

# THE TORCHBEARER • Ջահակիր

## St. John Armenian Church of Greater Detroit

22001 Northwestern Highway • Southfield, MI 48075  
248.569.3405 (phone) • 248.569.0716 (fax) • [www.stjohnsarmenianchurch.org](http://www.stjohnsarmenianchurch.org)

The Reverend Father Garabed Kochakian ~ *Pastor*  
The Reverend Father Diran Papazian ~ *Pastor Emeritus*  
Deacon Rubik Mailian ~ *Director of Sacred Music and Pastoral Assistant*



### HONORING LISA MARDIGIAN.....

On Sunday, April 1, 2012, the members of St. John Armenian Church in Southfield, Michigan celebrated more than just Palm Sunday. Hundreds of parishioners came to honor Lisa Mardigian, the longest serving youth coordinator in the Eastern Diocese.

For over twenty years, Lisa has been in charge of all youth activities including ACYOA Seniors and Juniors and Orthodox Youth Athletic Association (OYAA) basketball. It would be nearly impossible to list the countless contributions Lisa has made to our youth, both at St. John's parish and in the greater Detroit community. From heading up Lenten fish dinners, St. John's Day Camp and Hye Camp, and the White Cross Project, Lisa has gently and faithfully guided more than two decades of children, and on Palm Sunday more than 450 church members came to show their love and appreciation. Lisa adds this honor to her induction last year into the OYAA Hall of Fame. She is the first woman to receive this acclaim, and this induction was even more special as it is one she and her father have both earned.



A dedicated committee spent months planning this special event and the time and love they gave was evident in every detail. The tables were decorated with spring flowers and splashes of color, and cookies with photos of Lisa, both as a child and an adult adorned an overflowing sweet table. Lunch and desserts were prepared and served by the loving hands of those whose lives Lisa has touched. While dining, guests were treated to a beautiful slide show with two decades of pictures of Lisa and the children. Finally, the afternoon was highlighted by a stage full of Lisa's present and former youth participants, all surrounding the guest of honor, wearing shirts that said, We Love Lisa!

The program was emceed by Raffi ElChemmas, who grew up under Lisa's loving care. In addition, several others shared special memories and stories as they spoke words of praise and gratitude for Lisa. Among these speakers were Jennifer Morris, Youth Outreach Coordinator for the Eastern Diocese and Danny Dardarian, Chairman of the Detroit ACYOA Seniors. Lisa was also honored by the City of Southfield, and received a commendation on the city's behalf from Southfield City Clerk Nancy Malkasian Banks. A message was offered by St. John's Pastor Father Garabed Kochakian, who also read a message from Bishop Paren Avedikian, who was responsible for launching Lisa's youth ministry twenty years ago. A special commendation from the Diocesan Primate Archbishop Khajag Barsamian was read congratulating Lisa on this milestone, her longevity of diverse service to the parish and the Armenian Church. Also sharing words of praise and appreciation were Lisa's nephew, Armen Mardigian, and Alberta Godoshian, principal of St. John Church School. In addition to those present, several Diocesan clergy sent beautiful words of praise and admiration for Lisa's two decades of selfless service to the children and the church. At the conclusion of the program, Lisa was given a beautiful diamond cross to commemorate the occasion.

Lisa humbly accepted the many accolades given her, and true to her character, generously shared the praise with everyone she has worked with over the years. Lisa sincerely lives the Christian life she models for the children she works with. She is available to them whenever they need her, regardless of when or why. Lisa's generous spirit and unwavering devotion to the Armenian faith are a blessing to St. John's and to its members, and her loving influence has been, and continues to be, a cherished gift to the Armenian community. *Please see page three for more pictures of the Palm Sunday lunch honoring Lisa.*

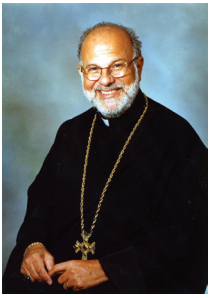
The 25th anniversary of the forgotten Armenian genocides, also known as the *pogroms* from 1988-1991, are rapidly approaching us. As we reflect and commemorate these events in history, we reach out to our community for a helping hand.

