



The Official Monthly Newsletter of CSI Church, Toronto

Pilgrim

Volume 15 Issue 10

October 2015



Happy Thanksgiving...

2015 Motto

'Fear God, and keep his commandments; for that is the whole duty of everyone.'

'வெள்ளதை தயைப்பட்டு அவர்கள் கல்லக்கலை புமாளிசூகொஸ்கி;

அரதாக்கார ஸகல மன்ஷ்யர்க்கங் வேள்ளனது'

Ecclesiastes 12:13

Youth Sunday - October 4

Thanksgiving & Harvest Festival - October 18



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Editorial

Lead Kindly Light

We run routine diagnostic tests of our vehicles, gadgets, health, and everything connected with us. We do so in order to make sure that everything is working as desired, and that it wouldn't pose an imminent breakdown. When we take so much care about it, how much more should we be really concerned about our hearts, the Operating Systems?

Heart is considered to be the seat of emotions and the best vault to keep every secret. The desire to keep something as secret rarely escapes the firewall, unless open to Trojans and backdoors. That said, heart can sometimes become a hindrance to our pilgrimage towards the blessed Jerusalem. When the mundane reality can't ascertain, discern, learn and guide the hearts of people, the absolute omniscient reality can fathom and decipher the intricacies of our hearts. So the psalmist makes a humble prayer in Psalm 139: 23-24

Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

As our hearts store tons of data – a record of what we've done, our desires and goals, our thoughts and secrets, we may not be in a position to identify the flaws and run the solution. People may be good enough to reveal just a nano-ounce of the petabytes of data. Trying or testing someone can really disclose the innermost thought, the anxiety and the real self. We need to undergo this test to find out if there's some hurtful way that prevents us from the eternal bliss. Trials also expose the strengths and worth of a person, and help people to be better-refined and purified products. As we strive to attain our goal of being in the light, let us pray God to fill us with His light that annihilates all darkness.

Request diagnostics →meet the reality →get refined →have a blessed journey!

Samuel Anselm Samuel

Editor

Achen's Message



Dearly beloved in Christ,

Hope all of you are preparing to greet the cold and the winter, which is inevitable in our lives in Canada! May the good Lord preserve us from all dangers and sickness.

As we know, our Church will be observing the Harvest Festival on the third Sunday in October. Harvest Festival is a time in the life of the Church, when we offer our best towards our faith journey as a Church. The custom of Harvest Festival is a legacy that we continue from the Old Testament period. For the people of Israel, it was then a time of remembrance of the ways in which they were led by the Almighty, as it is now. God is a God who intervenes in history, then and now. So it is important to have a closer walk with God with a grateful heart in our lives. It also reminded them of the passing, transitory nature of human life. So this will be a time for us to show our gratitude to the Almighty and also a time to submit the best we can for His glory and extension of the kingdom of God. We are expected to be responsible stewards of the blessings that we receive from God. I strongly recommend that your giving to Church should be directly proportional to your style of living. Remember, the presentation of your self reveals the blessings that you enjoy. Think for a while!

The young people of our Church are the future Church. And I am deeply indebted to God that our church is blessed by enormous talents of our youth group. Young age is perfect for molding and I would like to see each of our youth being molded according to our Saviour's wishes. May the Almighty bless them for the same.

We are looking forward to celebrating our Saviour's birth in different ways with several plans. Last year we could share our joy of Christmas with the Children in Costa Rica by sending shoe boxes with gifts through Operation Christmas Child of the Samaritan's Purse. We could give 42 boxes towards this cause. This year also we plan to give boxes to the Samaritan's Purse. The Mission's Committee is gearing up for this cause, and I request participation from every family. Details will be given.

Mission's Sunday was observed meaningfully. Thanks to everyone who actively participated in the lay ministry and I thank the youth for taking pain to practice and present a song during the observation of the Mission Sunday. Thanks to the Missions Co-ordinator, Mr. John Mathew for co-ordinating the Sunday.

We also observed the Choir Sunday significantly. Thanks to everyone who actively participated in the lay ministry and the presentation of the song. Thanks to the Choir Director, Mr. Daniel Thomas for co-ordinating the Sunday.

