

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. John 14:3

December 2021

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Editor : Usha George

Ministry of the month : Sunday School Ministry



Word from the Pastor

Inexplicable Salvation

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting." (Micah 5:2)

Every year, during this time, Businesses everywhere are trying to cash in on the best possible earnings with attractive advertisements and offers for sale of their merchandise. There are new phrases coined and innovative ways found to draw people to spend their money. Each year, we see one alarming sign which is 'we are moving further away from truth'.

For many, truth doesn't matter, as long as the cash register is full and the profits are high. It doesn't matter whether Christmas is about the Christ or about external celebration. It always makes me very uncomfortable when I hear about 'Christmas parties' where there is nothing Christian or about Christ. Where are we heading to?

The GOODNEWS in all this is that 'those who have ears let them hear what the Spirit has to say'. Many will not listen, many will not like and sadly many will not receive eternal life. But YOU and I are called to LISTEN, LOVE, LEARN AND LIVE. You can choose to turn this Christmas season into an opportunity to reanalyse your faith in Jesus Christ, prepare for the Second Coming (First Advent is distant past) which is imminent and tell as many as possible about the Great Day of Judgement to come.

Micah 5:2 gives us these beautiful lessons

a. God speaks to those who are lowly



- b. God enters the hearts of those who are willing
- c. God rules in the lives of those who submit
- d. God will receive us into His eternal mansion in Glory

The Gift of Salvation is an inexplicable gift, ready for all who receive. Will you receive this gift that costs more than your very life but is given to you because of Jesus' life?

Enjoy Christmas by enjoying Jesus in your hearts and home.

Blessed Christmas from my family to yours

Rev. Isaac Johnson & Roselin Johnson

Once in our world, a stable had something in it that was bigger than our whole world.

C. S. Lewis

A Christian should resemble a fruit tree with real fruit, not a Christmas tree with decorations tied on.

John Stott

What! Get to heaven on your own strength? Why, you might as well try to climb to the moon on a rope of sand! George Whitefield



John's Corner

AT THE CLOSE (Read Phil 4:13, Ps 84:5a) Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year

Another year draws to a close, A New Year's soon about to start; Make me aware of all You've done, And serve You, Lord, with grateful heart

I know not, Lord, what lies ahead, What each tomorrow has in store; But this I know, if You guide me, With hope there's no where I can't go.

Lord, this my prayer that I always Hold fast to Your unfailing hand; Then in Your strength each day I can Face bravely, and life's storms withstand.

John H. Bala Singh

The Healing Rain!

There was no rain before the Lord God formed 'man' on earth but His provision was sufficient. A mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the earth. What an Almighty Lord we serve, isn't it? When man grieved the heart of God, with continued evil thoughts there was eventual judgement. In the six hundredth year of Noah's life and more precisely on the seventeenth day of the second month it surely started pouring! It rained on earth for forty days and forty nights. Only those in the 'Ark' survived but how can we ever fathom the depth of the Lord's healing covenantal relationship! Whenever 'He' would bring a cloud over the earth, His rainbow in it would be an everlasting covenant remembrance. So, the Lord's goodness and faithfulness extended to every living creature on earth. Then how can we only groan or grumble when clouds outline our life's horizon? Oh! Come let us fear 'His' Name and the sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings. Let's quickly behold the one who would prepare the way to this healing.

There would be no wind nor shall you see rain, but make this valley full of ditches, so said the Lord and it shall be filled with water. This was a simple thing in the sight of the Lord as 'He' silenced the Moabites, way back. How could we ever forget that there was a silence of four hundred years as the way was prepared for the Messiah - JESUS! But suddenly the Angel of the Lord appeared to Mary and revealed that nothing was impossible with God. Joseph was assured in a dream to take Mary home as his wife. John the Baptist was born and as Zacharias wrote the baby's name, immediately his mouth was opened in praise. The Lord's most High Name came to be feared all around. The shepherds beheld the glory of the Lord shining all around as the Angel proclaimed the Saviour's birth and suddenly a multitude of angels sang, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth Peace, goodwill toward men'! Later wise men turned up too and opened up their treasures to the 'Babe' born a King! Oh! Come let us adore Him, for by His stripes we are healed.

