

# Happy Birthday Watermark: Our Compass Gathering

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] I've been thinking about our fourth year. And so what I do about this, I wanted to start off with, if you know me, my family's from Montana. I was born in Texas. My dad is a sixth-generation German farmer, did not want to be on a ranch in Montana, so he joined the military.

And so I was born in Texas. We traveled everywhere. And when you live on a military base, you hear of a lot of urban legends and stories are told amongst the military people. And I remember growing up and just hearing all these fancy, amazing stories about fighter pilots and jet pilots and all these other things that are going on.

But one stuck into my head. It's the one that's kind of imprinted in my mind. And my dad told me this. I don't know if it's true, but I'm just going to go by it and say it's true. It might be an urban legend he can tell me later on.

And the story goes like this. There was a corporal. So in the business world, corporal is, I don't know what you'd even call them. They're probably an intern at McQuarrie or someplace like that. So there, an intern comes in, a corporal, and he's in charge of the motor pool, which is where you have all the trucks and the Jeeps and the tanks on the military base.

And so he's sitting at his desk. And then one day, the base commander calls up. The base commander would be like, you're head, head, head. So he's the top of your company. I don't know. He's beyond a managing director, whatever you want to.

[ 1 : 1 4 ] So he's probably a three-star general. And he's trying to figure out, he needs a car for the day. And so he calls up the motor pool. He doesn't announce who he is. He just says, hey, I'm calling to see what kind of cars we have in the motor pool.

And the corporal, not knowing who's talking, said, well, you know, we have a couple Jeeps. We have a couple tanks that are being repaired. We have a couple big trucks. And we have this really nice limo for a big, fat general.

And the general's listening on his phone, right? And he's like, son, do you know who this is? And he's like, no, no, no, no, sir.

And he goes, this is General, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, that big, fat general. How dare you say something like that? And there's this quiet. And all of a sudden the private goes, sir, do you know who this is?

And the general goes, no. Goodbye, fatty. I tell that story because I love it.

[ 2 : 2 0 ] And I remembered it since I've been like 10 years old. But I think it's a story that speaks to us today. The story, I think, is, it talks about, you know, sometimes we just forget who we talk to.

Sometimes we forget who we're talking to. Sometimes we forget who we are. Sometimes we forget our position and our job and what we're supposed to do.

Sometimes we forget who we report to. And the story I just told shares a great example of that, and I hope it's true. But the scripture talks about it over and over again.

In the passage that we talked about about four weeks ago, we put it in the bulletin again today. And it's because I think it talks to us as a church at four years old. And this is going to be a very interesting sermon time.

So what we're going to do is, I hate meetings. I hate AGMs. I just, I'm always, because it's just always these situations where you're calling people up, come here to this meeting, and we need a quorum, and we need all these things. And it just never works out in churches and businesses and everywhere.

[ 3 : 21 ] And so what we decided to do, and this is, I think, is our third one, our second one, we decided not to have AGM, but we started to have a service. And so what we're going to do is, we're going to share. So you're in our AGM right now, but hopefully it'll be funner than a board meeting.

And we're going to share about what God's been doing in the church's life. We're going to share where we've been, where we are now, and where we're hoping to go. And so this is basically Watermark's AGM.

So you got that. Then afterwards, we're going to take a picture, and there's food for people. And if you haven't ordered your ticket yet, we have some extra tickets. Come see Christina and I. We're going to have this great celebration. But right now, we're looking at, you got it.

Where are we going, and what we're doing. And the passage says this. As Peter is talking to the church, he reminds them of who they are. He reminds them of who they're working with.

And the thing that always sticks out to me in verse nine is he reminds them that they are a priest. He reminds them that everybody in the church is a priest.

[ 4 : 22 ] Now in the Jewish culture, there were only a couple of priests, and those priest jobs were really important. But in the church, what Peter is reminding us is that everybody in the church is a priest. The priest job was to bring broken people to God.

The priest job was to be this element of reconciliation. The priest made the temple happen. Anything that happened in the temple, it was because the priest were serving, they were doing, they were bringing. And the priest job was to bring the broken people, to bring the people who needed God into the temple and to help this reconciliation take place.

And when Peter's writing in 1 Peter 2, what you realize is that the people forgot. The people forgot. And the Bible's full of this. The Bible talks a lot about sometimes we forget when it's prosperous and things are great and it can't even be better.

And then sometimes we, as God's people, priests, we forget when it's difficult and when it's really hard. But what he says here is that the people forgot. And as I look back on these four years and if I think about the next 20 years, and this is going to be short, guys, but I think about the next 20 years, there's some things that keep sticking into my mind is that what I hope this church will look like.

And there's some things in my mind that's sticking with what I hope this church won't look like. And I wonder, and my prayer is, and I hope that we don't become like the priest that Peter's writing to in 1 Peter.

[ 5 : 43 ] I hope that 30 years from now when people come into Watermark that we're not a group of passive people. I mean, sometimes we can become passive, right?

And that's why Peter's writing this message to him. Sometimes we can come into the temple and we can expect to have our needs met instead of meeting other people's needs.

