



FALL 2021

**"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."**

**Jeremiah 29:11**

平安  
Peace

望  
Hope

信  
Faith

爱  
Love

# Connie Wieck Newsletter



Dear Friends in Christ,

平安 (Ping Ahn, Peace) from Central Illinois!

Yes, the wait continues to return to China and my English language teaching position at Luzhou Vocational and Technical College. Teachers still "stuck" overseas are hoping the Chinese government will allow invitation letters from our Chinese work institutions to be approved in November or December. Of course, this depends on both China's and the world's virus situation. In the meantime, I am fulfilling my Global Ministries duties as the Mission Advocate for the North Central Jurisdiction while, at the same time, actively keeping my connections to Luzhou. What have both entailed? Read on!

## The Mission Advocate Position: Gaining Skills and Insight

My tasks as Mission Advocate for the North Central Jurisdiction have me engaged in the following: Participating in Zoom meetings with churches, missionaries, and Global Ministries staff, connecting with my 8 Mission Advocate team members, updating and being updated by my CSGMs (Conference Secretaries of Global Ministries), hosting and attending virtual gatherings, passing on mission support videos and materials, emailing those interested in our UMC programs and performing whatever else is required. I will say this: My computer skills have greatly improved. I'm already refreshing stale classroom lessons with more interactive power points. Upon my return, my students will be in for some very engaging activities and learning experiences, that's for sure.

## On the Web: Check Out What the UMC Has to Offer

**umvim.org:** VIM (Volunteers in Mission) is calling you! This website offers in-person and virtual opportunities to serve as a mission volunteer. Have limited funds and time? Try virtual! Travel the globe, visit our missionaries, see their projects and places of service, and meet new friends. All of this takes place on your computer, in the comfort of your own home, through the platform Zoom. If you haven't already, give a virtual VIM journey (i.e., trip) a try.

**umcmmission.org:** Our Global Ministries website gives information of important news from staff, missionaries, UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief), the Advance and others. Learn how we as a denomination can strengthen our service to the Lord by joining in whatever the United Methodist Church calls us to do.

**Global Ministries on Facebook:** Yes, the General Board of Global Ministries is on Facebook! Sign up to receive notices, watch videos and share your own exciting church news.

**#Still-in-mission Series:** The Global Ministries missionary support team has been hosting missionaries, still in their placements, through the Still-in-Mission series on Zoom. Every month, you can choose from 4 itinerating missionaries, learn of his/her work, ask questions, and have opportunities to set up further virtual meetings for your own church groups. Each month's session is 1 hour. Go to [umcmmission.org/still\\_in\\_mission](https://umcmmission.org/still_in_mission) for dates, times, and registration information.

## My China Connections

Despite being in the US, I'm in daily contact with my students, colleagues, my church, the Amity Foundation staff and my Chinese friends. All this takes place through China's WeChat App on my phone. I've been able to help with contests, give lesson advice, record dialogues or videos for classroom use, and even participate in my church choir's prayers and Bible reading assignments. Read onward for recent highlights.

### The Luzhou Protestant Church: Professing a History of Christian Service

A heartfelt request came from the Luzhou Protestant Church.

Additions are underway to have permanent display panels at the entrance to the sanctuary. These panels will tell the history and service Luzhou Christians have given to the city and country over the years. Pastor Liao was keen to have an English version accompany the Chinese. Why



was this? Luzhou's Southwest Medical University has 300 international students (Nepalese, Indian, Pakistani, Africans, Phillippino), some of whom are Christians, with all using English as the universal means of communication. While I have

been the only regular non-Chinese attendee to the church, at times the foreign Christian students do come to services. Also, organizations such as the Amity

Foundation, with which Global Ministries is affiliated, bring overseas Christian guests to visit the Luzhou Gospel Hospital, the only church-run hospital in all of China.



For these reasons, Pastor Liao felt a bilingual version was imperative for everyone to better understand the church. I was therefore enlisted to make sure the display's English was accurate and grammatically correct. I felt so honored, being entrusted with such a meaningful task. I'll share here my efforts, in an edited portion of one panel:

"Since its arrival in 1890, Luzhou Christianity has made positive contributions to the development of Luzhou society. During the feudal wartime era, it set up hospitals to relieve both the wounded in the army and those who were civilians. It enhanced education and medical training skills among citizens. It donated to the People's government, and it gave strong support to the initial advancement of area colleges and universities. . . . The Bible, our Christian guidebook for living, requires us to 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' (Matthew 19:19). This is in perfect harmony with China's traditional culture which advocates loving others and promoting goodness. By actively carrying out humanitarian works, we Luzhou Christians can provide welfare and charity to those in greatest need. Our actions and practice of love are a constant in the community."



### Faith Revealed in a Pair of Shoes

In July, I received a text message from my Chinese church choir members. To appear more uniform when wearing robes, the ladies were ordering online the same black shoes. The cost would be 29.9 yuan (roughly \$5 US). I wasn't asked if I wanted a pair. I was asked my size so a pair would be waiting for me upon my arrival back in Luzhou.

For moments when I feel a China return slipping away, I think of that decisive, resolute purchase made just for me by my Christian singing sisters. During my long absence, I've received so much support and encouragement from the choir members but this one is the most precious: a lesson in faith, embodied in a pair of shoes.





