

But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who *is* in the secret *place*; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

Matthew 6:6



# Kirkspire

The Monthly Magazine of St. Andrew's Church (The Kirk), Chennai  
January 2025

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### Editorial Board :

**Usha George**  
**Chitra Bennett**

## Word from the Pastor



### Omniscient God

*Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite. (Psalm 147:5)*

As God's minister I bless every one of you with this benediction – May the love of God our Father, the peace of Jesus Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit guide you through this year 2025.

Throughout the Bible, there are several verses that say 'God knows or God knew'. Due to the familiarity of our reading of the Bible, we may tend to overlook or fail to understand the enormity of this phrase. How often do we fall into this trap of thinking that 'God knows' and 'we know something or someone' are similar in meaning. When we talk about knowing someone or something, even the greatest of experts in any field know only almost everything about a subject. This is not true about God's knowledge. As we have stepped into 2025, God is reminding us about God knowing and how that should steer our faith, prayer, obedience, trust and everything else in the light of this truth – God knows. Here are 3 lessons that will help us understand this truth and draw closer to God with confidence and joy.

1. God knows the future as much as He knows the past – Isaiah 46:10 says 'Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure'. There will be too many unanswered questions when we try to grasp God's omniscience with our futile fragile minds. Trust and obey for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus.
2. God knows our choices yet loves us with unfailing love – Psalm 136:26 says 'Oh, give thanks to the God of heaven! For His mercy endures forever.' God's love oozes in His conversation with Jonah where He says how he cannot

stop loving the people of Nineveh in spite of their wicked past.  
God loves sinners while he abhors sin.

3. God knows the wickedness of the world and is not idly watching it – Proverbs 16:4 says 'The LORD has made all for Himself, Yes, even the wicked for the day of doom.' One of the great tests of faith is when the righteous see the wicked 'prosper' and God's faithful suffer and even get killed while serving God. God has an eternal plan and we neither can comprehend eternity past or eternity future. God knows EVERYTHING.

As you walk through this year, there will be those days or moments when we would ask God 'Lord, where are you' 'do you not hear my prayer' or 'God don't be silent to my cry'. Remember the lesson – God knows and God will rescue His children in His time, in His ways for His glory.

Walk through 2025 in the consciousness of God's Omniscience. He will never leave you nor forsake you. Blessings on you and your family

*Rev. Isaac Emmanuel Johnson*

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(Christ's love) is 'broad' enough to encompass all mankind ... 'long' enough to last for eternity, 'deep' enough to reach the most degraded sinner, and 'high' enough to exalt him to heaven.

*John Stott*

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John's Corner



## WEATHER REPORT

(Read Ps 27:1, Mat 6:34, Eccl 12:13)

The future no human can foretell,  
Astrology is one great farce,  
The foolish alone depend on it,  
And observe the sun, moon and stars.

The wind blows wherever it listeth,  
None can with precision predict,  
Whether a day will be bright or dull,  
The Lord alone gives the verdict.

God calls us to trust and obey Him,  
And leave all our cares in His hands;  
Take every burden to Him in prayer,  
And rest assured He understands.

As yet another New Year begins,  
Face each day bravely with no fear,  
Confident Jesus walks beside you,  
Trusting Him always to be near.

*John H. Bala Singh*

*A blessed New Year from John's Corner*

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"Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for *He is good!*  
For His mercy *endures forever.*" Psalm 136:1

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## The Mundane

*So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Romans 12:1 MSG*

Mundane(adjective): very ordinary and therefore not interesting.

Diapers and spilt milk. Sleeplessness and laundry.  
Lost in a routine that calls for little thinking  
but careful attention  
the mundane drowns purposeful living.  
Brain fog remains perpetual and time a scarcity.  
If a major portion of living is done  
in the landscape of the mundane  
how does one do it, Lord?

"My dearest child You are exactly  
where I want you to be.  
Historically. Geographically.  
Though it may seem otherwise.

Hasn't this always been the case?  
Not enjoying a particular season of life  
and then looking back with regret?

In life you always pass on. Remember that and  
do the best with what has been given.

Awaken with a grand sense of purpose.  
Few minutes spent with Me early in the day  
determine your outlook. Your day.

The world may hint otherwise.  
But what you do is important.  
And how you do it  
even more so in My eyes.

So get creative. Soak in that smile.  
The fresh, cold wind. That compliment.  
And cherish the interruptions.  
Mayhem. The mess.

Reclaim the mundane.  
Let it become a springboard  
to sing, reflect and listen.

Above all pray.  
Pray-  
in silence and with tears,  
with passion and in apathy,  
while cooking or kneeling.

