



The Voice

The Triannual Newsletter of
Bethel Mar Thoma Suvishesha Sevika Sangham, Sydney



“Women the Apostles of Christ”

There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus Gal3:28

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Blessings



Dear Bethel Women,

It is my joy to pen down the presidential note for this edition of the newsletter. The theme, **"Women, Apostles of Christ"**, brings to my mind a vivid, academic nostalgia about my seminary life, in which my fellow students and I had breathed in more books than fresh air. This topic had always been a matter of intense debate, whenever we discussed women apostles in the strict or general sense, from the Bible.

It is still vociferously argued by feminist theologians that **Romans 16:7** is a direct evidence to substantiate women's apostleship.

"Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was." (Romans 16:7, NIV)

It is not only the feminist school of thought which argue **Junia** to be a female apostle, many other theologians do as well. We have no solid lead to categorically assert that Junia was a woman, as we have no basis for this. However, Junia is considered to be a woman apostle by tradition.

John Chrysostom, an early church father (344-407 A.D.), commented as follows:

"Greet Andronicus and Junia... who are outstanding among the apostles... They are outstanding on the basis of their works and virtuous actions."

Indeed, how great the wisdom of this woman must have been that she was even deemed worthy of the title of apostle!

There is no biblical lead point to assert Junia to be a woman, however our assumption that she is a woman is further strengthened by the early church fathers.

In the strict sense, only those who were called to be Jesus' disciples (twelve men) were entitled to be apostles, which means people who are sent out i.e. emissaries and proponents.



Continued...



However in the wider sense, an apostle is one who is a protagonist of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in words and virtuous deeds.

I believe it is relevant to look to Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox tradition, which claim them as two among the seventy apostles (**Luke 10:1-3, NKJV**) whom Jesus had sent out.

Tradition tells of these two travelling far and wide, spreading the aroma of the Gospel, and being ultimately martyred in Moravia. They were instrumental and successful in demolishing many temples of idolatry .

One becomes an "Apostle of Christ" by being a mouthpiece of the Gospel of Christ and by virtuous deeds.

Women in the Bible paved the way for a new view of humanity rather than seeking to be venerated. Till then, humanity was defined and designed by men, and therefore, a woman's world was defined by men without her acknowledgement. Men spoke for women as if women could not speak a word in public.

Women continue to be apostles, not by this title conferred on them, but by living a virtuous life grounded in the Gospel. Women have demolished the design of women that was "granted" to them by men. The dignity of a woman is not to be granted by men, but to be found by women.

I pray that our Bethel women continue to be virtuous - ***Apostles of Christ - for the sake of their fellow-women, who want Jesus to carry their burdens and daily "busi-ness".***



**Rev. Eapen Mathew
President**

Bethel Mar Thoma Suvishesha Sevika Sangham, Sydney



Editor's Desk



Dear Sisters in Christ,

Praising God for giving us strength when we are weak and for His promises that speak love and peace into our lives every day. A warm welcome to all the elected members of SS representatives for 2023-2024. We also deeply appreciate each member of last year's team for showing relentless effort during their tenure.

“God doesn't call the qualified. He qualifies the called”

Our theme for this edition is “Women - Apostles of Christ”.

Historically, women have been marginalized and their voices often silenced within early Christianity and religious institutions. However, a closer examination of the New Testament reveals the integral role that women played in the life and ministry of Jesus. From His mother Mary, to the women who faithfully followed and supported Him, these women were not mere bystanders but active participants in the mission of Christ. One notable example is Mary Magdalene, the first person to witness the resurrection of Jesus, who was entrusted with the task of sharing this momentous event and the good news with His disciples. Mary Magdalene's pivotal role highlights the trust and confidence that Jesus had in her ability to proclaim the good news.

The teachings of Jesus Christ emphasized the value and worthiness of every individual, regardless of gender. He welcomed women as disciples and treated them as equals, challenging the prevailing societal norms of His time. Jesus encouraged women to actively participate in the spreading of His message, recognizing their unique perspectives and abilities. While some may argue that certain biblical passages seemingly restrict women from assuming leadership roles, it is crucial to interpret these texts in light of their historical and cultural contexts.

As we reflect on the role of women as apostles of Christ, let us be inspired to challenge and dismantle the barriers that hinder our full participation in sharing the gospel with love and compassion. I strongly believe that church mission can only be enhanced and made more effective when gifted men and women minister using their skills and abilities united for the gospel and building up the body of Christ, as well as equipping the people of God to reach out to the lost.

“Stay blessed and be a blessing to others”



Mrs. Simi Jins
Vice President

Bethel Mar Thoma Suvishesha Sevika Sangham, Sydney



Women - Apostles of Christ

Leena George

Galatians 3: 28 "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you all are the one in Christ Jesus".

Dear all in Christ,

I'm humbled to share my deep thoughts on this powerful theme **"Women Apostles of Christ"**.

An Apostle, in simple biblical context, is Lord's chosen one who strongly defends and proclaims the word of God.

Whilst the Church foundational layers were strong laid out by direct disciples of Lord Jesus, & St Paul, & his successors, it goes without saying that this beautiful Tapestry was carefully woven and passed on, by Men and Women believers in Christ, the latter part not necessarily well documented for reference. Unlike all other faiths dominated by Patriarchal positional leadership, Christianity, from the beginning embraced women being their integral part of their congregation. The New Testament, reference to Jewish women disciples **Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna** accompanied Jesus during his ministry and supported through their private means. Jesus encouraged women to set examples of faith, chose women to be the first to witness his mighty resurrection and has categorically stated in many occasions that **His kingdom of God belongs to all who have faith, not restricted to particular group or people.**

Whilst there's no dearth of inspirations for us from our past, I'm also inclined to bring an interesting perspective of how women who have been part of our lives have remained deep rooted in faith and have been Lord's witness to her Family and community around her.

