



St. John Armenian Church of Greater Detroit

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stjohnsarmenianchurch.com

The Rev. Fr. Garabed
Kochakian
Pastor

The Rev. Fr. Diran Papazian
Pastor Emeritus

Dn. Rubik Mailian
*Director of Sacred Music
and Pastoral Assistant*

Church Office Hours:

Monday - Friday:
9 am - 5 pm

After hours:
For pastoral needs -
Pastor's Cell:
248.225.9888

For all other issues -
Administrator's Cell:
248.880.8391

Parish Council Chairman's Cell:
248.688.1214

February 2012

The Torchbearer • Զահակիր

Holiday celebrations bring 2011 to a close!



*2012 Godfather of the Cross David Ameriguian
during the Blessing of Waters January 8th*

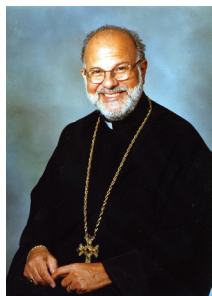


Pictured above right: Armen & Belinda Kabodian, Fr. Garabed, David, Rosanna, Robert, Dr. Anne Marie, and Susan Ameriguian



*Our deacons honored December 25th
on the Feast of Saint Stephen*

*Please continue reading within for holiday celebration details:
Women's Guild Advent by Candlelight
and Western Christmas Eve worship service.*



From Father Garabed's desk.....

To be or not to be "The Holy Family"

With the birth of Our Lord, God created a family when Jesus, His Son was born. And the Holy Family - Mary, Joseph and Jesus - was also born for all of us with unique relationships: fathers, mothers, children, grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins and all levels of family connections. God loved us so much that He came to earth to become part of us and live within our families. This was one of the most important remembrances we celebrated at Christmas time, showing our thankfulness for being family to each other and caring for one another in our own households and especially in our common spiritual home - St. John Armenian Church.

With the conclusion of celebrating Christ's birth and baptism on January 6th we brought home to our families Holy Water as a symbol and sign to remain faithful to God our Father and to live according to the way of Jesus in a family where His Spirit, His love is encountered finding holiness in our families. And, like the Holy Family we are called to show more regard and reverence to one another.

This is acting like Jesus wants us to act in our families, recognizing that in and through Him, we are all brothers and sisters connected, united. And when we are, our family grows in strength when each person in the family - from the smallest child to siblings, parents, grandparents and also those who visit our homes - is treated with love. This is what made Mary and Joseph 'holy' in the sight of God. And, with Christmas and the New Year the image of The Holy Family reminds us to open up our eyes, hearts and minds to the goodness in each person and to refrain from being callous towards one another.

In every family there are issues, difficulties, struggles. But, as Christians, we should transcend those petty earthly cares, concerns, unresolved issues and problems so that we can enjoy the light of God, burning and shining brightly through Christ in our families.

Certainly Mary and Joseph were not free of family struggles. How hard and difficult it was the night our Lord was born. How distressing it was for them when they had to flee to Egypt in order to escape danger, or how hurtful it was for them as they had to live in exile until they were able to return to their hometown of Nazareth. Through it all, God in Jesus was with them, because they prayed every day thanking our Heavenly Father for being able to survive their struggles with His Gift of the Christ child, who gave them an abiding spirit and strength to know that God was always with them.

Such love, devotion, concern for each other made them truly The Holy Family. Christ is also with you in your families, and when you stay with Him throughout all travail and pray to Him, He makes your family holy and good as well.

We pray for that holiness of God to be at the very heart of our spiritual family of St. John's so that truly we may be a holy and good family of God. We pray our Lord's holiness abides in your homes making Christmas a continuing joy in the days and months ahead keeping you close in holiness so that love and peace prevail, for where your heart is there also will be your treasure - Jesus the Christ.

~Father Garabed

Episcopal visit.....

The parish of St. John Armenian Church was honored to have as its guest our Diocesan Primate Archbishop Khajag Barsamian. Approximately one hundred guests attended this memorable event December 15th on our church campus. His Eminence spoke about the Diocesan Appeal and the objectives of the Lay Ministry and its importance in the 21st Century Armenian Church. Accompanying the Primate was the Coordinator of the Diocesan Appeal, Dr. Sam Mikaelian. Dr. Mikaelian made mention of the primary objectives of the Bishop's Appeal Fund and its importance for the future well being of the Armenian Church Community in the United States. Also attending from the Diocesan Council was the Very Reverend Father Aren Jebejian pastor of St. Gregory Armenian Church of Chicago and director of Midwest Hye Camp.

All who had gathered to greet *Srpazan Hayr* warmly celebrated the observance of the Primate's forty years as an ordained clergyman and twenty years as Primate of the Eastern Diocese.

In his early years in the United States he was assigned as visiting pastor of the Armenian Church in Worcester in 1976, and in 1977 he became Grand Sacristan of St. Vartan Cathedral. Later he became Vicar General of the Diocese under the then Primate, Archbishop Torkom Manoogian.

The Primate thanked those gathered for their support and acknowledged many St. John's parishioners present as serving the Diocese on various committees and boards, namely Ms. Jennifer Morris, Coordinator Youth Outreach; Deacon Rubik Mailian, Chairman of Sacred Music; Howard Atesian, Diocesan Council; Edward Korkoian, Board of Trustees; Roseann Attar, member of ACEF Board; Edward Mardigian, FAR; Dr. Gary Zamanigian, Diocesan Nominating Committee; and Kathy Mekjian, Women's Guild Central Council.

