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Editorial Board : Usha George Chitra Bennett Word from the Pastor



BOND WITHOUT BIAS

Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another (Romans 12:10)

Every month in our church Calendar, we see a new theme for our study of God's word and a new verse of the month. Along with this, there is also one ministry of the church that is focused on and presented to the congregation. For the month of August, we have one of my favorite ministries which is our Asha School. There are many reasons why it is close to my heart but the one I want to highlight here is the 'pure love' of the children which is simply infectious. One day, as I was entering the church, a little boy ran up to me and I was not sure what he wanted. Before I realized what was happening, he hugged me tight and would not let go. I stood there dumbfounded and wanted to enjoy this love which had no bounds. So many times, when the children of Asha school are on their exercise walk, they would smile, give a salute or on a couple of occasions, stand in front of the car until someone guides them away. They don't care if I am the Pastor or any such thing. For them, I am a friend and I don't want it any other way. Society may call them many names, their future may not have great careers or financial success but what is lacking in this 'successful corporate' world, has been achieved by these precious children, PURE LOVE.

The message in the Bible is a simple message of God-fearing love, God-honoring love and God-representing love. Our Master Jesus gave the perfect answer to the question, 'which is the great commandment in the law?' Jesus said 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets. (Matthew 22:36-40)



Love is the central message of the Christian faith which is why the Cross of Christ is the perfect representation of the perfect love our perfect Savior. Very often we complain how others don't show love and use that as an excuse to turn our backs on them. The message of the Bible is about bonding with others expecting nothing in return. It is a tall order and so counter-cultural. In simple terms, Love has no strings attached. Be a Christian, behave like a Christian and bring others to Christ with the love of Christ shown through our lives.

Have a blessed month.

Rev. Isaac Johnson

John's Corner

A BLIND MAN AND A CRIPPLE

Read 2Cor12:9, 1Tim6:6, Heb13:5 (Aug 13th is Asha Sunday)

I saw a blind man being led By one in pain who limped and walked; They both looked cheerful and content, Which made me wonder what they talked.

They seemed so carefree and relaxed, Though both to me appeared to be, Handicapped and unfortunate, Each with a disability.

I thought how often I've complained And murmured against God, when I Lacked something others had and mourned, 'Have You forgotten me, Lord, why?'

Open our eyes to realize How blessed we are, and prayerfully Reach out with love to help those, Lord, Burdened with disability.

John H. Bala Singh



Homeless Jesus

Homeless Jesus, also known as Jesus the Homeless is a bronze sculpture by Canadian sculptor Timothy Schmalz depicting Jesus as a homeless person, sleeping on a park bench. The figure is shrouded in a blanket with even His face covered, with the only indication that the figure is Jesus being the visible wounds on the feet. The bench has space for one person to sit beside it to meditate. The sculpture has Matthew 25:40 beside it - "Truly I say to you as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to Me".

The "Homeless Jesus" sculpture is a visual representation of Matthew 25. The sculpture suggests that Christ is with the most marginalized in our society. The original sculpture was installed at Regis College, University of Toronto, in early 2013. Over 100 casts of the statue have been installed worldwide since 2016.

There is one in the park near the entrance of the Israelite town of Capernaum popularly called "the town of Jesus". Strange to find the statute of Homeless Jesus in the town where Jesus chose as His home after He left Nazareth, where He chose many of His disciples, performed many miracles and preached many sermons.

John records, 'He came to His own and His own did not recognise Him ' (John 1.11). The nativity narrative shows that Jesus was laid in a manger as there was no room for Him in the inn (Luke 2.7). Jesus said,"Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head" (Luke 9.58). In fact He used a borrowed boat as His pulpit, rode on a borrowed donkey to Jerusalem, celebrated the Last Supper in a friend's guest room and was buried in a borrowed tomb (Luke 5.1-3, Mark 11.1-11, Luke 22.7-23, Matthew 27.57-62).

Seeing the statute reminded me of our Urban Ministry that caters to the marginalised - the homeless, the prisoners, drug addicts etc.,

their prayer walks and their tea ministry, prayer sessions etc.- I prayed "God use me in some way to minister to them".

