

KIDS SAY THE DARNDEST THINGS PG 4

HEALING INVASION PG 12 GTMC UNITED PG 22



There is a children's book by P.D. Eastman called Are You My Mother? It is all about a baby bird that hatches out of its egg just as its mother flies off to look for food for the baby bird. The book continues with the little bird going around asking every creature it encounters: Are you my mother?

In Mark 3:31-34, we see Jesus asking strange questions: "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?"

The context is that while Jesus is teaching a crowd of people, someone tells him that his mother is looking for him, but Jesus responds by asking everyone something truly outrageous. "Who is my mother?"

This is truly outrageous because in first century Israel, the family you were a part of was incredibly important.

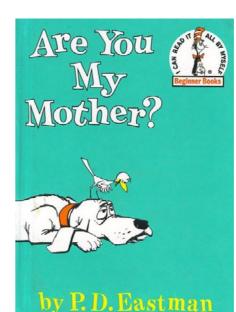
Your entire identity was built on what family you came from. But moving from what was social norm, Jesus tells the crowd that his family is made up of his disciples who are sitting around him.

In a parallel account in Matthew 12:46–50, Matthew tells it even more clearly: "And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

Now it seems odd that Jesus was thinking that some guy like Peter was his mum or brother. Perhaps he's really saying something truly profound at this moment. My personal view is that he is saying something profound at this time! Jesus did not see his disciples merely as students, but as a family. In fact, Jesus considers his disciples to be more than a true family, more so than the biological or human family.

Jesus came here on a mission to start a new family - the family of God. Being a part of this family is an important development beyond the biological family we come from. That's what Jesus is saying.

This may be hard for some of us because we may be blessed by the families we're a part of, and have godly parents who took the pains to disciple us or prayed for us. Let us give thanks for parents like that!



For others, because of sin, maybe the family seems more like a curse. But if the Holy Spirit adopts us and makes us part of a large family under Christ, this is indeed a new privilege extended to us by God.

So it doesn't matter how good we are or how bad we are. What really matters is that we can be adopted into this new greater family because of Jesus, who loved us enough to die on the cross for each and every one of us despite who we are!

When Jesus went to the cross, he exchanged his flawless image for our imperfect image. So it doesn't matter if we are a student, if we're married, if we are a parent or grandparent or a single person.

None of these roles matter, because ultimately we are spiritual orphans, unless God adopts us. Like Jesus. We will get to call God our Father, and then the relationships we have in the church would foster the kind of significant relationships we can have.

Of course, I'm not saying that our responsibility to our parents isn't important because it absolutely is, but the allegiance we now have to God's family takes on just as important a role. If you are a Christian, then the role you play now as a student, as a spouse, as a parent, a child, are all temporary roles, and these roles will one day fade away.

However, your true, eternal identity is that of a child of God and a disciple.

If you've been adopted by God, you're a child of God and a disciple first. Everything else is secondary.

We celebrate Mother's Day in the month of May. You may know that Mother's Day did not always have the meaning and message it does today. Its original inception was as a day for women, mothers in particular, to rise up and demand peace. The original Mother's Day Proclamation was written by Julia Ward Howe, who was known as a suffragist, abolitionist and poet. In the aftermath of the American Civil War, this author of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" wrote, in one line:

"Our sons shall not be taken from us to unlearn all that we have been able to teach them of charity, mercy and patience."

And because we are all in the family of God, we must take our individual responsibility seriously to affirm, nurture, love one other because we have received and experienced that sacrificial love from God.

A mother—a true mother—teaches her children by word and by example. The same should be said of fathers too. Parenting is an almost impossible task for anyone to handle alone. Trust me, I am a mother, a grandmother as well as a daughter!

How then can we function in our given roles as a member of Jesus's family?

Firstly may I suggest we put in a lot of prayer for our roles to begin with! And also by being a "Salt Shaker" where our lives speak louder than our words, where our families and friends can look at us and know that God's principles and passions override the demands and dictates that the world makes.

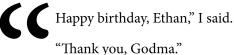
Let us echothe words of 1 Thessalonians 2:8,

"We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God, but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us."

Back to the original question: Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?

Jesus himself gave the answer: "... Whoever does the will of God is my brother and mother". (Mark 3:35)





"What is a godma?" asked Ethan's little sister.

Was this a "kids say the darndest things"

six-year-old, needling my conscience on my dismal performance as a godma thus far?

Sure, in the last 14 years, I think I've dutifully remembered his birthday, given him red packets at Lunar New Year, attended concerts at which he played, taken him bowling once.

moment, or was God, through the innocence of a

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THIS IS A PRETTY BIG PROMISE ... WE REALLY DON'T NEED PAPERWORK OR LEGAL?

Stumped, I dug up the Anglican liturgy for baptism to find out what I had promised before God when consenting to be a godparent more than 10 years ago. This is what I think I promised:

Will you be responsible for seeing that the child you present is brought up in the Christian faith and life? Will you by your prayers and witness help this child to grow into the full stature of Christ?

"I will, with God's help," I had said.

The simple question of a child prompted me to ponder for several hours, thinking of all the people who have - unknowingly - been godparents or spiritual parents to me.

The husband-and-wife team who led our adult Bible class in the early 1990s schooled me in apologetics, and showed me much love. They gave me my first study Bible and in it is written "Do everything for the glory of God." (1 Cor 10:31). Twenty years later, in moments of uncertainty, the Bible verses and promises I claim are still the ones that were first taught to me by Chong Hiok and Margaret Chan.

When I was an undergraduate in London, there was a girl just a few years my senior, who would relentlessly pursue us if we were absent from the

She formed a group of undergraduate girls to study the Bible and pray. One girl was staunchly atheist but Claire Lowe never let up, persistently inviting her to our meetings.

There was a lawyer, also from TMC, who met up with me every university vacation for lunch. He affirmed my gifts and encouraged the usage of them. It was just simple lunch chit-chat. No difficult Bible quizzes! But he did get me started in leading worship services. The now Rev Ivan Tan, pastor at Wesley Methodist Church, is legendary for his encouragement of young Christians to grow in Christ. Many in TMC can attest to that.

These persons did not have fanciful labels or high-sounding names like "mentor" or "sponsor". But they count as my spiritual parents, having been active in my ongoing maturity in Christ.

