



wITNESS



Keeping the Connections

Getting through this season with community



Loving Our Neighbors in Challenging Times

Showing our care to the workers in our midst



Constant Change

Adapting to the changes that came with COVID-19



Church Away From Church

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Contents

What is Truly Essential?

6



Keeping the Connections

Getting through this season
with community

10

COVID-19 Close Calls

14

Hospitality – The Heart of Ministry

18



Loving Our Neighbours in Challenging Times

Showing our care to the workers in
our midst

20



Constant Change

Adapting to the changes that came
with COVID-19

22

TNI Conference Highlights

24



Down But Not Out

A testimony on God's healing after
a major medical emergency

26



Make Time, Be Intentional, Let God Lead

Reaching out to a stranger

29

Chef-turned- church staffer Joshua Tang

32

Speak Lord, your Servant is Listening

34

A word



REV DR EDWIN WONG

from your Pastor

Shalom CMC, I bring you greetings and blessings in the name of our Risen Lord and Saviour, Christ Jesus. At the time of penning this article, we are about to exit Phase One (Safe Re-opening) of the COVID-19 Circuit Breaker measures, to move into Phase Two (Safe Transition) where we will begin to see some normalcy of life restored. Let us not be complacent but continue to keep the entire situation in prayer.

The past couple of months have been challenging for many of us, especially for

those with systematic daily routines. Some of us were hospitalized or quarantined. Some of us are affected financially or may be out of a job because of the economic downturn. Some of us have had to take a pay cut or dismiss employees. Many are probably trying to find a way to handle the stress of meeting the demands of work, studies, and family 24 hours a day.

For me, it took a while to get my bearings and momentum because I needed to adjust and adapt to the many new ways of

pastoring, implementing ministry, rethinking worship services, and communicating with teams. Having said that, allow me to share an observation made during this period which has to do with the word “refresh” and the phrase “Can you hear me?”

Due to COVID-19, many churches are streaming their worship services online and video conferencing has become, for better or worse, a part of our daily routine. Whether it is video conferencing or online worship services, the feedback and queries we often receive from members pertain to technical connection issues – there is no sound, no picture, nothing is moving, the motion is jerky, I cannot log in, etc.

Whenever anyone asks for help, we always begin by telling them to refresh their app, browser, Wi-Fi router, or in some circumstances, reboot the devices used. We have discovered that very often, through that simple act of restarting, people are able to connect and have things restored. Now, to “refresh” regularly is vital for things to be up and running because it removes old instructions that could be lingering in the system, prohibiting new instructions from flowing. It is almost like a case of the old wineskin not allowing the new wine to expand (Matthew 9:16-17, Luke 5:36-39, Mark 2:21-22).

God is always doing something new in our lives. But if we are not receptive to change and insist on holding onto old mindsets, we will not be able to handle new revelations or creative ideas to “do church” even if they are direct downloads from the Lord. Now, I am not saying that there is no value in the old; neither am I saying that everything new must be good. What I am saying is that we need to prayerfully seek the Lord, not only for a new understanding but for a willing heart to obey, even if it means foregoing our personal preferences.

Many of us are new to video conferencing and find it awkward to speak in front of a screen. The single phrase that many of us utter the moment we join a virtual meeting is “Can you hear me?” I sometimes wonder if God is asking us the same question during

this period, “My child, can you hear me?” In the busyness of coping with the new ways of living life, have we taken time to wait upon the Lord to ensure that we can hear Him?

Besides hearing that still small voice of God, is God also asking us, both as individuals and as a church, to “refresh” ourselves during this period?

Let me leave you with a verse from Mark 6:31b, that spoke to me on the importance of finding restoration, refreshment and reconnection with the Lord, our God –

“Come with me
by yourselves to a quiet
place and get some rest.”

When we rest in the Lord our Shepherd, we will receive from Him the refreshment we need. And whatever we receive from the Lord will help us recalibrate our alignment to Him, rekindle our passion for Him, which will then empower us to restart and reengage our love for the community with a kingdom mindset. What will keep us going in life especially when the going gets tough, is the depth of our gratitude for the things in life. The clearer we are able to see God’s purposes in all things, the better we are able to give thanks in all circumstances and for all things. But to do that, we need to constantly refresh ourselves in the Lord, rest in Him, and intentionally take time to hear from Him.

Even when we are able to return as a physical church, be prepared that things will no longer be the same. It is time for us to take a new step of faith because the old has gone and new has come. With wisdom and discernment, may we choose well and adapt well so that everything we do as the church of Jesus Christ will be edifying and honouring to God. May we have the courage to journey forward, looking after the 99 amongst us and at the same time, always looking out for the one out there.

What is Truly Essential?

BY PS BENJAMIN LAU

The original content of this reflection was shared with the Care Group Cluster Coaches on 18 February 2020. However, with the recent Circuit Breaker measures (7 April - 1 June 2020), I have updated this reflection based on the current advisory given to us.

With the Ministry of Health (MOH) advisory for churches to suspend our church services, and with the measures from the Circuit Breaker, I was challenged to reconsider what is truly essential for us to live out our Christian faith today. This is a time for us to “rethink church” or perhaps a time for the church to pause from our busy programmes.

During our staff meeting on 17 February 2020, one of our Pastoral team members shared three questions with us during our staff devotion that resonated with some of my thoughts on the implications of COVID-19 for our churches today.

1. Why do we meet?
2. What happens if we cannot meet as a church?
3. What are we as a church going to be known for?

But before we go into that, let us reflect on Hebrews 10:23-25 to glean some insights to these questions.

Hebrews 10:23-25:

“Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.”

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

Worship Services

On 15 February 2020, the pastors and leaders had to make the tough decision to suspend all activities that were deemed non-essential. One of the only essential aspects of church life that we kept was the corporate worship services with all the necessary precautions in place.



However, when the Circuit Breaker measures kicked in, all worship services in churches across Singapore were suspended and everyone was advised to stay at home. This is unprecedented for churches in Singapore and probably no pastor has ever

had to experience leading a church through such a pandemic in this century.

So, although we cannot come together to worship in a physical church building, we have implemented our online church services which have reached out to more people than ever before! Individuals who have not participated in our worship services in the past can now join us online on Facebook or our website. Online services have allowed us to still experience the corporate aspect of worshipping together and listening to the Word of God as a church family but in our own homes. This is us, the body of Christ, being the “church away from church”.

