


## The Marriage Course

By The Family Life Ministry

 The Marriage Course is a fun, enriching and very practical course of seven sessions. There is no group work and each couple's conversations are completely private. More importantly it equips couples with practical tools to build a strong and healthy marriage. Run over seven consecutive Sunday afternoons, the course will help the couples to:

- Understand each other's needs
- Communicate more effectively
- Grow closer by learning methods to resolve conflict
- Recover from the ways you may have hurt each other
- Recognise how your upbringing affects your relationship
- Improve relationships with parents and in-laws
- Develop greater sexual intimacy
- Discover each other's "love language" and much, much more....

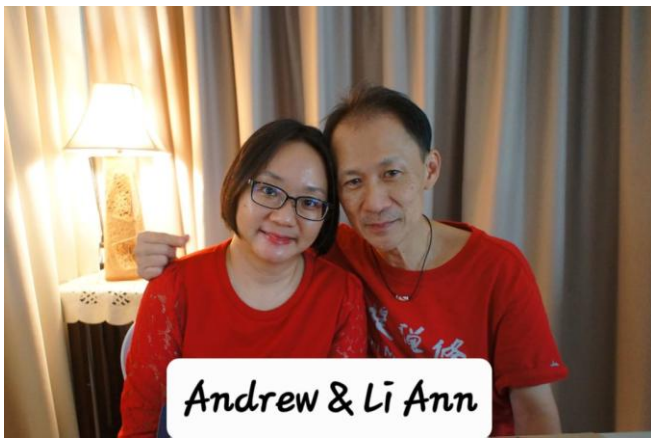
This course, whilst based on Christian principles, is very helpful for Christians or non-Christians alike, troubled or stable marriages.



A cohort of 7 couples had completed the course in November 2022 and two of these "graduated" couples now share a slice of their experience with us.

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*By Andrew & Li Ann*

My husband and I have been married for 23 years. Like every couple we have gone through thick and thin together. For the past 20 years we have devoted all our energy into bringing up our children. We made sure they studied well and have good moral values to fall back on. We have not put much attention to nurture each other as a couple as most of the time we are caught up in the operational side of family life. Having more free time in our hands as our three boys have grown up, I decided to reset our marriage post-pandemic by taking the initiative to sign up for **The Marriage Course** with the intention to tilt our marriage to a better direction.

This is by far the wisest decision I have made, so to speak. Although my husband was skeptical at first about the course, I told him to go for it and naturally, being a person who loves food, he fell for it! LOL

It was indeed an eye opener for me as to how a successful marriage can be

nurtured over the years by putting in the right input and love.

I finally discovered that I needed to change my attitude as a wife and not be too “masculine”, as I was a one-stop-centre to solve everything in the house. LOL

The biggest takeaway from this course is to be sensitive to the love language of your spouse. In this case, loving words is his cup of tea not mine. I immediately made an intentional change to put in more loving words, be it speaking or texting, just to express my love to him daily.

My husband has also been sensitive to my love language - spending quality time together and he tries to spend more meal times with me as we dine together on a weekly basis.

I believe we were in the safe hands of God throughout this course as He continued to guide and show us the correct way to live as a happy couple.

I would like to thank Sis Grace and her team of dedicated volunteers for showing their love and care during this seven-week course and the encouragement we received as a couple. Praise God for his Mercy and Grace!



*By Philip Yip & Deng Fang*

Committing to seven Sundays for The Marriage Course has been greatly challenging yet rewarding. We decided to join **The Marriage Course** with an open mind to learn the tools to a successful marriage. Though we felt that our marriage was OK, we realized that there were areas we had neglected and could do better.

The topic for Session 5 on The Impact of Family allowed me to understand my wife's thoughts on her family and also mine. It enabled us to talk about our upbringing, thus allowing us to understand each other better. In the last session, we discussed about our love language and were surprised to learn the highlights of our affection. Ultimately, it has enabled us to realize that we need to prioritize each other amidst the busyness of life and the challenges of starting a young family.

Overall, this course has provided us the tools to better communicate with each other and we enjoyed the atmosphere and privacy provided. Last but not least, praise be to God for watching over our marriage for the many years to come.

## **From A Pastor's Desk**

### **Year 2023 – Year of Worshipping the Lord**

#### **Come Worship the Lord Every Day All the Time**

*By Rev Dr Chuah Seong Peng*

As we begin a new year, I want to encourage and exhort all of us in HLCE to come together to look at this vital component of our spiritual life as Jesus' disciples - to worship our Lord. Let us come and worship Him with all of our hearts, our minds, our strength, and our souls. The questions you may ask: What is worship? How are we to worship Him?

#### **What is worship?**

When we talk about worship, the first thing that comes to mind is often the corporate worship we do every weekend in the church. But the Bible is silent on such corporate worship service. It only gives us some understanding of the people coming together for fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer to encourage one another (1 Corinthians 14:23; Acts 2:46; Hebrews 10:25). The apostles do not speak explicitly of 'worship'. In Matthew 21:13, when Jesus cleared the temple of all the business dealings, He tells us that His temple is to be called a house of prayer.

So what is worship? In the Old Testament the most common word for worship is the Hebrew word *hishtahvah*, occurring 171 times. Its basic meaning is "bow down," with

the sense of reverence, respect, honor, and awe. In the Greek New Testament, the main word for worship, translated from the Hebrew is *proskuneo*. This word occurs 26 times, with 21 times in the book of Revelation, where people would bow down in worship before Jesus. But in the epistles of Paul it occurs only once, namely in 1 Corinthians 14:25 where the unbelievers fall down at the power of prophecy and confess God is really among the people. And it doesn't occur at all in the letters of Peter, James or John. Astonishing, isn't it? So what is worship?

