



The Koinonia Inclusion Network is a Christian parachurch organisation that seeks to enable Christian communities by including people with disabilities. It does so through training, research and publication, and by promoting disability missions.



The Biblical Graduate School of Theology is a trans-denominational college for the whole people of God, providing flexible, relevant, and quality education that draws upon Scripture, Christian traditions, and inter-disciplinary studies.

This excellent publication reflects the Church's need to address "disablement" insightfully and holistically. Myths, half-truths, or stereotypes indeed do no real good in affirming persons with disabilities to accept their rightful place in the Church and society. I feel truly humbled to be counted for this notable cause.

*Rt Rev Keith Lai Chee Kheong, President, National Council of Churches of Singapore Synod Moderator, The Presbyterian Church in Singapore*

We may be "temporarily-abled" or not, but the Bible says everyone is disabled and in need of the inclusive, enabling love of God. Let this book inspire churches both to give and receive the inclusive, enabling love of God that every disabled or temporarily-abled person needs.

*Rev Dr Gordon Wong, Bishop of The Methodist Church in Singapore*

Holistically examined; convincingly argued; theologically stimulating; contextually practical. Disability is an inevitable encounter that affects us all in spite of age, gender, and environment. This book is a must-read for all pastors and church leaders to recalibrate an understanding of the nature, purpose, and discipleship of the Church in this new normal.

*The Rt Rev Dr Titus Chung, Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Singapore*

*Enabling Hearts* is a comprehensive resource not only for churches but for anyone who has a heart for persons with disabilities and wants to know and understand more. It provides insightful and practical knowledge to make ourselves and our churches more disability-inclusive which is very much needed. For sure, this book will be divinely transformational for all who read it.

*Ms Anita Fam, President, National Council of Social Service, Singapore*



Cover Painting: "Luke 14 Banquet" by Hyatt Moore (used with permission)



Enabling Hearts

Leow Wen Pin

Disability Ministry in Asia Series

# Enabling Hearts

## A Primer for Disability-Inclusive Churches

Edited by Leow Wen Pin



The Centre for Disability Ministry in Asia is dedicated to the mission of producing context-relevant resources to enable disability ministry in Asia. It is a collaboration between the Koinonia Inclusion Network and the Biblical Graduate School of Theology.

## **Endorsements from Church Leaders:**

On a recent trip to Dubai, I saw a sign announcing priority access for “People of Determination” — the first time I have seen people with disabilities described in such affirming terms. As the strength of a nation is seen in how it treats its weakest citizens, so also is the strength of a church. I warmly endorse and highly commend Wen Pin and his team for this “Primer for Disability-Inclusive Churches” believing with them that it will “open the hearts of God’s people towards the surprising grace of God as He leads us to include our brothers and sisters with disabilities”. May our hearts be so “enabled” that we will serve both the abled and the disabled alike.

*Rev Dr David W.F. Wong  
General Secretary, Bible-Presbyterian Church in Singapore*

In the Gospel narratives, the lame, the blind, the deaf, the mute, and the sick are not peripheral but central characters whom Christ related with and displayed His power through. Therefore, I find it important not to neglect the physically broken but to welcome and include them into the body life of the Church. I believe that Christ's power and presence are manifested in and through them. I am delighted to have a chance to read this book. It gives the much-needed theological underpinnings and sociological perspectives on the subject matter. It helps one to understand the wide range of disabilities, debunking myths, and overcoming misconceptions about them. It provides pastoral frameworks and practical pathways to include persons with disabilities into the community life and ministry environments of the church. I personally find this book insightful and helpful for me as a pastor.

*Pastor Rick Toh  
Lead Pastor, Yio Chu Kang Chapel*

This is a timely, accessible, and comprehensive primer for disability ministry. The Church needs to include people with disabilities, and this book helps us do so. I strongly recommend anyone who is serious about God's mission to read this book.

*Rev Dr Desmond Soh  
Pastor, Bethany Evangelical Free Church*

This book not only reveals the various nature of people with disability who are usually ignored in our churches and communities, but also provides practical guides to meet their lives with love and care, and equip them effectively to include them better in the life of the Church and community.

*Pastor Samuel Tin Hre Lian  
Senior Pastor, Acts Church, Yangon, Myanmar*

#### **Endorsements from Seminary Leaders:**

This book does more than reframe the way we think about people with special needs or dispel misconceptions about disabilities. It offers to readers a vision of the Church where people with disabilities are not marginal but vital members of the body of Christ.

