



**CONTENTS**

Word from the Pastor	3
Santa Forgot you??? Not to Worry... Jesus Didn't	4
"If"..... I follow 'Jesus'.	7
How I Got saved	8
Traditions of Christmas	10
Quiz No. 51 December 2014	11
Christmas Gifts	13
John's Corner	15
Psalm 23	15
Banana Cashew Cake for Christmas	16
Kirk News	17

Cover - The Three Kings

Back cover : Presenters of "Children's Sunday"

*Editor : Mrs. R. Chandy*

## Word from the Pastor



Advent reminds us of the generosity of God. As I reflect on the Gospels as well as Pauline epistles, I am moved to note this undergirding truth forcefully spilling over all through the New Testament – What we don't deserve, He freely gives.

St. John in his prologue in John 1:1-18 says: 'And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.' (v.14).

Advent forcefully communicates the generosity of God in Christ Jesus. From the generous bounty of the Father, it's as John the beloved beautifully records for us in John 1:16: 'And from his fullness we have all received grace upon grace.' It's literally raining grace upon us, blessing upon blessing, favour upon favour. God's shower is open, gift after gift. The season of Advent reminds us of God being lavish exposing us to His Treasury and His Riches.

The Apostle Paul in Romans 5:20 says: 'Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.' To capture this concept, Charles Wesley said: 'Plenteous grace with thee is found, grace to cover all my sin.' As Paul further shares his testimony with Timothy, he states in I Tim. 1:14: 'And the grace of our Lord overflowed for me.' In other words, Paul is visualising and underscoring this truth clearly by stating: God's tap was not closed when it came to his soul and spirit.

As a community of God's people:                      Let us CHERISH GOD'S GRACE

Let us CELEBRATE GOD'S GRACE

Let us TRAVEL BY GOD'S GRACE

Let us COUNT ON GOD'S GRACE

Let us APPROACH THE THRONE OF

GRACE

Let us BE GRACELETS FOR GOD

But let us NEVER CHEAPEN THE CONCEPT

OF GOD'S GRACE

MAY GOD'S GRACE SO INVADE AND PERVADE OUR LIVES that we may know His sufficiency during this season and beyond.

My family joins me in wishing you all Blessings and Favour from God through Jesus, His gracious love-gift !

*Peter Francis*  
Pastor



**Santa Forgot you???**  
**Not to Worry.....**  
**Jesus Didn't**

The most favorite time of the year has finally arrived... time to gear up for all the festivities right? We're all looking forward to having a time of fun and quality time with our families and friends aren't we? I guess that we're eagerly anticipating gifts too. Yes of course.. I guess all of us are excited about these things (including me.) May I also mention that children would also be on their best behavior and eagerly awaiting gifts from Santa Claus. But all our celebrations would be in vain if we forgot the primary focus of the season. Yes, it is indeed the commemoration of the virgin birth of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, the focal point in history where Almighty God assumed the likeness of frail man for the salvation of humanity. Someone once said "*The most beautiful thing about Christmas shines in the first six letters of the word*". Jim Reeves beautifully brings out the meaning of Christmas in a song he wrote entitled "C-H-R-I-S-T-M-A-S", the lyrics of which are as follows:

*"C" is for the Christ Child born upon this day;*

*"H" for herald angels in the night.*

*"R" means our Redeemer;*

*"I" means Israel;*

*"S" is for the star that shone so bright.*

*"T" is for the three wise men, They who travelled far.*

*"M" is for the manger where He lay.*

*"A" 's for all He stands for;*

*"S" means shepherds came,*

And that's why there's a Christmas Day.

Charles Wesley composed the popular hymn "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" wherein he hailed the baby "BORN THAT MAN MAY NO MORE DIE".

