

ST. THOMAS INDIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

1009 UNRUH AVE, PHILADELPHIA, PA 19111

Phone: (215) 342 1500 Fax: (215) 342 2700 www.stthomasphiladelphia.org

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2025

VOLUME XXIX ISSUE 4

Vicar's Message

The Resurrection Experience

Saul of Tarsus did not believe in Jesus during His public ministry; he didn't want to believe in him; he knew something is going on in his community in connection with Jesus but never believed His miracles and revolutionary talks; and he did not want to investigate into what's going on because his conviction was that the person namely Jesus who did all these must be a fraud. For Saul the one who broke the sacred laws of Moses, even the Sabbath does not deserve any attention. In addition, He did not respect the leaders of his own religion and even called them "hypocrites". Then Saul decided to bring an end to the followers of this strange leader who turned society upside down with his simple teaching of love. Saul did not want to accept the ideology of this 'fraud'. Then he thought to himself, 'thank God my people were able to reject him and kill him, giving the worst kind of death of a criminal. He thought everything came to an end like what happened to Theudas who had more than four hundred



followers, and Judas the Galilean who also had some followers (Acts 5:35-39). Just the opposite happened when this 'fraud' man's disciples started spreading a 'lie' that their leader has resurrected and appeared to several of them. The news became sensational, and several people started believing this 'lie' and it became unbearable to all religious leaders that they decided to eradicate the followers using all their might.

Later on Saul who took the name Paul, wrote to the Corinthians 15: 4ff., "He (Jesus) was raised on the third day according to scriptures and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve; then he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once....then he appeared to

James...and last of all as to child untimely born, he appeared to me (Paul) also.” He continued in vs. 14, “if Christ has not been raised then is our preaching in vain, your faith is in vain.” It was the amazing turning point in Paul’s life. Paul said all the stories to Luke who later recorded it in the Acts of the Apostles chapter 9. On the very unassuming but a targeted trip to Damascus Jesus met Saul through a lightning, asking, “Saul, Saul why do you persecute me?” To Saul’s reply, “who are you Lord” the response was... “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting”. Saul couldn’t believe that the ‘fraud Jesus’ is the living God! There began a new journey for Saul taking the name Paul.

The encounter with the resurrected Jesus was an ‘experience par excellent’ to Paul. Paul became the greatest missionary, greater than all other apostles who travelled with Jesus, to spread the Good News to the rest of the world. It was not a comfort seeking journey with Jesus

but a commitment to spread the Truth of Resurrection to the rest of the world. His entire life after the conversion was spent for Christ and His mission. The adventures, the sufferings, and finally his martyrdom were all the proof of his relentless faith in the true God Jesus Christ. This resurrection experience became instrumental to millions of Christians to accept the Way of Christ. This experience is available to us too if we are willing to believe in this living God who will give us a mission to spread that experience to others. As we celebrate Easter this year, let us try to capture this experience of an encounter with this loving God Jesus. He will change us. He will renew us. He will strengthen us.

The Lord is Risen! Indeed, He is Risen!

Lovingly,

Rev. Fr. M. K. Kuriakose, Vicar

Events and Announcements

Past Events Highlights

- **March 22nd** – Sunday School conducted a Prayer Rope fellowship this Lenten season led by Sbdn. Predeep Chacko.
- **March 25th** – Feast of the Annunciation to the Theotokos.
- **April 5th** – MGOCSM Philadelphia Lenten Retreat led by Rev. Fr. Sujit Thomas.

Upcoming Events

- **April 12th** – Lazarus Saturday & Parish Annual Retreat.
 - Chief Celebrant is H. G. Yuhanon Mar Policarpus Metropolitan (Angamaly Diocese).
 - Youth Retreat will be led by Mrs. Ceena Mathew, Assoc. Minister of St. Gregorios Orthodox Church, Bensalem.
- **April 13th** – Palm Sunday.
- **April 18th** – Good Friday.
- **April 20th** – Easter Sunday followed by Easter Egg Hunt.
- **May 29th – 31st** – NEAD MMVS Annual Retreat 2025 at HTRC.
 - The Retreat Father is Rev. Fr. Dr. Mathew Koshy.

