

# St.VartanVoice

The Newsletter of St. Vartan Armenian Apostolic Church

Rev. Fr. Krikor Zakaryan, Parish Priest



## Սույն Վարդանի Զայն Ս. Վարդան Հայ Առաքելական Եկեղեցոյ Պաշտօնաթերթ



Fr. Krikor Zakaryan

February 2023

### The Eve of Avarayr: St. Vartan's Address to His Troops

From their various positions around Armenia, the companies and divisions converged on the plain of Ardaz: a mighty force of sixty-six thousand men, including cavalry and infantry—nobles, freemen, and common folk. In their train came the saintly Catholicos Hovsep and the priest Ghevond, leading a contingent of fellow clergy and deacons. These hesitated not a bit at the prospect of going to war, for they saw that its great objective was not material, but spiritual—and in such a cause they would gladly lay down their lives alongside their valiant countrymen.

At last, the eve of battle arrived. As the sun was beginning to set, and the sky took on the fiery hues of twilight, the entire army mustered to receive instructions. Brave Vartan Mamigonian, sbarabed of Armenia, rose at the head of his noble commanders to address the troops. When he spoke, his tone was not that of a condescending lord, but of an elder brother, a comrade in arms, sharing his innermost thoughts with his peers. This is what he said:

“I have fought many battles in my time, and many of you have fought beside me. In some, our valor won the day; in others, we went down to defeat. I daresay the victories far outnumbered the losses. But every one of them was an earthly battle, fought at the command of a mortal king. Any coward who fled in the heat of combat knew scorn for the rest of his days. But we who kept up the advance—calmly, bravely—earned worldly fame, and material reward, for our courage. The scars and wounds that all of us bear on our bodies are the proof that the honors we received were real, and justified.

“Yet at this moment, as I look back, I see all those battles as profitless, the honors that came from them worthless—because in time they will crumble to dust, like everything else in this world.

“But the battle we are about to face is not of this kind. For our Commander today is not a mortal man, but the Lord of Life and Death. Whatever we were willing to give of ourselves to gain victory for a mortal king, how much more are we willing to sacrifice now, for the glory of our immortal King and Judge? Seen from the eyes of heaven, even the human blessing of old age is merely an obstacle to entering the presence of the Living God, and being separated from Him no more.

“I beg you now to hear these words, my brave friends, even though many of you are far greater than I in name and honor. But as the leader you chose of your own free will, I address my words to you all—to the great and humble alike. Have no fear before the heathen horde arrayed against us! Never turn your back in flight before the sword of a mere mortal! For if it is the Lord’s will to grant us victory, then we will smash the enemy’s power so that the cause of Truth may prevail. If, on the other hand, this battle is meant to crown our lives with a holy death, let us accept that, too, with joyful hearts—and without the slightest trace of cowardice spoiling our courage.

### The Road to War

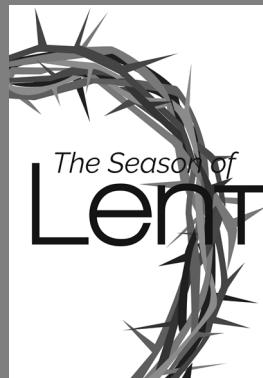
“I shall never forget the fateful trip to Persia that started our nation on the road to war. How some of our nobles—myself included—sought to mislead the

### Bible Readings

- Feb. 5 John 6:15-21
- Feb. 12 John 6:22-38
- Feb. 19 John 7:37-52
- Feb. 26 Matt. 6:1-21

### Hosea 12:6

But you must return to  
your God;  
maintain love and justice,  
and wait for your God  
always.



The Season of  
**Lent**

lawless Prince of the East, to trick him like a child, by making a show of obedience to his impious orders. I pray the Lord bore witness to the secret truth of our actions: that we never broke faith with Him in our hearts, even as our hands laid sacrifices on a filthy pagan altar. All of you now know that we did it for the sake of our dear countrymen and fellow Christians, so that we might buy time to release them from their captivity, and together wage a rebellion against the Persian King on behalf of our God-given faith. In the end, alas, we were unable to help them. But our failure stamped a lesson on my heart: to never trade away the love of God to gain the love of men.



“Since then, by the Lord’s power, we have won some victories and acquired a name for courage. We dealt a mighty blow to the imperial armies; we decimated the Magi without mercy; the emperor’s wrath threatened to engulf us like a wave—but we beat it back. The king who had thundered above the clouds was brought low, abased and humbled before us. He who dreamed of crushing our holy church through words alone, now struggles to do so with bow, lance, and sword. He imagined that our Christian faith was like a suit of clothes, to be changed whenever the mood struck us. But now he has discovered that it is more like the hue of our flesh—which cannot change, and cannot be exchanged. For our faith in Christ is anchored in rock—unshakeable! And nothing on heaven or earth—not rain or wind or rising floods—can move it. Here on earth we abide in flesh; but our true abode is in those heavenly structures built by no human hand, but by Christ alone.