For real sanctification happens-  
not in cathedrals but in ordinary moments.  
In kitchen top counters and in bathrooms.  
When you choose to live  
by losing your life  
for another.

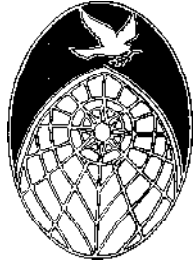
And then behold-  
as joy burgeons  
and eternal life begins  
amidst the mundane."\*

\*John 17:3

One small word of counsel before we strike out on this disciplined journey into the holy place: healthy prayer necessitates frequent experiences of the common, earthy, run-of-the-mill variety. Like walks, and talks, and good wholesome laughter. Like work in the yard, and chit chat with the neighbors, and washing windows. Like loving our spouse, and playing with our kids, and working with our colleagues. To be spiritually fit to scale the Himalayas of the spirit we need regular exercise in the hills and valleys of ordinary life.

Richard J. Foster, 1992, *Prayer- Finding The Heart's True Home*.

*Dr. Susan Rajkumari*



## A New Year Meditation

None of us know what the Year 2025 would look like economically, socially, spiritually or politically but the Creator of the universe holds each of His children in the palm of His hand, giving us what we need for each day. Now more than ever before, our calendars are constantly in flux as we erase and re-plan. But the chaos of the world we live in is in the capable hands of our great and good God who is the same yesterday today and forever.

Celebrate. New Year is a time to count and celebrate the blessings- physical and spiritual of the past year. The Psalmist exhorts all people sing to the Lord a new song! For He has done marvellous things; His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory. (Psalm 98.1). When we set our minds on the blessings in our lives, we recognise again that as the hymn writer puts it, "God is over all." We celebrate God's provision in the form of family and friends, food, clothing and shelter and health and healing. We recognise God's protection and provision and presence as we recollect the waters and the fires that threatened to destroy us. (Isaiah 43:2). We rejoice in every spiritual blessing- redemption, pardon, adoption, sanctification-found in Jesus Christ alone (Ephesians 1.3-14).

Confess. As the year turns, we open our hearts to the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit. Conviction and confession are not things to be afraid of, but are God's means of drawing us close, keeping us near, and protecting our wandering hearts. Using David's example, we can acknowledge, not cover but confess our sins, our iniquities and our transgression and receive God's forgiveness (Psalm 32.5). We then experience what Charles Spurgeon said, "When we deal seriously with our sin, God will deal gently with us". We then wear the full armour of God which comprises the Belt of Truth, the Breastplate of Righteousness,



the Gospel of Peace, the Shield of Faith, the Helmet of Salvation, and the Sword of the Spirit to stand against the devil's schemes. (Ephesians 6: 10-18).

Commit. Leaving behind the year past with its mix of joys and sorrows, goals met and goals missed, friendships gained and friendships loss behind us let us run the race before us with confidence looking unto Jesus, let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, (Hebrews 12:1-2). Moses asked of the Lord, "Teach us to number our days, so we may get a heart of wisdom" (Psalm 90.12). Time—seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, years—is a gift to us from the good God. To wisely follow him, then, is to redeem our time (Ephesians 5.6). New Year is also a time of renewing old commitments, like marriage, family, work and church. Commitment may require change in daily routine, setting priorities making commitments of our time, talent and treasure. It requires resting more on God and on His word.

The New Year brings with it new beginnings, new possibilities, new plans, new purposes, new provisions and new growth. 'And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year: 'Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.' And he replied: 'Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way.' So I went forth, and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the night. And He led me towards the hills and the breaking of day in the lone East' (Minnie Louise Haskins).

*Dr. (Mrs.) Sujata Elizabeth Prasad*

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Prayer is the burden of a sigh,  
The falling of a tear,  
The upward glancing of an eye  
When none but God is near.

*James Montgomery*

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## **We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder...**

*"And behold, the Lord stood before it, and said, I am the Lord, Thy God..." Genesis 28:13*

As we stand on the threshold of a new year, we reflect on the year gone by, having experienced a year which held many happenings, big and small, some joyful and momentous, and some challenging and sad. No matter what betide, may the Holy Spirit empower us to climb the ladder of life firmly and steadily. We trust and believe that our Loving Shepherd Jesus Christ, is the only way we can have access to our Heavenly Home. (Genesis 28:10-22).

May each passing year draw us to a closer to a deeper walk with the Christ of the Bible – our cosmic Creator and Redeemer. May our faith grow stronger and may His redeeming blood remain our theme until our last breath.

To build up our faith, we have to study the Word more deeply. Our Bible is a treasure, a pure and living fountain; the more we drink from it, the more our hunger for the multi-faceted, glorious Christ will grow.

