

ST. THOMAS INDIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

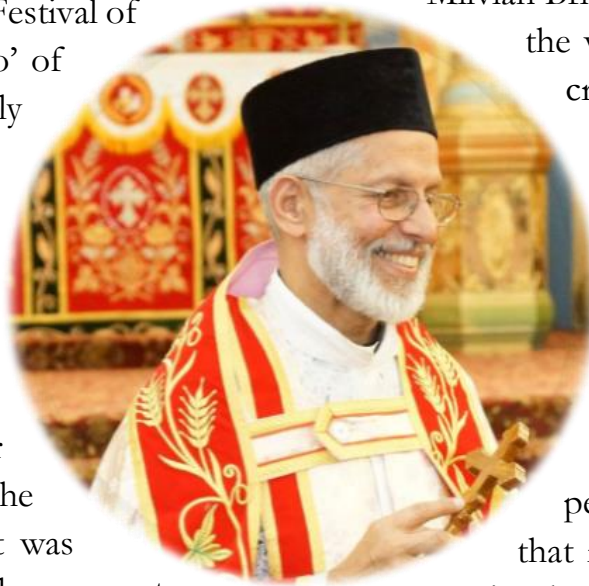
SEPTEMBER 2024

VOLUME XXVIII ISSUE 9

Vicar's Message

Festival of the Holy Cross

September 14th is the Festival of the Holy Cross. In the 'qolo' of the Kukilion of the Holy Cross, it has the brief story of the discovery of the cross on which Jesus was crucified. In the history books it is noted that in the year 326 AD, Helene the Queen, mother of Emperor Constantine discovered the Holy Cross in Jerusalem. It was believed to be a miraculous event because when the three crosses were discovered it was not possible to identify the cross on which the Lord was crucified. The story continues that a respectable lady who was very sick unto death was healed by touching the original cross, thus the cross became a venerable piece of relic.



Already in the life of Emperor Constantine the sign of the cross was a miracle worker. It was recorded in history that Constantine during an early morning sun worship, saw a cross on the sun and heard a voice saying to him, "conquer with this." Constantine was under the burden of an impending war which is later known as the Milvian Bridge War in 312 AD. Following the vision, he used the sign of the cross on all war equipment, flags, chariots and horses and eventually won the war. Thus, the cross became a sign of victory.

From the early centuries cross became the symbol of Christianity. Some people built the belief around that it can cast out demons. Many movies the cross was depicted as a source of exorcism. Some reportedly used to keep it under the pillow of sick children for healing. There is a famous story of St. Gregorios of Parumala, casting out demons in the nearby Hindu worship area called 'kavu'. Another story, when one foreigner was trying to take a photo of St. Gregorios, the sunlight was too

much, and His Grace raised the cross to have some cloud cover the sun for a better picture. These are stories transferred from one generation to the other without the possibility of any verification. In any case, there is a miraculous nature around the cross whether it is made of gold or other metals, wood or concrete. It is in the Church tradition. And it is strong. For that reason alone, the 'veneration' of the cross on Good Friday is of great significance to the believers. As a result of these beliefs, the cross became part of the life of Christians of apostolic tradition. Also, wearing the cross as a pendant, engraving it on the wedding 'thali', using crosses for every sacramental or liturgical occasion and prayers etc. is a normal practice. Needless to say, the use of cross on church steeples, inside the church building especially on the altar, liturgical books, vestments, church buildings etc. became common. For the Orthodox Christian, when they pass by a cross or a church that has a cross on the building, they will bow down and make the sign of the cross. In addition, we also make the sign of cross before meals, before anything important that we do every day, such as starting a day setting out from the home or starting the vehicle.

Strictly speaking, what is the miracle that the cross works? It is nothing but the unfailing, unconditional, and sacrificial love that Christ exhibited on the cross. The willingness to pray for his enemies, as He taught us, to forgive his adversaries (Father forgive them as they do not know what they are doing) and His own words, "If any man would come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me," (Luke 9:23.) This miracle working ability is left to the Christians to emulate in their personal and community life. There is nothing greater than the divine love which the Lord has instilled in our life when we accepted Him as our redeemer and savior at the baptism. From that status we work miracles every day when our unconditional love is poured out to the rest of the people obeying our Lord, "Love your neighbor like yourself." May all those who wear a cross around their necks make sure that they are wearing the great symbol of ultimate sacrificial love!

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 Achen 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 August 2024



August 1st- August 15th: Fast of the Assumption was observed in honor of St. Mary.

August 5th: Holy Qurbana was celebrated in honor of the Feast of the Holy Transfiguration.

August 4th: Rev. Fr. Rajan Varghese, Rev. Fr. K. P. Varghese and Rev.