Sometimes we can come into the temple and we can not want to be equipped. We cannot want to be served. We can just want to veg and sit down because our life is so hard and so crazy and we can come in and we can forget that God has called us all to be priests.

I mean, he has called us all to help broken people and to be a part of healing broken city, Hong Kong. I wonder, and I hope, that we don't become like the people in 1 Peter because Peter wrote this story to this church that's 30 years old.

And I hope in 25 years, we're not struggling with the same things that they were struggling with. I hope that we're not so busy that we become separated from where we live.

[ 6 : 52 ] In Peter's day, the people were so busy with their schedules and their life and everything they were doing. They were just so busy that they didn't think about their neighbors or the people around them. And they stopped reaching out to new people.

They stopped reaching out to new people because they were so busy. It's amazing to me, sometimes in a church, we can travel 20 minutes or 30 minutes to get to a church or a watermark, but we can't walk 10 feet out of our door to talk to our neighbors.

And I hope that we're not like that. I pray that we don't become like the people in Peter's day. I hope that we don't stop changing lives and communities and relationships.

I hope that we keep reaching out and loving people. I hope that we stay focused on the one teacher, Jesus, and not whoever's teaching up here 20 years from now.

We don't want to become a mega church that's focused on one personality, but we want to become a church that continually focuses on Christ and what he's done. You know, when we first started praying about this church, we wrote out some things.

[ 8 : 03 ] We said we want to be a church that knows what it was like before we became Christians. We want to be a church that never forgets what it was like when we walked in darkness, when we were alone, when we felt guilt, when we felt shame, when we felt terrible, and no one would ever talk to us.

We wanted to remember what that was like. We wanted to be a church that was for the unchurched people. We wanted to be a church that was for de-churched people, people who gave up on church. We wanted to be a church that was also for church people, but the focus was always never to bring people from other churches.

The focus was always to reach people who weren't in church on Sunday and to love them and bring them to the gospel. When we started praying about this, after six months, one of our members came up and he said, you know, this church, it's, I said, what?

He goes, well, this is how I would define it. I would say Watermark is the home of sinners in the gospel. Watermark is the home of sinners in the gospel and I pray that 25 years from now, we would continually be that group of people who were changed by God's word.

We prayed that we would be a church community where everybody knew your name and everybody knew your story or parts of your story. That people could pray for you and they could be a part of you. How are we doing? Are we doing good with that?

[ 9 : 12 ] Because that's what we prayed for. We prayed that we would be this church family where, and this is amazing to me because it's something I've been praying for forever, we wanted to be a church where even if friends knew that somebody else was thinking about spiritual things and even if they weren't spiritual, they would say, hey, go check out Watermark because they're an interesting church.

I've heard good things about them. And it's amazing to me how many people are in church today because somebody brought them and the people who brought them weren't churchgoers or they weren't in the family of God and some of them aren't even in here today and that's the type of church we want to be about.

We want to be a church that integrates all the generations together, right? We've talked about that and sometimes that gets messy. I mean, sometimes it gets messy when you have kids around and they're screaming and crazy. I actually love it.

I mean, I think it's just what the family of God's supposed to be like. The family of God's supposed to be messy and people are messy. But that's the type of church we wanted to be and what we realized is if your kids, listen to me really carefully, even if you don't have kids, you are raising the kids in this church.

If the kids never see you worship, if they never see you sing, if they never see you tithe, if they never see you come to God's word, they never see you open it, if they just come and they get separated and they go off to other places, if they never are integrated into the church family, their faith will never become their own.

[ 10 : 30 ] I mean, statistically, the numbers are out of control. And so we think that sometimes the best thing to do is get this great youth program and that might help bring some people into a church, but that's not going to help them walk a lifetime with the Lord.

What's going to help them walk a lifetime with the Lord is for us doing it together. And so they see older people and brothers and sisters and I'm so thankful for the singles in this group because my kids are ministered so much by you guys and ladies because you love them, you encourage them, and you show them what it means to be a Christian even as you're older.

We want it to be a church that was theologically sound. We want it to always talk about the gospel. We want it to be a place where you could ask questions. We want it a place where even if you didn't agree with what was said, you could feel free to ask the question and you could feel heard and then you could walk away going, wow, that's an interesting church because even though I agreed very differently, they love me, they care for me, they still pursue me in their community groups and I want to bring my friends there.

We want this vision to drive everything that we do. We want to be a church that understands that we're not in Hong Kong to use Hong Kong. We're not in Hong Kong for the short period of time just to use it and then get our money or our position and then go back to our hometown but we believe that God has placed you here because he wants you to serve the city.

He wants you to change the city. He wants you to impact the city. He wants you to use your gifts and your talents and your time and we want to be a church that does that and thinks about that. How are we doing? My prayer, I think that we're doing pretty good but we could do better in some areas and so what we're going to do is we're going to share some of these things of what God has been allowing us to do but again, it's not the staff doing it, it's you doing it and if you don't engage, if you don't pray, if you don't do all these things, then Watermark won't exist.

[ 12 : 19 ] We want to be a church community where everyone serves and use their gifts and talents and the focus point is changing lives and so I've asked Danielle to come up.

