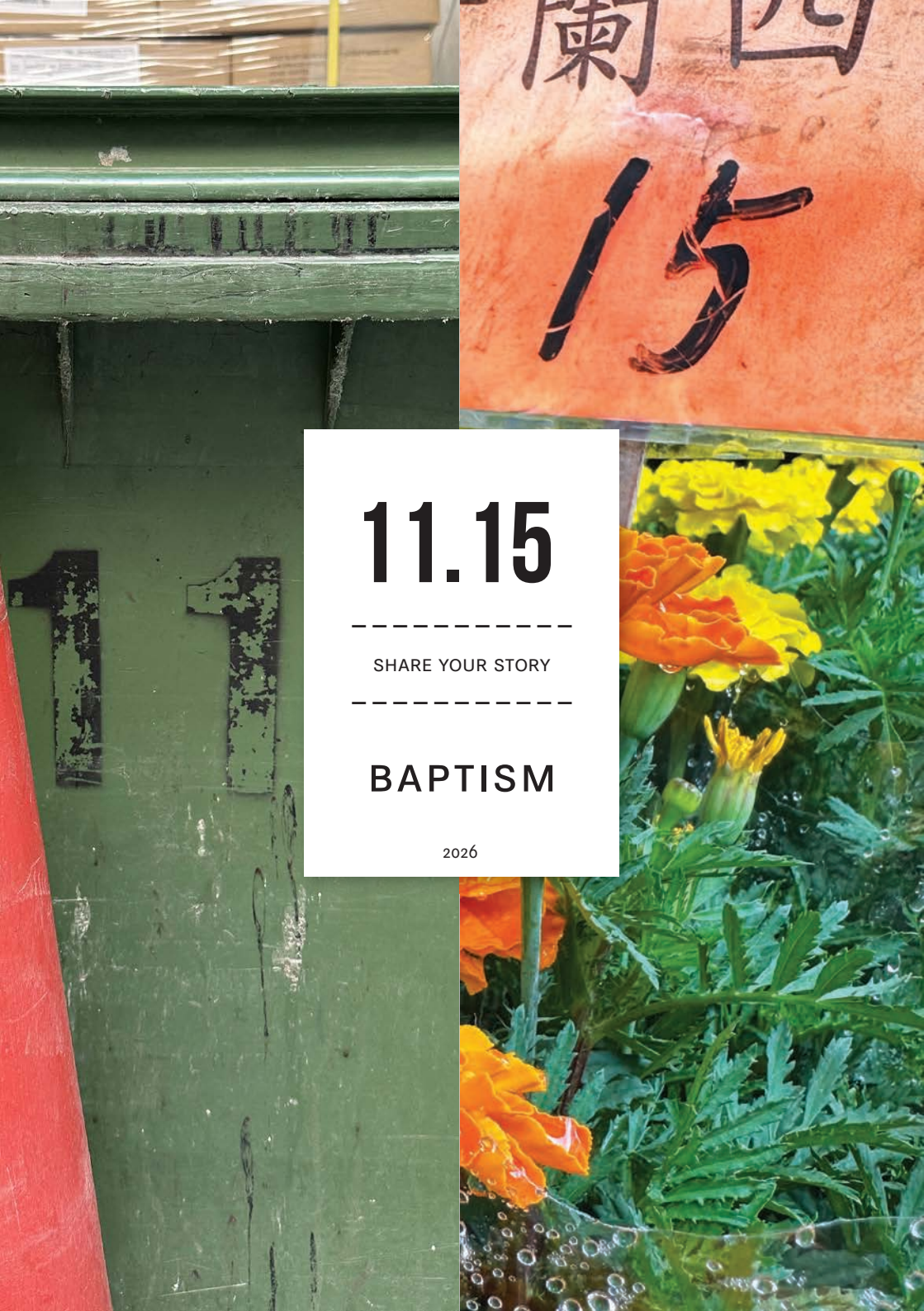
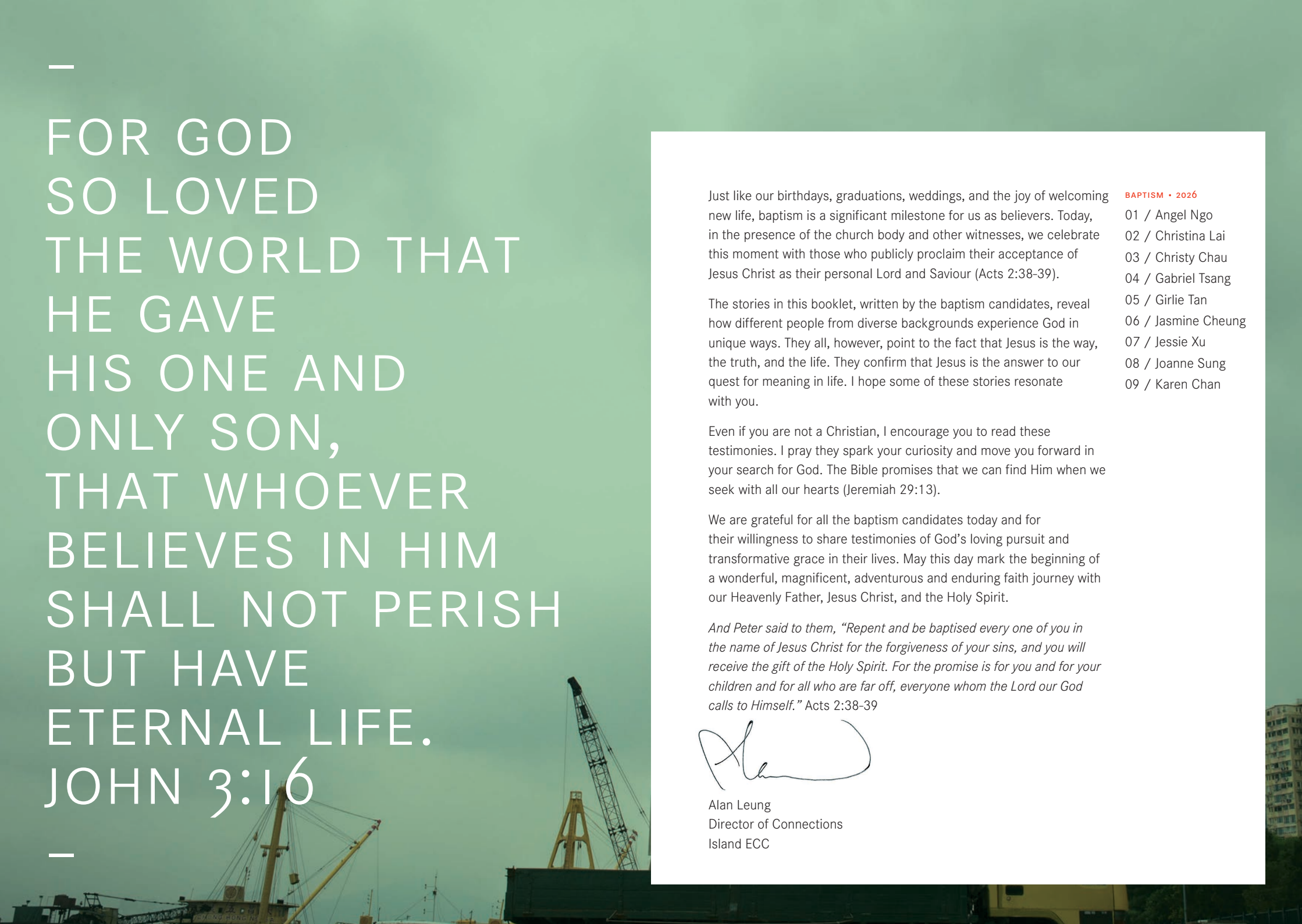

11.15
SHARE YOUR STORY
BAPTISM
2026



FOR GOD
SO LOVED
THE WORLD THAT
HE GAVE
HIS ONE AND
ONLY SON,
THAT WHOEVER
BELIEVES IN HIM
SHALL NOT PERISH
BUT HAVE
ETERNAL LIFE.
JOHN 3:16

Just like our birthdays, graduations, weddings, and the joy of welcoming new life, baptism is a significant milestone for us as believers. Today, in the presence of the church body and other witnesses, we celebrate this moment with those who publicly proclaim their acceptance of Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour (Acts 2:38-39).

The stories in this booklet, written by the baptism candidates, reveal how different people from diverse backgrounds experience God in unique ways. They all, however, point to the fact that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. They confirm that Jesus is the answer to our quest for meaning in life. I hope some of these stories resonate with you.

Even if you are not a Christian, I encourage you to read these testimonies. I pray they spark your curiosity and move you forward in your search for God. The Bible promises that we can find Him when we seek with all our hearts (Jeremiah 29:13).

