

Faith Journey

信心之旅



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The Pastor's Message



Dare to Hope

In the midst of extreme adversity, seeing his beloved nation and the icon of his faith destroyed, Jeremiah lamented before his God. He was known as a weepy prophet; no surprise as he had to go through so much pain and suffering. And yet when he lamented his sorrows, he could still remember his God.

In Lamentations 3:22-23, he declared

- ²² The faithful love of the LORD never ends! His mercies never cease.
²³ Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning.*

Recently, when I was reading through this book, it wasn't these two verses that the Lord spoke to me, but it was the verses before that,

- ¹⁹ The thought of my suffering and homelessness is bitter beyond words.
²⁰ I will never forget this awful time, as I grieve over my loss.*

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The views expressed by the authors are not necessarily the views of the church.

For non-Muslims only

***21 Yet I still dare to hope
when I remember this:***

Jeremiah did not deny his deep sorrow and suffering, he declared that he would never forget “this awful time”.

That would be exactly what many of us would say; how can we ever forget this awful time of the last two years. The national MCO started on 18 March 2020 and on 14 March 2020, at 10:30pm on a Saturday night, Rev Tie King Tai, then President of SCAC announced that there would be no in-person worship service the next day, Sunday.

Borrowing Jeremiah’s words, I would say : the thought of my ministerial loss and “churchlessness” is bitter beyond words. Suddenly, I became a pastor with no sheep, a church with no members and my faith community disappeared.

And now, after two years, as I look back on the losses, I can also echo Jeremiah’s words and say I dare to hope!

The original phrase here can be translated as “I have a foundation or basis to wait in hope.” That’s expectation, forward looking, waiting in anticipation.

Right now, we are in a transi-

tion state, with the expectation of better times ahead as we move from the pandemic to endemic. Hopefully, more and more in-person activities can return to the church and the living out as a faith community become more and more tangible.

We are grateful for technology and resources we had for the last two years that had helped us stay connected. But God has made us as physical and communal beings and we need the physical and communal aspects of our church live.

Since the beginning of this year, we have had more and more members return to worship in the sanctuary. We started our in person prayer meetings but with the surge of Omicron cases, we have gone back to be online. Some groups such as the GB, BB, MYF, MJYF have had activities in the church.

And so as I reflected, my response to God is yes, Lord, I dare to hope! I look forward with confidence that with His grace and Guidance, the practice of our faith in worship, ministry, community life will take place once again in our church.

Dear brothers and sisters, let these words from Jeremiah help us all to respond with, “Yes, Lord, I dare to hope.” Amen

Your Pastor
Rev Lenita Tiong
March 2022 §

Claiming God's Promises In Troubled Times

As a metastatic breast cancer survivor since 2017, I've been blessed to be given a targeted therapy drug the last 4 years which managed to control my disease well. During the last 2 years of COVID-19 pandemic, I've experienced several health challenges. Here you go ...

Single Cancer Progression at Liver (March 2020)

During my periodic CT-SCAN check-up as part of my disease monitoring –one tumor in liver was growing despite an ablation procedure I underwent in Oct 2019. My oncologist immediately urged me to fly to KL for an advanced radiotherapy i.e. SBRT to tackle this single-growth tumor. I was thankful that I managed to make my medical trip to KL back and forth amidst our very first MCO. My follow -on check showed that the tumor has been put to rest. Praise the Lord!

Acute Glaucoma on my Left Eye (June 2020)

One evening in June 2020, a sharp headache attacked me and blurred vision appeared in my left eye. My headache intensified and my vision remained blur as time passed by.

My hubby fetched me to a private hospital nearby 3 hours after. The ophthalmologist confirmed that I had Acute Glaucoma and prescribed some medicated eye drops for immediate containment. I was advised to undergo cataract surgery, but I was quite reluctant, for fear of the surgery risk.

Thank God that another ophthalmologist I approached recommended a laser procedure, which is simple and safe to tackle my eye problem as a short-term fix. The next day I

had the procedure, and my eye recovered reasonably well.

Broken Femur on my Left Leg (June 2021)

On another evening, my leg got knocked by the door while I hurried to get the rice cooked with the pot held with both my hands. I fell with unexplained pain on my left thigh. I was rushed to the private hospital again.

An x-ray confirmed my thighbone was been broken to two! The orthopaedic surgeon on duty told me that, the only way to fix my broken thighbone was to have a titanium insertion surgery.

While I was still worried about the surgery, surprisingly, the surgeon asked if he could pray for me. I felt so touched when he prayed that God would pacify my troubled mind, and that God's healing and guidance be with his surgery team. What a God-sent angel he was. I'm forever grateful for my surgeon's compassion and prayer support when I needed it most.

