



YETTEM ԵՂԵՄ

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

March 2021

GREAT LENT... GATEWAY TO NEW LIFE

“Hear my prayer, O LORD, and let my cry come to You. Do not hide Your face from me in the day of my trouble.” Psalm 102:2-3 It is absolutely astonishing to think of the steps our church fathers have taken in preparation of embracing the New Life, the gateway to which is Great Lent. Why? Because through 40 days of fasting and prayerful self-reflection, Great Lent purifies us so that we may see the holy face of God.

Humanity in general and the Armenian Christians in particular, need to fill their lives with the vibrant presence of God, so that the words that emerge from our soul become the words of God and our deeds become the tangible reflection of those very words.

“Hear my prayers, O LORD.” The supplications that stem from our prayers must originate from sincere heart and must be the result of our inner, spiritual urge. It is the desire of every Christian to get closer to God, dwell in His presence and indulge in the goodness of new life. We offer our heartfelt prayers to God, beseeching him to hear our pleas and direct our steps towards the light and truth.

“Let my cry come to You.” The words of the psalmist emphasize the desire of our hearts, that is for our prayers to become audible to God, because our spiritual lives have the thirst for God’s word, love and wisdom.

“Do not hide Your face from me.” With these words, the psalmist, on behalf of all of us, begs of God not to deny us His mercy and compassion.

During the spiritual journey of Great Lent, we urge you to recite the following words from the bottom of your hearts as you wake up and open your eyes to sunlight:

“Hear my prayer, O LORD, and let my cry come to You. Do not hide Your face from me in the day of my trouble.” Psalm 102:2-3

Let us recite this psalm before bed as well so that we may surrender our mind and soul into the hands of God.

Continuing our spiritual journey let us select prayers and readings from the scriptures and the writings of the holy fathers so that we may adorn our essence with the jewels of heavenly mysteries. The days of Great Lent should differ greatly from the rest of the days of the calendar, for lent offers a unique opportunity for spiritual preparation through which the new and cleansed person is born, ready to embrace the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who is the anchor of our faith.

Therefore, once again, we ask you kindly to dedicate special time for prayer and devotional reading, especially in the morning and at night, so that your days and spiritual journey may be blessed.

For this reason, the church fathers have established special rites for Great Lent, with unique prayers, hymns, and scriptural readings, which with its melodic sweetness engulf the hearts of the faithful with the love of God, leaving no space for darkness. When we chant those hymns, and reflect on the prayers, we achieve ultimate peace in body, mind, and soul. Without peace, we will be unable to welcome the Resurrection of Christ.

With your daily devotional readings, we intend to present you daily reflections derived from our readings. We hope that through those reflections, you can hear the prayers of our heart.

*Archbishop Hovnan Derderian
Primate of the Western Diocese*

YOUR LENTEN EXPERIENCE 2021 A PRIMER

What is Lent? The period just before Holy Week is called Lent. It is a time for reflection and self-evaluation. The Church guides the individual believer through this period by offering means of self-discipline and instruction.

When? Lent begins on the Monday following Poon Paregentan (Day of Great Living) and continues through the Friday before Palm Sunday. This year Great Lent begins on February 15 and ends on March 26, 2021, just before Holy Week.

The Purpose: During the 40-day period of Lent the believer is called to taper life down to the bare essentials. You should ask yourself what is really necessary to live? You'll find that much of life is made up of excesses, which clutter our lives and our values. When tempted in the wilderness, our Lord Jesus reminds us that "One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

Dietary Restrictions: Part of the Lenten journey involves "giving up" certain foods. In the Armenian Church you are called to abstain from all foods that come from animals. This includes all animal products, including flesh meats, milk & dairy items, eggs, fowl, poultry, fish, etc. – anything that comes from an animal! Find Lenten Recipes! 40 of them at <https://tinyurl.com/lent40recipe> Diet is only one small part of the Lent. Jesus instructs us, "It is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles." (Matthew 15:11) In this spirit, the individual believer is asked to inspect the content of his or her character and act in charity.

The Most Essential: Certainly, LOVE must be at the focus of your Lenten journey because it is the one ingredient of life that gives meaning and purpose to our existence. Love is the necessity of life that needs to be cultivated and nurtured during Lent so that it becomes the main purpose of existence after the Lenten period. While abstinence and restrictions are one part of Lent, the greater task for the believer is to be in love and harmony with his or her family, friends and nature.

