

Good News from the Pews

Newsletter of the English Congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown

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The Revolution Will Not Be Televised by Pastor Don

In a recent sermon I preached, I used an excerpt from Gil Scott-Heron's 1971 spoken-word masterpiece *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* to redirect our collective attention away from media landscapes—both traditional and social—that project a distorted image of Christians, and of Christ himself, as some kind of warrior. This includes not only depictions of Jesus as a violent or militarized figure, but even the softer image of Jesus as a “peaceful warrior” defending the downtrodden.

In that sermon, I challenged the language many believers use when they describe themselves as “prayer warriors” or engage in so-called “warfare prayer” aimed at political ends. At the same time, I also challenged the assumption—often present in progressive circles—that Christians can simply recast themselves as “Christian social justice warriors.” Too often, when we speak of liberation as a Christian concept, we move immediately into the world to liberate the oppressed without first examining what liberation means in Jesus Christ.

My point was to reorient our understanding of Christian liberation: it is, first and foremost, an internal transformation of the human heart and spirit. Liberation from injustice, poverty, and oppression is real and necessary, but it is never the first or defining meaning of liberation in Jesus Christ. These outward forms of liberation flow from inner transformation; they do not precede it. And because this transformation is internal—a revolution of consciousness—it will not be televised, streamed, or mediated through social platforms.

Christian Nationalism—or, as Episcopal Rev. Canon Stephanie Spellers has aptly renamed it, *Christo-nationalism*, “because it is not Christian”—is a profound corruption of the faith and teachings of Jesus Christ. There are many reasons for this conclusion, and I have been addressing them deliberately, week by week, in my preaching. Among the most dangerous distortions is the politicization of the church and the demand that it abandon its true calling in order to serve political agendas.

That realization gives me pause as I write this, because from a certain vantage point the English Worshipping Community of the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown could be accused of something similar: devoting so much energy to social and political change that the proclamation of the gospel itself has been diminished.

I can imagine the reaction to that sentence. Surely, he has lost his senses—the EWC is doing it right. So let me explain. I want to work backward, beginning with the concept of the Social Gospel. The Social Gospel is a religious interpretation of the message of Jesus Christ that emphasizes social

change through the application of theological principles in the world. I have long been a proponent of the Social Gospel because of its demonstrated ability to effect real and tangible change. However—and this point is essential—I firmly believe that before change can be sustained in the world, there must first be transformation within the human being.

That transformation is exemplified by becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ: seeking the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, being born again in Christ, and committing one’s life to following Jesus. In the six and a half years I have served here, we as a community—and I as a minister—have held only one baptism, but many funerals, memorials, and celebrations of life. We do not appear to be a place where new people come to learn about Jesus. We do not appear to be a place where people come to be formed as disciples, to become evangelists, or to encounter the living God in ways that lead to transformation.

Any institution—any church—that devotes itself entirely to changing the world while assuming that this alone will produce new disciples is in error. Whether it is a conservative church fixated on Christo-nationalism or a progressive church fixated on the Social Gospel, any church that makes social change its primary purpose has lost sight of the true purpose of the church: to worship and glorify God.

“Sacrilege!” you may protest. How could a focus on ending poverty—one expression of the Social Gospel—possibly be wrong? I am not saying it is wrong. Ending poverty is unquestionably something a church may—and should—do. But it is not the reason the church exists. First and foremost, the church exists as a place where God is worshiped, praised, and thanked for the salvation we have received.

We are not the church because we answer the call of the PC(USA)’s Matthew 25 initiative. We are the church because we are called to expand the pool of believers by making new disciples—disciples who are then sent into the world to live out that Matthew 25 calling. This reflection comes as I enter the third year of my four-year contract as Designated Co-Pastor of the English Worshipping Community. One reality of this moment is that I am currently the only pastor on staff at PCC. In two years, the congregation—primarily the English Worshipping Community, but ultimately the whole church—will need to discern whether to extend my designated contract, remove the “designated” status, or seek different pastoral leadership. At the same time, the Cantonese- and Mandarin-speaking communities will be making their own decisions regarding pastoral leadership. Any of these paths will require an updated mission study.

As we prepare for that work review and revising our Mission Study, we must confront an uncomfortable truth: our church is not growing—certainly not the English Worshipping Community. That means we are not reaching new people with the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are not transforming the hearts and minds of those who are not already here. Our community is not expanding.

The church must never be content to function solely as a social service agency. While our ministries—the food pantry, the backpack drive, the Christmas gift program, and many others—are faithful and meaningful expressions of service, they are not the reason we exist. We exist to be a

community that gathers for the worship of God and for the transformation and liberation of human beings through the proclamation of the gospel. We exist to make disciples.

