

Pulse

ST. JOHN'S

DECEMBER 2020

Parish Magazine of St. John's Church, Bangalore, India
FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION ONLY

encountering the giants

Through the eyes
of our Sunday
School Kids



Cianna Beniston



Raynah Daniel

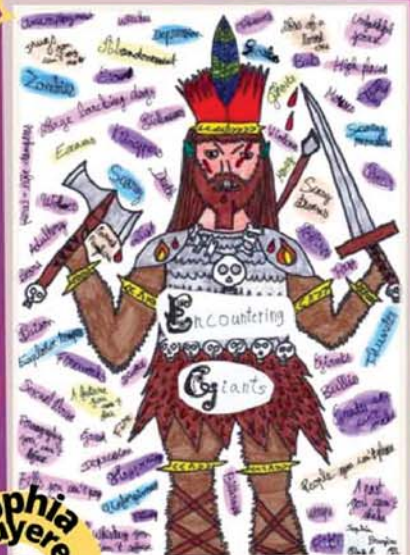
Andrea Princess - U.K.G. Encountering giants

Andrea Princess





Joshua Arun



Sophia Bruyere



Jessica Carolam



Angelina Sigamoney



Andrew Patrick

second prize winners

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Winning paintings by Sunday School children

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Editor's note

Dear Friends,

In mid-February 2020, when the Communication And Technology Sub-committee (CATS) announced the theme for the next issue as 'Encountering the Giants', little did we expect that lurking round the corner would be the giant that we are continuing to battle nine months now - the COVID-19 virus.

When St. John's Church closed, CATS brought you the church at home through the online recorded services. The Wings of the Church and Fellowships continued meeting on online platforms, strengthening faith and knitting bonds. Our Pastors called and continue to call members, especially those living alone, and prayed with them on the phone.

Pulse became an online weekly, publishing testimonies and thoughts of members on the pandemic, photos of nature on the campus by Rev. Navin K. John, and kept you updated about church news. A special online issue for the 100th birthday of our former Presbyter Rev. Joe Mullins was presented to him on July 14.

When the lockdown restrictions eased, the worship service in the church resumed from September 27, by following the BBMP guidelines.

And here is the printed copy in your hands. Rev. G. Wilson retired on September 1 after 40 years of ministry. We bring you glimpses of the farewell. CATS places on record his guidance and looks forward to Rev. Navin K. John to strengthening the communication mandate of St. John's Church.

We are saddened with the demise of Anna Varughese, an active and dedicated member of CATS. Thank you to all those who have written beautiful tributes on their loved ones who have slept in the Lord.

'Our God is bigger than any giant' is communicated by members of our church through their thought-provoking articles, and heartwarming testimonies that are sure to reinforce our faith. Our Sunday School children have demonstrated that their paintings speak louder than 1000 words.

FamilyPulse has something for everyone. Wings of the Church have been active as always.

This year, Advent and Christmas celebrations could be different from the usual. Let's remind ourselves that Jesus was born in tough circumstances, and yet emerged victorious. We hope that the articles on the Advent season will help us keep the season sacred.

We urge you to wear masks, continue to observe physical and social distancing and follow guidelines of the Government.

On behalf of CATS, I wish you and your families, a peaceful and joyful Advent season and Christmas.

Matilda Yorke

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Rev. Navin K. John

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From the Presbyterian's Desk

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It gives me great joy to greet you after taking over from Rev. G. Wilson, and I thank him for all his services in the ministry. I continue to seek your prayers as I work to fulfill the responsibilities entrusted to me.

We, as a Church, have a rich history of mission in the ministry of God. The Church and the School have always been unanimous in our witness to God in our society. The Church and the School continue to influence people towards faith and service. As an old student of St. John's High School, I recollect the influences of the Church and School in shaping my personality and my faith. I am always grateful to God for my teachers and Pastors who have moulded and inspired me.

On September 27, 2020, we, as members of the Church of South India (CSI), entered the 74th year of the formation of the CSI. At the commemoration service of the formation of the CSI, held at St. Andrew's Church, Bangalore, our Bishop challenged the Church to be

united in faith and witness and to continue to serve God by adapting to the 'new normal'.

Our faith is being challenged in these difficult times, and yet, for the past few months, we have endured it with perseverance and faith. We are learning to adapt our lives to the crisis and the situations around us and to protect ourselves from being prone to the COVID-19 illness. Every time we step out of our homes, we overcome the fear and danger because of our dependence on God and on His grace.

This issue of the **Pulse** brings us closer to the season of Advent. Ever since the lockdown happened in March 2020, our lives have drastically changed or altered. Our experiences over the past months have taught us many lessons for life and we are now preparing ourselves to usher in the joy of the birth of Jesus Christ in the world and to prepare ourselves for the second coming of Christ. May the beginning of the Advent bring back the love, joy and peace into our lives, may the light of Jesus Christ shine in our lives and brighten our lives and the lives of those around us. Amen.

Rev. Navin K. John

Sunday Worship Resumes in the Church

St. John's Church began Sunday worship service in the church on September 27, 2020. The service, which begins at 9 a.m., is live streamed. The Guidelines, on page 4, from the government are being strictly adhered to.

However, meetings of the Wings of the Church and Fellowships continue on online platforms. Do join these sessions and feel encouraged. Please call the Church Office 29513805 and give your name and contact number for the conveners to send you the link.

The CHURCH OFFICE is open Monday to Friday 9.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. and Saturday 9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.

ADMINISTRATION: Office: 29513805

PASTORAL CARE: Rev. Navin John 9886942735

Visit the **CHURCH WEBSITE**
<http://www.stjohnschurchblr.com>
 where you will also find the pew slips, announcements and Pulse newsletters.

Name of the Wing / Fellowship	Meeting Schedules
Women's Fellowship	Every Tuesday at 5.00 pm
Church Bible Study (church and online)	Every Wednesday at 6.30 pm
Men's Fellowship	Alternate Thursday at 6.00 pm
Neighbourhood Fellowship	Every Thursday at 7.00 pm
Angels of Change	Third Saturday at 11 am
Sunday School	Every Sunday at 10.00 am
Youth Fellowship	Every Sunday at 10.00 am
Teens Fellowship	Every Sunday at 3.00 pm

St. John's Church – Worship Service

22nd September 2020

Dear beloved in Christ,

The worship service will resume in our Church from Sunday the 27th of September 2020.

UPDATED Guidelines for participation:

1. The temperature screening will start from 8:30 am for the service which starts at 9:00 am.
2. The service will be a contactless service.
3. There will be a single entrance and exit.
4. The Congregation members should wear a mask at all times.
5. There will be two screening points at the main entrance of the Church where temperature screening and database collection will be done.
6. The Eucharist elements will be kept at the entrance: Immediately after screening, the congregation members can pick up individual packed communion elements as they enter Church.
7. There will be two sanitizing stations at the entrance.
8. The ushers will direct you to the pews adhering to social distancing norms.
9. There will be no use of Hymn or Prayer books during the service.
10. The Service liturgy and Hymns will be put up on the screen.
11. The members are requested not to bring hand bags, books etc.
12. The members are requested to bring their own water bottles.
13. The offertory box will be placed at the entrance of the church: While exiting the offertory can be dropped into the box. The envelopes for subscription and other pledges will be available at the entrance.
14. While exiting the church the ushers will guide you out starting from the last pew.
15. There will be no socializing after the Church service and the members will have to leave the Campus Immediately.
16. The entrance to the church will be from the Promenade road side.
17. Parking will be available at the basketball court.
18. Congregation members who are of high risk category are requested to refrain from attending.
19. Your prayers, cooperation and support are needed.

Thanking you,
Prayers and Regards,
Rev. Navin Kumar John.

" Note :

- # High Risk Category includes: co morbidities, persons above 65 years and Children below 10 years.
- # 27th September 2020 service will be uploaded after the worship service
- # Live streaming for the upcoming services is planned"

Thank You for Your Care and Support

For the last 167 years, St. John's Church has been demonstrating the mandate from Proverbs 3:27 – "Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to act" or in Romans 12:13 – "Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality".

The Medical Fund and the Education Sponsorship are two projects that our church has been focusing on for some time now, besides the Stephen's Home for the Aged and the Boys' Hostel.

Medical Fund: Thank you for your contribution to the Medical Aid Fund that has given a new lease of life to members of our church suffering from health issues like cancer and kidney malfunction. During 2020-21, till date, we have contributed a total monthly assistance of Rs 11,800 to five members, and have till date paid Rs 25,000/- each to four members.

There are many others whom we would like to help on a regular basis. As you are aware health care costs are spiralling, and there are members among us who are economically weak, may not have insurance/ or the insurance is not enough to cover their medical expenses.

We appeal to you to contribute to the Medical Fund to help us to support many more from our church. We provide financial assistance, up to a certain limit, to those whose illness is certified by a registered medical practitioner/hospital and who are economically weak.

Education Sponsorship: Over the years, many children who are economically weak have benefited from your contribution towards this fund. During the academic year 2020-21, Rs 1,52,000/- was disbursed to 21 children as against Rs 1,74,000/- that was given to 26 students in 2019-2020.

Like these children there are many more whom we can help stand on their feet by sponsoring their

education. Partner with the Church in its efforts to educate underprivileged children studying from standard 1 to 12, and for higher education in polytechnic and degree courses. If you know of children in our church who need assistance, do ask them to get in touch with the church office for more information.

There are five financial assistance schemes.

1. **St. John's Church Financial Assistance** for children studying from standard 1 to 12, and for higher education in polytechnic and degree courses. You can contribute to the Education Fund or be a sponsor of a child
2. **Sumanam Scholarship** for children studying in St. John's High School
3. **The Barbara Hereford Higher Education Scholarship** higher education for higher performers who need financial assistance
4. **Sarah Mathew Scholarship for the Girl Child** – women/girl children who need the funds to continue their education
5. **Indira Vidyadayini James Memorial Scholarship** – for children studying in St John's High School.

Please continue to support our church for the projects, the Medical Fund and Education Sponsorships together with your subscription, offertory, and tithes. You can remit online. Once the remittance is done, please mail the transaction details to sjchurchblr@gmail.com (Attn: Hannah), and mention the purpose of your contribution.

Bank details

Name of the account : CSITA ST JOHN'S CHURCH
Account Number : 457702011005149
Name of Bank : Union Bank of India
Branch : St. John's High School
IFSC : UBIN0558923

Payment Modes

NEFT	Google Pay	Online Payment Portal
Use the bank details as mentioned above. In the description in the NEFT transaction, please write your full name and the purpose of your contribution (offertory/ self-denial/subscription / birthday / wedding anniversary / projects).	Open GooglePay and click on Bank Transfer and enter the details of the bank account of CSITA St. John's Church as stated above. You can then proceed to remit the funds as you normally do for any transaction in GooglePay	Click this link https://donate.stjohnschurchblr.com

Spotlight



On his 100th birthday, St. John's Church was happy to present Rev. Joe Mullins a scrapbook of sweet messages from members and photos of his tenure at the church. Rev. Mullins served as Presbyter from 1962-65 and 1966-74. We bring you excerpts from the messages received from Rev. Mullins and his son Chris.

Great to have this touch with you all. God is indeed Sovereign over our troubled world, yet is mightier at work whether in India, Iran, Syria or Melbourne.

I pray St. John's continues to preach the glorious Gospel of our risen Saviour till He comes again.

Joe Mullins

DOWN MEMORY LANE



May 1971 – Members of the Pathfinders shared by Dr. C.S. Rajan

From left are Dr. Rajan, David Cyprian, Sam Immanuel, Jagdish Prasad, Thomas Swaroop, David Selvaraj, Charles Anthony and Tsua Shiro, the then Japanese VBS teacher.

The Pathfinders group of the seventies is like the Teens Fellowship of St. John's Church. After graduating from Sunday School, the children would join the Pathfinders before becoming members of the Youth Fellowship.



The twelve years that Dad and Mum were at St John's Church were hugely significant in Dad and Mum's life. I refer to Dad and Mum as they worked as one as a team.

They sowed the seed and cultivated the faith in the parish and were instrumental in taking the word of Jesus into the countryside with church plants in Lingarajapuram.

The youth group was one of their great successes where young people were brought to Christ and disciplined and to this day is still bearing fruit.

All of the Mullins family have a sense of home at St. John's and think of those days fondly. With special mention of Uncle John Jacob who was a brother to my Dad and still lives at Divya-Shanti in Lingarajapuram, John devoted his life to the children of India and took over my Dad's position at Scripture Union when Dad joined St John's.

Thank you once again for the recognition of our dear Dad.

Chris Mullins

New Church Email IDs

For better co-ordination and to streamline mails, St. John's Church has three new email ids, in addition to the existing email id sjchurchblr@gmail.com

presbyter@stjohnschurchblr.com for your pastoral needs (membership, baptism, marriage, burials, prayer meetings, counselling requests, etc.)

accounts@stjohnschurchblr.com for accounts

churchoffice@stjohnschurchble.com official requests and correspondence from wings and sub-committees.

Rev G. Wilson looks back on his tenure

Spotlight

In May 2016, when Rev. G. Wilson took over as Presbyter, Shirin Samuel welcomed him with a face-to-face interview in the *Pulse*, September 2016 issue. Fifty-one months later, the dynamics of our world has changed... the pandemic has transformed the way we communicate. In a telephonic conversation with Shirin Samuel, Rev. G. Wilson looked back fondly on his tenure as Presbyter of St. John's Church from May 2016 to September 1, 2020.

Remember the popular Sunday School song: "The B-I-B-L-E, yeah that's the book for me, I stand alone on the word of God, the B-I-B-L-E". Yes, the Bible has been the foundation of Rev. G. Wilson's ministry of over 40 years in the Karnataka Central Diocese, and, more so, even in his retirement.

Rev Wilson goes down memory lane when he served as Exposure Candidate at St. John's Church in 1979. "I remember that Bibles were kept at the entrance, and the ushers gave out the Bibles along with the hymn books to the congregation for use during the service. There were many families who brought their own Bibles to the worship service. But now, only the hymn books and the Book of Common Worship are being distributed to the congregation probably because members use their phones to refer to the Bible."

Being very particular about the Bible being central to the teaching in the church, Rev. Wilson, during his term as Presbyter, decided to base his preaching on the Word of God, and not on the ever-changing theologies, and he chose visiting preachers carefully to ensure that they would preach from the Word. "I strongly believe that the Word of God has power for social change and personal transformation, for



Rev. G. Wilson with his wife Yessumonie, and sons Ashish (left) and Abhishek

individuals and communities. And I was happy that the congregation was very responsive – they interacted after service and there were some who would phone me and discuss the preaching."

THANK YOU, DEAR CONGREGATION

"I carry with me wonderful memories of the St John's congregation. Thank you to the ever-loving congregation members for their prayers and support – it is God's absolute grace and mercy that enabled me, even in the midst of the pandemic, to complete my ministry for His glory." He remembers how the Harvest Festival offerings increased with joyful participation of members, who made the day very memorable.

In his first year, he recalls, the printing of the calendar for the next year was left to the last minute, and there were hardly nine days left to release it on Christmas Eve. In that challenging situation, he contacted the Convener of Communication And Technology Subcommittee (CATS), Ms. Matilda Yorke, for help to bring out the calendar. The Committee took up the challenge and – with the help of the late Mrs. Anna Varughese, Mrs. Susie John, and Mr. Stanley – a very beautiful calendar was printed, and all 1,000 copies were sold.

Dear Friends,

Grace to you and Peace from God our father the Emmanuel.

The author of the Hebrews wrote to the early Church Hebrews 10:24 "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works," The New American Standard Bible translates this verse as "let us consider how to 'stimulate' one another to love and good deeds"

The time I spent here at St John's brought me to the realization how the people of God are searching for relevance of their faith to life's many questions. There were times when in those interactions, we arrived at answers together, and there were also times we could not find the answers that brought satisfaction. Faith and Life cannot be separated. Everyone has faith – Faith in God, Faith in an Ideology, Faith in our convictions or opinions. This is part of life. But faith in God is central as we always relate our existential questions to our creator and maker.

Friends, Church is one place that God has created for us to fellowship with one another and to grow in the faith. The weekly gathering can be made use of for negative or positive growth. The book of Hebrews admonishes us to 'provoke' or 'stimulate' one another for Love and Good Deeds.

This kind of an attitude is missionary in nature. It is 'Love' and 'Good Deeds', the visible signs of our Faith in God.

We live in a context where our faith in God is challenged from within and without. It is love and good deeds issuing from our faith in God that will build each other and those looking for an answer to their existential questions.

There are families who were touched by my ministry through the Baptism, Confirmation, Engagement, Wedding, Sick Visits and Burial of those who passed away, and the Ministry of the Word of God.

It is my privilege that those memories will be with me and remind me about each of you, as you also will be reminded of my ministry among you. It is my prayer that St. John's family continues to grow in this love and lifts the royal banner of Christ's love to humanity.

My family joins me in thanking you for all your love and assures you of our prayers. Wishing you all God's blessings

In Christ's Service,

Rev. G. Wilson

During the pandemic, he recalls Ms. Padmini Hastings and other members who have the Church's ministry of caring and sharing at heart, kept him informed about members who needed prayer. Rev Wilson said that he would phone these members and chat with them and pray for them. He remembers with affection those long conversations when people opened to him. He said it was very fulfilling to minister during their difficult days.

