



ST. JOHN'S MAR THOMA
CHURCH, MICHIGAN

MISSION IN NEW NORMAL

NEWSLETTER
ISSUE 3, JUNE, 2021

Let's praise almighty for another safe and peaceful quarter that have passed us. Eventful, blessed and zealous in the hands of our sovereign Lord. As we learn to live in this "new norm", may our mission help us to connect with God and People.

Galatians 6:2 "Carry each others burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ".

May Jesus Christ our savior be the center of our new normal and lets serve and love one another just as Christ loved us. Hope to connect with families who needs us during this difficult times through prayers and fellowship. St. John's Marthoma Church (STJMTC) last quarter was filled with events, welcoming our new vicar Rev. Ajith K Thomas and family virtually, farewell to our first vicar Rev. Christopher Phil Daniel and Neethi Kochamma, conducting regular prayer lines every week by different organizations and in-person Sunday services, and conducted VBS which was a combination of online and in-person. All things were made possible through our Lord and savior Jesus Christ.

As we look forward to a new quarter we are eagerly anticipating the arrival of our vicar Ajith Achen and family from Kerala. We look forward to a summer filled with peace, joy and love for everyone . May our children be filled with grace and gratitude for His shelter and blessings during this pandemic, as they went through different schooling styles in the past two academic years. Lets continue to pray fervently without ceasing , connect with our Lord and uphold each other in prayers.

Farewell to Our Vicar Rev. Christopher Phil Daniel and Neethi Kochamma



On April 18th, 2021, we bid farewell to our dearest vicar and kochamma. Their immaculate service to STJMTC since its origin are highly commendable and remembered with gratitude. All the organizations of STJMTC felicitated Achen and Kochamma and celebrated their dedication and passion for God's ministry. We truly love, honor, and respect you and you will be always remembered as our first vicar and nurturer who helped us grow to be the "Best Parish 2019". Our hearts are filled with their blessed memories and we wish them a great spiritual journey. We as a parish wish God's immense blessings on their family life and personal growth in Christ. Your life is an example of true Christian, may you win more hearts and souls to Christ through your Christian living. We will miss you both but cherish all the services you have provided for our parish and look forward to more such great opportunities.

Message from our New Vicar



Dear all,

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

I am very happy to address you through this newsletter from India. As we embark on this new journey to a distant land, we look forward to it with a great deal of excitement and a level of trepidation. However, this is normal considering the fact that this is my first major trip to an unfamiliar land and environment.

Traveling to distant lands for the cause of Christ is a familiar theme in the New Testament. Apostle Paul says to Romans 'we are among those who have been called to belong to Jesus the Messiah'. Therefore, for those of us who love the Lord, irrespective of geography, culture, customs or attitudes, the conviction that we belong to Jesus the Messiah never changes.

Let's continue to remember everyone in our prayers. I also urge you to attend the prayer meetings and the Bible classes regularly. It will surely help us in our spiritual growth and will positively impact our perspective.

We should also think about our mission in this situation of 'New Normal' as a believer.

"And Jesus said to them: go into all the world and preach Gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15)

From the dawn of 2020, the world is witnessing dramatic and drastic changes everywhere, thanks to Coronavirus! Our social, religious and even faith perspective has changed. What was once deemed normal is now pookishly called the 'New Normal'. Even the familiar abbreviations now stand for originally unintended representations. Thus, the ubiquitous 'SMS' ('Short Message Service), now presumably stands for Soap - Mask - Social distancing. Clearly, our times call for a rethinking in the scope and purpose of our mission.

1. Are we equipped?

It is indeed time for some honest introspection. Are we growing in faith? Do we take more time studying the Bible? What about our worship life and quality time spent in worship? Are we spending appropriate time and resources for the mission of the Church? If we truthfully compare our answers in the light of what Jesus expects from us, the Holy Spirit will reveal to us what we are lacking. As the world battles with COVID 19, it's the study of the word that will equip us in the spiritual battle. So equip ourselves with the Word of God.

2. Pivot on the Power of God

Even for a believer, it can be easy to become self-reliant to the extent of spiritual egoism. For a person used to being sought after by others for help, it is likely to feel superior and smarter than others instead of feeling humility that she or he is being used as a channel of God's power to help others.

In the final analysis, the notion that we can realize all our God-given potential on our own steam is a fallacy. In a world of swiftly shifting ideas and ideologies, it's ever more important to anchor yourself to the unchanging word of God.

We are part of God's mission not because of our credentials, but by the choice that God made for His glory. It is our privilege to use our resources, knowledge and strength for the mission. As a parish community, we have to actively engage in worship services to equip ourselves for the mission.

I thank and praise God for our Rev. Christopher Phil Daniel and family, especially for his spiritual nurturing of the parish in this time of Covid-19 pandemic.

