

FEB 2015

# WITNESS



A publication of Christ Methodist Church

## EXPLORE

Our AV ministry  
Choral music in worship

## MEET

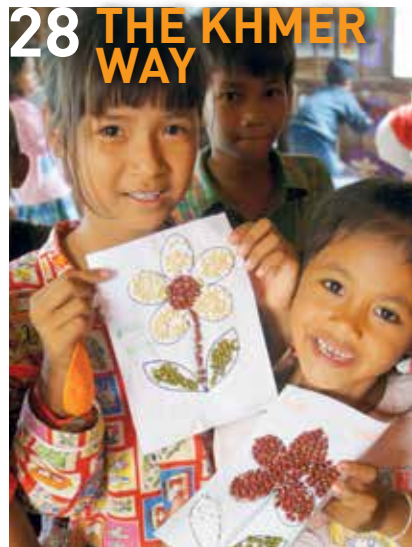
Rev Barnabas Chong  
Your 2015 LCEC

## HEAR

Our worship leaders  
Our domestic helpers

# EXPRESSIONS OF ADULATION

# In this ISSUE



Cover: Chua Lee-Ann, holding an M&M that represents a prayer item the children were asked to commit to God. Photo by Chris Seow.



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

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## A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

ELENA MAY GUDGEON

aware of someone that big, that wonderful, and that close.

negligible. They're just... there.

### WHO IS GOD? IS HE CREATOR? FATHER? FRIEND? JUDGE?

Our bible is bursting with imagery, poetry and stories that capture hundreds of years of mankind's best efforts to understand and outline God. As we read the gospels we think we're getting a good idea of what He looks like. We see ourselves in Jesus, a little.

But then we read Genesis and Revelation, and realize that He is not like us. He is ruler of the Cosmos; the originator of life, the taker of life. In Acts He is an invisible mission coordinator, advisor and empowering force. He comes upon His followers like "tongues of fire".

Who is God? It boggles the mind.

And worship is the only thing you can do when you become

But some of us don't feel He is that close. Other people talk about His "Presence", and we don't really have experience of it. Why do some people cry when they worship God, and we feel like we're just going through the motions?

I suppose our relationship with God is a little like our relationship with a loved one. First encounters are usually very special and memorable, and all our senses come alive for a while. Our natural response is to admire all their best qualities, prattle on endlessly about them to everyone we know, and crave their company when apart. Just saying their name stirs up volumes of emotion inside of us.

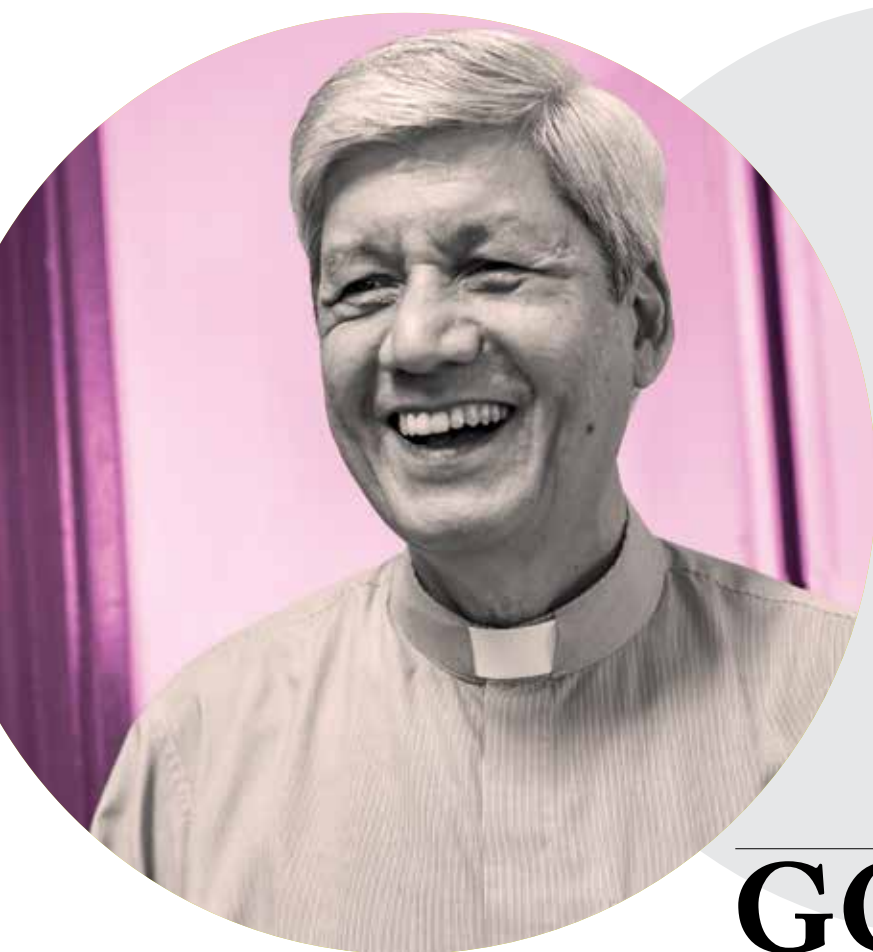
As time passes and the person becomes familiar, we start to take numerous things for granted, including perhaps, their faithful presence in our daily lives. Other things begin to capture our attention more – career, children, hobbies, entertainment, and other pursuits. Soon, the specialness of this person becomes almost

It's all very human. And like any human relationship, a relationship with God needs effort on our part to stay fresh and reach its fullest potential. It needs an occasional retreat away from all other distractions. It needs quality time spent, and gift offerings. It needs words of tenderness and affection, expressions of love and adoration. And like all relationships, nothing will grow if we harbour ingratitude and complaint against the other – *He doesn't talk to me so I don't want to talk to Him! He doesn't give me what I want, so He must not care!*

He does love you. Just look at the cross. Was that not enough?

Who is God? He is our beginning and our end. He conceived us. He will take us from this world. He is the most important person we will ever know. <sup>W</sup>

To submit feedback, story ideas or testimonies to this magazine, please email [elena.gudgeon@cmc.org.sg](mailto:elena.gudgeon@cmc.org.sg).



A WORD  
FROM YOUR  
PASTOR

# GOD AT THE CENTER

BY PASTOR EDMUND DE SOUZA

It has been said that humankind's chief end is to glorify God. God declared through the prophet Isaiah that we have been created and formed for God's glory (Isaiah 43:7). Jesus himself said "For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'" (Matthew 4:10). Peter puts it this way "you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of

him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" (1 Peter 2:9).

It is clear from Scriptures that God's desire is for the church to be a worshipping community. But what exactly does it mean to worship?

The word worship comes from the Anglo-Saxon word 'weorthscipe,' meaning 'one worthy of reverence and honour.' To worship then is to declare God's worth.

**"THEREFORE, I URGE YOU, BROTHERS, IN VIEW OF GOD'S MERCY, TO OFFER YOUR BODIES AS LIVING SACRIFICES, HOLY AND PLEASING TO GOD - THIS IS YOUR SPIRITUAL ACT OF WORSHIP"**

-Romans 12:1


As such, it is a recognition of who God is and responding appropriately, both in our private moments and when we gather as a corporate body.

Appropriate expressions of worship would include praise and thanksgiving as we declare God's greatness and mercy. It would include an attitude of submission to God who is LORD and confession when we stumble. It would also include a willingness to serve as a true recognition of God's greatness and mercy would cause us to have a humble and grateful spirit, leading to service to God and humankind.

In a nutshell, then, worship is God-centered. It is having a sense of devotion to God and expressing it in different ways. It is an inward awareness of God, leading to outward expressions of praise, thanksgiving, submission, confession and service.

