But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 1 Peter 2:9



Kirkspire

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

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Editor : Usha George



Word from the Pastor

Belonging to God

Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. (Exodus 19:5)

One of the weapons of satan that trouble believers is to us feel that there is no one for us, that we are fighting the battle alone, that we are a minority and that the battle is so fierce, that defeat is sure. The truth of God's word teaches the exact opposite of this lie from satan. The bible is filled with examples of men and women who were physically in a place alone, deserted, rejected or even abandoned. But God's presence, power and protection was more real to them in those places than with those who were with multitudes. Here are some examples and some life lessons.

- 1. Gideon Judges 6:13
- 2. Elijah 1 Kings 19:10
- 3. Friends of Daniel Daniel 3:25
- 4. Woman with issue of blood Mark5:33
- 5. Cloud of Witnesses Hebrews 12:1

Everyone of these examples (and there are so many more) teach us some crucial lessons about our standing in the Lord by faith in Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. The key lessons are

- a. God has chosen us and He will never leave us
- b. God has filled us and we will never be defeated
- c. God has empowered us and we are not walking in our strength
- d. God has touched us and we are never the same again

e. God has justified us and we are on our way to glorification

Dear brothers and sisters, anytime you feel that you are weak, your prayer is powerless or that your faith is not strong, stop looking for emotional answers. Turn to the God of your faith, the God of grace and the God of your hope. When a sinner turns to God for redemption, he/she becomes a new-born, forgiven, embraced, empowered, emboldened and redeemed child of God. We BELONG TO GOD. We are not our own, we have been bought with the blood shed on the Cross of Calvary.

Even if you do not realize who you are, always remember WHOSE YOU ARE.

Have a blessed month

Rev. Isaac Emmanuel Johnson

• • •

John's Corner

WOMEN OF GOD

February is dedicated to Kirk Women's Fellowship Read John 4:28-30,39, Mark 15:40,41, Luke 23:55-24:1,Mat 28:5-8

> Lord, bless the women of the church, Who do their best with all their worth, To make the world a better place, A bit of heaven bring to earth.

The Bible's filled with examples, Of those who diligently served Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ -Women of faith who persevered.

Lord, grant the women of our church Strength to improve on what they've done, And may more join their fellowship, That more for Jesus may be won.

John H. Bala Singh



Woe to Wonder-Darkness to Light

In a world where children are hungry and homeless, women trafficked and victimized, needs of the poor and marginalized often ignored and men take up arms against each other, Jesus the light of the world brings deliverance through His presence provision and protection. The message of the Bible is the message of God's wonderful light dispelling the woe of darkness. The Bible records that the first thing God created was light to dispel the darkness that surrounded the earth (Genesis 1.3). Isaiah wrote many years before Jesus' birth, 'The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light' (Isaiah 9.2). John in his epistle said of Jesus' birth that light came into the world and the darkness could not comprehend it—(John1.5,9).

During Jesus' earthly ministry, He gave a glimpse of what God's light can accomplish in our homes and societies. Children were not considered important in the Jewish society so much so that His disciples sent parents, who brought children, away when they sought an audience with Jesus. But Jesus rebuked them and said 'Let children come unto me for theirs is the kingdom of heaven' (Luke 18.16). The status of women during Jesus' days can be recognized by the 'thank you' prayers of Jewish men- 'I thank you that I am not made a woman or a gentile or a slave'. Jesus brought light to neglected women by making them part of His ministerial team, treating them as equals and, sending them as witnesses (Luke 8.2, 24.10). In days when a certificate of divorce could break the covenant of marriage, Jesus pointed the people to the original design of marriage-leaving and cleaving- and stated that what God has joined let not man put asunder (Matt 19.6). The parable of the prodigal son brought to light the heart of the father for a rebellious child (Luke 15.20). God's light can penetrate the woe of our brokenness in our homes.

