

# Touch of His Grace

St Lukes  
ELDERCARE



*“Oil and perfume  
make the heart glad,  
and the sweetness  
of a friend comes  
from his earnest counsel.”*

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Proverbs 27:9

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The Call to Befriend

In this issue, we reflect on the call to befriend - to journey with others in their pain, carry them in prayer and presence, and bring them to Jesus. May the stories inspire you to live out this *fellowship of the mat* in everyday ways.

## A Note by Our Partner



Many are familiar with J.R.R. Tolkien's *Fellowship of the Ring* - a group of people on a mission to destroy an evil ring. But long before that, the gospel of Mark (2:1-12) tells of another fellowship: a group of four friends who came together to take a paralysed man to Jesus to be healed. We call this the *fellowship of the mat*.

This man's condition left him helpless and likely cast aside by society. Though we do not know the cause, we know he could not walk, work or care for himself. In many ways, his physical condition mirrors our spiritual state apart from Christ - miserable, helpless and hopeless.

But the gospel writer Mark tells us there was hope for the paralysed man

- because of his four friends who knew Jesus. While they could not be healers, they could be the "stretcher-bearers". They could not change lives, but Jesus could. Their mission was thus clear and simple - just take the man to Jesus.

Likewise, may we faithfully take the needy to Jesus with compassion, courage and creativity - the friends dug through the roof to take the man to Jesus!

**Pastor Jason Lim**  
Senior Pastor  
Gospel Light Christian Church

*The church is a partner of St Luke's ElderCare (SLEC) and Pastor Lim was the guest speaker at the dedication service of SLEC Residence @ Punggol in March 2025.*

## Pray with Us

We invite you to pray with us, as we offer our thanksgiving and petitions to the Lord for the work He is accomplishing through us.

God, we praise You for Your blessings:

- For the official opening of SLEC Residence @ Punggol on 1 April and the three churches that have partnered us. May our new residents experience the love of Jesus.
- For the inaugural chapel service at SLEC Residence @ Ang Mo Kio on 4 April. May the residents encounter You in the monthly chapel services conducted by our chaplaincy team.

God, we seek Your guidance and provision:

- For our SLEC CommCare Symposium 2025 - *Sustaining Faith, Sharing Hope and Supporting Love: Spiritual Care for People with Dementia* - on 19 September. We pray for Your hand upon our speakers and organising committee, and that participants will be equipped to bless others.

- For the expansion of our Reminiscence and Spirituality (REST) programme to more centres. This will require more church volunteers to be trained. We pray for a warm response from churches to consider undergoing training, as we minister to elders living with dementia.
- For the opening of SLEC Senior Care Centre @ Fernvale in the second half of 2025. We pray for You to watch over the renovations, and the recruitment and training of staff.





# A Volunteer's Experience: Learning to be a Better Befriender

**I** joined the Pastoral Care Befriender Course in February 2025 to learn how to be a better communicator, especially with the elders. Many of them may feel abandoned, lonely, or emotionally distant from their loved ones and friends.

I wanted to learn how to truly befriend the lonely – to offer them a genuine sense of connection and companionship.

One key takeaway for me has been learning practical ways to communicate more sensitively with the elders. For example:

- Instead of asking, "How are you?", it's more thoughtful to ask, "How are you today?" – this encourages them to focus on the present moment, which feels less overwhelming.
- I've become more aware of the importance of the words I use, and I now strive to be gentler and more understanding in my tone and approach.

I also try to observe their body language and facial expressions before speaking or approaching them. My goal is always to engage with them in a cheerful, friendly, and sincere manner. I believe this approach truly makes a difference.

There's also always so much to learn from those who have more experience in this field. I learnt something new despite having worked previously as a nurse.

During a session about how to assist an elder in a wheelchair, I assumed I knew the proper technique – until I learned otherwise. When wheeling people into a lift, they should face the lift doors, not the back wall. This positioning allows the person to exit the lift moving forward, which is both safer and easier to control than having to reverse out. It's a small detail, but such things matter. I'm grateful for this eye-opening reminder.

This befriending journey has taught me that we can build meaningful relationships with elders in such care settings, and we can help them feel loved and cared for.

Here is a Bible verse that has kept me encouraged throughout this journey:

**“And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.**

— Colossians 3:17

**Chan Pui Meng**

Volunteer

SLEC Residence @ Ang Mo Kio

## About the Volunteer and Course

Ms Chan Pui Meng has been a volunteer with St Luke's ElderCare (SLEC) since February 2025. She was one of the participants of a six-session Pastoral Care Befriender Course, in which volunteers were equipped for one-on-one befriending with elders at the SLEC Residence @ Ang Mo Kio.

The training covered topics such as dos and don'ts, basic communication skills, handling a wheelchair, and simple report writing. In addition, volunteers received on-the-job training to gain practical experience in befriending the elders.



*Ms Chan Pui Meng (first from right) with other befrienders and SLEC Senior Chaplain Richard Woo (third from right).*

# Befriending Elders –

**O**ver sips of his favourite kopi-c siew dai, an 80-plus-year-old elder excitedly recounted to a volunteer as to how he met his wife. This was a drastic change from his previous demeanour when he joined an SLEC centre.

