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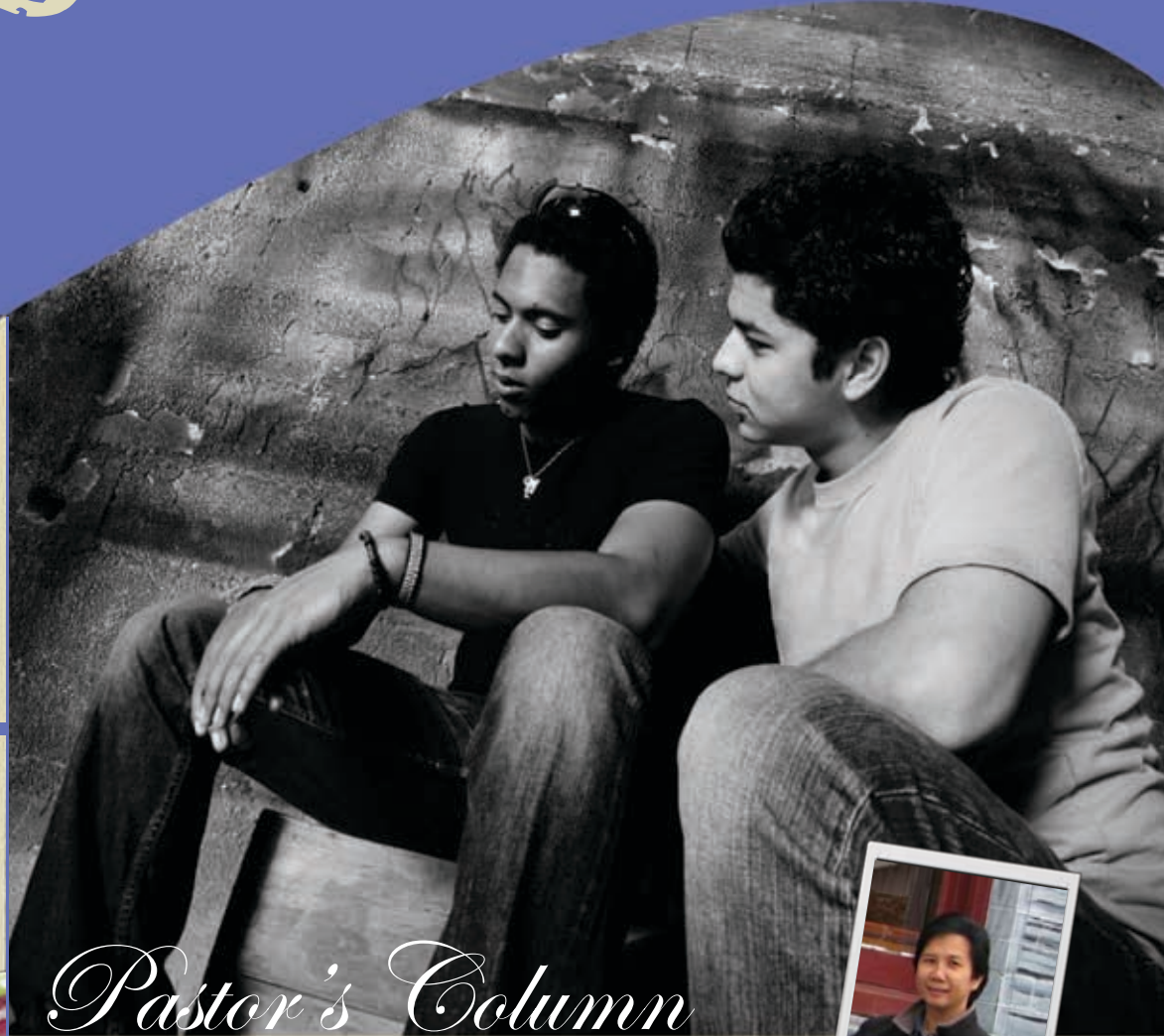
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SALTSHAKER



TRINITY
Methodist Church

MICA (P) 078/09/2009



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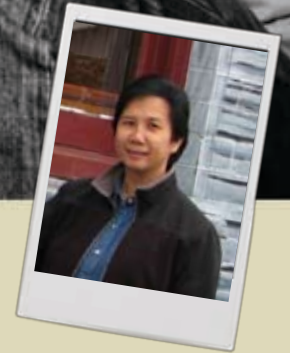
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Pastor's Column

Be Present and Counted

by Rev Dianna Khoo
Pastor-in-Charge



"Will you be loyal to The Methodist Church in Singapore, and uphold it by your prayers, your presence, your gifts and your service?"

This is a question asked of all of us upon our reception into the membership of the local church.

Prayers – that's quite straightforward. One should always uphold the ministry of the church and the church universal in our prayers. No disputing that one.

Gifts should hold no particular mystery as well. We are asked to be good stewards of what God has given us and put aside a certain portion to enable the work and ministry of His Kingdom.

There is also an expectation of us as individuals to serve (**service**) whether it is in a local church or in a community-related organisation. And we have been asked to place our hands on the plough and do our bit for church and society.

Presence – now this is something that, at first, I could not quite put my finger on. American actor-director Woody Allen once said: *"90% of life is just showing up."*

And I thought that was pretty clever, and a good start.

But where do I go from there?

It's important to be **present** at church. *"Amen. See you next Sunday."*

But is there more to this, you may well ask.

The verse which many of us are familiar with: *"For God so loved the world that He sent His own begotten Son..."* (John 3:16) models that very **presence** for us.

God's love was shown most fully for us by Jesus being sent to be present among us. The God of the universe, the Almighty Creator of the cosmos, came to be **present** with humanity.

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WITH OTHERS



Therefore, our **presence** in worship, ministry and in caring for others is required. This is a ministry that every person can take part in.

Caring for others is something every single person in TMC is called upon to do. We will all go through a time when a friend of ours loses a loved one and they turn to us for comfort. We all know someone who is injured or has cancer or some other ongoing illness and who needs our care.

We have all had a friend who has just lost his job or is struggling with his or her kids or whose spouse wants a divorce, and these friends ask us for help.

Yet, even though we have all been, and will be, called upon to care for others, we seem to be afraid of this calling too.

We would be expected to care for someone, yet wouldn't know what to say or what to do. We might not have the right words of comfort ready for them. We might not be able to solve their dilemma and we would feel inadequate.

Yet, often, our **presence** is what is most important when caring for someone.

One night in March, when a church member passed away late in the night, a few of us turned up at her home to be with the deceased's daughter. There really wasn't much we could do for the deceased, but certainly just being there was important - to show our love and support for her daughter in her time of grief.

