

The Armenian Congregational Church
26210 West Twelve Mile Road
Southfield, Michigan 48037

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Phone: 248-352-0680
Fax: 248-352-5568
Email: accgd@comcast.net

Rev. Shant Barsoumian, Pastor
Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian, Minister Emeritus

Or Current Resident

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Forging Ahead for Christ

The theme for our 22nd AEUNA Biennial General Assembly was “Forging Ahead for Christ” and I wanted to share a little about our time there and the message we heard. We arrived in Fresno, CA with 190 AEUNA participants and 90 Youth from all over the US and Canada, to spend time together in prayer and fellowship and seek out what our Lord Jesus has in store for us in the future.

Rev. Dr. Don Sunukjian guided us through God’s word for the weekend and challenged us with his messages to not put “new wine in old wineskins” or “sew a new patch on an old garment” (Mark 2:21-22) but to find new ways to present God’s truth to meet the needs of those around us. These analogies are given to us by Jesus to represent the new thing that God was doing through him by the New Covenant and the dissatisfaction of the Pharisees because of Jesus’ unorthodox behavior since he did not keep old traditions such as fasting and keeping of the Sabbath. Jesus refused to do things the way they had always been done, he did not pay lip service to the traditions of man and because of this he angered the Pharisees who sought to oppose him and ultimately planned to have him killed. Jesus did this not just to be contrarian or abandon all tradition, but also to restore the spiritual significance and original purpose of things like fasting and the Sabbath.

My observations of these mini “parables” presented here by Jesus is this, we are such impatient followers of Christ and slaves to instant gratification, whatever new blessings God gives us we immediately want to apply it to our old ways and old life. Instead of changing ourselves, and the way we do things in order to best

receive God’s blessings, we want His new blessings to fit into our old ways of doing things. But Jesus warns us that if we do this, we will fail and miss out on what God is trying to do in our midst. Instead of forging ahead for Christ, we will be falling behind. The old wine skins will burst and the new wine will be wasted on the ground; the new unwashed patch will shrink and tear the old garment apart. In the end that will ruin the blessing and our lives!!!

So how do we best use God’s blessings as a church and as individuals? As a church we have to be open and seek God’s direction and see where His blessings and work will lead us. We must be open to new ways to present His truth to meet the needs of people. The way we did things in the past might not be the best way to utilize God’s new blessings and we need to be willing to change in order to fit the blessings of God, instead of trying to fit His blessings to our ways and practices. So we must ask, where and how are we blessed? And how can we best fit ourselves to maximize God’s blessings to our church.

We can achieve this as individuals by making sure that our individual blessings are given first for God’s glory. Gifts of God are to be used for God’s purposes first, then to be enjoyed by us. God blesses us so that we might be a blessing, to bless others, serve His church and help His Kingdom emerge in our midst and forge ahead for Christ.

Soli Deo Gloria (Glory to God Alone),
Rev. Shant Barsoumian

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

June 6, 2014

Dear Dr. Tootikian:

Thank you for writing. Three years into Syrian conflict, we face a brutal and protracted civil war, which extremists are exploiting and which poses a threat to stability throughout the region. I am glad you took the time to share your concerns.

The conflict in Syria began as a series of peaceful protests against the repressive regime of Bashar al-Assad. He responded with violence and further repression. Today, over 130,000 people have been killed. Millions have been displaced and are in desperate need.

In response, the United States has stepped up as the largest donor of humanitarian assistance to those affected by the war. Our aid has helped ease the pressures this conflict has put on families and on the region, but international efforts to provide more assistance have been blocked by regime obstruction and insecurity. That is why we continue to demand greater humanitarian access to those in need.

Over the past 2 years, we have also worked with friends and allies to help the moderate Syrian opposition and chart a path to a political resolution. The January 2014 launch of negotiations between the Syrian government and opposition, mediated by the United Nations, was a critical step on that path.

One thing I have said since the beginning is that I will not pursue an open-ended military intervention in Syria. Last year, when the Assad regime violated international law by using chemical weapons in an attack that killed over 1,000 Syrians, I was prepared to respond through narrow and targeted military action. But when a diplomatic option opened up, we took it – because I believe any chance to remove the threat of chemical weapons without the use of force is one we must pursue.

Today, there is potential for progress. American diplomacy, backed by a willingness to use military force, has paved the way for a plan to eliminate Syria's chemical weapons for good. Now, Syria must meet its international obligations to implement that plan, and Russia has a responsibility to ensure that Syria complies. And in the months ahead, we will continue to work the international community to usher in the future that Syrian people deserve – one free from dictatorship, terror, and fear.

Thank you, again, for writing. You can stay up to date on the conflict in Syria and my Administration's response at www.WhiteHouse.gov/Issues/Foreign-Policy/Syria

Sincerely,
President Barack Obama

Reverend Barsoumian's Call to Ministry at ACC is Extended

I am delighted to inform you that Reverend Shant Barsoumian will continue to serve as pastor of the Armenian Congregational Church of Greater Detroit (ACC) for at least the next two years. This is a result of a meeting held on June 1, 2014 in which the ACC Council – comprised of the combined Board of Deacons, Board of Trustees, and the heads of our church organizations – unanimously decided to request that Reverend Barsoumian extend his service to the ACC for another two years. Thankfully, Reverend Shant was very agreeable to this request and instantly accepted the Council's offer.