That may mean being a place where people hear the teachings of Jesus for the first time. It may also mean being a place where people come to unlearn false gospels—whether Christo-nationalism or white supremacy. In either case, our focus must be refined. If new people are not coming here to encounter and worship God, then we must change.

We must seriously consider how this church will reach new people—not only those who come to fill a food basket, but those who come into the sanctuary to encounter the living God. We must reimagine how disciples are made here. One or two new members every other year is not enough.

Perhaps that requires different worship: different sermons, different preachers, or a different format. Perhaps we need to rethink our fellowship groups and activities. Of the few new members we have welcomed, how many are connected to a fellowship group? Perhaps we need a different pastoral leadership model—or even a different pastor. Perhaps instead of focusing our energy on those who have stopped coming, we need to focus more intentionally on those who have never come at all. Why are they not coming? We all know churches that receive new members regularly. How do they do it? We must look again at all of these questions, and we must be open to change. Above all, we must recommit ourselves to the essential work of disciple-making.

The unofficial motto of the PC(USA) is *Ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda secundum verbum Dei*—the church reformed, always being reformed **according to the Word of God**. That final phrase is often forgotten. When asked about the greatest commandment, Jesus taught: “*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets*” (Matthew 22:37–40)

Our job as church first and foremost is to be a place where people come to love and worship God. But if our message is only being heard by ourselves, we are not living into our calling. As the new year gets underway, let’s be ready to engage this critical question for the EWC: how do we be a place that attracts new worshippers? How do we approach the whole concept of being the church reformed, being reformed according to the Word of God? It’s a big task, but it’s an existential one. Great things are happening here: how do we let new people in on it?

Yours in service Christ and his Gospel,

Pastor Don

Elder Jeanette Huie- Class of 2028



On January 11th, I was installed as a Ruling Elder for PCC. I've served as an Elder multiple times and the Installation service was just as meaningful as before. However there was one difference that stood out for me. As I looked out into the pews, there were some worshipers who were familiar to me and some who were new. I was making a commitment to provide for their worship, nurture and service – with energy, intelligence, imagination and love. I realized that serving again as an Elder in this day and age will not be the same as before and I will experience different challenges, joys and insights.

I was born and raised in San Francisco, not far from the church. My parents attended PCC back in the 1940s and my father was a member of the choir. Jeannette Wei remembers teaching Sunday School to one of my sisters, probably in the early 1960s. When I was a junior at Lowell High School, I joined a high school Commission at Cameron House and the advisors (Cookie Wong and Nathan Lau) encouraged me to attend the English Evening service. The following year I decided to join the church and was baptized.

My last job was with Chinatown Community Development Center and commuting to the office in S.F. from my home in Oakland (only 15 miles away) became such a big headache that I decided to retire in the fall of 2019. My current fun activities are family gatherings, monthly mahjong games, daily walks with my dog Katie, road trips with my spouse Gilbert, watching cooking competition shows, gardening and trying new recipes. I've helped to coordinate PCC's Saturday food pantry for nearly ten years as a witness of my Christian faith and to support Chinatown residents.

Deacon Anthony Wong - Class of 2028

I've been a member of PCC since I was baptized in 1985. I grew up through the Cameron House programs - starting with Daycamp, Friday night club member, Daycamp leader and Friday night club leader. I met my wife Heidi while we were both Friday night club leaders. Heidi and I have settled in Alameda for the past 35 years. We have two kids - Mikayla and Justin. Mikayla lives and works in San Diego as an actuarial analyst and Justin is earning his Masters in Nursing at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore, MD and will graduate in August 2026.

I was born and raised in San Francisco and Union City. I went to UC Berkeley and graduated in 1990. I've been working in the insurance industry my entire career. My current position is Lead Reinsurance Underwriter at Summit Reinsurance Services located in Fort Wayne, Indiana. (Certain insurance companies actually need insurance!) I work remotely in my current role and have been working remotely for more than 25 years.

I spend most of my free time staying active through playing sports - golf, basketball, cycling and pickleball. I enjoy being outside versus inside. As I'm getting older, I'm hoping to travel more in the upcoming years. I'm trying my best to learn something new whether it's a random skill or knowledge.

I look forward to serving God and our church community as a Deacon. I appreciate the calling to learn something new about the inner workings of the church, others members and myself.

Deacon Linda Lee- Class of 2028



I joined PCC as a teenager participating through the Cameron House youth program. When I was an elementary school child, I remember Jeannette Wei and EJ were my Sunday School teachers. At PCC I used some of my skills as a Sunday School teacher for several years. PCC became more relevant to my life as we addressed social and civil rights issues. As an elected elder I became involved in what was then the War, Peace and Conscience Committee. I love that Presbyterians and PC(USA) is such a connectional church and I've been involved in General Assembly, Synod, SF Presbytery, Presbyterian Women and Asian Presbyterian Women. Meeting and worshipping with wonderful members from around the country (and the world) brings me joy.

