



Lighthouse

DECEMBER 2018

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



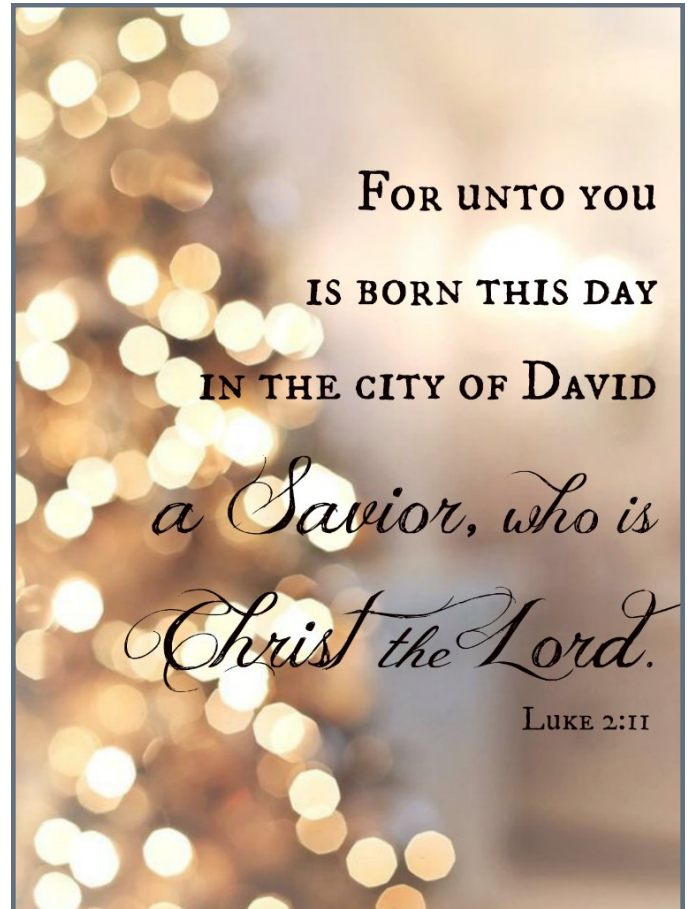
Dearly Beloved in Christ,

I hope you and your family had a blessed Thanksgiving. By now, I am sure that you are all preparing yourselves for the Christmas season. We are in the last month of the year 2018. As we enter the Advent Season, or the 25-Day Lent, let us join together and praise the Holy Trinity for the guidance and grace we have experienced throughout this year. I know it has also been a year of different experiences and circumstances, but God's presence and peace (Shalom) was with us, and that is what we are to remember and cherish.

The month of December is the time and season for us to celebrate the birthday of Jesus Christ. But as we do this, have we understood that this is the **"greatest of birthdays?"** God sent His only Son into the world for our salvation & redemption. This is God's greatest gift to humanity. More than giving gifts during Christmas, can we give the gift of salvation of Christ Jesus to humanity? We can agree that we are living in a world that is need of redemption. If you can give the gift of salvation to at least one person during this Christmas, I can say that you have truly given a Christmas gift.

Today, Christmas is marked by many different festivities. When I went to the various stores and malls, I saw so many Christmas decorations and sales. I remember hearing the song over the audio system, *"It's beginning to look like Christmas"* (Even though it was the week before Thanksgiving!) We shop during this season and we can hear the holiday music. Many restaurants and coffee shops have special menus for the holiday season.

(Continued on page 2...)



MAJOR EVENTS

Saturday, December 1 & 8

Christmas Carol Rounds

Sunday, December 23 - 5:00pm

Christmas Carol Service - GGUMC

Tuesday, December 25 - 9:00am

Christmas Day Holy Communion Service - GGUMC

Monday, December 31 - 6:00pm

New Year's Eve Holy Communion Service - GGUMC

(Dennis Achen's article continued...)

Many people have already started to put up decorations and lights in/around their house. At the same time, millions of dollars are being spent on substances and celebrations in the name of Christmas (but are not Christ-centered). These types of celebrations contradict with the true spirit of Christmas and the values of the gospel.

We need to celebrate Christmas in a way which honors the Christian values, faith passed to us from generations, and that which brings the true message of Christmas to this world. Just imagine the first Christmas. Though it was a time of crisis, danger, and promise, it was an act of humility. The King of kings being born in a manger. It was that simple. But today, we have made Christmas very complicated.

During this Christmas season, there are many who long to hear this good news – of the birth of the Lord. Let us bring this message of hope and peace to those who seek it. **Are we able to give the gift of salvation, the good news of Jesus Christ to this world during this Christmas time?**

We are also about to enter the New Year 2019. Before we start this New Year, let us reflect on how God has been with us this past year throughout our experiences. Let us dedicate ourselves for the New Year, and reconcile with our family, loved ones, and society. Let us make resolutions for the New Year and stick to them.

On behalf of my family and myself, we wish you and your families a blessed and meaningful Christmas, and a Happy and Blessed New Year! **Keep the “Christ” in Christmas.** May the blessings of the Triune God be with you all.