Our growth in our Lord is a gradual process, like the blossoming of a flower. We pray that with each year, we are drawn closer to the Truth that "He that loveth is born of God, begotten of God, abideth in God and God abideth in him." With the strength of the Holy Spirit, may we be armoured to resist the temptations and ignore the calls of the idols of the world. Let it be etched in our heart, soul and mind, "That you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

Secondly, recognizing His divine presence should inspire a longing for His fellowship and communion. To live a victorious Christian life, we must have a strong and prevailing prayer life. Each of us must be persuaded in our own hearts and minds, and the Holy Spirit will inspire and guide us along the way. We will pray for grace and faith and wrestle to see His face. The 19th century Scottish preacher Robert Murray M'Cheyne wisely said, "What a man is on his knees before God, that he is, and nothing more." To appreciate the value of prayer, we must look to the supreme example of our Lord who cried out, "Abba! Father!" If the Son of God understood the importance of prayer and fellowship with God the Father, how desperately we human weaklings should hunger for such support! As someone once wisely said, "Satan laughs at our toiling, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray."

Finally, our Lord entrusts us with the growth of His Kingdom. We cannot remain distant or aloof from the live and teeming mankind, merely reading God's Word and praying in isolation. Our Lord calls us, His disciples, to be "doers".

"We plough the fields and scatter  
The good seed o'er the land;  
But it is fed and watered  
By God's Almighty hand."

We carry the greatest responsibility of all: representing Jesus Christ in the world today. Our Lord revealed His life's purpose when He read from Isaiah 61, one of the noblest passages in literature. Our Lord read these powerful words and opened a new gate by emphasizing a personal note: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, ... Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (Isaiah 61, Luke 4:16-21). Even today these words remain alive, glowing and deeply personal. Should we not take up the mission to care for others as our Lord did throughout His life? All around us we see a distraught world filled with pain and suffering. Our Saviour never gave an unnecessary command. Our Lord's three commands for definite action were:

- Pray ye
- Do this
- Go ye

Each year, may we increase in our zeal to keep climbing despite the forces of evil trying to pull us down. We are soldiers of the Cross, and we are also God's "little stones," called to smash the Goliaths of the world.

"Onward Christian soldiers, marching as to war,  
Looking unto Jesus, who is gone before."

*A blessed New Year 2025!*

*Usha George*

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We are adopted into God's family through the resurrection of Christ from the dead in which he paid all our obligations to sin, the law, and the devil, in whose family we once lived. Our old status lies in his tomb. A new status is ours through his resurrection.

*Sinclair B. Ferguson*

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## Men's Fellowship Retreat 2024

The Men's Fellowship Retreat on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> October, 2024 at the Grand Serena Resorts in Pondicherry was a truly blessed time for all who participated. The decision to drive together to the resort was a blessing with bonding and fellowship beginning on the drive. All cars converged at the Manoj Bhavan restaurant just past Chengalpattu for a hearty fellowship breakfast before proceeding as a convoy to Pondicherry, reaching the resort at 9.30 am.

The theme for the Retreat was Roots & Fruits and consisted of five sessions over two days: 1. Attitude 2. Aptitude 3. Altitude 4. Gratitude 5. Servitude. The last session was followed by sharing and feedback from the participants.

Pastor Isaac facilitated the first two sessions, with the first session on Attitude from the book of Esther with the focus on Haman and Mordecai. The contrast could not have been clearer with Haman being stubborn, unwilling to learn, shortsighted and filled with self-pride; on the other hand, Mordecai's attitude was steadfast, doing everything for God's glory. He was not self-seeking, but had a self-less attitude. These attributes were reinforced with verses from I Corinthians 15:58 and James 3: 16.

The second session on Aptitude started with contentment being the key to confidence. Not being hasty, blind to reality, then being full of regrets. But having confidence in God's ability to carry you through, Proverbs 3:5,6. This session had four takeaways: 1. Learn through worship 2. Love through the Word of God 3. Lead through the wisdom of God 4. Leave behind wickedness and wicked people.

The third session on Altitude by Pastor Paul Anbarasu began with understanding how things grow. Plants that grow have two sides to them: 1. Gravitropic: roots that grow down into the earth following the force of gravity. This growth is into the dark without the need for light or pruning, and represents the

seed of the Gospel and our spiritual growth from reading the Word 2. Phototropic: Growth upward above the ground using sunlight for photosynthesis. This upward growth (Altitude) is not possible without deep roots that grow into the ground, which in our case is rooted in God's Word.

As we grow, we are not to be absent men getting into trouble: Where was Adam when Eve was being tempted by Satan? As he was silent, he was as good as absent. Where was David when his army was out fighting battles? Instead of leading the army, he was on his terrace when he saw Bathsheba and was tempted into grievous sins. A man after God's own heart was robbed of his desire to love and serve God at that point.

