

St. Vartan Armenian Apostolic Church
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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.

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St.VartanVoice

The Newsletter of St. Vartan Armenian Apostolic Church

Rev. Fr. Krikor Zakaryan, Parish Priest

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Fr. Krikor Zakaryan

January 2022

Feast of the Nativity and Theophany of our Lord Jesus Christ

The Feast of the Theophany [Arm. Asdvadzahaydnootyoon], meaning the “revelation of God” or God revealing himself to mankind, is one of the five great tabernacle [Arm. daghavar] feasts of the Armenian Church and it is always celebrated on January 6. This feast combines the celebration of the birth, baptism and manifestation of Our Lord Jesus Christ. The Feast of Theophany is an eight-day [octave] celebration from January 6 to 13.

Theophany

During the first centuries of Christianity, the Feast of Theophany was celebrated together with a number of observances as recorded in the Gospels. They are: the Annunciation of the archangel Gabriel to the Holy Virgin Mary; the Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, with the glorification of the heavenly hosts; the veneration by the shepherds and the coming of the Magi; the Circumcision; the Naming of our Lord; the Presentation to the Temple; the Flight into Egypt and Return; the Baptism at the River Jordan; the Temptation in the Wilderness and the Testimony (Witness) of St. John the Forerunner. This group of feasts was celebrated from the 6th to the 13th of January called the octave of Theophany [8 days]; the most prominent being the Birth and Baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ, with special importance afforded to the Baptism. The church grouped the birth and baptism, together (called Theophany, "the revelation of God,") on January the 6th [as a fixed date] because they were the first revelations of His divinity, incarnation, and the beginning of His ministry as Lord and Savior of mankind.

Until about the second half of the second century, both in the East and the West, the Baptism of Christ was held in preeminence above all other celebrations, even to that of the Birth. It was also in that same period that in the West a need arose to separate the Feast of the Birth from Theophany by celebrating it on December 25. This was also designed to discourage Christians from partaking in a major pagan festival on that day. This custom eventually became accepted in the East as well, particularly in Jerusalem where it was very difficult to celebrate Christ's Birth in Bethlehem and His Baptism at the River Jordan on the same day. Therefore, by the end of the fourth century, all churches were celebrating Christ's Birth on December 25, with the exception of the Armenian Church, which did not feel the need to deviate from the original practice.

The other observances connected with Theophany also did not retain their previous status. The Annunciation was changed to April 7th (in other churches near March 25). Feasts of the Holy Mother of God became special occasions of pious celebration and specific ritual; the Presentation to the Temple was changed to forty days after the Nativity -- February 14 (in other churches



Bible Readings

Jan. 2 Luke 22:24-30
Jan. 5 Matt. 2:10-12
Jan. 6 Matt. 1:18-25
Jan. 9 Luke 2:21
Jan. 16 John 2:1-11
Jan. 23 John 3:13-21
Jan. 30 John 6:39-47

Christmas Greetings

“Krisdos dzunav yev Haydnetsa.”

“Christ is born and revealed among us.”

“Orhnyal eh haydnootiun Krisdosi.”

“Blessed is the revelation of Christ.”



February 2). The Circumcision, Name Day of our Lord and the Temptation in the Wilderness were recalled during the octave of Theophany (to January 13); the Coming of the Magi, the Escape to and Return from Egypt are also recalled during that period.

The Blessing of the Water

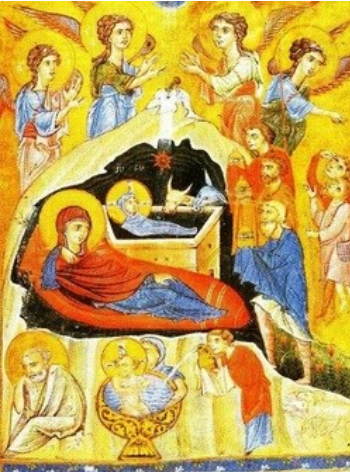
After the Divine Liturgy on January 6, The Blessing of the Water, takes place as a symbolic commemoration of the "Baptism of Christ". In the Armenian Church, the service is called CHURORHNEK. The Blessing of the Water celebration was originally performed in the Holy Land, at the river Jordan on Theophany, January 6. As the word spread of the beautiful ceremony in the Holy Land, churches outside of Jerusalem began to perform this ceremony by the riverside or at the seashore. Later, because of subsequent Islamic prohibitions under the Ottoman Turkish Empire, this and other public out-door rituals were henceforth accomplished within the confines of the churches.

