

23 Feb 2020 8.30am & 11am Services	1 Mar 2020 8.30am & 11am Services
Sermon Play By The Rules Esther 5:1-14 Dr Tan Kim Huat	Sermon Let God Vindicate Esther 6:1-7:10 Rev Tan Cheng Huat
Worship Leader Eld Corinne Liu	Worship Leader Joel Seah
Support Singers Felicia Toh/Samuel Sze	Support Singers Joshua Seah/Koh En Lin
Band Samuel Liu	Band Linus Lee
Cozy Corner (Suspended)	Cozy Corner (Suspended)
Announcements Rev Lee Kien Seng Eld Lawrence Fu	Announcements Eld Ng Tah Wee Eld Chan Kin Ming
Welcome I/C Dn Charles Lee/Christabel Lee Eld Tan Teoh Khoon/Ho Gek Hua	Welcome I/C Soon Chong Guan/Wee Yin Hong Eld Chng Chee An/Gaw Chu Lan
Count Offering Choo Meng Kern/Lee Peck Hian Dn Michael Khoo/Catherine Susha	Count Offering Lee Peck Hian/Joyce Peh Dn Belinda Lee/Lim Chong Seng
Ushers June Leong/Veronica Lau/ Soon Chong Guan/Chin Mee Fah Simon Maaland/Evelyn Koh Henry Teo/Linda Teo	Ushers Yip Cheng Wai/Derrick Tan/ Ng Sock Kheng/Ang Yoke Hwa Nina Teo/Liz Toh/ June Lim/Christina Chiam
Sound Leslie Ang/Ang Lay Choo Leslie Ang/Ang Lay Choo	Sound Peter Cheng/Nevan Ng/Paul Soon Peter Cheng/Evan Lim
Computer Lee Kien Meng Andrew Lim	Computer Beh Swee Lan Beh Swee Lan
Flower Arrangement (Suspended)	Flower Arrangement (Suspended)
Holy Communion Preparation on 1 Mar	
Chia Yin Choo/Lek Lip Hong/Leong Khar Gek Teo Wei Leng/Catherine Siaw/Chan Lai Chun	
Holy Communion Servers on 1 Mar	
S1 Eld Chong Yoke Fooi S2 Eld Ng Tah Wee S3 Eld Florence Chua S4 Eld Peter Goh S5 Eld Chng Say Tiong S6 Eld Alex Chan	S1 Eld Lawrence Fu S2 Eld Lee Chung Horn S3 Eld Wong Chee Seng S4 Eld Corinne Liu S5 Eld Eddy Teo S6 Eld Tan Teoh Khoon

* Indicates 11 am service

February Memory Verse

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience...

Colossians 3:12 (ESV)

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True Way
Presbyterian Church
ENGLISH CONGREGATION

23 Feb 2020
8.30am & 11am Services

Epiphany 7
(Transfiguration Sunday)

GATHERING TO WORSHIP

Prelude
Entry of the Word / Call to Worship*
Opening Song: Be Still For The Presence Of The Lord *
Prayer of Praise & Confession*
Songs of Praise & Adoration*

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

Scripture Reading: Romans 13:1-6
Scripture Memory: Colossians 3:12
Preparatory Song: God Has Spoken By His Prophets*
Sermon: Play By The Rules
Esther 5:1-14

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

Responsive Song: God Of Grace And God Of Glory
(TH292)*
Time of Sharing
Intercessory Prayers
Offertory Song: Blessed Be Your Name
Doxology / Offertory Prayer*

SENDING FORTH INTO THE WORLD

Welcome & Announcements
Closing Song: One Voice*
Benediction & Threefold Amen*
Choral Benediction: Shalom To You*
Postlude / Silent Meditation

* Please stand as you are able

Love God • Make disciples

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome

We welcome all our guests and visitors this morning.

Condolences

We extend our condolences to Poh Hoon and Eld Chee Seng, Joycelyn and Anthony Tan and Michelle Chiang on the home calling of the late Mdm Soh Geok Chen, beloved mother of Poh Hoon and Jocelyn on 18 Feb (Tue).

QR Code for Church Bulletin

We strongly encourage as many of you to scan the QR code for the bulletin. The hard copy will be given to those who really need it. This is our effort to save the environment.