My femur surgery went smoothly the next morning. The physiotherapist taught me basic physio-exercises that I could do at home to aid my recovery in the following months. Since then, the wheelchair, a walking frame and a commode cum shower chair became my closest 'friends' to support my daily activities.

Despite this unforeseen leg injury, I thank God that the incident happened when my family members were around and able to get me to the hospital quickly.

During my leg recovery period, with life slowing down due to limited movement, I adjusted my usual life style from 'fast and furi-

ous' to 'slow and steady'. Patience and perseverance were needed to cope with this long recovery. I started to focus on what is really vital important in life and be contented with what I've been given.

Left Eye's Cataract Built Up Followed by Cancer Progression (Aug 2021 till now)

Just when my leg gradually recovered, my left eye started getting more sensitive towards light/brightness with more blurred vision than usual. I thought it should be time for my cataract surgery once my leg has recovered well.

However, my tumor marker test at the end of August came back with a shocking spike ... I shivered, hoping that it wasn't accurate. I went a detailed imaging test via PET-SCAN. The result confirmed new cancer progression in my body ... a devastating news, indeed. This meant the 4 years of endocrine target therapy has lost its efficacy on me ...

Overwhelmed with anxious thought, I contacted my doctor to discuss the next course of action. My heart was relieved that a second-line treatment is in-place for me. Still, emotionally there was much turbulence during this time.

I was so thankful that a sister-in-Christ shared with me a Christian singer who sang a particular song entitled, "You Sit On the Throne" that touched my heartstring. I made the song my prayer of praise and petition to God Almighty, seeking His mercy and healing power upon me. I found this as a spiritual anchor that when I felt downcast,

I started oral chemo treatment in September last year. The side effects were bearable.

Thankfully my doctor allowed me to proceed with my cataract surgery with extended break after the 4th oral chemo cycle, hence most of the side effects faded off. Praise God

that my cataract surgery went smoothly and my eye is recovering well with improved vision.

After the 6th oral chemo cycle, a repeat PET-SCAN showed that this oral drug didn't work for me as more cancer progression has been detected. Surprisingly, I didn't get too worried. I experienced God's surpassing peace in my heart. I took heed of my Doctor's advice to switch to intravenous chemotherapy using a new version of drug. I've since completed 2 cycles with only a few not-so-good days in each of the 3-week cycle. Praise God for His goodness and graciousness.

Though I don't know what will unfold before me in the days to come, I have the assurance that I am in the same boat as Jesus. I need not fear because Jesus will calm the storm. God has given us His great promises with hope, joy, peace, wisdom and strength for whatever we are facing in life.

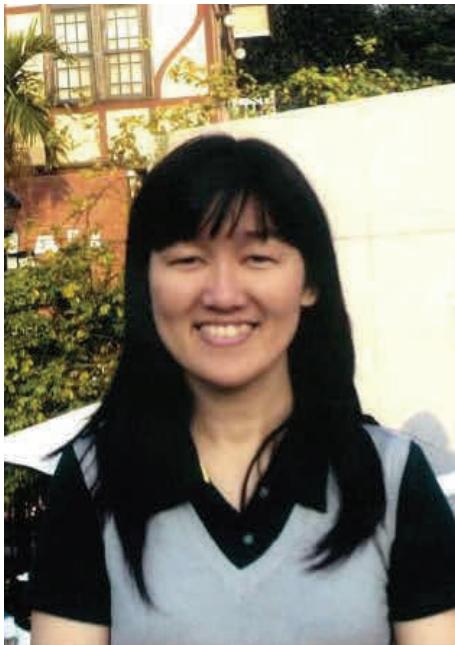
God empowers us, "For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline" (2 Timothy 1:7). And God will strengthen us and help us, "So do not fear, for I am with you, do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10). Indeed, "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1).

Lastly, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28). God does not promise us that our life journey will be easy, nevertheless, I shall remain grateful for every new given day and live everyday fruitfully with joy and peace from our Lord. Amen.

Sew Boon Lui, 27th March, 2022

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Getting to know Rev Wong Poh Fong



Rev Wong celebrating her birthday with her grandparents

Rev Wong Poh Fong is an associate pastor at Faith Methodist Church in 2022.

Family background

Rev Wong comes from Sarikei. Her parents and her brother's family are living in Sarikei and Pakan. Rev Wong's younger brother is working as a site supervisor in Kuching. Like many people from Sarikei, her father had a pepper and cocoa plantation before he retired. For those of you who like kampua mee, you can ask Rev Wong's mother about the secrets of good kampua mee. But she has retired from making kampua.

Before Rev Wong entered Methodist Theological School, Sibu, she had worked in Kuala

Lumpur for more than three years after she received her certification as a private secretary from Stamford College.