The Bible Study on The Book of Revelation is happening every Friday at the Parsonage. Though there are only a few participants, it is good to see the eagerness and enthusiasm for the Word. All men and women who are interested in the studies are still welcome.

Trusting in Almighty and remaining faithful and grateful, we will continue our walk of faith as a congregation, which will enable us to serve and witness our Lord and Master. May the Almighty be with us and keep us safe and sound.

Yours in His service,

Siby Achen.

CSI Formation Day

Rev. Varkey Thomas

The Church of South India union ceremony happened at St George's Cathedral in Madras on September 27, 1947, a month after India achieved her independence. It was formed from the union of the South India United Church (itself a union of churches from the Congregational Presbyterian and Reformed traditions); the southern provinces of the Anglican Church of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon; and the Methodist Church of South India. The presiding bishop of the inaugural function was C. K. Jacob of the Anglican Diocese of Travancore and Cochin.

When the Church of South India was inaugurated, there were fourteen dioceses. Today the church has twenty-four dioceses and more than five million members. There are eight dioceses in Tamil Nadu, six in Andhra Pradesh, six in Kerala, three in Karnataka, and one in Sri Lanka.

The logo of the Church of South India was designed by Prof. J. Vasanthan of Madurai. The logo of the CSI is a cross, superimposed on a stylized lotus and surrounded by the motto and the name of the church. The symbols of the lotus and the Christian cross used in the logo possess a rich cultural heritage in India, and are used to symbolize the call and mission of the CSI.

The petals of the lotus and the cross are knitted together with the symbol of the fiery-tongues of the Holy Spirit as described in the book of the Acts of the Apostles. It is an expression of the people's communion with God. The original colours, red (for life) and purple (for piety and ecclesiastical) on a white backdrop communicate the nature of the mystical union, where an inseparable companionship is established between God and humanity.

The motto and the name of the CSI is placed in a circle around the lotus and the cross. The words are taken from the prayer of Jesus Christ who prayed not only for the church but also for the whole world. This universality is portrayed by placing the words in a form of circle, a symbol which also represents the universe. It calls for the unity of both the church and all peoples of India.

The central position of the cross in the logo conveys the idea that the sacrifice made by Jesus on the cross is the foundation of the Church. The four ends of the cross painted in deep colour indicates that it is the cross that guides all Christians to join in one stream to pray and work together, united for a peaceful coexistence and communal harmony.

The Church of South India Scheme was the first practical attempt of its kind towards reunion, on the basis of the points enunciated in the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral:

The Holy Scripture of the Old and the New Testaments as containing all things necessary to salvation and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith.

The Apostles' Creed as the Baptismal Symbol and the Nicene Creed as sufficient statement of the Christian faith.

The two sacraments, ordained by Christ Himself — Baptism and the Lord's Table or Eucharist — ministered with the unfailing use of Christ's words of Institution and elements ordained by Him.

The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying need of the nations and people called of God into the union of His Church.

When the Church of South India was formed, it was not the formation of a new church. It sought rather to bring together the distinctive elements of different Christian communions on a basis of sound doctrine and episcopal order in a distinct province of the Universal Church.

During this celebration, let us pray for CSI (Church of South India), its great tradition, its vision and mission. Let us also remember the great leaders and elders who contributed to the growth of our church and CSI community as a whole.



Bible Portions

Awaken and Strengthen			
October 4 19 th Sunday after Pentecost	Old Testament Psalm Epistle Gospel	Isaiah 35: 3-10 12 Revelation 3: 1-6 Mark 13: 28-37	English Service Read by Youth Members
Differently Abled: the Challenged & Palliative Patients			
October 11 20 th Sunday after Pentecost	Old Testament Psalm Epistle Gospel	Exodus 4: 10-17 103: 1-13 Acts 3: 1-10 Matthew 17: 14-21	Malayalam Service Read by Santhosh Zac Koshy & family
Thanksgiving			
October 18 21 st Sunday after Pentecost	Old Testament Psalm Epistle Gospel	Deuteronomy 26:1-11 65 I Timothy 6:6-12 John 6:26-35	English Service Read by Alex Oommen & family
Church: Reformed & Reforming			
October 25 22 nd Sunday after Pentecost	Old Testament Psalm Epistle Gospel	Isaiah 60: 1-7 109: 21-31 Acts 2: 43-47 Matthew 13:33-35	Malayalam Service Read by Shibu Paul Pulikaparambil & family

Seniors' Sunday

Pilgrim

Seniors' Sunday 2015





Monthly fasting prayer

Our monthly fasting prayer will be held on Saturday October 3rd at 10.00 AM. All are invited.

