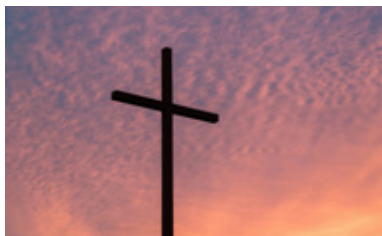




witness



Coming Home

A story of divine timing




Living Under God's Grace

Testimonies from our Grace Fellowship



Silver and Gold

Reflections from COSC's Bursary
Award Presentation Ceremony



Echoes of the Heart

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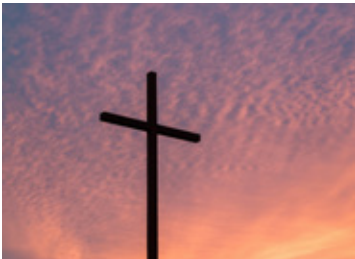
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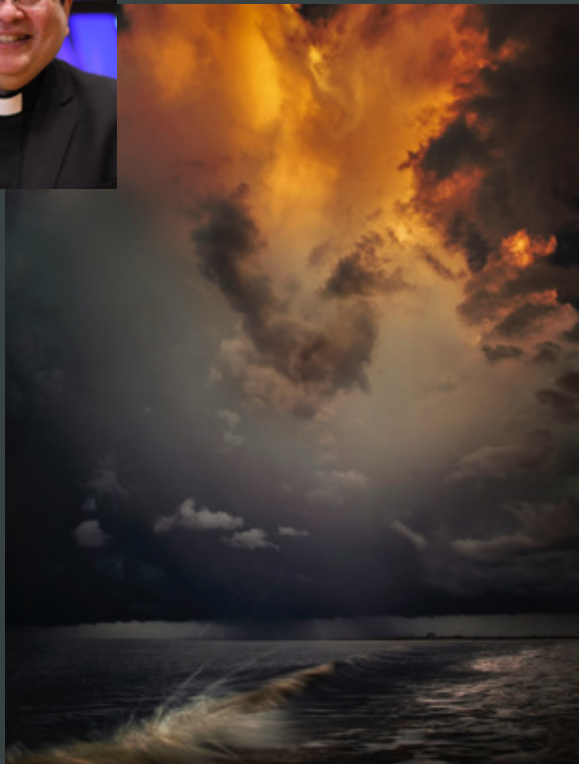
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A word



Faithful to the End

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

Isaiah 43:2

from your Pastor

BY REV DR EDWIN WONG

As Christ Methodist Church (CMC) enters the second quarter of 2024, I want to give thanks to our Lord for His faithfulness. His all-sufficient grace has clearly seen us through the past few months. I also wish to thank God for each and every member's understanding and support. May the Good Lord return your love and kindness with His presence, provision, peace, power, and protection.

As I was meditating on what to share with the CMC family, the importance of persevering faithfully came to mind. We have often said over the pulpit that we need to be a church ready for Jesus' return. So, how do we remain faithful to the end?

Know Who and Whose We Are

Being an overcomer is not about receiving breakthroughs. Victorious overcomers are those who know their worth and identity in the Lord. They have deeply rooted faith relationships with God as their Father, Shepherd, Saviour, Lord, and King that empower them to live life undefeated regardless of circumstances. In other words, overcomers are those who can still praise and trust God; and hold on to His faithfulness and goodness even in the midst of trying situations. This requires us to surrender in prayer and praise, in obedience and servitude and allow ourselves to be placed in the hands of the Potter.

We must never let what we perceive as our current adverse circumstances fool us into thinking that it is our destiny or our lot in life. Having faith is having the confidence of knowing that God is in control, and we can rest in Him. All we need to do is to be still and know that He is our loving Father and our God.

Be Patient, Be Prayerful, Keep Praising

We need to remain patient as He moulds and shapes us. In life, there will be obstacles along the way, or a detour may be required. The travel time will vary but if we patiently trust God as our hope and navigator in life, we have the blessed assurance that we will eventually arrive.

Prayers offered in faith serve not as informational reminders to God about His role in our lives and our needs in this world, but to transform our faith for the well-being of our souls. This is why faithful believers are able to praise God and give thanks in all circumstances.

Praise is not a temporary numbing of our pains and problems. Praise is a weapon of the faithful because it is a reminder, affirmation, and declaration of who and whose we are in Christ and what Christ has done for us. Praise gives us the right perspective of Jesus' sovereignty and as such, we can find strength, peace, joy, and hope.

Exercise Faith

Faith believes that God knows what is best for us. While faith may not appear to change our situation, faith changes us. Faith changes our countenance. Faith changes our outlook in life. Faith changes our understanding of trials and tribulations that could come our way.

*Hebrews 11:1 tells us that **faith is the realisation of things hoped for, the confidence of things not seen.***

Therefore, let us stand in faith, knowing who we are and whose we are. Let us walk in faith, pushing forward with patience, prayer, and praise. Let us live by faith, believing even when we are still in the waiting, God will move on our behalf.

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace as we trust in Him, so that we may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:13).

Amen.

