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ARTICLES NEEDED!

If you would like to submit any articles in English or Malayalam,
please send it to: Jacobkab@hotmail.com

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WEB!**

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St. Paul's Mar Thoma Church
2425 Gus Thomasson Rd.
Mesquite, TX 75150

THE EPISTLE

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION



December 2009





MESSAGE FROM VICAR

Dearly Beloved in Christ,

In December the Christians all over the world celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. The word “mas” means “sacrifice”. Christmas means the sacrifice of Christ. So it is an occasion to remember the birth and death of Jesus Christ because Jesus was the man born to die. 25th of December cannot be considered the as the actual date of birth of Christ. The powerful Roman emperor fixed that date because the same day was set apart to worship the sun as god. So Christmas celebration on 25th December may be considered as a symbolic act of accepting Jesus Christ as our light and salvation. As Mary prepared herself for the birth of Jesus, the church has set 25 days of lent for purification of our lives so that Christ will be born in us and we will grow up in Christ.

Christmas is an occasion of joy and peace. In the first Christmas night, an angel from heaven said. To the shepherds: “Don’t be afraid, I bring you good news of great joy” (Luke 2:10) but very often Christmas has become a celebration without Christ experience. For many people it is a time for worldly pleasures like alcoholism, eating, merry making, and shopping. The worldly pleasures are expensive, temporary and will be lost. But God gives real joy of salvation through Christ that is free and eternal that cannot be taken by others. It is joy of freedom from sin.

The first Christmas song sung by the angels was “Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth to those who have God’s favor” (Luke 2:14) It means God became man in Christ to give peace to the world and it is God’s greatest gift for us. Today we live in a world of fear and desperation. Only God can give us peace. Jesus revealed the truth that the peace of the world is possible only through love, forgiveness and reconciliation. Christmas challenges us to be peace makers (Matthew 5:9). But Jesus had to sacrifice his life for this task. So peace making demands our life as its cost. Let our Christmas celebration be an occasion of experiencing joy of salvation and God’s peace which transcends human understanding. Let us submit ourselves to participate in God’s salvific act of giving joy and peace to the world. May God bless you all.

I wish you all a happy and meaningful Christmas.

Yours in Christ,
Noble Achen
revnobleap@yahoo.com

Prayer Meetings

TBD

AGAPE
LEADER: VINOD CHERIYAN

TBD

EBENEZER
LEADER: LIZY JOHN

TBD

EMMANUEL
LEADER: VIJU VARGHESE

TBD

MANNA
LEADER: SAJI P. GEORGE

TBD

SHALOM
LEADER: ABRAHAM KOSHY

Count your blessings

By Joseph Abraham

The hymn “Count your blessings” is considered one of Johnson Oatman’s finest hymns.

It ranks as one of the most familiar numbers in our hymnals. There is a reason that this topic is such a popular one amongst Christians. Blessings are considered gifts or favors bestowed upon us by the grace of God that bring happiness. Our blessings can be very obvious or they can be unknown to us for spans of time. It is easy to count our blessings when things are going smoothly in our lives but how about during the challenging times?

Why is it important to count our blessings during challenging times?

1. It helps us to choose faith over fear.
 2. It helps us to focus on solutions instead of problems.
 3. It helps us to open our heart to God’s peace and blessings instead of pain and suffering.
 4. It helps us to remember that in every seed of adversity which the enemy may bring, there is a seed of opportunity that God has planted for us.
- It helps us to be a channel of blessing for God and others.

Will we spend time to count God’s blessings and to name them one by one, now and in the coming holiday season? I am sure it will surprise us what the Lord has done in our lives.

Laity Duties

	Worship Service Assistant	1st Lesson	2nd Lesson	Prayer
Dec 6 <i>Manna</i>				
Dec 13 <i>Shalom</i>				
Dec 20 <i>Agape</i>				
Dec 25 <i>Ebenezer</i>				
Dec 27 <i>Emmanuel</i>				
Dec 31 <i>Manna</i>				

Q 1: What are the different approaches to understand the relation between religion and science?

