



The Official Monthly Newsletter of CSI Church, Toronto

Pilgrim

Volume 23 Issue 3

MARCH 2023



2023 Motto

“A new command I give you: Love one another as I have loved you”

നിങ്ങൾ തമ്മിൽ തമ്മിൽ സ്നേഹിക്കണം എന്നു പുതിയൊരു കല്പന ഞാൻ നിങ്ങൾക്ക് തരുന്നു

John 13:34

**Women’s Sunday
March 5, 2023**

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Pilgrim

MARCH 2023

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Editorial

The Simple Things

A common struggle we come across in Christian life is relating Biblical truths and instructions to practical situations in our daily life. This is particularly true during the time of Lent when we try to meaningfully participate in our Lord's wilderness experience and prepare to witness His Passion.

It can seem that God speaks to us in ways we cannot comprehend or do not expect for our situations. Jesus often spoke in parables yet His message was always practical. It may be that we don't recognize when God speaks to us because we're looking for something grand and life-changing whereas His instructions seem too simplistic. There are instances of simplicity and awe in the Bible. In 1 Kings 18 we see how Elijah was used by God in a mighty way and yet immediately after this mountaintop experience, Elijah finds himself plunged in a valley, where he is lonely, exhausted and fearful. Here God sends an angel to his aid with a very basic instruction to "*Arise and eat.*" (1 King 19: vs 5 and 7). One may wonder why an angel had to be sent to provide such a practical instruction to a mighty prophet, but this is an example of how God is mindful of even our most basic physical needs.

In the New Testament Jesus' miracles of changing water into wine, feeding the five thousand, healing the sick, and even casting out demons were all motivated by His compassion in response to human conditions. In all this we see a God who knows what our pressing needs are, and who reaches out to help us. We all carry burdens and anxieties for things in the present and for our future, but Jesus reminds us, "*do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Today has enough trouble of its own*" (Mathew 6:34). This is a simple instruction but not easy to follow. To do so we need to have active faith that is experiential and not passive.

So in this season of Lent, let us challenge ourselves to heed the simple things our Lord may be directing us to do or even change in our lives. And despite our circumstances let's intentionally trust that God's grace is sufficient for everything we need for today.

Reshma George

Editor

Achen's Message



Dearly beloved in Christ,

Greetings to all in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The Church is preparing to celebrate two important events in the life of our Savior, Jesus the Nasserite; His death on the cross and His re-birth on the third day of crucifixion. The death and resurrection of Jesus was the plan of the Father to deliver humankind from the bondage of sin. Viewed another way, the death of Jesus on the cross was a politically planned murder; a reward from the higher authorities for the bold teachings and the life He lived in the plains of Judea. Holy week is a time that we reflect upon the acts in the last week of Jesus' earthly life that starts from triumphal entry to Jerusalem and ends in Calvary. These events are important for anyone who wants to follow Him.

Cleansing the temple is the most important and major incident that hurt the authorities. In doing this He spoke out against commercialization of temple premises, financial exploitation and He drove out the traders from the Holy Place. Known by the name Solomon's Porch, brisk business occurred in the temple in those days. It was a marketplace for the purchase of items needed for worship; pilgrims attending Passover celebration unfamiliar with Jerusalem purchased sacrificial animals at a higher price here than elsewhere in the city. Poorer individuals, unable to afford a lamb, purchased overpriced sacrificial doves. Foreign currency forbidden inside the Temple, could be exchanged for a fee for local currency to pay the annual Temple tax. It has been suggested that the High Priest may have received a percentage of the profit from the money changers and merchants, so their removal from the Temple would have caused a financial loss to those in power. Jesus would not allow exploitation in the name of God and He boldly raised his voice and acted decisively upon this. That eventually led Him to the cross.

