

GRACE NEWS

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Grace Baptist Church is a disciple-making church that transforms lives with the gospel and love of Jesus Christ.

TOP PRIORITY - RELATIONSHIPS

“Close relationships with others results in everyone being strengthened and blessed.”

In Grace News' metaphorical church, we now have a firm foundation (Issue 1) and a strong structure (Issue 2). For the third issue in our theme, we move on to consider the internal connections of the building, such as the wiring and pipes that provide electrical and plumbing services. In our analogy, this is equivalent to the relationships among church members that give rise to a mature community of believers, connected by love and care for each other and enabling a growing faith and a greater dependence on Jesus.

With this in mind, Pastor Arnold Wong gives us a biblical picture of the importance of relationships and community within the church, and helps us in our understanding with a memorable comparison. Read on to find out more!

In today's world we operate on the basis of what is important – priorities. But, what is a priority to one person may not be a priority to another. However, we can all agree that at least one item that should be on everyone's priority list is relationships. This is how it can play out in the life of a believer, within a community of believers.

When asked which is the greatest commandment of the law (that is, the top priority), Jesus answered to love God and love others (Matt. 22:36-40). Relationships are important and the chief relationships for God's people are with God and with others. Our close relationship with God will help us see His love, holiness, splendour and majesty. Our desire to serve and obey Him will deepen as we gain greater access to the power of His Spirit (Jn. 15:1-11). Our relationship with God is, therefore, the top priority.

Close relationships with others results in everyone being strengthened and blessed. As believers gather together as a community, they encourage, love, and serve one another (Heb. 10:25; 1 Jn. 4:12; Gal. 5:13). These are only a small sample of what should and can happen. Such loving, caring acts are significant and meaningful to us, and to different people at various times in their lives. Without close relationships, life can be unmanageable and even unbearable. When believers gather alongside each other, it can make all the difference in the world. It can keep people from getting too close to – or even going over – the edge. Our relationships with others in the community of Christ are a priority.

A brother in Christ once shared that when believers gather, they are like charcoals stacked on top of each other, helping to keep each other hot. But, if one charcoal is separated from the rest, it will soon die off. It is important that we keep our relationships with other believers in the body strong and vibrant. If we are separated from relationships with God and others, our love could cool and eventually be extinguished. This is why relationships in the community of Christ are so important. Ω

Illustration by Benjamin Khan

The Ministries of Grace Baptist Church

Who's who and what do they do?

By Chan Kim Hoong

GBC's vision is to be "A disciple-making church that transforms lives with the gospel and love of Jesus Christ". The focus for 2016 is on deepening community. Quoting Pastor Oliver, "Disciple-making occurs in the context of biblical community and fellowship." We can deepen community and fellowship by serving one another with our gifts and talents through the various ministries established in GBC. 1 Peter 4:10 (NIV) says that we "should use whatever gifts we have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace".

When we serve, it opens up a whole new perspective of the multitude of needs in GBC. It is a first key step towards deepening community spirit where we can support and strengthen one another by meeting each other's needs. Being involved with a ministry is not about joining a club or society to feel we belong but rather it is about serving people – God's people – who are all part of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:27).

What are the various ministries in GBC? Well, you can find them on the church webpage¹ where an overview of the various ministries and how you can be involved is provided. Essentially, the various ministries revolve around the central theme of exalting God through our attitudes and actions. First, by developing a heart of love and obedience to the Lord and secondly, by cultivating a heart of thanksgiving and praise amongst her people (Psa. 86:9). Each ministry undertakes a key role in either reaching out to the lost

(Evangelising – Matt. 28:19-20), deepening faith (Edifying – Col. 1:28), identifying and sharpening gifts (Equipping – Eph. 4:11-12), mobilising people for God's work (Engaging – Rom. 12:4-8) or simply caring and encouraging one another in our walk in Him (Encouraging – Heb. 10:24-25).



