

MADRAS MAR THOMA SYRIAN CHURCH
PRESENTS

WORSHIP CONCERT
FEATURING

Glorious

THE 34 YEAR OLD GOSPEL YOUTH CHOIR
FROM BANGALORE



16 SEPTEMBER 2023, 6.00 PM

MADRAS MAR THOMA SYRIAN CHURCH
PLATINUM JUBILEE AUDITORIUM
38, HARRINGTON ROAD,
CHETPET -31

ALL ARE WELCOME
ENTRY FREE

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Koinonia

MMTSC

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ENGLISH, MALAYALAM



For where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am with them.

A bi-monthly newsletter of the

Madras Mar Thoma Syrian Church

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**SEVIKA SANGHAM
BREAKFAST SALE - 23.07.2023**



MESSAGE



The year at hand holds immense significance for our church, as it marks the centenary celebration of The Mar Thoma Voluntary Evangelists' Association. This milestone stands as a testament to the spiritual rejuvenation within the Church, stemming from the seeds of reformation. This renewal has ignited a fervent desire among believers to extend the Gospel's reach. It became evident that this mission couldn't be solely entrusted to a handful of full-time evangelists. Instead, the aspiration emerged for every member of the Church to embody a missionary spirit, exuding the joy and certainty of salvation, thereby becoming living witnesses of Christ to all they encounter—irrespective of their secular vocations. This approach avails these individuals the chance to interact with others within the context of everyday life, presenting the Gospel in an organic and relatable manner.

Enthusiasts inclined towards evangelistic and intercessory endeavours convened at intervals for prayer and fellowship. It was during one such gathering in 1924 that The Mar Thoma Voluntary Evangelists' Association was officially established. The Most Rev. Dr. Abraham Mar Thoma Metropolitan ardently championed this movement, and Titus II Mar Thoma Metropolitan issued a circular to all parishes, encouraging the formation of association branches. At its inception, Rev. C. P. Philipose Kassis assumed the role of the first president, with Sadhu Kochu Kunju Upadesi as secretary and Kolakottu John Upadesi as the travelling secretary.

Rooted in the ethos of "Every Marthomite is an Evangelist," a concept embraced by the esteemed Abraham Mar Thoma Metropolitan, this organization has evolved into a prominent vehicle for Gospel propagation within the church. This philosophy invites each individual to be a witness of Christ within their respective life domains, embracing this divine calling of the organization.

The ethos of being "the light of the world" and "the salt of the earth" is deeply embedded in this organization, reflecting its responsibility to radiate the love of God. Recognizing that each creation, including humanity, serves a purpose in God's divine plan, this association acknowledges the paramount responsibility of responding to this divine call. At its helm during its early days was Sadhu Kochukunju Upadeshi, the inaugural General Secretary, whose leadership illuminated the path forward. This organization shines as a guiding light, penetrating even the darkest corners where affliction resides, and boldly entering spaces others might shun. The luminous journey undertaken by those driven by Christ's love shapes the radiant light that dwells within us.

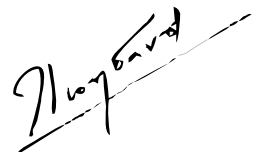
The association's core mission lies in empowering every church member to

stand as a witness for Jesus Christ, regardless of their vocation. Volunteers gather in parish settings at least weekly for fellowship, intercessory prayer, Bible study, and experience sharing. Subsequently, they engage with colleagues and share the Gospel message. Moreover, they actively participate in various parish services, including Sunday school, youth fellowships, and cottage prayer meetings. Their outreach extends to visiting the infirm and needy, providing both spiritual companionship and material support. Working to mend estranged relationships and seizing opportunities to convey the Gospel to non-Christian acquaintances are additional facets of their efforts.

As we celebrate the centenary of this great mission, it's a good time for us to take a fresh look at who we are and what we're meant to do. The passage from 1 Peter 2:9-10 is really important here. It goes like this: "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light". These verses carry a deep message that sheds light on what it means to be a follower of Christ. It uses strong images to show the heart of the Christian community and how it connects with God.

