



YETTEM ԵՂԵՄ

Հրատարակութիւն Եղեմի Ս. Աստուածածին Հայաստանեայց Եկեղեցւոյ

A Publication of St. Mary Armenian Church Yettem, California

Rev. Fr. Mashdots Keshishian, Parish Priest

February 2022

This year, Great Lent starts the evening of Sunday February 27th and we all will hear, read, and soak in many wise and worthy messages about our personal responsibility during Lent. To strip our lives down to the bare minimum is not something that we are willing to do, although many of us would like to think that we could, the reality is probably much different.

Over the years, one theme recurs in my thoughts as we approach Lent and that theme has stayed with me throughout the years and is no longer restricted to Lent but again, started one year when the question of life itself permeated my thoughts. Being able to serve God through His church has allowed me to be in close contact with parishioners during the most important times of their lives. The Sacrament of Holy Baptism will always be a highlight of my life, being a part of such an innocent and auspicious beginning of Christian life and perhaps the most important of all sacraments.

During the service, while most are concentrated on the child (in birth age or Christian age), there is one significant part that sometimes gets reduced to a performance and all wait to see if the Godfather will blow his lines or ace them and then all seem to react accordingly. Many will also be watching the child, especially infants and how cute they are or how they are acting. The focus is not the external circumstance but the heart and soul of the child and is represented best by the question from the Priest to the Godfather who is representing the child as to what this child desires. Below is my thought process that has been engrained for many years as to the significance of this question and most importantly, the answers that have become my basis for life on earth.

What does this child desire?

Faith: Faith to believe in the entirety of our God and place our lives in His hands without hesitation and to KNOW that HE is God.

Hope: Hope to manifest our faith in knowing that God has our lives in His hands and that he loves us, will protect us, and guide us and that His way will always provide.... ALWAYS.

Love: With the faith and hope in God, to keep our relationship close we must love. For God is love and we can do nothing without our love for Him

Baptism: Baptism in the Holy Spirit through the sacrament is the event that sends the Holy Spirit to dwell within us.

These four requests seem to have also been placed in order for none can occur without the previous.... we cannot receive the Holy Spirit without love and how can we love (with God's love) without the faith and hope that He provides? This contemplation is personal and ongoing when I'm constantly reminding myself of how critical each component is in relation to the others.

(Continued on the back page)

Parish Notes

FUNERAL

Funeral services for Sylvia Yahnian were held at St. Mary Yette on Thursday, January 13th.

ALTAR CANDLES DONATION

January 9th - Alan and Phyllis Borba and Family

ALTAR FLOWERS DONATIONS

January 9th – Parish Council

January 16th – Stella Ananian, Lisa and David Krause, Bryan, Terry, Renee, and Michelle Ananian in memory of George Ananian

January 30th – Margie, Annie, Sara, Gregory, and Skylar Davidian in loving memory of Gregory Davidian

HOKEHANKIST REQUEST

January 16th

George Ananian

Eleven years after his passing,

Requested by

Stella Ananian, Lisa and David Krause,
Bryan, Terry, Renee, and Michelle Ananian
in memory of George Ananian

January 30th

Gregory Davidian

One year to date after his passing,

Requested by his family,

Margie, Annie, Sara, Gregory, and Skylar
Davidian

HOKEHANKIST DONATION

(December 26, 2021 – January 23, 2022)

For Repose of George Ananian's Soul

January 16th – David and Lisa Krause

REMINDER OF PARISH MEETING

The Parish Assembly meeting will be held on Sunday, February 6th after church services. A light lunch will be offered, and the meeting will begin at approximately 12:45 PM.

HOME BLESSING

During the Christmas season it is customary in the Armenian Church for the parish priest to visit parishioners and conduct a home blessing. If you would like to schedule a home blessing, please call the church office.

THANK YOU

Margie L. Davidian for polishing the altar silver used for the Blessing of the Water service.

Alan Farsakian for designing and painting the letter "Eh" that was placed above the Holy Altar.

COVID UPDATE

In the past few weeks, COVID-19 has continued to spread in the greater community.

We are aware of the situation and watching things closely.

We are not at this time changing anything more to our church services.

You will receive updates if adjustments become necessary.

We want to continue operating at full capacity with as few disruptions as possible. We also want to keep everyone safe and healthy.

Please quarantine yourself if you test positive for COVID-19.