Church Services: Even the physical church in the Armenian Church changes in outward appearance during Lent. The curtain is drawn across the altar to remind us that sin prevents us from truly enjoying God. The prayer "Havadov Khosdovanim" (= I Confess with Faith) is offered in particular. St. Nersess Shnorhali, the 12th century Catholicos, wrote this set of 24 prayers and they are considered among the most powerful prayers in the Armenian Church. By following the services, practices and prayer life of the Armenian Church, the believer comes to find the most essential of life's joys. Peace through God is understood and Lent becomes a prelude to true Christian existence.

Fr. Vazken Movsesian

Parish Notes

CONDOLENCES

On behalf of our St. Mary Yetteem parish family, we wish to extend our deepest sympathy to Margie A. Davidian, Annie Davidian, Sara Davidian, Skylar Davidian and Gregory Davidian on the passing of Greg Davidian. Greg passed on January 30th.

WEEKLY BULLETIN SPONSORSHIP

February 28th - Margie L. Davidian, in memory of her grandmothers Zaroohie Davidian and Makroohie Derderian.

ALTAR FLOWER DONATIONS

February 7th – Dr. Janice and husband Leslie Emerzian, Ronald and Barbara Mortanian, and four grandchildren and six great grandchildren in memory of Mary Mortanian.

February 14, 2021- Lucille Margosian, Evelyn Crowder and Jack Boudakian.

HOKEHANKIST REQUESTS

February 7th

Reba Ananian

Three years after her passing

Requested by

The Reba Ananian Family

Mary Mortanian

Three years after her passing

Requested by

Dr. Janice and husband Leslie Emerzian

Ronald and Barbara Mortanian

Four grandchildren and six great grandchildren

February 14th

Khacher and Shahtane Majarian

Nishan Armenag and Estelle and Daniel

Armenag Elükuchukian

Megardich, Hampar, Haroutune and Sahag

Hacher and Mary Boudakian

Charlie Garabed and Patricia and Randal Allan

Harry Haroutune and Kathryn

Setrag and Annig Margosian

Amos, Aron, George, Lucy and Natali

Sherman "Spud" and Robert Sherman Crowder

George and Margaret Kevorkian and Donald

Ghazer Meghdesian

Veghia Gaghuntian

Ara and Betty Kaprielian

Marilyn Missakian

Requested by

Evelyn Crowder, Lucille Margosian and Jack Boudakian

February 28th

Zaroohie Davidian,

Fifty years after her passing

Makroohie Derderian,

Thirty five years after her passing

Requested by Margie L. Davidian

HOKEHANKIST DONATIONS

(January 25, 2021- February 24, 2021)

For Repose of Reba Ananian's Soul

February 7th – Sharon Ananian and Lydia Montoya.

For Repose of Family Member's Souls

February 14th – Evelyn Crowder.

RAFFLE WINNERS

Our second drawing for our St. Mary Armenian Church raffle was held Sunday, February 14th. Congratulations to...

(\$150) Sandra Choboian

(\$100) Steve Luisi

(\$50) Amos Margosian

Our next drawing will be held in March 28th. 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

I recently received this email message from Sarkis Enfiadjian:

"No other statement exemplifies the Yettem community then "Where there is a will, there is a way". The will of the Yettem parish is unmatched and that is why it will flourish as long as there are two gathered in HIS name." With that message, that theme, here is this month's Parish Council report.

Our Ways and Means Committee strategically planned an eventful Sunday afternoon February 14th to celebrate Poon Paregentian and Dyarentarach. Immediately after the Divine Liturgy, Father Mashdots, Deacon Randy Tellalian, Sub Deacon Alan Farsakian and altar server Dustin Vartanian conducted the Antastan Service (the Blessing of the Four Corners of the Earth) around the burning fire pit (thank you Margie L. Davidian) that was lit from the flame from the Holy Altar. Candles donated and decorated by Marlene and Colleen Majarian were made available to parishioners to carry the light forward to their homes. A delicious Spaghetti and meatball luncheon featuring Margie's homemade sauce was served to 79 individuals yielding a \$1205 profit. The specially prepared Valentine Day cookies that were purchased were actually made by Alec Yahnian. Thank you to Margie, the Soxmans, the Skaffs, the Peters and the Sheklians for donating the entire meal and for the entire Ways and Means Committee for your help that day.

A week later, we held our annual Parish Assembly meeting on Sunday, February 21st. The meeting was a "hybrid model" with some of the members attending in person and others joining in on Zoom. As a result, this was one of our best attended annual meetings in years! Chairman Alan Farsakian did a tremendous job connecting with both physical and virtual attendees and efficiently running the meeting. It was wonderful to be joined together from Yettem, Cutler, Shaver, Orange Cove, Dinuba, Visalia, Elk Grove, Sierra Madre and Long Beach.