There often isn't much we can say to change a dire situation. But it is often the non-verbal expressions that are more important than all the words in the world.

Surely each of us can offer a hug. We can sit down and listen, or even just sit down and be **present** with a grieving family.

Often, people tell me how much they appreciated a friend who had simply been there for them. When it came right down to it, they didn't need to hear particular words. They just needed to know that their friend cared about them enough to be **present** with them.

It's interesting—Jesus undoubtedly cared for people everywhere He went, but He often didn't use many words.

When He was teaching the crowds, He would say plenty. When He was with His disciples and teaching them, He would talk. But when He was caring for those in need and when He was healing the sick, He said very little.

"Get up, take your mat, and walk." (Mark 2:9)

"... neither do I condemn you... Go now and leave your life of sin." (John 8:11)

"Lazarus, come out!" (John 11:43)

Jesus knew that His presence with them was more important than anything else. When we care for others by being **present** with them, we emulate Jesus Himself.

John Wesley in a sermon from 250 years ago encouraged people to visit the sick and the poor. He said:

"People ask, 'But do I need to go and visit them in person? Can't I help them from a distance? Doesn't it accomplish the same thing if I send them help as if I took it there myself?'"

Sometimes, circumstances are such that you cannot visit the sick in person, and in those cases it is sufficient to send help, since it is the only option available to you. But that is not actually visiting the sick, is it? The word the Bible uses for "visit" literally means "to look upon", and as you know, you can't do that unless you are **present** with them.

To send them assistance is an entirely different thing from visiting them. Send assistance by all means, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't visit them also.

Other people ask: *"Shouldn't I send a doctor to those who are sick? Wouldn't a doctor do more good for them than I could?"*

In one sense, that's true, since a doctor will do more good for their physical health. But you can do more good for their spiritual health, which is just as important!

And even if sending a doctor did just as much good, it wouldn't do any good to *you* unless you visited them yourself. If you didn't visit, you would lose an excellent opportunity to increase your thankfulness to God. You would miss a chance to increase your sympathy and compassion for those in need. You wouldn't have the same sense of benevolence. You wouldn't receive the advantage of increasing in humility or patience or tenderness of spirit that you would have gained if you had visited them in person.

Two hundred and fifty years later, John Wesley's message is still preached since it is still a powerful message that we need to hear today. The people we serve benefit from our presence and we benefit from being present.

So don't limit your presence with just being in a worship service on Sunday. Look out for God-given opportunities where your presence can bring about healing, encouragement and love to those around you, both within the church family and without.



Visitations by TMC Worshippers

参与付出!

作者: 邱宜观主持牧师
翻译: 柯文灵

“你是否会对新加坡卫理公会教会忠心并通过你的祷告、你的参与、你的恩赐和你的服务来支持它呢?”, 这是当我们被接纳为地方教会成员时要回答的提问。

祷告 - 这是相当直接的事。每一个人都应时常通过我们的祷告来支持教会事工和全世界教会。这是无须争议的。恩赐不是什幺神秘的东西。我们总是被要求按神所赐给我们的行事, 并投入我们的一部分能力为神的国度工作。

神也期盼我们的个人服务, 不管是地方教会或是与社区有关的机构。我们也被要求用双手扶着犁来为教会和社会付出我们的一份力量。

参与 - 起初我不太晓得它真实的意思。美国著名演员伍迪·艾伦说: “生命的90%只是出个场。”我觉得这是相当聪明的说法。可是之后我又该怎么做呢? 参与教会活动是重要的。“阿门, 我们下个礼拜天见。”你可能要问, 除了这样还有别的意义吧。

这段经文是我们都熟悉的约翰福音3章16节: “神爱世人, 甚至将祂的独生子赐给他们。”为“参与”提供了模范样例。通过差遣耶稣显现(参与)在我们当中, 神就将祂的爱完全彰显出来了。宇宙万物的神、全能的创造者在人间显现(参与)。

因此, 我们在崇拜、事奉和关爱他人时参与的参与是有必要的。这是每个人都能参与的事奉。

关爱他人是三一教堂每个人都要去做的事。我们都会经历当某三个朋友失去一个挚爱而向我们寻求安慰的时候。我们都认识某个人受了伤或是得了癌症或某人正遭受病痛, 而需要我们的关怀。

我们都有某个朋友正面对离婚的痛苦或刚失业或正在为孩子的问题在挣扎, 而向我们求助。然而, 即使我们现或在以后感到害怕。我们可能也是对我们这种不知道说出什么合适的话来安慰他们。我们可能也是脑子里可能想不出什么合适的安慰。我们可能也是解决不了他们的困难, 于是我们感到无能。可是往往就是因为我们参与了, 这样的关怀对别人来说就是最重要的。

三月中一个晚上, 教会的一名会友在深夜里去三世了, 我们几个人到她家去慰问死者的女儿。我们在那里实际的忙也帮不上, 但我们的出席到席是重要的, 我们在死者女儿痛苦时刻表示我们的关爱和支持。

往往我们实际上也说不出什么话来改变恶劣的情况, 可是通常就是这样的无语表示比世界上任何话语还来得更重要。

我们当然可以给他一个拥抱。我们可以坐下来聆听, 或单只是坐下来并参与在一个正在悲痛中的家里。经常人们告诉我, 他们很感激能有一个朋友只是简单地现身在他们的身旁。说实在的, 他们其实也无需听到什么特别的话。他们真正需要的是他们朋友对他们的关爱足以让他们参与。



有意思的是, 主耶稣不论到什么地方都无疑会去关爱人们, 祂总是用不多的话语教导起并教导那些祂需要的人, 祂也会说话。可是祂说的很少。“我” (马可福音2章9节), “我也拿着你的褥子走” (马可福音2章9节), “罪了。” (约翰福音8章11节), “拉撒路, 出来!” (约翰福音11章43节)。

耶稣知道祂显现(参与)在他们当中是比什么都来得更重要。当我们关爱他人的时候, 我们只要参与在他们当中, 我们就效仿耶稣祂自己。

约翰·卫斯理250年前在一次布道时候鼓励人们去探访那些正在病痛中的和贫穷的人。他说:

“‘人们问: “可是我是否需要亲自去探访他们? 难道我不能在远距离帮他们吗? 亲自不去帮忙不都一样吗?’”

有时候, 情况如果不是允许的, 你亲自去探访那些病人, 请别人去帮忙并探不是足够的, 探这是唯一的。但是这样并不是真正的探, 是如果你不参与在他们当中, 你是做不到“看望”的。

不亲自帮忙他们和探访他们是完全不同的事情。你自然可以请别人帮忙, 可是这并不表示你不该去探访他们。其他会问: “我该不该给那些病人去看医生? 医生的不是比我更多吗?” 单方面来看, 这是正确的, 因为医生对病人的病况确实能做更多, 可是你在病人的精神方面能做更多, 而这也是同样重要的!

