



Church of South India, Diocese of Medak

Church Of St John The Baptist

SECUNDERABAD

ESTD:1813



RESURRECTION AND LIFE



The Parish Messenger
Easter Edition, 2023

Church of St John the Baptist
Church of South India, Diocese of Medak

THE PARISH MESSENGER



Cover designed by Ms Mesa Neria Aroha Clementia

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From the Editor's Desk

We are pleased to bring out the Easter 2023 Edition of the St John's Parish Messenger with news, views, reviews, and insights. We, in the Editorial Team, are elated with the feedback we've been receiving from St John's Parish and the positive response, each time we announce the next edition of the Parish Messenger. We will continue our endeavours to make the magazine as interactive as possible.

This time around we've announced a new feature 'Calendar of Events' which gives all the events planned for the year at a

glance.

Resurrection day is here again, and across the world Christians commemorate the day when Jesus conquered death and rose again. This, indeed, is the most important Christian festival because, while Jesus' birth was a precursor to His life and, subsequent, crucifixion, it was His death and rising again in flesh and spirit that led to the birth of Christianity.

The period immediately after the Resurrection—how Christianity spread across remotest part of the world starting from a small nucleus of 12 simple, uneducated, but courageous and inspired apostles is fascinating. How did these early followers become so energised, emboldened, and enlightened to conquer all odds and even face imprisonment and death to spread the Good News about Jesus' life, death, and resurrection? Of course, they were aided along the way by strong personalities like Paul, who preached about Jesus, — aggressively opening the doors to non-Jews and Gentiles to become Christians. The essence of the message was: "Love God and love you neighbour".

Over 2000 years later, the Good News continues to spread even today, perhaps less aggressively. We also need to acknowledge that several people are turning away from the Church.

We need to accept that it is not only through preaching and evangelism that we spread the good news. Some of us may have that calling and may go all out to do so. However, it is equally, if not more important that we reflect Christian values in our lives. Are we good Christians in the way we talk, move, and behave in society? Do our lives reflect the simple and powerful message of the Beatitudes as preached by Jesus?

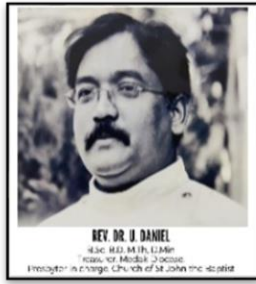
If we live by honest, upright principles and this is echoed in the way we interact with others at home, at our work place and in social gathering we are spreading the Good News! Christ has risen and lives in us. *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, in heaven."* (Matthew 5:16)

The Parish Messenger is a platform for all St John Parishioners to 'let their light shine.' We look forward to receiving more contributions and feedback from you.

Wishing you a blessed Easter.

Sheila J Kurian

Presbyter's Greetings



Rev. Dr U Daniel, Presbyter-in-Charge

I greet you in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I do hope you are all busy with the forty-day journey, during the Lenten season. Lent is the time to ponder on the sacrificial act of Jesus Christ, the Saviour who has incarnated into our lives, to save us from the bondage of sin. I appreciate your faith in our God Almighty. As we prepare to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord, let the power of resurrection bring in us an experience of a new creation in Christ Jesus and empower each one of us to be the light of the world.

A. Christ's resurrection insures our regeneration

Peter clearly connects Jesus' resurrection with our regeneration, or new birth. "Let us give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! Because of His great mercy, He gave us new life by raising Jesus Christ from death. This fills us with a living hope." (I Peter 1: 3). Peter says that we have been born anew to a living hope, through the resurrection of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

St Paul connects the resurrection of Christ with the spiritual power at work within us, when he tells the Ephesians he prays that they would know, "What is the immeasurable greatness of His power in us who believe, according to the working of His great might, which He accomplished in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and made Him sit at His right hand in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 1: 19-20). Paul explains that the power by which God raised Christ from the dead is the same power at work within us. And, he says we are buried in Christ's death and resurrected in the resurrection of our Saviour. (Roman 6: 4,11) The celebration of resurrection transforms us to demonstrate the mighty power of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus. While we all celebrate the resurrection of our Lord, we are also bound to celebrate our new life in Jesus the Saviour.

B. Christ's resurrection insures our justification

Paul says, "Jesus was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification. When Jesus Christ rose from the dead, it was God's declaration of approval of Christ's work of redemption. Because Christ humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on the cross. There was no penalty left to pay for sin, no more wrath of God to bear, no more guilt or liability to punishment, all has been completely paid for, no guilt remained. God has initiated His grace to sanctify us and redeem us and accept us as His children. In His suffering for us, in His atonement, death and resurrection He justifies us through His grace and invites us to be His Holy nation. (Roman 4: 25). We need to trust Him, obey His word, and witness His grace.



C. Christ’s resurrection ensures peace

Jesus Christ appeared several times. He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, who was worried and crying and searching for Jesus in the tomb. The resurrected Jesus appeared to her and said “Woman why are you crying?” The resurrected Jesus is available to comfort and console us. Therefore, let us not worry or feel insecure in our lives for the Lord is with us, He never leaves us alone.

When the disciples were afraid and gathered in a locked room, the resurrected Jesus appeared to them in the room and said “Peace be with you.” They were frightened, thinking they saw a spirit. Looking at their faithlessness, Jesus said to them “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds?” (Luke24:38)

The power of resurrection brought peace in the lives of the people who lost peace and created faith in fear and confusions in their lives. Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.” (John 11:25)

Let us celebrate Easter as the festival of new life, gifted by the Lord God who removes tears and give us peace and new strength.

Office bearers, Pastorate committee, all the conveners, area coordinators, Rev E. Sumalatha, and my family wish you all a Happy Easter, May the resurrected Lord fill you and your family with peace and abundant blessings. Amen.

Rev. Undunty Daniel, BSc, BD, M. Theology, (D Min) is the Treasurer Medak Diocese and Presbyter-in-Charge of Church of St John the Baptist, Secunderabad.



The Pastoral Committee conducted the Mid-Week Lenten Service on March 29,2023



Honorary Church Secretary's Message



Mr Mesa James Samuel, Hon Church Secretary

Dear family of St John's, we are in the season of Lent— and our Church is abuzz with lots of activities. What is Lent and why is it practiced by Christians? What does the Bible teach us about Lent?

The tradition of observing Lent through fasting and practicing self-discipline gives an individual the control over himself, which is required to purify his heart, renew his life, and draw him closer to the crucified Christ

Forty days of fasting and abstinence begins on Ash Wednesday and goes on until Easter. This helps people to prepare for the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ — that is Good Friday and Easter.

The Lenten Cottage Prayer Meetings that are held in our members' homes have evoked a good response and this brings families together in Prayer and Fellowship with one another. The Lenten Services which are held on Wednesdays in our Church are conducted by each of our fellowships. This enables our members to have a hands-on experience of how the Worship Service is held.

After the Ash Wednesday service, the Men's Fellowship conducted the first Lenten Worship Service on March 1, 2023. The Women's Fellowship conducted the Lenten Worship Service on March 8, 2023 and this also coincided with the International Women's Day. Our Special Speaker that day was Rev. Dr Jyothi Sunder, Presbyter, Wesley Church, Musheerabad. The Youth Fellowship conducted the Lenten Worship Service on March 15, 2023. The Sunday School conducted the Lenten Worship Service on March 22, 2023. The Pastorate Committee conducted the Lenten Worship Service on March 29, 2023.

The festival of Easter is the most important festival in the life of us Christians. Let us all strive to lead a transformed and renewed life year after year.

I would like to thank our editorial board members who have worked tirelessly overtime to bring out the Easter Edition of the Parish Messenger. God Bless us all!

Mr James Messa Samuel has been worshipping in St John's Church for over 50 years. He has held several posts in St John's Pastorate Committee. He is presently the Honorary Church Secretary. On the personal front he is doing real estate business in Hyderabad.



Men's Fellowship

(January – February 2023)



Mr P Francis Augustine

The Men's Fellowship of St John's CSI resumed their weekly meetings on January 11, 2023 after the Christmas break and continued up to February 21, 2023, after which we took a recess for the Lenten period. During this period, we conducted seven meetings (online) on Tuesdays from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

The format of the programme for above meetings included two hymns, opening– closing, intercessory prayers, scripture reading followed by a message and a well-contested Bible quiz, covering the recommended daily Bible readings for the week, as given in the CSI Almanac 2023.

The attendance for each meeting varied from a minimum of 12 to a maximum of 17 members, which has remained static for the last 2 years or more. We intend to have a relook at the format to make it short and welcome suggestions which may attract more members to the Fellowship.

Messages

Messages from the word of God is the most important item of our weekly programme.

During the brief period under report, we had some inspiring and incisive messages delivered by our Pastors/enlightened elders. In our first meeting, Rev. Rahul Edward (of Ramkote Wesley Church) advised our Fellowship to stand firm and work with commitment to the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58) and Brother P. E Kishore Kumar elaborated on the important elements and aspects of prayer (Matthew 6: 5–15). Dr Samson Gandhi bemoaned the present plight of our churches and called for incessant prayers to get rid of evils affecting the churches, such as litigations, corruption, personal sins (Matthew 21: 12– 17). Dr Anthony David highlighted the great qualities of King David in dealing with Abner (chief of Saul's Army) who helped in the smooth transition of power from Saul to King David, and yet, to the utter shock, grief and disapproval of King David (2 Samuel 3: 6-37) was killed by Joab (David's army commander) due to previous enmity. Rev. Sumalatha spoke about God's blessings on people that fear him (Psalms 103) and the last sermon was by Rev. Dr U Daniel on the Grace of God, that saves us sinners through faith from spiritual death (Ephesians 2: 2-10). This was a prelude sermon to the Lenten season.



