



YETTEM ԵՌԵՄ

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

January 2026

Rejoicing in the Birth of Christ and the Light of Theophany

Dear Beloved Parish Family,

As we approach the blessed celebration of **Armenian Christmas on January 6th**, our hearts are filled with joy as we commemorate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and His glorious baptism in the River Jordan. This holy season reminds us of God's immense love for humanity and His promise of salvation.

In the humble manger, we witness the simplicity and humility of our Savior, yet the angels declared His arrival with glory and peace:

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.” (Luke 2:14)

Through His birth, Christ brought light into a world shadowed by darkness, guiding us with hope, love, and grace. Armenian Christmas is not only a time of celebration but also a moment to reflect on the spiritual gifts of kindness, humility, and generosity. It is a season to share the love of Christ with our families, neighbors, and community. Let us open our hearts to those in need and extend the warmth and comfort of God's presence to all.

Celebrating the Joy of Armenian Christmas Together

As a parish family, we are blessed to gather in prayer, song, and fellowship to honor the Nativity and Theophany. Our **Christmas Liturgy and festive gatherings** offer us the opportunity to rejoice together and strengthen the bonds of our spiritual family.

Ways to Celebrate the Spirit of Armenian Christmas:

Meditation and Scripture Study: Read and meditate on passages about the Nativity and Theophany; focus on the spiritual meaning of light, hope, and renewal.

Personal Acts of Kindness: Perform intentional, thoughtful acts of service or kindness each day of the season, reflecting Christ's love in practical ways.

(Continued on the back page)

Parish Notes

ALTAR FLOWERS

December 14

*Alan, Marceen, Nick and Shant Farsakian,
and Linda, Mark and Ben Wall*
in memory of Betty Farsakian,
twelve years after her passing

Judy and Mike Skaff and Family
in memory of Alice Dudukian,
twenty-two years after her passing

SCHEDULED JANUARY HOKEHANKISTS

Sunday, January 11

*Bedros Stamboulian, Lucine Stamboulian,
Akop Oganessian, Oganess Oganessian,
and Vartui Oganessian*
requested by
Anush Oganessian

Sunday, January 25

Lucille Margosian
One year after her passing,
requested by Karon Penny and Family,
Sharon and John Kaprielian and Family,
and Carrie Margosian and Family

HOKEHANKIST DONATIONS

December 14

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

DONATION

A Christmas donation in loving memory of Arthur Vartanian, beloved son, husband, father and grandfather.

*Mrs. Alice Vartanian
Mr. Philip Vartanian
Mrs. Christine Vartanian Datian and Family*

RAFFLE

Our December 2025 raffle was held on Sunday, December 7.

Congratulations to the **December winners...**
(\$150) Lisa Krause
(\$100) Jeanette Ekizian
(\$50) Abe and Sandra Kizirian

LADIES SOCIETY NEWS

What a joyous and lively Holiday Bazaar we had! Entering the newly decorated Hall, I was warmly greeted by family and friends. Then seeing all the auction and country store items and smelling the delicious homemade lasagna, I knew we were in for a treat. I was not disappointed! But wait! Who showed up? None other than Santa Clause with gifts for the children! I thought it couldn't get any better. I was wrong! The live auction exceeded all expectations! Auctioneer John Kalfayan led the way, and our newest auctioneers Ani Valencia and Dustin Vartanian brought the house down!

Thanks to the generosity of those in attendance, donations from those that couldn't make it, and the luncheon committee who donated the lunch, we netted just over \$15,000.00. This will go a long way to helping our church meet its expenses. Thank you to Tracy Valencia and Debbie Agnew for co-chairing the event, to the bazaar committee for donating their time, to Sandy and John Kalfayan, Margie L. Davidian, Judy Skaff, Debbie Agnew, and Tracy and Albert Valencia for making the lasagna, our auctioneers, and to Sandy and John Kalfayan for decorating the Hall and Church.

Merry Christmas and a God's blessings for a Happy New Year from Ladies Society.

Linda Farsakian-Wall, Ladies Society Chair

THANK YOU

On behalf of the Parish Council, I would like to thank everyone who supported our beautiful St. Mary this past year. It truly is a testimony to the love and commitment we all have for our church and community. May God bless you all with a happy and healthy new year.

Special thank you to Lilit and Sargon Benjamin for ringing the bell during church services every Sunday that they are there. It helps the Parish Council out so much especially when only one is on duty.

Also, a special thank you to David Vartanian for donating really delicious coffee. Again, we are so very grateful for everyone's support.

