



# Catherine Lee

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**Location:** Taiwan



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

Dear all,

A large red neon sign showing the current temperature, 30°C, and the time, 5am, glows in the dark as I walk round the university sports field just across from St John's Cathedral, Taipei. Today is Thursday, 28 September and I'm getting in a bit of walking prayer before the university indoor swimming pool opens at 6am; the water will be a welcome relief from the heat! Tomorrow is the Mid-Autumn Moon Festival, and although it's not as hot and humid as a month ago, it still feels like summer, and will probably go on like this until November.

There's certainly much to pray about as I walk around the track with large numbers of other early-morning exercisers. There is much to be grateful for, including – in the Lee family – the marriage of my nephew Lawrence to Anja in Staveley Church, Kendal, Cumbria a few weeks ago. I wasn't able to be there, but the photos are stunning, and my mother was able to leave her care home for the first time and attend too, so thank you for all your prayers. Good news also is that Jesus Church, Troutbeck, in the same "South Lakes Team" has become my newest CMS link church, yes! As I walk around, I give thanks, praying for all my link churches, and especially for those who've been unable to offer financial support since the pandemic. Thank you again for all your prayers and support, I appreciate you even more as donations have fallen for CMS, and for me too. Please contact CMS if you would like to increase your support for me.

As day breaks, a fighter jet roars overhead and everyone looks up, it's the Air Force practising for their display on Taiwan's National Day, 10 October, but it reminds me of the continuing need of prayer for Taiwan's peace and stability. We expect heightened political and military tensions with mainland China to continue over the next few months leading up to Taiwan's presidential elections on 13 January. As I walk, I think of our student Bible study last week, when we discussed the Parable of the Widow and the Judge, told by Jesus in response to people asking him when the Kingdom will come, and ending with him talking instead about the importance of faith. International media is always asking when and how China will invade Taiwan, and like the widow in the parable, we too can focus on appealing to the unjust judges of the world for justice, though so far it is proving a long and seemingly fruitless task; instead, the Taiwan Episcopal Church focuses on keeping the faith. We discussed in the group about our diocesan vision to expand our outreach into Linkou and Hsinchu, both areas with vast new high-rise estates housing young



*St John's Cathedral, Taipei*

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fear that she would be forced to move back home and leave the church.

By 7:30am, I'm back at the cathedral preparing for my daily 30-minute kindergarten class at 9am. This semester, all 26 children, aged 3–6, are together in one class – it's like one big happy family. About half of them wear facemasks; parents are worried about COVID, flu and enterovirus. We learn a different colour each week; last week was blue and this week it's yellow, so today I'm wearing my bright yellow t-shirt and red trousers. Everyone says I look like a McDonalds advert! After the class, still in bright yellow and red, I'm off to the cathedral office to work on reports and articles for the upcoming diocesan Friendship Magazine, which we produce three times a year, and then to work on my sermon for this Sunday's English service. Our clergy and staff work hard preparing for the Sunday services, and the results have been encouraging, with increasing numbers of people coming along, including visitors from all over the world; we try to always be a welcoming and inclusive church.

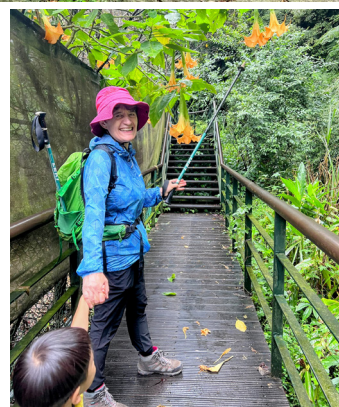
This being a weekday, my colleagues have kindly prepared coffee, which does much to cheer us up, given that we're working in the middle of a noisy building site, with major renovations going on to the kindergarten classrooms above us – as well as the high-rise building going up opposite us – the noise can be deafening. Hopefully next year, the new classrooms will be ready and lead to increased kindergarten enrolment, so it'll all be worth it! Hopefully also, the builders won't be working over this coming long weekend of the Moon Festival, one of the three most important festivals of the year. Everyone, including us, is busy eating moon cakes, pomelo fruit and planning barbecues to enjoy moongazing with family and friends; we'll be having ours here at the cathedral on Sunday afternoon; can't wait!

And so to wish you all a happy autumn and thank you for all your prayers and support, as always!

Catherine Lee

professionals working in the nearby high-tech science parks. After many years of prayer and planning, both these new mission centres are starting up this month. That doesn't mean we are not concerned about Taiwan's tense political situation, but with politics so divisive, so we choose instead to focus on sharing the gospel and building the Kingdom of God, offering people hope, peace and grace through faith in Christ.

We had our student Bible study again last night, and as I walk, I pray for the students. This time, we discussed the Parable of the Sower in the context of our community, and how the demands of filial piety in Chinese culture even now can prevent young people from accepting the gospel. One told how she was baptised secretly, and until now dares not tell her family for



*Photos from top to bottom: Blue and yellow: me with the St John's Cathedral Kindergarten principal, Ms Chen; hiking with my neighbours in yellow and blue; more yellow: me at Taroko Gorge, Taiwan, summer 2023*



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