

June 2014

MICA (P) 013/11/2010

WITNESS



CHRIST
METHODIST CHURCH

You will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. Acts 22:15



a *Home* to *Share*

Worship

- 6 Who do people say we are? **Earl Tan**
- 8 Our New Home

Connect

- 14 Christmas 2013 & Easter 2014 Baptism & Membership

Grow

- 16 Saving Grace **Alex Quek**
- 18 The hope of my life **Evelyn de La Cruz**
- 20 Experiencing Christian Kinship **Isabel Chew**
- 24 Anxiety's Antidote: Prayer **Jessica Nye**

Serve

- 28 Keeping it real **Sherene Kang**

Reach Out

- 30 A different kind of weekend in Bintan **Joy Sim**
- 34 What goes on at Palm Cove Lounge? **Evangeline Lim**

**Communications
Chairperson and Editor:**
Michele Soh

Managing Editor:
Elena Gudgeon

Cover Photograph:
Jeremy Ho

Layout Artist:
Christine Teo (First Printers)

Pastor-In-Charge:
Rev Edmund de Souza

Witness is a quarterly newsletter of Christ Methodist Church. The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of Christ Methodist Church or The Methodist Church in Singapore.

Christ Methodist Church
597 East Coast Road
Singapore 429082
Tel: 6345 3934,
Fax: 64470035
www.cmc.org.sg



A Word from the Editor

At last we return home!

We've spent the past three and a half years watching a small plot of land across the road morph from a little red brick church to a pile of rubble, and then become a giant hole, which was soon filled with steel and concrete. We prayed and we prayed, and Father God showed us His tremendous love and grace through the rebuilding processes and through your generosity. Today, CMC @ 597 stands four stories tall with a sunny roof and a rockin' basement.

What awaits us as we return home? Comfy chairs. Clean carpets. Beautiful greens. More toilets!!! (Yaaaay!) Skylights. Lifts and ramps. Panoramic views. That exotic "new building" aroma. An incomparable evening light-up. Also, unfamiliar technology. Different parking and transport routines. Possible changes in service timing to help ease the squeeze. A bit of confusion. Strangers wandering in to have a looksee. Sister churches popping over for meetings and conferences. Rebuilding bills to pay.

The "moving house" season is always emotional, memorable and uncomfortable for us. Jessica Nye's beautiful and brave personal testimony on page 24 parallels in some ways the journey we've all just gone through. Change makes us anxious. Change makes us wonder.

Change makes us depend on God.

It's worth remembering that when we started our rebuilding project we were only expecting to build three floors because the plot-ratio given to organizations like ours in the district did not allow us to build any higher. But with hopes for a change in the distant future and faith in God, we decided to build a base structure that could support a 4-storey building one day. That day came sooner than we expected. In the middle of church camp 2012, our rebuilding committee got a phone call bearing news that the government regulations had been adjusted to a higher plot ratio for our building type.

Two years later, here we are. God gave us more space than we thought we could have. It may feel a little tighter in there than Ye Lovely Olde Grand Dame, St Pats, but give thanks and praise to God because we will be worshipping inside of our very own concrete miracle.

Elena Gudgeon
Managing Editor, WITNESS

CMC @ St Pats
December 2010 – June 2014
We came. We were blessed.
We return to bless.



Passionate for God, Loving the Community

by Pastor David Ho

Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. "It is written," he said to them, 'my house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it 'a den of robbers.'" The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them. But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple courts, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they were indignant.

Matthew 21: 12-15

We have moved back into 597 East Coast Road! Many have given generously and sacrificially and now eagerly anticipate worshiping in the beautiful church building. But we must remember, the building is NOT the church, we the people are. The building is there to assist the church in fulfilling its purpose. What is that purpose?

The owner of a building or space is the one that determines that purpose, and we must recognize that it is not us but God who is the owner. It's clear enough from the fact that He calls the believers place of worship "My house". So, regardless of how much one may have contributed to the church rebuilding fund, no person can claim greater ownership of the building over another because we are all fellow stewards of God's house. After all, the amount we may have contributed to the rebuilding fund comes from the financial resources that He has given to us, of which we again are not owners but only stewards. You can expect serious problems if individuals or groups in the church start claiming "territorial rights" to certain spaces. Remember, all the work or money we have put into a building program does not earn us the right to claim and control any area of the building – all of it belongs to God and must be used for His glory.

Having understood that God is the owner, we must then work towards allowing the building to serve its owner's purposes. Jesus cautioned, "My house will be called a house of prayer, do not make it into a den of robbers." Now we don't imagine ourselves to be exactly like the people who turned the temple grounds into a marketplace in Jesus' time, buying and selling for their own selfish profit. But in my opinion we will not be too far off if we start using the church building grounds for our personal consumption and enjoyment. We would be robbing God of His ownership if we pursued our selfish agendas and not His.

What does God want in His house? For a start, He wants prayer among His people. As we read in Hebrews 4:16, this is the kind of prayer that brings the needs of the church, the community and the world to His altar of grace. Sincere prayer evidences our total dependence on God and our faith in His Word.

The church is also a platform for proclamation of the glory of God. Proclamation of the glory of God is expressed in two ways that are not mutually exclusive – in our congregational worship and also in our efforts to reach out to those outside the church. Psalm 46:10 reminds us "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth".

