

St. Vartan Church  
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Oakland, CA 94610

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HAPPY★NEW★YEAR

### *The St. Vartan Voice*

newsletter is published once a month by St. Vartan Armenian Church.

The deadline for all articles is the fifteenth of each month.

Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate  
Rev. Fr. Hovel Ohanyan, Parish Priest and President of All Church Organizations  
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Parish Assembly Chair: Don Manoogian  
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Organist: Araks Aghazarian and Ida Mazmanian  
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Sunday School Superintendent: Janet Yeghissian and Nicole Vasgerdsian  
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Cultural Society Chair: Liz Ojakian  
Hokejosh: Nora Hanoian  
Newsletter Editors: Arlene Hovsepian and Rachel Harger  
Church Secretary: Rachel Harger  
Altar Flowers: Carole Chang  
Church Custodian: Wartkes Hagopian

Divine Liturgy Service—Sundays 10:30 a.m.

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# St.VartanVoice

The Newsletter of St. Vartan Armenian Apostolic Church

Rev. Fr. Hovel Ohanyan, Parish Priest

Սուրբ Վարդանի Ձայն

Ս. Վարդան Հայ Առաքելական Եկեղեցւոյ Պաշտօնաթերթ



January 2020

## Primate's Message of the Feast of the Nativity & Theophany January 6, 2020

### EMMANUEL – GOD IS WITH US!

The significance of Christmas is embedded in this simple affirmation. As we celebrate the miraculous birth of Christ, we become more cognizant of God's perpetual presence in our lives. With the birth of Baby Jesus, God himself visits the human race, embarking on His earthly redemptive mission. God becomes incarnate to dwell with us, to give us spiritual birth so that we may align our paths and live according to His commandments and personal examples.

When we celebrate the Nativity and Theophany of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, first and foremost, we confess His divine intervention and lasting presence in our lives. We proclaim that God is with us and therefore, with that conviction, we direct our lives toward the good and the beautiful, toward divine perfection and creativity.

When we reflect on God's presence in our lives, we experience a revelation and a spiritual rebirth, which in turn fill our lives with new resolutions, commitments and visions.

Engulfed in the spirit of New Year and Christmas, as a spiritual servant of the Holy Armenian Apostolic Mother Church, I pray to God, beseeching that He transforms our hearts and makes them a warm manger for the newborn King to abide. In our prayer, we recall the words of St. Nersess the Graceful found in the Service of Peace Hour, where he says, "And a child is born, a son has been given to us, for God is with us. And his authority is upon his shoulders, for God is with us. And his name is called messenger of great counsel, for God is with us. And wonderful counselor, for God is with us. And God the mighty prince, for God is with us. And prince of peace Father of the One to come, the Lord God is with us."

Our ancestors lived their lives with that strong conviction that God was with them. That notion gave them strength and confidence to build the Fatherland and the Church, to create spiritual values and missions, high moral standards and culture, science and arts. They have created a great future for the generations to come, for they knew that God was with them.

Emmanuel – God is with us. When we declare this affirmation out loud, we experience a moment of self-reflection, spiritual transformation and a beginning of a new life. In addition, we acquire a higher level of spiritual self-awareness or self-confidence, if you will, to answer God's call and re-evaluate our lives with His presence.

It is unfortunate that due to today's life circumstances, we often times fail to season our lives with prayer. As a result, we distance ourselves from God and reject His presence, resembling an uprooted tree doomed to die in a short period of time. In our case, having time-limited lives means being deprived



### Bible Readings

Jan. 5 Matt. 2:10-12  
Jan. 6 Matt. 1:18-25  
Jan. 12 Luke 2:21  
Jan. 19 John 2:1-11  
Jan. 26 John 3:13-21

As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

—Matt. 3:16-17





from spirituality, which is truly fatal. It is part of the human nature to be inseparably united with God, without forgetting that we have been created in His image and likeness. Otherwise, we will cease to live and will wither like the uprooted tree.

