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M E S S E N G E R

DIOCESE OF WEST MALAYSIA

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RT REVD DR D STEVEN ABBAROW
BISHOP OF THE ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF WEST MALAYSIA



*"Who are you and why do you request entry?"
"Why have you been sent to us?"*

*"I am sent as bishop to serve you, to proclaim the love of
Christ and with you to worship and love Him
with heart and soul, mind and strength."*

Diocesan Theme for 2021

Behold, I Am Making All Things New

Season of Preparation



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Coming Events

- Consecration of Bishop
- March
- Installation of Bishop
- March
- Webinar on Church Planting
- March
- Synod
- August

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Diocesan Theme 2021-2030

On 2 March 2021, on the day that I was installed the Diocesan Bishop, we launched the Diocesan 10-Year Development Plan (2021-2030) with the Theme: 'BEHOLD, I AM MAKING ALL THINGS NEW' (Revelation 21:5). This is in line with our Mission Statement: 'We are a Church, moving towards making Christ known through Church planting, mission, social concerns, environmental care, intentional discipleship, and building up of family units with love, grace and fellowship of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.'

In the previous 10-year plan, a different theme was chosen for each year, while at the same time maintaining the progressive plans to advance the Kingdom of God. This time, the Diocesan 10-year Development Plan shall be divided into three Seasons of 3 to 4 years each, with their respective Operational Objectives as shown below:

No	Season	Scriptural Reference	Operational Objectives
1	Season of Preparation (2021-2023)	"Prepare your work outside, get everything ready for yourself in the fold, and after that build your house." Proverbs 24:27	1) Human capital development for God's Kingdom advancement initiatives 2) Explore, identify, target, encourage and equip members through discipleship and church planting training
2	Season of Propagation (2024-2026)	"Those who sow in tears shall reap with joyful shouting" Psalm 26:5	1) Build a dynamic generation 2) Beautify the inner being of men and women 3) Bond a united family and church
3	Season of Proclamation (2027-2030)	"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End." Revelation 22:13	1) Persevere in local and overseas mission 2) Promote social and environmental care 3) Plant new churches and congregations 4) Proclaim the Good News and Biblical truths

For the Season of Preparation, the primary focus shall be to identify, target, encourage, equip and train members to be disciples of Jesus Christ and for church planting initiatives. The Key Performance Indicators (KPI) at the Parish or Missionary District (MD) level for the Season of Preparation are related to Discipleship Training (DT) and

Church Planting Training (CPT).

For Discipleship Training at the Parish/MD level, the KPI are:

- Identify at least 5 members for DT for year 2021, and at least another 5 members for year 2022.
- Train and equip all the identified members.
- Trained personnel to lead in all ministries in the local Parish/MD after 2 years.

For Church Planting Training at the Parish/MD level, the KPI are:

- Identify at least 3 members for CPT for year 2021, and at least another 3 members for year 2022
- Train and equip all the identified members with practical exposure
- Trained personnel to eventually lead in mission, evangelism and social concern ministries

Ministry, Women's Ministry, Men's Ministry, Golden Circle Ministry, Lay Readers/Pastors and Lay Leaders.

(b) Appropriate leadership training to be provided under the direction and supervision of the Diocesan Bishop.

Resource materials for DT and CPT shall be based on the available materials from Intentional Discipleship (Anglican Communion), Discipleship Training Books (Sarang), AIM and Equip. Each Parish/MD shall customize the training programmes and modules to suit their own local context. The Diocesan Language Boards shall be responsible for making available materials in Bahasa Malaysia, Mandarin, Iban and Tamil (where applicable).

The entire Diocesan 10-Year Development Plan shall be managed by the Coordinative Body and Key Facilitators, comprising the Diocesan Bishop, the DSIC, Suffragan Bishops, Archdeacons, Ministry Heads, Parish and MD Priests. The implementation of the Season of Preparation shall be reviewed every 6 months by the DSIC. Appropriate structured review mechanisms shall be put in place for feedback, reinforcement and effective implementation to achieve the KPI at the Parish and MD level.

We have prayerfully made these plans for the next 10 years. I pray that the implementation of these plans be undergirded with your prayers, generous giving, cooperation and humility to the glory of God. May the Lord's will be done in all things, may His name be lifted up and glorified always.

Veni Sancte Spiritus

The Rt Revd Dr D Steven Abbarow! **AM**

(a) Identify Directors for the ministries: Theological training, Lay training, Mission & Evangelism, Anglican Care, Spiritual Formation Platform, MICPE, Children's

Thanksgiving for the Episcopal Ministry of the Rt Revd Dato' Charles Samuel

by Revd Timothy Nicholls



Bishop Charles giving his retirement sermon

It was a special and moving time as we gathered for a Service of Thanksgiving for the Episcopal Ministry of the Rt Revd Dato' Charles Samuel on Sunday 20 December at St George's Church Penang. The service coincided with the retirement of Bishop Charles, who had faithfully served in the Diocese for over 41 years and was now retiring as Vicar of St George's Church Penang and Bishop of the Area Diocese of Northern Peninsula. By God's grace, though Penang was still under RMCO, the service went on with a reduced number of participants. Hundreds more joined the service online through livestream.

The service, which included bible readings, singing, prayers, speeches, gifts and a farewell sermon by Bishop Charles was full of thanksgiving to God. The impact of the service was felt by all as the congregation reflected and celebrated a remarkable

ministry that spanned all corners of the Diocese over four decades.

