



Lighthouse

SEPTEMBER 2018

A monthly reflection of Horeb Mar Thoma Church, Los Angeles
12741 Main Street, Garden Grove, CA 92840



Dearly Beloved in Christ,

By now, we have heard about the natural calamities which took place in Kerala, India. Many of us have some form of connection with “God’s own country.” Friends and relatives have been affected by this flood in one way or another. As you know, I was in Kerala, and directly witnessed the storm and its catastrophic effects. Many people I have spoken to have indicated that they haven’t experienced such a storm (of this magnitude) in their lifetime.

The force and large-scale of the flood waters also resulted in landslides and rockfalls. Hence, many homes were severely damaged to the point of being inhabitable or being destroyed. News reports are indicating that the flood waters have slowly started to recede. However, many are still left homeless, displaced, and have lost their livelihoods. More than 300 people including children, and also much wildlife have perished. Many farmers have lost their harvest, many shopkeepers have lost their merchandise considering this was the Onam season. Millions of people from around the world have offered their prayers and support. Many people from around India have come to Kerala to selflessly volunteer in the rescue and recovery efforts.

I am very happy to see the efforts of the Mar Thoma Church in coordinating and leading in the rescue and recovery efforts. Many of our Mar Thoma churches have opened up their parish halls, and other buildings as camp centers for people to seek refuge. Our Bishops, Achens, Evangelists, along with many volunteers are earnestly working towards the relief and recovery of our people.

(Continued on page 2...)



I LIFT UP MY EYES
to the mountains...
WHERE DOES MY
help come from?
MY HELP COMES
from the Lord,
THE MAKER OF
heaven & earth.

PSALM 121:1-2

MAJOR EVENTS

Sunday Service Time Changes:

Sunday School at **2:30pm**
Praise and Worship at **3:30pm** | Service at **4:00pm**

Saturday, September 8 - 4:30pm

Unity Musical Evening - *GGUMC*

Sunday, September 9

First Day of Sunday School
Sevika Sangham Day Auction/Potluck

Saturday, September 29 - 9:30am

Izzy’s Corner Sunday School Outreach
Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange

Sunday, September 30 - 10:00am

Terrace View Care Center P&W Service - *Fullerton*

Friday, October 5 - Sunday, October 7

Annual Convention

Sunday, October 7

Parish Day

(Dennis Achen's article continued...)

In light of recent events, I would like to share a few thoughts:

1. Praying earnestly

Though many of us are thousands of miles away from the disaster zone, there is one thing we can do: **PRAY**. Never underestimate the power of prayer. *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” (Philippians 4:6)* God hears the prayers and cries of His people. This is the need now. In the midst of the “busy-ness” of life, can we take time to pray for the people of Kerala?

2. Understanding the situation and need

As in any event in history, we need to have an in depth understanding. We are aware about conflicting reports in the news and social media. However, seek the true facts. This will enable us to extend appropriate support for the people. Also, contact your friends, relatives and church/community members. Extend your prayers and support. I believe this will mean a lot for the people of Kerala. Can we be in solidarity with the people?

3. Support

The people here are in need of support. Not only for rescue, recovery & relief, but also for rebuilding. God has given to each of us accordingly. Let us give accordingly. However, be aware of fund raisers being set up by private entities, like individuals. I have been informed that a few of the fundraisers being set up on social media or in person are the work of scam artists. Please exercise caution and discretion when giving to different causes, and make sure the entity is genuine before giving. As intimated to us by the Metropolitan's Kalpana, and from the Diocesan Bishop, our offertory for August 19 was also used for this cause. The church is encouraging donations, which will in turn be handed over for the needs of the people. I exhort our faith community to contribute to this cause.

4. Live a life of Hope

Considering the circumstances and the people affected, it is easy for us to get discouraged and to lose hope. During the trials & tribulations of life, we cannot lose faith and hope, because they are sustained through Christ Jesus, our eternal Savior and refuge. He is our strength, and we patiently await His second coming. This gives us hope. We need to hope for the future, and encourage other fellowship brothers and sisters to do the same. (1 Peter 5: 6-10)

5. Pledging to take care of our God-given planet

One of the discussions which is a bone of contentment is ecology and the need to develop an eco-sensitive lifestyle given the current circumstances. Can we hear the cry of the land? This is not the time to delve into the politics of ecology, but rather, the material & theological implications of our actions towards this planet. – in the book of *Genesis 2:15*, it says: *“The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.”* *What is our responsibility and participation in maintaining planet Earth?*

Please continue to pray for the people of Kerala. Also, we are in the month of September. Our children have entered a new academic year. In addition, our Sunday school classes begin. I humbly request the parents and teachers to cooperate and support this ministry. Remember: parents and family members are the primary spiritual educators of our children. The Sunday school will reinforce what is taught at home. How can something be reinforced if it is not taught?