**True Worship is in Spirit and in Truth**  
Jesus in His encounter with the Samaritan woman in John 4:21 tells us worshipping God is not confined to a place, *'Woman,' Jesus replied, 'believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.'*

Worship does not need a building, a priesthood, and a sacrificial system. Rather we are to worship God in Spirit and in truth as Jesus said in John 4:23, *"Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks."*

Worship in Spirit means being carried along by the Spirit and it occurs mainly as an inward spiritual experience arising from the heart, not an outward bodily event. Worship in

truth means our worship is shaped and directed by the true view of God through His word. True worship is therefore from the heart, centres on God, for who He is. Worship is an inward, authentic expression of the heart with outward manifestations that honor and glorify God.

### **Worship as an act of service to God**

The second most common word for worship in the OT is the word *latreuo* used over 90 times, which is usually translated "*serve*". For example, in Exodus 23:24, *"You shall not worship their gods or serve them."* Worship is our every act of service unto God for His glory. In Romans 12:1, Paul says, *"Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship."*

Worship involves every act we do and every word we speak in honor of God in our daily life.

It starts by giving the most valuable part of us – *'ourselves'* to Him. We are to surrender our beings, died to self, and let His Spirit works in us to will and act according to His good purpose.

### **Worship the Lord in the hearts and hands, every day and all the time!**

Worship is therefore not about the place and the rituals, but it's about the heart, not just Sunday but every day and all the time in our life. It is about giving our best to God. This is what Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 10:31, *"So whether you eat or drink or*



*whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” Also in Colossians 3:17, “And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” This is the form of true worship we are called to - to act and speak in a way that reflects the value of the glory of God in the name of Jesus with thanks to God from the heart.*

Therefore, in the coming year, let us come back to the heart of worship – come worship and serve Him and give all glory, honour, and praise unto the Lord every day and all the time with our life!

To God be the glory!



## **Faith**

*By Dr Ngeow Took Fah*

What is faith? Lexical meaning of faith includes belief, trust, dependence, confidence, commitment, and religion. Generally speaking, faith is an act of trust, believing in and committing ourselves to the object or person of our trust.

I recognise two types of faith, depending on the object of faith followed. In biblical faith, the object of faith can be the promises of God, the Word of God, or Jesus Christ Himself, who is the author and perfecter of faith (Hebrews 12:2).

In the other type, the secular faith, believers' faith is in things regarded as worldliness that occupy the central place of their soul. We may find ministers that turn out to be kleptocrats, war mongers posing as defenders of democracy, celebrities and idols of all forms and in all fields.

Biblical faith can be defined in several ways, depending on what is being emphasised by Bible commentators or writers. Examples:

1. The original definition found in Hebrews 11:1 states that 'Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.' This view is also supported by Paul who said, 'We live by faith, not by sight' (2 Corinthians 5:7).

2. Biblical faith is a commitment of the heart in response to God's word, with

the idea of trust or reliance underlying the concept of faith' (The Personal Growth Study Bible).

Like grace, faith is a gift of God. Paul declared in Ephesians 2:8, 'For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no-one can boast'. From beginning to end, from grace to faith, salvation is a channel joining grace in the Godward side, and faith the side of human response. God's saving act in Christ flows into one's life via this channel.

According to Paul, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ (Romans 10:17). Faith grows along with the increase in knowledge of Christ and His word. However, it is the object of faith that matters, not the size or degree of faith. Jesus taught His disciples this truth using the parable of the tiny mustard seed which, when planted, can grow to become the largest of all gardening plants (Mark 4:30-32).

On another occasion, Jesus was sleeping in the boat when suddenly a storm struck. The disciples were terrified and woke Him up. Jesus calmed the storm before He rebuked them. 'Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?' (Mark 4:40). I believe they panicked either because they underestimated the power of Jesus, or they had not thought of trusting the Saviour to save them, despite His presence with them.

Faith is an important topic in the Bible. It is mentioned more than 300 times in the Old Testament. There are several reasons for its prominence. Besides the dynamic of salvation, the Bible also teaches that faith is the only approach to God. In God's perspective, faith is counted for righteousness (Romans 4:5) because keeping God's laws is difficult. Faith eliminates pride of human effort and exalts God's work. Saving faith is based on our relationship with God, not on our performance for God, which amounts to good deeds.

Faith is necessary for us to live a life pleasing to God (Hebrews 11:6). It enables us to obey His commands and claim His promises. The Bible says, 'The righteous shall live by faith' (Habakkuk 2:4, also quoted in Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, and Hebrews 10:38). In times of trials and sufferings, faith not only helps us overcome with patience and perseverance, but also enables us to rejoice that we participate in the sufferings of Christ (1 Peter 4:13).

We need to remind ourselves that God's precious gift of salvation does not exempt us from the requirement of faithful obedience. 'For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad' (2 Corinthians 5:10).

In difficult situations, prayer is the key that unlocks faith in our lives. Effective prayer involves both an attitude of complete dependence and

an action of asking. Jesus reassures His disciples with His three steps 'ASK' approach for help. 'For everyone who Asks receives, he who Seeks finds, and to him who Knocks, the door will be opened' (Matthew 7:8). This could have been the logical response from the disciples in the midst of the stormy sea. It is also applicable against any storm in the course of our lives.

The so-called conflict between Paul and James over the issue of faith against deeds is a non issue because true faith always results in deeds, but deeds do not justify us. Faith brings us salvation, whereas active obedience is evidence of true faith. Faith without deeds is dead, according to James (2:17).

