

The Lord is my shepherd;  
I shall not want.  
Psalm 23:1



# **Kirkspire**

The Monthly Magazine of St. Andrew's Church (The Kirk), Chennai

August 2022

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## Word from the Pastor

### No one is less Important

*Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? (Matthew 6:26)*

Some have experienced rejection more than others and some have experienced them in close quarters, scars of which will never fade away. These thoughts will haunt and hurt again and again, only God can give the strength to forgive others and keep marching forward. A neglected child, an abused wife/husband or an overlooked staff in spite of good work are always those who try to be loved, want to be loved and are left in the lurch in tears and sorrow. One such example is a young shepherd boy, a gifted musician, a skilled hunter but an unloved son & brother. Yes, I am talking about David, as mentioned in 1 Samuel 16. The father did not give him much credit, his brothers did not give him much respect and his king would later want him dead. BUT God loved and led David through all the unwanted circumstances to a place where David became the king of the nation.

Here are some lessons we should learn about this "Ra'ah". God is our Shepherd, the keeper of His flock, tender, caring and never forgetting us – for He knows each one of us by name.

1. God's presence is undeniable – Whether it is David or any of us, we have to realize that His presence in our lives is undeniable. That is why the Bible says, 'a fool says in his heart, there is no God'. God is the reason why we exist and the more we realize His presence, it is easier to hear His voice and to follow Him daily. The closer we are

to Him, the clearer we are about ourselves. Saul walked away from God and sadly he forgot why he became a king, who elevated him and what is his life's purpose.

2. God's plans are indescribable – When God is the Shepherd of our lives, we will constantly realize that He is so sovereign that He can and will alter our lives' directions in whichever way He wants for His plans are greater/better than our greatest plans. David was the shepherd of his flock but God was the Shepherd of David, as a boy, as a soldier, as a king – always.

3. God's purposes are unfathomable – The conclusion of Psalm 23 is wonderful because David declares not about his position as king or of his riches or fame but about God's goodness and mercy. David experienced deep pain throughout his life, from his parents to his own children, especially from Absalom but David was 'a man after God's own heart'. When we are stuck with the 'why's' of life, let us remember that 'all things work together for good to those who love God who are called according to His purpose'.

Whenever you feel less important or unimportant, remember that God of David is our God and He will be our Shepherd now and forever more.

Have a blessed month

*Rev. Isaac Emmanuel Johnson*

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The words of Jesus in the mind of one who does not do the will of Jesus, is like seed-corn in a mummy's hand.  
- Henry van Dyke

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## **Journey of Bible Translation**

In addition to the Word from the Pastor, every month I write these articles that carry information of great historical value related to our Christian faith and doctrine. This month, we look at the historical chronology of the Bible Translation which many may not be aware of. Most of our homes have many Bibles, many versions and even in a few different languages. In the modern era, we forget to think about the painstaking efforts of men and women of God who worked selflessly, tirelessly and faithfully to take God's word, the Bible, beyond their shores to reach new languages and peoples. Here goes the brief summary of this monumental journey.

130 BC – Septuagint. This is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament which enabled a wider audience to read the Old and the New Testament in the then widely spoken language

382 AD – Eusebius Sophronius Hieronymus who is popularly known as St. Jerome translated the Greek Bible to Latin. It is called the Vulgate translation which means 'in common language'.

1382 – John Wycliffe is one of the earliest translators from Latin to Middle English. He started the journey of what we have today as the English Bible though his language was more contemporary to his times.

1435 – John Huss translated the Bible from English to Hungarian and Bohemian. He is popularly known for his martyrdom because he was burned at the stakes where he was singing Psalms as he died at the age of 46.

1455 - Johannes Gutenberg is popularly known as the founder of the Printing Press and the world's first book which was printed is the Bible in Latin.

1534 – Martin Luther, the great reformer of the Protestant faith, translated the Bible into German. The New Testament was translated in 1522.

1535 – The First complete Bible was printed in English by Myles Coverdale. This was after William Tyndale had printed the first New Testament in English in 1526 and the Pentateuch into English in 1530. He died as a martyr in 1536. Tyndale was the first to use the name 'Jehovah' in the English Bible.

1611 – King James Bible which is also called the Authorized Version was published under the auspices of King James I. This was a replacement for the Geneva Bible which was published in 1557.

1885 - Samuel Ajayi Crowther of Nigeria, translated the Bible into Yoruba language. This is the first known entry of the Bible in native language into the African continent.

