



GTB President's Report for AGM 27 December 2020

Dear Friends,

Welcome to GTB AGM of 2020. Our last AGM was on 28th September 2019. This is the first AGM on ZOOM. These are unusual and difficult times and we have no choice but to adapt and accommodate! The past year, the first year after the full PRATHISHTA, has been very eventful to say the least. The COVID-19 pandemic has played havoc and changed the world around and made us close the temple to public for many months to meet the Public Health guidelines. However, with the grace of our Lord, our priests have maintained the Thrikala Pooja without fail and conducted many other special and seasonal poojas and provided services meeting the needs of our devotees. In spite of the prevailing uncertain and difficult circumstances, I feel that we devotees have grown closer to the Lord and have sincerely appreciated his protective presence here with us, in our new pastures. Our faith in Him has kept our optimism, dreams and hopes alive and kindled!

OM NAMO NARAYANAYA.

Before I go further, let me remember and pay tribute to our departed leader and visionary, my dear friend and our founding board member, Bhaskaran Menon who left us on the 25th Dec 2019. May his soul rest in peace. His wife Lalitha is now in Bombay staying with her sisters. Their son Ashish and family are in Dubai and their daughter Anu and family live in Chicago. They are all keeping well and healthy with the grace of Almighty.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE LAST AGM

I will briefly touch upon some of the important achievements since our last AGM. Our Executive Director Radhakrishnan Padiyath will be covering the details of financial statements in his report.

- Our third priest Kookkanpara Narayanan Namboothiri arrived here on the 28th December 2019 on work Visa. He has been an amazing addition and perfect match to Divakaran and Manoj Namboothiris.. Our three priests complement each other and work in unison. May the LORD grant all the three of them long life and good health to serve, guide and lead our community for many more years to come. Their patient nature and temperaments, humility and vast knowledge are second to none and we all have a lot to learn from them. We are blessed indeed to have these three Gurus to guide us.
- In March with the arrival of Covid 19, we had to close the temple completely to public; then operate with restricted numbers for some time, and finally again close the temple to public. This had a serious impact on our revenue particularly donations and pooja income.
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- The Board set up a Medical Advisory Team consisting of prominent doctors within the community to advise the Board. They were very helpful in preparing the guidelines from time to time for the safe operation of the temple
- After last AGM, the Board appointed a Management Advisory Committee. It has worked well even with all the restrictions. Regular monthly meetings were held on virtual basis with the Board. It has the potential to fulfill our needs and realize our dreams. Our aim is to see more women and youth in leadership roles and would encourage them to play key roles in running this temple taking it to new heights.
- Each of the sub committees also met regularly to discuss and finalize various aspects of the temple's operations.
- IT team set up an online booking system at very short notice, which was well received and has been responsible for maintaining the pooja income at reasonable level. It also helped devotees to book poojas for their important life events. Accounting team and staff members have adapted to the new system, and integrated the two systems quickly to help manage the pooja bookings seamlessly.
- Religious Team has done an amazing job in promoting the temple poojas and special events to help maintain pooja income. They managed to conduct almost all the important events at the temple, and stream it live on zoom and face book for the benefit of devotees. This was not an easy task; but the team worked hard to make it happen.
- Our Narayaneeyam group deserves special appreciation for conducting the chanting on Zoom every Sunday at 9 am throughout the year.
- Similarly, Media & Marketing team set up a E-Satsang and E-Deeparadana almost instantaneously to allow devotees to participate in the temple's events. Several prominent speakers were arranged to enlighten, maintain interest and provide some emotional support to devotees who are struck at home during the pandemic and facing distress.
- Media & Marketing team also launched Social Media platforms such as "Kshetra Vijnanam" WhatsApp group, which helped us expand the devotee base not only to promote the temple; but help us get some monthly pledges and pooja bookings from out of country.