This is my first opportunity to be a Deacon. I'm excited to be in a role that offers care, visitation, prayer and assistance to members. To me, church community is like an extended family: we are friendly, warm and welcoming, but we don't always know what needs someone has. As a Deacon I hope I can be of service to you. I'm also co-moderator of our Women's Fellowship, often leading our Bible Study. I'm a frequent volunteer at the Saturday food pantry, and try to play my ukulele with our church group.

Deacon Nancy Chee -Class of 2028

It has been a long while since being asked to be an active deacon but then, once a deacon, always a deacon? I was first called to be a deacon at the time when there was PCC Evening English worship in the 1980's. Since then, the call to serve this church has included being a Sunday school teacher (then its Superintendent), an Elder, Food Pantry volunteer and the behind the scene stage manager for worship during the pandemic. There has also been coordinating the long running Cookie Project and participating in the various committees through the years (true to the Presbyterian tradition).



Outside of church, I am an occupational/hand therapist and have worked many years at CPMC Davies hospital and as a volunteer in overseas medical missions. About twice a year, I participate in these missions providing needed services and teaching people in underserved countries and they have taken me around the world and back on so many adventures!

So why a deacon now? We are an aging community (along with me) and it feels important to provide the love and support to people as the needs change. So with the skills and gifts that I have been given, I hope I can continue to serve with lending my ears, hands and heart to this church community.

Deacons' Potluck by Wayne Eng



One thing that our church is good at, are events involving food. Our fall gathering was no different. Even though we were assigned types of food by last name, we didn't have too many doubles or triples of food items like chicken wings.

We want to thank the deacons and the special guests who organized the mixer and the music trivia games. Thanks also to the ones who helped out washing the containers, helping with the trash, and cleaning the hall afterwards for church the next day.

Many of you said we should have evenings or gatherings like this more often. We can. However, please be willing and able to share in all the tasks that are necessary to make these events happen. Please contact any one of the deacons to suggest what you would like to see and initiate planning for our next event.

Women's Fellowship Christmas Gathering by Carole Chinn-Morales



Women's Fellowship held its Christmas gathering in the church fellowship hall in December. We were asked to bring donations for the Asian Prisoners Support Committee.

APSC is a nonprofit that focuses on ways to support persons incarcerated, detained, those in eminent danger of being deported, as well as recent deportees who are now separated from their families, friends, and loved ones. These deportees are finding their way in countries where they may know no one, yet are trying to survive, find shelter, jobs, and support. Read more about this nonprofit based in Oakland at asianprisonersupport.com

EWC Mission Giving in 2025 by Ed Chin for M&E

The English Worshiping Community (EWC) of the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown is a community of faith, biblically grounded, and acting faithfully in the spirit of Micah 6:8 “to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God.” We are committed to bearing witness to Jesus Christ and sharing His love and justice, starting with the San Francisco Chinatown Community and extending out into the world.

In addition to providing direct service such as our food pantries, cooking and serving meals for the SF Interfaith Council Winter Shelter program, forming an accompaniment joining team, or joining a Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) work site to rebuild homes, and what is done individually and by fellowship groups, we support organizations and causes that we have affinity with through in-kind gifts and cash donations. This is a synopsis of 2025 mission giving on behalf of and by the English Worshipping Community.

We donated funds to PCUSA One Great Hour of Sharing, Peace and Global Witness, and Christmas Joy offerings, raising about \$6000. We donated \$430+ from 2cents-a-meal to the SF Presbytery Hunger Program.

We gave two designated donations: \$18,000 to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Shared Mission Support <https://centernet.pcusa.org/who-we-are/gifts-financial-support/types-of-giving/> and \$7,500 to Donaldina Cameron House <https://cameronhouse.org> .

Following are the organizations that the Mission and Evangelism Committee, at its discretion, and acting on behalf of the EWC, contributed cash or in-kind donations to during the year.

Partnering Organizations that we donated in-kind to:

- Collecting and purchasing 30 back-to-school backpacks for the Asian Women's Shelter <https://www.sfaws.org> and \$218 from cash donations.
- In collaboration with Chinatown Community Development Center, <https://www.chinatowncdc.org> we donated 100 gifts to the Christmas Toy Drive for children who live in SROs.
- The food pantries at PCC are distribution sites for the SF-Marin Food Bank, <https://www.sfmfoodbank.org>. Our Saturday pantry has been operating since 2016.

