



The Official Monthly Newsletter of CSI Church, Toronto

# Pilgrim

Volume 18 Issue 12

DECEMBER 2018



### 2018 Motto

...for it is written, 'you shall be holy, for I am holy.'

*1 Peter 1:16*

'ഞാൻ വിശുദ്ധൻ ആകയാൽ നിങ്ങളും വിശുദ്ധരായിരിക്കണം' എന്നു എഴുതിയിരിക്കുന്നുവല്ലോ.

**Carol Service - December 8, 6 pm**

**Jordan Area Carol - December 15**

**Shalom Area Carol - December 16**

**Christmas Service - December 25, 10 am**

**Watch Night Service - December 31, 10 pm**

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Achen's message....	3
Celebrations.....	4
Bible Portions.....	5
Dedication.....	6
Church News.....	7
Article.....	8
Youth.....	9
Men's Retreat.....	10
Quiz.....	11



# Pilgrim

**DECEMBER 2018**

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*Editorial .....*

*Beautiful Star of Bethlehem....*

Do you decorate your house during the Advent? Have you ever wondered why a star is always the part of the decorations? Did I hear you say, "Yea, we know. Isn't it the replica of the star of Bethlehem – the star that led the magi to the manger?" You said it! The star of Bethlehem is not an ordinary star. *"Where is the one who has been born the king of the Jews? We saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him."* (Matthew 2:2)

The star that appeared in the sky, heralding the birth of the Saviour, had disappeared. As we love to remember this unique appearance, we end up hanging a variety of stars. The warmth and the light it shed on the manger made it special. It was also a guide that attracted and guided people from afar to the real Star of Bethlehem. It is encouraging to look at this appearance not as a normal, scientific phenomenon, but as the celestial manifestation of the Shekinah glory.

As the song goes:

*Jesus is now the star divine,*

*Brighter and brighter He will shine,*

*O beautiful star of Bethlehem, shine on...*

Jesus, the bright and morning star, the one who holds the seven stars in His right hand, is by far the Star of Bethlehem, who gives hope of grace and eternal life.

Jesus chose a manger, which is quite unbecoming of a king. But the impact was awesome. "God with us" became a reality. Too many things in our hearts may deny Him space. Nevertheless, the warm, yet cool beams of the star that pierced the heart of the night two thousand years ago, can also rent our hearts and shine on us, filling us with His glory.

May this Christmas season help each one of us to receive the Star of Bethlehem. Let the light from the Star of Bethlehem light us and give us enough light to light the world.

*Merry Christmas.*

Samuel Anselm Samuel

Editor





## Achen's Message



Greetings, dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Christmas is a time of joy because it reminds us of the birth of Jesus, the Savior of the world. Earlier, it was the time to share our faith, peace and happiness with others. But many people are not happy during Christmas time. Are you aware of it? Why is it happening?

Those who only have the 'knowledge' of the Messiah are not happy. In Matthew 2:4-6, the chief priests & scribes had the knowledge of the Messiah and the place of His birth. But that did not give them happiness. King Herod was also aware of the Prince of Peace, but he received that news with a crooked mind, full of insecurities. If we know about Messiah, we can of course take part in the celebration around us, like organizing a program for Christmas, but it will not give us real joy. Are we experiencing Jesus Christ or simply living with the knowledge of the Messiah?

Those who don't go to Christ are also unhappy. The scholars came from the east to see the Messiah guided by a star sent by God to guide them. But they tried to forge their own path or used their intelligence which led to many problems. That wrong decision of going to King Herod's palace came from their worldly mind. They got respect and a royal treatment from the palace, but it killed many children. Do we go to Christ? As a star, can we follow the Bible? Can we avoid our own thinking and instead choose to follow God's wish?

Those who don't know about Messiah are not experiencing real joy. They are not the part of this spiritual happiness which you and I are living. The shepherds didn't know about the birth of the Messiah and so they were sleeping (Luke 8: 20). But angels delivered the good news to them and made them a part of this joyful moment. Around us in this world, many people are sleeping without the happiness Christmas brings. Would you be presenting the good news to these people or at least one person? This year we can celebrate Christmas differently.

