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SALTSHAKER



TRINITY
Methodist Church

MICA (P) 083/09/2013

Youth Avenue



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OH LORD
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Shaking Salt

YOUTH AVENUE



by Lim Sue Yien

In the last issue of the Saltshaker, we informed our readers that Contact 123 would be rebranded and renamed Youth Avenue in May 2014. Well...

Youth Avenue is open!

The centre that we used to know as Contact 123 is now called Youth Avenue, a new space with a new purpose.

Even though it sits on exactly the same spot, the renovated place bears little resemblance to the old. A large glass door entrance facing the car park welcomes visitors. The open concept makes good use of space. Your eye will be drawn to a few focal points - the colourful beanbag corner which hosts the Playstation and board games, the computer area where serious

gamers can play their favourite games on high speed computers, the study room with a library for those wanting a quieter moment, a snack bar, and even a private counselling room. One wall is slated to be a mural to be designed and painted by the youth of Youth Avenue.

Youth Avenue. Meet Friends. Grow In Potential. Do Great Things For Our Community.

Youth Avenue is a youth drop-in centre. It aims to support youths to grow in their character by providing and creating opportunities for them to develop their physical, social, emotional and cognitive abilities. Friendship, a sense of belonging, leadership and self-worth will be a part of the experience for the youth here.

For some time now, Contact 123 had hosted a core group of youths who were attracted to the centre's facilities, and more recently activities. Over time, they formed friendships as they spent more time together playing computer games, attending tuition classes, and practising soccer. After a while, they brought their siblings and classmates in to join this little community. One of them is now part of TMC's Youth Ministry.

The Youth Avenue committee and its Chairman Terry Lau explored the models used by other church-run youth centres. They found that turning the existing centre into a youth-friendly space would help to create a conducive environment for more young people to notice the

place, drop in, find it interesting, and stay on.

Play Time, Study Time, Kopi Time

Something will always be happening at Youth Avenue. Monday is self-study day. Tuesday and Wednesday will be Study Help days where volunteers will coach the students in their studies. Thursday, Friday and Saturday are Chill Out/Hang Out days, when the centre will come alive with fun and games. Saturday is also soccer day where the boys play soccer with TMC Lay Executive Staff (Outreach & Social Concerns/ Young Adults) Jestyn Koh. During the school holidays, outings will be organised. Previous activities that the youth enjoyed included cycling trips, prawning outings and adventure-based activities.

Three times a week, a Coffee Corner will be set up outside the centre. The youths, together with TMC volunteers, will be manning the station, serving free coffee and tea to the residents. This is meant to encourage youths to give back to their community and provide a place for community bonding to take place. These youths are also expected to participate in the maintenance of the centre eventually. And as they do their small part to ensure the cleanliness of the place, their sense of belonging and ownership of Youth Avenue will grow. In time to come, it is hoped that they would accept more responsibility, both in the centre, as well as in their personal lives.



This constant stream of activity is intentional. If these youth were not at this centre, they could be spending their time in places or in company where they could be exposed to undesirable habits such as smoking and gambling. Jestyn, who has spent much time building relationships with the youths there, believes that every youth can develop good and positive friendships where they spur one another on toward good deeds. Every youth has the ability to make good decisions. Youth Avenue hopes to lead everyone who passes through those doors into a meaningful experience in these formative years of their lives.

All Hands On Deck

Youth Avenue needs as many helping hands as possible. Help is wanted at the Coffee Corner, where volunteers are required to keep track of the attendance register.

Tutors are also required. (See the feature in the May 2014 issue of the Saltshaker, "Lifeguards Needed".)

However, as Cathrine Sunitaa (Senior Operations & Admin Assistant for Youth Avenue) says: "We are just looking for people to come and spend time with these youth. Only by spending time with them can meaningful relationships develop, and they can then see God's love for them through us."



HOW YOU CAN BE A LIFEGUARD AT YOUTH AVENUE

Every - Monday / Wednesday / Friday from 12 - 2pm / 4 - 5.30pm
For the Coffee Corner

Prepare Tea, Coffee for the seniors / residents and enjoy a time of fellowship with them.

Coach youths how to make coffee/tea and serve residents

Every - Thursday / Friday 1 - 5 pm
For Hangout/Chill Out days

Track the youths' points system and enter into the log book / computer

Make sure the youths carry out their duties responsibly to keep the centre clean (based on a roster)

Make sure the youths sign in and out when they are at Youth Avenue

Keep track of the computer access hours

Play / Engage / Encourage youths

Every - Tuesday/ Wednesday 3-6 pm
For Study Help days

Help P3 - P6 students in Mathematics, Science, English or Chinese
Help Secondary 1, 2 and 4 students in Mathematics or English

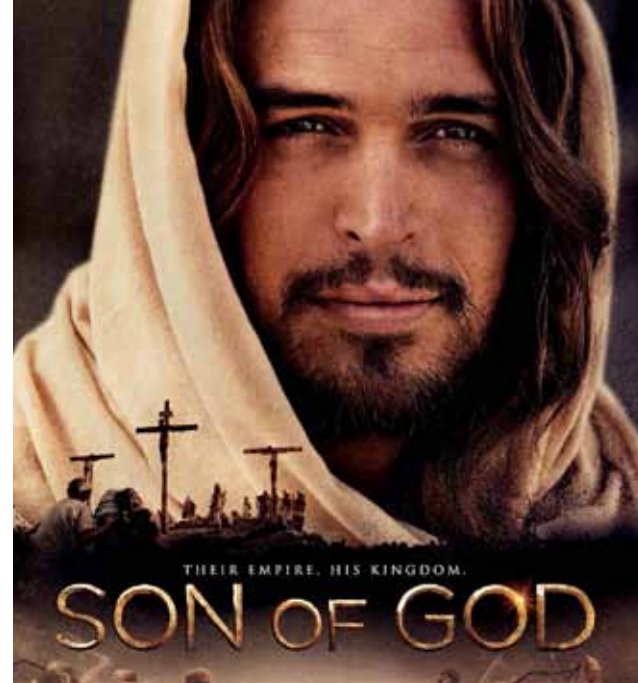
To volunteer or find out more about Youth Avenue, please contact Cathrine Sunitaa / cathrine@tmc.org.sg, or at 6285 8450.