There was hardly any time to waste in JESUS's healing reign of three and half years while on earth. But the one who rained *'manna'* from heaven taught the disciples clearly about *'His'* second coming too! On the day that *'Lot'* went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven; even so will it be in the day when the King of Kings will be revealed. Oh! come on, what a frightening thought as we prepare to celebrate. Is that pounding our mind and heart right now? Let's not forget that our Lord JESUS has not left us alone, for he who believes, the scripture has said "out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." And without a doubt one day on the other shore, a pure river of water of life will proceed from the throne of God and the Lamb. On either side will be the tree of life and its leaves imply that there will be no more curse of sin. What a way to celebrate! Definitely we will behold not just the Babe of Bethlehem but come face to face with our Eternal Healer!

Dr. Christina Ambrose

You have not lived today until you have done something for someone who can never repay you.

John Bunyan

Whatever a person may be like, we must still love them because we love God.

John Calvin

Excerpts from reflections written for a local church in England in November 2020 by Rev. Joseph Goodridge, former Minister of St. Andrew's Church, Madras

Advent, if I rightly understand it, calls us to a glorious, thrilling and even exciting four-week ADVENT-URE. So let's join hands and hearts with three mysterious persons, known as Wisemen (the Magi) on their journey (as mentioned in Matt. Ch. 2) and travel through the days of light and nights of darkness guided by a Heavenly Star, so bright it outshines the light of day and by night sparkles, like a cluster of diamonds, with angelic majesty to guide us on our way to a world changing event, prophesied in times past that a Child King would be born and that a lantern in the sky of extraordinary brightness would indicate His imminent arrival.

Imminent arrival!

Imminent indeed!

From early childhood our lives have been enmeshed in one way or another with the greatest story ever told. A story too good not to be true. A story tantalizingly beautiful, inexplicably demanding and incredibly exciting. It is a story which changes time, history, human nature and wonder of wonders, US, you and me! And all who will take time to read and digest it. But still there dawns a yet more glorious day because for a moment we are joined by those who have trodden the ADVENT ROAD before us, leaving behind the music and record of their journey. Like Handel, Mozart, Charles Wesley, Isaac Watts, John Bunyan with his Pilgrims Progress and John Wesley who cheerfully encourages us in our endeavour to reach our destination with the words "THE BEST THING OF ALL GOD IS WITH US". And also, lovingly, Mother Teresa draws near carrying a blind crippled child and whispers "the eyes of the blind shall be opened

and the ears of the deaf unstopped" (Is. 35:5). This heavenly interruption encourages us in our ADVENT journey to go forward because as the Prophet Isaiah says "There will be no more gloom for ..." (Is.9:1) and we must wait for it, but Isaiah can't see (Is.9:6 & 7).

Therefore this STAR OF WONDER urges us, once again, to journey with GREAT EXPECTATIONS (from the BLEAK HOUSE of our present confinement, through corona virus restrictions) with a nerve-tingling, creative impulse to see for ourselves the promised Gift.

With this GIFT, unsurpassed in world history, let us hope that the wise men and women working diligently in Laboratories around the world will find a start which leads to a reliable vaccine before the end of the year so that we can celebrate Epiphany with a double celebration of thanksgiving. All scientific discoveries which bring healing and health, to me, come from the divine hand through the mind of God's highest creation...and for HIS GLORY.

ADVENT, each year, bustles with the excitement of ADVENTURE, learning things old and new and with ANTICIPATION that something needed by all will arrive to enrich the human race.

Prayer

Lord God Almighty, King of all Creation, we give you thanks and praise for your abiding love and constant assurances that you will never leave us nor forsake us in our moments of need, loneliness, illness and anxiety but will be our friend and comforter to our life's end. Amen

Joe Goodridge 29th Nov. 2020



Love Gives the Best

"Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," Matthew 1:23

The Christmas story is simple, serene, and yet fascinating. It defies analysis, arguments, and high-sounding philosophies. It goes far beyond our Maker's marvelous creation – the universe with countless galaxies moving in their orbits with stunning velocity: the quenchless sun, moon and stars together with the beauty of our earth.

