

# church

THE CHURCH IN SINGAPORE

# times

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## From The Elders' Room...



**P**raise the Lord and all glory and honour be to Him Who reigns over us!

We have come to another year. As the church we have been richly blessed by the Lord. He is the One Who supplies us all our needs. He is the One Who preserves us from day to day, through good days and bad. He is the One, faithful and true, Who upholds us and in so doing keeps us faithful and true to the vision, we have received, of Christ and the church. He is the One Who is the Head of His body, the church.

The Bible warns us to “be sober, be vigilant”, especially in the latter days, “because (our) adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” (1 Pet 5:8) Hence, dear brothers and sisters, let us stand “steadfast in the faith” against all troublemakers and false prophets who are very active even today in trying to draw away the very Elect from His truth.

And because of the influence of the materialistic world that we live in, people tend to believe what they want to believe. They will accept what they are comfortable with and reject teachings they do not or cannot accept. We need to be clear of what the Bible tells us and ask the Lord for much grace to walk in His truth. Otherwise, we will be like “children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine” (Eph 4:14).

We can do this only if we are grounded in the Word of the truth, and to be so grounded, we need to read our Bible daily whilst looking to the Lord to speak to us and strengthen us in our daily walk with Him. In this way, we will have a daily experience of and with the Lord which we can then take to the meetings on the Lord's Day, our topmost experience to share with saints and to encourage them. All this is to be done to the praise and for the glory of God, our Father.

Therefore, as Paul reminds us in the epistle to the Ephesians, we need to remember constantly that “the God

and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ... has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ” and “raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (1:3; 2:6). Let us “therefore ... walk worthy of the calling with which (we) were called”; indeed as “imitators of God ... walk in love”; “walk as children of light”; “walk circumspectly” (4:1; 5:1-2, 8, 15).

This year we are planning, the Lord willing, to have a special meeting, in either November or December to help brothers and sisters strengthen their walk with the Lord. When the date is firmed up, we will make the announcement.

There will be a Children's Camp from Wednesday, 8 June 2016 to Friday, 10 June 2016. This will be a day camp in which the children will come in in the morning and go home at the end of each day.

The youths and young people will be having a camp from Wednesday, 15 June 2016 to Saturday, 18 June 2016 to be held at the Le Grandeur Palm Resort, Johor.

We have also planned for a number of Gospel Meetings to be held on some of the public holidays. The first ones were on 1 and 2 January 2016, followed by one on Friday, 25 March 2016. The dates for the others are printed in the church table calendar. Do remember to pray for the Lord to work in these meetings – that when the good news is preached to our unsaved relatives and friends, they will be convicted and will turn their lives over to the true and living God.

As for the Lord's Day and Home Meetings, we will be pursuing the books of Philipians and Colossians after we complete Ephesians. We are looking to the Lord to lead us in the pursuit of His Word so that we can all be edified and build up His testimony in Singapore.

“Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. Let all that you do be done with love.” (1 Cor 16:13-14)

## Singing Hymns & Praising God

**W**hy are singing unto and praising our Father God and the Lord Jesus an integral part of Christian meetings? God declared in Isaiah 56:7 that “My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.” In Hebrew, “praying” includes the meaning of singing one’s prayer unto God during worship. So God’s house is to be a house prayer and praise.

### God desires that we sing unto & praise Him

In the Old Testament, God’s people expressed their heartfelt thankfulness to Him by singing and praising, especially after they had experienced His deliverances. For example, after they had left oppressive Egypt and crossed the Red Sea, they sang this song: “I will sing to the LORD, For He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea! The LORD is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation; He is my God, and I will praise Him; My father’s God, and I will exalt Him”; after King David had erected the tabernacle, “he appointed some of the Levites to minister before the ark of the LORD, to commemorate, to thank, and to praise the LORD God of Israel”; after the Diaspora, they “shall return, And come to Zion with singing, With everlasting joy on their heads” (Exo 15:1-2; 1 Chr 16:4; Isa 51:11). Psalm 98:4 even calls on all the earth to shout joyfully to the LORD, to break forth in song, rejoice, and sing praises!

In the New Testament, we are also asked to sing psalms when cheerful; speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, sing and make melody in our heart to the Lord; rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in everything, for this is the will of God for us (James 5:13; Eph 5:19; 1 Thess 5:16-18). We should respond to such a call, amen!

