

THE TORCHBEARER • Ջահակիր

St. John Armenian Church of Greater Detroit

22001 Northwestern Highway • Southfield, MI 48075
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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*



ST. NERSESS VISITS ST. JOHN'S



October 23-25 was a special weekend for many of our parishioners. Father Stepanos Doudoukjian, vocational director of St. Nersess Armenian Seminary in New Rochelle, NY and St. Nersess Seminarian Vahagn Azizyan, came to St. John's with a special mission for Altar Servers, our youth and community.

Der Stepanos met with our senior Deacons and Subdeacons on Friday evening for a spiritually focused discussion on the beautiful prayer by St. Nersess Shnorhali, *I Believe and Confess*, that helped the Deacons see even more deeply how personal faith impacts not only their own service to Christ but how their love for the Lord inspires others. (Pictured above)

On Saturday morning, junior and senior ACYOA members and some parents embarked on a journey to understand the great *I Am* statements spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ. Der Stepanos welcomed everyone with a talk about St. Nersess Summer Conference. After an icebreaker exercise, everyone gathered in the sanctuary for a meditation about these two important words, *I Am*,

which was led by Father Garabed. He challenged the participants to think about identity: Who is God? Who is Jesus? Who are you? Explained the meaning of the symbolic Armenian letter *EH*, telling the story of Moses and the burning bush. He then led the group around the church interior to view the Holy Letter *EH* as it appeared in the halos of Jesus in the mosaic icons.

Returning to the Vartan Room, presentations were given by Der Stepanos, Subdeacon Vahagn and Danny Mantis, a member of the ACYOA Seniors Central Council, who came to St. John's for the youth conference. Themes of identity with Jesus helped to fortify their growing faith in understanding relationships with God and each other. Additional presentations kept them all active and engaged in the inspiring mentoring and teaching that came from the leaders.

Later that evening, a Halloween Dance was sponsored by the St. John ACYOA Seniors with proceeds going to St. Nersess Seminary to support all the good works they produce for the present and future of the Armenian Church in America. Dozens of youngsters, gaily attired in Halloween costumes, gathered at the Veterans Building for treats and music by the Nigosian Band and Greg Nigosian's storytelling.

On Sunday morning Father Stepanos celebrated the Divine Liturgy. His homily underscored the need to support St. Nersess for the future growth of our North American parishes. He challenged the faithful to encourage the youth to consider a vocation to serve the Lord, stating that if every parish in the next ten years sent just one seminarian to St. Nersess, the critical clergy shortage we presently are experiencing would be solved and then some.

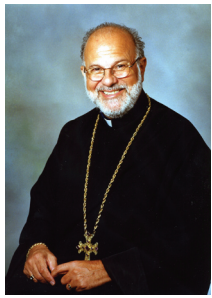
Subdeacon Vahagn, who spoke to Sunday School High Seniors, complimented them as 'gems' of the future whose shining hearts and minds will lead our parish and perhaps one day provide a priest for our Diocese. A big thank you to John and Kim Kalajian for overseeing and organizing the weekend for our youth, to the ACYOA Seniors for their fundraising efforts, and to Carol Ohanesian and Linda Lutz for providing the snacks and lunch for the conference.

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: 248.802.2861



FROM FATHER GARABED'S DESK.....

He's All in the Family

Consider this.

Conflict seems inevitable between individuals and particularly within the family. Family members can always find something to disagree about - personal values, current events, politics, possessions, money, intimacy, feelings, what you believe, etc. Even a husband and wife, who are supposed to love each other for better or worse, and as the "builders of family", may wonder why some of their most bitter arguments and disagreements between them may occur. And we might ask how people who are so familiar with each other can sometimes find themselves so far apart?

One reason is that people bound in a sacred union of marriage and even those individuals who are born of that union and constitute family members, are all by nature imperfect and commit sin no matter how much they love each other. Yes, all of us. This has been so from the very beginning of creation. In fact, the first eight families we read about in the *Holy Bible*, beginning with Adam and Eve, displayed many kinds of dysfunction, revealing their condition as sinful human beings. Perhaps God recorded their stories for us to know and understand that even when He lives in our hearts, we are not perfect beings and that somehow we can, by our own actions, willingly or unwillingly, cause hurt to each other.

Fast forward now to our Lord's family. How did Jesus manage His family of origin, the holy family as well His relatives? How did He deal with people in His family who had all kinds of imperfections?