Beloved in Christ,

In the Nativity and Theophany of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, try to discover new life perspectives. Abide in faith, uphold spiritual and moral values, open up your souls to God and keep your hearts warm for the Fatherland and the Holy Church. Do not hesitate to pass on the sacred values and traditions of our church and nation to your children, so that they may be spiritually armored to withstand any and all challenges of the time.

**CHRIST IS BORN AND REVEALED! BLESSED IS THE REVELATION OF CHRIST!**

May God grant peace and prosperity to the world, continued success to Armenia, strength to the church and longevity to our Pontiff, His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians.

Emmanuel – God is with us. May God be with our nation today, tomorrow and unto the ages of ages.

Amen.

Archbishop Hovnan Derderian,  
Primate Western Diocese of the Armenian Church North America

**Sunday School Christmas Activity**  
On December 15, the ACYO joined the St. Vartan Sunday School for a joint project of creating Christmas Gingerbread Houses.



**Visiting Priest**  
St. Vartan Church welcomed Fr. Mashdots Keshishian, who visited from Portland, Oregon, on Sunday, November 24 when he led the Sunday morning Badarak Service.



Upcoming Events		
Armenian Rockin' New Year's Eve 2020	Tuesday, December 31, 2019	8 pm
<b>No Morning Badarak/Evening Service Only</b>	<b>Sunday, January 5, 2020</b>	
Armenian Christmas Eve Service	Sunday, January 5, 2020	6 pm
Armenian Christmas Day Service	Monday, January 6, 2020	10:30 am
Armenian Christmas Celebration	Sunday, January 12, 2020	10:30 pm
Fr. Hovel Farwell Luncheon	Sunday, January 12, 2020	1 pm
Merelots Service	Sunday, January 19, 2020	10:30 am
St. Vartan Annual Assembly & Lamb Shank Lunch	Sunday, January 26, 2020	after church

**St. Vartan Church Annual Assembly and Lamb Shank Luncheon**  
**Sunday, January 26, 2020**

All pledged members are invited to attend this meeting, so a quorum can be met and business can be conducted. If you haven't paid your entire dues yet, please make your donation by December 31, 2019 so you are eligible to vote at the meeting.

**Everyone is invited to attend the annual lamb shank luncheon.**

**\$20 per meal**

**St. Vartan Church Christmas Schedule**

**Sunday, January 5, 2020**  
**Armenian Christmas Eve**  
Jurakalouyts Badarak (Liturgy of the Lights) .....6:00 p.m.

**Monday, January 6, 2020**  
**Armenian Christmas Day**  
*Asdvadzahaidnootiun—Nativity and Baptism of Jesus Christ*  
Morning Service..... 10:00 a.m.  
Divine Liturgy ..... 10:30 a.m.

**Sunday, January 12, 2020**  
**Armenian Christmas**  
*Asdvadzahaidnootiun—Nativity and Baptism of Jesus Christ*  
Morning Service ..... 10:00 a.m.  
Divine Liturgy ..... 10:30 a.m.  
Blessing of the Baptismal Waters  
*Godfather of the Cross: Manvel Avanesian*  
*Son of Arsen Avanesian and Susanna Petrosova*

**Sunday, January 19, 2020**  
**Memorial Sunday—Merelots**  
Morning Service..... 10:00 a.m.  
Divine Liturgy ..... 10:30 a.m.  
Requiem for Deceased Loved Ones

**Yughakin**

It is customary in the Armenian Church to provide **Yughakin**, especially around the feasts of Christmas and Easter. This practice dates as far back as the time of Moses in the Old Testament. **Yughakin** in Armenian means "price of oil". Each local church community would donate money specially earmarked towards the purchase of oil, which in return would keep the lanterns burning and ultimately the doors of the Church open. At this season of Christ's Birth let us remember and continue in the custom of **Yughakin**, so we can keep our "oil-burning lanterns" always burning and our doors always open at St. Vartan. Mail your donation to the church office and mark **Yughakin** on the memo line. Please be generous to the Church in observing this ancient Armenian custom.