If you or someone you know has been gifted from God with the ability to professionally record video, we ask for your help as we undertake another small initiative in remembering the *pogroms* in Baku and Sumgait. For more information please contact Julia Papiyants at 248.924.7335 or [julia@sjchurch.org](mailto:julia@sjchurch.org)

**Church Office Hours: Monday - Friday: 9 AM - 5 PM**

After hours in an emergency, please contact: Pastor's Cell: 248.225.9888 • Administrator's Cell: 248.880.8391

MAY 2012



## FROM FATHER GARABED'S DESK.....

*Piecing things together... to Understand and Believe is the journey of every believer in Christ our God.*

After the Resurrection of Christ and during the days that followed, His disciples and followers struggled with all that happened...trying to piece things together.

It was on a road that Jesus met two men, and actually His followers themselves. They were going to the village of Emmaus when He mysteriously appeared to them. They walked and talked with Him, not knowing who He was. It was later at a meal when He broke the bread and gave thanks that their eyes were opened and they recognized Him. They returned to Jerusalem and finding the eleven disciples, told them what occurred, verifying from their experience of Jesus that *the Lord has Risen*.

While the disciples were talking to these men, Christ appeared to the confused and bewildered disciples who had followed Him, learned from Him, but then abandoned Him. Christ came and stood among them saying, *Peace to you*. Jesus saw their fears, doubts and anxieties and assured them by showing them His wounded hands and feet. To counter their fears and doubts, the Lord invited them all to touch His scars and then He ate with them, blessing a broiled fish and some honeycomb. These were two significant post-Resurrection appearances that put together finally the pieces of what had happened. The meal with the Bread and the Fish was the first meal He shared after He rose from the dead. The honey which was added sweetened the understanding of these bewildered men.

Jesus was saying to them that all the pieces now have come together and are fulfilled, helping the Disciples understand more clearly. Understanding the mystery of God is not only achieved by intellectual means with words and teachings, but also when all the pieces come together in life. For example, we have an **experience** of Christ by touching Him physically, like we do each Sunday with the Kiss of Peace, receiving Holy Communion and hearing His praises during the Divine Liturgy.

And it is so true that we all have pieces of faith that are like a puzzle that needs to be assembled - our prayer life, attending worship, reading scripture, attending bible study, acting and speaking with love and charity, and enjoying Christian fellowship, etc. They all help us know the Risen Lord and recognize Him when we are assembled together. The picture becomes evident and we believe more because we see more clearly; we get the message that perhaps for so many years has been incomprehensible, a mystery beyond reach, and for many hard to believe, difficult to understand. This is what we call "our struggle with faith."

Our lives as Christians are no different from what happened to these men. We struggle daily to believe, and perhaps even spend a lifetime trying to understand this great mystery of God in Christ and the Lord's RESURRECTION...Death being overcome with Life...swallowed up in Victory.

Yes, we may ask...How can this be? Is this Easter celebration really logical? Is it possible that the dead can rise? Yes. When we believe Christ's promise of Eternal Life, that crowning reward, even when we can't understand it all, helps us to put the pieces together.

Մեր Տէրը իր աշակերտներուն կ'ըսէր, «Ետեւէ՛ս եկեք, եւ ձեզ մարդոց որսորդ (այսինքն ձկնորս) պիտի ընենք»: Մեր Տէրը գործածեց ձուկը հասկցնելու թէ ի՞նչ է իրենց առաքելութիւնը՝ ժողովուրդը հաւաքել, հավատքը սերմացնել, ու կերակրել իրենց հոգեկան սնունդով: Մենչեւ այսօր՝ այս է մեր Եկեղեցւոյ եւ Քահանայական առաքելութիւնը որպէս ձկնորս եւ հովուական պարտականութիւն մեր հաւատացեալ ժողովուրդին որ աւելի հստակօրէն իմանան Աստուածը, եւ հանչնան Յարուցեալ Տէրը:

And so our message is that the mystery of the Risen Lord comes to us as we experience Him, like putting together a puzzle, when we meet Him, piece by piece, on the roadway in our daily lives, and little by little we see the image of the invisible God become a visible picture before our very eyes. For some the puzzle of understanding the mystery of God is completed sooner than later. So we must be patient for however long it takes and for whatever many pieces it takes until the ICON and IMAGE come together, showing us how the power of God is at work in our lives, and that it is working especially when we live the words of our Easter message...

