



THE CHURCHMAN

THE ST. MARY'S CHURCH MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
ST. MARY'S CHURCH (C.N.I.), 1A Sholapur Road, Pune - 411001

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Dear Family of God at St. Mary's,

The month of December is the time of the year that most of us look forward to: the time of joy and sharing, family and friends, food and decorations—it's the time for Christmas! No doubt, along with all the happiness there is busyness as each of us makes preparations in our homes for the season. The Church is the centre of our celebration as it calls us together during this time to remember the birth of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, in our worship and fellowship as the larger family of our church and in our own individual families.

Yet the Church calls her faithful to another kind of preparation in the four weeks before Christmas, in the Season of Advent which begins this year from the first Sunday of December. The preparation that we are called to in Advent is certainly for Christmas but not just in merely looking back to what happened almost 2000 years ago, it is in also looking forward. The root meaning of the word Advent is *Come*. One of the last verses in the Bible mentions Jesus' words, 'Yes, I am coming soon' and the reply of those who believe in him is, 'Amen. Come, Lord Jesus' (Rev. 22:20). So Advent is the time for not only preparing to celebrate his having come once in the past but also for his coming again in the future. It is the time for not just preparing for Christmas outwardly but also inwardly by personally asking whether or not Christmas has happened in our hearts.

In the four weeks before Christmas we will be having in our church both the time of solemn introspection as well as joyful celebration. The Lectionary themes and readings focus on preparing ourselves to be found faithful when our Lord returns and the several programs of our church gear us up to meaningfully celebrate his having come in the past for our salvation. I encourage all of us to join in as many worship services and programs that we can during this month so that we will together seek the true meaning of Christmas in the very paradoxes of this season. Please do go through the details of the Sunday Worship Services Schedule and the Schedule for Christmas & Epiphany which are given in this issue.

May we be those who have found Christmas not only to be a time for ourselves in celebration but also in focusing on the Reason for the Season. As a result we will then find Christmas to be a time to also reach out in simple, practical ways to others, especially to those who live in circumstances that are not happy; situations due to which they cannot celebrate the way that we are able to. God bless you this 'coming' season.

Revd. Sumesh Jacob

Presbyter-in-charge



May this Christmas season, bring with it the promise of love, peace and happiness!

BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Aditya Chopde, Rohit Mathew.
- 2 Melvin Joel, Tabitha Narella, Shrushti Pathare, Tony Paul, Mary Smith, Evelyn (John) Richard, Boniface Bangera.
- 3 Frank Freese, Francis Torne.
- 4 Michael Stanley Young, Patricia Johns.
- 5 Arav Tribhuvan, Cdr. (Retd) Prafulla Sockey, Elizabeth Birnur, Savio Silimkar.
- 6 Tichnor Charles, Taronish Karkaria, A. Sagyanathan, Ian Nicholas.
- 7 Matilda Gandhi, Gabriel Swami, Maya Andrew.
- 8 Shirley Lall, Joanna Mankad, Dr. Anita Ramdas, Grace Walter Thomas, Candide (Barrow) Loos.
- 9 Clement Cyril, Sandesh Banejadkar, Yohaam Ramdas.
- 10 Rohan Bhonsle, Sharon Herbert, Hemant Kedar, Lalita Phillips.
- 11 Susan Thomas, Yash Jadhav.
- 12 Shawn Fernandes, Rajiv John Phillips.
- 13 Desmond Michael, Sareeka Abhane, Preeti Chatterjee, Mary Mathew.
- 14 Simone Lokku, Rajiv Pandkar, Rachael Shah.
- 15 Sunil Khilare.
- 16 Rydon Johnson, Vinamra Paul.
- 17 Ajay Ranbhise, Kenneth Charles.
- 18 Ronald Naik, Glen Vastrad, Maryalita Kantimahanti, Brett Larviere, Franky Fernandes.
- 20 Niharika Patro, Grenville Wood, Sandra Fernandes.
- 21 Maj. Gen. (Retd) Farhat Bhatti.
- 22 Rachana Jacob, Cherishma Lahori.
- 24 Carol Kulkarni, Pawan Sachdev.
- 25 Kenan Rogers, Dinshaw Eduljee, K. Lal Rongheta.
- 26 Veena Ranganadhan.
- 27 Jaysheel Jently, Akshit Prasad, George Michael.
- 28 Bhaskar Chakranarayan
- 29 Bhalchandra Chakranarayan, , Ruben Kale, Nekita Dennis, Nilima Lingham, Pallavi Patole.
- 30 Grace Roy, Paul Swami, Trevor Lee.
- 31 Moira Jolly.