How can we develop and nurture faith? Billy Graham in his book 'Peace with God' suggests three prerequisites to abide before faith takes root in us.

1. Knowledge of what God has taught about sin and its consequence, Christ's death and resurrection, salvation of soul and eternal life.
2. With knowledge a range of emotional impact elicited such as 'The fear of God is the beginning of knowledge' (Proverb 1:7), and 'The love of Christ constrains us because we are convinced that one died for all and therefore all died' (2 Corinthians 5:14).
3. Meditation, decision making with exercise of free will.

Growing in faith follows increase in knowledge of Christ. It is actually a

constant process of daily renewing our trust in Christ.

Hebrews 11 is known as the great chapter on faith. It gives a list of Jewish heroes of faith, ranging from the revered patriarchs to the lowly prostitute Rahab, besides prophets and martyrs. But without doubt, Abraham is the most distinguished, even though his name does not appear on top of the list.

Abraham was noted for passing three tests of faith set by God. First, he was called to leave home with his family and property and move to an unknown land. He complied. Then God promised him and his wife that a son would be born to them despite their super old age. They believed and waited a year for the miraculous birth of Isaac. Lastly, God wanted their only son Isaac to be sacrificed for burnt offering. And Abraham was about to kill the boy when the Angel of the Lord intervened and stopped him.

The parallel between the ram offered on the altar as a substitute for Isaac and Christ offered on the cross as a substitute for us sinners is remarkably fitting and appropriate. It affirms the truth that the key to Christian life is our faith in Jesus Christ, His sacrificial and atoning death for our sin. We also have to accept that 'Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death' (Hebrews 11:19).

In Judaism, Abraham is the first, and Joseph the last of the four patriarchs.

In his younger days Joseph was hated by his ten half brothers out of favouritism and jealousy. Twice he was sold as a slave, finally ending in the household of Potiphar, the captain of Egyptian guard. He encountered injustice including accusation of sexual crime and was imprisoned for thirteen years. But God was with him in every situation and protected him. He rose to become the prime minister, saved many Egyptians from famine, forgave and reconciled with his brothers.

Two things we can learn from Joseph's life experience. What matters is our response to pain and suffering, not the circumstance or event that brought us the calamities. With God's help, any adverse situation can be turned from bad to good. Joseph said to his brothers, 'You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives' (Genesis 50:20).

Moses, brought up by Pharaoh's daughter, had been accustomed to every honour, every luxury and every privilege, from living in the Egyptian palace. Yet he was able to make a right decision of giving up the pleasures of flesh and sin, without fearing the wrath of the king. By faith, so recorded the Bible, 'He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ, as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward' (Hebrews 11:26).

In Hebrews 11:13 we have noted that 'All these people were still living in

faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance'. These statements are the basis for the definition of faith stated in verse 11:1.

So what rewards of our faith can we expect now and in our next life? God has promised us that:

1. We are saved (Romans 10:10).
2. We have a place in heaven (John 14:2).
3. We become children of God (Galatians 3:26).
4. We have peace with God (Romans 5:1) and peace in God (Phil 4:6,7).
5. We are assured of God's faithfulness (2 Timothy 2:13).
6. We are assured of God hearing our prayer (Matthew 21:22).
7. We are kept by the power of God through faith (1 Peter 1:5).

#### Postscript

'I know by faith in whom I have believed,  
I know that God's free gift I have received,  
I know that He will keep me to the end,  
My Savior, my Redeemer, and my friend.'

Anon



# Our Spiritual Senses

By Eld Dr Alex Tang



Touch, taste, hear, see, and smell are how we interact with the physical world with our physical senses. Through the tactile sensor in our skin, our taste buds in our tongue, the vibration of our eardrums, the receptors of our olfactory glands, and light falling on our retina, we interpret and perceive our physical world as a reality. Since the Age of Enlightenment, we are increasingly drawn to believe in this reality as the only reality. Postmodernism posits that we have moved beyond ‘the God hypothesis’; a concept that we created God in order to help us feel safe and make sense of the physical reality. This ‘spiritual but not religious’ mindset nevertheless makes allowance for a spiritual realm, other than the physical one we are familiar with. If a human has senses to interact with the physical world, is it not conceivable for the human to have spiritual senses to interact with the spiritual one?

In the Christian tradition, these spiritual senses have been alluded to frequently in the Bible and writings

of the believers. There are numerous examples of people seeing God (as burning bush, pillar of fire), hearing God (as a still small voice), touching and smelling in a wrestling match, and tasting as ordained by Jesus in the future sacrament of the Holy Communion. These spiritual senses were highlighted by the patristic theologian Origen (c.185-c.254 CE) in his commentary of the Song of Songs as the highlight of the mystic experience in the text. I will mysticism as experiencing divine encounters with God. This was further explained by Gregory of Nyssa (c.335-c.395 CE) whose work greatly influenced Bernard of Clairvaux and Bonaventure. All of these theologians played a significant role in developing the Western mystical tradition. Julian of Norwich (late 1342-after 1416), an English anchoress, gave a precise definition of the spiritual senses when she described her visions which are published as *Showings* (long text),

*And then we shall all come into our Lord, knowing ourselves clearly and wholly possessing God and we shall all be endlessly hidden in God, truly seeing and wholly feeling, and hearing him spiritually and delectably smelling him and sweetly tasting him* (1978, 255)

Julian was referring to the five spiritual senses when she refers to ‘truly seeing,’ ‘wholly feeling,’ ‘hearing him spiritually,’ ‘delectably smelling him,’ and ‘sweetly tasting

him'. By noting 'we shall all come into our Lord' Julian seem to imply that we all have the spiritual senses. The Psalmist encourages us to "taste and see that the Lord is good..." (Psalm 34:8a).