Collection of Tithes & Offerings

Worshippers who wish to give tithes and/or offerings may now do so via PayNow by using:

- 1) our Church U.E.N. number T12SS0173B; OR
- 2) a QR code, which can be obtained from our Administrator, Mr. Alvin Yip.

Please indicate whether the giving is a tithe or offering, in the narrative field – “Enter UEN/Bill Reference No.”

Car Park on Sundays

The main gate (where the cars come in) will be opened between 7-8am, 10-10.30am and 12.30-1pm. Car parks in the church will be reserved for duty personnel on a first-come-first basis in the respective reserved lots (English and Chinese). Your temperature will be taken before you are allowed to drive in.

Only the side gate facing Commonwealth Avenue (sheltered walkway from Queenstown MRT station) will be open to worshippers. Your temperature will also be taken as you enter the gate.

No Cozy Corner and Community Lunch & Newcomers Get Together

Our monthly Community Lunch & New Comers Get Together and Cozy Corner is suspended until further notice.

Church Prayer Meeting

Date: 4 Mar (Wed) Time: 7.45 pm Venue: Room 204
Mission Focus: "One Generation Away." (Judges 2:1-15)

The heartbeat of God is “Missions”. This Church prayer meeting is led by the Missions Committee. We will be praying for the ongoing mission efforts of the church in different parts of the world.

Pew Ministry

Date: 5, 12, 19, 26 Mar; 2 Apr (Thu) Time: 7.45pm - 9.30pm Venue: Room 204

In Christ’s Great Commission to us, we have been instructed to MAKE DISCIPLES. Our every Sunday gathering is a very good platform for us to fulfil this mandate. Yes, we gather together to worship God, but we can also extend love by building each other up so that as worshippers we are transformed from being passive recipients or spectators/consumers to active other-person-centred servants in our Sunday gatherings. Find out how our church culture can be transformed from the ministry of the few to the ministry of the pew and how you can be part of that culture. This course will be facilitated by Rev Lee Kien Seng. Please register with Alvin Yip (Church Office).

Before You Say I Do (BYSID) Class

Date: 7, 14, 21, 28 Apr; 5 May (Tue) Time: 7.45pm - 9.30pm Venue: Room 204

Couples who are intending to be married in the 2nd half of 2020 or beyond are required to attend the class. Please register with Alvin Yip at <alvinyip@trueway.org.sg>.

Pray Singapore @ 12 noon

Let’s join Christians all over Singapore at 12 noon to pray for our nation, especially for the Coronavirus situation. Wherever you are, whatever you are doing, just stop and pray for as long as the Spirit leads. The prayer pointers have been circulated through the DGs. If you need them, you can request from Pr. George.

Church Camp 2020

Date: 12-15 Jun (Fri - Mon) Venue: Tanjong Puteri Golf Resort, Johor

Mark your calendars now and plan to join us for a blessed time of Fellowship and Spiritual retreat. More details to follow.

Our Daily Bread

The above devotional material is available for collection from the Ushers’ Table on a first-come-first-served basis.

Puppet Recruitment 2020

The Puppet Ministry aims to teach, preach, and reach the young with the Good News of our Lord Jesus through Puppetry. We provide a platform for the young to serve the Lord, thus nurturing their gifts and talents. We are looking for people to serve as puppeteers and scriptwriters. All are welcome! Sign up at: <https://tinyurl.com/puppetrecruitment2020> Please feel free to contact Amelia at 93712050 or <ameliatanx@gmail.com> if you have any enquiries.

Gospel Cart

We are glad to inform you that new resources have been added to the Gospel Cart – a Bible Society of Singapore (BSS) booklet: “Hope In The Storm”, English tracts: “Why Trust The Bible”, “Who Is Jesus?”, “10 Reasons Jesus Came To Die”, “More Than A Carpenter”, “In Search Of Truth”, “Don’t Be Left Behind” and “A Father’s Love”, ODB ‘Looking at Life’ booklets: “How Can I Change For The Better?”, “Is Being Good ... Good Enough?” and “Why Am I So Lonely”, bilingual tracts: “Where Can You Find True Love?”, “The Best Gift To Have”, “Let Go Of Worry!”, “The Search For Satisfaction” and “From Emptiness To Satisfaction” and ODB booklets: “10 Reasons To Believe”, “How Can I Live With My Loss?” and “How Can I Break The Silence?”. We encourage you to prayerfully make use of these available resources in the Gospel Cart for your outreach efforts.

