



YETTEM ԵՂԵՄ

Հրատարակութիւն Եղեմի Ս. Աստուծածիկն Հայաստանեայց Եկեղեցւոյ
A Publication of St. Mary Armenian Church Yettem, California
Rev. Fr. Mashdots Keshishian, Parish Priest

February 2021

The Feast of the Presentation of the Lord to the Temple

On February 14th each year, the Armenian Church celebrates *Tiarn'ndaraj* (*Dyarentarach* in Western Armenian), literally “the bringing forward of the Lord.” The Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord to the Temple is always 40 days after Armenian Christmas. Other names for the feast include *Derendas* (possibly a contraction of *Tiarn'ndaraj*) and *Candlemas*.

The Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord is told in the Gospel of Luke 2:21-40. It is the combination of two Jewish rituals followed by families during Jesus' time. First, it represented the idea that 40 days after a woman gave birth, she would go to the temple and offer a pigeon and lamb as offerings of atonement and thus, she would be “purified”. The feast also recognizes the long-standing tradition of Jews to symbolically dedicate their first-born son to God by giving a small gift to the temple.

When Mary and Joseph took the baby Jesus to the temple, Mary was seen by Simeon, an elderly and devoutly religious Jew who had prayed to God to keep him alive so he would see the Savior promised to mankind. When he saw Mary and her baby, Simeon suddenly sensed God's presence, and said: “*Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation which thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to thy people Israel.*” (Luke 2:29-32)

The feast commemorates the confirmation of Jesus' revelation as God. As we think about the revelation at the temple, we reflect on three ideas:

1. **The Son of God is a real person**, fully human. In his presentation at the temple, he took part in the totality of everyday human life and thereby repeatedly graced it with meaning and purpose. Although we are granted a precious few details of Jesus' life, this is one of them.

2. **God is real to Mary and Joseph.** In every moment of their lives, His presence and divine vision have charted their course. They listened for His voice and, as all such people do, they kept hearing it. When it was time to leave their private decisions and lives and join God's community, they did so, not out of a devotion and commitment that was culturally determined, but out of a determination into which they had been newly called.

3. Being real, **God's purpose became the guiding principal of this family.** It is not primarily the Son of God that Mary and Joseph take to the temple — for He needs no presentation — but the baby Jesus, a child who is to be raised in the faith that will both anchor him and yet allow him to reach high above and deep within to find the image and likeness of God that alone makes us truly human.

In the tradition of the Church, Evening Services are conducted on the night preceding the Feast Day. At the conclusion of the service, the priest lights a candle from the Holy Altar, and distributes the flame to all present. With great care, the faithful take the lit candles home (symbolically bringing light into the void) to light lamps or light a bonfire in the church courtyard.

Light is defined as life, as seen in John 1:4, "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men". Those who have faith through Him will have eternal life. This "life" is a gift Jesus brought from God into a dying world. ... The only way to receive "life" is to be known of the light through God and his promises. When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "*I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.*" (John 8:12)

In many parts of the world populated by Armenians, Tiarn'ndaraj is a holiday of great joy celebrated especially by families and newlyweds. People make bonfires at churches or near their homes, circle the fire, and sometimes jump over the flames in order to symbolize joy, happiness, and coming before God. The faithful light their candles by the fire burning at their church with the idea that the flame will illuminate their year until the next Tiarn'ndaraj. Many people return home with this flame in order to make a family bonfire.

Many customs have been inherited from the past. In Yettem this year, instead of a bonfire, a small symbolic fire will be made in a campfire pit from candles lit from the altar. Here, our faithful can gather and circle the flame if they so choose. The fire symbolizes the light, the warmth, and the joy we receive from God. The Ways and Means Committee will be distributing candles.

Parish Notes

ALTAR FLOWER DONATIONS

January 3rd – Richard, Lillian, Pete and David Safrazian in memory of Pete, Idalene, and Jack Barsamian.

January 17th – Stella Ananian, David and Lisa Krause, Bryan, Terry, Michelle, and Renee Ananian in memory of George Ananian.

January 24th – The family of Rose Shuklian in memory of their mother.

HOKEHANKIST REQUESTS

January 3rd

Pete Barsamian

Twelve years after his passing

Idalene Barsamian

Two years after her passing

Jack Barsamian

Two years after his passing

Requested by

Richard, Lillian, Pete and David Safrazian

January 17th

George Ananian

Ten years after his passing

Requested by

Stella Ananian, David and Lisa Krause, Bryan, Terry, Michelle, and Renee Ananian

January 24th

Rose Shuklian

Ten years after her passing

Requested by

The family of Rose Shuklian

HOKEHANKIST DONATIONS

(December 29, 2020 – January 24, 2021)

For Repose of George Ananian's Soul

January 17th – David and Lisa Krause, Serge and Judith Ananian.

ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

The Annual Parish Assembly Membership Meeting of St. Mary Armenian Church will be held this year on Zoom, Sunday, February 21st. Members will be able to start checking in at 12:30 PM with the meeting starting at 1:00 PM. Zoom link will be sent to parishioners emails three days before the meeting. If we do not have your email on file, please call the church office by Thursday, February 18th.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Amy Shuklian who was selected to become the chair of the Tulare County Board of Supervisors at their January 5th meeting. Father Mashdots was an invited guest at the ceremony.



RAFFLE WINNERS

Our first drawing for our St. Mary Armenian Church raffle was held last Sunday. Congratulations to Alice Toukdarian (\$150), Alan Borba (\$100) and Dottie Whitlock (\$50). Our next drawing will be held on February 14th. It's not too late to take part in the fun! If you don't have tickets or need additional ones, please contact Tina Peters at (559) 967-2593 by phone or text.



PARISH COUNCIL CORNER

We have had a very busy past month. With great hopes for a better 2021, we started this calendar year by celebrating Holy Badarak on New Years' Day outside and hearing an inspirational message from Father Mashdots. On January 3rd, we held our regular Sunday services. Three days later, we met outside again to hold services for Armenian Christmas on Wednesday, January 6th. Three full services in six days!

Over 50 parishioners joined us on Sunday, January 10th when we again celebrated Armenian Christmas, Theophany, Blessing of the Water, and held a *Home Blessing* service that is traditionally done on that day. Brian Poochigian served as our Godfather of the Cross. The weather was perfect for us and all services were conducted in our beautiful courtyard.

We keep having to adapt this year as we continue to find ways to protect our parishioners' health and safety from the coronavirus. Our Ways and Means will help us celebrate Poon Paregentan with their traditional spaghetti and meatball luncheon on February 14th with a slightly different twist. Read all about it in another part of this bulletin.

On February 21, we will be conducting our annual Parish Assembly meeting via Zoom. The Parish Assembly officers and our Parish Priest, Der Mashdots will be safely distanced in the Majarian Hall and we will be streaming the meeting to voting members. Voting members will be receiving a mailing prior to the meeting with all of the details.

Although anyone may *attend* Parish Assembly meetings, only "voting members" of the parish may vote on nominations, proposals, budgets and any other business during the meeting. Additionally, at this year's meeting we will be voting for the approval of our Parish Priest's preliminary appointment. Diocesan by-laws require that in order to vote at a meeting, a person must be approved as a member six months in advance.

We encourage members of our parish to become voting members of St. Mary Yetteem. Membership is \$150 per year and open to any baptized or chrismated member of the Armenian Apostolic Church who is at least eighteen years of age. In about the last 10 years, twenty-seven of our voting members have passed and another eight members have moved from our area.

Our call for membership is not about the money, but instead about building a strong and active parish. We have secured a passionate and caring parish priest, we have dedicated altar servers and choir members, we have strong leadership in our auxiliary organizations, and we are weathering the Covid-19 storm. Our church has been here for us since 1911 through thick and thin. If you are not a voting member, please consider joining in 2021.

Myron Sheklian
Chairman

LADIES SOCIETY NEWS

We held our first monthly meeting via Zoom on January 9th. Seventeen ladies and Der Mashdots logged in to participate. The best part of the meeting was seeing everyone's faces and enjoying each other's company. Our next meeting is scheduled for Saturday, February 6th. The time and the place to be announced via email depending on COVID regulations.

What I look forward to the most at our monthly meetings is the friendship, the laughter, and the feeling of belonging Ladies Society has among its members. Yes, we raise funds for the church and Sunday school, and we sometimes discuss seemingly mundane things. But it is at the monthly meetings where we can be with each other, enjoy each other's company, and share. If you have not been to a meeting lately, you are missing out. I encourage you to join us and partake in the fun and friendship.

The 2021 booklet is available. Thank you to Myron Sheklian who edited, printed, and assembled the booklet. It would not be available without him. If you have not gotten yours, please contact me at 559-786-1419 or by email at linda.hyewall@gmail.com.

Birthday wishes for February goes out to Debbie Agnew, Renee Ananian, and Tracy Valencia. We wish them all God's blessings.

Linda Farsakian-Wall
Chairlady



**THE TRADITION OF
POON PAREGENTAN**

Poon Paregentan is held on the last Sunday before Great Lent.

Paregentan is composed of two words; Paree and Gentanootioun which translates to *good living, rejoicing*. The word poon means main. Indeed, the word ‘Paregentan’ itself explains it fully, by the joining of the words ‘pari’ (good) and ‘gentan’ (living). It is a felicitation, a silent toast for a favor, for health, for long life, for success. It is a heartfelt expression of an attitude toward a loved one that is disclosed in gatherings and around a bountiful table. This points to the fact that the fasting period following Paregentan is longer than weekly Lents of other feasts, and it is tied to the main event of Christendom, the resurrection of our Lord.