If we all have spiritual senses, the question then arises whether we are using them. And do our spiritual senses become less sensitive or atrophied if we do not use them? In the physical example of a squint or 'lazy eye', the affected person see double (diplopia) because of the misalignment of the two eyes. It is confusing for the person to be seeing double so the person's brain will 'switch off' one eye in order that the person can see well. The eye that was 'switched off' is a perfectly normal eye but since it was 'switched off', that eye is effectively blind. Could that be happening to our spiritual senses? Children are very good in using their spiritual senses. But as they grow older, these senses are slowly being 'switched off' as they are slowly inducted into a world that only believed in the physical.

How may we recover our spiritual senses? The Christian tradition has always used liturgy, church worship services, sacraments, and the spiritual disciplines as formative means of grace to help to restore and sharpen our spiritual senses. Spiritual disciplines such as prayers, Bible reading, meditation, silence, retreat, service, *Lectio Divina*, and *Lectio Visio* are especially powerful in

sharpening our spiritual senses. Sharpened spiritual senses enable us to move easier to divine encounters with our Living God. Our God is a relational God. Our spiritual senses enable us to have a real relationship with God as with our human neighbours. As real as the physical and spiritual relationship, Adam and Eve have in the Garden of Eden. A Christian tradition that focuses on the cognitive and dwelling mainly on propositional truths devoid of spiritual experiences become dry and dogmatic. There is a need for the Christian tradition to be balanced by a spirituality that the spiritual senses provide. Gordon Smith (2017), professor of systematic and spiritual theology, rightly points out the church should be utilizing evangelical, sacramental and pentecostal principles. Such a church will be utilizing both our physical and spiritual senses.

Sharpening our physical senses helps us to better enjoy the wonderful creation that we are born into. Honing our spiritual senses helps us to connect with the spiritual dimensions of this same creation. We all will be poorer without our physical and spiritual senses.

## **A Testimony of God's Grace and Mercy During My Heart Attack**

*By Rev Raymond Ho*

Sixteen years ago, in June 2006 I had a mild heart attack and had an angioplasty done whereby 3 stents were inserted into 3 of my heart arteries. Since then, without fail, twice a year I went for check-ups with my Cardiologist in Mt Elizabeth Hospital, Singapore. Each time the blood results, the ECG, the Echo sound and Stress tests showed that my heart was functioning well and fine, although occasionally I do feel breathless and tightness of my chest.

On the 14th of December 2022, I arrived at my office in Berea at about 11am. At that time Pastor Gan was using our shared office room for a counseling session. I decided to wait at the hall to make some phone calls. About 5 minutes later I felt a bit of congestion on my chest and I quickly took a GTN pain reliever pill and put it under my tongue. Sister Grace Soon happened to come out from her office room to make a drink at the pantry near the hall. I told Grace about the congestion of my heart and she quickly went to the office to pull the office chair for me to sit comfortably and then she went back to the pantry.

After that I felt that I was going to black out and I shouted to alert Grace and suddenly I became unconscious. I was told later that I slipped from the chair and fell onto the floor. A few

minutes later I gained consciousness and I found myself lying sideways on the floor surrounded by a few persons



who were asking me to just relax and not to move. I heard they were calling for an ambulance and I told them that I was alright already. I asked them why they needed to call for an ambulance and they told me not to talk and just relax. I kept asking them what had happened and they kept telling me not to ask any question and just relax. Later the ambulance arrived and I was taken to the Emergency ward at the Johor Specialist Hospital.

At the Emergency ward I complained to the attending doctor that I still felt the congestion on my chest and he gave me an injection and did the ECG test. Later Dr. Ngim, the cardiologist came to attend to me and did further tests, repeating the ECG and doing the Echo sound test. All the tests didn't show any sign of blockages in

the arteries except one of the tests showed a bit of abnormality.

Due to the persistent congestion of my chest and a bit of abnormality of the result of one of the tests, Dr. Ngim felt that I should go for an angiogram to find out whether there is any blockage in the arteries and whether there is a need for an angioplasty to clear the blockage and to insert any stent into the arteries.

During the angiogram I was fully conscious, Dr. Ngim told me that the previous 3 stents which were inserted 16 years ago had been blocked. One of them had 60% blockage. The other two had 99% blockage each. My heart was 40% hardened and injured. It means that I had a major heart attack. Dr. Ngim told me that this could be my third heart attack. Probably prior to this, I had another heart attack which I was not even aware of, in between the one I had 16 years ago and now.

Dr. Ngim then suggested that I should proceed with the angioplasty which I had to agree in order to clear the blocked arteries and probably to insert some more stents. The procedure took about three and a half hours and Dr. Ngim managed to clear one of the 99% blocked stents and put a new stent in the same artery. He could not do any repair to the other 99% blocked stent as it was very close to the other 99% blocked stent which was too delicate to clear at that time. He did not do anything to the

60% blocked stent as there was sufficient blood flow to the heart.

At one point during the procedure my blood pressure dropped to zero, which means my heart had stopped and the CPR team on standby rushed into the operating room. One of them tapped on my shoulder, and praise the Lord I was still conscious and my blood pressure began to increase slowly to the normal level and there was no need to perform CPR on me.