### To worship & thank God

God is the Creator. Dominion and fear belong to Him, He makes peace in His high places; His kingdom rules over all; the heavens declare His glory, and the firmament shows His handiwork (Job 25:2; Psa 103:19; 19:1). God is also our Saviour, Master and Beloved. When we consider who He is and what He has done, we cannot help but thank, extol and praise Him from our heart. This is worshipping and glorifying God by offering the sacrifice of praise, which please God better than an ox or bull (Heb 13:15; Psa 69:31).

“I will praise the name of God with a song, And will magnify Him with thanksgiving”; “I will sing to the LORD, Because He has dealt bountifully with me” (Psa 69:30; 13:6). Besides extolling God, we must also thank Him, for He has not only given us all things for our enjoyment, but also saved



us from the dominion of sin. When we were still in sin, He sent His beloved Son Jesus Christ to accomplish redemption, save us from eternal damnation and perdition, and give us eternal life. His works are worthy of our thanksgiving. Through hymn-singing, we thank God and the Lord Jesus who has done God’s will and brought us the blessing of eternal life. Our God is worthy of our thanksgiving.

### To declare God’s deeds & virtues

“Sing praises to the LORD, who dwells in Zion! Declare His deeds among the people”; “Men shall speak of the might of Your awesome acts, And I will declare Your greatness” (Psa 9:11; 145:6).

There are countless psalms and spiritual songs which declare and extol the wondrous acts and virtues of our great God, and inspire us to appreciate Him more. For instance, hymn 423 in our hymnal describes the Lord’s love and how He suffered weariness, woe, wanderings and bitterest agony for us. Psalms 59:16 and 71:22 proclaim His power, mercy and faithfulness, while Revelation 15:3 declares, “Great and marvellous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!”

### To express our love for God

Innumerable saints have penned fine expressions of their desire and appreciation for the Lord’s love, e.g. “Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth – For your love is better than wine. Because of the fragrance of your good ointments, Your name is ointment poured forth; Therefore the virgins love you. Draw me away! We will run after you. The king has brought me into his chambers. We will be glad and rejoice in you. We will remember your love more than wine”; “My beloved is white and ruddy, Chief among ten thousand”; “David ... spoke to the LORD the words of this song on the day that the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. And he said: I will love You, O LORD, my

strength”; “LORD, I have loved the habitation of Your house, And the place where Your glory dwells” (Song 1:2-4; 5:10; Psa 18:1; 26:8).

Today many Christians lack the words to express our feelings for the Lord’s great love in dying for us on the cross to redeem us. We may extol the Lord and express our adoration for Him with the hymns and psalms written by the saints, which can move us to more consecration and willingness to bear our cross and follow Him in love.

### To pour out our heart to God when afflicted

As a sojourner on the way to glory, we will meet trials and tribulations and it is indeed not easy to keep our spirits up. At such times, we can pour out our heart to the Lord through psalms and prayers, and experience His deliverance and victory over all difficulties: “In my distress I cried to the LORD, And He heard me”; “You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance” (Psa 120:1; 32:7). Like David, we may also turn to our Saviour anew through hymns and praises, and be comforted and encouraged by experiencing Him as the source of our joy.

### To sing songs of victory before the enemy

We Christians have an enemy from of old whose aim is to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10). How do we overcome Satan? Psalm 22:3 tells us that God is enthroned in the praises of Israel. When we exalt God by our praises, the enemy will flee. We see a stirring example of this in 2 Chronicles 20:1-22: “The people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and others with them besides the Ammonites, came to battle against Jehoshaphat ... And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the LORD, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army ... Now when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambush against the people ... who had come against Judah; and they were defeated.” Hallelujah, we can praise God and sing songs of victory before the enemy!

### How do we sing hymns to praise God?

Hymns are spiritual songs that express the hymnists’ innermost feelings engendered by their experiences of God’s salvation and understanding of His truths. The contents include praises, love, consecration, the gospel, etc. We should learn to appreciate their spiritual meanings, truths and feelings. Paul teaches us so: “I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding” (1 Cor 14:15).

