

## SIGNS IN FRONT OF CHURCHES

1. The best vitamin for a Christian is B-1.
2. Under the same management for over 2000 years.
3. Soul food served here.
4. Don't wait for the hearse to take you to church.
5. Come early and get a good seat at the back.
6. What part of "Thou shall not" don't you understand?
7. Never give the devil a ride. He will always want to drive.
8. Can't sleep? Try counting your blessings.
9. Forbidden fruit create many jams.
10. God answers knee-mail.
11. Try Jesus: if you don't like Him, the devil will always take you back.
12. You may party in Hell – but you will be the barbeque.
13. There are some questions that can't be answered by Google.
14. Read the Bible: it is user friendly and we offer technical support on Sundays.
15. Every day above ground is a good one.

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# The Parish Messenger

## Church of St John the Baptist

### Secunderabad



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**FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESBYTER - IN-CHARGE  
LET US GIVE THANKS TO GOD**

It is indeed a great delight for me to greet all my dear congregation members in the precious name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Truly, it is important to give thanks to God for all that He does in our lives. Many a time we take things for granted but as the Psalmist reminds us we need to give thanks to God at all times. Never should we forget to thank God. Every morning, I make it a point to thank God for protecting me from all kinds of danger, for giving me good rest, for renewing my spiritual and physical life, for blessing me with a new day and new life – the list goes on and on.



In our culture, we tend to think of gratitude as a social courtesy that re-balances the relational scales. When we say *Thank you* we feel that we have made the minimum payment necessary to keep that relationship in good standing. There is no *debtor's ethic* with God. When we through prayer or song thank God for all that He has done for us, we are not engaging in common courtesy or re-balancing the relational scales. We are most certainly not paying back God a debt that we owe. For which of us can pay back God for His grace, for sending His Son to save us from our sins? Biblical thanksgiving is not merely a social courtesy, it is *God-centred*; it is speaking words out of the overflow of hearts that love God. In other words, biblical thanksgiving is praise.

Thanksgiving is not just about the words that we speak, but also about the way we live: "Here's how persons who have humbled themselves and submitted their life to Jesus Christ should live." Colossians 2:6-7 says "*Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.*" Paul is saying that as we go about living under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, our hearts must overflow with thankfulness to God for who He is and what He has done in our lives.

The *sobering implication* is that when we thank God, we affirm His Lordship – and when

we fail to thank Him, well at a minimum, we are not in our hearts and with our mouths affirming His rightful place as Lord. Therefore, dearly beloved, it is my humble prayer that we give thanks to God at all times, for He is worthy of all our praise.

Certainly God has been doing marvellous things in our lives, in our Diocese, and it is our bounden duty to glorify His name. We have a great mission to accomplish, and I would like to invite each one of you to participate in accomplishing it. Our mission is to 'revive the Gospel, rebuild the Churches, and rejoice in the Lord'. In the past, missionaries from different parts of the world came to India and proclaimed the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and we are all the fruit of their labour. Because of the tireless efforts of those missionaries we are blessed today with God's salvation. We need to be thankful for the rich experience we have had in our journey of faith. There is still a lot to accomplish: there are many people in this world who need to hear the good news and experience the love of God, especially the poor and the marginalized. One of the ways in which we have been able to pass on the love of God is through providing education to the poor. In the present context, it is very expensive to raise a child, and if we have to continue our mission, we must join hands to support our hostels and schools. I would therefore like to encourage each family to adopt at least one child and become partners in sharing the love of God.

Similarly, I would like to invite all the medical doctors to come forward and revive our mission hospitals, which once catered for the needs of the vulnerable sections of society. And most importantly, we need to build churches and parsonages so that gospel work is not hampered. It is my vision to build at least 100 churches during my episcopal ministry in our Diocese, and this can happen only if we get your cooperation.

May the God of all grace, continue to bless and preserve you from this time forth and forever. Amen.

**Rt Revd T S Kanaka Prasad B.D.  
Bishop-in-Medak & Presbyter-in-charge**

## PASTORAL LETTER

*"Give thanks in all circumstances" (1 Thessalonians 5:18)*

Dearly beloved

I thank God for the splendid opportunity that God has given me to once again greet you in the precious name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, through the Parish Messenger. The theme for this issue of the Parish Messenger is "Let us give thanks to God", a powerful reminder of the many reasons why we feel grateful to God.

God is awesome in His works and we need to thank Him in all circumstances. For everything that God does in our lives we have something to be thankful for, even though a few circumstances may appear dark and depressing. Everyone goes through disappointments and periods when nothing seems to make sense. It is easy to be discouraged and think *Why did this happen to me?* Even though life is not good all the time, God is good all the time and He will work everything out for us.

We need to draw our inspiration to thank God from the sixteenth chapter of the Book of Leviticus in which God commands the ancient Israelites to observe the Feast of Booths – in Hebrew, *Sukkot* – "to rejoice before Adonai your God" at the time of the fall harvest [verse 11]. In Jewish tradition, the Festival of Sukkot is a joyous occasion to give thanks and praise to the Source of Creation for the bounty we enjoy. In fact, we are told that during Sukkot "you shall have nothing but joy" [verse 15]. Jews erect a *sukkah*, a harvest booth, in which they have their meals, and sometimes sleep, during the festival. It is a reminder of the booths in which their ancestors dwelled during their forty-year sojourn in Sinai.

The *sukkah* is a temporary structure, which reminds us that we are pilgrims in this world, vulnerable to the forces of nature. However, God is great, and greatly to be praised for blessing us with all that we need. God is the giver of all good gifts and He graciously and generously gives us not because of our merit but because of His love for us. Just as the Israelites remembered their experiences in the wilderness and God's blessings in those difficult times, we too must remember God's faithfulness and thank Him for all that He has done in our lives.



For Christians thanksgiving is crucial. The service at the heart of much Christian worship is the thanksgiving, the Eucharist. Thanksgiving is important because it enables us to think beyond our self-centredness, and brings us into a close relationship with God and our fellow human beings. We should not take things for granted but need to express our gratitude through singing, proclaiming, praising, worshipping, confessing, and remembering.

