

ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH

(CHURCH OF NORTH INDIA)

NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2017



(For Private Circulation Only)

Almanac and Lectionary: June 2017

Date	Theme & Readings	Liturgical colour
<p>Sunday, 4 June 2017 Holy Communion Services: 7 a.m., 9 a.m. & 6 p.m.</p>	<p>Pentecost Theme: The gift of the Holy Spirit. 1st Reading: Acts 2:1-11 Psalm : Psalm 139:1-4,7-8,11-12,23-24 2nd Reading: I Corinthians 12:1-13 Gospel : John 20:19-23</p> <p>Refer to <i>Readings for Sunday Worship</i> ~ page 129</p>	<p>Red</p>
<p>Sunday, 11 June 2017 Holy Communion Services: 7 a.m., 9 a.m. & 6 p.m.</p>	<p>Trinity Sunday Theme: God the Holy Trinity. O.T. : Exodus 6:2-8 Psalm : Psalm 33:12-19 Epistle : Romans 8:11-17 Gospel : Mark 1:7-13</p> <p>Refer to <i>Readings for Sunday Worship</i> ~ page 132</p>	<p>White</p>
<p>Sunday, 18 June 2017 Holy Communion Services: 7 a.m., 9 a.m. & 6 p.m.</p>	<p>Second Sunday after Pentecost Theme: Jesus tells us who are truly blessed, happy. O.T. : Isaiah 61:1-4,8-9 Psalm : Psalm 119:1-6 Epistle : II Corinthians 6:3-10 Gospel : Matthew 5:1-12</p> <p>Refer to <i>Readings for Sunday Worship</i> ~ page 135</p>	<p>Green</p>
<p>Sunday, 25 June 2017 Holy Communion Services: 7 a.m., 9 a.m. & 6 p.m.</p>	<p>Third Sunday after Pentecost Theme: Our hearts must be kept free from anger and hatred.. O.T. : Genesis 4:2b-10 Psalm : Psalm 37:3-8 Epistle : I John 3:11-15 Gospel : Matthew 5:17,20-26</p> <p>Refer to <i>Readings for Sunday Worship</i> ~ page 138</p>	<p>Green</p>
<p>Sunday, 2 July 2017 Holy Communion Services: 7 a.m., 9 a.m. & 6 p.m.</p>	<p>Fourth Sunday after Pentecost Theme: The source of truth and purity is in the heart. O.T. : Genesis 6:5-8 Psalm : Psalm 34:8-9,11-14 Epistle : Ephesians 4:17-25 Gospel : Matthew 5:27-30,33-37</p> <p>Refer to <i>Readings for Sunday Worship</i> ~ page 140</p>	<p>Green</p>

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Understanding the Church

The images of the church provided in the New Testament helps us in understanding what the church should be like. In the previous issue, three minor images were discussed namely, 'The Salt of the Earth', 'The Temple of God', and 'The Flock'. Two other important images are: 'Kingdom of God' and 'The Bride of Christ'.

1. Kingdom of God

The kingdom of God is an important image of the church which helps one to understand God's plan of salvation. It also provides important insights in understanding the nature and mission of the church. According to the Gospels, Jesus came to announce and to inaugurate the kingdom of God. Jesus declared the kingdom of God and God's righteousness. Even though the term 'kingdom of God' is not defined in the New Testament, it is quite clear that Jesus' hearers were familiar with the concept.

In the Old Testament, the term appears rarely. However, the idea of Yahweh's kingship pervaded every sphere of life in ancient Israel. That Israel recognised and celebrated Yahweh's kingship can be seen clearly in Psalm 145 & 146. "I will extol you, my God and King," is how Psalm 145 begins. The term 'kingdom of God' appears four times in Psalm 145:11-13. Psalm 146 concludes with the words, "The Lord will reign forever..."

The essential nature of God's rule can be seen in Psalms 145-146. John Driver says that "The kingdom of God is seen most clearly in the way in which the Lord shows his merciful providence toward the weak and oppressed. Principal attributes of divine kingship are mercy, goodness, faithfulness, and providence."

Jesus sent out his disciples with the words, "As you go, proclaim the good news, '**the kingdom of heaven** has come near.' Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons" (Matthew 10:7-8). This was the nature of Jesus' earthly ministry. The church, says John Driver, is "commissioned to live out the reality of the presence of the kingdom in the world... This is the community which anticipates the kingdom; it is a sign of the kingdom; and it fulfils its mission in the service of the kingdom." The church must proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God to the poor (cf. Luke 4:18). The church must work towards establishing the kingdom where God will be the king. The church as the representative of the Kingdom of God must play the role of a facilitator in ordering the society in accordance to the revealed will of God. The kingdom of God has different dimensions, namely political, social, personal, and universal. The church is not the kingdom. It only points to the kingdom. The church is to witness to the kingdom. The church must be a sign of the kingdom reflecting the life and values of the kingdom. In other words, the church, as Kuncheria Pathil says, must make the kingdom of God "visible in its own life by its *kerygma* (proclamation), *koinonia* (fellowship), and *diakonia* (service)."

