

The Calvary Messenger

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Volume 45 / Number 1
2016

The Newsletter of the
Calvary Armenian Congregational Church of San Francisco
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A View from Calvary Rev. Nerses Balabanian
Pastor

Joyful Hearts

Joy is something everyone searches for. People want to live happy lives. Last week the United Arab Emirates appointed a minister for the newly founded Ministry of Happiness. On his last days on earth, Jesus talked about JOY several times.

These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full (John 15:11). You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy (John 16:20 ESV). So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you (John 16:22 ESV). Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full (John 16:24 ESV). But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves (John 17:13 ESV).

What is this joy that no one can take away from us? How can we have it?

Jesus found joy in obeying the will of His Father. **He said, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work (John 4:34).** For Jesus, obedience to his Father is what gave him joy and contentment.

1. JOY in knowing God

Knowing that God is supreme, the Creator, the Redeemer, the Alpha and Omega, and that you are His creature is the beginning of inner peace and joy. **"But now, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand" (Isaiah 64:8).**

Funny, we do this in sport. We go and watch basketball games where amazing athletes play. We go and listen to musicians who are masters of their instruments. We go to museums to see paintings of giants of art. Why? We enjoy watching, observing and listening to the MASTERS.

John Piper says it well: "Why are we willing to be exposed in all these places as utterly inferior? How can we get so much joy out of watching people magnify their superiority over us? The biblical answer is that *we were made by God to get our deepest joys not from being superior ourselves but from enjoying God's superiority.*"¹

2. Joy in Experiencing God's Presence

You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. (Psalm 16:11)

You love your spouse, family members or friends and you enjoy your relationship not only when they do something for you. You enjoy being with them. Being in the presence of God is a great source of joy.

3. Joy in obedience and trust

The best example is Jesus who obeyed his Father. **God is our GPS (God's Pointing System).** We do not see the future but we do know He knows and He leads us. We trust and obey Him.

2016 Coming Events

Saturday, March 5
World Day of Prayer
Sunday, March 20
Palm Sunday
Thursday, March 24
Maundy Thursday
Sunday, March 27
Resurrection Sunday
Sunday, April 24
Genocide Commemoration
Sunday, May 8
Mothers Day
Sunday, June 5
Graduation Sunday

1. <http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/the-supremacy-of-christ-and-joy-in-a-postmodern-world>

(Continued on page six)

Food Festival

The aroma of Armenian coffee was the first thing you experienced upon entering the 34th annual Food Festival at the Calvary Church on November 14th. The 800 or more people who attended the Festival encountered not only authentic Armenian food, but also Christian hospitality as they were warmly greeted at the entrance. The Food Festival offered delicious Armenian food with luscious desserts and pastries at the buffet line and Country Cupboard. The kitchen volunteers worked tirelessly in the kitchen while Triple X Fraternity men worked behind the grill to get the kebab fresh and ready.

A warm fellowship atmosphere permeated the Halajian Hall. After enjoying a delicious meal, the visitors had the chance to visit the Christian book corner and receive



free Bibles or walk toward Boutique Noel to look at carefully selected merchandise. Children were entertained at the Kids' Corner. The raffle items were on a beautiful display. There was endless live entertainment featuring Martin Ulikhanyan, the Calvary Worship Band, Hayeli Band and two local Armenian dance groups, Hamazkayin Araz Dance Group and Yerevan Dance Ensemble.



Our Annual Food Festival has once again stood the test of time, because its purpose was greater than having delicious food, entertainment and prizes. It was a blessing indeed to see so many dedicated church members and friends spend countless hours, for several months, at church or at their homes, preparing the most labor-intensive high quality Armenian foods. With the prayers and the hard work of the volunteers, an unprecedented number of visitors attended the Festival and were nourished both physically and spiritually. A big thank you to the 2015 Food Festival committee and to all the men, women and youth who served the Lord in this effort and helped make our Food Festival a great success.



