



YETTEM ԵՊԵՄ

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

June 2023

How to Grow Spiritually

As a seed grows when it's planted and watered, followers of Christ grow in spiritual maturity when they are planted and watered in good soil.

In the Bible, Jesus describes a fictional scene of a farmer planting seeds. Some seeds fall on the path, some on rocky places, some on thorns, and some on good soil (Matthew 13:3-8), but only the seeds that fall on good soil grow into healthy plants. Jesus explains the meaning of the story this way: The one who hears the Word of God and understands it is the one who grows in their faith (v. 23).

The Christian life is a relationship with God that develops over time. To grow in spiritual maturity (that is, to grow spiritually) is to look more and more like the person God designed you to be more and more like Jesus. What does it mean to grow spiritually? Journey with us as we explore the answer to this question.

What Is Spiritual Growth?

Spiritual growth is the journey of growing in faith to know more about God and become the person that He created you to be.

Peter, one of Jesus's closest followers during the time He was on earth, encourages us this way: "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18).

Paul, a leader in the early church who wrote much of the Bible's New Testament, describes this growth in another way: "We have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Colossians 1:9-10).

The type of person that God wants you to be is one who is characterized by His qualities: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law" (Galatians 5:22-23).

What Does the Bible Say About Spiritual Growth?

The Bible has a lot to say about what it looks like to grow spiritually. Here are some important verses of Scripture that can help you understand what it means to be spiritually mature.

God begins the work in believers and will continue it.

"He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6).

There is a hunger for knowing God.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled" (Matthew 5:6).

God equips you through His Word.

(Continued on the back page)

Parish Notes

CONDOLENCES

On behalf of our St. Mary Parish family, we wish to extend our deepest sympathy to Marceen and Alan Farsakian, Nickolas and Shant on the passing of Marceen's mother ***Margaret Yaldezian*** on May 18, 2023. Church services will be held at St. Peter Armenian Church in Van Nuys on Thursday, June 8th. Our thoughts and prayers are with Margaret's family.

BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT

Congratulations to Jordan and Nina Yahnian on the birth of their son, ***Nikos Bryan Yahnian*** on Friday, May 26th. He weighed 6 lbs, 10 oz. Nikos proud grandparents are Renee Yahnian and the late Bryan Yahnian and Zepure Geuvjehizian.

HOKEHANKIST DONATIONS

(April 30th – May 21st)

April 30th

For Repose of Mike Derderian's Soul

Mary and James Pelloian

Margie L. Davidian

Myron and Debbie Sheklian

ALTAR FLOWER DONATIONS

May 14th

Julie Poochigian

HOKEHANKIST REQUESTS

May 14th

All the deceased mothers

ADDITIONAL EASTER YUGHAKIN DONATION

Charlie and Christine Davidian

DONATIONS

Betty Skaff Jacobo

WAYS AND MEANS

On behalf of the Ways and Means Committee we would like to thank everyone for all their hard work in making our May Food Festival a big success.

We sold 1,293 tickets and have a preliminary net income of \$20,000. This would not be possible without the help of so many devoted parishioners and friends of our church. Our next fund-raising event will be the Golf Tournament on September 23, 2023 at the Tulare Golf Course.

Your Co-Chairs,

Margie L. Davidian and Judy Skaff

June 2023 Bulletin LADIES SOCIETY NEWS

The 71st Annual Ladies Assembly was May 4 at our St. Leon (Ghevontians) Cathedral in Burbank. I attended as Yетtem chairman along with delegates Shirley Ouzounian and Judy Skaff. The Assembly room was filled with delegates & priests. Brief oral reports were presented by chapter chairmen. Yетtem's was well-received, focusing on history and education. Revision of the most recent Bylaws (2016) was tabled to a 2023 project to be presented at the 2024 Assembly. Three of us including myself will work on this task. Ideas discussed at the meeting included giving new members a job so they get to know how things work.