Finally, the church should be a place of helps. People with needs, both material and unseen, should feel welcome to spend time here and find the kind of help they need. "The blind and the lame" were society's outcasts in Jesus' day and would not ordinarily have been allowed by the religious authorities to hang around the temple or worship there. But they were never outcasts in the compassionate eyes of Jesus, who also declared in Luke 5: 31-32 "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

If the church is to rightly represent our Lord Jesus to the world, then our top priority is to do what He came to do. If we acknowledge that Jesus is Lord, then obedience to His Great Commission is mandatory. This is our call: to be "Passionate for God, Loving the Community"

WORSHIP, CONNECT, GROW, SERVE and REACHOUT

I'm not sure how many of you remember, but many years ago CMC had a slogan called "To Be God's People" and we even adopted a hymn of the same title as our theme song.

In 2005, we introduced a new term "INDI", which was short for "Intentional Discipleship", because we recognised that unless we began to intentionally act on what we needed to do as disciples, we tend to not put to practice what God has commanded us to do. This new direction for our church was based primarily on Jesus' commandments in Luke 12: 30-31,

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these."

as well as Jesus commission in Matthew 28:19-20,

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."

To help the congregation understand how to 'do' INDI as a church, we adopted and adapted the Purpose-Driven model inspired by

Pastor Rick Warren and Saddleback Church in California, and ultimately presented five aspects of Christian living that would help everyone be more conscious about personal discipleship. These are (as I'm sure you know by now),

WORSHIP, CONNECT, GROW, SERVE and REACHOUT

As our church grew in size, we sought to organise our many activities and ministries into five departments which corresponded with these five aspects of Christian living. But over the years we have noticed that these five aspects are not easily applied or remembered by everybody in all parts of the church. They tend to make our activities process-driven rather than goal driven, and we've also noticed that if anyone asked a church member what CMC was primarily about or where we were heading, they didn't have the easiest time trying to explain The 5 Aspects of Intentional Discipleship.

So as 2013 ended, our pastors and church leaders talked through with how to make it easier for everyone to understand and describe what CMC is about, and how to make our God-given vision of Intentional Discipleship generally easier to recall and

PASSIONATE FOR GOD, LOVING THE COMMUNITY

practice. After wrestling with several phrasing options they manage to shrink the 5 concepts down to a 2-part tagline:

PASSIONATE FOR GOD, LOVING THE COMMUNITY

These words express clearly the 2 foundation pillars of our church mission and goals. We chose "passionate" over the simpler word "love" because we felt it communicated the ideas of deeper commitment and drive – we want to be Christians who not just say we love God but who also put time and energy into building the house of God and pursuing the things that matter to Him.

We chose "loving" instead of "love" to capture the fact that "to love" is not just a one-time occurrence or something short term, but a continuous action and outpouring of compassion, kindness and assistance (whether financial, physical, emotional or spiritual) to others.

The word "community" doesn't refer to just Christians, our church or even our neighbourhood, but anyone and everyone that you and I have the privilege of walking with in life.

You may have noticed that our key churchwide activities in 2014 have also been aligned with this re-worded vision, with the first half of the year focusing primarily on teaching and encouraging us all to spend more time building our personal relationship with God, and the second half of the year focused on getting to know our community and their needs.

Let's all join hands to make this church vision a reality, and not just words on a page. If you feel prompted this year to become more active in either pursuing a deeper relationship with God or serving the needs of others, let a church leader know, and we'll walk through the options with you.



Earl serves as our church lay leader and one of our chief people-connectors. He is otherwise known as "Ban Hock", "that worship leader with the deep voice", "kopiyo kao", or, as ah cek knows him, "Orl".

WHO DO PEOPLE SAY WE ARE?

by Earl Tan



OUR NEW HOME

In our Sanctuary, there are two Family Rooms for parents with infants and young children, to cater for a meaningful worship service experience for everyone.

Main: The sanctuary as seen from Level 2
Left: Beautiful landscaping outside one of the small group meeting rooms

God has blessed us with a new home and it is one we want to share with everyone and anyone who will come. So start inviting your friends and family to come by, have a poke around, enjoy the worship service and fellowship with us!



A precious piece of our old church has a new home @597 ECR. The cross reminds us to share the good news of God's great love.

The old rugged (restored) cross



An exciting Level 5 awaits us at our new home. Next to the Chapel and the Resource Centre is an additional room we call the "Upper Room" - a nice reminder to make time for God daily.

Top: Main Staircase
Left: The Library

Our green planters are watered by an auto-irrigation system. There are three planters on Level 4.



Clockwise: Our "green wall" getting started; The back exterior; One of the meeting rooms on the fourth floor; Note the stylish lighting!

You'll be relieved to know that there are lots of toilets in our new home! Every Ladies toilet has a urinal for little boys, and the Level 4 Ladies toilet has additional child-friendly facilities.

Christmas 2013 Baptism & Membership

Baptism

Infants & Children

Master Conrad Ephraim Wee,
Miss Corliss Naomi Wee,
Children of Mr & Mrs Franck Wee
Miss Channelle Chun Zhi Yu
Daughter of Mr & Mrs Chun Ling Yong
Master Tay En Ci Reuben
Son of Mr & Mrs Tay Kaifang Remus
Master Yap Jun Kai Zachary
Son of Mr & Mrs Jonathan Yap
Jiunn Liang

Adults

Mr Cheok Jee Young Stanley
Mdm Chiam Kheng Ling
Ms Christina Koh Mui Koong
Ms Christina Tan
Ms Irene Goh
Mr Jonathan Yap Jiunn Liang
Mr Lim Ang Peng
Dr Low Shiong Wen
Ms Ong Lee Yeng
Mdm Por Hwee Lan
Dr Raymond Tham Meng Choong
Mr Seow Zhi Wei Daniel*
Mr Sim Kee Soon
Mdm Soo Mun Foong
Dr Tan Kuan Yang
Ms Zhaoting Low

