

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR NERSES BALABANIAN

Celebrate Your Graduation!

When I was young my parents thought my generation was shallow, spoiled, and not ready to face life's challenges. Now my generation tends to think exactly the same thing about the next generation!

"The young people of today are utterly dissolute and disorderly." (Martin Luther)

"The youth are rebellious, pleasure-seeking, and irresponsible." (Plato)

"The youth have no respect for their elders; children now love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority. They show disrespect for elders and love chatter." (Socrates)

"We live in a decadent age. Young people no longer respect their parents. They are rude and impatient..." (Carved in Egyptian tomb three thousand years ago)¹

What is new under the sun? When you complain about the youth, do you remember yourself as a youth? I don't know why we complain about the youth saying, "Our days were different...nowadays the youth ...forget it. Nothing good will come from this generation."

Before we say anything else, how about talking about how God chose some young people who made an impact in our history? **Joseph** the spoiled kid, the dreamer, who became the ruler of Egypt; **David** the young shepherd, who had a heart after God's own heart, became the king of Israel; **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego**, three young, courageous and faithful servants of God who dared any god and king; **Mary** the teenager who gave birth to Jesus.



In Ecclesiastes 11, we find a wonderful and timeless address to the youth of any age, any generation, and any century. Take it as a graduation address from the Word of God.

1. Rejoice...

"Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth. Walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes." (Ecclesiastes 11:9a ESV)

Do you see how many times Solomon

tells the youth to rejoice and enjoy life? These days will never come back. Enjoy the day! We always complain about our age. As kids, we want to become adults. As we grow older, we look back and want to be young again! Somehow, we do not know how to enjoy each day that is given to us. Each day is precious. Each minute is a gift from God.

This is the day that the Lord has made. Teach me, Lord, to rejoice in it. We often have difficulty rejoicing. Either we are busy, worried, or not content with the day that is given to us.

There is such self-centeredness in our society. In the 1950s, families displayed a wedding photo, a school photo or family reunion photo in their homes. Today's family displays 150 pictures of themselves and their pets.

- These days on social media people display to everyone what just they had for dinner. (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube...)
- They expect the whole world to affirm that they are great! (seriously)

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Celebrate Your Graduation

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There are some positive things as well:

- The Internet has given everyone equal opportunities to access information that once belonged mostly to the wealthy.
- Millennials could bring huge positive change. They find new and better ways of doing things. They are creative and never say, "We have always done it this way."
- They are the "Why not? Generation". They are earnest and optimistic. They are cool and reserved, not at all passionate. They love their phones but hate talking on them!

We, as a church, need to understand this generation, and learn how to reach out to them. Remember, there is no perfect society. We all need God. Therefore, let us go back thousands of years back and see how Solomon dealt with the youth of his time.

Solomon has some words for the youth as well.

2. Watch what you Sow

But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment. (11:9b ESV) Therefore, remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth [are] vanity. (Ecclesiastes 11:10 NKJ)

"You reap what you sow" is the old saying. There are less responsibilities when one is young. Enjoy the youth; enjoy the moment God gave you. Life tends to become harder and heavier. However, Solomon also warns the youth about the danger of sowing wrong seeds. Guard your mind, guard your heart from harmful influences.

3. Remember Your Creator

"Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near of which you will say, "I have no pleasure in them"; before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened and the clouds return after the rain," (Ecclesiastes 12:1-2)

Remembering our Creator keeps us in the right perspective.

Remember who you are. God is your Creator, and you are His creature. He made you; wonderfully made you; designed you in His image.

David is describing how God made him:

For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together

in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

(Psalm 139:13-16 ESV)

I heard a graduation speech that went:

"Today I have a confession to make. I am an average student. I was never an A student like all the others in my class. I have B's and C's on my transcript.

However, I found my special gift and worked hard to make the best out of it..."

God made us special. Each of us has his/her own gifts, some more and some less. When we trust God and we surrender to Him, He will

guide us to do our best.

