

COMING UP AT ISLAND ECC

TODAY **Baby Dedication**

Today we are very pleased to join with Howard and Olivia Abe in the dedication of their daughter, Sara Joy, to the Lord. Sara was born on 5 June 2012. We warmly welcome relatives and friends visiting for this special occasion. (11.30am, 2/F).

TODAY **Christmas Love Offering**

Today you will have the opportunity to give to our annual Christmas Love Offering. This is a chance to give generously, over and above your tithe, in order to support ministries in Hong Kong and beyond. Special offering envelopes will be provided.

TODAY **2013 Island ECC Devotional Calendar**

The Island ECC Devotional Calendar is now available! May it bring blessings and joy to your household and friends. They are \$50 each and are available on each floor.

DEC 24 **Christmas Eve Services**

We look forward to celebrating with you at our special Christmas Eve services on **Monday, December 24**. This is a wonderful opportunity to invite your family, friends and colleagues. Special music, creative features and a Christmas message will take place on 1st and 2nd floors at **6pm, 8pm and 10pm**. Below see QR code to open invitation.

DEC 25 **Indonesian Christmas Outreach**

On **Tuesday, December 25** at **10.30 am** at Lily Valley Restaurant, G/F, 36 Oi Kwan Road, Wan Chai. It's FREE. We would like to invite your Indonesian helper to join us. Our guest speaker is a former Muslim. iGlee choir will join too. It will be fun and inspiring.

JAN 13 **2:7 Discipleship Course**

This course has a long history of helping Christians strengthen their walk with God to be rooted in Him and overflowing with thankfulness. The course teaches Bible study skills, Scripture memory techniques and other skill-based topics. Join us for this life transformational journey starting on January 13, 2013. Visit www.islandecc.hk/27 for detail and registration.

Children's Ministries - New Check-in System

Children's Ministries is preparing for a new check-in system and needs the help of all parents. Prior to the launch of the new system in January, families need to pre-register and be set up with their account on The City. For more information, pick up a flyer on the 9/F. Bar code cards are now available to collect before and after services from the Green Room on the 9/F.

Deadline for Donations for Friends of Hong Kong Charities

Please take note that donation cheques for Friends of Hong Kong Charities Inc. to be accounted for 2012 should be dated and handed in no later than December 31, 2012. Anything received after this date will be considered as a 2013 donation. Thank you.

Lost and Found

If you have lost items on the premises, you can enquire at 1/F Connect Counter to see if they have been found. We hold items for up to two months.



www.islandecc.hk



WATCH FOR... ON THE CITY

The 12 Days of Christmas Devotionals

Every day leading up to Christmas Day, you can read a special Christmas devotional. The contributors are individuals who serve in our ministries and they have written in amazing ways from their hearts and experience. Along with their devotion, a fun picture depicts an aspect of that ministry and a prayer guide for that day. These are our gift to you during this Christmas season.

NEW TO ISLAND ECC?

1

MEET US AT THE CONNECT COUNTER ON 1/F

We are so glad that you're here today and would love to get to know you! The Connect Counter is located on the 1F and volunteers are there to answer any questions you might have about Island ECC and its different ministries and events.

2

JOIN THE CITY

The City is the online connection point for Island ECC. It's limited to the people who attend our church and over 1,000 people are already using this fantastic tool. By creating an account and logging in, you'll have access to weekly devotionals, updates on events, the chance to connect with others and more!

3

CHECK OUR WEBSITE

By visiting www.islandecc.hk, you'll have access to information about all our ministries, as well as a broad spectrum of resources - including video podcasts of sermons.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

HE LOVES

God loves you because he chooses to. "God wasn't attracted to you and didn't choose you because you were big and important... He did it out of sheer love..." (Deut. 7:7-8). He loves you so much that...

HE GAVE

He gave Jesus, His one and only Son. While we do wrong things daily, Jesus is sinless. Though sinless, Jesus took our sin. He died on the cross in our place. Our response to this great gift is simple...

WE BELIEVE

We trust Jesus to do what we can't. We don't trust our own efforts to save us. We can't save ourselves. We don't place our trust in other people to save us. We believe in Him.

WE LIVE

God gives us brand-new life. We have joy because of his Spirit living within us. Little by little his Spirit changes us to be more like Jesus. No guilt in life, no fear of death, He gives life, now ... and for eternity.

You can tell God you accept Him now.

"Father, I believe you love me. You gave your one and only Son so I can live forever with you. Apart from you, I die. With you, I live. I choose life. I choose you."

photos: Egypt Mission Trip



December 16, 2012

Miracles and Doubt at Christmas Time

⁵ In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. ⁶ Both of them were righteous in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commands and decrees blamelessly. ⁷ But they were childless because Elizabeth was not able to conceive, and they were both very old. ⁸ Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, ⁹ he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰ And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshippers were praying outside. ¹¹ Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. ¹² When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. ¹³ But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John. ¹⁴ He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, ¹⁵ for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born. ¹⁶ He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷ And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." ¹⁸ Zechariah asked the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years." ¹⁹ The angel said to him, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. ²⁰ And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their appointed time." ²¹ Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering why he stayed so long in the temple. ²² When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for he kept making signs to them but remained unable to speak.

Luke 1:5-22

²⁶ In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you." ²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰ But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favour with God. ³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end." ³⁴ "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" ³⁵ The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.

Luke 1:26-35

⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests." ¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

Luke 2:8-15

How can I be sure of this?

How can this be?

Let us go.