We are grateful for all the baptism candidates today and for their willingness to share testimonies of God's loving pursuit and transformative grace in their lives. May this day mark the beginning of a wonderful, magnificent, adventurous and enduring faith journey with our Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

*And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to Himself."* Acts 2:38-39



Alan Leung
Director of Connections
Island ECC

BAPTISM • 2026

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I BAPTISM • HONG KONG

# ANGEL NGO

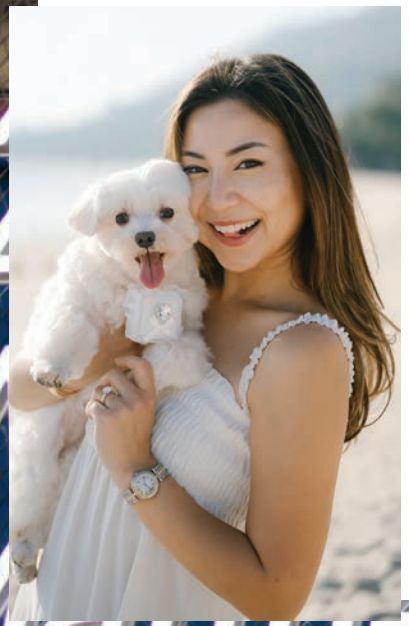
It's time.

Although I have identified as a Christian for a long time, I have definitely not been the best Christian. For years, my faith was just something quiet in my heart.

But what I have realised for sure is that I am blessed in life. And I took it for granted; I attributed it to my constant luck. I now realise that it's time to thank God for all the big and small miracles I have experienced.

For almost two decades, I have been in and out of church, burying myself in studies and work while everything else in life continued moving forward. As cheerful as I always am, I have also been lost, sad, and anxious over these years. Whenever I return to church, tears fall as we sing in worship, and a feeling of safety washes over me without fail. Yet I continued to live life my way, trying to plan it with my own little wisdom.

I planned life my way. Ever since I was little, I had hoped to be a veterinarian, but I thought it was a dream too far to chase, so I planned for other careers. But weird choices happened, one after another, and I blamed myself for many of them, thinking they were horrible choices. In the end, they pushed me toward where I wanted to be most.



It could be my habit from working as a veterinarian in the emergency room for a long time: whatever happens, I anticipate the worst and worry. Unconsciously, I bring it into my personal life and use my knowledge to gauge the situation; I do not hand over my worries to God.

Three years ago, I was engaged to a wonderful man who is so kind and loving, and again, I feared that I was undeserving of great things happening to me. I worried that I had become someone else's responsibility and burden. Just as I was thinking I did not deserve that, a family member fell ill, and I had never prayed so desperately.

And just as with my panicked prayers before exams, my prayers were answered. The Lord was protecting our family. Half my tears walking down the aisle were my thankfulness to the Lord for life and health. But what have I done to deserve it?

Then, not long ago, our firstborn, Oliver, arrived. From seeing his first heartbeat on the screen to holding him in my hands, I felt so much love and gratitude, but also bottomless worry. Looking at Oliver, at my loving husband, and at my ageing parents, I realised how deeply I cherished them, and how powerless I truly was to protect them all on my own.

When the hospital pastor spoke to me just days after Oliver was born, what resonated with me so much was that the love that a mother has for the child is only the beginning of our understanding of God's love for us.

For I have received someone so precious to me; it does not matter how much clinical training I have. This life is out of my hands, and I know I should have handed all my worries over to God.

And I thought, I haven't been lucky in life; I have just been blessed.

It's time that I surrender myself to God.

WHAT RESONATED WITH ME SO MUCH WAS THAT THE LOVE THAT A MOTHER HAS FOR THE CHILD IS ONLY THE BEGINNING OF OUR UNDERSTANDING OF GOD'S LOVE FOR US.

2 BAPTISM • HONG KONG

# CHRISTINA LAI

I was born and raised in Canada, and I grew up in a church where my parents faithfully served in various roles. Faith was always part of my life, and I even taught Sunday school. I was on my way to getting baptised before I left for university, until a couple of family friends from church passed away from illnesses. Their deaths profoundly shook my faith and stopped me from getting baptised. Soon after, I was accepted into law school in Hong Kong, so I left baptism behind. When I arrived in Hong Kong, I visited different churches, but I never found a place that felt like home. I struggled with language barriers and couldn't connect in the way I had hoped.

For many years, God was a lifeline I only pulled when I was in trouble. Yet looking back, I had always felt content with my 20 years in Hong Kong until an unimaginable tragedy struck. My husband suddenly passed away. My world shattered into a million pieces. With the love and support of family, friends, and my daughters, I managed to keep putting one foot in front of the other, but inside I still felt lost in the dark.

And then, at my absolute lowest point, God met me in the ordinary. I was waiting for a minibus at my residence, and when I was told it wouldn't come for 40 minutes, I decided to take a taxi. For some reason, I turned to the lady behind me and asked if she wanted to share the ride. As we talked, I oddly opened up about my tragedy, and she asked if I believed in God. I then learned she attended the very church my parents had encouraged me to visit for years in Hong Kong, although it was mainly a Chinese-speaking church. That ride was no coincidence; I felt God's presence, a gentle whisper of His unwavering love and an assurance that He hadn't abandoned me in the rubble.



I FELT GOD'S PRESENCE, A GENTLE WHISPER OF HIS UNWAVERING LOVE AND AN ASSURANCE THAT HE HADN'T ABANDONED ME IN THE RUBBLE.

That whisper soon became a chorus of grace. Many things started to happen: obstacles that usually blocked my path to church miraculously cleared away, and many friends who never identified as Christian suddenly encouraged me to go to church. Then someone special who constantly reminded me how much God loved me and my girls brought us to Island ECC. For the first time, I felt truly at home.

A sermon from Pastor Daniel especially touched my heart when he shared that when we surrender our struggles and pain to God, He not only moves us forward with Him but also equips us to help others. That truth undid me. And seeing my daughters – especially my youngest, who usually despised new environments – grow to love church is a miracle I never could have dreamed of.

Today, I am not only sharing my story, but also offering my deepest gratitude and surrender. My baptism is a public declaration that God is real, that He carried me through the valley of loss and that He has led me here today. This is a symbol of brand-new life – one with hope, meaning and His endless grace.

3 BAPTISM • HONG KONG

# CHRISTY CHAU

I attended a Christian school and became a believer at 13. When I entered college, I went astray. Academically, in relationships, and with my family, things were great. It was smooth sailing until my 30s. Before that, I took control of my decisions and my everyday life, leaned on my own understanding, and became distant from my beliefs. Then, two years ago, my life hit rock bottom. My marriage fell apart, and we got a divorce last year. A few months later, my mom was diagnosed with Stage IV cancer. My parents were agnostic. My mom's diagnosis was a wake-up call for me that I have zero control over my life.

I literally had no recourse; the whole family was helpless. It made me rethink my faith. All these incidents cannot be random. They happened within such a short timeframe, and I started thinking: Is this my punishment from God? Is this what God wants me to repent for? I asked God: If this is a punishment, why don't I get cancer? Why mom? Why now? I had a lot of questions in my head. I started looking into the Bible for answers and followed my cousin to church. My Christian friends reminded me of God's character and helped me process these hardships. God works for the good of those who love Him – perhaps, rather than punishment, He was preparing me to share my faith with my parents. Deep down, I was like, "Me?" Who am I? How am I capable?

Even then, I still had doubts; I clung to the little self-control I had left, not ready to let go and let God.

I started praying, repenting, and begging Lord Jesus to take me back and give me the wisdom to preach to my parents. I started doing morning devotionals and would send the passage to my parents. I joined Island ECC's grief support group and *Faithfulness* small group from Women's Ministry at The Village, where I met members who share similar experiences. I got a lot of spiritual support from the group, and I am very grateful!



(For those of you who are reading this – thank you!) Group members are praying for me and checking in on me; I know this is no coincidence. God let things happen to me, and He's also opened a door for my family. One day in December, I asked Mom, "Do you want to go to church with me?" To my surprise, she said yes. In January, my parents became believers, and they now have their own church community. Praise the Lord. It's a miracle that the whole family has come to Christ.

My mom has gone through 20 rounds of chemotherapy. There is physical pain, emotional swings and loss of appetite. The treatments have been torturous for her, and now that they are no longer working, we have to switch to alternative treatments. To this day, she's still fighting, and we are fighting with her; most importantly, Jesus is fighting for us. Jesus has walked with us every step of the way, and He has kept the door open. We have faith and peace in Christ; prayer has become our daily routine, asking God for direction, wisdom, and peace.

I STOPPED DOING THINGS MY WAY BUT LEANED ON GOD. LET GO AND LET GOD; HE ALWAYS HAS THE BEST PLAN FOR ME.