Let us all learn and practise worshipping the Lord by extolling Him from deep within with our spirit and understanding. If we do not use our understanding, we will neither comprehend the content of our praises nor enjoy the Lord and the Father thereby. God is exalted by our praises in all kinds of situations and at church meetings, and such praising will continue forever and ever (Rev 5:13). Amen!

## Reports

# Shepherds’ Conference – 9 & 10 November 2015

The conference started with a night treasure hunt by the Singapore River. In the following morning, more than 40 shepherds came together to have fellowship.

We reiterated the objective of the children’s service by reviewing the purpose, origin and history of Sunday Schools, and considering Proverbs 11:14: “Where there is no counsel, the people fall”. Should we lose sight of our goal, our service might degenerate into mere routine, without motivation to give our best to the Lord. We might become easily discouraged and even give up this service. This would not aid the spiritual growth of the shepherds or children. We were encouraged to renew our personal objectives with regard to our service and to serve in 2016 with renewed goals and purposes.

Then we emphasized two principles in service: “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart”; “But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully” (Gal 6:7-9; 2 Cor 9:6). We saw that sowing to the Spirit included spending our time, money, energy and mind on God and on serving Him. May we be those who sow and reap bountifully, amen!

# Elderly Saints’ Outing – 10 November 2015

For their eleventh annual outing, the elderly saints visited River Safari. From August 2015, Singapore had been affected by haze and the Pollutant Standards Index (PSI) even hit the hazardous range of over 400. We prayed earnestly that the Lord would remember the weakness of the elderly saints and be gracious to us. Indeed, by early November, the condition improved! A day before the outing, our faith was again tested when the PSI climbed to 114 and it rained. Thank our merciful Lord for hearing the church’s prayer! The weather on 10 November was just perfect for an outing, glory be to God!

To facilitate mingling and fellowship, the 95 saints, of whom 75 were above 60 years old, were divided into 15 groups of about six persons each. After three hours of sightseeing, though we were tired physically, our spirits were high. It was a memorable first visit to River Safari for most of us.

We thank and worship God for the beautiful weather and the Lord’s wonderful leading!



## What the participants felt about the outing

- ⇒ “Basically, it was a smooth outing with improved arrangements. Everyone had a great time! I praise God for all His gifts, and thank the brothers and sisters for doing their best in all the arrangements.”  
*Sis Ho H.L.*
- ⇒ “I must thank God for the fine weather, for taking care of each and every one of us, for the good food and smooth journey. May God remember all those who could not join us and those who were sick. May His blessings be upon them too!”  
*Bro Teo B.L.*
- ⇒ “Praise the Lord for the outing! Thank God for the weather, and for giving me the opportunity to join the outing. I could see that all the saints had a good time mingling with and helping one another in many ways. I also saw that the saints really cared for their domestic helpers in many ways. This really touched me. This is really the wonderful church life. It's joy unspeakable. Praise the Lord!”  
*Sis Jenny Khoo*
- ⇒ “Every saint came with a smiling face and rejoiced in the gathering in the Lord Jesus Christ. We saw animals created by God, as well as man's adoration of the Lord. An elderly sister told me that originally she had planned to take a bus, but her loving son-in-law insisted on driving her to the hall. Oh, man's heart is precious!”  
*Bro Neo T.K.*
- ⇒ “Our mouths shall praise Him with joyful lips.”

*Bro Chua C.H.*

- ⇒ “I believe that we all enjoyed the trip thoroughly. More importantly, we had time to chat with each other and had a good time of fellowship. The lunch was very good and plentiful, I am sure all went back fully fed. Of course, we did not collect 12 baskets full of leftovers, but we had enough for all. Praise the Lord! The fellowship around the lunch table was even better as we got to talk to one another in an informal atmosphere and about informal subjects. I thank the organisers and helpers for the hard work they had put in to make the outing a very fruitful and meaningful one. In fact, some of us are already looking forward to next year's outing!”  
*Bro Timothy Chew*
- ⇒ “To God be the glory!”  
*Bro Sim K.Y.*
- ⇒ “Thank the Lord for always hearing our prayers, and giving us His grace, lovingkindness and blessings throughout the annual outings. ‘And also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labour – it is the gift of God.’ (Ecc 3:13) Amen!”  
*Sis Zhuang*
- ⇒ “It was very enjoyable. God is good and if the Lord is willing, I can activate more young adults to support the outing next year.”  
*Bro Low K.Y.*



*Thank God for the wonderful weather & His wondrous leading!*



*What a joy to tour the River Safari with the saints!*

# I Know Who Holds Tomorrow

Christian and secular verses are totally different in nature, but they do share some similarities, one of which is the distillation of the most intense sufferings into the most deeply moving expressions. Good poetry is pregnant with meaning, so we must first grasp its meaning before we can appreciate its precious message.