Who are vou.a spiritual parent to?

matter what age we are or whether we call ourselves godparents or mentors, encouragers or befrienders. It's not about making sure someone knows the Bible cover to cover although there is a place for that.

For the most part, it doesn't

through Jesus Christ. alongside the person as he hits the road of discipleship in Christ, with an intention of directing his attention to what God is doing in his life and encouraging him he journeys in Christ. The to respond in faith. How do sponsor's solemn promise we do that? For starters, I is to support and encourage think one needs to at least the candidate in his spend time with the person Christian life. you are a spiritual parent to. Jesus spent time with

COMMENDATION AND WELCOME

Members of the household of God,

As members together with you in the body of Christ

I commend *these persons* to your love and care. Do all in your power to increase *their* faith, confirm *their* hope, and perfect *them* in love.

and we welcome you in Christian love.

We give thanks for all that God has already given you

There are a few young ladies I meet up with fairly regularly. When we meet, we share about our spiritual journeys, which include the trials and joys of work, family, personal struggles. I pray for them as they embark on their careers, as they experience the ups and downs of dating, as they grapple with work issues. It's not all that daunting to have breakfast or any other meal together just to hear someone out and ask what God is showing them in their lives, offering some personal spiritual insights if applicable. There is always the "I'll ask the pastor" card to play if any difficult questions arise! Or, more seriously, there is one's own spiritual parent to seek counsel from.

the Twelve. Paul spent time

with Timothy. Elijah with

Elisha. And the list goes on.

The sponsors of TMC's baptismal and membership candidates also take on the role of spiritual parenting (Sponsors, did you know that?). Hence, one does not frivolously accept the role of a sponsor. It's not merely

and in this congregation of The United Methodist Church, we renew our covenant faithfully to participate in the ministries of the church by our prayers, our presence, our gifts, and our service, that in everything God may be glorified about standing behind the candidate and putting a hand on his shoulder for some brief seconds. It's about holding his hand as

> On all these occasions, the whole congregation - even those who aren't sponsors – are asked to do all in their power to increase the candidates' faith, confirm their hope and perfect them in love. And to this commendation, the congregation renew their covenant faithfully to participate in the ministries of the church by their prayers, presence, gifts and

"When you make a vow to God, do not delay to fulfill it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow. It is better not to make a vow than to make one and not fulfill it." - Ecclesiastes 5:4

service.

Who will you be a spiritual parent to? Who will you embrace as your spiritual parent?

For me, I know it's time for me to fulfil my vows as a godma.

Watch out for an opportunity to learn about being an effective spiritual parent to others. Coming soon later in the year.

Christian Union meetings. It's more about walking



took off when I was about three years old so there was never any hardship in my life.

My parents wanted me to have everything they did not have as children – an easy lifestyle, happiness, best education. Moreover, I was plagued with severe asthma and eczema, and so was sent all over the world to visit top doctors. I took advantage of my family's sympathy and got everything I wanted.

I grew up in the United Kingdom, very streetsmart, spoilt and lavished with the best things in life, untouchable. including an exclusive Catholic boarding school education to keep company with other wealthy and spoilt children. Being the methods. I always passed. only Chinese kid in the Nevertheless, my ranking school, and coupled with my severe skin condition,

I was ill-treated by some boys drew comparisons got up to would shock My parents' business of the teachers and older classmates.

> racial discrimination on a more than 10 years in a antics got me into trouble major scale. At that time, however, their attitudes internationalscholarships courts. But my father only made me extremely rebellious. Consequently, I never paid any attention From the age of 16, I had in class, never studied, and was always on the brink of being expelled. I was a natural athlete and my love of cars without the end of the second my representation of the holding back and was year of university, I school in all the national games provided me with made me feel like a king. university for failing a "legitimate" outlet for my aggression. It was the on a regular basis, even which demanded my only reason why I wasn't bullied. In fact, I fought the older boys and was with people who were My father was hugely

I also found ways to cheat examination answers to other more sophisticated looked up to me. of 10 in a class of 20

with some of my Hong the average parent of Kong and Malaysian a teenager, including cousins who were not as getting heavily involved Now that I am older, I fortunate, and yet topped recognise it as having been the city's academic system Sometimes, my reckless row and even collected along the way.

an infinite cash income. I could buy anything I wanted. I often indulged consequences. Towards addicted to gambling. It was kicked out of the I switched girlfriends to attend three courses playing up to three girls at mandatory attendance. one time. I kept company five to 10 years older than disappointed. He tried me, all of whom were his best to get me school dropouts and not readmitted and had ranging from stealing fortunate to have what numerous meetings with I had. Many of them the principals and deans

> The mischief (and I'm for not being there to putting it mildly) that I guide me.

with gangs and triads. with the police and the always got me out of those sticky situations.

Being rebellious was thrilling. Yet it had its

of the university to no avail. He blamed himself that my father had no and an atheist, I felt it was power to help me. It was my duty to open her eyes also then that I realised and I sought evidence that my father's wish to prove my hypothesis. was for me was to grow I embarked on a twoup and at least complete vear fact-finding mission my university education, by reading books and as he had put in much Scripture. It then became effort in raising me. I apparent that I was only realised for the first time proving myself wrong. in my life that I had done It was the beginning of something wrong.

The expulsion propelled me to prove to him that I I good Chinese son. I started to change.

best friend" who was degree turn. I attended born and raised in a church regularly. Istopped Christian family. I myself doing what I knew was was raised in a Taoist unacceptable behaviour family. Despite the strict for a Christian, and gave Catholic education I had received as a child, I was I had been keeping. I personally opposed to continued to play rugby Christianity. My friend for the university, city, persistently shared the and state but this time, I Gospel with me, as well as testimonies and stories - to finish my university about her life, including how she faced difficulties with a Computer Science heart, or maybe because in her family. I always found easy and logical answers for her problems, but she always found the answers difficult to accept and explained that It was clear to me that I wasn't a Christian.

I wanted to prove her there was no God and what she believed in was not valid. I threw typical questions at her like "why is there suffering", "if and that".

my journey in coming to know Christ.

attended various could be that stereotypical Christian courses at various churches such managed to get into as ALPHA, Christianity another university. And Explored and so on. In that was where everything 2003, I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Saviour.

I met my first "female My entire life took a 180up all of the bad company studied - for the first time I've always found it easy education. I graduated degree with First Class Honours and was one of the top three in a class of more than 80 people.

