



# The Church of Bangladesh Newsletter

● Newsletter ● July– August 2024 ●

Volume 28

## *Warm Christian Greetings from the Moderator*



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ, both at home and abroad,

Greetings to you in the precious name of our Lord Jesus Christ. "The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold" (Psalm 18:2). As we reflect on this verse, let us remember that our strength and protection come from our unwavering trust in God, who guides and sustains us in every season of life.

Our beloved country has journeyed through times of significant change, from the previous government to the current interim administration. Through it all, we have witnessed God's hand at work, preserving our nation and providing us with the stability needed to continue our daily lives and ministries. As we navigate these transitions, we humbly ask for your continued prayers and trust in God's providence to lead us forward in peace and unity.

In the midst of these changes, we have remained steadfast in our mission to serve God's people. Our ministries continue to flourish, and we are committed to fulfilling our responsibilities with diligence and faithfulness. With God's grace, we aim to complete our reports and responsibilities on time, ensuring that our work reflects His glory and purpose.

This year, we have faced the harsh reality of natural calamities, particularly the devastating floods that have brought suffering to many in our communities. We are deeply moved by the resilience of our people, and we earnestly request your prayers for those affected. May God's comfort and provision be with them as they rebuild their lives, and may we be instruments of His love and care in their time of need.

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We are also excited to share the progress we have made in rolling out our strategic plans and implementing new policies that align with our mission. These initiatives are designed to strengthen our ministries, ensuring that we are well-equipped to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow. We remain committed to our vision of being the salt and light in our communities, reflecting Christ's love in all we do.

May God continue to bless and guide us as we journey together in His service.

In Christ,

The Most Revd. Samuel S. Mankhin



*Dear all in Christ,*

**Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

I write to you with a heavy heart, as our beloved country, Bangladesh, is facing a severe crisis due to recent floods that have devastated the lives of many. In times like these, we are reminded of the words of Psalm 34:18, “The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.” Even in this storm, we find hope and comfort in knowing that our God is ever-present, offering strength to those in need.

As a Diocese, we have tried to respond to this disaster. With the resources available, we have extended our hands to support the affected communities with relief efforts, food, and other necessities. Yet, we know that the work is far from over. We kindly ask for your prayers—for the protection of those affected, for the restoration of their livelihoods, and for God’s grace to be evident in their recovery. In James 5:16, we are encouraged that “the prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.” So, let us lift up our prayers in unity, trusting in God’s mighty hand to bring healing.

Additionally, during this time, the Diocese of Barishal is observing Creation Week, as we reflect on the divine mandate to be good stewards of God’s creation (Genesis 2:15). This observance calls us to care deeply for the earth and all that God has entrusted to us. Let us remember that the earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it (Psalm 24:1), and our call is to honor and protect this gift, especially in the face of environmental challenges like the floods.

As we continue to walk through these challenging times, may we hold fast to the promises of Scripture, knowing that God is with us, guiding us, and offering hope through His Word and Spirit.

**In Christ’s peace and service,**

**Rt. Revd. Shourabh Pholia**



*Dear sisters and Brothers in Christ,*

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**“Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name and who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagles. The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed. The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.” (Psalm 103:1).**

Everyone knows what happened in our country just after August 5 and is still happening. Yet we are thankful to our loving and living Lord that we are still safe in the midst of so many sufferings. There is a beautiful church at Naogaon in Kushtia Diocese, called St. Mark’s Church. On the night of August 12, some extremists set fire to that church and tried to loot the priest’s house. Like this, many more accidents took place that we could not know. At this juncture, we leave this helpless life alone in the hands of God.

After all these pains and sufferings we love our country. Because Bangladesh is our motherland. We minorities, especially Christians want to be like the salt in this country. Although we are small, yet we have been contributing a lot in building the country in various ways. Especially in the field of education and health service, we are much ahead. It’s true that we cannot preach the Gospel directly, but we express the love of Christ through our various institutions.

To sum up, our prayer is, may peace return to our land. Let the interim government lead the country wisely. May we all live together regardless of cast, creed and religion, and we all put our hands together in the work of building the country. Being up-to-date with current world affairs we will open our eyes, do the right things at the right time and go through the foot-steps of our Lord Jesus Christ with humility and prayers.

Thank you to all the friends of the Dioceses and partners who have helped us with prayers and other support.

