

# *Saltshaker*

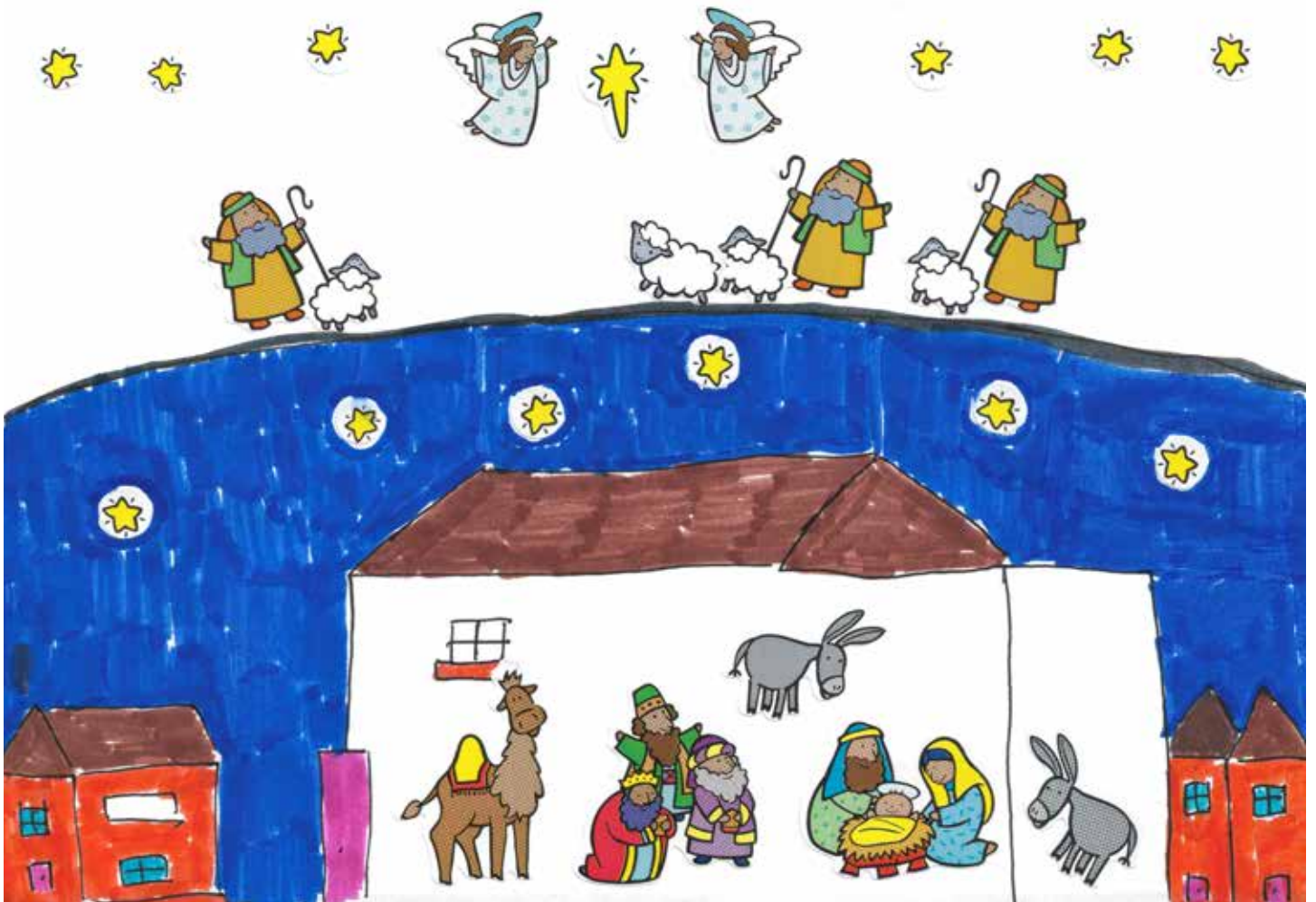
A Trinity Methodist Church Publication



TRINITY  
Methodist Church  
卫理公会三一堂

DECEMBER 2018

MCI (P) 036/08/2018



*Illustration by Colette Yip, 10*

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# iChrist Incarnation



..... Rev Sng Chong Hui

The newest iPhone “incarnation”.

This was how Apple described its iPhone7 and 7 Plus when these models were first launched.

In the bible, the word “Incarnation” refers to the second Person of the Godhead, Jesus Christ, who took the form of humanity to save us.

The word “Incarnation” thus holds a special meaning for the Church. And also for me. (By the way, the church I used to serve at is called Methodist Church of the Incarnation.)

It is because of the Incarnation that we know what God is truly like. The invisible God became visible.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God became like us. The Incarnation is evidence that God understands our plight.

“He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering.” (Isaiah 53:3)

Molokai is an island in the Hawaiian archipelago. In the late 1800s, there was an outbreak of the deadly and highly contagious disease called leprosy.

The disease affects the skin, mucous membranes, and nerves, causing discoloration and lumps on the skin and, in severe cases, disfigurement and deformities. Back then, there was no cure for this disease.

In order to keep the disease at bay and prevent it from spreading, the government sent lepers to the island of Molokai.

In 1873, there was a young, brave Catholic priest named Father Damien who volunteered to spend his life serving the leper colony on this island.

When he arrived, he was startled to see people who were not only suffering physically but socially, emotionally, and spiritually. In the leper colony he saw extreme drunkenness, immorality, abuse, and a heavy sense of total hopelessness.

What he saw were people who desperately needed to know where God was in their lives.

And so, in 1873 Father Damien lived among the 700 lepers. He knew the dangers and the inevitable result of so much personal contact with a highly contagious disease. He built hospitals, clinics, and churches and some 600 coffins.

Whenever a church service was held, he would warmly and lovingly address the lepers as “my dear brethren”.

Then one morning in 1885, at the age of 45, in a calm clear voice, instead of “my dear brethren”, he began with: “My fellow lepers, I am one of you now.”

The humble priest became one of them. He became for them the iChrist Incarnation. It changed their lives for all of eternity for he answered their question: “Where is God?”

Today, people are still asking: “Where is God?”

The only convincing answer you can give is when you become for them the iChrist Incarnation.

This Christmas, may you be the iChrist Incarnation for your pre-believing family and friends.



# Harvest at the Marketplace



Dorcas Yim

I became the principal of a childcare centre, Acekidz@ Trinity Methodist Church, in December 2015.

The month before I joined Acekidz, God spoke to me through 1 Kings 17:13:

“Elijah said to her (the widow), ‘Don’t be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a loaf of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son.’”

God used this verse to send me to Acekidz as I was reluctant to obey this calling.

I had to be like the widow, putting myself last, serving God’s agenda first.

I had to trust God to let go of my last meal and to trust God, to make the first meal and offer it to God. My needs would be met as “The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the Lord sends rain on the land.”

My time at Acekidz was not simply to make a living. My personal mission statement is found in Isaiah 52:7:

“How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’ ”

God is faithful. He helped me to sow the seeds of the Gospel among the staff and children.

