

## Women's Guild Gets Creative During Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has rocked many businesses and organizations to the core, set the Women's Guild of St. John Armenian Church in Southfield, MI on a mission to find ways, not just to survive, but to thrive, proving that the old proverb "necessity is the mother of invention" is indeed true.

The year began as usual. The Women's Guild sponsored a luncheon following the Armenian Christmas service, bake days began in preparation for the yearly Palm Sunday bake sale and Women Saints Day was observed in early March. Blindsiding everyone, the pandemic hit like a world-wide black-out; then little by little the lights came back on.

For St. John Women's Guild, keeping in touch with members became paramount. A system of phone calls began to over 200 members to check up on them, touch base, and share recent Guild news. Through the year, 6 rounds of calls were made and continue as an ongoing outreach. Monthly executive board and general membership meetings continued very successfully thanks to the Zoom platform. An interesting side effect was greater attendance at the Zoom meetings than in-person meetings since those out-of-town could join! The practice of monthly newsletters continued and frequent email announcements furthered the goal of making sure the membership was informed. Guild members were not forgotten when it came time to recognize members for their years of service. Instead of the usual membership dinner, gifts were delivered in person by board members. The Guild's annual visits to Manoogian Manor senior residence continued, masked and distanced.

Fundraising efforts took on a new look. Following very strict CDC guidelines, Women's Guild members baked at home and brought goods to church to be kept in the freezer for a Mother's Day bake sale and a holiday cookie sale. Orders taken ahead of time were packaged and ready for pick up at a designated date and time. This drive-up sale format became the new way fundraising took place. Following this pattern, Women's Guild members and parishioners went into action baking the high demand baked goods sold during the St. John annual Bazaar.

An ambitious initiative was developed to offer tutorials and information on a variety of topics during a time when people were homebound. A series of creative videos, recorded by volunteers and published on YouTube under the title *Guild Gatherings*, was born. The program, containing 15 videos with over 3000 views, has become very popular and is available to everyone who would like to learn something new or benefit from the talents of others. New videos continue to be produced in 2021. Anyone can access *Guild Gatherings* using the following link [Guild Gatherings - YouTube](#).

The Guild also found a way to hold elections. In normal times, those who attend the election meeting get to vote. This time, those who attended the November Zoom meeting were mailed a ballot using the good old-fashioned mail service. A system was developed with great care to ensure all ballots were anonymous.

The Women's Guild is very grateful to parish priests, Very Rev. Fr. Aren Jebejian and Rev. Fr. Ardash Bagdasarian for their support, guidance, and encouragement in helping the Guild continue to thrive in a very difficult year.

Visit to Manoogian Manor senior residence



Saintly Women's Day service



Mother's Day bake sale -first ever drive-up sale



Planning- a Guild Gatherings videos



Armenian Christmas drive-up luncheon prep 2021



# Holiday Drive-up Cookie Sale



## Guild Gatherings [Guild Gatherings - YouTube](#)

**Guild Gatherings**

16 videos • 3,244 views • Updated 2 days ago

Unlisted ▾

No description

St. John Armenian Women's Guild

**Meditate to Reboot & Revitalize your Life!**  
St. John Armenian Women's Guild  
WATCHED 17:14

**Apple Pie With A Lattice Crust**  
St. John Armenian Women's Guild  
WATCHED 52:56

**Let's Bake Candy Cane Cookies**  
St. John Armenian Women's Guild  
WATCHED 15:07

**Decorative Christmas Pots**  
St. John Armenian Women's Guild  
WATCHED 18:31

**Decorate a Festive Holiday Table**  
St. John Armenian Women's Guild  
WATCHED 6:52

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLgaajJ5B015V\\_fCalkqdiHwLZU3qTyV7l](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLgaajJ5B015V_fCalkqdiHwLZU3qTyV7l)