

Hermon Marthoma Church

MIDLANDS

February 2008

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www.marthomamidlands.co.uk



Next Service:

9 Feb 2008 (Malayalam)

23 Feb 2008 (Malayalam)

At

St. James Hill Church
Mere Green Road
Four Oaks, West Midlands
B75 5DD

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Give God what's right
-- not what's left.

Something to ponder

February 3rd is the beginning of the 'Great Lent.' In the Mar Thoma Church, we observe 50 days of Lent before Easter. We include 40 days in which our Lord fasted and prayed and 10 days to commemorate the passion and death of Christ. The purpose of Lent is not just to give something up, but to prepare us. To prepare our bodies, minds, and souls. A time for us to further our relationship with God and with all of his children; especially those who are materially less fortunate as us.

During the season of Lent every member of the Church is expected to set apart a time for serious reflection, self-examination and renewed commitment with fasting and prayer. Fasting should never be observed with ostentation or spiritual pride. Neither is it intended to win favors from God by changing his mind. This is a time in which we especially wait upon the Lord in fellowship and are transformed to fulfill his will.

Some restrictions regarding food may be observed as self-imposed discipline which would certainly facilitate concentration, more importantly leading to a feeling of deep concern for the hungry and poor and a real sense of self-denial. (*Roots and Wings* p. 60)

Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness



to prepare himself for His ministry. He sacrificed many 'worldly pleasures' to prepare himself for a ministry where He would be faithful to God. He deliberately took time to stop and experience the presence of God. This enabled him to do a ministry that constantly required him to give to others, it meant suffering and painfully dying for others. This is the same ministry that Jesus is calling each and everyone of us to accept.

In today's busy world, we need to take the time to stop running around and spend some time in prayer and reflection. We need to take the time to feel the presence of God in our lives. We need to realize that it is because of my sins that Jesus had to suffer and die. We need to realize that we can help those around us, and then we need to go ahead and help. Not to win favors or praise, but because it is the right things to do. Because it is what God wants us to do. I hope and pray that during the Lent season, all of us spend some extra time in prayer and self-reflection. That all of us take time to experience God. That we renew our commitment to serve God and help others. May the Holy Spirit enable us to do the ministry that Jesus calls us to perform.

Rev. Shibi Abraham

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2008 – a leap year

Numa Pompilius introduced February, along with January, onto the Roman calendar when this calendar was extended from ten to twelve. The word February comes from the word 'februa' - which means cleansing or purification, and reflects the rituals undertaken before spring.

The Anglo Saxons called February Sol-monath (cake-month), because cakes were offered to the gods during that month. February was also known to the Saxons as 'sprout-kale' from the sprouting of cabbage or kale.

Having only 28 days in non-leap years, February was known in Welsh as 'y mis bach' - the little month.

In Shakespeare's time about 400 years ago, the second month of the year was called Feverell. In Isaac Newton's time one hundred years later it had become Februeer. The modern name, February, is only about a hundred years old.

The Romans and the Celts regarded February as the start of spring.

What is Candlemas Day

February 2nd is Candlemas Day. This ancient festival marks the midpoint of winter, halfway between the shortest day and the spring equinox. In olden times, many people used to say that the Christmas season lasted for forty days - until the second day of February.

It was the day of the year when all the candles that were used in the church during the coming year were brought into church and a blessing was said over them - so it was the Festival Day (or 'mass') of the Candles.

Candles were important in those days not only because there were no electric lights. Some people thought they gave protection against plague and illness and famine. For Christians, they were (and still are) a reminder of something even more important. Before Jesus came to earth, it was as if everyone was 'in the dark'. People often felt lost and lonely. Afraid. As if they were on their own, with no one to help them. Then came Jesus with his message that he is with his followers always ready to help and comfort them. As if he is a guiding light to them in the darkness. Christians often talk of Jesus as 'the light of the World' - and candles are lit during church services to remind Christians of this.

Candlemas is a day, which holds many different customs. The Romans had a custom of lighting candles to scare away evil spirits in the winter.

Candlemas's Day also has two other names. One is the 'Presentation of Christ in the Temple'. The other is the 'Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary'. Both these names come from special events in the life of baby Jesus.

People believe that Candlemas Day predicted the weather for the rest of the winter. The weather proverbs express the idea that a fine bright sunny Candlemas day means that there is more winter to come, whereas a cloudy wet stormy Candlemas day means that the worst of winter is over.

Weather Proverbs

If Candlemas Day be fair and bright
Winter will have another fight.

If Candlemas Day brings cloud and rain,
Winter won't come again.