Congratulations to Scripps Bux-Mont Regional Spelling Bee Champion – Maia Mathai



Maia Mathai, a 6th grader, is the daughter of Justin & Princy Mathai (#382).

She will go on to represent her School District in the National Spelling Bee in Washington D. C. in May.

Here's wishing her all the best!

Church Reminders

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.

OCYM

- OCYM has weekly meetings after Holy Qurbana every Sunday.

MMVS

- MMVS has weekly meetings after the Holy Qurbana every Sunday.
- MMVS is selling Raffle tickets for \$25. Please support them.

FOCUS

- Monthly meetings are conducted by FOCUS.

MOCF

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

MGOCSM

- Bible Study will be held on the last Saturday of the month at church.

Save the Dates

MMVS Annual Retreat (May 29th – 31st)



NORTHEAST AMERICAN DIOCESE MORTH MARIAM VANITHA SAMAJAM

Annual Retreat 2025

Theme
The Guarding of the mind or of Thoughts
St. Luke 6:45

May 29 - 31, 2025

Holy Transfiguration Retreat Center
1000 Seminary Road, Dalton, PA 18414

HQ. Mor Nicholas Zachariah Metropolitan

Retreat Father
Rev. Fr. Dr. Mathew Koshy

Click Here for Registration

Registration Fee 200\$

Registration Deadline
MAY 10, 2025

OVBS (July 17th – 19th)



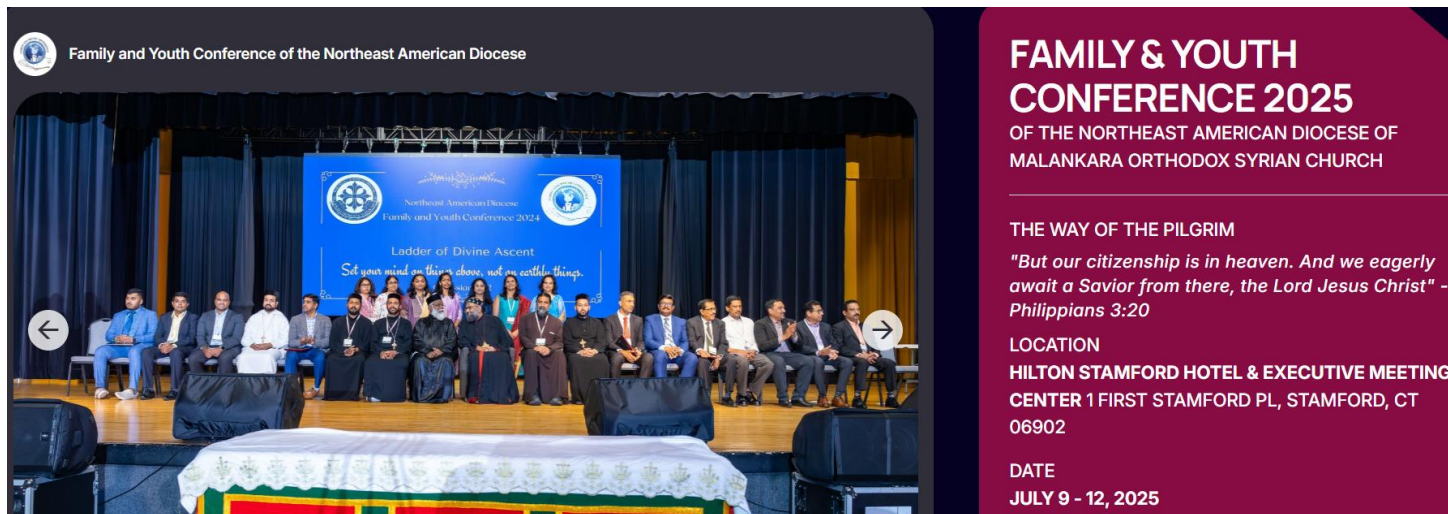
Join us
Save The Date

OVBS 2025

Date : July 17 to 19 - 2025
Location : St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church, Unruh Ave.