Last month, we sent Christmas gifts (shoe boxes) to Africa. Of course, we joined our hands for celebrating Christmas differently by these gifts. Our Mission Director Daisy Mathai, and Grace Samuel worked behind this collection. Anna Esther Samuel, Jinu Mary Jacob, Joshua Moothedom, Jovin Mathew, Jeffin Mathews, Chris George, Joshua George, Grace George, Shini Samuel and Zac Santhosh Koshy helped. Thank you very much all of you for your support.

We had a blessed Men's Fellowship Retreat on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. Rev. Moncy Varghese, vicar, Milton Marthoma Church was the main speaker. The theme of the retreat was "United by God, committed to serve". We started with praise and worship, followed by Moncy achen's powerful message. Group discussions and all other activities spiritually strengthened everyone. My sincere thanks to Moncy achen, Men's Fellowship Director, Mr. Santhosh Cherian and all other leaders who organized the retreat and participants.

We dedicated our new board room on November 11 after the service.

Our church choir attended the carol service of KCEF. Under the leadership of the Choir Director Chris George and Choir Master Daniel Thomas, our choir sung well.

Our fifth Friday prayer fellowship 'At the feet of Jesus' was very successful. Thank you to all those who participated in this worship.

Under the leadership of Gilead prayer group, we started our area carolling at London at George Mathew's house on 24<sup>th</sup> November afternoon. Gilead group's 2<sup>nd</sup> carolling was held at Dr. Nibu Varguise's house at Mississauga.

Please send your family photos to the church email ID for the new directory.

Our carol service will be held at 6 pm on December 8, 2018. Rev Stephen Blackmore, Area Dean of the Anglican Diocese, will be the chief guest.

We have Christmas worship with Holy communion service at 10 am on December 25, 2018.

*(Continued on page 4)*





**BIRTHDAYS**

01	Rebecca Thomas	12	Joshy Ani Mathew
01	Sajin Mathew Alexander	12	Navin Abraham
01	Ruby Mariam Mathew	16	Tojan Joseph Abraham
02	Sanju Cherian	20	Elizabeth Shirley Abraham
04	Sheeba Levison Ghosh	21	George Philip
04	Rebecca Kuruvilla	24	Rhea Grace Varguise
05	Maria Gajraj	28	Daniel Koshy
06	Anaya Sara Cherian	29	Rennie Philip Joseph
07	Daniel Thomas	30	Sandhra Elizabeth Eapen
08	Shalini Mary G. Enoch	31	P. Matthew Verghis
11	Vinu Jacob	31	Liz Varughese
12	Joana Grace Varguise		

**ANNIVERSARIES**

14	Jiby Jacob & Jain Daniel
17	Abhilash Raj & Smitha Titus
18	Reji Johnston & Milly Johnston
29	Samuel Anselm Samuel & Shini Samuel
29	Balaji I. Kuruvilla & Rebecca Thomas
30	Alex Oommen & Susan Alex

*(Continued from page 3)*

Year ending prayer will start at 10 pm and Common Worship will start at 11.30 pm.

An Extra ordinary general body meeting to approve the revised constitution of CSI church, Toronto, will be held on December 2, 2018 immediately after the service.

May God bless you abundantly.

Happy Christmas and a prosperous new year.