Some members discussed on the phone many topics, especially why God allowed the pandemic. Rev Wilson said he enjoyed those discussions, and felt very connected to the congregation through these phone calls. "This experience was so unique when people sought God's Word to overcome the situation, and it was very rewarding."

THE MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH

Rev. Wilson felt that the role of the Wings/Fellowships/ Committees of the Church in carrying forward the ministry of the Church, is commendable. "Each one does their best and we saw immense growth and participation of the laity also in the Church services and extending the ministry beyond the Church to those in need."

Rev. Wilson found the time with the residents of Asha Nivas, the senior citizens' home, very fulfilling, especially during the monthly prayer meetings on the first Monday of the month. and the ensuing discussions. He appreciated the Committee and the Convener, Mrs. Jemima Edwin, who ensures that the Home is run systematically and that the residents' needs are met with love and care; any concern brought to her notice is dealt with utmost sincerity and understanding.

The ministry of Stephen's Home is carried out by showing the love of Christ. Rev. Wilson always reminded them that they are precious in God's sight. He appreciated the Committee members for their ministry and commitment, and the Convener, Mrs. Ida Job, who is dedicated to meeting the needs of the residents and giving them good care.

The Boys' Hostel went through a rough patch because of the company that some of the boys kept outside of the campus. But corrective steps streamlined the smooth functioning of the hostel. Rev. Wilson appreciated the Hostel Convener Ms. Kavitha Reuben, Committee members and the Warden for their co-operation.

Rev. Wilson recalls that when he took charge as Presbyterian, the Youth Fellowship was barely functioning; the Pastorate Committee was deeply concerned about this and suggested ways to establish the Fellowship on the lines of the Constitution. It was given all encouragement and the youth at that time coordinated well with each other, and today we have a vibrant Youth Fellowship, that is very active and growing. He appreciated former Asst Presbyterian Rev Victor Prabhakar for all the support and for carrying out the decisions. He also appreciated the youth and their leadership, with Mr. Tejonidhi Paul as the President, for the present growth.

Though he was not involved much with the Sunday School, as most of their programmes were during the service timings, Rev. Wilson was happy that the teachers implemented the Bible-centered syllabus he had recommended. He appreciated the commitment of the Sunday School teachers and the Committee, led by the SS Superintendent Ms. Anita Beniston.

Regarding the Teens Fellowship, Rev Wilson said that the teens ministry developed a solid foundation under the long association and strong leadership of Dr. Shirley Hereford, and Mr. Daniel David took this legacy forward in bringing the teens together as a close-knit family.

Along with his wife Yessomonie, who was President of the Women's Fellowship, Rev. Wilson was blessed to interact with the members of WF. "It was a joy to minister to the enthusiastic Women's Fellowship under the leadership of Mrs. Lalitha Vergis, and be a part of their programmes regularly."

The Men's Fellowship is a well-run and self-sufficient group, and Rev. Wilson participated in their meetings and programmes whenever he was called.

Rev Wilson said that the Angels of Change are full of life and addressed social issues and took up contemporary and relevant topics. He appreciated the AoC for their willingness to be available to people in need. He pointed out how they organized a sale on the sidelines of the Fireball Tournament and gave the proceeds to the Youth Fellowship, and how they raised money for the door of the church. This interwing cooperation was vital to the growth of the ministry in St. John's.

He appreciated the Choir for their ministry and wishes to place on record the ministry of Mr. Samuel Samson, Mr. James Prajwal and Mr. Roger – they faithfully led the singing ministry by playing the organ every Sunday at the services. "Our violinist, Mr. Shyamal Biswas, and his daughter Grace added to the meaningful service. Each member of the Choir is deeply committed to their call, and their place in the worship services makes a great difference and cannot be underemphasized," says Rev. Wilson.

Rev Wilson made a special mention of those he served with – the Pastorate Committee members of the first triennium and the present PC, the officebearers, and the members of the sub-committees. He also recorded his appreciation for the Assistant Presbyters, Rev Victor Prabhakar and Rev Navin John.

"I cannot forget the contribution of Mr. Ramanna and Mr. Benjamin to the worship services, the gardeners Mr. Manjunath and Mr. Shankarappa for their ever willing wonderful support and services rendered, and the Church office staff Ms. Christy Theodore, Ms. Hannah and Mr. Manjunath".

"Our St. John's School is a great support to the ministry of the Church. The school provided the staff to keep the campus clean, and the security guards ensured it was secure. Thank you to Principal Mrs. Shanta Susheela, for all her support to the ministry of the Church."

RETIREMENT PLANS

What are his retirement plans? Rev Wilson, in his inimitable style says, "No plans, but will carry on as God leads. I am confident of Jeremiah 9:11 – 'For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.' Am making a prayer list of people from the various congregations I have served. My father taught me to pray for anyone who came into his thoughts, and I am following his footsteps, doing just that."

The Communication And Technology Sub-committee (CATS) thanks Rev. Wilson for his guidance and encouragement of every task that the CATS has in its portfolio. CATS wishes him, Mrs. Yessomonie, sons Ashish and Abhishek, all God's blessings.

Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain.

– 1 Corinthians 15:58

Rev. G. Wilson Retires as Presbyter



Members of the Pastorate Committee and the Wings and Fellowships of the Church bid farewell to Rev. G. Wilson on his retirement on September 1, 2020. They welcomed Rev. Navin K. John as Presbyter-in-charge.

The congregation thanks Rev. Wilson, his wife Yessumonie, who was President of the Women's Fellowship, for their dedicated service to the church. God be with you and your family. We bring you snapshots.





Pastorate Committee



Church Office



Youth Fellowship



Teens Fellowship



Angels of Change



Mens Fellowship



Neighbourhood Fellowship



Choir

Asha Nivas Bids Farewell

With a sad and nostalgic heart, the residents of Asha Nivas bid farewell to our dear Pastor Rev. G. Wilson and his wife Yessumonie.

Rev. Wilson was gracious enough to take part in every monthly meeting and gave messages and advice from the word of God. He quietly but firmly and sympathetically solved problems of the residents and encouraged and guided them. Dr. Daisy narrated her long-time relationship and told of how her brother while in Bangalore, was eager to listen to his preaching and attended St. John's Church services, even though he was a member of St. Mark's Cathedral. Our oldest resident Kitty Gojer reminisced how she carried their first-born son and went around the campus for walks when Rev. Wilson was the Assistant Pastor.



As many of the residents are Women's Fellowship members, we thanked Yessumonie Wilson for her active participation in Women's Fellowship activities and her humble way of counselling the members whenever it was necessary. We as Committee members, Convener and Residents have learnt so much from both of them – how to lead a life in difficult and desperate situations especially to be calm, magnanimous, gracious and humble as Jesus taught.

We will as a family miss both of them but thank God for such wonderful servants of God and their services rendered to us.

God bless Rev. Wilson and Mrs. Yessumonie Wilson and the family to continue to serve Him, spreading the Gospel of love wherever He leads them in the future as there is no full stop in God's ministry.

Jyothi Parker

Committee Member, Asha Nivas



Stephen's Home Bids Adieu

Towards the end of August, Stephen's Home bid farewell to our very own Presbyterian-in-charge of five years, Rev. G. Wilson and his wife Yessumonie.

At Stephen's Home at a small programme, they were honoured by residents and committee members. It was a joy for us to hear Ayya give the residents comfort and encouragement through his words and prayer.



They are one of the biggest support and inspiration to our residents. We pray for him and his family to

be always wrapped with our Lord's peace, goodness, and love.

Ida Job, Convener

All Saints Day – An Affirmation of Life Everlasting

Once again, this year, members of St. John's Church gathered at St. John's Cemetery, on October 31, to honour their loved ones who passed on to their eternal home. It was celebrated a day earlier because November 1, All Saints' Day, fell on a Sunday.

"We thank you for their example. We praise you for their lives of faith. For all your saints, O Lord, who strove in you to live, who followed, obeyed, adored you," was the reassuring response to Presbyterian Rev. Navin K. John's call to remember "Patriarchs and matriarchs, prophets and psalmists, disciples and evangelists, martyrs and saints."

Surrounded by a cloud of witnesses, in the serene atmosphere, members prayed that like the saints, we too will live in holiness. The sombre moment of the service was the lighting of candles by representatives of the bereaved families in memory of their beloved ones. The names of the persons departed between November 1, 2019, and October 31, 2020, were read.

In his message, Rev. John said that All Saints Day and All Souls Day are two important observances in the life of the Church. It is the remembrance of the life and witness of the faithful who have departed (All Souls Day) and an affirmation of life everlasting which is in the company of all the saints in God's presence (All Saints Day).

"We observe All Saints Day to thank God for the life and witness of those who have 'fought the good fight and finished the race'. It is to remember their life and the way in which they overcame the struggles/pain/trials/tribulations of the world. This memory helps us to affirm the life that God has given to us, to affirm that pain/death/suffering are part of life, and the last and greatest affirmation is the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our affirmations do not end with pain and suffering or death, but with the glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ and His presence among us and in us."



100 Years on Planet Earth

Nirmal Basheshar Nath

Pulsonality



Kamini Williams writes about her mother Nirmal Basheshar Nath, who scored a century on October 31, 2020. St. John's Church wishes her good health and happiness.

When people talk of my mother Mrs. N.B. Nath, they describe her as dignified, feisty, charming, always with a kind

word for everyone, an excellent teacher, but few know of her determination, her courage and the steel within.

I guess this is a natural outcome as she was sent to a boarding at the age of four as her doctor mother who was in charge of the Zenana and Mission hospitals had little time for a lively youngster.

These lessons of being self-reliant, independent, and resourceful came in useful when they had to flee Pakistan during partition leaving family, friends and all their worldly possessions.

They landed in Amritsar from Rawalpindi (Islamabad) on the last plane. Going to a refugee camp was not an option. With cholera and typhoid raging, living on the railway platform was better. At least it had toilets, water and free food provided by the Sikh community

It took several years after Dad joined the army as an officer that the family started recovering. I remember vividly the days when we could supplement dry chappatis with an onion that was considered a luxury, and something to be grateful for. But never did we ever feel deprived, everything was a game even to sharing one banana between six members of the family – my grandmother, mum and dad, my brother, I and our family servant who had come with us.

Mum was a superb teacher and went beyond the classroom to reach out to children, even getting them

"There is a fountain of youth: it is your mind, your talents, the creativity you bring to your life and the lives of people you love. When you learn to tap this source, you will truly have defeated age." – Sophia Loren



Nirmal Basheshar Nath celebrates her 100 years with daughter Kamini Williams, grandson Varun, and son Kamal Nath

to spend days in our home if she felt they needed it. A firm believer that nature was the best teacher, we never spent weekends, summer, or winter holidays at home, but were out camping, fishing, hunting and in winter skiing, tobogganing, and riding. School books were not allowed. Only encyclopedias!!

Mum founded two schools, looked after the farm, led a mountaineering expedition at the age of 75, represented her school and college in state level athletics, was an officer in the WAC(I) signal regiment and was part of the Swadeshi movement. Mum has worn many hats efficiently and proudly,

What motivates her is her firm belief that, "I am the master of my fate and the Captain of my soul". And that Jesus her Saviour will pilot her through life.

Confidence comes with age, and looking beautiful comes from the confidence someone has in themselves. – Kate Winslet

Battling the Giants with Paint Brushes

It was great to see a very good response to the painting contest. We were blessed to see the marvellous insights of children on a very important topic- 'Encountering Giants'

Each one was an amazing work of art. A group of judges worked through diligently to select a few, and they said it was very difficult.

The winners in each category are:

Category I - Tiny tots to Class 2

1st Prize - D S Andrea Princess, UKG

2nd Prize - Joshua Emmanuel Arun, LKG

Category II - Class 3 to Class 5

1st Prize - Raynah Daniel, IV

2nd Prize - Angelina Sigamoney, III

Category III - Class 6 to Class 10

1st Prize - Cianna Beniston, IX

**2nd Prize - Andrew Naveen Patrick VIII,
Jessica Sarojam J P. IX and Sophia
Bruyere, VI**

Congratulations to all the winners and all the participants.

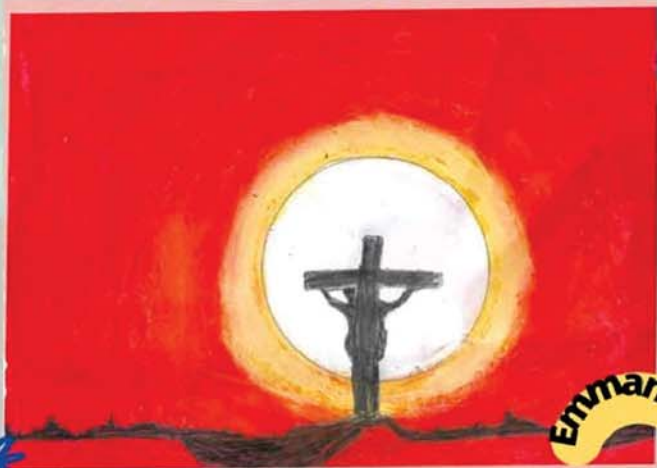


Category 1



Category 2

Category 2



Emmanuel

Olivia Bruyere

ENCOUNTERING
GIANTS.



Olivia Bruyere



Olivia Bruyere

Tia



the giant in front of you is never bigger than the LORD with you!

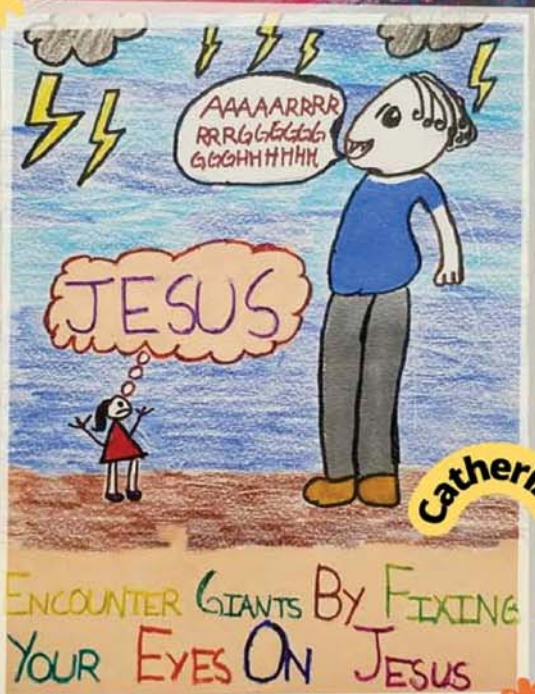


Roxanna



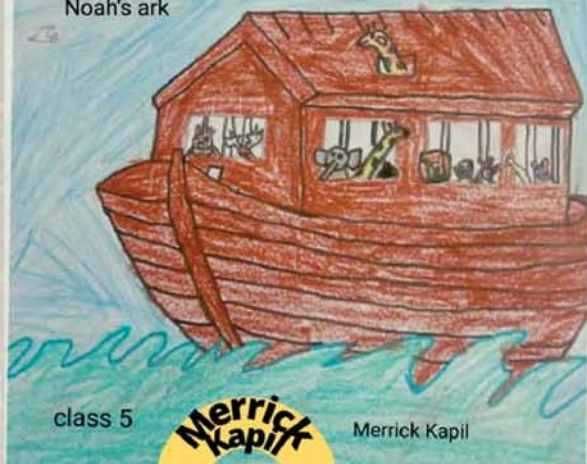
Hannie

zeplin



Catherine

Noah's ark



Merrick Kapil

Merrick Kapil

Category 3



Sophia Bruyere





Category 3

Sophia
Bruyere



Mark
Patrick



Cressida



Encountering
Giants



Olivia
Bruyere

Encountering Giants: (David and Goliath)



Reshma
Janet

The Giant Called 'Not Trusting God Enough'

Anna Varughese



Theme: Thoughts

My giant is the guilt that I am not trusting God's love enough. We are told over and over again that when we truly repent God forgives us. But we do not quite believe that. We do not quite believe that He will forgive us even though we have not obeyed His plan for us. It seems too good to be true.

E. Stanley Jones says that sin is falling short of God's standard. We pray that God will heal our broken relationship with Him. We ask God to forgive us, but we still carry around the guilt of our sins of omission and commission. That takes away our peace of mind.

Jesus asked us to witness for Him - that is where we often fail because we think we are not good enough to do that. We think we are being humble, but it is actually a kind of false pride. We fail to acknowledge God's power to use us despite our inadequacy. And so, we do not put into action that which God requires of us.

This Lent we heard about the accepting, restoring and transforming Christ. Let us give up our guilt and hold on to an undoubting faith in our God, who forgives us and accepts us just as we are.

Let's be Victorious

Janet Roberts



Theme: Thoughts

We face storms and challenges in our life often. It could be many things like fear of uncertainty, sudden illness, depressions, and at present the deadliest threat of Corona virus which has shaken the whole world.

God promised prophet Zechariah that in the last days, He would be a protective wall of fire around His people. (Zechariah 2:5). God's promises are meant to comfort us. How can we remain calm in difficult times? "I saw the Lord always before my eyes. For He is at my right hand, I may not be shaken". (Acts 2:25). First, we must remember that God is bigger than any giant.

