

Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel *them* to come in, that my house may be filled. Luke 14:23



Kirkspire

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

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Editor : Usha George

Word from the Pastor



PASSING THE TORCH

*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see
your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*

Matthew 5:16

During the Olympics opening ceremony, one of the highlights is the carrying of the torch bearing the Olympic flame and the lighting of the cauldron to mark the commencement of the games. Over the years, it has taken some very unique forms but one of the highlight moments is when the torch is passed from one person to the other and finally to the place where the flame is lit. The 'torch-bearer' is specially handpicked but the TORCH is greater than the bearer. How true is this for our lives as well. A believer in Jesus Christ is called to be a carrier of the light and live as the light and salt of the world not for one's own glory nor to proclaim one's greatness but to declare the praises of Him who has brought us from darkness to His marvelous light.

This month, we are studying the topic 'Choose to Bestow'. This is such an underrated, under-valued and less spoken need in the body of Christ. God's heart is for every human being for He knows that ALL of us are the same in our core being, a soul that needs a Savior, a mind that is volatile and can wobble, and a body that is only going to return to the dust. Fallen mankind has created categories and classes in society but God draws our attention to seek our Maker and show our Maker to others around us.

There is no greater expression of Bestowing this love of God to others than this verse we all know. JOHN 3:16. When we get closer to the heart of Jesus, we realize that He never gets carried away

with the aristocrats, powerful, rich or famous. On the contrary, He is looking to touch, reach, and catch everyone with His love and that is why Jesus summarized the law and said, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and your neighbour as yourself'. So here are some lessons for us to learn, ponder and follow:

- a) Never insult or look down on another human being for we should never hurt whom God loves
- b) We are who we are by the grace of God and all that we are and all that we have is only by His provision and that includes the breath in our nostrils
- c) We are called to intentionally be a channel of blessing to others, not expecting any return or personal glory

Be a torch-bearer for Jesus always.

Have a blessed month.

Rev. Isaac Emmanuel Johnson

"Not by our good works or deeds do we find salvation, but by fellowship with, and faith in, Jesus Christ."

There is something better than understanding God; that is trusting Him.

G. H. Knight

THE FIREFLY

In December 2022, my husband and I had a short holiday in Bangalore with our daughter and family, enjoying every minute of it. One night sleep eluded me and I stood near the bedroom window of the apartment, watching the silent, deserted road, below. The Metro work was going on and a part of the road was cordoned off, with iron rods, bricks and cement bags strewn around. Suddenly I saw a glimmer of bright light flitting around the concrete pillars. It was a fire fly- shining its light in not very congenial surroundings. I watched the little insect darting in and out, glowing in the darkness. How often, I thought, we blame our circumstances for not serving God and for not fulfilling the purposes for which we have been created. The firefly was not in the midst of flowers, plants, or verdant trees, but it was gaily emitting its tiny God-given light! We wallow in the mire of self-pity and sadness, preoccupied with our disappointing circumstances and all the gifts and talents God has blessed us with, lie unused and untapped. We wait for things to get better to step out for Him. If we are waiting for perfect conditions to step out in Faith, we might have to wait forever.

Jesus is the Light of the World. As believers and followers of His guiding Light shouldn't we be reflecting His Light irrespective of our circumstances? In the throes of suffering, if only we could throw ourselves at His feet with abandon, He would lift us out of the 'mire of clay' and set our feet on level ground. He would give us the strength to move on, equipping and anointing us to emit His light to those in darkness. "In Him was Life and that Life was the light of men". In Him we gain the strength to reach out and touch another. Our touch of love when we are going through tough times is more tender and compassionate than when we are sailing along without a care in the world. That touch is resplendent with the Beauty of His Love, the Light of His Compassion. My spirits rise as I watch the little firefly bravely glowing in the midst of stone and rubble. I go to bed to sleep soundly, secure in the knowledge that my Saviour will fill me with all that I need to shine, even in the darkest hours. The lilting notes of the Sunday school hymn resound in my mind and heart:

"Jesus bids us shine with a clear, pure light.
Like a little candle burning in the night,
In this world of darkness we must shine
You in your small corner and I in mine"

Chitra Bennett

Run

But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish. Jonah 1:3

Fright. Flight. Fight.