即使帮忙找医生和探访的效果是一样, 可是如果你不亲自去探访他们, 你将失去一个机会去为那些不需要帮助的人加深你的怜悯和热情, 你不能感受到那份仁爱。如果你不亲自去探访, 你不能领受到由于你付出更多的人道支持或忍耐或温柔所带给你的收获和好处。

250年后, 约翰·卫斯理曾作的教训到今天依然被传承着。这仍然是我们今天需要聆听的一个强有力的信息。我们所服侍的人们因为我们的参与而受益, 而我们也因为参与而获益。

就让我们不再限制自己的参与。单单出席星期天的崇拜并不算参与。留心神赐给我们参与的机会, 它可以给你带来周围的人带来康复医治、鼓励和关爱; 不管是教会里或教会外, 都是如此。

Leader's Column

Stay Green

by Albert Yeo

Associate Lay Leader



Job looked down at his naked skin, covered with sores from the soles of his feet to the top of his head, each wound so painful, he used broken pottery to scrape himself.

His ears could hardly believe the words sprouting from the mouths of his close friends, each condemning him for the “sins” he had committed.

He had lost everything.

A daughter lay in bed, eyes staring at the ceiling in the dark. Shadows of the trees outside the house moved uneasily on the walls. Tears welled up in her eyes. She could not understand why God had allowed both her parents to be stricken with cancer.

She felt alone and abandoned by God.

Driving home after a hard day's work, my wife, Ling and I could not wait to get home to rest and be with our children. Our car came to a halt as the traffic light turned red at Upper Cross

Street. At the corner of the junction was Hotel 81. A girl, no more than fifteen, and clearly not in control of herself, stumbled across the traffic crossing, in the arms of two young boys still dressed in their uniforms. Halfway across the crossing, the girl bent forward as if to throw up. She was clearly drunk. One of the boys had his hand around the bare waist of the girl.

Maybe we are not in any of the dire situations above. However, we face numerous situations and choices daily. Some make us happy whilst others test us. Inevitably, we are faced with two stark choices: grumbling or gratitude.

But how can one stay thankful amid our daily struggles?

Oswald Chambers said: *“A life of faith is not a life of one glorious mountaintop experience after another, like soaring on eagles’ wings, but is a life of day-in and day-out consistency; a life of walking without fainting (see Isaiah 40:31).”*

Jeremiah taught us, *“But blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.”*
(Jer 17:7, 8)

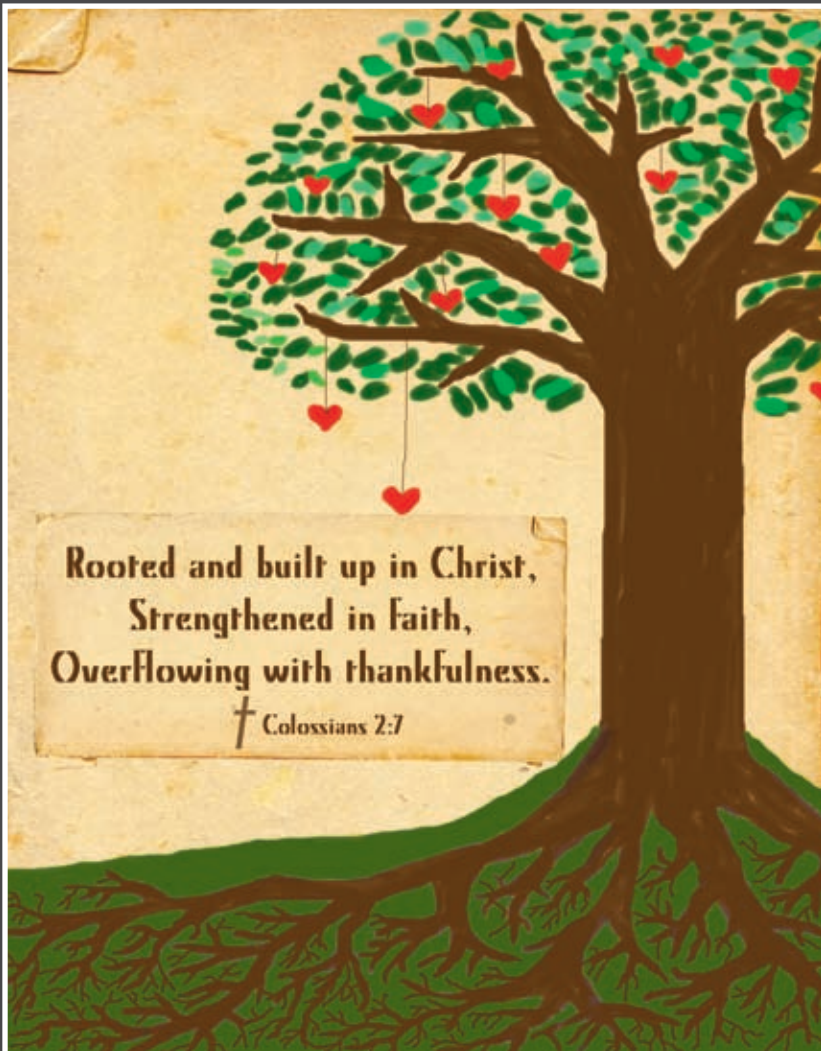
We stay green by drawing from the endless wellspring of Jesus Christ. Receiving Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour is only the beginning of life with Christ. We must continue to follow His leadership by being rooted and built up in Him.

Christ desires us to have a close walk with Him. However, it requires a commitment from us to *“Be still and know that I am God”* (Psalm 46:10). **Commit to Jesus Christ.**

For Jesus Christ to work in us, an active and continuous yielding of our will, time and effort is required.

Experience serves us well as we get older but experience can get in the way of learning. We begin to become set in our ways of doing things. But as the Chinese saying goes, “活到老学到老”, that is, “Continue to learn as long as you live”.

Our hearts and minds need to stay open to allow God to work in every area of our lives. **Commit to learning.**



Men who have served in the army will remember the log. Ten men have to carry a really heavy log over their heads. At the blow of the instructor's whistle, the men have to lower the log onto their left or right shoulders. Another blow of the whistle is the signal to lift it overhead again.

If each man carries his share, the load is bearable. However, if a man so much as decides to take a break, the load is instantaneously felt by the others.

Faith without works is meaningless. The converse is true. Works without faith is barren.

There are many areas to serve in TMC. If you look at the last page of Saltshaker, you will see a column "Services Required".

