

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son,
that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have
everlasting life. John 3:16



Kirkspire

The Monthly Magazine of St. Andrew's Church (The Kirk), Chennai
December 2024

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Usha George
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Word from the Pastor



Birth Conquers Death

I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness.

(John 12:46)

The first place where life replaced emptiness is found at the very beginning of creation. Genesis 1:2 says the earth was without form and void. God's creation made this great transformation of changing a dark emptiness into full of life – perfect life. How beautiful a picture is presented which in many ways is how the New Heavens and the New Earth will replace a broken world filled with sinful darkness and the void of godlessness.

Throughout this year, we have been studying on the Mind of Christ in our church services and it is my prayer that we have given enough thought to our thoughts whereby it changes our lifestyle and life's choices. This is all the more applicable when it comes to the Saviour's Advent. Everything about the First Coming of Christ is a miracle from Mary to Joseph to his birth place and even the witnesses who came to him. Right from the night of his birth even to a few years later when the Magi visited, Christ's birth is nothing but 'Miracles Galore'.

Here are some thoughts for our thinking about how His birth impacts our life here and forever:

1. Christ's birth as an answer to man's sinful death

Unto us a Son is born and unto us a son is given. What the first Adam failed to do i.e obey the will of God the Father, the second Adam, Jesus Christ, fulfilled in perfection even to the death on the Cross. The devil is a liar and he deceived the first couple into believing his words and even today, he is spewing many lies to make the minds of the people numb to the problem of sin and death. His birth

conquered death, the spiritual death of a human being conquered by the birth of the Son of God.

2. Christ's birth as anticipation to biblical prophecy

Isaiah 9:6 says 'For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.' Cain was the first human being born on earth and then came the millions and billions. But no one prior or since had or will have a birth like our Messiah Jesus. His birth was greatly anticipated by believers like Simeon, Anna and the prophecy that came even in the Garden of Eden was fulfilled in Bethlehem. The birth that conquered the death of all false claims.

3. Christ's birth assures of a believer's eternal life

Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. (Acts 4:12) It is very possible that one can feel disheartened about the way in which the world is sinking in moral and spiritual darkness. But let us remember that Jesus is the light and apart from Him there is and will be darkness. No amount of Christmas decoration or fanfare can bring light into people's hearts but if a person is walking in the light of Jesus Christ, there is a reason for the season and beyond – salvation forever, preparing for His Second Coming. His birth conquered by spiritual death and now I am born again into eternal life.

Have a meaning Christmas season filled with worship, wonder and the word of God so that your life is filled with Christ's light and life that can help us conquer every dark darts of the evil one.

*Blessed Christmas to all of you and
Blessed New Year 2025*

Rev. Isaac Emmanuel Johnson

John's Corner



SACRIFICES

(Read Eph 5:2, Heb 13:16, 2 Cor 8:9)

It's Christmas time around again,
Kids long for that great day to break,
To see the gifts by Santa brought;
What sacrifices do they make?

We wear our best and greet our friends,
Can't wait to cut the Christmas cake,
Drink, dine and dance and carols sing;
What sacrifices do we make?

Do we for those downtrodden pray?
To cheer the sick, steps do we take?
The lonely visit, help the poor?
What sacrifices do we make?

As Christmas comes and goes this year,
May it a difference in us make;
As Christ loved us, so let us love,
For Jesus sacrifices make.

John H. Bala Singh

A blessed Christmas from John's Corner

Mountains

So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. Matthew 17:20

"The mountains melt like wax before the Lord, before the Lord of all the earth." Psalm, 97, :5,

Mountains are lofty.
Intimidating and seemingly insurmountable.
When encountered it's tempting
to turn back
or chart another path.

But there is another way
a better way...
We have been asked to face the mountains of difficulty with courage
and speak to them-
'Move and be gone.'

Threshing is another ancient method.
To strike repeatedly is hard work
Requiring guts and nerves of steel.
It may not be a personality trait
but He offers to change you.
(If you will let Him)
Lowly insects transformed to*
sharp edged weapons are His doing.

Thresh them. Speak to them.
A detour is not an option.
Don't lose heart 'cause
mountains quake in His presence.
Every valley He fills.

Every mountain and hill will be brought low.
The crooked paths shall become a highway.
Marvelous things He will do.
The next time you face a mountain
remember to say,
'Who are you, O great mountain?
Before this child of God
you will become a plain.'
Amen.

*He who removes mountains, and they know it not, when He overturns
them in His anger... Job 9:5*

**Isaiah 41:14-16*

Dr. Susan Rajkumari

"Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born,
If He's not born in thee, thy soul is all forlorn."

Look Who Is At The Door!

"Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!" 2 Corinthians 9: 15

"It's the most wonderful time of the year!" sings a popular crooner. The cheer and the merriment of the season grips hearts all over the world. Since childhood days most of us have experienced the thrill of Christmas trees, brightly-lit stars, carols, rich plum cake and happy get-togethers. It is indeed the loveliest time of the year!

