

ST. THOMAS INDIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2022

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Vicar's Message

Consecration Anniversary

1976 is the year in which the first Indian Orthodox Congregation was born in Philadelphia. That too in the month of October, as told by Very Rev. K. Mathai Cor Episcopa. Purchase of our present building complex and consecration of it were all in October. Thus, we started celebrating the anniversary with the Harvest Festival in October. Therefore, we have a reason to be thankful to God especially in October every year. Let me share a few thoughts on this occasion.

1. **Rewind the History:** I go back to the year 1996 every now and then just to reflect on how we started reviving the parish that was small. I remember how small the offertory on Sunday was! The activities were slowly getting organized. The young and old came together with zeal caring for the parish. Our search for a building of our own was in the vision while we slowly started spiritual activities such as Sunday School and MMVS. MGOCSM was just for namesake. The most active spiritual exercise was the Saturday evening prayer held in homes where I used to stay as I was traveling from North Jersey every



weekend. All of us knew each other well and every new member who came became known to all. Indeed, we started connecting ourselves with other parishes and the Ecumenical Fellowship from the beginning. The rented facility was our solace at that time.

In 2004 we acquired the present building complex after selling the 6-acre land on Ashton Street in the Northeast area of Philadelphia. It was an amazing experience that we did not have a penny in debt when we acquired the building in contrast to several parishes in the Diocese that accumulated debt. We never gave any financial burden to any member who joined us after we bought the building

complex. Many members were generous in continuing to contribute as we had many financial needs to replenish the building.

In addition, we feel thankful to God that we could organize the parish with maximum participation for people in different committees. And we took steps to start several spiritual organizations with a view to give participation in spiritual activity for all, according to the age and gender. It is with much high sense of gratitude that I remember all those who are taking lead in various activities of our parish. It makes us a dynamic community.

2. **Looking to Future:** I am not sure how many of us are thinking about the future. Most of us are so satisfied with the present activity or inactivity! We have grown beyond our dreams. We have a new generation that needs to take over leadership in all areas. I do see some silver lines of hope when I see a number of youngsters taking lead. At the same time several of the youngsters are yet to become active in the parish. They may be active in their own areas of work or study but we need them for the parish activities as well. A good sign of hope is seen in the willingness of some youth to become members of the Managing Committee this year. Likewise, much more youth should be involved in spiritual activities as well.

We are now worshipping in a very spacious building complex which we could never imagine to build on our own. But

how long can we be there considering the changing demography and the social condition of the area? We must seriously look into the future in terms of moving into a much safer neighborhood. If we take seriously our future, we should make plans now. We cannot or need not move out immediately but we should be ready when the situation changes. It may be the closeness to the building, or unwillingness to spend more money that makes us comfortable with the present place. But the time will soon come when we will not care for money or building but our own safety and the ability to live in peace as a community. Be prepared! Make up your mind for the future!

In the same line let us also make plans to vigorously engage in our spiritual activities. We must use our quality time spending at least a portion of it for our spiritual upbringing. Many of you may be thinking that you have learned enough or you know enough. I am not questioning your self-esteem but in the present world that is not enough for us. We are constantly surrounded by the evil influences. We need to work harder to enrich ourselves spiritually. St. John 1:21 says, "Dear Children, keep away from anything that might take God's place in your hearts." Keeping this in our mind we should work harder for the future. As we celebrate our anniversary, may these thoughts and prayers remain in our hearts!

Lovingly,

Fr. M. K. Kuriakose, Vicar

COVID-19 and Support System

Financial Assistance to Members

If any of our members need any assistance with food, medicine, transportation, shopping, or any other needs due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they may contact our Achens or the Secretary. They will coordinate help. Our MC members, along with other volunteers will be available to provide any possible help.

We are all in this together.

Contact:

- Rev. Fr. M. K. Kuriakose: 201.681.1078
- Rev. Fr. Sujit Thomas: 516.754.0743
- Binu Mathew: 267.893.9571



Parish Highlights from September

Reception to the Catholicos

Diocesan Reception

Our parish members attended the reception given to His Holiness Moron Mar Baselios Mar Thoma Mathews III on Sunday, September 25 at St. Thomas Orthodox Church in Levittown, NY.