One of the dangers we face in our modern, fast-paced, success and consumer oriented society is to be so caught-up with the desire to succeed, the need to ensure that our families do well and the desire for leisurely pursuits, that we worship 'life' at the expense of the worship of God. As such, we may take greater pains at washing

and preparing our cars for the weekend than preparing our hearts to worship God. We may strive to get to the golf course before tee off but stroll into church in the middle of the service.

The challenge and the struggle for each believer is to ensure that we stay focused on God and worship the Lord, no matter how important and desirable all else may be. 

**"... LET US CONTINUALLY OFFER TO GOD A SACRIFICE OF PRAISE - THE FRUIT OF LIPS THAT CONFESS HIS NAME. AND DO NOT FORGET TO DO GOOD AND TO SHARE WITH OTHERS, FOR WITH SUCH SACRIFICES GOD IS PLEASED"**

-Hebrews 13:15-16



# WHAT'S IN STORE THIS YEAR

BY DORIS LEE

Becoming "A Church Without Walls" was a movement that many of us at CMC contributed towards in one way or another in 2014. After relocating back to 597 East Coast Road in June and getting settled, we turned our focus outward in the month of August, making concerted efforts to bless the community through acts of kindness, and welcome them in through our Open House festivities.

We were so blessed by the faithfulness of God throughout the rebuilding project and the new found friendship with our community that the only appropriate response was to praise and thank Him, so we came together for a special "Worship Night" celebration in our new sanctuary on 18 Oct 2014. Together with our friends and families, we experienced God's manifest presence in our midst that evening, and were reminded of His heart for the lost through the teaching of Pastor Rupert Lim from Cornerstone Community Church.

Little did we know that this event, attended by a few hundred, would set in motion a vision for 2015 that God had been simmering on the stove for CMC for quite awhile. The leaders of the church are now

united in their conviction that The year 2015 will be one that is centered on the theme of Worship

**"He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."** ~ Micah 6:8

I believe that God is calling CMC to greater awareness and action in this area of our intentional discipleship; to recognise that worship isn't just the corporate singing segment before the sermon at church services. The kind of worship that God desires is a life of continually pursuing personal holiness, while giving of ourselves to love those in need (whether they are here in Singapore or in a foreign land.) It is hard, but we don't have to do it on our own strength. I believe He is going to bring about a spiritual awakening in many of us that will mobilise the church to make His name known. This is going to be an exciting year!


Earnest worship connects us to the heart of God, and being connected with a heart that

powerful is bound to change us. We naturally begin to look more and more like Jesus.

We **"ACT JUSTLY"** ...living with a deep conviction of what is right and what is wrong. Instead of staying in our comfort zone or turning a blind eye, we will do what we can to bring someone to the truth.

We **"LOVE MERCY"** ... showing compassion and love especially to those who are disadvantaged, discouraged, sick and unloved. We think about what Jesus would do to minister to these people.

We **"WALK HUMBLY"** ... showing humility in our attitude towards God, frequently acknowledging reliance on Him instead of boasting in our own accomplishments.

I would like to encourage you to commit yourself to be a part of this movement in 2015! Let's be a church that has a sincere and ever-deepening relationship with our God. 



DORIS is the chairperson of our Worship & Music Ministry at CMC.



## Letters from your WORSHIP LEADERS

### ► My love/hate relationship with worship leading



SHAWN YONG


Ten minutes before I step onto stage, my heart starts pounding, my palms sweat profusely, and my mind runs all over the place. *What do I say? What if no one gets what I say? What if I sing this wrong?* But when it's time to start, I manage to greet you with a smile and a cheery "Good morning CMC!"

Rewind seven to ten days before that: I begin talking to God about the songs we should be singing at the service, asking that He break my heart for Him and the congregations once again. For the next few days I spam my ears and mind with Christian worship songs, waiting for a few to strike me. Those that do are often the ones I like, but I trust that God is the one who places them in my heart. This can be a long process for me, and usually ends just one or two days before we rehearse. It becomes a real struggle when the busyness of the week harangues me, and causes me to absolutely not want to do it. But I trudge on.

On Saturday, we rehearse for two to three hours. It's awesome when it goes well, but when it doesn't, let's just say it's excellent for faith-

building. I could go home imagining that I got the whole direction wrong. Or that God picked the wrong guy for this job. Those thoughts are nerve wrecking and demoralizing. Then Sunday comes, and I'm usually up an hour before my alarm goes off, heart already racing, palms and feet already sweaty from the anxiety. I pray for grace profusely. I get into my clothes, I'm quiet on my drive to church, and very soon, I'm on stage.

"Good morning CMC!" you hear me say, along with some other words that I hope sound warm and inviting to you. And then we start singing together. For me, this is where the wonder begins. The vision that God impressed on me early in the week now becomes a reality; hands raised, voices loud, hearts surrendered. This is my reward. To be able to see from where I stand, His people in one voice, in worship. And as we sing, He feels close, I feel him hug me. Sometimes He says "I love that chorus, get them to sing it to me one more time", or "She needs to be reassured of My grace, do that verse again." Oh how I love that proximity!

Three paragraphs of moaning, one paragraph of praise. Days of sowing, twenty minutes of reaping. But so, so worth it. Every time. 

### ► Present!



JONATHAN ONG

When I was younger, I used to struggle with one question especially whenever I led worship: "Where are you, God?" If the congregation didn't look particularly lively that Sunday, I would shoot


prayers to Him in-between every song, forcing Him to sweep the congregation off their feet with His presence. I hadn't realized that my focus was misdirected by the 600 pairs of eyes staring at me and waiting for me to say the right words to usher them into God's presence. It was scary, and so my mind was on myself.

As I matured in the faith and better understood the incredible honor of my role as a worship leader, I began to pray differently. The truth is that God is all knowing and always present. He is amazing! I must focus on appreciating that about Him, and allow myself to be overtaken by His awesomeness, in order to respond appropriately in worship. The problem is never that God is absent; it's that I am too distracted with trying to sing properly, or work out if the congregation is worshipping, or give the right signals to the band, and so on, to notice that He is already there.

“God, make me sensitive to your presence,” is my prayer these days. “Take over from me as I step onstage, and in the light of Your glory and grace, let everything else grow strangely dim.” I want to encourage you to do the same.

Many of us Christian soccer/basketball/tennis fans claim we do not worship our favourite

teams, but when watching a big match on TV, we turn into the most expressive people, shouting at the top of our voices, jumping up and down and sometimes even crying. Yet on Sundays, in a church service when God is right there, real time, in front of us – the God we all claim to love and adore – we can be described as almost dead-pan. Our faces and postures betray boredom or disinterest. We look around at what people are doing. We check our phones frequently. We sing half-heartedly, especially if it is a song we don't like.

I've realized that it has nothing to do with personality type, because I have seen the most introverted people lose their minds during a football match. It has more to do with how much we truly want to communicate with God, and how 'present' we are, both mentally and emotionally. Shall we encourage one another to focus on Him, rather than ourselves, the next time we are at worship service together? 



## ▶ Have faith like a child, gain knowledge like an adult and worship like a youth



TEO MAE YAN


It has always been my desire to see youths grow such that they become fearless and full of fire in their expression of worship to God. IGNITE's youth leaders have tried to encourage and nurture the qualities of boldness, purity and love in our youths and while I often

see instances of the latter two, the former is ironically lacking in our ministry.

