



YETTEM ԵՊԵՄ

Հրատարակուիլն Եղեմի Ս. Աստուածածիկն Հայաստանեայց Եկեղեցւոյ

A Publication of St. Mary Armenian Church Yettem, California

Rev. Fr. Mashdots Keshishian, Parish Priest

January 2025

“Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!” (Isaiah 2:5)

The life of a person, especially a Christian, becomes impossible to sustain in constant renewal and awakening if we fail to hear and adhere to God’s voice, aligning our lives with the life of Christ. This is the message of Christmas: the Son of God descends from His heavenly throne to reveal His divine and boundless love, lifting our fallen human nature and reconciling us with our Father.

With confidence and faith, let us respond to the call of the Prophet Isaiah, making God the foundation of our lives, the light of life, and the path we walk.

We live in a beautiful world where humanity is the crown of divine creation. This world entices us with marvels, new inventions, and technological advancements that ease our lives. Yet, when we witness the pain and suffering of people in different parts of the world, we realize that some are deprived of enjoying the beauty and goodness of God’s creation.

In the face of global turmoil, the Son of God - Baby Jesus - once again makes His humble appearance to humanity. His birth comes to the Prophet Isaiah as a message of light: **“Let us walk in the light of the Lord.”**

The Nativity and Theophany of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is an invitation to renewal and introspective reflection. It also becomes a bridge connecting heaven to earth and a seal of reconciliation between humanity and God.

During our lifetimes, we celebrate many birthdays, which not only bring us joy but also offer opportunities to ponder the purpose and meaning of life, our mission on earth, the gifts of the Holy Spirit bestowed upon us, and how we might use them to illuminate the course of our lives. We also commit ourselves to rectify all the negativity rooted deep within our spirituality so that we may be reborn with Baby Jesus. That is when our lives are transformed miraculously.

The astounding event of Christ’s incarnation, which also marks the New Year 2025, invites us to make the life of Christ the mirror of our own lives. It urges us to continue our earthly journey with prudence, grounded in our spiritual and moral values, the vision of our forefathers, love for our Motherland, and a spirit of service, while preserving the sanctity of the Christian family.

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Parish Notes

CONDOLENCES

On behalf of our St. Mary Parish family, we wish to extend our deepest sympathy to Jeremy, Lenna and Addison Evans, Debby and Sammy Bagdasarian, Nicholas and Christina Bagdasarian and family, Judy and Mike Skaff and family, Rick and Tanya Dudukian and family, and Renee Yahnian and family on the recent passing of ***Gina (Bagdasarian) Evans*** on November 18th. Gina's services were held on Thursday, December 5th at Holy Trinity in Fresno.

Also, on behalf of our St. Mary Parish family, we wish to extend our deepest sympathy to Paula Shapazian, Alison and Ross Parnagian, Paul and Christina Shapazian, Jerry Shapazian and Marilyn Shapazian-Fowler on the passing of ***LeRoy Shapazian*** on December 10th. LeRoy's services were held on December 18th at Pardini's Banquet Hall in Fresno. Our thoughts and prayers are with both these families.

THANK YOU'S

A very special thank you to ***Charlie Ananian, Jeff Ananian, and Myron & Debbie Sheklian*** for their hard work cleaning up around the church grounds on Monday, November 11th. Jeff Ananian brought in his backhoe to reposition the cement barrier and remove the damaged shrubs caused by the car accident on October 4th. Jeff also removed the old palm tree behind the Majarian Hall. Also, a special thank you to ***Charlie Davidian*** for stepping in and to ensure the completion of the new railing on the back stairs on the north side of the church.

BAPTISM

December 23rd

Steven Stewart

Steven is the son of Alan Stewart and Francis McAvoy of Scotland. He is the fiancé of Elizabeth Torosian. His Godfather is Alex Torosian and his Godmother is Tracy Valencia.