Once again, I thank everyone for your support and prayer. May God bless you all and strengthen you for His mission.

Blessings,

Ajith Achen & Family

Sacramentality of Slowing Down



Rev. Dr. Baiju Markose

*Above all, trust in the slow work of God.
We are quite naturally impatient in everything.
To reach the end without delay.
We should like to skip the intermediate stages...
And yet, it is the law of all progress.
That it is made by passing through
Some stages of instability-
And that it may take a very long time...
Give our Lord the benefit of believing
That his hand is leading you,
And accept the anxiety of feeling yourself
in suspense and incomplete.*

-Pierre Teilhard De Chardin, Hearts on Fire



Most often, we put ourselves "over" or "out" of the time, not "in" and "inside" the time! Often our ego would not allow us to put ourselves under the gaze of the time. We say time is money. But it is not true! Time is life. Our current common predicament of the Pandemic says it loudly! It also reminds us of our mortality. "We are merely moving shadows, and all our busy rushing ends in nothing"(Psalm 39:6). A common word for human being used in almost all the South Asian languages is "Marthya"- which means one who is having "Mrithyu"(death). If we put it another way, "one who is intentionally aware of life's finitude is Marthya." The simple awareness about our finitude would make us slow down to the essential things and focus.

Unfortunately, the present culture of haste produces restlessness, haste, and hurt both on personal and communal levels. The reality of turmoil in our contemporary society is evident and epidemic. Walter Brueggemann names the present market-driven culture of speed, restlessness, endless desires as the "liturgy of consumerism." The liturgy of consumerism/commodity should be replaced by the liturgy of rest/sabbath. Jesus' words are the specific embodiment of rest/sabbath- "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest (Mat 11:28)." Weariness, being heavy-laden, yoke are the symbols of commodity-society. In the first century context, these symbols refer to the strenuous taxation system of the Roman Empire and the endless requirements of an over-coded religious system that demanded stressful attentiveness. But Jesus offers an alternative: "come to me and rest!" In rest, we truly celebrate our being. Sabbath/rest is a radical transition from human-doings to human-beings!

In this Pandemic induced forceful "rest"-time, we need to reclaim the sacramentality of slowing down! Milan Kundera asks, "why has the pleasure of slowness disappeared? Ah, where have they gone, the amblers of yesteryear? Where have they gone, those loafing heroes of folk song, those vagabonds who roam from one mill to another and bed down under the stars? Have they vanished along with footpaths, with grasslands and clearings, with nature? Let us realize that life is not an emergency, but it is e/merging. We are the emerging selves in-between the past and present moments. Let us be creative, "liminal" beings! A Czech proverb describes being at the liminal by a metaphor: "They are gazing at God's windows." A person gazing at God's windows is not bored; but excited!

From the Secretary...

Another eventful Quarter has passed by. Let us thank God for the manifold blessings we have received as individuals, families and community. Our Valiya Metropolitan Beloved Chrysostom Thirumeni was called to His eternal abode. We, as a church acknowledge his services and thank God almighty for all that he had done for our community and Sabha in and around the world.

Thanks to Rev. Ajith K Thomas, Rev. Philip Varughese, Rev. Dr. Itty Mathews and Rev. Varghese Thomas for their support and guidance for last months. In this pandemic time their took effort and support in our church service.

In this edition our theme is: mission in New Normal.

In Mathew 13.44, Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasurer hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from the joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and busy that field." As achens and church leaders empowering our church to reassemble for worship and live for Christ in a post Covid context, we must ask ourselves and our churches some challenging questions. Has our hope and joy always been in Christ and the Kingdom of heaven. As church buildings have been empty, attendance numbers not counted, budgets potentially altered, are we striving to simply return to normal, so we can preserve and endure as the church at Ephesus. Who or what is our first love? Is Christ calling us to "go" back to church or to "be" the Church?

Shepherds, as we seek to be the church and share the gospel in the new Normal, let our first love be Christ and His word! Let us equip the saints to not only find their joy and identity in Christ alone, but also to share their joy and the hope of the gospel in a fallen world.

Our Sunday school conduct VBS Virtually with CSI Church Great lakes on month of June. All participants was really enjoyed this VBS and this will make more meaningful their vacation times.

Next quarter we are planning on our Church Picnic on Aug. 14th and First Fruit Auction / Cultural Program on Aug. 21st. The amount we are collecting will go to towards our building fund. This year Parish convention we are planning to do on sept. 18th and 19th. We are humbly requesting your prayerful participation.

Organization Events, Prayer lines and Bible studies are taking place during this quarter.

Please continue to support the committee and the needs of the church in the coming Months.

