

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### CHRISTMAS EVE OUTREACH SERVICES

Our Christmas Eve Outreach Service is happening next Sunday! Invite your friends and loved ones so they can hear about God's greatest gift through a musical performance and a special message.

A special second offering will be collected during the service, which will be donated to New Hope Community Services.

**Date:** 24 Dec (next Sun)  
**Time:** 8.30am and 10.30am  
**Speaker:** Rev Chris Chia

### CHRISTIANITY EXPLORED

If you are curious about Christianity or have been visiting the church but have not accepted the faith, join us at Christianity Explored! This is an informal platform to explore Christianity and discuss spiritual questions.

**Date and Time:** Six Sundays from 14 Jan to 25 Feb (except 18 Feb) at 1pm  
**Venues:** WDL Centre, Love Room  
BPJ Centre, Hope 4

Covenanters who would like to invite and accompany their friends and loved ones on these sessions, are encouraged to attend a training session on Sat, 6 Jan, 2pm to 4pm at ACKCentre, Training Room 5.

Sign up for the sessions or for the training at <http://cefc.ch/christianity-explored>

### HOKKIEN CHRISTMAS OUTREACH

Celebrate and share God's greatest gift with your Hokkien-speaking friends and loved ones by inviting them to our Hokkien Christmas Outreach.

**Date:** 23 Dec (this Sat)  
**Time:** 7pm – 9pm  
**Venue:** BPJ Centre Main Sanctuary (Level 2)  
**Speaker:** Rev Timothy Hoon (洪茂祥牧师)

### WATCHNIGHT PRAYER

Come join us to start the new year in God's presence at our Watchnight Prayer. Together as a church, we will look back on 2017 with thanksgiving, look within ourselves to renew our commitment to God, and look ahead into 2018 with faith.

**Date:** 31 Dec (Sun)  
**Time:** 9 p.m. to 12.18am  
**Venue:** WDL Worship Centre

*Please note that there will be **no** children's programme.*

### NEW CHINESE SERVICES TIMINGS

**Hokkien Service**  
Starting 6 Jan, service will be held every Sat from 2.30pm to 4.15pm.

**Mandarin Service**  
Starting 7 Jan, service will be held every Sun from 1.30pm to 3pm.

**New China Fellowship Service**  
Starting 21 Jan, a new China fellowship service will be held every Sun from 3.30pm to 5pm at Chapel 1, Level 4.

## COVENANT EFC

ACKCentre: 2 Kallang Avenue, CT Hub #10-26, Singapore 339407

ONE CHURCH MULTIPLE CENTRES:

BPJ Centre: 8.30am, 10.30am & 12.30pm ■ WDL Centre: 8.30am & 10.30am ■ East Centre: 10.00am (Pre-service prayer: 9.30am)

Tel: (65) 6892 6811 ■ Email: [mail@cefc.org.sg](mailto:mail@cefc.org.sg) ■ Website: [www.cefc.org.sg](http://www.cefc.org.sg)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/CovenantEvangelicalFreeChurch](http://www.facebook.com/CovenantEvangelicalFreeChurch)

## VISION

AUTHENTIC  
DISCIPLESHIP  
& INTENTIONAL  
DISCIPLEMAKING  
OF A CERTAIN KIND

### VISIBLE VALUES

- Grace
- Growth
- Godliness



### UNDERLYING VALUES

- Truth
- Community
- Stewardship
- Balance
- Brokenness

## COVENANT EFC

WOODLANDS CENTRE, 17 DEC 2017

SERVICE LEADER: PAUL SHI ■ WORSHIP LEADER: PS FABIAN GHUI

### Rebuilding the Foundations

PS IVAN HO, DISTRICT MENTOR AND INTEGRATED EQUIPPING

This year, as we preached through the book of Ezra, it speaks about rebuilding the foundations. How apt and timely is God's Word for us! God is so good and faithful to His people! He knows what we need and guides us clearly, so that we can be restored in His presence and by His Word to fulfil the destiny He has for us as a discipling church.