4. Remember Now your Creator, TODAY

In some translations we read: "***Remember NOW your Creator in the days of your youth.***" Why postpone? Now is the time. Now that you are young, it is the best time to remember who you are and who God is in your life.

A parent told me once that he does not want to bring his children to Sunday school, so one day when they grow up, they decide if they want to follow Christ or not to follow him. He does not want to impose his "religious" ideas on them. Tragic decision by a father...

Today, Do not harden your heart, TODAY. "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts." (Hebrews 4:7)

I remember three young people (students at the village School in Ainjar, Lebanon where we were working in the 1990s) who came and knocked our door and asked for guidance to accept Jesus Christ as their Savior. I am glad that they did that. They prayed with us and accepted Jesus that day. Two of them died very young, one from a heart attack and the other from brain tumor.

TODAY and not tomorrow... quickly, do not waste any minute. Thank God, remember who He is in your life.

Dear graduate, celebrate your achievement. And wherever life takes you, remember your Creator every day of your life. May He be your guide.

¹David Jeremiah, Searching for Heaven on Earth p 295

MODERATOR'S REPORT

*“And He gave some as apostles,
and some as prophets, and some as evangelists,
and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping
of the saints for the work of service,
to the building up of the body of Christ...”
(Eph. 4:11-12 NASB)*

As we bid goodbye to Fiscal Year 2020; and with God's provision, we will soon find ourselves at the end of the pandemic. As I conclude my term as Moderator, I wish to express my gratitude to God for granting me the opportunity to serve Him in this capacity.

Looking back over the Council monthly meetings for past two years, I attest that we worked together in a harmonious way. We didn't compete with each other, nor did we drown each other out. Each member used his/her own God-given talents to serve the body of Christ. We strived toward one common goal to stay faithful to God and to the Congregation laboring toward the advancement of His kingdom.

I wish to also appreciate our pastors, Badveli Nerses and Badveli Kevin, for their commitment as they shepherded during these difficult past two years, and continue tirelessly to shepherd the flock at PACC.

Thank you to each board, committee and organization for your devotion through your respective calling; and a special thank you to our Office Administrator, Houry Sabiljian, for always being willing and ready to serve. Thanks also goes to Joe Fischer for his faithful service to our church.

Finally, my appreciation goes to our Media Committee and to the youth, who volunteered to operate the live-stream equipment each Sunday. Their dedication enabled those who could not attend the worship service in person, to join via internet. Without them, this would not have been possible.

I praise God for all the blessings He provided Pilgrim Armenian Congregational Church.

In closing, I thank the Congregation for giving me the opportunity to serve Him as Moderator of the church these past two years.

– by Moderator Edward Saliba

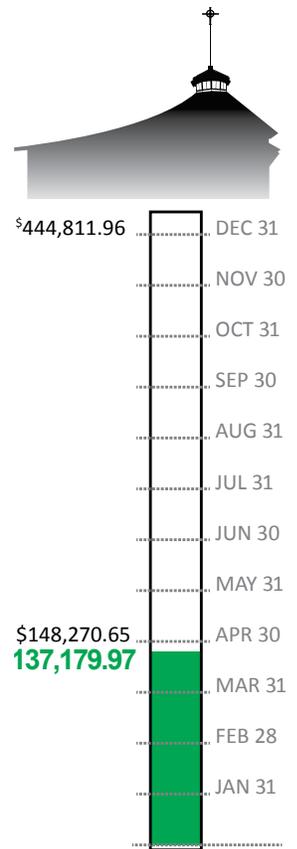
*“As it is, there are many parts, but one body.”
(1 Corinthians 12:20 NIV)*

2021 ANNUAL GIVING RECAP

Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need. (Malachi 3:10 ESV)

The graph indicates budget and actual activity for contributions received through April 30, 2021. The graph indicates the total budgeted amount for annual contributions. Also shown is the budgeted amount through the current month. The final amount shown is the actual contributions we have collected through the current month. As of April 30th we have received 92.5% of the budgeted amount of contributions.