The response to fear is often flight.

Running away seems like the easiest option-
be it in the face of conflict,
strongholds or guilt.

We tend to be ostriches at times-
willingly burying our heads in the sand.

Ignoring the problem does not make it go away-
It makes it worse.

At times we concentrate on the trivia,
hoping that the elephant in the room disappears.

When faced with sudden disappointments,
heartaches and pain-

the response is to flee from You.

It even seems convenient at times.

Your plans, lessons and love are tough.

I don't know why I do it.

When trouble strikes the first response
is to sprint away from You.

Lately I have figured that
running away from You is futile.

Where could I possibly go?

The highest mountains and the deepest valleys
are not exempt from Your gaze.

Even the darkest night cannot hide me,
for darkness and light

are both alike to You.

Going in the opposite direction
serves no real purpose.

Life seems hollow,

rebellion loses its charm,

distance hardens the heart and

the road back home is exhausting.

So teach me Your approach.
You always deal with issues.
You don't let them fester.
Teach me to fight the good fight;
to not be intimidated by
the giants of fear and failure;
to face life with a smile,
to face life with You.
The next time I'm tempted to flee-
may my reflex be
to run to You.
'Cause when I run
You run
to me...

P.S. The only instance You ask me to flee is from youthful lusts.
Also read: Psalms 139:7-12, Luke, 15:20, 2 Timothy 2:22, , , ,

Dr. Susan Rajkumari

"When Jesus said, 'Take My yoke upon you,' He was inviting us to
come into partnership with Him."

Bible Quiz No. 135–March 2023



A Miller's Quiz

Please give one reference for Questions 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10

1. Is the word "**miller**" used in the Bible?
2. How was grain milled? ~~w~~Where? ~~a~~And by whom ?
3. What were the chief grains used?
4. How was '*manna*' prepared for eating?
5. What were ground cereals commonly called?
6. Of what grain was the bread of the poor made? ~~t~~The rich ?
7. What was the method used to obtain '*fine*' flour?
8. When Jesus spoke about two women grinding at the mill, '*the one taken and the other left*', to what future event was he referring?
9. How was Abimelech killed?
10. Whose name comes to mind when you read of '*the meal in the pot*'?

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 March 2023.

Usha George

Kirk Sunday School Retreat 2023

The most awaited day of the year for the Sunday School children was when the Kirk Sunday school retreat took place at the Pleasant Days Resort, Chennai.

The excited children gathered in the church premises bright and early at 7:00 a.m. on Sunday, 29th January 2023.

Around 65 children and 15 teachers and volunteers left the church at 8:00 a.m. after a prayer led by our Pastor Rev. Isaac Johnson.

The travel to the resort was filled with laughter, fun, and excitement, eagerly awaiting a great day ahead. The resort gave an ambience of being surrounded by greenery and the beauty of nature.

The children enjoyed the breakfast spread. The team from Hi-Kids Ministries led by Mr. Robin led the children in a joyous time of praise and worship and the sessions on fear and how to overcome fear with Jesus as our one stop for help was enriching.

At around 1:00 p.m. we took a break for a scrumptious lunch followed by chocolate pudding and ice cream for dessert.

The children had a good time playing both indoor and outdoor games organized by the team. In the closing session, the children learnt the importance of committing their lives to Jesus and making Him the role model of their lives.

We left the venue after a high tea and reached church at 5:30 p.m.

Some snippets from the children:

"We learnt how to face fear and how to overcome fear."

"Jesus should be our number one priority, we shouldn't let God out of our heart."

"We should give our everything to Jesus."