Better yet, come visit Youth Avenue at Blk 123, #01-149, Serangoon North Avenue 1.

www.facebook.com/YouthAvenue123



POPPING THE QUESTION



The Youth Ministry (YM) organised a movie screening of “Son of God” on Good Friday this year. Our youths were encouraged to invite their friends to the screening to introduce them to the story of Jesus.

The 138-minute long film depicted Jesus’ life and ministry and was adapted from the 10-hour television mini-series called “The Bible”. An episode of “The Bible” on the life of Daniel was screened during one of the YM sessions in TMC last year.

As the youths gave that the thumbs up, when “Son of God” was released, the YM saw the opportunity to provide our youths with a non-threatening platform to invite their friends to find out about Jesus.

On Good Friday, the cinema was fully packed with half the patrons being guests of our youths. Some of these guests were prebelievers.

The movie was also opened to the Serangoon Garden Secondary School Girls’ Brigade and Boys’ Brigade members, as well as youths from Youth Avenue (formerly known as Contact 123). The Youth Avenue youths enjoyed the movie and were able to grasp the concept of Jesus as the Messiah. They also shared with their Youth Avenue friends who did not attend the screening about the movie through Whatsapp.

HERE ARE SOME REFLECTIONS FROM OUR YOUTHS WHO INVITED FRIENDS TO THE MOVIE...

When our youth leaders encouraged us to invite our friends to this movie, I immediately thought of two close friends, who are also my classmates. Although both of them are Christians, they do not go to church regularly. Among ourselves, we had discussed Christianity a couple of times. I felt that they were not familiar with many aspects of the life and works of Jesus. So I thought that this movie would be a good opportunity to share more about Jesus with them.

Initially I was hesitant to invite them for the show because I was apprehensive about being rejected. I prayed about it and eventually mustered up the courage to ask them. To my surprise, they agreed to come immediately.

After watching the movie, we discussed and shared our views about it. Both of them found the movie to be insightful and educational. But most of all, it was clear that they had obtained a deeper understanding of why we observe Good Friday and why we celebrate Easter.
– Calida Kenga (Photo: Centre)

When I was first told about it, I wanted to invite two of my friends, Charlotte and Andre because most of my friends are Christians or Catholics and both of them are not. I got to know them at the start of this school year. My Catholic friend and I had shared about Jesus with them. They were quite interested but also thought that what we had said was unrealistic. I didn’t have any reservations about inviting them as they are quite good friends and very open-minded. I just asked them if they wanted to watch a Jesus movie with me and that I would buy popcorn for them. They thought I was joking so they answered sarcastically at first but, in the end, they agreed to come (though Charlotte had to back out later because she had a party to go to). I invited some other friends too because I had a few tickets.

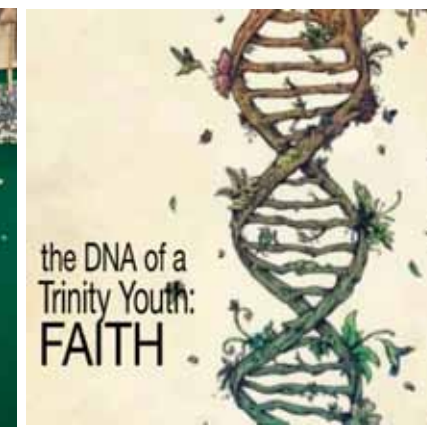
We discussed the movie briefly afterwards. Although they seemed very confused, they thought it was good overall. I will invite them again next time, and other friends too.
– Yeo Su-en (Photo: Left)

When I first heard about the movie and how we were encouraged to invite our friends to it, I was rather apprehensive about inviting anyone. However, I did feel a tug in my heart to step out in faith and reach out to my classmates.

Having known my classmates for a mere three months, I had mixed feelings about inviting them but eventually I did! The four friends whom I invited were a rather diverse bunch. One was an atheist who had strong opinions against Christianity, one had stopped going to church, one had little exposure to Christianity and one was a Christian.

By God’s grace, all of them agreed to attend - willingly! I prayed over the movie and my friends for many nights because I truly believed that God had planted a seed in each of them and I sought to be Spirit-led as I hosted them. After the movie, (though my friends were not the most thrilled and to most of them it paled in comparison to any secular movie they had ever seen) I could see that they were ravenous to know more and were brimming with questions. We had dinner together after and discussed the movie and engaged in a conversation about Christianity.

Thinking back, I am ebullient that I did not let my fear of getting rejected or of not being able to be a good host deter me from inviting my friends. I truly believe that if it is God-ordained, it will be God-sustained! Given another chance to invite my friends, I will. From this, I know that the small step of faith we take can be used greatly by God, so let nothing hold us back from doing His work, blessing Him and His people!
– Samuel David (Photo: Right)



Youth Ministry Curriculum

6 July - “A People of Character”
13 July – In recess (Youth Sunday)
20 July – In recess
27 July - Community Sunday

Raising Godly Children in Today's World

Sat 26 Jul 2014 | 2 - 5pm | Trinity Methodist Church

"I attended the launch of Elijah7000, which is a movement for fathers started by Jason Wong (see below). This initiative is a response to the rising wave of attacks on God's design for marriage and family. What was impressed upon me was that God's design of a family unit - comprising a male and female in marriage - is the perfect design. Holiness within the family and marriage is needed to counter any deviation from this design. Fathers play a key role in this."

- Ong Hon Yuh, father to Victoria, 4 months.



"Having to harden my heart and allow my children to learn the hard way when they repeatedly refuse to take heed my teachings and advice is one of the hardest things I ever have to do as a mother. Still, one of the best things about parenthood is introducing God to my children, learning humility, developing a sense of humour, resilience and patience. In my journey as a mum, I wish someone could have advised me on the struggles of being a Christian parent."

- Au Chui Lin, mother to Dionne, 23, and Russ, 19.



"One of the difficult things about being a mother is going out for some 'couple time' with my spouse without thinking of the children every minute and feeling guilty the whole time. The best thing about being a mother though is that because of my unconditional love for children, I have finally understood the unconditional love that my parents showered on me. I ought to be more filial to my parents before it's too late."

- Carine Lim, mother to Gracelyn, three-and-a-half, and Gabriel, 14 months.



"One of the most difficult things about being a mum is to see your child in physical pain. I thank our heavenly Father for teaching me the meaning of unconditional love for my children, and for personally teaching me to appreciate the pain and sacrifice He suffered when putting Jesus, His Son, on the cross."

- Sharon Khoo, mother to twins, Annabelle and Alexander, both two-and-a-half.



