

The Calvary Messenger

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The Newsletter of the
Calvary Armenian Congregational Church of San Francisco
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A View From Calvary

Rev. Nerses Balabanian
Pastor

Surprised By the Blessings

Are you surprised by the teachings of Jesus in Matthew 5-7? Maybe you are not, but the disciples and the crowds around him were. Jesus' teachings were truly revolutionary in a system where people trusted that righteousness was achieved by keeping the law and behaving in a godly manner.

Lately I have been teaching from the Sermon on the Mount. The eight beatitudes, of which begins with the word blessed (*Makarios* in Greek, *Yeranee* in Armenian) are the core of the sermon series. The beatitudes are not things you do so that you become a "happy" person. They do not make a checklist to complete. They are not teachings about behaving properly. No, these teachings are an **invitation to become members in the Kingdom of God**. They start from accepting how much one needs Jesus as Savior, King, Lord, Guide, Teacher, Healer, Comforter, the King of this new kingdom, the new creation. These are teachings of **seeking first His kingdom** and **His righteousness** and all things will come after that...all things. No wonder the first beatitude is being poor in spirit, being empty, seeing how desperately hungry you are and that you need Christ.

One of my pastor friends, Shawn Reese, from PBCC describes the Sermon on the Mount: **"living right-side up in an upside down world."** N.T. Wright says: "God is acting in and through Jesus to turn the world upside down... to pour out lavish 'blessings' on all who now turn to him and accept the new thing that he is doing."

What kind of blessings are you looking forward to this year? A new house, a new car, a new job, a new... something... those are part of God's blessings as well. But my word to you is beyond these blessings. The beatitudes are blessings. Are they blessings in your life?

It all starts with being poor in spirit, as I said before. The poor in spirit are the ones who have realized they are no one if they are not part of the Kingdom of Heaven. The Greek word for poor means extreme, desperately poor. All eight beatitudes flow from being poor in spirit. The poor in spirit are those who say: "I need God, I surrender". Once you are there, you see your sins and the sins of the world around you and you mourn for them and ask for forgiveness. This leads you to be meek, as those who are the ones who are hungry to be fed by God and to have a right relationship with God and with others. That leads you to learn to be merciful, because Jesus is merciful. How can you be merciful if your heart is closed? Pure in heart leads you to see more than yourself in life. You become a peacemaker, which will lead you to be in trouble. In the end, people **will persecute you** for obeying God and becoming his child.

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Coming Events

Sunday, February 26

Vartanantz Sunday

Saturday, March 4

World Day of Prayer

Sunday, April 9

Palm Sunday

Thursday, April 13

Mauudy Thursday

Sunday, April 16

Resurrection Sunday

Sunday, May 14

Mother's Day

Food Festival



The preparation for the CACC's 35th Annual Food Festival began as early as July. Our freezers were jam-packed with trays of sou boreg, different varieties of kuftas, spinach, Swiss chard and cheese beoregs, manti, choregs, lahmajoon, and many more delicacies. Numerous dedicated volunteers put countless hours in preparing for November 12th.

When the doors opened at 12 noon, the delectable aroma of shish kebob grilled by the Triple X Fraternity volunteers enticed our guests to come in. Everyone was greeted and welcomed at the entrance. Many first time visitors were from our immediate neighborhood or they were just driving by looking for a place to eat. As people walked towards Halajian Hall, they admired the beautiful Armenian crafts corner, the valuable raffle prizes and the Christian literature corner. Soon enough long lines were formed in front of the food buffet.



The Country Cupboard was bursting with homemade desserts, jams, pastries and many volunteers who were working tirelessly. Boutique Noel displayed exquisite pieces of artwork and jewelry. The Children's Corner provided art, crafts and games for all the kids.

