

**I planted,
Apollos watered,
but God gave the growth.**

~ 1 Corinthians 3:6



**UNION
CHURCH**

**annual
report
2024**



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 Henry Ngan
 Alan Law
 Rosanna Chan
 Jane Arnett
 John Li
 Jasmine Ng

DEACONS

Terri Appel (Clerk)
 Kenneth Morrison
 Alexander Mak
 Malama Piliae
 Shlivya Dhavale
 Joshua Ng
 Wanda Yuen
 Grace Siu
 Eric Fung
 Stephen Shum
 Tess Lyons

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 William Kuan (Vice Chair, Transition and Young Adults)
 George Ding (Honorary Treasurer)
 Jonathan Ah-weng (Honorary Secretary and Sunday School)
 Emilie Banfield (Communications)
 Po Cheung (Worship)
 Shaun Dove (Security)
 Ester Chung (Children)
 Cecilia Lee (Youth)
 Ricky Lai (Facilities Management)
 Susan King (Filipino Ministry)
 Ellie Pang (Women’s Ministry)
 Kenneth Chan
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Senior Pastor's Message

by Rev. Dr. Michele Bland

"I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labour of each."

~ 1 Corinthians 3:6-8 NRSV

Union Church achieved some significant milestones this year. What an exciting year with noteworthy highlights! As Alpha celebrated its 30th birthday in Hong Kong, Union Church launched Alpha 6 times, in three different languages. This was a first! Also, Union Church, after a thorough process, recognized and affirmed the pastoral gifts of Dan Tupps and ordained him into Christian Ministry in September. He was given a new title -Pastor of Discipleship. Additionally, as a church, we celebrated 180 years of ministry in Hong Kong with an anniversary service and we splashed out with a BBQ - inviting the neighbourhood. Happy Birthday, Union Church! I am so grateful for the many Alpha and Small Group leaders who have invested in the lives of individuals for decades.

Unique to Union Church is that we continue to offer three different vibrant weekly worship services and I am so grateful for all those involved. Thank you to our choir under the leadership of Hillary Law, Dr Joyce Wu, the Associate Director of Traditional worship, and our regular volunteer contemporary worship leaders who are so committed and faithful - Joshua Ng, Eric Fung, Po Cheung, and Justin Chong. We have enjoyed Cantatas, special music, and services that feature a collaboration of



worship styles. Thank you Yellowfrog - Rob Porter, Betty Lui and team for making us sound good.

Although we started 2024 with a strong staff team, by the first quarter some staff members left Hong Kong, and one moved into corporate work. With the exception of one, all were full time-roles. We are grateful for the ministry of Bronwyn Alexander -Director of Communications, Teddy Packham - Director of Digital Ministries, Julianna Rotmeyer - Director of Women's and Creativity Ministry, and Joshua Cheang - Director of Contemporary Worship. These individuals played big roles and left big holes which needed to be filled. I am very grateful for our staff team who picked up additional responsibilities and who are willing to go the extra mile and work well together. Their commitment to the Lord and His church is inspiring.

Fortunately, we were blessed to have AJ Ornias, our new youth director, and Fiona Li who supports ministry events and works in digital communication, join our staff team. We were able to strengthen our

accounting team's headcount and added a worship intern, Britta Tellvik, for 10 hours per week. In the summer we sent Pastor Fe Pepito and AJ Orniás to Kuala Lumpur for an Alpha Conference.

Leadership Teams:

Our leadership teams are very active and engaged. Our Deacons and Committee of Management have individual ministry profiles/liaisons and each team meets monthly (separately). On three occasions, January, May and September, we gathered with the Trustees for team building and vision casting. Thank you to our chairmen, John Nicholls (Trustees), Michael Birley (COM) and the Clerk of Deacons Terri Appel - your commitment to teamwork and collaboration is invigorating. Our Property Team (Chairman Michael Birley) was also engaged as we learned to work together on issues related to the property of Union Church. As a missional church, I am grateful for our Missions team for providing opportunities for the congregation to serve and their effort in supporting 24 ministry partners - through prayer partners, advocacy, giving and hosting regular lunches. This team meets monthly and looks for ways to live out our mission - thank you Nick Appel (Chairman) and team.

Pastoral Care:

Stephen Ministry teams are very strong and they are equipped and trained to meet care receivers weekly; in addition they are committed to regular supervision. Thank you, Stephen Leaders - Tess Lyons, Crystal Lo, Melody Funk, and Deidre Chan - for training, equipping and facilitating our Stephen Ministry teams. Thank you Stephen Ministers for walking alongside those in need. I enjoyed co-facilitating an Alpha parenting class with Jacklien Lee and a Griefshare group for those who had lost a loved one.

Family in Need:

The Family in Need ministry at Union Church helps those who are going through financial challenges and difficulties. Sometimes it is a one-off contribution, for others, it is more consistent financial and spiritual support. Over the years, we have supported those in our refugee and asylum-seeking community and it has been a joy to see some in this community go on and find a new home outside Hong Kong. Thank you, Isabel Morrison and Eric Fung, for your engagement and support.

Women's Ministry:

Thirty Eight ladies participated in the 8th Annual Ladies Retreat - Flowers in the Winter - in Hoi An, Vietnam. These getaways are invaluable as we are refreshed by time away with the Lord and we meet new friends. We also hosted the Semi-Annual Ladies Dinner, which was held in April and November respectively, and I am grateful to our catering teams, speakers and table design crews. Several fundraising events were held, eg. selling baking utensils.

Connecting and Partnerships:

There were several connecting opportunities held throughout the year. We hosted Welcome Lunches, bi-monthly Coffee and Conversation with hosts Ken and Isabel Morrison, as well as launching a Baking Ministry that provides baked goods on a weekly basis for all three services. Union Church continued to be on RTHK Radio 4 for English Worship services. We also enjoyed hosting a BBQ for University Students in September and many in the church joined Bridges International and hosted students at Christmas. Once again, we joined the One Hearing the Word Campaign for Lent.

We explored some new initiatives and potential partnerships this year in the areas of a Playgroup and a Café. A tremendous

Senior's Pastor Message

amount of time and energy was spent on this. Thank you, Jessey Xiong, Ricky Lai, Jane Arnett and Michael Birley, for journeying with us.

Union Church has resumed weddings and funerals - what a tremendous ministry this is to our community - thank you, Eric Leung, for your support in this ministry! We have been intentional in making our facility available to NGO's, ministry partners, and those in our neighborhood.

With all this going on, I am grateful for intentional time carved out for prayer. We continue to lift up the needs of the church and individuals on a weekly basis through our Tuesday and Friday morning zoom prayer, as well as a monthly Wednesday night prayer.

Our theme at last year's AGM was "Pass the Salt and Turn on the Light": in many respects we have done this - we have been busy planting and watering seeds and I have been encouraged to see our neighbours join us. I have been encouraged to see many of you inviting your family and friends, and I am so grateful for your partnership. I look forward to this new season together.

Blessings
Pastor Michele





Deacons' Court Report

by Terri Appel, Clerk

Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayer that is made in this place. ~ 2 Chronicles 7:15

In 2024, we experienced a full year of ministry in our 22A Kennedy Road home, full of all the promise and excitement that GOD has in store for His church in Hong Kong. We continue to praise the Lord for the gift of His glorious grace, as we endeavour to seek, love and serve our neighbours through Christ's redeeming love.

We are full of gratitude, as we reflect upon 2024 and all that the Lord has done among us, and continues to do in us as a leadership body, as a church family, and as members of the ONE Church in Hong Kong. Last year, we welcomed two new members onto the Deacons' Court - Stephen Shum and Tess Lyons. Our membership for 2024 includes: Pastor Michele at the helm, and deacons: Shlivya Dhavale, Eric Fung, Tess Lyons, Alexander Mak, Ken Morrison, Joshua Ng, Malama Piliae, Stephen Shum, Grace Siu, Wanda Yuen, and Terri Appel (Clerk). We have invited and will welcome a new member to the Deacons' Court at the 2025 AGM.

As Deacons, we started the year in dedicated prayer for ministry expansion, focusing on Union's capacity to encourage each other to be bearers of Christ's aroma to our neighbourhoods, city and region. On multiple occasions, we took our prayers to the streets and began walking the territory where we believe God is calling Union to serve - namely throughout Wan Chai area from 22A Kennedy to the area around Dah Sing (our previous temporary church location). We held a few prayer walks throughout 2024 with Deacon participants

to seek God's vision and direction to expand our ministry presence. We see it as a calling to continue to witness Christ's message in the way we love God, obeying and acting accordingly from His perspectives as seen in the Bible, and how we love others through our work for the Kingdom.

This year, aside from growth in our Sunday ministries - worship services, Young Adults, Youth and Children's ministries and Filipino Ministry, we are also encouraged by the growth in Union's ministries Monday to Saturday. Many of the stories can be read in this Annual Report, and we pray that as you read these pages, you will feel equally encouraged that God is on the move at Union Church Hong Kong and doing new things in and among us! We have seen expanded Alpha ministries with English, Chinese, and Tagalog languages, and workplace and youth offerings. Pastorally, we have continued to provide Grief Share and Stephen Ministry services, as well as continued training for any Union family members interested in utilising their gifts through participating in these ministries. We have offered The Restored Lives course from Alpha, to support and encourage our Union and broader community members.

