

# ST. THOMAS INDIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

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## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2024

VOLUME XXVIII ISSUE 1

### Vicar's Message

#### Blessed New Year!

Seeing the dawn of 2024 many are excited to review and revise their life from a Christian perspective. The New Year concept is very seriously taken by a vast majority of people. New Year Day is, therefore, not just another day for those people. Many honestly make an attempt to review their life. In our Christian teachings a review of life is a sign of a person's ambition or desire to find out the weak points in life and discard them; while affirming the strong aspects to further strengthen them. For such people life will become a success by all means. That does not mean we have immunity for adversity. Adversities are all mixed in our life along with joy, peace and prosperity. Our ability to react to each of these good or bad situations leads us to success. A life without opposition, feud, sickness, sadness, poverty, hatred etc. is not guaranteed but our Lord gives us one guarantee, "I will be with you to the end of the world". When a matter disturbs us our first reaction is against God thinking, "why did you forsake me?" Even Our Lord asked this question on the cross! Jesus gives us the example that God does not forsake us but remains with us through our adversity or struggle. This corporate work with God is the reason of success. While



engaged in this corporate activity we need to assess ourselves realizing our life that God has entrusted us. Therefore, a review is a highly positive step than whining about one's mistakes.

How can we review our life?

1. Understanding the Purpose of Life: This is purely the awareness of the responsibilities given to each one of us as parents, children, workers, retired, disabled, etc. Indeed, the hardworking parents are the best examples of those who understand the purpose of life. If they did not work hard their family will starve and the children won't get their education. Are we using our best abilities to carry out the workload? Are we willing to share the workload, or emotional burden or our joy with our own family members? How many feels comfortable to be aware of the pain of the spouses or children? How many can be sensitive

to each member of one's own family and the community?

2. Understand God's Gifts to Us: We should be aware of the various talents God has given us. Knowing the talents that God invested with us we should be willing to use it intelligently. In our parish I have seen many offering their talents not only for the home but also for the parish. It is not easy, but many taken it seriously that the gifts of God are to be used for God's sake. It may be our financial strength that God gave us that we should utilize the best way. Each one of us have own desires and interests or hobbies. Those make us happy too! However, we should rethink that it is not just our joy that is important but the joy of those who are underprivileged are also to be considered. Our parish allows ample opportunities to exercise this noble act of realizing God's gifts.

3. Understand the value of relationships: No one is alone! No one can survive alone. Even the cave-monks are dependent on the products made

by others. This is the universal truth. If we are dependent on others, we should be aware of maintaining our relationships carefully. We cannot ignore others. I always request people to 'stand in the shoes of others and think' so that we can respond to them or communicate with them with compassion or consideration. It is the sadists who react to others with vengeance, jealousy, hatred, anger and despise. Such people enjoy other's suffering. In fact they are the true criminals. It is unfortunate that even spiritually trained people are incapable of reading the needs of others. If we want to maintain or strengthen our relationships, we should work hard to be empathetic to others, no matter who that person is! Such habits are to be developed. No one will get automatically. Often such qualities are learned at home. We should continuously train our children to be kind to others. It is the only way we can make our future generation to be kind to us as well.

**HAPPY HEALTHY AND PEACEFUL NEW YEAR!**

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 Aichens 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
- Jobin Regi: 267.226.6366



## Managing Committee Members for 2024

The following office bearers have been elected to serve in 2024:

Mr. Ajin Abraham- Treasurer

Mr. Jobin Regi- Secretary

Mr. Alex Symon- Office Manager

Mrs. Simmy Robin- Ex Officio (2023 Treasurer), Inventory Coordinator

Mr. Steven Kurian- Ex Officio (2023 Secretary)

Mr. Isac P. George- Board of Trustees, MOCF Rep

Mrs. Maya Kappil- Board of Trustees, Assistant Treasurer

Mr. Paul C. John- Board of Trustees

Mr. Christin Varghese- Assistant Secretary

Mr. Geevarghese K. John- Assistant Office Manager

Mr. Jestin Abraham- Picnic/Sports Coordinator

Mr. John Panicker, Assistant Treasurer, Charity Coordinator, MOCF Rep

Mr. Joyel Manoj, IT Coordinator, Ecumenical Rep.

Mr. Lijin Joyes- Library Coordinator

Ms. Nissi Zachariah- Ecumenical Rep.