"I find that the most difficult thing about being a father is trying to give my child the time that he desires from me. But it's great to spend time as a father nurturing your child, and seeing the fruits of your labour blossoming into a beautiful flower."

- Andrew Chong, father to Gabriel, 9, and Joshua, 5.



"As a father, I find that the most difficult thing I face is having to consistently portray myself as an exemplary role model for my sons. I have been honest and explained to them that I am not perfect. When they grow up, they must learn to distinguish what is right and not emulate blindly everything I did as an excuse. My constant reminder to them is...the best role model is God. I wish that, in my journey as a father, someone could have advised me that parents are the worst teachers because I find it extremely difficult to remain patient when I coach my sons in their schoolwork. Somehow, I have this tendency to increase my expectations a couple of notches higher and patience level a couple of notches lower."

- Jason Tang, father to Dylan and Jordan.

What are the challenges for today's parents? How can mum and dad meet them? Jason Wong, founder of the Yellow Ribbon Project and the Dads for Life movement, will be at TMC to guide parents on these issues on 26 Jul 14. A short but heart-warming movie "The Little Star" directed by Jack Neo will be shown.

Register online at www.tmc.org.sg/highlights.html#raisingchildren or at the iSunday Counter.

Organised by the Discipleship & Nurture Committee. Please direct your enquiries to Andrew Chong 9221 3093 / Chew Kim Ling 9190 3998.

SOWING GOD'S WORD THROUGH SONG



by Vinitha Jayaram

Since January 2014, the children from Children's Ministry (CM) have been learning a new song and a Bible verse every month. Alice Lim, our Lay Ministry Staff from CM shares with us about CM's monthly theme songs. Read on to find out more...

WHAT IS CM'S MONTHLY THEME SONGS ALL ABOUT?

At the heart of CM's monthly theme song is the intention to teach the children about God's Word in a way that they can relate to. The children in TMC are very musically inclined. They love to sing and take to music very well, so this is a great way to help them absorb God's Word. We introduce a new song every month and the children are taught the lyrics and tune of each song. The meaning of the lyrics, which is derived from a specific verse in the Bible, is explained to them so that they fully understand the verse, and learn how it applies to their daily circumstances and experiences.

The children learn the song during the praise and worship session and there are actions for each song to help them better understand the lyrics. The children are encouraged to meditate on the words of the song as they are God's words. Meditate is a big word for a four or five-year-old child, so we teach them to continuously think about the words of the song and fill their minds with the lyrics. We explain to them that instead of letting their anxieties, fear of the dark or stresses from life overwhelm their minds and hearts, they only need to constantly reflect on God's words and they will bring them peace.

WHAT IS THE MOTIVATION BEHIND IT?

God is the greatest motivation behind this idea. Every time I read His Word I am reminded of three verses which speak to me.

Psalms 119:1

"Blessed (happy, fortunate) are the undefiled (the upright, truly sincere, and blameless) in the way (of the revealed will) of God, who walk (order their conduct and conversation) in the law of the Lord (the whole of God's revealed will)."

My takeaway is that if we want to know the revealed will of God, we need to read His Word.

Joshua 1:8

"Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful."

I've learnt that God wants us to obey His Word. We can keep His Word constantly on our lips by studying and reflecting on it day and night.

Hebrews 4:12

"For the Word that God speaks is alive and full of power [making it active, operative, energising and effective]; it is sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating to the dividing line of the breath of life (soul) and [the immortal] spirit, and of joints and marrow [of the deepest parts of our nature], exposing and sifting and analysing and judging the very thoughts and purposes of the heart."

God's Word is not any ordinary word. It is alive and full of power. We really need His Word to guide us on how to go about dealing with challenges and how to pray about problems in our lives

If we help our children to be rooted and grounded in His Word, when they face challenges or struggles at any point of their lives, they will be like the wise man who built his house on the Rock, which is God's Word. They will remain stable and secure in Him.

HOW ARE THE SONGS COMPOSED?

I try my best with God's help to choose verses that are related to the lessons and worship songs for the preschool and primary-level children, so that God's Word is reinforced throughout the year. As for the melody, I am not musically-inclined and through prayer I asked the Lord to "download" to me His heavenly melodies. I sought help from Joseph Tay, a brother-in-Christ from the church that I used to worship at as he can play the melody with his guitar. Of course I welcome anyone who is able to help me to improve the melody.

HOW DO THE CHILDREN TAKE TO IT?

One Sunday, I heard one of the Primary 1 children singing Matthew 7:7 and it was music to my ears. I believe that God's Word which is planted and sown in the children's lives will not return void and will accomplish the purpose that God set it out to be. We only need to be obedient and faithful to sow His Word into their lives and it will last through eternity.

The monthly verse songs are uploaded on the Children's Ministry website www.tmc.org.sg/cmsongs.html for your child to sing and learn HIS WORD.

John 3:16 (April)			Matthew 7:7 (May)		
A	D	A	C(D)	F(G)	C(D)
For God so loved the world			Ask and it will be given to you		
	D	A	C(D)	G7(A7)	
that He gave His One and Only Son			Seek and you will find		
	D	E	A	C(D)	F(G)
that whoever believes in Him			Knock and the door will be opened to you.		
	D	E	A		
should not perish but have eternal life.					

If you would like to offer your musical talent to compose a tune for each month's verse, kindly contact Alice at alice@tmc.org.sg

PLAY TO LEARN



by Pamela Woo

Trinity Methodist Church Kindergarten was started in the 1990s with only a handful of students. It has grown by God's grace to now house about 80 students with eight very dedicated and committed teachers.

The vision of the Kindergarten is for all children under its care to grow in wisdom, stature and in favour with both God and men (Lk 2:52). Its mission is to provide a holistic preschool education strongly grounded in Christian values so as to demonstrate the love of Jesus to families with young children.

“Train a child in the way he should go;
and when he is old he will not turn from it.”
– Proverbs 22:6

It is critical, and of greater urgency now that the internet is so much a part of our lives, to strongly ground young children with God's Word. God promised in Isaiah 55:11 that His Word will never return empty. Instead, it will always serve a purpose – primarily in the lives of those of us who digest it, who apply it, who memorise it, who meditate on it, who ponder it, who declare it and by God's bountiful grace, who live it out. What better time to start this than when a child is young and impressionable.

