

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

THE PARISH MESSENGER



*New Beginnings!*

**EASTER EDITION**

**2024**

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## **From the Editor's Desk**

The theme chosen very aptly for the Easter 2024 issue of the Parish Messenger was *New Beginnings*. The Resurrection of Jesus from the dead was, and continues to be a new beginning every year and we celebrate this in our hearts and minds. Jesus' death and subsequent resurrection gave birth to Christianity, which has spread through various means across the world. We celebrate this every year during the Lenten season, which culminates on Easter Sunday. St John's Church, so beautifully bedecked with flowers on March 31, 2024 was a fitting testimony to this air of celebration and commitment.

At this time, let us keep in mind that it is election season in our country and as responsible citizens it is our obligation exercise our franchise, choose our leaders wisely and importantly pray for a good clear mandate. The outcome will surely impact all our lives.

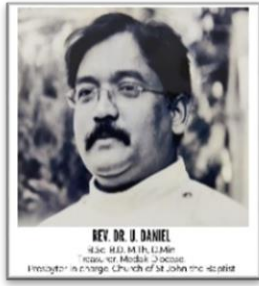
This also is a new beginning because we welcome several members into St John's church this year. It is our privilege to introduce these families to our congregation. Brief write-ups and family photographs of these members have been included in this edition. Let us meet them and welcome them into our fold.

We are please, too because, besides our regular contributors to the Parish Messenger this time again we have new writers who have given us different insights with quizzes, compilations and art work. We look forward to many more contributions.

Importantly, this is Easter edition is a New Beginning because we are experimenting with a different lay-out and tabloid format. We welcome your feedback on this.

Wishing you a blessed Easter.

## 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 brings 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 insures 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?"

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.*

## Secretary's Report



*Mr Mesa James Samuel*

Dear St. John's Family,

As we are going through this Holy Season of Lent we need to focus on how to live in Christ and what it means for us. Our greatest desire should be to seek first the Kingdom of God to have Christ like character and serve Him with reverence. That is why our devotional life is indispensable, and it is the choice we need to make each day.

Remaining faithful to Jesus is a perfect plan for bearing fruit. Just sitting at His feet and listening to His word and becoming more and more intimate with Him. When we abide in Christ we enjoy His rest and peace. When we abide in Christ our hearts are cultivated for growth. When we abide in Christ we produce good and lasting fruit. Let us all reclaim these promises as we abide in the word of God.

Lenten Cottage Prayer Meetings have evoked a good response from our members. The Lenten Services in our Church were conducted very well with each Fellowship leading the Worship Service on every Wednesday. Youth Fellowship visited the Montfort Social Services Institute and distributed gifts collected during the "Christmas Tree Lighting" called THE JOY BOX. The Women's Fellowship conducted the World day of Prayer, The Men's Fellowship conducted a Revival Meeting with the Theme 'RETURN, REPENT& REVIVE'. Mr Rajkumar Ramchandran was the main speaker.

We are glad to inform members that the newly constructed washrooms and Sexton's quarters are ready and functional. Also glad to inform that we were able to construct a Multi Utility Hall in the First floor. I express my thanks to all members who contributed generously for this cause.

As we are nearing completion of the Lent Period and would be celebrating Easter, I wish all the families all the very best and many blessings of the Resurrected Lord.

HAPPY EASTER.

*Mr Mesa James Samuel is the Honorary Secretary of St John's. He has been worshipping in this church for over 50 years. He and his family are active members of the church.*

**Report**  
**MEN'S FELLOWSHIP**  
**(January – March 2024)**



**P. Francis Augustine, Secretary, Men's Fellowship**

The Men's fellowship of our church resumed its weekly Tuesday zoom meetings from January 9, 2024 onwards till February 13, 2024 when we took a break for the Lenten season. During this period, we had six meetings on all Tuesdays from 7–8:15 pm. The programme for each meeting included, opening, closing and general prayers, two hymns and a message followed by discussion at the end. The attendance varied from 10-15. Our hope and prayers for an increase in the attendance have not fructified, but we are grateful to God that we could continue our meetings without break.

**Messages:**

The Men's fellowship accords a special importance to messages from the word of God, as it is only through the word, we can know Him and become closer to Him. The message in our first meeting in the new year 2024 was from our Presbyterian-in-charge Rev. Dr. U. Daniel, who drew attention to John's Gospel 20: 24-31 and mentioned about the blessings that are associated with believing in Jesus Christ. Rev. E. Sumalatha, in her message in the second meeting, referred to Phil 2: 1-11, where Jesus emptied himself on the cross as a supreme sacrifice and personified humility.

The speakers in the subsequent meetings—Dr M. A. David spoke about commitment, thankfulness, and forgiveness from Matthew 6:14, Bro. P.E. Kishore Kumar explained the salient features and differences of rapture and the second coming (1Thessalonians 4:14-18; Zechariah 14:4). Bro. Martin David introduced the book of Ephesians and outlined the blessings that naturally accrue to faithful believers; Rev. E. Sumalatha spoke about Paul's mission for the Gentiles and referred to Ephesians 2:11-22 and how by His grace and through faith we are saved and made members of the household of God.

**Midweek Lenten Worship Service:**

During the Lenten season, our fellowship conducted the midweek Lenten worship service in our church on February, 21 2024. On that occasion, we also sang a special hymn "My Song is Love Unknown ...." (209 in the church hymnal) which was well received. Many of our members attended the mid-week Lenten services.

**Lenten Revival Meeting:**

With the guiding of The Pastorate Committee of St John's, the Men's Fellowship conducted a revival meet in our church on March 16 24 from 10:30 a.m.– 4:00 p.m. with the internationally known evangelist, bible teacher and revival preacher Bro. Rajkumar Ramchandran. The theme of the revival meet was '**Repent (Matthew 4:17), Return (Hosea 14:1) and Revive' (Psalm 119:107)**. About 150 participants attended the meeting, with a handful of them from churches other than St John's.



There were in all four sessions, two sessions of 45 minutes each in the forenoon and one session of the same duration in the afternoon, followed by a QA session. Each session was absorbing and held the participants spell-bound by the intimate spiritual knowledge and wisdom of Bro. Ramchandran and the way he quoted extensively from the Bible, extempore with effortlessly (indeed a gift of the holy spirit).