Dn. Shojil Abraham visited and celebrated Holy Qurbana with our parish.



August 10th: MMVS Philadelphia Area Retreat was held at St. Johns Church Drexel Hill. Over 20 members from our parish attended the retreat. Our MMVS also participated in a food drive for the Philadelphia Area MMVS. (See above picture.)



August 17th: The Ecumenical Tournament was held at Renegades Gym. Our church participated in the volleyball tournament and made it to the semifinals! Team members included: Joyel Manoj, Abel Mathew, Vincent Daniel, Jestin Abraham, Jobin Abraham, Christin Varghese, and Noel Cherian. A special thanks to Joyel

Manoj, who was a coordinator for the event as a whole!

August 31st: Celebrating the anniversary of Ordination of Priesthood of Rev. Fr. M. K. Kuriakose with His Grace Zachariah Mar Nicholovos! (See below photo.)



Upcoming Events and General Announcements

Save the Date

- **Sunday, September 29th- OCYM Christian Devotional Concert** will be held at church beginning at 5PM, tickets are still available!
- **Saturday and Sunday, October 5th and 6th -MOCF Gospel Convention-** Held at St. Gregorios Church. The main speaker is Rev. Fr. Varghese P. Idichandi for both days.
- **Saturday, October 5th – Parish Harvest Festival-** Come experience all the fun and games at our Annual Harvest Festival. There will also be food, auctions, and our world-class cultural performance. All Spiritual Organizations are participating. Ticket sales and pre-orders for food have begun!

Spiritual Organization Updates

Sunday School

- Sunday School classes began Sunday, September 8th. The new class schedule for the upcoming year is 12:15PM – 1:15PM.

OCYM

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

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.
- MMVS hosted a delicious snack sale of Aval and Murukku on Sept. 1st.

MGOCSM

- Philadelphia Area MGOCSM Back to School Conference was hosted at our church. It was well attended and led by Seminarian Mathew Varughese.

FOCUS

- FOCUS meets monthly, please contact Danny George for more information and to host a FOCUS meeting.

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 Shrine.

Digital Payment: All donations may be made by Apple Pay / Google Pay / Venmo/ Paypal - members can scan QR codes affixed on the glass wall outside the Church office. Please remember, whenever using ACHS or an

electronic payment to include full name, member ID and purpose of payment. Any questions, please contact, the Treasurer, Ajin Abraham.

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.

ST. THOMAS INDIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
Ocym proudly presents

ATHMA SANGEETHAM
ആത്മസംഗീതം
MUSIC CONCERT

September 29, 2024
LIVE ORCHESTRA

ROY PUTHUR
PLAYBACK SINGER

SUDEEP KUMAR
PLAYBACK SINGER

LIBIN SCARIA
PLAYBACK SINGER
TITLE WINNER
(ZEE KERALAM SAREGANAPA)

