

Evangelical Free Church of Australia

澳洲基督教播道會靈福堂

【Family Letter】



Dearest Brothers and Sisters,

Greetings in Christ!

God is full of grace. Over the years we have witnessed His ample provision for our church in countless different ways. We have waited five years for a senior pastor, and we saw God answering our prayers with Rev David Tse joining us this year. Praise the Lord!

This is the 32nd year since we started worshipping at Chatswood Church of Christ (CCoC). God has richly blessed our time there. We write to inform you about a change concerning the 11:45am Cantonese worship service at CCoC.

In March this year, CCoC informed us that they are actively pursuing the growth of their church and they need the 11:45am timeslot back to enable expansion of their ministry. They initially asked us to vacate the 11:45am timeslot by July this year. Since then we have engaged with them many times and on various levels. We came to the understanding that we have got no choice but to comply. But CCoC respected our wishes for more time to enable an orderly and well-planned transition. The 11:45am service will now come to a close at the end of this year. Meanwhile, all other current activities will remain unchanged. The 11:45am service is the only change.

Our feelings are mixed. Naturally, we are sad, feeling a sense of loss, because we have been worshipping at CCoC for so long. We are thankful for being able to establish and grow our church at this location. Despite our desire not to stop worshipping at CCoC at 11:45am, we also rejoice in seeing the growth of CCoC and their desire to reach out to the community. This is most wonderful for God's kingdom.

In terms of the plan ahead, after carefully examining various possibilities, the Deacons Board and the Cantonese Ministry Team have developed a 2-stage plan:

- Stage 1: the 3 current Cantonese services will be combined into 2 at Zenith Theatre. This is a transitional stage of about 6 months.
- Stage 2: we are looking to implement a revised worship arrangement for the Cantonese ministry with a strong intention to restart a 3rd Cantonese worship service.

As part of finalising the details of Stage 2, we will be considering many factors, such as time, location, format, target congregation, ministry, readiness of the congregation and pastoral resources. We need members of the 11:45 congregation, indeed members of the entire Cantonese ministry and whole EFCA to walk together in one mind as we navigate this

significant change in the life and ministry of our church. We are committed to actively seeking feedback and listening to brothers and sisters as we shape the future worship arrangement together.

Change is never easy, and we appreciate that there will be challenges ahead. This will particularly be so for the existing 11:45am congregation. We have faith that God will lead us through these challenges and emerge victorious as we follow the Lord's leading. This certainly tests our faith. We will be doing everything we can to look after all affected brothers and sisters. This circumstance also presents us with opportunities such as reimagining our worship service arrangement for the growth of our church - revitalising it and making it more sustainable into the future, saving souls around the globe and discipling the nations for Christ's glory. This will take time and will require your support and involvement throughout the process.

We invite you all to join us on this journey of faith ahead by sharing your ideas and feedback and continuing to support one another in love as one body in Christ. Please in particular care for affected brothers and sisters who currently attend the 11:45am service. Above all, please pray with us. Pray for a smooth transition and an edifying conclusion of our 11:45am service at CCoC. Pray for a new worship service arrangement for the Cantonese ministry that glorifies God.

We will be discussing this matter in more detail at the family meeting on 29th September, which you are warmly invited to attend. In the meantime, please share any questions and comments with a deacon, member of the Cantonese Ministry Team or pastor.

The Almighty Lord and King has given us an important mission – “Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes.” (Isaiah 54:2) For the glory of His great name and eternal kingdom, let us follow wherever He leads us.

Deacons Board

8th September 2019