

Bring all the tithes into the storehouse,
That there may be food in My house,
And try Me now in this,"
Says the Lord of hosts,
"If I will not open for you the windows of heaven
And pour out for you *such* blessing
That *there will not be room enough to receive it.*
Malachi 3:10



Kirkspire

The Monthly Magazine of St. Andrew's Church (The Kirk), Chennai
September 2023

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Editorial Board :

**Usha George
Chitra Bennett**

Word from the Pastor



BRING, BOW AND BEHOLD

The Bible is filled with examples of those who brought their offerings to God in worship only to realize that the recipient of this worship is not going to silently watch the offering but responds in such a way that it wows the one who offers which will only make the offeror offer more and more. I see that it is a loaded statement but it is so true.

Take the example of Abel who brought his offering to God by faith. God mentions Abel's righteousness to shame his murderer (and his brother) Cain about Abel's beautiful offering, and it is notable that this offering is mentioned all the way in the book of Hebrews.

Elijah, at Mount Carmel, brought his offering to God to prove the greatness of God in an open challenge to the prophets of Baal, and God responded by sending fire from heaven. The same Elijah was found on the Mount of Transfiguration along with Moses, a testament of God's reward for the faithful.

Mark 2 records four men who brought a paralyzed man to Jesus even by breaking open the roof of the house. Their faith and boldness was rewarded by Jesus when the man was healed and saved (his sins were forgiven).

Ultimately, Jesus offered Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world and declared in His prayer, 'Father, not my will, let Thy will be done.' Philippians 2:8-9 says, 'And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore, God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name.'

As the church celebrates Thanksgiving Sunday in the month of September and as we reflect on the theme 'Choose to Bring', let us understand the sequence taught in God's word.

- a. Bring your life, its challenges, needs and your shortcomings to God completely
- b. Bow down in worship acknowledging that He alone can lift us from where we are to where He wants to take us
- c. Behold His power at work in your life in such amazing ways that not only you but everyone around you will marvel when they see the greatness of God in you, for you and through you.

Have a blessed month.

Rev. Isaac Emmanuel Johnson

It hurts when God has to PRY things out of our hand!

Corrie ten Boom



John's Corner

TRULY THANKFUL

Read Eph. 5:20
(September 10th is Thanksgiving Sunday)

My blessings, Lord, are numerous,
I can't keep pace with all You've done;
I cannot live sufficient days,
To thank You for them one by one.

Help me to never overlook
The little things You often do,
And wait for some great miracle
To know I'm blessed and say, 'Thank You.'

Open my eyes, my mind, my heart,
To those less fortunate than me,
And reach out to them with Your love,
That they may draw, dear Lord, to Thee.

John H. Bala Singh



Spurring on...

Spurring and encouraging one another is not an option but a mandate for every Christian. Hebrews 10: 25 exhorts us to consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Today there is a crying need for encouragement as we live in a fallen world of toil and turmoil, a world of cutthroat competition in all spheres and loneliness in the midst of teeming multitudes around us. It is easy to slip into dark, deep wells of depression and sadness. Some griefs are hard to bear and difficult to overcome without a shoulder to cry on. Christ is our Anchor to stabilize us and the Rock on which we stand but a friendly hand to help us up and encourage us to move on remains indispensable. In I Thessalonians 5:10 Paul writes "Christ died for us so that whether awake or sleep we may live together with Him. Therefore encourage one another and build each other up."

We become strong encouragers when the Love of Christ flows through us and spills over to meet the needs of others. Preoccupation with ourselves and our problems prevents us from seeing the needs of others. But when we look at them with eyes tinged with the Love of Jesus we are able to see clearly the despair, the loneliness and the desperation behind masks and facades of seemingly brave and smiling faces. The need is everywhere – maybe right in our own homes - tired and weary husbands , facing the onslaughts of pressure and stress at work, children who have so much to contend with in schools and colleges – all of them need a sympathetic ear to listen to their woes and a comforting word to lift them up. Maybe we have a friend who has received an adverse medical report, a neighbor who just lost a loved one, an elderly couple in the neighbourhood with children living far away – all of them need your look of compassion and touch of love. We often withhold words of comfort afraid of intruding but by so doing we lose valuable opportunities of breathing Christ's Love into their hearts and spurring them on.

