

V E S P E R S  
FOR  
AMERICAN  
CHRISTMAS EVE  
AND  
ST. STEPHEN'S DAY



*Let this be a sign to you:  
in a manger you will find an infant  
wrapped in swaddling clothes*

St. Leon's Armenian Church  
Fair Lawn, NJ  
1991

THE EVENING HOUR  
OR  
VESPERS  
OF THE  
ARMENIAN CHURCH

*Priest:*

Blessed is our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

*All:*

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

*Priest:*

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

I have called upon God and he has heard me in the evening, in the morning and at noonday.

*Deacon:*

I waited upon my God and I set my eyes upon the Saviour, who delivers his servants and saves them.

*Priest:*

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit:

*Deacon:*

Now and always and unto the ages of ages.  
Amen  
Again in peace let us beseech the Lord,  
Receive, save and have mercy.

*Priest:*

Blessing and glory to the Father and to the

Son and to the Holy Spirit; now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

*Priest and people in antiphone: Psalm 86*

- Incline thine ear, O Lord, and hear me; for I am poor and needy.

= Keep my soul holy, O Lord; and save thy servant, O my God, for I have put my trust in thee.

- Be merciful unto me, O Lord, for unto thee have I cried all day; gladden the soul of thy servant, for unto thee, O Lord, have I lifted up my soul.

= For thou, O Lord, art kind and righteous; and plenteous in mercy to all that call upon thee.

- Give ear, O Lord, unto my prayers; and attend to the voice of my supplications. = In that day of my trouble I have called upon thee; and thou hast heard me.

- There is none like unto thee among the gods, O Lord; and there is not one that does works like thine.

= All nations whom thou hast made shall come and bow down before thee; and they shall glorify thy name for ever.

- Thou art great, O Lord, and doest wondrous things; and thou alone art God.

= Lead me in thy way and I will walk in thy truth; and my heart shall rejoice in the fear of thy name.

- I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart; and I will glorify thy name for ever.

= Thy mercy hath been great toward me, O Lord; and thou hast delivered my soul from the innermost hell.

- O God, the lawless have risen against me and the assemblies of the violent have sought after my soul; and have not set thee as God before them.

= But thou, O Lord my God, art compassionate and merciful; long-suffering, plenteous in mercy and truthful, attend unto me and have mercy upon me.

- Give strength unto thy servant, save the son of thine handmaid; and show me a good sign.

= Let them who hate me see it and be put to shame; for thou, O Lord, hast helped me and comforted me.

- Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;

= Now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen .

*Priest:*

Glory to thee, O God, glory to thee; for all things, O Lord, glory to thee.

*Deacon:*

Again in peace let us beseech the Lord. Receive, save and have mercy.

*Priest:*

Blessing and glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

*Priest and people in antiphone: Psalm 140*

- Rescue me, O Lord, from the evil man; deliver me from the man of iniquity.

= They devised evil things in their hearts; all day long they prepared for war.

- They sharpened their tongues like that of a serpent; and the poison of vipers is under their lips.

= Keep me, O Lord, from the hands of the sinful; and deliver me from the wicked man.

- They have planned to hinder my steps; the arrogant have hid a snare for me.

= They have spread cords as a snare for my feet; and they have laid stumbling-blocks around my ways.

- I said, O Lord, thou art my God; give ear, O Lord, to the voice of my prayers.

= O Lord, Lord, who art the strength of my salvation; a cover for my head in the day of battle.

- Abandon me not, O Lord, to the desires of the ungodly, who plotted against me; do not cast me down.

= Lest they be exalted and their plans be accomplished; let the purpose of their doings, the toil of their lips cover them.

- Cast burning coals of fire upon them and destroy them; let them not be saved from afflictions.

= Let no crafty talker prosper on the earth; his own evil shall hunt the sinful man unto perdition.

- I knew that thou dost execute justice for the poor; and maintain the cause of the needy.

= The righteous shall give thanks unto thy name; the upright shall dwell in thy presence.

- Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;

= Now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

*(Congregation may be seated during the solo.)*

*Choir:*

Joyous light of glory  
of the immortal Father;  
heavenly, holy, blessed Jesus Christ.

*(Congregation rise after the solo.)*

We have come at the setting of the sun, and we look to the evening light.

We praise God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And we all say: Amen.

Make us worthy forever to sing praises, to Your glorious name: Holy Trinity.

You are the giver of life; therefore the universe proclaims Your glory.

*(Congregation may be seated.)*

*Deacon:*

Having arrived at this hour of the evening, we all lift up our hands and glorify thee, O Lord our God, who hast granted unto us to pass the day in peace and to arrive at this hour of the evening. Make us worthy, O Lord, with pure heart and with angelic song to offer thanksgiving unto thee. Almighty Lord our God save us and mercy upon us.

