

ST. THOMAS INDIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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Vicar's Message

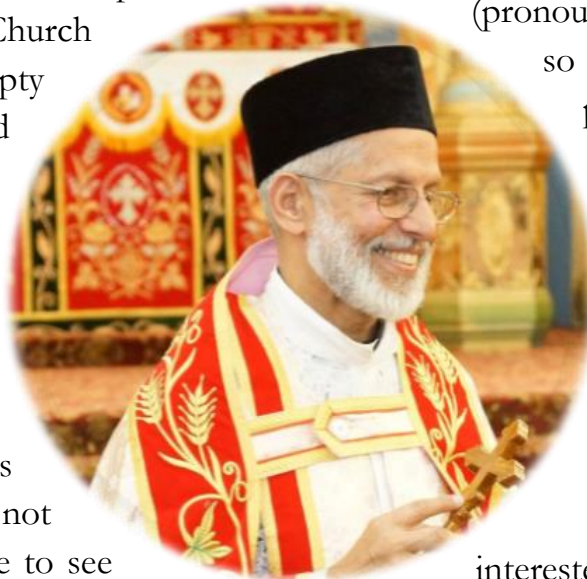
Saint Mary Remembered

On August 15th, we have the festival of the sacred memory of St. Mary's assumption or dormition. In our Church tradition, there are two empty tombs, one that of our Lord and the other that of St. Mary. The tomb of St. Mary is at the valley of Jehoshaphat near Mount Olive, close to Gethsemane. It is believed that all the apostles came to bid farewell to the Theotokos (God-bearer.) St. Thomas was not able to reach, but he was able to see the journey of St. Mary to heaven during which St. Mary dropped her girdle to St. Thomas. A piece of the girdle is kept as a relic in the Devalokam chapel, Kottayam.

Knowing the fact of the assumption of St. Mary, the Church from early times observed

her memory. It is believed that she remained a saint all her life and that the Lord honored her body which bore Him. During the past 20 centuries, St. Mary became a source of strength and powerful mediator for many. Many churches became pilgrim centers where miracles were attributed to St. Mary. Millions of such miracles recorded in various pilgrim centers like Lourdes, Fatima, Velankanni, Manarcad, Guadalupe, Medugorje (pronounced mejagore), Zeitoun and so on are some of the most popular ones. Needless to say, that millions of people across the religion and denominations give respect and appreciation to the life witness of St. Mary and seek her mediation.

Indeed, people are always interested in miracles. While seeking the mediation of St. Mary it is also important to learn some spiritual lessons from St. Mary. I would share two things we need to learn from St. Mary:



1. God will dwell in human beings. We believe that the dedication, commitment and sanctity of St. Mary were the reasons for God to select St. Mary to dwell in her to fulfill the promise of Incarnation. God gives full freedom to all humans to say 'yes' or 'no' to God. But to those who say 'yes', He will give the sanctification to dwell in him/her. Therefore, St. Mary stands as the greatest example that any human being can bear God if he/she is willing to obey Him.

God does want to dwell in us always. We sometimes find it difficult to accommodate Him in us because we want to travel in our personal world where unholy things would take place. We miss God every now and then, but He will never miss us for a second. St. Mary carried Him in her life without missing Him even while suffering. The life of St. Mary became fully devoted to God and she earned her status "Theotokos". We will get the same status if we can follow her path. We should try that model.

2. God's Dwelling is an Assurance in Our Struggles and Tribulations: When St. Mary obeyed the Word of God, she knew right away that it is not easy for her to complete the mission that came with the call. She had to suffer so much suffering all through her life. Finally, she had to witness the sad death of her own Son on the Cross and the persecution of His followers. But she was confident that

God's protection was around her in suffering. St. Mary gives us that assurance that God will be with us even when we go through tribulations. Likewise, St. Paul went through many sufferings when he accepted Jesus as his Savior, but he was convinced that "if God be for us who will be against us?" (Romans 8:31). We are sometimes so dismayed when tribulations haunt us. Don't worry, God will not leave us unattended. Trust Him. St. Mary is our model. May the memory and intercession of the Theotokos be a solace to us!

INDIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY

On August 15th we celebrate the Independence Day of India. 78 years of Indian independence has made such drastic growth for the nation becoming one of the great powers of the world. Indian men and women have gone all over the world making their contributions. In space mission, business, military, technology etc. areas Indian contribution to the world is great. India has been known for the religious tolerance among all nations, but recent occurrences of religious persecution is a concern for Christians. Politicians are playing the religion card to win votes of the majority community. Hatred and animosity are encouraged against minorities. All must pray for India to regain its democratic and secular nature that was acclaimed by all once upon a time. As overseas Indians, we should cooperate with the people of India and pray for peace and

amity. And as Christians we should live a life of Christian witness providing enlightenment and Christian love. We have the potential to impart perfect peace to the country. To do that all Christians should be united with one mind in Christ.

