

St. Vartan Voice

The Newsletter of St. Vartan Armenian Apostolic Church

Rev. Fr. Krikor Zakaryan, Parish Priest

Սուրբ Վարդանի Չայն

Ս. Վարդան Հայ Առաքելական Եկեղեցու Պաշտօնաթերթ



Rev. Fr. Krikor Zakaryan

January 2021

Nativity and Theophany of Our Lord

“Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, ‘Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him.’ And lo, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; and going into the house they saw the child with Mary, his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.” (Matthew 2:1-11, RSV)

The Armenian Church celebrates the holy birth (Sourp Dznount) of Jesus Christ on January 6. In Armenian tradition, this feast day commemorates not only the birth of Christ, but also His baptism by John the Baptist. The latter is remembered through the “Blessing of Water” ceremony, which follows the Divine Liturgy on the same day.

On the eve of the Feast of the Nativity and Theophany of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Jrakalouyts Divine Liturgy (the lighting of the lamps service) is celebrated in honor of the manifestation of Jesus as the Son of God (theophany). It is custom for the faithful to hold lit candles during this special service.

On the following day, the mystery of our Lord’s baptism in the River Jordan is remembered in the ceremony of the Jurorhnek, or the “Blessing of Water.”

In ancient times, this ceremony was celebrated by the riverside or sea shore, but, for various reasons, it was later confined to the interior of the churches. During the ceremony, the cross is dipped in water, recalling Christ’s immersion in the Jordan River. Blessed oil, or Holy Chrism (Muron), is poured into the water from a dove-shaped container, symbolizing the appearance at the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove and the voice of the Father proclaiming to all that Jesus is His Son.

The Holy Chrism is prepared in Holy Etchmiadzin and is blessed by the Catholicos assisted by the bishops. Muron contains olive oil, balsam and the essence of forty different flowers and herbs. At the end of the ceremony, members of the congregation are given the blessed water to drink, thereby sharing in the life-giving act of Christ. As water is essential to the life of the body, drinking the blessed water is a reminder that participation in the acts of Christ is essential for eternal life.

Why January 6?

Even at the time of the Holy Apostles, the traditions in the Christian churches in the different parts of the world were not uniform. In fact, Christmas was probably not observed at all in the very early Church. Later, the mysteries

Bible Readings

Jan. 5 Matt. 2:10-12
Jan. 6 Matt. 1:18-25
Jan. 10 Luke 2:21
Jan. 17 John 2:1-11
Jan. 24 John 3:13-21
Jan. 31 John 6:39-47

For unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given;
And the government will be upon His shoulder.
And His name will be called Wonderful,
Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace

Isaiah 9:6



of the birth and baptism of Jesus Christ began to be observed on January 6.

By the end of the 3rd century, Christmas in Rome was celebrated on December 25, which coincided with a major pagan feast. The Eastern churches, meanwhile, continued to observe Christmas on January 6. The Armenian Church has maintained that ancient tradition to this day, whereas the Greek-speaking Christian world switched to the Latin tradition at the end of the 4th century.

Armenian-American households may exchange Christmas gifts on December 25, since it is the custom in American society to do so. In some of our churches in the United States, it has become traditional to observe the feast of St. Stephen the Proto-Martyr on Christmas Eve (December 24), though that feast is movable and may not always fall on December 24.

If possible, the faithful should fast during the seven-day period preceding January 6 and should inform their children that they are fasting as a way of preparation for Christmas. On the evening of January 5, families should attend church and participate in the celebration of the Christmas Eve Divine Liturgy. They should do the same on the morning of January 6.

The Feast of the Naming of Jesus

The feast of Jesus' naming always falls 8 days after the commemoration of His birth. Use this opportunity to explore all the amazing names given Jesus in Scripture.

St. Vartan Cultural Committee Presents

2021 - A YEAR OF HOPE

A Virtual Benefit Concert Supporting Humanitarian Aid for Families Displaced from Artsakh

**Sunday, January 24, 2021
5 PM**

All donations to benefit *The Western Diocese Humanitarian Initiative* aimed at supporting displaced families from Artsakh.

Make Donations To: **ST. VARTAN ARMENIAN CHURCH**

Donate Online at: <https://www.stvartanoakland.com/donate> or mail checks to St. Vartan Church,
650 Spruce St., Oakland, CA 94610

Featuring Artists: Araks Aghazarian, Tatev Amiryan, Karo Avakian, Nadima Avakyan, Heghine Boloyan, Arlene Boyd, Soussanna Choubarian, The Mazmanians, Armena Petrosova, and Armen Phelps

Concert Link: <https://www.facebook.com/stvartanoakland> or
<https://www.stvartanoakland.com>

For More Information:

Liz Ojakian lizojakian@yahoo.com / 510.351.6754

Zaven Kanneian zavenk2@gmail.com / 510.528.1807

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

St. Vartan Voice Newsletter—Hasmig Vasgerdsian

In Memory
† **Raya Mardirossian**
Adik Mardirossian

HAPPY NEW YEAR

News From Our St. Vartan Family

Baptism

On November 25, Fr. Krikor baptized **Vincent Bennett Anenberg** at St. Vartan Church. Vincent is the son of Jeffrey and Shushig Anenberg. His godparents are Armen and Laura and Adel DerStepanian. Grandparents are Steve Anenberg and Donna Battaglia and Kevork and Narine Anenberg and Lida Mazmanian. His great-grandmother is Emma Mazmanian.