JANUARY

- 1 Monali Ghatge, Neelima Mehta, Jeevamani David, Kareena Rogers, Pankaj Wadhwa, Michael Wilson Jr, Rev. Baburao Apte.
- 2 Aswin Pillay.
- 3 Viraj Kale, Sangeeta Kadam, Daniel Nichodemus, Leah Singh
- 5 Rebecca Jason, Melanie Lobo, Eva Pawar, Victoria Robins.

Wishing you all a very Happy Birthday! God Bless!

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

- 2 Wg. Cdr. Atul & Barkha North.
- 5 Deepan & Anny Gaikwad.
- 6 Vinod & Carol Kulkarni.
- 12 Joanna & Neeraj Mankad
Ranjan & Vanita Samuel.
- 14 Ashish & Monica Jacob,
Vinay & Deepti Jadhav.
- 15 Rev. Ravikumar & Victoria Joseph.
- 18 Rakesh & Sunila Kashinath, Edward & Geraldine Wood, Amit & Preeti Chatterjee
- 19 Gail & Kailash Choudhary,.
- 20 Vijaykumar & Leena Kantimahanti, Ritesh & Megahna Shaw, Rev. Gaekwad & Sushma,
Victoria & Rev. Dale Robins,
Darrel & Megha Shaw.
- 21 Dudley & Wendy O'Berne.
- 22 Jayasheel & Sophia Jently,
Dr. Nitin & Manisha Joseph.
- 23 Tichnor & Nandini Charles,
Rev. Vijayanand & Rupa Salve.
- 26 James & Vijaya Nichodemus.
- 27 Annu & Manisha Anjan, Clement & Anupama
Cyril, Winston & Sugandhi Dhanraj,
Hemant & Sony Kedar, Jayant & Savita
Pathak, Paul & Elveena Swami, Utkarsh &
Deepti Waghmare, Darrel & Meghna Shaw,
Col. S.K. Jena (Retd) & Padma.
- 28 Dennis & Joyce Massey, Hemant &
Meenakshi Pathak, Nitin & Shubhanjali
Prabhune, Col. (Retd) A.K. & Shalini Singh,
Grenville & Sandra Wood,
Alfred & Maggie Santram.
- 29 Ravi & Sonali Ghodge, Theo & Simin Lazarus,
Patricia & Leonard Johns
- 30 Sameer & Neha Londhe, Janet &
Chandrashekar Sapaliga, Ajay & Renu
Tribhuvan, Catherine & Ramachandran
Ramdas, Trevor & Cynthia Lee

JANUARY

- 1 Robin & Corrine Singh.
- 2 Boland & Lorna Roberts.
- 3 Alistair & Michelle Freese.
- 4 Esther & Robert Lobo.
- 5 S. Abraham & Dr. Vimla Abraham.

Wishing you all a Long and Happy Married Life!