“He is our true Commander, who will never forget the heroism you show this day. So stand firm with Him, my brave, noble Armenians! Through us, God will reveal His power to the world! And in this godly cause, if destroying the enemy brings glory to our names and to our church here on earth, then how much greater will be our heavenly reward if we die as a testimony to our Lord Jesus Christ? Even the deathless angels would envy us for our mortality, for they cannot give their lives as a gift to Christ, while we can.

“Yet it is not any kind of perfection in us that has merited this great opportunity, but rather the generosity of the Lord. As our Scriptures proclaim: ‘Where sin abounded, there God’s grace was even more abundant.’ How true those words are. For who has made their names more infamous than those of us who pretended to turn our backs on our ancestral faith? How many tears were shed by our families, by our church, when the news arrived of our submission to the pagan king? How many threats did we receive from our own people? Even distant nations who had admired us for our fidelity to Christ, and who knew nothing of our true intentions, heaped curses upon us for our apparent lack of faith. And believe me, not only men on earth, but even the angels in heaven turned their faces from us in shame and embarrassment.

“Well, the day has now arrived for us to throw off every suspicion, and redeem our former disgrace. At the time, we were sick with grief, in body and soul. But today we are overflowing with joy, yet quietly composed, for we recognize the Lord before us as our Leader. We are not led by a mere man, but by the Commander of all martyrs. In His mighty hands I feel no fear. Fear is the companion of Doubt. But we vanquished Doubt long ago; so let Fear too run away, and leave our hearts and minds free to act!”

### A General Among His Men

With such words, the warlord of Armenia addressed his entire host of soldiers. Afterwards, as the troops broke up into small groups, Vartan walked throughout the camp, among the campfires, stopping here and there to speak with his men in private, to encourage them and buck up their spirits. If in the course of such talks, it turned out that a soldier lacked anything—clothes, armaments, a horse—Vartan would make sure he was provisioned, often out of his own resources.

To cheer them while they ate, he told them stories of the valiant men of old—especially the exemplary figures of the Bible, for Vartan had been tutored in the Holy Scriptures since his youngest days. By firelight, he read to them from the Book of Maccabees: how this ancient Hebrew clan had led a struggle against the mighty pagan king Antiochus Epiphanes, to preserve and defend their God-fearing religion. Though the battle ended in their deaths, he stressed, the memory of the Maccabees had lived on, down through the ages, and was still honored on earth as in heaven.

From the same Scriptural source, Vartan read the story of the old Hebrew priest Mattathias, father of Judah Maccabee, who stood firmly in his faith even when his own kinsmen defected to the pagan enemy. Yet Mattathias did not slacken in his fidelity to God, but became more adamant, gathering around him like-minded Hebrews, and inspiring the war of liberation chronicled in the Bible.

Deep into the night, Vartan related these ancient tales, and the similarity with their present-day cause was not lost on even the simplest Armenian conscript. Finally, the camp was quiet, the troops asleep, and the cavalry stood watch around the perimeter.

By Christopher H. Zakian, EDACNA

## Donations

*St. Vartan Church Parish Priest and Council gratefully acknowledge the following donations:*

**Choir Fund**—Paul and Cheryl Ohanesian

**St. Vartan Voice**—Sarkis and Anahid Sarkisian

**In Honor of Don Manoogian's Birthday**—Don and Lisa Manoogian (Endowment Fund)

### In Memory

#### † **Marilyn Sarkisian Woloochojian**

Barbara and Jack Bousian

#### † **Virginia Madajian**

Barbara and Jack Bousian

#### † **Mike and Virginia Madajian**

Violet Apelian

#### † **Bill and Beverly Nalbandian**

Violet Apelian

#### † **Nadia Cingoz**

Violet Apelian

#### † **Greg Tcherkoyan**

Janet Kamian, Ara and Hasmig Gregorian (Ladies Society), Sylvia Gozurian,  
Alice Gregorian (Ladies Society)

#### † **Sophie Bedrosian to Endowment Fund**

Aaron and Norma Avedian, Edward T. and Kristian Minasian, Julie Der Garabedian,  
Pete and Pat Barsamian

#### † **Sophie Bedrosian**

Loretta Barsamian and Harland Kahn, Harvey and Nora Hanoian (Ladies Society), Carol H. Steinberg

#### † **Edward Minasian**

Melanie Goodin

#### † **Salvatore Nicoletti**

Sirvart Agopian

#### † **Khalid Yousif (husband, passed December 2, 2022)**

Marta Krikor (Karamanookian) Yousif

#### † **Arshalois Karamanookian (sister, passed November 21, 2022)**

Marta Krikor (Karamanookian) Yousif

## Christmas Yughakin Donors

Eevet Aghajian  
Araks Aghazarian  
Stephan Wenger and Asli Apkan  
Yeghia and Monica Dalmeida  
Apkarian  
Adrienne Baker  
Pete and Pat Barsamian  
Vartan and Ayko Berberian  
Jack and Barbara Bousian  
Seda and Charles Chavdarian  
Ellen Chesnut  
Ray Chiljan  
Brian and Cynthia Der Matoian  
Miriana Derderian  
Gay P. Diers  
Linda Diers  
Suzanne Diers  
Harry and Carol Dokouzian  
Jack Dorian  
Anne Dyer