When did this all begin? The Season rests on a Truth so seemingly simple that we rush on blindly missing out the sacred awesome Truth staring at us. The Christmas Story rests on God's celestial plan that cannot be analyzed in human laboratories; it defies highest human calculation.

Let us pause and reflect.

We earthlings, divinely created with the breath of God, had willfully strayed beyond the boundaries set up by our Maker. He made us to enjoy sweet communion with Him and to enjoy the wonderful creation made for us.

Our fickle hearts dangerously and blatantly disobeyed His laws, foolishly ignored His messengers and prophets. We pompously declared ourselves as self-evolved beings and stepped into demonic terrain to eat 'forbidden apples'. We, the 'apple of God's eye' were doomed to eternal darkness.

Our gracious and merciful Father and Creator could easily have bombed us out of existence in righteous anger, at our betrayal. He could have got fresh clay to mold a new creation, nearer to His heart's desire.

Our Almighty Father looked down with compassion at His wrecked children and prepared the Plan for Redemption. The preparation ran through several centuries as we read in the Old

Testament. In spite of our rebellious obstinacy, He longs to save us just as we are.

With a magnanimity which surpasses human understanding, our loving God says, "They have not heard My prophets, but I will send My Son; and they will hear Him. He is the Only Way." This is final.

A well-known servant of God said with deep understanding, "The world is not built on justice; if there is a foundation at all, it is MERCY."

The Redemption Plan came into effect on Christmas Day. Let us etch the words of our Lord in our hearts, "I am come that they may have life, and that they have it abundantly."

"Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe;

Sin had left a crimson stain – He washed it white as snow."

Our God stooped and did not scorn the low roof of our life. This Child stands outside and knocks at the door of my heart and yours and asks, "Is there room for Me?"

This Child has more power in a tear than all the worldly billows that pound us; more light in His compassionate heart than all sins in the firmament, and, most of all, His precious blood from the writhing body on the Cross which alone can save us from the fathomless fires of hell.

Let us with joy rend our hearts and let the Babe in!

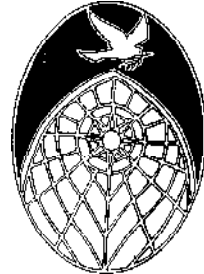
"Great little One! Whose all-embracing birth lifts earth to heavens, stoops heaven to earth!" – Richard Crawshaw.

Christmas is a time to celebrate this precious Gift of Life in holy joy and limitless thanksgiving. The season is an acknowledgment that "a force was born that transformed the world. That force was the Birth of Light; the Day Star has risen and streams into the dark night of hearts, radiantly pointing to the Truth and the Way" and to the pinnacles of the City of God.

Merry Christmas!

Usha George

**“NO ONE IS GOOD BUT ONE,
THAT IS, GOD”**



This is a most inapt and politically inappropriate comment to make in the modern times. The majority these days tries to speak platitudes, fearing controversy in the society or abusive trolling in the social media. Jesus Christ was not on a people pleasing mission. He spoke the truth truthfully. Words that went forth from His mouth never returned void, but made designated and lasting impact, so much so that they are not just historical but also have eternal value.

In the Holy Bible, there is an important episode which is parallelly narrated in all the three Synoptic Gospels (Matthew 19:16-22; Mark 10:17-22; and Luke 18:18-23). When a certain rich young man belonging to the ruling class came running to Lord Jesus, kneeled before Him, and asked, “Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?” (Curiously, the confident young man had considered Jesus only as a religious teacher, and didn’t know that he was talking to the Lord Himself.) Jesus put a counter question to him, “Why do you call me good?” And then Lord Jesus made an earth-shaking declaration: “No one is good but One, that is, God” (Mt 10:18; Mk 10:18; Lk 18:19).

The rich young man coming from affluent and elite background must have felt the carpet pulled right from under his feet. But he retained his self-confidence, for he considered himself adequately righteous and he overwhelmingly satisfied with ‘his own good conduct’. His purpose apparently was to seek the counsel of the religious teacher, possibly for performing some additional simple religious duties, over and above what he claimed to have already fulfilled from his early life, in order to ensure his place in the eternal kingdom.

Lord Jesus helpfully and lovingly asked him to keep the well-known commandments enshrined in the Book of Exodus, in chapter 20 and randomly recalled by Lord Jesus, stating, “Do not commit adultery,

Do not murder, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honour your father and your mother, and, You shall love your neighbour as yourself." The rich young ruler quickly made a boastful and sweeping reply, "Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth." He was proud and boastful that he had meticulously observed all these commandments; meaning thereby, he had not murdered anybody, he had not committed adultery, he had not stolen anything from anyone, he had not borne false witness against his neighbours, he had honoured his father and his mother, and he had also loved his neighbours as himself!

Apparently, he had a good track record according to his own estimate and presumptions; and therefore, he positively expected that the "Good Teacher" would give him highest scores possible. But a rude shock awaited him! Jesus said to him, "You still lack one thing..." (Lk 18:22); "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven, and come, follow me" (Mt 19:21).