Recently, all the presbyters in our Diocese were in Delhi for a Pastors Retreat. As part of the sightseeing programme, we went to India Gate. We were given a lot of time to spend over there, so we kept ourselves busy viewing the magnificent India Gate and clicking photos. In the midst of the busy crowd was a young lady, in a wheelchair. She was accompanied by her mother, and was earnestly praying for all those who asked her to pray for them. We were all surprised to see this young lady, Sungeetha, ministering to the tourists, thronging around her to be prayed for. We approached her and asked her what inspired her to do this challenging work, despite her own desperate situation. She began to share her testimony about how at the age of ten she met with an accident and lost her legs. Her dreams were shattered as she would be an invalid for the rest of her life. She went into depression and felt like life was all over. She thought God was angry with her and that was why she was in a wheelchair. Coming from a Hindu family she believed she was being punished for her bad karma or sins. Her parents prayed to different gods and goddesses in the hope that she would be healed, but nothing happened. They spent thousands of dollars as offering to religious teachers, but nothing changed. Then a man of God introduced her to Jesus, as someone who came to forgive the sins of the world and not to punish the sinners. She was told that Jesus loved her so much that He died for her. Finally, she started believing in this Jesus, this God of love and forgiveness. The whole family was led by the Spirit to the saving knowledge of our Saviour Jesus Christ. Even though she is still confined to her wheelchair she is thankful and grateful to God for all that He is doing for and through her. She is being used by God to witness the love of God to people who are ignorant of His amazing love. God has abundantly blessed her, so while being realistic about her own pain and despair, she continues to thank God. She is the first person in a

wheelchair to ever win the title of Miss Teen Washington. Moreover, God is using her to heal the sick and the oppressed, and doing amazing miracles both in India and the US. Because of her 'thanksgiving' life God has opened doors for her to minister in churches, hospitals, slums, schools, businesses, conventions, street corners, marketplaces, and just about anywhere people will listen.

Undoubtedly, thanking God in all circumstances is a great challenge but when we trust in God and thank Him, He will turn any situation around in our favour. We need to believe that God has a definite plan for each one of us and He is in control of our lives, even though we may not understand how He works everything out for our good. To God nothing comes as a surprise, He is omniscient, and will somehow work out our problems. At this juncture, I would like to thank Mr Parimal Rao, our former editor, who painstakingly edited all the Parish Messenger contributions in the past few years. I would also like to congratulate and thank our new editor Prof. Paul Gunashekar, who has graciously accepted our request to be the editor of Parish Messenger. I wish him all the very best and God's blessings.

I praise God for showering us with abundant spiritual blessings, especially for enabling us to go through the course 'Walk Thru the Old Testament', and eagerly plan to do 'Walk Thru the New Testament'. I would like to express my thanks to Mrs Lilly and Mr Jason Wilson's family for hosting all the Bible study fellowships. 'Coffee with Pastor' has been a wonderful programme, which we are now planning to have on a regular basis. We are also planning to have a programme for the youth, 'Coffee House', in which the youth can interact, have fellowship, sing, dance, watch Christian movies, and discuss spiritual aspects so that they will grow in the knowledge and love of God. I request you to kindly uphold this in your prayers.

It is my prayer that God should continue to bless us and we continue to develop the habit of thankfulness, both now and forever. Amen.

*How good it is to give thanks to you, O Lord,  
To sing in your honour, O Most High God,  
To proclaim your constant love every morning  
And your faithfulness every night. (Psalm 92:1-2)*

**Revd. B J Moses Shanthi Kumar**  
**Resident Presbyter**

### THE MAGIC WORD

"Say the magic word, son, say it. What's the magic word, son?" the mother kept on saying. But the little boy was too busy opening the wrapper of the chocolate box which I had given him. I didn't know what the magic word was, and I was disappointed not seeing any magic happening. The mother repeatedly apologized to me for her child not saying the magic word. That was my first experience in the first week of my arrival in the UK in 1967. It took me awhile to know that every British parent teaches the magic word to their children almost from infancy. There is no magic in the magic word – except that it is the word *Thank you*. For little or no reason the British have the habit of saying automatically three magic words. They are: 'Thank you', 'Please', and 'Sorry'. In my early days in Britain my colleagues and friends must have thought I was an uncouth Indian for not saying those magic words! After having lived in Britain for a long time, *Thank you, Please* and *Sorry* have become an essential part of my vocabulary. Now our domestic helpers and their children have also caught the three words from us without us having to make them say the magic word.



Now shall we say this Magic Word to none other than God Himself? *Let us give thanks to God* is the theme of this month's parish magazine!

The Anglican Book of Common Prayer (1662) and the CSI Book of Common Worship (1948) both have prayers of thanksgiving. The most common prayer is known as **General Thanksgiving**. This prayer of thanksgiving refers to not only our creation, preservation, and to all the blessings of this life, but above all to the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, to the means of grace, and to the hope of glory. The prayer continues asking God to give us a due sense of all His mercies so that our hearts may show forth our praise not only with our lips but in our lives by giving ourselves over to His service.

To give thanks to God is not just a matter of saying the Magic Word with one's lips nor is it currency notes for the blessings received. The prayer of **General Thanksgiving** is to give thanks not only *with our lips, but in our lives*. That we call The Spiritual Word of Gratitude – not a mere Magic Word uttered by our lips. To be grateful for the good things that happen in our life is easy, but to be grateful for everything in our life – the good as well as the bad, the moments of joy as well as the moments of sorrow, the successes as well as the failures, the rewards as well as the rejections – truly requires hard Spiritual

Work. So long as we keep dividing the good events we would like to remember from the unpleasant events we would rather forget, we cannot claim the fullness of our beings as a gift of God to be grateful for.

Just a few hours before its delivery, a baby in the womb died with the umbilical cord twisted round its neck. The young parents were heartbroken and floods of tears followed. The Pastor, who knew the family and the couple well, visited them, and paid full pastoral attention to the grieving couple. Before he left he held the hands of the couple and thanked God for all those nine most memorable months of excitement, anticipation and expectation as a wonderful gift from God, and blessed them for their spiritual gratitude. The couple to this day say that the visit of their pastor and his prayer gave them a ton of spiritual strength.

It was on 23 January 1999 that the Australian missionary Graham Staines and his two sons were ambushed by a frenzied mob with flaming torches and burnt alive in Manoharpur, Orissa. Gladys Staines said, "My husband and our children have sacrificed their lives for this nation. India is my home. I hope to be here and continue to serve the needy." Her daughter Esther Staines said, "I praise God that He found my father worthy to die for Christ." The tragedy of the Staines family turned into a triumphal witness with those spiritual words uttered by both mother and daughter as an act of true praise and thanksgiving to God. That is what we call the Spiritual Word of Gratitude. Here is the full text of the prayer of General Thanksgiving taken from the CSI Book of Common Worship. Blessed are those who would learn this prayer by heart and live by it. *God of all mercies, we your unworthy servants give you most humble and hearty thanks for all your goodness and loving kindness to us and to all people. We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for your boundless love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And we ask you, give us such an awareness of your mercies; that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to your service, and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our redeemer, to whom with you and the Holy Spirit be all honour and glory, now and forever. Amen.*

**Revd Samuel N Prasadam**

## THANKSGIVING

*"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits" Psalm 103:2.*

Gratitude to God for what He has done in our lives should express itself in thanksgiving. Only when we appreciate His goodness does gratefulness come into our hearts. The degree of our appreciation decides the intensity with which we respond. But at the outset we should realize that however intense our response is, it will not match the least of God's goodness towards us (least in our estimation).



