

Spiritual Life

What is the gospel to you? Describe your current walk with Christ.

To me, the Gospel is the greatest hope there is. Following the introduction of sin in the world, God decided to intervene by sending Jesus to Earth, the “light of all mankind” (John 1:4) and “the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27). Though humans had turned their backs on God, He still found a way to reach humanity with a means of redemption by sending His only son (John 3:16). It is this transformative hope and God’s love shown in it that breathes life into the darkest areas of reality.

Raised in a faithful household, I have been a Christian since childhood. However, there have been a few points in my life where the truths of the Gospel felt further from me. The worst of these occurred during COVID-19 lockdowns in 2020. During this time, toxic discussions surfaced in my old home church. At this uncertain part of my faith journey, I moved out for university, and with this change, I became aware that my faith was not yet my own. Spiritual confusion followed and culminated in questions about whether God saw the ugliness in my life as a passive observer or if He stood beside me in my affliction.

In the second semester of my first year, God’s love and grace were shown to me in the church community at Christ the King (CTK). The people God had placed in my life at this time—from older individuals in CCF to others in my church small group—helped me to again believe in God’s goodness. These figures reminded me of the light of the Gospel. They helped me to reaffirm my faith in God and His provisions. Naturally, there have been moments since my first year when I have felt tested by disappointment, exhaustion, and stress. Yet trials have taught me to be more at peace and reliant on God by showing how He leads me past darkness. God is worth it to me, and I continue to grow willing and earnest to partner with Him.

I remain encouraged and find spiritual support from my old CTK small group, despite moving to the Chinese Presbyterian Church (CPC) a year ago. I am blessed to know Roger Ong from my small group and Tony Lai and Iris Eom, who help lead the young adults section at CPC together. These individuals fill my weeks with advice, wisdom, and general spiritual guidance. I am most thankful to God for the connections to my small group and church, which centre my life around Christ and the Word of God.

Candidacy

What do you believe is the purpose of UTCCF and the UTCCF Committee?

UTCCF is firstly a place to find Christian fellowship with other students. It is a community that encourages journeying with others in pursuit of God. Fellowship is cultivating a caring space where people feel welcome to deepen their faith, trust one another, share both joys and sorrows and grow equipped to serve God. In more immediate ways, fellowship looks like studying the Word of God together, generously serving one another, finding unity in Christ through breaking bread and sharing meals; and worshipping together in prayer (Acts 2:38-47).

A UTCCF Committee member's role is thus to facilitate and oversee this Christian community. A role like this may necessitate building up leaders, handling logistics, mediating conflicts, and praying on behalf of the fellowship. While the Committee member may be at a similar part of their faith journey as others in the fellowship, these added responsibilities require humility, God's wisdom, and a continual partnership with the Spirit to see how God leads.

How has God led you to run for committee, as well as the specific position you are running for? If you are not elected to your chosen role, how will you still serve and carry out your vision at CCF next year?

My motivations for pursuing the role of Vice Chair stem from a place of gratitude and eagerness. For one, the past three years at UTCCF have been an immense blessing to me. My time in fellowship has brought amazing people into my life, whom I am lucky to call friends. It has welcomed me. Above all, It has also brought me closer to God in my faith journey by surrounding me with His teaching. Early last year, I felt compelled by God to share the blessings in my life with others, which is a feeling that has grown since then. Secondly, I found a lot of joy in supporting others in the fellowship this year as an IG leader. It has been unfathomably wondrous to witness the commitment and growth in my IG as I served them, something I wish to continue fostering. Lastly, my time and commitments for the upcoming year have aligned such that I can assume more responsibilities. In reflecting on the past year as an IG leader, I understood the leadership difficulties that friends discussed before, such as balancing commitments. I desire to continue serving the fellowship by supporting other leaders as they serve the wider community, which is my primary motivation for pursuing the role of Vice Chair. Even if I am not elected, I am most willing and able to serve UTCCF flexibly in some other capacity as needed (e.g. IG leading, supporting Outreach ministry, etc.) and support friends who are also pursuing leadership next year. I could see ourselves making a great team.

Vision: Living in the Delight of the Lord

Then my soul will rejoice in the LORD and delight in his salvation. My whole being will exclaim, "Who is like you, LORD?"
Psalms 35:9-10a

At university, I saw that Christian life is not primarily about service alone, but is about hospitality in the context of community. In previous years, the fellowship underwent revival after coming out of COVID-19 and a strengthening of relationships. This past year, we have seen the fellowship build on existing relationships and increase its spiritual awareness. There was a desire for a greater sense of belonging and spiritual growth, through seeking regular Friday meetups and ministries. Individuals sought to be intentional with and encourage each other in their walks of life. In that way, the fellowship has become a space where believers can gather together, but what separates a community of student believers from a "Christian club"?