My Grandmother, Late Mrs. Saramma Mathai, was a strong believer and lady of deep faith. I vividly remember theirs was the only Christian home amidst a concentrated community of regional faith practitioners. Every evening at 5 PM, she lit up candles at home, offered prayers and recites songs with deep devotion. She would then come to the porch and start narrating biblical short stories to her grandchildren. Slowly the listeners group expanded, and we had kids from other homes making these story sessions without fail. Mrs Saramma always made a point to visit neighbours regardless of which faith they belonged to, offered prayers to sick people, families dealing with grief & comforted them. People affectionately called her "Ammachi" as they could feel the healing touch she brought to them in the name of our Lord Jesus. In my eyes, she and her fellow church women were true Ambassadors of Christ.

Ephesians 4:11-12 "And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds, and teachers to equip for the work of ministry, for building up body of Christ."

My friends in Christ, Today's world is much liberated and fast-paced, with us adorning multiple hats. It is more important to introspect our role in being true Apostles of Christ, and in my view, this can only occur through an amalgamation of self-realization of God's presence, building deeper relationships with Lord and a recognition that we have our role to play here.

I pray to Almighty God to help us grow in faith and make a spiritual difference in the place we live and the broader community.



Feeling the true Christmas Joy

Manju Cherian

Christmas!! What a joyful season! Be it the colourful decorations, the delicious meals we prepare and share, the gatherings where our loved ones come together or even the exciting holidays we take, year after year it is a merry occasion that always makes our hearts bubble up with happiness. But in all this Christmas rush, do we ever take some time to think about the bigger picture? In the times that we do, we realise that the scene is not quite right...

Our God, who is too glorious to even look upon, and from Whom the cherubim hide their faces, is lying in a filthy manger. God doesn't want us to view the 'manger scene' as glorious or picturesque. He wants us to be puzzled and awed because only then, would we start thinking about the purpose of the divine birth. What happened at that manger was not intended to put us in 'the holiday mood', but rather shake us and transform our lives like never before.

Most of the time, we find ourselves excited about the Christmas season, but surprisingly apathetic about Christ. Often, we are not able to feel the enormity of the incarnation because of our familiarity with the story. The truth is, we have heard the story so often that we've stopped thinking about it.

We fail to understand the magnanimity of His action because we do not realise how bad our fate is without a Saviour. To be excited about the birth of a Saviour, we need to acknowledge our sinful nature first. At all times, humans tend to normalise sins. Most of us do not count ourselves as grave sinners but rather as trivial sinners. But God does not make a distinction between a minor sin and a major sin like the world does. There are no big sins and little sins, but rather there are sins. Any sin in our lives, if not repented of and washed away by the blood of Jesus, will keep us from the Heavenly reward. So, ultimately, if not reconciled with God, you and I are destined for the same eternal punishment as that of an unrepentant murderer or a blasphemer.

John Newton, the author of the song **"Amazing grace"**, at the age of 82 was asked to say a few words about his steadfast faith and his reply was, "Although my memory is fading, I remember two things very clearly: I am a great sinner and Christ is a great Saviour."

May the core reason for our excitement during this Christmas season be the realisation that we are all grave sinners BUT Jesus has rescued us from certain doom. Let us acknowledge the Birthday Boy for the true reason why He gave up His divinity and came into our world.



Sevika Sangham Event List 2023-2024



Watch this Space

- Dec 2023 10 Christmas Carols
- 19 Community Cafe Outreach Food Support
- Feb 2024 18 SS Annual Food Sale & Pickle Sale
- TBD SS Barbie Day
- Mar 2024 02 SS Annual Retreat
- TBD Return and Earn Family Challenge

Ongoing Events

- Quarterly Fasting Prayer
- Monthly Bible Study
- Friendly house visits - Senior Ladies (who are unable to attend church)
- Revive & Survive Monthly Women Fellowship
- Prenatal Prayers





Getting ready to 'see' GOD's wonderful world

Linda Abraham

Travelling allows a person to temporarily abandon mundane routines, remove ourselves from our comfort zone, open our minds for curious exploration and allow our souls to 'see'.

I was asked, of all the 35+ countries we have had the privilege to travel to, to pick one that stood out. After almost a month of thinking, there is no one country that stood out. Each had its unique beauty, culture, amazing landscapes, interesting history and to pick just one would be doing injustice to the others.

Here's a few tips on those thinking about wanting to travel more.

1. Remove the barrier of fear & Block Calendars!



The biggest part of travelling is uncertainty. There are a lot of things that we cannot control during a journey to a completely foreign country. That fear alone stops people from attempting to travel. Block your calendars and make those dates non-negotiable.

2. Start Small!



If you can't quite jump onto a 14-hour flight, start with cross-state trips. Tasmania, Philip Island, Perth, Adelaide. Australia in itself (and a continent) has so many beautiful places to explore.

3. Chill or Run!



You must understand what you want to do during the trip. Do you want to just saunter around and be relaxed or visit every single monument that exists?

4. Plan, Plan, Plan ! (as much as possible)



Once we have set our eye on a certain country, then our first point of call is to research through several travel blogs that people have posted.

On creating a rough idea of the dates, number of days and roughly where we want to be, we start booking. Based on our budget, we search for flights, accommodation, car rental, day trips or airport transfers.

Cleartrip.com
lastminute.com.au
booking.com
Airbnb.com.au



Don't forget Google chacha

If research is too much or time consuming then travel agents are useful.

We also make a point of checking the weather while we're there, so we know what season it is and what to pack.

Understand the risks in some countries. Whether it be geo-political or general pickpocketing, do your research to understand the latest scenario so that you can prepare accordingly. Including making yourself update www.smarttraveller.gov.au if you're going to a risky area. It's good practice.



Continued...

5. Pray!



God, in his infinite wisdom and power created our beautiful world and there are so many things that can go wrong or make the trip uncomfortable. No matter how much you plan. God has been seen working miracles whenever we got stuck or things that have happened that protected us and we had no idea whilst we were travelling.

We MUST pray;

Pray before, to remove our worries and to understand HIS will in all this.

Deuteronomy 31:8 – The Lord himself will go before you. He will be with you; He will not leave you or forget you. Don't be afraid and don't worry.

Proverbs 16:9 – The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps.

Pray during, to thank for each day that you return safely and continue to guide you through the next day.