Matthew 6:33-34

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”



Coming Home

BY LOW SWEE TECK

After three decades of working overseas and an unplanned exit from work in Vietnam, my wife, Sally, and I returned to Singapore in 2023. The re-integration process was a chain of challenges and disappointments which tested us to our limits. One of our key decisions was to seek a home and a church in the East where we could “fit” in and grow

in the Lord. We attended various churches until a sister-in-Christ told us about a talk at CMC on 1 July 2023 by Bishop Emeritus Dr Robert Solomon on “When An End is Not The End – Theology of Death & Afterlife”.

On 12 November, we visited CMC for the third time and attended the 10.30am service.

We had the coffee voucher for newcomers and decided to try it out.

Amid all the noise around us, I told Sally “I feel this is our home church.” She replied she felt the same. I felt comfort and peace and I am sure she felt the same. Looking around, I added “So many people and yet we do not know anyone.” Just minutes later, Edward (Ed) Wong approached us and introduced himself as he had seen us during the service. He made time to answer some of our questions. He shared about the church and the happenings in church, including the Prayer Retreat commencing the very next day. However, Ed added that registration had long been closed, with no slots available.

A few hours later, during our dinner, Ed texted me that one slot for the Prayer Retreat had opened up and asked if I was interested. Surprised, I looked at Sally and asked if the Lord had created the slot for her or if it was for me. She replied that it was for me.

To cut a long story short, I registered, and, in the morning, found my way to Changi Cove hotel.

In addition to my stress of re-settling back, we had friends and relatives hit with serious illnesses at almost the same time – a close brother-in-Christ with heart problems complicated by diabetes, a believing relative with Stage 4 cancer, and a close brother in the Lord with chest and lung problems from an unidentifiable source. On top of this, on one of my trips to Malaysia in June, I had a total blackout while standing and fell face down, hitting the road with the full force of gravity. Thank God I did not hit the edge of the pavement but I suffered a broken tooth and a bloody chin.

It was indeed stressful and overwhelming. I looked to the Lord for help and presented Him with a long list of prayer requests.

The atmosphere of the Retreat was very special. Pastor Edwin and Pastor Barnabas were open and transparent, sharing their trials and challenges. Before the morning

of the first day was over, Matthew 6:33-34 came to mind:

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

I was so focused on my prayer list that I had forgotten the Giver. My “I need and I want” list overtook my worship and fellowship with God. I was so focused on God’s hand and not His face. Sister Shevaun aptly likened my situation to putting two coins in front of my eyes and then complaining that I could not see beyond my problems.

God knew I needed to be extracted (temporarily) and distracted from my problems – to see, worship, and walk with Him daily. It reminded me that I needed to approach issues and challenges differently.

My daily morning walks are now times of fellowship with God. It has given me the strength and composure to face problems and know that the Lord hears us and has great compassion on us.

In the past few months, Sally and I have also seen how the Lord opened another timely door to our other challenge – finding a new home in the East.

The Lord truly hears us in our challenges and anxieties!



A believer for 30 years, after three decades working overseas, **SWEE TECK** and Sally chose to return to Singapore in 2023 to start life afresh.

The Final C

BY PEARLYN KOH

Crying almost always comes with the dreaded 'C' - when someone dear is diagnosed with cancer. Yet the tears of this mother are a mixed bag of guilt, gratefulness, reconciliation and relief.

Guilt

When Kian Lim, found out that her 18-year-old son, Joseph Kwok, was diagnosed with Hodgkin lymphoma in January 2022, she asked herself if there was something she could have done to prevent her son's cancer.

Or is it her family's genes? Kian is in her fifth year of remission from breast cancer and her brother is now receiving treatment from a cancer relapse. The Old Testament verses about generational curses bothered her and her children.

Too many questions surfaced, but Kian, as Joseph's primary caregiver, could not process these questions. She had to be strong physically and emotionally to care for him. These questions were shelved until much later and for a good reason too.

The journey from January 2022 till today has been a long and arduous one. Yet hidden within are slivers of blessings and Kian's gratefulness.

Gratefulness

After observing an abnormal size mass in the X-ray report, Joseph's GP told Kian to admit him that very night. Because of Covid-19 restrictions, Kian had to be separated from Joseph, and he had to spend Chinese New Year alone in the hospital. The family had to settle for waving at him outside the building from across the road.

"As Joseph was 18, I had to be around to sign papers, which gave me a chance to still see him and be with him in the hospital," said Kian.

It was tough as she witnessed her son suffering from the side effects of the different treatments - vomiting, diarrhoea and nausea, and seeing the scars on his body because of the two biopsies he had to go through.

"The most difficult time for me was when Joseph was in ICU due to complications arising from a virus attack. The doctor said



Joseph may have to be sedated for the invasive breathing ventilator. But in the end, God answered our prayers, and Joseph did not have to go through this procedure.

"These events broke my heart, yet the Lord gave Joseph lots of joy and he was in good spirits most of the time," recounted Kian.

"It was such a steep learning curve for me to respect and give him space as a patient, and not just see him as just my son. I have learnt so much and our once broken relationship was reconciled. He thanked me for staying in the hospital with him. He knew it was tough for me since I had to manage my younger daughter, Mikaela, who was taking her PSLE then."

