

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*



A CELEBRATION OF SERVICE.....

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Eastern Diocese, celebrated Divine Liturgy at St. John Armenian Church of Greater Detroit on Sunday, November 11, 2012 and presided over the ordinations of Dr. David Aprahamian and Mr. Aram Sarkisian to the rank of *Sargavak* (Deacon). St. John's Pastor Father Garabed Kochakian, who was instrumental in their training, presented them to the Primate who bestowed the *Ourar* (Stole) upon the Deacons, a symbol of their elevation after years of study, training and devotion to the Church. With Father Garabed and Archbishop Khajag were Father Abraham Ohanesian and Father Diran Papazian, Pastor Emeritus of St. John. Also present was Bishop Paren Avedikian, former pastor of St. John now serving at Holy Etchmiadzin.

Following the service, a banquet and program were held in the St. John Cultural Hall attended by over 350 parishioners and friends where Ms. Karmen Santourian of St. John's Parish Council served as mistress of ceremonies. In addition to honoring the newly ordained Deacons, the "Celebration of Service" honored twenty parishioners for their love, dedication, and long years of service in the life and activity of St. John.

The program began with St. John Komitas Choir Director Deacon Rubik Mailian singing both the American and the Armenian National Anthems accompanied on the piano by Ms. Margaret Lafian.

Two separate awards were presented: First the St. Vartan Award for exemplary service on both the Church and Diocesan levels was bestowed upon Mr. Howard Atesian, Dr. Vincent Baylerian, Mr. Simon Javizian, Mr. Edward H. Korkoian, Mr. Arthur Mardigian, Deacon Richard Norsigian, Dr. Edward Sarkisian, and Dr. Gary Zamanigian.

For dedicated service, support and stewardship, the St. John the Forerunner Award was presented to Deacon Ohannes Boyajian, Ms. Almas Derderian, Mr. Peter Egigian, Mrs. Mary Egigian, Mrs. Alberta Godoshian, Mr. Sooren Gozmanian, Mrs. Agnes Carman Hovsepian, Mr. Harry Keoleian (posthumously), Ms. Sirvart Mezian, Mr. Edward Papelian, Mr. Charles Stambouljian and Mr. Simon Tashjian.

Finally, the St. Gregory Medal and Encyclical (*Gontag*), on behalf of His Holiness Karekin II Catholicos of All Armenians in Holy Etchmiadzin, was presented to Mrs. Emma Tabibyan Sogoian by the Diocesan Primate Archbishop Khajag Barsamian. The text was read aloud to those present by Father Diran Papazian.

In the Encyclical, His Holiness extolled the charity of Mrs. Sogoian, who, with her late husband Kaloust, has supported and continues to support the Holy Mother See in Armenia for the diverse needs of the Armenian Church in Armenia and throughout the world. In 2007, at the request of His Holiness Karekin II, she generously donated eighteen manuscripts dated as early as the eleventh and twelfth centuries to the Mother See. She and her husband provided the funding to build the St. Drtad Armenian Church in the village of Vayk in Armenia. Also, the Sogoians donated the present organ in the sanctuary in 2002.

Throughout her life in the Greater Detroit Community, Mrs. Sogoian has been a member of St. John, and an active member of the AGBU, Detroit Armenian Women's Club, Armenian Renaissance Association Sophia Chapter, and has supported a school in Karabagh and numerous Armenian projects and programs locally and in Armenia. After her brief acceptance speech, Mrs. Sogoian received a standing ovation from those attending this joyous event and thanked the Catholicos for the award.

The program concluded with the benediction given by His Eminence who congratulated all of the recipients once again. On this gathering of celebration and appreciation, Veterans Day was also observed as the newly formed Komitas Bell Choir, directed by Deacon Rubik and accompanied by Ms. Margaret Lafian, performed a moving and beautiful version of "I Vow To Thee My Country" composed by Gustav Holst.

