

interact

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NEW PASTOR

Welcome
Rev Poh!

09

MISSIONS

Church Planting
in Odem –
The Third Place

12

LIGHT OF CHRISTMAS

18

TURKEY TRIP

Visiting the
Seven Churches
of Revelation



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INTERACT is a publication by Toa Payoh Methodist Church (TPMC). All views expressed in Interact are solely those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Church, the Editorial Team or the Methodist Church in Singapore. An online copy is also available at tpmc.org.sg

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“WILL YOU PLEASE PRAY FOR...”

Even if we do not complete the sentence, it is still a familiar phrase and one that we have heard before. Why? Because as Christians, we rely on prayer. John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, said that **“God does nothing but by prayer, and everything with it.”** For someone who did so much for and in the name of God, Wesley knew how critical, crucial and central prayer is.

Whether as individuals or as a corporate body, we have prayed and requested for prayer. However, I wonder, amidst our daily activities, whether we still remember to pray for our loved ones, our brothers and sisters in Christ who have entrusted us with their requests and our church leaders. If so, how frequently do we pray? Finally, when our prayers are answered, do we give thanks to God?

The importance of prayer can be seen from the life of our Lord Jesus. In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus was praying at His baptism when heaven opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him (Luke 3:12). Lest that you may think otherwise, Jesus did not only pray on special occasions or in public, as Luke 5:16 tells us that **“But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed”** Jesus would even spend an entire night praying to His Father (Luke 6:12).



Jesus' prayer life must have greatly inspired His disciples and made them realize the importance of prayer. Luke 11:1 informs us that after witnessing another occasion of Jesus praying, His disciples were moved to ask Him to teach them to pray. Jesus started His reply with “When you pray...”. The word “when”, not “if”, was used. To Jesus, prayer is a given. It is an act that must take place. Like breathing, it is never “if”, but always “when”.

The importance of prayer could be seen at the Light of Christmas event last December. A few hours before the start of the second day's activities, it began to rain heavily. While the rain would cool the surroundings, it would also put a damper on the community's attendance. Prayers were soon lifted towards heaven. Just as we gathered to welcome the community, the rain stopped and many thanks were expressed to God. God truly does nothing but by prayer, and everything with it.

We hope that you will enjoy reading this issue of the Interact. While going through the magazine, please join us in giving thanks to God for His faithfulness. Will you please pray for Toa Payoh Methodist Church?

Rev Reuben Ng
Pastor-in-Charge

WELCOME, REV POH!

PEACE BE
WITH YOU!



Rev Poh Zhi-Hui

What is your favourite Bible verse and why?

Revelation 21:1-5. This vision of a new heaven and a new earth, the assurance of God's continuous relationship with the world and the glorious end to & renewal of all things give me comfort, hope and direction for life.

Why did you become a pastor?

I became a pastor because I know and trust God, and desire to help others do the same. I am also convicted by God of the special place and purpose that Jesus has given to His Church by being the community through which God's kingdom of justice, righteousness, truth and love is proclaimed to, experienced by, and advanced in the world.

What excites you about working at Toa Payoh Methodist Church (TPMC)?

In my time thus far at TPMC, I have witnessed the following which excites me about serving:

- The kind and welcoming community
- The clear purpose of the church's existence as articulated in its vision statement "Encounter to Love"
- The clear conviction of the church that God has placed us in Toa Payoh to serve and bless its residents, especially those who are in need
- The unity of the church leadership & staff and their dedication to the work of building up their fellow members and equipping them to be witnesses for Christ

Describe yourself in five words.

Being renewed in God's image.

If you could pick only three foods to eat for the rest of your life, what would they be?

- Bak Kut Teh
- Steamboat
- BBQ

NEWLYWEDS



*Wesley Lim &
Nicole Goh*

they tied the knot on

2 Mar 2019

NEWBORNS



On **25 Nov 2018**, Jackson Phua & Scarlett He were blessed with their first child, **Elijah Phua**.

On **25 Nov 2018**, Marcus & Eileen Seah were blessed with their second child, **Sarah Seah Yu Qi**.

On **30 Dec 2018**, Ho Eng Khoon & Choong Lee Wen were blessed with their first child, **Ian Ho Yit En**.



On **25 Jan 2019**, Wee Keng Rui & Mary Sim were blessed with their second child, **Wee Sheng Qi, Svitlana**.



On **18 Mar 2019**, Jan Lin Sheng Qian & Yap Chee Wee were blessed with their first child, **Yap Chun Xi, Mathea**.