- We have also launched a youth wing called “Yuvathma” to promote our temple among young members. Their representative also takes part in the Management Advisory Committee meetings to learn the operation of the temple. Their thoughts and vision help us to expand our horizon! They have conducted special events such as game nights and arranged , guest speaker sessions to maintain the interest in the platform. A special thanks to our youth! You are our future and we have confidence and faith in you !!
- Community and Volunteer group arranged CRA sponsored outreach seminars for devotees and also an online special safety training session from Peel Police to educate our staff and volunteers.
- In spite of the limitations, Facilities & Maintenance Team completed many of the outstanding projects such as completion of storage cabinets, temple’s exterior decorative works (Panjaram installation and painting), installation of the large Thazikakkudams on the roof, sump pump installation, electronic sign board, creation of a wash area enclosure, copper roof cleaning and other maintenance jobs.
- Monthly pledges improved towards the last quarter of 2020 (19,255\$ in November 2020 vs. 17,200 in September 2019). Some devotees who were facing financial difficulties because of Covid requested to discontinue; but we managed to get some new ones to compensate. Fund raising team is continuing their efforts to promote the monthly pledge in spite of the difficult times. These efforts will continue till we reach our goal. On a happy note, I want to announce that on Vaikunta Ekadashi one devotee made a pledge to donate 2500\$ every month. We are thankful to him and the LORD for this surprise. We sincerely wish that many more devotees who can afford will come forward and do the same. Let us make this temple debt free as fast as we can.
- Our mortgage with BMO Bank of Montreal was 3,265,000.00 when we started. As of now it is down to 3,086,666.00. By the time of renewal in Sept 2021 we would have paid 275,000.00 towards the principal. Mr.Radhakrishnan Padiyath, our Secretary and Executive Director has the details and more in his financial report which is to follow later.
- We are also grateful to all the Devotee Loan Donors who have remained committed to the temple and supported us by maintaining their loans.
- The Board has met regularly each month on virtual basis to discuss the activities of the temple and take appropriate decisions based on changing circumstances.

MOVING FORWARD – OUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE



Many of our dreams we talked about last year are on hold due to the pandemic.

After the pandemic, when the temple is fully functional, we will spread our wings, promote attendance and participation, to involve and include all similar communities of Indian Heritage. This will enlarge our horizon and help us improve revenue and cash flow and achieve a debt free status for our temple. Then we can expand our community activities and services. We will focus our attention in the following areas as planned last year.

1. Increase revenue and promote religious events and services (Religious Affairs)
2. Increase monthly pledges to above 30,000\$ (Fund Raising)
3. Promote the temple among other communities (Media & Marketing)
4. Start and implement new community and youth projects (Volunteer & Community Service and other projects by Yuvathma)
5. Maintain and improve temple facilities. (Facilities & Maintenance)
6. Wellbeing of our priests and other employees. These dedicated visionaries need to be recognized, appreciated and rewarded. It is high time we did that.

The Board will stick with its decision to hold off any further major capital projects at the temple till the patron loans are repaid first. We need to save money to pay back the mortgage as well.

PROJECTS TO BE COMPLETED

Street Sign Mr. Manoj Karatha has kindly sponsored this sign. He and Anil Ambat have worked together. There were some inevitable delays but this project will be completed soon.

Security Fence and Gate: Gate is in place. Fence is yet to come. This project is important in the light of some incidents that we experienced. However, the cost is substantial. We have submitted an application in October 2020 for a special Government grant for this purpose; we are still waiting for results.

Remaining Decorative Works: We will complete some of the other items such as **Thoovana Palaka, Ghana Dwara Alankaram, Pakshi Mala and Nasika** as soon as possible. These are decorations usually seen only in Kerala temples.

VOLUNTEERS: We can not manage the temple office and reception without volunteers. We need large number of volunteers for special events. Our priests need many extra hands and assistants during special poojas.



Volunteers are the body and soul of our temple. The pandemic has changed and delayed everything at least temporarily. When the temple becomes fully operational, we will be open 365

days from morning to late evening, except for a short break in the afternoon. There will be several routine activities every day and we have commitment to complete 31 more Udayasthamana

Poojas and other recurring festivities and special seasonal poojas. Devotees are likely to book more of these in future. Some of these are elaborate and consume more time and man power! We do have some paid staff taking care of these chores; however, we will need more volunteers to support and complement them, especially on the days when there are special events. I request as many of you as possible to volunteer at the temple, whenever possible. Please register your names with the office. Volunteers must be willing to serve the temple with no expectation of remuneration or special thanks. We all believe that such work will receive special blessings from Lord Guruvayurappan.

OFFICE ADMINISTRATION

Our Manager, **Mr. Appukuttan Nair**, has agreed to continue for now. We have not yet succeeded in finding a replacement and we have placed his request for replacement on hold! Viji Ramanujam has been an amazing Assistant Manager and she has provided great relief for Appu. This has allowed Appu to concentrate on monthly pledges and other administrative matters.