One of the key initiatives our church is committed to is the support of St Luke's Eldercare in partnership with Bless Community Services. You can read more of this at page 14. It may all seem daunting.

But as the example of the log shows, if we each carry our own weight, we can all make it together. **Commit to service.**

A prism breaks up light into its full spectrum and shows the full glory of the colours of the rainbow. Let the world see the glory and love of our Lord Jesus Christ. **Let's commit to Jesus Christ, commit to learning and commit to service!**

作者：杨肃全，副执事

翻译：柯文灵

哥罗西书2章7节：“在祂里面生根建造，信心坚固，正如你们所领的教训，感谢的心也更增长了。”

约伯上下打量着自己赤裸的身体，强忍着从头顶到脚底的剧烈疼痛。他甚至用破碎的瓷片来刮擦疼痛处以缓解自己的痛苦不堪。他的耳朵几乎不能相信从自己好朋友口中所吐出的话语，每一句每一字无不谴责着他的“罪孽”。他失去了所有一切。

一个女孩子躺在床上，直楞着眼睛睁看着漆黑空气中的天花板，屋外大树的投影不安地在墙上恍惚摇晃。她眼泪夺眶而出，不明白为什么神要让她父母饱受癌症的折磨。她感到孤单，认为神已经丢弃了她。

经过一天的疲劳工作，我太太玲和我驱车返家。我们迫不急待地要赶回家休息并且期盼见到我们的孩子。我们的车子在克罗士街上段的一个交通灯前停下来。就在81酒店前的拐弯处，有一个估计还不到15岁的小女生显然似乎是神智不能自控，两名小男生左右扶夹着她打算急速窜冲过马路。过马路的半道，小女孩弯着身躯似乎要呕吐。很明显的，她喝醉了。其中一名男生的手腕还环抱着小女孩的裸腰。

或许，我们不曾亲身涉及上述情况。但我们每天也要面对无数的事件和选择。我们所面对的一些事情让我们开心，而另一些则会考验我们。无可避免的，我们必须完全面对两种选择：埋怨或感激和感恩。一人该如何持守感恩的心呢？

奥斯瓦德·章伯斯说：“有信仰的生命并不是一种攀爬一山又一山、登峰造极、如雄鹰展翅般的辉煌经验，而是一种日进日出、连贯一致、不疲乏软弱的生命（请阅以赛亚书40章31节）。”耶利米教导我们：“依靠耶和华，以耶和华为可靠的，那人有福了。他必像树栽于水旁，在河边扎根，炎热来到，并不惧怕，叶子仍必青翠，在干旱之年毫无挂虑，而且结果不止。”（耶利米书17章7-8节）。

我们在主耶稣源源不断的泉水中保持青翠。接受住耶稣基督成为我们个人救主只是在主里生命的开始而已。我们必须继续跟从祂的引导，在祂里面扎根建造。主基督渴望我们与祂亲密同行。然而，这需要我们致力于“要休息并要知道我是神”（诗篇46章10节）。要致力于主耶稣基督。

要主耶稣基督常常在我们当中就需要我们积极和持续地投入决心、时间和努力。就如经上所说的：“按教导你的”。随着年龄的逐渐增长，经验对我们来说虽然有益但它们也能成为一种绊脚石，我们开始按我们自己的方式去做事。就如中国俗话说的：“活到老学到老”，我们的心思必须敞开，让神在我们的各个部分和生命中运行。要致力于学习。

当过兵的人一定记得关于圆桐木的训练。十个人必须同时将一根十分沉重的桐木头顶在头顶上。指导员一吹哨子，他们必须将木头降下来放到他们的左或右肩膀上，下一个哨子信号吹出时或许又要让他们将木头提到自己的头顶上去。如果每个人都按各自份量提放重担，那么就能承担起这个沉重负荷举动。但如果只要有一人决定要休息一下，那么剩余的负荷就即刻落到其他人那里了。

有信心但没有实际行动是毫无意义的。反过来说，有行动但没有信心也是徒然的。三一堂里有许多领域可以让我们投入事奉。如果你查看SALTSHAKER的最后一页，你将会看到“事奉需要”栏目。例如：其中一项事奉就是支持我们教会与蒙恩社区服务（Bless Community Services）合作的圣路加安老服务中心（St. Luke's ElderCare Centre）事奉。你可以在第14页里阅读到更详细信息。或许你觉得这整件事情似乎令人感到畏缩，但桐木头的例子告诉我们：如果我们分担起各自的负荷，我们就能共同挑起整个重担。致力于服务。

一个棱镜能将光线分散折射成可辨别的光谱，它让我们的肉眼能清晰地看到彩虹的所有璀璨光彩。就让全世界都看到我们主耶稣基督的荣耀和慈爱吧。让我们致力于主耶稣基督、致力于学习并致力于服务！

Worship Whys - Corporate Confession

by Amy Cheong

What it is

Corporate confession refers to that portion in the Order of Worship where the church comes together as the body of Christ to declare its sins and receive pardon. It can be in various forms – Silent Prayer & Confession followed by Prayer on Behalf of the Church (where the Worship Leader confesses the sins of the congregation on their behalf), or a set Prayer of Confession said by the entire congregation followed by words of pardon (e.g. “Confession & Pardon” in *A Service of Word and Table II, page 12, The United Methodist Hymnal*)¹.



In contrast to individual confession, corporate confession does not go into details of each sin. The Confession in the example referred to above reads:

*Merciful God,
we confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart.
We have failed to be an obedient church.
We have not done your will,
we have broken your law,
we have rebelled against your love,
we have not loved our neighbours,
and we have not heard the cry of the needy.
Forgive us, we pray.
Free us for joyful obedience,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Mark Daniels says, “A parading of one’s sins in public worship can easily degenerate into an egotistical bid for being noticed, whether in providing others with shock value or in wowing them with abject--and all to narcissistic--submission to humiliation. Public confession, as should be true of all public worship, is never about us; it’s always about God.”²

Also, a “prayer of confession and declaration of pardon belong together; neither should be used without the other.”³

Why it is significant:

Confession is Biblical

Psalm 32:1-5 says, “Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed are those whose sin the LORD does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit. When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD.” And you forgave the guilt of my sin.”

James 5:16 says, “Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.”

1 John 1:9-10 says, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.”

An article which I read recently puts forth 3 more very good reasons for corporate confession⁴:

Corporate confession and forgiveness militates against the arrogance--spiritual and otherwise--to which our still very human wills are inclined. They remind us that no one is personally worthy of entrance into God’s kingdom apart from the gracious act of Jesus Christ on our behalf and that nobody is more important in the eyes of God than anybody else.

