

St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church,  
Greater Washington



*St. Thomas  
Mirror*

EDITION : 10

DECEMBER 2014

### Yeldho (Christmas)



## Vicar's Message

Dearly Beloved in Christ Jesus,

Glory to God Almighty for His abundant grace and mercy throughout the last 11 months. It is with great happiness that we enter into the last month of this year, especially in this advent season. As you all know, canonically, Holy Church instructs her members to observe 5 Lents. Yeldo nombu or the 25 days fasting is observed in commemoration of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are back to Advent and we begin preparing again for the coming Nativity celebration. The word Advent means "coming" or "arrival." The focus of the entire advent season is the celebration of the birth of Jesus the Christ in his First Advent that happened 2000 years ago in a manger, and the anticipation and the preparation for his Second Advent or second coming .

God prepared a way of deliverance in the person of Jesus, as the angel said unto the shepherds, "unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11). In the person of Jesus, God prepared a way of Joy and delight. The angel said to the shepherds, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people" (Luke 2:10). God made a way for us to know Jesus Christ and, through knowing Him, subsequently to know joy and peace. He is God's glorious gift for you and for me. For nine months, behind the veil of a virgin womb, God was wrapping the greatest Christmas gift, the Lord Jesus, who came for our salvation.

Let us use these 25 days of fasting for our own preparation for the coming of our Savior, birth of Jesus Christ in our hearts. Whatever observations and celebrations we do are fine, if it brings the message of the season into our minds and actions, remember "Jesus is the reason for the Season". Let's wait for the proclamation "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men" (Luke 2:14). Christmas is a time for giving, Christmas is a time for good tidings, Christmas is a time for His amazing grace and Christmas is a time for glorifying our God.

May you all be blessed in the name of Holy Trinity.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Fr. Dr. Johnson C. John Chirathalackal

### MMVS Announcements

12/07/14 - Christmas Song Practice  
12/14/14 - Christmas Song Practice  
12/21/14 - Christmas Song Practice

### Food Roster

12/07/2014 - Thomas Varghese/Nita  
12/14/2014 - Well-wisher  
12/21/2014 - \*\*\*\* Vacant\*\*\*  
12/25/2014 - Christmas feast (common lunch)  
12/28/2014 - Aby Oommen

### Sunday School Announcements

12/24/2014 - Sunday School Christmas program  
12/27/2014 - Area Christmas program 3:30 PM - 6:30 PM

### Men's Forum & Focus Announcements

12/07/2014 - Christmas Caroling  
12/14/2014 - Bible Class - St. Mathew 22 - Eapen Varghese  
12/21/2014 - Bible Class - St. Mathew 23 - Eapen Varghese  
12/28/2014 - Bible Class - St. Mathew 24 - Eapen Varghese

### Dates to remember

12/01/2014 - Eldo Nombu starts  
12/07/2014 - Birth of John the Baptist (Children's day)  
12/14/2014 - Annunciation to St. Joseph  
12/14/2014 - 2nd Dukhrono of HG. Mathews Mar Barnabas  
12/21/2014 - St. Thomas martyrdom  
12/25/2014 - Christmas/Eldo Nombu ends  
12/28/2014 - The Holy Family flee to Egypt

Merry  
Christmas!

and a  
Blessed New Year

# Worship Schedules

## SATURDAY

**12/06/2014**

Ecumenical Christmas Program

**12/13/2014**

11:00 am – 6:30 pm  
Christmas Caroling in Lanham Area

**12/20/2014**

11:00 am – 6:30 pm  
Christmas Caroling in Virginia Area

**12/27/2014**

6:30 pm – 7:30 pm  
Evening Prayer & Song Practice



### Members celebrating birthday

|                       |         |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Rajan Yohannan        | - 12/1  |
| Angeline Johny        | - 12/5  |
| Shanu Eapen           | - 12/5  |
| Ethan Sajan           | - 12/8  |
| Jacob Benny           | - 12/8  |
| Sara Shibu            | - 12/9  |
| Anu Mathew            | - 12/9  |
| Saji Mathai           | - 12/11 |
| Sheeba Chacko         | - 12/14 |
| Mary John             | - 12/16 |
| Libu Varkey           | - 12/19 |
| Delin Varghese        | - 12/20 |
| Sheba Saji            | - 12/22 |
| Joel Johnson          | - 12/24 |
| Anika Jacob           | - 12/25 |
| Johnson Alexander     | - 12/28 |
| Lukose Cyril Parampil | - 12/29 |
| Della Varghese        | - 12/29 |
| Thomas Palathra       | - 12/31 |

## SERVICE

**12/07/2014 – Malayalam**

Morning Prayer 8:30 am - 9:30 am.  
O.T. Bible Reading family: Mr. T.P. Johny & Family  
[Genesis 21:1-21, Exodus 2:1-10 & Psalms 127:1-5]  
Epistle Reading  
[Ephesians 6:1-4 & Colossians 3:20-21]

**12/14/2014 – English**

Morning Prayer 8:30 am - 9:30 am.  
O.T. Bible Reading : Jacob Benny & Joji Thomas  
[Genesis 1 3:1-11 & Isaiah 1:2-9]  
Epistle Reading  
[I Peter 2:11-17 & Galatians 1:11-24]

**12/21/2014 – Malayalam**

Morning Prayer 8:30 am - 9:30 am.  
O.T. Bible Reading family: Mr. T.P. Varghese & Family  
[Genesis 46:8-27, I Kings 9:3-7 & Isaiah 7:14-15,11:1-9]  
Epistle Reading  
[Acts 3:16-26 & Romans 4:13-25]

