

THE GRACE COMMISSION

JAN &
FEB 2025



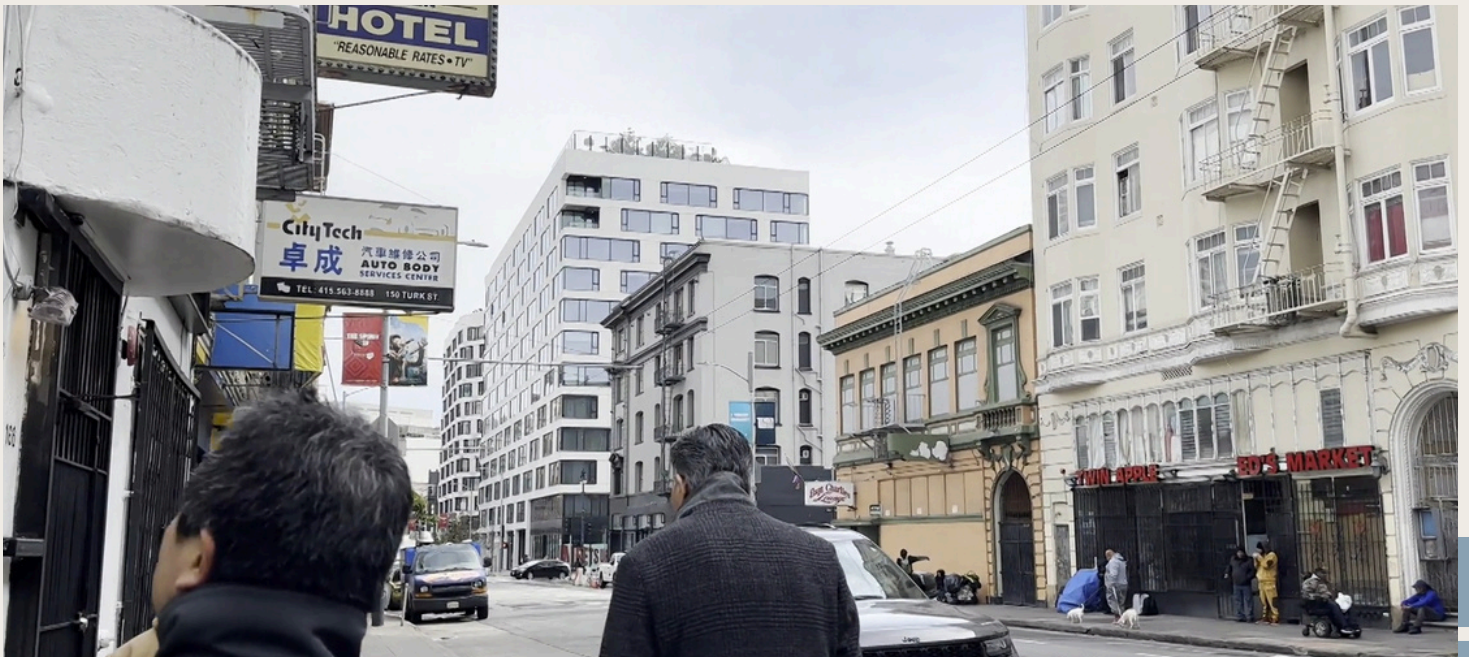
SERVING SAN FRANCISCO

*The monthly
publication of
Grace Bible
Church*

God is moving in 2025! This February, we launched the new year with a missions trip to San Francisco, joining SF City Impact in serving the Tenderloin community with resource distributions and spiritual support.

Read on to hear Johs' incredible testimony and how we can continue to pray for and contribute to their work.





