

# The Calvary Messenger

## Գողգոթա Լրաբեր



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2008

The Newsletter of the  
**Calvary Armenian Congregational Church of San Francisco**  
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## A View from Calvary

### Come!

The cartoon on this page tells us how some churches are thinking to change their strategy in inviting people into the church. I am not sure this is good strategy. Unfortunately, every Sunday malls attract more people than churches do. The message of our Lord Jesus Christ is the Good News of



Salvation which leads to transformed lives. Eventually, the Church (the congregation of believers) will be light and salt in our “consumer” culture. The healthy church is not the one who will satisfy all its “customers”. We are in the world not of the world...

CACC is a church with a mission. My family and I came to serve at CACC three years ago. I came to this church because I believed that this church had a mission - **to serve Jesus Christ and provide spiritual nourishment to its members.**

We thank God for all those committed members in our church who are faithfully serving and receiving spiritual nourishment here. We thank God for all those who are part of the CACC larger family in the Bay Area. We would love to see you all here, attending, finding nourishment and fellowship, making friendships, building relationships, serving and reaching out to others. Remember, the theme of the year is “Know Jesus and make Him known.”

I believe that CACC has a special role in spreading the Gospel of Christ in the Bay Area. Have you considered being involved in one of CACC’s ministries? Would you consider helping me, as Pastor, to facilitate the growth of our ministry? You may serve in Sunday School, VBS, Youth Group, Music Ministry, Food Festival, Calvary Circle, Bible Study and much more. We need you here.

My message is simple and encouraging. Come and serve in the CACC. Ask God whether you are called to serve in this church. Malls are filled with customers seeking satisfaction. The church is not a mall. It is the house of the Lord where we come together as one family. If you are not there, your place is empty. Come and be active at CACC.

## 2008 Coming Events

**Monday-Friday / July 14-18**

Vacation Bible School

**Sunday, August 10**

Annual Picnic

**Sunday, September 14**

Renewal Sunday

**Saturday, November 8**

Food Festival

**Saturday, December 20**

Christmas Banquet

*Rev. Nerses Balabanian, Pastor*

# 82nd Annual Banquet

"Home is where one starts from." [T.S. Eliot](#)

Attendees at Calvary Armenian church's 82<sup>nd</sup> Annual Banquet felt right at home amongst the elegant orchids and appetizing mezza in Halajian Hall, May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

Mr. Zaven Khanjian, the evening's speaker is a man who knows much about the importance of home and presented to the guests an evening of moving words, photos, and song to tell of his 28-day pilgrimage to western Armenia, Cilicia and Istanbul. Mr. Khanjian is the author of the newly released book *Is this Home Yours or Mine?* - a moving story of his journey back to his family home in present day Agin. Mr. Khanjian held a captive audience as he read his eloquent and moving story of returning to the homeland, as a way of honoring and remembering his grandfather and father. He described the difficult walk to his family's land and displayed on video the journey down the dusty path lined with fruit trees, leading to his paternal home.

Ever present throughout the story is the bagged little tree which Mr. Khanjian carried in order to plant in his once owned family's backyard. Out of kindness and respect, the current owner of the home, welcomes Mr. Khanjian, and digs through shovels of tough rock and dirt until the tree is planted and watered.

Mr. Khanjian relayed the importance of wanting to plant a fruit tree to represent the fruit it will give to future generations and to honor and symbolize the love and continuation of life of his forefathers. Mrs. Sona Khanjian, beautifully accompanied the program by singing and reading excerpts from the book and poetry, accompanied by the music of Ganatchian.



Zaven and Sona Khanjian



Service Award presentation to Mrs. Gloria Medzian.  
Left to right - Margaret Shamlian, Edward and Gloria Medzian.

The smoothness and beauty of the evening's program was set by the talented Master of Ceremonies, Mr. Zaven Tashjian. The banquet committee provided an atmosphere of good food, décor and *Armenian* heritage for attending guests.

