

*And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of
the heavenly host praising God and saying:*

*"Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"
Luke 2: 13-14*



Kirkspire

The Monthly Magazine of St. Andrew's Church (The Kirk), Chennai
December 2023

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Editorial Board :

Usha George
Chitra Bennett

Word from the Pastor



LIGHT DISPELS DARKNESS

And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. (John 1:5)

When we hear the phrase 'Pitch dark', there are many images that run through our minds. It may range from a dark tunnel to a scary cave or to a completely dark space not knowing what may be around us or underneath our feet. What does it take to dispel that darkness? Do you need an expensive floodlight or will a simple candle take care of the need? A simple candle will take care of the immediate need of replacing darkness with light. When the candle is lit, it will instantaneously change the appearance of the place. Darkness and light cannot co-exist. That is the same when it comes to the Message of Christmas.

Ever since, the darkness of sin entered the world in the garden of Eden, mankind is left with no other option than to do what the first Adam did after he sinned. He covered himself with leaves that could cover his body but could do nothing about the shame within. Even today, the world with its festive glamour is trying to celebrate a festival with external lights, colourful decorations and celebratory events. Yet, there is one BIG PROBLEM. We have become more lonely than ever before, more perverse than ever before, more violent than ever before, hating each other more than ever before. The lights of the world cannot dispel the darkness in the hearts of human beings.

Jesus is the Light and He alone has the power to dispel darkness and the Bible records in John 1:5 that once light entered darkness, darkness could not comprehend it. Here are some encouraging truths about the True Light i.e Jesus, that will forever change our approach to understanding the darkness of sin

1. Light exists beyond the realm of darkness
2. Light and darkness have nothing in common
3. Light is more powerful than darkness

'Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness but have the light of life.' What a powerful truth, a powerful reminder and a power promise. (John 8:12)

Dear church, Celebrate the Christ of Christmas by walking in the light of Jesus Christ, He will help you and me to be a Conqueror in Christ. Celebrate the Joy of Jesus, He will take away all fear of darkness because He has become our Light. Finally, celebrate the Life in Jesus because He has moved us from darkness to Light.

Have a blessed worship-filled Christmas and enter into the New Year with songs of gratitude and surrender.

Blessings

Rev. Isaac Emmanuel Johnson

John's Corner

ALWAYS CHRISTMAS

Read Philippians 4:4, Psalm 40:16

Does Christmas come only once a year?
Why do we foolishly think that way?
If Christ's truly born within our hearts,
It ought to be Christmas every day.

Celebrate Christmas with gaiety,
Most certainly yes on Christmas day,
But let not the celebration cease,
As bright lights of Christmas fade away.

Rejoice with great joy our Saviour came,
Christ's birth celebrate all through the year,
Always remembering why Jesus came,
And praise Him daily with awe and fear.

John H. Bala Singh

A joyous Christmas from John's Corner

Certainty

*Have I not written to you excellent things of counsels
and knowledge, that I may make you know the certainty
of the words of truth...? Proverbs 22:20,21*

Very few things in life are definite:
Sunsets, seasons, God.
Cultures and governments fade.
Our best laid plans are vapour.
Tomorrow is an unanswered question
And uncertainty is certain.

But You are not.
Your truth is eternal.
Your government will continue.
Your love will endure.
Our disappointments caution us to trust easily
But we affirm things we are clueless about.
Sometimes grace, faith and love
are concepts in our mind-
Abstract, not tangible or evident in our lives.

Father, the coming year fills me
with fresh apprehension.
I wonder if You will come through.
I believe in my head but
my heart refuses to follow suit.
Forgive my unbelief and pathetic attempts
to substitute genuine faith with empty words.
You are not a man
to lie or change Your mind.
If confusion arises with the arrival of doubt
Teach me to extinguish it before
an inferno ensues.
Fill me with a daring confidence

In Who You are and in what You say.
When I can't comprehend
(people or situations)
Teach me to cling to what I know-
You and Your truth,
Certain and reliable
In a world of uncertainty.