*All:*

Save us, O Lord, and have mercy on us.

*Deacon:*

Have mercy upon us, O Lord our God, according to thy great mercy. Let us all say with one accord:

*Priest:*

Lord, have mercy; Lord, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.

*Priest:*

Having arrived at this hour of the evening we all unceasingly glorify the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and always unto the ages of ages. Amen

*Priest and people in antiphone: (Luke 1:1-2)*

- My soul shall magnify the Lord; and my spirit shall rejoice in God my Saviour.

= For he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaid; for behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.

- Let my prayers be aright before thee as incense, O Lord.

= And the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice.

*Deacon:*

- Let us all say with one accord: Lord, have mercy.

*All:*

= Lord, have mercy.

- For the peace of the whole world and for the stability of the holy Church, let us beseech the Lord.

= Lord, have mercy.

- For all holy and orthodox bishops, let us beseech the Lord.

= Lord, have mercy.

- For the life of our Catholicos-Patriarch His Holiness..... and for the salvation of his soul, let us beseech the Lord.

= Lord, have mercy.

- For doctors, priests, deacons, clerics and for the whole league of the children of the Church, let us beseech the Lord.

= Lord, have mercy.

- For the Presidents of the United States of America and the Republic of Armenia, for their public officials and their citizens, let us beseech the Lord.

= Lord, have mercy.

- For all travellers on land, at sea and in the air, that they may arrive in peace at their several good destinations, let us beseech the Lord.

= Lord, have mercy.

- For the sick and for all that are afflicted and for their speedy recovery, let us beseech the Lord.

= Lord, have mercy.

- For seasonable weather, gentle rains and abundance of fruits, let us beseech the Lord.

= Lord, have mercy.

- That the Lord God may be pleased to deliver us from enemies visible and invisible, let us beseech the Lord.

= Lord, have mercy.

- Have mercy on us, O Lord our God, according to thy great mercy. Let us all say in one accord:

= Lord, have mercy; Lord, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.

*(Congregation rise)*

*Priest:*

Hear our voice, O Lord our God, receive our supplications, the lifting up of our hands and the words of our prayers, Sanctify this our offering of the evening, that we may prepare it for thy pleasure with a sweet smell of fragrance. Increase in us, O Lord almighty, faith, hope and charity and all deeds of virtue, so that we may always devoutly obey thine ordinances by day and by night according to thy beneficent will, and that we may be worthy to beseech thee for the salvation of our souls and for our spiritual life, O Lord, and to find grace and mercy from thee and giving thanks to glorify the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Peace be to all.

*All: And with thy spirit.*

Let us bow down to God.

*All: Before thee, O Lord.*

Bowing down to thee, O Lord our God, we give thanks to thee, for thou hast granted us to pass the length of this day in peace. Grant us, O Lord, we beseech thee, to pass the evening and the night before us without sin and without stumbling, and to stand firm and abide steadfastly in faith, in hope and in charity and in the observance of thy commandments. Give peace, we pray thee, to the whole world and stability to thine holy Church and salvation to our souls. So that receiving from thee all that we ask, we may always send up on high hymns of glory due to the majesty of thine all-powerful dominion, O Christ our God, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

*Choir: The Trisagion Hymn.*

Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, who was crucified for us, have mercy on us. (Repeat three times.)

Glorified and blessed ever-holy Virgin, Bearer-of-God Mary, Mother of Christ, offer our supplications to thy Son and our God.

*Priest:*

That he may please to deliver us from temptation and from all our perils.

*Deacon:*

And again in peace let us beseech the Lord, that the voice of our supplications may be heard by the Lord God through the intercession of the holy Mother-of-God and that the mercy and compassion of the Lord God may descend upon us. Almighty Lord our God, save us and have mercy.

*Priest:*

Blessing and glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

*Priest and people in antiphone: (Psalm 121)*

- I lifted up mine eyes to the mountains; from where my help shall come.

= My help shall come from the Lord; who made heaven and earth.

- Do not let thy foot be shaken; and he who keeps thee will not slumber.

= He that keepeth Israel; doth not slumber nor sleep.

- The Lord shall keep thee; The Lord shall receive thee with his right hand.

= The sun shall not harm thee by day; nor the moon by night.

- The Lord will keep thee from all evil; the Lord will keep thy soul.

= The Lord will keep thy coming in and thy going out; from this time forth for evermore.

- Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit;

= Now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

*(Congregation may be seated. The collection plate is passed.)*

*Choir: Hymn of St. Stephen*

Naskhasargavak yev arachin mardiros, vor ee Krisdoseh busagetzar, yev hergnajem arakasdin baydzaratzyal pergretzar; aghachya zAsdevadz shnorhel mez uzgyans anvakhjan.

