



Church of St John the Baptist

Church of South India, Diocese of Medak



HOPE

for All

THE PARISH MESSENGER

EASTER EDITION 2022



Editorial

At the outset, it is good to give thanks unto our Lord Jesus Christ as the Psalmist declares in Psalm 92.

It is also good to come back with this edition of the Parish Messenger for Easter, as we ponder over the happenings of Lent, the Crucifixion and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Basically, we have been profusely and unduly weighed down with the happenings of the pandemic for more than two years and suddenly things have brightened up and looking healthier. People have become more agile and moving around with lots of confidence in the air. We even notice people without masks, oblivious to the fact the pandemic has not been totally eradicated. There is a complete sense of freedom, freedom from the Corona Virus! People want to just fly, fly high to the mountains (as many are flocking to the plethora of Hill Stations in our country due to the scorching heat).

Nevertheless, we praise God for this great sense of relief that the pandemic may be coming to an end and we wish to just go back in time and fantasise, or deeply meditate on the developments during the times of our Lord Jesus Christ

How betrayed our Lord must have felt after the people whom he had healed, cured and liberated from evil spirits, started to shout “Crucify Him”! At times, I feel even we are not different in any way. We possess all that we want from the Lord’s hand and whenever something that we seek fervently does not happen, we totally forget the Lord and go our own way.

Our Pastor had delivered a very meaningful message on the subject of Lent at the dawn of this season. The sermon had many inputs on how to observe, ponder and get cleansed from our evil doings and cling to the Cross, the

saving power. He also reminded us about how fortunate we are, to live to experience this Lenten season, as against the years 2020 and 2021. It is a great privilege for us to experience this season and it has been blessed indeed, full of worship, praise, repentance, cleansing of our bodies and souls by seeking the all-powerful resurrected Lord’s providence, pardon and salvation.

Easter is the crux of Christianity and not Christmas, as many scholars around the world expound. The power of resurrection has saved the entire sinful humankind from the clutches of sin and Satan and has given us the assurance of living for eternity with our supreme and sovereign Lord. May the Holy Spirit continue to reveal unto us the true meaning of this entire season and bring us closer to our Lord.

Few noticeable features of this edition are the news, testimonies, events accomplished by our church members including Sunday school children; health corner and reports from the sectional secretaries. I would like to acknowledge the editorial team for their untiring efforts in bringing out this wonderful Parish Messenger in spite of their hectic schedules, the Pastorate Committee members for their constant support and all the church members / authors for their timely articles throughout the release of the Parish Messenger. In closing, I wish to leave this promise of our Lord.

God has a plan for my life, “For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

God can be trusted — “Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise.” (Hebrews 10:23)

Satri Chandrika Samuel

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Table of Contents

Editorial – <i>Satri Chandrika Samuel</i>	2
Editorial Team	3
Presbyter’s Greetings – <i>Rev. K James Cecil Victor</i>	5
Lent: A Time of Introspection - <i>Dr M Udaia Kumar</i>	7
Ordination Service - <i>Ms Rev. Deacon Sumalatha</i>	9
Good Friday — Made Good to Many – <i>Dr Karunakar Rao</i>	10
Fasting – <i>Mr Amos Phillip</i>	12
Called and Chosen - <i>Mrs Urmi Victor Dass</i>	14
Good Friday Word Search - <i>Mrs Saritha Karturi</i>	16
Easter-Paramount Climax - <i>Dr Priyadarshini John</i>	17
Jesus, the Conqueror of Evil - <i>Captain IN AJ Manohar</i>	18
Yeshua’s Healing Love—Expect the Unexpected - <i>Mrs Yashodhra Desappa</i>	20
What Next? - <i>Ms Chris Nidhi Anthea</i>	22
A Canadian Easter – <i>Mrs Nargis Abraham</i>	23
A Word of Assurance - <i>Late Mrs Bessie John</i>	25
A Tribute - <i>Dr Carol Reddy</i>	27
A Tribute – <i>Family Members</i>	28
Report - Men’s Fellowship - <i>Mr P Francis Augustine</i>	29
Women’s Fellowship Report - <i>Mrs Angelina Clement</i>	31
Sunday School Report – <i>Mrs Sujatha Madhukar</i>	36
Testimonies by Senior Class Children	47
Achievements.....	49
Honour to a Woman Journalist	49
The Success Story of Anmol Manohar and Jacinth Manohar.....	50
Spreading the Christmas Cheer- Outreach – <i>Ms Sheeba Roy</i>	51
Sunday School - Art Work	52
Easter Cross Craft - <i>Ms Joanna Joel Siriki</i>	54
Records - Church of St John the Baptist – Marriage and Death Records – <i>Mr Sumanth Kumar</i>	56
Bladder Tales-Urinary Tract Infections in the Elderly – <i>Dr Priyadarshini John</i>	57

Presbyter's Greetings



The Rev. K James Cecil Victor

The greatest wonder on earth is that the Son of God died a shameful death on the cross. However, for every true Christian, it is the greatest comfort, for the merciful Father so loved the world that He did not spare His only begotten Son, but gave Him up for all of us, so that whoever believes in Him does not perish but has everlasting life.

The season of Lent prepared us to celebrate the greatest miracle on earth, the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Lent period and Easter drive our attention towards the monumental events of Christ's passion, death, resurrection, and ascension. It's a glorious time of contemplating on God's greatest gift, His greatest sacrifice and supreme love, manifested in and through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

God has enabled us during the mid-week services, to reflect on five pertinent questions namely: 'Where are you?', 'is it right to be angry?', 'Who do people say that I am?', 'Do you believe that I'm able to do this?' and 'Do you love me?'

These questions enable us to relive our faith and realign ourselves to God. The Holy Week has enabled to delve into the events that lead Christ to the cross, as a ransom for all. And, Easter enables us to celebrate the victory over death and evil.

'Christ has died, Christ is risen and Christ will come again' is part of our faith statement during the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Yes, Christ died for our sins, so that by accepting Him as our Lord and Savior we may live; He is risen that we may have the hope of eternal life; and He will come again to judge the living and the dead. God's ultimate love and power have been revealed on the Cross as well as in the Tomb where Jesus was buried. The fact that Jesus' grave alone in the world is an open grave and His tomb alone is an empty tomb is a proof of His resurrection. "He is risen, He is not here" is the first gospel proclaimed by the angels. Thereafter, the good news spread all over the world breaking barriers, empowering the weak and transforming the lives of people. On Easter day, we re-tell the story of Jesus' resurrection and re-affirm our faith in the risen Lord.

Immediately after His resurrection, Jesus went to Galilee, as He had promised (Mathew 26:32) to meet His disciples. He chose an insignificant place for His glorious revelation. All fear was dispelled and faith was instilled in the disciples; uncertainty was eliminated and the direction for their life was found with the appearance of the risen Lord. It is from Galilee that the life-changing gospel has been proclaimed, impacting lives and life situations. Those who lost hope, found hope, those who yearned for love, found love, those who looked for comfort, found comfort in the risen Lord.

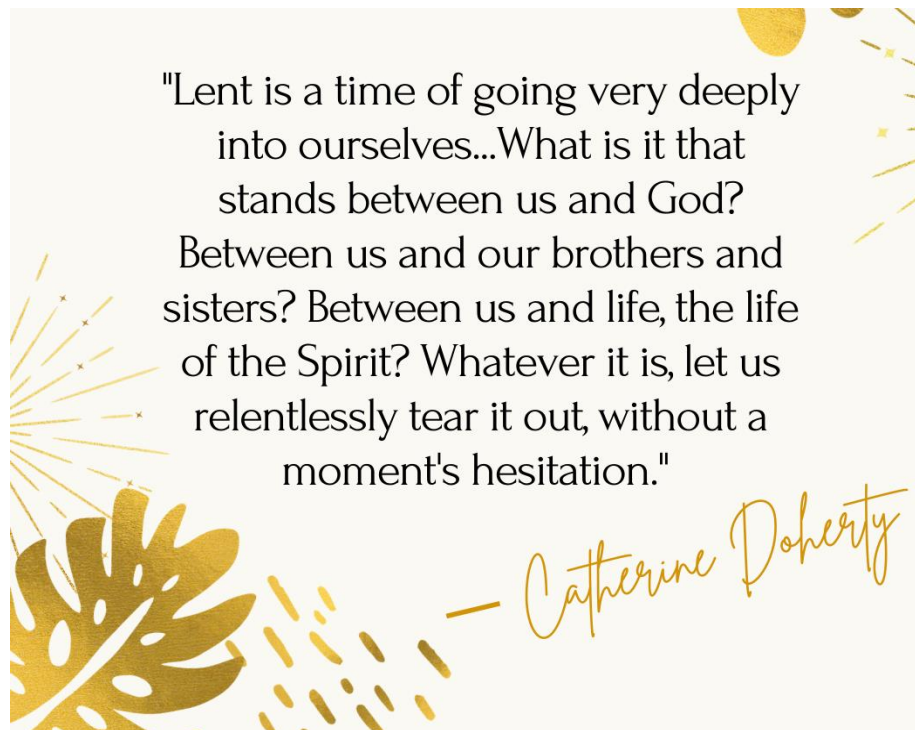
Easter is all about assuring life in the midst of life-negating situations. While we celebrate Easter with grandeur and jubilation, there are many such as the Ukrainians, who have been facing Russian aggression for over 50 days. So also, Christian minorities in South-East Asia, victims of violence, injustice and oppression, the poor and the anguished continue to suffer. Let us pray that the light of Christ shines upon them and the hope of resurrection empowers them to overcome their struggles and find peace that the risen Lord offers.

Let us live as those who belong to the Lord, who died but rose again victoriously.

I wish you all a blessed Easter



Rev. K James Cecil Victor is Presbyter-in-Charge at church of St John the Baptist, Secunderabad. He is also the Vice-President of the All India Sunday School Association [AISSA]



Lent: A Time of Introspection



Dr M Udaia Kumar, Honorary Church Secretary

A soap manufacturer and a pastor were walking together down a street in a large city. The soap manufacturer casually remarked, “The gospel you preach hasn’t done much good, has it? Just observe. There is still a lot of wickedness in the world, and many wicked people around us too!”

The pastor did not respond until they passed a dirty little child making mud pies in the gutter. Seizing the opportunity, the pastor said, “I see that soap hasn’t done much good in the world either; for there is considerable dirt, and many dirty people around ”.

The soap manufacturer said, “Oh, well, soap is only useful when it is applied”.

And the pastor said, “Exactly, so it is with the gospel”.

We often set aside the forty days of Lent for praising and worshiping the Lord, reading the Bible and praying more often, with the anticipation of deeper intimacy with Christ. Lent is popularly regarded as a period of fasting and some form of self-denial. It is not about feeling shame, but more about the awareness that sin separates us from God— a regretful acknowledgement of sin with a commitment to change.

While doing so, we tread the dangerous path of burdening the Lenten period with personal goals like losing weight, giving up a craving, or discontinuing a bad habit. Resolutions (like the ones we take up at New Year’s Eve) focus on self-motivated goals rather than goals established with God as the focus. It is easy to be misguided in our thoughts and lose the crux of Lent, which is to contemplate what our Lord did for us on the Cross and the cost He bore for our reconciliation. We need to recognise that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19) and the work of the potter (Isaiah 64:8).

