



The Official Monthly Newsletter of CSI Church, Toronto

# Pilgrim

Volume 23 Issue 11

NOVEMBER 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*

**Nov 5 - Harvest Festival Service at 9.30am**

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# Pilgrim

**NOVEMBER 2023**

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## Editorial

### Choosing to be Joyful!

Is happiness our natural human state? This is an interesting and also much debated question with arguments split on both sides. Based on statistics of mental health and suicide it would seem that happiness is not our natural state. But rather than argue either way, the pertinent question to ask is what our disposition *should* be as Christians.

It is interesting that the Bible subtly distinguishes between happiness and joy, and regards joy as being greater as it is promised to us by God for eternity. Happiness is a fleeting earthly emotion that we do not experience constantly, and it is also easily replaced by other emotions like anger, sadness, and frustration. So, in essence we are influenced by the conditions around us to feel happy or unhappy. Whereas joy is a more stable and lasting state of mind which stems from being consciously rooted in God's purpose for our lives. A good reference is the text in Hebrews 12:2 where it says about Jesus that, "...For the joy set before Him, He endured the cross..." To think that anyone would want to endure a crucifixion for the promise of eternal joy is not easy to understand, and yet that is the example that Jesus left us. Jesus was clear about this and John 15:11 proves it, "These things I have spoken to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full".

So why does Jesus want us to have 'His joy' rather than our happiness? I believe it is to inspire us to focus on Him and His promise of eternal life for us because everything that the world offers is transient and sure to disappoint. If we look closely into the lives of the apostles and other key Bible figures, we see a pattern; in that they lived their lives on earth physically but with a mindset set on the joy of eternity. As people though, we are always looking for things that make us happy, and we make life decisions guided by what we think will guarantee us happiness. The mantra of the times is to live unfettered and as we "feel" rather than as we ought to. True Christian living challenges this approach, and our call is to face struggles in our daily life in faith, enduring it all in the joy of Christ.

As we cross into the month of November and the days darken and shorten, if we find ourselves feeling low, isolated, or experiencing struggles, let us not be overcome by negativity, but rather as Paul instructed us, "let us take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5) and through that experience the joy that our Lord promises.

Reshma George  
Editor

## Achen's Message



Greetings to you all in the matchless name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

As fall is in the air, I hope and pray that you all are in good health and high spirits. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each one of you for your active participation in our Family Night event. Your presence and enthusiasm truly made it a memorable and joyous occasion. It is this sense of togetherness that defines our wonderful parish community.

We are celebrating our Harvest festival on November 5. The Harvest Festival is a remarkable tradition in our church as a moment to give thanks for the abundant blessings we received from God. It is a time when we come together as a community to offer our gratitude before God for sustaining us as a diaspora community and to offer our offerings to Him. As we gather to celebrate the Harvest Festival, we are also reminded of the importance of stewardship and caring for God's creation.

We are observing November 12 as Sunday School Sunday. This special day is dedicated to understanding the importance of Sunday School and to reflect on its historical significance. The roots of Sunday School can be traced back to the late 18th century, with Robert Raikes often credited as the father of the Sunday School movement. In 1780, Raikes, a British publisher, started a school for children in his neighborhood on Sundays. The purpose was to teach reading, writing, and religious instruction to working-class children who could not access education during the week due to their work schedules. This ground-breaking initiative quickly gained popularity and spread across England and eventually around the world. Sunday Schools continue to be an integral part of Christian education centered around religious and moral education. So this year let us reflect on the historical roots of this movement and the significance it holds in our modern lives as well. In today's fast-paced world, where our lives are often filled with busy schedules and constant distractions, Sunday School plays an essential role in providing a solid foundation of faith and values for our children. It is a place where they can learn about the teachings of the Christ, explore their spirituality, tradition of church and develop strong moral principles. I praise Almighty for the dedicated service of our Sunday School teachers as they help our children to grow in faith.

May November be a month filled with blessings, love, and togetherness for our parish family. Wishing you all a wonderful month ahead.

God Bless You All!

In His service  
Binuachen



**Bible Study – Book of Ephesians:** The Bible study will take place every Wednesday from 7:30 pm to 8:30 pm. The Bible Study provides an in-depth learning on the book of Ephesians. Please plan to attend the Bible study through **Zoom**.

#### **Intercessory Prayer Cell Fellowship**

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

#### **Board Meeting**

Board meeting for the month of November will be held on November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023, after social hour.