One of the ways the Kindergarten inculcates this is through playtime. That's why the emphasis for our curriculum is play-based and class sizes are intentionally kept small to ensure the teachers are not overwhelmed with too many students. We have daily devotion times with the children through fun storytelling, singing and many more interactive activities during which God's Word is taught. This regular devotion is not only done with the children but also with the teachers as well as the cook and cleaner, with the support of church members Alice Lim and Linda Kwan.

With God's love flowing through the Kindergarten teachers, it is not surprising to hear of the many wonderful testimonies from grateful parents who are touched by how the teachers have helped their children overcome either learning or socialising challenges. In our feedback sessions with some parents, I have personally witnessed them openly sharing how their child has grown and blossomed under these teachers' care and love.

We continue to seek our readers' support and prayers for the Kindergarten.



Where Children Play to Learn



We are proud of our **play-based curriculum**, **small class sizes** and the **Christian values** we instill in each child.

Grandmother
to
Jynette Tan

Over the years in TMCK, Jynette has blossomed into an expressive, articulate and confident child. TMCK has provided Jynette with a warm, conducive environment that has allowed her to be herself and yet has given her the discipline and guidance that all children need.

Mrs
Josephine
Cheo

We were concerned about Sean learning Chinese as we speak only English at home. Sean looks forward to his Chinese speech & drama classes and he is more open to speaking in Mandarin now. We are thankful for TMCK's teaching methods and we experienced the change in Sean.

Max &
Anna Ong

We witnessed very positive developments in Fabian as he was going through Nursery 2, Kindergarten 1 and 2 in TMCK. Fabian has not only grown intellectually, but also spiritually and emotionally. We are really glad that we found Fabian such a good school that focused a lot on Christian values.

**The TMC
Kindergarten
still has
vacancies for 2015!**

**N1 and N2 sessions: 800-1100am / 1215-315pm
K1 and K2 sessions: 800-1115am / 1215-330pm**

34 Serangoon Garden Way | 6284 0894 |
www.tmc.org.sg/kindergarten.html



CONFERENCE 2014

SATURDAY, 19 JULY.

WHAT'S X-Y?

A conference that aims to address specific gender-related issues that youths commonly struggle with.

WHY X-Y?

So that youths will go away inspired to live out the calling God has for them.

HOW DOES X-Y WORK?

Guys and girls will be gathered in separate venues within the same location. They will hear from various guest speakers on specially selected topics.

DATE: SATURDAY, 19 JULY 2014

TIME: 8.30AM REGISTRATION BEGINS | ENDS BY 9.00PM

VENUE: TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH

COST: \$15 (INDIVIDUAL) | \$10 (GROUP REGISTRATION - 10 PAX AND ABOVE)

REGISTER AT <http://xyconf2014.tumblr.com/>



Alarice Thio
Singer-Songwriter



Ps Neli Atiga
Lead Pastor, EN Central



Wendy Cheong
Youth Speaker



Ps Jeremy Seaward
Youth Pastor, TheEdge



Esther Lim
Net Leader, TheEdge



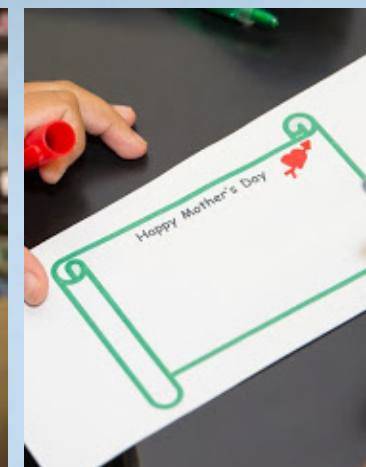
Ps Calvin Tan
Youth Pastor, St. Hilda's Church



Ps Chris Long
Executive Pastor, HSG

IN AND ABOUT TMC

Mother's Day



YM GUEST
SPEAKER,
TRACY
TRINITA



WSCS Day



St Luke's Elder Care and Banteat Meanchey Methodist Church





HOMEMADE YOGHURT



by Koh Shuwen

Have you taken a close look at the ingredients in store-bought yoghurt? And the amount of sugar that goes into the flavoured ones? You would be shocked!

Like most things homemade, yoghurt you make yourself is simply better. It is creamier and tastes less sour – like the fancy “European” brands except that the homemade version costs much less (1 litre of milk gives almost 1 litre of yoghurt). It is better for you (no preservatives, thickeners, sugar or chemical additives). Also, a large batch of yoghurt minimises packaging waste.

When I first started, I followed temperature recommendations strictly and obsessed over sterilising all the utensils. After more than 50 successful batches (and only one failed attempt), I have minimised the steps.

Here are my directions adapted from multiple sources to suit my kitchen set-up.

1 Heat milk to 80-85 °C for 15-20 minutes

- I start with 1 litre of whole milk each time and distribute the yoghurt to friends and family. The recommended shelf life is two weeks but my yoghurt (with no preservatives added) has been edible and tasty for over a month.
- I use a water bath (about 90% of the milk is submerged) so I do not need to watch the temperature. I also do not need to worry about over-cooking the milk.
- This step breaks down the milk protein for smoother yoghurt and this set-up sterilises my glass container as well as utensils at the same time.
- It is normal to see a layer of “skin” forming on the surface of the milk. Just remove it with a clean utensil.



Jar of milk submerged in a water bath and EasiYo incubator



The milk boils and bubbles



Simply remove the “skin” that forms on the milk surface

2 Cool milk to 40-45 °C (15-30 minutes depending on the volume of milk and water bath used)

- I immerse the jar of hot milk in a room temperature water bath and add some ice if I want the milk to cool faster.
- When you can grip the jar comfortably with bare hands, the milk is cool enough not to “kill” the bacteria in the next step.

4 Cover and keep warm

- Screw on the lid, keep it insulated and undisturbed.
- I fill the EasiYo incubator with freshly boiled water from the kettle. It is designed to fit a 1-litre jar but you can use any cooler as long as it can insulate its contents for 6-8 hours.
- About 80% of the jar of milk + starter is submerged in hot water.
- In my experience, lactobacillus acidophilus thrives and makes yoghurt over a broad temperature range. I do not monitor the exact temperature of the water bath or the jar of milk + starter.
- This set-up uses no electricity so you do not have to worry about leaving it unattended.