Several biblical figures often fasted when petitioning God for something important. “So, we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and He answered our prayer.” (Ezra 8:23) “They mourned and wept and fasted till evening for Saul and his son Jonathan, and for the army of the Lord and for the nation of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword.” (2 Samuel 1:12) Before going to the king to intercede for the Jews, Esther told Mordecai, “Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.” (Esther 4:16) Even Jesus, after His baptism, went into the wilderness and fasted and wrestled with temptation.

We learn from the Bible that fasting during Lent, or otherwise, is not an opportunity to meet our self-focused goals, but actually a time to achieve greater intimacy with God. God’s love and our

salvation do not depend on denying ourselves chocolate or wine, but in recognising that idolising any of these, stands in the way of worshipping the one true God. The intimacy with Christ is a blessing, and not the expectation of God's favourable response to our prayers, or on successfully achieving a resolution towards self-improvement, although many may indeed experience freedom from some long-standing challenges or habits, they strive to get rid of.

Let us remember what Christ said of the Pharisees, "They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them". (Mathew 23:4) Jesus rebuked and criticised the Pharisees for setting traditions and expectations for Jews that missed the heart of God. It is therefore important to check our motives while observing Lent. Jesus said, "When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full". (Mathew 6:16)

The intent of Lenten observance is to recognise our need for repentance (Ephesians 2:1-5; Colossians 2:13; 1 John 1:9), to draw close to God and to prepare ourselves for Easter.

Let us introspect by asking ourselves whether Lent is a period of obedience to tradition or obedience to God? Do we look to this period as a means of achieving work-based salvation, or giving praise and thanks to Christ? Are we approaching Lent as a way to achieve a personal resolution with rigour, or an opportunity to grow closer to God?

This Lenten season, we were offered several opportunities by our church community to grow deeper in our faith. Our Sunday Eucharist services and our Wednesday Lenten services were focused on themes to enable our preparation towards Easter. The Lenten cottage prayers and the fellowship (men, women and youth fellowships) meetings, enabled smaller church member-groups to meditate deeper into the word of God.

Let us check our intentions and thoughts, aligning them clearly to God and His purposes. Let us remember that the true power of the gospel can be experienced only when we apply the Word of God daily in our lives. I urge that we continue with the same rigour beyond the Lenten season to constantly deepen our relationship with Christ. May the risen Lord help us in this endeavour and in our spiritual growth and nourishment.

May this season inspire us to new hope, happiness and abundance, received through God's divine grace. Happy Easter!



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

Ordination Service



Rev. Deacon Sumalatha

Rev. James Cecil Victor, The Pastorate Committee and the entire congregation of St John the Baptist Church, Secunderabad congratulate Rev. Deacon Sumalatha on her Deacon ordination.

An Ordination service was held on February 18, 2022 at Medak Cathedral. Medak Diocese Bishop, Rt. Rev. Dr AC Solomon Raj, and the team of the Diocesan Officers: Vice-Chairman, Rev. Dr T Bhaskar, Diocesan Treasurer Rev. Dr U Daniel, Ministerial Board Secretary, Rev. K Charles Wesley and Lay Secretary Mr Dolakala David, along with all the clergy of the Medak Diocese were present in the Ordination Service. A total of sixteen pastors were ordained; eight of them received Presbyter Ordination and the other eight Deacon Ordination by laying of hands by Bishop Rt Rev. Solomon Raj and through the invocation of the Holy Spirit.

The Ordination service was bilingual (in Telugu and English) for the benefit of the congregation. Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr AC Solomon Raj shared the word of God emphasising on the Ordination, reminding Presbyters and Deacons of their call and commitment to God's Ministry and their role and responsibilities in Medak Diocese.



Good Friday — Made Good to Many



Dr Karunakar Rao



As recorded in the four gospels of the New Testament: Jesus died on the Cross to redeem humankind, by redeeming them from their sins, through God's love.

Jesus Christ was mocked, scorned, and tortured in the praetorian, condemned to death by Pontius Pilate and forced to carry His Cross, via Dolorosa in Jerusalem to Calvary.

He was nailed to the cross and hung between two terrible criminals. While He was on the cross, Jesus uttered seven valuable sentences, to fulfill the prophecies and needs of all people.

We generally meditate on these words in the Lenten season and try to remember them. More importantly we need to practice the message they convey. This will reveal the real character of a Christian. Let us, therefore, understand the details of the last statements He made.

1. "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:34)

Forgiveness for their sins was the prime need of people around His Cross. Hence Jesus prayed to His father to forgive them. Jesus also expects us to forgive others, hence let us practice this important lesson.

2. "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:43)

This is the kind response to the personal request of a repented sinner. Individually, we can obtain mercy if we repent and accept Him as our Saviour and King.

3. "Woman, here is your son!" and "Here is your mother!" (John 19:26-27)

This is the responsibility of all children towards their parents, especially when they are old. Jesus fulfilled this.

This is God's commandment too. Let us fulfil this, without giving fake reasons not to do so.

4. "E-Loi E-Loi Lama Sabachthani "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46)

This is an expression of agony about the disconnected communication with God. Jesus needed restoration of communication with His father. We, too, should be alert to sense the fellowship of God.

5. **“I am thirsty” (John 19:28)**

Jesus was exhausted and severely dehydrated, expressing His human need. Also, He was determined to complete His great victory on the cross. We are indeed partakers of His work now.

6. **“It is finished!” (John 19:30)**

Jesus came as Christ to this World, on a special mission commissioned by His father. That is, to pay the price and redeem humankind from their sin. This

sixth word on the cross is an announcement after He completed the great task. Jesus never forgets His purpose. We too need to understand and respond to His purpose in our society.

7. **“Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!” (Luke 23:46)**

This is an authentic submission of life to His father, after completion of the task. He has proved that, nobody can take His life, He will only lay down His life. He can give his life and take it back. **(John 10:18)**

The Roman centurion immediately realised that Jesus was a righteous man and the son of God.

We are the children of God, hence let us feel privileged to be part of His kingdom. Praise the Lord.



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



Fasting



Mr Amos Phillip

Religious fasting should always be guided by the Holy Spirit God because it:

1. Draws us closer to God
2. Directs our minds towards Him
3. Makes us depend completely on Him, when we seek His help and guidance
4. Allows us to hear His voice more clearly
5. Removes the focus from the physical things of this world
6. Denies the natural desires of the flesh
7. Produces a complete transformation in us

Let's get a deeper understanding of the 7 letters of this word F A S T I N G, with biblical references (NIV).

F – Fear (Deuteronomy 9:18-19): Moses feared the anger and wrath of the Lord would destroy the Israelites because of their sins.

Are we not fearful at the possibility of losing many souls in this sinful world?

A – Approach (Esther 4:16): Esther was well aware that it was against the law to approach the king without being summoned and the sentence for this would be death. Despite this, she used her status and position to save her Jewish people.

Are we silent and fear opposition if we approach lost souls? Do we get lost with our position / status when trying to save them?

S – Speaking (Daniel 9:3): Daniel turned to the Lord God and pleaded with Him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes. In the twentieth verse we read that Daniel was speaking and praying, confessing his sin and the sins of the Israelites to the Lord.

Can we speak to the Lord without listening to His voice? Fasting allows us to draw closer to Him and be able to hear Him speak?

T – Temptations (Matthew 4:1-11): There is no better example for this than when our Lord Jesus had to overcome temptations. We know that Christ's Ministry started after being tempted by Satan.

I – Intercede (1Samuel 7:5-6): Samuel interceded with the Lord for the Israelites and on that day, they fasted and there they confessed their sins. The result: ‘the Lord thundered with loud thunder and defeated their enemies’ (v 10).

N – Needs of others (Isaiah 58:6-7): We are called to free people from burdens, be concerned with the needs of others and not oppress them with other burdens (Luke 11:46 and Hebrews 13:1-3). Jesus said, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light (Matthew 11:30).

Our yoke is faith and love and Jesus will carry the burden for us.

G – Guidance (2 Chronicles 20:3-4): Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the Lord, proclaimed a fast for all Judah. The people came together to seek guidance from the Lord.

Verses 22 and 23 tells us that Ammon and Moab together fought against Seir and when Seir was destroyed, Ammon and Moab destroyed each other.

All we need to do is completely depend on Him and seek His guidance.

Let’s introspect on our ways and reasons for fasting

1. **Traditional fasting**

During lent some people stop watching movies, lying, using abusive language, smoking and drinking.

Why fasting only during Lent and why not any time of the year? No! They go back to their normal lives after Lent.

2. **Involuntary fasting (forceful)**

There are people who fast for selfishly, with false intentions and motives. Let’s look at King Saul in 1 Samuel 14:24-30 where he bound the people under an oath, saying, “Cursed be anyone who eats food before evening comes, before I have avenged myself on my enemies!” For Saul, the battle was his, not God’s. He must take vengeance on his enemies with no thought for the welfare of his troops. They had to refrain from eating or be cursed.

3. **Hypocritical fasting** (Matthew 6:16)

Some people fast to boast about it. Remember that fasting is not a public display of spirituality. It is between you and God alone.

The Reward

Let us be mindful of the purpose and ways of fasting. Matthew 6:17-18 tells us that when our fasting is guided by the Holy Spirit. which is in line with the Word of God, then our Father will reward us.



Mr Amos Philip is from Sunday School Intermediate Class at church of St John the Baptist, Secunderabad.

Called and Chosen



Mrs Urmi Victor Dass

Have you ever thought about being special? It's a startling idea: Among all the world's billions, no other person is exactly like you. Look at the signs of your individuality. No other person was born with your fingerprint. The iris of no other person matches yours. Every cell in your body, every spark of mental activity, everything about your spirit, speaks of significance; *You are more than special, you are unique.* Babies are not born alone. They are born to mothers who hold and feed them. Likewise, God gives us new life by His Spirit "...who He poured out on us richly covering us and caring for us." (Titus 3:4-7).

More than that, *you have been called and chosen.* If you have heard the Good News, that is God's way of calling you. If you have shared in the Good News, that is God's way of choosing you. Actually, the Bible tells us that even before the world began, God chose to purify and adopt you through His Son. Now, God confirms that choice by the work of His Spirit and by your belief in the Good News.

"[God] chose us in [Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love, He predestined us for adoption as sons (and daughters) through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace, with which He has blessed us in the Beloved [Christ]." (Ephesians 1:4-6)

"God chose you as the first fruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. To this, He called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14)

God's Spirit sanctifies you, sets you apart, makes you special, for closeness with God. The result is that you share in the glory of the risen Lord. This is not the earthly glory of the rich and famous. This is the glory of being with, and like God's child. He fills your life with purpose and joy.

Do you believe that God wants you and chooses you? Have you accepted His call by sharing His death, burial and resurrection? Then you are ready for the adventure of your life!

God's Spirit is there for you from the beginning. Just as life in flesh came through your parents, spiritual birth comes from the Holy Spirit.

“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” (John 3:5-6)

“... He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.” (Titus 3:5-6).

