



Church of St John the Baptist



CHURCH OF SOUTH INDIA - DIOCESE OF MEDAK

Peace  
&  
Good Will

THE PARISH MESSENGER  
CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR EDITION 2022



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## Editorial Note



"Come Thanks Giving, Come Christmas" goes the adage.

It is a universal phenomenon that sets in the Christmas Spirit around the world, that people scramble to shopping mallstoacquire the product they desire most, at throwaway prices. Or, they travel to their homeland on long vacation to celebrate Christmas Eve with their family. Airports and Railway Stations are overflowing with thousands of vacationers and there is a sense of excitement allover the place.

At our home, it's been a practice to play Jim Reeves Christmas songs from the dawn of December. We play the full series and get immersed in the season of Christmas, the season of joy. We also hear the trumpet being played in onecorner of our home, with traditional hymns that are played in churches. There is a complete sense of happiness that engulfs our churches, our homes and neighbourhoods and, most appropriately, our hearts. The anticipation only peaks, leading to a whole series of activities pertaining to this great event of Christ's birth.

Already, with Advent the stage has been set for the beginning of all ecumenical activities by various wings of our church and by the pastors of all churches inthe twin cities. Sermons are delivered about two prominent events, Christ's Birth and the second coming of Christ. Rightfully, our Pastor Rev James Cecil Victor elaborately dwelt on the subject of the long-awaited second coming of Christ. He exhorted all of usto examine ourselves, to see whether we are prepared to receive Him on the lines of the "Parable of 10 Virgins" (Mathew 25).

I couldn'thelp introspecting as to how privileged we are to attend church and listen to God's word unlike the past year! How merciful, gracious and generous our sovereign Lord has been to us, throughout this year by meeting all our needs on a 24x7 basis.



Satri Chandrika Samuel

Without any hesitation, I assert that that our Lord has a purpose for all of us and it is only rightful on our part to seek and learn what it is and to fulfil thesame (John 10: 28-30).

Let us all uphold in our prayers in our Church and neighbourhood, those who have lost their dear ones and will not be in our midst of us during this season "Blessed are those that moan, for they shall be comforted" (Matthew5:4). May our dear Lord fill them with eternal hope of re-uniting with their loved ones in His kingdom.

A few special features of this edition are the Christmas Tree Lighting, Awards, News and events accomplished by our church members, including our Sunday school children; reports from the sectional secretaries and the Festival of 9 lessons.

I would like to acknowledge the editorial team for their indefatigable efforts in bringing out this magnificent Parish Messenger, in spite of their hectic schedules, the Pastorate

Committee members for their constant support, all the church members and authors for their timely articles every time the Parish Messenger is released and last but not the

least, the plethora of art work, poems, puzzles and the like by our Sunday school children.

**May the spirit of Christmas bring you hope, love and happiness and may each of you shine with the light of Christ this season.**



## Editorial Team



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# Pastor's Message

## CHRISTMAS: Peace and Goodwill



Rev K James Cecil Victor

Dear Members,

The most awaited time of the year is here, assuring us of untold joy and peace. The birth of Christ is the reason for the season. It is the time to celebrate love, joy, peace and justice of God revealed through Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The incarnation of Jesus Christ is the greatest miracle on one hand, as well as a sacrifice on the other. God becoming human and dwelling among us is a miracle par excellence, for the transcendent became tangible. God sending His only begotten Son is a priceless sacrifice, for it involved self-giving and self-sending by God.

Jesus' birth was a new dawn, a turning point in human history. Jesus emptied himself and took human form to redeem us from every kind of bondage. Pope Francis said, "God never gives someone a gift they are not capable of receiving. If He gives us the gift of Christmas, it is because we have the ability to understand and receive it". Let us understand the new promise, the new paradigm and new possibilities with the arrival of the 'Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Eternal Father and the Prince of Peace'.

The promise was of a child, and not a warrior. While the whole nation awaited for the coming of the Messiah, a political leader who would liberate Israel from the Roman imperialism and consequent

pathos, a child was born as prophesied in Isaiah 9: 1-7. However, 'as weak as a baby!' is a common expression that cannot not be applied to the baby Jesus in the manger. 'The government will be upon his shoulders' indicate that the reign of God vested with peace, justice and righteousness shall be established by Him; and the salvation of human race rests upon Him.

The promise of a child was certainly a paradigm shift in the salvation history of humankind. People expected the Messiah to be a personality from the palace in Jerusalem. Jesus's birth was significant, but contrary to the expectations of the people. It was evident that God can use the ordinary to do the extraordinary; the obscure to become significant.

The fact that the shepherds and the Magi were led to worship the child, born in a manger in Bethlehem, is a pointer to the nature of God. One was lowbrow and the other erudite, yet God chose to reveal the good news of the birth of the Saviour to these two extreme groups by opening their spiritual eyes to see the promised Messiah. Christmas, in fact, opens our hearts to worship Christ the Saviour and opens our eyes to recognise the intrinsic worth of every child in our midst and affirm his or her dignity.

First, the shepherds received the good news of Saviour's birth. After finding the baby, as it was informed to them by the angel, they reported the good news to others, "glorifying and praising God". By doing this, they took the place of the angels! (Luke 2:13-14). For some reason, shepherds were

not permitted to testify in court, but God used these humble shepherds to be the first witnesses. They were liberated through the creative power of God to move forward in the midst of fear and uncertainty to enrich the 'centre'. Even the first witness to the risen Lord was a deliberate choice by God. It was a woman, whose witness had no validity in those days. This preferential option taken by God towards the neglected and ostracised, reflects His mind and inspires us to remember the excluded. The Magi's episode reminds us that one's wisdom can be folly, if not directed to the truth and God.

In a world ridden with violence, hate culture and discrimination based on caste, class, gender and sexuality, the birth of Jesus Christ heralded the beginning of shalom- peace and well-being for all. As prophesied by the prophet Isaiah, 'the cities created with contempt will be made glorious and people who walk in darkness will see a great light. God shall break the yoke of their burden, staff on their shoulders and the rod of their oppressor' (Isaiah 9: 2-4). And, as the angels proclaimed: Christmas is all about peace and goodwill!

The famous "Pax Romana" (Roman Peace) had been in effect since 27 BC, but as people were made to believe, absence of war did not guarantee the presence of peace. The stoic philosopher Epictetus said, "While the emperor may give peace from war on land and sea, he is unable to give peace from passion, grief, and envy. He cannot give peace of heart, for which man yearns more than even for outward peace". God alone can offer inner peace and well-being. Since neither law nor religion could offer these which humans sought for, 'God sent His Son when the fullness of time had come'.

As we celebrate Christmas, let us internalise the significance of Jesus's birth, commit ourselves to be the peacemakers in this hurting, self-centered world and strive for the well-being of all. May the people who walk in darkness see the Light through us and experience the fullness of life which Christ offers to all those who believe in Him.

Wishing you all a blessed Christmas and Christ-centred New Year!

May God bless you and your families.



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*The Rev K James Cecil Victor is Presbyter-in-Charge at Church of St John the Baptist, Secunderabad. He is also the Vice-President of All India Sunday School Association (AISSA).*

# The Experience of Christmas in our Lives



Dr M Udaia Kumar

"Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place." Luke 2:15

The familiar story of the shepherds at the birth of Jesus, may lead us to take it for granted, to overlook just how amazing this event really was. Yet, it's not just a story of God's love for a few shepherds, but it is a story about God's love and hope for each of us.

There was only one announcement of Christ's birth recorded in the Scriptures, only one invitation to anyone to visit the infant Jesus and this invitation went to uneducated, outcasts-shepherds, who under normal circumstances would not expect to be the first and only direct recipients of the good news. Firstly, they were considered religious outcasts, for according to Jewish religious law, they were unclean. Their work prevented them from participating in the feasts and holy days, which were part of the Jewish religious calendar. Secondly, they were not in contact with others, for they "lived out in the fields"(Luke 2:8). Theirs was not a 40-hour a week job, but a 24×7 work week. During the day, they led the sheep to grass and water and watched them grazing, while keeping an eye out for predators. At night, they slept with the sheep, guarding against theft and animal attack. The shepherds' job was therefore, lonely, tedious, and often extremely dangerous. Paradoxically, while they had a lot of contact with sheep, they

had very little exposure to people, so it seems pointless, that they were chosen to know and spread the news of Jesus' birth.

We would expect an event like the birth of Christ to be announced to the most important people in the nation: political leaders - kings, governors, magistrates, even Caesar; religious leaders- priests, rabbis, synagogue officials, the head of the Jewish ruling council; wealthy merchants- men and women of distinction. Strangely, none of these were invited! A few foreign kings did figure out this important event by following the star of Bethlehem, but they did not get an angelic messenger, or angel choir, or an invitation. Only these poor shepherds were the privileged invitees.

This unusual choice shows us that God's love is available to all on the same basis - faith. In fact, the Scriptures indicate that God loves to lift up the lowly, and bring down the proud and self-satisfied. "You save the humble, but your eyes are on the haughty to bring them low" (2 Samuel 22:28). Paul makes the same point: "Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things and the things that are not-to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him" (1 Corinthians 1:26-30).

God invites each of us, too, to emulate the

example of the shepherds, to simply obey in faith and follow Christ.

Just as those shepherds were so special to Him that He gave them the incredible privilege of being the first to hear of Christ's birth, the first outsiders to lay eyes on the Son of God and the first to tell others about Christ. Not in spite of who they were, but because of who they were-humble, ordinary people who simply accepted what the angels told them, without seeking religious professionals for a second opinion. Importantly, in their excitement to see the new-born Messiah, they did not worry about who was going to watch their sheep. They simply obeyed and went ahead.

This Christmas season, is especially significant, as we experience life with a new perspective, after an eighteen month long wait. Therefore, with renewed strength, let us fill our lives with the love and peace of Jesus. For Jesus said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (John 14:1).

The decision of the shepherds to obey the announcement should be our choice too, when we simply accept Jesus in our lives. This Christmas could be the beginning of a new life, where we transform ourselves to live a Christ-centred life.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



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*Dr M Udaia Kumar, is the Honorary Secretary at Church of St John the Baptist, Secunderabad.*





## Did you know?



Mrs Dr Jessie Mrudulanjali

I was in the kitchen when the song "Mary did you know?" by Pentatonix started playing somewhere. I like the lyrics. Mary did know a little about the child she was going to have, as foretold by the angels and the Scriptures, whereas we don't know what our children are going to be. However, God knows our future as He has planned each second of our lives. Our duty is to lead our children in the right direction and then leave them in our Lord's hands.

When I was a child, my mother told me a story 'The Damaged Plank', which left such a great impact, that I often share it with not only kids, but also youth and adults

The story goes like this...

There was a mischievous boy, whom his parents, teachers and elders tried unsuccessfully to correct, but every day he would create some new problem. Once, the boy cheerfully said that he had broken their neighbour's window. His mother felt upset, but the boy was uncaring. Then, his mother took a nail and drove it into their wooden door. The boy didn't pay attention. Subsequently, his parents would drive nails into the door, whenever he was naughty and soon the plank was half filled.