1942 – Cameron Townsend founded Wycliffe Bible Translators. This is a landmark moment in the journey of Bible translation because this has led to translation of the Bible especially the New Testament into hundreds of languages.

In India,

Bartholomaeus Ziengenbalg was a German missionary who lived only 37 years but his contribution to Indian Christian movement is amazing. He translated the Bible into Tamil and completed it on January 3, 1714. He came to our nation, learned our language, painstakingly translated every verse, got a printing machine shipped to India and completed the work. He died in 1719.

Today there are Bible Translation movements under various names like Bible Society of India, India Bible Translators etc. Every time you take your bible and read, remember that someone in history toiled and sowed the seed.

The Bible - It is the word of God...handle with care

*Rev. Isaac Emmanuel Johnson*

## **“Idol Making Factory”**

*“Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.” 1 John 5:21*

John Calvin, renowned reformer, theologian, and pastor of the sixteenth century aptly wrote that the heart of man was a perpetual idol-making factory.

The Ten Commandments states that the Lord God said there should be no other gods before Him nor should there be any graven images.

A powerful illustration of obedience to this supreme command is from the Book of Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar, the powerful king of the Babylonian Empire builds himself a stunningly huge gold statue of himself and ordered one and all to fall down and worship it. The captive young Hebrews defy the order. This well-known incident is inspirational and an acknowledgement of God’s power and provision. (*Daniel 3: 8-30*)

History is replete with human beings hungering to be deified and worshipped. This craving is evident through ancient, medieval and modern times. Our fast-paced, media-dominated culture provides rich pastures for ‘golden calves’ to flourish. The availability of lavish standards of life provides an atmosphere where money, success and self-aggrandizement are unabashedly worshipped.

The fact is that anything we place higher than God is an idol. Satan longs for us to fail in our endeavour to conquer our base longings and our God longs for us to emerge victorious.

Christians are challenged everywhere – in educational institutions, business and social circles. The values we hold dear are ridiculed as old-fashioned and irrelevant.

Do we shy away from taking a firm stand for Biblical values or merge with the laxity of values lest our idols shatter?

Beware! We can be shipwrecked if we are not firmly anchored to our Master's teachings. We are made in God's image and possess sublime gifts and graces. Let us not tarnish it with the stains of sin. We have been told to "Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong." *1 Corinthians 16:13*

One thing is true too. Jesus would certainly not want us to live in a 'Christian bubble'. Our Lord was highly visible and available – to the rich and learned, and to the poor and ignorant, to the old and to the young, the healthy and the sick. He wants us to work in the highways and byways, work in the fields of God, cultivating our patch, transforming the deserts and making it rejoice. Our part may be small and obscure. We are to be the salt on the meat and not untouched in the jar; a light that is visible – making matters clear around.

Under the white banner of Christ, innumerable men and women have fought against the cruel pressure and lash of the world and never surrendered. Nothing in their hands they had save their stark faith in their Lord and God Jesus Christ. The fires of Sinai will never be quenched if we too fight the good fight.

"The dearest idol I have known,  
Whate'er that idol be,  
Help me to tear it from Thy throne,  
And worship only Thee."  
- George Matheson

*Usha George*

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The Christian life that is joyless is a discredit to God.

- *M. D. Babcock*

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## **KIRK YOUTH FELLOWSHIP**

### The Heart of God

*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you hope and a future. Jeremiah 29:11*

The Kirk Youth Fellowship (KYF) is known for its involvement in all the major events of our church. We, as the enthusiastic younger generation of St. Andrew's Church, meet regularly through youth events and reach out to the underprivileged through outreach.

Last year had been an amazing year in the journey of KYF! We started the year with the theme "Thus far the Lord has helped us". And aptly so, God's hand worked in and through us. Every first Saturday of the month, we meet at the home of our youth members. We discuss the practical difficulties we face as young Christians and try to arrive at a Biblical solution. On the second Sunday of every month, we help in leading the service, Sunday school and Youth fellowship at our outreach church in Thirupalaivalam. After the Service, the doctors of KYF treat the medical and dental patients coming to the clinic.

On the third Saturday of every month, the youth meet for Bible study at the SACCE hall. This is the forum where youth raise their questions and dive deep into God's word to find answers. "Catalyst" is an exclusive Youth Service which happens on the fourth Sunday of every month at SACCE hall. We invite guest speakers to deliver power packed messages. On the evening of every fourth Sunday, we have our outreach youth service at Gypsy colony. We enact a short skit, teach new action songs and share God's word with them.