*Reaffirmation of Baptism

Reception into Membership

Mdm Chiam Kheng Ling
Ms Christina Koh Mui Koong
Ms Christina Tan
Mdm Connie Fong Mee Hiong
Mr Jonathan Yap Jiunn Liang
Ms Kwan Hui Xian
Mr Lim Ang Peng
Dr Ong Aihui Clara
Ms Ong Lee Yeng
Dr Raymond Tham Meng Choong
Mr Seow Zhi Wei Daniel
Mr Sim Kee Soon
Mdm Soo Mun Foong
Dr Tan Kuan Yang
Ms Teo Mae Yan
Mr Wang Hanhui Kevin
Ms Zhaoting Low

Transfer of Membership from another church

Mdm Gan Hui Yi Ashley
Transferred from Aldersgate
Methodist Church

Mdm Lim Lan Yin
Transferred from Singapore
Life Church

Mr Lu Jilun
Transferred from Faith
Bible-Presbyterian Church

Mr Ng Buck Chew
Transferred from Singapore
Life Church

Mr Samuel Chan Wei Mun
Transferred from Life
Bible-Presbyterian Church

Mdm Tan Gek Lan Rosie
Transferred from Trinity
Methodist Church

Ms Wong Keqi Gladys
Transferred from Katong
Presbyterian Church

Easter 2014 Baptism & Membership

Baptism

Adults

Ms Liew Hui Shyuan
Mr Lu Chung Yuan
Mr Alex Quek Yu Xian
Ms Wan Geok Chiew

Reception into Membership

Mr Goh Teck Wee Vincent
Ms Koh Mui Hoon Sharon
Ms Helen Lim
Dr Low Shiong Wen
Mr Lu Chung Yuan
Ms Por Hwee Lan
Ms Teo Ee Hoon Shirlene

Transfer of Membership from another church

Ms Giam Poh Choo Nancy
Transferred from Grace
Methodist Church

Mr Ho Yeow Thim Vincent
Transferred from Grace
Methodist Church

If you would like to be Baptised or received into Membership at CMC you will need to:

- Fill out a form
- Attend Baptism and/or Membership Classes (over 2-3 Saturday afternoons)
- Submit a written testimony about your faith journey
- Be interviewed by a member of our staff
- Be present at the Baptism and/or Membership ceremonies

Our next round of classes will be held in late November or Early December.

If you would like to consider being baptised or officially received into membership at CMC, please call our church office at 6345 3934 for details or pick up a form at our Information Counter closer to that time of year.

Saving

GRACE

by Alex Quek

One night in June 2013, I had a terrible nightmare that I'd committed a serious criminal offence and policemen came to my house to arrest me and throw me in jail.

At that point I woke up and realized with relief that it was just a dream. That same morning, my mum brought to my room a letter from our postbox, addressed to me. At first I thought it was a letter from the army because the envelope was marked MINDEF, but when I opened it I saw that it was an official letter from the Singapore Police Force.

I was already a little jittery when opening it because of the nightmare I had just had, and after I read it I completely broke down. It was a letter instructing me to report at the police headquarters in Cantonment Road to answer enquires about a criminal offence that I had committed. My mind went blank and I didn't know what to do next, apart from tell my parents. Their reaction, as you might expect, was one of worry, disappointment and sadness. I felt utterly broken and useless as when I realized how hurt my parents were, especially my dad, who cried as he scolded me about always not listening to him. I locked myself in my room and cried to myself for many days.

My brother came to me one day, handed me a Bible and asked me to read it. After reading some of it, I accepted his invitation to follow him to church on Sunday, and I visited CMC

twice. At that point I had little knowledge about God, but I remembered the dream I had just the day before the bad news and I began to believe that it was God who had been preparing me for what was ahead. I accepted that the offence I had committed had to be punished because I had been committing the same sin over and over again and He had forgiven me and let me get away with it all those times. But I never did change. So now He was letting me reap what I had sown – a possible jail sentence for myself, pain and frustration for my parents, my relatives and close friends.

Convicted of my sinfulness, I decided that I truly needed a savior. I accepted Jesus and started to follow Him with all my heart, reading the bible that my brother had given me every single day, attending church every Sunday, and praying every night. In my prayers I asked for forgiveness for the sin I had committed and told God I wanted to change.

My dad hired a lawyer to fight my case and the lawyer spent a lot of time drilling me with questions that I might be asked on the day of my official investigation. I wasn't able to handle the pressure and kept stumbling in my replies, which really concerned him. The night before the day of my investigation, I cried out to the Lord in desperate prayer, asking for His mercy and grace to be shown to me. I asked Him to help me not be nervous and not to stumble in my replies.

The following day I was granted a miracle. During my interview I didn't feel nervous at all. I spoke clearly and was able to explain in detail what they wanted to know. Although I was very emotional and even cried once in front of the Investigation



Officer, she didn't respond negatively to it. She just handed me a piece of tissue paper and gave me some personal advice about how I should live my life from now on. She asked many questions to make sure I understood that what I had done was a serious offence, and after hearing me out she told me that she would give me a break by not locking me up for further surveillance and investigation before an appropriate sentence was passed. Apparently 97% of teenagers who plead guilty to the same crime are locked up immediately, charged in court within a few days, and usually have to serve time in jail.