**Harvest Festival:** The 2023 Harvest Festival auction event will be held on November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023, in a hybrid format immediately after worship service. Worship service starts at 9.30am.

**KCEF Christmas Carols:** The KCEF Christmas Carols will be held on November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at the Canadian Marthoma Church, 159 Sandiford Drive, Stouffville. Doors open at 4:30pm.

#### **Cottage Prayer**

- **Jordan** area virtual prayer will be held on Friday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023, at 7:30 PM. This online prayer fellowship will be hosted by Mr. Daniel Thomas and Mrs. Mariamma Thomas.
- **Gilead** area prayer - No area prayer fellowship has been scheduled.
- **Shalom** area prayer - No area prayer fellowship has been scheduled.

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](mailto:secretary@csichurchtoronto.org)



 **CSI CHURCH  
TORONTO**

# HARVEST FESTIVAL

**NOVEMBER 5, 2023**

**“So that the Lord your God may bless you in all  
the work of your hands.” (Deuteronomy 14:29)**

<b>November 05, 2023</b> <b>Harvest festival</b>	<b>Harvest Festival</b>		
	Old Testament	1 Chronicles 29:10-20	<b>Malayalam Service</b>
	Psalm	65	Read by
	Epistle	1 Timothy 6: 6-12	Board Members
	Gospel	Luke 21: 1- 4	
<b>November 12, 2023</b> <b>Sunday School Sunday</b>	<b>Sunday School Sunday</b>		
	Old Testament	Lamentations 3:31-41	<b>English Service</b>
	Psalm	77	Read by
	Epistle	2 Corinthians 13:5-14	Sunday School Students
	Gospel	Matthew 7: 1-5	
<b>November 19, 2023</b> <b>Girl Child Sunday</b>	<b>Assuring a future for the girl child</b>		
	Old Testament	2 Kings 5 :1-5	<b>English Service</b>
	Psalm	8	Read by
	Epistle	Acts 12 :11-17	Girl children
	Gospel	Mark 5:21-24, 35-43	
<b>November 26, 2023</b> <b>26<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost</b>	<b>Preparing for the coming of the Lord</b>		
	Old Testament	Hosea 10:12-15	<b>Malayalam Service</b>
	Psalm	37: 1-5	Read by
	Epistle	Colossians 4:1-6	Abraham P George & Family
	Gospel	Luke 12: 35-40	



**BIRTHDAYS**

	Eldho Mathulla	14	Mathew Abraham
01	Christina Susan Kurien	14	Reuben Benjamin
02	Steephamol S.S	15	Elizabeth Kuruvilla
03	Ani Chacko	15	Gracy Salomon
03	Bijino A.S	16	Balaji I. Kuruvilla
04	Christina Fredrick	16	Abel David
04	Kevin Varghese Mathew	16	Jerlin Elza Joseph
06	Asher Mathew Jacob	17	Tomcy Thomas
06	Nancy Grace Daniel	17	Supriya Supriya
08	Alby Williams	18	Jared Chacko
08	Benony A.S	18	Chanchal Shaji
09	Nikhil Joseph	19	Chris George
10	Jithela Yohannan	20	Biby Esther Abraham
10	Paul Samuel	20	Elizabeth Mohan Kurien
10	Dawn Abraham Sabu	20	Paul Daniel Frederick Asokan
10	Jacob John	21	Amelia Ancy Jacob
11	R. Linus Sherwin	25	Surekha Jacob
11	Amos Jacob	26	Milly Johnson
13	Reji Johnson	26	Prem Narayan
13	Heza Angel Sydney	26	Nesy Victor
14	Ashley Lional Ajoy	26	Anju Kurian Mathew



### BIRTHDAYS

27	Leanne Chacko	29	Sonijya Raj
27	Mary Jacob	29	Tarun Mohan
27	Shona Sam	30	Smitha Abhilash
29	Matthew Gajraj	30	Susan Mathew

### ANNIVERSARIES

10	Sanjay Charuvil Ninan & Jency Jose
11	Sanal N. David & Mithul Nimmy Manuel
18	Kumbicottu Varghese Abraham & Shalini Mary George Enoch
19	Ajoy Lionel & Rejy Elizabeth
19	Shanto Sydney & Annu Sara Paul
19	Sheno Sydney & Chinnu Sara Paul
22	Rakesh Thampi & Neena Kuruvila
25	Nibu Varguise & Ajin Annie Varghese
26	Abraham P. George & Elzy George
29	Sajesh Mathew & Bency Mathew
30	C. Mathew Thomas & Rebeccamma Thomas





## Visit to Ashabhavan

Shawn and I had the good fortune to visit Ashabhavan in July of this year and this article is a firsthand summary of our experiences and impressions during this visit. Our motivation to make time for such a visit stemmed from the sermons we heard from Anish Achen when he was the Vicar of our church. Achen encouraged the congregation to dedicate at least 1 day of our Kerala vacation for Mission related purposes. In fact, Anish Achen also accompanied us on our visit to Ashabhavan despite his busy schedule.