Baptism Membership

16 DECEMBER 2018

Baptism Candidates

Children:

Efrem Mak Yi En
Judah Yeo Zhi Yong
Lee Ying Xi Breanne Grace
Samantha Nicole Rajenthiran
Sophia Joyce Rajenthiran
Teo Cheng Jun Jason
Teo Lingen Timothy
Teo Sheng Jie Matthew
Teo Zhi Jia Alicia
Wong Qing En Darbie
Wong Ting En Darlene
Wong Yuan Kai Darwin

Adults:

Chik Xiao Si Faye
Choo Yu Lin Connie
Lua Boon Chye Clarence
Toh Sok Chuan Joanna



Reception of Membership

Amy Tham Yoke Lan
Ang Ee Hsien Sharon
Bai Jinchun
Chee Ha Noi nee Toh Ha Noi Doris
Chee Peter @ Chee Soon Whatt

Chik Xiao Si Faye
Choo Yu Lin Connie
Choy Weng Yew Jonathan
Fong Keng Kong Stephen
James Lim Keen Yong

Junita Purwanegara
Ler Poh Leong Irene
Mariammal Yanapiragasam
Png Hui Leng
Zhang Fangfang Alicia

ism & ership

14 APRIL 2019



Baptism Candidates

Children:

Bryan Sim Yong Rui
Chelsea Adelia Low
Christy Giselle Low
Daniel Ong Sheng Min
Deborah Yip Si Hui
Faith Ong Sheng En
Jocelyn Sim Yun Xuan
Lea Donnez
Wee Sheng Qi Svitlana

Adults:

Chan Yan Han
Donnez Fabrice J
Tay Tin Bock Richard
Tham Wei Lien Davina
Tia Teck Kiang Tommy

Reception of Membership

Daniel Tan Zhi Rong
Donnez Fabrice J
Elizabeth Leong Yee Peng
Heng James

Huang Zhenyi
Khoo Thiam Swee
Leow Swee Khim
Selwyn Lim

Tan Siow Hoo Dorothy
Teo Lay Hoon
Teo Siow Woang
Tham Wei Lien Davina



Kristal Chan

Tell us more about yourself.

I guess I should share how I came to TPMC. A secondary school friend invited me to TPMC and I accepted Christ into my life at one of the youth camps. To date, I have been attending TPMC for about 12 years, I serve as an audio engineer with the Tech team and the Chairperson of Communications and Media. My current job involves managing the operations of a company supplying food service equipment. I dispatch technicians to support customers who face trouble with their equipment.

What hobbies or leisure activities do you have?

I go for CrossFit classes about 3 times a week, just to keep fit! The workouts are always different, which keep them interesting. Other than that, I like to watch TV series on Netflix.

HELLO KRISTAL!



God-daughter, Nelly

Brother, Justin,
a.k.a. #instabro

What is your favourite food?

I have too many favourite food! But if there is one thing that I cannot resist – BURGERS.

How do you maintain your relationship with God?

I would say that doing devotions is one way I maintain my relationship with God. But sometimes (ok, most of the time) I am not consistent in penning my Encounter Journal. But I try >< because it is important to know the Word of God and apply it to my life. Another way is to pray and talk to God, spending time sharing about my life and struggles with Him. Because He cares.

Do you have any words to encourage your brothers and sisters in Christ?

“Focus on what God is doing instead of focusing on what we think God is not doing”. I was struck by this thought recently because it reminded me that I should not be bogged down by my struggles but to focus on what God is doing. So brothers and sisters, if you are going through a difficult time, know that you are not alone. God has not forsaken you. He will never forsake you. He is patiently working in your life. And I pray that He helps all of us to focus on Him.



CrossFit Family

Cellgroup, Stones

TPMC Communications & Media Team

Kristal & Friends

A PRECIOUS GEM

By Shirin Wun

Ruby Song Choo Lian, or Aunty Ruby as she is affectionately known, is a familiar sight to many of us at Toa Payoh Methodist Church. Given her enthusiastic nature, it comes as no surprise that she has been given an award by the Singapore Prison Service for her contribution as a Christian counsellor to inmates at Changi Prison.

Aunty Ruby joined Christian Counselling Services, an inter-denominational Christian organisation that works to restore lives ravaged by substance abuse, as a volunteer when she was (merely!) 83 years old. Now, three years later, she still finds joy going down to the prison once a month to share the Bible, worship the Lord and pray with inmates. John 3:16 is the verse that she shares the most. She earnestly adds that

“God is kind and merciful.”

As bright and vibrant as her name, Aunty Ruby is truly a precious gem.



“

For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16



”

IN SAFE HANDS

By Alan Goh

Do you notice the guys and gals with the luminous green vests and earphones when you arrive at the main sanctuary on Sunday? Attentive and friendly, patient yet firm, they form the Security Ministry at Toa Payoh Methodist Church. In the light of increased security threats around the world to places where people congregate, including churches, the Security Ministry provides additional eyes to look out for suspicious characters and items.

Beginnings

The Security Ministry had its beginnings in 2016 when a few long-standing church members were tasked to look into security issues for that year's Light of Christmas. What started out as an ad-hoc assignment soon sprouted into a group of about 25 members who now contribute weekly to a safe worship environment.



From left to right: Vicky, Hock Sian, Gerald and Anthony

Inauguration



From left to right: Fabrice, Gerald, Anthony, Jenn, Julia, Clarence and Angus

When the Security Ministry first started, duty personnel wore red armbands to identify themselves, and had to communicate face-to-face. As the ministry grew, highly visible luminous green vests and walkie-talkies were acquired so that roles could be performed efficiently and effectively.

