

# NEWS LETTER

## Otahuhu Community Baptist Church

*Knowing Christ - Growing in Christ - Going with Christ*

### TAKE NOTE:

#### 20th December 2020

#### CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION SERVICE

A true christmas celebration of our faith community involving all three congregations with nativity play, songs and dance numbers from children and adults alike

#### 24th & 25th December 2020

#### CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Christmas Services begins with the Christmas Eve Service from the English and the Christmas Day Services for the Tamil and Chinese Congregations.

#### 31st December 2020

#### WATCH NIGHT SERVICE

Finishing this year and beginning a New Year in the presence of God. It is the right place to be.

### THE TIME HAS COME TO CELEBRATE

All worries and anxieties will be forgotten for a while now as we have come to the last month of the year. It was a hard year, but God has been gracious and has brought all of us safely to the end. So, we now think of nothing but celebrations. Most importantly the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ and the true reason for the season that Christ came into the world to save all mankind from sins that lead to death. What joy salvation brings into our lives! What hope it gives us as we remember once again that we do not belong to this world, but to a place prepared by Christ to all those who believe in Him! Amen

### A TIME TO SURELY GIVE THANKS

As a Church we came together on 15th November in our Thanksgiving Service. Though it was a dull year, our Church was alive as ever with great testimonies. The leaders of the three services came to testify our Lord's goodness throughout this year. At the end of the service we had great fellowship over great food.



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**FASTING PRAYER MEETING -**  
Friday, 4th December from 8pm-10pm @ Church

**HAMILTON CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION -** Saturday, 12th December, 5:30pm @ Discovery Christian Centre

**SOUP KITCHEN FOR THE COMMUNITY -** Sunday, 12th December @ Church premises.

**THANKSGIVING SERVICES IN TAMIL CONG -** Sunday, 13th & 27th December

**CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION SERVICE -** 20th December, 10:30am Combined Service

**CHRISTMAS SERVICES -** 24th & 25th December

**WATCH NIGHT SERVICE -** 31st December, 10:30pm Combined Service

## PRAYER NEEDS

**THANK GOD FOR :**

- Thank God for watching over us during the year.

**PRAY UNTO GOD FOR:**

- Pray for the Lord's blessings to be on all planned Services for this Christmas and New Year.

## VERSE FOR THE MONTH

**LUKE 2: 10 - "I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people"**

## MISSIONS COMMITTEE UPDATE: from Rachel Jacob

The Missions Committee are looking forward to our local Christmas Missions and have been collecting supplies for essential hampers. The last day of collection is the 6th of December. We are also hosting our soup kitchen on the 12th of December. All volunteers are welcome. Please approach any member of the Committee to discuss where help is needed. Many Thanks for your ongoing support towards missions.



## CAROL SERVICE

It was a great Carol Service 2020. There was very good participation from all groups and we had about 15 songs presented by various groups. Thanks to one and all for bringing your contributions and making it a blessed service. Once again thanks to all who brought good food and there was plenty to feed the good numbers who turned out for the day.

## CAROL ROUNDS

The true spirit of Christmas lies in going from house to house to sing songs of joy through carol songs in people's dwelling places and praying for them. So, thanks to all who participate with joy in our Carol Rounds.

## JANUARY SERVICES AND EVENTS :

December and January are months of break and holidays to enjoy with your family members. There will not be a Newsletter for January 2021. Details of the events and services from January to March are highlighted in the last page of this Newsletter.



## CHRISTMAS PROGRAMS FOR 2020

**INVITE YOUR FRIENDS TO ALL OUR CHURCH CHRISTMAS PROGRAMS**

## **There is a Season - from Pastor Mike**

Greetings Church family and praise the Lord that we have made it through to the Christmas season of 2020!

We have just celebrated our Thanksgiving Service and Carols Night. It certainly is a blessed season. The time that we spent together in thanking the Lord for His grace and faithfulness to OCBC this year was truly special as we have much to be thankful for.

Followed by the Carols Night which really enhances the feeling of God's incredible love to us, and reminds us just how He demonstrated that love by sending His only begotten Son into this world, to die for our sins, and rise again to give us a wonderful New Life in Jesus.

As I look back on this year both in the Church and in my family life, I can see very definite seasons occurring during this year of 2020, and I'm sure that you can do the same.