2. The Bride of Christ

In the New Testament, the Greek word for a bride is *gune*, a wife. For example, in Revelation 21:9, one of the angels told John, “Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.” Walter Elwell says, “The church is never directly called the bride of Christ, but is so understood by Paul’s analogy in which husband-wife relationship is said to be like the Christ-church relationship” (Ephesians 5:22-33).

The relationship between the church and the Lord is portrayed in terms of marital relations in four New Testament writings. Paul was the first to make a clear use of the bride metaphor for the church. In II Corinthians 11:1f. Apostle Paul writes that he promised to give the church in marriage to Jesus Christ, who will be her one husband. A sincere and pure devotion is expected from the bride (church) towards the bridegroom (Christ). In Ephesians 5:21-31, again, the relation of the church to Christ is compared to the relation of wife to husband. John the Baptist identified Messiah with the bridegroom, and himself as the friend of the bridegroom. He said, “He who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice. For this reason my joy has been fulfilled” (John 3:29).

The image of the church as the bride of Christ finds its fullest expression in the final chapters of Revelation. The bride is synonymous with the Holy City, the New Jerusalem. “And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Revelation 21:2). The image of the bride could typically be combined easily with such unrelated pictures as those of city, nation, temple, and body. As the bride would be sincere and pure in her devotion to the bridegroom, the church must be devoted to Christ. The church is warned against committing adultery by submitting to “another Jesus... a different spirit... a different gospel” (II Corinthians 11:3-4).

**In His Grace,
Thomas Jacob**

NEWS & NOTES

Confirmation classes: The confirmation classes have started from 28 May.

Sunday School: Sunday School will reopen on 18 June.

QCCCS: The Day Care Centre and Study Centre reopened on 1 June.

Weekly Bible Study: Members meet in the PHCC every Thursday at 7.30 p.m. for a time of fellowship, singing and interactive Bible study.

Visiting Preachers: Rt. Rev. S.B.Joshua (retd.) and Rev.Keith Pasgon conducted the services on 14 May. We thank them for their support.

Obituary: We are sad to announce the demise of Mrs. Promila David (79 years) on 23 May. May our Lord console the bereaved family.

Membership: We are happy to welcome and introduce our new member:

- Mr. George Muller, Mrs.Pushpa G. Muller & son (Full Membership)

Senior Citizens: We pray for all the senior citizens of our Church that our merciful God will give them good health and strength.

Sick & Homebound: We continue to pray for the sick and house bound members of our Church: Rani Biswas, David C. Matthew, Prakash Naik, Olga Nazareth, Loolu Thomas, Padmini Abraham, Lizy Kurian, Judith Rallia Ram, Anitaa Thakur, Sumitra Figueredo, and Pushpa John that God's merciful healing hands be upon them and strengthen them.

Isaac Cladio

Hon. Secretary

HEARD FROM THE PULPIT

7 May 2017 ~ Third Sunday after Easter

Theme: 'The Good Shepherd.'

Psalm 23 portrays God as a Shepherd who cares for and looks after his flock. It is a song of confidence - confidence in God. David affirms his confidence in God.

1. Confidence in a God who provides.

"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want" (v.1). The shepherd leads the sheep to fields of green pasture and fresh water, where they can lie down and rest and be nourished so that their strength would be renewed. Similarly, God cares for us. He leads, provides, nourishes and strengthens us. In the highly materialistic society that we live today, where most people say "I want this... I want that..." this Psalm challenges us to trust in God rather than in things to bring happiness. We need to discover the joy of being content from Apostle Paul, who wrote, "I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want" (Philippians 4:11b-12).

2. Confidence in a God who protects.

"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil" (v.4). David knew well that the shepherd not only need to provide green pasture for his sheep but also provide protection against thieves and wild animals that would prey upon them. David himself experienced God's protection as he encountered his own enemies in life. So he could declare boldly: "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me..." The valley of the shadow of death is indeed a frightening place. Yet the Bible is clear that we need not fear in the valley of the shadow of death since, as David testified, through it all God is with us. As someone said, "Peace is not the absence of trouble. Peace is the presence of God."

21 May 2017 ~ Fifth Sunday after Easter

Theme: 'The promise of the Holy Spirit.'

The expectation of the Lord's return prompts Peter to urge Christians for the fullest use of the gifts that the Holy Spirit has given them (I Peter 4:7-11). Earlier, in the same chapter, Peter had said, "Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same thought ... so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer by human passions but by the will of God." We must not live to fulfil the sinful desires of the flesh. Rather, we must live by the will of God. We must live a life that pleases God. Peter goes on to contrast the life of an unbeliever with that of a believer (verses 3-5).