A highlight of the evening was the presentation of the Service Award, which was given to Mrs. Gloria Medzian, a long time member of CACC. Mrs. Medzian served the church throughout her life, establishing a foundation of devotion and work critical to the early years of the church. Mrs. Medzian has lovingly dedicated her time and talent to serving the church, the

AMAA and the Armenian community. Her service has been an example of generosity, spirit and thoughtfulness to all.

Badveli Nerses Balabanian concluded the evening with prayer and thanked the guests, attending clergy and the banquet committee.

*Yvonne Minassian*

# Missions Corner

The Celebration of the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church (Eglise Evangelique Armenienne) in Issy-les-Moulineaux, Paris France.

Recently I had the great pleasure of participating in the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Issy-les-Moulineaux (Issy Church) in Paris, France.

After Russia and the United States the largest concentration of the Armenian Diaspora lives in France. Over 400,000 Armenians live in a straight North-South line between Paris and Marseille, most of whose ancestors have moved to France after the Armenian Genocide. Almost 100,000 Armenians live in Paris and its vicinity.

The Armenian Evangelical Churches in France started in 1920 and presently the Armenian Evangelical Union of France (AEUF) has around a dozen churches in France including 3 in Paris and its suburbs.

On May 11, 2008 when I visited the Issy Church (see picture) it was a special day of joy and celebration. They were celebrating the 80<sup>th</sup>



Armenian Evangelical Church in Issy-les-Moulineaux

anniversary of the church. They had invited their two sister churches in Paris and there were over 300 people packed in and out of the Issy Church, praising the Lord with songs and messages.



Rev. Joel Mikaelian leading the service

Pastor Joel Mikaelian (see picture) the present pastor led the meeting and two of its

former pastors; Rev. Rene Leonian, in French and Rev. Gilbert Leonian, in Armenian, gave the messages. The choir was comprised of 3 generations (see picture) and they sang and praised the Lord for all the work that the Lord had done in their lives.



Three generational choir praising the Lord

After the church service there was a luncheon served on the grounds, with lots of laughter and sweet social time.

I left the church blessed and praised God that His word is being preached in various corners of the World to Armenian people.

As we concentrate on the work of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (AEUNA), let us remember and pray for our sister Armenian Evangelical Churches both in Armenia and the Diaspora.

In Him,

*John Haleblian*



Welcome Babies Luncheon, February 10, 2008

## Maundy Thursday

Usually our social hall is a place of happy chatter and exuberant children, but on March 20th, Maundy Thursday, it took on an altogether different tone that was both deeply challenging and sincerely reassuring.

As the lights were dimmed, we silently ate our Lenten meal by candlelight. It was a very reflective time to think about the events of the day as our scripture readers shared the Bible story with us in Armenian and in English.

It would be easy to find the events of Maundy Thursday to be challenging; after all, that is the night of the Last Supper when Jesus washed the feet of the disciples and acknowledged to them that he would be betrayed by one of them.

However, Badveli challenged us even further by explaining that Christ had become like a servant as he humbled himself to wash the feet of the disciples. He then showed a short video to illustrate how Jesus' sacrifice on the cross has made possible our salvation.

In his message Badveli stressed that there were actually two disciples who were guilty of betrayal, but with very different outcomes. As we know, Judas was the disciple who betrayed Jesus for 40 pieces of silver. He was consumed by remorse for his actions and ended his own life by hanging himself.

Simon Peter, on the other hand, betrayed Jesus by denying him three times. However, he wept and repented and went on to spread the gospel message after Christ's resurrection.

To make the evening even more personal, included in our program was a sheet entitled, "How I Have Betrayed Jesus". Each of us was asked to fill in the blanks, but not to share what we had written with others. The sheets were then collected by the deacons and shredded in front of everyone to represent that Christ's sacrifice had taken our betrayal away.

This very personal exercise prepared each of us for the sacrament of Communion which followed and the ending of the service with Badveli's benediction.

*Margaret Shamlbian*

## Brotherhood Way Food and Culture Festival

On Sunday May 4th members of Calvary Church joined with our neighbors to celebrate the wonderful variety of communities that reside on Brotherhood Way. The first ever Food and Culture Festival took place at the St. Thomas More Catholic Church and school. Special appreciation goes to Father Labib Kobti and the event coordinator, Mrs. Linda Shah, for their hospitality and hard work in making this event a success.