	Key Ministry	Sub-Areas	Person(s) In-Charge
<p>These ministries are akin to the essential services of a building. They connect people and give life to the community. Your involvement is therefore important towards the aim of deepening community bonding within GBC.</p> <p>So, will you take the first step in giving of your time and talents by being involved in these ministries? You can connect yourself by getting in touch with the people listed in the chart on the right:</p>	Worship & Prayer (Oversight: Ps Arnold Wong)	Worship	Lam Lup Meng
		Ushering	Bruce Mok
		Hospitality	Peter Ho Lick
		Prayer	Ps Arnold Wong
		Pulpit	Ps Arnold Wong
	Christian Education (Oversight: Ps Oliver Chia)	Discipleship Seminars	Leow Wen Pin
		Seekers' Class	Chong Kang Wei
		Children Ministry	Mok Chuan Xin
	Care Groups (Oversight: Ps Oliver Chia)		Ngo Tian Chye
	Youth (Oversight: Tan Chong Tien)		Samuel Beh
	Young Adults (Oversight: Beh Soo Hee)		Caleb Yap
	Adult/Family (Oversight: Ps Arnold Wong)	Ladies Fellowship	Belinda Wee
		Ladies Precepts Class	Chan Yoke Meng
		Wednesday Ladies Bible Study	Effie Wong / Chong Miauw Suang
		ENJOY	Bruce Mok
	Missions & Evangelism (Oversight: Ps Oliver Chia, Wee Thiem Heng)	Family	Mok Chuan Hao
		Missions	Tan Kim Cheng
		Evangelism	Seah Kah Yin
	Communications (Oversight: Ps Arnold Wong, Eddie Tan)	Tuition	Low Lai Sai & Patsy Low
		Grace News	Tan Sze Gar
		Church Website	Carrie Chong
	Personalised/Seasonal (Oversight: Ps Arnold Wong, Ps Oliver Chia)	Watchman Prayer	Kuan Kok Pui
		Pastoral Care	Ps Arnold Wong
		Visitation	Kuan Kok Pui
		Care Fund	Chan Kok Pun / Wong Ann Chai
		Church Camp	Wong Ann Chai

¹<http://english.gracebaptistchurch.sg/ministries>

From Sunday Chore to Life Together



“ Every word spoken to exhort,
encourage and spur one another
towards Christlikeness is not futile.”

Illustration by Benjamin Khan

The faithfulness of one led him to a community of many. Tan Yee Kiat reflects on the importance of God's family.

When asked to write a reflection on my own attitude towards church, I can best describe it with the title above.

It's worth revisiting how I even came to be part of a church. I did not come from a church-going family. It started with a neighbouring family, the Poh family. Poh Teck Hwa, who I knew as Uncle Poh, was attending a church called First Baptist Church in Kuching, Malaysia. He had invited my family to a Christmas evangelistic event. Prior to this, my own aunt had given me a Children's Bible to read which I did, but I was not going to any church. I was around 9 or 10 at this time.

After this evangelistic event, Uncle Poh sought permission from my parents to bring me to church.

And so it began.

Going to church meant waking up early on Sundays, something that I was still struggling to get used to. A word here must be put in for the faithfulness of this Uncle Poh. Even when their family moved out of the neighbourhood, he still arrived promptly

on Sunday mornings to pick me up. Some days his journey was 'futile' because I woke up and told him, I don't feel like going today.

This carried on all the way until secondary school. In church, I was mostly on my own and I didn't really participate in the life of the community. As soon as church ended, I would meet my parents and we would go for lunch together.

When I came to Singapore at 15, I took the liberty to be free from church for one year. I did actually go to Grace Baptist Church (Chinese congregation) for one week in January, because my roommate Moses Han attended the Chinese congregation here. Moses is now studying for his Masters of Divinity in Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, Florida.

But 2002 was also a harsh lesson of trying to live in Singapore, without God. Some things were happening in my own family, and my mother started attending a church near our home in Kuching. When I went home that holiday, my mom signed me up for a baptism class. Once a week, for 13 weeks straight – which was the duration of my entire holiday – I strove to understand what the Christian faith meant. After all those years of church-going, I finally understood why Jesus had to die.

I came back to Singapore and spent one year in Grace Assembly of God. When junior college started, I came to Grace Baptist Church.

I would say there has always been a disjoint because my primary community was never the people of God at this point.

Things began to change when my primary community began to comprise less of friends from school, fellow Malaysians studying in Singapore, hostel friends and so on. It started to become more and more of the church community. I slowly began to understand our need to grow together as people of God.

By participating in life together, there is also a growing awareness that I participate in the highs and the lows of our life together. The Bible exhorts us to “rejoice with those who rejoice, [and] weep with those who weep” (Romans 12:15, ESV).

