

“So let’s do it—full of belief, confident that we’re presentable inside and out. Let’s keep a firm grip on the promises that keep us going. He always keeps his word. Let’s see how inventive we can be in encouraging love and helping out, not avoiding worshiping together as some do but spurring each other on, especially as we see the big Day approaching.”

Hebrews 10:22-25 (MSG)

This past year has proven to be a very challenging one for us with all that has gone on with COVID-19 as this pandemic affected not only us but also the entire world being pretty much at a standstill. As we approach this new year we are prayerfully hopeful that an end to this may be in sight. Having to cancel in-person worship services, Sunday school, Bible studies, choir practices, other ministries as well as Food n Fun has taught us to approach things that we have done through the years in a different light. We are even needing to conduct our Annual Business Meeting via Zoom this year! I am however very thankful and grateful that we have been able to continue the ministry of Matthew 25 as the need to assist in providing for those less fortunate continues to be at the forefront of our endeavors. I am also very grateful and appreciative of the time and dedication that our Pastor and Arlean, Jeff, and the rest of those involved in our on-line worship (Lester, Larry, Jeran, Elizabeth, Colette, Jill, the Praise Team) put into allowing us the ability to continue to be in worship and in God’s Word.

As our church family continues to struggle with the loss of loved ones, friends and others that we all come into acquaintance with along with the loss of jobs and income; let us continue to lift them up in prayer and offer encouragement that this pandemic will come to pass in God’s timing. Let us all put our trust and faith in the Almighty, our Sovereign Lord. Let us continue to worship together, even though remotely for now. Let us encourage one another in God’s love and pray for one another as a family; God’s family, that we are a blessing to one another.

Boon Tee, Church Moderator

ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

January 17, 2021

I. Call to Order and Opening Prayer

II. Election of 2021 Church Officers

Chairman of the Board (Moderator):	Boon Tee
Church Clerk:	Patti Kunkel
Financial Secretary:	Richard Ward
Treasurer:	Martin Jung
Church School Superintendent:	Ginny Kamimoto

III. Election of Deacons (Class of 2023)

Irma Jue
Ken Lai
Patricia Tom

Class of 2021

Richard Bruce
Jennifer Chmielewski
Cynthia Ho
Dr. Jack Patton
Janelle Soria

Class of 2022

Patti Kunkel
Lisa Lee
Bobby Standring
Boon Tee

IV. Presentation of 2021 Annual Church Budget (Richard Ward)

V. Benediction

First Chinese Baptist Church

Pastor's Annual Report

JANUARY 17 - 2021

Dear Church Family,

This feels like an annual report like no other. I continue to struggle with the grief and new challenges of what took place in 2020 because of COVID-19 and what may lie ahead in 2021. We have been facing anxiety, depression, and fatigue. Yet, there has also been the joy of creating new worship experiences that allows us to connect with people and their challenges in new and innovative ways.

Personally, I was honored to have a devotional book put into print which has been published in the Philippines, Thailand, and Brazil. A real privilege to bring Scripture, God's Word, and elements of contemplation to brothers and sisters in Christ around the world. PLUS, Arlean and I celebrated 45 years of marriage. (She has been a partner, wife, friend, and a companion throughout our ministry. What a blessing these past nine months. She did not need to be asked she just stepped forward and has been singing, decorating the altar, listening to a whining pastor, and standing in for the congregation. A blessing to me and to this ministry).

We were supposed to take a Disney cruise to celebrate our anniversary, but we all know what happened to the cruise industry. But our daughters put us on a cardboard SS Minnow instead, and we had a great time of celebration. The church family had a drive thru birthday celebration for me which was a complete surprise and very special. To top the year off we had another grandbaby born in 2020. Point? God always brings peace and hope in the middle of chaos when we have a church family to stand with and beside us through the years.

So, as we look back, as a church we also look forward (whatever may come) to another year of helping everyone we interact with to see what it means to be connected to Jesus. That as we live our daily lives in Christ, as we walk in His Word our faith is strengthened and we feel His loving care. Romans 1:17 tells us that the righteous will live by faith. That means that faith is ongoing. We must walk it out in our lives, day by day. We need constant refreshing from the Holy Spirit and revelation from God's Word so that we can move through the year. In days like we are living I find encouragement in Psalm 91.