**Requiem Service—Hokehankist**

A requiem will be said for the souls of the departed on Sunday, January 19, 2020. Those who would like to have the names of their departed loved ones included should contact the church office before Thursday, November 16, 2020 at 510-893-1671 or at stvartanoakland@aol.com.

**Home Blessing**

The Home Blessing Service is one of the most ancient and revered traditions of the Armenian Church. The three necessary items to conduct this service are: water, bread, and salt.

For the traditional Christmas Home Blessing, call the church office at 510-893-1671 or email stvartanoakland@aol.com.





Please join Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, the St. Vartan Parish Council & Ladies Society  
as we bid a fond farewell to our beloved Father Hovel Ohanyan



# ST. VARTAN ARMENIAN CHURCH FAREWELL LUNCH

*honoring*  
REV. FR. HOVEL OHANYAN

Join Father Hovel as he celebrates a final Badarak  
before embarking upon his new assignment in Armenia.

**Sunday, January 12, 2020**

**1:00pm Celebratory Luncheon immediately following Badarak**  
St. Vartan Armenian Church, John Marukian Hall | 650 Spruce Street, Oakland, CA

**RSVP required no later than Monday, January 6.**  
**Space is limited.**

Email [stvirtanoakland@aol.com](mailto:stvirtanoakland@aol.com) to secure your reservation

*This event is generously hosted by the St. Vartan Parish Council & Ladies Society  
and open to the entire church community.*

**St. Vartan Church Parish Council gratefully acknowledges the following donations:**

**In Honor of Carol Rustigian**—Greg and Seta Tcherkoyan

**St. Vartan Voice Newsletter**—Greg and Seta Tcherkoyan, Sarkis and Anahid Sarkisian, Sylvia Arzoian

### In Memory

† **Mary Warda (Wartkes Hagopian's sister)**

Greg and Seta Tcherkoyan

† **Virginia Ratcliff**

Harry and Carol Rustigian (The Sarafian Foundation), Nora and Harvey Hanoian (Ladies Society),  
Caroline and Stuart Arakelian, Mary and Nurhan Donikian (NorCal), Edward and Armineh Jamgotchian  
(Kitchen Remodel Fund), Greg and Seta Tcherkoyan (Fr. Mesrob Sarafian Education Fund),  
Anto and Hasmig Cingoz (The Sarafian Foundation), Virginia Ratcliff,  
Edward and Kristian Minasian, (Ladies Society), Edward Minasian

† **Fr. Mesrob Sarafian,**  
**and the beautiful messages he leaves behind in this book, "Life's Lessons Learned"**  
Kathy Agajanian

### ENDOWMENT FUND

#### In Memory

† **Helen Danielian**

Annabelle Taylor and Family

† **Ronald Hung**

Annabelle Taylor and Family

† **Virginia Ratcliff**

Harold and Bonnie Koojoolian, Annabelle Taylor and Family

## *News From Our St. Vartan Family*

### Condolences

On Sunday, December 2 Fr. Hovel performed a funeral service at St. Vartan Armenian Church for long time church member, **Virginia Ratcliff**. Our condolences to the Sarafian family and all of Virginia's relatives and friends.

### Altar Flower Donation Chart

The 2020 Altar Flower Donation Chart is located on the **bulletin board** in the John Marukian Church Hall entryway. Please choose a Sunday to sponsor flowers for the altar. You can sponsor flowers in memory of a loved one, or to celebrate a special event. The suggested donation for altar flowers is \$35.



### Thank You

Don and Lisa Manoogian donated the cloth napkins at the St. Vartan Ladies Society 90th Anniversary Celebration. St. Vartan will keep the cloth napkins and be able to use them at other events. This donation was made in honor of Don's beloved Father Leo Manoogian.