Youth Sunday

We will be observing October 4 as Youth Sunday. Our Youth fellowship members will be taking an active part in the worship service. All are invited.

Thanksgiving and Harvest festival

Our Thanksgiving and harvest festival will be held on Sunday October 18, 2015. During this time of Thanksgiving, let us thank the Almighty God for the freedom to worship, for the beautiful church we have and the opportunity to meet together as a congregation and pray together as congregation, the blessings we have been receiving as a congregation and for the fellowship that binds us together.

As usual, after the Thanksgiving service we will be celebrating the Harvest festival. It is a time to express our thankfulness to our Lord for all our blessings He has bestowed on us during the past year, despite our many shortcomings. We should express our thanks to God by giving Him our best.

It is our practice to offer to the Almighty **our ONE DAY'S INCOME**. Each earning member in the family is expected to offer his or her one-day's income to God as a token of thanks.

Please bring in at least two suitable items for the Harvest festival. These items will be auctioned after the worship service. This is our church's main fundraising event. All our members whole-hearted participation and co-operation is requested to make this year Thanksgiving Day and Harvest festival a great blessing.

Out reach Ministry

On October 4 after the service we are arranging another Out reach Ministry program. I am requesting more participation for this ministry. In the meantime thanks for all the members who are participating in this important ministry. May the Almighty bless you all.

Cottage Prayers

Cottage Prayer for JORDAN Group will be held on Saturday October 17 at the residence of Mr & Mrs. Reji Johnson at 6.30 PM. All area members are invited

Cottage Prayer for GILEAD Group will be held on Saturday October 24 at the residence of Mr & Mrs. Shibu Paul Pulikaparambil at 6.30 PM . All area members are invited.

Area Carol singing.

The Executive committee met and decided that this year we have House to House Carol singing, only outside the Metro Toronto area. The Cottage prayer leaders will arrange Area Carol Singing for Toronto, Mississauga, Brampton area. Your Prayer group leaders will contact you and plan the Carol singing.

The Schedule is as follows. All are welcome to join the carol singing

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| November 7, Saturday | - Outside Metro Toronto area |
| November 8, Sunday | - Mississauga, Milton Area (after worship service) |
| November 14, Saturday | - SHALOM Group |
| November 15, Sunday | - JORDAN Group (after worship service) |
| December 6, Sunday | - Toronto, Etobicoke and the Parsonage. (after worship service) |

Celebrations



Pilgrim

BIRTHDAYS

01	Sajan Itty	14	Niranjan Byru
02	Joseph P. Mathews	16	Grace Ann Samuel
04	Siby Jacob	18	Omana Saramma Eapen
06	Fremita Fredrick	20	Joshua Shaji Moothedom
07	Christy Abraham	20	Meera Jacob
08	Samuel Anselm Samuel	21	Grace Elza George
09	Kenneth Kuruvilla	21	Aghil Mathews
11	Maya Jacob	24	Sarah George
12	Soni Byru	25	Sarah Oommen
13	John Cherian Mathew	25	Susan Kurian
13	Isabel Johnson	26	Shini Samuel
14	Reshma George		

ANNIVERSARIES

03	Christy & Shirley Abraham
10	Jamal Masih & Kiran Masih
24	Philip Mathai & Diani Mathai
30	Vilayil I. Kurian & Susan Kurian
30	Varghese V. John & Liji Varghese John
31	Bishan Ghosh & Sheeba Levison Ghosh

Pilgrim

Choir Sunday 2015

Choir Sunday





ROMANS 8:28

Rev. George M John

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose”

In Rom. 8: 28, St. Paul reminds the early Roman Christians not to be discouraged in the midst of cornering and isolation; while exhorting and encouraging & counseling them to retain their Christian hope and consolation as followers of Christ. Even though St. Paul's epistle to the Romans is generally called the crown of Pauline theology, it has its own practical applications to edify and enrich the pilgrimage of a believer or a follower of Christ in the midst of many trials, setbacks and hardships during his short and fragile life on this planet. Christians are termed as cross-bearers of our Lord and Saviour—Jesus Christ.