The mission of the Security Ministry is to “seek to encounter God and to love His people by providing a safe and secure environment for them to worship Him”. To fulfil this mission, duty teams at main services look out for potential security threats & disruptions. They also assist in maintaining order and evacuating the congregation during an emergency. The Security Ministry does not work alone, but hand in hand with the Usher Ministry, as parts of one body (1 Corinthians 12:12-27). The ministry also helps at church events such as the Light of Christmas.

People

The members of the Security Ministry are a mix of men and women, young and never too old, from diverse backgrounds, who joined through the church ministries' recruitment drive, word of mouth, friendly invitations and (for a couple of members) “coercive measures” :D.

Members meet from time to time to share a meal and build camaraderie, as well as communicate what they encounter on duty so that the rest can learn. Those with skills and experience in security-related work provide guidance and share their know-how.

Invitation

The Security Ministry is thankful to God for its establishment and the members coming forward to serve. Before every shift, the duty team will pray to God, trusting in and submitting to Him (Proverbs 3:5-6). If this sounds fascinating to you, join them! Approach the church office for more information.

CHURCH PLANTING IN ODEM – THE THIRD PLACE

By Carol Ong

The Third Place, Odem is a new church planting ministry that started in August 2018. Odem is a 2km commute from the Phnom Penh International Airport, along National Road No. 4. It is a place dotted with many factories but where no visible church exists at the moment. We hope that we can establish a presence among the factory workers and people in the neighbourhood, so that they might come to hear His Name and can grow and mature in the love and knowledge of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Our church planting efforts started with bridge-building outreach ministries like English and Mandarin classes, medical outreach and health talks, as well as other activities that seek to educate the mind, enhance knowledge, improve the quality of life, and bring about transformation of the whole person – body, soul and spirit. To date, we run the following classes:

- English classes on weekday evenings with about 10 students
- Mandarin classes on weekends with about 11 students
- Sunday school with about 10 children, and
- Sunday worship service with about 15 in attendance.

We pray and ask the Lord for wisdom and discernment in knowing how to further penetrate the community with His love, and protect them as we continue to fulfil His call. We invite you to join us in prayers and participation.



CAMBODIA MISSIONS TRIP

By Edna Woon

Five persons from TPMC went on a missions trip to Phnom Penh, Cambodia from 5 to 8 April 2019. The purpose of the trip was to get to know the community around Odem, a district in which Carol Ong, our missionary, has started a new outreach centre, called The Third Place.

This is what one of our trippers, Edna Woon, had to say about her missions trip experience.

On 5 April 2019, I embarked on my second missions trip to Cambodia. My first trip was in 2017 when I went with a youth team. As a youth, this trip was my first experience without my friends, and travelling with a group of adults. This trip has truly been eye-opening and I would certainly like to go again as it helped to strengthen my walk with God.

During this trip, I taught six ladies English, using creative ways like preparing food (and pretending to be Gordon Ramsey for two days). I helped to conduct Sunday School for about 14 children. I also had the chance to get to know the people around Odem as we walked along the streets distributing pamphlets, inviting the community to our New Year party. I also helped to organise a cool party in which I totally embarrassed myself by “dancing horribly” as the people in the community celebrated the Khmer New Year.





The Third Place offered an opportunity for the team from TPMC to minister to the Odem community. The people who dropped in at The Third Place were of different ages and from different backgrounds, and for many, it was the first time they heard about Jesus. The TPMC team was expectant yet apprehensive as we were not sure what to expect. We thank God for the opportunities He created for us to engage with the people and to allow them to know Jesus.

The team has been truly amazed by God's faithfulness and grace. Although the trip was short, this was the first step to demonstrate God's great love to the Odem community. I pray that the works of Jesus will continue to flourish there and we will get to see changes happen in that community.

I truly enjoyed my four days there and I'm very sure that there will be many more trips to come. If you're a youth (or of any age group) and are considering to go on a missions trip, this is my challenge to you. Take the bold step of faith to leave your comfort zone and I promise you'll be amazed by how God is working, not only in Singapore but all around the world.

Can't wait to go back!



Light of Christmas 2018

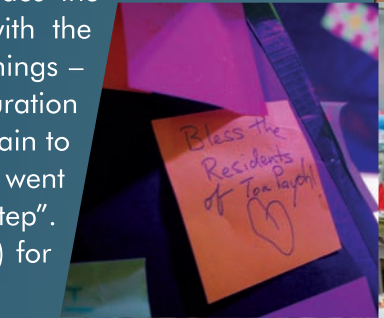
By Betty Lim

In collaboration with the Toa Payoh Central Community Club and Indian Activity Executive Committee (IAEC), the Light of Christmas (LOC) is an annual event that provides the opportunity for Toa Payoh Methodist Church (TPMC) to celebrate Christmas with the community. The event used to be held over one day but was extended to two evenings – 22 and 23 December 2018 at the Toa Payoh Central Amphitheatre. The longer duration provided a chance for the community to share and invite others or simply return again to enjoy the Christmas festivities and performances on the second evening. LOC 2018 went with the Christmas Market concept and adopted the theme “Christmas at your Doorstep”. We were very honoured to have Mr Saktiandi Supaat, Member of Parliament (MP) for Bishan-Toa Payoh GRC, grace the event.