The boy observed this and one day asked his parents what they were doing. They told him that each nail represented one bad behaviour. This made the boy realise his mistakes and a change began gradually. He

not only stopped being naughty, but once actually helped his neighbour in some chores. On hearing this, his mother pulled out a nail from the door, saying that henceforth, whenever he did a good deed, a nail would be pulled out. The boy felt inspired and decided to work towards removing all the nails from the door. Within a few days, all the nails were removed. Now there no nails, though the holes still showed. The boy asked his parents to remove the holes but sadly, these could not be removed. The mother explained, that the naughty things he did also left such deep marks that they would always remain.

We have all heard stories, which we could use to mould our own kids. This is our duty as parents.

Children are God's gifts. We don't know His plans for them, but as caretakers we are responsible to Him. However, in present day society, do parents pay attention to their kids? What are they doing? Who are their friends? What books are they reading? Which sites are they watching on the internet?

### Listen

Do spend time with your kids and listen to them. If we don't listen to them, they won't want to listen to us. Cultivate the habit of listening, from very tender age. Research shows, good listeners become successful people. Jesus said, "He who has ears, let him give ear" (Mathew 11:15). Do listen to your children. Interact with them about their ideas, plans and respect their views. This will help them to build self-confidence and give them success in their chosen field.

## Talk

Talk, read, and sing even when they are babies in your womb. They hear you. "And when the voice of Mary came to the ears of Elizabeth, the baby made a sudden move inside her; then Elizabeth was full of the Holy Spirit"(Luke 1:41) .

Listening, talking and interacting are soft skills that everyone needs for life. Let us cultivate and improve these skills and guide our families as well as our society.

For the song and lyrics....

<https://multimedia-english.com/videos/music/mary-did-you-know-pentatonix-6103>



*Dr Jessie Mrudulanjali is a practicing Advocate in High courts of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. And a former Bench member, district consumer's forum, Hyderabad.*

**Mary Did You Know?**  
(solo cello)

Melody by Buddy Greene  
Lyrics by Mark Lowry

*♩ = 95*

VERSE 1

Ma ry did you

2 know that your ba by boy would someday walk on wa ter Ma ry did you know that your ba

CHORUS 1

7 by boy would save our sons and daugh ters did you know that your ba by boy has

12 come to make you new this

14 child that you de li vered will soon de li ver you Ma ry did you

VERSE 2

18 know that your ba by boy will give sight to a blind man Ma ry did you

22 know that your ba by boy will calm the storm with his hand did you know

CHORUS 2

26 that your ba by boy has walked where an gels trod when you

30 kiss your li ttle ba by you've kissed the face of God the

# Thanksgiving: Responding to God's Goodness and Grace



Ms Mabel Genevieve

Thanksgiving is celebrated once a year across the globe. But we Christians need to learn to be thankful every day.

Why should we be thankful?

- ♦ It is written in the Bible. 1 Chronicle 16:34
- ♦ God has blessed us.
- ♦ It honors God.

You cannot instantly become thankful. You only become thankful, when you habitually practice gratitude in your life.

Did you know being ungrateful is a sin? We can find several instances in the Bible which emphasise the significance of gratefulness:

- ♦ A 1-day trip from Egypt to the Promised Land, resulted in the Israelites wandering in the wilderness for 40 years. Why? I choose to pick just one of the many reasons - they were unthankful to God.
- ♦ The Lord says when you enter the Promised Land and you have eaten to your fullest don't forget to bless the Lord. (Deuteronomy 8:10).
- ♦ King David wanted to build the temple for God, but he was not allowed to do so, because he had blood on his hands. He was disappointed and he started thanking the Lord (1 Chronicles 28:3).

♦ During the Babylonian captivity, the temple was destroyed. After 70 years, the Israelites returned and they started rebuilding the temple. When the foundations were laid, they praised and thanked the Lord (Ezra 3:11).

♦ Nehemiah rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem and when he had dedicated the wall, they thanked the Lord and he set up a thanksgiving choir (Nehemiah 12:38).

♦ Solomon was one of the wisest and richest man in the Bible. He had everything under the sun, yet he was unhappy (Ecclesiastes 1:2). He goes on to say in Proverbs 15:15 "all the days of the oppressed are wretched, but the cheerful heart has a continual feast". " For the hope of the unthankful shall melt away, as the winter's hoar frost, and shall run away as unprofitable water."

♦ Daniel and his friends were living in hostile conditions under King Nebuchadnezzar. The king had a mysterious dream that none could explain, but Daniel was able to interpret the dream with God's help and he thanked the Lord (Daniel 2:23).

♦ Jonah was running away from God. When he got caught in the fish's belly, he submitted himself to the Lord and gave thanks (Jonah 2:9).

♦ Ten lepers came to Jesus asking him to heal them. All were healed, but only one returned to give thanks to Jesus (Luke 10:15-18).

♦ Apostle Paul learnt the true meaning of thanksgiving in the midst of great adversity. He always made it a point to thank the Lord (Ephesians 5:19-20).

So, take some time out of your busy schedule and list down all the things you need to be thankful for. You will be amazed, as the list just goes on.

What do we need - a 40 years detour or blessings after 11 days?

If it wasn't for the birth and death of Jesus Christ what would our lives be? We wouldn't know what salvation, grace or mercy are.

Do we thank God enough? Try this antidote: THANK YOU JESUS. Let's add this in our To-do list too.



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*Ms Mabel Genevieve is part of the Talent Management team working towards creating and sustaining high performance workforce.*



# Learning from Christmas



Dr Karunakara Rao

Every year we celebrate Christmas on 25<sup>th</sup> December to rejoice in the birth of Christ with our families and friends- with prayer, festivity and fun. When we think of the happenings of this great event, we can learn many things from Christmas regarding God's promises and its fulfillment.

I would like to present here a few relevant points to get an understanding of God's ways of doing things.

## 1. Promise of God:

Our God is almighty and promise-keeping and fulfills our needs at any cost. He promised the birth of Christ from Genesis 3:28 onwards, until the book of Malachi, although it took roughly 400 years (as per Wiki) to fulfill this promise. What we need to understand here is, God will follow His calendar and may not proceed according to our timings, expectations and anxieties

## 2. Fulfillment of Promise:

Let us understand God's great plan and how He fulfills His promises perfectly.

- ♦ God visited Zechariah and Elizabeth, and gave them a son to prepare the way for Christ, as per the Scripture (Luke 1:11).
- ♦ The angel visited Mary to proclaim the good news and prepare her to take on a difficult responsibility (Luke 1: 26-31).
- ♦ The angel appeared to Joseph to clear his doubts and to give him the green signal to proceed with his marriage to Mary (Matthew 1:19-20).



- ♦ God inspired Caesar Augustus to announce a census in their native village. This made a way for Joseph and Mary to reach Bethlehem to give birth to Jesus as per the Scriptures (Luke 2:1-4).
- ♦ The angel appeared to the shepherds to confirm the good news about the Saviour born to them (Luke 2:8 - 12)
- ♦ God guided the wise men from the East to visit the child born to Mary and Joseph. This was a confirmation that a Saviour had been born to them (Matthew 2:1-11).
- ♦ God spoke through Simeon, a priest and Anna a prophetess, who saw God's salvation through this child (Luke 2:25-38). It is said that Mary kept these words in her heart.
- ♦ All these events happened normally, without any pre-intimation and announcement, they comforted and confirmed to Mary and Joseph, about the special child, born to them.
- ♦ Often, we are not sure of the miracles by God, but are able to sense through His comfort and can always approach God with confidence based on our trust.

## Conclusion

1. Once God promises, He will definitely fulfill it with a wonderful plan. We need to believe and thank Him.
2. God has His own time and follows His own calendar, and is not influenced by our circumstances and anxiety.
3. He will arrange the things in order, which may not be as per our plan and imagination.
4. Though we cannot understand it, God chooses His own way to fulfill His plans.



(Joseph and Mary) did not realise that, they were celebrating the first Christmas since the circumstances were not conducive.

5. We may understand God's amazing acts much later, just as people understood the significance of Jesus' birth and began celebrating the day, only around 300 years later.

Continuous relationship with God, through prayer, reading the scriptures and fellowship with God's people will help us to understand His influence in our lives.

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*Dr Karunakara Rao works as National Manager for Health Education Department in Sevabharat, Hyderabad. Previously he was Professor in Ayurveda Medical College, Bidar, Karnataka.*



# The Birth of Jesus Christ



Ms Simadan Daniel

Long ago, in a place called Nazareth, lived a woman named Mary. Gabriel, the angel told her that she would give birth to a son, and she was to name him Jesus. Mary was worried about how this was possible since she wasn't married, but the angel assured her that it would be a miracle from God. The angel also told her that her cousin, Elizabeth, who had no children, would give birth to a baby who would be called John, who would prepare the way for Jesus' birth.

Mary consented to God's will. This worried Joseph, who wondered if he should call off the wedding. However, while he was asleep, an angel visited him and told him about God's will. And, told him, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. "Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord. The saviour of the world" (Luke 2:10 - 11).

The birth of Jesus was signified by a bright star in the sky. Three Wise men from different parts of the world understood the significance of this star and followed it to reach Bethlehem. They brought along gifts for the baby and his parents.

Since then, this day has been celebrated as Christmas. People go to church at midnight or based on the church services to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.

## Preparations for Christmas

Preparations for Christmas start early from the first week of December itself as

preparations involve shopping, decorating the house, preparing savouries and gifts for the children in the family and for friends.

Churches are well decorated and lit at least one week in advance, special prayers and Christmas songs are played during this time along with reciting the stories of the birth of Jesus Christ, as told in the Bible. Children wait for their gifts generally placed under the Christmas tree.

## Celebrations

Activities on the Christmas Day are usually very few because everything would have been prepared in advance as families wait for the Christmas Eve, which begins at 11:59 pm on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Christmas carols are played on radios and television to mark the birth of Christ. After the church service, many families join their extended families to greet and exchange gifts.

Santa Claus or Father Christmas is a figure originating from the Western Christian culture, which is believed to bring gifts to disciplined children during Christmas. Santa gives gifts to the children on Christmas Eve, which is on the 24<sup>th</sup> December night for those children sleep early on this day hoping to get a gift from Santa Claus.

They also keep cookies and milk near their bed for the Santa Clause and the carrot for the reindeer of Santa Claus on which he rides as a part of this tradition. The famous poem and song "Jingle Bells" celebrates the coming of Santa to give away the gifts.

Sadly, in present times, the festival of Christmas has surpassed all religious boundaries and has become the symbol of a holistic culture with the winter in December enhancing the festive feeling.

### Conclusion

Christmas is a festival which is celebrated by people of all faith.

Worldwide, despite this being a Christian festival, the essence is uniting people far and near. We should learn the importance of such unity from this festival, and despite our religious differences, Christmas is a medium that has the power to keep people united for the betterment of humanity in the future.

Rejoice and be glad for unto us is born a saviour, Jesus Christ the Lord.