Small Groups

Secondly, I believe keeping the connections with our small groups is still essential. This is something that we should not neglect. Especially in times of crisis, we need to keep on “**watching over one another in love**”, to pray with one another and to spur one another on towards love and good deeds, even if it is only through virtual means in this season.

During the MCS135 anniversary service on 16 February 2020, Bishop Chong shared that “**Religious belief not lived out in the presence of others, and not in interaction with others, has no place or purpose at all.**”

This is where I am reminded of the early church in Acts 2.

Acts 2:42-47

“⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who

were being saved.”

The early churches started meeting in homes. The disciples broke bread together, spent time in fellowship, listened to God’s word and prayed together. These house churches are like our Care Groups today; where we experience the gospel come alive in our meetings together.

Although we have not been able to meet physically, this is an opportune time for us to keep the connections with others through our Care Groups virtually through various tools such as Zoom, Google Hangouts, WebEx, FaceTime, etc.

I have personally attended meetings with a discipleship group via Zoom and we still experienced the presence of God as we shared our journey with the Lord from our different households.

So, going back to the three questions again:

1. Why do we meet?

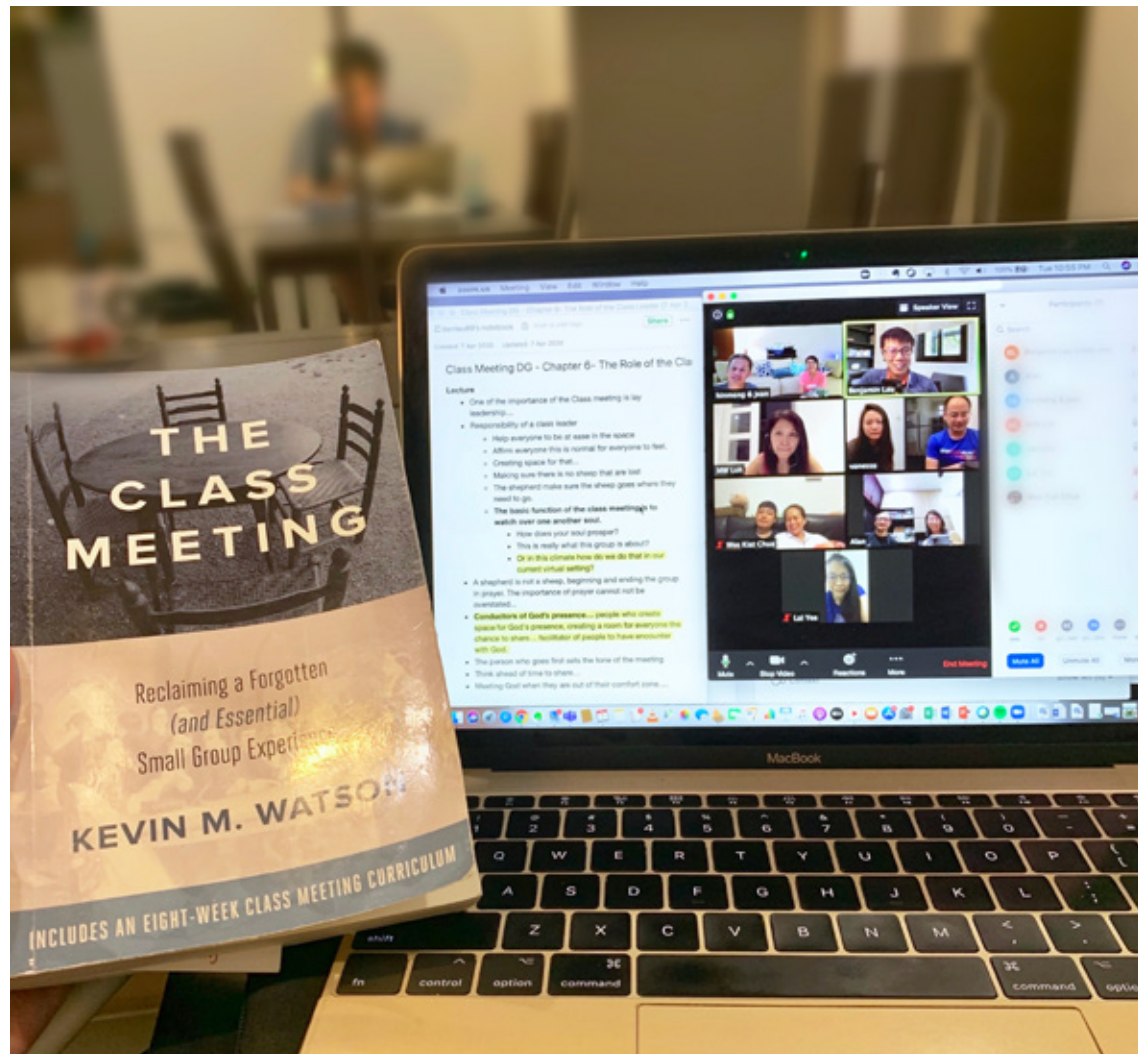
We meet to spur each other on in the faith together as the body of Christ. The church is not just a physical building, it is the people of God coming together! If we cannot meet physically, we should still keep meeting virtually.

2. What happens if we cannot meet as a church (or I would rephrase “in church”)?

To answer this, we need to go back to the first question; we can still meet together online if we see church being more than just going to the physical church building. This is where the Care Group comes in. Besides our online services, we need to be part of a smaller group where we can share more intimately with one another and check in on the state of our relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ. We cannot live our Christian life alone!

3. What are we as a church going to be known for?

No church would want to be known as a virus cluster, so how can we leverage this crisis for God’s kingdom work instead?



The church is not just a physical building, it is the people of God coming together! If we cannot meet physically, we should still keep meeting virtually.

Do we want to be a church that is just fearful, allowing our fear to cripple us, or are we going to be a church that is known to carry on the mission of God's kingdom work within all these limitations?

Perhaps, instead of being crippled by this crisis, how can we see this crisis as an opportunity for the church to advance God's Kingdom even further than ever before?