*Whoever goes to the Lord for safety,
whoever remains under the protection of the Almighty,
2 can say to him,*

³ *He will keep you safe from all hidden dangers
and from all deadly diseases.*

his faithfulness will protect and defend you. Psalm 91:1-4 GNT

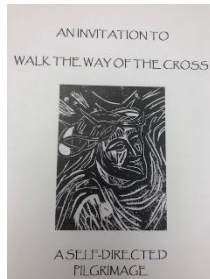
Grace and Peace,
Rev. Danny L. Jack



WE WORSHIP TOGETHER AND INVITE OTHERS TO JOIN US - ONLINE!

When the pandemic reached critical levels and the Governor placed a stay-at-home order on us all just before Easter. As your pastor I was given the new challenges of providing a worship service that contained all the usual elements of a “normal” service but with visuals that could be utilized in a digital format.

Fortunately, with the help of Arlean, Jeff Burkett, Jill Prince, Jeran and Elizabeth Ott along with Lester Lowe and Larry Lowe we never missed a Sunday of worship. We put together a digital worship service on Facebook. Here is a list of some of our innovative attempts to keep our families, members and visitors engaged.



- A self-guided Good Friday service video that utilized the various prints I have used over the years for our Easter and Advent services. Using music and an online program people could take their time in reading Scripture, looking at the artwork in order to contemplate on our Savior's sacrifice.



- We had a drive thru easter egg hunt to use the eggs that had already been put together for children by the Subvert small group. Little did we know that eight months later we would still be socially distant from each other.

- To keep the younger children further engaged with worship I had a pandemic first responder bear that I placed in various places each week inviting children to tell me where the bear was hiding. After several weeks I gave the children their own bear with a message of encouragement from their pastor.



- With the pandemic continuing and no letup in sight I began a twelve-week series I called “unraveled” to take us through the summer months. I noted that we would look at weaving our lives together in worship, confession, and affirmation. In fact, as I tried to think of a visual representation of bringing the unraveled threads of our lives back to God, I pictured a loom. So, I got a frame and began to string thread back and forth and as I did so praying the requests you sent in each week. We lifted a

daughter, a family that suffered immense loss, and a few prayers with the theme of frustration and anger. I asked that you continue to send in your prayer requests and together we weaved God's Word and His presence into our lives during the weeks and months. We ended that series with a worship of remembrance. For me one of the most moving times of Word and worship in my years as a pastor.



- The Education Committee and I struggled with what to do about Vacation Bible School. We decided to keep the same format we had used over the years but do it online. Mr. Scott Berglund and I did our usual skits and Colette Ott led singing on Facebook and then the children were invited to continue their experience online. Thanks to the education committee we were able to provide a quality experience for our children even in the middle of pandemic chaos.



In September we had a blessing of the backpack service. After church families drove thru and got their backpack tags and a special blessing. Then with the help of the education committee we had a socially distant ice cream social. Was a wonderful time!



In the middle of the CORONA 19 virus, I started thinking about money. Asking myself questions like: How will we as a church survive when we are not able to gather and take our offerings? What is stewardship in the middle of a chaos? Does God really expect us to give?

So, I began working on a new way of seeing stewardship. I put together art, Bible stories, poems, and space for members to discern their money story in a journal. I then did a poster to use in worship to track our stewardship story. I was disappointed in the number of people willing to really look at their giving history and then to honestly respond but for those that did they have reported a change in perspective regarding God's gifts to us all.

In fact, despite this season of uncertainty, the generosity of FCBC has been wonderful. Our income has remained steady in a season when many churches and non-profits are struggling. We have been able to continue ministering during the COVID-19 pandemic.



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After our stewardship Sunday we came to Thanksgiving. In the past we have always enjoyed a time of worship, praise, and a wonderful meal together. But this year was different. So, we catered a brown bag thanksgiving that included a turkey sandwich, chips, and a treat. People then drove thru or stopped and fellowshiped at a distance. In other words, not the same but we were still able to give thanks for God's goodness. Channel 24 even covered the event!



- Every year our children help to put on a Christmas program. Of course, 2020 is different but Michael Oldham stepped forward and put together a digital presentation that honored our Savior's birth and provided some much-needed smiles.



- Thanks to Jeran Ott we were able to have our own AM station that allowed us to end the year with a parking lot Christmas Eve candlelight service. This pastor and this church are truly blessed with willing hands, and dedicated individuals. Praise God!

Our In-Person average worship for
January-March was 159 in attendance.

Our On-line worship for March-December
31st average was 329. (Of course, we
recognize there may be more than one
person watching our services at a time).

WE SERVE IN OUR CITY & WORLD

One of the strongest descriptions of the church in the Bible is that of it being the Body of Christ. When the early church was young and going through countless challenges the Apostle Paul wrote this truth: *“All of you together are Christ’s body, and each of you is a part of it,”* (1 Corinthians 12:27). It can be easy to reflect on the last ministry year and only focus on the pandemic, but there is so much more to the year than that.