*Ms Simadan Daniel is studying in 11<sup>th</sup> grade in St Mark's Junior College.*





# Always Thank God for What he has done for us



Mr Amos

We all know about this imaginary story: The Three Departments in Heaven

A man went to heaven. As he was being ushered by a caring angel to his mansion, he noticed that heaven has three (3) major departments.

Two of the departments were extremely busy with numerous angels working in them, while the third department was very free with just an angel as staff.

Curious to know why these two departments were extremely busy, the man asked the angel, to clarify. The angel explained that the first department was responsible for receipt of prayer requests from people and the second department was responsible for answering these requests and sending replies to the people, as quickly as possible.

'But why is the third department so free', the man asked, then the angel replied, 'It's only a few that acknowledge what the Lord has done for them.' So, the third department was for acknowledgement of answered prayers.

The following are examples from the Scriptures of God being thanked after a prayer was fulfilled or granted:



*Amos is studying in 9<sup>th</sup> standard and at Sunday School he is in Intermediate class.*

Moses and Miriam's Song thanked God after they crossed the Red Sea (Exodus 15:1-21). Hannah thanked God for granting her petition for a son (1 Samuel 2:1-10).

David's Song thanked God, when the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul (2 Samuel 22:1-51).

Solomon thanked and praised God in his prayer of dedication for the temple (1 Kings Chapter 8 -14<sup>th</sup> verse onwards)

Elizabeth thanked God for taking away her disgrace among the people of Israel. Elizabeth was barren and beyond child-bearing age and yet conceived (Luke 1:24-25).

Mary's Song gave thanks to the Lord for being chosen to bear the Son of God (Luke 1:46-55).

The Leper whom Jesus healed - Ten lepers came to Jesus and asked Him to heal them. Only one of the ten healed people returned to thank Jesus (Luke 17:11-19). Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?"

Let us always remember to thank God for what He has done for us.

# The Good Samaritan (Compassion - is Love in action)



Mr Deron Shaphan Peter's

In response to a lawyer, asking, what must I do to get eternal life; Jesus gives the parable of the Good Samaritan, found in Luke 10: 25-37.

A man going from Jerusalem to Jericho was ambushed by bandits, who left him half dead. A priest came that way, saw him and avoided him. A Levite came that way, saw him and passed by without helping him. However, a Samaritan came by, had compassion on him, bandaged his wounds with oil and wine, brought him to an inn and took care of him. In the morning he departed, giving the innkeeper 2 coins, promising to come back in the future.

This parable can serve as a template to show the Gospel message. The traveller, (you and I) leaves Jerusalem (Garden of Eden) to go to Jericho (where man falls into sin). The Priest and the Levite (represented the animal sacrifices and the Law) which could not save us from sin. But Jesus, the Good Samaritan saves us and takes us to a safe place to heal. The Inn can be seen as the image of the church. The Oil and the Wine, with which his wounds were healed, can be seen as Baptism and the Last Supper. The Good Samaritan promises to return (Second Coming) and he leaves the Innkeeper 2 coins (Old and New Testament) His Word, till He returns.

LESSONS -- what must I do to inherit eternal life?

Inheritance is a gift. Not received by keeping a set of rules. It is our relationship with JESUS. Which is available to all

How do we view people?

- a) Do we view people with compassion?
- b) The **Bandits** looked at the man as an object to be exploited. Do we look at people with the view of what we can get from them?
- c) The **Priest** looked at the wounded man, as a problem to be avoided and not get involved. Do we view people as a burden and turn away when people are in difficulties? Jesus said, "Love your neighbour as yourself."
- d) **Levite** - He looked at the man and passed on to the other side. Do we observe people, but fail to connect with them?

Like the priest and the Levite, we do not want our normal busy schedule to be interrupted and look at people as a nuisance or a problem?

The Samaritan in the Jewish area, looked at the man as a person to be cared for and took a great risk, as he was between Jerusalem and Jericho. Are we willing to take a high risk and show compassion and mercy and help people?

Love is not a sentimental feeling.

Compassion is love in action and Jesus did that for all of us on the Cross.

He was born in a manger in Bethlehem. When he grew up, Jesus took the punishment of our disobedience, died and became alive again.

We are celebrating the First Coming of Jesus, at Christmas. Let us all be ready for the Second Coming, choosing to trust in what Jesus did for us at the Cross, confessing this with our mouth (Romans 10:9).

We are saved by the good work of Jesus, not by our good work.



*Mr Deron Shaphan Peter's, grandson of the Desappa's, is studying 11<sup>th</sup> standard in Don Bosco Chennai. He attends Sunday school and two Bible studies. Loves to play laser tag and football and dabbles in cooking.*

# Tributes

## Ordinary yet Extraordinary

*A tribute to my dear father*



Late Mr D J S Sekhar

'Naana' as I would fondly call him; the passing away of my father, Mr D J S Sekhar, has left a deep void in my life. He was painfully snatched away by a relapse of cancer.

A couple of years ago, my father was wheeled to a hospital for a CT scan. As we were waiting for his turn, he started blinking his eyes in an unusual manner. It caught my attention and on prodding, he quipped, "I am rehearsing for my final closure!" I quickly retorted, "Well, one needn't rehearse for one's death!" Peals of laughter followed ... banter was always our catchword!

On 18 April this year, my father's eyes indeed closed in death. Tears well up as I reflect on his life.

His most admirable quality was how he prioritised his prayer life. One of my earliest recollections was of him, reading the Bible, in the wee hours - a sight I never missed. He made family prayer a routine at home. On Sundays, he invariably rode the family of five to the church on his scooter, much to the amusement of onlookers!

Discipline was his trademark and he strictly adhered to the adage, "Spare the rod, spoil the child." Needless to say, each of us children got our due! He invested big-time in our academic lives. Growing up, we had a timetable to follow each day and Sundays

were punctuated with a quiz in English Grammar and speech-making.

My father was a gifted writer. He had a flair for English and won many accolades from 'Reader's Digest' and the like. Fittingly, he used his talent extensively in the service of the Church and the CSI mission college, where he served for three decades as a Lecturer in Political Science.

Of the many memories, one really got etched on my mind. I was just 17 years old and headed to take my board practical exam. Unfortunately, my father and I had misread the timetable and by the time we reached the college, the exam was over. Both of us stood speechless! I was sobbing as it meant losing a year of study. We rushed to the Principal's office in despair. As a last resort, he asked us to give it in writing, stating that I was sick and therefore missed the exam. My father quietly drafted a letter and categorically stated that we had misinterpreted the timetable. The Principal scoffed at us, but my father stood his ground, and his words still echo in my mind - "This is what has happened, and I cannot write anything other than this." I stood there as a mute witness to his honesty!

Like a duck drawn to water, every time I penned something, it was so natural for me to get the draft proofread by my father. Today, as I write this tribute, it feels surreal that he is not here to edit it. But I know for sure that I will meet him some day and earnestly hope that our cheerful repartee will continue!



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*Dr Grace Sundar daughter of Late D J. S. Sekhar, is an Assistant Professor at the English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad.*

# A Tribute to Late Col Sadanandam K



Late Col Sadanandam K

Col Sadanandam K was born on 15<sup>th</sup> May 1955, the youngest of six children and one of the twin boys, to Wing Commander (Dr) S M Krishnan and Jane. Joined the National Defence Academy to train and serve as an Officer in the Indian Army. Served in the First Third Gorkha Rifles and became fluent in Nepali. He was posted in mainly the North-East states of India such as Nagaland, Manipur, Sikkim, Meghalaya, and other states of Rajasthan, Jammu and Kashmir.

He married Elizabeth, who was the daughter of the Pastor of his church (Gwalior, MP). Their first posting was Nagaland. They have two children, Sabrina and Shane. As a father, he encouraged and challenged both the children in all academics, games and activities. He would lead family devotions daily.

Col Sadan enjoyed sports such as boxing, football, horse-riding, golf, skiing and paragliding. He was very artistic ---in sketching, oil-painting and sculpting.

He built a good rapport with the officers and soldiers. Whenever they would move to a new location, he was concerned first for the men, and Elizabeth similarly made sure the families were well looked after. Col Sadan had a great love for the people of the community. He got involved with the local church and Christian community. The family would go to church over long distances on a motorcycle/scooter, starting almost 2 hours in advance of the Sunday service, sometimes, to the only church in the area. They



*Ms Sabrina Money is the daughter of Late Col Sadanandam.*

were always part of choirs and carol rounds as they all enjoyed singing. After many years, when he returned to Nagaland on another assignment, there were many families and fellowships that welcomed him and remembered all the support and protection they had, through God's design, in the initial years of his service there.

Being the only Christian family in the Battalion, they would host the Christmas/Easter celebrations. However, he was firm about not participating in any Hindu /other religious rituals and lost out on getting due promotions. God was with the Sadanand family and blessed them through it all.

He excelled in Masters in Defence Studies and International Relations from Staff College, Wellington. He took over command of the same Gorkha Battalion during the UN Mission to Rwanda, in 1994. He received two Chief of Army Staff Commendation awards for 1979 (Counter Insurgency Operations), 1997 (UN Mission). He took over his second command of 29 Assam Rifles in Arunachal Pradesh (2001).

Through many dangerous and tough missions, he recognised the hand of God in keeping him safe and often shared his testimony. He retired from the Indian Army and the family came to stay in Hyderabad. He joined Justice Ventures International, Delhi, as the National Director (Administration). He worked for three years against Human-trafficking and helped rescue many bonded-labourers/slaves across North India.

He struggled with ILD (Interstitial Lung Disease) for last 2 years and went to be with Jesus on 12<sup>th</sup> November, 2021. He will be missed dearly by all family and friends.

# Tribute to Late Dr B E Vijayam - A Student's Perspective



Dr B E Vijayam

My association with Dr Vijayam's family dates back to the 1970s, whilst I was at Engineering College. This was through the student's movement called Evangelical Union, which I was part of Dr Vijayam's entire family was engaged with the Evangelical Union. Later, Dr Vijayam also confirmed that he was associated with Dr Enoch, founder of the Evangelical Union, when he was a student at the Andhra University. I am mentioning this because Dr Vijayam became a role model for me to emulate.

There are briefly three aspects I admire about Dr Vijayam. Firstly, his love for students. In this aspect, I recall King David's friendship with Jonathan. On Jonathan's passing away he said, "You adorn others with finest gold. Your love for me was greater than the love of women." Such indeed was the love Dr Vijayam had for his students.

The second point is about being among his

people. Dr Vijayam's last days were in the company of his loved ones. My son, Anmol and Jacinth's wedding gave him the opportunity to meet all his loved ones, children, grandchildren and even great grandchildren. This is a blessing awarded only to saints, and Dr Vijayam is surely to be counted among the saints.

The third point is about being excellent in all his endeavours. As a Greek philosopher says "we are what we repeatedly do, excellence then is not an exception but a habit". Dr Vijayam was an excellent academician, scientist and a highly acclaimed man of God.