A: According to the American theologian J.F. Haught, there are four different approaches towards the relation between religion and science.

Contradiction Approach: It means science and religion are fundamentally opposed to each other and no reconciliation is possible. Science tests it’s hypothesis and theories against experiences while religious ideas seem to be experimentally unverifiable.

Contrast Approach: It means science and religion are valid in their own sphere of inquiry and there is no hostility between them. Their tasks are different and so one of them cannot be judged by the standards of the other.

Contact Approach: it tries to establish meaningful interaction and dialogue between science and religion because each one of them can be strengthened by the other.

Confirmation Approach: It says that both science and religion are supportive and dependant of each other and thus promote and confirm each other.

Q 2: What was the conflict between science and religion?

A: Science and religion are two main pillars of human civilization. Science is based on materialism which says that forces of nature can explain everything that exists. It is based reason and experiments. It deals with how of natural phenomena. Newton’s laws of mechanics are the basis of science. It states that the universe exists on some predictive and mechanical laws of physics. There is no need to believe in anything which cannot be proved. There is a cause for every effect. There is no role for a creator. Science alone is the path to progress.

But religion deals with God’s revelation. It deals with the why of various phenomena. It deals more with the origin and destiny of human beings. The conflict between science and religion happened because of the dogmatism of the church orthodoxy and an unbridled materialism the Catholic Church persecuted Copernicus and Galileo due to their observation that the sun and not the earth is the centre of the universe.

But of late this conflict has become much reduced because science became more open and the church became less dogmatic. Einstein’s theory of relativity and quantum theory helped science to be more open. Relativity theory says that all universal phenomena are relative. Space-time is not straight, but curved by matter and energy. Quantum theory states that the movement of small particles does not follow the cause-effect principle. It has postulated the laws of uncertainty and unpredictability. The absolute is going way to the relative; objectively to subjectively; prejudice is openness; religious dogma to inclusive spirituality. Einstein admitted that science without religion is lame and religion without science is blind. J.B. Haldane said that the wise man regulates his life by the theories of both science and religion. Stephen Hawking, the scientist says: “I believe that the universe is governed by the laws of the science. The laws might have been decreed by God, but God does not intervene to break the laws.”

Q3: What does the science say about the origin of life?

A: Prof. Edward Humble of California University in 1929 discovered the Big Bang Theory which says that the universe was formed by the explosion of a cosmic egg about 17 billion years ago and the universe is still expanding because the stars are running away from each other. It is calculated that there are one thousand billion illumious bands of countless stars. In one of the bands named "milky way" there are four thousand billion of stars and the sun is one of them. It is also discovered that 45 billion years ago a star in the galaxy exploded and thus the solar system came to existence. The age of the earth is calculated through geology, the study of rocks. The age of species is calculated through paleontology, the study of fossils in the rocks.

The evolution theory propounded by Charles Darwin in the 19th Century A.D. says that life started by chance after the Big Bang and man evolved accordingly to the laws of evolution. The world's species had not been shaped in one single burst of divine creation. Instead, they have developed and evolved from species which existed earlier. The force that makes it possible is natural selection and the survival of the fittest happens always. The biological changes are mainly caused by the process of mutation which are changes in genes which happens either automatically or in response to environmental changes. The human beings also were evolved from earlier species and are not created by God. Both man and chimpanzee were evolved from the same ancestor. From the common ancestor named homo-erectus, there evolved two branches named homo-sapiens and apes. Man came from the homo-sapiens and chimpanzees show 99% concordance. The evolution of man occurred five to seven million years ago in the eastern part of Africa. And it took 40 billion years for the evolution from single cell species to human beings.

Address Change

Mr. & Mrs. Mathews Idikkula
3818 English Oak Dr,
Garland, TX 75043

KECF Christmas Carol

December 5, 2009 at 5:30 PM
MGM Auditorium

LENT

December 1, 2009—Twenty five (25) days of lent starts. It calls for repentance, re-newel, re-dedication.