We proceeded to election for Central Council. Linda Farsakian-Wall represented the nominating committee. Srpazan said he wants the Central Council to increase from a board of seven to nine or even eleven members. Lo and behold, we got nine. 2023-2024 Ladies Society Central Council Executive Board members: continuing are Aida Sethian, Aida Askejjan, and Adrineh Ghookasian. New members: Edita Ghazaryan, Mary Sayadian, Roberta Hagopian, Sonia Serpekian, Suzie Grigoriants, and Taleen Vartivarian.

The Educational Program consisted of two presentations: Hayk Madoyan on Christian Education and Diran Avagyan on The Healing Power of Companionship: A gift for overcoming loneliness.

Each year at the assembly, we have a candle-lighting ceremony for ladies who passed away. From Yетtem, we remembered Rose Kaplan. The meeting concluded with remarks and a closing prayer by Hovnan Srpazan. We adjourned, gathered for a group photo at the entrance to the cathedral, on a fresh pleasant afternoon cleared by morning rain. We had lunch and visited with Ladies Society friends and priests. It was a satisfying and productive meeting.

Calling all choreg makers

Armenian summer camp needs choreg for their evening snack. Lots of choreg. Four weeks' worth. Camp starts the week of July 9th and runs through August 5th. This is a heads-up to be prepared to make choreg in June or July. We'll finalize a time and date at our next meeting, June 17.

Mari Louise Menendian
Ladies Society Chair

**CELEBRATING WOMEN by HONORING
OUR MOTHERS**

ST. MARY YETTEM LADIES SOCIETY held our Annual Mothers' Day Luncheon, renamed **CELEBRATING WOMEN by HONORING OUR MOTHERS**, Saturday, May 13, 2023. While the Executive Board is the nominal host, it was the indefatigable Janice McWilliams who expended a major effort for weeks in organizing this event. At the end of the day, the choice of venue was easy. We were in the Mirror Room of the Vintage Press, enjoying a meal that only David Vartanian can provide. Great thanks to him as always. We think he loves us.

Your Ladies' Society Executive board hostesses were happy to contribute. Again thank you to Janice for exhaustive planning, preliminary and up to and including the day of. Thank you to Janice for the spring flower centerpieces she donated, which went home with the guest at each table whose birthday was closest to September 13. Thank you to Janice and Margie Lynn for the See's treats at each place setting. Thank you to Janel for her calligraphy as only she can do. Mari Louise spent hours making flyers, seven actually. Janice, Margie, Janel, and Mari Louise arranged the seating. It takes a while.

Fifty-five guests, forty-seven adults and eight children, gathered for this luncheon. We enjoyed chicken crepes, chicken curry salad, chicken strips, and dessert. The program began with learning who was at each table. Many of us know names or have heard names but don't know faces or relationships. Table by table, a representative of each family introduced themselves and their guests. We got to know the younger generation. And then we were reminded of or even discovered connections running deep into our past and our history.

We decided, at Janice's suggestion, to call this yearly gathering a celebration of all women by honoring our mothers. Many were the new harses of the Yetem boys of the 40's and 50's. That generation is gone now. We have newcomers to our community, witness Der Hayr and his growing family. If our forebears' lives as mothers, as Ladies Society members in aid of their church, as strong women, are to truly matter,

then their examples must live on through us. They showed us the way, just as their mothers showed them the way. There is continuity here. As they look down on us from heaven, let them be pleased that their efforts have not been in vain.

In another round of the program, this one of reminiscence, we reminded ourselves who many of them were. Table by table, those whose mothers, grandmothers, great grandmothers were members of our St. Mary Ladies' Society, stood and named them and showed framed pictures. Guests new to the St. Mary community shared pictures and stories. Our Der Hayr and Yeretsgin's son Hagop Pegor did a lovely job introducing his family.

Richard Asadoorian sang The Lord's Prayer. Der Hayr closed with a prayer. The event was intimate, the food delicious, the talk spirited.

