

Kirkspire

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



*"You crown the year with Your goodness,
And Your paths drip with abundance." Psalm 65:11*

January 2022

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Editor : Usha George

Ministry of the month : Men's Fellowship



Word from the Pastor

God is Unchanging

Psalm 136

Is it the end? Is it the beginning? Is it a continuation? When the calendar runs out, it is the end, when the new calendar is hung, it is the beginning and life that we live is a continuation.

Psalm 136 is a very unique Psalm and if you look at chapters in the Bible, there is none like this. The phrase 'His mercy endures forever' is repeated 26 times. This is a great reminder for all of us as we start 2022. His mercy, compassion, love, grace, goodness, kindness and above all, His very Presence is unchanging and incomparable. We rate our lives based on life experiences and call a season or a year as a good year or a bad one. But God does not compartmentalise the way we do. He is constant and His thoughts about us are constant. Here are few essential lessons for us to carry as we walk into the unknown.

1. We live under God's sovereign world
2. We believe in God's perfect word
3. We experience God's Emmanuel presence
4. We follow God's eternal plan

There is much to be said on each of these lessons. But I choose to leave it to your study on each of them as we march through 2022. Here are a few application examples from the Bible.

- a. Over 1 million people stood before the Red Sea but only one had the courage and faith to say, 'Stand still and see the salvation of God'.
- b. An entire army expected to be defeated by Goliath but David stood by faith believing God's power
- c. All of Babylon were sure that 3 men will die pitifully in the fiery furnace but God's presence was there
- d. Amidst the pelting stones and uncalled for hatred by 'religious scholars', one man saw the glory of God and then entered that glory.

Life, as God designed it, is not about wishful thinking or worrisome living. It is about walking each day by faith – all along knowing that 'HIS MERCY ENDURES FOREVER'.

Have a blessed year 2022 filled with worship, word, and witness.

Rev. Isaac Johnson

The same Jesus Who turned water into wine can transform your home, your life, your family, and your future. He is still in the miracle-working business, and His business is the business of transformation.

Adrian Rogers

Forgiveness is not that stripe which says, "I will forgive, but not forget." It is not to bury the hatchet with the handle sticking out of the ground, so you can grasp it the minute you want it.

D. L. Moody



All Things Are Made New...

2 Corinthians 5:17

We have just passed through the season when we celebrated the Blessed Birthday of the Babe in Bethlehem. Along with His birth was born a new concept of God which emphasized the Father – child relationship between God who is the Creator, Judge, Lawgiver and King of the Universe and His earthly children.

As we ring out the old year and ring in the new, can we reflect a while on the year that is past? Are we satisfied that we have furrowed well and sown good seeds for our Master? Have we in our personal spiritual lives emerged stronger in our faith and prayer to experience deeper joy and understanding with God?

We have been placed on planet earth by our Creator and have to go through this journey according to His well-defined timelines. Life at times seems placid and predictable but sudden gusts of tempestuous winds can topple the sails of our life. These uncertainties exist be it in a hovel or a palace.

We also very well understand that though we may be bright and highly capable we know that we can never be sovereign. We were created to live forever but that gift lay shattered on the floor of Eden. But this we know - that God has ordained a life for us beyond earthly boundaries. He has put eternity in our hearts and He will lead us on if only we trust Him.

The Old Year has fallen like a drop of dew into the vast ocean. From God's storehouse of Time, we have twelve new months released for us, unless differently planned by our Sovereign God.

We hold closely to our hearts the divinely inspired words of Paul who once in rebellion had gone down the depths of defiance against his Maker, only later to attain glorious heights by the power of the

Holy Spirit. "Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." 2 *Corinthians 5:17*

One thing is needed and that is that we must recognize and accept the fact that we can be cleansed and redeemed only by the precious blood of Jesus shed on the cross on Golgotha's lonely hill. There are no poetic words to describe this. It is "surgical"!

This New Year 2022, we pray afresh for His blessings to renew our minds, our gifts, our health, our resources, our lives to serve our Master with a deeper love and fellowship with Him. All this we can achieve only if we are made new with the touch of our Master. Let us emerge from this pleasure-seeking world, stronger in faith, prayer and commitment to serve our Jesus.

