

S.V. Temple Newsletter



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Sri Venkateswara (Balaji) Temple



On the auspicious Ugadi day in March 2009, the Lord Sri Venkateswara (Balaji) Temple was started at a temporary location in Golden Valley, MN. After identifying a permanent location in Edina that is accessible for majority of the Indian community in the Twin Cities area, the construction of the new temple commenced in 2010. On August 4-6, 2011, the inauguration of the S.V. Temple took place and *pranapratishta* (consecration) of Ashtalakshmi *sameta* Sri Venkateswara was performed.

The City of Edina Mayor James Hovland and City of Edina Council Members Mary Brindle, Ann Swenson, Joni Bennett, and Josh Sprague were among the chief guests at the inauguration function of the temple. A number of devotees from all over Minnesota attended the function and received blessings from Lord Sri Venkateswara.

Hinduism in Minnesota

In 1894, Swami Vivekananda arrived in Minneapolis to promote understanding of Hinduism and India's spiritual culture during his visit to USA. After various changes in the U.S. Immigration Law in 1965, the number of Asian and Hindu immigrants started increasing in the Twin Cities area. Currently, there are about 40,000 Hindus who live in the Twin Cities area. With such a growth in the Indian Community, the *City of Edina has recognized and announced Diwali, a highly celebrated event amongst Hindus, (also known as the Festival of Lights) as one of the major events of the City.*

Amidst such a warm welcome from the American community and the expanding opportunities for growth of the Hindu community, the S.V. Temple in Edina provides a venue for all Hindu devotees in the Twin Cities around to participate in Hindu religious, educational, social, and cultural activities. This will strengthen our families and help our younger generations in the USA learn, participate and preserve the Hindu *dharma* and culture for years to come.

S.V. Temple Deities

The SV Temple is unique in the sense that the main deity (Lord Venkateswara) is consecrated along with Ashta Lakshmi, eight secondary manifestations of Goddess Sri Lakshmi. *This feature makes our temple special and is the only temple in North America where it can be seen.*

Lord Venkateswara also known as Balaji, is a form of the Hindu god Vishnu. Venkateswara means “the lord who destroys the sins of the people”. According



to the Hindu scriptures, Lord Vishnu was incarnated as Venkateswara and appeared for the salvation and upliftment of humanity in this *Kali Yuga* age. The Venkateswara swami temple is also called Kaliyuga Vaikuntham. Lakshmi is the Hindu goddess of wealth, prosperity, fortune, and embodiment of beauty. She is the consort of God Vishnu. She is seen in two forms: Bhudevi and Sridevi, both either side of Sri Venkateswara. Bhudevi represents totality of the material world (Mother Earth), Sridevi the spiritual world.

The eight forms of Lakshmi are: Santana Lakshmi (Bestower of offspring), Aadi Lakshmi (an ancient form of Lakshmi and incarnation of Lakshmi as daughter of the sage Bhrigu), Gaja Lakshmi (Giver of animal wealth , like cattle and elephants and Giver of power and royalty), Dhana Lakshmi (Giver of money and gold), Aishwarya Lakshmi (Goddess of riches), Veera Lakshmi (Bestower of valour in battles and courage and strength for overcoming difficulties in life), Dhanya Lakshmi (Giver of agricultural wealth), Vijaya Lakshmi (Giver of victory, not only in battles but also in conquering hurdles in order to beget success), and Maha Lakshmi (Grand Consort of Lord Vishnu).

The shrines of Ram Parivar, Sri Ganesha, and Shiva Linga were also consecrated in the temple. In addition to these main deities, the shrines of Guru Ramanuja and Annamayya shrines were consecrated and receive continuous Poojas from the devotees. There are also picture frames depicting Dasavataras on the walls of the main prayer hall. Thank you to all the donors that sponsored the shrines of the deities in the temple. Currently, the temple is looking for donors who could sponsor the stone *vigraha* of the Lord Sri Venkateswara. Interested devotees can contact the temple priests.

Temple Inauguration Speech by Gautham Reddy

Hindu temples have served as important centers of personal and spiritual development for thousands of years. The foremost purpose of a temple is, of course, to provide an auspicious space to feel connected to the divine. A temple is a place we can go to with our wishes and anxieties, our hopes and dreams. It is a place we can find mental relief, to get a sense of something larger than our own egos. But a temple is also more than a place of personal spiritual development--it is an integral place for community building. This is especially true for new temples like ours, growing out of an American context.