Session four on Gratitude was facilitated by Pastor Steve of the Perumbakkam church and was based on Gratitude being a believers' attitude from head to toe in living for God. The sections in this session were 1. In everything, give thanks 1 Thessalonians 5:18 2. Living with gratitude enables God's will in our lives. Jesus constantly gave thanks and did God's will. Living with head-to-toe gratitude was illustrated through many other verses from the Bible.

Session five on Servitude, also by Pastor Paul, spoke directly to our being obedient disciples of Jesus Christ by being Christ-like in the place where he has called you to serve. Servitude calls for our witness in community-starting with our families, neighbors, work place and broader circles of influence. We should remember that God is a community of three persons who exhibit perfect love and harmony! Our servitude must be guided by three questions: 1. Who should people see in our life? 2. Who do we want to model? 3. What legacy will you leave behind when you are gone? The answer to all three questions is Christ.

Each session took us step by step into Spiritual growth through understanding God's purpose for us. And this was reflected in the sharing by the participants at the end. The sessions were interspersed with games, time to frolic in the swimming pool, and an early morning visit to the beach in Pondicherry, and fun and laughter during our stay. The Retreat ended all too soon, and we made our way back to Chennai as a convoy, transformed by the experience.

*David Appasamy*

## Men's Fellowship Report 2024

### Psalm 133

How good and pleasant it is, when brothers live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down upon the collar of his robes. It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forever more!

Dear brothers, do you sometimes feel all alone? Are there troubles at work that you can't share with your family? Are there relationship problems that stress you out? Do you struggle with questions of faith and moral standards? Do you have vices that have a grip on you? We've all been there and struggled with such problems.

The Kirk Men's Fellowship is a Band of Brothers who will stand with you in your times of trouble, and prayerfully support you through such times. You may wonder what the purpose of the Men's Fellowship is? The Mission of the Kirk Men's Fellowship flows from the vision of our church, 'To be a congregation of obedient disciples of our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ'.

Our mission stands on four pillars.

That:

- 1) The men of the church may find salvation in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ
- 2) They may be obedient and effective disciples of Christ
- 3) They may be the High Priest of their homes setting Godly standards for the family
- 4) They may be effective witnesses for Christ in every sphere of influence

We empower men to be disciples who are compassionate, and loving, setting the spiritual standards for the family; supporting

one another in the faith; compassionately reaching out to the lost and lonely; to have concern for the broader community and the issues we face as a society and city. And, in so doing, to walk in the steps of Jesus, reflecting him to those around us that they may be drawn to Him by experiencing His love through us.

Our monthly fellowship meetings have praise & worship, and the facilitation of topics that are edifying to men in their roles as husbands, fathers, sons, brothers, colleagues -indeed in every role in life. These are times of learning and edifying one another in the faith, knowledge of our Savior, and what He teaches us. Our Pastor has been doing a series through this year on empowering us as disciples with relevant topics, workshops, group discussions, and praying for one another.

Some of the topics covered this year include: 'Being a witness in the market place', 'Influencing through love', 'Serving like Jesus', and 'Purposeful discipleship'. We also ensure we have fun as brothers, with barbecues, retreats and picnics in the lap of nature, games, outings, walks, and quizzes. Our Retreat in October in Pondicherry was on the theme of 'Roots & fruits', and was a time of Christian edification and growth facilitated by our Pastors. So, we have many opportunities to come together in meaningful ways.

We also actively participate in the initiatives of the other ministries of our church. We work closely with Prashant of the Urban Ministry, and Melvin from the E&MM ministry, participating in the Prayer Walks, the Tea Ministry and the Medical & Counseling camps held in the outreach areas. Some of our men participate in the life of the church by serving on the Committees of other ministries such as the SALT ministry, the DCC, Fund Raising Committee, the Human Resources Committee etc.

Our ministry and its activities are managed by a Committee of men from the congregation who take ownership for the various initiatives. That is why we say the ministry is made up of a Band of Brothers who support one another in prayer, in practical ways, in life, and in our Spiritual growth!

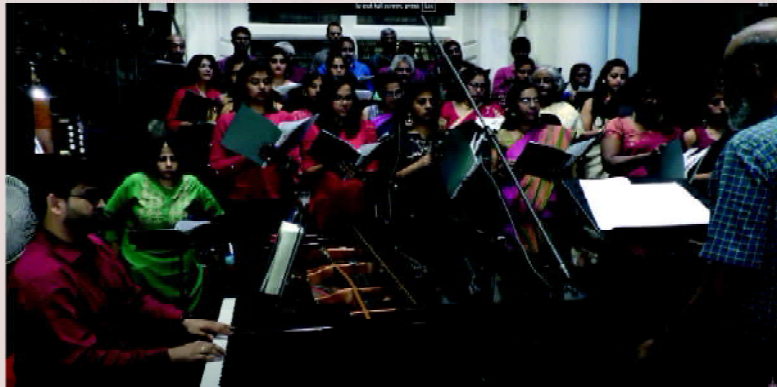
Come join us and grow in faith as we walk with our Lord as obedient disciples so that we live life to the full as He intended.

