pointed out the four panels that are on the Cameron House stage that are part of the foundation (part of our DNA if you will) of both PCC and Cameron House – the four fold way of Prayer, Study, Work and Worship. You notice, they are listed in THAT order –with prayer and study FIRST- and then work. I think as a society we are so action oriented, we often want to skip to the third panel and forget the other three. We certainly don’t often do them in this order. The invitation toward prayer is more than just a precursory prayer before a meeting or a meal, it is an invitation to really seek God first, to listen to God rather than simply talk to God. If we skip that step, we are in danger of doing what *we* want to do rather than what God wants us to do.

So invite us – all of us – to be in prayer.

To reorient ourselves to God in our personal lives, our response to the news and the needs of the world – and to be in prayer with the Adaptive Adventure team – to seek to listen and learn where God is leading us.



*(continued on page 4)*

**From Pastor Kimberly** *(continued from page 3)*

I leave you with this quote from Wayne Muller about finding Sabbath moments – which help us orient ourselves with God at the center.

*Sabbath is more than the absence of work; it is not just a day off, when we catch up on television or errands. It is the presence of something that arises when we consecrate a period of time to listen to what is most deeply beautiful, nourishing, or true. It is time consecrated with our attention, our mindfulness, honoring those quiet forces of grace and spirit that sustain and heal us. In these times we remember what a gift it is to be alive, and we discover again, throughout the day, that God meets us in ordinary and extraordinary ways.” Sabbath by Wayne Muller*

May we all enjoy Sabbath moments where we seek first the kingdom of God in this season.

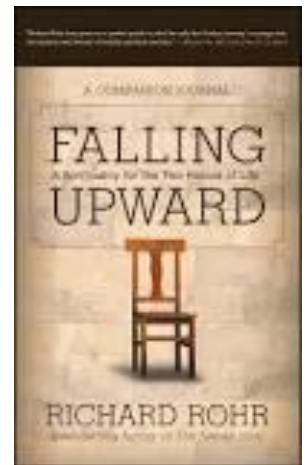
*Pastor Kimberly*



**Thoughts on Women's Fellowship Retreat, Sept. 30, 2017 by Carole Chinn-Morales**

We were twenty five women, in our thirties to our eighties, working women, retired women, all active women, with diverse commitments, family situations, experience in the church, reflecting on our faith now and on our faith journeys up to now. We were led by friend and pastor Cal Chinn, who encouraged us to honor a safe respectful space, and no matter what came up, to be consciously holding one another in trust and love.

In this context, Richard Rohr's thoughts about spirituality in his book, Falling Upward, provided jumping off points. How would you describe the building blocks in the first part of your life? How would you describe faith now? How does Rohr talk about the necessary parts of the faith journey? Who is the "true self" for Rohr, and for ourselves? This was where we started.



What unfolded became an opportunity for us to raise questions about faith, reveal concerns, and honestly share burdens that have been heavy in our hearts. The miracle for me was not so much leaving with complete answers, as much as the experience of opening our hearts in the presence of strong, caring, empathetic women who also experience the difficulties of trying to live a life of faith in all our different ways. The sense of humbling, trusting intimacy that we shared was the gift in our midst.

In planning for the retreat, Ruth, Mary and I made basic decisions to make the retreat happen. But it was everyone's full participation and the Holy Spirit in each of us that connected us, challenged us, comforted us, and made the retreat come alive. I am grateful for the time we spent together and continue to be amazed at how God works in our lives. The Christ candle started our retreat, sustained us through the retreat, ended the retreat, and hopefully, will go with us the rest of our way. Looking forward to next year!

By the time this article comes out, it will have been a couple months since the conclusion of the CCU summer sports season. This summer has been particularly hectic and really challenged everyone who was involved from the coaches and spiritual leaders all the way to the fans and the church community that supported each and every one of the teams throughout the summer. There were last minute schedule changes, new players joining last minute, and logistics involving the teams and sponsors. Through it all, everyone kept their composure and didn't crack under the pressure. Everyone was invested and embodied the CCU theme of HEART for the summer.



I believe that it was truly a blessing that this was the theme for the summer considering everything that were going on within CCU as well as for our own church. For CCU, there were a lot of changes going on with the schedules after one of the gyms backed out on the league. From the CCU Committee, they worked their tails off to make sure that they rescheduled all the games before the season started. For our teams, there were plenty of new faces and changes to the rosters from last minute additions as well as trying to find coaches and spiritual leaders to help lead our teams for the summer. To top it off, our church, PCC went through some unfortunate times/transitions. But our community banded together and continued to invest in CCU, the teams, and players involved over the summer.