I keep praying and asking God for direction about baptism. This is the time. I wonder why I still haven't been baptised. After all those years, I have sinned and strayed, yet I was reborn in Christ, for He has pruned me, humbled me, removed my arrogance and replaced it with humility. Most importantly, He embraced my parents; they became believers just like that! I stopped doing things my way but leaned on God. Let go and let God; He always has the best plan for me.

Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Matthew 6:33

# GABRIEL TSANG

I was born and raised in a Christian family, attended a Christian primary school, and belonged to a church.

In my teenage years, I began questioning the Christian faith with doubts such as “Why is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil present in the first place?”, “Is the creation story fake?”, and “If God is real, why doesn’t He prevent all evil?”

These doubts led me into a rebellious, “edgy” atheist phase. After hearing about secular philosophy, I dismissed religion as a tool created by authorities to control the masses. My foundation at that time was weak, and I grew hostile towards God and Christianity.

The 2019 social movements intensified my resentment towards God. I struggled with the suffering and injustice I saw around me, and I reached an emotional low point.

Through my growing interest in global current affairs, I encountered Christian voices on YouTube who shared my convictions. Gradually, I became less hostile towards Christianity and began exploring its teachings.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, challenges surrounding my final year at university left me anxious about graduating. That’s when I remembered something my mother and I used to do: pray.

I began praying desperately, not expecting much. When my university moved courses online again during the fifth wave, I felt my prayers had been answered. The relief remains vivid. This marked a turning point, though I still did not fully understand Jesus’ character.



My mother invited me to Island ECC after a pastor visited her church. Hesitant at first, I visited in mid-2024. There, I discovered the Jesus I had misunderstood. I had seen Him as judgmental; He is full of grace and forgiveness. I thought He came to be praised; He came to serve. I believed He was too exalted to know suffering; yet He knows our pain because He experienced it Himself.

We all worship something, even if it’s not God. It could be our careers, our finances or modern ideology in academia. None of these pursuits provide lasting satisfaction, except for Christ.

God knows I cannot meet His perfect standard by my own efforts, so He sent His Son Jesus as a ransom for my sin. He offers salvation and does not demand perfection even after I receive Christ. He extends forgiveness to all who repent and believe. Anyone who trusts in Christ is saved. This love overwhelms me as a former adversary of God. (Christian apologetics has also answered many of my earlier questions!)

The parable of the prodigal son resonates deeply. Despite my rebellious years, God never abandoned me. When I sought Him in despair after years of neglect, He welcomed me with open arms, drawing me back through interests, politics, and family. I have now opened the door for Jesus to transform my heart.

I used to be easily agitated by political events beyond my control. With the peace God has given through Jesus, I can finally take to heart these words: “Be still, and know that [He is] God.” Psalm 46:10

Trust in His plan – big or small – and let Him cook, knowing He cares about both. God bless.

DESPITE MY REBELLIOUS YEARS, GOD NEVER ABANDONED ME. WHEN I SOUGHT HIM IN DESPAIR AFTER YEARS OF NEGLECT, HE WELCOMED ME WITH OPEN ARMS, DRAWING ME BACK THROUGH INTERESTS, POLITICS, AND FAMILY.

# GIRLIE TAN

Before I committed my life to Jesus, my relationship with God was inconsistent and surface-level. I was baptised as a Catholic when I was young, so I grew up aware of God, but I did not have a personal relationship with Him. Later, while working overseas, Catholic and Christian friends planted seeds of faith in my heart. I saw myself as happy-go-lucky and able to get by with or without God. He was not my priority, and I relied on my own strength when things went smoothly. Because I looked okay by the world's standards, I assumed casual faith was enough. I drifted through life under the illusion that I controlled my own destiny, unaware of how fragile that foundation truly was.

Over time, self-reliance took a toll on my spiritual life. I prayed less and drifted further from God. Then reality hit. A series of painful low points came one after another, affecting both my personal and professional life. My old mindset could no longer carry me. My strength felt empty, and I realised I couldn't bear the weight alone.

In that dark season, Psalm 46:10 became a lifeline: "Be still, and know that I am God." I had to stop fighting for control and learn to sit still in His presence. Realising that reaching out for help is a sign of true courage, not weakness, I began seeking support through different courses at Island ECC and beyond, including Alpha, and more recently, Woven and The Village ran by the Women's Ministry. At a retreat, the Holy Spirit gave me one clear word: surrender. The church's Romans series also broke heavy chains in my heart, reminding me that in Christ there is no condemnation. John 3:16 became deeply personal: God loved the world, and loved me, enough to give His only Son. I realised I had only been "technically" Christian, knowing about God without truly knowing Him. There, I surrendered control and accepted Jesus as my personal Saviour and Lord.



Since choosing to put Jesus in the driver's seat, God has transformed my mindset, priorities, and values step by step. God is now first in my life, followed by my family and loved ones. I want to lead my household by example, showing faith, hope, love, and constant prayer. I hope my children grow up rooted in a community where they know God's real love. We are still a work in progress, but I now genuinely look forward to church and want to immerse myself in God-centred activities.

INSTEAD OF ANXIOUSLY FIGHTING FOR CONTROL, I NOW PRAY FOR GOD'S WILL TO BE DONE. HE GIVES ME COURAGE TO ACCEPT WHAT I CANNOT CHANGE AND STRENGTH TO CHANGE WHAT I CAN WITHIN MYSELF.

My heart now desires to give back and pay it forward. I want to help others learn from my journey so that they may be protected from similar pain and mistakes. Looking back, I see how God began developing spiritual gifts in me – evangelism, faith, and encouragement. Today, I want to use them for His purpose. Matthew 7:7-11 reminds me to ask, seek and knock, trusting that my Heavenly Father delights in giving good things to His children. Instead of anxiously fighting for control, I now pray for God's will to be done. He gives me courage to accept what I cannot change and strength to change what I can within myself.

A beautiful moment of wisdom came through my daughter: without faith, each step feels heavier, but when you pray to God, each step becomes lighter. Those words touched my heart deeply as I prepared for this baptism milestone. Through community sessions and the book *The Purpose Driven Life*, I learned the beauty of simplifying life with God at the centre. He is reshaping my values and opening my eyes to my divine purpose while filling me with Shalom – His supernatural peace.

I am now inspired by God to become the best version of myself. My life feels like Kintsugi: God took my broken pieces and sealed them with His golden grace, making me stronger and more valuable than before. I know tests and trials will still come, but I am at peace because God is with me. I am still growing, learning healthy boundaries and balance, and asking the Holy Spirit for discernment. Today, I stand here to declare that Jesus is my Saviour, my rock and my everything. I hold firmly to Jeremiah 29:11, trusting that God has plans to give me hope and a future. I choose to follow Him through every single season ahead. All will be well in His Kingdom.

## JASMINE CHEUNG

I'm Jasmine. I come from a traditional Chinese family, but my dad put me in a Christian school, and that's how I first learned about Jesus. In primary school, I prayed to God whenever I forgot to bring my homework. Most of the time, I got away with it – the teacher didn't ask for the homework. This sounds small, but it is part of my childhood memory of God being with me.

After I left school, I became disconnected from God until more than ten years ago, when I was at a very low point in my life. I went to my dance lesson to relieve my stress because my dance teacher was also my mentor. I thought music and exercise would help me relieve my stress, but they didn't. After the dance lesson, I still felt helpless. Then God was really calling me. I asked my dance teacher, Giselle, "Where are you going next?" She gave me her sunflower smile and said, "I am going to church. Would you like to come?" I said, "Yes," and that "yes" became a turning point in my relationship with God.

Giselle brought me to Island ECC, and everyone stood up and started to sing. I realised that when I sang to Christ, I felt peace; I felt like I was talking to God, and I felt connected to God. Over the past ten years, I have seen several of my friends get baptised here, but I had not yet taken the big step to be baptised myself. I was afraid to put myself in front of the camera.

Two months ago, my mom was in hospital in critical condition. All I wanted was one more chance to speak to her and take her out for a nice lunch. Then I suddenly told Mom while she was in bed, "Mom, you have been baptised, but you haven't seen me get baptised."

Thanks be to God – He has always been with me. Today, I dare to speak in front of my mom, my family, and my friends, and to declare my faith in the Lord Jesus Christ publicly.

WHEN I SANG TO CHRIST, I FELT PEACE; I FELT LIKE I WAS TALKING TO GOD, AND I FELT CONNECTED TO GOD.



# JESSIE XU

Hi, I am Jessie. My journey with God has revealed His goodness, His plan and His unconditional love.

I was born and raised in Shanghai. From a young age, I was competitive and driven to be a high achiever. I always wanted to be in control and make my own plans. Before knowing God, my main driving force was fear – specifically, the fear of falling behind. That fear pushed me from Shanghai to New York, and from New York to Hong Kong.