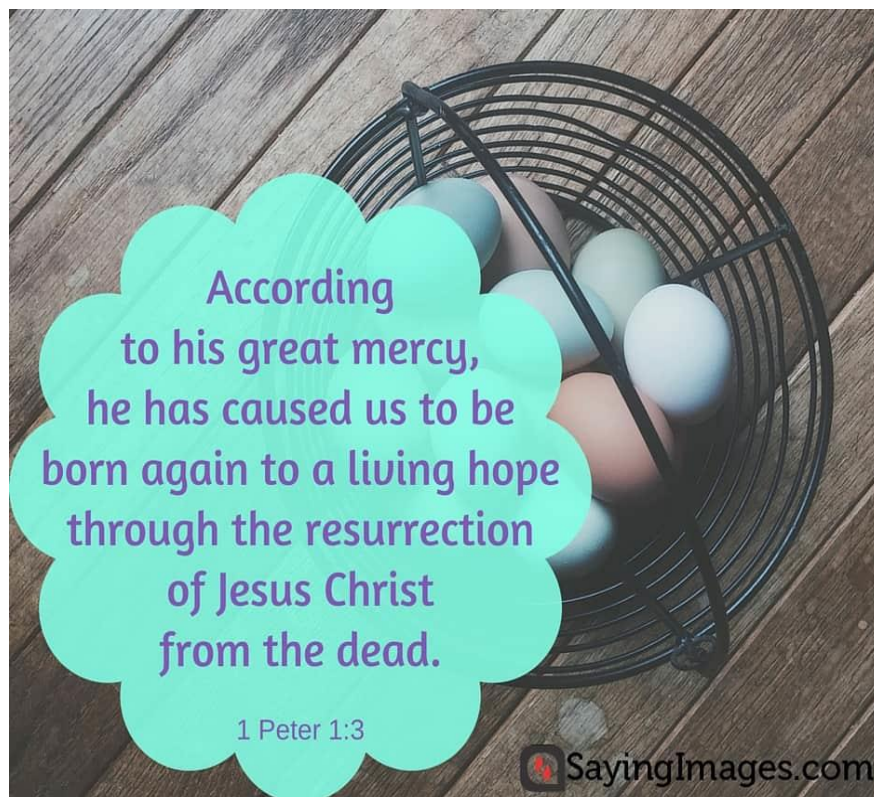
Lenten Season

The Lenten season offers an opportunity to each one of us to introspect, reflect, renew and revive our spiritual life and commitment to Christ who died on the cross for our sins — (Roman 6:10; Colossians 1:19–20; Hebrew 10: 1–10). The cross reminds us of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and is, therefore, a sign of our Lord Jesus Christ and serves as an epitome of our faith in Him. The Cross also signifies God’s love, suffering, sacrifice and victory over death. The focus during the Lenten season is, therefore on the cross. Self-denial is the pre-requisite for bearing/carrying the cross (Matthew 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23).

The vertical and horizontal posts in the cross, represent this concept of self-denial and the posts themselves indicate our relationship with God (vertical) and among the believers (horizontal). The Lenten season is the time for self-examination of our sinful nature, confession, penitence, and seeking God’s forgiveness. We are all prodigal sons, and God expects us to return to Him.

Let us remember that, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” (Roman 10:13).

Mr P F Augustine is a Geologist He worked in the Geological Survey of India, Government of India for 35 years, where he held the prestigious position of Deputy Director General before he retired. He has been a member of church of St John the Baptist for over 25 years.



Women's Fellowship

(January–March 2023)



Mrs Angelina Clement

I bring warm greetings in the mighty name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and thank our gracious God for His unmerited favour, unlimited mercy, and abounding grace. As another year begins, we, the members of the Women's Fellowship offer praise, heartfelt thanks and adoration to God our Saviour for another blessed year in our lives. The theme verse chosen for this year inspiration is as follows:

“But one thing I do,

Forgetting

Those things which are behind and reaching

Forward

To those things which are ahead

I press toward

The goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:13-14)

A time to forget

The dawning of a new year, provides an excellent opportunity to wipe the slate clean and make a fresh start. Those who know the Lord are able to do this in a way that has a special meaning. Remembering God's faithfulness and forgetting past mistakes, can make entering the new year a time of joyous anticipation.

The great 19th century preacher Henry Ward Beecher said, “We have passed through one more year. One more long stage in the journey of life, with its ascents and descents. Rocks and thorns and burdens that wear the shoulders, is done.

“The old year is dead. Roll it away. Let it go. God in His providence, has brought us out of it. It is gone....and now we stand at the beginning of the next, the new.”

We should leave the failures of this year behind us. Having confessed our sins to the Lord, let's accept His forgiveness and press on to higher ground.

As we move into the new year, we should pause and remember God's immense faithfulness and blessings during the past twelve months.

Belong to God deep in your heart

“I will never break my covenant with you.” (Judges 2:1)



“I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” (Jeremiah 31:33)

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. So, rejoice that God is ours and resolve that we will be His.

Give thanks

January is considered the Global **Thank you month**. What better way to start off a New Year than to concentrate on conveying gratitude to our Lord. We bestowed our gratitude on our great God for every day of this ‘special month’ for all the wonderful blessings He has showered on all our families.

Weekly virtual fellowship meets

Women’s Fellowship virtual meetings continued as in the previous year. Meetings are scheduled on Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. every week. We resumed our meetings on January 12, after the Christmas break. Rev. Dn. E Sumalatha Pastorama shared a spirit-filled and enlightened message.

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 too. All the tomorrows in our lives have to pass through Him before they get to us. We spend quality and blessed time in offering our requests and petitions at the throne of His grace, sharing everyone’s burdens through our prayers. Prayer requests are posted in the St John’s Prayer Chain Warrior group, seeking God’s divine healing and blessings on the sick and the suffering. We experienced miraculous healing and many of our prayers are answered.

World Day of Prayer 2023

The World Day of Prayer was observed as a special Worship Service during our Sunday Evening Service on March 5, 2023. The order of service was prepared by WDP committee of Taiwan. The theme verse chosen for the service was “I have heard about your faith” on Ephesians 1 :15-19. Paul gave thanks to God for the Ephesians, living out their love and faith, and sent this letter to a faith community to express his gratitude.

Prior Preparation

Banners were prepared as sent by the WDP committee. The altar was decorated with lilies and orchids and the pulpit was decorated in flag colors of Taiwan. A table was arranged in the centre and indigenous food was placed on it. All the women participating in the service were draped in flag colours of Taiwan accessorised with pearls and beads.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Call To Worship

The introduction of the prayer service, the lighting of the first candle of faith, the prayers and benediction were offered by our Presbyter-in- charge Rev. Dr U Daniel. The entire service was led by the members of Women’s Fellowship. We gathered to celebrate faith by lighting three candles of faith knowing that our prayerful and faithful action can bring to life the promise of



R

God, who cares for us all. Rev. Dn. Sumalatha Pastoramma offered the prayers of “Call to Worship” and lit the second candle of faith.

Prayer of confession

We acknowledged and confessed that we have sinned against God in thought, word and deed and offered the prayers of confession. Mrs Selena Sumanth, Mrs Manju David and Mrs Joylitha Dinesh offered the prayers of confession.

E

Scripture reading

The Bible passage from the New Testament, Ephesians 1:15-19 was read by our Women’s Fellowship president Mrs Rosy Chrisolite.

P

Sermon

Prayer is one of the dominant themes of the Bible. It is the way in which we develop a relationship with our Father in heaven. We presented a prayer-filled song titled “Pray without ceasing, pray.”

O

Our guest speaker for the day was Dr Y. S. Vimala Reddy, sister of former Chief minister Dr Y.S. Rajashekar Reddy and aunt of Chief minister of Andhra Pradesh Mr Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy. She is an itinerant evangelist, a Bible teacher at Haggai Institute and at present the president of CEEFI. Mrs Vimala Reddy lit the third candle of faith and shared a very inspiring and encouraging message on the importance of prayerfulness.

R

Letters of encouragement

The letters of encouragement sent to the women of Taiwan were read by Mrs Yashodhara Desappa, Dr Sravanthi Uday and Mrs Mercy Samroy.

T

Prayers of intercession

Mrs Sujatha Madhukar, Dr Govardhini, Mrs Sarah Allan and Mrs Manjari offered the prayers of intercession, a spiritual gift given to all of us. Mrs Geetha Lincoln and Mrs Kavitha Chandrashekhar offered prayers for the people of Ukraine and Syria.

S

Theme painting

The theme painting idea was created by the artist Hui -Wensaio from Taiwan, who used several motifs that highlight Taiwan’s best-known features, to express how the Christian faith brings peace and a new vision to Taiwan.

The women in the painting are sitting by a stream, praying silently, and looking up into the dark. Despite the uncertainty of the path ahead, they know that the salvation has come. The Mikado pheasant and the Black-faced spoonbill, the two endangered species, are both of unique significance to the Taiwanese people. Their distinctiveness symbolises characteristics of the Taiwanese people— confidence and perseverance, in times of difficulty. The green grass and orchids stand out against the dark background. They are the pride of Taiwan, which has a worldwide reputation as the “kingdom of orchids.” Green grass represents the Taiwanese as simple, confident, strong, and under God’s care. The artist hopes that people will know God better through her art.

God’s calling indeed has a meaning and a purpose. Often times, we are frustrated by difficulties and obstacles and may even lose hope and faith, or rely solely on our weak human nature. However, we are called to keep our belief in God’s kingdom and promises. Through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, we come to see our faithful, loving, and gracious God.



R

We regain our hope and faith to face the challenges and move forward. As written in Hebrews 11:1, “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen”.

The onus to take God’s message forward,

E

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 surely transform ourselves

P

As with each passing day.

God within us increases.