Rev Anish M. George Padickamannil



Celebrating the Good news			
<b>December 02</b>  1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday in Advent	Old Testament	Exodus 2:1-10	<b>English Service</b>
	Psalm	117 & 118 :1-10	Read by
	Epistle	Acts 9:10-18	Jacob John & Family
	Gospel	Luke 1:39-56	
Word of God: Inspired to inspire			
<b>December 09</b> <b>Bible Sunday</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Advent	Old Testament	1 Kings 19:1-21	<b>Malayalam Service</b>
	Psalm	119:33-40	Read by
	Epistle	Revelations 10:1-11	Jophy Philip & Family
	Gospel	John 1:1-13	
Deliverance from the bondage of sin			
<b>December 16</b>  3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Advent	Old Testament	Exodus 14:1-14	<b>English Service</b>
	Psalm	37:1-12	Read by
	Epistle	Romans 8:1-11	Shibu Paul & Family
	Gospel	John 8:31-38	
Maranatha - O Lord come			
<b>December 23</b>  4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday in Advent	Old Testament	Deuteronomy:18:15-22	<b>Malayalam Service</b>
	Psalm	28	Read by
	Epistle	1Corinthians 16:13-24	Varghese V. John & Family
	Gospel	John 14:1-11	
Christmas			
<b>December 25</b> <b>Christmas</b> <b>Family Day</b>	Old Testament	Isaiah 9:1-7	<b>English Service</b>
	Psalm	98	Read by
	Epistle	Galatians 4:1-7	Church Committee
	Gospel	Luke 2:1-14	



# Board Room Dedication



	<b>Family as a healing space</b>		
<b>December 30</b>  1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday after Christmas	Old Testament	Genesis 33:1-11	English Matins Service
	Psalm	91	Read by
	Epistle	Ephesians 6:1-9	Youth Fellowship
	Gospel	Luke 15:11-24	
	<b>God's call for committed partnership</b>		
<b>December 31 &amp;                  January 01</b>  <b>Watch Night                  Service</b>	Old Testament	Isaiah 1:1-20	Malayalam Service
	Psalm	89:1-18	Read by
	Epistle	Acts 16:19-34	Church Committee
	Gospel	Luke 19:1-10	





### Intercessory Prayer Cell Fellowship

The Intercessory Prayer Cell Fellowship will be held in the Sanctuary every Wednesday from 10:00 am till 12:00 noon. Please come and join us for the fellowship.

### Christmas Service of Lessons and Carols - December 08, 2018



Our Christmas Service of Lessons and Carols, "CHILD OF THE PROMISE", will be at 6:00 pm on December 08. Doors open at 5:30 pm. It's a traditional service of Choral music, Scripture readings and Congregational hymns with the Church Choir, Youth Choir and Sunday School. The service includes Advent prophecies of the coming of the Messiah, the Annunciation of the birth of Jesus to Blessed Mary, the Nativity of Our Lord, and the Journey of the Magi, concluding with the Prologue from Philipians "Imitating Christ's Humility"

Please invite your friends and relatives to come and be part of this special celebration of our Saviour's birth.

Please plan to arrive early.

### Church Executive Committee Meeting - December 09, 2018

A meeting of the Church Executive Committee will be held at the board room at 1:00 pm on December 09, 2018. All committee members are requested to attend.

### Area Caroling, Jordan - December 15, 2018

Jordan area caroling will be held from 11:30 am to 5:00 pm on Saturday, December 15, 2018 at the church hall. Please note that all church members are invited for this Christmas gathering. Please inform Elizabeth Mathai (Daisy) if you are attending to facilitate the planning.

### Area Caroling, Shalom - December 16, 2018

Shalom area caroling will be held on Sunday, December 16, 2018 immediately after the divine service at the church hall. Please note that all church members are invited for this Christmas gathering. Please inform Abraham P George (Shabu) if you are attending to facilitate the planning.

### Christmas Day Service - December 25, 2018 (Family Sunday)

We will be having Holy Communion Service at 10:00 am on Christmas Day. We will be observing the day as "Family Sunday"

### Watch Night Service - December 31, 2018

Our watchnight service will start at 10:00 pm on December 31, 2018 with prayer and testimonies followed by covenant service and Holy Eucharist. Please come and be blessed.

### Obituary

Mrs. Sosamma Levison, mother of Shaji L. Moothedom and Sheeba L. Ghosh, went to be with the Lord at the age of 80, at 2:00 am (IST) on Tuesday, November 20, 2018. She passed away peacefully at Pushpagiri hospital, Thiruvalla. Funeral Service was held at St. Pauls CSI Church, Chenganacherry.

