

MTCA NewsLetter

February

From the Vicar's Desk

Newsletter Date
Volume 2, Issue 1

Dearly beloved in Christ,

"O sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, bless His name; tell of His salvation from day to day." The Psalmist encourages us to sing new songs to our Almighty God and proclaim all His glorious ways. As we move towards the blessed days of great Lenten period, God is giving us another chance to journey together as a faithful community praising and proclaiming His wondrous ways. **The great Lenten period starts from 23rd of February and ends on 12th of April.**

As a child, I always wondered about the traditions and practices we have in our Christian faith. A few of the traditions were explained to me and many were not. As I got older and began life in college, I saw that my friends of other faith communities also had similar kinds of practices in their faith life. It was at this point that I developed my interest in learning more about faith and practices of Christian communities. Through this write up, I would like to discuss some of my understanding about the need for observing Lent. The word 'lent' is a shortened version of the old English word 'Lenten' which means long day or which points to spring season. Since etymological survey is not the primary focus here, let me write about the origin of this practice. Many Christians have wondered if this word is in the Bible, or whether it was adopted from other faith practices. Bible does not use the word 'Lent' but we do find instructions about repentance, confession, prayer, fasting, etc. Similar to Lent there are many other Christian terms which we cannot find in the Bible, such as Sunday service, Christmas service, mission and the list goes on. Lent is not something we have adopted from other cultures or faith practices, rather it has evolved in the Christian world over the centuries. We have clear references about fasting, prayer, and repentance in the Bible. Some of the common passages we highlight during our Lenten period which helped the lent to evolve are,

§ Exodus 34:28 where Moses spent forty days and forty nights with the Lord in order to receive the Decalogue;

§ 1 Kings 19: 8 the angel of the Lord instructed Elijah to travel, where he was given the opportunity to experience the presence of God.

§ In Jonah chapter 3 we about read the Ninevites observing fast which helped them to receive compassion from God's fierce anger.

§ In the book of Esther, when King Xerxes wanted to kill all the Jews, Esther requested the people to go into a time of fasting. This helped them to win over their enemies.

§ St Mathew discusses about Jesus being tested in the wilderness.

Summing up all the above passages, we can say that fasting or observing lent can help us receive the clear instructions from Almighty God, enabling us to experience the presence of God and receive God's favor, enjoying quiet moments with God and defeating the evil. In Matthew's Gospel, we read that Jesus is telling His disciples, "however, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting" (Mt 17:21). Specifically, here we see that Jesus tells us about the blessedness of fasting. We read that in the early church they observed fasting as part of their faith journey and made all decisions in accordance to that (Acts 13 2, 3).

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Lent observation is not just abstinence from food items, but more than that. It is a spiritual journey with the Savior. Lent is a time of repentance. As we read in Genesis, the first sin came to this world through food. So, controlling and disciplining our eating habits will help us to remember that “man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.” This keeps us away from sin. Controlling food will help us to lighten our bodies so that we can have control over our body and mind. This will help us experience how the Spirit works in us. Lent is not just fasting, rather it encompasses prayer, fasting, and good works. It is always worth remembering the teaching of Paul to the Colossian church. “Devote yourself to prayer, being watchful and thankful”; “be wise in the way you act toward outsiders and make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace and seasoned with salt so that you may know how to answer everyone.” (Col 4:2, 5, 6.).

In the Mar Thoma Church, it is specifically written in the Constitution that “...observance of Sunday, Lents and Dominical Feasts shall not be abolished, at any time.” (Part I, Clause 3). When we read the history, it is written that the church observed lent with great importance. The Mar Thoma Canon which was published in 1857 by the 13th Mar Thoma, His Grace Mathews Mar Athanasius, mentioned under the eighth clause how reverently church leaders taught about this holy practice. Later, His Grace Juhanon Mar Thoma in 1959, 1961, 1964, 1967 and 1973 exhorted through his circulars, the importance of lent and the need to practice it in every church. I am incorporating all these here because many are of the opinion that the Mar Thoma Church does not have such practices and these practices were developed recently. It is not true. From the time of reformation in the early part of 19th century Church leaders taught the believers the need and the meaning of such practices. So, let us look at it with a positive approach understanding that these were not the ultimate means of salvation rather, these are the means which helps us to control our bodies, keeping away from sin and journeying with our Saviour.