Judy Skaff, Parish Council Chair

LADIES SOCIETY

The Ladies Society meeting is scheduled for **Saturday, January 10 at 11:30 AM. Location off-site is to be determined.**

ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY MEETING

The Annual Parish Assembly meeting will be held on **Sunday, February 1, 2026**, after church services. A **light lunch** will be offered. **Please make every effort to attend.** (See flyer)

PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council's next meeting will be held on **Thursday, January 15 via Zoom at 6:30 PM.**

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.**

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

**MEMBERSHIP
DUES**

For your convenience, **membership dues** can be paid through **Zelle**. Just send your payment to saintmaryyettem@gmail.com

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

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.

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



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.

Scan the QR code below to visit the official St. Mary YetteM website



ST. MARY ARMENIAN CHURCH

JANUARY 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 New Year's Day Church Office will be Closed	2	3
4 Celebration of Theophany/ Armenian Christmas at 9:30 AM Armenian Christmas Luncheon Sunday School Christmas Program	5 Armenian Christmas Eve Prayer Service & Gospel Readings at 5:00 PM Divine Liturgy (Jrakaluyts) at 5:30 PM	6 Armenian Christmas Feast of the Holy Nativity and Theophany of our Lord Jesus Christ Morning Prayer Service at 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy at 10:00 AM	7 Remembrance of the dead	8	9	10 Ladies Society meeting at 11:30 AM Location off-site to be determined
11 Sunday School Children's Sermon	12	13 Feast of the Naming of our Lord Jesus Christ	14	15 Birth of St. John the Forerunner The Parish Council meeting via Zoom at 6:00 PM	16	17
18	19 <u>ML King Day</u>	20	21	22	23	24
25 Eve of the Fast of Catechumens Sunday School	26	27	28	29	30 Remember of the Prophet Jonah 35 th Anniversary of His Eminence Archbishop Hovnan Derderian's Episcopal Ordination	31 St. Sarkis the Warrior

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
818-293-9098 - Cell

To the Parishioners of the St. Mary Armenian Church in Yetteem,

As we come to a close of the calendar year of 2025, I wanted to share with you all an update about what Parish Council has been doing over the last two years. It's impossible to include everything we've accomplished in this letter. Collectively, we have selected the contained highlights of improvements we have made to our beloved Yetteem, our own Garden of Eden, the paradise for our faithful servants. I am honored to be a member of Parish Council. It is a position of utmost importance in my life. Along with providing you an update of improvements, this article affords me the opportunity to share with you an "insider view" of the group who diligently serve our church. Our Parish Council members each bring a unique skillset to the table. Our meetings are thoughtful, insightful, and effective. We each have a vision of longevity and productivity for our church. These are people who consistently teach me something new, from life lessons to hidden gems about Yetteem's history. Our Parish Council is comprised of a group of individuals who love our church. We love our parishioners. We love serving Jesus Christ and desire to walk daily with His mission at our forefront. This love is what binds us, and it is our desire to share that love with all of you. We are blessed to have a Chairperson who has a vision for the beautification of Yetteem, and her vision kicked off a long list of projects, repairs and maintenance that began in 2024. Judy Skaff has been on the move! I've observed her diligently walking the church grounds, noting items in need of restoration. Her reserved and quiet nature has resulted in a resounding thunder of applause at all that has been accomplished under her watch. Tina Peters and Tracy Valencia have brilliantly collaborated with all things centered on the revival of Yetteem's beauty. These amazing women led the way. Their strength, commitment, and desire to do what is best for our church is both admirable and refreshing. Their vision resulted in the following projects: new porcelain slabs adorning the candle holders; coating and restriping of the parking lot; repair of the hall and church roof; rain gutters; repair of the hall drywall; replacement of churchwide electrical panels; cleaning and repair of the church organ; repair of the storage shed roof; professional deep cleaning of the kitchen; complete clearing of the church yard with pruning of all trees; total renovation of the hall entryway and main hall, which includes new paint, window coverings, light fixtures/plugs/light switches, baseboards, ceiling fans, lighting for bathrooms and the hallway, stripping and waxing of the floors; new walk-in refrigerator and conference room refrigerator; total renovation of the hall exterior and front of the church, which includes new paint, lights, entryway windows, staining of the church doors, painted railings, cleaning and polishing of the chandeliers; new sound system. If this list contains only our highlights, you can imagine what our detailed list looks like. The transformation is amazing, and we hope you all have enjoyed watching this beautification project as it progresses. We have composed a list of further improvements for the 2026 year. Tina Peters has organized our future projects by meticulously keeping a watchful eye on our finances. Her focus has resulted in ways to make our project dreams a reality. We are grateful to all who contributed to these projects coming to fruition. If that wasn't enough, 2025 brought us twenty new voting members – a first in the history of Yetteem. Church membership isn't just a number – it shows a willingness and commitment to a life devoted to our faith. We would like to encourage you all to consider making this commitment in 2026. I am of the belief that God intended for houses of worship to come together under leaders who were handpicked and chosen by His design. Father Mashdots, thank you for being our leader. Your vision for a thriving Yetteem is contagious, and your guidance of your flock is admirable. I can't wait to see what the upcoming year has in store for us all. On behalf of the Parish Council of the St. Mary Armenian Church, may God bless you all this holiday season. We thank you for being Yetteem's good and faithful servants.