The "Celebration of Service" is the first of a 'new tradition' for St. John Armenian Church intended to be held annually hereafter so that many more worthy parishioners may be deservedly honored for their undaunted, unwavering and dedicated service to the parish. *Please see page 5 for additional photos from Archbishop Khajag Barsamian's visit. Watch for profiles of award recipients in coming Torchbearer issues.*

-Ardis Gregory and Liz Aprahamian -



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

DECEMBER 2012



FROM FATHER GARABED'S DESK.....

Don't Worry - Be Happy

Then He said to His disciples, "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on. Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing. Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds? ... by worrying can you add one cubit to his stature?...do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink; nor have an anxious mind. For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things. **But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you.** [Luke 12:22 ff.]

Jesus is simply saying: Keep a focus on what is **MOST important**. Yet this is a hard thing to do in today's frenetic world where we are daily bombarded with distractions of every type that distract us from faith, from family and from ourselves. We become so entrenched with things around us that we lose sight of what is **MOST important** - God, our souls, our families.

As we enter the season called Advent and begin preparing for the Christmas holiday ahead, let us remember that our focus should be on God, who came to earth in Jesus Our Saviour. The keeping of the season is what we call in Armenian *Hisnak*, the fifty days of preparing, before our celebration of Christ's Birth and Baptism.

During these days of shopping, decorating, partying and other frivolities, we can easily get 'wrapped-up' in the seasonal preparations. Being enshrouded by the Christmas holiday trappings, our vision of what this Christian Season is about gets blurred. Our focus needs to be nothing other than Jesus Christ/God's coming to earth and His helping us find our way to heaven. Advent then, is that extended time to think deeply and more profoundly about God in our lives, how He - in Christ His Son - makes the difference, how He guides us by His Spirit all the while trusting that He always provides for our needs.

Do not worry about how to celebrate the forms, festivities, the functions of the holiday. Rather trust that in the end finally... *God IS at the center of life, Christ and His Love* gives us what we need every day when we ask Him. Advent then is a time to worry less and focus more on what is really important. Don't seek all things first and then add God at the end, but seek God first. Thereafter, as Jesus says, *all things will be added*. Unfortunately, worry, fear, anxiety have infected life and for so many the temptation of losing focus overtakes us, even in the sincerity of our faith.

Jesus' teaching tells us not to be obsessed with worry for 'every single thing.' Rather, trust in God first and all things will be added. Focus more on God the giver, not gifts. Therefore, like shepherds keep watch, like Angels be on guard, focus on the Glory of God, not the glitz of the world. As Jesus reminds us today to keep our focus on what is **MOST important**...for every day of life, *seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you*. Don't worry, focus on Christ our God, who is most important and let Jesus be your happiness.

~ Father Garabed

MEN'S SOCIETY HOSTS ANNUAL WINE TASTING.....

The Men's Society on Friday, October 19, 2012 held a Wine Tasting. Approximately 100 people attended the event. Besides the delicious wines available, food was prepared by the following Men's Society members and their wives: *Basterma*, Pita and Hummus - Greg and Edith Baise, Cheese *Boereg* - Elizabeth Aprahamian, David Aprahamian, *Yalanche Sarma*, Lentil *Kufta* and More - Gary and Pat Hachigian, Cheeses, Smoked Turkey, Spinach Dip and Autumn Apple Salad - Robert and Patricia Magee, Cheeses, Meats, Dried Fruits, Vegetables and Crackers - Mark and Maral Mamassian, Butternut Squash Soup, Pulled Pork Sliders and *Khourabia* - David and Marianne Dardarian, Baked Cod, Beurre Blanc Sauce, and Pasta Tossed in Olive Oil, Romano Cheese, Tomato and Garlic - Paul Yousoufian, Chocolates, Fresh Fruit and *Baklava* - John Yavruian, Dan and Judy Cristiano, and Coffee Station - Ron and Adrian Keoleian.

Two pair of tickets for a Piston's game on Monday, November 26, 2012, were drawn. The winners were thrilled and a good time was had by all. The raffle of the one week stay in a condo, donated by Michael and Kathy Boucher, in Sarasota, Florida, was won by Father Garabed Kochakian, who unfortunately was not able to attend the event. For those of you who did not attend this year's event, we look forward to seeing you next year.