The greatest blessing we have received is His indescribable gift, which is the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Grace is defined as **God's Righteousness At Christ's Expense** (2 Corinthians 9: 15). There are many reasons why we thank God, such as success in our ventures, a good job, a promotion, an acquisition, a healing (many times we praise the doctor who treated us before we thank God, knowing well that we, our family, and a host of friends, and the church have all been praying). No doubt we need to thank God for all these simple mercies and benefits we receive from God. Many of our non-believer friends also enjoy such benefits. These He gives to all freely. But there are many other, more important blessings and gifts for which we need to thank God. How often do we thank God for His Grace in saving us? Unless we value our salvation as a precious gift we will not thank God for our salvation. Further, in our walk with the Lord we won many spiritual victories – the temptations we were able to defeat with His help, picking ourselves up from a spiritual low, and situations when we could encourage a brother from going under, etc. Such victories come with perseverance. Often we forget to thank God for the life he has given us and for sustaining us in the land of the living, day after day, night after night.

Having mentioned the spiritual reasons for thanking God, I now offer three good scriptural reasons why we should thank God. The Bible enjoins us to thank God always:

**1. Because it is God's will.** 1Thessalonians 5: 18: *In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.* So when we give thanks to God we are fulfilling His will.

**2. Because it is our duty.** 2Thessalonians 2: 3: *We are bound to thank God always for you.* It is very clear that we have a duty to perform by thanking God for what He has done.

**3. Because it is our future Heavenly Chorus.** Thanks belong to God: Revelation 7: 12: *Saying Amen! Blessing, glory, and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might be unto our God forever and ever. Amen.* This is the heavenly chorus being sung there. So when we join the saints there we ascribe thanksgiving along with the other appellations to our God. For what He did in our earthly life here, we thank God continually while there, and it is even more appropriate to thank and praise Him while we are here. If this is so, what should be the nature of our thanksgiving?

**1. Our thanksgiving should be a sacrifice.** Psalm 116: 17: *I will offer to thee a sacrifice of thanksgiving.* Earlier in the Psalm it is stated: *“What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me? I shall take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all His people.”* The Psalmist talks about his response being a vow. It is no longer bulls and cows, lambs and doves, or meals with incense and wine but it is the sacrifice of whole-hearted thanksgiving.

**2 Our thanksgiving should be spontaneous.** Philippians.1: 3: *I thank my God upon every remembrance of you.* Our thanksgiving should flow like a spring from within and not forced out. The sense of appreciation of God’s goodness is so strong that it breaks out into praises voluntarily.

**3 Our thanksgiving should be unceasing.** Ephesians 5:20: *Giving thanks always for all things.* The key words are ‘always’ and ‘for all things’. These words clearly indicate the ceaseless nature of our thanksgiving. Even under adverse circumstances, when we do not feel like giving thanks, if we think of how good God has been to us and how worse things could be, then we will still praise God. Job, under the most adverse conditions when he had lost all his children, his camels, his cattle, and his sheep and servants, made an exemplary statement: *“The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away, Blessed be the name of the Lord.”* At this time I cannot help quoting Pastor Martin Rinkart of Eilenberg in Germany. He was pastoring a small Lutheran church in the early part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. At that time Germany was involved in the 30-year war, as indeed were many European nations. In addition, there was a plague raging at the time. People were dying both on account of the war and the plague. The population of Germany dropped to 6 million from 16 million. On one single day Pastor Rinkart buried 50 people of whom two were his own wife and a close relative. Anybody would have buckled but not Pastor Rinkart. He came out with the beautiful hymn *“Now thank we all our God”*, a hymn which we readily pick to sing whenever we feel like singing to express our thanks to God. Mark the words *‘with countless gifts of love’* and *‘O Bounteous God’*. Let us gratefully remember the circumstances out of which this beautiful and popular hymn sprang. Out of disease, destruction, and death came this extraordinary hymn. We never lack reasons for thanking God.

How should we express our thankfulness?

**1. By witnessing.** Remember the man possessed with a legion in Mark 5:1-20. After he was healed he wanted to be very close to Jesus probably because he was afraid that the evil spirits might repossess him. But Jesus told him to go home to his friends and to tell them the great things the Lord had done for him. Also remember the two blind men who received their sight as Jesus healed them, and who in spite of Jesus’ instruction went and spread abroad his fame in all that country. (Matthew 9: 30,31)

**2. By singing.** We have to sing praises to our God expressing our thankfulness. Ephesians 5:19 says: *‘Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord’*. In Acts 16:25 we read that *Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God* when they were in prison with their feet in stocks after having been beaten with rods earlier; they were not nursing their hurt. Moses and the Israelites and Miriam and the women broke out into song in Exodus 15. Deborah and Barak broke out into a song in Judges 5, and David in II Samuel 22. Singing is an emphatic and spontaneous way of expressing our thanks to God. He does not frown at our deficiencies in the tune or meter or *thala* or *sruthi*.

**3. By giving.** As already mentioned, thanksgiving is a sacrifice (Psalm 116). In the Old Testament, the law stated that the first fruits of the crops, vineyards, olive gardens, etc. were to be brought before the Lord. This was to signify one’s thankfulness to God. For us also it is the same. We do not have tithes as in the Old Testament period. The New Testament concept of giving is different from the idea of tithe. Let us look at the Scriptures. There are two principles in giving:

II Corinthians 9:7: *So let each one give as he purposeth in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity. For God loves a cheerful giver.* The matter of giving is between you and God. Out of your gratefulness you give. Not out of compulsion. A rule of tithe would impose on you a compulsion. It suggests God is like a debt collector. How much you give depends on your appreciation of what God has done. It is directly proportionate to your sense of appreciation of what God has done or what He has given. This way you would give cheerfully and this is what God wants. So it is no longer tithe but joyous giving. We give to God what is conscientiously right and not what is incidentally left over!

I Corinthians 16:2: *Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him.* It teaches us to give more and more as God prospers us and not a fixed amount or a fixed quantity. As God blesses us even materially, because of our cheerful giving, it follows that our giving goes on increasing and is never static. These two principles teach us that we should give to God regularly and our giving should always go up. One caution however is that our giving should not be done with an eye on increased material blessing and protection from pestilence. I have heard many preachers stressing this point from Malachi 3:10-11. In essence, what we give to God is our heartfelt thankfulness, not cash or in kind, because in truth what we have belongs to God.

## I AM SO GRATEFUL, LORD

Throughout history, different cultures have set aside a time and day for expressing their thankfulness. In the USA, Thanksgiving Day originated with the Pilgrims. In the midst of extreme hardship, loss of loved ones, and meagre supplies, they still believed they were blessed, and hence Thanksgiving Day was started. Every day for us too should be a day of Thanksgiving for life, good health, loved ones, and freedom to worship. Billy Graham once said, "Thanksgiving does not have to wait for prosperity and peace. It is always a good time to praise God for the wondrous things He has done".

Giving thanks is a programme of study from which we never graduate. Thanksgiving is good, but *Thanksgiving* is better. If you have nothing to be thankful for, perhaps something is wrong with you.

