



# Mar Thoma Church of San Francisco

DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 12 - 2015

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## From Vicar's Desk

Greetings to you in all the name of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ.



Dearly beloved in Christ,

In December the Christians all over the world celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. The word "mas" means "sacrifice". Christmas means the sacrifice of Christ. So it is an occasion to remember the birth and death of Jesus Christ because Jesus was the man to save the world from her sin and death. As Mary prepared herself for the birth of Jesus, the church has set 25 days of lent for purification of our lives so that Christ will be born in us and we will grow up in Christ. Christmas is an occasion of joy and peace. In the first Christmas night, and angel from heaven said. To

the shepherds: "Don't be afraid, I bring you good news of great joy" (Luke 2:10) but very often Christmas has become a celebration without Christ experience. For many people it is a time for worldly pleasures like alcoholism, eating, merry making, and shopping. The worldly pleasures are expensive, temporary and will be lost. But God gives real joy of salvation through Christ that is free and eternal that cannot be taken by others. Our parish's house to house Christmas Carol singing shall begin on Saturday December 05th. Christmas Carol Service and Christmas Day Holy Communion will be on Dec.12, 6:00 pm & Dec. 25, 9:00 am respectively. We are at the close of the current financial year. The parish members who are yet to pay the monthly pledge and other commitments are requested to pay them before December 31. As we are moving on in to the New Year 2015, what is our testimony? Let us cling on to the promises of God in His time; He shall make all things beautiful. I

look forward to receive your whole hearted support in the days to come as you had extended to in the past. May the Almighty God help us to share the joy of Christmas with all our friends and neighbors.

Yours in Christ's service,  
Rev. Biju P. Simon Achen

**Our church Christmas program is scheduled for Dec 12th at 6pm. If you arrive before 5:30, please proceed to Social Hall and sit and relax. Choir has arranged for snacks and drinks. Rev. Dr. Ruth Myers from Berkley episcopal seminary will be our chief guest and speaker. Please keep this program in your prayers. Sunday school children and all organizations are participating in the program.**

## Area Prayer Meetings

San Ramon Area	Dec 4, Friday 8:00pm	Tentative (cancelled for Dec)
Sacramento Area	Dec19, Saturday 4:00 pm	Tentative (cancelled for Dec)
Central Valley	Dec19, Saturday 7:00pm	Tentative (cancelled for Dec)
San Francisco Area	Dec 26, Saturday 4:00pm	Tentative (cancelled for Dec)
Fremont Area	Dec 26, Saturday 7:00pm	Tentative (cancelled for Dec)
South Bay Area	Dec 5, Saturday 7pm	Tentative (cancelled for Dec)

## Holy Communion Service

December 6	Malayalam Holy Communion service @10 AM	Fremont Area assist
December 13	Malayalam Holy Communion service @10 AM	San Ramon Area assist
December 20	English Holy Communion service @10 AM	Central Valley Area assist
<b>December 25</b>	<b>English Holy Communion service @9 AM</b>	<b>Executive Committee</b>
December 27	English Holy Communion service @10 AM	South Bay Area assist
<b>December 31</b>	<b>Malayalam Holy Communion service @11PM</b>	<b>Executive Committee</b>

1	Ajay Koshy	14	Annie Thomas	28	Sindhu Philip
1	Jainy Philipose	14	Tareek Thomas	29	Nina Varghis
1	Anoop Thomas	14	Mary Jacob	30	Nathan Thomas
1	Andrew Sam	15	Ivy Kuruvilla	30	Eben Simon
2	Juvento Varghese	15	Elizabeth Koshy		
2	Jacob Varghese	15	Sheela Zachariah		
3	Tony Mathew	16	Lena Mathew		
4	Jeslin Jacob	16	Thomas Philip		
5	Shiny Thomas	17	Sherly Mathew		
5	Brian Varughese	18	Zayne Samuel		
5	ordan Mathew	21	Mathew Anikathil		
7	Merykutty Varughese	22	Sajini Thomas		
9	Melanie Zachariah	22	Annie Thomas		
9	Sam Abraham	22	Mathew Thomas		
9	Sherly John	23	Kevin Viji		
12	Pretha Thomas	25	Mariamamma Oonunny		
12	Nora Kurian	25	Biji John		
12	Aaron Thomas	26	Beena Elza Mathew		
12	Annamma Varughese	27	Tiara Abraham		
13	John Mathew	28	Thomas Godfray		



