

華倫敦中華基督教會
Chinese Church in London

Baptism Celebration Service 2023

Youth & English Ministry



Testimonies

tng the next generation

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy universal church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.

Amen.

Romans 6:4–11

⁴ For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.

⁵ Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised to life as he was. ⁶ We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. ⁷ For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin.

⁸ And since we died with Christ, we know we will also live with him. ⁹ We are sure of this because Christ was raised from the dead, and he will never die again. Death no longer has any power over him. ¹⁰ When he died, he died once to break the power of sin. But now that he lives, he lives for the glory of God. ¹¹ So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus.

Andy Yu

Closer To Jesus Youth Group Graduate (Colindale)

Growing up in a Christian family, I was surrounded by the stories within the bible. The numerous miracles and stories of prophets and their work was fascinating to me. Since I wanted to learn more about Christianity, I decided to enrol in the Easter Camp. Due to this experience, I was able to communicate to other believers about topics of interest that I was lucky enough to come across in my Christian life. During this time, I used prayer, contemplation and communication with believers around my age to open my heart to Jesus. I delved into scripture and surrounded myself with a community of devotees. This allowed me to recognise my need for forgiveness and simultaneously accept the gift of salvation that he offers freely to us all.

However, the older I grew, the less I believed in the story and therefore, the less I felt connected with my religion. My work had encapsulated my life and caused me to distance myself from God. My schedule became too hectic and I found myself giving less and less time to my religion, not going to church, not reading the bible, not praying as much as I wanted to which is something I currently regret.

I found the importance of God during my A-Levels. It was an incredibly difficult time for me as I felt pressured to do well. This led to me feeling highly anxious and scared of failure, when thinking of the importance of these exams and the impact that the results would have on the rest of my life. During that time in my life, I turned to Christianity. I surrounded myself with the teachings of Christ which gave me a sense of purpose and the motivation that saw me through my A-Levels. When I had felt such a lack of certainty and fear of the change that the future would hold, religion provided the stability that I desperately needed.

Baptism, to me, means having a fresh start, by washing away my past mistakes, I am able to rebirth into a new life guided by my faith. It symbolises my commitment to follow Christ and live according to His teachings in the Bible. It marks the point where I chose to put my trust in God and live a life that reflects His love and grace, signifying the start of an ongoing journey of growth and transformation.

As I take this step of baptism, I'm reminded of Romans 6:4, which says, "We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."

Angel Liu

Ignite Youth Group (Croydon)

I always believed that there were so many requirements that you needed to meet before you became a 'real' Christian. So often I thought that I needed to be a certain age and to have read the entire Bible and to have a definite turning point, where I was involved with some divine intervention. When I reached the age I thought I should be baptised by, without reading the whole Bible and no grand turning point, I became stagnant in my journey with Christ and those were my excuses for not taking that step. Looking back on it now, I realise these trivial excuses were used to justify why I felt I couldn't be baptised and not real barriers. I thought I just wasn't there yet and that I wasn't Christian enough to get baptised.

Without realising, God was softening my heart and I was starting to realise why my thoughts were just excuses and fell away from thinking that I needed to be a perfect Christian before being valid enough to go through with it. God's love does not depend on how close we are to perfection. We cannot earn His love. We may stray away and try to hide but, He is always reaching out to us and waiting to bring us home. He led me to see that despite our flaws, we are loved so deeply by Him- for while we were sinners, Christ died for us.

There is a kind of peace that we receive when we trust in Christ. It is a peace that is beyond all understanding and I know I do not need to be worried or afraid. This was especially felt at times when I was feeling overwhelmed by feelings and people and to-do lists and deadlines. But as I prayed and listened, there was a shift in my perspective of things; it is God's will for me, and from that, I know that he will keep my heart and mind safe.

For the next step of my walk with Christ, I hope I will run the full distance toward Him, no matter what circumstances arise as I am so grateful for His love for us and I know it is by the grace of God that I can feel so loved and at peace.

Audrey Tam

ALIVE Youth Group (Hammersmith)

I began coming to CCiL when I moved to the UK from Hong Kong 2 years ago. I used to be very against coming to church because of the fact that I would not understand the gospel and wouldn't get along with the people in the youth group so whenever I was in youth group I'm on my phone and I just won't talk to other people other than the leaders.

Going to school in UK is very different from schools in Hong Kong it was a struggle for me, I can't really make any friends because of the language barrier ,it was my lowest point in my life so my parents took me to church and on that day I met some people they're around my age,I get on with them very well so I keep going to church (I still do). But the reason why I was in church is because I want to make more friends.

Then I started going to church camps like YEC and PHAT, during worship I was reading through the lyrics and I got really touched by it and paid a lot of attention during the keynote sessions. What God has really done to me is that he provides all of the good people around to support me and teach me how to become a better person for God.

Since then, God changed the way I used to be ,from being very isolated to going to church every week, socialising with the people in camps or in church.

I'm very thankful for the people that God has provided me ,and i hope that i will continue seeking him and live the life to the full with christ.And I want to end this testimony with 1 John 4:9-10 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the worlds that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Bethany Liu

Ignite Youth Group (Croydon)

I've always known Christ ever since the day my parents took me inside the classroom of junior kids church and I would never have thought about a life without god. Ever since I was younger I've been going to church every week with my family .But I didn't fully understand why I came to church.

As I grew up, I slowly gathered more and more information about God but I never knew the sheer amount of love god had until I heard all the parables Jesus told like the story of the lost sheep, where a the Shepard lost his sheep but never gave up on finding it, and the parable of the Growing seed, where he talked about the seeds that couldn't grow because of all the threats it had but there was this one seed where it landed in the good soil. These stories really stood out to me as it shows how much effort and attention God really gives us.