Missions Corner

Matthew Silverman

On January 9th, the Missions Committee hosted a meeting with Badveli Mgrdich Melkonian to get some updates on the status of some of the churches in Armenia that CACC has supported over the years, and get some advice on how best to continue supporting them. We had a great time learning about what is happening with each of the churches we've been connected to, and were encouraged by the reports. We saw pictures of the vibrant young couples ministry at the church in Alaverdi, led by Rev. Arthur Ochinyan. The church has many young adults, with a lot of potential for the future. We received updates from Rev. Gagik



Hovhannesian's church in Aintab, and heard about the strong community there. We also heard about the worship team in our sister church in Armavir, pastored by Rev. Garouj Antonyan. Encouraged by the music ministry there, we even discussed the idea of getting some videos or recordings of their music to sing along with Sundays at CACC, worshipping God together with our sister church across the world.

Here in the Bay Area, we are privileged to live in an area with abundant resources and support. With these blessings comes an important responsibility to use what God has given us for His purposes. This meeting was a great reminder for us that we are part of a kingdom that stretches across the world, and that what we do impacts people we may never see face to face. Lord willing, there will be many more opportunities to help our sister churches as they continue to grow and serve the communities around them.

CACC's Toddler Sunday School Class

Alina Melkonian Balabanian

In the Summer of 2015 we were blessed to launch CACC's Toddler Sunday School class. The vision for this ministry was to provide some of the youngest members of our congregation a Christian education. The goal was to provide an environment where they can learn some of the fundamental truths of the Christian faith at an early age. Our theme for the year has been "A Sure Foundation" where the toddlers have been learning some essential truths of the Christian faith. Our time together



consists of fellowship, learning about God and His Word, prayer and worship. It is a blessed time for the children and adults who are involved. I would like to thank the Lord for opening the doors to make this ministry possible at CACC, the church for their support, the parents who bring their children faithfully, and of course the most amazing toddlers ever who make each class a joy!



Christmas Celebration

Sona Bekmezian



The College and Career Group was happy to host Calvary's first Christmas Luncheon on December 20, 2015 for a crowd of over 200 members of the community! Following church service, all were welcome to Halajian Hall for a wonderful buffet lunch of saffron chicken and roasted vegetables provided by our friends at La Mediterranee Restaurant in San Francisco and delicious rice pilaf prepared by Calvary's very own Leda Kissoyan. Attendees were delighted at the ice cream sundae bar with all the fixings that followed!



The CACC Youth Worship Band led the celebration and fellowship with a rocking sing-along of our favorite Christmas carols, while Pastor Nerses Balabanian and Hagop Nazarian performed tableside with their accordion and violin. Gingerbread houses, preassembled by the College and Career Group, were provided for children and families to decorate with icing, candy, and gum drops. There were some truly beautiful and unique gingerbread houses that got taken home from the church hall that day!

The grand finale was a very special appearance from Gagbant Baba, all the way from the North Pole! Gagbant Baba brought awesome gifts for all the children in attendance and they, in turn, recited, performed, or sang their favorite poems and songs to thank him.

While we did not anticipate such a wonderfully large turn-out to our event, and worried at our capacity to provide for all those in attendance, it was truly by the grace of God that "all ate and were satisfied" and there were "basketfuls...that were leftover"(Matthew 14: 20). We feel so blessed to have such generous donors, without whom it would not have been possible to hold this event free of charge as a ministry to our community. We are also very grateful to La Mediterranee for their excellent food and service, kind discount, and extra donation of food that came in very handy! Thank you to all those who helped set up the event and worked tirelessly and thanklessly behind the scenes to serve our bountiful crowd for the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. We hope all felt the spirit of Christmas truly come alive!