3 Stir in yoghurt starter

- The “starter” is simply 1-2 tablespoons of ‘yoghurt. Yoghurt contains millions of lactobacillus acidophilus (which means “acid-loving milk-bacterium” in Latin) and it is this bacteria that converts the lactose in milk into lactic acid and in that process, ferments milk into yoghurt.
- The trick to avoiding lumpy yoghurt at the end is to mix in the starter yoghurt thoroughly. Add 2-3 tablespoons of the cooled milk from Step 2 to the starter yoghurt, mix well and stir thoroughly into the jar of cooled milk.



EasiYo incubator

5 Wait 6-8 hours

- Basically, you will have yoghurt in 6 hours but if you forget, it is still good until up to 24 hours. It just gets more sour as time goes on as the friendly bacteria produces more lactic acid.
- The water in the incubator would have cooled and be just warm to the touch.



6 Chill to set

- The yoghurt would have thickened and set slightly.
- Transfer the still-warm jar to the fridge to chill for 4-6 hours.
- Voila! Creamy, all-natural goodness!



Low-fat milk was used in this batch and the lower fat content causes the yoghurt to separate more easily from the liquid whey

7 Enjoy homemade yoghurt

- You can make as little or as much as you want.
- Be sure to save a few spoonfuls as starter for your next batch! A new batch of starter needs to be used after about 6 months.

FLAVOURED YOGHURT

Simply add some fruit, honey or your favourite jam to your preferred level of sweetness. The possibilities are endless.



Strain the yoghurt using a clean cloth

GREEK YOGHURT

Greek yoghurt can be obtained using special strains of bacteria OR you can strain regular yoghurt overnight in the fridge using a clean cloth (such as a bandana or handkerchief). What you get is a thickened "Greek-style" yoghurt and liquid whey that can be consumed or used for baking and as liquid fertiliser.



So this was what Little Miss Muffet was eating...

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www.makeyourownyogurt.com



**LIFE
IS WORTH
EXPLORING**

How reliable is the Bible?

How does God guide my life?

Who is Jesus?

Christianity: Is it true? Is it relevant? Is it for me?

*SO I'VE HEARD HE DIED TO FORGIVE SINS.
WHY DID HE HAVE TO DIE? AND DID HE REALLY RESURRECT?*

If you have asked these questions...come!

Attend a course that explores Christianity.

THE ALPHA COURSE - A 101 course on the Christian faith

Sun, 3 Aug – 12 Oct | 12.30-3.00pm (incl. light lunch)

The ALPHA course is an opportunity for **ANYONE** to **ASK ANYTHING** about Jesus and the Christian faith in a thought-provoking, non-threatening environment. You won't be forced to believe.

This is also for Christians to review what they truly believe in.

Come to a non-obligatory introductory session.

Sun 27 Jul. Lunch at 1.00pm in the Plaza, followed by a video talk at 1.45pm

Register online www.tmc.org.sg/alpha.html or contact Claire Lowe / claire@tmc.org.sg / 9430 5165



Alpha



Instruments of God



by Alice Chong

What is an instrument?

An instrument is something that has to be used by someone in order to serve its purpose. The ukulele is a humble musical instrument because it is small, light and unimpressive. If nobody picks it up and plays it, it serves no purpose.

We serve the Almighty God and need to avail ourselves to be used by Him as His instrument. If not, of what use are we to God?

God impressed upon our hearts to pick up our ukuleles to minister to my brother, Roland, with songs of worship and praise.

With the birth of the Fellowship of Ukulelians (FOU) (thanks to Pastor Peter), we had been jamming* with the FOU on Saturday mornings and participating in group performances when invited.

When the call came that we – just my husband, Hong Bin and I with our ukuleles - should go to fulfill God's mission for us, we were apprehensive. How would we be received? What would our singing and playing be like? Would we be able to play in tune and in time?

I shared with the FOU committee one Sunday about Roland's upcoming surgery and our intended visit. Pastor Peter and the committee members prayed for us to be empowered by the Holy Spirit, to boldly go and touch lives, and that we would go not in our own strength but with God leading us.

Roland was due for heart surgery on Wednesday 5 March to replace a leaking valve. He had been putting off this surgery since last year, out of fear and uncertainty.

Roland was very much against Christianity. When we were young Christians, we were often laughed at and brushed aside whenever we tried witnessing to him.

When we learnt that the doctor had given him a date for the operation, we could only give him words of encouragement. But the week before his operation, Roland and his wife, Mary, requested us to pray for him. In his desperation, he had no one to turn to but our God. All other temple gods and deities could not give him peace. We realised that it was a good time to share God's Word with him.



The brethren rehearsing a song dedicated to Pastor Peter



Bro Hubert caught in action

Two days before the surgery, my sister and her husband, Hong Bin and I went to Roland's house to pray for him. We spoke to him about God's love for us and how as God's children, we are blessed that God is watching over us. We shared our personal testimonies which he had never given us a chance to tell him all these years. He listened intently.

Then Hong Bin and I took out our ukuleles and played five songs, one of which was "What a Friend We Have In Jesus". We did not want to pressure him into accepting the Lord Jesus there and then, but told him that if he believed in his heart that Jesus would heal him, it would come to pass. When we prayed for him, the presence of the Holy Spirit was very strong in our midst, and both he and his wife were moved to tears. We left him that afternoon, assuring him that our pastor and church friends would keep him in prayer when he was wheeled into the operating theatre.

Roland underwent surgery as scheduled. The next day, Mary called me. She was anxious as Roland's kidneys were not functioning well and he might have to be put on dialysis. I sent emails to Pastor Peter and the FOU committee to pray for God's intervention.

Two days after the operation, on her way to work, my niece was prompted by the Holy Spirit to make a detour to the hospital. She found out that Roland's kidney function had improved and he was able to pass out more toxins from his body. (We later found out that this was because the doctors had discussed his case the night before and had treated him with a stronger dose of medication. Praise the Lord for intervening and granting wisdom to the doctors such that Roland did not need to endure the trauma of dialysis.)

My niece asked Roland if he wanted to accept Jesus as his personal Saviour. Roland readily agreed. As soon as he had said the Sinner's Prayer**, he saw the word "Jesus" in red across the sliding glass door facing him. Later, he saw more of the same word on the glass door. When he was transferred to the general ward, Roland made known to all his visitors that he had received Christ and the vision that he saw. With his simple faith, God gave him a new lease of life – both physical and spiritual.

Mary had her own story to tell. While having breakfast with my niece, Mary revealed that a lady had handed her "The Four Spiritual Laws" booklet. I believe that she must have been an angel sent by God. My niece read the booklet with Mary and subsequently led her to salvation in Christ.