I recently came across this cartoon that showed an illustration of the "Devil" and "God" having this conversation. The Devil said, "With COVID-19, I closed your churches!", but God responded, "On the contrary, I just opened one in every home!"

This is so true as someone added on, **"The church isn't empty; the Church is deployed."** I believe even in our own Care Groups today, we can be a group that impacts the world just as what we read in Acts 2:47, "... *the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*"

Today, seekers or our pre-believing friends can be invited to join our online Care Group meetings. One barrier is down now, since one no longer needs to travel in order to still connect with others through video-conferencing.

So, if you ask me what is truly essential right now for the church, I would say is "keeping the connections" with one another. Even though the church may not be able to meet physically, we are still the "church away from church" wherever we are.

We can still keep the church going as we are the church in our own homes, even if it is just within our family units. If you are the only Christian in your household, you are still the church, and you can keep the connections with your fellow pilgrims of the faith using modern technology today.

Final Thoughts

Revival first came when the Roman road system was built, and the disciples could spread the gospel by foot.

Centuries later, the printing press was invented, and the Bible could be produced and shared across the world.

Today, in this 21st century, technology has advanced even further, and social media has become the new normal.

Perhaps, this could be a new movement where the gospel can spread even faster and wider than ever before?

So, let us keep pressing on, and persevere in the faith by encouraging each other to love and good deeds.

Let's keep the connections with one another!

Keeping the Connections with our youths

BY STANLEY CHEOK & CHIN CHAINN MIIN

Everything has changed, yet nothing has changed.

Since the COVID-19 outbreak in Singapore, change has been the constant. Work, school, lifestyle, and even church services and CG gatherings have been affected nationwide. As CG leaders of the 16-year-olds, we have had to adjust to the church-wide changes at short notice. From the shifting of the IGNITE youth service

from Sunday mornings to Saturday afternoons, moving CG outside of the church premises, sourcing for alternative locations for CG gatherings, and then moving CG online; these were a few of the many changes that had taken place over just a month.

Yet beyond all the hassle and scramble, we have witnessed the other constant – our Father’s love and faithfulness. When we

were first informed that our youth CG would have to be held away from the church premises due to the tighter restrictions, we struggled to find an alternative venue. Our prayer was answered when God blessed us with two families who were willing to open their homes even amidst the rising number of COVID-19 cases in Singapore.

But alas, the outbreak worsened, and we could no longer meet physically. Hosting CG virtually was the only option. We were prepared that interactions might be inhibited, and attendance might drop. However, God showed that He is faithful when we obey Him. He has been giving us the wisdom and creativity to improvise games and leverage video conferencing tools

to facilitate discussions. We have also been blessed by the tireless support and encouragement of the IGNITE ministry who went the extra mile to create CG materials that relate to the situation we are in today. We have seen an increase in CG attendance and are so blessed by our youth’s reflections and prayers for one another. Some have also stepped up during this period to host worship and prayer meetings online with their friends and schoolmates.

This period has spurred us to pause, reflect and give thanks for everything that we have taken for granted when things were fast and furious not too long ago. Time has somewhat expanded because, for example, getting to work now takes us five seconds. It is also a timely reminder – and some may call it a test – of what we use this extra time for: His purposes or ours? We believe that this is the time that God has prepared for us, to learn and grow as a church away from church, being a part (i.e. of the church) but not apart.

The world after COVID-19 will never be the same. But as sons and daughters of Christ, we can stand firm and hold fast to our Father’s love and faithfulness which will always be the same.



Keeping the Connections with our families

BY CHUA WEE KIAT

Every tranche of measures to counter the transmission of COVID-19 felt like a tightening screw and the subsequent shutdown of traditional ways of worship felt like a sucker-punch to the nth degree. The extroverted me could not imagine not fellowshiping in person. Matthew 18:20 states,

“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them.”

Fellowship, as I knew it, was a restorative ritual enactment of the Gospel.

As I contemplated the situation, I felt the Lord speak to me through His Word. Wasn’t the Apostle Paul in the same boat centuries earlier, albeit in different circumstances? Wasn’t he unable to meet or connect physically with his beloved church members? He did not lament his circumstances and do nothing. He wrote long emotional letters and used the Roman road system, a phenomenal work of engineering, and a technological marvel then, to deliver these to his members.

Col316 Circuit Breaker Day 3



I realised that Paul in present day would have embraced online communication tools. Armed with this revelation that corporate worship was much more than a physical gathering, and frankly, not having much by way of options, I zoomed onto Zoom.

Growing Kids God's Way, a parenting course I co-facilitate, turned out great online. So were the Care Group (CG), Cluster and Cluster Coaches meetings. Most of us were Zoom newbies but attendance was almost always 100%. In fact, members seemed more excited online and I even detected a willingness to share more deeply, something that delighted me. My CG's Whatsapp chat group remained vibrant and active, and we even added a daily montage of our CG members to boost interactions and morale. When I met my zone CG Leaders online, they all reported that they were doing well as a CG. At another level, besides regular email updates from the pastors, ChristKidz and

Col316 Circuit Breaker Day 20



CG Ministry, some of the pastoral team also met all Cluster Coaches on Zoom to encourage and update us.

My concerns over the impact of COVID-19 on church life melted away with the familiar and reassuring warmth of the CMC spirit during

each week's online Sunday service. My family members dress up and sit on proper chairs. We felt like we were in an overflow room. We even "sat" with our CG on Zoom.

As we navigate ongoing uncertainties, I believe that never more in the history of the modern church has it been so important to be part of a CG. My prayer is that CMC's CG community will become stronger and more united. I pray that we will become more self-reliant, adaptable, and appreciative individuals, having had the chance to reflect on what is truly important in life. But most importantly, I pray that we will always have hope in Christ as a community of believers.



Keeping the Connections with our seniors

BY WITNESS

Humans are creatures of habit. Change is often something that we do not want to think about unless truly necessary. However, change has been constant during this pandemic and we have all been compelled to look at different ways of doing things. This was especially so when it came to keeping connections within CGs.

While majority of CGs shifted their meetings online, this was not the preferred option for some of our senior groups. Technology is not always the easiest for many seniors, who struggle with unfamiliar things online. Being unable to meet physically presented them with a predicament and they had to decide on an alternative.