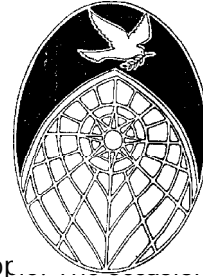
*"...it seemed good to me also...to write to you an orderly account,
most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the certainty of those
things in which you were instructed." Luke, 1:3-4, , , , ,*

Dr. Susan Rajkumari

Every Christian family ought to be, as it were, a little church,
consecrated to Christ, and wholly influenced and governed by
His rules.

Jonathan Edwards

CROWDED?



What an experience, wading through a sea of people. The experience might have been different but the memories can run through even generations. The excitement at a crowded mall, resort or a holiday spot can be stupendous. Cutting short on the list, festive seasons do gather a huge crowd but how about the barrage of thoughts? Do they pass away as a vapor in the wind?

What a challenge as we manage our time, talent and treasure this Christmas season! How could we possibly do away with all the planning and the preparation before we are seated expectantly at the pews! Never a dull moment but was it really so crowded that day? There was definitely no room for them in the inn, yet the Angel's announcement to the lowly shepherds was precise: this Babe just wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in the manger would be the sign. The Savior who is CHRIST the Lord has been born and of all the people in the crowd, even the shepherds, were thought of! Suddenly a multitude of heavenly host praised God that day "Glory To God in the highest and on Earth peace; goodwill toward men!" Of course, the glory and grace in this good news can catch the attention of any crowd. But do we choose to be contented hearing the refrain yet another year, hidden behind a myriad thoughts and action plans? In the midst of all the singing and the sharing, are we still seeking comfort zones plagued by hidden doubts, uncertainties or inadequacies? Crowded or not, how comforting to know and believe that the Savior of the World came down to cover us with His precious Blood! Covered, safe and secure in His blood Covenant, we can surely press on to take hold of that for which CHRIST JESUS took hold of us! Pass me not my gentle Savior: Yours is the absolute control!

What a friend we have in JESUS; all our sins and griefs to hear! What a privilege, even the crowds had as they listened to JESUS

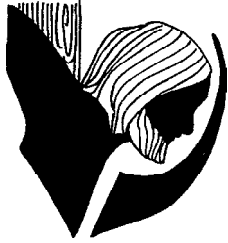
firsthand. The sermon on the Mount saw multitudes, but we can hear the similitudes even today: "You are the salt of the earth; you are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden." But the crowd no doubt, swayed along with the popular side. One day they cried out celebrating, 'Hosanna, Blessed is the one who comes in the Name of the Lord!' and in a few days they shouted out 'Crucify Him! Crucify Him!' Yes this babe – 'Our Savior' came down to be crucified, rejected and to be alone! Just to think that 'He' took our place – what a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer. Not even a whisper of ours goes unheard. But the other side, being a friend of JESUS is not to be forgotten. "You shall not follow the crowd to do evil," says the Lord. The poor, the stranger, and even the enemy needs to be reached out in His timetable. Crowded or not, don't you think that it is time that we shout out from the mountain top 'The Lord of love has come to me; I want to pass it on' for His is the absolute care and cure!

What a tremendous sight and insight it will be for sure when "every creature on the earth and under the earth and such are in the sea and all that are in them, say: Blessing and honor and glory and power Be to Him who sits on the Throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!"

Dr. Christina Ambrose

"Test me in any way You choose Lord; only don't throw me on the scrap pile."

Anonymous



Love Has Come!

*Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;
And let them say among the nations, "The Lord reigns."
1 Chronicles 16:31*

The story of Christmas has changed the world forever! 'It's the most wonderful time of the year' sings a pop singer. Yes, truly it is a season that brings a glow of joy in hearts and homes. Pulses beat faster with thoughts of home-coming, special food, gifts, lights, stars and music.