When we study the life of David, we see that when David focused on God, the giant tumbled. Moses sent 12 men to spy in the Land of Canaan. Ten men gave a bad report that there were giants, whom they could not conquer. (Numbers 13:31-33). But Caleb and Joshua, who had seen the same giants, tried their best

to get the people to trust the Lord, enter Canaan and claim the land.

When you trust God with your problems, they will become possibilities, for God works in our life. Whatever your challenges may be, realize that you cannot defeat it in your own strength. Use the Divine weapons He has given us. Stand on God's Word. He has given His Word to strengthen and encourage us and help us to overcome the issue before us. Dedicate time to prayer and call on God and pray for His power.

Focus on God and not the giant. God will give us the strength to face the problem and overcome it. Remember to give God praise for helping us to defeat the giant. When we rely and trust in God, the Spirit of God which dwells in us, will instruct and guide us in what we ought to do and we will be victorious and our heart will be overflowing with joy, peace and praise.

Overcoming the Giants of Life Through Prayer



Reginald Solomon

Theme: Thoughts

Prayer is the strongest pillar of our church. Did you know that before the COVID-19 pandemic, members of the Saturday Prayer Fellowship met regularly at prayer corner of St. John's Church every Saturday morning from 6.30 am for an hour of praise and worship? Till the pandemic broke out, we met more than 635 times, bringing our petitions to God on behalf of the family of St. John's. Now, we have a list of prayer requests which is circulated to members of the Saturday Prayer Fellowship.

I am truly humbled to witness the answers to our prayers. I remember clearly, praying for God's intervention and healing of Ebola at a time when the disease was fast spreading in Africa. We prayed

without ceasing, every Saturday for almost a year. Suddenly we read of a cure for Ebola and its eradication, which was reported by BBC. Praise God.

We need to earnestly join hands and take the trouble to come to the Tabernacle of God and ask for our mountains to be moved! And God will do it!

We also have a WhatsApp prayer group called Pray@St. John's Church where prayer requests by members are shared. If you want to be a member of this prayer group, kindly SMS your request to Thomas Swaroop 97417 54000.

Come, be a part of our prayer fellowship! Pray regarding Corona now. God bless!

The Battle is the Lord's

Suryakumari Dennison



Theme: Thoughts

David and Goliath regularly do the rounds on social media. You must have seen the brave boy and his alarming adversary. The text accompanying the image proclaims that faith conquers fear. Personally, I find that message easier to forward than follow.

When I encounter a Goliath (not necessarily gigantic), I panic. In fact, I feel overwhelmed at the mere prospect of trouble. Besides, each of my Goliaths resemble the Hydra, a mythical monster that sprouted two heads in place of one chopped. No sooner do I cope with one crisis than another, and yet another, comes along.

Last year, I was faced with two gargantuan Goliaths: my husband's acute asthmatic attack and my brother's cardiac surgery. Waiting anxiously outside the CCU on

both occasions, I put my problems in perspective, dismissing trivial concerns and minor setbacks.

The Lord who has guarded and guided me through the decades was my mainstay in those times of trial, and I was sustained by the prayers of family and friends. I resolved then to adopt in future the proverbial 'attitude of gratitude'. I declared with the psalmist, 'In God I trust and am not afraid.'

Will my courage hold in the face of a new and nightmarish Goliath? Can all of us confront Corona with confidence? We seem to be fighting this threat on a wing and a prayer. If that sounds inadequate, let us remember that David vanquished Goliath with a sling and a prayer!



Triumph over Trouble:

A six-point action plan to overcome giants

Jaya Paul

Theme: Thoughts

"No matter how many times we may feel unprepared, God is never unprepared. God never has an emergency"

–Derek Prince

Many of us believers in Christ are forced to face several giants in our journey on this earth. The giants are innumerable taking the form of problems, people and circumstances of an emotional, physical, spiritual or sinful nature. The question a believer needs to ask is what should my response be to this Goliath – huge, seemingly unsurpassable and creating unease and chaos in my life?

Should I take this Goliath head on like King David and see its defeat or be passive, fearful and let the giant overtake me?

"You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will deliver you into my hands, and I'll strike you down..." (1 Sam 17:45-46a). In this verse when facing a Goliath we need to first remember that sometimes, it is our heavenly Father who puts a Goliath in our way. Why? It is to test and refine us because he loves us so much. Or simply put, the Goliath in our life is the result of sinful living resulting from a refusal to obey God's commands.

Based on the above scripture how then do we react to the Goliaths in a godly manner?

- 1. It is important to acknowledge the giant before you** – Goliaths do not vanish if we simply choose to ignore them. Even when we acknowledge a Goliath in front of us magnifying them mentally to gigantic proportions will only minimize our trust in God and his power to crush them. Overestimating and accelerating its magnitude will only result in the 'Goliath' controlling you.
- 2. Complete surrender and Trust in god** – The next step is to focus on God and hand over everything in our life situations to God to handle totally. This will take your mind away from the concern facing you. But trust is simply not saying to oneself –

have faith. Trust is the confidence in the divine encourager, who is also the pioneer and perfecter of faith (Hebrews 12:2) and to believe God's divine favour (grace,) providence and faithfulness upon your life, and that God has power over every obstacle. It is wisdom to remember that the hardest battles are God's way to mould you into toughness, strength and spiritual maturity.

- 3. Having a quiet time** – Prayer is not only asking, petitioning always that God bless you but also to quiet oneself to experience his presence, love and peace and in stillness listening to his soothing voice (Psalm 46:10). A quiet time overpowers the associated restlessness and meaningless fleshly efforts to figure out everything but instead it helps putting God in the driver's seat and depending on Him for everything.
- 4. Cultivating joy** – Not an easy thing to do but vital because joy will be our strength (Nehemiah 8:10). Worry only bogs us down further. As James says consider it "pure joy" when you face trials of many kinds (James 1:2-4), as being sad is a rebellion against God (1 Thessa 5:16-18). Wait in joyful hope and turn your worry into glad and grateful worship (Psalms 42:11). Commit to a sacrifice of praise to our Almighty God (Hebrews 13:15) and watch your spirit soar on wings like eagles.
- 5. Experiencing God's love** – Feeling certain dryness in the spirit is the flipside of the nonscalable mountain before you. Love definitely goes out of the window. So also empathy, compassion and patience as we focus on the self and hardheartedness coupled with bitterness sets in. To love the people around you in such hard circumstances becomes a painstaking task. But looking heavenwards to our Father whose love for us endures forever (Ps 136:1) and remembering our Saviour's sacrifice on the Cross because He loved us first despite facing rejection, disobedience and betrayal, asking him to pour out his Holy Spirit into our lives will regenerate and renew us for agape love and forgiveness (Romans 15:13).

6. **Self-talk** – Speak aloud the word of God with faith and conviction over your problems and to your selves when one feels overpowered as the word of God is a double edged sword alive and active (Hebrews 4:12) and 'it will not return to me empty' (Isaiah 55:11). We stand on the promises of a loving God who will never forsake us and for this one needs to memorize appropriate scripture accordingly.

The Goliaths are necessary in our daily faith walk, however tormenting they might be. It is helpful to remember that we must welcome the Goliaths that come our way that seem to oppose us and appear as walls in our earthly journey.... knowing and believing that God is always on our side and He will eliminate them for us in His time. More importantly, as disciples the Goliaths point us to who we are and what we are actually becoming in Christ.

Defeating Goliaths in Our Lives

Prof. Navin Vijay Orlando



Theme: Thoughts

The episode from 1 Samuel 17 teaches us lessons on how to take over Goliaths in our lives. Goliaths in our lives refers to the problems, hurdles, sins, and issues that we face daily.

The question I ask every child of God – Are you ready to face your Goliaths? If yes! Then what is needed of us to face and defeat the Goliaths in our lives?

I am sharing with you eight steps that will take you to victory:

1. **Do not be discouraged by others** – Every time you take a step towards success there are people and factors discouraging and stopping you to take that step. Do not give space to those discouraging thoughts. 1 Samuel 17:33.
2. **Show up for the battle** – Always be the first one to take charge of things in life, be it a Goliath for you or for your family members or friends. This is because when you take charge you are giving a signal to the enemy that he no longer can trouble and that you are going to put an end to his menace. 1 Samuel 17:32.
3. **Understand the strengths of your enemy** – It is necessary, before you take on your enemy, know what he is made of. For winning a battle it is

necessary to know the strengths and powers your enemy possesses. 1 Samuel 17:4-7.

4. **Choose the weapons** – The next thing, is to select the right kind of weapons to defeat the enemy. Be tactful of what you want with you to face the enemy. 1 Samuel 17:40.
5. **Know the rewards of winning** – Every victory brings with it great rewards. It is not only to defeat the enemy but to be aware of the consequences of the victory. 1 Samuel 17:25.
6. **Remember! God fights our battles** – We are God's children, when we take a step to defeat the enemy God gives us all the strength and power through the Holy Spirit. He fights our battles and gives all the victories to us. 1 Samuel 17:47
7. **Give it all that you have got** – March ahead without any fear in your heart, attack the enemy on his face. 1 Samuel 17:49-50.
8. **Victory shall always be yours** – God has already fought the battle; victory is always on the way and when you are victorious the enemy is completely defeated.

Praise the Lord Jesus Christ.

LOOK TO THE LORD
AND HIS STRENGTH;
SEEK HIS FACE
ALWAYS.



A Beauty Pageant

Preeth David

Theme: Thoughts

During the lockdown, I find myself more often pottering around my garden, tending to the flowers. Drawn to the plethora of colours, a pure visual treat, it was as if God orchestrated this beauty pageant right in my backyard. Each competing with the other, each one putting up quite a show.

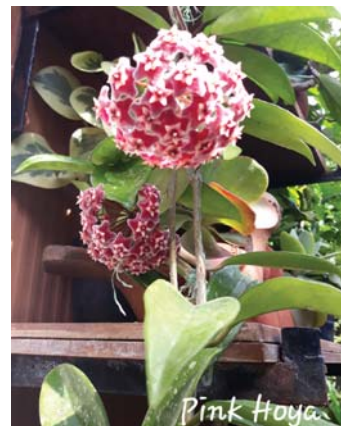
The Passion flower styled in purple as if she stepped out of Royalty, was in close competition with the standing tall, Lavender Water Hyacinth and the Aristolochia, the burgundy aristocrat. The pink Hawaiian hibiscus – now did the makeup artist paint a little extra blush on her?

Another contestant, the petite Morning Glory, walks the ramp only during the day while the Rangoon Creeper wakes up fragrant at dusk. Definitely not a morning person – but surely a show topper the 'Raath ki Rani' crowned Miss Sunshine the Mexican sunflower

The star of the show, the Asian Hoya, is dressed in shades of dusky rose and her counterpart in creamy hues with dotted red centres.

Jesus spoke about the lilies in Matthew 6:28-29: "So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these".

In this pandemic where we seem to be drowning in images of gloom and despair, God hit the pause button in my life, so my eyes could see the hope and assurance of his unfailing promises in the beauty of his creation. I have a little sign in my garden which reads: "Heaven is a little closer in the garden". Imagine the Garden of Eden the first home of Adam and Eve – and what a beauty pageant that must have been!



Under the Shadow of His Mighty Wings

Earnest Gurupatham



Theme: Thoughts

The seed of the deadly virus, developed in the laboratories of Wuhan, China, in 2019, came to full bloom in 2020. The virus was so strong that it touched every country of the globe. People across the globe were advised by their own governments, to strictly hide their nose and mouth with the mask, stay indoors in their homes in complete isolation. Social distancing seems to be the new world order.

The pandemic has not spared anyone, not kings and queens or dignitaries of the world. All domestic and international airlines, hotels and restaurants shut down. The Stock Markets fell, and people were locked down in their country, town and homes like prisoners. This reminds us of the great plague in London in 1665-66 as also the Spanish Flu of 1918 when millions lost their lives.

In times like this we need to call on the Saviour, Jesus Christ, to remove this deadly virus because He has assured us in His Word not to be anxious, but to depend on Him.

Philippians 4:6 – Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

It is time to re-examine and humble ourselves. We need to get on our knees and cry out to God. He promised: Call upon me and I will answer. Ephesians 3:20 tells us He can do exceedingly abundantly, more than we ask or think. He never ever fails.

In time of great distress, Peter cried to the Lord when he was sinking in the Sea of Galilee. It was not Peter, who caught Jesus, but Jesus who caught Peter.

This is exactly what God can do for each of us when we cry out in faith while drowning in our sorrows, sickness and suffering. Jesus approaches us and stretches out His hand, His nail pierced, blood ridden right hand of righteousness and He will pull us out of the miry clay and set our feet upon the solid rock.

“The Eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are His everlasting arms. (Deuteronomy 32:27) When we believe that Jesus has caught us, we will be walking over waters, over trials, even the deadly killing Corona

virus. Jesus catches us always, because He loves us and gave His life in pain and shame on Calvary's cross for us.

The book of Ecclesiastes, chapter 3, verse 2 says there is a time to be born, a time to die. So don't worry yourself. You can't die one minute early or late but according to God's time. So keep praising God in all circumstances and all trials, and He will never leave you alone. He will change you from victim to victor, and trials will become a time of triumphant living. He will supply all your needs because He does not depend on world economy. So, cheer up, ye saints of God. He answers the faintest whisper of a prayer as He is alive and not a dead God like other gods. COVID 19 will come and go. Trials are sent not to destroy us but to bring us to spiritual maturity.

Saints are formed out of trials, so don't let your troubles, trouble you. Don't give room for self-pity or discouragement. If you do, you will become a liability to God and to others.

The Lord has not planned failure for you but success. Jeremiah 29:11 says: For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.





No Man is an Island

Dr. Eva Bell

Theme: Thoughts

Loneliness, a giant of enormous proportions, is widespread today. Though the world has become a global village interconnected through social media, scientific development and technology, lonely people have increased in the past three decades. Almost 40% of the world is supposed to suffer from loneliness. Thoreau said, "A city is a place where hundreds of people are lonely together." Even the famous scientist Einstein lamented about himself, "It is strange to be known universally and yet to be so lonely."

At a time when the Corona virus pandemic has brought about a general lockdown of activities and people are advised to stay indoors, loneliness is likely to escalate, especially for those who live alone. Everybody experiences transient periods of loneliness. Bereavement, divorce, illness, relocation to a new place are some of the reasons. Most people bounce back to normal after a short time. But when the feeling of loneliness becomes a chronic malady, it saps one of strength, robs one of hope and isolates a person in a bubble of hopelessness. Almost 80% of psychiatric patients say they are lonely. Scientists agree that loneliness can be more toxic than alcoholism or drug addiction.

No man is an island. Life is built on relationships with one's self, with others and with God. Low self-esteem and self-pity isolate us, makes us lose perspective and forget our purpose in life. Marriage, family, friends, and church are institutions for human intimacy and belonging. We distance ourselves from others because we fear rejection, or criticism or guilt or out of sheer insecurity. This takes a toll on our physical and mental health, causing cardiovascular problems, damage to the immune system, depression, and suicidal tendencies. But it is the lack of a right relationship with God that makes loneliness incurable.

"Action is a great restorer and builder of confidence," says Norman Vincent Peale. The best way is to sit down and analyze our reasons for loneliness.

Acceptance of self is important. By enumerating our skills, resources and interests we realise that we have the resources to fight loneliness.

Increasing our communication skills with spouse, family and friends, being sociable and finding ways to help others, gets us out of our rut.

In some cases, professional help is required.

But the most important of all is being in a right relationship with God. Jesus can bring us inner healing and help us accept ourselves and live with confidence. He will give wisdom to consciously reinterpret our situation in a positive way. The psalmist says a lonely person is like an 'owl in the desert or a bird alone on a roof.' (Psalm 102:6,7)

We can cry to the Lord as the psalmist did, and say "You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living." "Set me free from my prison that I may praise your name." (Psalm 142:5,7)

Jesus holds out an open invitation. "Here I am. I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and sup with him and he with me." (Revelations 3:20.) He promises never to leave us alone.

Warren Weirsbe, the great preacher, calls loneliness a "malnutrition of the soul. It happens when we live on substitutes."

The giant of loneliness can be vanquished when we refuse all fast foods on offer by the world. Why must we live on substitutes when we can feast on the Bread of Life? (John 6:48,51).



Our God is Bigger than Any Giant



Priscilla Anthony

Theme: Thoughts

"God will not only remove the giants we encounter in our lives, but He will replace them with His blessings"

To impress upon the mind of three-year-old students in my class of how big a GIANT would be like, I had my 13-year-old grandson lie on a long sheet of drawing paper, and we drew along his body line and cut it out. I had this huge figure put up on the classroom wall. For a three-year-old child, this was a big tall GIANT. We then made rock balls out of foil paper which we used to pelt at the GIANT, while we shouted out, "My GOD is so big" or "I'm not afraid of GIANTS because my GOD is bigger than any GIANT." I am very sure my students will always remember the story of David and Goliath.

So, what are the giants we encounter in our lives? As adults, we often encounter giants of all shapes and sizes. What are some of the giants we are afraid of in our lives? Giants are present in our lives through sickness and addiction, through jobs and financial losses, through broken relationships and broken lives.

Right now, the world has encountered a giant unseen and unheard of before. With the loss of thousands of lives and thousands of jobs, humanity has been shaken to its core. With no cure or a vaccine in sight, people's fear of the COVID-19 is similar to encountering a GIANT.