He explained half-jokingly: “We need to behave ourselves when we attend school (referring to the eldercare centre). Here at the coffeeshop, we can be ourselves.”

Once a month, about eight members of Emmanuel Evangelical Free Church (EEFC) Silver Vine Fellowship arrive at the centre, carrying an air of joy and excitement when ministering to our elders. The simple but significant difference – the volunteers, led by the ever-spritley Elder Robert Pang of EEFC, take our elders out of the centre to a coffeeshop that is a five-minute walk away.

Through conversations over coffee, with no specific activities planned, our elders share about various aspects of their lives. Giving our elders opportunities to “be themselves” over kopi is a simple yet powerful way to affirm their dignity that had been diminished by disease, ageing, and the loss of mobility. They become open to chatting when taken to an environment reminiscent of a social gathering.

With the regular visits to the coffeeshop, other people in the community have also been involved in supporting the elders. A coffeeshop assistant, for example, would make it a point to stay back to welcome the elders when they visit.

This idea of befriending elders over conversations at coffeeshops has also been shared with other churches such as Grace Bethesda Church and they have conducted similar sessions.



*Members of Grace Bethesda Church befriending SLEC elders at a coffeeshop.*



*Members of EEFC's Silver Vine Fellowship at SLEC Active Ageing Centre (Care) @ Bukit Timah.*

“Our little contribution in terms of time can mean so much to some of the seniors. Our genuine fellowship with them, the willingness to hear them out, and our prayers – these help them to see the silver lining in the horizon of God’s unparallel love and companionship.

– Pastor Lee Fook Choon,  
Grace Bethesda Church



# One Kopi at a Time

## **Thoughts on the Ministry of Presence by Our CEO, Adj A/Prof (Dr) Kenny Tan**

Sojourning is about walking alongside our elders in a shared journey rooted in love and faith. It involves being fully present, taking the time to listen and talk to them, to laugh and cry with them. Or just to be. With them.

To gift them with our presence – a ministry of presence.

As our elders' cognitive abilities decline and communication becomes difficult or seemingly impossible, what remains powerful and impactful is the simple presence of another person.

When words fail, a smile, a shared silence, or just a companionship can offer a healing balm and comfort that transcends the best and most sophisticated clinical care. It is simple and significant, yet often elusive in a world that moves so quickly.

*This is an excerpt from an article by Adj A/Prof (Dr) Kenny Tan, in Faith Matters: Conversations on Care and Spirituality, Volume 2, a publication by SLEC.*

“Beyond just providing a service, let's become sojourners – to offer the ministry of presence.

– Adj A/Prof (Dr) Kenny Tan, CEO of SLEC



Members of EEFC's Silver Vine Fellowship ministering to our elders over kopi.

## **Elders enjoying a kopi session with the EEFC members**



# Past Events

## SLEC Annual Dedication Service

On 18 January 2025, about 50 SLEC staff gathered at Zion Bishan Bible-Presbyterian Church to dedicate SLEC's work to God. Our Chairman, Professor Ho Yew Kee (below), delivered his sermon *Soaring High by His Grace*, encouraging us to trust in God instead of our own strength as we fulfil our mission for the year.



## SLEC Residence @ Punggol Dedication Service

On 15 March 2025, SLEC staff and church partners gathered for the dedication of our SLEC Residence @ Punggol, before it started operations on 1 April. Pastor Jason Lim of Gospel Light Christian Church spoke on the topic *Fellowship of the Mat*, reminding us of our calling to befriend. Our Vice-Chairman, Mr Foong Daw Ching (below), led us in a prayer of blessing.



# Upcoming Events

## Join us at SLEC CommCare Symposium 2025 to explore wound care, dementia and spirituality

SIM Global Education, 461 Clementi Road, S(599491)

### **Wounds to Wholeness: Bridging the Gap from Injury to Recovery**

Thursday, 18 September 2025, 9am to 5.30pm

Designed for healthcare professionals and caregivers, this track focuses on strengthening clinical understanding and skills in managing complex wounds. Through plenary sessions, an interactive panel, and hands-on workshops, participants will explore wound healing challenges, advances in wound care, and management of atypical wounds.

### **Sustaining Faith, Sharing Hope and Supporting Love: Spiritual Care for People with Dementia**

Friday, 19 September 2025, 9am to 5.30pm

Designed for caregivers and ministry leaders, this track focuses on a holistic approach to spiritual care for people with dementia.

Main sessions:

- Faith beyond Forgetting: Sustaining the Spiritual Life of Believers with Dementia
- Hope beyond Hurdles: Sharing the Gospel with Pre-believers who have Dementia
- Love beyond Loss: Supporting People with Dementia in Their Final Journey

Workshop topics:

- Interfaith as Insight: Embracing Diverse Spiritual Perspectives
- Reminiscence as Reflection: Unlocking Spiritual Insights from the Past
- Music as Ministry: Cultivating Faith, Hope and Love through Music

Email [secretariat.commcare@slec.org.sg](mailto:secretariat.commcare@slec.org.sg) for more information and to register or look out for updates on our social media platforms.



Over 450 participants attended the SLEC CommCare Symposium 2024.

## Support Us

Join us in caring for the elders in our community. Every contribution matters!

Partner us:

✉ [pccp@slec.org.sg](mailto:pccp@slec.org.sg)

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