In a society discriminated on the basis of ethnicity, sickness, disability, status or work titles, Jesus raised the level of the despised Samaritans by making the Samaritan the hero in the 'Parable of the Good Samaritan' and praised a healed and thankful Samaritan (Luke 10.25-37,17.16). Jesus was willing to touch the 'unclean' persons with leprosy, encouraged inviting the differently abled to banquets (Luke 14.12-24) and treated employees with fairness and respect. The wonder of God's light can transform our societies. Romans who were the hated rulers of Jesus' time, were loved and healed by Jesus- Centurion's servant (Luke 7.1-10) and Malchus who came to arrest Jesus (John 18.10-11). His general prayer of forgiveness (Luke 23.34) is a demonstration of His words 'love our enemies, pray for them that offend you' (Matthew 5.44). When Jesus said" 'Render to Caesar all that is Caesar's' (Mark 12.17), He encouraged us to be good citizens of the country we live. Jesus' words, 'Love the Lord with all your mind' (Matthew 22.37), paved the way for educational institutions to teach the mind of Christ along with all the other subjects that reflect and affect God's creation.

If we let Jesus into our lives and our society, truly our woe will change to wonder for God's glory.

Dr. Sujatha Elizabeth Prasad

"Dust am I, yet dust dignified with Divinity Finite am I, yet graced to live in infinity; Weak am I, yet strengthened in all my extremity Grace gave me Christ!"



Stagnation

And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Galatians 6:9

Stagnation may concoct different images in your mind.
A muddy pond; a plant that exhibits nil growth. A static career. A period of dullness.

Inertness is not popular. Visible growth is. Seasons of quiescence is your undoing because you measure years by predetermined benchmarks.

My child

A dormant career of four decades had to pass before Moses became a powerful leader. Dethroned to a humble occupation he still worked.

A latent period of nearly two decades had to pass before David was crowned king. Though on the run he still worshiped.

A time of humiliation and provocation had to pass before Hannah saw the fulfilment of My word... Yet she still prayed.

The problem with My people is-During hard times they shed alot of tears but refuse to work, pray or worship. But how can reaping happen without sowing? How can you expect different outcomes without changing your old thought habits? For how you handle this trial Will impact future generations. Dearest child,
There are certain flowers that
grow only in a murky pond.
There is a certain kind of faith
that grows only by patient waiting.
Apparent stagnation is not
synonymous with failure.
What you call wasted years
I call precious years.
What is looked down by you
is highly esteemed by Me.
So invest with Me
even if immediate results are not forthcoming.

Don't give up now!

My best work is often done in secretHidden and concealed,
to be revealed at the appointed time.

Age is just a number to Me
And numbers don't restrict Me.

Keep giving your best
Even when it's hard as

Waiting almost always precedes the promise.

For soon
these mountains will be brought low,
the valleys exalted,
the crooked places shall be made straight...
And My Word will surely come to pass."

Dr. Susan Rajkumari

Teach me to dance to the beat of Your heart
Teach me to move in the power of Your Spirit
Teach me to walk in the light of Your presence
Teach me to dance to the beat of Your heart.

Graham Kendrick and Steve Thompson

Answers to Bible Quiz No. 133 – January 2023

20/20 Vision

A Herbalist's Quiz

- 1. The tree of Life. Revelation 22:2
- 2. 'than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.' Proverbs 15:17
- 3. At their last meal in Egypt. Exodus 12:8
- 4. Rue and nettles (Bible reference missing for this answer)
- 5. The mustard. Matthew 13:32
- 6. Mint, anise and cumin. Matthew 23:23
- 7. Gall. Matthew 27:34
- 8. The bay. Psalm 37:35
- 9. When Elisha told his servant to 'seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets'. 2 Kings 4:38-40
- 10. Coriander seed. Exodus 16:31, Numbers 11:7

The winners are:

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

Hearty Congratulations!



Our Kingly Calling as God's Vice Regents The Kirk Church Camp 2023

In the midst of uncertainties, challenges and chaos, our LORD has once again showered HIS blessings. The Annual Church Camp 2023 was possible after a gap of two years, only by the Grace of the Almighty.

An early Friday morning drive down the East Coast Road took us to the cosy, comfortable campus of The Green Coconut Resort for a weekend get-away. As the sun began to show its face through lush coconut trees, the church witnessed the unpacking of powerful and practical life lessons, Spirit-led praise and worship, innovative group activities for everyone including the children and a wonderful time of fellowship.

