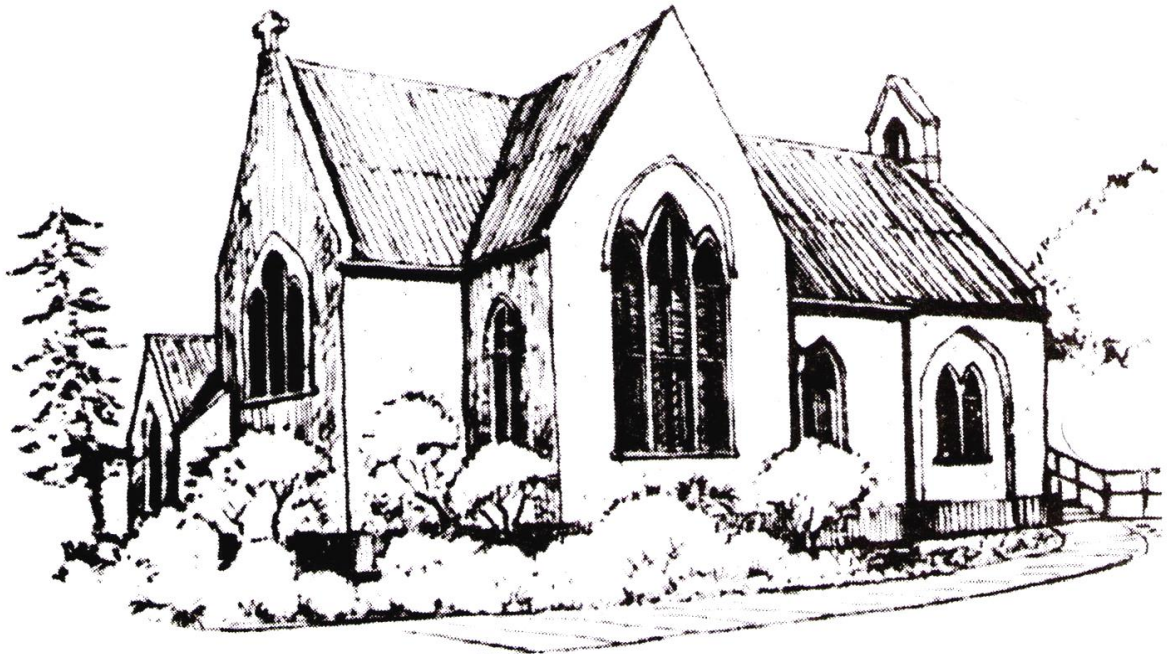


**ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH**  
CHURCH OF NORTH INDIA

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**NEWSLETTER**

**MAY 2024**



(For Private Circulation Only)

## Almanac and Lectionary: May 2024

Date	Theme & Readings	Liturgical colour
<p><b>Sunday, 5 May 2024</b> Holy Communion Services: 7 a.m., 9 a.m. &amp; 6 p.m.</p>	<p><b>Fifth Sunday after Easter</b> <b>Theme: Jesus promises that the Spirit of truth and love will come to dwell in the Church.</b> 1<sup>st</sup> Reading : Acts 11:1-18 Psalm : Psalm 98:1-6 Epistle : I John 3:23-4:4 Gospel : John 14:21-26</p> <p>Refer to <i>Readings for Sunday Worship</i> ~ page 113</p>	<p><b>White</b></p>
<p><b>Sunday, 12 May 2024</b> Holy Communion Services: 7 a.m., 9 a.m. &amp; 6 p.m.</p>	<p><b>Sixth Sunday after Easter</b> <b>Theme: The ascended Lord upholds those who are united to him by faith.</b> 1<sup>st</sup> Reading : Acts 7:54-60 Psalm : Psalm 27:1,3-5 Epistle : I John 2:28-3:3 Gospel : John 17:11-19</p> <p>Refer to <i>Readings for Sunday Worship</i> ~ page 120</p>	<p><b>White</b></p>
<p><b>Sunday, 19 May 2024</b> Holy Communion Services: 7 a.m., 9 a.m. &amp; 6 p.m.</p>	<p><b>Pentecost</b> <b>Theme: The gift of the Holy Spirit.</b> 1<sup>st</sup> Reading : Acts 2:1-11 Psalm : Psalm 139:1-4,7-8,11-12,23-24 Epistle : I Corinthians 12:1,4-13 Gospel : John 20:19-23</p> <p>Refer to <i>Readings for Sunday Worship</i> ~ page 123</p>	<p><b>Red</b></p>
<p><b>Sunday, 26 May 2024</b> Holy Communion Service: 9 a.m.</p>	<p><b>First Sunday after Pentecost: Trinity Sunday</b> <b>Theme: God the Holy Trinity.</b> O.T. : Isaiah 6:1-8 Psalm : Psalm 46:1-6,10-11 Epistle : Ephesians 3:14-21 Gospel : John 16:5-15</p> <p>Refer to <i>Readings for Sunday Worship</i> ~ page 127</p>	<p><b>White</b></p>
<p><b>Sunday, 2 June 2024</b> Holy Communion Services: 7 a.m., 9 a.m. &amp; 6 p.m.</p>	<p><b>Second Sunday after Pentecost</b> <b>Theme: The unique authority of Christ our Lord.</b> O.T. : Deuteronomy 5:22-28 Psalm : Psalm 89:5-6,8-9,14-17 Epistle : I Corinthians 4:14-21 Gospel : Mark 1:21-28</p> <p>Refer to <i>Readings for Sunday Worship</i> ~ page 130</p>	<p><b>Green</b></p>