This year, on the 24<sup>th</sup> of July, the Annual Youth Sunday Service came through with the theme "The Heart of God". The inspiration for the

theme came from the fact that, young people often make wrong decisions as they misunderstand the Heart of God. We often tend to think our plans are better and get frustrated when things don't go our way. We forget that His plans are better and His ways are higher than ours. So, this year, we are focusing on the theme "The Heart of God".

We were overjoyed to see God's guidance as we planned and conducted the Annual Youth Sunday. Praise and worship was led by the youth. We also enacted an entertaining and thought provoking skit titled "The Heart of God", depicting the importance of waiting on God and trusting in His plans for us. We did a special song and a poem recitation as well.

The guest speaker, Mr. Thomas George spoke on "Thoughts about thoughts", making everyone think how Satan ruins our minds with negative, godless and amplified thoughts. He challenged everyone to have God-centered thoughts and to take captive every thought making it obedient to Christ. The congregation felt encouraged through the sermon.

Grateful for God's faithfulness in the past, we look forward to the future with hope as we plan upcoming events. We have our Annual Youth Camp in August and many other interesting events this year. And we desire to be obedient to His call, not to be conformed to this world, but be transformed and do the perfect will of God.

*Emmanuel Paul*

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Increasing knowledge of Jesus requires increasing imitation of Jesus.

*- Robert E Speer*

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## Physio

*Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy. He who continually goes forth weeping, bearing seed for sowing, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. Psalms 126:5-6*

One ligament injury was all it took to cripple me. Initially it was okay. The bed rest was not a problem. The physiotherapy was. Excruciating pain was the hallmark of every session. You had to willingly put yourself through torture to recover. Relaxing the muscle followed by stretching is a paradox; Akin to resting in Him and then working. Reversing the process is painful (in both cases).

Most of us who want health and healing are unwilling to go through the process. It takes time and effort. God sure heals, but often, He requires our cooperation. Wilfully embracing the pain dulls the ache. Dread doubles it. Refusing to go through the exercise stiffens the joints and hardens the heart. There is no point in quitting. (I tried that. It makes it worse)

Set your face like flint. 'The best view comes after the hardest climb.' Get rid of the notion that life should be easy. Stop comparing. Anything worth having involves a struggle on your part. Shed tears if you must but keep going.

Sometimes the surgeon/physiotherapist (aka my husband) seems heartless. He refuses to end the session without going through the complete range of movements. Under his watchful eye you cannot get away with shoddy work. This guy reminds me of My Master Who lovingly walks me through tough times. Like a firm parent He wants me to deal with my addictions and character flaws. He refuses to let me stay the way I am. From glory to glory is His principle. (Regression hardly features in His vocabulary) Sometimes I resent His discipline

but honestly, there seems to be no other wholesome way than His, to deal with life.

Trials will come. Hearts and bones will break. Ligaments will tear. Let nothing deter you. As surely as the sun rises the Son of righteousness will come with healing in His wings. You will radiate joy and abundant peace. The lame will leap. The deaf will hear. The blind will see. The very weakness that keeps you awake at night will become your strength. His people will never be put to shame. May my scars (and yours) declare His faithfulness now and evermore.

Amen.

*Dr. Susan Rajkumari*

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I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.

*- The Psalmist*

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"He who would guide others to Christ must know the way himself"

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## **Treasure, Talent and Time: The Kirk Carnival Way**

It was a Sunday of a different kind as the St Andrew's Kirk congregation stayed on campus after the service either to buy or sell at the Kirk Carnival, with a sole purpose of contributing to raise funds for key church projects that serve several needy communities for God's glory.

As Pastor Rev Isaac Johnson blessed and cut the ribbon the swarm of people entered into a hyper market of sorts around the church offering an array of appetising delicacies including biryani and pork to books, placards with Bible verses, jewellery, leather items, plants among many others.

For many it was an occasion to loosen their purse to support God's work. "It's a fun way to contribute for this cause", a young mother said. "This is the essence of what Christ wanted us to do. We've to be channels", added Usha George.

Individuals, families and projects had stalls to give all the proceeds for the cause. "We buy good leather items including shoes and bags and contribute the entire sale" said Dr Rebecca Devaprasad, an Assistant Professor.

"From the little we have, we give to God. We are happy" said Alex Pandian, an active member from the Gypsy community. Their stall sold hand crafted ornaments and decorative items besides cutlery they had procured from the market.