The Kirk Church Camp 2023 was kicked-off with an opening prayer by Pastor Rev. Isaac Johnson. The first day's morning session started with Mr. Paul Balasundaram, a former Executive Director of The Haggai Institute and a renowned name in the Christian ministry.Mr. Balasundaram initiated the 'Starfish' ministry based on a Biblical understanding of the 'Kingdom of God'.In his session 'Secrets of the Kingdom of God', he unraveled why the Kingdom of God is unshakable. An enthralling video presentation defined the Kingdom of God, illustrating the four key areas of Redemption, Reconciliation, Restoration and Renewal.

After a Spirit-filled time, the next speakers were a husband-and-wife duo, no strangers to the family of St. Andrew's Kirk – Mr. Wilfred Davidar and Dr. ShanthiDavidar. Mr. Davidar, a former Govt. I.A.S officer, is popularly called as "Mr.Clean" for his high levels of integrity. Dr. Shanthi, a prominent psychiatrist, distinguished counsellor, The Founder Director of Rapha Unlimited, and an alumnus of reputed

universities, has a mission of service and conducted several workshops and seminars on the abundance of marriage.

The Davidars spoke on our 'Identity in the Kingdom of God', unravelling the question, 'Who are we?'. The topic 'Sons and Daughters' enlightened the church on the Spiritual and Natural World, reiterated in the words of Jesus Christ in John 3:5, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God", to be led by the Spirit, to repent and come back to our Father. A group prayer followed, where each group prayed for family members to be born again, for Kingdom priorities to be our priorities and to empower the church and its families to worship with the joys of a child. The Davidars elaborated on the topic "Kings and Priests" enlightening the church on our 'Kingly Calling', reassuringus that God has given us the authority and responsibility to be priests.

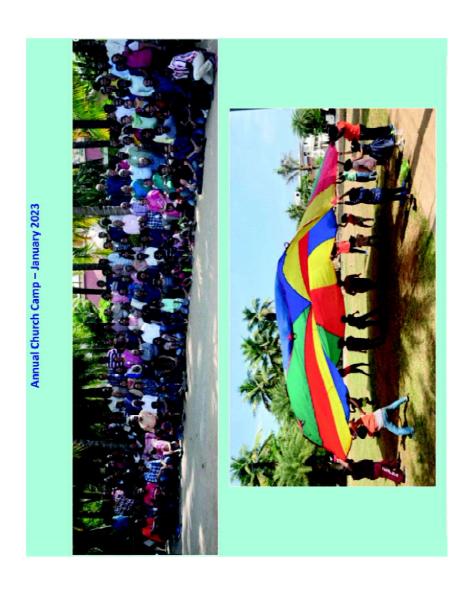
On day two, Mr PaulBalasundaram continued the topic "Secrets of the Kingdom of God", explaining four practical aspects of bringing God's kingdom to the world, (i.e) Reclaiming Creation, <u>bB</u>ringing Justice in the workplace and Parenting through Kingdom principles. As God's Vice Regents, we are called to be the salt and light, to make a difference and to be kings, priests, and prophets.

In the last session, the Davidars spoke on our identity (the church) as the Bride who has been sanctified in preparation for marriage. As we read inRevelation 19:7-10, we should be glad, rejoice and give Him the glory in preparation for the marriage of the Lamb, just as the Bride makes herself ready.

And now, what about the children? For both days, the children were engaged in Bible lessons taughtby experienced teachers involved in children's ministry with energy packed games, activities, and worship sessions. They shared their experiences with a beautiful song and dance performance.

Sushma Rao

"Abraham pleaded for his enemies, for the wicked who laughed at him; it is about time we caught up with Abraham!"







Towards The Sunset

Change is tough. Gradually and almost imperceptibly, one enters into the glow of the Sunset. We recognize sometimes with a start that so much of life has gone by – decades of living and loving, adventures and challenges, myriads of moments have skipped into eternity. In Psalm 92:14 a beautiful assurance is given to us,

"They will still bear fruit in old age, And they will stay fresh and green."