When covid happened I feel like the relationship with God started to dwindle because I was always on my phone ignoring him. But I started to lessen my screen time and slowly but gradually build the relationship back stronger and sturdier than last time. Through that I learnt that being a child of god means that you deeply trust, accept and give all of your time to god and believe that Jesus is our lord and saviour. And in your heart you know that whatever you do he will be there for you ,though thick and thin. In the bible it says," Do not be afraid—I am with you! I am your God—let nothing terrify you! I will make you strong and help you; I will protect you and save you."~ Isaiah 41:10. This is really comforts me knowing that he will guide me and the thought of having god as your protector makes me very grateful that I have him in my life.

Now every time I pick up the bible I would read more and more of it and every time I would be extremely joyful and grateful that god is here beside me and every song my sisters and I would sing about him I continue to develop my love to god every single time.

Cammi Siow

Truth and Grace English Ministry (Hammersmith)

I encountered Jesus Christ when I was a teenager where I attended the school Christian Fellowship every Friday back home in Malaysia. However, I don't know much about the faith and furthermore I'm from a Buddhist background. All I remembered was that I enjoyed very much when singing the worship songs and the only verse that stuck in my head until now is John 3:16.

Where there were times of troubles, I do pray and ask GOD for help. I remembered vividly there was one occasion where I was so desperate that I was crying and asked for GOD's help. I couldn't believe myself when my prayer was answered on the very same day. I knew that was not a coincidence and GOD really exist. Since then, I was a strong believer of GOD but without faith.

I've promised GOD that I'll go to the church, but this never happen until 30 years later in London.

The first local church that my children and I went to was 5 years ago at Brentford. My first experience in this church was I became very emotional when everyone started to sing the worship songs. I was crying all the way and felt really embarrassed. I don't understand why I feel such way, but it continues every Sunday. The journey only lasted for 2 years as my children refuse to go and I also found that I could not focus on the sermon preaching. I do have the urge to attend other churches but there were too many to choose, Catholic, Methodist or Anglican and I do not have a direction which one I should go to. I end up not going to any.

However, GOD is amazing. HE does not give up on me and is always doing HIS work.

On 16th March 2022, I attended a Club Event at Herring Tower, City of London and left early. On my way to Liverpool Street station, I was stopped by an elderly who was an evangelist from the City of London Church. I couldn't remember one of the questions that he asked whether it is "Do you have a bible or Do you read the bible?" My answer was "I have the Book of Mormon but never read it". He said "No, that's not the same as the Bible", and took out from his bag a pocket size bible which is the New Testament & Psalms and gave it to me. I thanked him and went off.

I started reading the Bible on the train following the Daily Readings, and Luke was my first chapter. To my amazement I do enjoy reading it and I like the idea of the pocket size which I can carry inside my coat. I got this satisfaction owning a pocket size bible! I couldn't believe myself either. I was determined to follow the 2 years daily readings plan on the Bible and do it consistently and try to catch up if miss out any days.

My mum who came to visit me a few years ago happened to go to CCiL with her friends in the Mandarin congregation. She has always encouraged me to attend this church with my children. I was a bit hesitated but told her will go one day.

On 16th October 2022, I believe it's GOD's call, that I decided to take my son and go to CCiL. We went into the church, and everyone was singing in Cantonese. I was told by one of the church members that the English congregation starts at 11.15am. As a first-time comer, we were welcomed by the church members, and I felt the warmth and the care shown to us. Obviously, I became very emotional again when everyone is singing the worship songs. My first experience with this church is like "I found GOD" and I wanted to come to this church every Sunday to know GOD and hear HIS words.

I came to know about Alpha course from the church member and decided to try out myself. I remembered one of the sessions is about "How can I have faith?". I have mentioned the word "faith" twice but have no understanding whatsoever what it is about until this Alpha film series being played. In the video, Nicky Gumbel prayed a simple prayer and told the audience to echo in their hearts along with him which goes like this:

"Lord Jesus, thank you that you love me so much. I now turn away from all the bad stuff in my life and ask for your forgiveness. Thank you, Jesus, that you died for me so I could be forgiven and set free. I now receive your forgiveness. I put my trust in you and I ask you to come into my heart by your Holy Spirit to be with me forever. Thank you, Lord Jesus, Amen".

After that moment, I felt like a new-born Christian and will commit myself to Jesus.

I've also attended Alpha weekend last year which is something very special and meaningful to me. Many thanks to those who organised this event which draw us closer to our Heavenly Father, praise the Lord, Amen. Again, that was another emotional moment for me. I was sobbing hard and this time I know why. It's the Holy Spirit in me. I've shared my experience and announced to all participants that Holy Spirit is with me, and I will get baptised soon.

After accepting Christ, I can see the transformation of myself. I found peace, love and life fulfilment and praise GOD for leading me here to who I am now.

The only regret I have is that why have I not follow Jesus in my earlier life. GOD knows everything and he has mercy on me and leads me back to him and I'm very grateful to GOD. I pray for all nations to ask GOD to come into their hearts and we will all then be living in GOD's kingdom on earth.

Christine Liu

Ignite Youth Group (Croydon)

Living in a Christian household, I don't think I've ever experienced life before Christ because, throughout my entire life, I have always been introduced to Him. So, I would go to church every week and it gradually became the norm. I grew up listening to Bible stories, miracles, and worship songs. I always knew that God was there, I don't think that I have ever not believed in God, but sometimes I would forget about Him and get distracted. So, it would pull me away from Him.

During COVID, my relationship with God grew. Every week for fun, me and my sister would make PowerPoints and quizzes about the Bible. From then on, I would try my best to work on my relationship with God. Even though I was working on my relationship with God, I would often forget to thank him for the many things he had done for me throughout my life.

When church brought up easter camp, I was really eager to go because it would be my first one. I didn't really think that this camp would help me get closer to God but it did. In easter camp, there were sessions where they would teach you more about God then split you into small groups. I would try my best to answer the questions and contribute as much as I could and because of this it helped me grow closer to God. Then on the last night of easter camp there was a prayer session and it really opened my heart to God and helped my relationship with Him grow.