Please consider staying home and joining us online if you've been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

Please stay home and join us online if you've experienced any of the following symptoms: fever, cough, chills, nausea, shortness of breath, runny nose, or loss of taste/smell.

Masks are encouraged indoors where social distancing is not possible.

We understand that this is a stressful time for many. **If you do not feel comfortable joining us in-person at this time, we will continue to stream our services on the web at www.stmaryyette.org and on FaceBook.**

PARISH COUNCIL CORNER

Visitors to our parish are often awestruck when they enter the sanctuary. One of the many artistic features that attracts their attention is the triangular murals of the evangelists on the four pendentives high above them.

The four corners leading up to the central dome were once painted the same stark white as the rest of the church. One of the many projects envisioned by Rev. Father Archpriest Vartan Kasparian (1973 -1989 and 2003-2011) was to enhance this area.

The proposed project to adorn the blank areas with murals was shared with the Yetteem community, and donors were encouraged to come forward to fund the project. The depictions of St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John were funded by donations from Arsen & Roxie Iskenderian, Roxie Barsamian and Pepron Cherkezian, Nish and Ann Majarian for Jeanine Majarian, and by a former Yetteemite family Mr. & Mrs. Edward H. Kamlin (Kemalian).

It was decided rather than commissioning frescos, murals would be painted which could be relocated if necessary. Artistic work began on the murals in Los Angeles in 1977 designed and painted by a Los Angeles artist named Kero Antoyan. When completed, the murals were installed, sheet by sheet, by several of Antoyan's associates working atop scaffolding. The cost of the project was \$6000 funded by the donors at \$1500 each. On April 2, 1978, His Eminence Archbishop Vatche Hovsepian consecrated the four murals in the presence of a full congregation.

The artist, Kero Antoyan, was a member of the St. James Los Angeles Church and was known to Father Vartan from his service to that parish prior to Der Vartan's arrival in Yetteem.

Antoyan was born in 1912 in Dersim, Turkey, of Armenian heritage. Antoyan's father escaped persecution by leaving for America but had to leave his wife and children behind. After the Armenian genocide of 1915-1918, Kero, his grandmother, and aunt were the only survivors from his family. Eventually finding safe haven in Marseille, France, he began to study art. He immigrated to the United States in 1934 and continued his studies in art in New York. During WWII, he was stationed in Southern California and remained there after the war. In Los Angeles he became an instructor of drawing at the Chouinard Art Institute and opened a photography studio in Hollywood, California, that catered to

aspiring actors and actresses. He had exhibited widely throughout the United States, France, and

Armenia, and his paintings are in collections at the Norton Simon Museum in Pasadena, the Laguna Beach Museum, and the Yerevan State Museum, and several Armenian churches. After the completion of the work here in Yetteem, Kero painted the wall murals for the new St. James Church on Slauson Avenue in Los Angeles and the four pendentives at Holy Trinity Church in Fresno. Antoyan died August 19, 1993, of an apparent heart attack while visiting his son, Ares, in Lyon, France.

Thank you, Father Vartan, for envisioning this project and for spending time with me recently to share information about this beautiful Yetteem treasure.

Myron Sheklian
Parish Council Chairman

LADIES SOCIETY NEWS

The new executive board held their first meeting January 15. Margie L. Davidian is vice-chair, Donna Torosian is recording secretary, Janel Zerounian is corresponding secretary, Gina Ananian is treasurer, and Renee Ananian and Janice McWilliams are advisors. We're already making plans for our Annual Mothers' Day Luncheon. Donna will chair the event as she has done so ably in the past.

Our general meeting followed, again with a full agenda. We began with a moment of silence for Sadie Derrick and Sylvia Yahnian. Sylvia was a dedicated part of our church and our society for so long. Sadie was dear to us. We hope she knows she is not forgotten.

Since one of us, I specifically, was self-quarantining, the meetings changed from the church hall to Zoom, just the night before! Thanks to Janel Zerounian for suggesting it. Apologies to Margie L. and her committee for all their work for the luncheon which didn't happen. Everyone adjusted easily to the last-minute change.

Birthdays celebrated in February are Shari Ananian, Debbie Agnew, Renee Ananian, and Tracy Valencia.

February is the month we celebrate Vartanants. We remember the powerful speech Saint Vartan gave to the Persians, in which he proclaimed, "From this faith, no one can shake us!"