O

International women’s day

Digit all: innovation and technology for gender equality

R

We celebrated Women’s Day on March 8, in the midweek Lenten worship service led by the Women’s Fellowship. This year’s theme gives us an unmissable opportunity to have a voice and be equal partners in decision-making for sustainable development and gender equality.

T

We followed the order of Lenten service. The responsive reading and Epistle lesson were read by Mrs Hannah Augustine and Mrs Sushma Sharon. Our guest speaker was Rev. Mrs Jyothi Sunder, Presbyterian-in-charge, CSI Wesley church, Musheerabad. (It is worth mentioning that Pastorama had raised funds and renovated the 160-year-old Garrison Wesley Church, Trimulgherry. This is a beautiful white Gothic structure, with European architecture. Traditional lime mortar professionals were hired for the renovation, which should preserve the building for another 200 years. In recognition of this monumental work, she received the INTAC HERITAGE AWARD in 2015.)

S

Pastorama shared an enlightening message, vividly explaining how Christ’s sacrificial death, removed the barrier of the veil, thus making access possible for us and also, beautifully brought out this year’s theme, which is about how women’s leadership and collective action can make a difference to drive progress towards gender equality and empowerment.

The ladies of our fellowship, draped in shades of purple, presented the songs “King of my life, I crown thee now.” and “Redeemed how I love to proclaim it”.

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

Mrs Angelina Clement has over 35 years of teaching experience and is presently with the English Department at St Andrew’s School. She is currently the Secretary of the Women’s Fellowship at St John the Baptist Church and she and her three daughters are active members of the church.





Online Women's Fellowship virtual weekly meetings



International Women's Day



Announcements



Church of South India, Diocese of Medak
Church Of St. John The Baptist
SECUNDERABAD
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VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2023

SERVE ONE ANOTHER

GALATIANS 5:13

At St. John's Church High School, East Marredpally

29TH APRIL - 6TH MAY

7:30AM - 10:30AM



GAMES | WORSHIP | FUN | DEVOTION

Registration Fee: 100/- + On spot registration available as well!

Contact :

Grace Didla - 9989691977

Sheeba Roy - 9550735973



CHURCH OF SOUTH INDIA, DIOCESE OF MEDAK
CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST, SECUNDERABAD



celebrates
Annual Day - 2023

TIME: 5:30 pm
DATE: 15 April, 2023
VENUE: Church Annexe



P

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Parish News



HRH The Princess Royal and her husband Sir Timothy Laurence at the Wellington Cathedral of St Paul on February 16, 2023 — for the unveiling of the stone, commemorating the Mission to Seafarers and the Merchant Navy. Princess Anne visited the Cathedral in her capacity as the President to the Mission to Seafarers.

We are absolutely thrilled that our member Mesa Cassandra Samuel had the opportunity to greet and welcome the Princess Royal.

Cassandra serves as the Peoples Warden at the Wellington Cathedral of St Paul.

(Cassandra is the eldest daughter of our Church Secretary, Mesa James Samuel)



Mrs Yashodhra Desappa was felicitated, during the Lekhana Telangana Women's Day Celebrations, on the Theme 'Daughters of the Church,'.

(Mrs Desappa is our Church Steward, Prayer Warrior for Christ and an Entrepreneur)

N

Introducing New Members

(We are happy to welcome the following new families to the St John's Church fold.)

E

Cecil Victor Potharaju and family

Hello brothers and sisters in ChriSt I am Cecil Victor Potharaju, and I would like to introduce you to my family— my wife Neethi, our 1-year-old son Noah, and myself. We are excited and grateful to be part of this church community and are happy to share a little bit about ourselves with you.

W



Cecil Victor, Neethi and Noah

First and foremost, Jesus Christ has always been the light that guided us through every trial we faced. Through his faithfulness and mercies, we were able to overcome some of the most challenging moments in our lives. Daily, we look to His word for inspiration and guidance, and one of our favourite verses is Jeremiah 29:11, which says, "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".

M

As a family, we believe in the power of prayer and the promises in the Bible that offer hope and strength. Our faith journey led us to this community, and we're excited to play a role in the fulfilment of God's kingdom through his church. We are committed to serving the Lord and being a blessing to others.

E

Thank you for welcoming us into your congregation. We look forward to getting to know each of you and growing together in ChriSt May we continue to seek Him with all our hearts.

M

B

Ananth Sadhu Johnathan and family



Ananth Sadhu Johnathan and Monica

I started my career in the Mechanical stream and worked in this area for close to 5 years. I then switched to the IT(HR) field to fulfil God's purpose and plan 6 years ago. Since then, I have been worshipping in this spiritually edifying church, along with my family, which include my parents and sister's family.

E

R

Since my marriage in 2021, my wife Monica has joined me in worshipping here and we felt a strong need to become members of the St John's family a couple of months back.

S

As members, we feel humbled and privileged to grow spiritually and as a family in this 200-year-old church. In this process of our spiritual journey, we seek God's blessings as well as that of the congregation that worship here and above all, that of the ordained.



N

Dr P Prasanth and children

Greetings in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I am Dr P Prasanth, earlier a member of CSI St Mary's Church Khammam and now very happy to be a member of CSI St John's Church, Secunderabad.

E

I have been working as Principal Scientist in Horticulture at Floricultural Research Station, Rajendranagar, Hyderabad.

W



My wife, R. Sathvika, passed away in 2019. We are blessed with two children Samuel Aniv (son) and P. Stuthi (daughter) studying in Class 2 and Class 1, in Edify world School, Attapur. We are happy to be supported by my mother-in-law R. Rita Rani, Teacher (retired.)

I thank the Presbyter-in-charge, church's committee for accepting me and my family to be a part of the St John's church Family. I hope we receive abundant blessings and great association with this St John's church Family.

M

P Prasanth with son Samuel Aniv and daughter Stuthi

E

Nomula Sanjeev Kumar and family

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ! What a joy it is to worship in this historic church with the faithful.

M



Nomula Sanjeeva Kumar, Kaleshwaram Elizabeth and Suzanne

B

I work for Directorate General of Mines Safety, Ministry of Labour & Employment, Govt. of India. My wife, Kaleshwaram Elizabeth is presently not employed. The Lord has blessed us with a daughter, Suzanne, who studies in Class IV at Delhi Public School, Nacharam.

E

Recently, I had my church membership transferred from CNI, St Mary's Church, Dhanbad to CSI, St John the Baptist church, Secunderabad. I thank the Presbyter-in-charge, the church committee and all others for including us in the St John the Baptist church family. We are very happy to be associated with this church to worship the Lord along with my family and my loving parents.

R

S

I am sure that this church will be a source of blessing to my family and me. We hope to participate in all the church activities proactively.



Martin Basil Wood and family



Martin and Ruth Basil Wood and daughters, Clara and Myra

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ I am Martin Basil Wood working in the IT industry and my wife Ruth, is a home maker. We are blessed with two daughters. Our elder daughter, Clara Catherine, is 9 years old and our younger daughter, Myra Caroline is 6 years old. We are happy to be members of St John’s Church family.

Joseph Sheelam and Sunitha Thomson



Joseph Sheelam and Sunitha Thomson

I work as a Director, in a reputed IT firm in Hyderabad and my wife, Sunitha Thompson, works in a well-known bank as a Senior Process Executive. We live in Dundigal, Hyderabad. I am also a member of St Thomas SPG Telugu Church, Secunderabad and my wife and in-laws have been active members of St John’s Church since the early 90’s. We thank the Presbyter-in-charge and the church committee for giving us the opportunity to be also associated with St John’s Church!

Thank you and May God bless us all!

Professor Aaron Rajani Kanth and children



Prof. Aaron Rajani Kanth

I have completed a MSc, Bed., M.Phil. (Biochemistry) and M.Div. I am the Principal, APBC. My wife passed away recently. Our three children are all high achievers. The eldest son, Vivek completed his BTech from JNTU, Kukatpally and MS, from Georgia State University He works in New York and is presently pursuing one more MS. The second son, Vikas, has completed a BE from Osmania

and has an MS in Computer Science. He works for the Canadian Government in Halifax, Canada. Our daughter, Kedusha completed her MBA and worked for Google and Apple. She has recently moved to HR.



Vivek, Vikas and Kedusha

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“REJOICE, CLEOPAS!”



Dr M Anthony David

It was the first day of the week, after the tragedy. Our Master had died on the cross, enduring torture inflicted on Him by the merciless Roman soldiers.

Demas and I lived at Emmaus, around seven miles away from Jerusalem. We were with the group following Jesus, before tumultuous events overtook us. The Saviour we believed in, had been crucified mercilessly by the cruel Romans. Depressed and dejected, we gathered in the Upper room and commiserated with one another. What else could we do?

After the Sabbath, a few of the women surprised us. Having gone at sunrise to anoint Jesus' body with sweet spices, they returned saying that His body was not in the tomb. We were flummoxed! They also told us about the angels they had seen!

Peter and John ran to check out the truth and later reported to us that what the women said was true! We didn't, we couldn't believe! Could it be true that He was alive! We were totally in a dilemma.

“It's been a while since we went home”, I told Demas my friend, and we decided to leave.

We started the long walk to Emmaus after lunch. Naturally, we chatted about all the unusual happening, as we plodded home wearily. A stranger, who seemed to be going our way, appeared and we walked together.

“What are you talking about?” he asked. I replied sadly, “Do you not know what has been happening in Jerusalem in the past week?” When he replied in the negative, we narrated all the events of the day.

“There was a mighty prophet of God called, Jesus of Nazareth. He spoke like a true prophet of God and did good works. Unfortunately, our chief priests and rulers condemned Him to death and had Him crucified. He died and was buried. He was our hope, our deliverer, our Messiah!”

Later, a few women, went to His tomb early this morning and found it empty!”