In verses 7-11, Peter presents the positive side of the contrast in lifestyle. The realisation that "the end of all things is at hand", that the Lord is coming, that the Day of Judgment is approaching, implies that our lives must be different from our old sinful past. We must exercise the gifts that the Holy Spirit has given for the glory of God and for the benefit of others.

Every person who is regenerated by the Holy Spirit is given at least one spiritual gift. Some may have more than one. While some gifts of the Holy Spirit would be prominent, others may not have much visibility. It does not matter what gift/gifts we are given. It does not matter whether our gift is prominent that people take note of it, or whether it not seen by any. What is important is that we use the gift/gifts that we are given.

Spiritual gifts are given for the common good. So, when one person does not use what God has given him/her, everyone else suffers. This is what Paul illustrates in I Corinthians 12. Paul compares the church to a body with many parts. Just as a body has many parts; eyes, ears, feet, which function together in harmony so that the body works the way it should, so the church has many parts, you and I, and each one of us has a part to play by serving one another. When we don't play our part it effects everyone around us, it is like having a body part that doesn't function, which leads to sickness.

28 May 2017 ~ Sixth Sunday after Easter

Theme: 'Christ's ascension is a sign of our glorious destiny.'

The ascension of Jesus is an event of great importance but is often wrongly overlooked. If we would careful attention to it, we would be able to see its implications in relation to our faith.

The Ascension shows that Christ is Lord. The ascension of Jesus is an integral part of the proposition that Christ is the "Lord." On Pentecost, after arguing the death and resurrection, we see Peter's contention that the ascension makes it known to all with certainty that God has made Jesus both Lord and Messiah (Acts 2:36).

The ascension of Christ also clearly reveals that, contrary to Jewish expectations, and those of some of the disciples, Jesus' mission here on earth was not to overthrow Rome! The ascension marked the end of the mission of Jesus the Incarnate.

The ascension of Christ also demonstrated the manner of Christ's final return. He would return the same way as he ascended. It would be a return that we would physically see. Jesus' second coming would not be an invisible act.

The ascension provides us with a supreme confidence that we have a heavenly High Priest - One who would act as our intercessor (Hebrews 7:25).

Now, what was the response of the disciples to the Ascension? We note in Acts 1:12-14 that the disciples returned to Jerusalem with great joy and renewed devotion. When we consider the ascension of Christ, we are reminded of God's declaration that Jesus is Lord. The question is, "Is Jesus Christ your Lord and Saviour?" If Jesus is truly the Lord of our lives, we can be filled with joy, irrespective of the circumstances. It is a time for us to renew our devotion, as the disciples did as they returned to Jerusalem, because the Lord is coming again. Jesus told his disciples in Matthew 24:44, "Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour."

GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE

We thank God for the lives and faithful service of all those who passed away in the month of June of earlier years.

YEAR	NAME
1890	HURST FREDERICK
1892	LUKE CYRIL BERNARD
1899	ALLUM CECIL ERNEST
1900	GOSTLING BEATRICE
1912	MUIR FLORA
1917	RADCLIFFE MAUDE
1967	RODRICKS DOMNIC MANUEL
1972	NOEL WHITTAM
1977	ANDREWS REBECCA
1989	THEOPHILUS PRAKASH
1990	TARAPOREWALA MARGARET HOSHANG
1992	BARKER JAMES ARTHUR
1996	FOSTER IAN
2000	JOHN GRACE SUNDARAM
2002	ANCHAN SILAS
2003	RAWSON DORA
2005	MATHAI SUSAN
2006	GRIFFIN PAUL
2006	JACOB SUSANNA
2006	D. EDWIN SAMSON
2011	MANJULA AMOLIK
2012	P.G. THOMAS
2014	GEORGE JACOB
2015	DENNIS JACOBS

REGULAR ACTIVITIES

**Worship Services on Sundays: Holy Communion (Said): 7 a.m. & 6 p.m.
Holy Communion (Sung): 9 a.m.**

Activity	Venue	Day & Time	Contact Person	Phone No.
Pastorate Committee Meeting	Parsonage	18 June 10.45 a.m.	Isaac Cladio	9869513872
Sunday School	PHCC	Reopens on 18 June.	Beulah Tellis	9820432056
Bible Study	PHCC	Thursdays 7.30 p.m.	Rev.Thomas Jacob	9820736359
QCCCS: Day Care Centre & Study Centre	PHCC	Monday to Friday 9 a.m.to 4 p.m. 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.	Sumitra Figueredo	26050229

Church Office: Saguna Doshi (Monday to Saturday: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.)	26423955
Rev. Thomas Jacob, Presbyterian-in-charge	9820736359 / 26428803 presbyter@stephenschurch- bandra.com
Isaac Cladio, Hon. Secretary	9869513872
Sabina Solomon, Hon. Treasurer	9820080456
K.P. George, Hon. Jt. Secretary	9821074653
Vimla Philips, Hon. Jt. Treasurer	9892624886

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