These two months as I prepared and preached three sermons in Ezra 9 to 10, I sensed God convicting me that I have become desensitised to my sins and that God's people have trivialised sins. A clear indicator is that I do not have tears nor feel grief for personal and communal sins when they become known to me. What about you? What has been your response to the Whole Life Survey results? Let us ask God for tears to cry over our own sins and the sins of God's people. For a broken spirit and a contrite heart to grieve over the brokenness of our own lives,

marriages, families and church. So that God can rebuild us from the inside out to be holy and distinct in our calling and conduct. For our repentance to be genuine, it cannot be forced or rushed. It is a process and will take time. The key is for us to seek God in prayer and then do as He leads us.

Our church theme for next year, our 40th anniversary, is "We Are Church: Pray and Repent!" The movement forward for us is an emphasis on personal and corporate prayer. Let us start now to seek a deeper journey of prayer with God. Begin a daily discipline of self-examination and repentance of sins. Come before God at the end of each day and ask: "In what areas have I sinned against You today, Lord? In my thoughts, my words and my deeds?" Then in 2018, let us receive every prayer initiative that our church leaders lead us to, as an opportunity to seek God's presence and obey His Word.

## SERMON OUTLINE

### **Ezra Revisited**

SCRIPTURE: BOOK OF EZRA ■ SERMON: PS IVAN HO

#### **Introduction**

#### **A. A Deep Longing for God's Presence (chp. 1-6)**

#### **B. A Decisive Alignment to God's Word (chp. 7-10)**

#### **Conclusion**

NEXT WEEK'S SERMON SPEAKERS:

24 DEC – PAUL SHI (BPJ), REV CHRIS CHIA (WDL) AND DR ANDREW GOH (EAST)

## LAST WEEK'S SERMON SUMMARY

### **It's Not the End**

SCRIPTURE: EZRA 10:16-44 ■ SERMON: PS SHARON FONG

#### **Introduction**

There are two perspectives to finishing well:

#### **A. We Must Be Willing (vv.16-17)**

The Israelites were willing to be investigated by their leaders and were willing to obey them. Most importantly, they were willing to obey God after they confessed their sins. They did not just cry over their sins or feel sorry for their mistakes. Israel finished well because they put the words of confession into actions of obedience. To finish well, we must be willing to obey God with our actions. Do whatever you have promised God before the year crosses over to 2018.

To finish well, we must be willing to journey with a spiritual community. Verses 16 to 17 refer to a spiritual journey with a community. Just like how the Israelites journeyed with their leaders, we need to find trusted friends, spiritual leaders or mentors to journey with us, to expose our sins, and highlight the deception and blindspots in our lives.

#### **B. We Must Issue a Warning (vv.18-44)**

The list of names in verses 18 to 44 is a warning signpost — priests, Levites and Israelites with foreign wives. More than just a list of offenders, it serves as a warning signpost to those who had fallen not to repeat their mistakes, and the community not to follow their footsteps. Most importantly, it warned them that “no sin is excusable” and “no one is infallible” even if they are priests and Levites.

Truly, no sin is excusable no matter how innocent or good the foreign women and children looked. We must issue a warning to ourselves to expose all sins and make no excuses. There is no such thing as small or big sin, not even pet sin. What are your pet sins? Expose all sins including your pet sins. No one is infallible, not even leaders. Hence, we must firstly issue a warning to ourselves and stay vigilant.

When I saw this list of names, a question came to my mind: Why were they washing dirty linens in public? Perhaps it wasn't meant to be like that, but to serve as a warning to the community and the next generation. When God exposed the sins that choked their lives, it looked dirty and shameful, but it was amazingly redemptive — warning everyone not to follow their footsteps. Thus, the third warning that we must issue is to the people in our community. Share our lives with those who come after us as a warning not to repeat our mistakes.

#### **Conclusion**

The spiritual revival started by Ezra ended with a list of names that reflects shame and warning. Coming to the end of the chapter, we wonder if they finished well. In the same way, we may feel that we have not finished well especially as 2017 is about to come to an end. 2017 may be ending but it is not the end of hope. Our chapter is not yet closed. Our race is not yet over. God is not done with all of us. It is not yet the end. Let's continue to focus on the finished work of the Cross where everything will make sense when Christ comes again. Let's continue to believe that He who began a good work in us will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.