SREYA JAYADEEP
PLAYBACK SINGER

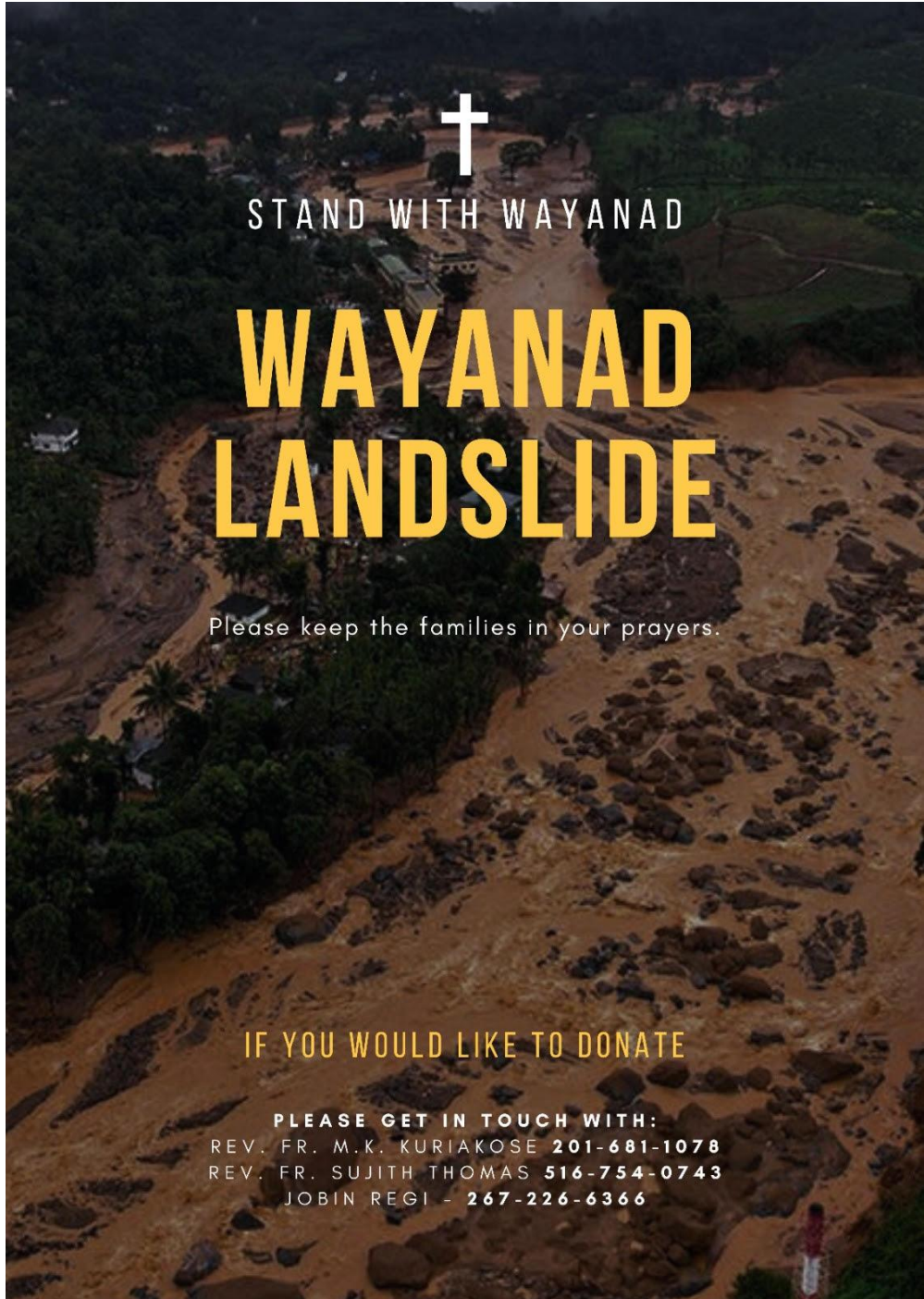
LIJO

LINU

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

August Memorials

- ❖ **Mr. Raju Kuruvilla**, Uncle of Anita George (#386)
- ❖ **Mr. T. O. George**, Grandfather of Jitha Alex (#316)
- ❖ **Mr. P. C. Chacko**, Father of Nisha Alex Mathai (#285)
- ❖ **Mr. Abraham Varghese (#143)**, Father of Varghese P. Abraham (#143), Thomas Varghese (#142) and Jessly Alex (#154)



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.

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.

SEPTEMBER WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Mr. & Mrs. Job John	Sep 1	Mr. & Mrs. George Varghese	Sep 27
Mr. & Mrs. Rajesh Geevarghese	Sep 3	Mr. & Mrs. Anu Thomas	Sep 28
Mr. & Mrs. Varughese John	Sep 7	Mr. & Mrs. Yohannan Mathew	Sep 30
Mr. & Mrs. Jacob T. Mathai	Sep 8		
Mr. & Mrs. Thankachan K Mathai	Sep 10		
Mr. & Mrs. Anoop George	Sep 10		
Mr. & Mrs. Alex Mathew	Sept 12		
Mr. & Mrs. Babu M Kunjandy	Sep 12		
Mr. & Mrs. Thomaskutty Varghese	Sep 13		
Mr. & Mrs. Joy Jacob	Sep 13		
Mr. & Mrs. Jacob K. Thekekkuttu	Sep 14		
Mr. & Mrs. Saju Paul	Sep 14		
Mr. & Mrs. Mathew Varghese	Sep 15		
Mr. & Mrs. Jiju George	Sep 16		
Mr. & Mrs. Jino Jacob	Sep 19		
Mr. & Mrs. Anoop John	Sep 20		



SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Alvin Anil	Sep 1	Nivedh Philip	Sep 11	Smitha Jacob	Sep 23
Vivek K Paulose	Sep 2	Brown Varghese	Sep 13	Viji P Koshy	Sep 23
Susmitha Thomas	Sep 2	Zariah Geevarghese	Sep 14	Alissa Jose	Sep 23
Panickal Y Mathaikutty	Sep 3	Sosamma Educula Chacko	Sep 15	Jeena Tobin	Sep 23
Jacob Kuruvilla	Sep 3	Jonathan B Varghese	Sep 15	Joanna Sunil George	Sep 25
Carolyn Miriam Cherian	Sep 3	Elsa Thomas	Sep 16	Shinu Augustin	Sep 25
Joshua J Mathew	Sep 4	Kunjamma Thomas	Sep 16	Gitty George Abraham	Sep 25
Angelina Susan Zachariah	Sep 4	Saramma Varughese	Sep 17	Varghese Panicker	Sep 26
Elizabeth Thomas	Sep 4	Annamma Geevarghese	Sep 17	Nicole Samuel	Sep 26
Jacob Chacko	Sep 4			Adam Mavelly Paul	Sep 26
Simon Daniel Jaison	Sep 5			Smitha Thomas	Sep 27
Alex T Raju	Sep 5	Suja Mary Mathew	Sep 18	Linda Elsa Aji	Sep 28
Liya Sara Aji	Sep 5	Sneha Jose	Sep 19	Anoop Joseph George	Sep 28
Niju Mathew Cheriyan	Sep 6	Joy Panicker Jr.	Sep 20	Smitha J Mathew	Sep 28
Raji George	Sep 7	Seraphina Mary George	Sep 20	Shaji Thomas	Sep 28
Shinu P Thankachan	Sep 7	Jensil Varghese	Sep 20	Christiana Rachel Shibu	Sep 28
Anoop George	Sep 8	Sheril Susan Varghese	Sep 21	Julee P Saji	Sep 29
Samkutty John	Sep 8	Nimitha Thomas	Sep 21	Achamma Kurian	Sep 29
Varghese P Abraham	Sep 8	Ajin John Abraham	Sep 22	Jibin Vaidian	Sep 29
Hanah M. mathew	Sep 9	Anu. Pulickal Varughese	Sep 22	Binish George	Sep 30
Isaac Varghese	Sep 9	Eben P Mathai	Sep 22		
Priya Mariam Saji	Sep 11	Sarah M Samuel	Sep 23		
Jennifer Mariam Philip	Sep 11				

Sunday School News

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

- Classes have started for the new school year. The new start and end time for classes for this year is: 12:15PM to 1:15PM.

One Year Bible Reading Schedule - September

<i>Date</i>	I	II	III
<i>September 1</i>	2 Kings 6	Lam. 2	1 Cor. 15
<i>September 2</i>	2 Kings 7	Lam. 3	1 Cor. 16
<i>September 3</i>	2 Kings 8	Lam. 4	2 Cor. 1-2
<i>September 4</i>	2 Kings 9	Lam. 5	2 Cor. 3-4
<i>September 5</i>	2 Kings 10	Ezekiel 1	2 Cor. 5-7
<i>September 6</i>	2 Kings 11-12	Ezekiel 2	2 Cor. 8-9
<i>September 7</i>	2 Kings 13	Ezekiel 3	2 Cor. 10-11
<i>September 8</i>	2 Kings 14	Ezekiel 4	2 Cor. 12-13
<i>September 9</i>	2 Kings 15	Ezekiel 5	Luke 1
<i>September 10</i>	2 Kings 16	Ezekiel 6	Luke 2
<i>September 11</i>	2 Kings 17	Ezekiel 7	Luke 3
<i>September 12</i>	2 Kings 18	Ezekiel 8	Luke 4
<i>September 13</i>	2 Kings 19	Ezekiel 9	Luke 5
<i>September 14</i>	2 Kings 20	Ezekiel 10	Luke 6
<i>September 15</i>	2 Kings 21	Ezekiel 11	Luke 7
<i>September 16</i>	2 Kings 22-23	Ezekiel 12	Luke 8
<i>September 17</i>	2 Kings 24-25	Ezekiel 13	Luke 9
<i>September 18</i>	1 Chron. 1	Ezekiel 14	Luke 10
<i>September 19</i>	1 Chron. 2	Ezekiel 15	Luke 11
<i>September 20</i>	1 Chron. 3	Ezekiel 16	Luke 12
<i>September 21</i>	1 Chron. 4	Ezekiel 17	Luke 13-14
<i>September 22</i>	1 Chron. 5	Ezekiel 18	Luke 15
<i>September 23</i>	1 Chron. 6	Ezekiel 19	Luke 16
<i>September 24</i>	1 Chron. 7	Ezekiel 20	Luke 17
<i>September 25</i>	1 Chron. 8	Ezekiel 21	Luke 18
<i>September 26</i>	1 Chron. 9	Ezekiel 22	Luke 19
<i>September 27</i>	1 Chron. 10	Ezekiel 23	Luke 20
<i>September 28</i>	1 Chron. 11	Ezekiel 24	Luke 21
<i>September 29</i>	1 Chron. 12	Ezekiel 25	Luke 22
<i>September 30</i>	1 Chron. 13-14	Ezekiel 26	Luke 23

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