Worship songs would get stuck in my head after service either because of the lyrics or the tune, but it helped me know a lot more about God. The songs made me realise that God never fails, there are no outsiders to his love, and much more.

I think writing my testimony was a massive journey with God too. When writing this, I found it really hard because the ones I had heard were all so life-changing. As I took time to think about what to write I asked for help from other people, and I slowly came to realise that writing a testimony is like telling other people stories of your relationship with God and what it is like. When I was thinking about my relationship with God, I began to see that He is your father, your friend and so much more. He has your back and loves you unconditionally.

Connie Wong

Soho English Ministry

I first attended church when I was around 7 years old, because a neighbour had invited my mum to CCIL. My mum then started to take my sister and I regularly to church, where I started attending Sunday school. I made friends there and enjoyed attending and learning the content that was taught. Although I had started incorporating God into my life through prayer and trying to read the Bible in my own time during my early teens, I think my understanding of God was still very surface level and I had treated God like a “genie” that I could turn to for every little thing that I needed help with. I think this was reinforced by the fact that God did answer my prayers time and time again, no matter how small the prayer was. However, I was not brave enough at the time to get baptised. I didn’t feel confident enough to do so because I had not experienced the difficult situations that I had heard in other people’s testimonies so I wasn’t sure whether I was committed enough. Although I fell into this misconception, it also showed that maybe I had not understood the meaning of baptism.

I continued going to youth group and life was smooth sailing for a few years. However, during my late teens, a few disheartening events meant that I started to lose trust in God. However, because I had witnessed God at work before and I remembered all the blessings God had given me whilst growing up, such as being accepted into a Christian school via a lottery system, I knew that he existed and was still there. At first, I thought that since God had “broken” my trust, he would need to fix the relationship himself. As I matured a bit, I realised that a relationship with God is a two-way thing and that I would need to make some efforts to mend our relationship too. Therefore, I started to do more daily devotion, prayers and actively sought ways to grow closer to God. However, I found that no matter how I tried, I was unable to get closer to him. My heart had completely hardened to him and I was unfeeling to what I read and heard. Again, this was a beating down of my hope to grow closer to God. Every time that I felt that there was going to be a breakthrough, I would get knocked down again by the situations in life. This state continued on for almost 10 years.

Coming out of COVID, I started to attend Friday small group where I met new people to journey with. As we all came from diverse backgrounds, I felt that I was able to encounter other opinions and ways to approach faith. My group leader also encouraged me to start serving and so I decided to help with the Kids Church ministry. Through serving, attending small group and God’s grace, I’ve been able to open up my heart to him slowly over the past two years. At the beginning of this year, I actually felt the joy of knowing God. I felt that God had not only softened my heart, he had also been filling it up slowly, to the point where it was

overflowing. The joy was actually so great that I just couldn't wait to tell others about God and I was excited to share my testimony and other useful bible plans with those around me.

I am very thankful that God had given me all those blessings before the storms in life so that I could be persistent in pursuing him. These 10 years of struggling with how to reconcile with God was difficult and a very lengthy process. However, I think this has made me more resilient and more committed in my faith in him and has made God's love even more precious to me. It has also demonstrated to me that without the Spirit working within me, it would not be possible for my heart to be softened at all. Although I know that following God is not easy and life is not always smooth sailing, I'm really joyful to know that God has and will always be there for me and that he truly loves me, enough for him to send his son down to save me. I can now boldly declare my faith and surrender my life to him.

George Zhang

360 Student Fellowship (Soho)

Growing up and being raised in a Christian family, I attended church and Sunday School every week. As a kid, back then church was about meeting and playing football with my friends. Although I learned about God and stories in the Bible, I never really understood or appreciated God as the relational God I now know He is. As I grew older, I became increasingly academically focused, and church and God became something that took time away from my academic goals, so I often ended up skipping youth group. As a teenager, I was extremely proud, selfish and impatient with other people.

My first year of university was particularly challenging – I moved to London during the pandemic so was stuck in my room most of the time. For the first time in my life, going to church was something that was entirely my choice. With the temptation of sleeping in, or squeezing some extra studying on Sunday mornings, I ended up inconsistently watching church live streams. During this time, I felt I had little need for God and had hardened my heart.

At the start of my second year of university, I began to have a desire to begin attending church again but was also conflicted as I was too scared and shy to go somewhere with so many new people. After a few weeks of hesitation, I had a chance conversation with a flatmate in the toilet and discovered that he had just come back from HTB's student fellowship. Following that conversation, I began to attend HTB church and their student fellowship regularly. Slowly, my heart was softened to His word and I began to really understand that God is a God who listens and a God that I could truly have a relationship with. Looking back, I can see that I was a lost sheep and how God really pursued me and opened a door in my life through my flatmate to bring me back to Him.

I remember one particularly desperate day when my lab experiment went terribly - I failed to get the data I needed for my coursework, and there was no second chance to redo the experiment. In the evening, I went to student fellowship as usual and during some prayer time, in sadness and desperation I surrendered all this to God, realising that in my pride, stubbornness, and desperate need for control, I had lost sight of God. I realised that He was my Lord and Saviour and how much I wanted to pursue and trust Him. To my surprise, the next day, I received an email stating that the entire experiment had been set up incorrectly and everyone would have the chance to redo it.

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At the start of this year, I decided to attend 360 dumpling night with some of my childhood friends from BCEC. Originally, I was really just there to get free dinner. But somehow, over the weeks that followed, I kept returning to 360 and CCL. Through the bible studies at 360, I was able to explore the Bible differently to how I had before and begun to really see the grace and faithfulness of God in my own life. I am so thankful to God for strengthening me through this fellowship.

For a long time, due to an intense focus on academia and a “you get what you work for” mentality, I always felt that I wasn’t good enough, or holy enough for God. Although, grace was something always mentioned and explained to me, I don’t think I ever really grasped it. Only in the last few years, by really pursuing God did it start to become clear that even though I am a sinner, Jesus died for me and that through this I am freely justified by God’s abundant grace. The life I want to live now is no longer self-serving, but rather one in surrender to God.