I strongly believe, His love for others, his worthiness to be counted among the saints and his overall excellence are worth emulating.

In conclusion, I recall what John F Kennedy said about showing appreciation: "When we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words but emulate them."

Let us all therefore resolve to emulate the great virtues of Dr Vijayam garu



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*Captain IN AJ Manohar whilst in service was the President of the Ecumenical Choir at Visakhapatnam and also served as the President of the Evangelical Graduates fellowship and Haggai International, Visakhapatnam Chapter.*

# Magnificat

*(The Song of Mary, in Luke 1:44-55)*



Mr Joel Victor Annaladas

Christmas is the season of joy, hope, peace and celebration of Christ's arrival on earth over 2000 years ago. This joyous celebration began with the baby, John the Baptist, leaping in his Mother Elizabeth's womb hearing the Song of Mary, in Luke 1:44-55.

The Song of Mary, in Luke 1:44-55 called the "Magnificat", is named after the first word of its first line in Latin "Magnificat anima mea Dominum," or "My soul magnifies the Lord".

The Magnificat is the most ancient Christian hymn and perhaps one of the earliest recorded hymns. This is chronicled only by St Luke in his Gospel and is also called as Cantic of Mary, (**which is a song or a hymn taken from the Bible**). This canticle includes several Biblical passages, with some verses similar to verses in Song of Hannah, (1 Samuel 2:1-10).

The canticle of Mary is one of the four canticles mentioned below:

Mary's Magnificat: Luke 1:46-55

Zechariah's Benedictus: Luke 1:67-79

The Angels' Gloria in Excelsis Deo: Luke 2:13-14

Simeon's Nunc dimittis: Luke 2:28-32

These songs are an overflowing of joy, as God fulfilled His promise of sending a messiah to the world.

**The Mary's Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55)**

Christ's arrival and the reasons for eternal joy: The song is Mary's response to God's sovereign grace to choose her in His divine plan. She acknowledges God as her saviour. Her grateful heart overflows with thanksgiving. Mary's humility is very evident. "The Lord has regarded the low estate of His handmaiden." She is mindful of the privilege bestowed on her and acknowledges God's Mightiness and

Holiness. In verses 46-50, her heart is full of joy and praise, **because of Christ's arrival.**

She saw the divine plan of salvation for generations to come. This was not an instant arrival, it's God's plan for Mary and each one of us. It was prophesied hundreds of years ago. This was God's redemptive plan which gave us salvation and is the focal point to celebrate Christ's birth. The joy of salvation is the basic reality of Christian life.

Let's celebrate the birth of the saviour of the world and share His good news **with** everyone.

Mighty God- Yet Mindful of the Poor, the weak, the marginalised, the outcast:

From verse 51-55, the song becomes revolutionary. Mary sings about God's mightiness against the proud, the rulers, and the rich and, His compassion and love for the humble and hungry. A young Jewish lady delivers, revolutionary ideas- relevant even today.

Our God is a God of the poor, the weak, the hungry, the marginalised and the outcast. He has been on their side generation after generation. Kingdoms and governments come and go, and their priorities often change. However, in the Gospel, the poor, the weak, the marginalised, the outcast and the sinful have always had a special place. Remember, the first news of Christ's birth was proclaimed to poor shepherds in the fields-simple village boys. God did not choose the royal clan to know about His son's coming!

What a profound song, celebrating the arrival of Christ, even before the angels sang the Gloria!

**While celebrating Christmas** this year, let's have the poor, hungry, weak, marginalised and underprivileged in mind and share our joy with them.

What are we waiting for? Let's celebrate Jesus' birth with singing. Sing, when you are alone. Sing as a family. Sing in church. Sing as community- **about** the goodness of God **and** His salvation, **so that** the people around may know Him.

(This article is inspired by the Choir practice sessions)

*Mr Joel Victor Annaladas is a Human Resource professional and is a member of Church of St John the Baptist, Secunderabad.*

# Christmas Memories across the World



Mrs Nargis Abraham

December 25, Hyderabad. The day dawns crisp and clear. It's Christmas! The children wake before us and rush to the decorated tree branch to check if Santa has visited. Cousin's jump and laugh in excitement. My sister-in-law and family are visiting from Chennai. The house is filled with cheer.

"Let's go, children. We can't be late for church." New clothes are hastily donned, a quick breakfast gulped down. We pile into cars for the short ride to St. John's. We are twenty minutes early, but the sanctuary is filling fast. The main section is full, and we settle for the side seats. No matter. It's Christmas, everyone is cheerful and accommodating. I look around and wave at people I know. A friend takes the seat next to me and whispers, "Merry Christmas! Missed you at the Midnight Service." I mumble an excuse and remark, "It must have been packed. How nice that you came this morning also." I admire her for her dedication and am thankful that we have a Christmas morning service too.

The altar is ablaze with red and white flowers, poinsettias taking prime space. The choir seats are at capacity, ready to sing special songs. The service begins. Silk saris rustle and throats are cleared as everyone stands. The familiar liturgy takes on a special tone. Popular carols and Christmas hymns are sung lustily for the last time this season. The Halleluiah Chorus flows from

the organ. Christ is born!

The church yard is filled with greetings and animated chatter. Beyond the short wall, traffic moves, as it does 365 days of the year. Scooters glide in between honking cars and braking buses. The public goes about its daily tasks, unaware that it is Christmas. We are a tiny minority in the country. For most people, Christmas is just another community's festival, a commercial opportunity at best. However, in our hearts and homes, the Lord's birth reigns supreme. We celebrate with biryani and fruit cake, adhirasam and diamond cuts, prayers of thankfulness and rejoicing in the birth of our Lord, confident that we have our families and friends to celebrate with us.

December 25, Vancouver. Our first Christmas in Canada. A dust of snow covers the grass. The perfectly symmetrical artificial Christmas tree is decorated with newly-purchased ornaments. The girls are big now, but they still look forward to the few gifts wrapped for them. It is Christmas morning, but there is no church service to attend. The Christmas Eve candlelight service at 6.30 last evening is the highlight of our church's celebration for the season. We put on the celebration attire we know - our best saris - and the church elders remark on our "beautiful costumes". They wish us politely, then everyone goes their separate ways.

On Christmas morning, we are alone, in this country where the major religion is Christianity. Canadians are busy cooking turkey, just right for their extended

families. For our own extended family on the other side of the world, Christmas is almost over. We have called and wished them already on our return from the Christmas Eve service last evening. Now

there's nothing to do except cook some chicken curry and pulao rice. We smile weakly at each other and plan to invite new friends for next year's Christmas.

Merry Christmas everyone!



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*Mrs Nargis Abraham and her husband, Jaya attended St John's Secunderabad for nineteen years before they left for Canada. It was an integral part of their lives. They continue to be members of the church and attend when they are in Hyderabad. Nargis taught Journalism at Osmania University and Communication Skills at the British Columbia Institute of Technology. Nargis and Jaya live in Vancouver, Canada.*





# Joy is the New Attitude



Mrs Sarah John

It is said that, if you have happiness and a grateful heart serotonin is produced in the body. This key hormone stabilises your moods, feelings of well-being, and happiness. This hormone impacts your entire body and enables brain cells and other nervous system cells to communicate with each other. Serotonin also helps with sleeping, eating, and digestion. In these days of quick fixes for better health, better immunity, a perfect figure and improved life, we have the living word which guides us to an abundant life of satisfaction, enabling us to look at eternity with joy and thanksgiving.

Therefore, in everything, give thanks for this is the will of God. In thanksgiving, there is joy which is above happiness.

It is written, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you" (1 Peter 4:12). We, my friends, should not let circumstances and difficulties pull us down. Arise! Tap your feet and dance, if not literally, then in your imagination. Make it happen! In Exodus, Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took a timbrel in her hand and danced.

Recall what the lame man healed by Peter and James did? He walked, leapt and praised God.

Let's open our mouths with songs of gratefulness and thanksgiving. Happiness is momentary, but joy is forever.

Quit thinking of what may or might go wrong. Start humming that song of praise and gratitude in your soul. Give thanks with a grateful heart. For, the best part about thankfulness is that the more you choose it, the easier it gets.

Remember the Sunday school song "Count your blessings" and be grateful for what you have.

When you find that many people are worse off than you are, you'll learn to count your blessings and get that 'right attitude' factor in your life.

Let's recall 'the fruits of the Spirit' (Galatians 5:22-23). The second fruit of the Spirit is joy.

How amazing is this? Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say rejoice. The lack of gratefulness can truly be eradicated through the living word of God. So, let's use the most effective method, which is reading the word of God to pump up that serotonin. "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Joshua 1:8).

Simply, register JOY in your mind's database. Then, Ctrl+Alt+ Del, to control and delete negative thoughts. Think of a Biblical verse, which overrules those thoughts and circumstances and erase anything which pulls you down.

"... And do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength" (Nehemiah

8:10). Therefore, my brothers and sisters in Christ, do not allow Satan to steal your joy, because he doesn't deserve it. Let your joy be in the Lord, as you will receive strength to face and overcome all trials and obstacles.

He gives you unspeakable joy, that overflows, which keeps you going regardless of all hardships. His joy can neither be understood, nor can it be taken away from you.

When someone asks "Why you are smiling?" "Why are you happy?" "Why do you sing joyously?" you say, "I sing because I am happy, I sing because I am free, I sing because I have a new life in Jesus. I sing because I am saved, sanctified, and Holy Spirit-filled. With Jesus on my mind, I have new life!"



*Ms Sarah John started her professional career being a junior producer with Vishwa Vani. Then she trained to be an Autism Therapist with Action for Autism. After which she became a school teacher for many years through the length and breadth of India. At present she chooses to be a homemaker but has in the course of these years taken to freelancing with schools teaching singing and dramatics for annual days not to mention her writing scripts and hosting a program for children called ' Kushi ki Duniya' for CBN.*



# Sunflower/Sonflower



Mrs Yashodhra Desappa

The carol, "Hark the Herald" has a verse:

Hail the Sun of Righteousness

Light and life to all He brings

Risen with healing in His Wings....(Malachi 4:2)

Born to give us Second birth...

In a recently concluded Biblical Cookery challenge, a 15-year-old boy Peters, gave the title "Sonflower" to his dish and the verse quoted was from Malachi 4:2. He amplified it by saying: "Just as a Sunflower always turns towards the Sun, we as Christians, should always look towards the Son, Jesus and be a SONFLOWER. How true!

This is a Messianic prophesy around 450 BC by Malachi the prophet. Reverential fear is born of love and respect, as we obey and honour Him and receive His blessings. Jehovah Tsidkenu, He is our righteousness. He was born in this dark world to dispel the darkness of sin, so that we may walk in the light. 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things will be added unto you' (Matthew 6:33).

**Healing in His wings** is part of the Shalom package, for which Christ was born. Malachi uses the Hebrew word "kanaf" means wings or fringes of His garment, which is described in Numbers 15. The knots in the Tallit or Prayer Shawl represent the Word and as we touch the Word (John 1:1), Jesus, we are healed. The woman with an issue of blood was healed at once, as she touched the hem of His garment and Jesus tells her, 'Daughter be of

good comfort, your faith has made you whole' (Isaiah 40:31). They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint.