It is Christmas every time you let God love others through you... yes, it is Christmas every time you smile at your brother and offer him your hand.~ Mother Teresa

Christmas & Epiphany Schedule 2012-13

Date	Time	Worship Service/Program
Sunday, 16	8 am.	Sunday School Nativity Play during the Worship Service
	6 pm.	Service of Nine Lessons and Carols
Monday, 17	6 pm.	Carol Singing Rounds by the Youth Fellowship
Tuesday, 18	6 pm.	Carol Singing Rounds by the Youth Fellowship
Wednesday, 19	6 pm.	Carol Singing Rounds by the Youth Fellowship
Friday, 21	6.30 pm.	Christmas Musical Evening in aid of Pipe Organ Restoration
Monday 24	11 pm.	Christmas Eve Worship Service
Tuesday, 25	8 am.	Christmas Day Worship Service
Thursday, 27	7 pm.	Carols by the Campfire and Fellowship Dinner
Sunday, 30	10 am. onwards	Sports Day
Monday 31	11 pm.	New Year's Eve Worship Service
Tuesday, 1	8 am.	New Year's Day Worship Service
Sunday, 6 Jan	8am. & 6 pm.	The Festival of the Epiphany

Sunday Worship Services Schedule for December 2012

Date	Worship Services	
Sunday, 2 nd December <i>Fourth Sunday before Christmas/Advent 1</i>	8 am. & 6 pm. The Lord's Supper Service Theme: <i>Watching for Christ in patience and hope.</i>	Old Testament: <i>Jeremiah 23.1-6</i> Psalm: <i>75.1-7</i> ; Epistle: <i>2 Peter 3.8-15</i> Gospel: <i>Luke 12.32-40</i>
	11 am. Contemporary Service (Holy Communion). Conducting and Preaching by the Clergy.	
Sunday, 9 th December <i>Third Sunday before Christmas/Advent 2</i>	8 am. & 6 pm. The Lord's Supper Service Theme: <i>The Old Testament is fulfilled in Christ.</i> Bible Sunday.	Old Testament: <i>Deuteronomy 18.13-19</i> Psalm: <i>119.97-104</i> ; 2 nd Reading: <i>Acts 3.18-26</i> Gospel: <i>Luke 24.44-48</i>
	11 am. Contemporary Service	
Sunday, 16 th December <i>Second Sunday before Christmas/Advent 3</i>	8 am. The Lord's Supper Service Sunday School Nativity Play.	Old Testament: <i>Isaiah 35.1-10</i> Psalm: <i>28.1-2,6-9</i> ; 2 nd Reading: <i>Acts 19.1-6</i> Gospel: <i>Mark 1.1-8</i>
	11 am. Contemporary Service	
	6 pm. The Service of Nine Lessons and Carols	
Sunday, 23 rd December <i>The Sunday before Christmas/Advent 4</i>	8 am. & 6 pm. The Lord's Supper Service Theme: <i>At Christmas we welcome Jesus who is like us in every way, apart from sin.</i>	Old Testament: <i>Isaiah 49.1-6</i> Psalm: <i>132.11-16</i> ; Epistle: <i>Hebrews 2.10-18</i> Gospel: <i>Luke 1.39-49</i>
	11 am. Contemporary Service	
Sunday, 30 th December <i>First Sunday after Christmas</i>	8 am. & 6 pm. The Lord's Supper Service Theme: <i>Family life.</i>	Old Testament: <i>Zechariah 8.3-8</i> Psalm: <i>128</i> ; Epistle: <i>Colossians 3.12-21</i> Gospel: <i>Luke 2.41-52</i>
	Note: No 11 am. Contemporary Service.	

THE INNKEEPER'S TALE

(The story of the birth of Jesus through the eyes of the innkeeper)

They think I'm some kind of cruel, heartless landlord. Someone must have told them that. But they're wrong, just plain wrong, and it's time to set the record straight, once and for all.

People say I'm an innkeeper. I suppose you'd call it an inn. To us it's just a big house. My grandfather, Joshua ben-Yahoudi, built it back when his trading business was at a peak. And he built it big enough to fit all fourteen kids.

Well, a few years ago, the missus and I were just rattling around in that big house--kids grown up and all--and we were thinking, maybe we could take in a few travelers. Rachel has always been mighty good in the kitchen, so we just let out word that we'd take people in, and they started to come.

