Dec 2024 Newsletter

[11] He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. [12] But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, [13] who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. John 1

During this season of remembering Jesus's first coming, I'm thankful for the many open doors to share the gospel with people around us. May these encounters have an eternal impact on the lives of those we crossed paths with. I'm also thankful for the time to slow down and spend time with family and friends.

Neighbor, Shizuko

For several days, I felt an urge to visit my Japanese neighbor **Shizuko**. I made a few mochi for her and she was delighted. She said that she just saw it in a cookbook and was thinking of making it. It's the first time she invited me into her home even though we've chatted many times. We had a wonderful time drinking tea and chatting about family. As I was leaving, I told her that I liked her wall decoration near the front door. She said that she bought it and painted it to match the painting hanging opposite. She said that the painting was done by her sister who took her own life 38 years ago. Shizuko felt bad that she didn't do enough to reach out to her sister who had depression. As she gets older, she's happy thinking that she's getting closer to her sister. I asked Shizuko if she knew where she's going after this life. She said that she's not religious but wished that heaven is real. I shared that heaven is real and over there we would be renewed and have no sorrows if we trust in Jesus. She repeated that she's non-religious and doesn't believe in heaven. But she said that today is her sister's birthday and talking to me cheered her up. I told her that it was God who sent me, but she brushed it off. I invited her to come over to my home when she's free. I was filled with joy as I walked home in the dark and understood why God kept bringing her to my mind recently.

Church ESL class

During the last lesson in December, I shared about the meaning behind the different symbols of Christmas, such as the Christmas tree, the wreath, the star etc. I also used the candy cane to share about Jesus's life. We learnt a Christmas hymn "Silent Night" and played games. Then Roseann and my class had lunch together. We had a wonderful time!

A. Juan and Elyssa

Juan couldn't join us for the Christmas lunch because he had to work. After lunch, Judy and I visited Elyssa. Judy gave her a gift and I bought dolls from her. We prayed for their family, and she was very

grateful. When I shared their needs with the church, more brothers and sisters gave generously to them.

B. Cindy

Cindy came to our Sun service with her son. She has passed her driver's test and obtained her work permit. She is very grateful for our prayers.

C. Former ESL student, Ma Yong (Hui Muslim)

We visited my son's church in Queens and invited **Ma Yong** to come. We attended the English service, and the message was about Mary being chosen to carry the Son of God. She was highly favored by God and so are we who are God's children. Pastor Rong also gave an imagery of a baby in the womb to describe "Emmanuel" – God's presence with us that surrounds us. Ma Yong said that impacted him. He'd like to attend the church again. He has also been practicing English by listening to sermons online, transcribing it and saying it out loud. I sent him our church's Christmas eve recording about the incarnation of Jesus which clearly explains why only Jesus can be our savior: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5sCjwFYIUnk

Online ESL class

The students are making good progress. Some good news include **Guifen Li** is expecting, **Naomi** passed her driver's test, **Enoch** received his learner's permit and **Chengdong Wu** found a new job.

Sunharbor Manor Nursing Home

We gave out some Christmas cards decorated by our church kids, and the residents and employees loved them.

When I handed a Christmas card to **Annie Taylor** who was sitting outside her room, she said that she doesn't celebrate holidays. She asked if celebrating holidays is in the scripture. I said that the Jewish people celebrate many holidays, and that God wants us to enjoy life. She said that was a long time ago and maybe I'm not reading the Bible correctly. She wanted to give me something to read but couldn't remember where she left it. I realized that she's a Jehovah witness. I asked if she went door to door witnessing and she said she did that for 18 years. She asked me various questions about creation, the fall of Adam and Eve, Revelation and so on. She concluded that I do know scripture and I joked that I "passed her test". She asked when I would be there again so she could give me something to read. In the end, she accepted the Christmas card I offered her.

We saw **Martin and Jeanette**. We gave them a card and Martin opened to read the scripture inside – John 3:16. We said that since he accepted Christ, he has everlasting life, and we hope that his wife will receive it too.

Katherine was happy to see us. She seems to have a genuine relationship with the Lord. She finds it challenging to read the Bible daily. We encouraged her not to give up because it's spiritual food for her soul.

Haque had a lot of trouble walking today. After every few steps, he would shake uncontrollably. We held his arms as he walked slowly to the lounge to get some sun. He showed us pictures of his 3 sons and 1 daughter. As he was showing the pictures, **Dr. Ali** from his home country Bangladesh came by and he accepted our Christmas card.

Outreach

A. Broadway mall

A Hindu Indian man, **Permoud**, is a visitor and will return home to India the next day. He says that there're many gods in the world and all are the same. We shared about the creator God who loves us and sent His son Jesus into the world. We gave him gospel material to read, and he said that he'll read them on his long flight home.

A Puerto Rican man, **Carlos Santiago**, came from Chicago. He said that he has read the Bible thoroughly including the difficult sections like the genealogies. He said that he studied some Hebrew to better understand the Bible. He's not attending a church currently and we encouraged him to find a good Christian church and to continue reading the Bible and trusting in Jesus.

Mrs Wang owns the massage store. We invited her to church, and she said that she'll come after she retires. However, she seems interested in our ESL class and may attend it.

Brandon said that he used to attend a Roman Catholic church. I asked him where he would go after this life ends. He said that he would go to heaven because he believes in Jesus Christ. I was pleasantly surprised by his answer and shared that many people think that our salvation is through good works but our good works can't meet God's standard. He said that he should start reading his Bible again.

B. Tri County Bazaar

A lady, **Kathy**, was very happy to receive our tract. She said that her son passed away a few years ago and holiday times are hard for her. She said that she felt comforted when we wished her "Merry Christmas" and gave her the tract. A Taiwanese store owner remembered me from previous visits. We encouraged her to attend church with her sister after the busy holiday season.

Some prayer items:

1. Have renewed zeal to reach the lost and to train others too.
2. God would increase the understanding of the gospel for Ma Yong, Haque, Annie Taylor, Cindy, and Shizuko.

Thank you for your prayers! Please let me know how I can pray for you and your ministry. If you do not want to receive future communications from me, please let me know and I will take you off my mailing list.