During the meeting, Bea Soxman was recognized for being the first and only woman to serve as chairperson of the parish in the last 110

years. It was also noted she was elected to this position for twelve years – longer than any other chairman. His Eminence Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese of North America sent a personalized message of congratulations that was shared with the meeting attendees. Former Yettem Parish Priest Zaven Markosyan also joined in on the Zoom meeting to offer his appreciation to Bea.

Reports were shared, the budget that was proposed was approved, and new officers were elected. Elected to serve on Parish Council were Gerard Garoian and Judy Skaff incumbents and new members Adrienne Poochigian, Lisa Krause and Mari Louise Menendian. Alan Farsakian was re-elected as Parish Assembly Chairman as were Jim Soxman as Vice Assembly Chair and Laurie Menendian as Secretary. Elected as delegates to the Diocesan Assembly were Judy Skaff and Debbie Sheklian. Also elected were Linda Farsakian-Wall and Michael Tellian as auditors.

In New Business, the approval of the appointment of Father Mashdots Keshishian as Parish Priest for St. Mary Yettem was unanimously approved. We pray that we will be together for many, many years!

On Monday, February 22nd funeral services for Gregory Davidian were conducted in front of our outside altar for what was probably the first such service in Yettem history. Covid has taught our parish flexibility. Over these past months we have learned to do things differently and do them safely. I am thankful we were able to provide Greg's family with some comfort as a result.

"Where there is a will, there is a way."

Myron Sheklian
Parish Council Chair

HOME BLESSINGS

The following home blessings were conducted during the last month:

Jerry and Julie Poochigian
Jim and Bea Soxman
Mark and Linda Wall
Mari Louise Menendian
Brian and Adrienne Poochigian

LADIES SOCIETY NEWS

We are back live and in person! Come join us for our March monthly meeting on Saturday, March 6th 11:30 AM at the church hall and enjoy the fellowship of our members. A Lenten lunch will be offered. COVID regulations of socially distanced tables will be observed.

Following the meeting, Yn. Maral will be demonstrating how to make tahini bread. If you would like to learn how to prepare and roll out the dough, please contact me at 559-786-1419. Reservations help us know how much ingredients to purchase. Your masterpieces will then be served at the Lenten lunch the following day. All are welcomed to join us and learn.

Ladies Society is sponsoring a Lenten lunch on Sunday, March 7th following church. The menu features, vospov kufta (lentil kufta), plaki (bean salad), eech (Lenten keyma), green salad, olive bread, and dessert. Dining outside and take-out options are available at no charge. Donations are appreciated. For reservations, call me at 559-786-1419 or Sonya at the church office at 559-528-6892.

Our condolences to our members Margie A. Davdian on the loss of her husband and Annie and Sara Davidian on the loss of their father, Gregory Davidian. To all the Davidian and Ananian families we offer our sympathies for the loss of their nephew and cousin. Greg was a lifelong member of St. Mary Armenian Church community since his baptism in our church. He will be missed. May he rest in peace.

The 2021 booklet is available. If you have not gotten yours, please contact me by phone at 559-786-1419 or by email at linda.hyewall@gmail.com.

Birthday wishes for March goes out to Annie Davidian, Elizabeth Ananian, Michelle Ananian, and Lucille Margosian. We wish them all God's blessings.

*With God's love and guidance,
Linda Farsakian-Wall
Chairlady*



On February 2nd, an exceptionally large part of the mulberry tree outside the church office and hall fell down. Fortunately, it happened when it did without anyone under it. The tree shattered one of the cement tables and bench sets that were nearby. That cement slab and bench area project was done in the Fall of 1995 and the Spring of 1996. Original donors for that project were Arshaloos Horasanian and Lucinne Menendian Bennett.

As a parish we are grateful to David, Laurie and Mari Louise Menendian for covering the cost of the replacement table and benches. The Menendians made their donation in memory of their Aunt Lucinne Bennett.

CALLING ALL SUNDAY SCHOOL STUDENTS!

Sunday School is starting back in person classes on Sunday, February 28th. Sunday School meets 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 for any questions at 559-824-0913.

PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council's next Zoom meeting will be held on Thursday, March 18th at 7:00 PM.

ACYO

ACYO's next meeting will be announced.

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 \$6,972 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 Yettem 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.

