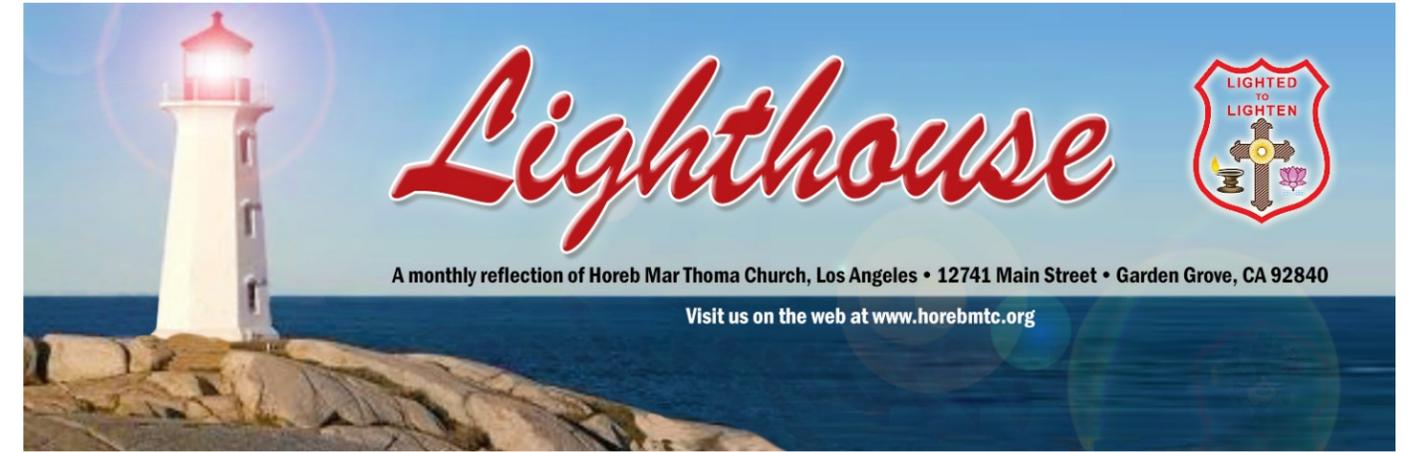


FEBRUARY CALENDAR

Thu Feb 2	9:00pm – 10:00pm	Weekly Tele-prayer conference - (712) 432-1500; 969538#
Sat Feb 4	7:00pm - 8:00pm	South Area Prayer - Anina & Jiju Cholakath, Irvine
Sun Feb 5	3:00pm – 5:00pm	Holy Communion Service (English) - GGUMC
Tue Feb 7	7:00pm – 9:00pm	Edavaka Mission Bible Study - Merry & Mathew Thomas, Cypress
Wed Feb 8	8:30pm—9:30pm	Western Regional Tele-prayer Conference - 714-432-1500 638599#
Thu Feb 9	9:00pm – 10:00pm	Weekly Tele-prayer conference - (712) 432-1500; 969538#
Fri Feb 10	7:00pm - 9:00pm	Youth Fellowship Meeting - TBD
Sat Feb 11	6:00pm - 7:00pm	West Area Prayer - Sheeba & Giju George, Cerritos
Sun Feb 12	3:00pm – 5:00pm	Holy Communion Service (Malayalam) - GGUMC
Tue Feb 14	7:00pm – 9:00pm	Edavaka Mission Bible Study - Ann & Isaac George, Buena Park
Thu Feb 16	9:00pm – 10:00pm	Weekly Tele-prayer conference - (712) 432-1500; 969538#
Sat Feb 18	6:00pm - 8:00pm	East Area Prayer - Anna & Philip Jacob, Yorba Linda
Sun Feb 19	3:00pm – 5:00pm	Holy Communion Service (English) - GGUMC
Sun Feb 19	5:30pm - 7:00pm	Sevika Sangham Fellowship - GGUMC
Tue Feb 21	7:00pm – 9:00pm	Edavaka Mission Bible Study - Annamma Mathai, Cypress
Thu Feb 23	9:00pm – 10:00pm	Weekly Tele-prayer conference - (712) 432-1500; 969538#
Sat Feb 25	5:00pm - 7:00pm	Young Family Fellowship - Elizabeth & Anup Kurien, Rancho Cucamonga
Sun Feb 26	3:00pm – 5:00pm	Holy Communion Service (English) - GGUMC
Sun Feb 26	5:00pm - 6:00pm	Youth Fellowship Meeting - GGUMC
Sun Feb 26	5:30pm - 7:00pm	Sevika Sangham; Mary's Kitchen Outreach - GGUMC
Tue Feb 28	7:00pm – 9:00pm	Edavaka Mission Bible Study - Annamma & Mathew Koshy, Cerritos



Vicar's Message Rev. Larry Varghese

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,
Feb 27th marks the beginning of the Great Lent. It's a period of 40 days that leads up to Easter, April 16th, 2017. Let me offer some insights and advise on how to participate meaningfully in this Lenten season.