During that period, one teacher and her fiancée came to know Christ. The teacher was baptised at Trinity Methodist Church. They are now married and live in China.

Two aunties, one a member of staff at TMC and the other at Acekidz, also received Christ.

God also gave me an opportunity to lead to Christ the grandmother of a child who studied at Acekidz.

I thank God for this harvest. The harvest would not have been possible if God had not blessed me with several Christian ladies from TMC who supported me and Acekidz.

There were three sisters in particular who walked alongside me and the centre, praying with and for us in all matters. They also supported and encouraged us in monthly bible studies, prayer-walking in the centre, joining us for field trips and providing staff with yummy food.

There were other TMC Christian sisters interceding for us too, ever concerned about my own walk with God and assuring me that I was not alone in this work.

I am very thankful to God for sending me to do this work. He provided me with co-workers to labour in this field. In the marketplace, we still can fulfil our mission and calling because whoever God calls, He empowers. Our response to that calling is simply to trust and obey.



# B.L.E.S.S

*your family and friends*



## ABOUT

The B.L.E.S.S Initiative was started in 2015 to provide simple steps on how we may learn to be a witness for Christ within our various spheres of influence. The acronym stands for Begin in prayer, Listen to a friend, Eat with a friend, Serve (with) a friend, Share your story.

Head over to <http://www.tmc.org.sg/xmas2018.html> to check out how you can meaningfully engage with your family, friends and the wider community this Christmas.

A summary of the activities are listed below.

### 1. Christmas at Home

Always wanted to throw your own Christmas party at home but not sure how to? Scratching your head over how to bring the message of Jesus to your friends or family? Fret not, we've prepared a kit of ideas and tips to get you started!

### 2. A Tot-ful Morning Christmas Celebration | 13 Dec | 9-10.30AM | TMC

A Tot-ful Morning is a weekly Thursday gathering for young children from 0-3 years and their caregivers, where activities are planned to foster learning and a time of bonding. A Christmas edition will be held on 13 Dec, so head down with your tots in tow!

### 3. YAMY Christmas Dinner | 15 Dec | 6PM | TMC Plaza

Gather with fellow young adults in TMC for an evening of great food, fun and fellowship as we celebrate the festive season. Even better if you've got a friend (or two) to bring along, the more the merrier!

### 4. Christmas on Orchard Road | 16-23 Dec | Full Day | Orchard Road

Celebrate Christmas in Singapore (CCIS) is an annual event at Orchard Road helmed by a group of Christians. The event seeks to commemorate the Gift of Jesus Christ through a multimedia celebration of performances, interactive activities, carols, floats, mass choirs, and much more. Don't miss this!

### 5. Fearless Youth Ministry Camp: Wonder | 19-22 Dec | Full Day | TMC

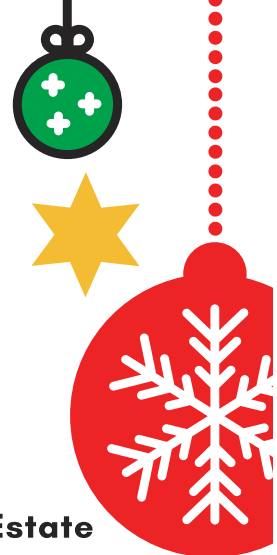
Our fearless youths have a reputation for planning some of the most happening events in TMC. Their annual year end camp promises 4 days of (very) creative games, a refreshing time of worship and solid speaker sessions. The plus side: You'll get to do it all with your friends, or make new ones!

### 6. WSCS Domestic Helpers Party | 23 Dec | 10AM-12:30PM | TMC Upp Room

Our domestic helpers are almost always busy with their daily household chores or caring for us and our children. We invite them to take a morning off and celebrate Christmas with their friends. This is the perfect event for them to unwind over a time of food, songs and fellowship.

# B.L.E.S.S

*the community*



## **7. Antioch Toa Payoh Outreach Party | 1 Dec | 10AM-3PM | Toa Payoh Estate**

Antioch Toa Payoh Outreach is a ministry that seeks to reach out to the poor, needy and elderly living in one-room flats in the housing estate of Toa Payoh. This Christmas, bring the gifts of hope, joy and love to those who need them the most.

## **8. Christmas Carols MyVillage | 9 Dec | 7-7.30PM | MyVillage S'goon Gdns**

There is no better way to spread the Christmas message and cheer than through good ol' Christmas carols! If you've got a penchant for belting out tunes, then it's time to leave the constraints of your shower and bring those Christmas melodies to the streets of Serangoon Gardens.

## **9. Institute of Mental Health (IMH) Visit | 9 Dec | 9AM-1PM | IMH**

Come minister to the residents of the Institute through the sharing of the Christmas message, and the singing of songs. Watch them express themselves freely and joyfully as they respond to your company and the Good News you bring.

## **10. Youth Avenue Camp | 11-13 Dec | Full Day | NSRCC Changi**

Youth Avenue was established is a gathering place for youths in the Serangoon North area, with the aim of reaching out and impacting these young lives through the provision of programmes and services. Sign up as a participant (if you're still a youth) or a volunteer!

## **11. Youth Avenue Christmas Party | 22 Dec | 7-9PM | Youth Avenue**

Every year, volunteers from TMC put together a Christmas party for the youths at Youth Avenue and their families. With help needed for decor, table setting, games, catering, hosts and a live band, there is definitely an area you can serve in. Team work makes the (Christmas) dream work, so sign up now!

## **12. St. Luke's Eldercare Centre Visit | 27 Dec | 12PM | St. Luke's Eldercare Centre**

St Luke's ElderCare provides a range of day care services to help families take care of their elderly loved ones. TMC regularly builds relationships with the elderly at St Luke's Eldercare Serangoon Centre, so join if you want to spread some festive cheer to our elderly friends.

## **13. CSL Methodist Children's Home Outing and Dinner | 27 Dec | 3-8PM | CSL**

Chen Su Lan Home provides loving, Christian nurture for disadvantaged children of all races and religions and TMC's ministry with the Home spans many years. Join the children and other volunteers on a fun outing, followed by a Christmas Dinner!

### **FOR ENQUIRIES**

Please direct all enquiries to Kim ([kimwoon@gmail.com](mailto:kimwoon@gmail.com)) or Claire ([claire@tmc.org.sg](mailto:claire@tmc.org.sg)), or leave your enquiry, name and contact details at the iSunday Counter



# Empowered by the Holy Spirit

## Qualified to BLESS



*Chew Kim Ling*

I used to associate serving God with my serving in church activities such as the Children's Ministry on Sundays.

God's Kingdom purpose for me in my workplace never really crossed my mind.

This started to change in 2014 when God called me to serve in the Witness & Evangelism committee. There, I began to learn more about marketplace ministry and how God has a divine purpose for each of His people whatever their station in life.

If we are to believe that only pastors or evangelists are "qualified" to evangelise, then we would have fallen into the trap of the evil one and missed being a part of God's amazing redemptive plan for the world.

When God calls, He will equip.

The Holy Spirit began its work to address my lack of confidence in witnessing and evangelising in 2015 when our church started the BLESS initiative.

