

The Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Carrollton

1400 West Frankford
Carrollton, TX 75007

Phone: (972)939-8081
www.mtcd.org

Dear Prospective Parishioner:

On behalf of The Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Carrollton, I welcome you in the name of Christ! Below you will find a brief history of our Church here in the Dallas area, our office bearers and points of contact to the various organizations that you are welcome to join. Included in the packet you will also find our financial expectations from you as a member. As always, I as the vicar am here to assist in any manner and look forward to growing with you spiritually.

Yours in Christ,
Vicar

Our Diocese

Mar Thoma church of Dallas Carrollton belongs to The Diocese of North America and Europe. The Diocese is presided by the Bishop Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius. The Mar Thoma Church has been dynamically involved in the socio-cultural settings of North America and Europe for the past 30 years. Fundamentally an immigrant Church, she has contextualized her ministry in her new life situation without compromising the rich ethos and tradition received from her motherland of Kerala, India. Currently, under the rubric of the Diocese, there are 51 parishes and 20 congregations. In order to cater to the ministerial needs of the Diocese, there are 48 clergy as well as functioning organizations for children, youth, women, and evangelistic work. The address to the diocese is Sinai Marthoma Center, 2320 Merrick Avenue, Merrick, NY 11566-4340.

Our Parish

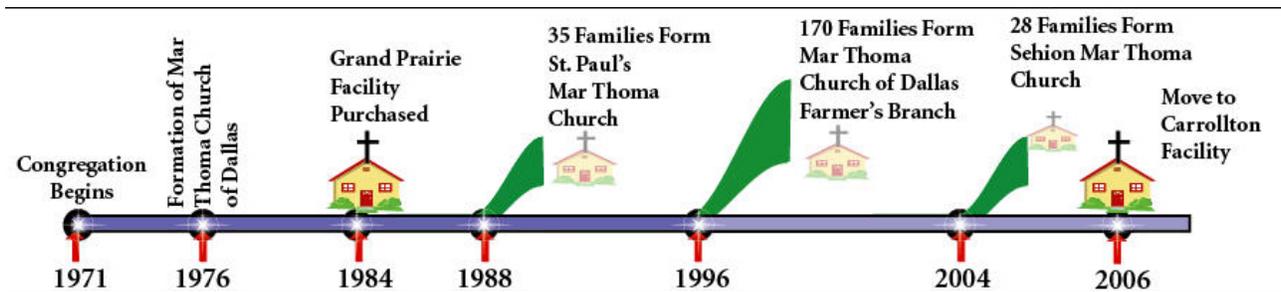
Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, established in 1976 is one of the parishes under the Diocese of North America and Europe of the Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church of India. Today we are over 118 families that worship at the Carrollton facility every Sunday.

We trace the history of our parish back to a small prayer group of Kerala Christians that began meeting in 1971. By 1976, this fellowship had developed into the Mar Thoma Church of Dallas. From 1976 to 1984 we conducted services at Cochran Chapel United Methodist Church in Dallas, TX. Prior to 1976, we held services at St Luke's Methodist Church. On December 7, 1984, the Grand Prairie facility was purchased. The Most Rev. Dr. Alexander Mar Thoma Metropolitan dedicated this facility on July 20, 1985.

In 1988, thirty-five families formed the St. Paul's Mar Thoma Church in Mesquite, TX. Likewise in 1996, the general body requested the Episcopal Synod to divide the church into two parishes. This paved way for the formation of The Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Farmer's Branch in Farmer's Branch, TX and The Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Grand Prairie in Grand Prairie TX. In 2004, 33 families requested the Episcopal Synod for a new Church in the Garland, TX area. On July 2004 the Sehion Mar Thoma Church was dedicated at a rental facility in Garland, TX.

The Gracious Lord guided us throughout the past 30 years having immensely blessed our church and our members. During the year 2006, under the guidance of the our beloved Diocesan bishop, Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim

Mar Coorilos Episcopa, the members of the Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Grand Prairie were able to sell our facility in Grand Prairie and purchase our new facility in Carrollton. We began worship services in our new facility on April 9th, 2006, and continued to improve the facility to meet our needs. On June 1, 2006 our church name was changed to The Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Carrollton as per the Kalpana from His Grace, Rt. Rev. Dr. Philipose Mar Chrysostom, Mar Thoma Metropolitan.



