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Location: Taiwan



What I do: Working with the Taiwan Episcopal Church, supporting the church and kindergarten ministry of the Diocese of Taiwan



Equipping and encouraging where followers of Jesus are in a minority

Happy summer 2025!

"Y'all got mosquitoes?" asked our very lovely visitor from Texas as I took her group around Taiwan a few weeks ago to visit our churches. "Yes, we all got mosquitoes!" was my reply. Not surprisingly, I spent the rest of the week teasing her about her Texan way of asking questions; fortunately, she loved to laugh, including at herself, which is always a great blessing. A famous Confucian saying often quoted in Taiwan is that visitors from afar bring great joy, reflecting traditional values of friendship and human connection, so visitors from overseas are warmly welcomed, and usually treated like royalty. Sometimes this is to the embarrassment of the visitors, who are not used to such five-star treatment, particularly with meals and gifts; when they go home, their suitcases bulging with boxes of pineapple cakes, they all say they don't need to eat for another month! So far this year, we've rolled out the red carpet for my VIP visitors from CMS (who came for four days in March and it hardly stopped raining the whole time!), from ECW (Episcopal Church Women), who came for 10 days in May to see women's ministry in Taiwan, and most recently my brother David and his wife, Anna, who came for 17 days in May-June. After many years of caring for my mother, and with her death last November, they were keen to squeeze in their first-ever Taiwan visit before the high heat of summer.

All the visitors did indeed bring great joy from afar, and we enjoyed hosting them as much as they seem to have enjoyed coming. Most visitors comment on the drive from the airport into Taipei City about how green the scenery is, followed by amazement at all the new high-rise buildings going up along the route. But when they get out onto the streets of Taipei City, the heat, humidity, noise, pollution, crowds, motorcycles, smells of cooking and markets can be quite overwhelming. And yet everywhere we went, our visitors would comment on how friendly and polite everyone was, from the customs people at the airport apologising for the inconvenience as their sniffer dogs checked around everyone's luggage for meat products or drugs, to the staff at every hotel and restaurant who went out of their way to be welcoming and nice, to all our clergy and church members who welcomed us with amazing hospitality, and to our kindergarten children who sang, drummed and danced in welcome. My kindergarten class even asked the visitors a whole host of interesting questions in English. Thank you, Taiwan!



With CMS visitors

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**With Jesus
With each other
To the edges**



All the visitors came with open minds and hearts, enthusiastically seeking to learn as much as they could about Taiwan, the country, history, culture, church and more. Anna and David were here for three Sundays so we went to three different churches, and they loved the fact that all our churches serve a free lunch after the service, followed in the afternoon by fellowship groups or Bible studies; here at St John's Cathedral, a large number always stay on to eat dinner together in the evening before going home. Anna and David remarked on the strong identity that the church community in Taiwan has as Christians – many of them wear crosses, and churches often have group t-shirts to wear when taking part in an activity, with lots of group photos. Visitors are often a bit exhausted with the number of times

they are asked to pose for photos, but it is now so much part of Taiwan's modern culture, and sharing those photos on church social media platforms is considered part of community outreach. During the pandemic, with more time at home for looking at social media, ordinary Taiwan people discovered their local church livestreaming services and suddenly they could see what a church does on Sunday mornings. Even my hairdresser, waiting for her customers on Sunday morning and scrolling through Facebook, asked me recently what the priest was doing in the middle of the service holding something up above him; it turned out she was watching the Holy Communion service. What an opportunity to share with her about our faith and practice.

All our visitors had their quirky ways of doing things, and I'm so glad they can all laugh! Some were highly organised and always on time, others much more relaxed, and some could never remember which city they were in (not helped by the fact that many cities in Taiwan start with the prefix Tai-), much to the entertainment of the others in the group! Anna and David kept us well-entertained with all the tea they needed to drink, along with David's fascination with Taiwan's musical bin lorries at every place, the FamilyMart jingle, which nobody could get out of their minds, and of course his new lightsabre (traffic wand) for dark evening walks in the UK, complete with flashing red light and siren.

And finally, back to those mosquitoes, and yes, y'all need to know that mosquitoes (and pesky midges) are a big problem in Taiwan during the rainy season and throughout the summer, especially in central and southern Taiwan. But insect repellent and wearing long trousers helps considerably, so don't let them put you off coming to visit Taiwan. I'm here waiting for y'all, so welcome!

Thank you everyone for all your support and prayers for us all in Taiwan, always much appreciated.

Catherine Lee



Photos from top to bottom:
WECW visitors and family visitors



Equipping where followers of Jesus are in a minority

I've been encouraged to hear from others who are part of my wider area of work. Recently in Lebanon, three Muslim women have turned to Jesus and discovered their own mission calling, and in Nepal a young man called Amit has chosen Jesus over fame and fortune. Read more at churchmissionsociety.org/equip