Our path to happiness should lead us to focus on the whole panorama of God's sublime purpose. The ugly truth is that we humans have failed to live up to the goodness of God. Our Creator has made everything so painstakingly beautiful for us and how did we return His loving provision?

We flouted His laws. Stoned His messengers; killed His prophets. We wantonly strayed further and further from our Maker. We made our own gods and goddesses, endowed them with make-believe qualities. Our imagination made thousands and thousands of them and set them up in temples and worshipped them in multiple altars.

How easily we had forgotten the purpose for which God had made us. We betrayed and blasphemed Him in base ways. Our God could have scrapped us and our world and fashioned another world! But what did He do? With love supreme, He sent His own beloved Son to save us from the fatal grip of sin and ruin. Mercifully our loving Creator had no "Plan B".

The Old Testament resounds with prophecies about the coming of a Messiah to deliver Man from captivity.

Standing at the peak of the Old Testament is Isaiah – the Prince of Prophets. No Christian can read Isaiah 53 without noting his graphic description of the coming of the Suffering Servant. Malachi brings the Old Testament to a close as he speaks of the Messiah who would lighten our way out of sin's captivity into the light of healing, freedom and peace.

Hundreds of years of silence follows these prophecies.

God's divine Son was born humbly and unobtrusively, to live like us, speak like us and move with us. He lived without sin, lived so nobly, so beautifully, so spotlessly that looking on Him, men saw God.

What was the cost of God's Plan to redeem us? It was the precious blood of His Son at the Cross. Our Lord's death was the price paid for our redemption. "Salvation is free for you and me because Someone paid for it." The Risen Lord fulfilled God's plan paving the only way for us to Eternal Life.

When we gaze at the familiar Nativity Scene, let not familiarity blunt our sensibilities. May we gratefully reflect on the Son of God, who became our 'Suffering Servant', gifted us with Salvation and healed us with His stripes.

"What more could He give? God gave His all;
He gave Himself. Who can measure this love?" – Charles H. Spurgeon

This is the Love we celebrate with jubilation at Christmas. The arrival of our Messiah was the world's most sublime moment – a new era – and a new life for Man begins.

"Love has come – a light in the darkness!
Love explodes in the Bethlehem skies.
See all heaven has come to proclaim it;
Hear how their song of joy arises:
Love! Love! Born unto you a Saviour."

Usha George

Children's Corner

JESUS LOVES US

A drawing by Shawn PriyanHeynes – XII Standard, Kirk Sunday School

Isaiah 54:13 All your children will be taught
by the Lord and great will be their peace.



-Shawn Priyan Heynes - XII Std
Kirk Sunday School

Sunday School Sunday Program





Nativity Finger Puppets



Cut out for little fingers to walk their characters through the Christmas story

Source: www.ChristianPreschoolPrintables.com

Dolly Shanthakumar



A Christmas Quiz

Please give a Bible reference, where applicable.

1. Which Gospel(s) speak of the events surrounding Christ's birth?
 - a. Mark and John
 - b. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John
 - c. Luke only
 - d. Matthew and Luke
2. How many magi visited Christ shortly after his birth, according to the Bible?
 - a. Three
 - b. None
 - c. One
 - d. An undisclosed number
3. According to most English translations of Matthew 2:11, where is Christ when the magi come to visit Him?
 - a. In the manger
 - b. In a house
 - c. In the temple
 - d. On the Mount of Olives
4. The magi ask Herod where Christ is to be born. Herod summons his priests and scribes, who know the location of the birth because of the prophecy of this man.
 - a. Jonah
 - b. Joel
 - c. Amos
 - d. Micah

