

Hermon Marthoma Church

MIDLANDS

November 2007

www.marthomamidlands.co.uk

Volume 1, Issue 7



Next Service:

10th Nov 2007 (Malayalam)

24th Nov 2007 (English)

At

4pm

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

Highlights

Something to ponder	1
Church – activities	2
Sevika Sangom	2
Advent	3
Announcements	4

Something to ponder From the Achen's desk

“As we are getting ready to celebrate Christmas, I think it is important to remember some of the major festivals the Mar Thoma Church celebrates. We are to celebrate more than just Christmas and Easter. Below is a brief listing of some of the major feasts and festivals of the Mar Thoma Church:

Epiphany – Celebrated on January 6th there are two important events remembered on this day. It is celebrated as the day commemorating the baptism of Jesus in the river Jordan. It is also commemorated as the day that the magi (wise men) from the East visited Jesus and that Jesus revealed His Glory to the Gentiles (non-Jews.)

Feast of Annunciation – March 25th – The day that the news of Jesus' birth was announced to Mary by the angel Gabriel.

Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter

The day of Ascension - Celebrated 40 days after Easter.

The Day of Pentecost – Celebrated 50 days after Easter, it is celebrated as the day that the Holy Spirit was sent to the Church.

The Day of Transfiguration – Celebrated on August 6th, it is a reminder to the Church to share in Christ's glory and radiance.

Christmas

Our festivals are not just for the happy days of the life of Jesus, but we also commemorate the important events in His ministry. This includes His

suffering for us and His death for our sins. Part of the reason that these festivals are celebrated is to remind us of the suffering that Jesus went through to establish the Kingdom of God here on earth. It is also to remind us that we are to be active in helping to establish the Kingdom of God here on Earth. Like Jesus we too will suffer in establishing this Kingdom, but the rewards we will receive in Heaven will outweigh any of the sufferings we experience here on Earth.

These festivals remind us that too many Christians only go to church a few days a year (ex. Good Friday, Easter, Christmas, etc...) But we are to be active participants in Christian worship services throughout the year. Celebrating, remembering, and participating in the joys and pains of our Lord and Savior.

Also, too many Christians only feel joy during Christmas, but as Christians we need to feel that joy throughout the year. How many people truly celebrate Pentecost with the same kind of joy that they celebrate Christmas????????? The people around us should know all the time that we are Christians and not just on Easter and Christmas.

May the Holy Spirit enable all of us to celebrate the joys of Christian life throughout the year and to share that joy with all those around us. May the Holy Spirit also help us to remember the ministry, the sufferings, and the death of our Lord and Saviour Jesus the Christ throughout the year, and enable us to active participants in Christian worship and establishing the Kingdom of God here on earth?

Rev. Shibi Abraham

Just a reminder to all

Only if all of us pay our subscriptions of a minimum of £20 per month will we be able to proceed as a Church. God gives in plentiful.

The Church – Its activities

Activities of the Mar Thoma Church are not confined to worship conducted within the four walls of the Churches and Prayer Halls. Reformation leaders of the Church realised that the success of the movement contributing to the growth of the Church depended mainly on promoting the following aspects of a Christian culture.

1. Rearing the next generation in a Christian atmosphere from their early childhood.
2. Retaining them on firm Christian faith through the subsequent stages of youth, parenthood and old age.
3. Addressing the pressing needs of the poor and the downtrodden people

4. Encouraging members to lead a life bearing witness to Christian teachings good enough for people belonging to other denominations to emulate for the common good of the society.

For fulfilling the above objectives, the following organisations came into existence at different stages

- Sunday School Samajam
- Yuvajana Sakhyam
- Sevika Sanghom
- M T E A – Mar Thoma Evangelistic Association
- M T V E A – Mar Thoma Voluntary Evangelistic Association
- DSMC – Department of Sacred Songs and Communications
- Development Department
- M S C – Mar Thoma Students Conference

Sevika Sanghom Women's Auxiliary

The women in the Mar Thoma church also shared the spiritual power generated by the Reformation. The Mar Thoma Suvishesha Sevika Sanghom the women's wing, was inaugurated during the Maramon Convention in the year 1919, under the leadership of Abraham Mar Thoma Suffragan Metropolitan., who gave the Sanghom continued support and inspiration.

Every women of the Mar Thoma Church above the age of 18 years is a member of the Sevika sanghom. The Sevika Sanghom has branches in all parishes of the Mar Thoma Church both in India and abroad. Each branch elects from among its members a committee including office bearers. The Vicar of the parish is the President of the branch Sevika Sanghom, who gives guidance and support to the activities. . A few branches are grouped together to form a centre and a few centers together constitute a Diocese. The Sevika Sanghom follows the pattern of the Mar Thoma Church in the organizational matters.

The Income for the Sevika Sanghom is through voluntary contributions from its members by way of four collections:-

- Deppy pirivu - For Children's Work
- Varshika pirivu - For office and establishment expenses
- Saujanya danam - Evangelistic Work
- Videsh Mission - Work outside Kerala and Ashram etc.

Besides the above, donations, sponsorship and endowments are received for various purposes from kind hearted members.