May the blessings of the Triune God be with us all.

Yours in Christ's ministry,

Dennis Achen



WESTERN REGIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE 2018

By Noah Abraham

Spending a weekend in Scottsdale, Arizona in the dead of summer wasn't an ideal situation. The temperatures were well over 100 degrees, but being a part of this year's Western Regional Youth Conference made it all worth while though. After a draining school year, being able to spend a weekend growing closer to other youths and God was a wonderful refresher. 83 youths from the Seattle, San Francisco, Silicon Valley, Glendora, Horeb, and Phoenix parishes came together to celebrate being a member of the Western Regional Mar Thoma Youth Fellowship. Reconnecting with friends made during the past conference and coming together to praise God was definitely an experience worth cherishing.

The main speaker, Mr. Matt Samuel, made a genuine effort to try and connect with us, teaching us about the importance of "God-esteem." Hailing from Texas, Matt Samuel works with at-risk youth in his free time apart from work as an Apple employee, trying to point these youth in the way of God. As someone who was interested in helping youths, Mr. Samuel made his talks relevant to the issues that we as youths faced. He wanted us to realize, that through all of our flaws and imperfections, we were made in God's perfect image. No matter if the world told us we weren't enough or we needed to change who we were, God loved us for who we really were.



Spending time at the conference retreat center for the weekend and hearing that message had a profound effect. In addition to the main speaker, there were also two track sessions, one on Social Media and another on Mental Health, and small group discussions based on age and gender. This allowed us to be placed into an environment of people going through the same problems. We were able to open up about our struggles without the worry about being judged, leading to intimate, meaningful conversations about our faith. For me, the most impressionable part of the conference was the Re-dedication program. At this event, we had an opportunity to realign ourselves to God's plan. We sang praise and worship songs and prayed with each other. Overall, I really enjoyed my experience at this year's youth conference and I'm eagerly looking forward to the next one.



Photos courtesy of Phoenix MTC Youth Fellowship

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VBS 2018



WELCOME REV. DENNIS ABRAHAM



Our new vicar Rev. Dennis Abraham's first Holy Communion Service at Horeb

SUNDAY SCHOOL ANNIVERSARY



Nursery/Pre-K



Kindergarten



1st Grade



2nd Grade



3rd/4th Grade



4th Grade



5th Grade



6th Grade



7th/8th Grade



9th/10th Grade



Sunday School with guest Achen Rev. K.V. Simon

Grace Thomas & Dr. Abraham C. Thomas

were two of the elder members of the the Mar Thoma Church of Los Angeles. They were very active in the church and in their own ministry in India. Uncle and Auntie moved to Florida many years ago and were retired. Grace Thomas passed away last month. She is survived by her husband, 2 sons, grandchildren and extended family. She will be fondly remembered and missed dearly.



Below is a reprint of an article that appeared in the Fall 1995 edition of "Turning Point" newsletter published by the youths of the Mar Thoma Church of Los Angeles. Grace Thomas & Dr. Abraham C. Thomas were married on August 20, 1956. This is Grace Thomas' story of how she met uncle and their marriage.

How did you and uncle first meet? Who introduced you two together?

In 1956, Uncle and his friend, both of whom were working for Children's Special Service Mission (a Christian organization for youths and young children), came to our church to show slides and have a meeting for the children. We were attending the C.S.I. church and my father, a church worker, was in charge of the church. Before the meeting for the children, uncle and his friend came to our home to discuss the event with my father. I was looking after my brother's children at the time and taking them to the well to give them a bath, that was the first time I saw uncle. We never actually got a chance to meet.

Uncle's friend, who was in his fifties, told uncle that I seemed like a nice girl and might be a good candidate for him. Uncle was not interested in marriage at the time. He was also under the impression that I was married because he had seen me with my brother's children and thought they were mine.

But his friend persisted and asked my parents about me. He found out I was single and was teaching at the time. About a month later he asked uncle again if he was interested. At this time uncle said he will pray about it and see if it is in God's will. So he was slowly changing his mind. Four or five months later uncle's friend contacted my parents and said uncle was interested in marriage; my parents replied that they would have to ask me.

In the meanwhile, a proposal for marriage for me had come from another preacher. My appachen replied in a letter that we were willing to meet that person on a certain date, and he put the letter in his Bible to mail it the next day, but that same night he got a high fever and didn't get a chance to mail it. And he forgot about the letter in his Bible until the date had passed. This was when I knew it was God's guidance that I should meet uncle.

After a month, uncle's friend contacted my appachen saying uncle and his parents were interested in a marriage proposal. So his friend was the matchmaker.

The first time you saw uncle, what stood out about him?

He looked very young and innocent. He was also skinnier than I was.

How did you get to know each other?