*Thank you,
John Varughese, Secretary*



Everlasting Mission

*Days, weeks, months have passed.
The worry and distress will end, many have said.
Not knowing how long this season would last,
But the glories of an all-knowing God are left unsaid.*



Ms. Sneha Mathew

*What is our mission in this new normal? Many ask.
Let our first love be Christ and His Word.
Showing love to the few we encounter is our task,
While not letting the blessings we experience go unheard.*

*Let us be living proof of our Father,
In all that we do.
In times of joy, sadness, or worry,
A life that is fully embraced in Christ and new.*

*Let us continue to have our hope in the One.
For He is the One who defines hope, after all.
The God who breathed the stars and the sun,
He who comforts and sustains, we enthral.*



Our new Mission in New Normal.

*All is same, all is precious
Divinely Creations, in the eyes of God.
Planets and Stars, still on track
Plants and Animals, still abide nature*

*Seeking wealth, heaping fortunes.
Oh human, you are, always on the run
Greed and selfish, blinds his destiny
forgetting God, breaking His laws.*

*Prophets and messengers, sermons and books
All for human, preaching of born again.
None were heard, none were followed
like the seeds fell on rocky land.*

*Floods & fires, quakes & pandemic
God our creator, His signs of Anger.
Conquered space, commanding seas
Humans just learnt, his science in vain.*

*Let's Live with nature and love His creations
Time to reconcile and reset our life
A new beginning, reflecting Christ
Our new Mission in New Normal.*



Mr. Chacko Varghese



<u>JULY</u>	
7/1	Shobi Mathew
7/1	Sherwin M. Shaji
7/1	Naheth Abraham Steephen
7/1	Nahum Sakhariah Steephen
7/4	Shine M. Eapen
7/9	Tessa Mary Mathews
7/10	Aden Thomas
7/10	Asher Thomas
7/13	Tina Mary Mathews
7/14	Vin Joe Varghese
7/17	Aquino Dominic
7/18	Kurian Palathinkal Jacob
7/21	Ansu Susan John
7/24	Cherry Thomas
7/24	Jaya Susan Mathew
7/25	John Varughese
7/26	Sarah Kurian
7/27	Aleyamma Mathai

<u>AUGUST</u>	
8/1	Rajumon George
8/6	Isabel Maria Sam
8/8	Charls Thomas
8/11	Sneha Mathew
8/12	Rijo Kurian John
8/12	Stephy M. Shaji
8/17	Mariamamma Thomas
8/20	P. V. Cherian
8/24	Soumia Thomas
8/30	Alexandru Versin

<u>SEPTEMBER</u>	
9/5	Mariamamma Abraham
9/9	Sony Mathews
9/10	Aleyamma Cherian
9/12	Jennifer Mathew
9/18	Manaloor Eapen
9/18	Shaji Mathew Mannoorethu
9/22	Rachael John
9/23	Rejeesh Rajan



Wedding Anniversary

July

Mr. Nirmal Mathews & Mrs. Sophiya Mathews	7/14
Mr. Philip Mathew & Mrs. Laly Mathew	7/21
Mr. Manaloor Eapen Eapen & Mrs. Saramma Eapen	7/30

August

Mr. Charls Thomas & Mrs. Saumya Kuriakose	8/5
Mr. Kurian Palathinkal Jacob & Mrs. Renu Elizabeth Thomas	8/20
Mr. George Chacko & Mrs. Annamma Chacko	8/20
Mr. Roy Mathews and Mrs. Jolly Mathews	8/20
Mr. Shaiju Manaloor Eapen & Mrs. Shinu Kuriakose	8/21
Mr. Sunil Koshy Babu & Mrs. Sona Susan Mathews	8/21
Mr. Mathew Cherian & Mrs. Aleyamma Mathew	8/21
Dr. George Koshy Vilanilam & Dr. Priya Ann Mathews	8/22
Mr. Alexandru Versin & Mrs. Sarah Kurian	8/22
Mr. Rejeesh Rajan & Mrs. Bincy Joshua	8/30

September

Mr. Thomas Panamootil Jacob & Mrs. Elizabeth Thomas	9/7
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Lectionary

July:

4 Sunday Christian Stewardship - Tithing Offering
1 Chro. 29:1-9 Phi. 4:10-20 Mal. 3:6-10
Acts. 5:1-11 St.Luke. 19:11-26 1 Tim. 6:17-22
Ex. 23. 1-9 Gal. 5. 1-6
Acts. 15. 1-11 Luke. 6. 20 – 26

11 Sunday Priests: Called to be Imitators of Christ
Mal 1:6-14 Gal. 6:11-18 Lev. 8:1-15
2 Tim. 2:1-13 St.John. 21:15-19 1 Cor. 9:23-27

18 Sunday God's People to be prepared for Witness
Deut. 6:1-12 Rom. 13:11-14 Zep. 3:17-20
Eph. 5:1-21 St.Mat. 5:13-16 2 John. 1-13