After the procedure I was put in the ICU ward for observation for 2 days before being transferred to the normal ward for another day. I was told by Dr. Ngim that that was the best he could do for the angioplasty. He needs to monitor the progress of my recovery to see whether there is any improvement of the blood flow to my heart. I have to go for a review for at least two times within the next two months. I will need to do a cardiac perfusion scan at HSA within the next few months to get a clear picture of the amount of blood that is flowing to my heart and to know the actual condition of my injured heart. The result of the cardiac perfusion scan will help the doctor to assess and decide on the next treatment that I need to undergo. It could be that I need to go for another angioplasty to open up and clear more blockages in the arteries for more blood to flow into my heart. If this is not possible, the last resort would be that I may have to do a by-pass. From now on, I will take one day at a time, cherishing

every moment I have and commit my future to God who has preserved my life during my major heart attack on 14th December 2022.

Looking back on all that had happened to me during this major heart attack, I really thank and praise God for His grace and mercy upon me. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Pastor Gan, sister Grace, sister Carol, and brother Timothy Yong for attending to me at Berea and Dr. Chuah and Dr. Khong for dropping by and making the timely decision to call for the ambulance to send me to Johor Specialist Hospital. I am also very thankful and grateful to all church members and friends who were concerned and had covered me with their prayers.

What if my major heart attack occurred a bit earlier, before I arrived at Berea? If it had happened earlier, I would have been driving alone on the road! What if Grace was not at the pantry at that particular time? I would have no one to call out to and no one would have known that I had collapsed. What if I were in my office room alone with the door closed? No one would have known that I had collapsed and became unconscious.

It is all because of God's grace and mercy that I am still alive today and am able to write this testimony.

To God be the glory!

## At The SU 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

*By Grace Soon*

The Scripture Union Primary-Age (SUPA) camp which was usually held at their Tapah camp site, came down south and to HLCE's grounds. Thus, from 4th-5th June 2022, 56 children aged 7-12 years old from our church and other churches participated in this two day camp. The camp theme "Light it Up" taken from Ephesians 5:1-21, together with theme activities certainly made a good impact on the children. Their post camp testimonies were published in the Sineews September 2022 issue.

Likewise, I too would like to sneak in my testimony of how SU camp had helped me in my secondary school days as a new believer in Jesus. My small home church that I went to, not only encouraged some of us but also sponsored us to attend the SU camps. We went by the locomotive that was powered by coals, to the Christian Convention Centre in Penang. I still remember the Scripture passage that we must memorize before a camp leader named Mr McSparrow. It was Philippians 3:7-11, *"But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ – the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings,*



*becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.”*

The Word of God is indeed active and alive, bringing back to my memory what I learned 50 years ago.

One from our children's church who participated in the SUPA Camps since 2019 shared his experiences as a camper and a volunteer. Matthew Leong was favored and selected to share at the SU's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner on November 6, 2022. Sharing the big stage with the many VIP speakers, Matthew spoke confidently on a huge stage at the Glad Tidings in Petaling Jaya. HLCE sponsored a dinner table for the occasion, attended by Rev and Mrs Raymond Ho and our church members who reside and work in Petaling Jaya/Kuala Lumpur. It was a memorable evening where we heard testimonies of the Lord's faithfulness that led the SU ministries through the last 60 years. Many workers in the past and present were acknowledged for their faithful service. The highlight moment was when Matthew Leong, the youngest speaker walked up the stage confidently to give his speech. Not only his parents, Elder Tommy and Nyee Nyee, and brother John are proud of him, but we the Holy Lighters are happy that one of HLCE's children amongst the many in the SU ministries was chosen to share.

Thus, I am attaching Matthew's speech here:

*“Hey everyone, I am Matthew Leong from Johor Bahru.*

*I first joined SUPA camp in 2019 at age 9. My pastor's wife, auntie Lydia convinced me to join because my*

*mother had signed up to be a volunteer. Well, through this camp, I had the opportunity to experience the outdoors which I don't particularly enjoy but I had to just live with it. 4 days at the Tapah camp site felt like a month because I had to share room with strangers and bathe in an outdoor bathroom knowing that bugs were lurking everywhere. And yes, I am 12 but I am still scared of bugs. Maybe, I will appreciate all that when I am older.*

*However, I learnt interesting life skills like outdoor cooking, washing dishes, serving food, making my own bed, hiking up the hill and walking through the stream. There were many activities and games which I had never played before and had enjoyed. The Bible lessons taught were also filled with fun activities. There was never a dull moment. The best activity was pretending to board the airplane and go on holiday to match the theme “Backpackers”. With tickets to board the plane, it was fun. My group leaders, teacher Jeremy and teacher See Yuan were good in helping us enjoy the activities.*



*Although all the lessons, games and activities were enjoyable, I didn't want to join any more overnight camps even if my mom was volunteering. Then, as if God had known beforehand, the*

pandemic hit and SUPA camp went online. Of course, I was relieved and happy as I could still attend SUPA camp without leaving my home. But, I must admit that physical activities were more fun. The camp teachers did a lot of work of preparing and sending materials for the activities to our houses which included my favourite “mamee” biscuits. I was so proud to receive a box in my name. The teachers were very clever to plan great online activities. I liked “Cracking the Code” best. We had to find out who kidnapped the famous singer. The teachers acted so well as if it was a real case; I was impressed.

And when I thought that this year’s SUPA camp was going to be online again, the government allowed gathering and physical camp resumed. It was a 2-days camp (no overnight). Not only that, it was held in Johor Bahru, in my church grounds – the place that I am familiar with, with half of the camp participants, friends from church. So, this year’s camp with the theme “Light It Up” is my best camp. I enjoyed the “Game of Choices” where we were given a “baby” that was actually a cream cracker. Teacher See Yuan said we had to protect our “baby” very well; during the game we were tempted and lured to exchange the “baby” for SUPA money that can be used to buy goodies. Some had their “baby” stolen and others had broken biscuits at the end of the game which would cost the team losing points but each biscuit that was protected gained points. My team unexpectedly became champion at the end of the camp even though we were losing in the beginning. Thank you SU, for bringing the camp to Johor Bahru. Unfortunately, I won’t be

eligible to participate in next year’s camp. Perhaps I could join SUPA camp again as a volunteer when I am allowed to.