- Dan Cristiano -

LEARN MORE ON THE WEB...

Armenian Church Teachings

The Eastern Armenian Diocese of America is an excellent resource for learning more about our Christian faith. Visit the website below, click on the Programming tab, and learn more by clicking the Christian Education link.

www.ArmenianChurch-Ed.net

Discover the Bible

Ever wondered what a Bible passage was about or who said it? Sometimes we need to refresh our memory. The website below is another great source to learn more about the Bible, its commentaries, and several texts.

www.BibleGateway.com

"TLC" LEARNS TO RELAX.....

On Tuesday, November 13th, the Tuesday Lunch Club had the pleasure of a presentation from Julie Jenkins on "Reducing Stress." The twenty-one attendees were made aware that stress can lead to illness. Some of the ways to manage stress include exercise, deep breathing, hobbies, pets, laughter and your favorite music. Stress robs you of peace of mind and your most precious commodity, time. Remember, "DON'T WORRY, BE HAPPY."

Julie's next presentation will be in January. We hope to see you then and afterwards you can join us for lunch. And this final quote by Winston Churchill, "Don't worry about avoiding temptation. As you grow older, it will avoid you."

- Dan Cristiano -



Sue Vian with gift bags packaged by the the Women's Guild at the November meeting for the Alternative Home for Girls.

DSO ILLUMINATES ST. JOHN'S SANCTUARY.....

The inaugural concert of the St. John Armenian Church Music Guild, which was a collaboration with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra's Neighborhood Concert Series, was a triumph! For the first time, through the sanction of Father Garabed Kochakian, the Church Sanctuary was opened for the concert. The combined sound of the virtuoso musicians of the String Quartet and the Brass Quintet playing the *Hayr Mer* (the Lord's Prayer) to open the concert was an emotional moment that will long be remembered. The String Quartet, as a surprise encore played "Kele Kele" (an Armenian folk song) which was a special gift to the Armenian community and the 400 guests who were in the audience that day. Emotions ran very high and there were tears in many eyes.

The musicians in the String Quartet included Principal Cellist Robert deMaine, Associate Concertmaster Kimberly Kaloyanides; Assistant Concertmaster Hai Xin Wu and Assistant Principal Viola James VanValkenburg; the Brass Quintet included David Ammer and Robert White, trumpets; Corbin Wagner, horn; Kenneth Thompkins, trombone; and Dennis Nulty, tuba. This was an unprecedented event in the annals of St. John Armenian Church. The DSO indicated that this was the largest audience ever in attendance at a Neighborhood Concert. The musicians were also amazed at the acoustics of the church and have expressed a desire to return.

Nothing of this magnitude is done alone. Kudos go to Father Garabed Kochakian, Deacon Rubik Mailian and St. John's Komitas Choir, the St. John Music Guild; Brooke Minasian Hoplamazian, Chair, John Yavruian, Parish Council, and members of the committee Janet and Norman Ankers, Greg Jamian, Jeanette Keramedjian, Annette Mamassian, Sevan Merametjian and Marty Shoushanian. The sponsors included Janet and Norman Ankers; Sandy and Greg Jamian, Jeanette and Richard Keramedjian, and Emma and Michael Minasian. The reception that followed the concert was chaired by Dolly Matoian and Marianne Dardarian for the Komitas Choir of St. John Armenian Church.

It should be noted that all of the musicians stayed for the reception and greeted the guests. This again indicates the depth of their feeling toward this concert at St. John. This concert is the first in a series for 2012-13. We look forward to seeing you on April 14th when we will have Dr. David DiChiera with the Michigan Opera Theatre, again in the sanctuary of our Church. This should be another stellar event. Program to be announced.

- Jeanette Keramedjian -



St. John's altar provides magnificent setting for The String Quartet.



Hai Xin Wu, Kimberly Kaloyanides, Brooke Minasian Hoplamazian and Deacon Rubik Mailian toast to a glorious event.