Satenik Elmaoglu & Gary Eldemir  
Seno and Dickie Garabedian  
Sylvia Gozurian  
Aylin Gulbenkian  
Wartkes Hagopian  
Harvey and Nora Hanoian  
Frank and Sharon Higgins  
Arlene and Vartan Hovsepian  
Edward and Armineh Jamgotchian  
Aram Kaloustian  
Janet Yeghessian and Zaven  
Kanneian  
Arka and Nelly Kargodorian  
Helin Karunyan  
Hermine Keshishyan  
Vartan Keshishyan  
Arax Konjoyan  
Peggy Magarian (In Memory of  
Rick Magarian)  
Don and Lisa Manoogian

Adik Mardirossian  
Zohrab and Elizabeth Markarian  
Debbie and Ron Maturo  
Maida and Vrej Mekhalian  
Vahe and Hilda Mener  
Liz and Ron Ojakian  
Norman and Virginia Rees  
Patti Kezerian Rosenthal  
Hrant Sahagian  
Edward and Karen Sarafian  
Claris Sarkis-Golly  
Simik and Hermina Sarkis-Kelly  
Richard and Judy Sharafian  
Ray and Reyhan Shepherd  
Victor and Bella Stepanian  
Don and Virginia Tafjen  
Frederick and Ardemis Tajirian  
Annabelle Taylor  
Arthur and Susan Van Diggelen  
Suzanne and Ed Vasgerdsian

## *News From Our St. Vartan Family*

### Condolences

A funeral service for **Sophie Bedrosian** was held on December 22 at St. Vartan Church. Our condolences to Sophie's son, Brian (Yvette); and grandsons, Erik and David; nieces and nephews, Gayle (David), Betty and Tyler, Paul (Denise), Laila, Delaney (Michael), and Ali, Peter (Pat); and cousin, Julie Der Garabedian.

A funeral service was held for **Yeghisa (Elizabeth) Zadoor-Shahbazian** at Chapel of the Chimes, Hayward, on January 7, 2023. Our condolences to Yeghisa's six children (Lydia, Zaven, Alvart, Margaret, Ruben, and Madlen), and 11 grandchildren, and 4 great grandchildren.

A funeral service was held for **Khachik Derderian** on January 19, 2023 at St. Vartan Church. Our condolences to Khachik's wife, Siruhi Derderian; his children Margarit Derderian and Nishan (Paula) Derderian; and his grandchildren, Edward and Michael Casaceli and Ariana and Isabella Derderian.

### Baptism

Fr. Krikor baptized **Eva Chemedikian** at St. Vartan Church on January 15, 2023. Eva is the daughter of Hagop Chemedikian and Stanislava Peycheva-Chemedikian. Her grandparents are Psycho Peychev and Katya Yordanova-Radkova and Vahe and Loussina Chemedikian. Godparents are Todor Todorov and Hristina Belokonsta-Todorov.

### SAINT VARTAN ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH



INVITES ALL

### Boys & Girls

AGES 10+



# ACOLYTE TRAINING

- ◆ All Boys & Girls ages 10+ are eligible to participate.
- ◆ Registration required by February 26, 2023 at [www.stvartanoakland.com](http://www.stvartanoakland.com).
- ◆ Training begins March 5, 2023 and ends May 21, 2023 (6 training periods).
- ◆ Learn the basics of serving on the Church Altar.
- ◆ Training will take place after Church services on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month from 1pm to 2pm.
- ◆ Regular attendance and successful graduation from the training program will ensure an opportunity to serve on the Altar during Badarak and get ordained to the rank of Acolyte by His Eminence Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of WDACNA.

### Church Humor

#### GIFT CARDS FOR JESUS

At the Christmas Eve service at my church, the pastor, quizzing some children about the nativity, asked, "What gifts did the three wise men give the Christ child?" "Gold!" one child yelled. "Frankincense!" shouted another. After a pause, a third asked, "Gift cards?"

#### TOO EARLY FOR SERVICE

In the foyer of a church, a young boy was looking at a plaque with the names of men and women who had died in various wars. He asked the pastor, "Who are these people?" The pastor said, "Those are members from our church who died in the service." The boy asked, "The early service or the second service?"



## ST. VARTAN ACYO WARM WINTER COAT DRIVE

12.18.22 - 02.05.23

**St. Vartan ACYO is starting a Warm Winter Drive**  
to provide 50 care bags for the unhoused in Oakland this winter.

Please bring gently used jackets, blankets, hats and gloves and NEW warm socks to the bin in the hall entryway. We will also be passing a “second plate” on February 5, 2023 to raise money to purchase a few necessities to include in the bags.

ACYO members will sort our collections, put together the bags and distribute to those in need on Saturday, February 11 in the church hall.