I wouldn't understand as God was working in my life from the time of my graduation till the time I The more she shared landed my first job as a favour was on me. I was and explained, the more graphic designer. Though I wasn't good at the role, wrong. I told her that God clearly opened doors, guiding me to a totally different career path where I received God's grace seems four promotions within two years. Time and time there is a God, why this again, I would share my story with my family, though not with my dad.

Him with all the blessings I told my boss that I was Chinese community. leaving and he literally and go". I received a jump in Singapore is about 10 per cent compared to 40 per cent in the UK.

landing Upon Singapore, I stumbled across a small group that consisted of about Christ workers and knew instinctively that this was clearly the path for me. I felt that God was calling me to work with less-privileged children to help them walk on the straight and narrow. because I am a big kid at I was a true example of a bad kid

In time, I took up a permanent job in Singapore. I was blessed to be promoted every year. I am not ambitious or a go-getter but God's I therefore publicly always recognised and opportunities seemed to fall from the sky...well from Him of course.

endless. Some of His other blessings include the fact that my brother, once a devout Buddhist, accepted Christ

It was then that I first felt Being a logical alpha male As I grew in my journey 2010. He is now actively with God and through my serving in church using daily evening quiet times his God-given talent with Him, I felt a strong of musicianship. My calling to move to Asia to mother accepted Christ serve Him. China, Hong at Christmas in 2011 Kong and Singapore despite her family being were all options, but devout in other religions. Singapore stood out as a Her powerful story is place where I could serve shared with other elderly Chinese people in her UK that He had given to me. church including the city's

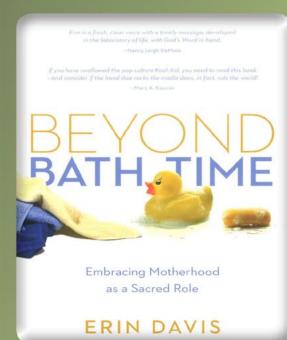
> said: "Take everything My father is closer to me than he has ever been. in my salary since the tax He was the disciplinarian when I was growing up. He is a pre-believer but God works in mysterious ways so I'm sure it's a matter of time before he embraces the Christian faith.

> six full-time Youth for I also met the love of my life in Singapore. She accepted Christ in November 2011. We are married and plan to have many children. I am after all now a Singapore Permanent Resident!

> The list of examples of working with kids. Maybe God's grace goes on. It sounds unbelievable but it is truly miraculous how God has helped me all my life. I sometimes wonder if He will severely test my faith since I've always had it so easy! I owe everything to Him.

> > declared my faith by being baptised. My wife and I have started serving in TMC and we want to do more social community outreach to underprivileged prebelieving youths.

Bibliotheque



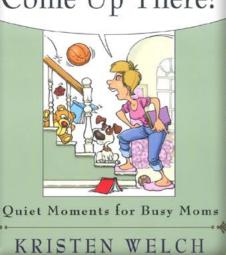
BEYOND BATH TIME Author: Erin Davis

Motherhood is under attack! A recent survey shows that among Christians, 47% felt that the roles of marriage and motherhood should not be emphasised for women. What is worse, most churches are not talking about why motherhood matters, nor is it equipping young mothers while seeking God in the midst of to see their family as a mission field.

Erin Davis was a young Christian wife who made the decision to not have children. She Filled with inspirational and had multiple degrees, a great husband, and a promising career, but most days she felt anything but fulfilled.

In Beyond Bath Time, Erin shares her journey to the place of true fulfillment by responding to the call of motherhood. Women will be challenged, convicted and wonderfully encouraged by Erin's honest and provocative look at motherhood and its divine call.

Don't Make Me Come Up There!



DON'T MAKE ME COME UP THERE! Author: Kristen Welch

To a mum, taking care of a family with children is about as dedicated a job there is. Don't Make Me Come Up There! is specially written to help remind mums laugh and to remind them why they love being a mother, the mess and the mundane that often to conquer your fears while defines the life of a mother.

hilarious real life stories and reflections written by a mum for mums, readers will recognise themselves in the pages of this book. The 52 reflections encourage mums to revel in the everyday beauty of their lives and grow closer to God through it all.



THE LEAGUE OF INCREDIBLE VEGETABLES VeggieTales (DVD)

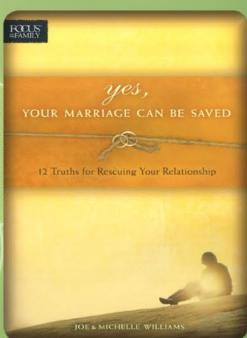
Can a cape and a mask change the world? Not exactly but VeggieTales uses a cape, mask and a group of veggie heroes to illustrate to kids that they can make a difference! "The League of Incredible Vegetables" provides a lesson of how reminding kids that they do not have to be afraid, because God is always looking out for them! It also offers parents the opportunity to talk with their kids about the true meaning of heroism!

As we celebrate Mothers' and Fathers' Days in May and SKS will be selling these and other titles in the Plaza on 12 May.

SKS BOOKS WAREHOUSE



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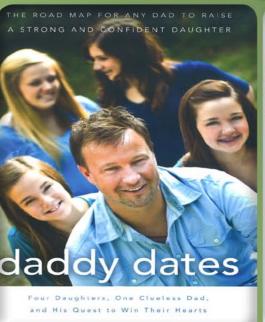


YES, YOUR MARRIAGE CAN BE SAVED Authors: Joe & Michelle Williams

When a marriage hits rough spots, the In this game-changing book, Greg wisdom and informed help it needs to ensure that the marriage comes out for how married and single dads can hard to find.

Through personal experience, Joe and Michelle Williams have learnt what works and what does not in the tough times of marriage. Having experienced several divorces each before becoming Christians, Joe and Michelle write with an insight and authority that simply cannot be denied. Follow them as they help you to understand the biblical principles that couples need to develop to make a marriage work.

This book includes a temperament test it feels like to be treated with love, and survey to help readers evaluate their marriage and also contains questions for self-evaluation and support-partner discussion questions to help them understand their marriage better.

