

ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH

(CHURCH OF NORTH INDIA)

NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2017



(For Private Circulation Only)

Almanac and Lectionary: December 2017

Date	Theme & Readings	Liturgical colour
<p>Sunday, 3 December 2017 Holy Communion Services: 7 a.m. & 9 a.m.</p>	<p>Fourth Sunday before Christmas (Advent 1) Theme: Watchful expectation for the coming of Christ. 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>Violet</p>
<p>Sunday, 10 December 2017 Holy Communion Services: 7 a.m., 9 a.m. & 6 p.m.</p>	<p>Third Sunday before Christmas (Advent 2) Theme: The word of God demands a response from its hearers. O.T. : Zechariah 1:1-6 Psalm : Psalm 119:129-134 Epistle : II Timothy 3:14-4:5 Gospel : John 5:31-40,45-47</p> <p>Refer to <i>Readings for Sunday Worship</i> ~ page 4</p>	<p>Violet</p>
<p>Sunday, 17 December 2017 Holy Communion Services: 7 a.m. & 9 a.m.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Carol Service & Sunday School Program 6 p.m.</p>	<p>Second Sunday before Christmas (Advent 3) Theme: The coming of Christ is good news for the oppressed. O.T. : Malachi 3:1-5 Psalm : Psalm 146:4-10 Epistle : James 5:1-9 Gospel : Matthew 11:2-11</p> <p>Refer to <i>Readings for Sunday Worship</i> ~ page 6</p>	<p>Violet</p>
<p>24 December 2017 Sunday</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Christmas Eve Holy Communion Service 10 p.m.</p>	<p>Christmas Eve Theme: The birth of the Saviour who is the Word made flesh. O.T. : Micah 5:2-4 Psalm : Psalm 98:1-6 Epistle : Titus 3:4-7 Gospel : Luke 2:1-16</p> <p>Refer to <i>Readings for Sunday Worship</i> ~ page 12</p>	<p>White</p>
<p>25 December 2017 Monday</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Christmas Day Holy Communion Service 9 a.m.</p>	<p>Christmas Day Theme: The birth of the Saviour who is the Word made flesh. O.T. : Isaiah 9:2-3,6-7 Psalm : Psalm 86:8-13 Epistle : Hebrews 1:1-6 Gospel : John 1:1-14</p> <p>Refer to <i>Readings for Sunday Worship</i> ~ page 15</p>	<p>White</p>

<p>31 December 2017 Sunday Holy Communion Service: 9 a.m.</p> <p>Watch night Service Holy Communion Service 11 p.m.</p>	<p>First Sunday after Christmas Theme: Family life. O.T. : Zechariah 8:3-6 Psalm : Psalm 128 Epistle : Colossians 3:12-21 Gospel : Luke 2:22-40</p> <p>Refer to <i>Readings for Sunday Worship</i> ~ page 17</p>	<p>White</p>
<p>1 January 2018 Monday</p> <p>New Year Day Service Holy Communion Service 9 a.m.</p>	<p>New Year Day Service Theme: Family life. O.T. : Zechariah 8:3-6 Psalm : Psalm 128 Epistle : Colossians 3:12-21 Gospel : Luke 2:22-40</p> <p>Refer to <i>Readings for Sunday Worship</i> ~ page 17</p>	<p>White</p>
<p>Sunday, 7 January 2018 Holy Communion Services: 7 a.m., 9 a.m. & 6 p.m.</p>	<p>Second Sunday after Christmas Theme: We are sharers in the Sonship of Christ. O.T. : Proverbs 8:1,22-31 Psalm : Psalm 103:8-14 Epistle : Galatians 4:1-7 Gospel : John 1:9-18</p> <p>Refer to <i>Readings for Sunday Worship</i> ~ page 23</p>	<p>White</p>

SERVICE TIMINGS – DECEMBER 2017

DATE	WORSHIP SERVICES	
3 DEC Sunday	7 am & 9 am	NO SERVICE at 6 pm
10 DEC Sunday	7 am, 9 am & 6 pm	
17 DEC Sunday	7 am, 9 am & 6 pm – CAROL SERVICE & SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAMME	
24 DEC Sunday	10 pm - CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE	NO SERVICES at 7 am, 9 am & 6 pm
25 DEC Monday	9 am - CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE	
31 DEC Sunday	9 am & 11 pm - WATCH NIGHT SERVICE	NO SERVICES at 7 am & 6 pm
1 JAN 2018 Monday	9 am - NEW YEAR DAY SERVICE	

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

THE JOY OF MEETING AND WORSHIPPING THE SAVIOUR

“When they (wise men) saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him” (Matthew 2:10-11).