A lovely blessing or grace goes like this:

*We thank thee Lord for daily food,  
For plenteous store of earthly good,  
For life and health we still possess,  
For house and home so richly blessed.*

Among the most important words we can speak are the two words "Thank you". God does not owe us anything yet He gives us everything. Each day we live is a gift from God, and our grateful response should be to live to please Him. For a Christian, thanksgiving is not just a token of gratitude, but a way of life.

Instead of grumbling because you do not get what you want, be thankful you do not get what you deserve. Instead of complaining about the thorns on the rose, thank God for the rose among the thorns. Hebrews 13:16 says, "Do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is pleased."

Do you sometimes find yourself becoming apathetic with all the blessings God showers on you each day? Don't take them for granted: remember to thank God for your daily bread, life and strength, and the countless things He provides for you each day.

When things are going well, we can easily become preoccupied with our houses, cars, clothes, and other trappings of modern life. Remember an attitude of gratitude can make your life a beatitude.

*For blessings without number,  
And joys they do afford,  
Accept my deepest, heartfelt thanks,  
I am so grateful, Lord.*



Bessy John

## THANKS BE TO GOD

Giving thanks to God is not an option for Christians. We should be thankful to God for His loving kindness, His goodness, His care, His works and deeds, and, above all, His provision for our salvation. Thankfulness should flow naturally from a Christian who realizes that the great gift of salvation was offered through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. Christ suffered the penalty for what He did not deserve (for *our* sins) and then freely offered to *us* the reward (eternal life) that *we* did not deserve. *What an awesome God! What a mighty God we serve!*

The goal of a Christian is to be transformed into the image of Jesus Christ. As a model for us, Jesus gave thanks for food and prayers answered.

Yes, the Bible does tell us to give thanks for *everything*. We often complain to God about all the bad things that have happened to us – things we did not deserve, and definitely did not want. How can we then be thankful for everything? Firstly, we have a God who answers our prayers so that we are never anxious about any difficult situation. Secondly, although things may seem to be bad, we are told that God causes all things to work together for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.

The Church of St John the Baptist has been and will always be a "GIVING CHURCH": the members have always given with spontaneity and gratitude. This only proves that the congregation gives thanks to God and glorifies Him for all the wonderful benefits received from Him.

As the Psalmist exhorts us to do in Psalm 100: "*Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness... Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him... for the Lord is good and his loving kindness is everlasting and his faithfulness continues through all generations*".

Let us all continue to glorify God and give thanks to Him.

Norman Isaac  
Hon Secretary

**GOD'S GIFT – OUR GRATITUDE**

A young missionary to Armenia was called to the bedside of a dying woman. The sick woman would have nothing to do with the Gospel when she was hale and hearty. Sickness however had softened her attitude and she listened attentively as the missionary explained the way of salvation by grace, through faith in the Lord Jesus. Much as she wanted to be forgiven the lady found it impossible to believe that God's grace could extend to one who was so rebellious all her life. "I can understand God being good to someone like you, but a sinner like me – no way," she said to the missionary, who was getting frustrated thinking "How am I going to explain God's grace to her." Suddenly she remembered, and looking intently at her, she said *Baksheesh!* This is a term commonly used in Armenia by beggars holding out their hands for a handout, from passersby. Immediately the dying woman saw the light. She realized that Salvation is offered freely and she did not have to earn it. It could be hers because of the goodness, compassion and generosity of the Giver. There on her deathbed, she received the wonderful gift of Salvation by placing her trust in the One who provided it, by His sinless life, atoning death and bodily resurrection.



Yes, we are not given Salvation because we deserve it. We receive it as God's free gift. Ephesians 2:8 says: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God." So let us believe that Jesus Christ died for our sins and ask and thank Him for saving us. He always responds to our cry of "Baksheesh". We are saved by Christ's mediation, not through our merits. God's highest gift should awaken our deepest gratitude.

*He deserves our thanks:*

At one time a wise and beloved Shah, who cared greatly for his people and desired only the best for them, ruled Persia. One day he disguised himself as a poor man and went to visit the public baths. The water for the baths was heated by a furnace in the

cellar, and the Shah made his way to that dark place to sit with the man who tended the fire. The two men shared simple food, and the Shah befriended him in his loneliness. Day after day the ruler went to meet the man. The worker became attached to this stranger as he "came where he was" (Luke 10:33). The Shah expected the man to ask for a gift, when he learned his true identity. Instead he looked with love and wonder into his leader's face and said, "You left your palace and your glory to sit with me in this dark place, to eat my simple food, and to care about what happens to me. On others you may bestow rich gifts, but to me you have given yourself."

As we think of what the Lord has done for us, we can also echo the worker's sentiments. He stepped from heaven onto earth, from the worship of angels to the mocking of cruel men. From glory to humiliation, to provide for our salvation, Jesus came in human flesh, took upon himself the form of a servant, and became "obedient to the point of death, even the death of the Cross" (Philippians 2:8). Our great Creator became our Saviour. He truly deserves our heartfelt worship and humble adoration.

GOD'S PLAN: a Priceless Gift, a Precious Son, a Loving Sacrifice.

OUR PART: Accept graciously, enjoy immensely, *thank* extravagantly, and live eternally.

A thankful heart enjoys blessings twice – when they are received and when they are remembered. Give all your thanks to Christ for He gave his all for you.

**Yashodhra Desappa**

## LET'S THANK GOD

*1 Thessalonians 5:18: "In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."*

*Psalms 105:1: "Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name: make known among the nations what he has done."*

*Ephesians 5:20: "Give thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus."*



Why should we give thanks to God?

We need to thank Him all through our earthly sojourn for His everlasting love, goodness and kindness, tender mercies, and constant protection and care.

In order to thank Him, firstly we need to cultivate a thankful heart by offering the sacrifice of praise to God continually.

Secondly, we thank Him when our hearts are filled with His love and light. Only then will our gratitude be considered a virtue. In spite of trials and tribulations, mountain-like crises, and sicknesses, we will have at least one strong reason to thank our Lord. Our very existence is a living proof.

Thirdly, thankfulness strengthens our relationship with our Saviour and helps us to know His will for the present and the future.

Finally, in a spirit of unselfishness, if we put on a cheerful face and show the spirit of joy, praise and thankfulness, it will help us shed sunbeams rather than shadows on the path of Life. Do not nurse the sorrows in your heart but promote a cheerful heart by dwelling on the wonderful things God provides day after day. Psalm 5:3 says, "My voice you shall hear in the morning, O Lord: in the morning I will direct it to you, and I will look up." We should direct our prayer as an arrow, and then look up to see if it has hit. When the prayer is directed in the morning, the 'looking up' lasts all day. We begin the day with hope and close the day with thankfulness.

Let us therefore give thanks to our Lord for shedding His precious blood for the propitiation of our sins and for giving us faith, hope, joy, peace and thankfulness through His resurrection.