"We learnt we should not look up to bad role models but keep Jesus as our best role model."

"We learnt how video games can affect you."

"The Hi-kids team helped us learn Bible truths in an interesting way."

"We learnt how to be good role models."

"The skit enacted by the team helped us to realize that we should keep Jesus first in our lives."

"They communicated in simple language so that children of all ages could understand."

"The retreats activities were engaging and fun."

"The message was great, and impactful and we learnt a lot. The games were fun, we were BLESSED TO BE HERE, and I praise God for bringing me here."

Grace Devadoss
Sunday School Teacher

The Cross of Christ



I am the cross of Christ,
I bore His body on Calvary's hill.
'Till then I was a humble tree that grew beside a rill,
I think, till then,
I was a thing despised of men.
"I am the cross of Christ,
They say I tower o'er the wrecks of time.
I only know, that as a humble tree,
This was not so. But this
I know – since then
I have become a symbol of the hopes of men".

William L. Stidger



KIRK WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Our Almighty God indeed blessed the ministry of KWF through 2022 and here are some special mentions to highlight the ministry

- Prayer has been the backbone of the ministry over the years and more so since starting the weekly prayer on Zoom. This began during Covid 2020. When we were all physically apart, many battling loneliness and feeling down, coming together in prayer was a God-given boon that lifted our hearts and minds toward Christ and also brought us together. We are faithfully praying every Friday for over an hour for personal, national and international needs. Our personal prayer has been enhanced and our bond of Christian love has grown stronger because of this weekly prayer. We also see many answers to our prayers and the overall bonding amongst the sisters in Christ
- We have also enjoyed fellowshiping in person and one such events was the overnight retreat. The weather forecast for that week was bad and we prayed for God's intervention and He gave us the best weather and time to share, pray, laugh and fellowship together.
- The day-long Outreach Fellowship with all our fellow sisters in Christ in Kosappur was another important day. We were nourished by singing, praying, studying God's word and encouraging one another.
- Visiting men and women who are visually impaired was another inspiring day for us as we not only blessed them with our visit but were blessed ourselves seeing their enthusiasm in serving God
- The year 2022 ended with a beautiful day of Fasting and prayer thanking God for the past and committing our life for the new year.

I thank God who helped us through all this and the culmination of all this was on February 12, 2023 when we had the Women's Fellowship Sunday. The ladies of KWF were beautifully attired in purple as they actively participated in their various duties. Some were in group singing, some in door duties, leading the service and many more. We thank Dr. Latha Christie who shared God's message in both services on this Sunday. Women's Fellowship is never complete without some enthusiastic sale of goodies and this was done on the first Sunday of February (February 5th).

All glory be to God who is continuing to lead us forward in His strength for His purpose and glory.

Mrs. Roselin Johnson

"Time is raw gold. Prayer is the mint in which moments are coined into heavenly wealth."

"A wise woman once said, 'The person I have the most trouble with is the person I see in my mirror every day!'"

"We do not receive tomorrow's strength for today."

Kirk Women's Fellowship Sunday - 12-02-2023



Kirk Women's Fellowship Sunday - 12-02-2023



Kirk Women's Fellowship Sunday - 12-02-2023





Special Song by Kirk Women's Fellowship

Whose Children Are They Anyway?

“Jesus loves the little children,
All the children of the world
Red and yellow, black and white
They are precious in His sight
Jesus loves the little children of the world.

George F. Root

In lowly adoration and thanksgiving to our gracious Lord Jesus Christ, we cherish and celebrate the Golden Anniversary of the Riber Memorial Day Care Center (RMDCC) and Community Development Ministry. “Thus far the Lord has helped us” (1 Samuel 7:12).

Twenty-five years ago, I watched a powerful movie *Slumdog Millionaire*. This Oscar-studded film had as its backdrop the stark, and ugly reality of the slums in Mumbai.