***Christ is Risen ... Չեզ եւ մէզ Մեծ Աւետիս ... Քրիստոս Յարեալ ի Մերէլոց!***

*~ Father Garabed*



## FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL.....

The newly elected Council members assumed their responsibilities on April 10, 2012. Under the direction of Father Garabed the election of the new Tivan was accomplished. The results are as follows:

<b>Chairman</b> <i>John Yavruian</i>	<b>Treasurer</b> <i>Karmen Santourian</i>	<b>Recording Secretary</b> <i>Marianne Dardarian</i>
✠	✠	✠
<b>Vice Chairman</b> <i>Gary Hachigian</i>	<b>Assistant Treasurer</b> <i>Roseann Manoogian Attar</i>	<b>Assistant Recording Secretary</b> <i>Ardis Gregory</i>

With the New Tivan in place, the Council will be inviting representatives from each Church Affiliated Organization and the Armenian Organizations that use our facility to our Parish Council Meeting on Tuesday, May 8, 2012, where new policies and goals for the coming year will be shared. There will an opportunity to ask questions and engage in an open dialogue. The 2012 calendar has been set and there will be some very exciting events planned for this year.

Palm Sunday was truly a festive day and a beautiful way to begin Holy week. Having our Children in Church, carrying palms was a sight to see. The Committee that put together ACYO Day, honoring Lisa Mardigian, did a fantastic job!

We are all Torch Bearers. As the New Council has been seated, please use us, as we are your representatives. Communicate with us. Let us know if there is something that can be done better. The Council has been elected to serve the Community. But the Council needs your support. We continue to look for individuals who are passionate and possess the courage to lead. Courage manifests itself in the presence of Faith. Each of us have our personal struggles, but together we can be supportive of each other as we seek to do God's work.

May the Holy Spirit continue to guide our Community and its Council as we carry the Torch our Forerunners passed off to us.

## PALM SUNDAY CONTINUED....



- 1 Father Garabed and Lisa
- 2 Lisa cutting her cake with emcee of the luncheon, Raffi ElChemmas.
- 3 Arthur Mardigian and Lisa
- 4 Lisa's "children"
- 5 Alberta Godoshian speaking about wonderful memories.
- 6 Laura Leacock, Anita Arslanian, Lisa, Marilyn Dadian
- 7 Jonathan Banks and Lisa posing





## HOLY WEEK AT ST. JOHN'S.....



- 1 Holy Tuesday participants in Wise and Foolish Virgins Service pictured with Father Garabed.
- 2 Chairwomen for the Easter brunch: Lisa Boyadjian, Nyree Giragosian and Dawn Karagosian.
- 3 Mother and child lighting an Easter Candle during Badarak.
- 4 Krisdos Haryav Ee Merelots! Father Garabed reading Easter Sunday's sermon.
- 5 Tomb of Our Lord on Holy Friday.
- 6 The *Bakutsi* Youth - Robert Antonyan, Reshmi Nair, Lilly Ayrapetyan, Greg Babayan, and Armen Mkrtumyan.
- 7 Gary Hachigian passing out Blessed Nushkhark.
- 8 The "*Bakutsi* Connection" with Sam Antonyan, Father Garabed, and Artur Mkoyan.
- 9 One of hundreds of tiny palm crosses passed out on Easter.
- 10 Father Diran Papazian conversing with Ed and Cathy Zwinck.
- 11 Ed Bedikian and Karmen Santourian at the Easter brunch.