Now, I intentionally endeavour to BLESS when I meet or catch up with colleagues and friends.

I ask the Holy Spirit to remind me to listen more and speak less, to learn to speak with grace yet let my speech be seasoned with salt, to build common ground or bridges, to show love in action and meet people at their point of need. At the end of each encounter, I never cease to be amazed as I see God's hand strengthening relationships and producing fruitful outcomes.

The period of relearning prepared me better when I took up a one-and-a-half year overseas work assignment in Bangkok in 2016.





In Thailand, the Buddhist faith is prevalent and the culture non-confrontational. But God showed His favour as I and my Christian friends (my office's weekly lunch fellowship group and local church's care group) prayed for opportunities for me to witness for Him.

In 2017, we were blessed with the rare opportunity to host the first ever Christmas party in the bank's premises for more than 50 pre-believing Thai colleagues. This was given the stamp of approval by the CEO of the bank.

We subsequently found out that our Thai Buddhist CEO had studied in a Christian school when he was young.

During the celebration, the Holy Spirit empowered us to share the Gospel boldly, yet with gentleness and respect. It was a blessed time where we sang Christmas carols, ate together and exchanged gifts.

We prayed for our colleagues in dual languages and God's love was felt. We thanked God for using us to sow and water the seeds and prayed that He would cause the seeds to grow and bear fruit in His time (1 Cor 3:6-7).

It has been a big faith-building and mountain-top experience for me. I have seen how, with our mighty God, all things are possible (Matt 19:26).

I pray that all of us will tap on the power of the Holy Spirit to live out a life of salt and light, to point people whom God has placed in our lives to Christ Jesus (Matt 5:13-16).

***“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)***

# Give Time to Receive More



*Lim Sue Yien*

It all started with a reluctant heart.

Last August, during the sermon series based on Timothy Keller's "Every Good Endeavor", the congregation was invited to join one of seven groups, each representing a sphere in society.

Carine was invited to lead the Family and Homes sphere, together with Emily Wilfred. She was in charge of administering the chat groups, and organising at least two gatherings where people facing the same situations in life would come together to share common experiences of their marketplace ministries. Although she agreed to lead, it was primarily out of obligation. And when she was again asked to help out in a new ministry, A Tot-ful Morning, a few months later in November, she agreed because of her "can't-say-no" personality.

The sense of duty that she started off with in agreeing to get involved in both ministries was soon overcome by gratitude.

The 20 members of the homemakers sphere got on incredibly with one another. Even today, more than one year on after its genesis, their chat group is still active, with people sharing daily devotions and praying for one another. They have developed close spiritual friendships, meeting up in smaller groups of three or four, or even one-on-one with Carine. Had she not said "yes" to this area of service, she would never have met these "spiritual mothers". God had clearly put them in her way. As one of the homemakers said, she felt God was leading her to take care of Carine.

The defining moment for Carine was when her son Gabriel contracted pneumonia in May this year. It was a difficult period for her. She did not sleep for a week as Gabriel has a history of fits when he is unwell. On top of that, she was juggling the household chores as she had recently released her domestic helper, and was still leading worship services. Even after that week was over, Gabriel took a long time to fully recover.

Alone at home to deal with the chaos, she found herself "helper-less but not helpless". God carried her through this period with the love of her new spiritual friends from both the Family sphere and A Tot-ful Morning ministry.

One offered to take Gabriel and her to the hospital. Another got a box of cupcakes delivered to her home to give her an additional boost of energy and happy hormones, and activated the PrayerNet to pray for her. Above all, the chat group stayed by her side praying for her, claiming God's promises daily. They vowed not to stop praying until Gabriel was fully healed.



*Carine (far right) with the Family & Home sphere*



This past year has been filled with spiritual lessons for Carine.

The first and foremost is how important and powerful prayer can be. Carine learnt this from the determined older women who journeyed with her. They were not just there physically, but more importantly, lent their support in prayer. It suddenly dawned on Carine why God had placed her in the Family sphere and A Tot-ful Morning.

She who gives time will receive more. Through her experience, Carine realised that God wasn't so interested in the things she did for Him in church, but that God wanted her to experience the love of her fellow servants in Christ. God showed His care through others.

Now, Carine serves with a totally different attitude. She does it because she wants to do it. She no longer dreads going for A Tot-ful Morning, even though Thursday mornings are still a big challenge in time-management. In fact, she now looks forward to Thursday mornings as she believes that God will sort out the logistics for her. She also organised another gathering with her Family sphere members in July 2018 just to spend time with them, even though it is no longer expected of her to do so.

Having learnt to see the good in everything, her advice to those who are being asked to serve in church is: "So, just obey, and you will be blessed".

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*Carine is a mother of two young children, Gabriel, aged five, and Gracelyn aged eight.*

*Married to Daryl who introduced her to TMC, she has been attending this church for 11 years. She serves as a worship leader at the 11.15am English service and a "godma" at the A Tot-ful Morning ministry for 0-3 year olds held on Thursday mornings. Carine is an active member of the Jagas small group, regularly opening her home for small group meetings.*

***"Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered." (Proverbs 11:25)***



## THE LOCAL CHURCH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE & STAFF COMMITTEE 2018/19,



(L-R)

Front Row: Wong Ting Ling (*Lay Executive Staff, Outreach & Social Concerns; 4th Reserve Lay Delegate to TRAC*); Yong (as he then was) (*Assistant Pastor*)

2nd Row: Debbie Tng (*PPRSC member*); Tan Kim Lam (*Lay Ministry Staff, Discipleship*); George Sathiasingam (*Children's Ministry Chairperson*); Violet Khor (*Local Preacher*); Judy Yip (*Honorary Steward*); Nerine Seng (*Glowing Years Ministry Chairperson*)

3rd row: Koh Eu Beng (*Boys' Brigade 47th Coy Captain*); Eddie Goh (*Lay Ministry Staff, Mandarin Service*); Rev Pa Ling (*Girls' Brigade 55th Coy Captain*); Mary Foo (*Women's Society of Christian Service, President*); Carol Lie (*Mandarin Ministry 1st Reserve Lay Delegate to TRAC*); Toh Soo Yee (*Assistant Secretary*); Eugenia Koh (*Outreach & Social Concerns Lay Leader*); Christina Choo (*Church Governance Chairperson*); Pamela Lim (*Prayer & Intercession Chairperson*)

4th row: Rev Alvin Chan (*Pastor-in-charge; Nominations Chairperson*); Edwin Koh (*Property Management Chairperson*); Lay Delegate to TRAC; PPRSC Chairperson); Tan Seng Hee (*Small Groups Chairperson; 2nd Reserve Lay Delegate to TRAC*)

Last row: Jacob Cheng (*Discipleship & Nurture Chairperson*); Richard Seng (*Lay Leader; PPRSC member; 2nd Lay Delegate to TRAC*)

# EE AND THE PASTOR-PARISH RELATIONS AND MEMBERS OF STAFF



Not in picture:

Alice Lim (*Lay Ministry Staff, Children's Ministry*); Ang Hern Shung (*Lay Ministry Staff, Youth Ministry and Prayer & Intercession*); Ang Poh Kit (*Associate Lay Leader*); Bryan Chong (*Church Treasurer*); Caroline Lim (*PPRSC member*); Claire Chong (*Lay Executive Staff, Missions and Evangelism*); Daryl Ong (*Worship & Music Chairperson*); Dexter Chia (*Secretary, PPRSC member*); Hum Sin Hoon (*LCEC Chairperson; 1st Lay Delegate to TRAC; PPRSC member*); Jeremiah David (*Youth Ministry Co-Chairperson*); Kelvin Tan (*Missions Chairperson*); Khor Tong Hong (*Honorary Steward*); Nicole Gan (*Youth Ministry Co-Chairperson*); Rev Sng Chong Hui (*Pastor*)

Kengadharan VK (*Associate Lay Leader*); Lee Park Ming (*Lay Executive Staff, Discipleship & Nurture*); Ps Timothy

dren's Ministry Chairperson); P Sathiasingam (*Honorary Steward*); Wee Eng Hock (*Pastoral Carenet Ministry Chairperson*); Tan Sin Guek (*Church Archivist*); Christabel David (*Communications Chairperson*)

ul Nga (*Pastor*); Choy Wai Cheng (*Lay Executive Staff, Administration; 3rd Reserve Lay Delegate to TRAC*); Lee Hui (*darin Service Chairperson*); Cheryl Sim (*Young Adults Ministry Chairperson*); Lim Sue Yien (*Finance Chairperson; Chairperson; Associate Lay Leader*); Chew Kim Ling (*Witness & Evangelism Chairperson*); Tan Sue Ann (*Associate*

erson); Guo Xiaorong (*Assistant Secretary*); Ronnie Tan (*PPRSC member*); Robert Yeo (*Associate Lay Leader; 3rd Delegate to TRAC*)

Delegate to TRAC)



# OUR HAPPY PROBLEM



Rev Alvin Chan

TMC, we have a problem.

In the last two years, attendance at the 8.45am English service has surged.

We started an overflow room in the form of the Abraham lounge to accommodate the increased numbers in our congregation. But on some Sundays, even our overflow room is also overflowing.

Similarly, we are running close to full capacity at the 11.15am English service on a number of Sundays. God has also led us to look at further enhancing the worship experience for our 11.15am congregation, to make it a more conducive worship environment to nurture spiritual growth.

These are problems, but they are happy ones.

We are running out of space, but we have seen a growth in numbers at TMC.

More and more church members are bringing their friends and families to join us each week, and our loved ones are attending worship services with us.

We are witnessing people who walk in, led to check out our worship services. They have ended up rooting themselves in community here.

God is working powerfully in our midst.

Like the church in Acts, we rejoice at God's work and faithfulness, as he adds to our numbers.

Hence, we need to expand, or rather, in this case, ACTS-pand.

## **Project ACTS-pand**

Project ACTS-pand is relevant to all of us for we are God's faithful stewards.

Together, we are tasked as a church to manage our growth and to provide everyone – young and old – with a conducive environment to further grow in our experience and love of God.

We want to be a church which incorporates the worship needs of the current and next generation.

We want to partner with God to provide conducive worship experiences for all who join our services.

There are two areas of focus for Project ACTS-pand as we seek to address current and future needs:

- A physical aspect of upgrading our facilities; and
- A spiritual aspect of creating meaningful and enriching worship experiences for everyone.

This involves many things. But for me, I would like to at least have as many of us in the same space, having line of sight of the preacher and the worship team, and being led in worship of God.

We need to upgrade our aging audio-visual facilities in both the Sanctuary and the Emmanuel Hall.

There is also a need to re-fashion the worship space and enhance the worship environment in the Emmanuel Hall which houses the 11.15am English service, to nurture spiritual growth as was done in the church of Acts.

To cater for further physical and spiritual growth, we are reviewing our current worship services and considering the addition of worship services.

## YOU ARE INVOLVED!

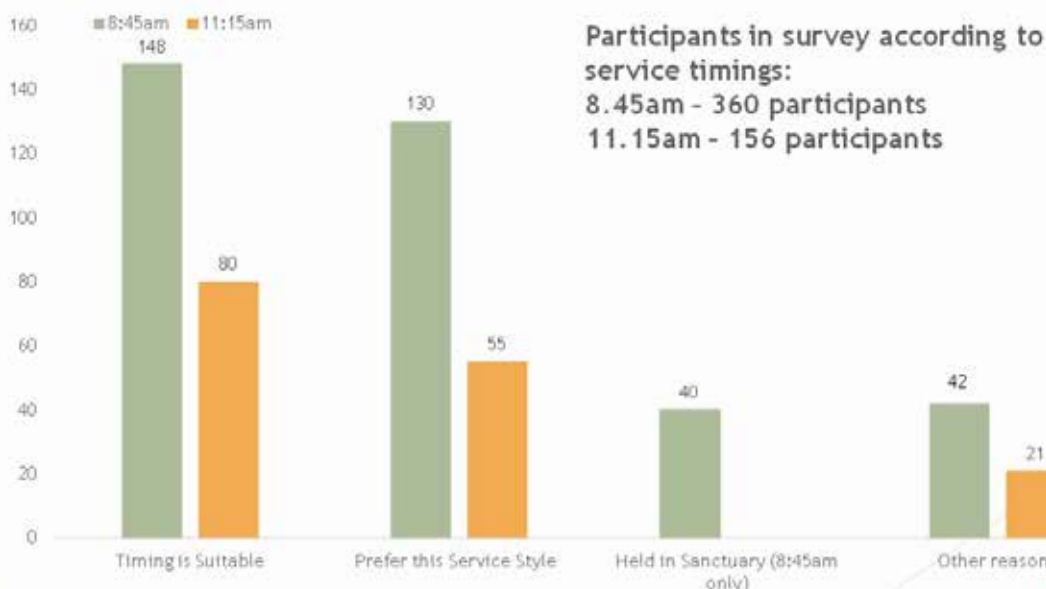
And you are involved in the planning process in these ways:

- Help us to better understand your preferences. We handed out a survey form on Sunday 4 Nov to obtain feedback from you;
- Participate in the Project ACTS-pand focus group to discuss how the church should manage her growth and continue to grow, and create meaningful worship experiences for all generations. To this end, focus group meetings were held on 17 and 18 Nov;
- Donate towards our fundraising efforts, details of which will be revealed in due course.

Project ACTS-pand is an exciting time in TMC's history.

Let us continue to partner with God in managing this season of our church life.

### Main reason for attending 8:45am/ 11:15am service



# THE OTHER ALFA

Koh Shuwen



The seniors in our community are treasures we should cherish and endeavour to care for in a dignified manner.

Just as parents would not think of leaving their young children at childcare centres which only take care of their feeding and diapering needs, or leaving their charges in their cots all day, children of aging parents and these seniors themselves are not satisfied with current sterile aged care options.