In the Gospel of Mark, [cf. Mk.3:33-35] Jesus' brothers and His mother came to see Him one day. Knowing who they were, the Apostles said that they wanted an audience. But what did our Lord say? *Whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and My mother.* Was Jesus forgetting about his family of origin? And what did his answer imply?

The Church is the family of God and in our family we Christians have family foibles - differences about personal values, leadership, politics, possessions, money, intensity of faith, practice of prayer life, etc.

So how do we, as the Family of God, deal with those daily conflicts which are inevitable, even in the Church, which is a reflection of the Holy Family?

Our Lord's comment shows how He was distinguishing between human expectations, personal desire about how families should relate and what the values of 'Divine Love' have to say about family relations. He was not against His own parents and siblings; He just wanted to stress obedience to God, and that God comes first.

In spite of our human frailties, as family we can overcome our differences when we obey God's commandment to love and rise above personal desire for that 'greater love' that Jesus says is the Love of self-sacrifice, the Greater Good, our obedience to love each other as much as humanly possible.

May these days ahead, remembered with Thanksgiving for God's blessings, and the months to come, when we Rejoice in the Birth of Love Divine, become occasions to bind our families together.

Walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God [Eph.5:2]

~ Father Garabed

You can help bring the Light of Christ!!

During this past summer, the youth of our parish returned from the St. Nersess Summer Conferences with a special hand-painted donation box for the ongoing work at the Seminary where the future priests and Christian educators for the Armenian Church in America are trained. In October when Father Stepanos visited our parish, he spoke about the need for continued support during his sermon and at the special fellowship that followed. He noted the presence of this red, blue and orange box that now is placed on the candle table in our church lobby and that your donations, no matter how great or humble, can make a difference. Every week when you purchase a candle or two, don't forget St. Nersess Seminary in your spiritual prayers and with your donations as well. Make a gift that will keep alive and bright the light of Christ in our Church, in our parishes, and in our homes.

KEF KLUB arrives in 2010! The Gathering Place for ALL AGES

On Friday, January 15 friends and family of all ages will be able to gather for fun and food in a casual atmosphere. The monthly gatherings will take place at St. John's Recreation Center at 6 pm. We look forward to having the support of various church groups for each of the monthly gatherings with proceeds going to St. John.

Each month will have a community based element. In January, Linda Assarian and the Women' Guild Knitting Group will bring warm and cozy scarves they knit for Children's Hospital. Marilyn Sarkesian, a nurse at the hospital, will see that the scarves reach children there. You may bring new scarves and mittens for Children's Hospital that evening. Future gatherings will feature the Arts and Dance Camp and the Build Armenia group that will go to Armenia next summer.

Join your church family at the KEF KLUB.

To volunteer, sponsor or for suggestions or questions:

Diane Ekizian: dlekizian@yahoo.com, 248-851-4069

Marianne Dardarian: 248-661-0617

The dates for KEF KLUB 2010 will be THIRD FRIDAYS of each month (except for February):

January 15, February 12, March 19, April 16, May 21, June 18, July 16, August 20, September 17, October 15, November 19, December 17.

~ Diane Ekizian

A Wonderful Day

Hello Father Garabed,

We had a great time joining the Divine Liturgy today (Nov. 8). Bianca and Adam were excited all weekend and really enjoyed being part of the service. As for Kim and I, we couldn't have been more proud and honored as parents and as members of our church. Today's service seemed to have a special feeling to it. Maybe it was that my mother got a chance to see her grandchildren participate in the church where so many wonderful things have taken place for our family. Or maybe it was the choir singing their beautiful hymns or Father Hrach's lesson for the kids or the tribute to the veterans. All in all, it was a wonderful day for us, something that we will never forget. Thank you for extending this wonderful opportunity to our family. We are truly blessed to have such a wonderful church and loving Der Hayr. And we can't say enough about our Sunday School teachers. Ms. Lena and Ms. Rosemarie are the nicest and sweetest teachers around. We are lucky to have such loving people in our church.

Love,

Adam and Kim Karibian, Bianca and Adam Jr.

Church School Classrooms Brighten The Spirit Of Students



The upstairs, church school classrooms for grades 1-4 have received a makeover. The bright blue, purple, and gold walls brought smiles of surprise from staff and students as

they started the 2009-2010 church school year. Mr. George Saboonjian, (pictured at left), member of the Church School Advisory Board, had a desire to make the surroundings for the students a cheery one. After a consultation with Fr. Garabed and Sue Vian as to paint colors, George donated all of the supplies and labored for the month of August in preparation for opening day. Working on cinder-block walls and worn, wood trim was a difficult and time-consuming job for George and his volunteer helpers. However, after seeing the results and hearing the students' comments, "It's so pretty," it was worth it. George would like to thank the following men who helped him throughout the month: Jim Berryman, Mike Matoian, Richard Baylerian, (pictured at right) John Pochas and our St. John's custodial staff.

