Lighthouse

MAY 2019

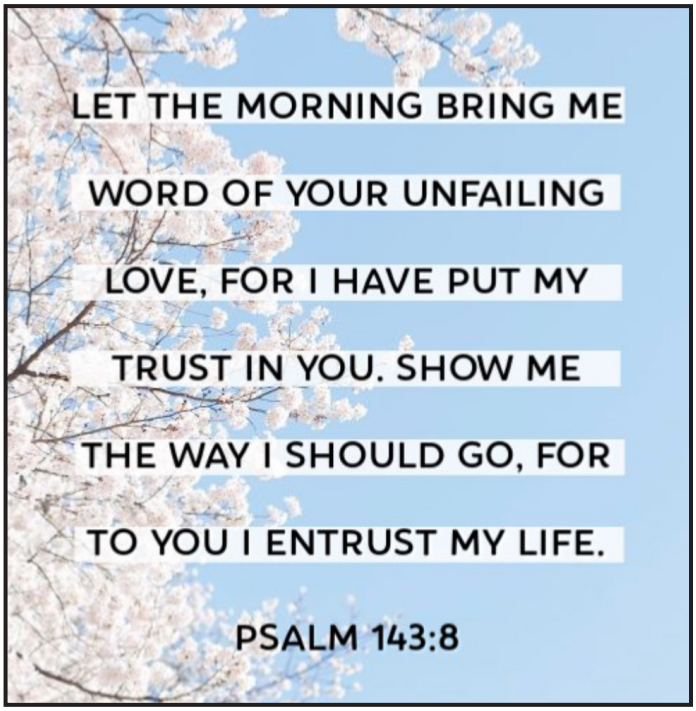
A monthly reflection of Horeb Mar Thoma Church, Los Angeles
12741 Main Street, Garden Grove, CA 92840

Dearly beloved in Christ,

Greetings. We have completed yet another Lenten season. I invite you to reflect on the ecclesial life of the church, as we move forward in our spiritual journey, juxtaposing to the life and mission of the church. The Apostle Paul, architect and builder of the church, had several metaphors describing his view of the Church. He saw the Church as the *Body of Christ.* This can be observed in Colossians 1:18, 24. In his major epistles, he didn't mention that the Church was the body of Christ, rather, Christians belonged to the body of Christ. In comparison to this, Paul opines that Jesus Christ is the head and Lord over the Church. When Paul refers to Body, he is stressing that the Christian community is to be a body, with special focus on the individual and his/her responsibility within the community. Each Christian is considered to be a member of this body. Just as each part of the body has a significance and specific function, we too, as the body of Christ, need to understand the diversities in the faith community. There needs to be unity in diversity.

The integrity of the witness of the church and its presence in the community is very important today. We live in a time where we see a tainting in the very identity of the church. It is having a negative impact on the church worldwide. We need to remember the early church, as seen in the Acts of the Apostles, and pursue a reform in our lives. Reform doesn't necessarily mean a complete change; it also means to go back to the roots. We need to protect the orthodoxy (true faith) of the universal church. It starts from the individual. Let us pursue spiritual excellence through strengthening our relationship with the Lord, and through a critical self-reflection. If we want the world to change, it needs to begin with us.

(Continued on Page 2…)



UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, May 2
Rev. Arun Samuel Varghese's Arrival @ LAX 2:10 pm
Prayer at Parsonage - around 5 pm
(See details on page 3)

Sunday Service Time Changes
1:30pm - Sunday School
2:30pm - Praise and Worship
3:00pm - Service

Sunday, May 12
Last Day of Sunday School
Mother's Day

Sunday, May 19
Diocesan Exam (see details on page 3)

(Dennis Achen's article continued…)

We are also approaching the summer. I encourage the faithful to register and participate in the different conferences being organized. Our region is hosting its first Regional Conference from July 12-14, 2019. The Diocese is also offering different mission opportunities.

For the past one year, God Almighty gave me an opportunity to serve the Horeb Mar Thoma Church, Los Angeles. Isaiah 55: 8-9 says: *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."* I believe that this is all part of God's plan and purpose.

I had a profound relationship with this parish. I cherish the great memories and experiences I have had over the past year. Worship, prayers, meetings, conferences, conversations, family/house visits, and travel were all important in this ministry, and I am thankful.

I enjoyed ministry in this parish, even though we had challenges as a parish. The fellowship we experience brings us together in our Lord Jesus Christ, and whenever it came to anyone's need, the youth, families and well wishers of this parish stood together, shoulder to shoulder to help others in need. We have experienced joys and happiness, but have also experienced tragedies as a faith community. But we have received peace and hope from our Lord Jesus Christ.

