

## The History of Memphis Chinese Evangelical Church (MCEC)

### The Beginning: A Campus Fellowship (2007–2010)

The history of **Memphis Chinese Evangelical Church (MCEC)** began with a small campus fellowship in late 2007. Moved by the Holy Spirit, several Chinese brothers and sisters started a Bible study for Chinese students at the **University of Memphis (UM)**. The group initially met in a student apartment and was supported by a few American brothers and sisters connected through **Bridge International Ministry** under Cru.

This fellowship was named **Memphis Campus Chinese Christian Fellowship (MCCCF)**. Over time, it began to draw Chinese students and scholars not only from the University of Memphis but also from the **University of Tennessee Health Science Center (UTHSC)**. The fellowship met on Friday evenings and moved among several meeting locations before eventually settling at **Christ United Methodist Church (CUMC)** in the spring of 2010, with the support of American brothers and sisters from that church.

During these early years, God graciously worked among the students and scholars. Several came to faith in Christ and were baptized. As the fellowship grew, some coworkers began to pray about the possibility of establishing a church to serve Chinese students and scholars living and working within the **I-40 / I-240 loop** in Memphis.

### Expansion of Campus Fellowships (2010)

In September 2010, a coworker's family who shared the vision of starting a campus fellowship and a church moved to Memphis from out of town. Shortly after arriving, they began another fellowship—the **UT/St. Jude Fellowship**—which met at **Union Avenue Baptist Church (UABC)**.

Meanwhile, **MCCCF** continued its ministry at the **UM** and became known as the **UM Fellowship**, still meeting at **CUMC**. In this way, God provided two fellowships serving Chinese students and scholars in different parts of the city.

## The Call to Build a Church

In the fall of 2010, coworkers from both the **UM Fellowship** and the **UT/St. Jude Fellowship** began meeting together to pray and discuss the possibility of establishing a Chinese church within the I-40 / I-240 loop.

A passage that deeply touched the coworkers' hearts was **Exodus 25:8**:

*“And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst.”*

They sensed that God was calling them to build a spiritual sanctuary—a church—where God would dwell among His people. Yet they also asked an important question: **Who is able to stand before God and serve Him?**

Through studying Scripture together, the coworkers came to understand that those who, out of love for the Lord, willingly offer themselves as “**slaves to God**” can stand before Him and serve Him (**Exodus 21:5–6**). Responding to this calling, several brothers stepped forward to take on the responsibility of sharing God's Word, even though none had received formal seminary training.

## The First Worship Service (2011)

On February 6, 2011, the first Sunday worship service was officially launched at UABC, with a little over twenty people in attendance, including adults and children.

Remarkably, on that very weekend, God brought another coworker's family from out of town to Memphis. Soon afterward, additional coworker families also moved to the city. As the church grew, Sunday morning worship services were moved to **Reeves Chapel at CUMC**.

The church was now formally established and adopted the English name **Memphis Chinese Evangelical Church (MCEC)** and the Chinese name 曼城华人福音基督教会.

## Establishing Vision, Mission, and Covenant

The coworkers continued to seek the Lord together through prayer, asking for guidance regarding the **church's vision and mission**. They prepared the church's first vision and mission statement (see **MCEC Vision and Mission**).

In 2021, after the COVID-19 pandemic, the statement was revised to emphasize the importance of building up Christian families as an essential part of the church's ministry.

The coworkers also established a **Coworker Covenant**, committing themselves before God to serve the church together faithfully.

Throughout the years, there have been times when coworkers held different opinions about church matters. Yet through the work of the Holy Spirit and the covenant that binds them together, they have remained united as one body, serving the Lord in one spirit.

On October 18, 2020, while the COVID-19 pandemic was still ongoing, the church stepped out in faith to reopen for in-person gatherings and resumed Sunday worship services at **UABC**.

## Church Governance

For many years, the coworkers prayed and sought God's guidance regarding the governance of the church. After much prayer and discussion, they agreed that the church would adopt an elder-led leadership structure.

In 2024, three elders were ordained to shepherd and govern the church together. At the same time, much of the church's pastoral care continues to be shared among coworkers and elders alike—those who willingly offer themselves as servants of God to serve Him and His church.

## Looking Ahead

As **MCEC** continues its journey, we pray that God will faithfully guide the church in His ways and that **MCEC** will remain vibrant and fruitful before Him.

This record of the church's beginnings is preserved so that future coworkers may remember the faithfulness of God, the vision He placed in the hearts of His people, and the lessons learned along the way as the church was established.

May God continue to use **MCEC** for His glory in the years to come.