*David Appasamy*





Christmas Carols Service





Asha Christmas Celebration





AKDCC Christmas Celebration





RMIDCC Christmas Celebration



## Unto Us A Child Is Born

The children of Kirk Sunday School kicked off the Christmas season by staging a musical 'For Unto Us A Child Is Born' on 1st December 2024 during the 6:00p.m service.

Despite the inclement weather the previous day and a stormy week, the children participated with enthusiasm!

The children, be it the tiny tots or the seniors, actively participated by lending their talents in singing, choreography and acting.

The musical detailed about the Christmas story - the travel down the road to Bethlehem right from the royal decree by a messenger for the census to the manger by Mary & Joseph, the shepherds who scurried to that little town having heard from the great company of angels and the wisemen faithfully following the star to the manger where the baby lay.

Yes, the children enacted every minute detail about that night in Bethlehem. Each child part of the skit enacted the events and shared the experience of every person involved on that beautiful holy night two thousand years ago.

We had children enacting the role of Mary and Joseph and the Angel Gabriel and not to forget a soldier perfectly dressed up who acted the part of pronouncing the royal decree issued by Caesar Augustus. The Beginners Sunday School sang 'The Drummer Boy' and 'Baby Jesus We Love You' by striking the drums to the beat. The Shepherds started off with a dance all excited about the great news that was brought to them by the angels they danced with the shepherds staff to a peppy shepherds song. The girls from the primary section danced to the angels song whilst announcing the Saviour's birth. The lively choir from classes 2 to 12 rendered in song and hymn, by

joyously singing 'The Little Donkey' while Mary and Joseph set off on their journey down the road to Bethlehem. The magi walked down the aisle pointing to the star right up to the stage where the manger scene was positioned. Not to forget a star was dragged and hoisted from the congregation to the stage by our Sunday School teacher and students. It was a delight to see the star move and the magi pointing and trodding along the way with their gifts. The choir then sang the hymn 'O Come All Ye Faithful', and in closing the children sang 'It's About The Cross' with the finale 'Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee' followed by the wishing song 'Feliz Navidad'.

The musical described the birth of Jesus that NIGHT IN BETHLEHEM ... how that night brought HOPE ... and the promise of SALVATION to all people.

*Preethy Deepak*  
Kirk Sunday School

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God has a place and purpose for you, somewhere for you to be and something for you to do. You never will be happy elsewhere, nor can you please God anywhere but there.

*Vance Havner*

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## Children's Corner

### **BIBLE QUIZ - January 2025** - Genesis 21-25

1. What does the name "Isaac" mean?
2. What did God say would become of Hagar's son?
3. Who stopped Abraham from sacrificing his son?
4. Where was Sarah buried?
5. Where did Abraham's servant go to find a wife for Isaac?
6. How were Esau and Jacob described as they grew?

Source: theseeker.org

### **Answers to the Christmas Bible Quiz for Children – December 2024**

1. The Gospel of Luke 2:1-20 and the Gospel of Mathew 1:18 – 2:12
2. Caesar Augustus
3. The Prophet Isaiah foretold the birth of Jesus. Isaiah 7:14, 9: 6,7
4. Simeon. Luke 2: 25 – 32
5. The Gospel of Mathew 2:13-15

#### **Hidden Pictures: Jesus and the Children**

Find these objects hidden in the picture below: book, canoe, carrot, fish, magnet, needle & thread, orange slice, snail, pencil, plate, and spoon.



*Dolly Shanthakumar*

## Taming the Tongue

The Bible warns us about the power of words, yet we often misuse them—especially on social media, where a single post can ignite division. Why do we struggle to stay silent when silence might bring peace? “The tongue is a fire...” (James 3:6). Could pride or impatience be fueling our words?

Why do we speak as if we are all-knowing, forgetting that even the wisest can falter under God’s sovereignty? “The prudent hold their tongues” (Proverbs 10:19). Is it arrogance or insecurity that prevents us from choosing wisdom?

Paul calls us to speak only “what is helpful for building others up” (Ephesians 4:29). Why don’t we weigh every word for its potential to help or heal? Jesus reminds us, “Everyone will give account for every empty word” (Matthew 12:36).