Isn't it amazing when God speaks to us? I have a very dear, life long friend who has always shared her experiences with me when the spiritual world presents itself in our everyday life. She clearly recounts her experiences to me of when God speaks by many means, in many places and circumstances. I have always believed her but for years I couldn't understand how that could happen. Once I took my walk with Jesus seriously I completely understood and have since been blessed by hearing God "speak". I have a feeling it happens constantly but I'm either not willing to listen or not willing to follow. When it happens it's not coincidence, it's not magic, it's the Holy Spirit working and it's faith in the God who loves us so much He cares about the big things all the way down to the minute. And a message from God is clear. If you think you hear there are no calories in ice cream, it's most likely not our Heavenly Father! Get into His Word, prioritize obedience to Him and don't miss Him speaking to you. After listening to Badveli speak about Jonah and his reluctance to follow I walked out of the church and in a most subtle yet very clear moment God spoke to me and reminded me what I was supposed



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JUNE 6 – ANNUAL MEETING

The PACC Annual Meeting is scheduled for June 6, 2021 following morning worship for the purpose of electing the slate of candidates, receiving reports from church boards, committees and organizations, consider the use of the Endowment Fund for the replacement of the social roof and flooring, and other items that may pertain to the well-being of Pilgrim Armenian Congregational Church facilities and its ministry.

Children's Ministry

Dear Friends,

May has been a beautiful time of learning the Word, time in the garden, and interesting projects.

We have concluded our inductive Bible Study of John 1-10 for now and will resume with the remaining chapters in the fall.

The students have had various opportunities to engage in creative worship including painting with watercolor, making bird feeders, and having fun exploring all about Meyer lemons. Herb containers and sweet bell peppers were added to the garden area. The children have also enjoyed the fruits of their labor and have been able to pick berries from their strawberry patch and taste the amazing flavor of their sun ripened cherry tomatoes! The corn and guta are coming along well too.



Mother's Day Sunday was a special time helping the students create projects for their mothers, which were then presented during worship service. It was a blessing to all of us to hear the children express their love for their sweet mommas publicly.

Please continue to join us for **June Sunday School**. We have a special program planned!

New friends and guests are always welcome. Come join us Sunday mornings! Check-in 9am; Classes 9:15-10:15am – 4 years through 6th grade

– by Children's Ministries Director Melinda Eritzian



ANNOUNCEMENTS

**WITH SYMPATHY:
WE ARE DEEPLY SADDENED
BY THE PASSING OF:**

Gladys Peters
May 15, 2021

Gladys Shegoian
May 19, 2021

*Well done, good and faithful servant.
You have been faithful over a little;
I will set you over much.
Enter into the joy of your master.
(Matthew 25:21)*

BIRTH CONGRATULATIONS

Stephen & Kelsey Prince
on the birth of their daughter
Olivia Carole Prince
on April 29, 2021

Grandparents:
Michael & Barbara
Gunner Mazman

BAPTISMS

Carmen Violeta Garcia Russell
Parents: Steven Joseph & Carmen Garcia-Russell

Lilliana Elena Kathleen Portillo
Father: Steven Joseph Garcia-Russell; Mother: Amanda Marie Portillo

Treasurer's Report

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to do. If I hadn't listened I wouldn't be sharing this with you!

In Your kindness, You lead me home

In Your presence, where I belong

You called me out, lifted me up

How great is Your love

From the heights of heaven,

You stepped down to earth

*Innocent perfection, gave Your life
for us*

*And we are amazed, we stand in awe
For we have been changed by the
power of the cross*

*How great, how great, how great is
Your love*

*Excerpt from How Great Is Your Love
by Phil Wickham*

PILGRIM
Armenian
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

3673 North First Street
Fresno, California 93726-6870

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP

In-person 10:30 am

Masks Mandatory • Social distancing

Online at 10:30 am

On our website: pilgrimchurch.com

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Fresno, CA

PRAY FOR OUR YOUTH
AS THEY TRAVEL & SERVE:

**UthGrup Mission
Trip**



HOUSTON,
TEXAS

JUNE
17-29

Yes!

to
VBS

SAVE THE DATE!
August 2-6, 2021