There is a remembered day, fifty years ago at the commencement of the morning service at Kirk: with the soaring notes of the organ playing the Prelude and the devout congregation seated in the pews, Reverend Murdoch MacKenzie led a ragged group of children from the neighbouring slums, down the aisle into our stately sanctuary. He brought to the eye what he had preached from the pulpit – the exquisite and everlasting command of Jesus to “Love your neighbour”.

A Ministry was born!

The little preschoolers were received in our Day Care with warmth and care. The wan, timid and ill-clad children were soon transformed into eager little kids, bright eyes filled with curiosity and life.

The children love colours, music, new words, rhymes and creative activity. It is a joy to see them come alive when they enjoy the various playthings provided. They respond eagerly to smiles, laughter and relish tasty snacks and food. They listen, wide-eyed to the stories of Jesus and His love. It is no wonder our Master hit the bull’s eye when He said, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 19:14).

Understanding the close tie between the mother and child, the ministry has programmes to empower the mothers to become economically self-reliant. The Community Development Ministry includes imparting skills like tailoring, producing leather items, phenyl and candle making.

The Ministry is largely supported by our congregation and well-wishers who believe that every child needs a chance under the sun. We trust and pray that the completion of fifty years of ministry in His service will lead us on to invest in higher grasps to reach for this community living on the edge of society.

With no fantasy of a rags-to-riches story, the children need, as children all over the world, compassion and care.

We may ask the question, 'Whose children are they anyway'?

'Not mine, not yours, but OURS' is the answer.

"Open the door of your heart my friend
Heedless of class or creed,
When you hear the cry of a brother's voice,
The sob of a child in need".

- Edward Everett

Usha George



John's Corner

NOW

(Read 2Cor 6:2)

Meditation for Lent

Don't wait to commit one grave sin,
Before you should repent,
Before you accept Jesus Christ,
And life has been far spent.

Don't wait for sin to take its toll,
Before to Christ you turn,
Before you've paid the price for sin,
And Satan's ploys discern.

'Now's the accepted time', said Paul,
Come now before it's late,
In Christ find peace and happiness,
Pray do not hesitate.

John H. Bala Singh

Answers to Bible Quiz No. 134 – February 2023

20/20 Vision

The Ark of the Covenant

1. C) Shittim. Exodus 25:10
2. False; the dimensions were two and a half cubits long, one and a half cubits wide, and one and a half cubits high. Exodus 25:10
3. Gold. Exodus 25:11
4. To hold the staves used to carry the ark. Exodus 25:12-14
5. The mercy seat. Exodus 25:17
6. B) Cherubim. Exodus 25:18
7. B) Wings. Exodus 25:20
8. True. Exodus 25:22
9. Two tables, or tablets, of stone. Deuteronomy 10:1-2
10. C) Levi. Deuteronomy 10:8

The winners are:

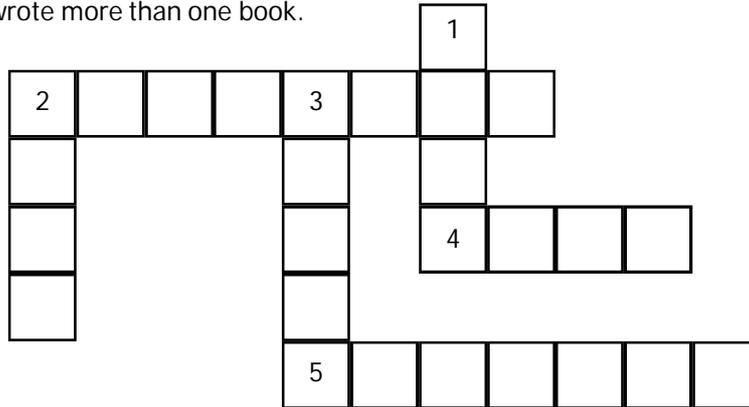
1. **Mrs. Sabrina Siga**
2. **Mrs. Aruna Asir**
3. **Mrs. Indra Rajanayakam**
4. **Mrs. AngelinPackiyaraj**
5. **Mrs. Suguna Joseph**
6. **Mrs. Patricia Patrick**
7. **Mrs. Leela Coilpillai**
8. **Mrs. Peace Rani**
9. **Mrs. Sujatha Elizabeth Prasad**
10. **Mrs. Gladys Vedavimali**
11. **Mrs. Victoria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

Hearty Congratulations!