In keeping with our welcoming and community-building core values, we hosted a number of events and organisations in our church building, providing the same hospitality and sanctuary that Christ implores us to offer to fellow believers and those in need. We hosted a space for ministry partners' staff trainings and community gatherings; Mental Health First Aid training sessions; Hong Kong Chamber

Orchestra; Hong Kong International Pastors breakfasts; Half-time Summit conference space; and numerous lunches and information sessions for the Missions Ministry Partners and Friends of Union Church. A number of our congregation also took part in a University Friends for the Holidays outreach programme with Bridges International. After going through a brief and very informative training session, a number of Union families and small groups hosted students from across all of Hong Kong's major universities for meals in their homes or at restaurants, to share the love and hospitality of Jesus Christ in a relaxed setting. Within our Mid-levels neighbourhood, we have hosted a few events for children and families, inviting them to join our church family for relaxing and fun family entertainment through holiday fairs and parties staffed by Union volunteers and open to all comers. We also provided lunchtime outreach to the numerous secondary schools, by offering space for study, refreshment of bubble tea and baked goods, with a view to feeding their minds, bodies and eventually souls, through the love of Christ. As always, our "Carols on the Green" service during Christmas was a welcomed outreach for many newcomers to 22A, who felt the love, hope, joy and warmth of the Christmas season through music and refreshments.

We have maintained a steady number of small groups in 2024, and these smaller discipleship groups continue to strengthen the spiritual fabric of our church family through fellowship, teaching and service. In other areas of discipleship, we started new small groups on Sundays with the 2/7 course that has completed all three books in the series and will start a new cohort in the Spring of 2025. We also initiated the Coffee & Conversation small group for the more mature, retired members of our congregation, offering a time of fellowship to share life's wisdom and experiences with

others in the same age and stage of life. We also have started both a monthly fellowship and a weekly Mandarin Small group, both spin-offs of the first Chinese Alpha courses.

Another key highlight for 2024 was the ordination process and service for Pastor Dan Tupps, which all Deacons took part in. After prayerful compilation, Dan submitted his statement of faith and call to ministry paper to the Deacons' Court for review. Deacons offered their support for his statement and ministry call. Subsequently, a small group of Hong Kong clergy, Pastor Michele Bland as Senior Pastor, and Union Church leaders including 3 deacons met with Dan to ask pointed questions regarding his faith journey, his call to ministry and to offer personal reflections on the process, meaning and expectations for ordination within the Christian tradition. We were overjoyed to host Dan's ordination service on the evening of 8 September 2024, with keynote speaker Pastor Steve Gaultney. It was a joyful celebration of leadership development and growth from among our church staff members. Key for us was recognising staff who have served the Union Church family diligently and expressed a desire to deepen their ministry activities within our church.

In the area of mission, another of our core values, we continue to work with the Missions team to encourage broad congregational engagement with our missions partners, through lunch and learn sessions on Sundays, mission highlights during Sunday services to share our partners' activities and needs, Mission Fairs to offer platforms for our mission partners to engage with more congregation members and through providing service opportunities, like BLESS THIS CITY, and holiday outreach events (Christmas plays, tutoring services, onsite testimonies and sharing by Union members). Members of the Deacons' Court also took part in the

Deacons' Court

recent global search for a new Missions Director to further support mission activities at Union in new and exciting ways.

As mentioned at the start of this report, prayer remains a central focus and activity for the Deacons' Court. Prayer ministry is offered each week during all four Sunday services, with Deacons and prayer ministers standing by after each service to pray with congregants individually for their specific prayer requests. Along with the entire Union family, we continue to pray daily with our "Change me, Use me" prayer messages. We encourage the church family to pray for the needs and intentions of our community through the WhatsApp prayer chat and through the prayer@unionchurchhk.org email. We take part in weekly prayer sessions on Tuesday and Friday mornings and host monthly all church prayer meetings, typically on the second Wednesday of each month. This spring we will expand our Prayer Ministry team, providing training with members of our Union Church family who feel called to activate their prayer life and receive training to do so. Listen for announcements about these sessions in the coming month and prayerfully consider if God is calling you to participate in Union's church life in this manner.

As you read through this list of growing and new activities at Union, we hope you will share in the excitement we feel about how God is moving in our church. We look forward to the multiple opportunities and activities that we see arising on the horizon. These will expand our Kingdom reach even further as we continue to seek God for His Spirit of unity, with a keen prayerful focus on His perspective and guidance as we go! Throughout 2024 and into 2025, we will remain steadfast as Deacons, to pray, discern, collaborate, [10 | Union Church | Annual Report 2024](#)

challenge ourselves, wrestle in faith, love through Christ, and serve Union Church and the broader Hong Kong Christian church community in unity with our fellow leaders.

The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house,' says the Lord Almighty. 'And in this place I will grant peace,' declares the Lord Almighty.. ~ Haggai 2:9





Committee of Management Report

by Michael Birley, Chairman

Celebrating 180 years of Union Church and Our First Full Year in the New 22A.

Ephesians 4:16: “From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”

After the frantic activity of the preparation for and the execution of the move in our new premises from Wanchai, our first Christmas and getting used to living in and running the building, one might have expected everyone to take a break! This would be far from the actuality. The activity has continued unabated.

Those of us who only attend Union Church on a Sunday are only getting part of the total picture. We have a new and much expanded premises with what is a much more technically complicated building to run. Under Pastor Michele’s leadership, supported by Rev. Dan Tupps (we celebrated his ordination on September 8th), and our operations director, Jessey Xiong, the Union Church staff have more than stepped up to the task in hand and have achieved all that they have with a reduced head count in some key areas. I cannot express highly enough our appreciation at the thought, dedication and application that is evident in all that they are involved in.

In November, we held a celebration service to mark the establishing of Union Church in Hong Kong by Rev James Legge

180 years ago in 1844, and to give thanks for completing our first 12 months at 22A. In 2014, we established the BUFF (Building Union for the future) team who did an exemplary job in planning and building our Church and residential block over 10 years. We are now in the process of building up the soft side of our Church and community. This is also taking time, prayer and commitment. We are looking to the future of Union to fulfil our statement of mission:

“Building a home in Christ to seek, love and serve God and our neighbours.”

Our neighbours are certainly noticing! In addition to the tenants in the 22A residences, we are getting an increasing number of local residents who are stopping by to look in. We have a Wednesday Coffee and Conversations every other week, which is very much a community-based initiative. That’s on top of Alpha Courses – we celebrated 30 years of Alpha at Union Church - our Children, Youth, Women’s and Men’s ministries, kindness walks, the Stephens Ministry, and so many more.

Reflecting on the last 12 months at Union Church, I believe we have been going through a period of bedding in! To continue the gardening analogy, we transplanted the Church from 22A to Wanchai in 2017. After six years, there was another uprooting and replant in a very different 22A. As we continue to work and grow our missional capability, we will be taking same steps forward and some backwards - sometimes it may appear that there is not much of an expansive nature happening. Nothing could

be further from the actuality.

There are activities at the Church almost every evening during the week, as well as day-time events and ministries. We have had the HK Chamber Orchestra perform in the Sanctuary, which was very well attended, and we expect further similar events.

Our weddings and funerals ministry has seen an encouraging uptake in 2024 which we expect will continue to expand in 2025.

It would of course not be possible to oversee and run the increasing number of activities we do without the input of our volunteers, who add a whole new layer of 'can do'. We are always looking for not only volunteers to support the existing leaders and teams in these activities, but also for individuals who are going to be tomorrow's leaders. There are so many opportunities and levels at which members of our congregation can be involved; as we look to fulfill our aims as a Missional Church, we can encourage one another to start small. Being on the welcome team, helping with coffee or the baking and of course participation in a home group is a wonderful place to begin. Or simply join one of our prayer meetings.

The Union Church Committee of Management meets on a monthly basis, usually by Zoom. We did have two meetings in person: one before a dinner to celebrate the Lunar New Year and a similar format just prior to Christmas for the December meeting.

We welcomed Jessica Cutrera and Kenneth Chan who joined the Committee in April after they were voted in at the last AGM. I would like to express appreciation for the

dedication that each of the committee members have demonstrated during the last 12 months. Each member takes a role as liaison with a particular part of the Church's activities, which takes time and attention, in addition to attending the monthly meetings. My thanks to George Ding, our Honorary Treasurer, who continues to play a key role in working with the staff on budgeting and financial reporting and Jonathan Au-Weng, our Honourary Secretary, who is keeper of the records.

During the year, the Members of the Committee of Management (CoM) were:

Michael Birley
Chair – Stewardship

William Kuan
Deputy Chair - Young Adults

George Ding
Hon Treasurer

Jonathan Au-weng
Hon Secretary and Sunday School

Emilie Banfield
Missions

Po Cheung
Worship

Shaun Dove
Security

Cecilia Lee
Youth

Ricky Lai
Facilities Management

Committee of Management

Susan King
Filipino Ministry

Elizabeth Pang
Women's Ministry

Jessica Cutrera

Kenneth Chan

A big thank you to Shaun Dove who will be stepping down after four years on the Committee. His advice and insights, particularly in the area of security and safety as we prepared for the move into 22A, have been invaluable.

I will be stepping down at this AGM after six years on the Committee of Management. It has been an honour and privilege to serve alongside my fellow members of the Committee past and

present, as well as with Terri Appel and John Nicholls and the other Deacons and Trustees. I would like to thank the Union Church community for your support, encouragement, guidance and in some cases forbearance! We have an awesome staff, awesome team and awesome community. I'm very excited about our future and what will emerge from the prayer, preparation and plans we continue to develop and lay down.

To Him be the Glory.

Michael Birley, Chairman
Committee of Management



Trustees' Report

by John Nicholls, Chairman

The Trustees for 2024 were unchanged from 2023 and were Prof John Nicholls (Chairman); Ms. Jane Arnett; Dr. Rosanna Chan; Mr. Alan Law; Mr. John Li; Dr. Henry Ngan; and Ms. Jasmine Ng.

Each year, we remind the congregation that the Trustees are the body corporate of Union Church in which we hold the church's property in trust for the purpose of a church for the public worship of God and for preaching the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, according to the principles and usages of Protestant Christians, provided that the Church shall always accept as its primary standards the Word of God as witnessed to by the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, the Trinitarian Doctrine of the Christian Faith and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

One of the Trustees' main responsibilities is to oversee the management of investments Union Church has been fortunate enough to possess from the previous years of good stewardship of our predecessors.

