

What was your favorite Christmas present? Was it one that you received or one that you gave? Was it purchased or handmade? Was it an experience or an item? What was your favorite?

When I think of Christmas apart from the gifts and decorations, I like to ask myself the same thing: What is my favorite thing about Jesus' birth? What's my favorite thing about God the Son becoming a human being? What's your favorite of all the Christmas blessings given in Jesus Christ?

Is it the hope & promise of eternal life beyond death? (John 3:16) Is it the gift of forgiveness? (Colossians 1:13-14) Is it that God has created a specific plan for your life, filled with opportunities to love Him and glorify Him while you do good here on earth? (Ephesians 2:10) Is it that you are a new creation in Christ? (2 Corinthians 5:17) For you, is it your unrestricted welcome to come to God just as you are with confidence and boldness? (Hebrews 4:15-16)

I imagine for some of us, it is the assurance that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus! (Romans 8:1) For others, it may be that we will never be separated from the love of God—ever!—in Jesus Christ. (Romans 8:38-39)

The gift of the Holy Spirit and the privilege to call the creator of the universe "Father" may be your favorite. (Galatians 4:6-7) For me, it's being chosen and beloved as His child and the promise that He will make me more and more like His One & Only Son, Jesus. (Ephesians 1:3-14 & 1 John 3:1-3) I just remembered one camper this summer saying, "I LOVE that Jesus has been tempted in every way and can help me out when I am tempted!" (Hebrews 2:18)

It's really hard to choose, isn't it?! All these and so much more are God's gifts to us in the sending of His One & Only Son to earth to save us from our sins.

As hard as it may be, I do want to encourage you to try to pick—maybe your top two or three. Why? Because the Lord meets us personally and individually. We do not experience all of His blessings equally. Some seem to meet us exactly where we are at specific moments.

So, as we begin 2020, which of Christ's gifts mean the most to you right now?

Some of our more "senior saints" are filled with hope and praise when they hear the Apostle Paul's word in *Philippians 1:6*, "*being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*" It won't be long now!

Some of you who are facing severe hardships whether financially, physically or even in your families, are holding on tightly to *Romans 8:28*, "*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.*"

Whether you're looking back or looking forward or you're just focused on making it moment to moment right now, Christ promises to be with us by His Spirit. He speaks to our hearts as we read and listen to His Word. He "highlights" passages, verses and stories from His Word that He knows we need right now.

What is He speaking to you about right now?

As we start the New Year, take the time to reflect on His precious promises. This is also a great time to renew your commitment to listen to God daily by reading the New Testament this year or maybe the entire Bible! You may want to use the YouVersion app on your phone or tablet. On the other hand, you may want to use the Bible Reading plan that's included in this month's Mosaix. Either way, include this in your daily discipline of seeking to know and experience Christ more fully.

For me, 2020 is the year where I am seeking to grow to become a man of prayer, a man who genuinely prays for my family, for you, our church, for the Holy Spirit to work in us and through us, and for His kingdom to come more fully throughout Armenia, Turkey and His world. Please pray for me! And pray with me too! I'd love that!

Plan on joining with more than seventy-five other valley churches January 6-26 to fast and pray together for God to reveal Himself more clearly right here in our town. These **21 Days of Fasting & Prayer** can have an incredible impact! We get to host on Armenian Christmas, January 6th @ 7 p.m.

●●●●● Family Life News ●●●●●

It may have been a wonderful year for some, good for others, and difficult for a few. As I watched my family grow and their interaction with others, especially with our church family, it made me so proud and blessed that I have raised such awesome “Asdvadzavakh” (God-fearing) kids. I am sure that it was all through the power of God with encouragement and prayer from my church family. It has been so exciting to see how involved they have become with FAPC, from fun events, like the 4th of July gathering and Harvest Carnival, to serving the church during the Merchant’s Lunch.

Yet for me, 2019 has been a melancholy year due to my lovely husband’s many health issues. Mike and I have been together for a wonderful 42 years, but this year has been particularly challenging. In order to provide care for him, I have had to retire from my job of 30 years. It has been very difficult since he has become much more dependent and requires my presence and assistance 24/7. Even in the face of these difficulties, I give thanks daily to the almighty King above for the strength and patience that He provides. Every morning when I wake up and every evening before I go to bed, I say the following prayer in Armenian:

Ով Տեր այսօր ալ փարք կուտամ որ մեզի ողջ պահեցիր չար փորցանքներէն պաշտպանեցիր եվ տվիր համբերություն, եվ քո կամքդ ըլլայ հաճո օրը:

I have loved and enjoyed serving at many events at FAPC throughout the years. As it has become more difficult for me to participate in these ways, it makes me feel like I am unable to serve the Lord and that makes my heart weep. My ability to attend Bible studies and time to myself has also been impacted by my responsibilities as a caregiver. At the same time, I feel blessed whenever my boys or my brother, Koko, are able to care for Mike to give me time to reflect and be restored.

God has a mysterious way of doing things. I don’t know if He is testing me and my faith, because at times I may question Him wondering, “Why is this happening to me?” Then I stop myself from that way of thinking. He knows what He is doing. I am trying to rely on Him because I know He will reveal His plan in His timing.