Henrick Lee

Closer To Jesus Youth Group (Colindale)

Growing up I was born into a Christian family and regularly attended church on Sundays at Colindale , from young I was surrounded by stories within the bible that were told to me by my parents as well as learning about them in kids church. Reading illustrated bibles would also help me to understand the different stories of prophets and their work was attractive to me at such a young age which made me want to read the bible more as well as learn it. As I grew older and began to study the bible in more depth, I noticed little things that was of God's work throughout my daily life. It was something so small like praying for a space in a car park that was full . These little things would just present to me Gods work and show his greatness in ordinary daily life.

However as a I grew older, at certain points I felt disconnected and felt like a light switch with God and religion, as sometimes I would almost feel like I would forget about God and just rely on myself and other people instead of sitting down and taking the time to talk to him in times of need especially in my lowest points and even to the point where I was happy and forgot to thank him for getting me there in the first place. I would just attend church for a few hours not really looking out for God and people but instead it would just feel like a place to meet friends and socialise with people you met since you were little. Even when in times of happiness and joy, I would almost forget about God completely as he was the one who controls the outcome too. I would forget that he was the one giving me all this joy which just led me astray from him.

I found the importance of God leading up to my GCSE's. it was a very hard and lonely time for me as I felt the pressure from friends and family to do well and get excellent results. It led to me feeling anxious and worried about how my life would be if I didn't get the results I wanted or needed as these days a piece of paper can decide what your job is going to be and what university you will be attending. There were many occasions where I wasn't able to sleep at night due to the high levels of anxiety and just overthinking of what my life would be if I didn't do well. Will my parents be disappointed ? will I be able to afford a house? All these things would be rushing around my head when I was about to sleep which really came to me. The sleep deprivation finally got to me which hence forced me to tell my mum about the situation. She told me to pray to God and to tell him how I feel in order to succeed in my GCSE's. I continued to pray for each exam every time to ask God for wisdom and strength to do my very best in these exams , during these difficult times it really showed and presented to me that I really needed God and that he was the one to see me through the exam period. When I

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need God, he was there. When I called for help, he helped me. Even when the exam season ended I still felt and knew I needed God, because I really believe everyone needs God through the good times and the bad. God spoke to me through the bible as it said "God will come through" this then showed me that he was with me and he will not forsake me but instead has a plan that only he knows in my future. Going to Phat camp also helped me restore that relationship with God as well and gave me the boost to continue to trust and believe in him.

Baptism to me means having a fresh and clean slate from my past, by sterilising my sins of that past. I am able to be born again through Christ which will guide me throughout my new life. It relates to my commitment to follow Christ through his words and teachings In the Bible. I chose to put my trust in God and live a life that reflects his actions. Amen.

Jason Zheng

Closer To Jesus Youth Group (Colindale)

Before I knew God, people in my house have been believed in religions such as buddhism, taoism since they believe in what most people believe in the village and think if it is believed by the people and it should work, perhaps they have also been hearing how people in these religions also promoting themselves by making speeches and persuade people to join them by saying how their issue are being solved by what they have believed in.

From what I remembered, people in my house have been buying things such as wooden statues or drawings of Bodhisattva guanyin, or the goddess of sea mazu. And they have also been buying incense, fruits and other things for the deities just hoping they will use their powers and let people in my family get what they are wishing for such as having a wealthy body.

In China people don't only believes in the deities from myths and legends but they also believe in people that are historically recorded such as guan yu who is a military general, and he is well known for his honesty and people believes that honesty can brings richness and that's why he is also being praised as the deity of money.

How I first know God is by going to church with my mom's friend, and by that time i was still an atheist since I wonder why does the religion they believe in China are all so weird that they need to get something from the people and then they give the help (this is what I thought when I was young since people ask for help from their deity after they have given the sacrificial offering to them) and I am not a Christian by the time because it is the first time I have ever went to a church. And this is also how I witness the miracle of God for the first time through the bible stories.

The most recent time that I have seen the miracle from God is during the Covid period, and that is also why I have decided to become a real Christian. It is around a year after I have come to UK, the Covid have started, I have been praying for my families to stay safe from the Covid to God , it seems like He has heard my praying and comes to help me, during the 2 year of the Covid term, although nearly everyone in my family have caught Covid once and some of the have caught twice, but they have all safely recovered from it. This event has totally changed my mind toward religion and made me completely believe in Him.

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He has also been helping me a lot throughout my life, usually before my exams I will pray due to my anxiousness, and I will always feel a bit more confident and calm in my heart so I can perform well in my exam.

I feel very lucky that I have known God in my life at this early stage of my life so I can know God better throughout the rest of my life and I can learn His Word better, to spread His gospel and make more people become in part of our Christian family, also be able to ensure myself to pray my full heart to Him the only God.

I feel very thankful that I have a chance today so I can be baptised and to praise God and become a real Christian quite early during this stage. All I want to say is thank you God so much for giving this change, In Jesus' name, Amen.

Jiaen Lin

Ignite Youth Group (Croydon)

I think I've long flown past the point of starting to believe in God. I can't quite say when, but I've been able to feel myself in the cycle of tying my heart close to God at camps and then slowly unravelling again when I'm back in my normal life. I was fairly certain of God but I never felt a need to get any closer because the bit of faith I already had felt fine. I sang along to worship songs – because they're good songs!! Church friends were exactly just that to me: people I saw once a week, and I nodded along to whatever was said on Sundays because it sounded sensible and smart. I didn't bother to engage with my beliefs because I was comfortable with where my heart was.

I wouldn't be able to tell you how many baptism classes I've been to, haha. It was something that never felt completely right for me. At first it was because I felt like I wasn't good enough of a 'Christian', and later on it was because I was often in seasons where I was distant from God. My faith just wasn't something that excited me and I just wanted to stay as a 'cool, casual Christian' if I were to be honest.