**May God be with us.**

**Rt. Rev. Hemen Halder**



## Church of Bangladesh Unveils Women Fellowship Strategy 2021-2030

On August 1st and 2nd, 2024, the Church of Bangladesh hosted a significant event at St. Mary's Church, Jobrapar Deanery, to launch its Women Fellowship Strategy 2021-2030. Funded by the Anglican Community Fund, the event was themed "Live and Grow Up with Love" and aimed at empowering women within the Church and broader community.

The event was led by Rt. Rev. Bishop Shourabh Pholia, Bishop of Barishal Dioceses, who served as Chief Guest, alongside other esteemed clergy members, including Rev. Shuchitra Behera, Rev. Monindra Boidya, Rev. Shanti Mondal, Rev. Bilium Sardar, Rev. David Mridha, and Rev. Peter Monol. The strategy focuses on four key areas: spiritual growth, economic empowerment, health and well-being, and leadership development. During the two-day event, a detailed presentation of the strategy was given, followed by interactive workshops and group discussions. Participants, divided into focus groups, developed localized action plans tailored to their communities' needs.

The event concluded with reflections from the attending clergy and closing remarks by Bishop Pholiya, who emphasized the Church's commitment to supporting women's empowerment. The event was a resounding success, laying a strong foundation for the ongoing implementation of the Women Fellowship Strategy.

## Church of Bangladesh Hosts Synod Youth Program and Ecology Consultation

The Church of Bangladesh recently held a Synod Youth Program and Consultation on Ecology from August 18-21, 2024, at the Retreat & Prayer Garden (RPG) in Savar, Dhaka. Supported by the Council for World Mission (CWM), the event brought together over 40 youths from the Dhaka, Barishal, and Kushtia dioceses to engage in discussions on social, theological, and ecological challenges. The program featured a variety of sessions led by distinguished church leaders, including the Most Revd. Samuel Sunil Mankhin, Moderator of the Church of Bangladesh. Key topics covered included environmental stewardship, Nature abuse and the ethical implications of genetic engineering with God's creation.

Alongside leadership development, participants focused on ecological awareness and environmental stewardship, emphasizing the Christian duty of creation care. Group sessions explored the importance of sustainable living, highlighting faith-driven responsibility for the environment. This theme nurtured spiritual growth while promoting a commitment to protect and sustain the planet. The Church of Bangladesh's dedication to preparing future leaders for both social and ecological action was evident, reinforcing creation care as a core element of Christian leadership.





## Women Fellowship Strategy Rollout 2021-2030

### A Vision for Empowerment

The Church of Bangladesh, with the generous support of the Anglican Community Fund, successfully hosted the Strategy Rollout 2021-2030 for the Women Fellowship on the 30th of August, 2024, at St. Thomas Church New Center, Mogbazar, Dhaka. This significant event, centered on the inspiring theme of Matthew 15:28, sought to empower women within the church by promoting leadership, spiritual growth, and community outreach. The program commenced with an opening prayer and worship service, followed by a thought-provoking keynote address from Rev. Dr. John Probhudan Hira. His message emphasized the transformative power of faith in fostering leadership among women and inspired participants to embrace their potential within the church and beyond. Attendees then engaged in interactive discussions that explored the strategic pillars of the initiative, such as leadership development, community service, and sustainable growth initiatives for women in the church. Another session led by Dr. Florence Lipika Samaddar delved into the theme of women's resilience as reflected in Scripture, reinforcing the central message of faith and empowerment. The day continued with a detailed presentation outlining the practical steps for implementing the Strategy Rollout, including the formation of leadership teams, strategies for ensuring financial sustainability, and the introduction of tools for monitoring progress. Group discussions provided a valuable opportunity for participants to address key challenges, such as economic empowerment through vocational training and small business initiatives.

The Church of Bangladesh expresses its deep gratitude to the Anglican Community Fund for their support in making this pivotal event possible and looks forward to future collaborations in advancing the role of women in the church and wider society.

## Celebrating International Youth Day



On August 12, 2024, International Youth Day was celebrated by the "Father Gyanen Marak Jubo Sangh" in Idilpur through a tree-planting initiative. They planted a variety of fruit and forest trees to support both environmental conservation and their family's financial well-being. In addition, the entire campus participated in a day-long cleanliness drive. Through these efforts, young people actively contributed to various activities, including the upkeep of the garden.

