



YETTEM ԵՌԵՄ

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

January 2022

PRIMATE'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

*“Put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires;
be renewed in the spirit of your mind; put on the new man which was created according to God,
in true righteousness and holiness” Ephesians 4:22-24*

At the threshold of the New Year and the Feast of the Nativity, we are invited by the All-Benevolent God to reject and relinquish our old being, *“corrupted by its deceitful desires.”*

From the first glance, it seems to be easy to relinquish the old, dilapidated, demoralized, and unholy things that make us vulnerable at every step of the way. However, one who wanders on the wide path of wickedness shall find it extremely difficult to abandon and emancipate himself from the snares of darkness and walk through the narrow path of righteousness without repentance. The latter comes with remorse, confession, and retribution, coupled with prayer and good deeds.

Facing the old self requires spiritual maturity, courage, and honesty as we become the target of our own criticism. It is extremely difficult to forego one's ego, overcome shame, and save face, for rejecting the past means to obliterate the pseudo-image that we have created for ourselves and presented to others. Christ, however, states *“No one puts new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved” (Matthew 9:17).*

A year ago, as a nation, we experienced a devastating loss. Our tears have not yet dried nor have our wounds been healed. Armenia and Artsakh are still hurting. Have we been courageous enough to reflect on our flaws, analyze our shortcomings, shed light on the corrupt, inhumane and negative aspects, which had infiltrated into our lives, causing collateral spiritual and moral damage? Have we been able to wake up from the lethal sleep that had veiled our eyes from reality? Do we comprehend the heftiness of defeat or do we continue to live intoxicated by our triumphant past?

Undoubtedly, we need to repent and pray fervently as a nation, in order that we may get rid of the *“old self”* and give birth to the *“new person”* in Christ. Otherwise, we shall not be able to fully embrace the greatest miracle of all, namely the Birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Often times, by observing current events, people make the statement that the world has changed. However, the truth of the matter is that the world is unchanged. It is humanity that has changed. Man has distanced himself from God and stripped himself from the virtues of the Spirit. Therefore, it is imperative that we quest the path of justice and true holiness and return to the bosom of the All-Merciful and All-Loving God. When St. Paul, the Apostle speaks about the *“new man”* in his Epistle to the Ephesians, he specifically emphasizes the need *“to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.”*

(Continued on the back page)

Parish Notes

CONDOLENCES

On behalf of our St. Mary Parish family, we offer our deepest sympathy to Richard Yahnian and Family, Sub-Deacon David and Jennifer Yahnian and Family, Renee Yahnian and Family, Marilyn Zerounian and Family on the recent passing of Sylvia Yahnian who entered her eternal rest on December 27th.

ALTAR FLOWERS DONATION

December 5th – Julie Poochigian
December 12th – Linda and Mark Wall and Alan, Marceen and Nick Farsakian in memory of Betty Farsakian
December 12th – Mike and Judy Skaff and Family in memory of Alice Dudukian

HOKEHANKIST REQUESTS

December 12th

Betty Farsakian

Eight years after her passing,

Requested by

Linda and Mark Wall and Family
Larry and Wendy Farsakian and Family
Alan and Marceen Farsakian and Family

December 12th

Alice Dudukian

Eighteen years after her passing,

Requested by

Mike and Judy Skaff and Family

December 19th

Deacons and Sub-deacons of St. Mary Yettem:
Deacon Sirag Kalfayan, Deacon Garabed Simonian, Sub Deacon Harry Neffian, Deacon Mihran Davidian, and Deacon Kay Hagopian.