This revival meeting was perhaps the first in our church. It lightened up the Lenten season in our church and was spiritually rewarding to all the participants. Those who could not attend the revival meeting are strongly advised to listen to the footage on YouTube from our church website. Some of the pictures taken during the meeting are presented below.



Invite



Bro. Raj Speaking from the Lectern



Speaker being honored by our Pastors



A section of the participants

## BELONG TO GOD DEEP IN YOUR HEART



**Mrs Angelina Clement, Secretary Women's Fellowship**

### JEREMIAH 31:31- 34

These verses are a timely New Year reminder to our Women's Fellowship that God calls us to a life which is a two-way relationship. He belongs to us with a mercy, which never wavers and we must belong to Him with an obedience which never slackens. His covenant with us is a wonderful blessing God has offered and we must be God's people completely. 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.

### **Lenten Service**

Women's Fellowship led the Lenten Service on February 28, 2024. The theme chosen for the service was CROSS – A TIME OF FORGIVENESS. Lent is an invitation to return to be reconciled with God, with each other and with ourselves. It is a time of repentance, a season of preparation and a time of sacrifice. Let us pray that we will be drawn closer to Him and prepare us for a fresh experience of Good Friday and Easter. Our W.F members presented a special song titled "Peace, Be Still." In this blessed season of penitential reflection, it is particularly appropriate that we listen and ponder on God's Word as we consider all that our Lord Jesus did for us in His life. Dr Vidya Sravanthi, an honourable member of our Church, an eminent speaker, both spiritual and political, shared the Word of God with us on the given theme.

### **Women's Day**

We celebrated International Women's Day on March 3, 2024. The theme chosen for the day was INSPIRE INCLUSION. This year's theme gives us an unmissable opportunity to ensure and meet the needs, interests and aspirations of women and girls who are valued and included. Our purpose is to encourage, equip and to support education in our journey as members of our Church. We have set the goals of what we want to accomplish this year. One of the projects our W.F decided on is to inspire inclusion through action in supporting the Class 10 students of Wesley Girls Hostel.

Our members, Mrs Mercy Samroy, Mrs Prashanthi Harrison and Mrs Angelina Clement helped the students to prepare for the Board Exams. Mrs Anna Alexander, Mrs Geetha Lincoln, Mrs Manju David, Mrs Kavitha Chandrasekhar sponsored the items required for the exam, toiletries, and cookies. We believe that when we truly value difference, inclusion comes from the heart.

### **World Day of Prayer**

Women's Fellowship followed the instructions from the Synod and observed WDP as we do every year on March 10 during the evening service. The theme of our service was based on Ephesians 4:1-7 'I beg you, bear with one another in love'. *World Day of Prayer* is a global ecumenical movement led by Christian women across the globe who welcome us to join in prayer and action for peace and harmony. This year we were called to worship God for the people of Palestine.



Prayer is one of the dominant themes of our Bible. It is the way in which we develop a relationship with our father in heaven. We interceded for the people of Palestine for their salvation. We presented a very meaningful song titled 'Be in Time 'alerting everyone to heed the warning voice and make the Lord our final choice, so that the heaven will rejoice. Our speaker for the evening was Rev. Shanthi Roberts, who served the diocese for 43 years in different capacities. Pastorama shared a very enlightening, spirit filled message on the theme to bear with one another in love.

May we commit to working for peace as we stand with all women, particularly those experiencing oppression, violence, or discrimination. May we be faithful advocates in all levels of society and Church life. May we bear with one another in love. May we humbly ask God to help us to be agents of peace and justice.









## Youth Fellowship Report



### **Buelah Supriya—Secretary, Youth Fellowship**

Greetings!

I am glad to share about the activities of the youth fellowship of St John's - FOG. The months of January to March 2024 have been packed with outreach, regular bible studies and more.

After *Christmas Unplugged* — the annual event organised by the youth to usher in the advent season — we visited the Montfort social services institute in February. The non-profit reaches out to children in the slums around Hyderabad and equips them with skills like advocacy to become agents of change within their communities. Through our first outreach of 2024, we delivered 100 JOY BOXES. These were shoe boxes filled with gifts for school going children; including water bottles/ lunch boxes. We spent some time with the children in interaction and leading them in some familiar Sunday school songs. It was a great way to share Christ's love. I would like to thank the church members for their generous giving and for enabling us to make the outreach event successful.

During the past few months, we camped out on Psalm 23 through a bible study led by Mr Maju George. The familiar Psalm found new meaning as we looked into the then history and compared it to John 10: 1-18. Just like the sheep mentioned in v4, we want to hear and follow God's voice. In the 24/7 digital age where many voices of influence clamour for our attention, we can find the 'truth' only when we compare it with the infallible word of God. This is why studying 'the word' is a high priority to the fellowship.

As members of the church, the youth are glad to lend a helping hand in design, sound, and music. It is through these opportunities that members have honed valuable skills that are used in other areas of life as well. I would like to thank Pastor Daniel and the pastorate committee for giving the youth the opportunity to lead the mid-week Lenten service.

Being part of a fellowship in church is a commitment and a blessing. I'd like to take this time to acknowledge the youth who've given this commitment of growing stronger in the word of God and giving back to the church through volunteering in various capacities. God has been faithful and I look forward to the remainder of the year as together we grow in Him and do

Our best for Him.

*Buelah has been an active member of St John's for over two decades. Apart from being a part of the youth, she is an energetic member of the Church choir. On the education front she has completed her Master's in Communication Studies from ASU.*

# SUNDAY SCHOOL REPORT

(January-March 2024)



## Mrs Grace Didla, Superintendent, Sunday School

After a short Christmas break, Sunday School reopened on January 7, 2024 and the children got back to the fold with great enthusiasm.