A couple of groups decided to give online meetings a shot. Although most of their initial reactions included

"Alamak, I don't know how to do this!" and "Don't ask me to learn at my age", they powered through to meet anyway.

Despite their hesitation, the experience was an overall positive one for the majority. When asked about their experience, they shared how they enjoyed catching up with everyone and they found it fun. The biggest hurdle was setting up the equipment but with help from their family members, they were able to get on board in time for their CG sessions.

However, this was not the case for all the groups. For some who found it too daunting, the CG Leaders stepped up by frequently calling or texting their members to ensure that everyone was doing well. In fact, some groups found themselves interacting more overall and became much

more active on WhatsApp.

General Adults (GA) Zone Cluster Leader, Sharon Lopez shared how it has been encouraging to see the dedication of these CG Leaders as well as the older folks embracing technology during these unprecedented times. She hopes that more will get on board to meet online as we are uncertain how long the pandemic will last. Furthermore, learning useful technological tools is something we ought not to fear, but embrace instead. Even if it is just the first step of downloading the online meeting App, it is a step nonetheless!

If you need additional help to meet online during this time, please contact the church office at **6345 3934** or **info@cmc.org.sg**.

Transcending the Virus of Fear

BY MONICA LIM



It started with a slight cough in mid-February. I went to the GP who dispensed some cough meds. Nothing out of the ordinary. Then a few days later, the cough degenerated into a hacking, wheezing affair. I returned to the GP, expecting him to give me some antibiotics and stronger medicine.

Boy, was I wrong. The doctor listened to my lungs, deemed me a COVID-19 suspect and promptly ordered me to get to the A&E pronto. My husband drove me to Changi General Hospital's A&E section, where a systematic process was in place for GP referrals, with a separate section completely carved out for triage and assessment of patients. I had to do an x-ray, swab tests for COVID-19 and blood tests.

At this point, I still thought everyone was just being ultra-cautious and I would be on my way home after the barrage of tests. It only occurred to me that things might get complicated when a nurse ran me through a series of questions. When I told her that my son interned at Changi Airport, I saw alarm instantly register in her eyes. After a bit

of a wait, the x-ray showed I had a lung infection and that piece of airport info sealed my fate—I had to be warded.

I was wheeled to a ward specially converted for pneumonia patients while awaiting the results of the swab tests (which take half a day). It was a 5-bedder and I was roomed with four elderly ladies. The nurse had warned me that I might have to be warded for some time and moved to a regular ward if I didn't have COVID-19.

After that whirlwind day, I finally had time to reflect while lying on my hospital bed. I am by nature, quite an anxious person, but what struck me was that I didn't feel the least bit fearful. Whether or not I had COVID-19, whether I would have to be hospitalised for a long time—strangely, none of it seemed to bother me. I even wrote a tongue-in-cheek post on Facebook to keep my friends updated. Before I went to sleep, I stared at the geometric shadows left by the vents on the ceiling, fascinated, and just felt enveloped by God's peace and the deep assurance that everything would be okay.

The next morning, I was woken up to the good news—my first swab came back negative! A second swab was performed to confirm the result and by the afternoon, the result came back negative again. Even better, the doctor had decided not to keep me in hospital. I could be discharged!

I look back at that experience with some curiosity. I'm convinced that I was being carried by the prayers of family and friends because a naturally kancheong person like me typically isn't fearless in the face of such uncertainty. It strengthened my belief that God does indeed hear our prayers. Now, I'm resolved to pray more fervently for others.

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” – Philippians 4:6,7

God in the Small Things

BY GLEN FOONG



Five months travelling around Europe—this was a once in-a-lifetime opportunity. I left home in January and flew to the UK for a semester of exchange at the University of Leeds. The COVID-19 pandemic was only in its initial phases in several countries around Asia and Europe. I remember my friends and I were appreciative of being in the UK during this outbreak, as the situation in Singapore was starting to get more serious. During that time, there were only eight confirmed cases in the UK. It seemed so insignificant within Europe. I constantly prayed for my friends and family back home, for God's favour upon them.

Two months flew by and it was the middle of March. Europe was not so safe from the outbreak anymore, with Spain and Italy being the two countries to be hit the hardest. I was starting to feel the weight of the pandemic in the UK. Within the next few days, the Ministry of Education (MOE) called all exchange students to return to Singapore immediately. Though that was the end of my precious exchange opportunity, I felt assurance and peace instead of anger or

disappointment. I was thankful to God that I got to return home to my friends and family in Singapore.

After I settled down back home, I started to develop a dry cough. It went on for over a week, so I decided to get myself checked for COVID-19 as I did not want to spread it to others if I had indeed contracted it. In all this, I was still extremely peaceful and optimistic – I am always optimistic in life, as I trust in God's plans for me. When I got to the National Centre for Infectious Diseases (NCID), I was greeted by many of the healthcare workers who were fully dressed in protective gear. They were all extremely cheerful and polite, despite the fact that they were working tirelessly during this stressful outbreak season. This reminded me of God's unconditional and never-ending love for me as I could feel His love through all the wonderful healthcare workers.

As I moved on to the check-up area, I felt God's peace with me throughout. I was not afraid of the outcome - the words

'To live is Christ, to die is gain'

were stuck in my head. After the test, as I was ready to head home and await the results, a nurse came up to me and told me they had detected some signs of pneumonia in my x-ray and I had to be warded. Again, I did not panic or worry when I got the news but entrusted it all to God and His sovereign hands.

During my stay, I received many messages from friends and family wishing me a speedy recovery. It was quite overwhelming, and I am grateful for the love that was shown to me. Two swab tests and a CT scan showed that I was clear from COVID-19. As I reflect on the incident, I remember how God reminded me of His love in so many situations and how He walked me through it all.

Hospitality – The Heart of Ministry

BY REV DIANNA KHOO



Some of us might be aware that as part of CMC's effort to stand in solidarity with our front-line workers, we distributed ice cream to Tan Tock Seng Hospital, National Centre for Infectious Diseases and Changi General Hospital before Circuit Breaker kicked in. We had communicated with hospital welfare officers and they had indicated that ice cream would be a good morale booster for their staff. Together with the ice cream, we sent posters which contained messages of gratitude and encouragement from all

at CMC. We have also done the same for healthcare workers worshipping at CMC by providing a coupon for ice cream at a local ice cream store. Just a small gesture to say "thank you".*

Eating ice cream, according to scientists, really does make a person happy! Neuroscientists at the Institute of Psychiatry in London scanned the brains of people eating ice cream and found that one spoonful lights up all the happy zones in the



brain. The hospital welfare officers certainly know their stuff when they requested for ice cream.