## ST. JOHN'S ANNUAL LENTEN RETREAT.....

On March 10th the 17th Annual Lenten Retreat took place at St. John's. This year's theme was "Forgiving the Unforgivable?" and was led by Reverend Father Vasken Kouzouian, pastor of Holy Trinity Armenian Church in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Many of the participants wondered how any one of us could forgive the unforgivable. For us that would be the Genocide of the Armenians perpetrated by the Turkish government during WWI. We all have a personal connection to that great tragedy. How could anyone, let alone an Armenian priest, expect us to forgive? Who would we forgive? And, if we forgive, does that mean we choose to forget?

Father Kouzouian's presentation led us to consider the words forgive and forget. When God forgives, he forgets completely because he loves unconditionally. And forgiveness is a healing act of love. Part of our human nature, whether we know it or not can inflict hurting on others and when we become aware of the pain we have caused it is proper to ask for forgiveness because forgiving is a divine attribute. But what often occurs is our human pride and that may place condition upon forgiveness. God's forgiveness is complete - with no conditions.

The conversations that ensued made the participants think about how does one forgive, without condition? No doubt all realized how difficult this is in our daily life.

Prayer is a means of discerning what Christian forgiveness is. And Der Vasken emphasized how everyone needs to ask God to understand remembering the words of our Lord upon the Cross, when Christ said *Father forgive them for they know not what they do*. Putting everything in its proper perspective first is the beginning of understanding what to do.

But when willful hurt is inflicted, premeditated and deliberate, those actions in the case of murder and the Armenian Genocide are not forgivable, for it is breaking a commandment of God, *thou shall not kill*.

For such sin and transgression we are not the ones to forgive, only God is. But we can at least ask the person, those responsible for the inflicted pain to change, to pray and ask for their heart to be opened, to make possible the gift of healing.

When we harbor hatred, ill feelings, and remain closed to even the possibility of forgiving then even our hearts and feelings can never heal. Forgiveness is a decision to let go and get on with life.

At the end of the morning discussion the participants broke out into small groups to read and study what the scripture teaches about the forgiveness and the need to move on with our lives; particularly in the Gospel of Matthew 6:6-15 The Lord's Prayer, Matthew 18:21-25 The Unmerciful Servant, Luke 15:11-22 The Prodigal Son and Mark 2:1-12 Jesus Forgives and Heals the Paralyzed Man.

The afternoon session was devoted to Forgiveness and the questions regarding our look at forgiveness in the context of the Armenian Genocide. Father Vasken showed a film about the Rwandan Holocaust which took place in 1994 and the story of Imaculee Ilibagiza, a survivor. The horror she encountered echoes the pain our own people endured but her story described how she moved beyond the angst of harboring hatred and was able to forgive the murderers in that tragedy. Imaculee did not want to carry the burden of hate with her throughout her life, so, with God's help through prayer, she was able to forgive the killers of her family.

This became a springboard to much discussion about our own readiness to forgive and move on if and when the denials of the Turkish government cease and an admitting of the crime of the past is acknowledged. If the regret is officially expressed are we ready and can we forgive? Already there are signs happening. The testimonies of many Turkish writers and intellectuals have asked their government to acknowledge and apologize for the Armenian Genocide. What is the conclusion? Are we able to get ourselves ready? Are we the ones to forgive the unforgivable?

Learning to separate the crime from today's denial is a first step; putting historic truth in proper perspective and continuing to work for justice, but doing so with thought of moving on with our lives, but never forgetting the evils of the past so that they may not be repeated.

Forgiveness enables us all, to move beyond being victims of the past to becoming victors of the present and the future. The stimulating and compelling questions brought forth during the day of reflection, helped to better focus on the power of what forgiveness can do for all.

### The Arts of Armenia Program

Sponsored by the Komitas Choir

A premier summer fine arts program for Children and Adults.

Children's Session: July 9 - 13, 2012

Monday - Friday, 9:30 am - 3:30 pm

Ages 8 - 16

\$150

Adult Session: July 5th & 6th, 2012

Times to be Determined

\$25 per class

Please contact Denise Karakashian or Rubik Mailian

[denisekar@hotmail.com](mailto:denisekar@hotmail.com) / [rubik@sjachurch.org](mailto:rubik@sjachurch.org)

Registration Forms can be obtained at

[www.stjohnarmenianchurch.org/artsofarmenia.html](http://www.stjohnarmenianchurch.org/artsofarmenia.html)

Deadline: June 20, 2012



Let the good times roll! Jim Berryman gets katah dough rolling lessons from Margaret Gozmanian.