*Rev Dr Edwin Tay  
Principal, Trinity Theological College*

Christians are called to love our neighbours, including people with disabilities. But how do we go about doing so? *Enabling Hearts* has done the Church a great service by compiling in one handy volume all the necessary theoretical and practical perspectives for disability ministry. I warmly recommend it as essential reading for all church leaders!

*Dr Lai Pak-Wah  
Principal, Biblical Graduate School of Theology*

This amazing little book will speak to a number of different audiences. For pastors who feel helpless, it offers practical advice. For entrepreneurs who want to start ministry, it offers success stories. For parents with disabled children, it offers hope. For me personally, it stirs tears. Read it and be blessed so that you can bless.

*Rev Peter Lin  
President, Baptist Theological Seminary Singapore*

#### **Endorsements from Missions Agency Leaders:**

*Enabling Hearts: A Primer for Disability-Inclusive Churches* is not a book of dry, technical theory regarding disability. It is about flesh and blood—real people's struggles with various disabilities. Their stories will make you smile and move you to tears all at once. Based in the Singaporean context, *Enabling Hearts* addresses contemporary situations while remaining firmly grounded in a strong biblical foundation. I highly recommend this book to pastors, leaders, and all who believe in the all-inclusive mandate of the Great Commission, and hope to better serve differently-abled people.

*Rev Dr Patrick Fung  
General Director, OMF International*

The Koinonia Inclusion Network (KIN), a robust fellowship of disability ministry leaders based in Singapore, has produced a volume that is committed to disability inclusion focusing on the local church. All contributions are biblically supported and practical. The chapter on sight impairment is a model for instruction in church engagement.

*Dr Dave Deuel  
Senior Research Fellow and Policy Advisor, The Christian Institute on Disability,  
Joni and Friends,  
Catalyst for Disability Concerns Network, The Lausanne Movement*

Congratulations to Wen Pin and the team of writers who have shared a bold vision of a more inclusive and empowering community. If human resources are indeed precious to us, then accepting those of us who are imperfect and encouraging them to live fulfilling lives will help us all affirm our humanity, made in the image of God. The Church can take a lead in envisioning a true community of faith, hope, and love indeed.

*Mr Lawrence Ko*  
*National Director, Singapore Centre for Global Missions*

A well-researched compendium, written under local contexts, about what we might term “the least of these”. For an aspiring volunteer seeking to serve in this ministry, this is a highly recommended primer. The book not only expounds, it probes us at the very root of our faith—on why we need to care. It endeavours to transform the minds of its readers, and open the hearts of believers towards the abundant grace of God. Like David in 2 Samuel 9:3, we need to show Mephibosheth the kindness of God. Indeed, an invaluable much-needed work—*bene factum!*

*Mr Lim Yu Ming*  
*National Director, Scripture Union Singapore*

#### **Endorsements from Social Sector & Academic Leaders:**

This compelling book combines both call and response. It exhorts the Church to widen its welcome and to see people with disabilities as indispensable members of the body. Each of the authors then equips readers to adopt the practices, postures, and partnerships that lead toward full inclusion and deep belonging.

*Prof. Erik Carter*  
*Cornelius Vanderbilt Professor of Special Education, Vanderbilt University*

A must-read for seeding Disability Ministries and growing Disability-Inclusive Churches. God calls us to His purpose and grace. May He speak to you, the reader. My congratulations to Wen Pin and the writers for the love and insights poured out in this book.

*Ms Tina Hung*  
*Senior Consultant, National Council of Social Service, Singapore*

This book is a great resource for churches considering disability-inclusive ministries. There is a good balance between the theologically based exhortations of “why”, the expert-based descriptions of “who”, and the practical steps of “how” a church should proceed. Many persons with disability, their caregivers, and their churches will be richly blessed by the wisdom in this book.

*Mrs Rosana Quek*  
*Chairman, AWWA School Management Committee*  
*Board Member, St Luke’s Hospital*

Disability is a reality of our fallen world, affecting—according to the World Health Organization—some 15 percent of the population. Through disease, accident, or the inevitable result of ageing, the disabled community grows, and with it, their need for ministry. Containing insights from all stakeholders in the disability community, this compelling read provides practical and holistic guidance on enabling a disability ministry.

*A/Prof. Lai Poh San*  
*Associate Professor, Department of Paediatrics, Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, National University of Singapore*

Wen Pin has compiled the thoughts of so many brothers and sisters in Christ who, compelled by His love, have extended their hearts and helping hands to so many communities of people with disabilities in Singapore. To anyone who aspires to start a ministry to people with disabilities in their church, or simply to anyone with an interest in reaching out to people with disabilities and their families, this book contains the why, what, and how of ministering to people with different disabilities. Be richly blessed as you digest the theology, practical advice, and testimonies of the wonderful work of these brothers and sisters.