The Ritual of The Blessing of the Water

A large silver basin containing water is placed on the table in the sanctuary in front of the Altar. The priest, signifying Christ’s entry into the river Jordan, immerses a cross in the water. A silver dove-shaped chism or "Muron" container is brought up in procession as the choir sings the Hymn Looys ee Looso [Light of Light]. Next the water is blessed, and the dove is raised up by the celebrant who takes it to the basin of water and dispenses a few drops of the holy oil into the water through the mouth of the dove.

We know from biblical accounts that God revealed Himself as a Triune God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit, at the time of Jesus’ baptism by John. The voice of God the Father was heard saying: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased", and the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove. Muron is kept in a dove-shaped container symbolic of the Holy Spirit who dispenses the graces that are given to those who are anointed and who receive it through the blessed water at Theophany.

MAY THE LIGHT OF THE NATIVITY AND REVELATION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST ILLUMINATE THE NEW YEAR 2022 AND BRING BLESSINGS, GOOD HEALTH, JOY AND PROSPERITY TO ALL.



News From Our St. Vartan Family

Condolences

Former St. Vartan member **Judge Amy Hoogasian** (beloved Cousin of Mary Shahbazian) passed away on November 14, 2021 in Phoenix, AZ. Our condolences to the Hoogasian & Shahbazian families. Services were held in her home town of Lake Forest, Illinois on December 4, 2021.

Fr. Krikor Zakaryan conducted private funeral services for **Emma Mazmanian** on November 29, 2021. Our condolences to her loving son and daughter Greg (Laura) Mazmanian and Lida Mazmanian, five grandchildren, and six great grandchildren.

The funeral service for **Richard "Rick" Gray Magarian** was conducted by Fr. Mesrop Ash at St. Vartan Armenian Church on December 7, 2021. A visitation was held the night before at Chapel of the Chimes. Our condolences to Rick’s wife, Peggy, and his sons, Nick and Tom.

Fr. Mesrop Ash conducted a funeral service for **Dorothy Demirjian** at St. Vartan Armenian Church on December 10, 2021. Our condolences to Dorothy’s brother, Adam (Louise) Vahratian; her sister-in-law, Isabelle Vahratian; her son, Richard (Aida) Demirjian; her daughter, Janet (John) Demirjian Schmid; her grandchildren, Ara (Ani) Demirjian, Vahe Demirjian, Conner King, Madelyn King, Zachary Schmid, Kayleigh Schmid, and Alayna Schmid; and her great-grandson, Toby Schmid.

On December 10, 2021 Fr. Krikor Zakaryan conducted a funeral service for **Sourin Azizian**, at Turlock Memorial Cemetery. Our condolences to Sourin’s children, Antranik (Armine) Azizian, Levon (Anush) Krikorian, Sona Azizian, and Seta (Nazaret) Jindoian; his grandchildren, Laura, Nataline, Jacob (Joulyana), Sevan, Tanya (David), Tamar, Talin, Silva, David, Grikor, and Anna; great-grandchildren, Remone, Anthony, and James; sister, Manoush Melikian; sister-in-laws, Anush (Sargon) Hagopian, Armenoush Tersakian, Vehanoush Haytayan; his cousins, nieces and nephews.

*Christ is Born and Revealed
Blessed is the Revelation of Christ*

**Wednesday, January 5, 2022
Armenian Christmas Eve**

Readings.....6:00 p.m.
Jurakalouyts Badarak (Liturgy of the Lights)6:30 p.m.

**Thursday, January 6, 2022
Armenian Christmas Day**

Asdvadzahaidnootiun—Nativity and Baptism of Jesus Christ

Morning Service 10:00 a.m.
Divine Liturgy 10:30 a.m.