The verse, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness...”, being the bedrock of our vision this year, a well-thought-out annual calendar was prepared for general devotions. These devotions focused on giving an overview of the Old Testament, progressing from one book to another. In line with this plan, in the past three months, several Bible stories from the Old Testament were taught, which are reflected in the posters below. I am truly grateful to our teachers and parishioners for diligently contributing to these devotions. In addition, there were also class-wise spiritual reflections led by our dedicated teachers every Sunday. To consolidate their year-long learning in these classes, an annual assessment was carried out recently.

The Annual day celebrations, scheduled on April 13, will mark the closure of this academic year. We hope to have an enriching time of worship, fellowship, and fun.

It has truly been a gratifying experience to nurture our children in Christian faith and virtues. I am indebted to all our teachers and the praise and worship team for their unwavering commitment all through the year. I thank our Presbyterian-in-charge Rev Dr. U. Daniel, Rev. Sumalatha, and our Pastorate Committee members for giving me this opportunity to serve our Sunday School.



Posters of General Devotion

*Dr Grace Didla is an Associate Professor in the Department of Phonetics at the English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad. She is the Superintendent of the Sunday school at St John's.*



## Announcement

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

# Sunday School

Celebrates

## Annual Day - 2024

Date: 13 April, 2024      Venue: Church Annexe      Time: 6:00 pm

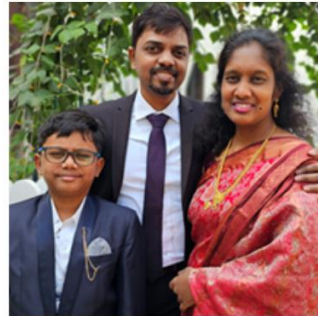
## Introducing New Members



Praise the Lord,

We are a family of three. My husband, L Joel Fedrick Sebastian (MTech), works as a Software Engineer. I'm V Suhasini, and am also an MTech. I presently work as an Assistant Professor in Holy Mary Engineering College, Hyderabad. Our son is L Jayden Steve is 19 months old.

We, Vijay, Prathibha, and Jaden (the Kadasi family), are delighted to be new members of St John the Baptist Church. Both Prathibha and I come from Karimnagar and have been married for little over 12 years. We are blessed with a son, Jaden, who is 9 years old. We have been worshipping in this church for few years now but continue to be members of CSI Wesley Centenary Church in Karimnagar. Praise the Lord,



I completed my post-graduation in Microbiology from Osmania university and have been working in the pharmaceutical sector, specifically in the field of Medical Affairs and Medical Communications, for over 15 years. Prathibha, on the other hand, completed her post-graduation in Microbiology as well as B. Ed from Kakatiya University and is in the teaching field.

Sunday school has been a great blessing for Jaden, as the seed of God's word was sown in him from his childhood. We both enjoy worshipping in this church and eagerly look forward to each Sunday for the worship service and the fellowship.

Previous to this, we worshipped in CSI Badvel, which is in Kadapa(dt).



I am Vijay Gnanaraj, a senior Immigration consultant (Osian Overseas Careers) AS. Rao. Nagar. Hyderabad  
My wife, Deepti Priyanka, works as senior Accountant for Vasundara college ECIL.  
My son's name Bedford Isaac Paul studies in the 7th grade and will be going to the 8th grade this year

Ours is a Christ-centred family by God's grace. We are a blessed and happy family of five, which includes my mother, Mrs Ratna Mary Sudha Karlapudi.



I, Surendranath Karlapudi, am a software engineer by profession. My wife Diana Swetha is in Human Resources. We are blessed with 2 daughters, Sherlyn Ruth Karlapudi (9th Std) and Shannon Maria Karlapudi (5th Std).

We have been coming to St John's church regularly and our daughters have been part of the Sunday school since 2018.



(Incidentally, my husband's parents got married in this church on May 2, 1984, Late Mr I Solomon Raj and Mrs Doris Lalitha (daughter of Rosemond Raj and sister of Mr Jordan Reddy, Late Mr Ratnalu Reddy, Mr Edvard Reddy and Mr Sundar Reddy, whose family clan are still members of St John's church.)



Our family includes my husband Mr BJ Jacob (B. Tech) who is a Civil engineer and has his office Riverstone Designs on SD Road and me Mrs B Vasantha Jacob (D.C.E, M.A).

We have two children Tarun Tejas (BTech, MS(US) presently working as a Data analyst in the United States and B Advithi who is currently pursuing an MMBS.

Our family also includes Jacob's sister Ms B Varadhanam, who is a retired Superintendent in the Government Sector.

## Children Obey Your Parents



**Captain IN AJ Manohar**

This Lenten season, we remember Jesus' responsibility towards His mother even at the Cross. Turning to His mother, He said, "Woman this is your son". And to John, He said, "Here's your mother." What a wonderful way to honour His mother even as He bore the shame, and agony on the Cross. This is a shining example of Jesus showing His responsibility towards His mother.

My family and I, gladly take care of my 103-year-old father. Such matters do not come merely under the realm of just feelings, but more so as a deliberate act of the will.

The intent in the title of this piece is crystal clear. Let's not dilute the implicit compliance to this mandate.

You may often hear the lament, "My child does not listen to me!" What is the genesis to this problem? You guessed it right. Often, parents take the easier path, and conveniently engage the child with joy with the tab/cell phone or television—the beginning of a child's addiction to electronic devices which is later nigh impossible to withhold later.

Don't jump to the conclusion that I am not in tune with the lifestyle of the new generation! Our children too threw tantrums to get video games. Fortunately, the only video game gifted by my mother-in-law became defective on the first day and was never replaced. Our children grew up without iPad, cell phones, TV, video games, et al. We ourselves didn't watch soaps to protect our children from such addictions.

Did they lose out on technology? The answer is an emphatic "No"! Because they succeeded and were blessed too in their lives — Akshay, our elder son is a Director in an Engineering company at Dubai and our younger son Anmol, is an accomplished CEO of an aerospace company in the UK.

Parents often do not ensure that their children enrol in Sunday School and later Youth fellowship. The word of God says, "Train a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverb 22: 6).

The problem of childhood disobedience festers and further manifests at adulthood, too. A parent once complained about their young daughter and said, "On weekends we cannot even ask where she is going or when she will be back"! What a sad testimony!

