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"From this faith no one can shake us, neither angels nor men; neither sword, nor fire, nor water, nor any or all other horrid tortures. If you leave us to our belief, we will, here on earth, choose no other master in your place, and in heaven choose no other God in place of Jesus Christ, for there is no other God. But should you require anything beyond this great testimony, here we are; our bodies are in your hands; do with them as you please."

- Excerpts from Vartanants Proclamation of Faith, mid-5th Century A.D.

In the cold and dark of February we have this bright shining light of faith as Armenians to remind us of how our forefathers stood up for their faith and defended that faith with their lives. Facing insurmountable odds against the staggering Persian army they entered the battlefield ready to die in order to keep their precious faith.

Did they have any hope of winning on that day? If you go by the odds then there was no way to be victorious. Yet they were not without hope since they knew that the victory was already secured for them in Jesus Christ. They resonated with their lives the words of the Apostle Paul *"Death has been swallowed up in victory, where, O death is your victory? Where, O death is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."* (1 Cor. 15:54-57)

Victory was already theirs, though they might lose their lives and be slain on the battlefield, they could not picture a life without worshiping Jesus Christ, or being a people without their Christian faith.

We are the proof of that victory. The history of our Christian faith through the Armenian nation and people are evidence of the truth of their words so long ago. Our own personal life of faith is vindication and justification for their sacrifice in defending and standing up for their own faith. As we remember this sacrifice and the preciousness of the faith that we share

As we continue to live out our faith and stand witness to the testimony of St. Vartan and all of our ancestors who defended that faith, we again are reminded by the Apostle Paul's concluding words, *"Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain."* (1 Cor. 15:58) We continue in that work of faith and stand firm and defend the Cross of Christ wherever we may be. We must *"always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you to give a reason for the hope that is in you, with gentleness and respect."* (1 Peter 3:15)

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

Elementary/Middle School Sunday School Class Fund-Raising

On Sunday, December 21, students in the Elementary/Middle School Sunday School class did their part to support the ACC capital campaign. These talented student artists created ornaments out of felt, beads, glitter, and embroidery thread. Some of them learned how to sew, and some of them shared sewing skills that they had already developed.

The students came up with what they considered to be a fair price of \$5 per ornament, taking into consideration the time they spent making each one. Then they made signs, created a display, and sold the ornaments after the Christmas program luncheon. They are proud to report that they were able to contribute \$129 to the capital campaign, plus another \$129 in a matching gift from a generous ACC member!

Many enthusiastic comments came from these creative and generous students:

"My favorite part was making the ornaments," said Taleen Avakian.

"I liked selling the ornaments," commented Camille Sanchez.

All of this tied in very nicely with lessons from Proverbs, a continuation of the focus on this book, started last year.

"A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed." Proverbs 11:25

by Barbara Keteyian

ACC Women's Fellowship Annual Lenten Luncheon

The A.C.C. Women's Fellowship is sponsoring their annual Lenten Luncheon on Friday, March 27 at 12:00 noon. Admission is \$15 per person. Come enjoy a beautiful program. Both men and women are welcome. To RSVP please contact the church office.

ACC Gratefully Acknowledges the Following Donations

ACC Sunday School Class-Building Fund
Rev. Shant Barsoumian-Building Fund
Kenneth Basmadjian- Building Fund
Steve and Sima Baylerian – Building Fund
Samuel J. Churikian – Building Fund
Kevin and Pam Czartoryski- Building Fund
Ralph and Frances Garabedian-Building Fund
Jan and Carol Janigian – Memorial
Janet Janigian – Memorial
Howard and Martha Kaloogian-Building Fund
Rodney and Barbara Keteyian – Building Fund
Monica Koehler – Building Fund
Paul and Esther Kulhanjian – Building Fund
Karen S. Lipski – Building Fund
Martin and Diana Shoushanian-Building Fund
Harry and Eileen Stephey – Heritage
Rev Dr. and Mrs. Vahan H. Tootikian-Building Fund
Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Vahan H. Tootikian – Christmas Missions
Knights of Vartan – Vartanatz Donation
Dr. Thomas Varbedian –Building Fund
Dr. & Mrs. Michael and Jacqueline Voskian – Building Fund
Varsnie Walsh – Building Fund
Hannah M. Wider – Building Fund
Mark and Ann Zartarian-Building Fund

Book of Life

Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Michael and Jennifer Mullen on the birth of their twin boys Aaron Robert and Christopher Joseph on Monday, February 2. We also congratulate the proud grandparents Mr. and Mrs. Robert and Hourig Jacobs.

Important Dates

February 27 ACC Family Night
March 8 Daylight Savings Begins
March 27 ACC Women's Lenten Luncheon
March 29 Palm Sunday
April 2 Maundy Thursday
April 3 Good Friday
April 5 Easter Sunday
April 24 Armenian Genocide

Evolution of a Giver

I've started the year with a new commitment and a new understanding of giving. Over a period of time, and after several recent sermons from Pastor Shant, and Rodney's Annual Stewardship Letter, I've developed an understanding that is different from what I had in the past. My view of the Offering was changing. I started taking note of what was being taught, rather than nodding because I've heard this before. After several very poignant analogies from Pastor Shant, I started to understand giving differently. Gradually, my viewpoint of the Offering unfolded into a new image. During one sermon in particular, I suddenly realized that giving is an act of worship. Even though I was always glad to give when I could, I thought of it as an act of obedience. And I didn't mind that. But when I realized it's an act of worship, I saw that giving would be an expression of appreciation for what I have, and offering a portion of that would be much richer and more meaningful.

I decided to make a commitment to pledging. As I looked at the Pledge Card, I thought about the monthly bills and how bothersome it can be to make payments so frequently. So I thought, 'I'll just make one payment and be done with this.' I laughed when I realized- that attitude is not an act of worship! It became clear to me that I needed to give monthly as a reminder that I am worshiping God with this offering. Sort of along the lines of: **"Do this in remembrance of me."** We take communion regularly to remember His sacrifice and commune with Him. So also, I'll be giving regularly as an act of worship and to express my appreciation for the provisions with which God has blessed me.

After the Offering, We sing Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow. This too has new meaning for me. We worship by giving a portion of what He's given, and we close with a beautiful song of appreciation.

Looking forward to the first Sunday of each month ~
Monica Koehler

Family Night



The ACC Women's Fellowship Family Night will be held on Friday, February 27, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. Bring your family and friends to enjoy a delicious dinner and an evening of fun and fellowship with the church family.

Camp Arevelk

The camp provides a wonderful Christ centered atmosphere for our young people ages 10-16 to learn about their faith, make connections with other Christians and to enjoy a variety of activities and sports in an encouraging and loving environment.

It also provides opportunities for the older youth to serve by becoming counselors and building life long relationships with the campers.

The camp is located on the beautiful grounds of the Ararat Center in the Catskill Mountains, in Greenville, NY, and it will be held August 9, thru Saturday August 15, 2015. To obtain more information, you can contact www.camparevelk.com.



Reminders!

Is your anniversary, birthday or graduation approaching? Why not share your celebration with the church family by sponsoring the Fellowship Hour or Altar Flowers. Please sign-up on the bulletin board or call the church office.

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