

The Fine

Multi Media Ministry

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BOYS' BRIGADE



Enrolment Service 2016



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Boys' Brigade

Enrolment Service on

17 Apr 2016



HOM'S Reflections

A new Christian mentioned to Joo See that she did not like to attend AGM because she does not like to witness brothers and sisters quarrelling in public.

Apparently what some consider as sharing of differing opinions, others view as quarrelling between brothers and sisters in Christ. We must understand that even blood siblings do quarrel because we are all wired differently and have different views of things. For that matter, even twins do disagree. It would be sad if our disagreements divert public attention from the love of Jesus to his factious children

However we should not let our differing opinions cause a division in the body of Christ. I am painfully aware that a number of brothers and sisters cannot get along with each other but I do hope that they can learn to agree to disagree because until the perfect comes, there will always be a difference in opinions. As the tagline of the new Captain America movie states: "UNITED WE STAND, DIVIDED WE FALL", I hope there will be open sharing of views with tolerance this AGM.



We are in the process of building a church hub where Christians of different denominations are coming together to forge a partnership that the world may see we are one in Christ. Yet we are currently in a situation where 2 churches are sharing the same premises but not really able to mingle with each other. Is it like North and South Korea (at present) or East and West Germany (in the past) – one people, yet divided? Until the walls are torn down, there could be critical conflicts affecting relationships.

Taking some ideas from “When Christians Disagree” from CMF.org.uk, Christian unity is “unity in the truth”. Some Christians emphasize unity to the extent that they are willing to sacrifice the truth to gain it. The result is syncretism, where unbiblical beliefs are accepted and ungodly behavior is tolerated. Other Christians emphasize the truth to the extent that they are willing to sacrifice unity to preserve it. The result is schism, where people retreat to their own isolated ghettos of like-minded believers. The church that Jesus prayed for is one that is committed to both truth and unity but characterized by diversity. We are not expected to be identical like a product out of a production line but rather diverse like parts of a body so that our various strengths when combined will make up a strong body.

Even as AGM comes along and there may be a din of battle but when all the dust has settled, may we come together again as one family for a FUN day at the East Coast Park for the coming event on 2nd May. May we resolve to be one united family in Christ and be one united church hub for the glory of God.

Recently there was a call for prayer to uphold some fund raising initiatives by Bishop Kee. Well we have 1 million reasons to thank God as Bishop received a \$1 million love gift for the rebuilding project. Do continue to pray for God’s providence for the rebuilding project, that He will open Heaven’s doors and pour forth the funds we need.

The church leadership has plans to form a new ministry to bring JCC into the digital age of social media. I am all for it but I am wary of social media as news reports reveal how a simple mistake can be multiplied a thousand fold when tweeted. The net is filled with dangers for all, especially the young people 14 to 17 years old. We will have to tread carefully where we are going.

Daniel 12:3-7 *Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever. But you, Daniel, roll up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. **Many will go here and there to increase knowledge.*** Was Daniel referring to the Internet?

Martin Cheah

Dialect Ministry 8th Anniversary Celebration and Rev. Samuel Sia's Sermon Message



The Dialect Service 8th Anniversary celebration was held on Sunday, 3rd April 2016. While it was belated by one month (in April instead of March) due to a heavy schedule of church events in the Easter season, the celebration provided sweet reminiscence of fruitful co-labouring in the field of harvest for the Ministry Team members, especially those who have been together in support

of one another since the beginning.

With a sudden heavy downpour in the afternoon, there was initial concern about a possible negative impact on the attendance. However, the concern was thankfully misplaced as empty seats were quickly taken up by the time the service commenced at 3.30 p.m. The great turnout of dialect worshippers (filling up the whole hall) in celebration and praise was very heartening to God's humble servants.

Our guest speaker, Rev. Samuel Sia, delivered the message for the occasion. It was an inspiring message to all, and everyone seated listened with attentiveness until the end.

The rain stopped just minutes before refreshment time. Buffet was served and the fellowship opportunity was great for everyone to mingle, chat with one another and forge their camaraderie as brothers and sisters in the Lord. From the attendance, we can tell that the growth of the Dialect Fellowship is going strong and the love for one another that is seen and cultivated will stimulate further increase in our sheep.