Some parents choose to worship at a traditional church, letting the children go to other churches where music has more importance. Besides not being in tune with what their children are doing, one of the risks is, when the parents are looking for partners for their children, no one in the congregation knows the children. It is essential that the entire family worship together in the same Church, carrying their individual Bibles.

There is a fallacy that academics are more important than Spiritual education. Nothing can be further than the truth. Academic education is of temporal value as we live in a bubble and life itself is soon over. The word of God says, "What does it profit a man to gain the whole world but lose his soul." Children who have the fear and reverence for God will certainly embrace truth, integrity, respect for

elders and will also be law-abiding citizens. Remember, the wild sapling takes shape with the right support. Children will imbibe the right values when they:

- Attend Sunday School regularly
- Have regular family prayers and reading of God's word to instil Spiritual values
- Follow good lifestyle practices to develop physically and mentally.
- Enrol for a weekly Bible study class



## The Uniqueness of Jesus—Victim to Victor



### **Mrs Yashodhra Desappa**

We live and die. Christ died and lived.

Jesus Christ is unique in numerous ways. He was God and man. Born of the Holy Spirit. The Pharisees and Sadducees were puzzled by His Word. He stilled the sea and walked on water. He healed multitudes with His touch, with no medicines. He built no church, yet 2000 years later, He is a central figure in history, with more followers than any other.

Jesus existed even before creation and all things were created by Him. He exists in the present and will exist in the future, through all eternity. (John 1: 1-3) Hundreds of prophecies were fulfilled in His life, birth, and death.

He is the only one who bore our sins, so that we can have forgiveness and redemption from sin (Isaiah 53). He had the power to lay down His life and take it back again (John 10).

His resurrection was both physical (witnessed by Thomas) and spiritual (Romans 1-4). As He is a Spirit, He will never die. He went to Heaven and will return to earth in all His glory (Matthew 24:30, Acts 17:3). He is the only one who will judge the earth, the only one who will be worshipped through eternity (Revelation 21-22). He is the only one who can give us eternal life (John 3:18). There is no Salvation without Him (Acts 4-12).

Our fingerprints might give us an identity, but not uniqueness. He has given us new birth through His blood, which is unique. Our unique God expects us to be unique.

As we celebrate the resurrection, let us look over the uniqueness that Christ has given us. All those who were brought back to life like Lazarus, died. John records “I am the Living One. I was dead but now look, I am alive forever and ever”. (Revelation 1:16)

The risen Lord gives us the power to preach the Gospel according to His great commission. As forgiven Christians, our life does not end here. We inherit eternal life, unique indeed.

The Cross and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus provides the best hope for humanity.

“Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? So, I will not forget you.” says the Lord.

Let us remain faithful to this unique sacrificial love of Jesus.

Our old life ends with the Cross. Our new life begins with the resurrection. Outside of the Cross of Christ there is no hope for the world. A new beginning indeed!

*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.*

## NEW BEGINNINGS



### **Dr M Anthony David**

“Let there be light”, said God and it was created. And God saw that it was good. He separated the light from the non-light, which is called darkness.

God created flora and fauna, which came alive. He customised and created, the first humans, in His own likeness, to preside over this idyllic new universe. Adam, named his help-mate Eve, and also named each of the fauna. The new creation was declared to be ‘very good’ by the Creator, Yahweh El Shaddai.

Seeing the beauty of Eden, the majesty of God’s creation and the harmony between Adam and Eve, rankled Satan, a fallen angel. He just could not bear the communion the Creator and the created had. “How can I spoil this?” he pondered.

Tempting Eve, Satan made them disobey God. Disaster loomed. Convicted, Adam and Eve were sent out from Eden. Sin had entered their haven and marred their lives, heaven, and earth.

Centuries passed by. Over the centuries, many men and women had inklings of faith and tried to commune with God.

Another new beginning. The Son of God was born in Bethlehem. Growing in grace, He ministered to humankind. Jewish leaders, inspired by the evil one, opposed the Lord. They reviled, arrested, and tortured him. He patiently bore it all in silence. They made Him die on the cross. Satan thought that it was a victory for him. Little did he know that God used this cross to save all mankind! Jesus was taken down from the cross and buried in the new tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. They sealed the tomb and set a watch on it.

There was no light that gloomy Friday afternoon. Despair, disappointment and dejection dogged the disciples. They sat crouched in fear, locking their doors fearing further persecution.

Three days later, another new beginning! The watch and the seal could not prevent this. The cold damp of the tomb, could not contain the vibrant Saviour! The Son of God arose victorious, and left the tomb empty! He had conquered sin and death and Satan too, all in one stroke! Seeing the empty tomb, John and Peter were bewildered. Mary Magdalene alone lingered and saw the Risen Christ! But, could not recognise Him till he called her familiarly, “Mary!”

On Pentecost, the Holy Spirit God arrived and a new entity, the Church, was born. Persecuted, these believers spread abroad, and took the news all over the world. The church blossomed and bore fruit and continued through the centuries, despite many attempts to annihilate it. It is still thriving!

Wait, wait! It is not over. Another new beginning is in the offing! The coming rapture as we go to meet the Lord Jesus, the new beginning of an immortal life. The dead in Christ first, and then us, living believers. Maranatha, Come Lord Jesus!

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

# Mysteries of the Cross



**Dr Ganti Joseph Bhasker**

## **I. Three sorrowful moments of Jesus Christ:**

1. The Agony of Jesus in The Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:44)
2. The Crowning of Jesus with a crown of thorns and Jesus carrying the cross to the calvary (Matthew 27:29)
3. The Death of Jesus on the cross—Crucifixion (Matthew 27:45;50)

## **II. Three Glorious mysteries of Jesus Christ:**

1. Resurrection of Jesus Christ (Luke 24:1-10)
2. Ascension of Christ in to heaven (Acts 1:1-12)
3. Descent of Holy spirit on the Apostles (Acts 2:1-13)