Parsonage

The church parsonage is located a mile away from the church facility at 3404 Ashleaf Dr, Carrollton, TX 75007. The phone number to the parsonage is 972-394-7919.

Area Prayer Groups

As part of our parish's spiritual growth, our church is divided into four smaller area prayer groups. Each prayer group usually meets on Saturday or Sunday of each week in various homes within the designated area. There is a common prayer at Church on the last Saturday of every month. Coordination of the prayer meetings in each area is done by the respective prayer group leader(s). Prayer group areas are as follows:

1. Arlington/Ft. Worth/Mid cities
2. Carrollton,
3. Irving
4. Garland, Mesquite and White rock.

Organizations

The parish has several organizations to facilitate your family's spiritual growth. The organizations hold general meeting and events throughout the year. All members are welcome to participate in these organizations as per the constitution of each organization. If you are interested in joining any of the groups, please contact the secretary of the organization.

Church Choir

Church Choir is one of the five essential parish organization promulgated by the Mar Thoma Church. Choir works in association with the Department of Sacred Music and Communication (DSMC) Tiruvalla, established in 1969. Our church is blessed with both English and the Malayalam choir. The Choir actively participates in all church services and other activities. As per the constitution of the Choir, participation in the choir is through the annual selection of choir members. The Malayalam and English choir practice is held on every Sunday from 9:30 AM to 10:20 AM.

Sunday School

"Train a child in the way he should go, when he is old he will not depart from it"

Proverbs 22: 6

Sunday school plays a very significant role in the spiritual renewal and growth of the new generation. It provides a platform for kids to learn and understand the Bible and provides a strong foundation for the spiritual growth of a person. The formal inauguration of the Sunday School Samajam comprising all the Schools, which had already been started in the parishes, took place at Maramon Convention in 1905. 'Come to Jesus and bring every child to Jesus' is the motto of the Sunday school.

Our Sunday school has over 80 students in 9 classes and a team of dedicated teachers who work hard for the spiritual growth of students. Beginning at age 3½ years, children can attend Sunday school. Classes are conducted every Sunday from 9:15 am to 10:20 am from August through June. Sunday school organizes several events throughout the year such as VBS, Spring Fling, Carnival, and annual competitions. The Sunday school also participates in all regional competitions which include our sister churches in Dallas, Oklahoma and Houston. If you have children of school age or want to be a volunteer at the Sunday school, please see the Sunday school superintendent.

Edavaka Mission

"Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in Unity"

Psalms 113:1

Mar Thoma Voluntary Evangelists Association was formed in 1924 during Maramon Convention by Titus 2 Metropolitan. The association was formed by the inspirational interest of then the Suffragan Metropolitan Abraham Mar Thoma whose vision was '**every Mar Thoma member is an Evangelist**'. Evangelism is the utmost mission of this organization. The parish level unit is known as Edavaka Mission. The object of this association is for every member of the Church to be a witness to Jesus Christ, whatever his occupation may be.

Our church has an active Edavaka Mission. Bible study classes are conducted every Thursday at 7:30 pm either at the Church or at one of the Edavaka Mission member's house. The regional Edavaka Mission prayer is conducted every quarter and includes members from our sister churches in Dallas. Our Edavaka Mission participates in several activities and provides help to the ones in need; we provide financial support to mission work in India that provides food, clothing and shelter to the homeless in the local community. For more information please see the Edavaka Mission Secretary.

Sevika Sangham

"But a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised"

(Proverbs 31:30)

The Sevika Sangham also known as the women's auxiliary group is one of the fundamental organizations in the church hierarchy that provides women the opportunity to serve the Lord and take a more active role in the church. The Mar Thoma Suvisesha Sevika Sangham, was inaugurated during the Maramon Convention in the year 1919, under the leadership of Abraham Mar Thoma Suffragan Metropolitan, who gave the Sangham continued support and inspiration. The motto of the Mar Thoma Sevika Sangham is '**Service and Evangelism in the life and mission of the Mar Thoma Church**'. Every women of the Mar Thoma Church above the age of 18 years is a member of the Sevika Sangham.

Our Sevika Sangham organizes and maintains a variety of events which occur throughout the year. Among them are area-based prayer meetings, monthly joint area meetings at the church and one-day retreats. In addition to events to supplement the spiritual growth of our women, our Sangham has taken the responsibility of recognizing

and acknowledging our new graduates and first communicants. As is well known, the Mar Thoma Church is a mission church, our Sangham has embraced this tradition of mission by supporting the Native American Missions established by the Diocese and is also working in our local community by sustaining and aiding the needs of the less fortunate.

