



# Catherine Lee

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**Location:** Taiwan



**What I do:** Working with the Taiwan Episcopal Church, supporting the church and kindergarten ministry of the Diocese of Taiwan



**Equipping and encouraging** where followers of Jesus are in a minority

Summer greetings to you all from Taiwan!

Flying cockroaches, rats, angry people, loneliness; what do they all have in common? They're all things we're afraid of in Taiwan! Yes, these are the most common answers when our kindergarten children and their parents are asked what they are scared of. Every week we invite some of our kindergarten parents into the classroom to let the children practise their English by asking them questions. After asking about what animals, colours and ice-cream they like and don't like, the children move on to asking, "What country do you like?", with Taiwan at No. 1, and Japan at No. 2, and then, "What country don't you like?" When the parents hesitate, the children shout out suggested answers in Chinese and English. Even at five years old, the children are very aware of Taiwan's precarious international situation, though we've come up with the answer "fighting countries" as a way to avoid further political discussion!

To the question, "What building do you like?" the children and parents alike all answer "Taipei 101", Taiwan's tallest building. It was recently made even more famous when Alex Honnold made history by successfully free-soloing all 101 floors to the top without any ropes or safety equipment, and it is now the first port of call for all my international visitors. I went with our dean's wife, Linda, to watch Alex Honnold's feat live, while millions around the world watched the livestream on Netflix. What excitement and relief when he got to the top in only 90 minutes! As Alex Honnold says, "You will always feel fear, but over time you will realise the only way to truly manage your fear is to broaden your comfort zone." Just watching it all was nerve-wracking enough; certainly, it was one way to broaden our comfort zones!

It took 10 years for Alex Honnold to get permission and prepare for that climb, with some media reports saying that Taiwan was the only country willing to take up his challenge to free-solo up a skyscraper. Having lived here for a while, I think I understand why. Taiwan is a place where the whole concept of risk is redefined. Earthquakes, typhoons, military tensions and uncertainty about the future are a tangible part of life in Taiwan, they're not just imaginary threats. For those of us living here, daily life is stable, safe and orderly. We have regular earthquake and fire drills, typhoon warning systems work well, construction codes for new high-rise buildings are closely followed. People leave their belongings lying around and nobody steals them, public transportation is reliable and safe, healthcare is excellent, and there is a very strong sense of community, coming together in disasters and emergencies, including in the pandemic.



*One big happy Lee family – with  
Bishop-Elect Keith Lee*

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**With Jesus  
With each other  
To the edges**



For those of us living here, free-soloing up Taipei 101 seems but a small risk, one well worth taking!

In the middle of all this, and managing their own risks, we have Taiwan's booming semiconductor industry sitting right at the centre of the global economy, an industry that over decades has built a whole ecosystem of infrastructure, suppliers, expertise and talent, all centred on Taiwan's west coast. Huge numbers of high-rise apartment buildings are being built to house the young professionals moving into the area and working in the semiconductor industry, many of whom are initially sceptical

towards the Christian faith. Encouraged by church members living there, and as part of a wider development plan, plus the vision and enthusiasm of the Bishop of Taiwan, Lennon Yuan-Rung Chang, the Taiwan Episcopal Church has planted three new churches right there. All are appropriately named for the areas they serve. We have St Thomas' Church, Linkou, named after the disciple who moved from doubt to faith, St Matthew's Church, Hsinchu, named after the tax collector who changed direction and used his writing skills to produce the first gospel, and St Gabriel's Church, Beitun, Taichung, named after the messenger from God who proclaimed the good news. These small churches are just getting started; please do pray for them, as there is much to do and much good news to share!

On 9 May, 2026, the Rev Keith Chen-Cheng Lee was elected to succeed Bishop Chang as the next Bishop of Taiwan. Everything went smoothly; thank you for your prayers. We are now planning for his consecration on 7 November, 2026, followed by his installation in April 2027, when Bishop Chang retires. With our new bishop's surname being Lee, we have moved almost full circle, as when I first came to Taiwan in 1999, the president of Taiwan was Lee. All of us Lees at the bishop's election took a photo that day – there's me, Rev Keith Lee, my good friend, Sheerah Lee, and Rev Richard Lee. One big happy Lee family!

I've run out of space to tell you about all the delightful visitors I've had recently, but a big welcome to my nephew Lawrence and his wife, Anja, who came for Chinese New Year, to Rev Nicky Chater and her daughter Harriet, from my very supportive CMS link church, St John's Church, Neville's Cross, Durham, UK, and who've been here several times, they came in March. And not forgetting Bishop James Boliget and clergy from the Episcopal Diocese of Central Philippines who came to visit St James' Church, Taichung, in April, renewing friendships we established over 20 years ago, which led to St James (under their rector, Rev Charles C T Chen) raising the money to build 12 churches in the Philippines – but that's a whole other grace-filled story!

Thank you again for all your prayers and support, and please do continue!

Catherine Lee



*Photos from top to bottom: Visiting Taipei 101 (note the new "No Climbing" sign!) with visitors (photos 2 and 3); Watching Alex Honnold free-solo up Taipei 101 (photos 4 and 5)*



## Equipping where followers of Jesus are in a minority

**I've been encouraged to hear from others** who are part of my wider area of work.

In Pakistan more women are teaching theology and playing a key part in training the next generation of Christian workers. **Read more at [churchmissionsociety.org/equip](https://churchmissionsociety.org/equip)**