## SACRAMENTS

### Baptisms

April 2012

- 14 Olivia Varsen  
Daughter of Brian and Maral Thomas  
Godparents: Jason Thomas & Marie Vanerian

### Weddings

April 2012

- 21 Mary Diana Dardarian & Joseph Richard D'Ascoli  
*Khachyeghpayr*: Jeffrey Dardarian  
Bestman: Paul Santora  
Maid of Honor: Nicole Dardarian Toubassi

### Funerals

April 2012

- 13 Hagop Mutaftian, 90, Woodlawn  
20 John Zarifian, 74, White Chapel  
23 Margaret Jamgochian, 99, Woodlawn



ANTONIA ARSLAN  
Author of *Skylark Farm*  
To visit St. John's on  
Saturday, May 19, 2012, 7:30 pm

Topic: The Continuing Saga of *Skylark Farm*  
And her most recent literary work

Antonia Arslan, who lives in Padua, Italy, has a degree in archaeology and was professor of modern and contemporary Italian literature at the University of Padua. Her first novel, *Skylark Farm*, was made into a full-length movie.

## FROM OUR READERS.....

I thank you for sending me *The Torchbearer*. I have lived in Detroit 23 years and in 1964 moved to Albany, New York. Still one-half of my heart belongs in Detroit! Having reached the age of 93-1/2 I am beginning to forget names. I knew Mr. and Mrs. Mardigian well, but I was wondering who is Lisa Mardigian? Anyone who has devoted service to the Church deserves to be honored.

Best regards to Der Hayr and the Yeretegin.

*Beatrice Arzoumanian*  
Loudonville, NY

## St. John Day Camp

It's back! St. John's Armenian Church is happy to announce the return of our ever-popular day camp program for children ages 5-12. Day camp is a great opportunity for our children to get acquainted with other Armenian children, learn about their rich heritage, and share in the exciting and enriching experience of camp. Our campers have a week of supervised indoor and outdoor activities that include swimming, learning, crafts and much more! Each week consists of a special theme guaranteed to be a crowd-pleaser.

We have several sessions, themes, and field trips for happy campers!

Check-in: 9:00 - 9:30 am • Dismissal: 4:00 pm

Session One: June 18th - 22nd

**Retro Week**

Swimming • Roller-skating • Tie dye

Session Two: June 25th - 29th

**Motor City Fun**

Swimming • Tiger's Game • Detroit Science Center

Session Three: July 9th - 13th

**Arts of Armenia (In conjunction with Komitas Choir)**

Swimming • Dancing • Arts and crafts

Session Four: July 16th - 20th

**Fun with Food**

Swimming • Baking with friends • Chocolate factory trip

Session Five: July 23th - 27th

**Holiday Celebration**

Swimming • Christmas in July • Halloween fun

Break from July 28th to August 4th due to Hye Camp.

Session Six: August 6th - 10th

**Let's Move!**

Swimming • Yoga • Fruit picking

Session Seven: August 13th - 17th

**World Explorer**

Swimming • Hola! Mexicantown • Camping (overnight optional)

### Additional Information

\$125 a week / \$25 a day

Discount for second  
child available!

Enrollment includes supplies, refreshments, camp t-shirt, picnics, field trips, and transportation to field trips. Parents, please provide a sack lunch!

For more information, please contact Lisa Mardigian at 248.569.3405 or [lmardigian@sjachurch.org](mailto:lmardigian@sjachurch.org)

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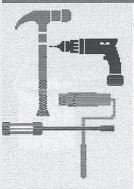
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248.569.3405

### The Torchbearer Staff

Father Garabed Kochakian, *Editor-in-chief*  
Julia Papiyants, *Managing Editor, Copy & Layout;*  
Harry Avagian, Mary Davidson, Diane Ekizian, May Kafanian, Dolly Matoian

We welcome your comments and suggestions, so please feel free to contact the Church Office so we may continue to improve the way we bring information to our parishioners, subscribers and the St. John community. If you would like to help defray printing and postage costs, and are computer savvy, please consider receiving your *Torchbearer* online as 10% of our readership already does. The added bonus is that it appears in color online! Please contact the Church Office.