Archdeacon Ven Dr Stephen Soe who officiated the service opened with this summary of Bishop Charles' ministry:

"Bishop Charles along with his dear wife Alice and daughter Miriam, have faithfully served in the Diocese of West Malaysia for over 41 years. Having graduated from Seminari Theologi Malaysia with a Bachelor of Divinity, Bishop Charles was ordained as a Deacon in 1979 and as a Priest in 1981. His first posting was at the Church of the Holy Spirit, Ipoh. He was then moved to St Mary's Cathedral, Kuala Lumpur where he was later made a Canon. Later he served in Good Shepherd Church, Subang, St Paul's Church, Petaling Jaya, St Andrew's Church, Kuala Terengganu and most recently, St George's Church,

Penang where he has served as Vicar for over a decade.

The remarkable ministry of Bishop Charles in each of these churches was honoured in 2015 with his appointment as Suffragan Bishop in the Area Diocese of Northern Peninsular. In addition to his service in the Diocese, he has served as Chairman of the Provincial Liturgical Committee, Secretary to the National Council for the Blind, Malaysia and Chairman of St Nicholas Home for the Blind.

We give thanks to God for the enduring ministry of Bishop Charles and his family. He has impacted the lives of so many as he has shepherded God's church with love, wisdom and joy. We praise God, who has strengthened Bishop Charles throughout his decades of ministry. On this day, we give thanks to God for His grace in the life

of Bishop Charles and his family, and pray for them as they enter into a new phase of life and ministry.”

The hymns for the service were specially chosen by Bishop Charles himself. The first hymn, ‘I Bind Unto Myself Today’ expressed Bishop’s Charles persistent desire to commit his life to the Trinitarian God, looking to Him for strength to live a godly life to the glory of God. The second hymn, ‘Christ is All To Me’ (originally a Tamil Song, ‘Yellaam Yesuve’) expressed Bishop Charles’ love for his precious Saviour. The beautiful and powerful words of the chorus moved many to tears as they sang:

*Christ is all to me,
Jesus Christ is all to me.
In this world of strife and sorrow,
Christ is all to me*

The final hymn, ‘To God Be The Glory’, reflected Bishop Charles desire that the service would not be about a hymn but a service of praise and thanksgiving to God. Indeed, it was.

The New Testament reading from 2 Timothy 4:5-8, written by the Apostle Paul at the end of his ministry was a fitting and stirring encouragement.

⁵ ‘As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. ⁶ For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.’

But the highlight of the service was the retirement sermon by Bishop Charles which once again moved many of the congregation to tears. Bishop Charles reflected on the book ‘Faithful to the End: A Reflection on 2 Timothy’ and shared candidly of his experience in the ministry.



L to R Alice Samuel, Bishop Samuel, Ven Stephen Soe and Mrs Soe with gifts presented by Area Diocese of Northern Peninsular Upper North and St George’s Church Penang

He began: “Forty one years in the priesthood is quite awesome. I don’t know how I did it. I experienced betrayal, denial, crucifixion as well as miracles, joy and blessings. I had my own set of joys and challenges, and my fair share of suffering. It is certainly not easy to carry the cross.”

Bishop Charles shared how he learnt and grew as a priest through the challenges, emotions, weakness he experienced. A total surrender and dependence on God became a necessity to fulfil his calling that he felt so passionate about. The disciplines of prayer, reading the Bible, finding a spiritual director and mentorship were crucial to perseverance and growth. Learning also came in times of joy as he

witnessed people accepting Christ, offering themselves for ministry, committing their lives to each other in marriage, coping with the loss of a loved one and growing in Christian maturity.

Bishop Charles shared of his own calling to full time ministry, when Bishop Savarimuthu, approached his parents to offer their son for the ministry. Later a personal conversion experience at a Bible meeting at the age of 17 set him further on this path. He recounted how despite being enticed by the world and resisting the call to full-time ministry for a time, God made him realise that his plans to run away were not the plans of God. So began his journey of 41 years in the ministry.



Farewell Group photo

Bishop Charles gave insight into what being a priest was like, offering a job description and challenges as he has experienced it. A priest:

- Must keep his door open 24/7
- Must always answer the phone immediately
- Has special access to every home.
- Is invited to the heart of someone's story
- Must make the sacrament real and living
- Must be an accountant, a maintenance man, an advocate, a psychologist, counsellor, schoolman, and security man.
- Must be a letter writer, reference writer, and a community advocate,
- Is to be an outspoken public speaker against injustice
- Walks as a companion with the bereaved.
- Is a guide, a writer, a reader.
- Acts as a friendly presence with those disconnected from the church
- Is a clown (Bishop Charles was known for his fantastic sense of humour)

Reflecting on this imposing list, he shared of the days when the demands of ministry seemed too heavy and burdensome and he contemplated leaving the ministry. Yet, God sustained him through it all, reminding

him that He had a plan for his life, and encouraged him through the joys of seeing people's lives transformed by the gospel.

Reflecting on last year's bicentennial anniversary of St George's Church Penang, where Anglican Ministry in Malaysia began, he paid tribute to the missionaries and priests who preceded him in faithfully serving in the Diocese. He also honoured the clergy and laity of days past who loved and served God and had the conviction to preach the gospel in difficult times with whatever little they had.

Reflecting on his experience of the length and breadth of God's ministry, he echoed the words of the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-49) as his own song of praise to God.