Left to right - Serop Moroyan, Susan and Hartley Appleton, Margaret Shamlbian and Arpi Haleblian.

For our food booth, both men and women from our church joined together to prepared Armenian specialties such as Swiss chard boereg, choereg, and yalanchi sarma. We especially thank Mrs. Nora Balabanian, Mrs. Sarah Nazarethian, Mr. and Mrs. Mihran (Rose) Sagatelyan and Mrs. Ilda Kullukian for their donations to this event.

Those in attendance were also able to sample an array of foods from Brazil, the Philippines, Greece, Israel and the Arabia community. Delicious breakfast items were provided by the Alma Via Elder Care Community.

Throughout the afternoon there were games and crafts for the children. The Parkmerced apartment complex generously donated two bounce houses and provided logistical support as well.

Mr. Sal Torres, the former mayor of Daly City, acted as Master of Ceremonies and welcomed everyone in each language represented at the festival. He then introduced the youth choirs from Beth Israel Judea Synagogue, St. Thomas More School and KZV Armenian School. There were also dance groups from KZV, the Arabic, Greek, Burmese, and Filipino communities and a wonderful pianist, Mr. Bill Johnson, from Alma Via.

The hall was decorated with a display of native costumes and poster boards from each of the Brotherhood Way communities. We thank KZV Armenian School for providing a beautiful costume to represent our Armenian heritage.

The Food and Culture Festival was organized by the recently formed Brotherhood Way Committee, of which our church is a member. This committee fosters friendship and builds understanding between the neighbors along our street. More information on our activities can be viewed at [www.brotherhoodwaysf.org](http://www.brotherhoodwaysf.org).

*Margaret Shamlbian*

# Leadership Retreat

On April 26, 2008 24 members of the Church Council, the Board of Deacons, Christian Educators and Committee Chairs, together with our Badveli, met with Rev. Alan Forsman for an inspiring interactive discussion designed to move CACC forward in all areas of ministry. Reverend Forsman, of Sarasota, Florida, is an experienced church growth consultant, serving many diverse churches, parachurch organizations, and even some secular enterprises nationwide, in fulfilling their stated missions.



Revs. Nerses Balabanian and Alan Forsman

The main thrust of the Retreat was to stimulate those present into re-evaluating the mission and vision of CACC in order to create an updated image of what an ideal future for CACC should look like. Following this type of assessment of the current circumstances, the next emphasis was described as development of a plan to achieve the desired objectives. And finally, the developed action plan will have to be carried out with the help of all those who attended the Retreat and many others in the CACC congregation who are committed to the church's ministry for the glory of God.

It was an inspiring time. Those who attended the Retreat were highly motivated, and are now engaged in putting Rev. Forsman's ideas and techniques into practice.

You are invited to consider and pray about how you can be an integral part of this stimulating process. Your help is needed and will be appreciated very much.

*Robert Damir*

Dear Family and Friends,

We are delighted to announce the addition to our family of a ten-month old baby boy from Armenia! We named him Peter David Baruir Gulesserian.



We are very happy to share this joyous news with you!

Sincerely,

*Alec, Anahid and big sister Andrea!*

# Three Days in Istanbul

Rev. 7:9-12

"I looked and behold, a great multitude, which no one could count from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes and palm branches in their hands and they cried out with loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb". And all the angels were standing around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, "Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever, Amen"



This is how it felt for me at the jam packed Armenian Evangelical Church in the Gedik Pasha district of Istanbul on Sunday morning, May 18, 2008. Armenians, Turks, Moldovans, Kazakhi, Persians, Koreans and one person from Zimbabwe, all with one voice but in different languages praising God with hands lifted up and God's Spirit upon them. It was a revival experience for me as I joined them in my primary language, English.

Not more than 20 years ago, the Armenian Evangelical church at Gedik Pasha was practically in ruins, paint and plaster literally peeling off the walls, leaking roof and a small handful of Armenians coming to worship once in a while. It was of course a perfect opportunity for the Turkish government to declare that due to the lack of membership, the building would have to be turned over to the government. But God had other plans and just the right servant to accomplish his plans, Badveli Krikor Aghabaoghlu.