**William Anup Kumar**

## THANKS: AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF JOY

Giving thanks, being grateful, is a fulfilling experience as it cements a relationship and acknowledges the act of giving and receiving. To God, who owns all, directs all, works on all, what can we give Him? Here are some biblical extracts to make you think of thanksgiving. *Micah 6:1-8*



The Lord's case against Israel

*Listen to what the Lord says: "Stand up, plead your case before the mountains; let the hills hear what you have to say. Hear, O mountains, the Lord's accusation; listen, you everlasting foundations of the earth. For the Lord has a case against his people; he is lodging a charge against Israel. "My people, what have I done to you? How have I burdened you? Answer me. I brought you up out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery. I sent Moses to lead you, also Aaron and Miriam. My people, remember what Balak king of Moab counseled and what Balaam son of Beor answered. Remember your journey from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the righteous acts of the Lord." With what shall I come before the Lord and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*

How generous, how gracious, how wise, and how loving our God is, is revealed even more in the New Testament: Jesus says (John 12:35, 36)

*"Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. The man who walks in the dark does not know where he is going. Put your trust in the light while you have it, so that you may become sons of light."* Later Jesus says (John 12:46, 47)

*"I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness. As for the person who hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge him. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it."*

We are therefore commanded to keep our lives filled with the Holy Spirit, the living water. *"Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."* (John 7:38) We are to walk in Him, live through Him, bear fruit by Him, and overcome sin with Him as our Sword of the Word.

We can never have a Word-filled life without reading the Scriptures regularly because we cannot be deeply influenced by that which we do not know. When we are filled with God's Word, and obedient to His Word, we can appreciate how our life is being informed and directed by God, and acknowledge His intervention.

Based on *LightSource.com*

**Sunil Kumar VS**

## WILLINGLY THEY GAVE

"If you want to get out of the clutches of Mammon, apply the magic four-letter word: GIVE. Once you learn to give willingly, you become the master and money your slave..." Standing at ease in front of the congregation, the pastor was communicating clearly with his words and gestures. The congregation listened, captivated and in silence.

The Pastor ended the sermon with an appeal: "Our brothers and sisters in the village congregation do not have a place to worship. Let us all contribute and help them build a sanctuary. Please hand over your donations to the Treasurer or to me."

Many of the members gushed as they shook his hand. "Excellent message, Pastor," most of them said. Timothy had something different to share with him. "Pastor, God was speaking to me through you. I'm convinced that my wife and I need to give to God. Willingly and together we ought to contribute to the church construction."

Timothy and Rachel were a young, upwardly mobile couple. Back at home, Timothy was taking his shoes off. "I'm personally convinced," he said. "We need to give a donation to the village church building fund. If we're a little careful in spending, we can do so. I'm quite sure about it. How about you, Rachel?"

Rachel was busy folding her dress. "But Tim," she replied, "I'm not so sure. We pay the church subscription regularly. Isn't that enough?"

"But Rachel, we don't really own all the money we earn. It is all God's money, which He has given to us as stewards. We need to give for God's work. I feel we need to give more than what we are already giving, for His work. Didn't you hear the preacher tonight talk about the way poor Christians donated to God in St. Paul's time?" countered Timothy as they settled down for a cup of coffee on their sofa.

Rachel paused as she took a sip of the piping hot coffee. She looked intently at her husband and said, "Really, Tim, we need to think of our future needs. Remember we have two kids. Soon they'll grow up and we'll need money for their education. Schooling is so expensive these days. We also need a new car. What about buying a better house than this? If we keep giving, will we have enough for all our needs?"



Timothy was enjoying his coffee. He sighed and said, "But Rachel, God and His kingdom should have the first place in our lives! We are to give to God's work liberally. God Himself will surely provide for all our needs. Has He not provided for all our needs so miraculously till today? Remember Matthew 6:33: *Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you.*"

"Tim, my dear, come on now. We need to be practical too. It's all very well to be generous but can we risk it? I'm not sure," Rachel responded.

"Let us pray and then decide, Rachel. I feel that we should give for this church project. Because the Lord has blessed us so much. And it's a deserving cause. Let's pray and then decide."

Later on, after the kids were fed and put to bed, the young couple knelt together by their own bed. "Dear Father God," prayed Timothy, "We praise your Matchless Name! We feel that we ought to give generously to the church project we heard about. All that we needed till today you have generously provided for us. Help us to willingly contribute our mite towards the extension of your Kingdom, O Lord!" Both of them said Amen with all their heart.

"Now how do you feel, Rachel?" enquired Timothy gently. "Well..." replied Rachel, "Maybe we should give..."

"Thank you, Rachel, for being with me. Surely God gave the money we have, to both of us. So now we can decide together to give. Shall we make it twenty thousand?" asked Timothy. "Sure thing" said Rachel. Timothy wrote out the cheque for the church building fund. "I'll hand it over to the Pastor next Sunday," he said as he put his pen down.

Months later...

"Rachel, Rachel," cried Timothy as he rushed into their home. "I've been offered a new job today. It's something I like and they are offering me twice my present salary! Praise be to God!" He was exhilarated!

"Great, Tim," responded Rachel as she hugged him "We honoured God with our giving then, and now, He has honoured us! May His Name be blessed!"

They knelt down contentedly to offer thanks to the Lord.

**Dr M Anthony David**

**BE EARNEST IN SUPPLICATION AND  
INSTANT IN THANKING GOD**



*Morning by morning new mercies I see*

Being thankful completes the cycle of receiving mercies and expressing gratitude to our Maker. From the beginning the persons who experienced God's love thanked and praised Him by offering their first produce.

King David, after the victory over the Philistines, apart from the customary offering, appointed special musicians with strings, harps and cymbals to thank and praise God. It was at this time that David delivered his *psalm of thanksgiving* to the chief musician: *Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name, make known among the nations what he has done. (Psalm 105:1)*

After David provided for all the material for the building of the Temple, including gold, silver and precious stones which were offered willingly by the people, he thanked the Lord before all the congregation, saying:

*'Blessed are you, Lord of Israel, our Father, forever and ever*

*We thank and praise your glorious name*

*For all things come from you and of your own we give you.'*

When all the work that Solomon had done for the house of the Lord was finished, the Levites, who were the singers, stood at the east end of the altar, clothed in white, with cymbals, stringed instruments and harps, and with them were one hundred and twenty priests sounding the trumpets. The trumpeters and singers were one, making one sound to *praise and thank* the Lord, and then they lifted up their voice and praised the Lord saying "For he is good for his mercy endures forever." Then the house of the Lord was filled with a cloud so that the priests could not continue. For the glory of the Lord filled the Temple.

**Here are some more biblical examples of thanksgiving:**

*Dedication of the Wall of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 12:27 & 40)*

Now at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought out the Levites in all their places to celebrate the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgiving and singing with cymbals and stringed instruments and harps...

So the two thanksgiving choirs stood in the house of God...