Children's Corner

Bible Writers Puzzle

The books in the Bible were written by about 40 different people. Some wrote only one book. Each of the Bible writers in this puzzle wrote more than one book.



ACROSS

- 2. He wrote 2 books of prophecy
- 4. He wrote a Gospel and book of history
- 5. He wrote 3 books of poetry and wisdom.

DOWN

- 1. He wrote 12 letters
- 2. He wrote 5 New Testament books
- 3. He wrote the first 5 books of the Bible

Source : Ministry-to-children.com

Answer to Bible Brain Teaser – February 2023

I once made a remark about the hidden books of the Bible (merely by a fluke). It kept people looking so hard for the facts and for others it was a revelation. Some were in a jam, especially since the name of the books were not capitalized, but the truth finally struck home to numbers of 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. There really are sixteen names of Bible books in this story.

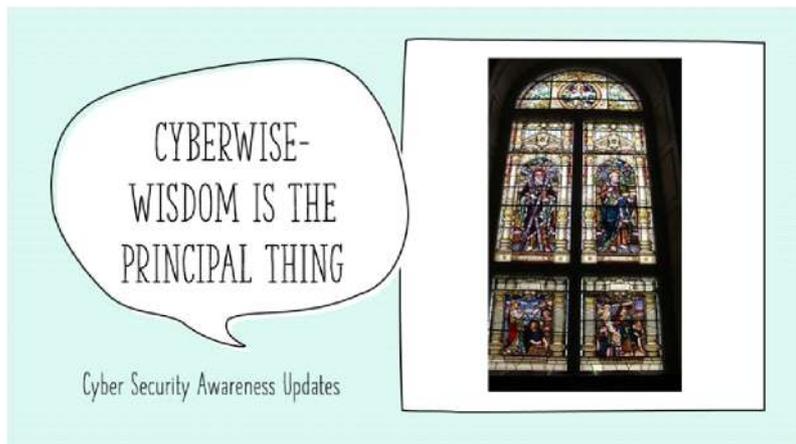
- Caron Dania Justin

Dolly Shanthakumar

Cyber Security Awareness: Being Cyberwise–2

***The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge,
But fools despise wisdom and instruction.***

Proverbs 1:7



As Christian professionals and believers, we are called to excel in everything we do (2 Corinthians 8:7 ESV). Importantly, when we share our time or resources or knowledge that equip others for good works, we bring glory to God and good to the communities around us. “Whatever you do, do it for the Glory of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

In the last update we saw how the ever-increasing incidence of cybercrimes and financial frauds necessitates each and every one of us to be informed, cautious and aware of some of the basics in cyber security. In this context, last month I covered password protection.

In this issue, I would like to share a bit on phishing and leave the social engineering update for next month. Phishing is a type of online fraud that involves attempting to steal sensitive information, such as passwords, bank account credentials and credit card numbers, by posing as a trustworthy entity or individual.

The goal of phishing attacks is to trick you into giving away your personal information, which can then be used for identity theft, financial fraud, or other malicious purposes. Phishing attacks often come in the form of emails, SMS text messages, WhatsApp messages or phone calls that appear to be from a legitimate source, such as a bank, reputed social media sites, a well-known retailer, a close friend or even a family member living far away.

These messages typically contain a sense of urgency, such as a warning of a security breach or a request to update account information. Most commonly used tricks are KYC updates, PAN Number updates, Aadhaar updates or an appeal to help for an emergency and may include a link or attachment that leads to a fake website designed to look like the real thing.