I've damaged a lot of relationships with people I care deeply about because I thought the right way to come back from conflict or feeling hurt was to hold tight to my resentment and use it to try and move on. But I've felt stagnant from holding on to overdue feelings and stuck to the same thoughts of the past when I really just want to let go and grow.

The more I continue my walk in faith, the more I realise God has done for me. When I've turned away out of carelessness time and time again, when I've been ungrateful for the people I have around me. But God has helped me get through some of the toughest times. It's not that my life has been particularly tough and I've had massive problems to face. It's just that in the parts of my life when I felt all alone, or when I was seriously burnt out during exam seasons, or when I had struggles with my identity, God always had my back and gave me the encouragement to continue on. And I feel awful when I feel myself not remembering how much of a mess I was until God picked me up and pieced me back together. I feel so bad for forgetting the periods of my life I needed God and truly relied on him. I feel so ungrateful, and I know I will forever be ungrateful for all he's done for me. That's all I need to remember to want to keep going.

Only from truly understanding that I've been so undeserving of all the forgiveness I've received from God can I be able to learn to give forgiveness myself, even when it feels like they don't deserve it and I'm the one giving in, and even if I still hold anger and bitterness. I

can't just dip my toes into my relationship with God if I want to be able to grow. I can only take this next step with Him to see the world with new eyes. I want to be able to love others regardless of how I feel because that's what I owe to God. I don't want to just be civil to them while gritting my teeth – I want to be refreshed when I love my enemies and those who hurt me because I can be free from being led by my emotions. Only by committing and really wanting to learn can I continue in my life without regrets. I know it's not easy, but that's sort of the point, right? There's so much more I know I'll have to overcome but I have confidence in who is supporting me.

My faith feels alive now. It's my last year in youth group – which is crazy, I feel like I've been here forever – and I have to admit I do have a part of my heart in this community. I know some people look up to me and I just hope people can keep developing their interest in their faith. And I have friends I'm so thankful to have in my life – thankful that we can keep encouraging each other to stay willing to grow in God. I know this enthusiasm probably won't last forever, but it's enough confidence for me.

Matth Kot

360 Student Fellowship (Soho)

Miracles have occurred at every important crossroad in my life, repeatedly affirming what has happened can only be God. I can no longer deny how blessed and grateful I am to be chosen as God's child from before I was born. I grew up in a Christian family so the rituals of going to church and praying were ingrained in me. I had fundamental understanding of Jesus and what he did, but I never truly connected with him on a personal level as my early life was smooth sailing.

Being a doctor was a dream since young, and God unveiled the 'why' and more importantly 'how' one step at a time. The journey began in year 10. I went on a service trip to Cambodia, thinking I was there to have a good time. Little did I know I would be assigned to teach and interact with children born with AIDS. These children were forced to spend their entire childhood in seclusion due to the heavy stigma attached to their condition. Despite the language barrier between us, these children were the most joyful and kindest children, always eager to play and engage with us. It was during this profoundly moving experience that I felt God's purpose for me confirmed. I knew that being a doctor was my way of making a difference with the gifts he had given me and a chance to help children and people like them.

God soon opened doors for me to come to the UK for boarding school on remarkably short notice, within 2 months from entertaining the idea to being interviewed then admitted. Only after speaking to other students, I knew it was God's plan again, other students had to apply a year before and had multiple rounds of aptitude and admission tests to go through before being admitted. I made great friends and learned to be independent, it was full of great memories and glory to God for all of it.

God's power and sovereignty became even more evident during my application process to medical schools. Stress and anxiety piled up as I was rejected by one school after another, most of them even before a chance to interview. Except that one school that accepted me, that interview was nothing short of a miracle. A panel of five doctors sat across the table and took turns interviewing me, when answering a question about my motivation to be a doctor, at some point, I started recalling a story I read from a memoir written by a surgeon about witnessing the fragility of life and experiencing helplessness as a professional. The story was about a pregnant woman bleeding from a car accident, she was injured so severely she was not able to be resuscitated, so a swift decision was made to prioritise the delivery of the baby. After the delivery, it was found that the baby's heart also stopped beating and cannot be resuscitated. Breaking the bad news to the husband and family about failing to save both

weighed heavily on this surgeon. As I finished up the story, I was surprised by the fluency and conviction I had when recalling this story that had impacted me greatly. I noticed one of the doctors had tears in her eyes, and when she stood up to shake my hand at the end of the interview, I saw that she was heavily pregnant herself. Three weeks later I was given an offer.

Then began the years in university, the countless times where I was put in the right place in the right time, encountering amazing people, doctors, and opportunities to learn and discover my passion. There were many profound moments with patients facing death, disability, pain, and hopelessness, showing me how fragile but precious life is and made me into who I am today. And in times of stress, and there was many, there was always peace to hold me still and grace to see it through with Him. In the midst of trouble, his solutions always exceeded what I have asked for. In moments of defeat and heartache, there was comfort in his unchanging love and presence. When confronted with sin and at times even wilfully disregarding what I knew was right and persisted in my way, God had always patiently waited for my return, and when I did, I was filled with remorse but also in awe and feel wrapped in his unchanging love for me. In the process to adjusting to a new stage in life, with family being away and new social circles, I was blessed to find CCIL and 360 to have brothers and sisters to walk this journey with.

Time and time again God showed how he has already mapped out where I needed to go, how I needed to get there and who I needed to meet. In Jeremiah 1, the Lord said before you were formed in the womb, I knew you, before you were born, I set you apart. My experiences have proved that verse true for me. He chose me for all these wonderful experiences, both good and bad, he knew what I needed to be fulfilled, arranged people to accompany me and events for me to grow in maturity and spirituality. I am ready to make a commitment to surrender my life to him, to be baptised, because I know I can't live my life without my God, without his wisdom and protection and love I would not be here at where I am.

