**Armenian Congregational Church of Greater Detroit**

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11:00 a.m. March 9, 2025

**FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT**

**ORDER OF WORSHIP**

**ORGAN PRELUDE, QUIET MEDITATION**

**LIGHTING OF THE ALTAR CANDLES**

**CHOIR INTROIT**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

**\* CONGREGATIONAL HYMN**: “Worship the Lord,” #3, vs.1-3

**\* INVOCATION AND THE LORD’S PRAYER** (in unison)

O God our Father, we come into the quiet of your house to worship you. We come for spiritual refreshment, for renewal, for tapping into the only power that lasts. Help us to resonate with your Spirit and find all the benefits of your presence. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who taught us to pray: *“Our Father, Who art in heaven…”*

**\* GLORIA PATRI**

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**A RESPONSIVE MEDITATION AND PRAYER**

PASTOR: The ancient Israelites wandered in the wilderness for forty years because of their unbelief.

**PEOPLE**: **Noah’s flood lasted forty days, because of the world’s wickedness.**

PASTOR: Jesus spent forty days in the desert, being tempted by the devil.

**PEOPLE**: **But these occasions were times for the renewal of their faith.**

PASTOR: Lent is patterned after those historic retreats – forty days for repentance and rededication.

**PEOPLE: Lent is a time when we become intentional about our faith. It is an extended period, to take stock of our lives, and to renew our vows of faithful service.**

PASTOR: Lent is that time in the Christian year, when we focus our attention on our failures, and renew our dedication to the cause of Christ.

**PEOPLE: We humble ourselves, not to satisfy some divine desire for vengeance, but to respond to the divine call to discipleship.**

PASTOR: Let us pray for assurance of forgiveness. O God, forgive us for not taking Lent seriously.

**PEOPLE: O God, be near us in moments of trials and tribulations, and help us to overcome them by the strength of your Word.**

PASTOR: Lord God, enable us to overcome all temptations and find the victory we need.

**PEOPLE: Lord God, help us to follow Christ more closely, when we face problems and hardship in our daily lives.**

PASTOR: Gracious Lord, we confess our need of the guidance and spiritual power, which you alone provide.

**PEOPLE: Gracious Lord, help us to submit ourselves to the disciplines of repentance and discipleship.**

PASTOR: O Lord, help us to learn and live the lessons of the Christ–like life.

**UNISON: In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

**CHORAL PRAYER AND CHORAL RESPONSE**

**NOTICES AND CONCERNS**

**PRESENTATION OF THE OFFERING WITH CHOIR**

**PRAYER**

**\* DOXOLOGY**

**CHOIR ANTHEM**

**ENGLISH SCRIPTURE READING:** Matthew 4:1-11 (p.1499-1500)

**ENGLISH SERMON:** Jesus’ Temptations and Ours

**\*CONGREGATIONAL HYMN:** “Take Time to Be Holy,” #244, vs.1,4

**ARMENIAN SCRIPTURE READING:** Genesis 3:23-24 (p.6)

**ARMENIAN SERMON:** Making Choices

**\* HAYR MER:** #275

**\* BENEDICTION**

**\* CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE**: “Park Kez Der, Asdvadz Mer”

**ORGAN POSTLUDE**

**\* Congregation is requested to stand**

**\*\*\* Latecomers may be seated**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**WE WELCOME ALL WHO ARE WORSHIPPING WITH US,** especially guests. We extend a very cordial welcome to newcomers to take part in the worship, to engage in the activities of the church, and to make this your church home.

**CHURCH JOYS AND CONCERNS**: Please continue prayers for Armenia, Jan Janigian, Susan Mousigian, Dr. Richard Marburger, Alice Kakousian, and the California Fires Disaster.

**WELCOME REV. DR. VAHAN H. TOOTIKIAN:** We are very happy to have our Interim Minister.

**BOARD OF DEACONS**: Next Sunday, March 16th, there will be a Board of Deacons meeting at 12:30pm.

**FOOD DRIVE:** Bring non-perishable food, the last two weeks of March, for Cass Community Social Services. Your items may be left on the Lobby table, as you come in. Thank you.

**SYNOPSIS OF THE ARMENIAN SERMON**

According to the ecclesiastical calendar of the Armenian Church, the First Sunday of Lent is called Expulsion Sunday (Artaksman Kiraki), and is devoted to the story of Adam’s expulsion from the Garden of Eden.

Adam and Eve did not enjoy the delights of paradise for long, and disobeying the divine injunction, they were driven out of the Garden of Eden.

The story deals with the privilege of choosing. It conveys the following lessons:

**First, God has created humans with a free will.** Human beings make choices. This is a great privilege. But like all privileges, there are responsibilities. Human beings are supposed to be responsible individuals. Adam had the privileges, but he forgot his responsibilities.

**Secondly, human pride leads people to make wrong decisions.** Adam wanted to partake of the forbidden fruit, in spite of the stern warning by God. He acted irresponsibly and tried to blame others for his disobedience. When human beings abuse their free will, they suffer the consequences.

**Thirdly, human beings eventually have to choose either God or Satan.** They cannot serve two masters at the same time. Eventually, they should pledge their allegiance either to God or to Satan. Jesus came to the world to give mankind a second chance.