

“Now when David had served God’s purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his ancestors and his body decayed.” Acts 13:36 (NIV)

This is really what it’s all about, isn’t it?

Not how well-endowed our portfolio is. Not how many children or how successful our children are. Not the number of degrees or academic honors. Not even how renowned, respected or influential we are. What matters is fulfilling God’s purposes for our lives in our generation.

The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 has brought perspective to each one of us. The “gift” of realizing that we can’t just do what we want, when we want. Sports has been dethroned. Even weddings and funerals have been transformed. The harsh realization that how I behave can have catastrophic consequences on others is sobering. Coming to grips with the awareness that our response to an unseen virus literally can turn upside down our families, our communities, our economy, our schools, our churches and our health care system has been staggering!

Are you as fatigued as I am by all the adjustments we’ve had to make over the last four months?!

The better question is “Am I serving God’s purposes in my generation?” How about you?

We had returned from visiting Mark at West Point’s *Plebe-Parent Weekend*. We were enjoying spring break with several of his friends. We never dreamed we’d have Mark with us again for more than a week, much less four months!

Can you even remember life before March 16, 2020?! Our schoolchildren studied online. Those with parents in care facilities and nursing homes haven’t seen or hugged them in months! Some of you have lost your jobs, changed your employment or have been trying to navigate working from home. It was humbling for many of us to realize that according to the State of California we weren’t “essential”—sorry! our WORK was not essential!

Until recently, we couldn’t eat out in restaurants or go to the beach—then that changed. We witnessed a leveling off of COVID infections only to see them rise again as we’ve attempted to “normalize” our lives. No one could have predicted all that we’ve experienced. I confess that I appreciate it when a leader or expert admits fallibility or ignorance.

The social fabric of our society has been ripped apart as well. The tragic murders of Ahmaud Aubry and George Floyd (and others) have torn back the shroud that veiled racial inequality and injustice in our nation. Regardless of our political preferences and convictions, we have been grieved by the obvious pain these have surfaced. I’m grateful for our law enforcement community here in the Valley, for their approachability and positive engagement and, Lord willing, will participate in the “Support Blue” Run again next year. I’m grateful for the privilege of praying with and becoming friends with other pastors and elders from other ethnic churches and communities. I can’t express how much I’ve absorbed in the last six weeks as I’ve sought to look, listen, learn and love my black colleagues. I have a long way to go but it’s a start!

Let’s ask the question another way, not just about ourselves individually. Are we as a church fulfilling God’s purposes in our generation, in our community?

I’ve been thrilled by your weekly participation in our livestreaming worship! The team of Stephen, Jesse, Brandon, David, Kalem, Eddy and Garo—and Mike on the organ—our worship band and vocalists has been amazing! They were already working hard to bring us into the digital world, but this crisis has energized us! The Lord alone knows our future. We are truly safe in His hands! The issue is not whether we will be “buried with our ancestors” or if our “bodies will decay.” The question is whether we will fulfill the Lord’s plan for us now.

Our hope is to welcome you back in our sanctuary this summer—hopefully before Labor Day. Until then, join a small group and keep participating in our online virtual community of worship! We love you and miss seeing you!

FAPC will not be resuming in-person services on July 19th. Because of factors including the rising number of cases of COVID-19, we are delaying in-person services until further notice. However, we want to hear from you. What are your thoughts about coming back to worship together in the sanctuary? Please choose one of the following responses:

1. If FAPC opens with full safety procedures (i.e. masks, no singing, taking temperatures, 6-ft apart), I would attend.
2. I will not be attending until there is a vaccine available to the public.
3. I will not attend until I can sing and am not asked to wear a mask.
4. I want to be present in church ASAP, with a limited capacity, even while we are mainly streaming the service.

Let us know online @<https://fapc.churchcenter.com/people/forms/150272>, by phone @ 559-237-6638, or email @ fapc3@fapc.net so that we can better serve you!

Are you receiving the weekly church emails?? If not, please send us your email address and we would love to put you on our list! You can email fapc3@fapc.net to give us the address you want added.

