

News from Sri Lanka October 2019

The past few months have provided me with a wide variety of experiences, some challenging, many humbling as I seek to do God's will on this wonderful island.

In July I returned to the UK for four weeks and managed to see family, friends, spend a couple of days at the Methodist Conference and visit my home church. It was wonderful to be part of the service in the recently refurbished worship area of Emmanuel, Ormskirk and on another occasion to meet Obeth and his family, Sri Lankans, part of the Tamil worshipping community in the Liverpool South Circuit.



This year I booked a seat to get a good view of the Esala Perahera in Kandy, noted as one of the most colourful religious pageants in Asia! There were many fire dancers, bands, dancers and elephants, the highlight being Buddha's tooth in a casket carried by an elephant. There were at least four sections to the parade each one had decorated their elephants in different coloured lights.



During August the Conference of the Methodist Church in Sri Lanka was held in Colombo. Rev. Patrick Evans, from the Southport Circuit, represented the Methodist Church in Britain. He and Louise managed to visit college for a couple of days.

The President/Bishop made a special award to one of our college students at Conference. Suren went to help at one of the bombed churches on Easter Day. He was close by, heard the explosion, and went to the church to help. He carried bodies to the mortuary and then helped with the post mortems.



The procession to the Inaugural session



Suren

At the end of the month the Archbishop of Canterbury was on the island for three days as an act of solidarity following the Easter Day bombings. His hectic schedule included one hour with us at college, the one ecumenical activity of his stay in Sri Lanka. He had lunch with us and as I am involved with the Mess Committee the responsibility weighed heavily upon me. I was totally dependent on the cooks and students. Questions arose such as "Are 20kg rice sufficient to serve 120 people?" All went well, thanks to the knowledge, skills and hard work of all those involved.



I am fascinated by the items that are for sale in the small local shops and stalls. The general store, just by the college entrance, manages to pack many, many items into a small space. The fruit and vegetable stalls are very colourful too but I can't say I am keen on the dried fish of which there seems to be quite a range!



Rev. Arulnathan, Principal Designate, has been with us several months now. His Induction will be in early January. We all appreciate his presence and the new initiatives he is developing. Quite a different role to others he has held in the Methodist Church. We recently enjoyed sharing in the celebrations at the first birthday party for his daughter Avi.



I had a lovely surprise on my recent birthday, when the students presented me with two decorated cakes!

From the leavers last April, Anglicans and Methodists, all 14 are now allocated to churches. I enjoy meeting up with them and hearing about their work as they settle to ministry after years of study and formation.

I would ask for your prayers for:

- Rev. Arul and his family as they settle to college life.
- Our former student as they take up their roles in churches.
- For our current students, taking exams at the end of the first semester and that they may enjoy the inter semester break.
- For us all here at TCL as we seek to do God's will
- Peace on the island as elections for a new president take place next month.

Thank you for your prayerful support and all your messages. It is good to hear from you and enables me to keep up with some of the news in the UK.

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Please share this newsletter with those who may be interested.