How do we encourage each other? Our awesome God Himself is our best role model in this. I Kings 19 explicitly reveals God's loving care and compassion. Elijah after his stupendous victory on Mt. Carmel, is filled with fear when Jezebel threatens to take his life and runs into the desert and sits under a broom tree, praying that he might die. Tired and exhausted, he feels he'd had enough. The Lord ministers to him with utmost love and understanding. First He makes sure Elijah is fed and physically nurtured. Elijah is twice given bread kept warm over hot coals and water to drink. When we are physically exhausted and hungry our troubles seem big and gigantic. Our Living Lord knows that physical sustenance is of paramount importance. Next God reassures Elijah with the strength of His Presence. The Lord comes to Elijah not in the wind or the earthquake or the fire but in a gentle whisper. An awareness of God's Presence always lifts us up. Sometimes just being there for a hurting person is all that is needed. No words – just our comforting presence, a hand on the shoulder and a compassionate look. Then God lends a listening ear. It's not that God does not know what had happened but makes Elijah pour out his troubles and all that he had gone through. Allowing the hurting person to give vent to his inner turmoil often has a cathartic effect. Finally God gives practical solutions. He tells Elijah to anoint Hazael and Jehu as kings and knowing that Elijah needed help tells him to anoint Elisha as his successor. Where and when practical help is needed that is what we are to offer a hurting person.

'No man is an island.' All of us need each other for encouragement, prayer and helping hand. May God grant us the wisdom and discernment to choose the right words-the Word of God is rich with verses of encouragement, the insight to know when to keep silent and above all the love to reach out in promptness to those in need. May God enable each of us to be inspiring cheerleaders 'spurring one another to love and good deeds.'

Chitra Bennett

Endureth

Love...beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. 1 Corinthians 13:7

'To thine own self be true.'

Will life always be like this, Lord?
A series of endless trials?
Laughter and hope seem strangers.
My love for you is feeble and cold
with more duty than delight;
prayers are half hearted and rambling
as specific ones require substantial faith.
Then, there is this gnawing feeling-
like I'm making a big deal out of nothing.

'My child,
I haven't forgotten
I am not flippant either.
Don't run away from Me.
Don't hide or pretend with Me.
Truth is what I long for
even when it's ugly at times.

I want the real you,
with the
brokenness, scars, grief and all.
You are Mine and I care for you.
Not only when you are good
but also in your worst moments-
When you go crazy,
When you despise yourself,
hate yourself...
Yes, I love you
even when
you hate yourself.

When days are hard
lean fully on My Spirit, My promises.
As you do this
you will fall deeply in love with Me.
Then endurance becomes possible.

My dearest child,
because of My love for you and
your love for Me
you will not only survive
but will also learn to live
truly and freely...
After all,
Love endureth all things
And,
Love never fails."

Dr. Susan Rajkumari

Mercy there was great, and grace was free;
Pardon there was multiplied to me;
There my burdened soul found liberty, at Calvary.

William R. Newell

Bible Quiz No. 140–September 2023

A Chemist's Quiz



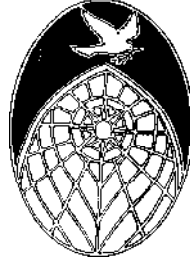
Please give the Bible reference where applicable.

1. By what name is a chemist known in the Bible ?
2. In what country was the science of medicine first known ?
3. What gifts of **The Wise Men** would have been found in the Apothecary's ?
4. What was the base of most unguents used in Bible times ?
5. In Ecclesiastes, what is said to cause the *'ointment of the apothecary to stink'* ?
6. What place was famous for its medicinal **'balm'** ?
7. What herbs were named by Jesus when He castigated the Pharisees for their *'meticulous'* tithing?
8. What was the most **costly ointment** ? and what story is connected with its use ?
9. What did the shepherds ordinarily use to heal wounds of the sheep ?
10. According to the Book of Revelation, the leaves of which tree were *'for the healing of the nations'* ?

Taken from Who? Why? What? - a Bible quiz book by May C. Smith.

Kindly send your answers to the church office or email admin@thekirk.in by 24th September, 2023.