There are many things that wouldn't be in my world – PSLEs (Primary School Leaving Examinations), Parkinson's, cancer, newborn babies, marriages, bereavements – and so on, if I choose to look only at my own life.

The most important thing for me is to know that this community, unlike others which are transitory and short-lived, is prepared for an eternal weight of glory that awaits all of us. Every word spoken to exhort, encourage and spur one another towards Christlikeness is not futile. I once used the phrase 'Community for Eternity' to describe us and I stick to this description of who we are – thanks to all that God has done for us.

The verdict at the end of the day is that Uncle Poh's efforts were not futile and ours will not be either. Ω



GBC Retreat 2016

Living Together, Living for Him

Li Shi Wei talks to Nathasha Raj and Dr Loi Kuan Long on their expectations for this year's church retreat, and what it means to them as part of the GBC family.



We give thanks to God for Dr Loi (middle) and the organising committee for bringing the GBC family together for the church retreat.

This year's church retreat, held in June, was Nathasha's first experience of the biennial event. Strictly speaking, it should have been her second experience. In the last edition two years ago, the teenager was struck with stomach flu on the first night, which confined her in the hotel room for the rest of the event.

This time round, she's looking forward to creating a more memorable experience over the four days. She sees this as an opportunity to know people from outside the young adult care group. **"I am joining the retreat because I want to grow in fellowship with the rest of the church,"** she says. "If not, I'll simply be always close to just my group of 5 to 6 people."

Although Nathasha admits to having mixed feelings about interacting with people outside of her circle (she is attending the retreat with her family, and two close friends from her own fellowship will be her roommates), yet she feels an almost duty-bound sense in her desire to build up a bond with the church family. She cites Galatians 6:2 (ESV), and its exhortation to 'bear one another's burdens', as her inspiration.

The sense of community was also a factor in Dr Loi's decision to get involved in the church retreat. Not only did he sign up for it, but also for the first time this year he was part of the organising committee. Months before the event, he went around scouting for a suitable location, before finally settling on a sprawling and quiet venue near Malacca.

This year's event comes amidst a time when the church is raising funds for the rebuilding project. As Dr Loi explains, with the current situation that the congregation is in, it makes the organising of the four-day event all the more necessary.

"In these two years we won't have a physical place to call our own," he says. "We need these events all the more, where people

can bond together. A church retreat has a different emphasis from a normal service."

"When people stay together for a period of time, there is more interaction, the worship and learning becomes more concentrated, and we form a deeper bond as a church family."

In addition to location scouting, Dr Loi's role as an organising member extends to staying back after Sunday service to assist participants in the registration process. The general practitioner, who is married with three children, also sets aside time to liaise via email with various stakeholders to tie up all the necessary arrangements. Often this would take place long into the night, after he comes home from his clinic.

Indeed, as Nathasha and Dr Loi have expressed, the church retreat is an opportune time for fellowship across all generations and groups within the church. Their commitment to the GBC family – mirrored by many others out there – shows that, whether as a retreat participant or a committee member, the deep bonds of love between God's people are essential. Ω

Read what campers say about the retreat at <http://english.gracebaptistchurch.sg/blog/post/gbc-retreat-2016>

Through Thick and Thin

In 1986, I was in the second year of my Studies at the National University of Singapore when I received the Lord Jesus into my life after a friend shared Christ with me. A fellow course-mate then invited me to attend some events at GBC. I was immediately struck by the warm, welcoming community and the strong focus on God's Word. Over the next few years, I made GBC my home church and joined a vibrant care group. I made many good friends and grew in my knowledge of God and the Christian faith. In 1988, I got baptised in the sanctuary of GBC. My wife, Eng Khin, and I were also married by Dr Poulson in that same year.

We left GBC in 1994 and worshipped at another church nearer to our home until my family migrated to Perth, Australia in late 2002. However, my links with GBC were kept alive in very unexpected ways even as I was in Australia. It came in the form of a group of GBC men, including many of the former deacons, who were die-hard golfers. These men held regular and professionally organised golf tournaments – where the winner was decided over a few rounds and trophies were even awarded! On a few occasions, they chose the Joondalup Golf course in Perth for their tournament venue – which was where I lived.

Even though I had left GBC for more than 10 years, they would still make the effort to invite me for dinner in Perth. The meals were always delicious but more importantly, it was a time when we reconnected. We reminisced about the times when I taught their children in Sunday School and updated each other on our families and some of the developments in GBC. Over the years, I also appreciated the visits from others who were not part of this golfing group. These visits and fellowship meant a lot to me and my family.