It is God’s marvellous gift of mercy, and the perfect result of Christ’s death. God never meant us to be lost, lonely and empty without Him. He made us for Himself. He too is urgently calling us, seeking us, wanting to complete us... now!

“Seek the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him while he is near.” (Isaiah 55:6)



Mrs Urmi Victor Das works as a project manager in an NGO. She was a Hindu, married into a Christian family. It took eight long years to accept the Lord. She is thankful to the Lord for choosing and calling her as his daughter. She is a member of St John the Baptist, Secunderabad.



Good Friday Word Search

Mrs Saritha Karturi

Good Friday Word Search

B M P B E C F M V D I Q E P A J O N Q Q F R Z C O F
S T E N T G S O X Z F S Y Y M A G W G D A G U O O W
R B E E A Y W S R N S X Y A A G N H J B C O F M D O
O S Q F X T D E A O W U I H I I E Q U R J A N M N W
Q Q K W S Z G H R M H M N Q U Y E C I S B W U E Y W
S Y R A V L A C P O K O F M T B L H N D I I J M H L
W H D I S R V X V D I R J P B I N M F A U J Z O L G
T P U D K T X Z T U O K O J T M P G A S N H P R H B
O P L D K A F I D A P S E A S T E R C X W E L A B R
P R A Y E R X J U A L C R R Z L F R V N S D P T K Q
Y H T N V P Y N E A I G L K X J P L G S G Z C I A C
A Q U Z J Y X I W V R J L U K M V B U R X X T O O O
D A T S Q J G T R G R E U C Y P B O M B F S O N V S
I Z H B E A Y E R V M S R D Q E I G O Y H S Q W S B
R S M X O A S D F T Y U L U E G L R P J D Y C K Z B
F S F D D H M C A Z C S R J I W B L X B M A A Y L H
Y T W I C I H X E I P C N L I J V W G N I T S A F E
L T L R M O X V F I X H E N M C L G C J O M C Q F M
O O U K T L K I C Q Q R B O L Q U M O M N K W A D Q
H H I E J T X R B Q M I P D Y X Q A B D F C F R M W
C R O N C I E H K X I S M Z K C G I W R C M X P F J
D D J L O G N H K F G T X G K P E Z I N T G W X I O
R K D N F U T T C G Z G H J Q Q U D U R P U W X S D
A G T B A Q D S S C N A O U C H A L L O B L W Y H Q
D M F Q F Y W O R R O S I L K Y C N L T P E W K K D
O G R E A T F R I D A Y I Y L I D W I P Q K F M N B

Calvary
Church Service
Commemoration
Cross
Crucifixion
Easter
Fasting
Fish

Jesus Christ
Holiday
Mass
Penance
Religious
Prayer
Sorrow
Tomb

Bonus Challenge:
Find 3 alternate names
for Good Friday
1.
2.
3.

Source- sweetpatterndays.com

Easter-Paramount Climax



Dr Priyadarshini John

The Dawn that saw the ultimate defeat of death
The Day that witnessed fulfilment of scriptures
The Moment that abandoned the life's hard storms
The Empty tomb that revealed the reality of resurrection.

The Sacrifice that surpassed the supremacy
The Tragedy that ended as a triumph
The Hour that turned blasphemy to sanctification
The Sepulcher that transformed affliction to comfort.

The Truth that crushed the sin and set humankind free
The Freedom that showed the way to life and hope
The Deliverance that delighted and comforted the deprived soul
The Purpose and the Promise that paved the way to light.

The Faith that turned death to life
The Love that reflected the supreme grace
The Ascension that elevated the heaven realms
The History that spoke the greatest reconciliation!



Dr Priyadarshini John, Consultant Nephrologist and Renal transplant Physician, AIG Hospitals, Hyderabad.

Jesus, the Conqueror of Evil



Captain IN AJ Manohar

As we come to the end of another Lenten season, we are sometimes filled with great remorse and guilt. We experience feelings of sadness for the greatest travesty of justice for the Son of God on the cross of Calvary. However, in hindsight, it was also Jesus' greatest victory over sin, evil and death. For, the religious leaders, teachers of the law, Jewish authorities were reduced to mute spectators or mere caricatures. The arguments to trap Jesus were responded to with such a *tour de force*, that the so-called erudite Jews were demolished beyond redemption.

The entire gamut of human emotions evoked by Jesus' sacrificial love, had then reached a sublime level, which the world had hitherto never experienced. Many writers and poets, at best, reach a pedestrian level in fathoming the depths of Jesus' love and compassion. Humanity was destined to perish, except for the hope given by the Saviour of humankind. It needed the divine intervention of the Holy Spirit to inspire gospel writers to accurately record the happenings of the Jesus era. We see the hand of God, to present to humans an inspirational message of love through the gospels. The gospel writers are, thereby, fully, and rightfully, entitled to conclude their message simply in just three power-filled words, 'God is love'.

The message of Jesus' love, is truly and remarkably woven through the annals of history, using the lineage of lowly women, tracing back from Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba and finally to Mary, the mother of Jesus. A powerful message reverberates time and again, that God uses the lowly and humble to shame the proud and mighty. Throughout the gospels, Jesus is seen as a humble Son of God who constantly and persistently championed the rights of the weaker and marginalised sections of the society.

When He was just a child, while Jesus was talking to a crowd, His mother and brothers stood outside wanting to speak to Him. When someone mentioned this to Him, He replied, "Who are my mother and father, brothers or sisters?" He then laid down only one condition—the 'one who does the will of the Father' (Matthew 12:46-50). It is not, therefore, how well we are connected in society that brings us recognition from God, but how well we follow the will of God that gives us the connectivity to His heavenly network.

His victory over evil was legendary at every stage of His ministry, beginning with the temptations in the wilderness and culminating at the high point of His crucifixion. Throughout, He fought injustices and prejudices to set high standards for society to emulate. From the protection of the

woman caught in adultery, to the clemency granted to the repentant thief on the cross, Jesus' actions speak volumes about His redemptive hope for lost sinners.

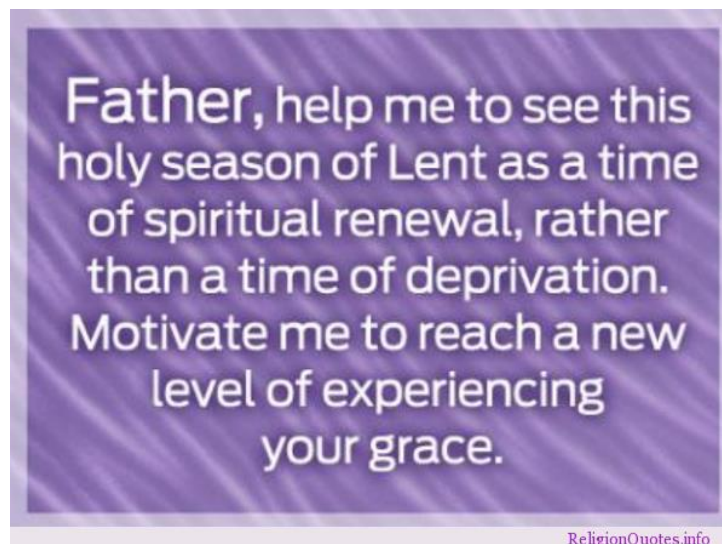
In short, Jesus defeated many evil doers:

- ❖ The teachers of the law, religious leaders at every occasion conceded a humiliating defeat. It is a challenge to break out of the mould for our religious leaders as well.
- ❖ Pilate, the governor declared Jesus innocent and yet handed Him over to be crucified. His utter helplessness to administer justice showcases our present-day secular leaders.
- ❖ The grave could not hold Him down even in death as He rose again on the third day. No pandemic can terrify a child of God. This is great comfort indeed.
- ❖ He will return again as judge to reign for a millennium. What a glorious privilege for His children! All people are to turn from their wicked ways and follow Jesus as a role model.

Therefore, let us not feel sad about Jesus' suffering. He truly sacrificed Himself to give us victory over evil doers and wicked rulers. He championed the cause for justice to all. He defeated death and paid the penalty for sin. It is our privilege to enjoy the kingdom of God on earth. Let's showcase the victorious life of Christ and live each moment in faithful obedience.



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.



Yeshua's Healing Love—Expect the Unexpected



Mrs Yashodhra Desappa

Let us go back in time, to the Garden of Gethsemane. There is a hush, as Jesus has just finished the High Priestly prayer, where His sweat was like drops of blood. Just a few days earlier, the people were shouting Baruch Haba as Jesus triumphantly entered Jerusalem. Now the stillness of the night is pierced by the raucous sound, of some members of that crowd, egged on by the High Priest, demanding for the arrest of Jesus.

The time had come, for the terrifying deed of carrying the sins of the world and dying in our place. In the midst of the chaos, stands Jesus, a perfect example of control. He shows us what meekness truly is.

Jesus calmly asks “Whom seek ye?” They reply, “Jesus of Nazareth”. When Jesus says, “I am He”, the crowd falls backwards, by the power of His Words.

In the ensuing scuffle, the ever-impetuous Peter, draws out his sword and cuts off the ear of Malchus, servant of the High Priest, whose name is mentioned only in John's Gospel. Jesus rebukes Peter saying, “He who lives by the sword, will perish by the sword”. Perhaps, Peter never forgot this rebuke for there is no record of him ever raising his sword again. Only John mentions Peter's name, and the Gospel of John, was written after Peter's death. The other three gospel writers could have left out the name of Peter, maybe out of Christian charity to Peter, whose name could be tarnished because of this incident, perhaps because Peter was alive, when the other three gospels were written.

Like blind Bartimaeus, Malchus experienced the healing love of Jesus. This was perhaps the last physical healing, of our Saviour before His crucifixion.

Jesus extends His grace on the servant of the man who thirsted for His blood. There lay Malchus on the ground, writhing in pain, blood oozing out, maybe thinking that he would be maimed for life. Incredulously, he witnesses the healing hand of Jesus, reaching out, even to him, a servant, crossing all barriers of race or position. Here, we perceive Jesus as love personified.

We do not know the impact of the miracle on Malchus. Malchus could have had a life-changing experience or he could have brushed this incident aside as just something that happened in a flash. Society could have marginalised him, but Jesus' love is all inclusive.

We know that Malchus did not do anything that we can emulate but, everywhere the Crucifixion is mentioned, his name will be remembered. Perhaps, he had done something good, for His name to be immortalised. Despite his lack of expectations, he did receive unexpected healing from Jesus.

As Jehovah Rapha, healing was an integral part of the ministry of Yeshua. It is His nature to set right, things that are wrong.

