

# The Calvary Messenger

## Գողգոթա Լրաբեր



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The Newsletter of the  
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## *A View From Calvary*

*Rev. Nerses Balabanian, Pastor*

### Wisdom for Everyone 9 to 99

As I look back, I find it funny that when I was young my parents thought my generation was shallow, spoiled, and not ready to face life's challenges. Now my generation tends to think exactly the same thing about the next!

"The young people of today are utterly dissolute and disorderly." (Martin Luther)

"The youth are rebellious, pleasure-seeking, and irresponsible." (Plato)

"The youth have no respect for their elders; children now love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority. They show disrespect for elders and love chatter." (Socrates)

"We live in a decadent age. Young people no longer respect their parents. They are rude and impatient..." (Carved in an Egyptian tomb three thousand years ago)<sup>1</sup>

The book of Ecclesiastes says, "**There is nothing new under the sun**" (1:9). When you complain about the youth, do you remember that you were once young? Young people, if you think the elderly too outdated or slow, just remember one day you will be like them.

The beauty of the Word of God is that God speaks to all generations. **Abraham** was an aged person when God used him to learn to become a father for Isaac and a father for all nations. Noah's life is another example of how God works with people in the different stages of their lives. **Joseph** was the spoiled kid, the dreamer, who became the ruler of Egypt. Yet God did not give up from teaching Joseph in his old age. **David**, the young shepherd with a heart after God's own heart, became the king of Israel. **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego**, three young courageous and faithful servants of God dared any god and king. **Mary** the teenager gave birth to Jesus.

My message is addressed to all, graduates and parents, children and seniors.

First, to the youth.

#### 1. Rejoice...

**"Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth. Walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes." (11:9a)**

Do you see how many times Solomon tells young people to learn to rejoice and enjoy life? These days will never come back. Enjoy the day! We always complain about our age. As kids, we want to become adults. As we grow older, we look back and want to be young again. **Somehow we do not know how to enjoy each day that is given to us.** Each day is precious. Each minute is a gift from God.

**This is the day that the Lord has made. Let me learn, O Lord, to rejoice in it.**

#### 2. Watch what you Sow

But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment. (Eccles. 11:9b ESV)

"You reap what you sow" is the old saying. **"Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap"** (Galatians 6:7 ESV).

*(continued on next page)*

**“Those who plant injustice will harvest disaster,”** says King Solomon (Proverbs 22:8 NLT). **“You have planted wickedness, you have reaped evil,”** says the prophet (Hosea 10:13 NIV).

The Bible stresses the wisdom of examining what we are doing with our lives. As young people, we are commanded to enjoy life, enjoy youth, and enjoy the moments God gave us. Life tends to become harder and heavier. However, Solomon also warns the youth about the danger of sowing wrong seeds.

**“Sow joyfully, but sow healthy seeds and not wild oaths. Youth is no excuse for exploits that don’t honor Him.”** (David Jeremiah)

I am thankful that my parents and advisers helped me in my youth to be joyful and yet cautious with my desires. God’s Word and the church youth (C.E. in Aleppo) were helpful to keep me in alignment with God. One way to stay away from evil was to spend time with the youth at the church singing, writing new songs, translating songs, cycling together, caroling, serving, going to KCHAG, volunteering at the church camps.

### **3. Remember Your Creator**

**“Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near of which you will say, “I have no pleasure in them”; before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened and the clouds return after the rain”** (Eccl 12:1-2).

“Remember your Creator” is great advice. It gives us the right perspective. Remember who you are. God is your Creator, and you are His creature. He made you; He made you wonderfully; He designed you in His image.

David described how God made him.

**“For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well”** (Psalm 139:13-14 ESV).

Remember that God loves you, and made you special. Each of us is special.

### **4. Words also for the elderly: “never late to bear fruit...”**

The title of my article is “Wisdom for Everyone from 9 to 99.”

God does not give up from any age group. So let me focus also on the seniors of the church.

Psalm 92 says:

**“The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. They are planted in the house of the Lord; they flourish in the courts of our God. They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green, to declare that the Lord is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him”** (Psalm 92:12-15 ESV).

The palm trees, the cedars of Lebanon, all those metaphors indicate growth and aging. These trees take a long time to grow, yet they still bear fruit in old age.

