

# THE MESSENGER

CHINESE CHRISTIAN CHURCH JAN 2026 EDITION

## EDITOR'S NOTES

In this issue, we highlight God's faithful work through the Women's Bible Study Group, serving women from CCC and their friends for 42 years. The 21 years of ministry of the Deborah Mothers Group reveal God's care and outreach to women in need. You will also be encouraged by the story of ESCCC's recent growth. May these testimonies inspire us all to continue growing together in faith and service.

## WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY GROUP (WBSG)

*Author: Silyee Chen*

### *Fellowship Origins and Growth*

The WBSG was formed as the Women's Mid-day Fellowship in 1983 with a gathering of CCC women from the English, Cantonese and Mandarin congregations who were interested in studying God's Word and fellowship together in an informal setting in private homes. The vision was to encourage sharing and foster closer communion with one another and among women from the three congregations with warm hospitality in a relaxed environment and a shared meal at the conclusion of each meeting (Acts 2:46). Apart from a brief period between 1989-1993 when the Northern Districts Chinese Christian Church offered the venue, meetings have been generously hosted by participants, until the Covid pandemic in 2020. For a short time also, in order to accommodate a member who had relocated, Bible studies were held in her nursing home. It was a joy to have a couple of residents occasionally join in as well, and at Christmas, to share with other residents a time of carol singing and a short message.

### *Meeting Structure and Content*

The meeting format has remained basically unchanged - a time of hymn singing, sharing news and concerns, thanksgiving and prayers, followed by a study on a book, theme or character from the Old or New Testament and separation into 2 groups, originally conducted in English and in Chinese.

Over past decades, the group has been blessed and benefitted from the presence and participation, teaching and encouragement of occasional speakers, pastors' wives, women's ministry workers sharing talks, devotions or personal stories.



In addition, topics relating to life and health issues were also included as well as other fun activities. In recent years however, the focus has primarily been on Bible study.

Visiting overseas missionaries supported by CCC have been invited to share their work, experiences and challenges. To hear about their stories of hope, joys, struggles and challenges give insight into their individual ministries.



### *Recent Challenges and Adaptations*

In recent years and particularly since Covid when meetings have been conducted online, numbers have fluctuated as women have moved on according to their individual situations, either to other churches or elsewhere, some to serve in different ministries, attend other Bible studies or growth groups. In addition, sadly, the recent passing of some greatly loved regular members, and for others, ageing, health and mobility issues and changed life or family circumstances have also influenced attendance as well as problems with technology.

Currently, meetings still continue online, fortnightly during school terms and English is now the only language used.

### *Enduring Faith and Fellowship*

In spite of difficulties, thanks be to God for He is good and faithful and the group continues with a smaller number of women still committed to learning and desiring to grow more in knowledge of God's Word.

Physical gatherings, particularly at the end of each year, have occasionally been organised and these have given much anticipation, enjoyment and blessing to past and current attendees.

### *What to give thanks for:*

- \* The group continues with faithful members regardless of the challenges.
- \* Blessings of being ministered to by godly women of faith over the years
- \* The privilege and joy of being able to share love and comfort to those in nursing homes
- \* Technology that enables participants to attend, occasionally from overseas

### *What to pray for:*

- \* God's guidance and direction going forward
- \* Perseverance and faithfulness of current members
- \* Continued growth and maturity in God's Word in order to live Christ-centered lives
- \* To desire and love to meet together and to encourage one another with hope and joy (Hebrews 10:24-25)

*“You have made known to me the path of life, you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand” Psalm 16:11*



\*\*\*\* WBSG meets every alternate Friday on zoom at 10.15am until 12pm during school terms. Notices of meetings are included in the weekly bulletins \*\*\*\*

# SUPPORTING ONE ANOTHER AND GROWING TOGETHER - CANTONESE DEBORAH MOTHERS GROUP

*Author: Dora Lee*

## *Calling and Establishment*

The Cantonese Deborah Mothers Group was established at the end of 2004. At that time, I had already been attending the English congregation's mothers group for some time. As the number of mothers in the Cantonese congregation increased, Ivy, the pastor's wife from the English congregation, suggested that I start a Cantonese-speaking mothers group.

Interestingly, just a few months before Ivy made this suggestion, my family went through a deeply painful tragedy. My husband and I felt as though we had fallen into a deep valley, unsure when we would recover. A few months later, carrying a heavy heart, I attended a women's retreat organised by a gospel ministry. During that retreat, God's Word once again became my comfort and strength. On the final day, I went forward in response to the Holy Spirit's prompting, committing my life to serve women who are hurting. Miraculously, not long after the retreat, God gave me the opportunity to lead a Cantonese mothers group — allowing me to fulfill the vow I had made to Him.