But soon God put me in bed after an accident. Lying in bed from June 12th2023 till now (with four more weeks to go as per doctor's instructions) helped me ponder on my life vis a vis the marginalised not in society but in the church. Though I prayed for the sick, yet I never took the trouble to visit, to help monetarily or physically. I recognised my sin and asked for forgiveness and asked God to help me be a doer of the word.

During this period of my sickness I have been the recipient of many prayers, some calling every day to enquire and pray, some texting daily with prayers, some coming with food, one brought communion elements (so grateful), others came just to spend time with me and pray.

So much I received; I feel humbled and I am asking God to help me to cater to needs of the marginalised in some tangible ways.

Dr. Sujatha Elizabeth Prasad

God promises a safe landing, not a calm passage.

Unknown

Between two evils, choose neither; between two goods, choose both.

Tyron Edwards

My Tryst with Faith-building

Hebrews11.1 says "now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen".

Whether one is a long-time believer or beginner, in the journey of faith-building, many verses from the Scriptures inspireand guide us. In Christian life there are times when it is easy to have enormous faith, and then, times when our faith is challenged. The most earnest of people in the Bible have had severe times of faithlessnesslike 'doubting' Thomas, who required to personally see the nail marks on the Lord's palm, or even Peter who unsuccessfully tried walking on water andhad Jesus exclaim "o you of little faith, why do you doubt?" (Matthew 14:28-33).

It is certainly easy to believe and be faithful when it is sunny and there are blue skies and rainbows. My world has seen dark gloomy days when my faith seems to dissipate and I seem to be walking aimlessly in life. That is when I realise God has still enormous work to do in me as I struggle to fully believe in His powerand majesty. Even Sara was not fully convinced about God's promiseand provision, that she would bear a child at 90 years of ageand she even 'laughed' secretly at the thought (Genesis 16-18).

Consider the incredulous actions of the Israelites, who timeand again doubted our Lordand lost faith in His power. This too, AFTER witnessing awesome andmind-boggling miracles, exposes human frailty while displaying God's benevolence and forgiveness.

When things do not go the way we had hoped, despite persistent prayer, it gets tough to navigate the 'faithful' route. It is critical to keep trusting in God's majesty and promise implicitly. It can prove to be a game changerand may eventually be an opportunity to praise God no matter what meets you at sunrise. It is believed that through faith, one can overcome worldly disappointments.

His grace is sufficient for us!

Faith is like a radar that sees through fog, reality of things at a distance, that the human eye cannot see.

Faith, I believe, is a work in progress, and I heard someone say, if you have more faith, you will be endowed with greater grace ... hallelujah!

To build more faith, we need to add oil to the lamp of faithand that is prayer. We have often heard it said that a prayerless person has a powerless life! We are advised to pray with childlike faith; it is not easy when prayers remain unanswered and there are long periods of drought. However, prayer cannot be casual or fizzle out when the need is met or the battle is won.

The 'size' of our prayer should match the size of the opposition ... the Devil! He will continually discourage us, discount our trust as meaningless, cloud our minds with negative feelings and desperate thoughts, and, if we give in, we will end up becoming Christians without conviction. Determine to be one who has peaceand purpose in life because of faith in the Lord Jesus!

'Those who look upon Him are radiant, their faces never covered in *shame*

This poor man calledand the Lord heard himand saved him from his troubles'. Psalm 34:5-6

If we look at everything through the prism of faith, it will become clear how abundantly our Lord has provided for us. Hoping and trusting in the Lord can give us renewed strength, to get back up after any disappointment. Isaiah 40:31.

I have heard it saidthat when you achieve complete 'faithfulness' you will trust like Mary, pray like Paul, save like Noah, believe like Abraham, fight like David, and serve like Jesus, and loveand obey God.

My journey to emulate these giants will be arduous, but with God's help, I hope to keep at it!!

(with excerpts from personal testimonials and prayers)

Asha Mohan



Forgotten

The church in exile here with me but not for a moment forgotten by God... 1 Peter 5:13 (MSG), ,

Forgotten, overlooked, Unnoticed, bypassed... By friend or foe, Knowingly or unknowingly is a form of rejection that breaks the heart. More so when You seem oblivious to pain.