What is the one positive word that can describe the COVID year 2020? Friends responded positively with

words such as faith, hope, love, blessed, trust and courage. Surely for a Christian, we must face adversity with words of hope and trust, courage, and determination, knowing our GOD is bigger than anything.

Words of a song come to my mind...

*"Bigger than all my problems, bigger than anything,
Bigger than any mountain, I can or cannot see,
Bigger than all my questions, bigger than all my giants,
My God is bigger than any mountain I can or cannot see."*

At this time of the year, Texans are once again facing storms and hurricanes. This time it was Laura we awaited as we prayed and trusted. Even as we waited, we were reminded of hurricanes now past, such as IKE in September 2007 and Harvey in 2017. Harvey impacted our family personally when my son lost everything, their home and all their belongings to flood waters, only managing to swim through chest high waters, holding onto his wife and son, as they tried to reach higher ground. Both my sons lost their cars too. Yet, a mighty and a loving God restored to them a double measure of His grace and His blessings. God who worked and restored Job is still at work in our lives today.

With faith and trust in a great, big wonderful God, all of us can face any giant, big or small, real or unreal, any time in our lives. For our God is bigger than any mountain we can or cannot see. Keep trusting.



Please Help Me!

Dr. Peter S. C. Pothan



Theme: Testimony

It was early morning in mid-January 1980, and I was returning by train from Kerala to Mumbai with my wife, three-year-old son, and my two-month-old baby daughter. Suddenly our baby got up, and we discovered that there was no hot water in the thermos flask to make her milk.

"Don't worry," I told my wife, "We will be in Guntakal in five minutes and I will get hot water there."

As I spoke the train ground to a halt at a small wayside station. It seemed there was an accident further up the line and we would be stuck there for some time. Meanwhile, the baby's cries became more demanding,

and so I got out with the flask. But there was no one on the platform. Then I saw a house down the slope below the station, probably that of the station master, so I rushed there. There were two ladies talking and I requested them whether they could make some hot water for my baby.

One lady kindly got up and heated some water on her stove and filled my flask. She refused to take any money. So gratefully thanking her, I returned to the train to make milk for my baby. It is over 33 years, but I cannot forget the kindness of this unknown lady to a desperate young father.



When God Ran...

Jenifer Grace

Theme: Testimony

As, with all mothers, my day came too, but a month early. Since the doctors found that a part of my previous stitches had opened, they delivered Josiah, a healthy 3.2 kgs handsome little boy.

When I came to consciousness after the Caesarean, I heard that my baby was suffering from breathing difficulties. While I was sure that God will take care, I saw that people around me looked anxious when I got out of the ICU, after my physio fitness.

I saw Josiah was wired and struggling to breathe and he had to be shifted to Bangalore Baptist Hospital, where he was put on a ventilator, as he wasn't breathing by himself.

After three days of ventilator and no improvements, the doctors called us for a counselling session. They politely explained and asked us if we could let go of Josiah – that was a kick in my gut. I said, when God wants me to have him, nobody or nothing can ever ever take him away.

My husband Jo and I carried our wrenching hearts to God, we found no words but only tears. With one heart, we begged God to let us have Josiah. The doctors saw resilient parents, and decided to keep Josiah on the ventilator for three more days. Prayers were mobilized at every home and in our church for Josiah; probably you did too.

On the fourth day, with the tone of a teacher telling students to sit straight, with the authority that Jesus commanded the dead not to be dead, our son obeyed. Cold skin warmed. Stiff limbs moved. White cheeks flushed. With a squeal and a smile, the boy jumped back into life, and all wires were removed.

Luke 7:15 says, "Jesus gave him back to his mother". The NICU, which looked like a cemetery for me, appeared like resurrected tomb.

After 21 days of battling, we brought our 'little fighter', 'miracle baby' back home. We only know that God, who rewrote history for us, chose to give him back. The one who directed the pebble at Goliath's temple, is the Sovereign God each day.

Saved by His Grace

Karenza Robson



PulseGuest

After eight years into motherhood, and being blessed with children, something happened. I found myself losing sleep in moments of intense sadness and cried many tears. I fell ill, had panic attacks, I found out that I had an irregular heartbeat – life just seemed to have spun out of control. Relationships suffered.

I had heard enough from doctors, I tried to keep busy, fix myself. I felt like I was running on an empty tank. I knew that I needed to do something for myself, but I couldn't find out what my soul was craving.

One afternoon while I slipped into another panic attack, I felt the hand of my daughter. In that moment of helplessness, I was reminded of my miracle - I had

been told by doctors that I couldn't have children. Something changed inside me, I felt drawn to my Heavenly Father.

In the following months, my relationship with Jesus was rejuvenated. I needed His love. I couldn't give any love, without His love. He had to fill my tank with His love. I have felt His love and grace ever since.

Sometimes, we forget to be kind to ourselves, love ourselves. To love ourselves, we have to experience the immense love of Jesus. My relationship with Jesus is stronger than it has ever been. He has given my life a new direction. I am saved by His grace, and His grace is sufficient for me.

PulseClap

Congratulations, Jordan

Jordan Hereford raked in many prizes in the CIC Class 12 of Clarence High School. He was the topper for Senior Secondary NIOS, and won special merit prizes for Economics, Mass Communication, and Business Studies, and the A.G. Senapathy Memorial Trophy for Accounts.



Jaden Sings His Way to Victory

Right from Season I of Facebook Live Lockdown Star, he was the popular singing star. He was awarded sponsored prizes for his talent throughout the Seasons, and won the Season IV competition with the most number of likes, comments and shares. And in the finale of Season V, there was no guessing who the winner is in the children's category. It is 13-year-old Jaden Antonio Byford, son of Avalon and Suzanne Byford.

Facebook Live Lockdown Star was created during the pandemic, when the lockdown began in April 2020, by Brian Mark Cotter and Elaine Roach. All one had to do was sing 'LIVE'. This page was open to people from all walks of life and all age groups – an opportunity to showcase one's talent.



The judges for Season V were Anton Belov, Professor of Music at Linfield University, Oregon, Randy Hiebert, Lead Guitarist for the famous group Bellamy Brothers, and Ariel Edler, professional Soprano Singer, who was featured in Broadway Plays.

For Jaden, winning Season V has been an important milestone. Facebook Live Lockdown Star has more than 35,000 members from all over the globe. Jaden and his family are delighted and feel blessed by this achievement. All praise and glory to God on high.



The 'Pathos of God'

Rev. Navin K. John

Theological Perspective

On September 27, 2020, the Church of South India entered its 74th year of formation. As we look back at our rich history of witness to God in the Church and society, we are faced with a very difficult and different situation because of the COVID-19.

The church is faced with the biggest question about the intervention of God in this pandemic situation. We are learning to adapt our lives to 'live with the COVID-19' as humanity still has not found a cure for the virus. Even though societies all over the world are trying to bring back normalcy into the society, the new normal is here to stay as an indispensable part of our lives. But the basic question 'Why does a loving God allow people to suffer?' still lingers in our minds. Perhaps the experience of pain and suffering is often ignored, as it is better to ignore it rather than accept it. It is in the light of this dilemma that the following words of Jesus give us a new perspective of life and suffering:

"Then Jesus told his disciples, if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." Matthew 16:24,25.

These words of Jesus reflect the 'pathos of God' i.e. God experiencing our pain. God's experience of human suffering is exemplified in the incarnation. Jesus as the Christ is God becoming human and becoming part of our pain and suffering. The pathos of God gives us the courage to believe wholeheartedly in the affirmation that God is with me/us in my/our suffering.

The pathos of God is the ability of God to come down to the level of human suffering. By commanding his followers to take up 'their own cross', Jesus stated the criteria for anyone who wants to be a follower of Christ. The act of 'self denial' is implied in the decision to 'take up one's own cross'. The Christian way of life is not about negating pain and suffering, but it is about overcoming pain and suffering

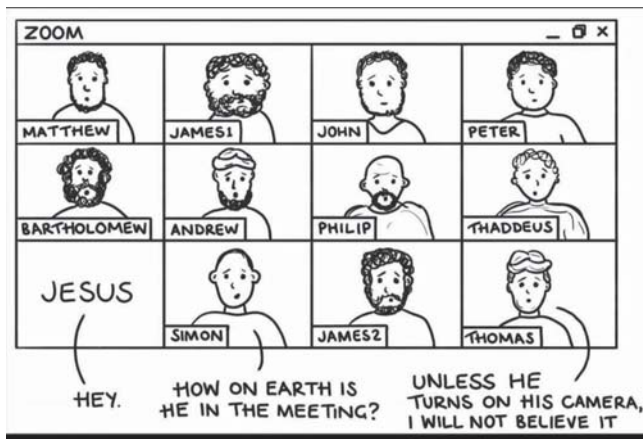
through Christ. This is beautifully echoed in John 1:14, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son[a] from the Father, full of grace and truth."

The Apostle Paul in his letter to the Philippians in chapter 2, verses 6-8 states that, "who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

The pathos of God is the humility of God and it is found completely in Jesus Christ. Paul's understanding of the death of Jesus Christ is the very basis of the purpose of God's incarnation in the flesh. This is what gives us the basis of understanding the predicament of human suffering. Suffering is not a necessity but is accepted as part of life along with various other experiences of life.

"To deny ourselves" is to place the life of Christ as the central aspect of our life experiences, "To take up His cross" is to take up an identity which is in line with the life of Christ and not to project our own identity, and "follow me" is the assurance of the constant presence of God in our life's journey.

Amen.



Now Thank We All Our God

Vinita Samuel

Hymnology

Does the hymn “Now thank we all our God” conjure up an image of a church congregation singing in union with the beautiful notes rendered by a pipe organ, and perhaps thinking about an upcoming feast? Or maybe a happy family singing around a table spread with scrumptious food on *Thanksgiving Day*? However, this hymn of thankfulness was written at a time when “giving thanks” was particularly difficult.

The *Thirty Years War (1618-1648)* was a violent and gruesome time on the European continent, following a century after the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. Millions died in bloody battles and many more perished in plagues and famines. In the year of 1617, at the age of 31, Martin Rinkart (1586 - 1649), the author of this hymn, became the archdeacon in his native town of Eilenburg, Germany, just as the *Thirty Years' War* broke out. He had a good reputation as a musician as well as being a writer and theologian, and he came with the intent to serve his people as the Bishop of Eilenburg, during the *Thirty Years' War*.

Many people came to seek shelter from the war in the walls of Eilenburg, and the town was overcrowded. Eilenburg became a place of refuge for fugitives of the war, and also a place of famine and disease due to overcrowding. The residents of this walled town endured many horrors during this time. In the year of 1637, a great pestilence struck the town, and thousands died that year. The other clergy of Eilenburg either fled or died, and Rinkart was left to minister alone and perform the work of three men. He performed more than four thousand funerals that year, with an average of 40 to 50 burial services on a daily basis, one of them even being for his dear wife.

Following the plague came a famine, and even in the midst of his poverty, Rinkart shared food with all he could. The Rinkart home was a refuge for the victims, even though he was often hard-pressed to provide for his own family. As if that weren't enough, the city was sacked three times by invaders, one of which imposed a large tribute payment upon the people. After the plague, the town was hit by a famine so extreme that one could see 30 to 40 people fighting in the streets for

a dead cat or crow. Rinkart did his best to help and gave away everything, keeping only the barest rations for his own family. In time, he was forced to even mortgage his future income to buy bread and clothes for his children.

As if the sufferings were not enough, the Swedes returned and imposed a ransom of 30,000 thalers on the town. Rinkart left the safety of the city to meet with the Swedish general to plead for mercy. He was refused and returned to the town saying, “Come my children, we can find no hearing, no mercy with men, let us take refuge with God.”

In the aftermath of such grave and monstrous suffering, Martin Rinkart wrote a hymn. What kind of song could come out of such tragedy? A lament? A plea for vindication? A cry for mercy? Instead, Rinkart wrote a hymn of gratitude, “*Nun Danket Alle Gott*” (Now Thank We All Our God). As the Lord had spared him and sustained him through the terrible plight of war, pestilence, and famine, the song of Rinkart's heart was one of thankfulness. The “Nun danket” tune was composed by Johann Crüger (1598-1662) and translated into English for British hymnals by Catherine Winkworth (1827-1878).

The hymn abounds with gratitude, while at the same time looks forward to a great deliverance. The first stanza is a depiction of a bounteous and gracious God who has blessed us and provided for us. The second stanza of the hymn moves to the future, praying for guidance and a continuation of thanks and praise. The third and final stanza brings the hymn to a close, by offering praise to the Trinity and acknowledging God's eternal nature. The hymn ends on a beautiful note, which echoes the thought, “The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away, may the name of the Lord be praised”.

Through grief, and loss, suffering and death, Rinkart was able to look to his Saviour, and thank God for the blessings he still had. Even after facing such misery, he was able to write a hymn of abiding trust and gratitude toward God. During these difficult days with COVID-19, we too, like Rinkart can thank God even amidst trouble, despair, and sorrow.

Lyrics of the hymn on page 58

My Memoirs: Travails and Triumphs of a Cardiac Surgeon in the 20th Century

Author: The late Dr. Stanley John, MS, MS (Thor), FACC, FAMS. Cardiac Surgeon

PulseReview

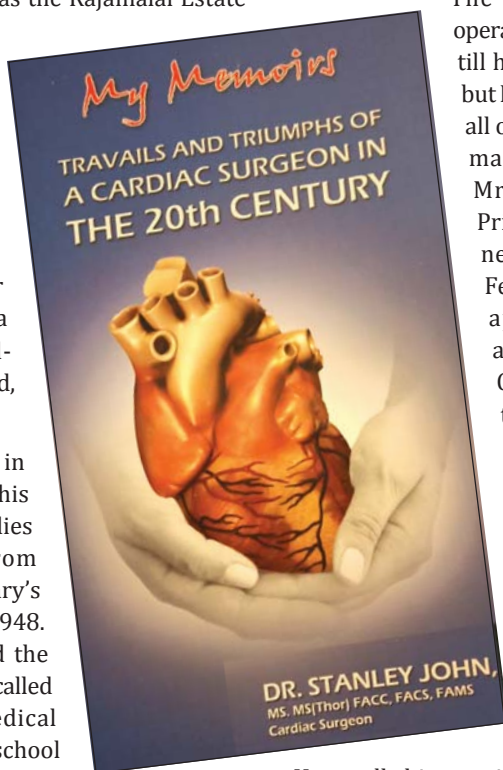
This interesting and inspiring autobiography by the late Dr. Stanley John is the story of a man who rose from a humble background to become a renowned Cardiac Surgeon. He had eight siblings of which three became doctors. I read the autobiography just before he passed away to glory. I could see God welcoming him with "Well done, my good and faithful servant!"

He was born in August 1932 in the Munnar estate hospital where his father was the Rajamalai Estate doctor. Two years later they moved to the Kolar Gold Fields where his father became one of the medical officers at the KGF hospital. He points out how he was impacted by the life of his father who was devoted to work and a stickler for discipline, a godly man with a firm resolve, and his God-fearing mother who was a kind, caring and loving person.

You can see all these traits in Dr. John in his life. He did his kindergarten and early studies at St. Joseph's Convent from 1937, and then joined St. Mary's Middle and Upper School in 1948. During this time, he visited the hospital whenever his father called him and learned basic medical tenets. After his secondary school board exams in 1948, he chose to pursue study at the Madras Christian College, instead of Bangalore. It was then that he began to lean towards a career in medicine as both his grandfather and father had been medical practitioners. So, he joined the Christian Medical College in Vellore in 1950.

After his graduation in 1956 and his house surgeoncy, he joined the MS General Surgery programme in 1957 and finally moved towards Cardio thoracic surgery. In

September 1961 he soon started doing Tracheotomies among other operations. In February 1965 he went to USA and studied and worked with Dr. Lillehei in the University of Minnesota Hospitals. His one year under Dr. Lillehei and a three-month period under Dr. Cooley of Texas Medical School were soon over and he was called back to CMCH Vellore to head the Department of Thoracic Surgery in 1967.



The various complex cardiac operations he did in the following years till he retired in 1992 are inspiring, but I must admit I did not understand all of it as a non-medical person. He managed to arrange for the late Mrs Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister, to inaugurate the new Cardiac Thoracic Ward on February 14, 1976. His work was so appreciated that he was awarded a Padmashree by the Government of India in 1975 by the then President the late Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed. He also received the Dr. B.C. Roy National Award in 1985 from the then Prime Minister the late Rajiv Gandhi. He has also presented several papers on Cardiac surgery in many journals and medical conferences in India and abroad.

He recalls his marriage to Dr. Lily John at St Mark's Cathedral on June 5, 1967, and talks about their two sons, both of whom are doctors.

After his retirement he joined Manipal Hospital in Bangalore and later moved to Yellamma Dasappa Hospital.

Truly the story of a great and yet humble man, who it was my honour to know.

Dr. Peter S.C. Pothan

Why Do We Believe in God?

Rev. Navin K John

PulseForum

Each time I get a group of young people who come for confirmation, I begin with this thought in the first class. Belief in God is not a necessity nor a requirement, but it is a conviction. It is not something that can be taught in confirmation classes. Confirmation classes only help edify one's faith. The answers that I get are quite an eye-opener.