Bible Reading Plan (BRP)

Bible reading is a good spiritual discipline. You are encouraged to embark on this journey of reading the Bible from cover to cover. If you want to know God, you would need to know God’s Word because He has revealed Himself through His Word. You may choose between reading the Bible within a year, 2 years or even 3 years. This year, we have booklets of “Word Intake for Spiritual Edification” (WISE) to accompany your Bible reading. Booklets of 40 Day Devotion for New Testament, for OT – Pentateuch, and for OT - Powers are available for collection if you are keen to do this Bible reading or if you have queries, please email to Pr. George Ang.

Calvin on Handling the Things of this World

Date: 6 Apr (Mon) Time: 7.30pm-9pm Venue: Orchard Road Presbyterian Church

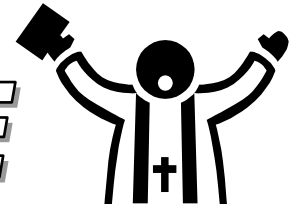
The Presbyterian Church in Singapore has introduced the abovementioned talk by Prof. Tony Lane which is organized by the Asian Institute of Calvin Studies. For more information, please refer to the noticeboard outside Sanctuary 2.

Last Week’s Attendance And Giving

16 Feb 2020	8.30am Service	11.00am Service	U12	Youth Zone	Thai Service	TOTAL
Attendance	180	208	44	52	43	527

Cheque payable to: “TWPC - English Congregation” (tithes and offerings to English congregation)
TWPC - EC - TTF (for Theological Training Fund). Write your name and contact number behind the cheque.

PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE



Faith In The Time of Corona

With the COVID-19 outbreak, attending Sunday services is now problematic for some Christians. Since services are essentially made up of congregations of people in confined air-conditioned spaces, they are potential avenues for the contagion to spread. Two local churches have already been identified as outbreak clusters, and it is no wonder there are Christians unwilling to attend services for now. Despite MOH's assurance that church services may continue with precautionary measures, there would be those who remain unassured. On the other hand, there are Christians who resolutely continue with "business as usual" because they believe God will protect them from the outbreak. Already one local pastor has declared to his church that "No virus can come near you." These responses to the outbreak prompt the question: Is it a lack of faith when one stays away from service to avoid the contagion?

It has not been uncommon to hear Christians encouraging one another to "have faith" during this ongoing outbreak. However, when uttered too often as a spiritual panacea to any kind of crisis, the phrase soon degenerates into an empty platitude. What does it really mean to "have faith" in the face of COVID-19? Faith is a concrete response to the gospel, and it has three components: knowledge, assent, and trust. Here, Abraham is instructive for us. He became aware of God and his promises through God's own revelation (knowledge). After considering those promises and the One who made them, he acknowledged them to be true (assent). This was developed into trust when he uprooted his family from their homeland to sojourn in Canaan. For Christians on this side of the cross, having faith means knowing the person of Christ and his good news to us (as mediated by Scripture), assenting to who Christ is and the veracity of his message, and thereby entrusting ourselves to him. It is not something which remains in the realm of abstraction but is concretely expressed in our lives. How then should this faith in Christ be expressed in this outbreak?

We may be thankful for guidance from church history, for this is not the first time that Christians have to reflect on the problem of infectious diseases. In the 3rd century, a mysterious and deadly contagion hit Roman North Africa such that in the city of Alexandria “there are lamentations everywhere, and all are mourning ... by reason of the number of the dead and the dying day by day.” Yet Dionysius, the bishop of Alexandria, had this to say about his flock:

At all events most of the brethren through their love and brotherly affection for us spared not themselves nor abandoned one another, but without regard to their own peril visited those who fell sick, diligently looking after and ministering to them and cheerfully shared their fate with them, being infected with the disease from them and willingly involving themselves in their troubles. Not a few also, after nursing others back to recovery, died themselves ...

This he compared to those who were not Christians:

But the Gentiles behaved quite differently: those who were beginning to fall sick they thrust away, and their dearest they fled from, or cast them half dead into the roads: unburied bodies they treated as vile refuse; for they tried to avoid the spreading and communication of the fatal disease, difficult as it was to escape for all their scheming.