LOC 2018 provided a myriad of events to create a memorable experience for the community. Light sculptures and installations were put up for residents to capture memories with their loved ones. Children enjoyed their train and carousel rides, played carnival games and engaged in art & craft activities. Social enterprises were invited to set up gift stalls so that the community could enjoy unique offerings at affordable prices and increase their awareness of social concerns. Besides the Christmas market, professional performances were lined up on both evenings to provide festive entertainment for everyone. To top it off, both young and old could immerse in a “snow experience”. Many who came had a great time and gave positive remarks about the event. This included our Guest of Honour, MP Saktiandi Supaat, who expressed his delight and invited families through his Facebook page to come for the event after his visit.

Through LOC 2018, there was a huge increase in followers on TPMC’s social media channels and we hope that they would continue to join us for our future events. There was also strong participation from the community for our children’s Christmas party where over 80 kids signed up during the Light of Christmas. Finally, our “Hanging a Wish” station provided opportunities for individuals, including children, to share their needs and enabled our prayer intercessors to pray for them.

Though it was a tiring and challenging year to prepare for the event, the committee members experienced the presence and power of God throughout. We are especially grateful to the 300 volunteers who came forward to help to make this event an astonishing success. Thank you volunteers! To God be the glory!





TRAC President Rev Dr Gordon Wong (third from left) visiting nativity scene.



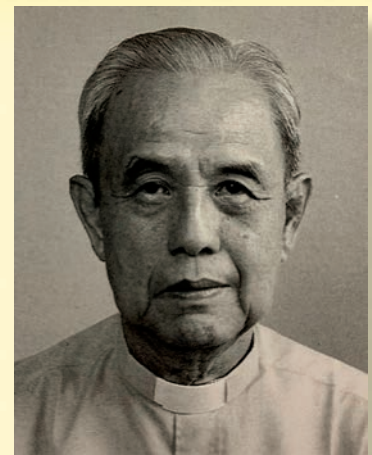
Mr Saktiandi Supaat (fourth from left), Member of Parliament, Bishan-Toa Payoh GRC with our pastors and leaders.



THE WORK OF THE LATE REVEREND T.C. NGA IN BUILDING TOA PAYOH METHODIST CHURCH

By Jerome Sim

The late Reverend (Rev) T.C. Nga played a vital role in building Toa Payoh Methodist Church (TPMC) in her current premises at 480 Toa Payoh Lorong 2 in the early 1970s. This was his second church-building project, following the founding of Faith Methodist Church (Faith MC) in 1966. Rev Nga also pastored the English-speaking congregation of TPMC from August 1982 to March 1984, while concurrently serving as the first elected President of the Trinity Annual Conference (TRAC). He was also the first elected President of the National Council of Churches Singapore (NCCS) after separate councils were established for Singapore and Malaysia. This is an excerpt of his invaluable contribution to TPMC. Rev Nga was called home to be with the Lord on 19 January 2019.



How It All Began

The pioneering work leading to the establishment of today's TPMC began in 1967, as a joint project of St. Andrew's Cathedral and Wesley Methodist Church (Wesley MC) in the form of a clinic cum preaching centre at Lorong 1 Toa Payoh. In 1969, with the expansion of the ministry, a new worship centre was established at Lorong 7 Toa Payoh to provide social services and perform outreach. Rev Michael Wong Chee Wun was appointed in 1970 to pastor the parish. [This was the first established venue of the TPMC that we know today. TPMC's history began here, in 1970 at Lorong 7 Toa Payoh!].

From late 1970 to early 1971, Rev Nga, through his involvement in the relocation of Poi Ching School from Queen Street to Toa Payoh, noted the growing ministry in Toa Payoh and had frequent discussions with Rev Wong on the possibilities of building a church complex in Toa Payoh. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Housing and Development Board (HDB) invited tenders for a few sites in Toa Payoh for religious use, but the response from Christian churches was poor.

When news was received that a site for religious activities at Lorong 2 Toa Payoh would be available for tender, Rev Nga quickly initiated a meeting to gather support to bid for the land parcel. On 18 June 1971, Rev Nga hosted a Covenant Meeting at the old YMCA building in Orchard Road. This meeting was attended by representatives from Wesley MC, Faith MC, Foochow Methodist Church (Foochow MC) and Kampong Kapor Methodist Church. After careful deliberation, the meeting decided unanimously to embark on the project of building a church in Toa Payoh (called the "Toa Payoh Project") and pledged "to see it through".

