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# PULSE

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## Reconciled: Youth Winter Retreat

By Erika Lee, photos by Richard Lee and Clark Fobes

Imagine if you were a dad, and you had a two-year-old son. You do everything for him — feed him, play with him, change his diapers, wake up in the middle of the night to take care of him — and for that he calls you “daddy.” But what if he starts going up to the people he sees around him and calling them “daddy?” They didn’t earn the title of “daddy” — they don’t feed him or sleep less to take care of him 24/7 — you earned it, and you’d probably be offended that he calls them “daddy!” Now imagine that you’re the son, and God is the father in the story. Do we do the same thing, and turn to other things and call them dad? Those things would be our idols, the things we would choose to follow over God. When we do that, God gets offended, as He should.

That was one of the illustrations that Pastor Nate gave us during the retreat. After the sermon where he gave that analogy, he gave us hope by explaining that God loves us so much that through Jesus’s death, God adopts us as His own, despite every single sin we’ve committed, and we’re no longer in debt, and He treasures us. Because we’ve been reconciled with God, we can reconcile with friends at school or work if we’ve had a fight and show God’s love through that.

Throughout the retreat, we had serious reflection times, reflecting on



*Erika Lee, far left, with her small group*

what idols we were struggling with and sharing them with everyone on the open mic or singing songs sung by an amazing worship team. We also had lighthearted times, from watching a movie made by our counselors, to spending 30+ minutes trying to flip a water bottle on a slanted table, to making 12 people try to get across the room while standing on a tarp, to making people carry other people to go from one tree to another tree, to having to eat dinner with huge serving utensils or with nose plugs on.

(My brother had to do that.) These were the types of games we played in our game groups, and each game group was a different body part. (GREEN THUMBS!)

The cool part was that we did everything with our brothers and sisters in Christ! The retreat was a great experience for me, and I was able to have a lot of fun while focusing on God and how we’re reconciled to Him, getting to be way more comfortable in sharing with my small group, bonding with friends, and talking to new people.



# Reflections from Youth Winter Retreat



## *What did you learn from retreat?*

"I learned that we have been adopted into God's family and He wants to be with us and have a relationship with us. God would rather be with us when we are in sin than have us run away from God because of our sin." — Daniel Wong

"God is an angry God but not in that human type of way." — Maya Chinn





# Reflections from Youth Winter Retreat, cont.



*What is one word you would describe your retreat experience and why?*

**Love.** I would describe the retreat as love because of the love I learned and experienced from God and from my brothers and sisters at retreat. Also I know that God showed the greatest sacrificial love to me by sending His Son Jesus to die for me.  
— Daniel Wong

**Reminder.** That's not an adjective but whatever. Anyway, it was a good reminder about idols and how we idolize many things that aren't worth worshipping/devoting our lives to because we are so passionate about those things. We fall away from God and forget that he is constantly loving and fulfilling unlike our idols. — Kimberly Wong



**Humbling.** God used His Word powerfully to reveal our brokenness and need for Him. I was able to witness this in my own small group and hear the joy they found in understanding their worth being found by a heavenly Father who treasures them. — Harmonie Wong

**Unity** because we are all like really close."  
— Courtney Wong

**Community** because I got to spend more time with my small group and meet new people."  
— Emmanuel Ching





# Reflections from Youth Winter Retreat, cont.

## *What was the highlight of the retreat?*

"I really liked the extra-long worship because it gave me time to think. I also just really liked singing all the songs and it also gave me time to do the prayer stations." — Ariana Lum

"Talking about how Jesus has reconciled us from our sins and being able to let go of my sins and confess them and know that I have been forgiven through Christ." — Daniel Wong

"I liked hanging out with my friends and getting to know them better. And I learned a lot about God and how we need to get rid of our idols. I liked small groups too." — Emma Law

"Praise and prayer night!" — Charmaine Ho

"Church time because it was a very good symbol of how we are separated from each other but connected through Christ." — Katie Quan

"My highlight of retreat was the prayer and praise night." — Quincie Wong

"Talking with my small group before going to sleep for hours on end and almost missing breakfast!" — Emmanuel Ching

"Prayer and praise night because it was really emotional for me just being around people who support one another by growing in faith through Christ." — Hannah Ng



## *How did God reveal Himself to you?*

"I think God really revealed Himself to me by the power of prayer. We prayed many times a day. My favorites were the prayer stations and the prayer and praise night." — Hannah Ng

"God revealed himself to me through my brothers and sisters in Christ. The love from my brothers and sisters showed me how God loves me so much and how his love is even greater. Also the encouragement from my brothers and sisters was very encouraging to me." — Daniel Wong