Danielle, where are you? Okay. And as I think about what God has called us to do, it's my privilege as a pastor just to see God changing people's lives and so Danielle has agreed to come up here and she's going to share a little of her story.

I promise not to be as hard on her as I am with my wife sometimes up here by asking funny questions or things like that. So Danielle, as I think of God changing people's lives, I know that there's many stories out here but I really want people just to kind of hear a part of your story so maybe just share who you are and how you, just share who you are.

Hi everyone. My name is Danielle and I'm currently working for Watermark Church as a graphic designer and my husband is a non-believer which is why he's not here today but he supports my choice of faith because he has witnessed the change in me over the last two years after I've become baptized and my seven-year-old daughter, she comes to church with me every Sunday so she's on this journey together with me and I got baptized two years ago just outside.

In our great kiddie pool that we have out there. Yes, and then I have started coming ever since. Okay, well can you tell a little bit about your story about how the Lord has been moving in your life and in your marriage and just the things that you've been learning, I mean as comfortable as you feel during this time.

[ 13 : 56 ] Yeah, a couple of years ago I was going through a phase whereby nothing seems to matter or mean to me, like nothing seems to mean anything to me and I was feeling empty and lonely no matter what, even though I have all the things that I need and I was depressed so, and because of that I started picking on my marriage, my life, and my partner.

I resented many things that I have been through in Hong Kong and I really, really blamed him for everything and we separated for a while and I started coming to Watermark Church.

So what God has taught me was, he actually showed me a miracle, a miracle for me because during that time I was so 100% sure that I'm not going to give my marriage a second chance but he changed my heart and he healed my heart and I started to learn how to love my husband again and we got back together and we are now having a really healthy marriage.

You have a very interesting story of, can you just share maybe how you came to be about at Watermark and what the church has been doing in your life since that happened?

So I was going through a phase like where I was so upset and I was talking to a friend when I went back to Singapore. I'm from Singapore and she's from here and she asked me if I'm doing alright and I usually would tell people say I'm fine but on that evening I was with Scarlett I was feeling really down.

[ 15 : 35 ] I told her no I'm not fine at all. Something is really wrong in me and I don't know how to fix it and I think she said you should go to this church with me and check it out and I said okay and we did so it was Watermark Church and I came without any expectations and without like thinking whether it's really the solution to my problems and yeah so she kind of indirectly helped sort out my messy life I'm grateful for that and of course I know it's through God that you know he brought her to my life on that night and asked me to come here.

and you told me that she's not a church goer and she no longer goes to church here right so my question is why did you keep coming? I don't make fun of Singaporeans so you're okay with that because there's too many rules there.

That was a good one I didn't prepare for that. Okay why do I keep coming? Why do you keep coming? Because yeah Okay firstly I've been to churches in Singapore but they are like maybe not the ones that I really feel comfortable with so that puts me off and then when I was here and I was down and I came here I don't feel intimidated I like the music and I like the atmosphere and I like your sermons yeah You don't have to say that because you work for me No yeah so that's why and also after I started joining a community group I have a sense of belonging and I just realized that I can't stop coming anymore yeah What would you tell somebody who was experiencing the same things that you were experiencing in that sense?

Well this I have to read from the script for those of you or even a friend or a family member you see that if they are experiencing something similar to me I just want to say as cliché as it sounds we are not alone and that God is always around as forms of church as forms of a church mate a neighbor or even a friend who is sitting right beside you who brought you here like I think God wants us to be here and there's a room you just don't know or maybe you know and you don't know where to start so coming here I think is a good place to start Can I pray for you?

Yeah And then we'll let the next guys come up Father we thank you for my sister and I pray for her family and pray for her husband who is still on this journey thank you that he is happy to have Danielle and his daughter come to church and the community and stay in it and I pray for just his eyes that you would open his eyes to your son Christ pray that you just encourage her and just thank you for how you you've healed her marriage in many many ways but we know that the journey isn't completed and so we pray that you would continue to go before her and give her wisdom give her peace and to encourage her and just give her the words that would point those around her to your son so Father we just thank you and we love you and we pray these things in your son Jesus name Amen Thanks Good morning Are we on?

[ 19 : 10 ] Following on from what Tobin has been saying I'm going to talk a little bit about community groups but connected to what Tobin was saying in 1887 a guy called Ansel Bourne who is the guy that Jason Bourne from the Bourne was named after he was a Christian preacher who one day set off to visit his sister he was in Rhode Island it was only a couple of miles away but then mysteriously he ended up withdrawing all of his savings moving to Pennsylvania and opened up a store under the name of Alfred J. Brown for two months he was there when after two months he suddenly woke up one morning thinking where on earth am I?

when the people around him told him oh we think you are called Albert J. Brown he was totally confused because Mr. Bourne had had a case of amnesia for two months he'd forgotten who he was and what he was meant to be doing and he ended up living a completely different life from what he was meant to be doing he went back after two months and lived completely normally as Ansel Bourne for the rest of his life now why do I tell that story you may be wondering basically as Christians we often have an amnesia problem at Watermark we know that actually we often forget who we are and what we're here for why actually God has brought us into Hong Kong and at Watermark we have community groups which is one of the places where we are to remind each other of who we are and what we're here for we are to remind each other that as Christians we're to be