St. Vartan Church sponsored the Second Annual Holiday Boutique on December 1 and 15 in the John Marukina Church Hall, which featured hand-crafted items and food.



ԱՐԵՄՏԵԱՆ ԹԵՄԻ ԱՌԱՋՆՈՐԴ ՍՐԲԱԶԱՆ ՀՕՐ  
ՍՈՒՐԲ ԾՆՆԴԵԱՆ ՊԱՏԳԱՄԸ  
ԷՄՄԱՆՈՒԷԼ՝ ԱՍՏՈՒԱԾ ԸՆԴ ՄԵԶ

Էմմանուէլ՝ Աստուած ընդ մեզ. այս է ողջ խորհուրդը Ս. Ծննդեան, տօնախմբութիւնը մեր կեանքէն ներս Աստուծոյ ներկայութեան՝ մանուկ Յիսուսի Ս. Ծննդեան հրաշքին ի տես: Յիսուս մանուկին ծնունդով Աստուած Ինք կ'այցելէ մարդկութեան՝ մեկնարկը տալով Իր երկրային փրկչագործ առաքելութեան: Աստուած կը մարդանայ մեզի հետ ըլլալու, մեր մէջ բնակելու, Իր հրաշալի ծնունդով մեզ վերստին ծնունդ պարգեւելու, որպէսզի մեր կեանքը ուղեգծենք Իր կեանքին կենդանի օրինակով ու Աստուծոյ պատուիրաններուն համահունչ:

Ամեն անգամ, երբ կը տօնախմբենք մեր Տիրոջ և Փրկչին Յիսուս Քրիստոսի Ծնունդը, մեր կեանքէն ներս Իր մշտամնայ եւ մշտանորոգ ներկայութիւնը եւ ներգործութիւնը կը խոստովանինք նախեառաջ, կը վկայենք, թէ «Աստուած ընդ մեզ» է եւ այդ գիտակցութեամբ մեր կեանքին ընթացքը կ'ուղղենք դէպի բարին և գեղեցիկը, դէպի աստուածային կատարելութիւն ու ստեղծագործ կեանք:

Երբ կ'անդրադառնանք մեր կեանքէն ներս Աստուծոյ ներկայութեան, յայտնութեան պահ մըն է, որ կ'արձանագրենք, որով եւ հոգեւոր վերածնունդ կ'ապրինք՝ նոր խոստումներով, նոր տեսիլքներով եւ նոր յանձնառութիւններով զարդարելով մեր կեանքը:

Ս. Ծննդեան եւ Ամանորի հոգեզմայլ տրամադրութիւններով խանդավառ, որպէս հոգևոր սպասաւոր Հայց. Առաքելական մեր մայր սուրբ եկեղեցւոյ, մենք մեր աղօթքը կը բարձրացնենք առ Աստուած, որպէսզի Տէրը մեր սրտերը վերածէ բերդեղէմեան մսուրի՝ մանուկ Յիսուսը հոն պատսպարելու համար: Եւ անշուշտ մեր աղօթքին մէջ կը յիշենք խաղաղական ժամերգութենէ Ս. Ներսէս Շնորհալիին «Շնորհեա՛ր Մեզ Տէր» երգը ուր կ'ըսէ. «Եւ քանզի մանուկ ծնաւ, Որդի եւ տուաւ մեզ, զի Աստուած ընդ մեզ է: Եւ որոյ իշխանութիւն իւր ի վերայ ուսոց իւրոց, զի Աստուած ընդ մեզ է: Եւ որ կոչի անուն նորա մեծի խորհրդոյ հրեշտակ, զի Աստուած ընդ մեզ է: Եւ սքանչելի խորհրդակից, զի Աստուած ընդ մեզ է: Եւ Աստուած հզօր իշխան, զի Աստուած ընդ մեզ է: Եւ իշխան խաղաղութեան, Հայր հանդերձելոյ յաւիտենին Տէր Աստուած ընդ մեզ է»:

Մեր նախնիք Աստուծոյ մշտական ներկայութեան գիտակցութեամբ եւ հաստատումով առաջնորդած են իրենց կեանքի ճամբան՝ կերտելով հայրենիք ու եկեղեցի, հոգևոր առաքելութիւն եւ արժէքներ, բարոյականութեան բարձր չափանիշներ եւ մշակոյթ, գիտութիւն եւ արուեստ: Առանց երկնչելու, ընկրկելու կամ վարանելու մեր նախնիք կերտած են ապագայ գալիք սերունդներուն համար, որովհետեւ համոզումս ունեին, թէ «Տէր Աստուած ընդ մեզ է»:

Աստուած ընդ մեզ. քրիստոնեայ հաւատացեալը երբ բարձրաձայն կ'արտասանէ այս բառերը, անկասկածօրէն անդրադարձումի պահ մը կ'ունենայ, հոգեւոր պայծառակերպութիւն մը, որ իր մէջ կ'արթնցնէ շարժումը նոր կեանքին: Հոգեւոր բարձր ինքնագիտակցութեան կամ, եթէ կ'ուզէք՝ ինքնավստահութեան այդ զգացողութեամբ կարելի կ'ըլլայ պատասխանել Աստուծոյ կոչին՝ մեզի տրուած կեանքը Իրմով արժևորելու համար:

Այսօրուայ աշխարհի նոր պայմաններու բերումով յաճախ կը թերանանք աղօթքով համեմել մեր կեանքը, որուն որպէս արդիւնք ինքնըստինքեան կը հեռանանք Աստուծմէ՝ նմանելով այն ծառին, որու արմատները հողին մէջ չեն և բնականօրէն՝ կեանքը սահմանափակուած է ժամանակի մը մէջ: Մարդու պարագային ժամանակի մը մէջ սահմանափակուած կեանքը հոգևոր բոյսիկութիւն է, այն ալ՝ չափազանց վտանգաւոր: Մարդը իր բնութեամբ անբակտեիօրէն կապուած պիտի մնայ Աստուծոյ հետ՝ առանց մոռնալու, որ Աստուծոյ պատկերին համաձայն ստեղծուած է: Այլապէս՝ ան կը դադրի կենսագործելէ եւ ծառին նման կը չորնայ:

Սիրելիներ՝ ի Քրիստոս,

Յիսուսի Ծննդեան պատկերին մէջ գտէք Ձեր կեանքին նոր ուղին: Ապրեցէ՛ք հաւատքով, կեանքը մշակեցէք հոգևոր ու բարոյական արժէքներով, Ձեր հոգիին սլաքը միշտ ուղղէք դէպի Աստուած, զեղուն պահէք Ձեր սերն ու եռանդը հայրենիքի ու Ս. Էջմիածնի հանդէպ: Մի գլանաք Ձեր զաւակաց որպէս ժառանգ աւանդել մեր ազգի ու եկեղեցւոյ սրբութիւնները, որպէսզի հոգեւորապէս զինած ըլլաք զանոնք դիմակայելու ժամանակի բոլոր մարտահրաւերները:

Քրիստոս Ծնաւ և Յայտնեցաւ,  
Օրինեա՛լ է Յայտնութիւնն Քրիստոսի:

Թող Աստուած աշխարհին պարգեւէ խաղաղութիւն ու բարգաւաճ կեանք, մեր երկրին՝ Հայաստանին մնայուն վերելք, մեր Ս. Եկեղեցւոյ՝ անսասանութիւն, ազգիս Վեհափառ Հայրապետ Նորին Սուրբ Օծութիւն Տ. Տ. Գարեգին Բ. Ամենայն Հայոց Կաթողիկոսին՝ կենաց արեւշատ օրեր, որպէսզի շարունակէ առաջնորդել մեր ազգն ու եկեղեցին դէպի նորանոր բարձունքներ:

Էմմանուէլ՝ Աստուած ընդ մեզ, Աստուած մեր ժողովուրդին հետ այժմ եւ միշտ եւ յաւիտեանս. ամէն:

Յովնան Արք.