In addition to offering delicious meals, the Food Festival also created an opportunity for friends and acquaintances to meet around the table and have a great time. The place was filled most of the day. People didn't want to leave since they were enjoying each other's company and

following the cultural program. This year, Yerevan Dance Group and solo dancer Shohger Oknayan graced our stage with beautiful performances. In addition, Aleppo Nights Duo (Badveli Nerses on the piano and Hagop Nazarian on the violin) added a special touch to the evening. The day ended with the distribution of the raffle prizes. Under the leadership of Armine Adrouny and Nora Balabanian, the Food Festival was undoubtedly an event that brought our dedicated church members together around a huge task. Although the days of preparation were sometimes long, but the fellowship and commitment of the volunteers was outstanding. The Food Festival Committee would like to thank all the volunteers and sponsors for supporting the 35th Annual Food Festival and making this year's festival a huge success.



May God be glorified in all we do.

Harvest Sunday Funday!

Harvest Sunday on October 23 was indeed a fun day! The Sunday School teachers transformed the Halajian Hall into a place where the children arrived with their costumes to play and have lots of fun activities.

Looking at the pictures, you can see the adults had as much fun as the children!



Samaritan's Purse Newsletter

Michelle Sagherian

This year was another fun and successful year packing shoeboxes with the Calvary Church Sunday School Kids to be sent to the children in need through the Samaritan's Purse organization! This year we found out that the shoeboxes were sent to the Philippines!

This time around, the kids prepared 47 boxes, and they loved the process of building each and every one. Many of our church's kids came up to me to ask to write a letter to the child who will be receiving their box. I love how connected they felt to the child who would be receiving their box!

I would like to say a huge thank you to the many of you who donated your time and donations to our packing this year. The boxes arrived safely and were received with much gratitude. May the Lord Jesus be glorified through this ministry we adore so much!



We all look forward to sending more shoeboxes through Samaritan's Purse for years to come!

Christmas Celebration

Alina Balabanian

On Sunday, December 18, 2016, the Sunday school students presented a play titled “Jesus is Born!” wherein their task was to tell the story of Christmas to the congregation. Through the learning of the carols and preparing for the play, the kids learned the story of Christmas and were encouraged to respond to the birth of Jesus by joyfully welcoming him as King of the world. Our aim was to teach the Christmas story in a hands-on way and allow the kids an opportunity to gain the perspective of their character within the story.



It was a blessing to work with the kids and see their excitement while they dressed up, acted out their parts and sang their hearts out. We praise God for the phenomenal way they were able to communicate the story to the congregation. They took their role very seriously and put on an amazing performance. Many thanks to all the kids, parents and Sunday school teachers who helped make this play a memorable and special experience. Special thanks also to Caroline Sagherian who taught the kids the carols every Sunday so they would be well prepared for the play. We hope and pray that the kids will continue to “tell the story” of Jesus



as the King of the world and their lives always.

Following their performance, the Sunday school kids went downstairs to their classrooms for a fun time of games and crafts, and they were given Christmas cookies as a snack. Alidz Nazarian also gave each child a gift filled with various treats inside. After church we were all treated to a wonderful Christmas celebration luncheon in the Halajian Hall organized by Matt Silverman. After enjoying a delicious Kebab lunch with a yummy chicken nugget option for the kids (which was highly appreciated!) we were graced by the highly anticipated visit of Gagbant Baba. The kids all gathered around him and were given their gifts. It was a wonderful time for the entire church family to come together and celebrate Christmas together.

WORLD DAY
of PRAYER
2017

2017
World Day of Prayer
Am I Being Unfair to You?

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Աղօթքի Օր

Prepared by WDP of the Philippines

SATURDAY, MARCH 4th at 11 am

St. Andrew Arm. Apost. Church
11370 South Stelling Road
Cupertino, CA 95014

Luncheon will follow - \$10 Donation

For reservations contact:
Sevan Balabanian: 650-815-8680
Sose Ballian: 415-566-0309
Theresa Bezdikian: 408-578-9120
Maria Gamitian: 415-601-2629



ARMENIAN MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Faithful to Our Legacy - Embracing the Future

"Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to all creation." Mark 16:15

For almost one hundred years, the Armenian Missionary Association of America has served the Lord in 24 countries around the world, by putting faith into action for our brothers and sisters in need. We have built churches, schools, and camps, provided life-giving medical care, created educational opportunities, met the needs of those in want, and done so much more. The needs are great and our faith is strong. Please continue to partner with us in faith.