Vor koyin hamperootyamp uztroons yergnits patzyl deser, yev zortee unt achmeh hor, aghoteyir ee verah ko karatskoghatsn; aghachya zAsdevadz shnorhel mez uzgyans anvakhjan.

Yegeghetsik artarots yev zjoghovk ooghaparats, aysor uzhishadagus ko donemk, yev ardasvok haytzenk ee ken jushmarid vugah Krisdosee; aghachya zAsdevadz shnorhel mez uzgyans anvakhjan.

*(Congregation rise.)*

Deacon:

For the peace of the whole world and for the stability of the holy Church, let us beseech the Lord. Let us all say with one accord:

All:

Lord, have mercy; Lord, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.

Priest:

Father compassionate, that takest good care of all, maker of all creatures, receive the implorations of thy servants in this evening hour, for thou art abounding unto all with the gifts of thy beneficence. Have mercy, O Lord, upon the whole world and upon thy holy Church, upon the sick, the grieved, on those who travel by land, sea, or air, on confessors, penitents, and on the souls that are at rest. For thou, O Lord almighty, knowest our needs and our wants to be more than that which we ask or comprehend; and to thee, with the Son and the all-holy Spirit, is fitting glory, dominion, and honor, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

(Congregation may be seated.)

L E C T I O N S

A Reading from the Acts of The Apostles

(6:2-7)

The Twelve assembled the community of the disciples and said: "It is not right for us to neglect the word of God in order to wait on the tables. Look around among your own number, brothers, for seven men acknowledged to be deeply spiritual and prudent, and we shall appoint them to this task. This will permit us to concentrate on prayer and the ministry of the word." The proposal was unanimously accepted by the community.

Following this they selected Stephen, a man filled with faith and the Holy Spirit; Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus of Antioch, who had been a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles, who first prayed over them and then imposed hands on them.

Deacon:

Alleluia; Alleluia.

The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.

Alleluia. Rise (Congregation rise.)

Priest:

Peace be to all.

Choir:

And with your spirit.

Deacon:

Listen with awe.

Priest:

To the Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Luke. (1-14)

Choir:

Glory to you, O Lord, our God.

Deacon:

Proschoumen. (Be attentive.)

Choir:

This is the Word of God.

Priest:

The birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In those days Caesar Augustus published a decree ordering a census of the whole world. This first census took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria. Everyone went to register, each to his own town. And so Joseph

went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to David's town of Bethlehem - because he was of the house and lineage of David - to register with Mary, his espoused wife, who was with child. While they were there the days of her confinement were completed. She gave birth to her first-born son and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the place where travelers lodged. There were shepherds in that region, living in the fields and keeping night watch by turns over their flocks. The angel of the Lord appeared to them as the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were very much afraid. The angel said to them: "You have nothing to fear! I come to proclaim good news to you - tidings of great joy to be shared by the whole people. This day in David's city a savior has been born to you, the Messiah and Lord. Let this be a sign to you: in a manger you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes." Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying: "Glory to God in high heaven, peace on earth to those on whom his favor rests."

Choir:  
Glory to you, O Lord, our God.

*Censing by the deacons, while the choir sings the following song.  
(Congregation may be seated.)*

Stepanos kaghtsrig dadrag,  
Soorp zevartoon anoon busag,  
Keghetzgatsar anorinag,  
Paytz nergetzar aryan koonag,  
Dyarn Hisoosi kach nahadag,  
Haykvo norin vart manishag,  
Tebed marmnov sagayn hreshdag,  
Ee Krisdoseh arer busag.

Priest:  
Let us make Christ, the Exalted, our refuge, that evildoers may not reach us, nor torments approach our dwellings.

Deacon:  
And in one accord asking the Lord for his mercy, let us say all in unison:

All:  
Lord, have mercy; Lord, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.

Priest:  
Hope of life, receiver of prayers, forgiver of sins and fulfiller of requests, O Christ our God, receive our implorations in this hour of the evening through the intercessions of the holy Mother-of-God and through the prayers of all thy saints. Hear us, O Lord, and have mercy; forgive, expiate and remit our sins. Make us worthy to give thee thanks to thee and to glorify thee with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

### SINGING OF CHRISTMAS CAROLS

#### KHORHOORT MEDZ

Khorhoort medz yev skanchelee,  
Vor haysm avoor haydnetsav,  
Hovivkn yerken unt hreshdagn,  
Dan avedis ashkharhee.

Dzunav nor arka  
ee Petghehem kaghakee,  
Vortik martgan orhnetzek,  
Zee vasun mer marmnatsav.

Anpaveleen yergnee yev yergree  
Ee khantsaroor badetsav,  
Voch megnelov ee hore  
Ee soorp Ayreen pazmetsav.



O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL

O come, all ye faithful,  
Joyful and triumphant,  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;  
Come and behold Him,  
Born the King of angels:

*Refrain* O come let us adore Him,  
O come let us adore Him,  
O come let us adore Him,  
Christ the Lord.