Calling

Rev Wong saw the spiritual need when she was working in Kuala Lumpur. She had a burden for lost souls. She had experienced God's word, "It's like a precious pearl and I want to share the wonderful treasure with others. 让人寻找并得着这宝神的话" . She hopes that others will search and find the precious pearl too.

She later saw how busy the pastors were and wanted to help but she was

not equipped to do so.

When she announced her intention to go to seminary college, her parents and grandfather initially had some reservations. They knew that she was not expressive and wondered how she could be a pastor since pastors have to preach and talk a lot.

"My grandpa played a role in my decision-making," Rev Wong said. She grew up with her grandparents and were close to them. Her grandfather was a faithful Christian. He bought a shop near a Methodist church, so that his children and grandchildren could go to church. Because she lived with her grandparents and her brother's children, she finds



it easy to relate to the elderly and children.

Later her parents and grandfather did not object to her becoming a pastor. Since it is God's calling, they supported her.

"Sometimes it 'sn't easy for me to express myself. Even for simple expressions, I have to speak at length to say what I really mean," Rev Wong explained. "But when God wants to use me, I automatically can talk!"

FMC is Rev Wong's 7th appointment. Before this, she was in:

1. Selangau and Setapang

Preaching Centres, Sibu District, 2008 (3 years)

2. Zhuo En Methodist Church, Sarikei District (2 years)
3. Eng Kwang Methodist Church, Bintulu District(2 years)
4. Gloria Methodist Church, Bintulu District(1 year)
5. Living Stone Methodist Church, Miri District(2 years)
6. Nyelong Park Methodist Church, Sarikei District (3 years)
7. Faith Methodist Church

Apart from two stations where she was for 3 years and one station for 1 year, Rev Wong was in other stations for 2 years.

Rev Wong said, "In the seminary, we were taught that wherever we are posted, we accept it. We learn to serve."

Health problems

Rev Wong took a medical break of one year after her pastoral appointment in Selangau and Setapang.

She has some problem with her spine—a deteriorated disk and lack of elasticity. She had forgotten the medical terms but she remembers her doctor telling her that there was a hole in the disk which caused the fluid to leak out.

Several Malaysian doctors advised surgery but foreign doctors advised against it. In the end, Rev Wong decided not to go for the surgery. "What if I cannot walk after the surgery, and I would need my mother to look after me?" she wondered. In the end, she opted not to have the surgery.

If she sits for very long, she would experience pain around her waist and the pain would spread to her upper and lower back. She also cannot carry heavy things. The doctor advised her not to have air-conditioning flow directly on her back, so she sits with a pillow behind her back for protection.

People and doctors have suggested ways to alleviate the pain (physiotherapy, special belt etc.). "I would like to express my thanks to those who showed their care and concern towards me," she said.

"I'm okay when I am serving. Even though there is pain, I can serve. I just feel the pain after serving. My spine problem is tolerable, compared to my knee pain. My eyes feel tired if I read for too long. But God's grace is enough for me. Please don't worry about me," she said.

She is often reminded of 2 Corinthians 12: 7-10.

"because of these surpassingly great revelations. There-

fore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

God's grace is sufficient for me. Through my experiences, I can understand the health problems and sufferings of the elderly. When I was younger and had a healthy body, I could not understand them but now I do.

Different churches, different experiences

Every church is different. Big church, small church, big town, small town.

Rev Wong found that different churches have their own strengths. One church may have Strength A, another may have Strength B. One single church cannot be expected to have all the strengths of different churches put together.

She learnt to understand the culture of people. The different churches, different leaders, different brothers and sisters, different co-workers, and different congregation members all give rise to different situations, different time and methods of doing things. All these influences ministries and spiritual results.

Through it all, Rev Wong learns that she cannot rely on previous experiences, and needs God's guidance above all on how to serve Him.

"God trains me to be adaptable," Rev Wong said. "I learn to allow God to change me so that He can use me in different circumstances. If I don't change, God cannot use me well."

Whenever she goes to a new church, she asks God, "What do you want me to do in this church? How do you want me to serve you?". In the recent years, she came to the realisation that she needs to know seek God's heart.

In FMC, Rev Wong enjoys good comradeship with brothers and sisters in doing God's will and appreciates the opportunity to serve Lord, brothers and sisters. May God bless her!