**Sunday, January 9, 2022
Armenian Christmas Celebration**

Asdvadzahaidnootiun—Nativity and Baptism of Jesus Christ

Morning Service 10:00 a.m.
Divine Liturgy 10:30 a.m.
Blessing of the Baptismal Waters

**Sunday, January 16, 2021
Memorial Sunday—Merelots**

Morning Service 10:00 a.m.
Divine Liturgy 10:30 am.
Requiem for Deceased Loved Ones

**Join us for Bible Study
On-line Beginners Bible Study
10 am**

Wednesday, January 12, 2022
Wednesday, January 19 2022
Wednesday, January 26, 2022

**On-line Bible Study
7 pm**

Thursday, January 13, 2022
Wednesday, January 19, 2022
Wednesday, January 26, 2022

Register for Zoom Code
[https://www.stvartanoakland.com/
events](https://www.stvartanoakland.com/events)



Altar Flowers

Please sign up to sponsor altar flowers on the 2022 Flower Chart, located in the church hall entryway. This is a great way to honor a deceased loved one or celebrate a family milestone.



Ladies Society Featured Recipe of the Month

Mixed Vegetable Bake

Kharn Panchareghen

This is a popular Armenian vegetable and meat. You can omit the meat and add lentils or beans and you'll have a delicious vegetarian meal.

Preparation time: 20 minutes
Cooking time: 2 1/2 hours
Serves 6

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1 lb. lamb or beef cut into 1 inch cubes | 3 tablespoons tomato paste |
| 3 medium potatoes cut into 1 inch cubes | 1/2 lb. string beans cut into pieces |
| 2 zucchinis | 4 carrots |
| 2 medium onions chopped coarse | 1/2 garlic head |
| 2 tomatoes seeded and cut into wedges | 1 green pepper seeded and chopped |
| Salt and pepper to taste | |

1. Heat 2 to 3 tablespoons oil to skillet. Sauté meat on medium high heat and brown. In large cooking pot add meat and tomato paste with 1 cup water. Cover meat and cook medium heat 30 minutes.

2. Sauté potatoes in 2 tablespoons oil and brown. Remove with slotted spoon and repeat sautéing separately all vegetables. Place in 13x9 baking dish. Tomatoes and green peppers to be added to casserole.

3. Preheat oven to 400 F. Add tomato and meat to baking dish. Cover and cook in oven about 1 1/2 hours. It may be necessary to add 1/2 cup water halfway through cooking.

Serve with lemon wedges, bread, cheese and olives.





Dear Bay Area Armenian Community Member,

We would like to express our sincere thanks and gratitude to everyone who participated in our Virtual Gala & Live Auction **For Our Soldiers** Community-Wide Fundraising Event earlier this year. Your tremendous generosity raised \$100,000 that will go directly to the families of our fallen and wounded soldiers through the Insurance Foundation for Servicemen (IFS) in Armenia. We also sincerely thank the Friends of Armenian Soldier and Family (FASF) for channeling these tax-deductible funds to the IFS.

While this \$100,000 donation was a remarkable effort, we still need your help as there is a \$12-13 million gap that needs to be closed by the end of the year due to the significant number of fallen and wounded soldiers from the 44-day war in Artsakh last fall. The families of 3,948 dead and 558 wounded servicemen currently registered for benefits with the IFS will only continue to increase with the continued attacks at our borders.

How can you help? Subscribing to a monthly donation is the best way to support the thousands of beneficiary families. Just like every taxpayer in Armenia and Artsakh who are contributing up to \$30 monthly to the IFS, imagine the huge impact we can make if every single Armenian in the Diaspora contributed \$30 or more per month.

Are you concerned about where your dollars go? The IFS has total transparency and accountability. You can see the funds collected, compensations made, donors, beneficiary families, and independent audit reports at any time on their website. Read more about the IFS mission at www.1000plus.am.

You can send your monthly tax-deductible donations to the IFS two ways at: www.FASF.org or www.ArmenianWoundedHeroes.com. Both 501(c)(3) nonprofit foundations are set up to directly channel your donation to the IFS and our soldiers and their families.

For those who were not able to attend our Virtual Gala & Live Auction, please watch our video at: www.bit.ly/ForOurSoldiersGala.