Usha George



**'Great are the works of the Lord
They are pondered by all who delight in
them''**

In the quietness of the morn, 'the Special Children' of Asha, praising and thanking our Lord through a simple dance to the song 'Iduvarai nadathi, kuraivindri kaathu, makilavai thantheerae, nantri aiya' (Thank you Lord for leading us this far, rejoicing and not lacking for anything), was an apt beginning to the Asha Sunday celebration during the 7am service on the 20th August 2023.

'Praise God in his sanctuary
Praise him for his acts of power
Let everything that has breath praise the Lord'

Taking the cue from the Psalmist, this is exactly what the Asha Family, comprising of 48 'special children' from the Egmore campus and 9 from the Thirupalaivanam campus, their families and staff, put into action in both the 7am and the 9 am services.

In spite of their physical and intellectual challenges and poorly developed verbal communication, the joyful, lively singing of the children 'there is joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart' and 'Deep and wide, deep and wide, God's love is deep and wide' reverberated through the sanctuary. The memory verses recited and the rhythmic dancing by these 'special children with special needs' amazed many in the congregation.

The testimony by Mrs Dhanalakshmi mother of S. Priya about the Lord being with her and guiding her and her family and the healing of her child bore a powerful witness to the presence of our Lord in our lives- his bond with us beyond boundaries of any kind.

To the families gathered there, bruised, embittered, scorned, humiliated and harassed even by their very own immediate circle of family and the society around, excluded from social interactions because others felt embarrassed by the presence of 'a special child', Pastor Isaac Johnson's message on 'Bond beyond Blood' was a balm. It reassured them of God's love for them and His grace available for them without any reservations, giving them the courage to face the tomorrows.

The congregational hymn 'Through the love of God Our Saviour, all will be well' was indeed a reassuring reinforcement of our God's presence with us as we navigate through life.

The sale of colourful products after the service show- cased the abilities of the children and their capabilities.

As the congregation departed for home, they would have surely pondered on this Great Compassionate God and on his wonders to be remembered !!

The Asha Family

Never forget that at the very heart of the Gospel is the whole principle of giving.

Dr. Stephen F. Olford



The ASHA Thanksgiving service popularly known as ASHA Sunday



The children of the Thirupalaivanam ASHA centre



The children of the Egmore ASHA singing.



The children of the Egmore ASHA presenting a dance



Mrs. Dhanalakshmi, parent of S. Priya a special child, bearing witness to God's goodness in their lives.



The Parents of Egmore ASHA praising God

**Kirk Men's Day Out: A Unique Sunday of Worship,
Fellowship, and Fun by the Sea**



It was a time of worship, fellowship and fun by the sea as the Kirk's Men's Fellowship took a day out at Mamallapuram

It was a Sunday of a different kind as 19 men from the Kirk including a few guests carpooled and headed to Mamallapuram on August 20th for a day long picnic at the Scripture Union camp site.

Seated on cement benches in the casuarina grove closer to the beach, it was an off-sanctuary spirit filled Sunday service with three musicians Amardeep Devadason, Alfred Pramod and Sujith Ipe leading the praise and worship with their guitars.

Sporting an army cap and sharing his testimony, David Appasamy brought the word emphasizing on the need to make "Christ Our Primary Identity" than our titles, talents or designations. He emphasized the need to have a personal encounter with Christ and submit to His lordship to receive salvation and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Only then could we truly be "Obedient disciples of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Sujith reflected on the conditions for experiencing God's presence, meditating on Isaiah 59:1-2 and 57:15 with a call to examine ourselves in the light of these.

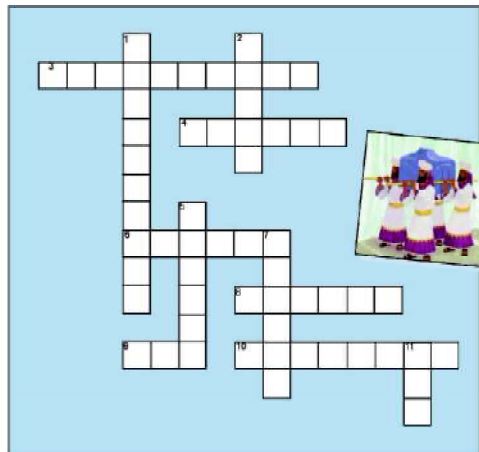
Israel Abraham created magical moments of laughter with his fun ice breaking games helping the men to get to know each other and pray for each other. There was also a photographic competition on God's creation as told in Genesis that kept the teams on their toes. Water Polo in the pool drew even those who didn't know swimming to get wet. The hour long boisterous aquatic clash turned into a perfect appetizer to enjoy the sumptuous fish meal served.

