

A PILGRIMAGE

FOR EPIPHANY



A Pilgrimage for Epiphany

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We have heard about the word "pilgrimage," yet many Christians in Malaysia may not have a chance to experience it with the Diocese. Under Bishop Charles Samuel's guidance, the Anglican Diocese of West Malaysia took the initiative to organize the Pilgrimage of Epiphany on January 7, 2023. It is the Diocese's first pilgrimage from - St. George's Pro-Cathedral to St. Paul's Church Jalan Macalister Road in Penang. The pilgrims journeyed through the steps our founding fathers took from the oldest Anglican Church in the Far East to plant the daughter church, St. Paul's Church, at 56 Jalan Macalister. Under the guidance of Bishop Charles, the pilgrims could experience a spiritual journey that followed the path their predecessors took through the lanes and streets of Georgetown, Penang. The uniqueness of this pilgrimage was done on a 2.5-kilometre journey in the bustling city of Georgetown, beginning from St. George's Pro-Cathedral at Lebuhraya Farquhar, to Steward Lane, through Chulia Street, going on to Penang Road, and reaching St. Paul's Church at Macalister Road. St. Paul's Church and St. George's members journeyed together on this pilgrimage. With the assistance of the Suffragan Bishop Stephen Soe (Vicar of St. George's Pro-Cathedral) and Rev. Phillip Ong (Vicar of St. Paul's Church) to explain in Mandarin, the pilgrimage journey was set to take place.



The renewing of the baptismal vows



Pilgrims beginning the journey from St. George's Church to St. Paul's

...began in silence and prayer

...renewing our baptismal vows gathered at the baptismal font and the recitation of the Nicene Creed.

The pilgrimage began in silence and prayer at 7 a.m. in St. George's Church Penang, followed by the devotion of pilgrims, renewing our baptismal vows gathered at the baptismal font and the recitation of the Nicene Creed. The first symbolic act was when we touched the baptismal water in the font; we reminded ourselves of our relationship with Jesus Christ, as coming together, clothed in our old life with all its habits, mindsets, and behaviours. The water symbolizes Jesus' death and burial. By touching the water, we began a new spiritual journey and followed in the footsteps of early Christians who took the gospel to another church and baptized new Christians.



Touching the water

Next, the pilgrims visited the plaques of notable people who played a significant role in the 200th anniversary of the Pro-Cathedral. Bishop Ashok Biswas of Calcutta visited and commemorated the consecration of St. George's Church by the late Bishop Thomas F. Middleton (Calcutta) on May 11, 2019 (the 200th anniversary) in 2017 and the visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, in 2019.



Tamil Anglican Church

...first Tamil service was held on February 19, 1871

The Tamil Church was pioneered in the parish hall (behind the Pro-Cathedral); through the initiatives of Rev. J. Moreton in 1871, upon his behest, for a leader to lead the Tamil Mission in Penang. Rev. Rayappen Balavendrum was sent from Tirupathural, Tamil Nadu, and the first Tamil service was held on February 19, 1871. God multiplied his efforts, and Rev. Rayappen founded the St. George's Church Anglo-Tamil Boy's School in 1873 and an association for the Tamil Christians of the Church of England in 1875. Reverend Anthony Jude and Reverend Marshall, successors of the Tamil Anglican Church, read the history of the life of Rev. Balavendrum and said a prayer of thanksgiving in Tamil on the grounds of the pioneer Tamil Church.



The Bicentennial Cross



Late Rev. Rayapen Balavendrum (1825-1912)

The pilgrimage also taught us to slow down to capture and appreciate the places we dismissed as unimportant. We paused at the Bicentenary Cross and read the inscription-

“The Bicentennial Cross stands as a testimony of God’s faithfulness and blessing to His people. (left) It was erected by the members of St. George the Martyr Church to the Glory of God and the extension of God’s Kingdom on the 200th anniversary of the consecration of the Church on the 11th of May 2019. The wood for the cross came from the Mahogany tree planted in the 1880s and uprooted in 1998.”. On the same platform, there is a time capsule which is to be opened in the year 2119.



...forgiveness for the things left undone.

Yet, when pausing to think deeper, it is significant as the pilgrims stood at the gates of St. George's Church and reflected on the thousands of people who had passed through the gates for two centuries through the thin and thick times of the world and the Church. That moment of reflection caused us to thank God for His blessings on the people through the Church. Bishop Stephen prayed and thanked the many who found solace in Christ and asked for forgiveness for the things left undone.

