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Atlanta Tamil Church celebrates Christmas & New Year

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Atlanta, GA: Christmas is a joyous occasion all around the world. The nostalgic song with lyrics that go, *"I'll be home for Christmas, you can count on me...I'll be home for Christmas, if only in my dreams..."* reminds everyone that people do long for a touch of home when it comes to celebrating festivals. Here, in the heart of Norcross, the crisp cold winter air was alive with joy and friendship – the reason being Atlanta Tamil Church was holding its Christmas celebration. To many South Indian Christians settled in Georgia, this was a piece of home. The rich and vibrant colors of the traditional silk saris, the men dressed in formal suits and children clad in gorgeous traditional and western outfits; the one common denominator – their love for celebrating the birth of the Savior in a way that is close to their hearts – traditional South Indian-style!

The worship service started with carols sung in Tamil and English led by the Atlanta Tamil Choir in a heart-warming praise and worship time. This was followed by message rendered by Rev. Palmer Paramadhas, Pastor of Atlanta Tamil Church. With the culmination of the Word of God, the service concluded with greetings and reports from the church Elders. The annual church photograph was taken and traditional festive lunch – biryani was served. The air was cold but the hearts were warm and aglow and true to the words in the children's Christmas carol, *"Christmas time comes once a year; it's here and then it's gone...but if you have Christ in your heart...then Christmas will live on..."*

A week later, church members and guests from nearby states gathered together for a watch night service to usher in the New Year, 2016 in the presence of God. The church choir led the congregation with a series of praise and worship songs, that set a deep sense of gratitude for the goodness and mercy of God in 2015 and an expectation of greater things to happen in the New Year 2016. The church had a special testimony from Evangeline Justifus and Justifus Asir on how God carried them through their battle with cancer as a family and brought them out stronger than before on the other side. In the New Year Rev. Palmer revealed the promise of 2016 to the church and expounded on it. "... I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and I will bring them again to place them; for I have mercy upon them ..." Zechariah 10:6.

The service ended with the Holy Communion, after which, everyone congregated in the fellowship lounge as they enjoyed a very early South Indian tiffin breakfast. Everyone who attended the service returned home with a warm smile, and a heart full of joy – in anticipation of the great things God has in store for them in the very near future.