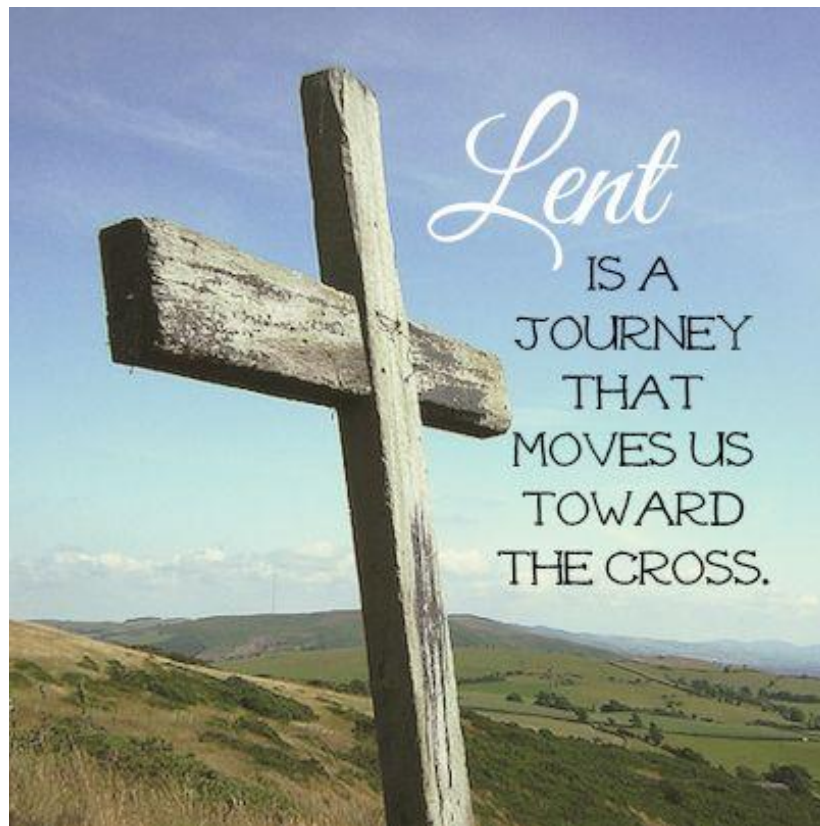
We too can be channels of love, when we put aside, swords of hatred and division. It's not an easy task, but then again, when we make the right decision to choose Jesus, we can turn our foes to friends.

We can be released from slavery and bondage to sin and catapulted to eternal life.

Thanks to Jesus, we too can expect the unexpected with the healing love of Yeshua.



Mrs Yashodhra Desappa, Ambassador for Christ, Pastorate Committee Member and Business Woman.



What Next?



Ms Chris Nidhi Anthea

Each of us had our own way of making the lent season yet another special one— a memorable one in our lives by having our unique ways of expressing our devotion to our Lord. However, now that we have come to an end of the Lent season and are celebrating the risen Lord, are we going to go back to how we were before these 40-45 days of giving special importance to our spiritual growth and relationship with God?

After Jesus' death, the disciples went back to fish, first Simon Peter, and then the others too joined Him (John 21). The disciples then went back to where they were staying. We could also mention that the disciples probably went back doubting, afraid, confused trying to figure out, what's next? They still did not understand from the Scriptures that Jesus had to rise from the dead.

We could be in the same state of mind asking ourselves what's next? Last Lenten season (2021), was one of the most difficult times that I've been through, as it was that phase of my life when I had to choose my life partner. After going through a few tough experiences, I had almost given up on finding someone I would actually love and who would love me for who I am and not just a compromise, considering only the exterior factors, such as job, money, education and family background, which are usually given utmost importance in our society.

I cried to the Lord during this precious season every single day, asking God to show me who that person is before Easter and remove the anxiety I was going through for the past few years. And God, like a loving Father, answered my prayers exactly as I desired and led me to that person for which I can never be thankful enough to Him. He has been so faithful to have been so mindful of the smallest things I asked for in my life partner.

Once my prayers were answered, that was not it. We had to sincerely work towards building our relationship every single day and that's what is expected of us to work on our relationship with our Lord every day. His sacrifice on the cross has made it possible for us to have the privilege of going to Him with boldness and placing everything in His care. Our God is not a distant God who just looks at us from far above, but a personal God who is interested in every single detail of our lives. He looks into our hearts and minds and knows every small emotion we go through. He feels proud of our achievements, He grieves at our struggles and disappointments, He holds us in His arms when we cry out to Him, and listens to our problems when we go to Him with a burden that we've been carrying. He cares for us, looks out for us, and in His own precious and perfect time, makes all things beautiful. We need to only be STILL and KNOW THAT HE IS GOD.

All glory and honour to our loving Father.



Ms Chris Nidhi Anthea is a passionate teacher. She is an active member in the Church and has been teaching in the Sunday School and is also a part of the Youth Fellowship.

A Canadian Easter



Mrs Nargis Abraham

Music from the phone alarm makes her open one sleepy eye and look out the window. Dawn is struggling through grey rain. Why did she wake up early? Then she remembers. It is Easter Sunday.

George is already in the kitchen. “It’s a miserable morning. Are you sure you want to go to this outdoor service?”

“Yes, of course. What’s a little rain?”

Easter is not Easter without a sunrise service. They have been in Canada for some years, but every Easter she wishes for the early morning joy of resurrection. The Lord rose early in the morning, and she yearns to rise with Him on Easter. She scans the community newspaper for any church willing to wake up and rejoice. Her heart leaps with joy when she finds it. “The Anglican Church will conduct a Sunrise Service at 6 am on Easter Sunday April 20 at the Rocky Point pier. All are welcome.”

She thinks of Easter back home. Mid-April must be really hot. On her phone, the weather for Hyderabad evening is thirty-eight degrees Celsius. She is happy to be away from the intense heat. If only she could see the sunrise over the mountains.

“We should leave now.” George’s voice reminds her of today’s mission. “Coming!” She puts on a cardigan.

They drive the short distance through empty streets. The rain has eased, but the grey persists. A breeze adds a chill. They park the car in an empty lot — at least that’s one plus advantage of coming to the park very early.

A fine drizzle coats their heads. At the end of the pier, a handful of people stand around, some clutching Bibles, others with umbrellas. A clerical collar peeps from under a jacket — that’s how she identifies the pastor. His smile barely disguises the surprise in his eyes that says, who are these strangers braving the cold? But his tone is friendly. “Welcome!”

George goes up to the pastor. “Hi! We’re here for the Easter service.”

A woman steps forward. “Here’s the bulletin. I’m the sextant. And the vicar’s wife.” She smiles. “We’re a small congregation.”

The grey sky deepens, obliterating hopes of seeing a sunrise.

The pastor clears his throat. “Welcome to our Easter service. The Lord is risen.” The handful of voices respond enthusiastically: “He is risen indeed!”

An Easter hymn is announced. A grey-haired man steps forward with a guitar. Bulletin sheets rustle to the page. George sings lustily. The outdoor air mutes the intensity of the music. As the pastor starts his sermon, the drizzle turns into rain. Umbrellas unfurl. The small group huddles closer. She pulls the hood of her winter coat over her head. Under hoods and umbrellas, heads bow and eyes close. A closing prayer, a last hymn.

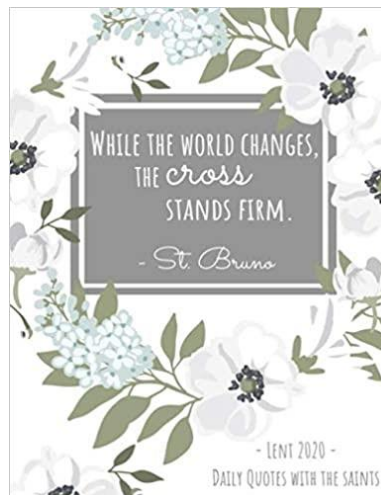
“The Lord is risen. Go in peace.” Smiling faces wish each other. “Have a good one.”

It is still raining. They head back to the car.

“Let’s go out for breakfast.” She voices the rumbles in her stomach. Visions of hearty omelettes and steaming hot coffee dance in her head. All this rain is making her hungry. Happy Easter!



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



A Word of Assurance



Late Mrs Bessie John

(This is an extract from late Mrs Bessie John's personal Bible Study notes.)

A careful study of the last seven words Jesus spoke on the cross shows us a close relationship between the first and second words. The first word was a prayer for His enemies and the second was an answer to that prayer—a word of assurance to the repentant dying, “Today you will be with me in paradise”.

A student once asked his professor, “Why was only one thief saved, when Christ prayed for all His enemies?”. The answer is simple. Only one thief repented and accepted Christ as Lord and Master. So, too, today, the gospel is meant for everyone but only some accept Jesus as Lord and saviour.

Why did God allow His son to die between two criminals? He did have a reason. Isaiah 53 says, “He was numbered among the transgressors”. Hence, the prophecy was fulfilled. The death of Jesus had to demonstrate all the shame, sorrow and penalty attached to sin.

The authorities deliberately crucified Jesus between two thieves to humiliate Him before the crowd. Hanging on the cross for some time, the effect of the drugged wine would have worn off and the pain must have been intense. The crowd must have been in a frenzy, as they mocked and reviled Him. Against this background, we see the request of the dying sinner, who was being put to death for robbery and insurrection. At that time, thieves and brigands mixed murder with robberies. There was actually no difference between these two thieves. Both were immoral, reviled Jesus and heaped insults on Him. Perhaps, one of them read the inscription above which read “Jesus, King of the Jews” and in view of all that he had seen and heard, realised the truth of what it meant. He was gripped with fear and repented, confessing that there was justice in the punishment he was receiving, but injustice in the treatment given to Jesus.

Our Lord was in wretched company. His crucifixion was a grim sight, in the presence of hardened criminals. The penitent thief said “Jesus, Lord”. Perhaps, he saw in Jesus both the human and the divine and recognised Him as His Lord and saviour. He also believed in Christ's resurrection.

How strong was his faith! All three victims were dying, so it was inconceivable that he expected Jesus to descend from the cross and erect an earthly kingdom. But this thief recognised Christ's heavenly kingdom—a kingdom beyond the grave. He was able to see the crown behind the cross and accepted Jesus when others did not, and made it a public confession.

The 3 crosses were similar. The method of death was the same. Yet, how vast a difference!

We see:

The cross of rebellion

The cross of repentance

The cross of redemption

Jesus told the repentant thief “Verily” meaning, certainly. This was indeed a word of assurance to the thief, since Jesus accepted the sinner immediately.

He also said “today”— not tomorrow or after you join a community. A sinner is pardoned and cleansed at once.

Jesus said, “With me” — this thief must have walked with Jesus into the presence of the Father.

“Paradise.” The thief who was not fit to live on earth by the Roman law, was invited to live in paradise with Jesus.

Just think of it!

“Today thou shalt be with me in paradise.”

TODAY: What speed!

WITH ME: What company!

IN PARADISE: What a place!



A Tribute



Mrs Bessie John
1932-2021

Mrs Bessie John was born in Madras, the eldest of 8 siblings. She used to be a good tennis player in her youth. She was also an exceptional piano player and had many students. She was one of the founder members of the Anna Nagar Methodist church, a unit of the Emmanuel Methodist Church, Chennai. It was here that she played the piano for the services over several years. She was an active member of the Women's Fellowship, as well as the choir. She was also a member of the Madras Musical Association and took part in concerts in places like Coventry, England and Sydney, Australia.

After relocating to Hyderabad in 2002, she tried 2 other local churches but when she started attending St John the Baptist Church, Secunderabad she truly found her home church. She became active in the choir and women's meetings. She had a talent for organising games and quizzes. She made many friends wherever she went. She was an active member of several groups in the city like Dobara and the YWCA. She served 4 terms as President of her flat association in the city.