We did not see each other for a long time after the first time he came to our house. My father told uncle's friend that uncle should write to me if he was interested. That's the way it started. He wrote about his Christian faith and asked me about mine. We were communicating just like friends. We got to know each other's thoughts by writing. Through writing we found out we were the right persons for each other.

How did the first meeting go? Did anybody give you any advice on how to act?

Well he was traveling to Kottayam and on the way he wanted to come and visit my family. My parents thought it was a good idea if we got a chance to talk before we got married.

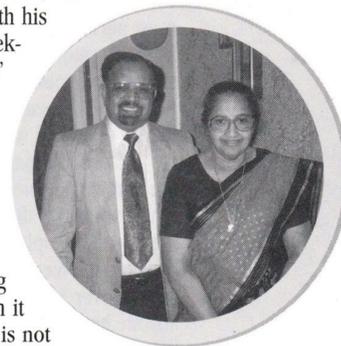
When he came, he was dressed casually. My whole family was there; so after a while my father left us two alone in the living room to talk. I was little nervous about meeting him, but we were not shy or anything. Both of us were already working, I was teaching at the time and he had been doing his ministry work; we were used to talking. My parents didn't really advise me to do this or that, and I hadn't told my friends about uncle at the time, because in those days it just was not proper. So we talked for a short time and drank our coffee.

Did uncle do anything romantic?

We were married on August 20 and my birthday was on September 2. Every morning we would sit together to read the bible and pray before we went to work. Well on my birthday, he asked me to read the Bible, and as I was flipping through the pages, I saw an envelope and thought what this was? As I opened the envelope, there was a gold chain (minnumala) inside and he had written 'Happy Birthday' on the envelope. So it was a surprise birthday and wedding gift. In those early days we didn't have a lot of money to buy each other jewelry or gifts, so he saved whatever he could and bought me the gold chain.

What kind of interests did you and uncle have in common?

He liked sports and was involved in badminton; I also enjoyed sports and was active as a Girl Scout leader. Uncle was on the road during the weekdays with his ministry work; our free time on the weekend was spent going to our the relatives' and friends' houses and to church on Sundays.



How do you feel about today's culture of dating before marriage?

If a Christian boy and girl, committed to God, have a nice time together sharing their Christian experience and faith, then it is good. But, dating in the 'worldly' way is not good. In the U.S. it is very difficult to get married if the couple doesn't know each other. Sometimes there is a pitfall in dating, because some Christians when dating, put on an act and their true personality doesn't come out until after a few months of marriage.

Any advice you would like to give the youths today regarding relationships or marriage?

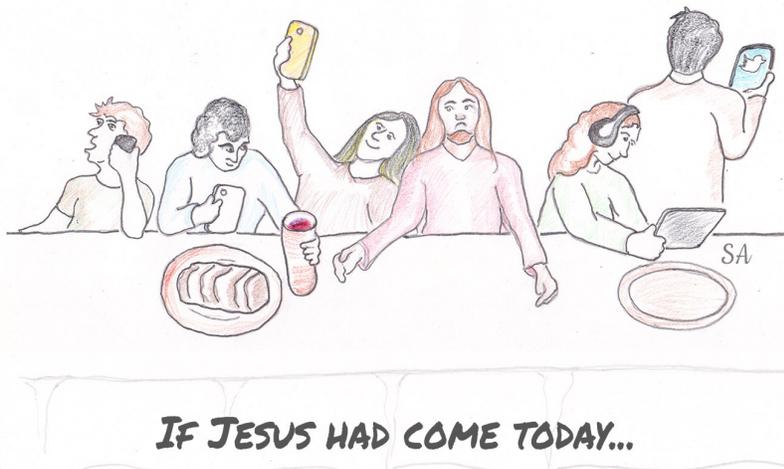
Before you get to know an another person, you have to pray to God and ask Him for guidance. You shouldn't jump into conclusion. You should see and study them and then decide.

On the first night of our marriage, the first thing uncle and I did was pray. We made a pledge to each other that we will not hold any grudges, talk over disagreements, and forgive each other before we go to sleep. After all these years we still make that same commitment to each other. People say that marriage is a 50-50 effort, but I say it should be 60-60. A person should make the extra effort to see that the other person is taken care of. ■

FIRST YF MEETING WITH DENNIS ACHEN



Jesus and the “Millennial” disciples



IF JESUS HAD COME TODAY...

By Saji Abraham

IZZY'S CORNER SUNDAY SCHOOL OUTREACH

Have you ever thought about how many of our kids have missed a meal or were not certain they will have dinner tonight? Probably none. Hunger is a real problem in our suburban affluent county. It's an astonishing fact that more than 20 percent of children in OC are living in households considered "food insecure."

