

NCCS LUNCH FELLOWSHIP WITH CHURCH LEADERS 5 APRIL 2024



L-R: Rev Dr Ngoei Foong Nghian; Ps Leong Che Yeong (Bethesda Katong Church); Ps Harun Lie (Bethany Church Singapore); Rev Dr Chern Hock Chye (Renewal Christian Church); Abp Dr Titus Chung; Bp Lu Guan Hoe; Ps Leong Sow Hoe (Bethesda Cathedral); Mr KC Vergis (Mar Thoma Syrian Church); Rev Dr Bobby Chaw (City Harvest Church)

Leaders Share about their Churches

Bethesda (Katong) Church, has for the last 88 years, existed to be a faithful beacon of light and of truth at our corner of Pennefather Road and Carpmael Road, in the Joo Chiat neighbourhood. We strive to be a church faithful in reaching people for Christ and growing believers to maturity in Christ.

Built on a plot of land donated by the late Mr Wee Thiam Seng, Bethesda (Katong) Church started as a Sunday School – English missionaries invited some 100-strong children living in the vicinity to come together to learn about God. Today, our church has grown to become three congregations – English, Mandarin, and Peranakan. Of the three, the Peranakan congregation reflects our locale in the Katong district, which is a Peranakan enclave. True to the Plymouth Brethren tradition of church planting, in the years since her inception, Bethesda (Katong) Church has, by the grace of God, daughtered churches Bethesda Frankel Estate Church and Bethesda (Bedok-Tampines) Church.

As we focus on “The Good News of the Kingdom”, our theme for this year, we pray that our church will continue to diligently reach out to more people with the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ and through him have our very lives transformed to be like him.

Bethany Church Singapore, while it is a predominantly Indonesian-speaking congregation, and as a member of NCCS, endeavours to be a blessing to this nation.

One of our ministries is the thousands of migrant domestic workers in Singapore. Our church has programmes to help upgrade their knowledge and skills in areas such as language, information technology, financial management, entrepreneurship, etc. By God's grace, having served in this area for about 15 years, we have more than 2000 'graduates' who are mostly non-Christians. The Ministry of Manpower acknowledges our church's ministry. Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/development.sg/>

Renewal Christian Church (RCC) was founded in 1989 as a small Chinese-speaking congregation that focused its gospel effort towards blue-collar workers. It has since grown into a 1500-member congregation that uniquely continues to hold only Chinese services up till today.

RCC celebrates its 35th anniversary this year, giving thanks for a vibrant congregation that spans multiple generations. Communities both young and old come together, uniting in Christ and journeying as family.

Under the leadership of Rev Dr Chern Hock Chye, RCC prays for and seeks the unity of Singapore's churches, working to bring the city's churches together through resource-sharing and friendship building.

In 1992, **Bethesda Cathedral** started as Bethesda Charismatic Centre, an independent and sovereign church with Pastor Tay Cheng Kee as pastor.

The church was built based on a vision given to Pastor Tay five years earlier on 26 May 1987. In Louisiana, USA, while driving towards Denver, Pastor Tay received a vision of a majestic white church named Bethesda Cathedral and received the strong impression of the Holy Spirit to build this cathedral.

Pastor Tay understood that this vision was an affirmation of a prophecy made by an American evangelist in 1986. A second prophecy, this time by Rev John Elliot in 1988, assured him that this was a sure sign of God's call.

Once registration as an independent and sovereign church was approved, the first worship service was held at Republic Theatre on 31 May 1992. Worship services and prayer meetings were held in various rented spaces like Odeon Katong Theatre, LASALLE College of the Arts, and Sea View Hotel until the following year.

In 1993, against conventional wisdom, Pastor Tay went ahead in obedience to the Lord to bid for a piece of land at Chai Chee Street. It was to be the land on which the cathedral would be built.

The church won the bid for the piece of land at \$2.7 million. The cathedral would cost an additional \$5 million to build. No one at that time could see how a congregation made up of just 200 people could afford to build this cathedral. What seemed like an insurmountable task was made possible only with God.

In 1994, Bethesda Charismatic Centre became Bethesda Cathedral. A year later, the building was completed and on 5 November 1995, the church had their first worship service at Bethesda Cathedral on Chai Chee Street.

The majestic white building is a physical testimony of God's grace, goodness, and providence. In 2022, we celebrated Bethesda Cathedral's 30th anniversary. And in that same year, Pastor Leong Sow Hoe was installed as the new Senior Pastor succeeding Pastor Tay. Under the new leadership of Pastor Leong Sow Hoe, we strive to continue to go Forward in Faith, Be a House of Prayer, Strength to the Believers and an Attraction to Pre-Believers. Bethesda Cathedral is not just a place of worship, but a beacon of hope, faith, and love for all who encounter it.

The Mar Thoma Church is part of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, and is one of the ancient Churches in the world. The Apostle, St Thomas (Mar Thoma in Syriac), the disciple of Christ, came to India in AD 52 and established the Church in the Malabar Coast, Kerala. The Church accepts the Holy Bible as the basis for all matters of faith and doctrine, and the Nicene Creed formulated in accordance. The church is Eastern in orientation and adopts the St James liturgy.

The earliest Syrian Christians arrived in Singapore in 1912, with the inaugural organised congregation gathering in 1936. The Mar Thoma Syrian Church in Singapore (MTSCS) was built on a piece of reserved land off St Michael's Road in 1952. The church has since relocated in 2004, to 29 Jalan Keli, off Upper Thomson Road. To the glory of God, MTSCS will be celebrating her 90th Anniversary in July 2026.

We are engaged within the community through platforms such as food-aid to needy residents in the vicinity, free monthly legal clinics, foreign worker outreach, and invested in social integration and harmony through membership in the Marymount Harmony Circle.

City Harvest Church (CHC) is a creative, contemporary church that is Christ-centred, Spirit-led, and Bible-inspired. Every weekend, CHC runs English Services for its main congregation, a Chinese Service, a Dialect Service, Harvest Kidz Services, and a Jesus For All Minds (JAMs) Service for persons with special needs.

As a Pentecostal church, CHC is highly committed to the Holy Spirit's active role in the life of believers through Spirit baptism, with an emphasis on spiritual gifts, the importance of living a holy and sanctified life, and evangelism and missionary work both domestically and internationally. Since 1994, City Harvest School of Theology has graduated more than 8,200 students from all across the globe to serve as effective ministers of Christ. CHC has established The Harvest Network (THN), which is a network of churches and ministry leaders around the region connected to CHC, bringing together like-minded Pentecostal churches and ministries to do the will of God in their respective nations. These include Australia, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Taiwan, the United States, and Vietnam.

CHC runs Church Without Walls initiatives regularly—a project in which the church members reach out to the poor and marginalised in society, aiding underprivileged children, youth-at-risk, single parents, unwed mothers, the elderly, the intellectually disabled, the terminally ill, and migrant workers. The church also has a social services arm, City Harvest Community Services Association which serves the elderly, at-risk youths, low-income families, and those struggling with mental wellness.