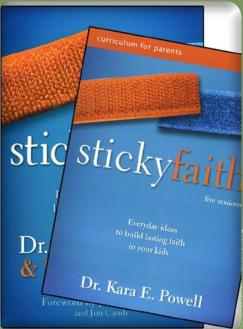


DADDY DATES: THE ROAD MAP FOR ANY DAD TO RAISE A STRONG Authors: Dr. Kara Powell & & CONFIDENT DAUGHTER **Author: Greg Wright**

Wright shares his easy-to-follow secrets stronger than before can sometimes be bridge the gender gap and become the clued-in man who knows his daughter

> Instead of laying down pronouncements, The Sticky Faith Kit, which consists Greg Wright writes humbly about his best efforts at being a successful dad. He writes about trying to know his own daughters, their fears, dreams and opinions, and how he stumbled across an kids emerge from adolescence with incredible strategy to do that with daughters of any age or stage.

shows how dads can raise a confident woman-to-be, show your daughter what respect, and true interest by a man who loves her.



STICKY FAITH Dr. Chap Clark (Book & DVD kit)

Did you know that research indicates that even in a predominantly Christian country such as America, approximately 40-50% of high school seniors drift from their faith after graduation?

of a reading book and a Parent Curriculum DVD is a video-based study that was developed as a result of Kara Powell's desire to see her own their faith intact.

This curriculum enables parents to This funny, insightful, and relatable book instill a deep and lasting faith in their adolescentsthrough the use of powerful strategies and practical ideas to help parents encourage their children's spiritual growth that will enable them to develop a faith that sticks.





have to confess, I'm quite a hoarder, particularly of information. I came across this salad concept in the August 2008 issue of the Gourmet magazine and filed

it away in the deep recesses of my brain.

It's a simple idea really. You layer the salad ingredients in such a way that you can take it on the go. This is great for frazzled moms or any busy person who needs to just take things out of the fridge ready to be consumed.

A dear friend's birthday yacht cruise presented the perfect opportunity to execute this beautiful Salad-in-a-Jar! I found a nautical-themed salad online for the occasion but the permutations and possibilities are endless!

This is what you would need for four appetiser portions:

A 1-litre mason jar

3-4 tablespoons of salad dressing (recipe below) Half a fist-sized red onion, thinly sliced into rings

Half a can of tuna

6-8 *cherry tomatoes*

1 hardboiled egg, cut into eighths

1 small cucumber, deseeded and diced

Half cup of cooked cous cous, orzo, quinoa or pasta of

your choice (I used a mixture of all four)

Salad greens of your choice (I used a mixture of romaine and butterhead lettuce)

ready-to-eat, salad-in-a-jar with no mess!

Recipe for approximately one cup of salad dressing (this is great paired with tuna and eggs):

Half cup of kewpie mayonnaise Half cup of Dijon mustard 3 tablespoons of yoghurt 2 teaspoons of apple cider vinegar Ground black pepper

Secret Moves

Cut tomatoes "weep" and it will leave you with a diluted dressing so I prefer to use cherry tomatoes that are delicious in their own right and pop satisfyingly in your mouth.

Cut cucumbers also "weep" so rub them with salt to draw out the cucumber "juices". Wash the salt off with water and you can further "wring" them dry in a clean kitchen towel. The result - crunchy cucumbers!

Assembling the Salad

The trick to keeping the salad greens crisp is to separate them from the wet and dense ingredients so layer the ingredients in the order listed above, with the salad dressing at the bottom and the greens at the top. Don't fill the jar to the brim. Leave some head room for 'tossing' the salad!

When ready to eat, simply shake or invert the jar several times (make sure lid is tightly screwed on before that!) to distribute and mix the ingredients and voila! A

This recipe is a 'green' one, not because of the colour of the salad leaves, but because you can re-use the jar, and also put together small amounts of vegetables which you might find difficult to do anything with on their own.





Over the years, I have considered myself a miracle child.

One of the miracles I experienced took place in 1995 when I went for an evening jog at Lower Peirce reservoir and was hit by a car driven by an unlicensed driver. I was hit from behind and sent spinning. The driver was not able to control the car and the front wheel went over my legs followed by the back wheels.

It all happened so fast. My shirt was torn. My watch and shoes were gone. As I lay there on the ground next to the drain, I immediately wriggled my toes to see whether I still had feeling in my legs. Fortunately, I did. The young driver and his girlfriend were in shock. I heard the group of three or four guys who had been jogging behind me say: "She's dead!" But I got up and scolded the driver. They wanted to call for an ambulance but I demanded that he take me back to my car. I managed to contact my family members to ask them to come down.

By the time my brother-in-law arrived, I was in great pain. There were tyre marks and mud embedded in my skin and the skin on my shoulders and legs had been torn off. Although I was in a big mess, I thank God that I didn't have to be admitted to hospital. I was on medical leave for a month. As the days went by, both my legs grew very swollen and even turned black, purple and blue.

With both legs in such a condition, I got so anxious that I went to see a senior muscle specialist at NUH. When he saw my injuries, he was shocked that I survived the accident with no fractures. He was amazed as the condition of my legs showed otherwise. He asked me: "Stephanie, what is your religion?" I told him I was a back-slided Christian and had not gone to church for a long time. The doctor, who was a Christian, said, "I think it's time you start going back to God. It's impossible that you survived such a motor accident." I was stunned. This was the first time I had seen this doctor and he didn't know me.

The doctor said he was very concerned about my leg injuries as both legs might have to be amputated if the muscles were found to be rotting inside. This was when I really panicked. But over time, God miraculously healed me. The entire physical and emotional healing process took 10 years. I didn't lose my legs but it wasn't easy. I didn't go jogging for many years and whenever I was out, every time I heard a car behind me I would turn around to look. I didn't dare cross the road on my own. Even in parks, I would turn around at the slightest sound. I was so fearful. When I walked up the stairs, my back would be bent at a right angle. But today I am healed. And I thank God for preserving my life and for healing me and for how my sister-in-law and my nephew stayed persistent and patient over the years as they helped to bring me back to God.

HEALING

With several others from TMC, I attended the Christian conference, "Kingdom Invasion" in March this year.

The conference has a strong emphasis on healing and spiritual manifestations of God. When Sophia from my small group first told me about it, I was initially not interested. But she shared about the healing miracles at last year's conference (for example, a lady cured of bone cancer) and so the thought of praying for my daughter, Colette, to be healed came to mind. Because her thyroid condition has been easily managed with daily medication and regular doctor's visits, we have slipped into a stage of acceptance of her condition. The drive to seek complete healing for her with God has been lost somewhere along the way. And so with the sole purpose

not really knowing what to expect.