⁴⁶ *My soul magnifies the Lord,*
⁴⁷ *and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,*
⁴⁸ *for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.*
For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
⁴⁹ *for he who is mighty has done great things for me,*
and holy is his name.

He ended: "Thank you to the Diocese for accepting me as a priest, and for looking

after me and my family all these years. Thank you to all of you for your partnership in the gospel. I have enjoyed every minute of it" and closed with the priestly blessing of Number 6:24-26

²⁴ *The Lord bless you and keep you;*
²⁵ *the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;*
²⁶ *the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.*

Words of appreciation were spoken by Bishop-Elect Revd Dr Stephen Abbarow, Vicar-General Ven Canon Eddie Ong, Archdeacon Ven Dr Stephen Soe and Mr William Vathamoney, the People's Warden at St George's. These touching words of appreciation are reproduced in full in the following pages.

Rev Dr Richard Loh, Ms Irene Chin, and Ms Eunice Ong led the congregation in praying for those called to full-time ministry, for Bishop Charles and his family, for St George's Church and for the Diocese of West Malaysia. Gifts were given to Bishop Charles and his wife Alice by the wardens of St George's Church on behalf of the Area Diocese of Northern Peninsular Upper North and St George's Church Penang.

The service closed with Bishop Charles giving the benediction, before laying down his crosier (pastoral staff) on the Altar Table, as a symbol of his retirement.

The service was a fitting tribute to a man of God who faithfully and sacrificially served God his whole life. The tears, emotions and heartfelt tributes all bore witness to how deeply Bishop Charles touched the lives of so many. We thank God for Bishop Charles and his wife Alice, who supported him through it all, for their model and ministry, the fruit of which will echo for many decades to come in the lives of those he impacted and discipled. **AM**

Revd Timothy Nicholls is the Curate of St George's Church Penang.

A Tribute by Archdeacon Ven Canon Eddie Ong

Vicar General of DWM

If there is one word to describe my friend Charles Samuel, it is the word: "DEDICATION". Dedicated by his parents to the Lord when he was a small boy, he grew up, wholly dedicated to Christ and the work of God in and through the Anglican Church. The Lord allowed our paths to meet way back in 1977. The occasion was an enquiry visit I made to Kolej Theoloji Malaysia in Klang, a seminary training for young Anglican ordinands. I still remember my first conversation with Charles. It was a chat on theological issues. From that time on, the Lord allowed our paths to cross again, this time at the newly established Seminari Theoloji Malaysia in 1979, 41 years ago.

From then on, I came to know Charles. From day one, I could see his dedication to the work of God. In the course of all my years knowing Charles, his dedication to the Lord's work in the Diocese of West Malaysia has been remarkable, authentic and deeply appreciated.

Charles was made Deacon in 1979, ordained priest in 1981, appointed Precentor at St Mary's Cathedral in 1986, collated as Canon in 1991, installed as the Archdeacon of the East in 2001 and consecrated as a Suffragan Bishop in 2015.

He served at six parishes:

- St Mark's Church, Butterworth in 1979
- Church of the Holy Spirit, Ipoh in 1981,
- St Mary's Cathedral in 1986,
- St Paul's Church, Petaling Jaya in 1994
- St Andrew's Church, Kuala Terengganu in 2001
- St George's Church (current)

There are three things I wish to speak about the Dedication of this man:

1. Charles strived very hard to bless and to build the church the Lord had placed him in. In church after church he initiated



many activities especially among young people. He was very hard working. He was a church planter, planting the Church of the Good Shepherd in USJ, Selangor when he was Vicar of St Paul's PJ. In 2006, he enabled the Missionary District of Kuala Terengganu to become a Parish. Charles is a very dedicated servant of God. It is in his DNA.

2. Charles is a very loyal member and leader of the Anglican Diocese of West Malaysia.

His father, the late Revd Victor Samuel, himself was a priest. Charles was one of the founders of the Young Adults Ministry (Persidangan Belia Anglikan), Chairman of the Diocesan Lay Training, member of the Diocesan Standing Committee since 2000 and of the Provincial Standing Committee. Wherever he was, he put his whole effort, not only to build parishes, but to build up the whole Diocese of West Malaysia. This is something I deeply appreciate.

3. Charles is known for his deep knowledge and practice of the Anglican liturgy in the Diocese of West Malaysia

In our early days, before Google came, Charles was like a walking liturgical dictionary. If I was not sure of anything liturgical, I would ask him, and he would quietly whisper the answer without making you feel embarrassed. His background as a son of a priest, his years as a precentor at the Cathedral have shaped him and we all addressed him fondly as Father Charles, now Bishop Charles. Charles was the Chairman of the Liturgical Commission of the Province of South East Asia. Together with his team, they produced a liturgical book on the Order of Services for liturgical usage on various occasions.

On behalf of the Diocese of West Malaysia, I thank God for Bishop Charles:

- for his contributions to the life and liturgy, mission and ministry of the Diocese of West Malaysia;
- for his contributions to the development of Anglican parishes and churches where he served and ministered as Vicar, Archdeacon and Suffragan Bishop.
- for his warm affection shown to both clergy and lay members, regardless of race and gender and to me personally.

I wish Bishop Charles, Alice and their daughter Miriam God's richest blessings, protection and good health. Charles, Alice and Miriam:

'The Lord bless you and keep you, The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you, The Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace' in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! **AM**

A Tribute by Archdeacon Ven Dr Stephen Soe

Archdeacon, Upper North Archdeaconry

I thank God for the privilege to speak words of appreciation on behalf of my family, the Upper North Archdeaconry of the Diocese of West Malaysia, as well as St Nicholas Home for the Blind. To all these entities you have been a great blessing.