Then, the pilgrims journeyed to the streets...

Then, the pilgrims journeyed to the streets, passing the Penang Chinese Town Hall beside St. George's Church. According to the old town plan from the 1800s, the Chinese town hall was designated as a location for a Chinese church.



Bishop Charles explains that the Chinese Town Hall was a designated place for the Chinese Church.

Next, the pilgrims journeyed Through Steward lane and to "Kawan Centre" in Lebuah Klang. It is an interdenominational Christian organization called Youth for a Mission in Malaysia. Pilgrims



prayed for those who took care of the place and those who sought help from there; the poor, lonely,

and segregated from society. Around this place was where the St. George's Chinese congregation rented a house and continued the mission work at the crossroads of Chulia Stree and Love Lane.

...at the crossroads of Penang



The pilgrims walked along Chulia street and arrived at the crossroads at Penang Road. Here we stopped and remembered the many people who walked and journeyed using the tram to undertake their missionary journey.



As the pilgrims passed by the Penang government's office at Komtar, we stopped to say a prayer of thanksgiving for the works that they have done and for God's blessing to be upon the State Government.



Following that, the pilgrims went up to the overhead bridge and stopped over the juncture of Burmah Road, Where the Chinese Congregation moved to the second location. During this time, they were able to purchase a House along Macalister Road, which is now the permanent site for the church



Upon reaching St. Paul's Church Penang, Bishop Stephen Soe and Rev. Philip Ong explained the marvellous works of God that through His providence, St. Paul's Church was able to purchase the two lots beside to the support the growth and mission of the church.

...one faith, hope and gospel.



As they entered the church, the pilgrims touched the water in the baptismal font at St. Paul's Church, symbolising that we are united with

all the new converts in one faith, hope, and gospel. As pilgrims, we are encouraged to follow in early Christians' footsteps.



The pilgrimage was completed by Mr Kenneth Ho Heng Kee (left), a St. Paul's Church Penang history buff to explain how the ministry grew from St. George's Church, to St. Paul's.

St. Paul's is the first Chinese Congregation in the Anglican Church. God used a few people to start different ministries and fellowships, and the Church grew. The St. George's Chinese Mission was founded in 1886 and assisted by Mrs Lim Kim Soa (nee Tan Ooi Iu Ghee). She ran a small private Chinese School to teach Chinese to Chinese Women and helped Chinese government servants known as Chinese Cadets.



Together with her were the families of Mr and Mrs Chan Khay Kong, Mr and Mrs Lim Kim Soa, and Mr and Mrs Ooi Kim Pong. The first catechist was Mr Cheah Boon Tian, and some meetings were held in his house on Kimberly Street. The first Chinese-ordained priest was Rev. Tay Chhui Look. More information can be obtained in the Chinese Centenary 1886-1986 magazine. The mission house was at 367 Chulia Street, then 424 Penang Road and finally, the first Anglican Chinese Church church to be consecrated in 1949 and named St. Paul's Church.

WHAT DID THEY SAY?

...God's faithfulness never ceases



Bishop Stephen Soe mentioned that "it was the first pilgrimage walk in our diocese. I truly enjoyed the fellowship and the prayer walk. I hope we will have more of this in other areas to discover the footprints of God in our diocese."



The RAAF Chaplain, Rev. Tom Killingbeck, who followed the pilgrim, said, "it was great to walk through the city, getting a glimpse into the life of the Church in the past. So many faithful people over many years - we have a lot to live up to

and learn from as the modern Church continues God's mission."



