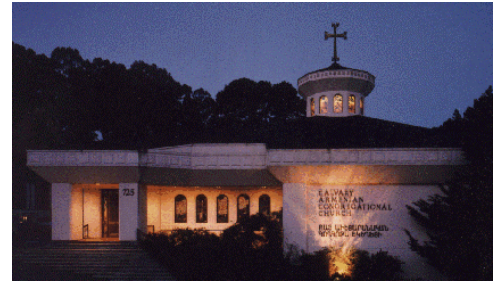


The Calvary Messenger

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The Newsletter of the
Calvary Armenian Congregational Church of San Francisco
725 Brotherhood Way, San Francisco, CA 94132-2902 Office (415) 586-2000 / Fax (415) 333-1076
Website: www.calvaryarmenianchurch.org / Office Email: cacc@cacc-sf.org / Rev. Nerses Balabanian:

A View From Calvary

Rev. Nerses Balabanian
Pastor

Many times I have told stories from Anjar and Beirut. Lately our daughter Nanor went back to Lebanon. Her report is inspiring and challenging. God is working in many ways.

You can also view our messenger in color by visiting our new website:
www.calvaryarmenianchurch.org

2013 Coming Events

Saturday, March 23

CACC Choir Concert

Sunday, March 24

Palm Sunday

Thursday, March 28

Maundy Thursday

Sunday, March 31

Resurrection Sunday

Sunday, May 12

Mother's Day

Saturday, June 9

Graduation Sunday

Sunday, June 16

Father's Day

July 15 - 19

Vacation Bible Camp

Sunday, August 18

Annual Picnic

22 Years Later

Nanor Balabanian

My year ended in the very same place where I once opened my eyes 22 years ago--Anjar, Lebanon.

Growing up in Anjar, I always saw the village as a safe haven. In many ways, it still is.

A few years prior to my trip, I met a German missionary who had served in Anjar during the Lebanese



Civil War. When I asked her why she had spent most of her youth in this village when she could have been living a comfortable life in Germany, she shared with me the following verse:

"God gave me this verse: 'Do not be afraid for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name; you are mine. When you go through deep waters, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown... I will gather you and your children from east and west'" (Isaiah 43: 1-2).

With this verse, God had called her to serve Anjar and help dedicate her life to help run the boarding school. She had been fully assured by God to put her full trust and faith in Him. As a young 18-year-old girl, she obeyed God's calling and moved to a completely foreign land and served Anjar's boarding school for over 20 years.

Now, 40 years after her departure, I was back in the same village, staying in the same room she once lived in, and working in the same boarding school that she



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Food Festival

Nora Balabarian & Armine Adrouny

It was with our Lord's help and grace that we held our 31st annual food festival on November 10 and 11.

The most important fund raising event of the church called for intensive planning and a monumental effort from all the dedicated volunteers who used their God given talents and worked tirelessly in the following categories: food and pastry preparation, Christian outreach, musical entertainment, raffle, knitting, crafts, decoration, financial planning and publicity.

The preparation of an authentic Armenian cuisine and delicacies began in early June and eventually culminated in a festive weekend of fun, fellowship and food.



Our valued guests were greeted by the deacons and church members and were directed to the Noel boutique, beautifully decorated by Sona Plavjian, and to the Christian corner where free Bibles, Christian CDs and books were offered.

The aroma of the shish kebob and the food enticed the guests to the serving line. The country cupboard was bursting with homemade desserts, jams and pastries. The Noel boutique offered many unique items. The talented Calvary Jazz Ensemble and the Hamazkayin Araz and the Yerevan Dance Group provided musical entertainment throughout the evening.

The Food Festival Committee hosted three luncheons:

Renewal Sunday, September 9, a luncheon was hosted to raise funds toward the expenses of the festival.



Thanksgiving Sunday, November 22, a Thanksgiving luncheon was served to thank all the volunteers who worked tirelessly for the success of the festival.

Advent Sunday, December 16, a festive Christmas luncheon was offered to the congregation.

(continued on next page)



The CACC Food Festival is a widely anticipated event for the Bay Area Armenian and the local community. It gives us an opportunity to minister and provide Christian outreach. "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." It also is an event which contributes to the camaraderie of the dedicated church members. The committee is grateful for the great dedication and help of the church members who donated their time and talents to make the 31st Annual Food Festival a great success. We especially thank the members of the Triple X Fraternity who have graciously volunteered their help over the last few years.

Welcoming Babies

Calvary Church family was blessed with three beautiful babies born in 2012 to Todd and Aline Childers, Eddy and Rhoda Ekmekji, Hrag and Taleen Kalebjian. On Sunday January 20th the Church welcomed the babies as the families cut the cake during coffee hour. Each newborn received a Children's Bible that was presented to them by Aileen Hartunian on behalf of Calvary HomeBuilders.