Perhaps it is an age and stage when one becomes more self-conscious as it is a transition from adolescence to adulthood. I remember that I was similarly fearful (or petrified) when I was younger; I was fearful of making mistakes and of being criticised for the way I led worship, but after laying aside my pride and surrendering it to God, I learned that God's approval is all that matters. Despite all my best efforts to prepare my heart, practise the songs, and reduce my errors, there are still days when my singing sounds

like Kermit-the-Frog and days when my heart weighs heavy. But even on such days, I persist in worshipping Him, not because I am capable, but because He is great and worthy of whatever I possess.

Dear IGNITE, it is my prayer that you will become youths who embody passion, fervour and boldness for God – the very traits that you often exhibit at your favourite pop stars' concerts, but somehow not for the Author of your life. I pray that you will grow in wisdom to recognise that God is your everything; He is all you ever need and all you should ever want. I pray that the things of this world lose their appeal to you, and instead drive you into the loving arms of our Father.

I am stepping down from the IGNITE committee as the worship base coordinator this year (after 7 years of service and 3 years of leadership) but I will never stop worshipping my God nor will I stop praying till I see that change happen in IGNITE! 



# CELEBRATING GOD IN HIGH DEFINITION

At our church services, we mostly see and hear the people in front of us and we naturally pick up understanding and ideas about worshipping God through their example. But there are also some people behind us, often unnoticed, who are experiencing God in a slightly different way – through serving with the Audio-Visual (AV) crew.

## WHAT THEY DO

“The AV team aims to use AV elements to enhance the worship service experience for both worshippers and volunteers. Sometimes, a simple action can make a significant contribution to the service. For example adjusting the volume of the preaching pastor to an audible (comfortable) level allows listeners to receive the message clearly.

Our hope is always that all the preparations we make on a Saturday will give worshippers the maximum opportunity to engage with God in prayer, praise and through His Word on Sunday, whether they choose to do so loudly or softly, in-tune or out-of-tune, expressively or reservedly. ➔

➔ The existence of this ministry also gives church members who serve here an opportunity to minister to each other, by building friendships through encouragement, prayer, caring for sick members, having fun fellowship and so on. After all, a ministry like this is also a means to engage the hearts of others and serve their needs, which is pleasing to God.”

~ Lim Yew Chong

“We’re a great team! I’m very encouraged by the team spirit that is evident in our ministry and how everyone chips in to do his or her part. To switch on the AV equipment and set up the sanctuary for the 8.30am service we have to come slightly earlier than most other congregation members, but both my buddy Lian Teck and I have been at this duty for such a long time that we have come to see it as part of our Sunday life!”

~ Gilbert Chong

“We try as much as possible to minimize disruption to the order of service. Regardless of which ministry you serve with, serving is part of worshipping and honoring God, and we see our work as doing His will and bringing honor and glory to Him.

~ Jenni See



## WHO IS IN THE AV MINISTRY?



### 8.30AM Traditional Service

Lighting	Camera and Video
Tan Hock Seng, Winston Wee	Andrew lee, Jonathan Wong
Words Projection	Sound
Sharon Grace Alcantra, Jennie See	John Lee, Goh Lian Teck, Gibert Chong,
Technical Direction	Stanley Lee



### 10.30AM Contemporary Service

Lighting	Camera and Video
Sharon Thong, April Chan, Tay Siew Koon, Sharon Hing	Wei Yi Hui, Brenda Lee, Calvin Fong, Gan Cheng Kai, Nattaporn
Words Projection	Sound
Tan Ler Shan, Samantha Soh, Audrey Lim, Eileen Sim	Brampy Tay Wei Jun, Marcus Tan, Lu Jilun
Technical Direction	
Szetoh Khai Mun, Wong Jia Hui, Tania Tan	

## HOW THEY EXPERIENCE GOD IN SERVING HERE

“Serving in this ministry has often reminded me that God works ‘behind the scenes’ in our lives. He is always walking ahead and beside us even when we don't see Him or feel Him.” ~ **Tay Wei Jun**

“I had no prior technical knowledge about using sound equipment before I joined this ministry. Whatever knowledge I have now has been learnt from people who have technical expertise (eg. church-mates Andrew Lee, Jeremy Lim, and Earl Tan) or making mistakes during worship practices or Sunday services (sometimes major mistakes!).”

That being the case, I commit those days when I'm on duty to God. I pray for attentive ears and spirit and alertness to the sound needs of the worship team and the speaker at the pulpit. When the sound needs of the service goes well (ie. no major concerns raised by our worship i/c Doris), I attribute it not to my own effort but to God's grace and blessings. I'm very thankful when there are no major hiccups. This has led me to commit other needs that I have in my work, family, personal life etc to God, to seek his guidance and wisdom when I encounter problems rather than depend on my own strength to resolve them. God has in his mercy, answered my prayers with respect to some 'big' problems. I have learned that God can be depended upon to provide for my needs and I have learned to trust him more.

There have been occasions when I think I have sensed the presence of God in the service (I'm not very good at this sensing God thing, and sometimes I have my doubts, haha.) For example, sometimes I make an adjustment during service that I did not do during the previous day's

“I have been in this ministry for a long time, but I have no idea just how long. Each year, I tell myself that it is time to move on and allow others to take over as I get so annoyed when things are not done to my liking – the layout of the words for example. Then I am reminded of my attitude towards others and God. He gives and blesses me freely day in and day out. Besides, what right do I have to comment on others' contributions? None!”

So one of the biggest challenges I face in serving others is my critical attitude, which I feel damages friendships. But I know God is changing me inch by inch. Ephesians 6: 5-7 encourages me to recognize that it is Him whom I serve, not men. And others are serving Him too, so I shouldn't be so critical of their work. Isaiah 40:31 reminds me that no matter what happens, God is the one who give me the strength to continue.”

~ **Sharon Grace Alcantra**

practice, and it sort-of makes the acoustics of the service better. In such an instance, I later question myself why I did that specific thing, and can only again attribute it to God's hand at work during the service. My walk with God is encouraged and enhanced by moments like these.

The 10.30am service worship team meets about an hour and a half before service to pray and prepare our hearts. This discipline has taught me that what we do in the ministry must be done with God's desires in mind and not our desires. Sometimes different members of the worship team share anecdotes about how God has worked in their lives, and this encourages me to believe that the God we serve is someone real and awesome.

My walk with God is still a work in progress. There is still room for improvement. But my time with the AV ministry has deepened my trust in Him to a great extent.” ~ **Brenda Lee**

## WHAT THEY WORK WITH

### Digital Audio Console

The Allen & Heath iLive T-112 digital mixer and in-ear monitoring system controls the audio inputs of the worship team, choir, musicians, preachers, background music, video, etc. to produce the cohesive sound mix that you experience from the Front of House speakers.

### High Definition Cameras

Located on both levels of the Sanctuary, these HD Panasonic camcorders are the “eyes of the service”, to show you what is happening from vantage points in the Sanctuary.

### ProPresenter on iMACs

The teams use a special lyrics and video projection software called “ProPresenter”, pre-loaded into Apple Macintosh computers, to control what content (song lyrics, scripture verses, moving backgrounds, etc.) is being projected to the congregation.

### ETC 40 Lighting Console

This helps to determine the visual clarity as well as the atmospheric 'mood' on stage by adjusting brightness, colour, and type of lighting used for each segment of the worship service. The system even has moving/rotating lights for creative lighting options.

### Video Production Switcher

The Technical Director uses a Ross Carbonite video production switcher (the first in Singapore!) to designate the specific feeds (visual inputs from cameras and iMacs) that will be projected onto the different digital screens.