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Then the man who was walking with began to speak. He said, “How foolish you are, brothers! You are slow to believe the prophecies of the Lord. Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer all these things and enter His glory?”

R

From the writings of the Prophets starting from Moses, he expounded facts, in a new light. We could get a glimmer of the fulfilling of the prophecies. By that time, we were nearing our home in Emmaus.

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As our new friend appeared to be going farther, we convinced him to stay the night with us saying, “The dusk is fast approaching”.

I

He came in with us, took the bread, prayed, and blessed it and broke it, to give to us. At that moment our eyes opened! He was the Lord Jesus Christ Himself! How blind we had been! Before our dull minds could comprehend this, He vanished from our sight!

C

“Cleopas, Cleopas,” exclaimed Demas, “did not our hearts burn as the Lord was expounding the scriptures to us on the road?”

L

“Indeed, Demas,” I replied, “Let us return at once to the Upper Room to share what happened to us with our brothers!”

E

Although it was dark and the way tough, we walked blithely all the way to the Upper Room in Jerusalem, all of seven miles. The moment they saw us, they exclaimed, “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon Peter.” We recounted our strange and thrilling experience to all of them. Even as we were talking, the Lord stood amidst us, saying “Shalom, Peace be to you all!”

S

Startled and fearful, some of us continued to disbelieve. He spoke kindly, reassuring us, and ate a piece of broiled fish in front of us. Demas exclaimed, “What a Saviour. It is true indeed! He is alive! Rejoice Cleopas!”

We sat down to listen again to the words of the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ that blessed day!

Dr M Anthony David, a creative communicator for Christ, teaches in a private medical college, for his bread and butter. He writes, preaches, facilitates, and counsels, all for the extension of God's kingdom.



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A Journey from a 'Womb to a Tomb'



Captain IN AJ Manohar

“When people are old enough to know better, they are old enough to do worse,” is a quote by Hesketh Pearson a British actor. This quote, in a nutshell, encapsulates all that happens or is likely to happen, at various stages of our life’s journey. Those who honestly pause and introspect at the crossroads and the pitstops of life, can certainly do a course correction and set their path towards reaching their goal. Others, risk the danger of getting buffeted like jetsam and flotsam and reach nowhere. Further, the lack of clear goals, make people drift aimlessly, till they are washed ashore like driftwood, at low tide.

The phases of life at infancy, childhood, teens and twenties, youth, middle age, elderly and old age are all important phases of one's journey, from the womb to the tomb. Any omissions or self-neglect will affect the next generation, too. Some common follies are the neglect of one's own health and, thus, becoming a liability to one’s own children, at a later stage. The root cause of this, is the seed of negligence in one's own diet, lack of exercise, lack of adequate nutrition, lack of rest and, most importantly, the lack of a positive mental attitude. The absence of positive mental attitude, accounts for a large percentage of mental health issues.

The course correction for enjoying good health must be set early in our life, if we wish to enjoy good health later, too. The apostle Paul demonstrated his goal in life with the simple maxim, “My life’s aim is forgetting what is behind and straining for what is ahead, I press on towards the goal...” (Philippians 3:13,14). This single-mindedness, is very important to save our resources of time, finances, and talent to pursue our goals, not lose focus and fritter away our lives on frivolous matters.

A simple matter of dressing up well is neglected by many despite the many benefits. Psychologists aver to the fact that, “When you look good you, feel good, as well”. One of the important and visible aspects of self-esteem, is being well-dressed and well-groomed, too. There is no better example than Queen Elizabeth who was the epitome of grace, beauty, and charming persona, which emerged from being well groomed and correctly attired too. Remember, however, that one doesn’t have to be rich to be well-groomed and neatly attired.

The other often neglected aspect is the making of a will for the next generation. Lack of clarity ruins relationships. The Church has the responsibility to address issues of elders through teaching/workshops and regular counselling.

What is the use of endless training without practical application? While gifting a rose on Senior Citizen's Sunday may make the elders feel special, our responsibility does not end there. Every



Church needs to set up counselling teams, especially for elders, as many are ill-equipped to face real challenges at the sunset of their lives.

This article aims to throw light on the problems faced by the elderly, in life's journey from the womb to the tomb. It is a wonderful idea for the Church to appoint area coordinators for this. A special effort is, however, needed by the coordinators to continue the good work started at Lent by continuing this effort throughout the year. No diocesan approval is needed for doing this good work to rehabilitate elders and guiding them to maintaining good health, and a positive attitude.

Let us not wait until Christmas for the care of elders to recommence. A shining example of elderly care with hospice facilities set up is found in the life of King David and in current times, in the life of President Jimmy Carter. Let us nurture elders in their journey from the womb to the tomb. The final destiny of all mortals on earth, is the tomb as our final resting place.

Jesus defeated death by rising from the Tomb. He assured us the same power to overcome sin and receive the gift of eternal life. Let us therefore focus our good works towards the care of elders this Easter and beyond and be abundantly blessed.

(Captain IN AJ Manohar has over 4 decades of experience in serving youth fellowships in many churches. He has been serving as a Children's leader in the Student's Programme of the Bible Study Fellowship International for many years.)



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Jesus our Hope: The Rope to Cope



Mrs Yashodhra Desappa

The books of the Old Testament point to the death of our Lord Jesus Christ and His Resurrection. The Gospels describe it in detail and the Epistles look back to it.

Many years ago, two men were crossing a river in a small boat. As the current was strong, they lost control of the boat and started hurtling towards a waterfall. People on the shore saw the struggle but could do nothing. One man in the boat saw a dead log floating nearby and grabbed it. Soon he was swept down the waterfall, to his death. The other man in the boat quickly got hold of a rope, thrown to him, by a man standing on the shore and was pulled to safety.

The boat of our life is floundering on the river of this world. The currents of sin are swirling our life out of control. We are fearful. All our *deeds* and our own efforts like the log, will only take us to eternal destruction, as Hebrews says without shedding of blood there is no remission for sin. Amid all the turmoils of life, if we hold on to the rope called Jesus, as He bridged the gap between God's wrath and judgement by His death on the cross and resurrection, we have the eternal *hope* of everlasting life.

Psychologists say that the need to belong is basic. God puts us in families and when we accept Jesus as our Saviour, we are adopted into God's family. God the judge declared us guilty, but Jesus took our punishment, on the cross, on our behalf. Jesus is our rope to cope.

The resurrection of Christ, said Selwyn Hughes, "is like a lighthouse in a storm-tossed sea of pain, and suffering, beaming out a powerful message of **Life** and **Hope**." His pain is our gain, as the resurrection shows us that pain and suffering are defeated enemies.

To the women, the angel said "Do not be afraid. He is risen". (Matthew 28:5-6) Job said "I know that my Redeemer lives"(Job 19:25). When we reach out to the Lord, with our hand of faith and cling to Him alone, He gives us the blessed hope, that we will live with Him eternally. Jesus said, "I am the Resurrection, he who believes in me will never die,"(John 11:25)

*"My hope is built on nothing else,
But Jesus' blood and righteousness,
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.*

*His oath, His covenant, His Blood,
Supports me in the whelming flood,
When all around my soul gives way,
He then is all my hope and stay.*

*When He shall come with trumpet sound,
O may I then in Him be found,
Dressed in His righteousness alone,
Faultless to stand before the throne.*

*On Christ the solid ground I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand.*

(Song by Robert Critchley)



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May we as God's people, know, that God's last word was not death but life. By His forgiveness and grace and our acceptance of Jesus, He fills us with the blessed hope of glorious, everlasting, and abundant life.

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

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“Father, Forgive Them”

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Mrs Prameela Sadanand

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Once again, we have entered the Lent season to remember the unspeakable love God showed towards humankind, to forgive and redeem them from their sins. At this juncture, let us examine the answers to some of the most important questions that are asked, to understand the depth of the sacrifice God made for us. These are:

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What is Crucifixion? To whom was this type of punishment given? Why was it given to Jesus? What does sacrifice mean? Why did God do it? Why is the death of Jesus considered a sacrifice?

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Crucifixion was a method of capital punishment used by the Roman Empire, reserved for those who rebel against their authority. Death by crucifixion was agonising. This punishment was given to Jesus, because it would have been a frightening and horrifying experience for His disciples and His followers to see their Messiah put to death in this cruel fashion. “Sacrifice” in this sense means giving something that is held valuable to God. As people were going astray from God, the Almighty God decided to sacrifice His only Son, to redeem them.

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“God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him may not perish but have eternal life”. (John 3:16) So, the death of Jesus on the cross was a sacrifice made for us.

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Jesus’ first words, on the cross, " Father, forgive them" may sound very unassuming, but these are the key words, subtly denoting the task of redemption He took on Himself. If we study the process of crucifixion performed by the Roman Empire deeply, we realise that our human intelligence is insufficient to understand the intensity of the agony that Jesus undertook to redeem us from our sins and forgive each one of us through the power of the cross.

Jesus, bearing His cross, patiently trod the path to Calvary to the hill named Golgotha, in Hebrew which looked like the human skull. This signifies the priceless sacrifice He made for us. Blood and sweat spilled from His pierced side and healed downtrodden lepers, countless sick people and even the stone-hearted Roman Centurion, who glorified God saying, "Certainly this was a righteous man "(Luke 23:47). The crown of thorns, mockingly put on His head by the Roman soldiers was transformed into a crown of glory, when He broke the chains of the grave on the day of the Resurrection.

This glorious sacrifice made an unrepeated history in the world.

So, let us all bow down our heads humbly with the realisation of the agony Jesus suffered to forgive our sins in the blood that flowed from the Calvary and thus uplifted us from our sinful lives.

Mrs B F Prameela Sadanand, BSc M Com, worked as Senior Accounts Manager in the Finance and Accounts Department, the Electronic Corporation of India Ltd., Cherlapalli, Hyderabad.