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

### **A Community that thrives.**

In his final greetings, as he concluded his second letter to the Church in Corinth, Apostle wrote: “Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you... May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” (II Corinthians 13:11,14).

In these words, Apostle Paul underlines the importance of living in harmony with one another and striving for unity as disciples of Christ. We must encourage one another and be of one mind in our personal relationships. To live in harmony with one another, we must also have a right relationship with God. As we live in peace with one another, we invite the presence of God to dwell among us. Through his grace and love, we can experience true fellowship with him and with each other. Paul wanted the believers in Corinth to be blessed as true Christians.

In the Holy Land, the land where Jesus walked, there are two major water bodies. One is Sea of Galilee, which is also known as Sea of Tiberias or Lake of Gennesaret. It is a beautiful lake that is filled with fish and surrounded by lush greenery. The other is the Dead Sea. The salt content of the Dead Sea is about ten times more than of other seas, which makes it a harsh environment in which life cannot thrive. The Jordan River is the primary water source of Sea of Galilee, and the same Jordan River flows down to the Dead Sea. The reason why the Sea of Galilee is beautiful and alive while the Dead Sea is barren and lifeless is that the Sea of Galilee has an outlet, but the Dead Sea does not have an outlet. Water flows in and out of the Sea of Galilee. When it comes to the Dead Sea, water flows into it but does not flow out. This is what happens to the community that receives the grace of Jesus Christ and the love of God but does not share it. Life does not flourish. On the other hand, the community that shares the grace and love that it receives will be alive and beautiful and will be a place where believers will grow and thrive. It will be a community that will be of same mind with the triune God and with one another.

As I, along with my family, move to serve in another Church after having had the privilege to serve here at St.Stephen's Church for the last nine years, it is my prayer that the grace and love of God will continually flow through the community at St.Stephen's so that it will always thrive.

Charles Hodge wrote, “For a Christian is one who seeks and enjoys the grace of the Lord Jesus, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost.” So let us remember to live in harmony with one another and seek the unity that comes through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. May God bless you abundantly!

**In His Grace,  
Thomas Jacob**

## NEWS & NOTES

**Sunday School:** During the month of April 2024, Sunday School continued to be held regularly during the 9 am service. However, during the month of May 2024 it shall remain closed and will resume from the first Sunday of June 2024.

**Pastorate Committee Meeting:** The Pastorate Committee Meeting was held on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2024 after the 9 am service in the Parsonage.

**WFCS:** We were happy and privileged to have the Diocesan WFCS office-bearers join our 9 a.m. Church service on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2024. After the service, the DWFCS office-bearers had an interaction with the WFCS members of our Church in the Community Hall. We are thankful to the DWFCS office-bearers for their visit.

**Guest Speaker:** During the 9 am Sunday service on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2024 we had the opportunity to have Rev. Dr. Lamboi Haokip, Director, Bethesda Khankho Institute, Manipur, in our church. Rev. Dr. Lamboi shared about the situation in Manipur and the work being undertaken there and also brought the word of the Lord during the service.