When the rich young ruler heard this he was crestfallen, for he was very rich and had a lot of wealth and possessions; and he didn't expect such a counselling from the "good teacher". He may have anticipated some 'superficial outward duties or tasks' coming his way for reserving his place in the kingdom of God, and was not prepared for something so drastic and far-reaching. So he became sad, departed very sorrowful and didn't come back to the "good teacher".

Lord is the fountainhead of all the blessings of abundance and richness of resources. Only God is completely and always good in nature and actions. God's grace, patience and kindness are incomparable. Therefore, when the enthusiastic but overconfident and self-righteous young man called the teacher as "Good", Lord Jesus reminded him rather sternly but helpfully that only God could be attributed with being really good.

God is good and the Goodness of God is unfathomably deep and wide. No one ought to even try or usurp to oneself that qualification presumptuously. The "Good" that exist around us in this world are only reflections of the Goodness of God. There is no other source of true goodness.

The Scripture testifies this in Exodus 34:6. When Moses makes new tablets of stones containing the Ten Commandments, the LORD passed before him and proclaimed Himself as: "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abounding in goodness and truth...". So, it is abundantly obvious that, "NO ONE IS GOOD BUT ONE, THAT IS, GOD".

**There are many great men, mighty and honourable,
Rich and powerful, self-righteous and also majestic,
But none like Lord God, the King affable and adorable;
His trustworthiness is full of love, eternally altruistic.**

B V Selvaraj

How proper it is that Christmas should follow Advent. For him who looks toward the future, the Manger is situated on Golgotha, and the Cross has already been raised in Bethlehem.

Dag Hammarskjold

Understanding Christian Righteousness - The Need of the Hour

For a follower of Jesus, righteousness is a way of life. It is a life that embodies salvation appropriated by accepting Jesus' forgiveness - His birth, life, death and resurrection. It is not merely about following rules or performing good deeds; rather, it is a mark of transformation of the heart and spirit.

The Nature of Righteousness

Righteousness is often understood as being in right standing with God. This relationship is established through faith in Jesus Christ, who, according to Romans 3:22, provides righteousness to all who believe. This means that it is not achieved through human effort but is a gift of grace.

Righteousness as a Way of Life

Living righteously involves reflecting the character of Christ in our daily lives. This is expressed through acts of love, compassion, honesty, and integrity. As believers, we are called to live like Jesus, who showed and commanded us how to love God and love our neighbors (Matthew 22:37-39).

The Role of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit plays a crucial role in guiding Christians toward righteousness. It is not a one-time affair. Through the Spirit, believers are empowered to resist sin and to pursue a life that honors God. Galatians 5:22-23 describes the fruit of the Spirit— love, joy, peace, patience, and kindness—that are evident in a righteous life.

Righteousness in Community

Christian righteousness is also expressed in community. The Church serves as a body of believers who support one another in their spiritual journeys, encouraging each other to live righteously and to hold one another accountable. This communal aspect reinforces the idea that righteousness is not just an individual endeavor but a collective mission.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Christian righteousness is a transformative journey that begins with faith in Jesus Christ and is reflected in our actions and relationships. It calls us to a higher standard of living that reflects the love and grace of God that we have received and extend to a world in need of hope and redemption. As we strive for righteousness, we do so not out of obligation but as a response to the incredible gift of grace we have received.

Charles D. J. Heynes

"...for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those *who are* with Him *are* called, chosen, and faithful."

Revelation 17:14



WORSHIP – MY PURPOSE

“The people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise” – Isaiah 43:21

Do you know that the first ever sin that happened in the kingdom of God was “choosing NOT to worship”? When the other two archangels were fine with maintaining God’s armies and performing messenger duties, Mr. Lucifer chose NOT to do what he was created for. God created him with extreme beauty so that he could use it all to worship God in the best way possible. Instead, he started doing self-worship (Isaiah 14:13 – “I will raise my throne above the stars of God”), his own beauty made him think he deserves to be in a position higher than God, he started deceiving certain angels in heaven into thinking similar to him and that is how an unnecessary battle started in heaven, a rift created, the goodness of God was put to question. (Don’t you think there would have been angels in heaven telling each other, “Hey, God created Lucifer and see what he did in return? Disloyalty?”)

Well, how great is our God? He created light, the seas, dry land, sun, moon, stars, birds, marine animals, land animals, and the best of all, mankind, only and only to worship Him. And, do you know what we actually LOST by listening to the serpent in the Garden of Eden? Mr. Lucifer lost an intimate connection with God by deceiving himself. He lost a position in heaven forever by choosing to worship himself. Similarly, he made us lose a strong relationship with God; a connection originally so strong that if we didn’t sin, we would have been going on a real evening walk with God right now. Our 24/7 job was to worship God but due to sin, a ‘9 to 5 job’ curse crept inside. (“Through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life.” – Genesis 3:17)

Not only is having to do a work or going to school or college distracting enough from worshipping God, but also, the devil infuses his original

thoughts of self-worship, deceiving others, becoming his followers and so on. Every day, we're forced into thinking more about ourselves and our so-called issues that we totally forget we're here to worship God. Worshipping God is not a dedicated five minutes spent every day in prayer. It is an intentional way of living – a lifestyle. It is the way we CHOOSE to live in which every single part of us, every single work of our hands glorifies only and only God. Your purpose is to worship God. When will you come in terms with that, dear reader?