Many had also showcased artistic items they made using their talent. Selling her handmade jewellery including chains and pendants she makes as a hobby, Kavitha Suresh said "I think I should give

back my talent". Priya sold rock paintings with Bible verses she made. "These verses had helped me. I thought I should share these" she explained. Her son Nathan had gifted love birds he raises at home to the Sunday School stall. Another little girl Mia helped her parents sell their home-made cuisine. Understanding the joy of giving she said "The money goes to the Church to raise funds. We need to help".

"There's joy in contributing to God's work" said The Benjamins whose homemade Pepper Pork has always been "a sellout over the last 25 years" they say.

Explaining this unique tradition of St Andrew's Church (The Kirk), Rev Isaac Johnson said "We maximise this opportunity to be a blessing. We want to be good stewards. We are super excited that people are passionate about contributing to God's kingdom. There are many people beyond our congratulation coming here".

The carnival also gives opportunity for many to learn about the life changing work done by the church's flagship projects. "For years the Asha Project has been training and rehabilitating children with autism, dyslexia and other challenges. With God's blessings many have now become trained professionals earning their own livelihood" said Shirley from the project.

The AKCDC Project offers tuition to less privileged children. "Many are now pursuing even law and engineering" said Sophia Rani Dulipsingh. "The Healing Ministry, as part of Village Ministry runs clinics at Thirupalaivanam, Karanodai and Gypsy Colony," said Dr Vimala. "The Sunday School" Mrs Edward, a teacher explained "When we introduce Jesus we lay a strong foundation, they grow up as Godly children and build Godly families". The RMDCC and Community Development Centre offers succour to underprivileged preschoolers and study centres (Night schools) for school going children. Itstailoring classes and skill development programmes bring about a socio-economic change among women.

Praseetha Das cherishes the opportunity for fellowship the Kirk Carnival brings about. "There is a kind of oneness among all the families" she says. "After the pandemic this is also an occasion to meet all our friends" added another mother.

Sushma used the opportunity to bring two of her friends. One of them said "We loved the experience". So did Rohini. Her brother

showcased a new curry paste his start-up has developed. She said, "Since all goes to the Church, I thought I'd bring him in".

Live music by young singers struck a chord with the cause. Some youngsters also regretted they did not involve much in any of the ministries. "The carnival made me realise this. Soon I'd involve with the Sunday Class" said a young college student.

"Our objective is not just treasure but time, treasure and talent too and carnivals like this help the congregation understand the work ministries do" explained DulipsinghThangasamy, Secretary, The Kirk Session.

*Sam Daniel*

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"Every duty carried out, every righteous deed wrought, every kindness shown, every day rightly lived, improves the Royal Highway"

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Lord God of hosts, be with us yet  
Lest we forget – lest we forget.

*- Kipling*

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## **“When you walk through fire, you will not be burned”**

As Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego walk in the furnace of fire, King Nebuchadnezzar sees a fourth person walking with them. He looked like a “son of the Gods” (Daniel Ch 3:25). God walked with the three men, who refused to bow down to the image of gold the King had set up. And God brought them out of the fire without a hair being singed and with no smell of fire on them. The God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego is our God today and His beautiful promise, “when you walk through the fire, you will not be burned” still holds good. God walks with us as we are engulfed in fiery trials and still brings us through with Love and Compassion. Human help and support can fail, but God never leaves nor forsakes.

Recently, both my husband and I had serious health setbacks. God walked with us in that “burning furnace” and but for His Presence and timely intervention we would not be here this day to glorify Him. Be it in making us reach the hospital on time, accessibility to medical help, Godly counsel to the medical personnel or the love and care that surrounded us, His Presence was with us every step of the way. In the hospital, even those who did not know the Lord Jesus, His Love and wonder working Power could not but acknowledge His Divine Presence and Healing Touch. In our most vulnerable moments when we could not seek or call out to Him, He extended His grip of Love, intervened and interceded for us, restoring life and breath in us so that we could emerge unscathed.

God takes hold of us and walks by our side at all times, not just during physical need. In emotional turmoil and spiritual turbulence His Presence restores and refreshes us. When we are reeling with pain at the loss of a loved one or shattered by the dissolution of a



relationship; when we feel lonely, rejected or hopeless, He is with us. He walks with us in the "valley of the shadow of death and His 'rod and His staff' will comfort us. He leads us through with a tight grip on our hand like a father leading his child in the dark. He never lets go of our hand. We may slacken our hold but He will not. It is this reassuring Presence, this firm clasp on our weak and trembling hand that makes us emerge through the fire, ready to move on with our heads held high, with our hearts brimming with hope and confidence.