This Lenten season and particularly the Holy Week challenges us as Christians to open our eyes to the exploitation around us and to join with Jesus in righteous anger and to oppose exploitation as a spiritual act of worship. Let us open our ears and eyes to pay attention to the stories around us and hear the unheard voices around us that will be a pleasing act of a Christian before our Lord rather than practicing the cultic acts of imitation. May the Holy Spirit grant us the wisdom to recognize injustice and exploitation of people around us, and the courage to fight against these evil forces.

Last month the Sunday School anniversary and Men's Fellowship Sunday were conducted on February 12th and 19th respectively. I praise and thank God for our children and their talents and pray that the Almighty will continue to bless our kids. I congratulate the Sunday School Director, Rejini Gajraj, and all the Sunday School teachers and parents for their sincere efforts for this program and for the Sunday School. Men's Fellowship Sunday worship was also a blessed experience, and I thank the Director Hans Thomas, and Men's Fellowship members for their commitment and participation.

I also take this opportunity to acknowledge the efforts of the Executives & Board of Directors for the biennium 2021-22. On behalf of the Church I extend heartfelt thanks to all the Executives & board members for their service to the church for the glory of God. Further, I welcome the incoming Board of Directors & Executives for the 2023-24 term. May the Lord Almighty be with you and bless all your efforts. God bless you all.

In His Service Yours
Binu Achen



Dear Friends,

On the playing field of the Baker Memorial Girls High School in Kottayam, Kerala is a large open-air tent. Not the kind of tent you might see in a campground. This canopied structure seats at least 3,000 people. Every year, the Diocese of Central Kerala of the Church of South India gathers for an annual convention under the big top. The week-long gathering begins on a Sunday evening. On each subsequent day, ministry areas would assemble to discuss issues of faith, formation and mission – Sunday school teachers, children, youth, outreach ministries, schoolteachers, administrators, clergy, women's fellowship, choristers and so on each taking the time to be together, to pray and to celebrate ministry.

Each evening was devoted to worship, prayer and listening to a sermon offered by different pastors. Each sermon was an hour in length. My wife Mary and I were invited by Bishop Cherian to join the Diocese for the convention, to deepen our relationship with the Church of South India and for me to preach two one-hour sermons during the week. When you are used to preaching for 15 to 20 minutes on a Sunday morning, an hour is a different challenge, especially with simultaneous translation into Malayalam. The topic of my second sermon was *The Feeding of the 5,000*. Little did we know just how the story would play out under the big top.

With each passing day the crowds would get larger and larger; 1,000 strong would become 1,500. There were more than 5,000 in attendance at the closing Eucharist. The tent could not contain the number. The overflow throng gathered under trees and in the wings. The singing was electric, the congregation truly present and joy-filled. The sermon was passionate. The distribution of communion took time; it takes time to offer communion to that many people. A paten heaping with wafers would soon be emptied and then replenished. And the people just kept coming. Hands – young and elderly, smooth and wrinkled, weak and strong – would open to receive with grace and patience. It was truly a holy moment.

At the close of the service, the liturgical party recessed through the crowd, and I was moved beyond words by simply walking amongst so many, exchanging eye contact, being greeted by joy-filled smiles, and feeling the presence of the Holy Spirit in our midst. What I did not know at the time was that with the final note of the closing hymn came the invitation to stay and share in a meal. The Church of South India literally provides a meal for all who are assembled. Many of our congregations will host pancake suppers on Shrove Tuesday. I remember how much work that was. Imagine feeding 5,000 people.

You give them something to eat, Jesus tells his disciples in the story. Five loaves and two fish pass through the crowd and 12 baskets full of leftovers remain. We are summoned always to dwell in the abundant presence of God's love.

Pilgrim

The Diocese of Central Kerala has almost 400 congregations, over 100 missions, over 50 schools, 1,200 schoolteachers and 300 clergy. Mary and I attended almost every session through the week, bringing greetings, prayers and reflections from the Diocese of Toronto. Beyond the tent we had the opportunity to visit a number of the Church-run schools, specialty ministries, restaurants, clothing shops, food banks, embroidery ministry, fabric shop, rubber tree plantations and more. And I count it as an honour to have preached at Holy Trinity Cathedral on the first Sunday and Church of the Ascension on the last Sunday.