His Holiness Visits our Parish

A warm welcome was given to His Holiness Moron Mar Baselios Mar Thoma Mathews III as His Holiness visited our parish on Thursday, September 29. Our Vicar Rev Fr MK Kuriakose, and Asst Vicar Rev Fr Sujit Thomas received His Holiness with a lighted candle. Several priests and parish members accompanied His Holiness during the procession. The Diocesan Metropolitan HG Zachariah Mar Nicholovos also joined His Holiness.

After evening prayer, a public meeting was held. Rev Fr MK Kuriakose and HG Zachariah Mar Nicholovos felicitated His Holiness. Oommen Kappil welcomed the gathering. And Binu Mathew expressed vote of thanks.

Consecration of St. Mary's Cathedral (Huntingdon Valley) & Reception for His Holiness

HH the Catholicos was the chief celebrant at the Consecration ceremony of our sister parish St. Mary's Cathedral, which was held on September 30th and October 1st. A reception for His Holiness was organized by the parish in collaboration with the MOCF at the Cathedral on Friday, September 30th. Our Vicar Rev Fr MK Kuriakose, who is the Chairman of the Ecumenical Fellowship, also felicitated His Holiness.

Sahodaran Charity Project

Our parish supported the Sahodaran Housing Charity Project initiated by His Holiness. The amount raised was given to the Catholicos. Our MOCF representatives Mr John Panicker and Mr Thomaskutty Varghese led the fundraising in our church. A raffle was conducted to raise funds. Mr Jose K John from our parish won the first place. Congrats

to Mr Jose K John. We gratefully remember all those who supported the project.

Our Parish Hosts the MMVS Annual Convention

On October 1st, our parish hosted the Annual Conference of the Morth Mariam Vanitha Samajam. Over 500 members attended the event. Our parish received the trophy for first place in Bible Quiz.

Spiritual Organization Updates

Men's Forum

Men's Forum meets every Sunday. The meetings will be held in person immediately after the HQ at our church. Christian songs, Bible reading, prayer, and preaching the word of God are included in the meeting. Our achens also share valuable messages at their convenient timings. For anyone who wants to join the meeting, please contact Lukose Mathew, Secretary (267-467-4993), Vakkayil Joseph, Treasurer (267-205-7986), or Thomas Daniel, Prayer Coordinator (267-303-1898).

OCYM

OCYM meets every Sunday after Holy Qurbana. Our achens answer various questions from our members regarding Faith, theology, and other general topics. Please contact Joel Manoj for more information.

MMVS

1. Northeast American Diocese conducted Bible Quiz 2022 on Sept. 17th at St. Thomas Orthodox Church, Levittown, NY (Genesis 1-50)

There were a total of 25 churches that participated in this event. From our church, 9 members participated and our church won 1st prize.

2. Northeast American diocese celebrated annual conference & 40th-year celebration at our church in the presence of HG Zachariah Mor Nicholovos Diocesan Metropolitan on Saturday, 10/1/2022. 96 members who completed 40 years in MMVS ministry were honored at the event.

Upcoming Events

Harvest Festival

Scheduled for Saturday, October 8th, at our church from 8am to 4:30pm. A variety of Foods, Games, Auctions, and Entertainment Programs are planned. All families are encouraged to purchase a ticket to support this event. Ticket will cover breakfast and lunch for all family members. Breakfast includes Masala Dosa & Omelet. Lunch is Chicken / Vegetable Biryani. You will also be able to enjoy the entertainment programs as well.

Pre-Order:

- *Pothichoru* (\$15) (Take Out at 4 - 4:30 pm)
- *Kappa Biryani* (\$15)
- *Fish Fry* (\$12)

- *Fish Thala Curry & Kappa* (\$15)
- *Falooda – Desert* (\$5)

Honoring of Senior Parish Members

All senior members of our parish who are the age of 70 and above will be honored in our church after the Holy Qurbana on the 9th of October 2022 in connection with Parish Day. All eligible members are requested to write their name on the form placed on the notice board. A sign-up sheet is also posted in the church's WhatsApp group. You are required to confirm your attendance in one of the two ways.

HG Yuhanon Mar Meletus, Metropolitan of Trichur Diocese will be the chief guest.

Fasts & Feasts

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
None for October.	None for October.

Parish Calendar

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
Sat, Oct 1	MMVS 40 th year celebration at our church
Sat, Oct 9	Harvest Festival
Sun, Oct 9	Church Consecration Anniversary/ Honoring the Senior Members

Member Announcements

Life Events Announcements

Do you have a special day that you would like to announce, like a milestone wedding anniversary (25th, 50th etc.) or a birthday (50th, 60th, 70th, 80th etc.)? If you would like to, please inform the Secretary in advance. Please remember that even though our parish database includes birthday and wedding day, it doesn't include the year of birth or marriage. Unless you notify the Secretary or Clergy, they wouldn't know milestone events.