The conference was truly amazing and God's presence was thick in the air. It was hard to miss it! The worship was excellent and the teaching sessions and testimonies were fondly about her time there. She was surprised by all a great encouragement. There were many opportunities to receive healing and I seized every opportunity to seek how the speakers were from her church in the USA. She prayers for Colette.

At one of the prayer sessions, besides Colette, I asked for her a revelation about the fall-out - an unexpected ability healing for my left knee. It occasionally has a crackling sound when I walk, and a dull pain is most obvious when walking up and down the stairs. It has bothered me sufficiently to contemplate seeing a doctor. Anyway, a member of the prayer team prayed for me and immediately after, there was ... no change. When I got home that night, I realised that the knee felt different! I did the usual things The key takeaways for me from the conference were that would ordinarily cause it to be painful and... there was almost no pain! I thought perhaps it was just temporary, and that I had caught my knee at a right moment. Moreover, reader to seek a closer relationship with God. When you it didn't feel it was "one hundred per cent" yet. Over the see Him at work in your life, it is truly amazing! To God 12 next few days, I paid great attention to how the knee was be the glory!

INVASION



feeling and indeed, the usual pains were no longer there. I now realise that complete healing need not be immediate and feel very assured that God has indeed healed my left knee! Hallelujah, praise be to God!

So, I wait in anticipation for Colette and what God has done for her!

I realised that God had another purpose for me

to be at Kingdom Invasion. Besides praying for Colette and my incidental healing, he used my experience at the conference to touch a young colleague, Y, who is a backslided Christian. Y and I share many common interests. Recently, I found out that she is a believer, but had left church after falling out with her Christian friends while studying in the USA. For some time, I have felt the need to reach out to her. of praying for her healing, I signed up for the conference, When Y and I talked about the conference, we realised that Y was from the same church where the speakers were from - Bethel Church in Redding, California. That was also where Sophia, Desmond and Raymond (all from my small group) went last December. That got her recounting these "coincidences" - how we became good friends, acknowledged that God must be at work in connecting us. She later confided that one of the things I shared gave to understand things from her friends' perspectives. To me, this was quite a breakthrough as her disappointment in her friends had cooled her fervour for God and desire

> that we must be obedient and exercise faith, just like Abraham. I pray that this testimony will encourage the

> to remain in church. I am amazed how God was able to

use the conference to speak to her situation!



My 81-year-old aunt has had a difficult life since she was a young woman. She was a nanny to me when I was a child.

At this stage in her life, she is plagued with hypertension, diabetes, cataracts, irritable bowel syndrome and recently, what seems to be severe arthritis in her leg.

I visit her at a particular time every year. As a result of certain circumstances, it has been difficult for me to visit more often. Last year, she told me she wanted Christian rites at her death. I had a sudden panic attack when I was at first unable to contact her before our usual meeting this year. Was I still in time to have the Gospel shared with her? Would the Lord have mercy on her soul?

I had intermittent sleep. I was anxious about her salvation and particularly how I could get her out of the home to hear the Gospel.

I have been praying for my aunt on-and-off but this frequency and urgency intensified before we met this year. My Accountability Group (AG) prayed alongside me. I also shared her story with Eddie, our lay ministry staff member at TMC, and he prayed for her too. In desperation, I said to God: "Lord, I've done everything I can to set up this meeting. Holy Spirit, You need to do the rest please because I have neither power nor ability to do anything else."

Things could not have gone more smoothly on the day I set off to see my aunt. My AG was praying for us at this time that, amongst other things, she would and

could come out of the home so that our conversation would be easier. Despite her impaired mobility, she agreed to come to church immediately. My aunt had not been inside a church for the last 50-60 years.

Eddie and his wife, Rebekah, availed themselves to share the Good News with my aunt when she arrived at church. It was not easy going as my aunt is a little hard of hearing. While they were sharing, someone from my AG and I were praying at the side, with me

Suddenly, we heard Eddie shout for me. My aunt was ready to pray the sinner's prayer. I could only continue crying as she very simply prayed aloud as guided by

A huge sense of relief came over me as she was praying the sinner's prayer. I think I was particularly moved because she has suffered much. I wanted her to have so much more, especially the greatest Gift – Jesus.

As only God could design, Pastor Peter was still in church late on that Sunday afternoon. At my aunt's request, he baptised her at the baptismal pool, with a small supporting cast of Eddie, Rebekah, and four other witnesses.

I thank the Lord for His kairos, His ever perfect timing, for designing everything to proceed so smoothly and simply. I give thanks for His love, especially towards the widows and the downtrodden. Thanks to God also for my AG, and the pastoral staff for their big and warm hearts.

The Saltshaker welcomes testimonies from our readers. Please write to us at tmccomms@gmail.com

If you wish to be on the Prayer Net – to seek prayers or to pray for others - please visit www.tmc.org.sg/prayers.html

IN & ABOUT TMC ///////















































14

It has been some 40 years since TMC established links to the Institute of Mental Health (IMH).

Formerly known as Woodbridge Hospital for the mentally infirm, the IMH has the support of TMC's Outreach and Social Concerns ministry (OSC). Since 2007, volunteers like Yvonne Tan have spearheaded various programmes for the residents of both IMH and the neighbouring Tai Pei Social Service.

During the OSC's monthly visits, the gatherings on IMH premises are filled with activities like singing and games followed by feasting. On a recent visit during Chinese New Year, the usual group size of about 30 residents swelled to about 60 as it was a special occasion. Instead of the usual venue of the Prayer Room, the larger Multi-Purpose Hall was used. An airy and cool self-contained space in Block 6, it is handsomely equipped with piano and speakers.

Volunteers like Grace Chua, Foo Check Siew and Andrew Wong from the Hougang Small Group were present to help shepherd and entertain the residents, a happy gathering comprising Christians, Catholics and free thinkers.

Rousing the crowd and leading the sing-along was Alice Ng from the WSCS, cleverly switching between dialects and languages in the musical interlude. A recent volunteer, Alice says she has a passion for the people, moved by the many sad cases she sees among the IMH residents. Her fluency in Hokkien helps her relate to and understand their plight even better. Tapped to give her testimony of her walk with God, she stumbled over the thought of giving her testimony in Mandarin. Determined to overcome this impediment, she prayed hard, bought two Mandarin CDs to listen repeatedly to and prayed even more. As always, God showed His hand and blessed her with a level of fluency that is now almost faultless.