Psalms 121:7-8 – The Lord keeps you from all harm and watches over your life. The Lord keeps watch over you as you come and go, both now and forever.

Pray after, for when you reach home for the experience that you had and be thankful. To reminisce in what you have learnt during the trip, be able to hold onto that learning and apply it to your lives.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 – Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

I hope this article provides a start to getting out and travelling. Are you ready to take the first step and really 'see' God's beautiful world?





Our Assets, Our Teenage Children - some things to do alongside them

Roshini Thomas



Adolescence is a period of massive change. Self-care such as eating well, sleeping, exercising, and talking about any problems with a trusted adult, who has the capacity to deal with these problems, is part of that care for our teenager.

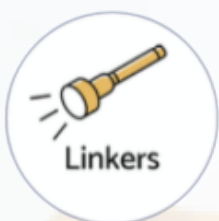
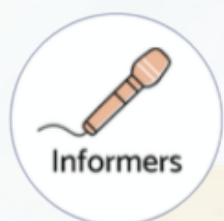


Richelle Staley is Careers Counsellor at Lourdes Hill College in Brisbane. She says, "School is a young person's main job, and it should be their focus, but a part-time job can teach invaluable skills and help them decide what sort of career might suit them in the future."

Accept them when they say, "I am a work in progress and that progress is not always linear."

Why are part-time jobs important for our teenagers? What do the experts think?

The work cluster would include:



Take the cluster identification quiz: <https://thecareerclusters.com/quiz/>

After graduate education or even high school, when looking for work, our child stands a better chance if he/she has had a part-time job during school. Part-time work points to an ability to manage time, work with others, and take direction.

- They see more of the world they live in.
- It broadens their worldview.
- They discover the value of money
- This gives kids relational skills.
- This helps the child find their work cluster

Above all let us commit them in prayer and continue to help them see our faith, love and hope in action. 'Seeing is believing'. Let us praise God for the family, the church and the community we are privileged to be part of.

An eye-opening and gratifying aspect of truly engaging in discussion with our teens is finding out we are not always right. Sometimes we are inconsistent and sometimes we expect more from them than we ask of ourselves.



Recipe Corner

Bread & Butter Pudding

Recipe from The Australian Women's Weekly. (Eating Together)

Prep and cook time: 1 hour 15 minutes. Serves 6



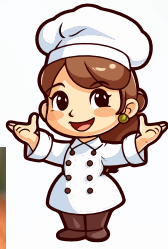
Mini Philip

Ingredients

- 6 slices white bread (270g)
- 40g butter, softened
- ½ cup (80g) sultanas
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg for custard
- 1½ cups (375ml) milk
- 2 cups (500ml) cream
- ⅓ cup (75g) caster sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 4 eggs

Method

- Preheat oven to 160°C/140°C fan-forced oven. Grease a shallow 2-litre (8-cup) ovenproof dish.
- Make the custard. Bring milk, cream, sugar and vanilla extract to boil in a medium saucepan. Beat eggs in a large bowl. Now, whisking constantly, gradually add the hot milk mixture to the egg mixture.



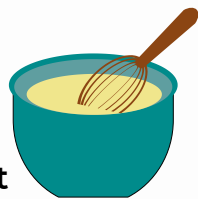
- Trim crusts from bread. Spread each slice with butter; cut into four triangles. Layer bread, overlapping, in the dish; sprinkle with sultanas. Pour custard over bread, then sprinkle with nutmeg.
- Place the ovenproof dish inside a larger baking dish; add enough boiling water to come halfway up the side of the ovenproof dish. Bake for about 45 minutes or until the pudding is set. Now, remove the ovenproof pudding dish from the large baking dish; let it stand for 5 minutes before serving. Serve dusted with sifted icing sugar.

TIP - Try substituting brioche or croissants instead of white bread, for an even more luxurious version of this classic dessert.



Smitha Ann Mathew

Yummy Tuna Dip



Do you have any guest coming home and need something to quickly put together? Well try this AMAZING dip that everyone will absolutely love!

Ingredients

- 1 can of Tuna
- ¾ of a cup of mayonnaise
- 1 white onion
- One teaspoon sugar
- ¼ Teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper



Method

- In a large bowl add all the ingredients except mayonnaise (add more of each if needed).
- Stir while adding ¼ of mayonnaise at a time.
- Stir until well mixed.

Enjoy.





“Are you OK?”

Shika Pramod



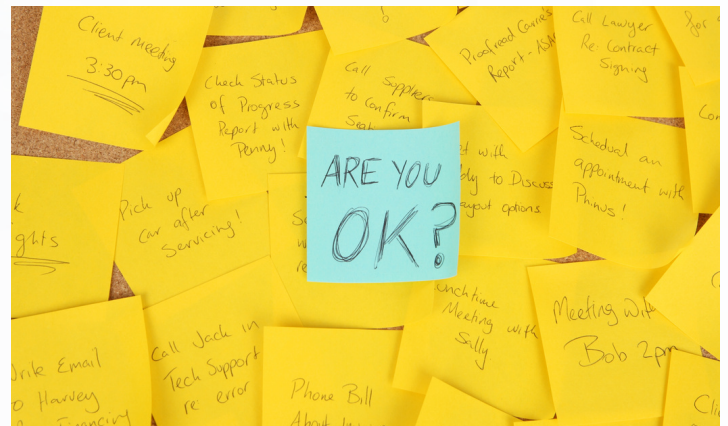
We often run into people asking us “How are you today?” Are people genuinely keen to know how I am doing or are they just being polite. More often than not, it’s merely a greeting gesture and there isn’t much more to it, possibly because people are worried about the answer and may not know how to respond.

When it comes to our friends and family, do we really know how they are doing? Sometimes it’s not easy to understand if they are struggling with something, bottling up pain, or finding it hard to make it through the day. This deep-rooted need in our community for open communication gave birth to the “R U OK” Day.

R U OK Day came into existence on the 12th September 2009, founded by Gavin Larkin following the tragic suicide of his father. Feeling helpless and consumed by grief, Gavin channelled his energy to create the RUOK program that encourages people in our communities to check in and support on others.