Mr Bernard Chew  
Chief Executive Officer, St Andrew's Autism Centre

# **Enabling Hearts**

***A Primer for Disability-Inclusive Churches***

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Disability Ministry in Asia

Volume 1

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Leow Wen Pin

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A Collaboration with  
GRACEWORKS

# Enabling Hearts

*A Primer for Disability-Inclusive Churches*

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Disability Ministry in Asia Series | Edited by Leow Wen Pin

***Enabling Hearts: A Primer for Disability-Inclusive Churches***

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*This book is dedicated to  
our dear differently-abled brothers and sisters in the Church,  
and to the passionate special-needs ministry leaders and volunteers  
who journey alongside them.*

*May we grow under the Father's grace,  
building up Christ's Body in love,  
by serving with the Spirit's gifts.*



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



This book was written and edited during the momentous events of 2020. It has already become a cliché to talk about how Covid-19 has reshaped norms, but that is because it has indeed been a world-shaping pandemic. Given the unease and challenges of this period, I am filled with a heart of thankfulness that this volume was able to be completed on time with the full participation of all our passionate contributors. It is my pleasure, therefore, to be able to acknowledge here all who contributed to its publication with a word of thanks.

Pride of place must go to our Father in heaven. Amid the turbulence of this time, His grace and mercy are seen more clearly as we learn to lean on Him ever more closely. Yet, even more fundamentally, we recognise that it is because of the Father's welcoming heart, revealed in the gospel of Jesus Christ, that this book even has a reason to be written. Any wisdom found in its pages is merely a footnote to the Father's love. May this book be a continuing testimony to God's abiding hospitality for sinners.

A huge word of thanks also goes out to all of our chapter contributors who, despite the upheaval caused by Covid-19, went out of their way to thoughtfully write their chapters and submit them by the assigned deadlines. This should be recognised for what it is: a labour of love. Thank you, dear brothers and sisters, for your selfless efforts. Your dedication speaks Christ to me.

Likewise, I would also like to thank all the Christian leaders of denominations, churches, missions organisations, seminaries, social sector organisations, and in academia who wrote endorsements of this book. We know that you took precious time out of your busy schedules to read the draft of this book and to write your thoughtful reviews. Thank you for aiding the cause of gospel inclusion.

On behalf of the Koinonia Inclusion Network (KIN), I would also like to thank all the collaborating organisations whose partnership in

the gospel made this book possible. First of all, we thank our colleagues at the Biblical Graduate School of Theology for co-establishing the Centre for Disability Ministry in Asia (CDMA) by which this book is published. Second, we also thank all the churches that provided their stories, namely (in alphabetical order) Chapel of Christ Our Hope, Sengkang Methodist Church, St. John's-St. Margaret's Church, and World Revival Prayer Fellowship.

Next, we would like to thank our publishers, Graceworks, especially Ms Bernice Lee, Rev Dr Tan Soo Inn, and Ms Priscilla Jamir, for labouring alongside us in the task. This volume is the first resource to be published in the Disability Ministry in Asia (DMA) series, a collaboration between Graceworks and KIN. The camaraderie of and trust from Bernice and Soo Inn were instrumental in making this series and this volume a reality. Thank you for your spiritual friendship.

I would also like to thank Dr Yam Tim Wing, Bernard Chew, Chan Kong Wah, and Chan Poh Leng for their support for the CDMA. In addition, I would like to also thank the members of the Editorial Advisory Board for helping to direct the nascent work of the DMA series, namely, Professor Erik Carter, Professor John Swinton, Associate Professor Wong Meng Ee, and Dr Eunice Tan. Thanks also to Rev. Dr David Wong for suggesting the appendix to this book, and to Prof. Carter for allowing his checklist to be adapted.

Several other individuals also contributed to this volume. I would like to thank Kevin Chow for his help during the early planning stages of this book. A very warm word of thanks also goes to Hannah Quek, my CDMA research associate, who diligently undertook an initial preliminary edit of all the chapters, painstakingly adjusting all the different formats to a common one.

I would also like to thank all the management committee members of KIN (Jesselyn Ng, Timothy Teoh, Amy Ji, Loo Kee Wei, Janice Ho) for their strong support of this project. My dear brothers and sister, I am so glad to be able to serve alongside you. Thank you for teaching me and encouraging me through your lives. I pray that we will serve together for many more happy years!