“So, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” – 1 Corinthians 10:31

KrenaSasitharan

How do I know He's the Christ of God?
I was blind and men trampled on me;
'Have pity!' I cried; and He touched my eyes –
“Be opened” He said; and I see!

Robert Jones Burdette

The Kirk–Evangelical and Missions Movement

Romans 10:14-15

¹⁴ How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?

¹⁵ And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written:

“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace,
Who bring glad tidings of good things!”

Greetings to each one of you in the name of our Lord & Saviour Jesus Christ.

I write this with a grateful, joyful heart on behalf of all our outreach pastors and the E&MM committee. I'm reminded that we are immensely blessed as a Church to be a part of God's redemptive work through us in our outreach areas. We have been blessed to reach, touch, and transform lives as we carry the gospel of Jesus with an eternal hope.

Let me remind you that the phrase E&MM stands for Evangelism and Missions Movement.

On the 10th of November 2024, The Church, E&MM Committee along with 10 outreach pastors celebrated God's immense leadership and blessings in our ministry areas.

Currently we are blessed with 12 worshiping congregations overseen by 10 outreach pastors and with their able leadership we also continue to be involved in work of evangelism in 18 areas as our sowing areas.

God blessed our journey this year in discovering the giftedness of our outreach pastoral team, continue to equip and enrich them to bring effective and qualitative pastoral care to the congregations, continue

to raise disciples of Jesus Christ and find places of God's leading to sow meaningfully. I'm honoured to be able to mentor and lead this team of amazing men of courage, call to serve, passion and love for Jesus.

E&MM also has been instrumental in bringing various ministries of the church together to serve in our outreaches in effective ways and using the giftedness and availability of many congregants of the Kirk. It is a joy to see all fellowships & ministries of our church come together with the children's ministry, medical camps, ministry with families of people in conflict with the law and in serving in various capacities in our outreach churches.

You can get in touch with one of us if you are willing to give and participate with the outreach ministries of the Church.

I praise and thank God for the able leadership of Pastor Isaac Johnson, the E&MM committee, and the Kirk Session for the continued prayer, support, and leadership. It has been an amazing journey with our eyes fixed on Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith.

I also ask each of you to continue to pray for each of our pastors and their families. Amidst all the changing situation in our culture and communities may I remind you that our battle is not against flesh and blood but against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms, manifesting through establishments & powers of this dark world.

You will be hearing from the E&MM committee about each of these outreach areas in 2025 through the Kirk Spire.

I encourage you to cut out the group picture and place in a place of remembrance to pray for the outreach ministries and the pastors through the year.

I close with a prayer expressed through the words of the missionary David Livingstone. *"God, send me anywhere, only go with me. Lay any burden on me, only sustain me. And sever any tie in my heart except the tie that binds my heart to Yours."*

In His Grip

Rev. Paul Anbarasu



Ministry in Gypsy Colony, Pallavaram





Outreach Pastors with Rev. Isaac Johnson & Rev. Paul Anbarasu
Front rows from left of your view – Rev. Steve, Rev. Yesudas, Rev. Arulraj, Rev. Isaac Johnson, Rev. Paul Anbarasu, Rev. Anbu Franklin, Rev. Stephen **Upper row from left of your view** – Rev. Satish, Rev. Samuel, Rev. Mishra, Rev. Chandrasekar, Ps. Ilayaraja



Perumabakkam Women's Fellowship



Kirk's Medical, Gospel and Counseling Outreach Program at Semmancheri- 29/Sep/2024

Urban Ministry at The Kirk



As they talked and discussed these things, Jesus himself suddenly came and began walking with them. Luke 24:15

Four years ago, the Kirk started a new Urban Ministry, aimed at relationship-based outreach to the marginalised around us, beginning with the homeless. It has been a real adventure into discipleship and obedience with many miracles and lessons on the way. As we try to walk alongside the poor in a more intentional way, we see Jesus at work both in and through us.

Which is why – when faced with the need for a new name – the Lord led us to the name Emmaus Road Ministry. Like those two disciples, we find that Jesus is in the midst of our interactions, especially with the poor and marginalised. And our prayer is that – like those two disciples – their hearts would “burn” within them as we try to be as Christ to them.

In 2024, one of the most significant milestones was our attempt at a Sports Ministry. A group of men from the church came together to play cricket with the men from a community of formerly homeless people in and around Egmore. We were unable to continue due to a variety of factors but there remains a very great need for a ministry among men. Please pray that God will enable us to make this a sustainable reality.

Our fortnightly Tea Ministry has grown slowly to a lovely time of fellowship with some of our regular friends and the monthly Prayer Walk - in partnership with the Men's Fellowship - has seen a surge in attendees in the latter half of the year. The weekly prayer at K.P. Park Housing Board and other one-on-one activities continue by God's enablement.