The Diocese of Toronto has a long relationship with the Church of South India, and we are blessed to have a CSI congregation in our midst. Kerala is a beautiful place, known to many as “God’s Own Country.” We were moved by the hospitality and welcome, the sheer scope of ministry and the friendships that have deepened and the opportunity to serve together as churches in communion. Bishop Cherian and his wife Jesse will be visiting the Diocese of Toronto in March and April and we look forward to welcoming them in our midst.

Yours in Christ,

+ Andrew Toronto

The Rt. Rev. Andrew Asbil
Bishop of Toronto



Intercessory Prayer Cell Fellowship

The Intercessory Prayer Cell Fellowship will take place on every Thursday from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon in the Church Sanctuary. Please join the fellowship through **Virtual Worship**.

Bible Study – “Book of Hebrews”



The Bible study will take place on every Thursday from 7:30 pm to 8:30 pm. The Bible Study provides an in-depth learning on the book of Hebrews. It also provides an opportunity for members to connect with and understand each other while continuing to build personal relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ. Binu Achen will be leading the Bible study. Please

plan to attend the Bible study through **Zoom**.

Lenten Prayer

There will be prayer in the sanctuary on every Wednesday at 7:30 pm during the season of Lent beginning March 1, 2023. Please plan to attend.

Board Meeting

The next online board meeting will be on Sunday, March 5, 2023, at 9:00 pm.

Women’s Fellowship Sunday

Sunday, March 5, 2023, will be observed as Women’s Fellowship Sunday

Episcopal Visit

The Bishop of Madya Kerala Diocese of the Church of South India, Right Reverend Dr. Malayil Sabu Koshy Cherian and Mrs. Jessy Cherian will be with us during passion week. Bishop will lead the Good Friday service and Easter Sunday Holy Communion service.

Annual General Body

The Annual General Body meeting was held on Sunday, February 26, 2023. The Annual Reports, Financials for 2022 and Budget for 2023, were accepted and passed respectively. The following members were elected to the board at the meeting.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Vicar/President | Reverend Binu Philip |
| 2. Vice-President/Rector’s Warden | Zac Santhosh Koshy |
| 3. Secretary/People’s Warden | Abraham K Varghese |
| 4. Joint-Secretary | Joby Mathew |
| 5. Treasurer | Betson Abraham Mathew |



- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| 6. Joint Treasurer | Shijo Perumannoor John |
| 7. Director of Sunday School | Beena Annet Hans Thomas |
| 8. Director of Women's Fellowship | Binssy Mathew |
| 9. Director of Choir | Chris George |
| 10. Director of Social & Recreational Activities | Jacob P John |
| 11. Director of Youth | John Cheriyan Mathew |
| 12. Director of Men's Fellowship | Varghese V John |
| 13. Director of Mission | Christopher Moothedom |
| 14. Director of Public Relations | Rijo George Cherian |
| 15. Director of Malayala Lokam | Eva Bose |

Ecumenical Representatives: Vicar, Choir Director, Secretary

CSI NA Council Members (4): Vicar, Rennie Philips, Chris George, Jenny Cherian

Sub-Committee Members - Social & Recreational Activities: Elzy George, Vinod Maliyekal, Ashley Jeji George, Bijoy Bhutia

Area Prayer Leaders

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| • Jordan Prayer | Elizabeth (Daisy) Mathai |
| • Gilead Prayer | Christy Abraham |
| • Shalom Prayer | Abraham P. George |

Cottage Prayer Meetings

- Jordan area prayer will be held on **Saturday**, March 18, 2023 at 7:00 pm. This **in-person** prayer meeting will take place at the residence of Santhosh and Jenny Cherian.
- Shalom area prayer will be held on **Friday**, March 24, 2023 at 7:30 pm. The prayer meeting is hosted by Zac Santhosh and Suja Koshy. Please join the **virtual fellowship**.
- Gilead area prayer will be held on **Saturday**, March 25, 2023 at 7:30 pm. The prayer meeting is hosted by Shibu Paul Pullickaparampil and Shiny Shibu. Please join the **virtual fellowship**.