~Violet Cholakian

News from the Women's Guild

The results of the Women's Guild 2010 Elections held at the November meeting are: Executive Body: Linda Tiffany, Pam Dayinian, Jackie El Chemmas, and Carol Aprahamian, with Joyce Slowik as alternate. Nominating Committee: Charlene Apigian, Lisa Derderian, Virginia Mekjian, Diane Nolff and Joyce Obenhoff. Congratulations to all and may you have a productive and fruitful year!

Once again the Women's Guild prepared gift bags for **Alternative for Girls**. Susan Vian has organized this outreach project for young women who are in need and we thank her for this annual initiative.

A plaque has been presented to the Women's Guild thanking them for all of the time and hard work they do baking for the church. The plaque has been appropriately placed over the ovens in the church kitchen. The Women's Guild is honored to be so recognized.

Pam Dayinian and her Armenian Cookbook committee are busy compiling family recipes. If you have a special Armenian recipe to share, please send it to Pam at 31070 River's Edge Ct., Beverly Hills, MI 48025 or submit via e-mail: wgmail@sjachurch.org

~Marianne Dardarian

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE OF WORSHIP

Տոնակարգ Ա. Ծննդեան Շրջանի

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2009

Matins / Առաւօտեան Ժամերգութիւն	9:00 am
Divine Liturgy / Ա. Պատարագ	9:45 am
CHURCH SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM	12:00 pm

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2009

WESTERN CHRISTMAS EVE – Քրիսմըսի Նախօրեակ

Carols (in English) & Scripture Readings	10:30 pm
ACYOA Tea following service – all are welcome	

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2009

Matins / Առաւօտեան Ժամերգութիւն	9:00 am
Divine Liturgy / Ա. Պատարագ	9:45 am
Requiem Service / Հոգեհանգստեան Պաշտօն	12:00 pm

Special Deacons' Service commemorating
the Feast of St. Stephen the Protodeacon & First Martyr
Յատուկ Սարկաւագաց Արարողութիւն՝ Ա. Ստեփաննոս
Նախասարկաւագին եւ Առաջին Մարտիրոսի Տօնին առիթով

TUESDAY, JANUARY 5, 2010

ARMENIAN CHRISTMAS EVE / JRAKALOOYTS

Vespers and Reading of Prophecies	6:00 pm
Ճրագալոյց / Խթան Գիշեր / Դանիէլի	
Սարգարեութեան Ընթերցում եւ «Երից Սանկանց»	
Candlelight Divine Liturgy / Ա. Պատարագ	7:00 pm

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 6, 2010

THEOPHANY / EPIPHANY / DON ASDVADZAHAYDNOOTIAN

Տօն Ա. Ծննդեան եւ Աստուածայայտնութեան

FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

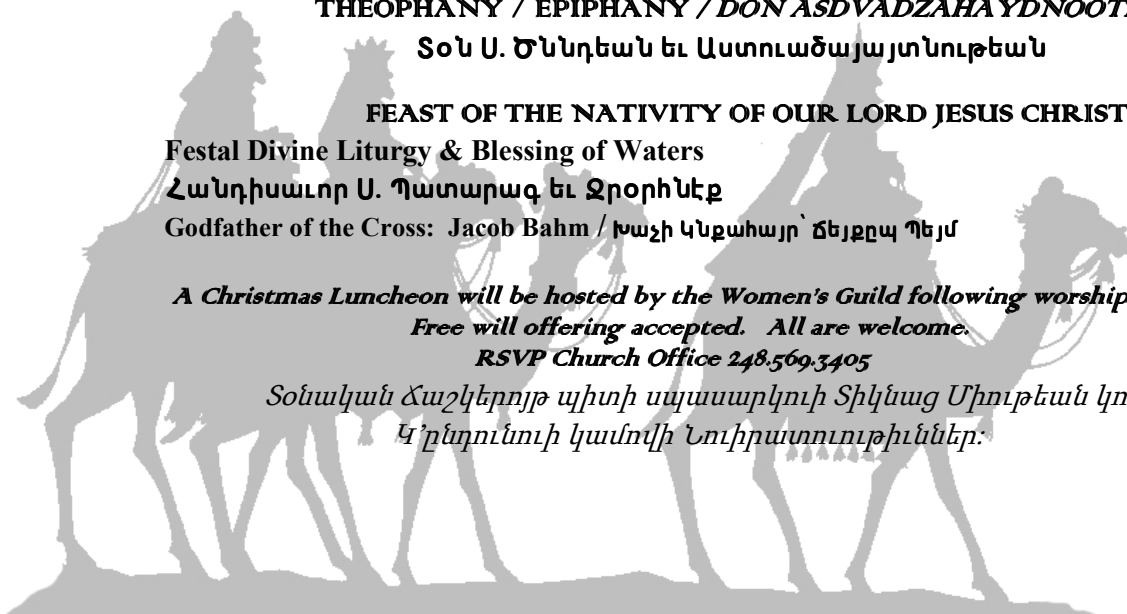
Festal Divine Liturgy & Blessing of Waters	10:00 am
Հանդիսաւոր Ա. Պատարագ եւ Զրօրինէք	
Godfather of the Cross: Jacob Bahm / Խաչի Կնքահայր՝ Ճեյքըպ Պեյմ	