Տ. Յովնան Արք. Տէրտէրեան



# ARMENIAN ROCKIN' NEW YEAR'S EVE 2020

## DECEMBER 31, 2019 8PM

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**djDIKO**

EXCELLENT SELECTION OF HOT & COLD HORS D'OEUVRES  
BALLOON DROP & CHAMPAGNE TOAST AT MIDNIGHT  
FULL COURSE DINNER | DESSERT BUFFET  
CASH BAR | NO OUTSIDE LIQUOR PERMITTED

**PRE-SALE | \$85** ENDS DEC 2  
**ADULTS | \$105**  
**CHILDREN AGES 7 -12 | \$25**  
**CHILDREN AGES 6 & UNDER | FREE**  
*Special entertainment space provided for children*

**LIMITED SPACE! RESERVE TODAY!**  
*Checks made payable to:* St. Vartan ACYO  
*Mail to:* 650 Spruce St. Oakland, CA 94610

**RESERVATIONS**  
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**TICKETS AVAILABLE ONLINE**  
[www.ArmenianNYE.com](http://www.ArmenianNYE.com)

**ST.VARTAN ARMENIAN CHURCH**  
650 Spruce St Oakland, CA 94610





### NorCal Christmas Party

On December 2 the St. Vartan Ladies Society sponsored the Annual NorCal Christmas party. The ladies served a delicious chicken lunch, as well as a breakfast buffet. The event featured Fr. Hovel's message, a visit from Santa Claus and his helpers, as well as a piano performance by Araks Aghazarian of Christmas carols. Rev. Fr. Sahak Martirosyan displayed his photo exhibition for purchase. Sale proceeds went to the Sunday School of St. Mariam Astvadzadzin Church in Armenia.



### Warm Winter Hats

The St. Vartan Ladies Society donated over 100 hand-knitted hats to the homeless and needy in the Bay Area. These warm winter hats are sized for adults, children, and infants. Thank you to Antica Odabashian for organizing this project and to Alice Sarafian who delivered the hats to Building Futures.

### U. S. Senate Recognizes Armenian Genocide

On December 12 the U.S. Senate unanimously adopted the bipartisan Senate Resolution 150—the Armenian Genocide Resolution—formally recognizing the Ottoman Empire's genocide against the Armenian people.

### Christmas Family Night December 14—Sponsored by Sunday School & ACYO



### Parish Council Update

#### Our Parish Priest

Please mark your calendars and join the St. Vartan Armenian Church community to celebrate Fr. Hovel's final Badarak on Sunday, January 12, 2020. A reception will follow and as noted in the enclosed invitation, RSVP's are required. No seats will be available at the door.

The Parish Council has started work to ensure a smooth transition period, including meeting with Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese and forming a Parish Priest Research Committee (PPRC). The nine member PPRC reflects our parish and is comprised of the following representatives:

Parish Council – Nazar Jindoian, Liz Ojikian and Edward Jamgotchian

Ladies Society – Marlene Tolegian and Nora Hanoian

Deacons – Deacon Vartan Berberian

ACYO – Nataline Jindoian

General Parish – Greg Tcherkoyan and Anto Cingoz

#### Nominating Committee Meeting

On Sunday, December 1 the nominating committee held a meeting to identify candidates for the upcoming church elections. The nominating committee, as defined by church by-law, is comprised of the parish council, the general assembly officers and diocesan delegates. The general assembly chairman directs the meeting. Candidates are contacted to determine their interest, and as appropriate, listed on the ballot to be presented for consideration by the full general assembly. Pledge members in good standing may vote in person during the general assembly.