Bring your donations December 18 through February 5 or donate online at [stvartanoakland.com/donate](http://stvartanoakland.com/donate). Write ACYO Warm Winter in the notes section.

Thank you in advance for your generosity and all ACYO members/St. Vartan teens are encouraged to join us on Feb 11 to help complete this project!



The A.R.S. Erepouni Chapter and St. Vartan Church Armenian School hosted a children’s program and lunch in the John Marukian Church Hall on January 15, 2023.

Ladies Society is bringing back our  
**Famous Hamburger & Apple Pie Luncheon**  
followed by Bingo  
with St. John Armenian Church

**Thursday, February 9 at 12 noon**

In the St. Vartan John Marukian Church Hall

**Tickets—\$15. Everyone is welcome.**

RSVP by Feb. 5 to Lisa Manoogian  
[lisamno@yahoo.com](mailto:lisamno@yahoo.com) or 925-698-6399



SAINT VARTAN ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH INVITES ALL

Celebrate the Tradition of  
Տիառնդարայ / Տրնձեզ  
Tiarn'ndaraj / Trndez



**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2023**  
**AFTER CHURCH SERVICES**  
**BONFIRE ~ ROUND DANCE ~ FELLOWSHIP**

**Altar Flowers**

Please sign up to sponsor altar flowers on the 2023 Flower Chart, located in the church hall entryway.

This is a great way to honor a deceased loved one or celebrate a family milestone.  
Suggested donation is \$50.



"Be my valentine .... Be my valentine ....  
Be my valentine ...."



## In Memoriam: Archbishop Vatche Hovsepian

In appreciation:

On December 18, 2022 we lost one of my dearest spiritual Fathers, His Eminence Archbishop Vatche Hovsepian. He was the foundation of the Western Diocese for 32 years, a pillar of strength (one who could still lift me even in his 80's) and even in retirement he worked tirelessly for the Church & the Armenian people.

I am was first introduced to Vatche Surpazan in November of 1971 the year he was elected Primate of the Western Diocese and you could say I grew up on his lap (see picture). From that moment on I was drawn to him. We formed a kinship that will never die. When he walked into a room he commanded the room. He spoke with such flare and passion. I loved his sermons—I wish I had a recording of his Den of Thieves sermon. Whenever we would see each other at Church, camp or sports weekend, we would greet each other with me kissing his hand and, then he quickly giving me a little slap on the face, then a warm big hug and a kiss. He was one of the driving forces to encourage me to serve the Church. I was blessed to have him ordain me as Acolyte and Sub-Deacon. I tried everything possible to have him ordain me as Deacon, but he had retired.

Vatche Surpazan loved his visits to St Vartan. When he came it wasn't for just a few hours. He spent the weekend and always stayed at a parishioner's home. There would be a get-together on Saturday night filled with stories, passionate discussions and Kef. We have an Armenian Summer camp because of his vision and love for the Armenian children. There would be excitement in the air when he would arrive at camp. He loved to fish and play softball. There was never a more impressive "Dead Pull" hitter in camp history.

I loved to throw him batting practice before the big Staff vs. Counselors game. He did break a few windows with his mighty drives down the left field line.

Archbishop Vatche oversaw some of the most historic Sundays at St. Vartan. With his blessings on the occasion of Very Rev. Levon Apelian's 25th anniversary of his ordination, we had both the Primate of the Eastern Diocese, Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, and the Western Diocese, Vatche Surpazan. It was a once in a lifetime Badarag. Archbishop Vatche also ordained our beloved Father Mesrob into the Priesthood on October 13, 1984.

Archbishop Vatche's last visit was on October 21, 2012 when he filled in for Hovnan Surpazan (who was out of the country) to bestow the St. Nersess Shnorhali medals to Deacon Nurhan Donikian and Sylvia Gozurian. In his sermon

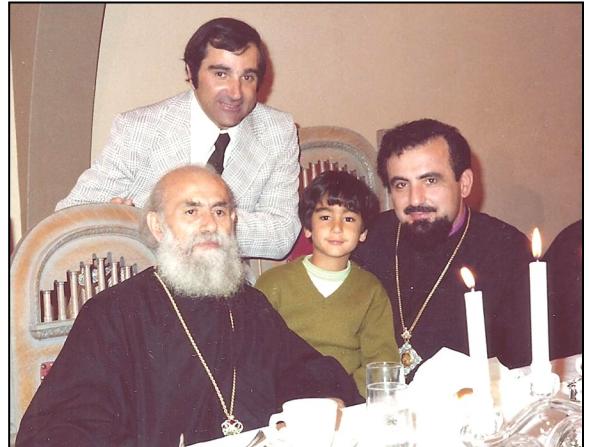
Vatche's first visit to St. Vartan, November 14, 1971, Dad & Steven Tulanian

Vatche Surpazan was very emotional seeing so many of his old friends again after almost 10 years. I remember him looking up to the choir loft complimenting choir director Beverly Nalbandian on being the only one in either Diocese to do the Gomidas Service and doing it so beautifully.

