Saltshaker

A Trinity Methodist Church Publication







AN EXERCISE IN BLESS-ERCISE PG 6 THE TEN COMMANDMENTS (PART I) PG 18 保护我们的母鸡 WHO RULES YOUR ROOST? PG 24



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### get ready. get courageous. get patient.



When I was asked to share my BLESS story, I was very hesitant. It seems very self- congratulatory boasting about what I have done. However, taking a step back, I now see it as boasting of God's work in my life, and we should never hesitate to boast in the Lord.

As some of you may know, I am involved in the organisation of an event called Charity Bike n Blade. A bunch of cyclists - the ones that some of you deem a nuisance on the roads - cycle in Malaysia to raise funds for charities in Singapore.

I have been blessed to be involved with this event for quite a few years. I always consider it to be a special vehicle used by the Lord to bless others. Through this event, I have met many people.

In order to train, I cycle with a few groups. One of them is FOTR - Fellowship of the Ride – and many are Christians. We start each ride with a prayer and always end with the all-important breakfast.

A few years back, one of the cyclists of FOTR phoned me urgently to say that her husband had been diagnosed with lung cancer.

Both husband and wife cycle and are not Christians. A few of us responded immediately. We went to the hospital and asked them for permission to pray with them. They allowed us to do so. The husband was admitted into hospital with a preliminary diagnosis of stage 1 lung cancer, which was operable. By the end of the four-day stay, the diagnosis had become "stage 4 non-operable cancer". It was hard news for the couple to accept. We carried on praying with them. They also asked for prayers from other Christians. We continue to keep them in prayer and today, more than three years later, the husband's tumour has stabilised. We are still walking with them and have invited them to Alpha. We continue to pray for their salvation.

Turning to another story, a few years ago, a lady wanted to participate in Charity Bike n Blade.

A few weeks before the event, she fell quite badly and hurt herself. She was resting in hospital when I visited her. Subsequently, when she was not able to cycle anymore, she turned up with her friend to support the event .... on motorcycles.

One day, out of the blue, I received a call from her. She needed someone to talk to. After talking to her for a while about her situation, she accepted Christ over the telephone! She now worships at TMC, and I will leave you to guess who she is. In fact, she has asked her brother and sister-in- law to worship at TMC as well.

What lessons have I learned from these two friendships that God has led me to?

1. Be ready: It requires some extra effort to take time out of our daily routine. We need to care enough to make the effort. Surely God will bless these efforts.

2. Be courageous: What's the worst that can happen? You get to spend some time with a friend?

3. Be patient: When we interact with our friends, God is always there in our midst. He has a plan. The timing is in His hands. The first friendship has not fully played out, and it took many years and only intermittent interactions in the second friendship for God's love story to be revealed.

All of us have it in us to make a difference. The friend in the second story told me that she felt at home in TMC. You – Christ's disciples at TMC - made her feel welcome. This shows that we have it in every one of us to bless others.

Albert's testimony was first shared over the pulpit on Sun 27 Nov 16.



Albert (right) all kit up with a Bike and Blade pal



Sending dad off on another adventure bike ride

Get ready, get courageous and get patient!





Keegan Ong Associate Lay Leader 王梅利 执事会副会友领袖 BLESS A Christmas BLESSing to Antioch Toa Payoh Outreach 致大巴窑外展事工的圣诞祝福

PANDAS, a boat ride and a delicious Christmas buffet dinner.

These were some of the highlights of a River Safari outing on 15 December last year for the folks from the Antioch Toa Payoh Outreach (ATPO) group.

For most of them, this was a truly special treat, as this was the first time they had seen such animals or enjoyed a boat ride.

The outing was organised by Trinity Methodist Church's Mandarin Ministry, which had formed ATPO last year to reach out to the elderly and less fortunate residents of a HDB block in Toa Payoh.

Earlier in mid-November, Mandarin Ministry volunteers had served ATPO folks by cutting their hair, giving them facials, and washing and massaging their feet. They also played games with them and served them lunch. The visits meant a lot to the ATPO beneficiaries, and gave those of us from the Mandarin Ministry the opportunity to get to know them better.

For Christmas, the Mandarin Ministry decided to bless our ATPO friends with an outing to the River Safari. This stemmed from our desire to fulfill a wish expressed by many of the elderly residents, most of whom are from low-income households, to go on an outing together. They would not otherwise be able to go out an outing on their own as they had various physical disabilities and required assistance to travel.

Sisters Adalena and Pei Yun worked tirelessly, going door-todoor to visit the elderly residents, to invite them to the outing.

On the day of the outing, 25 volunteers chaperoned 55 excited ATPO friends, including some who were wheelchair-bound. Volunteers sprang into action right from the start, borrowing wheelchairs for the physicallychallenged, distributing light snacks and drinks and goodie bags. It was challenging and tiring to accompany the physicallychallenged seniors on this outing. As one of the volunteers, Cindy Teo, said: "I was concerned about whether I was physically fit to wheel them around and make them feel safe." Nevertheless, our volunteers rose to the challenge and managed to assist the seniors with their wheelchairs especially when using the restrooms.

Most of the elderly were fascinated as they had never seen these animals. The stars of the River Safari were the pandas, and our elderly friends strained to get a glimpse of these shy creatures.

We also took our friends on a boat ride. It was a first-time experience for some of them, and one that they found enjoyable.

We left the River Safari in the evening and headed to the home of a sister-in-Christ who had booked her condominium function hall for everyone to have a buffet dinner. Everyone was ravenous after the day's outing, and the meal was heartily consumed.

At dinner, Adalena shared her testimony about how God had blessed her and her family. She wished for all the participants to receive the same blessing and to have the abundant life that God had blessed her with. During the altar call, three pre-believers raised their hands to receive Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. They were led in the sinner's prayer by Eddie.

"I am very clear that this is the door that God has opened for the Mandarin Service to reach out to the unchurched," said Carol Lie, chairperson of the Mandarin Service.

The whole experience was encouraging and meaningful. I felt the impact that love and concern can have on a needy community. Despite our unfamiliar faces, many beneficiaries warmly accepted us because of the genuine love that we showed. It warmed my heart when I witnessed their joy as their wishes came true. As Cindy said: "The smiles on their faces were priceless." We were, in turn, very happy to be able to grant them

安提阿大巴窑外展事工 (ATPO) 主要是面向居住在大 巴窑大牌15号的年长者和较不 幸的一群。早在去年11月中, 华语崇拜的一些义工便参与了 这项事工,前往大巴窑为该地 年长的居民剪头发、洗脚、敷 面膜等。在游戏与共进午餐的 过程中,义工们也更进一步地 认识了事工的服务对象。

. . . .