Tenacity

The days following the Covenant Meeting saw a flurry of activities for Rev Nga. On 20 June 1971, a final meeting, chaired by then-Bishop Yap Kim Hao and attended by Methodist pastors and lay leaders interested in the Toa Payoh Project, was held at Wesley MC. At the meeting, Rev Nga was authorised to prepare the tender form & other documents and submit them together with a deposit to HDB by 22 June 1971. Undeterred by the tight timeline, Rev Nga worked tirelessly till the early hours of the deadline to prepare the required documents, which precipitated the following sequence of events:

Time	Event
6.30am	The tender form and other documents were submitted to Foochow MC for the sponsor's endorsement.
1.00pm	The endorsed documents were collected from Foochow MC.
2.00pm	A cheque for \$16,000, amounting to 5% of the tender price of \$320,000 for a land area of 63,055 square feet, was collected from the Treasurer of Wesley MC.
3.45pm	Together with the late Rev Richard E Ong, District Superintendent (Singapore) for the Singapore-Malaya Annual Conference, Rev Nga went to the late Mr Yong Ngim Djin's (an educator and Methodist leader) residence to obtain his signature on the tender documents.
4.50pm	Rev Nga then rushed to the HDB office at Maxwell Road to submit the tender documents and deposit, just before the office closed. (There were no mass rapid transit and electronic submission in those days).

Between 22 June and 5 August 1971, Rev Nga continued to make visits to more than 100 homes to discuss and answer some 500 enquiries about the Toa Payoh Project from interested parties.

We Got It!

On 5 August 1971, HDB informed the Secretary of the Trustees of the Methodist Church in Malaysia (the Methodist Church in Singapore had not yet been formed then) of the successful tender. A 99-year lease of the plot of land at 480 Lorong 2 Toa Payoh would be offered to the Trustees.

As it was urgent to formally accept HDB's offer and raise the necessary funds, a meeting was convened on 9 August 1971 (Singapore's National Day) at Faith MC. At this meeting, the Methodist Church Toa Payoh Project Committee (MCTPPC) was formed. The following persons were elected to serve in the Executive Committee:



Mr Diong Woong Ding
Mr Ding Bing Hock
Mr Wong Ha Hee
Rev T.C. Nga
Mr Billie Cheng
Mr Chiang Kuo Chi
Mr Tommy Yeo Chew Hoo

Chairman
Secretary
Treasurer
Secretary-General cum Project Manager
Programmes and Activities
Fundraising
Building Planning and Supervision

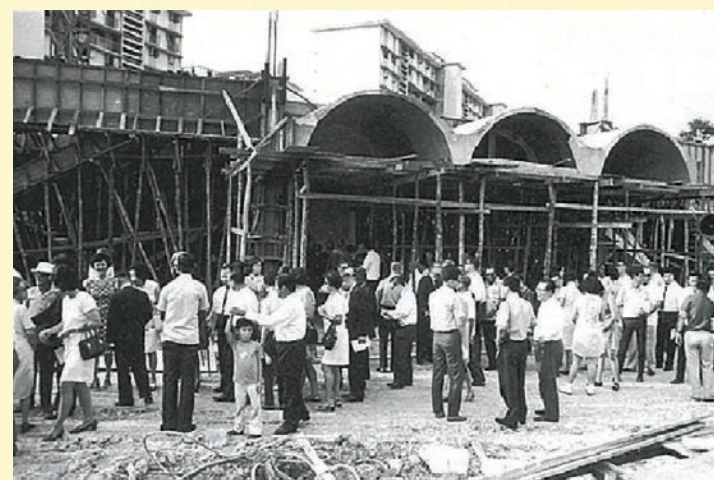
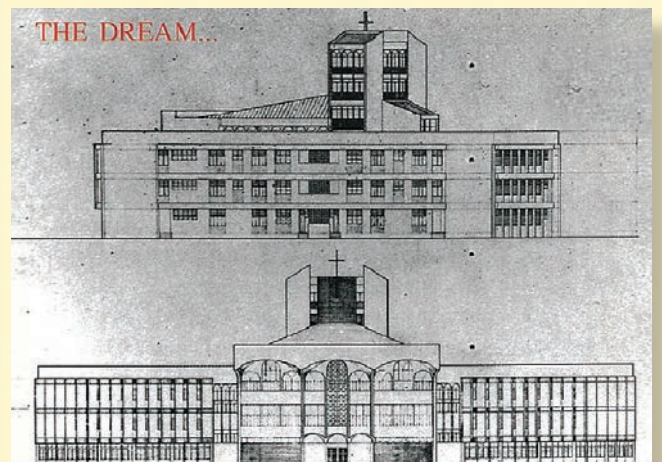
A Giving Person

On 14 August 1971, the first Executive Committee meeting was held at Foochow MC to set up an administrative machinery and discuss fundraising efforts to pay for the land by 1 September 1971. In the meantime, 15% of the tender price (or \$48,000) had to be paid within 2 weeks from 5 August 1971 as acceptance of HDB's offer. As MCTPPC was just formed, money was not readily available.