September is Hunger Action Month across America and our Sunday school is raising awareness by participating in an outreach program at Izzy's corner. This is a kid-friendly space inside Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County's food distribution center in Irvine that provides a hands-on volunteer experience to children ages 7-13 years. Here kids will learn about hunger in our community and how they can make a real difference in the lives of children who face hunger. Details are as follows:

Date: Saturday, September 29, 2018

Time: 9:30-11:30am

Venue: 8014 Marine Way, Irvine, CA 92618

Approximate # of Volunteers: 25 total including children and adults

It's easy to get involved! Just sign up using the volunteer sign-up link which will be emailed soon. Since there are limited spots, it is on a first-come, first-served basis. Meanwhile, I would like to encourage all our kids in elementary & middle school to please consider donating your time by helping at our local food bank. Feel free to contact me @ [714-717-1828](tel:714-717-1828) for any questions.

Please keep this event in your prayers and thanks in advance for helping overcome the hunger crisis in our community.

Julie Mathew (coordinator)

SEPTEMBER CALENDAR

| | | |
|------------|-------------------|--|
| Sat Sep 1 | 6:00pm - 8:00pm | South Area Prayer - Betsy & Dr. Jooby Babu, Irvine |
| Sun Sep 2 | 3:30pm - 4:00pm | Praise & Worship - GGUMC |
| Sun Sep 2 | 4:00pm - 6:00pm | Holy Communion Service (English) - GGUMC |
| Tue Sep 4 | 7:00pm - 9:00pm | Parish Mission Bible Study - Thankamma & Thomas Mammen, Long Beach |
| Fri Sep 7 | 7:00pm - 9:00pm | West Area Prayer - Parsonage, Anaheim |
| Sat Sep 8 | 4:30pm - 6:00pm | Unity Musical Evening - GGUMC |
| Sun Sep 9 | 3:30pm - 4:00pm | Praise & Worship - GGUMC |
| Sun Sep 9 | 4:00pm - 6:00pm | Holy Communion Service (Malayalam) - GGUMC; Sevika Sangham Day |
| Wed Sep 12 | 8:00pm - 9:00pm | Western Regional Tele-prayer Conference - 515-603-3108; 638599# |
| Sun Sep 16 | 3:30pm - 4:00pm | Praise & Worship - GGUMC |
| Sun Sep 16 | 4:00pm - 6:00pm | Holy Communion Service (English) - GGUMC |
| Sun Sep 16 | 6:15pm - 7:15pm | Sevika Sangham Meeting - GGUMC, Room 20 |
| Tue Sep 18 | 7:00pm - 9:00pm | Parish Mission Bible Study - Ann & Isaac George, Buena Park |
| Sat Sep 22 | 5:00pm - 6:00pm | Young Families Fellowship Meeting @TBD |
| Sun Sep 23 | 3:30pm - 4:00pm | Praise & Worship - GGUMC |
| Sun Sep 23 | 4:00pm - 6:00pm | Divine Service (English) - GGUMC |
| Sun Sep 23 | 6:15pm - 6:45pm | Mary's Kitchen Outreach - GGUMC, Room 20 |
| Sun Sep 23 | 6:00pm - 7:00pm | Youth Fellowship Meeting - GGUMC |
| Wed Sep 26 | 8:00pm - 9:00pm | MTVEA Western Regional Bible Study - 515-603-3108; 638599# |
| Sat Sep 29 | 9:30am - 11:30am | Izzy's Corner Sunday School Outreach - Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange |
| Sat Sep 29 | 3:30pm - 5:30pm | East Area Prayer - Julie & Manoj Mathew, Yorba Linda |
| Sun Sep 30 | 10:00am - 11:30am | Terrace View Care Center P&W Service - Fullerton |
| Sun Sep 30 | 3:30pm - 4:00pm | Praise & Worship - GGUMC |
| Sun Sep 30 | 4:00pm - 6:00pm | Divine Service (English) - GGUMC |

'Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.'
Psalms 95:1




Horeb Mar Thoma Church Choir & St. Peter's CSI Church Choir
present

Harmonies of Praise

Unity Musical Evening

Please join us for an evening of
Music and Spiritual Community

* FREE ADMISSION * GUESTS ARE WELCOME *

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 8TH, 2018
4:30PM

GARDEN GROVE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
12741 MAIN ST, GARDEN GROVE, CA 92840

For more information, contact Jubey Jacob Mathew @ 562-206-9514 or Priji Eapen @ 714-501-4390

Horeb Mar Thoma Church, Los Angeles

Sevika Sangham Day 2018



Worship, Auction, & Potluck

September 09, 2018

Let us join to celebrate and praise God for 100 fruitful years
of Sevika Sangham ministry

- Special worship and Holy Communion lead by Rev. Liju John
- Fun filled auction of home -made food, home grown veggies and more
- Once a year Kerala style dinner on banana leaf