MISCELLANEOUS DONATIONS

The Mike Ekizian Family

HOKEHANKIST DONATIONS

November 10th

For Repose of WWII Veteran,
Charlie Davidian's Soul
Margie L. Davidian

ALTAR FLOWERS

December 8th

Mike and Judy Skaff and Family

in memory of Alice Dudukian

December 15th

***Dn. Alan, Marceen, and Nick Farsakian
and Linda and Mark Wall***

in memory of Betty Farsakian

HOKEHANKIST REQUESTS

December 8th

Alice Dudukian

twenty-one years after her passing,

requested by

Mike and Judy Skaff and Family

December 15th

Betty Farsakian

eleven years after her passing,

requested by

***Dn. Alan, Marceen, and Nick Farsakian
and Linda and Mark Wall***

December 22nd

Pete Barsamian

sixteen years after his passing,

Idalene Barsamian

six years after her passing,

and

Jack Barsamian

six years after his passing,

requested by

Richard, Lillian, Pete and David Safrastian

ARMENIAN CHRISTMAS

Armenian Christmas will be celebrated on
Sunday, January 5, 2025. (See flier)

RAFFLE

Our November and December raffles of 2024 were held on Sunday, December 8th.

Congratulations to the November winners...

(\$150) Ara Kaprielian

(\$100) Alan Borba

(\$50) Jenna Cavanagh

Congratulations to the December winners...

(\$150) Sark Davidian, Jr.

(\$100) Michael Mikaelian

(\$50) Neshan Tabibian

Our **January, February and March drawings of 2025** will be held on **Sunday, January 5, 2025.**

LADIES SOCIETY NEWS

How do we begin to thank our Yetteem community for making our annual bazaar such a success? Your generosity in donating items for our country store and our auction with amazing items is much appreciated. And to our buyers who did not hesitate to make a purchase, much gratitude goes to you. With the combination of the luncheon, kufta, country store, and auction sales, we successfully grossed over \$9,000.00! This money will help us reach our annual assessment to the church to keep our doors open. Thank you all for your kindness and open hearts!

Thank you to Tracy Valencia and her committee for the delicious luncheon and decoration of the Hall. All the food and decorations were donated generously by the committee members. Without their compassion for our church, our event would not have been as successful. Each committee member is greatly appreciated.

Ladies Society has elected new executive board members for the 2025 year. Officers are Chairman Linda Farsakian-Wall, Vice Chairman Donna Venturella, Recording Secretary Janel Zerounian, Corresponding Secretary Margie Dawson Davidian, Treasurer Julie Poochigian, and Advisors Renee Ananian and Michelle Ananian. This dynamite group is ready to lead our organization with the help of Fr. Mashdots Keshishian leading and guiding us. We say good-bye to Janice McWilliams who served on our board for 4 years. Her dedication and service will be missed. Thank you, Janice!

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

*God's blessings to each of you,
Linda Farsakian-Wall*

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

The church office will be closed **December 24th – 27th and January 1st**. Our regular church office hours are **Tuesday through Friday from 9:30 – 2:30 PM**. The office phone number is (559) 528-6892. If you are in need of something beyond those hours, you can email fathermashdots@stmaryyettem.org or text/call (818) 293-9098 or email St. Mary Parish Council Chair Judy Skaff at judy@thebelmontgroup.com or text/call (559) 799-1198.

NEW CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS

Thank you to Debbie and Myron Sheklian for donating the new Christmas decorations in the church.

2025 RAFFLE

Tina Peters has sent out information and tickets for our **2025 monthly raffle**. If you did not receive tickets by mail and would like some, contact Tina Peters at (559) 967-2593 by phone or text. (See flier)

LADIES SOCIETY

The Ladies Society next meeting will be held on **Saturday, January 11th**. Meeting place and time to be determined.

PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council's next meeting will be held on **Thursday, January 16th** via Zoom at **6 PM**.

WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

The Ways and Means Committee next scheduled meeting is **Tuesday, January 21st** via Zoom at **6:30 PM**.