As with any message, I have 3 points. I conclude my ministry here with the following thoughts:

1. **Lead a genuine Christian life as individuals, families, and faith community.** The world cannot tolerate "untruth" or hypocrisy. Your life must be your witness. That was my emphasis during my sermons over the past year. How are we presenting Jesus Christ to the world? The world is watching.
2. **Be loyal to Christ and the Mar Thoma Church.** The church is the bride, and Christ is the groom. We grew up in this church. Our church is growing and developing; have patience. We live in a world of "spiritual malls." We need to own our church, its ministry, which includes the younger generation ministry. But above all, remember that Christ is the foundation of our church. We cannot compromise the spiritual truths of scripture in the midst of a world of compromises and conveniences.
3. **Have a deeper vision and concern about the future of the church.** We as people think about the here and now, but we forget that there is a future. *There is no point in being proud of the past and celebrating in the present, if we don't have a future to look forward to.* Do not give up hope. Any prayer that is prayed, every tear that is shed through prayer will always be heard and seen by our Almighty God. We must have hope. Also, the ministry in this Diocese must grow. More youth need to answer God's call and commit themselves for the ordained ministry of the church. We already have 10 Achens who are from the U.S., and presently, 3 of our students from U.S. are studying in seminary).

Maya Angelou once said: *"People may forget what you said to them. People may forget what you did to them. But people will never forget how you made them feel."* I am eternally grateful to all of you. I thank God for the privilege given to serve you all this past year. I want to thank H.G. the Mar Thoma Metropolitan, our Diocesan Bishop who made arrangements for my appointment to this parish, and I would like to thank you all for your prayers and support during the past year. Whenever you remember me, please pause for a moment and keep me in prayers, and keep in touch. I also assure my prayers for you.

Rev. Arun Samuel Varghese will be joining this parish by the beginning of May 2019, God willing. Please support the new Achen & family through your prayers and fellowship. I wish Arun Achen & family the very best in the ministry here at Horeb MTCLA.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, I move forward from this ministry taking fresh, challenging, yet beautiful and profound memories. Though I do not consider this as a 'Farewell,' I would like to say: "God be with you till we meet again."

Let all glory, honor, and praise be given unto God the Father, Son, & the Holy Spirit, now and forever, AMEN.

May the blessings of the Holy Trinity be with us all.

Yours in Christ,
Rev. Dennis Abraham

REV. ARUN SAMUEL VARGHESE & SHARON MARIAM MATHEW KOCHAMMA

Our new Vicar, Rev. Arun Samuel Varghese was born in Dubai and brought up in Dallas, TX. His parents are Varghese T. John and Elizabeth John, and their family are members of MTC Dallas, Farmers Branch. Achen did graduate studies in Telecommunications Engineering before taking up God's call for ordained ministry. Achen spent the last 7 years in India for theological and ministerial training in the Mar Thoma Church. He obtained his Bachelors of Divinity from the Mar Thoma Theological Seminary, Kottayam and was ordained as priest in July 2017. For the last 2 years, Achen had been serving as Assistant Vicar of Kattanam St. Thomas MTC. Achen is married to Sharon Mariam Mathew, from Bahrain Mar Thoma Church.

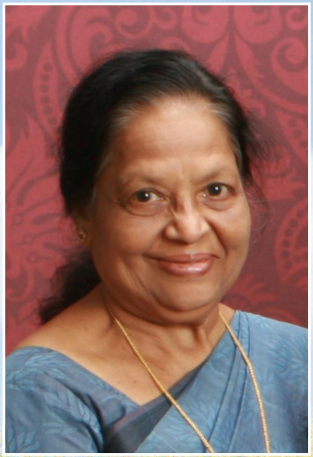
ARUN ACHEN'S ARRIVAL INFO & PRAYER AT PARSONAGE

Rev. Arun Samuel Varghese, is arriving Thu, May 2nd, 2019. Kochamma is awaiting her visa. Achen's flight arrival details are as follows: EMIRATES Flight No: EK 215, 2:10 PM at Tom Bradley International Terminal, LAX from Dubai (DXB)

Those who can join at the airport may please assemble at the waiting (reception) area of the Tom Bradley International terminal. Please check the ETA (estimated arrival time) before you start to the airport.

As in previous years, we will have prayer and fellowship with Achen at the parsonage soon after his arrival on Thursday, May 2, 2019 by 5:00 PM (time depending on Achen's arrival at the parsonage after Airport procedures). All are invited. On Sunday, May 5, 2019, we will have a Welcome Meeting for Arun Achen in the Sanctuary immediately after the announcements.

Mrs. Thankamma George,



aged 80, mother of Giti Varghese, returned to her heavenly home on April 28th, 2019.

She is survived by her daughters Gini and Giti, sons-in-law Biji and Nebu, and her grandchildren Liz, Joel, Leann and Luke.

Please upold them and their dear ones in our prayers. On behalf of the Horeb family we extend our deepest condolences and prayers.

DIOCESAN EXAM

Sunday, May 19, 2019 is our Diocesan Exam (for children of 5th Grade-10th Grade). Children who are writing the Diocesan Exam should come at 8.30 am so that we can have prayer and listen to the instructions prior to the exam. Please bring your own pencils/pens and erasers. No electronics please...