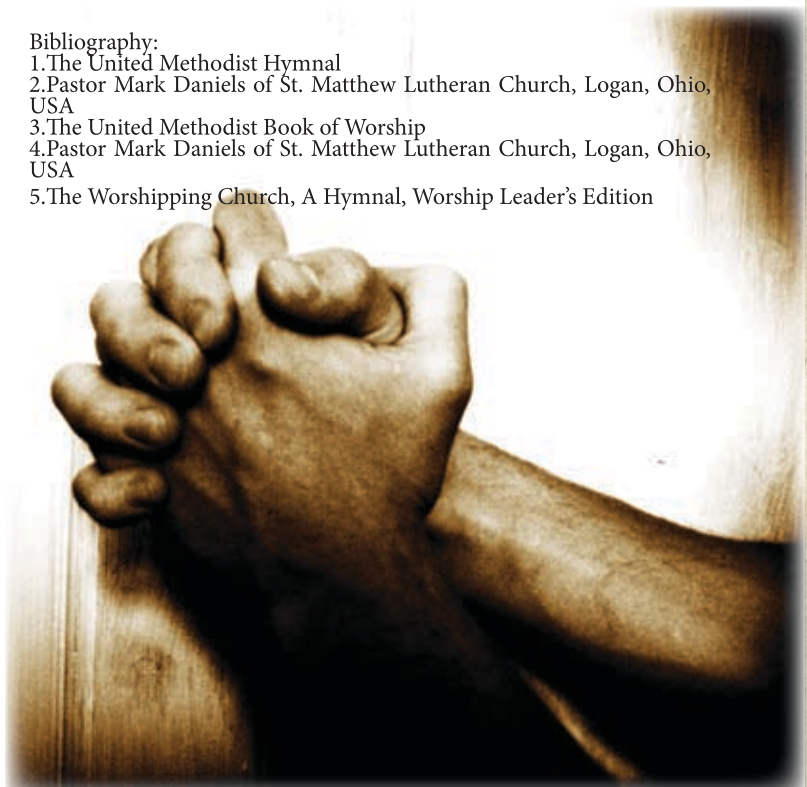
Corporate confession reminds us that the person in the next row who we may be inclined to disdain is just as loved and just as forgiven by God as we are. When, in our corporate worship, we acknowledge that we haven’t loved God with our whole hearts or our neighbours as we love ourselves, we humble ourselves together and ask for God’s forgiveness together. Together, we stand exposed before the throne of God and together, we receive the empowering assurance that in Christ, the sins of repentant sinners are freed to be our best selves and we can be God’s ambassadors for good--God’s good--in the world.

Corporate confession also reminds us to make confession of sin a regular part of our daily prayer lives. Peter reminds us in the New Testament that our violation of love for God and love for neighbour is a constant possibility for us as we live on earth. We need to remain diligent in our commitment to following the God we know through Jesus Christ at all times. We need to return to God for forgiveness and help in resisting temptation all the time. That’s why 1 Peter 5:8-9 says, “Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. Resist him, steadfast in your faith.”

Finally, **corporate confession and pardon brings us joy.** The Worshipping Church, A Hymnal, Worship Leader’s Edition says, “any confession should be followed by the assurance of God’s gracious pardon, which is one of the best sources of genuine joy in worship. To be reminded week after week of one’s failures and God’s forgiveness and restoration produces spiritual balance and health.”⁵

Bibliography:

- 1.The United Methodist Hymnal
- 2.Pastor Mark Daniels of St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Logan, Ohio, USA
- 3.The United Methodist Book of Worship
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by Sim Cher Khee

Lord, You are indeed a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love.

We sincerely thank You, for whilst we were still sinners, You bore our sins, died on the cross and forgave all the wrongs we have done.

We commit to turn away from all that is wrong. We choose to trust in You, our Saviour and Lord who has died, is risen and who will come again. Hallelujah!

Almighty God, Your Word says that if anyone is in

Christ, he is a new creature; the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come.

As we experience another Easter, we consciously let go of our past bitterness, failures, hurts, mistakes and pains. We decide not to let these memories become strongholds preventing us from enjoying the abundant life that You promise to every child of God.

Lord Jesus, help us to not allow our old nature, accustomed to critical attitudes, fits of anger and all kinds of anxieties, to ruin this new relationship with You.

Every day as we count the many blessings showered upon us - of friends and family, of the life and health that we possess, and the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit - we are filled with gratitude.

O God, control our words. Keep us from saying things that can result in arguments and sometimes, only make bad situations worse. O God, control our thoughts. Shut the door of our minds against all envious and jealous thoughts, against all resentful, ugly and unclean thoughts.

We pray for every worshipper in Trinity Methodist Church, our two pastors and the church staff. May we truly desire and seek holiness that comes from a pure heart. Holy Spirit, hide the Word of God in our hearts so that there is no attraction to sin. Let Christ be formed in us.

Finally, may our faith be strong enough as we always give ourselves to the work of the Lord Jesus, in whose lovely Name we pray. Amen.

SEASON PRAYER FOR THE EASTER

Nothing is impossible with our God



by Irene Lee

For the past eight months or so, the vision of my one good eye deteriorated so much that reading became difficult.

It was even an effort to see the dishes in front of me. The faces of people from a short distance appeared blurred.

All this was very frustrating and I became very depressed. I cried a lot when I was alone.

Who could help me? I was going blind.

I prayed a great deal for divine healing, even going down on my knees. Sometimes, in my frustration, I got angry with God, but would end up asking for His forgiveness.

Our God is indeed a faithful, loving and merciful God. I know He forgave me and He answered my cry for help.

On 9 Feb this year, I went to see an eye surgeon. After going through a series of tests, the surgeon told me that my "field reading" was bad. He said that there was a membrane covering my cornea, but that he could help me.

I had a laser operation done on the same day. Within about fifteen minutes into the operation, my sight was slowly restored. Nothing could make me happier than regaining my vision.

Now I can see the "railway lines" on my face more clearly! Well, they do not bother me one bit. All I know is that God really loves and cares for me and has worked a marvellous miracle at this stage in my life.

All thanks, praise and glory be to God.

¹ But now, this is what the LORD says he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.

² When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze

Isaiah 43:1-2

GOD & POPEYE'S CHICKEN

by Ang Hern Shung



Just the other night, I had this sudden craving for Popeye's Chicken.

It was already 9pm, but I felt that I needed desperately to eat some chicken from Popeye's or I'd suffer a sleepless and horrible night. Thing is, I only knew of two Popeye's Chicken fast food outlets – at Changi Airport and the Singapore Flyer.

So, what else was I, a resident of Serangoon Gardens to do?