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE OF WORSHIP - Տօնակարգ Ս. Ծննդեան Շրջանի



MONDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2012 – WESTERN CHRISTMAS EVE

Քրիստմսի Նախօրեակ

“A Family Christmas Worship” - Carols (in English) & Scripture Readings with St. John’s Bell Ringers - 5:00 pm;
Yuletide Refreshments in the Main Hall to follow.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2012 - ST. STEPHEN THE PROTODEACON AND FIRST MARTYR

Տօն Ս. Ստեփանոս Նախասարկաւագ եւ Առաջին Մարտիրոս

Blessing of Deacons - Սարկաւագի Օրհնութիւն

Matins / Առաւօտեան Ժամերգութիւն - 10:30 am; Divine Liturgy / Ս. Պատարագ - 11:00 am

SATURDAY, JANUARY 5, 2013 - ARMENIAN CHRISTMAS EVE / JRAKALOOTS

Vespers and Reading of Prophecies - Ժրագալոյց Ծ խթման Գիշեր

Դանիէլի Մարգարէութեան Հնթերցում եւ «Երից Մանկանց» - 4:00 pm

Candlelight Divine Liturgy / Ս. Պատարագ - 5:00 pm

SUNDAY, JANUARY 6, 2013 - THEOPHANY / EPIPHANY / DON ASDVADZAHAYDNOOTIAN

FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

Տօն Ս. Ծննդեան եւ Աստուածայայտնութեան

Matins / Առաւօտեան Ժամերգութիւն - 9:00 am

Festal Divine Liturgy / Հանդիսաւոր Ս. Պատարագ - 9:45 am

Blessing of the Waters - Զրորհնէք: Godfather of the Cross: Stephen Armen Leacock

A Christmas Family Luncheon will be hosted by the Church School following worship services.

Adults \$20.00; Children 18 and under are no charge. RSVP Alberta Godoshian at 248.476.4638 for tables of 8 or more.

Զեզ եւ Մեզ Մեծ Աւետիս - Քրիստոս Ծնաւ եւ 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 – Իւղակին 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 Saviour. 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 – Ծնօրհնէք 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 – Խորանի Ծաղիկներ 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 – Տոնական Մոմեր 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 a Christmas Candle, please contact the Church Office.

CAPTURING ARCHBISHOP'S VISIT.....



Pictured, top left: The "Celebration of Service" Committee. Top right: St. Vartan Award recipients. Bottom left: Archbishop Khajag Barsamian and Father Garabed are pictured with Mrs. Emma Sogioian. Bottom right: St. John Forerunner Award recipients.

To see more photographs from this auspicious occasion, along with photos from the church service, please visit www.tinyurl.com/PrimatesVisit

A MEMORABLE THANKSGIVING EVE SERVICE.....

Father Garabed along with some members of our Komitas Choir and parishioners took part in a Thanksgiving Eve worship service under the auspices of the "Lift Up Southfield" Inter-Faith Clergy Association at Saint David Episcopal Church in Southfield. This was the first time in at least two decades in the city of Southfield that peoples of diverse faith confessions gathered together to pray and thank God for his many blessings on the occasion of the national holiday of Thanksgiving. Taking part were eight communities: Orthodox, Catholic, Episcopal, Lutheran, Unitarian, Methodist, and Baptist. The Reverend Chris Yaw hosted the service. Following worship the faithful gathered for fellowship in greeting and meeting new friends. It is hoped that this renewed celebration will continue in the years to come. *Pictured below, left: Father Garabed congregates with the other religious leaders. Center: Yeretzgin Roberta talks with the ladies of St. John after service. Right: Thanksgiving Eve Inter-Faith service takes place.*



SACRAMENTS

Baptisms & Chrismations

November 2012

- 3 Sophie Alo
Daughter of Joseph & Sevan Sanjian
Godparents: Viken Karadolian & Dr. Sevan Karadolian
- 18 Charlotte Marie
Daughter of Cory & Elizabeth Bergeron
Godparents: Fotios Floros & Shirley Ann Sarkisian

December 2012

- 4 Florinda Mazmanian - Adult
Godparents: Artur Babayan & Katina Demiri
- 9 Sophia Presley
Daughter of Justin & Kristen Waterstrat
Godparents: John Daguanno & Allison Wilke
- 14 Eleanore Lucine
Daughter of Raffi & Genevieve Vartian
Godparents: Aram Vartian & Angela Russo

Weddings

December 2012

- 8 Nicholas Corral Vowell & Crystal Michelle Manoogian
Khachyeghpayr: Peter Manoogian Jr.
Best Man: Richard Barron
Maid of Honor: Amanda Poynter

Funerals

November 2012

- 8 Levon Nazoyan, 76, Pine Lake

LETTERS OF APPRECIATION.....