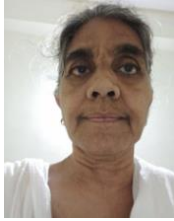
## **III. Three Correlations:**

1. We lost paradise due to the disobedience of first man (Adam) in the garden of Eden when he ate the forbidden fruit. The fall of man. (Genesis 3:1-7)
2. Paradise was restored by the second Adam, Jesus Christ, in the Garden of Gethsemane by His obedience to die on the cross for the redemption of our sin. (Matthew 26:38-45 and Mark 14:34-42)
3. Though He was son of God and prince of peace, He was despised and rejected by His own men, He became a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs and insults. Yet His love for us compelled Him. How low He fell, to lift us from our fall in sin. (Luke 23:35-37 and John 18:35)

*Dr Ganti Joseph Bhasker, M.Sc. Ph. D Retd. RJDCE and Principal, Degree College, Govt. of AP.  
Dr Ganti and his family have been members of St John's Church since 2003.*



## I will Rebuild...



**Dr Mrs Govardhini**

I was blessed to see this happening in a semi-urban area of West Godavari district. An inspired young couple partnered with a teaching Institute to set up facilities and take up the responsibility to teach and train servants of God about the discipline of discipleship.

The vision is to take it to grass root levels where every believer will be a leader leading, inspiring others to follow Jesus. As expected, the team was plagued with innumerable obstacles. There were unexpected delays in the construction works. Then there were legal battles with neighbours who owned land around the premises. Also, the inevitable struggle between the residents and their appointed authority finally led to a stage where all work had to be stopped and the group got busy moving away from the proposed work into doing other things on their own.

Yes, even the trees on the campus took on a forlorn appearance and only rubble remained all over the place. Recently after 14 years, I happened to come to this place again hearing of the work starting once again on the premises. I was and am amazed at the change! That is why I post this picture of the trees with new green leaves.

The land issue and now a wall surrounds the premises. Surely, it was God who help us solve this huge problem. Attempts are now being made to landscape the grounds and care properly for the trees on campus. Arrangements are also now in place for an office, kitchen and dining space. The centre is also well equipped with staff and infrastructural requirement necessary to help youngsters from the local area to have vocational training besides the discipleship work originally planned for.

Over the last 2 days, I have been part of this worshipping community who each in their unique role are fulfilling the Great Commission, " Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you'. (Matthew 28:19-20 a)



*Dr Govardhini 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 paediatric doctor by profession.*

## The King, Cross and the meaning of Easter



### Dr Hannah Rajyalakshmi

We all know the panic of a crisis. A glance at the recent Corona pandemic teaches us the result and impact of economic collapse and global pandemic. In such moments we look for one who can control the situation. We ask the question: “Who can control?”

The very same question stands at the heart of Easter. The story of the crucified man who rose from the dead may be familiar to us, but, as a result, we can easily miss or overlook what this story is really all about. Despite all the appearances to the contrary, the man who died on Good Friday and rose again on the third day is really the true ruler of the world. Jesus is the one supreme control, even when things seem most out of control. He is the King.

Pilate, the Governor asked Jesus “Are you the King of Jews?” Jesus answered “Do you say this of your own accord or did others say it to you about me?” Pilate answered “Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the Chief Priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done? So, you are a King?”

Jesus answered “You say that I am a King. For this purpose, I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world —to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice”. (John 18:33-37)

Pilate told the Jews, “I find no guilt in him. But you have a custom that I should release one man for you at the Passover. So, do you want me to release the King of the Jews?” They cried out again, “not this man but Barabbas.” (John 18:38-40)

The Jews came up to Jesus, saying, “Hail the King of Jews. Pilate said to the Jews, “Behold your King shall I crucify your King?” and he delivered Jesus over to the Jews to be crucified. So, the King was put on the cross. As Pilate delivers this king to be crucified, little does he know that Jesus must enter His kingdom by the way of the cross. The innocent man before Him will bring salvation to the guilty, and this man will die so that they may go free.

Jesus was crucified and died on a Friday. Perhaps, the author could say Jesus was crucified on a Friday and then mention why it is called Good Friday. Early on Sunday morning Mary Magdalene went to the tomb where Jesus had been laid. She found that the great stone which sealed the tomb had been rolled away and the tomb was empty. She said, “He’s not there. He is risen.”

Jesus Christ came into this world as God’s promised as the saving king of humanity. He offers us forgiveness through His death on the cross and life by His resurrection from the dead. So, believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and have life in His name.

“The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans 6:23)

*Dr Hannah Rajyalakshmi is a Retd Govt Reader in Zoology and has been a Member of St John’s since 2003.*

# Myrrh : A Medicinal Herb

## Dr Karunakaran Rao

It is important to learn about this medicinal substance —myrrh, especially in the Lenten season

- *Commiphora myrrha*, myrrh or African myrrh, is a tree in the Burseraceae family, growing in northeast Africa and in the Arabian Peninsula.
- This is mainly used in the production of myrrh, a resin made from dried tree sap.
- It is spiny and grows to a height of about 5 m (16 ft). Its short, hairless, thick, and flaky trunk has two layers of bark.

Myrrh is mentioned in the New Testament as one of the three gifts the "Wise men from the East" presented to the Christ-child (Matthew 2:11). When Jesus was on the cross, He was given a drink of vinegar mingled with gall: and "when he had tasted it, he would not drink". (Matthew 27:34)

The Gospel of Mark describes the drink as wine mingled with myrrh (Mark 15:23). Myrrh was also presented at Jesus' burial. Joseph of Arimathea brought a 100-pound mixture of myrrh and aloes to wrap Jesus' body. (John 19:39)

### In contemporary Christianity

Because of its mention in the New Testament, myrrh is an incense offered during some Christian liturgical celebrations. Myrrh mixed with frankincense and some more perfume is used in the Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, traditional Roman Catholic, and Anglican/Episcopal churches.

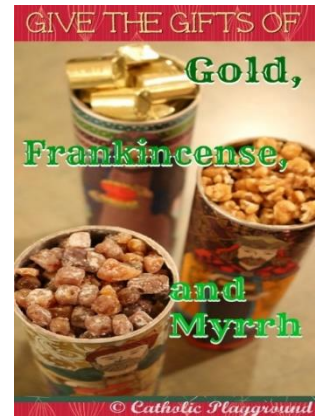
Interestingly, myrrh is also used to prepare the sacramental chrism used by many churches of both Eastern and Western rites.

