

# **ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH**

**(CHURCH OF NORTH INDIA)**

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## **NEWSLETTER**

### **NOVEMBER 2017**



(For Private Circulation Only)

## Almanac and Lectionary: November 2017

Date	Theme & Readings	Liturgical colour
<p><b>Sunday, 5 November 2017</b> Holy Communion Services: 7 a.m., 9 a.m. &amp; 6 p.m.</p>	<p><b>Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost</b> <b>Theme: Love sums up and fulfils every law.</b> O.T. : Deuteronomy 10:12-19 Psalm : Psalm 119:161-165,168 Epistle : Galatians 5:2-6,13-15 Gospel : Matthew 22:34-40</p> <p>Refer to <i>Readings for Sunday Worship</i> ~ page 191</p>	<p><b>Green</b></p>
<p><b>Sunday, 12 November 2017</b> Holy Communion Services: 7 a.m., 9 a.m. &amp; 6 p.m.</p>	<p><b>Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost</b> <b>Theme: Preaching is useless, if it is contradicted by the way we live.</b> O.T. : Jeremiah 5:1-5,30-31 Psalm : Psalm 62:1,8-12 Epistle : Romans 2:17-24 Gospel : Matthew 23:1-12</p> <p>Refer to <i>Readings for Sunday Worship</i> ~ page 193</p>	<p><b>Green</b></p>
<p><b>Sunday, 19 November 2017</b> Holy Communion Services: 7 a.m., 9 a.m. &amp; 6 p.m.</p>	<p><b>Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost</b> <b>Theme: God will call us to account for our stewardship of time and talents.</b> O.T. : Genesis 39:1-6a Psalm : Psalm 92:1-2,12-15 Epistle : I Corinthians 3:10-17 Gospel : Matthew 25:14-30</p> <p>Refer to <i>Readings for Sunday Worship</i> ~ page 196</p>	<p><b>Green</b></p>
<p><b>Sunday, 26 November 2017</b> Holy Communion Service:</p> <p><b>Harvest Festival</b> <b>5 p.m.</b></p>	<p><b>Harvest Festival</b> <b>Theme: Thanksgiving for the fruits of the earth.</b> O.T. : Joel 2:21-27 Psalm : Psalm 65 Epistle : I Timothy 6:6-11 Gospel : Luke 12:15-21</p>	<p><b>Green</b></p>
<p><b>Sunday, 3 December 2017</b> Holy Communion Services: 7 a.m. &amp; 9 a.m.</p>	<p><b>Fourth Sunday before Christmas (Advent 1)</b> <b>Theme: Watchful expectation for the coming of Christ.</b> O.T. : Isaiah 64:1-2,4-8 Psalm : Psalm 80:1,3-7 Epistle : I Corinthians 1:3-9 Gospel : Mark 13:28-37</p> <p>Refer to <i>Readings for Sunday Worship</i> ~ page 1</p>	<p><b>Violet</b></p>

## **FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK**

### **Judging Others**

A week back, I read a post titled 'Christians are judgmental' in the social media. The person says, "Christians are judgmental. They are trying, consciously or not, to justify feelings of moral and spiritual superiority." In response to the post, someone wrote, "... Christ alone was non-judgmental."

Another person said, "Christians like to hear themselves talk. They are arrogant about their beliefs, and they never bother figuring out what other people actually think. They don't seem to be very compassionate, especially when they feel strongly about something."

Why are Christians, many a times, accused of being judgmental? What did Jesus mean when he said, "Do not judge, or you too will be judged" (Matthew 7:1)? Are we to suspend our critical faculties? Are we to turn a deaf ear or close our eyes to the wrongs that happen around us in the church and the society?

Yes, we should not assume any superiority. However, when we call spade a spade, we could be accused of being judgmental. Christ called the religious leaders of his time "hypocrites". So, when we see hypocrisy today, we must call it hypocrisy. Sadly, today we are often more concerned about political correctness than the truth itself.

Matthew 7:1 - "Do not judge, or you too will be judged" – is often misquoted for the sake of political correctness. As a result, the world is now expecting the church to validate its sins. Many Christian leaders today speak what is politically correct even when it is not correct biblically. Preachers are reluctant to speak about sin from the pulpit for the fear of offending the congregation. We are fine with compromising the truth in order to retain friendships and for the sake of attracting people to church. True, we must not judge self-righteously, arrogantly or contemptuously. That, however, does not mean that we should not make moral and spiritual judgments.