**12/24/2014 – Malayalam**

(Christmas Evening Service 6:00 PM followed by Sunday School  
Christmas Program)

**12/25/2014 – Christmas Service Malayalam**

Morning Service 8:30 am  
O.T. Bible Reading  
[Genesis 21:1-8, Micah 5:1-4 & Isaiah 9:1-7]  
Epistle Reading  
[ I John 1:1-10 & Galatians 3:23-4:7]

**12/28/2014 – English**

Morning Prayer 8:30 am - 9:30 am.  
O.T. Bible Reading : Nidhi Mathew, Renu Thomas & Roshni Thomas  
[Genesis 37:13-28, Zechariah 8:3-8 & Isaiah 5:20-30]  
Epistle Reading  
[Acts 16:6-10 & I Corinthians 10:1-13]



### Members celebrating wedding anniversary

|                                     |         |
|-------------------------------------|---------|
| Sajan Mathew and Renju Rajan        | - 12/26 |
| Aby Oommen and Devi Alphonsa George | - 12/28 |
| Johnson Alexander and Jessy Johnson | - 12/29 |
| Mathew C Paul and Aleyamma Paul     | - 12/30 |

\*\*\*\* If any of your family member's anniversary/birthday falls on this month and doesn't see under birthday/anniversary column; please login to our church website and update \*\*\*\*

## **Importance of scripture in the life of an orthodox Christian**

“The Bible is the book of the church; it is the main writer’s authority within the church, not over or apart from it. The Bible lives in the church, without the church, there would be no Bible. The church gives the Bible its life as a book. It makes the book come alive.” These are the words of one of the great Orthodox Father Thomas Hopko.

The soul of whole orthodoxy is prayer and Holy Scripture since the Christian church is a scriptural church. The Eastern Orthodox Church follows the beliefs of the Old Testament, New Testament and several books of the Apocrypha. We cannot separate Holy Scripture and the holy tradition. It is from the church that Holy Scripture ultimately derives its authority, for it was the church, which originally decided which books form a part of Holy Scripture. We often don’t know that Orthodox Church has a larger Bible than the Protestants and Roman Catholics. It is unfortunate that we Orthodox Christians often do not read Bible as we should be. We revere Bible, don’t actually read it. This is a terrible weakness in our spiritual lives. One of our Holy father St: Jerome said bluntly “ignorance of scripture is ignorance of Christ.” Bible informs reforms and transforms a Christian. St. Tikhos of Zadok in 1724-1783 wrote, “Whenever you read the Gospel, Christ himself is speaking to you. And while you read, you’re praying and talking with him.”

How can we grow with scripture?

- 1) We must read Bible prayerfully. Pray before you read Bible so that God can help you understand what you’re reading, so that you can put word into practice.
- 2) Set aside few minutes every day to just for reading Bible.
- 3) Don’t read too much at one time.

Orthodox Christians are not merely to read the Bible; we are also to pray the Bible. This takes place very clearly on every Sunday when you participate in the Holy Liturgy. All the sacraments of our church are directly connected to scripture. By participating in these sacraments, actually we are reading, studying and praying the Scripture. In the Holy Eucharist, the first part is called the Liturgy of the word; there are three types of readings, the Old Testament reading, the epistle reading and the Gospel reading. We pray the Lord’s prayer, “our father who art in heaven..” and we sing from the book of Psalms. One of the priest’s blessings, “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and love of God the Father and communion of Holy spirit be with you all, is a direct quote from St. Paul’s final farewell to the church in Corinth as mentioned in 2 Corinthians 13:13. And when we sing “Holy, Holy , Holy, Lord God Almighty. Heaven and Earth are full of His mercy. Hosanna in the highest”, here we are singing the angelic singing Prophet Isaiah heard in the temple in Jerusalem as mentioned in Isaiah 6:1-5.

Scripture is an integral part of orthodox Christianity. We cannot go without Word of God. “Everything written in the scripture was written to teach us in order that we might have hope through patience and encouragement that the scriptures gives us.” (Romans 15:4).

## **Christmas Carol Schedule - 2014**

### **Saturday, 11/29/2014**

Baltimore Mr. Aby Oommen  
Germantown Mr. Biju Mathew  
Mr. V.M Joseph

### **Sunday, 12/07/2014**

Silver Spring Mr. Thomas Palathra  
Mr. T.P Johny - Combined  
( T.P. Varghese,  
T.P. Abraham,  
T.P Johny,  
Johnson T. Varghese &  
Benny Varghese)  
Mr. Sunil Mathai  
Mr. Mathai Chacko  
Mr. Biju Lukose  
Mr. Bixa Kurian Kanneth - Combined  
( Mathew C. Paul &  
Bixa Kurian)  
Mr. Binu Abraham

### **Saturday, 12/13/2014**

Lanham Dr. Vinod Abraham  
Mr. Johnson Alexander  
Mr. Thomas K Varghese  
Mr. K Yohannan  
Mr. Rajan Varghese - Combined  
( Rajan Varghese &  
Tiju Mathew)  
Mr. Rajan Yohannan  
Mr. Thomas Varughese

### **Saturday, 12/20/2014**

VA Mr. John Koshy  
Mr. Varghese Kurian  
Mr. Bavan Vargese  
Mr. Benny Job  
Mr. Davis Varghese  
Mr. John C. Thomas  
Mr. George P. Thomas  
Mr. Isaac K. John  
Mr. Joy C. Thomas

### **Thursday, 12/25/2014**

Common Church