

A HAPPY
NEW YEAR



Carmel Mar Thoma Church Liverpool United Kingdom



From the Vicar's Desk....

January: 2010

Issue No : 49

EBEN-EZER, THUS FAR THE LORD HAS HELPED US. 1Sam. 7:12

Dearly Beloved in Christ,

We are saying goodbye to the year 2009, eagerly welcoming the New Year (2010) with lots of expectations. We are at a transition point, a junction where we have to look backward and forward.

The great Prophet Samuel brought the people of Israel to a junction point, He took a stone and placed it and said "**thus far the lord has helped us**" - **EBEN-EZER**. This is the point where he took a stop to look back. He could see both the good and bad times of the life from the past to the present. (read 1 Sam. 7:3-12)

In v.3 he points out to the Israelites of their deviation from the true living God. It is not that they had completely forsaken their God but they in cooperated the idols of Baal in their worship. Why it happened so?

1. Priority for the existence.

The Israelites found it difficult to worship the one and only one God in a polytheistic society. To be comfortable they had to make some compromises and yield to the social pressures of their environment. The rich heritage of faith was interpreted according to their conveniences. The compromises may have made them much more acceptable in that society. Compromises are not adaptability. In adaptability one need not compromise with the basic faith, value systems and ethics. We too are victims of compromises in our present situation for the sake of our existence. Like the Israelites, our existence is more important for us than our Creator.

We too incorporate the Baal idols in our daily life. The idols are the priorities that we set in our life in relation to God. We are more conscious of keeping our social idols higher in our life, our job, education, family, children, investments, and social status ...the list will be never ending. When all these take a place above God, then we find less time for worship, devotion and fellowship with God and his creation. In other words we become more and more selfish. This is a new form of Baal worship in our life. In this circumstance what should we do?

2. Resetting the priority for existence

v. 5. At the prophecy of Samuel, the Israelites realised how far they had gone away from God in their life. They repented and fasted. They opened themselves before God personally and as a group. This helped them to identify the idols in their worship. It helped them to change their life style, their worship style and their whole being. Thus their whole priorities where reset. They held fast to their true Redeemer, the living God, the Creator and the Sustainer. They experienced the Grace of the Lord more powerfully... It is high time for us too, to realise our distance from God. Let us open our hearts before him. Know what our true self is. Seek his pardon. Reset our priorities in life. Give first place to God in everything.

3. Reaffirming the hand of the lord.

After the victory when Samuel said "**Thus far God helped us**", **EBEN-EZER**, his words had great meaning.

It was the statement of acknowledgement of the failure (worshipping idols)

A statement of better understanding of self (repentance)

A statement of remembrance of the good and bad days (thanks giving)

The Israelites had both happy days, and the days of pain. They had a deep pain of humiliation, defeat, loss etc.

As we are welcoming the New Year we too have hurt feelings, sorrows, sufferings along with joy and happiness. Let us look back and identify the idols in our life and repent. Like Samuel, let us look into the pains and struggles with the eye of faith and see how He has guided us **thus far** in our life. All our struggles and pains have strengthened us to be strong and courageous. It was the pain and struggle that helped us to see the Glory of God and experience his care and love more meaningfully. It is a source of hope and strength to welcome the New Year optimistically. It will surely help us to shine in the darkness and face our life with added strength and confidence. It is the struggle, which helps us to see the hand of the lord in our life.

LET US TOGETHER SAY "THUS FAR THE LORD HAS HELPED US" EBEN-EZER.

Let us grow in fellowship with God and with each other through our worships in the New Year

Wish you all a happy and meaningful New Year.

In the love of Christ,

Rev. Varghese Mathew

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Wedding Anniversaries

13 th January	:	Joseph John & Molly Joseph
16 th January	:	Daniel P.J & Elizabeth Daniel
29 th January	:	Geevarghese John & Jessy Geevarghese


Birthdays:

2 nd Tanya Liz Jacob	12 th Ann Marry Varghese
6 th Anu Suresh George	13 th Elcy Varghese
7 th Crystal Benedict	15 th Alisha Benz
11 th Mathai Abraham T (Saji)	15 th Aiden Philip Abraham
	18 th Anila Benz

Schedule of Worship for the Month of January 2010

Saturday 2 nd January 2010 3.00 pm H.C. Service in Malayalam... L I : Isai : 56 .1 -18 Mathai Abraham L II: Acts :17:16-31 Julie Abraham	Saturday 9 th January 2010 4.00pm Ordinary worship in Mal... L-1 Prove: 23: 19-34 Jermiah Daniel L-II Ephe: 5: 1 -11 Anu S. George
Saturday 16 th January 2010 4.00 pm .H.C Service in Mal L – I : Isai: 60: 1- 7 Geevarghese John L–II Ephe 4: 1-8 Jessy Geevarghese	Saturday 23 rd January 2010 4.00 pm Ordinary Service In Mal. L – I : Isai: 42: 1-7 Ashwin Varghese L – II: 2 Timo:2:1-13 Anju Varghese
Saturday 30 th January 2010 4.00 pm H.C Service in English L-1 Gen:31: 1-5 Dennis C. Daniel L-2 James: 3: 1-12 Lynette Aan Mathew	YOUTH MEETING 16/01/2010 The youth's meeting will be held on Saturday 16 th January 2010 @ 2.30.pm at St. Pauls Church Fazarkerly

Prayer Meetings will be held at the residences of the following persons

Sunday 3 rd Jan 2010 @ 5 pm Dr. Giju Jacob George 25 Millfield Neston, Cheshire CH64 3TF	Sunday 10 th Jan 2010 @ 5 pm Mr. Vinu Joseph 125 Capricorn Crescent Liverpool L14 9LR
Sunday 17 th January 2010 @ 5 pm Mr. Abraham Philip (Doye) Fazarkerly Memorial Hall, 167, Lower Lane, L9 7AD 0151 2225836	Sunday 24 th January 2010 @ 5pm Mr. Geevarghese John 32, Davidson Road, Liverpool, L13 2BT 0151 2915852
 Baptism: Nelda Vinu Daughter of Mr. Vinu Joseph & Leny was baptised on 12 th December 2009 at Kereeth MTC. Karavaloor.	Sevika Sangam Meeting 20/01/2010 The Sevika Sangam Meeting will be held on 20/01/2010 @ 6.00pm at the residence of Mrs. Jessy Geevarghese!!

No Prayer meeting on Sunday 31st January 2010 ..due to Outreach Service !!

For more details please visit www.carmelmarthomachurch.org.uk