去年圣诞节,华语崇拜决定 进行跟进,携带这些年长者 前往合川生态园。在一天的活 动结束后,我们也为受邀者提 供自助式晚餐。这次活动较11 月份的活动增添不少位义工; 共有25位弟兄姐妹们响应了号 召,决定在这个佳节期间把上 帝的爱与祝福带给身边的人。

为了这项活动,Adalena和 Pei Yan姐妹更是不辞劳苦地挨 家挨户登门邀请年长的居民前 来参与。活动的目的主要是完 成居民们素来的心愿。长久以 来,这些来自低收入家庭的居 民都一再表达了他们期望出游 的愿望。由于他们的行动不方 便,因此若没有义工的协助, 他们几乎不可能到访我国的名 胜地。

12月15日,25位义工领着 55位受邀者前往合川生态园。 在受邀者中,有不少需要使用 轮椅代步。

活动一开始,义工们便积极 地为受邀者租用轮椅、分发点 心与礼包,并搀携着受邀者在 生态园内游逛。这无疑是一项 相当名义工,张美丽,所说:" 我的体力能够在了是不是有足。"然而, 义工们个个毫不退缩,并让 受激相个个毫不退缩,并让 受知何以正确的方式推动轮 椅、在如顾时协助年长者上下 轮椅等。

活动中,我们见证到上帝丰 盛的供应。因着一名慷慨会友 的捐赠,我们得以在酷热中享 受到鲜甜的葡萄。上帝也为我 们供应了一些免费的门票!

义工们也主动充当起导游, 透过园内的指示牌为受邀者介 绍园中的不同生态。

大部分受邀者首次见到这么 多生物,都感到无比惊奇。当 然,两只熊猫是合川生态园的 亮点。这次到访,受邀的年长 者也个个挺直腰板,满怀期待 地探着头,希望一睹熊猫们的 风采。

在看了熊猫后,我们也和 受邀者一同乘船绕着生态园逛 一圈。很多受邀者此前从未坐过 船,因此这个体验令他们感到愉 快与难忘。

傍晚时分,我们离开了合川生 态园,前往其中一位姐妹公寓的 活动厅用晚餐。

一天活动下来,大家都食欲大 开,因此吃起来更是津津有味。

晚宴上, Adalena姐妹与受邀者 分享上帝在她及她的家人身上所 行的奇事。她表示希望受邀者也 能领受相同的福分,一同享受上 帝所赐予她的丰盛的生命。感谢 主,在分享结束后,有三位未信者 决定敞开心,举手表示愿意接受 耶稣为他们个人的救主。于是, 伍传道带领他们做了决志祷告。

针对这项活动,华语崇拜委员 会主席,李美琴姐妹,指出:"我 深信这是上帝为华语崇拜开启的 一扇门,让我们能成为宣扬福音 的管道。"

总的来说,这历程是满有意 义,也令人鼓舞的。我感受到了 这个活动为有需要的人群带来的 爱与关怀。尽管受邀者中有一些 不甚熟悉的面孔,但因着我们真 诚的爱,他们也愿意欣然地接受 我们。看着他们因为愿望成真而 喜悦,我也由衷地感受到温馨。 正如美丽所说:"他们脸上的微笑 是如此可贵。"借着祝福他人,我 们也领受了无比大的喜乐。

"Evangelism is a journey, not a one-time event. The Gospel is relevant daily even to pre-believers. I am glad to have been given the opportunity to be part of this journey," – Cindy Teo.

"It was great to see how a one day outing could bring so much joy and happiness to the elderly. To some this may be an ordinary outing with the elderly, or another volunteer project. But for me through this outreach activity, God opened my eyes to see how He could do great things amongst the lost souls that He loves. God has given me eyes of faith that one day He will lead His lost sheep home." – Carol Lie



### An Exercise in BLESS-ercise

SAHMs is an acronym for "Stay-At-Home-Mums", and a homonym for "Psalms" (which in Hebrew means praises or hymns). One author says it may well be called the "Hebrew Prayer and Praise Book". As much as we often speak of Christians as witnesses for Christ in the marketplace, we thought we would highlight what some SAHMs are doing for the Lord. Contrary to popular thought, SAHMs do not "just stay at home and take care of the children".



"Exercise daily in God- no spiritual flabbiness, please! Workouts in the gymnasium are useful, but a disciplined life in God is far more so, making you fit both today and forever." (Paraphrase of 1 Tim 4:7-8 from The Message)

Koh Shuwen



Jerrica Soh (middle in photo) is married to Richard Seng and they have three children, Megan (15), Branden (13) and Caelen (11).

Jerri took a few years to respond to God's prompting to stay home, as she was concerned about managing as a single-income family. Reassured by God that she should prioritise building a better family environment for her children, she stopped work five years ago when Caelan was entering Primary 1.

Jerri started taking Zumba lessons in 2013 and was certified as an instructor two years ago. She met many friends who are mostly non-believers. She enjoyed the rapport and sense of community that was built from sharing their lives and challenges regularly. She wanted to replicate it within the TMC community, with the crucial element of the love of Christ and prayer support which was missing from her Zumba class. In germinating this idea, Jerri had unwittingly stumbled on her version of the BLESS (B - Begin in prayer, L - Listen to a friend, E - Eat with a friend, S - Serve (with) a friend, S - Share your story) initiative!

Jerri wants to build a community in TMC, especially for other TMC SAHMs through exercise, as well as provide a non-threatening environment for TMC members to bring pre-believing friends.

The first BLESS-ercise Zumba classes ran every Wednesday from 9.30-10.30am in the Upper Room last November. There were 10-12 ladies at each session; the workout was followed by fellowship over food, which gave them a wonderful opportunity to build one another up physically, spiritually and emotionally.

Jerri was initially apprehensive about promoting the BLESS-ercise as she was unsure if Zumba might be perceived as being too secular or sensual for a church setting. Jerri also had to make sure that she could commit to all the sessions as she did not have a back-up teacher and each session involved planning of songs, incorporation of Christian music, choreography and practice. Rather than dwelling on her doubts, Jerri focused on her two objectives and proceeded with faith to serve God. Jerri said that she could not have done it without encouragement and tremendous prayer support.