## How we can encourage them to keep at it

“I've always found it encouraging when church members and our team members greet me cheerily every Sunday morning, like family, and even more so when members come forward to offer their thanks for our work after the church service. It's also very helpful when members give us constructive feedback (not complaints!) on how to fine-tune our overall work in the AV ministry after they've spotted some areas that could be improved.” ~ **Stanley Lee**

## JOIN US

If you're interested to serve with the Audio Visual crew, you can contact Tan Hock Seng (8.30am traditional service) at 9768 2825 or Lim Yew Chong at yewchong.lim@gmail.com (10.30am contemporary service), or visit the AV booth at the back of the sanctuary to talk with them after service.

## How YOU can deepen your walk with God through serving here

“As long as you have a passion and interest to learn, managing the audio-visual equipment is not that difficult, even if you are at the age of 60 or above. Generally, a person can handle the equipment well if given the proper training. An average of 6 – 9 hours of training is quite sufficient for someone to learn how to handle the equipment. Ideally, the 9 hours of training is split into three to four sessions and on-the-job training too.”

~ **John Lee**



# IN FULL BLOOM

BY **POH AI LIN**

**L**ike a lovely fragrance in the air and with a smile so enticingly sweet, Mrs Tan Eng Hwa breezed into the Fellowship Deck one cool December morning to meet with me for a quick chat about the CMC Floral Ministry. I reckon after 25 years of service in the ministry, it would be hard not to be influenced by the beauty of nature that she surrounds herself in.

With more than two decades of experience behind her, Mrs Tan, who serves as the co-ordinator of the floral ministry, exudes a quiet confidence as she goes about describing more about this often ‘un-noticed’ and ‘un-acknowledged’ ministry.

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**So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.**

~1 Cor 10:31

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*Describe the work involved in preparing the weekly floral offering?*

The floral arranger has to first conceptualise a theme, design (what shape, size and proportion of arrangement) and colour scheme for the display. She has to decide on the type of flowers, fillers and leaves that will best suit the floral design. She then orders the flowers from a regular florist on a Wednesday for the items to be delivered on





a Friday. Alternatively, she may choose to purchase the flowers from the market on a Saturday morning. Flowers that are delivered on Friday are received by our caretaker Mr Tang, who will then soak the sponges and flowers overnight in preparation for the arrangement on Saturday morning.

Floral arranging can be labour-intensive and can require physical strength as well. Trimming the stems and shearing off the thorns on a stalk, for instance, can sometimes cut the hand

and cause injury. And in our new building, physical strength is required to carry the arrangements up to the Sanctuary (for the English service) and Auditorium (for the Chinese services).

*How much time is involved?*

A small team of 2 to 3 floral arrangers usually meet on a Saturday morning in the Fellowship Deck or the Sanctuary to piece the display together. This process can take anything from 3 to 4 hours, depending on how complicated the arrangement

is and how experienced the arrangers are. Mrs Tan currently has a team of about 16 volunteers, 6 of whom are new. Volunteers serve on rotation and can be rostered to serve up to 3 to 4 times a year.

*Is experience required?*

“Absolutely not”, says Mrs Tan who shares that she herself learnt the craft from scratch. “I was taught by Kenneth Tan”, she enthuses. While no experience is required, what IS needed is genuine interest and

passion in this creative art form. Mrs Tan is happy to personally hand-hold newcomers for the initial first 3 practice sessions. She is confident that newbies will be independent and ready to take off and fly with their own creative prowess after 3 hands-on lessons.

*In what way do you see what you do as worship unto the Lord?*

“It is such a joy and delight to be among God’s beautiful creation. It gives me a greater sense of just how almighty and awesome our God is by being around nature. And when I am able to share God’s blessings with others, and to draw them nearer to His beauty, I feel a sense of satisfaction and purpose. When I see others happy and uplifted by looking at my flower creation, I too feel a sense of immense joy. Floral arranging is my way of expressing gratitude and thanks to a God who has provided and blessed me with so much.”



**INSPIRED TO COME ON BOARD?**

The floral ministry is on the constant lookout for volunteers (men are welcome too, seriously!) with a passion to work with all things natural and nice.

Contact Mrs Tan Eng Hwa (leeenghwa@gmail.com / 9060 5677) for enquires.



**AI LIN** is our new Communications ministry chairwoman!

**Special Floral Demonstration!**

Sat 11 April, 2 – 4.30pm  
Fellowship Deck  
(Ground Level) CMC



# IN different tongues

MANDARIN, CANTONESE, HOKKIEN

BY SHERYL ANG

Most attending the English services in Christ Methodist Church have heard about the Mandarin & Dialect Ministries in our church, but have little clue about how they worship. Chatting with our ministry staff, Mr Alvin Teh, and the chairpersons of these ministries has given me valuable insights into the hearts and minds of our Chinese congregations.

Mr Teh, or “mu shi” (pastor) as he is affectionately called by his flock, has been serving God faithfully in CMC for the past 20 years. He helmed the Hokkien service when he first joined CMC in 1994 and subsequently set up the Cantonese and Mandarin Services which started off as care groups, in 1997 and 2002 respectively. His passion is reaching out to the dialect-speaking older generation, fondly referred to as his “sunset” ministry. Supporting him in his ministry are his wife and 3 grown-up sons

who serve in the Mandarin ministry.

**Our Mandarin service,** held on Sundays at 2.30pm, has grown to a 60-strong congregation, 90% of whom are Chinese Nationals who accepted Christ while in Singapore. Their music ministry has grown from just a handful of musicians to 3 pianists, 3 guitarists, 2 flutists, 2 drummers and 2 violinists, and their chairman, Mr Daniel Wang, shared that worship in the Mandarin Ministry is predominantly guided by the Holy Spirit. For example, during their Christmas and Easter Gospel rallies in 2014, the Holy Spirit impressed upon the team to worship God in a vivacious way, and prompted them to use flags and ribbons in various colours and sizes, which they incorporated into their dances as a form of worship. During their prayer, they received visions of angels worshipping with

them, blowing horns and dancing, some occupying the unoccupied seats, filling the whole auditorium!

**Our Cantonese congregation** of about 40 persons meets on Sunday mornings at 8.30am. About half of them are actually members of the English congregations committed to serving the needs of the elderly worshippers, who are conversant in Cantonese but not literate. As many of them cannot read what is being projected on the screen, their faith is built on hearing alone. They learn worship songs by heart, and every Sunday service begins with the same song “Thank you Jesus” (in Cantonese). The musical accompaniment is simple – usually either a single guitar, ukulele, or piano. By the end of 2014, Cantonese worshippers had memorized 10 short songs! Praise the Lord!




Cantonese Ministry chairwoman, Mrs Janet Lam, expressed a desire for more volunteers to help chaperon elderly worshippers (who are on wheelchairs or need walking aids) as they make their way up to the 3rd floor Auditorium where their service is held.

About 50 **Hokkien-speaking believers** come to church on Thursday evenings at 8pm to worship God. This group also largely consists of mobility-impaired elderly persons, so CMC has hired a van to help transport them from and to their homes at a nominal fee. In addition, 2 members from our English congregation have recently volunteered to drive some of these elderly folks from their homes to the church, much to the delight of Alvin Teh, who has been asking for this sort of support for a number of years. “Help enable your elderly sisters and brothers in Christ to attend their worship

service on a regular basis,” he asks. “That in itself is an act of worship to God!”

Hokkien Ministry chairman, Mr Rodney Chia shared that this worship service is unique in how simple it is kept, for the benefit of the old folks. It is not a requirement to possess special talent or skill in order to serve here, and some of those who attend as mobility assistants don’t even speak or understand the Hokkien dialect. All that is really needed is patience, understanding and sensitivity towards the special needs of the elderly. All from our English services are welcome

to drop by and chat with ministry leaders to find out more.