Mrs Bessie John was also a strict disciplinarian and expected punctuality from everyone. She always had a positive outlook towards every situation. She was appreciative of nature and knew the names of several birds and flowers. She loved reading, playing the piano and doing crossword puzzles. She would go out of her way to talk to strangers, to make them comfortable. She used to greet friends and family on their birthdays, first thing in the morning. She did her own Bible study and filled many books with her thoughts.

All in all, hers was a life well-lived. I thank God for giving her a long and healthy life.



Compiled by her daughter Dr Carol Ann Reddy also an active member of the Church of St John the Baptist, Secunderabad

A Tribute



Mrs J Kamala Paul

Jakkula Kamala was born on August 14, 1937 to Jakkula John and Karunamma, in Meerut town of Uttar Pradesh. She was the fourth among the five children. On 28 August, 1963, she was married to Geddam Luther Paul, youngest son of Rev. Geddam Luther Daniel and Vajramma.

God and the church were a priority for the couple. They were a God-fearing, simple, humble, loving and affectionate couple, well loved by their relatives and friends. They were always dependent on Jesus for all their problems and successes. They lived in Secunderabad and raised a daughter and three sons. They never had great ambitions— all they wanted was that their children should have a good education and that they should be raised according to God's ways.

Thaamarani meaning Lotus — a loving pet name given by her parents, was God-fearing, hardworking, kind, loving wife, mother, mother-in-law and grandmother. Our Lord Jesus Christ was her Father and the centre of her life. She was a prayer warrior and would always first approach our Lord for any problem or need and would advise her children to pray to Him for help.

Kamala worked as an English teacher at Zilla Parishad Government High School, Bollaram, Secunderabad, until she retired. Her family was everything and meant the world to her and nothing else. Kamala was the pillar of our home.

She was a caring, compassionate, and independent lady who never wanted to become a burden on anyone. She took pride in her grandchildren's achievements and would constantly pray for them and their well-being. She was a very courageous and determined woman and a true prayer warrior. And she always prayed.... prayer was her main ministry. She taught us the power of prayer and the importance of having a daily routine of family prayer and reading the Bible. She was indeed an example and inspiration to our family.

She leaves a legacy of love. We will always remember her for her generosity, compassion, and caring personality, for her respectful attitude toward others, for her openness of mind and for her loyalty to and support to those who were dear to her. She will forever be remembered for the things that she loved to do, as well as for the love that she spread to others, through her kind gestures. While she may not be with us physically today, her loving spirit will remain in our hearts forever and because of what Jesus did on the cross for us we have the hope to see her again in Heaven.

She is dearly missed by family and friends.



Compiled by loving family members.

Report ~ Men's Fellowship (January – March 2022)



Mr P Francis Augustine

After the Christmas break, December 1, 2021 to January 10, 2022, our Men's Fellowship commenced its weekly meetings from January 11, 2022 and continued up to March 1 2022, when we took time off for the Lenten season. During this period, we had eight online meetings through the Zoom app every Tuesday from 7-8:30 p.m. When we commenced our first meeting in the New Year, the Covid Wave 3 (fortunately a milder variant of its predecessors) was at its peak and by the end of February '22 it was well under control, by the grace of God and all the restrictions were slowly being withdrawn in our country.

Our weekly meetings were conducted according to our well-established pattern, which included an opening prayer, two hymns, intercessory prayers, scripture reading with a brief message, including a lively interaction and discussion, a Bible quiz contest among the participants, followed by the closing prayer and benediction, usually by our Pastor Rev. K J Cecil Victor. The messages were generally delivered by our Pastor and occasionally by some senior members of our fellowship, including, Dr M A David, Dr G S Gandhi, Mr P E Kishore Kumar, Mr M Israel and Rev. Anugraha Ivan of Wesley Church.

The *Bible quiz* is one of the most interesting items in our fellowship programme. We completed all the four gospels and the book of Acts in the year 2021 and, after careful, consideration and deliberations, the Fellowship decided to follow the CSI Almanac and have the quiz on the Old Testament and New Testament daily readings recommended for each week Accordingly, the book of Leviticus and part of Ezekiel in the Old Testament were completed during this period. Only the Epistles and Revelation in the New Testament were taken up for the quiz, because the other books had already been completed.

The quiz consists of 12 questions and 4 jumbled up biblical words. The participants are divided into 4 groups with 3 participants in each group, according to the attendance for the day. Generally, Mr Jason Wilson conducts the quiz with great interest and commitment. This is apart from the WhatsApp-based quiz he conducts on the daily Scriptures from the CSI Almanac. We are grateful to him for his support and abiding interest in the Fellowship.

Messages from the word of God are the heart and soul of our programme. All the participants look forward to the messages and are greatly blessed and benefited by them. This report covers only a short period of less than two months sandwiched between two major festivals of our Christian faith. We commenced our first fellowship meeting with the message from raising of the dead son

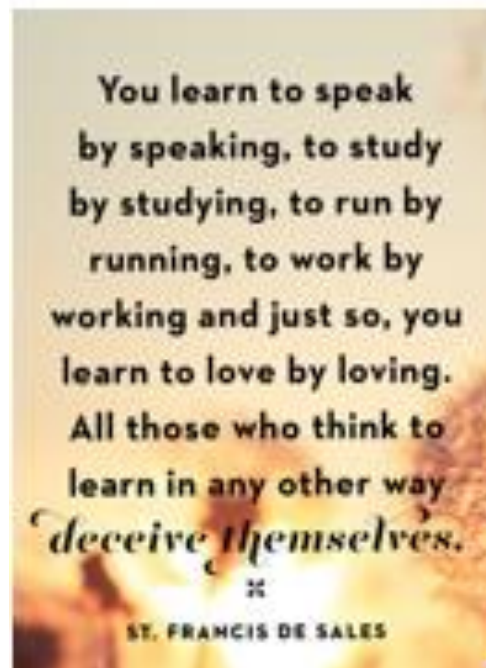
of the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11-17) which reassured us that our Lord and Saviour will guide, guard and lead us in the New Year. The last meeting was on the eve of the Ash Wednesday, wherein we were reminded that the Lenten period offering spiritual renewal to every believer through confession, repentance, forgiveness and restoration (Joel 2:12-14).

Lent is indeed a spring time for our spiritual renewal, which demands sacrificial and prayerful living and also giving. The other messages dealt with God's hatred for false worship and hypocrisy (Amos 5:21-24), lessons from the contrasting personalities of David and Doeg (1 Samuel 22 : 6-23), Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath (Mathew 12 :9-14), all about faith and its inseparable relation to grace and healing (Hebrew 11:1-5) with examples, insights from Jesus' statement after washing the feet of His disciples, "Now that you know these things, you will be blessed, if you do them" (John 13:17) and the prayer of Jesus for church unity (John 17:20-23).

Although many members of our fellowship individually shoulder different responsibilities in the church, the fellowship does not have any worthwhile contribution of its own in a collective manner. One reason for this, is the poor membership strength and second is the prevalence of Covid for the last nearly 2 years. We continue to pray for increased membership and the active participation of all the members. The Covid wave also appears to be retreating. We hope to overcome these constraints and become a vibrant instrument for the glory of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.



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 St John's Church for more than 25 years.



Women's Fellowship Report

As Another Year Began...



Mrs Angelina Clement

Praise and thanks to God our Saviour for another blessed year in the life of the Women's Fellowship of St John the Baptist Church.

I bring warm greetings in the mighty name of our Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ and thank our gracious God for His unmerited favour, unlimited mercy and abounding grace. We have had a hard year and are struggling to feel positive about what might be next but we have learnt that through Christ all things are possible. No matter what 2022 holds for us, Christ will walk alongside us to help us to move forward in our lives.

We ushered in the New Year with hope for a better tomorrow and are looking forward to a healthier and safer world.

THIRTY-ONE DAYS OF THANKS

Global Thank You Month

As January is considered as *Global Thank You Month*, to make the best use of this celebration, we bestowed our gratitude on our great God. We could spend the whole month learning about gratitude from Psalm 136.

Weekly Fellowship Meets

Women's Fellowship virtual meetings continued as in the previous year. Meetings are scheduled on Thursdays at 6:30 pm every week. We resumed our meetings after the Christmas break on January 13, 2022 with the following theme verses.

"I will never break my covenant with you." Judges 2:1

"They shall be my people and I will be their God." Jeremiah 24:7

These verses are a timely New Year reminder that God calls us to a life which is a two-way relationship. He belongs to us with mercy which never wavers and we must belong to Him with an obedience which never slackens. Our covenant with Him is a wonderful blessing that God has offered. It is summed up in His words: "They shall be my people and I will be their God."

And we must be God's people, through and through. Our love for our Saviour must have its roots deep within us. Our thoughts and actions must belong to Him, but, far above everything else, we must love Him in the depths of our hearts and be thankful. Nothing less will do.

Rejoice that God is ours.

Resolve that we will be His.

What better way to start off a New Year than to concentrate on conveying gratitude to our Lord Jesus Christ? Our Presbyterian-in-charge Rev James Cecil Victor shared a spirit-filled and enlightening message.

Our fellowship meetings include Praise and Worship, Scripture Reading and the Word of God, shared by our members or guest speakers. We spend time in intercessory prayers, sharing testimonies and learn the scriptures in depth through games and quizzes. Heart touching devotions are posted every morning to reflect, introspect and pray.

Prayer Chain Warriors Group

Our God is good all the time, usually it is tomorrow that fills people with fear but our God is in our tomorrow. All the tomorrows in our lives have to pass through Him, before they get to us. We spend quality time in offering our requests and petitions at the throne of His grace, sharing the burdens of others through our prayers. Prayer requests are posted in the prayer chain group, seeking God's divine healing and blessings on the sick and suffering, and many of our prayers are answered.

International Women's Day

THEME: GENDER EQUALITY TODAY FOR A SUSTAINABLE TOMORROW

We celebrated Women's Day on March 13, which was all about unity, respect and advocacy. This year's theme gives us an unmissable opportunity to have a voice and be equal partners in decision making for sustainable development and better gender equality.

Rev. Deacon Ms Sumalatha shared an inspiring and enlightening message based on the theme.

The lovely ladies of our Women's fellowship were draped in shades of blue, signifying the theme and presented a song titled '*Wonderful, Merciful Saviour*'.

World Day of Prayer

The World Day of Prayer was observed as a special worship service during our weekly Lenten service on March 23, 2022. The order of service prepared by the women of England, Wales and Northern Ireland was followed. The theme chosen for the service was, "God's promise to His people in exile in Babylon found in Jeremiah 29:11".

For I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Jeremiah 29:11

PRIOR PREPARATION

A banner was prepared as sent by the WDP committee. The pulpit was decorated in the flag colours of these three countries. A table was arranged in the centre and various things like indigenous food, art work and crafts used in England, Wales and N. Ireland were placed on it. All the women participating in the service were draped in floral printed sarees accessorised with pearls and beads.

ORDER OF SERVICE

The introduction of the prayer service, the prayers and benediction were offered by our Presbyter in charge Rev. James Cecil Victor.

The entire service was led by the members of Women's Fellowship.