First, in God's providential plan, man is called the crown of His creation; he cannot simply avert God's intervention in one's life; it is good for a man if a person has to face joys and sorrows in one's lifespan or to go through the hills and valleys designed by God. Difficult situations and experiences enrich, mould, shape and orchestrate one's life for a better tomorrow if it is with the divine plan and intervention. Bishop Abraham Mar Thoma, one of our evangelical giants, lost his own father when he was an infant due to the swelling of the Manimala river in Kerala; this painful incident subsequently drilled and shaped him to prove the cost of discipleship and to act as a true servant of Christ. Man's destiny is under the supremacy of the Almighty. (as we sing in the second stanza of the hymn 'What a friend we have in Jesus'... Have we trials and temptation...)

Second, St. Paul reassures the Lordship of Christ in the midst of suffering or any life situation during our fragile life on this planet. Being the handiwork of God, we acknowledge His Lordship and dominion over the universe as well as our obedience and loyalty to our Creator who controls the whole universe. The whole world is under the Lordship of God; we have no power in ourselves and we are transient on this planet.

Third, we Christians, the members of a called-out (ecclesia) are subjective and submissive to His dominion and sovereignty; we cannot neglect his sovereign rule and authority. We are liable to His rule and authority; by acknowledging these divine guidelines, we cannot simply escape and avert His plan and divine intervention in history including one's personal life and mission. Let us be submissive to His dominion and sovereignty; our submission to Him also acknowledges our reconciliation with Him.

Fourth, we are fragile or weaken vessels before God and we have no dynamism in ourselves and we are to be obedient and receptive to His direction and guidance. The Bible categorically affirms that we are the handiwork of God and our lifespan on this planet is controlled by Him. We are dependent on Him and we are under His divine protection and guidance. Let us depend on imHimH Him and act wisely and prudently each movement.

Fifth, we are God's viceroys or ambassadors on this planet; we are instruments for his divine plan. We have a gigantic duty to fulfil on behalf of God. We are appointed, created and moulded to bring God's presence and to acknowledge His divine majesty during our short stay on this planet. So let us act our role with responsibility and good stewardship as His agents during our pilgrimage on this earth.

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Missions Sunday 2015



(Continued from page 10)

We have to face many ups and downs or hills and valleys during our short stay here. A follower of Christ reflects a person who follows the footprints of Christ; in a nutshell, a Christian is a cross-bearer. Let us rededicate and equip ourselves for the cause of Christ and his unending mission in the days ahead. We are in the midst of a pluralistic situation, and our cities are turning into global villages. May the Lord enable us to sense the innumerable needs of this world in the midst of many religions and ethnic diversities. May the Lord help us to sense this divine truth as cross-bearers here on this planet. A Christian has to inspire, illuminate, motivate and ignite the wider human community for the cause of Christ.



THANKSGIVING

Mary Alexander

Once a Marriage Counselor was speaking at a family convention. He noticed an older couple in the audience who seemed very happy together. He made it a point to talk to them and remarked, "you seem to be very happy together; what is the secret? The wife took him aside and said, "you don't know how hard it is to live with this man. He is a good helper around the house, but murmurs and complains all the time while helping.

Are we giving thanks to God while murmuring? As we celebrate thanksgiving, let us look at thanksgiving in the light of God's Word and His expectation of us.

Gratitude is a command of God.

In Exodus 23:14-19, God commanded the Israelites to conduct three feasts for Him each year. One of them is the FEAST OF HARVEST. He said, "The first fruits of your land you shall bring into the house of the Lord, your God." In return, God promised great blessings for them and assured them that He will drive out all the people from the land and give them the whole land. God never forgets our giving. His blessings are poured unto us. This tradition is practiced in the many churches of Kerala even today; our forefathers kept the tradition, and we are continuing in their footsteps.

In the New Testament also there are many references regarding thanksgiving. Jesus healed ten Lepers at one time; one returned to thank Him, and He asked, "where are the other nine?" In Colossians 2:6-7 we read, "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him, established in faith, abounding in THANKSGIVING."

