



## Chinese Baptist Fellowship of the United States and Canada

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# NEWSLINK

### ***The Next Step: Hattiesburg Chinese Christian Church***

Rev. Dawson Zhang

The Hattiesburg Chinese Christian Church was organized in early 2012. In the 7 years since, we had experienced God's abundant grace through the selfless support of our mother church, the Hardy Street Baptist Church. They allowed us to use their chapel, kitchen, Sunday School rooms and the Pastor's Study for free.



#### **The Decision to Grow in Faith**

Towards the end of 2016, the Deacons of our church agreed that it was time for us to take the next step - to have our own building. We believed it would help our congregation to grow in faith as we learn how to trust God.

We considered three options: 1. Renovate an available dental office into a place of worship; 2. Buy an existing church facility; and 3. Buy a piece of land and the congregation will work together in designing the lay out, sourcing the materials and constructing the building. The church decided on the third option.

#### **We Needed Land**

In early April 2017, Josh Moudy, a Deacon of Hardy Street Baptist and whose mother is a realtor, shared with me that there was a 1.5-acre plot on W 4<sup>th</sup> Street, just north of the Turtle Creek Mall, was listed with the price of \$55,000 which was reasonable. However, the owner raised it to \$75,000 the following day. We decided not to proceed.



In that afternoon, Deacon Josh's mom told me that Josh noticed a plot of land was up for private sale on Oak Grove Road. It was listed just that morning and the price was \$72,000 for 4 acres. It was a beautiful lot in a great location. It was close to where most of our members live, and in close proximity to the public school and the Lamar County Public Library. It was a better location with a great price. The

The timing was indeed a miracle. Praise God!

#### **Our Challenges**

But we faced two challenges. We had less than \$50,000 in our building fund. We needed another \$30,000 in a month's time to buy the plot. (The church had decided not to borrow from the bank to buy land but would do so only to develop it.) We would still need the county's approval for the change of use - from residential to commercial use.



I shared these two concerns with the church, and asked them to pray fervently, to seek God's will in the building of His house. Our brothers and sisters experienced God's faithfulness, grace and provision firsthand.



In this faith journey, there were those among us who were not likeminded. We experienced attacks from the evil one as well. But one morning, as I awoke, my mind was filled with the images of Joshua and the Israelites crossing the River Jordan. They were conflicted and their faith was tested. But as the priests who were carrying the ark of the covenant set foot in the river, the water flowing downstream was cut off and stood in a heap upstream. The people were then able to cross it safely on dry ground and into the "land flowing with milk and honey." These images convinced me that all we needed to do was to have the faith to move forward.



## The Lord Provided

In the following three weeks, God moved the brothers and sisters in the church to give sacrificially. By the final week of the closing of the escrow, our building fund stood at \$97,000 - the \$30,000 we needed was raised in less than a month! Considering the size of our congregation, it was nothing short of a miracle!



We were also grateful to Josh and his mom, Caroll. They provided their services to us free of charge. And because it was a private sale, the seller did not pay Caroll any commission for the sale either.



Malachi 3:12 says, "Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land," says the Lord Almighty." This piece of land and the building to be built on it would forever be a memorial to witness to the grace, the faithfulness and the

love of our Lord and a testimony that the Chinese community in Hattiesburg is indeed a blessed people.

We learned afterwards that another offer that was \$2,000 above the asking price was submitted to the seller. But because he had accepted our offer first, he allowed our deacons additional time to meet and discuss until they were ready to sign the contract. Praise God!

## We Needed Another Miracle

Following the signing of our purchase agreement, we submitted applications to the Lamar County for a change of use and approval of our building plans. A public hearing was held on June 13, 2017. There were some opposition from our neighbors. We praise God that all five members of the Planning Commission unanimously approved our application. In the Board of District Supervisors meeting on July 5, 2017, the District Supervisors voted 5 to 0 to affirm the Planning Commissioners' decision. We thank God for His guidance and grace.



