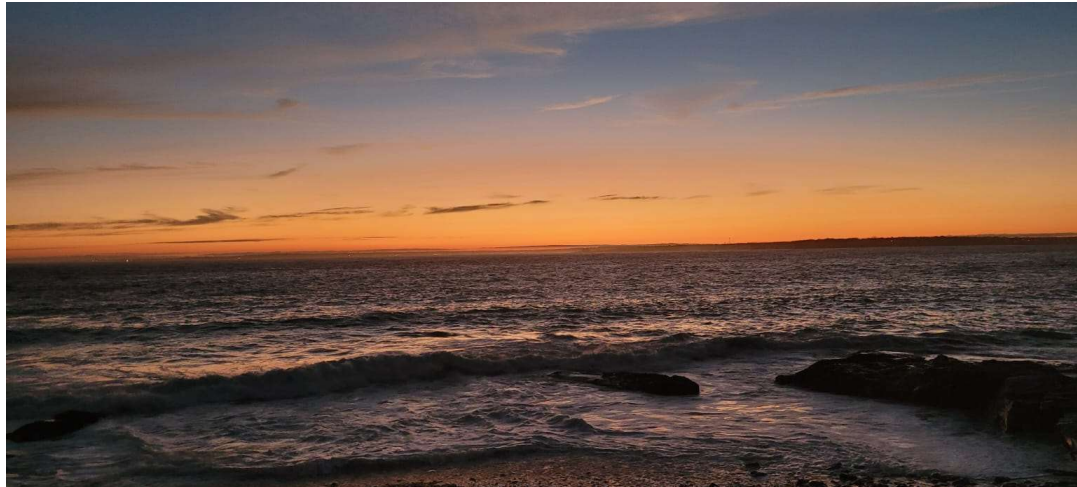




# Carmel Times

*A Teens Fellowship Initiative*

CARMEL MAR THOMA CHURCH  
BOSTON



## Today I choose Joy...

Short story series on the fruits of the Spirit

----- Story and Illustrations by Ziva Thomas

“These things I have spoken to you that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.” *John 15:11*

Back to school shopping... a bittersweet experience - you still want to enjoy summer vacation, yet you want to see your school friends. I needed a new pair of branded high-top sneakers. I went to the only store that I knew would have them. But wait... they only had them in purple? That didn't exactly fit into my neutral color aesthetic. Oh well, purple branded high-tops were better than none. I paid with a gift card that a generous aunt had given me for Christmas.

I headed outside, dejected, thinking that the universe was against me. Right outside the bookstore were local musicians who were affected by the pandemic, entertaining the weekend shoppers for a few pennies. I saw a young girl sitting on the ground, wrapped in a blanket though it was a 90-degree day. That's odd, I thought. She was enjoying the music, but she looked unkempt and tired. Next to her, was a sign that said



I gave her a dollar and asked, “Are you okay? Have you eaten anything?” I was headed next to Starbucks and figured I could get her some food.

“Not since yesterday”, she said. I could see the exhaustion in her eyes. Her money jar tipped over. While trying to pick it up, her blanket shifted. And then I saw.

This young girl who was smiling and singing along to the music, had bandaged feet that were bleeding and swollen. “What happened?” I asked her. She sighed. “Well, my shoes don't fit anymore. We were evicted and my mom died shortly after. I must walk all day until I can get into a shelter home at night. Bandaging them up helps with the pain. I've gotten used to it. Thank you so much for your kindness”



I looked at her feet and then at the new shoes that I bought that I hated. Why is she happy with injured and bleeding feet while here I am, perfectly healthy and complaining about the color of a fancy shoe? When did I become this shallow?

“Here, you need this more than me”. I handed her the bag from the shoe store.

### Foreword by patron

My dear friends,

This is our fourth edition of the Carmel Times, and it is amazing how God has brought us this far. It was a dream to provide the children of Carmel Mar Thoma church a platform to showcase their literary and art skills and to use this as a medium to spread the Word of our Lord within our community. But how do you go about doing this? What does it mean to bring out a publication? Will the children come forward to participate in this? Will anyone read this? Will we have time or resources to pursue this? Do we have the creativity and talent to do something like this? There were many questions in my mind, and I knew this was an ambitious undertaking. But with our Achen's guidance and counsel, this became a reality on March 20, 2022. Thirteen children have contributed to making these four Volumes possible. Not a single child said “No” or “Maybe” or “I will think about it”, and they have been prompt in returning their work at the given time. I am very proud to say that this has mostly been their own work. There has been help from well-wishers in editing and proof reading.

Many a times we feel like we cannot make a difference for God. Mother Teresa said, “God did not call me to be successful, he called me to be faithful.” There is profound truth in that statement. God isn't calling any of us to be successful in our work or our witness. He's simply calling us to be faithful. And faithful means living out our Christ-centered values consistently every day in our communities and trusting God for the outcome.

We should think of the apostle Peter when we need to be reminded that God can use anybody to accomplish his purposes. Peter was truly unqualified to lead the early church—uneducated, impulsive and with little relevant experience. But Jesus chose Peter anyway. What Peter had to offer was his passion and his availability.

