



## YETTEM ԵՊԵՄ

Ջրատարակուրթիւն Եղեմի Ս. Աստուածածին Հայաստանեայց Եկեղեցւոյ

A Publication of St. Mary Armenian Church Yettem, California

Rev. Fr. Mashdots Keshishian, Parish Priest

### August 2024

#### Feast of the Assumption of the Holy Mother of God

In the Orthodox tradition, icons often are referred to as windows to heaven. This is because, through their visual depictions, icons help us understand complex matters of our faith, which are hard to comprehend and grasp. Today, we celebrate the Assumption of the Holy Mother of God into heaven. The icons and miniature paintings portraying the Assumption of St. Mary are extremely rich in elegant and ancient symbolism, guiding our minds and teaching us about the spiritual significance of the feast. This is especially important since the Assumption is not mentioned anywhere in the Bible, and we must rely on the church tradition and religious art to help us learn about this very important and sacred event.

The Assumption icons offer a great message of hope and have been used to explain the Christian view of death to children as well as adults. They portray Mary in a coffin surrounded by the apostles and sometimes three early church bishops. Above the Theotokos, we always find Jesus, holding in his hands the soul of his mother, pictured as a baby in swaddling white clothes. This symbolizes St. Mary's birth through death into new and eternal life with God. It is important to note the reversal of the roles. While typically it is Mary portrayed holding baby Jesus, in Assumption icons, this changes, and it is Jesus holding baby Mary.

Death is the ultimate enemy of life. It is irrational, ugly, violent and destructive. And no matter how informed we are and how much we believe, death is also always very painful. If you lost a loved one, if you struggle with grief, how comforting it is to reflect on the hope that the Assumption icons offer. How consoling it is to learn that our loved one is in the loving embrace of Jesus, who cares for them and carries their soul in his hands to a place of safety and peace. Ultimately, these icons are a reminder that the feast of Assumption is not merely a story about what happened to St. Mary but also an invitation to believe and desire God, so we too, one day, will be greeted and embraced by Christ and find rest and refuge in his loving arms.

As we celebrate the feast of the Assumption of St. Mary, the Armenian Church through the framework of its life-giving liturgy offers a wonderful alternative approach. Many other churches and denominations around us celebrate the feast with beautiful liturgies, festive processions, hymns and prayers. But there is something extraordinary and peculiar happening in the Armenian Churches. We bring grapes to church, place them on the altar, bless them with prayers of healing, distribute and consume them as a medicine for our souls and bodies. Why grapes? What is the spirituality behind this ancient ritual? And what does it teach and remind us about?

(Continued on the back page)

# ST. MARY ARMENIAN CHURCH

## August 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3 St. Gregory the Theologian The Ladies Society meeting at 11:30 AM in the Majarian Hall
4	5	6	7	8	9	10 200 Fathers of the Holy Council of Ephesus
11 Barekendan of the Fast of Assumption	12	13	14	15	16	17 Showers of Radiance of Holy Etchmiadzin
18 Assumption of the Holy Mother-of-God Asdvadzadzin The Parish Council Luncheon Ladies Society Bake Sale June, July & August Raffle	19 Remembrance of the dead	20 The Ways and Means Committee meeting via Zoom at 6:30 PM	21	22	23	24
25 The Parish Council meeting will be held after church services	26	27 Sts. Joachim & Anna, Parents of the Holy Mother-of-God	28	29	20	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

## ***Parish Notes***

### **CONDOLENCES**

On behalf of our St. Mary Parish family, we wish to extend our deepest sympathy to Nabil Hebesha, Nivin and Craig Velasquez and family, Rasha Hebesha, Sharif and Amanda Hebesha and family on the passing of ***Madlien Hebesha*** on Friday, July 5<sup>th</sup>. Services were held on Tuesday, July 23<sup>rd</sup> at St. Mary Yettem. Our thoughts and prayers are with Madlien's family.