I remember you were the very first person to welcome me to join the big family of the Anglican Church in West Malaysia. Immediately after my ordination interview in the old diocese office 22 years ago, a few months later I reported for work at St Paul's Church Petaling Jaya. You were my Sifu and Vicar, mentoring me as a young curate, teaching me to conduct services in an Anglican way, to care for the sick and to shepherd not only the church but the community. Many years later you became my Archdeacon, then my Bishop in the northern region of Malaysia. I have learned much from you, and you are such a gracious and caring leader to me.

Bishop, I hope and pray that in this new season of life and new chapter in your



calling, your remaining years may be full and fruitful. May the good Lord continue to bless and guide you in many years to come.

Datin Alice and Miriam, thank you for sharing your dear one with us for the ministry of God. Thank you for supporting Bishop Charles' ministry so that he might

become a channel of blessings to many. You both are women behind a great man.

May you enjoy the fruits of your labor. All the best to you, Bishop, Alice and Miriam, God bless you. **AM**



A Tribute by William Vathamoney

People's Warden, St George's Church Penang

We thank Almighty God for blessing us through Bishop Charles. Bishop Charles has been good to us all the time. We thank God for using him to bless this church and the community for the past ten years. We will not forget the wonderful service and meaningful sacrifice that he and his wife Datin Alice and daughter Miriam have given to St George's Church. Under Bishop Charles' leadership and guidance, God has brought many back to St

George's Church. Even though Bishop Charles has retired from his ministry in St George's, we will never forget his teaching and example. We will continue to pray for his family as he continues to serve Almighty God and the community. May God richly bless him. **AM**

The Consecration and Installation Of The 5th Diocesan Bishop

The Rt Revd Dr D Steven Abbarow

by D Raja Singam



Bishops in attendance

*L to R Rt Revd Dr Jason Selvaraj, The Rt Revd Dr D Steven Abbarow – Bishop of DWM
Rt Revd Datuk Ng Moon Hing, Rt Revd Steven Lawrence Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*

The Revd Canon Dr D Steven Abbarow was duly consecrated as a Bishop of the Diocese of West Malaysia on 1 February 2021 in the Cathedral of St. Mary the Virgin, Kuala Lumpur. His Grace, the Most Revd Datuk Melter Jiki Tais, the Archbishop for the Province of the Anglican Church In South East Asia duly appointed the Rt Revd Datuk Ng Moon Hing, the retired Diocesan Bishop of the Diocese of West Malaysia to officiate the consecration service. Bishop Moon Hing was duly assisted by Suffragan Bishop, the Rt Revd Jason Selvaraj and the Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church In Malaysia, the Rt Revd Steven Lawrence. At the outset, Bishop Moon Hing clarified

that due to the restrictions imposed by the government arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, only five people could participate in the Consecration service. He added that the Installation service of the 5th Diocesan Bishop would be held at a later date when more people could gather and participate.

In his illuminating message and inspiring appreciation of the gospel passage read from St. John 21 vs 15-17, Bishop Moon Hing highlighted three important perspectives for the reflection of the then Bishop Designate Dr D Steven Abbarow. In the said gospel passage, Jesus asked Simon Peter whether he loved him, to which Simon Peter readily answered in the

affirmative. Bishop Moon Hing examined the three responses of Jesus within the context of our Diocese which merits quick reflection.

Feed my lambs

Jesus asked Simon to “Feed my lambs”. Bishop Moon Hing noted that ‘lambs’ in our Diocesan context refer to the younger generation, that is, the children, youths and the young adults. Specific attention and focus must be given to this group to train and equip them to be disciples of Jesus. There must be ‘intentional discipleship training’ for all our ‘lambs’ in our Diocese. They must be grounded in the word of God and be disciples of Jesus. They are

our next generation leaders. We must invest in them.

Tend my sheep

Secondly, Jesus asked Simon to 'Tend my sheep'. The 'sheep' refers to those who are new in leadership positions, new in Ministries and all the upcoming leaders in our churches. They need to be consciously moulded and shaped like Jesus, that is, 'Jesus shaped life' as it is often referred to in the Anglican Communion. Their outlook, perspectives, desires, directions, goals, plans and actions must reflect 'Jesus shaped lifestyle.'

Feed my sheep

Finally, Jesus asked Simon to 'Feed my sheep'. The 'sheep' in this context would be a reference to the senior members and seasoned leaders in the church who have over the years served faithfully and contributed significantly in many areas of church life and the community for the growth and advancement of God's Kingdom. What is next for this group? The Diocesan Bishop must give the senior members the assurance that they too are important and are vital part of the church. The Bishop shall walk with them, encourage them and build them further so that they can continue to serve God faithfully.

The consecration of the new Bishop proceeded in accordance with the Canons and the rich traditions of the Anglican Church. Premised on the fundamentals that there must be at least three Bishops present together and join in the act of consecration, the said three Bishops, that is, Bishop Ng Moon Hing, Bishop Jason Selvaraj and Bishop Steven Lawrence consecrated the Revd Canon Dr D Steven Abbarow as a Bishop of our Diocese by laying their hands on him (observing strict standard operating procedures) and praying,



A copy of the Holy Bible was handed over to the Bishop designate

"Send down the Holy Spirit upon your servant Steven for the office and work of a bishop in your church".