The consequences of careless speech are serious: “The tongue has the power of life and death” (Proverbs 18:21). Why not choose to speak life and delay responses to avoid harm? Instead of spreading discord, let us seek harmony, for “A perverse person stirs up conflict” (Proverbs 16:28).

To reflect Christ, we must be “slow to anger” and respond with kindness to harsh words (Proverbs 15:1). Let this be our daily prayer: “Set a guard over my mouth, Lord” (Psalm 141:3). If our hearts are filled with God’s love, wouldn’t our words reflect His grace? (Luke 6:45).

### **Practical Steps to Discipline the Tongue**

1. Dedicate your tongue to the Lord daily – Pray for control and guidance.
2. Pray for awareness – Be mindful of how your words impact others.
3. Surrender complaints – Choose gratitude over grumbling.
4. Ask for forgiveness – Reconcile quickly for unkind words.
5. Speak to uplift – Use words to encourage, comfort, and inspire.

By following these steps, our words can become tools of peace and grace, reflecting Christ’s love in everything we say.

*Charles D.J. Heynes*



**Bible Quiz No. 155–January2025**

**Bible Trivia**

Please give a Bible reference (KJV)

1. The earth, seas, grass, herb yielding seed, and the tree yielding fruit were created on which day of creation?  
a. 2<sup>nd</sup>    b. 3<sup>rd</sup>    c. 4<sup>th</sup>    d. 5<sup>th</sup>
2. Abraham asked God to spare the city of Sodom if a certain number of righteous people lived there. What was the final figure that God said he would spare the city for?
3. How many times did the children of Israel march around the city of Jericho?  
a. 2    b. 7    c. 13    d. 21    e. 49
4. In what book of the Bible do you find the words, "Of making many books there is no end" ?
5. To whom was the following statement made? "Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece."
6. When Philip met the Ethiopian eunuch, he was reading from what book in the Old Testament?
7. When a certain king tried to take the place of the priest at the altar, he was struck with leprosy. Who was this king?
8. David disobeyed God and numbered the people. As a result God gave David the choice of one of  
a. 2    b. 3    c. 4  
d. 5 different kinds of punishment he could choose.
9. The book of Proverbs lists four creatures that are small but exceedingly wise. What are these four creatures?
10. There are four different coloured horses mentioned in the book of Revelation. What were the four different colours?

Taken from *In Pursuit of Bible Trivia – Believers Edition First Volume, Bob Phillips*

Kindly send your answers to the church office or email [kirkspire@gmail.com](mailto:kirkspire@gmail.com) (please note the new email address for Kirkspire) by 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

*Usha George*

**Answers to Bible Quiz No. 154 – December 2024**

**A Sailor's Quiz**

1. Paul. 2 Corinthians 11:25
2. Ecclesiastes 1:7
3. That the disciples might have the needed tribute money. Matthew 17:27
4. In the New Jerusalem. Revelation 21:1
5. It blew in quails from the sea. Numbers 11:31
6. a) The Mediterranean b) The Dead Sea
7. Any who offend '*my little ones*'. Matthew 18:1-11
8. '*The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as ...*'. Isaiah 11:9
9. '*... These see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep*'. Psalm 107:23
10. Micah. Micah 7:19

**The winners are:**

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

*Hearty Congratulations!*

## **A prayer for St. Andrew's Church, Chennai, at Christmas**

**Rev. Peter Millar**

*Lord Jesus  
guide and friend  
of every human heart.  
At this time of Christmas  
we seek your light and love and hope  
For ourselves  
and for our world.*

*Help us to come to You  
with open hearts  
and humble minds  
that we may discover each day  
the strength of your Holy Spirit  
bringing us new life each day.*

*May your Christmas light  
shine in these places of war  
of violence and where injustice reigns.  
May your healing touch be near the sick,  
the lonely and the broken hearted.*

*Lord of the pilgrim road  
may your blessing fill our world  
and our hearts at this time of Christmas.*

*Amen*

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*"A god who is all love, all grace, all mercy, no sovereignty,  
no justice, no holiness, and no wrath is an idol."*

*R. C. Sproul*

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*Always give thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Eph 5:20*

## KNOW YOUR HYMN

“Give Thanks with a Grateful Heart”

Henry Smith

“Give Thanks with a Grateful Heart” is one of the most beloved contemporary Christian hymns, resonating deeply with believers worldwide for its simplicity and heartfelt message. Written in 1978 by Henry Smith, the hymn’s origins lie in a season of personal challenge and faith for the composer.

Henry Smith, an American worship leader and songwriter, penned “Give Thanks” during a difficult period in his life. After graduating from seminary, he struggled to find consistent work and was battling a degenerative eye condition that was gradually leading to blindness. In the midst of these challenges, Smith found solace and hope in his faith.