*Thanks to Pastor Clark and all the amazing youth counselors for making the retreat so memorable and fun for the 165 youth!*



# 鄧萃雯見證佈道會

## Evangelistic Evening with Sheren Tang

By Bill Tam, photos by Wai Lam and Margie Fong

在2月3日，香港著名影星鄧萃雯在本教會作見證佈道會，講述十二年前信主的過程。此乃由影音使團主辦的一個公開聚會，吸引了六百人參加，使教會的禮堂、大堂、和體育館都坐無虛席。

鄧萃雯在1985年開始進入無線電視台，前後在六部不同劇集中當女主角，在2009及2010年獲得最佳女主角獎。在分享中，她講述如何在出生時便被父母遺棄，由祖父母養大，童年充滿孤單和失望，但培養出一種努力和永不放棄的性格，環境讓她早熟。進入影藝圈後，以為可以用掌聲和成功來填補心靈的空虛，但卻發現名與利都不能帶來喜樂。在三十多歲時，她進入人生低潮，由朋友帶她參加藝入之家，期後信主，在2005年受洗。得救後經歷新的生命、目標和喜樂，現在工餘時便作佈道和關懷的事工。

佈道會後八人決志信主，我們教會負責跟進，在她三日四場的灣區佈道會中，共有43人信主，我們為她和各位新信者祈禱，並感謝神使用我們教會作此傳福音的渠道。



Christian Hong Kong TV Celebrity, Sheren Tang with Sunset's Transitional Minister and Elder Bill Tam.



"During this Chinese New Year, the Building Christian Artists (BCA) team and I were blessed to serve with Media Evangelism Ministry in their February 3rd outreach event. Praise the Lord that two of our Sunset line dance students accepted Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior on that night! Welcome to the family of God, Camilia and Candice!"  
— Margie Fong

On the evening of February 3, 2017, a famous Hong Kong television celebrity, Sheren Tang, came to Sunset Church to witness her conversion to Christ about 12 years ago. It was an evangelistic event sponsored by Media Evangelism Association, USA, and Sunset Church was the San Francisco venue that hosted the event. The event was open to the public and about 600 people showed up and totally filled the sanctuary, lobby and the gym.

Sheren Tang started her Hong Kong TV acting career in 1985 and earned the "best actress" award in 2009 and 2010. She is the first actress that has done six different leading actress roles in the Hong Kong television drama history.

In her sharing, she described how she was abandoned by her parents at birth and was raised by her grandparents. Her childhood was lonely and full of disappointment, but

she worked hard and built a tough "fight-for-herself" spirit; she matured early in childhood. Her entrance to the entertainment industry was initially viewed as a fulfillment of a void in her heart. However, she didn't find real joy from her fame and fortune. It was in her thirties that she faced a downturn in her life. Through some Christian celebrity friends, she found Jesus and was baptized in 2005. With the salvation from God, she experienced a new life of purpose and real love. Now she dedicates her free time to evangelizing and caring for people.

At the end of the event, eight people stepped forward to receive Christ as their personal savior. Sunset Church was tasked to follow up with these new believers. We learned that a total of 43 people trusted Christ as a result of her three other similar events held in the Bay Area. We pray for her and for the new believers. We also thank God for using us in this evangelism effort.





## February 19th Welcome Brunch

quotes by Daniel Huang and Rachel Wong, photos by Melody Gawliu and Lucy Gee

*"When my wife, Stephanie, and I started attending Sunset over four years ago, the members at Sunset Church really made us feel at home. From the beginning, we felt a part of the wonderful Christ-centered community here and not just as attendees. It is our desire for all new Sunset attendees to experience this as well. The Welcome Brunch is one of the ways that new attendees and current members can connect in a smaller and more personal setting. We hope to meet more of you at the upcoming Welcome Brunches!"*

— Daniel Huang



Thanks to the amazing team who hosted the February 19th Welcome Brunch!

Front row, left to right: Courtney, Rachel, Stephanie and Kathy  
Back row, left to right: Hilary, Tim, Gary, Paul, Daniel and Andy



*"It was definitely a team effort! I'm glad everything worked out and that we had so many willing volunteers. There was a great turn out for the welcome event. Hoping that some genuine connections were made and that everyone left with a warm heart and a full stomach. All praise and glory to God for sure!"* — Rachel Wong





# Alpha Pregnancy Center Annual Banquet

by Elgin Quan, photos by Gary Gin and Phillip Wong

“A baby’s purpose begins with a mother’s courage,” wise words spoken by a courageous mom whose unplanned pregnancy managed to grow in grace and wisdom. In partnership with Alpha Pregnancy Center (APC), this year’s featured speaker, Amy Ford, spoke with fervor and passion driven by a vision that became the inspiration of Embrace Grace. Birthed in her small church in hometown Fort Worth Texas, Embrace Grace has grown within ten short years into a multinational non-profit organization that hopes to partner with churches to provide practical emotional and spiritual help for single young women who find themselves facing an unplanned pregnancy.