Pete, Idalene and Jack Barsamian

Requested by

Lillian and Richard Safrazian and Family

HOKEHANKIST DONATION

(November 28, 2021 – December 26, 2021)

For Repose of Betty Farsakian's Soul

December 12th - Alan, Marceen and Nick Farsakian and Linda and Mark Wall

For Repose of Alice Dudukian's Soul

December 12th - Mike and Judy Skaff and Family

HOLD THE DATE

Our Annual Parish Assembly Meeting will be held on **Sunday, February 6, 2022.**

ARMENIAN CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

Armenian Christmas will be celebrated on **Sunday, January 9, 2022.** Full details were mailed out Wednesday, December 15th. A luncheon will be held following the day's worship and will feature a chicken and beef kebab plate with rice and bulgur pilaf, salad, carrots, bread, dessert, and drinks. See attached flier in this bulletin. Please help us plan by calling the church office, email lunches@stmaryyettem.org, or texting (559) 280-7315. (See flier)

FEAST OF THEOPHANY/ARMENIAN CHRISTMAS TO BE CELEBRATED

In the Armenian Church, "Armenian Christmas," as it is popularly called is officially celebrated on January 6th and it is a Major Feast Day. Historically, all Christian churches celebrated Christ's birth on January 6th until the fourth century.

Because January 6th falls on a weekday this year, in Yettem we will be celebrating on Sunday, January 9th. Armenian Christmas is a culmination of celebrations of events related to Christ's Incarnation. Theophany or Epiphany (or Astvadz-a-haytnootyoon in Armenian) means "revelation of God," which is the central theme of the Christmas Season in the Armenian Church.

Thursday - January 6, 2022

Morning Services at 9:30 a.m.

Feast of the Nativity and Theophany of our Lord Jesus Christ

Divine Liturgy at 10:15 a.m.

Sunday - January 9, 2022

Morning Services at 9:30 a.m.

Divine Liturgy at 10:15 a.m.

Blessing of Water/Baptism of the Cross will take place at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy
Godfather of the Cross – Nickolas Souren Farsakian
Celebrant & Preacher – Rev. Father Mashdots Keshishian

Hokehankist (Requiem Service) – Hokehankist will not be conducted during these days because January 9th (The Birth and Revelation of Jesus Christ) is one of the five major celebrations of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

Yughakin – During the Christmas season, it is customary in the Armenian Church for parishioners to make a special offering called Yughakin. Originally, this was to purchase oil to keep the lamps of the church burning brightly. This is now used for the general expenses of the church, again to enable it to continue to provide the light of Jesus Christ.

PARISH COUNCIL CORNER

There are many features and items within our beloved St. Mary Armenian Church which we often take for granted. How often have you been greeted coming into church with the sound of a clanging bell? Have you been moved by the tolling of a bell nine times as the Deacon carries the chalice around the altar before presenting it to the celebrant during Holy Badarak? Have you been brought to even more tears as the casket of a loved one is carried out from the sanctuary following a funeral service while a bell is steadily rung as mourners solemnly exit? Our Yettem bell has an amazing history.

During the late 1800s, the Troy-Watervliet area in New York's Capital District was considered the bell capital of the world. Its four bell manufacturers sold a combined total of more than 100,000 bells to every continent except Antarctica. The foundry operated by Andrew Meneely was both the most successful and the longest-running bell foundry in the Capital District. Andrew had three sons, who at one time or another were involved in the family business. A third son, Clinton formed his own business after returning home from the Civil War and not being allowed back into the family business by his brothers.

The Clinton H. Meneely Foundry proved to be highly successful in its own right manufacturing twenty-five thousand bells including the replacement Liberty Bell in Philadelphia and the Women's Liberty Bell on behalf of the suffragist movement. Both the Clinton Meneely Bell Company and the Meneely Bell Company lasted well into the 1900s. During and after World War II, a combination of metal shortages and the increasing popularity of electronic chimes finally led to the closure of both factories in 1952.

What does all of this have to do with our Yettem Church? The story continues.

The bell in our church belfry was originally in the clock tower of the old Bank of Visalia at the corner of East Main and Church Streets circa 1874. That bell was donated to our St. Mary Armenian Church by the City of Visalia in 1947 and installed by the

workmen of the Friant-Kern Canal in the newly built brick sanctuary that replaced the original 1911 church. That is the church bell that you hear today that was cast in Troy, New York by the Clinton H. Meneely Foundry in 1885!