From ancient times there has been a discrepancy between perceived rejection and actual truth. For, Joseph was not forgotten in prison, The Israelites were not forsaken in Egypt, Hannah's cries did not fall on deaf ears and David's tears were not passed over.

Some things are beyond understanding. We may never know why. Trying to figure out the reason almost always leads to despair. We think if we know the cause we can find the cure. But healing is elusive when we use our own methods. Only You can heal.

Forgive me for misinterpreting Your silence as apathy, for not waiting patiently and willfully disregarding Your voice. You do not ignore Your people. Engrave this truth in my heart.

"My dear child, My memory is intact. The only thing I choose to forget is confessed sins. I Am not a haphazard God.

Forgotten? Hardly. Unnoticed ? Never. Overlooked? Surely not. My silence is not synonymous with absence. I Am methodical and thorough. Intimately known and loved beyond your wildest imagination, In exile or grief you are not forgotten. Your walls are continually before Me. Remember the cross, Remember My love for you, lest you forget."

Isaiah 49:13-, 16, Psalm 56:8, ,

But You have seen, for You observe trouble and grief, to repay it by Your hand. The helpless commits himself to You; You are the helper of the fatherless.Psalm 10:14

Dr. Susan Rajkumari

Evangelism is a process of bringing the Gospel to people where they are, not where you would like them to be.

Vincent Donovan

?

Bible Quiz No. 139–August 2023

A Choirmaster's Quiz

- 1. Who was called 'the sweet singer of Israel'?
- 2. Asaph, Ethen and Heman held what positions in David's musical world ?
- 3. On what occasion did a choir of angels sing?
- 4. Who sang:
 - a. 'the song of deliverance'
 - b. 'a song of victory'

c. 'a song of thanksgiving'

(Hint – all were women)

- 5. Which Book of the Bible is sometimes called 'The Song of Songs'?
- 6. Who said : 'He hath put a new song in my mouth' ?
- 7. According to the Bible, how many **'songs'** is Solomon said to have written ?
- 8. Who said : 'We have piped to you, and ye have not danced' ?
- 9. Who was working in the fields when he heard 'musick and dancing'?
- 10. On what occasion did Jesus see 'minstrels, and people making a noise'?

Taken from Who? Why? What? - a Bible quiz book by May C. Smith.

Kindly send your answers to the church office or email <u>admin@thekirk.in</u>by 20th July 2023.

Usha George

SOAR HIGH!

Thinking back specifically on Youth Sunday - 2023, there's no doubt a memorable take away! The day to be precise, the 23rd of July started off with the theme of the year ringing out beautifully in the song, "Your ways are higher" in the 7am service. Followed by this the youth report for the year 2022-23 with the theme, "Heart of God" was portrayed on a thankful note. The word of God came through as our Pastor Rev. Isaac Johnson spoke on being built without guilt! The 9am service was a point of soaring high in the Lord as the youth ledthe service through songs, skit, choreo with the music and the decorations that were breath taking. The worship time led by Kiaraliftedup the Name of the Lord who is Holy forever! In and through the very touching skit everyone thought, "Hope to see many more Davids!". Sujay and the many more musicians soared high not just with the skills but with the special touch.Dr. Joan Elango's message reiterated the repeated call of our loving Lord and His thoughts as we soak in "His" Word! The evening 6pm service worship time led by Dr. Suman was aptly followed by the Word, "Taste and see that the Lord is good". Yes, bind us together Lord, with cords that cannot be broken.

Thinking ahead specially on the things yet to come, there's a lot of planning, preparing and waiting on the Lord as Emmanuel & Christianna prayerfully work through the upcoming events. As an open invitation to be a part of the youth camp was colorfully presented and this would definitely be a point where many more young people can soar high! But it goes without saying that the home fellowship, youth Bible study, outreach to Thirupalaivanam, Gypsy Colony and the youth service, "Catalyst" are the innumerable ways through which our youth continually soar high! Not because of who we are but because of who He is!

"His thoughts are Higher! His ways are Wiser! His strength is Greater! "

Yes, the Lord's promise is sure as His grace is unfathomable and His Word is immovable.

"SOAR HIGH- Anchored in the Awesome One!"

Kirk Youth Fellowship





Answers to Bible Quiz No. 138 – July 2023

In the Bible or Not?