A well known section in the Book of Ecclesiastes clearly outlines different seasons or times in our lives...

***"1 For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:  
2 a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;  
3 a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;  
4 a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;  
5 a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;  
6 a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;  
7 a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;  
8 a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace."*** -

***Ecclesiastes 3:1-8***

*My question is "How have you seen God active in every season this year of your life?"*

We had times like with the Corona virus when we really didn't know how it was all going to turn out. Nothing could have fully prepared us for what actually happened or could happen. But the Lord was there for us.

We had seasons of much learning, and it was the Lord who was our Teacher, our Rabbi. I'm sure you are like me and think "Wow! - God, you were there each step of the way, in the good season and the more challenging season, I can see now looking back, just how marvellous your Presence truly was, as you had every situation in your hands, and you helped me in every season - and I just want to thank you Lord."

Now, we are in this most blessed season of the year, but still we know that we must be careful and vigilant! Church family, continue to look out for one another, even as we share the love of God to the community around us this Christmas season. It is God's heart abiding in us that makes every season worthwhile and meaningful to us in every way.

Have a wonderful and safe Merry Christmas season. God bless.



**KEY EVENTS - ENGLISH CONGREGATION**



BAPTISM OF FRANK - PRAISE BE TO GOD





## Chinese Congregation

*“And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. And oft times it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. ( Mark 9:21-24)*

We trust in our God, but sometimes our faith may be tested by our surroundings. In moments like these, we must pray that God will give us strength no matter what life may throw at us. Our Father God loves us abundantly and is always watching over us.

Our congregation sister Lily was diagnosed with end stage cancer. This has been a challenging time for her and her family, and as a congregation we have stood by her through this ordeal. Over the past few months, we have learned about faith from our sister. Despite the diagnosis, she has exemplified peace and comfort to those around her.

Sister Lily has since flown to China to undergo further medical treatment there. Upon arrival she faced 14 days quarantine at the National Border. However, during this time her health deteriorated and had to receive urgent medical care. Thankfully God answered our prayers and she was able to be accepted for treatment by a hospital in Guangzhou. She completed her quarantine in hospital and was able to be admitted straight into the cancer hospital in her home city Shenyang. While overseas she still joins us for church online via zoom when she is able.

Even as she goes through this journey, she has remained strong in her faith, and her faith has seen God open doors for her to access the care she needs. She has now completed her second course of chemotherapy. While her body is still weak, we pray that God will be with her and bring her strength.

We thank you all for your ongoing prayer for sister Lily. And may we continue to pray for her and her family.

### **Coming up on our calendar is Christmas!**

We will be having our Christmas service at 4pm on Christmas day at OCBC followed by a shared dinner and celebrations. We warmly invite all our family, friends and neighbours to join us as we celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ!

From the 21 -23<sup>rd</sup> of December we are also running a youth camp, outreaching to international students studying in New Zealand. We pray that this camp will be a blessing to them and build their faith in Jesus.

Praise our heavenly Father. He is an amazing God and may his blessing be with each and every one of our brothers and sisters in 2020. May he continue to guide us into 2021!



### MOMENTS OF THANKS TO GOD IN NOVEMBER 2020





## **JANUARY 2021**

**We will enter a brand New Year 2021 at the stroke of midnight on New Year's Eve. In the presence of God, we ask for God's leading into the New Year. Last Year we had a theme as we entered 2020 and it was - "Listening Well and Seeing Clearly". We did not envisage that 2020 would be a year of turmoil all over the world, but for us as a church the theme helped us to listen to God and see the world through God's eyes prayerfully. Isn't it wonderful how God leads us year after year. May be 2021 would be a different year as the Lord has already purposed in His heart. May our Lord give us the strength to depend on Him solely and trust in Him every step of the way. Let's look forward to a Year of Hope in Jesus Christ.**



**There will not be a Newsletter in January and so please do take note of the following:**

### **Services during January 2021**

**3 January 2021 - Communion Sunday - in all three congregations**

**10 January 2021 - Mission Sunday observed by the whole church**



### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**19th - 21st February 2021 - CHURCH CAMP @ CYC, Ngaruawahia**

**26th February 2021 - Oversight Group Meeting**

**28th February 2021 - FIRE DRILL**

**6 March 2021 - Leader's Retreat**

