



The Official Monthly Newsletter of CSI Church Toronto

Pilgrim

Volume 11 Issue 12

DECEMBER 2011



2011 Motto

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!

1 John 3: 1



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Achen's message.....	3
Church News	4
Bible Portions.....	5
Celebrations.....	6
A True Story.....	6
Sunday School.....	7
Kids' Corner	8
Choir	9
Inspirational.....	10

Pilgrim

DECEMBER 2011

EDITORIAL BOARD

Chief Editor

Rev. Shaji M. Johnson

Editor

Samuel Anselm Samuel

Publication Team

Suja Sarah Koshy

Annie Koshy

Abraham P. George

Samuel Chacko

Address

CSI Parsonage
15 Masters Green Crescent
Brampton ON
L7A 3K3 CANADA
(905) 789- 8238

Articles/ Feedback

May be sent to

pilgrimcsi.to@gmail.com

Editorial

Love Waits!

Love is a multi dimensional, driving force that keeps our world intact. But this mundane love is conditional. How often we have had this thought: 'I can't stand this anymore; I have no connection with you. I just can't forgive you.' To lift us from this transient state of love into a more sublime level, the A and Ω of love stepped down from heaven as a babe, wrapped in clothes in a manger at Bethlehem. John 3: 16 says, 'God so loved the world....' He illustrated how we could remove the boundaries which we set on love.

Have you ever thought about a God who sets boundaries like we do? However we dance, the love widens and enfolds us waiting like the father in the Prodigal Son Parable. Isaiah 49:15-16:- 'Can a woman forget her own baby, and not love the child she bore? Even if a mother should forget her child, I will never forget you. Jerusalem, I can never forget you! I have written your name on the palms of my hands.'

When Christmas is at hand, some people ask, 'Was Jesus born on December 25? Why do you celebrate Christmas?' but these questions have lost their flavor. The most pertinent question we need to consider is: 'Have we taken our presents [all that we have/ are] and gone all the starry and rugged way to the manger to kneel and bow down in humble adoration before the ever waiting love?' If we've found an answer to this question, this Christmas will be the most blessed one for; the star of Bethlehem will shine through our hearts, giving us the warmth and love no one else can give. The love waits.....Love's still waiting.....

Samuel Anselm Samuel
Editor



Achen's Message



Dearly beloved in Christ,

Greetings in the precious name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

We are entering into an advent season. Advent is manifested by a spirit of expectation, anticipation, and preparation of longing. It is the season of expectant waiting for the arrival of Jesus to this world. Purple is the sanctuary colour of Advent. This is the color of penitence and fasting as well as the color of royalty to welcome the Advent of the King. The purple of Advent is also the color of suffering used during lent. It points to an important connection between Jesus' birth and death. The incarnation cannot be separated from the crucifixion. The purpose of Jesus' coming into the world and dwelling among us is to reveal God and His grace to the world. This was achieved not only through Jesus' life and teaching, but through his suffering, death, and resurrection as well. To reflect this emphasis, Advent originally was a time of penitence and fasting; much as the Season of Lent. Receiving the King is a time of celebration and so we celebrate Christmas. The question raised by the wise men echoes even today. "Where is the one who has been born the king?" Are we able to find him in today's world? Can we trace him amidst the commercialised Christmas celebrations? As a community waiting for His arrival, we are responsible to answer this question. Today most of the Christmas celebrations are Christ less celebrations. Christ is totally exterminated from all these galas. Christmas, in the true sense, is the celebration of incarnation and the birth of Jesus. If so, where is he incarnated? Where is he born? Now it's our moment in time to furnish a place in our own hearts for Jesus to be born as our king and God. Then only our celebrations will be meaningful.

The area carolling arranged in Scarborough area was the reflection of the joy and cheer of Christmas. I thank you all for your participation and cooperation in this fellowship. I hope the same enthusiasm may continue in Brampton-Mississauga area get-together.

I request you all to pray for our Church choir as they prepare for a musical feast on 17th of this month during our Carol service. The entire congregation is requested to lend a hand with the choir and the office bearers of our church in making this music service a remarkable one.

Christmas day will be observed as family Sunday. The Watch night service will follow a prayer gathering. I call upon all our parish members to grace all the worship services this month with their presence.

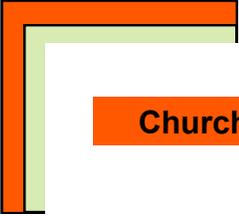
Our general body has elected new interim members for the vacant offices of our church. I congratulate the committee members and pray that God almighty bestows them courage to render their duties for the growth of our church.

