



**THE DIOCESE OF SINGAPORE**  
**26<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF SYNOD (3<sup>rd</sup> MEETING)**  
**17<sup>th</sup> MAY 2024**

**PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS**  
**LIVING OUT LOVE, CENTRED ON GOD'S WORD**

Brothers and Sisters-in-Christ, Shalom. Welcome to the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the 26<sup>th</sup> Session of Synod.

Today we have Revd Martin Rhodes, Mr Daniel Longkumer and our deanery clergy with us. A warm welcome to all of you to our Synod.

Next, I want to take this opportunity to record a vote of thanks to the following clergy from the Deanery of Nepal who will retire this year. Revd Rinzi Lama, Revd Shyam Nepali and Revd Norpu Lama, thank you for your faithful service in building up our work in Nepal. I pray that the Lord will guide you and continue to use you in the next season of your life.

I also bring you the latest update on our clergy brethren Revd Canon Dr Lewis Lew, who has been on extended medical leave since December 2023. From what he has shared with me, his doctors have strongly recommended that he stop work completely in order to rest. After much prayer, Lewis has tendered his resignation and I have accepted it. He is unable to be with us today, but I wish to take this opportunity to record a vote of thanks to Lewis for his significant contributions to the ministry, both locally within Singapore and across our deaneries throughout his service. We will continue to pray for Lewis and we trust God to bring about complete healing to him.

### **Holding Fast**

As I pause to reflect on what had happened within our diocese over the last half year, my heart is filled with joy and thanksgiving to God for what He is doing in our midst.

We have several parishes having milestone celebrations this year. First, we have St Andrew's Cathedral Mandarin (SACM) celebrating her 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We thank God for the significant growth in the Chinese-speaking work in SACM and look to Him for continued growth as she faithfully serves God's purpose.

In addition, St Hilda's Church celebrates her 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary while St Hilda's Schools celebrates her 90<sup>th</sup> Founder's Day. It is encouraging to witness how both the parish and schools have diligently upheld the legacy of the late Archdeacon Graham White, and we pray they continue to build up Christ-centred lives through the education and church ministry.

It is encouraging to observe that the parishes within the Area Groups are collaborating more and more, leveraging on each other's strengths and resources. Working together has enabled our parishes to execute large scale outreach efforts such as Easter musical productions which would otherwise have been challenging to do alone. I wish to share with

you one particularly inspiring example of one parish organising a fundraising concert for another parish. This selfless act epitomises what we are striving to cultivate within our Anglican Body, that of love, mutual support and solidarity. I pray that we can draw inspiration from this and continue to foster partnerships that uplift and strengthen us all.

We thank God for His favour and blessings as we seek to bring the gospel to our deaneries. This year marks the 25<sup>th</sup> year since the start of our ministry in Nepal. Let us rejoice and continue to support the ministry in the Deanery of Nepal. We also celebrate the steady growth of other deaneries, made possible through the unwavering support of both Singapore and deanery parishes. In addition, we must not forget that our sister dioceses within the Province are also in partnership with us in the work of the deaneries. Let us pray that the Lord will open more doors for our deaneries to partner our sister dioceses to expand our mission work in these 6 countries.

## **Forging Ahead**

Brothers and sisters-in-Christ, it is undeniable that we are navigating through very challenging times. Wars persist, devastating natural disasters continue to afflict many countries and amidst all these, uncertainty looms in our socio-economic climate. During this period, I believe many of our members are concerned about the state of the world and its effect on our lives.

While most of us may not experience the direct physical impacts of wars and natural disasters, as a globally interconnected society, we are susceptible to the ripple effects of such events on our economy, security, and society. On top of this, the rising costs of living can create significant challenges, leading to stress and anxiety. With so much that is happening, our members may feel lost and hopeless. As pastors and lay leaders of the flock, the best thing we can do for them is to lead them to have a living relationship with God, leaning on Him for guidance and depending on His Word as the light to their path.

Even as the world goes through such turmoil, the Church is also not spared from trials. The decision of the General Synod of The Church of England in November 2023, voting in favour of holding standalone services of blessing for same-sex couples on a trial basis has caused concern amongst many believers. As highlighted in the Pastoral Letter from the House of Bishops from our Province, circulated in March 2024, we as the Diocese of Singapore and the Province of the Anglican Church in South East Asia, firmly disagree with the decision.

The motion, carried by a vote of 227-203, with 53% in favour, reveals a severe division within The Church of England. We need to recognise that there are still numerous members in the Church of England who remain steadfast in their adherence to Scripture and disapprove of this development. We need to stand in solidarity with these orthodox believers, offering our prayers and unwavering support during these challenging times. This does not contradict our unequivocal stand that we disapprove of the decision to endorse same-sex unions.

This nuanced position acknowledges the intricacies within The Church of England and the broader Anglican Communion. Now more than ever, those who stand firm upon the truth of God's Word must stand together, seeking His wisdom and guidance in the days ahead.

Members of Synod, let us not be distracted by all that is happening in the world. Scripture has forewarned us that “many will come in (Jesus)’s name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will lead many astray. And you will hear of wars and rumours of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are but the beginning of the birth pains” (Matthew 24).

Knowing all these, what should our response be? Let us ground ourselves in the Word of God, to know and discern all the distractions that may come our way and not be led astray. Let us also do what the Lord requires of us as His disciples - to obey the New Commandment and fulfil the Great Commission.

I believe many of our parishes are engaged in various forms of outreach through chaplaincy in schools, community services or special events. However, in an increasingly fast-paced society where time is so precious to an individual, what would make a non-believer want to come to church? What would make them stay in your church after an outreach event? Recently, some of our parishes have introduced the concept of showing exceptional hospitality to people, believing that every human being desires to feel valued and loved. In a world that believes there is no free lunch, where everything is transactional, an act of extraordinary hospitality is counter-cultural and is a tangible way for non-believers to experience the love of God.

As we continue to show love to the world, I pray that we will do it out of the love for God. For if we love God with all our heart, our capacity to love others will grow.

Amen.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Titus Chung" with a cross symbol on either side. The signature is stylized and includes a flourish at the end.

The Most Revd Dr Titus Chung  
The Bishop of Singapore