These events caused me to ponder a few matters.

When God calls, we need to just obey and go. We should not look at our own inadequacies but draw strength from God. If we are willing to be used by God, we have to be His instrument, to be used by Him, no matter how small we feel. The ukulele is after all a small instrument. We need not fear, for God will prepare the ground for us. When we played the songs on the ukulele that Sunday, our playing and singing were far from perfect. But somehow, God touched the hearts of Roland and Mary through the lyrics of the songs. God was preparing them for salvation.



TMC Fellowship of Ukulelians' visit to Johor Wesley Methodist Church - Seniors' Sunday

Very often, we have our own plans, but God has His plans. We should be sensitive to the prompting of the Holy Spirit and be led by His Spirit in our actions. That was what my niece did that morning and two souls were saved.

All this while, I had thought that playing the ukulele was for personal pleasure and achievement. Now, I realise that there is a purpose for the birth of FOU. God has a mission for the FOU. So I exhort my fellow ukulelians – and you, the reader – to pick up our ukuleles and with our repertoire of praise and worship songs, boldly go forth to touch the lives of those in need of a touch from God.

**Jam sessions are often used by musicians to develop new material (music), find suitable arrangements, or simply as a social gathering and communal practice session.*

(Source: Wikipedia)

***This is a prayer which consists of an acknowledgement and plea for forgiveness of personal sins, and invites Jesus as one's personal Saviour.*

*The FOU meets at 9am on Saturday mornings.
For more information, please contact the church office.*

"Why, O Lord?"



by Kwa Kiem Kien

Psalm 3:

A Lament, How to read laments

(from Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 1982, Zondervanpp. 178-179)

Address:

The psalmist identifies the one to whom the psalm is prayed, that is the Lord.

Complaint:

The psalmist pours out, honestly and forcefully, a complaint, identifying what the trouble is and why the Lord's help is being sought.

Trust:

The psalmist immediately expresses trust in God. Moreover, you must trust Him to answer your complaint in the way He sees fit, not necessarily as you wish.

Deliverance:

The psalmist pleads for God to deliver from the situation described in the complaint.

Assurance:

The psalmist expresses the assurance that God will deliver. This assurance is parallel to the expression of trust.

Praise:

The psalmist offers praise, thanking and honouring God for the blessings of the past, present and/or future.

In the last issue of the Saltshaker ("*#@!!*%," p.16), I discussed Imprecatory Psalms – those psalms which express such anger that one is imprecating, that is calling curses, onto others. Living in a fallen world where bad things happen, imprecatory psalms are a way of expressing ourselves.

This time I will discuss laments.

Laments are broader, in that they are general expressions of struggles, sufferings or disappointments to the Lord.

We regularly experience these times of difficulty... seasons in our lives when we or someone in our family is faced with sickness, long hours at work, exams, and then because of these stresses, we may get into a minor accident.

"For troubles without number surround me; my sins have overtaken me, and I cannot see...and my heart fails within me" (Ps 40:12).

At other times we are in a low mood for no reason and our devotional times are dry, coming to church is a chore and discouragement sets in.

"My soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water" (Ps 63:1).

At still other times, we are down because corporately or nationally there is a crisis, such as the recent weeks of drought we faced. In these times, as a community we express our questions and disappointments to the Lord and struggle to find meaning.

"Do not hold against us the sins of the fathers; may your mercy come quickly to meet us, for we are in desperate need" (Ps 79:8).

It is in these situations that we lament, pouring out our questions, doubts, fears to the Lord and wait for Him to respond. And often, we don't even know what to say or how to express our emotions. The Psalms, which are our words to God, help us express our feelings and confusion.

"My soul is in anguish. How long, O Lord, how long?" (Ps 6:3)

Lament is not just complaining

When Singaporeans complain, we are often just venting our frustrations at systems and policies which are unfair or don't make sense. Sometimes, these

complaints sound like the whining of a spoilt child who just wants to get his way all the time. While there is an element of complaining in a lament, especially about the injustices faced in life, a lament is different in that it is expressing these questions to God and expecting a response.

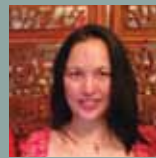
Lament takes time

Some people talk all the time, repeating themselves as they process their thoughts and what is going on in their lives. Some people think by talking; and they repeat themselves as they process their thoughts and what is going on in their lives. Laments are a little like that since often the distress and pain that the psalmist feels is repeated. When we are down in the dumps, or in pain because of a broken relationship, we often keep asking the same questions over and over again. And we find that when we repeat ourselves, repeatedly going through the same ground, we come to a resolution of the matter, and reach a more peaceful state. Too often we are too quick to try to "get out" of a low period. There can be some value in taking time to lament our situation before the Lord and asking Him, in our fragile state, to lead us to growth.

Laments ultimately affirm trust in a sovereign and loving God

While our complaints about policies often will not make a difference and will not get us anywhere, when we lament to God, we are crying out to the One who loves us and the God of the universe who can answer our prayers. As we pour out ourselves to the Lord, often and repeatedly, we are acknowledging that the Lord is the one who can absorb and understand our negativity, our doubts, and dryness. Hence, lamenting during these times will actually draw us closer to our loving heavenly Father.

Renovation of the Heart



by Claire Lowe

Can you imagine yourself not getting perturbed by a snide remark or a negative innuendo? Is it possible to maintain one's calm and peace when faced with a rude driver?

Dallas Willard, a renowned author and teacher of the Word, says that the miracle of spiritual transformation IS available to all who believe by grace and through faith. Unfortunately, many Christians do not think that it is possible and have not pursued it, and therefore have not experienced the freedom found in God's truth.

Instead, we readily seek after the more tangible gifts of the manifestation of the Holy Spirit. We endeavour to achieve noble acts and deeds of service. Sacrificing our money, time and effort seem more do-able than the pursuit of holiness. However, the painful truth lies in 1 Sam 15:22, "obedience is better than sacrifice". A radically transformed life by the renewing of the mind - a change from the inside out - is how we can attest to God's good and perfect will in our lives (Rom 12:2).

Lest...

We cry "Lord Lord! Have we not by Thy name done many mighty works?" To which the Lord replies, "I do not know you." What is required is a "serious obedience" to the will of God (Matt 7:21-23; ASV, The Message).