Our Matthew 25 ministry continues to be an example of our commitment to being the hands and feet of Christ. Our weekly pickups of cookies, pastries, breads, and surplus foods from local schools goes to a variety of grass roots ministries helping hundreds of families that fall through the cracks in the city of Fresno. Once more we distributed 400 turkeys at Thanksgiving helping well over 700 people.



We also reach out globally. Supporting the AKHA Youth Foundation in Thailand and our denomination’s ministry through the One Great Hour, World Fellowship Offering, America For Christ and the Retired Ministers and Missionary Offerings.

WE LEAD WITH GRACE, HUMILITY, TRUST AND JOY

As I think back over the last 12 months it is hard to believe all we have been through trying to do life and church during this COVID-19 pandemic. A huge thank you to our Board of Deacons that makes sure the bills get paid, the building is maintained, and the grounds beautiful all-in preparation for that day we return.

To our Shepherding Team that maintains contact with each member finding out how they are doing and any prayer concerns. To Pastor Jeannie Gong who kept weekly contact, led Bible study, and ministered to the Agape membership despite

her being in China. To our education team that has Zoomed, prayed, and looked for ways to do Sunday School, VBS and care for our children despite the distance. You all have put in a tremendous amount of work and additional efforts to move from life as we knew it, to all things virtual.

For many in leadership here at FCBC this has been a season filled with a lot of uncertainty, additional stress, loss, and anxiety. Yet together we have placed our lives and of those we shepherd in the hands of our Savior. Remembering Philippians 4:6, *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”*

From Pastor Jeannie To You

Dear FCBC family and friends,

Greetings with peace in Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior!

The year of 2020 has been an unprecedented experience for everyone. Nobody could imagine that I had spent nine months, three quarters of the year, in China. Here are the highlights of my surprising journey in the past twelve months.

January: I flew out of San Jose and arrived in Guangzhou on January 23rd, Chinese New Year Eve and the same day that Wuhan started its lock down due to the Covid-19 epidemic. It was my first time going back to celebrate the special holiday with my parents. Instead of festival gatherings and crowded markets, what was waiting for me at my hometown was quiet streets and empty buses that I had never seen in a city with two million people.

February: As my two week visit with my folks was getting close to the end, I received the flight cancellation from the airline. From then on, my life was divided into two: I wanted to leave China the Covid hot spot ASAP and return to my family at Fresno; on the other hand, I was happy to stay longer with my elderly parents and comfort them as we were facing such a crisis there. I got a large printed Chinese Bible for my mother and started to read it with her every morning. Everyone sheltered in my parents' house including my niece's dog loved my prayer before meal time. My 85 year old father was changing his way to call out "Dao Gao 祷告" ("pray" in Chinese) instead of "Chi Fan 吃饭" ("eat rice" in Chinese, a typical calling for mealtime).

March: It was over a month long PPE donation project that I got involved in. At the beginning there was a shortage of PPE in the local hospitals of the Foshan area. And then I received the message from Fresno that the health care facilities were lacking sufficient supplies of PPE even for the doctors and nurses. I was able to use the connection from working with the local Chinese companies to arrange several international shipments of PPE donations to Fresno Community Medical Center, Valley Childrens' Hospital, and other individual health care workers in America. It was quite a challenge to deal with such an urgent project completely out of my comfort zone. I am so grateful for the generous support from my folks in China and our FCBC family members and friends. It was your precious prayers carrying me through those sleepless nights.

April: While I almost got called into the international trading business, I followed obediently what our gracious Father had prepared for me to "be still, and know that I am God...". With the uncertainty of my flight back to America, I turned a small study room in my parents' house into my upper room of prayers. I listened to the birds chirping in the morning, and watched the torrential downpour during the day, and tried to tune off the loud arguments of the next wall neighbor at midnight. It was in that upper small room where I started the Spiritual Formation online course and practiced my contemplative prayer everyday. What a comfort and assurance we can receive from meditating God's Word day and night at such a turbulent time like this.

May: There was still no flight schedule set for my return trip. I even missed my graduation commencement that DTS had turned into a virtual ceremony the first time. But God is good and always working through our impossible circumstances. After three months of the Bible reading, my mother accepted Jesus as her personal Savior. I had the honor of giving her sprinkling Baptism on May 18th during our Agape online worship. My 85 year old mother was born again to start her new life in Christ. And now she is able to join our weekly online Chinese fellowship and listen to her own daughter's teaching of the Bible. What a miracle it is that our gracious Heavenly Father has done even in the midst of pandemic isolation!

