

ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH

(CHURCH OF NORTH INDIA)

NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2017



(For Private Circulation Only)

Almanac and Lectionary: August 2017

Date	Theme & Readings	Liturgical colour
<p>Sunday, 6 August 2017 Holy Communion Service: 9 a.m.</p>	<p>Ninth Sunday after Pentecost Theme: The messengers of God are often unheeded. O.T. : Exodus 32:1-8 Psalm : Psalm 106:7-14 Epistle : Romans 10:13-21 Gospel : Matthew 11:16-24 Refer to <i>Readings for Sunday Worship</i> ~ page 153</p>	<p>White</p>
<p>Sunday, 13 August 2017 Holy Communion Services: 7 a.m., 9 a.m. & 6 p.m.</p>	<p>Tenth Sunday after Pentecost Theme: God cares for those who are heavily burdened. O.T. : Exodus 19:1,2b-6 Psalm : Psalm 23 Epistle : Hebrews 4:14-5:5 Gospel : Matthew 11:25-30 Refer to <i>Readings for Sunday Worship</i> ~ page 157</p>	<p>Green</p>
<p>Sunday, 20 August 2017 Holy Communion Services: 7 a.m., 9 a.m. & 6 p.m.</p>	<p>Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost Theme: We are judged by our words, which show what is in our hearts. O.T. : Jeremiah 23:23-32 Psalm : Psalm 141:1-5a Epistle : James 3:1-12 Gospel : Matthew 12:31-37 Refer to <i>Readings for Sunday Worship</i> ~ page 159</p>	<p>Green</p>
<p>Sunday, 27 August 2017 Holy Communion Services: 7 a.m., 9 a.m. & 6 p.m.</p>	<p>Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost Theme: The fruitfulness of the Gospel depends on how it is received. O.T. : Jonah 3 Psalm : Psalm 85:7-12 Epistle : I Thessalonians 1 Gospel : Matthew 13:1-9,18-23 Refer to <i>Readings for Sunday Worship</i> ~ page 162</p>	<p>Green</p>
<p>Sunday, 3 September 2017 Holy Communion Services: 7 a.m., 9 a.m. & 6 p.m.</p>	<p>Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost Theme: No sacrifice is too great for those who seek the kingdom of God. O.T. : Genesis 12:1-7 Psalm : Psalm 119:65-68,71-72 Epistle : Philippians 3:4b-11 Gospel : Matthew 13:44-52 Refer to <i>Readings for Sunday Worship</i> ~ page 165</p>	<p>Green</p>

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

True Spirituality

There are different concepts of spirituality in Christian circles. While some would consider a person who talks about God and religion always as very spiritual, others think that the person who prays the longest and loudest in a Christian gathering is spiritual. Still others consider someone who has lot of biblical and theological knowledge as spiritual. Often we replace spirituality with religiosity. We put up an external display of what we think a Christian should look like. We attend church regularly, take part in the Holy Communion, and actively participate in church activities. We put on a great show for all to see. We look down at those who are not working as hard as we are to be or to look spiritual. We are judgmental. We condemn those who are struggling to get their life right with God, but just aren't as faithful as we are at coming to church. We focus solely on outward conduct and ignore the inner being.

What is true spirituality? How can we measure spiritual growth? What are the marks of true spirituality?

1. Seeks God first.

Those who are spiritual will first and foremost seek God. They would have a deep desire to honour God in all that they think and do. Their supreme love would be directed towards God. Everything and everyone else would come second for them. They would see everything from God's perspective. The spiritual person would be able to look at things as God looks at.

2. Love for others.

A genuine love for others is another mark of true spirituality. James writes in his letter: "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress... (James 1:27). Truly spiritual persons would not do anything out of selfish ambition but would always seek to help those who are vulnerable and needy. They would not promote themselves but would help others get ahead (cf. Philippians 2:3-4). They would forget themselves long enough to be able to help others. There would be no envy in their hearts when others are honoured.

3. Desire holiness.

"Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this ... to keep oneself from being polluted by the world" (James 1:27). Truly spiritual persons would be concerned about holiness rather than happiness. In the search for happiness many Christians compromise on holy living.

**In His Grace,
Thomas Jacob**

NEWS & NOTES

“And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.
To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen”
Philippians: 4:19,20

Weekly Bible Study: Members meet every Thursday at 7.30 p.m. in the PHCC for a time of fellowship, singing and interactive Bible study. Currently, studies in a series titled *Know why you believe* is underway.