In July 2012, I was back in Singapore to attend a wedding. We noticed that my mother was asking the same few questions repeatedly. Realising that something was amiss, I took my mother to see a geriatrician, who diagnosed her with an early onset of Alzheimer's. Then came the major decision: What should we do? What would God have us do in this situation? I was the only child and my parents had so far been very independent. With the support of my wife, we decided that I would station myself in Singapore to look after my parents while she



(R-L) Song Huat together with his wife Eng Khin, and his three daughters - Olivia, Andrea and Tessa.

Rejoicing in God's faithfulness and the warmth of the GBC family, Lim Song Huat shares why he chose to return to GBC after living in Australia for 10 years.

remained in Perth as Tessa, our youngest daughter, was only 15 years old then.

I returned to Singapore in 2012 and missed my family in Perth very much. Even though I flew in and out of Perth as much as I could, it was never the same. It was a

difficult and uncertain time but one thing I was convinced of: I needed to trust God by staying in His Word, through prayer and by surrounding myself with God's people. I continued my involvement with BSF, a parachurch organisation and also decided to return to GBC. The transition back to GBC was relatively seamless. The people were warm and welcoming, and the strong focus on God's Word always remained.

Meanwhile, my father's physical condition deteriorated and he was still a non-believer. His legs weakened so much that he needed a walking frame and later, a wheelchair. His hearing also deteriorated and hearing aids

did little to alleviate the situation. However, that did not deter him from coming to GBC with me because he found the people very warm and friendly. Although my father was not a regular worshipper, many people made a special effort to welcome him when he visited the church each week. The ushers faithfully showed him to his "designated seat". Others visited him at home, bringing food, cakes and desserts — including his favourite Nonya desserts! They shared the gospel and prayed with, and for him. By God's

“ Perhaps these imperfections are God's instruments in allowing us to learn to depend on Him. In that spirit, I will endeavour to serve God and His people here at GBC. ”

grace, he received the Lord Jesus into his life at the age of 91, just before he was called home in January 2016.

What challenges have I faced upon my return to GBC? The church has grown and there are many new faces. But this is a good problem and I need to take the initiative, time and effort to get to know others. Of course, GBC is not a perfect church but there is also no perfect church here on earth. Perhaps these imperfections are God's instruments in allowing us to learn to depend on Him. In that spirit, I will endeavour to serve God and His people here at GBC. Ω

CHURCH REBUILDING PROGRESS 2Q2016



On 5th April, a crawler crane tipped over while pouring concrete. We thank God for His miraculous intervention such that there were no casualties and minimum property damage. Work was suspended for 3 weeks for investigation by Ministry of Manpower (MOM) and the stop work order was lifted on 25 April.



Good progress was made for the superstructure works, including works on lift shafts, detention tanks, sprinkler system, stairwells, piping and scaffolding. Level 1 superstructure is 96% completed with Levels 2 and 3 moving along well.



Rebars in place for the car park ramp from level 1 to level 2. The ramp slab was cast with a grooved surface.

FAMILY MINISTRY FUN BRUNCH 7 MAY



At the Family Ministry Fun Brunch, our newly married couples mingled with mentor couples over a delicious home-cooked brunch spread and took time out to chit-chat, laugh, and get to know one another.

BABY DEDICATION 15 MAY



Following in the footsteps of Hannah and Mary, eleven couples dedicated their children to our Lord for His purpose and His plans, showing their desire and dependence on God to fulfill their parental responsibilities and to bring up their children in the knowledge of God.

INSTALLATION OF ELDERS 22 MAY



We thank God for the willingness and obedience of Elder Eddie Tan and Elder Beh Soo Hee in stepping up to shepherd the flock at GBC. It is our prayer that they will look to our Chief Shepherd as their example and that we in turn will also obey and submit to them.

YA MINISTRY — RISEN MOVIE SCREENING 16 APR

We praise God for the good turnout for the screening of Risen, as well as the talk by Prof Lockhart on a historian's perspective of the resurrection. Please continue to pray that the seeds sown and questions raised will be discussed effectively, as church members follow up in personal evangelism.