I don't know about tomorrow;  
I just live from day to day.  
I don't borrow from its sunshine  
For its skies may turn to grey.  
I don't worry o'er the future,  
For I know what Jesus said.  
And today I'll walk beside Him,  
For He knows what is ahead.

Many things about tomorrow  
I don't seem to understand  
But I know who holds tomorrow  
And I know who holds my hand.

I don't know about tomorrow;  
It may bring me poverty.  
But the One who feeds the sparrow,  
Is the One who stands by me.  
And the path that is my portion  
May be through the flame or flood;  
But His presence goes before me  
And I'm covered with His blood.

Every step is getting brighter  
As the golden stairs I climb;  
Every burden's getting lighter,  
Every cloud is silver-lined.  
There the sun is always shining,  
There no tear will dim the eye;  
At the ending of the rainbow  
Where the mountains touch the sky.



This simple, popular and helpful song was written by Ira Forest Stanphill (1914-93). Although he was in a very difficult situation when he wrote it, by his great faith and intimate knowledge of the Lord, he could still magnify the Lord. He was born in New Mexico, USA. Exceptionally gifted and brought up in a musical family, he could play the piano, organ, ukulele and accordion, and sing beautifully when he was ten. At 12, he consecrated his whole life to God. At 22, he was already a renowned gospel songwriter and pastor. However, when everything seemed to be going well, his wife had an affair; despite his efforts to save their marriage, they divorced and she left with their child.

Some said divorce was not a good testimony and doubted Stanphill could be a credible pastor. Though harshly criticised, he bore all the misunderstanding and pain alone quietly. Actually, he did not break his marriage vow and tried to be reconciled with his wife, but to no avail. When he was about 50, he moved to Texas to teach in a music school where he met a young sister who loved the Lord. They fell in love, but he felt he could not remarry even though his wife had left him (1 Cor 7:11). So he sought to focus on his music ministry and urged the sister to seek her own happiness. At times when he felt he could not give up the relationship, he thought of giving up church work. One day, as he was driving and brooding over this struggle, God spoke to him and the lyrics of this song came forth. God's presence lifted his spirit. When he got home, he immediately composed this greatly comforting song.

A few months later, Stanphill's ex-wife passed away after a car accident. He could now marry his love and lead a happy, new life. He had gone through much suffering, felt fearful and lost, and struggled with doubts. But over and over again, he trusted wholly in the Saviour, committed his feelings and needs to Him in prayer, and believed fully that He was the One who held tomorrow. After he had spent years in prayer, God replied him by turning his afflictions into a song for His use. Through its content and beautiful music, we can appreciate more of God's redemption and love, and likewise declare that we know Who holds tomorrow, and we know Who holds our hand.

(Excerpted and translated, with permission, from [blog.xuite.net/xmas2305/blog.15888886](http://blog.xuite.net/xmas2305/blog.15888886))

## From Idols To God

When I was young, my family stayed with my maternal grandparents and uncles in an extended family with up to 30 members. All the grandchildren were regularly gathered by our grandparents to kneel before the idols in the living room to burn incense. During the Ghost Festival in the seventh month and New Year of the lunar calendar, our worship rituals were even more elaborate. If the family met an insoluble problem, we would go to a temple to pray. So the gods I knew from young were the idols we worshipped.

In primary school, the only thing I knew about Jesus was that – according to a teacher – He was a historical figure who was crucified to die for and save men. I got to know more about Jesus when I was in Anglican High School. The weekly assembly comprised hymn-singing, reciting the Lord's Prayer and preaching, while the social study class, the reading of the four Gospels. I learned that Jesus was the Son of God who could perform many miracles like casting out demons, healing and raising the dead. Once an aunt was harassed by demons and always suffered excruciating pain at a specific hour. My grandfather sought help at a temple and she indeed got well. So I thought Christianity was just another religion which could heal the sick etc, similar to my grandfather's. Since it was to be expected that Jesus would be preached in a mission school, I did not take it seriously.