## *Growth and Expansion*

I have now been leading the Deborah Mothers Group for more than twenty years. When we first started, only five or six mothers met in my home. Over time, God brought more and more mothers to join us. As the group grew larger, to allow deeper sharing and make room for newcomers, we began to form subgroups.

Over the years, we have gone through six rounds of establishing new groups or restructuring existing ones. Each time changes occurred, God raised up sisters to take on different roles in ministry — opening their homes, leading Bible studies, providing care and contact, or offering transportation. Through serving, their lives have gradually grown and matured.

## *Reaching Out and Caring*

Through the Deborah Mothers Group, we have also connected with many women who are not yet believers or who are in need of care. God has led these women to the group, where they learn God's Word, share their burdens, and pray for one another. It has been deeply encouraging to witness some of them hearing the gospel, coming to know Christ, believing in Jesus, and receiving baptism.

Many sisters have formed deep friendships through the Deborah Mothers Group that continue to this day. We have laughed together and cried together. We have delivered meals to sick sisters and provided help to new mothers after childbirth. We support and encourage one another through every season of life.

## *Looking Ahead with Hope*

May God continue to use the Deborah Mothers Group to raise up more leaders, strengthen the faith of the sisters, and reach those who have not yet believed.



# THE RECENT GROWTH OF EAST SYDNEY COMMUNITY CHRISTIAN CHURCH (ESCCC)

*Author: Rev Chris Chua*

## *Church Introduction*

ESCCC was formed in 1980 by a group of theological students driven by the vision “to train and to send”. They held their first worship service in rented premises at the Randwick Uniting Church. In 1986, the church became a branch church of CCC. They became an independent, non-denominational church in 1998 while they continue to maintain close ties with CCC. In the first 6-month of 2021, Rev Chua, Rev Wang, and Deacon Pu Songhe from Mandarin congregation shared the preaching at ESCCC to support its growth.

## *God’s Provision of Ministry Teams*

It was from the beginning of 2021 we started witnessing God’s work at ESCCC. He had prepared ten devoted and like-minded brothers and sisters to participate in various ministries — leading Sunday service and music worship, leading prayer meetings and Bible study groups, welcoming newcomers, engaging in visitation and outreach. Though small in number, the congregation was able to serve in every aspect.

## *Worship During the COVID-19 Restrictions*

In 2021, to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus, ESCCC could only worship online. In our first online service, I taught that worshipping God does not have to take place in a church building—it can also be done at home. The Lord Jesus said: “God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” (John 4:24) In the original text, “spirit” can be translated as “the Holy Spirit,” and “truth” refers to Jesus, for the Lord Jesus said: “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6) This means that since God is spirit, those who worship Him must do so through the Holy Spirit and through the truth—Jesus. As Christians, whether in church or at home, we must come before the Father sincerely, worship Him through the Holy Spirit, and draw near to Him in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

## *Resuming In-Person Worship*

The church is a gathering of Christians—the body of Christ with many members—coming together to fellowship and care for one another like a spiritual family.

Although we can interact online, such as through WhatsApp video, the experience is not the same as meeting face-to-face, shaking hands, or giving a hug. Thus, within a year we resumed in-person worship, and the number of attendees gradually increased from just over twenty to more than forty. ESCCC began returning to in-person services in 2022. By October 2025, it has already been more than three years.

## *A Family Transformed by the Gospel*

Shortly after in-person worship resumed in May 2022, a lady from Shanghai named Mrs Ji began attending. Her granddaughter was studying at a school in Randwick, and Mrs Ji had come to Sydney to look after her while she was studying. The granddaughter hoped that the grandmother could join a Chinese Christian fellowship, and she found ESCCC’s Mandarin service from the website and the church was close to where they lived. One Sunday, the granddaughter brought Mrs Ji to the church; I happened to be preaching that day. After the service, brothers and sisters welcomed Mrs Ji warmly, and we chatted with her. She felt the warmth of the church community, continued attending, joined the gospel class, came to know the Lord Jesus, and made a commitment of faith. I baptised her on 7 May 2023, making her the first person baptised in the Mandarin service.

After believing in the Lord, she followed Jesus’ teachings in her daily life and gradually experienced transformation. Her daughter-in-law witnessed the power of the gospel and was baptised on 11 August 2024, along with another sister.

Seeing God’s work in ESCCC has brought us great encouragement, joy, gratitude, and praise. Glory be to God.