The Significance of Fasting in Lent



Dr Karunakar Rao

The meaning of Lent in Latin (*Quadragesima*) is ‘fortieth.’ The British changed it to ‘Lenten,’ meaning lengthening of days in the spring season, in preparation for growth.

Lent is a solemn religious observance in the Christian liturgical calendar, beginning on Ash Wednesday and ending with Good Friday (40 days, excluding Sundays). Perhaps, this was inspired by the account in the Gospels where Jesus retreated for 40 days into the wilderness to fast and to pray.

Religious experts believe that this tradition may have formally started amongst Christians after the first council meeting in Nicaea around AD 325.



The Purpose

Since most of us are busy with our routine schedules, Lent helps to correct ourselves and reconcile with God—through prayer, repentance, self-denial, and abstinence from desires, including food. Importantly, fasting keeps us alert, and improves our concentration on specific areas like prayer.

Fasting during Lent serves three purposes:

Spiritual—correcting our lives and reconciling with God, thus becoming closer to Him

Psychological—emotional correction and balance

General—promotion and restoration of one’s general health.

Fasting

In Indian scriptures, fasting is defined as ‘*Upavasam*’ which means, abstinence from routine life and certain foods and drinks for a period of time, for a specific purpose. It may be complete abstinence from certain foods, or partaking in a light diet. Some give up certain luxuries, or stop eating meat, to deny themselves.



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Examples of fasting in the Bible

- Jesus fasted for 40 days to prepare for His mission.
- Esther, urged her fellow Jews to fast for the redemption of God from the death sentence to the whole Jewish community. (Esther: 4:15-16)

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David fasted to seek God's healing for his sick child. (2 Samuel 12:14-16)

- Paul fasted 'often' (2 Corinthians 11:27). He fasted because he constantly felt the need for God's help in facing many trials, and fasting strengthened him spiritually.

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Cornelius, a righteous person, worshiped God with fasting. (Acts 10:30) Another righteous woman, Anna, "served God with fasting and prayers night and day." (Luke 2:36-37)

Spiritual benefit

Fasting helps us concentrate, be alert, increase our capacity for prayer and despite hunger pangs, it leads to self-realisation and learning God's truths and finally, there's repentance.

Importantly through reconciliation and restoration of our relationship with God, we find answers. Thus, prayer and meditation on the Word, prayer with fasting, improves our faith and draws us nearer to God.

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Jesus affirmed this when His disciples were not able to heal the epileptic boy. (Matthew 17:21)

Psychological benefit

Reportedly, fasting decreases aggressiveness, and increases patience, the ability to retrospect, forgive and adopt an adjusting nature.

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Health benefits (Physical)

Fasting controls blood sugar, by reducing insulin resistance. It enhances heart health, by decreasing cholesterol levels, high blood pressure and hypertension. It aids weight loss by limiting calorie intake, and boosting metabolism. (Immunity levels are enhanced, if we take citrus fruits during this period.)

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Fasting helps our body systems remove toxins at the tissue level, thus helping to cure some chronic illnesses. Periodical fasting, also delays the aging process and extends longevity. It also aids in cancer prevention and increases the effectiveness of chemotherapy.

Growth hormone secretion, vital for growth, metabolism and muscle strength is increased. Other potential benefits, include reducing bad cholesterol and excessive weight, thereby reduce high blood pressure, and heart disease.

Precautions and recommendations

Fasting should be periodical or occasional. During Lent the following are recommended:

- one full meal and two liquid juices / gruel, or two small meals, and a juice
- water should be taken at regular intervals.
- for diabetics / the elderly, small portions of food should be taken at regular intervals
- Others may take 300 millilitres of diluted juice every 4 hours
- working people may take fewer small meals at intervals or 300 millilitres of fruit juice every 4 hours
- rest and relaxation
- prayer and meditation
- besides regular medicines, strong antibiotics / medication should be not be prescribed
- a minimum meal is mandatory before taking medicines



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Finally, Lent, is an opportunity to spend time with a special schedule for 40 days every year, to correct our lives through repentance, reconciliation with God, our family and friends. It is also beneficial to get rid of the greed for food and a relief from routine health problems. Hence, this is useful for every Christian to follow it regularly, without thinking of any denominational concepts and differences.

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Dr Karunakara Rao, is an active member, St John's Baptist Church. He works as HOD for the Health Education Department, Sevabharat.

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Some Facts about Lent, Ash Wednesday, Easter

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Mrs Nargis Abraham

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The death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ form the basis of our Christian faith. We are amazed that Christ died to save us, but the fact that He rose from the dead is the foundation of Christian belief. From the earliest days of Christianity, believers sought to commemorate Christ's death and Resurrection.

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Early Christians observed two or three days of fasting and prayer, before celebrating the Resurrection, as recorded by Irenaeus of Lyons (130-200 CE). Fasting is mentioned 70 times in the Old Testament, notable being Moses' 40-days fast on Mount Sinai (Exodus 34:28). Fasting for 40 days, as Jesus did in the wilderness before He began His ministry (Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, and Luke 4:1-13), was in practice among Christians by the fourth century. By the time of the Council of Nicea (325 CE), 40 days of fasting was linked to the 40 days before commemorating the death and resurrection of Christ

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Because the 40-day fasting period occurs in March-April, it acquired the name "Lent," from 'lengthening (of days).' In Secunderabad, we barely notice the shortening of daylight time in November when the sun moves away southwards from the Tropic of Cancer. However, in colder regions including North India, Europe, North America, sunrise is distinctly later in the day and sunset is much earlier, making daytime very short. Daylight lengthens when the sun moves back in March.

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The start of Lent was moved from Sunday to Wednesday by Gregory the Great (540-640 CE) to achieve exact 40 days to Resurrection Day, excluding Sundays. On this day, Pope Gregory marked the foreheads of his parishioners with ashes, a symbol of repentance: "You are dust, and to dust you will return" (Genesis 3:19). The Old Testament frequently mentions covering the body with ashes to show anguish (2 Samuel 13-19, 1 Kings 20-41, Esther 4:1, Job 2:8, Isaiah 58:5, Jeremiah 6:26, Lamentations 3:16, to quote a few).

The date of Resurrection was established by the Council of Nicaea, which decreed that Easter should be observed on the first Sunday following the first full moon after the spring equinox (March 21). Easter, therefore, can fall on any Sunday between March 22 and April 25. Though early Christians commemorated Jesus' death and Resurrection on one day, that is, the evening before the day of Resurrection, the Council decided to commemorate Good Friday and Easter separately, with the day of Vigil in between.

Many churches now replace the term Easter with Resurrection Day, to distance themselves from non-Christian practices related to the Spring solstice, notably Easter eggs and bunnies. Eggs symbolise birth, and Spring season in the Western world is a time when the snow melts away



revealing the birth of fresh grass and budding plants. Though some say that the name “Easter” originates from Ostara, the pagan Anglo-Saxon goddess of spring and fertility, Christian researchers have established that the word comes from designating Holy Week as ‘in albis’, Latin for ‘dawn’, which translated in old German to ‘*eostarum*.’ We can therefore continue to use the word Easter to celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord.

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



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Celebrating the Resurrection



Dr Govardhini Chelapathy

The celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ has always been more meaningful and joyous to me than the Christmas celebrations which commemorate Jesus' birth.

It seems to me, that the birth of Jesus had to do with God's plan for the salvation of humankind. However, the Resurrection was, for us believers, to persevere in hope, and for unbelievers to come to believe in the hope of eternal life. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is by far, more filled with wonder, mysticism, amazement, and admiration. It is the most powerful event in human history to date, ever since it happened more than 2000 years ago. True, many people do not believe in the resurrection of Jesus, but then, many people do not believe in many things that are indisputable— for example, smoking increases the chances of dying from heart disease.

I am personally enamored by the sheer power of the Triune God, which raised Christ from the dead and even more enamored by the promised spiritual blessings, which come to every believer through the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ

Listed in the first chapter of Ephesians 1:3-1 the Apostle Paul gives powerful assurances to all in faith that a life 'In Christ' is to be most desired. The truth of belonging to God the Father as His fully adopted children, through faith in His beloved Son removes all insecurity and loneliness. To know that God predestined us in love, gives significant meaning and purpose to the life of those who live by faith in Jesus Christ.

The priceless gift of redemption from the kingdom of darkness, that comes with forgiveness of sin, means a life full of God's light. All of us, most especially the visually challenged, understand the relief and rejuvenation experience, when physical darkness is dispelled by light. How much more then to be given understanding of the knowledge of God through faith in Jesus Christ which dispels the darkness of one's sinful nature.

To know our creator, and to open up to His wisdom and power that brought us Salvation is truly liberating. Only then, worship in spirit and in truth is possible. The marvellous power of the resurrection is astounding and calming at the same time. The astonishment deepens as our understanding and growth in the word of God increases. Then calm and rest is assured for a life time as the Holy Spirit seals us in this sonship and brings us into our Heavenly inheritance.

Spiritual blessings are to be eagerly sought more now than ever before as the evil and wickedness in the world seem to be surfacing. To turn to Jesus for His saving grace and humble ourselves under His mighty but merciful hand is more desirable than falling into the hands of the Living God, the coming Judge.

Dr Govardhini Chelapathy has been an active member of St John's for over 10 years. She is committed to disciple the next generation for God's Kingdom. She is a paediatrician by profession.



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Important People from the Bible



Mr Nalli Vijaya Kumar

(The following is a meticulous and interesting compilation of names and brief description of those mentioned in the Old and New Testaments.)