Or, in Willard's words, "Much of what we do in Christian circles, with very good intentions, hoping to see steady significant growth, simply makes no sense and leads nowhere, so far as substantive spiritual formation is concerned." (Willard, p46)

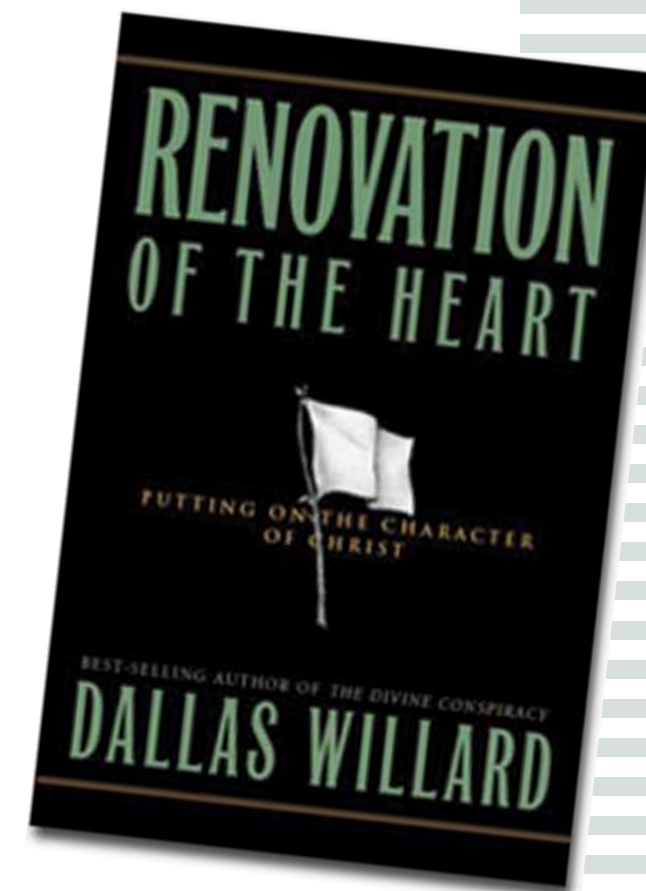
Like a skilled surgeon, Willard in his book, *Renovation of the Heart*, cuts open the heart and takes the reader on a journey of deep and soulful reflection. He defines six aspects of the human personality and elucidates on how each element of our being may harmonise with the Spirit.

The shaping of the inner man is the central theme in this book and is based on the vision that a carefully cultivated heart, directed by the grace of God, can transform our response to whatever pain and negativities that life may bring, to the point of even having "right" emotions.

What our lives amount to is not the attainment of the "measurables" but truly, a matter of who we become within.

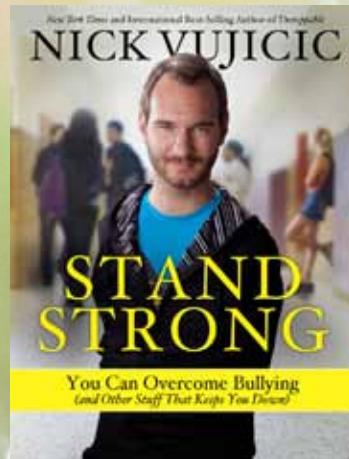
Renovation of the Heart is not a book to be read at leisure. One needs to very intentionally schedule a regular quiet time of about 45 minutes. Reflective reading ushers us into the presence of God, allowing His Spirit to permeate every sinew of our heart, mind, soul and spirit.

2 Chronicles 15:2 promises, "If you seek Him, He will be found by you."



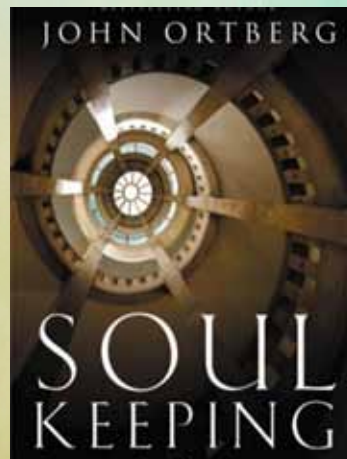
Renovation of the Heart is written by Dallas Willard and is available at the Resource Centre (248.4 WIL)

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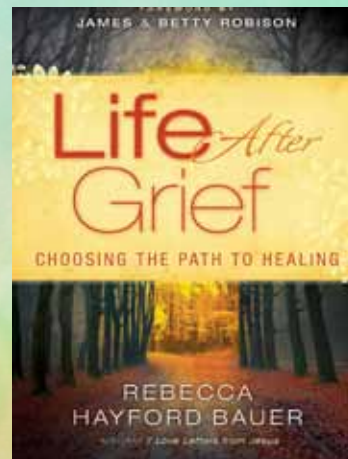
STAND STRONG
Author: Nick Vujicic

Born with no arms, no legs and hence no ability to defend himself, Nick Vujicic knows what it feels like to be picked on and pushed around. However he has learnt that he does not have to play the bully's game and neither do you! Find out how you can turn being bullied into a great opportunity, create a safety zone within yourself and establish strong values that no bully can shake. This book also includes chapters on how to deal with cyber bullies and ways that you can monitor your emotions and control your response to them while helping others who are being bullied.



SOUL KEEPING
Author: John Ortberg

Anxiety, depression, fear and loneliness are all symptoms of a soul that has lost touch with its source of life. The question is how do we nurture our soul and prevent it from shrivelling from neglect? With a workable and relevant approach, John Ortberg shows how Jesus has called us to a deeper life with Him. A life that goes beyond our everyday interest and desires instead of the shallow life where one just goes through the motions of being spiritual when we are actually being enslaved by unhealthy habits.



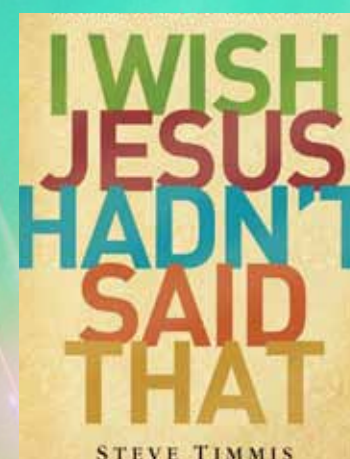
LIFE AFTER GRIEF
Author: Rebecca Hayford Bauer

When you experience a loss that changes everything, grief is only the beginning. While mourning for the life you once knew is a long and important process, it is not healthy to be grieving all the time. However most people do not know where they should go from there. Rebecca Hayford Bauer's loss was the death of her husband in 2003. In Life After Grief, she shares her personal story of loss, grief and healing, and invites readers to walk with her into the hope and uncertainty of new life.