We are sure all of you know what Ashabhavan is and that our Women's Fellowship is supporting this charity. However, it is not until we made the visit that we realized how huge and important this mission is as a center for differently abled children with varied physical and mental capabilities. The facility is situated near Kottayam – Ettumanoor, and once you enter the gates you will notice how huge the complex is. It is a multi-story building with facilities such as classrooms, mess hall, auditorium, teachers' rooms, activity rooms, etc. There is a chapel as well as a cottage in the compound, so basically it has everything that is needed to run a well-established school. It started with 8 children few years ago and today over 40 children and adults ranging from ages 6 to 40 study there. Most children are from nearby areas; their parents drop them at the school in the morning and they pick them up in the evening after the school is over, just like any other school.

We reached Ashabhavan around 11 am, and we were greeted by Mr. Shaji George who is the Program Coordinator and Mrs. Sajina Koshy the Convenor of Ashabhavan. Sajina is a retired MRF employee who has dedicated her life for Ashabhavan. They gave us a complete tour of the building, showed us various rooms and introduced us to few of the teachers and students. The students were eager to see us, and they greeted us with open arms and smiles. There are more girls than boys (28 girls and 12 boys) in the school at this time and their challenges range from cerebral palsy, autism, down syndrome to intellectual disability. We saw 2 boys to whom their father had given poison when they were young but thankfully, they survived. We saw a 6-year-old who is paralyzed from the waist down. We came to know about a family in which all 3 children are mentally challenged. We saw a 6-year-old boy who has down syndrome and needs individual attention as he cannot even draw properly. These are just a few examples of the many children and their challenges that we saw firsthand. However, even in the mist of their challenges the children seemed very energetic, curious, and always kept a smile on their face.

We saw the children making arts and crafts which are available for sale at a very nominal price. We saw a group of children and staff hand-stitching a saree which I bought and brought back with me to Canada to be presented at the upcoming Harvest Festival auction. We had lunch with the children and staff after which a short meeting was convened to formally introduce us to the children. The children displayed some of their talents like singing, dancing, gym activities, etc.

Ashabhavan staff include 2 trained teachers, 2 vocational teachers, 2 therapists, 2 ayahs, 1 driver, 1 cook, 1 hostel warden and many voluntary workers. A physiotherapist comes to help the students with sciatic nerve issues, facial problems, etc. Each of these staff members have dedicated their life to the service of these children. The center's monthly expenses run into approximately 1.5 Lakhs INR. (approx. 2500 CAD). Mr. Shaji mentioned that they were trying to procure equipment to improve the facilities and to provide better physical development for the children.

# Pilgrim

The 4 to 5 hours that we spent was an eye opening and humbling experience for us, and we encourage all of you to make a visit to Ashabhavan when possible. We should all be proud that our CSI Madhya Kerala Diocese is supporting such a noble cause. We can all also be part of this movement to recognize differently abled people and do whatever we can in our capacity to make them feel loved and cared for.

We want to thank our dear Anish Achen for encouraging us to visit Ashabhavan and for accompanying us on the visit. We also want to thank Mr. Shaji, Mrs. Sajina and all teachers and staff of Ashabhavan for making our visit so special. Thanks to the children for their energy and enthusiasm in displaying their talents. Above all, thanks to God Almighty for giving us the opportunity to see this place and its operations firsthand and ground us in reality as to how blessed our lives are. Let us not take that for granted.

Warm Regards,  
Sanju & Shawn





### Family Night 2023





Gallery

Pilgrim



### The Executive Committee Members of CSI Church, Toronto

<b>President</b>	Rev. Binu Philip		
<b>Vice-President / Rector's Warden</b>	Mr. Zac Santhosh Koshy	<b>Secretary / People's Warden</b>	Mr. Abraham K Varghese
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<b>Joint Treasurer / Trustee</b>	Mr. Shijo Perumannoor John	<b>Sunday School Director</b>	Mrs. Beena Annet Hans Thomas
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