Please uphold the bereaved family members in your prayers.

### Upcoming Events

Celebration of New Ministry Service      January 06, 2019 at 4:00 pm

Sunday School Examination January 20, 2019



## SIMEON'S ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS

Mary Alexander

In Luke 2: 25-35, we read about a man, named Simeon who was “just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel. The Holy Spirit was upon him, and it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. (2: 25-26).

Simeon was waiting expectantly to witness God’s salvation for himself and Israel.

God sends His Holy Spirit to those who wait eagerly. Simeon, certainly was eager to see the fulfilment of God’s promise. It wasn’t a coincidence that Simeon was led to the temple by the Holy Spirit at the right time to witness the miraculous, and to be told that the Baby he held in his arms was none other than the Messiah he was waiting to see. So, he lifted the Child up, held Him in his arms and blessed God saying, “Now You are letting Your servant depart in peace.” Vs. 29. Simeon was waiting for:

1. The consolation of Israel, the comfort the Messiah would bring to them through God’s salvation
2. The revelation of the Holy Spirit
3. The leading of the Holy Spirit.

Are we just lookers or seekers as well who eagerly wait to witness the miracle of God?

Waiting requires:

- Faith in accepting the will of God
- Contentment and obedience to follow God’s directions
- Believing the impossible with patience
- Closely abiding in God to witness the miracle and receive His promise.

Because of Simeon’s trust and obedience to God and waiting for God’s actions instead of his own, he was in the right place, at the right time when Baby Jesus was brought to the temple. Thus, he witnessed the fulfillment of God’s revelation. He saw the Messiah who will bring salvation to himself, Israel and the rest of the world.

Simeon did not keep the experience to himself, but eagerly shared the experience with others and revealed God’s miracle. He lifted Baby Jesus, (the Messiah to come), in his arms and blessed God in thankfulness. He shared the prophecy from God with the parents of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, and they marveled at what was spoken. (Vs.30-32.) He blessed the parents and the baby.

How do we apply Simeon’s story in our lives? Are we expecting to see/experience God’s salvation as Simeon did? Do we listen to the Holy Spirit when He speaks to our hearts and follow His directions with no questioning?

Salvation of our souls is important to God. The Bible tells us that Simeon was a just and devout man, and yet, he needed God’s salvation before his death. We need the same before we die. It is God’s salvation through Christ that determines our destiny and where we will spend eternity. We all can be just and devout in our good behavior, but it is when we confess our sins to God and receive Christ in our hearts and life, that we experience His salvation and the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit within us. (Romans 10:9-10).

Simeon physically saw Jesus, the Redeemer to become. We will see Jesus with our inner spiritual eyes and experience His salvation when we surrender our lives to Him. Once I asked a 4year old, “Why did Jesus die for us”? She answered, “So He can take us all back to heaven.”

When we receive Jesus as our Savior, we will be ready to lift Him high to the world. Simeon lifted Jesus high not just in his hands, but in his heart and life. What is just in the hands and minds will perish, but who is in the heart is eternal. We will be able to lift Him high through our faith, our righteous behavior, dependence on the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit, love and forgiveness for others, patience, perseverance, and the peace of God that passes all understanding. Simeon said, “Lord now You are let-

*(Continued on page 9)*



## Youth Church Retreat

*Rini Miriam Jacob*

While we all are in the midst of our hardship at school or university, the youth of North American Region 6 came together to gain knowledge and look towards our hope, our Christ. The retreat, to start with, consisted of many cheerful youths from Detroit, to be more precise 14 of them, and from both the churches in Toronto (21 from each church). The tiredness and travel didn't deter the youth from being very enthusiastic and attentive, and they were actively conversing on the theme of the retreat.

