

Minute for Mission: Armenian Genocide Commemoration

April 24, 1915



On this day, we remember the Armenian Genocide that began a century ago.

Centered geographically on Noah's Mount Ararat, Armenians survived the clash of Egyptian, Mongol, Byzantine, Arab, Persian, and Ottoman cultures, and were the first to officially claim Christianity as their national religion in 301.

Yet from 1915 to 1923, 1.5 million Armenians perished, and a million more were deported from Asia Minor. Through forced marches, torture, concentration camps, starvation, and executions, the Ottomans systematically expunged Armenians from their motherland of the past 3000 years. Genocide survivors built new lives in Syria; they erected Holy Martyrs Armenian Church and Memorial in the desert at Der Zor—until an ISIS attack took it down.

“Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” (Psalm 23:4)

Presbyterians participated in relief to Armenians throughout WWI, and have been serving struggling communities on the Middle East faithfully since 1966 through the Jinishian Memorial Program (JMP).

“Everywhere we work is under ongoing conflict, politically tense, and vulnerable,” says JMP executive director Eliza Minasyan. “We are unique in that we partner equally with Apostolic, Catholic, and Evangelical churches and serve the Armenian community as a whole. We swiftly adapt to constantly changing conditions and provide everything from emergency relief to long-term community development and discipleship programs.”

Talin Topalakian directs the JMP program in Syria where war has again devastated and displaced millions. They traverse dangerous territory to deliver critical aid, gather the needy for Easter, or minister to traumatized children. She says that “the courage which comes from God empowers our devoted staff. As descendants of heroic survivors and having the same strong faith, we are confident that God hears our cry and will save our nation once again.”



“Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.” (1John 3:18)

With a 50-year legacy of service and 100% local teams, Jinishian now reaches 70,000 Armenians each year in Syria, Lebanon, Armenia, Turkey, and Jerusalem. They emphasize medical assistance in Syria and Lebanon due to war, scarcity, and inflation. In the post-Soviet Republic of Armenia, they focus on sustainable impact and community development. Dozens of projects include micro-lending, prenatal care, and clean water. About 3,000 needy or disabled children each year—many from villages with no church—encounter Christ at summer camps. Learn more at pcusa.org/jinishian.

- ❖ “This commemoration helps ensure that no other peoples experience such suffering and witnesses to the Christians who are persecuted in the region today that they are not forgotten.” Rev. Dr. Christine Chakoian, pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Lake Forest, IL
- ❖ “Our ecumenical brothers and sisters need to know that we weep with them as we contemplate the genocide, yearn for them as they seek to be faithful to the Gospel mandate, and lift them before God's throne of grace.” Rev. Dr. Don Dawson, director, World Mission Initiative

Let us Pray: *Merciful God, strengthen all souls who trust in you and deliver the persecuted wherever they may be. Thank you for Armenian believers who have clung to you and the hope of the Resurrection. You, Jesus, are our good shepherd—gather us in as one flock in your name. Holy Spirit, empower us in your ministry of healing and reconciliation in a brutal world. By your grace, may we love in truth, in action, and with our very lives as you have loved us. We call on you in Jesus' name. Amen.*