## A Farmers' Daughter: Heartbreaking Disappointment Followed by Determination

This story begins in 2016. "Snow" Xue, a junior high school English teacher, invited me to visit Che and Chen on what she called "an adventurous Saturday outing." After 3-hours travel via bus, ferry, and foot, we arrived at a typical Chinese farmhouse, nestled amid lush, green rice fields. Che and Chen greeted us at their doorway. We enjoyed a home-cooked meal, heard stories of their difficult life, and were led to visit nearby neighbors, many of whom asked about their daughter. Without a secondary school nearby, the two had sent 13-year-old Liangyu to Luzhou to study but the cost of room and board, book and activity fee, and other expenses were too much of a burden. Che wanted her to stay at home and help her mother on the farm. Chen wanted her to be educated. That's where Snow and I stepped in. We offered assistance, with a promise to supplement her education with what the parents couldn't afford. After 5 years of financial help from Snow, myself, and a few in America, Liangyu joined her classmates on June 7 to take the nerve-racking 2-day gaokao, the college entrance exam. This standardized test is necessary for all wishing to go on to higher education. Liangyu's score, 517 out of 750, placed her at the lower end for university enrollment. She applied to nine second-tier, 4-year institutions. None of them accepted her.



Two options remained: give up her college dream and join her parents on the farm or repeat her senior year of high school with the hope that her 2022 gaokao score would be higher. Liangyu's determination won out. She chose the latter. It will be another year of grueling high school study, but she'll have the continued encouragement and support from those of us who care. Despite your set-back, Liangyu, we are very, very proud of you!



## A Reunion in the Works

My website, [connieinchina.org](http://connieinchina.org), is mostly viewed by church supporters or American friends. But on rare occasions, I get a surprise note from someone who has found me after many years.

"Teacher Connie, this is Kevin Hu," read my inbox. "I was your student in Nanchang, 30 years ago. Do you remember me?"

How could I possibly forget one of my first students in China?

Kevin and his 29 adult classmates were teachers from the rural countryside. The 1-year program, sponsored by the provincial government and the Amity Foundation, was created specifically for language educators from poor areas. Two overseas teachers, myself being one of them, led classes in English listening, speaking, writing, teaching methodology and culture.

Our students, ages 18 to 57, traveled great distances to commit to this unique learning opportunity. We stayed on campus, in somewhat primitive living conditions. There was no heat (lows of 10 degrees), no air-conditioning or fans (highs of 90 degrees), no washing machines, no modernized classroom equipment (just a blackboard and the classic cassette tape machine), few usable textbooks, and yet, priceless learning took place. Despite physical discomforts and our cultural differences, by the end of that year, we had formed a close-knit family.

Kevin and I are now eager to find more former students. So far, we've connected with 5. We are currently working on widening that circle to include those enrolled during my second and third years in that program. Our plan is to have the classes of '91, '92 and '93 meet for a weekend reunion in the school that hosted us, Nanchang Normal University in Jiangxi Province. When I return to China, we'll begin in earnest for a tentative 2023 gathering. For now, we're working on increasing that contact list to at least 25, out of a total of about 90 in the program. With such powerful technology tools at our finger tips, I'm confident we can get there.



## Pray For: 祈祷

- Liangyu, as she repeats her senior year of high school, and her parents who work hard to support her.
- My former students, to reconnect and help plan for our future in-person, +30-year reunion.
- The Luzhou church choir members, whose strong Christian faith continues to uplift, enlighten and inspire.

## Salary Support Needed for My China Return

How very, very grateful I am to you, my partnering mission supporters, as I enter my 30th year with Global Ministries. Missionaries are asked to raise \$25,000 a year as a commitment of our service to the Lord and the UMC. If you or your church hasn't already, consider giving to my salary support through the Advance. I've included the necessary form to complete. Online giving is also found at: [umcmmission.org](http://umcmmission.org), under "Give," "covenant relationships," "support a missionary," "Wieck, C.", Advance #10672Z.

### Current Address

Connie Wieck  
710 Mulberry Street  
Marshall, IL 62441  
Tel: (217) 293-1208  
Cell: (217) 921-4909

# 平安

(Ping Ahn)  
Peace

### After-China-Return Address

Please copy and paste the below English-Chinese address on any packages or letters you send.  
This will ensure I get them!

Connie Wieck 康妮 (外教)  
泸州职业技术学院  
Luzhou Vocational and Technical College  
龙马潭区长桥路2号  
Long Ma Tan District, No. 2 Chang Qiao Road  
四川省泸州市 646005  
Luzhou, Sichuan 646005  
P.R. of CHINA  
电话 (Tel): 18281161095; 13568622055

### Email, Websites

**[corneliaw2000@hotmail.com](mailto:corneliaw2000@hotmail.com)**

**[connieinchina.org](http://connieinchina.org)** (my blog with stories, personal reflections, updates, and photos)

**[amityfoundation.org](http://amityfoundation.org)** (our partner organization in China, The Amity Foundation)

### Invite Me to Zoom with You!

The missionary support team has recently informed the 250-plus missionaries, serving both overseas and in the U.S., that only virtual visits with church supporters will take place, perhaps until early 2022. This decision was made to keep all safe due to the highly contagious Delta variant. In a few instances, in-person is allowed but with GBGM approval. I am always available to virtually meet with you. I can set up the meeting for your adult or youth groups, mission committee folk, congregations, UMW, MYF or UMM. I can center on any topic you'd like, including teaching you some Chinese. Since February, I've Zoomed with the following: Mahomet UMW (IL), Sangamon District UMW (IL), Anna UMW (IL), Clemson UMC Adult Sunday School class (Clemson, SC), Champaign 1st UMW (IL), Prospect UMW (Lawrenceville, GA), Ebony UMW (Ebony, VA), Belleville UMW (IL). It's been such blessing to fellowship and spend such special time with others. Join the list and contact me soon.