Partnering Organizations that we donated cash from the Mission and Evangelism Committee budget to:

- \$500 to the San Francisco Interfaith Council <https://www.sfinterfaithcouncil.org>
- \$500 to the Living Waters World Mission <https://www.livingwaterworldmissions.org>
- \$100 to the Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach <https://www.apilegaloutreach.org>
- \$350 to the host church for the mission trip worksite - Trinity Presbyterian Church
- \$1000 to the Middle East Children's Alliance <https://www.mecaforpeace.org>
- \$1000 to the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance for Israel/Palestine <https://pcusa.org/disaster-assistance/active-responses/international-disaster/israelpalestine>
- \$500 to the Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity <https://www.im4humanintegrity.org>
- \$500 to the Pipit Fund <http://pipitfund.weebly.com>
- \$500 to Tsuru for Solidarity <https://tsuruforsolidarity.org>
- \$500 to the International Rescue Committee <https://www.rescue.org/what-we-do>
- \$500 to the San Francisco Safe House <https://www.sfsafehouse.org>
- \$500 to the San Francisco Night Ministry <https://sfnightministry.org>
- \$500 to the San Francisco Community Health Center <https://www.sfcommunityhealth.org>

Another Successful Cookie Project

by Nancy Chee

First off, I want to offer a deep thank you to all who participated in last year's 2025 Cookie Project. This was the first year that I was not home for this project as I was off on a medical mission abroad to Bhutan through Christmas. But we had many "elves who rolled up their sleeves to make this Christmas miracle happen.

We had 21 bakers this year with so many different varieties of butter, shortbread, chocolate chip, oatmeal cookies and more. We also had a few adventurous flavors of peppermint, lemon and ginger snap. Such joy in a bag of homemade cookies. One recipient said there was such a variety it was hard to decide what the best was. And another froze some of the cookies and is still eating them through the new year.

While I was away, I was nostalgic and remembered how this whole project started almost 30 years ago. It began as a lesson for the children in Sunday school on how at Christmas it was not always about receiving gifts. It was also about how we should remember to give too. It might have been a little torturous for the kids to see the delicious cookies, having to pack them and then to give them away. Thank you to the original parents who supported this and went to make deliveries with the kids who did not necessarily know who the recipients were. They were not strangers but people of our PCC extended community.

And each year, this project reminds me of the unconditional gift of love that was given to us by God. We do not necessarily deserve the precious gift of Christ but it was given out of love and the lesson I hope we continue to carry in our life in Christ.

It takes a village to care for one another and this project continues to be a testament to the thoughtfulness and care of everyone in our PCC community. From the bakers, card and bag makers, cookies packers, deliverers and so many others who have continued to work together to remember those in need in our community.

A deep, heartfelt thanks to all of you for helping! I hope that we can each continue to share our gifts and talents as God calls us.

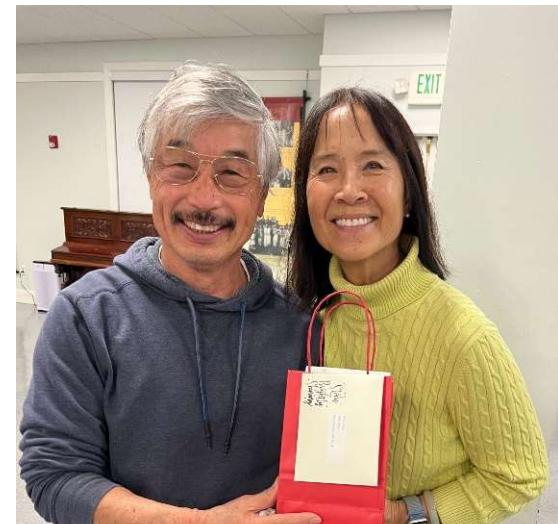
Blessings always,

Nancy

Christmas Cookie Project 2025- Handmade Card, Cookie Packing, and Cookie Recipients



More Christmas Cookie Recipients (partial list) 2025



First Anniversary Celebration of Joice Food Pantry- 10/02/2025

The first anniversary of the Joice Street Food Pantry of PCC was celebrated with lunch, singing, and Food Pantry Bingo with prizes!!

Cheers To Us - lyrics by Michelle (Mo) Wong

Sung to the tune of Twinkle Twinkle Little Star or the ABC Song



We are here to celebrate

Friends formed at Food Pantry.

Whether we come from PCC,

Cameron House or Rotary,

We're a very special crew,

Finding Joy in what we do.

A big shout out to David C

He's the guy with the master pl

Always seeking to improve

and keeping us in the groove.