I got into my car and drove all the way to Changi Airport - mainly because I didn't know how to get to the Singapore Flyer by car - for three pieces of freshly fried Popeye's Chicken.

Just one bite into the tender fried chicken and any doubts I had about making the late night trip to the other end of the island melted instantly. The chicken was sooooo good!

It tasted so great that I didn't want to just call some friends to tell them about how good it tasted because it simply wouldn't do the chicken justice.

I wanted to bring them along to experience it as well!

I'll admit it.

It was pretty crazy to drive 30 minutes to the airport, just for three pieces of chicken (albeit very good-tasting chicken). Hunger indeed drives you to do some crazy things.

On the drive back from the airport, I thought of this:

Imagine if we had the same hunger for God in our lives.

The same hunger and desire that would cause us to go out of our way to "get" Him.

The same craving that, if unfulfilled, would cause us to suffer for hours, maybe even days on end.

The same love for Him that would cause us not to merely want to tell our friends about Him, but bring them along so that they can experience Him as well!

I think some of us are never hungry for God, because we have never tasted God. And we would be missing out on something good and great. Or maybe some of us don't crave a relationship with God because it's been too long a time since we last experienced God that we have forgotten how good that experience was. Maybe it's time to supersize your hunger for Jesus and get addicted to Him!

And some of us may have tasted God and loved that experience, but have assumed, "Oh, that other person has probably already had a taste of Him" or "Oh, I don't know if he will like the taste of this", and refrain from telling our friends about Him. It's really time to start telling everyone about God, because He's finger lickin' good ... no wait, that's KFC ... He's AMAZINGLY AWESOME.

WHY GOD IS WAY BETTER THAN POPEYE'S CHICKEN:

1. Popeye's will set you back by \$10+. God is pretty much free.
2. Too much of Popeye's is a bad thing. too much of God is a good thing
3. Super-sizing Popeye's is too big for you to handle. You can super-size God, but you can never get enough of Him.
4. You may love Popeye's, but Popeye's doesn't love you back. You may love God, but God loves you even more.
5. Consuming Popeye's puts weight on you. consuming God takes the weight off your shoulders.
6. Popeye's Chicken is full of oil and fat, God is full of love and grace.
7. Popeye's closes at 11pm. God is never closed.
8. There's always a possibility that Popeye's runs out of chicken. God never runs out of love and grace.
9. Eating Popeye's everyday is not healthy. Having God everyday for every meal will do wonders for your spiritual health.

To Be A Discipler

by Lee Park Ming
TMC Lay Executive Staff



You may think you would need to be a Bible scholar, or a worship leader, or perhaps a ministry chairperson to make any difference at all to the life of a fellow brother or sister in TMC.

Well, think again.

Because whether or not you are already serving in a ministry, regardless of your qualifications, and whatever your gifts are, as long as you are willing - and a baptised TMC member - you can help to spur another budding TMC-er on.

You (yes you) can be a Discipler.

Who is a Discipler? And what does he do?

A Discipler is **any** baptised TMC member who is willing to make himself available to help a brother or sister walk the road towards baptism and, in the process, help a fellow believer better understand his faith and baptism and what it means to be a member of TMC.

It is an invaluable opportunity for TMC members to connect with one another so that, as a body of Christ, we can be strengthened in our faith as our theme verse in Colossians 2:7-8 commands.

Does a Discipler have to have the ability to recite large chunks of Scripture by rote, hold a leadership position in church or go through a 20-week course on how to be a discipler?

The emphatic answer is “no”.

Too often, we complicate our faith journeys. Let’s see how relatively easy it is to serve as a Discipler.

A Discipler is someone who loves the Lord and desires to share his faith with another.

He does that by spending time with the other person simply in having conversations about life in Christ, about the church, about Christian service, ministry and the mission of the church. We simply disciple by sharing our lives, we converse by hearing the questions and concerns of the new believer, and we grow together, realising that the Holy Spirit in our teacher in every spiritual conversation.

He is a link between TMC and the candidate, a facilitator to connect the candidate with a small group, an encourager to exhort the candidate to grow, to participate in the life of the body of Christ to serve and also to minister to others.

Any TMC member can and should be able to do and be all the above things. There are many biblical exhortations to love one’s brothers and sisters in the faith and make disciples. For the TMC member, these exhortations all lead to two choices only – obedience or defiance.

In Rick Warren’s February 2010 article, “Connect By Taking the Initiative”, he says,

“The first principle for connecting with people is this: Be courageous and take the initiative! Don’t wait on somebody

else to connect with you. You must take the initiative to connect with them. This often takes courage. Why? Because when we’re full of fear and anxiety, we don’t get close to each other. In fact, we back off from each other. We’re afraid of being rejected, manipulated, hurt, or used ... Fear does three terrible things to relationships:

- ***Our fears make us defensive.***
- ***Our fears keep us distant.***
- ***Our fears make us demanding.***

Where do you get the courage for taking the first step in connecting with someone? You get it from God’s Spirit in your life: “For the Holy Spirit, God’s gift, does not want you to be afraid of people but to be wise and strong [courageous] and to love them and enjoy being with them” (2 Timothy 1:7 LB)...

So the starting point in connecting with anybody is to pause and pray and say, “God, give me the courage to take the first step.”

The starting point for a TMC Discipler is to pause and pray and say: ***“God, give me the courage to take the first step.”***

So, how can I take my first step as a Discipler?

By discipling a candidate in the current Baptism and Membership class.

Candidates in the current and future batches are expected to attend eight one-to-one sessions with a Discipler before he or she can be baptised and received as a member of TMC. A candidate also needs to attend four Small Group sessions if he is not already attached to a small group, baptism classes, membership classes and two interviews with the pastors.

Baptism classes have been running from 25 Apr 2010 and will end on 16 May 2010, with baptism taking place on 22 May 2010.

Membership classes will run for another four Sundays from 23 May 2010 to 13 Jun 2010, with the Reception of New Members on 4 Jul 2010.

Be a part of these momentous events. Let us strengthen one another’s faith as we rejoice with our brothers and sisters taking their baptism and membership vows.



Baptism on Dec 12 2009

What's *new* on the tmc website?



Want to catch a glimpse of TMC's most recent events which you might have missed?

Turn the pages of our user-friendly online photo album for poignant shots of the most recent happenings at TMC. New photos are added almost every week. Whether you are new or have been with the church for a while, the online photo album is a great place to look for friendly and/or familiar faces to brighten your day.

Feel free to contribute to these special events too. If you have photos of a particular TMC event that you'd like to share with the rest of us, drop us an email @ tmccomms@gmail.com. The Communications Committee thanks you in advance for contributing to our fond recollections at TMC.