In the Middle East, the Eastern Orthodox Church traditionally uses oil scented with myrrh (and other fragrances) to perform the confirmation after baptism, which is commonly referred to as "receiving the Chrism".

Chrism is confirmation after baptism in the Anglican tradition.

### Medicinal properties:

Resin from *Commiphora Myrrha*, oozes from incisions in the bark and dries into small clumps of sap. Natural myrrh tastes sour, bitter, and aromatic, which is a key ingredient that adds flavour to meat products, desserts, soft drinks, gum, and sweets. Its use as a fragrance in incense has extended to other cosmetic products, such as mouthwash, soaps, and perfumes. The Arabic term 'Murr,' which means 'bitter', describes the flavour and balsamic aroma of myrrh. Historically, myrrh was extremely expensive, as it is costlier than gold. Al-Razi, the outstanding physician the Middle Ages, used myrrh to treat kidney and bladder diseases and stomach bloating. Its essential oils (EOs) have been used for



centuries, to manufacture perfumes and cosmetics and in aromatherapy as an incense and for medicinal purposes. Leprosy, syphilis, other infectious disorders, as well as cancer, have reported to have been cured with myrrh.

It is also a component of traditional medical practices in China, the Middle East, and Africa and has been used since antiquity for several medicinal applications. It has been used traditionally used for treating wounds, mouth ulcers, aches, fractures, stomach disorders, microbial infections, and inflammatory diseases. It is used as an antiseptic, astringent, anthelmintic, carminative, expectorant to stimulate menstrual flow, and as an.

*Dr K. Karunakar Rao – St. John church member,*

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## Titles given to People in the Bible



**Ms B Shourya Prashastha**

### **Old Testament:**

**Adam:** The first man; Father of Humanity

**Eve:** The first woman; Mother of All Living

**Abraham:** Father of Many Nations; Friend of God

**Sarah:** Mother of Nations

**Isaac:** Son of Promise

**Jacob:** Israel; Father of the Twelve Tribes of Israel

**Joseph:** Dreamer; Prince of Egypt

**Moses:** Deliverer; Lawgiver; Prophet of God

**David:** Shepherd King; Man after God's Own Heart

**Solomon:** Wise King; Builder of the Temple

**Elijah:** Prophet of Fire; Troubler of Israel

**Elisha:** Prophet of Miracles

### **New Testament:**

**John the Baptist:** Forerunner of Christ; A voice in the Wilderness

**Jesus Christ:** Messiah; Son of God; Savior; Prince of Peace

**Mary:** Blessed Virgin; Mother of Jesus

**Peter:** Rock; Apostle

**Paul:** Apostle to the Gentiles; Writer of Epistles

**John:** Beloved Disciple; Apostle of Love

**Judas Iscariot:** Betrayer of Jesus

**Mary Magdalene:** Follower of Jesus; Witness to the Resurrection

**John the Baptist:** Forerunner of Christ; A voice in the Wilderness

## The Best Seller – The Bible



Ms B Swetcha Prayoktha

*The Bible was written by 40 authors*

➤ **Books:**

- ✚ *The Old Testament contains 39 books.*
- ✚ *The New Testament contains 27 books.*
- ✚ *In total, there are 66 books in the Bible.*

➤ **Chapters:**

- ✚ *There are 1,189 chapters in the Bible.*

➤ **Scriptures:**

- ✚ *There are approximately 31,102 verses in the Bible.*

➤ **Time Period:**

- ✚ *Adam to Noah – 1000 years.*
- ✚ *Noah to Abraham – 2000 years.*
- ✚ *Abraham to David – 3000 years.*
- ✚ *David to Jesus – 4000 years.*

➤ **Old Testament:**

1. **Pentateuch (Torah):** *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.*
2. **Historical Books:** *Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther.*
3. **Poetic Books:** *Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon.*
4. **Major Prophets:** *Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel*
5. **Minor Prophets:** *Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.*



➤ ***New Testament:***

1. ***Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John***
2. ***Historical Information: Acts***
3. ***Pauline Epistles: Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon***
4. ***General Epistles: Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude***
5. ***Apocalyptic: Revelation***

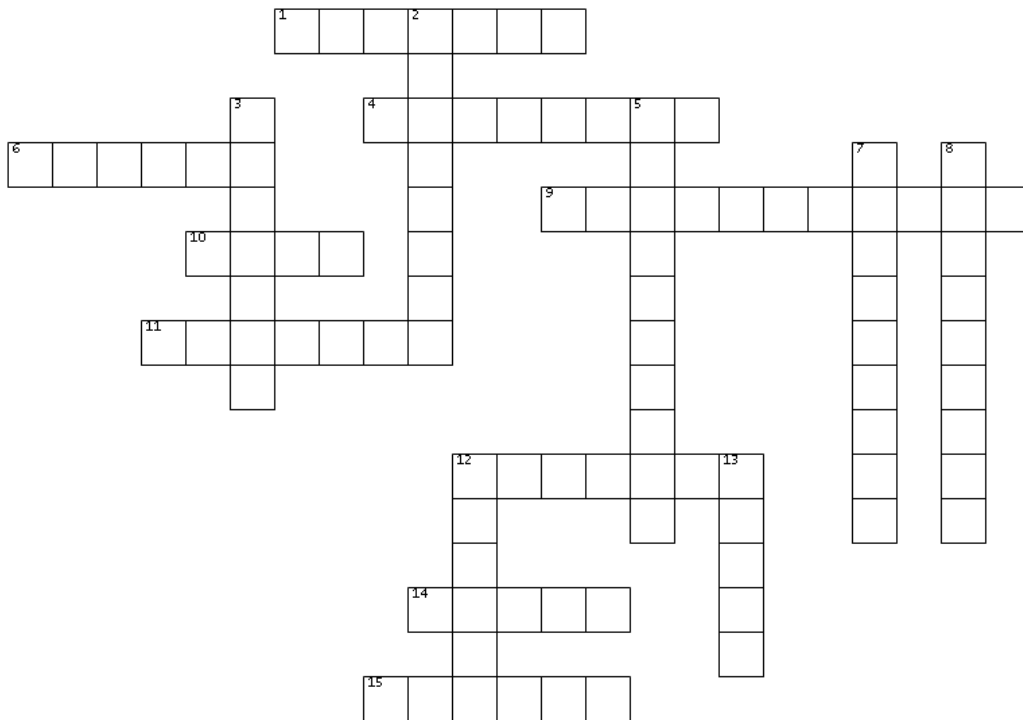
✚ ***All this comes into harmony, gives a single message, and talks about one person – JESUS CHRIST.***