The American Hindu Temple has become a vital center for the arts, education, and service work. It is here that traditional forms of music and dance can be performed, enjoyed, and passed on to future generations. Well-intentioned individuals can gather to embark on projects of good will and social justice. The temple is an important cultural resource for our community, not only for youth but for adults as well. Through yoga, meditation classes, and spiritual discourses, it offers us all the opportunity to engage with our cultural heritage in a deeper, more significant way.

In India, such cultural activities are omnipresent and it is easy to take them for granted. We see them on television, in our next door neighbor's homes, and in school. But in the United States, they become a much rarer sight, and thus all the more precious to us. Because of this situation, the Hindu temple in America becomes an important center for nurturing these extracurricular activities. The temple creates a positive and affirming place for us in American society to practice our religion as well as our culture.

One thing that is distinctly unique to the American Hindu Temple is that it is an important site for inter-cultural dialogue. Hinduism is a minority religion in the United States and there is a great deal of misinformation and ignorance about our tradition among the general population. The greatest way to get rid of cultural misunderstandings and clear up prejudice is by the simple act of dialogue. The temple gives us a concrete base for reaching out and creating bonds of friendship with members of other communities. It is a place we can bring our American friends, where curious co-workers and neighbors can come, to learn more about our cultural traditions and where we come from. It's through such simple acts that we can educate and enrich the greater community around us.

In ancient times, temples were built by great kings and queens who wanted to

building has grown into a community activity. The institution that we establish today will serve to strengthen and rebuild us as a community in the years to come. Let it be remembered: the efforts and energies that we invest in building our own Sri Venkateswara Temple here in Edina will be repaid a thousand fold in the coming years, in ways we can not yet even imagine.

Upcoming Events and Festivals

Date	Event
August 1	Rakhi Pournami
August 4	S.V. Temple First Anniversary
August 8—9	Sri Krishnashtami—Gokulashtami
August 15	Indian Independence Day
September 9	S.V. Temple School Open House
September 16	S.V. Temple School reopening
September 18	Vinayaka Chaturdhi
October 15	Devi Navarathris begin
October 23	Vijaya Dasami
November 12—13	Naraka Chaturthasi—Deepavali or Diwali
November 16	Nagula Chavithi
December 15	Dhanurmasam begins
December 23	Vaikuntha Ekadasi

S.V. Temple Future Plans

1. The short-term plan of the temple is to consecrate the *Mulavirat of Sri Venkateswara Swami*. S.V. Temple President has received a letter from the TTD's Executive Officer granting the supply of a stone vigraham. The *carving of the stone vigraham is currently taking place in India* and will be shipped to Minneapolis.

2. The temple has two priests who are responsible for performing temple rituals, including puja, and aarti, and taking care of murtis. *The temple will be adding another priest who will join the temple by the end of this year.*



Cultural Events since August 4, 2011

Below is the recap of the cultural events that took place since August 4, 2011. A “Thank you” for all the volunteers and organizers who made all these events a great success. We are looking forward to your support in the coming years.

1. **Dr. Akki Raju Sundara Rama Krishna’s performance**—August 4, 2012. Local talent also participated to celebrate the first anniversary .
2. **Super Guru Sri Ramachari Light Music Concert**—July 24-28, 2012. Concert by Sri Ramachari and workshop participants on July 27, 2012. Sri Ramachari was able to extract the talent out of the workshop participants and trained them into well performing musicians.
3. **Sri Ramu (Andhra SP Balu)** along with Sarada and local talent performed Light Musical Concert —June 22, 2012.
4. **Annamacharya Jayanthi Celebrations** —May 19, 2012.
5. **Carnatic Star of Minnesota** —April 27-29, 2012, *Carnatic* music community in Minnesota celebrated Carnatic Music Festive Mela in the SV Temple Auditorium. Several competitions were held in different categories and prizes were distributed to the winners.
6. **Ugadi Celebrations**—March 23-24, 2012. During these Ugadi celebrations, many devotees participated in various cultural activities.
7. **New year celebrations**—January 1, 2012. Many devotees participated to celebrate the new year and received blessings from Sri Venkateswara Swami and Ashtalakshmis for a successful new year.
8. **Diwali Celebrations**—October 26, 2011. More than 1,000 people participated in these celebrations. S.V. Temple organized fireworks to celebrate festival of lights. Devotee families and children enjoyed this event.
9. **Sri Medasani Mohan’s Astavadhanam** —September 17, 2011. This was made possible by S.V. Temple and Telugu Association of Minnesota.
10. **Sri Viswayogi Viswamji’s visit** to the Temple—August 27, 2011.