Sunday School: The Sunday School meets at 9 a.m. on all Sundays. At present, the focus is on the Parables of Jesus.

Teens Meet: Teens and college students will volunteer in the Free Medical Camp to be conducted by the Mumbai Diocesan Missionary Movement (MDMM) in one of its fields in the month of August.

WFCS: The Women’s Fellowship for Christian Service (WFCS) held their Annual General Meeting on 23 July. Vimla Philips was elected as the Secretary for a term of three years.

QCCCS: The Queenie Captain Community Centre Society (QCCCS) held their Annual General Meeting on 30 July. The Management Committee members were elected during the meeting.

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: David C. Matthew, Prakash Naik, Olga Nazareth, Loolu Thomas, Lizy Kurian, Padmini Abraham, Judith Rallia Ram, Anitaa Thakur, Pushpa John, Sumitra Figueredo and Nancy Razdan that God’s merciful hands be upon them to heal and strengthen them.

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen”
Philippians 4:23

Isaac Cladio
Hon. Secretary

HEARD FROM THE PULPIT

2 July 2017 ~ Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

Theme: 'The source of truth and purity is in the heart.'

In Matthew 5:27-30, Jesus gives a deeper meaning to the 7th commandment – “You shall not commit adultery”. While the scribes and the Pharisees limited the scope of the commandment, Jesus widened it. Like the inclusion of angry thoughts and insulting words to the prohibition of murder, Jesus included lustful looks to the prohibition of adultery.

So how do we maintain sexual purity? Jesus points out the relation between the eyes and the heart. You commit adultery in your heart when you commit adultery with your eyes. Job understood this: “I have made a covenant with my eyes...” (Job 31:1,7,9,11). If we have control of eyes, we would have control over our hearts. If we have control over our hearts, we would have control over our lives. Eyes are the windows of the heart. So, we need to guard what we allow to come in through the windows of our heart. Jesus says that, sometimes, we may even have to take drastic measures to avoid sin. He was not actually promoting self-mutilation. Rather, he was suggesting a ruthless moral self-denial.

9 July 2017 ~ Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

Theme: 'Our love for others should be without any limit, like the love of God.'

As a Christian, what should be my response to a wicked person, or to someone who always opposes me? Jesus spoke on the issue in Matthew 5:38-48. The law “An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a truth” laid down the principle of exact retribution (cf. Deut. 19:21). It was meant to define justice and to restrain revenge but was not meant to be used for personal retribution. Rather it was designed to be administered by legal authorities such as judges. But the Pharisees extended this principle of just retribution from the law courts to the realm of personal relationships to justify personal revenge, which was the very thing it was meant to abolish. But Jesus said, “I say to you, ‘Do not resist an evildoer.’” We do not pretend that we are not wronged. We do not condone the evil behaviour. Yet, we must choose not to retaliate; not to take revenge. Further, Jesus said, “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven.” Jesus himself is the perfect example for us to follow. As Apostle Peter wrote in I Peter 2:23, “When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly.” When he was dying on the cross, he prayed, “Father, forgive them.”

16 July 2017 ~ Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

Theme: 'Be doers, not merely hearers, of the Word.'

James wrote, “But be doers of the word and not merely hearers who deceive themselves” (James 1:22). He compares the person who hears the word and rejects it to someone who looks at himself/herself in the mirror and walks away and immediately forgets what he/she looks like.

In Matthew 7:21-29, Jesus tells the Parable of the wise and foolish builders. The one who hears and obeys the word of God is like a wise man who built his house on rock. The house withstood the storms and floods since it was built on a strong foundation. But those who hear the word of God and do nothing about it are like the foolish man who built his house on sand. When the storms and floods came, the house fell due to its weak foundation. If we are only reading and hearing the truth, we are not prepared for life's storms. On the other hand, if our foundation is sure, no storm will cause our lives to collapse. The song writer put it beautifully:

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand,
All other ground is sinking sand.

23 July 2017 ~ Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

Theme: 'It is God who commissions those who are to do his work.'