Also, on behalf of our St. Mary Parish family, we wish to extend our deepest sympathy to Nancy Metcalf & family, Gail Thomas & family, and Karen Diltz & family on the passing of their father ***Mike Kaloustian***. Mike passed away on Friday, July 5<sup>th</sup>. His funeral service was held on Monday, July 22<sup>nd</sup> at Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel in Visalia. Our thoughts and prayers are with Mike's family.

### **BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT**

Congratulations to Melissa Sheklian and Sy Sivaraman on the birth of their daughter, ***Taleen Sheklian Sivaraman***. She was born on July 4<sup>th</sup> weighing 7 lbs., 13 oz., and 21" long. The proud grandparents are Myron and Debbie Sheklian and Siva and Nala Sivaraman.

### **ALTAR FLOWERS**

July 14<sup>th</sup>

***Pierre, Melissa, Alik,  
Arlen and Alina Pilavian***

in honor of Janice McWilliams and Tina Peters receiving the Hye Spirit Award

July 21<sup>st</sup>

***Charlie Ananian, Gary, Janet, Brandon, and  
Kathryn Ananian, Darren, Gina, Laura, and  
Marley Ananian, Audreena Ananian,  
and Aubrey Chavez***

in memory of Elizabeth Ananian

July 28<sup>th</sup>

***Sally Zarounian***

in memory of Gary John Zarounian and  
Jessie Zarounian's July 28<sup>th</sup> birthday

### **HOKEHANKIST REQUESTS**

July 14<sup>th</sup>

***Rev. Fr. Vahan Guldalian  
Rev. Fr. Vartan Davidian  
Archpriest Rev. Fr. Garabed Kalfayan  
Rev. Fr. Kourken Koudoulian  
Rev. Fr. Khachadoor Sarajian  
Rev. Fr. Artoon Sempadian***

July 21<sup>st</sup>

***Elizabeth Ananian***

forty days after her passing,  
requested by

Charlie Ananian, Gary, Janet, Brandon, and  
Kathryn Ananian, Darren, Gina, Laura, and  
Marley Ananian, Audreena Ananian,  
and Aubrey Chavez

July 28<sup>th</sup>

***Gary John Zarounian***

one year after his passing,  
requested by

Sally Zarounian and Family  
Carol and Vernon Hovannisian and Family  
Gail and Bruce Groefsema and Family

***Souren Sam Farsakian***

seven years after his passing,  
requested by

The Sam Farsakian Family

### **ALTAR CANDLE OIL DONATION**

June 30<sup>th</sup>

***Carrie Margosian***

in memory of Aron Margosian  
six years after his passing

### **HOKEHANKIST DONATIONS**

June 9<sup>th</sup>

***For Repose of Jack Ananian's Soul  
Shari Ananian and Lydia Montoya***

July 21<sup>st</sup>

***For Repose of Elizabeth Ananian's Soul  
Charlie Ananian  
Serge and Judith Ananian***

### **DONATIONS**

***John and Sharon Kaprielian,***  
in memory of Aron Margosian  
six years after his passing

### LADIES SOCIETY NEWS

In the last month, Ladies Society lost two dedicated members Elizabeth Ananian and Madlien Hebasha. Liz joined in 1975. She faithfully served on the Executive Board as chairman, vice-chairman, treasurer, and corresponding secretary. In addition, she was a Diocesan Assembly Delegate, chairman of numerous committees, and a Heritage Collection model. Madlien joined in 1993. She faithfully served on the executive board as the treasurer, advisor, and vice-chairman. She also served on the auditing committee, was co-chair of the kufta committee, and was on various other committees. Their unselfish service is a model for all of us. They both leave a tremendous void not only to the organization but also in our hearts. Our condolences to the Ananian and Hebasha families. Our condolences also to our member Shirley Ouzounian who lost her husband. George, always a supporter of Ladies Society, was committed in his service to our church and our diocese.

Our next meeting is Saturday, August 3, 11:30 at the church hall. We are excited for this special day. We invite all young women of our community to join us. As a special treat, we invite mothers to bring your children. Come meet and get to know the women of our community who are the heart, soul, and backbone of our church!