*Mari Louise Menendian
Ladies Society Chair, 2023*

THANK YOU

On behalf of the St. Mary Parish Council, we wish to thank our auxiliary organizations and so many individuals. Many stepped forward to assist with the preparations for the 50th Anniversary Banquet honoring Archpriest Rev. Fr. Vartan Kasparian. This was a magnificent endeavor to mark a very special occasion for Fr. Vartan and our entire parish. A few photos from the evening can be found in a collage elsewhere in this bulletin.

Thank you to Rose Marie Margosian, Pierre and Melissa Pilavian and family, and Darrell and Tina Peters and family for the printing of Fr. Vartan's two collages in color.

We appreciate Charlie Ananian for keeping our west parking lot free of weeds and for keeping it scraped level.

ARMENIAN LANGUAGE CLASSES

Armenian Language classes will be held via Zoom on **Tuesday, June 6th and Tuesday, June 20th** at **7 PM**. Call the church office if you would like the link.

BIBLE STUDY

Our **Bible study class** will be held on **Wednesday, June 7th** via Zoom at **7 PM**. Bible Study is held on the **first Wednesday of each month**. If you have questions, call Der Mashdots at the church office.

PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council's next meeting is May and June combined. The meeting will be held via Zoom on **Thursday, June 8th at 6 PM.**

RAFFLE

Our **May and June raffle drawings of 2023** will be held on **Sunday, June 11th**. The drawing will also be streamed on Facebook. Thank you to our Ways and Means Committee for this great fundraiser for our church.

WAYS AND MEANS

The Ways and Means Committee next meeting will be held via Zoom on **Thursday, June 15th at 7 PM.**

LADIES SOCIETY

The **Ladies' Society** luncheon meeting will be held on **Saturday, June 17th** in the **Majarian Hall** at **11:30 AM.**

FATHERS' DAY HOKEHANKIST

At the close of the Divine Liturgy on **June 18th**, a general **requiem service/hokehankist** will be conducted in memory of all deceased fathers.

YETTEM SOCIAL HYES

The Yettem Social Hyes meeting will be held via Zoom on **Tuesday, June 20th at 6 PM.**

SUNDAY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Sunday School had their last day on Sunday, May 21st. **Sunday School** will **resume** on **Sunday, September 10th.**

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.

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.** The **weekly bulletin** for a **minimum donation of \$25** or the **monthly bulletin** for a **minimum donation of \$250.**



Every donated vehicle helps keep our doors open at St. Mary Yettem. For more information, contact Linda Farsakian-Wall at 559-786-1419.

ST. MARY MEMORIAL WALL

The St. Mary Memorial Wall was started in 2001 and has been a huge success. The original Wall is completely filled. **Two new columns** will be **added soon.** This will make room for an **additional 96 names** at a **donation of \$250/name.** Contact Jim Soxman: ph. (559) 623-2390 or email: jimbeasoxman@sbcglobal.net

Group photo at the Greek Monastery on 4/29/2023
See more photos in the Greek Monastery collage.



ST. MARY ARMENIAN CHURCH

JUNE 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3 Yn. Maral's Baby Shower at 11:30 AM at the Garabedian Residence in Selma
4 Remembrance of the Prophet Elijah	5 St. Hripsime & her Companions, Virgins	6 St. Gayane & her Companions, Virgins Armenian Language Class via Zoom at 7 PM	7 Bible Study Class at 7 PM	8 Parish Council meeting via Zoom at 6 PM	9	10 St. Gregory the Illuminator Deliverance from the Pit
11 Feast of the Catholicos of Holy Etchmiadzin May and June raffle drawings	12	13	14	15 Ways and Means meeting via Zoom at 7 PM	16	17 St. Nerses the Great Ladies Society luncheon meeting in the Majarian Hall at 11:30 AM
18 Father's Day	19	20 Yettem Social Hyes meeting via Zoom at 6 PM Armenian Language Class via Zoom at 7 PM	21	22	23	24 St. Gregory the Illuminator Discovery of His Relics
25	26	27	28	29 Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Translators	30	

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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

GREEK MONASTERY, DUNLAP ARMENIAN CHURCHES VISIT APRIL 29, 2023

The Holy Convent of the Theotokos of the Lifegiving Spring.