Presanna Kumar continues to manage the office accounts including payroll and will remain part of the office management team assisting the Temple Manager. He has taken over the additional responsibilities of maintaining the Patron Loan and interest accounts, purchasing supplies as well as issuing the Charitable Donation Receipts at year end.

We have four other rotating part time staff as well as some regular volunteers who help manage the booking counter.

Manoj Thirumeni's wife, **Reena Manoj** is appointed as part time employee, taking care of Thidappally and other temple related work to help the priests. **Sunil Nambiar** is another part time employee to get flowers and make flower garlands instead of buying them from flower shops.

Udayasthamana Poojas: The total number booked is 79. We completed 48 poojas last year. There are 31 poojas to be completed. Because of the Pandemic we could not complete them this year and also celebrate the **Prathistha Dinam**. Because of this and after completion of the Copper roof and Thidappally repairs we conducted **Sudhi Kalasam** on the 19th and 20th December 2020



Medallions: We have sold almost 400 medallions in different ways so far, out of 1500 available. There is still a large number available. I have mentioned this before. Please offer the medallions as a gift to your friends and relatives on special occasions like birthdays, wedding anniversary,

retirement, and new births and choroon. This is really one of the best and most powerful gifts and gesture establishing a lifelong bondage with the temple and the LORD.

EXPANDED AND NEW ACTIVITIES IN THE TEMPLE

Once the Pandemic is over, the temple will be able to offer many new poojas for all the four Deities. The list is created but continues to be expanded and updated. Please promote these new poojas and other activities when ever possible.

We will also be able to resume engagements, weddings, choroon, vahana pooja, ezhuthiniruthal and other group activities.

We can expand and renovate our stage, **“Poonthanam Kalavedi”** to conduct gatherings and performances with advanced booking. We have the potential to accommodate up to 300 people inside at any one time. Such events held after temple hours can generate additional income for the temple.

The Board is looking for opportunities to welcome other communities to this temple, joining in some of their celebrations and festivities and creating an opportunity to interact and work together to promote Sanathana Dharma, Universal Brotherhood and World Peace. Our temple is open to all.

Thank you all for your ideas, advice, participation and hard work! We are growing and changing with time and needs of our children! The world is in need of leaders and visionaries! Let us do our share.

My sincere thanks and appreciation to our Legal Counsel, Lata Menon and our auditors, McGillivray and Partners.

I am sincerely grateful to all the donors, monthly pledge supporters and everyone who books poojas throughout the year and utilizes our temple facilities. It is your presence that makes it all worthwhile and pleases our LORD the most! Your visit adds to the Power and Glory of our deities!

I also want to take this opportunity to thank all the cultural and community organizations as well as the local religious institutions for their continued support and participation during the past year. I want to acknowledge with gratitude the support from our media partners who promote our temple and its events free of charge.



Special thanks to all the Board members, Advisory Committee members, our Priests, Office, management staff and all the volunteers for their unconditional support, trust and hard work which gave me the courage and strength to pull through the various temple activities of another year.

You all worked very hard behind the scenes but allowed me to take credit and look good as your President. I am nothing without you. I forget my age and minor ailments when I am with you all. Thank you, my friends, I will not mention your names least I forget some. It goes without saying that you are all in our prayers and the LORD's thank you list!

Finally and most importantly, my sincere thanks to all the members and devotees for their dedication and support to our temple in numerous ways throughout this long journey. Your faith, love and affection are intoxicating and infectious and is the medicine that keeps me going. Thank you very much.

This is our temple, yours and mine! Please resume visiting the temple regularly once the lock down is lifted. Please introduce our temple to all your new friends and acquaintances and bring them over. Promote our monthly pledge, medallion and Udayasthamana Poojas. Be an AMBASSADOR of this temple and OUR LORD.

Most of your life's pooja needs can be met at this temple in the most authentic way. Anything new you need, please tell us. There is nothing our dear THIRUMENI cannot do! Please talk to him and his charisma will make you feel blessed. Please visit our web site www.guruvayur.ca for updates, notifications and other temple activity details. Use our online facilities.

Excuse us for any deficiencies or omissions. It is not intentional. I beg for your forgiveness.

OM NAMO NARAYANAYA. MAY THE LORD BLESS US ALL.

Dr.P.Karunakaran Kutty

President, GTB

27th Dec 2020