5. In a dream, an angel tells Joseph that Mary will bring forth a Son and to call His name JESUS, for it was prophesied that a virgin would give birth and call her son Immanuel. What does Immanuel mean?
 - a. God with us
 - b. God in flesh
 - c. Jesus saves
 - d. God is born
6. Herod's slaughter of the children two and under, according to Matthew, fulfills a prophecy uttered by whom?
 - a. Micah
 - b. Jeremiah
 - c. Jonah
 - d. Joel
7. How much younger was Jesus than his cousin John the Baptist?
 - a. Six months
 - b. Two years
 - c. One year
 - d. Twelve days
8. Why was Jesus born in Bethlehem, according to the Gospel of Luke?
 - a. His mother went to visit Elizabeth
 - b. He wasn't; he was born in Nazareth
 - c. That's where both his parents lived
 - d. His earthly father went to Bethlehem for a census
9. The Bible tells us Christ was born in December.
 - a. True
 - b. False
10. How do the shepherds learn of Christ's birth?
 - a. They see a new star in the sky
 - b. An angel appears to them
 - c. The magi tell them
 - d. There are no shepherds in the Biblical account
11. Who prophesied to Mary that Christ was "destined for the fall and rising of many" and that "a sword" would "pierce" her "own soul also"?
 - a. Micah
 - b. Isaiah
 - c. Jeremiah
 - d. Daniel

- a. Anna
 - b. Gabriel
 - c. Elizabeth
 - d. Simeon
12. Where do we find "the Magnificat"?
- a. Matthew
 - b. Mark
 - c. Luke
 - d. John

Taken from funtrivia – Christmas According to the Bible.

Kindly send your answers to the church office or email admin@thekirk.in by 17th December 2023.

Usha George

Promises are God's golden fruit to be plucked by the hand of prayer.

E. M. Bounds

The love even for our enemies, which Jesus commands, is not our work but His work in us.

Thomas Green

Answers to Bible Quiz No. 142 – November 2023

A Clergyman's Quiz

1. Altar : tabernacle : temple : synagogue : church
2. It was brought into the temple built by King Solomon.
1 Kings 8:4
3. Lamech. Genesis 4:19
4. Yes.
5. No.
6. No. Only two or three. 1 Corinthians 1:14-17
7. No. It was not a religious celebration.
8. The son of the Widow of Nain. Luke 7:11-15
9. The marriage at Cana. John 2
10. No. Matthew 22:30

The winners are:

1. Mrs. Victoria Basker
2. Mrs. Suguna Joseph
3. Mrs. Sabrina Siga
4. Mrs. Patricia Patrick
5. Mrs. Indra Rajanayakam
6. Mr. G. Jonathan Bhavyan
7. Mrs. Peace Rani Sudhakar
8. Mrs. Sujata Elizabeth Prasad
9. Mrs. Gladys Vedavimali

Hearty Congratulations!

Medical Corner



GLANDS IN THE BODY – III

THE THYROID GLAND

“Doctors treat, but Jesus heals”

There is hardly anyone who has not heard about the “Thyroid” gland. 5% of the population is affected by thyroid disease and women are more affected than men. Thyroid gland secretes 3 types of hormones (Thyroxine, Triiodothyronine, Calcitonin). Abnormalities of any of these can cause changes in the functioning of the body.

HYPOTHYROIDISM

Every cell in our body depends on the action of thyroxine, one of the hormones secreted by the butterfly shaped thyroid gland situated at the base of the neck, for its optimal performance. So if the thyroid gland were to secrete too little (hypothyroidism) or too much (hyperthyroidism) of its hormones, the resulting disorder would wreak havoc on our bodies and our lives. One of the predominant symptoms of hypothyroidism is mental and physical sluggishness. Exhaustion, excessive daytime sleepiness, long term constipation, and an irregular menstrual cycle are common complaints. This condition, if left untreated, could open a Pandora’s Box of secondary problems, ranging from obesity, heart disease, depression, infertility, and even mental retardation. Since hypothyroidism usually develops slowly over a considerable period of time and the early complaints are frequently minor and vague in nature, it is not surprising that the diagnosis is often overlooked.

