

THE RED-HEADED CHAPLAIN

at SKH Wei Lun Primary School

Text by / THE REV. DREW COURTRIGHT

I look out at a sea of yellow and blue. 400 primary school student faces looking back at me. The vast majority local Hong Kongers with a smattering of expat kids whose primary language I share. Who is this new guy with red hair and an American accent? What's he going to say that has anything to do with my actual life? They settle in for a boring religious lecture, eyes primed to glaze over. 'Raise your hand if you like superheroes!' I say. What?! Okay; this might be interesting. Let's see where this goes.

That's the challenge and opportunity in my role as one of the Chaplains at SKH Wei Lun Primary School in Discovery Bay. Connecting with children and also giving them a lively sense of God's grace in Jesus Christ

for them. Over a year since that first time preaching, I'm grateful to share that this aspect of ministry is going well!

I must say I'm thankful for five years of leading pre-school chapel services at my last church. Engaging with two to five years old taught me to have fun, get on their level (literally and figuratively), and to let the story speak for itself. So, whether it's in a holy day chapel service, a Friday afternoon Christian Fellowship extra-curricular activity, or just seeing the students out and about in Discovery Bay, it is my joy to proclaim and embody God's grace in this special way with the Wei Lun community.



The Revd Stephen Hung, Priest-in-Charge at Ascension, Tung Chung, and Chaplain at Wei Lun recalls that ‘the Priest-in-Charge at Ascension, Incarnation, and Discovery Bay Church have traditionally all served together as chaplains. My first impression and earliest memory of having we three Chaplains together “on the stage” was the Chinese Culture Day when we dressed in Chinese costume and gave out candy lai see. Fr Drew fit right in with his traditional jacket and collar! Since then, the students have really enjoyed his energetic preaching at chapel services’.

I love this aspect of ministry in the HKSXH. Our schools have a unique role—education and spiritual formation. I was amazed the first time I preached that the service was not just a school assembly with a religious talk. Rather, it was a full Anglican service with hymns, readings, and prayers!

Do some students care less than others? Of course. But we have the chance to lift their hearts upwards and ground their identity in something bigger and deeper than test scores and padding their CV. This seed is planted at school and often germinates when a student comes to church.



And then the reverse of seeing your Sunday church priest during the week at school. It's a win-win for school and church as the three chaplains/priests-in-charge work together to support our students. It's also just a lot of fun!

I want to thank Revd Stephen Hung, who heads up the chaplaincy work, the Revd Samuel Tang for his many years of faithful service before his recent retirement as Superintendent, teacher Matthew Ma for his logistical help, Ms Tong and Ms Kwong for leading the Christian Fellowship ECA, and Principal Angela Lo for her ongoing welcome and support.