Alvin fervently urges members of our church to bring their elderly relatives to the dialect services, and their Chinese friends to the Mandarin service. He also hopes the Hokkien and Cantonese Services can establish their own choir one day, and prays that more from the English congregations will volunteer their time with these ministries in one way or another, as the opportunities to worship God through selfless serving are bountiful. 



**SHERYL** has attended CMC since Sunday school days, but only got to truly understand the life of the Mandarin & Dialect Services through the experience of writing this article.

# MEET YOUR LEADERS

## MINISTRY & SUPPORT STAFF



**Mr Alvin Teh**  
Senior Ministry Executive  
(Dialect Ministries)



**Miss Elena May Gudgeon**  
Senior Ministry Executive



**Mrs Amy Loh**  
Senior Ministry Executive  
(Christkidz Children's Church)



**Mr Errol Champion**  
Ministry Executive  
(St Patrick's Secondary School)



**Mdm Evangeline Lim**  
Ministry Executive  
(Ping Yi Secondary School)



**Mr Kevin Wang**  
Media Executive



**Mr Earl Tan**  
Executive Director

## ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

**Ms Mabel Wat**  
(Administrative Manager)

**Mr Steven Sim**  
(Finance & IT Manager)

**Mr Timothy Wong**  
(Admin / Accountants Executive)

**Mrs Alice John**  
(Secretary)

**Miss Abilgail Koh**  
(Secretary)

**Mr Shi Kai**  
(Operations Executive)

## LOCAL CHURCH

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2014-2015



**Rev Edmund de Souza**  
Pastor-In-Charge



**Rev David Gwee**  
Pastor



**Rev Shaun Chong**  
Assistant Pastor



**Rev David Ho**  
Outgoing pastor  
(Jan 2015)



**Rev Barnabas Chong**  
Incoming Pastor  
(Jan 2015)

## LOCAL CHURCH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2014-2015



**Mr Donald Tay**  
(LCEC Vice  
Chairperson)



**Mr Kelvin Lim**  
(LCEC Vice  
Chairperson)



**Ms Serene Chee**  
Finance Chairperson



**Mr Thangaveloo  
Suppiah**  
Archivist



**Mr Chris Seow**  
Christkidz  
Children's Church



**Mr Stanley Lee**  
Christian Outreach  
& Social Concerns



**Ms Poh Ai Lin**  
Communications



**Mr Karl Howe**  
Discipleship &  
Nurture



**Mr Barry Hung**  
(LCEC Vice  
Chairperson)



**Mr Winston Wee**  
Associate Lay  
Leader



**Mrs Seow Yang San**  
Treasurer



**Mr Noel Ong**  
Governance



**Ms Elaine Shu**  
Family Life



**Mr Rodney Chia**  
Hokkien Ministry



**Mr Samuel Choo**  
IGNITE Youth  
Ministry



**Mr Daniel Wang**  
Mandarin Ministry



**Mr Alan Tan**  
Associate Lay  
Leader



**Miss Phylina Yeo**  
Associate Lay  
Leader



**Mrs Christine Yu**  
Assistant Treasurer



**Mr Alan Yong**  
LCEC Secretary



**Mrs Mary Lee**  
Missions



**Mr Peter Soh**  
Prayer Ministry



**Mr Ravi  
Ravichandran**  
Property  
Management



**Mr Wee Hock Ho**  
Seniors Ministry



**Mrs Janet Lam**  
Cantonese Ministry



**Mdm Loh Mei Wai**  
Care Groups



**Mr Kevin Loh**  
Church rebuilding



**Mr Ling Ting Soo**  
Christalite  
Methodist Home



**Miss Woo Ti Soo**  
School Ministry  
Management



**Mr Andrew Wee**  
Witness &  
Evangelism



**Mrs Sylvia Liew**  
Women's Society of  
Christian Service



**Ms Doris Lee**  
Worship & Music  
Ministry



**Mr Mark Chan**  
Steward (Outreach)



**Mr Jonathan Ong**  
Steward (Young  
Adults)



**Mrs Tay Poh Luan**  
Honorary Steward



GETTING  
TO KNOW YOU

# PASTOR BARNABAS

## A WARM WELCOME TO PASTOR BARNABAS CHONG, WHO JOINED US IN JANUARY 2015!

He has kindly obliged  
to share with us  
about his life journey  
thus far.

### EARTHLY NAME:

Barnabas Chong Chien Chih

### EXPERIENCE-O-METER:

50 going on 51

### VIPs:

Wife May, and three sons Aaron (21), Elisha (19) and Josiah (12). May and Josiah will be worshipping with us at CMC, while Aaron and Elisha have decided to stay on in Aldersgate Methodist Church.

### ROOTS:

“We are the chicken rice people – pure bred Hainanese!”

Grew up with 3 elder sisters in the Commonwealth and Ghim Moh areas.

### BOYHOOD:

“Schools have been known to have gone extinct after I attended them.” Permaisura Primary School and Ghim Moh Secondary School no longer exist! But luckily Hwa

Chong Junior College (now Institute) and Ngee Ann Polytechnic are still around.

Played the big bass drum and the euphonium in the school band. Often cut classes to go to the movies, shop, bowl and test drive cars! “I guess I loved Hwa Chong JC more than anyone else – stayed 3 years there while everyone else only stayed 2!”

### BREAD N BUTTER:

Having graduated from Deakin University (Geelong, Australia) with double majors in Management & Accounting, Barnabas worked a year in Human Resources, and then another year as an auditor with Ernst & Young, prior to entering full-time ministry in 1995.

### ROMANCE:

Met his wife May at Deakin University, through the Overseas Christian Fellowship. “I aimed high, went for the vice-president of the fellowship and we started going out together.” Both received the same call from God separately before meeting one another. “Are you willing to serve Me anytime, anywhere?” Both said yes.

### THE CALL:

Received first ‘mobilisation warning’ from God at a Singapore missions conference in 1987, but was only drafted into active duty 8 years later while working at Ernst & Young. Started full-time ministry with his home church, Shalom Gospel Hall, in 1995 and became a Methodist pastor in 2002. Since then he has pastored sheep at Barker Road Methodist Church (BRMC), Faith MC, Paya Lebar MC, Cairnhill MC and Aldersgate MC.

### FAITH-STRETCHER:

“The biggest so far has been the medical dilemma I faced in Dec 2011, just a week before Christmas. I came home from a tour of Israel with a near-fatal skin infection that led to cardiac arrest, kidney failure, liver failure, and septic shock (blood pressure dropped to 60). The Lord healed me miraculously and quickly by

a word of revelation given to my wife. ‘I will preserve his leg’ He told her, so she refused to sign the papers for a major surgery to amputate my left leg from the thigh. Within 24 hours, everything turned around.”

### GOD THOUGHTS:

“He is so kind and I’ve experienced it so often in my life. Revelation changes everything for me. I can’t help but respond in worship, praise, thanksgiving and adoration when I experience His revelation of Himself to me.

### FOR YOU:

“God calls us all to a deeper place of worship. To enter His sanctuary is a privilege we have as His sons and daughters. (Psalm 73:16-17). Take the opportunity given to you to enter in because it is the place of revelation. And when God speaks, everything changes!” <sup>w</sup>



# WORSHIPPING GOD BUT FASCINATED WITH MAN

BY REV BARNABAS CHONG

The super-gifted Corinthian church had many problems and one of the problems was that they were exalting human leaders above God. Whether it was intentional or not, the truth is, when Christian leaders were exalted over God, the church became idolatrous.

The same is true for us today. When our fascination is with what men or women can do, how anointed they are whether in preaching the Word of God, in leading worship, in the prophetic ministry, in the healing ministry or in sharing the gospel, etc., we can easily slip into idolatry. On the one hand, there is nothing wrong with honoring a man or a woman

of God and to speak well of such a person.