Post lunch there were more sports activities to burn the extra calories added. Mini Basketball, a tweaked version of Dodge Ball and Frisbee engaged all. Some men of course didn't miss the opportunity for a 'sun bath', to be washed by the waves.

The drive, breakfast, lunch and evening teatime gave good opportunity for the men to fellowship, bond and to grow as obedient disciples of Jesus Christ. If you think you missed this, you may want to register for the upcoming men's fellowship retreat at Kodaikanal in October.

J Sam Daniel Stalin

God Stopped the Jordan River Crossword Puzzle



ACROSS

- 3. Set apart; sanctify
- 4. Number after eleven
- 6. Groups of people, usually related
- 8. He was the leader of the people who crossed the Jordan River.
- 9. Not wet
- 10. Something that reminds people of an event

DOWN

- 1. The people who crossed the Jordan River
- 2. Rivers are made of this.
- 5. "The Lord's hand is _____."
- 7. Another word for rocks
- 11. _____ of the covenant

Just a little talk with Jesus



Zacchaeus didn't know God but he wanted to know who this Jesus person was"

- Ruana Std 3

Answers to Bible Quiz No. 139 – August 2023

A Choirmaster's Quiz

1. David
2. Choir leaders and chief musicians
3. At the birth of Christ
4. a) Miriam; b) Deborah; c) Mary
5. The Song of Solomon
6. David. Psalm 40:3
7. 1005. 1 Kings 4:32
8. Jesus. Matthew 11:17
9. The elder brother of the prodigal. Luke 15:25
10. When He went to the ruler's house to raise his daughter from the dead. Matthew 9:23

The winners are:

- 1. Mrs. Suguna Joseph**
- 2. Mrs. Indra Rajanayakam**
- 3. Mrs. Victoria Basker**
- 4. Mrs. Aruna Asir**
- 5. Mrs. Patricia Patrick**
- 6. Mrs. Sujata Elizabeth Prasad**
- 7. Mrs. Sabrina Siga**
- 8. Mrs. Peace Rani Sudhakar**
- 9. Gladys Vedavimali**

Hearty Congratulations!



*"He who refreshes others will himself be refreshed."
Proverbs 11:25*

Thanks giving

The day this issue of our Kirkspire is released we will be celebrating our Annual Thanksgiving Service in our Church. This is a truly joyous occasion everyone in our church looks forward to which brings in bounteous offerings. The reason for our overflowing joy is that, unlike various other churches, we do not sell or auction the offerings but on the same day distribute them to various Christian organizations which take care of the poor and needy in our society. When we visualize the happiness on the faces of the people receiving the items - our expression of love -it warms our hearts.

Thanksgiving is our expression of gratitude to our Lord for all that He has done in our lives. Whenever I think of being thankful to our Lord for His material blessings in our lives, Deuteronomy Chapter 8 comes to mind. This passage not only reminds us about the need to be thankful to our Lord for his material blessings but to also realize how much He has showered us with His mercies and goodness in the past and how much we can trust Him regarding our future. It reminds us that before the act of thanksgiving, there is the need for a thankful heart. If we lack a truly thankful heart, the outward act of giving will be absolutely meaningless. It is key to remember that it is not by our ability or strength that we raise and produce what we have, but it is by the power and strength of our Lord.

When we go through the pages of the Bible, the Old Testament in particular, we see that thanksgiving is always associated with joy, singing, praise and exuberance. In the New Testament Paul tells us

in 1 Cor. 9:7 that "...God loves a cheerful giver." And this cheerful giving is demonstrated by "sowing generously" and "not reluctantly or under compulsion." In his message during the 9:00 am service last Sunday (1st September), our Pastor described thanksgiving as giving glory to God. Our act of thanksgiving is an act of witnessing to our Lord's grace and kindness that glorifies Him.