ECHOES OF THE *Tenderloin*



by **JOHN WU**

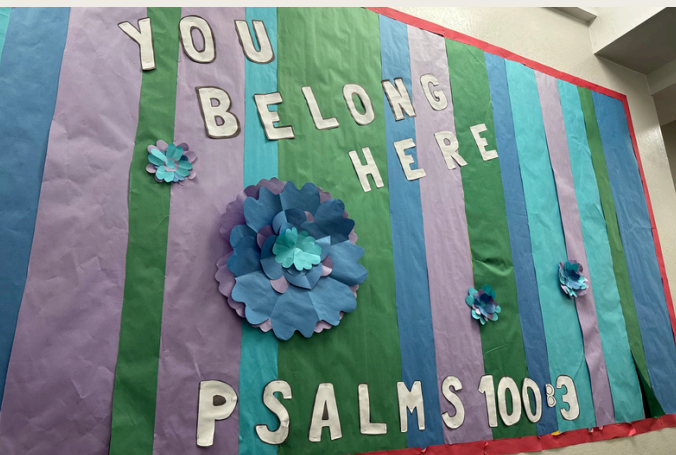
The Hospitality Hub. A cathedral of need, its glass windows and wooden doors replaced with the grime of city life. Giulio and I, small figures in this theater of need, stood by an empty altar for folding chairs. Fear, a serpent coiling in our guts hissed its warnings. “I’m afraid,” Giulio whispered. I, a mirror to his unease, confessed the same. This was the Tenderloin. This was where hope battled despair in the alleyways, and every meal, every article of clothing, was a victory.

The Team & the Mission



Our fellowship – six pilgrims seeking purpose – embarked upon a journey to San Francisco. Pastor David, the leader. Pastor Hyun, the ponderer. Edi, the tank. Jessica, the guide. Giulio, the enthusiast. And I, the rookie.

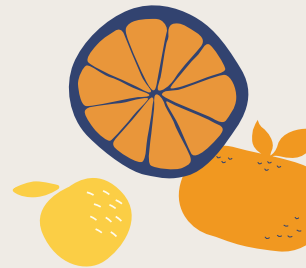
We were drawn to City Impact, a sanctuary built by Pastor Roger Huang and his wife, Maite, over four decades ago. They sought to illuminate these shadowed corners, to offer not just sustenance, but something more... redemption? Transformation? The questions themselves hung heavy in the San Francisco air. They sought to mend the shattered fragments of lives, to offer not just bread, but a glimpse of the divine. A daunting task in this city of contrasts, where golden gates masked the darkness within.



Day 1: The Warehouse and Whispers

The warehouse. A labyrinth of donations, a testament to both generosity and the sheer scale of need. We, like worker ants, toiled amidst the towering stacks, sorting, organizing, disposing. Later, at the Hospitality Hub, before the evening meal, I sought a hollow victory over my fear. I stood with Jethro, one of City Impact's assistant managers, greeting the arriving guests. A fleeting sense of control.

But when Jethro, like a phantom, vanished, the fear returned, a familiar specter. Preceding the distribution of meals, Pastor Andre offered words of comfort and inspiration, a reminder that spiritual sustenance was just as vital as the food we shared. That night, under the watchful gaze of the city lights, Eli led us on a journey. Not just a tour, but an initiation. A glimpse into the heart of San Francisco, its beauty and its brokenness intertwined like the threads of a Shakespearean tragedy.



“... *spiritual* sustenance was just as vital as the *food* we shared.”





Day 2: Doors and the Dance of Humanity

The second day dawned, and the rhythm of service continued. Pastor David and Edi, like tireless foragers, crisscrossed the city, gathering the bounty of Trader Joe's. Meanwhile, we, the harvesters, descended upon the Hospitality Hub, sorting and organizing the newly acquired treasures. A symphony of bags, a ballet of boxes, all orchestrated to feed the hungry.

But before the afternoon's work, we were granted a hint into the heart of City Impact. We visited their private school, a haven of learning amidst the surrounding turmoil. School was dismissed, yet we caught a glimpse of a young girl, bright-eyed and full of potential. It was a stark contrast to the challenges faced by so many in the Tenderloin, a reminder that hope could be found even in the most difficult circumstances.

“Perhaps
this is a peek
into the *renewing*
of minds and
filling of the
Spirit.”