However, unlike children who improve in their ability to feed, wash, dress and move independently, seniors are on the deteriorating end of the spectrum. This often results in caregiver burn-out and an alarming rate of depression in isolated seniors.

## ENABLING DIGNIFIED AGING

The familiar adage “it takes a village to raise a child” can be similarly applied to enabling dignified ageing.

It is for these reasons that I personally think that Assisted Living (AL) is a viable and attractive care model for the seniors in my family in future.

It is also a model that I believe meets a growing need in Singapore. AL fills the gap in Singapore’s aged care landscape, between home and nursing home care.

In May this year, an unlikely crew consisting of two family physicians, an information systems academic and I, co-founded the Assisted Living Facilities Association (ALFA).

We believe that AL is a model of care for people with increasing assistance needs that provides them with a sense of autonomy and dignity. They could be seniors or young people with some form of disability.

ALFA is set up as a not-for-profit organisation and its roles are:

- Assisted Living Facilities (ALFs) guidelines writing
- Advocacy

- Audit and Accreditation
- Consultancy
- Liaison
- Mediation

The aim of AL is to enable a senior to live meaningfully, within community for as long as possible. When care for a loved one can no longer be managed at home due to higher care needs, the transition to a nursing home often means a sharp drop in the quality of life as well as a loss of social and community engagement. In most nursing homes, residents are only provided a small cabinet to house their possessions. The stripping away of the things and memorabilia they once held dear is only the start of the erosion of the residents’ former lives and identities.

A key feature of Assisted Living Facilities (ALFs) is the single or twin-sharing room with en-suite toileting facilities. This differs from nursing homes which typically house eight seniors per room with shared toileting facilities.

The availability of toileting facilities is not simply a matter of personal preference for privacy. The increased distance of some residents’ beds from shared toileting facilities poses a higher risk of falls.

The residents might soil themselves if the nursing home staff are not able to attend to them in time. A common solution is to put the residents in diapers for convenience. But this has been shown to result in the residents’ loss of toileting function and concomitant loss of continence due to the deterioration of the bladder and related muscles.

Unlike nursing homes which are set up to manage seniors who are mostly bed-bound or wheelchair-bound, ALFs cater to seniors who require assistance to carry out two to three out of six Activities of Daily Living (ADLs). The extent to which a senior is able to carry out the six ADLs is a good indication of his or her ability to live independently. The six ADLs are washing, feeding, dressing, toileting, mobility and transferring to and from the bed and/or mobility aid (e.g. a wheelchair) independently.



The implication of mixing independent seniors with those with those who have much higher care needs is that the resources to fulfil the healthcare needs of the latter often means that the social and community engagement aspects of the former are sacrificed.

AL seeks to involve the independent seniors in activities to stimulate their minds and slow down the loss of their ability to carry out ADLs. These aspects are not what nursing homes are set up, or able to meet.

### 3 models – Home, Hospitality, Hybrid

ALFA is proposing three broad categories of ALFs, the “Home”, “Hospitality” and “Hybrid” models. All three models can be purpose-built or retrofitted from an existing building or apartment unit to enable AL.

The “Home” model is one where social, community and healthcare services are provided on a regular basis according to the needs and abilities of the residents. Examples would be transportation for outings, on-site recreational activities and assistance with medication administration.

The “Hospitality” model includes lifestyle and leisure add-ons from an a la carte menu such as on-site amenities like a hairdresser, café and convenience store as well as a medical concierge and chaperone services.

Having studied different countries’ aged care models and from speaking to AL experts as well as operators of ALFs, we currently recommend that ALFs be run in clusters of eight to ten residents. Large-scale ALFs are also run in multiples of similar cluster sizes.

AL as a concept is a throwback to the kampung days of yore and rapidly gaining traction among the young-old (aged 55 to 74) who want better aged-care options. In order for AL to be a reality, one of ALFA’s first roles is to set up industry guidelines for the operation of ALFs. This is to protect the interest of seniors in ALFs and prevent unscrupulous ALF operators from taking advantage of vulnerable seniors.

After our roadshow in July, we received a significant private donation for the next three years to support some of the work that ALFA would like to accomplish. We have also been very blessed to have enlisted the help of many like-minded people who are volunteering their time and expertise to write

the guidelines. Their varied perspectives will help to enrich the set of guidelines to enable the dignified care of our seniors who will retain their autonomy and sense of self.

If you would like to find out more about, and advocate for, AL, or contribute to the writing of the guidelines, please visit <https://alfasingapore.org> or feel free to contact me.

“We want autonomy for ourselves and safety for those we love. That remains the main problem and paradox for the frail. Many of the things that we want for those we care about are the things that we would adamantly oppose for ourselves because they would infringe upon our sense of self.” - Atul Gawande, “Being Mortal”.

“By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:35)



*Dr Belinda Wee, one of the founders of ALFA*



*An equipped kitchen at an Assisted Living Facility*



*A wading pool at an Assisted Living Facility*

# UNDERSTANDING DEPRESSION



Tan Sue Ann

Our culture in Singapore is such that perfectionism, workaholism and shame appear to be the norm.

This provides a breeding ground for poor mental health.

At the same time, the stigma attached to mental health issues prevents many from seeking help when it is needed.

It is therefore important for us to learn about mental health and find out how or what we need to change.

To help us to understand depression, one of the most prevalent mental health conditions in Singapore and one which has been claiming an increasing number of lives, our newly-established TMC Family & Community Ministry held a seminar entitled "Understanding Depression" on 3 Nov 18.

Dean of the School of Counselling at Singapore Bible College, Dr Valentino Gonzales, whose counselling specialisation includes depression and addictions, addressed some 130 members and friends of TMC at the seminar.

In an engaging and enlightening session which received very positive feedback from participants, Dr Gonzales spoke about the symptoms and causes of depression. Participants were given the opportunity to apply what they learnt through case studies done in break-out groups.

They were also provided with some theological insight into the mental condition by Dr Gonzales, who also served as senior minister of Dallas Metroplex International Church in the United States before he came to Singapore.

The crux of the message at the seminar was that the Church needs to have an appropriate response to counter the menace of depression, which has permeated into our communities. The Church has an important role in the recovery of individuals, as well as in providing support for families affected by the mental condition.

Any stigma attached to mental health issues needs to be stamped out to encourage those affected to seek help. Time is of the essence especially when there is risk of suicide or harm to others. As a community of faith, the following steps can be taken as part of our response:

- Learn to identify the symptoms of depression.
- Reach out to individuals who display symptoms of depression and encourage them to seek help. Approach the pastoral team for help if the relationship with an individual is not sufficiently close to enable you to reach out to him.
- Where an individual has suicidal thoughts or has developed psychosis, the priority is to ensure his safety. Contact his family so that he can be referred promptly for medical intervention. Do not leave the individual unattended.

- Educate our community about depression and work towards eliminating any related stigma.
- Organise a crisis intervention team and support groups for those recovering from depression, their families and those who have lost loved ones to depression.

