

Christ Community Church

Cross-cultural congregation finds a new minister

By Loraine McClell
staff writer

The Rev. William John Burke Jr. was installed as pastor of Christ Community Church of Metropolitan Detroit late last month.

His appointment had ended a long search by the congregation for a pastor to serve in this cross-cultural ministry.

"I think he got the job just because he could speak Chinese," joked his wife, Hsui Hsia. (She has translated her name to Diana since coming to the United States.)

The couple and their two children, 5-year-old Caitlin and 18-month-old Christina, arrived here about a month ago as the Rev. Burke prepared to take charge of one of the four churches ministering to the 8-10,000 Chinese-Americans in the Detroit-Metropolitan area.

The church's sermons and liturgy each Sunday are given in Chinese and translated to English. "The older people are more comfortable having services in Chinese," the Rev. Burke said.

But he was quick to point out a Biblical verse that is paramount in the Reformed Church doctrine. "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples." (Isaiah 56:7)

CHRIST COMMUNITY Church, at 50333 10 Mile Road, was purchased in 1978 from a Lutheran congregation by 25 Chinese-American families. The church has since grown to a congregation of 40 families with 75 communicant members.

While it is not the intention of the congregation to become an ethnic church, the ministry does strive to emphasize and to understand the Oriental cultural background, the linguistic differences and ethnic make-up.

Yet, instead of allowing these differ-

ences to create barriers to a total community ministry, the congregation's aim is to build understanding and love between all Christians.

Before acquiring the church building in Farmington Hills, the former minister of the church, the Rev. Dr. Moody Yap, "was conducting services and Bible classes all over the place," the Rev. Burke said.

Now members come to the church "from all over the place."

Mrs. Burke said cities such as Warren, Dearborn and Rochester are common on the congregation's address list.

"And as long as they come from that far away for worship a lot of them plan to stay the entire day," she said. "After-service ethnic luncheons, youth-choir practice and prayer meetings are scheduled Sunday afternoon for the convenience of those who have to spend an hour to get here."

But at the luncheons, Mrs. Burke said, "The little ones prefer hot dogs."

THE REV. BURKE met Hsui Hsia during his 10-year stint as a missionary in Taiwan, Free China, from 1984-1974. She was one of his students while he was teaching in the National Chung Hsing University there.

She now holds a master's degree in English literature. He has master's degrees in both Greek and Roman literature.

"Master's degrees and doctorates are common among the members here," Mrs. Burke said. "We joked a lot about what an intelligent congregation we were getting ourselves into when we were first introduced here."

One of the Rev. Burke's first impressions of his new congregation was of what he termed their "giving-ness."

The couple said they have yet to hear anyone ask for a volunteer.

"The volunteers just seem to be there when you need them," the Rev. Burke said.

The couple said the list for families volunteering to prepare the after-service luncheon was filled through August.

They were both impressed that all money earned by church members who work during Oriental Day at Detroit's Ethnic Festivals has always gone toward paying off the church building mortgage.

THE REV. BURKE's mother, here to help the family settle in their new home in the 12 Mile-Drake Road area, said the congregation's fellowship has been "amazing" during her visits.

"I've worked in churches all of my life, and it is a pleasure for me to see my son working here," she said.

The Rev. Burke also was impressed with the congregation's spiritual faith in taking on the burden of building another church in the Detroit area for the Chinese-American community.

Of his time spent as a missionary in China, he said, "You have to take that country as your own, or you'll always be a foreigner there. You have to believe that it is your home with your heart, soul, mind. That just has to be if you are going to be successful."

He left Taiwan after being instrumental in building a new center for Bible studies there and learning to speak the language fluently.

He describes the Reformed Church, stemming from the Old Dutch Reform Church, as "Calvinist in doctrine. Presbyterian in government. So we easily get along with both."

Before coming to Michigan, the Rev. Burke served congregations in Passaic and Montagu, N. J.



RANDY BORSI/staff photographer

The Rev. William John Burke Jr. holds his 5-year-old daughter Caitlin, who will enter Woodcreek Elementary School this fall, at left. Eighteen-month-old Christina is held by her mother Hsui Hsia. The family

arrived here from New Jersey last month for his installation as pastor of Christ Community Church of Metropolitan Detroit in Farmington Hills.

7-year-old leads field of 45 in St. Jude bikeathon

A 7-year-old biker pitted against a field of 45, most of them in their teens, walked away with the grand prize in Farmington area's bikeathon benefit for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

Gary Berger, who will be entering second grade in Flanders Elementary School this fall, was given a television set for amassing slightly more than \$700 in pledges.

The sum was the most accumulated by one biker in the total of \$4,000 pledged by area residents for the Memphis, Tenn., hospital. St. Jude is the largest childhood cancer research center in the world in terms of numbers of patients and treatment successes.

The young winner is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Mark Berger, both members of Farmington Helping Hands, the CBers who set up the bike route, moni-

tored the bikers and ran the checkpoints.

"WE THOUGHT he'd do three-four miles and that would be the end of it," Berger said of his son. "But he'd stop for a pop or talk to someone along the route — he knew them all — get back on the bike and ended up with a total of 26 clocked miles."

Gary was not the only prize-winner in his family.

Gary's 3-year-old brother Jason, who pedaled the route on a two-wheeler with training wheels, took a \$10 gift certificate from DuQuet Jewelers for being the youngest to tackle the course on Oakland Community College Orchard Ridge Campus.

He also took some bruises on both knees and both elbows.

JULIE AND Alan DuQuet expect to be collecting the pledged money for the

next week at DuQuet Jewelers in Farmington Plaza that was headquarters for the bikeathon this year.

"If all of our pledgers come through, that \$4,000 will make the largest contribution to St. Jude we've ever given from the Farmington area," Mrs. DuQuet said.

In addition to help coming from Helping Hands, the bikeathon chairpersons got an assist in staging the event from administrators at OCC, local McDonalds which furnished food and drink for the bikers and Farmington Bike Shop which sent personnel to check safety factors on the riders' bikes.

Prizes for the riders came from DuQuet Jewelers, Farmington Bike Shop, The House of Lee, Kinney Shoes of Farmington, Harmony House, The Printery, DuQuet & Sons Heating, Manor Craft Homes, Big Boy and World Wide TV.



RANDY BORSI/staff photographer

Seven-year-old Gary Berger had to sit atop a counter in DuQuet Jewelers to get a better look at the television set he won after pledges were tallied up in the bikeathon staged here to benefit St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Allen and Julie DuQuet were co-chairmen for this year's event that netted \$4,000 in pledges from area residents.

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