John Francis Wade, in a Latin Hymn he composed entitled "*Adeste Fidelis*" better known as its English version entitled "O Come All Ye Faithful" perceived the baby as "WORD of the FATHER now in flesh appearing"

Isaac Watts in his well known composition entitled "Joy To the World" heralds the coming of the Messiah. In fact many believe that he was not just referring to the birth of Christ in this World but his composition is also the expression of a believer's expectation of Christ's second coming to judge and rule the world with perfect justice, righteousness, and peace for all eternity. The last paragraph of the hymn illustrated just that:

***He rules the world with truth and grace,  
And makes the nations prove  
The glories of His righteousness,  
And wonders of His love,(x2)  
And wonders, wonders, of His love***

The above hymns commemorate the very fact that God, the Everlasting Father of all creation who always existed and will continue to exist from everlasting to everlasting sent His only begotten Son into a world perishing in sin and rebellion. God [The Son] took on the likeness of frail human flesh and dwelt among us. God did not send His Son to condemn the world but to save the world. God's only begotten Son is God's Greatest Gift to mankind and represents His great love for a world perishing in sin and error. Our celebrations and festivities must be on our gratitude to God for His Indescribable Gift (John 3:16).

Santa Claus only gives gifts to those who've been nice and rejects those who have been naughty. But the Lord loves all of us irrespective of our sin and faults. He rains blessings on both the just and the unjust (Matthew 5:45). However, we must also take note that He is Holy and Righteous. He cannot and will not continuously condone nor will He continually tolerate our habitual indulgence in sin (Proverbs 6:16-19). As per God's standards all people have sinned and fallen short of His glory. In addition to that God's Word tells us that no one can honestly consider himself/herself righteous nor good (Romans 3:10, 12 & 23). The very thought of our hearts and mind are wicked and evil (Mark 7:20-23). Even our so-called righteousness are like

filthy blood soaked rags (Isaiah 64:6). Do any of us need to be taught how to lie, steal, deceive, hate, envy, lust after, and so on... I'm sure all of us know exactly what I'm talking about. These sinful thoughts and instincts are inborn in all of us, irrespective of the integrity and decency of our family upbringing. As per God's standards, none of us deserve anything except hell. So who is Santa Claus going to have to give gifts to? I think he too would most definitely need to be saved (if he ever existed).

But there is still Hope! Christmas is a season that celebrates hope of a better future where sin and death will no longer be issues that man has to contend with. But we can only partake of this future only if we **first believe and accept** God's greatest Gift to us; the **LORD JESUS CHRIST** and all that He's done for us and **as a result** of believing in Him good works and righteous living **must** flow from our lives (Ephesians 2:8-10). It doesn't matter whether you've been naughty or nice. You can freely accept Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord. Even if Santa forgot you, don't worry; God Didn't. Won't you accept God's greatest Gift to you? Just come to Him as you are.

I'd like to conclude by quoting a part of Philips Brooks composition "O Little Town of Bethlehem". Let this be our prayer, not just for this Christmas, but all throughout our lives in our walk with our God.

*"O Holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray  
Cast out our sin and enter in be born to us today  
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell  
**O come to us, abide with us our Lord Emmanuel!**"*

*Varun Christopher*

## **"If" ..... I follow 'Jesus'.**

Who is this 'JESUS' of history? Down the centuries many have tried to answer this question. But God chose the foolish, the weak, the lowly and the despised things of the World to shame the wise and the strong. 'Great power' and 'much grace' has been on all who choose to proclaim the message of the Cross.

At the chime of the bell at 9 on Sunday the 16<sup>th</sup> of November which was observed as 'Children's Sunday', Bach's Fugue 5, D major filled the air as Adrian played it, and we all stood up reverently as the BIBLE was brought in and the service was led by Rubina.

Can I be the 'Candle in the dark'? This presentation was brought by the Intermediate and Senior students portraying the life of William Carey. It was followed by a short compilation-'Follow the Leader' by the beginners. O! What a joy it was to behold them shining like the 'City on a Hill', all for the glory of God. A musical "All because of JESUS" challenged each one to ponder anew, Can I be the 'Christian who celebrates JESUS'?