After my first SUPA camp, we got to know about the SU memory verse competition which I joined for 2 years. The first year, I received a consolation prize and the following year, I was delighted to win the second place! The rewards were Baskin Robbins ice cream, my favourite.

Recently, my mom helped as a SU volunteer in a church camp at Port Dickson. Our whole family including my Dad and my brother tagged along. It was a good experience for me as I learnt many things about being a volunteer. I enjoyed being part of the worship led by Abigail and I learnt from her to be lively and eager for God. It would be nice to be a volunteer so I can serve God. I am so happy that aunty Jennifer gave me a SU volunteer t-shirt that was exclusive to volunteers, which I wear so often.

Last but not least, I would like to thank SU for this opportunity to share my experience and for the great work that SU is doing in Malaysia. Enjoy the rest of the night. God bless you all.”

I am sure the children’s church is happy for Matthew who started young, helping his parents as volunteers with quite a number of SU camps held in other churches too. I praise the Lord, that some of our members have moved out of the pew to impact the communities and nation, to be fishermen. And this is one of the visions of Church without Walls.

## **Walking the Christian Walk Together**

*By Agape Youth Fellowship*



Agape Youth Fellowship (AYF) has always strived to be an avenue where our youths can come together to grow in their relationships with Christ and one another. Other than focusing on Bible knowledge, which is a fundamental part of our Christian life, we also want to cultivate an environment where the youths can come and share life with each other. This is the culture that Uncle Ch'ng, our previous youth advisor, has left us with and which we are preserving even till this day.

We are glad to see the youths finding their identities in Christ and being the salt and light in their various schools and communities, not swaying by the wants of this world but by the teachings of Christ. We pray that God will continue to use this ministry as a vessel for Him to work in their lives. Here are the sharings from some of our youths:

For the past 2 years, while we were stuck in the COVID-19 pandemic, I personally found that having a group to come closer to God with was particularly enlightening and comforting, especially when a student

like me was stuck at home with nothing to do except to watch time pass. AYF has created unforgettable memories and helped me forge connections with other youths along the way, aiding me in breaking out of my shell and stepping out of the comfort zone. I'm also grateful to have had such passionate and thoughtful leaders who guided everyone through each and every step of growing faith towards God whilst making sure that we were all safe and having fun. I look forward to another year to come with them!

**(Eunice Yap Pei Yin)**

When I was young, I was afraid of many things such as the dark and sleeping alone. So, I decided to attend Bible school and later AYF. At first I didn't know who Christ is and I had a lot of questions regarding Christianity. But the teachers/leaders were friendly and kind and they taught kids like me who Christ is. After a while, I was not afraid of sleeping alone or being alone. Even though there are still times where I am afraid, Christ makes me less fearful as I know that all I need is to have faith in Christ and all the fear I have will be gone. That's why I go to church and AYF every Saturday, to know and grow more in my faith in Christ.

**(Yong Chen Si)**

We joined AYF in the second half of 2022 and since then, we have learnt so much about our relationship with Christ. AYF was not only educational, but it was also very entertaining and fun for us! We wish to attend even more sessions in 2023.

**(Ethan Loo Yan Bo and Alexis Loo Ying Xuan)**



Before joining HLCE, I only knew God with surface level knowledge; I knew He was our heavenly Father and that Jesus came and died for our sins but to me He was always a distant being whom I could never understand. However, after joining HLCE and AYF, I begin to develop a personal relationship with Him which brought me comfort especially during difficult situations where I feel lost and worthless. I learnt that my worth and value is not accountable by my actions but by His who is perfect and that He'll always love me no matter how much I mess up and with that I feel peace in the midst of chaos.

**(Enya Chang Yeelea)**



One of the things that I have learned in AYF is to have a good relationship with God by having devotion and meditating on His Word every day. Another thing that I enjoy in youth is the fun activities and games that help us socialize better. One of my favorite verses is from Luke 1:37 that says "For nothing will be impossible with God". It helps me remember that even though I am going through a tough time I can always rely on Him.

**(Joanna Isabel Antoney)**

## TEO'S JANUARY UPDATE

Greetings and trust you are keeping well and had a good start to the new year.

I thought we just drop a short email and give up a few brief bullet point updates.

- We just completed the OM Global Orientation one week course online. The conference saw 138 new recruits joining OM worldwide and it was a good time for the recruits to get better prepared and equipped for service. From Canada, there were two who joined this orientation. One of them was originally from Sudan but due to persecution for his faith, he left with his family as a refugee from Sudan to Egypt many years ago and subsequently moved to Canada where he got his permanent residence. He now serves as a part time accountant to support the finance work in the Middle East North Africa Area. The other person who attended is a young man who is preparing to go to Pakistan. He is currently raising support and hopes to be there for a year initially.

- There was a large missions conference held in Vancouver last weekend and OM was one of the many mission booths represented at the conference. We had the opportunity to meet enquirers and to share about OM ministry. It was good to see so many different mission agencies all serving the Kingdom and desiring to make disciples of all nations.

- I had the opportunity to speak at a church and to share with about 60 young adults our faith journey and a message. It was encouraging to receive some positive feedback after the service. I will be meeting a young man

later this week from this church to explore mission possibilities.

