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## May 2025 Prayer Letter

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Peace to you in the Lord!

**“The LORD has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy.” (Psalm 126:3)**

Since February of last year, when we learned that we could no longer use the Kansas City Sheraton Hotel, where we had held our Winter Conference for decades, we began our journey of searching for a new venue! Within a four-hour driving radius from CWC, many hotels failed to meet our needs. In the end, only one hotel fits our four main criteria: the Embassy Suites in Rogers, Arkansas. These four criteria were: (1) Two large ballrooms (one for the adult meeting hall and the other as a dining room), (2) Thirteen to fourteen breakout rooms for adult workshops, youth classrooms, nursery, and children’s classes, (3) Over 300 guest rooms, and most importantly, (4) Permission to use the hotel kitchen, so we could cater food from nearby Chinese restaurants. However, the state of Arkansas does not grant tax exemptions to churches or non-profit organizations, and there are few Chinese restaurants near Rogers. Being in the southern part of the Midwest, attendees from the states of north of Iowa and east of Illinois would need to travel nearly four more hours to attend. Furthermore, Embassy Suites rooms are all suites, making the cost two and a half times that of the Kansas City hotel in 2023 — a significant jump on expenses. (But thank the Lord: on the last day of the Winter Conference, God had completely and abundantly provided for our needs.) Still, I continued to consider the needs of our brothers and sisters and wanted to find a more centrally located and reasonably priced hotel. So, after the January Bible camp ended, we once again set out on the journey of searching for a hotel for this year’s Winter Conference.

We focused our search in Missouri to avoid state taxes. To our surprise, two hotels in St. Louis welcomed us. Both offered prices one-third lower than last year’s Embassy Suites. One of them only allowed limited use of their kitchen, but the other one, Marriott St. Louis Grand met all of our needs. What made us even more thankful to the Lord was that the hotel’s Senior Sales Executive is a deacon at a church and identifies with the vision of our ministry. When we asked for a further discount, he was happy to help, we are very grateful to the Lord for this. St. Louis is Missouri’s largest city with convenient transportation, making it more accessible for those in northern and eastern states. “The LORD has done great things for us, and we are glad.”

After everything was finalized, I couldn’t help but ask our coworkers: Why didn’t we find this Marriott St. Louis Grand last year when we also searched St. Louis areas? Why is this hotel offering us such favorable terms this year — even beyond all that we ask or think? Why did every hotel door in Missouri seem closed to us last year? And why did God open just one door — the Embassy Suites — no more, no less? As I reflected before the Lord, **the only answer I could find was this: God was training me personally in the lesson of faith.** He wanted me so-called senior Christian — who often teaches and shares God’s Word — to see my own weakness, insufficiency, ignorance, and lack of faith. Through this, I witnessed again God’s sovereignty. We are the work of His hands. Gold, silver, and all the earth’s possessions belong to Him. “He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.” This past month, all I could do before the Lord was praising Him, bowing down before Him, and giving thanks to Him. He is worthy of all praises and worthy of our complete surrender and dedication to Him. I now see that on this journey of following the Lord, I still have many areas needing refinement, training,

and growth.

As I am writing this letter, my heart is as shaken as yours. Since April 2, President Trump has issued executive orders that change almost daily, throwing the global economy into turmoil. U.S.–China relations are tense, and even some of F-1 student visas are being revoked. The U.S. is tightening immigration policies, and those holding visas below green card status (F1, H1, J1) are full of anxiety. Although the high tariffs have been delayed for three months, the budget stores where we often shop have already warned us: by the end of June, either prices will rise, or shelves will be empty — because it's unclear who will bear the tariffs, ships are stuck at ports, unable to dock. On the campuses we serve, many faculties and students have told us that due to severe federal budget cuts, the funding they rely on for research has been delayed or halted. As a result, universities are hesitant to recruit new graduate students. Professors and students alike are uncertain about their futures! In this turbulent time, our coworkers at the Center often encourage one another: “The LORD sat enthroned at the Flood.” (Psalm 29:10) Rather than being anxious all day long, it's better to be still, wait upon the Lord, and equip ourselves.