Finally, with the deepest love and gratitude, I would like to thank my family for giving me time to work on this book, especially my best

supporter in the world—my loving wife Xinyi. Thank you, my darling, for your never-ending support and love! As I was in the midst of editing this book, my daughter was born into this world. The dynamic duo of our sons (Matthew and Nathaniel) thus became the “thrilling three” with the addition of Sophie. My children, your papa loves you more than you can imagine!

Indeed, my children’s Mandarin names—恩溢 (Enyi), 恩凯 (Enkai) and 恩宣 (Enxuan)—reflect the story of the gospel of Jesus Christ in the cross (“grace abundant”), the resurrection (“grace victorious”), and its subsequent spread across the world (“grace proclaimed”) respectively. This glorious gospel is at the heart of this book. We love and include because Christ first loved and included us.

Thus, to Him be the glory!

*Leow Wen Pin*  
December 2020

## PREFACE

*Leow Wen Pin*



Disability is a facet of everyday life. In Singapore, approximately one out of 50 students have a disability, and it is almost double that in the population of those 18 to 49 in age.<sup>1</sup> And although these numbers already indicate a significant level of disability, they are not truly reflective of human disability in Singapore, for they do not include some forms of disability like myopia (present in about four out of five Singaporean adults!)<sup>2</sup> that have been socially normalised.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, when we turn our eyes to consider those who are 50 years of age and older, the figures are dramatically higher, with slightly more than one in ten people having some form of disability.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, Singapore’s Enabling Masterplan 3 (2017–2021) has identified an ageing population as one of the key drivers of disability in Singapore.<sup>5</sup> In light of this connection between ageing and disability, some advocates prefer to refer to persons without disabilities as “temporarily able-bodied” in the recognition that disability is ultimately an inevitable stage of life.

To put the preceding statistics into more grounded terms: If a church has 500 people and is representative of Singapore’s demographics in 2016,<sup>6</sup> we might roughly expect 36 individuals (7 percent) in the congregation to have some form of disability. This is about one person in every small group, or one person in every row of pews. Christians should consider whether their church is indeed reflective of these demographics and, if not, what that implies for their church’s own rhetoric of missions and inclusivity.

These numbers unambiguously remind Christians of a number of social realities. First, given the prevalence of disability in Singapore, a church that meaningfully engages with persons with disabilities is being conscientious at addressing the pastoral needs of its members in its midst, as well as addressing the real needs of the society around

it. Second, given the link between ageing and disability, inclusion of persons with disabilities is a need that is growing. Hence, ultimately, inclusive churches exhibit wisdom because they prepare themselves for their own members' eventual state of disability. And these are simply some pragmatic reasons for why churches must seriously engage with the inclusion of persons with disabilities (there are several more crucial theological reasons which we will discuss in Chapter 2).

Given this need, this volume was formulated to help enable the development of more disability-inclusive churches. As an introductory “primer”, it aims to provide churches with a basic understanding of disability in Singapore, and some foundational insights concerning how to minister to persons with disabilities.

Its title, *Enabling Hearts*, reflects two essential characteristics of the volume. First, it captures the authors who have been invited to contribute. Every author of this volume is either a person with disability, a disability professional (e.g. clinician, therapist, special educator), or a disability ministry leader. All of them have committed a substantial portion of their life towards advocating for the inclusion of persons with disabilities. In that sense, they truly possess “enabling hearts” and I am delighted that they have chosen to partner with us in this endeavour.

Second, the title, *Enabling Hearts*, also reveals the spiritual goal of the volume. While the chapters in this book will often focus on technical know-how in ministering to people with disabilities, the book is ultimately aimed at transforming the hearts of its readers—to open the hearts of God’s people towards the surprising grace of God as He leads us to include our brothers and sisters with disabilities. As those of us who have served in the disability sector know, while we may come to serve hoping to give to persons with disabilities, all of us have learned that persons with disabilities give us far more grace in return—we have experienced the transformative love of God through our brothers and sisters with disabilities! It is thus my hope that you, the reader, will experience the same joyful shaping of your heart as you learn to journey alongside these precious children of God.

The book is structured along four major sections: In the first section, entitled “Preliminary Matters”, I introduce the reader to two

foundational aspects of disability ministry. In Chapter 1, I provide an overview of some key aspects of a biblical view of disability. Such theologisation is necessary to shape the mindsets of disability ministry leaders and the churches within which they serve. In Chapter 2, I then provide a broad framework for disability ministry leaders to enable them to see how a ministry might be started and developed.

