

THE TORCHBEARER • Ջահակիր

St. John Armenian Church of Greater Detroit

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The Reverend Father Garabed Kochakian - Pastor

The Reverend Father Diran Papazian - *Pastor Emeritus*

Deacon Rubik Mailian - *Director of Sacred Music and Pastoral Assistant*



CELEBRATING THE SHARING OF "TIME & TALENT" IN THE ST. JOHN FAMILY.....



"Thank you" to the Membership & Stewardship Advisory Board!

The Pastor and Parish Council wish to express sincerest gratitude and thanks to Elizabeth Aprahamian, Kimberly Kalajian, Joyce Obenhoff and Anna Sarkisian of the Membership & Stewardship Advisory Board for organizing a most stimulating and successful Celebratory Tea on Sunday, September 18th. The displays and information presented by all of the church organizations truly reflected the vibrancy and living Christian spirit with which our beloved parish is blessed. Thank you also to all who diligently set up and illustrated the various ministries that take place in our sacred halls and beyond. The Tea itself was sponsored very generously by Elizabeth Aprahamian in memory of the deceased members of her family.

The following groups and organizations participated in the "Celebratory Tea" September 18th, which showcased the "Time and Talent" expended on behalf of our parish and the community beyond. Please review this list and consider becoming part of the activities, opportunities and enthusiasm of our parish life.

**Women's Guild • Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure • Men's Society • Mr. & Mrs. Society
Marriage Enrichment Group • Bible Study • Komitas Choir • Church School • Altar Guild
Mahs Makers • The Fuller Center for Housing - Armenia • Moms & Manoogs
Youth Activities • Lenten Retreat • ACYOA Juniors & Seniors • Festival 2011 • Kef Klub
The Baku-Sumgait Memorial Project • English as a Second Language
Fine Arts, Manoogian Museum & Mardigian Library • Usher Corps
The Church Administration & Parish Volunteers**



The Stewardship Tree of Life has undergone a complete update, the first since 2008. It is accurate through August 15, 2011 and "Steward of Faith" donations are recognized on the adjacent plaque. Please consider becoming part of the Stewardship Program. Information is available on the carousel in the Church Lobby, from the Church Office and from any Membership & Stewardship Advisory Board or Parish Council member. Another update will be done in January, 2012.

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

OCTOBER 2011



FROM FATHER GARABED'S DESK.....

Jesus said: "If you were of the world, the world would love his own; but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you." John 15:19

Marshall McLuhan, a well-known Canadian philosopher, educator, and communication theorist, once said, the *Media is the Message*.

But today, when a person who believes in God looks to finding information through the mainstream media on vital issues in life and faith, the sacredness of our beginnings, family issues, politics, gender issues, sexual preference, etc., there are flaws and errors in understanding God's truths.

Being uninformed about the world and its problems and issues is a sin against our vocation as leaders and Christian educators. Our beliefs concerning the issues I have just noted defines our battle lines and makes our mission as a Church and teachers of the faith quite challenging and at times more difficult.

With relatively few exceptions, the mass media tend to cover the aforementioned issues with a combination of ignorance, laziness, and world view bias in contrast to our traditional beliefs and moral values. Not only does our Christian faith receive this downplay, but it is the same for other faiths as well. Christians particularly make a very serious mistake by relying only on media outlets, TV, Internet, and especially printed media to guide us and provide for reliable news about religion.

The means of technology simply don't provide trustworthy information about religious faith. In fact, they are secular operations focused on one thing alone and that is....making a profit and becoming famous. In truth, they have very little sympathy for the Christian faith, and at that, promote quite a lot of aggressive skepticism toward any religious community that claims to preach and teach God's truth.

We may even assume members of the secular media themselves do not believe in God, and even less in Christian teaching. Thirty years ago, media analyst Robert Lichter surveyed the news media with stunning results. He found that of those surveyed, 50% did not believe in God, 86% seldom or never attended church or synagogue, and only 2% were practicing Christians. That was thirty years ago. The numbers are unquestionably worse today.

The heart of the story is that Christians and other people of faith deserve to have their stories told accurately by the mainstream media, without bias and without setting seeds of negativity. As parents and teachers of faith and a community of believers, we have a responsibility to hold the mainstream media and wider culture accountable when they fail to present a fair and balanced view of important issues and fail to question what is flawed.

