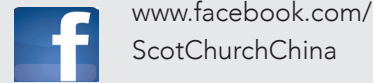


Follow Us

Keep up to date with all our news, and that of our partners by following us on Facebook.



Website: www.sccg.org.uk

We also provide a short news update about our work by email using MailChimp. This goes out roughly five times a year and has links to the latest news from our partners in China and Scotland. Sign up on our website.

Contact Us

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The Scottish Churches China Group is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation.



Treasurer Updates

Thank you!

Firstly I want to say thanks to everyone who has contributed to our GIVE40 initiative, marking our 40th anniversary last year. The total is £1,315. If you would still like to donate to mark this milestone, please get in touch with me or go to our website (details below) where there is more information and a downloadable form.

GIVE40

Trust Fund support

We're also extremely grateful to the Barbour Trust and to the Pollock Memorial Missionary Trust for their recent generous support.

As well as specifically for projects with partners in China and Scotland, this covers 'core' costs which are the administrative overheads. These are mainly the cost of our Accountants, the part-time Advisor (Tricia Johnston) and our very part-time publicity officer (Gillian McKinnon). It also includes the costs of our publications and the two annual meetings in spring and autumn.

The projects being supported by these Trusts are inclusive education support in Nanjing, Hospice Clinical Support advice in Nanjing, Project ECHO facilitation for Palliative Care and for Rehabilitation Services in Shenyang. The funding will also cover a future visit to China.

Trust funding is almost always for specific projects or purposes and what we need also are funds for running costs and contingencies (for example crisis support for Fr Zhang in Shenyang). It's hard to see the difficulties that some of our partners are facing, but we are committed to helping in whatever way we can.

Fundraiser hours

Support from Pollock has now also allowed us to employ a professional fundraiser for some sessions over three months (a total of eight days work). The fundraiser is Susan Irwin who was recommended to us by our friends at the Eric Liddell Community, and we're very grateful for that contact.

Legacies

Every charity's experience is different, and, up until now - perhaps surprisingly - we have not particularly benefitted from legacies. This is despite being blessed with, and grateful for, members who are very committed to the SCCG's work in China. Many also have personal and family connections to health and medical work in China.

However, there is a huge benefit of someone leaving a gift in their will. For a small charity like ourselves, the support of even small-scale legacy giving would make a big difference to the work we can undertake. We will be putting together some further information about legacies but, in the meantime, I'd be happy to answer any of your questions. Or if I don't know, I can find out for you!

New ideas

Finally, if you have any fundraising ideas or feedback about any of the issues or ideas here, please do get in touch. Even the humble Church Coffee Morning can raise much-needed funds!

Val Nellist, Treasurer SCCG

More information on our website at www.sccg.org.uk



Living Water



Our partner in China, the Amity Foundation, has been highlighting the global water crisis since 2010. This year's Amity 'Walk for Living Water' event was held in May in Hong Kong, with over 300 participants. They reported that, "the main event saw participants carry weighted buckets over a distance of approximately 3km ... The experience was designed to simulate the situation in countries where people are forced to travel great distances to and from safe sources of water." As well as raising public awareness in China about the global water crisis, The Amity Foundation's Living Water Campaign has helped to implement water projects in China and other countries including Myanmar, Nepal and Kenya.

FCC talks

The FCC (Friends of the Church in China) have been running monthly talks on Zoom, with some excellent speakers and topics. Find out more by joining their mailing list - use the contact form on their website (www.thefcc.org). Their latest mailing also includes an interesting transcript of an interview with the new Catholic Bishop of Shanghai. In October 2024, the FCC mark their 40th anniversary, and will celebrate that with an event in London.

Scottish Churches China Group

苏格兰教会中国会



NEWSLETTER



Early evening haze viewed from Shengjing Hospital, Shenyang

Seeing Ahead

It's something of a truism that we live in an uncertain world. Shifts in global politics, conflicts and climate chaos, all make things look hazy and fragile.

