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March 2016

The season of Lent is a time of anticipation and sacrifice as we prepare ourselves for the celebrations of Palm Sunday and Easter. Many Christians give up something for the season of Lent, whether it is no longer eating meat for the 40 days or giving up sweets, or coffee. Sometimes it is giving up something that we like and enjoy, other times it is a vice we vow to give up through the Lenten season. There have been many Lenten seasons where instead of giving something up I take something on, like Scripture memorization, particular times of prayer or a Bible reading plan of the Gospels, in order to form better habits or deepen my spiritual growth. Whatever it is you do during Lent, the purpose is to draw ourselves closer to Christ, to identify with his pain, suffering and sacrifice.

As Jesus spent 40 days in the Desert to prepare himself for three years of ministry, miracles and making disciples that ultimately led him to the Cross, he suffered on our behalf and for our benefit. He experienced real temptation in the desert as he prepared himself for the mission that God the Father had sent him into the world to complete. Jesus' temptation in the desert is not play-acting; it is not included in the Gospels for dramatic effect. I think it is included in part to show us what it looks like for God to become man, in the incarnation of Jesus. It is Jesus drawing himself closer to us, showing his humanity and vulnerability, and ultimately his faithfulness to the mission of the Gospel, the salvation of our souls. That is why we read in the letter to the Hebrews, *"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin."* (Hebrews 4:15) God draws near to us in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Jesus knows what we go through day in and day out, he lived it, he experienced it for himself. He knows the temptation, the struggle, the strife but, unlike us, he remained without sin. He is like us, and he is unique. He is fully God, and fully man.

Lent is our opportunity to draw ourselves closer to Jesus. When we do give something up in this season, meat for instance, whenever we feel a craving or a pang to eat meat we must remind ourselves of Jesus, of His sacrifice, which came out of his great love for us. When we feel this physical struggle, we are called to turn to His spiritual triumph. Maybe that is why giving up a certain type of food is so prevalent in Lent, our physical pangs and desires are used to trigger spiritual pangs and desires to remind us that *"Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD."* (Matthew 4:4) As much as we might desire and want that which we sacrificed for Lent, we must recognize that Christ sacrificed so much more for us, and just as he was able to resist temptation in the desert by using God's word to defend against Satan's attacks, we too can do the same and resist temptation in our own lives.

As we look forward to the ultimate victory of Jesus Christ, in his resurrection at Easter, we should be reminded that if we place our faith in Him, we already have the victory, we have already won. Satan is already defeated, death has been swallowed up in victory, God's Kingdom is immanent and Christ will return. As one theologian put it, we live in the parenthesis of the Kingdom of God, which began with Christ's Resurrection and will be completed upon Christ's return. We live in between, but our ultimate destination is with Christ in God's Kingdom. We are all at the same time Saints saved by Grace through faith, and sinners struggling to fight against our fallen nature. May this Lenten season remind us of our weakness but also our strength in Christ and may we like the Apostle Paul proclaim, *"But [Christ] said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me."* (2 Corinthians 12:9)

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

Upper Elementary/Middle School Sunday School Class Roundup

After studying Proverbs for the past two years, our class has moved on to study the Parables. Our curriculum consists of a set of DVD's that portray contemporary interpretations of the parables, with accompanying questions and conversation-starters. The class is learning to translate the teachings of Jesus into messages that they can apply to their lives and personal growth. So far, we have covered the parables of The Good Samaritan, The Talents and The Lost Coin.

In addition to our Bible studies, the class is focusing once again on our roles as church citizens and fundraising to contribute what we can. Like last year, the class made Christmas ornaments and sold them to the congregation during the coffee hour, after our Christmas program. We are happy to report that the class made \$120, and this has been contributed to the church general fund.

Looking ahead, the class plans to continue our tradition of visiting Manoogian Manor to spend time with residents and share the cookies we will make during Sunday school. We will schedule that "field trip" sometime around Easter, and decorate our cookies accordingly!