Theme **Walk in Purity**
Psalm 119:9

Family & Youth Conference 2025 (July 9 – 12)



Family and Youth Conference of the Northeast American Diocese

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

- ❖ **New members** – We welcome Mr. Nelson Oommen Panicker & Reni Panicker (#392) to our family.
- ❖ **First Temple Entry** – We welcome Fiona Lijin, daughter of Lijin & Dona Joyes, granddaughter of Joyes M. George & Laly Joyes (#362) to our family.
- ❖ **New Altar Assistants** - Simon Jaison, Stephen Kalathil, Joshua Raju, Delwin Thomas, Noah Cherian, David Roy, Josh Job, and Jacob Varghese entered as altar assistants.
- ❖ **Wedding** – The wedding of Mr. Alen Shibu Varghese, son of Shibu & Susan Varghese (#346) and Ms. Crystal Skaria, daughter of Chandy & Josey Skaria will take place on April 28th in India.

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.

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.

April Wedding Anniversaries

Mr. & Mrs. Raju C Samuel	Apr 3	Mr. & Mrs. Prince Sam Jacob	Apr 22
Mr. & Mrs. Saji Varghese	Apr 5	Mr. & Mrs. Thomson Korah	Apr 23
Mr. & Mrs. Philip George	Apr 7	Mr. & Mrs. Mathew George	Apr 24
Mr. & Mrs. Suresh George Varghese	Apr 9	Mr. & Mrs. Ronnie Cherian	Apr 28
Mr. & Mrs. John P Eapen	Apr 11	Mr. & Mrs. Robin Montharayil	Apr 28
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas T Varghese	Apr 11	Mr. & Mrs. Jacob George	Apr 29
Mr. & Mrs. Joyes M George	Apr 13	Mr. & Mrs. Biju P. Varghese	Apr 29
Mr. & Mrs. Samuel George	Apr 14	Mr. & Mrs. George Abraham	Apr 30
Mr. & Mrs. George Thadathil	Apr 17	Mr. & Mrs. Jose V Abraham	Apr 30
Mr. & Mrs. Libu K Geevarghese	Apr 21		



APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Mathew Vaidyan Lukose	Apr 1	Raju T Chandy	Apr 13	Goldy Mathew	Apr 20
Jose Ninan	Apr 1	Sean George	Apr 13	Joshua Koshy	Apr 20
Thankkamma Simon	Apr 2	Tigy Elza Cherian	Apr 13	Reem Ann Bivin	Apr 21
Timothy Mathew	Apr 2	Babu Varghese	Apr 14	Keziah Sarah Lajy	Apr 21
Sajini Babu	Apr 2	Daji Mathew	Apr 14	Aleyamma Kuncheriaiah	Apr 21
Evelyn Ann Johnes	Apr 4	Reshma R Padiyara	Apr 14	Emilia Rachel Panicker	Apr 22
Raju C Samuel	Apr 4	Sherry Kurian	Apr 14	Lincy M Reji	Apr 22
Oshin Shinu	Apr 4	Ansamma Sajy Paul	Apr 15	Simi Mary Mathew	Apr 23
Shibu Mathew	Apr 5	Jacob Chacko	Apr 15	Janly James	Apr 23
Ezra Binu	Apr 5	Achen Varghese	Apr 15	Philip John	Apr 24
Kevin Reji Ninan	Apr 6	K K Varghese	Apr 16	Alice Sathees	Apr 25
Ricky Panicker	Apr 6	Susamma George	Apr 16	Leona Thomas	Apr 25
Atlin Alex	Apr 6	Mathew Philip Varghese	Apr 17	Thankachan P Daniel	Apr 25
Samuel Joseph	Apr 6			Adith John Tojo	Apr 25
Thankachan Samuel	Apr 7			Jaisy A Thomas	Apr 25
Stephen Rajan	Apr 7			Princy Mathai	Apr 26
Renju R Padiyara	Apr 7			Philip Skaria	Apr 26
Koshy Daniel	Apr 7	Thomas Daniel	Apr 17	Lilly Simon	Apr 26
Rev. Fr. Tojo Baby	Apr 7	Lukose Vaidyan Mathew	Apr 17	Noyal Varghese	Apr 26
Jaison George	Apr 9	Jobin K. Abraham	Apr 18	Austin Mathew	Apr 27
Manoj Mathew	Apr 9	Synu Varghese	Apr 18	Isaiah Thomas Anish	Apr 27
Priya Jerin	Apr 9	Beena Joseph	Apr 18	Alka Mirium Varghese	Apr 27
Greeshma M.		Jeremy B Mukadiyil	Apr 18	Rajani T Rajan	Apr 27
Geevarghese	Apr 9	Jacob M Zachariah	Apr 18	AnnMaria Anooj	Apr 27
Leahana Alexander	Apr 9	Ajish Kutty	Apr 18	Benjamin Jacob Sam	Apr 28
Thomson Korah	Apr 10	Jessy Jacob	Apr 18	Thomas G Kappil	Apr 28
Annie Thomas	Apr 10	Suni Brown	Apr 19	Mathew Varghese	Apr 30
Joel Koshy	Apr 10	Bindu Sam	Apr 19	Sean P Thomas	Apr 30
Leelamma Vaidian	Apr 12	Joel Sathees	Apr 19	Ajo Raju	Apr 30
Anitha Jossy	Apr 12	George Eapen	Apr 20	Reuben Jacob Sam	Apr 30
Jolly Reji	Apr 12	Aleyamma Varghese	Apr 20		
Ashish Abraham	Apr 13				