Four gifts were delivered to the Rt Revd Dr D Steven Abbarow upon his consecration as Bishop. Firstly, Bishop Moon Hing delivered a copy of the Holy Bible to him saying,

"Receive this book; here are words of eternal life. Take them for your guidance and declare to the world. Be diligent in reading and exhortation, that your progress thereby may be evident to all. Keep a close watch on yourself and the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers. Be a shepherd to the flock of Christ, not a wolf; feed them, do not devour them. Hold up the weak, heal the sick, bind up the broken, bring back the outcasts, seek the lost. Be merciful, but not indifferent, minister discipline, but do not forget mercy that when the chief shepherd shall appear you may receive the never-fading crown of glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen".

Secondly, the episcopal ring was given to the new Bishop as a symbol of faith, to be faithful guardian of the church, the Bride of Christ.

Thirdly, the mitre was given as a reminder that the Bishop's authority rests in God's word given through his Holy Spirit.

Finally, the crosier (pastoral staff) was given to Bishop Steven Abbarow to watch over the flock of Christ.

Bishop Steven Abbarow was duly installed and enthroned as the 5th Bishop of the Diocese of West Malaysia on 2 March 2021 in a solemn Installation service at the Cathedral of St. Mary the Virgin, Kuala Lumpur. As a symbolic gesture, Bishop Steven

knocked three times on the South Door of the Cathedral with his pastoral staff in order to enter into the Cathedral. He was accompanied by the Diocesan Chancellor and the Diocesan Registrar. The door was opened by the Cathedral Wardens. The Dean of the Cathedral, the Very Revd Dr Andrew Cheah Song Soo together with the Cathedral Wardens and Bishop Jason Selvaraj and the Diocesan Secretary Mr David Joseph warmly received the Bishop into the Cathedral. Bishop Steven Abbarow declared that he will faithfully observe the laws and customs of the Diocese and shall govern the Diocese according to the Constitution with truth, justice and mercy. The Dean of the Cathedral the Very Revd Dr Andrew Cheah Song Soo duly inducted and installed Bishop Steven Abbarow as the Bishop of the Diocese of West Malaysia with all the temporal and spiritual rights and responsibilities and installed him at his Episcopal seat in the said Cathedral. The Dean delivered the Investiture to the Bishop. The Cathedral bell was rung 39 times to signify adherence to the 39 Articles of Religion. Thereafter the Bishop was presented to the people. The congregation

at the Cathedral received and greeted the 5th Diocesan Bishop with applause. Thirty people attended this auspicious and joyous ceremony, including the Bishop's wife, Mrs Anne Abbarow, his son and daughter-in-law Ruel Abbarow and Ng Meng Leng and his daughter, Naomi Abbarow.

We were also blessed by the presence of all our Archdeacons. Many others both locally and from abroad followed the Installation service via the online platform.

In his first sermon after having been installed as the 5th Diocesan Bishop of the Diocese of West Malaysia, Bishop Steven Abbarow preached about orthodoxy and on having a covenantal relationship with God. He emphasised the need for commitment to mission and justice. He noted that 2nd March was chosen as the Installation date because firstly, it was the feast day of St Chad, an Anglo-Saxon Bishop who was committed to mission and secondly, it was the day commemorating mission to the Dayaks in the Borneo states. In his message, Bishop Steven drew reference to Isaiah 1:17, "Learn to do good, seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause." He further emphasized the need for humility in Christian service. "The greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself, will be humbled and whoever humbled himself will be exalted" Matthew 23:11-12).

As a fitting commitment to mission, Bishop Steven officially launched the Diocesan theme, that is, "BEHOLD, I AM MAKING EVERYTHING NEW" (Revelation 21:5) for the period 2021 - 2030 with the following mission statement:

"We are a Church, moving towards making Christ known through Church planting, mission, social concern, environmental

care, intentional discipleship and building up of family units with love, grace and fellowship of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."

The ten-year Diocesan development plan will reemphasize and focus on discipleship training, church planting and pastoral care. As part of the official launch, a video on the Diocese of West Malaysia which was prepared by Mr Nandagoban and his



The Crosier was handed to the Bishop designate

technical team was screened. It reflected on the faithfulness of God towards our Diocese and the challenges, commitments and accomplishments of our Diocese in advancing the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ over the past fifty years under the Episcopal leadership of the previous Diocesan Bishops and the challenges which lie ahead for the new Diocesan Bishop.

By the providence of God, the Proclamation of Emergency in the nation and the MCO/CMCO to arrest the COVID-19 pandemic did not in any material way diminish the sanctity, solemnity and significance of the Consecration service and the Installation service. On the contrary, it reinforced our

faith in our Lord Jesus Christ that when two or three are gathered in His name, we are assured of His presence in our midst. Both the said services were occasions of grand celebrations as our Lord Jesus Christ was present.

The presence via the online platform of the Most Revd Datuk Melter Jiki Tais (the Archbishop for the Province of the Anglican Church in South East Asia and the Bishop of the Diocese of Sabah), the Rt Revd Datuk Danald Jute (Bishop of the Diocese of Kuching) and the Rt Revd Dr Titus Chung (Bishop of the Diocese of Singapore) further enriched the celebrations. They conveyed their heartiest congratulations and best wishes to Bishop Steven and his family. They wished him God's richest blessings and providence as he leads the Diocese of West Malaysia during these very challenging and unprecedented times.