The inspiration for “Give Thanks” came during a sermon at his church. The preacher emphasized the power of gratitude and how the ultimate act of thanksgiving is rooted in Jesus Christ’s sacrifice. This message, combined with Smith’s personal struggles, led him to write a song that expressed profound gratitude to God, even in the face of trials.

The lyrics of “Give Thanks with a Grateful Heart” are simple yet profound:

‘Give thanks with a grateful heart,  
Give thanks to the Holy One,  
Give thanks because He’s given Jesus Christ, His Son.’

Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift! 2 Cor9:15.

The hymn emphasizes the transformative power of gratitude, especially when grounded in the truth of God’s gift of salvation through Jesus. It reminds us to focus on the spiritual riches we have in Christ, regardless of our earthly circumstances.

There is a declaration of faith and hope:

'And now let the weak say, "I am strong,"  
Let the poor say, "I am rich,"  
Because of what the Lord has done for us.'

2 Cor 12:9 we read this comforting verse "My grace is sufficient for you," and v10, "For when I am weak then I am strong," echoing Joel 3:10 "Let the weak say I am strong."

Initially, "Give Thanks" was sung in Smith's local church and remained relatively unknown. However, the song gained wider recognition after it was included in a recording by the worship leader and songwriter Don Moen in the early 1980s; Moen's version, released through Integrity Music. Today, "Give Thanks with a Grateful Heart" is sung in churches around the world, often focussing on gratitude and praise. Its enduring appeal lies in its universal message of hope, faith, and thanksgiving—a reminder to focus on God's goodness in every season of life.

We step into a New year with hope, excitement, mingled with apprehension But be sure to fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you. 1 Sam 12:24

Henry Smith's hymn reminds us of 1 Thes 5:18 In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

GIVE THANKS WITH A GRATEFUL HEART.

*Dr. Anita Chelliah*

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Whenever you put happiness before righteousness, you will be doomed to misery. That is the great message of the Bible from beginning to end. They alone are truly happy who are seeking to be righteous.

*Martyn Lloyd-Jones*

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## Medical Corner

### NUTRITION – III

**“Doctors treat, but Jesus heals”**

When I was a child our family used to visit our village during the summer vacation. Every house used to have Drumstick trees in their backyard! Drumsticks were used in sambar, made as a fry with coconut gratings and the leaves were cooked and eaten as keerai.

Drumstick leaves contain:

- 12 times more vitamin C than oranges;
- 17 times more calcium than milk;
- 10 times more vitamin A than carrots;
- 25 times more iron than spinach;
- 15 times more potassium than bananas;
- 9 times more protein than yoghurt.

Moringa (Drumstick) leaves are rich in antioxidants. Some studies show that dried, powdered leaves when taken daily, can lower blood sugar level, cholesterol levels, slow the effects of aging and reduce inflammations, and as a machine lubricant. In Western countries, dried leaves are sold as dietary supplements, in either powder or capsule form. Compared to the leaves, the pods are generally lower in vitamins and minerals. Moringa is an important food source in some parts of the world. Because it can be grown cheaply and easily, and the leaves retain lots of vitamins and minerals when dried, Moringa is used in India and Africa in feeding programs to fight malnutrition.

*Dr. (Mrs.) Rajini Kantha Narendranath*

## Kirk News



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

### **Prayerful Steps**

It is abundantly clear that prayer is the divine conversation anchoring us in God's love and grace. We come to God in prayer empty-handed, bearing only the name of Jesus, yet He faithfully answers each of our petitions. In the chaos of this world, prayer offers us a time of resting in the finished work of Jesus. As we close one year and step into another, may this perspective on prayer transform our hearts, enabling us to end the year with gratitude and begin the new one with hope.

Philippians 4:6-7 encourages us to bring everything to God in prayer with thanksgiving. When we do so, we exchange our worries for His supernatural peace. As we reflect on the past year, we can give thanks for God's faithfulness, knowing that even in the midst of challenges, He has been working all things together for our good.

Looking ahead, prayer becomes our connection to hope. In Mark 11:24, Jesus promises that whatever we ask in prayer, believing, we will receive. Let us boldly approach the throne of grace, as Hebrews 4:16 reminds us, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Prayer is most powerful when infused with thanksgiving and faith in God's promises. As we step into the new year, let us pray with the assurance that we are beloved children of God, equipped by His grace and empowered by His Spirit. In doing so, we can confidently embrace a year filled with His plans for good, overflowing with hope and abundant favour.

Let prayer be the bridge that carries us from a year of reflection into a year of divine expectation. Rest in His grace, and let His peace guide our heart every step of the way.