God Bless India!

Lovingly,

Rev. 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



Parish Highlights from July 2024

July 4th and 5th: Gospel Convention led by Rev. Fr. Philip Tharakan and Rev. Fr. Aji K. Thomas via Zoom.

July 6th and 7th: Our Annual Church Perunnal was celebrated throughout the weekend, with highlights of Family



Day, Rassa and Holy Qurbana. Rev. Fr. John Panarayil was with us for the weekend. The Athmasangeetham Ticket Launch was also held for the upcoming Devotional Concert on September 29th.

July 10th – 13th: Family and Youth Conference was held and well attended by our Parish. A special thanks to our Chenda team for playing at the Conference as well as other summer events!

July 21st: General Body was held as well and the Annual Report for the year 2023 was distributed. If you did not receive a copy, please come to the office to collect one.



July 27th: Our annual church Picnic was held at Wilson Farm Park. It was a great event enjoyed by all, a day spent in the sun, with sports and great food. A special thanks again to the Food Coordinator, Mr. Sathees Easow and the Picnic Coordinator, Mr. Jestin Abraham and team volunteers for all their hard work in making it a grand success.





July 28th: We celebrated over 20 graduates from high school, undergraduate, graduate and professional programs. Congratulations to the Class of 2024!



Celebrating Kuriakose Achen's Birthday and Sujit Achen and Deepa Kochamma's Wedding Anniversary in July!



Upcoming Events and General Announcements

Spiritual Organization Updates

Sunday School

- Sunday School classes will begin Sunday, September 8th.

OCYM

- Christian Devotional Concert will be on Sunday, September 29th, tickets are available!

Men's Forum

- The Men's Forum has weekly meetings after the Holy Qurbana every Sunday.

MMVS

- MMVS has weekly meetings after the Holy Qurbana every Sunday.

MGOCSM

- Philadelphia Area MGOCSM Back to School Conference will be held Saturday, September 7th at our church, please register for this event!