With sincere thanks,
San Francisco Bay Area Artsakh Task Force Humanitarian Aid Committee

Follow the SF Bay Area Artsakh Task Force on Facebook at
www.facebook.com/BayAreaArtsakhTaskForce

Friends of the Armenian Soldier and Family (FASF) is 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with EIN Tax ID 86-2191892.
Armenian Wounded Heroes Fund Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with EIN Tax ID 81-2263520.

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

St. Vartan Voice—Don and Lisa Manoogian, Adik Mardirossian, Harry and Carol Dokouzian, Howard and Rose Marie Atamian

Ladies Society—Judy and Richard Sharafian, Marlene Tolegian (for updating kitchen implements)

Stewardship Donations

Silver Level—Marie and Harout Hagopian; **Donor**—Seza and Dana Dominguez, Judi Swenson

In Memory

† **Deeramayr Hyule Khachikyan (Fr. Hovel's mother) for the Ohanyan Family Fund**
Kestekyan Family, Seta Azizian, Vrej and Maida Mekhalian, Seza and Dana Dominguez, Araks Aghazarian, Hasmig and Anto Cingoz, Vahe and Hilda Mener, Vartan and Ayko Berberian, Mae Kaljian, Nadya and Arto Yagjian, Nurhan and Mary Donikian, Ray and Reyhan Shepherd, Norma Yaglijian

† **Rick Magarian**

Nadya and Arto Yagjian, Harold and Bonnie Koojoolian (Richard Demirjian Athletic Fund), James Evans and Daphne Harmola (Richard Demirjian Athletic Fund), Albert and Glenn Yeremian, Barry and Carole Chooljian (Richard Demirjian Athletic Fund)

† **Dorothy Demirjian for the Richard Demirjian Athletic Fund**

Lori and Andy Hill, The Tateosian Family, Daughters of Vartan Araxi Otyag Chapter, Mr. and Mrs. Ara Bagdasarian, Edward T. and Kristian Minasian, Nurhan and Mary Donikian, Renate Bussell, Jerry and Lori Maness, Seno and Dickie Garabedian, Harold and Bonnie Koojoolian, June Demerdjian, Kathleen Demerdjian, Richard and Anahed Kharibian

† **Dorothy Demirjian**

Aram and Kim Henesian, Nora and Harvey Hanoian (Ladies Society),
George Gazmararian and Ruth Boyajian Gazmararian

† **Ed Minasian**

Dorothy Demirjian (Richard Demirjian Athletic Fund), Elaine and Peter Colett, Mae Kaljian,
Carol Loshigian, Barry Barsamian

† **Antranik and Lena Avakian**

Seza and Dana Dominguez

† **Hranoush Azizian**

Nataline Jindoian

† **Sourin Azizian**

Sona Azizian, Anni and Younan Jasim, Jacob Elisha, Laura Elisha, Nataline Jindoian

† **Emma Mazmanian**

Anto and Hasmig Cingoz, Nadya and Arto Yagjian, Edward T. and Kristian Minasian (Endowment Fund),
Nora and Harvey Hanoian (Ladies Society), Mary and Jack Aslanian, Lori and Andy Hill (Endowment Fund), James and Marjorie Kurkjian, Lorraine and Nick Kazarian, Dennis and Paulette Kalebjian

† **Earl Saroyan**

Isabelle Dokouzian (St. Vartan Voice)

Save the Date

**ST. VARTAN ARMENIAN
CHURCH VIRTUAL
ASSEMBLY MEETING**

Sunday, February 6, 2022

Details to follow

**All pledged members are
urged to attend.**



Thank You

Fr. Krikor, Yn. Anoush, Emma and Grace are expressing their heartfelt gratitude to all those who brought food, called, and texted while they were quarantined at home. Special thank you goes to: Seza and Dana Dominguez, Edward Jamgotchian, Marie Hagopian and Judy and Barry Toomajian for the food they've delivered and for making sure that everyone is well nourished. May God bless you all abundantly and keep you and yours protected under the shadow of His precious Cross in peace! Our deepest gratitude to All!