We gathered to celebrate Hope by lighting seven candles on behalf of the seven regions of the world, knowing that our prayerful action can bring to life the promise of God who cares for us all.

Rev. Deacon Sumalatha Pastorama gave the background information of these countries and lit the candle of hope.

We are given a seed of hope to ponder where it needs to be planted in our lives and in our communities. We considered this as a great opportunity to raise awareness on the needs of our community and offered gifts of prayers and commitment. Mrs Sujatha Madhukar, our Sunday school Superintendent, offered the prayer of hope and commitment.

The Bible passage from the Old Testament was a part of a letter from Jeremiah, setting out God's plan for the exiles, the Psalm reading was about the relationship between the omniscient and omnipresent God and His creation and the Gospel Reading was about Peter's confession. Mrs Hannah Augustine, Mrs Kavitha Chandrasekhar and Mrs Mercy Sam Roy read the Word of God.

The Women's Fellowship President, Mrs Suhasini Cecil lit the candle of hope and shared a very inspiring and a thought-provoking message on one of the heart-touching questions that Jesus asked and also on the importance of prayer.

We presented a prayer filled song titled, "Our Father, hear our prayer". Mrs Sarah Allan and Mrs Vijaya Mary offered the prayers of confession.

There are times in our lives when we find ourselves in situations, where we do not want to be. Sometimes, like the exiles in Babylon, we cannot see a way forward and long for God to intervene, when God does, it is often in ways that we could never have imagined and not at all as we expected. There are many people who have settled in the British Isles after having fled from their homeland and culture. In the land of prosperity, there are those who are poor and in the midst of crowded cities many are lonely.

Mrs Rina Ratnam, Mrs Anna Alexander and Mrs Vinolia Pauline lit the candles of hope and shared the testimonies of three women from England, Wales and N. Ireland, telling us what it means to feel excluded, living in difficult situations and how God's plan for them have blessed them in unexpected ways.

Mrs Manjula Krishnan offered the prayers of intercession, a spiritual gift given to all of us. We lifted up others in prayer and offered our requests and petitions at the throne of His grace. We praised and thanked God for sending His Son our Saviour Jesus Christ to love, heal and forgive us. It was so amazing that we were able to join other sisters in Christ as we worshipped the Lord through a beautiful song titled “Because He Lives”.

Mrs Sulochana James offered a prayer for the people of Ukraine, who are suffering as the crisis in Ukraine deteriorates, people who are fearful and anxious, those who are bereaved, injured and those who lost their lives.

Mrs Sushma John offered the prayer of thanksgiving, thanking God for the assurance of His divine guidance, faithfulness, protection and for His unfailing love.

The theme painting was created by the artist Angie Fox from Derby England who used several images to depict the key words. As the WDP 2022 Painting expressed, we the women of our church are empowered by Jesus’ call to act in love for freedom, peace and justice and pray for world peace.

Let us allow Christ to reign and rule over our lives, submitting to His authority and plan and trust Him to help us in whatever we need while we move forward.

The onus to take the message of God forward, is onto our shoulders,
If we obey the voice of our hearts,
We can conquer the doubts that put us down, for we will for sure transform,
As with each passing day, God within us increase.

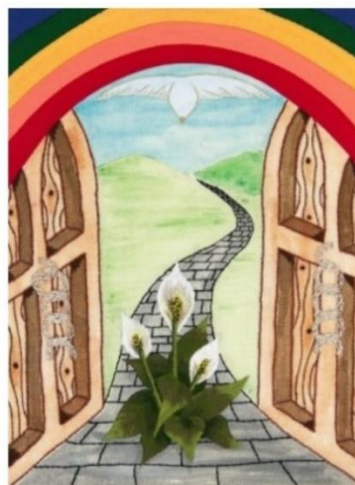
May our good Lord help us to look beyond our current troubles and see the glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever. Amen.

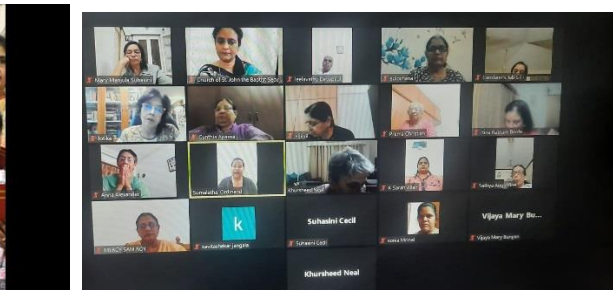


Mrs Angelina Clement has over 25 years of teaching experience and is working with the English Department at St. Andrew’s School. She is currently serving as the Secretary for the Women’s Fellowship at Church of St John the Baptist and is passionate about doing God’s ministry.

“I Know the
Plans I have for
You”

Artwork by Angie Fox (artist)
- Explanation
Freedom: open door to a
pathway across an endless
open vista
Justice: broken chains God’s
Peace and
Forgiveness: the dove of
peace and a peace lily
breaking through the
pavement
Love: rainbow, a symbol of
the overarching love of God.





Sunday School Report January to March 2022



Mrs Sujatha Madhukar

“Nurture them in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”(Ephesians 6:4)

Sunday school reopened on January 9, 2022 after the Christmas vacation.

Our Sunday school team consists of 120 children, 13 teachers and the Praise and Worship team with 7 members, led by Ms Nikhitha Sherlyn.

The Beginners class (ages 3-5) has 17 children and is taught by highly enthusiastic and creative teachers Ms Nidhi Clement, Mrs Sneha Joel Siriki and Mrs Sweety Raj Kumar.

Primary class (ages 6-8) has 33 children and is taught by Mrs Lucy Samuel, Mrs Candita Hephzibah and Mrs Rama Varghese. The active and energetic children are taught with visual aids and activities.

Juniors' class (ages 9-11) has 28 children and is taught by Mrs Julie Hudson and Mrs Sheba Mridula Philip Sagar. Their boundless energy is harnessed with the use of audio-visual aids and creative activities.

Intermediate class (ages 12-14) has 26 children and is taught by Ms Joyce Thompson, Dr Grace Sunder and Mrs Junia Sucharitha. The teachers take great personal care to give the right guidance to help each child grow spiritually.

Seniors class (ages 15 - 16) has 16 children and is taught by Mrs Usha Manohar and Mrs Sujatha Madhukar. As our Seniors will be the future adult members of the church the spiritual growth of these youthful youngsters is nurtured prayerfully, with the help of relevant videos.

During the lockdown, the Sunday school classes were taken Online and some of the children from other churches; from cities like Bangalore, Delhi, Chennai and Bikaner and even countries outside India like Dubai, USA joined. For all these children, the corresponding student workbooks were couriered to their places to enable them to follow the lessons.

Our Sunday school children participated in competitions conducted by CSI Department of Christian Education like Eco Video competitions, dancing and singing.

CSI Medak Diocese, conducted a *Slogan Writing* competition for *National Girl Child Day* on February 7, 2022. Our Juniors, Inters and Seniors children participated in the competition.

As the Covid cases increased from February, online classes are being conducted for Inters and Seniors.

Our teachers completed the assigned Sunday School syllabus and Annual Examinations were conducted for their respective classes.

We celebrated our Sunday school Annual day on March 20, 2022, after the service in our Church. The Annual day Programme started with the Opening prayer by Pastorama, Rev. Deacon Sumalatha.

Ms Nikhitha Sherlyn led the children in Praise and Worship by singing beautiful songs. The children enjoyed the songs, as they had the physical singing session after a long time.

The Sunday school Superintendent Mrs Sujatha Madhukar gave a brief report on the Sunday school activities conducted in the year June 13, 2021 to March 19, 2022.

The Hon. Pastorate Secretary Dr M Udaia Kumar shared greetings and encouraged the children. He explained the importance of the attributes of a pencil and related this to life— face challenges, erase incorrect things that happen, cleanse bad behaviour and leave a mark, just like a pencil does. He asked the children to praise and thank God and communicate the lessons they have learned in life to others.

Greetings were shared by Bishop Rev. Surya Prakash. He asked children to remember three things in life Devabhimanam, Desabhimanam and Sevabhimanam i.e., Devotion towards God, Country and work.

Our Sunday school teachers sang a beautiful song thanking God for all the things He has done with a grateful heart.

Pastorama, Mrs Suhasini Cecil Victor, reminded us of all the activities done by our Sunday school children and appreciated them while sharing the greetings.

Pastor Rev. K James Cecil Victor gave an inspiring devotion by describing the life of Hudson Taylor and explained in detail how things will happen when we pray in faith. He asked the children to remember that our faith must be shown in our actions.

In the Cultural Programme:

The Beginners performed an action song ‘He is God —God the creator King’. The Primary class presented a “Show and Tell” of few lessons they learnt during the academic year these included Tool box, Stories from Book of Acts, Fruits of the Spirit, Prayer — 5-finger prayer and a missionary story on the life of William Carey. This was followed by a choreographed song ‘God is watching Over You’.

The Juniors presented a short introduction and a conversation about being thankful and remembering everything that the Lord has done followed by a choreographed song ‘I Like to Think About the Goodness of the Lord and Lift My Hands in Praise’.

This year, the Inters meditated on the Book of Acts, which beautifully captures the execution of the great commission leading to the establishment of the early Church and spreading of the gospel to remote corners of the world.

The Inters were taught about the relentless efforts of the Apostles, especially those of Peter and Paul, to spread the gospel in the first century and the boldness with which they proclaimed the risen Christ. Their learning culminated in the form of skit performed on the Annual day, where children cheerfully enacted the historic conversion of Saul and, thereafter, his total commitment to Christ. They also performed a choreographed number on the song 'In Christ Alone'.

From the Seniors, Rahul Nathan Kenneth shared his testimony and he narrated how his life was transformed when he accepted Jesus as his personal Saviour. Joash Sherwin expressed his joy of being a Sunday school student and described how Sunday school was blessed and helped him in moulding his character.

The Seniors sang a song titled 'Still' to praise Lord Jesus.

First, Second, Third and consolation prizes were distributed for the First and Second Term activities, Annual Examination and Attendance. The Annual day programme was concluded by Carolyn Paul and Carine Benjamin.

Our teachers are highly committed and incredibly talented, sincere, spiritual towards God's work and lead the children prayerfully to Christ. I thank all the teachers for their relentless work in reaching the children and adopting innovative ways to create interest in children to learn God's word.

I thank our Pastor Rev. K James Cecil Victor, and Pastorama Mrs Suhasini Cecil Victor for encouraging our Sunday school team and for their constant prayer support.

I thank Hon. Secretary Dr M Udaia Kumar, Hon. Treasurer Norman Isaac and Pastorate committee members for cooperating with us and accepting all our proposals.

I am very grateful to all the parents of our Sunday school children for encouraging their children to attend the Online Sunday school classes regularly.

I thank Mr Raj Kumar and Mr Sumanth Kumar for making all the arrangements for the Annual day programme and Mr Aaron Pranay and his team for helping us with the sound.

My sincere thanks to Mr Philip, our church sexton and his wife Mrs Rani Philip for their untiring work in making arrangements for this programme.

I praise and thank God for being with us and helping us conduct the classes and various events this academic year and guiding us to teach the Word to our Sunday school children. I request our members to uphold our Sunday school children and Sunday school team in your prayers.