Each participant in the Anniversary Celebration service was also given a goodie bag, including a commemorative souvenir of a specially-designed cup with matching spoon to take home. The cup bears the encouraging message from John 7:37, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink."

The Sermon

In his sermon, Rev. Samuel Sia pointed out Jer. 32:36-41, reminding us that it was both a prophecy about the coming of Jesus giving us the new covenant and a caution to us not to leave the Lord, our Messiah.

“God wants us to be His people as He wants to be our Lord,” the speaker said. “Yet, straight after Easter, something happened. Some, or most, of the disciples left Jesus to go back to their old life of catching fish and not heeding the commandment of Christ.”

John 20:31 tells us that many signs that the Lord performed in the presence of His disciples were recorded in the

Gospel for the reason “that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”



With the above as the backdrop, the speaker continued his sermon based on John 21, about Jesus appearing to His disciples by the Sea of Tiberius.

On this day the 3rd of April that we celebrated the 8th Anniversary of the Dialect Service, it was the Sunday after Easter. Some churches call it Low Sunday. Why? Because, in contrast with the highs of Easter, the moods of many Christians die down. Can we see something similar in the behaviour of the disciples of Jesus in John 21?

- After the highs of Easter, the disciples went away from the Lord. When Simon Peter said, “I am going fishing,” he was so disappointed that the Rabbi he followed was crucified and died. Although he witnessed the empty tomb, that did not really change his life. Where to go? What to do? The very first human reaction was to go back to his profession as a fisherman. That was the very first wrong step, leading to other disciples following, “We are going with you too.”
- The other disciples did not stop Simon Peter. None of them told him, “NO, Peter, remember what the Lord told us. Now you are our big brother, you should lead us, press on.” Regrettably, none of them said that. Instead, they said, “We go with you.” AND THAT NIGHT, THEY CAUGHT NOTHING.

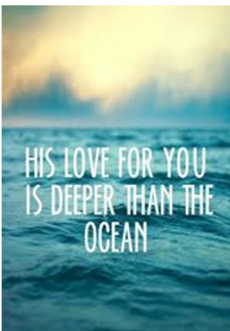
By the above, Rev. Samuel Sia further exhorted:

“Therefore, I would like to urge leaders of the church to understand – It’s easy to say “I quit”, but bear in mind there might be some who are weaker than you and they would take the opportunity to say “I go with you.” Before we say “We quit” or “We are so discouraged,” we ought to think what would be the effect.

“Once you have left the Lord, the result is obvious. The disciples were professional fishermen who would know where and when they could haul in a good catch. That night, their experience and professional knowledge counted for nothing. THEY CAUGHT NOTHING. I would like to urge brothers and sisters never to depend on your own ability but on the Lord. You may say that with your experience, knowledge and training, nothing will go wrong because you are so sure that you have been doing your stuff for so many years. Yes, you may ... but you can’t be fully self-assured when you have left the Lord.”

The message delivered in Hokkien also reminded Christians not to be neglectful that after Easter, our Lord is still with them:

“That night when Jesus appeared to the disciples and asked them whether they had caught anything, I believe that there was a body language reminding them that just over there, a short distance away and not too long ago He had fed 5000. Despite the eye contact, the disciples were slow to realise that it was Jesus speaking. It was serious. They thought He was already crucified, dead ... The resurrection experience did not hit them hard enough for them to appreciate that the Lord was still with them. This could be very real in your life; you are experiencing a disaster, a serious illness ... everything broken into pieces and you do not know that this Jesus you have trusted for so many years is still your Lord who is near you – in fact, with you to help you and pour out His love unto you. Yet, at any particular moment, you fail to realise His presence.”



“WE ARE DEEPLY LOVED BY THE LORD” was a theme Rev. Samuel Sia brought out in his preaching from John 21.

Our Lord appeared to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberius (a.k.a. Sea of Galilee) out of His own love initiative

despite the fact that they had already cast His presence away from their consciousness. They forsook Jesus (forgetting His commandment) but He did not forsake them.

Has our delight of Easter died down quickly and then we are back to our daily life forgetting that Christ is still in our midst? Just like the disciples of Jesus going back to their old life catching fish and overlooking His command, are we equally guilty?