Location: Ricker Lounge at Garden Grove United Methodist Church
Arrival: 8.30 am
Exam time: 9.00-10.30 am

Easter Fest

Easter Fest was a great success and blessing this year to all the kids, volunteers, and members attending. Along with Bible lessons, activities, and an egg hunt for the kids, Horebites made 120 baskets for some of the most destitute 80 women and 40 men living at 10 homes of Grandmas' House of Hope (GHH). The baskets consisted of hygiene items, alongside a book with short, life changing messages from the Bible and an Easter message. These baskets were delivered to one of the homes, "Serenity House" consisting of 9 residents. Dr. Susan Varghese and Sueann Parikh, Easter Fest coordinators, and Manoj Mathew, Parish Mission, sincerely thank everyone for their support.

Easter Service + Dennis Achen's Farewell

For about a year, we all have been richly blessed with the graceful spiritual leadership of our Achen, Rev. Dennis Abraham. A farewell meeting was arranged on Easter Sunday April 21, 2019 after the Holy Qurbana Service. Achen will now be the full time Vicar of the San Francisco Mar Thoma Church. Members and Rev. Liju John also gathered at the parsonage on Thursday morning, April 25th for prayer and a tree planting ceremony before Dennis Achen's flight.

It is a time to reflect and thank God on manifold blessings we received from our Lord through Achen's ministry for the past one year.

MAY CALENDAR

Thu May 2	2:10~pm	**Arun Achen Arrival** - *LAX*
Thu May 2	5:00pm - 7:00pm	**Prayer** - *Parsonage*
Sat May 4	6:00pm - 8:00pm	**South Area Prayer** - *TBD*
Sun May 5	2:30pm - 3:00pm	**Praise & Worship** - *GGUMC; Welcome mtg for Arun Achen after service*
Sun May 5	3:00pm - 5:00pm	**Holy Communion Service (English)** - *GGUMC*
Wed May 8	8:00pm - 9:00pm	**Western Regional Tele-prayer Conference** - *515-603-3108; 638599#*
Sat May 11	5:00pm - 7:00pm	**West Area Prayer** - *Saji & Jayni Abraham, Cypress*
Sun May 12	2:30pm - 3:00pm	**Praise & Worship** - *GGUMC*
Sun May 12	3:00pm - 5:00pm	**Holy Communion Service (Malayalam)** - *GGUMC; Last Day of Sunday School; Mother's Day*
Tue May 14	7:00pm - 9:00pm	**Parish Mission Bible Study** - *Annamma Mathew & Mathew Koshy, Cerritos*
Sun May 19	2:30pm - 3:00pm	**Praise & Worship** - *GGUMC; Diocesan Exam in the morning*
Sun May 19	3:00pm - 5:00pm	**Holy Communion Service (English)** - *GGUMC*
Wed May 22	8:00pm - 9:00pm	**Western Regional Tele-prayer Conference** - *515-603-3108; 638599#*
Sun May 26	2:30pm - 3:00pm	**Praise & Worship** - *GGUMC*
Sun May 26	3:00pm - 5:00pm	**Holy Communion Service (English)** - *GGUMC*
Sun May 26	5:15pm - 5:45pm	**Mary's Kitchen Outreach** - *GGUMC, Room 20*
Tue May 28	7:00pm - 9:00pm	**Parish Mission Bible Study** - *Cini Mathew & Mathew Philip, Norwalk*
Fri May 31	7:00pm - 9:00pm	**Youth Fellowship** - *Yasmeen & Meha Thomas, Orange*

REGIONAL & DIOCESAN CONFERENCES 2019

Joint Western Regional Conference *Azusa Pacific University, California*	July 12-14
Diocesan Youth Fellowship Conference *Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Texas*	July 25-28
Diocesan MTVEA Conference *St. Mathew's Mar Thoma Church, Toronto, Canada*	Aug 1-4
Diocesan Senior Fellowship Conference *Philadelphia Ascension Mar Thoma Church, PA*	Sep 25-28
Diocesan Yuvajana Sakhyam Conference *Philadelphia Christos Mar Thoma Church, PA*	Oct 4-6
Diocesan Sevika Sangham Conference *Houston Trinity Mar Thoma Church, Texas*	Oct 10-13

To contribute content, please contact:

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MAR THOMA CHURCH

JOINT WESTERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE

AZUSA PACIFIC UNIVERSITY
JULY 12-14, 2019

"For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."
Philippians 1:21

Speakers:

Ann Cherian Kochamma

Rev. Abraham Kuruvilla

Maureen Mathew

Rajeev Nandakumaran

Registration Cost	On-Site*	Commuter **
Kids (4 years - 5th grade)	$135/Person	$105/Person
Juniors (6th grade - 10th grade)	$140/Person	
Youth (11th grade - 35 years)	$140/Person	
Men / Women	$140/Person	$105/Person

Checks : Payable to MTCSV , Memo – WR Joint Conference 2019 , Postmark by 06/02/2019

Mail to: Western Regional Conference 2019, c/o Rev. Larry Varghese
158 Teralba Ct , San Jose, CA 95139

*commuter price and on-site guest price includes conference provided snacks/refreshments as well as APU Cafeteria breakfast, lunch, dinner on Saturday and lunch on Sunday.

** Commuter price does not include any overnight housing arrangements.

** Linens are provided in on-site guest price

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