I wish to express my grateful appreciation to the Primate, His Eminence Archbishop Khajag Barsamian and Diocesan Council for receiving the St. Vartan Award and to the parish of St. John's for nominating me to receive this coveted award.

Because of my health I was unable to be present but certainly was there in the spirit of celebration as my brother Gary accepted on my behalf. I am truly thankful to God for all my blessings and to all who made this possible.

With profound thanks,

Simon Tavizian

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.

Please call the Church Office for additional information at 248.569.3405.

Since I was a small child and my parents held my hand to take me to the Armenian Church, it has been my home away from home, where I felt safe and belonged. Through my participation in youth groups, many years as a Church School teacher, nearly 60 years as a Woman's Guild member, chairwomanship, taking part in all the Picnics, Bazaars, and having had the privilege of chairing many events, I feel humbled in the 'journey of love', and am truly grateful to St. John's for the honor bestowed upon me. I wish to thank the Pastor and Parish Council for the recognition with the St. John the Forerunner award.

Respectfully,

Agnes Carman Hovsepian

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www.stjohnsarmenianchurch.org

PLEASE SAVE THE DATE.....

December

- 8 Celebrate the Season Dinner Dance
Sponsored by the Parish Council and Apostolic Society
- 9 Conception of the Holy Mother-of-God
- 11 Celebrating the Legacy of 500 Years of Armenian Book Printing: 1512-2012
Sponsored by the Armenian Research Center, University of Michigan-Dearborn and the Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum. Guest Speaker: Levon Avdoyan, Armenian and Georgian Area Specialist, Library of Congress
- 16 Oakland Choral Society performs Handel's *Messiah*
- 19 Day by Day Afternoon Bible Study
- 24 Family Christmas Worship & Tea, 5:00 pm
- 25 Western Christmas - Complex Closed
- 29 *Barekendan* of the Fast of Nativity

January 2013

- 1 Happy New Year! Complex Closed
- 5 Armenian Christmas Eve
- 6 Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord
(see centerfold)
- 20 Men's Society Pancake Breakfast
- 23 Day by Day Afternoon Bible Study

IN THE COMMUNITY.....

Tuesday, December 11, 2012

5:30 pm - Reception/View Exhibit

6:30 pm - Lecture

Exhibit December 11, 2012 - January 31, 2013

Celebrating the Legacy of Five Centuries of Armenian Language Book Printing: 1512-2012

A Joint Exhibit Being Presented By

The Armenian Research Center,

University of Michigan-Dearborn

The Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum, Southfield

Friday, December 14, 2012, 7:30 pm

"Extend a Helping Hand to Syrian Armenians and Raise Your Voice Against the Destruction of the Genocide Memorial Church and Museum in Der Zor, Syria"

Guest Speaker: Ara Sanjian, University of Michigan-Dearborn
Hagopian World of Rugs, 850 Old Woodward, Birmingham

Reception will follow - All are welcome!

Sponsored by Greater Detroit United Committee for Syrian Armenian Relief Fund

Monday, December 31, 2012, 8:00 pm

NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATION

St. John Armenian Church Cultural Hall

Featuring Music by John Bilezikjian and All Stars

Harry Hovakimian, Vaughn Masropian, Cory Tosoian, Tom Zakarian

Sponsored by Knights and Daughters of Vartan

For reservations contact Chris Korkoian at 248.217.5447

Saturday, February 2, 2013, 6:30 pm

Kef Time Keghi!

St. John Armenian Church Cultural Hall

Featuring the Keghetzi All-Star Armenian Band

For reservations contact Barbara Norsigian at 248.661.2342

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