Jerri was unable to carry out her plan of conducting a second round of BLESS-ercise Zumba this past January as Chinese New Year was celebrated early this year. Both her sons also contracted chicken pox in quick succession – part of the trials of all mums! But a second round of Zumba is in the pipeline, so do look out for this, all SAHMS.

Jerri has also been serving in TMC's floral ministry with Joanne Yeo as her partner for more than two years. Jerri invited one of her pre-believer friends, Ms M to join them and Ms M has been serving faithfully alongside them ever since. Ms M is very receptive to, but not yet ready to receive Christ due to family reasons. In the meantime, the three ladies have been praying and encouraging one another through this informal disciple group and God is with them (Matthew 18:20). The next time you worship at TMC, take some time to admire the beautiful floral offerings that are the inspiration and expressions of worship of these and other ladies.

The deliberate scheduling of these ministries around her existing homemaking routine is one of the sacrifices that Jerri makes as a SAHM in order to serve the Lord. The lives that she touches through her ministries, directly or otherwise and the joy she gets from honouring God with her gifts, are what keeps her going.

Blessed are those who fear the Lord, who find great delight in his commands. Their children will be mighty in the land, the generation of the upright will be blessed. (Ps 112.1-2)



# Christian Cheer Charity

Christmas 2016 was one of the happiest in TMC history.

Apart from celebrating our Lord's birth, we also saw the largest number of christenings of 25 adults and children.

Having finally accepted Christ a little over a year ago, Mrs Susan Bussiere had been attending church on and off most of her life. However, in her search for some solace after her mother's passing, her sister Joyce suggested she might like to attend the Alpha course held at TMC in July 2015.



Volunteers from TMC with their Santa hats

Both Joyce, her husband Steve, and Susan's husband Richard attended the 10-session course, which they all found enriching and fulfilling. At the seventh session, Susan accepted Christ and she was very happy. Up to that point, she had not attended any Sunday services at TMC but that changed quickly – Susan and Richard are now regulars at the 8.45am service. At Christmas 2016, she too took a dip in the baptismal pool.

When it was announced that TMC would be holding the annual Christmas party for some of the residents of the Institute of Mental Health (IMH), Susan was prompted by a spirit of love and charity. At the same time, she felt compelled to go as she was intrigued and curious to see what this institute was like.

Despite going with a large church group, she still arrived with some trepidation and fear, but was pleasantly surprised by what she observed.

Set in wide open spaces and generous grounds, she found IMH bright, clean and tidy. The TMC group of almost 30 volunteers, half of whom were first-timers, got organised and immediately went into work-mode the minute they arrived. They started carrying out their duties in their various roles as worship leaders, emcees, befrienders, game masters, logistics, and those in charge of decorations and door gifts. Susan was in charge of purchasing and putting up the decorations. She also made sure all the volunteers were properly attired with red and white hats to enhance the Christmas party

In the course of the singing, fun and games, there were opportunities for the residents to share their testimonies. One testimony that Susan found encouraging and profound was given by a man who after years of treatment at IMH was pronounced well enough to be discharged. He was to continue his treatment only at a day care centre and had hopes of finding a job in the future. Another testimony was given by a resident who despite being wheelchair bound, shared that



Susan at her baptism

he felt God had touched him. Despite all the set-backs in his life, he was happy and contented, breaking into song praising God.

Although Susan did not personally engage any particular resident that morning, she found most of them to be very warm, friendly and appreciative. Perhaps in her next visit, which she looks forward to, she would be better prepared.

To those who are thinking of joining these monthly group visits, Susan advises them to go with an open mind and let the Spirit lead them. Similarly, she feels that volunteers must be sensitive to the feelings and conditions of the residents and not be judgmental.

"From this experience, God has impressed upon me to always count my blessings and appreciate what I have. Always good to get out of our comfort zones and experience something new."

A group of volunteers visits IMH every month on a Sunday. If you would like to BLESS the IMH residents, please contact Yvonne Tan through the iSunday Counter.



I was born and raised in San Francisco, in a very liberal environment where religion was not really spoken about.

At the same time, everyone was expected to respect all religions. My family practised Taoism. But in my growing-up years, I was turned off by religion. And I was turned off most of all by Christianity because I did not want to be converted and I did not want others to impose their faith on me.

I began to open up to Christianity a little more after meeting my boyfriend and now-husband Adrian. Even then, the journey was not easy for us.

I challenged Adrian's faith. We argued, and had misunderstandings of what it took to continue our relationship.

In my exploration of the Christian faith, we attended courses such as Alpha and Exploring Christianity, and we watched videos and did devotionals together. I gradually realised that in order for our relationship to work, I needed to take the step of acceptance. I was doing the exact thing I had always hated - to be "that girl" who became a Christian because of her boyfriend. It had better be worth it, I thought!

The moment at which I accepted Christ was not particularly memorable. I do not recall the exact date nor did I feel like God was impacting my life significantly.

> However, I felt like I had reached a point where I understood Christianity enough, agreed with its values and teachings, and was willing to make a lifetime commitment to

continue pursuing a relationship with God. This was a conscious decision and a promise I could make to further my relationship with Adrian. The turning point in my relationship with God was at the sudden passing of my father.

He was a good man who knew of the Lord, but was not a Christian. Did this mean he would not go to Heaven? I prayed that God would accept him, and I prayed this for months, not knowing what to expect.

At the time, Adrian and I were helping with a run of the Alpha Course. During one of the sessions, Nicky Gumbel gave me an idea — rather than praying that my dad was eligible for Heaven, why don't I ask God to simply tell me? So I started praying to God to tell me whether my dad was with Him. I prayed this for a couple of days.

Then I had a dream. I saw my dad in a white, pure, graceful environment. There was nothing around us but him and possibly my mum or sister behind him. When we saw each other, tears came to our eyes. We hugged tightly, and I physically felt my dad. We seemed to know what had happened during this time, that he had passed away, and we were so joyful to be reunited. The feeling was real and raw. It was tearful but it brought absolute peace. I woke up tearing.

I did not tell Adrian about my dream until a couple of days later.

I later told him that I had never dreamt about my dad before. In fact, I rarely dream about the people I care about — my dreams are usually about trivial matters like missing a very important business meeting. I also do not remember my dreams, nor do I resonate with them so much that I would wake up tearing.