Jesus was wounded for our transgressions, was bruised for our iniquities and with His stripes we are healed. We are under the wings of His mercy and love as His blood, heals our hearts of the disease called sin, as **All have sinned**.

When we went hang gliding in Switzerland, in the air, the instructor would be so close to shield and protect us from danger. Imagine how our Lord Jesus came to earth, to protect us from the dangers of the evil one, when we accept Him as our Saviour, teaching us to fly high and flying with us.

The Sun has different effects on different things, depending on their nature. Butter melts but mud hardens like Pharaoh's heart. Just like a Sunflower faces the Sun, we too can be a **SONFLOWER**, always looking up to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. When we yield our hearts to Him.

Jesus was born as Saviour in the First Coming to grow up and die for us and when we believe in Him, we will have a Newer New Year. This New Year we can leave the shadows of yesterday, walk in the Light of TODAY in Hope of TOMORROW - Blooming for HIM and with HIM.

Jesus is waiting to gather us, as chickens, under His wings. In the Second Coming, Jesus will come as the Judge are we ready to heed the call to accept Him as Saviour and live forever with Him?

Then it will be Shana tovah meaning Happy New year.



Mrs Yashodhra Desappa is an Ambassador for Christ, Pastorate Committee member in Church of St John the Baptist, Secunderabad and a Business Woman.

# Report - Men's Fellowship (July - November 2021)



Mr P Francis Augustine

The Men's fellowship of our church continued to meet on every Tuesday for about 90 minutes from 7 PM onwards. The pandemic (Covid-19) was at its peak in June but gradually abated by October but is still prevalent and may take a long time to disappear particularly from the minds and hearts of all of us. The meetings were held in virtual mode and are being continued in the same way. In spite of occasional glitches in the zoom app and network problems to certain members at times the meetings were conducted well and all participants deemed it a blessing. The programme of our fellowship meeting is planned and circulated in advance. It includes two hymns, opening and intercessory prayers, scripture reading, a brief message, a Bible quiz for about 20 to 25 minutes followed by closing prayer and benediction. By God's grace, these programmes could be conducted smoothly and uninterruptedly from Easter onwards till now. All praise, honour and glory to our Triune God.

## Messages

Message was the most important item of our fellowship meetings. There was an ambience of fear and uncertainty all over because of the pandemic and the messages broadly addressed to the prevailing ethos and covered the following themes:

1. The battle is the Lord's - With Jehoshaphat, David and Jonathan as individual examples.

2. Rejoicing in difficult times - Through prayer and supplication; Ask, Seek and Knock; Do not worry.

3. Lamentation over the fall of Jerusalem to Babylonian Empire - Psalm 137, Habbakuk's narrations.

4. Be strong in faith, hope and endure hardship - Emulate a soldier, an athlete and a farmer.

5. Parable of the lost son - Reflections.

6. Kingdom of God - End Times - Workers in the vineyard.

7. The Early Church - Lessons from Annanias and Sapphira to the present church: Paul and Silas in prison.

The messages were mostly delivered by our dear pastor Rev K J Cecil Victor and other clergy (Rev M Prashant Babu & Rev Rajshekar) and by some senior members of our fellowship. After each message there was provision for discussion so that the members could freely interact with the speakers. I have no hesitation to state that all the members were greatly benefited and blessed by these messages. The interactive discussions were also lively.

## Quiz

The penultimate item in our programme is the bible quiz, in which nearly all the participants took part, divided into 3 or 4 groups of three each. About 15 to 18 questions are set from 4 to 5 serial chapters of a pre-informed book in the New Testament and each group answer their share of questions. Towards the end jumbled up letters of six words figuring in the prescribed bible portion are asked in the form of "rapidfire", thrown open to all the teams at a time with credits given to

the first team responding with the correct word. All the participants take the quiz seriously and make it quite interesting. Usually the winning group is the one which does well in the rapidfire. We have completed all the gospels so far and the book of Acts also will be finished in November.

### **Harvest Festival and Annual Thanksgiving Service**

The members of our fellowship took active part in the organization and conduct of the above service held in our church on 3-10-21. The fellowship raised an amount of Rs 20300/- (plus 1050 separately) by selling fruit juices, tea, assorted fruits, premium soaps, handkerchiefs, ball pens and liberal lump sum contribution from one of the members.

### **Miscellaneous Activities**

Digital apps (WhatsApp, Zoom) have helped one and all during Covid times and continue to do so. Many of our fellowship members post on meditations, daily devotions and scriptures, melodious Christian musicals, sermons, contemporary developments that are of interest to Christians and several others. Some members of our fellowship play active roles in the conduct of church services and also help the pastor in organizational matters of the church including its upkeep and maintenance.

### **Looking Ahead**

The church itself is a Fellowship of

believers and for this to be an effective and vibrant instrument for God's glory, all the organs particularly the Men's fellowship has to be strong and set an exemplary trend for others. The nucleus of the church is a family, headed by man who has the responsibility of leading, guiding, protecting and providing for his family (physically and spiritually) in the same way as God does for the Church, which is His body. Men therefore have a pre-eminent and crucial role to play in the activities of the church. We appeal to all the men in our church to realise and ponder over this and make it convenient to become members and strengthen the Fellowship by their active participation. This will be a great blessing to each individual and to their families and to the church at large. Let us not forget that God expects us to give not only our tithes but also our time and talents.

In closing, let me quote what Apostle Paul wrote to the Philippians "Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me - put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you" (Phil 4: 8-9) [NIV]. As we enter into yet another Christmas season, let us examine our hearts and minds about the place and space we have for Him in our lives and prepare for His Second coming!



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*Mr P F Augustine is a Geologist who worked in the Geological Survey of India, Government of India for 36 years and retired as Deputy Director General. He has been a member of Church of St John the Baptist, Secunderabad for more than 25 years and is the Men's Fellowship Secretary.*

# Christmas is Worship of Christ



Dr Samson Gandhi

Christmas may come and go but the worship of Christ remains. We must never stop worshipping Jesus.

In the passing scenes of life, we seem to shift our focus from one character to another; from one problem to another and from one challenge to another. We seem to appreciate our own efforts at survival in a harsh world. In this production of our life, Christ is relegated to the status of a supporting actor and you play the hero. Sometimes He is summoned only to make a special appearance in every crisis. At Christmas, Jesus takes the centre stage in most of our lives. Sometimes, in the form of Santa Claus, at other times as a Christmas tree and sometimes as the gifts under that tree. Let's remember that all this is not at all Christmas- the worship of Christ.

Jesus said, "If you love me, keep my commands" (John 14:15). This is meant for those who keep His commandments, especially the new one, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another"(John 13:34).

When was the last time you felt you loved a fellow believer? Was it when you forgave somebody? Was it when you gave your undivided attention to listen to a hurting soul and made their pain your prayer? Was it when you went out of your way to help someone overcome a personal challenge? A loving heart is able to readily worship Christ. This person will have a perpetual Christmas. Are there more instances

of resenting a fellow believer or ignoring one? A dark and divided heart can never worship Christ. There cannot be a Christmas for such a person.

The temple of God at Jerusalem was at the heart of worship during Jesus' time. He used this icon to bring home many truths about worship. Our worship must be clothed in humility. Telling the story of a Pharisee and a tax collector, Jesus affirmed the humility of the sinner and denounced the self-righteousness of the Pharisee (Luke 18:9-14). Jesus is the new Temple. When we are in Christ, in the Temple to worship, we must do so in humility. There is no room for any flashing of our piety. The Christmas for the Magi (the three wise men) was to seek, search and worship the King. When we put this practice to seek, search and worship on a shuffle (like we do a favourite song), we will see more of Christ and it will be a perpetual Christmas.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus wanted His worshippers to first reconcile with those whom they have hurt and then go and offer a gift at the altar (Matthew 5:23, 24). Jesus is not interested in our charity at Christmas time, if we have unsettled business in our heart. If giving gifts are an expression of our love to God, let us do so out of a guileless heart.

At another time, Jesus commended the widow and her offering. Generosity is not a monopoly of the rich. It is a matter of the heart that trusts the Lord. The widow gave all she had because she trusted the God of the Temple. Jesus is the new Temple. Can we give the whole of ourselves in an unreserved manner? For, that will be a fitting worship of Christ. It would be a beginning of loving God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind and with all our strength! In such love, there is true Christmas.



*Dr Samson Gandhi MBA, Doctor of Ministry, serves as the Executive Director of Person to Person - Institute for Christian counselling in India. Today, it is an indigenous ministry training counsellors internationally. He is a level 3 ACC South Asia accredited counsellor, and an Honorary Fellow of ACC, UK. He is a widely published author, international speaker on leadership and counselling, compelling teacher on Christian spirituality and sought-after family counsellor.*

❖ ❖ ❖ *A Savior is Born* ❖ ❖ ❖

# Resolving Conflicts- A Biblical Viewpoint



Capt IN AJ Manohar

Conflicts are age-old occurrences which have existed right from the days of creation. They are to be handled with care and with utmost urgency, or else they can spread like wildfire.

The safest way to manage conflict is to conform to the highly effective Biblical pattern. During Paul's ministry, he had to juggle with many conflicts on the road to success. One such conflict was the issue of circumcision, which was spread by some in the church at Jerusalem in the first century, as being a prerequisite to being a true follower of Jesus Christ according to the Judaizers. In the Old Testament, envy and jealousy shown to Joseph by his own brothers and Joseph later forgiving his brothers is a shining example of love in action triumphing over envy, jealousy and hatred. Instead of taking revenge, Joseph showed love and kindness, when his brothers faced starvation during a famine in the land of Canaan. This is where brotherly love of a pristine level is seen as a shining beacon to be emulated by all of us.

In the modern era of Christian leadership such a conflict could have snowballed into a major crisis sadly, with the warring factions choosing to smother the opposition with a cold shoulder or even muscle power. However, that was not the case with Apostle Paul either at the church council of Philippi. He called for a discussion

and used his own personal testimony and knowledge of the Bible to convince the opposition regarding their misconceptions about circumcision. That opened the doors of the church to converts from amongst the Gentiles. It is of great significance that the issue raised by the opposition was first heard by the council which had Peter, James, Paul and Barnabas. These leaders, thereafter gently but firmly used the experience and depth of insight of the scripture to convince those advocating circumcision to change their views.

Church relationships are a perfect platform to demonstrate our love towards one another. The starting point is the realisation that we are placed here not to compete with each other, but essentially to complete and build each other. As Paul says in Romans 12:3, "Dear folks, do not think of yourself more highly than you ought to, but in humility consider others better than yourselves." When we place humility in the forefront of relationships, there can be only friendships and not conflicts. We will always strive to build others and not break relationships.