Ladies Society Update

Our usual activities continue to be put on hold due to COVID-19 and we were not able to enjoy our joint luncheon with St. John Ladies in November nor host our Annual Christmas Luncheon this month. The good news is with the vaccine now on the horizon, we see light at the end of the tunnel and hopefully by spring or possibly summer, we will be able to regain our activities once again.

Election of Officers: Last month we mentioned it was time for election of officers and asked for volunteers to join our Ladies Society Board. We are thrilled to announce that Lisa Manoogian is joining our wonderful group of ladies on the board. We had planned to have our Election of Officers in December, however, with everything closed down once again, that was not possible. We hope to be able to meet the first of the new year and will announce our new officers at that time.

2021 dues: It is that time again. Ladies Society Membership Dues of \$35 are payable by January 31, 2021. For those who have not reached the milestone age of 80, please mail your check, payable to St. Vartan Armenian Church, to our treasurer: **Nelly Kargodorian, 420 LaCasa Via, Walnut Creek, CA 94598.**

Please stay well and be safe until we meet again. With blessings and love to all.
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Parish Council Update

My Faithful and Fellow Parishioners,

On behalf of the Parish Council and myself, we pray that you, your family and loved ones remain healthy and safe. We also wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

We appreciate everyone who has and continues to support our Parish during these unprecedented and uncertain times. We thank Der Krikor, Yn. Anush and their beautiful children and family, our altar servers, our volunteers, and those who have worked tirelessly to make sure that we all stay connected in our faith. Thank you all, on behalf of the entire Parish Council.

Please save the date for Sunday, January 24, 2021 as the Cultural Committee has organized an incredible benefit concert to help support families displaced from Artsakh. More information can be found in the insert in the newsletter or on our website and Facebook page.

The following Sunday, January 31, 2021 will be our very first VIRTUAL St. Vartan Parish Assembly Meeting. More information on how to join will be made available as the New Year approaches. We hope you will be able to join us and look forward to reviewing the past year and electing our Parish Council for 2021. We need your continued support. At this time, we are relying on receiving your yearly dues to help with our overall financial stability. Your dues and donations help us with meeting our financial obligations. Your support, along with your donations, are imperative to keeping us stable and for the Church to be open in order to practice our faith and love for our culture.

Please continue to make your donations online using our donation page, at <https://www.stvartanoakland.com/donate> or by mailing your check to the church office at 650 Spruce St, Oakland 94610.

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Gratefully,
Dicko Shahvekilian



WESTERN DIOCESE
OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH

Artsakh Needs You.Urgently.

Humanitarian Relief
to the Displaced
Families of Artsakh.

Mother See of Holy
Etchmiadzin



Reality

The aftermath of the war continues to take a toll on the most vulnerable. Displaced families face arduous winter months ahead. Deprived of shelter, food, medical care, or emotional support, our brothers and sisters will suffer greatly without our support.

Details

Program Duration

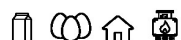
December 2020 | March 2021

Target Group

Repatriates 10K | Displaced 40K

Assistance

The allocated funds will go towards their housing (except for those who dwell in the church properties), utilities (gas, electricity, and water), food, clothing, and other essentials.



Mission

At the direction of the Diocesan Primate, Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, and in collaboration with the Department of Social Services of the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, a new humanitarian initiative is underway to support displaced families from Artsakh. Funds will initially help families now residing in transitional housing, with further support designated for families repatriating to Artsakh, rebuilding their homes in the lives under the most challenging circumstances. The Diocese is actively overseeing these efforts to ensure efficacy and transparency. Donate now and sponsor a family or individual facing hardship this winter.



Donate

			Food	Utilities	Admin	Total 1 month	Total 4 months
👉	Angel	1 person	\$68	\$40	\$11	\$118/ month	\$472
🛡️	Protector	2-4 people	\$131	\$60	\$19	\$208/ month	\$832
👊	Guardian	5- 7 people	\$188	\$80	\$27	\$268/ month	\$1,072
💖	Supporter*	***Consider becoming a supporter with a recurring donation.***					

Donate Now at www.cutt.ly/DisplacedFamilies

What Is Advent?

“Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.” (James 5:8)

Advent means “coming”—the coming of Christ. It is the 50-day period during which we prepare to celebrate the Nativity and Theophany of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In the Armenian Church, Advent lasts approximately two weeks longer than it does in the Western churches, hence the Armenian word for the season: Hisnag, “a 50-day period.” It is a time for us to think of the why of Christmas—why the greeting cards, the decorations, the gifts, the family gatherings? A time to look within our hearts to see if there is anything that stands between us and the Good News of Jesus’ birth.