We were able to partner with various NGOs and social enterprises over the year to minister to children, youth, adults and even the elderly in various ways including rescues and financial aid. We have been tremendously blessed by the partnership with the CCM & Friendship Club.

As Jesus said to his first followers, "Come and see." See you there!

Prashant Lazarus

As the Blessed Birthday creeps near, we should clear our minds of all clutter and commotion, so that we may have room for the contentment and the peace that passes all understanding.

Anonymous

The Urban Ministry of St. Andrew's Church



The Urban Ministry comprises of three ministries, namely Friendship Club, Emmaus and Christian Counselling Ministry.

The Friendship Club meet every 2nd Thursday at SACCE hall. Around 70 persons gather and at times if health issues are not there, we could even have 75 members attending. It starts with a time of praise and worship where songs are sung with great gusto especially action songs. This group of senior persons are very active and thoroughly enjoy this time of praising God through Song. Someone from our Church gives the message of the day.

Thereafter there is a game followed by a quiz on a passage from the Bible. Most come prepared for the memory verse and recite it happily. A monthly stipend is given which is very much needed as many have no family, or have no other income. Early dinner is served and this is sponsored by members who may have celebrated a birthday or an anniversary. The members go home happy, refreshed and relaxed after a time of bonding with their friends. Reaching the aging population of our Church will help you, because they have a lifetime of experiences that they have to share. We need to only take time, to listen.

The Christian Counselling Ministry members come early to meet Friendship Club members. We counsel them with their varied problems. At times they wish to only just talk as to a friend with a listening ear or just vent. It eases their anxieties.

The counselling ministry has over the past 5 years expanded its responsibilities. This includes not just our on-site ministry at the church campus which is overseen by Mrs. Jessie Jeyshakaran. We have in partnership with the Evangelism and Healing Ministry visited all the projects of the church during the year. Phone counselling is done regularly and we have attended to over 157 cases. The active counselors have areas of specialization and so the main registered phone number will be attended to by Mrs. Jessie who then allots the

cases accordingly. In person we have counselled 95 cases. Many need more than one session.

The YWCA has requested our counsellors to present talks at the PPF home for young girls. The topics range from building self-esteem, developing healthy relationships to exploring career interests and setting goals. These are just a few but very helpful to them, for it prepares them to navigate through life successfully.

We have seminars on topics much needed by our community as a whole. Latha Christie spoke on Domestic Abuse which is helpful to many. It's a crime that's kept well hidden under the guise of misunderstandings or disagreements in a marriage. There were 95 who registered and around 45 remained for the Q& A session after Lunch. Latha Christie herself being a Domestic Abuse survivor was able to correctly point as to how to recognize abuse and conflict. There were many who found helpful, the legal and government policies that are available to victims. She also spoke about safe houses and police protection available to all abuse victims.

From the feedback we received from many parents we are planning a seminar on "Equipping youth in today's world". The 1st day is for young people and day 2 is for parents and teachers.

Life today is fast paced. Stress, anxiety, marriage issues, relationship woes, financial worries, all take its toll. Many need help in the decision-making process, especially when they are at crossroads.

We are here to assist with Biblical-based counselling. Discretion is important to us. Do reach out to the Kirk Urban Ministry if you need help.

Sabrina Siga

The Son of God became a man to enable men to become sons of God.

C. S. Lewis

Children's Corner

CHRISTMAS BIBLE QUIZ - December2024

1. Which Gospel contains the story of the birth of Jesus?
2. Who was the king who ordered the census, leading to Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem?
3. Which Old Testament Prophet foretold the birth of Jesus?
4. What was the name of the elderly man who recognized Jesus as the Messiah when he was presented at the temple?
5. Which Gospel describes the journey of Mary and Joseph to Egypt?

Source: Christmas Bible Trivia (<https://littlehaloj.com>)

Answers to Bible Quiz for Kids – November2024

Genesis 16 - 20

1. The well where God spoke to Hagar –Gen 16:14
2. Princes –Gen 17:15
3. Ten righteous men –Gen 18:32
4. Inhabitants of the cities, All the plain, what grew on the ground, Cities. -Gen 19:25
5. Gerar –Gen 20:1

Bible Verses for Christmas

Isaiah 9:6 – For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

Zechariah 9:9 – Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout *in triumph*, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Luke 2:10-11 – But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 27

Add your own ornaments and color the Christmas Tree!



Dolly Shanthakumar

Bible Quiz No. 154–December 2024



A Sailor's Quiz

Please give a Bible reference (KJV)

1. Who said: '**A night and a day I have been in the deep**' ?
2. Is this quotation from **Psalms**, **Proverbs**, or **Ecclesiastes** :
'All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full' ?
3. Jesus once said : '**Go thou to the sea, and cast an hook**'.Why?
4. Where, according to the Bible, shall there be '**no more sea**' ?
5. What did '*a great wind*' once '*blow in from the sea*' to aid the Israelites ?
6. What are the modern names of **a) The Great Sea** **b) The Salt Sea** ?
7. Of what offenders did Jesus say :
'It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea' ?
8. What is the beginning of this text from Isaiah : '*. . . as the waters cover the sea*' ?
9. What does The Psalmist say about those '**that go down to the sea in ships**' ?
10. Did **Jesus**, **David**, or **Micah** say : '*Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea*' ?