In conclusion, abounding love, personal experience, and testimony, depth of Biblical knowledge and great insight are essential to resolve conflicts affecting relationships and disturbing the harmony amongst families and the Church community. Let us usher in the ambience of festivities this Christmas by reconciling with all our loved ones, and friends. Also resolve to ring in the New Year with better relationships and friendships.



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*Captain IN AJ Manohar whilst in service was the President of the Ecumenical Choir at Visakhapatnam and also served as the President of the Evangelical Graduates fellowship and Haggai International, Visakhapatnam Chapter.*

# "Joy to the World"- Christmas Tree Lighting Program

Force of God, the Youth Fellowship of Church of St John the Baptist organized the annual Christmas tree lighting event on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2021 where the church gathered to welcome the 2021 Christmas Season. This year's theme is joy to the world and the congregation participated by donating and contributing towards Christmas Joy Boxes that will be presented to the disadvantaged children at the CSI School for Deaf and Dumb at Armoor. The entire program was also streamed to welcome more families from around the world to celebrate with us.

The program consisted of lighting the four advent candles by our sectional secretaries, the Women's Fellowship President and our Presbyter. The first candle, the 'Prophecy Candle' which represents Hope refers to the Prophecies about the birth of Christ. The second candle is the 'Bethlehem Candle', which represents Love and symbolises the manger in which Christ was born. The third candle is the 'Angels Candle' which represents Peace. The fourth candle is 'Shepherds Candle' which represents Joy that was proclaimed through the world at Christ's birth.

This vibrant evening featured the Youth group from CSI Ramkot Church, Youth For Christ (YFC) and Force of God (FOG) bands along

with a choreography by the FOG dance crew, while the Men's and Women's Fellowships rendered melodious Christmas Carols. Rev Jacqueline Prasanna Kumar shared the word of God and dwelled deep into the significance of the four advent candles and the need to create avenues to include the youth in the church and its activities. Our Presbyter along with the Members of the Pastorate Committee did the honours of lighting the Christmas tree. We concluded the program with final remarks by our Presbyter, Rev James Cecil who applauded FOG and all the participants and their efforts in organizing the program followed by closing prayer and benediction.

We thank the Lord Almighty for enabling us to celebrate and welcome the Christmas Season. We also thank Rev James Cecil and the Pastorate Committee for giving FOG the opportunity to host the program. We appreciate and acknowledge the CSI Ramkot Church and their youth for accepting our invitation. We also extend our heartfelt gratitude to congregation offline and online for joining in the evening of celebration and donating towards the Christmas Joy Boxes. Last but not the least a big thank you to all our FOG members for planning and executing this event.







# Achievements News!

Church of St John the Baptist Basketball Team claimed the Champion's trophy in the Inter Church Basketball Tournament organized by United Christmas Celebrations Committee, Telangana on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021 at YMCA, Secunderabad.

In the finals they defeated Holy Family Church 56-42. Nathan Abraham was the top scorer with 22 points. Nathan and Sam are currently in the Telangana State team playing the Senior Nationals Tournament.

Team: Dennis (Captain), Maju, Nathan, Liju, Sam, Danny, Aaron and Joshua.

Mentor - Mr Norman Isacc



The highest scorer of the tournament.


# Makeover - The Living Waters Garden

Psalm 24:1 says, "The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein,". Responding the call to be custodians of God's creation, FOG decided to contribute towards developing the area adjacent to the main entrance of the church to create a meditation space for the congregation.

The once wildly overgrown patch of land now is named "The Living Waters Garden (John 7:38)" and hosts an overflowing fountain signifying the abundance of grace, regeneration and pardon we receive for Christ Jesus surrounded by a luscious lawn making it a serene space amid the hustle of the city. The fountain was dedicated on the occasion of Youth Sunday on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2021.

This project would not have been complete without appreciating Col S D Chandrashekar under whose watchful eye the premises of Church of St John the Baptist has undergone a remarkable transformation. We extend our gratitude to him for carefully monitoring the whole process and for his valuable inputs.



From this  to this



## Major General Surender Pavamani

Major General Surender Pavamani was awarded the AVSM (Ati Vishisht Seva Medal), the second highest distinguished service award for devotion to duty of exceptional high order by the President on 22 November, 2021 at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, Delhi. This was for sustained work as a Major General for operations in Jammu and Kashmir, along the Line of Control with Pakistan and the Eastern Border with China, from October 2018 to January 2020, as well as for ensuring battle readiness as an ADG Equipment Management in Army Headquarter during 'Operation Snow Leopard', in 2020 in the Ladakh sector.

Earlier in 2018, he was awarded the SM (Sena Medal) for distinguished service by the President as a DDG in Army HQ. He is also a recipient of two GOC-in-C commendation awards in 2007 for World Military Games in Hyderabad and in 2011 for operations in Jammu and Kashmir.

General Pavamani and Mrs Sujata Pavamani were active members of the Choir of St John the Baptist Church from 2007 to 2009. Their sons, Stephen and Andrew were active in the Sunday School. They are currently settled in Delhi and are members of the Free Church Choir, where the General is the Secretary of the Church, after his retirement this year.



President Ramnath Kovind presents Ati Vishisht Seva Medal to Major General Surender Pavamani, SM, The Regiment of Artillery (Retired). Pawamani was also posted in Aurangabad as a Brigadier of 56 artillery brigade.



# Little Hearts - Joy to the World



Joshua Bennett – Primary Class



Akshay Paul (Junior)



# Easy Origami Santa Claus



**Joanna Joel Siriki – Sunday School Juniors**

Fold a paper to make a simple and cute Santa Claus.

Materials: Origami Paper (Red and White) or 2 Square papers (Red and White), Pen / Sketch (to draw face). Get a standard size origami paper, red on one side, white on the other or 2 origami papers one red and the other white.



OR Use A4 size paper (red and white), fold it diagonally and crease. Now cut off the excess to get a perfect square.



Start with the white side of your paper facing up.



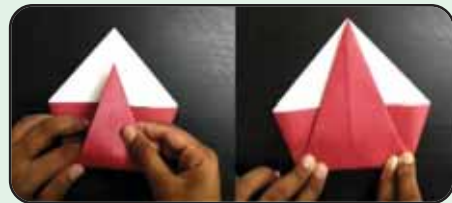
Fold in half along the diagonal, crease and open back out.



Repeat previous step along the other diagonal, crease and open back out. Fold each side into the centre and crease to make a kite shape.



Fold the bottom point up to meet the top centre.



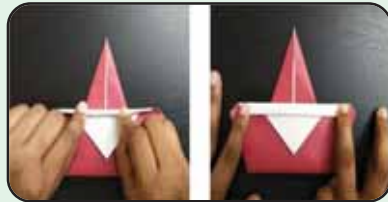
Flip the paper over.



Fold the top of the paper down to make a white triangle while leaving around 1 cm of red showing at the bottom and crease.



Fold the paper down again on the top to make a small strip and crease.



Flip it over.



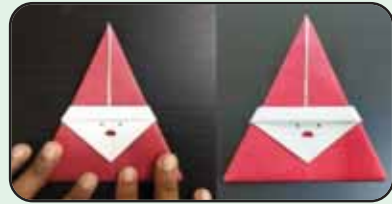
Fold back the sides along the edge of the triangle.



Flip it over again.



Draw a face to finish.



Use a white pom-pom or a small cotton ball on the top of Santa's hat. Use these cute Santa's to decorate or hang on Christmas tree or doors or walls or windows. Do try and hope you have fun making it. Merry Christmas everyone!!








# Church of St John the Baptist-Sunday School Report (July - December 2021)



Mrs Sujatha Madhukar

“Discipline your son, and he will give you Peace, he will bring delight to your soul.”  
Proverbs 29:17

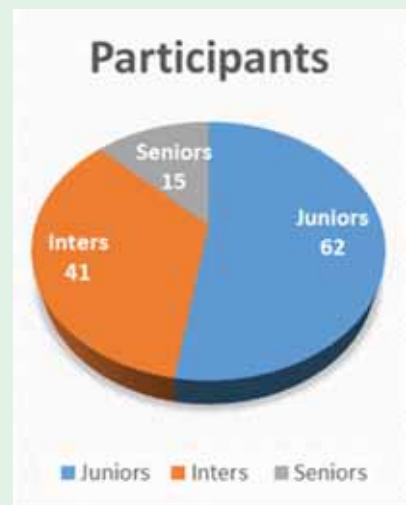
Greetings to you in the name of our Saviour Jesus Christ. The Sunday school Academic year started from June 13, 2021 and 120 children are currently enrolled with us.

| S. No | Class   | Teachers  | No. of Students | First term Activities (August 2021)     | Class Tests  |
|-------|---|---|-----------------|---|--|
| 1     |    | Ms Nidhi Clement,<br>Mrs Sneha Joel Siriki, Mrs<br>Sweety Raj Kumar | 17              | Action Song and<br>Story Telling        | Every<br>alternate<br>month, class<br>test is<br>conducted |
| 2     |    | Mrs Lucy Samuel,<br>Mrs Rama Varghese, Mrs<br>Candita Hephzibah     | 33              | Bookmaking to<br>write Memory<br>verses |  |
| 3     |   | Mrs Julie Hudson,<br>Mrs Sheba Mridula Sagar                        | 28              | Sword Drill                             |  |
| 4     |  | Ms Joyce Thompson,<br>Dr Grace Sunder,<br>Mrs Junia Sucharitha      | 26              | Model presentation                      |  |
| 5     |  | Mrs Usha Manohar<br>Mrs Sujatha Madhukar                            | 16              | Time Management<br>Chart                |  |

## Inter CSI Church Drawing Competition

We hosted the Inter CSI Church Drawing competition on October 31, 2021 with the theme **Peace in Chaos**. Children from CSI Churches across the twin cities were invited. **118 children from 23 churches participated in the drawing competition.**

The program was inaugurated in the St John’s Church with opening prayer and devotion on the theme by our Pastor Rev K James Cecil Victor. This was followed by the judges giving out instructions to the participants. The participants were given one and a half hours to submit their work to the jury. The students were engaged with a Magic show conducted by Mrs Ruth Subhashini while the judges deliberated on the winners for juniors, inters and seniors’ categories. A valedictory





session was conducted where greetings were shared by Hon. Secretary of St John's Church Dr M Udaia Kumar, Town DCC Sunday School Convenor Mr Katamalla Samson and Town DCC Sunday School Secretary Mrs Sabitha Eguri. Prizes were distributed to all the winners and participation certificates to all the participants. Prizes and participation certificates were distributed, the program concluded with vote of thanks by Sunday School Superintendent, Mary Sujatha Madhukar and closing Prayer by Pastor Rev G Samuel.