Reconciliation

"During my chemotherapy, the nurses made me as comfortable as possible. Yet I was still feeling very nauseous. I asked my mum to sit by my bed and hold my hands as I

steadied myself," Joseph recalled.

"When I woke up from my intermittent naps, she was always there, holding my hands, when she could have just walked away while I dozed off. No. She was always there."

"Before cancer, I already knew my parents loved me. But many other things in life overwhelmed and overshadowed this love. Before cancer, I only saw things from my perspective. Having cancer made me take a step back and see the bigger picture. During my hospital stays, my mum slept over countless times. My dad took so much time off work to bring me to doctor's appointments. This love is hard to miss," said Joseph.

"Before, I wasn't the most religious person. I learnt about the reverence of God, the fear of God. Now, I am in awe of God. There are many small details, millions of puzzle pieces that fit together perfectly that only God



could bring about. And it is surreal because I am at the receiving end of it.”

“If my treatment hadn’t been delayed for one weekend, I wouldn’t have been Dr Daryl’s patient. This in turn got me the most advanced treatment for my cancer. And because Dr Daryl was also on the insurance panel, much of my expenses were covered.”

Despite receiving the most advanced treatment, Joseph still had a relapse, which required a second round of treatment, immunotherapy.

“I cannot imagine what repercussions there would have been if Joseph wasn’t Dr Daryl’s patient and didn’t receive the most advanced treatment,” said Kian.

“The fact that I am alive, every breath I take is a testimony of God’s presence,” said Joseph.

Relief

When Joseph finally got his all-clear, Kian wanted to testify to the goodness of God. However, the painful and challenging part

also crept back - did I cause my son’s cancer? Are we under a generational curse?

In God’s impeccable timing, Kian found relief. She was having breakfast at the CMC fellowship deck one Sunday when Reverend Chan Siew Chye walked by and she stopped him with her question. It was not something Rev Siew Chye had expected. But there and then, amidst the bustle and lively chatter at the deck in between services, Rev Siew Chye shared his views with sermon-like clarity and depth, as if he had prepared it just the night before.

“There are some who subscribe to generational curses, and some who don’t. When one sees a pattern happening in the family, some see it as a curse, renounce it and pray over it. This is one point of view.

“I don’t want to say it is not true, but I also don’t want to give the enemy too much credit. All these curses have no hold on God’s people but the enemy can cause us to think otherwise.

“The blessings that God gives us, the enemy cannot take it away. But the enemy can

The blessings that God gives us, the enemy cannot take it away. But the enemy can mislead you in your thoughts and you can fall into the trap of subscribing to it.

mislead you in your thoughts and you can fall into the trap of subscribing to it.”

Rev Siew Chye continued, stopping in between with looks of assurance and comfort.

“But we believe in Jesus Christ and know what He has accomplished for us. Even if there is a curse, it has already been broken.

“The spiritual reality is that the enemy is still at work. Demonic strongholds are real. But we must always look to the cross and remember that Jesus has taken all the sins and curses upon Himself. This is the contention that we all have to grapple with.

“Remember that the Spirit of God is in us. Do not allow the enemy a foothold; instead, let the truth and love of Christ reign over our hearts and minds. Let faith arise and break the curses of sickness and all spiritual strongholds in Jesus’ name.”

“We are to minister what is clear biblically in a situation that is not so clear. Point people

to the finished work of Christ,” said Rev Siew Chye.

And right there, tears rolled down Kian’s cheeks. When asked why she wept, she took a few weeks before she could answer, “Those were tears of relief. Finally, I don’t have to blame myself anymore.”



PEARLYN is penning God’s rhythm into the new chapter of her storybook.

The Goodness of God

BY JENNY GAN



2023 was a rollercoaster year filled with so many valleys and chasms. It was one thing after another—from family to work, but the deepest cut was from doing church ministry. People have the perception that Christians would not do or say unkind things to others, but that was what I experienced. I wept for weeks, feeling intense pain from a particular encounter.

Being a senior citizen in the marketplace is also challenging. I was forced to take no-pay leave without any valid reasons and had to compensate for my lunch breaks. Family life was complex and complicated, as I was the youngest. I'm glad I have a Heavenly Father whom I can turn to.

I kept asking God, "Why? What have I done wrong?" But there was no answer. But I thank God that in His time, He assured me during one of our worship services when I heard the song "The Goodness of God".

**"You have led me through the fire
And in darkest night, you are
close like no other"**

Since then, this song has become a big part of my daily worship. God's goodness kept running after me. Who could ask for more? He healed my brokenness bit by bit. During service, God would often touch me through the worship, and tears would trickle as I felt Him hugging me. I also experienced His healing power of compassion during the Corporate Prayer Meetings.

Although I struggled with these three issues daily, God did not forsake me and revealed more of Himself during my quiet time. I encountered questions on some days that dealt with my inner being, such as, "How can you focus on Christ today, rather than the world's evil? How can you remind yourself that you're precious to Him and He knows your heart and the work of your hands? How can His unchanging love give you hope and security in your present situation?" Reflecting on these questions reminded me of

Romans 8:28: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose."