### Wedding Anniversaries

1	Pothen Joseph & Betsy Joseph
2	Sam John & Ansu Ninan
2	Mathew Thomas & Aleyamma Thomas
3	Jose A. Mathai & Daisy Jose
15	Mathew Anikathil & Manasi Mathew
22	Josie Varughese & Susy Varughese
26	Thomas Alexander & Bindu Alexander
27	Santosh Simon & Beena Elza Mathew
27	Babu C. Philip & Lilly Philip
27	Thomas Kuruvilla & Lizy Kuruvilla
28	Naveen George & Meena George
30	Mathew Simon & Cissy Abraham



**What is the real meaning of Christmas?** There is so much tradition mixed up with spiritual truth that it's sometimes hard to tell Jesus from Santa Claus and the Wise Men from the snowmen.

**When I was reading about the Christmas history, I came across a verse that usually no one pays much attention to. In my opinion this verse sums up the meaning of Christmas better than any verse in the Bible. II Corinthians 8:9:** "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich." If you analyze and try to understand the meaning, it sums up one of the great truths behind the saviors birth.

**He Was Rich:** We have seen and heard of many rich people in our life. There are several categories of richness. There is Average Rich, Medium Rich, Super Rich and finally, there is Incredibly Rich: That would be Donald Trump and Sam Walton etc. But Jesus Christ owns the heaven and earth and is above them all. Bible says, "He was rich." It is speaking of what he had before he left heaven to come to earth. The Bible says that all the glory of God radiates from him (Hebrews 1:3). It also says that all things hold together in him (Colossians 1:17). It also says that by him were all

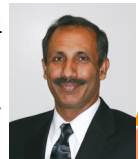
things created (Colossians 1:16). And before he was born (in the manger), he was the Mighty God and the Father of Eternity (Isaiah 9:6). He was rich. He didn't leave heaven in search of riches.

**He Became Poor:** What does it mean? He was rich in eternity but he chose to become poor in time. He left heaven for a remote village in a forgotten province, to join a despised race, to be born of an obscure teenage peasant girl in a stable, wrapped in rags, placed in a feeding-trough instead of a crib. But he himself, of his own free will, became poor. That's something no man would ever do. He voluntarily gave up the riches of heaven for the poverty of earth. He who was richer than any man has ever been gave it up freely and became poorer than any man has ever been. The richest person in the universe, of his own free will, became poorer than the poor. John 1:14 says, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." The phrase "became flesh" really means to wrap you in flesh. It has the idea of God wrapping himself in human flesh. That's what happened at Bethlehem. It was God entering the human race in the form of a man.. He became poor like us so that forever we would hear him saying, "I love you."

**That We Might become Rich:** when I come to Jesus Christ. He takes my sin and I take his righteousness. It is credited to my account. Once I was poor. Now I am rich. That's the grace of God. And it happened because of Christmas. **He who was rich became poor for my sake that I through his poverty might become rich.** So that when I come to Jesus Christ, I come as a pauper in the spiritual realm. My hands are empty, my pockets bare, I have nothing to offer, no claim to make. My entire resume is filled with failure. All my life I have gone two steps forward and three steps back. And when I come to him, I am fed, clothed, filled, forgiven, crowned with every good thing. He takes away my rags and puts around me the robe of his own righteousness. Everything that was against me is gone. Everything I lacked, I now have. Because we who were poor have suddenly been made rich. And that's the true meaning of Christmas. Let us rejoice this year that these things are true and let us teach them to our children that they may know what this season is all about.

Wish you all a happy and blessed Xmas.

Sincerely,  
Jacob Varghis (Prasad)



Sevika Sungham **CANNED FOOD DRIVE 2015** -As we are approaching the holiday season, we are mindful that there are people who are less fortunate than we are. Sevika Sungham is organizing a canned food drive from November 15th through December 20th 2015. All proceeds will be given to the Tri Valley Haven Livermore. Please bring nonperishable items and canned foods such as canned foods (fruits , vegetables, cranberry sauce, tuna , chicken, soups) sugar, oil, and cereal. A barrel will be placed at the foyer in which you can deposit the items. Please participate and help our less fortunate brothers and sisters. (Sevika Sungham)