The media, while playing down religious beliefs and offering them as options, and simultaneously raising their moral voice and taking an active role in civic life imposes a kind of unofficial state atheism. Forcing religious faith out of a nation's public square certainly does not serve democracy. Religious freedom means being able to worship as one chooses and includes the right of all religious believers, leaders, and communities to take part vigorously in a nation's public life for the purpose of edifying society in America.

Our task, therefore, is to prepare our children to be "capable defenders" of their faith and to live a life based on Christian values. Children growing up today in public arenas of education don't have the exposure to what we teach as Christians. How many scripted TV shows portray their characters heading to a weekly religious service, or portray Christians in a positive light? By cultivating our faith-based education early in our children's lives we can provide them a better success rate in staying away from crime and drugs when they are older.

Jesus said: "If you were of the world, the world would love his own; but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you." John 15:19

As your pastor and spiritual father, my intention in presenting this message to you is to raise these flags so we know exactly what we have to deal with. God has chosen the Church OUT OF THE WORLD, therefore the world (i.e. worldly, faithless people) hates or has no love for Christ and His Church. The words of Jesus couldn't be any clearer.

And so, our collective mission as a Church, a Church School, Christian educators and faith-community is to be teachers of the Christian Faith . . . helping our children:

- ◆ To become good moral human beings, making correct choices in life according to Orthodox Christian teaching
- ◆ To discover that their humanity is an image of God in themselves and to know God in Christ Jesus the Lord
- ◆ To develop a spiritual appetite – a hunger and thirst for Him
- ◆ To satisfy that hunger, and worship Him daily and weekly at community prayer of the Divine Liturgy

Let His hands touch you, His spirit breathe on you, His love embrace you, His Body and Blood feed you, His words quench your thirst, and you will find God, and experience your first step toward heaven, from this world to the world to come.

~Father Garabed

KOMITAS CHOIR MEMBERS SING IN WINDSOR....



Several Komitas Choir members traveled to Windsor on Saturday, September 10th to participate in the Divine Liturgy offered for the Armenian community there by the Armenian Diocese of Canada. Services were held at St. John Anglican Church with Rev. Fr. Serop Azarian as celebrant. Requiem prayers were offered in memory of the victims of the September 11th terror attacks. A special cross processional took place on the occasion of the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross and with it the blessing of the basil. There were seventy-five people attending along with many children.

KEF KLUB WELCOMES SPEAKER TO MICHIGAN.....

The original intent of St. John's Kef Klub each month was to bring members of the Armenian Community together for an evening of fellowship, recreation and good food, but it has become much more.

The Friday, September 16th Kef Klub gathering provided an additional feature by inviting Michael Guglielmo to speak. Mr. Guglielmo is currently the Executive Director of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, and served as Director of Social Services there from 1992 to 1997. During that period over 90% of his time was devoted to serving Armenian refugees and immigrants from the former Soviet Republics, making him well informed about the terrorism suffered by Armenians of Azerbaijan between the years of 1988-1991.

Throughout his presentation, Mr. Guglielmo cited actual acts of terror and ethnic cleansing, whereby pogroms targeted the Armenian population living in the historic Armenian regions of Baku and Sumgait. What made these events so heinous was the lack of concern and positive action by law enforcement officials. While looking the other way, those officials allowed military confrontations to escalate to the point where bloodshed was as common as the sun rising each morning.

The tragic events in Azerbaijan from 1988 to 1991 essentially occurred with little international reaction or offers to help those who were losing their personal property as well as their lives. Thousands of Armenians were forced to leave their homes entirely depleting the once well populated historic Armenian communities of Azerbaijan.

Therefore, once again a major human tragedy suffered by our fellow Armenians was ready to be entered into the textbooks of World History. The hope is that these pogroms as well as the Armenian Genocide which occurred during 1915 will someday be recognized by all people as tragic events against a peace-loving Christian nation. Despite all these historic events of tragedy, the Armenian people remain strong and committed to their Christian values.

During the meeting Edward Korkoian presented a new project that is underway in our community of a future memorial monument to honor the Armenian victims of the pogroms committed by the Azeris in Azerbaijan. This monument will be placed on the campus of St. John Armenian Church in Southfield, Michigan nearby the present memorial khachkar monument for the Armenian Martyrs of 1915. Mr. Korkoian indicated that the project needs approximately \$35,000 to complete. When the project is completely funded, then the formal dedication will take place during 2012.