In 2021, my colleagues introduced me to Jesus. In 2022, my hometown experienced lockdown, and my dad became critically ill. Being far away, I couldn't do anything on my own. All I could do was pray – by myself and with my church. My dad was very blessed to have survived. I accepted the Lord into my life. This was the first time I knew God is good.

But that was just the beginning of my relationship with God. I learned that God doesn't just give us good things; He actively guides our steps into new chapters.

In 2023, I experienced a setback in my career. At that time, God sent my friends like angels to remind me that He is my Shepherd, and He still has a plan for me.

Growing up, my parents taught me to be independent. Learning to rely on God was a completely new discipline for me. Remarkably, God gave me a new direction in just 50 days – when many of my peers were waiting six to twelve months. More importantly, He showed me that my life could be rich and abundant even without a big paycheck. He didn't want me just surviving in Hong Kong; He wanted me to rediscover joy.



Working in a big law firm paid well, but it consumed my entire life. God began showing me the amazing gifts He has for me outside of work.

One lesson was to "waste" time on the beautiful things He created for us. One day, walking through Tamar Park, I saw helpers playing music and having picnics under the shade. Spontaneously, I decided to lie down under a tree with them. As a gentle breeze blew across my face, I realised how much of God's beautiful world I had been missing because I was always running.

I FELT HIM WHISPER IN MY HEART, "YOU'RE TRYING SO HARD, MY CHILD... BUT I JUST WANT YOU TO FIND YOUR JOY AGAIN."

Another lesson was that I don't always have to win. I've always been terrible at sports (it took me two months to learn how to ride a bike!). Yet, after five years, I decided to take up Jiu-Jitsu again – even though I was the most awkward person in the class. I realised how foolish it was to believe I had to win at everything.

I would have missed these lessons if I hadn't put my ego down and listened to God. I felt Him whisper in my heart, "You're trying so hard, My child... but I just want you to find your joy again."

God was also teaching me about His unconditional love. This year, I volunteered with the Marvel ministry at church. I've never known how to interact with kids, and my assigned buddy was a lively little boy who lives in his own world. While other kids did crafts, he'd run out to jump on the trampoline or read books. Yet, surprisingly, I never felt annoyed. I just stood nearby, watching over him to make sure he was safe.

In that moment, God gave me a powerful perspective: This is how God looks at us. We are all adults with "special needs". We are stubborn, silly, desperate for things and constantly losing our tempers. Yet, God looks at us with gentle, loving eyes, protecting us under His wings.

Through all these experiences, one passage from Romans has encouraged me deeply: "Suffering produces endurance; endurance produces character; and character produces hope." Romans 5:3-4

## JOANNE SUNG

I was born into a Christian family, and I grew up attending church regularly with my family on Sundays. But as my studies became more time-consuming in high school, I gradually drifted away from church life.

I've always struggled with feeling like I had to prove myself to be lovable. I also liked being in control. During high school and university, I often blamed God when things didn't go the way I thought they should. The pressure I put on myself to do well brought me so much stress that I would often break down, and there were times when I felt like I was on the verge of depression.

But God never gave up on me.

Even when I held a lot of anger and bitterness towards Him, He continued to place angels in my life in the form of friends and family to support me. Through them, and through the different circumstances He brought me through, He kept reminding me that I am loved – not because of what I achieve or what I can do, but simply because I am His.

Looking back, many of the detours I thought God was taking me on were actually blessings. It was in the valleys, in the moments when I felt most alone and when I couldn't understand why things were happening, that I grew closer to Him. I learned that I don't always have to understand God's plan to trust Him.



HE KEPT REMINDING ME THAT I AM LOVED – NOT BECAUSE OF WHAT I ACHIEVE OR WHAT I CAN DO, BUT SIMPLY BECAUSE I AM HIS.

For so much of my life, I thought I had to prove myself and be in control. But God has slowly been teaching me that I am already loved, and that I can surrender my plans and trust Him with my life.

That is why I want to be baptised today. I want to publicly declare that I belong to Jesus Christ, and that He is my Lord and Saviour. I know that my journey of faith is not over, but today I want to take this step of faith and commit my life to following Him.

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# KAREN CHAN

I come from a family business background. For more than 20 years, I have been managing different lines of business for our family. My husband and I work side by side in the family business, and I also have a teenage son. Balancing family responsibilities, marriage, parenting, and the many demands of running a business has been a long and challenging journey.

I was first baptised as a Catholic at 16. The seed of faith was already planted deep in my heart. However, I gradually drifted away, and my relationship with my loved ones was affected along the way.

During those years before I truly came to know the Lord, I relied only on my own strength to handle all the pressures of work and daily life. I had many worries at work, and I struggled to manage my emotions. I also held very high expectations of both myself and the people around me. I carried heavy responsibilities on my own, trying to manage every difficulty and make every decision by myself.

It wasn't until I was led to this church that I encountered something truly wonderful – I could feel God's presence deeply. Ever since I started attending Island ECC, it has felt just like coming home. Every time I listen to the sermons at Island ECC, the Holy Spirit fills me, and His presence deeply moves me.

I am so grateful to have drawn close to the Lord once again. My thanks go to Noel Chu, Carman Kwan, and Carmen Ho, who helped me come to know the Lord Jesus Christ and walk with Him throughout my life's journey.



After coming to know God, I have learned to surrender, pray and trust in Him. Gradually, I began to accept everything God has arranged and understand that every season in life is part of His good will. The Lord always has His perfect plan. I can lay down my burdens and anxieties before the Lord and receive His peace.

I thank God for everything He has arranged for me, including every opportunity and blessing in my career. I am grateful that God has used me and guided me through the process of starting a new fashion business. Through this journey, I have fully experienced Almighty God's protection, care and sovereignty, and learned to trust in Him in all situations.

As Scripture says in Matthew 5:16: "In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." This verse is a gentle but powerful reminder that faith is not only about receiving God's blessings, but also about letting His light shine through my life, my family, my work, and every relationship He has placed in my hands.

FAITH IS NOT ONLY ABOUT RECEIVING GOD'S BLESSINGS, BUT ALSO ABOUT LETTING HIS LIGHT SHINE THROUGH MY LIFE, MY FAMILY, MY WORK, AND EVERY RELATIONSHIP HE HAS PLACED IN MY HANDS.

I long to draw even closer to the Lord and become a servant of Christ. I truly love the worship at Island ECC, and I hope to share the blessings I have received with the people around me. Today, I am reaffirming my faith as a Christian through this baptism, and I thank everyone for witnessing this special moment with me.

# WINNIE WONG

Growing up in Hong Kong, I was raised in a Buddhist family. My father was deeply devoted to his faith, and every day I watched him perform his rituals.

But when I grew older, I never felt a strong connection to this religion. Instead, I believed my own strength and ability were enough to handle whatever life brought my way. I liked being in control of my life and my future.

Then, two years ago, my world began to fall apart.

A series of unexpected challenges hit me all at once, both at work and in my personal life. I was overwhelmed and was constantly battling self-doubt. I was trying to manage the demands of my job while facing the difficult decision of changing my son's school. At the same time, my mother was diagnosed with a serious illness.

Since my father had passed away more than a decade before my son was even born, and I was the only child in the family, I had to carry this burden all by myself, as there was no one else to share it.

Watching my mom endure surgery, medical treatments, and emotional struggles made me feel completely helpless. I had always seen myself as a tough person who could solve problems and stay in control. But during that season of life, I felt trapped. I was worried, exhausted, depressed, and lost. It felt like I was walking through a long, dark tunnel with no end in sight and no light ahead.



Amid frustration and uncertainty, my colleague Lydia invited me to Island ECC. She introduced me to the Women's Ministry gatherings at The Village, accompanied me to the Alpha programme, and encouraged me to attend Sunday services. Another Christian brother, Dan, took time to counsel me, and he taught me how to pray.

I began praying every single day, talking to God just as I would talk to a close friend. In those quiet moments, I asked for God's guidance and let out my tears, fear, and emotions. Each time I prayed, I felt peaceful, and it recharged me.

Gradually, things began to change.

My son transferred to a new school, even though it wasn't during a normal school admission year. At his new school, he met wonderful friends and even joined the sports team that he loves.

My mother's treatments were successful, and today, she only needs routine monthly check-ups.

Most importantly, I was changed.

I have returned to being an optimistic and confident person, but I know this transformation did not come from my own strength. It came from surrendering my life to God. He heard my prayers; He met me in my brokenness. Through those difficult circumstances, God healed me, shaped me, and transformed me. I am truly thankful to God for carrying me through one of the most challenging seasons of my life.