The birth of Jesus Christ is an unprecedented moment in the march of man. A new era, a new life begins.

God chooses the earth – a mere drop in the bucket of creation, to place Mankind in it. Man is the crowning work of God, created in His own image. Man is bestowed with a mind to discern the good and the bad, the capacity to love and hate, plus a whole gamut of feelings and emotions. He is gifted with many assets and talents. Man has the capacity to worship and adore His Maker or to fall a prey to the snares of Satan. Man sadly falls a victim to evil and is easily attracted to the golden calves of the world.

Refusing to abandon His dearly beloved children, our Almighty Father reached out in His rich mercy and love to save and redeem us; so the embodiment of Love came down at Christmas. He sent His beloved Son Jesus Christ to be born and live as an ordinary person. Jesus lived as a Suffering Servant and He died most brutally on a cross bearing our sin. His precious blood has made us flawless – if we believe in His Holy Name.

The story of Christmas is a unique fusion of the heavenly realm and a totally unsophisticated lowly world. God fulfils His divine purpose in the womb of an obscure peasant maid Mary. As we see, Joseph

covers her with a blanket of love and a faith that never questions. Yes, love surely gives the best.

Again a glorious message of great joy is brought to the Palestinian shepherds, a lowly lot indeed. With a radiant light an angel appears and conveys the highest tidings to this humble group, who have never been exposed to any rules and rites of a synagogue! Their eyes and ears are filled with celestial sights and music. Unquestioningly they rush to a humble cattle shed to adore the heavenly Babe.

This Babe then received the adoration of wise men who have journeyed through a rough long way. They are seekers after Truth and offer their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Christ's mission on earth was to build His Father's Kingdom of Love and we the Church, His bride, must work to accomplish this. He has laid the cornerstone for us to build on. We are bound together in Christ by His love. Following the new luminous commandment He has given us, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another." (John 13:34), may His love fill our hearts with an inner warmth to feel, hear and understand the cries of our broken world.

Christmas is a season to feel a special cheer and joy. Exchange of gifts, cards, baking cakes, cookies and delectable sweets, decoration of colours and sparkling lights, family and friends get togethers are all a part of the Christmas season.

With Christmas love glowing in our hearts, let us put up "The World Christmas Tree" and adorn it with gifts of love, compassion, and kindness. So,

"When the song of the angel is stilled, When the star in the sky is gone, When the kings and the princes are home, When the shepherds are back with their flocks, The work of Christmas begins." - Richard Armitage

Usha George

Sunday School Report



Kirk Sunday School has been a vital ministry of St. Andrew's Kirk for many decades.

To this day the ministry is fresh and alive with the same vision and purpose.

A line of dedicated Presbyters and teachers have lit the lamp along the way.

Every Sunday, the Sunday school starts with a time of praise and worship when young voices are joyfully raised in praising the Lord. The children are then organized into groups where they receive God's Word through Bible lessons, lively discussions, and memory verses.

Here are some of the special events that the children look forward to every year:

Retreat

This is an annual event packed with meaningful activities. Children experience joy through singing songs of praise, dancing, and enacting Bible-based skits.

Sports Day

A day of laughter and fun when children along with the parents participate in the events organized to test their speed and skill.

Evangelism and Mission Trips

The senior children of the Sunday School visit the Outreach Church and the Children's Home in Red Hills. They demonstrate God's love by interacting with them, singing songs, and staging mimes.

Annual Church Quiz

Sunday School helps the children to prepare for the Quiz and ace it.

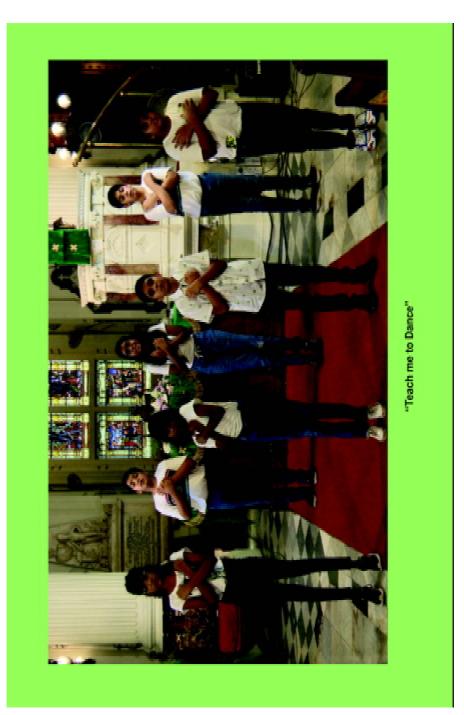
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"Battle Belongs"



Classes 6 & 7 Praise & Worship





Senior Girls



Senior Boys





Witnessing Sunday

On this day, the children share the blessings they have received from the Lord with gratitude.