We've come a long way since that first Christmas Day (Helen Steiner Rice)

We've come a long way
since that first Christmas Night
When led by a STAR
so wondrously bright
The Wise Men journeyed
to find the place
That cradled the CHRIST CHILD'S
beautiful face –
But like “lost sheep”
we have wandered away
From God and His Son
who was born Christmas Day,
And instead of depending
on God's guiding hand
Ingenious man had assumed
full command
Like the “Prodigal Son”
who seeks to be free
From the heavenly FATHER
and His holy decree –
But life without God
is corroding man's soul,
Weakening his spirit
and distorting his goal,
And unless we return
to OUR FATHER again
We will never have PEACE
and GOOD WILL among men –
And the freedom man sought
will make him a slave
For only through God
is man strong, free and brave,
So let us return
to OUR FATHER and pray
That CHRIST is reborn
in our hearts Christmas Day.

The shepherds were filled with joy upon meeting the Saviour who was born in Bethlehem. They returned “glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen...” (Luke 2:20). The wise men who came from the east were overjoyed when the star led them to baby Jesus; and they worshipped him (Matthew 2:11). The joy of Christmas is not in the festivities but in meeting with Jesus, the Saviour of the world, and worshipping him. May our lives be Christ-centred during Christmas and always.

**In His Grace,
Thomas Jacob**

NEWS & NOTES

“Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”

I Timothy 1:15

Visiting Preachers: We thank Mr.Vijay Thangiah for speaking at the Youth Service on 5 November; Rev. Keith Pasgon for conducting all the worship services on 12 November when Rev.Thomas Jacob was away; Rt.Rev. Prakash D. Patole for conducting the confirmation service on 19 November; Rev.Jacob Thomas for taking the evening service on 19 November.

Teens Meet: The “Emerging Youth” of our church led the evening worship service on 5 November in Praise and Worship, scripture reading and intercessory prayer. The theme for the service was ‘Freedom and Struggle: Christ is enough’.

Confirmation: Two candidates were confirmed during the confirmation service on 19 November: 1.Christina Paul Thomas 2. Ashray Jacob Thomas

Church organ: The new church organ *Viscount Chorum 40* was dedicated by our bishop on 19 November. We thank Praveen Kenneth for this wonderful gift.

Harvest Festival: The thanksgiving service and harvest festival was celebrated with the traditional pomp and fervour on 26 November. We thank everyone who helped in organizing and all those who participated.

Membership: We are glad to welcome and introduce the new members:
Vivek Sridharan, Jane Sridharan and daughter (Full Membership)

Obituary: We are sad to announce the passing away of Mr.Sham Sunder Nath Razdan, husband of Nancy Gloria Razdan, on 23 November. May God console the bereaved family members.

Diocesan Committees: The following members were chosen in the 46th Ordinary Meeting of the Bombay Diocesan Council to serve on different diocesan committees:

A.P.Kurian – Executive Committee

Sabina Solomon – Finance Committee

Beulah Tellis – Religious Education Committee

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. Mathew, 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.

“Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

I Timothy 1:17

Isaac Cladio

Hon. Secretary

HEARD FROM THE PULPIT

5 November 2017 ~ Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost

Theme: 'Love sums up and fulfils every law.'

Often our spirituality is reduced to the religious following of rituals. We assume that if we say the right words and do the right things, we are living the right way before God and people. This is not necessarily true. The mandate of Jesus is not that we follow the rituals correctly, or even read our Bibles and pray every day. Rather, the mandate is that we love God and love one another.

When we love God and others, we fulfil all the commandments of God (Matthew 22:38-40). It is only through love that we can truly witness to other people about Jesus Christ. To be truly religious is to love God and to love our fellow human beings whom God has created in his own image. And we must love God and people not with some kind of sentimentality but with total commitment that would result in devotion to God and practical service to humankind.

19 November 2017 ~ Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost

Theme: 'God will call us to account for our stewardship of time and talents.'

We can learn at least three things from the parable in Matthew 25:14-30.

1. The parable tells us that God gives people varying measure of resources and opportunities. What God expects is that a person uses the resources and opportunities given to its full potential.
2. Those who are faithful stewards are given more resources, opportunities and responsibilities. William Barclay says that this is a rule that is universally true. If a person has an ability and uses it, he/she is progressively able to do more with it. On the other hand, if he/she is not exercising it, he/she will eventually lose it.
3. The person who is condemned is the one who doesn't use the talent. He simply did nothing with the resources and opportunities given.

26 November 2017 ~ Harvest Festival

Theme: 'Thanksgiving for the fruits of the earth.'