As a special treat the supper was prepared by Chef Garri Mazmanian, owner of the Allegro Restaurant in West Bloomfield, Michigan. Mazmanian and his family fled Baku during the pogroms to find sanctum in the U. S. and a new life in the greater Detroit area. God has blessed him with the Allegro Restaurant and it was his honor to provide the meal for the Kef Klub. There are many other Baku Armenians like him who have risen from the ashes of this most recent tragedy, and we celebrate their achievements as we remember those who perished in Sumgait and Baku.

-Harry Avagian



Helen Knar Arakelian Cirrito of East Lansing, refugee resettlement worker, and guest speaker Michael Guglielmo are pictured above.

SUMMER CAMP NEWS.....

Under the supervision of Youth Director Lisa Mardigian and her army of volunteers it was a busy, fun and spiritually uplifting summer for our kids as they enjoyed both Summer Camp at St. John's (left) and then at *Hye Camp* in Illinois (right).



FREE HEALTH FAIR AT ST. JOHN'S SEPTEMBER 17TH



For the second year, St John Armenian Church, the Wayne County Pharmacists Association (WCPA) and the Wayne State University (WSU) pharmacy students, with the support of Henry Ford Health Systems sponsored a free Health Fair at St John's Recreation Center Saturday, September 17th. The WCPA pharmacists and WSU students offered blood pressure, diabetes, and cholesterol screenings, medication review, smoking cessation as well as flu shots, all provided at no charge to the over one hundred participants. Included also were chiropractic screenings, podiatry, nutritional and dental experts who answered questions about nutrition and oral health. A social worker was available for assistance to those without insurance. Thanks go to Greg Baise and his crew for arranging this year's Health Fair.

Haiganoush Mengushian/ Gloria and Robert Ajemian Foundation St. John Armenian Church School Scholarship Established

Beginning with the 2011-12 academic year, the Church School of St. John Armenian Church of Greater Detroit will annually offer a scholarship to a college bound senior who successfully completes and graduates from the St. John's Church School Christian education program. The award will be announced on the day of graduation, May 20, 2011.

Robert Ajemian, a pious servant of the Lord and faithful parishioner of St. John Armenian Church, was passionate about Christian education during his lifetime, and saw the need to foster and support the education of our Armenian youth. Following his death we were informed that he had named the St. John Armenian Church School for a bequest to establish a scholarship. It is to be awarded annually to a graduating student from the Church School for college expenses. In accord with the wishes of his will, a seven-member scholarship selection committee comprised of St. John's parish members was organized by the Pastor, Fr. Garabed Kochakian, in order to construct the process of application and eligibility requirements for students. For more details about eligibility and requirements, please contact the Church School Superintendent Mrs. Alberta Godoshian at (248) 476-4638.

TEN YEARS LATER - ST. JOHN'S PARTICIPATES IN 9/11 COMMEMORATION.....

In many places throughout our nation, Sunday September 11th was a day when millions observed the 10th anniversary of an event that has already become a permanent historical tragedy.

Father Garabed, in his homily that Sunday morning, reminded a rather large congregation present that we as a community share our nation's grief over a tragedy which has affected the lives, both directly and indirectly, of many of our fellow Americans.

The 9/11 observances continued during the evening as a community-wide interfaith service of commemoration took place at Congregation Shaarey Zedek in Southfield. The theme for this gathering of diverse community leaders was to generate an active building of cultural unity, friendship and peace.

Numerous religious leaders from many faiths—Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Unitarian, Hindu—were present and had an opportunity to speak about the importance of this observance and the need for greater cultural tolerance. Several speakers noted that since the 9/11 event, tolerance and respect among Americans had lessened.

City of Southfield officials were present, led by Mayor Brenda Lawrence who offered words of welcome. Southfield's County Clerk, Nancy Malkasian Banks, offered a reading of Maya Angelou's poem, "Let There Be Peace."

Congressional representatives who were present included United States House of Representatives Sander Levin and Gary Peters. Their remarks reflected the need for continued efforts to bring about unity and tolerance for all people regardless of race, color or religion. They also remarked on the apparent trend of intolerance among the people of our nation. Much of this intolerance since 9/11 has surfaced through an increase of hate crimes perpetrated most often because of intolerant and misguided attitudes.

In addition to the invited religious participants, choir members from various religious groups, including our own Komitas Choir, joined the Congregation Shaarey Zedek choir to sing a program of patriotic songs. The youth of St. John Armenian Church were represented by Anoush and Armen Arslanian, who placed flowers on the *Bema* and led the "Pledge of Allegiance". A group from our parish joined other volunteers as ushers for the evening's worship service.