Taken from *A Bible Quiz Book* by *May C. Smith*

Kindly send your answers to the church office or email kirkspire@gmail.com (please note the new email address for Kirkspire) by 15thDecember2024.

Usha George

**Answers to Bible Quiz No. 153 – November
2024
An Anthropologist's Quiz**

1. The Flood. Genesis 6: 6, 7
2. Babel. Genesis 11:1-9
3. 'Are ordered by the Lord.' Psalm 37:23
4. Zechariah. Zechariah 6:12
5. 'Mindful of him ?' Psalm 8:4; Hebrews 2:6
6. David. Psalm 144:4
7. 'The resurrection of the dead'. 1 Corinthians 15:21
8. 'Is unstable in all his ways'. James 1:8
9. Solomon. Ecclesiastes 2:22
10. Old, young. Joel 2:28

The winners are:

1. Ms. Praiseye K
2. Mrs. Gloria Jawahar
3. Mrs. Suguna Joseph
4. Mrs. Gladys Vedavimali
5. Mrs. Victoria Basker
6. Mrs. Indira Rajanayakam
7. Mrs. Angeline Reagan
8. Mrs. Leela Coilpillai
9. Mrs. Patricia Patrick
10. Dr. (Mrs.) Sujata Elizabeth Prasad
11. Mrs. Peace Rani Sudhakar
12. Mrs. Sabrina Siga

Hearty Congratulations!

KNOW YOUR HYMN

"STILLE NACHT" - A Timeless Christmas Carol: "Silent Night"

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. Luke 2:14

"Silent Night, Holy Night" has become a quintessential part of the Christmas celebration, a song that transcends cultures, languages, and musical genres. From its humble origins in a small Austrian village, this carol has risen to worldwide fame, translated into over 300 languages, and its melody has been adapted to countless musical styles and performances. It has been designated by UNESCO as part of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

The lyrics were written by Joseph Mohr, a young priest in the year 1816. Though Mohr was a skilled musician, he sought the help of his friend Franz Xaver Gruber, a schoolteacher and organist in Oberndorf to compose the melody. In 1816, the world had just emerged from the devastating Napoleonic Wars, and the region of Austria was in turmoil. The political and social fabric of the country had been shredded, and many families were left impoverished and struggling to survive. Europe experienced a prolonged period of cold weather, leading to crop failures and famine. Mohr's congregation in the town of Mariapfarr, where he served before moving to Oberndorf, was reeling from these calamities. Amidst this suffering, Mohr wrote a poem that would later become the lyrics of "Silent Night." His words, crafted in German, were infused with a message of peace, hope, and divine love. Mohr sought to offer comfort to his congregation, with the opening verse declaring: "Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright." His words reflected the peaceful, almost miraculous stillness of a world in need of healing as Paul says in 2 Thes. 3:16 "Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. "

The melody he created was influenced by the Italian musical style known as "Siciliana," which mimics the rhythmic flow of water and rolling waves. The song was first performed on Christmas Eve in St Nicholas church in Oberndorf in 1818 Mohr playing the guitar, as the church's organ had been damaged by the overflowing Salzach river. The organ builder took a copy of the carol back to his home village. From there, it was picked up by two families of traveling folk

singers, the Strassers and the Rainers. These families began performing the song throughout northern Europe, and by 1834, it was performed for the King of Prussia and Russia. In 1839, the Rainers performed "Silent Night" outside Trinity Church on Wall Street in New York City, introducing the song to an American audience. From that point, the carol's popularity grew, spreading across Europe and beyond. German-speaking missionaries also helped spread the song, taking it to places as far-reaching as Tibet and Alaska, and translating it into numerous local languages.

The song's growing reach was not limited to churches and communities; it became a symbol of peace in turbulent times. During World War I, in the midst of the brutal trenches of Flanders, soldiers on both sides of the conflict famously laid down their arms during a temporary Christmas truce in 1914 and sang "Silent Night" together. This moment of shared humanity, marked by the song's peaceful message, is still remembered as one of the war's most poignant episodes. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed we are called in one body Col 3:15

In Austria, where the carol was born, a memorial service is held every year at 5 p.m. on December 24th in front of the Silent Night Memorial Chapel in Oberndorf. Thousands of people gather to honour the creators of the carol, singing "Silent Night" in a multitude of languages. This annual tradition draws visitors from all over the world, highlighting the global resonance of the song's message of peace and unity. It reminds us of the importance of peace in a world often marked by conflict and division, and it continues to be a source of comfort, offering a sense of grace and unity in the midst of our busy, sometimes chaotic lives. Whether sung in a church, in a town square, or on a battlefield, the song's message remains the same: peace, hope, and the enduring love of Christ for all people. As we sing "Silent Night" each year, we are reminded not only of the joy of Christmas, the birth of our dear Saviour, the Prince of peace but also of His gentle promise "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. John 14:27

The LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. Num 6:26

"Stille Nacht heilige Nacht"

Dr. Anita Chelliah

Living by the Book: Part 6

Learning how to study the Bible from Dr Howard Hendricks

We are looking at how to interpret what we are studying in the Bible, i.e. what does it mean. Our aim in coming to the Scriptures should be life change, and without understanding its meaning, there can be no application.