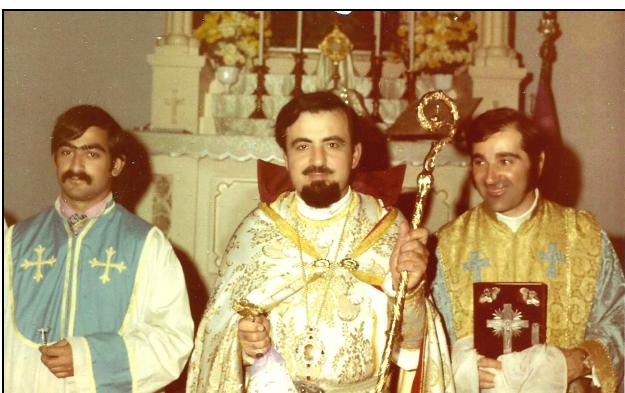
During his latter years and with my health issues, we had lost touch. But my dear brother in Christ Archpriest Sarkis Petoyan arranged a one-day trip for me to spend the day with Surpazan at his home and a wonderful lunch. His first question was about his beloved St. Vartan and its community. After the lunch I would try to call him on a monthly basis. We promised to get together again for lunch, but Covid hit and we couldn't get together. We continued our phone calls with much joy and love. I was debating when to call him to wish him a Merry Christmas, before December 25 or the week of Armenian Christmas when I got the call of his passing.

Surpazan always kept St Vartan in his thoughts & prayers; I know he will continue to do so. Until we meet again Vatche Surpazan—maybe at the summer camp, fishing or on the softball field Asdvadz Togh Hokeed Loosevorah.

With Much Appreciation & Love, Deacon Steven Donikian



Vatche Surpazan, Shnork Kaloustian Patriarch of Istanbul, Dad & Me 1974



Vatche's first visit to St. Vartan, November 14, 1971, Dad & Steven Tulanian



Vatche's final visit in October 22, 2012

# Armenian Christmas at St. Vartan





## The Tradition of Poon Paregentan

It is the last Sunday before Great Lent. It is composed of two words; Paree-Gentanootioun good living, rejoicing. Poon means the main. This points to the fact that the fasting period following Paregentan is longer than weekly Lents of other feasts, and it is tied to the main event of Christendom, the resurrection of our Lord.

The best explanation of Paregentan is from our Church father, Krigor Datevatzi. According to him, the biblical base is from the Old Testament from the life of Elijah when the Angel of the Lord tells him, “Eat and drink because you will be traveling a long road. (I King 19:7) In our case this long road is the 40 days of the Great Lent journey.

Paregentan, according to Datevatzi, doesn’t stand alone but points to the reality of a period of abstinence. Feasting of Paregentan will lead us into fasting; fun-filled days will turn into days of penance. In other words, the zeal and ingenuity we show in the realm of having fun should be put into the work of enriching our spiritual life.

In the past Paregentan was a period of two weeks, from St. Sarkis to Poon Paregentan. These were fun filled days for everybody. Weddings and engagements took place usually within these two weeks. In the region of Marash (in Western Armenia), the days of last week of Paregentan had special names. The Thursday was called “Tulkhaghir”. That day people ate Herissa (Keshgeg) and later played the game of Tulkhaghir.

Tulkhaghir was a broomstick, which the women transform into a bride. They even put on it some of their jewelry and took it around from house to house by singing and dancing. Then they would put it in a courtyard and dance around it until evening.

Wednesday was called “Feast of Wolf”. Women did not do house chores that day so that their neighborhood could be free of wolves. Friday was called “Feast of Mouse”. Women did not sew that day so that the mice do not nibble on their clothing. On Saturday the youth of the town wore masks and were engaged in variety of games. Good food and pigging out was the main event of Paregentan. People ate so much that the day received the nickname of “Poragentan” (Belly-gentan).

Besides the quality, the quantity of food was important as well. As the week progressed, the numbers of casseroles were increased as well. For example on Tuesday, three kinds of food were on the tables, on Thursday, five; on Saturday, seven; and on Sunday, more than 12 kinds. The traditional food in these days were: Roasted Lamb stuffed with cracked wheat and seasoning, baked in tonir, Patila, Sroon, Khachil, Deserts, Pukhpkhig, Dumplings.

The last day of Paregentan, meaning Sunday the fun and eating was intensified. That day nothing is cooked; people consume and finish all kinds of food prepared by meat and dairy. No trace of fat should remain in the house, because the next day is Great Lent.

Paregentan was a process of chasing away “Oodis Dadig” and inviting “Bass Babig”. Oodis Dadis was a worn out doll, which the villagers officially threw down from the top of a mountain on the last night of Paregentan. That night after dinner and before going to bed, people ate Madzoon and Gatnaboor. When in bed, they put the whole boiled egg in their mouth by saying “we close our mouth with white egg, may God make us worthy to open our mouth with red egg” (meaning Easter egg).

