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From the Ministers Desk

Dear Members and Friends:

As we approach 2019, our thoughts turn to a venerable practice of making resolutions for the New Year. Such resolutions should not be laughed at, for they spring from the knowledge that we are free and responsible creatures, able to grow and correct ourselves.

None of us is yet what he or she should truly be. Hence, we seek to resolve that in the year ahead, we will try to be more what God wants, and achieve the realization of our better selves.

The goals we set for ourselves should be realistic, not goals that are impossible to accomplish. Life does not demand that we be perfect. It requires only that we grow.

It is in that spirit that I share with you seven resolutions for the New Year.

1. Resolve to commit the past with its faults, foibles, and failure to God's mercy, and then, seeking His daily guidance, strive for greater spiritual progress in the future. So many of us move forward into the New Year depressed by the memory of the mistakes, blunders, and sins of the past. But it is also true that God's forgiveness can turn even those regrets into a redemptive and healing purpose.
2. Resolve to cultivate a character too noble to cherish petty resentments and grudges. What an inspiration to see a man or a woman strong and generous enough to be impervious to the shafts of resentment and revenge.
3. Resolve to be tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving, and tolerant with the weak and the wrong. Sometime in life, we will have been all of these.
4. Resolve to strengthen and deepen in the years ahead the ties that bind us to our friends and dear ones. Friendship, like all rich gifts, is not cheaply bought. It demands time, thoughtfulness, self-sacrifice, and outgoing affection.

5. Resolve to develop inner spiritual resources so that our happiness and peace will not be at the mercy of every chance intruder. Then we will become too strong for fear, too noble for anger, and too rooted in faith to be overcome by trouble. But we will never achieve that unless we keep a regular appointment with God and seek to encounter His presence by prayer, worship, and complete commitment to Him.

6. Resolve to make a specific contribution to human welfare and the concerns of our time so that it can never be said that we lived in vain. All about us are opportunities for service, if we have eyes to see them. Armenia needs our support and so do the institutions of Armenian life.

7. Resolve to enlarge our understanding of the Armenian Heritage – its values and ideals, its millennial history and modern development, its observances and practices, its literature and culture. The treasure of countless generations of Armenian commitment is available to us for the asking.

Can we implant all of these resolutions and fulfill their mandate? Perhaps this lies beyond the capacity of most of us, but these resolutions can serve as a challenge, for they constitute an ideal to guide us. Those who cherish an inspiring ideal in their hearts will ultimately realize it.

On the threshold of 2019, I wish you all a very happy New Year!

Faithfully yours,
Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian
Minister Emeritus

The Rev. and Mrs. Vahan and Rosette Tootikian join in expressing their deepest appreciation for the many lovely Christmas and New Year's greetings sent and spoken by so many of you, and they extend to each of you their warmest wishes for the New Year.

**Celebrate With Us on
Sunday, January 6th**

The holiday festivities continue through Sunday, January 6th, as we mark the special days of Armenian Christmas, New Year, and Communion Sunday.

Let us all come to church on this first Sunday of 2019, so that through confession and repentance for our sins, we may prepare ourselves to worship Christ the Lord. And then, as we approach the Holy Table to take Communion, we may begin the new year with a clean slate.

A.C.C. Annual Meeting – January 20th

The Annual Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 20th, immediately following the Morning Worship Service. All boards and organizations are requested to submit their reports.

We are reminded that this is a new year . . . and a new beginning. At the Annual Meeting we are given an ideal opportunity to focus our energies toward new visions of what we ought to be as a church; our concerns, our hopes and aspirations, and voice them. Only by so doing will A.C.C. grow in her mission of service in today's world.

Book of Life

Born

Alex Zartarian, son to Mr. and Mrs. Ari and Carine Zartarian, grandson to Mr. and Mrs. Mark and Ann Zartarian, and great grandson to Rev. and Mrs. Vahan and Rosette Tootikian, on Tuesday, November 20, 2018 at William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, Michigan.

Entered Their Rest

Armen Mutaflan passed away on Monday, November 19th. Funeral services were held at St. John Armenian Apostolic Church on Saturday, November 24, 2018. The eulogy was given by Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian. On Sunday, November 25th, a memorial meal, sponsored by his family was served in our Church.

Rev. Fr. Diran Papazian of St. John Apostolic Armenian Church passed away on Wednesday, November 21, 2018. Funeral services were held on December 5th, at St John Armenian Apostolic Church. Our minister participated in the service.

**ACC Gratefully Acknowledges
The Following Donations**

Thanksgiving Banquet

A generous donation was received for our Thanksgiving Banquet from Dr. Thomas G. Varbedian, in loving memory of his wife, Mrs. Marilyn Varbedian.

Christmas Greetings

Susan Gopigian extends her warmest Christmas Greetings to the members and friends of A.C.C.

Christmas Missions

Mary Jo Agbabian
Carole Basmadjian
Anahid Haroutunian
Dan and Sandra Haroutunian
Rodney and Barbara Ketayian
Stephen and Doris Krikorian
Michael and Susan Mousigian
William and Araxie Terian
David Terzibashian
Rev. and Mrs. Vahan and Rosette Tootikian
Edward and Asdghig Tutelian
Diran and Joyce Yazejian



Armenian Congregational Church - Christmas Eve Service



“Sixty Years in the Lord’s Vineyard”

By Rev. Dr. Vahan Tootikian

Consistently, and through his 42nd book; “*Sixty years in the Lord’s Vineyard*” Rev. Dr. Vahan Tootikian touches our minds and souls as he celebrates 60 years of calling, commitment, and ministerial service.