*Praise for dramatic deliverance (Psalm 30:11,12)*

You have turned for me my mourning into dancing,

To the end that my glory may sing praise to you and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever.

*Petition for God's intervention (Psalm 35:18)*

I will give you thanks in the great congregation, I will praise you among many people.

*God is the judge (Psalm 75:1, 6, 7)*

We give thanks to you, O God, we give thanks...

For exaltation comes neither from the east nor from the west nor from the south. But God is the judge. He puts down one and exalts another.

*Serve the Lord with gladness (Psalm 100:4)*

Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise...

*We have sinned (Psalm 106: 47)*

Save us, O Lord our God, and gather us from among the Gentiles, to give thanks to your holy name and to triumph in your praise.

*God satisfies the longing soul (Psalm: 107:8, 9)*

Oh that men would give thanks to the Lord for his goodness.

For he satisfies the longing soul and fills the hungry soul with goodness.

*In praise of the Scriptures (Psalm 119:9, 62)*

How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to your word...

At midnight I will rise to give thanks to you because of your righteous judgments.

*Daniel prays faithfully (Daniel 6:10)*

Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.

*Jesus feeds the five thousand (Matthew 14:19)*

Then he commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass, and he took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples and the disciples gave to the multitudes.

*Jesus feeds the four thousand (Matthew 15:36)*

And he took the seven loaves and the fish and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to his disciples and the disciples gave to the multitude.

*The Lord's Supper (Matthew 26:26, 27)*

And while they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed it and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat, this is my body.'

Then he took the cup, and gave thanks and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it all of you, for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.'

By giving thanks to God in all circumstances, we humble ourselves before the Almighty. Abide in Him and rejoice in His continued blessings and confidence to face new challenges.

*Great is thy faithfulness!*

**Jason Wilson**

**THANK GOD AT EACH CORNER!**

Thanking God is a vital part of our Christian worship. We Christians, after experiencing the power of the living God, should thank God every step of our life for the wonderful things He did and is doing. We are indeed indebted to Him for His matchless sacrifice on the Cross of Calvary to redeem humankind from sin and for bestowing upon us salvation, the fruit of His great sacrifice. Therefore, it is only proper that we express our thankfulness to God for His great sacrifice.



It is mandatory for us to give thanks to God as God Himself commanded Moses to bring fellowship offerings to express the Israelites' thanks to Him for all the good things He did in their lives. In Old Testament times a lot of importance was given to thanksgiving, and the Israelites were guided by the priests and Levites to give thanks to God.

**Why should we thank God?**

- 1) *To reveal the deeds of God to people:* In David's song of thanksgiving, he says that we should give thanks to God and tell people about his good deeds. "Oh, give thanks to the Lord! Call upon His name; make known His deeds among the people" (1Chronicles 16:8).
- 2) *To reveal that our God is an answering God:* We should thank God for He hears our supplications. "Evening and morning and at noon, I will pray and cry aloud, and he shall hear my voice" (Psalms 55:17). Even Jesus, the Son of God, thanked God for hearing his prayer in Bethany (John11:41).
- 3) *To reveal our faith to the world:* Paul thanked God for the great faith of the saints in Rome, which was spoken throughout the world (Romans1:8).
- 4) *To reveal our obedience to the Word of God:* We should thank God because, though we are sinful by nature, we obey the Word of God, which delivers us from sin (Romans 6:17).

- 5) *To reveal the grace we received from Jesus:* Paul says that we should thank God always for the grace of God we have received through Christ Jesus (1Corinthians 1:4).
- 6) *To reveal that we believe in the Word of God:* Paul says that we should thank God without ceasing as we have accepted the Word of God as the truth and believe it unconditionally (1 Thessalonians 2:13).
- 7) *To reveal that we pray for others:* Paul says that we should thank God and pray not only for our loved ones but also for our fellow beings, believers, the Church and its congregation, and people who are sick and needy (2 Timothy1:3).
- 8) *To gain courage:* After the shipwreck, Paul reached Rome and met with the brethren, thanked God, and regained his courage and strength to continue his ministry (Acts 28:15).
- 9) *To declare God's loving kindness and faithfulness:* The psalmist says that we should thank God for His unconditional love, kindness, compassion and faithfulness to us (Psalms 92:1).
- 10) *To humble ourselves before the cross:* Jesus Christ bought us at a great price (1 Corinthians 7:23) by shedding His precious blood on the cross of Calvary. He humbled Himself even unto death on the cross, a punishment given to the worst criminal by the Roman government. They put a scarlet robe on Him, implanted a crown of thorns on His head, pushed it down into His skull, spat on Him, and mocked Him "Hail ! King of Jews!" When they arrived at the place called Golgotha, they nailed His hands and feet to the cross and sat down and waited for Him to die—a slow, agonizing death (Matthew 27:35-36). It was only when Jesus bled and died on the cross that man's age-old struggle with sin found its ultimate solution. When Christ died on the cross, He gained a decisive victory for us. His final cry was not one of defeat but of triumph. His "It is finished" has echoed through the ages as the believer's ultimate answer to Satan's accusations. It was the declaration that there was no further price to be paid. The blood of Christ buys us our spiritual freedom. "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace" (Ephesians 1:7). Spiritually, this is what Christ did for you and me. By right, we should have been on the cross. Our sins make us liable for the penalty of death. Yet Jesus took our place and purchased our redemption with His blood. Through His blood we, being sinners, are reconciled with God. Through His blood we are sanctified (Hebrew 10:10). The power of the blood leads us to God, saves us, sanctifies us, and motivates us to service.

The life bought with blood should never be underestimated. There is no more important purchase in all the universe than the purchase of the eternal souls of men and women. There was no higher price than the one paid for the precious blood of the slain Lamb. No wonder Charles Wesley asked:

*And can it be that I should gain  
An interest in the Saviour's blood?  
Died He for me, who caused His pain?  
For me, who Him to death pursued?  
Amazing love! How can it be  
That Thou, my God, should'st die for me?*

If you have been purchased by His blood, rejoice and stand in awe of God's amazing grace! Let us give thanks to God every second, every minute, every day, and every step of our life. Let us give thanks to God for He has breathed His breath into us and created us in His own image, hence He does not want to lose us. Since we are sinners, we are not neutral toward God. Satan is at war with God and we are at war with God due to our human weaknesses. Fighting with our inner self and outward influences, we have to live the life of humility by remembering our past life, taking care not to stumble on the old stones, and thanking God at each corner. This life of thankfulness is possible only when God sanctifies us. He does not eradicate the flesh within us; He does not destroy the principle within us that constantly bends us towards sin. The Spirit of God provides us the power to live above the evil influences of the flesh. The flesh still craves sin, but the Spirit suppresses those cravings and supplants them with spiritual desires. "Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time" (1Peter 5:6). God bless you.