Adrian told me that he thought it was a very powerful message from God. "Remember to thank God for it, and just be honest with Him. Tell Him you're thankful." But could God reinforce what He was trying to tell me to reassure me further? I prayed for this reinforcement. And a couple of days later, I had another dream. him. I expected to see the same in my dream as I approached his hospital bed. However, this time, I was surprised to see my dad sitting upright in bed. He was wearing his favorite tan-coloured sweater. Though his eyes were closed, his cheeks were healthily pink. There were no tubes, and he looked exactly like himself. I was overwhelmed with a feeling of peace and tears came to my eyes. My dream ended.

I shared my second dream with Adrian. By now, I had reached a place with God where I could continue to over-analyse these dreams, wondering whether my dad was really in Heaven and wondering whether God was



This one was much more complicated. It involved many people of various ages, and different scenes and locations. It ended with a hospital visit, which I recognised as the period where I saw my dad after his fatal accident. In real life, I remembered seeing him by his hospital bedside – he wore a hospital gown and his head was shaven. Unconscious and in a coma, my dad was skinny, frail, and small, on life support with tubes and machines all around

Colleen at her baptism on Christmas Day 2016

really speaking to me. Or I could just surrender to Him and believe that something had happened at my dad's death-bed between my dad and Jesus which led to this series of revelations from God to me.

I chose the latter. I chose not to doubt and to take that leap of faith given all that God had revealed to me. I chose to surrender myself and all my sorrows to God. I chose to listen to Him, to lean on Him, and to truly try to love Him back.

Since then, God has blessed Adrian and me in countless ways. He is the anchor in our marriage, and He has taught me how to respect and nurture our marriage by resting on Him as the foundation. God has also carried us through our three-year journey of trying to conceive seeing different doctors, undergoing an operation to remove my fallopian tube, and attempting IVF (in-vitro fertilisation) two times. During this process, we have been blessed with church brothers and sisters who have been more than supportive.

It is through God's presence in our lives that has helped us remain faithful, hopeful, and thankful. Today, He has created a miracle for our family as we expect our daughter in April. In our society today, people often shy away from publicly disclosing personal issues, especially those related to fertility. However, over the last 12 months, we have been given the opportunity to offer support to over 10 couples who are facing similar challenges with conception. We have always felt that God put us through this journey for a purpose, and we believe that this is a strong part of our testimony.

I know I have a lifetime of tests, challenges, blessings and joy ahead of me, but that is why I can depend on God more than ever. I look forward to a deeper relationship with God, together with Adrian and our new family.

## BEING CHRIST'S DISCIPLE AT HOME



"I sold idols and porcelain figurines, and God still found me".

Sarah Tan's spiritual journey began at 2pm on 18 Mar 2009.

It happened during a business meeting with an American buyer and a local associate, Cheryl Lee.

Although the sale did not materialise, they ended up praying for Sarah and led her to the Lord.

At Ya Kun Café in Thomson Plaza, Sarah accepted Christ into her life and the tears flowed non-stop.

Cheryl followed up by inviting Sarah to attend Barker Road Methodist Church.

It was a challenging time for Sarah. Business was not ideal, and her oldest daughter, Grace, was suffering from depression.

Yet, Sarah drew even closer to God. She prayed for Grace, and God embraced her as she voluntarily accompanied Sarah to church one Sunday morning. God brought about healing for Grace, who stopped her anti-depressant pills, and Sarah found peace.

At home, Sarah also lives as a witness for Christ. She provided an environment for her 26-year-old domestic helper, Yu Hlaing, to come to Christ.

In an atmosphere of love and caring, Sarah brought Yu Hlaing to attend the Mandarin Service at TMC.



Sarah and Yu Hlaing

Yu Hlaing is from Taung Gok in Myanmar, a two-day journey by bus from the capital Yangon. Coming from a predominantly Buddhist culture, Yu Hlaing was touched by the warmth of the church. One church member, Norman Ng, gave her a bible in the Burmese language.

Yu Hlaing accepted Christ and was baptised on Christmas day last year.

As an ambassador for Christ, Sarah also mentored her previous Myanmar helper, Moe Si, who was also baptised at Trinity Methodist Church. Since her return home, she has been attending a church in Yangon.

God continues to use Sarah powerfully to reach out to the elderly in an old folks' home in Pontian, Johor, once a month.

Closer to home, Sarah prays for God's mercy and salvation for her younger daughters, Rachel and Carwen.

May God continue to bless Sarah with good health and the power of the Holy Spirit in her outreach efforts.



Yu Hlaing at her baptism

## GOD'S WORD TRANSFORMS



Growing up, I had many opportunities to know God on a personal level - through school (a Methodist Church kindergarten and Anglo-Chinese Junior College), through good friends and relatives.

After graduating from junior college, and before getting married, I was very focussed on building my career, and climbing the corporate ladder. My career defined me. I had always been a bit of a controlfreak and a perfectionist, which made me a rather difficult person to be with. I often imposed my high expectations on the people around me, especially those closest to me. When things didn't quite go the way that I expected, anger and resentment would build up. This was especially so when it came to my job that I was so proud of.

I only started to feel His presence when I was planning to get married in 2010. I knew that someone or something important was missing in my life. However, being a very logical and practical person, I chose to ignore those feelings at the time.

It was in February 2014 when a friend of mine introduced me to Bible Study Fellowship (BSF) that I started to want to mend and build the relationship I once had with God as a child and teenager.

The study of the Book of Matthew opened up my heart and my mind. I discovered how wonderful it is to be a child of God. He is perfect, not I. He is in control, not I. It is not easy for a control-freak like me to rely on someone else, let alone Someone whom I had not made an effort to get to know over the years.

Even though it seems a cliché to say so, God works in marvellous ways. He transformed me in ways I never knew possible. Despite my perfectionist streak, my anger and resentment, the Holy Spirit truly worked in me and is still working today, every day. I started relating to my family with less anger, but with more love and empathy. It was then that I felt it important to bring my family closer to God and hoped that they would also feel the joy and security that I was feeling every day.



Jasmine and her family



"I baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."



Jasmine receiving her baptism certificate from Ps Alvin on Christmas Day 2016

The transformation was very apparent. Both my husband and my mother noticed the changes in me, and we started attending church as a family. This significant change in my personality led my mother to God. I feel very privileged that God used me as an instrument to reach out to my loved ones. I hope that, not only through my inward baptism but also my outward baptism, I may reach out to more people.