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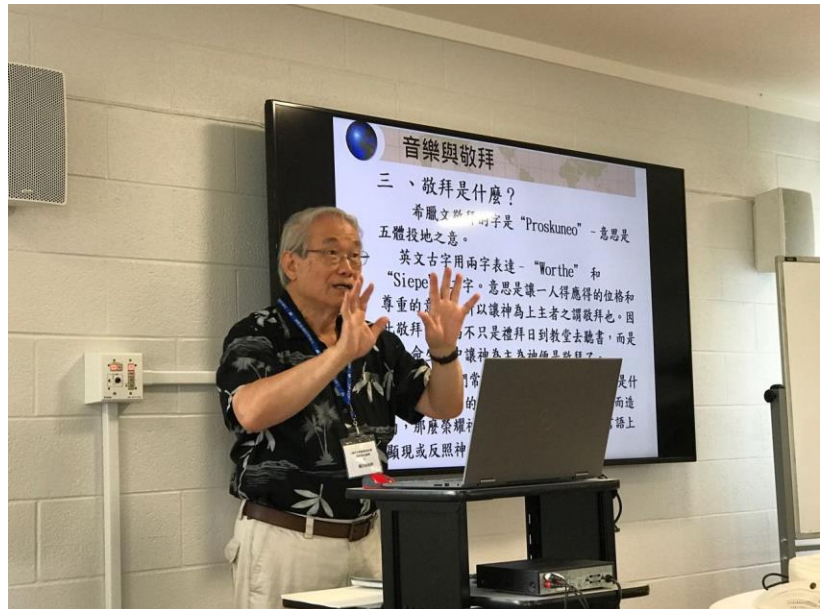
With the collection of all of these things happening, it could have been easier to say that we should take a break this summer and take care of all of the other things that were going on, but everyone persisted. 1 Samuel 16:7 says, “But the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.’” Reading that passage in retrospect of the summer and everything that happened, it’s truly amazing to witness and to have lived the Word. Our church, the CCU Committee, even the coaches and spiritual leaders could have at any point left because the odds seemed to be stacked against them. But each and every person, from the organizers to the fans, all invested themselves and had a hand in everything that transpired this summer.

Honestly, this article is not a personal reflection on the CCU season as much as it is a ‘Thank You’ to everyone for their involvement in CCU and the church this summer. For living out the theme of HEART and the 1 Samuel 16:7 passage in the midst of the transitions happening. I thank you for being patient with me and for supporting all the teams, coaches, spiritual leaders even with all of the bigger things happening with PCC and the world. Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedules to live out the Word of God. I’m grateful to have witnessed the transformation within the CCU league, the players that participated, and the living of HEART in our church through the trials.



“Worship in Spirit and In Truth” is the theme for this year’s Cantonese Worshipping Community’s annual retreat. With 25 attendees on July 28-30, we held this 3-day 2-night retreat at Point Bonita YMCA, Sausalito, only 45 minutes away from Chinatown. We were very excited to have Rev. Joshua Law as our guest speaker. Rev. Law is a famous musician in the Bay Area and had been a professor of music and church music in different schools and churches over the last 30 years. His current ministries are founder & executive director for Dorean Ministries for Christ, and founder & director for Herald Chorale and Orchestra.

We learned so much from the two sessions of lectures presented by Rev. Law. The main topic was about Music & Worship – What is music, what is worship, how God wants us to worship Him, how we should worship God and what are the appropriate procedures. In the first session, all of the above was demonstrated in “Tabernacle of the Wilderness” which was about the Tabernacle and our worship life. The second session was about different kinds of music being used and practiced during worship. Culture change is the main point. Adding contemporary elements in traditional worship is the current direction for traditionalists. Like language and culture, music is a means of expression. With additional new elements in worship, music will help keep the theological substance of worship but change the form of worship in order to lead the congregation into a life changing experience. Rev. Law also demonstrated the technique of singing and vocal practice at the end of the second session, and gave us some exercises during the break time.



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Campfire was always the fun part during free time in our second night. Youngsters really enjoyed making their cookies & cream S’mores as well as dancing and singing. Others stayed at the meeting room for a sing along, especially with the newly arranged karaoke version of traditional youth hymns. We experienced a great time of fellowship with all participants.

