

ST. THOMAS INDIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2025

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Vicar's Message

The Theotokos: The Utmost Example

March 25 is the day set apart for remembering the Annunciation to St. Mary (Sooboro). This date is fixed and would not change as the day of Christmas, which is on December 25, will not change, making it the full pregnancy time for a woman to give birth. Even if March 25th falls during Holy Week or even Good Friday, that day must be observed as a Perunnal with offices of prayers of Wednesday which is the day set apart to remember St. Mary. (the Sleeba namaskaram we use on Sunday from Feast of the Holy Cross and Easter is the order of prayer for Wednesday). In such case the Good Friday offices of prayers will not be used except the "veneration of the Cross". In some traditions, the Good Friday prayers are conducted after the Holy Qurbana in the morning. Even in that case there won't be any kneeling because after Holy Qurbana kneeling is not allowed. Such importance is attached to the Annunciation Festival.



St. Luke in the first chapter of his gospel provides detailed account of the Annunciation to St. Mary. No other gospels have this account. In addition to this we have the apocryphal literature which gives more information about St. Mary's family and other stories. The Bible gives an important place for St. Mary. Also, in the Early Church a special devotion developed in the Church highlighting her life and mediation. A Marian theology developed later in the theological education circles. The Roman Catholic and the Orthodox Church, even though have slight differences (the Roman Catholics believe in the immaculate birth of St. Mary, the Orthodox does not) in Mariology, do

consider St. Mary as the greatest saint of the Church.

Several apparitions (appearances) of St. Mary was reported at different places making such place pilgrim centers. Fatima in Italy, Lourdes in France, Zeitoun in Egypt, etc. are some of them. In India, Velankanni in Tamil Nadu, Manarcadu at Kottayam are special pilgrim centers. All these are indications how St. Mary has become a great source of divine blessing. Several modern psychologists tried to explain these appearances as hallucination and mental projections but the repeated appearances at Zeitoun, Egypt could not be explained psychologically, including many miracles attached to it. The Zeitoun apparitions continued for more than a year, giving opportunity to hundreds of thousands of people to see and receive blessings. It is proving that special mediation of St. Mary is a solace for many believers.

We may wonder why St. Mary is so important in the Church! St. Mary's name 'Theotokos' or God-bearer explains everything. In the Orthodox teaching, St. Mary is symbolized as the second heaven or even The Church itself because she carried the Lord in herself. No other human got that privilege. We as Christians who take the Lord into our life are replicas of St. Mary. Every time we take Holy Qurbana we become like her. She is the greatest model for us.

St. Mary's life is a perfect example for us in understanding Christian values such as humility, obedience, forgiveness, kindness, sanctity, tolerance, and so on. She is a example for all of us to follow. Even though she did not enjoy worldly peace during her life, she stands as the firm rock rooted deeply in the Lord offering peace and healing to those seek her mediation. May her prayer be a refuge for us!

Lovingly,

Fr. M. K. Kuriakose, Vicar

Events and Announcements

Past Events Highlights

- **February 2nd** - Blessed Feast of the Entry of Our Lord into the Temple.
- **February 2nd** - Inauguration of Housing Charity 2025.
- **February 10th-12th** - Nineveh Fast.
- **February 16th** – Sunday of All Faithful Departed Priests.
- **February 16th** – Ecumenical Fellowship Bible Quiz was held at Christos Marthoma Church.
- **February 16th** – MMVS Homemade pickle sale.
- **February 18th - 29th** Anniversary of the Reorganization of our Church.
- **February 23rd** - Sunday of All Departed Faithful.
- **February 23rd** – Sunday School Virtual Game Night.
- **March 1st** – World Day of Prayer was held at our church.
- **March 7th** – MGOCSM Philadelphia Area Service event was held at our church.
- **March 8th** – GROW Annual One-day Conference was held at St. Stephen's Orthodox Church, Midland Park, NJ.
- **March 8th** – MMVS Delegates Meeting.

Upcoming Events

- **March 22nd** – Sunday School is conducting a Prayer Rope fellowship this Lenten season led by Sbdn. Predeep Chacko.
- **March 25th** – Feast of the Annunciation to the Theotokos.
- **April 12th** – Parish Annual Retreat. Chief Celebrant is H. G. Yuhanon Mar Policarpos Metropolitan (Angamaly Diocese).
- **April 13th** – Palm Sunday.
- **April 18th** – Good Friday.
- **April 20th** – Easter Sunday.

Congratulations to GROW Ashley Samuel Memorial Scholarship Award Recipient - Treena Jossy



The Ashley Samuel Memorial Scholarship is awarded to a worthy graduating female High School Senior of the Northeast American Diocese with demonstrated excellent academic achievement along with strong character, compassion for others and a strong commitment to community service in pursuit of higher studies.

Church Reminders

Dip Jar: We regret to inform you that Dip Jar has been discontinued, and the device has been removed from the church premises. Those who are interested in submitting their offertory electronically may use digital payment via the QR code posted by the Meditation Room.

Digital Payment: All donations can 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. Unclaimed items will be donated to charity.

Spiritual Organization Updates

Men’s Forum

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

MMVS

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

MOCF

- MOCF is conducting non-perishable food drive this Lenten season.