We have been attending the 8.45am service at TMC since December 2015. I continue to pray that

God will plant and grow us in this church where I hope to enjoy positive and nurturing fellowship not only for my husband and I, but also for my two young daughters.

## He Is My Exceedingly Great Reward





"I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

God has pursued me all the days of my life.

He made Himself known to me, when I was a young child, through a children's bible in my non-Christian household.

He placed me in Paya Lebar Methodist Girls' Secondary School (PL), where He slowly made His way into my life, and showed me the love of a Christian community.

After graduating from PL, I prayed to receive God's gift of His beloved Son, Jesus Christ my Saviour, into my life.

As I began to place my hope in His beautiful existence, He sustained me through a long and draining time of coming to terms with the emotional struggles that I developed from not only being physically abused at home by my domestic worker throughout my primary school years, but also being in constant fear and crippling paranoia at home after she claimed and described to me how a male member of my household had sexually harassed her. While I was in university, God began my process of healing through counselling sessions with a pastor from my previous church. In the midst of that, I found myself defeated by the magnitude of the hurt and trauma that I knew I had to overcome in order to live a more normal, and mentally healthier life. I doubted that He would hold my hand through the process, I doubted His promise to bless me, and I had no faith in His gentleness towards me.

With His mercy and grace, and in order that I may know His thoughts for me, God also demonstrated His sovereign knowledge of what is truly good for me. My ex-boyfriend and his loving Christian family were the semblance of the "normal life" that I craved, but they became my crutches.

God intervened to remove the crutches in my life that I had placed my sole and undue hope on. He opened my blinded eyes to see that what I had truly thought of as "the best that life could ever offer me", was in fact a hurtful and fruitless relationship that caused me pain and stagnation, because God had ceased to be the centre of it.

After more than half a year of healing from my break-up with my ex-boyfriend, I have come to have complete faith that God knows and wants what is truly best for me, and I now trust and rejoice in His steering of my life.

God has restored me. He used my beloved long-time friend from PL to place me in Trinity Methodist Church, in Baptism and Membership classes, and in a group of His children who seek all of His ways. I also met His beautiful gift to me - a man after His own heart, who seeks to love me as He does.

With His loving kindness, God has now brought me back to the point where I had previously let go of His hand. I now hold His hand firmly, and I follow Him closely in faith.

He is my shield, and my exceedingly great reward.

God's infinite love for me has brought me closer to His beloved Son, that I may be restored to Him and in response, love the Lord my God with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Having received an outpouring of love from those who know Him, in accordance with God's wisdom and love laid out in 1 Corinthians 13, I seek strength from Him to do His will and to love His people as He does.



## THIS IS MY STORY, THIS IS MY SONG



"Perfect submission, all is at rest, I in my Saviour am happy and blest, Watching and waiting, looking above, Filled with His goodness, lost in His love." - "Blessed Assurance" by Fanny Crosby



Stacey and Sue Yien

To a large extent, the first half of my life had been a "noisy" one, peppered by responsibilities, job, travel, and distractions.

Life was busy, but not full.

A break from work in 2009 gave me the time and stillness of mind to discover the gaps in my life. I accepted the Lord Jesus as my Saviour in January 2009 during this "gap" year, more aptly described by Bob Buford as "Halftime".

While the Alpha course is known to bring prebelievers to Christ, God led me to Alpha shortly after I had accepted Christ. At Alpha, His streams of assurance, protection and provision filled me with a thankful heart. I was comforted by His presence, and I began a personal relationship with Him.

Borrowing the words of John Newton, I was lost, but now am found.

Today, life is still "noisy", but has taken a different spin. God is now a big part of the new equation.

My mind is not always at equilibrium, but the heart is anchored right by His grace, and His word is my wisdom. From being a guardian of my time and my interests, I have learnt gradually to let "self" diminish, surrender, and increase my dependence on Him. God has become the first go-to in my "valley "moments. He has become my compass in my navigation of life, and my refill station when I need a top-up.

I have become more involved in bible study and I experience a sense of fulfilment from the ministry opportunities he has given me because he has allowed me to be a part of His work. I know He is in control.

Baptism is an event that is a natural and significant progression for a believer. I was baptised on Christmas Day at TMC. It's the church that I drive by each time I visit my sister, with a playground that my nieces look to with envy, and where I have been a frequent visitor through my friend, Sue Yien.

I had envisaged to beautify my baptism alongside the salvation of some of my family members who have yet to be saved. "In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps" (Prov 16:9). God knows better.

Earlier this year, a friend shared from Jer 6:16 – "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls." God's word dwelled in my heart and I pondered on the meaning of the "ancient paths". Through the study of Revelation, 3'C's came to mind: challenge, confession and conviction. Challenge to live in righteousness, Confession in areas to be purified, Conviction to be a better witness. My appreciation of the ancient paths fell into place. In this season of my life, the call to baptism is the good way to walk in and find rest for my soul. As Jesus says in Matt 3:15, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness".

The ancient path will be different for you and me, and the season we each are in. I look forward to a new season, His revelation of a new ancient path in 2017, knowing that He will make everything beautiful in His time.

"Perfect submission, all is at rest, I in my Saviour am happy and blest, Watching and waiting, looking above, Filled with His goodness, lost in His love." - "Blessed Assurance" by Fanny Crosby



## THE TEN COMMANDMENTS: Who God is, is Who We Are (Part 1)



Kwa Kiem Kiok

Korean TV and movie stars are so popular and influential now that some of their fans try to become like them in every way – the way they dress and, in the extreme, some fans will go through surgery to have the perfect Korean "look".

People want to emulate their idols.

We become who we worship – if we worship Korean stars, we want to become like them.

When we worship God, I pray that we want to become like Him.

The book of Exodus starts with God leading the people out of slavery in Egypt. It ends with the setting up of the Tabernacle of the Tent of Meeting in the desert.

The book starts with the Israelites in Egypt seemingly in the absence of God ("a king who did not know about Joseph" - Ex 1:8) and ends in the desert and a Tent where the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle, present with the house of Israel during all their travels (Ex 40:34-38).

This is a story of God's mighty acts and gracious dealings with His people.

The Ten Commandments, encapsulates this relationship between God and His people and so we will study this portion of Exodus to know God better and so that we can be His people.

In this article we shall look at the first five commandments as a reflection of God's character, and in the next issue we shall consider the next five commandments to know what is expected of us who are His people.