June 2023 Bulletin LADIES SOCIETY NEWS

St. Mary Yettem Ladies' Society planned a field trip to the **Holy Monastery of the Theotokos the Lifegiving Spring Orthodox Monastery** in Dunlap April 29, 2023. St. Paul Fresno visitors joined us. We requested and received a blessing from the Abbess for our visit. Thirteen of us from Yettem took advantage of this opportunity: Myron and Debbie Sheklian, David and Ardemis Menendian, George and Shirley Ouzounian, Laurie and Mari Louise Menendian, Linda Farsakian-Wall, Madlien Hebesha, Gerard Garoian, John and Sandy Kalfayan. We drove up in cars and reached the monastery before noon. We were greeted by a nun, who acted as our hostess throughout the visit. We weren't expecting it, but while we waited for Fresno, she made us Greek coffee. When the seventeen Fresno visitors arrived in their van, she made three more jazzvehs and everybody enjoyed coffee as we explored the entrance, amazed at the location, the grounds, the flowers, the greenery, the peace in our beloved foothills and mountains.

Lunch was in their large dining room, where they set up a long communal table for "our Armenian friends." Vegetable stew, rice, olives, green salad, bread, tangerine, water, as wholesome as you can imagine. They asked for no talking during lunch, while a nun recited from the Bible.

After lunch we toured the church. Our hostess led us into the narthex, where she presented history of this holy place. Theotokos (Greek: Θεοτόκος) is a title of Mary, Mother of God (Armenian Soorp Asdvadzadzin *Սուրբ Աստուածածիկ*). The story of **Theotokos of The Lifegiving Spring** can be found on Wikipedia. "Life-giving Spring" comes from Byzantine Emperor Leo I searching for water to give a thirsty man. Leo heard a voice say to him, "Do not trouble yourself, Leo, to look for water elsewhere, it is right here!"

Bishop Metropolitan Anthony Gergiannakis, the first Metropolitan Bishop of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco, established the Holy Convent of the Theotokos Orthodox Monastery and Nicholas Ranch and Retreat Center in 1993. His last name denotes Crete lineage, and indeed that is where he was born. All the woodwork for the church was done in Crete. The pictures show just a small indication of the skill of the artisans and the intricacy of their work.

We entered the nave to find no seats or pews. Traditionally there is no sitting during services. The people stand before God. Along the walls were chairs with arm rests high enough to be used for support while standing. The walls were covered with icons, wall paintings of saints, their lives, and stories from the Bible. These frescoes were painted by the nuns, work that is ongoing.

The chandelier is in the form of a large circle and is adorned with icons of saints. It is suspended by chains from the ceiling. See the picture to get a sense of its size and ornate appearance.

We browsed the gift shop before we left. They have books, olive oil, jam, jewelry, clothes, everything. There was no cost for our visit. The Yettem Ladies Society made a \$150 donation. Everyone thought the trip incredible. We were filled with wonder by this monastery and convent and grounds, in this breathtaking setting in our own back yard.

*Mari Louise Menendian
Ladies Society Chair, 2023*

KATHRYN BAIR

Kathryn is graduating from Redwood High School this year, and will be attending College of the Sequoias in the fall. She is the daughter of Tom and Julie Bair and the granddaughter of the late Jack and Reba Ananian.





MELINA ROSE PETERS

Melina graduated, Summa Cum Laude, from California State University, Fresno with a Bachelors of Arts Degree in Liberal Studies and a Minor in Armenian Studies. She was a Member of Kappa Alpha Theta Sorority. Throughout College, Melina was an active member of the St. Mary Yetteem ACYO and The Armenian Students Organization (ASO) at Fresno State.

In the Fall, Melina will continue her studies at California State University, Fresno, pursuing her Master's Degree in School Counseling. After graduate school, she hopes to work as a school counselor at an elementary or middle school within a local school district in Fresno.

She is the daughter of Darrell and Tina Peters of Visalia. Grandparents are Rose Marie Margosian and the late George Margosian of Dinuba and Florence Peters and the late Darrell Peters, Sr. of Fowler.