Moses said:

**“For all our days pass away under your wrath; we bring our years to an end like a sigh. The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty; So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom”** (Psalm 90:9,10,12).

So my dear senior citizens, don’t give up from bearing fruit. Don’t give up from life. Don’t give up from learning wisdom from God. Don’t give up from the youth. There is richness in serving the Lord together 9-99.

### **5. Do Not Postpone**

**“Remember NOW your Creator in the days of your youth”** (Eccl. 12:1). Some translations add the word **NOW**. Why postpone?

**“Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts”** (Hebrews 4:7).

A parent told me once that he does not want to bring his children to Sunday school, so one day when they grow up, they will be able decide if they want to follow Christ or not. He does not want to impose his “religious” ideas on them.

I think those children are being taught about other ‘gods’ in their lives. If these children are exposed to other ‘gods’, why not also give a chance to the God of our creation, God the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Why not?

All ages, 9-99 do not postpone your relationship with God.

### **Prayer:**

***God, I want Your Word to be deeply implanted in me so that I not only know the truth, but also express it in the way I live.***

1. David Jeremiah, *Searching For Heaven on Earth* p 295



# Science Sunday

Alina Balabanian

On Sunday, March 26, 2017 the Sunday School kids gathered to worship the Lord in the sanctuary with the congregation. Then they went downstairs to practice the Palm Sunday songs with teacher Caroline Sagherian. Immediately following worship practice they were led upstairs to the Halajian Hall where they gathered to have Science Sunday with scientist Matt Silverman.

The program started with an introduction and a short clip on how intelligent design in creation begs the existence of a Designer. It was explained to them that studying science can be a means to worshipping God the Creator as what we are studying is ultimately His creation. Ari Ekmekji led the kids in singing

Our God is so Great and Awesome God.



Teacher Alina introduced and interviewed scientist and fellow Sunday school teacher, Matt Silverman. He was asked questions like - what made him decide to study science on a deeper level and how he sees the hand of God in the work that He does. We then had a short question and answer time followed by a fun pizza party for the kids and their teachers.

Once the kids were done with their meal they were invited to watch scientist Matt Silverman in action. They were fascinated as he proceeded to do several experiments. There was a toddler-friendly experiment as well as an older kid experiment. A fun time was had by all. The kids were treated to a brownie volcano and got some prizes like a ball of the earth on which it said John 3:16.



# World Day of Prayer

Sevan Balabanian

The Bay Area Armenian clergy and more than 100 women and men from all five Armenian churches of the SF Bay area participated in World Day of Prayer service on March 4. This year our host was the St. Andrew Armenian Apostolic Church of Cupertino. The program titled, "Am I Being Unfair to You?" and based on the Parable of the Workers of the Vineyard (Matt. 20:1-16) was prepared by WDP Committee of the Philippines.



After the welcoming words of the host church, the service continued with the procession of girls and women who brought in articles that represented the Philippines. Then they read testimonies coming from the girls and women of the Philippines. Sevan Balabanian interviewed a Filipino woman called

Danna Falla who described her life back home and her immigration experience. This year's speaker was Mrs. Lena Garabedian of Pasadena. Her message was a great blessing to all participants. There were songs, readings and prayers.

This year the love offering went towards supporting Armenian children through the Society of Orphaned Armenian Relief (SOAR).

Following the service, everyone enjoyed a fabulous Lenten luncheon prepared by the ladies of St. Andrew.



# Palm Sunday

Caroline Sagherian

*"Rejoice greatly...Shout in triumph...Look, your King is coming to you; He is righteous and victorious (having salvation), humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey." Zechariah 9:9*

Christians throughout the world celebrate Palm Sunday to commemorate Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. But why? What's the significance? And, why do our CACC Sunday School children sing to share the message of Palm Sunday each year?

Marking the beginning of Holy Week, this event (prophesied in Zechariah 9:9) continues to show the world that Jesus was (and IS) the Messiah, the One True King, the Christ, the Anointed One, the Savior, and the Redeemer of those who trust in him!

Even Jesus' riding in on a donkey had significance, as it was the animal that kings rode when coming in peacetime, as opposed to horses used in wartime. What a great, symbolic way for the Prince of Peace to make his entrance...and emphasize such a point! The full story of the fulfillment of this prophecy is recorded in the parallel passages of Matthew 21:1-17, Mark 11:1-11, Luke 19:28-44, and John 12:12-19.