Advent – what is it?

Advent is the season four weeks before Christmas in which we prepare for the coming of Christ. It begins on Sunday nearest to 30th November. Advent is the period of preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus and its name comes from the Latin word *adventus*, which means "coming".

The season also celebrates Christ's anticipated coming again in the fullness of time to rule triumphantly over life in heaven and earth, as well as the coming of Christ as the infant Saviour whose birth we celebrate at Christmas. And because the season emphasizes Christ's comings and not just his birth, it's more than just a time to get ready for Christmas. It is a penitential season but is no longer associated with the strictness of Lent. Nevertheless Advent reminds us that the question is not whether Jesus will return to judge the earth, but when.

The season of Advent came into being toward the middle of the sixth century. At first, the Advent Season was determined as the six Sundays leading up to Christmas. This was then reduced to four Sundays by Pope St. Gregory the Great (591-604).

Before the seventh century, Christmas was a secondary feast, especially in Rome, but as it came to take on more and more importance, so the season of Advent evolved in a similar manner. Advent became more solemn and its orientation changed. From just being a time to prepare for Christmas, it became a time to look to the glorious return of the Lord and now the Sunday's of Advent reflect this double perspective of waiting for the Second Coming of Jesus (First and Second Sundays) and the immediate preparation for the feast of Christmas (Third and Fourth Sundays).

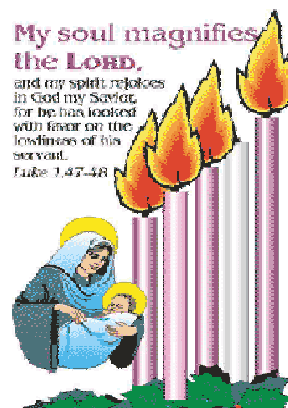
The Roman Catholic Church summarises Advent by saying, "When the Church celebrates the liturgy of Advent each year, she makes present the ancient expectancy of the Messiah, for, by sharing in the long preparation for the Saviour's first coming, the faithful renew their ardent desire for His Second Coming."

God's first intervention within our history came not in the form of some instant or earth shattering event, but instead God chose to come into the world as we all do, to be born as a baby in the midst of a chaotic world. By our own impatient standards this seems such a slow way to bring salvation to the world. But God may not always choose the easy answer or the quick fix.

But by His earthly incarnation He demonstrates a total commitment to the very core of humanity. -A commitment, to its day by day routines and challenges, a commitment to humanity from the cradle to the grave and beyond. And in that same incarnation way, God comes to us day by day, through the working of the Spirit, through His Word and Sacrament, making the ordinary extraordinary; making the broken whole; and redeeming and restoring the past, present and future, whatever they hold.

This is a message which is clear in the gospel reading today. History, myth, belief and imagery come together to create a vision, the strength of which is not in trying to understand the detail of Christ's second coming but in catching a glimpse of the message of salvation and healing being completed. We should not spend our time worrying about the timing of God's arrival or about the distraction of what might happen in the meantime. God's reign has already broken into our world through the incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ. His Kingdom is near and it is coming, even as it is already arrived but not fully realized. We are to remain watchful, and aware, and to be prepared for the final coming, which is likely to arrive any time that God's love is shared with uncommon grace in a world so desperately in need of that love. It is through us, and through the very imperfect Church that bears His name that His love and grace continue to come and spread, at Advent and through the Christian year ahead as we look to His coming in glory.

There is much about Advent to enjoy, the Advent wreaths found in our churches where they have four candles to be lit each Sunday and one for Christmas Day. But in the midst of our church we know that just as we prepare for Christmas, so we have to make ready to welcome Jesus in our lives. Are you ready for the coming of Jesus?



Special Greetings this month

Birthday greetings to

Susan Abraham, Thomas K Mathew , Sinu Mathew , Mathew Samuel, Gowry Simon, Mathew Samuel, Jenisha Joji, Sosamma Shyji

Congratulations on the Wedding Anniversaries of

Thomas K Mathew & Marykutty Thomas, Joji and Jejo, Shyji Joseph & Sosamma Shyji

Sunday school

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

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

For the Kids

A man was driving a black truck. His lights were not on. The moon was not out. A lady was crossing the street. How did the man see her?

It was a bright, sunny day.

Do you say, "Nine and five is thirteen," or "Nine and five are thirteen"?

Neither. Nine and five are fourteen.

What's the moral of the story about Jonah and the whale?

You can't keep a good man down!

Why does history keep repeating itself?

Because we weren't listening the first time!

Why were the early days of history called the dark ages?

Because there were so many knights!

Other announcements

Harvest Festival

Sevika Sangam has managed to collect £1300/- as part of the Harvest Festival. This will contribute to the running of our church for a couple of months.

Christmas Carol service

Hermon Marthoma Church's first Christmas Carol service will be held on the 22nd Dec07 at the St James Hill church. It is our intention to invite all other UK churches, parishes, congregation and prayer groups. Attendance is important.

Choir Practice

Choir practice will be held at the St James Hall after the church service from 6:30pm until 8:00pm. Additional practices will be arranged at suitable venues.