Mike and I spent this Thanksgiving in Dallas with our in-laws. As I was talking about how hard it has been for me, Aleen’s mom mentioned the book of Job. She suggested I read it and see how he had to endure hardship without any complaints, yet he prayed and believed. Even though everything was taken away from Job, he never lost his faith. This has encouraged me not to lose my faith.

Mike and I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year! No matter how difficult our circumstances may seem in 2020, let us not forget to trust Him in everything.

●●●●● Maral Afarian



MEN’S MINISTRY NEWS

On December 20, 16 men gathered at Chef Paul’s Café in the Chinatown Neighborhood to share in the *Friday Men’s Bible Study*



End-of-Year Luncheon. Guests feasted on such southern-style specialties as oxtails, fried chicken, savory waffles, and an assortment of soul food accompaniments. Special thanks to Jeff Esraelian for coordinating the group order.



The study group meets year-round each Friday from 12:10 to 12:50 p.m. in the Fireside Room Kitchen for delicious lunches and a study of the Scriptures. Senior Pastor Greg Haroutunian is the Study Coordinator.

To be included on the no-obligation study group e-list, please call 237-6638 or email administration@fapc.net.



Our Condolences:

Evelyn Michigan, a precious senior member of FAPC, passed away at the California Armenian Home on December 14 at the age of 94. A native of Reedley, Evelyn grew up in Tulare, California where her family operated Eagle Cleaners.



A gifted vocalist as a youth, Evelyn was a member of the FAPC Chancel Choir for more than half a century, served as Treasurer of the Missions Committee, was honored as a Silent Servant of the Congregation and was recognized by the Fresno Bee for her outstanding community service. Evelyn was preceded in death by her parents, Mihran and Armenoohi Michigan; brother Arah M. Michigan; and sister Hermina Ann Kargenian. She is survived by her sister, Alice Walker of Clovis; nephews Harry Kargenian of Tulare and Bob Kargenian of Yorba Linda; niece Karen Michigan of Visalia; and many cousins in Kingsburg, Southern California; Las Vegas; and Detroit.



The end-of-year Congregational Meeting took place following the 11 a.m. Worship Service on December 8, 2019, the Second Sunday of Advent. **Senior Pastor Gregory V. Haroutunian** served as Moderator and Clerk of the Session **Hagop Afarian, M.D.** served as Recording Officer. **Elder Edward Esajian** presented the report of the Committee on Nominations and **Treasurer Sue Garabedian** presented the Session-approved Budget for Calendar Year 2020. Communicant Members of the Congregation received the Budget with thanks and elected **Kalem Kazarian** to the office of **Ruling Elder and Grace Chavoor and Noelle Daoudian Nightingale** to the office of Deacon. At the conclusion of the meeting, Badveli Haroutunian provided an update on the **God Dreams Planning Committee**, including the revised Vision Statement and Statement of Values for FAPC as the congregation enters a new decade.



Kenneth and Jane Bedrosian celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary on December 27, 2019. The Church Family saluted the happy couple and their family at the After Service Coffee Fellowship on Sunday, December 29, with a 50th Anniversary Cake, Armenian appetizers, and an array of desserts. Congratulations Jane and Ken!

Deacon's Corner

There are times I might leave the house early morning and forget to ask the Lord for guidance. A few days ago, I found myself frustrated in the start of my day. Everything seemed to be going wrong. The day started with anger and frustration with an overwhelming feeling of responsibilities at work. While pondering why I was feeling this way, I came to the realization that I had not started my day off right by talking to Lord Jesus and praying for help to guide me throughout the work day. If we call out to God in prayer the minute we get out of bed, He will take control of our situations, frustrations, anger, temptations, anxieties, sadness, fears and replace them with joy. We are so loved by God but may forget it, at times, in this chaotic world. Always remember to look up to heaven!

Isaiah 41:13 For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you. Amen!

●●●●● Sela Ghazarian



We would like to give a special thanks to **Steve and Sandra Marashian, and their team**, for decorating the Sanctuary for Christmas!



2019 Caroling

A group of people from FAPC participated in the December 22, 2019 caroling to our homebound friends. Among those whom we visited include *Margaret Harrison, Gary Simonian, Hagop Karkazian, Lydia Saghdejian, Moses Kerkejian, Liz and Vahack Haroutunian, Knar Guekejian, Nora Agulian, Lydia Kalebjian, and Vartouhi Filian*. It was such a joy to sing Christmas hymns and to be able to share the good news of the birth of our Lord and King, Jesus Christ. Merry and blessed Christmas!



●●●●● Sela Ghazarian

2019 Hunger Project

More than a dozen volunteers from the congregation and community welcomed the Thanksgiving season to the *Huntington-Homes Neighborhood* by participating in the *2019 Hunger Project*. On November 22, team members purchased, transported, and arranged hearty food packages and warm coats for 40 families residing in the areas served by Jackson and Jefferson Elementary Schools. The next day, other team members greeted and ministered to the families in the Fireside Room. The Session extends special thanks to Co-Chairs *Jeff Esraelian, Syusanna Artemyan* and their dedicated team members for sharing the Gospel message and abundant blessings as part of this annual mission's project.