May the enlivening verses in Isaiah 43 remain indelibly etched in our hearts and minds as we face difficult times in our lives. May they constantly remind us that our awesome God is our Healer, Provider and Redeemer who envelopes us in the warmth of His Love and Care and walks with us in all our crisis situations.

"When you pass through the waters I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour". Isaiah 43: 2-3.

*Chitra Bennett*

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"A temptation put in one's way by a friend is a greater stumbling block than one laid by others"

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**Medical Corner**

## **BENEFITS OF REGULAR EXERCISE - 1**

*“Doctors treat, but Jesus heals”*

Exercise is defined as any movement that makes our muscles work and requires our body to burn calories. There are many types of physical activity, including swimming, running, jogging, walking, and dancing, to name a few. Being active has been shown to have many health benefits, both physically and mentally. It may even help us live longer.

### **1. It Can Make Us Feel Happier**

Exercise has been shown to improve our mood and decrease feelings of depression, anxiety, and stress. It produces changes in the parts of the brain that regulate stress and anxiety. It can also increase brain sensitivity for the hormones serotonin and norepinephrine, which relieve feelings of depression. Additionally, exercise can increase the production of endorphins, which are known to help produce positive feelings and reduce the perception of pain. Furthermore, exercise has been shown to reduce symptoms in people suffering from anxiety. It can also help them be more aware of their mental state and practice distraction from their fears. Interestingly, it doesn't matter how intense our workout is. It seems that our mood can benefit from exercise no matter the intensity of the physical activity.

### **2. It Can Help with Weight Loss**

Some studies have shown that inactivity is a major factor in weight gain and obesity. To understand the effect of exercise on weight reduction, it is important to understand the relationship between exercise and energy expenditure. our body spends energy in three ways: digesting food, exercising and maintaining body functions like

our heartbeat and breathing. While dieting, a reduced calorie intake will lower our metabolic rate, which will delay weight loss. On the contrary, regular exercise, has been shown to increase our metabolic rate, which will burn more calories and help us lose weight. Additionally, studies have shown that combining aerobic exercise with resistance training can maximize fat loss and muscle mass maintenance, which is essential for keeping the weight off.

### **3. It Is Good for our Muscles and Bones**

Exercise plays a vital role in building and maintaining strong muscles and bones. Physical activity like weightlifting can stimulate muscle building when paired with adequate protein intake. This is because exercise helps release hormones that promote the ability of our muscles to absorb amino acids. This helps them grow and reduces their breakdown. As people age, they tend to lose muscle mass and function, which can lead to injuries and disabilities. Practicing regular physical activity is essential to prevent muscle loss and maintaining strength as we age. Also, exercise helps build bone density when we are younger, in addition to helping prevent osteoporosis later in life. Interestingly, high-impact exercise, such as gymnastics or running, or odd-impact sports, such as football and basketball, have been shown to promote a higher bone density than non-impact sports like swimming and cycling.

*Dr. (Mrs). RajinikanthaNarendranath*

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A healthy body is good; but a soul in right health – it is the thing beyond all others to be prayed for.

*- Carlyle*

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Take the Sunday with you through the week, And sweeten all the other days.

*- Longfellow*

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### **Bible Quiz No. 128 – August 2022**

#### **WHERE IS THAT STORY IN THE BIBLE?**

In which book of the Bible would you look to find the following stories?

Please give book and chapter.

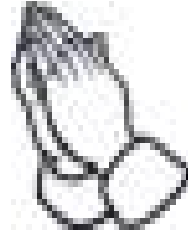
1. Saul becoming Israel's first King
2. Peter getting out of prison while his friends were praying for him
3. Jesus teaching in the temple at age twelve
4. Abraham leaving his homeland at God's request
5. The giving of the Ten Commandments
6. Elijah being taken to heaven in a "chariot of fire"
7. King Belshazzar's banquet where the people saw the handwriting on the wall
8. Jesus turning water into wine at a wedding in Cana
9. Achan taking what didn't belong to him at Jericho, leading to a stunning defeat for Israel at Ai
10. Deborah and her leadership in the battle against Sisera

Taken from Our Daily Bread Bible Word Search & Activity Book

Kindly send your answers to the church office or email [admin@thekirk.inby](mailto:admin@thekirk.inby) 21<sup>st</sup>August2022.