The best explanation of Paregentan is from our Church father, Krigor Datevatz. According to him, the Biblical base is from the Old Testament from the life of Elijah when the Angel of the Lord tells him “Eat and drink because you will be traveling a long road”. (I King 19:7) In our case, this long road is the 40 days of the Great Lent journey.

Paregentan, according to Datevatz, doesn’t stand alone but points to the reality of a period of abstinence. Feasting of Paregentan will lead us into fasting; fun filled days will turn into days of penance. In other words, the zeal and ingenuity we show in the realm of having fun should be put into the work of enriching our spiritual life.

**CALLING ALL SUNDAY SCHOOL
STUDENTS!**

Sunday school is having Zoom classes on the second and fourth Sundays of each month at 11:00 AM. All Sunday school age students are welcomed and encouraged to attend! Please contact Tracy Valencia if you need the Zoom link and for any questions at 559-824-0913.

PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council's next Zoom meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 24th at 1:30 PM.

ACYO

ACYO will be having their monthly meeting on February 28th after church services.

On Sunday, January 24th our ACYO members attended Badarak and then held a meeting where they elected the new executive board for 2021. Anyone interested in becoming a member is encouraged to attend our meetings.

- Chairman: Elizabeth Torosian
- Vice Chairman: Pete Safrazian
- Secretary: Dustin Vartanian
- Treasurer: Melina Peters
- Advisor: Tracy Valencia



ARTSAKH AID

The parishes of our Diocese play an instrumental role in the rebuilding of our homeland and showed immense support to our homeland during the tragic war in Artsakh. To date our parish and individuals have contributed about \$6,872 to this effort.

As we move forward with these efforts in supporting the humanitarian efforts and strengthening Armenia and Artsakh, we ask that you make your future donations to **St. Mary Armenian Church** and write **“Armenia and Artsakh Relief”** on the memo line. In this way, we can forward and direct donations to go to Diocese- endorsed programs.

FACE MASKS

St. Mary Yetem face masks are available for purchase in the church office or at the Parish Council desk on Sundays. Thank you to David and Lisa Krause for this project. Suggested minimum donation for each mask is \$5.

ALL services are livestreamed on our webpage at www.stmaryyettem.org. There are links on the "Camera Tab" for INSIDE and OUTSIDE services. The Holy Badarak is streamed on our Facebook page each Sunday beginning at 10:30 AM.

The St. Mary Armenian Church of Yettem Facebook page and website will keep you informed about our church schedules, events and miscellaneous happenings. Make sure you stop and visit often as we are always adding lots of pictures and information.

ST. MARY MEMORIAL WALL

There are now 35 available spaces for new names on the Memorial Wall. The cost for each space is \$200. You can place an order for an additional name(s) by contacting Jim Soxman: ph. 559-936-2227, or email: jimbeasoxman@sbcglobal.net

PAYPAL

You may access PayPal through the St. Mary Yettem web-site (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.

COOKBOOK

A second edition of the "Treasured Recipes from the Garden of Eden" has been made available. These cookbooks make a great Christmas 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.

Fr. Mashdots is available for pastoral care, spiritual guidance, and support. Please inform Der Hayr of those who may be sick at home, hospitalized or may simply want to talk, so that he can organize a time to contact them. (559) 528-6892 or Reverend Father Mashdots Keshishian at (818) 293-9098.

Church office hours are Tuesday-Friday, 9:30 AM to 2:30 PM.

Rev. Fr. Mashdots Keshishian

Email: fathermashdots@stmaryyettem.org

Cell (818) 293-9098

Myron Sheklian, Parish Council Chairman

Email: myron@sheklian.com

Cell: (559) 280-7315

Home: (559) 733-4417

Sonya, Church Secretary

Email: sonya@stmaryyettem.org

Church office (559) 528-6892

HOME BLESSING CONDUCTED

On Sunday, January 10th, following services Der Mashdots conducted a Home Service as is in the tradition on Armenian Christmas. On this occasion, God's blessing is asked for homes. Fr. Mashdots blessed the bread, water and salt. These three fundamental elements are essential life-giving gifts for human life. Bread symbolizes the word of God, salt represents man in this world - *you are the salt of the earth*, and water represents cleanliness. It is through water that we are cleansed by baptism, renewed in Christ and united with Him.



Armenian Apostolic Church Hymns CD performed by Rev. Fr. Zaven Markosyan is available for distribution and all the donations will go to St. Mary Yettem.