On the next day of Paregentan was called (Pagla Khoran). It was a chance for housewives to get their kitchen rid of traces of fat. They boiled their utensils, plates, pots and pans.

### Games and Masquerade parties

Along with good food came as well lots of games, masquerade parties and vaudevilles. After dinner the youngsters of the town would disguise themselves with a variety of costumes and masks and color their faces with flour or charcoal. Boys wearing girls’ clothing and with the company of Daoul Zourna would barge into homes, dance and entertain the residents.

The most common funny play staged on the squares of towns would be the “khnamakhos” the process of asking the hand of one’s daughter.

Even the monks would be at ease on Paregentan and stage vaudeville called “Apeghatogh” (literally means freedom from rigid rules of monastic life).

After dinner, folk dances and processions took place. A master of ceremonies was elected who was attired in funny dress. His comical gesture and expressions provoked laughter. He freely ridiculed everybody and nobody got offended.

Toward the end, a special hymn was sung and the M.C. was carried away for “Burial”. The spectators then would say “Lazarus come forth.” Like Lazarus, the M.C. then would rise and the audience would flee and retire to their cells.

From Paregentan songs we can remember “Ay Noubar Noubar”, “Tamzara”, “Zinch ou Zinch”, “Dzamteln ee Dzoven”, “Ay Ayloughe”.

## Poon Paregentan Recipes

### Roasted Lamb

The centerpiece of Paregentan Carnival food. Stuff the lamb with bulghour and seasoning and roast it in a tonir.

### Patila (Made by dough)

Roll the dough as thin as can do. Put in on a flat surface. Spread Khavourma or cheese on it. Cover it with a second layer of identical dough: Roll the edges and bake it on a flat space: After making few stack them on each other in a tray and than with a sharp knife cut little squares after spreading on them melted butter.

### Pkhpkhig (Is a desert)

Mix the flour with the egg yoke and milk and cut the dough in little pieces, as big as walnut. Cook them in deep oil. Before serving pour on them either grape syrup or honey.

### Բուն բարեկենդան. մարդկային առաջին երջանկությունը



Բարեկենդանը պահքի սկիզբն է, իսկ Բուն բարեկենդանը՝ Մեծ պահքի սկիզբը: Բարեկենդան նշանակում է բարի կենդանություն. ուրախության, խրախճանքի օր, որին շարաթապահը է հաջորդում: Իսկ Բուն բարեկենդան նշանակում է ամենամեծ բարեկենդան, որին հաջորդում է Մեծ պահքը, որն ամենաերկարն ու տևականն է:

Բուն բարեկենդանը Մեծ պահքի յոր կիրակիներից առաջինն է: Այն մեզ հիշեցնում է մարդկային առաջին երջանկությունը: Այս օրը նվիրված է դրախտի հիշատակին, որի փափկության մեջ նախածնողները Աղամն ու Եվան, ապրում էին անմեղ ու երջանիկ կյանքով մինչև դրախտից վտարումը: Առաջին մարդը դրախտում Տիրոջց պատվիրան ստացավ. «Դրախտում ամեն ծառի պտուղներից կարող ես ուտել, բայց բարու և չարի գիտության ծառից մի՝ կերեք» (Ծննդոց 2:16-17): Ամեն ծառից ուտելը խորհրդանշում է բարեկենդանը, իսկ մեկից չուտելը, որը դրախտի մեջտեղում է, խորհրդանշում է պահքը:

Դրախտային կյանքը Աղամի ու Եվայի համար երանական կյանք էր, բարի կենդանություն՝ Աստծո ներկայությամբ: Չկար ոչինչ, որ տրտմեցներ մարդուն, ընդհակառակը, նա ապրում էր անսպառ երկնային հավիտենական ուրախության մեջ, քանի որ վայելում էր Աստծոն անմիջական ներկայությունը: Սակայն մարդը, մեղանչելով, կորցրեց այն բարի կենդանությունը, որը վայելում էր դրախտում: Նա սկսեց ապրել մարմնական կյանքով:

Բուն բարեկենդանը մարդուն հիշեցնում է իր երջանիկ վիճակը, իսկ Մեծ պահքը՝ խորհել տալիս, թե ինչպե՞ս է կորցրել այն և մասնանշում դրան վերադառնալու միջոցն ու ձանապարհը:

Բարեկենդանի օրը, բնականաբար, չենք կարող այն անցկացնել այնպես, ինչպես նախամարդը դրախտում: Մարդը չի կարողանում իր ուրախությունը դրսուրել միայն հոգեպես, այլ հաճախ հոգնորին շաղկապում է մարմնականը, նյութականը, այդ պատճառով աշխարհը մեր հոգենոր այս ուրախությանը միախառնում է սեղանների ճոխություն ու վայելքներ, իսկ այդ շոայլությանը որպես հակակշիռ՝ Եկեղեցին հորդորում է չափավորություն:

Երբեմն մարդիկ Մեծ պահքից առաջ Բուն բարեկենդանին, հաշվի առնելով պահքի երկարաձգվող շրջանը, ճոխ սեղանները զարդարում են չափից ավելի կերակուրների բազմազանությամբ, որի արդյունքը բնավ հաճելի լինել չի կարող: «Որդյա՞ն, եթե մեղը գտնես, չափո՞վ կ կեր. չինի թե հազենաս և փսխես» (Առակներ 25:16):

Սողոմոն իմաստունը մեղրի մասին է խոսում, բայց մենք պետք է ընդհանրացնենք, քանի որ ամեն ինչի մեջ չափն է գովելի, և անչափը՝ պարսավելի: Եթե ցանկանում ենք իրոք ուրախ լինել բարեկենդանի օրը, պետք է խուսափենք ծայրահեղություններից և ընտրենք ուսկե միջինը:

Բուն բարեկենդանի շարականները պատմում և նկարագրում են նախածնողների դրախտային փափուկ կյանքը, այն գոհունակ և զվարթ հոգեվիճակը, որ վայելում էին դրախտում Աղամն ու Եվան: Այս շարականների առանցքը «դրախտի փափկությունը», «դրախտի զվարձությունը» և Աղամի երջանիկ վիճակն է կազմում: Հիշատակվում է նաև Քրիստոսը որպես երկրորդ Աղամ, որ իր միջոցով մարդկանց արժանի դարձրեց «դրախտի փափկության»: Բուն բարեկենդանի շարականները «զվարձության», «ուրախության» և «դրախտի երջանկության» մասին են խոսում:

Բուն բարեկենդանի նախորդ շաբաթ օրը, երեկոյան ժամերգության ընթացքում փակվում են բոլոր Եկեղեցների խորանների վարագույրները, որոնք բացվում են Սբ. Զատկի ճրագալույշի Պատարագին: Մեծ պահքի ընթացքում վարագույրը բացվում է միայն Ծաղկազարդին, Ավագ հինգշաբթի՝ ոտնվայի արարողությանը, Սբ. Գրիգոր Լուսավորչի մուտքը վիրապ, Սբ. Մարիամ Աստվածածնի ավետման, Տեառնդառաջի տոններին, եթե դրանք հանդիպում են Մեծ պահքի օրերին:

Բուն բարեկենդանի կիրակի երեկոյան ժամերգությունից հետո սկսվում է Մեծ պահքը:

Save the Date

**ST. VARTAN ARMENIAN CHURCH  
IN-PERSON  
ASSEMBLY MEETING  
& LAMB SHANK LUNCH**

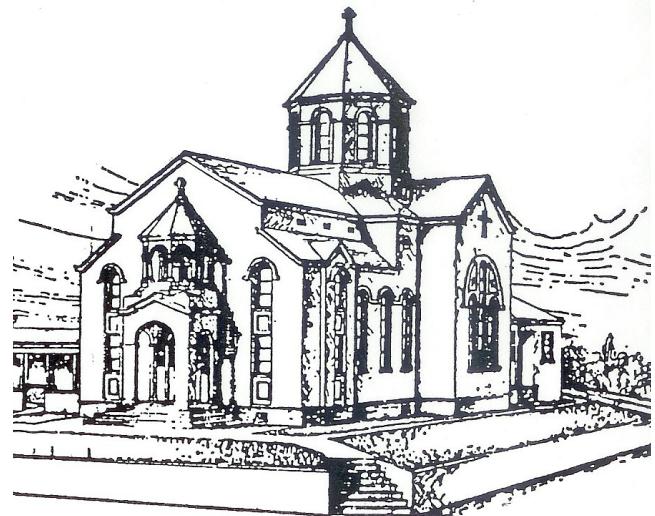
**Sunday, February 5, 2023**

Lamb Shank Meal—\$25

Child's Hot Dog Meal—\$7

**After church services**

**All pledged members are  
urged to attend, so a  
quorum can be reached.**



**Wednesday Lenten  
Services at St. Vartan  
Church**

6-7 pm

In-person & Online

February 22  
March 1  
March 8

March 15  
March 22  
March 29





SATURDAY  
FEB 4, 2023  
7:00PM

---

# ARMENIA and ARTSAKH

## What's next - What to do

### A CONVERSATION WITH TATUL HAKOPYAN

Aliq Media columnist and coordinator of the ANI Center for Armenian Studies Tatul Hakobyan will address the situation on the Armenia-Azerbaijan border, the new conditions created in Syunik and Artsakh after the 44-day war, the September 12th incursions into Armenia proper, and the current blockade of Artsakh.



ST. VARTAN  
ARMENIAN CHURCH  
JOHN MARUKIAN HALL  
650 SPRUCE ST  
OAKLAND, CA  
510-893-1671 [stvartanoakland.com](http://stvartanoakland.com)

Sponsored by St. Vartan Church Cultural Committee

PRESENTED BY ANI CENTER FOR ARMENIAN STUDIES  
[ANIARCF@GMAIL.COM](mailto:ANIARCF@GMAIL.COM)

## St. Vartan Church Attends Armenian Heritage Night at the Golden State Warriors

On a stormy Wednesday evening on January 4, over 300 Armenians from the Bay Area gathered to cheer on the Golden State Warriors and participate in Armenian Heritage Night.