Pastor Shant was originally called to serve the ACC from March, 2013 through August, 2014. During his tenure, Pastor Shant has faithfully and capably fulfilled the many responsibilities of minister of the ACC. He has earned the respect and confidence of the congregation. In addition, he has also become known in the local Armenian community. Most notable were his two fine sermons (English and Armenian) delivered on April 24 at St. Sarkis Armenian Apostolic Church during this year's memorial service commemorating the 99th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

On behalf of the ACC Council and the entire ACC congregation, I wish Pastor Shant continued success and many blessings as he ministers to our community. And, I look forward to working closely with Pastor Shant as he continues to develop his ministry.

Rodney Keteyian, ACC Moderator

In Christian Sympathy

We extend our heartfelt sympathies to the Kesh, Berberian and Mullally families on the passing of Isabelle Kesh who made her transition from this world to eternity on July 2, 2014.

The New Hymnal is Printed

The ACC Armenian Heritage Committee is happy to announce that the New Armenian Evangelical Hymnal is printed and ready for distribution. It is a beautiful 9x6 inches, maroon color book. It is a labor of love by the Hymnal Committee, under the leadership of the Co-Chairpersons Hrant Agbabian and Lucina Agbabian Hubbard. This Hymnal has the following characteristics that distinguishes it from previous Armenian Evangelical hymnals:

1. The Hymnal committee has spent 17 years of research and has made selections from 12,000 hymns, using 27 different hymnbooks.
2. The New Hymnal has a larger content. It is comprised of 435 hymns, whereas our present hymnal (the red hymnal) has only 304 hymns.
3. The Hymnal Committee presents all hymns in four-part harmony for voice and keyboard.
4. Theologically, the Hymnal is based on the Apostles' Creed, dedicated to the Holy Trinity, and deals with hymns on every occasion of the church year.
5. It contains new and contemporary hymns.
6. The Bilingual hymns (English and Armenian) face one another on the open page and use the same key, melody line and harmonization.
7. It is comprised of rich liturgical part at the end of the hymnbook, where there are 100 pages of responsive meditations, unison prayers and litanies on all occasions.
8. The Hymnal contains a larger selection of Sharagans.
9. Accurate information is provided on names and dates of authors, translators, composers, scriptural reference and hymn tunes.
10. Weak Armenian translations were amended or replaced to improve the poetic quality of the hymns.

Those who wish to purchase a copy (or copies) for their own use, or donate one or more in honor, or memory of a loved one, may do so, by calling our church office at (248) 352-0680 or by writing to the Armenian Congregational Church 26210 W. Twelve Mile Road, Southfield, MI 48034. Memo: Armenian Heritage Fund. Each copy is \$30.00

Election of Rev. Barsoumian to the AEUNA Board

During the 22nd AEUNA General Biennial Assembly Rev. Shant Barsoumian was elected, along with a new slate of candidates, to the AEUNA Board as the Committee on Youth Chair.

This is a new opportunity for Rev. Barsoumian to serve the larger Armenian Evangelical community and help develop leadership through relationships as well as be instrumental in decisions made at the board level to ensure growth and spiritual development for all of our youth.

Along with the newly elected AEYF National Representative, Mr. Darren Getzoyan, the forming of the Committee on Youth will have a number of important tasks ahead. With the resignation of Rev. Dr. Ara Jizmejian as the Eastern Region Minister to the Youth, the Committee will team-up along with the AEYF Eastern Region Committee and work closely to continue the scheduled events and conferences until the search committee finds a suitable replacement.

We congratulate Rev. Barsoumian for this opportunity and ask for your prayers and support as they meet the challenges ahead.

ACC Gratefully Acknowledges the Following Donations

Araxie and Moses Ashekian - Donation
Mary J. Agabaian – Donation
Samuel Churikian - Missions
Ralph and Frances Garabedian – Missions
Vahan and Janet Ishkanian - Heritage
Michael and Tamar Kadian – Heritage
Taline Khorchidian - Missions
Dr. Richard Marburger – Donation
Jean Nash - Donation
Kenneth and Karen Lipski – Missions
Dr./Mrs. Michael Voskian - Heritage
Robert and Hannah Wider- Missions

Church School News

Armenian Congregational Church will embark upon a new Sunday School year (2014-2015) on Rally Sunday, September 7.

The Sunday School meets each Sunday morning from 11:00 to 12:00 noon. The classes are held simultaneously with the morning Worship hour in order that families may take advantage of the teaching, which leads into creative and inspired Worship in the House of God.

Our Sunday School staff looks forward with our children, helping them to gain an understanding of Christ and become a community of young Christians with a life to share.

This year's Sunday School Staff are: Ann Bayleran, Leslie Banerian, Hourig Jacobs, Barbara Keteyian, Carole Basmadjian and April Tini.

Save the Date!

Friday, October 10, 2014 – 7:00 p.m.

**Armenian Cultural Event
Honoring
Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian
for 55 Years of Christian Ministry
and Author of 36 Books**

**Sponsored by
Armenian Congregational Church
Women's Fellowship**



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