In his closing remarks, Dr Gonzales shared a message of hope:

- Depression is not a mystery. We can learn to understand it better.
- There are redemptive possibilities in our suffering, and this includes struggles with mental illness such as depression.
- Suffering need not necessarily be an obstacle to service and could be a precursor to it.
- We can take courage that even giants of the faith have struggled with depression, as illustrated by the stories of Elijah and David of the Old Testament, and Martin Luther, the father of the Protestant movement.
- God's grace is available and sufficient to anyone who seeks Him.
- We can be a channel of God's grace.
- Depression can be overcome within the context of loving, affirming relationships, just as it often develops within the context of faulty relationships.
- As a church, we can overcome this menace called depression by demonstrating love for one another and working together, depending on God's grace.

***If you would like to seek help for mental health issues but do not know where to start, you may wish to email our TMC Family & Community Ministry at [fnctmc@gmail.com](mailto:fnctmc@gmail.com) for guidance. All such enquiries will be kept in strictest confidence.***

The TMC Family & Community Ministry (F&C) was set up in August this year. Our purpose is to support family life and also help cultivate an authentic Christian community which provides a safe space where those struggling with life's challenges feel loved and accepted. Be it marital problems, parenting issues, relationship conflict, sexuality or identity issues, grief and other mental health problems which we may be going through, acknowledging our weaknesses and supporting one another is an important aspect of our discipleship journey. F&C hopes to help encourage and equip members of our community to be ready to talk about our struggles and walk with one another. There is much work which God has called us to do. Therefore, if you have a burden for this area of ministry and would like to contribute or serve alongside us, please contact us at [fnctmc@gmail.com](mailto:fnctmc@gmail.com). We'd love to have a chat with you.



# HELPING CHRISTIANS THROUGH DEPRESSION



Pamela Koh

Are you currently struggling with depression in your discipleship journey? Or are you currently mentoring someone who is battling depression every day?

Welcome to the discipleship landscape of today.

Depression is ranked by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as the single largest contributor to global disability. It has been known as the "common cold of mental health problems." At a global level, over 300 million people are estimated to suffer from depression, equivalent to 4.4% of the world's population.

According to the Singapore Mental Health Study conducted in 2010, 5.8% of the adult population in Singapore suffered from Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) at some time in their lifetime. In Singapore, MDD is found to be ranked among the top three mental illnesses in Singapore, alongside alcohol abuse and obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD).

## The Church is not spared

The devastating news on the suicide of Pastor Andrew Stoecklein from Inland Hills Church highlighted the grim reality of depression in the Church. You'd probably already know of a fellow Christian who's right in the middle of it now.

We often think of discipleship as if there is a formula to success. If I'm a discipler who prays for my disciples, prepare bible studies diligently and be faithful to teach the Word, our disciples should grow naturally.

We forget the complexity of the condition of the

human heart (soil) that needs a certain environment (temperatures, amount of light, water, nutrients) for the powerful seed of God's Word to bear fruit. There is no doubt in the power of God's Word. But just as in the Parable of the Sower, the condition of the heart affects the potential of seeds being sown.

## Safe spaces

Discipleship is not just about teaching the Word, but also creating a "safe space" where our disciples feel emotionally safe to share their struggles without judgement. To share authentically without fear of rejection, with the freedom to clarify questions or doubts they may have about their faith and not being seen as "lacking faith."

When we look at Jesus' model of discipleship, He does not just teach or preach the Word. He did life together with his disciples, sharing their joys and sorrows as they serve together.

## Authenticity is key

What has all this got to do with ministering to our mentees/disciples/friends who struggle with depression in discipleship? It has everything to do with it! Through Jesus' ministry, we learn two very important ingredients necessary for creating this "safe space", which is critical in our discipleship efforts:

### 1. Understand your own propensity for head-heart disconnection and brokenness

Your capacity as a discipler to empathise with your disciples by understanding your own propensity for head-heart disconnection and brokenness is needed to help you cultivate this

environment of compassion and non-judgement.

## 2. See the importance to connect with our disciples/mentees at the heart-level

Connecting with your disciples heart-to-heart helps encourage them to connect with God and themselves at the heart level, not just intellectually. Loving exploration and confrontation with the Truth is what's needed to overcome the cognitive dissonance.

### Identifying depression symptoms

To be able to journey with someone who has depression, it is important to be able to identify the symptoms that are related to depression.

According to the Diagnostic Statistical Manual (DSM5), an individual need to show 5 or more symptoms during the same two-week period and at least one of the symptoms should be either **(1) depressed mood** or **(2) loss of interest or pleasure**.

Other symptoms include:

1. Significant weight loss, or weight gain,
2. Feelings of restlessness,
3. Fatigue and loss of energy every day,
4. Feelings of worthlessness,
5. Excessive guilt daily,
6. Inability to concentrate,
7. Indecisiveness daily,
8. Sleeping more or less, recurrent thoughts of self-harm, death, suicidal ideation with or without specific plan.

Those who are depressed may be unaware of their condition. Or they may feel the stigma in getting help.

### Or ... is it burnout?

The other challenge in identifying depression is differentiating it from burnout.

Burnout is usually related to specific contexts such as in work or interpersonal relationships. Depression is usually more general and its impact has repercussions on all areas of life. Yet we need to take note that it is possible for prolonged burnout to trigger and become full-blown depression.

I have noticed, more often than not, that the high functioning types may not be aware when they are burning out because of their high capacity and tendency to drive themselves.

*Just like soil, the human heart needs a good environment for the seed of God's Word to bear fruit. (Credit: Lukas Langrock on Unsplash)*

As a result, by the time they walk into my counselling room, their burnout has triggered depression or become full-blown depression. So we may not want to take too lightly burnout signs and need to caution those who are unaware to be more intentional in their self-care before it gets worse.

The good news is that depression is



very treatable, if the necessary help and support are provided. The Church has to learn to work hand-in-hand with trained health professionals in helping members face the frightening darkness of depression.

## Professional counselling intervention

In my clinical work, I've had the privilege of journeying with people who were affected by burnout and depression. Almost everyone who recovered would testify that their burnout-depression experience is a milestone that they learnt important life lessons.

Their recovery journeys are also the beginning of their journeys of "finding themselves", who they REALLY are, rebuilding and realigning their identity, values and priorities back to Christ.

One lady with whom I counselled shared, "Through counselling, I discovered that I'm extremely self-critical, and my identity is defined by my performance. These expectations were scarily applied to my Christian faith, leading to my burnout-depression."

Another shared, "As a perfectionist, I set for myself standards that are high and unrealistic. Through the counselling sessions, I recalled painful childhood experiences that led me to think that I ought never to make mistakes, and how I felt valued only when I had contributed positively."

"As the sessions went by, I felt empowered to set boundaries for myself, recognising that I am not to be a saviour but to allow God to play His part."

## Paradigm shift for the contemporary church

For the church to become a place of healing for

these people, there needs to be the cultivation of communities within the church to be safe spaces.

We also need to have a paradigm shift to see discipleship more holistically. Recognise that journeying with people through their struggles and healing is an important part of discipleship in cultivating one's "being".

We should not singularly focus on working individual's "potential" through equipping, training and programs.