The “Little Church” in Every Home

Home Blessing in the Armenian Church

Throughout history, Armenian Christians have considered the home to be a sacred place: the tranquil sanctuary of the family, where habits of virtue, pious traditions, and life-affirming customs are passed from one generation to another.

Under one roof, members of a household achieve a unity of spirit and assume responsibility for the larger life of the community. They break bread and share life’s joys and sorrows.

Above all, the home is where one’s faith in God is first kindled, and where that faith finds some of the most profound occasions for action. God’s presence makes every family home a “Little Church”, where His love and blessings permeate every corner.

Through a special ceremony of the Armenian Church, we ask God to bless our homes on occasions like the Nativity and Resurrection of Christ, as well as on the joyous occasion of moving into a new home. It’s called the Dounohrnek, or Home Blessing service.

Home Blessing: An Armenian Custom

During a Home Blessing, the priest takes with him wafer and incense. He blesses bread, water, and salt: three fundamental elements essential for human life. The priest asks God not to lessen these three gifts, without which life becomes impossible or imperfect. The bread, water, and salt are symbols of God’s infinite goodness and care.

Bread, which symbolically represents the Word of God, grants life to all those who taste it.

Salt seasons our food, making it delicious and edible. Metaphorically, salt represents man in this world with his words and deeds; Christ said, “You are the salt of the earth.” Man’s life should be seasoned with wisdom, moderation, or a sense of sufficiency.

Finally, water, the essential element of life, represents cleanliness. Through the water of baptism we are cleansed, renewed in Christ, and united with our God.

Alongside the bread, salt, and water offered on a tray by the home-dwellers, the priest places the wafer stamped with a crucifix and designs of grapes and wheat. The wafer signifies the presence of Christ in the home. The members of the family can either distribute the wafer among themselves or keep it in a jar along with flour, salt, or rice.

During a Home Blessing, it is customary to burn incense, symbolizing the burning of our souls with our Lord’s love. In his prayer the Psalmist said: “Let my prayer be counted as incense before Thee.” In the prayer of the Home Blessing the priest first asks for purity and abundance of the three gifts. Then he blesses the home and all its inhabitants, asks God to keep them away from visible and invisible enemies, and prays that God will protect them and grant them health of soul and body.

Reviving a Meaningful Practice

The Home Blessing is a meaningful religious service that can bring the entire family together in holiness. Through this ceremony faith is replenished and strengthened, and the presence of our Lord is felt. The beautiful tradition of the Home Blessing was once an annual routine for every Armenian Christian family. In modern times it had fallen into disuse, but has regained momentum in recent years, as more than ever before, families feel a need to acknowledge the presence Christ in their homes and lives.

You can contact our office or Fr. Krikor directly to schedule the service in your own home.

Prepare for the service by placing a glass of water, a small dish of salt, and a slice of bread on a tray. The priest will bring incense, charcoal, and incense burner and whatever else he needs with him.

The revival of this centuries-old custom brings the Lord closer to us. Having all members of the family taking part of the ceremony, young and old alike, will make it all the more meaningful.



Khanoot Korner

Ooof! Vocheench choonem — I have nothing: you bought it all in December.

Ladies Society will be busy this month replenishing stock. Khanoot will be back in February. The pickup date will be Saturday, February 12, 2022 if you want to mark your calendar. Check back next month for the list of available items. In the meantime please have a Happy New Year and Merry Christmas! And thank you for all your support in 2021. -Kristian

SAINT VARTAN'S ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH OF OAKLAND
IS INVITING THE ENTIRE CONGREGATION TO CELEBRATE THE

2021 STEWARDS OF ST. VARTAN



DATE SUNDAY, JANUARY 23, 2022
TIME DURING BADARAK

ST. VARTAN WILL ACKNOWLEDGE AND HONOR THE
2021 STEWARDS DURING BADARAK

SPECIAL COFFEE HOUR TO FOLLOW
AT JOHN MARUKIAN HALL

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." 1 Peter 4:10

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. To make a donation please log on to the church website: <https://www.stvartanoakland.com/donate> or mail a check to the office. 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 16, 2022. Those who would like to have the names of their departed loved ones included should contact the church office at 510-893-1671 or stvartanoakland@aol.com before Thursday, January 13, 2022.