The Bible readings, Acts 4:23-33 and Matthew 5: 13-16 as read by Karen and Jeswin, reassured us to continue following the Lord, since 'GREAT is His power of His resurrection'. An exhortation by Pastor Peter Francis challenged everyone with the words of William Carey, "Attempt great things for God, expect Great things from God" urging parents to consider focussing their dreams and aspirations towards missions and to stand in the gap. Following this, the highlight of the offertory time came in the two songs -"You're my strength when I am weak" and 'I have decided to follow JESUS.' The service came to a close with the all-time favourite Hymnal, "Follow, follow, I will follow JESUS." Memories of this service might fade away after a while, but the theme for the year "Choose this day.....to Follow JESUS" echoing the theme verse from Joshua 24: 15b "As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord," is bound to resound and bear fruit in many a young life.

*Dr. Praise Ambrose*  
Sunday School Supdt.,

## How I Got Saved

by Lianca Ray

Hi, my name is Lianca Ray and I am a seven and a half year old girl from India. Now let me tell you what sin is, before I tell you how I got saved. Sin is anything that goes against God. And anyone who sins is a sinner. And I know this because the Bible tells me that I'm a sinner. And if you're a sinner you will go to hell forever and be in eternal separation from God. And I don't like being separated from God. And neither does God like being separated from me. God is a loving and kind God, so he made a plan to send his only son to the earth to save us. I know and believe this because the Bible tells me.

Now I'm ready to tell you how I got saved, because you know what sin is now.

How  
I got  
saved →



This is what I did to be saved.  
I believed in the promise God  
made according to his word. (John 3:16).  
My parents, Sunday school teachers,  
and school teachers taught me  
that verse. And that is how I  
got saved. I hope you enjoyed  
my version of the essay!

THE END

Christianity requires the participants to  
come out of the grandstand and on to  
the playing field.



## Traditions of Christmas

The term X Mas instead of 'Christmas' is Greek in origin. The word for 'Christ' in Greek is 'xristos'. Eventually, XMas came to be both an accepted and suitable alternative to the word 'Christmas'. The festivities began in the middle of December and continued until January 1<sup>st</sup>. Visibility of the invisible God is Christmas.

According to some legends, the Christian celebration of Christmas was invented to compete with the pagan festivals held in December. The 25<sup>th</sup> was sacred not only to the Romans, but also the Persians. Christmas means 'Christ's Mass' and is the celebration of Jesus Christ's birth and baptism. In 137 AD, the bishop of Rome ordered that the birthday of Jesus Christ be observed as a solemn feast. In 375 AD it was finally announced that the birth of Jesus would be honoured on this day.

The colours often associated with Christmas decorating are green, red, white, blue, silver and gold. The green represents everlasting life, red represents the bloodline of Jesus Christ, blue represents the sky from where the angels appeared, white represents the purity of virgin birth and silver and gold represent the richness of God's blessings.

The three wise men who followed the star and reached Bethlehem to worship the child – baby Christ – the eldest of them was Melchior, King of Arabia and he was 60 years old. The youngest was named Gaspar who was 20 years old. The third monarch was Balthazar, King

of Sheba and he was 40 years old. The three kings began their journey west. They travelled across lonely desert and windy mountain plains, guided always by the star. They reached Jerusalem and conversed with Herod before continuing on their way. All around the world, so it is said, the air was filled with beautiful fragrance. The children gathered near the crude cradle; one of them a small girl named Madelon was weeping because she did not have anything to offer to the baby – Christ. Suddenly, Gabriel stood before her and struck the ground with his staff and while petalled flowers with gold hearts appeared. Madelon picked the blossoms and carried them to the cradle. Her gift was Christmas Rose.