Mari Louise Menendian
Ladies Society Chair

ARMENIAN LANGUAGE CLASSES

Can you speak Armenian? Armenian Language classes start on Wednesday at 7 PM. The short 15-20 minute classes will be on Zoom and will teach simple conversational Armenian. Please call the church office for sign-up information. Please call the church office or Der Mashdots for information and/or sign up.

RAFFLE

474 St. Mary Yetterm Raffle tickets have been sold to date. These are great odds to win something. If you would like tickets, contact Tina at (559) 967-2593 by phone or text.

RAFFLE WINNERS

Our first drawing for our St. Mary 2022 raffle was held on Sunday, January 9th. Congratulations to...
(\$150) Jim Soxman
(\$100) Maria Picazo
(\$50) Florence Peters

Our second church raffle of 2022 will be held on **Sunday, February 27th** after church services. The drawing will also be streamed on Facebook.

BULLETIN SPONSORSHIP

If you would like to sponsor either the weekly bulletin for a minimum donation of \$25 or the monthly bulletin for a minimum donation of \$200, please call the church office at (559) 528-6892.

ACYO

ACYO meeting will be held on **Sunday, February 13th** after church services.

WAYS AND MEANS

Ways and Means to set up for Poon Paregentan on Saturday, February 26th at 9 AM. Poon Paregentan luncheon is on Sunday, February 27th after church services. (See flier)

PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council's next meeting will be held via Zoom on **Tuesday, February 15th at 6 PM.**

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School meets on the second and fourth Sundays of each month, September – June. All children welcome!

ALL services are livestreamed on our webpage at www.stmaryyettem.org. Click the link on the "camera tab" to watch services. The Holy Badarak is streamed on our Facebook page each Sunday beginning at **10:15 AM.**

DONATIONS

Expenses continue during this difficult time. Checks may be mailed to the church office, or you may access PayPal through the St. Mary Yetterm website (www.stmaryyettem.org). You may donate for General Donations, Yughakins, Pledges, Membership Dues, In Lieu of Flowers, or pay for Altar Flowers you have ordered for the church altar.

Please inform Father Mashdots of those who may be sick at home, hospitalized or may need special prayers. Der Hayr is available for pastoral care, spiritual guidance and support.

COOKBOOK

A second edition of the "Treasured Recipes from the Garden of Eden" has been made available. These cookbooks make a great gift. If you are interested in purchasing a copy, call the church office at (559) 528-6892 or Debbie Sheklian at (559) 733-4417. The cost of the cookbook is \$30 or \$30 plus shipping if mailed.

ST. MARY MEMORIAL WALL

The St. Mary Memorial Wall was started in 2001 and has been a huge success. Currently there is **space for 28 additional names** at a **donation of \$200/name**. Contact Jim Soxman: ph. 559-936-2227 or email: jimbeasoxman@sbcglobal.net.

PAYPAL

You may access PayPal through the St. Mary Yetterm website (www.stmaryyettem.org) and click on the "Donation" button on the bottom of the Home Page. You may donate for general donations, yughakins, hokehankists, pledges, membership dues, in lieu of flowers, or pay for altar flowers you have ordered on behalf of the church.



“Eh” - The Armenian Name of God

Father Mashdots recently noted that we needed an addition to the St. Mary Yetem Holy Altar. He commissioned Deacon Alan Farsakian to design an Armenian letter Eh” (“Է”) that could be placed above the altar. Why the letter “Eh”? This explanation found on the internet was written by an individual named Vigen Avetisyan and explains things quite well.

Those who have seen Armenian Churches may have noticed a mysterious sign on top of their main altar. The interesting sign features the symbol “Է”, which in fact is the 7th letter of the Armenian alphabet. The history of this sign is of great interest to us.

The earliest evidence of the sign Eh” (“Է”) has been discovered on rock carvings in Metsamor, Armenia. These petroglyphs date to ca. 3000 BC. The sign is known to have been used by Mithraic priests in pre-Christian Armenia. During the creation of the Armenian alphabet in 405 AD, Mesrop Mashtots incorporated the sign as the 7th letter of the alphabet. The letter would subsequently be adopted by the Armenian Church, and that’s why it can be now seen in Armenian temples.

In Armenian Churches, either the sign “Eh” (“Է”) or the inscription “Asdvadz Ser Eh” (in Armenian) with its English translation “God Is Love” can be seen, mostly above the altar. What’s so special about the letter “Eh” that makes it such a key feature of the churches’ altar?