As Christians, it’s a day that fits naturally with our calling to care for each other. When we look around there are many families in our church/community that have battled depression, anxiety or grief. It may be the loss of a loved one, an illness, or a toxic relationship that’s making you spiral down. In such circumstances, all you need is a listening ear; a conversation that could change a life, sometimes even save one!

Checking in doesn’t have to be a planned conversation, sometimes the little nuances or slight changes, like someone inadvertently acting out of character or appearing more withdrawn could be the subtle ways in which they might actually be screaming out for help. Take the time to ask “Is everything okay?” and mean it genuinely, because, it’s not always easy for people to admit that they are struggling. Sometimes only deeper conversations may reveal the true state of their mind. Know that it’s okay “Not to be Okay”.



God has created us in His image and designed us to live in a community just as the existence of the Holy Trinity. Ecclesiastes 4:9 says “two are better than one” confirming that man must take comfort in fellow beings. Let’s offer “safe spaces” where people can pour out in confidence instead of clichés like ‘everything will be ok’, we must meet people where they’re at to render life-changing conversations.



Bitesize Emotional wellbeing - Biblical way



ANXIETY

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and mind in Christ Jesus. *Phil. 4:6-7*

TAKE ONE DAY AT A TIME AND DON'T WORRY:

Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough of its trouble of its own. *Matt. 6:34*



BE SLOW TO BECOME ANGRY:

A wise man fears the Lord and shuns evil, but a fool is hotheaded and reckless. A quick-tempered man does foolish things, and a crafty man is hated. *Prov. 14:16-17*

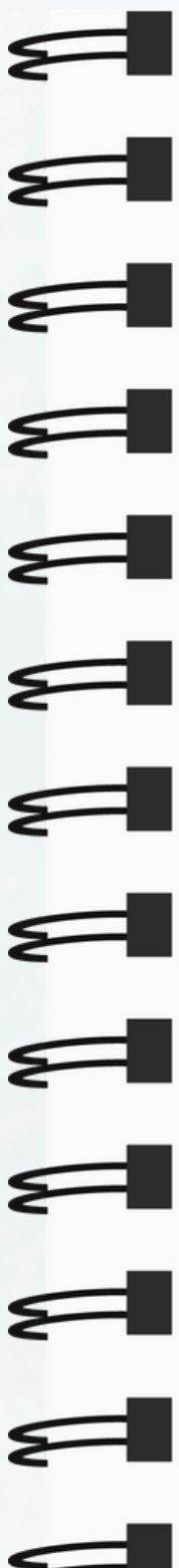
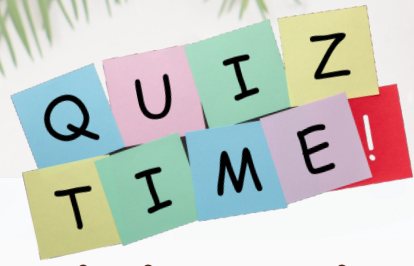
TRUST GOD EVEN MORE:

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. *Prov. 3:5-6*



Bible Brain Teaser, Anyone?

Elizabeth Philip



1. ആരെങ്കിലും മനുഷ്യന്റെ രക്തം ചൊരെയിച്ചൽ അവന്റെ രക്തം ആർ ചൊരിയിക്കും?

മനുഷ്യൻ ഉൽപതി 9:6

2. ആരാണ് അസ്ഥി ബലമുള്ള കഴുത എന്നു വിശേഷിപ്പിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നത്?

യീസാഖാൻ ഉൽപതി 49:14

3. സത്യ നഗരം എന്നു അറിയപ്പെടുന്ന സ്ഥലം ?

ജെറുസലേം. സഖ:8:3

4. ഏതാണ് ദാവീദിൽ യെഹോവ പ്രത്യക്ഷനായ പർവ്വതം?

മോറിയ 2 ദിന :3:1

5. അവൻ കൃമിക്കിരയായി പ്രാണനെ വിട്ടു , ആർ ?

ഹെരോദാവ് അപ്പൊ 12:23

6. ഇതു ദൈവത്തിന്റെ വിരൽ ആകുന്നു. ഏതു ബാധ അനുബന്ധിച്ചു പറഞ്ഞ അഭിപ്രായമാണ് ?

പേൻ പുറ 8:19

7. ആരാണ് മൂന്നുരു പേരുടെ നേരെ കൂന്തം ഓങ്ങി ഒരേ സമയം അവരെ കൊന്നു കളഞ്ഞത്?

യശോബെയാം 1 ദിന 11:11

8. ആർ ആയിരുന്നു മോശയുടെ ശരീരത്തെ കുറിച്ച് പിശാചിനോടെ തർക്കിച്ച വാദിച്ച ദൂതൻ ?

മിഖേയൽ യുദ:9



Here are some helpful tips

Sheeba Mathew



HANDY TIPS FOR SUMMER

1. Sun Protection:

Avoid peak sun hours from 10 am to 4 pm when the UV rays are strongest.

2. Swimming Safety:

Cooling off in the water is a favorite Aussie pastime. Always swim at patrolled beaches, and be mindful of flags and safety signs.

3. Bushfire Precautions:

Stay informed about local fire conditions and have a bushfire plan in place. Clear your property of debris and create a firebreak to protect your home.

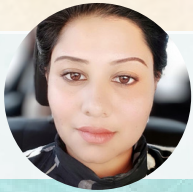
4. Road Safety for Road Trips:

Wear the right clothing and accessories. Pack a refillable water bottle and first aid kit.

5. Know the Risks and Signs of Heat Exhaustion:

Heat-related illnesses, like heat exhaustion or heat stroke, occur when the body can't properly cool itself.

By following these tips, you can enjoy the Australian summer to the fullest while staying safe and protecting yourself and your loved ones. Make this summer a memorable one for all the right reasons.



