



YETTEM ԵՌԵՄ

Հրատարակութիւն Եղեմի Ս. Աստուածածին Հայաստանեայց Եկեղեցւոյ

A Publication of St. Mary Armenian Church Yettem, California

Rev. Fr. Mashdots Keshishian, Parish Priest

January 2024

The Cave Paves the Way

When the Creator of all who cared for His children by being a shelter and refuge for every wounded heart and soul was revealed to the world, there was no place for him, so the earth offered Him a place in a cave. When the true Light that shone bright and warmed every heart was incarnated, it found home only in the darkness of a cold and inhospitable cave. When the source of all knowledge and wisdom, who guided the mighty kings and the great prophets was born to this world, there were no noblemen, kings and princes to greet Him, and He was visited in the cave by strangers from far lands and shepherds.

The cave is an important spiritual symbol and a key that can help us unlock the true meaning, depth and beauty of the message of Christmas. The life of our Lord begins and ends in a cave. It begins in a cave in Bethlehem where He was born and ends in a cave in Jerusalem where He was buried and resurrected from. A cave is a lifeless, cold, dark, inhospitable and unappealing place. But if we look into the nativity icons, we will observe that they depict something entirely different. In the Armenian miniature paintings, the cold and dark caves of nativity and resurrection overflow and vibrate with light, life and love. It is as if the mere presence of Christ instantly transforms and repels every form of darkness and turns it into a symbol of renewal, rebirth and resurrection.

There is a lifeless and frigid cave in every life. It might be a dark chapter in our life we struggle with, a cold and indifferent close person in our lives, a relationship that lacks life and love or a dire and harsh situation we are dealing with at this very moment and time. Whatever might be the reason and source of sadness and disappointment in your life, it is important to remember and be strengthened by the message of dark and cold caves' transformation. There is no cave, no form of darkness, disappointment, heartbreak, sadness, lifelessness and chilling indifference or alienation that is beyond the reach of Christ's healing touch. The moment He steps into the cave of our hearts, the way we feel, see the world and ourselves starts transforming and changing in ways that we can't perhaps even explain or understand. The rays of His peace and presence fill our hearts, cast all darkness and sadness away from us, warm the chilling caves of our hearts and transfigure them into an altar of joy.

Fr. Vosgi

Parish Notes

CONDOLENCES

On behalf of our St. Mary Parish family, we wish to extend our deepest sympathy to The Hovannisian Family on the passing of **John Hovannisian, Jr.** Services were held on Thursday, December 14th at Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church in Fresno.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Alex and Alysse Hovannisian on the birth of their son, **Avo John Hovannisian** who was born on December 10th. The proud grandparents are Karen Hovannisian and the late John Hovannisian, Jr. and Barret and Caroline Arakelian. Avo's great-grandmother is Vars Hovannisian.

Congratulations to Kevin and Lynn Skaff on the birth of their third child, **Juliette Azniv Skaff** who was born on December 20th. The proud grandparents are Mike and Judy Skaff and John and Gladys Saroyan.

THANK YOU

A very special thank you to Charlie and Elizabeth Ananian for the donation of a brand-new green privacy fence between our church and the neighbors to the west. Charlie has been working hard to keep the dirt parking lot scraped and free of weeds and stickers. Most recently he cut back the entire fence line of bushes and tree limbs that come onto our side of the property. After doing so, he hated that we could see all of the junk in the backyards of the neighbors. He approached the Parish Council with a proposal to have a second fence installed that would mask the eyesore from our parishioners and guests. Charlie also volunteered to coordinate the installation and cover all costs. Thank you for your hard work and generosity.

ARMENIAN CHRISTMAS

Armenian Christmas will be celebrated on **Sunday, January 7, 2024.** (See flier)

ALTAR CANDLES

December 24th

Alan and Phyllis Borba
grandparents of Parker Christine Borba
in honor of her 1st birthday

ALTAR FLOWERS

December 10th

Deacon Alan, Marceen and Nick Farsakian,
and

Linda and Mark Wall
in memory of Betty Farsakian

Mike and Judy Skaff and family
in memory of Alice Dudukian

Richard, Lillian, Pete and David Safrazian
in memory of Pete, Idalene and Jack Barsamian

December 17th

Julie Poochigian
in memory of all the deceased

The Yahnian Family
in memory of Sark and Sylvia Yahnian

December 24th

Alan and Phyllis Borba
in honor of our Christmas miracle,
Parker Christine's 1st birthday
"Thank you everyone for your
thoughts and prayers"