The Communications Committee is also seeking photographers with some basic DSLR skills to help us capture these great moments. Once again, do email us at tmccomms@gmail.com if God is calling you to serve with us.

Accessing the Online Album

Go straight to <http://picasaweb.google.com/trinitymethodist2010> or go to the main website and click on "Downloads"

Top Tip

If you are a Picasa member, you can add Trinity Methodist as your Favorite. That way, you'll be notified whenever new photos are added to TMC's Photo Album. Just click on the "Favorites" tab and follow the instructions.



Some photos found on the TMC online photo album!

(Right) Seniors enjoying a time of fellowship at the Senior's Lunar New Year Lunch (Feb 27, 2010)



The Girls' Brigade after their enrolment service on Mar 21, 2010

Reflections On the Alpha Course

by Caroline Lim



Connect with Others

that is too basic, silly or offensive. We may not always have a ready answer, but we will always try to address the question in subsequent ALPHA sessions.

I have been involved in the ALPHA Course at TMC for the last couple of years, starting first as a participant, then as a helper, and now as a facilitator. Each run of the ALPHA Course has been a special experience and enriching in so many ways.

At the heart of it, ALPHA is about friendships. Over the course of the last few runs of ALPHA, I have gotten to know many wonderful individuals. I have also had the joy of seeing many of them continue to grow in Christ even after the course. Some of the people that I got to know through ALPHA have also become my friends in the Footprints Small Group.

For many people, ALPHA has been a critical platform for learning more about the Christian faith and an important first step towards a deeper commitment to Christ. The format and structure of ALPHA provides a “no pressure” environment for both pre-believers and believers to ask questions about the faith without feeling self-conscious or ignorant. In ALPHA, we often say that there is no question

I started as a helper a few years ago when I invited some friends to come for the course. Ironically, my friends dropped out of ALPHA but I stayed on and have been part of the team that coordinates the ALPHA course ever since. I think what made me excited about being part of the ALPHA team was the opportunity to serve God in a programme that He has used to touch countless lives. Seeing how ALPHA has been effective in building up faith and commitment in others is a real blessing. God is wonderful as I am still ministered to, no matter how many times I have watched the ALPHA videos.

Ideally, ALPHA participants should transit to a small group after ALPHA has ended. That is why we want to encourage more small groups to step forward and take up the challenge of running the ALPHA course. As the host small group, you will be able to witness God’s power at work as you connect with others and show God’s love through hospitality and friendship. Don’t worry about not being “ready” to lead an ALPHA group. If there’s one thing that God has taught me through my involvement in ALPHA, it is to take that step of faith, trust in Him, keep on praying and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. To God be the glory!

Comments from participants of the current course

Interesting and easy to understand. Gives a very good overview of being a Christian. Learnt about the importance of the Holy Spirit and how to be the salt and light for God.



I am more confident in walking with the Lord through seeing His promise and work in my life. I have learnt to build a closer relationship with Him, to affirm my faith and experience the Holy Spirit. I thank all who have guided me during the ALPHA course. The process has healed me, given me strength and taken my fears away.

I feel that the ALPHA course has helped me to have a clearer and better understanding about God. The Christian faith is really powerful and gives a wonderful meaning to my life. I also feel that we should share the good news of being a Christian, and how having a relationship with God can change our lives so much. After the course, I also have a much deeper interest in reading the Bible.



This is a very structured yet easy-to-follow series of talks introducing us to the faith. Verses from the Bible are liberally sprinkled all over and they become “sign-posts” to make us want to read more about the context in which they are applied, clearly showing us that the Bible is indeed the Living Word. The examples are all very inspiring and also show us how others are led to Christ. We heartily thank the group of ladies who have given us so much of their time to make this an interesting and engaging journey for us!

If your small group wants to find out how to run the ALPHA Course, please email Caroline at feedmylamb@hotmail.com. Look out for information on the next run of the ALPHA Course.



by Eric Cheong
TMC Lay Ministry Staff

Have you ever felt lonely, unloved, oppressed, marginalised, disconnected from the world around you, and desperately in need of a kind word, a caring touch, some human warmth?



If so, you would be able to empathise with some of those who turn up at CONTACT 123 on a daily basis. These ordinary folks with deep heartfelt needs live among us in our neighbourhood.

And some of them come to CONTACT 123, an IT centre managed by TMC, just to make friends and find companionship.

Situated at Block 123, Serangoon North Avenue 1, the centre has been in operation for the past two years.

The work done at CONTACT 123 serves as a window to connect with people in our neighbourhood. Through CONTACT 123, we seek to befriend, provide relevant services and hospitality to the people in Serangoon North. We hope that, in serving the community, we will be given the opportunity to share the love of Christ and the reality of the Gospel.

We bring blessings to people living in our neighbourhood by connecting with them and offering assistance in any form. Through God's grace, we hope to touch the lives of people who are in need, lonely, unloved, oppressed, marginalized, from dysfunctional families, or disconnected from an increasingly-connected world.

Matthew 25:32-36 tells us that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Shepherd will separate the sheep from the goats.

"He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me. I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'"

Matthew 25:40 teaches us that, whatever we do among the least in our community, we are doing it for our Lord.

Certainly, none of us wish to be on the "left", and told by the Lord:

"depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels".

Similarly, Proverbs 19:17 tell us that:

"He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward him for what he has done".

Let us not interpret this incorrectly – salvation is by faith through the grace of God. However, after receiving this gift of salvation, we do need to demonstrate and reflect God's love in our lives, strive to be the salt of the earth and develop Christ-like characteristics.



Legal Clinic



Homework Help



Some boys at the IT centre



The IT centre



Volunteers and visitors of the centre having a fun time during an outing to Snow City in Nov 2009

CONTACT 123 is an opportunity for TMC worshippers to live out a good Christian life by getting involved in the Serangoon North community in a non-threatening way through a loving and caring approach.

Currently, IT and Internet facilities are the main services provided by CONTACT 123. We have a group of school-going boys who are there regularly to play computer games.

We provide a friendly, loving and safe environment for online gaming. The aim is to keep the children away from bad influence.

Others use the centre for emailing, MSN, surfing, doing homework and for personal or work-related purposes. We also run periodic computer classes in basic computer usage, blogging and others.

Lately, there has been an increasing demand for **Homework Help** which involves children coming by after school to do their homework with the assistance of our church volunteers.

Other services rendered by CONTACT 123 are quarterly birthday parties for the children, outings and chaplaincy services.

We also have a **Legal Clinic** operating on the first Monday of the month depending on minimum sign-ups received at the end of the previous month.

We are critically in need of volunteers to help out in administrative work, tutoring, IT maintenance, troubleshooting, and as befriending.