In the second section, called “Aspects of Disability Ministry”, the book moves to focusing on topics that all disability ministries have to reckon with in the course of their work. Chapter 3, written by social worker Timothy Teoh, provides an introduction to the broader social landscape of disability in Singapore, since churches must minister to persons with disabilities from a whole-of-life perspective. Chapter 4, authored by psychologist Eliza Leong, introduces the reader to neurodevelopmental disabilities that are often less understood than physical or sensory disabilities. Special educator Norman Kee then provides a quick overview on special education for people with autism/intellectual disabilities (Chapter 5) that Sunday school teachers might find more challenging.

The next two chapters, written by lawyer Ronald Wong and past SPD President Chia Yong Yong respectively, provide insight into legal/policy issues (Chapter 6) and physical access issues (Chapter 7) for persons with disabilities. Then in Chapter 8, the volume provides a family-based perspective on persons with disability. Written by experienced autism advocate Brenda Tan, the chapter allows the reader to gain insight into what persons with disabilities and their family members think. Another disability advocate, Jacqueline Woo, wrote Chapter 9, where she shares her thoughts as a person with disability on how the differently abled might be discipled into being disciplemakers themselves. Finally, to cap off the section, seminarian Benita Lim provides the reader insight on worship and liturgy that is inclusive in Chapter 10.

Following this, the focus of the volume shifts towards discussing specific disabilities in the next section entitled “Including People with Disabilities”. Since disability is so variegated, each chapter in this section seeks to highlight representative disabilities, rather than seeking to cover all disabilities to avoid information overload. May

Low (a Deaf leader) and Li-Sa Wang (an experienced interpreter) give us a look into including the Deaf in Chapter 11. This look into sensory disabilities is matched by Associate Professor Wong Meng Ee's discussion of including individuals who are blind or have low vision in Chapter 12. Sherena Loh, a person with muscular dystrophy (MD) and a co-founder of the Muscular Dystrophy Association (Singapore) then gives us insight into including persons with physical disabilities by focusing her discussion on MD in Chapter 13.

The section then takes a cognitive turn in Chapter 14 when Dr Eunice Tan, an academic and long-time disability sector leader, helps the reader understand how to include people with learning disabilities by thinking about dyslexia. Chapter 15 then addresses persons with intellectual disabilities, with a special focus on Down syndrome, through a discussion by Khoo Jit Kuan, an experienced paediatric occupational therapist. This is followed by Chapter 16, a collaborative endeavour by therapist Teo Yafen and psychologist Jesselyn Ng, which considers the inclusion of persons with development disabilities by discussing autism. Lastly, given its increasing prevalence in Singapore, Chapter 17 takes a brief look at how to include persons with dementia. We are delighted that Drs Kenny Tan and Lester Leong, the CEO and COO of St Luke's ElderCare respectively, have penned this chapter.

In the final section of the volume, entitled "Reflections from Disability Ministries", the discussions of the preceding chapters are given flesh through personal reflections by disability ministry leaders in Singapore. In Chapter 18, ministry leader Sarah Yong traces the development of the Special Needs Support Group of a venerable Anglican church, St. John's-St. Margaret's Church. Dr Dominique Phang (a parent of a son with special needs) and Pastor Nathanael Goh then provide a matching account of the development of the Ohana ministry at Sengkang Methodist Church in Chapter 19.

Thereafter, in Chapter 20, Sarah and Grace Phua, two daughters of deaf parents, discuss the rich experiences of a Deaf congregation called Deaf Faith Fellowship (part of an independent Pentecostal church). This is then followed by an inspiring analysis of an Anglican church plant focusing on persons with autism called Chapel of Christ our Hope by Reverend David Teo and Dr Leong Keng Hong. The

volume then concludes with a brief conclusion from the editor, as well as an appendix with a checklist that allows one to evaluate one's own church's inclusivity.

A brief note on language: In Singapore, the general norm is to adopt people-first language (e.g. "people with disabilities" rather than "disabled person"), and impairment is usually referred to as either "disability" or "special needs". However, to reflect the diversity of different communities in the disability sector and the Church in Singapore, the authors have been given free rein to choose nomenclature that reflects their own communities and thoughts. Hence, readers will encounter terms such as "deaf", "autistic person", "differently abled", "the blind", etc. My hope is that this will help readers develop a greater appreciation for disability diversity in Singapore as well as a more fine-tuned sensitivity to how language can help or hinder inclusion in churches.