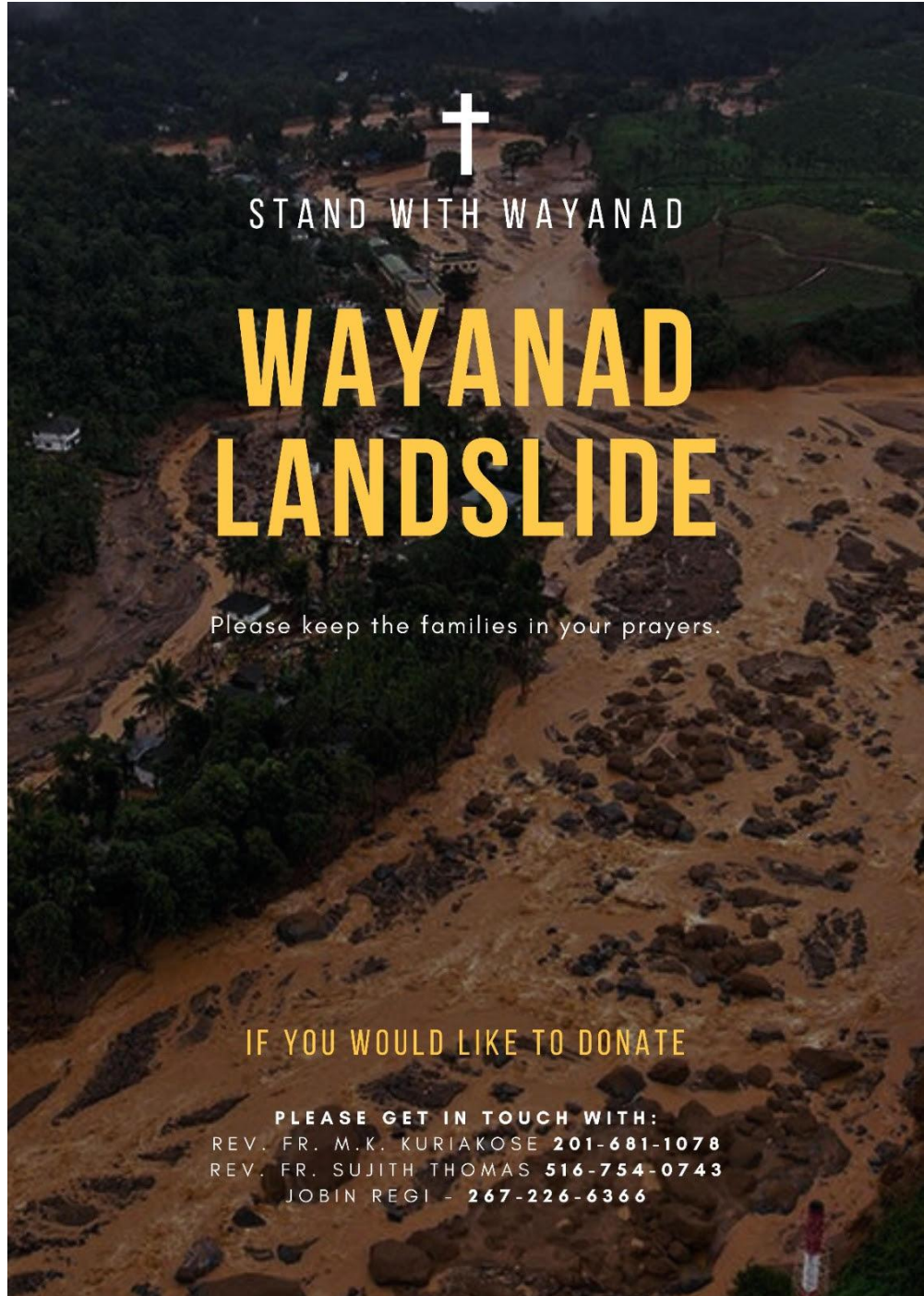
FOCUS

- FOCUS will be hosting a service event on September 14th, please contact Danny George for more information.

General Announcements

Wayanad Collection- Due to the devastation that has taken place in Wayanad, please continue to pray and donate as you can to help support the affected families.

Housing Charity- Please continue to support our housing charity as our goal is to achieve \$40,000 to build 5 houses in Kerala for those who are in need.



Member Announcements

July Memorials

- ❖ **Rev. Fr. Dr. T. J. Joshua**
- ❖ **Mr. George Chacko**, Brother of Susan Zachariah (#374) and Mabel Roy (#309)
- ❖ **Mr. P. S. Abraham**, Uncle of Anitha Jossy (#332)
- ❖ **Mr. Abraham Kochitty**, Brother of Annamma Mathew (#160) and Aleyamma Thomas (#161)
- ❖ **Mrs. Kunjamma Shaji**, Mother of Shaji Varghese (#365)
- ❖ **Mr. Mathai P. Thomas**, Brother of Annamma Geevarghese (#108) and Uncle of Rajesh Geevarghese (#108)
- ❖ **Mr. T. G. Joykutty**, Brother of George Thadathil (#286)

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.

July Birth Announcements

- ❖ **Kaleb Aleyas** – Baby boy born to parents Basil and Bini Aleyas, grandparents Thankachan and Kunjamole Samuel (#296)

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.

AUGUST WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Abraham	Aug 2	Mr. & Mrs. Kochupurackal Thomas	Aug 27
Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Rajan	Aug 2	Mr. & Mrs. Suresh Cherian	Aug 29
Mr. & Mrs. Abraham K. Varughese	Aug 14	Mr. & Mrs. Alex P Symon	Aug 29
Mr. & Mrs. Renji Varghese	Aug 15		
Mr. & Mrs. Varghese Baby	Aug 15		
Mr. & Mrs. Mathew P Cherian	Aug 15		
Mr. & Mrs. Georgeyo Oommen	Aug 16		
Mr. & Mrs. Ashok Mathew Koshy	Aug 17		
Mr. & Mrs. Rajan Koshy	Aug 17		
Mr. & Mrs. Manoj Thomas	Aug 19		
Mr. & Mrs. Cibu Joseph	Aug 19		
Mr. & Mrs. Jacob Kuruvilla	Aug 20		
Mr. & Mrs. Ajo Raju	Aug 21		
Mr. & Mrs. Nadukemuriyil V Thomas	Aug 21		
Mr. & Mrs. David Philip	Aug 21		
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Vakkayil	Aug 22		
Mr. & Mrs. Anoop Joseph George	Aug 22		
Mr. & Mrs. Shibu Thomas	Aug 22		
Mr. & Mrs. Vinod Jacob	Aug 24		
Mr. & Mrs. Jiju Mathew	Aug 26		



AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

Zeena Jacob	Aug 1	Eliza Leela Panicker	Aug 12	Naomi Panicker	Aug 18
Joel Jacob	Aug 2	Jibin Verghese Jacob	Aug 13	Thomas Abraham	Aug 18
Jijo George Varghese	Aug 2	Emersyn Grace Jacob	Aug 13	Christina S Thomas	Aug 18
Chinnamma M Varghese	Aug 2	Sneha Reynold	Aug 13	George Abraham	Aug 18
Cherian Philipose	Aug 2	Augustin Babu	Aug 13	Ninan Mathai	Aug 19
Merly Mary Mathews	Aug 3	Joel G Panicker	Aug 13	Hannah Mary Thomas	Aug 19
Saya Alina Thomas	Aug 4	Alexandra Geevarghese	Aug 14	Paul P Mavelly	Aug 19
Justin Mathai	Aug 4			Sherin Sara Anish	Aug 20
Dony Davy	Aug 4			Stephan Kalthil	Aug 20
Abraham John	Aug 5			Mariamamma Mathew	Aug 21
Jonathan Matthew Cherian	Aug 5	Jojoy Varghese	Aug 14	Aben G Panicker	Aug 21
Jaison Daniel	Aug 5	Johan Anto Panicker	Aug 14	Amelia E George	Aug 21
Aleyamma George	Aug 6	Liana John	Aug 14	Aaron George	Aug 21
Siny Varghese	Aug 7	John Thomas	Aug 14	Flamy Philip	Aug 21
Lambert Thomas	Aug 7	Nadukemuriyil V Thomas	Aug 15	Joel Joe Zachariah	Aug 22
Leelamma O Panicker	Aug 8	Achamma Cherian	Aug 15	Shyni Anu	Aug 22
Mathews T Varghese	Aug 8	Tincy Raju	Aug 16	Isabel J Mathew	Aug 22
Crisia Maria Shibu	Aug 9	Rachel A Varghese	Aug 16	Bindu Job	Aug 23
Josh Job	Aug 9	Abel T Anooj	Aug 16	Anoj Thomas	Aug 23
Varghese Mammen	Aug 10	Mikayla Maria Cherian	Aug 17	Sajan Thomas	Aug 23
Sheena Jose	Aug 10	Shelby Alisha Thomas	Aug 18	Kochupurackal Thomas	Aug 24
Ashok Paulose	Aug 10	Alex Mathew	Aug 18	Jonah Thomas	Aug 25

Shawn Stephen	Aug 25	Luke Lynnson	Aug 28	Rosamma Baby	Aug 30
Riny Saju Mathew	Aug 25	Sharon Jacob	Aug 29		
Annamma Mathew	Aug 26	Thomas Samuel	Aug 29		
George Varghese	Aug 27	Bibin George	Aug 30		
Judy Philip	Aug 27	Betsy George	Aug 30		
Nallumalayil Joseph George	Aug 27	Cijo Joseph	Aug 30		
Agin G. Thomas	Aug 27	Anugraha Thankam John	Aug 30		

Sunday School News

*Submitted by Steven Kurian, Principal
(Tel.: 267.450.6815, Email: stevekurian@yahoo.com)*

- Classes will resume after Labor Day.

One Year Bible Reading Schedule – August

Date	I	II	III
August 1	2 Samuel 18	Jer. 22	Romans 9
August 2	2 Samuel 19	Jer. 23	Romans 10-11
August 3	2 Samuel 20-21	Jer. 24	Romans 12
August 4	2 Samuel 22	Jer. 25	Romans 13-14
August 5	2 Samuel 23	Jer. 26	Romans 15-16
August 6	2 Samuel 24	Jer. 27	Mark 1
August 7	1 Kings 1	Jer. 28	Mark 2
August 8	1 Kings 2	Jer. 29	Mark 3
August 9	1 Kings 3	Jer. 30	Mark 4
August 10	1 Kings 4-5	Jer. 31	Mark 5
August 11	1 Kings 6	Jer. 32	Mark 6
August 12	1 Kings 7	Jer. 33	Mark 7
August 13	1 Kings 8	Jer. 34	Mark 8
August 14	1 Kings 9	Jer. 35	Mark 9
August 15	1 Kings 10	Jer. 36	Mark 10
August 16	1 Kings 11	Jer. 37	Mark 11
August 17	1 Kings 12	Jer. 38	Mark 12
August 18	1 Kings 13	Jer. 39	Mark 13
August 19	1 Kings 14	Jer. 40	Mark 14
August 20	1 Kings 15	Jer. 41	Mark 15
August 21	1 Kings 16	Jer. 42	Mark 16
August 22	1 Kings 17	Jer. 43	1 Cor. 1-2
August 23	1 Kings 18	Jer. 44	1 Cor. 3
August 24	1 Kings 19	Jer. 45-46	1 Cor. 4-5
August 25	1 Kings 20	Jer. 47	1 Cor. 6
August 26	1 Kings 21	Jer. 48	1 Cor. 7
August 27	1 Kings 22	Jer. 49	1 Cor. 8-9
August 28	2 Kings 1-2	Jer. 50	1 Cor. 10
August 29	2 Kings 3	Jer. 51	1 Cor. 11
August 30	2 Kings 4	Jer. 52	1 Cor. 12-13
August 31	2 Kings 5	Lam. 1	1 Cor. 14

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