Armenian Evangelical Emmanuel Church of Beirut Lebanon
Daily Vacation Bible School Report
July 6 - August 7, 2015

Pastor Sevag Trashian

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Brothers and sisters at The Calvary Armenian Congregational Church San Francisco. We praise God for your enthusiasm and zeal in the service of our Lord Jesus Christ. Your moral and financial support to our children's ministry and specifically to our **Daily Vacation Bible School** has been a great blessing. We thank you for your gift of 500 US dollars that was given to us for the 2015 DVBS program.



Our general theme for this year was "Praise Him" it included (Praising God for His power, love, providence, authority and greatness) Around 150 children attended our DVBS program. Ms. Liza Barsumian and 14 leaders were our teaching staff.

The Armenian Evangelical Emmanuel Church considers children's ministry as an essential part of its mission. In addition to our Sunday school program, we give great

importance to the **Daily Vacation Bible School** program for which we plan and put every effort to have it every summer. As a neighborhood church in the Nor Amanos area it is our calling to be the light and salt to the community surrounding us through every ministry we are involved in. Hence the primary mission of the DVBS is to gather and attract the children from our neighborhood to attend our program where they will hear God's word and receive love and care. The summer school with its mission has had and still has a great impact on the ministry of The Armenian Evangelical Emmanuel Church.



1. It has connected many families of previous summer school students' parents to the Church.
2. It has promoted and boosted our Sunday school program which we have every Sunday during the school year.
3. It has helped in bringing new students to the Armenian Evangelical E.P. Torossian school which is an essential part of our mission field.

It brings us great Joy to have 150 children in our campus every summer singing and praising God with joyful music and prayers. We evaluate our mission every year and ask God to fill us with passion and zeal and insight into new methods and ways through which we can serve "the little ones" so that they come near to Jesus and hear his words and experience his love.

Yevnige Salibian's Biology

Armine Manoukian



January 14, 1914 - August 29, 2015

Yevnige Aposhian Salibian, a 101 year old Genocide survivor, passed away in Mission Hills, CA on August 29, 2015.

Born in Aintab, Turkey on January 14, 1914, Yevnige was one the few remaining survivors of the Armenian Genocide. She was the oldest of seven Aposhian children and fled with her family from Turkey to Syria to Lebanon to escape the Genocide and other Armenian massacres. At age seven, she was physically saved via a midnight escape by horse drawn carriage. After her mother passed away at an early age from malaria, she helped raise her siblings, praying with them and teaching them the Bible.

Yevnige graduated from the Armenian Evangelical School for Girls in Beirut, Lebanon and, at age 21, married Rev. Vahram Salibian. They served together throughout Lebanon, ministering to refugees, orphans, the blind and the crippled, to students and in churches. They raised six children and also planted a new church in Nor Amanos, Bourdj Hammoud, Lebanon, "Armenian Evangelical Emmanuel Church," which still thrives today.

In 1976, they came to the United States, eventually settling in San Jose, CA. Together she and Rev. Salibian continued to serve the Lord, ministering to families and serving people in homes. She loved to garden, cook, exercise, crochet, write, read, sing, laugh and spend time with family and friends.

In 2006, she moved to the Ararat Home, a retirement community in Los Angeles. There she prayed with the residents and staff, led Bible studies and devotionals, encouraged the elderly and made everyone laugh with her sharp wit and humor.

During the recent Genocide Centennial commemorations, Yevnige was able to share her journey of faith with thousands of people including the Mayor of Los Angeles, clergy, politicians and celebrities. Because she could clearly remember, coherently communicate and vividly describe her escape, she was interviewed during the last year of her life by many reporters for countless articles published around the world and was asked to speak at various events commemorating the Centennial.

Yevnige's life continues through all she served and mothered emotionally, physically and spiritually. She was predeceased by Rev. Salibian in 1995 and is survived by 43 descendants: five children, Armine, Araxie, Shoushan, Hrag Sam and John, (her son Norair was tragically killed in 1960 in a bus accident along with 21 of his high school classmates), 11 grandchildren, 24 great-grandchildren and 3 great-great-grandchildren. Many of her descendants now serve as missionaries, pastors, chaplains and ministry workers.