If one were to do a quick survey of Jesus' ministry on earth, you will find that hospitality was very much at the centre of the way he approached ministry. Throughout his sojourn on earth, he was both hosted as a guest as well as extended his welcome to outsiders, sinners and seekers. Eating together was a natural act of hospitality in his ministry and indeed when we look at the Last Supper, which would become an important teaching for Christian worship associated with the sacrament of Holy Communion, it was a shared meal between Jesus and his disciples. Elsewhere in the Bible, meals were used to reinforce his hospitality to and his care for those who are vulnerable and easily overlooked.



See for example, Luke 14:12-14 New Living Translation (NLT): ¹² Then he turned to his host. "When you put on a luncheon or a banquet," he said, "don't invite your friends, brothers, relatives, and rich neighbours. For they will invite you back, and that will

be your only reward. ¹³ Instead, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. ¹⁴ Then at the resurrection of the righteous, God will reward you for inviting those who could not repay you."

Well, the healthcare workers are not exactly disadvantaged people; far from it. But during these unprecedented times, I believe extending encouragement, appreciation and care for our front liners is very much embracing Jesus' ministry. Hospitality in its purest form blesses others. Furthermore, we read in Philippians 2:4 "Do not look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too." Here, Jesus reminds us not so much to define who is our neighbour. But the more appropriate question we should all ask ourselves as a church and as followers of Christ is: who can I be a neighbour to?

May CMC continue to be a church in Christian action.

*If we missed you out, please let us know so we can send you a coupon!
Email [Joshua Tang](mailto:joshua.tang@cmc.org.sg) at josh@cmc.org.sg

Loving Our Neighbours in Challenging Times

BY 5 LOAVES 2 FISHES CG



During the Circuit Breaker period, one CG decided to perform a simple act of kindness. 5 Loaves 2 Fishes (5L2F) took the initiative to pack and send goodie bags to bless 27 migrant workers who were isolated in dormitories.

This was just before the outbreak of COVID-19 was detected in the dormitories. The idea came from one of the CG members and the rest responded positively. "Our hearts went out to them because of their plight. Some of us had also been involved in CMC's local outreach activities with migrant workers previously and so the impact of their situation hit a bit closer to home."

One member added, "We tried to put ourselves in their shoes. They must be having lot of anxiety and fear about the certainty of their job and their life. For those of us who have experienced living in foreign countries without family around us, we understand how receiving care from their local community can be so encouraging."

"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

Galatians 6:9

The first thing to consider was which dormitory. As 5L2F is not very large, they looked for a smaller group to establish connections with. A CMC member connected them with 27 of his workers.

The next decision was what to give. After seeking advice from their contact person, they decided to give fruits, biscuits, instant coffee, Vitamin C and some snacks. They also decided to include a card with messages such as "God cares for you" or "God loves you" and a simple prayer printed behind.

With the "Who" and the "What" settled, they moved on to the "How". They discussed how to go about this project while abiding by the safe distancing measures and Circuit Breaker regulations. Each member took on different responsibilities to enable this to happen. One became the treasurer while those

with cars went shopping and did the packing separately. The bags were then dropped off at another member's house for a final check and to add the cards. The last step was to drop off the bags with the contact person who brought them to the dorms. Within a week, this was put in place.

Leviticus 19:34 reminds us that "The alien (foreigner) who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the aliens as yourself..." It is God's calling for us to bless the foreigners living among us and 5L2F hopes that through this small gesture, our heavenly Father will be glorified.

The CG began this initiative with the hope of being able to continue to befriend this group of workers. This was an important first step, to show that we as Singaporeans care and

appreciate the workers in our midst. As a Church, it is even more essential that because we are passionate about God, we must love our community.

Let us remember as Paul encouraged the church in Galatians 6:9, "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." For those of us who are willing to do something but lack the courage or ideas on what to do, pray and seek God. Ask Him to show you the way and take a step of faith to perform that act of kindness.



Constant Change

Adapting to the changes that came with COVID-19

1

Weekly temperature taking and contact tracing before services (5 February to 15 March 2020)



Many stepped up to give of their time as we adjusted to the pandemic together. Thank you to all who tirelessly volunteered as the changes took place.

We are also thankful for our congregation – thank you for navigating this season together with us!

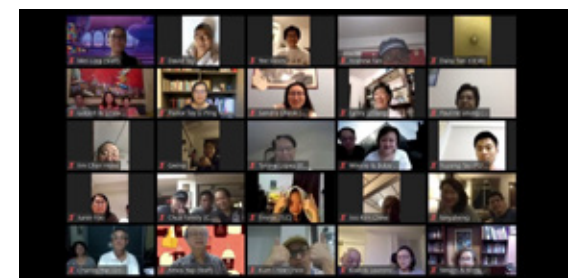
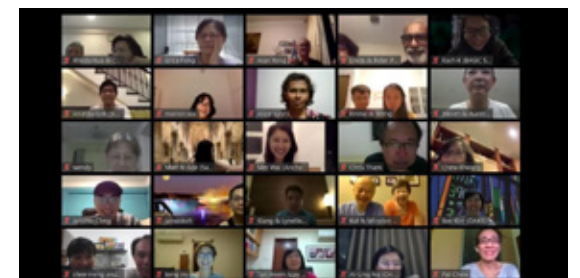
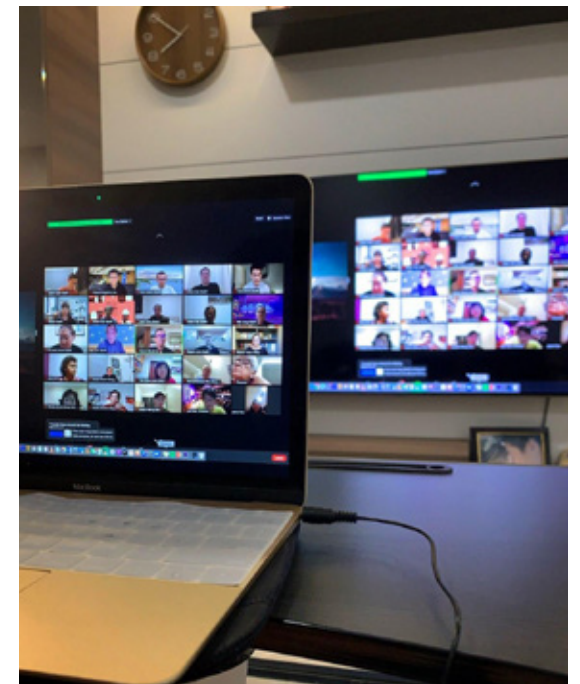
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Livestreaming our services before the implementation of Circuit Breaker (21 March to 5 April 2020)



3

First online prayer meeting (6 May 2020)



TNI Conference Highlights



What was supposed to be our biennial Church Camp turned into our very first Zoom conference.