At the end of 2024, all residential units at 22A Kennedy Road were leased out. The Trustees will continue to hold the property and the net rental income for the purpose of the trust.

So that Union Church can retain its charitable status under section 88, the Inland Revenue Department has stipulated that income from the flats and car parks must be separate from the operating expenses of Union Church. Accordingly, the Trustees applied for Business Registration, and this was granted in June 2024.

Subsequent to that, Trustees appointed Forvis Mazars as auditors for the body corporate for the fiscal year ending December 2024. In 2024, income from the flats and carparks, after deducting all expenses, has been used to establish a sinking fund for future capital works of the apartments, staged replenishment of capital reserves, and missions and outreach purposes. Contributions towards mission outreach and missions staff funding have exceeded HK\$ 2 million in the fiscal year 2024.

As stated in the Ordinance, the Trustees are responsible for providing of a residence for the Minister. As mentioned in the 2023 Annual Report, income from the apartments has been used to secure accommodation for the minister close to the Church.

The Church has two main investment funds: the General Fund and the Three-Quarter Century Fund. There are no restrictions on the use of the former; however, there are on the latter. The Three-Quarter Century Fund was established shortly after the First World War, about 75 years after the foundation of the Church, and any income or capital can be used only for specified expenses and outgoings connected with maintenance of the Church's Ministry. In effect, the Three-Quarter Century Fund is the investment set aside to ensure that we can continue to employ a minister, should we ever be unable to pay our way. Similar to 2023, 2024 has been a challenging year for the church finances, so the Trustees used interest from this fund to aid in the Senior

Minister's stipend.

The Trustees are regularly asked at the Annual General Meeting why we do not move funds between the General Fund and the Three-Quarter Century Fund; the simple reason is that the regulations do not allow us to do so, and we would have to apply to the courts to alter this.

As documented in the last Trustee report at the end of 2023, the General Fund was valued at \$10,607,951 and the Three-Quarter Century fund at \$8,691,536. Despite the relaxation of many activities after the pandemic, 2024 has still been a challenging one for the financial markets, with the effect of the conflict in Europe and tensions between regions causing significant market volatility. Our holdings have been invested in Fidelity Global Investment (FGI) Fund – Stable Growth Fund (Class A), managed by FIL Limited. The FGI Fund is authorised by the Securities & Futures Commission and complies with Mandatory Provident Fund.

As of 31st December 2024, the balance in the General Fund was \$11,162,488

and the Three-Quarter Century Fund was 8,609,474.

One concern that regularly arises from the congregation, and which was detailed in last year's report, is how our funds are invested. The Trustees do not have personal control over the ethical nature of the companies in which the church's funds are invested, so they are not able, for example, to screen out gaming or other stocks they consider inappropriate for the church to hold. However, the Trustees note that Fidelity is a signatory to the United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment, a voluntary framework for incorporating Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) issues into investment decision-making and ownership practices.

FIL participates in the debate over the development of appropriate standards for responsible investment through its membership in the following forums:

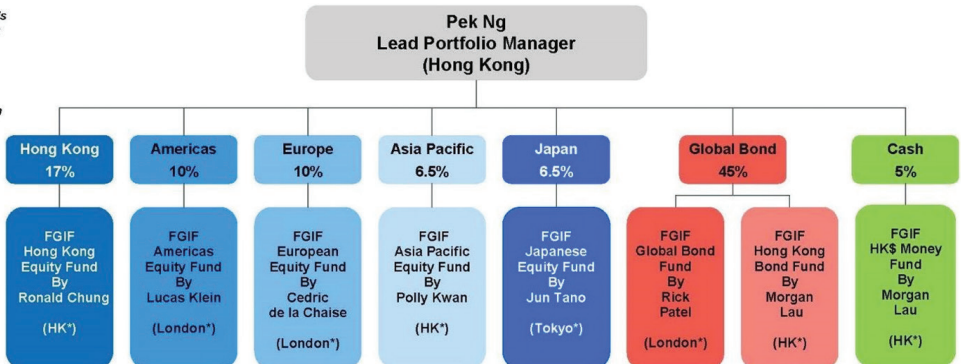
- International Corporate Governance Network (ICGN)
- Asian Corporate Governance Association (ACGA)
- Asia Securities Industry and Financial Markets (ASIFM)

Structure of the FGIF Stable Growth Fund

Two Levels of Alpha:

Asset Allocation

Security Selection



- Hong Kong Investment Funds Association (HKIFA)
- The Association of British Insurers (ABI), the Corporate Governance Forum, Investment Association (IA), and UK Sustainable Investment and Finance Association (UKSIF) in the UK
- The Dutch Association of Investors for Sustainable Development (VBDO)

In addition, Fidelity is a signatory to the UK Stewardship Code and the Japanese Stewardship Code.

In overseeing the management of the Church's investments during 2023, the Trustees summarise the situation as follows:

- (a) the aim of the church's investments is steady growth and income with low to medium risk
- (b) the funds are managed by FIL Investment Management (Hong Kong) Ltd, and
- (c) the funds are invested 50% in

equities in five regional (worldwide) pooled funds, 45% in bonds in two regional (worldwide) pooled funds and 5% cash.

The Chater (Union Church) Endowment Fund is an endowment fund that is too small to be managed alongside the General and Three-Quarter Century Funds. Invested in Hang Seng H Share Exchange Traded Funds (with a small amount of cash), the Fund was valued at \$68,880 at the beginning of 2025, representing a 45% gain. To comply with the charitable status for the purposes of taxation, after an audit by the Inland Revenue Department, a small disbursement was made from the Fund's income to the Committee of Management which, in accordance with the Fund's Deed, is responsible for its use. In March 2024, the Inland Revenue Department continued to accept the Chater Fund as a Charitable Institution.



Prayer

by Eric Fung

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” ~1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

As followers of Jesus Christ, prayer is a foundational aspect of our lives, integral to our communion with our Lord and Saviour. It shifts our focus from ourselves to Him, allowing us to spend time in His presence and align our hearts with His will.

Over the past year, our congregation has been encouraged to deepen our commitment to prayer on both individual and corporate levels. We are grateful for our dedicated team of prayer warriors who have faithfully participated in our Tuesday morning prayer sessions, Deacons' Friday morning prayer gatherings, monthly in-person prayer meetings, and the fervent prayers offered through Union's prayer chain. These efforts are vital in providing spiritual support for our church community and fostering a strong spirit of unity as we come together to pray for our congregation, our city, and the world.

Beginning in June 2024, we have intentionally dedicated a space in the sanctuary for personal prayer support at the end of each service. This initiative allows our Deacons to pray with those who seek prayer - whether for physical or spiritual healing, guidance and strength in challenging times, or to express gratitude for God's provision and protection. The response has been overwhelmingly positive, with many individuals stepping forward to receive prayer.

Our commitment to intercede for our community has been further exemplified through several prayer walks over the past year. During one such walk in Wan Chai, our team prayed for local ministries, those working on the streets, and sought to open our eyes to the needs of our neighbours, asking God to reveal our roles in His plan. Additionally, our leaders - comprising the Committee of Ministry (COM), Deacons, Trustees, and staff - have gathered for retreats to pray, reflect, and seek God's vision for us, as we strive to build a home in Christ where we can seek, love, and serve God and our neighbors. Members of our congregation also contributed to a devotional during the Advent season, facilitating daily meditation and prayer.

We have witnessed God continually transforming us through prayer. Let us be reminded that prayer is not only our refuge but also a powerful weapon as we lean into His presence and guidance for what lies ahead.

*“So when I fight, I'll fight on my knees
With my hands lifted high
Oh, God, the battle belongs to You
And every fear I lay at Your feet
I'll sing through the night
Oh, God, the battle belongs to You.”
~ Phil Wickham, “Battle Belongs”*

Educate

Young Adults by Rev. Dan Tupps

YOUNG ADULTS

I continued leading our young adults ministry, with the great help of William Kuan, this past year. While we said farewell to some who left Hong Kong, we also welcomed several new young adults who joined our group – including one who was baptised! We averaged 11 in attendance at our weekly Sunday gatherings and topped out at 17 twice during the year, including our annual Christmas party.

The three pillars of our young adults ministry are: Learning, Fellowship and Serving.

Learning:

- **One at a Time** – An inspiring video-based study on how we can make a difference by following Jesus' example of impacting one life at a time.
- **Jesus the Messiah (Gospel of Matthew)** – ONE2024 Campaign study during Lent.
- **Faith, Doubt and God's Mysterious Timing** – Video-based study on trusting God.
- **Christianity for All** – Joined the Apologetics class taught by guest Joshua Yen.
- **Book of James** – Sermon-based study.
- **Stewardship/Generosity** – A study during stewardship month.

Fellowship:

- Weekly lunches together during/ after study
- Visiting Pastor Dan & Geeta's home

in Ma Wan

- Basketball
- Bowling
- Karaoke
- Games Day/Night
- Christmas Gift Exchange Party

Serving:

- **Kindness Walks** – We served together on five Kindness Walks throughout the year, blessing our neighbours in Wan Chai.
- **University Outreach** – We hosted a BBQ for university students in September for over 30 university students from various schools in Hong Kong, as well as partnering with Bridges International, with several Union families hosting university students during Christmas holiday.
- **Christmas Outreaches at HOLF and SBSH** – We participated in two Christmas outreaches: to individuals with mental and physical disabilities at the Home of Loving Faithfulness and children at the St. Barnabas' Society and Home.

It was a great year of fun, fellowship and strengthening our faith together.