Many Bay Area organizations and churches came together to show their Armenian pride. Prior to the game there was a performance by South Bay's Armenian Folklore Yerevan Dance Group followed by the singing of the National Anthem by Piedmont High Schooler, Danielle Zaroukian.

St. Vartan ACYO had a great turnout along with many parents in attendance. They all sat together and cheered for their beloved Warriors, including Der Krikor and Yeretzkin Anoush.

Despite a heartbreaking buzzer beater loss to the Detroit Pistons, the group was thrilled to attend a postgame talk with Warriors Head Coach, Steve Kerr, and Pistons Assistant Coach, Rex Kalamian. They were both interviewed by Ani Hovanessian, an LA based documentary filmmaker.

During the discussion, Coach Kerr discussed the pride he has for his parents and grandparents involvement in helping Armenians around the world, especially during the Genocide. He brings that same passion and community devotion to his current job as head coach.

Kalamian was asked about his involvement as Head Coach of the Armenia National Team this summer in Yerevan. He spoke about his grandmother's story as a Genocide survivor and commitment to further grow the Armenian basketball programs in Armenia.

Both coaches chatted with the crowd afterwards including Coach Kerr who was moved when St. Vartan Church member, Suzanne Abnous, asked him to sign a copy of Coach Kerr's grandfather, Stanley Kerr's book, The Lions of Marash.





### Hye Social Club Paint n Sip

On the evening of Saturday, January 14 more than thirty aspiring artists came together to put their paintbrush to the canvas and create beautiful art during Hye Social Club's, Paint n Sip event.

Led by an instructor, all participants were given two brushes, paint and a canvas to recreate Van Gogh's, Starry Night (over the San Francisco Bay). It was fun to witness everyone's inner artistic talent and see their various interpretations come to life.



The evening began with a delicious potluck dinner and wine which provided time to congregate before the painting lesson began. A fun evening was had by all "artists."

The event was organized by the newly formed Hye Social Club, a group for 35+ year-olds who want to engage in various social activities.

To learn more about the group contact Annette Kevranian at [annette@method42.net](mailto:annette@method42.net).

### Hye Camp Scholarships

St. Vartan Ladies Society is pleased once again this year to provide two camperships for St. Vartan ACYO members ages 13 to 17 years old. The criteria is to be a regular attendee/involved/proactive St. Vartan ACYO member and write an essay themed, "What makes me an Armenian-Christian?"

Families who are willing to sign their kids for HyeCamp must do so at the opening of registrations and pay the full tuition on their own. The two children to win the essay competition will receive campership from Ladies Society, which will actually be a reimbursement of the tuition that has been already paid during registration. (The campership amount is ~ \$600 to \$700/per child TBD).

The due date to submit all essays is March 1 and the winners decision will be made by March 10.

## 2023 HYE CAMP APPLICATION DATES!

STAFF APPLICATIONS | FEB 14TH 2023

CAMPER APPLICATIONS | APRIL 1ST 2023

APPLICATIONS WILL GO LIVE @ 10 AM

**St. Vartan Armenian Apostolic Church**  
**650 Spruce Street**  
**Oakland, CA 94610**

*Address Service Requested*

NON-PROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
OAKLAND, CA  
94615  
PERMIT NO. 2273



***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. Krikor Zakaryan, Parish Priest and President of All Church Organizations  
Parish Council Chair: Dicko Shahvekilian  
Parish Assembly Chair: David Ojakian  
Choir Director: Armena Petrosova  
Organist: Araks Aghazarian  
ACYO Chair: Ani Vasgerdsian Brady  
Sunday School Superintendent: Karen Mener  
Ladies Society Chair: Lisa Manoogian  
Cultural Society Chair: Liz Ojakian  
Armenian School Principal: Anna Massis  
Hokejosh: Nora Hanoian  
Hye Social Chair: Annette Kevranian  
Boys Basketball Coach: Mike Boloyan  
Girls Volleyball Coach: Annette Kevranian  
Newsletter Editors: Arlene Hovsepian and Rachel Harger  
Church Secretary: Rachel Harger  
Altar Flowers: Sylvia Gozurian, Elo Markarian, Suzanne Vasgerdsian  
Mas Committee: Sylvia Gozurian, Elo Markarian, Hilda Mener  
Church Custodian: Wartkes Hagopian

**Morning Service—Sundays 9:30 am**  
**Divine Liturgy Service—Sundays 10:00 a.m.**

**650 Spruce Street, Oakland, CA. 94610**  
**Phone: 510-893-1671**  
**Email: [stvartanoakland@aol.com](mailto:stvartanoakland@aol.com)**  
**Website: [www.stvartanoakland.org](http://www.stvartanoakland.org)**