A good percentage of people (8 to 10%) fall to get rich overnight schemes like lottery scams, lucky draws, free giveaways and the like. Remember a golden rule, NOTHING comes free.

To avoid falling victim to phishing scams, it is important to be vigilant and to carefully examine the source of any unsolicited messages before responding. Be wary of unexpected messages. If you receive an email or text message from an entity that you are not familiar with or have a doubt, just delete it. Never click on any links or download any attachments from unknown or doubtful sources.

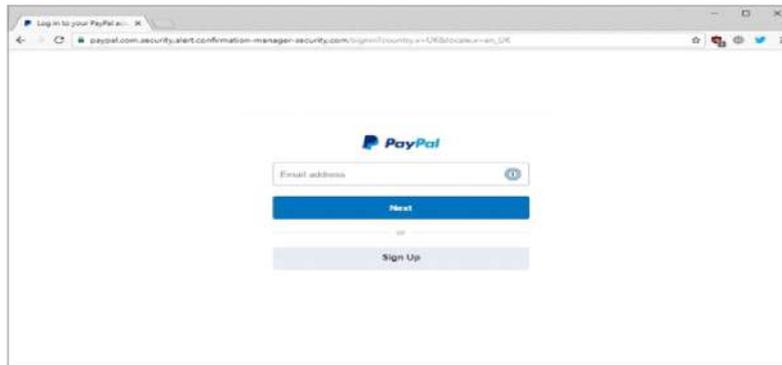
Phishing emails often use fake or misleading email addresses that are designed to look like they are from a legitimate source. Make sure that the email address is accurate before responding. Even if you have the slightest doubt, discard the mail.

Verify the authenticity of websites: Before entering any sensitive information on a website, check that the URL is correct and that the site uses a secure connection (HTTPS).

In order to know what to look for when examining the URL, you need to know how a URL is constructed.



Now, armed with the above knowledge, always make sure that you know what the actual domain you're on is. Sub-domains can be misleading. Here's an example of a first- and second-level sub-domain that intentionally mimic a domain and Top-Level Domain.



This URL is designed to look like it's PayPal.com, but if you take a closer look, you'll notice that those are sub-domains, the name of the actual domain is "confirmation-manager-security."



Remember, the real domain name appears right before the Top-Level Domain (just before ".com/"). So, this is **not** really the PayPal URL. This is a phishing site. Notice how it still displays the little green padlock, thanks to the use of an SSL certificate? That's why you always have to check the URL before accessing or submitting any information.

Remember, if something seems too good to be true, it probably is. Be wary of unsolicited messages, and never give out any personal information without verifying the authenticity of the request. By staying informed and taking these simple precautions, you can help protect yourself and your information assets.

Note

These updates are deliberately kept simple for all age groups to understand and not for tech savvy individuals or IT professionals.

P.C.R. Suresh



Medical Corner

ALLERGIES IN THE BODY – VI

ALLERGIC OCCUPATIONAL LUNG DISEASE - II

“Doctors treat, but Jesus heals”

In certain occupations, the inhalation of dusts, fumes or other noxious substances may give rise to specific pathological changes in the lungs. The risk of these forms of occupational lung disease is highest in spray painters, shipyard and dock workers, miners and quarrymen, welders, electronic assembly workers and those who work in the construction industry or in chemical processing. Prolonged exposure to these allergens (inorganic dusts) lead to destruction of normal lung tissue and scarring (fibrosis) occurs. Industrial gases and fumes can cause acute lung diseases like accumulation of fluid in the lungs (pulmonary oedema) and asthma.

It is very essential to take a detailed occupational history, both present and past, since a diagnosis of occupational lung disease can easily be overlooked, and patient may be eligible for compensation. A long period of dust exposure is required before X-ray (radiological) changes appear. These may be present even before the patient starts clinical symptoms. Lung function tests may reveal decreased lung volumes. For those who are exposed to asbestos, the risk of bronchial cancer is extremely high, especially in patients who also smoke.