My heartfelt thanks to:

- ♦ Our Pastor Garu Rev K James Cecil Victor and Pastor Amma Mrs Suhasini Cecil Victor for their encouragement and guidance to conduct this event.
- ♦ I thank Pastor amma Ms Sumalatha, Ordained for her prayer support.
- ♦ Honorary Secretary Dr M Udaia Kumar, Honorary Treasurer Norman Isaac and all the Pastorate committee members for their timely support.
- ♦ Mrs Rose Mary, Headmistress St John's church School for her cooperation in conducting the competition at School premises.
- ♦ Judges - Mr Harry Praveen, Mrs Asmitha Doris, Mrs Sandhya Santhosh, Invigilators, Sponsors for prizes, Praise and Worship team and Volunteers for helping in conducting the competitions.
- ♦ Mrs Ruth Subhashini for engaging the children in the magic show.
- ♦ Ms Jennifer for designing Posters, Banner and Certificates.
- ♦ Ms Nikhitha for leading Praise and Worship team.

| <b>Praise and Worship team</b>                          |                  |
|---|------------------|
| Nikhitha Sherlyn  | Lead vocal       |
| Jennifer Hadassah                                       | Guitar and vocal |
| Rohan   | Drums and vocal  |
| Jonathan Richard  | Drums and vocals |
| Martina   | Keys             |
| Action Team: Neria Aroha, Reuben Marvin, Simadan Daniel |                  |

- ♦ Ms Nidhi Clement for her promotional videos.
- ♦ Mrs Sweety Raj Kumar for making badges for participants, teachers and volunteers for the competition.
- ♦ Mrs Sheba Sagar for making participants list.
- ♦ Mrs Candita and Ms Nidhi for conducting the program.
- ♦ Mr Sumanth Kumar, Mr Raj Kumar and Mr Vinod Kumar for taking care of all the arrangements and distributing snacks for children and parents.
- ♦ Sexton Mr Philip and family for all the service that they have rendered.
- ♦ All the teachers and volunteers for their involvement, cooperation, commitment and prayer support.

- All parents of the participants for encouraging their children to participate in the drawing competition.
- Three children from our church got the prizes in the competition.

| <b>Winners of the Inter CSI Church Drawing competition</b> |                 |                        |                                  |
|--|-----------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Prize</b>   | <b>Code No.</b> | <b>Name of Winners</b> | <b>Church</b>                    |
| <b>Juniors</b>   |                 |                        |                                  |
| 1st  | J-14            | Keenan Aarav George    | St John's Church Secunderabad    |
| 2nd  | J-70            | Alvin Philip Sujith    | CSI Emmanuel Church Malayalam    |
| 3rd  | J-58            | Cherub Hans            | CSI Holy Trinity Church Bolaram  |
| Consolation Prize 1  | J-19            | Evelyn Natalia         | St John's Church Secunderabad    |
| Consolation Prize 1  | J-76            | Samai Frank            | Wesley Church, Chilakalaguda     |
| <b>Inters</b>  |                 |                        |                                  |
| 1st  | I-55            | Joy Stephen Raj        | CSI St Mark's Mettuguda          |
| 2nd  | I-33            | M. Rowan               | CSI Holy Trinity Church Bolaram  |
| 3rd  | I-40            | E Selena               | CSI Wesley Church, Ramkote       |
| Consolation Prize 1  | I-15            | N Vinolia Sharon       | St Thomas SPG Church             |
| Consolation Prize 1  | I-54            | K Samyuktha            | CSI St Mark's Church Mettuguda   |
| <b>Seniors</b>   |                 |                        |                                  |
| 1st  | S-05            | Anuhya Sonali          | CSI Wesley Church Clock Tower    |
| 2nd  | S-08            | K Shiney               | CSI Wesley Church Bowenpally     |
| 3rd  | S-02            | Rhea Abraham           | St. John's church Secunderabad   |
| Consolation Prize 1  | S-15            | CH Deepthi             | St. Mark's Church Mettuguda      |
| Consolation Prize 1  | S-11            | K Keerthigna           | Wesley Church, Warasiguda        |
| <b>Special prizes</b>                                      |                 |                        |                                  |
| Special prizes   | I-19            | Deepin John            | St. Mark's Church Mettuguda      |
| Special prizes   | J-16            | Ashwith                | CSI Wesley Church Jagadgirigutta |

| <b>Prize Sponsors</b> | <b>Invigilators</b> | <b>Volunteers</b> |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Mr Harrison           | Mrs Anna Alexander  | Simadan           |
| Mrs Lotika Gunasekhar | Mrs Sulochana James | Rohan             |
| Dr Grace Sunder       | Mrs Chaya Wilson    | Louie             |
| Mrs Prema Christian   | Mrs Vinolia Pauline | Eshaan            |
| Mrs Rina Ratnam       | Mrs Simi Daniel     | Richard           |
| Mrs Manjula Suhasini  | Mrs Majusree        | Joash             |
| Mrs Swarna Majari     | Mr Noel Nicholas    | Rahul             |
|                       | Mr Anup             | Ruben             |
|                       | Mr Madhukar David   |                   |
|                       | Mr Praveen          |                   |

### World Sunday School Sunday (WSS Day)

Every year first Sunday of November is celebrated as "World Sunday School Day". This year November 7, 2021 was celebrated as World Sunday School Day. This year the theme was - **MY EARTH, MY RESPONSIBILITY**

Our Sunday school children portrayed how the Sunday school movement began by Robert Rakes and explained about the importance of Sunday school and about protecting the environment through the skit.

Children recited memory verses, enacted Daniel and Queen Esther and sang beautiful songs.

My Special thanks to Dr Grace Sunder and Mrs Usha Manohar and all the teachers for training the children for the program.

### World Sunday School Sunday Exhibition

We have organised WSS day exhibition at the St John's church Annexe on November 7, 2021. After the church service Exhibition was inaugurated by Pastor Rev K James Cecil Victor. Some of the models made and displayed by our Sunday School Children were - **Tabernacle, Daniel's Lion's Den, Babel Tower, Manger, Rebekah's well.** Children enthusiastically participated and shared their understanding with the congregation.

| Beginners              |                                 |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Name of Student        | Models                          |
| Aariv Kenny            | Beautiful Lilies                |
| Anaiyah Yohann         | Battle of Jericho               |
| Anna Faith Cassidy     | We are like Lost Sheep          |
| Elena Rachel           | The Wise Man's House            |
| Nathan and Eathan      | Battle of Jericho               |
| Aanshi Nalli           | Ask and it will be given to you |
| Charts                 |                                 |
| Helen Srinidhi         | You are Special to God          |
| Jenica Arlene and Samu | Blind Bartimaeus                |

| Primary         |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Name of Student | Models                                   |
| Anush David     | Jesus Heals the Paralytic Man            |
| Ethan Praneeth  | Earthly Treasures and Heavenly Treasures |
| Shama           | Tool Box                                 |
| Tiara           | Love Your Enemies                        |
| Akhil & Nikhil  | Nativity                                 |
| Charts          |  |
| Jonathan        | The Great Banquet                        |
| Vivianna        | Fruits of the Spirit                     |
| Ashray Nalli    | Peter disowns Jesus                      |
| Sumod           | William Carey                            |
| B.Olivia        | Temptation of Jesus                      |
| Swaraj          | John the Baptist Prepares the Way        |

| Juniors         |                     |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| Name of Student | Models              |
| Nihal Devaraj   | Noah's ark          |
| Evelyn Natalia  | Tower of Babel      |
| Joanna Joel     | Isaac and the wells |
| Aaron Philip    | Marble Activity     |
| Charts          |                     |
| Evelyn Natalia  | Abraham and lot     |
| Jaden           | Elijah's prayer     |
| Jacey           | Who am I            |

| Inters          |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Name of Student | Models  |
| Amos Philip     | Tabernacle and aeroplane- Cross- craft activity |
| Jenita          | Daniel in Lion's Den                            |
| Geethika        | Moses at Mount Sinai with the Ten Commandments  |
| Smarana         | Moses dividing Red sea and craft- My Guardians  |
| Sanjana         | Craft- creation                                 |
| Charts          |   |
| Wesley          |   |

| Seniors   |  |
|---|--|
| Charts  |  |
| Vinuthna Priya  |  |
| Mike Duston   |  |
| Rhea Abraham  |  |
| Anna Manuela explained about taking care of the earth |  |

All the artwork from the Inter CSI Church Drawing competition were also displayed. All the Church members expressed their joy looking at the models made by our Sunday School children and gave encouraging comments on the exhibition.

I thank:

- ♦ Our Pastor garu Rev K James Cecil Victor and Pastor amma Mrs Suhasini Cecil Victor for motivating Sunday school team and their constant prayer support.
- ♦ All the parents for encouraging their children to do models and charts.
- ♦ All the teachers for guiding the children to exhibit their talents for God's glory.

All glory to God only



*Mrs Mary Sujatha Madhukar is the Sunday school superintendent at Church of St John the Baptist, Secunderabad.*

# Inter Church Drawing Competition



# Inter Church Drawing Competition



# Exhibition by our little stars during the World Sunday School Day on 7 November 2021

## Beginners



Samu  
The Wedding Miracle



Helen Srinidhi  
I am Special to God



Jenica Arlene  
Blind Bartimaeus



Aanshi Nalli  
Ask and It Will Be Given To You

# Beginners



Nathan & Eathan  
Battle of Jericho



Anna Faith Casidy  
The Lost Sheep



Elena Rachel  
The Wise and the Foolish Man



Anaiyah Yohann Battle of Jericho



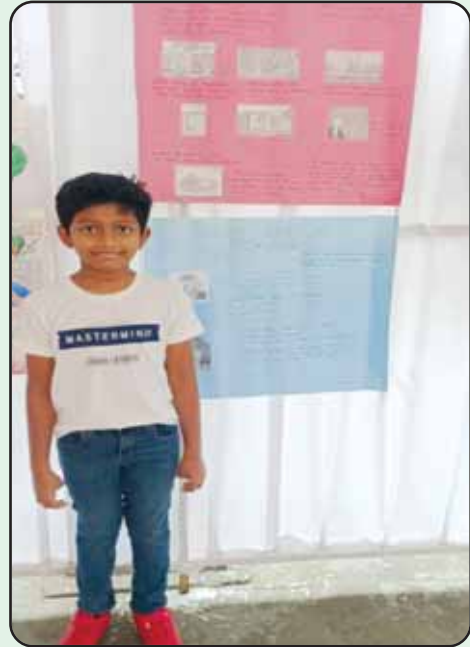
He is Aariv Kenny



# Primary



Swaraj Thomas  
John the Baptist Prepares the Way



NathSumod  
William Carey



Olivia  
Jesus Tempted



Akhil & Nikhil  
Nativity

# Primary



Ashray Nalli  
Peter Disowns Jesus



Tiara Philip  
Love your Enemies



Shama  
The Tool Box

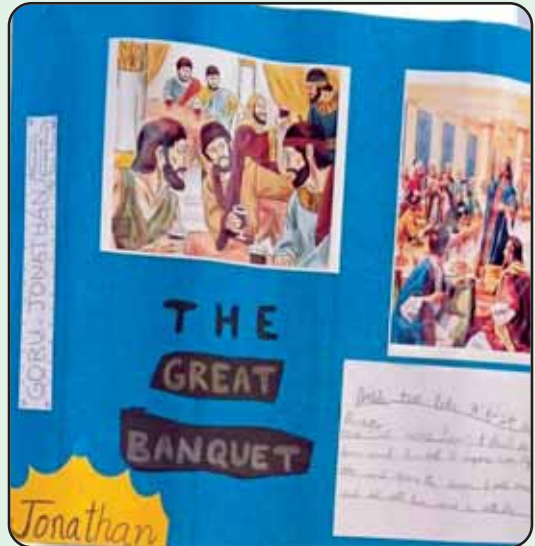


Akhil & Nikhil  
Nativity

# Primary



Anush David  
Jesus Heals the Paralytic Man



Jonathan  
The Great Banquet



Vivianna Joel Siriki  
Fruits of the Spirit

# Juniors



Jayden  
Elijah's Prayer



Nihal  
Noah's Ark



Jacey  
Who am I ?