We accept all types of vehicles. Plus, your donation qualifies for a tax donation. Contact Linda Farsakian-Wall at 559-786-1419 or linda.hyewall@gmail.com for more information.

WEEKLY EMAIL UPDATE

If you would like to have your email address added to our weekly update email blasts, please call the church office or email sonya@stmaryyettem.org.

ST. MARY MEMORIAL WALL

The St. Mary Memorial Wall was started in 2001 and has been a huge success. Contact Linda Farsakian-Wall at (559) 786-1419 or email: linda.hyewall@gmail.com

SUNDAY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Sunday School meets on the **second and fourth Sundays** of each month at **10:30 AM**, September-June. **Welcome all children!** If you have any questions, please contact **Adrienne Poochigian** at (559) 679-8452 or email: alskaff@gmail.com

ST. MARY ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH

JANUARY 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 New Year's Day	2	3	4 Scripture Readings at 4 PM Jurakalouyts Badarak at 4:30 PM
5 Celebration of Theophany/ Armenian Christmas at 9:30 AM Armenian Christmas Luncheon Sunday School Christmas Program Jan., Feb., & March Raffles	6 Feast of the Nativity and Theophany of our Lord Jesus Christ	7 Remembrance of the dead	8	9	10	11 Ladies Society meeting Place and time to be determined
12 Sunday School Children's Sermon	13	14	15	16 The Parish Council meeting via Zoom at 6 PM	17	18
19	20 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	21 Ways and Means Committee meeting via Zoom at 6:30 PM	22	23	24	25
26 Sunday School	27	28	29	30	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

St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church of Yetem
Feast of Theophany/Armenian Christmas

Saturday - January 4, 2025

Evening Service & Scripture Readings 4:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve Divine Liturgy 4:30 p.m.

Sunday - January 5, 2025

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 – Davy Vartanian

Celebrant & Preacher – Rev. Father Mashdots Keshishian

Hokehankist (Requiem Service) – Hokehankist will not be conducted on Sunday, January 5th as this day marks (The Birth and Revelation of Jesus Christ) 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.

Flowers/Candles – Anyone wishing to make donations of flowers, poinsettias or candles for the Holy Altar for the Christmas observance may make arrangements through the Church Office at (559)528-6892.

Home Blessings – During the Christmas season it is traditional 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.

**St. Mary Armenian
Church of Yettem**



Armenian Christmas Luncheon

Sunday, January 5th 2025

Immediately following the day's worship

Menu

Brisket, Pilaf, Green Beans, Salad, Rolls & Dessert

Adults--\$20.00

Children twelve (12) and under--\$15.00

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





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Look at how children celebrate Christmas with enthusiasm and pure hearts. We must foster the same spirit in our hearts so that the celebration of Christ may become our own celebration, adhering to the words of the Prophet: **“Let us walk in the light of the Lord!**

We indeed celebrate the Nativity and Theophany of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ when we walk in the light of the Lord, live lives befitting Christians, and make 2025 a year of journeying with God, keeping it under Christ’s spotlight. Furthermore, the miraculous birth of Christ affords us the opportunity to reflect on our spiritual lives as a community and diocese. How well are we preserving the sacred traditions of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church entrusted to us, and how faithful are we, especially in these challenging times?

Let us walk in the light of the Lord so that we are not consumed by darkness. When we walk in the light of the Lord, we ascend to God. We have been given the means to walk in His light and persevere in our journey - prayer, faith, commitment, and a creative spirit.

Let us walk in the light of the Lord, for it is the only path that leads us to Baby Jesus, before whom we bow our heads with psalms of praise and glorification. As we greet each other warmly, confidently, and affectionately, let us proclaim:

“Christ is Born and Revealed; Blessed is the revelation of Christ our Lord!”

Prayerfully,
Archbishop Hovnan Derderian
Primate of the Western Diocese
January 6, 2025
St. Leon Armenian Cathedral – Burbank, CA