Badveli Krikor started to read the Bible to learn Armenian, but when he learned the truths and promises God was making in the Bible, he was too "unsophisticated" to philosophize them away, and took them for face value. He told the Turkish government that God wants him to pastor in that church and he figures that God is greater and more mighty than the Turkish government, so he plans to follow God's calling - a courageous act, but even more importantly, in complete obedience to God and unwavering reliance on His promises, regardless of the expected consequences from the Turkish government.

And they came. And they came in great numbers. Not only Armenians came, but all kinds of people came, representing many different ethnic groups, including Turks and other nationalities, who found in Jesus that which they could never find in Islam - the living Savior, the Holy Spirit and the Father all in one.

*(continued on page six)*

Continued from page five

God is blessing this church in unimaginable ways, with obvious miracles and yes, more abundantly than they could even fathom. As people started to pour in, Badveli Krikor decided that he would repair this house of God and make it a place of workshop, starting by repairing the roof. One day when he was on the roof hammering some shingles, a Moldovan believer happened to drop by the church and seeing Badveli on the roof inquired what he



Left to right - Anahid Yeremian, Maria Aghabaloghlu and Raket Dink.

was doing. "Well, I am repairing the roof because we can't afford to hire anyone to do it" was the obvious answer. The Moldovan believer told Badveli, "You know, I am an expert in that trade. Why don't you wait 2 weeks and after I return from my trip, I will do the repairs". And sure enough when he returned, he organized a work brigade from the church members and they repaired not only the roof, but the walls and windows and yard and painted it fresh inside. Just about then, another Moldovan believer came forth asking permission from "Brother Krikor, is it OK if I paint some frescos on the walls inside and in the yard?" It is amazing what great things God accomplishes and who He will use to accomplish it, when we seek to know and serve His priorities rather than our own.

Currently there are 4 services in this church every Sunday, starting with Russian at 9:30 am, Turkish at 11:00 am, then Armenian language at 1:00, and finally in Farsi at 2:30 pm. The

Turkish language service is jam packed, it being the common language of the many nationalities represented at the church. Many from this service double up by attending the second service in their mother tongue only.

The church may not have all the modern day conveniences such as soft pews, or an elaborate kitchen, but it has a PC projector and a lap top (donated by our church, CACC), a modern movie screen that rolls down during the worship service so that everyone can be free to raise their hands, and devote themselves to sweet, sweet worship. The dress-code rule is: If it covers what should be covered, if it is clean, and if it is not torn up, then it is good. Some people come all dressed up, most youngsters come in jeans. The worship time includes all kinds of instruments from violin, to guitar, to keyboard, to dumbeleg and tambourine.

It was a contagious experience, for me to spend 3 days with Marie Aghabaoghlu and a day with Raket Dink in the context of this church. These women are pillars of inner strength, which they draw from their total reliance on the Holy Spirit. Though they face daily struggles and danger is never far from their heal, they express an inner peace and quiet confidence that they attribute to their total reliance on Jesus.

"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful." John 14:27

Today, as I write this article, I myself have to stretch my hands to heaven and ask God "Give me this peace, give me this faith, give me this confidence to trust you for EVERYTHING!"

## Ministry Opportunities

For summer schedule 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, Thursdays

**Coffee Time with God:** San Francisco, 1st Thursday every month

**Men's Bagel Time with God:** Los Altos, 3rd Saturday every month

**HomeBuilders for Young Couples & Families:** South Bay & Peninsula, 3rd Saturday every month

**FaithBuilders Couples Ministry:** South Bay & Peninsula, 1st Friday every month

**College & Career:** South Bay and Peninsula, every Wednesday

**Weekly Dinner Bible Study:** San Francisco, every Monday

**Foster City, Peninsula Bible Study:** Last Thursday every month

**Church-wide Prayer Meeting:** Los Altos 1st Thursday every month

The Calvary Messenger is produced as a quarterly 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](mailto:cacc@cacc-sf.org). Please check our website for current ministry information. <http://www.cacc-sf.org>