2019 Christmas Program - Angels Aware



On Saturday, December 21, First Armenian Presbyterian Church hosted its annual *Christmas play*, this year titled *Angels Aware*. The play, written by Kathie Hill and Janet McMahan, fictionalized a heavenly meeting among the various legions of angels including Michael, the archangel, and prophets Moses and Isaiah. With a humorous twist and playful songs, the play pivoted around the monumental reason we celebrate Christmas; God has sent His Son to earth as a baby.

It was an absolute pleasure for us to direct the fifty participants in this year's play. We had cast members ranging from one-year-olds to senior citizens. And, of course, we cannot forget the hilarious lineup of young dads who danced and sang along when revealing the Ten Commandments.

We cannot express to you how delighted we were to work with your little angels (yes, pun intended). There were times when we were struggling to fill in some of the roles, and your kids stepped up to the plate. Their enthusiasm is what kept us going. No matter how large or small each child's role may have been, everyone played a meaningful part in delivering the Christmas story to an audience of two hundred people that evening. It was truly moving to watch the younger generation of Christ followers step up and share the Gospel through drama. We certainly cherished the time spent at practices getting to know these children more.



This certainly would not have been possible without all our lovely volunteers. Whether it was setting up for the dinner, helping decorate, assisting during the play, or cleaning up afterward, we appreciate all your help. In particular, we would like to extend a special thank you to Lisa Tokatian for organizing the dinner, Cindy Rettig for baking all the cookies, Morgan Marashian for directing the music, Sue Garabedian for helping with the Kids Quest children, and Annie Rubio for painting the cover page and display. We couldn't have done it without all of your help. And, of course, thank you to everyone who participated in the play.

With much appreciation,
●●●●● Arpi Keledjian & Carina Tokatian

Steeple Song

Don Francisco

I don't care how many buses you
own
Or the size of your sanctuary
Doesn't matter how steep
Your steeple is, if it's sittin' on a
cemetery

I don't care if you pave your
parking lot
Or put pads upon your pews
What good is a picture perfect
stage
If you're missin' all the cues

I don't care if your pastor is super
powered
And your program's always new
What you need is love and truth
And men are gonna come to you

It doesn't matter if you know the
Bible
If it's all just in your head
But the thing I need to ask you,
Is have you done the things I said?

Do you love your wife?
For her and for and for your
children

Are you layin' down your life?
What about the others?

Are you livin' as a servant
To your sisters and your brothers?
Do you make the poor man beg you
for a bone?
Do the widow and the orphan cry
alone?

I don't care if you pray for miracles
I don't care if you speak with
tongues
I don't care if you've said you love
Me
In every song you've sung

It doesn't matter if your sacrifice of
praise
Is loud enough to raise the dead
The thing I need to ask you,
Is have you done the things I said?

Do you love your wife?
With all you've got inside you
Are you layin' down your life?
What about the others?

Are you livin' as a servant
To your sisters and your brothers?
Do you make the poor man beg you
for a bone?
Do the widow and the orphan cry
alone?

Lord, when were your prisoner
But we did not come to you?
When was it that we saw you sick
That we didn't follow through?

Every time you turned your head
And pretended not to see
When you did it not to the least of
these
You did it not to Me

Lighting of the Advent Candle

December 1, 2019



THE KELEDJANS

December 8, 2019



THE CATCHATOORIANS

December 15, 2019



THE RUBIOS

December 22, 2019



THE THURBERS



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Upcoming Special Events

City-wide 21 Days of Fasting & Prayer
Camp Arev Winter Camp 2020, *High School Juniors*

The Gathering, Armenian Cooking w/ Kohar
Camp Arev Winter Camp 2020, *Junior High College*

Men's Retreat
The Gathering, Women's Embrace Conference
Annual Meeting @ 10 am Coffee Hour
The Gathering, Egg Painting

Jan 6-26
Jan 17-19
Jan 24-26
Jan 25
Jan 31-Feb 2
Feb 7-9
Feb 21-23
Feb 28-29
Mar 15
Mar 21

Church Office:
8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
(M - F)
P: 559.237.6638
F: 559.237.9526
E: fapc3@fapc.net

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Suzy Artemyan, Church Administrator
(administration@fapc.net)

Vera Darakjian, Armenian Ministries Pianist
Jesse Dunbar, Interim Music Ministry Director
(music@fapc.net)

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Ruling Elders: Dr. Hagop Afarian, Sevag Afarian, Ed Esajian,
Rev. Razmig Minassian, Dr. Dennis Shamlan, Ron Statler

Deacons: Silva Esajian, Kim Garo, Sela Ghazarian, Keith Harrison,
Maria Kalayjian, Arpi Keledjian, Kohar Kojayan, Bob Mangasarian,
Sandra Marashian, Karine Martirosyan, Rita Shamlan, Varvara Sivas

**Mosaix submissions
are due by the
15th of every month.**
**Please e-mail
information to
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