As the psalmist declares in Psalm 19:14—"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer." Indeed, may the chapters of this book, written by the "enabling hearts" of fellow brothers and sisters with/without disabilities, be an act of pleasing worship to our God—He who welcomes all sinners to come before Him to repent before the cross and to drink richly of the waters of life. And it is my prayer that, as our readers read this book and live out whatever wisdom they find in its pages, they will come to a deeper appreciation of the words of another psalmist: "Behold, how good and sweet it is when God's people dwell in unity!"<sup>7</sup> (Psalm 133:1)



# LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

## (Alphabetical, by surname)



**CHIA Yong Yong**, BBM, PBM, was President of SPD (2008–2020), an organisation that supports people with disabilities in Singapore. Her contributions to the social service sector span nearly three decades. She was conferred the Public Service Star in 2018, the Public Service Medal in 2013, the President’s Social Service Award in 2011, and Social Service Fellowship in 2020. She sits on the board of SG Enable, and was a member of the Committee for the Future Economy, Committee on the 3rd Enabling Masterplan, the Compulsory Education Advisory Panel, and the Tote Board Charity (Social Service) Sub-Committee. A practising lawyer, Ms Chia has served two terms as Nominated Member of Parliament from 2014–2018.

**Nathanael GOH** is husband to Charmaine, and father to Jonathan and Joelle. He is a pastor with the Chinese Annual Conference of the Methodist Church in Singapore. He has been appointed to Sengkang Methodist Church since 2018. Nathanael is currently completing his PhD in Christian Ethics with Durham University. His interests are in Christian ethics, politics, and Biblical interpretation.

**Norman KEE Kiak Nam** is a lecturer in the Psychology and Child & Human Development Academic Group at the National Institute of Education, Singapore. He has Board Certification in Special Education (NASET, AASEP) and is also a Board-Certified Advocate in Special Education (NASET, AASEP). He has been elected into Omega Gamma Chi, a national honour society of special education teachers and is also an affiliate member of the Chartered College of Teaching (FCollT). He is a father of three adult sons with autism, all of whom are working.

**KHOO Jit Kuan** is a paediatric occupational therapist who has worked in early intervention centres, special education schools, and at therapy clinics. He has also led and supported church-based programmes for people with disabilities. Jit Kuan is married to Min, and they have a daughter, Hui En. They worship together at New Creation Church.

**Eliza LEONG** is a registered psychologist who works with children with disabilities. She graduated from Queensland University of Technology with a Master in Educational and Developmental Psychology. Eliza strongly believes in a family-centred, evidence-based approach to guide her work. She often works collaboratively with important stakeholders in a child's life (such as parents, teachers, therapists, and other professionals) to support the child's needs. Eliza firmly believes that every individual is uniquely made and, with support, has the ability to achieve the best of their potential. Eliza is married to Glenn, an Anglican minister who is currently serving at St James' Church, and they have two children, Rylee and Alyssa.

**LEONG Keng Hong** is Senior Consultant Rheumatologist at Gleneagles Medical Centre and an Adjunct Associate Professor and Associate Dean at Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine at the National University of Singapore. He is the founder of the Osteoporosis Society (Singapore) (OSS) and also served as Chairman of the Chapter of Rheumatologists in the Academy of Medicine, Singapore. He worships at Chapel of Christ our Hope where he serves as a Lay Reader.

**Lester LEONG** is the Chief Operating Officer and Clinical Director of St Luke's ElderCare. He graduated with a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery and a Master of Medicine (Family Medicine) from the National University of Singapore (NUS), as well as a Bachelor of Laws and Commerce from the University of Western Australia. He holds teaching appointments at both the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, NUS, and the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, Nanyang Technological University, and is a Fellow of the College of Family Physicians, Singapore. He is actively involved in his church as a deacon and cell group leader. He and his lovely wife have three wonderful children.

**LEOW Wen Pin** serves as Director, Centre for Disability Ministry in Asia, and Lecturer in Biblical and Interdisciplinary Studies at the Biblical Graduate School of Theology; he also leads the Koinonia Inclusion Network. His research interests include disability theology and ministry, and he has published several research and popular works in these areas. He is an associate editor of the journal *Mental Health, Religion, and Culture*. Wen Pin has more than a decade of experience in the social sector, and currently helps to govern a school for children with moderate to severe disabilities. He is married to Xinyi, a clinician scientist, and they have three children, Matthew, Nathaniel, and Sophie. They worship at Singapore Life Church (Presbyterian), where Wen Pin serves on the English service pastoral team.