Rightly, Rev. Samuel Sia urged:

- Praise God for what He has done for us. Praise God that He is our Lord and praise Him that we are deeply loved by the Lord. The Lord came and stood on the shore. He came wanting to find back the disciples. He took the initiative not because we first loved Him but, the other way round, because He first loved us. He asked, “Children, do you have any fish?” That is a reminder that if we have followed Him, we would not have to worry whether we have food, or what is next.
- The Lord directed His disciples to cast the net on the right side. What is the difference between the right and left of the boat other than the fact that they are a few feet apart while underneath is the same sea? There is a spiritual truth here about whether in life we are casting our net on the side that is right or wrong. In your life, are you casting your net on the right side, or do you keep casting the net in the world on what is not of the Lord? Could you be casting the net to fulfil your ambitions and wanting to be outstanding above others? To some extent it is good to have ambition and desire to excel, but overdoing the effort by being only yourself without loving the Lord with all your heart, without loving your neighbour as yourself, is missing the Lord’s commandment and casting the net on the wrong side.
- All of us are blessed because we have the Lord who will restore our soul and lead us along the path of righteousness. (Ps. 23:3) The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. I am not lacking anything; what are you lacking of? You do not lack the leading or directing of our Lord.

Jesus came into your life and today He is telling you to cast your net on the right side. Listen to Him and take His instruction. When His disciples followed Jesus' instruction, they had a full harvest of 153 fish, well beyond their imagination. Despite the record-breaking haul of fish, the net was not torn. They took the fish to shore and saw a fire in place with fish and bread already prepared for them. The Lord invited them, "Come, have breakfast."

- They might be thinking, "Why should I labour for the whole night on my own when actually I could just depend on what the Lord would prepare for me every day?" Do you enjoy what the Lord has prepared for you every morning; or every morning to you is just a rush to work to do what you are supposed to do and you forget that the Lord has invited you to feast on His Word, the most important breakfast He has prepared for you to enjoy? Every morning, take the Lord's instructions seriously.
- After they finished eating, Jesus asked Simon Peter, "Do you love me more than these?" To this and two further questions on whether he loved Jesus, Simon Peter answered "Yes". Simon Peter of course had to answer "Yes", but the 3 answers seemed to be reluctantly given. Nevertheless, Jesus responded to the 3 answers with these commands – (1) Feed my lambs, (2) Take care of my sheep, (3) Feed my sheep.

The Lord wanted His disciples to be fishers of men. If He were to ask us the same question 3 times as He asked Simon Peter, would we answer as Simon Peter did 3 times? If our answer is "Yes" each time, what do we mean by it? According to Rev. Samuel Sia, our answers must correspond with our convictions in the following 3 areas that would form the 3 pillars of the church:

- No. 1 – Evangelism. If we stop bringing people in, there will be no tomorrow; the church will go downhill.
- No. 2 – Need to feed the people.
- No. 3 – Conduct teaching faithfully. If not, many Christians will not know the Word of God.

Easter may be over, but Jesus is with us. Post-Easter is not time for us to go low in spirit but to retain the highs of the Easter hope through our ongoing service to our Lord.

Conclusion

It was a pleasant time to witness the huge attendance at the celebration of the Dialect Service's 8th Anniversary, with no empty seats.

All these years, do we have food? Certainly, the answer is "Yes". God has been our constant provider. Surely His goodness and love will follow the Dialect Ministry Team and all His worshippers all the days of our faithful service. We do not neglect His presence with us after Easter. As good fishers of men, we follow the Lord's instruction to cast our net on the right side (not the wrong side).



Thanks be to God for all blessings!

John Lee



Christ in the vessel

Songs of praise filled the air as the post-Chinese New Year fellowship started in the late afternoon at Mong and Danny's place on 27 February 2016. It was clear skies and the atmosphere was bustling with excitement on the food prepared as members of the Abundance group spent time together to pray, eat and get to know each other better.

Christ in the Vessel

The fellowship started with Ethel leading a familiar song sung in Children's class. It was a reminder to us that Christ is in the Vessel in the storm and we can smile because He is with us all the time.

