

SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

EBENEZER MAR THOMA CHURCH

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From Vicar's Desk

September 2024

"Honor the LORD with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase: So, shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine" (Proverbs 3:9-10).

Dearly Beloved in Christ,

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

We are living in turbulent times. Day by day, when we look at the news, the happenings around the world cause us to be afraid or observe a dismal world. When Jesus spoke to the disciples about their grief turning to joy, He said, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (St. John 16:33). Our faith and hope are grounded in the risen Lord. Let us not lose sight of God's plan for us and let us continue to toil for God's kingdom. Let us continue to pray for those who are struggling and pray for peace. In prayer we are profoundly connected to God and one another in deep and meaningful ways that passes all understanding. In prayer we are never alone.

I hope you are having a blessed summer. Some of our families traveled near and far this summer and are returning to New York.

Our children and youth will be returning to schools and colleges this month. Sunday School will soon begin a new academic year. Let us pray for God's blessings on our Sunday school ministry, and the schools and universities of this land. The word of God pointing children in the right direction. "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Proverbs 22:6.

September 01, Sunday has been set apart by our church as Harvest festival Sunday. The Harvest festival is a time to celebrate all the good things God has given us. Since we are thankful to God for all the blessings He's given, let's make it a point to share our blessings. This is always a great fellowship and a time of Thanksgiving. May I invite your wholehearted participation.

September 15, Sunday has been set apart by our church as Suvishesha Sevika Sanghom Sunday to meditate up on the theme, 'Women, Apostles of Christ'. Every woman of the Mar Thoma Church above the age of 18 years is a member of the Sevika Sanghom. The Sevika Sanghom has branches in all parishes of the Mar Thoma Church both in USA and abroad. The women's wing of the Mar Thoma church is well organized body with a team of dedicated and hardworking members. May the Lord be glorified through the activities of our Sevika Sanghom.

September 15, we are also observing as Senior Citizen Sunday. One of the most precious gifts we have is the maturity and wisdom of the elderly. They are the guardians of our traditions and memories. It is a special gift to have the opportunity to spend time with our elders and learn from them. 'Even to your old age I am he, and to gray hairs I will carry you. I have made, and I will bear; I will carry and will save.' (Isaiah 46:4) So let us offer up prayers to a God who promises to carry and save us, even to our old age.

We must remember that all our programs are meant for the spiritual growth of the faithful, and they are privileges. Engaging in spiritual reflection, contemplation, and work will help us to grow in our relationship with the Lord and help us to strengthen our Christian faith, life, and witness. The opportunities are available. The question is whether we are taking the initiative to grow spiritually as individuals and as families. It is up to each individual and family to respond creatively and positively. Let us join with Joshua by saying, "But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." (Joshua 24:15).

Our Johnson Mathew Achen is back here in USA after retirement and praising God for Achen's prayerful participation and leadership in our parish life. May God almighty continue to Strengthen Achen more to make use of the God given talents for many.

Thank you so much for your continued prayers, love and support when I am going through some health issues these days. Please do continue to uphold us in your prayers. Let's become people of prayer and a church of prayer together. God will move mountains and God will transform us into people of love, joy, and peace through prayer. I encourage you to be faithful to our Lord and his Bride, the church. Let us be committed and serve Him in the beauty of His Holiness.

May God continue to Bless You All. Prayers for you All.

Yours in Christ's ministry,

Rev. George Abraham

Vicar

Ebenezer Mar Thoma Church,

New York.

Message from Youth Chaplain - September 2024

Glory be to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - One True God!

"Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:2)

Beloved family in Christ,

How important is money to you? What would you do without it? Can you imagine living without money? When will you feel you have enough? Is a life without luxury worth living?

As I was speaking to a student the other day, these questions came to mind as they were preparing to pick the major. They firmly believed that money is crucial and that it is easier said than done to live without it. People often say money is not important, but in reality, many crave it. Without money, life can be full of difficulties. These thoughts led me to reflect deeply, and I want to share three insights that make me believe there are things far more important than money. Yes, money is a tool and can make life more comfortable, but it should never be at the centre of our lives.