In Exodus, God acts and initiates action among his people. He is the one who brought them out of Egypt. He is the one who will bless those who follow him to a thousand generations. God's character is shown clearly in these first five commandments.

The key characteristic we see here is God's holiness: God is holy and so we cannot worship any idols. We must not make any idol in the form of any created being.

He is holy and so his name is holy and should not be misused.

He is holy and has made time holy, and thus commands that there be no work on the Sabbath day. The Sabbath is holy time set apart for God, time that is a gift not just for us but for all who are in our care, including our workers and creatures. God is holy. This means that he is apart and different from his people.

When He revealed himself to Moses in the burning bush (Ex 3:4-6) he tells Moses to take off his sandals for the ground is holy. Because God is holy, the unclean can't come before him. Hence, priests had to be consecrated, that is cleansed, before they could perform their priestly duties (Ex 29).

Holiness is neither a popular nor an admired characteristic today.

To be called "holy-holy" is almost an insult – one is seen as otherworldly, moralistic and a spoilsport in all the worst possible ways. So we shy away from this concept.

But to do so is to therefore miss a major aspect of God's character – his holiness. Because we worship a God who is holy, we are to be holy.

There are two ways we can do this.

First, we can only come to God because He first loved us and reached out to us by sending Jesus to die on the cross for our sin. We enter God's presence because of the blood of Jesus, and not by anything that we have done.

Hence our posture before God is one of humility and reverence. Like Moses we take off our dirty sandals (sin, sinful actions and dirty thoughts) when we come before Him. When we bow before this holy God we become so aware of our sinfulness. We cannot be presumptuous.

Secondly because we worship a God who is holy we too need to become more holy.

We follow his commands, though they may be inconvenient and challenging; such as the demand to keep the Sabbath for us and for our families.

We worship and obey this holy God because we know that he is the one who rescued us out of our Egypt. So we need to put away our old sinful nature.

We seek to become like our idols. Who God is, is who we are.



The sermon series on Exodus started on 5 Feb, and will continue until 30 Jul.

Kiem, who is one TMC's local preachers and a lecturer in Inter-Cultural Studies at the East Asia School of Theology, will be helping our readers in following that sermon series through this column.

Details – including the sermon schedule, discussion questions and additional resources – are available at www.tmc.org.sg/pulpit.html and the TMC app.

# God's Initiative, Our Response



Cheryl is leading a small, but very dedicated team of young adults in planning this year's church camp in June.

When the pastors approached me to lead the planning for the church camp, I was very unwilling.

I had just started work in a new organisation, and was very busy, tired, and preoccupied with work. I felt distant from God. I was in no position to be involved in leading any committee – let alone a church camp committee, which would surely require sensitivity to God, discernment, and prayer.

At the same time, I knew this state was not where I wanted to be.

I wanted to see transformation: a change in my priorities; to prioritise God, and be more sensitive to Him.

After a sermon by Pastor Alvin one Sunday, I felt the Lord encourage me to consider Deut 26: "He brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey;" – which I felt was representative of my current station in life – "and now I bring the first-fruits of the soil that you, Lord, have given me."

These first-fruits were not just my possessions, but also my time.

I realised that saying I wanted to prioritise God was not enough. If I wanted to see change, I needed to take active steps to spend time with God: in prayer, in His Word, and also in service. In other words, I needed to have a "human response". And so I agreed to serve.

Looking back, halfway through my journey in leading the camp committee, agreeing to serve God has taught me three things. It has:

- Encouraged me to think more about God and His work, and look beyond my daily concerns;
- 2 Helped me learn much about God from the other young adults I serve with; and
- **3** Taught me to trust in God more, look to Him, and to grow in my faith in Him every time I see Him come through for us, as He always does, whatever situation we are in.

Yet, my experiences are also a continual reminder that my act of creating time for God isn't enough. There are still so many things I see in myself – as an imperfect leader of a team that is trying its best to follow God's will – that I try hard to change, but can't. I know that, if there is to be any hope that I can be made more like Jesus, it has to be a solution beyond self-help. It's more than just throwing out the metaphorical old clothes and putting on new clothes at Chinese New Year. I need the initiative and action of God to change me from the inside out.

#### And so it is. God's initiative, my response; God's initiative, our response.

I see this in our fortnightly committee meetings too. The young adults start the meeting with time set aside to study the Bible and pray. This is our commitment to create space for God and to put Him at the centre of our work. Then, at every meeting, God reaches out to give each of us new insights from His Word. I am encouraged every week by how God gives each of us unique revelations that are suited to our circumstances, and that we can share with the rest of the team. It is His initiative that illumines the Bible for us. In the process, we are transformed.

How does this relate to church camp? Maybe you, like me, are looking for transformation. You would like to create a bit more space in your life for God. You're hoping to hear God better, or spend time with Him. But maybe you're busy, or stuck in a rut, not knowing what to do. May I invite you to take the active step towards transformation by devoting the time to listen to God, and learn from Him at camp? You can trust that God will do His work of reaching out to you, bringing out His best in you.

This year's camp theme is "Relevant", and we will be learning how our faith is relevant to our culture and the world around us. We will be in the much-loved Malacca from 16 - 19 June, and will be taught by camp speaker Pastor Benny Ho, whom you've heard preach at TMC this year.

On behalf of my committee, we hope you will respond. Please sign up to join us on a journey of transformation – as individuals and as a body of Christ.



To help as many people come for the camp as possible, there is an early bird discount that lasts until 2 April 2017. All early bird registrants will get 10% off room rates. For campers who have already registered, the amount will be refunded to you via cheque, which you can collect from the iSunday counter from 12 Feb onwards.

Relevant AS WE ARE & WHERE WE ARE

#### Trinity Methodist Church Camp 2017

"So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life – your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life – and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking.

Instead, fix your attention of God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you."

- ROMANS 12: 1-2 (The Message, MSG)



VISIT THE WEBSITE www.tmc.org.sg/churchcamp.html. The bi-annual church camp is an event many of us look forward to, in fact if we could, we'd do one every year. In case you are still deciding if this year's camp is worth signing up for, here are a few reasons why you don't want to miss Relevant 2017.

### \_\_\_\_\_

#### **THE SPEAKER & THE MESSAGE**

Pastor Benny Ho is currently the Senior Pastor of Faith Community Church in Perth with a lifetime of ministry behind him, including missions work with World Vision. His life goal? Preaching through every book of the Bible. And with what we've seen from his dynamic sermons so far, we'd say sign us up for more! Pastor Benny will be sharing how we can live out our Christian calling as we are (how God has made us) and where we are (our station in life).