As we begin another new month, I urge all the parishioners to observe lent by managing your time for prayer and reading the Word of God, and also abstaining from the passionate things in your life. As I have written above, Great Lent has a unique place in the Church calendar. Throughout history, all the faithful members of the Church observed great lent to remember the passion and suffering of our Savior Christ. It is the time when Church prepares herself to become the transforming agents in the mundane reality. The fifty days of great lent starts with Shubkono service where church extends the reconciliation with the entire created order. As the Word of God reminds us, any worship without reconciliation is meaningless, “first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift” (Mt. 5:24). A reconciled start will definitely bring a fruitful dimension to our spirituality. I pray that the days ahead in this great season may be a time of repentance and renewal.

--

Rev. Aju Abraham

Mar Thoma Church, Atlanta
1548 Fair Oaks Lane, Snellville, GA 30078



Worship Calendar

Date	Time	Service
Feb 2nd	10:00 AM	Holy Qurbana (Malayalam)
Feb 9th	10.00 AM	Praise and Worship and Holy Qurbana (English)
Feb 16th	10.00 AM	Holy Qurbana (Malayalam)
Feb 23rd	10.00 AM	Praise and Worship & Holy Qurbana (English)

Lectionary

Date	Lessons	Epistle-Gospels
02 Sunday	Mayatho-Presentation of our Lord in the Temple	
	1 Samuel 1: 19-28	Romans 11: 33 -12:2
	Hebrews 10: 1-14	Luke 2: 22-39
09 Sunday	Sabbath: Leading to the Perfection of Creation	
	Isaiah 65: 17-25	Colossians 1: 15-24
	Hebrews 4: 1-13	Mark 2: 23-28
16 Sunday	Violation of the Purpose of Creation	
	Genesis 6: 1-13	Romans 7: 14-25
	Romans 5: 12-21	Matthew 7: 15-23
23 Sunday	Pethrutha-Beginning of Great Lent	
	Isaiah 44: 21-28	Romans 11: 13-24
	1 Timothy 1: 12-17	John 2: 1-11

Birthday Wishes !!!

Name	DOB
Mr.Anish Kurian	Feb-1
Mrs.Saramma Thomas	Feb-2
Mrs.Mariamamma George	Feb-2
Mrs.Annie Varghese	Feb-2
Mr.Gijo Jacob	Feb-3
Mr.Renjit Mathew	Feb-3
Mrs.Mariamamma Abraham	Feb-4
Mrs.Susan Chandapillai	Feb-4
Ms.Riyana John	Feb-5
Mrs.Jincy Mathai	Feb-5
Mrs.Sangeetha Mathew	Feb-6
Ms.Krupa Sarah Zachariah	Feb-6
Mrs.Sudha Ann Zachariah	Feb-6
Mrs.Shirly Wilson	Feb-8
Mrs.Leslie H .Paul	Feb-9
Dr.Oomman Thomas	Feb-10
Mrs.Susan Abraham	Feb-10
Ms.Sharon Sunny	Feb-11
Mr.Reji Samuel	Feb-12
Mr.Anil John	Feb-13
Mr.Josh Mathew	Feb-14
Mr.Jibin Titus	Feb-14
Ms.Shruthi E. Thomas	Feb-15
Mr.Tyson Jones	Feb-15
Mr.Mathew Samuel	Feb-15