Smitha Ann Mathew



TIPS FOR FAMILY QUALITY TIME



- Family quiz time- Test your families knowledge with a fun and friendly quiz.
- Family movie night- Watch a fun family movie night on a Friday night to celebrate the end of another long week.
- Go for a walk- Get outside, watch birds, play in the park, family walks are never a bad idea!
- Do chores together- Tired of doing chores! Do it with your whole family, they'll always make thing more fun!
- Cook a meal together- Why you just eat together when you can share the pleasure of cooking the meal together with your family.

TIPS ON SELF CARE

- Read a chapter of your favourite book
- Buy yourself a small treat when feeling low
- Get your hair washed at a salon
- Take a bubble or essential oil bath
- Meet for a tea or coffee with a friend
- Play your favourite song
- Laugh so much so that your mouth hurts, as life is too short for not laughing





“Being Proactive”: The best pathway to prevent early Type 2 Diabetes

Nima Mathew



Type 2 diabetes is a condition in which blood sugars are high either due to reduced production of insulin by pancreas, or the insulin produced by the pancreas is not working effectively, or our body doesn't respond to the insulin effectively. Genetic predisposition is a major reason for Type 2 diabetes. In addition, there are several modifiable risk factors like diet, physical activity, stress, high blood pressure and body mass index can highly contribute towards developing Type 2 diabetes. Mothers who have a history of gestational diabetes are also prone to Type 2 diabetes. This chronic condition can lead to several health issues such as heart attack, stroke, kidney failure and vision impairment. In general, it is very important to comprehend that diabetes is a health problem anyone can get. It is not a sweet tooth problem

As a part of prevention of Type 2 diabetes, firstly it is vital to undergo regular screening test via the GP, ideally every three months to a year. Blood tests play a major role in detecting prediabetes or Type 2 diabetes before complications occur. Additionally, it is also important to listen to your body. Know your body and understand the signs and symptoms of Type 2 diabetes. Any variation from normal body behaviour should be acknowledged and investigated.

Diet and physical activity play a crucial role in preventing progression to Type 2 diabetes. A healthy diet should consist of half a plate of vegetables, quarter a plate of protein and quarter a plate of carbohydrates.

Carbohydrate is the component that contributes to high sugars. In saying that, completely avoiding carbohydrate is not the solution to healthy eating and achieving target blood sugar levels. Carbohydrate breaks down in your body to form glucose. This glucose is used by muscles for energy. Choosing healthy carbohydrate options and its correct portion size is the key to healthy eating. Protein and fibre consumption are also equally important.

Physical activity should be a part of everyone's life. Getting involved in any kind of physical activity which brings enjoyment, not only provides physical health benefits but also mental well-being. To ensure compliance, the major factor is to choose an exercise that fits into your life and your schedule. Try to integrate exercise into your family time or choose an exercise buddy for mutual motivation. Set realistic achievable goals, no matter how small they are.

Maintaining a balanced healthy diet, regular physical activity and undergoing regular screening tests is the key to keeping your health in check. Even though this information is commonly known to everyone, taking that proactive step is crucial. Let us take that step ahead today to make a small and meaningful change in our lives. I assure you that you will feel the positive difference, both mentally and physically.



Just For Fun!!



Sona Babu

WORD Search

Women of the Bible

Q	Z	R	A	H	A	B	C	P	J	E	I	V	N
M	A	R	T	H	A	J	Z	T	X	S	W	V	P
W	D	O	K	S	N	A	O	M	I	T	G	X	I
R	A	C	H	E	L	A	M	V	Z	H	T	J	Q
O	L	L	C	I	A	E	J	P	T	E	S	U	K
H	K	H	Y	X	F	V	V	J	Z	R	A	B	H
D	A	S	I	E	W	E	A	Z	F	B	R	V	K
E	Y	F	E	G	Z	X	S	J	S	X	A	W	R
B	X	M	D	H	L	M	J	V	K	B	H	Z	E
O	Q	I	X	A	E	A	T	R	L	R	C	Z	B
R	G	R	F	N	A	R	F	U	R	S	C	A	E
A	I	I	E	N	H	Y	Z	T	J	V	D	E	K
H	Y	A	G	A	J	O	C	H	E	B	E	D	A
N	N	M	V	H	M	S	W	N	P	L	J	U	H



- Eve
- Hannah
- Mary
- Esther
- Rahab
- Naomi
- Jochebed
- Rebekah
- Martha
- Rachel
- Leah
- Ruth
- Sarah

Can you tell ??

1. Why isn't a Fireman called a Water-man?



2. Which letter is silent in the word "Scent," the S or the C?



3. Do Twins ever realize that one of them is "Unplanned"?



4. Why is the letter W, in English, called double U? Shouldn't it be called double V?



5. Maybe Oxygen is slowly killing you and It just takes 75-100 years to fully work.



6. Every time you clean something, you just make something else dirty.



7. The word "swims" upside-down is still "swims"



8. 100 years ago everyone owned a Horse and only the rich had Cars. Today everyone has Cars and only the rich own Horses.



9. If you replace "W" with "T" in "What, Where and When", you get the answer to each of them.



Meet our New Borns



Enoch Joseph
(Jyothis & Ann)



Dion Joe
(Jomon & Sona)



Jonah Mathews
(Mithun & Joysee)



Jaxon Jibu
(Jibu & Ansu)



Meet our New Families



Blessed



Mr. Eapen Thomas (Renny)
Mrs. Elizabeth Zachariah (Veena)
Evelyn & Emma

Mr. Nithin Mathew Thomas
Mrs. Sara Susan Shaji



What is Vaping ?

Nisha Anil



"Vapes" or e-cigarettes are battery-powered devices that heat a liquid to produce vapour, a "smoky cloud" of liquid droplets. Inhaling this substance is labelled as 'vaping'. The liquid can contain nicotine, marijuana distillate or oil. E-cigarettes can be refillable or pre-filled with cartridges containing the e-liquid. The pre-filled e-cigarettes are designed for one-time use.

Why is it attractive to teens?