We welcome the New Year with the glorious harmonies of heaven:

"Oh, sing to the Lord a new song!
Sing to the Lord, all the earth."
Psalm 96:1

Usha George

"But," a man said to me, "no one has come back, and we don't know what is in the future. It is all dark, and how can we be sure?" Thank God! Christ came down from heaven, and I would rather have Him coming as he does right from the bosom of the Father, than any one else. We can rely on what Christ says, and He says, "He that believeth on Me shall not perish, but have everlasting life." Not that we are going to have it when we die, but right here to-day.

D. L. Moody



Mary did you know?

The song "Mary did you know your baby Boy?" is sung by all choir groups during the Christmas season. I first heard this song sung in the church I attended in the US five years back. I liked it very much and asked my daughter to get the words of the song, and wished to give it to our church people to sing, but before I returned to Chennai this song became very popular in India and all over the world as well.

Did Mary truly know that her "Baby Boy" would be the Saviour of the world and that He was really the great "I Am"? Maybe she would have known His full picture after the crucifixion and the resurrection. Now we must ask the same question ourselves: Have we known fully this One and Only Saviour of Mankind?

When we pass through turbulences in our life and experience difficulties in our day-to-day life, we go to Jesus as we believe in His divine power to solve our problems and give us physical healing. Last year when I got infected by the Coronavirus, I was down for nearly three weeks and was very sick. Some nights I went to sleep thinking that I might not wake up alive the next morning. I was afraid too to go to the hospital and chose to stay home, and was just taking the medicines prescribed. I pleaded with the Lord to heal me and the Lord in His mercy healed me, and I am now living to tell others of His goodness and compassion towards me.

Like Jesus' mother Mary who witnessed His divine power when He turned the water into wine at Cana, if your life is like tasteless water you would do well to surrender to His will. If you submit yourself to the Lord Jesus and pray for His will to be executed in your life, you will find Him in the life-giving word of God and your life will be changed to a tasteful and useful one. He invites all of us to know

Him as in Matthew 11:28, "*Come to Me, all of you who labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest*", as He is gentle, lowly in heart and we find rest for our souls. All of us try to find the details of the lives of celebrities, but to know Jesus is our greatest privilege and we will be greatly blessed as He has given us the promise of Eternal life. What else do we need?

Aruna Asir

There was a day when I died; died to self, my opinions, preferences, tastes and will; died to the world, its approval or censure; died to the approval or blame even of my brethren or friends; and since then I have studied only to show myself approved unto God.

George Mueller

Holiness, not happiness, is the chief end of man.

Oswald Chambers

I have one desire now - to live a life of reckless abandon for the Lord, putting all my energy and strength into it.

Elizabeth Elliot

The Kirk Men's Fellowship

The Kirk Men's Fellowship started with the objective of empowering men of the church to grow spiritually in Christ to become better husbands, fathers, brothers, sons, and leaders. This flows directly from the vision of our church, 'To be obedient disciples of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ'. The aim of the fellowship is also to have men contribute meaningfully to the life and ministries of our church.

All the meetings and activities are organized based on these objectives, including the sharing of testimonies, men sharing and praying for each other, relevant quizzes, games, and of course, Spirit led speakers on topics of relevance. The last year was a challenge due to the pandemic, but the fellowship pivoted to online meetings that continued to empower the men spiritually.

We began the year with a two-part workshop on 'Marriages that thrive for the glory of God' by Valentine Davidar that explored Godly marriages from a Biblical perspective. We had Ramachandran Periasamy, a convert who works in the civil administration of Singapore full time, is Missions Pastor of his church, and is actively involved in church planting in India and other developing countries, speak on responding to God's call.

Pastor Isaac spoke on, 'The faith led family' that was a blessing during these challenging times, while Victor Anandakumar spoke on, 'Standing in the gap for your family'. Valentine Davidar on 'Men as role models' challenged the men to be Christ like, starting with their families. Dr. Rebecca Vedamanikam spoke on, 'Are you the fifth Gospel?', another challenging topic. The speakers actually facilitated learning with interactive sessions with active participation from the men.