Melchior had brought 30 gold coins to crown the little King. Balthazar's gift was frankincense, a token of divinity. Gaspar's gift was bitter myrrh, thus a sign of death that the child would later experience. The three kings took 2 years to reach their homes. Each of the three kings lived to a very old age and before each died, the star that had led them appeared again before their eyes.

The sending of greeting cards at Christmas truly began during the Victorian era. Now, in America, Christmas cards are sold for more than 30 million dollars.

The very first practice of decorating the Christmas Tree was introduced by Albert, the husband of Queen Victoria in 1840. The tradition of a Christmas tree spread across America during the 1800's with the arrival of German immigrants. Christmas tree lights were first mass produced in 1890. Christmas trees are grown in all American States.

According to ancient tradition, Christmas carols should strictly bear the narrative of St. Luke which has three distinct points: the recitative of the Angel of the Lord, the choir of the multitude of angels and the reaction of the shepherds.

Amongst all the beautiful carols like "Joy to the world", "While shepherds watched their flock by night", the all-time favourite is "Silent Night, Holy Night". It is an anchor for Christmas celebrations throughout the world.

*Dr. Asir Benjamin*

**Bible Quiz No. 51**  
**(Based on Job - KJV)**



Note : Give only 1 reference

1. 'Is there any taste in the white of an egg?'
2. "Going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it" Who said, to whom?
3. 'Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.'" Who said, to whom?
4. Who mentions Arcturus, Orion and Pleiades?
5. Who discovered that moon has no light?
6. Which is the place of origin of sapphires?
7. Who said that underneath the earth it is turned up as it were by fire?
8. Who was the O.T personality who was the father to the poor?
9. Who said, "With the ancient is wisdom and in length of days understanding"?
10. Who made a covenant with his own eyes?

*Send answers by 25th December.*

*Usha George*

**Answers to Bible Quiz No. 50**

***Hearty Congratulations !***

**Right answers given by :**

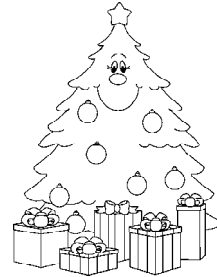
**Mrs. Indira Rajanayakan  
Mrs. Minnie Devadoss  
Dr. Rachel Chacko  
Mrs. Shanta Jaikumar  
Mrs. Suguna Joseph  
Mrs. Victoria Baskar**

The answers are :

1. 'The evil and violent man'. Psalm 140:1-3
2. Bread - Ps. 105:16
3. Ministers / servants. Ps. 104 : 4
4. Asaph Ps 82 : 1
5. Sparrow Ps. 102 : 7
6. The wicked Ps. 10 : 6
7. Psalm 72
8. Psalm 2 : 4
9. David Ps. 141:2
10. Light Ps. 104 : 2

*Usha George*

## Christmas Gifts



The Christmas story is a wonderful one; it belongs to the realm of magic, for it has angels speaking to human beings, it has stars brighter than we have ever seen and it has at its centre a baby. The angels even direct the parents to name the baby. A wicked king, like in the fairy tales of old, sends his soldiers to kill the baby, but the baby escapes, as the parents flee with him to a far-off land. The magic ends here, and the mundane takes over. The next we hear of this baby is that he is growing up as a young boy in subjection to his parents, who are humble, pious Jews in an obscure village in Galilee in the land of Palestine. His name is Jesus, and he lives a fully human life, shouldering the responsibility of the home after his father's death. After he turns 30, he chooses his own vocation, that of an itinerant preacher, and leaves home.

Once again we enter a realm of extraordinary happenings 'Jesus' ministry explodes into great healings, zealous presentations of the Kingdom of Heaven and warnings of the judgement of God. Finally His revelation of Himself as the Son of God, ("Do you accuse me of blasphemy, because I said, I am the Son of God?") leads to His crucifixion. But his rising to life after 3 days, authenticates His claim to be the Son of God. He lives for ever and shares the lives of the believers.

His resurrection is the crowning glory of His life; the gift of His everliving presence with us who believe, is the best Christmas gift we all receive.