Here are some of the common answers that I get from confirmation candidates:

- I believe in God because my parents / elders told me.
- I believe in God because the Bible mentions God.
- I believe in God because logically there must be a God.
- I believe in God because of a blessing or healing or something good that happened, which I prayed to God.
- I believe in God because of my fear of hell
- I believe in God because everyone I know believes in some God, so I believe in Jesus as a God.
- I believe in God through beauty, like art, poetry, nature etc., only God can recreate such beauty.'

For me, I feel that our belief in God should be a conviction. If our belief in God is because of good things happening to us, then when bad things happen, our

belief is destroyed. Similarly, if our belief in God is because someone told us, then we would change our belief if someone convinces us differently. There are some Christians who attend Church, read the Bible, and pray, but who do it because it is a good practice to follow or because it is a good discipline to follow. I feel that this happens when there is lack of conviction in what we do.

Conviction is the key to belief. Belief is not something that can be imparted or taught. Belief is a personal conviction which is channelled by scripture and experiences. The lack of conviction could make us 'Christian atheists', i.e., people who do not believe in Christ through conviction but through external factors. The external factors like people and tradition help us to preserve or strengthen our conviction. The inherent belief throughout the Bible is a belief in a single God which comes only by conviction.

So, to answer the question, why do we believe in God? The answer is it is a matter of conviction.

(Dear readers, I would be interested in knowing your own thoughts on the same. Kindly write to navinkjohn@gmail.com / WhatsApp 9886942735, or mail pulseofst.johnschurch@gmail.com.

HOPE FOR TOMORROW



The church calendar for 2021 is out. The theme is **Hope for Tomorrow**. We hope that the calendar will encourage and inspire us each month of the 2021.

Amy Carmichael – 'Amma' of Dohnavur

Dr. Eva Bell

PulseInspire

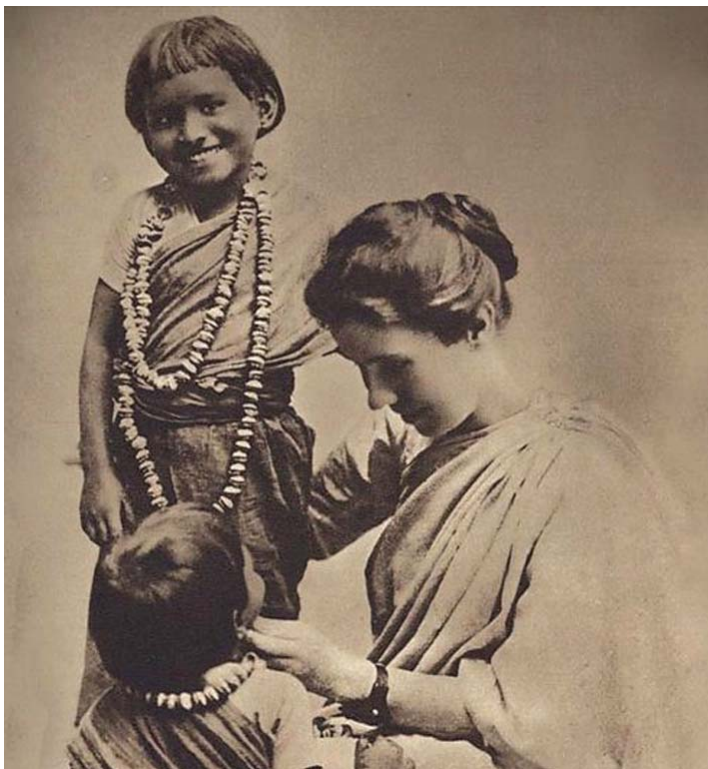
The story of Amy Carmichael is fascinating for its sheer grit and immense faith that led her to a life of service to the poor, the downtrodden and the exploited. Unpredictable and independent by nature, she did not fit into any Missionary community who usually separated themselves in "other worldly" bubbles, keeping their distance away from the very people they wished to serve. Through her unflinching trust in God, she led a life of faith and victory.

Early life

Amy Carmichael was born on December 16, 1867, in County Town, North Ireland, to David and Catherine Carmichael. They belonged to the Presbyterian Church. Her mother was a woman of strong faith and Amy inherited her 'apostolic spirit'. Her father owned several flour mills, and the family was well off. She attended the Wesleyan Methodist School. They moved to Belfast because of changes in the milling business. However, not very long after, her father's business collapsed. The shock brought about his death in 1885. Amy had to drop out of school to help her mother take care of her brothers and sisters. She was the eldest in a family of seven children.

One Sunday while returning from church, Amy saw a poor old woman straining under the bundle she was carrying. With the help of her brothers, the woman was relieved of her bundle and escorted to her house. She was moved by the woman's poverty. It brought about a change in her life's values and she decided that her calling would be to help the poor.

Amy would often accompany her pastor to distribute food and tracts in the poor quarter of town. She had a burden for the poor girls who worked in the mills and



Amy Carmichael with children

started a ministry among them, beginning with Sunday school. She even moved into their neighbourhood and slept in their bug infested beds. They were called 'shawlies' because they could not afford to buy hats and wore shawls instead. Through her efforts she found a hall where they could meet. It later became the Welcome Evangelical Church. Her time here prepared her for full time ministry.

In 1886, Amy was invited to the Keswick Convention in Glasgow. It was here that she became convinced of her calling for missionary work. She was sent abroad by the Keswick Convention, and her first trip abroad was to Japan in 1893. However, it lasted for only 15 months due to ill health. She then moved briefly to China and then to Ceylon but had to return to England in 1894.

To India

It took her just a year to set out again, and on November 9, 1895, she sailed to India under the authority of the Church of England's Zenana Ministry Society. Amy's idea of service and ministry did not go down well with other missionaries. She wanted to pattern her work along the lines of Hudson Taylor's ministry in China. The blueprint for her work dropped unexpectedly into her lap.

On March 6, 1901, a girl of seven called Preena, landed on her doorstep. She had absconded from a temple where she had been initiated into the life of a temple prostitute. Her parents had sold her into the service of a goddess. This was just a smoke screen for prostitution. The girl sought protection in the Mission compound.

Amy was aware of the risk she was taking in sheltering the girl. She could have been charged with kidnapping which invited imprisonment for seven years. But despite brushes with the law, this brave lady made the rescue of 'devadasis' like this girl, her life's mission.

The Dohnavur Mission

And so, began the Dohnavur Mission – an orphanage for girls who were saved from defilement and prostitution. She became 'Amma' (mother) to these girls. She began to wear a sari and even dyed her skin with coffee decoction, to blend with her protégés. Amy did not solicit funds for her work, but whatever donations were received, went into the Missionary account to be dispensed 'as the Lord directed'. The Mission never borrowed money or went into debt.

Amy chose her helpers carefully especially as she espoused a "no salary policy". They had to be committed to Christ and work for the welfare of the inmates. Her little band was called 'Sisters of Common Life'. Young women who wished to serve at Dohnavur were cautioned: "Missionary work is simply a chance to die."

In 1904, there were 17 children. But by 1918 the number increased to 130. Then babies were also brought to her. In 1918, a section was opened for boys who were also sold into temple slavery. Some of them were children of prostitutes. Earlier, in 1912, a hospital sprung up on the campus, which was funded by Queen Mary.

Staunch, but simple faith

Amy was an avid reader. She read not just different translations of the Bible, but history of the Church fathers, of mystics and even Greek philosophers. It was her way of relaxing after a day of heavy work. She was also a prolific writer. She wrote 52 books of various kinds – the story of Dohnavur, stories of children who were rescued, poems, devotionals and meditations. Her staunch but simple faith echoed through her writings.

Amy lost her usual activity after she suffered a fall on October 24, 1931. She was physically confined to her room but continued to direct her ministry. During the next 20 years she wrote 13 books and many letters. But when she fell for the second time in 1948, she was confined to her bed until her death on January 18, 1951, at the age of 83. No tombstone marks her grave. A bird bath with a simple inscription "Amma" stands over the spot.

The work of Dohnavur Fellowship continues even today. It is now functioning under the CSI Tinnevely Diocese.



A bird bath with a simple inscription "Amma" stands over the spot where Amy Carmichael was buried.

"What people see you do may not be remembered; what they hear you say may be forgotten; but how they feel your intervention in their times of need will forever be remembered."

– Israelmore Ayivor

Seek to Find

Suryakumari Dennison

FamilyPulse

In the following sentences, find three people, three places, two animals and two weapons. They feature in the David-Goliath story, as told in I Samuel, 17. Each word is hidden in two words or three.

Example: This is a propaganda video, praising a politician. (name)

Answer: David

1. After our quarrel, I absolutely refused to meet him. (person)
2. Can ahimsa ultimately defeat violence? (person)
3. He hailed a cab nervously, with not much money for the fare. (person)
4. She has a rug at home that visitors admire. (place)
5. The Krone is the currency of Norway. (place)
6. We still have a lot of travel ahead. (place)
7. The child eats broccoli only when nothing else is served. (animal)
8. There will be a really big crowd this evening. (animal)
9. I do not understand this word in the passage. (weapon)
10. She has pearls that are both beautiful and valuable. (weapon)

Answers: 1. Eliab 2. Saul 3. Abner 4. Gath 5. Ekron 6. Elah
7. lion 8. bear 9. sword 10. spear

Snowy the Dog

And **Nita Isaac** has based it on Galatians 5:22,23)

FamilyPulse

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Snowy Dog was bought from a veterinary doctor's clinic. She was about 7 hands span long.

Snowy Dog celebrated her first birthday on October 1, 2020. She was thrilled to get a big bone chewy as a birthday present. She chewed continuously on the bone that melted in her mouth, and disappeared. Then Snowy Dog became sad. We gave her something else to eat and drink, and she became better.

Children come and visit Snowy Dog. She's happy to receive them, and other admirers from the neighbourhood.



Daily spending time with Snowy Dog, has helped us to know what to do and give her care with gentleness and love. We need to live our lives by practising everyday what the Bible tells us to do, however small the task is.

Chocolate Loaf

Jenifer Grace

FamilyPulse

Jenifer Grace shares her special recipe for all you chocolate cake lovers

FOR CHOCOLATE LOAF

Ingredients

- ½ cup refined flour
- ½ cup chocolate powder
- 3½ tsp baking powder
- ¼ salt
- 1⅓ cup granulated sugar
- ½ cup butter or 6 tsp no-smell-oil
- ½ cup warm milk
- ½ cup of filter coffee decoction or 2 heaped tsp of instant coffee powder dissolved in ½ cup warm water
- 1 tsp vanilla essence
- 2 beaten eggs
- 1 cup chopped walnuts

Directions

- a. Pre-heat your oven to 180°F, also oil and dust your baking tin.
- b. In a large dry vessel, sift the flour, cocoa powder, baking soda, walnuts and mix roughly.
- c. In a large blender, add the eggs, oil, vanilla essence, sugar, salt and mix till you see the sugar has dissolved.
- d. Pour in the wet mix into the dry ingredients and mix until well combined, be careful not to over mix as it might kill the bubbles you created in the blender.
- e. Pour in the baking tin and bake for 35-45 minutes or till done (a toothpick or a skewer inserted in the middle of the cake should come out clean, if not done, you will still have batter stuck on the skewer).
- f. After done, wait for 30-40 minutes or till completely cooled and tip the cake out of the tin, or if you are in a hurry, cut the cake directly out of the tin and serve up hot cakes.
- g. Leave on the cooling rack.



FOR THE GANACHE

Ingredients

- a. Fresh cream 1 cup
- b. Dark chocolate-chopped (compound or cooking chocolate will work) 2 cups

Directions

- a. In a dry pan add the fresh cream and bring to a boil on medium heat.
- b. Put off the stove and add the chopped chocolates and wait for 5 minutes and stir till the chocolate melts.
- c. Now keep the mixture in the fridge, until completely cooled.
- d. With a hand whisk or even a fork, whisk the cooled mixture, you will get a stiff spreadable ganache.



Christmas 2020

Jeyanthi Manokaran

Advent Thoughts

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. – Isaiah 9:6

The Christmas story overflows with messages of hope, humility, family, peace and goodwill. These qualities desperately need to be imbibed during the challenges faced by the world this 2020.

The deadly virus

Mass terror engulfed the people in 4 BC under King Herod's rule. Conflict raged in and beyond Jerusalem where God spoke to Joseph and Virgin Mary through His angels about the birth of Jesus, a divine child. Joseph accepted his virgin fiancée's pregnancy and protected her from being ostracized and stoned.

This year, COVID has not only taken lives, but it has also spread uncertainty, fear and gloom throughout the world. This growing phobia needs to be contained. A positive approach to a tough problem can spread contagious warmth. Let us strive to put a mask on negativity and bring in a 'virus of good feeling' because with God all things are possible. Matthew 19:26.

The lockdown

Families have been locked together for months due to the pandemic, and overwhelmed by lockdown fatigue. This is a time to work things out with God's help and bring peace into our homes. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Philippians 4:13

Migrant Workers

Mary's little boy child was born in a lowly manger, wrapped in swaddling clothes with a trough as his



cradle, so that even the simple folk can identify with this precious gift from God. Mary, Joseph and Jesus had to flee the country to Egypt when the insecure tyrant King Herod ordered the killing of all baby boys. 'Where there is no vision, the people perish.' Proverbs 29:18

In today's context, refugees and migrant workers were compelled to flee with no resources for survival. Stranded without trains or vehicles, they were forced to walk many days to find refuge. Under the toughest circumstances they returned penniless to their villages. May God grant our leaders wisdom and compassion during hard times for, 'everyone who has been given much, much shall be required.' Luke 12:48

It is time for us to roll up our sleeves and act with guidance from God. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins. Matthew 1:21.



Therefore encourage one another
and build each other up,
just as in fact you are doing.
1 Thessalonians 5:11

The Christmas Story Lessons of Obedience

Advent Thoughts

Advent is here, and as we ponder on the giants that we encounter, let's turn our attention to Mary and Joseph. The first Christmas teaches us a lot about God's strength that enables Mary and Joseph to persevere and come out triumphant. Joseph and Mary faced many the troubles that we face - financial, health, marital, family issues, job problems. In addition, they had the pressure of being the parents of the promised Messiah. So, what was it that enabled them to encounter the challenges they faced and doubts they had? It was sheer obedience to God's will.

Here are excerpts from <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/blogdetail/inlaymans-terms-mary-and-joseph-taught-lesson-of-obedience-7092740>

The Christmas story is one of obedience. It tells of a young woman Mary and a man Joseph to whom she was betrothed. Both, in their own way, chose obedience that at times must have brought them discomfort and, perhaps, some pain. But their willingness to listen to God provided all of us with the greatest gift of all: The Saviour who delivers us from sin and death. Their obedience paved the way for us to be saved from our disobedience.

Picture Mary...

What must Mary this young virgin, have been doing when the angel appeared to her and told her what was going to happen? Her reaction must have been one of fear. Unlike other young people who face that kind of news, she knew she had not done anything sexual to bring on such a life-altering decision. She must have been scared. In fact, the story of Jesus' birth in Luke tells us she was "greatly troubled."

We can only imagine how much the scandal of a young, unwed woman's pregnancy would escalate in ancient Nazareth if Twitter had existed back then. Can you imagine? #she must have cheated #unwed mother

We don't know how much time Mary and the angel discussed this news. But in Luke 1:38 we read that Mary eventually says, "I am the Lord's servant. Let it be with me just as you have said." Mary chose to say "yes."



... And Joseph

What about Joseph? He is about to get the worst news that a groom-to-be can receive. The woman he is engaged to marry is pregnant. And he knows the child is not his.

Scripture doesn't tell us a lot about Joseph. But it does tell us from the beginning that he was a righteous man. The indication is that he loved God. He followed the Jewish laws. By his actions, he must have truly loved Mary, because we learn that he didn't want to humiliate her - although that was certainly allowed under the customs of the time. He decided instead to quietly call off the engagement.

As the story continues, an angel comes to Joseph in a dream and tells him not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife because she is blameless. The child was conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Joseph gets a look into the future: Mary will give birth to a son, a treasured offspring, particularly for a first child in ancient Israel. They will name the child Jesus, and this child will save his people from their sins. He even gets a reference to Isaiah 7, a prophecy about what is about to happen.

But verse 24 tells us "When Joseph woke up, he did just as an angel from God commanded and took Mary as his wife. Joseph chose to be obedient to God.

Saying "Yes"

Mary and Joseph said "yes" to a huge responsibility. They were charged with bringing the son of God into

the world. They were given the task of raising him, teaching him the Jewish Law and the culture's customs. They were asked to give Jesus the foundation upon which His ministry would be built - a ministry that truly changed the world.

But His story continues in this modern day through us. We're directed to play a part in the ongoing story, to make disciples. But there's a hitch: We have to be obedient and say "yes."

We're asked to care for all kinds of people with whom we have no relation, by serving as the hands and feet of Christ in our world today.

Mary and Joseph had the tough part, but God was with them every step of the way. Philippians 2:12-13

tells us that "God is the one who enables you both to want and to actually live out His good purposes."

Do you have a fire in you today to tell others about Christ? Do you know someone who needs a relationship with Jesus? If so, don't stay silent. Don't let fear of ridicule get in the way; whatever you may face is nothing compared to what the earthly parents of Jesus faced.

Know that Jesus wants you to make disciples. God expects you to do your part if you truly are a follower of Christ. Be a part of God's good purpose by saying "Yes."