June: The Covid crisis was getting under control in China. I was able to have my graduation celebration with my relatives and friends at a nice buffet restaurant. But five days after the happy gathering, I received a message that one of the guests died from a heart attack. He was my former classmate and had just become a believer through our Agape online class. I was so saddened by the sudden loss of a new brother in Christ that I didn't know what to say to his non-believer family at the funeral. However, it was through the tragedy that I got acquainted with his elderly parents and was able to pray and share the gospel with them. Now I am still keeping contact with them as they are going through the grief of losing their only son.

July: My return flight had been rescheduled and then cancelled several times as the number of Covid cases going up and down in America. What helped me overcome the anxiety, besides prayer, was reading. The books are so easy to order online and the price is so reasonable in China. I usually spent the afternoon in my upper room to read and to reflect. In July I finished reading one of the books from my favorite author Henri Nouwen, *The Inner Voice of Love --- A Journey through Anguish to Freedom*. I love Nouwen's inspirational message, "...light and darkness, hope and despair, love and fear are never very far from each other, that spiritual freedom often requires a fierce spiritual battle".

August: The Gongs could not have their annual family reunion due to the pandemic. I had been staying in China so long that I voluntarily looked up the Gong's village, which is by the Guangzhou international airport. The local officials were able to help me connect with one of our distant relatives. Uncle Biao welcomed me with his big smile and showed me around the village. I saw the four story solid house that my husband's great grandfather built a hundred years ago, and now has become a historical relic protected by the government. We also went to the clan grave site and showed respect to the ancestors. It was a fun adventure for me to discover the Gong's family roots and meet Uncle Biao and his family.

September: I finished reading more books about early missionaries in China. It is even more inspiring that I had the opportunity of visiting the actual sites where the missionaries stationed many decades ago. I am so thankful for the high speed train in China that makes it much easier to travel afar. I was able to visit the Stone Gate Way Church founded by Rev. Samuel Pollard (1864-1915) in the remote mountain area of Guizhou Province. Even today, the A-Hmao hymns are still echoing there. I also read the book of Ruth Hitchcock (1892-1984), *The Good Hand of Our God*, sharing the story of how she left her comfort in Santa Barbara and lived in China for six decades. The church that she started among the rice paddies in Canton had been relocated.

The orphanage that she established during the war years no longer exists. But her witness of God's love and mercy continues to impact generations of people. I am so glad of meeting some of them fellow Christian brothers and sisters near my hometown area and listening to their live stories about the legacy of Auntie 何义思 (Ms. Hitchcock's Chinese name).

October: It was time for me to return finally. I packed up the two check in luggages. One of them was filled with books that had been and would continue to be my companion during the pandemic. I really experienced God's mighty protection and tender care with me as I was walking through the empty airport and boarding the Boeing 787 with only a handful of passengers. It was like a dream for me as the plane landed in SFO. There was no line at either the Immigration and Customs or the Baggage Claims. I am so thankful that the reserved shuttle showed up and took me to pick up my car that had been parked at my niece's place for nine months, overly exceeding the original plan of two weeks.

November: The joy of being back home comes with the tedious of the ongoing house chores. While I am constantly cooking, washing and scrubbing, I try to meditate over the quote from Brother Lawrence, "It is enough for me to pick up but a straw from the ground for the love of God." Another mundane task that I am getting into is to write personal letters to the folks in China. Most of my letter recipients are elderly people who can't hear well over the phone nor use modern technology like email or texting. Letter writing could be an effective way to keep a long distant relationship and share the gospel eventually. The preparation of my Ordination paper doesn't give me more fun than mopping the kitchen floor. Would you continue to pray for me walking down the pastoral path that could be long and tiresome.

December: Christmas celebration is quite different during the pandemic. I treasure the quietness of being home instead of all the gift shoppings and party gatherings. Life could be simple and yet filled with abundance as we take a walk in the warm sun or send out a personal greeting to whom God has put into our heart. I would count this Holiday season as the most memorable one for our family while we are taking turns of cooking and enjoying time together around the dining table. There is even one more blessing that we together as a family attended the main sessions of the online Chinese Mission Convention.

The year of 2020 is full of uncertainties and yet new opportunities to strengthen our faith, to proclaim and live out the gospel of hope in the darkening world. As we are zooming the celebration of the tenth anniversary of our Agape Ministry, we will continue to grow and serve together as a faith community with God's redeeming love and tender mercy for His eternal glory.