GBC RETREAT 8-11 JUN



“And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.”
Acts 2:44-45

BAPTISM AND TRANSFERS 26 JUN



We witnessed with great joy the baptism of Amanda Chiam and praise God for His continual work in her. We also warmly welcome Lim Song Huat (left) and Jonathan Lai to the GBC family upon their transferral of membership to the church.

A Beacon of Truth and Light

The Beacon Hall in Chiang Mai is a subsidiary of 'The Firm Foundation' and an affiliate of Kathy's Home in Pua, Thailand.

“Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labour in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain.” Psalms 127:1 (NIV)

Pastor Arnold reminded us of this during our groundbreaking dedication last year. Indeed, what can mere men like us accomplish without the Lord's sanction? God has ordered, guided and protected this whole project from its inception until now.

I must admit that unlike William, I was rather concerned about fundraising for Beacon Hall, especially with our church rebuilding programme running concurrently. However, when the funds started coming in slowly but surely, I was very much encouraged. My doubtful mind was reprimanded and I was once again reminded that God, who is our Provider, owns everything. For Ps 24:1 (ESV) declares,

“The earth is the LORD's, and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein” and He decrees in Ps 50:10 (ESV), “For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills.” In other words, God owns everything, so what have we to fear? Just be faithful and obey.

Hence, we are confident that He will also take care of all the exigencies and see to its completion for His glory. Many of you have supported us in prayer and some in kind and expertise — we would like to thank all of you.

In conclusion, we would like to share a few prayer items:

- 1) For a smooth completion of the home and hassle-free issuance of the Temporary Occupation Permit (TOP).
- 2) May God grant us wisdom and guidance as we prepare for the first batch of students.
- 3) May the Hall be a home away from home for the students and may seeds of truth and light be sown in their lives.
- 4) For our visa to be issued without complication and that we will be faithful and committed to this privilege that God has given us.
- 5) To be diligent in keeping ourselves healthy in body, mind and soul.
- 6) To avoid complacency and seize other opportunities in the neighbourhood and elsewhere.
- 7) May Beacon Hall serve the needs of the students and bring glory to God.

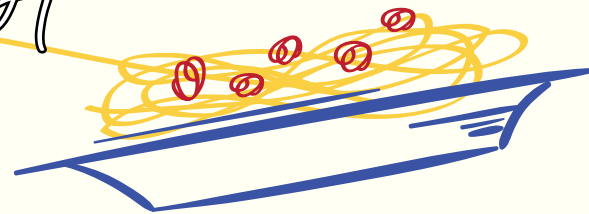
Finally, we welcome all of you to visit whenever you can. Ω

Until He comes,
William and Karen Lenn



SPAGHETTI CHURCH

By Rachel Wong



Do you like eating raw spaghetti? No? How about cooked? Cooked spaghetti tastes much nicer, don't you think? But - at least raw spaghetti is neat and tidy, all lined up nicely and easily separated. Cooked spaghetti tells a different story. A plate of cooked spaghetti is all mixed up and you can't see where each strand starts and finishes.



Church is a bit like that. We are all part of God's big family and God wants us to be all mixed up together, sharing each other's lives, not separate and apart. Church is not a place where we try to be a Christian all by ourselves - it is a group of friends with whom we spend time and learn how to follow Jesus together.

Hebrews 10:24 says this: "Let us be concerned for one another, to help one another to show love and to do good." (Good News Translation) How can we be concerned for others? We can serve them, do good to them, pray for them, put them first, remind them about God's word, feel sad when they cry, laugh with them, and help them to love God more.

God wants us to be connected to Him and to other people because that's the best way we can grow in our faith. When we are intertwined like spaghetti, we make each other stronger so we can do more and learn so much more than we could on our own.

How can we be a spaghetti church? Come jump in the pot, let's learn and live out our faith together, and help each other follow Jesus! Ω



Church Rebuilding Update @ 30 Jun 2016

WE THANK GOD FOR

- ▶ Good progress on superstructure works since the Stop Work Order was lifted.
- ▶ The funds raised to date and the various fundraising plans that are under way.
- ▶ God's guidance and provision every step of the way.

PLEASE PRAY FOR

- ▶ Good weather, safe & incident-free work to recover the 5-week project delay.
- ▶ Wisdom, as the Building Sub-Committee drives to complete selection of options and materials.
- ▶ Unity, as the leaders discuss the usage plan for the new building.
- ▶ Humble and thankful hearts as we recognise that "unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labour in vain" (Psalm 127:1).