After I became a Christian, I found something I never expected: a caring community of brothers and sisters in Christ who encourage, support, and walk alongside me in faith.

TODAY, I NO LONGER FEEL THE NEED TO CONTROL EVERYTHING. EVERY DAY, I SEEK GOD'S GUIDANCE, TRUSTING THAT HE CONTROLS MY PATH AND MY FUTURE.

Today, I no longer feel the need to control everything. Every day, I seek God's guidance, trusting that He controls my path and my future. Because of His grace, I am no longer afraid of life's uncertainties, including health challenges, work pressures and relationship struggles.

I have found strength, peace, and purpose that I could never have achieved on my own. Most importantly, I am deeply grateful for His love, the life I have today and the family, friends, and community He has blessed me with.

I am very happy to share His goodness and faithfulness with those around me. I hope that through my words and actions, others can see the hope and peace found only in Him.

# VICKY CHOW

I was blessed to be born into a Christian family, grow up in a local church, and attend Christian schools, surrounded by a faith-filled environment. I can't recall exactly when I started calling myself a Christian, or the specific moment I took this faith personally and accepted Christ as my own Saviour.

As a child, I used to see Christianity as a school subject with grades and standard answers. I first began to wonder who God really was when I saw the brothers and sisters in my church praying for their lives and ministries. I was amazed by the peace and joy they showed while facing the ups and downs of life. From them, I learned how faithful and powerful God is, and that God listens and is willing to protect His people. I started to surrender my anxiety, difficulties, happiness, and sadness to God. Whenever I feel that unexplainable peace and comfort during prayer, I know this God is real. When we hand our lives over to God, He will work with us and carry us through.

During seasons of intense study and work, the workload, pressure to be perfect, and feelings of helplessness and loneliness became overwhelming. Some days, I want to lock myself away. In those moments of breaking down, God reminds me to return to Him. He renews my strength by speaking to me through the Bible and through other Christians. "I love you; you are My precious daughter, no matter what you do or how you perform." This unfading love and power have become an important anchor in my life. I know that even if I cannot see Him physically, God is with me. Jesus is the one who loves me most and gave His life for my sins. This promise is not only for me, but for anyone who believes in Him.



Growing up, I heard many powerful testimonies involving near-death experiences or miracles. I always wondered, What about my magical pivoting moment? This held me back from being baptised for years. But now I realise that what I have experienced is already more than enough.

There were times when I didn't know the way forward or felt lost, like when I was choosing my university major, narrowly escaping a phone scam, doubting myself during my internship, standing alone in an unfamiliar place not knowing where to go next, or just missing my umbrella. Looking back, whether in those difficult times or in moments when I was enjoying the beauty of this world and finding a church community to walk this faith journey with, I see His hand. These experiences might not have a "wow" factor, but they are all part of my faith journey and build up my relationship with God.

Every one of these small moments has steadily strengthened my faith. I am certain that God's plans are higher than mine and that He is a God of great power. This makes me want to devote more time and my whole heart to knowing Him better, the One who loves me, protects me and died for a sinner like me. The One who welcomes me the moment I turn and repent. I couldn't tell when or how exactly He changed me, but gradually I chose to root my faith in Him and surrender my life to Him.

EVERY ONE OF THESE SMALL MOMENTS HAS STEADILY STRENGTHENED MY FAITH. I AM CERTAIN THAT GOD'S PLANS ARE HIGHER THAN MINE AND THAT HE IS A GOD OF GREAT POWER.

"Why do I believe in God?" has never been an easy question for me. I think it is because this God has taught me to love others and accept myself. He has shown me that He will never give up on me. He is the Creator, the Saviour, and the loving Heavenly Father who never leaves us nor forsakes us, who brings joy and freedom into our lives.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16

Special thanks to my family, friends, and care group who have witnessed my faith journey and walked with me through all its ups and downs. Thank you also for your encouragement and for all the times we have shared and talked about faith together. I am so blessed to share this journey with each of you.

9 BAPTISM • HONG KONG

# TOMMY MA

I was raised in a traditional Chinese family without a religious background. Although we lived together and were physically close, our relationships were often emotionally distant. My family cared for me and supported me financially, but we did not spend much intentional time together or openly share our feelings. As a result, I gradually became used to keeping my thoughts to myself. I knew my family loved me in their own way, but I often didn't feel it, and it affected how I expressed and received love.

I also had no personal belief in God. My life followed a repetitive pattern of work and home. I worked hard, fulfilled my responsibilities and tried to plan for the future, but I lacked a clear sense of meaning or direction. I sometimes wondered what life was really about, why I was never fully content and whether there was a purpose beyond my life as it was.

During this period, I met my girlfriend, who is a Christian. Through our relationship, I began to encounter Christianity in a personal and meaningful way. At first, I was curious about what she believed and why her faith was important to her. I saw that Christianity was not simply a set of rules or traditions, but shaped how she understood values and the importance of love and communication. I was particularly attracted to the values she lived by and to the strength of her mind. She had a clear sense of right and wrong, yet she was also compassionate, willing to forgive and open to admitting when she was wrong. Her faith gave her a peace and contentment that I had never experienced. Because of this, I began to ask questions about Christianity and to learn more about Jesus. I wanted to understand whether the Christian faith could provide the meaning and guidance I had been searching for.



My faith did not appear all at once. It developed gradually through conversations with different Christians, reflection, and learning about Jesus. I found that the Bible was not just something that appears in the captions of people's Instagram posts or is used to judge others, but an account of history, teachings about life, poetry, and more. I accepted that God came to save us, despite our limitations, and not because of merit or social standing. I could work hard and appear responsible, but my identity is not based solely on my achievements, job, or material security.

MY LIFE HAS PURPOSE BECAUSE GOD KNOWS IT AND GUIDES IT. I AM STILL GROWING IN FAITH, BUT I KNOW THAT I DO NOT HAVE TO WALK THROUGH LIFE ALONE.

I still experience moments of doubt, and my faith does not magically make life easy. However, trusting in Him has changed the way I see myself and the people around me. God's presence is not limited to church on Sundays; it is also present in ordinary moments at work, through the people around me who challenge my thinking, and in times of uncertainty. He teaches me to see the beauty around me, whereas before, it was too easy for me to see the ugliness or the negative in the world. My faith has also helped me communicate with greater openness and seek reconciliation, rather than avoiding confrontation or difficult conversations out of convenience. He also reminds me that life is more than a repeated cycle of work and home. My life has purpose because God knows it and guides it. I am still growing in faith, but I know that I do not have to walk through life alone. God is the way and the truth, and I trust Him to continue shaping my life.

# REKA WIDYA OKAVIA

I grew up as a Muslim. My grandma raised me to love Allah. I prayed five times a day and fasted during Ramadan. At age 12, I became a victim of human trafficking by my own aunt.

At age 19, life led me in the wrong direction. I joined a satanic community in Australia. At that moment, I didn't know anything about Jesus. Before my last ritual, I had the same dream two nights in a row. I saw a cross full of light, and because of that dream, I started questioning my decision. I never knew about Jesus, but as for the cross, I knew it was a Christian symbol. I started to Google that dream and found articles talking about a sign from God; I felt it was nonsense. Why did Jesus save me? I was just an empty soul who only cared about money and a better life. Still, He saved me from the darkness of life.

I told my friend, who introduced me to the satanic community, about my dream, and I told him I had changed my mind; I didn't want to continue the ritual anymore.

I was so scared to tell him because leaving this group could mean death, but I did it anyway. It was a miracle that my friend didn't say anything; he just drove me to the airport. He returned my passport and gave me a one-way ticket to Indonesia. All I had with me was what I was wearing, my passport, ticket and phone, and that's how I got back to Indonesia.

After arriving back in Indonesia, I started getting nosebleeds daily, and when I had a check-up, the doctor said I had cancer. I was alone in the hospital, struggling and worried I might die soon. I was still young, and there were a lot of things I wanted to achieve. I was so down and sad. Why me? Why did I have cancer right after I started searching for Jesus?



I told my best friend about my struggles. Her response was, "Maybe it's punishment from Allah because you believe in Jesus Christ." I didn't know how to respond to her, but I told her about my dreams that clearly showed a cross, not other religions' symbols. The dreams led me to learn more about Christ, and I began to believe in Jesus. I started to look for a church, but it was not easy as I lived in a majority-Muslim country and feared judgement from people.

TO ME, FAITH ALSO MEANS, IN SOME WAY, ACKNOWLEDGING THAT GOD FIGHTS FOR ME WHEN I CAN'T FIGHT FOR MYSELF. HE GAVE MY HEART STRENGTH AND COMFORT.