St. Mary Armenian Church, Yetteem

FEBRUARY 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6 Ladies Society meeting
7	8	9	10	11 St. Vartan the Warrrior & his Companians	12 Lincoln's Birthday	13
14 Poon Paregentan The Presentation of the Lord to the Temple (Dyarentarach)	15 First Day of Lent Presidents' Day	16	17	18	19	20
21 2 nd Sunday of the Lent (Expulsion) Annual Parish Assembly Zoom Meeting Registration at 12:30 Meeting at 1:00 PM	22	23	24 Parish Council Zoom meeting at 1:30 PM	25	26	27
28 3 rd Sunday of the Lent (Prodigal Son) ACYO meeting after services						

7

Sunday Schedule:

Morning Service (Matins) 9:45 AM
Divine Liturgy 10:30 AM

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

2020/2021

Agajanian, Melvin & Regina
Ananian, Charlie and Elizabeth
Ananian, Serge and Judith
Dadian, Carol Ann and Arnold
Davidian, Margie L
Davidian, Sark Jr.
Derrick, Sadie
Enfiedjian, Sarkis and Hasmik
Garoian, Gerard and Sylvia
Gomes, John & Janet
Groefsema, Bruce and Gail
Hagopian, Richard and Geraldine
Halbourian, Alice
Hampar, Arthur
Hebeshha, Madlien N.
Jendian, Dcn. Allan & Rosemary
Kizirian, Abe and Sandra
Krikorian, Gary and Nancy
Margosian, Carrie, Amos, Margo and Zoie
Margosian, Lucille
Margosian, Mrs. Rose Marie
McWilliams, Richard and Janice
Menendian, David and Ardemis
Menendian, Mari Louise
Nunes, Richard and Joyce
Ouzounian, George and Shirley
Peloian, Joyce and Gary McCrea
Peters, Darrell & Tina
Pilavian, Pierre & Melissa
Poochigian, Jerry and Julie
Sarabian, Charles and Lori
Sheklian, Myron and Debbie
Skaff, Judy and Mike
Soxman, James and Beatrice
Tolegian, Madelaine
Torosian, Patty
Toukdarian, Alice and Aresa
Vartanian, Sandra
Wall, Mark and Linda
Zakarian, Archie and Kathy
Zerounian, Marilyn

TOTAL

\$5,580.00



GRADUATE

Pete Safrazian has graduated from Fresno State with a Bachelor's degree in Mathematics with an emphasis on Statistics. His passion for basketball and statistics has sparked his interest as a sports statistician/data analyst, in which he is currently finding employment for. Pete is the son of Richard and Lillian Safrazian and grandson of the late Pete and Idalene Barsamian.

Sponsored by the Ways and Means Committee

POON PAREGENTAN

Sunday, February 14, 2021

After Church Services

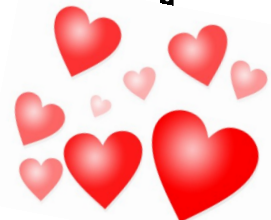


Enjoy lunch

Outside under the trees -or- ToGo

Lunch Includes:

- Spaghetti and Meatballs
- Salad
- Garlic Bread
- Valentine Cookie



\$15 per person

Please RSVP by Wednesday, February 10

To the Church Office—(559) 528-6892

-or- Email—lunch@stmaryyettem.org



Candles will be available, lit from the Bonfire during the

Dyarentarach Services

(Feast of Presentation of our Lord to the Temple)

****Donations would be appreciated****



**Theophany / Armenian Christmas
January 10, 2021**

Feast of St. Ghevond the Priest and His Companions

The Feast of St. Ghevond the Priest and His Companions is dedicated to the blessed memory of the Armenian priests who fought alongside St. Vartan and the entire Armenian Nation for their Christian faith in 451 A.D. in the Battle of Avarayr.

The eldest among them was Priest St. Ghevond, and among his companions were Catholics Hovsep, Bishop Sahak of Syunik, Bishop Tatik of Basen, Priest Mushe or Mushegh, Priest Arshen, Priest Samuel, Deacons Abraham and Kajajn. After the Battle of Avarayr the Persian King Hazkert took revenge on Armenians and ordered to kill the brave priests. According to the tradition the day of the Feast of St. Ghevond the Priest and His Companions is the day of the clergy.



Feast of St. Vartan the Captain and Companions

The Feast of St. Vartan the Captain and his 1036 Companions marks their martyrdom 1551 years ago in the battle of Avarayr, fighting for the freedom of conscience and religion for the Armenian Nation. It was to be the first testimony of many to follow that the Armenians were a people who freely chose Christ, remained steadfast in their Christian faith, and would not betray that faith for any ransom. “Vartanants” as it is commonly called, is one of the most sacred feasts of the Armenian people.

In the Armenian Church, the Feast day of St. Vartan the Captain and Companions is also celebrated as the Naming Day of His Holiness Karekin II. To mark the occasion, at the conclusion of Divine Liturgy, a Pontifical Prayer is offered before the Holy Altar of Descent.

St. Mary Armenian Church
P.O. Box 367
Yettem, California 93670
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