Excerpts from
<https://www.greatplainsumc.org/blogdetail/in-laymans-terms-mary-and-joseph-taught-lesson-of-obedience-7092740>

Breast Cancer – in Clear and Simple Terms

Dr C.S. Rajan

PulseHealth

Breast Cancer is a **Cause** of **Stress** and anguish for all women,

But, **Curable Solutions** are available today.

We have **Conservative Surgery** (only 'Lumpectomy')

Along with **Combination Schedules** of multimodality treatment (radiation, drugs, hormones)

That are **Conveniently Sandwiched**

To provide **Cancer free Survival** to normal life span!

The **Commonest Symptom** is the painless lump in the breast,

With **Clinical Signs** of being irregular in shape, and hard in consistency.

Later, **Changes** on the **Skin** like dimpling, nipple retraction and even ulceration can follow.

Often, **Concealed Spread** occurs to lymph glands that enlarge in the axilla (armpit)

Helped by **Created Shadows** on Imaging / Scans, the size and extent of the disease are determined.

However, **Cytology Samples** by needle aspiration are needed to confirm the malignancy,

And Core **Substance** tissue by 'Trucut' biopsy of the lump are mandated

For **Categorisation** and **Selection** of treatment.

It is with the **Cordial Stance** of the medical teams,

The patient and family are **Counselled** and **Spoken** to, on choice of ideal treatment.

This is **Commenced** as **Soon** as possible.

Occasionally **Chemotherapy Sessions** may be tiresome.

But with **Courage** and **Stoicism**

And **Caring Support** groups,

The whole duration of therapy is **Completed Safely**.

Return to normal life motivates the patient to set up **Cancer Survivor** groups, to spread awareness

Of Breast Cancer **Cognizance and Sensitivity**,

By teaching ladies the art of regular (monthly) and **Careful, Self-examination**.

After all, it is the detection of the Curable Small (early) lesion

Rather than that of the large (late, locally advanced) lump which has **Chosen to Stretch**, to other parts of the body

That forms the basis of all **Community Screening** programmes.

This helps to reduce the **Commonness** and **Suffering** Of the **Curtable Scourge**

Of Breast Cancer.

Asha Nivas

Wings of the Church

The world is going through a global pandemic and our lives have changed profoundly. We are going through difficult times. Even the simple act of singing together, praying together can spread the virus. So how do we band together at a time like this?

How do we keep our faith, keep believing and never lose hope? When will all this be over? Where is God in all of this? I have no answers, but I do know that throughout the Bible we are assured of God's presence with us. We cannot allow Satan to instill fear in us. We cannot lose sight of God's promises that He is always with us. We are reassured of this in Romans 8:38-39 "For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

How has the COVID-19 virus had an impact on our Seniors at Asha Nivas? The residents have taken a step forward to unite and pray for one another. They have realized the need to look beyond divisions and look out for each other. We, at Asha Nivas, are strong in our belief that God is with us. While we try and abide by the word of God, we take refuge in His assurances. "It is the LORD who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed." Deuteronomy 31:8

Certain preventive steps are being taken by the Management at Asha Nivas to keep the residents safe during this pandemic:

- 1) Stopped contact with the outside world to the extent possible.
- 2) Movement of residents leaving the campus has been restricted
- 3) Proper disinfection of all items that come in from outside
- 4) Premises is sanitized frequently
- 5) Temperature screening is regularly carried out
- 6) Residents have been made aware of the need for social distancing and wearing of masks
- 7) Use of sanitizers is mandatory as also regular washing of hands.

We are immensely thankful to the Pastors for their special counsel and to the Office Staff for their support. We are very grateful to our sextons Benjamin and Ramanna for taking care of procurement of daily essentials. Our gratitude extends to the warden, the cooks and the helpers who took care of the residents during the lockdown period and to all those who continue to do so.

We had two residents joining the Asha Nivas family earlier this year. Christabel Frazer, aged 73, a member of FGAG Church in Indiranagar came to reside at the Home on January 6, 2020.

Esther Mabel, aged 82 years, joined the family of Asha Nivas on February 8, 2020. She is a member of City Harvest A.G. Church in Kalyan Nagar.

On October 17, 2020, Almighty and Merciful God took our Thomas Verghese to His bosom to give him peace and eternal rest. He had been ill at Vikram hospital for almost three weeks. I remember Mr. Verghese as being very direct in nature and one who spoke his mind openly. He was concerned about the well-being of others, especially those of the residents. From my interaction with him, I found that he was never ready to accept anything at face value but always questioned intelligently. He was intuitive and always surprised me with his clarity of thought. His deep love and devotion to his family was clearly apparent and something to be admired. We miss him terribly and are extremely sad that he is no longer with us. We pray for God's comfort and grace on his wife Mrs. Molly Verghese and the family as they mourn the loss of yet another family member. A couple of months ago, Paris Thomas Verghese, son of Mrs. Molly and Mr. Thomas Verghese, passed away on August 27, 2020. It was a terrible loss as he was called well before his time. God's ways are unfathomable but His love for us is infinite and unconditional.

As we continue to tune our hearts in fellowship and do the work that God has called us to do, may we never lose faith and hope. In fact, the greater the difficulties we face, the more we need to worship God and put our trust in Him. Proverbs 3:5 guides us with this verse: "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding."

Jemima Edwin, Convener

Stephen's Home for the Aged

Wings of the Church

God is good all the time. Amidst these adverse times of the COVID-19 pandemic, where no visitors or family members were allowed to visit the residents, God has been gracious and protected us through all of this with his presence in the loneliest of times.

This would not have been possible without the wonderful employees and the warden, who relentlessly worked for the well-being of the residents through these months in all ways.

The garden of Stephen's Home is a home of dewy mornings followed by the beautiful sunshine and warmth of our city. The residents have been healthy and enthusiastic, making good use of their time. They have been overcoming the stress during this different and difficult time by singing, praying, having devotions, and exercising.

The new television installed with the generosity of the congregation, provides their entertainment slot during their free time.

Our residents have been regularly monitored medically so that their health updates can be maintained by the in-house warden during these times. The extended help from the pastors and all the members of the committee has been a great support to the home.

Stephen's Home is yet to be opened for visitors. Hence, we hope you can support and keep our Stephen's Home and its residents in your prayers, as we thank and keep each one of you in our thoughts and prayers.

Wishing you good health and safety during these perilous times. May we always look to our Lord for his protection.

Ida Job, Convener

Choir

Wings of the Church

**How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD of hosts!
My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the LORD;
My heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God.**

- Psalm 84

The sons of Korah, temple musicians, wrote this psalm thousands of years ago. It is most likely that they wrote this psalm when the nation of Israel was under severe oppression from Sennacherib, king of Assyria or there was some other reason that prevented them from going to the temple of the Lord. Whatever the reason may be, this accurately describes what we as a church are experiencing now due to the current pandemic.

The choir of St John's Church, Bangalore, share a similar emotion. Being a very close-knit group, whose main objective is to sing praises to the Lord in His Holy temple and lead the worship, the past few months have brought out a lot of challenges. To start with, the choir was preparing for the Palm Sunday musical with full enthusiasm when the doors of the church were closed to adhere to the norms laid down by the government.

As the psalmist records in verse 11 of the same psalm, For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favour and honour. Yes, God's grace is

unfathomable and beyond human understanding. God in His wisdom granted the grace to stream the church services to the homes of the parishioners.

Led by the pastors and the leaders of the church and teamed with some enthusiastic youngsters, services were recorded, and these included special songs and numbers from the members of the choir. Within the limitations of technology available, members of the choir rallied together and sent individual recordings which were then carefully and meticulously integrated with sound tracks by the choir coordinator James Prajwal.

We are glad that God has granted all of us, members of the church and choir, to get back to regular Sunday services, whilst adhering to checks and controls. The choir is eagerly waiting for the most awaited season of the year – Christmas. Plans are being made to see how best the festivities can continue as usual; so, stay tuned for more updates.

Till we meet again in person – stay healthy, stay safe and may our good Lord bless, keep, and protect you.

Samuel Elisha, Choir member

Women's Fellowship

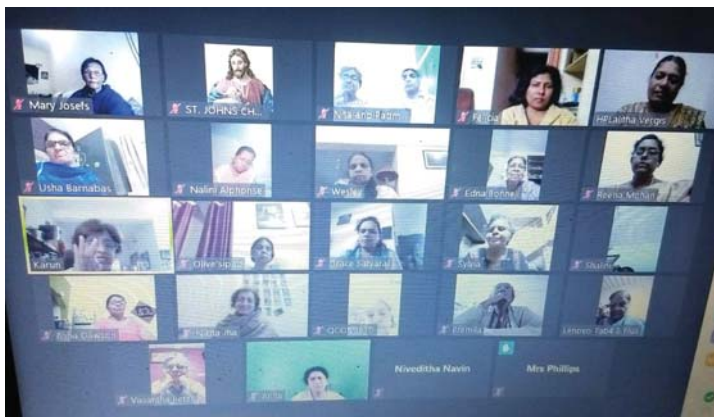
Wings of the Church

The Women's Fellowship thanks our God Almighty for leading and guiding all of us during the time of lockdown. Though we were not able to meet physically as before, with the help of technical assistance from the Youth Fellowship, we were able to meet virtually.

Around 20-30 members come together for these virtual meetings, which have become a vital connection for the members of the Women's Fellowship and enhances our faith and fellowship and our courage to face the challenges around us. The Women's Fellowship continues to work to strengthen the life and witness of the women of St. John's Church.

We resumed the weekly virtual meetings in May 2020 after a brief break because of the lockdown since March 2020. We began with Bible devotion by Niveditha Navin. Each week different speakers are invited and asked to share the word of God through their experience and testimonies, intercessory prayers, Bible studies, missionary updates, health topics, social topics, etc. The study includes exposition of selected portions of the Bible, social application, orientation to missionary work.

Since the Church worship services were recorded, the Women's Fellowship regularly participated in the online worship services by contributing to the Bible Readings, and Praise & Worship. This participation enabled us to keep alive the spirit of worship even though our church was closed.



All our programmes and projects are run from the funds raised every year by holding a Jumble Sale, Breakfast Sale and our Annual Sale. Due to the pandemic, we could not hold any sale. Funds already raised as per previous budget was disbursed to the following organisations and Church projects: Stephen's Home for the Aged, St. John's Hostel, Liza's Home, Abhayam, IEM, KEA, ACCESS, COME Ministry, Maharashtra Village Ministries, New Life Centre Girls' Hostel. The amount earmarked for VBS was given to Mr. Joshua OKelly for his medical expenses.

In September 2020, the Women's Fellowship experienced a change in the leadership. Our President Yessumonie Wilson laid down her office after the retirement of her husband, Rev. G. Wilson as Presbyter of St. John's Church. The Women's Fellowship joined with other wings to felicitate them for their dedication, involvement, and participation in the ministry of the Women's Fellowship.



The Women's Fellowship welcomed our new President Niveditha Navin, wife of our Presbyterian Rev. Navin K. John.

Women's Sunday was observed on September 13, 2020; the theme: 'The imprint of God on a woman's heart'. Prof. Esther Samuel, our Bishop's wife, was the guest speaker. With the resumption of the service in the church, the Women's Fellowship continues to be involved in the participation of the worship services.

Due to the restrictions on social gatherings, our

weekly meetings continue online every Tuesday at 5:00 p.m. We encourage women to join the fellowship and be part of the ministry of the Church.

Lalitha Vergis, Secretary



Angels of Change

Wings of the Church

During this pandemic, as a wing of St. John's Church, the Angels of Change, claim God's promise in Psalm: 91:1: "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty."

We began our fellowship on a virtual platform from June 2020 onwards. We had many more angels attending our fellowship meeting on the third Saturday of the month at 11 a.m. We had the privilege to have speakers both from among our angels and outside too covering topics like "you are special," prayer warriors, testimonies by members during pandemic, and the journey of Israelites during the wilderness comparing with our journey in this world.

We had some cooking and baking lessons which was very helpful especially during these times when we were locked inside our homes.

We uphold our members with prayers and have an active verse a week group on WhatsApp; the verse is to be learned during the week. By doing this exercise we learn the Word of God with diligence. We still celebrate our angels' birthdays virtually.

We invite all women to join and be blessed.



Manjula Swaroop, President

Neighbourhood Fellowship

Wings of the Church

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin." 1 John 1:7.

It was during the time of lockdown that the five Neighbourhood Fellowship groups (Lingarajapuram,

share church news. We also observe special days like Father's Day, Teacher's Day, etc.

Few impressions shared by the NF members :

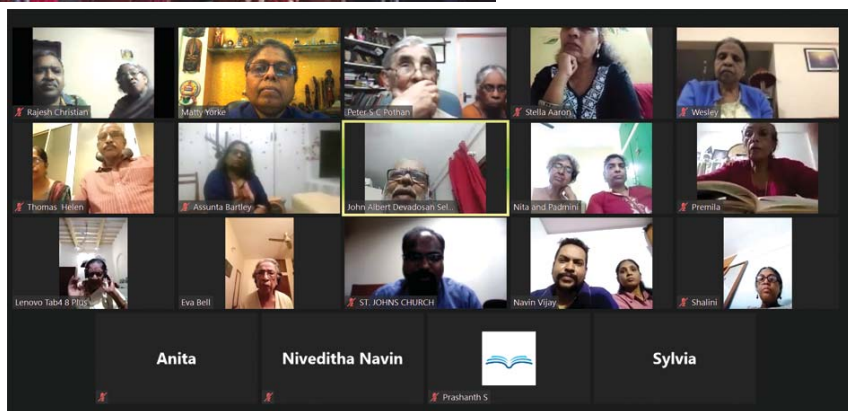
- we are united in prayer.
- there is a sense of togetherness as we fellowship.
- get to know more about the church and its members.
- the pandemic has knitted the fellowship groups closer.
- a strong family sense of being part of the NF exists.
- enjoying good speakers.
- sharing of views related to the topic is mind stirring.
- Bible topics presented are linked to day-to-day life.

The Neighbourhood Fellowship groups also assisted in the



Cox Town, Jal Vayu Vihar, Hennur Cross and Kalyan Nagar) decided to meet on the online platform. The meeting room was graciously opened to us by the Yorkes in mid-May 2020, and ever since we have been meeting regularly on Thursdays at 7 p.m. Presently we have an average attendance of 20-25 members at each meeting.

We enjoy the wholehearted support of our Pastors and every first Thursday of the month is assigned to the Pastor, for his time of sharing. We invite a guest speaker once a month, and the remaining Thursdays are assigned to fellowship members. We have a Psalm reading chronologically to start each meeting. During the meeting time, we sing, pray, study God's Word and



Sunday Worship service online as well as the service held in the church on October 4.

We invite all to be part of the NF and experience your portion of blessing.

To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen.
1 Timothy 1:17

Padmini Hastings

There is nothing in this world that can compare with the Christian fellowship; nothing that can satisfy but Christ.

– John D. Rockefeller

God is so unique in giving His people ways to fellowship, witness, and remember what a mighty and merciful God He is.

– Monica Johnson

Youth Fellowship

Wings of the Church

The beginning of 2020 brought a host of events and activities for the Youth Fellowship. The months of January and February also saw intense preparation for our highlight event 'Fireball 2020', an inter church Basketball and Throwball Tournament held on February 21, 2020. The Convenors for this year were Suraj Jonah and Darshana Karian. This tournament received an overwhelming response with 25 teams participating. It truly was an action packed day. All members of the Youth Fellowship worked tirelessly to make the event a success. For the first time at Fireball, the Youth Fellowship provided scrumptious meals for all participants and guests.

The results:

Boys' Basketball

Winner: Richmond Town Methodist Church

Runner-up: St. Mark's Cathedral

Girls' Basketball

Winner: St. John's Church

Girls Throwball

Winner: Shaffer Memorial Church

Runner-up: St. John's Church

Weekly devotions are conducted by Rev. Navin K. John. However, youth members are also encouraged to come forward and conduct devotions. In March, Elizabeth Yorke conducted an interactive session entitled 'Theological Histories of Bread', wherein the youth donned chef's hats, taking a biblical journey through the making of bread from the little grain to leavened bread and its significance. After the devotion, we were left spiritually and physically fed. Keziah Malcolm also conducted 'The Big Quiz' on the Bible, which was very innovative, engaging and loads of fun. The members were left wanting more.

With the lockdown from the end of March, weekly Youth Meetings are now held on the online platform. The Youth Fellowship bought a licence which was shared with other wings of the church for three months. The online sessions started with the live streaming of services for the Youth Fellowship, beginning with Palm Sunday and Maundy Thursday services. The Good Friday devotion saw seven youth members speak on the '7 Words on the Cross'.

Further, weekly sessions are conducted by Rev. Navin K. John. Our Youth members and special speakers focus on topics that address the day-to-day

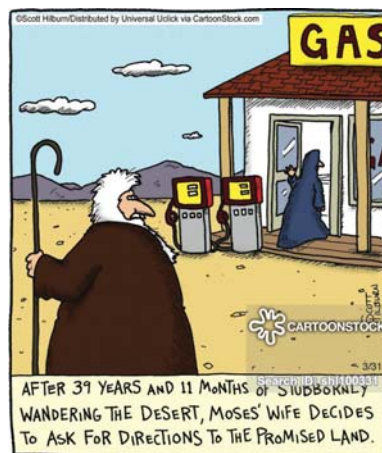
challenges faced by the youth and a Christian answer for the same. Every third Sunday Dr. Shirley Hereford conducts an engaging Bible Study on the Book of Nehemiah. These online sessions have seen active participation from our own Youth members as well as youth members from other churches. The online sessions will continue till our church resumes normal functioning.