Let’s firstly look at the meaning of the sign. In the phrase “God Is Love”, the Armenian word for “is” is “eh”, so “Eh” (“Է”) literally means “is” or “he is”, which may sound like a reference to God Himself. In chapter 3 of Exodus, Moses encounters God in the burning bush. While God was briefing the prophet to deliver His people from Egypt, Moses asked:

If I come to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?’

God said to Moses, “I am who I am.” He said further, “Thus you shall say to the Israelites, ‘I am has sent me to you.’”

God told Moses that His name is “I am”, which technically means “Is” or “He Who Is.” God thereby is a being who just IS, and He is the only eternal God to call Himself by that name. As we already mentioned, “Eh” (“Է”) is the Armenian word for “is.” And the Armenian Church now realizes that God (Eh) dwells at the church altar, just as Moses realized that God was dwelling in the burning bush. God is omnipresent - not only in church, but everywhere.

When pronounced, “Eh” (“Է”) is accompanied with an exhalation, so the idea of God being the breath of life is represented in the letter’s symbolism. Apart from that, the number 7 is known as the number of perfection or completion. Throughout the Bible, this number is attributed to a number of acts of God, as well as to God Himself. Thereby, the 7th letter of the Armenian alphabet “Eh” (“Է”) and its symbolism are considered Holy by the Armenian Church.

Interestingly, the letter “Eh” (“Է”) is the only letter of the Armenian alphabet that can be added as a prefix or a suffix to form a new word. “Eh” (“Է”) is not only a mere character but also a Word of and in itself.



ST. MARY ARMENIAN CHURCH

FEBRUARY 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 Armenian Language Class at 7 PM	3	4	5 Ladies Society meeting in the Majorian Hall at 11:30 AM
6 12 Noon Parish Assembly meeting	7	8	9	10	11	12 St. Sarkis the Warrior Lincoln's Birthday
13 Presentation of our Lord of the Temple Dyarentarach Sunday School ACYO meeting after church services	14 Presentation of the Lord to the Temple Valentine's Day	15 Parish Council meeting via Zoom at 6 PM	16	17	18	19 St. Sahag Bartevo Catholics
20	21 Presidents' Day	22 St. Ghevont the Priest & his Companions	23	24 St. Vartan the Warrior & his Companions	25	26 Ways and Means set up for Poon Paregentan at 9 AM
27 Great Barekenda Sunday School Children Sermon Ways and Means Poon Paregentan Luncheon 2 nd Raffle drawing	28 First day of Lent					

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Sunday Schedule:

Morning Service (Matins) 9:30 AM
Divine Liturgy 10:15 AM

Office Hours
Tuesday – Friday
9:30 AM to 2:30 PM

Father Mashdots can be reached at:

559-528-6892 – Office
559-528-6897 – FAX
818-293-9098 - Cell

St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church

Christmas Yughakin

2021/2022

Agajanian, Melvin & Regina
Ananian, Charlie and Elizabeth
Ananian, Serge and Judith
Borba, Alan and Phyllis
Davidian, Edward and Georgia Ann
Davidian, Margie L
Davidian, Sark Jr.
Ekizian, Lesta
Emerzian, Leslie and Janice
Enfiedjian, Sarkis and Hasmik
Farsakian, Alan and Marceen
Fowler Steve and Marilyn
Garoian, Gerard and Sylvia
Gomes, John & Janet
Groefsema, Bruce and Gail
Hagopian, Richard and Geraldine
Hebesha, Madlien N.
Kaloostian, Linda
Kizirian, Abe and Sandra
Klaseus, Denny & Betty
Krause, David & Lisa
Krikorian, Gary and Nancy
Margosian, Lucille
Margosian, Rose Marie
Menendian, Laurie and Fredric
Menendian, Mari Louise
Mikaelian, Michael and Sandra
Nunes, Richard and Joyce
Ouzounian, George and Shirley
Peters, Darrell & Tina
Pilavian, Pierre & Melissa
Poochigian, Julie
Sarabian, Charles and Lori
Shapazian, Jerry
Sheklian, Myron and Debbie
Skaff, Judy and Mike
Soxman, James and Beatrice
Tamouzian, Mike
Torosian, Patty
Toukdarian, Alice and Aresa
Vartanian, Sandra
Wall, Mark and Linda
Zakarian, Archie and Kathy
Zerounian, Janel E.
Zerounian, Marilyn

Total Christmas Yughakin

\$6,240.00

Sponsored by the Ways and Means Committee



POON PAREGENTAN

Sunday, February 27, 2022

After Church Services



All-You-Can Eat Lunch

- Spaghetti and Meatballs

- Salad

- Garlic Bread

- Dessert Table



\$15 per person

Please RSVP by Wednesday, February 23

To the Church Office—(559) 528-6892

-or- Email—lunch@stmaryyettem.org

Let's Play Bingo!