With Christ in the vessel
We can smile at the storm
Smile at the storm x2

With Christ in the vessel
We can smile at the storm
As we go sailing home

Sailing, sailing home
Sailing, sailing home



Will You Forgive?

Roy reminded us in his sharing of devotion that we need to learn how to forgive. Forgiveness starts with us and in Christ Jesus we need to learn forgiveness even though it is not an easy thing to do.

“For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.” (Mathew 6:14:15)

As we moved around the living room and shook each other's hand to ask for forgiveness, Roy shared that as a cell group, we never know when we have offended and hurt the people around us. We should not take it for granted that others will be as understanding all the time even when we serve God. We must always ask for guidance and wisdom in all that we do for Him in His glory.

Will you forgive or are you willing to forgive? Christ did as He died for us. He died for our sins. What do we have to deserve this? I reflected on why is it so difficult at times to forgive. Is it our pride or our intellect that has gotten in the way? ...

Smile as We Go Sailing Home



Do you recognise them? These are the “macho” guys posing for the camera.

And these are the ladies in action where sharing and food kept us together.



As the fellowship sailed into the night with laughter and food, candid shots were taken and discussion of plans for the next fellowship filled the conversations.

On behalf of the Abundance Cell Group, I am giving thanks for the opportunity to



share their love and heart for God. Until then, our next fellow-ship awaits us.

With Christ in the vessel, we can smile at the storm as we go sailing home.

Joyce Tan

14 So he went and got them and brought them to his mother, and she prepared some tasty food, just the way his father liked it. **15** Then Rebekah took the best clothes of Esau her older son, which she had in the house, and put them on her younger son Jacob.

Was Rebekah efficient?

She definitely solved the problem - in her own ways. I do not think she expected her meddling to come at such a high price. All Rebekah did was to show motherly concern for Jacob, seeing a good reason to urge him into action despite the fact that God said that the older will serve the younger. When she saw her husband preparing to bless Esau, she grew anxious. She had to do something. By her meddling, she alienated her sons. She had to send Jacob away to preserve his life.

Of course, we cannot point fingers at others and claim that we have no responsibilities towards the decisions we made. There are days when I too, like Jacob, allow the advices or decisions of others to dictate my actions which result in undesirable consequences. Instead of letting God rule, we allow others to lead us because we value their opinions more than God's. Other times, it's the fear and anxiety over our circumstances that cause us to act prematurely.

If we search through the entire bible, we would not be able to find any verses encouraging us to trust in our own ways so that His will can be done. *"But...but...waiting is hard!"* I agree but that does not mean we should interfere. Sometimes it may help if we take a deep breath, slow down, take a step back, meditate and pray. Turn our eyes onto His attributes, promises and faithfulness.

I pray that the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13) Even without all the pieces in our lives in place, we can still enter a rest that is far richer and sweeter than the kind that arises from the arrangement of circumstances by our own devices.



Alicia

Divorce

I like to read what Joyce writes, but what she wrote in The Vine (January issue) on the title “*It is not easy to be a Christian!*” was sad reading. She mentioned that two of her close friends’ marriages ended in divorce last year.



Whenever we read about divorces in the news, we may have some detachment of feelings because divorces have now become “so ordinary” that our hearts are numbed to it. In this age, some people treat marriages like commodities that can be procured and then disposed of when they are past useful date.

Nevertheless, many loving couples who tie their knots with realistic expectations are also not immune to life’s unexpected harshness when stresses overwhelm, wrong choices are made, tensions escalate and hearts grow cold.

When divorce becomes an unwanted reality, those around the couple (close friends and caring relatives) often feel helpless to offer any solution to rescue the relationship or ameliorate the distress. While one may commiserate with the person one is close to, who is driven down the path of divorce, the bystander can never fully grasp the complex crisis of emotions in the broken-hearted pair. I can understand this sense of helplessness because I also ever encountered a situation to offer some words of advice to a set of friends on divorce. Here is a paraphrase of a part of the conversation that took place some years ago:

Me: “Do think carefully both of you about your decision. It may solve one problem but create unknown problems years down the road, especially, with both of you inextricably joined as parents of the children. You may decide to divorce each other, but you can never divorce yourselves from your flesh and blood. The choice of divorce must be the last resort if there is really no other way (even if imperfect) of getting around the cracks in the current relationship with a high degree of forbearance.”