All glory to God only.



Mrs S Mary Sujatha Madhukar is a Chemistry lecturer @ Nrupatunva Junior College. She is the Sunday school Superintendent at church of St John the Baptist, Secunderabad.

Pictures of Sunday School Events





Greetings by Dr M Udaia Kumar Hon. Secretary



Greetings by Bishop. Rev. Surya Prakash



Greetings by Mrs Suhasini Cecil Pastoramma



Greetings by Rev. Deacon Sumalatha



Devotion by Rev. K. James Cecil Victor



Beginners



Primary Class





Teachers' Special Song

Juniors Class





Inters



Seniors



Prizes for the Annual Exam and Attendance



Jingle Carnival Prizes



Jenica Arlene – Beginners – Special Prize



Anush David – Primary – Second Prize



Joanna Joel Siriki – Juniors - First Prize



Carol Singing – Consolation Prize



Dr Grace Sunder, Jingle Carnival Carol Singing -Team Leader



Ms Nikhitha Sherlyn, Praise and Worship Team Leader



Jennifer Hadassah, Designer – Online Invitations



The Teachers' Team



Carolyn Paul and Carine Benjamin

Testimonies by Senior Class Children



Joash Sherwin

I am Joash Sherwin from the Senior Sunday School class, in St John the Baptist Church, Hyderabad. Sunday School has played very significant role in my life. It helped me grow in Christ, and has shaped my character and personality in Him.

This being my last year in Sunday School, I am grateful to God for blessing me with this place, where I made amazing friends, had great teachers, participated in many activities, made so many memories to cherish but, most importantly, I learnt more about the love of Jesus Christ and about the Bible. It helped me accept Jesus Christ as my personal savior and follow Him.

Sunday School gave me many opportunities to show my potential and develop skills. I am sure these experiences will always be useful in my life. I have also discovered my love and passion for music and I feel so blessed to be part of the worship team and praise God every Sunday. My regular school has never been a good place for me but Sunday School has always been my comfort place and I always looked forward to it every Sunday.

During these three years, I learnt how to strengthen my relationship with God and learnt about the challenges I will come across in my life and how to overcome them with the help of God. I also learnt about the history of the books of the Bible and how it is still valuable and helpful today. I learnt many more amazing lessons taught by my teachers.

I thank my teachers Mary Sujatha Aunty and Usha Manohar aunty for making lessons interesting, interactive and creative. I cannot forget thanking God for all my Sunday School teachers who taught me right from my beginner class. I am indeed grateful to all of them too. They have put in a lot of effort every week and I am really thankful for them as these lessons will always be useful in my life. I thank God once again for blessing me with Sunday School and I will always remember the lessons I have been taught and cherish the memories I have made.



Rahul Nathan Kenneth

My name is Rahul Nathan Kenneth and I am from the Senior's Sunday School Class, St John the Baptist Church. I have been attending Sunday school at Church of St John the Baptist since 2006. I come from a family of doctors and educators.

My journey in Sunday School has made me spiritually strong. I know that our Lord Jesus has a purpose in everyone's life. So, I believe that God has a purpose in my life, too. I have learnt many new songs, memory verses, Bible characters during my stay at Sunday school.

Christian faith becomes a reality when the lessons of the Bible inspire us to love God and to trust in God's guidance, which was possible attending Sunday school.

By nature, I was silent and introvert and didn't clearly express my thoughts and actions. But ever since I have accepted Christ as my Saviour, I became bold and expressive. The Christmas message that I gave in my aunt's house astonished my relatives and I give the credit for this credit to all my teachers who have taught me regularly at Sunday school. My interest in playing the mouth organ started when my grandfather gifted me his instrument. I gained confidence playing it and always felt God's presence with me.

Sunday school has been a learning, growing and serving process for me. I made many friends and involved myself in various activities at different events.

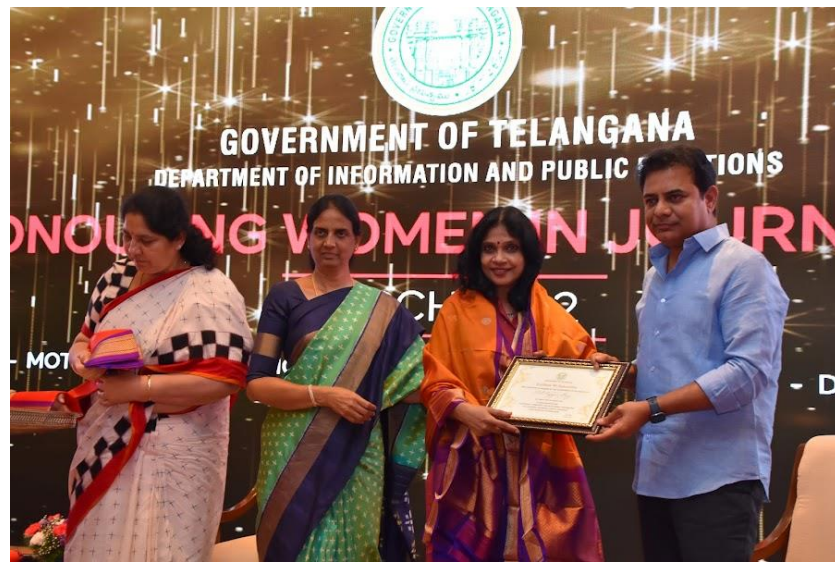
I do encourage my other younger brothers and sisters not to miss Sunday school as this is a place where we get to know more about God and the plans He has for our lives

I thank God for His many blessings and for my family, teachers, friends and well-wishers as God used them to make me the person I am today. Thank you one and all.

Achievements

Honour to a Woman Journalist

Mr K T Rama Rao, Minister for Municipal Administration and Urban Development, Government of Telangana, along with his cabinet colleagues P Sabitha Indra Reddy and Satyavathi Rathod felicitating S B Vijaya Mary, our church member and Senior Deputy Editor, The Hindu. She was honoured on the occasion of International Women's Day. Speaking on the occasion, Mr Rama Rao said that change in terms of gender equality should begin at home.



The Success Story of Anmol Manohar and Jacinth Manohar

From Ramakrishna Mission nursery to Rolls Royce, Anmol is leap frogging all the way to the top position as CEO of another aerospace company at UK. I wish to share the success story of my son, Anmol Manohar and his beloved wife Jacinth Manohar. It is not often that an Indian heads an international company. When such an event happens, it brings joy to the parents and the entire nation.

My son, Anmol Manohar Arava, has been offered the CEO's position by the outgoing CEO of the aerospace company, where he is presently the Chief Technical Officer. He is the leader of a consortium of 14 British Companies engaged in developing a Hydroelectric-based zero emission aero engine. If all goes well, Anmol will take over in 3 months as the CEO. In this endeavour, his pillar of support was and continues to be Jacinth, who did her Masters in finance at a Premier Institution at Cambridge and is now a brilliant finance analyst based in the United Kingdom.

Kindly pray and wish them well, so that Anmol has a smooth transition for the takeover, amply supported by Jacinth as his sheet anchor.



Compiled by Captain IN AJ Manohar, father of Anmol Manohar.



Spreading the Christmas Cheer~ Outreach

Compiled by Ms Sheeba Roy

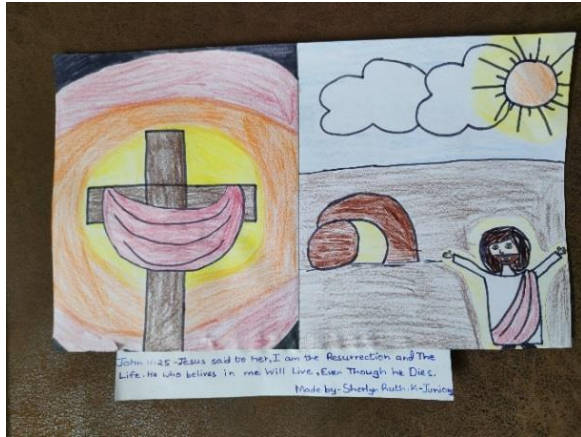
On December 16, 2021 Force of God [FOG] along with our Presbyterian-in-charge Rev. James Cecil Victor, Pastorama Mrs Suhasini Cecil and our church members visited the CSI HPD School for Deaf and Dumb at Armour, Nizamabad. The school is home to more than eighty boys and girls, most of whom are neglected or rejected by their parents. The staff at the school is well-versed in sign language and are committed to providing for these kids and educating them to become future leaders.

Post lunch, the students were all gathered in the dining hall, where the principal of the school formally welcomed us and invited Rev. Cecil to open with prayer and share his Christmas greeting for the kids followed by Mrs Suhasini Cecil. The FOG band then engaged the kids with praise and worship action songs followed by fun-filled and learning activities. The teachers and wardens also participated actively along with the kids. The high school students performed a few Christmas choreographies as part of the programme.

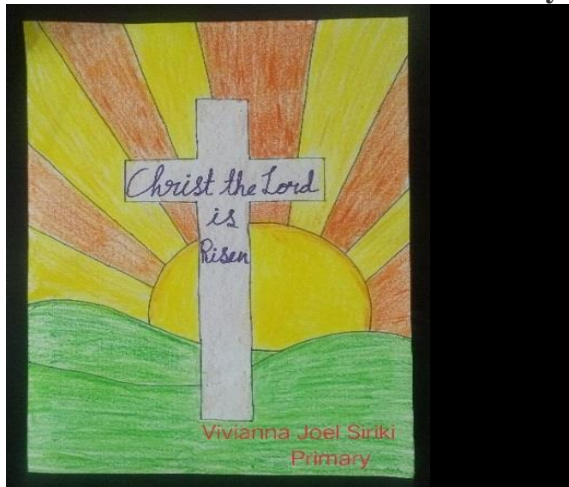
We would like to thank all the members of our church who donated and contributed for this cause. We were happy to bring Christmas and New Year greetings from the staff and students of CSI HPD School for Deaf and Dumb at Armour.



Sunday School - Art Work
Children are a heritage from the LORD - Psalm 127:3



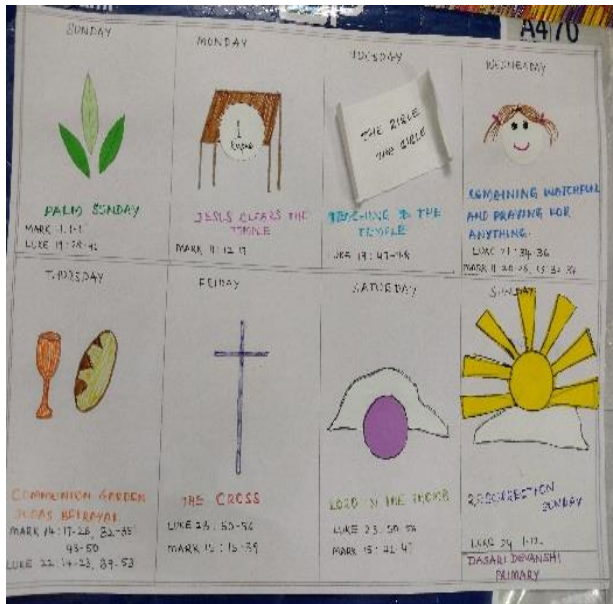
Sherlyn Ruth - Juniors



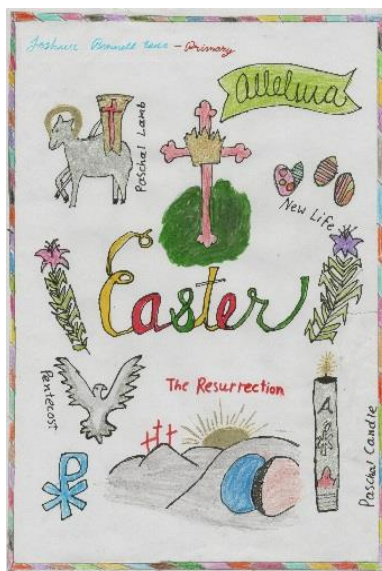
Vivianna Joel Siriki – Primary



Nathan Andrew Pabbathi - Beginners



Dasari Devanshi - Primary



Joshua Bennett Eeda - Primary

Easter Cross Craft



Ms Joanna Joel Siriki

With Easter just around the corner, I thought it would be a great idea to do a fun activity. Hope you try this out and have as much fun as I did, making the craft. You can also have a look at this link for more instructions.