Su Hie §

泗里街教区、开元堂与信心堂 - 乐龄团契联谊会

感谢神的带领，信心堂乐龄团契受邀于2021年10月16日参加泗里街教区、开元堂与信心堂联合举办之乐龄团契联谊会。当晚的程序是以Zoom和YouTube线上直播的方式进行。

领会：林赛英姐妹

泗里街教区乐龄团契主席刘贤敏弟兄致词。刘弟兄指出那是难得的机会，联合六所堂会举办这一次前所未有的跨教区，和跨省份的联谊会，希望参与者都能享受所有安排的节目，渡过一个美好欢欣的夜晚。

他以诗篇65:11-13勉励大家：你以恩典为年岁的冠冕，你的路径都滴下脂油。滴在旷野的草场上，小山以欢乐束腰，草场以羊群为衣，谷中也长满了五谷，这一切都欢呼歌唱。我们在主里联谊，成为一家亲。

李家财牧师分享专题：主里一家亲。主里一家亲是神家里的人，是属于上帝的儿女。

以弗所书 2:18-19说：因为我们两下借着祂被一个圣灵所感，得以进到父面前。这样，你们不再做外人和客旅，是与圣徒同国，是神家里的人了。

以弗所书 1:15-16，保罗祷告说：因此，我既听见你们信从主耶稣，亲爱众圣徒，就为你们不住地感谢神，祷告的时候常提到你们。

主里一家亲，当信从主耶稣，特别有三方面的表现：

信从主耶稣是指要信赖耶稣的引导。

信从主耶稣是指要信任耶稣的安排。

信从主耶稣是指要信服耶稣的教导。

主里一家亲，是亲爱众圣徒：

亲爱众圣徒的爱是没有选择对象的爱。彼得前书 4:7-8说：万物的结局近了，所以你们要谨慎自守，警醒祷告。最要紧的是彼此切实相爱，因为爱能遮掩许多的罪。

亲爱众圣徒的爱是要清楚表达出来的爱。约翰一书 4:12说：从来没有人见过神，我们若彼此相爱，神就住在我们里面，爱祂的心在

我们里面得以完全了。

亲爱众圣徒的爱是一种彼此尊重体谅的爱，活出基督的爱，成为主里一家人。

信心堂乐龄团契主席范长莊弟兄分享：感谢神，今晚特别荣幸受邀参加泗里街教区、开元堂与信心堂联合举办之乐龄团契联谊会。难能可贵借此机会彼此之间可在云端相见。过去要花数个小时的车程才得见面，现在藉着科技之便，弹指之间在线上就可喜相逢了。

神赐下宝贵的智慧，在新时代、新科技的发展下，就不受时空距离的限制了。彼此之间在云端可增进互访，相互间的鼓励、扶持、关怀、团契，在基督的爱里成为一家人，一同学习神的话语，一起进步，一起成长成熟。教会运用顶尖的新科技，成为全球化、一体化传扬福音的工具，引起新时代公众的共鸣。

虽然在疫情肆虐的严峻时期，我们宅家的日子，也能掌握天下的知识和资讯，带给天下的基督徒有神丰盛的生命与恩典。

如今牧者的主日信息透过网络把天国福音传播得更广更宽更远，直到地极，期望未得之民听到福音的好处，归向主耶稣，都要作主的门徒。

我要以耶利米书 17:7-8节与大家共勉：倚靠耶和华，以耶和华为可靠的，那人有福了！他必像树栽于水旁，在河边扎根。炎热来到并不惧怕，叶子仍必青翠；在干旱之年毫无挂虑，而且结果不止。阿们！

余兴节目：各堂会乐龄团契呈献精彩节目。

信心堂：十个童女的比喻
(录音)

开元堂：大合唱：主啊，我要跟随你

新恩堂：乐器合奏、大合唱：亲眼看见你

广恩堂：唱游：有主在我船上

怀仁堂：笛子演奏：生命曙光、旧曲新唱：小城的故事

新怀仁堂：大合唱：求神让疫情止息

各堂会乐龄团契弟兄姐妹们虽然躯体老迈，但内心却是一天新似一天。唱起歌跳起舞来，特别的活泼可爱，活力十足，有神的恩典彰显在各位的身上。感谢各位的笑容，增添生活的快乐！愿大家开心每一天，幸福安康。

泗里街教区长江锦顺牧师勉励和祝福。江牧师引用诗篇133篇的比喻，今晚来自跨区域，不同牧区和不同堂会的乐龄团契们欢乐相聚一堂，和乐融融，是何等的善，何等的美。这好比那贵重的油浇在亚伦的头上，流到胡须，又流到他的衣襟。因为在这里领受耶和华神所赐的福分，既有永远的生命，大家珍惜这段美好欢乐的时光。

虽然疫情肆虐，但神的国度已经扩张到云端，在线上彼此之间，互相的激励、团契、扶持，在基督里我们是同路人，也是主里一家亲。

江牧师为今晚联谊会祝福祷告。

古晋信心堂乐龄团契

范长莊报导

19. 10. 2021 §