A Christmas Luncheon will be hosted by the Women's Guild following worship services.

Free will offering accepted. All are welcome.

RSVP Church Office 248.569.3405

*Տօնական Ճաշկերոյթ պիտի սպասարկուի Տիկնաց Միութեան կողմէ:
Կ'ընդունուի կամովի Նուիրատուութիւններ:*



SUNDAY, JANUARY 10, 2010
ARMENIAN CHRISTMAS FAMILY WORSHIP

Matins / Առաւօտեան Ժամերգութիւն
Divine Liturgy / Ս. Պատարագ
Requiem Service / Հոգեհանգստեան Պաշտօն

9:00 am
9:45 am
11:30 am

A Christmas Family Luncheon will be hosted by the Church School following worship services..
Adults \$15.00; Children no charge. All are welcome.
RSVP Church Office 248.569.3405

Տօնական Ճաշկերոյթ պիտի սպասարկուի Կիրակնօրեայ Վարժարանի կողմէ:
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Չեզ էւ Մեզ Մեծ Աւետիս - Զրիստոս Ծնաւ էւ Յայտնեցաւ
Tsez yev mez Medz Avedis - Kreesdos Dzunav yev Haydnetsav
Christ is Born and is Revealed - Blessed is the Revelation of Christ!

GREETINGS FROM YOUR PASTOR AND PARISH COUNCIL

On the occasion of the New Year and the Holy Christmas Season, the Pastor and Parish Council wish to extend to our beloved faithful community and friends our sincere prayers and good tidings for a New Year filled with God's abundant blessings.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

The Feast of Our Lord's Birth and Baptism is a *Daghavar*/Tabernacle Feast of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church and is a day of Holy Obligation. In accordance with Armenian Church Canon, all the faithful are expected to partake of the Sacrament of Holy Communion at the Divine Liturgies of this Holy Season.

OLD & NEW TRADITIONS OF ARMENIAN CHRISTMAS

Yughakin - Բղազիւ

It is a church tradition to make a Christmas offering for the perpetuation of religious and educational programs and charitable deeds to be offered in the name of our Savior. Enclosed is an envelope for your Christmas gift, which we call *Yughakin* in Armenian, meaning "price of oil." Before the modern era, oil was used to light the lanterns in our churches. In this season of giving, keep the light of Christ burning brightly and remember your Church and all the good it can do with your support.

Home Blessing - Dnorhnek - Տնօրհնէք

It is customary to invite the Lord's blessings into our homes during the Christmas Season. Individuals who wish to have their homes blessed during Christmastide may call the Church Office at 248.569.3405 to schedule a visit by the pastor, who will – with joy – respond and bring the Blessings of Christ into your home.

Altar Flowers for the Season

A beautiful Christmas tradition at St. John's is the adornment of the holy altar and *bema* with flowering red and white poinsettia plants. If you would like to contribute towards these flowers, please contact the church office.

Festal Candles

To honor the Feast of Our Lord's Birth and the Baptism of Christ, The Light of the World, special candles are placed on the Bema for the Holy Season and Christmastide. If you wish to honor or remember a loved one with Christmas Candle, please contact the Church Office.