In our zest for worldwide evangelism, we sometimes forget that that our "doing" is an outflow of our being, and transformation of the world begins with the transformation of ourselves, from the inside out, not outside in.

Lastly, let's not forget that the purpose of discipleship includes transformation of our being into Christ-likeness.

*(This article appears on Cru Singapore's website and has been printed with the permission of Cru Singapore.)*

Pamela Koh has been on staff with Cru Asia for more than 15 years. She also worked with university students in Nagoya, Japan for 6 years. She went on to do her Masters in Counselling upon returning to Singapore and is currently a registered counsellor and clinical member with the Singapore Association of Counselling and a certified EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitisation Reprocessing) Therapist.

She is now with the Leadership Development Human Resource, and provides counselling and member-care within Cru Singapore.



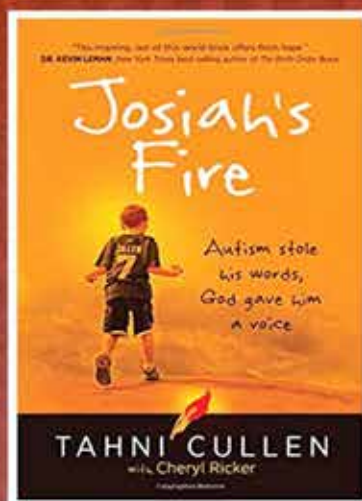
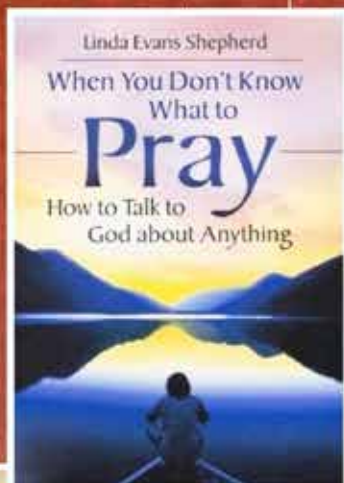
*Being in a community of empathy, care and support is vital for recovery. (Credit: Tim Marshall from Unsplash)*



# Bibliothèque

248.1 SHE

When You Don't Know What To Pray:  
How To Talk To God About Anything  
~ Linda Evans Shepherd

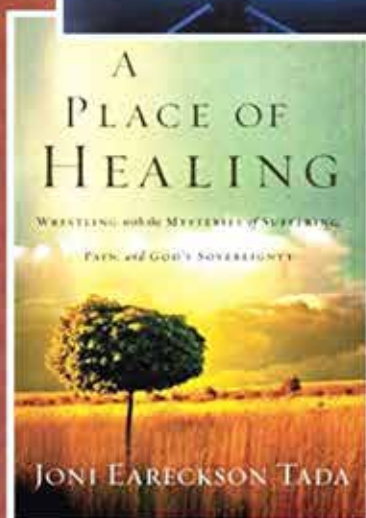
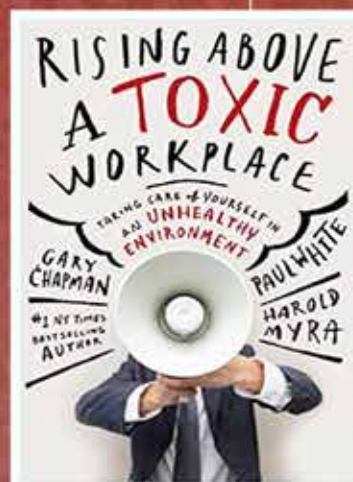


B CUL

Josiah's Fire: Autism Stole His Words, God Gave Him A Voice  
~ Tahni Cullen

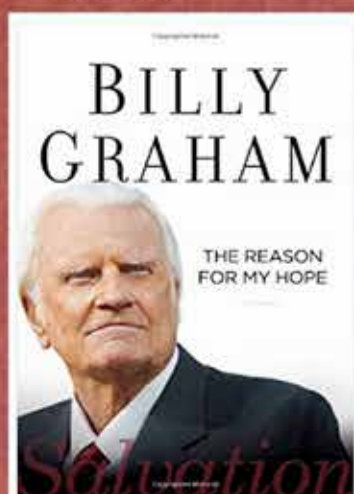
247.6 CHA

Rising Above A Toxic Workplace:  
Taking Care Of Yourself In An  
Unhealthy Environment  
~ Gary Chapman



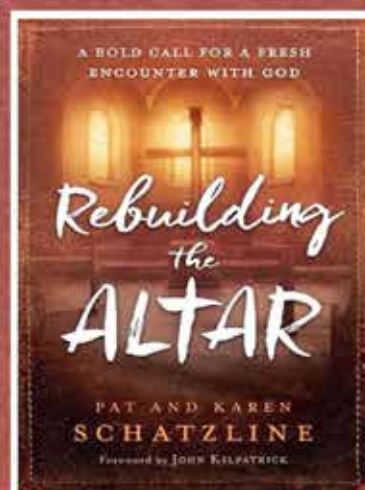
248.8 TAD

A Place Of Healing: Wrestling With The  
Mysteries Of Suffering, Pain And God's  
Sovereignty  
~ Joni Eareckson Tada



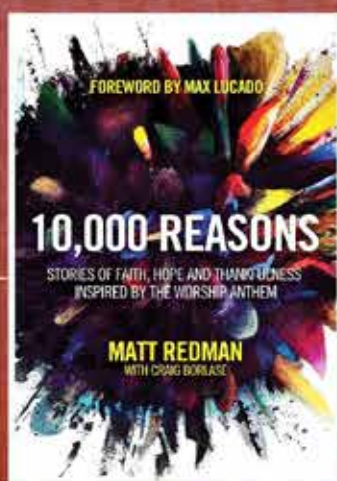
234 GRA

The Reason For My Hope: Salvation  
~ Billy Graham



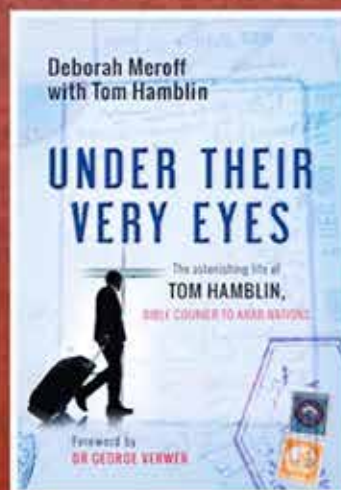
248.1 SCH

Rebuilding The Altar:  
A Bold Call For A Fresh  
Encounter With God  
~ Pat And Karen  
Schatzline



245 RED

10,000 Reasons: Stories  
Of Faith, Hope And  
Thankfulness Inspired  
By The Worship Anthem  
~ Matt Redman



B HAM

Under Their Very Eyes:  
The Astonishing Life Of  
Tom Hamblin, Bible  
Courier To Arab Nations  
~ Deborah Meroff

These books and many other resources are available for borrowing from the TMC Resource Centre, situated at Benjamin Room on Level 2.