Death Announcements

- ❖ **Mr. Kunjumon Pappachen (58)** younger brother of Mr. Ponnachen Geevarghese (Membership # 359) passed away in Kerala, India.
- ❖ **Mr. M.K. Paulose (85)**, older brother of Rev. Fr. M.K. Kuriakose passed away in India. Funeral took place on October 1st, at St. George Orthodox Church, Amabalavayal, Wayanad, Kerala.
- ❖ **Mr. M. T. Philip (76)**, father of Mr. Robin Philip Montharayil (Membership # 249) passed away in India. Funeral took place on October 1st, at St. Mary's Orthodox Church, Kanam, Kottayam, Kerala.

On behalf of the parish, we express our deepest condolences to the bereaving families. Let us pray for the departed souls and for the bereaving families. May our heavenly Father grant peace and comfort that surpasses human wisdom and understanding.

Memorial Prayer List

As you know, members can submit names of departed loved ones that needs to be included on the Memorial Prayer List. You probably have given the names of your departed ones in the past. However, please note that our church doesn't have a system to save such names with dates or automatically track and decide on which Sunday the name should be included on the prayer list. You need to enter the name on the Memorial Prayer list kept in the church office. Note: We do have a master list of departed faithful that we keep for remembering them on the Sunday of the departed faithful, which is a week before the Holy Lent begins. This list has names only no dates.

OCTOBER WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Mr. & Mrs. George Eapen	1-Oct	Mr. & Mrs. Saju Mathew	21-Oct
Mr. & Mrs. Daji Mathew	1-Oct	Mr. & Mrs. Dustin Paul	22-Oct
Mr. & Mrs. Varghese P. Abraham	2-Oct	Mr. & Mrs. Alex Babu	23-Oct
Mr. & Mrs. Mathukutty M. George	2-Oct	Mr. & Mrs. Varghese Panicker	23-Oct
Mr. & Mrs. Anil T. Babu	7-Oct	Mr. & Mrs. Steven Kurian	24-Oct
Mr. & Mrs. Divya Panicker	8-Oct	Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Varghese	25-Oct
Mr. & Mrs. Ajish Kutty	12-Oct	Mr. & Mrs. Paul P Mavely	28-Oct
Mr. & Mrs. Binny Cherian	12-Oct	Mr. & Mrs. John Abraham	28-Oct
Mr. & Mrs. Niju Mathew Cheriyan	21-Oct	Mr. & Mrs. Varughese P. Chacko	29-Oct
Mr. & Mrs. Nowell V Philips	21-Oct	Mr. & Mrs. Binish George	31-Oct



OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

Prince Sam Jacob	1-Oct	Aji Panicker	11-Oct	Emily Ann Varghese	22-Oct
Bincy Stephen	1-Oct	Gabriella Sofia Cherian	13-Oct	Nebu Joseph	22-Oct
Anish Mathew	1-Oct	Biju Varghese	13-Oct	Abia R. Mathew	22-Oct
Moni Thomas	2-Oct	Tom P. Biju	14-Oct	Delwin Thomas	22-Oct
Mathew George	3-Oct	Subha Baby	15-Oct	Lisa Mariam John	22-Oct
Jacob P Sam	3-Oct	Salikutty John	15-Oct	Neha Joseph	23-Oct
Alaina Mathew	3-Oct	Bishel B Baby	15-Oct	Mariamamma T Raju	23-Oct
Reuben B Varghese	4-Oct	Sosamma Jacob	15-Oct	Biju Mathews	23-Oct
Evan Luke Thomas	4-Oct	Shaju Varghese	15-Oct	Ammini Thomas	24-Oct
Rinju Jacob	4-Oct	Aaron T Mathew	15-Oct	George G Panicker	24-Oct
Abbey M Mathew	4-Oct	Oommen V Kappil	17-Oct	Ashley Varghese	24-Oct
Abraham Mathew	4-Oct	Risha A. Binu	17-Oct	Oommen George	25-Oct
Olivia A. Alex	4-Oct	Saramma Raju	17-Oct	Thara E. Jaison	25-Oct
Eleena Suja John	4-Oct	Asha Joel	17-Oct	Sharon Cherian	25-Oct
Kunjamma George	4-Oct	Georgie A. George	17-Oct	Jeney Joseph	26-Oct
George T Charia	5-Oct			Jeena Joseph	26-Oct
Shania M. Alex	5-Oct			Kondoor E. Chacko	26-Oct
Varghese K Issac	5-Oct			Marilyn Sarah Cherian	26-Oct
Reynold Educula	5-Oct	Mathew Samuel	18-Oct	Susan Shibu Varghese	26-Oct
Mony Babu	6-Oct	Annamma G Panicker	18-Oct	Elizabeth A Kappil	26-Oct
Jacob K. Thekekkuttu	8-Oct	Dinah Jubee	18-Oct	Kripaya Varghese	27-Oct
Thomas T Varghese	8-Oct	Varghese Jacob	18-Oct	Joseph Philip	27-Oct
Jacob P. Abraham	8-Oct	Mercy Cherian	18-Oct	Liju Cherian	28-Oct
Rinku Raju Geno	8-Oct	Gemma Valsa Kurian	19-Oct	Johan Jins	28-Oct
Noel P. Varghese	8-Oct	Cibu Joseph	19-Oct	Libu K Geevarghese	28-Oct
Esther Mariam Niju	9-Oct	Smitha Mathew	19-Oct	Thankamma Varghese	28-Oct
Finney M Philip	9-Oct	Kunjukunjamma Abraham	20-Oct	Annamma Varghese	29-Oct
Susan John Varghese	10-Oct	Abiel B Mathew	20-Oct	Tania Jossy	29-Oct
John Varghese	10-Oct	Justina Pothen	20-Oct	Alex Babu	30-Oct
Ponnamma Thomas	10-Oct	Nebu Daniel	21-Oct	Abraham Varghese	31-Oct
Isabel Vattasseril	10-Oct	Jensina Pothen	21-Oct	Nisha George	31-Oct
Oommen Mathai	10-Oct	Elizebeth Ann Varghese	22-Oct	Elizabeth Abraham	31-Oct
Alen Shibu Varghese	11-Oct	Sanji George	22-Oct		
Saji Philip	11-Oct				

Sunday School News

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

One Year Bible Reading Schedule - October

Date	I	II	III
October 1	1 Chron. 15	Ezekiel 27	Luke 24
October 2	1 Chron. 16	Ezekiel 28	Galatians 1-2
October 3	1 Chron. 17	Ezekiel 29	Galatians 3-4
October 4	1 Chron. 18-19	Ezekiel 30	Galatians 5-6
October 5	1 Chron. 20-21	Ezekiel 31	Ephesians 1-2
October 6	1 Chron. 22	Ezekiel 32	Ephesians 3-4
October 7	1 Chron. 23	Ezekiel 33	Ephesians 5-6
October 8	1 Chron. 24-25	Ezekiel 34	Phil. 1-2
October 9	1 Chron. 26	Ezekiel 35	Phil. 3-4
October 10	1 Chron. 27	Ezekiel 36	John 1
October 11	1 Chron. 28	Ezekiel 37	John 2-3
October 12	1 Chron. 29	Ezekiel 38	John 4
October 13	2 Chron. 1-2	Ezekiel 39	John 5
October 14	2 Chron. 3-4	Ezekiel 40	John 6
October 15	2 Chron. 5-6	Ezekiel 41	John 7
October 16	2 Chron. 7	Ezekiel 42	John 8
October 17	2 Chron. 8	Ezekiel 43	John 9-10
October 18	2 Chron. 9	Ezekiel 44	John 11
October 19	2 Chron. 10-11	Ezekiel 45	John 12
October 20	2 Chron. 12-13	Ezekiel 46	John 13-14
October 21	2 Chron. 14-15	Ezekiel 47	John 15-16
October 22	2 Chron. 16-17	Ezekiel 48	John 17-18
October 23	2 Chron. 18-19	Daniel 1	John 19
October 24	2 Chron. 20	Daniel 2	John 20-21
October 25	2 Chron. 21-22	Daniel 3	Acts 1
October 26	2 Chron. 23	Daniel 4	Acts 2
October 27	2 Chron. 24	Daniel 5	Acts 3-4
October 28	2 Chron. 25	Daniel 6	Acts 5-6
October 29	2 Chron. 26-27	Daniel 7	Acts 7
October 30	2 Chron. 28	Daniel 8	Acts 8
October 31	2 Chron. 29	Daniel 9	Acts 9

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