- In February, we will have a Canada Get Ready Course for a few people wanting to go on missions. One lady is wanting to go to Israel and work with the Jewish community. She has to first do some language study for the first year. A young guy is preparing to go to serve as a carpenter on the ship and another young girl to South Africa for a few months. We thank God that the new ship Doulos Hope has completed its renovations and will soon be in the final stages of preparations for handover and ministry in Asia. We continue to pray for more workers and for the two ships to continue to reach more people for Christ.

- At the Food Pantry ministry, I have been finding ways to try to connect with some of the middle eastern friends. I found some connected well when I asked them if they know stories about Abraham and Moses and Joseph and it is interesting to find some common stories between the Bible and the Koran. Do pray for ways to build bridges of friendship and to share about the Lord through these common Bible stories.

Thank you for upholding us in your prayers. May the Lord bless you all in the new year.

Chris and Joo Ping

## Thanksgiving for the Wongs

*By Grace Wong*



After going through the Valley of Weeping in 2021, I had hoped for 2022 to be a better year for our family. In 2021, I struggled with Daniel's absence and the uncertainty of how long we would be separated when his company called him back to Singapore while borders were closed. We eventually decided to move to Singapore in order to be together as a family unit. Despite knowing that this was a decision in the best interest of our family, I wrestled with this as it involved letting go of a job I loved, a house which had become our home, and the comfort of a familiar community.

Indeed year 2022 did not disappoint with the reopening of the borders, moving back to Johor Bahru and welcoming our second son, Samuel. Yet, we found ourselves constantly trying to keep afloat with the curveballs coming our way, from the beginning of the year and throughout – I experienced a terrible allergic reaction in my early stage of pregnancy and struggled with nausea due to my restricted diet to avoid oral steroids, Stephen received stitches for a deep cut on his forehead, close family members were infected with



COVID-19 and our lease was prematurely terminated.

A few months before Samuel was due, we received news that the landlord was looking to sell the flat. Daniel, knowing how last minute changes cause me to worry, assured me that it may not be a bad thing in the end. Certainly, God did make it work for the good as we ended up changing our plan from delivering in Singapore to deliver in Johor Bahru now that borders had reopened. On top of that, we planned on moving back home for good.

We had everything prepared for our return to Johor Bahru and for me to begin my maternity leave. Just three days before our planned move, however, I tested positive for COVID-19 and was whisked away to KK Women's and Children's Hospital (KKH) as I was in my final weeks of pregnancy. My worst nightmare would be to deliver alone if I were still COVID-19 positive, so my prayer was that Samuel would remain inside and unharmed. Thank God, I did not go into labour while I was there.

As I was being discharged, the doctor said they detected contractions and advised against returning to Johor Bahru – but delivering in Singapore was not ideal due to the tight timeline of handing over the flat. I had hoped to be able to spend one final night in our rental flat especially after receiving the sad news that my superior at work had passed away, but we did not want to risk going into labour in Singapore. Thus, we rushed from KKH to the rental flat. I grabbed whatever I could, and headed straight for Johor Bahru.

Though it was past the 7<sup>th</sup> day of infection, I continued isolation at home until I tested negative while Daniel made trips to Singapore to finish packing up the flat. In my birth plan, I had requested not to be induced – but my OBGYN informed me that she would need to induce me if I did not go into labour by the following Friday due to the increased risk posed by my COVID-19 infection. From praying that Samuel would remain inside while I was in KKH, I now found myself praying that he would come out before the scheduled induction on Friday – but ideally after we unpacked and cleaned the house on Wednesday. This was a tight window period we were looking at!

On Monday, the movers went to collect our items from Singapore and delivered them the next day. On Wednesday, the cleaner helped us with our final round of cleaning and finished at 5 p.m. I felt some pain but reasoned that it was due to the unpacking and cleaning over the last two days. Over dinner, the pain started to intensify and I realised that those were contractions. By 9:00 p.m., Daniel and I were at the hospital.

I was wheeled to the delivery suite while holding my huge exercise ball. Forty minutes later, it was little Samuel in my arms instead – he came out even before my OBGYN could reach the hospital! After all that had happened with my COVID-19 infection, the hurried move back to Johor Bahru and the speedy delivery – I thought to myself that finally the madness was over and everything would slow down now that Samuel was out.

Again, I was proven wrong.

Samuel had jaundice and underwent three rounds of phototherapy, with one episode of urinary tract infection and viral flu. We had to go to the hospital every 2 to 3 days to monitor his bilirubin level. After the one month mark, his direct bilirubin level was still high and an ultrasound revealed that his gallbladder was slightly contracted – that was when ‘biliary atresia’ (BA), a rare liver disease, was first mentioned as a possible cause. Thankfully, his stools were not pale so the paediatric surgeon said it should not be BA and Samuel’s paediatrician ran all tests possible to uncover the cause of his high direct bilirubin level.

Eventually Daniel’s hiatus from work came to an end, so we needed to adapt having one less person helping around at home. Then, one of our worst fears came true – Daniel tested positive for COVID-19 again. Thankfully both sets of grandparents were around to help us with managing the two children while Daniel isolated in the room. After a week, the end of the storm was in sight – or so we thought. Just when it seemed like we were out of the woods, Samuel had pale stools on Daniel’s last day of isolation.

We immediately showed it to our paediatrician who consulted the paediatric surgeon. We were instructed to go to Hospital Sultanah Aminah the next day, where they scheduled Samuel to undergo a HIDA scan on Sunday which would enable us to rule out BA. Unfortunately, it did not.

Monday, I woke up wishing it were all just a nightmare.