Ms. Rachel Melavila- Assistant Treasurer

Mr. Rajesh Geevarghese- Building Maintenance Coordinator

Mr. Sathees Easow- Food Coordinator

Mr. Sujith Thomas- Program Coordinator, Medical Team

Mr. Varghese P. Abraham- Building Upkeep/Cleaning Coordinator

## Sunday School News

Mr. Steven Kurian (left) has been appointed the new Principal of our Parish Sunday School relieving Mr. Binny Cherian(right). The Parish expresses her deepest thanks to Binny for his service over the past several years with growing our Sunday School Ministry.





## Parish Highlights from December

### Ecumenical Christmas Program- December 2<sup>nd</sup>



Our parish's many talented members performed a Nativity Play and Dance for the Ecumenical Fellowship of Indian Churches of Philadelphia (EFICP) Annual Christmas Program. In addition, our Karuna volunteers sold snacks and drinks to raise money for Cancer patients. Thanks to all those who supported and participated in the program.

### Youth Sunday- December 10<sup>th</sup>

Our parish celebrated the inaugural Youth Sunday, in which a collection was taken up to support the Diocesan Youth Ministries (MGOCSM). Our special guest was Rev. Subdeacon Shojil Abraham, the Diocesan Youth Minister. The initial donation was given by our member Rajesh Geevarghese. The total collection was almost \$10,000.00.



### Christmas Caroling- December 9<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>

Over 50 families hosted the Christmas Carolers this year. The Caroling team spread Christmas cheer over the course of two nights. Thanks to the OCYM for organizing the events.



### Parish Christmas Program- December 30<sup>th</sup>

Our Annual Christmas Talent Program on the evening of Saturday, December 30<sup>th</sup>, beginning at 3pm. Special thanks to the Program Coordinator, Mr. Binu Mathew, as well as our many performers, volunteers, and food team who made the event a great success. The event showcased our parish's many talents and ended with Evening Prayer and dinner provided by the Parish.

## January Events and General Announcements

### Church Reminders

**Dip Jar:** Those who are interested in submitting their offertory or any other small donation may do so in the Church dip jar located by the Meditation Room.

**Digital Payment:** All donations may be made by Apple Pay / GPay / Venmo - members can scan QR codes affixed on the glass wall outside the Church office

**Lost and Found:** Many small items such as jewelry and watches have been submitted to the office "Lost and Found". Please see the Secretary if you believe you may be missing one of these items.

### Spiritual Organization Updates

**OCYM, MMVS, and Men's Forum Meetings** will be held weekly after Refreshments.

#### OCYM

The OCYM has elected the following office bearers for 2024:

Vice President- Mr. Anish Thomas

Secretary- Mr. Joel Philip

Treasurer- Mr. Mathew Thomas

Joint Secretary- Ms. Lisa John

#### MMVS

The MMVS has elected the following officer bearers for 2024

Secretary- Mrs. Shiji Daji

Treasurer- Mrs. Jancy Manoj

Assistant Secretary- Mrs. Anitha Jossy

Assistant Treasurer- Mrs. Shirley Chacko



### Men's Forum

The following office bearers have been elected for 2024:

Secretary- Mr. N.K. Thomas

Treasurer- Mr. Thomas Daniel

### Events

**January 1<sup>st</sup>**- New Year's Holy Qurbana

**January 5<sup>th</sup>** – Danaho Service and Holy Qurbana

**January 20<sup>th</sup>**- MGOCSM New Year's Conference

### Save the Dates

**GROW Annual Conference-** March 9<sup>th</sup>



MGOCPSM Philadelphia presents  
**NEW YEAR'S**  
*Conference*

**20 January | 2024**  
**9:30 AM - 2:00 PM**

**Speaker: Fr. Vijay Thomas**  
 (Vicar of Sts. Basilios Gregorios Orthodox Church, NJ)

Registration Fee: \$15 (Cash/Venmo)  
 Register here:

**bit.ly/48Js41d**

📍 St. Gregorios Malankara Orthodox Church, Bensalem, PA.