Branches and cloaks were laid down to cover Jesus' path, to honor Him. And people shouted, "Hosanna!" meaning "Save [us], please!" because they knew that he really could! They expressed their praise and adoration saying, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" And today, we continue to celebrate that first "Palm" Sunday by declaring that Jesus IS the one who came to provide us with His salvation!

This year, our Sunday School children shared this Palm Sunday message with the congregation to communicate that there is no doubt that "He is God / The one true God!" and that "He is King / The one true King," as they invited the

congregation to "Come and see what God *has done* / All the wonders under the sun," and to "Come and see what God *can do* / [because] He's alive in me and you!"\*

Another song shared the story of the people shouting, "Hosanna!" pleading praises to Jesus, and recognizing that He is the one who provides [the saving] "Love beyond compare... [and that] / He [is the one who] paid the price [to] Open Paradise / [so that we can] see Him there."\*

The children also sang the Armenian song *Heesoots Christos Ge' Takavoré* which summed up the sovereign and eternal reign of Jesus "Over all the world / Over all of history / [and] Over all people!"\*\*

May God himself allow us the ability to recognize Jesus, to turn and trust in him, and be saved!

(\*Music and Lyrics by Jana Alayra. \*\*Music performed by Nerses Balabanian / Nor Yerk.)



**Graduation Sunday, June 25, 2017**



# Annual Banquet

Taleen Nazarian

In a changing world, it's all the more comforting to hold onto tradition, our banquet being among them. For the 91<sup>st</sup> time, CACC family and friends got together for a lovely spring banquet.

It was an evening that gave us hope and reason to thrive, as presented by keynote speaker, UCLA's Dr. Ann Karagozian Sarafian, Professor of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering and Interim Vice Chancellor of Research at UCLA. As a longtime member of United Armenian Congregational Church (UACC), Dr. Sarafian meshed science and Christianity in her presentation, "Wisdom that Equips Us to Thrive." In a poignant recollection of anecdotes highlighting the values passed on to her from her grandparents, Dr. Sarafian stressed the crucial presence of integrity, in every facet of life, reminding us that we best exemplify our relationship with God through our daily interactions with others.



In keeping with tradition, entertainment complemented the evening, but this year, it came with a nontraditional twist. He has been called a prodigy at the age of 12, which is not at all surprising given the standing ovation young pianist, Andrew Boldi, received for his mesmerizing performance of two beautiful Etudes from Chopin, as well as Babajanian's Elegy and Vagharshapat Dance. Under the tutelage of Dr. Michael Schmitz, Andrew's training and natural gift blend effortlessly, as only musicians twice his age hope to achieve. His captivating performance may have been his first for our church, but undoubtedly, Andrew will continue to play in high caliber venues and concert halls.



Finally, it is common knowledge that the tie that binds all Armenians is a shared passion for food. This year's banquet was no exception, as guests dined on a gourmet meal prepared by renowned chefs from La Mediterranee Restaurant. It was an exquisite touch for an evening coordinated by chairperson, Yvonne Minassian and her committed crew, all volunteering their time and effort to make our 91<sup>st</sup> anniversary banquet at least as lovely as those that preceded it. Many hands went into the evening to make it memorable; and because of them, our guests, and our many generous sponsors, the enchanting evening will be remembered by many people, for many years to come.

## Thank You

With Heartfelt Gratitude to our CACC Family,

Thank you for your expressions of love these past few months and upon the passing of our beloved mother/grandmother, **Alice Marashian**. She adored you all, and was especially touched by the warmth shown to her by Badveli Nerses and Sevan during her most trying days.

Your kind phone calls, visits, cards, meals, and especially prayers, were a source of comfort and encouragement. Being able to celebrate and mourn with those one loves is a blessing and we will be forever grateful.