**Benita LIM** is currently a PhD student in Theology and Culture at Fuller Theological Seminary (Los Angeles), and is also pastoring and serving the choir in a multigenerational Indonesian-Chinese church. She is passionate about reaching South-east Asian cultures with the Good News through engaging liturgical practices and understandings of the divine. She served as a pastor in a Mandarin-speaking church after graduating from Singapore Bible College with a Master of Divinity (Biblical Studies). Benita was born and raised in Singapore and in Glory Presbyterian Church, where she served with the worship team and youth ministry in the English service for more than 10 years.

**Sherena LOH** is a co-founder and director of the Muscular Dystrophy Association (Singapore) and is an ardent champion for the physically disabled. She was once told that she would not live beyond 25 years due to muscular dystrophy. However, her determination proved more tenacious than her muscles and, hitherto, she is still playing an active role in community work. Sherena holds a Bachelor of Social Science (Counselling and Community Work) from the Edith Cowan University, Australia, and a Diploma of Family Life Education. She is also a certified Grief Recovery Specialist, and the author of *Shaped for a Purpose*. She serves on the Advisory Council of the Koinonia Inclusion Network.

**LOW Jarn May** is a finance professional. Pre-lingually deafened at the age of three after a fever, her parents decided to learn sign language in order to teach and communicate with her. This gift of language from her parents out of their love for her has led her to strongly advocate for the use of sign language with deaf children born to hearing parents. Jarn May also supports the research of Singapore Sign Language and has taught a tertiary-level Singapore Sign Language programme at the Nanyang Technological University. She is married to Francis Tang. They have been blessed with two lovely daughters, Juliet and Emily. Jarn May's family and parents-in-law are members of Bartley Christian Church.

**Jesselyn NG** is a psychologist with ten years of experience in the disability sector. She has an honours degree in Psychology from the National University of Singapore. Outside of her work, she serves as Vice President of Koinonia Inclusion Network (KIN). She also supports the special needs ministry in her home church, Church of Our Saviour. Having worked with children, adults, and families with disabilities in the span of her career, she is convicted of the need for a more integrated church, where there is neither "abled" nor "disabled", for we are all one in Christ Jesus.

**Dominique PHANG** is a mother of two boys with autism, a practicing family physician by profession, and serves as the chairperson of Ohana Ministry in Sengkang Methodist Church. Together with her husband, Keith, she is active in advocacy and fundraising efforts in the autism sector through their family movement "Daniel & Ethan Run for Autism". They believe that God has called their family to raise disability awareness both in and outside the church, and to share their story and the hope they have in Jesus Christ.

**Sarah PHUA & Grace PHUA** are hearing daughters of Reverend Barnabas and Angela Phua. Reverend Barnabas is an ordained pastor of Deaf Faith Fellowship (of World Revival Prayer Fellowship, WRPF), the first fully deaf congregation in Singapore. Sarah is currently studying at the Biblical Graduate School of Theology and is a part-

time pastoral staff at WRPF, where she worships with her husband, Barnabas Ramesh. She is also the co-founder of Genesis Consulting and Solutions, a professional accounting & consulting firm which seeks to embody and redeem Christian values in the workplace. Grace is the author of *Mommy, Can You Hear Me* (a children's book on living with deaf parents), and is the founder of O'live & Write, a copywriting and design agency that provides creative content solutions for businesses on tight budgets. They also have two brothers, Samuel and Sean.

**Brenda TAN** has a Master of Arts in English Studies and is the writer of *Come into My World: 31 Stories of Autism in Singapore* ([www.come-into-my-world.com](http://www.come-into-my-world.com)). This book, now in its fifth print, has been widely used to enable caregivers and the general public to understand autism better. Brenda also conceptualised the One Child One Skill project in which students from tertiary institutions visit homes to teach children with autism over an eight-week period. In 2018, Brenda published another book, *My Way: 31 Stories of Independent Autism*, which features adults with autism, working or married, from 15 different countries. Apart from autism awareness, Brenda worked as an adjunct lecturer teaching English in tertiary institutions such as Nanyang Technological University and Singapore Institute of Technology. Brenda has two children: 13-year-old Ethel and 16-year-old Calder who has autism.

**Eunice TAN Meng Yin** is Senior Lecturer and Head of the Special Education programme at the Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS). She received her PhD in Autism from Nanyang Technological University. Prior to joining SUSS, she taught in both the mainstream and special education sectors, was a principal of a special school, and also worked in the social service sector, focusing on adults with special needs. She is a member of the school management committee of AWWA School, which caters to children with moderate to high support needs.