But on the other hand, we need to guard our hearts to ensure that the double honor does not become an unhealthy fascination. Reminds me of Beatlemania in the 60s and 70s when teenage girls would scream in absolute frenzy every time the Beatles showed up and during every Beatles concert.

If we are not careful, in honoring a Christian leader or pastor, we may become obsessive and excessively fascinated, emphasizing the power of man rather than the power of God, exalting the glory of man rather than the glory of God. We end up

drawing people to “anointed” men and women rather than to the God who anointed these men and women.

When that happens, we have much to be accounted for because we are leading them astray. Paul reminded the Corinthian church that while he planted the seed of the gospel and Apollos watered it, but in the end, it was God who made the seed grow.

He said, **“neither the one who plants nor the one waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.”**

As you begin your walk with God today, worship God and be totally fascinated with Him! Be careful not to share Almighty God’s glory with mere men, for in doing so, we become guilty of idolatry. Instead, always glorify God alone for He alone deserves all glory, honor, power and dominion forever and ever! 

FROM [WWW.TWCDAILY.COM](http://WWW.TWCDAILY.COM)

6 Sept 2013

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Paul told Timothy in 1Tim.5:17,  
**“The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of DOUBLE HONOR, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.”**

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TWC (THE WORD CONNECTS) is an online daily devotional, started since 31 August 2011 that presents a key biblical truth intended to be lived out each day so that your faith in Christ is not just all talk. Jesus said we should not worry about tomorrow, instead focus on life and living day by day (Mt.6:34). Let each day be a day of victory in Christ. Keep at it every day and before long, you would have had a victorious week, a victorious month and a victorious year! ~ Rev Barnabas Chong

# The Khmer Way

BY MICHELLE AW YONG

I had the privilege to participate again in God's great work in the Cambodia mission field in Dec 2014. Truth be told, prior to my first trip in 2013, I had some preconceived ideas about what to expect, especially in terms of worship. I had assumed the songs were going to be of the 'ethnic' variety, that the musical arrangement was going to be very traditional, the band instruments quite basic, and even the style of worship possibly quite conservative too. But was I roundly proven wrong. Gatherings at Krang Svey Methodist Church (Sunday services, evening discipleship, children's church, etc.) are almost always kick started by an energy-charged praise and worship segment led by young leaders. Songs range from those by Hillsong and Chris Tomlin etc (but sung in Khmer), to traditional hymns to other local gospel numbers.

And though the praise segment tends to be shorter than what we experience at CMC, it is certainly very passionate.

The faster songs are usually accompanied by rousing band instruments and sassy dance routines inspired by K-pop moves, which I must say, are totally infectious! The kids especially love it! Because the congregation is relatively small, most folks know one another, and the setting is so intimate that even the typically shy members will actively participate in singing and dancing to praise God.

As part of their worship service, the congregation breaks off into smaller discussion groups after the sermon to talk about what they have learned, clarify doubts and pray for one another. And during evening discipleship sessions,

attendees are welcomed to give testimonies of how God has been working in their lives. These really help to encourage others to stay strong in the faith, especially since they live and work in a predominantly non-Christian society.

Even though the songs, lessons, prayers and testimonies are in Khmer, which I do not understand, the sincerity of their worship is evident and one can really sense that emotions are being invested in worshipping God. No, I am not referring to big gestures by which the Cambodians proclaim their love for God – it's not that. Rather, it is their small, humble actions that convince me that they are truly surrendering themselves to Him.

While their living conditions in the village may be basic, their lives are no less complicated than ours, and their needs are equally demanding. From critical health issues and dire financial situations to substance addiction and broken families, many of the folks we meet have no alternative means of survival but to rely on Jesus to lift their burdens and turn things around. I believe this produces in them a pure faith – a faith that has not been rationalised, filtered, or 'managed' – and it is this childlike faith that makes

Choom reap sour!  
That's "hello!"  
in Khmer,  
the Cambodian  
language.



their worship so earnest and powerful, allowing them to commune with God not just in person but in spirit.

Nonetheless, as Jesus had taught us in John 4:21, worship does not happen only within the confines of sacred places but can happen whenever we come to Him in truth and complete submission. So to that extent, whilst some differences may exist between how we and our friends at KSMC worship God, I am so grateful that the similarities are far greater. As children of God, we can commune with Him in ways that transcend cultural and linguistic differences. But even as I write this, KSMC's future is being

challenged as many of its young leaders, aged 18-25 years, must juggle full-time studies and part-time work with the responsibility of running the church and nurturing the believing community there. As brothers and sisters in Christ, we are committed to continue working with them to bolster their spiritual foundations,

even as we encourage them to soldier on.

It is the deepest desire of the mission team that you will continually uphold KSMC in prayer, as well as actively step forward to join us on the field so that the seeds God has sown in this part of the world can grow and bear fruit. 🙏

## INTERESTED IN MISSIONS?

If you are inspired to participate in God's work at Krang Svey Methodist Church in some way, please email me at [michawyong@gmail.com](mailto:michawyong@gmail.com) and I can get you connected with the right people.



### MICHELLE WITH HER NIECE, GLENDA

Michelle wishes she could live a less multi-screened life but finds herself constantly replying whatsapp messages and using her computer. Aside from that, she's usually quite and attentive and patient mom, wife, and aunt.



# At the CHAPEL

BY MARY ANN CHUA

**“We bring the sacrifice of praise  
Into the house of the Lord.  
We bring the sacrifice of praise  
Into the house of the Lord.**

**And we offer up to You  
The sacrifices of thanksgiving;  
And we offer up to You  
The sacrifices of joy.”**

**T**his song often echoes through the 5th floor of our new building when domestic helpers connected with CMC families gather in our Chapel on Sunday mornings at 10.30am. The vibrant Grace Fellowship (GF) today is a far cry from the small huddle of 2-3 ladies

who first started gathering in a small room in our old church building 28 years ago. Grace Fellowship coordinators are celebrating today because we have witnessed so much growth in this ministry – both numerically as well in terms of spiritual maturity among the women who have been attending. We were incredibly blessed by the allocation of the Chapel worship space upon moving back into our new church building. From ‘fringe’ to ‘Chapel’! Indeed our God is faithful!

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### **Who despises the day of small things?**

~ Zechariah 4:10

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Worship at Grace Fellowship does not only start at 10:30am every Sunday or end at 12noon. *Pagsamba* (the word for worship in Tagalog) or *ibadah* (the word for worship in Bahasa Indonesia) is a 24/7 attitude that members are learning in their faith journey with the Lord Jesus. But corporately, the different ways that ladies express their worship of God in Grace Fellowship include prayer, song, dance, study of His Word, and acts of service.

### **Prayer**


Not all of them are able to be present every Sunday as many domestic helpers are often given a weekday off instead of Sunday. Some have days off once a week, while others only twice a month. This is why Marita, our worship team coordinator, encourages everyone to unite in prayer for one another every evening at 10pm, wherever they are. In addition, our prayer coordinator Rose, who has been with GF since 2002, compiles everyone’s prayer needs every first week of the month and channels it to all members. This prayer list includes both personal and corporate prayer items, and the regular ones include praying that all will come to church faithfully and serve willingly in CMC. On Sunday mornings, the gathering usually begins with a prayer inspired by the Psalms.

### **Song**

Marita and Arlene are sisters who take turns to lead the rest of us in songs of praise and worship each Sunday. Both are able to play the guitar and have

led worship at their home church in the Philippines. It was Pastor Hoi Kok Fu who encouraged them to serve, and later he asked Mr Wee Hock Ho to train others to play the guitar so they could become more involved. When I spoke with her, Marita expressed the hope that the Grace Fellowship worship team be included in any training that the CMC Worship & Music Ministry organises.