On the advice of many people, we decided to seek medical treatment in Singapore due to the rarity of the disease and the procedure involved. The clock was ticking as we were at the tail-end of the window period which gave the procedure the best success rate. With no hospital appointment in Singapore, we rushed to do several things after meeting our paediatrician in JB: we sent an email to NUH, obtained a passport for Samuel, and packed our bags for Singapore.

On that one day, we experienced God’s grace in many ways.

When we went to UTC to apply for Samuel’s passport, the queue was so long that it reached the furthest escalator. Usually I would feel reluctant to request for special treatment, but I went to the front and explained to the officer the situation we were in. Upon obtaining Samuel’s passport photos, he brought us to the counter and within 15 minutes, we had his passport. We then went back to pack our bags and leave for Singapore.

As we were on the Causeway, NUH called just four hours after I had sent the email. They asked when was the earliest we could bring Samuel in. I told them that we were reaching Singapore and by the next hour, we were in the room talking to the pediatric gastroenterologist, paediatric surgeon and their team who had made space in their busy schedules for us. Samuel needed surgery so that they could perform a cholangiogram to

confirm if he had biliary atresia. If he did, the Kasai procedure would be carried out during the same surgery. We were still considering KKH as another option but God made it clear through circumstances that NUH was where we should be.

The next day, Samuel was warded and scheduled for surgery the day after.

On the day of the surgery, the surgical team came to his room before we brought him to the operating ward – I could have almost heard the soundtrack of the final battle scene of Avengers: Endgame. While I held Samuel in my hands and thanked them, I tried to hold back my tears. We were all prepared for the worst case scenario, as the lead surgeon said it looked very much like BA, but our hearts were at peace knowing that Samuel was receiving the best medical treatment possible and most of all, he was covered in prayer.

About two hours after Samuel was taken in, we received a call from the nurse, “They have started the procedure.” In our minds, this meant the cholangiogram confirmed that he had BA and they were doing the Kasai procedure. Daniel and I sat down in acceptance, praying for the procedure to be done successfully. Twenty minutes later, we received another call – this time it was the lead surgeon’s voice. Everything was a blur and all we remember is his unforgettable words – “....it’s NOT biliary atresia.”

Daniel and I looked at each other in shock – we could barely contain ourselves in the waiting room. Our bags were packed to move to the paediatric

ICU but instead, we were returning to the original hospital room. I was called in to feed Samuel who had been fasting since early morning. Before he had even hit the third month mark, he had fasted three times and hopefully it will be a long time until his next fast.

Now that BA was ruled out with absolute certainty, we were advised to proceed with genetic testing to identify the cause of his prolonged jaundice and other symptoms. Praise God, the results were negative. The paediatric gastroenterologist concluded that all possible known causes have been ruled out and it should be non-specific viral hepatitis which would eventually resolve on its own.

On 20<sup>th</sup> January 2023, Samuel’s blood test revealed that he is no longer jaundiced and we are confident that little Samuel is on the road to recovery. Our hearts overflow with the words of King David, “Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!” (Psalm 103:1).

We praise and thank God for bringing us through a crazy year of unexpected incidents. We would like to record our sincere gratitude and deepest appreciation to our dearest parents, family, friends and family-in-Christ for their love, support and prayers. Truly, God’s grace was, is and will always be sufficient for the storms which come our way. Soli Deo gloria!



The OA gathered in Sg Gayung to celebrate Christmas on 18/12/2022



Worshipping & celebrating Christmas at Sg Gayung on 18/12/2022



Team KBM HLCE during the combined KBM Christmas celebration on 10/12/2022



Hope Resource Centre, Valediction Reception, 26 Nov 2022

Celebrating the graduation of eleven Year 10 students in a student-led event 🎉

What a privilege it is for this ministry to nurture and touch the hearts and minds of these young ones!

NB: Contributions to Sineews newsletter, via email to [spcheong88@gmail.com](mailto:spcheong88@gmail.com) (in Microsoft Word format), in the form of articles, testimonies and original photographs (with captions) are welcome, but we reserve the right to edit them in the interest of HLCE. Views and opinions expressed herein do not necessarily represent that of HLCE or the editor.



### Infant Baptism

Samuel Wong Yong Ling s/o  
Daniel Wong Kah Hoe &  
Grace Tan Huimin



### Baptism

Bro Leong Yok Meng James  
Bro Reuben Tan Tze Ren  
Sis Kok Fang Lin  
Sis Lim Kelly  
Sis Ong Mui Keow  
Sis Truong Ngoc Anh



## **Christmas Service**

**25<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

### Confirmation

Bro Matthew Leong Shou En  
Bro Abraham Yan Rong Han  
Bro Kumba Kelana Rusmardiharja  
Sis Kuning Kenanga

### Reception into membership

Dr Lakhdeep Singh  
Sis Irene Fraude  
Sis Mary Ann Fraude  
Bro Lim Swee Kuang, Joshua  
Sis Goh Ah Heong, Sarah  
Bro Tan Wing Hong  
Sis Tiong Chea King, Sally  
Sis Chong Sook Ching







**Congratulations to Cher Shiong & Sophia  
November 26, 2022**



**Congratulations to Dr & Mrs John Lee Yu Wei  
28<sup>th</sup> January 2023**



With Praise and Thanksgiving to Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Dr & Mrs Lee Thian Chai are joyous to announce the **Holy Matrimony** of their youngest son, Dr John Lee Yu Wei with Ms Emeline Han, on **28 Jan 2023** solemnized by the Reverend Christopher Chia, Senior Pastor of Adam Road Presbyterian Church in Singapore.

