

# ST PAUL'S CHURCH

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.

Isaiah 11:1-2

20 December 2020



Heavenly Father, who chose the Virgin Mary, full of grace, to be the mother of our Lord and Saviour; fill us with your grace, that in all things we may accept your holy will and with her rejoice in your salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Scripture Readings

**First Reading:** Isaiah 11:1-11

**Gospel Reading:** Luke 1:26-38

## Today's Sermon

The Promised One

by Pastor Leon Stewart

# A Love Story



by Heath Krueger, [heathkrueger.com](http://heathkrueger.com)

Not long ago I heard a knock, knock on our door. Spying through the blinds I saw two dressed up ladies. In their hands they held a single book along with some pamphlets.

I think you know where this is going...

I opened the door and greeted them, "Hi. I'm Heath. Nice to meet you."

They proceeded to explain who they were and why they were there. But I cut right to the chase,

"Is it true you don't believe Jesus was actually God? That He was just God's son and only a good teacher?"

"Yes that is right," they answered.

Instead of diving into theological mumbo jumbo I decided to go a different route this time.

I asked them if they liked love stories and they gave me a couple of their favorites.

"Which is a better love story," I asked, "One where the prince sends someone else to rescue the princess for him OR where the prince himself risks his life and comes and rescues the princess?"

Knowing my point, they hesitated and then answered the latter.

Friends, isn't the Bible the greatest love story of all time? Isn't it about a Prince who didn't make someone else do the dirty work, but took it upon Himself to rescue His bride?

Author Donald Miller defines what makes a good story. It involves "a character who wants something and overcomes conflict to get it."

In the greatest love story ever told we find the main character, God, wanting something and overcoming conflict to get it. What did He want? A relationship with us. He wanted our hearts.

So He was on a mission. He was on the move. It was "game on." He would stop at nothing to get what He wanted. He was madly in love.

For over 2,000 years God pursued His people. He tried to get their attention in all kinds of ways. He created a beautiful garden. He painted a rainbow in the sky. He took them stargazing and promised and provided a big family in a new home in a new land.

He got their attention in a burning bush. He heard their cries for help and He played hero and rescued them from their enemies. He parted a body of water 190 miles across and 7,000 feet deep so His people could escape the enemy.

He made it rain bread and quail from Heaven. He provided water from a rock. Ultimately, He guided them into a better land. One flowing with milk and honey.

He continued to protect His people from the enemy year after year after year. He never left them.

Why? Because He loved them. He wanted them to know Him. He wanted them to love Him. He couldn't stop thinking about them. He was head over heels for them. So He pursued and pursued and pursued and pursued.

But like any good story, there was conflict. What was it? Well, the people said 'No.' They wouldn't give Him their hearts. He moved towards them but they turned their backs on Him.

They rejected Him. They were seeing other gods. And the one and only true God, the passionate, jealous lover, who had romanced and courted His people for thousands of years, was heart broken:

"Will they ever remember me? Will they take notice of me? Will they see my love for them is real? That I would do anything for them? What can I do to break through to them? Haven't I tried everything?"

His heart was heavy. Tears streamed down His cheeks. There was one more thing He could do. But He never thought it would come to this. It was the last resort. Despite all the rejection, all the empty commitments from His people, He still loved them. And He wasn't ready to give up.

So, the time came. In Matthew 1:23 we read, "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel (which means "God with us")."

He didn't send a letter or an email or flowers or a billboard or a t-shirt.

Instead, He came. He sent Himself. You mean the God of the universe? Yes, that one.

God. With. Us. Three words that can change our life.

He came to walk with us. To hold our hand. To talk to us. To listen to us. To pray with us. To guide us. To protect us. To encourage us. To give us a hug when we need one. To pick us up when we fall. To comfort us when we cry. To celebrate when we celebrate.

Now that is a love story.

And He didn't just come to live with us. He came to die for us.

Spat on. Mocked. Beaten. Bleeding. Why?

Because He was in love with us. He was a character who wanted something (our hearts) and was willing to overcome great conflict (our sins) to get it.

It's almost like God stooped down like a humble servant. Like He got down on one knee. In the dirt. He made Himself nothing. He emptied Himself.

He reached into His pocket and presented something very precious. Something of extraordinary cost. With His arms outstretched, he offered His life.

Maybe the manger is God's way of asking, "Will you marry me?"

And there we are. Maybe caught off guard. Surprised. Humbled. Speechless.