God ordained stages in life as there are various segments. Youth is for zestful pleasures and learning, getting and begetting, middle age is spent in conserving and rearing a family, and old age is a garnering of all that went before. One becomes more aware of the spirit – the inevitable mystic element in life when the quest for God turns into an insatiable longing for an encounter with the Maker – as matter falls away so subtly.

As old age slides into one's life, one may wonder where and when has it all gone – the glamour, the light step, the quick turn, the passions, the aspirations, the dreams. It brings to mind the lovely old song

"Darling I am growing old; silver threads among the gold, shine upon my brow to-day, life is fading fast away."

Travelling to Bangalore to visit my daughter's home I availed of the Senior Citizen's concession on my ticket. <u>I</u>\(\text{\temp}\) <u>W</u>\(\text{w}\) as \(\text{-faintly disappointed}\) that the Ticket Collector did not check my proof of age.

We are challenged by a question in Matthew 20:7, "Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?" Our great God who has been leading us thus far will lead us into new ways, saving us from an isolation so common in old age.

True, each of us possesses a treasure chest of memories, of love, goodness, joys and sorrows, trials faced and met, but we also recognize sharply that amid the changes and losses and erosions, we can continue to live abundantly provided we affirm a few truths essential for a happy old age.

Are we engulfed in self-pity, constantly grumbling and nagging everyone around us? Let us spread cheer thanking God for the years that come and go, ever thankful to Him for His great mercies. "My times are in Thy hand" (Psalm 31:15).

Gradually the world narrows down for us, limiting our activities and our social life. Our nest has emptied. Transcending all our secular attachments is the strong and special bond of prayer raised for our families, our neighbours, and our nation in the serenity and beauty of His presence.

Each generation gives its testimony to the next generation – unconsciously and unwittingly, passing on wisdom, goodness and values of life, robust faith and joy in the Lord – a fragrance that wafts gently down the corridors of time. As the Psalmist says,

"One generation will commend Your works to another: They will tell of your mighty acts." (Psalm 145:4)

Our legacy to our children does not lie in brick, mortar and sand buildings but in leaving spiritual riches that can never be destroyed.

True, bones grow brittle, eyes dim, steps slacken, muscles loosen but, "unlike the flesh, the spirit does not decay with years." Nothing stays the same. Everything changes. Everything? No! We remember well the Lord's Promise:

"Even to your old age I will be the same" (Isaiah 40:31).

Usha George

Worship is to Christian living what the mainspring is to the watch.

Lawrence R. Axelson

?

Bible Quiz No. 134-February 2023

The Ark of the Covenant

The ark of the covenant was one of Israel's most sacred objects. Separate fact from fiction by answering the questions in this quiz.

Please give one reference.

- 1. The ark was made of what kind of wood?
 - a. Gopherb. Mahogany c. Shittim d. Ebony
- 2. True or False: The ark's dimensions were two and a half cubits long, two and a half cubits wide and one and a half cubits high.
- 3. Fill in the blank: The ark was overlaid with pure ____.
- 4. Why were the four rings on the ark, one on each corner?
- 5. What was the name for the top of the ark?
- 6. Choose A or B: The two figures on the top of the ark were A) seraphim B) cherubim.
- 7. Choose A or B: The part of the figures that touched above the top of the ark were their A) Arms B) wWings.
- 8. True or False: The Lord would meet and commune with His people from between the two figures on the top of the ark.
- 9. What was put into the ark?
- 10. What tribe was set to be the bearers of the ark?
 - a. Judah b. Reuben c. Levi d. Dan

Taken from Bible Trivia Challenge by Conover Swofford, John Hudson Tiner

Kindly send your answers to the church office or email admin@thekirk.inby 19thFebruary2023.

Usha George

Bible Brain Teaser

There are names of 16 books of the Bible mentioned in the paragraph below. See how many you can find. (A minister found 15 books in 20 minutes. But it took him weeks to find the sixteenth one. Let's see how much time it takes you.)