Held in the spacious foyer of St. Mary’s cathedral, 250 APC supporters including 57 attendees from Sunset Church, enjoyed a night of celebration beginning with a succulent meal served by Black Tie Catering, followed by warm fellowship amongst camaraderie of friends and the APC community.

Amy Ford, now mother of four, shared her story as an unwed single mother at the age of 19. “That unplanned pregnancy was one of the hardest times in my life — uncomfortable, alone and ashamed.” Fear and loneliness quickly became her scarlet letter. While the hardest part was going through it alone. Yet in her



*Chastidy Ronan, APC Executive Director, with husband Matthew and daughter Catica*

brokenness, God answered her: “Write the vision, make it plain on tablets so he may run who reads it.” (Habakkuk 2:2)

Embrace Grace was formed as a result. Its mission to empower churches across the nation to be a safe and non-judging place where girls can run to and not away from. “This is where the Body of Christ can minister to women who are desperately searching for a Savior. This is where we can speak into their lives and instill in them a heart transformation, not just a behavioral modification.”

Psalm 139:13-14 and Psalm 90:2 reminds us that “God constructed each of us with a built-in inherent value. He assigned to us before we were even born.” We are eternally lovable in the eyes of the Creator and we are tethered to the One who deemed us forever-worthy.

Crowned as daughters of the King, one of Embrace Grace’s specialties is to organize a special night just for the mothers called Princess Day. A team of massage therapists, hairdressers and makeup artists pamper them and help them feel beautiful on the inside as well as out.

As Amy’s vision grows, Embrace Grace has been endorsed by several dozen Christian organizations and churches nationwide. Up to four countries and 300 organizations currently use her curriculum. Embrace Grace and Embrace Life has been quoted as “really truly changing the Pro-Life movement,” including endorsements by Focus on the Family, Table Talk, Life Today, Glenn Beck and much more.

On one hand, Amy sees Alpha Pregnancy Centers to embrace the

[Read more on p. 8](#)



# Alpha Pregnancy Center Annual Banquet, cont.

unborn and the single mother. On the other hand, she sees Embrace Grace to be a bridge to partner with churches to give ongoing emotional, spiritual and practical support.

Together Amy sees the Body of Christ work side by side to help every young mother embrace grace and be encouraged and empowered to know each life is God's masterpiece.

From fear to courage and sorrow to rejoicing, Amy's passion and vision unleashed a floodgate of spiritual and emotional awakening. Amy Ford's brave, courageous and inspirational story inspires us all that no matter what situation we find ourselves in, we can find grace and wisdom, love and joy, and in doing so have a reason to celebrate.



*Pastor Jeff Mammen with guest speaker, Amy Ford*



*Thank you Sunset Church for participating in APC's Diaper Drive to help needy families!*



## 2017 Bass Convention

by Betty Lee

BASS occurs every year on the first weekend of March in Castro Valley and is a conference to train church leaders. There are workshops not only on Christian Education but topics on 21st Century Issues, Evangelism, Marriage and Families, Missions, Small Groups, Special Needs and Youth.

I attended a workshop by Pat Sikora about How to Deal with Challenging People. She taught us practical principles: Focus on the Kingdom of God (Matthew 6:10), Sacrificial Love (John 13:34), Love Covers a Multitude of Challenges (1 Peter 4:8), People Grow and Heal Best in Community, Minister to the Spirit rather than the Soul (1 Thessalonians 5:23, Hebrews 4:12), Deal with your Own Stuff (Philippians 1:6, 1

Thessalonians 5:24 by praying, seeking accountability and receiving, healing, Set a Goal of Restoration, not judgment (Galatians 6:1) This session can be used anywhere we work, with our family and in ministry because we have relationships with people.

The evening session speaker was Efrem Smith, CEO of World Impact who challenged us to spend time with God and His Word because if Jesus is not in us then He is not "on" us. When we encounter others, they should know Jesus by our actions, words and love for them. In the Bay Area, we reside in a multi-cultural diverse place where we could be the church in the mission field and see the kingdom of God penetrate His light to the dark places. Hope to see you next year at BASS convention!





