



# EDAPPALLY PERUNNAL

## ST GEORGE'S FORANE CHURCH



### LOCATION

Panchayath/  
Municipality/  
Corporation

Kochi Municipal Corporation

District

Ernakulam



### ACCESSIBILITY

Nearest Town/  
Landmark/ Junction

Lulu Mall – 650 m

Nearest Bus station

Edappaly Church Bus Stop – 450 m

Nearest Railway  
station

Edappaly Railway Station - 2.1 km

Nearest Airport

Cochin International Airport – 22.3 km



### CONTACT

St George's Forane Church  
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TIME

DATES

April – May

FREQUENCY

Annual

DURATION

20 Days

### ABOUT THE FESTIVAL (Legend/History/Myth)

Edappally *Perunnal* or St George feast is the annual festival celebrated in *St. George's Forane Church* in Edappally in Ernakulum District which is one of the oldest Roman Catholic Church in Kerala. The history of this church dates back to 6th century when it was a small shrine and a big church adjacent to the old shrine was built during the 11th century. The Catholic congregation at Edappally was rather small and they were all descendants of the Hindus converted into Christianity by *St. Thomas the Apostle (alias Dideemos)* who came to India to preach the *Gospel*. Catholic churches were few and far between in those ancient days; the Catholics of Edappally had to trek all the way up to the church founded by *St. Thomas at Parur* for their spiritual needs. This spirited display of faith by our forefathers should be an inspiring thought to us today. There was a dire need for building a church at Edappally to meet the religious and spiritual needs of the few faithful. A church was built in A.D.593 at Edappally on a plot of land allotted by the *Elangalloor Swaroopam* (The Raja of Edappally), a Hindu dynasty that ruled Edappally and neighboring areas. And that is the origin of today's famous *St. George's Forane Church* at Edappally. This Church was one of the most important and ancient churches built in India after the seven churches built by *St. Thomas the apostle* who came to India to preach the *Gospel*. The first church was a very small one and it faced west. Right in front of it was the water of the Arabian Sea washing the shore. Roads being non-existent, there must have been a footpath in front of the church stretching from north to south. The old church, with all its antique features, is still preserved by the side of the present church along with the statue of the saint This church has been a witness to many important events in the history of the Kerala Church. Since the old church was found to be too small to accommodate the overgrown congregation in A.D. 1080 a new church was built in the present location. The main altar and the facade of this church were later renovated. The altar was renovated by incorporating the picture of Virgin Mary which was surrounded by sculptures, angels and vines. The paintings depicting heaven on the wall behind the altar fills one's heart with joy and piety. This feast is conducted as a reminder to the ancient custom when the members of the parish used to visit the King of Edapally to seek his permission to hoist the flag. The king will then grants permission and arrange for a flag mast which is carried to the church by the palace elephant.



RELEVANCE-  
(Local / National / International)

Local



NO. OF PEOPLE PARTICIPATED

Approximately 10000

## EVENTS/PROGRAMS

Flag Hoisting  
Adoration  
Novena  
Procession  
Fireworks

## DESCRIPTION (How festival is celebrated)

The Catholic Church observes the feast of St George on 23rd April. The feast of St George in Edappally Church starts on 25th and lasts till May 15th. The annual feast at the St. George's Forane Church is celebrated on 3rd and 4th of May and the Octave on 10th and 11th. The Flag is hoisted on 25th of April. There are 40 hours Adoration and 9 days of Novena in preparation for the Feast.

Before the flag is hoisted, the President and members of the *Darsana Samooham* go to the Vicar with 101 sweets and savories and offer them to him. He is then invited to hoist the flag.

On May 1st, the statue of St. George, bedecked with gold ornaments given as offering by the devotees, is taken out in a solemn procession. The statue is placed in a *Roopakoodu*. The *Roopakoodu* is carved from wood with elegant designs. It is then placed in a chariot made out of teak and etched with Biblical scenes. This chariot is manually driven. Bands play loudly and fireworks add a touch of gaiety to the occasion. Devotees shower betel leaves and puffed rice on the *Roopakoodu*. The procession takes more than an hour to wind its way back to the church. The colourful procession of the feast days is very remarkable and is attended by tens of thousands. The statue of the Saint is welcomed in front of the houses by showering betel leaves, crushed rice and popped rice and by colourful fireworks.