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## **Annual Retreat - Cantonese Worshipping Community** *(continued from page 7)*

We worshipped and praised our Lord on Sunday morning on the third day. More than ten people (one-day participants) joined us. Rev. Ronnie Kaan gave an inspiring sermon titled “The Kingdom – Signs of Life”. Together we worshipped God with songs and prayers.

Visiting the Lighthouse was an unforgettable memory for most of us who never have been there before. We walked and hiked to the site on second day afternoon. The third day, when the weather was much better, we were able to take some good pictures of the nearby scenery. As a matter of fact, Point Bonita is the last staffed lighthouse on the California coast. It was a wonderful trip for all of us indeed. We also want to thank John Hee from Cameron House who voluntarily helped us with transportation.

We thank God for giving us opportunities to have our church retreat every year - to seek and praise God, to get close to His nature and to have our time of fellowship.





## Welcome New Members!

- Baptized: Elijah Wong and Samantha Hum
- Confirmed: Rene Fong



The Mandarin Worshipping Community has everything to be thankful for in this Season of Thanksgiving! We mark many firsts: December 1, 2017 will be one year since God led Missionary Hao to nurture our worshipping community. June 2017 also marks his one year in the U.S.A., and Sunday, October 15<sup>th</sup> we've celebrated Israel and Cathy's daughter Cecilia's 1<sup>st</sup> birthday!

We are grateful that Israel has put his heart into the work for God's kingdom, committing himself to the Mandarin Commission, and is learning the ropes hands on, feet wet... Besides being a full time seminary student, and as part time with us, Israel has finished his CRE/CLP courses, (Commissioned Ruling Elder/Commissioned Lay Pastor) and with God's guidance, we look forward to his installation as a Lay Pastor next Spring! We were on a fast paced course of study as Israel's credentials met most of the Presbytery's requirements to become a CLP. We needed only 4, including a private Polity Class with the Rev. Kamal Hassan.



CRE/CLP Last Class for 2016-17 held 9-23-17... Yay! We made it!  
We represent four different Presbyterian Churches in the Bay Area!

Israel and Cathy were the speakers and they led their first annual retreat for us on October 7<sup>th</sup>. Already he is setting up a follow up core group for discussion that came out of the retreat. The theme for our retreat was "Looking at our Church's Vision Through the Book of Haggai": A Call to Build the House of the Lord. We used the hymn "Be Thou My Vision" as our theme song throughout the retreat.

We look forward to Israel's leadership, new blood, new ideas, new perspective....yes, even at our ages, we need to be constantly learning...never stop... for the sake of God's Kingdom, Be Thou My Vision, indeed!

## Lavender Pen Tour Experience by Tad Hopp

Hi everyone, you may have heard that I recently embarked on what was known as the Lavender Pen Tour with the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus, a group that I've been a part of for two years now. To say the tour was life changing is a bit of an understatement. It wasn't just life changing, it was life giving.

But first, let me back up a bit and explain a couple of things. First off, the question that we got asked a lot: why is it called the Lavender Pen Tour? In the 1970s when San Francisco Mayor George Moscone signed into law the first ever gay civil rights bill, he signed it using a Lavender Pen given to him by Harvey Milk. Thus, the lavender pen symbolizes a landmark piece of legislation for the LGBT community. And also, the chorus's first public performance was on the steps of City Hall during the vigil for Harvey Milk the night he was assassinated. Thus, our very beginnings are connected with Harvey Milk and all that he did for our community. So, naming the tour the Lavender Pen Tour was a way of paying tribute to both him and historic piece of legislation that he helped bring about.

And the second question that I got asked, why did I want to go on this tour? I had a multitude of reasons for why I wanted to go on this trip. I think the biggest reason for me had to do with the fact that I was born and raised in Texas. Texas, as you may know, is a very conservative place and it was definitely difficult for me to grow up there. I felt very uncomfortable around my friends because I didn't feel that I could truly be myself around them. It was definitely something I struggled with and I felt so alone for most of those years. So, as someone who knows how difficult it is to grow up gay in the South, I wanted to go on this tour because I knew how badly 13 year old me needed something like this. I know there were young people in our audience who saw our show and realized they weren't alone anymore. They had someone else who knew what it was like to be gay and I think that we really did make a positive change in that young person's life. 13 year old me would have absolutely loved to have something like this in their life. And that's why I wanted to go on the tour.