This passage says 'us' as a "chosen people," picked by God, a "royal priesthood," like priests who talk to God directly, a "holy nation," set apart for God's purposes, and a treasured possession of God. These descriptions help us see who we really are, according to God's plan. But this isn't just about our identity; it's also about our vocation. Our vocation is to "declare the praises" of God. This means we're like witnesses, telling others about the amazing things God has done in our lives. It's like shining a light on how God rescued us from darkness and brought us into His wonderful light. This light represents the big change that happens when we choose to follow Jesus. In simple terms, 1 Peter 2:9-10 tells us important things about who we are, why we're here, and what we're supposed to do. It's like a guidebook for living out our faith. By understanding it deeply and putting it into action, we're not only honouring God but also making a positive impact on the world around us.

As we celebrate the centenary of the remarkable work that God has accomplished through the ages, guided by the hands of our fathers and mothers, let us wholeheartedly devote ourselves to being witnesses of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, within the specific places where we have been placed.



Vinoyachen
Vicar

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BAPTISMS

Name	Prayer Group	Date of Baptism
1. Daniel Shijo Koshy (S/o Shijo Tom Koshy & Neena Varghese)	Porur	August 23, 2023
2. Ethan Jacob Vivin (S/o Mr. Vivin Tom Jacob & Mrs. Bibina Vivin)	Aminjikarai	August 26, 2023

OBITUARY

Name	Age	Prayer Group	Date of Death
1. Mr. Jaby John	46	Ayanavaram	July 15, 2023

Our heart-felt condolence to the Bereaved Family

Programs for the month of September and October

16th September 2023

Glorious Program

23rd September 2023

Senior Citizens Meet

6th, 7th & 8th October 2023

Parish Convention (Malayalam)

14th October 2023

Harvest Festival / Fete & Sale

27th October 2023

Youth Meeting

28th October 2023

Couples Meet

29th October 2023

Family Sunday



PROGRAMMES



1. Sunday School : Every Sunday after the 1st Service
2. Yuvajana Sakhyam : Every Sunday after the First Service
3. Monthly Meeting of Sevika Sangham : Every 4th Saturday at 4.30 pm
4. Edavka Mission : Every Wednesday at 5.00 pm
5. Fasting Prayer : Every Friday at 10.00 am
6. Choir Practice : Every Saturday at 6.30 pm
7. Elder's Fellowship : Every 2nd & 4th Tuesday at 4.30 pm (Church)
8. Sevika Sangham Bible Study : Every Friday from 4.30 pm to 5.30 pm (Online)



WORSHIP ASSIGNMENTS



September 2023 : **Virugambakkam**

October 2023 : **Aminjikarai**

“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.”

~ 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

ANPIN SPARSHAM

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Medical aid (wheelchair, hospital cot, airbed, walker, medicines etc.,)
End of life care ♥ Advice on hospital admissions

ANSWERS TO NEW BIBLE QUIZ SERIES - 9

1. എദ്രെയി (Deu. 3:10)
2. മാഖീരിനു (3:15)
3. യഹോവ (10:9)
4. ആമേൻ
5. മോശെ (Deu. 31:22)
6. ആശേർ (Deu. 33:24)
7. മോശെയുടെ (Deu. 34:6)
8. യെരീഹോ (Deu. 34.3)
9. കൊയ്തുങ്കാലത്തു (Joshua 3.15)
10. ഹായി (Joshua 7:2)



WORSHIP TIMINGS

SEPTEMBER 2023

03-09-2023	7.30 A.M.	Divine Service in English (Yuvajana Sakhyam)
	9.30 A.M.	Holy Qurbana in Malayalam
10-09-2023	8.00 A.M.	Holy Qurbana in Malayalam (Sevika Sangham Sunday)
17-09-2023	7.30 A.M.	Divine Service in English (Sunday School)
	9.30 A.M.	Holy Qurbana in Malayalam
23-09-2023	8.30 A.M.	Holy Qurbana in Malayalam (Senior Citizens)
24-09-2023	7.30 A.M.	Holy Communion in English
	9.30 A.M.	Holy Qurbana in Malayalam

OCTOBER 2023

01-10-2023	7.30 A.M.	Divine Service in English (Sunday School)
	9.30 A.M.	Holy Qurbana in Malayalam
08-10-2023	8.00 A.M.	Holy Qurbana in Malayalam
15-10-2023	7.30 A.M.	Divine Service in English (Yuvajana Sakhyam)
	9.30 A.M.	Holy Qurbana in Malayalam
21-10-2023	8.30 A.M.	Holy Qurbana in Malayalam (Senior Citizens)
22-10-2023	7.30 A.M.	Holy Communion in English
	9.30 A.M.	Holy Qurbana in Malayalam
29-10-2023	8.00 A.M.	Holy Qurbana in Malayalam (Family Sunday)