- How should we fast?
 - ◊ "One should eat every day, but only a little, so as to not be satisfied."
- Why should we fast?
 - ◊ When we are full, we rest. When we are hungry we search for what might satisfy us. During Lent we search for more of Him and ultimately find that He satisfies.
- What should we fast from; what should we give up?
 - ◊ What we give up is not important. Only that we abstain from something.
- Who should fast?
 - ◊ Anyone. Unless there is a medical condition that requires you to be full, then you can't participate.
- What is the benefit of fasting?
 - ◊ We are often too busy, too full, and sometimes we forget the cost that Jesus paid for us. Fasting helps to clear the clutter in our lives. We are people created by God and for God. If we have become people who live and work just to fill our stomachs, then fasting becomes the antidote that detaches us from what is fleeting and finite and drives us back to our loving Creator and eternal Sustainer. It grows humility in us and fuels reverence for God.

I hope you all can participate in this Lent season by prayerfully fasting as we approach Easter and are confronted with His ultimate sacrifice for us.

in His service,
Larry Achen



Face The Book By Jaidon Thomas

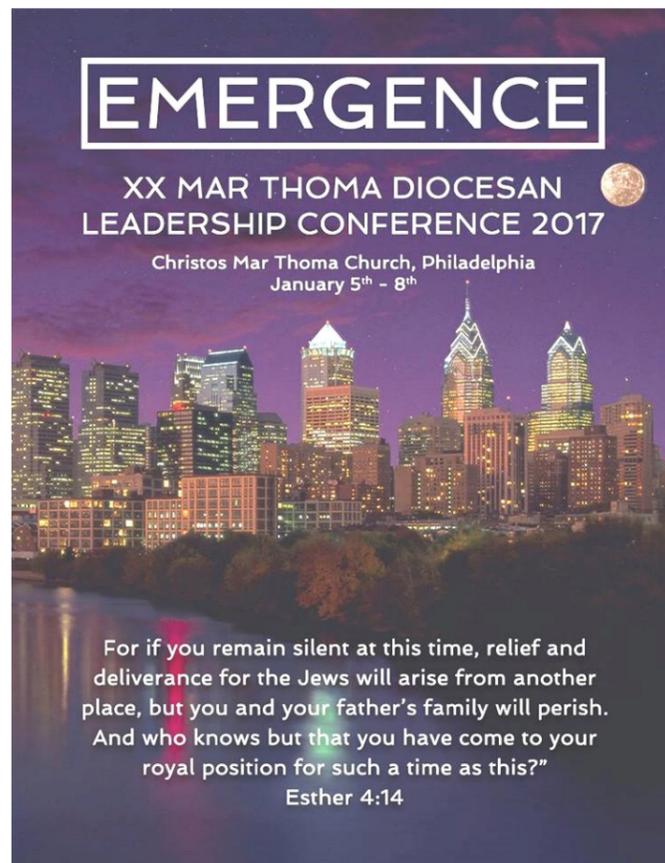
God holds all our accounts
sends a friend request to the whole human race,
as he is merciful and loving
Those who accept the friend request follow him
He updates our profiles with good deeds
and gives a like for all our generosity
If he doesn't reply soon to our prayers and posts
it's because He knows that it's not the right time
His posts are open to everyone
through 66 books in the bible
Read those posts daily
and put a like when it touches your heart
Follow them to succeed in your journey

Western Regional MTVEA Conference 2017 will be held on Feb 18th – 19th at MTCLA, 134 South Vista Bonita Ave, Glendora, CA 91740

Western Regional Choir Musical Night will be held on Saturday, Feb 18 from 6 pm at MTCLA, Glendora

Editorial Team: Anna Chandy, Mathew Thomas & Susan Abraham

Photography: Saji Abraham & Saji Baby



The 20th Session of the Mar Thoma Diocesan Youth Fellowship's Leadership Conference held in Philadelphia was inaugurated by the Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaac Mar Philoxenos Episcopa. Our very own, Sheila Vilanilam had the opportunity to attend this conference and learn from it.