*25 Sunday The Gift of the Holy Spirit - Given for
Common Wellbeing*
Exo. 36:1-7 1 Cor. 12:1-11 Hag 2:1-7
Eph. 4:7-13 St.John. 20:19-23 Acts. 13:1-12
Pro. 23. 1-22 Ephesians. 6. 1-5
1 Tim. 5. 1-8 Mark. 7. 1-13

September:

5 Sunday Education Sunday: "Christ the Great Teacher"
Prov. 4:1-19 Phil. 4:4-9 Prov. 1:1-10
1 Cor. 1:25-31 St. John. 13:12-17 Jam. 3:13-18

*12 Sunday Sevika Sanghom Day-Women: Participant in the
Divine*
Ruth 4:9-22 Rom. 16:1-16 Prov. 31:16-31
Acts. 12:11-16 St.Mark. 14:3-9 Acts. 16:11-15

*19 Sunday "Gray Hair: Crown of Glory" Senior
Citizen Day*
Gen. 48:1-22 2 Tim. 4:1-8 Prov. 16:20-33
2 Cor. 4:7-18 St.Luke. 2:25-38 Eph. 6:1-4

*26 Sunday Holy Qurbana: Sacrament of
Thanksgiving*
Exo. 12:21-28 1 Cor. 11:23-30 Gen. 22:1-19
Acts. 2:37-47 St.Luke. 22:14-20 1 Pet. 2:1-12

August:

1 Sunday Mission Sunday: Participation in Divine Mission
Exo. 3:1-14 2 Cor. 11:16-31 Amos. 7:12-17
Acts. 11:19-26 St.Luke. 10:1-12 Rom. 16:1-16

8 Sunday "Jesus Christ: Fully Human and Fully Divine"
Isa. 40:10-23 Heb. 12:1-13 Job. 42:1-6
Phil. 2:1-11 St.John. 17:1-8 Acts. 4:1-12

15 Sunday Reformation Sunday - The Reforming church
2 King. 23:1-6 Acts. 2:37-42 Ezra 3:8-13
Rev. 3:14-22 St.Mat. 13:1-9 Rom. 4:1-8

22 Sunday Theological Education: To Strengthen the Faith
1 King. 18:17-40 2 Thess. 1:1-12 Judges. 6:7-24
Acts. 8:26-40 St.John. 12:20-26 1 Cor. 4:14-21

*29 Sunday Holy Baptism: Identifying with the Death and
Resurrection*
Gen. 7:11-14 Rom. 6:1-14 Exo. 2:1-10
1 Pet. 3:17-22 St.John. 3:1-8 Gal. 3:26-29





TRUSTEES

Dear Parish Members,

We hope this letter finds you and your family safe, in good health, and enduring these unsettling days of quarantine with faith and hope. We encourage all our members to use our live streaming, if you are unable to attend the service on Sundays. We also encourage all our members for their continuous support on our financial needs, Zelle /Chase pay ID for the church is TREAS@STJMTC.ORG.

We need to have our own church in the near future, and we shall keep this in our prayers. We look forward to your generous and prayerful support for the upcoming Harvest Festival and Family Sunday.

“Mission in the New Normal”

The COVID-19 pandemic dangerously affected churches and its mission. Most churches today trying to cope up with what many call “the new normal”. During this time, it is important to focus on a few vital issues that are part and parcel of Church ministry.

First, the ministry of the pulpit needs to focus on grace and compassion. People in the pew go through serious emotional stress due to deaths of family members and friends. Some people go through stress due to the issue of employment and subsequent financial difficulties. Therefore, preachers must focus on grace and mercy of God (Philippians 4:6,7)

Second, the pandemic and the consequent closure of church buildings once again proved to the believers that it is not the building the church but the people. Therefore, churches must focus and invest on building fellowship and love among believers (Romans 1:11, 12)

Thirdly, the new normal also provides ample opportunities to share the good news, the only and ultimate solution to human problems. Since many are looking for a solution to their anxieties and uncertainties, the Gospel of Jesus offers hope during their helplessness. Churches need to focus on spreading the gospel (1 Peter 2:9)

Finally, churches are called to be salt and light to the world (Matt 5) Since the pandemic affected the economic conditions of most families, especially those who depend on daily jobs. Churches are called to serve the poor and the needy. Through our good works many will see Jesus (Ephesians 2:10, Titus 3:8, 1 John 3:13) we do not know how long this pandemic would last. But we are called to be ready in season and out of season to preach, teach, and serve the Lord (2 Timothy 4:2).

Our sincere thanks to everyone in the name of God. May the Lord bless and keep each of you and your loved ones during this challenging and historic time

Please free to contact one of us to if you need assistance

Nirmal Mathews 586-662-5247

Anil Sam 586-601-4075