Sing, choirs of angels,  
Sing in exultation,  
O sing, all ye bright hosts of heav'n  
above;  
Glory to God,  
All glory in the highest:

*Refrain*

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee,  
Born this happy morning,  
O Jesus, to Thee be all glory giv'n;  
Word of the Father,  
Now in flesh appearing:

*Refrain*

THE FIRST NOEL

The first Noel the angels did say  
Was to certain shepherds in fields as  
they lay;  
In fields where they lay keeping their  
sheep,  
On a cold winter's night that was so  
deep.

*Refrain* Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,  
Born is the King of Israel.

They looked up and saw a Star  
Bright in the East beyond them far,  
And to the earth it gave great light, And so  
it continued both day and night.

*Refrain*

And by the light of that same Star, Three  
Wise Men came from country far;  
To seek for a King was their intent,  
And to follow the Star where'er it went.

*Refrain*

Then entered in those Wise Men three, Full  
rev'rently on bended knee,  
And offered there in His presence,  
Their gold and myrrh and frankincense.

*Refrain*

HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING

Hark! The herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the newborn King!  
Peace on earth, and mercy mild;  
God and sinners reconciled."  
Joyful, all ye nations rise;  
Join the triumph of the skies;  
With th'angelic hosts proclaim,  
"Christ is born in Bethlehem."

*Refrain* Hark! The herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the newborn King."

Christ, by highest heav'n adored,  
Christ, the everlasting Lord!  
Long desired, behold Him come,  
Finding here His humble home.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,  
Hail th'incarnate Deity!  
Pleased as man with men to dwell,  
Jesus, our Immanuel.

*Refrain*

Hail, the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!  
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all He brings,  
Ris'n with healing in His wings.  
Let us then with angels sing,  
"Glory to the newborn King!  
Peace on earth and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled."

*Refrain*

SILENT NIGHT

Silent night! Holy night!  
All is calm, all is bright  
Round yon Virgin Mother and Child!  
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,  
Sleep in heavenly peace.  
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night! Holy night!  
Shepherds quake at the sight,  
Glories stream from heaven afar,  
Heav'nly hosts sing Alleluia;  
Christ, the Saviour is born!  
Christ, the Saviour is born!

Silent night! Holy night!  
Son of God, Love's pure light,  
Radiant beams from Thy holy face,  
With the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth!  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth!

JOY TO THE WORLD!

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her King;  
Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room,  
And heav'n and nature sing,  
And heav'n and nature sing,  
And heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the world, the Saviour reigns,  
Let men their songs employ;  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills  
and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sin and sorrow grow,  
Nor thorns infest the ground;  
He comes to make His blessings flow  
Far as the curse is found,  
Far as the curse is found,  
Far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace,  
And makes the nations prove  
The glories of His righteousness,  
And wonders of His love,  
And wonders of His love,  
And wonders, and wonders of His love.

*Deacon:*

Let us ask in faith and in one accord of the Lord that it may please him to bestow the grace of his mercy upon us. May the Lord almighty save us and have mercy.

*All:*

Save us, Lord.  
Lord, have mercy; Lord, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.

*Priest:*

King of peace, helper and savior of our souls, O Christ our God, defend and keep thy people under the shadow of Thine holy and precious Cross in peace. Deliver us from the visible and invisible enemy. Make us worthy to give thee thanks and to glorify thee with the Father and with the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen

Blessed is our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

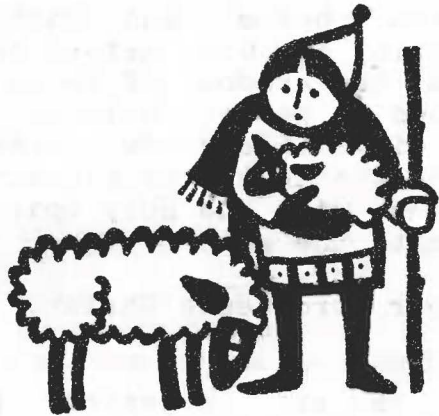
*All:*

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

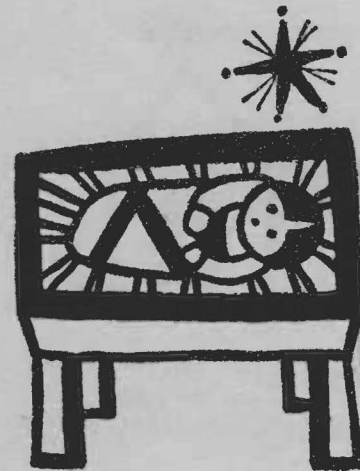
*Priest:*

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.



Let us go to Bethlehem  
and see this event  
which the Lord has made  
known to us





A light will shine on  
us this day:  
The Lord is born for us