I wish all my dear parish members Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year!

May God bless you all

Yours in Christ

Shajiachen



Church News

Pilgrim

Area Carol Singing

On December 4, Sunday our area caroling will be held at the residence of Mr. & Mrs. Joseph P. Mathews in Brampton immediately after the worship service, and then we will go to our Parsonage to end this year's caroling. All members are invited.

Carol service

Our Church Christmas Carol service will be held at 6.30 pm on Saturday, December 17. Please bring your friends and relatives. Our Entertainment committee requests each family to pay \$ 25.00 for the dinner. All are welcome.

Christmas day & Family Sunday

On Christmas Day Service, we will also be observing Family Sunday. The service will be in Malayalam.

Financial Year end

Our church financial year is ending in December 31. Those who haven't paid the membership and other dues, please do so before December 31, 2011.

Praise and worship & Watch night service

On December 31 / January 1 our Watch night service will start with a 'Praise and Worship' at 10.30 PM followed by the New Year service. The service will be in English.

Please note there will be ***No day time worship service*** on Sunday, January 1, 2012.

Association Agreement

Association Agreement between CSI Church, Toronto/ Madhya Kerala Diocese and Anglican Diocese of Toronto was presented and discussed at the Information meeting after the worship service on November 20, 2011. For more information please contact our Achen.

There will be another meeting on December 11 for those who could not attend the November 20 meeting.

**THE VICAR AND PRESIDENT REV. SHAJI M. JOHNSON AND
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS WISH YOU ALL
A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A BLESSED NEW YEAR**



December 4 Bible Sunday	The Word of God: The Bread of Life		
	Old Testament	Isaiah 55: 1– 13	English Service
	Psalm	119: 105– 112	Read by
	Epistle	Romans 15: 1– 6	Mr. Christopher Gajraj & family
	Gospel	John 6: 35– 51	
December 11 Third Sunday in Advent	Hope of Salvation		
	Old Testament	Zephaniah 3: 14– 20	Malayalam Service
	Psalm	43	Read by
	Epistle	1 Peter 3: 8– 16	Mr. & Mrs. Santhosh Zac - Koshy
	Gospel	Mark 13: 23– 27	
December 18 Fourth Sunday in Advent	Rejoice, the Lord is Near		
	Old Testament	Zechariah 2: 10– 13	English Service
	Psalm	50: 1– 15	Read by
	Epistle	Philippians 4: 4– 9	Mr. Siby Jacob & family
	Gospel	Luke 1: 46– 56	
December 25 Christmas and Family Sunday	God with Us		
	Old Testament	Isaiah 11: 1– 9	Malayalam Service
	Psalm	85: 8– 13	Read by
	Epistle	Colossians 1: 13– 20	Mr. T. Mathew Chacko & family
	Gospel	Matthew 1: 18– 25	
December 31/ January 1 Year Ending Worship/ New year	Lord to Whom shall We go?		
	Old Testament	Genesis 17: 1– 8	English Service
	Psalm	20	Read by
	Epistle	II Thessalonians 1: 3– 12	Mr. & Mrs. Jophy Jacob Philip
	Gospel	John 6: 66– 69	

Celebrations

BIRTHDAYS

2	Rachel (Naviya) George	12	Bilu Oommen
2	Sanju Cherian	20	Elizabeth Shirley Abraham
4	Sangeeth Shaji	21	Nisha Mathai
5	Maria Gajraj	23	Mathew Jacob
6	Anaya Sara Cherian	24	Rhea Grace Varguise
7	Daniel Thomas	26	Susan Thomas
10	Sunil Varghese Cherian	27	Joel Sanjay
11	Mathew Chandy	28	Daniel Koshy
12	Joana Grace Varguise	29	Rennie Philip Joseph
12	Navin Abraham	31	P. Matthew Verghis



ANNIVERSARIES

09	Roy Abraham & Rachel Abraham
09	Mathew Jacob & Elizabeth
17	Abhilash Raj & Smitha
18	Reji Johnson & Milly
29	Samuel Anselm Samuel & Shini

Inspirational

A True Story

Two Babies In A Manger

Author Unknown

In 1994, two Americans answered an invitation from the Russian Department of Education to teach in Russia. They were invited to teach at many places including a large orphanage. About 100 boys and girls who had been abandoned, abused, and left in the care of a government- run program were in the orphanage.

The two Americans relate the following story in their own words: It was nearing the holiday season, 1994, time for our orphans to hear, for the first time, the traditional story of Christmas. We told them about Mary and Joseph arriving in Bethlehem.