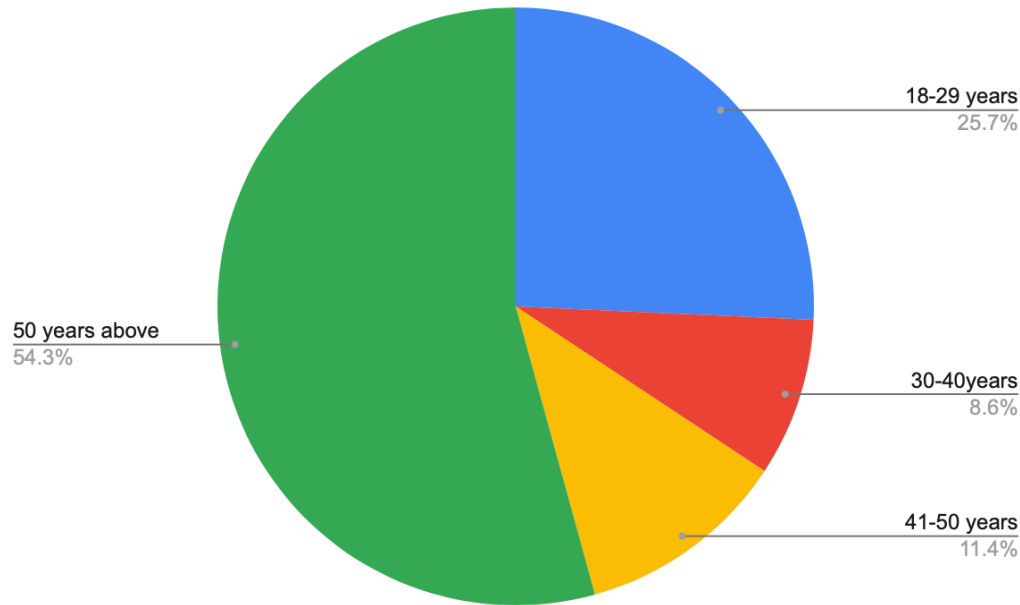
Rev Philip Ong too said "It is a great experience to take part in this meaningful event, to commemorate the dedication and hard work of the past mission work started in Penang. To pilgrim along the street where the mission works once took place reminded us of God's faithfulness never ceases and His faithfulness shall carry us through all the challenges and difficulties in the future."