Iodine is the main ingredient for the production of thyroxine, but we need only a minuscule amount. Adults require only 150 micrograms of iodine daily. Pregnant and lactation women need 200 micrograms. However, ensuring this amount completely from one’s diet is difficult, unless you’re a non-vegetarian who eats sea food every day, since iodine is present naturally in sea water. That’s why we add iodine to salt, but even then, our cooking methods often destroy it. Never

add salt to dishes that are boiling and steaming on the stove. Always wait for the dish to cool properly before adding salt. Otherwise, the iodine content could easily evaporate. Store salt in airtight containers and ensure that it is not exposed to excessive heat and moisture. A simple blood test can tell if the thyroid is healthy. Experts recommend testing for TSH, free levels of T3 and T4 in the blood. Any imbalance is easy to correct. All you need to do is swallow a single tablet (recommended by your doctor) on an empty stomach. Though you may be dependent on the drug, for some patients, dosage can be reduced over time with regular intake.

Dr. (Mrs.) Rajini Kantha Narendranath

The birth of Jesus ... Saviour, Messiah, Lord ... translates all that is shabby, despairing, and dying into newness, joy and life.

Jennie C. Olbrych



Kirk News

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

Let Gratitude Replace Entitlement

The key to a heaven on earth experience in life for a believer is rather simple. One of the ways is to grow in gratitude. While the 1% that didn't work out had all our focus, God caused the 99% to work in our favour and that goes un-thanked. We magnify what we choose to focus on. Let's magnify our Lord who alone is deserving of all our praise and thanksgiving. When we focus on God's multitudinous mercies in our lives, faith effortlessly grows even for the 1% that we are trusting God with.

It's always good to remind ourselves that God owes us nothing and that we don't deserve any of His goodness. All that we have is what we have received out of His storehouse of grace. The more we magnify how good and gracious our God is, we cannot help but put to rest the complaining spirit. Let us be so full of thanksgiving that even if something untoward were to happen, we are still thanking God, while puzzling all those around. These small things that we sweat over don't often matter in the larger scheme of things, but our praises and thanksgiving have eternal value. Time to get our priorities right and start this season of thanksgiving on the right note.

Guest Speaker

Dr. David Kim - 'Abide' - 5.11.2023 - 6:00 pm Service (Healing Ministry Sunday)

Kirk Youth Fellowship

The Catalyst for the month of October brought together the youth for a time of worship, word and fellowship on 29.10.2023 at 09:00 am at the SACCE Hall.

Kirk Men's Fellowship

On 19th November, at 11:00 am, the gentlemen of the church met in person at the DCC hall to discuss the topic 'Build One Another,' facilitated by Rev. Isaac Johnson.

Kirk Women's Fellowship

The Kirk Women's Fellowship had its Women's Monthly Meet on 19th November after the 9 am service at the SACCE hall for a time of testimonies, discussion, prayer, and snack after.

House Church

The House Church this month was hosted by Mr. Selwin Prabakar and Mrs. Ruth Prabakar on 17.11.2023 at 6:30 pm.

Kirk's Medical, Gospel and Counselling Outreach Program

The Kirk's Medical, Gospel and Counselling Outreach Program took place on 19th November at Perumbakkam from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm.

Errata

Kirk News in Kirkspire November 2023 mentioned that the event held at SACCE hall on Tuesday, 24th October on the topic 'Suicide Prevention & Awareness - Teenagers' was conducted by CCM. This is to clarify that the event was not conducted by CCM, and it was not a Kirk event.

Angela Susan Bryner

Merry Christmas!

Wishing our dear readers a joyous Christmas filled with love and peace! May the wonder of that first Christmas, the joy of God's abundant blessings, and the peace of Jesus' presence abide with you now and always.

Kirkspire Editorial Board



Sunday School Sunday Program Highlights



Sunday School Sunday Program Highlights