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*Compiled by Ms Swetcha Prayoktha – Inters (Sunday School) St John's Church*

# EASTER CROSSWORD



**Dr Priyadarshini John**



## CLUES ACROSS

1. Name the high priest's servant who had his ear cut off by a disciple, which was subsequently reattached by Jesus.
4. Jesus appeared to this disciple after his resurrection.
6. Name the Cross-bearer who was compelled to carry the on the day of the crucifixion is from this place
9. In the current world this country is known for performances of the Senákulo (passion play), public processions, and self-flagellation on Good Friday, every year.
10. This book of Old Testament prophesies about day night changes on the day of crucifixion
11. Thomas was called by this name because of his doubting nature
12. Silver pieces of betrayal money was used to buy this field
14. Jesus side pierced with



15. How many legions of angels did Jesus say He could call, on the day of His arrest year

### CLUES DOWN

2. Jesus was taken to this high priest, from garden of Gethsemane.
3. In this country people celebrate Good Friday by flying kites and eating cod fish cakes.
5. Joseph who volunteered to take the body of Jesus hails from this place
7. This man brought a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloe for Jesus after his death to place in the linen with the body in observance of Jewish burial customs
8. Palm Sunday prophesied in this book of Old Testament
12. What was the colour of the Jesus' robe on the day of crucifixion
13. Meaning of Golgotha in Hebrew



The picture depicts icon of the Resurrection, also known as “Christ’s Descent into Hades” and “the Anastasis”, is the icon of Easter, celebrating Jesus’ triumph over death. The icon depicts Jesus Christ descending into Hades and pulling Adam and Eve from the tombs, symbolizing His victory back to the very beginning of mankind. The two golden bars under Jesus’ feet (note that His feet and hands still carry the signs of His crucifixion) are the gates of Hades which He has broken open. On the left of the icon, we see David and Solomon, representing those who died before Jesus’ crucifixion, waiting patiently in Hades for their Messiah. On the right side of the icon, we see Abel as a shepherd, the first person to die as a result of the Fall, as well as Saint John the Baptist. In the darkness below, keys, locks & chains symbolize that He has entered and conquered both death and Hades.

*Dr Priydarshini John is currently Assistant Professor of Nephrology at Osmania General Hospital, Hyderabad. She is an active member of St John’s church contributing periodically to the Health corner in raising awareness about the most pertinent diseased conditions. Writing blogs in Literature and Nephrology are her other interests.*

### ANSWER KEY

#### ACROSS

1. Name of the high priest’s servant who had his ear cut off by the disciple and subsequently reattached by Jesus- **MALCHUS (JOHN 18:10)**
4. Jesus appeared to disciples after resurrection near this sea- **TIBERIAS (JOHN 21:1)**
6. Compelled Cross-bearer on the day of crucifixion hails from this place- **CYRENE (MATTHEW 27:32)**

9. In the current world this country is known for performances of the Senákulo (Passion play), public processions, and self-flagellation on Good Friday **(PHILIPPINES)**

10. This book of Old Testament prophesies about day night changes on the day of crucifixion-

**AMOS (Amos 8:9)**

11. Thomas was called by this name because of his doubting nature— **(DIDYMUS (JOHN 20:24))**

12. Silver pieces of betrayal money was used to buy this field — **(POTTERS (MATTHEW 27:7))**

14. Jesus side pierced with-**SPEAR (JOHN 19:34)**

15. How many legions did Jesus say he could call **TWELVE (MATTHEW 26:53)**

## **DOWN**

2. Jesus was taken to him, a high priest, from the garden of Gethsemane. **CAIAPHAS (MATTHEW 26:57)**

3. In this country people celebrate Good Friday by flying kites and eating cod fish cakes **(BERMUDA)**

5. Joseph who volunteered to take body of Jesus hails from this place- **ARIMATHEA (JOHN 19:38)**

7. This man brought a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloe for Jesus after his death to place in the linen with the body in observance of Jewish burial customs- **NICODEMUS (JOHN 19:39)**

8. Palm Sunday prophesied in this book of old testament- **ZECHARIAH (Zechariah 9:9)**

12. Colour of the Jesus robe on the day of crucifixion- **PURPLE (JOHN 19:1)**

13. Meaning of Golgotha in Hebrew-**SKULL (MATTHEW 27:33)**

## Easter Decoration of the Church and Grounds – 2024



When we were given the privilege, as usual, to carry out the Easter Decorations, we quickly got together the Iniya—Sweetness team of seven members— Jesus the Chief Director, Chaya, Yashoda, Mabel, Dr Praveena, Yashodhra and Mr Subbas. We prayed and left it to the Lord Jesus to guide our hands, minds, and spirits.

For the Iniya decoration team, time just flew and we realised it was 01 am, when we finally finished. We thank the Prayer family and Rani and Philip for cleaning up the Church after this and keeping it fully ready.



We offer the fragrance of the aroma of the visible floral Easter decorations, to our invisible Jesus who says " I am with you always, even to the end of the world."(28:19)

*Ms Yashodhra Desappa, St John's Church Steward.*

## An Icon for the Next Generation



REV. AA CHARLES DE (TELECOM) RETD.

At a time when a telephone connection could easily take a decade to fructify due to the waiting lists, this legendary Telecom officer used his position to help people secure jobs in his own department and other Institutions like military, schools, and colleges.

Rev. Charles had humble beginnings in the small town of Eluru, where he studied up to High school and before he went on to study in AC College, Guntur. He then joined the Telecom services and rose to the position of Divisional Engineer by sheer hard work, dedication, commitment, and a high level of professionalism. Those in the trade union shuddered as he regularly issued memos, warnings, and dismissals to maintain a high level of discipline and punctuality in the erstwhile Posts and Telegraphs department.