## 2

#### THE FAMILY & THE FRIENDS

Sometimes it feels like even 48 hours in a day wouldn't be enough to spend quality time with our loved ones. At church camp, you can take a break from the hustle and bustle to finally have that meaningful conversation with one another or stay up listening to your children's endless chatter about their day. Over four days, experience familiar faces become fantastic friends.

### 3

#### **THE FOOD & THE FUN**

We're talking durian party, gula melaka cendol, satay celup, chicken rice balls, putu piring and so much more but we'll stop before we drool all over. And if that isn't enough, we're planning to hunt down old haunts in Jonker Street and conquer new ones. Oh, did we also mention the superhero-themed gala dinner at the end? Prizes to be won, may the force be with you.





Our spider sense tells us you'll have so much fun that four days will flash

by in the bat of an eyelid. Don't wonder anymore, sign up now!

ash 🦩

23

# Who Rules Your Roost? 保护我们的母鸡



伍显芬传道 Eddie Goh

鸡年带给你怎样的运程?

今年2017年是农历新年十二生肖中的鸡年,鸡在我们生活中可以说非常 熟悉,特别是新加坡人都很爱吃鸡饭,海南鸡饭也成为新加坡的美食之 一,备受旅客的喜爱。

有一个伊索寓言,说有一只公鸡在田野里为母鸡寻找粮食,发现了一块 宝玉,公鸡对宝玉说:"如果不是我,是你的主人找到了你,他会非常珍 惜地把你捡起来带回家,但我发现你却毫无用处,如果让我得到很多宝 玉,还不如让我得到一粒麦子好。"这个故事告诉我们在你生命中什么 是最重要的呢?的确对公鸡来说,宝玉还不如麦子来的重要,因为麦子 可以当食物。

今天在我们生命中什么是最重要的呢?食物,金钱,房子,汽车等等。 我们往往终其一生都在追著这一切。这一切虽然都是我们生活中的必须 品,但这一切都只让人在他有生之年能够享用,并不是永恒的。耶稣曾 说:人若赚得全世界,赔上自己的生命,有什么益处呢?人还能拿什么 换什么呢? (太16:26)因此生命对我们来说是最重要的,耶稣在此除 了告诉我们在世上短暂的生命重要,但更重要的是他要赐给我们永恒的 生命,就是永生。



今年是我们华人在十二生肖的鸡年,让我想到 耶稣在他当年的事奉当中有 2次提到鸡, 一次 是耶稣曾责备文士和法利赛人假冒为善,却忽 略了先知和他本身的教导。耶稣说:耶路撒冷 啊! 耶路撒冷啊! 你常杀害先知, 又用石头打 死那奉差遣到你这里来的人。我多次愿意聚集 你的儿女,好像母鸡把小鸡聚集在翅膀下, 只是你们不愿意。(太23:37)

耶稣用母鸡来形容他来到这世上,就是要来拯救和保护我们不要被恶者 (撒但) 掳去, 然而这些宗教领袖不领情反而将他钉在十字架上。

另外一次是耶稣以公鸡来预言他到时被捉,他的门徒彼得将会不认他。 耶稣说:我实在告诉你(彼得),今夜鸡叫以先,你要三次不认我。 (太26:34)

鸡年你的运程如何?就以耶稣在上面所说的话来告诉你你在鸡年的运程 如何。首先耶稣告诉了我们他就像母鸡,我们是他的小鸡,母鸡不但会 找小虫,蚯蚓给小鸡吃,当遇到危险的时候会保护它们。

今天我们信主的人也知道我们所信的耶稣,他是"以马内利"就是神与我 们同在,我们还需惧怕什么呢?虽然在我们的生活中有起起落落,有时 一帆风顺,有时困难重重,但我们不是孤军作战,我们有主的同在,我 们要捉着神的应许。因为没有任何事能够使神的爱与我们分离。因此我 们不要像使徒彼得当遇到危险时,信心动摇,甚至3次不认主,感谢主彼 得遇见复活的主之后,生命完全改变,甚至愿意为主殉道。

最后要告诉大家,十二生肖只不过是人编造出来的东西,不论是金鸡, 火鸡或钻鸡都和我们的生命没有关系,我们的生命是掌握在创造宇宙万 物的上帝手中,世上所有的灾祸有些是人为的,有些是因为罪所引起 的,因此我们基督徒不要相信十二生肖给你带来的运程,因为上帝已经 将最好的礼物赐给我们,就是他的爱子耶稣基督作为我们的赎罪祭, 我们罪得赦免,得永生,成为上帝的儿女。

在此顺祝主内弟兄姐妹在新的一年里平安健康, 工作顺利,在籍学生学业进步,家庭和睦相爱, 灵命不断的长进,爱主也爱他人, 作主喜悦的门徒,多多的蒙恩蒙福。



What does the Year of the Rooster hold in store for you?

Singaporeans are familiar with chickens. Hainanese Chicken Rice is a staple in our local cuisine, and a must-try dish for the tourist.

One of Aesop's fables is about the story of a rooster looking for grain in the fields. The rooster found a precious piece of jade instead. The rooster said to the jade piece: "If your owner had found you instead, he would treat you as something precious and brought you home. Alas, you are of no use to me. What good are several pieces of jade to me? I'd rather a seed of grain." This story should provoke us to think about the important things in our life. As the rooster said, the grain as food would be far more precious to it, than pieces of jade.

Many of us are inclined to treat food, money, shelter, cars etc as precious items. We chase after them. Some of these things are undeniably necessities, but they can only be enjoyed this side of eternity. They cannot be eternal possessions. Jesus said: "What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?" (Mt 16:26).

Therefore, life is of the utmost importance. Apart from warning us of the temporal nature of our lives, Jesus also assured us of His gift of eternal life.

In this year of the Rooster, it is apt to recall at least two anecdotes relating to chickens in Jesus' ministry.

One mention occurs when Jesus rebuked the teachers of the law and the Pharisees for pretending to be merciful while forgetting Jesus' teachings. Jesus said: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing." (Mt 23:37)

Jesus used the metaphor of a mother hen to describe his coming to this world to save and protect us from the clutches of Satan. Yet, the religious leaders of Jesus' time did not accept His provision. Instead, they nailed Him to the Cross.