Those who are familiar with the fruitful life and activity of Reverend Tootikian, whether on the pulpit, at his writing desk, in the classrooms, on the ecclesiastical and interdenominational committees, or on the leadership positions, will understand what it means to stop for a moment and have a retrospective look into the past six decades and discern the paths he has walked and the lives and minds he has touched, communities of faith he nourished, and the calling he has been faithful to. Reverend Tootikian’s writing and communication skills turn this ‘moment’ into a composition where he shares with his audience deep reflections from a minister’s heart and experience.

The book comes in two parts; English and Armenian. In each part, the author takes the reader into a journey through the ecclesiastical year, and underlines what a minister would have said to reflect on the seasons that churches and communities of faith go through. The topics of his meditations reflect the essentials that individuals and communities of faith are called to cultivate in their spiritual lives, such as the importance of knowing Christ, spiritual growth, spiritual balance, prayer, giving, witnessing, and serving. On a similar note, Rev. Tootikian’s topics articulate the areas that any committed servant of the Word and the Sacraments would have put his focus and energy into for sixty years, whether by teaching, by guiding or by discipleship.

Reverend Tootikian humbly sees himself as an anointed instrument to partake the ultimate Vinedresser, Christ’s ministry on earth, which primarily involves strengthening the weak branches, pruning the healthy ones, loving the vine, and ultimately delighting in the abundance of the fruits.

Also, and on par with, the author underlines the fact that his ministry of taking care of God’s vine was proudly realized in the context of his Armenian identity and the Armenian culture. For this reason, he stresses the importance of all the Armenian cultural and historical milestones as being elements of our collective identity formation and means of ethnic perpetuation.

Reverend Tootikian pens his thoughts in the format of short essays with an easy to read flow of thoughts. His quotes from notable philosophers, theologians and educators add to the richness of his meditations. The book also contains testimonies of

those who have enjoyed his earlier publications and wrote reviews, which come to serve as live affirmations to his six decades of legacy in the Armenian spiritual, cultural, devotional and theological literature.

That is why people of all ethnic, cultural, educational and experiential backgrounds will be attracted to the pages of this book, including pastors, lay leaders and members of congregations, because they will see in the “*Sixty years in the Lord’s Vineyard*” their concerns addressed, their questions discussed, and their voices echoed.

Some sixty years ago, the Lord called a young teenager from Ekizoluk of Kessab for ministry. Though he developed some skill in the actual vine dressing, through the power, the blessing and the Grace of the Lord, Reverend Tootikian has ardently become a ‘spiritual vinedresser’ in God’s Vineyard.

Rev. Vatche Ekmekjian
AEUNA Moderator
Downey, CA

Many Thanks To Many Willing Helpers

We do want to express our thanks to the many people who assisted in one way or another with our Advent and Christmas services, programs and activities: to the members of our Choir for their music, to the Church School staff for the Children’s Christmas Program; to those whose decorating expertise graced the Sanctuary and Social Hall; to those who placed poinsettias for our Christmas services; for the person who sponsored the luncheon; for the hands who prepared and served the Church School Christmas luncheon; for those who participated in the Christmas Eve readings; for the A.C.C. Board of Deacons Christmas Eve reception; for those who generously supported our Christmas Missions Program offerings . . . the list goes on and on. We hesitate to list the names of so many, in case we miss someone. Please accept our thanks for making this blessed season a Christmas beautiful and memorable.

Installation of New Officers January 6, 2019

On Sunday, January 6th, the Minister will install all the members of the Board of Deacons and Trustees, during the Morning Worship Service.

On this occasion, we will have a guest preacher from Los Angeles, Pastor Hagop Haroutunian.

We invite all our members and friends to attend this special Armenian Christmas service.

Thanksgiving Banquet A Successful Church Affair

The annual A.C.C. Thanksgiving Banquet was held on Sunday, November 18, 2018. There were about 150 members and friends in attendance. The Co-Chairpersons of the Banquet were Nancy Berschbach and Ann Zartarian.

The sumptuous dinner of the traditional turkey with all its trimmings was catered by Gary Reizian.

The program consisted of greetings by the Co-Chairpersons as well by Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Mark Kadian, who thanked Nancy and Ann, as well as those who helped in planning the Banquet.

The Minister gave a brief message on Thanksgiving and what it really means in our daily life.

The Banquet was sponsored by Ann and Mark Zartarian in honor of their first grandson, Alex Zartarian. There were fourteen other donors.

The Program consisted of five folk and holiday songs presented by Laker Express singers, under the direction of Ms. Sheryl Hauk. The Chorale was introduced by April Arabian Tini.

The Program also included three Armenian musical pieces played by Mrs. Narine Ghambaryan, a professional Armenian Kanoonist, who was introduced by David Terzibashian.

In her closing remarks, Co-Chair Ann Zartarian thanked all the participants in the Program and those who helped in the Banquet arrangements: Ann Bayleran, Leslie Banerian, Carol Leslie and Sharon Theil, as well as Rosette Tootikian and Souzanne Pope for sale of tickets.

The Program came to its close by the singing of Hayr Mer and the bilingual benediction of Rev. Fr. Andon Atamian and Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian.

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Bulletin Board

Are you celebrating your anniversary, birthday or any milestone in your life? 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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