Yours in Christ's Service,
Dennis Achen

WORLD SUNDAY SCHOOL DAY



Diocesan Exam Award Recipients: Luke Varghese, Jaden Mathew, Leann Varghese, Zaavia George, Daniel Mathews, Ruth Jacob, Joana Thomas and Nikhil Abraham (not pictured)

THANKSGIVING DINNER & OUTREACHES



Youth Fellowship Thanksgiving Potluck

This November, Horeb collected 26 gift-filled shoeboxes to donate to Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child. Members from both Horeb MTCLA and Garden Grove United Methodist Church also collected a whole minivan full of blankets and jackets which were donated to OC Rescue Mission. A big thank you to all for your generosity.





CHRISTMAS MUSINGS

By Reni John

I strongly believe that the earth has conspired to spin around the sun a lot faster than before, because at the wink of an eye, another Christmas season has dawned upon us!

More than once I have caught myself exclaiming “how soon”, or “how did the year come to a close this fast?” But I quickly reconcile to the fact that the tide of time stops for nobody. Just as quickly, I fall into the business of celebration.

Christmas never fails to strike me with a sense of awe. The fact that one singular event in history could so radically change the world! I remember the paper star that my father used to hang ceremoniously in front of our house in Chennai. Also not to forget the humble Christmas tree with its sparse trimmings. Most of all I can still smell the aroma of freshly baked cake that my mother used to so lovingly make. The homemade goodies were then shared with our friends and neighbors. Today the tree is bigger and the frenzy to give and receive gifts have reached a feverish pitch, that at the end of it all, one feels exhausted and strangely yearning for that paper star of many years ago.

Throughout history, mankind has never ceased to ponder about things beyond. The purpose behind his temporal existence, the powers that shape his destiny and the yawning mystery of what lies ahead of him when he dies. Even the simplest of minds, have at some point, contemplated over these existential questions. Many philosophies have made brave attempts at answers to these questions, and many religions have laid claims to the absolute way in which to reach an otherwise unreachable God. Each falling short of quenching our thirst for answers and each ending up with more questions than before.

What makes Christmas unique is how radical the event is that indisputably changed the world. That God knowing our sin ridden plight, would choose to penetrate time and space, to redeem us. So while celebrating the birth of Christ, we celebrate our own release from the captivity of sin and death, with the promise of eternity with Him. This Christmas gift is totally unmerited. If God were to look at human history for a record of good works, to merit His favor, the record is pitiful and dismal. Nothing that we have done or will do, can merit His free grace and His redemption plan for us. God in His very nature is Love. His birth, as a pivotal part of His redemption plan, has broken, once and for all, the shackles of sin and death. We have been made free, for all eternity, never to return to bondage! What greater gift can mankind receive than this! Let this thought gladden our hearts as we celebrate and welcome Noel into our homes.

Merry Christmas!

To contribute content, please contact:

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Even though Joseph thought he got a great deal, Mary never let him plan any of their other trips after Bethlehem!

By Saji Abraham



Angel Tree, a program of Prison Fellowship, gives you the opportunity to share God's love by giving a gift to children of prisoners and their families.

*The Angel Tree will be in the entryway to the Sanctuary
Here's how to donate:*

- **CHOOSE A CHILD'S NAME TAG**
- **WRITE YOUR NAME NEXT TO THE SELECTED CHILD'S NAME ON THE LIST**
- **ATTACH THE NAME TAG TO A WRAPPED GIFT**
- **PLACE THE GIFT UNDER THE ANGEL TREE BY SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16th**



On behalf of Horeb, we thank all the members of the 2018 Executive Committee for your dedication and leadership throughout the year!



DECEMBER CALENDAR

Sat Dec 1	11:00am	Christmas Carol Rounds
Sun Dec 2	3:30pm - 4:00pm	Praise & Worship - GGUMC
Sun Dec 2	4:00pm - 6:00pm	Holy Communion Service (English) - GGUMC
Tue Dec 4	7:00pm - 9:00pm	Parish Mission Bible Study - Anna Chandy & Philip Jacob, Yorba Linda
Sat Dec 8	10:00am	Christmas Carol Rounds
Sun Dec 9	3:30pm - 4:00pm	Praise & Worship - GGUMC
Sun Dec 9	4:00pm - 6:00pm	Holy Communion Service (Malayalam) - GGUMC
Wed Dec 12	8:00pm - 9:00pm	Western Regional Tele-prayer Conference - 515-603-3108; 638599#
Sun Dec 16	3:30pm - 4:00pm	Praise & Worship - GGUMC
Sun Dec 16	4:00pm - 6:00pm	Divine Service (English) - GGUMC
Sun Dec 16	6:15pm - 6:45pm	Sevika Sangham Meeting - GGUMC, Room 20
Sun Dec 23	5:00pm - 7:00pm	Christmas Carol Service - GGUMC
Tue Dec 25	9:00am - 11:00am	Christmas Day Holy Communion Service - GGUMC
Wed Dec 26	8:00pm - 9:00pm	MTVEA Western Regional Bible Study - 515-603-3108; 638599#
Sun Dec 30	3:30pm - 4:00pm	Praise & Worship - GGUMC
Sun Dec 30	4:00pm - 6:00pm	Divine & Witnessing Service (English) - GGUMC
Mon Dec 31	6:00pm - 8:00pm	New Year's Eve Holy Communion Service - GGUMC

Horeb Mar Thoma Church

CHRISTMAS Carol Service

Sunday, Dec 23, 2018 - 5 pm @ GGUMC

Join us for Christmas Carol Service, songs, message, programs from our different ministries & dinner.

Message by Finney Premkumar