On 16 August 1971, Rev Nga secured a personal loan of \$50,000 (a significant sum in those days) so that \$48,000 could be paid to HDB to accept its offer. The remainder was used as working capital for the building of the church complex. Interest on the loan was borne by Rev Nga himself. After more than two years, MCTPPC raised and repaid \$25,000 to Rev Nga while he agreed to donate \$25,000 to MCTPPC by repaying the remaining loan himself.

Building the Church Complex

On 11 September 1971, the second MCTPPC meeting was convened to secure the services of an architect to produce an appropriate and attractive design for the church building. After careful deliberation, the meeting agreed to engage Mr Lee Kum Kit as the architect for the project. Rev Nga shared his vision with Mr Lee and the fan-shaped design of the Toa Payoh Methodist Church complex was born. The building plan was subsequently endorsed by MCTPPC and approved by the building authorities without alteration.



Construction for the church complex began after the appointment of a main contractor. A cornerstone laying ceremony attended by over 400 guests was held on 18 November 1972 at the site to praise God for His blessings on the project.

However, challenges soon cropped up and construction was disrupted due to a sudden increase in the costs of raw materials and skilled labour. At one point, there was a possibility that the project would be abandoned. With wisdom, tact and God's provision, MCTPPC reached an understanding with the main contractor after a series of mediations and negotiations. Arrangements were also made with the supplier of steel bars to support the main contractor with an immediate delivery of materials to restart the construction. By July 1973, the church complex was completed at a total cost of about \$1.14 million.

Transiting to Joint Management

The new church complex housed both the English-speaking and Chinese-speaking congregations. The English-speaking congregation reached an agreement with MCTPPC in September 1970 to withhold their application to form a Local Church Conference (LCC). This was to allow time for the Chinese-speaking congregation to be able to also organise themselves into a LCC, so that a Joint Management Committee with representatives from both conferences could be formed to take over the management of the church complex from MCTPPC.

Nonetheless, it was not until about seven years later, on 7 August 1977, that the English-speaking congregation organised themselves into a LCC with 296 chartered members under TRAC. One week later, on 14 August 1977, the Chinese-speaking congregation formed their LCC under the Chinese Annual Conference with 136 chartered members. As intended, a Joint Management Committee with five representatives from each LCC was set up to manage the church complex.

Finally, on 17 December 1977, then-Bishop Kao Jih Chung officiated at the ceremony to dedicate the Toa Payoh Methodist Church complex to God for the advancement of His kingdom here on earth. Three representatives from each LCC as well as MCTPPC (which was represented by Mr Diong Woong Ding, Mr Wong Ha Hee and Rev Nga) participated in the ceremony.



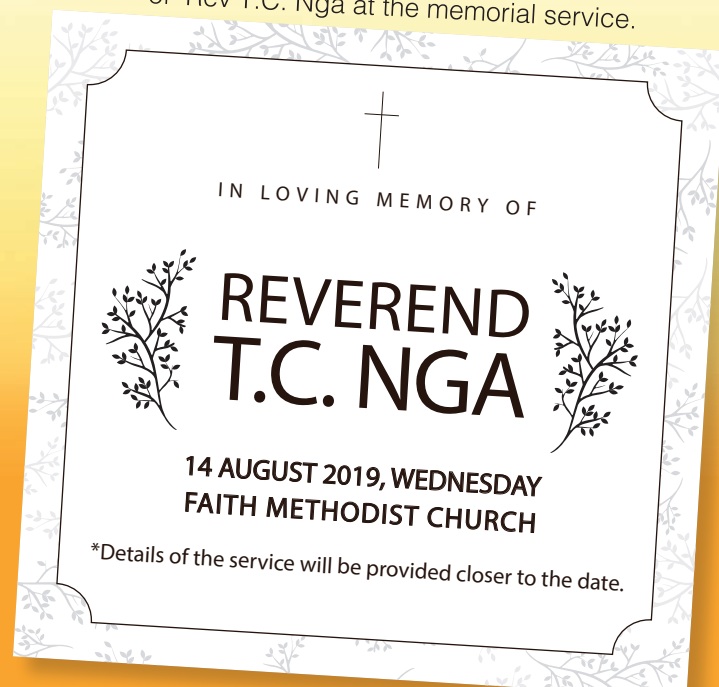
Final Words

Mr Diong Woong Ding, Chairman of the Management Committee Toa Payoh Project Committee made the following remarks in the committee's report dated 24 July 1977.

“ Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to God and my sincere appreciation to our project manager cum Secretary-General, Rev T.C. Nga, who had given so much of his precious time and energy to help to bring this worthwhile building project to a successful conclusion. He shed not only sweat but tears, to the extent of giving up his full-time job in teaching in order to devote his entire time to serve the Lord and to see that the building project is completed on schedule. His devotion to duty and the courageous spirit displayed in times of need and difficulties are truly admirable. ”

This series of events which spanned between seven and eight years were faithfully recorded and recounted by Rev Nga in his article “A Brief History of Toa Payoh Methodist Church”. This article was believed to have been reproduced in whole by Foochow MC in her 100th anniversary souvenir magazine in 1996. Foochow MC was the sponsor church for the Toa Payoh Project and played a significant role in supporting the project financially as well as taking on a leadership role in building up the Chinese and English-speaking congregations.