We are so excited to tell you that we have small groups starting the week of July 19th! If you haven't yet signed up on <https://fapc.churchcenter.com/people/forms/148293> please do so today! Space is limited in each group, so be sure to get your name on the list! Here are some of the times and days that small groups will be held on!:

- Monday's 7-8 pm
- Monday's 7:30-8:30 pm
- Tuesday's 7:30-8:30 pm
- Wednesday's 7:30-8:30 pm
- and more to come!



FAPC celebrated *Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA)* Sunday on March 8, the Second Sunday of Lent. Reverend Razmig Minassian, Ruling Elder, led the service in the absence of Badveli Greg, who was in New York State for the Plebe-Parent Weekend at West Point. AMAA Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian and Reverend Haig Kherlopian, D.Min., Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church of New York City, were special guests at the service. Executive Director Khanjian offered the 2020 AMAA Missions Report in the English and Armenian languages. Citing James 2:14 and Mark 16:15, Mr. Khanjian said the Biblical “verb ‘go’ implies action that converts wishes into deeds--actions that fulfill the Great Commission of the Lord.” He reviewed the ongoing work of the AMAA in global Evangelism, Education, Youth Programs/Camps, and Humanitarian and Relief Aid. He especially thanked the people of FAPC for giving nearly \$100,000 toward Syrian Relief efforts. Mr. Khanjian urged the congregation to heed Jesus’s call in Matthew 28:19-20 and “Go, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” Badveli Kherlopian, an AMAA Board Member, offered the English message, “The Servant of The Armenian Tables,” a meditation on Acts 6:1-7. Dr. Kherlopian said, “We need the Holy Spirit in our lives to make disciples. I used to do ministry for God. God wants to do ministry with us in partnership with the Church. . . . We want to make disciples who make disciples. . . . In many ways, the AMAA is like the New Testament Deacons -- serving those who are in need. We have to work together; we have to preach with our mouths and our hands and our feet. We need to practice what Jesus preaches and preach what Jesus practices.” FAPC Members Bryan Bedrosian (Class of 2021) and LindaKay Abdulian (Class of 2022) are current members of the AMAA Board of Directors.

Our Condolences:



John Carl Statler, father of FAPC Elder Ronald S. Statler, passed away on April 26, 2020 at the age of 75. A native of Bakersfield, John graduated from Arvin High School as President of the Class of 1962. He attended Bakersfield College and worked in the tire and auto repair industry and in sales before his retirement in 2008. To a generation of FAPC children, John was known as “The Candy Cane Man,” teaching the young people the craft of preparing the distinctive red-and-white confection for a number of Advent seasons. John was preceded in death by his parents, Carl Edward and Lois Marie Statler. He is survived by his beloved wife, Judy; son Ron and daughter-in-law Missy; grandchildren Kara and Mitchel Statler; sister Sharon Churchill of Fresno; nephews Eric Mitchell of Hawaii and Martin Mitchell of Exeter, and niece Heidi Mitchell Stewart of Fresno.

Rose Nevart Daghlian, beloved daughter of the eighth Senior Pastor of FAPC, passed away in Fresno on April 3, 2020 at the age of 79. Rose was born in Cairo, Egypt on New Year’s Day 1941, grew up in Alexandria, and moved with her family to the United States in 1955. A graduate of CSU Fresno, Rose served as a Social Worker for the County of Fresno until retirement and enjoyed traveling across the United States and around the world. In the 1990s, she contributed immeasurably to the FAPC Centennial Celebration by graciously sharing photographs and memories of her parents, Reverend Doctor Theodore Yacoub Daghlian and Pompish Yeranoohi Daghlian, and Badveli Daghlian’s eight-year ministry in Fresno. Rose was preceded in death by her parents. She is survived by her sisters, Victoria Kalfayan, Jacqueline Barnes, and Carolyn Stec; and by her niece, Jayne Kalfayan, and nephew, John Kalfayan.