Lectionary/Worship Information

Sunday, December 6, 2009 - (Holy Qurbana - Malayalam) Bible Sunday Birth of John The Baptist	
Lesson 1: Gen 1:1-24	Epistle: 1 John 1:1-10
Lesson 2: 2 Tim 3:10-17	Gospel: Luke 1:57-66
Sunday, December 13, 2009 - (Holy Qurbana - English) Annunciation to Joseph: Exhortation to participate in the Divine Plan of Salvation	
Lesson 1: Isa 40:1-11	Epistle: Phil 4:4-9
Lesson 2: Rev 2:12-17	Gospel: Mat 1:18-23
Sunday, December 20 2009 - (Holy Qurbana - Malayalam) Sunday Before Christmas	
Lesson 1: Isa 11:1-10	Epistle: Rom 1:8-16
Lesson 2: 1 John 5:1-12	Gospel: John 1:1-14
Friday, December 25, 2009 - (Holy Qurbana - Malayalam - 8 AM) Birth of our Lord - 25 Days Fast ends	
Lesson 1: Micah 5:1-19	Epistle: 1 Tim 1:14-17
Lesson 2: Col 1:15-20	Gospel: Luke 2:1-20
Sunday, December 27, 2009 - (Holy Qurbana - English) Church's Solidarity with the poor	
Lesson 1: Amos 8:1-7	Epistle: Acts 4:32-37
Lesson 2: 2 Cor 9:6-15	Gospel: Luke 4:16-21
Thursday, December 31, 2009 - (Holy Qurbana - Malayalam - 9PM) Year Ending and New Year - God Our Help and Redeemer	
Lesson 1: Isa 55:6-13	Epistle: 2 Cor 13:5-14
Lesson 2: Heb 13:7-21	Gospel: John 12:35-36

Worship Change Notice

Starting from January 2010, Holy Qurbana English Services will be held on First and Third Sundays.

BIRTHDAYS

1-Dec	Sosamma Philip	Sunnyvale	25-Dec	Annamma Abraham	Garland
1-Dec	Merril Raju	Mesquite	25-Dec	Koshy Thomas	Mesquite
2-Dec	Rebecca Philip	Rockwall	25-Dec	Salamma Johnkutty	Mesquite
2-Dec	Chloe Priya Abraham	Garland	27-Dec	Philip Mammen	Rockwall
3-Dec	Leelamma Joseph	Garland	27-Dec	Jordan Sam	Rockwall
3-Dec	Thomas Mathew	Garland	27-Dec	Gabrielle Mammen	Rockwall
6-Dec	Alwin Philip	Sunnyvale	28-Dec	Liju K Thomas	Garland
8-Dec	Tim Sam	Sunnyvale	28-Dec	Roger Philip	Mesquite
10-Dec	Mathew Thomas	McKinney	30-Dec	Mathew Samuel	Garland
10-Dec	Sheela Philip	Mesquite	31-Dec	Benjamin Joseph	Garland
14-Dec	Joseph Varghese A.	Garland			
14-Dec	Aleykutty Yohannan	Mesquite			
14-Dec	Charles Babu	Rockwall			
14-Dec	Shine	Garland			
17-Dec	Lijo George	McKinney			
18-Dec	Sheena Varghese	Rowlett			
21-Dec	Joel Philip Mathew	Sunnyvale			
21-Dec	Stephen Chacko	Garland			
22-Dec	Aleyamma	Plano			
24-Dec	Ashley Ann Mathai	Mesquite			

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

3-Dec	Mr. & Mrs. Joychen Joseph	Mesquite
8-Dec	Mr. & Mrs. Liju K Thomas	Garland
26-Dec	Mr. & Mrs. Issac T.Varghese	Dallas
29-Dec	Mr. & Mrs. Kurien Easo	Mesquite
30-Dec	Mr. & Mrs. Mathew Thomas	McKinney

Youth Chaplain's Message

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Back Pew - Jeff Larson



Now Zeke, the shepherd needed a little help from ... 'friends' to recall where baby Jesus could be found. **Luke 2**

Merry Christmas!

“The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel – which means ‘God with us’”. (St. Mt. 1:23)

Christmas is a time of great joy commemorating the miraculous event of divine incarnation and the amazing journey of discovery!