Men's Ministry by Rev. Dan Tupps

MEN'S MINISTRY

Our men gathered regularly for the monthly Men's Fellowship of Hong Kong, hosted by Union's own Michael Birley, at the Hong Kong Club. In partnership with Michael and Lance Lee, I helped plan these monthly lunches, as well as two special occasions for men and women at Valentine's Day and Christmas.

We also had two men's dinners – one in January with 50 men and another in September with 35 men joining. Danny Lim, part of the Walk to Emmaus community, shared a powerful testimony of trusting in God at the first dinner in January. And Allen Ha shared about Dads' Network and his passion for training up and encouraging dads to be active fathers. We also had a few informal times

of fellowship for Wings & Fries with the Guys.

Our men also engaged in in-depth study of God's Word through the weekly Thursday online lunchtime group, BSF groups, Tuesday online studies led by Ken Morrison on the Gospel of Matthew during Lent, and the book of James in the Fall. Andrew Lo led summer studies on the book of Colossians and John 3-4.

All this, along with other informal gatherings for fellowship, prayer and authentic sharing, have fostered friendships and spiritual bonds of brotherhood.



Discipleship by Rev. Dan Tupps

DISCIPLESHIP

This past year, we launched the 2:7 Series. Two of our core values at Union are that we are Christ-centred and we value building community. At the heart of discipleship is growing in our relationship with Christ, but doing so in community with other Christians. We believe that discipleship is holistic and happens in larger settings, such as a class, in smaller groups and one on one (mentoring).

2:7 Discipleship Series

This past year, we launched the 2:7 Discipleship series (based on Colossians 2:7), which consists of three 11-session books to help believers grow in their faith and walk with God. The material includes in-depth Bible studies, spiritual practices such as Scripture memory and prayer, teaching on evangelism and how to develop and share your personal testimony with others. The series started with 10 participants and there were 7 who completed all three books! A big thank you to Greg and Chris So for helping to launch and facilitate this inaugural group. We look forward to multiple new groups going through the 2:7 Discipleship series to deepen their faith in 2025.

Baptism Classes

I went through the baptism class material individually with two adults and one young adult, all of whom I had the honour to baptise! I also met with, and wound up baptising, four youth who went through the confirmation process, including my son and niece! I also met with three couples in preparation for baby baptism and dedications.

Adult Education – Christianity For All Class

In the summer of 2024, we held a 4-part series exploring the relevance of Christianity in today's world, taught by Joshua Yen, a Philosophy and Theology student at the University of Oxford. Joshua provided in-depth teaching and led discussion on topics like salvation through Christ alone, living as a Christian in a secular society, defending your faith and wrestling with questions of suffering. We had an average of 21 participants for each session.

Adult Education – Talks on James Legge and the History of Union Church

In celebration of our 180th anniversary, we had two talks on our founder Rev. Dr. James Legge during the Fall of 2024. The first was given by our own Catriona Woodrow by invitation of the Saturday morning small group with 32 in attendance. It was an excellent summary of Legge's humble beginnings and the influence he had, not just in starting Union Church, but throughout Hong Kong society. A few weeks later, Dr. Wu Kin Pan, guest lecturer at LTS, gave another insightful talk, with about 20 in attendance, on Legge's friendships and connections that led to the founding of Union Church.

Mental Health First Aid Training

We had 50 people certified in Mental Health First Aid over the course of three trainings this past year! Those receiving training included most of our mentors from our mentoring programme, Stephen ministers, church leaders and staff, educators in the city and others from Union and the broader community. Mental Health First Aid helps provide early-intervention steps to guide others to get the help they need. Grateful for Chloe Wong, a Counselling Psychologist and Board Certified Behavioural Analyst, who was our trainer for all three sessions.

Faith in the Marketplace

We believe discipleship is not just growing in knowledge, but also living it out in everyday life. Many spend most of their week in the workplace. Therefore, we want to equip and empower workers to integrate their faith with how they think and go about their work. After learning about the Faith Driven Entrepreneurs (FDE) movement and study materials in late 2023, we launched an FDE foundation group in the Spring of 2024 led by Vivien Teu. The small group of about 4-6 current and aspiring entrepreneurs went through the 8 sessions of the foundation course. We hope to run another FDE course in the future, as well as a Faith Driven Investor (FDI) group after the FDI Conference to be held at Union in early 2025.

Later, in May and June, we offered a 4-part series entitled: ***Thriving Amidst Workplace Challenges: Empowering Professionals to Excel***, with the goal of equipping and encouraging those at Union, as well in our community. We had an average of 20 attending each session. The topics and speakers were:

- *Coping with Workplace Stress* with Andrew Lo
- *Beyond Burnout: A Healthy Work-Life Balance* with Pastor Dan
- *Love as a Leadership Skill* with Charles Caldwell
- *Opportunities and Risks of A.I.* with Sohee Park

Union also hosted the annual Halftime Summit in June. This two-day event helped participants consider their calling for the second half of life and discover creative ways to channel their passions and talent towards meaning and significance.

Small Groups

Small groups are where we can connect regularly with each other in community and explore more deeply what it means to follow Jesus by studying the Bible, reading topical books, praying, laughing and serving together. There are about 15 small groups at Union that meet at different times of the day and night, and for people at various seasons of life. We have groups for Men, Women, Couples, Young Adults and inter-generational groups that meet in-person and online. There are groups that focus more on study, others more on fellowship; some place an emphasis on both and those are a couple of groups that place a strong priority on missions and outreach. While the groups are different, the purpose is the same – to grow more like Christ together in community.

Twice a year – once in the Spring during Lent and again in early Fall – we do a church-wide campaign where all our small groups study the same topic or book of the Bible that coincides with our preaching series. This past year it was “Jesus the Messiah” from the Gospel of Matthew during Lent, and the Book of James in the Fall.

Praise the Lord, we had several people joining a small group for the first time in 2024, and a couple of new groups were formed. Our hope is that even more will become connected to a group in the coming year, so that there are even more new groups and for every small group to be actively engaged in reaching out to our neighbours and community in Hong Kong.

Mentoring Programme

We continued to have more people join our mentoring programme and be successfully matched with a mentor. Existing mentoring relationships continued to go strong, with

Educate

a few ending naturally, due to one party leaving Hong Kong. In total, there are currently about 20 ongoing mentoring relationships. Feedback from mentees continues to be very good, as far as the effectiveness of having a mentor to help with various aspects of life and faith. Mentors also report the benefit they can see from being able to share and pray together.

We continued to provide ongoing training and practical tools to help both mentors and mentees. Charles Caldwell led three mentoring workshops in 2024 on the following topics:

- *The Time-Traveler's Parable* – This experiential case study helped the 26 participants see the need for working together and how mentoring is helpful in that endeavour.
- *God's Plans and Exit Plans* – A hands-on session for 28 participants who were trained in developing, and began working on, a helpful life planning tool that is applicable to various aspects of life.
- *LinkedIn, Job Skills, and Personal Brand in the Market* – This practical workshop helped the 25 participants to learn how they could enhance their career skills, build their personal brand and discover new ways to strengthen or share their faith.

The mentoring programme has helped some who are new to Union to become more connected and involved and allowed those with more experience in a specific area to mentor someone else. The mentoring workshops have attracted the interest of many outside the church. At one workshop, a snap poll revealed that nearly 20% of the attendees were still exploring

Christianity! This programme is a great opportunity for building up and reaching out.

Premarital Counselling and Weddings

I did premarital counselling for two couples this past year. I also officiated at three weddings - two at Union and one in Germany (for a couple from Union for whom I had done premarital counselling the year before). I also recorded a video message that was played for a fourth wedding in USA for a former Union young adult.





Youth by AJ Ornias

YOUTH MINISTRY

“Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.” ~ 1 Timothy 4:12

Identity plays a crucial role in a person’s life, particularly during the formative “Youth” stages. At Union Church, we recognized the importance of establishing a strong identity for our Youth Ministry. We aimed to create a mission and vision that resonated deeply with this generation.

To reflect this commitment, we named our Youth Ministry “4:12 Youth,” inspired by the passage you have just heard. Our goal is to provide young people with a broader perspective on their lives. As they follow Jesus, we want them to understand that their lives are not solely their own: they are called to submit to Him. In doing so, they can set a powerful example for others in every aspect of their lives.

Sunday School

This year, we made a conscious effort to differentiate our activities on Fridays and Sundays. Sundays are now dedicated to in-depth Bible and book studies. We kicked off the year with a Sunday series aligned with the church-wide focus on the book of Matthew and the Lenten season. During this time, we explored Jesus as the True Messiah, capable of overcoming the challenges of this world, followed by a series on being authentic witnesses of Jesus to others. We also took the opportunity to celebrate special days

for mothers and fathers, as they coincided with Sundays.

In the last quarter of the year, we experienced a remarkable increase in attendance for our Sunday School services, particularly at the 9:45 AM service. At the beginning of the year, we had just two children attending, but by November and December, that number grew to ten regular attendees. This surge can largely be attributed to our outreach efforts at International Christian School and Concordia Lutheran School, Northpoint.

Friday Youth Night

Friday Youth Night is designed to be a fun-filled evening for our youth. These gatherings are packed with games and activities, seamlessly integrating short Bible lessons and fostering small group discussions both within and outside the church. We began the year with a Friday Youth Series focused on the character of God as the Good Shepherd, highlighting His desire to care for His flock.

In addition to our structured activities, we enjoy various outings, such as bowling, roller skating, and movie nights, which help strengthen relationships and fellowship among the group. With exclusive access to the church building on Friday evenings, we make the most of our time together by playing games like hide and seek. We’ve also introduced Youth Lock-In events, where we spend the night at the church, further deepening the connections within our youth group. In the final part of the year, we hosted our inaugural “Night of Entertainment: Youth Missions Fundraiser Dinner,” inviting our church community to enjoy an evening filled with talented showcases while raising funds for our

mission trips. This event marked our first fundraiser of its kind in several years, and it was a wonderful opportunity to come together in support of our youth and their impactful missions.