The 16<sup>th</sup> Century Reformers stood for and spoke the truth. Since they chose to please God rather than people, many of them faced persecution and even death. When Jesus said "Do not judge, or you too will be judged", he did not mean that we must stop being discerning. In fact, he said a few verses later: "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing..." (Matthew 7:15). Apostle John wrote, "Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God..." Therefore, some judgment is not only accepted but also mandated.

**In His Grace,  
Thomas Jacob**

## **NEWS & NOTES**

“May the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you. Then the land will yield its harvest and God, our God, will bless us.”

Psalm 67:5,6

**Visiting Preachers:** We thank Rt.Rev.S.B.Joshua, Rev.Graham Engineer, and Rev.Elwyn Enos, for conducting the worship services on 1 October when Rev.Thomas Jacob was away. Rev.Dr.Jacob Thomas from Belfast Bible College was the guest speaker on 29 October on the occasion of 500<sup>th</sup> year jubilee of the Reformation.

**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.

**Teens Meet:** Teens and college students meet in the Parsonage with Rev.Thomas Jacob for a time of fellowship. These “Emerging Youth” will lead the evening worship service on 5 November.

**WFCS:** The Food Festival held on 1 October was a scrumptious treat and a record sell out in quick time. The WFCS members visited the All Saints Home, Dockyard Road on 2 October and had a meaningful time with the residents.

**QCCCS:** An Eye Camp was organised on 7 October for the children and the community they represent with the technical co-operation of K.B.H. Bachooali Charitable Ophthalmic & ENT Hospital, Parel. 132 people benefitted from this, out of which 20 people require cataract operations and 19 were recommended spectacles.

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

**Presbyter’s Travel:** Rev.Thomas Jacob will be away on leave from 10 to 15 November. Members may contact the church office for Pastoral care needs.

**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, Lizzy Kurian, Padmini Abraham, Judith Rallia Ram, Anitaa Thakur, Nancy Razdan and Thankam Venkataraman that God’s merciful hands be upon them to heal and strengthen them.

“He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy.”

Acts 14:17

**Isaac Cladio**  
**Hon. Secretary**

## HEARD FROM THE PULPIT

8 October 2017 ~ Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

**Theme: 'Though we have to face temptation, it is God's will that all should be saved.'**

Temptation is an experience common to all believers. There is an inclination within all of us to do wrong. Often knowingly, and sometimes unknowingly, we do what is wrong. Bible calls this urge the flesh or the old nature. We can trace back the origin of the battle with sin to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. To think of it, the essence of any temptation is to turn away from the Lord God, to rebel against God.

Does God tempt us? James 1:13 says: "When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone..." While God does not tempt us, he tests us. But, why would God test us? The answer can be found in Deuteronomy 13:3 ~ "...for the Lord your God is testing you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul."

There will always be the temptation to imbibe the values of this fallen world and to copy the lifestyle of this world. In this context, the words of the Apostle Paul serves as a challenge: "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God - this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Romans 12:1-2).

15 October 2017 ~ Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

**Theme: 'Those who refuse to forgive cannot be forgiven.'**

Forgiveness is essential to our relationship with God, with others, and even with ourselves. It is critical for our emotional, mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing.

Bible teaches us – as Martin Luther affirmed during the Reformation – that we are saved by grace alone. God loves, forgives and saves us not because of what we are or what we do, but because of the work of Christ on the cross. And yet there are several verses, particularly spoken by Jesus, that seem to suggest that we will receive his forgiveness only when we are willing to forgive those who have wronged us.

Jesus said, "Forgive and you will be forgiven" (Luke 6:37). "Forgive us the wrongs we have done, as we forgive the wrongs that others have done to us" (Matthew 6:12). "If you forgive others the wrongs they have done to you, your Father in heaven will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive the wrongs you have done" (Matthew 6:14-15). "And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins" (Mark 11:25).

God expects us to forgive for he has forgiven us.

22 October 2017 ~ Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

**Theme: 'God gives us far more than we deserve.'**

In the Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard (Matthew 20), the landowner hired some men at 6 am after agreeing to pay them the usual day's wage. At about 9 o'clock, he hired some more promising to pay them "whatever is right". The landowner hired more men about noon and about 3 o'clock. Interestingly, about 5 o'clock in the evening, with just about an hour left, the owner hired some more men. When evening came the owner instructed the manager to call the workers and pay them the wages starting with the last and then going to the first. Those who worked only the last one hour were paid the full day's wage. So those who worked from 6 am thought they would receive much more than a day's wages. But everyone received the usual daily wage.