By Barbara Keteyian
Upper Elementary/Middle School Sunday School Teacher

Important Dates

- March 18 - ACC Women's Lenten Luncheon
- March 20 - Palm Sunday
- March 24 - Maundy Thursday
- March 25 - Good Friday
- March 27 - Easter Sunday
- April 24 - Armenian Genocide Commemoration
- May 8 - Mother's Day Banquet
- June 12 - Graduation Sunday
Last day of Sunday School Year
- June 19 - Father's Day

ACC Gratefully Acknowledges the Following Donations

Haig and Sue Arabian- Missions
Carole Basmadjian – Gideon Missions
Ovsanna DerVartanian- Gideon Missions
Susan Gopigian- Donation to ACC Choir
Susan Gopigian-Missions
Alice Kadian- Building Fund
Aram and Alice Kakousian – Building Fund
Hovsep and Karineh Koundakjian- Missions
Dennis and April Tini- Missions
Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Vahan Rosette Tootikian- Missions
Knights of Vartan – Donation
Varsnie Walsh- Missions

Valentine's Family Night



Our Valentine's Family Night sponsored by the ACC Women's Fellowship was on Friday evening February 12th. We had a wonderful evening of food and games and fellowship. Once again the women of the church rallied together to make sure the event was a success. With delicious food prepared by many of the ladies of the church and beautiful decorations to set a love filled mood for our event. The children enjoyed games and prizes while parents and church members enjoyed good conversation over good food. Despite the cold weather, we had a good turn out and had an impromptu concert by Harry Kazelian III with his Oud! It was a fun-filled evening and all who were able to join us enjoyed themselves. Special thanks to all the ladies that participated and helped make this event such a success.

Holy Week

The week that begins with Palm Sunday and ends with Easter Sunday is called Holy Week. We are planning to have the following worship services.

Palm Sunday, March 20, the Sunday School students will participate in the morning worship service.

Maundy Thursday Service, March 24, Choir Concert, and the celebration of the Lord's Supper at 6:30 p.m.

Resurrection Sunday, March 27, The Easter morning worship service is a family service. The Sunday school students will begin worship with their parents in the Sanctuary, and be dismissed for a special Easter lesson.

Easter Breakfast, Sunday, March 27. The annual Easter Breakfast sponsored by the ACC Youth Group (ACYF), will be held from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Tickets may be purchased at the door

April 24th Commemoration Service

This year will be the 101st Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide. Our United Committee is making plans to commemorate this event together again with all the Armenian Churches in the Greater Detroit area. Thanks to the Leap Year, April 24th falls on a Sunday this year and we will be commemorating it together in a joint service on Sunday morning at St. John's Armenian Church in Southfield. This means we would not be having a regular worship service at the Armenian Congregational Church on Sunday, April 24th, and we encourage all our members to attend the joint worship service that Sunday. Since this is a particular celebration which we embarked on to celebrate the 99th, 100th and 101st commemorations together, I would encourage us to show this unity and commitment by participating in this year's joint commemoration. Please keep an eye out for flyers and announcements coming soon with details about the commemoration service as well as related events happening in our community this year.

Maundy Thursday

On Thursday, **March 24**, we will remember our Lord's last hours on earth through a special worship service that will include special music by the ACC Choir, and celebration of the Lord's Table. The evening will start at **6:30 p.m.**

ARS Scholarship

The Armenian Relief Society, Eastern USA is accepting applications to its undergraduate and Graduate Lazarian scholarship program. Applications for this year's scholarship will be accepted until April 1, 2016.

Requirements for eligibility are that the applicant must be of Armenian descent and must have completed at least one college semester at an accredited institution in the United States. For more information, contact the ARS Eastern USA office at 617-926-3801, and for complete details about the application process and to access the application form, please visit www.areasusa.org.

Detroit Armenian Women's Club Dabanian Memorial Scholarship

In memory of Hranoush Dabanian, Charter Member of the Detroit Armenian Women's Club, and her daughter, Rose Dabanian, longtime member and friend of the Detroit Armenian Women's Club, the Sarkesian-Dabanian Family are offering a \$1,250 scholarship to college students for the fall of 2016.

For inquiries, please contact Carole Basmadjian 248-879-8637, for an application form, send requests to DAWC07@aol.com. Completed application forms must be post marked no later than June 30, 2016.