One response: “I also understand. But this is like Hobson’s choice. Either we still live under one roof, [he/she] leads [his/her] life and I lead mine and ignore [his/her] profligate ways and give [him/her] all the space and freedom or liberate myself from [him/her] ... Either way is not win-win. My heart grieves also but my self-respect is being trampled underfoot... Sigh!”

with a simple angle of view...
 No longer taboo,
 but divorce still
 damages children
 Suffering goes on into adulthood and even old age

How would you feel as a bystander? When the unwanted happening is afar, some people may be carefree to gossip opinions about who is right and who is wrong and start casting stones; but when the matter comes close for you to become concerned, even as a friend offering advice, you know how difficult it

is to weigh two sides of a story and to bring two hands to clap for a better resolution of the marital woes instead of a divorce that risks greater and persistent heartaches over ancillary issues. Unless your heart is made of stone, you can't help feeling a tenderness. If not for the couple who should know better as responsible adults, it is for the innocents caught in the storm.



Marital infidelity is committed by both men and women.

It is very basic in the psyche of women that none would want to share her husband with another woman.

It is very basic in the psyche of women that none would want to share her husband with another woman. ("Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned!") Isn't it odd that when a woman would not want to share her husband with others, it is also someone of the female human species who has no qualms to desire for someone else's husband? (This kind of female seems to suggest that "it is not right for me to share my husband with other women, but it is quite fine for me to share the husband of another woman.")

In the same vein, none of the male human species would like to be seen wearing a green hat (i.e., being cheated by one's wife); yet it is also someone of the male human species who thinks that it is alright for him to make another of the same species as him wear a green hat. What has become of this motto: "Do not to others what you do not want others to do to you"?

Can one really be so blinded in their conscience because of "love"? Or is it because these marriage-spoilers are irrational adventure-freaks who dare themselves to go the way where trouble is mostly a certainty and clear-headed souls fear to tread?



Life's pressures are also common causes of divorce. If readers who read the above can feel the intensity of the distress that a failed marriage brings not only to the

protagonists but also to people who love them, then it is apposite for already-married couples and intending-to-get-married couples to note that the time when they are still hunky dory with each other is the best time for them to do their utmost to strengthen their relationship and work out positive ideas they can use in the event that unforeseen issues (job insecurity, financial stresses, opinion clashes over the upbringing of children, behavioural conflicts, etc.) arise. Some couples may consider it inappropriate to conjure negative thoughts about plausible adversity when their minds are occupied with the “happily ever after” vision of their love story. However, candidly discussing in advance issues germane to married life together is the wisest way to strengthen the relationship and make it truly “happily ever after” with both husband and wife well-prepared for mutual support and resilience that enhances bonding through sunshine or rain. It is usually more difficult to think of positive ideas at the time issues are brewing with life’s commonplace stresses taking their toil and emotions running wild.



A wedding is always a joyous occasion. As the groom and bride in their resplendent suit and gown declare their love for one another “until death do us part”

in front of witnesses, the beaming smiles and pride in their countenances make them so much the envy of many watching and congratulating them with best wishes for their conjugal bliss (永结同心,白头偕老,早生贵子) as they partake of the exuberant celebration after the customary ceremony.

The authentic marriage vow does not contain the word that is shown crossed out on the right:

Christian Marriage Vow

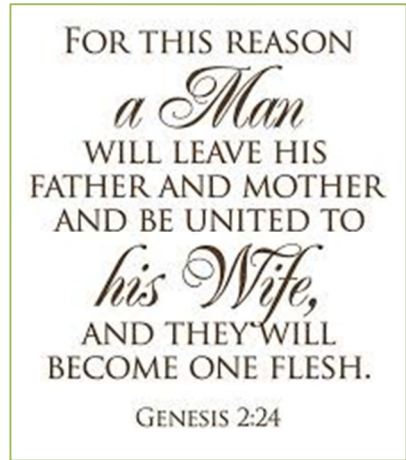
I.....take you.....
**to be my wife (or husband).
to have and to hold
from this day forward
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish,
till death do us part, ~~unless~~ ...
according to God’s holy law;
and this is my solemn vow.**