**Our May Discipleship Training and Lay-minister Training is about to begin. It is a good opportunity to pursue the Lord with us. Especially if you wish to attend the August Bible Camp to further your equipment, this May Training and the Lay-Minister Training is your last chance to fulfill the requirement of the Bible Camp.** That way: “the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.” (Matthew 7:25)

The theme of our prayer letters this year is: “Spread the Gospel widely, make disciples.” This issue, Pastor Danny Li, Pastor of Lawrence (Kansas) Chinese Evangelical Church and a board member of the Center is sharing a message “But I Will Do as You Say”.

### **BUT I will do as You say...**

(Pastor Danny Li)

Romans 10:9 "If you confess with your mouth Jesus {as} Lord." This is a verse we often use when making a decision to follow Christ. When we are getting baptized, the pastor will ask: "Are you willing to confess in front of others that Jesus Christ is the Lord of your life?" And when we finish our prayers, we will say, "In Jesus' name we pray." Although we often proclaim Jesus is our Lord, yet we actually are the one who runs our lives. For example, we say reading the Bible is great, but then say we're too busy to do it. We say discipleship training is helpful, but then say we can't attend because we've already booked a trip. We often say, “Lord, Lord, Lord,” and then follow with “but, but, but.” Let's look at Luke 5:1-11, where Jesus calls Peter, and see how a disciple should correctly use the word “but” in their life.

From this moment of calling, we see an important key word appear in verse 5. Simon said: "Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, BUT I will do as You say..." That "but" becomes the turning point in the whole passage. That word led to a different action — and changed Peter's life forever.

1. Peter was able to respond to the Lord this way because he was willing to trust and obey.

Verses 1–3 tell us that Jesus used Peter's boat because He needed a platform to preach from — His audience was the people on the shore. But don't forget, Peter was also one of the listeners, and he was the one who heard most clearly because he was right there in the boat. The other Gospels tell us that Peter had already heard Jesus' teaching at least twice before. He was someone who knew the Word of the Lord. So when Jesus told him, “Put out into the deep water,” Peter was able to obey. What Jesus said, Peter did. Trust and obey are not just about feelings — not just acting when you're moved emotionally. Trust and obey are based on God's Word. Even when things are difficult, we can still trust and obey because of what the Lord says.

2. Jesus said to Peter, "I want to use your boat." At that time, there were many boats fishing on the Sea of Galilee, but Jesus chose only Peter's. The Bible tells us Peter had already been working hard all night. He was tired and still had work to do — like washing his nets and making other arrangements. Similarly, today, in the midst of our busy lives, God calls us to dedicate our time and lives to Him.

3. Jesus told Peter to take the boat into deep water and let down the nets. For someone without experience, obeying the Lord may seem easier — since they don't know better, so they just listen. But for someone experienced, or when the Lord's instruction goes against your professional knowledge, obedience becomes much harder. Peter was a professional fisherman. He had worked hard all night and caught nothing. Now Jesus, a carpenter's son with no fishing experience, tells him to try again — in the daytime, which was not when people fished. From Peter's point of view, there was no chance of catching

fish. But he didn't rely on his own experience — he humbly obeyed the Lord's command.

"BUT I will do as You say..." This line transformed Peter from a fisherman into a fisher of men. From a night of fruitless labor to overflowing blessing. From living for himself to leaving everything behind to follow the Lord. May we, in the midst of our own busyness, also have a life transformed — all because of a simple yet powerful phrase: "BUT I will do as You say..."

## **Future Meetings**

### **(1) May Discipleship Training (5/18-23)**

The speakers for the May Discipleship Training Camp are: Pastor David Wu, Pastor Benjamin Tam, and the CWC co-workers. Pastor Wu holds a Master's degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Cincinnati and previously worked as a manager in an engineering company. Since 1991, he has served as the Senior Pastor of the Cincinnati Chinese Christian Church. Pastor Wu came from a Christian family, therefore, his experiences in the Bible and ministries are valuable examples for us. Although he retired from church ministry a few years ago, God has continued using him to lead Christian conferences around the world. Pastor Tam came to faith at a young age and was called to preach when he was twenty years old. He has faithfully served for forty-five years at the Chicago Chinese Baptist Church and the Northwest Suburban Chinese Baptist Church. He just retired from church ministry this year and is now able to travel around sharing the Word in various places. The topics these two speakers will address from the Bible include: Romans (chapters 1-9 on the Christian Faith), chapter 12 on the Christian Living, the Essence of the Book of Joshua, How to Read the Gospel of John in Greek, the Development of Christian Character, and more. Please reserve time in advance and encourage brothers and sisters to participate. Please also pray for this event, the speakers, and the co-workers involved. The registration form is available on CWC website. For more details and to register, [please click here](#). The deadline for registration is May 16th, so be sure to sign up soon.