Volunteers are also required for new areas of ministry such as befriending the elderly living in this community and families of children coming to us at the centre.

To some of us, such work may be simple, but it means a lot to the beneficiaries.

There is a story (<http://www.starrbrite.com/starfish.html>) about hundreds of starfish washed ashore on miles of beach, helpless under the hot burning sun.

If we could pick a few and return them to the ocean, it would give "new life" to these starfish. Come and be a starfish thrower and connect with others by becoming a volunteer at CONTACT 123.

You can volunteer as an individual (e.g. retirees, homemakers, vacation students, in-between jobs) or in groups (e.g. Small Groups, WSCS, Chinese Ministry, Seniors Ministry, Youth Ministry):

- to man the reception counter
- to supervise primary school children in their homework
- carry out IT troubleshooting and maintenance
- befriend families and the elderly

Time:
1-2 hours in the afternoon on Tuesdays, Thursdays or Saturdays

Contact:
Cho Mei Chan at 6282 4443 / meichan@tmc.org.sg
Eric Cheong at 6282 4443 / eric@tmc.org.sg
or leave your name and contact number with the InfoDesk on Sundays



St Luke's ElderCare Centre

in partnership with Trinity Methodist Church and Bless Community Services
and beneficiary of Charity Bike 'n' Blade 2010

by Albert Yeo
Associate Lay Leader

Trinity Methodist Church has another opportunity to overflow with thankfulness to God. With our partner, Bless Community Services, we are reaching a wider community for Christ at St Luke's ElderCare Centre (SLEC) in Serangoon.

With Singapore's ageing population, the need for elderly care centres grows more acute by the day.

SLEC, started by St Luke's Hospital, is one such operation with an important mission: to enhance the social, psychological and physical well-being of seniors and their quality of life through meaningful day-care services.

SLEC provides a range of day care services to help families take care of their elderly. It is equipped with, amongst other things, a wellness centre, serving up to 60 clients and residents (aged 40 and above).

This year, SLEC will be operating a new centre at Block 217 Serangoon Ave 4, and TMC is privileged to be a part of this undertaking.

The bulk of the recurring operating cost of the new centre - about \$200,000 yearly - comes only from kind public donations. Thus, SLEC needs all the help it can get.

SLEC at Serangoon is this year's beneficiary of Charity Bike 'n' Blade, a humble fundraising outfit that has seen amazing support from a growing list of companies and individuals in Singapore since the event took shape five years ago.

Charity B 'n'B raised over \$200,000 for Salvation Army's Peace Haven Nursing Home last year - a remarkable achievement considering the intense belt-tightening by companies due to the economic downturn.

This was all thanks to generous support from the cyclists and their supporters, as well as companies like Microsoft, Accenture, Oracle, Symantec, StarHub, Software AG, Equinix, Hewlett-Packard and more. It is a heartening testament that we do, indeed, live in a society that cares and shares.

Come the first week of September 2010, 70 cycling enthusiasts will once again set out for the Malaysian town of Mersing, in Johor, and back for a good cause. The 320km ride is a gruelling one, and past editions have humbled even the fittest of riders.

But the pain will all be worth it. Together with your generous support, the ride will change lives and help bring cheer and comfort to the less privileged in our society.

Activities at other existing SLECs



HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT THIS EVENT



A comprehensive range of sponsorship packages is available for corporate donors.

Cycling fans who wish to raise money and challenge themselves on the ride can sign up as participants.

Non-cyclists can show support for their favourite cyclists by making generous donations at <http://give.sg/org/slec/charitybnb2010>

**"Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day."
-- Dylan Thomas**

<http://www.charitybnb.com.sg>

"It only takes a spark"

Charity B 'n' B began in 2005 with the simple idea that a group of passionate people collectively participating in a sport they deeply love, can be a powerful vehicle to raise money for society's underprivileged. Between 2005 and 2007, the fundraising event supported St Andrew's Community Hospital, Gracehaven, Pertapis Centre for Women and Girls, Ling Kwang Youth Centre, and Peacehaven Nursing Home. This year's beneficiary is St Luke's ElderCare Centre at Serangoon.

Sparked by Sidney Lim, a cycling-mad geek who has a day job as Microsoft Singapore's services director, Charity B 'n' B has grown by leaps and bounds, and it is today stoked by a large group of volunteers who work closely with the beneficiary organisations to put the entire event together. This year's chairman is Albert Yeo, Trinity Methodist Church's Associate Lay Leader. Albert is no stranger to the event and the local cycling fraternity, having taken part in the previous two editions of Charity B 'n' B.



Last year's BnB event
Photos: Courtesy of
Jeffery Teo Photography

EVENTS

5 May

(Every 1st Wed of the month)
1000 to 1200 hrs

Yum Cha

Midweek tea in the Plaza for anyone aged 50 years and above

Contact Eric (eric@tmc.org.sg) or Gek Khee (gek-khee@tmc.org.sg)

22 May

Baptism of Adults

22 May

Seniors' Ministry

Get-Together

23 May

Global Day of Prayer

Visit www.globaldayofprayer.com

6, 13, 20 June

Children's Ministry

will be closed

11 to 13 June

Ignite!

Youth Ministry retreat

19 June

Prayer Walk

Every 1st and 3rd Wed of the month

The Connection

Prayer Meeting

1st and 3rd Fridays

WSCS Bible Study on the book of Ruth with Mrs Esther Wong

0915 – 1100 hrs, Contact Diana (beldavid@singnet.com.sg)

Every Saturday

WSCS Line Dancing

3 pm, Contact Eunice (yeo48sgw@gmail.com)

Every 2nd Sunday of the month

Outing with Chen Su Lan Home children

Every 3rd Sunday of the month

WSCS Visitation to Homebound

after the 8.45am English service

Contact Veronica (SST@sas.edu.sg)

Last Sunday of the month

Hospitality to Institute of Mental

Health residents

SERVICES required

Contact 123

Please see page 12.

St Luke's ElderCare Centre in Serangoon

Befrienders required to visit residents at the Centre during its operational hours. Musicians, singers and helpers required for devotion on the 1st Thursday of each month. Visit www.slec.org.sg and/or the TMC website for more information, or contact Eric in the church office at 6282 4443 / eric@tmc.org.sg. See article on page 14.

Yum Cha

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. If you can assist as a befriender / driver / musician / song leader / interpreter / game and exercise coordinator / general helper every 1st Wednesday of the month, starting from 5 May 2010, 1000-1200 hrs, please contact Eric or Gek Khee in the church office at 6282 4443 / eric@tmc.org.sg / gekkhee@tmc.org.sg. Visit the TMC website for more information.

As at 1 April 2010...



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