It is marked as safer than cigarettes, and teenagers believe that it is harmless compared to traditional cigarettes. These are packaged to look like traditional cigarettes, cigars, pipes and even USB sticks and pens. They are small and light, and are not regulated in the same way as tobacco products. They are hard to recognise, and there is no lingering smell of smoke, so it is very easy for teenagers to use in schools. They are available in multiple flavours such as watermelon, papaya, banana, maple waffle, mint, etc. Vapes are advertised as clean, harmless, fruit-flavoured products on social media and television. They are significantly cheaper than traditional cigarettes, and can be bought online. Due to the belief that it contains no smoke and tastes pleasant, teenagers are convinced that they are getting a "safer buzz".

What Are the Complications of Vaping?

- Addiction: E-cigarettes contain nicotine, a substance that is highly addictive - meaning one does not have to vape every day in order to get addicted.
- Anxiety and depression
- Becoming a smoker:
- Impotence
- Sleep problems
- Exposure to cancer-causing chemicals
- Chronic bronchitis: inflammation of the bronchial tube and causes cough. Lung damage that can be life-threatening



How do I know my child is vaping?

Talk to your children. Ensure that you are non-judgemental and maintain a two-way conversation. Look for e-cigarette supplies like cartridges or suspicious-looking items such as unfamiliar pens, USB sticks, vaping pods, and new battery chargers. Do they have any new health issues such as coughing, wheezing, nose bleeds, cold sores or mouth ulcers? New smells, fruity or sweet smells. Vaping can cause dehydration - if your child is drinking more water and has symptoms of dehydration, talk to them.

How Can Kids and Teens Quit Vaping?

Your child needs help and support to quit vaping. Explain to them about the consequences of vaping and motivate them to quit. Once they have decided to quit vaping, encourage them to write down the reasons why they want to quit. Pick up a day to stop vaping. Some people use distractions such as chewing gum or sucking lollipops, etc. Avoid negative influences and don't give up.

Get rid of all the vaping supplies. Talk to your GP or get expert advice. Smokefree.gov offers free apps and tools that can help to quit smoking or vaping. Understand the withdrawal. Provide support as a family.

Readers Choice

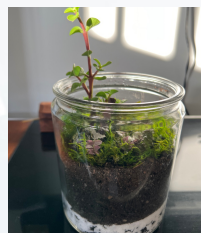


Lins Melvin

Don't throw away old glass jars (pasta sauce, coffee bottles etc). turn them into beautiful gift ideas.

Glass Jar -Terrarium

1.Add a layer of pebbles to the bottom of a glass jar/Mason jar followed by a some charcoal, then a layer of soil. Succulent soil works best.



2.Place your plants in an arrangement, bring your designer hat on. Moss will add a bit of extra dimension, personally I like them as they give a wild appearance. Put your creativity hat on !!!!

Brownies in a jar- edible gift ideas

Ingredients

- 1 litre glass jar
- funnel
- Ingredients to go into the jar (fill in this order):
 - 1/2 tsp salt
 - 1/2 tsp baking powder
 - 95g plain flour
 - 35g cocoa
 - 75g plain flour
 - 135g brown sugar
 - 150g white sugar
 - 100g milk chocolate chips
 - 100g white chocolate chips
- Add the ingredients carefully into the jar in the order listed above (starting with the salt After a layer has been added press down gently before adding the next layer.
- Simply paste the instructions on the jar



Instructions: Combine the contents of the jar with 150g melted butter and 3 beaten eggs. Bake in a 9 x 9 inch tin at 170C for 25-35 minutes.

Ann Jacob



Listen to what He says

Busy, sad or happy days
Listen to what He says

The day's tasks may never cease
Chances to relax, so slim
But He says, what we do for the
least of these
We do it unto Him

Pain of loss in different ways
Grips our heart and seems to stay
But He assures us that He cares
And on Him our burdens to lay

Some days are soaked in gloom
When no point in life we see
But then we are reminded that,
"His grace is sufficient for me"

And then there are happy days
When rejoicing fills our heart
He reminds us that neither life nor
death
Can keep us apart

So, sad days or happy
Whatever be the case
Listen to what He says



The Battle in the mind

Debbie Mathew

As parents, we need to be sensitive to our children's negative mindsets. When we constantly hear our children saying things like, "I'm not good at —", or "This — is too hard for me", or "I can't do that", we need to quickly counter their negative self-talk. The word "YET" is a great word to use when addressing negative and fixed mindsets*. Hence, when your child says a statement like "I just can't understand division/trigonometry", you can rephrase this fixed mindset statement with a growth mindset statement such as, "You can't understand division/ trigonometry YET". Respond with statements like, "I understand your frustration, but how about you try another strategy" or "How about we get some help?". Sharing your personal struggles at overcoming difficulties in academics/relationships, can also be an encouragement for your children to address their roadblocks with a bit more vigour and hope. Our goal is to help our child give their best effort, but at the same time to reaffirm our love for them regardless of their achievements or failures.

As Christian parents, we must help our children use the weapons God has given us to "pull down strongholds and cast down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God" as stated in *2 Corinthians 10:5*. We must model to our children how to "bring every thought captive to the obedience of Christ".

Hence when you hear your child make a statement like "I can't do this", show them how to pray God's word from *Philippians 4:13* which says, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me". When your child says, "This is a hopeless disaster", model to them how to cling to God's promise in *Romans 8:28* which says, "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God...".

Write God's word on a whiteboard or on a note paper and place it on the fridge or on their desk where both you and your child can see it often over the week. Think through every word in the verse and meditate on it until it goes from the head to the heart - until they can truly use the word of God as a sword to change their fixed mindset to a growth mindset.

It is hard to be a role model when we ourselves are not practising what we preach. *How are we changing our fixed mindsets about our situation, be it about our family, our relationships, our health or our finances? Are we aware of the constant negative self-talk we churn over and over in our mind daily about that hopeless situation, or that hopeless person?* We need to take our thoughts captive and bring them to the obedience of Christ. Be aware of the number of times you repeat a particular negative thought about a situation or person. So for example, if you keep thinking your situation with a certain person is never going to change for the better, then get ready to fight each time you think these negative thoughts by declaring/singing/praying *Ephesians 3:20*, "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us...". It takes practise and a lot of effort, but we just have to choose to be obedient to God, and He will give us His strength to fight the good fight and to model to our children how to walk in victory in their thought life.