Old Testament

1. **I AM** — Lord God, who created the universes. Triune God [the father]
2. **LUCIFER** —Satan, anti-God
3. **ADAM** —first man formed from the soil by God
4. **EVE** — first woman formed from the rib of Adam by God
5. **NOAH**—he lived in fellowship with God. God saved his family from the great flood that destroyed all living beings.
6. **ABRAHAM/ABRAM**—God made a covenant with him to make his descendants a great nation.
7. **SARAH/SARA**—wife of Abraham. God blessed her with a son at the age of 90.
8. **ISHMAEL**—the eldest son of Abraham, his mother was the Egyptian, Hagar (a slave, and handmaiden of Sarah)
9. **ISAAC** — promised son of Abraham and Sarah
10. **REBECCA** —wife of Isaac and mother of twin sons, Esau and Jacob
11. **JACOB/ ISRAEL**— son of Isaac. Father of 12 sons named after the 12 tribes of Israel
12. **JOSEPH** — Jacob's beloved son. He became governor of Egypt and saved people from severe famine of 7 years.
13. **MOSES** —God called him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt bondage to the Promised Land of Canaan. God gave Moses the Ten Commandments. (Moses is believed to have written the first five books of the Old Testament. Also known as the Pentateuch.)
14. **JOSHUA/HOSHEA**— the successor to Moses. He defeated many Kings of Canaan and divided the territory among the 12 tribes of Israel. He entered Canaan along with Caleb.
15. **SAMSON** — Manoah's promised son, dedicated as a Nazarite and one of the 17 judges of Israel
16. **RUTH** —she followed her mother-in-law, Naomi, to Jerusalem and later married Boaz, David's great grandfather.
17. **SAMUEL**—Hannah's son, dedicated to God. He was a powerful prophet and was the last judge of Israel.
18. **SAUL**—the first King of Israel anointed by Samuel. God later rejected him as King due to his disobedience.
19. **DAVID** — son of Jesse, a shepherd. He was chosen by God as the second King of Israel. He is known to have killed Goliath, a 3 meter-giant. He wrote the Psalms.
20. **SOLOMON** —son of David. The third King of Israel. God blessed him with great wisdom, wealth, and fame. He later turned away from God. God divided united Israel into 2



Kingdoms i.e., Israel and Judah; after his death. He wrote the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs.

21. **ELIJAH** —a prophet of Israel. He is believed to have stopped rain for 3 years. He killed 450 prophets of Baal. He is believed to have been taken up to heaven in a chariot of fire.
22. **ELISHA** —a prophet with the power of Elijah. He brought back to life, the dead son of a woman from Shunem. He cured Naman from a dreaded skin disease.
23. **EZRA** —an expert in the law of God, a counterpart of Nehemiah. He led the second group of Jews from exile to Jerusalem.
24. **NEHEMIAH** —the wine steward of Artaxerxes and emperor of Persia. He led the third group of exiles and completed rebuilding of the walls. Later he became governor of Jerusalem
25. **ESTHER** — was adopted by her uncle Mordecai, a captive from Jerusalem and rose to be the queen of Persia. She later, saved her uncle and the Jews from destruction plotted by Haman
26. **JOB** —a rich man, faithful to God. To test him, God permitted Satan to destroy 7 of his sons, 3 daughters, and all his wealth and also caused a terrible skin disease all over his body. As he continued to remain faithful all through these trials, God blessed him with twice as much as he had before
27. **ISAIAH**—a major prophet of Judah. He prophesied God’s revealed messages about Judah and Jerusalem.
28. **JEREMIAH** —a major prophet of Judah. He prophesied God revealed messages about the destruction of Judah. He wrote the book of Lamentations.
29. **EZEKIEL** —another major prophet of Judah. He prophesied God’s revealed messages to the exiles in Babylonia and the people of Jerusalem.
30. **DANIEL/BELTESHAZZAR**— a major prophet. He was taken to Babylonia as an exile at the age of 16. He revealed and interpreted the dreams of King Nebuchadnezzar and was put in charge of the province of Babylonia and head of royal advisors. God saved him from the Lion’s pit.
31. **HOSEA** —a minor prophet of Israel. He condemned pagan worship and idolatry in Israel and prophesied God’s promise of new life for Israel.
32. **JOEL**—a minor prophet. He prophesied the terrible invasion of locusts, drought in Palestine and God’s call to repent, and the promise of restoration and to send His spirit upon all the people.
33. **AMOS** —a minor prophet. He prophesied God’s judgement of Israel, its neighbours, and a call of repentance and future restoration of Israel.
34. **OBADIAH** —a minor prophet. He prophesied God’s punishments of Edom and the final victory of Israel.
35. **JONAH** —a minor prophet. He disobeyed God command to go to Nineveh, and set out instead to Spain. God sent a strong wind, and as his ship was about to break up, the sailors threw him into the sea, where he was swallowed by a big fish—probably a whale. He spent 3 days and 3 nights inside the whale. He then repented and obeyed God.
36. **MICAH** —a minor prophet. God revealed to him that Judah was about to face the same punishment as Israel. He predicted the birth of Messiah in the family line of David.
37. **NAHUM** —a minor prophet. He predicted Nineveh’s destruction for their disobedience and cruelty.
38. **HABAKKUK**—a minor prophet. Deeply disturbed, he asked why God was silent while righteous people are destroyed. God answered that he would act in His own time.
39. **ZEPHANIAH** —a minor prophet. He predicted the destruction of Judah and punishment on other nations for worship of other gods. He also predicted the restoration of Jerusalem.
40. **HAGGAI** —a minor prophet. On their return the exiles failed to complete the rebuilding of the temple. Haggai urged them to rebuild the temple as God had promised prosperity



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and peace if they did so.

41. **ZECHARIAH** —a minor prophet. He had visions to deal with restoration of Jerusalem, the rebuilding of temple, the purification of God’s people and the messianic age to come.
42. **MALACHI** —a minor prophet. He called priests and Jews to renew faithfulness to their covenant with God as there was laxity, corruption in their lives. He predicted that God would send his messenger, ahead of Him to prepare the way and to proclaim His covenant.

New Testament

1. **JOHN THE BAPTIST** — prophet, strong and mighty like, Elijah. He preached to people to turn away from sins and be baptised, so that God would forgive their sins. Jesus was baptised by John.
2. **JESUS — THE MESSIAH, CHRIST**— triune God—the Son. The Saviour as promised by God in the Old Testament. He was crucified on the cross for the remission of sins of humankind, died, was raised to life on the third day and ascended to heaven.
3. **PAUL/SAUL**— persecuted the early followers of Christ and tried to destroy the church. Jesus appeared and converted him. Then he preached that Jesus was the son of God. He established many churches and wrote 14 Epistles.
4. **MATTHEW** —one of the disciples of Jesus. He conveyed the good news that Jesus is the Saviour, promised by God in the Old Testament.
5. **MARK /JOHN MARK**— followed Paul in his first missionary journey. He called it “the good news about Jesus Christ, the Son of God”.
6. **LUKE**— was in jail with Paul in Rome. He confirmed that Jesus is the promised Saviour of Israel and also the Saviour of humankind.
7. **JOHN** — disciple of Jesus. He wrote the 3 Epistles. When he was a prisoner at Patmos Island, he had visions from God and wrote the book of Revelations.
8. **JAMES** — a brother of Jesus. He received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost and became a very important person in the early Church.
9. **PETER /SIMON**— a disciple of Jesus. He received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost and became a very important person in the early Church. Jesus declared him the “rock” on which he would build his Church and the keys of Kingdom of Heaven would be given to him. Peter established many Churches.
10. **JUDE**— a brother of Jesus. He received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. He warned against false teachers who claimed to be believers.
11. **THE HOLY SPIRIT** —Triune God, the everlasting. The helper and the comforter. On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples and the believers, like tongues of fire.

I thank God for having me surrounded with a lovely congregation. I wish you all a happy Easter and pray that His resurrected power prevails on your families.

Nalli Vijaya Kumar, aged 73 years, has been a regular member of St John's Church, over the last 20 years. He has actively participated in the Men's Fellowship and, also during the counting of the offertory.

His two sons, N Rajkumar Joshi and N Vinodkumar Joshi, are also the members of this church. Both his sons are married. He has four grandchildren. He retired from the Jails Department, Government of Andhra Pradesh.



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Women... Women... Women...



Dr T Rajya Lakshmi

Every woman who has walked with God has a story to tell:

Sarah will tell you, “Nothing is too difficult for God.” (Genesis 21: 2)

Hagar will tell you, “Even in the desert God lives and sees you”. (Genesis 16: 13, 14)

Rahab will tell you “God can use anyone.” (Joshua 2: 2)

Hannah will tell you “My God answers prayers.” (1 Samuel 1: 20)

Ruth will tell you “All that you will say to me, I will do.” (Ruth 3: 5)

Esther will tell you “God is able to transform an unworthy into a noble.” (Esther 9:4)

Elizabeth will tell you “Even if the age is advanced, you will give birth to a great man.”
(Luke 1: 18 & 45)

Mary will tell you “It will be done to you according to the Word of God.” (Luke 1: 38)

The woman with the issue of bleeding will tell you “When all has failed God never fails.”
(Luke 8: 43–48)

Mary and Martha will tell you “Dead things can come back to life.” (John 11: 32 and 44)

Dorcas will tell you “God never forgets what we do for others.” (Acts 9: 36–41)

And Eunice will tell you “It’s never in vain to pray for our children.” (2 Timothy 1: 1–5)

Dear women, it’s a great blessing to walk with God.

Dr T H Rajya Lakshmi, (MSc, PhD) is a Reader in Zoology (Retd.). Her family has been members of St John’s for several years.



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Musings Around the Palms



Dr Priyadarshini John

To have an undying faith in yourself—akin to the Bethany's sisters

To unfurl eyes blinded by mortal things—akin to Zacchaeus

To witness the abundance in you—akin to the Zion clan

To reckon you in our entirety—akin to Paul.

