

Dear Family and Friends,

A Happy New Year to you, and a Happy 'Lunar' New Year as well! As we write this letter, we are right in the middle of the Lunar New Year (not just Chinese New Year, because other Asian countries celebrate as well), which means almost everything in Hong Kong and greater China has come to a halt for the holiday. In bustling Hong Kong, people receive half a week's break, and in the mainland, they have the whole week. Families are visiting each other, and children are wishing their elders a blessed year ('Gung Hei Fat Choi!' or 'Xin nian kuai le!') – especially because they usually will be given a red-packet with money for the blessing!



Catherine's class celebrating the Chinese New Year

For our family, it is a chance to 'take a breath,' and enjoy a few days of rest from our busy schedules. Many of our church members travel during this season, and our students are also on break, so we can spend a little bit of time at home together as a family. Speaking of family, do pray for our hearts and minds as we serve overseas. Holidays are always a time of homesickness, as we miss our families (and church families) in the U.S., even though we are entering our 15th year serving in China, and 13th in Hong Kong! In our last letter we mentioned Steven, our eldest, would be moving soon, and he has: he is studying at Maranatha Baptist University (MBU) in Wisconsin, and he is loving his time with the students and faculty there. We are so thankful for the many Christian colleges and universities in the United States, and over the past few years we've been glad to have young people from Hong Kong heading to MBU, Bob Jones University, Pensacola, and other schools, and we hope you'll pray for those from our youth group at Island Baptist Church who are now studying there in the U.S. When our short holiday is over, we will be back 'to the races' here in Hong Kong. Jonathan's role at HKU continues to grow, and he will have the opportunity to share the story and hope of Christianity again this semester in a major general education class on world religions and philosophies. The class has been popular over the years, and there is some talk that instead of 120+ students each offering, it may become 400-800 students each class!



The character leadership program continues to grow – pray especially for Jonathan’s relationships with the mentors – as well as the research program. We have just created a special hub to study the role of Chinese Christians in the development of China itself. Praise the Lord for this open door to talk about the impact of the Gospel and of Christians in a secular setting! At Island Baptist Church, Pastor Matt Herbster has set the theme for the year of growing in “Service” in 2025, and started us off with a wonderful challenge on how we’re called to serve in various areas. The Herbster family also provided a wonderful Christmas concert, with a few songs from the IBC choir as well. We had almost 300 in attendance,

and not only did Pastor Matt weave the Christmas story through the songs and comments, but Jonathan also had a chance to share a simple Gospel challenge. We are so thankful for the Herbster’s continuing ministries to our church and to the people here in HK! We’re also thankful that we have some new members in our church that have really ‘stepped up’ and started serving in ways that are truly a big help to our church and our community. Please pray for more and more members to use their gifts as we try to reach our corner of China.



One other fun celebration during the holiday season was the wedding of church members Justin and Michelle Grace. Jonathan has enjoyed mentoring Justin for years, and had the privilege of doing the premarriage counselling and officiating the marriage for this dear couple. Please do pray for their growth together, and for the growth of many of our families which contain first- or second-generation Christians.



In family news, we were happy to have Steven (19) in for a short trip during Christmas; thank you for your prayers for him there at MBU! Lucy (15) has become a traveller as well, making trips to Taiwan, Malaysia, and recently Beijing for either sports or school speech and debate teams. She's doing very well in her studies, and is taller than Catherine now! She has been able to bring some friends to church, and she would appreciate your prayers for

them. Nicholas (12) is catching up too, and has a full slate of sports, playing basketball, soccer, and cross-country. He also is trying to find a way to start a Bible study with some of the kids at school – pray for that to work out in the right time and way. Unlike Catherine and Jonathan (we were both shy as kids), Nicholas loves public speaking! Catherine has returned to being a lead teacher, which brings both a lot more opportunities and a lot more burdens. Please do pray for her management of the other teachers and also for her opportunities to teach the Bible to the children in her class, many of whom are unsaved. One wonderful way that she will get to share the gospel is through a Good News Club this term at her school. As mentioned at the start of our letter, thank you for praying for our hearts and minds as we enter this season of ministry. Over the last year, for the first time, we've had a number of ministry requests from the U.S., which has given us opportunity to prayerfully seek God's clear leading, and also to discuss as a family where the Lord wants us to be in this season. We still feel that for now, God has clearly called us to the many open doors and many tasks He has placed in our hands here in Hong Kong. But do pray for our peace, both as we miss our family and wish to follow wherever He leads. If anything, there is more in Hong Kong to do than we can ever do ourselves! We often say, in seriousness, if the Lord might ever speak to one of you about ministering in Asia – 'come over and help us!' The fields are white here, as we're sure they are there. Whether here or there, we pray that we can continue serving together with you, and that the Lord will find us faithful when He comes. We recently had the joy of catching up with ministers in the U.S. by phone and by video call – we would love to be able to share more with you, your family, or your church, if a call or video-chat would be convenient.



Love in Christ,

Jonathan, Catherine, Steven, Lucy & Nicholas

johnsonsinchina@gmail.com

Country code (+852)69046831

Support Address: EOTEM, PO Box 4574, Beeville, Texas, 78104