Another member of Grace Fellowship shared with me “When we start with prayer, God is already there with us, so our hearts are encouraged to praise Him. We are able to enter into worship quickly because our hearts are connected with His.” It is true that in a smaller and simpler venue like the upstairs chapel, there is very little apart from our own thoughts to distract us from engaging with our Heavenly Father. We are always reminded that once we are there we are on “holy ground”.

Jane, our first Filipina domestic helper to give her verbal testimony in 





CMC, has been with Grace Fellowship since 2000. Each Sunday she is responsible for making sure the song lyrics are projected well at the Chapel. She is now even able to create slide presentations thanks to a young church member called Joshua Lim who gave the ladies Microsoft PowerPoint tutorials. Thanks to the training, Jane now leads an AV team of 4 ladies. They are happy that they do not have to print song sheets!

Sunday morning worship songs are usually in English, but there are also

occasionally songs in Tagalog and Bahasa Indonesia, as decided by the team assigned to lead worship. "Singing songs in our own language allows us to better express our love for God and also hear from Him more clearly," Jane shared. Our church associate lay leader Barry Hung, who conducted the Alpha Course for Grace Fellowship, also commented that the girls "sing enthusiastically, loudly, and cry out from the heart." He said it would be enriching for our congregation if they could be welcomed to give song offerings more regularly at our church services.

### Performance Art

Last October, many church members at the 10.30am English service were pleasantly surprised (and some admitted to being moved to tears) by the creative presentation that our Grace Fellowship ladies



put together to mark the ministry's 28th Anniversary. They presented a mime to the song "Above All" to thank God and CMC for all the love and support they have received over the years. When the ladies were given the good news that they could do a song offering at one of the English services, they wanted to give their best. Each sourced her own costume – a black outfit, white gloves – and some helped in making props like crowns. After it was over, Yanti, an Indonesian helper told her employer, "We were all scared before it started, but after we made the first move on that sanctuary stage, the anxiety and nervousness went away." They were just so elated at the opportunity to publically give glory to God!

Gina's employer brought her to Grace Fellowship in 2011. "The first time I attended Grace Fellowship, they sang 'This is the Day' during worship, and since I knew dance steps to this song, I just started dancing!" The next Sunday Pastor Kok Fu asked her if she would be willing to teach the other ladies those same steps. She admitted being shy but happy to serve. Together with Lani, whom she affectionately calls *Kumadre*

(Tagalog term for co-mother), they started the Tambourine Dance Ministry during the season that CMC was meeting at St Patrick's Secondary School. The large space that the school afforded them was a bonus, and the dance ministry expanded to six persons by 2013.

Once the worship songs are selected and communicated to them, the dance ministry members scour YouTube looking for appropriate dance steps that have been choreographed by others. Each member then practices the steps at home during the week, and then they meet as early as 8.30am on Sunday morning for prayer and practice before the 10.30am gathering. Then, from 1 – 3pm, when most of us are enjoying our Sunday lunch downtime, they practice

the dance steps for the following Sunday.

Gina is stepping up as a dance coordinator as Lani returned to the Philippines at the end of 2014. She says she feels inadequate for the task but has placed her confidence in the Lord. "When we dance, God leads us. He is ahead. He will teach us, and help our shyness and fears go away." Gina also shared that they welcome dance training from CMC members who are willing to help them improve.

Another dance team member, Vangie, was baptized in CMC before she returned home last December. "I came to Singapore empty, but I am returning home full of all the spiritual feeding"





and fun we have in Grace Fellowship”.

### Word

Because of the intimate setting and familiarity with most of their teachers, Word study at Grace Fellowship is often an interactive, animated, and enjoyable experience. Many of the ladies are spiritually young and biblical teaching has not been that accessible to them, so they are hungry for His truth and enthusiastic in applying it to their situation. One of the most encouraging things they have learned through Word study is when Pastor Shaun Chong addressed them and expounded on the biblical character Joseph, who was tasked with managing the household of his master, Potiphar. “You are the Josephs in your employer’s home,” he said, which gave the ladies new perspective on their daily responsibilities.

Upi, an Indonesian member of our ministry, shared that she became curious about Jesus as she read bible stories to her employer’s children.

After she was introduced to Grace Fellowship, she grew further in her curiosity and understanding of God through the weekly teaching, and then eventually asked her parents’ permission to be baptised in December last year. She now serves in our Worship team.

### Acts of Service

At our 2014 Christmas Party we formally recognized 17 members of Grace Fellowship who have been faithfully serving as musicians, singers, dancers, ushers and AV helpers for some time. Fera, who serves as usher and back-up singer in the worship team, is committed to attending both the 8.30am Traditional worship service as well as Grace Fellowship every Sunday. She shared that while she is regularly encouraged during sermons by our church pastors, she feels that she can grow a lot more in faith when she has the opportunity to contribute and be involved in the gathering. She also enjoys that there is dialogue and sharing of life issues at Grace Fellowship.



### “Worship at Grace Fellowship reminds me of the early church in the book of Acts,” shared Pastor Kok Fu.

“People feel free to come together and just praise God and learn about Him. There is no hierarchy among them and they are more personal – like the family of God. One body. People who attend are ministered as they are involve in the worship and in the running of all the activities”

As our church gives attention this year to the many ways in which God can be worshipped, consider visiting the Chapel on Level 5 one Sunday morning at 10.30am to experience how Grace Fellowship worships Him.

# Thanksgiving

Our recent growth and many milestones would not have been possible if not for the vision and tireless dedication of Pastor Kok Fu, who, even though he is no longer working as an outreach coordinator with CMC and now attends Toa Payoh Methodist Church with his wife and kids, continues to come back and shepherd the flock at Grace Fellowship at least once each month. His vision was that Grace Fellowship mature into a ministry that intentionally disciples domestic helpers during their window of time living and working in Singapore, and prepares them to become an effective vessel for God when they return to their homeland. “We are equipping them to become missionaries to their own people,” he shared.

CMC members who have been involved in the work of equipping these ladies include Grace Fellowship coordinators Pee See Hua, Katherine Tan, Doreen Yap, Lim Meow Jee and Mary Ann Chua, as well as guest teacher Adeline Chan, and occasionally our church pastors and ministry staff.



“The goal is for them to find Christ, find themselves, and hopefully find solutions to their problems in the process,” shared Katherine. “Their countenance changes as they become spiritually mature,” Doreen observed. “I’ve seen them transformed when given the opportunity to use their spiritual gifts in service to others at Grace Fellowship,” said See Hua.

The ladies wish to thank their employers who have connected them with or allowed them to participate in Grace Fellowship, as well as church members like Wee

Hock Ho and David Tay who blessed them with guitar and ukulele lessons that have enriched their music offerings to God tenfold, Barry Hung, who led them through the Alpha Course, Joshua Lim who gave them Microsoft Powerpoint lessons, the Crown Financial Team, led by Chee Hui Ling, who helped to equip them with financial wisdom and skills, Nellie Wee, and all other CMC folk who have supported them in one way or another through prayers and time spent with them.



**MARY ANN** is a Filipina Singaporean who is married to Jimmy and has one daughter, Grace, who is in IGNITE youth ministry. She currently serves as a coordinator for Grace Fellowship and as a WSCS representative to the Missions Committee.

# SING CHOIRS OF ANGELS!

Choral tradition is not especially strong in our little corner of South East Asia, and is often viewed as niche performance art or church ritual inherited from our colonial past. Younger generations tend to favour contemporary band music formats, which usually only accommodate 3-6 vocalists, so one wonders if this magnificently rich and rousing expression of worship will have a place in the church of tomorrow.