WEDDINGS

November

- 7 William Kemler & Armenouhi Boghossian
Bestman: Armen Nersis Boghossian
Maid of Honor: Ardemis Boghossian

BAPTISMS

October

- 17 Alan Lee
Son of Michael & Charlene Choukourian
Godparents: Dikran & Angie Choukourian
- 18 Christian James
Son of Michael & Maureen Yessian
Godparents: Brian Yessian & Colleen Fisher

November

- 14 Shahin
Son of Brian Lutz & Leah Khaghani
Godparents: Adam Garbooshian
& Catherine Baldwin

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.

FUNERALS

October

- 17 Alice Kouyoumjian, 83, Woodlawn
- 23 Carl Banerian, 85, Woodlawn
- 27 Marjorie M. Marohn, 83, Woodmere

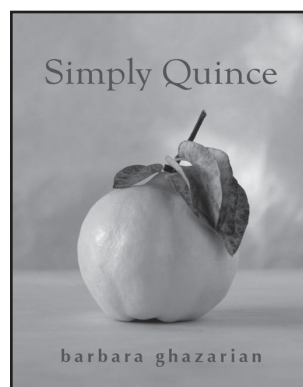
November

- 13 Lucille Davidson, 95, Woodlawn

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St. John Armenian Church
in your will.*

CHOOSE A MINISTRY TO SUPPORT,
ESTABLISH AN ENDOWMENT,
SUPPLEMENT THE GENERAL FUND.
CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE,
YOUR PASTOR OR A PARISH COUNCIL MEMBER
FOR WAYS TO LEAVE A LEGACY TO YOUR CHURCH.

AT THE PARISH BOOKSTORE



Simply Quince, a new cookbook devoted entirely to the lovely fall fruit, by Barbara Ghazarian, author of *Simply Armenian*. Both available at the Parish Bookstore.

Simply Quince,
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Simply Armenian,
Softcover, \$18.00.

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CONTACT MAY KAFAFIAN
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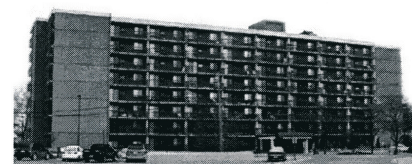
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Audrey Markarian, Manager
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PLEASE SAVE THE DATE.....

In order to economize on parish mailings, a complete schedule of holiday services and events as well as Yughakin and holiday card donation information can be found in the center of this Torchbearer.

December

- 2 Women's Guild Advent by Candlelight**
- 6 Stewardship Sunday Tea**
Refer to page 2 for more information
- 13 Concert of Armenian songs by a group of young singers from St. Gregory of Narek Church, Cleveland, OH.**
Sponsored by the Komitas Choir immediately following the Divine Liturgy in the Sanctuary. Free of charge.
- 20 Church School Christmas Program**
In the Sanctuary
- 24 Western Christmas Eve Service & ACYOA Tea**
- January, 2010**
- 5-6 Armenian Christmas**
- 10 Church School Armenian Christmas Family Dinner**
- 15 First monthly "Kef Klub" at St. John's Recreation Center**
Refer to page 3 for more details of this new event.
- 20 The New Men's Society - Inaugural meeting of the reorganized group. Please watch for more details of time and location. Great plans are in the works for the men of our parish and their families in the spirit of fostering faith and fellowship. See Paul Yousoufian, Ed Baharian or Craig Johnson for more information.**

February

- 11 Vartanantz Service at St. Vartan Armenian Catholic Church**
- 12 "Kef Klub" at St. John's Recreation Center**
- 14 Boon Baregentan – Great Lent Begins
Feast of the Presentation of the Lord
Infant Blessing Service**

March

- 19 "Kef Klub" at St. John's Recreation Center**
- 20 14th Annual Lenten Retreat**
- 28 Palm Sunday**

HOLY WEEK March 29 – April 2

April

- 3 Easter Eve Worship & Liturgy followed by Church School Family Dinner**
- 4 Easter**
- 16 "Kef Klub" at St. John's Recreation Center**
- 25 Armenian Martyrs Requiem and Program**
Details to follow

May

- 19 "Kef Klub" at St. John's Recreation Center**
- 22 Camp Kef: An Evening of Memories**
Dancing and mezza to remember Camp Ararat. Proceeds to establish a scholarship fund to attend Hye Camp in Illinois. Details to follow.

EVENTS IN THE COMMUNITY

December, 2009

- 31 New Year's Eve Party sponsored by the Knights and Daughters of Vartan. Proceeds to be shared equally among Detroit's four Armenian churches.**
Details to follow.

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Southfield, MI