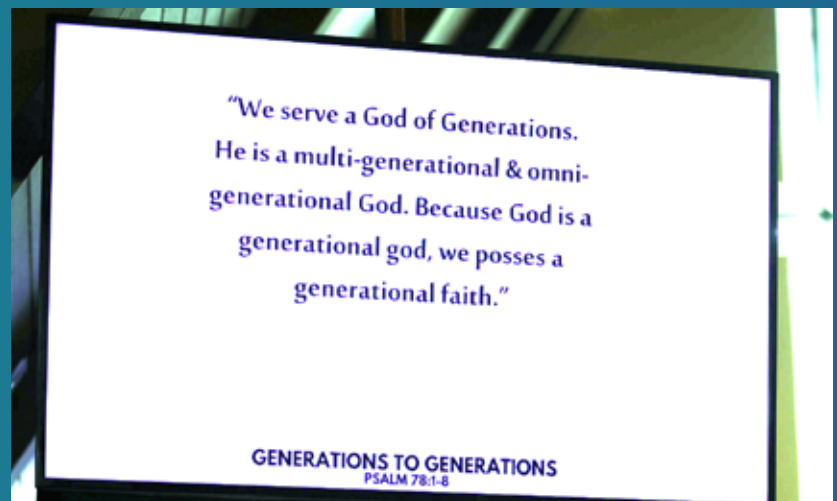


# IN & ABOUT TMC

## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY SUNDAY



## YOUTH SUNDAY





## TMC 62<sup>ND</sup> ANNIVERSARY





# EVENTS

## Sat 1 Dec

10.00am Antioch Toa Payoh Outreach party to one-room flat residents  
[www.tmc.org.sg/xmas2018.html](http://www.tmc.org.sg/xmas2018.html)

## Sat 1 Dec, 12 Jan, 2 Feb

10.00am Youth Avenue Leaders Captains' Development I  
[www.facebook.com/YouthAvenue123](http://www.facebook.com/YouthAvenue123)

## Tues 4 Dec

3.00pm Youth Avenue Nerf Game

## Fri 7 Dec

8.15am Youth Avenue outing  
 - Tree-top Walk

## Sat 8 Dec, 19 Jan, 9 Feb

10.00am Youth Ave Leaders Captains' Development II

## Sat 8 Dec

3.00pm GYM Thanksgiving

## Sun 9 Dec

9.00am Christmas Visit to Institute of Mental Health  
[www.tmc.org.sg/xmas2018.html](http://www.tmc.org.sg/xmas2018.html)

## Tues 11 Dec – Thurs 13 Dec

Youth Avenue camp

## Sat 15 Dec

10.00am WSCS Gospel Mission to the Blind  
 6.00pm A YAMY (Young Adults Ministry) Christmas Party  
[www.tmc.org.sg/xmas2018.html](http://www.tmc.org.sg/xmas2018.html)

## Sat 15 Dec, 26 Jan, 23 Feb

10.00am Youth Ave Leaders Captains' Development III

## Tues 18 Dec

1.00pm Youth Avenue indoor activity

## Wed 19 Dec – Sat 22 Dec

Youth Camp  
[www.facebook.com/TMCYouthMin](http://www.facebook.com/TMCYouthMin)

## Sat 22 Dec

7.00pm Youth Avenue Christmas party

## Sun 23 Dec

10.00am WSCS Christmas party for domestic helpers  
[www.tmc.org.sg/xmas2018.html](http://www.tmc.org.sg/xmas2018.html)

## Tues 25 Dec

9.00am Christmas Day English service with baptism of infants, children and adults  
 11.00am Christmas Day Mandarin service

## Thurs 27 Dec

3.00pm Outing and dinner for Chen Su Lan Methodist Children's Home  
[www.tmc.org.sg/xmas2018.html](http://www.tmc.org.sg/xmas2018.html)

## Mon 31 Dec

8.45am / 11.15am Reception of new members

## Sun 13 Jan

8.45am / 11.15am Reception of new members

## Sat 19 Jan

8.00am First Local Conference

## Sat 26 Jan

Empowerment series: BLESS organised by Discipleship & Nurture

## Sat 26 Jan – 30 Mar

1.00pm Marriage Preparation Course  
[www.tmc.org.sg/highlights.html#mpc](http://www.tmc.org.sg/highlights.html#mpc)

## Fri 15 Feb – 15 Nov

7.30pm Disciple IV  
[www.tmc.org.sg/d&n.html](http://www.tmc.org.sg/d&n.html)

## Sat 16 Feb

1.00pm Youth Avenue Lunar New Year steamboat

## Thurs 28 Feb – 2 Mar

LCEC planning meeting

## Every Sun

9.30am Mandarin Service Prayer Meeting  
 After the 11.15am service Young Adults' Lunch Fellowship

## Last Sun of the month

9.00am  
 Visit to Institute of Mental Health by Outreach & Social Concerns.  
 Contact Yvonne Tan at 9091 8589 / [yvonnnetangb@gmail.com](mailto:yvonnnetangb@gmail.com)  
[www.tmc.org.sg/osc.html#imh](http://www.tmc.org.sg/osc.html#imh)

## Every Wed (not 6 Feb)

8.00pm Church Prayer Meeting  
[www.tmc.org.sg/prayer.html](http://www.tmc.org.sg/prayer.html)

## Every 1st Wed (not 6 Feb)

10.00am-12.00pm  
 Yum Cha@10 is an opportunity for people to come together for fellowship, and serves as a platform for TMCers to meet one another as well as non- Christians in the community mid-week. Contact the church office / [churchoffice@tmc.org.sg](mailto:churchoffice@tmc.org.sg)  
[www.tmc.org.sg/ministries.html#gym](http://www.tmc.org.sg/ministries.html#gym)

1.00-3.00pm

Rummikub

## Every Thurs (not 20 Dec)

9.00am A Tot-ful Morning  
 A time for caregivers and children aged 0-3 years old to enjoy songs, stories and other activity  
[www.tmc.org.sg/highlights.html#atm](http://www.tmc.org.sg/highlights.html#atm);  
[www.facebook.com/atotfulmorning](http://www.facebook.com/atotfulmorning)

## Last Thurs of the month

10.00am-12.00pm  
 St Luke's Eldercare Centre Devotions at Blk 217 Serangoon Ave 4. TMC's ministry to SLEC brings hope, help and the love of Christ to many needy elderly. If you wish to join in, contact Eddie from the church office / [eddie@tmc.org.sg](mailto:eddie@tmc.org.sg)  
[www.tmc.org.sg/osc.html#slec](http://www.tmc.org.sg/osc.html#slec)

## Every Fri

8.00 – 10.00pm  
 Healing Ministry at the Prayer Chapel

## Every 1st and 3rd Fri (after Lunar New Year)

9.15am WSCS Bible Study (Acts)

## 2nd and 4th Sat

9.30am  
 Fellowship of Ukulelians  
[www.tmc.org.sg/regular.html#ukulele](http://www.tmc.org.sg/regular.html#ukulele)

## Monthly

WSCS Visitation to Homebound. Those interested to bring the church into the homes of the homebound, please contact Emily Wilfred. Group leaves TMC at 10am.

# CREDITS

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