

ST. THOMAS INDIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

1009 UNRUH AVE, PHILADELPHIA, PA 19111

Phone: (215) 342 1500 Fax: (215) 342 2700 www.stthomasphiladelphia.org

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2019

VOLUME XXIII ISSUE 3

Vicar's Message

Marching through Lent in March

It is so heartening to know that several of us are taking the Great Lent seriously and started observing it. In the Orthodox Tradition, Lent is a source of our spiritual strength, for those who seek it. For many it is just another season! For those who take it seriously, it proves as a beneficial factor in not only strengthening their spirituality but also strengthening their mental and physical life. In other words, Lenten time is a holistic exercise that helps us to full growth as a real human being. This concept of "real human being" is meant to say that the way the creator made us to function. Many people look real in exterior appearance but internally they are simply confused, destroyed, or even corrupted. They may appear well-dressed, good-looking, rich-looking, and will speak a lot of intelligent words. Many such people are good professionals too. But if we get an opportunity to look into their inner "being" we know what is going on. Often it may not be as great as they appear.



(transformation) or change. These are human beings who love their own life and want to have a change from what they had been doing that is detrimental to their life. Many are under various kinds of addictions: it may be substance abuse, entertainment factors, sexual perversion, egotistic life pattern, arrogance, love for money (avarice), love for positions or recognition, and so on. They will have a metanoia (change of mind) when they start observing lent. This is possible for the wise people who rethink about their own destructive elements in life that they acquired with their addictions or evil circumstances. But those who continue to enjoy their addictions will not feel the need for any

change. It is not easy to get rid of addictions once it has grown to some measure. It is easy to stop in the initial stage. However, there is nothing that is “impossible with God”. If a person truly wants to change their lifestyle, it is possible even though they will show some ‘withdrawal symptoms’. Withdrawal symptom is a great tool Satan uses against us. Once we feel ‘lost’ then such symptoms appear. But those who truly draw their strength from God will succeed in fighting that symptom and gain victory.

The greatest opportunity that the lent gives us is to impose some small restrictions in our life. It may look simple like abstaining from a particular food item such as egg, fish, or meat. But what the restriction gives us is the power of mind to withstand the simple need which may look unimportant. For people who are so deep in their addictions abstaining from certain habits is tough. But when they slowly overcome their affinity to certain food items, it will give them the feeling of success and they can slowly overcome serious addictions as well. All that we need is to make our small strides. Slowly we will reach our goal.

Another opportunity that the Lent gives us is to pray longer hours. Maybe we don’t even

know what we are praying while reading the prayers in the book. But the time that we spend with God is a positive time when the mind is completely diverted to prayer. Prayer is not always an intelligent exercise but a time set apart to divert our attention to The Superior Power. Thus, our attention given to some of our evil habits will get reduced as we are spending less time on that. Every instance of prayer is an opportunity to connect with God. That in itself is a power.

Finally, the lent opens the softer part of our heart to see the needs of others who are less fortunate. God has given us many things to make our life comfortable and cozy, but we should not just be satisfied with our comfort. We should seek the comfort of others as well. That is a dominant idea in our Lenten prayer; our prayer should result in our charitable action. We fast in order to share our resources with others who don’t have it. Without charity, our prayer is worthless. With prayer alone, we will never reach the favor of God. Prayer should lead to reconciliation, forgiveness, help, and love.

God bless you all to have a very blessed Lenten time.

Lovingly, Fr. M. K. Kuriakose, Vicar

From the Secretary's Desk:

Dear All,

With utmost humility thanking God for completing the month of February. God's grace allowed us to come together, worship Him, and partake in the Holy Qurbana during this month.



Great Lent: We started our great lent with Shubkono prayer, prayer of reconciliation and forgiveness. Every day during the Lent we have Lenten evening prayer and meditation starting at 7PM in the church. Our parish level Lenten retreat is on Saturday, April 13. Rev. Fr. Sujit Thomas will be leading our Lenten retreat.

Monthly Fasting Prayer: As you know, many of our parish members are going through difficult situations. Let us come together as a parish in fasting and prayer, and uplift each other. With this

in mind, we have initiated a monthly fasting prayer on the First Friday of each month ending with evening prayer at 7PM in the chapel.



Parking Lot: The first phase of the parking lot is complete. By the time the parking is completed in June, we are anticipating a total cost of \$115,000 for both parking lots. Encouraging all members to pay their contribution toward the parking lot fund.

Remembering our family members whose loved ones went on to be with Lord; **Mr. P. K. Abraham**, brother of Annakutty Mathew and Aleyamma Thomas and **Mrs. Aleyamma Ommen** grandmother of Simmy Robin Philip. On behalf of the parish we extend our condolences and prayers to all bereaving family members.

Thanking our beloved Kuriakose Achen, Sujith Achen, and their families for their sacrificial service to our parish. Thanking all our family members for your prayers and support. Please continue to uphold our parish and all our family members in your prayers.