We pray for the anointing of the Holy Spirit upon Bishop Steven Abbarow as he reverently, faithfully, diligently, patiently and humbly provides pastoral leadership to "feed the lambs", "tend the sheep" and "feed the sheep" through the relentless

and unwavering proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The words of the gospel are very powerful and life-changing. The apostle Paul wrote, "I am not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16). We pray that under Bishop Steven's episcopacy, all the clergy and the laity in the Diocese will work together as a family to lead many people to experience the love, grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

CONGRATULATIONS BISHOP STEVEN. GOD BLESS YOU, YOUR FAMILY AND YOUR MINISTRY ALWAYS. **AM**

D Raja Singam is the Diocesan Registrar for the Diocese of West Malaysia.

The Sermon Preached at the Installation Service

by The Rt Revd Dr D Steven Abbarow



My thanks and appreciation to all who have sent greetings and congratulations and at the same time your commiserations. We would have liked to have celebrated under normal circumstances but that was not possible and so I receive and understand your commiserations. In a way it gives us an opportunity to identify with those who want to celebrate important events in their lives and yet cannot. We are once again reminded that we have not been left orphaned. God is with us. The Angels, the Archangels and the Communion of Saints are always with us. We are thankful for this.

Our friends in the Diocese of Lichfield reminded me that today is St Chad's Day, an auspicious day for them. While we identify with our friends in Lichfield, this day is also important to us in Malaysia as it commemorates the mission and the ministry to the Dayaks and the Malays in Sarawak by William Henry Gomez. This day reminds us of mission and what God is really doing so get on board with that.

So, we identify with the spirit of St Chad's that mission is a priority, humility is an important feature and everything must be undergirded by prayer and holiness. The first song we sang was 'This is My Father's World.' Amidst the worldwide pandemic, people have lost their jobs and some have had to leave the country where they are working and amidst this difficult scenario, people are being branded as migrant, immigrant, alien, pendatang. We are reminded that these name callings are not important. We are pilgrims on the earth. Our home is in heaven and this is our Father's World. God is still the ruler yet and this gives us the strength and calmness of mind to make difficult decisions during the period of the pandemic.

Let us now look at the Biblical text read today. Isaiah, Psalms and Matthew talk about a God who was reminding His people that they were called to a covenantal relationship. They were special people of God. They were to be the catalyst to bring the shalom, the

peace of God that they had experienced through God's word and for us through Jesus Christ. These readings call for an accountability.

In Matthew the seven woes against the Pharisees are mentioned. It is rather alarming to see this passage read in an Installation service of the bishop. But the beauty in all this is that it is an invitation and an opportunity to come to this God who has called us to this kind of relationship. In Matthew, Jesus says the greatest among you shall be servants. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. And so, the common theme is being accountable to the mission God has called us to. A covenantal way of life is most profoundly said in John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him shall not die but have everlasting life." In Malaysia, we look at ourselves and our situation. We look at our leaders, spiritual and political. Jesus looked at His leaders and pronounced

seven woes against the Pharisees. Jesus graded their ministry. He gave them a good grade for their orthodoxy. He failed them for their orthopraxy. In Malaysia we colloquially say 'Cakap tak serupa bikin.' The hypocrisy that arises out of a community which stresses right beliefs but fails miserably in its faithfulness and right practice is not only incongruent in psychological and behavioural aspects of a person but also pollutes and mars the image of God in us. There is a dissonance in our spirituality.

But we are not dismayed by all this because we have a gospel to proclaim. We as Christians want to live our faith and submit ourselves as a living sacrifice in the service to Jesus Christ. This is so beautifully put by St Paul in Romans 12 : 1-2 'I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.' In obedience to the call of this mission we must continue to daily nail to the cross our selfishness, our self-centredness, our sense of entitlement and daily follow Him. In Matthew we are reminded that one sure guaranteed way to avoid these pitfalls is the path of servant-hood. It calls for a Christ-centred life, a life consumed by God's mission and love, humility, a spirit of servant-hood and undergirded by a life of prayer.

The clergy, the leaders and the laity gathered last year to discuss and think through what the mission of the church is. How should we express this mission of God in our lives. And so they came up with the theme for our diocese. Today we will launch this theme. I would like to spend another five to ten minutes to talk

about the key components of the theme and how it resonates with the call and heart of God to be faithful to a covenantal relationship with Him and to share that life in Christ with others in the many ways that we can.

The DSIC (The Diocese Strategic and Implementation Committee) decided to implement the Diocesan ten-year development plan 2021-2030. Revelation 21:5 says 'Behold I am making all things new.' We have a mission statement. We are a church moving towards making Christ known through church planting, mission, social concerns, environmental care, intentional discipleship and building up of family units with love, grace and fellowship of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

For the first three years we want to focus on the Season of Preparation. This does not mean we have not prepared all this while, or have not done this before. We want to bring to a focus that we will walk step by step and bring as many people as we can together; not to run too quickly unless we are the only two or three walking, and the rest have no clue. Kosuke Koyama said that God is a Three Mile an Hour God, a normal walking pace of a human being. God is a Four Mile an Hour God, He walks with us. The call for preparation is not an admission that we have not done any of these things but it is a humble admission that we are to walk as God has walked with us. We say prepare your work outside, getting everything ready for yourself in the fold. After that we say 'build your house.' Then we want to focus on human capital development for God's kingdom initiatives. We want to explore, identify, target, encourage and equip members through discipleship and church planting. Yes, even in the midst of this pandemic and collateral damage of Covid 19. This is God's heart and we will walk as how God walks with us. The woes

will always be there, being pronounced because of our own failings and because of our own misgivings. Yet, we are called and encouraged to stand on faith alone in Christ Jesus. We are to discover this wonderful freedom to live a covenantal and accountable life that glorifies God.