Then came that blankety-blank census the governor thought up. Taxation, pure and simple! People from all over the province flooded into town that week. Rachel and I slept in the main room where we always do, and we started putting guests in the other three rooms. They kept coming. Then we doubled up two or three families to a room. They kept coming. When we had filled the main room with four families plus Rachel and me, we started turning people away.

I must have gotten in and out of bed ten times that night, stumbling over bodies to get to the door. "No more room, sorry folks. No more room. Come back in the morning.." They'd mutter something and leave, and sleep somewhere next to a house under the shelter of a blanket. I just couldn't make any more room. That's the honest truth.

But I did make room for one more couple. Joseph was a burly man with big arms and strong hands, down from Nazareth, I think he said. He wouldn't take "no" for an answer. I would say, "No, I'm sorry," and he'd tell me about his "little Mary." Well, when I saw "little Mary" she wasn't very little. She was just about as pregnant as a woman can get, and awfully pale. While Joseph was pleading, I saw her grab her tummy in pain, and I knew I couldn't let her have that baby outside in the wind and sleet.

The barn! That would just have to do, I told myself, and led them and their donkey out back. Now it was pretty crowded, so I shoed several animals into the pen outside to make room in one dry corner. Joseph said, "We sure are grateful, sir." Do you know where I can find a midwife in these parts? We might need her tomorrow or the next day."

That man didn't know much about having babies, it was plain enough to see. I ran to Aunt Sarah's house and pounded on the door until her husband came. "One of the travelers is having a baby," I told him. "I'll wait while Aunt Sarah gets dressed." I stopped a moment to catch my breath. "And tell her to hurry."

By the time we got back to the barn, Joseph had "little Mary" settled on some soft, clean hay, wrapped up in a blanket, wiping the perspiration off her brow, and was speaking softly to her as she fought the waves of pain. Aunt Sarah sent me to get my Rachel, and then pushed Joseph and me out of the barn. "This ain't no place for men," she said.

We waited just outside in the shelter of the barn for hours, it seemed like. Well, all of a sudden, we hear a little cry. "You've got a baby boy," Aunt Sarah was saying as we peeped around the corner. She hands the young-un to Rachel, and she wraps it up in those swaddling bands she had saved. Cute little thing, I tell you. Well, Joseph goes over to Mary and gives her a big hug, and a kiss and Rachel hands Mary the baby, and then comes over to me and takes my hand. "Remember when our Joshua was born?" she whispers.

The lantern was blowing almost out, the cattle were lowing softly, and baby Jesus was asleep in his mother's arms. That's how I left them as I walked Aunt Sarah home. By the time I got back, Rachel was in bed, and I was about ready to put out the light, and get under the warm covers, when I heard some murmuring out by the barn.

I'd better check, I told myself. When I peeped in, I saw shepherds. Raggedy, smelly old shepherds were kneeling down on the filthy barn floor as if they were praying. The oldest one was saying something to Joseph about angels and the Messiah. And the rest of them just knelt there with their heads bowed, some with tears running down their faces.

I coughed out loud, and Joseph looked up. I was almost ready to run those thieving shepherds off, when Joseph motioned to me with his hand. "It's okay," he whispered. "They've come to see the Christ-baby."

The Christ-baby? The Messiah? That was when I knelt, too. And watched, and prayed, and listened to the old shepherd recount his story of angels and heavenly glory, and the sign of a holy baby, wrapped in swaddling bands, to be found in a stable-manger.

My Lord, it was my stable where the Christ-baby was born. My manger he rested in. My straw, my lamp, my wife Rachel assisting at his birth.

I'll always be glad I made room in the barn for that family-- that holy family. You see, I'm not some mean inn-keeper. I was there. I saw him. And, you know, years later that boy came back to Bethlehem, this time telling about the Kingdom of God. Oh, I believe in him, I tell you. I was there. And, mark my words, if you'd seen what I've seen, you'd be a believer, too.