Moses warned the people of God (Deuteronomy 8:11-14): "Take care that you do not forget the LORD your God, by failing to keep his commandments, his ordinances, and his statutes... When you have eaten your fill and have built fine houses and live in them..." Harvest Festival wakes us up from our complacency and arrogance. It reminds us that we must not take for granted the blessings of God. Harvest Festival provides us with an opportunity to look back and recognize God's faithfulness, and to give thanks to him. But thanksgiving should not be reduced to an annual event. It should be our daily experience.

Jesus said, "Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions" (Luke 12:15). Regular worship and thanksgiving helps us to have the right perspective about life and material things and thus lead a balanced life.

GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE

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

YEAR	NAME	YEAR	NAME
1902	MICHAEL MARGARET	1994	MARSHALL HAROLD
1915	CORKE MARIA	1995	THEOPHIL EDWIN
1944	BURBY GEORGE FRANCIS	1998	THOMAS ALLEYAMMA
1945	BLACKMORE EMMA	2002	MATHEWS LEELA
1968	BELL JACOB	2002	SHUKLA USHA
1975	CHINNERY ALBERT WILLIAM	2005	BOSE AMUL KUMAR
1980	MILLER ABRAHAM	2005	ROY ASIS
1980	CHRISTIE GRACE	2006	AARONS NILA
1986	VARKEY C.V. (JOE)	2009	SAROJINI ANCHAN
1986	MATTHAN MARIAH	2011	K.C. NAINAN
1991	MATHAI SARA	2012	SUCHITRA WAUGH
1993	PEREIRA HENRY J.		

HOLY LAND TOUR

On 20th October, a small group of pilgrims from St. Stephen's Church, left for a tour of the Holy Land, covering Jordan, Israel and Egypt. Our first stop was at Jordan, where we visited the Greek Orthodox Church. At Mount Nebo stands the Moses Memorial, which is said to be the burial place of Moses.

In Israel, we first visited Nazareth, Jesus's boyhood home. At Cana, there is a church dedicated to Christ's first miracle. Beneath it, there is a place where replicas of the earthen jars used to store wine, as well as a wine press, are on display. Near Cana stands the Basilica of Annunciation, built on the spot where Archangel Gabriel visited the Virgin Mary. In Tabgha, we saw the Church of the Multiplication of Loaves and Fishes. The beautiful Church of the Beatitudes overlooking the Sea of Galilee has each beatitude engraved along the path leading to the church.

We visited the Church of the Primacy of Peter built over the remains of his home. Our next stop was at the village of Ein Karem, the birthplace and home of John the Baptist. Here, the Church of Visitation has tablets with the Magnificat written in different languages, including Indian languages. Another notable church is built on the spot where Jesus taught his disciples to pray. Here the Lord's Prayer is written in different languages of the world, including Malayalam, Tamil, Kannada, Konkani and Bengali.

Jerusalem is a city with a chequered history, with wave after wave of invasions, resulting in the destruction of many churches which were later rebuilt. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre, perhaps the holiest of all the sites in Israel, is situated in Old Jerusalem. The Via Dolorosa, or the 'Way of Grief' marks Christ's last journey on earth. The Upper Room is also in Jerusalem, as well as King David's tomb.

From Jerusalem we headed to Bethlehem and the Church of Nativity, which is built around the cave where Jesus was born. We also saw the Shepherd's Field and the place where David looked after the sheep. On the way to Jericho we stopped at the Mount of Olives, from where one can get a panoramic view of Jerusalem. The churches in this are the Dominus Flevit, where Jesus wept over the imminent destruction of Jerusalem, the Basilica of Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane and the Church of Ascension. The River Jordan is quite narrow and shallow at the Baptismal site.

From Israel we travelled 500 kms through the Sinai Desert to Taba, in Egypt, where we visited the 6th century Church of Transfiguration (of Moses), built on the spot of the Burning Bush, and St Catherine's Monastery, which has a vast library second only to the Vatican's. From Taba we drove to Cairo. On the way we stopped at the Church of the Holy Family, said to be the place where Mary and Joseph with Baby Jesus took shelter after fleeing from Herod's diktat.

Most of the churches in the Holy Land are administered by the Greek Orthodox Church, and a few by the Franciscan Order of Monks. All the churches in the Holy Land are beautiful-some with impressive structures, others smaller but charming. The trip was a memorable one, and the icing on the cake was a Pilgrim's Certificate, issued by the ministry of Tourism and signed by the Mayor of Jerusalem. I thank and praise God for giving the privilege of visiting the Holy Land.

A Pilgrim

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	3 December 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
K.P.George , Hon. Treasurer	9821074653
Sushill Augustine , Hon. Jt. Secretary	9820657433
Sabina Solomon , Hon. Jt. Treasurer	9820080456

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