

Armenian Evangelical Church
of New York

Monthly Bulletin

The Rev. Haig Kherlopian, Pastor



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Founded in 1896, the AECNY, a Congregational Church affiliated with the United Church of Christ, is dedicated to serving the spiritual needs of the Armenian-American community, friends and neighbors in the metropolitan New York City area and around the world.

We aim to provide a variety of ministries in Christian education, music, outreach and fellowship.

All articles submitted for publication are subject to acceptance, rejection and editing by the Publication Committee with no obligations to return the unpublished articles to their authors.

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Are You Spiritually Lazy?

“God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, so that what you hope for may be fully realized. We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.”

—Hebrews 6:10-12 (NIV)

In New York, what could be worse or more shameful—more unusual, less New Yorkais—than to work moderately, to take it easy, to be—unbusy? This, the capital of striving and ambition, excellence and industriousness, this city expects and rewards long hours, productivity, overachievement. Not only do New Yorkers arrange their lives according to the norm of competitive workaholicism, they routinely announce their busyness to each other as a badge of importance and pride. (How often does “busy” make its way into your answer to the question, “How are you?” And how often do you get a tinge of satisfaction from that?)

Such a propensity for labor can mask many things, from loneliness to insecurity to illness. But, it dawned on me, a vivid and external sense of busyness can also render spiritual sloth invisible. All-consuming work can do this, first, because it makes you too busy to notice the things of worth to which you are not attending. You don't have time to reflect on the underdeveloped aspects of selfhood, so caught up are you in the daily grind. Second, excessive work can deceive you, causing you to believe that because you are hard-working in one area, you are diligent in all areas. How could your inner life be lacking? You are a high achiever, after all!

Take stock, then, of these signs of spiritual laziness: fickleness in fulfilling Christian disciplines; giving up easily in situations that require faith; taking the path of least psychological resistance in personal relationships; not caring about heavenly goods.

Perhaps more of a primer on the old-timey (Medieval) vice is needed. Sloth (Latin, *acedia*) is not merely the afternoon sleepies, it is the unwillingness to stir oneself to hope. Its definition even extends to the reluctance to

address conflict with others—a form of emotional listlessness, indeed.

So, dear New Yorkers, why not apply yourselves in the realm of faith (your confessional life) as strenuously as you do in work (your professional life)? Seek the Lord while He may be found (Isaiah 55:6a). Rouse yourselves to ask others for forgiveness, to attempt the difficult relational work of reconciliation. Set aside your theological apathy; get your soul up off the metaphysical couch. Invest in your eternal future. Care enough to show up for church, for a friend, for prayer time. Keep the fast. Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act (Philippians 2:12b-13a).

For all of you crying “Legalism! Legalism!”—I urge you to consider the logic of grace found in Philippians 2 and elsewhere, such as 2 Peter 1:3-5. Recognize the stillness-amidst-work that characterizes Christian effort. We apply ourselves to the task of upbuilding our faith, knowing that the Lord’s divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life. Finally, let us look forward together to the time when we will enter into

eternal Sabbath rest (Hebrews 4), or, as Augustine imagines at the end of the City of God, when “[w]e ourselves shall become that seventh day ...” (XXII.30, 1090).

— Heather C. Ohaneson, PhD

FELLOWSHIP HOUR

We wish to express our gratitude to the following for their generous contribution towards Fellowship Hour in the month of April:

*Ruby Kherlopian, Jennifer Telfeyan,
Nancy Kherlopian, Seza Momjian,
Ceilo Overa, Carla Bezjian,
Jon Brothers, Peggy Dingilian*



UPCOMING SERVICES & EVENTS

Join us for:

Sunday Morning Worship at 11:00 AM

June 3 **Sunday Service**
A Summary of the Temple (Acts 7:44-53)

June 10 **Sunday Service**
Forgiving Your Enemies (Acts 7:54-8:3)

June 17 **Sunday Service**
Unlikely Christians (Acts 8:4-25)

June 24 **Sunday Service**
International Church (Acts 8:26-40)

For more information, please contact our church office:

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