### **(2) Memorial Weekend Lay-Minister Training (5/23-26)**

May Lay-Minister Training will be held during Memorial long weekend and is especially reserved for believers who are working full time. In addition to Pastor David Wu, Pastor Samuel Yang and Elder Albert Shyu will also be the speakers. Elder Shyu has been serving the church while working full time until retired last year. Pastor Yang has served in China's house churches for many years and has taught at seminary. He earned a Master of Divinity from Denver Seminary and a Master of Theology from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. He previously served at the Chinese Baptist Church in the Rio Grande Valley, Texas, and pursued a Doctorate in Pastoral Theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary while training leaders of Chinese house churches. Currently, he serves at Preach the Whole Bible Ministry, providing leadership training for Chinese house church leaders via Zoom and his website, while also working as a freelance preacher in the U.S. Elder Albert Shyu became a Christian at a young age. He came to the U.S. in 1981 and earned master's degrees in both Mechanical Engineering and Computer Engineering. To further his ministry, he also obtained a Master's in Theological Studies while working. He has served at NASA and worked as a senior staff analysis engineer specializing in military vehicle's power and structural simulation analysis. He is currently an elder at the Sunnyvale Christian Church in California. The speakers will share not only messages aim on full-time workers, such as Balancing Work, Family, and Ministry; the Christian's Work Ethic, but also biblical and spiritual growth teachings. Topics include: Watch and Prepare for the Lord's Return (When the End Is Near, Secrets to Overcoming in the End Time, and Pleasing the Lord), and on ministry aspects such as the Often-overlooked Service, and messages on spiritual edification, etc. These teachings will help us building ourselves up with strong and solid materials, enabling us to stand firm in the last days, support weak brothers and sisters, and become pillars of strength in the church. If you are working full-time, please don't miss this special training prepared just for you during the long weekend (so full-time participation is required). Please set aside the time early, and not only attend yourself but also encourage brothers and sisters in your church to come together. The registration form is now available on CWC website. For more details and to register, [please click here](#). The registration deadline is May 16.

### **(3) June Youth Camp (rescheduled to 6/1-7)**

Originally, we scheduled the Youth Camp from June 8 to 14. However, over the past month, many parents have shared with us that their children's spring semester ends before Memorial Day, and summer class will start on June 8, but their children are looking forward to attending the Youth Camp. After a month of survey and coordination with the speakers, we have officially decided to move the Youth Camp one week earlier.

The Youth Camp has always been eagerly anticipated by young people, but it is not just an ordinary recreational camp. It is a

discipleship training camp that requires being born-again and full-time participation. This year's theme is "Peace in the Storm," based on Matthew 8:24-27. Life may have storms, but when Jesus is on our boat, we can have peace. We have several familiar speakers this year, including Pastor Steve Tan, who currently serves at Immanuel Baptist Church in Kansas City, and Pastor Berry Edwards, the senior pastor of Warsaw Cedar Grove Baptist Church (he was previously a math teacher at Warsaw High School and frequently teaches at the Youth Camp). Another speaker, Pastor Alex Lynch from Kansas City and now serves at Countryside Church responsible for Men's Ministries, College and Career Ministries, and Small Group Ministries. Pastor Lynch became a Christian at a young age and grew up in the church. He has a deep love for God's Word and a passion for spreading biblical truth. In addition to the activities that young people love, such as water sports, one afternoon will be dedicated to missionary work at several nearby nursing homes. More details will be posted online soon. Parents, please begin encouraging your teenage children to sign up for this camp! The registration form is now available on CWC website. [For more details and to register, please click here](#). The registration deadline is May 27.