Syria Relief: Distributing Food Parcels



Haigazian University, Beirut, Lebanon



Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian School, Yerevan



Camp Sheen Shoghig in Hankavan, Armenia

31 West Century Road, Paramus, NJ 07652

☎ 201-265-2607 ✉ info@amaa.org 🌐 www.amaa.org

AMAA Sunday at CACC

Alina Balabanian



On Sunday, January 22, 2017 Calvary Armenian Congregational Church hosted “AMAA Sunday”. During the service, Rev. Mgrdich Melkonian presented the various ministries of the AMAA and gave an overview of the work of the AMAA all around the world. He also preached on the importance of growing as believers and gave practical suggestions on how one can prioritize time with the Lord each day. In addition, he emphasized how we not only have to recognize how God has gifted us, but we must also ask how God wants us to use those gifts to do His work.

After the worship service, there was a delicious luncheon prepared by the ladies of the church. Dr. Matt Silverman, a member of the CACC missions committee, welcomed those in attendance and prayed for Rev. Melkonian and the mission of the AMAA on behalf of CACC. The luncheon enabled the congregation to have more time to learn about the various ministries and projects of the AMAA. Specifically, Rev. Melkonian spoke about the mission of the AMAA around the world, the Syria Relief, the Centennial Campaign and gave an update about our sister church in Armavir. He then gave the attendees some time for questions and answer. It was very touching to learn of the various ways the AMAA is helping and reaching out to people who are in need in so many places.

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In attendance were some of the youngest members of the congregation, the CACC Toddler Sunday school class. During Thanksgiving of 2016 these three-year old children packed and sent clothing and toys for kids in Armenia. It was wonderful to see how even young kids can help other kids and become a part of the mission of the AMAA. We are grateful to God for all the work the AMAA is doing all over the world and we are grateful that God allows us to be a part of sharing His love to others.



(continued from page 1)

If this is Jesus’ work in our lives, so what is our role?

Please come to Jesus poor in spirit every day. Come empty, God is going to surprise you with His blessings...

A friend of mine on Facebook wrote: “It took me 9.5 years to complete undergraduate studies and obtain a bachelors degree. The process involved many surprises, much heartache and much more effort than it ought to have. I’m blessed because “my trials grounded my faith in ways that prosperity and abundance never could.” I’ve come out stronger, more hopeful, wiser, and nearer to my God than I would have otherwise. This blessing I wouldn’t trade for anything...”

Are you surprised by the blessings?

Arlene Kazarian's Obituary



September 16, 1925 -
September 6, 2016

Arlene Shamlian Kazarian was born on September 16, 1925 to the late Hagop and Hranoush Shamlian in Aleppo, Syria. Her family moved to Iraq where she resided as a youngster. Arlene was blessed with a large, Godly family and was preceded in death by her parents, brothers, Puzant, Hrant, Toros and Edward and her sisters, Helen, Evelyn, and Rebecca. Arlene immigrated to the United States as a young teenager accompanied by family friends. She joined her family in San Francisco where she graduated from high school. She was closest in age to her brother Ed who happened to be friends with this nice, handsome, Armenian boy. Ed had to convince Arlene to attend a local dance with him where he introduced her to his buddy, Dick. They fell in love and were married on September 13, 1947. They made their home in San Francisco and were blessed with three wonderful children, a son Alvin, and daughters Carol and Susan.

Arlene was very supportive of her husband Dick. She understood how important his occupation as a police officer was to him, even though there were many dangerous incidents over his career. Her strong faith in God helped her deal with the risks involved in his particular job.