Our act of thanksgiving arising from a truly grateful heart has its blessings. Paul tells the "cheerful giver" in 1 Cor. 9:8 – "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work." This tells us about a cycle, of "having all that you need" to continue to "abound in every good work." Paul affirms this principle of God in verses 10 and 11 of the same chapter – "Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God."

May our Lord continue to bless us to be a blessing that will continue to result in Thanksgiving.

John Rajanayakam

Reprinted from Kirkspire, September 2013

Am I not destroying my enemies when I make friends
of them?

Abraham Lincoln

'Return Unto Me'

Jeremiah 4:1

Can one ever imagine and understand the pristine beauty of God's Creation as it is so matter-of-factly stated in Genesis 2:1 "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them"- the millions of radiant lights of the skies, seen and unseen, moving at spectacular speed, incomprehensible even to the sharpest minds.

Apart from the stunning glories of the Universe, Man was uniquely designed, which made David declare in one of the grandest psalms, "I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made"(Psalm 139:14).

Sadly, when Adam and Eve sinned, man's heavenly worth was lost. God's children were separated from their Holy Father due to their disobedience, hatred, jealousy, slaughter, ... the list is endless. Our Creator could have justly destroyed Man due to their dreary and devilish sins, but He restrained.

Holiness can never coexist with sin. Greatly grieved, God did not forsake His rebellious children. Our Creator reacted. He activated the plan of Salvation to rescue His sin-stained children and bring them back to Him.

Our God selected ordinary men to be His messengers. His prophets pleaded with the people of their day to return to God. They spoke with power and authority, but alas! the words fell on deaf ears. The hearts of the people remained obstinate. The centuries between the Testaments were moving towards a divine event.

How did our Creator fix the way to redeem and save His children who were lost to Him? "Christianity is the story of God fixing His foot into history." Our God laid a Child on the doorstep of humanity's heart."For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

All that follows is the final agonizing call of God to "return to Him." The life and teachings of the Messiah Jesus Christ remains unparalleled. Priceless and precious truths have been presented free to the world. Christ's mission is laid out explicitly "For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost"(Luke 19:10).

The parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son, make the 15th chapter of Luke precious. What does it mean to be lost – that something is not in the place where it should be. That which is LOST has to be FOUND. We have to return to Him as the Prodigal Son did, with a repentant and contrite heart.

The price of sin has been paid at Calvary. His redeeming blood is the only "gateway" to return to our Creator.

"Redeemed, redeemed,
Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb!
Redeemed thro' His infinite mercy;
His child, and forever, I am."

Usha George



Medical Corner

ULCERS IN THE BODY – V

Foot Ulcers in Diabetes

“Doctors treat, but Jesus heals.”

The foot is a frequent site for complications in patients with diabetes and for this reason, foot care is particularly important. Tissue destruction (necrosis) in the feet is a common reason for hospital admission which may be prolonged and may end with amputation.

Foot ulcers occur as a result of injury (often trivial) in the presence of neuropathy, a condition in which the nerves to the foot do not function normally. There is also decreased blood circulation to the foot. The patient may not have any symptoms and may have loss of sensation in the foot and numbness.

The diabetic foot may have ulcer or sepsis (infection), abscess, infection of the **“foot bones”** and gangrene. The management is to remove thickened skin, treat infection with appropriate antibiotics. Patient is advised to avoid weight bearing, ensure good diabetic control, (blood sugar levels), control the swelling, and undertake angiogram of the foot to assess the need for vascular reconstruction where indicated.

Prevention is the most effective way of dealing with the problem of tissue necrosis (ulcer) in the diabetic foot. A specialist chiropodist (foot specialist) is an integral part of the diabetes team to ensure regular and effective chiropody and to educate patients in care of the feet. Specially manufactured and fitted orthotic footwear is required to prevent recurrence of ulceration and protect feet of patients, from further damage.

Foot ulcers are common among diabetes patients, especially if they walk barefoot and end up with injuries. The injuries could be due to nerve damage or damage to blood vessels. Uncontrolled diabetes could lead to gangrene resulting in the amputation of the foot.