The second Season of Propagation is from 2024 to 2026. Those who sow in tears shall reap with joyful shouting. The Diocesan Language Boards will be responsible for making available materials in Chinese, English, Tamil and Bahasa Malaysia. My dear friends, we also want to focus on the Season of Proclamation. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. We must proclaim and focus on to preserve and persevere in local and overseas mission. We do not want to slow down. We want to promote social and environmental care. We will strive to better than what we are doing now. We will network so as to enlarge relationships and connectedness. We will plant new churches and congregations to proclaim the good news and Biblical truth, all these undergirded with the life of prayer. So my dear friends, three things we will focus on - discipleship training, church planting training and leadership development at every parish and missionary district.

I encourage you to participate in our Diocesan webinar on church planting by our Bishop, Ng Moon Hing, Revd John Ganapathy and Revd Fred David. I draw your attention to that. Please participate in it. And so we want to say to each and everyone of us to start from ourselves first. Let us read the scriptures, draw closer to Jesus and from that fountain of love let us love our neighbour and ourselves as how God has loved us. With that let us watch the short video of the launching of the Diocesan Theme and I therefore declare the Diocesan Theme launched with a prayer. **AM**

Diocesan English Youth Camp

by Melissa Raj

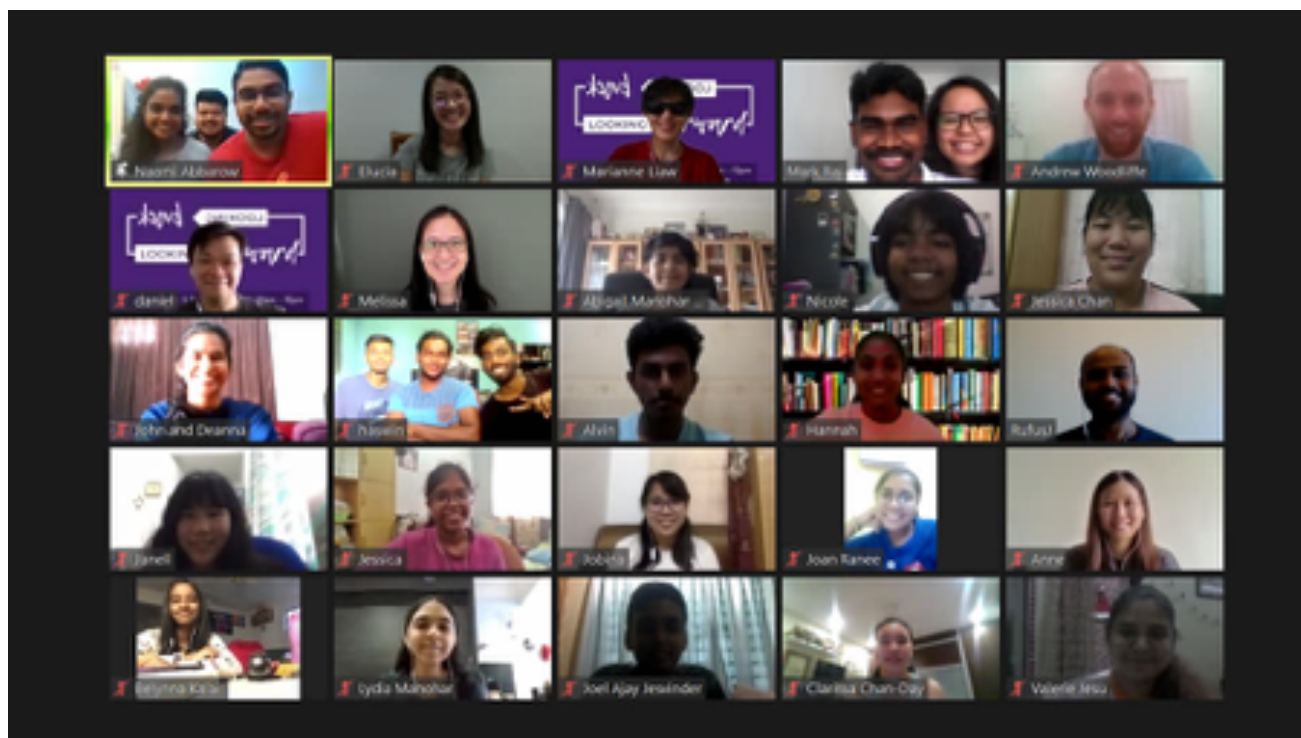
The year 2020 took us to territories unknown. Confined to our homes, we had to attend classes, run meetings and meet friends online. We even conducted our annual Diocesan English Youth Camp from home! The morning programme included a time of

singing, Bible reading, a short talk by Marianne and games.