The first thought that came to me was about health. Think about the athletes or celebrities we admire, people who seem to have it all. Yet what happens when their health fails due to addictions, stresses, etc.? Despite all their wealth and success, they would have given it all up to live a few more years in good health. For them, health became more important than anything money could buy.

The second thought is about relationships. Imagine someone who's the most popular person at school, the one everyone seems to envy. They've got the latest gadgets and the coolest clothes, but deep down, they feel lonely because they lack real, meaningful friendships. Wealth and popularity can never replace the love and support of true friends and family. So, between wealth and relationships, relationships hold greater value.

The third thought is about integrity. How far would you go to achieve success or earn money? In the pursuit of wealth, would you compromise your values or principles? Money can buy material things, but it can't buy a clear conscience or peace of mind. There was a young entrepreneur who, despite facing immense pressure to take shortcuts, chose to stick to his principles. He didn't achieve overnight success, but in the long run, his integrity earned him respect and success that lasted. Integrity and values are more important than any amount of money.

I recall seeing a quote that said, "The Value of a Leader Is Directly Proportional to That Leader's Values." This message struck me because what we value shapes our character and ultimately defines how we lead our lives.

When Paul wrote to the believers in Colosse, he said, "Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:2). His point is that only when our values are motivated and shaped by the eternal, rather than the temporary, can we be effective ambassadors of Christ. Understanding that we are pilgrims in this world, not tourists, helps us keep a clear perspective and an undistracted heart, enabling us to serve our Savior more effectively.

It is often said that we live in a world that knows the cost of everything but the value of nothing. In this fast-paced world, we, as Christians, are called to build our values around what lasts forever. We are called to remember the life of Jesus Christ. To put it simply: The effectiveness of a believer is directly proportional to that believer's values. So, what is your priority?

Yours in His Ministry,

JVarghese Achen

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Sunday Worship Schedule

Date	Time	Service
September 1 st – Sunday	10.00 AM	Holy Communion Service (Malayalam)
September 8 th – Sunday Senior Citizens Day observed	10.00 AM	Holy Communion Service (Malayalam)
September 15 th – Sunday Sevika Sanghom Day observed	10.00 AM	Holy Communion Service (English)
September 22 nd – Sunday	10.00 AM	Holy Communion Service (English)
September 29 th - Sunday	10.00AM	Holy Communion Service (Malayalam)

Lectionary

September 1 st – Education Sunday: Education that leads to Divine truths (15th Sunday after Pentecost)		
	1 st Lesson	Prov. 4:1-11
	2 nd Lesson	I Cor. 1:18-25
	Epistle	Rom. 11:33-36
	Gospel	St. John 14:5-14
September 8 th – Senior Citizens Sunday: Senior Citizens - Model for the generations (17th Sunday after Pentecost)		
	1 st Lesson	Gen. 48:1-22
	2 nd Lesson	Phil. 2:12-18
	Epistle	II Tim. 4:1-8
	Gospel	St. Luke 2:25-38
September 15 th – Women: Witnesses of the Gospel (Sevika Sanghom Day) (16th Sunday after Pentecost)		
	1 st Lesson	Ruth 4:1-12
	2 nd Lesson	Acts 16:11-15
	Epistle	Gal. 3:26-29
	Gospel	St. Luke 8:1-3
September 22 nd – Holy Qurbana: Foretaste of the Kingdom of God (18th Sunday after Pentecost)		
	1 st Lesson	Ex. 12:21-28
	2 nd Lesson	Acts 2:42-47
	Epistle	I Cor. 11:23-30
	Gospel	St. Matt. 26:26-29
September 29 th - Prayer: Constant communion with God (19th Sunday after Pentecost)		
	1 st Lesson	Prov. 30:4-9
	2 nd Lesson	Acts 12:1-12
	Epistle	Eph. 3:14-21
	Gospel	St. Matt. 6:5-15