## KUSHTIA DIOCESE

### Catechist Seminar



From July 26th to 28th, 2024, a seminar was held for all catechists and their families from Bollobhpur Deanery in the Kushtia Diocese. The theme of the seminar was “Let the word of Christ dwell in your hearts abundantly; ... and sing in your hearts to God with grace” (Colossians 3:16-17). The Honorable Bishop Hemen Halder of Kushtia Diocese spoke on this theme, emphasizing that Jesus desires not to be a guest in our hearts, but to dwell in them permanently. Ms. Jessica Suprna led a session on the challenges facing the Church, dividing participants into groups to identify and discuss these challenges and possible solutions. Mr. Peter Mondol, the Diocese Treasurer, conducted a session on maintaining transparent church accounts. The seminar concluded with a worship service and the Lord’s Supper.



After the prayer, the Honorable Bishop presented gifts to the catechist families. The seminar began with a warm welcome for the catechists and their families, who were greeted with flowers amidst a cultural program performed by local children. During the seminar, religious songs composed by the Bishop were taught. The importance of praise songs, hymns, and psalms in Christian life was highlighted, and the participants expressed their gratitude to the Bishop for organizing the event.

### Bible Study at Bollobhpur Parish



On August 17, 2024, at 7:00 pm, a Bible study was held at Immanuel Church in Bollobhpur, Kushtia Diocese. The theme of the study was “Let the word of Christ dwell in your hearts richly; And sing in your hearts to God with grace” (Colossians 3:16-17). Bishop Hemen Halder of Kushtia Diocese led the study, explaining that the Word of God is Christ Himself, and to have the Word in one’s heart is to have Christ dwelling within. About 50 Christians attended the session, which aimed to spiritually enrich participants through regular Bible discussions and teachings in each parish. Bishop Halder also emphasized the significance of songs, hymns, and psalms in worship, and suggested forming choirs in every parish.

### Women’s Seminar in Rajshahi Deanery



On June 28, 2024, a one-day women’s seminar was held at the Nobokali Craft Center in Rajshahi Deanery, attended by mothers from various churches in the area. The seminar’s theme was “For the flesh is death, but the spirit is life and peace” (Romans 8:6). Ms. Jessica Suparna Halder, Convener of Women’s Fellowship, discussed the contrast between the flesh and the spirit through short stories, highlighting how negative emotions such as jealousy, criticism, and selfishness can harm relationships, while spiritual qualities like prayer, constructive criticism, and respect for God foster peace.

Dr. Tasnia Akhtar, MBBS, Senior Medical Officer, spoke on women’s health issues, focusing on breast tumors and uterine diseases and their treatments. Additionally, Mr. Anik Halder, Development Coordinator at the Synod, along with esteemed guests from India, discussed human trafficking and ways to combat it.



## Sunday School Seminar

A Sunday School Seminar was held on 18th-19th July at Christ the King Church, Khalishpur, Khulna. There were 40 participants from different churches of Khulna Deanery. Honourable Bishop of Barishal Diocese, the Most Revd. Shourabh Pholia, Revd. Suchitra Behera and Revd. Albert Halder taught among them from the Holy Bible. The Honourable Bishop through different games, encouraged them to grow in love and faith in Jesus Christ. Revd. Albert Halder enlightened them on the serious issue of Child Trafficking. The seminar was a child-friendly learning experience, covering various topics and ensuring all participants were left with a wealth of knowledge. Revd. Monindra Boidya, Revd. Mridula Boidya, Mr. John Paul Baroi (Church Secretary), and Mr. Roton Jockley Halder (Deanery Secretary) were present on the occasion and participated actively.

## Prayer for Peace



Amidst the challenging situation in Bangladesh, the churches in the Barishal Diocese held special prayer

devotions for peace. The CCT (church and Community Transformation) group of Christ the King Church, Khalishpur, led a dedicated prayer meeting with the esteemed presence of the Diocesan Bishop Shourabh Pholia. Revd. Suchitra Behera guided the prayer meeting under the leadership and guidance of the Diocesan Bishop, instilling a sense of direction and unity.

## Tree Plantation and Church Caring



On 20th July, the Ekata Bible Study Group of St. Luke's Church, Kandi, led a tree plantation program at the church compound. It was heartening to see the active participation of children, women, and youth from our church, as well as from St. Paul's Church, Dhamshar, St. Mary's Church, Jobarpar, and Christ the King Church, Khalishpur, who also planted trees in their respective churches.

The future looks bright as the youth of St. Peter's Church, Barishal, took the lead in cleaning the church compound on 16th August under the guidance of Revd. Uttom Biswas and Mr Babul Sarkar (Church Secretary).