It was right at the time of Creation (Gen. 2:24) that God set the rule of marriage that when a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, they become one flesh. Becoming one flesh gives an idea of the kind of pain that would assail when the flesh is torn apart. Therefore, the Word of God also carries this advice: “What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.” (Mt 19:6)

It is human wretchedness that paves the road to the destruction of the purity and lasting nature of marriage as intended by God. Jesus made it very clear that divorce was permitted by Moses as a concession because of the hardness of man's heart, but it was not part of God's plan in the beginning. (Mt 19:8)

Apart from human hardheartedness, human weakness of endurance is also a major cause of a breakdown of relationship. This weakness of endurance is made more pronounced because of unrealistic expectations whereby what one's spouse is genuinely unable to satisfy

the other becomes the cause of high grievance. It sounds far-fetched, but Claire's story is real and you can read it on the Internet:¹



"It was all so stupid really — a heated row over whose turn it was to empty the dishwasher one cold night in November 1992. But for me, it almost led to divorce." – Claire's admission, about marital woes arising out of everyday stresses."

Thankfully, by now, Claire and her husband have stayed in their marriage for more than 37 years.

Do we envy couples who have kept their love for each other for many decades and whose marital relationships never seem to wear out, despite not being without skirmishes at times? We have many such couples in JCC. They know how to enjoy good times together and staying united with resilience through tough weather. Truly, "for better or worse, in sickness and in health ..."

Some may think that this is the "old generation thing" that is passé for the modern generation. I may have to agree if I look at the statistics of a much higher divorce rate among younger couples today compared to the older generations who strongly view divorce as taboo. We can perhaps pick out a

¹ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2324071/The-secret-staying-married-35-years-Never-wanting-divorce-time-One-couple-s-honest-confession-.html>

very cogent reason for this “old generation thing” from the following dialogue between Jack (a successful divorce lawyer facing divorce himself) and Max, an older friend in a 1982 television show, “Divorce Wars: A Love Story”:

Jack: “Max, how did you stay married for 35 years?”

Max: “I guess in our generation we didn’t expect as much from each other—and we ended up getting more.”

Other than the reason contributing to a long marriage, as stated by Max, I am pondering whether the younger person (being a divorce lawyer) knowing too much about the option and procedures of divorce to deal with marital woes had made him less inclined or less patient to seek out alternative “unfamiliar” solutions.



While one does not go about encouraging divorce as a panacea for marital conflicts, couples caught in distressful circumstances that lead them to think about divorce need understanding and solace from people close to them, whose hearts of flesh and blood can vicariously feel the struggle and pain. It is not for outsiders to pass judgment on who is more right or more wrong. A relevant advice to the heartbroken is to seriously explore possible alternatives (with professional counselling, if necessary). We may pray for the best for them even if as a last resort they still decide to go separate ways because they find their anguish becoming intolerable without any reasonable prospect of amelioration.

May all matrimonial unions be blessed with longevity!

John Lee



SNIPPETS

Monthly Bite-size News



3rd April

– The Baptism of the son of Nicholas Christian, the nephew of Pastor Michael Christian. Incidentally, Pastor Michael came all the way from Nias to witness this event.



17th April

– BB Enrolment Service. Yew Neng mentioned that some of the BB boys had served from their youths until now when they have become fathers. Thank God for their dedication to the Boys' Brigade and also for understanding wives.



25th March

– Good Friday worship service. Members went up to nail the cross, symbolizing our sins have been nailed on the cross and we are free through the blood of Jesus Christ.



Freddie in the Sheng Mun River (Shatin)

17th April – Congratulations to Freddie Low on winning the Master F category (>60 years) Single Scull 1000 meters event at the 1st Hong Kong International Master Regatta in 4 minutes 57.5 seconds. At 65, Freddie is the oldest competitor. Praise God.

JCC Family Day

2011



2012



2013



2014



2015



2016

**SIGN UP
NOW**

CLOSING DATE
24 APRIL 2016

JCC Presents

FAMILY

MON 2 May 2016 **FUN DAY**

East Coast Park

The poster features a central graphic of colorful stick figures holding hands, with stars above them. The background is a light green field of tall grass. The text is arranged in a clear, bold, sans-serif font.