(Special thanks to Chuck Simonian for sharing a chapter from a book entitled "Great Inventors of New York's Capital District" by Timothy Starr.)

Myron Sheklian
Parish Council Chairman



LADIES SOCIETY FUNDRAISER

This month an additional donation was received for the Ladies Society fundraiser:

I am thankful for . . . 1) my grandparents, my parents, my siblings; 2) survivors who were exiled across the world a hundred years ago and created a thriving diaspora; 3) my St. Mary Yettem Church which I love and which loves me; 4) our beloved majestic mountains just a half hour away, life-giving water, the scent of the surf, and a waterfall; 5) music that lifts me up into the sublime; 6) my Jim and the gifts he gave to the story of my life. . . *Mari Louise Menendian*

LADIES SOCIETY NEWS

The annual Holiday Bazaar was held in December, and what a success it was! The festive atmosphere was palpable! The live auction brought lively competition between the bidders. Thanks to all those that donated an item, to the people in attendance, to those who sent proxy bidders, and to all who placed a bid, bought baked goods, and/or bought kufta, the event raised over \$9,000! This money will go a long way in supporting our church.

It is official! The new executive board officers have been named. Chairlady is Mari Louise Menendian, vice-chairlady is Margie L. Davidian, recording secretary is Donna Torosian, corresponding secretary is Janel Zerounian, treasurer is Gina Ananian, and advisors are Renee Ananian and Janice McWilliams. Congratulations to the new board. They will carry on the strength of Ladies Society and of our church.

January happy birthday wishes to Janet Gomes, Adrienne Pochigian, Donna Torosian, Hasmik Gregory, and Peggy Fernandez.

Our prayer to all, may the right-hand of our Lord guard and shelter you day and night.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Linda Farsakian-Wall

RAFFLE

Tina Peters has sent out information and tickets for our **2022 raffle**. If you haven't received tickets in the mail and would like some, contact Tina at (559) 967-2593 by phone or text. (See flier)

RAFFLE WINNERS

Our twelfth drawing for our St. Mary Armenian Church raffle was held on Sunday, December 5th. Congratulations to...

(\$150) Betty Krikorian

(\$100) Joe Kalashian

(\$50) Carrie Margosian

Our **first church raffle of 2022 will be held Sunday, January 9th** 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 Christmas lunch Saturday, December 11th.



ACYO

ACYO meeting will be held on **Sunday, January 23, 2022 after church services.**

WAYS AND MEANS

Ways and Means next meeting will be held on **Thursday, January 13, 2022 via Zoom at 7:00 PM.**

PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council's next meeting will be held via Zoom on **Thursday, January 20th at 6 PM.**

SUNDAY SCHOOL

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



Do you shop using **AMAZON**? Amazon offers a program called **AmazonSmile** FREE to you that will pay our church 0.5% of all of your purchases. AmazonSmile is a simple way for you to support St. Mary YetteM every time you shop. AmazonSmile is available at smile.amazon.com and can be activated in the Amazon Shopping app for iOS and Android phones. When you shop with AmazonSmile, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added benefit to our church. Yes, you use your same account on Amazon.com and AmazonSmile.

To use AmazonSmile, simply go to smile.amazon.com on your web browser or activate AmazonSmile in the Amazon Shopping app on your iOS or Android phone within the Settings or Programs & Features menu. On your web browser, you can add a bookmark to smile.amazon.com to make it even easier to return and start your shopping with AmazonSmile.

On your first visit to AmazonSmile, you will be prompted to select a charitable organization to receive donations from your future eligible AmazonSmile purchases. Once AmazonSmile is activated in the Amazon Shopping app every eligible purchase you make through AmazonSmile will result in a donation to St. Mary YetteM.