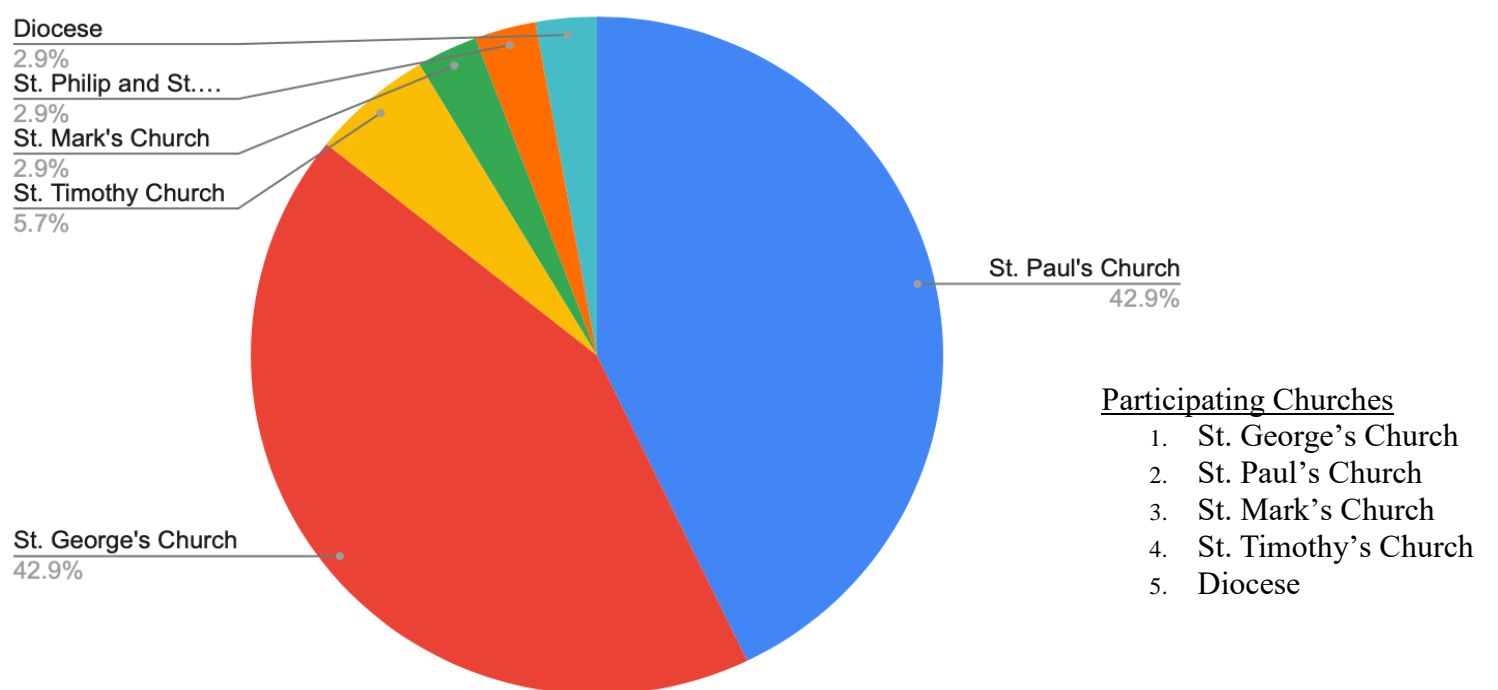
Statistics

- Total number of pilgrims expected: 20 pilgrims
- Total number of pilgrims participated: 34 pilgrims (6.8 % extra)
- 5 volunteers

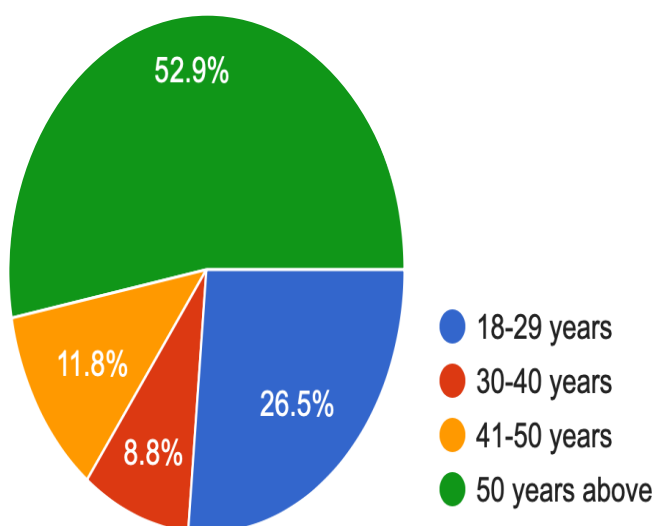
Total number of pilgrims according to age



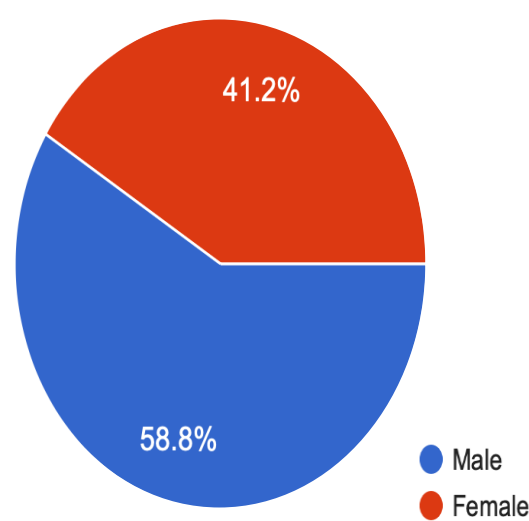
Total number of pilgrims from the participating churches



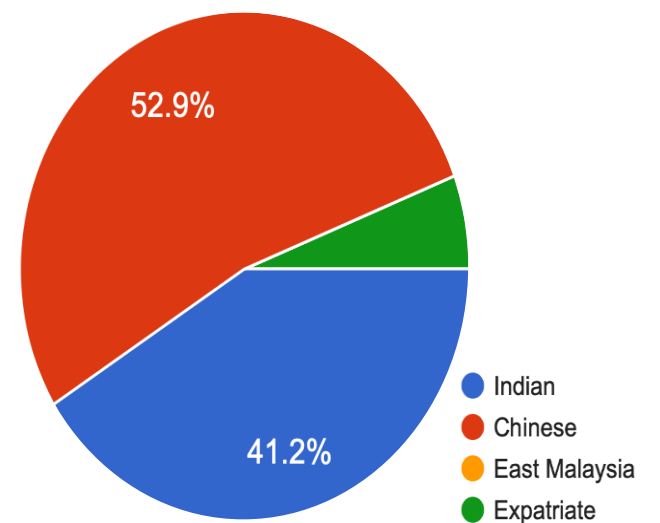
**Total number of pilgrims according to the age group.
No. of Pilgrims: 34 pilgrims**



**Total number of pilgrims according to gender.
No. of Pilgrims: 34 pilgrims**



**Total number of pilgrims according to ethnicity.
No. of Pilgrims: 34 pilgrims**



Motivation to join the Pilgrimage for Epiphany

34 responses