May God bless these families.



Vaun Hrag Kalebjian



Liam Yukio Ekmekji

2012



Lily Aida Childers

A Burst of Praise

Monica Hacopian

I thank You, dear Lord, for everlasting life
 For Your constant and unfaltering love
 Only You can save me from storm and strife
 I honor You for all your grace and glory

I raise my arms to You in prayer
 You remove my burdens from my weary shoulders
 I feel Your guidance and loving care
 With You in my life I have nothing to fear

I thank You, O Lord, for the air that gives me breath
 For each new day is filled with hope
 I feel renewed and full of strength
 To worship, You Master, of this earth

I praise You Lord for being with me from the start
 You have given me vision and spiritual sight
 Thank You for removing the darkness from my heart
 My loneliness gone as I will seek You always in the path of light.

Sumaritan's Purse



The Calvary Church kids, parents and Sunday School staff did an awesome job collecting funds and preparing 55 Samaritan's Purse shoeboxes and 55 AMAA Christmas Joy packages. The picture above shows the outcome of their hard work and the enthusiasm on their faces. May these boxes safely reach to the children around the world and may our Lord Jesus be glorified through these ministries.

AEYF Fall Retreat *Jenny Balabanian*



Over 50 high school and college students attended Armenian Evangelical Youth Fellowship's (AEYF) Fall Retreat in October 2012. The weekend-long retreat took place at Armenian Church of the Nazarene in Glendale, CA. Rev. Aren Bahadourian led students through the book of Jonah, and specifically emphasized God's Relentless Pursuit for us.



Year 2012 New Members: Top left to right: Sona Bekmezian, Jasmine Berjikly, Serop Moroyan, Audrey deLoache, Vehanoush Nazarian, Theresa Mullen and Alice Eldemir. (Absent: Jenny Balabanian, Roushig Kalebjian and Sona Plavjian)

Ministry Opportunities

For information please call the church office: (415) 586-2000

- Children's Sunday School, Junior High and High School Youth Groups: San Francisco, every Sunday.
- Women's Coffee Time with God: San Jose, every Thursday.
- Coffee Time with God: San Francisco, second Wednesday every month.
- HomeBuilders for Young Couples & Families: South Bay & Peninsula, third Saturday every month.
- Weekly Dinner Bible Study: San Francisco, every Monday.
- Church-wide Prayer Meeting: San Francisco, first Sunday every month.
- South Bay Bible Study: Every second Friday of the month.
- Women's Bible Study & Fellowship: Every last Thursday of the month.

Lifetime Service Recognitions

During our 86th Anniversary Banquet we honored seven members from our congregation (Edward & Gloria Medzian, Vehanoush Nazarian, Yevnige Salibian, Ardson & Gladys Shegoian and Sam Yeramian).

Ardson & Gladys Shegoian

Ardson and Gladys were both brought up in Christian families. Even though Gladys' mother passed away when she was only 3, her father made sure she attended church. Gladys grew up going to Sunday school, was in the choir and in Christian Endeavor. Gladys and Ardson were introduced to each other by Badveli Nishan Hachian.

Their daughter Sherry began attending Calvary's youth group. At the time, it was led by Levon Filian. Ardson and Gladys knew people at Calvary and occasionally attended their worship service and banquets, even though they were attending an American church near their home. They worshiped at Calvary on the Sunday of the annual meeting and Gloria Medzian nominated Gladys to be a council member. "But I'm not a member of the church," Gladys said. That's okay, everyone told her, and the rest is history.

Over the years, Ardson and Gladys have served the church in so many capacities. Ardson was very involved with the Building Committee, both in phase 1 & 2 when Calvary was built at this location nearly thirty years ago. Ardson did a great deal of gardening for the church. He also served as moderator. Besides serving on the council, Gladys was the first woman deacon at Calvary, temporary church treasurer of the general fund, a member of Calvary Circle and was treasurer of the Food Festival until recently. She has been the Building Fund treasurer for many years.

Advice from Gladys and Ardson to the coming generations: "Whenever you are doing a job at church, ask a young person if they would like to help." Even though they might not have considered the role before, they may very well want to participate. Ardson and Gladys have enjoyed serving Calvary Church and highly recommend Christian service.