God wants to use you and me to demonstrate His love and character to this watching world. So, let's march ahead with the job entrusted in us and trust that God has our back. Let us make ourselves available to be used by Him.

Warm Wishes for cold weather...

*Sheba Oommen*





Photographs by Sarah Oommen

## Sunday School News & Events

World Sunday School Day Nov 6th

### Next Carmel Times Issue – Nov

If you would like to be part of this team or contribute to this publication, whether it be a story, article, poem, drawing/illustration/ graphics, please send your contributions to [cmtcprintcrew@gmail.com](mailto:cmtcprintcrew@gmail.com)

Welcome our new Co-Patron  
Betsy Jacob

## Story Continued...

“Oh, my goodness. Are you sure? Those look very expensive. You don't have to.”

“Yes, I must. Don't worry about it.” I said, smiling.

As I handed her the box, I saw her eyes tear up with gratitude. Mine did too... with JOY. The joy of giving. The joy of helping. The joy of sharing His love. The shoes fit her perfectly. It was meant to be. “May God bless you”, she said.

“He just did”, I replied.

A few weeks ago, my little sister and her friends sang an old favorite Sunday school song at the Talent competition - I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart!

The lyrics reminded me that joy is not just external happiness. Rather, a deeper sense of contentment. That comes from knowing Jesus.

The Bible tells us that the Kingdom of God is founded on peace, righteousness, and joy in the Spirit (Romans 14:17). Because of Jesus, we have the hope of heaven, the promise of peace and the gift of salvation.

Do we need a better reason to be filled with joy? Let us REJOICE in His promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of age." Amen.



Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. *Romans 12:12*

## Editorial Board

Sheba Oommen  
Betsy Jacob  
Andrew Varughese  
Jairah Philips  
Sarah Oommen



## Jokes Corner

Q. The best vitamin for a Christian is

A. B1

Q. What is the best way to study the Bible?

A. You Luke into it.



# Voice from the Past

----- BY HANNAH VARGHESE



Huldah Buntain  
November 21, 1921 – September 5, 1997

There have been countless Christian missionaries in India, all of which have made a great impact on our society. Some are more commonly known such as Mother Teresa, while others are not. There is one Christian missionary however, that stood out to me. Her name is Huldah Buntain. Huldah was born on November 21, 1921, to her parents Gwendolyn Monroe and Rev. Alex Monroe. She was raised in Tokyo, Japan until the age of 5 when she moved to Vancouver, Canada. She was a smart girl who was good at sports and participated in musicals.

From a young age she was able to see how difficult and challenging ministry was for her family, and she had no desire to pick that as her life-long career. However, this all changed one day when Huldah happened to be at church. The subject was spreading God's word with people around the world. The evangelist who had spoken at the service (Mark Buntain) and Huldah ended up falling in love with one another. They tied the knot and married in the year 1944. Huldah was young (20 years old) at the time.

They were itinerant evangelists who ministered in churches all around North America. 9 whole years of their marriage was spent doing this. Their family and friends let them stay with them, and they also stayed in their car and nearby hotels. They welcomed their first child Bonnie in 1953. A year later, they took their ministry to Kolkatta, India.

They were only supposed to be there for one year. They stayed for much longer than anticipated. They decided to adopt a second daughter (Maureen) in 1977. Mark sadly passed in 1989. This left only Huldah to continue their ministry. Before Mark's death, they were able to start 70 preaching points in Kolkatta, India. After he passed, Huldah kept ministering and her ministries are currently made up of many hundreds of schools, 700+ churches, and many primary, secondary, and vocational schools (200 of them in exact.).

It also consisted of schools for kids that fall into the more advanced category, many programs that were able to feed loads of families in need, various children's homes, various clinics, and one hospital that has taken care of 2.2 million different patients. 40% of those patients got charitable care and didn't have to worry about paying for their visit.

An honorary doctorate was given to the very deserving Huldah for the amazing things she had done for the medical industry throughout Kolkatta and the surrounding areas. She spent the rest of her time speaking all over the world, inspiring people, and fundraising. At a certain point she could no longer travel as often, so she began to write emails, make calls to others, and find any possible way to continue helping other people. At the age of 96 she was invited to a golf fundraiser for compassionate healthcare ministry. She helped raise funds there.

Huldah had become one of the most influential Christian missionaries to serve in India. Huldah unfortunately passed away just a few weeks after this. Her sweet, loving personality however, will never be forgotten. Her legacy lives on as her three girls, their partners, her grandsons, their partners, her great grandkids, and of course the people in India continue to help others in need.