Though this question has been explored in the past, it remains an important one to address. The distinction lies in how we as a community reflect the Light of Christ in us. After all, this Light draws Christians together in the first place: to do fellowship with one another because of the stirring of the Spirit of God. Christ working in every one of us is what brings us together each week. We have Him to thank as the source of the goodness and blessing that this community provides. Thus, a delight in God and His ways should be a focus in how we interact within the community. Where can we look for example?

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer...They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need...They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.
Acts 2:42, 45, 46b-47

The author Luke beautifully paints a picture of how true Christian fellowship appears as a window into God's Kingdom. Devotion to teaching, fellowship, and hospitality shown here by the early Christian Church outlines a joyous unity under the Lord. As it did then, unity can be a powerful blessing and witness for Christ, inside and outside of the community. My hope and prayer then is that we as a fellowship can imitate this example through similar joy in devotion, both to teaching and to each other.

Delight in His Teaching: Blessing and Preparedness

For you make me glad by your deeds, Lord; I sing for joy at what your hands have done. How great are your works, Lord, how profound your thoughts!
Psalms 92:4-5

While God's magnificence and fullness may surpass human understanding, He makes himself freely accessible to all and seeks an intense and personal connection with us. As a source of His wisdom, God's word allows us to grow in our intimacy with Him.

*Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding,
Proverbs 3:13*

Immersion in Scripture begins our exploration of God's heart and voice. Through discerning and listening, we may be renewed by the fulfilment of God's promises. In this way, wisdom (through understanding) and intimacy with God help us stand firm in our faith when all else fades away. By delighting in God's teaching, we can grow equipped and receive blessings ahead of any trials or works of service.

Delight in Serving and Doing: Growth through Emulating Christ

*Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.
Romans 12:10-13, 15*

Here is a natural question: why are we called to serve? The fact is, we are not simply commanded to act this way. Service is an act that God has designed us to do (Ephesians 2:10). It is one of the key ways in which we can share love with others. By serving, we emulate Christ by loving others, and we step beyond what the moral law dictates (Romans 7:6). In this way, we come to personally know the love and attitudes of Christ through our relationships with others. By delighting in serving one another, we are ourselves made blessed (Acts 20:35) and further grow in the knowledge of Christ.

How has God called you to partner with Him in this vision?

Being responsive to the Spirit includes heeding when others nudge or call me to service in leadership/partnering. This year, a desire to encourage other leaders in their service has impressed on my heart. God has called me to serve Him and my community. Since this vision involves the fellowship as a whole, my partnership with him will involve fostering this vision and finding ways to assist in realizing it through supporting others. In the meantime, my partnership with God involves prayer and reliance on Him to see this vision through.

In the practical:

Assist with Outreach	Support Others	Creating welcoming spaces
Pray to God for preparedness + addressing my weaknesses. <u>Continual partnership w/ God</u>	Pray for and check in with IG leaders regularly. Work to address their concerns.	Help select passages that may encourage hospitality and missional attitudes

Personal Evaluation

What God-given gifts do you see in your life? How do you see God using these gifts to further His kingdom at UTCCF?

Some of the gifts that God has blessed me with are a curious spirit and a relational mindset. I love to learn from my observations and reflections, both in external and internal aspects of my life. Because of this attitude, I am active and intentional in reconciling inconsistencies in my understanding. This manifests in different ways such as the following: dwelling on old spiritual teachings, reflecting on myself to find more ways to grow, and discerning future directions that God has placed before me. Simultaneously, I am a sociable individual who is attuned to others. I am good at enhancing hospitality while sensitively including others. Because I am reflective, I'm also able to grapple in dialogue with addressing people's struggles with challenging knowledge or learning topics. These allow me to sympathize with others and approach relationships in humility. These gifts together have helped me deepen my relationships, both with God and with others. With them, I feel able to offer support to others in the fellowship, whether that be through planning, sharing teaching and advice, or just simply being a friend to those who need one.

What are some areas of weakness in your life? How are you taking grace-driven steps to overcome them and become more like Christ?

As for weaknesses, two particular ones come to mind. When confronted with burdens, I tend to buckle down and resolve myself to address the anticipated challenges. While this attitude can manifest as a solid work ethic, the flipside is that I can sometimes forget or otherwise fail to seek help from others when necessary. As I realized in reflection, I can over-emphasize my self-sufficiency. I am learning to trust God can prevail in every way. Additionally, though I am generally competent when it comes to organizing and planning around logistics, it is an area in which I sometimes struggle. These are tendencies of which I am aware. Being on committee involves working with a team: trusting each other for support and accountability when needed. In these areas, I have been actively reviewing ways to remind myself to reach out to others and also hold myself accountable. Beyond this, I continue to pray for the presence of mind when leading and hope that He will prevail in my weaknesses (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).