HOKEHANKIST REQUESTS

December 10th

Betty Farsakian
ten years after her passing,
requested by Deacon Alan, Marceen and Nick
Farsakian, and Linda and Mark Wall

Alice Dudukian
twenty years after her passing,
requested by Mike and Judy Skaff and family

Pete Barsamian
fifteen years after his passing,
Idalene Barsamian
five years after her passing,
Jack Barsamian
five years after his passing,
requested by
Richard, Lillian, Pete and David Safrazian

December 17th

Sark and Sylvia Yahnian
two years after their passing,
requested by The Yahnian Family

PARISH DUTIES

If you are interested in **servicing our church** as a **Parish Council member** or a **Diocesan delegate**, please call the church office **by January 5th.**

BAZAAR

THANK YOU YETTEM FOR YOUR SUPPORT

This bazaar is a tradition as only Yетtem can do it. Everybody was happy. Mouthwatering lunch. Fancy dessert goodies. Green and Red punches. Baked goods! Crafts! Gift packs! Christmas things! Armenian things! Country Store sold out! Kufta sold out! Spirited live auction! Energetic bidding through to the very end. Thank you to Linda Farsakian-Wall and Tracy Valencia for serving as Bazaar Committee Co-chairs. Thank you to all who contributed, set up, prepared, cooked, baked, donated, decorated. There were over twenty volunteers at the hall Saturday getting ready. Sunday morning crew finalized preparations. People were greeted with a festive atmosphere and decorations. Thank you to auctioneers John Kalfayan, Chuck Simonian, and Marlene Majarian! You join the fellowship of auctioneers past, whom many of us nostalgically remember: Sammy Farsakian, Harry Ekizian, Harry Kaloustian, Sark Davidian, Armen Menendian, to name a few.

Yетtem, you outdid yourselves. Tally is not final yet, but we can say auction plus Country Store plus kufta plus lunch grossed over \$14,000!!!

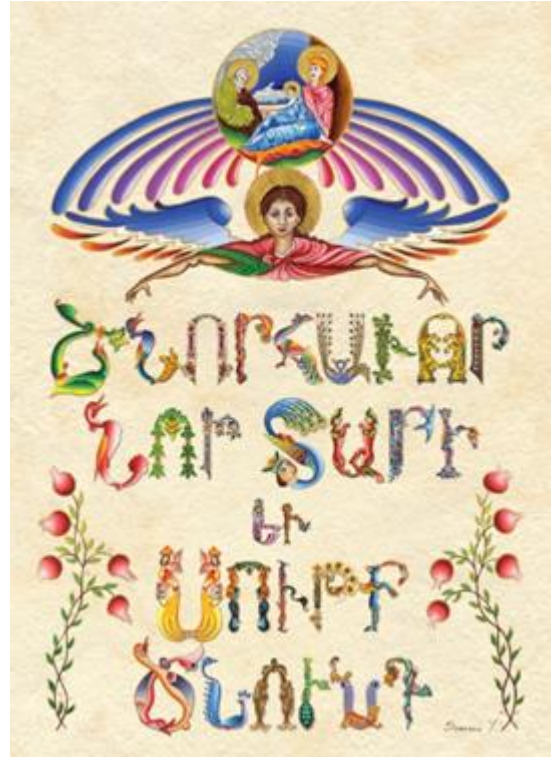
The Ladies Society elected two members to the Executive Committee at our November meeting, which was also our annual keshkeg luncheon. Keshkeg with sokhrats (battered browned onions) on top is the best. We're thinking of making a larger offering of it to the community. But I digress. Ladies Society officers for 2024 are Linda Farsakian-Wall, and Janel Zerounian, Chair and Vice-Chair respectively, Michelle Ananian Recording Secretary, Margie Ann Davidian Corresponding Secretary, Julie Poochigian Treasurer, Renee Ananian Assistant to the Treasurer, Janice McWilliams Advisor.

I have termed out after four years on the Ladies Society Executive Committee, the last two as Chairman. I thank Der Mashdots Keshishian and Parish Council Chair Myron Sheklian for their support and advice. Accomplishments were possible only because the Executive Committee was behind me all the way. Margie Lynn Davidian was my Vice Chair. She also termed out. It was a pleasure working with her and with all my Executive members, as well as past chairmen and I must say my sister Laurie Menendian. We were called on to serve, and we said yes. As I said at the bazaar, every one of us has something to give. St. Mary

Armenian Church of Yетtem is here and calling on you. Do not deny us your gift, your talent, your enthusiasm, your time throughout the year. Your church and your community, your tribe, is here to receive it.