(Continued on page 11)



Sunday School Sunday

Raimole Joseph

You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. (Deuteronomy 6:7 ESV)

November 6th was celebrated as World Sunday School day this year. Our Sunday School, being a part of this International fraternity, celebrated this day in its true spirit.



Teachers and students of our Sunday School participated actively in the Sunday worship service. The theme of the day was Nurturing In Faith. Mrs. Annie Koshy delivered the message based on the Gospel reading of the day John 6:1-14. The message conveyed the omniscience of Lord Jesus, still working in the lives of each one of us. Story telling time was a blessed time for the children as it opened their eyes to the parable of the sower and the seed in a very interactive way. The students reiterated how they should nourish their spiritual life by obeying parents and elders, reading Bible everyday and praying.

A special song was presented by our Kids attired all in radiant black and white.

Aachen along with a diligent and dedicated team of teachers worked behind the scene to make this day a success.

A Christmas Puzzle

Find the hidden words:

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

- | | | | |
|--------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Angels | Gabriel | Joseph | Promise |
| Augustus | Gifts | Manger | Savior |
| Baby | Glory | Mary | Shepherds |
| Bethlehem | Gold | Myrrh | Star |
| Census | Herod | Nativity | Tax |
| Christmas | Immanuel | Noel | Virgin |
| Elizabeth | Inn | Peace | Wisemen |
| Frankincense | Jesus | Praise | |



Kerala Christian Ecumenical Fellowship Christmas Carol

Mona Anna Abraham

The performance of the 24-member strong CSI church Toronto choir, at the Kerala Christian Ecumenical Fellowship Christmas Carol Night on November 19, 2011 at St. Francis Xavier Secondary School, Mississauga, left one wondering at God's goodness and faithfulness to this group. Under the finesse of Mr. Daniel Thomas, the choir sang two beautiful songs proclaiming the birth of Jesus Christ. "Shepherds Rejoice" was sung a cappella and "Jathanayi Bethalahemil" was accompanied by Chacko Jacob on the guitar. It was also a blessing to have our Achen join the basses. Added to this superb performance were the bright uniform outfits that created a riot of Christmas colours against the black backdrop of the stage. Seeing church members amidst the audience was a real encouragement. We had the privilege of sharing the stage with 11 other church choirs. We also took part in the carol service of St. Gregorios Indian Orthodox Church, Mississauga on November 26, 2011. We are so humbled and grateful to have such opportunities to celebrate our Messiah's birth.



WORD OF GOD

Nibu Varguise

“For, "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever." And this is the word that was preached to you.” I Peter 1:24, 25

Just like all my contemporaries, I was driven by ‘why, what and how’ questions. I questioned the authenticity of the Word of God. But my quest was not one of unfaith, but a faithful one. I prayed as the Psalmist prayed in Psalm 119:18 and the truth was revealed to me.

I wanted to know the profound effect of the Word of God on Man. When I was working in Kuwait (an officially Islamic country), which had recently started being unofficially tolerant towards Christians, I spent most of my free time reading the Word of God. The Bible would be left open on my table while attending to my clients (mostly Muslims). But no one had objected to it being there. In fact some parents, who accompanied their children, felt more confident in my treatment. Now these incidents set me thinking, ‘what is it in the Word of God which is powerful enough to transcend time and hold sway over the populace?’

My search led me to the answer which could be summarised in the words of Jim Downing, a Bible scholar and teacher; *“The Bible contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of Salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you and comfort to cheer you.”*

In the Old Testament itself, the words, ‘God spoke’, the ‘Word of the Lord’, the ‘Lord commanded’ appears nearly 2405 times. Prophet Isaiah’s mouth was made pure with a live coal from the altar. Then he was commanded to speak the word of God. I then understood the words in 2 Timothy 3:16, 17. God gave His Word to save us. God used His word to create the universe and He uses the Word to control the Universe (Psalm 33:6; 107:20; 119:89; 147:15-18). But the most important fact here is that the Scriptures are all inspired by God.

My next question was about John1:14, where John says, ‘the word became flesh’. Some theologians believe that Christ appears in several places in the Old Testament, thus proving who He is. He had come to do God’s bidding in all those occasions. Now why should the Son of God come down to earth as human, and be tested by the desires of the flesh? Hebrew 1:1, 2 says *‘In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe.’* This cleared my doubts- **Jesus Christ is the perfect incarnation of our Father in heaven.** Jesus tells Philip, ‘whoever has seen me has seen the Father...’ John 14:9. When we follow Jesus, His teachings and His commandments, we follow the Word of God. Jeremiah 29:11 comforts us: ‘For I know the plans I have for you’, declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you’.