**On Wednesday December 9, 2015 Theodosius Thirumeni will be completing 26 years of fruitful and blessed ministry. Theodosius Thirumeni was consecrated as a Bishop of the Mar Thoma Church on December 9, 1989. This is a time for us to thank God for all the leadership, guidance and blessings we have received through Thirumeni. A thanksgiving service and Holy Qurbana is arranged on Wednesday December 9, 2015 at 8.30 am in the Sinai Mar Thoma Center Chapel, 2320 Merrick Avenue, Merrick, NY 11566.**

**Trustees have updated payment list on the church portal for those who have dues and balances. Please check the portal and pay it before the year end. Also if you have re-imbusement or loan refund check coming, please stop by the office and pick up the check.**

**Sunday School Schedule change: Dec 13th the Sunday School will start at 9:15 and end at 10:00 am. There will be no common fellowship. Children will go to their class right away at 0915. We will not have Sunday School on Dec 20th & Dec 27th. We resume back on Jan 3rd at 9:00 am. Parents and students please take note.**

- Dec 5 @-Fasting and Prayer (CANCELLED)
- **Dec 5 @9:30am -Fremont Area House-to-house carol singing**
- Dec 5 @ 6:00pm-MTCSV Xmas program
- **Dec 6@10:00am- Malayalam Holy Communion Service**
- **Dec 6 @1pm -South Bay Area House-to-house carol singing**
- Dec12 @6pm-Church Xmas program
- **Dec 13@10:00am- Malayalam Holy Communion Service**
- **Dec 13 @1pm -Central Valley Area House-to-house carol singing**
- Dec19@0800 - MENS Bible study Volunteer work San Jose
- **Dec 19 @10:00am -San Ramon Area House-to-house carol singing**
- **Dec 19 @9:00am -Sacramento Area House-to-house carol singing**
- **Dec 20@10:00am- English Holy Communion Service**
- **Dec 25@09:00am- English Holy Communion Service (Xmas Day)**
- **Dec 27@10:00am- English Holy Communion Service**
- **Dec 31@10:00pm- Malayalam Holy Communion Service**
- Dec 1st-20th - Sevika Sungham canned food drive
- January 1st @4pm- Sacramento Holy Communion Service
- **Dec 20th @1:00pm -San Francisco Area House-to-house carol**



#### Condolences:

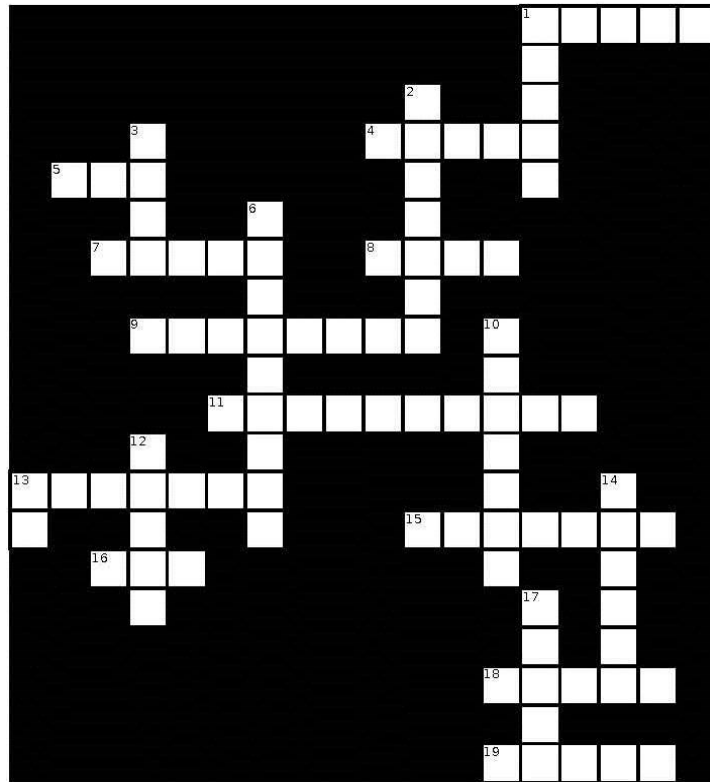
**Condolences:** One of our members from Sacramento Area Linson Varghese's brother-in-law passed away in India On December 1st morning. Linson is in India attending funeral. Please remember the family in our prayers. Linson contact number is 916-806-8041.