# Shalom

... a development organisation of Church of Bangladesh

## Empowering Local Communities: A Successful Visit by Donor Representatives



On July 17-18, 2024, Shalom’s Nolitabari Project Office welcomed Mr. Martin, Program Officer at Kerk in Actie (KIA), Ms. Tina Baidya, Coordinator at KIA, and Shalom’s Acting Director, Mr. Senoy Sarkar. This visit marked Martin’s first inspection of Shalom’s work in Bangladesh, with a focus on the Poverty Reduction and Building Community Resilience (PRBCR) project in Nolitabari.



The visitors were greeted with traditional Garo dances, and the staff showcased key initiatives in community mobilization, skill development, and advocacy. Martin praised the collaboration with local government agencies, particularly highlighting the partnership with Begum Rokeya Training Center, which provided additional skill training opportunities.

During the visit, Martin interacted with self-help, adolescent, and children’s groups, expressing admiration for the well-organized activities, including savings programs. He suggested expanding the project to include boys’ groups and expressed optimism for continued collaboration with Shalom.

## Shalom’s Mission Uplifts Communities in Natore and Rajshahi

Since 2023, Shalom has been making a transformative impact in the Chatni and Tebaria unions of Natore,



focusing on poverty reduction and community resilience. Through the “Poverty Reduction and Building Community Resilience” Project, Shalom has empowered local women by establishing 20 Self-Help Groups (SHGs). These groups foster self-reliance, enabling women to become independent and resilient members of their communities.

The project’s commitment extends to the younger generation as well. Shalom has formed 10 girls’ groups and 10 children’s groups, promoting awareness of healthy living. This initiative ensures that young community members grow up with the knowledge and support necessary for their well-being.

## Tree Seedling Distribution Event



On July 15th, the SHALOM-Jobarpar project, funded by BFTW, held a tree seedling distribution event, providing 175 beneficiaries with forest and fruit tree saplings for planting and afforestation. Inaugurated by Rev. Santi Mondol, Dean of the Jobarpar Deanery, the event also featured Sister Superior Dorothy, CSS; Md. Muntasir Rahman, Area Coordinator of SHALOM-Jobarpar; and the project staff. Beneficiaries received a brief orientation on planting techniques, and the event aims to enhance environmental sustainability in the future.





# CoB-CMCY

Christian Ministry to Children & Youth

## Annual workshop and Budget Orientation



On August 27- 28, 2024; CMCY organized Annual Workshop and Budget Orientation Program at the RPG Center, Anandapur, Savar. Theme was, "Let all things be done decently and in order" 1 Cor. 14:40.

Rt. Rev. Hemen Halder, Vice-Chairperson and Rt. Rev. Shourabh Pholia- Bishop of the Church of Bangladesh, Barisal Diocese inaugurated this seminar. The most Revd. Samuel Sunil Mankhin, Moderator CoB and Chairperson- CMCY exchanging greetings thanked all and urged for serving each other with love.

Rt. Rev. Hemen Halder spoke at the theme. He shared the life of St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo and Jesus Christ and urged all to have transformational Christian Leadership in each one's ministry for serving beneficiaries depending on God's plan and His wish.

Rt. Rev. S. Pholia surmounted well on, "Why is children care" and in the conclusion urged all to support the needy- genius to reach their goals. CIB-Officers feel proud of PDA COB-CMCY as one of their important partners and praised highly on its professionalism, dedication and standards supported in works and also expected further meaningful partnership within the signed Agreement. Rev. Simson Mazumder lessons on how to prepare a project budget wisely within its financial strength. Mr. Shyamal Sarker- Director,

CMCY shared about the Program Cycle Adoption (PCA) policies of CIB and gave guidance to prepare the budget for FY 2025. Mr. Harun Mondal spoke on CMCY policies and sponsorship obligations for the donors. Mrs. Ruth Sebika Raksam and Ms. Shila Kisku briefed on accounts and urged each one's support towards an effective and efficient office duties to carry on. To the participants, this 3 day seminar was full of joy and information and inspirations.

The most Revd. Samuel S. Mankhin- Moderator-Church of Bangladesh and Chairperson- CMCY, Rt. Rev. Hemen Halder- Vice-Chairperson-CMCY, Rt. Rev. Shourabh Pholia, Deputy Moderator- COB, Mrs. Monita Mankhin- Education. Director-COB, Rev. Simson Mazumder- (Hon) Treasurer- CMCY, Mr. Joel Utpol Halder- Senior Manager Partnership-Compassion International Bangladesh, Mr. Laal P. Chuaak-Partnership Manager- Compassion International Bangladesh, projects' Chairmen, Mr. Shyamol Sarker, CMCY Director and all central office staffs and 31 Project heads participated at this Workshop.