Prayer Corner

Seenu Abraham

Elizabeth George

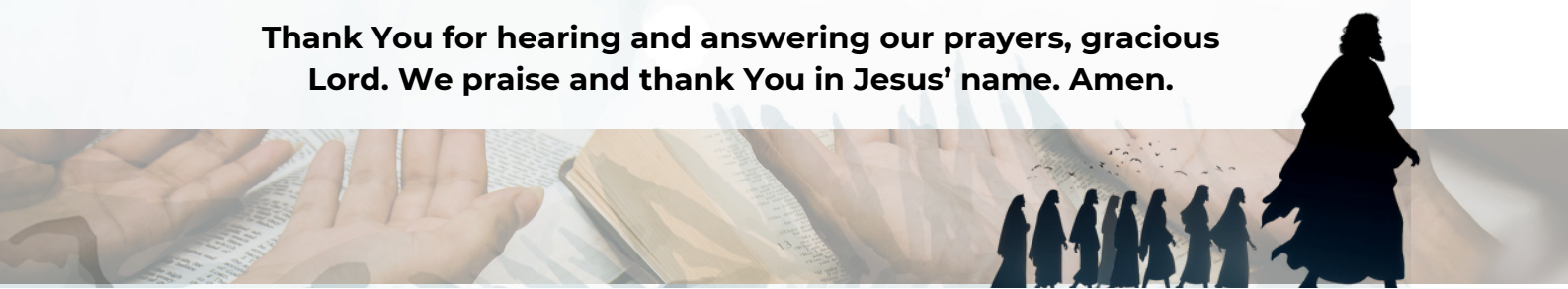
Philippians 4:6-7 says, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus".

As we come to the end of 2023, let us joyfully give thanks to our Lord for everything He has done for us. Let us also bring our prayers and petitions to Him.

Let's come together in Prayer

- We thank God for our own Marthoma Parish -Bethel Marthoma Church and organizations such as Edavaka Mission, Sevika Sangham, Youth League, Sunday School, and all office bearers.
- We pray for Achen and family, that God will bless and strengthen them to lead and support the church.
- We pray for all the members of the Bethel Marthoma Church, that God may strengthen them and bless all their needs and give them peace and favour.
- We pray for Sevika Sangham Central Committee that God will bless all the work of the committee.
- We pray for all prayer groups under our church in Sydney and other Marthoma congregations in Australia.
- We pray for spiritual awakening and revival within the churches in Sydney, and that hearts may be rekindled with passion for God.
- We pray for the children, youth, and young adults within the church that they may be rooted in faith and actively engaged in the life of the church.
- We pray for unity and harmony among different denominations and congregations within the Sydney church community and throughout the world.
- We pray for global missions and evangelism efforts, so that the gospel may reach unreached people and communities around the world.
- We pray for peace in Manipur between the Meitei and Kuki communities, and that they may know your grace and power.
- We pray for peace in Israel, Palestine and Gaza and that all hostages will be returned safely.
- We pray for refugees and displaced populations that they may find safety, stability, and hope in their circumstances.
- We pray for healing for all those who are sick and suffering from various illnesses in the community.
- We pray for support and help for poverty and hunger worldwide, that people may have access to basic needs and opportunities for a better life.
- We also pray for the opening and consecration of our new church building, that the church may be useful to society and show God's love to the community.

Thank You for hearing and answering our prayers, gracious Lord. We praise and thank You in Jesus' name. Amen.



Sevika Sangham Accomplished Initiatives

Solidarity Statement on Manipur Violence

On August 19, 2023, the Sevika Sangham took a compassionate and supportive stance by reading a solidarity statement expressing solidarity with the people of Manipur. The reading of the solidarity statement indicates a commitment to empathy, support, and communal concern for those affected by the challenging circumstances in Manipur.



Solidarity Statement on Manipur Violence

We, Bethel MarThoma Church Sydney, stand in solidarity with the people of Manipur during this time of hardship and distress. Our hearts go out to all those affected by the recent riots in the region. We condemn all acts of violence and aggression that have caused harm and suffering to innocent lives. We extend our deepest condolences to the families who have lost their loved ones and express our heartfelt sympathies to those who have been injured or displaced.

In these challenging times, we urge upon the international community, government authorities, and organisations concerned for the protection of human rights and the restoration of peace and stability in Manipur. As a Christian organisation, we believe in the power of prayer and faith in times of adversity. We will be praying for the victims, their families, and the communities affected, seeking comfort, healing, and strength for them during this trying period.

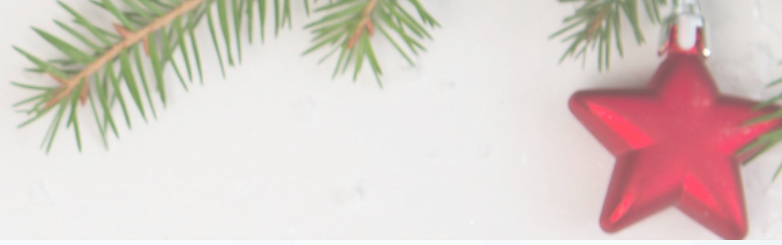
Let us come together as one compassionate community to support and uplift the people of Manipur during this difficult chapter in their lives. May the love and compassion of Christ guide us as we extend our helping hand to those in need.