Overcoming Mental Challenges TMC ministers at the IMH every last Sunday of the month at 9am. We are working on having residents from the IMH join us at our 8.45am service. Help is needed to chaperone our visitors. If you wish to explore service in this area, please contact Yvonne Tan at yvnn_tan@yahoo.com

"Now I feel I have fulfilled my promise to God in return for his many blessings and am able to share the blessings with others who are less fortunate. Many residents like the dialect songs and I think I sing these well," said Alice.

"I am particularly heartened by a few of the residents coming to accept Jesus as their personal Saviour. I feel I am an instrument that God uses to bring others to know Christ. Whenever we may think it is impossible, God always makes it possible."





Chinese New Year 2013 celebration

Boys' Brigade serving at IMH

Of course all this would not be possible without a dedicated TMC staff member to coordinate all the outreach activities. Juggling it all and overseeing four different charity groups, Jestyn Koh is taking it all in his stride.

Young and spirited, Jestyn is also making some headway introducing and integrating young people into the volunteer group. To his credit, he managed to get the Boys' Brigade to help out last July. During the visit, the 25 boys, mostly aged between 14-15 years, conducted all the activities single-handedly with games and interaction with the residents. The ones who were apprehensive in the beginning warmed up soon enough, changing their own perceptions of the IMH residents. So pleased were they with the outing, they are returning for another session later this year.

Likewise, the Watchmen, another TMC small group, also ran an outdoor programme last year, taking the residents to Bishan Park and building strong camaraderie with them over fun and games. They too are returning soon for another session this year. Young children, aged between eight and 12 years, from the Chen Su Lan Methodist Children's Home also went down on another occasion to perform for the residents.

"We hope that the residents we reach out to will experience the healing power and love of Jesus Christ, as well as the peace that he gives," said Jestyn.

"We are happy to note that some of the residents have actually expressed interest to attend services at TMC on a regular basis. Approval has already been given for two of the residents to attend now even though six have expressed this desire. In time, when there are more requests, possibly a regular transport service can be provided."

Summing up, Yvonne adds: "Even though we have made improvements over the years, we are still at the mass level when we reach out to them. We are approaching and hoping to see a breakthrough with the residents on a more personal level by bringing them to church, or by having Bible lessons with some so they can establish their own relationships with God. Certainly one challenge to pray about is that we will continue to seek intimacy and communion with God, putting on His armour to serve Him. We realise we cannot do this on our own accord but by His spirit and power, all things can be achieved."

Bringing the Church into Their Homes

COMING to church every Sunday simply isn't something they are able to do. But Gilbert Lam, Lily Wilfred, Andrew Tan and other TMC members like them haven't been forgotten.



A small band of TMC brothers and sisters make it a point to visit them every third Sunday of the month. They are from the Ministry to the Homebound, which is part of TMC's WSCS Outreach and Social Concerns ministry.

Each time, the group visits a few homebound TMC members who are not able to come to church due to illness or physical infirmity. The Saltshaker team joined them when they went on their visits on 10 Mar. Read on to find out more.



Gilbert enjoying the company of his TMC brothers and sisters.



Lucy Chan updates Gilbert on the latest goings-on in TMC.



The ladies (from left: Lelia Seow, Veronica Yang, Lucy Chan, Janet Sathiasingam and Nancy Tay) in the group praying for Gilbert.

1 1.30am. All Saints Home. latest Saltshaker. "We have a new Poh Huat Road

THE visitors' area is empty. We're the only ones here on a Sunday morning.

All the residents of the All Saints Home at Poh Huat Road are gathered for a chapel service inside the hall. We can hear their voices rising in unison to a familiar hymn. She notices that his face looks rather

and they wheel him out.

His face lights up when he sees us.

Everyone moves towards him. Let's pray, says Lucy. She asks Gilbert They call out: "Hi Gilbert! How are if he has any prayer requests. you? How have you been?"

he looks cheerful. And his grin widens at the chorus of greetings.

A brief catch-up, we hand him a box of handmade soon kueh which he looks pleased at, and then it's time to break into song.

We have a time of singspiration, with some of the songs chosen by Gilbert, and some by the other TMC members. His singing is hearty. Everyone looks joyful.

Lucy Chan gives him a copy of the moment.

pastor," she says. She turns the pages of the newsletter to show him an interview with Pastor Kang Ho Soon.

She asks if he needs anything. Vicks Vapo Rub, please, he replies.

red. "It's itchy," he says. "Maybe Then, the doors of the hall open it's the bed sheets." The ladies all chime in with advice on what to do. One of them promises to bring him moisturiser the next visit.

"Pray that I'll be able to walk on my Clad in a bright blue Hawaiian shirt, own one day," he said. "And that I'll be able to sleep well." His tone is earnest, his expression almost child-like.

> We all bow our heads as Lelia Seow leads us in prayer. Gilbert follows with a short and simple one of his own: "Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for all my brothers and sisters who have come to visit me today and brought me food. Even though I have not been to church for a long time, they have come to visit me."

Then, it's an update on TMC news. It is a sweet gesture and a touching

Later, over lunch, I learn that the Before we leave, she hugs me, And when we do, we spot a simple team has been visiting Gilbert smiles and thanks me for coming. I metal sign on the door of his flat. for the past three years since he didn't do anything. I was just there, A timely reminder of the reason stopped coming to church. Janet I think to myself. I'm beginning behind the activities of the past few Sathiasingam, who has been serving now to understand what keeps hours: The name Jesus encased in in this ministry for about 40 years, the group members coming every the shape of a fish. tells me that this is the first time month. Gilbert has prayed for them.

"It really is a very good thing, a good sign that he prayed for us today," she says.

How do they feel about serving in this ministry? "Whenever we visit them, and we see that they are happy, we also feel happy," says Lelia.

Of course, there are also less encouraging times. "If the person we're visiting is lively and cheerful, then we're happy too, but if not, or if they show no response for some reason, we also feel sad," says Veronica Yang.

But they press on and persevere anyway, knowing that their presence makes enough of a difference.



Lily (centre) singing her favourite hymns along with the group.

