

St. Thomas Mar Thoma Church, NY

34 Morris Street, Yonkers, NY 10705
<http://www.stthomasmtc.org>

December



2011

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Merry Christmas

*“And she will bear a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is
 He who will save His people from their sins”
 Matthew 1:21*

NEWSLETTER VOL. XXXI NO. 12

WORSHIP SERVICE SCHEDULE

Date	Time	Worship
Sun, Dec 4	9:30 am 10:30 am	Praise & Worship (Malayalam), Bible Class Holy Communion Service, English
Sun, Dec 11	9:30 am 10:30 am	Praise & Worship (Malayalam), Intercessory Prayer Holy Communion Service, English
Sun, Dec 18	9:30 am 10:30 am	Praise & Worship (Malayalam), Bible Class Holy Communion Service, Malayalam
Sat, Dec 24	6:30pm	Christmas Eve Program
Sun, Dec 25	10:00 am	Holy Communion Service, English
Fri, Dec 31	9:00 pm	Watch Night Service (Malayalam) Holy Communion Service, (Malayalam)

MAR THOMA SYRIAN CHURCH OF MALABAR LECTIONARY

Date	1st Lesson	2nd Lesson	Epistle	Gospel
Sun, Dec 4	Gen. 33:1-17	2 Cor. 1:3-11	1 Thes. 3:6-13	St. Luke. 1:39-45
Sun, Dec 11	Isa. 55:6-13	Acts. 11:19-26	Heb. 4:1-13	St. Luke. 1:57-66
Sun, Dec 18	Isa. 11:1-10	1 John. 5:1-12	Rom. 1:1-16	St. Mat. 1:18-23
Sun, Dec 25	Isa. 9:1-8	Gal. 4:1-7	Heb. 1:1-12	St. Luke. 2:1-14
Sat, Dec 31	Exo. 33:12-23	Heb. 13:7-21	1 Pet. 5:6-11	St. Luke. 12:22-34

IMPORTANT DAYS IN SABHA/DIOCESAN CALENDAR

Date	Importance of the Day
Thu, Dec 1	Beginning of 25 Days Lent
Sun, Dec 4	Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth- 'Bearers of Good News'
Sun, Dec 11	Birth of John the Baptist (2nd Sunday before Christmas)
Sun, Dec 18	Annunciation to Joseph (Sunday before Christmas)
Wed, Dec 21	Mar Thoma Church Day
Sun, Dec 25	Yaldo - Birth of Our Savior (Feast of Nativity)
Sat, Dec 31	Year Ending - Watch Night Service)

~Vicar's Message~

Dearly beloved in Christ,

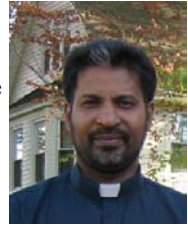
“For us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah.11: 6)

Once again we are at the Advent season. The Church prepares for the arrival of the Son of God, the incarnate word. The most comforting message of Christmas is Immanuel – God with us. The wonderful counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace is with us in all our life situations - situations of darkness, fear and perplexities He is with us to equip us and to enable us to face the worst.

We often refer to difficult times in our life as dark times. When you lose someone you love or your health deteriorates, when you are abandoned or rejected or when innumerable difficulties pile up and you sink in to depression and hopelessness, yes, he is with us as the Immanuel. “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; and those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.” (Isaiah.9: 2) Many of our members are going through bereavement and grief as they have lost their dear ones in the past year. Many are going through agonizing experience as a result of deterioration of health, loss of job and disharmony in the family ties.

One of the powerful messages of the gospel is FEAR NOT. Fear is the dark room where the negatives are formed. **And fear traps us in the past**—the past of injustice, oppression and hatred. Because fear keeps us in the past, it is antithetical to hope. **But the Gospel, as proclaimed in Advent, is anti-fear and pro-future.** When the angel addresses Mary to tell her about the blessed gift in her womb, the angel begins by addressing her fear - “Do not be afraid!” **Jesus comes to eradicate fear, to preach hope.**

When we are perplexed as entangled by adversities and find it difficult to see a ray of light at the other end of the tunnel, we are not alone and that is not the end. Let me conclude with the words of Stephen Covey as he begins his new book ‘The 3rd Alternative’ – “There is a way to solve the toughest problems we face, even those that look unsolvable. There is a path that cuts through nearly all life’s dilemmas and deep divisions. There is a way forward. It’s not your way and it’s not my way. It’s a higher way. It’s a better way than any of us have thought of before.” For us that is God’s way. And that is precisely what our Immanuel brings home. Happy Christmas and a blessed New Year!



