



THE OTTAWA MAR THOMA CHURCH

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2009

INTRODUCTION:

The year 2009 started with much uncertainty around the world, with nations at the verge of financial meltdown, countries in deep recession and people experiencing insecurity about their future. As a church, although our members were mostly unaffected by those difficulties, this year we have endured the loss of two of our senior church members, which further reminded us that our life in this earth is very delicate like the flowers on a field, and that every moment of our life is a gift from our Lord and Saviour. Therefore, as a church let us continue to remain true to our faith, humble in our actions, generous in our offerings and be thankful to God for all His blessings.

WORSHIP SERVICES AND PRAYER MEETING:

During the reporting year we had 5 Holy Communion services including one service officiated by our Diocesan Episcopa and another one by the Vicar of The Canadian Mar Thoma Church, Markham. Our Vicar Rev. Manoj M. Zacharia continued to provide the spiritual guidance. As a Parish, we take this opportunity to acknowledge the many sacrifices and travel amendments that Achen had to make this year to meet the various pastoral needs of our members, while trying to balance the demands of his life as a student with the pastoral responsibilities of three other parishes. I like to express our sincere thanks to Achen and Kochamma for their commitment to this Church.

For our services, an average of 60 people was in attendance and majority of them took part in the Holy Communion. Our Quarbana services were conducted generally on the second Sunday of every alternate month. We also had prayer meetings on Saturdays during Achen's visit. Our sincere thanks to St. Mark's Anglican Church for allowing us to use their Sanctuary and other facilities for conducting worship services and all of our other programs throughout the year.

Church services always ended with refreshments or dinner which gave us an opportunity for further fellowship. I would like to express our thanks to the refreshment coordinators Mrs. Suzy John, Mrs. Asha Alex & Mrs. Shobha Koshy and also to the members who contributed to those meals and refreshments.

EPISCOPAL VISIT:

This year, Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius Episcopa, our newly appointed Diocesan Bishop of the Mar Thoma Diocese of North America and Europe visited the Parish on June 19, 2009. During the visit, Thirumeni conducted Holy Qurbana service, assisted by our Vicar and by Rev. Brian Kauk, the vicar of the St. Mark's Anglican Church, Ottawa.

Thirumeni being the first vicar of the Ottawa parish who established the church in 1982, this visit was also a reunion visit for Thirumeni and the senior church members. To mark the occasion, a short felicitation was organized to officially welcome Thirumeni to the Church. The program was well attended by a large audience including members from various Malayali Church denominations and out of town guests. Ms. Suja Thomas started the program by reading Psalm 100. Vice President Dr. John Zachariah delivered the welcome speech. Invited guests Rev. Brian Kauk, Catholic Priest Father Sebastian Payyapilly and Mr. Wingson Karavally of St. Thomas Orthodox Church, Ottawa delivered felicitation messages. Secretary Mr. Reji Alex reported on the current status and activities of the Church. Church members Mr. Mathew Thomas and Mrs. Aleyamma Samuel recounted on Thirumeni's accomplishments and service to the parish.

Bishop Theodosius delivered a warm speech and delivered a sermon based on John 21:15 - Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?" - emphasizing that as true followers we should faithfully adhere to the precepts of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and live accordingly.

Members of the church Dr. Philip Mathew and late Mr. John M. John jointly presented a gift to Thirumeni on behalf of the Church. The program ended with a vote of thanks by Treasurer Mr. Rajiv Thomas, followed by a Dinner at the reception hall.

FIRST COMMUNION:

Five young members of our Church - Nita Koshy, Sarah Zachariah, Priya Alex, Shruthi Mathew and Sangeeth Mathew - received their First Communion from Thirumeni. Let us pray that these young children will be able to lead a life worthy of the body and blood of Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, which they have experienced by partaking in the Holy Communion.

PULPIT EXCHANGE

(On August 30, 2009) Rev. A. Abraham, vicar of the Canadian Mar Thoma Church, Markham conducted Holy Communion service for our congregation, while our Achen conducted Holy Communion service at the Canadian Mar Thoma Church, in accordance with the pulpit exchange program organized by various Mar Thoma churches.

MEMBERSHIP:

Ms. Sanjna Thomas from Toronto became a new member of our parish last year bringing the total membership to 21 registered members.

ANNUAL GENERAL BODY MEETINGS:

An Annual General Body meeting was held on February 22, 2009, at St. Mark's Anglican Church. Rev. Manoj M. Zacharia presided over the meeting. Secretary Mr. Reji Alex presented the Annual Report and Treasurer Mr. Paul Kuruvilla presented the annual accounts for the year 2008 and the budget for the year 2009. Both were approved unanimously during the meeting.