1 pm, Ang Mo Kio Ave 3

After a hearty chicken rice lunch, we show up at Lily Wilfred's home.

We greet her and quickly settle down for singspiration. What a Friend We Have in Jesus is popular and so are other familiar favourites. Then, we huddle together to pray for her and her family.



The group saying a prayer for Lily and her family.

Zpm, Serangoon Central

Our final stop for the day is at Andrew Tan's.

It's the second time the group has visited him. The first was just before last Christmas.

A TMC member for many years, Andrew was one of the stalwarts in our church choir until Parkinson's struck. The illness keeps him from attending church service as regularly as he used to.

A few members of his small group happen to be visiting him too and his flat fills up quickly. Soon, the place brims with our chatter and song. We spend the longest time here since it is our last. Again, The group prays for Andrew and his wife. before we leave, we pray for Andrew and his wife.

It's a meaningful conclusion to a simple yet satisfying monthly ritual. Those who have been faithfully going attest to that. Yet they say there are more homebound members they wish they could visit but aren't able to for lack of drivers and cars.

Are you able? Are you willing? If you are, the Homebound Ministry members would love for you to join them. They welcome drivers, vehicles and anyone with a willing and cheerful heart to serve. Pray about it. Don't ignore that tug in your heart.



Andrew (left) singing along with the members of the group.



The visits take place every third Sunday of the month. If you would like to help bring some cheer or would just like to find out more, do contact Lucy Chan at 9748 2733.

Pats Poems



HEY YOU SG Connect by Lim Sue Yien



Yes. You. Not the person sitting next to you. Not your husband, or your mother, or your cousin.

YOU.

The one whose name no one knows. Perhaps you prefer it that way. After all, Christianity is between you and God.

Well, did you know that "the Bible knows nothing of solitary religion"?* Indeed.

Maybe you've been short-changing yourself. Not living life to the fullest. Could life in Christ really be different, and is there something you could you do to get there?

Yes! Join a small group. That's what you need.

Join the hundreds in TMC who have seen their lives transformed just by being part of a group.

"I didn't want to join a small group because I felt it could offer me nothing. Then I realised that it isn't only about me being at the receiving end, but giving to others as well." -- Joel, from BASIC.



"We feel at home with the group, especially for Raphael. It is common for him to play, sing and talk during our small group meeting but the members are not disturbed because they are used to such behaviour in a child."

- Patricia Zoey Tan, mother to Raphael, from Village People group.



"Having this responsibility of ensuring that each one of my youths grows deeply rooted in the word, I find myself taking my faith more seriously and being increasingly certain of my role as a servant in God's house." - Jill, Youth small group leader.

"At the end of the day, that time you sacrifice goes toward forging new relationships and building on existing ones, not only with people in church, but with your Creator as you intimately study His Word"

-- Terri, from Salty Clubbers



Wait no longer. You deserve something better.

YES, YOU.

More about small groups at TMC can be found at www.tmc.org.sg/ smallgroup.html. Or contact Park Ming at parkming@tmc.org.sg

*quote from John Wesley



GTMC United isn't a football club! It's Pastor Chamnap's vision for the Phnom Penh church, Glory Trinity Methodist Church (GTMC), which TMC supports. This is an excerpt of Pastor Chamnap's recent letter to TMC.

"Thanks be to God. Since I have been appointed to be a full-time pastor of GTMC, I have been praying for a vision for, and the mission of, GTMC. I believe this is God's answer.

The vision revealed to me is this: 'All people in this city admire Jesus' Name' (Col 1:9-12)

The mission statement is:

- Abiding with God (Jn 15:5)
- United among the church members (Jn 17:21)
- Evangelism (Matt 28:19-20)

We will first focus on Unity. We will also call this year the year of Unity or Fellowship. We will be dividing our church into nine small groups. Each group will be led by eight elders in the church (formerly called church committee members). We decided to call them 'elders' because of Gal 5:22-23.

One of the nine groups will be a group of elders and pastors in the church. Since they are part of - and leading - the small groups, I felt that we need to help them to lead their groups and also to foster unity among us.

I believe that as long as we abide in God and are united, evangelism will come about naturally. So please remember to pray for the unity of GTMC.

We are also planning for the elders to have a retreat in June this year. If you can, please send a speaker or one of your small groups to fellowship with the group of elders here. They can share their experiences of what a Singapore small group does. I particularly want the speaker to address the duties of a small group leader.

I pray that all things will come through by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Please send my greetings from GTMC to all at TMC. May God be with you all forever.

Blessings,

- Chamnap'

Service Through Education

The Methodist School of Cambodia

by Vinitha Jayaram

The Methodist School of Cambodia aims to give each child an equal opportunity at schooling because education is a proven tool to eliminate poverty and a gateway to prosperity.

In a nutshell...

MSC encourages students to RISE and SHINE.

A school that teaches students to be mindful of their ABCD:

Attire and Attendance, Behaviour, Conduct, Discipline.

A school that moulds young boys and girls to become thinking, caring and giving people through: leadership camps, prayer sessions and field trips, career talks, football matches and so on. A school that encourages holistic education through academic studies and co-curricular activities.



fieldtrip with students from St Martens school in France

tr from Dental Care at MSC

Career Planning talk
& Aptitude Test for students

Learn more about the Methodist School of Cambodia (MSC) through their official website www.meth-schcam.edu.kh, or through TMC's webpage: Ministries > Missions > Methodist School of Cambodia at www.tmc.org.sg or www.tmc.org.sg/missions.html

If you would like to serve and contribute to MSC, click the OPPORTUNITIES tab on the website, or speak to Kelvin Tan / kelvinls@singnet.com.sg

See you soon Cambodia!



What did you learn from this trip?

A testimony by Geleste Tay after her visit to Cambodia with the Children's Ministry in December 2012

I was filled with excitement and nervousness the minute I got off the airplane. Will this mission trip be meaningful? Will I be able to share God's word with them?

My mind was preoccupied with these thoughts until we reached the Barn Barn restaurant, owned by Uncle Jacob. The delicious and yummy drumstick was finger-licking good! The "potato chip" was fabulous!

After eating, we checked into Harvest Inn. I opened the door and...my jaw dropped. What my mum said was true, she wasn't joking with me when she told me about Harvest Inn. There was no TV!