Owen Chen

Closer To Jesus Youth Group (Colindale)

Being raised into a Christian home, I am fortunate enough to have been introduced to Christianity from a very early age. I attended church every week and was familiar with a lot of stories from the bible. As a child, I was very enthusiastic with Christianity, attending activities, praying and reading the bible regularly. Growing up, I had always felt Jesus' presence in my life.

In my early teenage years, I didn't really think about my future, especially where God comes in. Most years, I went to Easter and Christmas camps, and those were when I felt a strong connection with God, though that feeling would disappear after a few weeks and I went back to my old ways. I had thought that only doing good things would allow you to enter heaven. Looking back, a lot of the "good" things I did wasn't for God, but rather to put myself on a pedestal for the world to see. I always believed in the existence of God, though I only turned to him when I was going through bad times, rather than continuously like I used to.

Even though I went to Sunday school and youth sessions every week, I wasn't consistent with my faith and often found myself sinning. There were often points in my life where I knew what I did was sinful yet did it anyway and felt distanced from God's presence. I never thought of giving my life to Christ as I didn't understand what I would gain from doing it. I kept putting worldly desires such as money and studies before God, not knowing that his plans and love for me were incomparable to these things. Falling into a pit of temptation, I knew that Jesus was my only solution, yet did nothing to find him and repent for my wrongdoings.

It wasn't until this summer when I went to PHAT camp that my faith reignited. The connection I felt was stronger and lasted longer, and I believe it was God reaching out to me to save me. During the camp, I learnt everything I needed to understand about living life under God's way, and I have decided that I want to follow his path. I realise the sacrifices needed in order to enter the kingdom of heaven and have eternal life with Jesus, and I am ready just as Jesus was ready to sacrifice his life for ours. I am now thankful of everything God does, whether it be good or bad as it is part of his wonderful plan, and I hope now that after baptism I can be reborn into a life of God's embrace and lead others who were lost like me along the path that I now follow. My love for Christ will never amount to his love for me, but I will carry on serving and worshipping him and declare that he is my Lord and saviour and that he died and rose again to forgive us of our sins and give us a chance to be with him in heaven. Amen.

Philip Ma

ALIVE Youth Group (Hammersmith)

My name is Philip Ma and I'm 16 years old. I have attended church ever since I was a kid. My parents would drive me to church every Sunday, so I could do Kids Church and worship Jesus. Before I was born, my parents were already serving God at the church; therefore, they influenced me to also go to church. In my early years at the church, I would not be interested in learning and would waste time by playing games or doing other stuff. It was until I was 15 years old, when I first took the holy communion service that I truly believed in God and was ready to leave my sinner-self and became a new life after baptism.

At first, I was uncertain if I was lying to myself about believing God after the holy communion service. Every night, I would question myself whether I was ready to worship the Lord. I thought about postponing my baptism for a year. My parents asked if I was going to get baptised so I could truly believe in God. As for right now, I'm doing my first year in A-levels and I want to achieve good grades, but I can't just pray to God to give them to me. However, God will provide me with an opportunity to get the good results by doing revision and listening well in classes and performing good studies. I pray that God will give me an opportunity to learn from my prayers and to work hard in my exams.

I was born in a Christian family. There is still a lot of things to learn from my experience. I now know that it is important to trust and obey Him. To be able to build a stronger relationship with God, I need to gain more faith in Him. I pray that I could maintain my faith towards God.

I hope God will guide me closer to Him, so that I can be a more faithful and humble Christian. I therefore pray that God will continue to challenge me and change me into a strong believer. I also pray that with every obstacle that come my way, I will have the strength to pray to God for His help and wisdom.

I would like to share my favourite bible verse:

Luke 10:27: He answered "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and 'Love your neighbour as yourself."

Rachel Yang

Ignite Youth Group (Croydon)

I've been going to church almost every Sunday of my life, but it took years of different people encouraging me and walking with me in my journey with God for me to finally be able to hand my life over to Him and truly understand what it means to be His child.

The first big step in my relationship with Him began in the 2020 summer lockdown when I suddenly found this new thirst to pursue God and understand who He really was. I found myself truly beginning to understand His word through a Bible study group with other girls in Ignite. I was able to appreciate His love for me through a youth leader who helped me grow in His grace and peace and comfort as she consistently called me to discuss His word or just to catch up. During this time, I felt so close to God but unfortunately, as I went back to school, I began to get caught up in distractions around me and I grew more and more reluctant to read the Bible and therefore I strayed away from Him.

When we went back to church after covid regulations relaxed, I realised that the confidence I had when I was trusting in God had deteriorated but this still wasn't enough for me to want to go back to Him and I continued to be a 'lukewarm Christian' for a long period.

At my first Easter camp, I saw many other youths feeling God's presence, but I still felt quite far from Him as I was not focusing my heart on Him. Some time passed and things stayed the same until I went to PHAT camp that same year. During this camp, I told my leader how I previously had a yearning for God and how I wanted to know Him again. She then prayed for me, and I broke down crying. She began to hug me and said, 'He is holding you'. During our prayer, someone on the worship team came in and began to play the song 'Holy Spirit' on the piano. I remember in that moment I felt so safe and loved by God and I knew that He forgave me for neglecting our relationship.

Later that summer, I went to London to meet the PHAT camp girls that I became friends with, and it reminded me how important fellowship is and how surrounding yourself with other Christians can encourage you to continue loving and praising God. When it was time to start heading home, it was pretty late and I felt afraid, so I prayed, asking God to protect me, and when I was on the tube to Victoria, I turned around and saw Hannah Chan behind me. It turned out that she was meeting some friends who bumped into their old friends, and it meant that she had to stay out longer. We then got on the same train and talked about how crazy it was that we bumped into each other, and I told her how I kept praying beforehand. It

was amazing to me how God really answered my prayer, and it reminded me how He's always looking out for every one of us.