1 Samuel 16:7b: "The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart"

The best "plaster" I received amid the pain was a surprise birthday party that my Girls' Brigade (GB) girls organised for me. God orchestrated this to remind me of my 35 years of GB service and the seeds planted in these girls during their school days. These seeds were and will continue to be watered by our Great Captain, Jesus Christ.



There were tears of joy on that unexpected evening. All these years of being there for them from their school days, witnessing them getting married, and becoming mothers did not go unnoticed. I'm deeply indebted to Jesus for the opportunity to journey with them as they faithfully serve Him in church and the mission field.

After that evening, I began to recall the other lives I had touched and impacted through church ministry, especially the children. The Holy Spirit jolted my thoughts and addressed the hurt that I was dealing with. *"How long are you going to wallow in this pity party? What happened to the covenant you made?"*

In GB, we are often asked to review our personal mission statements and add or amend them through the years. I penned my covenant as **"To touch and impact lives for His Kingdom."** As I reflected on my statement, I realised that I wanted to continue using the gifts God had given me for His Kingdom, to witness to the children in Bintan, Indonesia, as they grow from



toddlers to young children and teenagers.

As I meditated on God's word, it slowly but surely healed my aching heart. He is Jehovah Rohi, my Shepherd, who is also El Roi, who sees everything. Trusting in God's Name will change how I cope with these challenges.

*Your goodness is running after,
it's running after me
With my life laid down,
I'm surrendered now
I give you everything
Your goodness is running after,
it's running after me*

Colossians 3:23:
"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters".



JENNY always believes that touching and impacting lives is more valuable than mere words without actions.



Victorious in Christ

BY CATHERINE CHAN



The Diagnosis

It was early 2022. I was experiencing gastric pain but the medication I had was not working. I decided to visit the polyclinic to get more medication and I thank God I did as that was the start of my journey.

I was assigned to a senior doctor who did a physical examination of my stomach when I told him about the pain I was experiencing. During the examination, he detected something in my abdomen and decided to send me for blood tests and an x-ray.

Two days later, I received a call from the doctor saying that my results were not looking good. The blood test readings for my liver were a concern and he referred me to A&E to get it checked immediately.

I was admitted and spent seven days doing all sorts of tests and scans. On the seventh day, they finally found something near my pancreas, which led to another series of tests and scans. Two weeks later, they confirmed that I had pancreatic cancer.

It was Stage 2 cancer and the doctor advised for surgery to be done urgently. It was scheduled for 19 May 2022.

The Surgery

I was almost not able to go for the surgery due to my platelet count and weight. I had to have platelet transfusions before and during the operation. I was also barely 40kg which was a concern but it ended up working to the surgeon's benefit.

The procedure was a tedious one as all the organs in my abdomen had to be removed to access the pancreas. My weight allowed the surgeon to target the affected areas directly without having to manoeuvre through fats and flesh. The surgery took six hours instead of the usual eight; it was really a blessing.

By the grace of God, I pulled through with a newly constructed abdomen. It was extremely painful and without God, I would not have had the human strength to go through it.



The Support

I experienced God's abundant love throughout this journey. One way was through the support from my family and friends. Post-surgery, God sent people to take care of my daily needs as I live alone. My Care Group offered to cook for me so that I had proper meals. Others came by to pray for me, brought groceries, and arranged for someone to help me clean my house. There was even someone to feed the stray cats in the neighbourhood that I usually care for.

The Hand of God

On one of the mornings during this period of recovery, I was trying to send a text message, but suddenly lost control of my fingers. I called a doctor who suggested I go to A&E and again, I had to go through a series of tests which confirmed that I had a minor stroke.

The reason was due to post-operation trauma. My system could not take it. But God's hand was upon me; He allowed it to happen, but He prevented it from causing any paralysis. I truly felt like He was always watching over me amid all the pain.

The Relapse

Once I recovered from the surgery, I began chemotherapy. It took six months, ending in January 2023. I was very happy because it was just in time for Chinese New Year, but I started feeling very sick and weak. This lasted for one month, so I went back to see my oncologist. Another round of tests revealed that the cancer had come back viciously. It had started attacking my intestines and so I became an end-stage pancreatic cancer patient. I was given about three to five months to live.

I had two options: I could try aggressive chemotherapy, or I could opt for hospice care. I felt that God provided the treatment option and so I plucked up the courage and decided to go ahead. I am still going through chemotherapy now to control the spread of the cancer cells.

Although this chemotherapy has caused me to lose all my hair, it somehow does not bother me. In fact, a lot of people have been telling me that I look well, even without my hair. They also ask me how I still look so happy despite my condition.

The truth is that I wake up every morning and thank God for a new day, declaring that the joy of the Lord is my strength. Whatever hurdles come my way; I know I can ride through it with His joy.



The Victory

The truth is most people do not live more than five months after a pancreatic cancer diagnosis. Earlier this year, I asked my doctor how much time I had left. She said, "Catherine, I cannot put a tag on your life anymore. Twice I said you have three to five months, but you have outlived both and it's been two years since your diagnosis."