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 YetteM website (www.stmaryyettem.org) and click on the "Donation" button on the bottom of the Home Page. 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.

Father 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.

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 YetteM 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.



ST. MARY ARMENIAN CHURCH

JANUARY 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 New Year's Day
2	3	4	5 Eve of the Nativity and Theophany of our Lord Jesus Christ	6 Morning Service at 9:30 AM Feast of the Nativity and Theophany of our Lord Jesus Christ	7 Remembrance of the dead	8
9 Celebration of Theophany/Armenian Christmas at 9:30 AM Sunday School Raffle drawing	10	11	12 Feast of the Naming of our Lord Jesus Christ	13 Birth of St. John the Forerunner	14	15
16	17 M L King Day	18	19	20 Parish Council meeting via Zoom at 6 PM	21	22
23 Sunday School ACYO meeting after church services	24	25	26	27	28	29 Remembrance of the Prophet Jonah
30 St. Sarkis the Warrior	31					

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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

Ladies Society Featured Member. . .



Madlien Kalfayan Hebesha

Just when you think you know someone, you find out things you never knew. This was the case with Madlien Kalfayan Hebesha. We all know Madlien as a faithful Christian who regularly attends church sitting in the middle pews on the aisle. We know her as a member of Ladies Society, serving on the executive board, making kuftha, rolling yalanchi, making choreg, baking for the bazaar, and serving on various committees. We know her as a fun-loving woman who never misses having lunch with the ladies after church. But do we really know Madlien?

Madlien (Kalfayan) Hebesha, the second of four children born to Nazaret and Arshalous Kalfayan was born on October 27, 1942, in Cairo, Egypt. The Armenian church was an important part of her family's life. Madlien remembers her mother and the other ladies hand washing the walls of the church before Easter services. At the age of 10, Madlien joined the church choir. Getting an education was also important. From the age of three until her high school graduation, she attended Kaloustian Armenian School in Cairo. Representing Kaloustian School, she was a star athlete competing in gymnastics and running track in the 400m race winning numerous medals in each event.

After high school, Madlien worked as a telephone operator. Then she took a job as a secretary that would change her life. Here she met the handsome, Nabil Hebesha. The couple fell in love and were married in 1965. Three months later, Nabil's work took them to Nigeria for two years. It was here their first born, Nivin, was born. Finishing the work assignment in Nigeria, the young family traveled extensively throughout Europe before settling back in Cairo where their second daughter Rasha was born. It wasn't long before the family was on the move again. This time to Libya where they lived for five years. In 1974, they immigrated to the US settling in Visalia. Why Visalia? Because Madlien's horkoor (father's sister) Anitza Akizian lived here. They found a brand-new furnished apartment in Visalia for \$250/month. (Oh, how times have changed!) Here in Visalia, their third child, Sharif was born. The couple now have five grandchildren ranging from age 25 to 7 years old and are the joys of their lives.

Madlien was a stay-at-home mom, cooking, baking, sewing, knitting, and doing needlepoint. She once put her seamstress skills to work to make a bathing suit for her daughter. Soon after the family moved to Visalia, Nivin was invited to a swim party. Not owning a swimsuit, Madlien cut up two of her own dresses and sewed two different styles of swimsuits for Nivin. Madlien's skills did not stop there. In 1985, she opened and was the sole operator of Meditarrean Deli featuring home style cooking made from scratch. She even ground the fresh fava beans to make her famous falafel. Operating a deli by herself became too much for her and the decision was made to close it in 1990. Still wanting to work, she went to school to become a medical assistant. She then worked for Dr. Masky. Madlien is now comfortably retired and enjoying a slower pace of life.



Madlien joined St. Mary Yettem Ladies Society in 1993. She served on the executive board as the treasurer for 8 years, advisor, and vice-chairlady. She served on the auditing committee, as co-chair of the kuftha committee, and on various other committees. Madlien could also be found working at the annual food festival and at a hokejosh.