# A Call to Worship

a series by Melody Gawliu

In the clutter of my mind, I whispered to God prayerfully “Help. Show me who you are. Remind me who I am. I’m ready once again.” I know that when I pray, I have to be ready for God’s response and that He’d answer me in ways too marvelous for me to comprehend. I whispered that prayer to God over and over as I embarked on a solo self-exploratory journey that took me across the country 2,317 miles away from home to the cities of Franklin and Nashville in Tennessee. Fear and excitement filled me as I packed my cameras and journals because I did not know what I would find out there in Tennessee. Would I get homesick? Would I not want to come back? I wasn’t sure what I would find but as it turns out, I found more than I could have ever imagined — God met me there and reminded me of who I am and who I am called to be.

One of my mottos a.k.a. Melodyisms is “you can’t always choose what happens to you, but you can choose how you respond to it.” When I went through another huge loss in my life last year, I turned to God and spoke transparently to Him about my hurts and questions. Worship Leader Kari Jobe also recently went through a tragedy and turned to God in worship through music and I knew that was exactly what I needed to do. I needed to spend time alone but spending



time alone didn’t mean I was going to take a vacation from God. Quite the contrary, spending time alone meant that I needed quality time with God. Kari Jobe was a key worship leader for the Worship Together Conference and I felt that it would be a great way for me to spend some quality time with God uninhibited by any associations I had created in people, places, or things.

My time out in Tennessee was one where I found myself resting in God but not sitting out on a beach getting a tan. Instead I sat in silence, admired His creation, and worshipped Him for all that I knew of Him so far. Through the messages from Worship Leaders and pastors at the Worship Together Conference, I acquired life-changing knowledge and reminders that have blessed me and affected how I see worship, experience worship, and give my worship to God. These valuable insights are what I hope to share with you. Yes, YOU. YOU as in the one who is reading this RIGHT NOW.



*“I found myself resting in God but not sitting out on a beach getting a tan. Instead I sat in silence, admired His creation, and worshipped Him for all that I knew of Him so far.”*

I want to invite you to join me in a series of articles I will be writing journaling the messages that God lavished upon me during my journey through Tennessee and at the Worship Together Conference. Look for these articles in the Sunset Pulse newsletter or maybe better yet, talk to me in person! My prayer is that this series would affect our personal worship to God and our congregational worship. Stay tuned!



# SUNSET PROFILE: COURTNEY HOM



Courtney Hom on her first day of her six-month missions trip in East Asia eating street food!

## Tell us a little about yourself and your spiritual journey.

Growing up, God was more of a concept than a reality. My family went to church every Sunday at Sunset and I attended CampToons every summer. I cannot pinpoint an exact time in my life when I was saved because it was more of a gradual process for me. It was through two instances in high school when God started to become more of a reality. These instances (tearing my ACL through sports and being rejected from the college I wanted to go to most) grew my trust in Him and helped me to see His sovereignty.

## If you could go anywhere and do anything, where would you go and do?

I would LOVE to go somewhere to see the northern lights (Alaska, Norway, Finland?) I would also like to go somewhere with

little to no light pollution to stargaze and see more of God's creation!

## What are your hobbies or interests?

I love hanging out with people! I also love to play the drums, guitar, and sports (not necessarily in that order.)

## Tell us about your recent missions trip. What sparked your passion for missions?

God softened my heart towards missions in November 2015 after a hardened heart that resulted from a vision missions trip to East Asia four months prior. God opened the door to go on another trip to East Asia in the fall of 2016 for six months. I was fearful of the future because there were so many unknowns, but I knew God opened this door for a reason. I quit my job and left my family and boyfriend behind in order to learn more about missions in a

cross-cultural setting and how I can play a part. Through this trip, God confirmed that one of my gifts is the ability to make friends.

## What ministries are you involved in and why are you passionate about it?

Right now I am actively involved in the Worship Ministry. I love playing the drums because I feel like I can better express myself through them. Before I left for East Asia, I served as a high school AK counselor on Friday nights. I love this ministry because I love to invest and care for the next generation ... and they're a ton of fun!

## How do you see God working in your life?

God is currently teaching me what a call to living cross-culturally overseas on mission looks like. Before, I thought a call to overseas missions was only a divine, spiritual feeling. (This is why I was frustrated and confused when I didn't receive this during the Summer 2015 vision trip.) Now, I firmly believe that a calling to overseas mission is not only this, but can also be a cognitive response to what is true in the Word — that Jesus has commanded his followers to go (Matthew 28:19-20).

## What is something that people would be surprised to know about you?

I played flute from third to fifth grade.

## What Bible verse has been the most impactful to you in your Christian Journey?

*"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your doing; it is a gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."*  
Ephesians 2:8-10