**Kenny TAN, JP**, is the Chief Executive Officer of St Luke's ElderCare. He is also a joint Associate Professor with the Health & Social Sciences



Cluster at the Singapore Institute of Technology. He graduated with a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery from the National University of Singapore and holds Master degrees in Education (Monash), Business Administration (Hull) and Counselling (Monash). He is currently pursuing a Doctorate in Transformational Leadership from Bakke Graduate University, US. He also serves as the Chairman of Eagles Mediation and Counselling Centre as well as the Biblical Graduate School of Theology. He is actively involved in Zion Gospel Mission as a member of his church council and board. He spends his free time reflecting on life and published his first poetry anthology, *Sunday's Coming*, in 2020. His poetic musings can be found at [www.thewomb2tomb.wordpress.com](http://www.thewomb2tomb.wordpress.com).

**David TEO** is the Chaplain of St Andrew's Autism Centre. Together with his team, they provide pastoral care to a multi-disciplinary team of staff, parents, and volunteers. He is also the Pastor of Chapel of Christ our Hope where persons with autism and those without can co-exist and grow together in the life of a Church. This means providing a community of support for families of all abilities, nurturing those with autism, and worshipping together at service.

**TEO Yafen's** chance encounter with a young girl with disabilities in a Northern Thai village 17 years ago cemented her lifelong goal of serving and advocating for people with disabilities. Since then, Yafen has taken on various roles as a volunteer, a special education relief teacher, a training officer at a day activity centre, and as a speech therapist in different countries. Her work has been predominantly with adults with developmental disabilities. She has been serving with Jesus Club since 2013 and currently attends Bethesda Church Bukit Arang.

**Timothy TEOH** holds a Master of Science in Evidence-based Social Intervention and Policy Evaluation from the University of Oxford and a Bachelor of Social Science (Honours) in Social Work from the National University of Singapore. He is a Registered Social Worker and currently works in a Family Service Centre. He is the Honorary Treasurer of the Koinonia Inclusion Network.

**WANG Li-Sa** is an educator with more than 25 years of experience working with and among deaf people. Prior to joining the education sector, she was Singapore's first professional sign language interpreter. She also developed and taught the only tertiary-level programme on Deaf Culture and Sign Language in Singapore, and co-teaches an in-service teacher training module at the National Institute of Education on teaching students with motor and sensory difficulties. Li-Sa is married to Lim Kee Min and they have a daughter, Lauren Victoria, and son, Darien Nathaniel. The family worships at St James' Church. Li-Sa continues to interpret weekly for the deaf community at Bartley Christian Church.

**WONG Meng Ee** is Associate Professor at the Psychology and Child & Human Development Academic Group at the National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University. He researches and teaches on special and inclusive education, assistive technology, disability studies, and teacher education across diploma and postgraduate courses. He currently serves with a number of non-profit and charity organisations, including SG Enable and iC2PrepHouse.

**Ronald J.J. WONG** is a servant of King Jesus. He is a practising lawyer and Director at Covenant Chambers LLC, and serves as National Coordinator of Micah Singapore; on the board of Operation Mobilisation Mercy Teams International; as caretaker of Christian arts and culture community TheGroup.sg; as a deacon in charge of Young Adults ministry and on the preaching team in his church Yio Chu Kang Chapel; on the board of social service agency, Bless Community Services; and on the Advisory Council of the Koinonia Inclusion Network. He is the author of *The Justice Demand: Social Justice and The Singapore Church*, and a co-editor of *Good News for Bruised Reeds, Vol. 1: Walking with Same-Sex Attracted Friends*, and *Vol. 2: Mental Health and the Gospel Community*. He is married to his wife Ethel, and they have a son, Josiah.

**Jacqueline WOO** has recently written a book, a 31-day devotional—*Let Us Consider*—based on her daily experiences of disability, with Dr

Tan Lai Yong, who is best known for spending 14 years in Yunnan, China, serving the poor and disabled as a medical missionary. She read History at the National University of Singapore while living on campus at the College of Alice and Peter Tan, and graduated with a BA (Hons) in 2017. She is currently working in corporate communications.

**Sarah YONG** is a member of St. John's-St. Margaret's Church, and has been a part of the church's Special Needs Support Group (SNSG) since its inception. A speech language therapist and assistive technology specialist by training, she initially joined the group because she was convicted that she should use her skills and not "hide a light under a bushel". Eleven years on, she realises that persons with special needs, their caregivers, the volunteers, and SNSG members have been her therapists and teachers. She is grateful to be included in this wonderful community.