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 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 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

St. Mary Armenian Church, Yetteem

MARCH 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6 Ladies Society Lenten Luncheon Meeting in the hall at 11:30 AM
7 4 th Sunday of the Lent (Steward) Lenten Lunch sponsored by the Ladies Society	8	9	10 Median day of lent	11	12	13 Forty Martyrs of Sebastia
14 5 th Sunday of the Lent (Judge) Sunday School In person	15	16	17	18 Parish Council Zoom meeting at 7:00 PM	19	20 St. Gregory the Illuminator Commitment to the Pit
21 6 th Sunday of the Lent (Advent)	22	23	24	25	26	27
28 Palm Sunday Sunday School In person	29	30 Remembrance of the Ten Virgins	31			

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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

LENTEN LUNCH

Sponsored by

St. Mary Yettem Ladies Society

Sunday, March 7

Following church services

MENU FEATURES:

vospov kufta (lentil kufta), plaki (bean salad)

eech (Lenten keyma), green salad

olive bread, dessert

Dining outside and take-out options are available at no charge.

Donations are appreciated

For reservations call

Linda Farsakian-Wall at 559-786-1419

or Sonya at the church office at 559-528-6892

Sponsored by the
Ways and Means Committee



Palm Sunday

BAKE SALE

After Church Services

Sunday, March 28, 2021

Choreg

Simit

Nazook

Gata

Kataifi

Bread Sticks

Plus many more

Homemade Baked Goods



****SUPPORT the Ways and Means Bake Sale****

Donations of any Armenian Baked Goods or
Specialty Desserts will be greatly
appreciated and accepted
the day of the Bake Sale.

Text or Call Judy Skaff—(559) 799-1198



St. Mary Yettem ACYO

Annual Easter Luncheon

Sunday, April 4, 2021

Immediately following Easter Church Services



Beef Kebab

Salad, Pilaf, Green Beans, Bread,
Dessert and Bottled Water

Enjoy your Lunch

****Outside under the Trees—or—ToGo****

\$20 per person

Please RSVP by Tuesday, March 30

Text or Call Elizabeth Torosian—(559) 623-7801

-or- Email—lunch@stmaryyettem.org

Please specify if you would like your order(s) as
Dine-In or ToGo



Tricky Tray Basket Raffle

\$10 for 26 tickets

If you would like to donate a basket or item(s) contact
Dustin Vartanian at (559) 623-3520 -or- dustylvart@gmail.com



February 2021 Yettem Activities



INITAMCY

Prayer is a time to have an intimate relationship with God. Given our hectic schedules, we might not have the opportunity to partake in this relationship. However, the season of the Great Lent, which lasts for 48 days and prepares us for the Victorious Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, is the perfect time to partake in this relationship with God.

Fasting is a source of abstinence from desirable foods, while prayer brings us ever closer to God. "As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God." (Psalms 42.1) Indeed, God quenches our spiritual thirst.

"Prayers, like tears of grace, purify the mind and body, ridding both from evil thoughts and desires." St. Gregory the Illuminator.

Prayer is the pure expression of gentleness, tranquility, pacification, and love. Through joy, peace and gratification, prayer is the quest for perfection. Prayer is the remedy and source of solace for pain, sorrow, and doubt. St. NEGHOS SINAYETSI

Prayer is the castle of strength, the pillar of reaffirmation, the basis of faith, the anchor of hope, the staircase to God. Prayer is the crowning of pride, the reason of salvation, the opportunity to perform good, the guide to patience, the acquaintance of godliness, the host of the Holy Spirit. Prayer is the dispeller of demons, the destroyer of the evil one, and the defender of its attacks. Therefore, let us pray without anger and doubt and let us especially offer our prayers for all. KHOSROV ANTZEVATSI

"To pray is to give flavor to your life, surroundings, work, and relationships." Gregory of Datev

"Just as the grass and the trees may be overwhelmed by the heat of the sun during the day and be refreshed by the evening breeze, our minds and souls are plagued by evil and sinful thoughts during day, requiring solace and comfort at night, which is realized through prayer."

Pray grants us the opportunity to think not only for ourselves but also for others.

Like almsgiving, prayer is another way of helping others in need. The sole difference between them is that almsgiving is done through us, while prayer reaches the less fortunate through God.

The most spiritually enriching moment in prayer is when we devote our soul entirely to it. We are spiritually enriched when we encounter His presence in the depth of our soul and share an intimate moment with God, enjoying the sweetness of His presence and His boundless love. It is at this moment when our souls find comfort and our spiritual thirst is quenched. Essentially, genuine prayer must be in spirit and in truth.

Let us devote ourselves to prayer and never grow weary of it. Let us offer our intimate moment with God. Let us talk and open our hearts to Him, sharing with Him our pains and concerns. Let us lend our ears to Him, for He has much to say.

Mashdots Jobanian

Christian Education Department of the Western Diocese

St. Mary Armenian Church
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