The diagnosis is made by careful history taking, x-ray and lung function tests. Biopsy of lung tissue may also be indicated in some patients. Improvements in standard of industrial hygiene are now enforced by law in many countries. Measures such as wearing respirators, damping dust and efficient ventilation systems are already proving effective in a number of industries. The treatment is variable. Each case is assessed carefully, and treatment is given according to the clinical and radiological findings. Respiratory failure is treated appropriately by the lung specialist (pulmonologist).

Dr. (Mrs.) Rajini Kantha Narendranath

Kirk News

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

Let Lent Kindle a Revival

There's a revival happening around the world. There's a revival happening in our church - in the seemingly ordinary life of the church! The word "Lent" comes from the Old English word "lengten" meaning "spring" - when the days lengthen and new life springs forth. It is a time in which we anticipate the victory of the light and life of Christ over the darkness of the world. With the Victor in our midst, we can anticipate extraordinary revival in our church. Let the awe and wonder of this season be magnified in us as we meditate on the life, death, and resurrection of our Saviour.

Success 2023

On February 4th, a special prayer meet was held for the students appearing for their board exams. It included praise and worship, prayer, exam tips and a message from the word of God encouraging the children and the parents to trust God.

In the 9am service on the 12th of February, Rev. Isaac Johnson led the church in prayer for the 10th, 11th and 12th grade students appearing for the board exams.

Ash Wednesday

The Ash Wednesday Service on February 22nd at 6:30pm solemnly marked the start of the Lenten season. The theme for Lent this year is 'Characters Around the Cross.' Rev. Isaac Johnson shared God's word - 'Incomparable Love.'

Kirk Youth Fellowship

The Catalyst this month was excited to have Evangelist Isaac Joe to lead them in a time of worship with a message and a time for Q&A. The topic, Connect - Finding Life's Purpose, was apt for the crowd between the ages of 16 and 30.

Kirk Men's Fellowship

The Men's Fellowship met on Zoom on 26th February to meditate on the topic 'Men of the Kingdom.' The study was facilitated by Mr. Paul Balasundaram.

Kirk Women's Fellowship (KWF)

KWF had treats for the congregants after the service on 5th February to commence the Women's Fellowship Sunday the following week. On the 12th of February, Mrs. Roselin Johnson presented a report of KWF followed by a video presentation and a special song by the KWF members. Dr. Latha Christie was the guest speaker and shared the word of God in the message 'To Whom Would You Belong.'

KWF meets every Friday for prayer on Zoom.

Biblical Storytelling Workshop

NBS India conducted a Biblical storytelling workshop on the 17th February at our church from 10 am to 1pm. They closed the session with fellowship lunch.

RMDCC

On 26th January, a Children's Carnival was organised by RMDCC and Community Development Ministry to celebrate its 50th Anniversary. The Carnival commenced with prayer by Pastor Isaac Johnson and ribbon-cutting by Mrs. Usha George. Also in observance of Republic day, the national flag was unfurled by Colonel E.G. Muthuraj.

It was a morning filled with events for the children to enjoy games, snacks, and lunch. This was the first time that a Children's Carnival was held for the less privileged children and it was a blessing to all who attended the happy event. The Kirk Youth Fellowship conducted the games with great zest.

Revival Prayer

The Revival Prayer Ministry marked its second anniversary by holding a day of prayer for revival on the 25th of February at St. Andrew's Church, Awarivakkam (Pulicat), from 10am to 4 pm. It was filled with a time of songs, devotion and intercession.

Obituary

We convey our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family of Mrs. Maria J. Matthew, who passed on to be with the Lord on 03.02.2023, aged 70. The funeral service was held at St. Andrew's Church on 06.02.2023.

Angela Susan Bryner



Kirk Sunday School Retreat 2023



Conducting the Service - Dr. Lilyan Browning



KWF Report - Mrs. Roselin Johnson