Mission Trip

This year, we had the incredible opportunity to visit Kids International Ministries (KIM) during the Easter holidays. Our team consisted of 25 participants, including our youth, their parents, and some siblings. One of our primary tasks was to paint the fence of the newly constructed basketball court at KIM.

This trip also allowed us to spend meaningful time with the children from the home and local kids in the community. I particularly cherish this aspect, as it encourages our youth to forge friendships beyond Hong Kong and recognize the blessings in their own lives, inspiring them to be a blessing to others.

A significant part of our trip involved participating in feeding programmes. KIM has extensive outreach in small,

underserved communities, where they provide essential meals for children and their families. Witnessing our youth serve these communities and connect with the locals is one of the main objectives of our mission trips. While service is vital, the most impactful takeaway for me is the stories and perspectives these young people bring back home.

Throughout the trip, we received wonderful feedback from both the youth and their parents. It was heartwarming to see families bond more deeply, especially during the evenings, as they reflected on each day's experiences. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who partnered with us to make this trip possible! God is truly good!

Youth Confirmation

This year, six of our youth participated in the mentorship program for Confirmation: Anri van der Walt, Hannah Wong, Giselle Lee, Desiree Sidhu, Jody Lee, and Lucas Tupps. Over the course of two and a half months, they engaged in a comprehensive curriculum that explored the foundational aspects of our faith in Jesus.



Educate

During our Confirmation Sunday, we had the joy of baptizing four of these young individuals, while two others were confirmed. This milestone not only marks a significant step in their spiritual journeys but also reflects the dedication and growth they have experienced throughout the program.

Local Outreach/Partnerships

I wanted to share this update, so that our members can see the areas for prayer and support. Over the past year, we have partnered with Young Life to reach out to Concordia Lutheran School in North Point. This collaboration has opened the door for our church to connect with students, resulting in one student consistently attending our youth group on both Fridays and Sundays.

Additionally, the International Christian School has invited me to preach at several of their chapel services and student camps throughout the year. This partnership has led to a dozen new students joining our Sunday School, further solidifying the relationship between Union Church and

ICS as we work together to support these young individuals.

We are also strengthening our connections with various international churches across Hong Kong. Collaborations for Youth Nights, such as Resound and Alpha Youth, are planned to kick off in 2025, which we believe will enhance our outreach and community engagement.

Gratitude

I firmly believe that God is doing something extraordinary within our church, particularly in our Youth Ministry. I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone—members, church leaders, church staff and supporters—who have contributed to the growth of Union Church and our 4:12 Youth Ministry. A special thank you to Dale, Wanda, Cecilia, Jesna, Pastor Dan, and Pastor Michele for your unwavering support of this next generation. It is both an honour and a privilege to serve God alongside such dedicated and inspiring individuals.





Children's Ministry by Jacklien Lee

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

As we celebrate our first year operating in our permanent location, the Children's Ministry continues to faithfully raise all of our children for Christ's kingdom in line with our ministry's vision. We praise God for His faithfulness that we can share God's Word and His love with the children. We give thanks that "God works for the good of those who love him, and who have been called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28

This past year, the Children's Ministry has been productive in our mission to train up our children in God's way. We shared God's Word and disciplined our children through our weekly Sunday School programme and Vacation Bible School (VBS). Also, we equipped parents through our Parenting Alpha course. In addition, we reached out to the community through family-friendly Kids' Easter Fest, Kingdom Kids Carnival, Mom's Date, and Kids' Summer Fun Program. We warmly welcomed existing and many new families and out-of-town visitors to our Sunday School. Furthermore, we served our communities through Christmas outreach at the Home of Loving Faithfulness (HOLF) and the St. Barnabas Society and Home (SBSH). Lastly, we shared the good news of Jesus' birth with the community through our Children's Christmas Musical.

We are encouraged and thankful for our team of amazing and faithful volunteers.

By God's grace, our core team of Sunday School volunteers continue to faithfully invest their time in sharing God's Word with the children. In addition, we are grateful for the support of many brothers and sisters in Christ who generously invest their time, love, and energy into our community events. With their support, our family-friendly events and community outreaches were successful, and we were able to connect with many families for fellowship.

We are grateful for the continued trust and support of all our families and our church community towards Children's Ministry. We pray that we may find favour in God's eyes and He will continue to equip us and use us mightily to share Jesus' love with all the children and their families.

We are motivated to equip the children and their families to grow closer in their relationship with Jesus and with one another. We pray that, with all the resources and the gifts and talents that God has bestowed upon us, we may continue to abound in every good work and for the glory of His name.

"And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work."

~2 Corinthians 9:8









Filipino Ministry

by Pastor Fe Warlyn Pepito

FILIPINO MINISTRY

As we reflect on the past year, we are filled with gratitude and awe for the immeasurable ways God has moved within the Filipino Ministry. We have witnessed miracles, growth, and transformation, as well as the power of unity in our pursuit of God's desire, through worship, discipleship, outreach, and service. Together, we have glorified God and made His love known within our community.

Ministry Highlights

- Alpha Course:** In August, we had the opportunity to run the Alpha program for both Sunday and Saturday groups. Remarkably, 70% of the Filipino community participated, enjoying not only the food but also the inspiring talks and testimonies. Many shared that they felt renewed and motivated to serve the Lord, with some individuals who were not yet followers of Jesus accepting Him as their Lord and Savior. Four individuals have also committed to water baptism.
- Prayer and Fasting:** We welcomed the first Sunday of the year with a dedicated prayer and fasting initiative, aimed at encouraging individuals to deepen their prayer lives and intercede for the needs of the church and community. Our weekly prayer meetings have seen attendance between 12 to 23 individuals, with a special prayer getaway at Austin Park drawing around 50 participants.
- Chinese New Year Conference:** We hosted a two-day conference with four other Filipino congregations, attracting 342 attendees. This transformative experience led to testimonies of renewed hope, healing, and a deeper alignment with God's will.
- Sportsfest:** Themed "BASTAT IKAW MAY TAGUMPAY," this event began with prayer and a message emphasizing teamwork for Christ. It served as a platform for building relationships, fostering teamwork, and encouraging unity while providing fun and continuing the ministry.
- Filipino Praise Team:** Our praise team has consistently demonstrated exceptional dedication, collaboration, and innovation. Despite the unpredictable nature of their work schedules, each member has contributed unique strengths, fostering a positive and productive environment. We also bid farewell to Mary Ann Collado, Gelyn Preglo, and Joscelyn Denial, who made significant contributions to this ministry.
- Tambourine/Dance Ministry:** After a hiatus, this ministry made a meaningful contribution to the UC 180th Thanksgiving service in November 2024, enriching our worship experience and showcasing the power of music in glorifying God.

Throughout the year, we have been blessed to support 24 individuals facing job terminations, and those awaiting employment visas, including pastors who served as speakers.

These achievements have not come

Educate

without challenges, but God's steadfast love and faithfulness have guided us through. We are grateful for our dedicated team and the countless lives touched by this ministry.

Philippians 4:6 resonates deeply with us: "Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." This verse reassures us that our work is part of God's greater plan. As we move forward, we remain committed to serving with humility and a heartfelt desire to share God's love with others.

Looking ahead, we are filled with hope and anticipation for what God will accomplish in the coming year. Thank you to everyone for being a part of this journey.



Evangelise

Alpha by Patrick Wilson, Alexander Mak and Stephen Shum, Alpha Course Administrators

We ran Alpha in English, Mandarin, Cantonese and Tagalog this year. (The latter will be covered in Pastor Fe's report).

The two English courses started in January and September. 2024 saw the 30th anniversary of Alpha in Hong Kong which began at Union Church. In order to celebrate the occasion, we liaised closely with the Hong Kong Alpha office and 7 other international churches over several months, in order to organize one joint Away Day on Sat 9th November, which almost 300 people attended. The event was held at Yew Chung International School and also included Cantonese and Mandarin speaking groups from Workplace courses. It was a joyous occasion and a wonderful celebration of unity amongst Hong Kong's international churches; a special day enjoyed by all.

There were also two Chinese Alpha courses this year, consisting of both Cantonese and Mandarin speaking groups. For the Cantonese group, we had 24 caregivers, mostly from Guangdong and Guangxi provinces. However, because of their different work shifts, most of them could only attend one or two sessions, with a few who attended three or more sessions. Of these, one was already a Christian and one accepted Christ after the course. Because of the low attendance and the fact that Alpha is a structured and progressive course, we thought of bringing the course closer to their workplaces in Kwun Tong, in order to make it easier for them to attend. But we then found out that they actually preferred to meet at Union Church! So,

after the course, we organised three fellowship evenings at church. Following the Alpha format, we had a meal, a talk, and then a time of worship ending with a group discussion. They were all well attended with about 10 caregivers attending each time. It's been amazing to see lives being touched at different stages of guests' search for meaning. We have been encouraged to see some guests wanting to help on future courses, as well as the formation of a new Mandarin speaking small group that now meets weekly for Bible study and fellowship.

For the Chinese Alphas, we are grateful to Juliana Wang for inviting the caregivers to 'come and see' in response to Jesus' words. We are also grateful to the many volunteer group hosts and helpers, donors, cooks and caterers for all their help in running these courses.





Missions by the Missions Committee

A Missional Church

As we reflect on the past year, the Missions Committee of Union Church is filled with gratitude and excitement for the future. Our mission continues to be the heartbeat of our church, and we are committed to furthering the legacy of our founder, Rev. Dr. James Legge. His vision of a missional church in Hong Kong is still foundational to our leadership and congregation.