The message of Christmas reveals the oneness of God with humanity and all creation. Therefore, the Creator is not separate from the creation but amongst His handiwork. Further, it recounts the initiative of God to fellowship and restore broken and sinful humanity unto Himself. It is this bridge of love that has lifted the mortal human to communion with the immortal and infinite divine.

So, continues the Christmas story as one of great discovery! The three wise men and kings discovered the God who was amongst them in the infant child who they found in a manger. Later on, we read of the disciples who discovered God in the words and person of Jesus Christ. Although God is amongst us, we need to discover and know Him as our Lord and Savior. He is here, but we must step out of those comfort zones, those old lifestyles and ways that have unfortunately become too familiar for us and discover this God. We need to take that effort and find him in all the circumstances of our life because He is “Immanuel”, God is with us.

Here are **5 keys** to discovering God and keeping Him first in your life:

Fill your mind with good, life-giving information. The Bible, good books and edifying music that can help you focus on the Lord.

Pray regularly and frequently. Make God your best friend, not just the rescue team you call on when in trouble.

Keep good Christian friends. Prov. 13:20 says that the companion of fools will be destroyed. Avoid destruction.

Stay committed to your church. Christians are unable to survive alone. We are called to be connected to the Body of Christ in our church. Go every week and get involved.

Get rid of sin and weights. Heb. 12:1 teaches that if we want to finish the race God has called us to run, we must lay aside our sin and the weights that may hold us back. Sin is holding you back, so leave it BEHIND!

May God Almighty bless us all to experience the true joy of Christmas as revealed through the discovery of God in Christ Jesus!

Your brother in Christ,
Jaisen Achen
214-604-6678
972-495-5393
revjathomas@yahoo.com

2010 Executive Committee / Elected Officials

President	Rev. A. P. Noble
Vice President	Dr. Mohan Philip
Secretary	Mr. Phil Mathew
Treasurer	Mr. Oommen Koshy
Accountant	Mr. Thomas Philip
Lay Leader—Malayalam	Mr. Zachariah Thomas
Lay Leader—English	Mr. Soji Skariah
Sabha Mandalam Member	Mrs. Leelamma James
Diocese Assembly Member	Mr. Aby Thomas
Agape Prayer Representative	Mr. John Oommen
Ebenezer Prayer Representative	Mr. John K. Mathew
Emmanuel Prayer Representative	Mr. George Mammen
Manna Prayer Representative	Mrs. Annie Thomas
Shalom Prayer Representative	Mr. Abraham Koshy
Sunday School Superintendent	Mr. Joseph Koshy
Youth Fellowship Representative	Mr. Mathew Thomas
Yuvajana Sakhyam Representative	Mr. Liju Thomas
Edavaka Mission Representative	Mr. Chacko T. Oommen
Sevika Sangham Representative	Mrs. Jolly Babu
Choir Representative	Mrs. Ligy Skariah
Auditors	Anil Mathew
	Mathewkutty Geevarghese

Church Organizational Activities

SUNDAY SCHOOL:

Regular classes at 8.45am.

SEVIKA SANGHAM:

TBD

YOUTH FELLOWSHIP:

Tuesdays - Bible Study with Rev. Jaisen Thomas

Thursdays - Prayer Call

Fridays - Prayer Fellowship -

Sundays at 7-8:30pm - Open Gym at Sunnyvale First Baptist Church

YUVAJANA SAKHYAM:

TBD

PARISH MISSION:

Fridays at 7pm - Bible Study/Prayer fellowships at the Church.

Sundays at 9-9:30am - Intercessory Prayer

CHOIR:

Sundays - Practice sessions after Holy Qurbana.

SPECIAL PRAYER:

Fridays from 9.30 to 11.30am - The residence of Mrs. & Mr. Jaisy & Raju George, 922 Dandelion Dr, Mesquite, TX.



Christmas Carol Service

December 24, 2009—6 PM at St. Pauls MTC

Rev. Mathew Joseph—Guest Speaker

Christmas Carol Rounds and House Visit

December 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 20