"I once made a remark about the hidden books of the Bible (merely by a fluke). It kept people looking so hard for facts...... and for others it was a revelation. Some were in a jam, especially since the names of the books were not capitalized. But the truth finally struck home to numbers of our readers. To others it was a real job. We want it to be a most fascinating few moments for you. Yes, there will be some really easy ones to spot. Others may require judges to help them. I will quickly admit it usually takes a minister to find one of them, and there will be loud lamentations when it is found. A little lady says she brews a cup of tea so she can concentrate better. See how well you can compete. Relax now, for there really are sixteen names of books of the Bible in this paragraph."

Caron Dania Justin

Kirk Sunday School

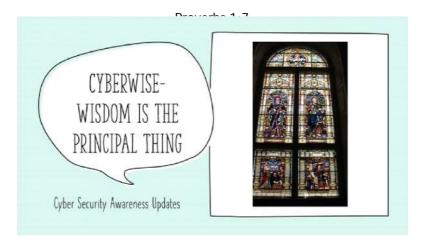
Answers to Crossword Puzzle - January 2023

God Led His People Crossword Puzzle



Dolly Shanthakumar

Cyber Security Awareness: Being Cyberwise - I
The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge,
But fools despise wisdom and instruction.



The growing prevalence of cybercrimes and financial frauds committed on vulnerable people is ever increasing by the day. Talk about creativity and innovation, these fraudsters are upping the game every single day. As Christians and Christian professionals, what should be our response to the threat of cyber security in our communities. Another reason for such cybercrimes to take place is, the people who acquire these cyber skills are without a godly worldview. Christian professionals/believers who possess these potentially dangerous skills should use it to create awareness for the good of the communities as exhorted to do so in 1 Corinthians 10:31 – "Whatever you do, do it for the Glory of the Lord."

So, the very first thing is to make the communities we live in, cyberwise is - to be alert and to be aware of the various cyber threats and modus operandi of these cyber criminals and fraudsters. God willing, we will do a series on cyber security that will keep us informed on the basic precautions one should take to keep all our information assets like laptops, smart phones and passwords as secure as possible from hackers. Apart from the above, we will bring updates on the latest trends in cyber security that will keep you informed and cyberwise.

Let's start with Password protection. As simple as it might sound, strong and unbreakable passwords is one of the strongest defenses against hackers. The stronger the password, the harder for hackers to hack into your accounts. Some simple rules for strong password management are:

- Length of the password minimum 8 characters with a combination of alphabets - upper and lower case, numbers, plus special characters. Do not use your name, date of birth (DOB), your pet's name, names of your family members names and the like. Your password must not contain any information about you.
- Preferably, use non-dictionary words. For example TLIMSPS2301* taken from The Lord Is My Shepherd PS 2301 with a star *. While it's easy for you to remember, it's difficult for hackers to crack non-dictionary words such as these. You can make it as complex as you want using this logic and your imagination. There are close to 65K words in the dictionary and hackers have programmes that can generate and decider millions of password combinations within a matter of minutes.
- As a general rule, do not use the same password for more than 60 days and do not use the same password for multiple devices or systems. Would you use a single key for your house, car, bike and office? Think about it.
- Sharing passwords is a definite NO, even if it's your dear ones.
- Storing or recording passwords in obvious locations like your notepad, mobile phones, diary and the like should be avoided. It is ideal to remember them and not write it down anywhere. But if you have multiple passwords to deal with, then using simple codes that help you remember the password is an option.

Note

These updates are deliberately kept simple for all age groups to understand and not for tech savvy individuals or IT professionals. In the next update we will cover Phishing and Email Security and bring lessons learnt from recent incidents of cybercrime around the world.

P.C.R. Suresh

Medical Corner



ALLERGIES IN THE BODY – V ALLERGIC CONJUNCTIVITIS

"Doctors treat, but Jesus heals"

In allergic conjunctivitis the eyes become red, with a watery discharge. Itching is a very common symptom. Contact with animals (dogs, horses, cats), pollens of certain flowers (e.g., Primula) is a frequent cause. Some chemicals, cosmetics like mascara, eye liners, kajals and eye shadow can cause severe conjunctivitis and inflammation of the eye lids and cheeks (dermatitis). In such cases, the cosmetic must be completely stopped for complete recovery. Hair dyes when shampooed and washed can run into the eye and cause allergy.

