

English Ministry Update

Toronto Chinese Baptist Church

also available on www.tcbc.on.ca

December 2009

English Ministry Committee: Looking back at 2009

Will Jin

But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.

Micah 5:2

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

Isaiah 7:14

Important Dates

- Dec 6 Christmas Chinatown Outreach
- Dec 18 Christmas Celefution
- Dec 20 Baptismal Sunday
- Dec 24 Christmas Eve Music Worship: "How Great our Joy" [at] 7 p.m.

Christmas Celefution

Date: 12/18/2009
Time: Dinner starts at 5:30pm

Program will start at 7:00pm

We will have 4 Stations happening simultaneously.

1. Traditional Talent show in Sanctuary
2. Coffee House for informal fellowship in 2nd floor chapel (Simul-cast)
3. Christmas Craft table / Photo Shooting with Christmas theme back drop
4. Children program

Please encourage everybody to come and celebrate the birth of our Lord Christ Jesus

In the midst of our busy lives, we have the opportunity to focus our sights on the significance of Christ during this time of the year. It also earmarks the end of the calendar year and brings to the end of another "term".

The EMC (aka the English Ministry Committee) has come along way over the last 12 months or from 4 years for that matter. The Committee has grown with the active participation of over 15 individuals that share the common "characteristics". 1. most (if not all) attend the English 9:30 service; 2. most are already serving in other areas of ministry within TCBC; 3. all have stepped up to provide leadership and discernment for God's Kingdom within the English Congregation.

I would like to take this time to recognize the good things that have come out of the leadership of the EMC in 2009. In 2009, we have been blessed with the provision of an interim English Pastor, Rev Frank Bryne. There was much input from members of the congregation and we do thank them for their efforts. Ministry initiatives continued and we are glad to continue our support with Urban Promise as they focus on the needs of the surrounding community. Internally, we have seen the advancement of the "Christmas Conspiracy" through new leaders. Music ministry, Sunday school, youth ministry, FAST... the list goes on.

Quite often the work that is done is unseen and unglorified. Sometimes we focus on the negative and lose sight of how God is working among us. There are areas where the EMC have fallen short, but there is no doubt that the efforts and time spent have been genuine and sincere to making things better for His Kingdom.

We recognize that there are many "challenges" ahead for 2010 and beyond, but we can deal with that later. Right now we should give thanks to God for all of His blessings to this community and His people. In this tough world, we need to remind ourselves of God's word and His promises; and then convert it to the "free gift" for those who don't know it and share it generously. More than ever, our world needs to see the light through us. That is the real message of Christmas and I hope we can all capture it during this busy season around us.

English Ministry Committee Retreat 2009

Toby Chang and James Wu

On November 14th, the English Ministry Committee (EMC) met for a day long retreat, to reflect on the past year, and start the planning process for the year ahead.

As a team building exercise, we discussed and explored our individual strengths and how we each fit within the committee as a whole. This aligned with a devotional time led by Rev Byrne, as he shared with us about the qualities of leadership and encouraged us to use our individual but God given strengths to lead and make decisions that are right for the specific circumstance. The discussions also helped us identify, as a team, where we were strong in some areas of leadership, and weak in others (including communication!).

We also started the process of creating a set of value statements for the English ministry. This involved assessing what we believe the congregation values and what we ought to value. This was the start of an exercise we hope to continue through next year which may also be helpful as we work with other leadership bodies in the church to understand how we can work well together in unity. We held a brainstorm session and are working towards identifying what we believe to be priorities for the EMC next year. This will be further discussed at the December EMC meeting and an output will hopefully be shared with you in the near future.

Finally, the day ended in dialogue with Rev. Tam about his proposed theme for 2010/2011. Although there is still much work to be done, there was an appreciation for the opportunity to dialogue with Rev. Tam, to understand his hopes for this church, and the desire to work together to understand how his plans fit within the context of the English ministry. Although the day ended late for all of us, there was much more that we felt we needed to follow up on.

We will be gathering on Thursday, December the 10th at 7pm at TCBC to follow up on the retreat and discuss a variety of other topics. This meeting is open to all and we encourage anyone who is interested in attending to come and share with us!

Advent Conspiracy Update

Katy Mok and Jaynelle Leung

On behalf of Urban Promise Toronto, we (J & K) want to congratulate and thank you for helping these few families stay warm for the winter season. It was a hard task since we were looking for specific items but we did it! God truly does provide.