With prayers,

Santhosh Baby
Parish Secretary, 2019

MARCH WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Mr. & Mrs. Achen Varghese	Mar 21
Mr. & Mrs. Jacob Chacko	Mar 30



MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Christian John	Mar 1	Shibin Mathew Koshy	Mar 15	Rajan C Padiyara	Mar 23
Kunjappy Koshy	Mar 3	Bibin P. Baby	Mar 16	Liya Thomas	Mar 24
Abel G Panicker	Mar 3	Reena Raju	Mar 16	Ivannah Alexander	Mar 25
Stacy M George	Mar 4	Aradhana Rose John	Mar 16	Mathew Varghese	Mar 25
Aswathi Eliz Jacob	Mar 4	Asriel Ann Vaidian	Mar 16	Susan Mathews	Mar 25
Julice John Raju	Mar 4	Pramod Kurisinmoottil	Mar 17	Ashin Saju	Mar 26
James C Peter	Mar 5	Philip George	Mar 17	Lucas Philip	Mar 26
Podiamma Thankachan	Mar 5	Nikhil M Philip	Mar 17	Susan Panicker	Mar 27
Elizabeth Kurian	Mar 5	Thejus Mathew	Mar 18	Alvin V Jose	Mar 27
Akash Anu	Mar 6	Daniel P. George	Mar 18	Daniel Yohannan	Mar 27
Susan Philip	Mar 6	Varughese M M.	Mar 18	Megha S Varghese	Mar 28
Justin Ronnie	Mar 7	Sarah Roy	Mar 19	Jacob Varghese	Mar 28
Joshua Jacob Jose	Mar 7	Josna Koshy	Mar 19	Rachel Melavila	Mar 28
Nissi Zachariah	Mar 8	Abhilash John	Mar 19	Cicily George Cherian	Mar 28
Saji Abraham	Mar 8	Cherian V V.	Mar 19	Raji K John	Mar 29
Simon Cheeran Ittikuru	Mar 8	Mariakutty Thomas	Mar 21	Alen Saju	Mar 29
Susan Daniel	Mar 10	Toby Johnes Fen	Mar 22	Ammukutty Geevarghese	Mar 30
Nelson O Panicker	Mar 10	Rohan Philip Robin	Mar 22	Annamma Cherian	Mar 30
Previn G Joseph	Mar 10			Daniel Thomas	Mar 30
Merlin Philip	Mar 12			Paul Jacob	Mar 30
Biju P. Varghese	Mar 13			Lovina Maria Aji	Mar 30
Binu K. Mathew	Mar 13			Cheriyann P. Oommen	Mar 31
Aneena Mariam Daniel	Mar 14	Tiji David Thomas	Mar 23	Raji George	Mar 31
Vincent Jacob	Mar 14	Mary Kuriakose	Mar 23	Izabella Ann Philip	Mar 31
Suresh Cherian	Mar 15	Alex Pothen	Mar 23		



Sunday School News

*Submitted by Binny Cherian, Principal
(Tel.: 914.708.7981, Email: cbinny@gmail.com)*

St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church (STIOC) Sunday School Calendar for 2019					
S.No	Event	Venue	Date and Time	Coordinator/s	Registration Fee / Deadline
1	SS Teachers Fellowship	Residence of Mrs. & Mr. Binny Cherian	Feb. 23rd (Sat.) 10.00 am – 1 pm	Binny Cherian	
2	Easter Egg Hunt	St. Thomas IOC, Unruh Ave.,	April 21 st (Sun.) @ 12.30 pm	TBD	
3	Training for Assigned Competition (Essay)	St. Thomas IOC, Unruh Ave.,	TBD	TBD	
3	Training for Quiz Competition	St. Thomas IOC, Unruh Ave.,	TBD	Deepa Thomas Kochamma	
4	Sunday School trip	TBD	TBD	TBD	
5	Church level Assigned Competitions	St. Thomas IOC, Unruh Ave.,	April 28 th (Sun.) @ 12.00 pm	Anu Lajy and Liz Pothen	
6	Church level preliminary Bible Quiz Competition	St. Thomas IOC, Unruh Ave.,	TBD	Deepa Thomas Kochamma	
7	Area Level Assigned Competitions	TBD	May 26 th (Sun.) 1.30 – 2.30 pm	TBD	May 13th (Sun.) \$5 per person. (fully subsidized by STIOC)
8	Diocesan SS General Assembly	St. Johns Orthodox Church Orangeburg, NY	June 8 th (Sun.) 9.00 am – 12.00 pm	Aju Tharian	
9	Centralized Exam (Grade 12)	TBD	June 2 nd (Sun.) 9.00 am – 12.00 pm		
10	Alternate Date for Centralized Exam (Grade 12)	TBD	TBD	TBD	
11	Prayer Meeting (SS students, Grade 12)	St. Thomas IOC, Unruh Ave.,	TBD	TBD	
12	Summer Blood Drive & Bake Sale (Karuna team)	St. Thomas IOC, Unruh Ave.,	TBD	Jessly and Bishel	
13	Centralized Exam (Grades, 5, 8, 10 & TTC)	TBD	June 30 th (Sun.) 9.00 am – 12.00 pm	TBD	
14	Sunday School Break		June 30 th – Aug 30 th		