When I was in secondary 2, a classmate took a few of us to a Gospel Meeting. The speaker said sinners should repent and believe in Jesus. I felt his preaching was very different from that in our school. He kept stressing the problem of sin and self-deception if one said one had no sin. He also asked if we had stolen, lied, hated anyone etc. Immediately I recalled that I had stolen my grandmother's money and a classmate's pen, lied and hated someone before. I thought, "Oh, so all these are sins!" Finally, he exhorted us to quickly believe in Jesus, repent and confess our sins, for those who believed would receive eternal life while those who did not were condemned and would end up in the lake of fire where the fire would not be quenched and the worms would not die. I thought of hell right away and was all the more fearful since I knew I had sinned. Following his guidance, I believed in the Lord Jesus, repented and confessed my sins. From then on, I realised that the god of this age had blinded men from knowing the true and living God and Jesus, and turned them to worship the devil hiding behind idols.

After believing in the Lord, I was fervent in spirit. With the saints' encouragement, I had the boldness to get baptised with a few classmates. A sister urged me to take a Christian stand before my family, forsake idols and no longer eat food offered to them. When I heard that some brothers and sisters were persecuted by their family and were even driven from their homes, I began to feel uneasy. At our family's monthly worship, the whole pot of rice was offered to the idols, and at the Ghost Festival, the entire sack of rice was offered. I wondered what I should do. The sister assured me that the Lord was responsible for everything and prayed with me.

Eventually I mustered up my courage and revealed to my second aunt that I had believed in Jesus, and as a Christian, I would no longer worship idols or eat food offered to them. She told this to my mother who in turn related it to my grandfather (a rather authoritarian head of the family). Wondrously, he replied, "She is a girl and will belong to another family, let her believe in what she wants." When I heard that, my heart was filled with joy, peace and thanksgiving to the Lord. From then

on, whenever my family worshipped the idols, a separate portion of food would be prepared for me. Not long after, my grandfather instructed that only a pot of rice and not the whole sack be offered at the Ghost Festival. I experienced the Lord Jesus as a true, living and faithful God. I worshipped Him with all my heart. Although my uncles mocked at my faith and said some unpleasant things occasionally, I did not feel aggrieved at all and remained silent when I thought of my Lord who was crucified for me.

I often met with the brothers and sisters to have fellowship, read the Bible and listen to messages. By and by, I knew more about my Saviour and God. After I had graduated and started working, because of physical weakness, I stopped attending meetings. And this lasted for ten long years. But God did not forget me and spoke to me through my mother. One day when I complained to her that I was unwell, unexpectedly she said, "You have chosen to believe in Jesus, so I cannot help you to pray at the temple. You should go pray to your Jesus. Our friend in the next block is also a believer of Jesus and goes to meetings on Sundays, but you laze at home!" Her words struck me and I felt extremely bad and ashamed, for I saw how pathetic I was and had to be awakened by the words of my mother who had not yet believed in the Lord. Straightaway I turned to the Lord and asked Him to save me from such a condition and give me the strength to go back to church meetings. Thank the Lord, gradually I led the church life again and joined the children's service. Although I still have bodily weaknesses, by the Lord's strength, I will continue to serve and attend meetings. My physical condition has improved and I really enjoy serving the Lord with the brothers and sisters.

In retrospect, I can testify that although my way was not very smooth, when I was lonely, the Lord was my friend; when I was disappointed, He was my encouragement; when I was weak, He was my strength; when I was helpless, He was my help. He has never left or forsaken me, He is my all, I want to thank and praise Him!

Sis Jasmine Seah



### Announcements & Prayer Items

#### Gospel Meeting

Date : 7 May & 4 Jun 2016  
Time : 7.30pm

Date : 6 Jul 2016  
Time : 10.30am

Venue : Meeting Hall

#### Children's Camp

Date : 8-10 Jun 2016  
Venue : Meeting Hall

#### Youth & Young People's Camp

Date : 15-18 Jun 2016  
Venue : Le Grandeur Palm Resort, Johor