The Neighbour Initiative Conference was held online from 10 to 13 June with our intended camp speaker, Mr Joseph Chean, National Director of Youth With a Mission (YWAM) Singapore. He inspired us with his stories and his insights on what God calls us to do as His people.

Over 340 screens of individuals and families gathered online for three evenings to hear the Word as well as respond to it in discussion during the breakout room time. The Conference concluded on Saturday morning with a Q&A session with both Joseph and our Pastor-in-Charge, Ps Edwin Wong responding to questions raised by participants of the conference.

Throughout the conference, we explored what it really means to be a neighbour and more importantly, how we can practice this in our everyday lives. In the Parable of The Good Samaritan, Jesus uses “neighbour” as a verb. Therefore, we are called not so much

to look at “who is my neighbour?” but to take action to find out “who can I be a neighbour to?”

Joseph also shared on what it takes for us to be a missional church – to be a community of disciples committed to know and to reveal the Character of God to the nations. This community includes both a top down and bottom up approach where corporate leadership is supported, and individual initiatives are celebrated. It is not about doing more, but about knowing God in an increasing measure and so representing Him to the community. For out of knowing Christ comes the natural expression of doing. We have heard the Word, we have been challenged, and we pray that God will continue to equip CMC to go out and do His good work. This is only the beginning!

Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ Matthew 22: 37 – 39

What participants *felt* about TNI Conference

“It shows how omnipresent the Holy Spirit is and how even a pandemic cannot stop our God.”



“Joseph Chean is a great speaker and this conference really gives him the time to dive into great detail, something impossible during a sermon...Last night’s session was really amazing, lots of people here felt that goose bump effect that you don’t usually get from a Zoom call.”



“Great conference! Pray that God will help translate it into actionable items.”



“Arguably one of the most rewarding conferences I’ve been to in my 20+ years in CMC.”

We’d love to hear how you have been Jesus’ hands and feet. If you have a story on a seed project or how you have been blessing others, please share your journey with us at tni@cmc.org.sg.



FAITH
OVER
FEAR

Down But Not Out

BY DENNICCE CHIA



Last year, a storm hit Dennicce in the form of a stroke. This is her testimony of her journey since then.

On 14 October 2019, I had a stroke that impacted my left limbs. The stroke was caused by a blood clot in my brain. When it happened, it was a miracle that I could still leopard crawl more than seven meters from my bathroom to the main door to get help in less than three hours (the golden rescue duration for stroke).

Many doctors and physiotherapists who saw my initial brain scans feared the stroke would leave me paralysed, or even lead to death. I underwent a craniectomy to

remove the blood clot. Just one week after this surgery, God met me at my place of faith, and I could swallow and even speak. Henceforth, I sought God, knowing that by His wounds, we are healed.

I clung on to God throughout an extremely painful fight for the next four months. I am so thankful for my church family for rallying around me, offering spiritual support, emotional support and even attending to my physical needs.

CMC's healing ministry, The Healing Place, was instrumental in ministering to me through constant prayers and sharing with me what the Bible says about healing. That helped me with my faith. On days when I was down, God's Word continued to minister to me. I began to hear God better. He showed me that He is faithful and powerful to deliver His promises.

"Surely He took up our pain and bore our suffering...He was pierced for our transgressions and was crushed for our iniquities." Isaiah 58:4

I read this verse right before I went for a second surgery – a cranioplasty to put back my skullcap. I clung on to this promise and claimed it by faith. I refused to let pain dominate my body. After that major surgery, to the shock of the doctors and nurses, I did not need a single painkiller! The Lord is true to His Word!

Having worked in hospitals for nearly a decade, I know the advances and limitations of medicine. They are tools God deploys to aid us in our healing journeys, but they do not have the power that God has. No medical team could tell me why a stroke could hit me – a young and healthy person. Neither could they explain why my recovery was faster than expected.

As I drew closer to God, I realised that in order to start living victoriously, I needed to know my inheritance from God. So, I went after the Word, tracking down all of God's promises and proclaiming them over my life, even though at that point, the full manifestation of God's healing had not come to pass.

*"When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth, and He will tell you what is yet to come."
John 16:3*

A day before one of my occupational therapy sessions, I had a vision where I was peeling a green apple. I thought to myself, "My fingers cannot feel things at this time. Peeling a small round thing is too difficult". Then I had another vision and saw myself peeling a long cucumber and that seemed more manageable.

The next day, I took cucumbers, an apple and a peeler, and brought them to the therapist. The therapist trained me to peel them and I saw the vision come to pass.

In my healing journey, there have been many instances where I read God's promises and clung to them in faith, believing that He will do what He said. I was to rise up against pain, physical setbacks and discouragement despite all the big challenges. Now I understand why the Healing Place ministered to me through His Word.

As I write this, I am still recovering but I believe without God, this journey would have been even more painful, and I would have had no hope to spur me on. Glory be to God!



DENNICCE grew up in CMC and has been worshipping here for over 30 years. She heads the marketing and communications department of Singaporean-owned hospital in Penang and has been in the healthcare industry for over seven years.

She loves to cook and travel. Her favourite ministries are Andrew Wommack Ministry, Jesse Duplantis ministry and Oral Roberts ministry, as they helped her tremendously in her healing journey and growth in the Lord.