In 2025, life dealt me another blow. I developed feelings for someone I believed felt the same way. I helped him financially, only to discover that he was involved with another woman and had been taking advantage of me. He was a future pastor, and I questioned how someone serving God could hurt me this way. I felt deceived, worthless and humiliated. Yet I also acknowledged my own faults, confessed my sins and remained determined to believe in Jesus as my God!

In March 2026, I started attending church services again. Within three weeks, I attended a service at Island ECC where the pastor spoke about forgiveness. Later, when I attended a service at the Indonesian Ministry, the topic was also forgiveness. I felt how God renewed my faith as I listened to those sermons.

In June 2026, I began to build a more serious relationship with the Lord Jesus. I tried to attend services during my time off, and I joined Bible studies with Ms. Riani. I also continued to cultivate my personal relationship with God through prayer, reading the Bible, and meditating on His Word.

I slowly began to get back on my feet. Despite facing life's ups and downs, I continued to rely on Jesus, and I slowly started to forgive the person who had hurt me deeply. To me, faith also means, in some way, acknowledging that God fights for me when I can't fight for myself. He gave my heart strength and comfort.

7 BAPTISM • HONG KONG

# MELISSA RURA-TJIOE

The Bible was probably one of the first books I read, and I remember it being my favourite bedtime reading. Morning prayer was the main highlight of my day throughout my childhood, and I would get on my knees to pray every morning before school.

Life turned sideways when I was sent to a girls-only Catholic school, I was bullied, and I felt so alone. As I got pushed further and further into the corner by my peers, I questioned God more and more. I refused to take my first communion as I didn't feel God's presence in my life. I blamed God for all the torture I received from my peers.

It led me into depression, and I started seeing a therapist, which my parents labelled as bringing shame to the family. I had a couple of self-harm episodes throughout university, which led me to try to find my purpose in life. I tried different kinds of healing workshops and methods just to fix what was broken inside me while trying to find the purpose of my existence. Eventually, it led me into shamanic practice, but my life felt so empty and dark, without any purpose.

I hit the lowest point of my life when I witnessed a good friend's mom pass away in early 2024. I just felt so sad and empty inside. My birthday and her funeral happened to be on the same day too. My life spiralled down from that point onwards, and I tried to end my life twice, though somehow neither attempt succeeded.



One day, an Instagram ad for a Christian brunch popped up on my feed. I kept brushing it away, but it kept coming back, somehow even more frequently than ever, so I finally decided to sign up. I was skeptical at first, as it was hosted in Wan Chai, and I almost bailed at the last minute, but something inside me pushed me to get ready that morning.

It was a painful journey to the brunch place, but somehow, I made it there and was seated next to a lady who shared her faith journey and invited me to The Village, Island ECC's Women's Ministry. I was even more skeptical; I mean, what sort of ladies hang out within a community called The Village? It took three attempts from her before I said yes, and even then, my steps felt so hard.

I then had an orientation session with Kwen, where she introduced The Village and explained what it was all about and asked us to introduce ourselves. I was still skeptical, perhaps just because of my arrogance, but upon finishing my introduction, Kwen said, "Welcome home." In that moment, I broke into tears, and somehow my shoulders felt so light.

That moment shaped me. As I frequented The Village, my shoulders felt lighter. It also led me to a prayer course Journey of the Heart, where I felt God's presence increasingly in my life. I learned to acknowledge my roots as well as my fruits, and it inspired me to get re-baptised, though I also struggled a lot internally throughout this baptism course and while writing this very testimony.

Recalling past wounds and sins, doubt came back, and I started questioning myself. I shared this struggle with my mom, and she quoted Ecclesiastes 3:11: "He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end."

WHEN I LEAVE ALL MY WORRIES AND HURDLES AT THE CROSS, I FEEL LIGHTER AND LIGHTER, AND I TRULY DON'T WANT ANYTHING ELSE BUT GOD'S PRESENCE IN MY LIFE.

Yes, it had been a long journey home, and yes, I am tired mentally and physically, but when I leave all my worries and hurdles at the Cross, I feel lighter and lighter, and I truly don't want anything else but God's presence in my life.

I wouldn't be here now without the presence of the Holy Spirit; therefore, I would like to publicly announce my decision to follow God from this point onwards.

# MAX WONG

Growing up in Hong Kong, my family practised Buddhist and Taoist traditions. I never connected with the practices, and they felt odd to me. I was always interested in religious studies, and as a child, I read a lot about different religions and God-like figures. I studied medieval history at school, and it always puzzled me how people could interpret God's will in completely different ways. I had too many questions and no answers at the time.

Throughout my younger years, I carried a lot of bitterness and anger in my heart. I was like a grumpy older man in my 20s. As a form of escapism, I turned to behaviours such as overindulgence in drinking and eating, materialism, and always looking for a good time. On the surface, things looked great. Spiritually, I was starved.

In the past few years, life got particularly hard. I had lost my self-motivation and my sense of self. I was burnt out, and I felt emotionally and physically exhausted. Although my family and friends were always supportive of me, I still felt very lost and isolated.

My first interaction with the church was at 16, when my Christian friend brought me to a summer programme at a local church. I couldn't understand what was going on then, but the seed was planted.

A series of events led me to believe God had a strong hand in guiding me to Jesus and faith. These included an incidental meeting with a pastor, a meal with friends that led to a deep conversation about faith, and an old friend encouraging my wife and me to attend church. I knew it was God's way of leading me to Him.



I was blessed to have met my wife and her family, who are devoted Christians. They willingly spread the Word and teachings of God and Jesus. Over time, as I learned more about God and the Bible, I believed more in Jesus and the values He taught.

SINGING IN WORSHIP TO GOD AND LISTENING TO JESUS' TEACHING FELT LIKE A BRIGHT LIGHT BREAKING THROUGH THE FOG FOR ME. EXPERIENCING THE LOVE AND WARMTH OF THE COMMUNITY WAS GOD'S WAY OF GUIDING ME TOWARDS HIM.

Sometime during 2025, my sister-in-law was baptised at Island ECC. While I had attended the church before, I had never come regularly. Listening to the pastors' sermons, I felt a connection with God and the church. Singing in worship to God and listening to Jesus' teaching felt like a bright light breaking through the fog for me. Experiencing the love and warmth of the community was God's way of guiding me towards Him. We started attending regularly as a family and embraced His guidance.

Praying to Him and accepting God's will, I can let go of all worries and my false sense of control. I can embrace and know God's love despite my imperfections. Now, even though life continues to be hard, I thank God for giving me the strength to do hard things.

By being baptised, I want to publicly proclaim that I believe in Christ and God. I plan to continue to grow spiritually with His guidance.

5 BAPTISM • HONG KONG

# JACQUELINE CHAN

I was raised in a Christian household, attended a Catholic school, and learned Bible stories from a young age. Yet, in my early twenties, I began to drift away. Like many young graduates, I was distracted and consumed with "finding myself" and building a career. Though I still identified as a Christian, I stopped attending church and abandoned Scripture.

In my late twenties, I married and had two children. After my eldest son was born, I became drawn to Chinese astrology and feng shui, which eventually became the compass guiding my decisions. I wrongly rationalised these practices as mere statistics, falsely believing that if God gave us wisdom, He must have intended for us to use it. I continued down this path until my mother and my sister, who was baptised in this very church seven years ago, patiently intervened. On separate occasions, they explained the spiritual origins of these practices and how they pull us away from God, as they are rooted in false gods.

The first unmistakable nudge came when my younger daughter was born three weeks early, on Christmas Eve. It felt like God's work, calling me back to faith. Over the next three years, these signs only grew more apparent. One instance was particularly memorable: my family was at a quiet restaurant when my distracted four-year-old son wandered over to another table. I went over to apologise to the couple, who graciously told us not to worry and mentioned they had raised four adult children here in Hong Kong. Through my line of work, I realised I was actually talking to Pastor Brett! On that occasion, he gently told us not to be "CEOs" (Christmas and Easter Only) and reminded us to come to church.



The signs kept coming. That same month, I unexpectedly bumped into an old friend after nine years, who invited me to join ITC, not realising it was a Christian workout group. Shortly after, I sat beside churchgoers from Island ECC at a friend's birthday dinner.

At home, God was also working through my children. When my son turned four, he began waking me in the middle of the night to pray for his nightmares. It was a testament to my mother and helper's faithfulness in reading him Bible stories, yet a convicting reminder of my own spiritual neglect. At night, we started singing to our children, and to my surprise, their favourite lullabies became *The Lord's Prayer* and *The Lord Bless You and Keep You*. These songs give them so much comfort, and I can only credit the Holy Spirit for calming them down before bed.