*Usha George*

John's Corner



## BLESSED WITH A HANDICAP

(21st August is Asha Sunday)  
Read 2 Cor 12:7-9, John 9:1-3

Our handicaps, God intends them to be,  
Divine steppingstones to dependency  
On the Father whose mysterious ways,  
We can't comprehend but are good always.

It was his thorn, the apostle Paul said,  
That he resented which drew him instead,  
To paths of purity else he'd have been,  
Vain and self-righteous, in God's sight unclean.

Lord, give us wisdom that we understand,  
Despite handicaps we're held by Your hand,  
And never complain but yield to Your will,  
Trusting Your promise that You love us still.

*John H. Bala Singh*

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It is almost presumptuous to think you can do nothing as to  
think you can do everything.

*- Phillips Brooks*

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## **Answers to Bible Quiz No. 127 – July 2022**

### **An Ironmonger's Quiz**

1. Nails. Daniel 4:33
2. Saw. 2 Samuel 12:31
3. Chains. Mark 5:3
4. Pot. Hebrews 9:4
5. Hammer nor Axe. 1 Kings 6:7
6. Ladder. Genesis 28:12
7. Candle. Matthew 5:15
8. Rule. Isaiah 44:13
9. Aul. Exodus 21:6
10. Hinges. 1 Kings 7:50

### **The winners are:**

1. Mrs. Indra Rajanayakam
2. Ms. Patricia
3. Mrs. Victoria Basker
4. Mrs. Suguna Joseph
5. Mrs. Peace Rani Sudhakar
6. Dr. Mrs. Sujatha Prasad
7. Mrs. Gladys Vedavimali

***Hearty Congratulations!***

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## **Obituary**

We are sad to inform that Mr. Fred Alberts passed away on July 10 2022 in England. He served joyfully, faithfully and enthusiastically as the Secretary of the Kirk Session from 1991 to 2002. We convey our heartfelt condolences to his dear wife and children.



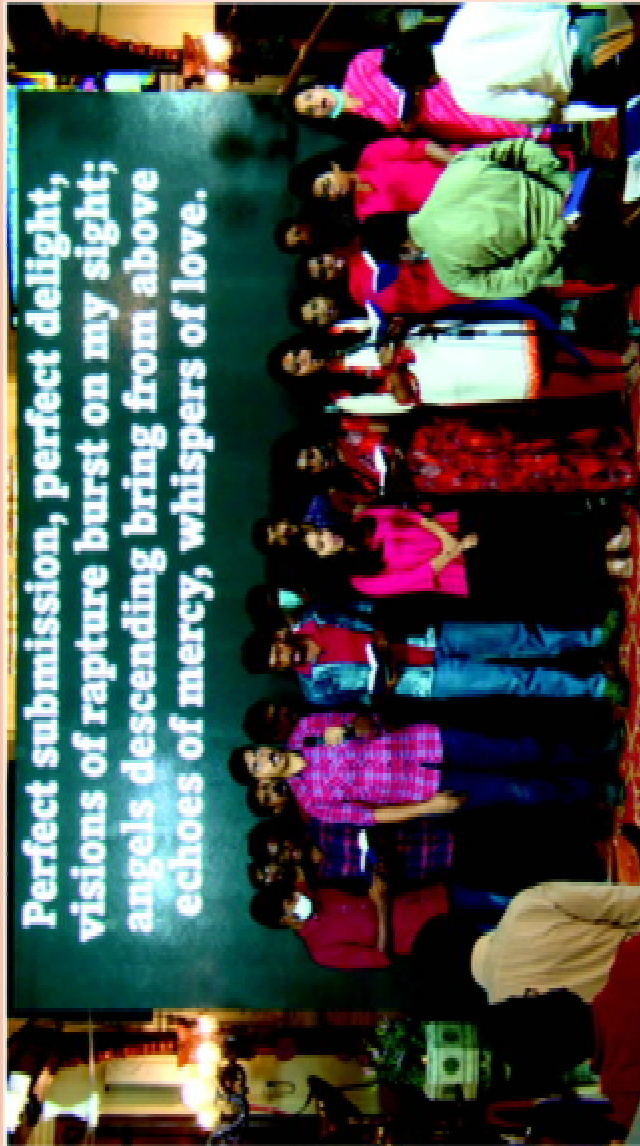
Parama Yerusalame Paralogam Vittiranguthae



An eager thronging to the Kirk Carnival!



Sale of delectable eats



Joyful singing by Kirk Youth Fellowship