Make Time, Be Intentional, Let God Lead

BY ASHLEY LIM



How did I end up praying for a stranger on the bus? I attended the FOPx Youth Conference in November 2019 and was inspired by one of the speakers – Todd White. He shared personal experiences of reaching out to people wherever he went, such as in a taxi or at a supermarket. I realised that we could reach out to anyone at any place and time; we just need to be intentional. After that conference, I decided one day that I was going to try to look around intentionally and be sensitive to God's prompting to direct me to pray for someone.

That morning, I was planning to head to church for an errand. I boarded a pretty uncrowded bus, and I headed to the upper deck which was completely empty. A thought suddenly crossed my mind to pray for this passenger that I had seen sitting alone at the lower deck.



You might think with all that motivation I had earlier, I would have gone downstairs to pray for that person. However, in such situations, fear and doubt are very common and that was exactly what I felt then. I wondered whether I had indeed seen only one person at the lower deck. I was afraid that other people around would stare and judge. I thought that perhaps I had misheard God's prompting.

Side note: You can reach out to people even without God's prompting. He can still move through your actions. However, there is nothing wrong with asking God to lead as it would possibly give us more courage and remind us that God is the one who moves and is the one who has the power. We are merely the vessels.

Being alone on the upper deck, I decided to tell God that if someone comes up alone to the upper deck after this, I would pray for that person. I began looking down from the window at every stop, to see if anyone would come to the upper deck. I was nervous and

hoped that it wouldn't be someone difficult to approach.

Three stops before reaching church, a girl came to the upper deck. Alone. I immediately thought "yes, I should go and pray for her." I gave God my requirements, which He fulfilled. Now it was my turn. Fortunately, she looked around my age, which I thanked God for as it certainly made things easier. Honestly, I was still nervous and chose to wait till I was even nearer church, thinking that if I messed up or was embarrassed, I could just quickly alight.

Eventually, I went over and asked if I could pray for her. She was quite open and friendly and gestured for me to come to sit next to her as I was sitting on the opposite side of the aisle. I asked whether she had anything she needed prayer for, or if she was struggling with anything. In summary, I found out that she had a lot of past hurts bottled up. Feeling a lack of support, she never shared them with anyone, and the hurts often resurfaced.

"Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'"

Matthew 28:18-20

So, I prayed for her. Nothing fancy and I even fumbled over my words a little. After I finished praying, she claimed to feel better. At this point, I realised I missed my stop, but I just continued to quickly share with her about Jesus. I shared about how He loves her, and I encouraged her to try seeking God in her own time as she could talk to Him at any time. As I was rushing down to alight from the bus, the girl suddenly called out to me and told me that I was "God-sent".

This last bit really encouraged me because during the whole interaction, I was constantly doubtful about the way I was handling the situation. I just want to encourage everyone that all it takes is for us to make time to intentionally look for people whom we can bring God's love to. When God sends (Matthew 28:18-20) and we go, He will never leave us to deal with it alone. His Spirit will be with us, guiding our words and actions.

Although I doubted my actions, I trust that everything was how God wanted it to be.

I went in without much of a plan, but that is better as it gives God space to work through us. However, one thing I missed out was to exchange numbers to stay in contact and suggest a church that she could check out – just an extra tip for everyone.

If anyone feels like trying out such impromptu evangelism, I encourage you to go for it! Take that step of faith—God is with you!



ASHLEY is currently serving in the Worship and CG ministry in IGNITE. She enjoys singing, meeting with people and watching Korean and music-related YouTube videos. Although not an actual dancer, she also has a secret desire to help choreograph a dance for a potential future IGNITE performance.

“The call has always been the same – to feed His sheep”:

Chef-turned-church staffer Joshua Tang

BY TAN CK



I silently chuckled at Joshua Tang’s oddly fitting choice of “Cheesus Loves You” jaffles as we chatted over lunch on a lazy Thursday afternoon. As one of CMC’s newly minted executives, the 32-year-old Nanyang Technological University (NTU) Sociology graduate describes his job as moving the church out into communities. A significant aspect of Joshua’s portfolio involves outreach programmes to marginalised groups. Hamper distribution to needy households and community dinners are right up his alley. For Joshua, nurturing a neighbourly spirit in CMC is key to bridging the church and communities.

“We all have it in us to love others because we have received the love of God. It all begins with a small step – willingness. If we avail ourselves to be used by God and are obedient to His promptings, the world will be a better place.”

Full-time ministry hasn’t always been Joshua’s first choice. A bona fide foodie,

Joshua craves a good sermon as much as he does *shio bak*; he holds the Psalms as close to his heart as he does his favourite Beach Road prawn mee. It comes as no surprise that he has a love for cooking. His first job after graduating from NUS was as a chef at a friend’s restaurant.

“I was bookmarking job listings but never applied for any because nothing attracted me. Cooking was something I enjoyed and did part-time to earn some money during my university days, so I thought, why not give it a shot as a career?”

However, long hours and the solitary nature of the job meant less time with God, family and friends. He also found himself too exhausted to serve.

“I prayed for a few months and got confirmation at one of our Sunday services. Our Trinity Annual Conference (TRAC) President Rev Dr Gordon Wong was preaching about priorities, and this line in

his sermon struck a chord with me: ‘The most important thing is to make the most important thing the most important thing’.

I knew that while I enjoyed cooking, there were other things in life that I placed more value in, and it was time to prioritise those. I stayed back after the service to pray, and it was then that God reminded me of a promise I made to Him at a Youth Camp when I was 20 – that if He came calling, I would say ‘yes’.

Hanging up his apron, Joshua obeyed. God, however, had other plans. As Proverbs 16:9 reveals,

“In their hearts,
humans plan their course,
but the Lord establishes
their steps.”

During an interview for chaplaincy work at CMC, the pastor who interviewed Joshua suggested that he first deepen his knowledge at Trinity Theological College (TTC). The church would sponsor his studies, and Joshua could pursue chaplaincy work after.

Joshua pondered over the opportunity and spoke to various pastors. Blessings from his family and fiancée (now wife, Chloe) trumped concerns over salary and career advancements. Thanks to role models like Rev Shaun Chong who tread the path before Joshua, uncertainties ahead were allayed.

