

# Sharing Our Story...

## Llanelwy Community Church, North Wales



John Thompson is minister of Llanelwy Community Church, who have recently been stepping out to reach their community and running Alpha – the dual screen Chinese version. John explains more here, saying, “When we step out in obedience, God sometimes works in ways you could never have planned...”

I am the minister at LLCC and when I was at the Fresh Streams conference, I believed that God had spoken to me about getting more involved in evangelism, both personally and at LLCC. In October 2018, our small church stepped out in faith with some trepidation and decided to start an Alpha course with meals. I challenged the congregation (and myself) to pray and decide on five people each to invite.

One of our Alpha leaders, Tony, is a native Chinese speaker and works in research alongside a number of Chinese students. Three of these students who he invited started to come. Bizarrely in God’s timing, a Chinese daughter-in-law of another church member happened to have come over from China to visit for about six weeks. In terms of languages, she had Chinese, and pretty good Welsh, but only a small amount of English. She was interested in finding out more about faith and she came too. There was then some discussion in Chinese in the group time and Tony was able to translate during the group discussion. This was fabulous. However, we were aware that those who did not have English as their first language may have been struggling to fully understand the video.

Before this, when advertising the Alpha at the regular toddler group, I was showing the Alpha video advert to the group on my laptop. Someone who was there kindly gifted the church a 55 inch TV thinking that this would be an improvement for us for our back room. Consequently, our tech wiz, Phil, and I got our heads together. We realised that we could move the telly through to the front temporarily. We could then project using our regular system in English with English subtitles and then simultaneously play the video in Chinese with no sound and Chinese subtitles. Phil contacted Alpha UK to see if Chinese Alpha with subtitles was available. It is – in Mandarin! Alpha UK then helped us to register a Chinese Alpha (all free) and the videos with Chinese subtitles were then all available to download.

So we had Nicky and Pippa Gumbel in dual languages! It all went like clockwork ... almost. Phil started them in sync perfectly and it looked superb. There is however just one bit where the English version has been updated to remove ‘the strimmer story’. Can’t say I blame them – it is an amazing story, but a bit harrowing. However, this is still in the Chinese version – so our Chinese-English subtitle sync got a bit lost there, but as the pictures changed, we realised where we were up to and we picked up the sync again.

The Alpha course was a really good course for us as a Church, praise God, and it was great to have the Chinese students joining us for a good number of sessions while they were over here. That was a huge encouragement too. We were just blown away by the way that God used this course in a language most of us didn’t know, to reach people – some of whom we really didn’t expect to come, using resources that we didn’t even realise that we would have. And all we did was step out in obedience. God is more than able to do the rest.

*What is God calling you to step out and do?*