Those who have been worshipping at CMC for at least 30 years will remember the numerous anniversary services, ordination services and regular Sunday services that our choirs have blessed with their anthems, as well as the special Easter Chorales and Christmas Cantatas that they worked hard to put together. Mrs Laura Chan, who has helmed the Chancel Choir since 1987, fondly recalls the joy of performing at the former Drama Centre in Fort Canning in 1992 – an

amazing privilege for any choir in Singapore – and shares her convictions about the significance of choral music in worship.

“Most Christian choral compositions, in addition to being heart-rending pieces of music, also have beautiful order, form and balanced Scriptural truth in them. In fact I have adopted the hymns ‘Give of the best to the master’, and ‘O Jesus, I have promised’ as my personal anthems for life.

God has given us voices as natural instruments, which in choral music is fully utilized. Even without microphones or musical instruments, a well-arranged a cappella piece would still sound very rich.”

CMC ears were treated to just what this sounds like on 7th December last year when we played host to a special seasonal service by the Methodist Festival Choir (MFC). Titled, “Jubilate”, the evening featured a series of traditional carols and hymns, woven together with scripture readings which, all together, creatively presented the story of Christ’s prophesied birth. The 67-strong MFC comprised choir members from various Methodist churches in Singapore and was conducted by the very talented Wong Lai Foon (wife of our TRAC president and former CMC pastor, Rev Dr Gordon Wong).



This large choir is coordinated by the Methodist School of Music (MMS) on a project basis, and usually avail


themselves to sing at major events within the Methodist circuit, such as the annual Aldersgate Hymn Festival.

“A typical MFC presentation follows an order of worship, crafted around a specific theme,” shared Ms Judith Laoyan-Mosomos, Acting Director for Worship & Church Music at MMS. “Jubilate, for example, was based on a traditional ‘Festival of Lessons and Carols’ originating from the 1880 Christmas Eve Service at the Cathedral of Cornwall in England. Events like these are meant to gather people to worship through scripture and song, and at every MFC event, you will notice one or two unfamiliar hymns. It is hoped that someone listening will love these new hymns enough to pick them up and add them to the repertoire of their local worship service.”

In January, the MFC began preparing for the next event, called ‘Songs of the Heart: a journey through the psalms and canticles in music, stories and prayer.’ While the Judith

and her colleagues at The Methodist School of Music continue to promote the role of the choir in worship, they also hope that the leaders and the members of every church will do their part in keeping the choral tradition alive by appreciating, believing in and supporting their choir’s ministry.

“Putting effort into developing vibrant children’s and youth choirs today is something we should seriously consider if we want to keep the choral tradition alive,” Judith shared. “Choir programs, for all ages, should be designed to play a part in equipping members to lead the congregation in worship. They should be aligned with the church’s main worship vision or theme, and geared towards supporting the spiritual growth of the congregation and the choristers themselves.”

So, at the end of the day, it’s up to us. Do we cherish choral tradition enough to fight for its survival? 

## LOVE TO SING?

If you have been considering joining a choir but never took the plunge, you could consider being a part of our Chancel Choir. Contact Mrs Laura Chan at [lurakohsg@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:lurakohsg@yahoo.co.uk) or visit the choir during their Sunday morning rehearsal from 10.30am onwards at the Creative Loft on Level 5 to chat with someone. You could also contact Judith Mosomos at the Methodist School of Music (email: [jlaoyanm@gmail.com](mailto:jlaoyanm@gmail.com)) for further information about joining the Methodist Festival Choir.

# SYMPHONY OR CACOPHONY?

BY ELENA MAY GUDGEON

I once heard an excerpt from a sermon titled “Symphony” by Dr Louie Giglio, pastor of Passion City Church in Atlanta, Georgia, USA, in which he ingeniously layered frequencies emitted by all created things – planets, stars, animals, and people – into a discernable rhythm, with the aid of modern technology. The increasingly intricate symphony of life came to a climax with the addition of human voices singing “How great is our God”.

Although I’ve always sort-of known it, this was the first time in my life I became truly aware that mankind is actually God’s crowning achievement in creation. Blessed with the privilege and power of language, and the amazing gift of being able to create as well, we are able to articulate worship of our God in great complexity, from writing music and poetry to painting, dancing, praying, posturing ourselves in a variety of ways, and singing. And almost all these expressions find their greatest significance in the company of other people doing the same.

Have you ever heard a group of people sing together in such perfect harmony that it gave you goosebumps? A person

blessed with the gift of singing well can inspire with a solo presentation. But there is something quite extraordinary about the human capacity to work with others and produce sound that is fifty times as glorious. It says something of our maker.

He made us this way. To live in communion with one another. To harmonize with one another. To be our strongest and most glorious when working together.

We often forget this as we face the pressures of work, school and family life, which cause us to spend a lot of time dwelling on areas of DISharmony – the people we don’t like, the people who don’t like us, the people in our way, the people who aren’t giving us what we want. These

“First World Problems” seem to take up 80% of our thoughts. We’ve forgotten what we were made for.

The home becomes a source of stress due to selfish disagreements, instead of a place of rest and encouragement as God intended. School life becomes enslavement to information memorization in order to make the grade, instead of a season of celebrating discovery and stretching our imagination together with friends. Work life becomes a race against other colleagues and businesses to churn out as much quality product as possible by given deadlines. Even church ministries turn into a battlefield of your-way-my-way.

We can’t worship God divided. But we can’t stay united if our will isn’t surrendered.

A symphony or choir is a beautiful analogy of what the human race was meant to look like in praise of God. All members must first acknowledge that one person – the conductor – is in charge, and submit their will to this individual. Without this general

*So if you are about to offer your gift to God at the altar and there you remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar, go at once and make peace with your brother, and then come back and offer your gift to God.*

~ Matthew 5: 23-24 (GNT)

compliance, they can only produce noise. But with this understanding and disciplined practice, choirs and symphonies can reach dizzying heights of beautiful musical expression.

What we learn from this is that surrender is key in achieving harmony. Not just surrender to God, which is expected from each of us of course, but also, surrender of our will to family, to the spiritual shepherds of our church, and to one another at our workplaces and schools. If we insist on getting things done “my way”, every day,

our marriages will fail, our friends will drift away, and our ministries will not build disciples. Our pride is God’s greatest challenge. He would have a much easier time saving His lost loved ones if we would empty ourselves of it to become the closest possible copy of Jesus for others to look at.

So the next time we listen to a choir or symphony, may we be visually reminded to also try our hardest in surrendering our will for the goal of harmony with others. In emptying ourselves, we make our Maestro so happy. 🎵



Elena is still floored by the notion that everyone in the entire concert hall MUST stand up in praise of God for the Hallelujah Chorus of Handel’s Messiah when it is performed, wherever it is performed. How cool is that?

For centuries past, Christian worship was widely expressed through the medium of fine art and church architecture.

Thousands of galleries, walls, ceilings, stained glass windows and soaring spires across Europe and the Mediterranean testify to biblical truth and the glory of God.

Today, the arena of fine art is largely associated with secular high society, and not with Christendom.

But those of us who love art will not give up worshipping God this way, even as we hope and wait for a new renaissance.



# HOPE

BY **ANDREW WEE**

**ANDREW** is an architectural illustrator and the founder of multimedia visualization firm AIP Studios. His painting of Mary, the mother of Jesus, captures her mixed bewilderment and hope after the Archangel Gabriel visited her with the good news. This is one of five paintings he created especially for our Christmas PassionArt event on 27 December.

*Andrew Wee 2014*