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*Mari Louise Menendian
Ladies Society Chair, 2023*



HOKEHANKIST DONATIONS

December 10th

For Repose of Betty Farsakian's Soul
Chuck and Susie Simonian

For Repose of Alice Dudukian's Soul
Mike and Judy Skaff

RAFFLE

Our **December** raffle drawing was held on **Sunday, December 10th**.

Congratulations to the November winners...

- (\$150) Carol Hovannisian
- (\$100) Dottie Whitlock
- (\$50) Ed and Georgia Davidian

Our **January and February 2024** raffle drawing will be held on **January 7, 2024**. The drawing will also be streamed on Facebook. Thank you to our Ways and Means Committee for this great fundraiser for our church.

2024 RAFFLE

Tina Peters has sent out information and tickets for our **2024 monthly raffle**. If you don't receive tickets by mail in the coming days and would like some, contact Tina Peters at (559) 967-2593 by phone or text. (See flier)

BIBLE STUDY

Bible Study has resumed. The next Bible study will be held on **Wednesday, January 3rd** via Zoom at **7 PM**. Bible study is held on the **first Wednesday** of **each month**. Please contact Father Mashdots at the church office if you have questions. The reoccurring Zoom link for these meetings will be:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82940394573?pwd=K1pYYjJLNkNnd05XWXpoUE92dmcyUT09>

Meeting ID: 829 4039 4573

Passcode: 096231

WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

The Ways and Means Committee meeting will be held on **Thursday, January 11, 2024**, via Zoom at **7 PM**.

LADIES SOCIETY

The Ladies Society **executive board** meeting will be held on **Saturday, January 13, 2024** in the Majarian Hall at **11:30 AM**.

PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council's next meeting will be held via Zoom on **Thursday, January 18, 2024** at **6 PM**.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

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

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. The original wall is completely filled. **Two new columns** were recently **added**. This will make room for an **additional 96 names** at a **donation** of **\$250/name**. Contact Linda Farsakian-Wall: at (559) 786-1419 or email: 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**.



Donating is easy. Pick-up is free. Call Linda Farsakian-Wall at 559-786-1419 for details.

VOTING MEMBERSHIP

If you are not yet a **voting** member of the St. Mary Yetem Parish, you might want to consider membership. Some might ask what constitutes "membership in our church".

If you tell others, you are a "member of St. Mary Armenian Church in Yetem" it is understood that you have an allegiance to our church. That means you have a loyalty to attending here in Yetem. That usually also includes that you support the parish by your attendance and your physical and/or monetary contributions to her well-being.

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Our church office hours are **Tuesday through Friday from 9:30 – 2:30 PM**. The **church office** will be **closed December 26th – 29th**. 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 Chairman Myron Sheklian at myron@sheklian.com or text/call (559) 280-7315.

**St. Mary Armenian
Church of Yettem**



Armenian Christmas Luncheon

Sunday, January 7th 2024

Immediately following the day's worship

Menu

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

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



ST. MARY ARMENIAN CHURCH

JANUARY 2024						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 New Year's Day	2	3	4	5 Christmas Eve Scripture Readings at 4 PM Jurakalouyts Badarak at 4 PM	6 Morning Service at 9:30 AM Feast of the Nativity and Theophany of our Lord Jesus
7 Celebration of Theophany/ Armenian Christmas at 9:30 AM Sunday School Raffle drawing	8	9	10	11	12 Feast of the Naming of our Lord Jesus Christ	13 Birth of St. John the Forerunner The Ladies Society meeting in the Majarian Hall at 11:30 AM
14	15 Martin Luther King Jr. Day	16	17	18 The Parish Council meeting via Zoom at 6 PM	19	20
21 Sunday School	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

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 Bazaar - December 10, 2023



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 Saturday this year, in Yettem we will be celebrating on Sunday, January 7th. 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.

Friday – January 5, 2024

Christmas Eve – Scripture Readings 4 p.m.

Jurakalouyts Badarak (Liturgy of the Lights) 4 p.m.

Saturday - January 6, 2024

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 7, 2024

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 – Jackson Poochigian

Celebrant & Preacher – Rev. Father Mashdots Keshishian

Hokehankist (Requiem Service) – Hokehankist will not be conducted during these days because January 7th (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.

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
P.O. Box 367
Yettem, California 93670
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