All my best,

Annie Davidian, Parish Council Vice-Chair

SAVE THE DATE



**35TH ANNIVERSARY OF
HIS EMINENCE
ARCHBISHOP
HOVNAN DERDERIAN'S
EPISCOPAL ORDINATION**

FRIDAY, JANUARY 30, 2026

**HOSTED BY CENTRAL VALLEY
WESTERN DIOCESE ARMENIAN CHURCHES**

MORE DETAILS TO FOLLOW

WELCOME
TO THE WORLD

Nezryn Marcy Babagian

Born December 19, 2025 | 7lbs, 3oz | 21 inches



Congratulations

Parents Stephen and Serena Babagian
Little Brother Bedros

Grandparents | Peter and Mary Babagian,
Cynthia Peeples-Escobedo, Edward Bonn

Great-Grandmothers | Louise Babagian, Elizabeth Peeples



Western Diocese of the Armenian Church
Proudly Presents

RECLAIM

10TH ANNUAL

SAVE THE DATE: MARCH 6-8, 2026

YETTEM ♦ CALIFORNIA

“Reclaiming Monasticism”

• Details to follow to participate in this informative Spiritual Retreat •

St. Mary Yettellem



Join us in January and February

More Information at  www.stmaryyettem.org

Sun | Jan 4

Armenian Christmas Lunch

Tues | Jan 6



Armenian Christmas Observed
Prayer Service-9:30am | Divine Liturgy-10am

Sat | Jan 10

Ladies Society Meeting
Location off-site to be determined

Sun | Jan 11

Sunday School -Children's Sermon

Sun | Jan 25

Sunday School

 Fri | Jan 30



35th Anniversary of
Archbishop Hovan Derderian
Episcopal Ordination
Pardini's, Fresno

Sun | Feb 1

Annual Parish Assembly Meeting

Sat | Feb 7

Ladies Society Meeting

Sun | Feb 8

Sunday School - Children's Sermon

Sun | Feb 15



Lent Begins
Poon Paregentan Fellowship

Wed | Feb 18

Souper Supper begins

Sun | Feb 22

Sunday School

ALL VOTING MEMBERS ARE REQUESTED TO ATTEND

St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church
★ Annual Parish Assembly ★

Sunday, February 1, 2026
After Church Services
Majarian Hall

- Report from Father Mashdots
- Reports from Organization Chairs
- Financial Statement of the Parish Council
- Elections of Officers and Delegates
- Adoption of the 2026 Annual Budget
- Old and New Business
- Prayer and Dismissal

★ Lunch will be served before the meeting ★

**Please pay your 2026 Membership Dues
before the Assembly**



St. Mary Ladies Society Cookie Sale

Homemade Cookies

baked by our members and friends

Perfect for your super bowl party or your Valentine



Treat Yourself or Share the Joy!

\$25 for 1 dozen box of assorted cookies

Order By: Sunday, January 25 by emailing
datorosian@sbcglobal.net

Pick-up: Saturday, February 7 &
Sunday, February 8



Support Ladies Society and enjoy the best cookies in town!

Order yours today!

For more information, contact Donna Venturella at 559-300-3017



Christmas Bazaar

We're grateful for all of YOU!



(Continued from the front page)

Share Your Faith Story: Encourage family and friends to reflect on their blessings and God's work in their lives; consider sending cards or notes with spiritual encouragement.

We welcome this sacred season, let us renew our commitment to walk in the light of Christ. His Nativity and Theophany are not merely historical events but living realities that continue to transform our hearts today. May the radiance of His divine presence inspire us to grow in faith, compassion, and spiritual maturity.

Let us also remember that Armenian Christmas calls us to unity, unity in worship, in service, and in love. When we gather as one body in Christ, we reflect the harmony and peace that He brought into the world. May our parish continue to shine as a beacon of hope, welcoming all who seek God's grace and truth.

“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.” (Isaiah 9:2)

As we celebrate both the birth and baptism of Christ, let us remember that His light guides us throughout the year. May the blessings of Armenian Christmas fill your hearts with joy, your homes with warmth, and your souls with everlasting peace.

From our parish family to yours, **Merry Armenian Christmas, and a Blessed New Year!**

Christ is born and revealed, Blessed is the revelation of Christ!

With love and prayers,

Fr. Mashdots

St. Mary Armenian Church
P.O. Box 367
Yetter, California 93670
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