During Advent, we can rededicate ourselves to Christ through our actions, thoughts, and prayers. This is a good time for us to improve our habits and offer them as gifts to God. Perhaps Advent can also be an occasion to discover God’s gifts all around us. We need to have an open heart to receive Christ—God’s greatest gift of all! We complain that Christmas is too “commercial,” but there is a way to live out the real “reason for the season.”

Special Feasts and Fasts During Advent Fasting During Hisnag

Hisnag is in a sense introduced by a week of fasting. The fast is officially known as “the Fast of the Beginning of Hisnag.” There is a second fast of a week’s duration following the third Sunday of Hisnag. This fast is known as “the Fast of St. James, Bishop of Nisibis.” The commemoration of the latter takes place on the following Saturday.

The third and final fast, again of a week’s duration, precedes the Feast of the Nativity and Theophany of Christ our God, and that is how it is officially recognized in the calendar.

During the remaining weeks of Hisnag when there is no fasting, the Wednesdays and Fridays are regularly observed as fasting days.

Feasts During Hisnag

The Armenian Church celebrates a number of feasts and observes some important commemorations during the 50 days of Hisnag.

The Feast of the Presentation of the Holy Virgin to the Temple, as it has a fixed date, is celebrated on November 21, even if it falls within the week of the fasting. On such occasions, the feast is celebrated liturgically, but the fasting prevails in dietary matters.

The same practice is also observed during the Feast of the Conception of the Holy Virgin by St. Anna, which is always celebrated on December 9th.

During the Hisnag we commemorate some of the important and major saints of the Christian Church. Among them are the 4th-century founders of Christian theology, St. Gregory the Wonderworker and St. Basil of Caesarea; the Holy Apostles Thaddeus and Bartholomew, the enlighteners of Armenia; the Egyptian fathers; the early bishops of the church, such as St. Clemens, St. Ignatius, St. Polycarpus, St. Nicholas; St. James of Nisibis; and at the very end of the year, King David commemorated as a prophet; the Holy Apostle James, Brother of the Lord; St. Stephen the Protomartyr; the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul; the Holy Apostles James and John, both of them surnamed as Sons of Thunder.



ARS Bake Sale

The ARS Erouponi Chapter held a Drive-Thru Bake Sale Fundraiser for Artsakh at St. Vartan Church on Saturday, December 12. The event was to commemorate Artsakh’s fallen heroes. It featured a Madagh Harissa plate, as well as favorite Armenian cookies baked by the ARS members.





INTRODUCING

2ND THURSDAYS AT CAFE LA MED!

Cafe La Med Fillmore, SF will donate 15%
of proceeds from ALL TAKE-OUT ORDERS to
Artsakh Relief Efforts!

Let's Order Take Out Together!

2210 Fillmore St. San Francisco, CA 94115



St. Vartan Wish List

1. St. Vartan Church is requesting donations to the St. Vartan Church Technology Fund, to upgrade our aging technology. Generous donations have already allowed the church to purchase a new camera to live-stream the church services.

Other new technology the church needs include upgraded security equipment and a multi-media projector.

Thank you to everyone who already donated to this worthy project.

2. St. Vartan Church is also looking for donations to purchase special orthopedic altar shoes to be worn by the priest and deacons on the altar, as well as shoe racks for the deacons' and priest's rooms.

You can donate to either of these projects on-line at stvar-tanoakland.com or by mailing a check into the church office.

Wish
List

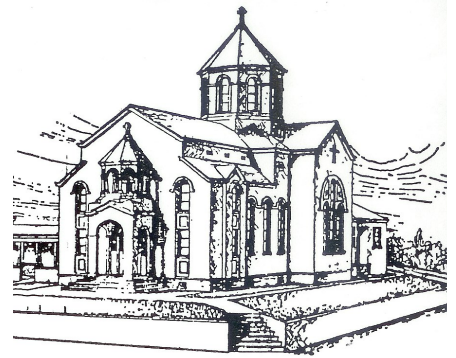
Save the Date

ST. VARTAN ARMENIAN CHURCH VIRTUAL ASSEMBLY MEETING

Sunday, January 31

Details to follow

All pledged members are urged to attend.



St. Vartan Church

Schedule of On-line Services

<https://www.facebook.com/stvartanoakland/live>

Tuesday, January 5, 2021

Armenian Christmas Eve

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

Wednesday, January 6, 2021

Armenian Christmas Day

Asdvadzahaidnootiun—Nativity and Baptism of Jesus Christ

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

Sunday, January 10, 2021

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

Sunday, January 17, 2021

Memorial Sunday—Merelots

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



Don't Miss Anything!

Get your free weekly update filled with curated news from St. Vartan Church to help you stay in the know! Subscribe to our private email list: www.stvartanoakland.com

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. 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 17, 2021.

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 14, 2020.



St. Vartan Church
650 Spruce Street
Oakland, CA 94610

Address Service Requested



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 Shahyekilian
Parish Assembly Chair: David Ojakian
Choir Director: Armena Petrosova
Organist: Araks Aghazarian and Ida Mazmanian
ACYO Chair: Silva Jindoian
Sunday School Superintendent: Karen Mener
Ladies Society Chair: Marlene Tolegian and Arlene Hovsepian
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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