We've been very concerned recently about the ongoing work of our partner in Shenyang, the Caritas Social Services Centre (CSSC) due to financial constraints. Exactly a year ago, Fr Zhang who leads that work, wrote in this Newsletter about their support for elderly people in Shenyang, many with dementia. They also run HIV/Aids services. We were encouraged to hear recently that he has secured a small amount of finance which will pay staff back pay. But the future is still very uncertain and we ask for your prayers for this work. We are desperate to help, but do not have core funds to do so.

A fascinating article written by Caroline Fielder for us (page 2) highlights new and fragile Chinese communities here in the British Isles. 'Sacred' values, like prayer, are identified as key to supporting them. Back in China, we're very excited about the possibility of supplying expertise in Nanjing at the only university in the country that trains Special Needs teachers (see page 3).

In a lot of ways we're standing at a few thresholds. There are new and important pieces of work which are moving forwards or just ready to start. It's both exciting and daunting, but we will continue to see our way forward with the help of our friends and partners. Thank you.

Sacred Values

by Caroline Fielder

In a world increasingly shaped by migration and global interconnectedness, the Chinese diaspora in the UK offers unique insights into identity, belonging, and resilience. Traditionally, Chinese studies have focused fieldwork on research in China, with some scholars suggesting that diaspora research is not 'Chinese enough' to warrant investigation. However, the evolving global landscape challenges this view, emphasising the need to understand how these communities contribute to and reshape society. Recent anti-immigrant riots in the UK, highlighting rising tensions and misunderstandings, underscore the urgency of this research.

The Chinese community in Yorkshire, though small, is undergoing significant change due to the arrival of students and recent migrants from Hong Kong under the British National Overseas (HKBNO) visa scheme. A notable portion of these new migrants are Christians with one study suggesting nearly 30% of new HK arrivals are Christian. This impacts on local Chinese churches and the broader Christian landscape.

As part of a larger project on the values and beliefs of the Chinese diaspora, a colleague and I examined what is considered 'sacred' within these Chinese Christian communities.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, our initial findings reveal communities deeply rooted in the notion of the sacred in the primacy of the Bible, with scripture shaping both beliefs and daily practices. Prayer emerges as a critical source of strength, offering guidance and spiritual nourishment, especially during times of societal tension.

Beyond individual practices, the sacred was also found in community life. For some, this was rooted in physical spaces like church



Photo: Pixabay

buildings, though others found their sacred community online - a shift accelerated by COVID-19 and reflective of broader trends including disillusionment with traditional church institutions. These digital spaces provide support, connection, and a link to 'home' and family left behind, bridging gaps as people transition to life in a new setting.

Identity was a shared value seen as 'sacred' by many, though its expression varied considerably among individuals. There was frustration over outsiders' perceptions of the Chinese community being a monolithic group, overlooking the rich diversity within. Our interviewees' perspectives illuminated the concept of "Chineseness", revealing it as a mosaic of diverse cultural, religious, and social expressions rather than a single, uniform identity.

Their frustration parallels incidents like the mistaken registration of some HKBNO arrivals as PRC Chinese in Scotland, denying them the right to vote in the recent general election. Such oversights not only marginalise individuals but also jeopardise fundamental values like democracy, where every voice should be heard. Ensuring that these communities are properly recognised and included is essential to upholding the democratic principles that form the bedrock of our society.

Land holds profound significance as a symbol of home for many within the Chinese community,

representing roots, heritage, and connection to family and tradition. For one family, cultivating a garden became a spiritual experience, nurturing life and reflecting on growth and renewal. This connection to land is especially poignant for those who have faced displacement and echoes the complex emotions tied to Hong Kong's return to mainland China.

This sense of loss intertwines with fears of transnational repression, which—since a series of detentions and arrests in Yorkshire on espionage charges in May 2024—looms large within the different Chinese communities. Addressing these fears and recognising the impact of our own colonial legacy is essential for fostering an environment of understanding and tolerance, where all individuals are valued and respected.

Amidst this time of unrest, the evolving Chinese community in Yorkshire serves as a powerful reminder of the need to recognise, understand, and support the diverse voices within our society. This includes respecting the sacred elements of identity and community that are essential to us all and adapting our approach to better recognise the nuances within the broader fabric of church life and society.