As part of our SMUS challenge, we invite everyone to take this time to reflect on the many blessings God has bestowed upon us. It is often too easy for us to accumulate more than we need and be consumed in the material world. Therefore, we challenge to you look through your closets and sort out the clothes that you haven't touched in a year, have grown out of or never worn and donate them!

"If anyone is poor among your people in any of the towns of the land the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tight-fisted toward them. Rather, be open-handed and freely lend them whatever they need.

Deuteronomy 15:7-9

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Harbourfront Outreach Information Sessions

Harbourfront Outreach Planning Committee will organize 2 information sessions to pray for this proposed initiative and to share updates on the planning progress.

- First session : 7-8 pm on Thursday, December 10, 2009. This session will be co-organized with EMC and will be conducted exclusively in English.
- Second session : immediately after Cantonese/Mandarin services on Sunday, January 17, 2010 and this session will be conducted mainly in Cantonese and/or Mandarin.

We encourage all TCBC members to attend both sessions wherever possible.

The Season of Advent

A season of the anticipation of the hope, love, joy and peace that comes in Jesus Christ.

Advent is the beginning of the church year for most churches in the Western Tradition. It begins on the 4th Sunday before Christmas Day. This year it began on November 29th. The word Advent means "coming" or "arrival." The focus of the entire season is the celebration of the birth of Jesus the Christ in his First Advent, and the anticipation of the return of Christ the King in his Second Advent. Thus, Advent is far more than simply marking a 2,000 year old event in history. It is celebrating a truth about God, the revelation of God in Christ whereby all of creation might be reconciled to God. That is a process in which we now participate, and the consummation of which we anticipate. In this double focus on past and future, Advent also symbolizes the spiritual journey of individuals and a congregation, as they affirm that Christ has come, that He is present in the world today, and that He will come again in power. That acknowledgment provides a basis for Kingdom ethics, for holy living arising from a profound sense that we live "between the times" and are called to be faithful stewards of what is entrusted to us as God's people. So, as the church celebrates God's in-breaking into history in the Incarnation, and anticipates a future consummation to that history for which "all creation is groaning awaiting its redemption," it also confesses its own responsibility as a people commissioned to "love the Lord your God with all your heart" and to "love your neighbor as yourself."

At TCBC, we will mark the Advent season in a couple of ways. During the worship service throughout the four weeks of Advent, we will light a candle on the Advent Wreath and share in a reading and prayer that focuses us on a different theme each Sunday. There is a special Adult Sunday School class to help you go deeper in the themes of the Advent season. There are Advent devotionals available for you to read throughout this season as a way to focus your own devotional time. And there is also our Advent Conspiracy challenge that you are invited to participate in. Let us not get caught up in the world's ways of celebrating this season, but instead let's recapture the real significance of this season. Let us be reminded again of the hope we have in Christ and the radical way His Incarnation transformed our world.

GLOW

Bonnie Lee

October 31st is a day that many people mark on their calendars. In our society, this day is known as an opportunity to gather candy (a.k.a. trick-or-treat), dress up in costumes and take delight in scaring others, or for some people, being scared by others. However, although Halloween gives this day its dark and gloomy atmosphere, we must not forget that God's mighty light always shines brightly; and it especially did that day on the streets outside TCBC.

TCBC hosted an alternative event to Halloween known as G.L.O.W., which stands for "God Lights Our Way". Aware that many children and families would be traveling the streets during this night, we took the opportunity as a church to connect with our neighbourhood, share God's love and spread His wonderful news. Led by Pastor Tanya, our teens from Barnabas Fellowship and many amazing volunteers with a heart to shine for God, we greeted our community with colourful sidewalks, glowing decorations, fun games, creative crafts, hot chocolate and packages with treats and Bible verses.

It has been amazing seeing how God has blessed this event year after year with much success; and this year was definitely no different! Many familiar and new faces showed up at our doors, curious about all our activities and bright displays. Particularly, they were attracted to the huge tent pitched on the front lawn. Inside the tent, a bright lamp radiated the space while children and adults alike participated in making crafts such as beaded pumpkins with a glowing cross in the centre. It was under this tent where I witnessed a lot of God's work being done. The craft session led to many deep and genuine conversations where we able to listen to their life stories and as well, share with them God's wonderful story. It was definitely surprising to see how receptive and interested they were. Furthermore, it was even more incredible to see how a few of our neighbours came back the next day for our Sunday Services and Children's Sunday Programs!

God can use any time, situation and opportunity to do His work. Even on that cold evening, He was wonderfully glorified because not only was His love "shone" to our community, but His love also brought the church closer together. I am so glad to say that we definitely did much more than "glow" for God that night! Hope to see you join in next year!