S.V. Temple School (SVTS)

The SV Temple School was started in March 2009 on Ugadi Day with just few students. At present, the student strength has increased to about 90. The school curriculum has been established and implemented for the school year 2011. Since then, SVTS is running successfully with the kind cooperation of parents, children and school volunteers. We have 30 teachers volunteering for different classes— Telugu and Hindi language, carnatic music, Yoga, Meditation and Bala Gokulam classes. The school registration form can be downloaded from the temple website and get registered. The school will be holding an open house on September 9th and classes will commence from September 16th. [*The school is looking for volunteer teachers, including those who can teach Tamil, Kannada, etc., if you are interested, please contact svts@svtemplenm.org.*](#) SVTS also organizes Annamayya keertana classes for adults and kids and *Gita* discourses. Healthcare educational presentations are given by local physicians once a month. Please contact SVTS to participate in these presentations.

Priest Sri Murali Vedala

Priest Sri Murali Vedala was born in Singaraya Konda (Prakasham Dt.) in Andhra Pradesh (AP), India. He has completed his intermediate (10+2) education in Guntur after which he decided to follow his father's footsteps to become a priest. So, he pursued his Vedic education. Sri Murali has worked as a priest in Sri Lakshmi Narayana temple Kapila Teerdham in Tirupathi. We are very fortunate that Sri Murali has decided to come to United States to work as a priest in our S.V. Temple. He speaks Telugu, Tamil, Hindi and English. Sri Murali can be reached at 612-481-9354.



Priest Sri Vamsi Kanduri

Sri Vamsi Kanduri was born in Warangal in AP and brought up in Tirupathi. He completed his Masters degree in Philosophy from Sanskrit University, Tirupathi. With a great interest in vedic philosophy and mantra, Sri Vamsi pursued vedic education to become a priest. Sri Vamsi has performed and participated in pujas in various *bramhotsavaalu* in almost every state in India, including Tiruchanoor. He is the first priest in our S.V. Temple. Before coming to the S.V. Temple, he worked in Rochester, MN temple as a priest. He speaks Telugu, English, Tamil, Hindi, and Sanskrit. Sri Vamsi can be reached at 507-271-7803.



Comments and Articles

We are inviting all readers, devotees, followers, students, teachers, and writers, etc. to submit devotional stories, essays, and experiences to S.V. Temple Newsletter Editor. After newsletter committee's review, selected articles will be published in the upcoming issues of the newsletter. Editor of the newsletter will have all the rights to modify the articles to address language, grammar, and space-constraint issues. Since the audience of this newsletter come from various age groups, we request you to send articles that everybody can understand. Make sure that your articles are helpful in educating the readers in devotional field and encourage them to follow *dharma*. Also, you can send comments on the published articles and ideas for new articles that you want to see. You can email your articles to Uma Vempati and Gayathri Vempati at uma.gaya3@gmail.com.



Vina Venkatesam na natho na nathah
Sada Venkatesam smarami smarami
Hare! Venkatesa! prasida prasida
Priyam Venkatesa! prayaccha prayaccha

There is no savior other than Sri Venkatesa.
I always pray to Sri Venkatesa
O Hari! Venkatesa! Be pleased and grant us favors

Thanks from S.V. Temple:

S.V. Temple earnestly thank all the generous donors, wonderful devotees, learned priests and dedicated volunteers that help to make our Temple a marvelous place of worship.

Temple Hours:

The temple is open weekdays from 9:30 AM to Noon & 5:30 PM to 8:00 PM
Saturday and Sunday from 9:30 AM to 2:00 PM & 5:30 PM to 8:00 PM
Please visit www.svtemplen.org for updates and details.