Evelyn  
Tower of Babel



Joanna Joel Siriki  
Isaac and the Wells

# Inters



Sanjana  
God's Creation



Jenita  
Daniel in the Lion's Den



Smarna  
Moses parting the Red Sea & Guardians

# Inters



Geetika  
Moses on Mount Sinai  
&  
The Ten Commandments



Amos  
The Tabernacle



Aaron  
Marble Activity

# Seniors



Anna Manuela  
Taking care of the Earth



# World Sunday School Sunday Celebrated on 7<sup>th</sup> November, 2021





# World Sunday School Sunday Celebrated on 7<sup>th</sup> November, 2021



# World Sunday School Sunday Celebrated on 7<sup>th</sup> November, 2021



# All India Sunday School Association [AISSA]

*Our Sunday school children participated in AISSA WSS celebrations at St Andrew's church on the 28<sup>th</sup> of November. They sang beautiful songs and also performed on the Theme-My Earth My Responsibility.*



Dance by Evelyn Natalia



Dance by Akshay Paul and Akhil



Our Children participated in Jingle Carnival competitions conducted by The Town DCC Sunday School Council on the 12<sup>th</sup> of December and won four prizes



Christmas Character-Jenica Arlene  
from Beginners – Special prize



Christmas Character-Joanna Joel Siriki from Juniors - 1st prize

Christmas Character-Anush David  
from Primary – 2<sup>nd</sup> prize



# Sunday School Christmas Pageant

Sunday School Christmas Pageant was conducted on the 18<sup>th</sup> December in the church Annex.

The program started with the Opening prayer by Pastorama Ms E Sumalatha and devotion by Rev K James Cecil Victor. Praise and Worship team led by Ms Nikhitha Sherlyn sang beautiful Carols. Our Sunday school Children performed a Skit and Choreo, drums were played by Nikhil Joseph and a special song was sung by our Sunday School Teachers.

The program concluded with the closing prayer by our Pastorama Mrs Suhasini Cecil and Benediction by Rev K James Cecil Victor.

Bibles were distributed to all the Sunday School children by the Hon. Secretary Dr M Udaia Kumar and family.

Children enjoyed Santa's Christmas gifts and refreshments after the program.

I thank our Pastor garu Rev K James Cecil Victor for his guidance and our Pastorama Mrs Suhasini Cecil Victor for her encouragement in conducting Christmas program, family of Dr M Udaia Kumar for the Bibles, all the Pastorate committee members in sanctioning the Christmas gifts and refreshments and the teachers for their commitment and devotion in training the children for Christmas program.

Mrs Mary Sujatha Madhukar  
Sunday School Superintendent

The skit was the story of three trees that reminds us that God has a beautiful plan for each of us. As we lower the world's volume, we can listen to His voice more clearly and know His will in our lives. His ways are not our ways but His ways are always the best.





*Our Children also participated in singing for the Festival of Nine lessons.*

# Women's Fellowship Report

## 2021-22



Mrs Angelina Clement

On behalf of the women's fellowship, I bring warm greetings in the magnificent name of our Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ. Our theme verse chosen for the year is "Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, and His mercy endures forever." What a joy in knowing that we have God's strong and abiding presence through His Word and each day we have the opportunity to turn to God in His Word, to be uplifted and refreshed even when the whole world around us seem to be closing down.

As we mentioned earlier, a major part of our fellowship is to encourage women to get involved in evangelism, many women in our fellowship shared enlightening, inspiring and thought-provoking messages. Every Thursday evening, we spend our time in His Holy presence by singing praises unto Him, listening to His Word, sharing heart touching testimonies, conducting quizzes, games and offering intercessory prayers at the throne of His Grace.

Women's Sunday is a very important event in our Church calendar. As part of our Women's Day celebrations, we encouraged our members to spread the Gospel and to exhibit their skills and talents to glorify His precious name. We conducted virtual competitions all through the week at 6 pm in Singing, Theme talk on the topic - I am a new creation in Christ Jesus, and a quiz based on the book of Acts.

We organized a virtual retreat on 10<sup>th</sup> September to give our loving Saviour the honour and glory and to strengthen each other as women so that we can add value to the Church and the society. Powerful speakers Mrs Leela Chandy and Mrs Kalpana Saxena spoke on the topics - "Imperishable Beauty and When Waters Rise." We had a blessed evening of prayers, praise and worship followed by an interesting game. The event was full of exuberance and excitement. We truly were rejuvenated and refreshed in His Holy presence.

When we pray in one Spirit, the whole Trinity is involved. Through the Spirit of God can move and accomplish many things. It is a weapon that has a divine power to destroy strongholds. We visited Prema Benjamin aunty, had a lovely time of carolling, and prayers for healing. We all yearn for miracles and December is a month when people celebrate miracles. Let us pray and believe that darkness and disease can be overcome through prayers. Let our December Desire for all to be well become a reality. God will one day begin His righteous reign as the rightful ruler of the universe. As we worship our Christ this Christmas, may our adoration be filled with wonder at the fullness of what it means. Our Heavenly Father has given His perfect, sufficient Son. Let us adore Him through our praises and prayers.



*Mrs Angelina Clement is the Women's Fellowship Secretary at Church of St John the Baptist, Secunderabad.*

# Visiting the Elder Members of our Church during Advent – 2021





## Virtual Meetings



The Women's fellowship singing during the Christmas Tree Lighting Program

# Records - Church of St John the Baptist

July to December 2021

*Wedlock*






| Married on | Names   |  |
|------------|---|--|
| 16.07.21   | Mr Nirav Nathanael Bhagvandas and Mrs Desmia Merlin Haldane |    |
| 20.08.21   | Mr Arnold D Cruz and Mrs Preeti Dunna                       |   |
| 02.09.21   | Dr Vamshi Krishna and Olivia Evans                          |  |
| 04.10.21   | Mr Basara Ajay Kumar and Mrs Lenora Misty Katta             |  |
| 08.11.21   | Mr Victor Sam Moses Babu K and Mrs Deepika T J              |  |

## Baptism held at St John's Church from August 2021 till date

| Date       | Name of child             | Parents  |
|------------|---------------------------|--|
| 08.08.2021 | Jason Paul                | <br>Vishal and<br>Shiphrah Paul                         |
| 15.08.2021 | Evelyn Natalia            | <br>Rev James Cecil<br>Victor and<br>Suhasini           |
| 05.09.2021 | Stephen Ananth Chandrahas | <br>Sandeep and<br>Salomi<br>Chandrahas                 |
| 19.10.2021 | Raaga                     | <br>Vikram Ezekiel<br>and Swapna James                 |
| 31.10.2021 | Noel Augustine            | <br>John Ignatius and<br>Dr Priyadarsini<br>Pabbathi |
| 07.11.2021 | Reuben Zane Maddi         | <br>Benny Deepak and<br>Cathy Niteesha                |
| 14.11.2021 | Stephen Anmol             | <br>Cyril Sandeep and<br>Ruth Madhuri John            |
| 21.11.2021 | Shaayan David             | <br>Emmaunel John<br>and Nitisha Sheba<br>Kattinapudi |

# Records - Church of St John the Baptist

| Deceased  |                         |           |   |
|---|-------------------------|-----------|---|
| Sl. No  | Name                    | Buried on |   |
| 1   | Mr Diwaker Francis      | 19.07.21  |  |
| 2   | Col Sadanandam Krishnan | 14.11.21  |  |



# Festival of Nine Lessons and Carol Service

Toeing the line of an age-old Anglican tradition, the Church of St John the Baptist celebrated the festival of nine lessons and carols on 12 December, 2021. This special Service with its established choral tradition of Christmas carols and anthems, is interspersed with Bible readings proclaiming the birth of our Saviour. The much-awaited event unfolded with the Introit – 'I am so glad each Christmas eve' – where scores of little children flocked together at the chancel steps and sang their hearts out in two-part harmony. It was indeed a sight to behold as they were all dressed in white and looked like little angels! This was followed by a remarkable rendition by the Church choir. In an unprecedented way, about 43 choristers attended the practice sessions religiously and joyfully rendered the nine carols in four-part harmony. The carols varied in complexity and texture and were meaningfully compiled for the occasion. As a Chief Organist and Choir Director, I am delighted to hold the fort with such committed choristers. I am grateful to God for this opportunity to lead the church choir and I also extend my gratitude to the Pastor Rev K James Cecil Victor and the Pastorate Committee for reposing faith in me to carry out this solemn task.

**Joshua Virender**

Chief Organist and Choir Director



## Christmas Greetings from Pastorate Committee Members



Mr Messa James Samuel

*Dear family of St John the Baptist, as we are in the Season of Advent and Merry Making - I sincerely Pray that our Good Lord would continue to keep us safe and healthy through this wonderful Season especially and all the days of our lives.*

*Hope all our fears are 'masked' with strong and unwavering Faith in Christ and may the future ahead be Promising, Hopeful and Bright.*

*Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas 2021 and a Prosperous New Year 2022.*



Mr Miriyala Raj Kumar

*Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,*

*Wishing you all a Happy Christmas and a blessed New Year 2022. May our gracious lord protect you all and may his spirit enrich you day by day!!*



Mrs Yashodhar Desappa

*May Christmas Joy, Light your heart in a special way and lead you into a New Year that shines with the blessings of Jesus.*



Mr Joshua Verender

*May your heart be lifted in praise this Christmas for the wonderful gift of Jesus and the joy He brings to our lives. Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and a Blessed New Year.*



*Christmas Season is a sweet reminder about the Light that has come into the world for the joyful and meaningful celebration.*

Mr A William Anup Kumar, Church Steward




*Christmas is the celebration of the light and Salvation wrought to us through Jesus Christ. He came down to earth as the light to enlighten us, to save us from sin and its consequent death. Let us celebrate Christmas with gratitude to God for sending His only begotten Son for our redemption and salvation.*

*I wish you all a Christ-centred Christmas and a blessed New Year*

Mrs K Suhasini Cecil







"And he took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them, 'Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me.'"

MARK 9:36-37

**WomansDay**





Have a Blessed Christmas  
and  
Happy New Year



## THE PASTOR AND THE PASTORATE COMMITTEE

*Please share your feedback with the editorial team, email at*

[parishmessenger@stjohnscsi.org](mailto:parishmessenger@stjohnscsi.org)