## Building the Building

On November 2017, we started to clear the land. In February, our mother church gave us a gift of \$10,000. On March 25



2018, we broke ground and then we prepped the ground and laid the foundation. By mid-May, we finished three walls and the roof, and installed windows. Between August 2018 and January 2019, members of the church spent many hours in the indoor and outdoor construction.

Local businesses pitched in by giving us heavy discounts for their services or donated them to us. A friend of a friend donated pews and the Crosspoint Community Church donated 150 chairs. On February 2019, brothers and sisters from the Chinese Christian Church of Greater Jackson and volunteers from Massachusetts, Michigan and Wisconsin led by a Hattiesburg area Habitat for Humanity construction manager assisted us in painting the building, doing the flooring, setting up fences and putting the finishing touches. On May 5, we held our first worship in the new building. On June 1, 2019, we dedicated our new building to the glory of God!



From conception to completion, we experienced the grace of God and the love of our community. It is our desire that our new facility could be used by God to draw people to Himself, as we lift up Christ and as we preach Him in word and deed. All glory to God!

*Rev. Dawson Zhang is the Pastor of the Hattiesburg Chinese Christian Church and hails from Hubei, China. He is a graduate in Computer Science. He became a believer in Jesus Christ in 1999 and felt called to the ministry in 2001. He graduated from the Moody Theological Seminary in 2011 with an M.Div. degree and planted the HCCC in 2012.*



## Save the Date

### 21st Biennial Conference & 40th Anniversary

**Theme: "Be Strong" (II Timothy 2:1)**

*Date: September 29 to October 2 2020*

*Venue: Crosspoint Church of Silicon Valley,  
Milpitas, California*

*Airport to Fly Into: SJC San Jose International*





### 下一步 - 建造教堂 哈蒂斯堡華人基督教會 張道山牧師

哈蒂斯堡華人基督教會於 2012 年初成立。在接下來的 7 年裡，通過母會哈代街浸信會 (Hardy Street Baptist Church) 的無私支持，我們體驗了神豐富的恩典。他們讓我們免費使用他們的小教堂，廚房，主日學的課室和牧師辦公室。



#### 決定在信心上長進

在 2016 年底，教會的執事們同意，現在踏出下一步的時候——擁有自己的建築物。我們相信，當我們學習如何信靠神時，他會幫助我們的會眾在信心上長進。

我們考慮了三個選項：1. 將一個牙醫診所改造成禮拜堂，2. 購買現有的教堂，3. 購買一塊土地，會眾將共同設計佈置，採購材料和建造教堂。教會選擇了第三個選項。

#### 我們需要土地

2017 年 4 月初，哈代街浸信會 (Hardy Street Baptist Church) 的執事 Josh Moudy，他的母親是一名房地產經紀人，他與我分享在 Turtle Creek 購物中心以北的 W 4th Street 有一塊 1.5 英畝的土地，出售價為 55,000 美元。這是一個合理的價錢。但是，賣主在第二天將其提高到 75,000 美元。我們決定不再考慮。

那天下午，Josh 執事的媽媽告訴我，Josh 留意到在奧克格羅夫路上有一塊私人出售的土地。那天早上才剛剛上市，價錢是 4 英畝買 72,000 美元。這是一塊很好的土地，位置優越，它離我們大多數成員很近，靠近公立學校和拉馬爾縣公共圖書館。這是一個更好的位置，且價格更優惠。時機確實是一個奇蹟。讚美神！



#### 我們面對的挑戰

但我們有兩個挑戰。我們的建堂基金不到 50,000 美元。我們需要在一個月的時間內再籌得 30,000 美元才能購買該土地。（教會決定不從銀行借錢買地，借款只供發展土地之用。）我們還需要縣政府批准改變用途：從住宅用地改為允許宗教用途的用地。



