

Chiang Mai Community Church

Church Profile

June 2019

Chiang Mai Community Church (CMCC) was established in the 1960s to offer a Sunday school and a place of fellowship for English-speaking Western missionaries—primarily American Presbyterians and American Baptists—who attended Thai and other local churches on Sunday mornings. In 1966 the gathering invited their first pastor, and two years later, with forty to sixty people in attendance, they formally became Chiang Mai Community Church and joined the First District of the Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT).

Over the years, the congregation membership became increasingly international and interdenominational and the range of church activities and programs grew more diverse to meet the needs and interests of members. By the late 1980s, the congregation had outgrown its meeting place in the McCormick Hospital School of Nursing, and the church moved to its current venue of First Thai Church, where we still rent the church sanctuary and education building for our afternoon worship service and Sunday school, following the Thai church's morning services. We also rent premises in a neighboring property, which contains offices for our administrative and pastoral staff and meeting rooms used by small groups and the youth, and community groups such as Narcotics Anonymous. The church's central location makes it well known among most Chiang Mai residents.

CMCC is by far the oldest of the several international, multi-denominational churches serving the English-speaking community here, and the only English-language church that meets on Sunday afternoon. Our congregation of approximately 250 people (including children) consists of a high percentage of full-time Christian workers (56%) as well as expatriates working at international schools, business people, NGO workers, retirees, international students, and others. While a large number of the congregation is transient, we also have many long-term members, and the church is delightfully diverse. Our latest demographic survey (2019) shows that twenty countries and over thirty denominations are represented in our congregation, with the largest percentage being from the US (45%), followed by the UK and Thailand (both 9%). One-third of our attenders are non-native English speakers. Fourteen percent have lived in Chiang Mai for thirty or more years, and 48% intend to stay in Chiang Mai indefinitely. Eighty-five percent consider CMCC to be their church home, with one-third of the congregation also attending a second church.

Chiang Mai is a center for missions in the Southeast Asian region. Because of its history and central location, we tend to have a large number of visitors each Sunday from around the world. We try to be inclusive of different traditions, and our rotation of three or four Sunday worship teams allows us to reflect this diversity in music and style of worship. Our church leaders and committee members also come from a variety of Christian traditions, which challenges us to be clear about the essentials of our faith. We highly value both our connection with Thai First Church and our diversity of backgrounds, while embracing our common commitment to love and follow Jesus and to love and serve others as the body of Christ.

Due to the somewhat transient nature of our congregation, we strongly encourage church attenders to join a small group as a way to get to know each other at a deeper level and

share life together more intentionally. Presently we have thirteen small groups meeting in different parts of the city with a combined total of 120 people. Four of those groups are part of the Women of the Word group that meets on Wednesdays. Nearly all of the groups meet weekly. The Fellowship Committee also plans churchwide meals and events every quarter to help members of the congregation meet each other and to grow a sense of community.

The organizational structure of our church specifies that the governing authority rests with the membership. The Leadership Team, Management Team, and Pastoral Team carry out the governance, spiritual direction, and administration of the church on behalf of the membership. The Leadership Team is concerned with church governance and spiritual direction, and the Management Team is concerned with the day-to-day ministry and administration of the church. The Pastoral Team works with the Leadership Team to lead the church spiritually and with the Management Team in the area of church administration.

The Management Team consists of the chairpersons of several different ministry committees: Treasurer, Worship, Christian Education, Fellowship, Social Concerns, Outreach, and Small Groups. In addition, we have two paid administrative staff members. Unique to CMCC is our expat prison visitation ministry which comes under the Outreach Committee.

Our worship service runs from approximately 4:20 pm (with ten minutes of preservice singing) until 6:00 pm each Sunday. We have a children's Jesus and Me (JAM) program running concurrently for the final hour of the worship service, held in the church's education building next door. JAM is led by our part-time children's education director, assisted by ten to fifteen volunteers each Sunday.

The youth program is under the leadership of the Youth Pastor, with several volunteer youth leaders assisting the pastor to deliver the programs and build relationships with the teens. At present, the full youth group meets on Wednesdays, from 7:00 to 8:30 pm. Middle school and high school discipleship meetings take place at different times. The children and teens in the church go to a variety of different international schools or are home-schooled, but a high percentage of children attend Chiang Mai International School, located near the church. The next largest percentage attend Grace International School, which is quite a bit farther away.