The pivotal moment finally arrived during a family holiday to Canada. A long-time university friend asked if we intended to raise our children as Christians. I answered without hesitation, "Yes." When he asked if we took them to church, I deflected, pointing to my non-Christian husband as a convenient excuse. To my surprise, my husband looked me squarely in the eye and said, "If you want to raise them as Christians, you must walk the talk." Convicted and humbled, I had no comeback. As soon as we returned to Hong Kong after the summer holiday, we started attending Island ECC. More importantly, both my husband and I are getting baptised today.

MY MOTHER AND MY SISTER, PRAYED EARNESTLY NOT ONLY FOR MY FAITH BUT ALSO FOR THE FAITH OF MY HUSBAND AND CHILDREN, SHIELDING US FROM SPIRITUAL ATTACKS AND GENTLY GUIDING ME BACK TO CHRIST.

Over these 15 months back in the faith, I have been deeply grateful for the supportive parents at my children's school. Many of them have been remarkably encouraging throughout my faith journey.

Finally, I want to thank my mother and my sister, who have prayed earnestly not only for my faith but also for the faith of my husband and children, shielding us from spiritual attacks and gently guiding me back to Christ. I am fortunate to have friends who continually encourage us, and I am thankful for every person who has played a part in my return to faith.

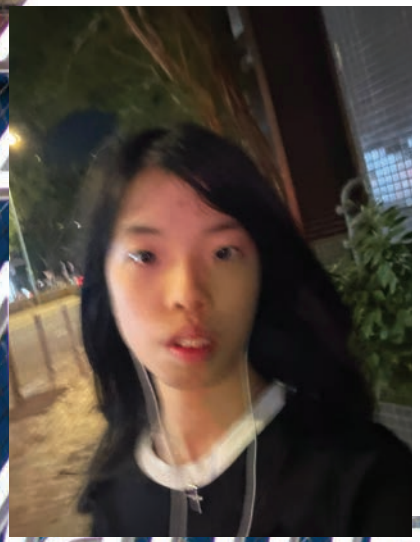
## CORINNE NG

My earliest memory is being at church when I was three years old.

In that memory, I'm sitting on a child-sized chair, and my Sunday school teacher leads us in a children's worship song about the fruit of the Spirit. I felt warmth and joy in His presence in Sunday school. This memory is frayed at the edges now, like a well-loved blanket, but I hold it close to my heart. I knew that God loved me, even when I was three years old.

My parents stopped going to church when I was 13. They were having marital struggles, and it looked like they had lost faith in God. When their faith dimmed, so did mine. My faith in God relied on my parents' faith, not on my own relationship with Him. I still remembered the joy God brought me as a small child, but I doubted I could experience it again. I strayed from God in my mid-teens and experienced a few years during which my mental health declined significantly. I didn't feel like my life had meaning. I felt like a mistake and a burden.

When I was 17, I had an online friend who was a Christian. My friend would listen as I ranted about almost anything. We were just two teenagers, each with our own struggles, chatting online and playing video games together. One night, he mentioned that he had found his faith in God again. In the months that followed, I saw my friend's life improve. Through the texts and photos he sent me, I saw him become happier and healthier; I saw his spark come back to life. Looking at how his life changed, I wondered if I could have that too.



John 9:3 reads: Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him."

I KNOW THAT I AM FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE, MADE IN GOD'S IMAGE. I KNOW THAT I AM NOT A MISTAKE; RATHER, I AM A VESSEL FOR GOD'S WORKS TO BE DISPLAYED IN ME.

I was born with a neurodevelopmental disability. The way I was treated and talked about made me feel like I was a mistake and a burden. Every pitiful look, every time I was cast out by my peers at school, every time my parents wished I was normal, it all made me question my worth. Now, I know that I am fearfully and wonderfully made, made in God's image. I know that I am not a mistake; rather, I am a vessel for God's works to be displayed in me.

God has changed my life for the better, and He is still working His miracles in my life. In the near future, I'm stepping into a new season of life, as I'll be studying abroad in Australia. It might be a time full of uncertainty and questions, but I choose to trust God.

Today, I publicly declare my faith.

3 BAPTISM • HONG KONG

# CAROLINE YUNG

I grew up in a Christian home and attended Christian schools, and I have been a Christian all my life. I was taught Bible stories, knew right from wrong, and never doubted God's existence. When I went overseas for boarding school, away from my family, I felt God's protection. Back then, I tried to be a good person, and I thought that was enough.

As I grew older and more independent, I subtly drifted away from God. Even though I still attended church regularly, I lived as though I could handle life in my own strength and remain in control. I grew anxious and angry whenever things didn't go according to plan. I treated God like a backup plan – someone to call on only when I had requests or when my own efforts failed. I didn't realise that living this way wasn't true obedience.

Because I hadn't experienced a dramatic turning point in my life and believed I hadn't committed any "terrible" sins, I didn't feel an urgent need to repent or be baptised. I viewed baptism like a graduation ceremony – something I would do only after I understood the whole Bible and lived a "perfect" Christian life. I felt I had to prove my worth to God and others before I was qualified. But instead of drawing me closer to God, this mindset fostered self-righteousness, and I kept finding excuses to delay fully committing to Christ.



Four years ago, I became pregnant with my son. From conception through pregnancy and birth, and as I watched my son grow, my heart was filled with awe at God's creation. I saw His hand protecting our family through pregnancy hiccups and health issues with my son. I began experiencing God's love and a deep joy that remained regardless of my circumstances.

TRUSTING GOD HASN'T REMOVED ALL OF LIFE'S CHALLENGES, BUT I NO LONGER CARRY THAT SUFFOCATING ANXIETY. I HAVE A LASTING PEACE KNOWING THAT GOD IS FAR GREATER THAN ANY TROUBLE I FACE.

I realised that the greatest gift I could ever give my son was for him to know and accept Jesus Christ, and I wanted to model what it truly means to follow Him. Last year, I felt encouraged to join a Bible study group. The Holy Spirit opened my eyes, and I saw God's heart more clearly. I recognised my own self-reliance and disobedience. I became deeply aware of my sins and my constant need for repentance. I was overwhelmed by God's unconditional love. John 14:21 resonated deeply in my heart: "Whoever has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him." I realised that obedience isn't about earning God's approval – it is my loving response to what He has already done for me.

The Holy Spirit convicted me that it was time to stop procrastinating and publicly declare my faith through baptism. God has been so patient and faithful to me, even when I tried to run life on my own terms. I am now ready to surrender my desire for control, put to death my old self, and step into a new life lived entirely for Christ and with Christ.

Trusting God hasn't removed all of life's challenges, but I no longer carry that suffocating anxiety. I have a lasting peace knowing that God is far greater than any trouble I face, and that this earthly life is temporary. Moving forward, I want to put God at the centre of everything, submit to His will daily, live as His faithful servant, and point others to His glory.

## CARMAN WONG

Throughout my childhood, I attended a Christian school and felt an invisible bond with God, who was a source of comfort and support. I saw God as a warm, fatherly figure – someone who uplifted me and silently supported me in times of need. My mother, a devoted Christian, always took me to church on Sundays. I enjoyed participating in Christmas nativity plays and listening to all the miraculous Bible stories. These moments created many happy memories, and church truly felt like home then.

However, as I grew older, I drifted away from my faith. I began to question and doubt God's goodness, especially when I didn't receive what I wanted. I felt that God was unfair. If He truly was a good Father, why wouldn't He grant my requests? I saw what I was asking for as simple blessings that He easily lavished on His other children. Among my doubts, the idea that God tests us was the hardest to accept. I struggled to understand why a loving Father would use challenging seasons or circumstances to test His children, as if these were cruel games we had to pass to prove our obedience. To me, testing someone implies a lack of trust, so I couldn't reconcile how a loving God would test us, as it seemed to suggest a lack of trust on His part.

This disbelief gradually intensified, and by 2020, it reached a breaking point. During a difficult season, my faith began to crumble. That's when I decided to attend the 10-week Alpha course. Although I was initially skeptical, God softened my heart, and my perspective began to shift. I came to realise that God's presence may not always be tangible, but He is faithful and continues to work behind the scenes, even in slow seasons when we see no visible progress. Although He may not have granted all my desires on my timeline, I'm starting to understand that He is a good Father who knows what is best for us and withholds no good thing.



The tests I once perceived as God's cruelty were, in fact, opportunities He gave us to trust Him more deeply. When God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac, He was testing and revealing Abraham's faith and trust in Him. Through this test, Abraham experienced God's loving provision, even at the last moment. God's tests can reveal His faithfulness and shape our character, as Abraham's story reminds us. If we base our understanding of God solely on the process, circumstances, or isolated seasons, we risk drawing the wrong conclusions and failing to see God's true nature – one that is inherently good. His goodness and love remain constant – yesterday, today, and forever.

I HAVE DECIDED TO PLACE MY TRUST IN THE ONE TRUE GOD – WHOM I KNOW I CAN TRUST WITH ALL MY HEART.