We are hosting the annual Asdvadzadzin bake sale August 18 after church. If you can make an item for the sale, please let Michelle Ananian know at 559-397-9083 or at [ananiamichelle@yahoo.com](mailto:ananiamichelle@yahoo.com). September 8, we are hosting our annual Grandparents' Day brunch. Make plans to attend both events. As always, you won't want to miss out!

*Blessings to all, Linda Farsakian-Wall*

### WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

The Ways and Means Committee next scheduled meeting is **Tuesday, August 20<sup>th</sup>** via Zoom at **6:30 PM**.

The Ways and Means Committee **Golf Tournament** will be held on **Saturday, September 21<sup>st</sup>** at the **Tulare Golf Course**. (See Golf Application)

### THANK YOU

*Thank you to:*

**Alan & Phyllis Borba and Jeff & Becky Akin**  
*for the beautiful and delicious cake, they donated in honor of Janice McWilliams and Tina Peters receiving the Hye Spirit Award*

**Myron Sheklian**  
*for spending many hours repairing the camera and internet wires inside and outside of the church*

*Also, another thank you to **Myron Sheklian** for cleaning the vestibule closet*

### HYE SPIRIT AWARD DONATIONS

**Haig and Donna Balakian**  
**John and Sharon Kaprielian**  
**Betty Krikorian**  
**Gary and Nancy Krikorian**  
in honor of Janice McWilliams receiving the Hye Spirit Award

**Randy, Terri, Cortney, & Alexandra Garabedian**  
**John and Sharon Kaprielian**  
**Gary and Nancy Krikorian**  
**Florence Peters**  
**Patty Torosian**  
in honor of Tina Peters receiving the Hye Spirit Award

### HYE CAMP 2024

Fr. Mashdots will be serving as the chaplain at the Armenian summer camp July 28<sup>th</sup> - August 3<sup>rd</sup>.

### LADIES SOCIETY

The Ladies Society **August meeting** will be held on **Saturday, August 3<sup>rd</sup>** at **11:30 AM** in the Majarian Hall.

### PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council's next meeting will be held on **Sunday, August 25<sup>th</sup>** after church services.

### RAFFLE

Our **June, July and August drawings of 2024** will be held on **Sunday, August 18, 2024**.

### WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

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### SAVE THE DATE

**Grandparents' Day brunch** will be held on **Sunday, September 8<sup>th</sup>** after church services. (See flier)

### SUNDAY SCHOOL STUDENTS

It's almost time for Sunday School to start again! All classes will start on **Sunday, September 8<sup>th</sup>** and we will be meeting on the second and fourth Sundays of each month at **11:00 AM** during the school year. Welcome all children! If you have any questions, please contact **Adrienne Poochigian** at (559) 679-8452 or email: [alskaff@gmail.com](mailto:alskaff@gmail.com)

### 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](mailto:linda.hyewall@gmail.com)

### BULLETIN SPONSORSHIP

If you are interested in **sponsoring a monthly bulletin** or a **weekly bulletin**, please call the church office at (559) 528-6892. **Sponsorships are a good way to remember or honor family members or friends. Sponsorships for the weekly bulletin are \$25 or more and a \$250 minimum donation for the monthly bulletin.**

### 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](mailto:sonya@stmaryyettem.org)



Spring is here! Time to clean out your garage or yard of that old vehicle taking up space and donate it to St. Mary Armenian Church of Yetteem. What are you waiting for? Clean out that clutter! Call Linda Farsakian-Wall at 559-786-1419 for more information.

### CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

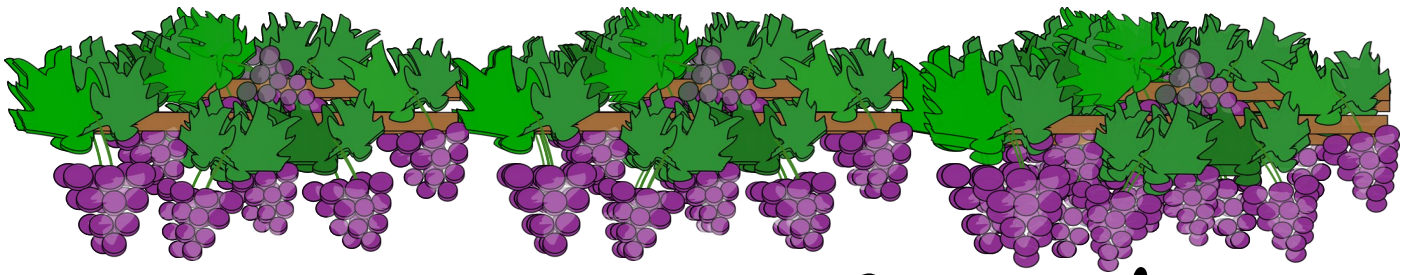
Our church office hours are **Tuesday through Friday from 9:30 – 2:30 PM**. The office phone number is (559) 528-6892. If you are in need of something beyond those hours, you can email [fathermashdots@stmaryyettem.org](mailto:fathermashdots@stmaryyettem.org) or text/call (818) 293-9098 or email St. Mary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

### PAYPAL

You may access PayPal through the St. Mary Yetteem website ([www.stmaryyettem.org](http://www.stmaryyettem.org)) by clicking 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.

### NEW QR CODE BELOW





# August Calendar

**Sunday, August 18, 2024**

*After Church Services*

## Bake Sale & Farmers Market

-Homemade Baked Good, Fruits & Vegetables

## Asdvadzadin

# Blessing of the Grapes Luncheon

-Pit Beef BBQ, Beans, Potato Salad, Green Salad, Rolls & Dessert-  
Donation—\$20 Adults/\$12 Children under 10

## Monthly Raffle

-June, July and August Drawings-

Luncheon Reservations by August 13  
lunches@stmaryyettem.org or (559) 528-6892



St. Mary Yettem - Ladies Society  
*Grandparent's are as Sweet as Honey*

# **Grandparent's Day Brunch**

**Sunday, September 8, 2024**

After church services in the Majarian Hall

**Un-Bee-Leviabable Brunch Items** 

**Featuring Beeshee, Basturma, Sujuk & Eggs**

**Adults—\$15**

**Children—(10 and under) \$12**



**-To Reserve a Table or Seat(s)-**

E-mail: [lunch@stmaryyettem.org](mailto:lunch@stmaryyettem.org) –or–

Call the Church Office — (559) 528-6892

by Wednesday, September 4



**RESERVATIONS are Requested**

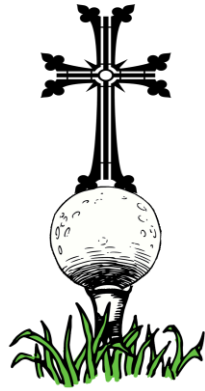
**Entertainment by our 'Busy Bee'  
 Sunday School Students**



**Raffle Drawing**

**Tickets will be available to purchase  
 during the Brunch! \$1 per ticket or \$5  
 for 6 Tickets**





# *St. Mary Yette Armenian Church Golf Tournament*

Saturday, September 21, 2024

Tulare Golf Course

**Save the date!**

- \$159/player entry fee; proceeds to benefit St. Mary Armenian Church of Yette
- Men and Women welcome
- Cash prizes for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place finishes
- Shotgun Start 8:00 AM
- Hole-in-One contest: win \$25,000!!

Start putting your team together.  
**Player Registration coming soon**

### Sponsorships still available

- \$3,000 Even Sponsor; includes 4 player entry fees
- \$1,500 Gold Sponsor; includes 2 player entry fees
- \$ 500 Silver Sponsor; includes 2 lunch tickets
- \$ 100 Tee Sponsor
- \$ 250 3-Hole Tee Sponsor

For Sponsorship information contact Linda Farsakian-Wall at  
(559)786-1410 or [linda.hyewall@gmail.com](mailto:linda.hyewall@gmail.com).