Lots of great Prizes to WIN



50/50 RAFFLE



Games for the Kids!

St. Mary Yettem
Ways and Means Committee

Mark your Calendars

ARMENIAN FOOD FESTIVAL

Thursday, May 19, 2022

Visalia Elks Lodge

(3100 W. Main—just East of County Center Dr.)

• Menu •

Choice of Two Entrée Plates

Lulu Kebab -or- Chicken Kebab

Pilaf, Salad, Peda Bread and Bourma

Donation~\$18 per person

Lunch Served — 11:00am—1:30pm

Dinner Served — 4:30pm—7:00pm

Bake Sale

Grape Leaves • Crescent Cookies • Nazook

Kurabia • Simit • Choreg

DRIVE THRU ONLY

~ Tickets will be sent in April~

If you are not already on the list to receive tickets in advance
Contact Tina—(559) 967-2593 or hyetina@lightspeed.net

AVAILABLE NOW!

Limited Supply Ordered



Color: Navy Blue with Gold Print

Cost: \$20 per T-shirt

Material: Dryblend—50% Cotton/50% Polyester

Will be Available for Purchase or Pick Up on:
Sunday, January 9, 2022 (Armenian Christmas) -or-
Sunday, February 27, 2022 (Poon Paregentan)

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

E-mail address: _____

List the **Quantity** of T-shirts **by Size** you would like to purchase

X-Small _____ Small _____ Medium _____ Large _____ X-Large _____ 2X _____

Total T-Shirt Quantity _____ @\$20 each \$ _____ Total Cost

Send your Check Payable to: St. Mary Church—Ways and Means

PO Box 367, Yettem, CA 93670

Questions: Please Contact Tina Peters-(559) 967-2593 -or-

E-mail—Hyetinapeters@lightspeed.net



Armenian Christmas January 9, 2022



Mark Wall Photos

(Continued from the front page)

After the Godfather has answered, he continues with how the child desires to live their life and we can see how the attributes that have been asked for allows manifestation in a lifestyle that God wants us to have. This is the way God wants us to live according to the sacrament. A way of life only allowed if we retain the gifts we received at baptism.

To be Baptized and Justified: Not just receiving the Holy Spirit through the baptism, but to also align ourselves with the Spirit of God, live in concert with the Spirit, to live in accordance with the Spirit's guideline...to me, that is the justification. That we can be justified in our life by living with the Holy Spirit within us.

To be cleansed of sins: If we have the Holy Spirit within us, we must live to have our lives clean to provide the most Holy of temples for the Holy Spirit to live. This is GOD we're talking about to live within us and through the Holy Spirit, we can access God for his forgiveness of all of our sins.

To be freed from demons: With the Holy Spirit, we can receive the cleansing of our sins which can be from our own devices or through the work of Satan who uses his special agents to infiltrate our lives to tempt and sway our ways away from God.

So, now we have Faith, Hope, Love and Baptism. We now are Baptized and Justified, cleansed of sins, and freed from demons. Now and only now can we be ready for the part that has become my personal ideal of the purpose of life...to serve God.

To serve God: The last of the request and looking again at the order of these requests tells me that our Church Fathers who created the sacrament knew in the depths of their hearts that the purest and most perfect way to serve God is if all of the other requests have been granted. The question that has been asked throughout the ages will always have as many answers as there are humans with just as many right answers. This is my consideration of the purpose of life and my constant conclusion that the request that my Godfather asked on my behalf when I was a child will always be my plan for my life. Service to God is personal and can take so many different forms, even a simple smile at someone can be a service to God by treating others as He commands us to, His way, not ours.

Ask yourself the question and especially during Lent when we are to strip ourselves down to the barest of life and find a way to become even close to God... what is the purpose of life? Reread the answer from the Godfather to the Celebrant. Know that it is always in my heart and prayer that everyone who becomes a part of God's family through Baptism will somehow live according to what the Church has determined to be the most critical components of what we desire...

“Faith, Hope, Love and Baptism, to be baptized and justified, to be cleansed of sins, to be freed from demons...and, TO SERVE GOD.

Deacon Randall Tellalian
St. Mary Yettem Parish