- 1. Yes. Proverbs 14:23
- 2. No. Probably from a sermon by John Wesley, 1778
- 3. No. From a hymn by William Cowper, 1773
- 4. Yes. Proverbs 21:19
- 5. Yes. Job 39:13
- 6. No.
- 7. No. Probably from an Aesop fable
- 8. Yes. Psalm 133:1
- 9. No. Mahatma Gandhi said this in 1929: "Hate the sin and not the sinner."
- 10. Yes. Job 19:20

The winners are:

- 1. Mrs. Suguna Joseph
- 2. Mrs. Aruna Asir
- 3. Mrs. Evelyn James
- 4. Mrs. Patricia Patrick
- 5. Mrs. Sujata Elizabeth Prasad
- 6. Mrs. Gladys Vedavimali
- 7. Mrs. Peace Rani Sudhakar
- 8. Mrs. Victoria Basker
- 9. Mrs. Indra Rajanayakam
- 10. Mrs. Sabrina Siga

Hearty Congratulations!

Appointed Miracle Moments

In the book of Acts Chapter 3, we are told about a man who was lame from birth, being carried and laid daily at thegate of the temple, which was called "Beautiful". He was there to ask for alms from those who went in and out of the temple. It was around 3 p.m., when John and Peter weregoing to the temple to pray. Peter (along with John) caught sight of the man and asked him to look at them. So, the man gave his attention to them expecting to receive something. Peter, in the Name of Jesus Christ, heals the man of his infirmity. The man wentwalking, leaping, and praising God in the temple.

From verses 1 and 2 we learn that:

- i. It was around the ninth hour (3 p.m.) that Peter and John were on their way to the temple to pray.
- ii. It is specific in stating that the man was lame "right from his birth".
- iii. The lame man was located at the gate of the temple called "Beautiful".

There are three key elements that we see emerging from the above points.

The element of Timing: When we consider the entirety of the lame man's lifetime in correlation with the exact specific hour in which he was healed, we understand the perfect and precise timing of God.

The element of Place: There were up to 9 inner gates within the temple complex. But the lame man wasplaced precisely at the gate "Beautiful." Peter and John could have chosen any of the other 8 gates, however, it wasthis specific gate that they had chosen to enter the temple.

The *element of* **People**:God brought Peter and John through the right gate at the right time.

While we learn from the first 2 verses of this passage that God would lead us to the right place, at the right time, and bring the people across our path, we learn 3 important lessons later in the passage, that play an importantrole in helping us experience these God-ordained Miracle Moments in our lives.

In Acts 1:7, Jesus says to his apostles *"It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put inHis own authority"*. There are indeed times and seasons, as Ecclesiastes 3:1 says, *"To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven"*. We further understand the purpose of this from Acts1:8. that we areto be witnesses for Christ. When the lame man was healed, he went walking and leaping and praising God in thetemple. He was now a witness to Christ's goodness and mercy.

The lame man's perseverance led him to this divine moment. Living with this major physical disability, he could have been bitter, given up, and stayed home. But he made the effort to come out of his home andfind a way to get to the temple gate to ask for help. As we see, he was laid DAILY at the gate (Acts 3:2). Welearn that perseverance is a byproduct of hope. As it is written in Romans 8:24-25, *"For we were saved in thishope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do notsee, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance."*

Lastly, the lame man heeded the voice of Peter. "He gave them his attention" (Acts 3:5). Who was Peter tohim? Did he even know that he was an apostle of Christ? Did he even know Christ? Why should he heed the voice of this stranger? All of these potential questions are possible. But the man heeded, for if he had not, if he hadbeen blinded by pride in asking those questions, he would have missed hismiracle.

We learn from this passage of Scripture that:

- 1. We are called to be witnesses for Christ through our "Miracle Moments".
- 2. Perseverance is a byproduct of hope, and unequivocally an act of Faith. As it is written in Hebrews 11 "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."
- 3. Our smallest effort acts as a catalyst to God's miracles in our lives in order to glorify God.

If we do our part of living, adopting Humility, Perseverance, and Hope, God will take care of the People, Place, and Time. Where we would be led to experience our "Appointed Miracle Moments"?