Therefore, what is thanksgiving, and how can we abound in thanksgiving? The first two steps are important in fulfilling the third. When we become rooted and are built up in Christ and His teachings, our faith in Him will increase. As a result, our gratitude for His blessings will flow out of our beings to glorify him.

Gratitude begins with the understanding and the acceptance of God's grace.

"By grace you are saved through faith and not of yourselves; It is a gift of God." (Ephesians 2:8). God, by his grace redeemed us through Jesus Christ to be His children and partakers of His inheritance. Therefore, gratitude celebrates God's redemption. We couldn't pay the price Christ paid for our sin, die the death He died, and suffer the chastisement for our peace with God and for the salvation of our souls. This itself is sufficient for us to live with thanksgiving the rest of our lives.

Thankfulness acknowledges God's sovereignty.

The Psalmist asks himself in Psalm 116:12, "What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits?" The greatest act of worship is to be thankful to God for all His actions, plans and fulfillment of His perfect will in our lives. When we consider His will as the ultimate authority in our lives, we honor Him and express our heartfelt gratitude saying, "Your grace is sufficient for me." A thankful heart is the perfect gift for God.

Once, some children in an orphanage were asked to draw "Baby Jesus" in a cradle. One boy had drawn two babies in the cradle. When he was asked "why two babies", he answered, "I told baby Jesus I had

nothing to give Him, but only keep Him warm. So He told me to jump right in," What a heart of giving for a little orphan who had nothing to give!"

Thankfulness makes us whole and complete in the Lord.

We need to be thankful to God all through our lives. In 1 Thess. 5:18 Apostle Paul says, "In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ for you." This means in good times and bad times, we have to give thanks. The sovereign God's providence is with us even in our sufferings, and we must thank Him for who He is and what He can do. With a thankful heart, we will look beyond our pain to the faithfulness and mercy of our Lord. God will not only bring us to the victory line but also use the sufferings to sanctify us and grow us into His image.

Thankfulness is a daily need.

Think of the story of the couple I wrote at the beginning. Our complaining and murmuring will displease God, and it becomes a sin. The Israelites lost many blessings because of their complaints. Remember, when we murmur, God can hear it even if others cannot. However, when thanksgiving is practiced daily, as a way of life, and as a permanent commitment, God's glory will abound through us. So He will not only bring solutions, but also make us vessels of peace.

Attitudes which will cultivate gratitude:

Humility - Those who live in gratitude are perhaps the happiest and healthiest people. They do not judge, criticize, or complain. They appreciate and encourage others. People like to be in their company. Gratitude can turn a meal into a feast, turn a hardship into a delight, change hatred into love, and create forgiveness through love. This perhaps is why Jesus told us to pray for our enemies.

Contentment - keeps us hopeful and helps focus on blessings rather than inadequacies and failures.

Faith - We will learn to trust God in all our ways than in our own abilities. We will become "rooted and established in our faith." Nothing will make us waver or doubt.

Love - conquers all evil. "Love covers multitude of sin." It will help us see the good in others and ignore the rest. It will help us to encourage and edify the weak; be caring and compassionate to those who are grieving and suffering. Therefore, through the love of God, let us celebrate "Thanksgiving" this year with the attitude of gratitude.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

Youth Fellowship – Summer Update

Sam Chacko & Sanju Cherian

As we look back at yet another summer, the Youth Fellowship has a lot to thank the Lord Almighty. The Youth were involved in numerous activities beginning in May, thereby advancing their Mission – “To Believe in Jesus Christ, To Grow in Relationship with Him. Learn to Serve and Go share Christ to the World”. To name a few – The Youth led the Gospel convention, assisted Mr. Anson Thomas in Downtown Outreach Ministry, participated in the NA CSI Family Conference in Buffalo, was instrumental in leading and coordinating the Vacation Bible School and participated in the



Yonge Street Mission at Downtown Toronto. The Lord made the Basketball pole/net a reality, and the basketball enthusiasts now have the opportunity to play ball and have fellowship after church service on Sundays. Nine of our youth members got confirmed by our Bishop Rt. Rev. Thomas K. Oommen. We had an awesome picnic in August at the Sibbald's Point Provincial Park. The Youth Choir performed numerous special songs for occasions like the Church Anniversary, Missions Sunday and Matins Services. We finished the summer holidays with a dinner outing at the Frankie Tomattos, which was an awesome night to remember.