God's word junkies we're to have the gospel shaping every part of our life increasingly day by day we're to be people who are who don't forget that actually we are family members we're here to love and serve and care for each other and encourage each other not just attend Sunday meetings we're also to remember that we are God's ambassadors called to share the gospel to people who don't know it to the world around who needs to hear the amazing good news that is why we started community groups at Watermark to have people around us who can help us to remember who we are so we don't fall into the same case as Ansel Bourne now I have I have a couple of wonderful people with me Colin and Kristen who are part of one of the 14 community groups that we have across Hong Kong Island and Kowloon and in Lantau Island and I've just invited them to share a little bit about what community group has been like for them over this last year so maybe if you'd just like to introduce yourself first and then that wasn't in the question

I'm just throwing them off with her so I'm Kristen my husband Colin we've been in Hong Kong for five years Colin is from Hong Kong originally but I'm not and we've been in Watermark for about three years great thank you so could you tell me what community group are you part of we are the Bel Air group okay and tell me what is it like being part of the Bel Air community group our group is very new we just started this year in February and we meet every other Saturday and our group is mainly composed of families and couples and there's very good bonding around the adults as well as the children and during our discussion time the kids the older one will take care of the younger one in a separate area which is very important for us because it takes away the chaos from our discussion and our group people are very open in sharing what God is doing in their lives which is really great great and so how have you seen God working and growing both your community group and even in your own lives this past year

I think just to give a bit of background of where we were at spiritually so I was from Hong Kong but then we met in London we were in London for quite a long time so and we moved back only five years ago and the first two years was really tough because we found in London there's a much better work-life balance and work is really demanding and it's really stressful for me and it's affecting my health and also our marriage and then we found Watermark and we joined Tobin's group which was great to be like spoon-fed for a year just go there enjoy the friendship and being taken care of yeah that was that was really we're thankful for that kind of recovery and refreshment time until until one day this particular church member church staff

[ 24 : 42 ] Chris Thornton strongly encouraged us to let's start a group together with two other couples Simon Sherman Dwight and Margo gentle encouragement gently and consistently at different occasion over a period of three months and yes with a gender behind let's come out for lunch yeah yeah and so I would say God help us to grow through co-leading a group because when we are CG members I think like what Tobin said we were really the passive participant we go there enjoy the friendship enjoy the food you know learn about God's word share it and bye bye and then wait for the next one and and when when we co-leading a CG I think God gradually changed our minds to become more proactive and also become more kingdom focused when we pray for our members when we pray for the visitors when we start to concern more about what's going on in the church yeah so we actually read the bulletins more now yeah sorry

I think I need to look yes and also we we start stepping a bit more you can see I'm not doing that very well we're trying to step outside our comfort zone to meet newcomers and try to make them feel welcome but naturally I'm the more introvert kind in our relationship and I am naturally not a very friendly person but Chris is great Chris is not Chris is complete opposite he's friendly and really welcoming people and outspoken yeah that's great and yeah and right so and also when we started the group we were a bit worried and very concerned initially whether are we ready to start a group and we're planning to have babies can we really commit how long can we commit and whether people will come if they come are they nice people are they easy to get along so a lot of these kind of worries and really self-centered question and but I think God just provided everything he provided people provided really good bonding among the groups regardless of our background our personality and beliefs that we we all come together quite well and and so

I think what we learn from is that it's not what we do or our ability that makes the group to grow but it's really God's causes the group to grow especially when we see God's work in our lives where we come together pray together we find that our our faith individually and as a group become stronger as we really can see God works in our lives through our ups and downs of our members that's great thank you and Kristen why do you why do you think being part of a community group has been important for your spiritual journey if there's someone out here as well who maybe was wondering about being part of a community group what would you say so I think if we are not part of a CG then we probably wouldn't be meeting people meeting other believers on a regular basis with the intentional purpose of sharing our lives praying together and studying the word and I think if we don't do that it's very easy for us to just get comfortable in our own ways which is really the worldly ways and we will have no accountability to other believers but because we are part of a CG we are regularly reminded about how the others are living their lives and so we are regularly challenged and encouraged by that so I think that helps us to walk we've got more closely and then secondly when we study the sermon series you know when we discuss it and when we think through the message together it really helps to make the message stick longer and hopefully that translates to our daily life and the third thing is I think the prayer support provided by the CG is really important for example in the early part of our pregnancy before we found out it's viable

I think I could have easily fallen I mean get overwhelmed by worries because I'm naturally a worrier but thanks to all the prayers from our CG and also many friends in this church we managed to stay quite calm which was a surprise so up until you know week nine which is considered quite late to hear the heartbeat so when we found out it was viable everyone who had been praying is super encouraged not just us so it's just a great thing to be praying for something together and I think in the recent months our CG has been quite amazed by how quickly God answered some of our prayers and when that happened everyone is encouraged not just the prayer requester but even in cases where God hasn't answered or God answered in a different way I think that God's peace and encouragement will still hold the prayer requester together that's great thank you thank you so our aim for this for this coming year is that we've already heard that we want to be a church which has church planting in our DNA and multiplying community groups is like church planting in miniature and so we want to be able to multiply community groups across Hong Kong Island and in Kowloon we would love to start groups in Park Island this year we'd love to start a group down in