To render most precious elements for you—akin to Bethany Mary

To heed to the living waters at the sight of the fear—akin to the Samaritan woman

To abide to truth howbeit the death strings—akin to Stephen

To ease the burdened hearts with your solace —akin to Moses.

To live your word albeit the turmoil—akin to Daniel

To pray continually despite the tribulations—akin to Hannah

To claim promises despite the darkness—akin to Joshua

To stay still notwithstanding the storm—akin to Joseph.

To praise and worship you in tough times—akin to Job

To rejoice in you undeterred by mourning—akin to Ruth

To be humble amidst the prosperity—akin to Queen Esther

To hail the father, the almighty, amid the pain—just as you!

Dr Priyadarshini John is an active member of St John's Church. She is senior consultant Nephrologist at AIG Hospital's, Hyderabad.



The Nightingales

(The Parish Messenger team reached out to some of the long-standing members of the St John's Church choir to share their experiences about being part of the choir and singing for the Glory of God. We look forward to hearing from other choir members as well.)



Mrs Prema Christian



I have been a member of a church choir from the age of twelve! That was in St George's Church, Hyderabad. After I graduated from college, I went to live with my parents in Delhi, and joined the choir of the Cathedral Church of Redemption. I was delighted to sing in this choir.

In 1961, Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh came to worship in this Church. I was only three feet away from the Queen and the Duke and I was absolutely thrilled!

After several years of postings in different parts of India, depending on where our work took us, we were back in Secunderabad in 1969 and happily joined St John's Church as members. One Sunday, Shanta and Yohan John (old members of St John's) happened to be sitting behind me, and heard my singing. They insisted that I join the choir. Late Colonel Blewitt who used to sit in the adjacent pew also added his request to theirs.

Thus, I joined the choir with great enthusiasm and have truly enjoyed every moment of singing in this church, as Mr Theodore Comfort, the organist and choir master, trained and led the choir. He also trained us to be punctual when coming to church and being regular for practice every Friday.



A

I was delighted to sing with Lily Wilson, late Lalitha Christian, Kamal Kumar and many others. Subsequently, Brother Champion took over as the organist and choir master. He always insisted that we sing with a loud clear voice and on being pitch perfect.

R

I have been blessed to sing in a church choir, wherever we moved across India—Guwahati, Delhi, Mumbai, and Chennai. We returned to Secunderabad for a retired life in 2002 and I re-joined St John’s Church choir. Praising Jesus through hymns, is one of the most beautiful blessings one can receive.

T

Mrs Lily Wilson

I

Looking back at the years that have gone by since we began worshipping at St John’s Church, it has been an incredible 53 years. In the first few years, I was busy with forming a youth fellowship—back then most of our youth joined the choir.

C

Theodore Comfort was our organist in the early days. He took great pains to train us in music and taught us several new compositions.

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We had many experienced singers at that time, like Howe Srinivasan, Lalitha Christian, Prema Christian and a horde of us youngsters, whom Theodore Comfort trained painstakingly. Our training in music was practical and good, especially in singing classical numbers. Most of us remember Uncle Comfort (as he was fondly called) with nostalgia.

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Subsequently, Commodore Champion took over the mantle. He taught us well and put in a lot of effort to form the present choir. We will always be indebted to these wonderful teachers. Our salutations to them.

Now Mr Virender Joshua has taken over the mantle and is doing a commendable job, too.

It will always be a delight to be part of the St Johns Church choir and sing praises to God in the beautiful sanctuary



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Risen Again



Ms Pauline Priyadarshini Jeswin

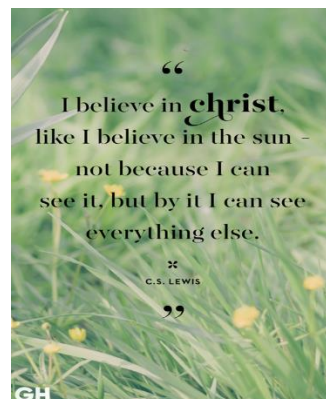
Silence the mourning,
It is a happy morning.
The angels have come announcing
The greatest news reminding —
"He is not here, He is risen!"

Set your lamps burning,
It's time for great delighting;
What we know as pure and sacred love —
Has brought us together from above.

Proclaim to this world,
To every length and breadth,
There is no more fear of death;
Cos' on the cross He died
And my heart is purified.

Welcome Him with a new song,
Singing all the day long;
Testify He did not die in vain,
Jesus is risen, risen again.

Pauline Priyadharshini Jeswin and her family are members of St John's. They previously worshipped in Capstone Church, Gachibowli. She is a Senior SAP Consultant working for Navisite.



Colours



Anaiyah Yohan

God made green, red, pink, and blue.
 He made black, silver, golden too.
 Blue makes me happy,
 Pink makes me girly,
 Golden makes me joyful,
 Black makes angry,
 Yellow makes me laugh,
 And silver makes me excited,
 But white makes me sad,
 Cos' it never colours on white paper!

Colours are what I love,
 God's colours make me happy enough.

Anaiyah Yohann is a spirited 6-year-old who loves all things colourful. She enjoys music, dancing and seeing the bright side of everything. While she isn't doing everything a little girl does, she makes up songs for different people and situations. Passionate and full of love, Anaiyah is truly a prayer answered, as her name means.



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Youth Speak

My Norway Experience



Master Rikhil Joseph Ganti

I am Rikhil Joseph Ganti. I live and study in Liverpool, UK. I am the grandchild of Dr Joseph Bhaskar and Dr Rajyalakshmi, long-standing members of St John's Church, Hyderabad. I would like to share an exhilarating experience about a recent trip I went on, with my cadet team.

A few weeks ago, I embarked on a journey to one of the most beautiful Scandinavian countries—Norway. It is, without a doubt, one of the most picturesque countries on the planet—famed for its breath-taking fjords, amazing Northern Lights, an infinite variety of ski resorts, and various fabulously modern, yet nonetheless, charming towns.

On February 15 2023, I left the UK for Norway. I was extremely excited to discover the adventure activities planned for me spread, over a week. After 24 hours of travelling, when I reached Bykle in Norway, it was illuminated with an abundance of fresh, white, glittery snow, filling up the street. There was no grass or dirt to be seen anywhere. Everywhere I looked instead of buildings, I saw mountains. Looking at this view; I thought how amazing is the Lord's handwork.

“O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom, you have made them all. The earth is full of your possessions.” (Psalms 104:24)

Throughout the week I was trained to ski, dog sledge and ice climb. I skied for 13 kilometres over the course of two days and also learned how to build a snow hut, to survive in a blizzard/avalanche and many other skills required in this terrain.

I went to Norway with my friends, bursting with excitement and anticipation and returned with a bag full of memories of fun and a heart full of gratitude for this opportunity. This adventure has created many beautiful memories, that I will cherish forever.

I praise the Lord Jesus Christ for giving me this opportunity and using me to be a witness for His Glory.

With this adventure in Norway, I advance a step closer to our creator praising Him:

'Then sings my soul... How great thou art,'



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Rikhil Gant was baptised in St John's in 2009 and confirmed in this church in 2019. Subsequently, he relocated to Liverpool, UK. He is now in studying in year 10 in Calday Grange Grammar School, Wirral, UK. Rikhil is closely associated with the Church at St Mary's Upton, working with the Sunday School programme for 4–7-year-olds, Jesus and Me (JAM)—spreading God's word and the importance of prayer in our lives.



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Being part of FOG



Aaron Pranay

Being a part of Force of God (FOG), the Youth Group of St John's Church, has been one of the most transformative experiences of my life. Not only has it deeply enriched my spiritual life, but it has also played a significant role in shaping my personal and professional growth.

One of the most significant ways that FOG has impacted my life is by providing me with a community of friends, like family. The bonds that I have formed with my fellow youth group members are deep and meaningful, and we support each other through all of life's ups and downs. We are a passionate group whose primary objective is studying the Bible; we read, study, discuss, debate, ask questions, find answers and pray a lot together. We also engage in other activities like going on outreach programmes, organising Inter-Church youth events, serving the Church in various capacities and participating in activities like motorcycle rides and basketball tournaments. The group also shares a mutual love for good food, be it breakfast, lunch or dinner, we are always ready for a good meal and the fellowship that ensues!

I have been a part of the FOG band for many years now and I have had the privilege of leading worship and playing the guitar not only at our weekly youth meetings but at various other Christian events, seminars, youth camps and more. All credit for my growth as a musician goes to my formative years playing and singing at Sunday School, VBS and FOG.

Aside from personal growth, FOG has also provided me with valuable professional opportunities. Through our various activities and programmes, I have gained valuable skills such as public speaking, leadership, and teamwork, which have been beneficial to my career.

Overall, being a part of the Force Of God youth group at St John's Church has enriched my life in countless ways. I am always grateful to our mentors Maju Anna and Junia Akka for the many years of guidance and support. I am grateful for the family that I have found here and I look forward to continuing to grow and learn with this amazing group of people.



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Testimonies



Ashish Paul

I will not die but live and will proclaim what the LORD has done. (Psalm 118:17)

This was the verse written on a car in front of us, when we were traveling from Hyderabad to Kochi on January 19, 2023. Moments after reading this verse, we met with a very unfortunate accident. The only way to describe it, is to say that we saw death face to face. However, amidst that trauma, we experienced the great and powerful hands of God protecting us.

While my father and I sustained a few minor injuries and bruises, Nivea fractured her right femur. However, God sustained our lives. He prepared people to be there for us in miraculous ways. The Operations Manager of FIMS hospital, happened to be just behind us, immediately called an ambulance, for us to be taken to the hospital.