Hendricks gives us five basic principles of interpretation.

Content: The content of the passage is the raw material we use to interpret, and all that we have learnt about observation so far helps us to uncover the content.

“THE MORE TIME YOU SPEND IN OBSERVATION, THE LESS TIME YOU WILL HAVE TO SPEND IN INTERPRETATION, AND THE MORE ACCURATE WILL BE YOUR RESULT”

Context: When we study a section of the Word, its context is what comes before and after. The context may be literary, historical, cultural, geographic or theological (relating to God).

Comparison: A great safety net against distortion is to compare Scripture with Scripture. A concordance is a helpful tool in studying terms or characters.

Culture: In order to understand its meaning, we have to study the passage against the right background, paying attention to the cultural and historical context.

Consultation: Consultation involves the use of secondary resources. There are others who have walked this road before us, and left their contributions to leverage our study. However, directly studying Scripture will always be the first step; Hendricks warns us to beware of relying too much on secondhand information. Tools such as concordances and dictionaries help us pay attention to key words or phrases that we encounter in our study.

“A COMMENTARY CAN’T DO YOUR STUDY FOR YOU, BUT IT CERTAINLY IS AN EXCELLENT MEANS OF EVALUATING YOUR OWN STUDY”

**“WHEN HE [JESUS] CALLS
HEROD A FOX, HE OBVIOUSLY
IS NOT SAYING THAT THE MAN
IS A ROVING CARNIVORE. HE’S
SPEAKING FIGURATIVELY,
COMPARING HEROD TO THAT
SLY DOG-LIKE CREATURE”**

Figurative language, when literal sense does not make sense, is a language of expression used in the Bible. Identifying figurative language is possible, e.g. when a literal meaning is impossible or absurd, or when it would involve

something immoral. There are ways to discern when the meaning can be taken literally, and when the figurative has been used.

Finally, stopping at Interpretation would be a mistake. We need to apply what we have learnt, in order to see it bear fruit in our lives.

Anisha Lazarus

A CHRISTMAS WISH by Edward Eyre Hunt
That love may light the eyes of them
Who keep the season of His Birth,
Till to the starry hosts, our earth
Shall be the Star of Bethlehem.



NUTRITION – II

VITAMIN 'A'

“Doctors treat, but Jesus heals”

Liver, milk, butter, cheese, fish-oils are rich sources of vitamin A. Carrots, papaya, dark green leafy vegetables, spinach, drumstick leaves and drumsticks contain beta-carotene which gets converted into vitamin A in the body. Vegans who are strict vegetarians depend totally on beta-carotene for their vitamin A requirements of the body.

Vitamin A is necessary for normal growth, fetal development, fertility and immune function. Deficient children suffer more severe respiratory infections and gastroenteritis and fall sick frequently, most often seen in severely malnourished children.

Vitamin A deficiency can cause blindness. Night blindness is the earliest sign of deficiency. The eye looks dull and lustreless. White elevated spots resembling thermacole can be seen on either side of cornea (Bitot's spots). In severe deficiency corneal melting can occur in infants and children leading to blindness.

Prevention is better than cure. A well balanced diet rich in vitamin A and beta-carotene can contribute to good health. In severely affected children injections of vitamin A is given. For mild and moderate deficiency vitamin A capsules are available. For generations, “Cod liver oil” and “Shark liver oil” capsules have been used to prevent deficiency in many families.

Dr. (Mrs.) Rajini Kantha Narendranath

Kirk News

*Bright eyes gladden the heart;
Good news puts fat on the bones.
Proverbs 15:30*



The Gospel of the Happy God

As we approach the season of joy, do we know the essence of true happiness? The phrase “the gospel of the happy God” finds its roots in 1 Timothy 1:11, where Paul describes the message of salvation as being in accordance with “the gospel of the glory of the blessed God”—a term where *makarios*, often translated as “blessed,” also conveys the idea of being deeply happy and fulfilled. This happiness is rooted in the joy of the Triune God, whose very essence is joy.

The Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—exists in perfect unity, love, and delight, embodying a joy that overflows into creation and redemption. This divine joy is not meant to be an abstract; it is offered to us as a gift. Through Christ’s sacrifice, God invites us to partake in this joy—a joy that is not shaken by trials or cheapened by worldly pleasures.