If you wish to be included in the parish e-mail list to receive special notices, please send your e-mail ID to the Secretary at secretary@csichurchtoronto.org

March 05 Women's Fellowship Sunday	Women as Change Makers		
	Old Testament	2 Kings 4: 8- 17	English Service
	Psalm	119: 57 - 64	Read by
	Epistle	1 Peter 3: 1-9	Women's Fellowship Members
	Gospel	John 20: 11- 15	
March 12 3rd Sunday in Lent	Forgiving Christ		
	Old Testament	Genesis 4 :8-16	Malayalam Service
	Psalm	25	Read by
	Epistle	Romans 5 : 6-11	Calvin Jacob & Family
	Gospel	Mark 2:1 - 12	
March 19 4th Sunday in Lent	Accepting Christ		
	Old Testament	Hosea 2: 14-23	English Service
	Psalm	87	Read by
	Epistle	Philemon 1: 1-21	Vinod Maliyekkal & Family
	Gospel	Mathew 15:21 - 28	
March 26 5th Sunday in Lent	The Liberating Christ		
	Old Testament	Exodus 3: 1- 13	Malayalam Service
	Psalm	82	Read by
	Epistle	Galatians 5: 1-12	Jinoj Titus & Family
	Gospel	Luke 13: 10 - 17	



BIRTHDAYS

01	Ivana Micheal Donny	18	Neil Mathews
02	Hans Thomas Varghese	18	Robin George
02	Jayden Hans Thomas	18	Jaby Mathew
02	Thankamma Mathew	18	Rohan Vergis John
03	Raimole Joseph	19	Mekha Elizabeth Varughese
04	Soloman Danny Alamshah	19	Sonia Joseph (Dr)
05	Joseph Thomas	20	Vilayil I. Kurian
06	Jijo Devasya	20	Mathew George
08	Abigail Cherian	21	Leanne George
09	Shinu Punnoose	22	Elzy George
09	Littymol Xavier	23	K. Philip Alexander
10	Vimal Philip	23	Chinnu Elizabeth Mathew
10	Vinod Maliyekal	24	Jovet Abraham Sabu
11	Sidhant Mathews	25	Emily A Verghis
11	Neil Jinoj	25	Marilyn M Verghis
12	Jewel Mariam Toms	27	Bryan Philips
12	Joshy Ani Mathew	28	Elizabeth Philip
12	Ashley Varghese	28	Ansu Rachel Raju
12	Ujwal Prakash	29	Vaiga Thampy
13	Jeevan Fenn Varughese	30	Susan Alex
16	Lenora Grace	31	Rakesh Thampi
17	George Mathew		



ANNIVERSARIES

- 11 Oommen Cherian & Mariamma Cherian
- 28 Donny Philip Varughese & Anuja Jose
- 30 Sam Daniel P & Selva Kumari

The Executive Committee Members of CSI Church, Toronto

President	Rev. Binu Philip		
Vice-President / Rector's Warden	Mr. Zac Santhosh Koshy	Secretary / People's Warden	Mr. Daniel Thomas
Joint Secretary / Trustee	Mr. Abraham K. Varghese	Treasurer	Mr. Samuel Anselm Samuel
Joint Treasurer / Trustee	Mr. Tojan Joseph Abraham	Sunday School Director	Mrs. Rejini Gajraj
Choir Director	Mr. Chris George	Men's Fellowship Director	Mr. Hans Thomas Varghese
Women's Fellowship Director	Mrs. Preetha Philips	Youth Fellowship Director	Mr. Jefin Mathews
Mission Director	Mr. Christopher Moothedom	Public Relations Director	Mr. Sanju Cherian
Social & Recreational Director	Mr. Jacob P. John	Malayala Lokam Director	Mrs. Eva Bose





Men's Fellowship Sunday