Much about faith may be gleaned from Dionysius’ words, but one thing is painfully obvious: Faithful Christians do die from contagion. None can accuse the Alexandrian Christians of being unfaithful, yet it was precisely their faithfulness that killed them. It is irresponsible and nonsensical to claim immunity from any contagion on the basis of faith, and the millions of Christians who would later die in the 6th century Plague of Justinian and in the 14th century Black Death testify to such vanity. However, faith does embolden Christians to be fearless before disease and death. It was not as if the Alexandrian Christians were unaware of the contagion’s virulence, yet they demonstrated their faith through sacrificial charity after the manner of their Lord, trusting that their lives were truly hid with him on high.

Carthage was another North African city similarly affected by the contagion. Cyprian, who was its bishop, gave a sermon encouraging his flock to face it without fear:

... what a great thing is it, how pertinent, how necessary, that pestilence and plague which seems horrible and deadly, searches out the righteousness of each one ... Even although this mortality conferred nothing else, it has done this benefit to Christians and to God's servants that we begin gladly to desire martyrdom as we learn not to fear death. These are trainings for us, not deaths: they give the mind the glory of fortitude; by contempt of death they prepare for the crown.

Cyprian minces no words when it comes to how the faithful should respond to the contagion. While the outbreak may be judgment for the impious, it is “departure to salvation to God’s servants.” Therefore, disease and death are but a test of a Christian’s faith, that he may be fearless before it so as to obtain eternal glory. It is incongruous to him for Christians to believe in a glorious afterlife with their Lord yet be so fearful and anxious of falling ill and dying.

That Cyprian delivered this sermon amid a deadly contagion implies Christians were still gathering for services. This comes as no surprise, for Sundays were hallowed for the corporate communion celebration. From the reign of Nero to Constantine (64-312 AD), widespread Christian persecution was sporadic, but it remained a capital crime for anyone to take part in communion services (this was how the Romans knew one was a Christian). Despite that, Christians risked their lives to participate in them week after week for two hundred and fifty years.

According to Anglican liturgical scholar Dom Gregory Dix, they took this risk because they believed it was only by participating in the corporate act of the communion service that each Christian fulfilled his personal duty, and so expressed the essence of the church before God as the Body of Christ. Furthermore, Dix observed it

was the conviction that there rested on each of the redeemed an absolute necessity so to take his own part in the self-offering of Christ, a necessity more binding even than the instinct of self-preservation. Simply as

members of Christ's Body, the church, all Christians must do this, and they can do it in no other way than that which was the last command of Jesus to His own.ⁱ

To assemble on pain of death is to have faith, because it is obedience to Christ's instruction to remember him (in the communion; 1 Cor. 11.24b), and an offering of oneself to God after the sacrificial manner of Christ. It is poignant Cyprian insinuates elsewhere in his sermon that if Christians are fearful of contagion, then they would scarcely face martyrdom for Christ.

From this brief historical survey of how the ancient Christians responded to contagion, we may conclude that part of what it means to "have faith" in the face of COVID-19 is not to be overcome by fear of catching the virus, but having courage to assemble with other Christians on the Lord's Day. This is even more so when the state has given the green light for services to continue with the appropriate precautionary measures (even if that were not so and services have to be suspended, it would still be appropriate for Christians to meet in small groups for worship). There are certainly factors which legitimately prevent Christians from assembling: when we are unwell and need rest to recuperate; when duties of our vocations forbid (e.g., healthcare professionals on shift work); and when charity to others forbid (e.g., tending to dependents). The last factor is also why someone with the flu should refrain from attending service – it is charitable not to infect others with it! Yet, fear is not one of these factors. If we should need more encouragement in this, then let us remember our Lord on the way to the cross. Although he faced deep feelings of dread prior, he was determined to obey the Father and so purchased salvation for us through a most torturous death. May the Spirit continue to increase our faith and imbue us with our Lord's fortitude in such times of testing.

ⁱ Dix regards Jesus' command at the Last Supper "Do this in remembrance of me" as his last command. Note that for the greater part of the church's history, what is now regarded as the Great Commission (Matt. 28.19-20) was never interpreted as a command to the church but only to the Apostles. Dix probably stands in this interpretive tradition.