We are extremely happy to invite you to the Silver Jubilee Finale of ST. JOHN'S MarThoma Church on December 5, 2015 Saturday at 5:00 PM. Our diocesan bishop. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius will be the chief guest. We request you to attend the function. Please accept our invitation. C V Simon kutty General Convener and Rev. Isaac P Kurien, Vicar. (Our church had send a full page AD for this event)

**H2H Carol singing:** We have completed two days of House-to-House carol singing covering Fremont area and South bay Area. About 40-50 people participated. Really a pleasure to see kids and youths singing and participating in the program. Next Saturday we are NOT planning to carol sing due to the Xmas program scheduled on 12th at 6pm. Please see the visit schedule above (upcoming events).

Matthew and Luke provide most of the details surrounding the actual birth of Jesus. Both tell the same story from different points of view. The other two gospels do not give details regarding the Nativity. Mark starts after Jesus' birth; John starts before. Luke 2:1, Jesus was born during the reign of Caesar Augustus (44 BC-AD 14). The traditional Christmas story from the Gospel of Luke begins: "Now it came about in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed" (Luke 2:1 KJV). Actually, Caesar Augustus was the greatest of the Roman emperors, greater even than his granduncle, Julius Caesar. It was said that when he came to Rome it was a city of brick and when he left it was a city of marble. Caesar Augustus was 19 years old when he came to power in 44 B.C. He reigned as emperor for 58 years. His greatest single act was to call for a census of the empire. The purpose of the census was to compile a list of property owners for the purpose of collecting taxes and military registration. It was a thoroughly secular decree, the kind of thing governments have been doing since the beginning of time. Historians tell us that it is not likely that the whole empire was enrolled at the same time. It might have taken years for the census to be completed. The Romans ordinarily enrolled men where they were currently living, while the Jews counted families according to their ancestral hometowns. That would explain why Joseph and Mary had to return to Bethlehem at a most inconvenient time—in the ninth month of Mary's pregnancy. According to Matthew 2:1, Jesus was born while Herod was still alive. Josephus tells of a lunar eclipse in the spring of 4 BC when Herod died. Astronomers calculate that as happening on March 13, 4 BC. Thus Jesus must have been born sometime earlier. Herod controlled all of Israel, making it likely that Mary and Joseph would indeed be forced to make the difficult and dangerous trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem. We know from history that Herod at this point is old, tired, cranky, ill, and near death. He earned a reputation as a vicious, evil, diabolical, paranoid killer. (from web)





Across

- 1 Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and afflicted Job with painful \_\_\_ from the soles of his feet to the top of his head.
- 4 Sabeans carried off Job's oxen, the fire of God burned up his sheep and servants, the Chaldeans carried off his camels and the \_\_\_ collapsed on his children and they all died.
- 5 Job's wife's response to his sickness was to curse God and \_\_\_.
- 7 When the angels went to present themselves to God, \_\_\_ also went with them.
- 8 When Satan took all of Job's belongings, he spared his \_\_\_.
- 9 Job and \_\_\_ cursed the day of their birth (Jer 20:14).
- 11 Job didn't sin by charging God with \_\_\_.
- 13 Job was blameless, \_\_\_; he feared God and shunned evil.
- 15 Job humbled himself before the Lord and said, "Naked I came and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be \_\_\_."
- 16 \_\_\_ is one of the most ancient books of the Bible that scholars have reason to think it of equal date with the book of Genesis itself.
- 18 Satan claimed that Job remained God's servant because He had put a hedge around him and his possessions. But if God were to strike everything Job had, he would surely \_\_\_ to His face.
- 19 Job had seven sons and \_\_\_ daughters.

Down

- 1 When Job's three friends came to visit him, they sat with him in the ground for \_\_\_ days and nights.
- 2 "You are talking like a \_\_\_ woman. Shall we accept good from God and not trouble?"
- 3 Sabeans are the descendants of \_\_\_. Gen. 10:7
- 6 Job maintained his \_\_\_, though Satan tried to ruin him without any reason.
- 10 \_\_\_ was the son of Esau. Gen.36:10 (Job's three friends are probably the descendants of Abraham.)
- 12 Satan has power to oppress people, but is restrained by God. Lord gave everything that Job had in Satan's hands, but not his life. There is one more instance in the Bible that Satan asked the Lord's permission to attack an individual. Luke 22:31
- 13 Job lived in the land of \_\_\_ in the east of Arabia near Euphrates, probably not far from the Ur of Chaldeans.
- 14 After the feasting days were over at his son's home, Job would have them purified and would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking that they would have sinned and cursed God in their \_\_\_.
- 17 In all his troubles Job didn't sin in what he said. "If you have planned evil, clap your hands over your \_\_\_." Pro. 30:32