Yet, as we look inward, we may find ourselves struggling with fear, anxiety, or even boredom. Have the pressures of life or our pursuit of lesser pleasures dulled our capacity for true joy? Wherever we find ourselves, the good news is this: God meets us right where we are. Even the faintest spark of faith in Christ’s work on the cross is enough for God to draw near and exceed our expectations. Not only does He save us from eternal separation from Him, but He also wraps us in “joy unspeakable” (1 Peter 1:8)—a joy that is richer and deeper than anything this world can offer.

This season, let us open our hearts to the happiness of God. May we experience the joy of the Trinity in our everyday lives, a joy that transforms, sustains, and fills us with hope.

Evangelism & Mission Movement Sunday and Urban Ministries Sunday

On November 10, 2024, St. Andrew’s Church celebrated Evangelism & Mission Movement Sunday. This special day brought together all

the pastors involved in the church's outreach programs, highlighting their collective efforts to share the gospel. The service was further enriched by the moving testimony of Brother Dinesh Raj, a CAM missionary supported by the church, who shared his impactful work in Uttarakhand.

The following Sunday, November 17, 2024, marked Urban Ministries Sunday. Representatives from the Friendship Club, the Christian Counselling Ministry, and the Emmaus Road Ministry shared inspiring updates on how these ministries have been a blessing—both to their members and to the communities they serve.

These Sundays served as a powerful reminder of the church's mission to spread the love of Christ in both rural and urban settings, encouraging the congregation to support and participate in these vital ministries.

Guest Speakers

Rev. Vasudevan – The Beauty of God – 27.10.2024 – 7:00 AM & 9:00 AM Services

Br. Jayakumar Christian - Being A Prophetic Witness – 24.11.24 - 7:00 AM & 9:00 AM Services

Kirk Youth Fellowship

The KYF continues its inspiring Rebuild Bible study series. On November 17, 2024, the group met at the Guest House after the 9:00 AM service, followed by a meaningful time of fellowship over lunch.

Catalyst:

An enriching session featuring Mrs. Lynette Johnson was held on November 24, 2024, at 9:00 AM in the SACCE Hall, with worship, the Word, and fellowship.

Kirk Men's Fellowship

On November 17, 2024, men of the church gathered at the DCC Hall at 11:00 AM to hear Rev. Paul Anbarasu share on *Serving Like Jesus*.

Kirk Women's Fellowship

The Women's Monthly Meet took place on November 17, 2024, at 11:00 AM in the SACCE Hall, with a special session of testimonies on *Witnessing Time*.

Friendship Club

The Friendship Club met on November 14, 2024, at 3:00 PM in the SACCE Hall, fostering Christ-centred relationships and meaningful fellowship. On the Urban Ministries Sunday, they cheerfully chimed the "Hello Again" chorus at the 9:00 AM service.

Medical, Gospel, and Counselling Outreach Program

The Kirk's outreach program took place on November 17, 2024, at Poondi, Chennai, from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM, combining medical aid with gospel sharing and counselling.

Musical Highlights

Enoch in Concert: Two-time Grammy contender Enoch performed live on November 2, 2024, at 6:30 PM at St. Andrew's Church.

Junior Music Recital: A delightful evening featuring the church's budding musicians took place on November 23, 2024, at 6:30 PM at the Kirk.

Stay engaged and inspired by these vibrant gatherings at St. Andrew's Church!

Angela Susan Bryner

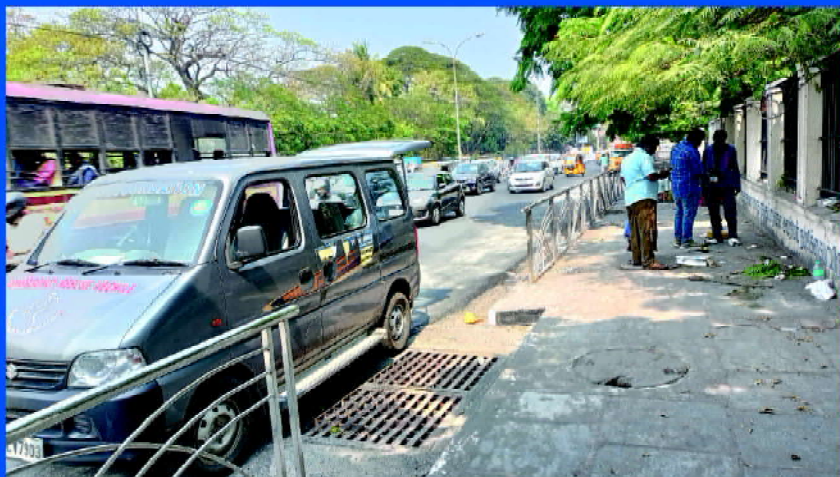
Merry Christmas!

Wishing our dear readers a joyous Christmas filled with love and peace! May the wonder of that first Christmas, the joy of God's abundant blessings, and the peace of Jesus' presence abide with you now and always.

Kirkspire Editorial Board



Urban Ministry Sports Fellowship trial meet in February 2024



Urban Ministry-Rescue underway in partnership with AGAL Foundation



Friendship Club Members @ Kirk on 17.11.24