Yours in His Service,

Rev. Joseph Johnny
Vicar



Youth Chaplain's Corner

Greetings in the name of One Triune God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

I am happy to greet you through this newsletter. Another Christmas is coming to our door steps; we are joyful to receive our savior Lord Jesus Christ. I am also sharing in that joy with you. It would be beneficial for all of us to remember this great event of the Christian faith with proper preparation and readiness. The 25-Day Fast or Nombu (Malayalam) is observed in the Mar Thoma Church in connection with Christmas (*yaldo* = *Birth*) or Nativity. 25 Days of Fast/ Nombu falls within the larger liturgical season of the church known as the Annunciation period or *Mangala vartha Kalam* or *Ariyppu kalam* in Malayalam. In the Western church this period is known as *Advent Season*. During this time the Church give thanks to God the Father remembering his selfless love of giving His only Son for the salvation of the world. In the Gospel of John 1: 14 we read, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." This 25-day Nombu/ fasting will help us to get closer to God and rejuvenate our spiritual journey in this world. Fasting is a great tool against evil one, through fasting Jesus Christ defeated forces of evil and has given us the armor to overcome Satan. Fasting must be undertaken voluntarily. Fasting becomes highly acceptable when it is joined with humility of hearts, charity towards all humanity, and continuous prayers. In the book of Isaiah we read as to what kind of Fast is acceptable to God, "Is such the fast that I choose, a day for a man to humble himself? Is it to bow down his head like a rush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Will you call this a fast and a day acceptable to the LORD? Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?" (Isaiah 58:5-7). Moses, Daniel, Elijah and many other people of faith practiced this discipline in their lives.

May God almighty help us to practice this liturgical discipline and be filled with the joy of Christmas.

Youth Chaplain's December Schedule:

1st Sunday	St. Thomas Mar Thoma Church
2nd Sunday	Epiphany Mar Thoma Church
3rd Sunday	St. Andrews Mar Thoma Church
4th Sunday	Staten Island Mar Thoma Church

*Individual parish Youth Fellowship Bible studies throughout the month

Weekly Bible Study:

When: Every Thursday

Time: 8:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M

Where: Youth Chaplain's Parsonage- 194 Bregman Ave, New Hyde Park, NY, 11040

Contact: 516-437-0425 or bsimonachen@gmail.com

Events of the Region:

Fall One Day Conference: November 26, 2011 (8:30 AM to 4:00 PM) at Epiphany MTC.

Dr. Anil Chacko, PhD is the main speaker; Morning Bible Study-Rev. Oommen V. Varkey.

Youth Christmas Choir Festival: December 31, 2011 at St. Andrews MTC from 3 to 5 PM

Diocesan Youth Leadership Conference: January 5-8, 2012 at St. Mark's MTC, Tampa, Florida



CHRISTMAS HOUSE CAROLING SCHEDULE



DECEMBER 2, FRIDAY (Yonkers West/ North)

DECEMBER 3, SATURDAY (Teaneck, New Jersey)

DECEMBER 4, SUNDAY (Yonkers East)

DECEMBER 9, FRIDAY (Long Island)

DECEMBER 10, SATURDAY (Connecticut, Poughkeepsie)

DECEMBER 11, SUNDAY (Westchester)

DECEMBER, 16 FRIDAY (Yonkers South/ North)

DECEMBER, 17, 18 SATURDAY (Rockland/Spring Valley)

“And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch of their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.”

Luke 2:8-11

Organizational Meetings

EDAVAKA MISSION

Prayer Meeting at Church every Wednesday at 7:00 PM

SEVIKA SANGHAM

Bible Study - 3rd Sunday at Church

Sevika Sangham	Date & Time	Location
Friday Prayer	Fri, Dec 2 9:30 am	Mrs. Lilly S. Mathew New City, NY
Friday Prayer	Fri, Dec 9, 9:30 am	Mrs. Aleyamma Kurian Spring Valley, NY
Friday Prayer	Fri, Dec 16, 9:30 am	At Church
Friday Prayer	Fri, Dec 23 9:30am	At Church

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday Schools Starts at 9:00AM

MALAYALAM CHOIR

Choir Practice Every Sunday After Worship Service

Young Families Fellowship

Event	Date & Time	Location
Fellowship Meeting	Fri, Dec 23, 7:30 pm	Mr. Ullas P. Thannickal New City, NY

CONDOLENCES

The father of our member, Mr. Samuel John, -Yonkers, Mr. Yohannan Samuel was called to our Lord in Kerala at the age of 87. Funeral service was held in Kerala on Saturday.

The Sister-in-law of our members, Dr. Varghese Abraham, Mr. George V. Varghese, Mr. Thomas V. Varghese, and Mrs. Sosamma Samuel, Mrs. Ponnamma Philipose was called to our Lord on November 8, 2011 at the age of 65 in Kerala. Funeral service was held on November 11, 2011 in Kerala.

Please uphold the families in your prayers.

We as a parish extend our deepest condolences and prayers to the bereaving families and friends. May the peace of Christ be with them and bring them comfort.

*“I sought the Lord, and He heard me,
and delivered me from all my fears.”*

Psalms 34:4