About 50 years ago there lived in the countryside of Wales, a very good doctor. He was in charge of a large district and his patients lived far away from each other. One cold rainy night, the doctor received a phone call from one of his patients that he was in great pain and faced an imminent heart attack. The doctor put on his coat, boots and muffler, and taking his black bag and torch tramped through the snow to reach his patient. What was his surprise to see the patient himself,

opening the door, looking hale and hearty. And he said he had never telephoned the doctor. The mystery was solved a few days later when the police caught a notorious robber who had murdered many of his victims. Among the many crimes he confessed to, was the intended attack on the doctor whom he had telephoned, pretending to be the patient. "I was waiting to pounce on the doctor in the middle of the lonely moor, when I saw that the doctor was not alone. Walking by his side was a tall, hefty man and I fled". Jesus walked along with this doctor on his merciful errand, unknown to him. So God is with us in our sorrows and joys, in our dangers and triumphs. Emmanuel, God with us.

The second cause for joy at Christmas is sounded in the angels' song to the shepherds on the hills of Bethlehem. Hitherto man's concept of God was that He was an omnipotent being who knew all the wrong things we had done and who would punish us suitably. And so we were afraid of God. But the angels sang that a child had been born who would bring peace and good will to all men. This was a great revelation. God was not an angry God waiting to pounce on us when we go astray, but a good shepherd who would come after us, seeking us with a heart of love. We see the face of God when Jesus heals the sick, cleanses the lepers, opens the eyes of the blind, feeds the poor and heals the broken hearted. Above all we see the heart of God when He calls every man to love each other as Jesus loved us.

The 3rd gift of Christmas is found in the name the angel asked Joseph to give to Mary's son - Jesus - "for he shall save his people from their sins" Jesus means 'Saviour'. All of us commit sins, some big, some small. But Jesus saves us from the consequences of these sins, when we repent and ask for the forgiveness of God. This way He fits us for heaven. Forgiveness is the great gift of Jesus. This was what He gave to the thief who repented. "Today thou shalt be with Me in paradise." This word is our assurance as we also journey on to paradise.

*Mrs. R. Chandy*





### John's Corner

#### **Jesus Christ is Born!** (Read Mat. 1 : 21 & Luke 2 : 11)

Year after year we celebrate  
The birth of Jesus Christ our King,  
But oft we fail to understand  
The message Christmas tidings bring.

To many Christmas only means  
A holiday to celebrate,  
Get gifts from Santa, dine and dance,  
Sweet hearts neath mistetoe to date.

But silently a baby cries,  
True happiness to spread I came,  
Yet let no pleasure hide from you  
The significance of My name.

'I am called Jesus Christ because  
I came to rescue man from sin;  
Remember this while you rejoice,  
And reverently let Me in.'

*John H. Bala Singh*



## Banana Cashew Cake for Christmas

Eggs (Large)	-	2
Banana (Large)	-	2
Sugar	-	1 1/4 cup
Butter	-	1/2 cup
Curd	-	1/2 cup
Vanilla Essence	-	2 tsp
Maida	-	2 cups
Baking Powder	-	1 tsp
Baking Soda	-	1 tsp
1 Pinch Salt		
Cashew	-	150 gm
(Indicated Cup Size 200 ml)		

### Step 1 :

Beat eggs, Sugar, Butter, Curd, Vanilla essence and sliced bananas in a mixie. Pour into a vessel

### Step 2 :

Sift Maida, Baking Power, Soda, Salt together and pour into the same vessel and mix well. Mix 1 tablespoon Maida with broken cashew and add to the batter. Sprinkle some on top for decoration.

Pre heat oven at 180°C in convection mode. Grease and dust with Maida a 8 inches diameter baking dish. Pour the batter in to the dish and bake for 50 minutes (convection). Take out the dish and let it cool before cutting.