Feedback from the men has been greatly encouraging with the topics very relevant and applicable in their lives – to the extent some of their wives attend! The fellowship is also emerging as a brotherhood to which they can belong, fraternize with like minded men, share





Men's Fellowship



with each other and pray for each other. It is a place where they can be themselves as brothers without pressure. Volunteers are increasingly willing to participate in the life of the church in various ways.

The in-person Christmas celebration saw the active participation of over thirty men for a time of Christmas hymns and songs, worship, games and a quiz. Prashant Lazarus of the Urban Ministry spoke on the need to express the love of Christ to the homeless and less fortunate around us. Followed by Pastor Isaac who exhorted the men to participate in the Urban Ministry by showing the love that came down at Christmas. The men of the fellowship also took part in the Christmas Sharing Sale with family stalls, as well as a Men's Fellowship stall, to raise funds for missions in need.

What does the future hold? Participation in prayer walks in the areas around the church; in the evangelism ministry in outreach areas; and workshops & training in addition to the regular meetings to continue to empower the men as led by the Spirit.

David Appasamy

Christianity is a love relationship between a child of God and his Maker through the Son Jesus Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Adrian Rogers

A real Christian is a person who can give his pet parrot to the town gossip.

Billy Graham

People are watching the way we act more than they are listening to what we say.

Max Lucado

Green initiatives at the Kirk

As part of the special initiatives to commemorate the 200th year of the church, an Environment Committee was formed to discuss and initiate measures to improve the environment of the Church campus. The members of the Environment Committee, Vivek Harinarain, Sabrina Siga, Abha Appasamy, Justin Ranjit and Daisy James discussed ways to increase the green cover around the church, beautify it and make the Kirk campus a bio-diverse green haven in the city.

The Committee, after discussions with the Secretary, engaged Mr. Ranjan Paul, retired Joint Director of Agriculture, whose passion is to use his talents and expertise in horticulture to help churches create greener and more beautiful surroundings. After a few rounds of discussions and campus visits, it was decided to do the work in phases, beginning with planting a green belt along the periphery of the church where feasible, pruning of the existing trees to improve their canopies, and planting flowering trees in available spaces. Such an initiative would check the noise and dust from traffic, attract birds, butterflies and bees to the flowering trees, and enhance both the flora and fauna on the campus that future generations of worshippers could enjoy as they fellowshiped in the grounds.

The initial work of pruning existing trees and planting the green belt began before serious onset of the monsoon on Sunday, 31st October. The planting of flowering trees by congregation members was planned on the following Sunday, the 6th of November, but had to be postponed due to heavy rains and flooding of the pits. On November 14th, as the weather was good, it was decided to go ahead and plant the saplings after the 9 am service with Pastor Isaac Johnson, Dulip Thangasamy our Secretary, Dr Prasanna Rao and family, Ruth & Praveen Alexander and Sudha & John Ravinder planting the first few flowering trees at select spots near the Asha School. Dr. Prasanna Rao and his family were invited to plant the first tree in memory of his wife and our elder, Mrs Premanjali Rao, who passed away last

year. It was a poignant moment for all, and an emotional one for the family as they planted an African Tulip in her memory.

In all, 120 saplings were planted during this first phase: 115 fast growing Conocarpus trees for the green belt along Poonamallee High Road, 2 African Tulips, 2 Lagerstroemia, and 1 Golden Shower. This is in addition to the 154 trees already on the campus. In phase 2, the green belt will be extended along the wall opposite the front entrance of the church bordering Egmore Station, and more flowering trees will be planted in designated spots around the campus. The Conocarpus trees in the green belt are expected to grow 25 feet tall in three years and will be an effective barrier against dust, noise and smoke pollution, and also release more oxygen into the atmosphere.

While planting a Lagerstroemia sapling near the entrance of the ASHA project, Pastor Isaac Johnson said, "We must remember that the first trees were not planted, but created. And man was placed in the garden to work it and look after it. Similarly, we must be good stewards of His creation. We are so grateful for the beauty of our campus, and must work towards enhancing it to God's glory".

The Secretary of the Kirk Session, Mr Dulip Thangasamy, said, "We would like to go beyond the stipulated 30% green cover and make our campus an example of a model bio-diversity area with indigenous trees and greenery. Such a green campus will also be something that our members will enjoy in the years to come. We would also like to replicate this model in the outreach areas wherever we have land so that it can be enjoyed by the congregations there. The sustainability of our environment must be everyone's concern as it is a Biblical mandate, and we are happy to be able to do this in a meaningful way".