Later, armed with treats and blessings, we ventured into a government housing project. A vertical village of forgotten souls. We descended its concrete stairs, floor by floor, knocking on doors, offering not just treats, but a moment of recognition, a spark of human connection. My initial timidity, a hesitant tap against the wood, gradually transformed into a confident rap, a declaration of presence. Giulio, a maestro of empathy, orchestrated a symphony of smiles and shared moments. That evening, over breaking bread (or pizza crust), Angel, a lawyer who traded courtroom battles for battles against despair, spoke of the "high" he experienced through service.

A spiritual euphoria, a transcendence of the mundane. Is it so different, this high, from the exhilaration of art, the rapture of music, the ecstasy of love? We are, after all, creatures of passion, yearning for connection, for meaning, for a taste of the divine. Perhaps this is a peek into the renewing of minds and filling of the Spirit.

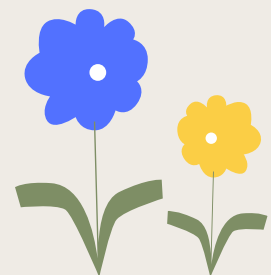


Day 3: The Garments of Grace & the Veil of the City



The Design Lab. A sanctuary of fabrics, a silent testament to the human need for dignity. Here, amidst the meticulously organized stacks, Pastor David, Edi, Jessica, and I confronted a mountain of brand-new clothing, a veritable Everest of generosity, a testament to the compassion that flowed towards those in need.

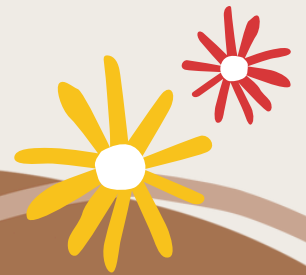
Four years' worth of garments, a legacy of unworn finery, a stark reminder of the countless souls who sought solace and renewal. Six rooms, overflowing with the pristine bounty of manufacturers and retailers, waited to be sifted, sorted, and prepared for distribution. Children's clothing, whispered the unseen voices, was the most precious commodity. These miniature garments, imbued with the fleeting innocence of youth, held a power beyond their simple utility. They were talismans of hope, fragile shields against the harsh realities of the world.





While we, the humble acolytes of the needle and thread (or rather, the detagger and sorter), toiled in this temple of textiles, Pastor Hyun and Giulio, like latter-day mendicants, traversed the city, gathering the daily bread from the overflowing horn of Trader Joe's. As the day waned, and the shadows lengthened, we departed, driving back through a veil of rain and fog, the city lights shimmering like phantom jewels in the mist, a final, fleeting glimpse of the city's enigmatic heart.





Reflection

This odyssey... it was not merely a trip. It was a rebirth. A baptism in the waters of compassion. We arrived seeking to serve, but we departed transformed. The echoes of the Tenderloin, the whispers of its inhabitants, will forever resonate within us. Our admiration goes out to the dedicated staff and volunteers of City Impact, such as Ed, their head of operations, and his family—his wife and daughter—who made the courageous decision to leave the comforts of Hawaii and a secure government job to answer this calling. Their sacrifice is a testament to the power of faith and the depth of their commitment.



“Pray for this *city*.
Pray for its *people*. Pray
for the enduring power
of *hope*.” ✨ ✨

City Impact, and organizations like it, are faced with a tremendous volume of requests for assistance, highlighting the ongoing and extensive need in the community. Learn more about SF City Impact and how you can help at <https://sfcityimpact.com/>.

And pray. Pray for this city. Pray for its people. Pray for the enduring power of hope. We pray that this experience is not wasted, that the good we witnessed and the small part we played will ripple outwards, impacting not only the lives we touched in San Francisco but extending beyond its borders, a testament to the enduring power of God’s love. ✨



LOOKING AHEAD

GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE

Apr 18 Fri

Joint service with ISBC
Floor 2 at 7:30pm

EASTER SERVICE

Apr 20 Sat

10:30am at the Yau's
Please RSVP with Wini by 4/17

MEXICO MISSION TRIPS

Mar 30 Sun
Jun 8 Sun
Aug 29-31 (Family Trip)

Please see Edi Chen if interested

2025 SUMMER RETREAT

July 4-6 Fri-Sun

San Diego
Please see Edi Chen if you have
any questions