God provided a good orthopaedic surgeon for Nivea, and she underwent surgery that same night. We experienced the unifying power of Jesus' name in that unfamiliar city, when many believers, who were total strangers to us, prayed and took care of our needs. Nivea was discharged a few days later and God led us to Angelina Aunty's cousin, Dr Abhilash, the Head of Emergency and Trauma at CMC Vellore. Nivea, who was advised at least 6 months of rest and recovery, is now able to walk without support. This is only the Lord's doing.

We, as a family, are slowly recovering from this traumatic experience, but are very grateful to God Almighty for His protection, providence, sustenance, and guidance. We are also very thankful to the many people whom the Lord prepared for us during this time. We will forever be indebted to our dear family for the incredible love, care, and support they continue to give us. We appreciate the congregation and our friends, who went the extra mile to help us with all our needs and most importantly, we are immensely blessed to be remembered in all your prayers.

We may never understand why it happened, but we believe that God, in His infinite wisdom, has a greater purpose for our lives. Like the verse says, we were given this experience to proclaim all that the Lord as done. We praise, worship, adore, and give thanks to the Almighty for His abundant grace and mercy.





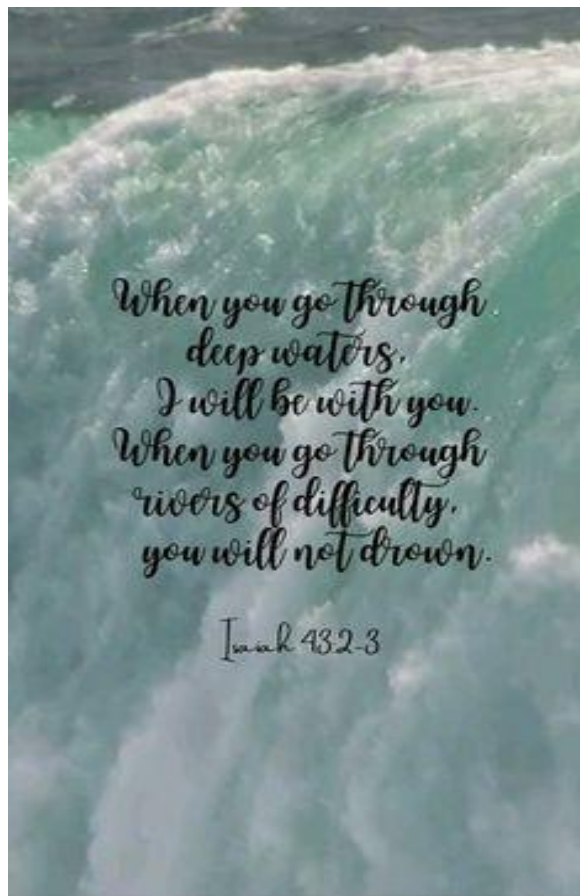
Sheela Anoop

As we were coming out of a photo studio towards the end of March, around 7.30 p.m., after taking my younger son, Abhijay Benjamin's passport picture, my elder 9-year-old son Anush David was closing the glass door of the shop, when it suddenly shattered and broke into pieces.

I screamed and Anush was so panic stricken that his feet could not even move to escape. Miraculously, by the grace of our Lord Jesus, my son was miraculously saved without even a smallest piece of glass hurting him.

I am really unable to express the intensity and severity of what had happened and how great a miracle we had experienced.

However much I praise my Lord it will never be enough!



Artwork



Joshua Bennett Eeda

Guide To Holy Week	
	Palm Sunday Sunday before Easter. Celebration of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Observed with palm branches, parades and celebration.
	Maundy Thursday Thursday before Easter commemorates the last Supper often observed with foot washing, stripping of the altar and overnight prayer vigil to keep watch with Jesus in the garden.
	Good Friday Friday before Easter. Most solemn day of the church year. Observes the day Jesus was crucified. Observed by praying the Station of the cross and three hours of silent prayer while Jesus was on the cross.
	Holy Saturday Saturday before Easter. Observes the day Jesus was in the tomb. This is a day of solemn reflection, reflecting on what we'd miss in a world without Jesus.
	Easter Sunday Hallelujah! Christ has risen! This day we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. Sing hallelujahs and celebrate with great joy.

Art by: Joshua Bennett Eeda

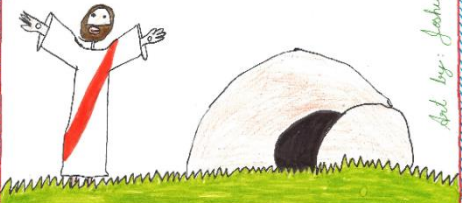
What Easter Means To Me!

What Easter means to me
Is drawn in my heart
The story all about Jesus
It's told from the start

How He rose that morning
And rolled away the stone
He did it for us all
And did it all alone

Showing all His love
When He got up that great day
As He promised that He would
We'd have it no other way

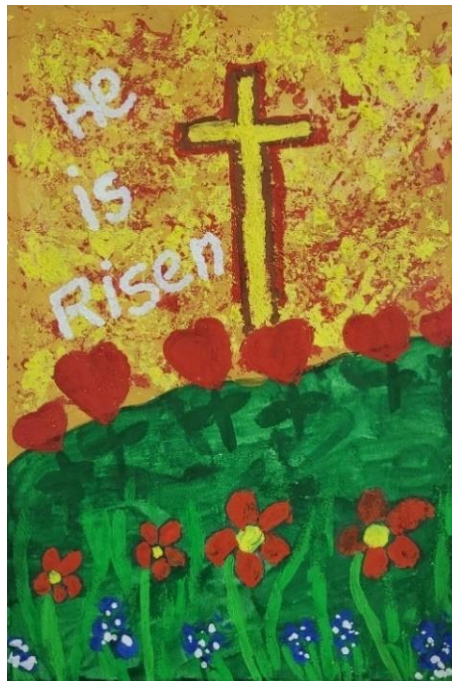
So there we have it my friends
Because we all are set free
And everyone really knows
What Easter means to me.



Art by: Joshua Bennett Eeda



Aanshi Nalli



Tribute
Brayan D'Cruz



26-11-1960 to 16-01-2023

Brayan D'Cruz was a wonderful son, a supportive brother, a loyal husband, a loving father, and an amazing friend. He kept all his siblings' families glued together. Even the younger generation did not feel any gap, when interacting with him. He was always calm and patient: in fact, more than an elder he was like a friend with his nephews and nieces. He always supported and encouraged them to do what they wanted to do and yet, guided and shaped them.

Brayan pursued his studies from All Saints and other Christian colleges. He worked abroad for few years, returned to India and owned a business selling novelty and gift items.

Brayan was an active person, full of zest for life, which he exhibited openly. He was loving and affectionate and had a good sense of humour. He was fun to be around and created a lively atmosphere through his English and Hyderabad Urdu idioms.

He was simple, composed, slow to anger, never expecting anything from anyone, and encouraging many. Brayan was a good human, invariably pleasant, always welcoming, and hospitable, concerned and constantly ready to help and be of assistance to anyone even for trivial matters. He seemed to understand their needs, without even being asked for it and always went that extra mile to help!



Brayan was systematic, attentive to details and knew how to conduct himself with truth as the pillar and foundation of our society. He was God-fearing, attended church regularly and served the parish consistently and gladly for the past 35 years. He was a kind, a good-hearted man of few words. Yet, he was brave outspoken, straightforward, and courageous with a never fear-come what may attitude, which was always appreciated. He was strong-willed, determined, and bold, yet very sensitive.

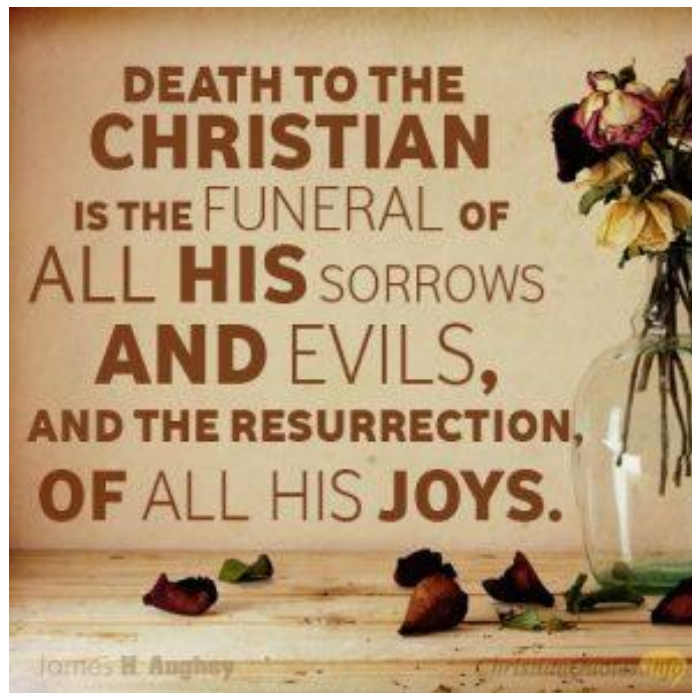
Under the efficient leadership of late Mr H W A Hartwig, late Major Samuel, late Major Rao, late Mr Theodore Comfort, late Mrs Lalitha Christian and late Mr Scott, Brayan undertook various administration-related activities in St John's. He oversaw facilities, arranged, and supervised church events, including food arrangements for special occasions and ensured excellent service and the best hospitality was shown to everyone.

Though his visits to the hospital increased towards the end, yet Brayan never spoke about his ailments or suffering. He always had a smiling face and at no time did he stop smiling even while in pain. "The name of the righteous is used in blessings." (Proverbs 10:7), Brayan kept his faith, finished the race and was an inspiration to all.

With loving memories, Evangeline D'cruz and family



<i>Death Record</i>			
			
	Date of death	Name	Photograph
1	16-01-2023	Brayan D'cruz	



He is Risen

Just as He said

Matthew 28:6

Happy Easter