I was so relieved and happy to hear that, and I prayed to God in my heart immediately thanking Him for His mercy and forgiveness. Over the next few weeks I continued to go to church on Sunday and pray every night before sleep, sometimes just to tell Him how my day had gone. After one month, the same Investigative Officer called me and told me that the Chief Police Officer had decided not to charge me and had given me an official warning instead. I was asked to go to the Cantonment police station to sign some documents. After hanging up the phone I was in shock for awhile because I couldn't believe how much undeserved grace I had just been given. Then I knelt down and thanked God for saving me. I committed my life to following Him and becoming His obedient son.

Today I realize how much I have changed since that day. The old me was a bully and what you'd called an "ah beng". I had a really bad temper and would pick physical fights with others. My friends from those days are all surprised that I've become a Christian and many are happy to see how I've changed. The new me is far less temperamental and I don't bully others

anymore. I even find myself apologizing for the smallest mistakes or accidents that I make, like when I bump into people in public. (In the past I would just give them "the death stare" haha). I find myself wanting to help the elderly, by giving up my seat for them or helping them off the bus.

I've also managed to quit smoking recently with the help of my Almighty God. He did it in a rather unusual way. I came down with a pretty bad flu last month, and suffered a fever that went up and down, coughing, nausea, and a lot more. I saw a doctor twice and took the prescribed medication but still couldn't recover. In my frustration I prayed and asked God "Why did you let this happen to me?", and then I heard a small voice say in my mind: "Well... didn't you ask me to help you quit smoking?" Then I realized that I hadn't smoked for a week because of the flu – it was possible to do it! Right away I took all the cigarettes that were in my room and dumped them into a bin, and prayed to tell Him that I would commit to quit smoking. The next day when I woke up I was no longer sick. I felt great in fact! My appetite returned, and everything felt back to normal!

Our God is amazing. If He can save someone like me, He can save anyone. Please share this story with anyone you know who has a son or brother like me, or who is struggling with the same issues. God is waiting to give them healing, wholeness, forgiveness, and a bright future, if they will just believe and pray.



I'm 23 this year and I just want to testify that our God is truly amazing. The photos in this article are of my and my family on my day of Baptism.

The Hope of my Life

by Evelyn De La Cruz

My name is Evelyn and I grew up in Pala-o, Iligan City, on the island of Mindanao in the Philippines. I've been working in Singapore as a caregiver to an elderly member of CMC for the past eight and a half years. I would like to share the story of my life to encourage other foreigners who live and work in Singapore, especially those who come from a difficult family background like mine.

My mother left us when my siblings and I were very young. I was 5 years old, my sister was 3, and my baby brother was only 1. My father couldn't handle us on his own, so he left us with our grandparents. As the oldest child I had no choice but to help with the household chores and look after my siblings as well as my great grandmother, while trying to complete my schoolwork, often on an empty tummy because we had very little money.

In Primary 5, my class had a science teacher who was a Baptist, and she offered us bible lessons every afternoon. That was the year I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Saviour, and started to read the bible every day and become active in a Protestant Christian church. However, my strict grandmother wasn't happy about this and asked



Evelyn with Mdm Choa Choo Neo in Singapore

me to stop attending church. I obeyed her and my faith in God grew weaker as I faced the unending chores and her bad temper every day. I couldn't understand why my life was still so difficult, even as a Christian, and with no church community around to support and encourage me, I started to lose my passion for Jesus. I became a rebellious teenager.

Then one night, just before my graduation, I felt so hopeless about my situation that I cried out to God for mercy and help, asking forgiveness for having doubted His goodness for a long time. I was reminded of something my science teacher had told me – that once you have received Jesus, He will never let you go and you will never be alone. So I gave thanks to Him for staying with me through the hard years, which had shaped me to be a strong person.

In 1994, I managed to pass a scholarship exam that gave me a place in a college for just 10 dollars a year, and I was so amazed at this gift from God because it had been a difficult exam that not all my classmates were able to pass. Unfortunately, my grandmother wasn't supportive of this decision and commanded me to get a job, which once again left me feeling angry and depressed and stuck in life. I did what she asked and worked hard over the next few years, but my soul was so crushed that I stopped talking to God, and my life felt meaningless and empty.

One night, many years later, I came back to Him crying and surrendered all the burdens that I had been carrying since childhood. I admitted that I just wasn't able to find peace on my own, because of all the hurt and frustration I had experienced growing up in my country. I asked him to show me the true meaning of my existence and to lead me to a place of work where I would have the time and opportunity to study His word and just be in His presence daily, to experience inner healing and peace.

God graciously answered my prayer by giving me the opportunity to work in Singapore, in the home of a peace-loving and Godly Christian family, taking care of an elderly lady, Mdm Choa Choo Neo, who loves the Lord also. I already had experience taking care of my great grandmother, so I was prepared to handle her needs. I have been taking care of her since October 2005 and she is now 98 years old. I miss my family and friends back home, but I definitely feel now that there is more purpose in my life and that the work I'm doing glorifies God.

Once a month, a pastor and several church members from CMC will come to the house to serve Holy Communion to Mdm Choa because she is now home-bound. When they come, they

also encourage me in the faith with their warm smiles, uplifting words, songs of praise and prayers – these things give me assurance that I am loved by God, and help me to appreciate my life more as I carry on in my daily duties. I would like to thank them for their kindness and encourage them to keep up the good work of winning souls and loving others.

As Christians we are not guaranteed an easy life – there will always be ups and downs. But when you have truly met Jesus and invited Him to be your Lord and Saviour, you will never have anything to fear, even when your faith fails and life gets really hard. Somehow, He will always provide a way.