With the Diocese's 50th anniversary in mind, our theme 'Looking Back, Looking Forward' was focused on the passage from Colossians 2:6-7, ⁶ So then, just

as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

Youths from St Mark's Church, Seremban,



who joined us shared their experience of the virtual camp:

When I first heard that camp would be online this year I was very disappointed but when we went online it was very different from what I had expected. Listening to the speaker, I was able to understand that while we may not be able to change the past, we should look forward to the future. – Sarah

I learnt what it means to live our life with Jesus as my God. First, I must be rooted in Jesus and I must grow as a Christian. Jesus suffered for me and my suffering is nothing compared to what He has gone through. Jesus is God's gift to us. – Belynna

We were taught that once we considered ourselves Christians, it meant that we have accepted Christ as the Lord of our life. Last year's camp theme on 'Glory to God Alone' was taught again. This means that everything we do must be

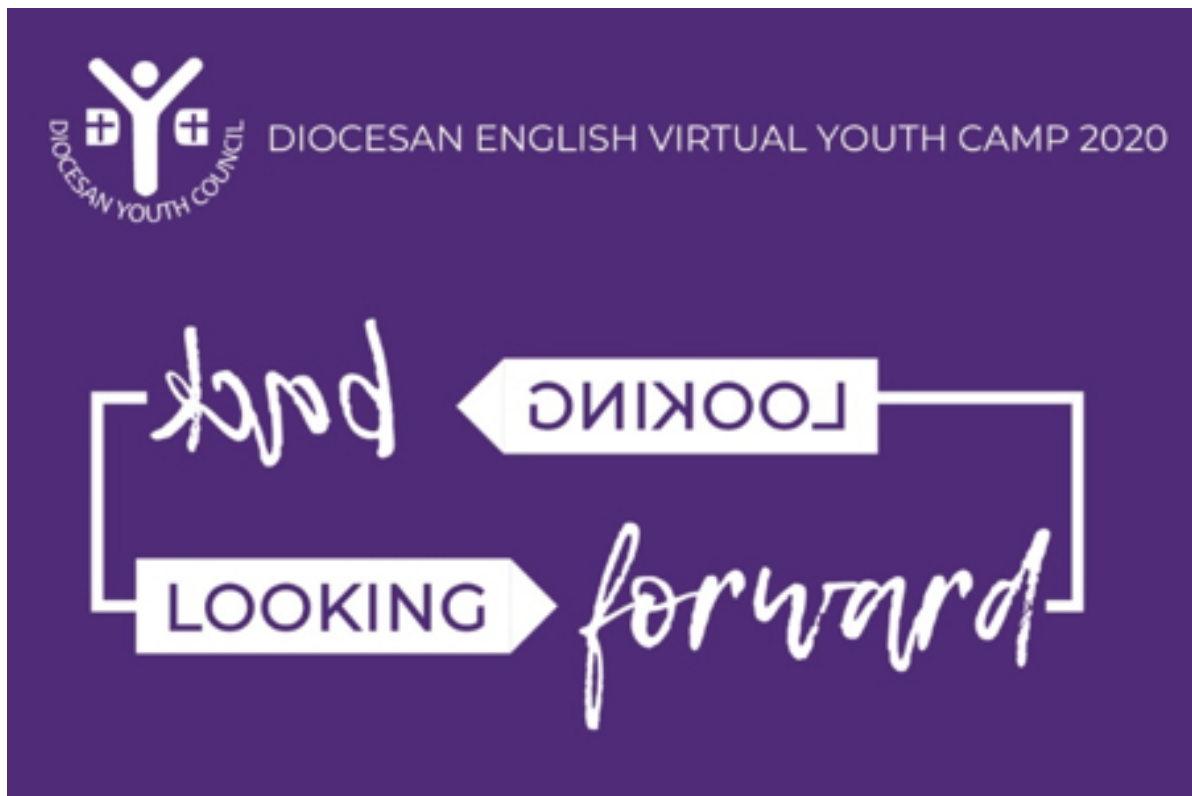
for the glory of God. We were reminded again that we have been saved by God's grace for good works. – Jessica

Marianne reminded us of the camp theme which was 'Looking Back, Looking Forward'. She went on to say that the one who has authority over us 24/7 is not us but God. She also explained 'Looking Back' based on the Bible's perspective (Colossians 2:6) and illustrated this with the Christmas Cracker and how it is related to a Christian's life. She then spoke to us about the ugly reality of today's world where people are separated from God as we reject and rebel against Him. She then spoke about the legend of the candy cane. The candy cane was first made in Indiana where its founder took a stick of hard white sugar, included the red stripes and shaped it into a crook. She explained that the white represented Jesus' purity, the red, a reminder of His crucifixion and the crook-like shape represented God our Shepherd. She also shared with us the good news that

Jesus gifted us with forgiveness of sin and eternal life but it is only through faith in Him that would lead us to these promised gifts. She explained to us that there was more to life than this. We as Christians have to be rooted in Christ and the gospel. Then, she explained about 'Looking Forward' based on the Bible's perspective (Colossians 2:7). Lastly, she ended the session by explaining to us about the true meaning of living with Jesus. – Alvin

I'm so glad that I had a chance to attend camp. I learnt a lot from here. Firstly, we have to receive Christ as our Lord and walk Him. It was so helpful and I am blessed that I have gained more knowledge about Christ. – Joshua

In conjunction with the 50th anniversary of our Diocese, we presented a special video to look back with thanksgiving for God's work in our ministry. Watch the video at this link:bit.ly/DYCvideo **AM**



Diocesan Youth Council logo.

A FAMILY PORTRAIT



L to R: daughter Naomi, wife Anne, Bishop Abbarow,
son Ruel and daughter-in-law Ng Meng Leng