Diabetes patients are prone to loss of sensation in the foot and poor blood supply to the lower limbs. This makes them vulnerable to ulceration, infection and poor healing. At an advanced stage, such ulcers can even lead to amputation. Proper footwear can help reduce the risk of ulcers. Proper preventive measures can go a long way in reducing the economic burden on the patient, the family and the hospital.

Dr. (Mrs.) Rajini Kantha Narendranath

Faith isn't faith until it's all you're holding on to.

Unknown



Kirk News

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

Hope in Times of Drought

Israel went through a period of drought for three years. During that drought, God provided for the widow of Zarephath and revived her son. After three years, the Word of God came to Elijah that He would send rain. However, when Elijah prayed, there were six times of "There is nothing." The seventh time, the servant saw a cloud as small as a man's hand after which there was a heavy rain. God's timings are so perfect, through the drought He takes care of the lowest, loneliest, and lost. He always brings about an "after the drought" time, so, during the seemingly protracted wait, let us be filled with hope in this Almighty God. At church, the Asha Ministry best demonstrates this.

Guest Speaker

Rev. David Singh - 13/08/2023 – 9:00 am Service - "The God of Hope"
- A message that inspired hope and faith in hearts.

SALT

On the 6th of August, at 11:30 am, the Serve As Living Testimony (SALT) ministry of the church brought together young families, couples, and individuals over a fellowship lunch outside the Manse.

Friendship Club

The Friendship Club met on the 10th of August at 3pm in SACCE for a time of purposeful togetherness in the Lord.

ASHA

On the 20th of August, at the 9 am service, the Asha children, parents, and staff gathered to thank the Lord for His goodness through the past year. The children recited Bible verses, sang, and danced along with the staff with big, broad smiles. A beautiful testimony of God's faithfulness to a family through ASHA's service to a child was shared. A video presentation showing how God continues to strengthen His children was watched by the congregation in absolute rapture. Kirk has been blessed to work alongside Asha through this beautiful journey.

Kirk Men's Fellowship

The Men's Fellowship Picnic took place on the 20th of August at the Scripture Union Camp Site, Mahabalipuram. This was an opportunity for the men of the church to take a break from their routine, relax, have fun with good food and music, and grow closer in their walk with the Lord together.

Kirk Women's Fellowship

The Kirk Women's Fellowship (KWF) organised a special event, Beautiful Buds, for young girls within the age group of 15 - 19 years on the 15th of August, from 10 am to 3 pm. This event was filled with inspiring talks on nutrition, mental health, and godly living. It included songs of praise and worship, activities, games, group discussions, and lunch. Dr. Malathi Sathiyasekaran, Senior Consultant (Gastroenterologist) and Dr. S.Sumathi, MD, DGO, Consultant Obstetrics & Gynaecology, were the guest speakers for the day. All the young girls who participated were blessed.

The Women's Monthly Meet took place on 20th August after the 9 am service. The women met for a time of testimonies, discussion on how to cultivate a gentle spirit, and prayer.

Independence Day Celebration

On the 15th of August, at 9:30 am, the children and staff of RMDCC, AKCDC and ASHA celebrated our country's Independence in the church campus.

House Church

House church was hosted in turn every Friday of the month at 6.30 pm by Mr. Anil Oommen and Mrs. Beena Oommen, Mr. S. Benjamin

and Mrs. Rebecah Sujatha Benjamin, Mr. Billy Paul and Mrs. Julia Paul, and Mr. Amulraj and Mrs. Jayanthi Amulraj.

Obituary

We convey our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families of:

Mr. Dilip John Chacko entered the glory of our Lord on the 11th of August. The funeral service was held at St. Andrew's Church on August 14th at 10.00 am.

Dr. (Mrs) P. Rebecca Clarke stepped into the glorious unknown on the 12th of August. The funeral service was held at St. Andrew's Church on August 13th at 3.00 pm.

Dr. Viziakumar passed on to be with the Lord on the 16th of August.

"Forever with the Lord!"

Angela Susan Bryner

It hurts when God has to PRY things out of our hand!

Corrie ten Boom



The Staff of ASHA thanking God for his grace



Pastor with Joshua
Message on 'Bond beyond blood'