Kudos to Annie and Mario

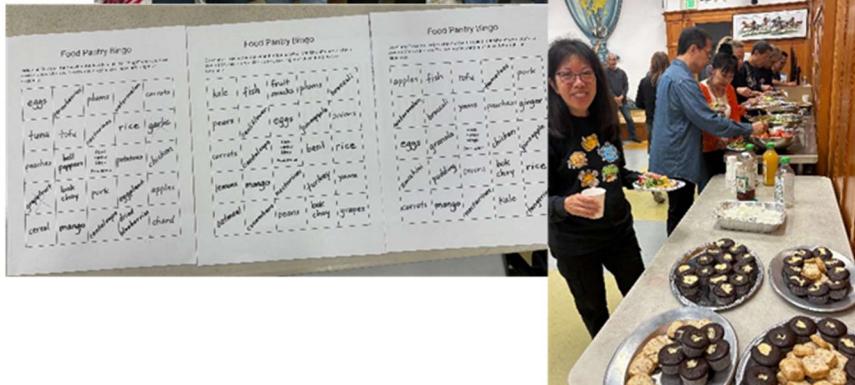
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We are grateful for everyone here.

Cheers to us for a successful year!!





ICE Protest by Clinton Huey

It's cold. It's dark. My alarm goes off at 4 am. Gotta get to my brother Byron's house so he can drive me to BART by 5:10 am. Today I'm going to join other faith activists to shut down the ICE offices on Sansome Street in San Francisco. I remember to put on my two layers of adult diapers they gave us because who knows how long it may be before I can get to a bathroom if I get arrested. And no contact lenses today in case we get pepper sprayed. When Byron drops me off at BART I remember to hand over my phone...don't want Homeland Security to dig into my connections.

It's been over 40 years since my last string of civil disobedience arrests. They were about stopping the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant and the dangers of the nuclear arms race back then, issues that seemed to loom so large over the fate of humankind. I heard the call back then...God's call to step up, to do something more than just sign petitions. This time it had to do with something closer, standing with immigrants in my own communities. We wanted no asylum seeker to have to check in today, no immigrant to walk into the ICE office and get deported.

I was signed up to be a part of one of Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity's faith vigils at ICE, to be a part of a group of witnesses to stand outside the office, letting people who had to check in know that they were not alone. My pod leader emailed me to say that our

Tuesday morning vigil was cancelled. But wait, Rev. Deb had added my name to a group chat for something else happening that same day. The chat hinted of something very secret, with no details. I had to register and be vetted on an encrypted site...and Rev. Deb added, I had to participate in a walkthrough on Sunday. So I went.

I joined the group that was to be at the Sansome Street entrance. Rev. Deb asked me, "What are you going to do, picket, blockade, or gear?" I answered, "I'll do what you're doing." So, we practiced with "the gear" and picked up our diapers before we left.

Early in the quiet of the pre-dawn, we put on our specially silkscreened stoles, which would indicate our faith connection. We each padlocked a section of chain around our waists as we quietly walked to the ICE entrance. As soon as we got there, we chained the doors shut and then linked ourselves to the doors. I felt safe. I was surrounded by reverends and rabbis, Buddhists, Protestants and Catholics. We stood arm-in-arm, chained together and connected by our commitment to protect our immigrant brothers and sisters. They gave us a banner to hold below our chains that said, "People of faith choose love over cruelty." A minister with a soulful voice and a rhythmic folk guitar began leading us in uplifting songs of community. So we sang and rocked, and sang for over 5 hours..."If you want to get our neighbors, you'll have to go through us." We had a support person feeding us snacks and bringing us little cups of tea.



As night changed to day, I saw that my brother Elliot and Carole arrived to support us. The ends of the street at Washington and Jackson had already been blocked off by supporters holding large banners. Others started laying out a mural on the street with a giant butterfly and the words, "Our faiths teach us to love our neighbor & disrupt injustice." Elliot grabbed a brush and added his flourishes to the art. After three dispersal orders,

homeland security, with the help of firefighters using bolt cutters, started arresting us one-by-one around 12:30 pm.



One by one, they moved us to the other end of the building on the ground floor where they gathered all 44 of us to book us with federal misdemeanor citations. We already had a pro bono team to handle our legal concerns. We continued to sing. Some led us in prayer. Deb gave a short history of the building, the building where women immigrants were processed and detained after the Angel Island immigration station closed. My mom was held here in 1948. We talked about the contrast between how we were treated and how current immigrants are treated...we were given chairs and water. Immigrants on the 6th floor have sometimes slept there without blankets while many were handcuffed and shackled and put into expedited deportation without even being able to plead their case.

By 2:00 pm most of us were released in groups of five. When we came out we found out that the ICE building was closed for the day. All appointments for the had been canceled. We had succeeded. One woman was overjoyed with gratitude because the friend she accompanied to the check-in was spared for another day. We will be back.