Fund Raising Events

Teachers and children wholeheartedly take part in the Project Sunday Sale and Christmas Sharing sale, and help raise funds for the various projects of the Church.

Children's Christmas Service

Children herald Christmas with great excitement and cheer by singing carols and staging plays.

The world has been traumatized by the Covid pandemic but the Sunday school continues, undeterred, with the God-given work by conducting the classes online.

The greatest gift our Church can offer these children is the strong faith that is passed down through the generations.

In the Book of Proverbs, King Solomon exhorts us to train up a child in the way he should go, so that when he is old, he will not depart from it.

May God bless our endeavours.

Mrs. Preethy Deepak

Jesus Christ knows the worst about you. Nonetheless, He is the one who loves you the most.

Aiden Wilson Tozer



Just Words

"They've made me feel like a prisoner They've made me feel set free They've made me feel like a criminal Made me feel like a king

They've lifted my heart To places I'd never been And they've dragged me down Back to where I began

Words can build you up Words can break you down Start a fire in your heart or Put it out" - Hawk Nelson

Words. These five letters have shaped my last two years in ways I couldn't have imagined. When you are in authority your words wield power. Some people know it. Some don't. Sadly I worked for someone who didn't. And that made all the difference. They might have been just words, but inwardly they did break my bones and my heart. Compounded by long working hours, ungrateful and angry patients, angrier relatives (especially while referring) and frustrations pushed me to the edge. Sometimes something as innocuous as negativity and cynicism, when allowed to grow can destroy. In fact, it most certainly will. It came to the point where I couldn't believe in the God Who made me. I still believed that He was Creator and Sovereign but I couldn't believe that He cared enough. I couldn't believe that He still had my best interests at heart and He was in control of my life - every tiny detail.

When your theology is a half-truth then nothing makes sense. Sometimes it's worse than atheism, because now you feel the added rejection by God Himself. Unanswered prayers can cause that. Unkept



promises too. I still prayed and read the Bible, more out of habit than any real devotion. I wanted a miracle. I wanted God to change my circumstances - which He didn't. In fact, in His mercy He didn't budge from His purposes. Healing did not come like a blinding light in the dead of night. It came in trickles - so small that I hardly even noticed it. And you know by what it came ? (God definitely has a sense of humour) Ironically, through words. But this time His words (Psalm 107:20).

Sometimes God seems distant. Truth is, He is not. Nights (or night shifts) don't last forever. God is good. All the time. It's difficult to make that statement and mean it while going through tough times. Looking back, when it's nearly done, nothing seems random. If we are faithless - He remains faithful. I lost faith. I lost hope. But God is able. He is yet able to make faith arise in cold hearts and hope to bloom in dead souls.

(Written during bond, Feb 2018)

Dr. Susan Rajkumari

Who can add to Christmas? The perfect motive is that God so loved the world. The perfect gift is that He gave His only Son. The only requirement is to believe in Him. The reward of faith is that you shall have everlasting life.

Corrie Ten Boom



A Choral Worship Service in Celebration of The Bicentennial Year of The Kirk: Felix Mendelssohn's Psalm 95 - Come Let Us Sing and Other Works

On the evening of Wednesday the 10th of November, the Bicentenary celebration of our church was enhanced by the MMA Choir that rendered praise and worship through singing of Psalm 95 set to music by Mendelssohn to the glory of God. Many braved the wet weather and came to church to listen to them.

The evening began with our organist Mr. Arul Siromoney playing an introit on the organ, Mendelssohn's Choral number "I waited for the Lord". This was followed by a prayer by our Pastor Isaac Johnson and then the opening hymn "Sing to the great Jehovah's praise" (music by Mendelssohn and words by Charles Wesley).