Evelyn with her grandmother in the Philippines



Evelyn with her grandfather in the Philippines

If you are living and working as a domestic helper in Singapore, like me, and you are struggling to find inner peace and healing, you can email me at eve.delacruz925@facebook.com to ask about the hope Jesus gives.



Evelyn pictured here with her father

Evelyn loves listening to music and learning to play the piano.



Experiencing Christian Kinship @ Trackers 2014

by Isabel Chew

Hi, I'd like to share my experiences at the Trackers programme with you. Trackers is an annual 3-month discipleship program designed by Truthmin especially for youths who have just graduated a stage of education and are waiting for national service enlistment or the next stage of school. There were 39 of us in this year's program, which started in January and ended in March.

We were led to deepen our relationship with God in three phases because the programme is based loosely on the book "Streams of Living Water" by Richard Foster. There was a learning or "Sitting" phase, where we were encouraged to be still and sit at the feet of Jesus through daily devotions and six weeks of lectures. This was followed by a missions or "Serving" phase, where we were challenged to serve Jesus and others through an overseas mission trip and local internship. And through the entire process we were challenged to give ourselves over entirely to God's will, through the discipline of "Surrendering".

One aspect of Trackers that I liked a lot was the programs' emphasis on team bonding. Being a reserved person generally, I never knew that it was possible to form such strong bonds in such a short period of time with people who started out as complete strangers. These strangers soon became like a second family to me, and this really blessed my journey through the three months.

Quite early on in the programme we were sorted into groups based on the different countries each of us selected to visit on a mission trip, and we stayed in these groups throughout the lecture and mission/internship phases of the programme. My team, which consisted of persons who elected to go to the Philippines, named themselves 'Tumatawa', which means 'laughter' in Tagalog. We spent a lot of time together and found that our personalities clicked well.

During the lecture phase, which – I'll be honest with you – initially had many of us worried that we'd be falling asleep often because of the long lectures, we found that we enjoyed discussing what was being taught, and many moments of stifled laughter occurred during the lectures, which I'm grateful we didn't get scolded for or anything because it really helped us bond as new team mates! Each of us contributed snacks to the group from time to time, which sustained the rest of us.

At the time I imagined that this would be the extent to which our group would bond – that we would only have a relationship similar to that of classmates. It was good enough for



me, but I was surprised to later learn that I had been wrong. The missions phase brought us so much closer! A particular memory that will probably stay with me forever is the fact that my team, before departing for our mission trip, huddled together in a room and had a real heart-to-heart sharing. It was the most emotionally intimate experience that I've ever had with a group of people. Whatever secrets or burdens each person shared were later prayed for by the rest of the team, honestly and earnestly. Of course I cannot describe what went on in detail, because it was very intensely personal for all of us. After that day, it truly felt like our team was bonded with super glue. I left that room feeling so blessed to be a part of Trackers.

During our mission trip to the Philippines, many of us fell sick and instead of taking it badly or freaking out, everyone strove to help each other. The boys were so kind, filling up the water bottles for the girls and doing the cleaning duties when some of us looked worn

out from our illness. Some of the boys fell sick from the polluted air, and suffered persistent coughing and runny noses, but they still helped voluntarily without complaints. A girl called Angelyn was dubbed our 'Health Department' because she had been super prepared and brought with her all sorts of herbal drinks and medicines which ultimately helped to 'save' the sick members of the team. She went around bugging the unwell team members to take their medicine and vitamin C every day. It was really amazing to see everyone come together and keep positive, and many members of Team Tumatawa returned to Singapore inspired by the examples of responsibility, selflessness and true care and concern that they witnessed there.

My life has been changed by Trackers and I can see myself continuing to meet up with my team mates for years. God has shown me the true meaning of Christian kinship, and what it means to belong to his "family". I give thanks to Him and hope that you too will have many such experiences this year.



"That's plain enough, isn't it? You're no longer wandering exiles. This kingdom of faith is now your home country. You're no longer strangers or outsiders. You belong here, with as much right to the name Christian as anyone. God is building a home. He's using us all—irrespective of how we got here—in what he is building. He used the apostles and prophets for the foundation. Now he's using you, fitting you in brick by brick, stone by stone, with Christ Jesus as the cornerstone that holds all the parts together. We see it taking shape day after day—a holy temple built by God, all of us built into it, a temple in which God is quite at home."

Ephesians 2:19-22 (The Message)



Isabel is 17 this year and attends daMessiah care group. She is a gifted artist and also the only daughter of Irene and Geoffrey Chew. Her brother Isaac and her both worship at Ignite Youth Ministry.



Anxiety's Antidote: *Prayer*

by Jessica Nye

Hi, my name is Jessica and I moved here from Texas in June 2013 after my husband received a 2-year work assignment to Singapore. Back home in Texas we lived very close to my mom, dad, sister and brother, who were all within a half hour drive radius from our home. We are all very close and used to get together most weekends, usually for church on Sundays.



When we learned of my husband's work appointment to Singapore, we were beyond excited, but also a little nervous for what our new life in Singapore would be like. Ever since my university days, I have had issues with anxiety and I was afraid that this would ruin the whole experience of migrating for me. The more I thought about how big this life change was going to be, fear started to overwhelm me and instead of packing all of my things up in excitement, I found myself on the floor of my closet crying my eyes out. My main worry was that I wouldn't be able to cope living so far away from the family that I relied on to keep me grounded. I know it all probably sounds a bit silly, but I wasn't fearful that I would miss my family. Rather, I was worried that without the comforts of home to keep me feeling safe I would be subject to even more anxiety and that nobody would be around to help me when it got really bad.