### **Guest Speakers**

Mr. Rajiv Chelladurai – Be the Man – 15.12.2024 – 7:00 AM & 9:00 AM Services

### **A Season of Advent and Celebration at St. Andrew's Church**

#### **1<sup>st</sup> December, Sunday**

The Advent season began on the Lord's Day with the lighting of the First Advent Candle, symbolising hope. This marked the start of a month of joyous anticipation of Christ's birth. The 6:00 PM service was enriched by the Sunday School Christmas Musical, "For Unto Us a Child Is Born," where children joyfully shared the message of the Saviour's arrival through music and drama. It reminded the congregation of the eternal hope we have in Christ, the light of the world.

#### **8<sup>th</sup> December, Sunday**

The Second Sunday in Advent highlighted Peace. Following the 9:00 AM service, the Christmas Sharing Sale was held to support missions. The church community came together to share in generosity and fellowship, offering biryani, stew, juices, ice cream, plants, books, clothes, and other items. It was a vibrant expression of unity and the peace of God that transcends all understanding.

#### **15<sup>th</sup> December, Sunday**

Joy filled the Third Sunday of Advent, celebrated as Men's Fellowship Sunday. The 9:00 AM service set the tone for a day of celebration across various groups. The Sunday School Christmas get-together at the SACCE Hall brought laughter and learning, while the Driver's Fellowship had their Christmas Celebration at 9:00 AM. Later, the Men's Fellowship and Women's Fellowship gathered for an inspiring time of carols, games, a Christmas message, and a festive lunch. It was a day that reflected the joy of the season through worship, community, and celebration.



### **20<sup>th</sup> December, Friday**

The much-anticipated Christmas Hope Concert, in aid of the St. Andrew's Church Restoration Project, was a grand evening of musical excellence. Beginning at 7:00 PM, the concert featured renowned bands and choirs, including AFC, Bella Voce, Canticles, Harmonics, Octet Cantabile, The Minstrels, The Samuels, and In His Service. The performances were a beautiful blend of talent and devotion, uplifting hearts while contributing to a cause close to the church's mission.

### **22<sup>nd</sup> December, Sunday**

The Fourth Advent Candle, symbolising Love, was lit during the morning service. The day culminated in the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols at 6:00 PM, an inspiring service interwoven with Scripture and choir performances narrating the story of Christ's birth. The evening continued with a Christmas Campfire, where the congregation enjoyed music, food, and fellowship under the stars. It was a night filled with the warmth of Christ's love.

### **24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> December**

On Christmas Eve, the final Advent Candle was lit during the 11:00 PM service, marking the fulfilment of Advent and the arrival of Christ. The next morning, the Christmas Festive Service at 9:00 AM was a jubilant celebration of the Saviour's birth, filled with carols, Scripture readings, and a powerful Christmas message that reminded all of God's greatest gift to humanity.

### **28<sup>th</sup> December, Saturday**

The Year-End Fasting Prayer, organised by the Women's Fellowship, brought together men, women, and children from 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM at the SACCE Hall. It was a time of consecration and intercession, seeking God's guidance and blessings as the year drew to a close. Through worship and prayer, the congregation reflected on God's faithfulness and committed to walking in His will for the coming year.

### **31<sup>st</sup> December 2024 & 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025**

The year ended with the Watch-night Service at 11:00 PM, a solemn and prayerful time to give thanks for the year gone by and to seek God's presence for the year ahead. The New Year began with the New Year Festive Service at 9:00 AM, a joyful

gathering to declare God's promises and start 2025 with hope and faith in His unfailing love.

**5<sup>th</sup> January, Sunday**

"I will be your God, and you shall be My people." Covenant Sunday services at 7:00 AM and 9:00 AM invited the congregation to renew their commitment to God's covenant. It was a moving reminder of God's steadfast love and our call to live faithfully in His grace.

The Advent and festive season was a time of hope, peace, joy, and love, drawing the church family closer to God and to one another. May the blessings of this season continue to inspire and strengthen us as we walk in His light.

*Angela Susan Bryner*

***Happy New Year 2025!***

***Wishing our dear readers and their families  
a blessed and joyous New Year!***

**Kirkspire Editorial Board**

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"We need to remember that we are saved by grace when we fail. But we need to remember it much more when we succeed."

*Timothy Keller*

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KSS-Kirk Sunday School Christmas Program 2024  
Preethy Deepak



KSS Nativity Musical - Unto us a Child is Born by the  
Sunday school children



Men's Fellowship Sunday\_Mr Rajiv Chelladurai  
spoke on Be the Man



Men's Fellowship Sunday-Men in white presented  
a Christmas number