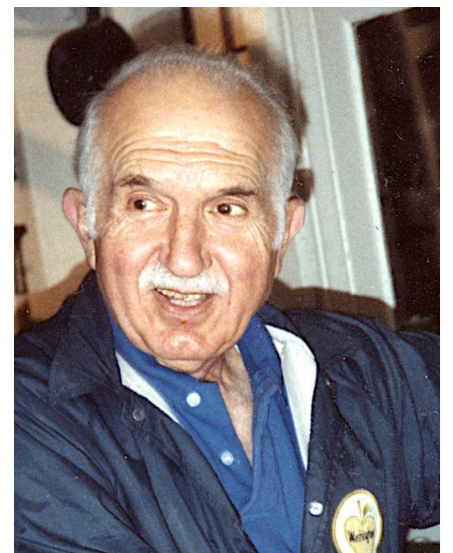
Sam Yeramian

Sam Yeremian had a family business, running a grocery store in San Francisco. The store was on 15th and Church St. called the Church Street Groceteria. He worked long hours, even early morning hours, when he shopped for produce for the store four or five times a week. He worked Sundays too at his business. Although he was busy at his store, Sam made sure his wife and daughter regularly attended church at Calvary.

After his retirement, he attended church every Sunday, sitting at the back and singing every hymn with his beautiful tenor voice. Sam was always generous to those around him. He would give produce to his tenants and was always giving their children candy. He would donate food for the banquets and picnics at Calvary. His faith grew when he met Pastor Nerses. It was Pastor Nerses who helped Sam truly accept Jesus Christ into his life. They have developed a very special bond over the years.

Sam deeply loves the church. Although he cannot sing hymns anymore because of his very weak body, yet every time Badveli visits him, he enjoys listening to hymns and participates with hand motions. Whenever Badveli wants to pray for him, he will stop him and say "Hayeren, Hayeren" Lately he has become much weaker because of Parkinson's Disease. When Badveli says "Getse Hayasdan", Sam raises his arm and expresses his approval by murmuring the same words with great difficulty.

Sam's dedication and service is an encouragement for all of us.



(continued from page one)

once helped grow and improve. But the boarding school had grown so much more. Now, there are over 70 children living in there, most of them come from very difficult backgrounds or are Syrian Armenian refugees.

Personally, I believe God had called me to Lebanon to witness the wonders He had done and continues doing in the lives of many.

Spending a week with the children in Anjar, I was amazed at the love they had for one another and especially for God. Every day their caretakers would wake them up, help them get dressed, tutor them after school, run the chapel, serve them food and put them to bed. The children sought for attention and love and would cherish any person who showed genuine interest in them. What was most surprising to me is how they *begged* me to play worship songs for them on the piano. As I played, they sang loudly and whole heartedly, requesting song after the other. I am sure that they had memorized almost the entire hymnbook. It was beautiful to see how the seeds of God's love and grace had been planted in their hearts from such a young age. Since many of them lacked a source of love and care at home, God was their ultimate redeemer. What a beautiful lesson to all of us!

I was lucky enough to be in Anjar during Christmastime. Christmas in Anjar is like Christmas in a story-book: the entire village is decorated and celebrates together as a big family. There are Christmas parties happening almost every day and Christmas delicacies are prepared and served in every home.

From the Armenian Evangelical School to the boarding house, everyone was putting on Christmas shows and celebrating Jesus' Birth. It was the best and the most joyful birthday for Jesus that I had ever witnessed.

Yet amidst the joyfulness and happiness of the season, there was a dark reality that remained. As the bombings worsened in Aleppo, one after the other, families were moving to Anjar and Boorj Hamood to seek refuge and safety.



Hidden behind the joyful faces of the people was their fear of unemployment and instability.

In these times of uncertainty, I was awakened to understand what it really meant to *truly* and *completely* be reliant on God. I started to compare my "First World problems" to the problems of people in Lebanon and their search for *basic needs*. It seemed silly to even compare the two. From the several families relocated to Boorj Hamoud in search for a better life, to the unemployed men and women looking for a job to make a living, people lived day-by-day relying fully on God's grace and miracles. I realized then how it was much easier to trust and rely fully on God, when He is your *only* source of hope.

But God had not abandoned His people. Even in this difficult time of war and instability, there are several organizations, schools, and churches transforming lives every day and sharing God's blessings with others.

For instance, the Howard Karagheusian Community Center provides social and medical assistance to the Armenian community in Lebanon, specifically targeting families from low socio-economic backgrounds. The center reaches out to over 400 Syrian refugee families and provides them with healthcare, humanitarian aid, food, and social services.

In addition, many churches and missionaries are also trying to alleviate the pain of war and unemployment by providing any kind of assistance that they can, from social to spiritual to humanitarian.

Volunteering at the Karagheusian Center for a week, I had the opportunity to talk to so many families struggling to get by, trying to offer any glimpse of hope and encouragement. It was a very humbling experience to see the glowing faces of the children when they received new clothes, toys, or blankets from the center.