Sunday School News

❖ **Apr 20th** – As per our tradition, we will have **Easter Egg Hunt** for all children in 5th grade and younger after Easter lunch.

Steven Kurian, Principal

Tel.: 267.450.6815, Email: stevekurian@gmail.com

One Year Bible Reading Schedule - April

Date	I	II	III
April 1	Numbers 15	Proverbs 11	Luke 24
April 2	Numbers 16	Proverbs 12	Galatians 1-2
April 3	Numbers 17-18	Proverbs 13	Galatians 3-4
April 4	Numbers 19	Proverbs 14	Galatians 5-6
April 5	Numbers 20-21	Proverbs 15	Ephesians 1-2
April 6	Numbers 22-23	Proverbs 16	Ephesians 3-4
April 7	Numbers 24-25	Proverbs 17	Ephesians 5-6
April 8	Numbers 26	Proverbs 18	Phil. 1-2
April 9	Numbers 27	Proverbs 19	Phil. 3-4
April 10	Numbers 28	Proverbs 20	John 1
April 11	Numbers 29-30	Proverbs 21	John 2-3
April 12	Numbers 31	Proverbs 22	John 4
April 13	Numbers 32	Proverbs 23	John 5
April 14	Numbers 33	Proverbs 24	John 6
April 15	Numbers 34	Proverbs 25	John 7
April 16	Numbers 35	Proverbs 26	John 8
April 17	Numbers 36	Proverbs 27	John 9-10
April 18	Deut. 1	Proverbs 28	John 11
April 19	Deut. 2	Proverbs 29	John 12
April 20	Deut. 3	Proverbs 30	John 13-14
April 21	Deut. 4	Proverbs 31	John 15-16
April 22	Deut. 5	Ecc. 1	John 17-18
April 23	Deut. 6-7	Ecc. 2	John 19
April 24	Deut. 8-9	Ecc. 3	John 20-21
April 25	Deut. 10-11	Ecc. 4	Acts 1
April 26	Deut. 12	Ecc. 5	Acts 2
April 27	Deut. 13-14	Ecc. 6	Acts 3-4
April 28	Deut. 15	Ecc. 7	Acts 5-6
April 29	Deut. 16	Ecc. 8	Acts 7
April 30	Deut. 17	Ecc. 9	Acts 8

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