Farewell

This year, we bid a heartfelt farewell to our long-time Secretary, Kathy Foley, who has moved back to Ohio. Kathy's faithful service at Union Church has been a blessing to our community. Her dedication and commitment have been instrumental in our mission efforts, and her presence will be deeply missed. We extend our best wishes to Kathy as she embarks on this new chapter in her life.

Meet Your Ministry Partner Lunches

Over the past year, the UC Missions team has sponsored one or two "Meet Your Ministry Partner" lunches each month. These events have provided our congregation with opportunities to learn more about the Christian NGOs we support and explore volunteer opportunities with these organizations. The lunches have fostered stronger connections between our church members and the missions we are passionate about, enhancing our collective impact. To further engage our congregation, the Missions Team has also arranged for a Missions Table to be set up outside the Fellowship Hall on the last Sunday of every month. The table will be manned by one of our committee members, and congregants can learn about and sign up for various service opportunities.

New Missions Director

The search for a new Missions Director was a thorough and prayerful process conducted by the UC Missions team, in collaboration with the HR Committee, Pastor Michele, and our Director of Operations, Jessey Xiong. We were blessed with an abundance of excellent and well-qualified candidates, but in the end the Search Committee voted unanimously to offer the position to Ms. Brenda Lee. Brenda agreed to assume her role effective March 25, 2025.

Brenda is currently pursuing a Doctorate of Ministry with a focus on Missiology at Biola University in California. She has simultaneously been serving as Choir Director, and the Convenor of Adult Bible Study at Ling Liang Church in Hong Kong. Brenda brings a wealth of knowledge and passion for missions. We are thrilled to welcome her to our team. Samantha (Brenda's daughter) is already an active member of our choir. Brenda recently participated in our Christmas Cantata together with Samantha, making this transition even more special. We look forward to Brenda's leadership and inspiration as we continue to support local and foreign missions.

What's Ahead?

As we move forward, we are encouraged by the progress we have made and the new opportunities that lie ahead. The Mission's Committee is committed to continuing our work with passion and dedication, honoring the legacy of Rev. Dr. James Legge and embracing the new leadership of Brenda Lee. Together, we will strive to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve, both locally and globally. We thank our congregation for their unwavering support and prayers, and we look forward to another year of fruitful mission work.

**MEET OUR
MINISTRY
PARTNER**

TODAY, 28 JULY 12:30PM
1/F Fellowship Hall

聖巴拿巴會之家
Saint Barnabas Society & Home

REGISTRATION
@ 62532528



Wedding and Funeral Ministry by Eric Leung

Make your events welcoming to everyone. Create opportunities for building relationships among attendees.

Use events as a chance to share the Gospel.

Overview:

The Union Church event ministry experienced significant activity in 2024. Supporting a variety of important ceremonies and gatherings. This report provides an overview of the key events and their impact on our community.

Weddings

During the reporting period, Union Church proudly hosted 10 wedding ceremonies, each serving as a beautiful celebration of love and commitment. These events brought together loving couples and their families, fostering moments of joy and unity within our community.

Each wedding ceremony is carefully planned and includes a three-hour booking time, which encompasses essential activities such as setup and teardown. This ensures that every detail is attended to for a seamless experience. However, the preparation for each wedding begins well before the ceremony day.

From the moment a couple submits their application, a series of significant preparation steps are initiated:

- **Site Visits:** We offer personalized site visits, allowing couples to envision their special day in our beautiful church setting. This helps them make informed decisions about the layout and decoration of the venue.
- **Wedding Orientation:** Our Pastor(s) provide spiritual guidance throughout the planning process. This includes

discussions about the significance of marriage in the Christian faith and the couple's journey together, helping to ground their celebration in spiritual meaning.

- **Ceremony Guidelines:** We provide comprehensive ceremony guidelines to assist couples in planning their wedding. These guidelines cover various aspects, including hymns selection, readings, and the overall flow of the ceremony, ensuring that it aligns with our church's values and traditions.
- **Rehearsals:** Rehearsals are an integral part of our preparation process. They allow couples and their wedding party to familiarize themselves with the venue and the ceremony proceedings, reducing any anxiety and ensuring that everyone is comfortable on the big day.

The positive feedback we receive from wedding parties reaffirms our commitment to creating an inclusive and welcoming environment. Couples often express their gratitude for the support and care they experience, highlighting how they felt God's love throughout the planning and celebration. This reinforces our mission to be a place where all can come together in faith and joy, celebrating one of life's most significant milestones.

As described in **1 Corinthians 13:4-7**, **love is patient, kind, and selfless**, and we strive to embody these qualities in every wedding we host.

Funerals

In 2024, Union Church provided sacred spaces and compassionate pastoral care for 65 funeral services, offering vital support during some of the most challenging moments in the lives of our community members. Each service was thoughtfully designed to create an atmosphere of reverence and reflection, allowing grieving families to honor their loved ones while finding solace among friends and community.

These solemn occasions served not only as a farewell to the departed but also as an opportunity for the living to come together, share memories, and support one another in their grief. Our dedicated pastoral team was available to provide guidance, listen to the needs of families, and facilitate meaningful ceremonies that aligned with the wishes of the deceased and their loved ones.

These funeral services are a ministry and not purposefully for profit. They reflect our commitment to honoring life and providing comfort, emphasizing the belief that every life is precious and deserving of recognition. **Ecclesiastes 3:1-4 reminds us that there is a time for everything, including a time to mourn**, and we strive to create a space where individuals can process their loss in a supportive environment.

3rd Party Organization Events:

The church hosted 62 events for external nonprofit and community organizations in 2024. These included BSF - Bible Study Fellowship, Mother's Choice, Half-time Ministry, FDI - Faith Driven Investor, HMCC - Harvest Mission Community Church Baptism Celebration, Son & Daughters, Small World Kindergarten Christmas and Graduation ceremony. Also, we host the

1st concert in New 22A with Hong Kong Chamber Orchestra in November.

These partnerships allow us to extend our ministry of fellowship and relationship-building to a wider audience. By opening our doors to various organizations, we not only support their missions but also create opportunities for our congregation to engage with different community members and initiatives.

Overall, the event ministry at Union Church continues to be a meaningful part of our broader mission. By supporting both joyous and solemn occasions, the church plays a crucial role in the life events of its members, providing a safe space for celebration and mourning. Our collaborations with various organizations expand our reach and impact, fostering a sense of unity and collaboration within the community. Together, we strive to be a beacon of hope and love, encouraging all to come together in service and faith.

May the church continue to be a beacon of hope and unity, guided by love and service in all its endeavors.



Worship by Dr. Joyce Wu

“Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.”

~Colossians 3:16

2024 was a truly memorable and amazing year for the Worship Ministry at Union Church. We praise God for His unfailing love, mercy and grace towards us, and give thanks to our volunteers for their faithful service!

We welcomed our worship intern, Britta Tellvik, to the team, and we were thankful to have new members joining the worship team and choir to serve the Lord through music. It was a blessing to worship Him as ONE church at our 180th Anniversary service, which featured a blend of choral music and contemporary worship and dances involving members of the congregation from all four services. We worshipped and remembered what God has done in the past and look forward to the future. May God receive all the glory!

The 8:45am traditional service’s worship ensemble remained united, featuring reflective vocal and instrumental music. Thank you for a group of committed singers and instrumentalists who faithfully dedicated their time to bless the Lord and congregation through music.

For the 9:45am traditional service, the Union Church choir remained strong and sang beautifully with the addition

of new singers. During Lent, the Union Choir collaborated with the choir from Hop Yat Church Hong Kong, and the German Speaking Evangelical Lutheran Congregation in Hong Kong in presenting the Good Friday Cantata “Witness” by Lloyd Larson, which took us to the heart of the Passion Story. We then celebrated Jesus’s resurrection with triumphant brass music at our Easter Sunday services. At the end of the year, we celebrated St. Andrew’s Sunday with bagpipe music. We entered the Advent season with our Children’s Christmas Musical “180 Years of Union Church – A Nativity Musical” and the choir presenting the Christmas Cantata “Bethlehem’s Child” by Lloyd Larson and Victor C. Johnson. We celebrated the birth of Jesus Christ at our joyful Christmas Day service with a string ensemble. For the 11:15am contemporary service, the worship team continues to mature in style and skills, with new singers and instrumentalists joining the team. We are grateful to Anna Rees for leading a Worship Leaders Workshop; Simon Ng for leading a worship workshop “The Presence of God in Contemporary Worship”; and Joshua Ng for leading a worship workshop “God reveals – How?” with fruitful fellowship, worship and thought-provoking discussion on God’s revelation to his people. Thanks to Rob and Betty Porter and AV team for experimenting with new settings to support the worship team and to the choir for leading the congregation into a deeper worship experience.

We also thank God for various music outreach opportunities, such as performing the Good Friday cantata at Hysan Place,

the Christmas cantata at the Hong Kong Museum of Art, and presenting concerts featuring hymn music for the Ebenezer Mooncake workshop and Christmas gingerbread cookies workshop organized by Les Beatitudes Foundation at Union Church. We welcome you to join us to make music and sing praises to our Lord together! We are excited to continue to serve God and our community in this new year.





Pastoral Care

Stephen Ministry by Crystal Lo

As Union Church embarks on its fifth year of Stephen Ministry, we continue to have lay people from our congregation trained and dedicated to provide high quality, confidential, one-to-one care to those experiencing a difficult season in life.

After 50 hours of initial Christian care training with two of our Stephen Leaders (Melody Landes and Deirdre Chan), 9 new Stephen Ministers were commissioned in June. They are - Alexander Mak, Danee Montecillo, Pastor Fe Warlyn Pepito, Georgina Chan, Heleen Van Der Walt, Irene Hui, Stephen Shum, Susanne Salg, and Rebecca Ewal.