Arlene loved to cook and entertain family and friends in her home in the city, a home that was filled with joy and the smell of baking in the air. Arlene also became proficient at cooking over a Coleman camping stove. Every summer the family hopped in the car and took off for a national park either in California or out-of-state. One of their favorite destinations were Lake Tahoe or Yosemite. Arlene could flip pancakes on the Coleman with the best of them as Dick's favorite breakfast was you guessed it, pancakes! Arlene also became proficient at packing. Even though the pile of camping items looked as if they would never fit in the trunk, Arlene could arrange it all with room to spare. Many wonderful summers were spent in the great outdoors with Ed, Roxie and their kids or her third daughter Marianne Mesrobian Cinfel.

Arlene decided that she couldn't abide the fog in San Francisco any longer and encouraged Dick to move anywhere the sun shined. After more than thirty years in foggy San Francisco, the Kazarians moved to San Mateo. After Dick retired, he and Arlene traveled extensively to Europe, Asia and Africa. Arlene enjoyed meeting new people and experiencing the native cuisine.

Arlene was able to see two of her three children get married and was present for the birth of her three grandchildren; David Hagopian, Richard Hoggan and the late Laura Hagopian.. She was a big influence in their lives and God blessed her mightily as she saw all three grow up into accomplished and successful adults whom she was extremely proud of and would brag about to anyone who was willing to listen. The death of her only grand-daughter tested her faith once more. Although this was an immensely difficult time for her, Arlene was comforted by God's promise that she would see Laura again.

She was an active member of Calvary Armenian Congregational Church for decades. She loved helping to prepare the food for the festival and attended church faithfully, until she became unwell this past August. Back in June Arlene had lunch with Badveli and Sevan. She inquired about the Home for the Elderly in Aleppo, which had been recently bombed by Isis. Arlene decided to donate money to help these people in any way that was necessary. Her donation was the seed money that began CACC's vacation bible school raising over \$1500 for this cause.

She was also an active member in the Daughters of Vartan organization. She maintained many friendships with her sisters over the years and enjoyed attending the many functions until she decided to no longer drive at night. About four years ago, Arlene met a wonderful group of women who walked every morning at the Hillsdale Mall in San Mateo. Arlene enjoyed her time with these lovely, caring women as they exchanged stories of their lives over a cup of coffee; just another venue for Arlene to brag about her grandchildren!

Arlene went to be with her Lord and Savior on September 6, 2016. She was laid to rest next to her beloved husband Dick on September 13, 2016, which would have been their 69th wedding anniversary. She will always be remembered for her warm hospitality, good heart and her love of Jesus. She is survived by her children; Al, Carol, son-in-law Bruce and Susan and her grandsons David and Richard and Richard's fiancée, Luisa and many loving nieces, nephews and friends. We will miss her greatly.

TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL

Or Current Resident



The Calvary Messenger is produced as a ministry update for our congregation and friends. Donations to offset printing and mailing costs are appreciated. Any comments, errors, omissions and/or newsworthy items may be addressed to the editors, care of the church office or sent via email to our box at cacc@calvaryarmenianchurch.org. Please check our website for current ministry information: <http://www.calvaryarmenianchurch.org>.

Church News

BAPTISM

Our congratulations to Armen and Jasmine Berjikly on the baptism of their daughter, Evelyn Sophie Berjikly on Sunday, January 29, 2017. Please pray for them.



CONDOLENCES

Mr. Levon Shemmassian (father of Arpi Shemmassian Beylerian) passed away on Sunday, November 6, 2016 in Ainjar, Lebanon. Our condolences and prayers to the Shemmassian, Kalfayan, Beylerian, Filian, Tovmassian and Blannin families.

Mrs. Joyce Muncherian (mother of our former Pastor, Stephen Muncherian) passed away on Thursday, September 1, 2016 in Merced, CA. Our condolences and prayers to the Muncherian family.

Mr. Zareh Sarkissian (father of Leda Sarkissian Getsoyan) passed away on Sunday, January 29, 2017 in Beirut, Lebanon. Our condolences and prayers to the Sarkissian and Getsoyan families.

UPCOMING COMMUNION SERVICES

Sunday - February 26, 2017
Thursday - April 13, 2017



Beatitudes