I felt so connected today to such a powerful group of people of faith, standing together and standing with our neighbors. I felt no fear as we were linked arm-in-arm, doing the will of the divine, following the call of Jesus.

For more, watch or read:

<https://www.nbcbayarea.com/news/local/ice-protesters-sf-federal-building/3998600/>

<https://abc7news.com/post/dozens-protesters-faith-communities-block-entrances-san-francisco-ice-building/18292234/>

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/sf/article/immigration-courthouse-sansome-protest-21246057.php>

Reflections of China by Jeanette Huie



My experiences on the China trip with my sister Georgette and 40 other travelers were memorable and at times mind-boggling. In order to prepare for our visit to the Huie (paternal side) and Chin (maternal side) villages, Georgette started gathering family information over a year in advance. We went to the Chinese cemetery in Colma to locate our Great-Grandmother's and Grandmother's tombstones which are inscribed with the village name of their husbands. That was my first visit to the Chinese cemetery. Through the Bay Area Chinese Genealogy Group meetings, I learned of the amazing resources at the SF Main Library and Oakland Mormon Temple for researching family history. I live only a half-mile from the temple and all these years was not aware of their services.

My first trip to China was in the early 1980s with a group organized by Bennett Tom. Bicycles were the primary mode of transportation (besides buses) and dark blue Mao jackets were typical attire for the men. Many residents of Beijing lived in hutongs with extended family members. When we exchanged our American dollars, we were given tourist dollars that were different from the native currency. Friendship stores were established for tourists to do their shopping. In 2005, I took a second trip with Ritz Tours. The hutongs that lined the streets of Beijing were mostly gone, replaced by high rise apartments. Grandmothers lamented that they didn't see their grandchildren everyday like they used to in the hutong. Family structure and relationships were changing rapidly. The wide boulevards were crowded with cars, scooters and taxis. Beijing was starting to build a stadium for the Summer Olympics (held in 2008). In Shanghai, knock-offs were the rage and street vendors would discretely lead us to a basement or apartment filled w/merchandise like purses, jackets and jewelry.

Another motivation I had for traveling to China was to see how it changed after 20 years. That was the mind-boggling part! Gigantic shopping malls, electric cars, Didi rideshare (China's version of Uber), communicating via WhatsApp and WeChat, and making purchases with contactless AliPay. High-speed trains allow for easier travel throughout the country. The streets and bathrooms were cleaner. Face recognition cameras are commonplace. Coffee shops abound. In fact, there was food everywhere we turned. In one of the hotels, little robots are used to deliver food when room service is ordered. Google Translate and other translation apps really helped us with reading Chinese characters and asking/answering questions.

It was a privilege to meet and learn from Dr. Selia Tan, Associate Professor at Wuyi University. One of her accomplishments is the creation of the Cangdong Heritage Education Center within the 700-year-old Cangdong Village. Buildings were restored and local residents are employed by the Center. We met there for two days before our trips to the village.

The morning of our village visit, we packed bags of candy and cookies to offer to our ancestors. The organizer of our group suggested packing DNA test kits and if anyone in the village claimed to be a relative and asked for money, we should tell them we want to test their DNA first! I felt much anticipation as we drove away from the hotel for the Huie village. The urban landscape eventually

changed to rural. I didn't see many directional road signs and the driver made occasional U-turns. It turned out he was lost.

We saw a lot of countryside, rice paddies and farms in that two-hour trek; I think the drive should've only been a half hour but with few road signs and with several villages of the same name, it's easy to go down the wrong road. We finally arrived and the rest of the day ran smoothly.

Learning that thousands of migrants died on the voyage from China to California was sobering. Grandfather Huie and Great-Grandfather Chin must have endured extreme struggles to survive here in America. I'm really glad I was able to visit the villages where they lived in the late 1800s; there's always the possibility that they'll be torn down for another new development.



← All our meals were freshly made and included regional specialties. For lunch one day we ate at a restaurant specializing in clay pot rice dishes. They were cooked outdoors over a wood fire.

→ The front entrance of Great- Grandfather Chin's ancestral hall that he built to honor his father.



← Paying respects to our Huie ancestors took place outside and then inside the ancestral hall.



→ Modern apartment buildings just a short distance from the Huie village. The structure in the foreground is a public bathroom.