At the end of the commemoration, our pastor was invited to lead a "Prayer for our Country." The prayer was read in unison by all who were present. It referenced the accurate reasons why our nation was grieving in nearly every community and offered hope for all of us who live in this great nation. Fr. Garabed invited all present to offer the "kiss" and sign of peace to one another, as is done during worship in the Armenian Church.

- Harry Avagian

WOMEN'S GUILD NEWS.....



The Women's Guild was again very successful in creating wonderful Armenian delicacies for the annual Festival. Participants learned from each other and had fun in the process. Many thanks to all our members and friends who have helped over the past three months. We would like to acknowledge and send a big "Thank You" to Dolly Matoian (*above in pink*) who each year puts in countless hours coordinating this huge undertaking. A special thanks to Margaret Gozmanian (*above in blue*) who for many years has taught us the fine art of making Katah. We hope to continue to make this buttery bread to her high standards.

We participated in the celebration of "Time and Talent" on September 18th, to showcase the Women's Guild and to encourage more of you to join our great organization.

Two major events remain for the Guild in 2011: *Detroit Kef Time* sponsored along with the Men's Society celebrating the 80th anniversary of St. John's and *Advent by Candlelight* on November 30th. More information on this popular event will be forthcoming.

-Nora Noraian

Programs of interest for our faithful

The Orthodox Catholic Witness
of Metropolitan Detroit
invites all faithful of
Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches
to attend its annual gathering and lecture.

"Catholics and Orthodox Over the Centuries: Shifting Perceptions of Division and Unity"

Thursday, October 21, 2011, 7:00 pm

*St. George Romanian Orthodox Cathedral
18405 West Nine Mile Road, Southfield*

International experts, Orthodox Fr. John Erickson and Roman Catholic Fr. Ron Robertson, members of the North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation, will explore the historical origins of division between our two ancient churches and the hopeful prospects for the reunification of our two traditions.

Free admission; everyone welcome.

Important Notice

Parish Council wishes to advise those who visit SJAC property not to park in areas labeled "no parking fire lane." This will help ensure emergency vehicles can access the facility when needed.

Also please display your handicap parking permit in your vehicle when parking in a handicapped spot.

Thank you for helping to keep our facility safer and more accessible.

New Initiatives at St. John's

Interest in a number of new initiatives and ones to be rejuvenated emerged from *The Showcase of Time and Talent* September 18th. If you are interested, please call the Church Office or contact the individual noted. We look forward to your participation and effort to expand St. John parish life.

• **The Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure:** This popular Detroit annual event occurs in May in downtown Detroit and includes a 5K Run, a 5K Walk and a 1 Mile Walk and supports breast cancer awareness, education and research. For more information, refer to the web site: <http://www.karmanos.org/racefortheuredetroit> or contact St. John's chair, Barbara Rupas at 248.643.7666.

• If you know of someone who needs **English as a Second Language classes** or such support, please call the Church Office. If there is sufficient interest classes could meet at the Church.

• We are trying to identify the ways in which our Church can be more responsive to the needs of young adults and professionals, and young marrieds with or without children, and married couples of all ages. If you would be interested in rejuvenating the

Mr. & Mrs. Society, or the Marriage Encounter Group, please contact the Church Office.

• **Are you trained or talented in graphic design, desktop publishing, photography or other computer work?** Would you like to share your skills with St. John's? Keep your skills sharp and help with projects as they come up. Contact the Church Office!

Moms and Manooogs

- play group meets once or twice a month.

For dates, contact Kristen Gustafson:

248.765.0471

Remember
St. John Armenian Church
in your Will.

Baptisms**August**

- 19** Allan
Son of Aram & Marina Oganyan
Godfather: Artem Avanesyan
- 26** Aron Louis Varteres
Son of Sven & Kristen Gustafson
Godparents: Kevin & Jennifer Tiffany
- 28** Aleksander
Son of Pavel & Yelena Mirzoyan
Godparents: Mikhail Gazaryan & Eleonora Arutyunova

September

- 4** Zoie Maral
Daughter of Keith & Maral Edwards
Godparents: Steve Nazoyan & Silva Nazoyan
- 4** Valerie Paula
Daughter of Paul & Asya Titov
Godparents: Igor Babayan & Araksina Titova
- 17** Lucas Charles
Son of Charles & Jennifer Wick
Godparents: Jonathan & Tina Richardson

Weddings**September**

- 10** Katherine May Morykwas & Michael Peter Kezelian
Bestman: Harry Kezelian III
Maid of Honor: Lisa Choinard

Funerals**September**

- 2** Arpie Mechigian, 95, Evergreen
- 3** Robert Vartan Gregory, 64, Woodlawn

Marriages

Arrangements for weddings are to be made at least eight months in advance. Marriage preparation and counseling are required before the celebration of the sacrament. The Bestman (*Khachyeghpayr*) must be a member of the Armenian Orthodox Church. The parish office will make all necessary arrangements for the deacon, organist and soloist. Marriages are not celebrated during Great Lent.