A welcome address was given by the President of MMA, Mrs. Mary Rodrigues who reminded us that the MMA had its inception here at the Kirk in 1893 with Signor Aloysio the first conductor. The baton was handed over after many years to the first Indian conductor, our very own organist and choir master the late Mr. Handel Manuel, who served as the conductor for 36 years. The President introduced the conductors Mr. Augustine Paul and Mr. Ebenezer Arunkumar and the accompanist Mr. Jeremiah Christopher. The choir all attired uniformly and elegantly took their places.

The first presentation was a piece by Mendelssohn, and the second and third pieces were from the Elijah oratorio, also by Mendelssohn and these set the tone for the evening.

Our church Secretary Mr. Dulip Singh presented the history of our church, its activities, and highlighted the legacy of the church in

thanking God and celebrating God's goodness. During the offertory Mr. Jeremiah played "Song Without Words" by Mendelssohn. This was followed by the Scripture reading of Psalm 95 by Ms. Asha Matthew, Treasurer of the MMA. Our Pastor gave a short exhortation on Psalm 95 and his message was very encouraging.

The second presentation consisted of five numbers from Psalm 95 by Mendelssohn with Soprano, Tenor, and Bass solos, a duet, and an octet.

The vote of thanks was given by the Secretary of MMA Mr. Samuel Prabhakar. Our Pastor Isaac Johnson closed the evening with prayer and a benediction. The MMA Choir rendered a blessing hymn 'Saviour, again to Thy dear name we raise'. The Postlude was played by Mr. Jeremiah Christopher on the piano.

The whole evening was one of praise and thanksgiving to God and the Kirk thanks the MMA Choir for their performance.

Dr. Vimala Samuel

The following is a message of appreciation received from Peter Le Messurier of Guernsey for the Choral Worship Service. Guernsey is the island in the English Channel from where the architect of St. Andrew's Church Major Thomas Fiott de Havilland hailed.

Thank you so much Gabriel for sending us this link which we watched and shared with a friend. The Psalm by Mendelssohn is not a work I was familiar with. It was beautifully sung and with conviction. It cannot be easy singing with masks on. We were also touched and impressed by the dedication of the choir members some of whom had waded through floods to arrive at your church.

Thank you once again, every blessing. Peter

Bible Quiz No. 121 - December 2021

?

A Christmas Quiz

King James Version (KJV)

- 1. When Joseph first discovered that Mary was pregnant, he:
 - a) Rejoiced
 - b) Tore his robe
 - c) No longer wished to marry her
 - d) Beat her
- 2. Why did Joseph and Mary go to the city of David?
 - a) To visit Joseph's parents
 - b) To seek the prophet Simeon
 - c) To celebrate their wedding
 - d) To pay taxes
- 3. With what did Mary wrap newborn Jesus?
 - a) A scarf
 - b) Swaddling
 - c) A blanket
 - d) Joseph's cape
- 4. After Jesus was born, where did Mary lay Him?
 - a) On the ground
 - b) In a pile of hay
 - c) She held him
 - d) In a feeding trough
- 5. What was the shepherds' initial reaction to the angel who visited them?
 - a) They were afraid
 - b) They were excited
 - c) They were angry
 - d) They were upset
- 6. What did the angel tell the shepherds?
 - a) The location of the newborn Savior
 - b) To not be afraid



- c) How to recognize the newborn Savior
- d) All of this
- 7. Who visited Joseph, Mary, and Jesus on the night He was born?
 - a) Shepherds
 - b) Shepherds, wise men, and all those dwelling in Bethlehem
 - c) Shepherds and wise men
 - d) Wise men
- 8. The wise men traveled ______ to Jerusalem.
 - a) Westward
 - b) Northward
 - c) Eastward
 - d) Southward
- 9. How many wise men brought gifts to Jesus?
 - a) 2
 - b) None
 - c) The Bible never says
 - d) 3
- 10. What gift did the wise men NOT give Jesus?
 - a) Gold
 - b) Frankincense
 - c) Silver
 - d) Myrrh
- 11. To where did Jesus' family flee from Bethlehem?
 - a) Samaria
 - b) Nazareth
 - c) Greece
 - d) Egypt
- 12. When they returned, where did Jesus and His family dwell?
 - a) Greece
 - b) Nazareth
 - c) Samaria
 - d) Egypt

Kindly send your answers to the church office or email **admin@thekirk.in** by 19th December 2021.