Do join us to remember the life and contributions of Rev T.C. Nga at the memorial service.



VISITING THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF REVELATION

LED BY REV REUBEN NG
FROM 17 - 27 MARCH

By Denise Wong

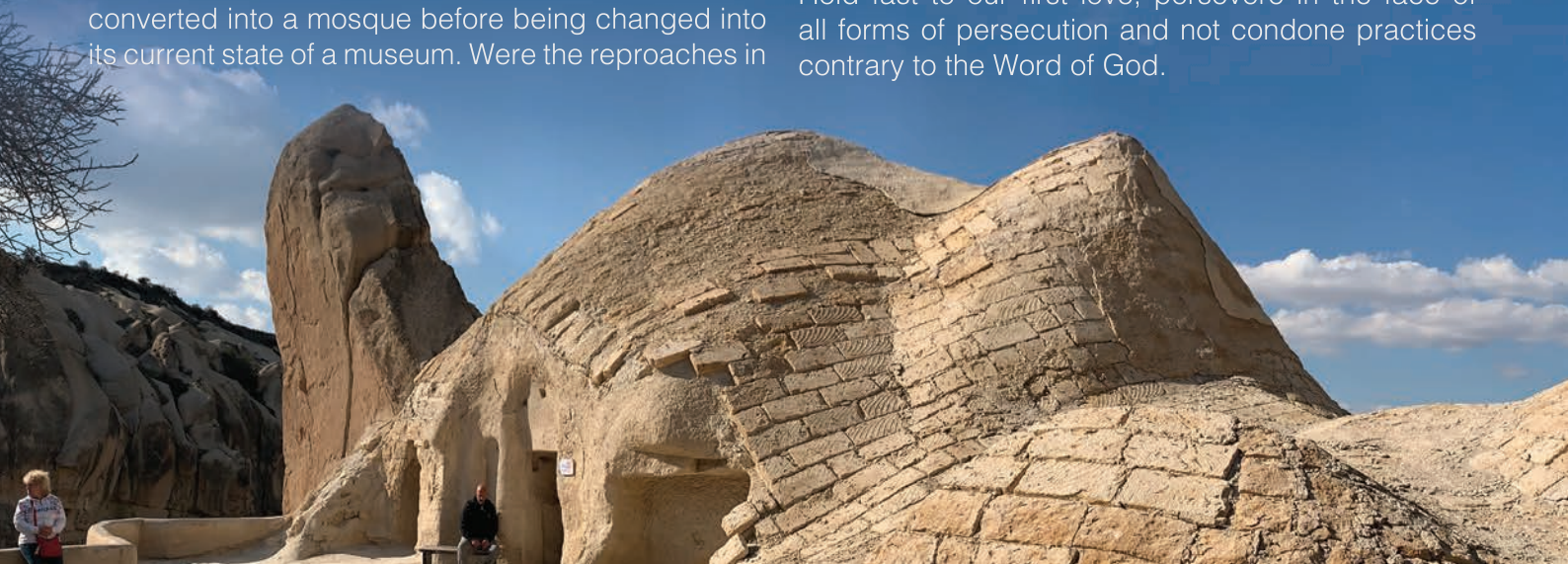
Reverend Reuben Ng (Rev Reuben), led a group of members from Toa Payoh Methodist Church to Turkey from 17 to 27 March this year. The trip included adventures through an underground city, a hot air balloon ride in Cappadocia, exploring the “cotton castle” in Pamukkale, and shopping for food at the Spice Bazaar and Taksim Square in Istanbul. However, the main focus of the trip was the Seven Churches of the Book of Revelation. It was sad to see these buildings in ruins, a faint shadow of their past glory. Christianity was able to spread in Asia Minor under the Roman Emperor Constantine who had converted to Christianity. However, the Roman Empire declined and lost its territories in Turkey to the Ottoman Empire in 1453. This seems to show that Christianity cannot rely on earthly powers to sustain it, but on the grace of God.

While visiting the churches and other places of interest, some disturbing questions came to my mind, foremost being: Given that Christianity first flourished in this land under Emperor Constantine, how did it decline to its current pitiful and derelict state? Some church buildings no longer house churches. The Hagia Sophia, one of the places that we visited, was originally a church which was subsequently converted into a mosque before being changed into its current state of a museum. Were the reproaches in

Revelation made only against the early church? Why are the letters to the seven churches in Revelation still important to us today?

The answer to my questions soon dawned on me after listening to several of Rev Reuben’s mini-sermons at each of the church sites. Ephesus’ abandonment of love, Pergamum’s embrace of the teachings of Balaam, and Thyatira’s tolerance of idolatry (as symbolised by Jezebel), sexual immorality and consumption of food sacrificed to idols were some of the acts that were displeasing to God. The other churches did not fare better. Sardis had the reputation of being “alive but was actually dead” while Laodicea sat on the fence, being “neither hot nor cold” for God. Being “busy” for God does not necessarily mean that our actions and heart please the Lord. These warnings are not only meant for the early churches. God continues to speak to us through the seven churches.