Anahid Yeremian

# *EACE 2008 Graduates*



Mikey Damir (Pre-K)



Vana Amirkhanian (K)



Aaron Avanesian (K)



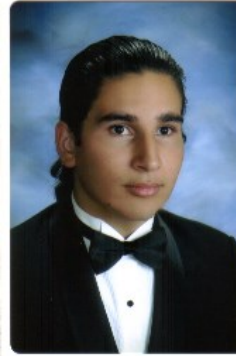
Karina Bender (K)



Haig Sadakian (J.High)



Azad Balabanian (J.High)



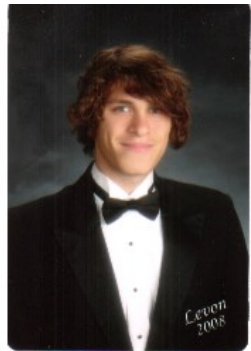
Andrew Arroyo (H.School)



Nanor Balabanian (H.School)



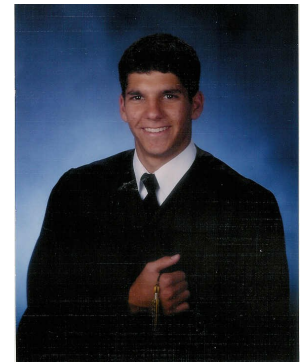
Emily Beylerian (H.School)



Levon Minassian (H.School)



Ari Nazarian (H.School)



Jeffrey Silverman (B.S.)

## *Graduation Sunday*



Continuing a decades tradition, the Children's Ministry Team hosted its annual luncheon and talent show on Sunday, June 1. Once again, our Sunday School students and Youth Group kids showcased a wide range of talent from choral singing to playing various musical instruments. Guests enjoyed a hearty luncheon of lasagna, prepared by a handful of ladies, and were entertained with music including traditional Sunday School songs and even rock performed by our four high school graduates. They got to hear funny selections in Armenian by our talented trio of Hagop, Aren, and Haig, as well as classical cello played by Azad. Gabriel eloquently delivered the Lord's Prayer. An ensemble comprised of Alexa (flute), Aram (saxophone), Ari (guitar), and Azad (cello) filled the room with Vivaldi's Four Seasons. Most touching, however, were the testimonies of high school graduates, Andrew, Ari, Levon, and Nanor who gave their personal testimonies on how the church has shaped them. As we pray for these young adults who will go off to various universities all over the state (they do promise to come home for visits, as often as possible), we also pray that the younger students in our Sunday School can continue to grow with the Word of Christ, surrounded by the warmth and encouragement of the families in our church.

*Tabeen Nazarian*

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## **Church News**

### **BIRTH**



We congratulate Joe and Lina Barsoian for their newborn daughter, **Sophie Lina Barsoian**, born on Monday, March 17, 2008. Congratulations also to the grandparents.

We congratulate John and Irmgard Adrouny for their newborn daughter, **Reese Holland Schuman Adrouny**, born on Monday, March 24, 2008. Congratulations also to the grandparents.

We congratulate Armen and Rubina Boldi for their newborn son, **Nicholas Armen Boldi**, born on Wednesday, May 7, 2008. Congratulations also to the grandparents.

We congratulate Alec and Anahid Gulesserian for their baby boy, **Peter David Baruir Gulesserian**, born on Tuesday, July 31, 2007 in Yerevan, Armenia. Congratulations also to grandparent, Levon Gulesserian.

### **COMMUNION SERVICES** **FOR 2008**



**Sunday, June 15**

Father's Day at 11:00 a.m.

**Sunday, July 27**

At 11:00 a.m.

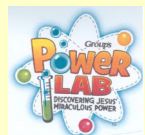
**Sunday, September 14**

Renewal Sunday at 11:00 a.m.

**Sunday, November 16**

Thanksgiving Sunday at 11:00 a.m.

## **Vacation Bible School**



**Monday - Friday, July 14th - 18th**

**10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.**

*Aftercare from 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.*

*\$35.00/child/week*

*Includes snacks, crafts and t-shirt*