Despite a near panic attack before getting on our flight, we arrived in Singapore in one piece and all went well for the first few months, with both Adam and I settling into our new jobs and routines. I don't know exactly what triggered my first anxiety attack in this country – whether it was too much time alone working from home, or not meeting friends right away, or feeling like I didn't fit in here – but such thoughts started to overwhelm me a few months after arriving. I began to wake up every day feeling anxious, over-thinking things, wondering if something was wrong with me. I worried that I was going insane,

because all kinds of crazy thoughts that didn't really make any sense were going through my mind almost all the time. I internalized all of this and tried to make sense of it on my own, but after months of living like this, I started to lose my sense of self and who I really was.

That was the scariest time for me. I started to feel like I was just going through the motions of life, but never having the same appreciation and love for things that I used to back home. I wondered if I was in depression. My husband and I would travel to different parts of Southeast Asia, and instead of just being able to live in the moment and soak up the amazing experiences we were having, I struggled with many haunting worries that prevented me from enjoying my life. Some nights I would pray and ask God to wipe my anxiety away and help me get out of my own head so that I could live the life He wanted for me, but I would still wake up the next day and be subject to the same thing all over again – a life of fear.

I really didn't know if I would ever get back to "normal" or feel like myself again. But then one day something changed. I started reading a book called Messages of Hope that my mom had recommended which talks about life after death. It was a comforting book that opened my eyes to the fact that God is in all things if we just take time to appreciate them. Slowly, I started to take notice of little things again and felt more and more like myself each day. About a month later, after finishing the book, I decided to visit a church. I had not done so since we moved, which by this point had been nearly 7 months. I visited a 10:30am service at CMC a few weeks before Christmas last year and was so blessed by the worship service that I was brought to tears. I felt as though God was speaking to me and pointing me in the direction of returning to Christian discipleship.

As we were about to head back to the States for the holidays I decided that it would be wise to get a medical checkup before we left. So a few days after that first church experience at CMC, I visited a doctor and was shocked to find out that I was 1 month pregnant! Mentally tracing backwards through my experiences in the

month prior, I realized that I had actually started to experience relief from my feelings of anxiety right about the time I must have become pregnant.

It's hard to describe what an amazing experience this has been for me, and maybe the spiritual significance isn't that apparent for some of you reading this, but the way I see it is that at a time when I was at my absolute worst – my lowest of lows, and totally consumed by my own thoughts and feeling like there was no one to turn to who would understand – God himself stepped in and lifted all of the unnecessary negative thoughts off of me, and at the same time gave me the greatest gift I ever could have imagined. He put meaning back in my life without me even realizing at the time what He had done. I am now nearly 7 months along and I know this is the real reason why I'm here – to care for someone else. By putting her in my life, He has helped me to see the bigger picture and allowed me to regain focus on what's important. With that, my anxiety has completely gone away. I feel a greater sense of self and happiness than I've ever had before, and my faith in God has grown after realizing what He's done for me.

I remember a more recent sermon at CMC which highlighted how God is with us even in our darkest times, and looking back now at what I went through and how He brought me out of it, I'm able to see that He truly was with me the entire time. We are naming our daughter "Sadie Grace", for a few reasons, but one of them is because I believe she is here because of God's saving grace to change our lives in ways we cannot imagine. I am so thankful to God for all the blessings he has given me and I feel so fortunate to have walked into this church when I did.



Jessica and Adam are expecting the arrival of their first baby in mid-August this year. Her name, Sadie Grace, is a combination of family names from each side, and though they didn't realize it at the time they were choosing her name, her initials are also the abbreviation for Singapore. :)





Keeping it REAL

by Sherene Kang

Like his brothers Ray and Ian, Pastor Shaun Chong is an avid foodie who brews his own coffee, appreciates the freshest produce cooked well, and will gladly discuss culinary techniques with you.

As our interview begins over plates of sushi, he tells me that this is one of his first few visits to Parkway Parade after its renovation. My jaw drops. Perhaps I was being a little presumptuous to think that CMC-goers frequent the mall at least six times a week.

The first time I got to know Shaun was when I interviewed him in 2010 for another Witness article. Back then, he was still an

impressionable student at Trinity Theological College (TTC). In the lapse of four years, Shaun graduated from TTC, got hitched to his very awesome wife, Rulin Yeo, changed his title from 'Mr' to 'Reverend', and even made a cameo appearance in a feature on the front page of The Strait's Times' Life! section.

Even though he only turns 29 this year, Shaun seems like he has accomplished more than others his age. Yet, his candid and down-to-earth nature is the quintessence of his being. He admitted that it's no bed of roses trying to spiritually nurture a church, and so he welcomes reminders that God will always provide and lead the way. He received many such reminders when facing challenges during his first two years of pastoral ministry at Christalite Methodist Chapel, after graduating from TTC.

Having grown up at CMC, the unique internal lingo, sense of humor, and makan culture had become second-nature to him. And even though Christalite Methodist Chapel originally began as a 'Preaching Point' planted by CMC, its location and proximity to Geylang Methodist School have resulted in a church culture very different to ours, which Shaun had to discover and assimilate into. He recalls that he delivered his first sermon there with great trepidation, grappling with so many questions in his mind – Had he chosen the right topic? Would the congregation get his jokes? What sort of anecdotes would they relate to? Would they like his delivery? And then he heard God whisper to him: "Just who are you trying to please anyway?"