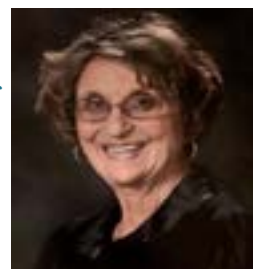


Richard Oliver Cencibaugh, longtime Interim Organist of FAPC, passed away on April 3, 2020 at the age of 83. A graduate of Fresno City College and California State University, Fresno, Richard devoted his life to keyboard music, education, and ministry. He served as Dean (1968-1970, 1972-1973) and Education Coordinator of the

San Joaquin Valley Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. He played and maintained the original Robert Morgan Pipe Organ at Warnor’s Theatre for half a century. He also played and maintained the Casavant Frères Pipe Organ in the FAPC sanctuary during the Senior Pastorates of Badveli Mgrdich Melkonian and Gregory Haroutunian and the Interim Pastorate of Reverend Paul Irwin. In 2012, the Fresno Arts Council honored Richard with the Horizon Citizen’s Award, noting he had “rescued, restored and placed countless organs in homes, churches and theaters throughout the San Joaquin Valley.” Richard was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Nancy Jean (Feaver) Cencibaugh, R.N., and by his parents, Oliver Bowlen and Lois (Crooks) Cencibaugh. He is survived by his children, Vera, Matthew, and Stephanie; five grandchildren; his brother, Charles Cencibaugh; and Nancy’s brother, Dr. Paul Feaver.

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Harriet Lee (Paul) Boghosian, a child of our church, passed away on March 18, 2020 at the age of 87. Harriet grew up on a poultry ranch in the West Park district near Easton and graduated from Washington Union High School in 1950. She married Tulare native Paul Boghosian in the early 1950s and the couple were members of the FAPC Chancel Choir while Paul served as an accountant and salesperson at Cloud’s Supply (later Fresno Distributing). In 1955, they moved to Tulare to establish Tulare Pipe & Electric, Anchor Distributing, and Anchor Lighting, the premier supplier of lamps, furniture, and accessories in the South Valley. Harriet was preceded in death by her beloved husband, Paul, and parents Leo and Lola (Williams) Paul. She is survived by her daughter, Paulette Kalebjian, and her husband Dennis, and son Charles, and his wife Michelle; six grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren, her brother, Harry Paul, her sister-in-law, Diana Boghosian Dorough, and many nieces and nephews.



THE GATHERING

Dear Church Family,

In this time of uncertainty it is easy for us to slip into a cloud of fear. It can be consuming and overwhelming. We may not be in control of our situation but the way we react is always our choice. We can choose our reaction to this unknown virus by putting our trust in a very real and known God.

In Deuteronomy, when the Israelites are going to go into the Promised Land, we see the great obstacles the Israelites face with the other mighty people who were occupying that land. The Israelites were afraid. They feared for their lives as God called them to accept and follow His command to go into the land and take it. *“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you”* (Deuteronomy 31:6). God was well aware of their fears, and He is well aware of our fears.

We, as Christians, do not need to fear as the world does because our peace, comfort, and faith are founded in an unchanging, loving, merciful, and compassionate Lord. Our trust is in the only one who can make the promise that He will never leave or forsake you. God is with us in our fears, just as He was with the Israelites. He is willing to take our fears and give us peace if we are willing to give them over to Him in prayer and meditation on His Word.

May the Lord your God be with you during this season of uncertainty and fear. May you grow in your reliance on Him and depend on His provision of peace. We would like to continue to encourage you with some resources on RightNow Media:

- Fear and Faith:** Trillia Newbell
- Take Heart:** Matt Chandler
- Psalm 23:** Louie Giglio or Matt Chandler
- God’s Names:** Tony Evans

●●●●● Noelle Nightingale and
The Gathering Leadership Team



The April 16 edition of *The Armenian Mirror-Spectator Newspaper* in Watertown, Massachusetts featured the FAPC Centennial Cookbook, *“A Hundred Years and Still Cooking,”* and the legendary recipe of *Esther Bagdasarian* for Grape Leaves (Yalanchi Sarmas).

<https://mirrorspectator.com/2020/04/16/recipe-corner-a-hundred-years-and-still-cooking-recipes-from-first-armenian-presbyterian-church-of-fresno/>

DEACON’S CORNER

Our God is so much bigger than the coronavirus!

Coronavirus Disease (COVID 19) has been a scary topic in the last few months. We must not worry about this virus, but instead we must pray about it. As children of God, we should be more practical, prayerfully, and boldly proclaiming Christ’s peace that is promised to us. I encourage you my dear friends, to remind yourself and your family members of God’s promises. I want to share this amazing verse that overwhelms my heart and gives me strength every time I read it.

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our

Lord. Amen!