If you would be interested in sponsoring an issue of *The Torchbearer*, that is, assuming the costs of producing one, please contact May Kafanian at the Church Office for further information. We also need volunteers who would be interested in helping prepare *The Torchbearer* for mailing. This occurs around the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month and for just a few hours. Again, please contact the Church Office.

We invite you to visit the St. John web site for up-to-date calendar information, the Sunday Bulletin, *The Torchbearer*, event information and links to internet sites of interest to our parishioners:

[www.stjohnsarmenianchurch.org](http://www.stjohnsarmenianchurch.org)

**Remember  
St. John Armenian Church  
in your will.**



CHOOSE A MINISTRY TO SUPPORT,  
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CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE, YOUR  
PASTOR OR A PARISH COUNCIL  
MEMBER FOR WAYS TO LEAVE A  
LEGACY TO YOUR CHURCH.



## PLEASE SAVE THE DATE.....

### May

- 3-5 Annual Diocesan Assembly (offsite)  
6 Men's Society Pancake Breakfast  
17 Holy Ascension - *Hampartsoom*  
Divine Liturgy, 10:00 am  
18 Kef Klub  
Women's Guild "Spring into Fashion Ladies  
Night Out"  
19 Guest Speaker: Antonia Arslan  
20 Church School Graduation & Tea  
23 Day by Day Afternoon Bible Study  
27 Pentecost - *Hokekalousd*  
28 Memorial Day - Complex Closed  
Grave Blessings at area cemeteries

### June

- 3 Men's Society Pancake Breakfast  
10 Feast of Holy Etchmiadzin  
15 Kef Klub hosted by the Women's Guild  
"Open Mic Joke Night"  
27 Day by Day Afternoon Bible Study

### July

- 4 Independence Day- Complex Closed  
15 Transfiguration of our Lord - *Vartavar*  
20 Kef Klub hosted by the Komitas Choir  
25 Day by Day Afternoon Bible Study  
28-Aug 4 Midwest Hye Camp

### August

- 5 Men's Society Pancake Breakfast  
12 Assumption of the Holy Mother-of-God  
Annual Church Picnic  
Kef Klub  
17 Day by Day Afternoon Bible Study  
22

### Armenia Fest

Saturday, July 14, 2012

6:00 - 10:00 pm

Royal Oak Farmers Market

### College Scholarships For Students of Armenian Heritage For 2012-2013 Academic Year

#### Armenian Renaissance Association Sophia Chapter

Ms. Sena Harootunian

1561 Brentwood

Troy MI 48098

248.641.9476

E-mail: [arasophia@aol.com](mailto:arasophia@aol.com)

Deadline: June 30, 2012

#### John M. Azarian Memorial Armenian Youth Scholarship Fund

6 Prospect Street, Ste 1B

Midland Park NJ 07432

Contact: Matthew Scozzari 201.444.7111 ext 16

E-mail: [info@azariangroup.com](mailto:info@azariangroup.com)

Web: [www.azariangroup.com/scholarship.html](http://www.azariangroup.com/scholarship.html)

Deadline: May 31, 2012

#### Detroit Armenian Women's Club

Dabanian Memorial Scholarship

Contact: Carole Basmadjian 248.879.8637

E-mail: [dawc07@aol.com](mailto:dawc07@aol.com)

Deadline: June 30, 2012

#### Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern)

630 Second Avenue

New York NY 10016-4806

212.6860710

Web: [www.armenianchurch-ed.net](http://www.armenianchurch-ed.net)

Deadline: May 11, 2012

A "Guide to Scholarships for Students of Armenian Ancestry"  
prepared by the Armenian Research Center of the University of  
Michigan-Dearborn is available at the Church office, and outlines  
other scholarship sources nationwide.

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