我與教會分享了這兩個問題，並要求他們熱切地祈禱，在建造神的教堂上尋求他的旨意。我們的兄弟姐妹親身經歷了神的信實，恩典和供應。



在這個信仰之旅中，我們中間有些人有著不同的意見。我們也經歷了惡者的攻擊。但是有一天早上，當我醒來時，我的思緒充滿了約書亞和以色列人穿越約旦河的形象。他們有衝突，他們的信心受到考驗。但當抬著約櫃的祭司踏上河流時，向下游流動的水被切斷並在上游堆成一堆。然後他們能夠在乾燥的地面上安全地穿過它，進入“流奶與蜜之地。”這些圖像使我確信我們所需要做的就是憑信心向前走。



## 主的供應

在接下來的三個星期裡，上帝感動教會中的兄弟姐妹作出犧牲的奉獻。在交易公正結束的最後一周，我們的建堂奉獻達到 97,000 美元 - 我們在不到一個月內籌集到所需的 30,000 美元！以我們會眾的規模，這簡直就是一個神蹟！



我們也很感謝 Josh 和他的媽媽 Carol 姊妹。他們免費為我們提供服務。由於這是私人出售，賣方也沒有向 Carol 姊妹支付任何佣金。



瑪拉基書 3:12 說：「萬軍之耶和華說：『萬國必稱你們為有福的，因你們的地必成為喜樂之地。』」這塊土地和其上的建築物將成為永遠的見證，見證了主的恩典，信實，和大愛，並見證哈蒂斯堡的華人社區確實是一群蒙福的人。

後來我們知道，賣家收到有另一個高於要價的 2,000 美元的報價。但是因為他首先接受了我們的提議，所以他允許我們的執事有更多的時間來開會和討論，直到我們準備好簽署合同。讚美神！



## 我們需要另一個奇蹟

在簽訂購買合同後，我們向 Lamar 縣提交了要求更改使用和批准建築計劃的申請。2017 年 6 月 13 日舉行了公開聽證會。我們的鄰居也有一些反對意見。我們讚美上帝，規劃委員會的所有五名成員一致同意我們的申請。在 2017 年 7 月 5 日的地區監事會會議上，地區監事以 5 比 0 的投票結果確認了規劃專員的決定。我們感謝神的帶領和恩典。



## 建造教堂

2017 年 11 月，我們開始清理土地。在二月，我們的母會給了我們一萬美元的贈款。在 2018 年 3 月 25 日，我們破土動工，然後我們準備好了地面並打好地基。到 5 月中旬，我們完成了三面牆和屋頂，並安裝了窗戶。在 2018 年 8 月至 2019 年 1 月期間，教會會友花了很多時間在室內和室外建築上。當地企業通過給予我們大量的服務折扣或捐贈來幫助我們。



一位朋友的朋友捐贈了長椅，而 Crosspoint 社區教會捐贈了 150 把椅子。2019 年 2 月，來自大傑克遜華人基督教會的兄弟姐妹以及來自馬薩諸塞州，密歇根州，和威斯康星州的志願者，由哈蒂斯堡地區的仁人家園建築經理領導協助下我們刷油漆，做地板，設置柵欄，和作最後的修繕。5 月 5 日，我們在新堂舉行了第一次禮拜。2019 年 6 月 1 日，我們舉行新堂奉獻！



從構思到完成，我們經歷了上帝的恩典和社區的愛。我們的願望是，當我們高舉基督，並在言語和行為上傳講祂時，神會利用我們的新堂來吸引人歸向祂。一切榮耀歸於神！

張道山牧師是哈蒂斯堡華人基督教會的牧師，他來自中國湖北，畢業於計算機科學專業。他於 1999 年成為基督徒，並於 2001 年蒙召作傳道人。他在 2011 年畢業於穆迪神學院取得神學碩士學位及於 2012 年植哈蒂斯堡華人基督教會。

### 請預留日期

美加華浸第廿一屆雙年會  
暨四十周年慶典

主題：「剛強起來」

日期：2020 年 9 月 29 至 10 月 2 日

地點：矽谷匯點華人教會

Milpitas, California

選用機場：SJC San Jose International