Eye drops used for eye diseases like glaucoma (e.g., eserine) and some dilatation drops like atropine can cause swelling of the conjunctiva and eyes lids. These must be stopped and substitutes used. Sometimes the allergen is a protein from bacteria in the sinuses, nasal cavity, adenoids, or tonsils. Tubercular (T.B.) protein is another source of allergy.

Spring catarrh is a bilateral conjunctivitis occurring with the onset of hot weather and is found in young people, usually boys. Burning, itching, some intolerance to light and ropy secretions are the symptoms. In cooler months the condition subsides and gives no trouble.

Treatment is to identify the allergen and to avoid it. Antihistamine eye drops and 2% sodium cromoglycate eye drops are used to treat mild allergies. Severe cases respond well to steroid eye drops, which must be strictly monitored by an eye doctor since prolonged use of steroids (self medication) can lead to fungal infection, cataract, and glaucoma.

Dr. (Mrs.) Rajini KanthaNarendranath

Kirk News



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

Making our Mark in 2023

We all want to not only start well but also continue in it. Be it new year resolutions or anything along those lines, in most cases we seem to fall behind and eventually quit. Clearly our resources are too limited to keep us going. Let us align our lives in accordance with the purposes of God and He will provide us with all the resources of heaven that will not only start the engine well but keep it at the needed pace till we reach our destination. We, the Kirk, have started the year on this note.

Church Camp

The annual church camp was held in The Green Coconut Resorts on the 13th and 14th of this month. It showed how diverse the congregation of Kirk is with the youngest child being 7 months old to the lovely aunty who was 96 years young. Over 145 members of the church partook of a wonderful time of Word, Worship, Fun and Fellowship. The guest speakers, Mr. Wilfred Davidar, Dr. Shanthi Davidar and Mr. Paul Balasundaram made the experience all the more impactful.

Kirk Sunday School

The Kirk Sunday School started their year with a retreat on the 29th of January, at Pleasant Days Resort. The Hi - Kids Ministries resource team made the experience all the more exciting.

Kirk Youth Fellowship

The Catalyst this month met on the 22nd at 9a.m. in the SACCE hall with Mr. Robin Rajasekaran as their guest speaker.

Kirk Men's Fellowship

On 22nd January, the Kirk Men's Fellowship met on zoom with Rev. Isaac Johnson as the facilitator to meditate on the topic, Courageous Men: Covenant, Conviction, and Conquest.

The Prayer Walk that the Men's Fellowship does in conjunction with the Urban Ministries commenced on the 29th January after the 9a.m. service.

AKCDC

Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it. (Proverbs 22:6)

AKCDC Sunday was on the 22nd January, when the children and staff of AKCDC came to the Kirk to sing and dance to the glory of God, recite memory verses and share their testimony. Twenty-five years since their commencement, they are growing strong. It was remarkable to hear the work of God being done among the underprivileged children through our church. Currently there are 105 children who are being cared for physically and spiritually. As a testament, there are children who have grown up to pursue Master's degrees and have even joined professional courses such as engineering and law and have qualified as first-generation graduates.

Annual General Assembly

On the 22nd of January, the Kirk Communicant members met after the service to hear from the secretary, Mr. Shanthakumar and the treasurer, Mr. Jebasingh Jothi about the events of our church over the past year and the vision for 2023 - growing deeper (in the grace and knowledge of Christ, our first love) to grow wider. This was followed by a time of Q&A, suggestions, and lunch.

Rise up, O saints of God! Have done with lesser things; Give heart and soul and mind and strength To serve the King of Kings.

Obituary

We convey our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family of Mr. M.Donald Stanly, who passed away on 31.12.2022, aged 71. The funeral service was held on the 2nd of January 2023.

"Forever with the Lord!"

Angela Susan Bryner

Celebrating AKCDC's Silver Anniversary



Children performing a lively dance and song



Performing a skit



Children singing and praising God



AKCDC report - Mrs. Sophia Dulipsingh

Testimony - Mrs. Nalini Sudhakar



A happy gathering with AKCDC children

51:02 February 2023