Usha George

Answers to Bible Quiz No. 120 – November 2021

A Stone-mason's Quiz

- 1. One was built on rock, one on sand. Matthew 7:26
- 2. It became 'the head of the corner'. 1 Peter 2:7
- 3. Paul. 1 Corinthians 3:11
- 4. No. It was done afar-off, so that no sound was heard near the temple. 1 King 6:7
- 5. Jesus Christ. Ephesians 2:20
- 6. The angel. Matthew 28:2
- 7. Abraham. Hebrews 11:10
- 8. No. It is from '*The Chambered Nautilus*' by Oliver W. Holmes.
- 9. The destruction of the Temple. Matthew 24:2
- **10. 'The Stone of Help' –** set up by Samuel to commemorate the defeat of the Philistines. 1 Samuel 7:12

The winners are:

- 1. Dr (Mrs) Sujatha Elizabeth Prasad
- 2. Mrs Victoria Basker
- 3. Mrs Aruna Asir
- 4. Mrs Suguna Joseph
- 5. Mrs Leela Coilpillai
- 6. Ms P Patricia
- 7. Mrs Indira Rajanayakam

Hearty Congratulations!





Medical Corner

MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH

ANXIETY – II

"Doctors treat, but Jesus heals"

(A) ANXIETY DISORDERS

Generalized anxiety disorder

Anxiety and worry are universal human experiences and only assume medical significance if they are disproportionate to stress or persist after these have been resolved. Anxiety is common during the early stages of any illness but usually subsides. Persistent anxiety is distressing, interferes with medical management and may require specific attention. Symptoms of anxiety can be divided into psychological and physical. These symptoms can complicate the presentation of underlying physical illness, and several physical conditions can initially manifest with anxiety before other symptoms and signs develop.

Phobic anxiety disorder

A phobia is an abnormal or excessive fear of a particular object or situation, which leads to avoidance of it. A more generalized phobia of going out alone or being in crowded places is called agoraphobia. Phobic responses can develop to medical interventions like injections, chemotherapy or radiotherapy. Phobic symptoms may be so serve that the patient abandons further treatment of his medical problems.

Panic disorder

The symptoms of panic disorder are due to episodic attacks of serve anxiety, which are not restricted to any particular situation or circumstance and are therefore unpredictable. Physical symptoms of anxiety, such as chest pain, Palpitations, breathlessness, dizziness

and numbness of limbs, are prominent. The symptoms are in part due to involuntary over-breathing (hyperventilation). Patients often fear they are suffering from a serious acute illness such as a heart attack or stroke, and may therefore seek emergency medical care. Panic attacks are often associated with agoraphobia.

Management of the anxiety disorders

Explanation and reassurance are essential in the management of all forms of anxiety. The nature of the symptoms should be explained and the patient reassured that they form part of a recognized illness. Reassurance is also needed to allay fears of physical illness, if this can be given after appropriate assessment. Specific treatment for anxiety includes relaxation for those who do not respond to reassurance, graded exposure (desensitization) to feared situations for phobic disorders, and cognitive therapy for panic disorders.

Anti-Anxiety medicines (Benzodiazepines) are useful in treating anxiety when symptoms can be expected to last no more than a few weeks. Antidepressant drugs are also effective for anxiety. Phobic disorders usually require exposure treatment as well as drug therapy

(B) OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE DISORDER

Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) is characterized by obsessive thoughts which are recurrent, unwanted and usually anxiety-provoking, and by compulsions, repeated acts which relieve feelings of tension. An example is repeated hand-washing because of recurrent thoughts of contamination.

Management

OCD usually responds to antidepressant drugs and to cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) but relapses are common. Apostle Paul gives us the best treatment modality. He says "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4: 6-7 NKJV)

Dr. (Mrs) Rajinikantha Narendranth