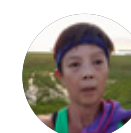
At my last appointment in April, she told me that there was something different in my results. My cancer markers went down tremendously, from 19,000 to 2,000. My most recent CT scan also revealed that the cancer cells have shrunk. I could not say anything but "Praise the Lord! Thank you, Jesus!"

Who has God been to me during this difficult and painful journey? He is good, gracious, loving, kind, awesome, and strong. He is my healer, comforter, and provider. I have declared that I am victorious over my cancer cells because God is my victory. I'm restored and healed in the name of Jesus.

Who has God been to me during this difficult and painful journey? He is good, gracious, loving, kind, awesome, and strong. He is my healer, comforter, and provider.

My focus now is to discover what God wants me to do with this time that He has given me. I pray that He will reveal it to me soon.

In the meantime, I hope that anyone who is struggling will be encouraged by my sharing to know that God is real, and He can and will come into your situation. Just like how I experienced God's love like a pair of invisible hands supporting me, you can experience the same love. It is accessible to us all. You just have to trust Him.



CATHERINE'S journey with God started in mid-80s and she was baptised in CMC in 1988.

Living Under God's Grace

Our Grace Fellowship is a ministry for Foreign Domestic Workers of any nationality. They meet on Sundays to worship, listen to the Word, pray and fellowship together. Here are some stories of God's healing and faithfulness in their lives!

Yulia Nurcahyani



On one Sunday morning, I could not get up because of the extreme pain in my lower back. My employer gave me a pain-relief patch for my back and I made my way to church. I told my Indonesian friend that I really needed healing, as I needed to do my work. I told God to heal me, as I need to take care of two old employers, and there's no way I can do my work with my back like this. When I was prayed for at the ministry session, I pleaded with God and told Him my concerns. After I went home, I realised suddenly that the pain was gone. This is the first time I experienced God's healing and it was an amazing experience! I will continue to trust in Him and His healing grace! All praise be to God!



Annabelle Arcayna



It was the last session of the Alpha series at Grace Fellowship. We had a ministry session where we first spend time soaking and then we were prayed for.

I had been suffering from extreme pain in my left shoulder for a few months, so I asked for healing for this pain. The neck and shoulder pain had gotten so bad I could not breathe. I was worried as I had seen a doctor before and it was not getting better.

When I was prayed for, I could feel the heat on my shoulder. I kept saying "Yes Lord, Yes Lord", believing that He is my Healer. After I was prayed for, I moved my arms and the pain was gone! I ran to tell all my friends about it.

This was not the first time I experienced God's healing. I had tinnitus (ringing in my ear) and it disappeared after I prayed for myself. These incidents have built my faith – every time I have sickness, I will pray first, before anything else. Even when my grandson in Philippines was sick, I just pray in faith, knowing that the Lord is good and our Healer.



Beverly Flores



"Praise the Lord. Blessed are those who fear the Lord, who find great delight in His commands. Their children will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed. Wealth and riches are in their houses, and their righteousness endures forever." Psalm 112:1-3

This Bible verse is very real to me as I look at my family. My mother, who will turn 98 years old this August, has always instilled in her nine children that God is first. Since we were young, she made the rule that it is a non-negotiable to go to church and worship God on Sundays. If we wanted to do anything else, it could only happen after church.

We didn't understand then, but now I can see the blessings she has sowed. When we grew up, we had the desire to seek God. In my own way, I continued to instill the same in my own children and I am thankful they are all serving in church.

I am not complete in material things but spiritually, I am full. I thank my mom for instilling in us this priceless knowledge that God should always come first, and all other things will fall into place.

My most recent testimony is about experiencing the peace of Christ when we give our troubles to Him.

My husband was hospitalised recently and the doctor told me to be prepared for the worst as he was very weak. At that time, I was preparing to go home to Philippines so I could go visit him. The thing is, even though the news seemed bad, I had peace. I told God, "I will be still as I know you are God, and if it is your will, you will heal him".

When I asked God why was I not worried, He replied and said, "I am with you".

When I arrived at the hospital, my husband had recovered mostly and was sitting up at the hospital, ready to be discharged. He was surprised to see me and asked me what I was doing there!

I thank God for this experience as my husband and I started praying together as a couple. In the past, we always prayed separately. He asked for us to start praying together and I know that this will draw us closer to each other and God. I could feel my husband's hands holding my hand tighter as we prayed through our concerns.

Even when I came back, we continued to pray together over the phone. He will ask me if I am free, and we will video call each other. I want to really thank God as this has drawn us not just together; but my husband's relationship with God has also transformed and his faith is stronger.

Now I am even more at peace, and trust that my family will be alright in God's hands. I am at peace, and they have everything as they have God in the centre of their lives.

I cannot contain my joy!



Come to SEA

BY SHONA KHOO

On Sunday, 31 March 2024, there was a certain joy and expectation in the air. It must have been because of Easter Sunday! We thank God for the big turnout at our Children's Ministry, ChristKidz, and must commend the children who were encouraged to invite someone who has yet to know Jesus. We rejoice that the children acted on the call so that more could come to know of God's great love for us.