OCYM

- OCYM has weekly meetings after Holy Qurbana every Sunday.

FOCUS

- Monthly meetings are conducted by FOCUS.

MGOCSM


- Monthly Bible Study will be held on March 29th at church.

Save the Dates

OVBS – July 17th – 19th



Family & Youth Conference 2025 – July 9 – 12



**FAMILY & YOUTH
CONFERENCE 2025**
OF THE NORTHEAST AMERICAN DIOCESE OF
MALANKARA ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH

THE WAY OF THE PILGRIM
*"But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly
await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ" -
Philippians 3:20*

LOCATION
HILTON STAMFORD HOTEL & EXECUTIVE MEETING
CENTER 1 FIRST STAMFORD PL, STAMFORD, CT
06902

DATE
JULY 9 - 12, 2025

Member Announcements

Obituaries

- ❖ February 25th - **Mr. G. Thomas**, elder brother of Mr. Skariah Thomas (#122) passed away in India.
- ❖ February 26th – **Mrs. Aleyamma Simon**, aunt of Mr. Shibu Baby (#239) & Mr. Santhosh Baby (#186) passed away in India.
- ❖ February 27th – **Mrs. Valsamma Kurian**, sister of Mr. Jacob Thekkekuttu (#284) passed away. Funeral was held on March 3rd at St. George Orthodox Church, Fairless Hills.
- ❖ March 14th – **Rev. Fr. Yohannan Panicker**, brother of Mrs. Elizabeth Varki (#127) passed away in Los Angeles. Funeral services will take place at St. Thomas Orthodox Valiyapalli, LA, and he will be laid to rest on March 31st.

- ❖ March 14th – **Rev. Fr. Jose K. John**, brother-in-law of Mrs. Chandni George (#253) passed away in India.
- ❖ March 19th – **Mrs. Ramany George** (#163), wife of Mr. Oommen George (Blessen), mother of late Blessy, Betsy, Bipin & Belinda and sister-in-law of Mr. Mathew George (#181) passed away. The viewing and funeral services will take place on Monday, March 24th in our church.

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 only names, 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.

March Wedding Anniversaries

Mr. & Mrs. Joe Zachariah Mar 4

Mr. & Mrs. Jenu Peter Alexander Mar 15

Mr. & Mrs. Achen Varghese Mar 21

Mr. & Mrs. Jacob Chacko Mar 30



MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Christian John Mar 1
 Kunjappy Koshy Mar 3
 Abel G Panicker Mar 3
 Stacy M George Mar 4
 Aswathi Eliz Jacob Mar 4
 James C Peter Mar 5
 Elizabeth Kurian Mar 5
 Podiamma Thankachan Mar 5
 Rebekah Mathew Mar 5
 Susan Philip Mar 6
 Justin Ronnie Mar 7
 Joshua Jacob Jose Mar 7
 Saji Abraham Mar 8
 Simon Cheeran Ittikuru Mar 8
 Nissi Elizabeth Zachariah Mar 8
 Nelson O Panicker Mar 10
 Merlin Philip Mar 12
 Binu K. Mathew Mar 13
 Biju P. Varghese Mar 13
 Vincent Jacob Mar 14
 Shabin Mathew Koshy Mar 15
 Suresh Cherian Mar 15
 K T Thomas Mar 15
 Bibin P. Baby Mar 16

Aradhana Rose John Mar 16
 Asriel Ann Vaidian Mar 16
 Isaiah John Mar 16
 Pramod Kurisinmoottil Mar 17
 Philip George Mar 17
 Nikhil M Philip Mar 17
 Thejus Mathew Mar 18
 Varughese M M. Mar 18
 Soushya Varghese Mar 18
 Daniel P. George Mar 18


Leia Rijon Mar 19
 Sarah Roy Mar 19
 Josna Koshy Mar 19
 Cherian V V. Mar 19
 Nitha L Alex Mar 20
 Anita George Mar 21
 Mariakutty Thomas Mar 21
 Toby Johnes Fen Mar 22
 Rohan Philip Robin Mar 22
 Mary Kuriakose Mar 23
 Elijah Binu Mar 23

Alex Pothen Mar 23
 Rajan C Padiyara Mar 23
 Liya Thomas Mar 24
 Ivanniah Alexander Mar 25
 Susan Mathews Mar 25
 Mathew Varghese Mar 25
 Lucas Philip Mar 26
 Ashin Saju Mar 26
 Alvin V Jose Mar 27
 Daniel Yohannan Mar 27
 Susan Panicker Mar 27
 Megha S Varghese Mar 28
 Rachel Melavila Mar 28
 Cicily George Cherian Mar 28
 Jacob Varghese Mar 28
 Alen Saju Mar 29
 Raji K John Mar 29
 Arielle Geevarghese Mar 29
 Ammukutty Geevarghese Mar 30
 Lovina Maria Aji Mar 30
 Annamma Cherian Mar 30
 Paul Jacob Mar 30
 Daniel Thomas Mar 30
 Raji George Mar 31

Sunday School News

Steven Kurian, Principal
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One Year Bible Reading Schedule - March

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

Please remember to keep the Sunday School children and staff in your daily prayers.