Yuvajana Sakhyam

The Mar Thoma Yuvajana Sakhyam was organized with a view that all the young people in the Church should accept Jesus Christ as their savior and Lord, and bear witness to His saving power. It was organized in 1933 by a resolution of the Sabha Prathinidhi Mandalam.

Yuvajana Sakhyam with its principles of **“worship, study, witness and service”** is an active organization in our church. Church members between the age of 14 and 45 are considered a member of this organization. Sakhyam Members conduct monthly cottage meeting which help in building fellowship among members and their families. These meetings are joyful occasions for all Sakhyam members and include activities like bible study, sharing experiences, discussions on biblical topics, current ethical issues and more. The Sakhyam members also assist in the Worship Services and Holy Qurbana. Our Yuvajana Sakhyam also participates and helps with activities at local, regional and national level. For more information please see the Yuvajana Sakhyam Secretary.

Youth Group

“Do not let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and purity”

1 Timothy 4:12

While the Yuvajana Sakhyam provides channels and opportunities for youths born and raised in Kerala and other parts of the world, the Youth Fellowship provides similar opportunities for youths born and/or raised in U.S. The Mar Thoma Youth Fellowship envisages in equipping the youths to grow in Jesus Christ and to engage them in the mission of the church through the four foundations: Witness, Worship, Study, and Service. Its goal is to:

- Help the youth of the Mar Thoma Church accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.
- Help youth grow into the maturity and knowledge of Jesus Christ.
- Equip youth for Christian fellowship and worship life.
- Facilitate youth to develop loyalty to the church and participate in the growth of various organizations and institutions in the church.
- Equip youth to participate in the mission of the church.
- Organize seminars, classes, workshops, conferences, etc., to create in youth interest in Bible studies, faith and practices of the Church, history of the Church, and ecumenical relationships.

Members from the ages of 12 - 35 can be in the youth group, and offers many events for the youths to become involved in the church, and the community. Events such as a weekly bible study, community service, fund raising, sports, conferences, etc provides the youth with ample opportunities to grow in the Christian spirit. Most college admissions in US look for volunteering activities of the applicant and the volunteering work performed through the youth fellowship of our church are a great addition to the youth's resume.

The diocese has assigned a youth chaplin, Rev Jason Thomas, for our church to address the growing needs of the youth fellowship which includes personal counseling.

Young Families

Our church has a vibrant Young Families fellowship. This is a group of about 15 young families (couples with less than 20 years of marriage) that get together once a month to study the bible and share their family experiences and to grow together with other families going through similar life situations. The study sessions are very interactive. These are usually held on the 2nd or 3rd Saturday of every month. All young families are invited to join the fellowship and contribute to the growth of the Church and each other.

Office Bearers

Office bearers of the church are entrusted to oversee the day to day activities of the church as well as to plan and execute on the projects approved by the General Body. As per the church constitution they are elected from the General Body for a one year term. Our church also has a special position called the Office Manager elected once every three years.

Financial Responsibilities

The General Body has approved implementation of several approaches to meet the financial challenges of our church. This welcome packet contains additional pages describing the financial challenges we face and the expectations from every member of the church. Please review the back page of the pledge form for details.

More Information

You can get more information about current activities of our church from our web site at www.mtcd.org. There is a monthly news letter detailing the month's plan, articles, member birthdays and anniversary, etc. A weekly news mail is sent to all the subscribed church members by the secretary. Make sure to provide your email ids to receive current news as well as timely messages from the vicar and diocesan bishop. You may also request a copy of the church member directory that lists all the members' contact details from the Office Bearers.