## Filled with Joy - Balloon Experiment

**Supplies:** Balloons, Sharpie, Baking Soda, Vinegar, Plastic Water Bottle, Tablespoon, Funnel (Optional, but very helpful), Safety Glasses

### Instructions:

1. Write your name on the balloon with a Sharpie (The balloon represents you).
2. Fill empty water bottle about a 1/3 of the way with vinegar (Represents the Holy Spirit at work in their heart).
3. Insert the funnel into the opening of the balloon, scoop a spoonful of baking soda into the funnel to fill the inside of the balloon (Represents spending time getting to know God. What are the ways we can do this—Reading His Word, Prayer, Worship, etc.)
4. Attach the balloon to the plastic water bottle filled with vinegar.
5. Slowly lift the balloon and watch what happens next (The Holy Spirit fills us with joy when we spend time getting to know God. Joy comes from being with God which means you can be joyful even in unhappy moments).



# ChitChat Room

Conversation with our Church Choir Director Christy Mathew

----- By Nathan Varughese & Sarah Oommen

**Sarah:** What is it like to be a choir director?

*Christy Uncle:* It's fun! It's fun because you must keep inspiring people on a weekly basis because it's a huge commitment to show up every Sunday. I want them to come back, so every week I'm thinking that way. How can I make them feel like coming back next week?

**Sarah:** What is something you do to prepare for church service?

*Christy Uncle:* I look at the lineup, who is going to be there and how we can use their abilities and help out the worship. There are 2 goals; one is to make the worship meaningful, and the second goal is to keep the people coming back so looking at the lineup, what can inspire them.

**Nathan:** What's your favorite song to play during church service? (Malayalam or English)

*Christy Uncle:* There isn't any one song. But one song I like to play is the song "At the Cross" because it's kind of jazzy.

**Nathan:** If not a musician, what would you have been? What other career choices would you have picked?

*Christy Uncle:* Interesting. Maybe a politician. Run for an office. But I don't think I would be very successful. You must be able to convince people.

**Sarah:** What is your proudest accomplishment (to date)?

*Christy Uncle:* Oh, that is yet to come. My proudest accomplishment is yet to come, working towards it.

**Sarah:** What is your favorite family holiday tradition?

*Christy Uncle:* Going up to the Cape every summer vacation.

**Nathan:** What song would you sing at karaoke night?

*Christy Uncle:* "Fly Me to the Moon" by Frank Sinatra.



**Nathan:** If you could have any superpower, what would it be and why?

*Christy Uncle:* Probably flying. One of the things on my bucket list is skydiving, so that's why I would pick flying.

**Sarah:** If you could live anywhere else in the world, where would it be and why?

*Christy Uncle:* Cancun, Mexico. Because of the sun and the beach.

**Sarah:** If you could be any fictional character, who would it be?

*Christy Uncle:* Jerry, from Tom and Jerry.

**Nathan:** Do you enjoy any hobbies outside of music?

*Christy Uncle:* I enjoy driving, spending time with my friends and family, and drink a cup of coffee with a hardboiled egg and watch CNN.

## Joy

Joy is the smile we have inside, no matter what is happening around us. Some people think that joy and happiness are the same, but there is actually a big difference. The word happy comes from the same word as happen. We feel happy if something good is happening to us at that moment. But this means that being happy is just temporary – it doesn't last. One minute something good could be happening and we are happy, but the next minute something bad could be happening and we don't feel happy anymore. Joy is different. Joy does not depend on what is happening to us – it stays deep down in your heart no matter what! (2 Corinthians 7:4) God is our source of joy. Psalm 16:11 says: "(God,) You will fill me with joy when I am with You." God is so good and everything He does is amazing! When we spend time with Him, we get to know Him more. We are filled with joy because of who God is and how He cares for us.

Out of all the fruits of the Spirit, joy seems to be the one that is most often overlooked. We always talk about how important it is to love people, be kind, and be peaceful, but we rarely talk about joy. But joy is very important because it is the easiest fruit for people to see, and people are attracted to joy when they see it. When people see joy in you, they will want to know why you are joyful.





# “My experience at the 2022 Retreat!”

-----By Joanna Alex

Last month my family and I had the opportunity to attend the weekend church retreat that was held at Singing Hills. The theme of the retreat was “Are we there yet?”. During the Friday evening session, we opened with praise and worship and along with that our guest speaker Prince Achen gave a brief introduction to the theme. We ended Friday by playing bingo and other games. After a hearty breakfast on Saturday, we started our morning sessions with praise and worship. The kids had their own sessions led by some of our great Sunday school teachers. In these sessions we learned songs, played foundational games based on the theme and talked about how we are all on a journey in life. It's not about the destination alone but also the journey.

My favorite part of Saturday was the skill development session such as fishing, photography, gardening, and jewelry making where each person was able to choose a group to be part of based on their interests. I enjoyed the jewelry making session with Kochamma where I learned to create my own piece of jewelry. We also had some outdoor activities followed by campfire singing and smores. The kids also got an opportunity to lead the singing session Saturday evening and it was quite pleasant to be able to show our thankfulness to the Lord.

On Sunday we had an early morning church service. Following that, there was a special session for kids with Price Achen where he taught us that Jesus should be the focus in our lives, and He is always present. There will always be distractions around us to pull us away from Him. If we focus our attention directly on Jesus, we will be able to live life understanding our God given purpose.

Overall, this was a great get together with our fellow church members and I highly recommend each of you to join our next retreat.