Joshua enrolled in TTC in 2016 and graduated with a Master of Divinity degree in 2019. Next, he returned to CMC where he landed his current job. With the job came perks, such as spending his days in church, and listening to the sermons thrice (yes, that’s a perk to Joshua)...as well as challenges.

“Having to wake up super early on Sundays! My weakness is my tendency to press ‘snooze’. Being an introvert, I have to muster up a lot of energy to talk to strangers and people who come into my path. It saps me,

and I need my alone time (and ice-cream) to recover!”

Like all jobs, there are bad days too, even when your boss is the Almighty God. The difference is that Joshua knows he can always turn to Him.

Joshua occasionally reminisces about his days as a chef but has come to a renewed understanding.

“I gave up cooking in a hot kitchen! But really the call has always been the same – to feed His sheep.”

As I listened, I got a sense of his stoic devotion. And there lies the crux. With a job so intricately tied to his faith, is it possible to divorce them? After all, full-time ministry is undeniably perceived to be more intently ‘spiritual’ than secular work. Unsurprisingly, Joshua rejected the separation.

“Without faith, it is impossible to please God. There are times where I’m guilty of trying to segment my life. It is a fine line and balance between protecting family time and ‘full-time’ ministry, and I’m still learning!”

He added that there was no reason to.

“I think it might be a case of us trying to segment everything that makes life messy. If we only lived one life, then we would have a lot more time and energy to live it, instead of trying to ‘organise’ it.”

We are all called to ministry. Perhaps when we approach our lives and work – whether it’s as a pulpit minister or a marketplace one – as platforms to advance His kingdom, we’ll understand that we work for the same boss no matter where our careers lead us.



As a former journalist, the only thing CK loves more than a scoop is a scoop of chocolate mint ice cream topped with rainbow sprinkles. He finds passion in serving the Kingdom and his idea of a good time is chilling with his pet shrimps.

You know him as the fiery and passionate youth leader shepherding CMC's youth ministry, IGNITE. But behind his bold and confident demeanour, Samuel is actually somewhat of a timid character.



Speak Lord, your Servant is Listening

BY GLEN FOONG

Growing up, he was a shy boy and was never a fan of the spotlight. Now, he constantly steps out of his comfort zone with confidence as he continues to serve and obey God, knowing God is guiding and empowering him every step of the way.

Samuel said, **“Whenever you see me speaking up and putting myself out there – that’s just me saying, ‘Yes, Lord.’”**

Family All Around
Samuel started attending CMC regularly with both his parents when he was young. His parents now attend New Life Vineyard, a church his father started



and is currently pastoring at. Growing up in a Christian family, home and church always blended together for Samuel. **“My father’s life gave me an intimate picture of a shepherd caring for his flock,”** he said. Samuel is now living a similar life, as he shepherds his flock of sheep in IGNITE.

Samuel and his wife, Samantha (yes, they are well known as the ‘Sams’), are the youngest in their families and they have 10 young nieces and nephews between the two of them. Family dinners are certainly always an event. In fact, family is everywhere for Samuel.

“The people in IGNITE are like a big crazy family to me. I guess that makes me the uncool father figure in this analogy,” he joked.

Fighting his Goliaths
Samuel describes himself as a kind of David – he might be small in size, but he sure is mighty for God. Since he was young, Samuel always loved art and imagination. Naturally shy, his secondary school days were a rough time as he found himself struggling to fit in with the rest of the students.

Being part of CMC’s youth ministry back then played a large role in guiding him and giving him opportunities to encounter God personally when he could have fallen away instead. Some of the youth leaders reached out to Samuel when he was struggling with his self-identity. “These relationships lifted me up and formed me spiritually. A lot of what I do and who I am in ministry is because of them and their spiritual friendship,” Samuel added.

In all this, God had a plan and in Samuel’s story, God was constantly forming him by drawing him out of his shell. Every time Samuel took the step of faith and obeyed God, he found himself growing in the confidence that God enables him to overcome all fears and inadequacies.

Throughout his life, Samuel has had to fight and overcome many Goliaths. Whether it was preaching sermons in front of a large congregation or rallying the energetic youths of IGNITE, God has certainly challenged Samuel to step up on many occasions. “I always feel like Peter stepping out of the boat or like Timothy who had to overcome a timid spirit,” he shared. In 2 Timothy 1:7, Paul tells Timothy: **“For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.”** In the same way, Samuel is reminded that God has given him this same spirit of power, love and self-discipline.

A Warrior for God
Samuel is currently serving full-time as

CMC’s youth pastoral team member. He oversees the ministry while preaching regularly at IGNITE, building strong partnerships with the parents and praying for the youths. “One of the biggest burdens I carry is to pray for the young people. As a leader, if I’m not praying then I’m just playing,” he shared.

He had previously served full-time in CMC as well, before leaving to complete his Master of Divinity degree at the Trinity Theological College. Samuel found himself facing many changes as he returned to CMC for his second full-time run. “Age, maturity, marriage, transitions,” he said. But the biggest change for him is the focus – from doing all the frontline work for the youths to empowering the next generation to be passionate disciples of God. Samuel strives to love and empower the youths “so that one day, I’ll find myself surrounded by warriors with the same hearts, kindred spirits, and kingdom friends.”

Samuel also co-leads the care group ‘Deeper in God (DIG)’, a group of 15-year-olds in IGNITE. At 30, his youth is an advantage as he has no trouble staying relevant with his care group as well as the youths in IGNITE. “Our goal at IGNITE is to see every young person become a ‘Champion of His Kingdom, Servant of His House,’” he said.

Leading IGNITE has been an amazing journey and a wild ride for Samuel. He feels that one of the reasons he is able to lead is because these young people have given him permission to have influence and to speak into their lives. “I am beyond blessed. It’s an immense honour. It took many small steps of faith for God to get me here, and I can only say ‘Wow,’” he said. “Don’t discount every small ‘Yes, Lord.’”



GLEN is currently pursuing a degree in communications at Nanyang Technological University. His hobbies include gaming, singing and playing the guitar. He is a strong advocate of the food around church – #EastSideBestSide.

WORSHIP WITH US ONLINE!

Join us every weekend until further notice

CMC **LIVESTREAM**

Saturday, 4.30 pm

Sunday, 8.30 am & 10.30 am

facebook.com/christmethodistchurch
cmc.org.sg/livestream.htm