With 28 active Stephen Ministers and, 15 caring relationships in 2024, our team meets regularly twice a month for supervision and continued training, and is committed to providing Christ-centred care and support to those who are hurting.

It has been a tough few years for many people, and, while Stephen Ministers are not there to solve the care receivers' problems, they can provide a safe, non-judgemental space and be a caring listener for one to navigate through their feelings and concerns. We hope and pray that more people will join us, to stand in the gap when we train our next cohort of Stephen Ministers. As we seek to be the caregiver to those in need, we give thanks and glory to God, our ultimate Cure Giver.

Commissioning of Stephen Ministers, 16 June 2024



Stephen Ministers gathered from cohort 1 - 3 for dinner and training.



Administration

Stewardship by Michael Birley



“Live the Vision.”

The theme of our Stewardship month in November was “Live the Vision”

We held our annual Stewardship month in November last year and figures to date are currently down. However, we had an increased number of new donors. This did not make up for the numbers that ceased regular contributions. We give thanks for those who have committed to give on a regular basis. We also give thanks for those who are still uncommitted but are considering whether to take that step! Be brave – many have reflected that once they have made a commitment, it becomes a norm.

We have seen an increase in our

attendance numbers and in the weekly collections. We have also seen activities within the Church and the ministries increasing as well. The events of Covid have taken their toll on the international community and some members of longstanding are no longer with us here in Hong Kong - having retired or moved back to their home countries. They are gradually being replaced by new individuals and families who are trying out Union Church for the first time.

Our community here could not operate without the individuals and groups who have given their time and energy to serve on Sundays, greeting, in the Sunday School, worship. During the week, there has been Alpha, now in English, Chinese and Phillipino, and so many other ministries, outreaches, trips, care programmes, mentoring and cooking!

We talked last year about this New Season for Union Church and we are still sowing and growing, in preparation for the opportunities to come out here in our harvest field that is Hong Kong and beyond. With thanks and appreciation.



2024 COMMITMENT CARD RESULT

	NO. OF PEOPLE		AMOUNT (HKD)	
	2023	2024	2023	2024
PLEDGE				
NEW	2	5	72,000	220,800
EXISTING	52	50	3,001,948	3,082,452
	54	55	3,073,948	3,303,252
ONE-OFF				
NEW	1	3	10,000	17,500
EXISTING	25	24	2,883,200	2,435,560
	26	27	2,893,200	2,453,060
FOHKC				
NEW	0	0	-	-
EXISTING	10	3	1,052,000	600,000
	10	3	1,052,000	600,000
GRAND TOTAL	90	85	7,019,148	6,356,312



Human Resources by Jessey Xiong

We praise God for the strength He has granted our staff team over the past year. Through challenges and triumphs, His unwavering support has empowered us to persevere and thrive. We acknowledge the dedication and hard work of each member, and we are grateful for the unity and resilience that has defined our journey as a staff team. We thank God for guiding us, inspiring us, and providing the strength we needed to fulfil our mission.

As of the end of 2024, our team consisted of 14 full-time employees and 10 part-time employees, totalling around 17.6 full-time equivalents. We have diligently worked on seven ministries, as well as wedding and funeral services, alongside non-ministry functions, including operations, accounting, communications, administrative, and janitorial services.

Last year, we bid farewell to our Communication Director, Bronwyn Alexander; Women's & Creativity Director, Juliana Rotmeyer; Digital Ministry Director, Teddy Packham; and Assistant Worship Director, Joshua Cheang. They did amazing work at Union Church, and we wish them all the best.

We also welcomed Fiona and Jack as our Ministry Assistant and Accountant. Looking ahead, we eagerly anticipate the opportunity to continue serving the Lord by faithfully engaging in every function He has called us to fulfil. As we embark on the journey of 2025, we commit to diligently seeking His will in every decision and action, striving to reflect His love and purpose in our work. May our efforts be fruitful and bring glory to His name throughout the year.

Property Committee by Michael Birley

We completed our first full financial year occupying our new premises at 22A. It has been a pleasure to see not only our Church premises being fully utilized but also our apartments in the residential block achieving full occupation. All the 20 apartments are now let out. We have 15 carparking spaces available for hourly parking and it is good to see these are well utilized on Sundays.

Savills have been retained to provide facilities management for the Church premises and Hang Yip and Henderson Leasing are managing the carparks, apartment block and common areas.

We have been blessed with a wonderful new facility, a very different building to the one we vacated in 2017: a 21st century church with 21st century systems and corresponding maintenance and servicing! With the 12 month guarantee period having expired, we have entered into ongoing servicing agreements for the lifts and plant items for the sanctuary and church podium.

As I reported last year, we have established the Union Church Property Committee to oversee all matters pertaining to the 22A premises. The Committee in turn reports and makes recommendations to the Committee of Management and Trustees.

The Committee comprises:

- Chair: Michael Birley
- Pastor Michele Bland
- Jessey Xiong – UC Operations Director
- Hon. Treasurer – George Ding
- Ken Morrison – Deacons

- Ricky Lai – CoM
- William Kuan – CoM
- Rosanna Chan - Trustees
- Jane Arnett – Trustees

Kay Ian Ng and Jasmine Ng stepped down from the committee in 2024 and I would like to record our thanks for the extensive work that they put into negotiating and reviewing all the contracts that were necessary to facilitate the leasing of the apartments. Jane Arnett kindly agreed to join the committee. We would like to extend our thanks and appreciation to all the members of the Committee for the work they have put in. A special mention needs to go out to those who have been involved on operational matters: Ricky Lai has been very active liaising and advising on the facilities management

side, supported by Patrick Wilson. John Li and Rosanna Chan have continued to do a sterling job with the residential block, being the liaison with Henderson Leasing and Hang Yip.

Michael Birley; Chairman



Treasurer's Report

by George Ding

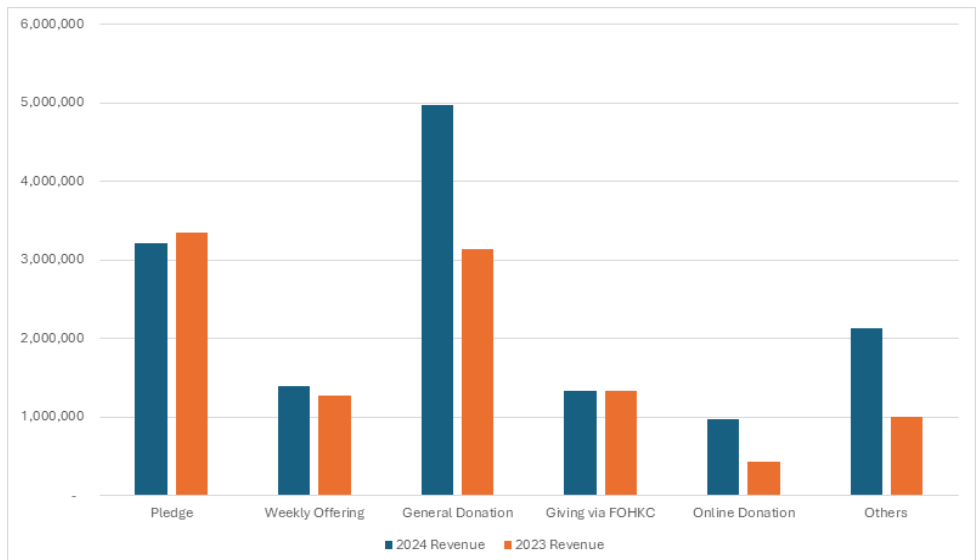
Financial Highlights

Union Church celebrated its 180th anniversary in 2024 at its new premises at 22A Kennedy Road, marking the first full year of operations in the new building. This milestone was achieved amidst Hong Kong's emergence from the aftermath of Covid, with the city experiencing modest GDP growth, a rebound in the equity market, and a real estate market characterized by declining prices but rising transactions.

Despite the challenges of operating from a brand new and much larger building, the church remained committed to its mission. The General Fund recorded a surplus of HKD 0.3 million by year-end, reflecting \$0.3 million operating deficit and a positive investment return of \$0.6 million on General Fund reserves. The net assets of Church Ministries increased to HKD 79.2 million as of December 31, 2024, from HKD 76.3 million in 2023.

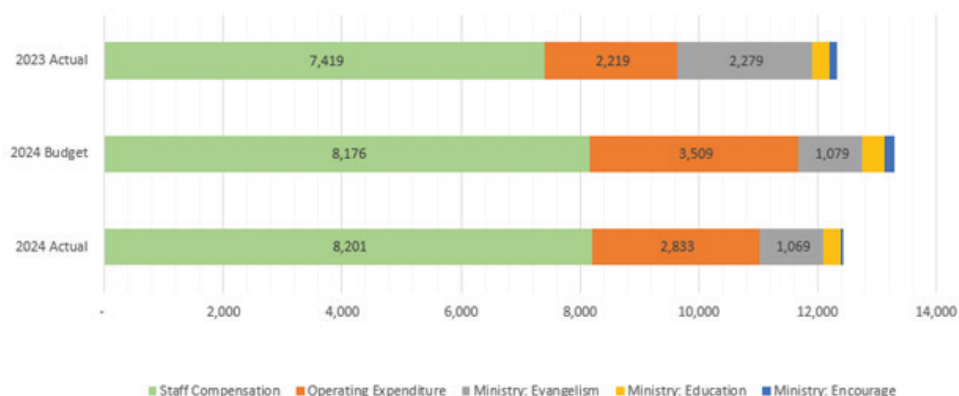
Revenue

Thanks to our Lord's abundant blessings and your generosity, the Offering and Donation Income increased by 24%, from HKD 9.5 million in 2023 to HKD 11.8 million in 2024. Other Income increased significantly, from HKD 1 million to HKD 2.1 million, primarily due to new premises-related income. These include HKD 0.8 million from Wedding, Funeral, and Use of Premises, and HKD 0.6 million from administrative services income, which are on a recurring basis going forward. Additionally, a one-off payment of HKD 0.6 million was received from the early return of our temporary Wanchai location. Our overall ministry revenue increased by 33%, reaching HKD 14 million compared to HKD 10.5 million in 2023. The breakdown of General Fund revenue for 2024 is as follows (in HKD):



Expenses

Operating expenses increased modestly by 1% year-on-year to HKD 12.4 million but remained below budgeted levels. The Church leadership decided to use the apartment rental income to cover Mission Donations starting in 2024, resulting in a 53% drop in Evangelism Ministry Expense to HKD 1 million. Without this transfer payment, the General Fund of Church Ministries would have recorded a deficit in 2024, highlighting the Church's commitment to financial stewardship and sustainability of our ministries. The breakdown of operating expenses for 2024 is as follows (in HKD thousands):



Church Apartments

The Trustees of Union Church in Hong Kong (TUCHK), an incorporated body established according to the Union Church Ordinance and holding the church's properties in trust, has delegated the management of these assets to the Property Committee. The Property Committee is composed of representatives from the Committee of Management, the Trustees, Deacons, and members of the congregation, ensuring a collaborative approach to property management.