The sea-themed programme began with icebreaker games which activated the five senses and a mind-testing fish toss game where two teams battled it out to win points. The programme was inspired by the book of Jonah that foreshadowed the coming of Jesus (John 3:16, Matthew 1:23). Jonah, the reluctant prophet, was given a mission from God which was not to his liking. He chose to run away from God rather than obey Him, and the book tells us how God stopped him and turned him around. He was tossed into the raging sea, but God provided a big fish to swallow Jonah and he was inside the fish for three days and three nights.

The story was told through a skit from the Big Fish's point of view, about the gift of salvation and God's redeeming love for all who repent and believe. Volunteers playing the Big Fish and Baby Big Fish characters entered on rolling waves and caught up with our superfluous Ken from the Barbie movie. Big Fish explained to Ken how it heard Jonah praying to God in its belly and said,

"Salvation comes from the Lord."
Then God ordered Big Fish to spit Jonah out onto the beach.

The children were given an opportunity to respond to the message and it was a privilege to witness over half of them stand up for prayer. Some invited Jesus into their lives, while others prayed for God to move in their lives and relationships.

Like Jonah, are we willing to bear our own cross (Luke 14:27) and take up our second chance to participate in God's work?



SHONA believes coffee is the natural starter for any conversation.

Connect Time!

On 24 March 2024, we hosted our inaugural Connect Time event to touch base with the newcomers of CMC! Around 30 visitors were greeted by the friendly faces of our pastors, leaders, and staff. During the session, the newcomers were divided into groups where the leadership could get to know them better and share more about our church.

Did you know that the stained glass in our sanctuary was preserved from our previous building?

This was one of the fun facts that Rev Dr Edwin Wong shared about our history during the session. He also introduced the leaders and staff, shared the vision and direction of CMC, and ways to get involved in church life. The session concluded with a time of Q&A in the respective groups.

If you're new to CMC, we'd love to get in touch with you! Find out more about us and let us know you're new at www.cmc.org.sg/im-new.





A New Perspective

BY TIMOTHY CHANG

In Uganda, Fulgenzio remembers being 5 or 6 years old when his family first received a bible. Every evening, his family would stoke the fire bright enough so that his elder brother – the only literate family member – could read it to them. This was only 45 years ago. His family learned about Christ through European missionaries and experienced a radical transformation. When Fulgenzio was in his 20s, by God's leading, he started a school. He taught local children basic math and languages under a tree. Today, the school has a

handful of simple buildings which educate hundreds of children every year, and they are proud to have handfals that score top grades in the national exams.

In his 40s, Ronny felt God tell him and his wife to give up their comfortable life in Australia to do God's work. That was 30 years ago. Today, their ministry in Borneo shelters over 700 children who were orphaned or would have been sold as brides shortly after their menarche. The ministry cares for and provides education for the children,

and some have gone on to graduate from university, joined the ministry or even become church planters.

Every day, thousands of once helpless people worldwide wake up with hope; hope because someone who loves God gave up what they had so that someone else could have an education, a home, food, a loving family, and could come to know God.

Did you feel something stir inside you as you read these stories? That is the Holy Spirit stirring within you as you think of God's love. Many of us are familiar with this feeling, especially when we are in worship or listening to a sermon. We feel alive and invigorated; however, we often find it difficult to live in tune with the Holy Spirit at other times.

My experience at Discipleship Training School (DTS) with Youth With A Mission (YWAM) in New Zealand helped me overcome this hurdle. When I was planning a sabbatical, DTS was initially not on my radar until I spoke to pastors and church staff about my plans. Through the training of the Lecture phase, mentorship by the staff, and challenges of the Outreach phase, I learnt to see life from a new perspective.

While YWAM is a missionary organisation, DTS is not explicitly designed as missionary training. Instead, I would liken DTS to attending a boot camp for all believers. Students get initiated into the basics of living in the kingdom. The ways of the world we have picked up (consciously or not) are shed off by God's word. We learn how to live in this new kingdom by understanding the principles and order of His kingdom. All of this potentiated by the context of **living in a community of believers, actively seeking and practising what we learnt, solidified my learning and faith.**

Every week, we received more than 12 hours of lectures on a topic from Monday to Friday. This level of depth would have taken at least a few weekends worth of workshops to dig through and was far more than I would ever



receive from weekly sermons. During the week, my classmates and I would reflect on and practise what was taught.

In doing so, we gained faith as we saw ourselves praying for and receiving healing, casting out demons, and receiving words of knowledge and unanimous direction for the team from God speaking to us individually.