Aplei Chow Aberdeen Wong Chuk Hang direction we'd love to start a group another group in Kowloon side and also we're hoping for those who English is maybe not the language they're most comfortable in we want to be starting and we're planning to start a group for Mandarin speakers to be able to study God's word which David later you'll see will be helping to head up and also a Cantonese speaking group as well so these are some of the things we really want to pray for if you are not in a community group come and see me afterwards if you live in any of the areas I've just mentioned or are interested come and see me afterwards because God actually wants to do amazing things this year like he's been doing in Colin and Kristen's life so let me just pray for them and then I'm going to transition on for Alfie to talk about the university ministry let me just pray Father thank you so much for what you've been doing in Colin and Kristen's life in that community group and I know in so many other community groups across Watermark

[ 31 : 53 ] Lord thank you that you are a living God who wants to change our lives he wants to help us to remember who we are and who we are called to be in this city Lord please help us as a church to be that kind of people who are everything that you've called us to be in your name Amen over to Alfie good morning ah here we go alright good morning my name is Alfie and I help direct the university ministries here at Watermark and it's been quite an exciting time it's been a lot of transition over the past 18 months in fact 18 months ago I did not know any of these people that I brought up and it's really exciting that we're able to come and hear from each of them a bit about what God has been doing in their lives and in the university ministry these 18 months of transition have been very stressful for me



I don't like change I want everything to stay exactly the same and go according to plan but you know as people have come and people have gone God has been so faithful to bring different people along you know he's brought me and he's brought Henrika to come and join the ministry team and David who we'll hear from later but he's also brought up this amazing team of student leaders there are about a dozen different students who together are you know reaching out and loving the campus in just an amazing way it's you know come talk to me later I'll tell you it's mind boggling just how God brought each one of these people in their journey of faith and you know to a position where they're leading and you know help doing little small groups on the campus one of these students is Irina who is really one of my favorite no you're all my favorites but her journey of faith consistently like you know daily monthly you know as I hear about what God has been doing in her life and her family is super encouraging for myself and so I've asked to share a little bit about how ICF the International Christian Fellowship at HKU how the university ministry and how Watermark as a church has been encouraging her and her journey hello

I'm Edie so I think ICF it's really important for each one of us and why I say that it's simply because in HKU where you find a lot of students really like to boast and pretend and it's hard to find a community where you can really share your struggles and really share like really be humble and really have a serving heart and I think ICF actually really encourage every single one of us to really be vulnerable and really share our struggles in the community and ask for prayers and fellowships and apart from ICF actually I think ICF it's a really prayer center community and actually when we go there every time we'll pray for each other and not only on the Wednesday meeting apart from Wednesday we actually pray for each other throughout the week and keep each other accountable and that's really encouraging for me because for a student

I feel like I'm not working like walking on this journey on my own but really I have a huge community supporting me and really inspiring me each time and I think apart from this what ICF ICF actually encouraged me to live out gospel center life why I say that it's because every time when we go to ICF we're actually challenged by Alfie or Henrika to really start our mission in the campus and that mission is not to get straight A's or to get really good grades but rather it's to really seeking all the souls and really spread gospel to the students around me and that actually inspired me to love and care about the people around me and actually I think that helped me to really get to know more about God's word and actually inspired me to really reflect on all those words and apart from ICF I think

Watermark encouraged me a lot as well and the reason why I say that it's I really appreciate Watermark's sermon which are really I think it's really honest and really open to talk about all those topics which are really hard it can be telling us we are sinful and we are but it can keep reminding us that we are worthy and God loves us so much as well and that's just really inspiring and really touched my heart each time and actually encouraged me to know more about God's word as well that's how I feel yeah thanks Edie one of the things that Edie and a dozen other students are doing is leading small groups so you know each week they're getting together in classrooms in dorms in the libraries to look at the Bible and see God's word but you know we have this huge struggle and you know especially like in my heart because I really want the students to be on the campus and you know reaching and loving those people but I also want them to be a part of the church

[ 37 : 12 ] I think sometimes we do one extreme or the other so either they're on the campus and we don't see them at church or they're all at church and they're never reaching out to the campus and this is where I would like you guys everyone here as a family of Watermark to come in and help us help us love these students come and take them out for lunch love them we have a volunteer who bought tickets for all the students to join our anniversary lunch for free so if you're a student free lunch but you know we want them to also come and get to know you get to know what God is doing in your life that you know there is life after you graduate and that Jesus is still there and he's still working and doing that we also want them to be involved in the church we want them to be serving and so you know if you're in a ministry if you're doing stuff with the kids or the youth and you see somebody who's young and wearing funny clothes ask them to you know come and you know come and join us come serve with us because as much as you guys are students and are on the campus you're also a part of this church family and we love to see us try and figure out where that balance is between being missionaries on campus and being you know members of this church one of the things that God has been doing has been bringing in lots of different people to allow us to reach more people on the campus there are about a million and a half