*Taleen, Hagop, Ari, Aram, Alexa Nazarian  
Noreen, Alex, Armand, Noah, Andre Djenguerian*

A colorful flyer for the "Maker Fun Factory" event. The title "MAKER FUN FACTORY" is in large, stylized letters. Below it, it says "Created by GOD" and "Build For a Purpose". The flyer lists activities: "Sound Wave Sing &amp; Play", "Bible Discovery", "Game Makers", "Snack Factory", "Imagination Station", and "Funshop Finale". There are illustrations of a crab, a bee, and a bird. The event is on "July 17th - 21st" from "10am - 3pm" at "Calvary Armenian Congregational Church", "725 Brotherhood Way, San Francisco, CA 94132". Contact information is provided: "(415) 586-2000" and "http://www.calvaryarmenianchurch.org/". A note says "\$50.00/child/week includes snacks, crafts, T-shirt &amp; lunch". For more information, contact "Rene Avanesian (415) 215-9936".

# Lévon Gulesserian's Obituary



Lévon was born to Dickran and Verkinia (Nouskajian) Gulesserian on January 7th, 1920 in Adana, Turkey, and passed away on May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at the age of 97. He was the youngest of the five Gulesserian children: Puzant, Yulia, Mourad, Elizabeth and then Lévon. Dickran and Verkinia were extremely protective of Lévon because the two previous children lost their lives prematurely during the 1915 Armenian Genocide.

In 1921, when Lévon was a year old, the last movement of Armenian Genocide was ordered. The family was forced to leave a well-established curtain business, bank everything they had, and board a French Merchant Ship bound for any open port. After many ports denied them entry, The Gulesserian Family was allowed to disembark in Beirut, Lebanon.

In Beirut, Lévon's father was able to establish his business, and the family began to heal, thrive, and establish themselves as a church family, devoted to help out other Christian deportees.

Jan. 7, 1920 - May 6, 2017

Lévon attended the Armenian Evangelical School and later the American University. His education was interrupted to help his ailing father at the store. Lévon enjoyed work at the store: it appealed to his sense of business and his social nature, but he devoted his life to Christ and Church as a member of the First Armenian Evangelical Church.

The church was the basis of his spiritual and social life. He was a member of the Christian Endeavor Movement, taught Sunday School, sang in the choir and with a group of Armenian Endeavor members, was a founding member of Kchag Christian Endeavor Summer Camp, and was a member of the Haigazian College Board of Managers in Lebanon and the Board of Trustees in the USA. He loved the church. It was part of his sense of being.

After being a long-time bachelor of 33 years, he met his future wife, Shaké, at the KCHAG Christian Education Summer Camp. Lévon married Shaké Adrouny, the daughter of Adour and Ovsanna Adrouny on February 13th, 1954. They were blessed with three children, Aline, Dickran, and Alec.

In 1970, the family moved to the United States. They settled temporarily in San Francisco but eventually moved to Saratoga, California.

Lévon, his brother Puzant, and nephews, Ike and Sam, established five Carpeteria stores in the San Francisco Bay Area. He was a happy "workaholic" who continued to work even after retirement.

Lévon and his family were members of the Calvary Armenian Congregational Church in San Francisco. Both he and Shake devoted their time and energy to the church. His opinions on Church matters were sought.

Lévon and Shaké spent 50 glorious years together. She was the quintessential "Dan De Geen" while he read news from all over the world, in three different languages. He was very much into politics. He would read political magazines, and International Newspapers daily. He would watch the news and make his own analysis; he could not be swayed by any commentary. Lévon was very intelligent and had a keen sense of analysis. He was always fair and cared about what went on in the world.

This was life until Shaké's death in 2004. It was a painful blow for Lévon to lose his Shaké so seemingly young. He was never the same, but continued to press on as he knew God would wish him to. He prayed often or sang "Allelujah" as a substitute. He looked forward to visits from family, and for the next O'Reilly Factor.

For the past 6 years, Lévon was in the loving care of his in-home caregiver, Suzanna. He slipped away from us with a smile on his face, confident that The Lord would welcome him and reunite him with his beloved wife Shaké and family and friends who preceded him.

Lévon leaves behind his children, Aline Richards, Dr. Dickran (Therese) and Alec (Anahid) and 5 grandchildren, Kevin Richards, Max, Cole, Andrea and Peter Gulesserian.

We will remember him as a loving and kind person who touched us all. May he rest in peace with his beloved Shaké and loved ones and know that he is always in our hearts.

The family requests that donations be made in memory of Lévon and Shaké Gulesserian Endowment Fund to Calvary Armenian Congregational Church, San Francisco, CA 94132.