As for the tour itself, it went so incredibly well. We were received with open arms in every city we visited and every concert venue was packed with people who were thrilled that we were there. Every singer on the tour paid their own way so that all of the money raised from our concerts would go toward local non-profits in each city working for LGBT causes. These ranged from the Human Rights Campaign to the ACLU to various other local non-profits. Over 200 of us went plus the fifty members of the Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir so it was a large contingent of us going to spread our message of love and inclusion the best way we know how, through song.

Our tour started in Jackson, Mississippi which is currently home to the worst anti-LGBT law on the books right now. Our first concert there was a rousing success and we felt so proud of ourselves for having such a great first concert. From there, we proceeded to Selma, Alabama where we had a service at Brown Chapel which was the headquarters for so many of the civil rights conversations that took place in the 60s. We actually got a chance to hear from some of the people who marched with Martin Luther King, Jr. That was awesome and it was inspiring to hear them speak. From there, we proceeded to march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge which was a great experience for all of us. Just knowing that we were marching across such an important historical landmark was great and it felt like we too were also marching for civil rights and that the movements were connected across time and distance.

From Selma, we headed to Birmingham and performed another great concert. This was followed by a trip to Knoxville, Tennessee where we gave another concert and did some outreach at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, singing for and with their Men's Glee Club. We also participated in a little performance in downtown Knoxville that evening and got the entire town dancing. The next day, we loaded up and headed to Greenville, South Carolina where we had been invited to sing at the First Baptist

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## Lavender Pen Tour Experience *(continued from page 11)*

Church there. This church was one of the founding churches of the Southern Baptist Convention so us singing there was a huge deal. We didn't sell tickets to that concert so we had no idea how many people would be there. We thought there would maybe be three people there. Instead, we walked out to see the entire church packed with a standing room only crowd of over 1,000 people! That concert was the highlight of the trip for me. Growing up in Texas, the Southern Baptist church had a huge influence on me even though I myself was not Southern Baptist. Still, their teachings and their influence were felt far and wide and are a big part of the reason why I waited so long to come out. So, being able to sing in a Southern Baptist Church with my gay chorus buddies and be so warmly received really did a lot of good for my soul and for my childhood wounds. I don't think words can really truly sum it up. It's gonna take me a few days before I can fully process that experience.

From there, we drove to Charlotte, North Carolina for our closing concert of the tour. We participated in an interfaith service in Charlotte that morning where I heard some really powerful words that I think will resonate with me for a while. "They tried to bury us. They didn't know that we were seeds." I think that really sums up the impact of the tour and the reasons we all embarked on it. Our current administration has made it very obvious that they do not care about the LGBT community. And they have made it very clear that they will do everything in their power to get rid of us, to wipe us out and to erase us from history. But they didn't realize that we are seeds and are not so easily buried. The seeds we planted this past week in Jackson, Birmingham, Knoxville, Greenville and Charlotte will hopefully bear something beautiful and something lasting. What exactly that will look like remains to be seen. But I think the tour changed all of us in some significant ways, in ways that we can't even fully articulate yet. I remain grateful to have gone on this tour and grateful for all the ways in which it really changed me and my life. It was exhausting and grueling and at times stressful but it was also so life affirming and so life giving. The warm reception we received from every city we visited, the hospitality we were shown, the gratefulness that people expressed toward us really shaped and influenced all of us in profound ways. There's a lot of terrible stereotypes out there about the South and the people who live there. I know many of us embarked on this tour with those stereotypes in our heads. And so I'd like to think that hopefully many of our pre-conceived notions about that part of the country were dispelled or at the very least changed. There are good people there. There are kind, generous, warm, friendly, accepting people there. Even I, Texan boy that I am, had forgotten that. And it was good to be reminded of it on the tour.



Hi. Welcome to St. John's Presbyterian Church. Please fill out your nametag and do you have your volunteer's waiver form? Please proceed inside amidst the many tables where the dried food and packaging equipment are assembled.

The Rev. John Anderson greeted the volunteers from Calvary, Christ United, Old First, PCC and his home church. Cindy Joe contacted each church for this project which required of them to chip in \$590 and recruit 10 people to pack 10,000+ meals to be shipped overseas.

Terry Lewis from **RISE AGAINST HUNGER** arrived early at 8:00 a.m. with a truckload of equipment and dried food. Our "Muscle Team"- Sing Quan, Casey Chow, Scott Barlow, Susie Wong and Alson Lee unloaded all the heavy stuff for us and then headed to PCC for Food Pantry duty!