❖ Vice-President	: Dr. John Zachariah
❖ Secretary	: Mr. Reji Alex
❖ Treasurer	: Mr. Rajiv Thomas
❖ Accountant	: Mrs. Mercy Thomas
❖ Lay-leader(s)	: Mr. John Kompithra, Mr. Mani P. Mani
❖ Sevika Sangam Secretary	: Mrs. Suzy John
❖ Auditors	: Mr. John M. John, Mr. Koshy Oommen

A general body meeting held on December 26, 2009, at St. Mark's Anglican Church, presided over by Rev. Manoj M. Zacharia unanimously elected the following Executive Committee members for the year 2009.

❖ Vice-President	: Mrs. Aleyamma Samuel
❖ Secretary	: Mr. Reji Alex
❖ Treasurer	: Mrs. Sobha Koshy
❖ Accountant	: Mrs. Susha Zachariah
❖ Lay-leader(s)	: Mr. John Kompithra, Mr. Mani P. Mani
❖ Sevika Sangam Secretary	: Mrs. Suzy John
❖ Auditors	: Dr. Philip Mathew, Mrs. Asha Alex

Mrs. Suzy John and Mrs. Leela Varki were named as the Refreshment coordinators.

Dr. John Samuel continues as the member of the Prathinidhi Mandalam and Mr. Mathew Thomas represents the church at the Diocesan Assembly.

We sincerely thank all the outgoing office bearers for their time and commitment throughout the year. Let us pray that God's guidance be upon the newly elected members as they carry out their responsibilities on behalf of the church.

ECUMENICAL CHRISTMAS CAROL PROGRAM:

On December 26, 2009 we organized our seventh Annual Ecumenical Christmas Carol program. Members of the three Malayali churches embraced this opportunity to come together as a church family to praise God and sing Carol songs at the end of another eventful year. Well over 140 people attended the program making the evening enjoyable for everyone.

On behalf of the Church, I like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the cooperation of the Orthodox Church and Catholic Church members. Let us also appreciate all those who took the time to present various programs that evening.

As we resolve to continue this tradition in future years, we must also look at ways to enhance the true spirit of the Christmas by bringing in more Carol songs & other programs keeping in tradition with the theme of the Christmas Carol.

The program ended with a special Christmas Dinner arranged by Mrs. Suzy John and family in loving memory of their dear Dad. Dessert for the Christmas Dinner was coordinated by Mrs. Leela Varki, Mrs. Elizabeth Kuruvila and Mrs. Thresiyamma Luiz.

WEDDING

This year, members of our church Benson John, son of Late Mr. John M. John and Mrs. Suzy John and Sanjna Thomas, daughter of Mr. Thomas Mathai & Mrs. Elizabeth Mathai, Mississauga were joined in Holy Matrimony on August 8, 2009 by our vicar, at Toronto. As parish, we congratulate the newly weds and we pray that God Almighty shower them with blessings in their married life.

CONDOLENCES

This year, two members of our church completed their journey in this world and entered in to the presence of the Heavenly Father. Mrs. Mercy Thomas passed away on May 03, 2009 and Mr. John M. John passed away on October 24, 2009. Both were committed members of the Ottawa Mar Thoma church and dearly revered friends to the church members.

Mrs. Mercy Thomas along with her late husband Mr. C.O Thomas have been active members of this church for many years and have served the church in various roles. She was the Accountant for year 2009. Her love and support will always be cherished by the members of this church and she will be greatly missed.

Mr. John M. John has left an indelible mark in the history of this Parish as one of the founding members of this Parish. Mr. John took leadership role in the development of this church during the early stages of its inception and has been part of the Executive committee for many years. He served the church through Executive committee roles, as

the Treasurer various times and in recent years as the Vice President of the church and as an Auditor in 2009. Johnsir will also be greatly missed by this church.

Members of the Ottawa Mar Thoma Church express our deepest condolences to the bereaved families of Mrs. Thomas and Mr. John. On behalf of the Mar Thoma Church, flower bouquets were placed at the funeral home and an honorarium donation was made to Heart and Stroke Foundation and Ottawa Heart Institute respectively.

WEBSITE

In order to provide a web presence for our church in today's internet based world, this year we have also launched a website for the Church. The website will serve as a portal for our members and visitors on information regarding the parish, its activities and some information about the Mar Thoma church.

FINANCE

I am pleased to report that, as in previous years, our members and well wishers made sufficient contributions to meet the expenses of the Parish. However it is important to remember that our expenses have increased over the years and we encourage members to continue their generous cooperation. With an opening balance of \$10,666.63 and total revenue of \$15,104.30, we closed the accounts of the reporting year with a balance of \$8365.94 carried over to 2010.

DONATIONS

This year Ottawa Mar Thoma Church donated to Carmel Mandiram in Ayroor, Jubilee Mandiram, Mar Thoma Theological Seminary and towards an educational support fund for Jinu James, a nursing student.

CONCLUSION:

As we close the chapters on 2009, let us be thankful to God for all His blessings in the past and let us seek His guidance to continue our union as a true Christian community in the years ahead.

I want to thank each of you for your contribution to this Parish and may God keep you all in good health and bless each one of you.

Mr. Reji Alex

Secretary.

Feb 14, 2010