# Primate's Pastoral Visit to Yettem

## July 14, 2024



# Hye Spirit Awards 2024





## Vartavar History and Celebration

Known as Vartavar, this festival is a beautiful blend of history, tradition, and pure, unadulterated fun. Participants of all ages drench each other with water, creating an atmosphere of laughter, playfulness, and unity.

Vartavar's origins are steeped in Armenia's pre-Christian history. The festival was initially dedicated to Astghik, the ancient Armenian goddess of water, beauty, love, and fertility. According to legend, Astghik would sprinkle roses and water to spread love and fertility across the land. The name "Vartavar" itself is derived from ("vart" means "rose" in Armenian and var means "to burn/be burning", this is why it was celebrated in the harvest time). After the Christianization of Armenia, the Armenian Apostolic Church identified the rose with the transfiguration of Jesus and Vartavar continued to be celebrated along with the Feast of the Transfiguration. Some claim it comes from a tradition dating back to Noah, in which he commanded that his descendants should sprinkle water on each other and let doves fly as a symbol of remembrance of the Flood.

When Armenia adopted Christianity in 301 AD, the festival was integrated into the Christian calendar. Today, it is celebrated 14 weeks after Easter, coinciding with the Feast of the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ. This melding of pagan and Christian traditions has helped Vartavar endure through the centuries, maintaining its significance and charm.

On the day of Vartavar, Armenians take to the streets armed with buckets, water guns, and any container that can hold water. The goal is simple: get as many people wet as possible. The streets become a playground, where no one is exempt from a good-natured soaking. From young children to elderly adults, everyone participates in the festivities, embracing the chance to cool off in the summer heat and enjoy each other's company.

Water fights break out in towns and villages across the country, and even tourists are welcomed into the fun. It is a common sight to see strangers laughing together, all differences washed away by the unifying power of water. For many, it is a day to forget worries and simply live in the moment.

While the playful aspect of Vartavar is evident, the festival also carries deeper symbolic meanings. Water, essential for life, represents purity, renewal, and the sustenance of nature. By drenching each other in water, participants symbolically cleanse themselves, seeking renewal and the blessings of nature and the divine.

In modern times, Vartavar has also become a symbol of cultural pride and continuity. It is a reminder of Armenia's rich history and the resilience of its traditions. As the world rapidly changes, festivals like Vartavar provide a sense of identity and continuity, connecting generations and fostering a sense of community.

The Armenian Report

(Continued from the front page)

Traditionally, every family and person would bring grapes from their gardens to the church. They would pick the very best their harvest had to offer. Grapes from the rich and poor, peasants and princes, men and women would all be placed together on the altar for a blessing. The differences and divisions of the community melt away and a powerful symbol of unity and sacred community emerges. Now the very essence of the grapes is transformed, now through the holy sacrament of our spiritual unity in love and faith in Christ the grapes are transformed into communion that has the attributes to heal and restore our bodies, minds and souls.

This ancient Armenian ritual is a reminder about two important things. First, it reminds us that when we bring forth the best we can offer to the world, our families, spouses, friends, work, education, community and parish and do so with love and not merely because of duty, pity or guilt a powerful transformation takes place. Our gift of time, our offering of love is transformed into a remedy that heals, forges a new spiritual reality and a dimension which allows God to enter our world, enter our families, our lives and parishes, renew and rejuvenate them with his blessing and presence.

This wonderful service is a reminder that we are not alone, that God works and touches our lives through our spiritual family our parish. It is a reminder that we are really the grapes, that when we bring our prayers and love, our wounds and struggles and put them all together we are transformed into a living communion, the very body of Christ. It is a reminder that, in the same way that each individual grape is connected to the stem, we too are connected to each other. We feed from the source of empowerment that is our heritage, our faith. In the sacred garden of our community, we grow together, suffer and struggle together, lift and hold each other up, withstand winds and storms together, fight heat and drought together. Always and in all things, supporting, helping, forgiving and loving each other.

Fr. Vosgi

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St. Mary Armenian Church  
P.O. Box 367  
Yetttem, California 93670  
Return Service Required

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U.S. Postage Paid  
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