My China Roots by Georgette Huie

My cousin Alvin Huie was one of the founding members of the Bay Area Chinese Genealogical Group (BACGG), which meets regularly to help interested persons trace their Chinese roots. He had begun the work of identifying the Huie ancestral village (Hengkeng), visited it and obtained the *zupu* (village/clan register), which traces our lineage back for generations. The problem was our grandfather and great-grandfather are not listed in the book! One person from the village had mentioned to Alvin that our great-grandfather may have been from another village but had moved to theirs. So, further investigation was needed and with Alvin now being in his 90's, I decided to take up the challenge. I attended BACGG meetings and the national workshops put on by Henry Tom (whose workshops are coming to San Francisco in February). I was curious to learn about my maternal ancestors as well, and I needed every bit of information from the workshops to even identify the village (Chazhou) and to know what questions to ask. Henry Tom and others have put months and years of effort into learning how to trace one's roots in China and are now so very generously sharing their knowledge with anyone who asks. Henry was leading a trip to China last April, and with the help of Selia Tan of Wuyi University and Stanford, we would be assigned our own researcher and translator who would pre-visit our village, verify the connection, find a car and driver, and take us there. I signed up and was glad Jeanette decided to go as well.

We flew into Guangzhou and spent the week in and around the area (Mei Guan Pass, Jiangmen, Kaiping) visiting sites especially relevant to us overseas Chinese. There were about forty other (mostly) Chinese Americans from different parts of the U.S., and it was enjoyable getting to know them. We stayed in 4+ star hotels and ate about nine courses at every lunch and dinner. In addition to visiting the ever-present night markets, a favorite activity was seeking out the well-kept massage places offering 90-minute foot massages for around \$20. During this part of the trip, I was especially taken by the Jiangmen Wuyi Overseas Chinese Museum. When we arrived, there were busloads of school children being taken to the museum. In other words, China is educating their young people about the experiences of overseas Chinese, highlighting how our families faced much discrimination but through hard work, determination, and intelligence, overcame the difficulties, survived, and thrived. Jiangmen boasts that it is "the home of overseas Chinese."



After a week of touring, it was time to visit our ancestral villages. Jeanette and I were lucky to have been chosen by a Chinese filmmaker to be the subjects of his new documentary on overseas Chinese connecting with their roots. We were followed everywhere by a six-member film crew. Whether the documentary sees the light of day is unknown at this time, but it was fun to receive the special attention and to have our visits filmed and photographed by professionals. Both paternal and maternal villages are now small, with only about one hundred residents in each. I felt fortunate that they even still exist; one or two people on our trip learned that their villages are now covered by modern developments. Thus, documenting through film and pictures is crucial, if one wishes to preserve that piece of one's heritage and history. Folks in China are not that interested in connecting with their ancestral village; it is of more significance to us from overseas.

I was touched by the warmth and welcome of our Huie relatives. They remembered when Alvin visited, and our visit six or seven years later confirmed for them that they were not forgotten. Unlike stories we had heard about village relatives wanting and expecting lots of money or ordering hundred-dollar bottles of alcohol during the lunch they were being treated to, ours were very considerate and even offered to pay when it appeared the bill was high (it wasn't). I felt very much welcomed into the Huie fold.

Our mother's last name was Chin, and it was determined by our researcher that no close relatives remain in our maternal ancestral village. But we were taken to the village anyway because our great-grandfather built one of the still-standing ancestral halls and is memorialized in a stone tablet as one of the six notable ancestors of the village. In the now abandoned ancestral hall, his picture is still on a wall. I was able to compare our family pictures of him with that picture and indeed, it is the same man. He had left messages engraved in the columns for his descendants, so it was meaningful that Jeanette and I could see those messages. Of greater significance to me is the fact that we are descended from the town's founder, Chen Yufu, who was a noted 17th century Confucian scholar. As recently as 1993, his works are still being published (in Chinese). From what little I have read, he seems to emphasize the importance and place of living out (i.e. practicing) one's beliefs – that the beliefs become real when they are being practiced and not when they remain in ivory tower discussions. Since I wrote something similar in my Doctor of Ministry paper about Christian "community," I feel profoundly connected to and supported by my ancestor through time and space.

The following week, we toured Yunnan Province and were fortunate to be in Xizhou exactly when Jeanee Linden was there. It really was chance timing and a delight to visit her and Brian's beautiful hotel.



Above- With Jeanee in Xizhou



Standing where our great grandfather's house was, while being filmed.

Kyle's Reverse Paperson Journey by Kyle Shin



My first journey from San Francisco Chinatown to China began in January of 2025. When I was visiting a friend in Yunnan, a big world event happened-- the U.S. TikTok temporary ban, sending millions of new users to a Chinese platform called Rednote 小红书. Through this app, I posted our family tree and asked the world if they would help me reconnect with our lost family in China. To my surprise, tens of thousands of Rednote 小红书 users assisted me on my quest, providing phone numbers, addresses and maps to the place my ancestors fled 93 years ago, Kowkong 九江.

In March 2025, from Yunnan, I flew to Hong Kong, and then transferred to Guangzhou airport-- where I met my mom, Sabrina. She arrived totally exhausted because, just like our paper son/daughter ancestors had issues going through customs, so did my mom entering the motherland.