We Are Not Our Labels; We Are CHRIST'S

By Noah Abraham

God works in many different ways. Though we may not understand how He's working in our lives, He is always there. Here's one recent experience that occurred over the course of two days. In our English class, students were giving presentations, when my friend group and I were labeled by some other kids as being teacher's pets. This in itself wasn't too bad, but it still hurt amongst the other things they said. I got really upset and began to think of all the ways I could make comebacks, the things I could possibly say during my own presentation the next day. I told this to another one of my friends, who gave me great advice: what others say doesn't matter. The world can say what it wants about us, but in the end, it doesn't matter. The way we present ourselves before God is the only thing that matters. His love for us is enough for us.

I took his advice, but still had a few leftover grumbling thoughts. The next day came and I found myself in English class once more. Our teacher announced the order for the presentations and I got ready to snap back, completely ignoring my friend's advice. However, the class ended before my group got to present, which was probably for the best. I didn't think too much of this and went home.

Later that evening, I pondered over my friend's advice, if the labels the world gave us really did matter. I recalled that we are not meant to please the world, but rather the Lord. I felt somewhat satisfied and pushed the matter to the back of my mind. That night we had a youth meeting, so I went over and got ready for the session. To my utter surprise, Achen revealed that the topic would be about labels and how to respond to them. I was completely blown away. It was too much of a coincidence to be shrugged off and I understood then that God really wanted me to learn from this.

What others say about us has no effect on what kind of people we are. They can call us horrible names and belittle us at every turn, but this doesn't change the people we are. How we respond to their criticism, however, is how we will be viewed by others. This is the character that we demonstrate. When people come and put us down, don't take it to heart. It's hard to do this, something that I'm still learning to do, but we should keep in mind one thing. Romans 8:37 reads "in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us." With His love on our side, there isn't anything that can stop us, especially the forgettable words of criticism that may arise around us.

BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT

IT'S A BOY

A GIFT FROM GOD

Levi Mathews

BORN:
January 4, 2017

PROUD PARENTS:
Ashby & Inez Mathews

PROUD GRANDPARENTS:
Aleyamma & Idicula Mathews

I sing for
joy at the works of
Your hands.
- Psalm 92:4



The Power Of Intercessory Prayers

By Anina Cholakath

No man is an island; he is a social being who counts on the support of others. This need for support is more pronounced during times of trouble, sickness, loss, and other desperations. Many may remember the testing time we faced when Abiel experienced excruciating pain from a cyst in his brain. The agony of watching my child suffer sucked me into a quagmire of despair and fear. I was drained of emotional ammunition to cope with his surgery.

On the day of the surgery, Achen, sensing our fear and anguish comforted us with prayers. He further reassured us "Don't worry, he will be fine. He is surrounded by prayers" HE IS SURROUNDED BY PRAYERS – those words very confidently spoken by Achen flooded me with instant relief. I was invigorated knowing that no harm or evil could penetrate this impregnable fortress of prayer that surrounded my son. My Horeb family was earnestly praying for Abiel. Every member of the church – adults and even the little children had signed up to pray for Abiel from dawn to dusk. The strength and comfort drawn from the prayer chain that surrounded Abiel saw us through the ordeal.

John Donne's famous quote '*No man is an island*' emphasizes the biblical truth that in Christianity, no man is an island. God saved us from being an island, so we could 'belong'. As Christians, a common bond of spiritual connection holds us together as a community of believers who are interdependent on each other. **1 Timothy 2:1** says "*I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them*".

Jesus always prayed not only for Himself, but also for his disciples and us (**John 17:6-26**). Our Lord continued His fervent prayers even in the midst of trials and tribulations. For many people prayer is the last resort. Interestingly, prayer was always on Jesus' mind – even when facing torture and death. In **Luke 23: 34** Jesus says "*Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing*".

The Bible is full of examples that depict the need and power of intercessory prayers. In fact, in **Acts 7:60**, Stephen even prays for his killers "*Lord, do not hold this sin against them*". We are instructed numerous times in the Bible to pray for others. The Bible has many instances of enemies that were defeated, weather changes, people released from prison and many more - all by the power of intercessory prayers. That being said, is it then a sin not to pray for others? This question is answered in **1 Samuel 12:23** "*As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by failing to pray for you*".

Therefore, we should passionately pray for our friends, family, colleagues, and the world community. Everyone has various forms of challenges and concerns. We can knock at heaven's door by crying out to the Lord on their behalf. Let us continue to intercede with divine enthusiasm and without fail for everyone around us.