



THE OTTAWA MAR THOMA CHURCH

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2004

INTRODUCTION:

Let us thank God for all His mercies and guidance throughout the past year. While we as a Church enjoyed freedom and comfort in this part of the world, for many people in and around our motherland, the year ended with one of the worst natural disasters in the form of tsunami that the current population has ever seen in their lifetime. In times like these, we need to draw closer to God. We can find comfort in the words of Psalm 46: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though its waters roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with its swelling" (Psalm 46:1-3)

WORSHIP SERVICES AND PRAYER MEETING:

During the reporting year we had one Episcopal visit by our Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Thirumeni. Our former vicar Rev. T.S Thomas conducted 2 services this year before his transfer back to India and our new Vicar Rev. Mathew M. Thomas conducted 2 more services this year. An average of 80 people attended the services and majority of them took part in the Holy Communion.

As in the previous years we had regular monthly prayer meetings on Sundays and on Saturdays during Achan's visit. Let me thank all families who have volunteered to host our Thirumeni and Achan & family during their visits, as well as opening their homes for prayer meetings.

MEMBERSHIP:

We currently have 25 registered members in our church. This year, two new babies were born to our Church members. A baby girl named Ashley Abraham was born to Biju and Jothi Abraham and a baby girl named Sierra Elyse Mathew was born to Byju & Debie Mathew. Congratulations to both of these families as well as those members of our sister churches who were also recently blessed with bundles of joy, in the form of little babies.

This year, Ashley, daughter of Biju & Joti Abraham was baptized and brought to the fellowship of the Church by Rt. Rev. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Episcopa. May God bless the child and guide her parents to help her grow up in the Christian spirit and values.

FAREWELL MEETING FOR REV. T.S THOMAS:

Following the Qurbana Service on March 14, 2004, a short sent off program was organized to bid farewell to our former Vicar Rev. T.S Thomas, who received a transfer back to Puna in India. The short program included solo songs and speeches by members of our church as well as our sister churches. I want to take this opportunity to appreciate Rev. T.S Thomas Achen for his leadership and his services rendered to this Church family during his three year tenure as the Vicar of our church. We wish Achen and family all the blessings in the future.

After a few months interval awaiting the arrival of our new Vicar Rev. Mathew M. Thomas, on August 08, 2004, we gathered together again to celebrate the first Holy Communion service offered by our new Achen. With much delight we welcomed Achen, Kochamma and their two children to our Church family and we appreciate having the opportunity to worship our Saviour, under Achen's spiritual leadership.

EPISCOPAL VISIT:

This year, for the first time in our history, we had the privilege of hosting our Diocesan Bishop on Christmas day. Thirumeni arrived here on December 24th and celebrated the Holy Communion Service on Christmas day at St. Mark's Anglican Church. The service was well attended by many people, despite the busy nature of the day. We like to extend our sincere thanks to Thirumeni in choosing to spend his Christmas day with us this year. As a token of our appreciation, in the Christmas spirit, we presented Thirumeni with a painting which depicts a uniquely Canadian theme, a picture of the Canadian Parliament with a formation of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in front of the building.

ECUMENICAL CHRISTMAS CAROL PROGRAM:

This year again, our Church organized the second annual Ecumenical Christmas Carol program. The program was conducted on the Christmas day after the Christmas Qurbana service. Accepting our invitation, several members of our sister churches and other friends set aside many of their regular Christmas day commitments and attended the program to make it a huge success. It was a blessed evening of Carol singing and Bible reading, well received by a large audience. Rt. Rev. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Thirumeni delivered the Christmas message and reminded us that the true spirit of Christmas comes to life through sharing and giving and when we share what we have with others who are less fortunate.

On behalf of the Church let me thank all the participants who presented programs for the event. The event ended with a pot-luck Christmas Dinner coordinated by Mrs. Suzy John, Mrs. Leela Varki, Mrs. Anja Kandathil and Mrs. Elizabeth George. It is my sincere hope

that we will continue this tradition every year to come together as a community to praise our Lord for all His blessings throughout the year.

TSUNAMI DISASTER RELIEF FUND:

On December 26, 2004, the world was awakened to the horrific details of the tsunami natural disaster that claimed the lives of more than 225 thousand people and deprived the lives of many more, including thousands of victims in our native land. That terrible tragedy was a reminder not only of the powerful forces of nature, but also how vulnerable we are as people on this earth.

On December 27, 2004, in response to this natural calamity of biblical proportion, Mar Thoma Metropolitan has called upon all Marthomites and well wishers to help support the tsunami victims by sending financial support to the Mar Thoma Natural Calamities Fund. I am pleased to report to you that the members of our church and our sister churches has generously responded to this initiative and we have send a total contribution of \$1200.00 to the Mar Thoma Sabha office in Thiruvalla.

OFFICE BEARERS FOR 2004:

The office bearers for the year 2004 were elected during the General body meeting held on February 15, 2004, at St. Mark's Anglican Church. Rev. T.S. Thomas presided over the meeting. The following members were elected:

- Vice-President : Mr. John M. John
- Secretary : Mr. Reji Alex
- Treasurer : Mr. John Zachariah
- Accountant : Mr. Paul Kuruvilla
- Lay-leader : Mr. Mani P. Mani
- Diocesan Assembly Member : Dr. John Samuel

- Auditor : Mr. C.O. Thomas
- Food Coordinator(s) : Mrs. Suzy John & Mrs. Anja Kandathil

We sincerely thank all the office bearers for the year 2004, for their time and effort expended for the nourishment of our parish.

An Annual General Body meeting was held on March 14, 2004, at St. Mark's Anglican Church. Rev. T.S. Thomas presided over the meeting. The annual report was read by Secretary Reji Alex and the audited financial statement for the year 2003 was presented by Treasurer John Zachariah and both were approved during the meeting.

OFFICE BEARERS FOR 2005:

A General body meeting to elect the office bearers for the year 2005 was held on October 17, 2004, at St. Mark's Anglican Church. Rev. Mathew M. Thomas presided over the meeting. The following office bearers were elected:

- Vice President : Mr. John M. John
- Secretary : Mr. Reji Alex
- Treasurer : Mr. Paul Kuruvilla
- Accountant : Mr. Mathew Thomas
- Lay-leader : Mr. John K. John
- Sevika Sangam Secretary : Mrs. Suzy John

- Auditor : Dr. John Samuel
- Food Coordinator(s) : Mrs. Suzy John & Mrs. Leela Varki

Let us pray that God's guidance be upon all these newly elected members as they carry out their responsibilities on behalf of the church.

OTHER MATTERS AND CONCLUSION:

At this moment, we as a church remembers Mr. Abraham Tharakan, a close friend of many of the members of this church and a fine citizen of this community, who passed away at an young age of 57, while relaxing with his friends from the community. Many of our church members attended Mr. Tharakan's funeral. On behalf of the church, we have placed a flower bouquet for the funeral, to express our condolence to the bereaved family.

On behalf of the Church, let me express our sincere appreciation and gratitude to the members and friends of our sister parishes for their regular attendance and support for our Qurbana Services and other functions throughout the reporting year. Church services always ended with an after-service reception or dinner which gave us an opportunity for further fellowship. I would like to express our gratitude to our food coordinators Mrs. Suzy John and Mrs. Anja Kandathil, and all those who voluntarily prepared those meals and refreshments.

We, the members of the Ottawa Mar Thoma Church would like to extend our sincere thanks to St. Mark's Anglican Church for allowing us to use their sanctuary and other facilities for conducting all of our programs throughout the year.

On behalf of the Executive Committee:

Mr. Reji Alex
Secretary.

February 20, 2005