Baptisms and Chrismations

All baptisms must be scheduled at least two months in advance. Pre-baptismal preparation for the parents and godparents is required. At least one of the godparents must be a member of the Armenian Orthodox Faith.

Regulation of Sacramental Services

In accordance with Diocesan discipline mandated by the Primate, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, all sacraments, e.g. funerals, weddings, baptisms and rites of Christian burial, can only be administered in the church sanctuary, which has been consecrated for the celebrations of these sacred rites.



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Diane Ekizian, May Kafafian, 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 Kafafian 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 25th 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:

stjohnsarmenianchurch.com

PLEASE SAVE THE DATE.....

October

- 2 Men's Society Pancake Breakfast
22 Detroit Kef Time! - A Musical Celebration of the 80th Anniversary of St. John Armenian Church
Sponsored by the Men's Society and Women's Guild,
7:30 pm-1:00 am - SOLD OUT!
23 Discovery of the Holy Cross
26 Day by Day Afternoon Bible Study, Noon - 2:00 pm
28 Kef Klub, 6:00 pm, Recreation Center -
sponsored by the ACYOA
30 Town Hall Meeting immediately following *Badarak*

November

- 6 Veterans' Blessing & Fellowship Tea - sponsored by
The Armenian American Veteran Association
13 Thanksgiving Dinner - sponsored by the Church School
18 Kef Klub, 6:00 pm, Recreation Center
20 Men's Society Pancake Breakfast
21 Presentation of the Holy Mother-of-God
23 Day by Day Afternoon Bible Study, Noon - 2:00 pm
24 Thanksgiving – Complex Closed
26 ACYOA November Dance
27 Advent Season Begins
30 Women's Guild *Advent by Candlelight*

Note: All parish events at St. John's Church and Cultural Hall unless specified.

EVENTS IN THE COMMUNITY.....

Armenian Studies Program at the U-Michigan

October Events

- Films by Artavazd Peleshyan and others
Introduction by Artsvi Bakhchinyan
Tuesday, October 11, 4:00-5:30 pm
- Lecture by Artin Arslanian, "The British Imperial Ethos:
Britain and Transcaucasia, 1917-1920"
Tuesday, October 25, 4:00-5:30 pm

MORE EVENTS IN THE COMMUNITY.....

Thursday, October 13, 2011, 7:30 pm

"An Evening of Armenian Music"

Sponsored by the Arab American National Museum

13624 Michigan Ave, Dearborn, 313.582.2266

Featuring Ara Topouzian, *kanun*

Joe Zeytoonian, *oud* - Myriam Eli, percussion

arabamericanmuseum.org

Friday & Saturday, October 14 & 15, 2011

Armenian Studies Program, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Celebrates the 30th Anniversary of the establishment of the

Alex Manoogian Chair in Modern Armenian History

Events open to the public include:

- "Armenian Studies & the Libraries of the U-Michigan

Hatcher Graduate Library Gallery

Friday, October 14, 2011, 2:30-4:30 pm

- Presentation and discussion of Armenian Films

University of Michigan Museum of Art, Auditorium, Friday,

October 14, 2011, 5:30-8:00 pm

- Symposium "Armenia in World History,
the World in Armenian History"

International Institute, Room 1636,

Saturday, October 15, 2011, 2:00-5:30 pm

For more information, contact Ingrid Peterson:

irjp@umich.edu or 734.763.0622

or visit the website, [http:// ii.umich.edu/asp](http://ii.umich.edu/asp)

Saturday, November 12, 2011, 8:00 pm

Sergey Khachatryan, violin & Lusine Khachatryan, piano

Sponsored by Chamber Music Society of Detroit

Seligman Performing Arts Center

Detroit Country Day School

22305 W 13 Mile Rd, Beverly Hills

For tickets/information: 248.855.6070 or comehearcmsd.org

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