ELIZABETH MARIN TOROSIAN

*Elizabeth Marin Torosian graduated in December with a Master of Science degree in Museum Studies from the University of Glasgow in Scotland. She plans on using this degree to further her love of research in a museum. She currently resides in the town of Motherwell in Scotland. Elizabeth is the daughter of Alan Torosian and Donna Torosian. She is the granddaughter of Jim and Anahid Soxman, Blanche Torosian and the late Johnny Torosian. We are all extremely proud of her accomplishments. **Way to go Elizabeth!***

ALEXANDER JOHN JAMES TOROSIAN

*Alexander John James Torosian graduated in December with a Bachelor of Science degree with a major in Marketing and a minor in Decision Sciences from California State University San Francisco. He is currently pursuing a job in Marketing. He resides in San Francisco. Alex is the son of Alan Torosian and Donna Torosian. He is the grandson of Jim and Anahid Soxman, Blanche Torosian and the late Johnny Torosian. We are all extremely proud of his accomplishments. **Way to go Alex!***





To the ladies of St. Mary

Oh dear!

OUR

Sweet little

Baby Keshishian

is almost here!

Saturday, June 3rd, at 11:30 AM

Garabedian Residence

1080 Rorden Ave, Selma CA 93662

Kindly RSVP to Olivia by May 27th

(559) 917-0227

Registered at Target and Amazon





St. Mary Yetteem
Armenian Church
Golf Tournament

Be a Sponsor!

Event Sponsor - \$3,000

Name prominently displayed on Welcome Banner

Name or Company Logo on tournament shirt complimentary to each player

4 player entry fees – which includes lunch

Golf Ball Sponsor - \$2,500 (One Available)

Name on Welcome Banner

Name or Company Logo on golf balls

(complimentary golf balls to each player)

Golf Towel Sponsor - \$2,500 (one available)

Name on Welcome Banner

Name or Company Logo on golf towels

(complimentary golf towels to each player)

Gold Sponsor - \$1,500

Name on Welcome Banner

Tee Sponsorship – one hole

2 lunch tickets

Silver Sponsor - \$500

Name on Welcome Banner

Tee Sponsorship – one hole

2 lunch tickets

Tee Sponsor - \$100

Name on tee sign

3-hole Tee Sponsor - \$250

Name on tee signs at three holes

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Sponsorship Level: _____

Name to appear on Signage: _____

Please complete form and mail to: St Mary Armenian Church

Golf Tournament

P.O. Box 367

Yetteem, CA 93670

Payment: ___ by check made out to St. Mary Armenian Church (included)

___ by Venmo: email payment and application to : YetteemWMC@gmail.com

For information contact:

Linda Farsakian-Wall (559)786-1419 * Janice McWilliams (559) 786-4202 * John Kalfayan (559)280-3855



**The Holy Convent of the Theotokos
of the Lifegiving Spring.**
APRIL 29, 2023



Ways & Means Armenian Foodfest





**50th Anniversary Banquet
Enjoying Conversation & Meza**



Color pictures courtesy of Rose Marie Margosian

Honoring Father Vartan May 27, 2023



Photography by David Menendian

more pictures @ www.stmaryyettem.org

(Continued from the front page)

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

You can grow by meditating on God’s Word.

“Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on His law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither whatever they do prospers” (Psalm 1:1-3).

The Holy Spirit teaches you to have the characteristics of spiritual maturity.

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law” (Galatians 5:22-23).

The characteristics of spiritual maturity make you productive and effective in serving God.

“Make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:5-8).

Growing in maturity and discernment is the natural and right path. Staying the same is not.

“Though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil” (Hebrews 5:12-14).

God builds up His followers to worship Him as a community.

“Rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good. As you come to Him, the living Stone, rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to Him, you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:1-5).

Jesus followers in community become more mature to look like Christ together.

“Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of Him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work” (Ephesians 4:15-16).

You should follow the example of more mature believers.

“Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1).

Hard times are opportunities to grow. You can be thankful for them.

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything” (James 1:2-4).

Jan Stewart