📷 📺 @mgocsm\_philadelphia



**Theosis**  
*The Journey*

**G.R.O.W. ANNUAL ONE-DAY CONFERENCE**

Saint Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary | 575 Scarsdale Rd, Yonkers, NY 10707  
**SATURDAY | MARCH 09, 2024 | 10 AM - 4 PM**

"And we all, with unveiled faces reflecting the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another, which is from the Lord, who is the Spirit."  
 -2 Corinthians 3:18 (OSB)

Register today at [www.thegrowministry.com](http://www.thegrowministry.com)  
 Registration: \$ 15 (now- Jan 31); \$25 (Feb 1- Mar 5); same day \$30

✉ GROWMINISTRIES2012@gmail.com 🌱 growministry 📺 @grow.ministries 📺 grow ministries

# Member Announcements

## Memorials

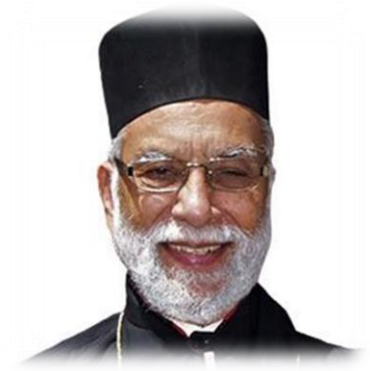
- ❖ December 14th - **Very Rev. Fr. P.S. Samuel Cor Episcopa**, former vicar of our Parish as well as other parishes in the Diocese.

Achen was a tireless leader of our Diocese and our Parish. He was an achiever and powerful leader whose contributions both financially and administratively will be remembered.

- ❖ December 16<sup>th</sup> - **Mrs. Gigi George**, Aunty of Varghese Mammen (#324) passed away in Houston, Texas. Funeral was held at St. Stephen's Orthodox Church, Houston, on December 23rd.

- ❖ December 17<sup>th</sup> - **Mr. V.Y. Mathai**, Father of Rev. Fr. V.M. Shibu (Vicar, St. Gregorios Bensalem), Grandfather of Mrs. Irine Abraham (#304)

- ❖ December 29<sup>th</sup> - **Mr. Thomas Oommen**, Brother of Jessy Padiyara (#134) and Uncle of Rajesh Geevarghese (#108). Funeral was held on January 2nd at St. Thomas Mar Thoma Church, Puthuvel, Pathanapuram.



*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 need 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.

### Life Events Announcements

Do you have a special day that you would like to announce, like a milestone wedding anniversary (25<sup>th</sup>, 50<sup>th</sup> etc.) or a birthday (50<sup>th</sup>, 60<sup>th</sup>, 70<sup>th</sup>, 80<sup>th</sup> 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.

# JANUARY WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Mr. & Mrs. Rajan T Samuel	Jan 1	Mr. & Mrs. Binu Thankachan	Jan 11
Mr. & Mrs. Shibu Varghese	Jan 1	Mr. & Mrs. Rinu John	Jan 11
Mr. & Mrs. Finney M Philip	Jan 2	Mr. & Mrs. Oommen George	Jan 11
Mr. & Mrs. Eapen V Kalathil	Jan 3	Mr. & Mrs. Elias K Issac	Jan 12
Mr. & Mrs. Lynnson Mathews Rajan	Jan 3	Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Koshy	Jan 12
Mr. & Mrs. Shibu Mathew	Jan 3	Mr. & Mrs. George G Mampallil	Jan 14
Mr. & Mrs. Sam Jacob Kurisinmoottil	Jan 4	Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Zachariah	Jan 15
Mr. & Mrs. Jaison Daniel	Jan 5	Mr. & Mrs. Varghese K Issac	Jan 16
Mr. & Mrs. Varghese Jacob	Jan 5	Mr. & Mrs. James C Peter	Jan 17
Mr. & Mrs. Mathew Samuel	Jan 5	Mr. & Mrs. Philip Varghese	Jan 18
<b>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Rev. Fr. Tojo Baby</b>	<b>Jan 6</b>	Mr. & Mrs. Abraham Thomas	Jan 19
Mr. & Mrs. Mathew Thankachan	Jan 6	Mr. & Mrs. Lukose Vaidyan Mathew	Jan 23
Mr. & Mrs. Mathew V Thomas	Jan 6	Mr. & Mrs. Liju Cherian	Jan 23
Mr. & Mrs. Sijo Abraham	Jan 7	Mr. & Mrs. Liju Alex	Jan 25
Mr. & Mrs. C C John	Jan 7	Mr. & Mrs. Rebu Roy	Jan 26
Mr. & Mrs. Anu Mathew	Jan 9	Mr. & Mrs. Babu Varghese	Jan 29
Mr. & Mrs. Geevarghese K John	Jan 9		
Mr. & Mrs. Ninan Mathai	Jan 9		
Mr. & Mrs. Prasad George	Jan 10		





# JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Jestin K Abraham	Jan 1	Mini Ninan	Jan 9	Wincy B Joseph	Jan 20
Shine E Varghese	Jan 1	Sandeep K Thomson	Jan 10	Anu Lajy	Jan 21
Ruth John	Jan 2	Nivitha Wilson	Jan 10	Maria Anna Abraham	Jan 21
Aleena Robin	Jan 2	Divya Mary Thomas	Jan 12	John Polayil Abraham	Jan 21
Abraham Thomas	Jan 2	Harshall Thomas	Jan 12	Mammana Unmesh	Jan 21
Suja Abraham	Jan 3	Joshua M George	Jan 13	Susan John	Jan 22
Roy Philip Chacko	Jan 4	Rachael Thomas	Jan 13	Shiji Mathew Abraham	Jan 23
Chrislin H Thomas	Jan 5	Carolyn Thomas	Jan 13	Anu Mathew	Jan 23
Jobin Varghese	Jan 5	Shawn George Philip	Jan 13	Shannon Ann George	Jan 23
Renju Ann Joy	Jan 5			Alwin T Raju	Jan 23
Ron Philip	Jan 5			Sunil Thomas	Jan 23
Jobin Varghese	Jan 5			Jelitta James	Jan 24
Deepu Mathew Daji	Jan 5			Linju Jacob John	Jan 25
Lydiya Elsa Jaison	Jan 6	Rijon C Simon	Jan 14	Angelin Shibu Mathew	Jan 26
Jijo Jacob	Jan 6	Shelby K Renji	Jan 14	Kasen Samuel Lajy	Jan 27
Diya Sara Thomas	Jan 6	Ramany George	Jan 15	Saramma Thomas	Jan 27
Wilson Panicker	Jan 7	Ian Thomas	Jan 15	Susan Mathew	Jan 28
Amelia J Mathew	Jan 7	Sajan Varughese	Jan 16	Mathew Thankachan	Jan 28
Madeline John	Jan 7	Allen Abraham	Jan 16	Mathew Philip	Jan 30
Joyel Manoj	Jan 8	Binsy E Mathew	Jan 17	Christin Thomas	Jan 31
Anila Thomas	Jan 8	Binsy Mathew	Jan 17	Thomas Abraham	Jan 31
Andrew Cherian	Jan 9	Adam M Anu	Jan 17		
Marshel Varghese	Jan 9	Maliyil M Philip	Jan 18		
		Sanju John	Jan 19		

# Sunday School News

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

**\*\*\*\*\*Sunday School will resume on Sunday, January 7<sup>th</sup>\*\*\*\*\***

## One Year Bible Reading Schedule - January

Date	I	II	III
January 1	Genesis 1-2	Psalms 1-2	Matthew 1-2
January 2	Genesis 3-4	Psalms 3-5	Matthew 3-4
January 3	Genesis 5-6	Psalms 6-8	Matthew 5
January 4	Genesis 7-8	Psalms 9-10	Matthew 6
January 5	Genesis 9-10	Psalms 11-13	Matthew 7
January 6	Genesis 11-12	Psalms 14-16	Matthew 8
January 7	Genesis 13-14	Psalms 17	Matthew 9
January 8	Genesis 15-16	Psalms 18	Matthew 10
January 9	Genesis 17-18	Psalms 19-21	Matthew 11
January 10	Genesis 19	Psalms 22	Matthew 12
January 11	Genesis 20-21	Psalms 23-25	Matthew 13
January 12	Genesis 22-23	Psalms 26-28	Matthew 14
January 13	Genesis 24	Psalms 29-30	Matthew 15
January 14	Genesis 25-26	Psalms 31	Matthew 16
January 15	Genesis 27	Psalms 32	Matthew 17
January 16	Genesis 28-29	Psalms 33	Matthew 18
January 17	Genesis 30	Psalms 34	Matthew 19
January 18	Genesis 31	Psalms 35	Matthew 20
January 19	Genesis 32-33	Psalms 36	Matthew 21
January 20	Genesis 34-35	Psalms 37	Matthew 22
January 21	Genesis 36	Psalms 38	Matthew 23
January 22	Genesis 37	Psalms 39-40	Matthew 24
January 23	Genesis 38	Psalms 41-43	Matthew 25
January 24	Genesis 39-40	Psalms 44	Matthew 26
January 25	Genesis 41	Psalms 45	Matthew 27
January 26	Genesis 42-43	Psalms 46-48	Matthew 28
January 27	Genesis 44-45	Psalms 49	Romans 1-2
January 28	Genesis 46-47	Psalms 50	Romans 3-4
January 29	Genesis 48-50	Psalms 51-52	Romans 5-6
January 30	Exodus 1-2	Psalms 53-55	Romans 7-8
January 31	Exodus 3-4	Psalms 56-57	Romans 9

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