As I returned to school, I still prayed and very occasionally read the Bible, but I knew I was not prioritising God in my life. However, a youth leader would call me frequently to Bible study and she really helped me to understand how to read and apply the Bible in my life. It was comforting to know that, even as I didn't prioritise God, He was still speaking to me through other people.

Then, the next PHAT came around and I really wanted to feel His presence strongly, as I did last time, and I told one of my leaders this in our one-to-one and she prayed that the Holy Spirit would be with me but that this time it would not just be a spiritual high but that I would stay close to Him. On that night, the speaker, Justin, said a prayer for the people who want to recommit themselves to God and, as I said those words in my head, I really meant all of them. He then told people to ask leaders to pray for them and I felt this strong need to ask my other leader if she could pray for me. After she prayed for me, we both started crying as she was so happy that I was able to go to her and I was so happy that God had, yet again, showed that He was near. When worship began, I started uncontrollably crying as the lyrics 'You love and I've witnessed it, You heal and I've witnessed it, You save and I've witnessed it' were sung because I realised how many people in my life have been brought out of bad places through His grace and 'I'm confident I'll see it again and again'.

Before, whenever I was asked about baptism, I always said 'I'm not ready' but this time I want to declare that from now on, I want to deny my sinful self and follow Him for all my days.

Ranee Cheung

Ignite Youth Group (Croydon)

Growing up in a Christian family and community, I have always gone to church – first Sunday school, then youth group. However, even though I knew the Bible stories and had always known who Jesus was, I was also very complacent in my faith. I did not have a personal relationship with God, even throughout the COVID period, when I consistently attended church and bible study, and afterwards, when I served in the worship team in youth group. It all felt impersonal, and I always felt preoccupied with other things.

It wasn't until Lent of 2023 that I started truly pursuing God. Initially, I started with all the wrong intentions – giving up Instagram because I was falling behind on academics. However, all of a sudden I found myself with an extra 30 minutes in the morning before I left for school with nothing to do. I never really understood what people meant when they said, 'it is important to start the day with God', but on that first morning when I read the Bible and prayed, I felt God's peace so strongly and I remember being so confused about why I was feeling this. So, the next morning I read the Bible again and the passage I came upon was Matthew 6:19-21. I think in that moment I felt that God was challenging me to evaluate where my heart was and inviting me to surrender to Him and live for Him instead of for the world.

Looking back now, even just a few months later, I can see how God has changed me and the way I approach living. All the worries for my family, fear for the future, and insecurities don't have a strong hold on my life anymore as they did before because I finally know what it is to trust in God wholeheartedly – to trust that I can lift every thought and situation up to Him because He is working even when I don't see it or feel it and that he is so much greater than any worldly thing.

But as I get to know God more (and it's an ever-struggling process), I am realising just how little I actually know about His character despite growing up in a Christian family. I had never realised how much joy there is to be found in God's presence and how worthy He is of praise and worship. Of course, this does not mean that temptation to sin and moments of doubt do not happen, but choosing to follow God and seeking for His presence every single day has shown me that His love and mercy are boundless. That even though I had repeatedly dismissed Him, He still has mercy on me and welcomes me as His child. So today, as I get baptised, I pray that He will continue to teach me to hunger for His Word and to use my life to glorify His kingdom.

'Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.' Matthew 6:19-21

Sam Chan

360 Student Fellowship (Soho)

Throughout my life, people have testified about their great stories of repentance, how God has been their unwavering anchor through the storms of life, or the miracles they've seen in impossible circumstances – how they have come to faith because of a momentous event in their lives. But I don't think my journey of faith has been anything extraordinary. I've gone to church since I was born and I've called myself a Christian my whole life. I read and study the Bible, worship, pray regularly and lived by Christ's words as closely as I could, and for as long as I can remember. But if I had to choose a piece of scripture to describe my journey of faith, it would be Luke 17:6 - "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you." Even though my faith has always been and is an integral part of who I am and how I live today, admittedly, it has always felt "small". Christianity became a constant in my life that sometimes my relationship with God became monotonous. Growing up in the church, we are persistently told that God loves us unconditionally and relentlessly, that He sent His Son to die for our sins and resurrected from the grave, that He created us in His image, that He sees me as his own child, that He is always with you, that He is the way, the truth and the life, that He is gracious and merciful. While I knew all this was true in my head, I doubted how true this was for me. I had become so accustomed to the messages and blessings of the big picture that I questioned how God could love someone like me.

This was the narrative that I believed for a long time and was only exacerbated by my depression and anxiety. For the past 6-7 years, I was always unmotivated, demoralised and unreasonably exhausted. Waking up was always the most difficult task of the day. I stopped enjoying things that I loved doing and stopped doing things I enjoyed. I became so anxious to face everyday situations that I had numbed out every emotion just to bear the thought of them. Every mistake I made was amplified to the worst outcome in my head. Every insecurity I had was reinforced with more doubts. Every thought I had was clouded with doubt and denial. I avoided facing every uncertainty, bottling up all the anxiety I had until it was too late. Even in my happy moments, like hanging out with friends and family, even in my successes, like coming to LSE or doing so many extracurriculars, and even in my "Christian" activities, like leading worship or becoming a Bible Study leader, I couldn't make it go away. As for my faith, I relentlessly questioned my worth and God's view of me. Does God love me? Why would He? How could He love someone like me? On the other hand, I would beat myself up for my doubt – how can I call myself a Christian and yet question and deny His love for me? I was fighting mental battles against myself every day. My faith in God's love for me seemed smaller than a mustard seed – in fact, it seemed to fade away. Maybe you may not have noticed how demoralised I was in these past few years, but I vividly remember feeling so anxious, overwhelmed, doubtful, tired and depressed. I constantly second-guessed whether anything I did was good enough. I became stubborn and numb. I hardened my heart to any hope, grace or love that God gave me. I believed I was nothing but a burden to love - not just to others around me, but to God.

