

A message from Pastor Michele and Ken Morrison

(Previously emailed to Union Church congregants on Friday, 20 August 2021, edited)

Dear Friends,

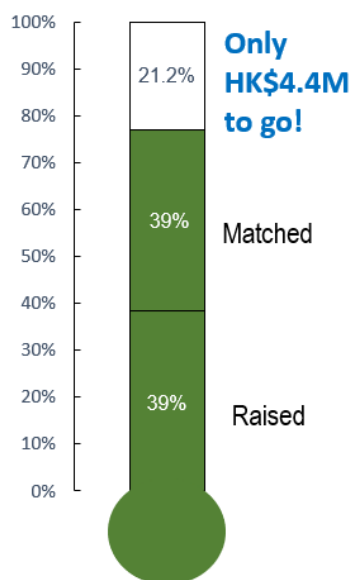
"But since you excel in everything...see that you also excel in the grace of giving"
2 Corinthians 8:7

Last Wednesday evening, we had 44 attending our Family "Zoom" Meeting during which Rosanna Chan of BUFF gave an excellent visual update of our Union Church redevelopment at 22A Kennedy Road. This included photographs of the construction progress to date together with stunning slides and renderings of the completed building and its beautiful interiors. Truly inspiring; "New 22A" is an amazing blessing!

There was also an update on the Grace of Giving and the progress towards the overall target of HK\$32 million for the new building fit-out costs.

The following briefly summarises where we are at present in the campaign, together with some observations and next steps regarding our Grace of Giving "journey":

Current Gap in Donations / Pledges – HK\$4.4 million



You may recall that at the launch of the active phase of the Grace of Giving in January this year, Union Church leadership had agreed that the church would match from Reserves any donations / pledges received, up to a total of HK\$15 million. In light of this, donations / pledges of HK\$17 million (ie HK\$15m + an additional HK\$2m) need to be raised. This sum, together with the Union Church matching of HK\$15 million, will thereby achieve the overall target of HK\$32 million.

At present, HK\$12.6 million in donations / pledges has been received. As such, to reach the donations / pledges target of HK\$17 million, there is currently a HK\$4.4 million gap to be "bridged".

To date there have been 194 individual donors to the Grace of Giving and over 292 separate donations or pledges. Therefore, It is clear that many of you have given / pledged more than once.

Thank you so much! You really have been a great blessing to the Grace of Giving.

Since the contracts for the fit-out of New 22A are to be finalised during the 4th Quarter of 2021, the Grace of Giving campaign is scheduled to conclude at the end of September, just over 6 weeks from now. (Initially, the timeline for the Grace of Giving was to run to the end of the 1Q of 2022, but faster progress of the building development resulted in an accelerated timeline.) We are amazed that most of the fundraising has been accomplished in only eight months.

Given our current HK\$4.4 million shortfall in donations / pledges, we are praying and trusting God that, by the end of September, we will have bridged this gap and reached our fundraising target. Psalm 37 reminds us: *“Commit your way to the Lord, trust in Him and He will do this.”*

The Grace of Giving Journey

“The Spirituality of Fundraising” – Henri Nouwen

The Grace of Giving team was richly blessed by a Henri Nouwen study “The Spirituality of Fundraising” from which we learned that:

* Fundraising is an important part of church ministry and not simply a “financial transaction”. It involves the fostering of relationships and community so that together we seek to carry out God’s work.

* Fundraising clearly involves an “Ask” by which we invite people to join in by using their gifts – their time, talents and, where appropriate, their financial resources.

These important lessons have been foundational for the Grace of Giving campaign.

Building and Strengthening Community

While we have a clear goal to raise funds for the fit-out of New 22A, we also have the opportunity for building stronger relationships across our entire congregation. Fostering community is at the heart of the Grace of Giving campaign. Our Union ReUnion in April involved many hosted gatherings as well as “alumni” joining by Zoom from overseas. The Grace Race in late May was also an opportunity for joining with family, friends and colleagues to participate in a sponsored run / walk. With over 200 participants of all ages from across our entire congregation – including Children’s Ministry, Youth, Young and “Older” Adults, Filipino Fellowship, and Staff - this was truly an event for all, involving Fun, Fellowship, Fitness – and, yes, Fundraising.

The Grace Race – The Final Push

While there was amazing participation at the end of May for The Grace Race and those taking part cumulatively covered 8,270kms in only 7 days, we still have approximately 1,600kms to go to complete the entire “virtual” journey from Scotland (where Rev Dr James Legge, founder of Union Church, was born) to Hong Kong. We are therefore planning to hold “The Final Push” on the weekend of 25-26 September and very much hope that the Union Church family will “lace up” again to help achieve this goal. Please mark your diaries for these dates. Further details will be circulated shortly but, as before, we are hoping that it will be an event enjoyed by all.

Prayer

As we prepare for next steps, we are planning to focus on prayer for the whole month of September. We would like to invite the entire church family to pray for all aspects of the move back to Kennedy Road – the smooth completion of the building; the detailed fit-out; and all the various ministries, both current and future. To guide and unite us in this, a daily devotional is

planned which will be compiled into a booklet and circulated. May we seek to extend God's Kingdom in our neighbourhoods, in Hong Kong, and beyond!

Are we "IN"?

Finally, we truly believe that Union Church is "on the move" – both literally and figuratively – and is in the process of transformation. While our return to New 22A does not occur until early 2023, the "journey" back to Kennedy Road has provided an added catalyst for this change - and has already begun. We are in a new season. The leaders have been meeting together, with a further meeting later this month, to discern: who are we? where is God leading us? what are the new ministries and missions He is calling us to? We strongly believe God is encouraging us to be a "neighbourhood" church and we are seeking to discern more fully what this means. Pastor Michele and the leaders will be sharing more on this important topic in due course. The Grace of Giving has opened a precious opportunity and invitation for joining in on this journey - an opportunity for fully participating, and, most certainly, for rejoicing!

Are we all "IN"?

Thank you for being part of the Union Church family. May God bless you, and many through you.

Michele Bland

Senior Pastor

Ken Morrison

on behalf of The Grace of Giving team

For donations to the Grace of Giving and the fit-out of New 22A, these can be made as follows:

By transfer - kindly make your donation to Bank of East Asia Limited, Account No. 015-521-68-00975-1, SWIFT Code if needed is BEASHKHH.

By cheque - you may write a cheque to "Union Church", indicating on the back "The Grace of Giving". American taxpayers may write a cheque to "Friends of Hong Kong Charities, Inc" with "The Grace of Giving" on the back. Cheques can be sent to Union Church, 18F Dah Sing Financial Centre, 248 Queen's Road East, Wanchai, Hong Kong

By credit card - you may donate via credit card using our online giving form at <https://www.unionchurchhk.org/give>.

Thank you!