When we accept Jesus as our saviour, we are given the Holy Spirit who leads us in our walk with our Father in Heaven. Just like prophet Elijah who heard the voice of the Lord as a small still whisper, Our Lord will be whispering to us in various ways. It may be a *Rhema*, when we read the word of God, or maybe exhortations through our brethren in Christ, or maybe sermons/ teachings through our Achen . All we need to do is to be attentive to the voice of the Lord. We need to tune our hearts through prayer and fasting to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Samuel was called three times by the Lord, but he did not understand that it is the Lord who had called him. Samuel had to be enlightened by Eli to listen to the voice of the Lord, but our Saviour Jesus has already enlightened us, we just have to listen.

It is Christmas every time you let God love others through you..... Yes, it is Christmas every time you smile at your brother and offer him your hand

Mother Theresa

(Two Babies.....Continued from page 6)

Finding no room in the inn, the couple went to a stable, where the Baby Jesus was born and placed in a manger. Throughout the story, the children and orphanage staff sat in amazement as they listened. Some sat on the edges of their stools, trying to grasp every word.

Completing the story, we gave the children three small pieces of cardboard to make a crude manger. Each child was given a small paper square, cut from yellow napkins I had brought with me. No colored paper was available in the city.

Following instructions, the children tore the paper and carefully laid strips in the manger for straw. Small squares of flannel, cut from a worn-out nightgown an American lady was throwing away as she left Russia, were used for the baby's blanket. A doll-like baby was cut from tan felt we had brought from the United States.

The orphans were busy assembling their manger as I walked among them to see if they needed any help. All went well until I got to one table where little Misha sat. He looked to be about 6 years old and had finished his project.

As I looked at the little boy's manger, I was startled to see not one, but two babies in the manger.

Quickly, I called for the translator to ask the lad why there were two babies in the manger.

Crossing his arms in front of him and looking at this completed manger scene, the child began to repeat the story very seriously.

For such a young boy, who had only heard the Christmas story once, he related the happenings accurately until he came to the part where Mary put the Baby Jesus in the manger.

Then Misha started to ad-lib. He made up his own ending to the story as he said, "And when Maria laid the baby in the manger, Jesus looked at me and asked me if I had a place to stay. I told him I have no mamma and I have no papa, so I don't have any place to stay. Then Jesus told me I could

(Continued on page 12)

The Interim Executive Committee Members of the CSI Church, Toronto

President	Rev. Shaji M. Johnson	Men's Fellowship Director	Mr. Zac Santhosh Koshy
Vice-President	Mr. Abraham P. George	Women's Fellowship Director	Mrs. Susan Joseph
Secretary	Mr. Christy Abraham	Youth Fellowship Director	Mr. T. Mathew Chacko
Joint Secretary	Mr. Thomas Mathai	Sunday School Director	Mrs. Raimole Joseph
Treasurer	Mr. Joseph P. Mathews	Choir Director	Mrs. Elizabeth Mathai
Joint Treasurer	Mr. Sanju Cherian	Entertainment Director	Mr. Joy Chemmanoor
Wardens	Mr. Daniel Thomas Mr. Prashanth T. Koshy	Trustees	Mr. Benjamin Chacko Mr. Sajan Itty

(Continued from page 11)

stay with Him. But I told Him I couldn't, because I didn't have a gift to give Him like everybody else did. But I wanted to stay with Jesus so much, so I thought about what I had that maybe I could use for a gift. I thought maybe if I kept Him warm, that would be a good gift. So I asked Jesus, "If I keep you warm, will that be a good enough gift?" And Jesus told me, "If you keep me warm, that will be the best gift anybody ever gave me." "So I got into the manger, and then Jesus looked at me and He told me I could stay with Him---for always."

As little Misha finished his story, his eyes brimmed full of tears that splashed down his little cheeks. Putting his hand over his face, his head dropped to the table and his shoulders shook as he sobbed and sobbed. The little orphan had found someone who would never abandon nor abuse him, someone who would stay with him--FOR ALWAYS.

"It's not what you have in your life, but WHO you have in your life that counts". JESUS wants you to stay in HIS LIFE always and HE wants to abide in you always. Do you have room in your heart for Jesus to abide in you? Or is it clustered with your busy life? Think about it. Make right decisions. Put Jesus priority in everything.