**Visiting Pastor:** It was a joy to have Rev. Ninan Chacko, former Chaplain of CMC Ludhiana, amidst us during the 9 am service on Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

**Transfer of Parish Priest:** After serving in our church for the last 9 years, our Parish Priest Rev. Thomas Jacob is under transfer orders to All Saints' Church, Malabar Hill, Mumbai, w.e.f. 1<sup>st</sup> June 2024. Rev. John Roland serving currently at All Saints' Church is transferred vice Rev. Thomas Jacob. We keep both Rev. Thomas Jacob and Rev. John Roland in our prayers as they prepare themselves to join their new places of service.

**Sad Demise:** Ms. Ruth Jagdhane, aged 76, a member of our parish, passed away on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

Mr. Raju P. John, aged 76 years, a member of our parish, passed away on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2024.



Mr. Raju John

We pray for comfort to the bereaved families.

**Sick & Home bound:** Let us continue to pray for the sick and elderly, especially Olga Nazareth, Loolu Thomas, Lizzy Kurian, Padmini Abraham, Joyce Nichols, Vijaya Rajaratnam, Purnima Seal, Anita Philips, Gloria Tata, Judith Prakash, Thelma Marshall, and the Pratap family. Pray that they are protected and healed and that God's hand be upon them.

**Shalini Outram**  
**Hon. Jt. Secretary**

## HEARD FROM THE PULPIT

7 April 2024 ~ 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Easter

**Theme: 'The fear of the Lord.'**

Throughout the Bible, there are several verses that command us not to fear. Jesus himself told his disciples on different occasions: 'Fear not!' But Bible also instructs us to fear – to fear God. Someone put it this way: "Fear: a natural emotion. The fear of the Lord: a supernatural grace."

In the popular hymn 'Amazing grace', John Newton writes: "Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace, my fears relieved." There are, probably, two different aspects of the fear of the Lord. There is a negative side, and there is a positive side to the fear of the Lord. The negative aspect is the fear of danger. Well, Jesus said we should fear God in this sense (Luke 12:4-5). However, in a sense, we must always have the negative aspect of the fear of the Lord. I mean, we must have a healthy fear of sin, and of God's response to sin.

We also need to have the positive aspect of the fear of the Lord. This positive aspect is based on who God is. He is the awesome and mighty God who created everything and sustains everything. That's why we must fear him. Jeremiah 5:22 – "Should you not fear me?" declares the LORD. "Should you not tremble in my presence? I made the sand a boundary for the sea, an everlasting barrier it cannot cross. The waves may roll, but they cannot prevail; they may roar, but they cannot cross it."

Ray Pritchard says, "The fear of the Lord combines the two qualities of love and respect. It is "loving respect" and "respectful love." To fear someone in this sense is to love them and respect them at the same time.

14 April 2024 ~ 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Easter

**Theme: 'Witnesses to Christ's resurrection.'**

After the Pentecost event, the apostles began to preach Christ boldly. The essence of the preaching of the apostles was that Jesus Christ died and rose again. The religious leaders tried to suppress this message. They arrested Peter and John and put them in jail. The next day they were released after giving strict warnings not to preach anymore in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered boldly, "Whether it is right in God's sight to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge; for we cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:19-20). Later, in Acts 5:12, we read: "Now many signs and wonders were done among the people through the apostles." The Jewish religious leaders realized that they had failed to suppress the message of Easter that Jesus rose from the dead. So they arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. They thought that this way they can silence the apostles. But an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought the apostles out, and commanded them to tell everyone about the new life in Christ. So the apostles continued to preach Christ boldly. The apostles were then flogged and ordered not to speak in the name of Jesus. But the apostles did not stop teaching and preaching the good news of Jesus Christ (Acts 5:42). Today, for fear of the consequences, we prefer to be silent when it comes proclaiming the gospel. However, we must remember that we are called to be witnesses to the resurrection of Christ. When there is opposition, our stand must be the same as that of Peter and the other apostles - "We must obey God rather than any human authority."

21 April 2024 ~ 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Easter

**Theme: 'The Good Shepherd.'**

Jesus compares himself to a shepherd: "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep..." (John 10:11). He gave his life so that we could live.

The shepherd and the sheep share an intimate relationship: "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me - just as the Father knows me and I know the Father" (John 10:14-15). Can we recognize the voice of the Good Shepherd in midst of all the noise and distractions of this world? Are our ears and hearts tuned to hear his voice? Without the good shepherd leading us through our journey here on earth, we will lose our way.