Another mention is when Jesus prophesied that his disciple, Peter, would deny Him at the time of his arrest. "Truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." (Mt 26:34)

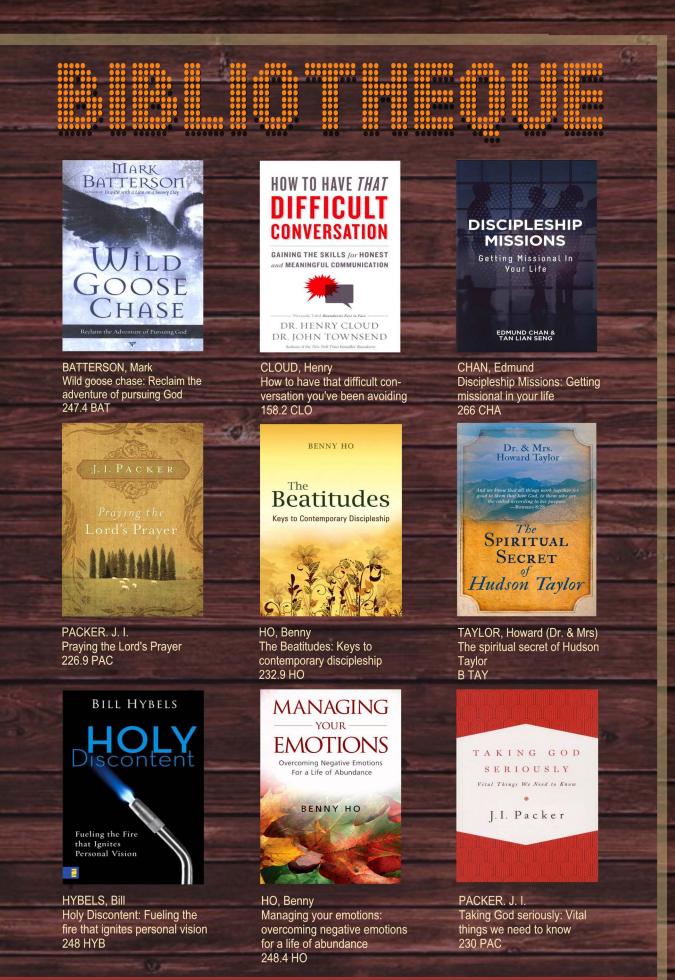
So what lies in store for you in the year of the Rooster? We can apply God's Word to determine what will rule our roost this year.

Firstly, Jesus has told us that He is like a mother hen and we are like young chicks. Not only will a mother hen look for worms for her chicks, she will also protect them in times of danger. We know that Jesus is Emmanuel – God with us. There is nothing to fear. We must cling on to God's promises in the ups and downs of our lives. Nothing can separate us from the love of God. Our faith should not waver in times of uncertainty, unlike Peter who denied Christ three times. (Thanks be to God that Peter's life was transformed upon witnessing Christ's resurrection, so much so that he was martyred for Christ's sake.)

The 12 Chinese zodiac signs are created by man. Whether it's the year of the Golden Rooster, the Fire Rooster or the Diamond Rooster, these have no bearing on our lives. Our lives are held in the hand of our Creator.

Some disasters are caused by man, others are due to sin, and we have no explanation for some other disasters. As Christians, we should not place our faith in the reading of the zodiac signs. God has already given us the best Gift of all – He sent His beloved Son to pay for our sins. He redeemed our souls for eternal salvation, and we are God's children.

In this new year, I wish everyone peace and good health. May everything go well in your jobs and studies, and may you experience the love of your family members. May you continue to grow your spiritual lives. Love God and others, and be disciples of great joy. Wishing you abundant blessings this Lunar New Year.



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

### **EVENTS**

#### **EVENTS**

Wed 1 Mar 8.00pm Ash Wednesday Service

Sat 4, 11, 18, 25 Mar, 1, 8, 22 Apr, 20, 27 May 3.00pm Youth Avenue Sport Activity www.facebook.com/YouthAvenue123

Sun 5, 12, 19, 26 Mar 2.00pm Membership Classes www.tmc.org.sg/baptism.html

Sun 12 Mar Children's Ministry outing to Pasir Ris park www.tmc.org.sg/cm.html

Wed 15 Mar 3.00pm Youth Avenue Nerf Game www.facebook.com/YouthAvenue123

Fri 17 Mar 2.00pm Youth Avenue Cycling www.facebook.com/YouthAvenue123

Sat 18 Mar 9.00am Christianity and Qing Ming talk, organised by Witness & Evangelism

Sat 25 Mar 1.00pm Youth Avenue FIFA 2017 Tournament www.facebook.com/YouthAvenue123

Fri 31 Mar and every Fri thereafter until 7.30pm DISCIPLE II (www.tmc.org.sg/d&n.html)

Mon 10 Apr – Thurs 13 Apr 8.00pm Holy Week Services

Fri 14 Apr 3.00pm Good Friday service

Sun 16 Apr 6.30am Easter Sunday Sunrise Service

9.00am Easter Sunday main service including Baptism of Children & Adults, Children's Ministry in recess

5.00pm Remembrance Service, organised by Witness & Evangelism and Chapel of Life

Sun 30 Apr 8.45am / 11.00am Reception of New Members

**Every Sun** 9.30am Mandarin Service Prayer Meeting

Every 2nd Sun After the 11.15 am service Young Adults' Lunch Fellowship

Last Sun of the month 9.00am Visit to Institute of Mental 4.30pm Youth Ministry - Worship, Health by Outreach & Social Concerns. Contact Yvonne Tan at 9091 8589 / yvnn\_tan@yahoo. com (www.tmc.org.sg/osc.html#imh)

Every Wed (not 1 Mar Ash Wed, 12 Apr Holy Week Wed) 8.00pm Church Prayer Meeting www.tmc.org.sg/prayer.html



#### Every 1st Wed

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 www.tmc.org.sg/ministries.html#gym

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. www.tmc.org.sg/osc.html#slec

**Everv Fri** 

8.00 – 10.00pm Healing Ministry at the Prayer Chapel

**Every Sat** 9.00 – 11.30am Fellowship of Ukulelians (www.tmc.org.sg/regular. html#ukulele)

Every 1st Sat

Word and Community (www. facebook.com/TMCYouthMin)

#### Monthly

WSCS Visitation to Homebound. Those interested to bring the church into the homes of the homebound, please contact Lucy Chan at 9678 4046. Group leaves TMC at 10am.

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