



# The Essence of Things

*For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Romans 14:17*

We are running our first baptism Service for the year this weekend. Congratulations to those who followed the Lord in baptism and welcome to the church family. Under present circumstances, we could not practise immersion but we do have permission for the pouring of water instead. Pouring of water, along with sprinkling are accepted modes of baptism which have deep historical roots in the life of the church. It is not difficult to imagine why there was a range of practices given the weather, health-hygiene issues and simply the non-

availability of pools or streams in some areas. Health issues have of course influenced the way we do baptism this weekend.

What is important is that it is done in the name of Christ (see Acts 19:3-5) and in the context of a local church community (see Acts 9:10-19). The essence or meaning of baptism needs to be captured and this matters most. We are all creatures of habit and often we are more attached to the forms than the essence of Christian practices.

Forms will always change faster than essence. If we learn to hold on



to the latter rather than the former, we will often cope better with the changes. I was asked recently to share honestly how I feel about being posted to the parish which is less than 10% of the current one I am in. I reminded this person that I have pastored smaller parishes before, the smallest being Jurong Christian Centre in the early 90's. The key with adjustment is about focusing on the essence of ministry. These are essentially the same wherever a clergy finds himself in. People are pastored "one person at a time." And whether you are preaching to five hundred or fifty, a sermon is still a sermon. It requires the same effort in prayerful and careful preparation.

Undoubtedly, we are living in a season of radical changes. We are still unsure what shape the ministry of the church will take post-Covid19. Some of our regular Service times will change along with the length of some Services. Will we be able to serve Communion the same away? Drinking from the cup was almost negated by SARS. Will Covid19 sound the death knell for the intinction method?

Whether it is immersion, pouring or sprinkling and whether it is drinking, intinction or self-administering, forms will continue to evolve or change.

So, let's learn to focus on the essence of our faith and practices.

DIOCESAN DAY OF PRAYER & FAST

# The Lord Is With Us

JOSHUA 1:9

DATE  
31.10.2020

TIME  
10:30 - 12:00

MEETING ID  
929 4288 1751

PASSCODE  
018122

URL  
[TINYURL.COM/DDPFE2020](https://tinyurl.com/DDPFE2020)