

## News from Sri Lanka

March 2019

There have been a number of special event at the Theological College of Lanka since the beginning of the year.

In **January** we began with a “Back to TCL” day when over 50 former students spent time visiting their former haunts.

This was quickly followed by **Thai Pongal** which is the Tamil harvest festival. A symbolic clay pot was filled with milk and heated over a small fire. When the milk boiled and spilled over it was a symbol of a bountiful harvest. Traditional hymns were sung.



Farming tools were then brought forward and placed in front of the table. The elements at the Communion Service were traditional symbols of a rice dish and then mixed fruit.



The entrance to the event which began at 6.00am



Receiving a Tamil book

On **4 February** events were held to celebrate 71 years of Independence. In chapel, in front of the Communion table, there was a sand map of the island, with several candles to be lit. I was invited to light one of them.



Later in the day we had our Sport Day, with many different events and, as on all occasions, cricket was included. Unusually the married men beat the single men this year! There were medals and some fine trophies to be won.



We all had a very enjoyable day

I recently had a visit from Rev Karen Jobson, Chaplain at MerseyCare NHS Foundation Trust. We made a number of outings including visiting a tea plantation and met Rev. Park, a Korean Methodist Minister, who lives and works on the Tillyre Estate.



Bags of tea waiting to be weighed



Looking across the estate



Steve Pearce, Partnership Coordinator for Asia and the Pacific, from the Methodist Church in Britain, was recently on the island and we were able to spend some time together and have a useful exchange of information.

Later this month are the college exams, followed by the external ones validated by Serampore University in India.

There are eight students leaving who will be promptly inducted as Methodist probationary ministers. I have the honour of presenting them with their "Collars" within the next few days.



Seven, of the eight, Methodist students who will be entering circuit ministry shortly with the President/Bishop of the Methodist Church in Sri Lanka

I view the whole experience of living here as one of great privilege and thank God for this opportunity.

At this time please pray for

- The people of this island, who have endured so much suffering through war, tsunami, flood, drought and injustice.
- All the students as they prepare for their examinations.
- The 14 fourth year students who move on next month.
- For the new principal, Revd. N. Arulnathan who takes up his post in May
- Me, that my health and strength may continue to enable me to complete my time here until April 2020.
- For us all as we seek to do God's will

Thank you for your prayers, letters, cards and emails which mean a great deal to me. I'm sorry I haven't been too prompt in replying to you recently.

Best wishes to you all

Anne

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