*Dr. (Mrs) Rajini Kantha*



## Kirk News



This is the best news of all: the God of the Universe became a man and dwelt among us – a cause for extraordinary celebration for all who understand its significance (along with the resurrection). Pastors and Bible teachers tell us we should approach our Holy Days with a lot more reverence and celebrate them with a lot more gratitude. True. As a church, we prepared in November for what's to come in December. Let this time of true joy fill our hearts to overflowing like never before.

### Guest Speakers

- 2<sup>nd</sup> November 6pm Dr. (Mrs.) Rajini Kantha Narendranath, our member, spoke on "Ten health capsules" from Mark 5:25-34 during healing service.
- 9<sup>th</sup> November 6pm Mr. John Rajayanakam, our elder, shared on "I'm going out to fish" from John 21:1-14
- 23<sup>rd</sup> November 6pm Mr. M.M. Narendranath, our elder, shared his perspective on the topic "Christian discipleship" at the Youth & Koinonia service.

**District Meetings** with fellowship and prayer were held as follows:

District 1 met in the home of Mr. K.M. & Mrs. Ashwathi Jacob on 16<sup>th</sup> Nov.

District 3 met in the SACCE bldg. on 23<sup>rd</sup> Nov., while District 7 & 8 did so on the 30<sup>th</sup>. District 5 went on a family day outing with prayer at Blue Lagoon (Neelangarai) on 30<sup>th</sup>.

**House Church** met on Fridays in the homes of Mr. & Mrs. Prasad Oommen, Mr. & Mrs. Melvin Ponraj, Mr. & Mrs. Dilip Chacko John & Ms. K.V. Saramma.

We thank the members and worshippers for opening their homes in Christian love and fellowship.

**Monday Bible Study** continued studying the Gospel of St. Luke.

**Manse Prayer Cell** met on Fridays as usual, studying the Psalms with prayer.

**Evangelism & Missions Movement Fasting and Prayer** met on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of November, praying for the church and village churches, Christmas programs, Church Camp 2015 and evangelism and missionary works. We believe our prayers in these areas are important as they please God who sees the concerns of our church and rewards us with His mercy, guidance and power.

**Sunday school Children's Sunday** service was held at 9AM on 16<sup>th</sup> Nov. on the theme 'If...I follow 'JESUS' . Presentations and songs praising Jesus marked the event, including a play on William Carey called 'Can I be a candle in the dark?' On the following Sundays, classes were held as usual.

**Kirk Youth Fellowship** met for prayer on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and attended the service at Tirupalaivanam on the 9<sup>th</sup>. CATALYST youth service happened on the 23<sup>rd</sup> as usual, with Bible study on the last Sunday, the 30<sup>th</sup> of Nov.

We appreciate the **12 young musicians** from our church who presented a piano concert on 29<sup>th</sup> Nov. playing Christmas carols, classical and popular pieces – a joy to their parents and all those who attended. The chief guest was Mr.Rampert Ratnaiya who encouraged the musicians to glorify God through music. Rev.Isaac Johnson prayed for the children. The program was coordinated by Mr.Devakaran. Mr.Arul Siromoney gave a vote of thanks.

#### **CONGRATULATIONS!**

**Mani Abraham and Catherine Natasha** were blessed with a baby boy on 19th November 2014. Grandson to our Elder Mr. Abraham Mani & Mrs. Susan Abraham.

#### **OBITUARY**

**Dr. (Mrs.) Kin Kin Sarojini Theodore**, our member, passed away on 25<sup>th</sup> November aged 84. The funeral was held on Saturday, 29<sup>th</sup> November. We convey our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family.

Please send your articles, poems, pictures etc. so as to reach the Editor or the Church office by the 30<sup>th</sup> of every month (answers to quiz: by the 25<sup>th</sup>). We especially encourage youth and children to contribute and make the magazine more special.

*Mahendra Kumar*



*A scene from the play on William Carey*



Presenters of "Children's Sunday"