The Youth also participated in other activities. The KCD Ecology Department gave us an opportunity to make a presentation video on the significance of Nature. The team comprising Keran Job, Darshana Karian, Tejonidhi Paul, Rebecca Priya, Clarence Edward, Cassandra David, and the Youth Virtual Choir accompanied by James Prajwal and Grace Biswas made a video presentation entitled 'Stewards of the Garden'. The YouTube link is <https://youtu.be/zj2RizcqoPk>.

For the recorded Sunday Services of St. John's Church, Clarence Edward assisted in editing the videos, and the YF Virtual Choir rendered songs.

With the resumption of Sunday Worship in the Church from September 27, 2020, YF members have been actively helping with the logistics and other formalities required for the re-opening of the Church. Every Sunday, they thermal screen those attending service, assist in the ushering, ensure social distancing norms are maintained and attend to any other needs of the Church members during the service. Our YF members also assist with the sound and projection of the order of service and in the live streaming of the church service on the YouTube Channel.

Tejonidhi Paul, President



Teens Fellowship

Wings of the Church

Our vibrant, hyperactive and enthusiastic bunch of teens are literally shackled at home due to this pandemic, COVID-19! The last eight months have been a very challenging period for the teens, who have been

getting used to online classes and chilling at home, and have little or no contact with the outside world and friends.

Nevertheless, with the help of social media and the bonding many of us had (thanks to the camp to Kodaikanal in December 2019) we have by the grace of God continued to remain a close-knit group.

The Teens Choir have been active in practising and coming up with lovely songs for the Teens Assisted Sunday Worship Service with the guidance of Dr. Harsha Joseph.



Teens fellowship Choir



Fun at the barbeque and potluck

We now see the light at the end of this long tunnel and cannot wait to catch up on lost time. From the past month that is September, we have started meeting in church for our regular meetings assisted by Pastor Navin John every Sunday afternoon between 4 pm and 6 pm. Though our numbers are small (15 to 20), we are happy to get back to some sort of a normal life.

We are sure in the coming months everything will get back to normal. "God is our Refuge and Strength" Psalm 46. And we give him all the praise and glory for protecting and guiding us this far. Looking forward to a meaningful Advent season and Christmas! God bless you all

Daniel David, Convener

Sunday School

Wings of the Church

In mid-March 2020, as the world was struck with the pandemic, most of our day-to-day lives were thrown out of normalcy. The St. John's Sunday School team rose to the occasion and started looking to God for ways to conduct the Sunday School for the new academic year. Our Sunday School team of teachers looked for the best possible solution to take the entire Sunday School online!

Google classroom was finalized as the platform for the Sunday School; it had great features to offer and almost replicated an actual school. We had video streaming, content sharing, images, presentations, creating quizzes, assignments, attendance and scoring each child's assignment. The next challenge was to ensure all teachers, students, and volunteers were trained on the platform to help the parents/students have a smooth sail during their classes.

The training was conducted on two Sundays before we could officially start Sunday School, and the teachers were duly prepped. Every teacher had a co-teacher, (who was technically very good), so the team could conduct classes and handle tech issues which cropped up!

Our first online Sunday School took off in June with bated breath, many prayers, and eager hearts! God blessed the work of our hands and we could see the joy, excitement in the students' faces and voices as they were happy to be back to Sunday School. Almost 160+ children signed up for online classes. We had children right from Tiny tots till class ten.

Our normal routine was that each class would start with an opening prayer, three songs of praise and worship, an activity, lesson from our Sunday School books, memory verse and close with activities/ assignments provided for the next week.

After two-three weeks, the teachers were getting more proficient, students more comfortable with lesser tech issues faced every week. Volunteers were readily available for any help that was required across all classes.

Our Sunday School started with a prayer at 8:45 a.m. Then classes from 9 to 10 a.m. / 10 to 11 a.m. followed by a thanksgiving prayer at 11:15 a.m. Every Sunday went from good to better by sheer prayers!

Now, that we were set, the team started innovating and looking at ways to bring in the regular programmes of Sunday School online. We started with celebrating Independence Day online, followed by a painting contest, and a quiz contest.

The Painting Contest was held on 'Encountering Giants'. This was a roaring success with excited children sending in their paintings. The judges (Sunday School teachers) did a great job of organizing this event online.

The Quiz Competition was held for classes 3 to 10, on the Gospel of St. John. The children were placed in groups. We had two rounds – the qualifying round and the final round. The online quiz masters did an excellent job of conducting the quiz online with enthusiastic participation from the students.

As of mid-November, we are now set for our online Sunday School routine and look forward to conducting this year's Sunday School events or programmes virtually till situation settles down. One does have advantages of online teaching where students have access to better online material both audio/video visuals, independent individual learning and better sharing/participating in classes.

We, as teachers of St. John's Sunday School pray this year of 2020 turns out to be the most memorable year for each of our children, teachers, and volunteers too! God bless!

Freedra David, Teacher



In Memoriam

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.

Revelation 21:4



Violet Subramanian (85 years)



"Life doesn't come with a manual, it comes with a Mother": Author Unknown

Our mother Violet Subramanian left for her heavenly abode on October 2, 2019. She leaves behind a grieving family, her loving husband Air.Cmde. V Subramanian (Retd.), daughter Radhika, son Danie, their spouses, three grandchildren and great grandchild.

Born on April 1, 1934 to Mr. S Daniel and Mrs. Nesam Daniel, natives of Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu, our mother graduated from Sarah Tucker College and did her B.T. from St. Christopher's College of Education, Chennai. She taught for a few years at St. Ignatius Convent High School, Palayamkottai.

Our parents celebrated 60 years of marriage in May of 2019. Marriage to an Air Force Officer took her to many cities around India and brought them to

Bangalore in 1968. Since then, the family has been members of St. John's Church, and attend the 8.30 a.m. service.

A very gentle, kind and unassuming person, our mother was a great cook and her family was her priority. She was the perfect host to visitors and guests at home. The Church choir was hosted regularly during the Carol rounds which was integrated with the Community Christmas Program of their apartment. This was a much-anticipated event for the family. She also participated in activities connected to the IMS Annual Sale and her snacks were extremely popular and would finish in no time.

*Radhika Thomas &
Danie Vaidya, children*

Vasantha Hector (83 years)



Mrs. Vasantha Hector, wife of J Hector, and mother of Jacob Surendra, Ashalatha Joshua and Bina Rajkumar, passed on on May 11, 2019.

Edison Thomas (85 years)



Mr. Edison Thomas, passed to glory peacefully, after a brief illness, on May 3, 2019, in a hospital near our daughter Bella's home at Noida, UP. He was my loving husband for 58 years and father of Bella Pillai and Peter Thomas.

A member of St. John's Church for 58 years – from 1961 to 2019 – he and I attended either the 6.30 a.m. / 8.30 a.m. service and participated in our Neighbourhood Fellowship meetings.

Born in Vellore, Tamil Nadu in 1933, Thomas was the youngest in a large family. He was a brilliant student. After college, he joined LRDE – an Electronic Radar and Development Establishment – and worked for 30 years before moving to CABS (Centre for Air Borne Systems), DRDO India, from where he retired in 1993 as a senior Scientist 'F'. He was in the Defence Aeronautic Research Development Establishment in Bangalore for 55 years.

Thomas was very good at chess. He taught both the children to play from a young age and encouraged and tutored them to participate in local and even national tournaments. He also disciplined them to hard work/studies and do their best in all they did. Above all he taught them godly values.

He is lovingly remembered by family for his gentle and caring ways. He was responsible and often sacrificed his own interests and pleasures for others. He was a wonderful husband, loving father to Bella and Peter, and a doting grandfather. Anand rightly calls himself as our son-in-grace!

Juliet Thomas, wife

Tribute to dad:

People say that a father-daughter connection is magical, and it certainly is in my case. Dad was the perfect role model for me. Gentle, witty, simply brilliant, and able to solve all my technical problems, etc. He was one of those whose actions spoke far louder than words. He never spoke much about Christ but he lived an amazing Christian life. His office friends unanimously concurred on the fact that he was a "true Christian".

As multiple organs were failing, he barely complained, smiled through pain, and still maintained his humour till the end. I still miss him tremendously but am thankful that God gave him to us for 85 years. He was a father that was a true reflection of my heavenly father. Our Anand writes that he was his Father in Grace, (not Father-In-Law!). "We are so glad that he could spend his last days with us in Delhi NCR."

He, our dearly beloved, is now free from all pain. He was God's precious gift to us! And we miss him very much. But we will meet him one day in our Father's presence with Jesus. Praise God!

Bella Pillai, daughter

Dr. Viola Chandrasingh (77 years)



Born to Arthur S. Nathaniel and Selina Bai Nathaniel, Venus Viola was the fourth of five siblings. As she was home schooled till Class 5, she developed a passion for treating the wounded animals and from there grew her determination to become a doctor. Though she did not get admission at once, she did not let go of her dream and completed her MBBS at the Trivandrum Medical College.

When she married Dr. A. M. Chandrasingh, together they set out to help the sick and suffering with compassion and love. A very loving person, Veena, as she was better known, drew people to her. Their trust in God and love for their fellow-beings fuelled their journey together as doctors in Neyyoor, Tamil Nadu and later in Vandiperiyar, and in Pathanapuram, Kerala. Later, they worked for more than 10 years in the CSI Hospital, Ikkadu and CSI Hospital, Kanchipuram in Tamil Nadu before they moved to Bangalore in their retired life.

Even after she stopped formal practice because of her husband's illness, she continued to treat those who came to her and counselled those with problems. Her life centred around her family and she doted on her husband, her daughter Sindhulina, her son-in-law Arun Hubert and her grandson Anish (Benjy). She was proud of all they were doing.

She was a prayer warrior, praying for all those who needed and asked for prayers, praying for each one individually and specifically for their needs. She kept in touch with the extended family and made sure she spoke to them regularly. But in all this she longed to be united with her beloved husband in heaven. It is there that she is now without pain and suffering basking in the glory of God. We on earth miss her, but all the saints in heaven are rejoicing at her arrival.

Sindhulina Hubert, daughter

Dr. Stanley John (87 years)



My husband Stanley John was born in Munnar, Kerala on August 11, 1932 to Dr. & Mrs. J.A. John. He was the eldest of nine siblings. Since his father worked as a doctor at the KGF Hospital, he inherited the desire to be a doctor. After he completed college at Madras Christian College, he joined CMCH, Vellore, in 1950. He completed MBBS and later general surgery. He decided on cardiac surgery, and did a year of advanced training in Minneapolis. On his return, he took over the department of cardiac surgery at CMCH and he worked till he retired in 1992.

The desire, passion for excellence remained foremost as his objective. He said the make-up of a cardiac surgeon consists of the hands of a maiden, vision of an eagle, supreme confidence and the compassion and caring of God Almighty.

We got married in 1967, and our two sons Ranjit and Rohan have followed in our footsteps. Both completed MBBS from CMCH. Ranjit is a cardiac surgeon at Minneapolis, USA and Rohan is a nephrologist at Toronto, Canada.

Stanley maintained a wonderful equilibrium between his career and family – living a demanding work schedule on one side and nurturing a loving Christian family on the other; in between he found time for tennis as exercise and relaxation. His faith in God was the source of strength for his hard work. He was awarded the Padma Shri in 1974 and later the B.C. Roy Award for his distinguished service in the field. His dedication, sincerity and integrity as a person are unquestionable and unsurpassable. The sustenance that he derived from God and his unwavering faith and loyalty to Him, have clearly been imprinted upon us.

During the last 10-12 years Stanley developed some difficulty in walking which gradually progressed and in 2012 he had a stroke, following which he required a wheelchair. Despite his disability, he remained mentally alert, attending church services regularly and even attending functions. He was a member of the Pastoral Committee and has contributed to the welfare of the church.

Stanley left for the heavenly abode after a short illness on February 23, 2020.

Lily John

"The remembrance of the good done by those we have loved is the consolation when we have lost them."

Andrew Wilson (55 years)



For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.

– Romans 14:8

Mr. W Andrews took his eternal journey on March 25, 2020. He was a man who fought for his life for 10 long years during which, he faced the good and the bad, but he fought his bad so bravely and boldly with the Almighty Father by his side. He was a real fighter who fought everyday and every hour. He was a person with a lovely smile on his face which would never fade away no matter what. His gentleness and politeness stole a lot of hearts. As a husband he gave his best as a companion, and as a father to me he gave his all. He was a friend to his son-in-law, and he was his best with his granddaughter. Overall, my father was an excellent human being. The family has faced a great loss of an amazing person who created a huge impact in our lives. We love him and miss him. Our king has taken his journey to his King

Renilda Andrews, daughter

"What we have once enjoyed we can never lose. All that we love deeply becomes a part of us."

– Helen Keller

Benjamin Mason (90 years)



My world was complete, my Grandpa and I. My first friend will always be my favourite friend. My grandpa did everything for me. He loved to read and was very keen I enjoy reading as well. He left no stone unturned and would get me the nicest and most colourful books and would read them to me. My world was complete; just him and me. As long as we were together, not much else seemed to matter.

We lived together since I was born. I'm close to my parents and granny too; but my relationship with grandpa was very special. He'd iron my uniform, polish my shoes, and took me to school and brought me back home, every single day for 14 years. He was the best teacher and taught me everything from English to Maths, Science to Hindi and even learned Kannada to teach me. I always felt he was the one friend I could share anything with.

I've learnt some of my most valuable lessons from him. He would often tell me about his early years which were quite a struggle economically but always spoke about that phase of his life with so much warmth. He was also completely indifferent to a person's position and truly treated everyone equally. Though there was much he had achieved, I never once heard him talk about it to

anyone including me. Never did he speak badly of anyone nor did he ever flatter anyone. All his compliments were sincere, and his polished humour brought a smile to many.

We continued our special relationship over the years. He was concerned every time I had the slightest temperature and would come to see me in my room, struggling a bit with his walker, during the later years. Whenever I touched his hand, I felt strengthened and comforted. It seemed like the big worries were perhaps not that big after all.

My greatest concern growing up was how I'd manage if my grandpa died. I'm so blessed, I had him for close to 32 years but often while the mind accepts, the heart takes longer to come to terms with a loss. My grandpa took ill suddenly and was in the ICU for 10 days. He didn't speak a word that time but would open his eyes sometimes. I told him every day how much I loved him and needed him in my life. A little before his passing, he opened his eyes and looked straight into mine. I had tears in them, and he nodded. I felt assured that he had been hearing me and seeing the notes I'd stand with, by his bedside. A few hours later, he passed away.

They say that death ends a lifetime, but not a relationship. I couldn't agree more with this statement. I feel my grandpa's presence and can picture him sitting on his chair and smiling at me and I'm smiling back at him, knowing that nothing can ever take away this feeling. My grandpa continues to love me just as much and watches over me from up above and I know that I will meet him again someday.

Monisha Mason, granddaughter

Luther Jayaseelan (53 years)



My family and I are devastated at the passing of our beloved brother, Luther Jayaseelan. He suffered a hemorrhagic stroke in October 2019, and after a long, hard struggle, he succumbed to his symptoms on April 20, 2020.

Luther never married, but he shared a strong bond with all his siblings and was a favourite among his nieces and nephews.

He was a devout man of God, and an avid churchgoer. There wasn't a Saturday evening when I didn't see his Sunday best hanging on his door, neatly ironed for the next morning's service. He would even hand over worship books to the members before the start of the service. The church was one place where he found solace in his tumultuous life, and the only thing that prevented him from going was his declining health.

To an outsider, Luther may have come off as introverted and reserved, timorous even. Only his dearest friends and family knew what an absolute joy he truly was. He was easy-going and cheerful, and deeply cared for those he was close to.

If the secret of genius is to carry the spirit of the child into old age, then Luther was the smartest of us all. He was the class clown who never quite grew out of that phase. Gone but never forgotten, he will be truly missed.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who supported and stood by us during the last few months of his life. Your support was greatly appreciated, and my family and I are eternally grateful.

Edwin Mohandas, brother

Usha Prasad (44 years)



Mrs. P. Usha Prasad, wife of Joshua Charles, and mother of a one-year-old baby girl, was called to her eternal home on June 30.

Shanthi Moses (75 years)



Mrs. Shanti Moses, wife of the late G.D. Moses, and mother of Ramona and Jaichand passed away on July 26, 2020.

**My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my
heart and my portion forever**
– Psalm 73:26

**"Say not in grief that they are
gone, but give thanks that they
were yours."** – Hebrew Proverb

Cynthia Gnanakan (67 years)



Since August 8, 2020, we have been living with the loss of Cynthia Gnanakan, who passed on after a brave battle with cancer.

Simple, ready with a smile, ready to help anyone even if that entails that she has to forgo her own little necessities, Cynthia has taught us many lessons without sermonising.

She never spoke ill of another; was a friend one could depend upon. She had utmost faith in her Lord Jesus, The Bible and the Church. And yet she was able to live amongst all of us who practised and prayed differently.