Some are called to devote fully in Christian ministries. But is the responsibility of proclaiming the gospel of Christ only for the so called full time Christian workers? The answer is 'No'. All of us are expected to declare the love of Christ through both words and actions at every opportunity that come our way. While full time evangelists and missionaries may devote all their energy and time to present the good news of Jesus Christ to others, we cannot shy away from our own responsibility.

What is God's work? Is it only evangelism and Christian ministries? Are only evangelists, missionaries and pastors called to serve God? Was work an after effect of the Fall? Are we created to work or cursed to work? We must recognise that work is a significant part of God's mission for humankind as originally intended in the creation mandate (Genesis 1:27,28). Work was envisaged by God for the fulfilment of his purposes. Since it was God who envisaged work, we can say that work is holy. All the fields of study and work can be traced back to God's creation mandate to subdue (or, rule over) the earth. The mandate to subdue is not a license for rampant exploitation. We must look into our work and see how our skills, training and work can be used in a way that it will help in developing and sustaining God's creation for the benefit of all. Are we excelling in our work? Are we honouring God in and through our work?

30 July 2017 ~ Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

Theme: 'Jesus teaches us to be bold in God's service.'

Fear is a good thing sometimes, like the fear of danger. Then, there is the fear of God that we all should have. Proverbs 1:7 reads: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge." But there are also fears that grip us and stop us short of living out our Christian faith and our commitment to live for Christ. Proverbs 29:5 says: "The fear of man will prove to be a snare."

We who have the truth of God's word, and the assurances and promises of God, and know that we are his children, still bow to public pressure. Our position on many issues is determined by the opinion of the people even when they are opposed to our thinking and conviction. Jesus tells us in Matthew 10:24-33 that we do not have to fear anything because nothing happens in our lives without the knowledge of our loving God.

SENIOR CITIZENS' CORNER

Pass It On

(Joseph J. Mazzella)

Growing up in my Grandma's house as a boy was an experience that would shape me for the rest of my life. We were poor in everything but spirit, yet I learned so much about life there. My Mom, Dad, Nana, two brothers, and I were crowded into a home made from two old shanty cars and several built on rooms. I always knew what my next set of clothes would look like because I had seen my older brother wearing them the year before. I always knew what we were going to be eating in the Winter, because I had weeded it in the garden during the Summer. Still, I never felt poor. No king ever ate as good as we did on Sundays after church when Nana cooked her homemade meatballs, spaghetti, and freshly baked bread.

Even though we had so little I can still remember Dad, Mom, and Nana giving so much. We were always sharing with others. Everyone who visited us could expect a plate of spaghetti, or a mason jar of canned vegetables, or a flower pot full of fresh blossoms to be given to them. I can still remember the sparkle in Mom and Nana's eyes whenever they passed something on to others. We never felt richer or more blessed than when we shared what God had given us. I learned early on that the greatest joy comes from giving rather than getting. Giving fills your heart with love. Giving fills your soul with God. Giving brings your spirit closer to Heaven.

Don't be afraid to pass on your blessings, riches, gifts, and talents to others. That is why God gave them to you in the first place. Share everything you have. If you have a beautiful smile then pass it on. If you have a lovely laugh then pass it on. If you have a few extra dollars then pass them on. If you give great hugs then pass them on. If you have a special talent then share it with others. If you have a heart full of love then give it to everyone. No life is ever truly lived until it becomes a gift in itself, so make your whole life a gift to the world.

GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE

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

YEAR	NAME
1902	WAGMANUS CLARA
1913	WALMSLEY ALICE
1914	BLISS WINTER GEORGE
1921	HOWELL EMILY
1929	DUCAT GEORGE VICTOR
1930	BARVETT JOSIAH
1967	VARTAK PETER MOTILAL
1983	JACOBIE SYDNEY
1983	RAO SANJEEV
1984	DEANE SHOBHA
1985	MATHAI GEORGE
1987	VARKEY JANE
1989	PAUL PRABHAVATI CALEB
1993	SMITH BEATRICE
2001	CHERIAN ACHAMMA
2001	AMOLIK BHASKAR
2002	MUNDLE DIPIKA D.
2003	NATH JOSEPHINE
2006	SUCHITTA MANOHAR
2014	MANDAKINI MAKHWAN
2015	JACOB MULIYIL

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	20 August 10.45 a.m.	Isaac Cladio	9869513872
Sunday School	PHCC	Sundays 9 a.m.	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.	Kumary Koshy	9820217524

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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