Everyone had to wear a red hairnet and plastic gloves before going to a station – we learned how to fill the plastic meal container bags with one cup of **soy**, one cup of **rice**, a tablespoon of **veggies** and a **vitamin** packet. From there the bags got weighed and sealed, then runners brought them to the packing tables. They were checked for any leakage before they were packed and sealed in cartons of 36 meals.

Every time we reached bagging 1,000 meals, the big brass gong sounded loud and clear while everyone cheered. Because of the enthusiasm and great co-operation of the teams, we finished packing over 10,000 meals under two hours!

Everyone gathered for group pictures and we enjoyed a delicious lunch. Then we cleaned up and got the sanctuary ready for Sunday worship.

It was a fun and fulfilling way to have the churches working together on helping to bring relief to those who suffer from hunger and malnutrition internationally.

Mission & Evangelism Committee



## **Worship Goes On**                      **by Linda Lee, Worship & Nurture Committee Chair**

It's been both challenging and refreshing to plan worship during this time of Pastor Kimberly's sabbatical and our temporary location at Cameron House. The Worship Planning Team has recruited some preachers that will challenge us with God's word. You'll want to participate in our planned Advent theme called "Angels Among Us", looking at the various messages of the angels throughout the Advent and Christmas story. Their opening message to us, "Do not be afraid", can bring us comfort, confusion and questioning. Moving us along in the 21<sup>st</sup> century we'll be experimenting with the use of hashtags during Advent (#morehope, #morepeace, #morejoy, and #morelove). If, like me, you've never used hashtags, get ready to explore a new way of community expression. Here are some upcoming worship dates:

- 11/5 Annual PCC Congregational Meeting (English worship ends at 11:30)
- 11/12 Special music worship and communion, Rev. Deb McGuire participating
- 11/19 Homelessness & Hunger Awareness Sunday, Rev. Norman Fong
- 12/3 First Sunday of Advent, "Angels Among Us", #morehope, Rev Jeff Hutcheson
- 12/10 Second Sunday of Advent, #morepeace, Tad Hopp
- 12/17 Third Sunday of Advent, #more joy, Jeanne Choy Tate
- 12/24 Christmas Eve-
  - 10:45 am service, #more love
  - 7:30 pm, Christmas Eve evening service, Caroling and Jook Fellowship
- 12/31 First Sunday of Christmas, #morelife, Ellen Tanouye, and the 88 Keys Choir
- 1/7 The Baptism of the Lord and Epiphany, Rev. Joey Lee
- 1/14 Second Sunday of Epiphany, Rev. Bruce Reyes Chow
- 1/21 Third Sunday of Epiphany, our very own Rene Fong

We hope to return to the PCC Sanctuary in 2018! The English Worshipping Community has been flexible and encouraging in supporting worship! Thanks to each one of you!



Here's the latest updates of our church members for this quarter.

Jeffrey Go, son of Stuart and Diane is in his first year of Medical School in Syracuse, New York. Jeff will have a lot of adjustment to make while attending Medical School. Let's see how he will handle the cold and snow for his first winter. Stuart and Diane will be visiting Jeff late October.

Max Hum, son of Ed and Belinda is attending his first year of college in Texas. His older brother Alex is already attending the same college.

Chris Chan, son of Terry and Norma is in his first year of Bible College. This college is not too far from Vancouver, Canada.

We want to wish these young men all a good first year in college.



Many of our church members have taken some really nice vacations.



Vivien and Kimball Wong had a nice private tour of China. One of their host high schooler parents took them around China. They will be Grandparents at the end of the year. Ryan, their son and wife are expecting their first child. Daughter Chelsea will be coming back from Scotland.

Len, Margaret and Peter Zavertrnik and Mildred Hall went to Europe in September. They first started in Slovenia where Len's family is from. They went to many cities and tried all the local foods. From there they went over to Italy and visited Florence, Rome and Venice. All had a good time eating and sightseeing.

Bruce, Doreen, Greg and Jeanine are in Italy now. We will have to ask where they visited when they return.

Irene Ng and her Sequoias friend took a tour of Greece. Irene really enjoyed visiting the museums in Athens and the Cyclades Islands in the Aegean Sea.

Wayne, Marie, Terry and Lianne are now on a Viking cruise to Europe. I believe they are going to Prague and Budapest etc. We will have to ask them about their trip when they return.

Cindy Joe and Amelia Chua took a trip to Morocco in October.

Lolan and Henry Ho-Wong's daughter Camille got married in September. This is all the news I have to share with you all.

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