# CoB Christian Mission Hospital Rajshahi



As per the decision of the Board of Trustees, on May 31, 2024, the 12-cabin construction project at Mission Hospital is being implemented satisfactorily and as planned. The roof casting has been completed. Out of the 12 cabins, work on two has already been completed, and they are being used for service. The remaining 10 cabins are expected to be completed by October 2024. Since the project is being funded internally, we feel a sense of pride, and it is being implemented with the consideration of time and demand, which will enable us to serve more patients through this work.

At the same time, the empty space on the east side of the labor room is being used to expand the labor room and increase the X-ray and ECG rooms. A large water tank needs to be constructed here as the demand is not being met by the small tanks, and they are very old, leading to leakage that damages the roof of the old building's second floor. The new construction work will allow the opportunity to install a large water tank on the third floor, ensuring there is no shortage of water for Mission Hospital patients.

Special reconstruction work is ongoing for the library and the preservation of medical documents, which may take another month to complete.

Over the past two months, it has been observed that the number of patients at the hospital has increased by about 25%. At least 250 patients are being served daily, both in outpatient and inpatient services. The Urology Department has been inaugurated, and

with the addition of a specialist doctor, patients are receiving services. The local working committee meets at least once a month. Additionally, efforts to restore the mission's glory as a place of trust continue.

The overall situation in the country is favorable for the hospital. Moreover, we did not face any particular danger or loss during the political upheaval and difficult times of August. Although we sent the students home in compliance with national policies.

## A seminar on "Wound Infection and Principles of Management" was held

A seminar on "Wound Infection and Principles of Management" was held at Christian Mission Hospital, Rajshahi, on 10th September 2024. The event was attended by nearly 40 specialist doctors and medical officers. Key topics included the latest strategies for preventing and treating wound infections. Experts also discussed emerging trends in wound care and effective management protocols. The seminar aimed to enhance the knowledge and skills of medical professionals in wound management.

**Finally, we express our gratitude to all of you for your prayers.**

Best regards,

**P. C. Mondal, Chief Executive Officer**

# CoB Nursing Institute Rajshahi



The Nursing Institute (NI) at Christian Mission Hospital, Rajshahi currently has a total of 214 students. Despite facing several political challenges, NI continues to operate smoothly and efficiently.

NI's 3rd-year students, along with the old 1st-year students, are scheduled to sit for their class test examinations on the 10th of September, 2024. Following the completion of

these exams, the 2nd-year students will begin their test examinations, as their final exam dates could be announced at any time.

The construction of NI's new building is progressing well, and we are hopeful that it will be completed by November 2024.

Please keep all our students in your prayers.

*Sulota Drong, Principal*



# CoB-Bollobhpur Hospital Nursing Centre

## 14 girls leave with their hard earned certificates

Another two months have whirled by in the life & work of Bollobhpur Hospital.

Our Nurse Training Centre saw 14 girls leave with their hard earned certificates, and they were speedily replaced by a new group of 16 girls in the middle of July, arriving with their beddings and boxes eager to start their three years training with us.

And it is good to be able to report that all have settled in well and at the time of writing are into the seventh week of the three months preliminary training school.

And it is good also to report that the students have a new house mother, young and energetic and endeavoring specially to make the simple diet that we manage for them tastier and interesting, with the result that less food is wasted and the students are happy.

Another big change their food is no longer cooked over wood fire stoves, but two large gas cylinders have appeared in the kitchen, and now cooking is quicker and easier, except when a cylinder runs out of gas before the meal is complete!!!

In the hospital, the special care baby unit has had

frequent small arrivals (sadly not all survive) keeping the senior students busy and preparing them for employment elsewhere.

The maternity ward has to compete with the many private "clinics" touting for custom, but those who come for delivery of their babies get the care they need, and our case nurses are able to get experience in delivering a new mother and dealing with any emergencies.

The country is in a mess, following the mass uprising of students and the fall of the government, but Bollobhpur is still an oasis of peace and harmony with Muslims, Hindu and Christian all living peacefully together- all using our school and hospital and any function taking place all are happy to join in.

We hope you too are all living peacefully in this tipsy turvy world of today.

**God blessings**

**Gillian M Rose**

*Director*

*Bollobhpur Hospital.*