2024 marks the first full year of operating the church-owned apartments. To comply with tax regulations, the Church maintains separate financial records for its Ministries and Apartments. The preliminary financial results for the apartment rental activities, which are subject to adjustments and tax filing, reported revenue of HKD 12.2 million and expenses of HKD 5.8 million, resulting in a net income of HKD 6.4 million on a cash basis.

As we look forward, Union Church remains in a strong financial position to continue pursuing our vision to "Build a home in Christ to seek, love and serve God and our neighbours" in our new home at Kennedy Road. We are grateful for the Lord's blessings and our community's unwavering support. As responsible stewards of the resources entrusted to us, we will adapt and innovate to ensure the sustainability of our ministries while fostering a welcoming and vibrant community of faith.

The Year at a Glance

What a significant year in the life of Union Church!

Sermon Series

Sermon Series in 2024 included: Mental Health Matters, Lent: Jesus the Messiah, You Will Be My Witnesses, Going Through the Motions, What Keeps You Up at Night?, Mirror the Faith you Proclaim, Live the Vision, Advent: I Wonder as I Wander.

Speakers

Rev. Dr. Michele Bland – 31
Rev. Dan Tupps – 15
Charles Caldwell – 2
Pastor James Tang – 1
Rev. Dr. John Snelgrove – 2
Rev. David Doong – 1
Pastor Esther Tung – 1
Dr. Peter L. Lim – 1
Rev. Steve Gaultney – 1
Dr. Jeffrey P. Greenman – 1
Rev. Dr. Kenneth Tsang – 1
Andrew Chua – 1
AJ Orniyas – 1

There were five Radio Broadcast Sundays on RTHK this year, one of which was our Choir's Christmas Cantata.

Baptisms And Membership

Adult Baptisms - 3

Jackson Hoi Fung Chow
Elaine Yan Ling
Marco Po

Baby Dedications / Baptisms - 6

Zachary Jason Fung
Joy Tinkay Ng
Revonica Somer Tse
Esme Shin Primrose
Ashton King Hang Chow
Madison Jacqueline Choi

Youth Confirmations - 6

Lucas Jaden Tupps
Desiree Sidhu Singh
Hannah Wong
Jody George Jia Jun Lee
Giselle Jacinda Jia Hui Lee
Anri Van Der Walt

New Members - 11

Hok Leung Larry Chan
Georgina Chan
Susan Berlincioni
Andrew Long
Diana Long
Mark Dinning
Marco Po
Mark Borland
Wendy Borland
Hei Man Leung
Ho Yan Lau

Missed But Not Forgotten

David Runciman
Jackson Hoi Fung Chow
Paul Wenham











The Union Church Team



The staff team is grateful to be part of the Union Church family and to have experienced a year as exciting as 2024. At the end of 2024, our staff and their positions were as follows:

The Rev. Dr. Michele Bland
Rev. Dan Tupps
Pastor Fe Warlyn Pepito
Dr. Joyce Wu
Ms. Hilary Law
Mr. AJ Orniás
Ms. Jacklien Lee
Ms. Jessey Xiong
Ms. Irene Lau
Mr. Jack Yau
Mr. Leo Lee
Mr. Eric Leung
Ms. Fiona Li
Ms. Josephine Lee
Ms. Liza Sumagaysay
Ms. Dorothy Pang
Mr. Wilson Wong
Ms. Fanny Cheng

Senior Pastor
Pastor of Discipleship
Director of Filipino Ministry
Associate Director of Worship
Director of Choir
Director of Youth
Director of Children's Ministry
Director of Operations
Senior Accountant
Accountant
Part-time Accountant Assistant
Ministry Event Coordinator
Ministry Assistant
Office Administrator
Graphic Designer
Children's Ministry Assistant
Full-time Janitor
Full-time Janitor

The Church was also blessed during the year by contractors and consultants who greatly assisted the staff team: Rob and Betty Porter and their team members (AV); Patrick Rathes (IT) and Asli Chan (Savills Facilities Management).

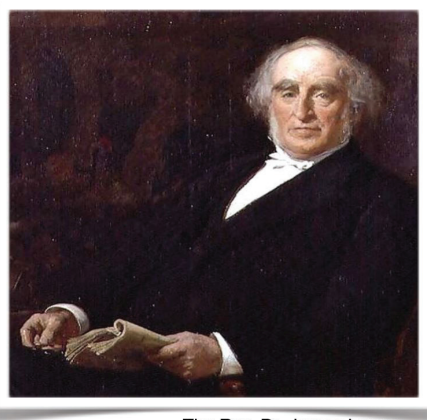
A Brief History

Union Church was founded in 1844 by the Rev. Dr. James Legge, a Scottish member of the London Missionary Society. Then known as Union Chapel, the first building was constructed in 1845 on Hollywood Road. An English service was held in the morning and a Chinese service in the afternoon.

Legge served as Pastor from 1844-1867 and from 1870-1873. He translated the Chinese classics into English and the Bible into Chinese. His translations are used to this day and are still in print. He was a major figure in early Hong Kong and the founder of the very first government school known now as Queen's College.

In 1866, Union Church relocated to a new site on Staunton Street near Hollywood Road and Lyndhurst Terrace. In 1873, Dr. Legge returned to the UK where he became Oxford's first Professor of Chinese.

In 1890, the Church was moved stone by stone to the present Kennedy Road site. Meanwhile the Chinese service became a sister church, Hop Yat, which has produced over 1000 daughter churches. Union's

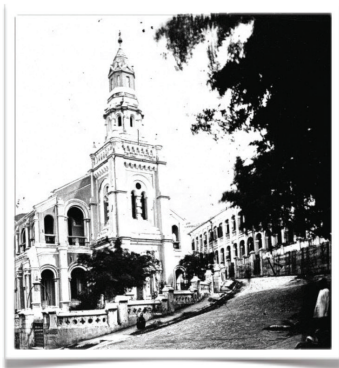


The Rev. Dr. James Legge

only daughter church is Kowloon Union, established in 1924.

The Japanese occupation of Hong Kong during WWII saw the forced closing of the Church. The events surrounding its total physical destruction remain a mystery. The survivors began fundraising and the Fellowship Hall was built in 1949, with the sanctuary completed in 1955. The education annexe was built in 1970 and later named after the Rev. Dennis Rogers, perhaps the most significant 20th century Union Church pastor, following his death in 1977.

Union Church is known for its welcoming and diverse multicultural and intergenerational congregation with a vision of building a home in Christ to seek, love and serve God and its neighbours. The Church embraces the core values of being Christ-Centred, Building Community, Welcoming, Living Missionally



Union Church on Staunton Street (c.1868)



First non-royal to be depicted on a HK postage stamp

A Brief History

and Growing in Unity. Union has gained a reputation for launching new ministries in Hong Kong (Alpha and Walk to Emmaus) that have greatly blessed the wider community.

The Rev. Dr. Michele Bland, arriving in 2012, is Union's 22nd senior pastor. In 2020, she became the first female senior pastor at Union. Rev. Dr. Gregory Anderson preceded Pastor Michele as senior pastor (2007-2018) and Rev. Ruth Tablada was Union's first pastor to the Filipino congregation (1991-2022).

Three bodies govern the Church: the Deacons' Court, Committee of Management, and Trustees. Union is a charter member of the Hong Kong Christian Council and active in the Network of International Churches.

After 30 years of prayer, planning and implementation, the Church redeveloped the 22A site in collaboration with Henderson Land. The latest generation Union Church building features a beautiful free-standing Sanctuary and a tower comprising a church podium and residential flats.

During six years of construction, the Lord rebuilt the spiritual heart of the church as we worshipped and served in what was previously known as Sunlight Tower, a commercial office building in Wan Chai.

With all the change at Union Church over the years, our purpose remains the same. It was reflected in a document first written by James Legge in 1849:

*“We differ in small matters,
we agree in great realities.
We trust that we are one in
Christ Jesus. We all love Him
who died for us. On the fact
of this great unity, our Union
as a church is based.”
-JAMES LEGGE 1849*

~ Written by Union Church staff, with gratitude to the previous authors of *A Brief History*: Greg Anderson, David Bunton, Brooke Himsworth and Geoff Lovegrove

Acknowledgement

We thank God for the wonderful people who helped put together this Annual Report:

Pastor Michele, the ministry leaders, Deacons, COM members, and Trustees who wrote these reports.

Office Staff: Jessey Xiong, Irene Lau, Liza Sumagaysay, Fiona Li and Josephine Lee

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THANK YOU ALL!





From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting, ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Ephesians 4:16 NIV



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