This parable speaks to us about the grace of God and the justice of God, which is quite different from our understanding and our sense of justice. It just does not seem right. How can the one who was hired at the eleventh hour be paid the same wages as was paid to those who worked from early morning? The answer is, God is gracious. This parable is also about the justice of God, which must be understood from the perspective of the least. If we read the parable from the point of view of the whole day labourers, then we would conclude that great injustice was done. But, if we would read from the perspective of those who were called at the eleventh hour, then we will see that God was both just and gracious. In those days, a day's wage was just enough to survive. If those who were engaged later in the day were paid less than the usual day's wages, then their families would have gone hungry that day. While we are grateful to God for his grace towards us, giving us more than we deserve, we are also challenged to consider the justice of God from the perspective of the least.

29 October 2017 ~ Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost

**Theme: 'The challenge to re-form.'**

II Kings 23 has an account about a reformation that took place in Jerusalem during the time of king Josiah. It began when the Book of the Law was found. It is shocking what can happen when the word of God is neglected. The Jerusalem Temple had adopted the worship of Baal and Asherah. Some of the earlier bad kings of Judah had even appointed idolatrous priests in the towns of Judah to burn incense to Baal, to the sun and moon... There were even male temple prostitutes. Under the leadership of the young king Josiah all of these were brought to an end. It began with the discovery and reading of the Book of the Law.

The trouble with the Church during the 16<sup>th</sup> Century Reformation was that it had become so powerful and corrupt that it sought to add things to the faith that were not scriptural. Today, we see a new and more profound corruption. The present day church is so weak that it is willing to forsake the scriptures in order to attract members. Today, we allow our values and lifestyles to be governed not by the Holy Scripture but by the notion of political correctness. Therefore, a new reformation is needed. We need to return to the purity of our faith based on God's Holy Word.

## SENIOR CITIZENS' CORNER

### God is Always There

We often feel as though  
God is far away  
And we often feel that He  
Is distant when we pray

So often we feel lonely,  
Not knowing where to turn  
Just a touch from God above,  
Our longing spirits yearn

So many times in our lives,  
God seems slow to act  
We cry out in desperation,  
But it's faith we often lack

For God is not being slow  
In coming to our aid  
He comes through in His time,  
We just need to learn to wait

The Lord is never distant,  
He is there by our side  
And continues to walk with us  
Through the storms in our lives

He always hears our hearts cry  
And answers all our prayers,  
He won't leave us all alone,  
For God is always there.

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## GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE

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

YEAR	NAME
	POLEN BLACKWELL
1891	ALICE MARY
1899	BROOKS JOSHUA
1900	HALE ELIZEBETH MARTILDA
1904	NUSROO MARIE LOUISA
1905	WEBB MARY
1907	MILLER THOMAS CONARDS
1910	ROBERT NORMAN DOUGLAS
1910	KREIES HENRICH
1911	GROBERTH EDITH WINIFRED
1912	WILLONGBBY MAUNDER
1917	GAINSFORD FREDERICK
1922	BIRD EVON
1926	WATTS MOLLY
1927	MENESSE MARY ANN
1929	LANGLEY WILLIAM
1934	BURBY IDA MAY
1956	HORTON WILLIAM GEORGE
1969	DAVID PRAKASH
1969	BARNETT MONA
1969	MICHAEL CELIL ARTHUR
1981	HAMILTON SATYAVARTA
1983	PONNAIYA LESLIE DAVID
1992	THEOPHILUS PREM
2004	AMAR P. BISWAS
2006	WINSTON IVOR C.
2008	JACOB ZHYA DAVID
2012	LEENA JOHNSTONE
2015	IRENE WHITTAM

## IMPORTANT DATES & INFORMATION

- Harvest Festival / Thanksgiving service at 5 pm on 26 November. There will be no other services on 26 November.
- In view of the CNI Day Thanksgiving Service at 5.30 pm at the Church of St.Mary the Virgin, Parel, there will be no evening service on 3 December.

## 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	5 November	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

<b>Church Office: Saguna Doshi</b> (Monday to Saturday: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.)	26423955
<b>Rev. Thomas Jacob</b> , Presbyterian-in-charge	9820736359 / 26428803 presbyter@stephenschurch-bandra.com
<b>Isaac Cladio</b> , Hon. Secretary	9869513872
<b>K.P.George</b> , Hon. Treasurer	9821074653
<b>Sushill Augustine</b> , Hon. Jt. Secretary	9820657433
<b>Sabina Solomon</b> , Hon. Jt. Treasurer	9820080456

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