Romans 8:38-39

●●●●● Sela Ghazarian



Christopher, Cheryl, Annabel, and Caleb Shamlian were profiled in the May 2020 issue of *Bluffs View Magazine*, a publication of *Melanie Warner’s Best Version Media*.



If you shop on Amazon, don’t forget to link FAPC with AmazonSmile, so that the church will receive a donation from Amazon, at no extra cost to you.

Happy shopping! www.smile.amazon.com

YOUTH COLUMN

Sipping the Tea: Gossiping Part II

In the Armenian culture, when someone offers you something to drink (or eat), it is disrespectful to decline. Similarly, in my last article, when my friend said, “I got tea to spill,” I struggled with how to respond. How should I act when a friend is standing in front of me holding out a teacup? Do I grab it and fill myself to the brim? Or do I, in God’s grace, kindly respond with a “No, thank you?”

In my previous article, I focused on those who “spill the tea”—the gossipers. Yet, it would be unfair to only focus on those who gossip and ignore the ones who listen. Sometimes, I convince myself that I am exempt from consequences as long as I am not the one spilling the tea. But when we steep ourselves in gossip, we too face consequences. We may not spill, but we sip. And sipping is instigating, or at the very least succumbing to the gossipers’ will. It communicates to the speaker that we do not mind hearing more.

But should we mind hearing more? Is listening to gossip really all that bad? It is not like I’m the one gossiping, right? Yet, someone could argue that “sipping the tea” is a form of idleness. In fact, Paul did argue this point when he warned young widows to not “get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house.” He wrote how “not only do they become idlers, but also busybodies who talk nonsense, saying things they ought not to” (1 Timothy 5:13). Now obviously, going from house to house and visiting our dear friends is a fantasy right now. And wearing a mask keeps our lips zipped, right? So, yay! Problem solved. Or, as they say in Armenian, “yeghav.”

Yet, we can still be idle gossipers right now in the comforts of our own homes with unlimited access to a phone. And this is where sipping others’ “hot tea” accomplishes nothing. The listener may benefit from the pleasure of discovering others’ faults, but there are really no practical benefits. We always complain how there is not enough time in the day. So why gossip? It is just so, so, so inefficient and nonsensical to “lend an ear” to gossipers when we could exert ourselves over a million other productive tasks.

Also, when we sip the latest gossip, our perspectives of others are bound to tarnish. Proverbs mentions how “the words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to the inmost parts” (Proverbs 18:8). It may be easy to ingest “the tea” others spill but not so easy to

digest. It is one of the most unfortunate consequences to never be able to unhear or erase gossip from one’s memory; it is stored in us like fat. Ignorance really is bliss.



The more exposed we are to petty gossip and rumors, the more prone we are to accept and validate this information

as truth. Whether or not our informant’s details are accurate, the teacup we sip from becomes tarnished. It is difficult to view the victim of gossip as we used to because we know too much. And this in turn can encourage negative attitude changes towards these people we gossip about. After all, “a gossip separates close friends” (Proverbs 16:28). We can hardly expect to be authentic around our friends when we have been drinking so much “filth” behind their backs.

Sometimes, we may be the ones who deliberately frame the questions that prompt others to gossip. Other times, we do not need to. No matter who initiates, it is really our responsibility to disengage. We could redirect the conversation and instead ask people questions about themselves. Also, defending the victim of gossip speaks volume to our character. It challenges the speaker to question the truthfulness or appropriateness of what he or she shares.

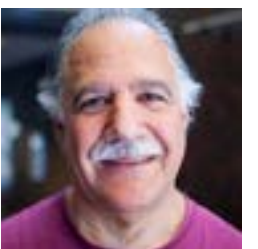
Before I conclude, I would like to note that I am no saint when it comes to avoiding loose lips or ears. Yet, my hope is that through this article, I too may give more thought in censoring what I choose to say and hear.

Even if you or I do not spill the tea, we are really not authorized to sip it. We should strive to refrain from drinking, no matter how much it may offend the gossipers who gladly spill the tea. For spilled tea leaves stains.

●●●●● Carina Tokatian



Congratulations to *Jack Chavo* on being nominated for the Outstanding *2020 Thesis in the CSU Fresno Master of Fine Arts Program in Creative Writing*. Jack’s virtual thesis reading is available on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N-XcH49unc4>.





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