Ryan Bosser



Mustard Seed Men

For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. 1 Corinthians 3:9

Our Master Teacher uses the word "mustard seed", a common seed, in a graphic and pictorial way to convey an important truth. The parable speaks of this tiny seed growing into a strong tree, where birds are happy to nest. Mark 4:30-32

The building up of God's kingdom on earth needs ordinary hands to hold up little candles and humble hearts to serve as mirrors reflecting His glory. Our Lord needs hands and hearts of love, care, devotion and compassion, not riches and gold.

Here is an uplifting little story for us "mustard seed people" to encourage us to do our best for Jesus. An elementary school supervisor was noting the progress the school had made. She stopped to admire a lovely mural displayed on the Bulletin Board. A little boy stood beside it beaming with pride. The lady declared it beautiful and asked the boy if he had a part in it. The little fellow pulled himself to his full height and exclaimed "I washed the brushes!". Yes, he was proud that he had done his part.As children of our Heavenly Father we should realize that it is an inestimable privilege to be "a doorkeeper in the house of my God" (Psalm 84:10).

During the Roman Empire under Emperor Nero in the 1st century A.D., innumerable and unnamed Christians were thrown to half-starved lions in the Colosseum. They chose death rather than recant their faith. The martyrs were just ordinary men and women but ablaze with love for Jesus.

Take an incident from the New Testament. No one will ever know the name of the good man in whose house the "Last Supper" was held.

Our Lord Jesus, as recorded in the Bible, had a humble background no different from other Jewish boys of similar rusticcircumstances. "He had no credentials". His followers were an ignorant, harried group. They were promised nothing but hardship and sacrifice. Jesus told them, "I am sending you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves". The "mustard seed men" heard Him clearly and followed Him eagerly. Jesus inspired the ordinary home-loving men to leave everything and follow Him.

Mighty and powerful kingdoms on earth have existed, flourished, crumbled and vanished. But our Master's kingdom -the Church of Jesus marches strong resting on the shoulders of little-known men and women in history –"mustard seed" people like us. Our Master expects us to boldly proclaim the good news of God, saying, "*The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.*" (Mark 1:15).

We pray for the zeal, strength and spirit that electrified the early church and made Paul declare, "For to me, to live *is* Christ".

"There's not a child so small and weak But has his little cross to take His little work of love and praise That he may do for Jesus' sake."

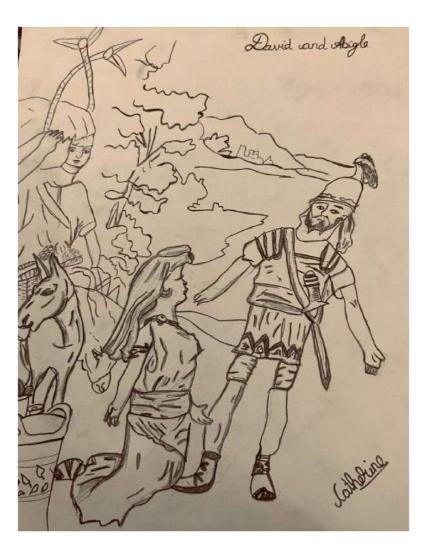
Usha George

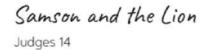
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Harry Dixon Loes

Children's Corner

David and Abigail" by Catherine, Std 6, Kirk Sunday School







Dolly Shanthakumar

"...the essence of gospel-humility is not thinking more of myself or thinking less of myself, it is thinking of myself less."

Timothy Keller

Medical Corner



ULCERS IN THE BODY – IV

CORNEAL ULCER

"Doctors treat, but Jesus heals"

The Bible talks about how our Lord Jesus restored vision to the blind miraculously. One incident is given in Mathew 9:27-30.

The cornea of the eye can be compared to the transparent glass of the wristwatch.We look at the coloured iris behind the cornea when we look at a person's eye, exactly like how we look at the dial of the wristwatch, and never at the clear glass in front.Since the cornea is the outermost layer of the eye, it is prone to infections and injuries.Corneal ulcers can be due to bacteria, virus, fungus or acanthamoeba.We should never wash our eyes with contaminated water from unclean bathroom fittings.Having a dip in a pond or river with stagnant water and bathing in waterfalls have their own risks.Using old, infected cosmetics in the eye like kajal, eyeliner, mascara etc, can also lead to corneal ulcer.