#### **(4) August Bible Camp (7/27 to 8/2)**

This time, we will be studying "The Pauline Epistles." If you are interested in learning, the syllabus and registration form are available on CWC website for you to download. The strict registration deadline is June 15th. Please register as early as possible and start preparing your assigned homework. [Click here for detailed information](#).

### **Sunday Evening Online Bible Study & Prayer Meeting**

Although the pandemic is over, the coworkers have decided to continue holding the online Bible study and prayer meeting on Sunday evenings, as it serves two purposes. First: it helps everyone begin preparing for the Bible camp in advance, so that when the deadline gets closer, you won't feel unprepared and want to give up. Of course, if you're not attending the Bible camp, you can still systematically study the Bible with us. Our coworkers will teach Bible study methods, how to do outlines, and how to write thematic reports, etc. This semester, we will be studying "The Pauline Epistles." The second 30 minutes is for everyone to pray in one heart for CWC ministry according to the center's monthly prayer calendar. Therefore, if you have burden to pray for CWC ministry, you can join the prayer meeting as well as study the Bible together. To avoid affecting brothers and sisters' work or school the next day, we have decided to shorten the meeting to one hour (7:00-8:00 PM Central Time). We will use Zoom, with the ID: 85888709271 and the password: 567482. We invite everyone to come and study the Bible together and pray for the center.

### **New Online Donation**

Thank the Lord! Since April of last year, we have opened an account that accepts Zelle donations. Over the past year, we have seen the effectiveness of this account, especially during the center's meetings. Brothers and sisters who are willing to give can make full use of this method for donations. This will greatly save everyone the hassle of writing checks and mailing them, [click here for detailed operation](#).

### **Thanksgiving and Prayer Requests**

1. Please pray for the preparations of the May Discipleship Training, the May Lay-minister Training, the June Youth Camp, and the August Bible Camp, as well as for the brothers and sisters to prepare their hearts to participate.

2. For co-workers

- Mrs. Sylvia Ko: Thank the Lord for hearing our prayers — He has healed the minor injury I sustained from a fall last month. And I am now fully recovered. Although the spring season, with its blooming flowers, is refreshing and delightful, it is also the most difficult time for those of us with pollen allergies. May the Lord have mercy and bring healing, allowing me to hide under the shadow of His wings, be nourished, and quietly wait for this season to pass, so I can rise up and press on again.
- Sister Cindy Chiang: Facing many CWC administrative business — whether office works, various camps, short-term mission arrangements, weekend message preparation, coworker collaboration, or wisely managing my time — all require reliance on the wisdom and insight that comes from God. May God's will be done in CWC ministry.
- Pastor Qinglong Liang: May God grant him divine wisdom and strength to prepare for the May 18–23 Discipleship Training and May 23–26 Lay-minister Training. Grant him a humble and courageous heart to diligently serve at CWC and church in Columbia and surrounding areas. Help him and his wife lead their three homeschooled children to live according to God's will. Grant him a loving and willing spirit to make disciple of Jesus among people who he encounters.

- Pastor Charles Huang Please pray for all the camps and short-term mission trips hosted by the Christian Witness Center during the summer. May the Lord draw believers to participate and equip themselves to be witnesses for the Lord in this turbulent time. Pray also for the new board of deacons at the Champaign Chinese Christian Church, that God would grant them wisdom and strength to serve the Lord and the church. Please pray for Pastor Huang that he would have the Word to feed the church, and wisdom to work together effectively with the church in outreach and evangelism on the University of Illinois campus.
  - American coworker Scott Jerome: Pray for the upcoming camps. Pray for the teachers of the children. Pray for Scott's mother, who is now living in a nursing home due to Alzheimer's disease. Also pray for their church's pastor, Isaiah Benedict, who is still in the ICU in Columbia, MO (now for two weeks) and for his wife, who is tirelessly caring for him day and night in the hospital.
3. Pray for the CWC monthly financial need (General fund, Building fund, Training fund, etc.) asking the Lord to manifest His abundant provision and allow more brothers and sisters to experience the blessings of giving.
4. For CWC: Pray that the Lord will bring more co-workers to the CWC ministry for the furtherance of the gospel ministry in the Midwest.

Emmanuel

In the Lord,

Sister Cindy Chiang