We were very busy in September as it marked the beginning of another academic year. But one of the highlights was the youth bible study on September 19 afternoon. This was the first time that we had a youth meeting combined with the youth from the CSI Christ Church, Toronto. This Bible study was planned for weeks in advance since the CSI Family and Youth Conference in July. The concept of regional Bible studies for all CSI Regional youth groups in North America, of which Canada is Region 5, was introduced by the NA Council. This was to facilitate more interaction among CSI churches, and to have

Combined Bible Study



study from the same readings in the Bible at the same pace. Sam Chacko was elected as the Youth representative of the Canada Region at the Family Conference, which comprises our church and the CSI Christ Church Toronto. It was decided by the NA CSI Youth Reps that we would begin the Bible study with the book of Galatians, and have bible studies on a consistent basis studying each chapter for each meeting.

Our first combined youth study started with Praise and Worship lead by youth from both churches. We sang five to six songs, which set the tone for next portion of the study, our bible session. This session was led by Jeffrey achacha (Leanne's uncle) who had guided our youth meetings in the past, and he helped us fully understand Galatians 1. We learned that Galatians was written by Paul for believers in Galatia, and how they had perverted the meaning of the gospel. So in this respect, it was very relatable to us as fellow believers in Christ Jesus. The chapter further elaborated that any change made to the gospel, essentially made it null and void. It also highlighted how we may misinterpret the gospel today. This was important for us to know because Paul had expressed how the gospel had to remain absolute, to be shared to others in the same manner. If not, we are subject to condemnation from God Himself, as Galatians 1:8 states, *"But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse!"* After this session we broke off into small group discussions to see how we, as youth, may misinterpret the gospel. We also discussed our own personal definitions of what the gospel meant to each and every one of us.

Overall, the youth study was truly a blessing enjoyed by so many in both youth groups. I can honestly say that the fruition of this youth study with our sister CSI youth group has been a dream and prayer of many

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Committee



The Executive Committee Members of the CSI Church, Toronto

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Vice-President / Rector's Warden	Mr. Abraham P. George	Women's Fellowship Director	Mrs. Susan Joseph
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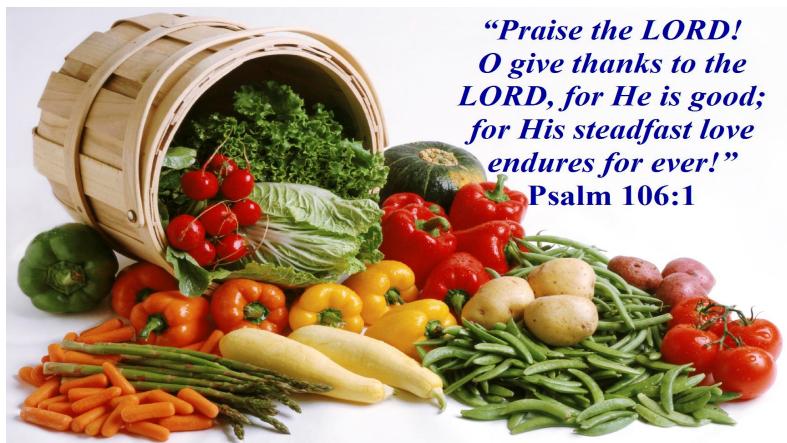
(Continued from page 15)

for a long time. Only by God's grace and prayer this became a reality with the support of the Vicars, the Executive Committees and the Youth Directors of both Churches. Moreover, only through God's will and our prayers can it continue. So please keep this endeavour in your prayers. A true testament that God works in mysterious ways!

We thank the Lord Almighty for giving us another awesome summer, for keeping all of us safe and sound and for being with those who travelled during the holidays. We request everyone's prayers as we embark on yet another academic year.

May God Bless Us All.

**As you harvest your crops,
bring the very best
of the first harvest to the
house of the LORD your God ...**



***"Praise the LORD!
O give thanks to the
LORD, for He is good;
for His steadfast love
endures for ever!"
Psalm 106:1***

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