HKU students who are from mainland China maybe it's about 2000 but David is God has brought David along who has just graduated from seminary in Boston who's from mainland China and he's going to share a little bit about what he's been doing on HKU with mainland with Mandarin speaking students so for people who never met me before and who is under five years old maybe you know I am Amanda's husband she volunteer in the case ministry sometimes so you may know her and I was born in up north very close to Russia and you can see maybe some polar bears there that's my neighbors yeah Hey Longjiang province it's very cold place and we have minus 0.3 year old kid on her way here and even though young as she is kicked me kicked me many times and

I will see what it will be like when she's out and right now we have he just said that we have 2,000 university students from mainland China and in the Bible we are always reminded love your neighbor and I'll be just reminded me you know do you know how many neighbors you have 2,000 2,000 people who are from mainland China they never heard of the gospel they never met Jesus and how do you love your neighbor the best way to love them is to tell them Jesus and share the gospel with them that's why we at Watermark we started the mental ministry and to share the gospel the word we started from the beginning Genesis we are reading chapter 1 and 2 every Thursday afternoon and Thursday evening at the community center you know where it is high street for six and if you have time and you know anyone who is interested please come and join us and we also cooperate with many other groups on campus and some other fellowship and some people so we can reach out to undergrad and graduate and post grad and many different people and the two weeks

I was in another fellowship and they just reminded me to say you know how many neighbors do you have I said how many and they said we have one million Mandarin speakers in Hong Kong so one million that's a large amount of people and they are our neighbors in many 2,000 years our Lord Jesus challenged this lawyer this lawyer came to Jesus and Jesus said you should love your Lord and love your neighbor and who is my neighbor one million people and I know many people of you maybe want to start Mandarin speaking CG so you know where I am and talk to me thank you thanks David we don't know what this university ministry is going to look like in another 18 months mostly students will have graduated maybe they'll have left Hong Kong there'll be a whole bunch of new students there'll be a new set of student leaders and I'm reminded every day that all the things that we're doing whether it's you know with small groups on campus whether it's reaching out to mainland mainland Chinese speakers you know these things only happen when God is working and when we're asking him and we're praying to him and praying for this university so we really want you guys as a church to join us in praying for these students to pray for them and pray that they would come to know Jesus pray love these students and take them out for lunch challenge these students to take the next step on their spiritual journey over this next couple of weeks we're going to be starting a journey towards talking a bit about justice and as a university ministry we're still trying to figure out what that looks like but within Watermark

Jeremy heads up our missional justice department and he's going to come up and department? I don't know he's going to come up and talk a little bit about that all right thank you so much missional justice it sounds kind of cool it wasn't just two words that I decided to throw together that sounds cool because it actually reminds me and it should remind us like what exactly is is justice justice so when I'm thinking about us serving the poor and when I'm thinking about us when we're thinking about you know reaching the people who are like at the lowest of the low at the lowest rungs of the social ladders it's not just a matter of charity or you know doing something nice it's actually an issue of justice it's actually something God looks at and says hey this is unjust and I as a just God believe that something actually needs to be done so it's not it's so much more serious and weighty than that and why missional because I think I constantly need a reminder

[ 43 : 55 ] I think we all do as a church when we go out and serve and do you know good deeds it's not really just to hopefully make society more just which is where the term social justice comes from but it's it's actually something more than that everything we do is intimately connected to a God who is missional who came first came down through Jesus Christ to actually reach us and everything we do is part of of advancing his kingdom a part of his mission that's so clearly written on the banner so even when we're loving people when we're serving the poor our hope is that they'll ultimately recognize the true issue of justice and that's the issue of being reconciled with God of receiving his forgiveness so that's why justice is not just social justice it's not just charity or mercy but it's actually missional and that's something that I need constant reminder of and I hope that God and his spirit would continually remind us as well so I'll be very brief there's a bunch of things that I can share about the short you know summary won't do these things justice

Chris got it there but but hopefully in the coming weeks and months you will you'll be able to see more spotlights of what God is doing in and around the community there's a few things that have really kind of risen up from the grassroots of of Watermark one is St. Barnabas Society you might have heard of it over the past year or two it just started from one community group seeing a need in their in the Kennedy Town area in the western district and they started going out to this NGO this Christian NGO that serves the elderly that serves street sleepers and homeless people and we really came alongside them as a church to help them actually start a kids learning club to actually reach underprivileged kids families and they've started a weekly program tutoring kids having their parents come over for like a home cooked meal and that's something that we want to continue partnering with them as well you might have seen like you know half a dozen a dozen maybe even 20

Nepali kids South Asian kids running around Watermark they're from an NGO called Inner City Ministries that serves in Jordan and Yamate and that whole area and it's just beautiful for me to see these kids come into our midst because it's not outreach anymore we always think of it as us and them but they're in our midst now they're part of our church at least that's what we're working towards as much as normal things like you know race and language and culture can still separate us I think the beautiful thing is God is using this opportunity to break down barriers that we have in our very hearts you know that they're the other you know they're poor they're dirty they're smelly which may be true to be honest none of them are here hopefully but the beautiful thing is you know I've walked up to them and smelled some of them before and they need cleaning they need people to walk alongside them and teach them about personal hygiene so that's the beauty that we can see God working and so inner city is another big thing and sons and daughters is another one they reach out to the working girls the mama sons even the customers in all the red light districts in Hong Kong especially