Madlien is an unselfish, dedicated member of our St. Mary Yettem community. We are thankful for her service and oh so happy she moved to Visalia!

**St. Mary Armenian
Church of Yettem**



Armenian Christmas Luncheon

Sunday, January 9th, 2022

Immediately following the day's worship

Menu

Chicken & Beef Combo Kebab, Bulgar and Rice Pilaf,
Salad, Carrots, Pita Bread, Dessert, and drinks

Adults--\$20.00

Children ten (10) and under--\$12.00

Special Christmas Program

Presented by the Sunday School Students

Please help us plan by calling the church office
at (559) 528-6892, texting (559) 280-7315 or emailing
lunches@stmaryyettem.org



St. Mary Yettem - Ways and Means 2nd Annual Monthly Raffle

Name	Address	Phone	No. 1000	St. Mary Armenian Church of Yettem MONTHLY RAFFLE TICKET 1st Prize - \$150.00 2nd Prize - \$100.00 3rd Prize - \$50.00 Winner need NOT be present to win This ticket is Valid from January 2022 to December 2022 Ticket Donation: \$20.00	No. 1000
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Monthly Raffle Drawing Starts in January 2022

Purchase and Return by December 31, 2021
to have a chance to **WIN** 36 times next year

If you would like tickets, Call or Text
Tina Peters—(559) 967-2593 -Or-
E-mail: hyetinapeters@lightspeed.net

2022 Raffle Drawing Schedule—Dates Subject to Change

January 9 • February 27 • March 13 • April 17
May 8 • June 19 • July 10 • August 14
September 11 • October 8 • November 13 • December 4

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

Annual Ladies Society Christmas Bazaar December 5, 2021



(Continued from the front page)

Divine justice and true righteousness are the constant values in this mutating world where falseness is presented as the truth, the corrupt as the just, obliviousness as knowledge, immorality as the new moral norm. Humanity seems to be detached from the real life, dwelling in a parallel reality.

What is transpiring around us? Why is there great social injustice? Why is society so polarized? How many more lives shall COVID-19 claim? Shall we trust the vaccines, or not? Shall we expect yet another economic collapse?

These are questions of the perplexed humanity. In order to provide answers, the “*new man*” should be the bearer of the Christian value system where divine justice and holiness are at its core. These two shall be our orientors. Let us never forget that we are the temples of God and that our words and deeds shall reflect His Will. Therefore, let us pursue God’s commandments, and live life in accordance to the path defined by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Only then we may perceive the gift of life in all its splendor and glory without darkness, fog or deceitful illusions. Let us adorn our souls, minds and hearts with the golden messages radiating from the Gospels and restore in us the image of God. Moreover, let us reject a life of apathy, greed, and vengeance. Let us live with a vision of sanctity, with the knowledge that we are the adopted sons and daughters of God.

The New Year and Christmas oblige us to live in accordance with the commandments of Christ, our Lord. Let us love one another. Let us love our Motherland Armenia and our Mother Church. Loyal to the calling and character of a true Armenian Christian, let us be the humble servants of these two anchors of our identity. Indeed, we are living in trying times, full of temptations. The Motherland Armenia and the Armenian Apostolic Church are in great pain and suffering. However, we are the descendants of Hayk, Vartan, and the new martyrs. Hence, we shall reject all weaknesses, making our faith the foundation of our lives. It is time for us to come together and make unity the testament of our faith. With that deep sense of understanding and resolute faith, St. Vartan and the generations after him knelt before the Holy Altar of Etchmiadzin and strengthened by Holy Communion, illuminated the pages of Armenian history.

Beloved faithful, be born anew with the Miraculous Birth of Christ, in order that the life of the “*new man*” may be filled with kindness, love, mercy, hope, and faith. This has been the expectation of our forefathers and the young martyrs who lived their lives for Christ and for the Motherland.

Christ is born and revealed! Blessed is the Revelation of Christ!

Archbishop Hovnan Derderian
Primate

December 2021