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Application for Membership

Applicant:

First Name: _____ Middle Name: _____ Last Name: _____
 Nick Name: _____ Native Town: _____ House Name: _____
 Date of Birth: _____ Phone: _____ EMail: _____

Applicant's Spouse:

Marriage Date: _____

First Name: _____ Middle Name: _____ Last Name: _____
 Nick Name: _____ Native Town: _____ House Name: _____
 Date of Birth: _____ Phone: _____ EMail: _____

Current US Address:

Street: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Address in India: _____

Home Parish in India: _____

Children & Dependents:

No	First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Relationship	Date of Birth	Baptized ?
1.						Yes
2.						Yes
3.						Yes
4.						Yes

Declaration:

Myself, the undersigned, and all the individuals whose names are given above, **are/request to be** bona-fide members of The Mar Thoma Church. The information given in this form is true to the best of my knowledge. We request the worship, fellowship and other sacramental services of the Church through the Carrollton Mar Thoma Parish. We assure regular and active participation in all the missionary and organizational activities of the Church as well as the Parish. We promise to share our time and material resources for the sustenance of the Parish.

Date _____

Signature of the Applicant

Prayer Group: _____

For Church Office Use Only:

Account No. _____

Remarks from Vicar: Statememnt / TC / NOC / Baptism Certificate / Marriage Certificate Attached.

Date

Signature of the Vicar

Instructions for Filling the Application Form

1. Please complete all the appropriate fields in the form in CAPITAL letters.
2. Names of the individuals should match the legal names as stated in the government issued document such state driver's License, Passport or other immigration document. This is necessary to properly document and report to the IRS any financial contributions you provide to the church.
3. If the applicant is a Mar Thomite, a Transfer Certificate (TC) or No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the previous parish must be submitted along with this application form.
4. If the applicant is not a Mar Thomite, then a statement accepting the faith and practices of the Mar Thoma church must be included with this application form.
5. Optional emails of children and dependents

Name	Email



The Mar Thoma Church of Dallas

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Pledge Form

Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. **2 Corinthians 9:7**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Capital Funds Pledge

New members are requested to pay a minimum of \$2000.00 (per household) towards capital funds, as per the decision of the church general body. This amount may be paid in full or installments by filling the year and the amount in the table below. Use the "other" row for payments that do not follow yearly pattern. Please read the attached narrative and contact the Trustees for more information on the Capital Funds Pledge.

Year	Amount	Year	Amount
Other			

Monthly Subscription Pledge

I pledge to contribute the amount mentioned below towards my MONTHLY subscription for the church (please check one):

\$100 \$150 \$200 \$250 \$300 \$350 Other _____

Frequency of payment (Please check one):

Every Month Accrued amount every 2 month Accrued amount every quarter

If the church does not receive this amount in the agreed time the Trustees can (please check at least one):

Send an email Send a letter Notify me in the church

Signature

Date

For Office Use

Received Date: _____ Received By: _____

Account Number: _____

Thank you for your generous pledge. God bless you!!

A Brief Narrative on Our Church Finances

In 2006 our church bought this facility for little over \$1.4 million. At that time we took a loan of \$1 million. The rest of the money for the purchase and various construction projects were raised by selling the old facility in Grand Prairie, and contributions from the family members of the church. The general body held on December 18, 2005 decided that every household should contribute a minimum of \$2000.00 towards this building fund. Later, the general body held on April 23, 2006 decided that all **new** members joining our church should pay a minimum of \$2000.00 per household towards the Capital Fund of the church. Capital Funds are used towards major improvements/maintenance of the church facility with approval from the general body. Unlike the membership subscription, Capital Fund contributions are perpetually listed in the church notice board, as per the decision of the general body.

Like all other churches, our church today has several financial obligations; mortgage payments, Vicar's salary and expenses, utility bills, facility maintenance, dues to the Diocese and the Sabha, etc. For example, we have a monthly mortgage payment of \$8,879.40; the average monthly bill for utilities comes to \$1275.00; the coffee and refreshments we serve at the church costs us \$300 per month; yearly we sent \$52 for each member of our church to the diocese as part of the church dues. To run the facility and meet these entire obligations, our church requires an income of \$19,000.00 per month. The source of this income is from the monthly membership contributions and other contributions such as offertory, anniversaries, etc. We do not always receive the \$19,000.00 per month. Because of this the trustees have a hard time meeting these obligations, especially during the summer months, where we have consistently seen 'dry periods' in the income.

Our computation of average contribution per household showed that if we receive \$2,475 per year from each household, we will be able to meet these financial obligations. Another computation showed that this same can be achieved if each household contributes 2.5% to 3.0% of their annual income. Compare that with the tithe that the bible mentions.

While there are no **mandatory** requirements for how much a member should contribute, we all take pride in what we can willfully give. It is a reflection of the Holy Spirit transforming our hearts to do the right thing.