LECTIONARY



SEPTEMBER 2023

Date	Lessons	Epistle	Gospel
03 Sunday	Education Day - Care Oriented Education (14th Sunday after Pentecost)		
	Prov. 1:1-12	Col. 1:24-29	St. Mat. 19:16-22
	Acts 8:26-38		
10 Sunday	Sevika Sangham Day - Women the Apostles of Christ (15th Day after Pentecost)		
	Num. 27:1-11	Rom. 16:1-6	John 4:27-30
	Acts 16:11-15		
17 Sunday	Senior Citizen's Sunday - Old Age that Combines Faith and Experience (16th Sunday after Pentecost)		
	Isa. 40:21-31	Tim. 5:1-10	St. Luke 2:25-38
	Eph. 6:1-9		
24 Sunday	The Golorious Coming of our Lord (17th Sunday after Pentecost)		
	Mala. 3:13-4:2	Acts 1:6-11	St. Mat. 24:42-51
	1 Thes. 4:13-18		

OCTOBER 2023

Date	Lessons	Epistle	Gospel
01 Sunday	Voluntary Evangelist's Association Day - Christian Presence in Differing Life Spaces (18th Sunday after Pentecost)		
	Isa. 49:1-6	Gal. 1:11-17	St. Luke 12:41-48
	Acts 16:19-34		
08 Sunday	Difference and dignity of all creation - Day of the Differently abled. (19th Sunday after Pentecost)		
	Isa. 35:1-10	1 Thes. 5:12-22	St. Luke 14:12-14
	Acts 14: 1-10		
15 Sunday	Youth Sunday - Youth with Christ (20th Sunday after Pentecost)		
	Dan. 1:11-17	1 Tim. 4:11-16	St. Mat. 7:21-27
	1 Peter 3:13-18		
22 Sunday	Christian Family Dedication Sunday - Family an Expression of the Kingdom of God		
	Josh. 24:14-22	Eph. 5:21-33	St. Luke 10:38-42
	Acts 10:1-8		
29 Sunday	Confession: Sacrament of Reconciliation with God and Human		
	Gen. 45:1-15	2 Cor. 5:16-21	St. Mat. 22:34-40
	1 Cor. 6:1-11		

NEW BIBLE QUIZ SERIES - 10



1. പുറകോട്ടു നോക്കിയപ്പോൾ പട്ടണത്തിലെ പുക ആകാശത്തേക്കു പൊങ്ങുന്നതു കണ്ടതാര്?
 Who turned back to see the smoke of the city rising up to the skies?
2. യിസ്രായേലിന്റെ ദൈവമായ യഹോവെക്കു, യോശുവ യാഗപീഠം പണിതതെവിടെ?
 Where did Joshua build the Altar for the Lord, the God of Israel?
3. അമോര്യ രാജാക്കന്മാരെ വെട്ടിക്കൊന്നു അഞ്ചു മരത്തിന്മേൽ തൂക്കിയതാര്?
 Who put to death the Amorite kings and hung their bodies on five poles?
4. ലാഖീശിനെ സഹായിക്കാൻ വന്ന ഗേസർ രാജാവ്? -
 Name the king of Gezer who came up to help Lachish.
5. യോർദ്ദാനക്കരെ കിഴക്കുള്ള തടാകം?
 Name the lake to the East of Jordan.
6. മനശ്ശെയുടെ മകൻ?
 Who is the son of Manasseh ?
7. ഹെബ്രോന്റെ പഴയപേര് എന്ത്?
 What name was Hebron previously known by?
8. അനാക്യരിൽ വച്ച് അതിമഹാനായിരുന്നവൻ ?
 Who was the greatest man among the Anakites?
9. രൂബേന്റെ മകന്റെ പേര് ?
 Name the son of Ruben
10. കിര്യത്ത് - യെയാരിമിന്റെ മറ്റൊരു പേര്?
 Another name for Kerieth Jearim

PRAYER MEETINGS



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Liturgy

- Rev. Philemon Koshy

The term liturgy is derived from two Greek words “Leitos” and “Ergos”. Together it made the meaning of Liturgy as the Public order or Public work which is used in worship. So Liturgy is a formal order of worship which is used in the Church. Liturgy plays a main role in the Worship. There are a lot of church denominations who follows different patterns of worship. There are churches who follow a written form of worship while there are others who do not follow a written set of prayers. This is not to condemn the churches who do not follow the written style of worship, but this article intends to highlight the importance of Liturgy in worship.