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4. Joy in serving the LORD

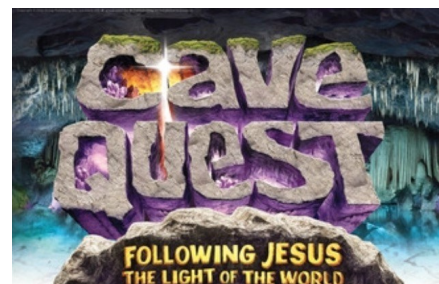
Our faith should be manifested in daily life and our talents should be used and be invested faithfully.

His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. **Enter into the joy of your master.**' (Matthew 25:21 ESV)

May we experience the joy of Christ that no one can take away from us.

Save the Date

CACC Vacation Bible Camp, July 18-22



Welcoming Babies

Sevan Balabanian



Among other celebrations at the Calvary Church, we love to celebrate the birth of babies in the church family and to share the joy of the parents.

During coffee hour on Sunday January 24, the parents and siblings of the babies born in 2015 were asked to come forward to cut the cake. Badveli Nerses prayed for the families and deacon Armine Adrouny presented them with children's Bibles.



A PowerPoint presentation of the pictures of the newborns and their families was projected.

Evelyn Sophie Berjikly, daughter of Armen and Jasmine Berjikli, Ruby Manoogian, daughter of John and Barbara Manoogian, Jane Elizabeth Plavjian, daughter of Kevork and Sona Plavjian, and Leonardo Jerry Vartkessian, son of Raffi and Nicole Vartkessian.

It is our sincere wish to see every child growing in the church and becoming a member of the CACC family.

“And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (Luke 2:52).

Installation of Officers



We are thankful for the dedicated service of the officers who finished their terms on the CACC Council and Board of Deacons: Armine Adrouny, Norayr Minassian, Hagop Nazarian and Margi Shamlan.

The installation of the newly elected officers took place on Sunday February 7th during the worship service.

CACC Council members: Armen Beylerian, moderator; Sona Bekmejian, clerk; Claude Khoury, treasurer; Harout Aroyan, Arpi Beylerian, Varouj Getsoyan, Susan Kazarian, Ara Kullukian and Norayr Minassian;

Board of Deacons: Rafi Balabanian, chair, Caroline Sagherian, clerk, Marge Damir and Nanor Sadakian

“Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain” (1 Cor. 15:58).

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@calvaryarmenianchurch.org. Please check our website for current ministry information: <http://www.calvaryarmenianchurch.org>.

Church News

BIRTH

We congratulate Raffi and Nicole (Tujian) Vartkessian for their newborn son, Leonardo Jerry Vartkessian, born on Monday, November 16th, 2015. Congratulations also to the grandparents.



We congratulate Kevork and Sona Playvjian for their newborn daughter, Jane Elizabeth Playvjian, born on Saturday, December 12th, 2015. Congratulations also to the grandparents.

We congratulate Ari and Hoorig Manoukian for their newborn son, Ethan George Samuel Manoukian, born on Tuesday, February 2nd, 2016. Congratulations also to the grandparents

CONDOLENCES

Mrs. Vartiter Kocharyan passed away on Thursday, February 4, 2016 in Armenia. Our condolences and prayers to the Kocharyan family.

Mrs. Leoni Boyajian passed away on Thursday, February 11, 2016 in Fresno. Our condolences and prayers to the Boyajian, Aroyan, Gedikian, Dunlap, Kalfayan and Beylerian families.

Mrs. Rosine Koundakjian passed away on Monday, February 22, 2016 in Fresno. Our condolences and prayers to the Shemmassian, Kalfayan, Beylerian and Aroyan families.

Prepared by WDP of Cuba
SATURDAY, MARCH 5th at 11 am
 Guest Speaker: Searan Salibian Kiledjian

Calvary Arm. Cong. Church
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 Luncheon will follow - \$8 Donation

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