He is the founding member of the CSI Church at Warisguda. He is also one of the two founders of the United Christmas Celebrations for the twin cities and was felicitated recently for his long association with them. Notably, he received an ordination from the Jerusalem Ordination Council for his contribution to lay preaching.

Family and friends enjoyed his regular visits to hospitals when any one was unwell. Most often, Rev AA Charles and Late Mrs AR Savitri (who passed away in 2021) would be the first responders, if there was an accident, hospitalisation, death of a loved one and a myriad other emergencies. His testimony for unparalleled success lies in the maxim, "Fear of the Lord", which he always repeats to all who come to visit him. He still devotes all his energy to reading God's word from his well-used, and heavily dog-eared Bible and begins his day in the mornings by singing old, forgotten Telugu hymns over and over again, reminding us of the verse in Psalm 71:8 which says, "My mouth is filled with your praise, declaring your splendour all day long".

Despite his failing eyesight and diminishing memory, he can still preach a homily on the book of Psalms for an hour. His love for the Lord and the Word of God is undeniable and he continues to inspire us every day with his Spirit filled interactions with those of us who are so blessed to love, serve, and live with him.

He is blessed with four sons, six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. At 103, he is all set to reach yet another milestone of 104 on 01 August 24, God willing. We salute his zest for life and thank the Lord Almighty for giving him as our parent in this life.

Isaiah 46:4 says "Even to your old age and grey hairs I am He, I am He who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you." These words ring true in the life of Rev A.A. Charles, my dear father-in-law.

*Mrs Usha Manohar is passionate about teaching and has been an active member in Sunday School for over three decades. She loves, traveling, entertaining, and reading. She loves God's work and tries hard to 'walk the talk'.*

## **A Miraculous Healing**

The Lord has shown abundant grace and mercy to me. In 2008, I had suffering from intense pain in my kidney area for a few weeks and then unfortunately I was diagnosed with Lupus Nephritis, stage 4. Ever since then, I was extremely worried that I might eventually reach stage 5 dialysis. I was especially concerned for my family, we prayed hard and called for His Mercy.

Last year, I started on a renal diet that seem to be working. When my husband came home for Christmas, we went for a diagnostic kidney test.

When I showed my Doctor the reports, he was very pleased and said that my kidneys seemed to be functioning normally. He advised me to repeat the Test after 15 days, which I did. After the second round of tests, when I asked him which stage of CKD (chronic kidney disease) I had now, he responded saying that I have no more CKD.

All praise and glory to my Lord Jesus Christ alone. It has taken 15years for me to come out of CKD. Is anything too hard for our Lord Jesus Christ?

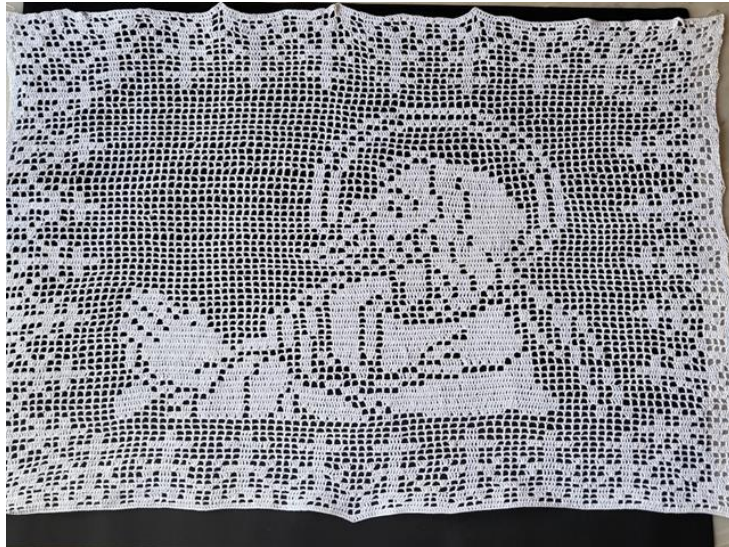
He is a wonderful, wonderful God By the Grace and Mercy of Our Lord Jesus I am completely healed. 🙏

*This testimony is shared by Ms Yashodhra Desappa. The name of the writer has been withheld on request.*



## Art Work

**Dr Carol Ann Reddy**



*Dr Carol Ann Reddy has been an active member of St John the Baptist Church for several years. She is a Doctor by profession. She loves to spend time on crochet in her spare time.*





# Records of St John the Baptist Church

January to April, 2024

Compiled by Mr Sumanth Kumar


## Marriage Records



	<b>Date of Marriage</b>	<b>Name of parties</b>	<b>Photographs</b>
1	January 8, 2024	<b>Yadki Reginold Charles</b> <i>and</i> <b>Bithiah Stacey</b>	 
2	January 29, 2024	<b>Pabbathi Deepak Moses</b> <i>and</i> <b>Surupa Rachel Evangeline</b>	 

## Death Records



	Death Records		
	<b>Date of Death</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Photograph</b>
1	22-01-2024	Srungarapati Jacob	



## **Shri Srungarapati Jacob**



**(01-07-1944—22-01-2024)**

Late Shri Srungarapati Jacob was born in Mulpur village near Telani, Guntur District.

He was from a farming background, but was always interested in studies and pursued higher education. He was the first person in his entire village to complete his BA and B Ed.

He subsequently worked as a railway school teacher and continued in this field for over 27 years in Dornakal, Khammam regions. His last assignment was in Kazipet Railway School. Throughout his service, he was known for his dedication, integrity, and straightforward nature. God blessed him with good health all through his life. He was generally considered very healthy, apart for a few patches of illnesses, which generally lasted for not more than a few months.

He is survived by three children —one son Mr S Vamseedhar and two daughters —Mrs P Bindu and Ms Bindu Mashuri. He also had four grandchildren.

Our sincere thanks go to Rev. U Daniel and Rev. E Sumalatha and the office team for their timely support guidance and prayers, especially for the smooth conduct of the funeral and memorial service.