What is the Importance of Liturgy

Liturgy is originated as a tool of worship especially to the people who have not known how to worship, just like Jesus taught his disciples to pray. Later liturgy went through many revisions and reconstructions to meet the need of the time, especially to counter the heresies of the time. It is fully loaded with the theologies. Because when we worship God, we learn. Praising God simply doesn't mean using flattery words but all those are teaching methods of the Church. Let us look into an example from Bible. Isaiah chapter 6 gives us a picture of heavenly worship. By participating this worship, Isaiah looked into himself and learned that he needs to be purified. Till the previous chapter, Isaiah used the phrase “Woe to you...” several times. But here he tells “Woe to me”. How he got that insight. It is when he looked into the Glory of God which helped him to see his own misery. When a bigger line is drawn, the first line gets shortened. Thus, Worship helps us to see the glory of God and helps us to understand our situation well.

Liturgy itself serves as a teaching pedagogy. Liturgy is loaded with interpretations of the Biblical truths. But interestingly, it is not the Bible, but liturgy is originated first. Even now, we use St. James (Jesus' brother) Liturgy and many other liturgy composed by early church father. One of them is believed to be composed by St. Peter. Of course, those were composed not in present forms, but may be in a very primitive form contains only basic factors. But the fact is, there were liturgies in the early Church, even before the books in the New Testament were written. But

as both, the liturgy and the Bible are products of faith community, it easily complemented each other. But in 3rd or 4th century the Canon of the New Testament was sealed, hence, the Bible ceased to undergo further changes. However, it was not the case with liturgy. It was kept on revised to meet the need of the church, of the time. It was constructed in such a way to interpret the Biblical truth. In the litigation filed against him by Mr. K.N. Daniel, Late Lamented His Grace Juhanon Mar Thoma Metropolitan endorsed the above said lines. Even though there is only one Bible, there are many doctrines. So, in order to understand which is the faith of our church, we have to look into the liturgy of the church. It is there, the faith is proclaimed and the Doctrines of the Bible is interpreted.

What doctrine do you want to learn? The virgin birth? The divinity of Jesus even before his birth in this world? The born again concept? The eschatological Parousia? Hypostatic union? And what else? Every one of these is explained well in detail. If you have doubt on a particular sacrament like baptism, then take a look at that particular liturgy. How rich is our liturgy. Fully loaded and enriched by theologies. How many books have been written on it, and how many have undertaken the liturgy as their thesis. Yet, it is not completed. Each and every word takes us to the depth of theological understanding.

Signs and Symbols

Liturgy, not just its words and prayers, but uses the entire ambiance to teach the generation the true faith. Each and every article, every other action is set up to teach us. We can sense those with every sensory organ. It starts from hearing the Church bell inviting you to the Church for the service. Some may think, is it really necessary to have these signs and symbols in the Church. Of course, it is. Not just in Church, in every sphere of our life, it is necessary and without signs and symbols, we cannot even survive. Let me take two examples from our everyday life. One is our language. When I write ‘C’ ‘A’ and ‘T’, the picture of a cat comes in our mind. I didn't present a cat in front of you. But still, you will think of a cat. Language itself is a set of signs and symbols. Let's take another from our road traffic. No one dares to drive the car if the traffic signal light is red. No one might be there to stop you. But you know it is a sign to stop. We smile, we wave hands, all these to show our love towards someone. Those are all signs, without which, we cannot even live.

It is applicable in the Church too. The Church bell, the structure of the Church, the altar, the veil, the censer, incense, the cross, the candles, 'chithola', 'virikootte', chalice, paten, spoon, the lector, the positions of people, the feasts, the sacraments, the rituals and every minute detail is crafted and placed very carefully so that it will pass on the rich heritage of the church to the generation. It is what exactly God commanded to Moses and Joshua to keep several articles and feasts so that it would edify the generation (Ex. 12:26; 16:33; Lev.23:43; Num. 17:10; Josh. 4:20). These are to be kept so that your generation may ask and you will describe the guidance and abundant grace of God.