After two and half years serving there, the man who was once self-conscious about speaking in public now preaches with the authority of Jesus Christ, and with the new posting to his home church at the start of this year, Shaun displays growing confidence and spiritual conviction as a pastor – you may have noticed that his sermon messages rarely skirt the truth. When asked whether he notices any difference in CMC after being away for a while, he says he senses a "new vibrancy" in the congregation. He is deeply encouraged by the new faces who have become a part of the family over the past two years, and also by those who have stepped up to become active leaders in the church. In the year ahead he hopes to see more CMCers discovering the joy of having an intimate bond with God, because its only then we can love others.

In addition to Sunday duties, Shaun also oversees the ministries that fall under the 'Grow' and 'Serve' areas of CMC. These are Care Groups, Ignite Youth, Christkidz, and Discipleship & Nurture, which includes the organizing of INDI conferences and leadership training workshops. That's a lot on the plate of this young pastor, so do support and bless him any way you can think of, and pray for him always!



While most people pay to eat, Sherene gets paid to dine and imbibe. Her bread and butter lies in the propaganda of a French restaurant and east-side bistro. On a daily basis, she grapples with French terms like 'sous vide' and 'bouillabaisse' and her taste buds are often put to the test of differentiating between a full and medium-bodied wine.

CONFESSIONS of a Reverend

How has life as a married man been?

Rulin has been a great partner to share my walk with God with. She has always been very supportive of my ministry through prayer and participation. We are both really looking forward to moving into our new four-room flat at Buangkok. It's our dream to build this space as an extension of hospitality to people around us.

Tell us more about the last book you read.

It's called 'Sifted' by Wayne Cordeiro. The book offers insight to how leaders can grow through hardships and difficulties when planting and leading churches. It's very applicable to me, having been in ministry for a couple of years now and looking for avenues to grow.

What is your pet peeve?

It really irks me when the toilet roll is not replenished! (It really doesn't help a man who has a super sensitive tummy!)

How do you keep spiritually radiant?

I create a routine for my quiet time with God to ensure focus and consistency. For example, I use the Scripture-Observation-Application-Prayer (or 'SOAP') method to facilitate my devotional reading of the Word. I also often pray through writing – like writing letters to God. It helps to keep me focused.

What do you think you will be doing now if you hadn't become a pastor?

When I was young I dreamt of being a policeman, teacher, social worker and/or chef. Looking back it seems these ambitions were centered on helping people or showing hospitality to others, so in some sense, being a pastor isn't too far off from this theme!



Shaun and Rulin, with Rulin's niece Kaeley

Bintan, Indonesia



Senggarang, CMC weekend outreach trips

The words "Bintan, Indonesia" conjure up images of idyllic seaside resorts and azure waters for many Singaporeans. But there is a lot more to the island than just the tourist areas you may have heard about or stayed in. For example, it has a local population of about 350,000, with citizens belonging mostly to the Malay, Bugis, Chinese, and the Orang Laut ethnicity, many of whom work in the tourism and fishing industries.



A different kind of Weekend in Bintan

by Joy Sim



Joy is married to a wonderful, handsome guy called Alan and they have two sons, Daniel and Nicholas. She wants to thank God for being "super kind and providing the best for me and my family". :)

CMC has been running weekend outreach trips to the Senggarang village in Bintan once every month, in addition to our longer missions to Cambodia and India.

These weekend missions are short, low-cost, 2-day-1-night trips that are ideal for those who have never tried missions before, who are unable to take a week off commitments in Singapore for longer missions, or who feel led to regularly minister to the underprivileged in a neighboring

country. The format and lighter workload of these trips also makes them suitable for families who want to try a missions experience together.

They have proven very popular over the past year and the maximum number of participants is often hit 2 or 3 months ahead of the trip, so if you are interested to go, please plan ahead. Upcoming trip dates are published on our website events page www.cmc.org.sg/events.htm, or you can call the church during office hours at 63453934 for more information.

The following is an account of Joy Sim's first mission trip to Bintan.

When Pastor Hoi Kok Fu asked me to consider joining the CMC mission team that would be going to Bintan from 18-19 January 2014, I readily agreed as the mission would involve ministry to kids, and I have always loved children.

We met at Tanah Merah Ferry Terminal at 8am on Saturday morning. There were many familiar faces among the 15 people who had signed up for this trip, and I could sense that it was going to be a fruitful mission. But about 30 minutes into the 2-hour ferry ride I started to feel queasy, so I prayed: "God, you know that this daughter of yours does not have a very warm and welcoming facial expression when she is sick, so please protect me from seasickness so that I can be a blessing to others." After that I felt ok for the rest of the journey – praise God! It also helped to talk with fellow tripper Joshua Lim about his life and ambitions. After arriving, we walked to a nearby hotel to put down our overnight luggage, and then headed out for a simple lunch together nearby. The surroundings reminded me very much of Thailand's upcountry. After lunch we took small boat to cross over to the Methodist Center, and that was when the fun really began for me!

At the Methodist Center we met about 90 children and 20 parents. The kids there don't really speak much English but we broke the ice by just sitting with them and taking pictures of them. Senggarang was the first home for many Chinese immigrants a long time ago, who then spread throughout the other island of Kepri (Batam), so most of the locals we met were Indonesian Chinese children, many of whom speak Teo Chew, Hokkien, Mandarin, and of course the national language, Bahasa Indonesia. The local teachers, local missionary pastor, and Pastor Kok Fu (who is Indonesian) helped to interpret for those of us on the team who could only speak English.

We spent the rest of the afternoon teaching them worship songs, dramatizing bible stories and doing handicrafts with both the kids and the parents who were there. Looking at each child, I could see how excited they were to spend time with their friends, teachers, and us visitors, and when the kids sang "Blessed Be Your Name" I almost cried, because I could feel the presence and love of God radiating out from them, filling the room. I believe that in the future when they think back to that day, many will remember God being present at that moment too.