**B F Prameela Sadanand**

### GRACE

Train Conductors (or TTEs, as they are called) are as a rule polite people – if you take that 'rule' to be of the elastic variety. It is the same with their honesty.

This particular TTE was better than most. I had no reservation and he tried his best (without a bribe) to give me a berth, but all he could manage was a seat – a rather uncomfortable one. I asked him if I could occupy that lone, empty seat in the corner over there. He said that that was his own seat and he would gladly let me have it, but he was going off duty at midnight and he could not tell if his successor would be glad enough to let me have it too.

He went away, and after about an hour, having checked all the tickets in the compartments allotted to him, and presumably spreading a lot of kindness along the way, came back to his seat. He certainly had the looks of a man hungry and tired from honest work.

From the bag under his seat he took out a metal box containing his supper. He then bent his head, closed his eyes, and remained in prayer for the incredibly long period of about half a minute. That done, he opened his box, removed a big curry leaf from the rice, and started his dinner. It now struck me that the badge on his coat had carried a Christian name, one from the Old Testament, more common among Protestants than among Catholics.

I tried to reconstruct what must have gone through his mind during those thirty seconds.

He must have thanked God for that rice with that big curry leaf standing guard in the middle. For the hands of his wife that had prepared and packed it with care. For her smile and for the understanding and support she gave him. For his children, now already tucked in bed and perhaps dreaming of him. For this job that made it possible for him to support them. For this train which was carrying some hundreds of people at sixty miles an hour, each with his own thoughts and plans in his mind. For the driver who would keep awake all night with the lives and fortunes of all these people in his hands. For the linesmen and the numerous workers who pulled wires, pushed levers or walked about with lights in their hands to protect this train and these people from disaster. Oh, what a list for thirty seconds!

And these thirty seconds were doing something to this man: they were enriching him, lifting his life above tickets, berths, seats, and his little book, and giving it all a new meaning and purpose.

I thought of the grace I usually said before meals – a hurried sign of the cross, like driving away a fly perched on the nose, then two or three seconds of perfect vacuity (a quiet surveying of the food). Then another sign of the cross as if the fly had come back, and sitting down to the attack.

This tired Travelling Ticket Examiner now made me examine my conscience and showed me that life could be a lot richer, and a lot more beautiful.

*Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Philippians 4:6-7

**Extract from book by Father Christopher Coelho**

**WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP 'HAPPENINGS'**

Here are some of the things the Women's Fellowship did from May 2011 onwards.

*Families in the Gap:* The May meeting was held at the residence of Mrs Kavita

Chandrashekar in Padma Rao Nagar. Mrs Rinku Peter led the devotion on the theme 'Jesus the Rock that never rolls'. After a time of prayer and testimony, the hostess treated us to a delicious lunch. The May Spiritual Development journey meeting again had Mrs Rinku Peters teaching us how to fight the evil one with the Word of God and other biblical tools like removing any unwanted artifacts from our houses, hard rock music, books like *Harry Potter*, by not watching devilish movies, or depending on manmade things like *Vaasthu*, astrology, depending on the 'right time', etc. and not depending on God Almighty. The point of reference was Jeremiah 17:5: "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord."

In June the *Families in the Gap* meeting was held at the residence of Mr and Mrs Ganti Bhasker at Banjara Hills. Mrs Manjula Krishnan spoke on the subject "A big mouth for Jesus gives us big rewards" based on Psalm 81: *Open your mouth wide and I will fill it*. She also very thoughtfully gave all of us gifts. The host treated us to a delicious lunch. June 19 was celebrated as World Women's Day with a thought-provoking skit written by Rinku Peters called "See the cross in all things". Whatever the circumstance, the cross added to it, changes it from your perspective to God's perspective. The ladies did a special reading from Isaiah 1-18: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow washed by his blood."

In July the town DCC Women's Fellowship meeting was held at the Bishop's Annexe and in August at All Saintbs Church. Responding to the call for building "Outreach Churches" the ladies came forward to donate for this noble cause.

In July again at the SDJ meeting, Mrs Purushottam spoke on "Blink and the Twink – the Rapture". We were all asked to be ready for this event as it may happen any time. Mrs Rosemary Vinod Kumar treated us to a delicious lunch.

The August *Families in the Gap* meeting was held at the residence of Mrs Geetha Lincoln in Kanchanbagh. Mr Solomon spoke on Proverbs 28:13: "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper but whosoever confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

In September Mr Jason led the SDJ meeting and spoke about how we need to shout for the Lord. (Psalm 100) We thank Mr Jason and his family for an excellent lunch.

How often we say 'the right hand should not know what the left hand does' - taking it out of context. Let us look again at Matthew 6:3. Jesus says "When you give alms (help the needy or some translations use the word beggar) –THEN let not your left hand know what the right hand does." Ms Elizabeth led us on a discussion of this subject.

May God's blessings chase and overtake all those who join us in sending knee mails to the Lord.

**Yashodhra Desappa**  
**Secretary, Women's Fellowship**

**REPORT OF THE VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2011**

Greetings to all in the wonderful name of our Risen Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

It was a great privilege to be the VBS Director for 2011. I extend my sincere thanks to our pastor, Revd Shanti Kumar Moses for giving me this opportunity. I thank God for helping me conduct VBS 2011 and bringing the children closer to His throne of grace.

VBS is a movement which in its existence of over 40 years has revived and transformed children, youth and adults into God-honouring men and women. Those who committed their lives to the Lord in VBS are today pastors, leaders, and workers in their respective churches and other missionary organizations and para-church agencies. Many of the Indian Christian leaders of today are those whose lives were touched by God in VBS.

VBS was started in Kovilpatti, Tamil Nadu in 1952 by a team from South India Biblical Seminary, Bangarapet, headed by Mr P Samuel. 75 children attended this first VBS, which proved to be a success. The motto of VBS is to bring children to Christ by educating them in the Word of God and training them in Christian living, and encouraging them to be active in the life of the Church and be witnesses for Christ. How does VBS benefit the church? It builds the Sunday School, it strengthens the Youth for the Church movement, revives cold hearts, and most importantly, it awakens interest in us for the unreached.

VBS makes children place their faith in Christ at a very young age. Witnessing for Christ is a vital part of spiritual growth and should begin at an early age. In VBS, children are encouraged to witness through words and deeds at home and in the community so that they grow up into mature and dependable young men and women. This year VBS started on 27<sup>th</sup> April and concluded on 7<sup>th</sup> May. It was packed with activities, devotion, praise and worship, games, and fun and frolic.

The theme for this VBS was "Walk in my ways" (I Kings 3:14.) We had devotion on the sub- themes emerging from the main theme. The sub-themes were: Walk in my ways, knowing His ways, Way of new life, Way of secured life, Way of righteousness, Way of perfection, Way of excellence, Way of holiness, and Way of everlasting life. Apart from this, each day was set aside as a special day, namely: Bible Day, Friend's Day, Day of service, Day of creativity, Day of cleanliness, Day of giving, Love feast, Inspection day, and Bible quiz.