Somehow, in the midst of all the overwhelming doubts and obstacles, I still woke up and went to church every Sunday. I came to 360 every week, led bible study and shared what's been on my heart. I went to PHAT Camp for the first time as a small group leader. God called me to give a talk in the 360 retreat about something I wasn't very good at. I kept going. And I couldn't give you the exact reason why. There were so many reasons for me to give up my relationship with Jesus after

all these years. But I didn't completely give up, because I knew He never gave up on me. I know this because I talked to Him every single day. When it came to Him, I didn't hide how I was feeling from Him. I kept being honest with God. While I thanked Him for the blessings and good things in my life, I also threw every single frustration and disappointment I had at Him. I let Him know the full range of the despair and angst I felt every day. I even told Him when I felt like I didn't believe in Him, His love and His Word, unfiltered and with the full force of my raw emotion. Even though my heart wrestled with God all day and night, there would always be a small voice urging me to press on. To hold on. To keep pushing. To wake up and live another day. I kept on telling God if I'm gonna wake up tomorrow, at least stay by my side through it all and never let me go. And maybe this isn't the best, most righteous, Christian-like behaviour, but I know He stayed with me. I don't have proof He was there, but you can't convince me that He did not listen and keep his promises. He was there. He was by my side through it all because I kept going. Living life only became bearable because I knew he was there. His love held me tight and never let me go even as I desperately clinged on to Him. And so, the least I could do is just to go where He calls me, be present and let Him be in control of everything else. And maybe that's what a faith the size of a mustard seed means. Even when I'm engulfed by obstacles, emotions and doubts, my faith will seem small by comparison. Yet, despite my circumstances, despite how I feel, despite what I think, I chose to have a little bit of faith. Faith that God will be there for me. Faith that He knows what is best for me. Faith that He'll work it out for the better. Faith that I'm never alone. That was the choice I made every day. The choice to believe in Him. It's a faith that seems small, but it doesn't mean it's not faith worth having.

If I'm being honest, I don't see my faith uprooting a mulberry tree and planting it in the sea or anything like that. I don't think I'm anything special or doing anything extraordinary for His kingdom. But looking back, I see how good He has been to me. In the past few months, I've been taking medication for my depression. It has been miraculously effective – instantly working from the morning after I started taking them, which is almost never heard of. Whilst my insecurities and doubts have not completely vanished, they have become much more manageable. I'm able to clear my head and focus on Him. I can be present once again. I've been meeting up with friends more. I can open up to my family more. I have a clearer vision of my future and my career. I've been bolder in my actions and more genuine with my words. God has given me countless blessings to celebrate in my life, but the one I will continually celebrate is his unwavering love for me. Knowing that God continued to love me, look out for me and fight for me, even when all I did not return His love, is reassurance that He'll be with me no matter what. I know that if He's been with me at my worst, He'll be with me when I'm at my best. Even when I am distant and lost, I know He will always choose to leave the 99 to find me. I may not always be a "good" Christian, but I can be certain that there is a God who loves me, sees me, and is with me unconditionally. I alone am not enough to glorify Him, but He is so loving that all He needs is my heart. I just need to trust Him, and let Him do the work because I can't do it alone. And I know that for sure. My journey reminds me that even though I have many shortcomings and faults, God will reveal how great He is through me if I give Him the little I have within me. And so, that's what I'll do, and continue to do. If all I do is glorify Him with my life, then that is enough for me. I will continue to choose to have faith in Him, whether my faith is small or big, through hills and valleys. I hope my baptism and this testimony is a demonstration of this faith that I have. For my faith may be as small as a mustard seed, but it is sowed and is growing day by day. For I believe that His love, His grace, His glory and His power can enable me to do immeasurably more than what I can imagine.

Sophie Ho

360 Student Fellowship (Soho)

Most of you may not know me, and that's how I felt when I first arrived in London last September to begin university. A foreign country, a brand new city, far away from my family and everything I called home back in Hong Kong. For the first few weeks, I was hit with a loneliness unlike anything I ever felt before. I was absolutely terrified of being lonely. So I tried everything I could to fill that void. I joined random welcome events and societies, forced myself to make conversation with random people that I would probably never meet again, and spent my time searching for the 'answer' to my loneliness. If I wasn't out searching, then I was in my room, playing Youtube videos or music in the background nonstop to avoid silence.

It wasn't until I began going to CCIL and 360 regularly when things began to change.

At home, I didn't go to church. Although I went to a Christian school in elementary and middle school, where I first learned and believed in God, the rest of my high school years were a fluctuating rollercoaster of faith. My family did not go to church, my friends did not go to church, so I did not go to church. I still called myself a Christian, prayed every day, and listened to worship music. On some days, when I was sad, or stressed about exams, I'd do it more. But there was no spiritual growth, no active pursuit of seeking God and getting to know Him.

But being a part of CCIL and 360, getting to know people there, and finally experiencing a church community made London more bearable. And more importantly, I was able to deepen my relationship with God. I realised how important it was to truly seek God and be more intentional in my faith; how important reading the Bible is, understanding its context and content, and applying it to my own life; how important it is to prioritise God above all else and to keep Him at the center of my life.

I am so thankful to God for showing me that I don't need to fear loneliness, and that being 'alone, not lonely' is okay. But I still struggle with negative emotions that often seem never-ending, that if I heal from one thing, another thing will plague me again – from being overwhelmed with busyness, uncertainty, to fear and anxiety. I still have a lot to learn. Thankfully, I am not alone, due to His mercy and grace. Christ lives in me. I now know without a doubt that God is always here for me, watching over me, and that I can choose not to be anxious about anything because He comforts and protects me.

Life isn't meant to be easy, but with God by my side, I can make it through the darkness – and that is all that I need. For the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard my heart and mind in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:6-7). I am so thankful for His forgiveness, guidance, and unconditional love and am excited to continue glorifying God and serve His Kingdom for the rest of my life.