Coming to the theme, it was very relevant to today's day and age, the theme being Spirit led... Christ centered...Gospel shaped...Community & Worship. All these topics are quite the concerns of most of the youth these days, especially with all the dilemma in the community and the world at large. Coming back to the event itself, it began with praise and worship, the singing set the tone for everyone. Personally, it was uplifting and awakening for me to realize that there is optimism, faith and togetherness in the voices of the youth. The vocalists (everyone included) were truly dedicated and sang with their hearts open. Then came the time to reflect on the video "Taking A Liturgical Audit of Your Life" we viewed after the singing session. This made us reflect in our own small groups and we were able to make close relationship with one another, whether it be on our habits or what we might do for bettering our lifestyle. Later, we had a collective discussion on the questions provided. Sam Chacko explained the reasoning and connected our thoughts in a manner that reached everyone collectively. The bonding didn't stop there. We also had game sessions conducted by Raina James and other youths. This created friendship and healthy competition among us. Games also enabled youths to go out of their comfort zones and have friendly conversation. To top it all, we had another conversational panel hosted by Hans Thomas and Susan Koshy. They were asked questions anonymously, on topics that are confusing for the youths today. Topics such as gender, getting into overt drinking habits and bullying were discussed. Both the hosts openly expressed their views on the topics; and to some extent, it created discussions within small groups. All this happened in C.S.I Christ Church and we departed to C.S.I Church Toronto by about 4.30 pm. For the evening session, we came to our church and had more time to chat and gain relationships, and we exchanged phone numbers to keep in touch with the Detroit group. To further expand our friendship, Jefin Mathew and other youth came together for another game session. After dinner, we went back to our homes. The next morning, at church, the youth (including all church) took active participation in the church service, and our Youth Director, Hans Thomas, gave the sermon as well. I would really like to thank Sam Chacko for coordinating this and all the other youths for putting their heart and soul for making this a meaningful retreat.

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*(Continued from page 8)*

ting Your servant depart in peace. (vs. 29). Simeon did not see or experience the Risen Christ, but he had foreseen the One to become the Risen Savior of humanity.

May the peace of God, His power, His presence and the glory of the Eternal Son, who took all our chastisement upon Himself to grant us peace with God, be glorified during this years' Christmas celebration and always.



MEN'S FELLOWSHIP RETREAT

Abraham K. Varghese

On the morning of November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2018, led by Men's Fellowship Director, Santhosh Cherian, a group of smart, lively and enthusiastic men donned in blue T-Shirts gathered together for an amazing one-day retreat.

The men's fellowship retreat started with the prayer led by Rev. Anish M. George. This was followed by an amazing praise and worship session led by Sanju Cherian and team. After brief introduction by Santhosh Cherian, Rev. Moncy Varghese, the vicar of St. Matthew's Marthoma Church, Milton started the main retreat session. He gave a very lively talk, which was casual, very thought provoking, encouraging and entertaining. Rev. Moncy, deliberated on the theme 'United by God – Committed to serve' through the story of Zacchaeus. Rev. Moncy, took us through the story from a very different angle. He shared many entertaining events from his own life. He highlighted that we must all allow Jesus to come into our 'Private Spaces' and should have only one personality. We should be willing to come down from our high places of pride and be fully united to God and be committed to serve Him in all circumstances. The first session ended for lunch break. The lunch was delicious! It was coordinated by Jacob P. John.

The second session was allotted for group discussions. Each group led by Abraham P. George and Thomas Mathai shared their answers on specific questions raised by Rev. Moncy. The retreat concluded after having a small game time, vote of thanks and tea with great snacks.

The men's fellowship retreat was a great all-round experience for soul, body and mind. A special thanks to all who had coordinated and participated to make this retreat a blessed experience.