This trip was not a sightseeing trip nor a shopping vacation. Our motivation to go back to Guangdong was simple and clear, touch roots, find our ancestral halls to pay respect, and find lost family in China. Once in Kowkong, we met up with a friend of a friend who shoots documentaries-- and so now we had a translator who could also capture our ABC root-seeking experiences on camera. Long story short, in Kowkong, we found everything and more.

In November 2025, I returned to Kowkong with 7 family members including my 91-year-old grandmother, Carolyn. Because her Cantonese and Kowkonghua level is quite good, she was treated as royalty everywhere we went! Although my family returned in mid-November, a voice inside me told me to stay in Kowkong and begin my most difficult language challenge yet-- learn Cantonese.

How did I learn Canto? Well-- I was honored to stay with distant relatives for a whole month, living where my Quan ancestors once lived 150 years ago. One moment that moved me to tears was when I sat underneath a 200-year-old Banyan tree located in the Quan neighborhood of Kowkong. To me, the Banyan tree, which has aerial roots that hang over us Quan descendants, symbolizes the big Chinese family, both rooted in China and overseas like us. We all come from the same root, but we're stronger when connected with one another. This Banyan tree, that has withstood centuries of cultural, political, and economic turmoil, provided me spiritual and emotional nourishment as I reflected on my journey to the East. Not to mention, this tree is an epic backdrop for our family reunion photos!



During the six months I spent in China in 2025 searching for and deepening my roots, my faith was tested time and time again. However, every time I felt helpless or needed assistance, strangers (or were they angels?) came to my aid. For example, in Kowkong, two very helpful people that worked at the Overseas Kowkong Benevolent Association reached out to me over Rednote 小红书 and guided my mother and I to find ancestral sites as well as our lost family in China. Many times, I wanted to give up on this journey to find roots in China. My limited Mandarin and non-existent Cantonese was a large hurdle, making communication quite difficult and frustrating. However, after praying, meditating, and crying, the depth of my faith is now rooted as deeply as the Banyan tree.

My 2025 ended with a bang as I was given the opportunity to perform my original song about finding roots in front of 10,000 people in Kowkong. Nervous but proud to represent San Francisco, I took the stage and sang these lyrics:

"I'm keeping my faith, I'm reading the signs / I still gotta do what I promised, finding my village with my mom / I know the Spirit's the only one steering, I pray that we make it Kowkong / but how long to Kowkong?"

Now, I'm back in San Francisco, studying my Cantonese and working on my next Son of Paper album inspired by my travels called JOURNEY TO THE EAST.

News from the Pews by Pat Chan



Happy New Year!!!

Lunar New Year will be the Year of the Horse.

Last year we had some joy and happiness with our church family so let's see what 2026 will bring to all of us.

I will share with you all the joy and happiness that was shared with us.

- Stuart and Diane Go's eldest son, Jeff, got married in August. Jeff and his bride Nicole were married down in southern California.
- Peter and Annie Wong's son Marcus got married in early December to his bride Carmen. Annie said it was an outdoor event and it was cold.
- Greg Chan and Jeanine Lim are now grandparents. Daughter Kati and her husband Sung are parents to baby Josephine. Greg says that as baby Josie gets older and less "floppy", he is more comfortable holding her.

We want to wish all the families a big "Congratulations".

Other news:

- Jeannette Wei turned 95 in December. I helped put together a booklet with all our birthday greetings. She was so happy to receive all the birthday greetings. On the telephone she was so happy to hear from us. Her voice is still strong. I know we all miss her and Jim.
- Kimball and Vivian will be on their 6th Medical Mission trip with the Philippine Medical Society of Northern California. They will do some traveling after their volunteer work. We wish them safe travels around Asia.
- Last year, many of us traveled near and far, to such places as Korea, Japan, Europe and China. I was one of the church members that went with Laurene, Corey, Ian and Tully to visit the Linden Centre in Yunnan, China. We all had a good time staying at the different hotels. They are very nice. Food was plentiful. We saw some beautiful sites. I know a few couples may go this Fall. Check with Laurene if you are interested in going with her and Corey. I have to say Jeanee and Brian were good hosts. Their co-worker Jing went along with us. She made sure we were safe each day. She took many pictures. My friend Marci was glad I invited her to come join us.

Even Pastor Don did some traveling last year.

I know people are making travels for this year.

Stay tuned...

From W&N: Save The Date- English Worshiping Community Retreat- June 13/14



We had a fantastic EWC retreat last year and we are planning another "fun-tastic" get away at **Redwood Glen's Siden Center on June 13-14, 2026**. Mark your calendars now for a weekend of study, fellowship and fun! More details soon!

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