WHAT IF YOUR BLESSINGS COME THROUGH RAINDROPS
Author: Laura Story

Based on the hit song by popular singer, Laura Story, this devotional contains 30 daily devotions that will guide the reader into a deeper understanding of God's mysterious use of blessings. Each chapter contains thoughts, prayers and quotes from Laura Story as well as other spiritual giants such as J. I. Packer, Oswald Chambers and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, along with a journalling page for the readers to recall blessings they have seen in their own lives. With chapters such as "What If Your Blessings Come Through Raindrops" and "He Loves Us Too Much To Give Us Lesser Things", this devotional is bound to encourage and inspire readers with its empowering messages about heartache, healing and God's grace!



I WISH JESUS HADN'T SAID THAT
Author: Steve Timmis

Steve Timmis calls all believers to consider ten sayings of Jesus that reveal where our affections lie. He reminds us that Christians are called to abandon, not cherish the ways of the world and reject rather than pursue the things that afford us status, prestige and pleasure. As followers of Christ, we must grapple with what it means to follow Him and accept His verdict on what constitutes the good life, no matter how counter-cultural it may seem. Are you ready to find out who really has your heart?



PASSION: TAKE IT ALL - Various Artists (CD)

Passion: Take It All follows the continued success of last year's Passion: Let The Future Begin. This praise album showcases today's favourite artists performing songs that have inspired the current worship movement and includes tracks such as "Don't Ever Stop" (Chris Tomlin), "Never Gonna Let Me Go" (Kristian Stanfill), "I Am" (Crowder), "Worthy" (Matt Redman), "You Came to My Rescue"



SONGS 4 WORSHIP: WORSHIP CLASSICS - Various Artists (CD)

Songs 4 Worship - Worship Classics comprises songs that have travelled the globe, finding their way into houses of worship and hearts of believers from all walks of life and is a must-have collection for worship music lovers. The wide selection of songs also makes it an ideal gift for those who are looking to introduce friends and family to great worship music. The Worship Classics collection features original recordings from Paul Baloche, Tim Hughes, Matt Redman, Brenton Brown, Darlene Zschech and Kari Jobe among others.

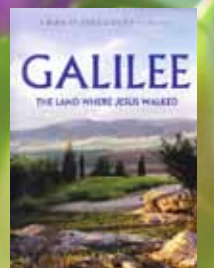
TMC RESOURCE CENTRE

You can borrow a series of four Day of Discovery videos produced by RBC Ministries on the theme of the Land of the Bible from the TMC Resource Centre on Level 2. Each video focuses on a particular city, its biblical history and the significant events that took place there.

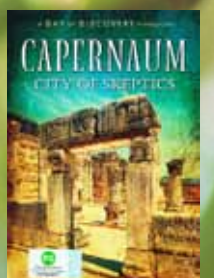
Underground Jerusalem – City of the Past (DVD 399)



Galilee – The Land where Jesus Walked (DVD 445)



Capernaum – City of Sceptics (DVD 446)



Hebron – City of Promise (DVD 458)



Events

Wed, 2 Jul, 6 Aug and every 1st Wed of the month
10.00am – 12.00pm

Yum Cha@10 is an opportunity for people to come together for fellowship, and serves as a platform for TMC-ers to meet one another as well as non- Christians in the community mid-week. Contact the church office / churchoffice@tmc.org.sg
www.tmc.org.sg/ministries.html#gym

Fri, 4 Jul – 6 Jul

Children's Ministry Workers' Retreat

Sun, 18 May

8.45am / 11.15am

Children's Ministry Creative Prayer
www.tmc.org.sg/cm.html

Sat, 5, 12, 19 Jul

2.00 – 5.00pm

WSCS Talk – "Rest in God's Abundance" by Mrs Lee Joo Choo

Sun, 6 Jul

Pledge Sunday

Sat 19 Jul

9.00am – 5.00pm

X/Y Conference 2014
<http://xyconf2014.tumblr.com/>

Sun 20 Jul

Girls' Brigade Fund Raising

Sun 13 Jul

Children's Ministry Creative Prayer for P1-6
www.tmc.org.sg/cm.html

Sun, 20 Jul, 17 Aug and every 3rd Sunday thereafter
10.00am

WSCS Visitation to Homebound. Those interested to bring the church into the homes of the homebound, please contact Lucy Chan at 9748 2733.

Sat 26 Jul

2.00 – 5.00pm

Raising Godly Children in Today's World
www.tmc.org.sg/highlights.html#raisingchildren

Sun 27 Jul

Missions Sunday
www.tmc.org.sg/missions.html

Sun, 27 Jul, 31 Aug and every last Sunday of the month
9.00am

Visit to Institute of Mental Health by Outreach & Social Concerns.
Contact Yvonne Tan at 9091 8589 / yvnn_tan@yahoo.com
www.tmc.org.sg/osc.html#imh

Thu, 31 Jul, 28 Aug and every last Thu 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 in the church office / eddie@tmc.org.sg.
www.tmc.org.sg/osc.html#slec

Every 2nd and 4th Sun
7.30 – 8.30am

Church Prayer Meeting in Sanctuary
www.tmc.org.sg/prayer.html

Every Sun
10.15am

Design for Discipleship
www.tmc.org.sg/d&n.html

Every 2nd and 4th Wed
8.00 – 9.30pm

Bible App – Book of Hebrews
www.tmc.org.sg/d&n.html#bibleapp

Every 3rd Wed
10.00am – 12.00pm

God's Masterworks: A Concerto in 39 Movements
www.tmc.org.sg/regular.html#masterworks

Every Fri

8.00 – 10.00pm

Healing Ministry in the Prayer Chapel

Every 1st and 3rd Fri

9.15 - 11.15am

Bible Study on Genesis
www.tmc.org.sg/regular.html#genesis

Every 2nd and 4th Sat
9.00 – 11.00am

Fellowship of Ukulelians meet to worship, fellowship, receive coaching and of course play a wide repertoire of Christian hymns and contemporary worship songs with the ukulele.
www.tmc.org.sg/regular.html#ukulele

Alternate Sat

2.00 – 4.00pm

Youth Avenue - Soccer Training at Kovan Sports Centre, Futsal Courts
www.tmc.org.sg/osc.html#c123

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Rev Dr Kang Ho Soon
Rev Peter Goh

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