While seeing miracles can be exciting, my biggest takeaways were in my relationship with God. In 1 Kings 19, God tells a discouraged Elijah to meet with Him. God sends powerful winds, earthquakes and fire, but the Lord was not in any of those but in a gentle whisper. Likewise, God spoke to me gently. In the week we were learning to hear God, we were paired with an undisclosed classmate and had to seek God for a bible character that reflected this person's life. I received the character Job but doubted whether to declare it for fear of inadvertently sounding like a curse over the person. **Despite the fear, I took a step of faith to declare it.** Afterwards, it was revealed to me I had been paired with my classmate who had suddenly lost his wife two years prior. This word of knowledge allowed him to receive emotional healing



from knowing God saw his pain. **This experience grew my faith that God was indeed speaking through me.**

I wanted to attend DTS to discern whether God had called me to work as a missionary. I often struggled to believe in my calling to missions because I was unsure whether it was others', my selfish desires, or God directing me to missions. During the week, I focused on identity and who we are in God, which helped me delineate who others say I am, who I think I am, and who God says I am. During that week, I was praying and meditating, and I got an answer from God. He spoke in an almost audible voice that, yes, I am being called to missions. When I received this in the spirit, I heard a loud "Finally!" from God.

My experience was not isolated either; all my classmates from different backgrounds, cultures, and ages shared similar takeaways. Despite age and cultural differences, we connected deeply over the course. Although YWAM mainly targets youths, you are never

too old to attend a DTS; our oldest students were 79 and 80!

If you feel called to missions or are keen to explore DTS, CMC can journey alongside you. Contact **Hoi Kok Fu** at kokfu.hoi@cmc.org.sg to find out more.



TIMOTHY loves witnessing and hearing testimonies of God's goodness. He's on a year-long sabbatical till August and will get married in June.

Silver and Gold: Reflections from COSC's Bursary Award Presentation Ceremony

BY MATTHEW CHIN



On an overcast Saturday morning in November, the Church opened its doors to a curious clientele. Children and youth, some scarcely older than the age of six, streamed through CMC's gates in the technicolour of their school uniforms.

Greeted by the smiles of congregant volunteers, the atmosphere was lively, resembling that of a carnival, replete with a photo booth and a pizza truck. The students had come for CMC's annual Bursary Award presentation ceremony.

The award ceremony, an initiative by the Christian Outreach and Social Concerns (COSC) ministry to assist underprivileged families, provides financial support to lower-income families in the neighbourhood.

Last November, over 140 students and their families attended the ceremony.

During the event, I met Mr Poh, who, along with his wife, had brought their two sons, JR and JL, 16 and 11 respectively, to the ceremony. Mr Poh spoke only Mandarin. “简单的就可以” (Translated to: “simple [phrases] will do”), he reassured me and my faltering Mandarin with a chuckle.

Mr Poh shared that he had to retire due to a series of health issues, leaving his wife, a supermarket cashier, as the sole provider for the family of four.

At the time of our conversation, JR, the older of the two sons, had just sat for his O-Level exams. “他的功课。。。他会自己做” (“He can do his schoolwork on his own”).



Mr Poh shared that JR displayed a knack for his academic endeavours throughout his years of formal education and particularly enjoyed the Sciences.

“这个小的比较头痛” (“The younger one is a bit more of a headache”), Mr Poh said of JL, wryly. Unlike his brother, the younger of Mr Poh’s two sons is more reluctant to subject himself to the rigours of education but excels especially in his Chinese classes.

CMC first connected with the Poh family five years ago, when JR’s then-school teacher introduced them to the Church’s bursary programme. Since then, the Church has kept in touch with the family through regular visits from COSC volunteers, who bear gifts and ask after the family.

Although the support from CMC is modest, it helps the Pohs get by. Mr Poh told me that the household’s sustenance came from home-cooked meals prepared by Mrs Poh – altogether breadwinner, homemaker and caregiver.

When even the most affordable store-bought

meal options cost close to \$5 a head, there is little option for the family to enjoy meals outside of the home, especially when his two growing sons have acquired the ravenous appetites so typical of adolescents.

According to the Department of Statistics, the Consumer Price Index for hawker food in October 2023 had risen by a staggering 4.5% from the previous year, an increase felt most keenly by families like the Pohs.

Shifting his gaze wistfully into the empty styrofoam cup in his hands, Mr Poh lamented the perils of inflation and rued the conditions that left him incapacitated. Out of work for nearly two years at the time of our conversation, Mr Poh had spent several stints in and out of hospital for the treatment of various conditions, including a low platelet count and disorders which had resulted in bouts of paralysis.

Nonetheless, the weight of scarcity seemed to have done little to temper the family’s dreams. Their older son JR, had hoped to earn himself a spot in Nanyang Junior



however, I found some comfort by the idea that the distributed funds were less important than the messages of hope that CMC volunteers bring to families like the Pohs. These volunteers spend their time navigating the turbulence of life with individuals like Mr Poh do so while bearing alms with an eternal significance, carrying little pieces of the Church to individuals who might otherwise have no reason to ever step foot into one.

The Bursary award ceremony typically runs at the end of each year. For other opportunities to volunteer with COSC initiatives, visit www.cmc.org.sg/community-outreach

College or Raffles Institution, two of the country’s most eminent pre-university institutions. Education, so the narrative goes, is the great countervail to the cycle of poverty.

Still, the prospect of financing the dreams of tertiary education for either of the two boys poses a challenge for the family with barely enough to shrug off the ever-present reminders of lack.

As I thought about the Church’s role in the lives of this family, I realised a striking difference between their experiences and my own: a contrast between the affliction of poverty juxtaposed against the subtle symptoms of abundance displayed in the sleek architecture of our modern church building. Surely there is more we could give?