Sevika Sangham Day

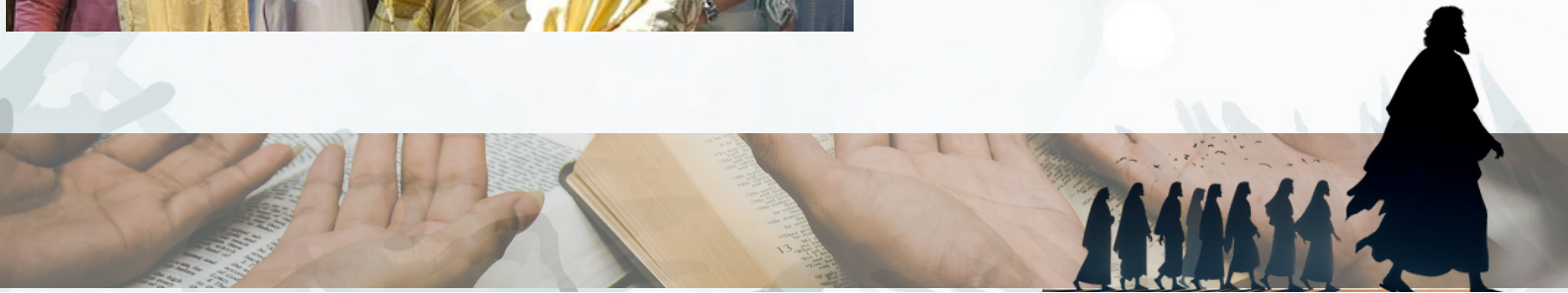
Suvishesha Sevika Sangham day was celebrated on 17 September 2023 and the theme was 'Women: The Apostles of Christ', indicating a focus on the role of women in the context of Christianity. The entire service was coordinated by SS members. Sermon was delivered by Mrs. Sumitha Rachel Kurien. All Sevika Sangam members actively joined and sang our Sevika Sangam Day song "Anayunnu Naadhaa thirusavidhathil". Post worship service Sevika Sangam team provided morning breakfast which included appam, bread, chicken stew and tea for all



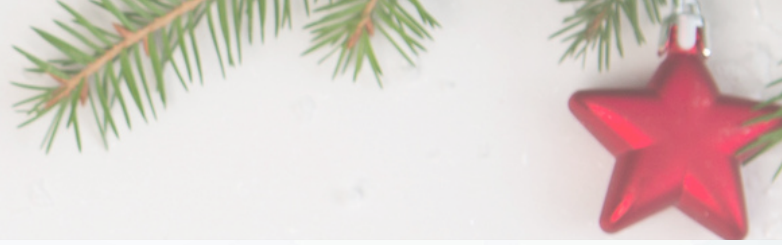
Continued...




BETHEL MAR THOMA CHURCH
SYDNEY
Celebrates
Srivishesa Sevika Sangam
Day
Women
"The Apostles of Christ"
17th September
2023
08:00am
19 Crown St. Harris Park



Continued...



Annual Food Sale

Fundraiser sales where SS members bring home-cooked delicacies to sell at church. The funds raised from the sale are dedicated to supporting charity initiatives undertaken by Suvishesha Sevika Sangam. We convey our sincere thanks for all the generous support we received for the Annual food sale conducted on 15 October 2023 by Western Sydney and Nepean Sevika Sangam members.



Monthly Bible Study

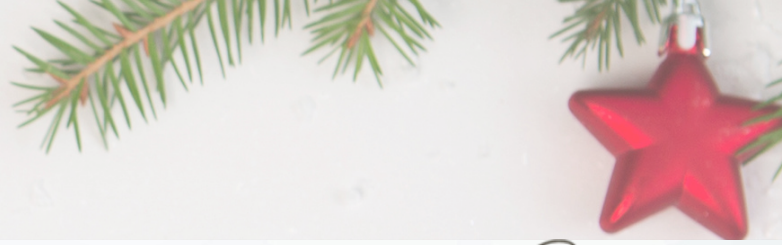
Combined monthly Bible study from Edavaka Mission and Suvishesha Sevika Sangam is conducted every second Sunday of each month via Zoom platform at 7.00pm. 'The Book of Revelation' is chosen for study and sessions are led by Vicar Rev.Eapen Mathew.

Quarterly Fasting Prayer

A combined initiative by Edavaka Mission and Suvishesha Sevika Sangam is conducted on the first Saturdays on a quarterly basis. Parish members gather at Harris Park church to pray especially for the construction of a new church building.



Gallery



Pre-Delivery Prayer Liverpool Sevika Sangham



Bankstown Sevika Sangham





Suvishesha Sevika Sangham Committee 2023-24



President
Rev. Eapen Mathew



Vice-President
Mrs. Simi Jins



Secretary
Mrs. Deepthi Jacob



Trustee
Mrs. Shiny Mariamma
Chandy

SEVIKA SANGHAM AREA REPRESENTATIVES

WESTERN SYDNEY



Mrs. Blessy M Thomas

INNER WEST



Mrs. Rebekah George

HILLS



Mrs. Aju A Kurian

LIVERPOOL



Mrs. Nisha Anil

NORTH SYDNEY



Mrs. Sinu Thomas

NEPEAN



Mrs. Elizabeth John

BANKSTOWN



Mrs. Elizabeth B George



Mrs. Sheba Elizabeth
Rijosh



Mrs. Maneesha J Kurian



Mrs. Blessy Rachel
Skaria



Mrs. Lins Melvin



Mrs. Susan Jacob



Mrs. Marin Abraham



Mrs. Aleyamma Jacob



Auditor
Mrs. Susan Tom





"I am a Proverbs 31 Woman"!

Julie & Rheana Thomas



Behind the Scenes

Special mention & thanks to
Liverpool & Bankstown Sevika Sangham Prayer Group
for volunteering to do this volume.

- Rev. Eapen Mathew
- Mrs. Simi Jins
- Mrs. Leena George
- Mrs. Manju Cherian
- Mrs. Linda Abraham
- Mrs. Roshini Thomas
- Mrs. Mini Philip
- Mrs. Smitha Ann Mathew
- Mrs. Shika Pramod
- Mrs. Lins Melvin
- Mrs. Julie Thomas & Miss Rheana Thomas
- Mrs. Elizabeth Philip
- Mrs. Sheeba Mathew
- Mrs. Nima Mathew
- Mrs. Sona Babu
- Mrs. Nisha Anil
- Mrs. Ann Jacob
- Mrs. Debbie Mathew
- Mrs. Seenu Abraham
- Mrs. Elizabeth George

Design Team

Mrs. Christina Anil & Mrs. Seenu Abraham

MERRY
CHRISTMAS
AND
HAPPY
NEW YEAR

This newsletter is intended for internal circulation among
the members of Bethel Mar Thoma Church, Sydney.