We finished our activities with at the Methodist Center around 5pm, crossed back over to our

hotel in little boats and had dinner together. Before retiring for the night, Pastor Kok Fu led us all in a short devotion about prayer, and reminded us to bring everything before God, whether big or small, because God loves us and never tires of listening to us.

The next morning, after breakfast, we crossed over to the village again in boats, but this time for a prayer walk and home visitations in two teams. My team visited four homes, and we prayed for the needs of those that we met, believing by faith that God heard our prayers and would take care of their material, emotional, and spiritual needs. We had a delicious lunch there (I think if the mission trip had been any longer, I would have put on some weight!) and then picked up our things from the hotel and boarded the ferry bound for Singapore around 2pm. We arrived back home after 5pm.

If I can summarize this trip in a single word, I would use the word "Love". I saw love demonstrated by the Indonesian pastor and teachers to the children they looked after; I saw love flowing out from our Singapore team to people from a different culture whom they had just met; and I also witnessed love within our mission team. If any married couple is falling out of love, spend some time with Bessie and James Goh and you will be inspired to fall in



James and Bessie Goh praying for lame and blind locals

love all over again. I witnessed love between father and son in Christopher and Gabriel Seow. And I experienced love from my mission team mates too, particularly Shevaun Sethi, who was just a little girl when I last went on a mission trip with her, 11 years ago. Today she is a beautiful young lady, inside and out. She showed love and concern to everyone in our group and I believe she will be a wonderfully caring doctor when she completes her studies in medicine.

If you are looking for love, the best way to find it is to give it. Consider going on a mission trip soon to experience this amazing phenomenon, inspired and instigated by Jesus Christ our Lord.

"Everybody can be great...because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love."
~ Martin Luther King Jr.



Journey from Tanjung Pinang to Senggarang



what happens at PALM COVE lounge?

by Evangeline Lim

Here's a quick look at some of the activities that have been happening at our student drop-in center "Palm Cove Lounge", in partnership with Ping Yi Secondary School. If you have any ideas for activities that you think you could conduct or which might interest the students there, do drop me an email at evangeline.lim@cmc.org.sg to discuss the possibilities.

Career Workshops

We were honoured to have entrepreneur Mr Chew Leong Hai from N.I. Creative Enterprise, conduct a career talk at Palm Cove Lounge in 2013. He began by showing the students an exciting video of his expedition to the Mount Everest Base Camp, and talked about pursuing one's passions in life. He also highlighted different fields of work and career possibilities and encouraged the students to participate in a Q&A session at the end. This career workshop proved so successful that we put together a few others, which included speakers Samuel Sim and Thangaveloo Suppiah from CMC, who shared insights on being a pilot and a lawyer respectively.

Free Food Days

We noticed that some students at Ping Yi Secondary School are not too well off and tend to skip lunch after school ends and just hang out at Palm Cove Lounge until it closes at 5pm. Then they go back for a home-cooked meal. So we started a special "free food day" on the same day as the career workshop. CMC volunteers are rostered to donate tidbits like muffins, curry puffs or biscuits fortnightly. This activity aims to satisfy the basic need (hunger) of some of the students and also tangibly demonstrate God's love for them. They are all told the food they enjoy on these days are prepared or purchased by church volunteers.

Arts & Crafts Workshops

Early this year we conducted beading and cross-stitch workshops with PYSS teacher Mdm Cindy Chiang, to help students cultivate a new skill and raise the girls-to-boys ration in the drop in center. Those who participated were taught the basics of cross stitching and making mobile phone

accessories from beads. Once, we organized a henna painting session inside Palm Cove Lounge with a henna artist. The students (mainly girls, but one boy too!) went off for the school holidays with pretty artwork on their hands.

Competitions

One of the most enjoyable activities that our students look forward to is the annual Table Soccer competition for all levels. In the Lower Secondary category, a number of Sec 1s who were new to the drop in center this year gallantly took up the challenge to pit their amateur skills against the Sec 2s. Prizes (trophies and vouchers) were presented to the winners during school assembly.

Official school events at PYSS

The school graciously invited Rev Hoi Kok Fu to be their Guest of Honour at their annual Open House and Carnival in October 2013. Rev Hoi, myself, as well as a few young adults from CMC were present to enjoy the carnival atmosphere and build bridges with the school management. Pastor David Ho, Robin Cheong and myself were also present at the school's 30th Anniversary Celebrations in April this year, where we were presented with a partnership award.



Thank you for praying for this important ministry and partnership with Ping Yi Secondary School, and also for your donations of furniture, games and much-needed electronic equipment earlier this year. I hope to work with more of you in the months ahead!



Evangeline is hired as CMC's outreach executive staff and has been managing the student drop-in center at Ping Yi Secondary School since May 2012. She attends Church of Singapore Bukit Timah and worships with us every first Sunday of the month. She married Philip Lee in January this year.



Thank You!

St Patrick's Secondary School

&

Brothers of the Christian Schools
(De La Salle Brothers of Singapore)

*For your wonderful hospitality
We will miss you.*

CMC OPEN HOUSE

30 AUGUST 2014, SATURDAY
10AM - 4PM
597 EAST COAST ROAD

AN OUTREACH OPPORTUNITY!
Invite your friends, family, neighbours and community

- Food • Games • Prizes • Dance Performances • Band Gigs
- Talks by celebrities & experts • Interest Groups Showcase

Together, let us share God's blessing of our new church home
and spread His love to the community around us.