If Candlemas Day be dry and fair,
The half o the winter's to come and mair;

If Candlemas Day be wet and foul,
The half o the winter's gane at Yule.

"Presentation of Christ in the temple" is another name for Candlemas Day

Are you wrinkled with burden? Come to the church for a face-lift.

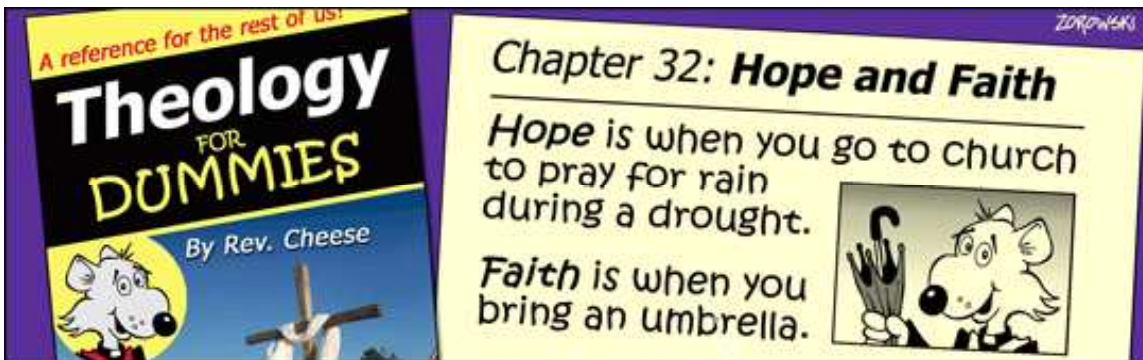
Emergency Numbers

When in sorrow, call John 14.
When men fail you, call Psalm 27.
If you want to be fruitful, call John 15.
When you have sinned, call Psalm 51.
When you are in danger, call Psalm 91.
When your faith needs stirring, call Hebrews 11.
When you are lonely and fearful, call Psalm 23.
When you grow bitter and critical, call 1 Cor. 13.
When you feel down and out, call Romans 8:31.
When you want peace and rest, call Matt.11:25-30.
When the world seems bigger than God, call Psalm 90.

When you leave home for labor or travel, call Psalm 121.
Your prayers growth narrow and selfish, call Psalm 67.
If you are depressed, call Psalm 27.
If your pocketbook is empty, call Psalm 37.
If people seem unkind, call John 15.
If you find the world growing small and yourself great, call Psalm 19.

NOTE: EMERGENCY NUMBERS may be DAILED DIRECT. No operator assistance is necessary. ALL LINES ARE OPEN TO HEAVEN 24 HOURS A DAY

Plan ahead -- It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark.



A Prayer

Why build churches? Jesus spoke of worshipping his father not in Jerusalem or on a mountain in Samaria, but in spirit and in truth. It is true that temples of stone make no sense without temples of flesh – each of us is a temple of the Holy Spirit. We can find God anywhere, in the beauties of our home in Kerala, or in our own heart. Our children may remind us of this –“I don't need to go to a building to find God.” But in a climate, which often is wet and cold, a community needs somewhere they can call their own, somewhere to meet in prayer, especially that prayer which we offer together. There are times when our own faith is faltering, and we need the support of a believing and worshipping community, who express their faith in the works of justice and charity. We need to come together, and for that we need a place. Amen





Special Greetings this month

Birthday greetings to

Giboy George, Georgie P Thomas, Ashik Geo Shibu, and Jinu Varghese

Congratulations on the Wedding Anniversaries of

Sanu & Jinu Varghese, Georgie P Thomas & Ciju Thomas

Useful contacts

Rev: Shibi Abraham:
07943818819
01612232199

Dr Sunny Thomas
0121 308 1200

Mr V V Abraham
0773 721 6172
0247 632 7334

Dr Simon Idiculla
01902 380 363

Sevika Sangam
Marykutty Thomas
0121 772 8697

Sunday school
Susan Abraham
0247 632 7334

Sunday school

At 3:30pm every 2nd and 4th Saturdays at the Church.



Other announcements

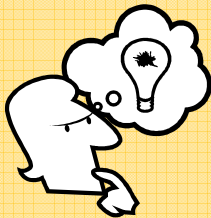
Guest

Our guest at the next service will be the Vicar from Bristol

Thirumei's visit

Coorlis Thirumeni plans to visit us on the 22nd March 08. Attendance is important.

It is also rumoured Thirumeni might be in Birmingham on the 23rd Feb 08.



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"We need to talk."