During this transformative journey, I continued to explore my faith through the Grow Discipleship Course and Woven, ran by Women's Ministry, gradually discovering the anchor of my life. As Hebrews 6:19 says, "We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure." When we accept Jesus Christ as our Saviour, we are blessed with the gift of eternal life and given a security that no storm can shake. All we need to do is trust God every step of the way, even when the circumstances don't align with our feelings.

The reason I choose to declare my faith now is not because my faith has become flawless or perfect, but because I have decided to place my trust in the one true God – whom I know I can trust with all my heart. Faith matures when we move from having faith in an outcome to trusting in the object of our faith – God Himself. Through baptism, I want to publicly declare my faith in Christ Jesus and affirm my lifelong devotion to Him.

I BAPTISM • HONG KONG

# ALICE MARSCHANG

I did not grow up in a Christian family. While I grew up in Hong Kong, both my parents moved to the United States from Mainland China a few years before I was born and had no concept of Christianity or Christ. I first learned about God through my helper, Cora, in primary school. She is from the Philippines and was raised Catholic. Scared of the dark, I would ask Cora to stay with me until I fell asleep. During those anxious nights, she first taught me to pray, ask God to bless my family before bed, and thank Him for all the things I was grateful for. I remember requesting a Bible for my birthday one year to learn the Lord's Prayer, and my parents laughing at how "cute" it was.

Christ first officially came into my life around 2004. My father had just left our family home, but I still held on to hope that he would come back. That was when I prayed, day and night, for him to come back – I tried to bargain with God, promising that I would be good and not sin if only he would return. This was also when my mom learned about Island ECC, and we (my mom, brother, sister, and I) started attending Sunday services for the sermons. My parents' separation ended in divorce, and I was crushed. As my mom and brother's faith grew in Christ and they chose to get baptised at Island ECC, my faith diminished. At this time, I was a young teenager – confused, alone and depressed. I felt like the one thing I consistently asked God for wasn't granted. I felt like He wasn't listening. However, I continued going to church, was supportive of my mom and brother's faith, and proudly attended their baptism ceremonies, but I wasn't ready to join them.



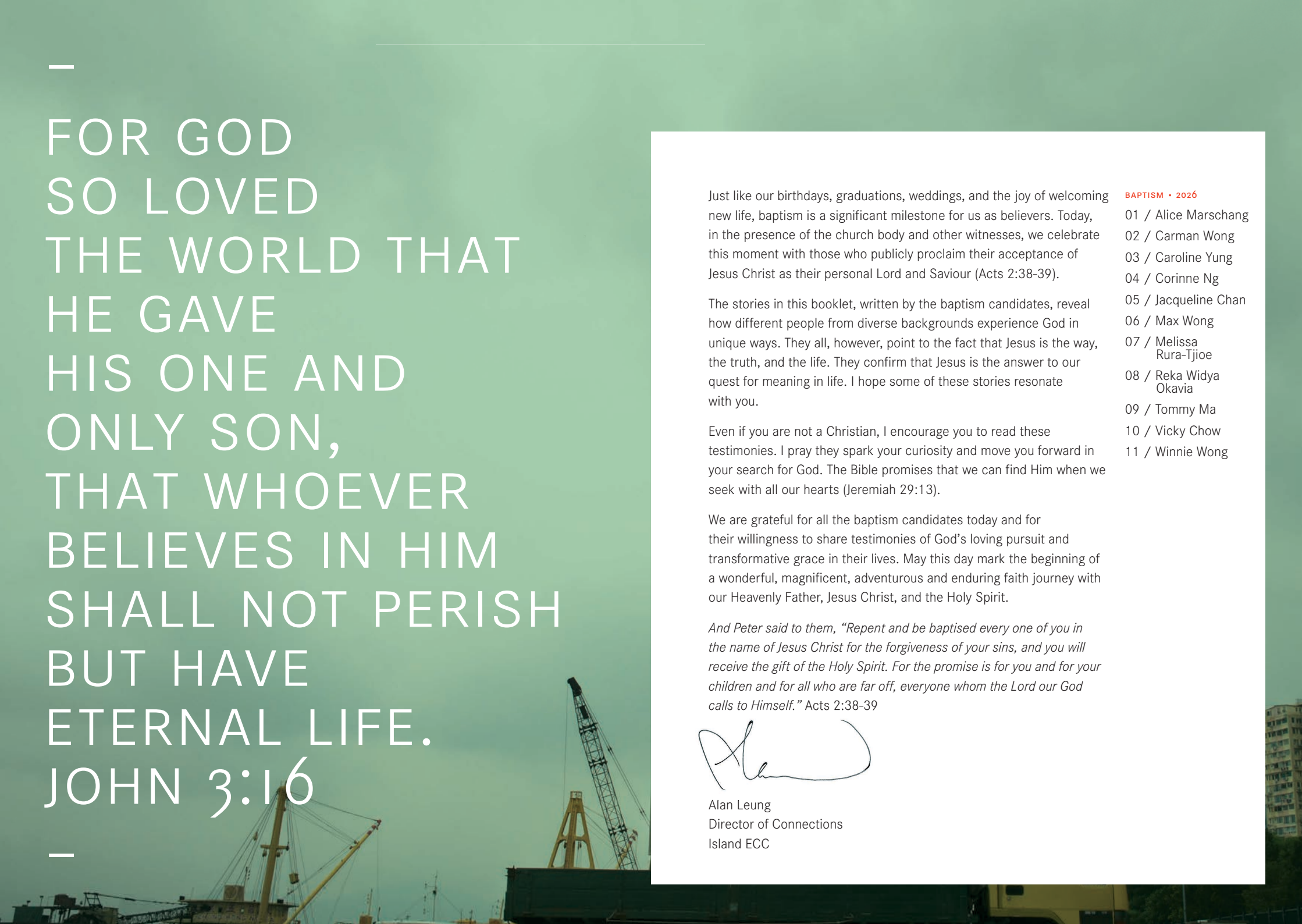
There was never a definitive period when I walked away from Christ – I still prayed every single night, joined Christian support groups at university and during my career in New York, and still felt His Spirit by my side in many ways – but I was hurt and ashamed. My heart wasn't open to repenting and giving myself to Jesus Christ.

## HE HAS BEEN WITH ME ALL ALONG.

I moved back to Hong Kong four years ago and returned to Island ECC. Reflecting on my journey today, I am more mature and have learned to understand much of my trauma, grief and pain, and to find peace with it.

I understand now that God has a plan. He is not a genie whose sole purpose is to grant my every wish, nor does He have to explain His every move to me. I am a better, stronger and ultimately happier person through it all, but that's not why I'm with God. I'm with God because He has a plan that is greater than me. I felt Him when I first met my now-husband, when this church blessed and married us, when our daughter came to us, and when we first held her in our arms as she joined us in this world. I feel Him when I am rocking our miracle daughter to sleep, when she wakes up in the morning and smiles the purest of smiles when I'm the first person she sees. I feel Him when my husband holds my hand before we go to sleep.

I used to think that for me to be truly ready to be baptised, I needed to have a dramatic spiritual awakening that showed me that He was indeed by my side and that I was ready. It has taken me a long time to realise that He has been with me all along. ThankGod for His love and patience. I am so proud to be here today and to have our beautiful one-year-old, Amelia, as part of the next generation here at Island ECC.



FOR GOD
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JOHN 3:16

Just like our birthdays, graduations, weddings, and the joy of welcoming new life, baptism is a significant milestone for us as believers. Today, in the presence of the church body and other witnesses, we celebrate this moment with those who publicly proclaim their acceptance of Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour (Acts 2:38-39).

The stories in this booklet, written by the baptism candidates, reveal how different people from diverse backgrounds experience God in unique ways. They all, however, point to the fact that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. They confirm that Jesus is the answer to our quest for meaning in life. I hope some of these stories resonate with you.

Even if you are not a Christian, I encourage you to read these testimonies. I pray they spark your curiosity and move you forward in your search for God. The Bible promises that we can find Him when we seek with all our hearts (Jeremiah 29:13).

We are grateful for all the baptism candidates today and for their willingness to share testimonies of God's loving pursuit and transformative grace in their lives. May this day mark the beginning of a wonderful, magnificent, adventurous and enduring faith journey with our Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

*And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to Himself."* Acts 2:38-39



Alan Leung
Director of Connections
Island ECC

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01 / Alice Marschang
02 / Carman Wong
03 / Caroline Yung
04 / Corinne Ng
05 / Jacqueline Chan
06 / Max Wong
07 / Melissa Rura-Tjioe
08 / Reka Widya Okavia
09 / Tommy Ma
10 / Vicky Chow
11 / Winnie Wong




# 11.22

SHARE YOUR STORY

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