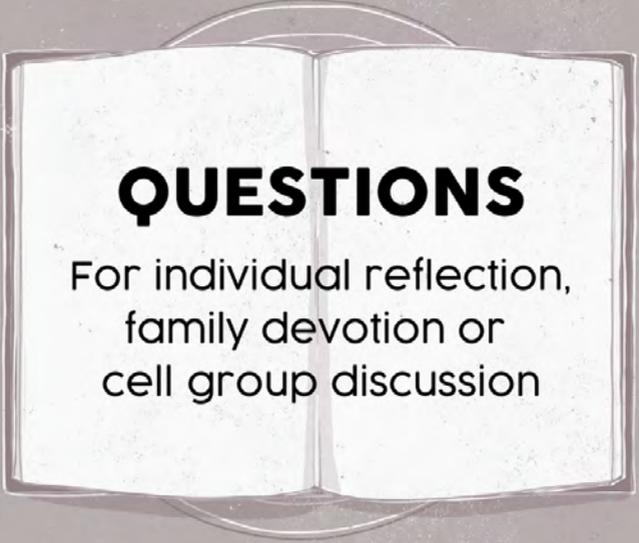
And we wonder, "He wants me? Doesn't He know me? But He loves me? He chooses me of all people?"

Friends, this Christmas our God is proposing to you. To me.

He is on our front step knocking on the door of our lives, ready to come in.

May we open the door and receive His gift.

And may we spend the rest of our life with our hero, the Prince.



# QUESTIONS

For individual reflection,  
family devotion or  
cell group discussion

Reflecting on Isaiah 11:2, discuss if it is possible that this passage can also be connected to Christians walking in the same attributes describe?

What experiences have you been through that you believe God has used or is using now to build up your dependence upon the Holy Spirit?

Reflect and discuss at least two ways you could respond differently if the Lord led you more in this area of your faith journey.

1

### Our Vision

## **To be Ambassadors for Christ in the Community**

### **2 Corinthians 5:20**

Therefore, we are Ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

2

### First Pillar

## **Being Spirit-Filled**

### **Galatians 5:16**

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

3

### Second Pillar

## **Imitating Christ**

### **Luke 9:23**

And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

4

### Third Pillar

## **Persevering Prayer**

### **Colossians 4:2**

Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.

5

### Fourth Pillar

## **Serving All**

### **Mark 10:45**

For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

6

### Fifth Pillar

## **Living Witness**

### **Matthew 5:16**

let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.



# Christmas

AT ST PAUL'S CHURCH

CHRISTMAS EVE  
SERVICE

**24.12.2020**

THURSDAY, 10.30PM TO 12AM

CHRISTMAS  
SERVICE

**25.12.2020**

FRIDAY, 9AM TO 10.30AM

NEW YEAR'S DAY  
SERVICE

**1.1.2021**

FRIDAY, 9AM TO 10.30AM

# TESTIMONY TIME!

We would like to open up a time of testimony sharing at our New Year's Day Service. If you have a testimony that you would like to share with the church, either in person or by video, kindly contact Pastor Leon Stewart at 9199 3815 or email him at [leon@stpaulschurch.org.sg](mailto:leon@stpaulschurch.org.sg)





A hand is raised in the center of the image, palm facing forward, against a background of blue and purple. The hand is positioned behind the main title text. The background has a grainy, textured appearance.

# **CONTEMPORARY SERVICE**

**SATURDAYS, 6 FEB ONWARDS,  
5PM, SECOND SANCTUARY**

A monochromatic, teal-toned photograph of a person with long, wavy hair seen from behind. Two hands are placed on their shoulders, one from the left and one from the right, suggesting a supportive or comforting gesture. The background is softly blurred, showing the profiles of other people.

# Pastoral Care

For those who require prayer or pastoral care, do drop us an email at [contact@stpaulschurch.org.sg](mailto:contact@stpaulschurch.org.sg) or contact the respective pastoral staff directly.

**Rev Jeremy: 9477 5476**

**Pastor Leon: 9199 3815**

**Pastor Leroy: 9710 2900**

ST PAUL'S CHURCH

# ONLINE GIVING



## INTERNET BANKING

St Paul's Church

DBS Current Account No. : 023-000684-7



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Please indicate "S2" under Reference No. The code "S2" refers to the English Congregation. Other information like specific giving (e.g. mission, building, etc.) as needed. Names are optional.



## GIVE BY CHEQUE

Made payable to "St Paul's Church" and mailed to our Church address - 843 Upper Serangoon Road Singapore 534683. Kindly indicate English Congregation at the back of the cheque.