We at the Kirk are fortunate to have been blessed with a beautiful campus. The Environment Committee is happy to follow members like Mrs. Sneha Pandian and Mrs. Nalini Simon and to have an opportunity to professionally enhance and develop our campus into a bio-diverse green haven in the city. We are grateful to Mr Ranjan Paul for his passion and willingness to lend his expertise in this effort. We hope in time to add a greater variety of trees and plants and set an example for other institutions, of caring for the environment in every possible way.

Abha Appasamy

John's Corner

CHRISTMAS CHEER

Happy New Year

(Read John 10:10b)

Yuletide brought cheer, Christmas has gone,
And now a new year has begun;
May we all year each day reflect
Christ Jesus, God's beloved Son.

Christ came to earth to bring good cheer,
Meant not to last for just one day,
But peace eternal, hope and joy,
That will forever with us stay.

Let us the new year then approach,
Not with anxiety and fear,
But Christ born in us and alive,
To help us through each day all year.

John H. Bala Singh

OBITUARY

Mr. Cheriyan Joseph, our member, passed away on Saturday, 4th December 2021 aged 97 years. The funeral was held in the church on 5th December, followed by burial in Kilpauk Cemetery. We convey our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family.



Medical Corner

MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH PEACE AND JOY

Why is it that we have everything but peace and joy these days? This is because our lives are dominated by fear, anxiety and worry!

A 17 year old boy came to me a few days back with severe headache not responding to any medication. All the medical tests were normal. As I was counseling him I realized that he was going to appear for plus two examination and he was full of anxiety about, "how would I fare in the exams?" Whether he would fulfill the expectations of his parents and teachers? How many marks would he get? What would be his future if he did not get the course/College of his choice? Anxiety and stress were the causes of his headache!

Another plus two student came with severe burning sensation in his eyes, because of which he could not study. On examination his eyes were absolutely normal. An anxious couple brought their daughter (plus two student) who felt sleepy every time she opened her books to study. They wanted to know if she had any organic eye problem which was responsible for this.

These are just a few examples of Psycho-Somatic disorders (P.S.D). Millions of people all over the world are suffering from P.S.D. with different symptoms and manifestations. Before labeling a person as having PSD, all efforts must be made to rule out organic physical diseases. Symptomatic treatment gives immediate, but temporary relief, so counseling is an essential part of treatment.

Our Lord Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30 NJV).

DR. (MRS) RAJINIKANTHA NARENDRANTH



Bible Quiz No. 122 – January 2022

A Preacher's Quiz

King James Version (KJV)

1. Which book of the Bible is sub-titled '**The Preacher**' ?
2. What family was baptized in the middle of the night ?
3. Which Old Testament patriarch did Peter call '*a preacher of righteousness*' ?
4. Who asked to be baptized in the middle of a journey ?
5. Was there a religious ceremony at a Jewish wedding in Bible times ?
6. What appeared to John in a vision: '**as a bride adorned for her husband**' ?
7. Who spoke about '*the foolishness of preaching*' ?
8. Which Old Testament book is a metaphor of Christ and His Church – a glorification of wedded love ?
9. What king, converted by an unwilling preacher, '*covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes*' ?
10. Did Paul or the Ethiopian Eunuch say: '**How shall they hear without a preacher**' ?

Taken from a Bible quiz book by May C Smith.

Kindly send your answers to the church office or email admin@thekirk.in by 19th January 2022.

Usha George

Answers to Bible Quiz No. 121 – December 2021

A Christmas Quiz

1. c) Matthew 1:18-20
2. d) Luke 2:4-5
3. b) Luke 2:7
4. d) Luke 2:7
5. a) Luke 2:9
6. d) Luke 2:10-12
7. a) Luke 2:15-16
8. a) Matthew 2:1
9. c)
10. c) Matthew 2:11
11. d) Matthew 2:12-15
12. b) Matthew 2:23

The winners are:

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

Hearty Congratulations!



Pastor planting tree



Rao family planting tree



Tree Planting Group