Finally, I want to end by talking about a very memorable night that left a big impact on me. It was the night before New Year's Eve. The Armenian youth group in Beirut was having a party at the church. Several young Syrian Armenian boys and girls had moved to Lebanon and started to attend the new youth group, trying to establish a new life in this new city. During the party, a young Syrian Armenian man said he had to leave the party to send a suitcase to his parents in Syria. I wondered what he may be sending. How is he sending it? When I asked him, he opened his big black suitcase: inside there were around 40 packets of bread, as well as shampoo, Kleenex, candles, etc. He said that even the most basic necessity, such as bread, was *so* expensive in Aleppo, that he had to send it to them frequently.

I realized then, that in difficult times, community becomes integral for survival. Everyone helps one another to get by. The harder the life, the closer were the people to one another and the closer they were to God.

In our comfortable lives here in the US, can we do the same? Can we also trust our lives entirely to God? I encourage all of us to make a *conscious* effort to do so. Even in times of health and prosperity, let's not forget our ultimate source of comfort and *let's remember* our calling to serve others with all of our blessings.



Calvary Armenian Congregational Church

Musical Night at Calvary

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Saturday March 23, 2013 5:00pm

Calvary Choir,
Men's Ensemble

Guest Musicians

Seda Kizirian, Soprano
Jason Park, Trumpet

RSVP and for tickets info call CACC office at (415)-586-2000 or Alidz Nazarian at (408)-315-4742
email Martha Missirlian: marthamissirlian@gmail.com
725 Brotherhood Way, San Francisco Adults \$15, Student/Children \$10



Bay Area AMAA Christmas Luncheon

On Friday, December 14th, 2012, Friends of the AMAA - Peninsula Chapter held a Christmas Luncheon for 40 guests in Los Altos at the home of Ike and Kris Gulesserian. The attendees enjoyed a delicious lunch, bake sale, raffle and a selection of joyous Christmas carols. In addition, Rev. Nerses Balabanian and his wife Sevan gave an audio/video presentation on the role of Jesus in our lives. This luncheon, sponsored by members of the committee of the AMAA - Peninsula Chapter, raised \$1900.00 to help in the education of Armenian children in Beirut and Syria.

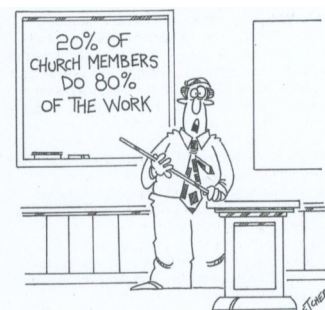
(left to right: Kris Gulesserian, Aileen Gulesserian, Aline Richards,
Nora Balabanian and Marina Sweeney)

Thank You

We are deeply thankful to the church families for their gracious care and love, and generous hospitality. Your prayers and ministry lifted our hearts.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Nazo and Rouzan Bosnoyan



"So the question is: 'How to get that 20% to press on to greater achievement?'"

TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL

OR CURRENT RESIDENT



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

Church News

BIRTH

We congratulate Hrag and Taleen Kalebjian for their newborn son, Vaun Hrag Kalebjian, born on Tuesday, October 16, 2012. Congratulations also to the grandparents.

We congratulate Eddy and Rhoda Ekmekji for their newborn son, Liam Yukio Ekmekji, born on Monday, October 22, 2012. Congratulations also to the grandparents.



DEDICATION

Our congratulations to Todd and Aline Childers on the dedication of their daughter, Lily Aida Childers on Sunday, January 20, 2013. Please pray for them.

BAPTISM

Our congratulations to Phillip and InYoung Shamlan on the baptism of their daughter, Taleen Viola Shamlan and their son, Phillip Puzant Shamlan on Sunday, February 17, 2013. Please pray for them.

CONDOLENCES

Mr. Aram Peter Kezirian (Husband of Michelle Janigian and son-in-law of Barbara Medzian) passed away on Monday,

November 19, 2012. Our condolences and prayers also to Kezirian, Medzian, Janigian and Simonian families.

Mrs. Eugenie Bosnoyan (Mother of Nazareth Bosnoyan) passed away on Saturday, January 12, 2013 in Aleppo, Syria. Our condolences and prayers also to Bosnoyan, Aposhian, Khan and Kushdilian families.

Mr. Adoor Bosnoyan (Father of Nazareth Bosnoyan) passed away on Sunday, January 20, 2013 in Aleppo Syria. Our condolences and prayers also to Bosnoyan, Aposhian, Khan and Kushdilian families.

Ms. Maral Khoshafian (Sister of Setrag Khoshafian) passed away on Sunday, February 17, 2013 in Beirut, Lebanon. Our condolences and prayers also to Khoshafian and Getsoyan families.

UPCOMING COMMUNION

SERVICES

Thursday, March 28

at 7:30 pm

Sunday, May 19

at 11:00 am

Sunday, July 7

at 11:00 am