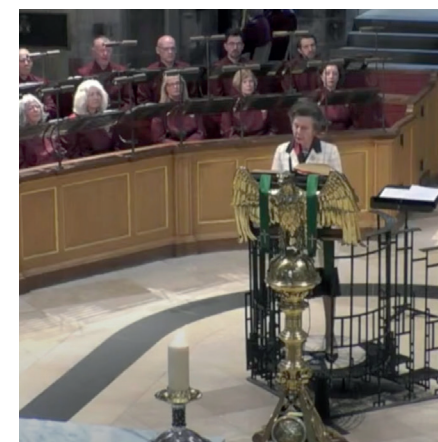
Caroline Fielder is Lecturer in Chinese Studies at Leeds University and is a former Amity teacher.

A life of witness

The SCCG has been delighted to be invited to some of the events to mark the centenary of the Summer Olympics in which Chinese missionary Eric Liddell participated and won his gold medal. I was able to attend a moving service of commemoration and thanksgiving for the life and witness of Eric Liddell in St Giles' Cathedral on Saturday 22nd June. Liddell was an Olympic athlete and gold-medal winner, and also a Christian Missionary and educator. He spent much of his life in China, where he had been born in Tianjin in 1902 to his Scottish missionary parents, returning to continue their work from 1925 - 1943.

Eric Liddell is famous by the portrayal of his success in the Paris Olympics in 1924, when he refused to run in the 100 metres race on a Sunday, preaching instead at the Scots Kirk, before going on to win the gold medal in the 400 metres.

Eric returned to North China as a missionary and educator, first to Tianjin, and then in Hebei province. During the Sino-Japanese war, Eric was interned in a Japanese camp at Weixian (Wei Hsien), where he died in January 1945, a few months before the war's end.



The service in June was organised by the Eric Liddell 100, and its patron, Princess Anne, the Princess Royal, read a Lesson.

It was a privilege to be there to remember this life of witness.

Alan Miller

Special Education in Nanjing



Nanjing Normal University of Special Education Photo © The Amity Foundation

I'm not sure how someone would go about finding out the number of children in China with special educational needs. It would take someone a lot more gifted than me to do that kind of detailed research. What I do know is that with a population of 1.4bn in China, it will be a significant number.

News agencies have recently reported that the Chinese Government has launched a five-year plan to strengthen services for children with autism, including developing integrated education. The South China Morning Post estimated that "Some 3 to 5 million children under the age of 14 in China are estimated to have autism." Of course, special education covers other diagnoses as well as autism.

Currently, however, there is only one Chinese institution that trains special educational needs teachers: Nanjing Normal University of Special Education. It is a unique institution for special needs education in China - quite a sobering thought. The University of Special Education was established in the early 1980's, and today has two campuses and over 5,000 students.

Through our long-term partner, The Amity Foundation, which has its headquarters in Nanjing, the SCCG has been asked to provide an expert in special educational needs to work at the University for a minimum of one year. This is to help evaluate the curriculum, work with staff, and present lectures to students. We felt very honoured to be asked to partner in this important piece of work and so began deliberations on how we might bring this to fruition.

Those of you who have been following our work will know that we have a long-standing relationship with Jasmine Miller, who is an extremely experienced special needs educator and mentor. Jasmine has, most recently, been mentor to Ma Xiaobo, an Amity staff member who is studying online for a Masters in Inclusion and Special Educational Needs. Ms Ma has been overseeing the development and running of an inclusive Kindergarten. Her studies are online with Queen Margaret University, with both the course and the mentoring funded by the SCCG.

So, we are now currently having conversations with Jasmine to get her input regarding the new post at the University in Nanjing. I am very optimistic that we will be able to help the situation there. We are planning well ahead as the post would begin at the start of the 2025/26 academic year, but there are processes to follow in the education system and Chinese government. This is a really exciting opportunity, but it is a complex process, so please keep this project in your prayers and look out for further updates.

Patricia Johnston