The corneal ulcer is examined by the eye doctor with the slit lamp biomicroscope which gives a well illuminated, magnified, image of the cornea. The margins of the ulcer, the slough at the base of ulcer, the number of ulcers, the congestion of the eye, swelling of the eyelids, the type of discharge, cloudiness of cornea and presence of pus inside the eye are all observed meticulously.

Scrapings from the margins of the ulcer are taken in a sterile swab / slide and sent to the microbiology lab to identify the organism causing the infective ulcer. Appropriate antibacterial / antiviral / antifungal eye drops and ointment are used, besides anti inflammatory and anti swelling agents, to bring down the pain, inflammation and swelling. Homatropine eye drops gives rest to the eye. The person is reviewed periodically, and the treatment is modified according to the progress. As the ulcer heals, the vision improves. Injury to the eye can also cause abrasion of the cornea. Besides appropriate treatment, the eye is also bandaged.

Dr. (Mrs.)Rajini Kantha Narendranath



Kirk News



Bright eyes gladden the heart; Good news puts fat on the bones. Proverbs 15:30

Soar High

Soar High! That was the theme of the Youth Sunday on 23rdJuly 2023. It was not simply because the youth of the church stood on a platform, but it was their passion about the message that they wanted to deliver that their collective energy made them soar.

Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. - I Timothy 4: 12

The youth of Kirk are not only immensely talented but are setting a standard to inspire others. The church felt proud of their youth as they saw them lead worship, put up a skit, sing and choreograph to glorify our Creator.

Guest Speaker:

Dr. Joan Elango - 23/07/2023 - 7:00 am & 9:00 am Services

Kirk Project Carnival

The Kirk Project Carnival was both hosted and participated by the congregants with much enthusiasm on 2ndJuly 2023, from 11 am onwards. With live music setting the tone, the stalls began to sell their products briskly. The stalls had books, clothes, leather goods, nursery plants, cutlets, stew, biryani, cakes, ice cream, and much more. The proceeds from the carnival go toward the outreach ministries and projects of the church.

Kirk Men's Fellowship

The Kirk Men's Fellowship met for a time of virtual prayer on 14thJuly 2023 from 7:30 pm to 8:00 pm.

On 16thJuly, the Kirk Men's Fellowship met at 11:00 am in person at the DCC Hall to discuss the topic - 'Don't be a Nabal!' facilitated by Rev. Isaac Johnson.

Kirk Women's Fellowship

The Women's Monthly Meet of the Kirk Women's Fellowship took place on the 16th of July at the SACCE Hall after the 9 am service for a time of testimonies, discussion, and prayer.

Friendship Club

Friendship Club met on 13thJuly at 3 pm in the SACCE Hall for a time of fellowship and growing in the Lord.

House Church

House Church commenced after a long break on July 21stat 4:30 pm at the residence of Mr. Vijaykumar Browning and Mrs. Grace Browning.

Kirk Medical Camp

The Kirk's Medical, Gospel and Counselling Outreach Program took place on 9thJuly, at Balaramapuram, from 11.00 am till 3.00 pm.

St. Andrew's Church, Perumbakkam

St. Andrew's Church, Perumbakkam, celebrated their 2nd anniversary at 6:00 pm on 15thJuly 2023 and at 8:30 am the following day. They invited Rev. Alex Joseph of the Maranatha Ministries and Bible College, Chennai, as their guest speaker. The worship was led by The Glauben team on the 15th, and Cross Rhythms Choir on the 16th. We continue to be amazed by God's work in this church.

Obituary

Mrs. Rubina Rebekah Rodgers (21/05/1997 - 27/06/2023), stepped into the glory of our Lord on 27th June 2023. The memorial service to celebrate her remarkable journey was held on 28th June at 9:30 am at Kirk, followed by burial at Kilpauk Cemetery, Chennai.

Mrs. Sarah Tharyan Fernandes joined the saints in heaven on 14th July 2023. The funeral service was held at 2 pm on 16thJuly in the chapel at the Toll Gate Cemetery, Vellore.

Angela Susan Bryner