Name	DOB
Mr.Benny Samuel	Feb-15
Mr.Jaison C. Varghese	Feb-17
Ms.Mintu Mathew	Feb-18
Mr.Philip Joseph	Feb-18
Mrs.Jessy Alexander	Feb-18
Mrs.Ginomol Mathai	Feb-18
Mr.Christan S. Mathew	Feb-18
Ms.Lilia Mariam Mathews	Feb-19
Mr.James Wilson	Feb-19
Mr.Bobby C. George	Feb-20
Mr.Joshua C. Mathew	Feb-20
Mrs.Susan Varghese	Feb-20
Mrs.Nini Mary Koshy	Feb-21
Dr.Joshy Jacob	Feb-22
Mrs.Sapna Thomas	Feb-23
Ms.Meenu Jacob	Feb-24
Ms.Sania Jacob	Feb-24
Ms.Livya S. Mathew	Feb-24
Mr.Varghese Abraham	Feb-24
Mr.Charly Soman	Feb-25
Mr.Sean Koshy	Feb-25
Mr.Mathew Varghese	Feb-25
Ms.Rhea Mathew	Feb-26
Ms.Sarah G. Mathew	Feb-26
Mr.Sagin K. Mamman	Feb-26
Mr.Febu T. Jacob	Feb-27
Mrs.Leny Betty Varghese	Feb-27
Mrs.Aleyamma Thomas	Feb-28
Mr.Nibin J. Mathews	Feb-28
Ms.Reanna Robin Alex	Feb-28

Happy Wedding Anniversary Wishes !!!

Name	Name	Date
Ajit Mathew	Priya Mathew	Feb-2
Lukose Tharian	Gracy Tharian	Feb-3
Rajesh Mathew	Bini Mathew	Feb-6
George John	Lizy John	Feb-7
T. John Mathai	Jolly Mathai	Feb-9
Chandapillai P Thomas	Susan Chandapillai	Feb-11
Joseph E. Jones	Molly Jones	Feb-23
Varghese Samuel	Susan Varghese	Feb-25
Varghese A. Chacko	Ramani Athiyal	Feb-26

Area Prayer Meetings

Feb 1st at 6.30 pm	Lawrenceville	Mathew Varghese(Mat) and Sangeetha Mathew, 1939 Austins Pointe Dr, Lawrenceville, GA 30043
Feb 2 nd at 6.30 pm	Tucker/NorthLake	Varghese Samuel and Susan Varghese, 3078 Alston Dr, Decatur, GA
Feb 8 th at 7 pm	Suwanee / Cumming	John Varghese and Sheeba John, 880 Grand Reserve Dr, Suwanee , GA
Feb 9 th at 6.00 pm	Grayson / Loganville	Shiboo Varughese and Reena George, 775 Barongate dr., Lawrenceville
Feb 15th	Alpharetta / Marietta	Cancelled due to Elections
Feb 22 nd at 7 pm	Snellville / Lilburn	Mathew Varghese(Sabu) and Jolly Mathew, 1878 Hedgestone Court , Snellville, GA 30078

Organization Schedule

Sunday School	Every Sunday @ 8.30 AM	Chapel
Edavaka Mission	Every Friday	At Church / houses
Sevika Sangam	Feb 8 th at 10 am	At Parsonage, 1548 Fair Oaks Lane, Snellville, GA 30078
Yuvajana Sakhyam	Feb 8 th at 4 pm	Chapel
Youth Fellowship	Sat Feb 15th	At Church
Young Family	Saturday, February 22nd	Varghese Abraham & Seema Varghese 6050 Pennant Lane, Suwanee, GA
Senior Citizen		

Fasting Prayer at church on Sat Feb 22nd at 10 am

New Family - Welcome

1. *Mrs. Sini Mary Abraham*

Mast Steve Samji Thomas

2489 Briarcliff Road, Apt A, Atlanta, GA 30329

Ph: 954 412 0344

Up Coming Events

Global Marthoma Meet. Please Register.
<https://mtcgfc2020.org>

Diocese of North America & Europe
 Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church

Presents

33rd
DIOCESAN FAMILY CONFERENCE
NORTH AMERICA & EUROPE
2020

July 2nd -5th, 2020
Mar Thoma Church, Atlanta
<https://mtcgfc2020.org/>

Speakers

Rev. Dr. Prakash K. George
 Principal Mar Thoma Theological Seminary

Rev. Eappen Varghese
 Principal St. John's School, Gurgaon

inform@mtcgfc2020.org

Maramon Convention - Feb 9 – 16, 2020