Wedding Anniversary

Jacob Mathew	Reena Mathew	5-Sep
Titus Samuel	Soji Samuel	12-Sep
Ryan Varughese	Aisley Varughese	14-Sep
Nihal Joseph Easow	Roopa Anna Nihal Easow	14-Sep
Saju Mathews	Mariamamma Mathews	18-Sep
Prasad Thomas	Bindu Prasad	20-Sep

Birthday Wishes

Vipin T Kovoov	4-Sep
Ezekiel Abraham Varghese	7-Sep
Rebekah Elizabeth Jacob	7-Sep
Reena Mathew (Kochamma)	10-Sep
Tisha Tharakan	10-Sep
Feby Varghese	11-Sep
Jose Cherian	15-Sep
Robin T Samuel	21-Sep
Rini Clement	29-Sep



Bible Reading

The family of....	Date
Feby Idicula Varghese	09/01/2024
George Thomas	09/08/2024
Ivy John	09/15/2024
Jacob Mathew	09/22/2024
Jacob Varughese	09/29/2024
Jerry Chacko	10/06/2024
John C Mathai (Raju)	10/13/2024
John Samuel (Kochumon)	10/20/2024
Johnson Mathew (Rev.)	10/27/2024

Upcoming Events

1. Wednesday Bible Studies and Saturday prayer meetings via zoom at 7:00pm.
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81243928868?pwd=TjdUODZQSnRiQkl2amlRaEdSNEo5dz09>
Dial 1 646-876-9923; Meeting ID: 812 4392 8868; Passcode:406406
2. September 1st, 2024, Sunday – Education Sunday
 - a. Dedication for School going students.
 - b. Dedication for Sunday School Students/ Teachers
 - c. Harvest Festival Finale (Conveners – Mr. Rahul Joseph & Mr. Vipin Kovoov)
3. September 8th, 2024 - Senior Citizen Day Observed.
4. September 15th, 2024, Sunday –
 - a. Sevika Sanghom Day Observed.
 - b. One day Income Offertory
 - c. Onam Festival
5. October 4th (Fri), October 5th (Sat), October 6th, 2024 (Sun) – 21st Diocesan Sevika Sanghom Conference at Carmel Mar Thoma Center.
6. October 6th, 2024, Sunday - M.T. Voluntary Evangelists Association Day
7. October 18th (Fri), October 19th (Sat), & October 20th (Sun) – Parish Convention
8. October 20th, 2024, Sunday – English Holy Communion
 - a. Youth Sunday
 - b. Christian Family Dedication Sunday (Oct 27th) (Family Dedication -Special Offertory)
9. October 27th, 2024, Sunday- Christian Family Dedication Day

Youth Fellowship Housekeeping

1. I am excited to announce our Twice-a-Month Youth Fellowship Bible Study sessions at the Northeast Regional Youth Chaplain's Parsonage! This is a wonderful opportunity for us to dive deeper into God's Word, connect, and strengthen our faith journey together. Our first sessions will be on Wednesday, September 11, 2024, and Wednesday, September 25, 2024, starting at 7:00 pm and concluding by 8:30 pm. We will also have light snacks to keep us fueled and ready for meaningful discussions. I encourage you to join us and be a part of this enriching experience!
2. Additionally, do not forget that your Parish Youth Fellowship Meetings are happening every month. For more details, please reach out to your Parish Youth Fellowship Secretary, who will have all the information you need.
3. NERYF Fifth Sunday Combined Holy Qurbana and Fellowship: Join us on September 29, 2024, at Jerusalem Mar Thoma Church in Connecticut. Let us make this a special time of worship and fellowship. We encourage everyone to carpool and make this event a blessing for all involved. More details to follow.
4. NERYF Fall One-Day Retreat: Mark your calendars for November 30, 2024, at Long Island Mar Thoma Church. It is going to be a day full of spiritual renewal and fellowship—more details to follow.

I look forward to seeing you at these events and growing together in faith!

JVarghese Achen;

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