The physical state of the seven churches is also a reflection of their spiritual state, a grim warning to all Christians, lest we face the same consequences. Indeed, some churches in the west have already been converted to pubs. What then should we do? Hold fast to our first love, persevere in the face of all forms of persecution and not condone practices contrary to the Word of God.





Ephesus



Pergamum



Smyrna



Philadelphia



Thyatira



Sardis

For those of us living in Singapore which is a multi-racial and multi-cultural nation, we have been inculcated with respect for others. Often, this value is translated into advocating a permissive attitude towards those whose opinions, beliefs, practices etc. differ from our own. In the light of the seven churches, it is all the more important that we differentiate between mindful respect and unfettered compromises. One can carefully give due regard to the feelings, rights and traditions of others without supporting or joining in practices which are contrary to God's instructions. There may even be situations where we will need to stand up for what we believe as Christians and not compromise on our beliefs. Understanding this gives new meaning and significance to our regular recitation of the Affirmation of Faith or the Nicene Creed during Holy Communion Services, which is not only a declaration of our Christian faith but also a timely reminder to hold on steadfastly to our "first love".



Laodicea

I thank God for keeping the group safe throughout the trip, His wake-up call for me (through the early churches) as well as His faithfulness and great love which will never leave me. May I humble myself, repent and say, "The Lord is my God, His voice I will obey."



RESURRECTION SUNDAY

By Alan Goh

The performing arts were used to convey the message of Easter for the past few years, with a hip-hop dance and spoken word presentation in 2016, a musical in 2017 and a play in 2018. Resurrection Sunday in 2019 saw a return to traditional sermons. Nonetheless, let us not take away anything from the Joy Kids Dancers who enthralled us with their enthusiastic and energetic dance offering.

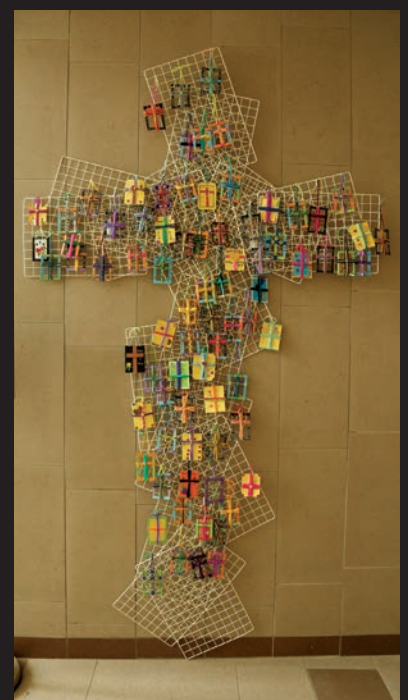


For the sermons, Toa Payoh Methodist Church had the honour of Reverend Dr Gordon Wong (Rev Dr Wong), President of the Trinity Annual Conference, to share with us from the Book of Isaiah. Rev Dr Wong shared on Good Friday how it seemed almost unbelievable that our Lord Jesus Christ who was rejected by His fellow men became exalted as mankind's saviour after His death on the cross. On Resurrection Sunday, Rev Dr Wong urged us to continue to stretch out and enlarge the presence of God, even if one is barren, bereaved or betrayed. This is because we have a friend in the risen Lord, who bore our sins and shared in our trials and temptations.

Resurrection Sunday also saw the culmination of a series of visual displays just outside the church sanctuary. During the period of Lent, worshippers and visitors were reminded weekly of significant events leading to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Palm leaves, a foot basin and a crown of thorns were some of the items presented. On Resurrection Sunday, banners proclaiming the finished work of Jesus Christ and His resurrection were on full display.

Finally, Resurrection Sunday is a celebration of life everlasting. And there are not many better examples of life than the creativity, energy and vibrancy of children and youths. To this end and also as outreach, the Joy Kids Ministry organised an Easter Hunt and Mini Carnival where children could engage in art & craft activities, play games, have their photographs taken, and indulge in a little snacking. Similarly, Youth Fusion organised an Easter Food Hunt in the afternoon where our youths and their friends ventured around Toa Payoh to search for delectable food and get to know each other better.

Let us now sit back and recap some of the highlights from Resurrection Sunday.





Joy Kids Dancers



Youth Easter Food Hunt



Key Dates @ TPMC

JUNE

7 - 10 June

Missions Trip -
Bangkok, Thailand



Outreach Sunday



26 June

JULY

1 - 4 July

Missions Trip -
Bengaluru, India (Chai 316)



Pledge Sunday



7 July

21 July

Ministry Recruitment



AUGUST



49th Anniversary:
Community Blessing Project &
Anniversary Service



17 & 18 August

25 August



Baptism and
Membership Service



SEPTEMBER



Missions Trip - Manado
& Palu, Indonesia



18 - 24 September