Let me take a few more lines to describe one of the signs and symbols in very limited words. It is about the vestments. The priests wear many vestments as per the occasion of the service. Let us take kaapa for instance. It points out to the outer garment Christ was put on during his trial (Mt.27:28 and Mk.15:20). In different version, it is named as scarlet robe, purple garment or crimson cloak. All these are used to describe wealth, splendor and status. Purple is a royal garment, which is worn only by King and his officials. Many New Testament scholars opined that this point towards the priesthood of Jesus. The book of Hebrew is very keen in proclaiming Jesus as the Great High Priest. Peter in his first epistle chapter 2 verse 9 also points us as 'Royal Priesthood'. So, the priests are given the garments which reminds the Christ. Also the features of 'armour of God' described in Eph. 6:13-17 are also incorporated in this. The prayers for wearing these vestments clearly spoke about it. I was just taking one of symbols of the Church, that too in very limited words, to show how deeply the theologies are incorporated in the Liturgy.

Conclusion

Thus, the liturgy, with all its might, teaches us the greatness of God, through words, actions, symbols, signs, structure, colour, look, smell etc. So that, by looking at Almighty, we will have a clear picture of ourselves. We can rededicate ourselves for the glory of God. Through which, we can follow the footprints of our Lord and we can be a blessing for many others. My dear friends, take part in the service with all your heart, mind and soul and make it a heavenly one and make your life 'a liturgy after liturgy'. Let others be blessed because of us.

Imitation of CHRIST

- Mr. Rajan Varkey (Aminjikai Prayer Group)

One who follows Christ should imitate Christ. It is not an easy thing to do. A saint, Thomas A. Kempis of the 15th century wrote a devotional book, **Imitation of Christ**. This is one the most widely read book after the Bible. Thomas was a Catholic Priest who lived between 1390 & 1440.

In imitating Christ he enumerates several things which we can try to practice. Some of them are noted below.

Shun self-love - quite often our actions are mostly by self love.

Shun concupiscence - excessive indulgence in lust and other strong desires.

My God and my all - do we invoke God in our happy times as well as difficult times?

Be you holy as I am holy - something to take us closer to God.

Life of faith and sincerity - Ask the Holy Spirit to strengthen our faith and give us more sincerity.

Re-dedicate one every day - back-tracking from divine salvation can happen even to saints.

Love Jesus above all things - Where is our first love?

Please Him not gratify myself - "this life is for me to enjoy!"

No obedience, no grace - This is what Jesus likes.

Cast your cares on the Lord - all our cares are tests of our faith.

Turn to God in every temptation - The Holy Spirit is always with us. How close are we to Him?

Mahatma Gandhi once said "I like your Christ but not your Christianity". All that we read in the scripture about imitating Christ is summarized in this remark.

You might like to get into the bible and look up Philippians 2:5; John 13:12, 15-16; Ephesians 5:1-2; John 13:35.

The Malayalam Calendar versus the Gregorian Calendar

- Mr. Abraham Zachariah

Malayalam Year 1199 (Kollavarsham) marks the beginning of a new year today. Malayalam Year 1099 is predominantly remembered for the devastating flood that struck Kerala, known as the '99 Flood of Kerala'.

It has been a century since that catastrophic disaster occurred. Additionally, in Malayalam Year 1194, another similar flood took place.

In terms of the Gregorian Calendar, Malayalam Calendar 1109 corresponds to the year 1924, while Malayalam Calendar 1199 aligns with 2024. The flood in 1924 is referred to as the '99th year flood', whereas the flood in 1194 is known as the '2018 Great Flood'.

Over the course of a century, the Malayalam Calendar has lost its prominence and popularity. The '2018 Great Flood' is now commonly referred to as the '20-18 flood'.

The Kollam Era, also known as 'Kollavarsham', traces its origins back to 825 CE when a significant convention was held in Kollam under the patronage of King Kulashekharan. Kollam held great importance during that period.

On the other hand, the Gregorian calendar was introduced by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582 with the primary objective of altering the date of Easter. Prior to this, Europe followed the Julian Calendar.

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