Based on the intimate knowledge between Jesus and his Father, there exists an intimate knowing between Jesus and his sheep. Jesus knows them by name and leads them; his sheep, in turn, hear and know his voice and follow him (John 10:3-4). The Greek word translated here as 'know' (Gk. *ginosko*) means to know experientially. It is not knowledge from reading a book. The word 'know' is used several times in the Bible to refer to physical intimacy in marriage. For example, in Genesis 4:17, we read, "Cain knew his wife and she bore a child." It doesn't mean Cain knew his wife's name. It implies the most intimate kind of love relationship. So when Jesus says he "knows" his sheep, he is saying that our relationship with God is a very personal and intimate one. The crucial question is: Do we know the shepherd – the good shepherd? Not a bookish knowledge of the shepherd, but a deep, personal and intimate relationship with Jesus. It is only when you have that intimate relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, would you be able to say with confidence: "The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing... Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me..." (Psalm 23:1,4).

28 April 2024 ~ 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Easter

**Theme: 'God is love, and we can only know him if we ourselves show love to others.'**

In I John 4:8, we have one of the most profound statements of the entire Bible – God is love! It is something many people today perhaps would find very hard to believe. Scientists estimate there are at least one hundred billion galaxies in this universe. The galaxy that we live in - the Milky Way galaxy – has an estimated 200 billion stars, of which the sun is just one. And on this tiny little planet earth there are over 7.6 billion people. When we consider all these figures, can we really talk about God loving us? Can the God who created such a vast universe be bothered about the seemingly insignificant creatures called human beings on this tiny little planet earth? When we see so much suffering, violence and injustice in this world, we may ask, "How can there be a God who really loves?"

Can such a great God be bothered about my small life, is a wrong question to ask. Because he is so great that he can be bothered with each of us individually. John emphasizes the amazing fact that God is concerned with human beings: "God sent his one and only Son into the world..." (v.9). "... not that we loved God but that he loved us..." (I John 4:10). "Beloved, since God loved us so much..." (I John 4:11).

When John says 'God is love', he is not saying that it is a quality that God has; he is saying that love is the essence of God's being. It is not just that God loves, but that he *is* love. If we are truly God's children, we would want to be like our Father. We would want love to be a part of our nature. The Christian church should be a community of love as Jesus commanded, "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:34-35).

## GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE

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

YEAR	NAME
1894	HOWELL HELEN FRANCIS
1899	ALLTREE ISABEL
1900	MORRIS AUGUSTINE
1902	DALL JAME JOHNSTONE
1905	CHRISTIAN BARBARA
1967	DODD FLORENCE MAUDE
1979	KOSHY P. KURUVILLA
1986	TRUMAN ELISHA RAJA RAO
1990	KADNAR MANUEL S.
1994	GAIKWAD S. PUSHPA
2000	NATH SURESH JOGINDER
2001	SOANS CLEMENT EZRA
2003	RAPAZ HELEN
2005	DONGRE RAJESH
2005	CHERIAN K.C.
2005	JOHN MATHEW BENJAMIN
2007	ANCHAN HENRIETTA
2009	THOMAS MANGALATH THOMAS
2009	THOMAS SUBASH
2017	DAVID PROMILA
2022	CHERIAN ANNIE



## BANK DETAILS

Account Name: **ST STEPHENS CHURCH**

Bank Name: **SOUTH INDIAN BANK**

Branch Name: **HILL ROAD, BANDRA**

Savings Bank A/c no: **0389053000037362**

IFS Code: **SIBL0000389**

\* When you do a bank transfer, please drop an email giving the details, including UTR number, to: [church@stephenschurch-bandra.com](mailto:church@stephenschurch-bandra.com) OR [sscbandra@gmail.com](mailto:sscbandra@gmail.com)



## REGULAR ACTIVITIES

Activity	Venue	Day & Time	Contact Person	Phone No.
Sunday School	PHCC	9 am on Sundays (Closed for Summer Holidays. To reopen in June 2024.)	Preethy Dhanaraj Raj	9920723235
QCCCS: Day Care Centre & Study Centre	PHCC	Monday to Friday 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.  Saturday 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.  (Closed for Summer Holidays. To reopen in June 2024.)	Chitra Thomas	9820150197

<b>Church Office: Charmaine Rego</b> Monday to Friday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.	9820738735
<b>Rev. Thomas Jacob</b> , Presbyter-in-charge	9820736359
<b>K. P. George</b> , Hon. Secretary	9821074653
<b>Sabina Solomon</b> , Hon. Treasurer	9820080456
<b>Shalini Outram</b> , Hon. Jt. Secretary	7738429332
<b>Smriti Rekha Vijay</b> , Hon. Jt. Treasurer	9821292089

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