Lockhart Road in Wan Chai and it's that's still something that we're really trying to spotlight and to build up but just seeing a few people in Watermark or even like half a community group kind of being passionate about reaching these ladies who a lot of them don't really want to be there they don't want to be on Lockhart they don't want to be at the clubs they don't want to be selling their bodies but for one reason or another they think they have no choice so so that's another thing and there's also little things that are going on you know community group that's going out to elderly homes regularly just to show love to people who are maybe often emotionally neglected there's I know there's a group that's giving bread and delivering bread to people who need food and those are just little things that we're hearing and I pray that it's not just something that really the vision the heart is not something that the elders or me just like coming and saying we got to do this and this and this and this all of these things is things that we've identified as things that have come up from the grassroots from community groups from a few people who have just gotten together and seen hey this is unjust there's something wrong here

God does not like this situation and we want to be his hands and feet and actually make a small difference so I'm really looking forward to what's happening what's going to be happening in the next six months a year what other things God might do if you heard anything that I've shared so far in terms of what's already going on you know inner city sons and daughters St. Barnabas or the other things please speak to me we'd love to continue just mobilizing and remembering that you know justice isn't really an option you know if we profess to be walking with the Lord and he is the Lord of justice it's not really something that we add on to our walk as a Christian it's something that we just have to do and he calls us to do if we're you know in love with the Lord and if we're following him so thanks so much and I will pass on to Franklin and Graham our elders who will speak about finances because all these things that we've talked about need finances and need human resources thanks guys this is the part of the service where all the bankers investment bankers and finance people actually wake up okay it's otherwise known as the

[ 49 : 31 ] Jerry Maguire part of the sermon show me the money okay which is what we plan to do I'm I'm Graham one of the elders and this is I'm Franklin I'm the other elder good so we haven't got exciting stories but we got something better than that we got bar graphs okay so here we go if you have a look at there I want to start the most beautiful figure to me is the little last one the little blue bar graph that actually shows how generous you guys have been we at Watermark ages ago we always want to be known as a generous church so we're going to begin with a thank you and that really is us as a family contributing over nine million dollars in giving last year which is a 13% increase over the year before so thanks everyone and thanks to yourselves right we're very blessed and we're very humbled to see those figures yes indeed we're very very blessed we're so blessed that in November of last year we made an challenge to all of us that the weekend of December 8th will give all that giving away and by grace that is the biggest weekend we have ever received in

Fortemark and we gave away a million and a half dollars on that that we received that weekend and the money that we just want to let you know that the money that was received went into several major ministries we went to help the church planters with City of City reaching our report that Jeremy mentioned for St.

Barnabas and Jordan the Kids Club for inner city ministries and several other ministries so but with all these investments we may not see an immediate return but Lord will continue to challenge us and show us and give us a vision that these things these investments will be worth it and reaching out to the reach in the gospel good all right now I've given there's always in accounting I learnt in school there's these things called a T account right there's a debit and there's a credit so I've just told you about the little blue graph and now I have to tell you about the green little bar chart there like anything in Hong Kong things go up right so that's the reality of what happened to us over the past year our expenses went up and particularly we've the cost of this venue right just being in here we've seen a dramatic increase in cost we've had to hire removal services they charge us to keep our equipment here during the week and all that's kind of led to an increase of expenses of over a million dollars so that's kind of what that little green bar indicates is our expenses have really gone up a lot compared to the previous year together with the expenses if you see the blue chart on 2012 and 2013 we have a year ago we had some really low donations plus the big expenses so the savings that we have in our bank account we have the very honest and upright with you that has kind of depleted so this whole year we have been very careful in our spending so that we will not continue going to red but when we are reducing expenses we don't want to reduce our outreach efforts our trainings and the ministry that is needed for the church so we'll continue to report these figures to you as a watermark family on a monthly basis so you will be aware and we hold us accountable for our spending someone asked me about a week ago they said is there something special in the coffee they serve a watermark because there's an awful lot of pregnant women around so I just don't put anything in the coffee but our family's growing which is fantastic right

I mean we're growing from the ground up from having babies from people coming in which is a wonderful thing but that kind of means an increase in expenses as well and we we've got to make allowances for that you know we hope to bring more permanent staff members on board and also we're praying for a permanent venue as well so what we've done is we've taken into consideration the giving of last year that nine million dollar figure I mentioned and we've taken into account what we've learned from our expenses and we've prepared a budget this year if you can have a look just can we go back one just before that last little gray box at the end you see that's perfectly in line with the little blue giving thing so we've been good stewards and we're trying to match our budget to our giving for the next year and Jackie's going to show us that we moved from bar graphs to pie charts it just gets better and better okay so that's kind of how we've broken it up right