#### Annual General Assembly

The St. Vartan Armenian Church general assembly is scheduled for Sunday, January 26, 2020 after church services conclude. As tradition holds, the meeting will be preceded by the highly anticipated lamb shank luncheon. The meeting is an opportunity to learn what the church organizations have done this past year and provide your feedback and support for the New Year. We encourage your collaboration on projects to expand the reach and further extend the voice of the Armenian Church.

Being a Christian means serving others for the good of the community; "There is no personal pleasure greater than enriching the spiritual life of another." Come join our volunteers and make a difference.



### Shadows of 1915 Book Review

The St. Vartan Cultural Committee welcomed author Jerry Burger to discuss his first and recently published novel “*The Shadows of 1915*” on December 8, 2019. Burger was born and raised in Fresno, California, and although he did not grow up on a farm, as a teenager he would make some money by picking grapes at the end of the summer. He had many Armenian friends as a boy. There were two things about Armenians that really stood out to him. The first was that every Armenian family had their own story tied to the Armenian Genocide, and the second was that they had intense and very strong negative feelings toward Turks. He found the aftermath of the Armenian Genocide to be a compelling topic through which he could explore issues related to family and justice.

Burger’s book examines how the legacy of the Armenian Genocide affects the life of the descendants of the survivors. The story takes place in Central California in 1953, where Armenian immigrants and their families live one generation removed from the 1915 murder of more than one million Armenians at the hands of the Turkish government. An encounter between the sons of a genocide survivor and some Turkish college students forces each of the main characters to make difficult decisions that pit loyalty to family and community against personal and legal standards of right and wrong. It delves into questions such as: How long is the shadow of genocide? How does it affect the offspring of the survivors? And how do survivors and their families retain a belief in justice when atrocities go unpunished? These are some of the questions addressed in Jerry Burger’s novel

It is a story about a displaced group of people and the consequences of real historic events that have rarely been examined in fiction. It is also a story about culture, family, recovery from tragedy, and the nature of justice.

We were fortunate to have Kim Bardakian conduct an interview with Jerry about his book, which kept things lively and interesting. Excerpts from the book were read and discussed, and the audience got a glimpse into the life of Armenian families in Fresno during the 1950’s. Many audience members recalled certain elements of life in Fresno during the period of the story and had lively conversations with Burger following the presentation. The story is a good read and quite insightful.



### Ladies Society Update

“Tis the Season”, and St. Vartan’s Ladies Society started December by hosting the NorCal Senior Services annual Christmas Luncheon with over 120 in attendance on December 3, followed by hosting the annual St. Vartan Ladies Society Christmas Luncheon with 90 plus attending. It was a fun-filled afternoon with friendships rekindled, a raffle table with over 30 raffle prizes, “The Swinging Blue Stars” singers performing songs from the 40’s in addition to Christmas Carols, and a delicious mezza platter luncheon, topped off with a fabulous dessert buffet prepared by your Ladies Society Executive Board. Everyone enjoyed the beautiful table settings contributed by the Adopt-A-Table volunteers. Please see photos in this newsletter.

A big thank you to the following ladies who made this event so successful: food committee chairs, Gail Kezerian and Caroline Arakelian, with their committee of Sylvia Gozurian, Elo Markarian, Hilda Mener, Kristian Minasian, Nelly Kargodorian and Sandy Capurro. Thanks also to Suzanne Vasgerdsian for organization the raffle and Lisa Manoogian for donating the entertainment. A special note of thanks to Harry Sherinian who donated approximately 70 sets of Nativity Scenes to members of the Ladies Society in memory of his late wife, Margaret, who was a very active ladies society member. Margaret had a collection of over 200 Nativity Scenes collected from their many trips locally and abroad, with which she decorated their home every Christmas. Our ladies are very appreciative and thank you again, Harry.

Membership chair Sylvia Gozurian continues to build our Ladies Society. We are happy to welcome two new members, Diane Combs and Ellyn Kesinger, daughters of member Mae Kaljian.

### Ladies Society Christmas Luncheon and Raffle