15	School Supplies Project	St. Thomas IOC, Unruh Ave.,	TBD	TBD	
16	New Graduates Felicitation	St. Thomas IOC, Unruh Ave.,	TBD	TBD	
S.No	Event	Venue	Date and Time	Coordinator/ s	Registration Fee / Deadline
17	Summer class for Sunday school students	St. Thomas IOC, Unruh Ave.,	TBD	TBD	
18	OVBS	TBD	July 25,26,27 @9.00 am – 12.00 pm	TBD	Reg. Deadline is TBD
19	Agni Middle School Camp	HTRC			
20	Teachers Meeting	St. Thomas IOC, Unruh Ave.,	TBD	TBD	
21	Sunday School Re-opens after the summer break	St. Thomas IOC, Unruh Ave.,	Sep 1 st 2019	TBD	
22	First Alphabet Writing	St. Thomas IOC, Unruh Ave.,	TBD	TBD	
23	Alternate Date for Centralized Exam (Grades, 5.8.10 & TTC)	St. Thomas IOC, Unruh Ave.,	TBD	TBD	
24	Church Level Talent Competitions (incl. Bible Quiz)	St. Thomas IOC, Unruh Ave.,	Sep.08. @9.00 am – 12.00 pm		
25	Area level Talent Competitions	TBD	Sep.28 th @9.00 am – 12.00 pm		Sep. 16th, \$10 per participant (fully subsidized by STIOC)
26	Diocesan Talent Competitions (incl. Bible Quiz)	TBD	TBD		Reg. Deadline is Oct.13
27	Area Teachers Fellowship	TBD	Nov. 16		
28	Craft fair and Movie night	St. Thomas IOC, Unruh Ave.,	Nov. 16	Susan Mathews	
29	Ecumenical Christmas Program	George Washington HS	TBD	Milly Philip	
30	Church, Christmas Social	St. Thomas IOC, Unruh Ave.,	TBD	Milly Philip	
31	Sunday school Anniversary	St. Thomas IOC, Unruh Ave.,	TBD		

One Year Bible Reading Schedule

<i>March</i>			
<i>Date</i>	I	II	III
<i>March 1</i>	Lev. 5-6	Psalms 105	1 Cor. 14
<i>March 2</i>	Lev. 7	Psalms 106	1 Cor. 15
<i>March 3</i>	Lev. 8	Psalms 107	1 Cor. 16
<i>March 4</i>	Lev. 9-10	Psalms 108-109	2 Cor. 1-2
<i>March 5</i>	Lev. 11	Psalms 110-112	2 Cor. 3-4
<i>March 6</i>	Lev. 12-13	Psalms 113-114	2 Cor. 5-7
<i>March 7</i>	Lev. 14	Psalms 115-116	2 Cor. 8-9
<i>March 8</i>	Lev. 15	Psalms 117-118	2 Cor. 10-11
<i>March 9</i>	Lev. 16-16	Psalms 119 v 1-40	2 Cor. 12-13
<i>March 10</i>	Lev. 17-18	Psalms 119 v 41-80	St.Luke 1
<i>March 11</i>	Lev. 19-19	Psalms 119 v 81-128	St.Luke 2
<i>March 12</i>	Lev. 20-20	Psalms 119 v 129-176	St.Luke 3
<i>March 13</i>	Lev. 21	Psalms 120-124	St.Luke 4
<i>March 14</i>	Lev. 22	Psalms 125-127	St.Luke 5
<i>March 15</i>	Lev. 23	Psalms 128-130	St.Luke 6
<i>March 16</i>	Lev. 24	Psalms 131-134	St.Luke 7
<i>March 17</i>	Lev. 25	Psalms 135-136	St.Luke 8
<i>March 18</i>	Lev. 26	Psalms 137-139	St.Luke 9
<i>March 19</i>	Lev. 27	Psalms 140-142	St.Luke 10
<i>March 20</i>	Numbers 1	Psalms 143-144	St.Luke 11
<i>March 21</i>	Numbers 2	Psalms 145-147	St.Luke 12
<i>March 22</i>	Numbers 3	Psalms 148-150	St.Luke 13-14
<i>March 23</i>	Numbers 4	Proverbs 1	St.Luke 15
<i>March 24</i>	Numbers 5	Proverbs 2	St.Luke 16
<i>March 25</i>	Numbers 6	Proverbs 3	St.Luke 17
<i>March 26</i>	Numbers 7	Proverbs 4	St.Luke 18
<i>March 27</i>	Numbers 8-9	Proverbs 5	St.Luke 19
<i>March 28</i>	Numbers 10	Proverbs 6	St.Luke 20
<i>March 29</i>	Numbers 11	Proverbs 7	St.Luke 21
<i>March 30</i>	Numbers 12-13	Proverbs 8-9	St.Luke 22
<i>March 31</i>	Numbers 14	Proverbs 10	St.Luke 23

Please remember to pray for the Sunday school Children and Staff in your daily prayer