Even during her final days she did not wish to trouble another person with her pain and worries. She took life as it came and would always say "THE LORD WILL TAKE CARE". Such faith seldom seen in today's world.

To this wonderful soul who held our family together, we dedicate this tribute. She will occupy our minds to soothe us for the loss of her absence in person.

**Amber and Zakir
Jennifer and Krishnan**

**Have I not commanded you?
Be strong and courageous. Do
not be afraid; do not be
discouraged, for the LORD
your God will be with you
wherever you go.**

– Joshua 1:9

Rev. Albert Sampath Kumar David (80 years)



Rev. Albert Sampathkumar David entered his heavenly abode on August 7. He is mourned by his wife Millicent and son Mark.

Mr. David was an active member of St John's Church. In the 70s and 80s, he was a cross-bearer and a chorister for many years in St John's Church choir, and also sang in the YMCA Choral Society. He used his talent to repair and maintain the church Tower Clock and the Pipe Organ.

Phyllis Rajan (80 years)



Mrs. Phyllis Rajan (aged 80 years) slept in the Lord on August 10, 2020. She leaves behind her children – daughters Anita, Sunita and son Vijayarajan

**from the end of the earth
I call to you
when my heart is faint.
Lead me to the rock that is
higher than I**

Psalm 61:2

Samuel Kanagarajan (78 years)



Our daddy was promoted to glory peacefully in his sleep on August 10, 2020. He is missed by his sorrowing wife Prema, daughters Anita Gladys and Jessintha Christy Paul and son Samuel Kingston.

Dad's life was one of courage, sincerity, hard work and a passion to excel. He always kept himself busy and was strongly independent. His passion to study made him get several degrees. He loved his profession as an advocate and attended court till just before lockdown. He fought for the rights of the poor and downtrodden without taking any fees from them and would walk that extra mile by often giving them monetary assistance to help them meet their needs.

Dad was an avid reader, especially of law books, and we remember him referring to many law books, studying very late in the night to get justice for his clients, which was reflected by a constant flow of his clients' children and relatives even from the third generation. He also opened an office in Singapore to meet the needs of his clients living there.

Our daddy was involved in many church activities – he was the secretary of St. Peter's Church, Chairman of Goodwill Girls High School, Treasurer of Bishop Cotton Girls' School, was in the Executive Committee of Karnataka Central Diocese and the Convener for India during Morris Crello's convention - a world renowned evangelist.

He has built two churches and has encouraged and given legal opinion to numerous pastors of various denominations. He possessed leadership qualities from his college days and held important positions in society as well.

Our daddy loved spending time with his friends. His wide knowledge on matters about Indian and world politics and a great sense of humour, gave him a lot of friends. Whenever our daddy found the time, he loved travelling, which took him to several nations and places. He enjoyed watching cricket matches. He was a loving husband to our mom, a caring father to us and an adorable grandfather to his seven grandchildren.

His voice is stilled, and his presence is gone. But daddy will continue to live within us with all the high values and Godliness he taught us.

Farewell dear daddy till we meet on that beautiful shore.

Anita Gladys, daughter

Iris S. Wilson (66 years)



Iris Sukhalatha passed away on August 11, 2020 in Bangalore. She will be deeply missed by her husband Austin, her sons Arun, Ashwin and Amrith, and her daughters-in-law – Roshni, Shiny and Vishaka.

Iris had been a member of St. John's Church since 1991. She was born in Mangalore on July 8,

1954, graduated from St. Gerosa High School, Mangalore in 1969, and went on to earn a Bachelor's degree in Science (B.Sc) from University of Mysore in 1974. She also secured a Bachelor's in Education (B.Ed) from Mangalore University in 1992. She served as science teacher in Florence High School, Bangalore, from 1992 to 2007.

Following her retirement from teaching, Iris pursued an active interest in cooking, gardening, singing, and welfare of stray animals. She is lovingly remembered for her compassion and determination.

Shiny Wilson, daughter-in-law

Joyce David (82 years)



Joyce David passed away on 13th August in Bangalore.

Mum was born and raised in Bangalore, married to the late Bob David. As a child Joyce David used to attend St John's Church with her parents and then after her marriage, she and her husband along with her four daughters used to attend the service at St John's Church. She loved the Lord dearly and also the church. Even during the lockdown she used to eagerly wait to watch the online service and this brought immense happiness to her.

**The LORD is near to the
brokenhearted and saves the
crushed in spirit – Psalm 34:8**

She was a loving and caring wife, and a doting mother and grandmother to her daughters and grandchildren. She lived a good life where she saw the blessings of God on her life.

We as a family thank God for giving us a wonderful Mum whom we fondly remember everyday.

Charles John, son

John Neil Sebastian (73 years)



John Neil Sebastian passed away in Bangalore on August 18, 2020. He was loved by his wife Florence, children Lovlynn, and Allen, son-in-law Dan, daughter-in-law Sumana, grandchildren Ryan, Leah and Arya, and his siblings Wilmoria, Helen, Winston and Irine, and their families.

John has been a member of St. John's Church for 50+ years, attending regularly the 8.30 a.m. service. He was a member of St. John's Youth Fellowship and took part in musical events.

Born in Shimsha, Karnataka on November 22, 1947, John did his schooling at Hardwicke School Mysore, and graduated from St. Joseph's Arts & Science, Bangalore, and ever since he worked in Bank of India. He played football for the Bank, and won many awards, including some for dancing, and singing as well.

John wore many hats, and was very good at his work as an officer in the Bank. He taught himself engineering, and would open things to learn how they worked.

His love for antique automobiles is legendary. His hobbies were swimming, fishing, singing and reading. He was an avid reader and his topics ranged from science fiction to politics, and everything between. He was very romantic and loved listening to Bee Gees, Beatles, Boney M, John Denver, etc., and as he was brought up in a musical family, he and his siblings played a variety of instruments. He was ambidextrous, and multitalented. He could stitch, cut hair, mend shoes, and repair anything and everything.

John lived his life to the fullest, with humility and simplicity. He taught us that there is beauty in being imperfect. He never had a single enemy but had loads of friends of all age groups.

In short, he was loved by each and every individual that he met, and although he has gone too soon, his memories will always remain alive.

Florence Neil, wife

Andrew Shekaran (84 years)



My dad Andrew Shekaran, who slept in the Lord on August 27, 2020, was a man of discipline and maintained timing very strictly. He was very systematic and would maintain a record of everything. He and mum brought us up very well and literally spoilt us with all the luxury that they could provide.

My dad regularly attended the 6:30 a.m. service on Sunday at St. John's Church, and was always

on time until he was almost 80 years. I cannot remember him missing church even once because he was a man who was very healthy and fit all his life.

My dad was a very loving and caring husband. Although my mum the late Grace Shekaran was bedridden for many years, he took care of her on his own without depending on us or a maid. Living with us was my mom's sister the late Mrs. Tara Kumar who was also bedridden in her last days. He took good care of her also as though she was his own sister.

After my brother Christopher and I got married, he treated his daughters-in-law too like his own children. He was very affectionate to his granddaughters.

We miss him very much. May his soul rest in peace.

Daniel Shekaran, son

George T. Philip (70 years)



George T. Philip [Mohan] was born in Ommalloor, Pathanamthitta district Kerala and was brought up in Bangalore. He completed his schooling at St. Joseph's Boys' High School, was a Science graduate and had a PG Diploma in Business Administration from St. Joseph's College.

George began his career with Mitsubishi Tillers Tractors Ltd. (VST) and Avery India Ltd., and in the eighties moved to Abu Dhabi where he worked for nearly

25 years in Senior Management positions with Jumbo Electronics Co., Emeco Electronics Co. and Al-Burj International Engineering & Contracting Co., Abu Dhabi.

He was the loving husband of Elizabeth and father of Manisha, Kunaal and Manish. He was a pampered brother to his three younger sisters Molly, Usha and Suja. His parents the late Mrs. and Mr. T.G. Philip were members of the Primrose Road Marthoma Church, and George also worshipped there until he came back from Abu Dhabi in 2002 to look after his mother.

He then became a member of St. John's Church and was regular at the 8.30 a.m. service. His steadfast faith in the Lord motivated him to be selflessly involved in church activities. He was an active member in the Building & Property Committee (BPCC) and took a keen initiative in the maintenance work of the church properties.

His sudden demise came as a rude shock to all his loved ones. 'He never said he was leaving, he never said goodbye, and he was gone even before we knew it. And only God knows why. He passed away on September 11, 2020 due to a cardiac arrest.

George was a gentleman, straightforward and honest who was not afraid to speak his mind. A man of principles he had this rare courage to stand up for the right and speak the truth. He would always say, 'I am not a politician to be politically correct or diplomatic.'

He was a pillar of strength to his family and friends and his greatest strength was his generosity and the happiness he gave to his loved ones. The word generation gap did not exist in his vocabulary, he bonded with the young and the old, and the personalized photos and videos he sent on special occasions made one feel very special.

He was an amateur snooker player and bagged many a championship trophy like the Ameen Memorial Open Snooker Tournament and UAE Open Championship at the ISC. He was a tech whiz, up to date with the latest technology and gadgets, an avid reader, loved cooking, cars, and long drives. He was fun loving and adventurous and a man full of zest for life, taken away a little too soon! His life was a blessing and he will continue to live in our hearts.

Elizabeth Philip, wife

Colonel T.N. Raina (79 years)



Colonel T.N. Raina passed on on October 5, 2020, in Bangalore. He is survived by his wife Nunte and sons Reuben and Michael. Born on March 3, 1941, Colonel Raina served the Indian Army for 33 years in the Army Dental Corps.

Anna Varughese (90 years)



Anna Varughese passed away on June 15, 2020, at the age of 90, a milestone she had celebrated in March this year.

Thomas Verghese (81 years)



Mr. Thomas Verghese, (resident of Asha Nivas), passed away on October 17, 2020. He is mourned by his wife Molly Verghese, children and family.

Our mum was born in Coimbatore and did her schooling there, then went on to study at Women's Christian College, Madras. Her final year in college was a memorable one – she was selected as the Senior Student leader, and got married to Thomas M. Varughese.

My father was in the Railways and mum journeyed with him through several postings in many parts of the country, where she was involved in the activities of the local Railway Women's Organizations.

In Delhi, our church and the women's fellowship there was a big part of her life. In 1980 my parents settled down in Bangalore and joined St. John's Church. Mum was part of the Women's Fellowship, served in the Pastorate and Asha Nivas Committees and was an integral part of the *Pulse* team. When the new hymnal was introduced, she was one of the group that worked on it. She always looked forward to attending the St. John's School Graduation ceremonies and all their other programmes too. Monday evenings were reserved for the Cox Town Neighbourhood Fellowship. Mum

Rajen Joshua (75 years)



Mr. Rajen Joshua slept in the Lord on October 26, 2020. He is survived his wife Manil Jayasena, and children Rashna and Rohith. Mr. Joshua was an environmentalist, motor sport rallyist, biker, and singer.

also attended a Bible Study group that enriched her life.

She spent a lot of her time engrossed in reading a wide variety of books and never missed doing the daily crossword, even as she quietly did many different household tasks. Late in life, after my father passed away, she was introduced to the art of painting and this gave her many hours of joy and contentment.

Graceful and elegant in her saris, her charming smile, thoughtfulness, and encouragement will always be remembered. As will her coffee cakes. Mum was gentle yet spirited, had a quick wit and a great sense of humour, and did not let her loss of hearing affect her involvement and interest in others. She lived her Christian faith through her words and deeds and in prayer. God called her home very suddenly and we miss her more than words can tell. We remember with gratitude the person she was and the example she set. We thank God for her.

Renuka Varughese, daughter

Remembering Anna Varughese

The Communication And Technology Committee has lost a dedicated and committed member in the demise of Anna Varughese.

I first met Anna at the Editorial meeting for the Pulse magazine of St. John's Church, when I took over as convener in early-2000. Anna's encouragement and support was always there. She was my go-to for any doubts I had about articles or the writers, or any brushes I had with anybody in the church about *Pulse*. And she was very objective in her assessment.

Anna always came prepared for the meetings with her list of themes or names for Pulsonality. When I sent her articles for review, she did not just read them for commas and full-stops. Anna pointed out and corrected any

theological confusion in the articles or something that would not go down well with the spirit of the *Pulse*. Anna was vocal about issues, but positive that they could be sorted out.

She and I shared a common vibe for *Pulse*. Besides a love for improving the magazine, we also felt that however badly the article was written, it should be used. All are not writers! So, with her daughter Renuka's able assistance, Anna rewrote pieces, edited, and proof-read.

Even when her hearing began to fail, and we could not speak on the phone, she insisted on phoning me to let me know the corrections, and when she returned the proof-read pages of *Pulse*, there was a neat little note listing out the

corrections. So meticulous and organized. There is a lot that I have learned from her.

Our friendship grew beyond Pulse and the meetings of the Communication And Technology Sub-committee, and my husband Peter and I enjoyed our visits to the Varughese home. There was always food for thought with Anna sharing what she had read. If any of you have watched the TV series *Ann with an E*, Anna could not have agreed more with this quote – A book is the window to the world.

I am going to miss Anna very much. The seat to my left at the *CATS* meetings will be empty. Anna taught me that it is not what the world holds for you. It is what you bring to it.

Matilda Yorke, Convener



Now thank thee all our God was written in 1636 by Protestant minister Martin Rinkart. Its hymn tune, Zahn No. 5142, was published by Johann Crüger in the late 1640s.

Now thank we all our God,
with heart and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things has done,
in Whom this world rejoices;
Who from our mothers' arms
has blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love,
and still is ours today.

O may this bounteous God
through all our life be near us,
With ever joyful hearts
and blessed peace to cheer us;
And keep us in His grace,
and guide us when perplexed;
And free us from all ills,
in this world and the next!

All praise and thanks to God
the Father now be given;
The Son and Him Who reigns
with Them in highest Heaven;
The one eternal God,
whom earth and Heaven adore;
For thus it was, is now,
and shall be evermore.

Countdown to Christmas

There's something very special about the Advent Sundays leading up to when Jesus was born. Join in with these activities as we prepare for and celebrate Christmas – and as we remember the Comfort and Joy that Jesus brings to us all.



Comfort and Joy

Date	What brings joy today?	Who needs comfort today?
29th Nov, the First Sunday of Advent	Counting down with excitement Look at your Advent Calendar – just 2 days until you can open the first door! Give a jump for joy or fist bump your family at the excitement of looking forward.	Those who are anxious about Christmas Look at the floor. Some people are anxious about Christmas. Ask God to be close to them in the coming days.
6th Dec, the Second Sunday of Advent	Being able to give presents to others Christians sometimes call Jesus 'God's gift to us' – that's why we give gifts to each other at Christmas. Make a list of the people your family will give gifts to this Christmas. Thank God for each person.	Those worried about money Christmas can be expensive. Some people are worried that they do not have enough money for gifts or food. Could your family help by giving a gift to your local foodbank?
13th Dec, the Third Sunday of Advent	Access to water Count the number of taps in your home. Pour yourself a glass of water and give thanks for access to clean water for washing, cooking, drinking, and cleaning.	Children of the world Pour a glass of water. Add a teaspoon of mud to it, stir and place it in your kitchen. In some parts of the world children only have access to water like this. Each time you see your glass today, pray for agencies like Water Aid, trying to bring clean water to children across the world.
20th Dec, the Fourth Sunday of Advent	Health and people who care Draw a rainbow. Around it write the names of your local doctors, hospitals and pharmacies. Colour a heart by each one to show you are thankful for them.	People who are feeling sad Find a sticking plaster. Draw a sad face on it. Stick the plaster onto your bathroom mirror to remind you to pray for people who are sick or sad.
Carol Service	The gift of music What's your favourite Christmas Carol? Record your family singing it and send it to your wider family and friends.	Those who can't get to church Some people will be sad that they can't go to a carol service. Make a poster of your favourite carol to put in the window to cheer everyone up.
Christmas Eve	Everything that makes Christmas exciting Gather round your Christmas tree and look at the decorations. Tell each other which is your favourite and why.	Those who are home alone Do you know someone who will be home alone this Christmas? Surprise them with a phone or video call.
Christmas Day	The gift of God's love in Jesus Today we celebrate Jesus' birthday. Light a candle (safely) and sing Happy Birthday for Jesus before you open your presents. (Remember to blow the candle out!)	People who have no homes Some people don't have their own homes where they can celebrate Christmas. Pray for charities like Crisis who will provide safe space for them to eat and sleep today.



1
Make an
Advent
wreath for
your home

2
Donate
a toy

3
Draw your family

4
Make a
Christmas
decoration

5 Read
a story
about St.
Nicholas

6 Do a
random
act of
kindness

7
Bake
Christmas
cookies

8
Name gifts
for your
family

9
Call or
skype a
loved one

10 Write
Christmas cards
to _____

11
Special
people we
pray for

12
Make a
crib
at home

13
SMILE

14
Sing
"Silent Night"

15 Visit
someone
who is lonely

16
Mend a
quarrel

17
Help clean
the house

18
Encourage
someone

19
Tell your
family you
love them

20
Participate
in decorating
your church

21
Make
peace
today

22
Visit the
Christmas
crib at church

23
What gift
will you
give Jesus?

24
Read the
Christmas story
(Luke 2.1-20)

2020