<https://todayskidsmin.wordpress.com/2015/03/13/top-10-diy-christian-easter-crafts-for-kids/>

You will need:

- Paper Plate / A4 sheets or craft paper or coloured paper
- 2 brads or craft pins
- Colour pencils, sketch pens, anything of your choice to decorate the egg
- Scissors
- Glue

Procedure:

Cut 2 circles and a cross out of color paper.

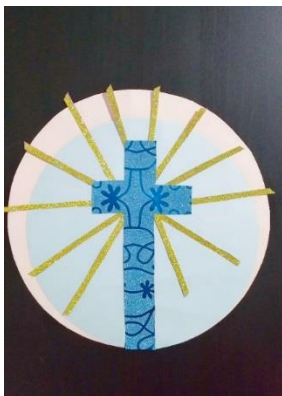
Cut an egg shape and decorate it according to your liking.

Glue the egg on one circle sheet we cut earlier and cut it in half along the center.

On the other circle, glue the cut out cross.

Secure the two pieces together using craft or brad pins.

You can now slide the easter egg open to see the cross.





Eggs are a symbol of new life. Easter eggs symbolise the rock tomb, or the empty tomb from which Jesus was resurrected. They are connected to the new life found in Jesus Christ at Easter where we rejoice in the abundance of God's love.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; The old is gone, the new has come! (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Wishing you all a very Happy Easter from my family to yours. Have a Blessed Easter.



Ms Joanna Joel Siriki is in Junior Sunday School class at church of St John the Baptist, Secunderabad




**Records - Church of St John the Baptist
January 2022 to March 2022**

Compiled by Mr Sumanth Kumar




Marriage Records



Date of marriage	Names of parties
03.01.22	<p align="center">Mr Uday Kumar Papathoti and Mrs Roopa Christeen Koppula</p> 

Death Records



Name of deceased member		Died on
Mrs Bessie John		28.12.21
Ms Prema Benjamin Masam Francis		7.02.22
Mrs G Nirmala		27.03.22

Bladder Tales-Urinary Tract Infections in the Elderly

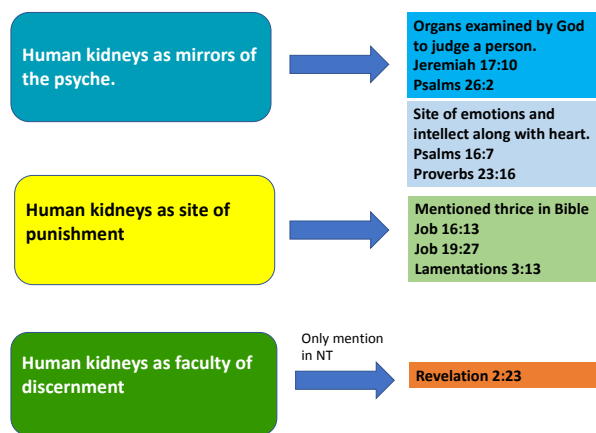


Dr Priyadarshini John



Greetings everyone. Praise be to our Lord Almighty as Exodus 15:26 and Deuteronomy 32:39 aptly proclaims that the ultimate physician and healer is He.

The term “kidneys” is mentioned more than 30 times in the Bible, including 11 times where it was cited in Pentateuch, mainly in connection with the instructions given for sacrificial offerings of animals. Later, translators of the King James Bible decided to use the word ‘reins’ to project the subsequent figurative use by poetic biblical scribes.



Urinary tract infections represent the tip of iceberg many a times, necessitating appropriate evaluation. The manifestation of these infections varies in different age groups. I will discuss these under the “Bladder tales” series.

As a part of this series, I want to emphasise in this issue about urinary tract infections (UTI) in geriatric population (older people). UTI is one of the most commonly diagnosed infections in older adults. I will discuss this important topic under the following headings

- What comprises the Urinary Tract?
- What are the risk factors for UTI?
- What are the causes of UTI?
- What are the symptoms of UTI?
- Diagnosis of UTI
- Management of UTI
- Can UTI be prevented?

What comprises the urinary tract?

Urinary tract ensures the elimination of metabolic products and toxic wastes generated in the kidneys.

The urinary tract is divided into two parts. The upper urinary tract, includes the kidneys and ureters. The lower urinary tract, includes the bladder and urethra. The kidneys remove waste and extra fluid from the blood to make urine. The urine flows from the kidneys through the ureters to the bladder. It is stored in the bladder until it leaves the body through the urethra. The process of constant urine flow in the upper urinary tract and intermittent elimination from the lower urinary tract plays a crucially important part in cleansing the urinary tract and ridding it of microbes that might have already gained access.

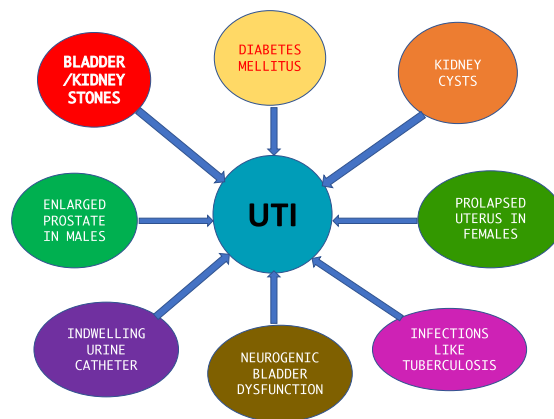
Understanding the urine (micturition) cycle is imperative to understand actually why urine infections happen. The micturition cycle is best thought of as two distinct phases:

- Urine storage/bladder filling
- Voiding/bladder emptying

The normal function of the bladder is to store urine until it has reached capacity and it is socially acceptable to evacuate urine. Typically, a healthy adult's bladder capacity is approximately 350-450 ml.

The two main factors responsible for micturition is **compliance and continence**. Compliance implies the capacity of bladder to hold the urine and continence implies the ability of the bladder muscles and sphincters to relax during the time of voiding. Impaired compliance and continence cause stasis of urine in the bladder, which serves as nidus, or a focal point for bacteria to grow. When the infection is restricted to the bladder the condition is called *Cystitis* and when the bacteria ascend back to

What are the risk factors for UTI?



What are the symptoms of UTI?

Lower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS) are categorised as symptoms related to storage and voiding.

Storage: Storage symptoms, experienced during the bladder filling and storage phase of urine, include:

- Urgency: A sudden compelling desire to pass urine that is difficult to defer
- Daytime frequency: A patient's perception that he voids too often by day
- Nocturia: The need to wake at night one or more times to void
- Incontinence: Involuntary leakage

Voiding: Voiding symptoms are those experienced at the time of urine flow and include:

- Slow stream: The individual's perception of reduced urine flow, usually compared with previous performance and, sometimes, compared with observations of other males. Splitting or spraying of the urine stream may also be reported
- Intermittent stream or intermittency: Urine flow that stops and starts, on one or more occasions, during micturition
- Hesitancy: Difficulty in initiating micturition, resulting in a delay in the onset of voiding after the individual is ready to pass urine
- Straining to void: An abdominal muscular effort used to initiate, maintain, or improve the urinary stream
- Terminal dribble: Prolongation of the final part of micturition, when the flow has slowed to a trickle/dribble
- Dysuria: Pain, burning sensation, or general discomfort at the time of passing urine

Post-micturition: Post-micturition symptoms include:

- A sensation of incomplete emptying after passing urine
- Post-micturition dribble—the involuntary loss of urine shortly following urination, usually after leaving the toilet

A patient with UTI can present any of the above symptoms and gives the clinician the clue whether the problem is with storage or the voiding part of the urine cycle.

Cystitis: Urine infection restricted to bladder

- Fever with chills
- Burning during urination
- Pain in lower abdomen/suprapubic area
- Turbid urine
- Foul smelling urine
- Blood in the urine

Pyelonephritis: Urine infection ascending to the kidney

- More sick
- Fever with chills
- Burning during urination
- Increased frequency of urine with urgency
- Pain in the loin
- Pus in the urine(pyuria)

- Blood in the urine

What is recurrent UTI?

Recurrent UTI is defined as more than four episodes of UTI in a 12-month period. In elderly males, this may be indicative of recurrent bacterial prostatitis.

Diagnosis of UTI requires the following four components

- Clinical symptoms
- Laboratory evidence of pyuria and bacteriuria (based on urine culture). (Collecting urine is key. Midstream voided specimens are accurate)
- Systemic inflammation (e.g., fever/hypothermia, raised WBC or CRP)
- The absence of another infection or non-infectious process to which the patient's symptoms can be readily attributed
- Imaging is done when there is suspicion of obstruction of the urinary tract. Ultrasound abdomen-pelvis and Plain CT abdomen pelvis aid in confirmation of diagnosis

Management of UTI:

- Cystitis is treated for 7-10 days with appropriate antibiotics
- Pyelonephritis is treated for 14 days, preferably with intravenous antibiotics, after which documentation of sterile cultures is mandatory
- Surgical intervention by stenting to relieve the obstruction of collecting system if present

Can UTI be prevented?

The following are the measures to prevent UTI:

- Addressing the incontinence and impaired compliance of bladder
- Strict control of sugars in diabetic patients
- Adequate hydration
- Appropriate antibiotic prophylaxis in recurrent UTI
- Intra-vaginal oestrogen in post-menopausal woman
- Resection of prostate in symptomatic prostate enlargement

Take home message:

Assessment of UTI can be challenging in elderly individuals. Treatment of recurrent UTI warrants a detailed assessment of the risk-factors to guide treatment

Appropriate preventive measures are the best tactic to alleviate the burden of recurrent UTIs.



Dr Priyadarshini John, Consultant Nephrologist and Renal transplant Physician, AIG Hospitals, Hyderabad.

May You Be Blessed with God's Eternal Love And Peace

HAVE A BLESSED EASTER

HE HAS RISEN INDEED!

**THE PASTOR AND
THE PASTORATE COMMITTEE**



Please share your feedback with the editorial team, email at

parishmessenger@stjohnscsi.org