**Women's Fellowship Bible Quiz**

*Instructions:*

1. *May follow NIV or NRSV as reference*
2. *Answer the question with related bible verse (eg ,Ans : xxxxxx chapter 1 versus 2)*
3. *Send the answers to [elzygeorge@gmail.com](mailto:elzygeorge@gmail.com).*

*Answers should reach on or before 20 December 2018*

**Questions - Quiz # 9 Matthew 23, 24, 25**

**Answer true or false and give the reference:**

1. Jesus advised the crowds and the disciples to obey the teachers of the law and the Pharisees and also to practice what they preach. T/F
2. According to the Pharisees, swearing by the temple or the altar was considered sinful and equal to swearing by God's throne.T/F
3. The second coming of Jesus will be witnessed by all nations.T/F
4. The parable of the 10 virgins teaches us of the importance of persevering in faith and spiritual preparedness, because of Christ's return at an unexpected time and that there will be no second chance for the unprepared. T/F
5. Towards the end of age, many people will turn away from faith and will betray and hate each other. T/F

**Answer in one word or sentence with reference:**

1. Jesus said "You will not see me again". To whom did Jesus speak these words and when will they see him again?
2. Which prophet spoke of "the abomination that causes desolation"? To which event in the past did Jesus compare the second coming of Jesus?
3. In which parable did Jesus speak of the coming judgement? To whom did he speak and from which place?
4. Jesus speaks of a mission that will be accomplished prior to the end that is to come. What is that mission or task?
5. Do we have to give an account of how we have used our time, resources and opportunities? Which parable of Jesus teaches us this truth ?

**Winners of Quiz #8 on the Gospel of Matthew 19 - 22 November 2018**

- First - Jeena Joseph, Susamma Jacob  
 Second - Susan Kurian, Ponnamma Varghese  
 Third - Shona Sam

**Answers for Bible Quiz #8- Gospel of Matthew 19 - 22**

**Answers - true or false with reference:**

1. False (It was the disciples who asked, "who then can be saved") Matthew 19:25
2. True Matthew 20:14-15

*(Continued on page 12)*





**The Executive Committee Members of the CSI Church, Toronto**

President	Rev. Anish M. George		
Vice-President / Rector's Warden	Mr. Zac Santhosh Koshy	Women's Fellowship Director	Mrs. Selvakumari Daniel
Secretary / People's Warden	Mr. Daniel Thomas	Men's Fellowship Director	Mr. Santhosh Cherian
Joint Secretary / Trustee	Mr. Abraham K. Varghese	Sunday School Director	Mr. Samuel Anselm Samuel
Treasurer	Mr. Ajoy Lional	Youth Fellowship Director	Mr. Hans Thomas Varghese
Joint Treasurer / Trustee	Mrs. Elizabeth Verghis	Mission Director	Mrs. Elizabeth Mathai
Choir Director	Mr. Chris George	Social & Entertainment Director	Mr. Abhilash Raj

*(Continued from page 11)*

3. False (Jesus asked this question to the two blind men, who were sitting by the roadside) Matthew 20: 30-32
4. False (It was only the Sadducees who did not believe in resurrection) Matthew 22:23
5. False (Jesus said this to the Herodians and the disciples of the Pharisees, who tried to trap Jesus in his words") Matthew 22:15-17

**Answers - one word or sentence with reference.**

1. i) The rich young man came to ask Jesus what good thing he should do to get eternal life (Matthew 19:16). ii) Jesus exposed the young man's weakest area, his love of wealth, which was a stumbling block. He rejected Jesus' invitation to follow Jesus, and walked away in unbelief. (Matthew 19:17-22)
2. Apart from Moses, the people also considered John the Baptist and Jesus as prophets. (Matthew 21:10-11; 21:26 ; 21:46)
3. i) The man was speechless when the king asked him, "Friend how did you get in here without wedding clothes?" (Matthew 22:11-12). This is mentioned in "The parable of the Wedding Banquet". (Matthew 22:1-14)
4. In Chapters 19-22, Jesus is addressed as Son of David by i) The two blind men. ii) During Jesus' triumphal entry to Jerusalem, the crowds shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David." iii) The children in the temple area shouted "Hosanna to the Son of David". iv) Finally, when Jesus asked the Pharisees, "Whose son was Christ?", they replied, "The Son of David." (Matthew 20:30-31; 21:9; 21:15; 22:42)
5. Jesus predicts the details of his death and resurrection to the twelve disciples, while going up to Jerusalem. (Matthew 20:17-19)

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