I don't know you can see that little figure up there it says budgeted spending from last year was 2.3 million more right so it's what Franklin already mentioned about us using a lot of the church saving so that's kind of how our ministry has been broken up into the different factors and we're basing it on you can see a monthly giving of around 750 to 800,000 is what we need as a family good so what we ask and what we really is to continue to pray right pray that God will bless us and continue to provide for our needs which he has done we just need to look over our shoulder and this is a little miracle that's happened and he's continued to provide for our needs and also don't forget right everything that we've heard gone before us community groups missional justice university that's all part of this we're all sowing into throughout the year

[ 55 : 52 ] I've always been reminded of this verse from the Bible from Philippians 1:3 to 6 and we read to you I thank my God every time I remember you in all my prayers for all of you I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now be confident of this that he who began a good work in you will carry until the day of Christ Jesus just if you look behind me one last thing this is a celebration of what we've been able to do over the past year we're not going to go into all the details but it really is big highlights of people we've managed to bring out things we've managed to do just as a church community all of it costs money and but it is reaching out the gospel if you do have any more detailed questions please come speak to the leaders or us as elders afterwards and we're happy to hear your questions and hopefully give you an answer thanks very much

Tobin okay so that was that was much better than AGM wasn't it come on guys is that better than sitting on a quorum raising your hands and all that stuff you know it's amazing when you look at that year chart what God has allowed us as a church to be a part of and all the things that he's allowed to and when you think about I realize one of the craziness about ministry as I've been doing it for 30 years now is that so much of what we see we don't see we're not going to see what's going to happen in the lives of the students a lot of the students are going to leave and they go to their other countries we're not going to see what's going to happen in the life of some of the kids because their families are going to transfer and they're going to leave and they're going to go two years to New York or to Singapore or someplace like that what we know is that our God is going with them and however long they're here he's been challenging us as a church to plant seeds of gospel the resources he's given us to allow those things to grow and to flourish and to change lives and things that are happening we're going to end right now Christina and I were talking and one of the things we talked about we said you know I said to her just yesterday last night actually we said so what do you want the church to look like 20 years from now and she said to me you know it doesn't really matter if Christ isn't at the center of it if Christ is at the center of it then he's in control and he's going to take care of it and he's going to grow it and it's going to happen but if he's not we can grow this massive mega church and it won't matter because it won't last

I wondered if I was going to share this with you but I want to share this with you just so you can keep us accountable you can keep me accountable but actually so we can keep the church family accountable because it's not just me saying it it's us doing it as a family in the year to come we want to reach out to other campuses we've partnership with churches in America and other organizations and they're going to start sending interns with us and that's that's part of the things we're praying about and doing and looking at in the year to come we want to keep training everybody in this church we want you guys to go deeper in your love for God's word we want you to understand theology we're going to put on classes my mentor the guy who trained me in seminary Dr. Hannah is going to come and he's going to be a consultant for us for two months and he's going to do Bible study classes and church history classes and all of these things we want you to take part of because we want you to grow and to develop we want to start Mandarin Bible studies and as David said we've already started the Bible study so if you're a Mandarin speaker or you know a Mandarin speaker Thursday night at the community center there's a fellowship there for Mandarin speakers to learn God's word in their native tongue we want to do that and our hope is that one day that that will plant into a church we want to keep planting churches we want to keep training pastors and and the hope is at the end of this next year that we would have developed a team a launch team a group of people and that we say okay we have a countdown now and so from one year from now we want to plant another church community maybe two and so that's what we're praying for but we realize that it's not going to work unless we do it as a family we probably need to start a second service and I've been fighting it been fighting it because of the community but you know as we as we continue to grow not to grab people from other churches but to get people who aren't in church we probably need to continue that because when people come and they see something this size they they don't necessarily want to bring their friends and so we need to pray about that we need to realize what it's going to look like for us just to trust the Lord and to move forward in this process and it's not just the staff saying it because we're all priests we're all called to do it and so I want to end our time by taking communion together because that's how the early church did it they took communion together and then they ate a big meal together a love feast the interesting thing about Christianity is this in every other religion in business however you want to do it when you want to honor somebody what you normally do is you make an image of them or you put their name on a building and there's a lot of names on buildings all around Hong Kong and those people are being honored for what they've done and some of that's amazing stuff but in Christianity what we're told in the Gospels and in 1 Corinthians is the way we honor the Lord is we take a meal and in this meal we're told that we take part in the symbolism of God's body we eat the bread we drink the wine we don't make an image of anything but we take those things into us the difference between Christianity and every other religion is when we do this what we're doing is we're saying that Christ is inside of us when you take the communion what you're saying theologically is

God is with you so the question we have to ask ourselves as we walk through this day is what does it mean for God to be with us what does it look like for that to happen as a church the difference between Christianity and every other religion is that when we take communion we take it together it doesn't just mean that God is in us that God is with us that God is with you as you're walking together as you're going to work as you're living in home as you're a dad as you're a mom as you're a single as you're a student as you're a worker whatever you're doing God is with you as you're doing it but what it also means is that God is with us that we are a family the symbolism of why we take communion as if we don't take communion apart from the big family because the meaning of communion is is that we are a family we walk together we pray together we serve together we love together we cry together we celebrate together we rejoice together knowing that God has brought us together a family we breathe together we MERCHED we pray together

Mike at the'll we join the next song we pray together we pray together we pray together we  
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