The next day we went to Learning Lab, owned by Auntie Claire and Uncle Kevin. Then we went to the Methodist School of Cambodia (MSC) to play games with the girls from the Girls' Brigade.

"Cuck-Cukoo!" It was time to wake up again! We went to the village! The people there are less fortunate and we had to walk 100m as the road wasn't suitable for vehicles. We saw many things like skinny cows and fields.

After we settled down, we started singing praises to God. The Khmers sang loudly and did the actions to the song. They were also very happy as they were singing. What about me?

We played the games organised by Auntie Charia. It was really fun squeezing together onto a sheet of paper, eating bananas, blowing balloons, popping them and threading needles.

When the adults were distributing clothes and slippers to the children, I could see them smile from ear to ear. They were so grateful and delighted for the simplest things. What about me? I pondered to myself again.



As we were about to board the bus back to Harvest Inn, the driver told us that the bus had broken down. We all gasped in horror, not knowing what to do. Soon, most of the adults came to push the bus while some prayed.

Half an hour passed and the bus could not start. Some continued to pray and after saying their prayers..."vroooom" the engine came alive again! Praise God for showing us such a wonderful miracle.

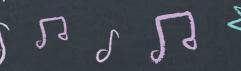
We also went to Glory Trinity Methodist Church (GTMC), TMC's sister church. We were warmly welcomed and the moment we stepped in, I had an enjoyable time. I enjoyed my time at the Children's Ministry where I interacted and played with them.

We also had an amazing dinner cruise and saw beautiful scenery.

I really enjoyed this trip to Cambodia. Though there were moments when I felt frustrated due to the hot weather, stuffy rooms and not-so-delicious food, I also realised that I am fortunate to be able to enjoy all the basic necessities where I live.

I also realised that I can still be happy as a lark even without computers and electronic games. The messages Auntie Kim and Uncle Jacob shared at GTMC were really good.

Well...I'm definitely going to Cambodia again, so see you soon Cambodia!



I learnt from this trip that one man's trash can be another man's treasure. Although we gave our unwanted clothes, they were still very grateful for it. I must learn to be grateful and not take things for granted.





INTERACTING WITH STUDENTS AT LEARNING LAB:

How did God touch you during this trip?

I learnt to appreciate what I have and that prayer works in any form as long as God wants it to happen.

So Pray, Pray, Pray and Pray.





Help! I only have an iPhone camera!"

Photography Course

Don't despair if you only own a phone camera, or one of them point-and-shoot cameras.

Jason Tang, who heads our Photography team at TMC, will share tips on taking well-composed pictures with the simplest of cameras. After this half-day course, you will develop a keener eye for details which make your photos interesting, such as angles, framing, colour and so on.

Whether you own a D-SLR or a phone camera, join us on:

Sat, 25 May
1.00—5.00pm, including 1-hour field trip
Meeting at TMC

Pick up a registration form from the magazine racks or register online (www.tmc.org.sg/highlights.html#photo). **Closing date: 18 May** Enquiries to Gek Khee in the church office / tmccomms@gmail.com

Brought to you by the TMC Communications Team

SERVICES

Graphics Designer

Do you enjoy reading the Saltshaker? Do you find the layout attractive? Or do you think you can do better? If you know anything about Graphic Design, we could do with more people on our team. Knowledge of Adobe Indesign and Photoshop is required...

Web Designer

We're looking for someone who can re-design the church website and implement a content management system (CMS). If you have any skills in this area, or if you know a company which could do this at a competitive price...

Facebook Manager

If you are an avid Facebook-er and have what it takes to keep people glued to our Facebook page...

please contact the Communications Team at tmccomms@gmail.com.

EVENTS

Sat, May 4 2.00pm - 4.00pm

Talk by Paul Perry, missionary in Brazil, on "Faith in the face of doubt". Register with Lydia Han / lydiagbu@hotmail.com. www.tmc.org.sg/highlights.html#perry

Wed, May 8, Jun 5 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 Victor through the church office / vseah@singnet.com.sg http://www.tmc.org.sg/ministries.html#gym

Sun, May 12

SKS Book table in the Plaza featuring books in Bibliotheque (see p.8).

Sun, May 19, Jun 16 and every 3rd Sunday thereafter

WSCS Visitation to Homebound. Those interested to bring the church into the homes of the homebound, please contact Lucy Chan at 9748 2733. See article on p.18.

Wed, May 15, Jun 19 and every 3rd Wed of the month.

10.00am - 12.00pm

God's Master Works. A Concerto in 39 Movements is an overview of the Old Testament conducted by Rev Peter Goh. Currently teaching on Leviticus.

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

Sun, May 26, Jun 30 and every last Sunday of the month 9.00am

Visit to Institute of Mental Health by Outreach & Social Concerns. See article on p.16. Contact Yvonne Tan at 9091 8589 / yvnn_tan@yahoo.com
www.tmc.org.sg/osc.html#imh

Thurs, May 30, Jun 27 and every last Thurs of the month 10.00am – 12.00pm

St Luke's Eldercare Centre Devotions at Blk 217 Serangoon Ave 4 on how to handle one's inferiority and temptations. 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

Wed, Jun 12 and every 2nd Wed of the month (no meeting in May) 3.00 – 5.00pm

Tea @ 3 organised by Glowing Years Ministry. Contact Victor through the church office / vseah@singnet.com.sg http://www.tmc.org.sg/regular.html#tea

Jun 13-17

Church Camp at Zenith Hotel in Kuantan, Malaysia http://www.tmc.org.sg/churchcamp.html

Every Fri 9.15-11.15am

Bible Study on Genesis by Mrs Esther Wong. For more info, contact Lynn through the church office / zlipop@yahoo.com http://www.tmc.org.sg/regular.html#wscsbs

8.00 - 10.00pm (not May 24 Vesak Day)

Healing Ministry in the Prayer Chapel

Every Sat fortnightly 9.00 – 11.00am

Fellowship of Ukulelians meet to fellowship and play the ukulele of course www.tmc.org.sg/regular.html#ukulele

Every Sat

2.00 - 4.00pm

Contact 123 - Soccer Training at Blk 143 Serangoon North Avenue 1. http://www.tmc.org.sg/osc.html#c123

3.00 - 4.30pm

Line Dancing. Contact Eunice Yeo through the church office / eunice@squirrelled.com for more information.

Every 2nd and 4th Sunday 7.30 – 8.30am

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

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