Each day's programme would start with an opening prayer, followed by praise and worship by the worship team. Some time was spent in devotion that was led by gifted speakers based on the day's sub-theme, which was followed by children going to their respective classes for their daily lessons. As the bell rang to signal a break, all the children would flock to get yummy goodies with some chilled juice to beat the heat. After the classes ended for the day the children would assemble in the Parish Hall for the closing session.



During VBS the children displayed their inherent talent and their sense of creativity. We noticed that every child had something special to offer. On 7<sup>th</sup> May we had an enthralling closing programme which was tastefully set up. Prof. Paul Gunashekar was our guest that evening. Sheeba Uday, who was the compere for the evening, played the role of a TV anchor of a programme called "SJC live", which was filled with hilarious advertisements and fun-filled skits, songs and dances.

I extend my sincere thanks to all the following teachers for their tireless effort:

Beginners : Mrs Vanya Moses, Ms Sheeba Uday, Mrs Kavita  
 Primary : Mrs Vinolia, Mrs Reena & Mrs Margaret  
 Juniors : Mrs Shravanthi Uday, Ms Sheryl, Mrs Geeta Lincoln and Ms Ramyata Rao  
 Intermediates : Mr Sanjeev, Mrs Sheila Jai Kumar, Mrs Sunita David  
 Seniors : Mrs Rinku Peters, Mr Sadanand  
 Joyhome : Mrs Angelina Clement

My thanks also go out to the amazing speakers who with their inspiring talks, pictures, and puppet shows made the devotion a really interactive one: Revd Shanti Kumar Moses, Mrs Usha Sagar, Mr Samson Gandhi, Dr Antony David, Mrs Rekha, Ms Esther, Mrs Veronica, Ms Sushmitha, and Mr Ebenezer.

Hearty thanks to all who donated generously, may God Bless each one of them abundantly.

**GRATEFUL THANKS TO THOSE WHO SPONSORED THE SNACKS:**

Mrs Yashodhra Desappa, Mrs Shravanthi Uday Kumar,  
 Mr Sanjeev Rao, Mrs Grace Geetanjali and sisters, and  
 Mr Benjamin James

**THANKS MUST ALSO GO OUT TO ALL THOSE WHO JUDGED THE VARIOUS EVENTS:**

Mr Austin Dinaker, Mrs Yashodhra Desappa,  
 Mr Jason Wilson, Mrs Prema Christian,  
 Mr NSJ Devadattam, Mr N Vijay Kumar,  
 Mrs Manjula Jeremiah and Mrs Manjula Krishnan.

I am also grateful to all the parents and grandparents who brought their children every day so punctually and encouraged them to participate in the VBS.

Last but not the least, I would like to thank the following persons without whose support and help VBS 2011 would not have been successful:

\* Volunteers and praise and worship singing group

- \* Mrs Anna Alexander and Mrs Nalini Vijay Kumar for their support
- \* Mrs Usha Sagar for giving us comfortable accommodation
- \* Mrs Rosemary, Mrs Yashodhra Desappa, and Mr Vijay Kumar for helping with the registration
- \* Mr Benjamin Franklin for multitasking
- \* Mrs Angela for doing up all the charts (and bulletins) so well
- \* Our Church sextons Phillip and Rani for all their help
- \* Watchman Upender and the Ayyammas of St John's School for support services.

**Yashoda Rao**  
**Director, VBS 2011**

**The Church of St John the Baptist welcomes the following newly baptized members into Christ's flock.**

1. Eliza Esperanza Nittala D/o Major NCP Sagar and Major Deepa John
2. James Philip Didla S/o Mr D. Naveen Rathnam and Mrs Swetha
3. Gabriella Joy Paul D/o Mr Paul Arthur Ajay and Mrs Ida Gnana Jyothi Paul
4. Sushma Puligandla D/o Mrs P Sujatha
5. Switin Ritvik Gundi S/o Dr Babu Suresh G and Dr Roshni Sumalini
6. Darren Newton Mathew S/o Mr Bijoy Mathew and Mrs Maria Mathew
7. Alysa Neeharika Paulina Gandiboyina D/o Mr John David G and Mrs Lillian Deepa G
8. Allison Dipika Gandiboyina D/o Mr John David G and Mrs Lillian Deepa G

**The Church of St John the Baptist wishes the following couples a happy and fruitful wedded life.**

1. Bunyan Sunil Johnson and Shirly Priyanka
2. Nagathota Micah Mrinal and Sonia Margarate
3. Priyadharshan David and Kezia Swaroopaa
4. K. Johnny and Shweta Kumar
5. Emmanuel Devaneyan and Tabitha Thyagaraju

**The Church of St John the Baptist regrets to inform you that the following members slept in the Lord. May the God of all comfort console the bereaved families.**

1. Mrs Grace Srinivasan
2. Mr Mekala Daniel

**ELECTION FOR THE BIENNIUM 2011-2013**

As per the provisions of the MDCR, a total of 6 members were to be elected to the Pastorate Committee and 3 members each would be included as Bishop's nominees and through floor nominations, for the biennium 2011-2013. The election schedule was laid out as per the Constitution and 6 valid nominations from members were available after the last date of withdrawal. All the 6 members were declared elected **UNANIMOUSLY**.

**The Six Elected Members**

1. Mr. N.S.J. Deva Datham
2. Mr. Norman Isaac
3. Prof. Dr. B. Vimal Sukumar
4. Mr. Ajit Alexander George
5. Mr. M. James Samuel
6. Mrs. N. Usha Sagar

**The Three Nominated members**

1. Dr. M. Udaia Kumar
2. Mr. H.W.A. Hartwig
3. Mrs. Yashodara Desappa

The following members were **UNANIMOUSLY** nominated to the Pastorate Committee from the floor for the biennium 2011-2013.

1. Mr Benjamin Franklin
2. Mr Kamal Kumar - Men's Fellowship Secretary
3. Ms Elizabeth

The following members were co-opted to the Pastorate Committee:

1. Mr N Vijay Kumar - Asst Men's Fellowship Secretary
2. Mrs Anna Alexander - Sunday School Secretary
3. Mrs Nalini Vijay Kumar - Asst Sunday School Secretary

**Members from Christ Church Lallaguda**

1. Mr David D Raj2. Mr Paul Raj
3. Mr Nirmal Dass4. Mrs Laxmi Kumari

The election of **Office Bearers** for the biennium 2011-2013 was taken up.

The following were **UNANIMOUSLY** elected

**Sectional Secretaries**

1. **Hon. Secretary:** Mr Norman Isaac
2. **Hon. Treasurer:** Dr Udaia Kumar
3. **Hon. Steward:** Mr Ajit Alexander George
4. **Hon. Property Secretary:** Mr James Samuel
5. **Women's Fellowship:** Mrs Yashodara Desappa
6. **Evangelism Secretary:** Mrs Usha Sagar