As I surveyed the interactions between the beneficiaries and the other volunteers,



20-something and single, **MATTHEW** is, by his own admission, not ready to mingle. Undergraduate by day, and fledgling CG leader by night, Matthew has been a part of the CMC family since the time that it had a kindergarten.

Worship Works Wonders

BY FAITH YEONG

Throughout the years, IGNITE Camp has always included a segment for local outreach because we wanted IGNITE youths to get an opportunity to serve as one community, just as Jesus came to serve and not to be served.

During camp last year, we were split into three groups, each sent to a different location. My group was sent to Singapore Christian Home (SCH). My group organised games and carolled at the shared space where

residents who are physically mobile would gather. A few of us were also in charge of ward-to-ward carolling for residents who were bedridden and unable to join the rest at the shared space.

Initially, the ward-to-ward carolling caught me off guard because we were not briefed beforehand. All that was given to me was a compiled list of song lyrics that I could choose to sing from. I felt that there was not much time to prepare.

We were going to sing acapella, but I decided to ask if a guitar was available, as I felt it would add to the atmosphere and make the carolling more lively. When I discovered a guitar I could borrow on-site, I realised I had spoken too soon. I started wrestling in my heart with fear and discomfort because I was not a confident guitarist and was used to only singing. However, I felt God prompt me to be bold and GO, so I took the guitar and went ahead.



When we visited the wards, I experienced emotions of sadness seeing the bedridden residents just lying on the bed, staring at us. Some of them were too weak even to move their arms; the only movement we observed was their eyes. Though we initially did not get much response when we started carolling, I firmly believed in the power of the lyrics that we were singing in the room. In my heart, I was also saying a prayer of blessing and peace over them.

I felt my heart break for the residents, and it made me realise that life here on earth is so temporal, and one day, age will inevitably catch up with us. **When that day comes, will I be full of regrets about how I lived my life, or will I have peace knowing that every step of the way, I chose to deny myself, take up my cross, and follow Jesus daily?**

In SCH, the particulars of the residents are pasted on the walls beside their beds. One lady's particulars indicated that she was not a believer. When I saw that, I felt hesitant and doubted if the song we planned to sing (Jesus Loves Me) was appropriate because the fear of offending her or receiving her judgment was running through my mind.

But after double-checking that the song choice was okay, one of the staff just encouraged us to proceed. So I sat down beside her bed and started playing the chords. The lady started crying as we sang Jesus Loves Me in our imperfect Chinese. She was touched by the words we were singing over her.

That deeply moved me because it was a simple song requiring less than 10 minutes of preparation time and a messy, on-the-spot guitarist who only knew four chords. Yet this lady was still touched by God.

Watching all that unfold touched me because I realised that even when we do



not see, God is moving, and things are happening in the spiritual realm that we may not know. I was also amazed because if I had not followed that prompting to take up the guitar and go, I would not have had the opportunity to sit back and observe. Instead, my eyes would have been glued to the lyrics on my phone, and I would just be singing like I usually do for worship, and I might have missed this moment.

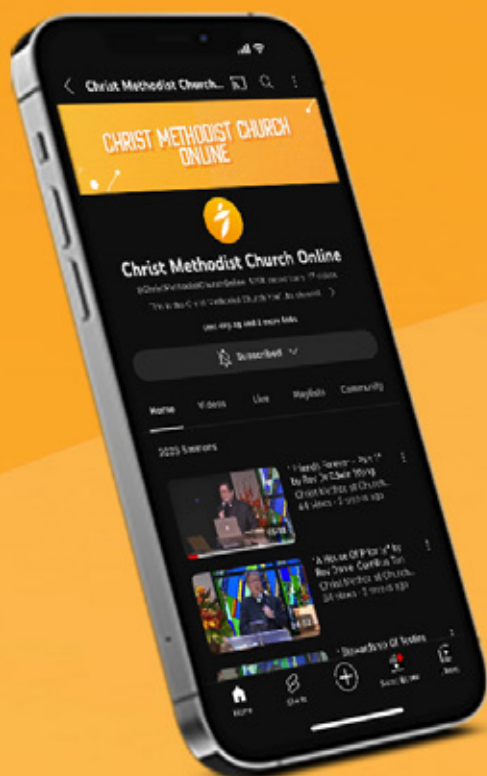
The simplicity and beauty of our messy imperfection reminded me of the heart of

worship—that it's not about the band, the lights, the vibe, the drums, super excellent harmonies, etc., but it's really about the heart. Do we mean the words that we sing? Do we know who we are singing to? Do we understand the weight of the words we are singing and the power of the name of Jesus that we call out to?

This encounter reminded me of the weight and power that Jesus holds. We may never know the weight of a seemingly insignificant prayer or a soft worship song in the spiritual realm. **There is power in the name of Jesus, and God is very much alive in our lives.** Even if we do not see God move in spectacular, grand ways, He is working in small yet equally powerful and transformative ways that our human eyes and minds may not be able to comprehend. Let us keep our faith and keep pressing on until the final day when our King Jesus returns.



FAITH has been in CMC since she was born, and she likes to sing.



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