# CACC 2017 Graduates



Ainsley Gedikian (K)



Eric Bender (Elem.)



Logan Dunlap (Upper Elem.)



London Dunlap (Lower Elem.)



Andrea Gulesserian (Elem.)



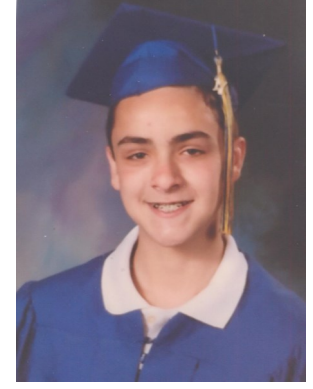
Kyle Hartunian (Elem.)



Sloan Adrouny (M.Sch.)



Michael Damir (M.Sch.)



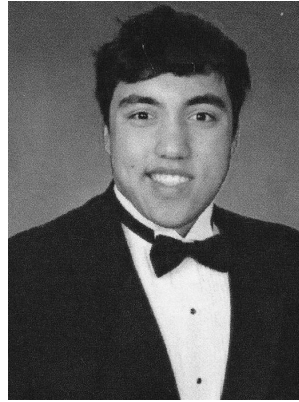
Hagop Nazarethian (M.Sch.)



Sofia Avanesian (H.Sch.)



Rubina Karapetyan (H.Sch.)



Phillip Shamlian (H.Sch.)



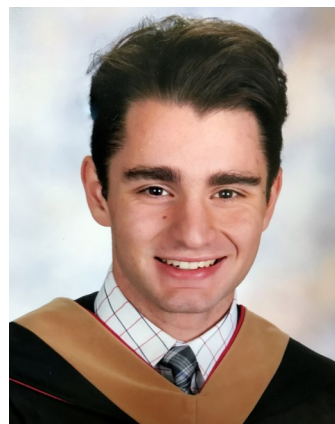
Connor Kerkejian (BA)



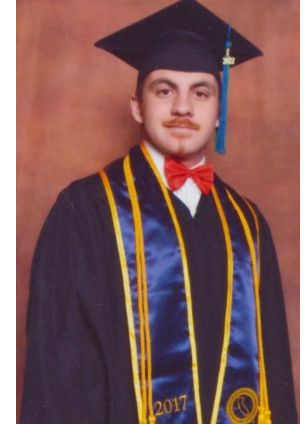
Oshagan Merjanian (BA)



Alexa Nazarian (BS)



Aram Nazarian (BS)



André Shabazian (BS)

**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](mailto:cacc@calvaryarmenianchurch.org). Please check our website for current ministry information: <http://www.calvaryarmenianchurch.org>.

## Church News

### **BIRTH**

We congratulate Danny and Aline (Kalebjian) Abajian for their newborn son, Hovig Nazareth Abajian, born on Friday, February 10, 2017. Congratulations also to the grandparents.



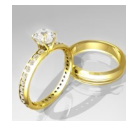
We congratulate Armen and Vana (Khanjian) Vartanian for their newborn daughter, Lori Sona Vartanian, born on Monday, February 27, 2017. Congratulations also to the grandparents.

We congratulate Arek and Jenna Manugian for their newborn son, Arthur Tigran Manugian, born on Tuesday, April 25, 2017. Congratulations also to the grandparents.

We congratulate Armen and Jasmine Berjikly for their newborn son, Christian Armen Berjikly, born on May 9, 2017. Congratulations also to the grandparents.

### **WEDDING**

We congratulate Mr. & Mrs. Jeffrey and Sarah (Pickett) Brusee, who were married on Saturday, June 3, 2017 at Fair Oaks Church, Concord, CA. Our congratulations also to the parents.



### **CONDOLENCES**

Mrs. Alice Marashian (mother of Taleen Nazarian) passed away on Wednesday, April 26, 2017. Our condolences and prayers to the Marashian, Djenguerian, Nazarian, Aghabashian and Greenberg families.

Mr. Levon Gulesserian passed away on Saturday, May 6, 2017. Our condolences and prayers to the Gulesserian, Richards and Adrouny families.

Mr. George Banerian (uncle of Anne Silverman and Brother-in-law of Arshalous Sarafian) passed away on Thursday, July 6, 2017. Our condolences and prayers to the Banerian, Sarafian and Silverman families.