While the guests had an opportunity to engage in traditional Armenian fellowship with each other and with the Primate, copious amounts of great food were available. The reception was sponsored by Catherine and Howard Atesian and Janet and Edward Mardigian. The event was truly an evening that will remain prominent in the hearts and minds of those who attended.

-Harry Avagian



Pictured above: Diane & Ara Ekizian and Edward & Janet Mardigian visit with our Primate at the reception.

Komitas Choir News.....

The Komitas Choir membership has elected a new Executive Body for 2012. Officers are: Chair, Kelly Callan; Vice Chair, Arlene Baylerian; Treasurer, Edward H. Korkoian; Recording Secretary, Charlene Apigian; Corresponding Secretary, Marianne Dardarian; advisors, Linda Jevahirian, Lucy Merzian and ex-officio advisor, Denise Karakashian.

The annual Komitas Choir Christmas party was held December 11th at Antonio's in Farmington Hills. A game was played in which teams competed by matching events with dates, Armenian cities and provinces with general information about them and musical terms and definitions. The winning team pictured at right consisted of co-captains Yn. Roberta Kochakian and Charlene Apigian and team members John Yavruian, Sooren Gozmanian, Michael Hazerjian, George Boyagian, Dr. Joyce Yeghissian and Fr. Diran Papazian.



The traditional Western Christmas Eve services took place Saturday, December 24th at 5:00 pm in the sanctuary of our church. While it was a tradition to have the Christmas Eve services, it was also untraditional because of the early start of the services and the very first time that chime ringers and Church School students were a part of this Christmas celebration at St. John's.



This year's program was unique because it featured the older and younger youth of our parish as the principal participants. Under the direction of Deacon Rubik Mailian and Anita Arslanian, the students of St. John Church School sang Christmas hymns in English and Armenian. Narrators Razmig Kalanjian, Emily Movsesian and Christine Santourian made the story of the first Christmas Eve come alive with readings from the Gospels.



To further enhance the evening's service, church organist Margaret Lafian and guest violinist Sevahn Merian provided the instrumental music appropriate for remembering the birth of Christ.

Thanks to the instructional effort put forth by Deacon Rubik, this year for the first time hand chime ringers were featured several times during the evening. Church School participants included Vaughn Carman, Zaven Dadian, Kyle Doyon, Tamara Doyon, Arevik Mamassian, Garo Matossian, Isabelle Matossian and Julia Palaian. *(Continued on page 6)*

Women's Guild News.....

At the November meeting members helped create gift bags for the Alternative for Girls home. Sue Vian chaired this worthy cause. That evening Dawn Karagosian (our new chairman), Karmen Santourian and Virginia Mekjian were elected to the executive board. Congratulations!

Women's Guild members and their guests enjoyed a magical evening during Advent by Candlelight, on November 30th. The room was aglow with candlelit tables and beautiful Christmas decorations. Holiday music and inspirational messages of Love, Joy, Hope and Peace were presented in the sanctuary. Solange Messelian, Yn. Roberta Kochakian, Dr. Diana Cohen and Pamela Dayinian were the evening speakers. The musical program directed by Diane Kachadurian Nolf included organist Lance Luce, the ensemble *Noteworthy* and soloist Kelly Karakashian Callan. Thank you to co-chairs Jackie El Chemmas, Sandra Jamian and their committee for making the event possible.

Members enjoyed a delicious meal prepared by co-chairs Pam Dayinian, Dawn Karagosian and their committee at our annual Christmas dinner December 7th. A holiday musical program was performed by pianist Margret Benian, violinist, Sevahn Merian, and members of our Komitas choir and our talented Women's Guild members. In the true spirit of Christmas donations of baby items were collected for new mothers-in-need under the leadership of Carol Ohanesian. Abigayle Ministries, Children's Hospital and Catherine Ferguson Academy gratefully received the generous gifts from our members.

-Nora Noraian



New Torchbearer format

The Torchbearer has a new look and a new size, changes which we hope will be as well received as the 'facelift' it underwent in the last five years. Ten issues a year, incorporating the holiday worship schedule into the two issues, establishing the *Yearbook* that recognizes all the year's donations and producing everything in-house with donated design services and volunteer help has meant sizeable financial savings and better information to our readers. In order to streamline the effort, better utilize our volunteers and realize postage savings, we have moved to this new size. Please let us know what you think and we hope you continue to value this publication.

Baku Memorial Project.....

Sparked by the independence movement of Armenians living in Nagorno-Karabagh accompanied by the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Baku and Sumgait pogroms targeted the historic Armenian minority in Azerbaijan beginning in 1988.

Twenty-two years have passed since the faithful days of the pogroms. In recognition of these devastating crimes against humanity, and specifically against Armenians, St. John Armenian Church of Greater Detroit has planned to place a memorial on its grounds. To raise its goal of \$35,000, the Baku Memorial Monument Committee planned a benefit dinner for December 4th. After several weeks of arranging, the event was anticipated to be an enormous success - and it did not disappoint. Father Garabed Kochakian blessed the table in front of a full house, and the night began on a perfect note. From the splendid food to the beautifully lit and decorated venue, both generously provided by Garri and Kristina Mazmanian proprietor and owner of the Allegro Restaurant, in West Bloomfield. For the phenomenal volunteer staff of Arthur and Enrico Agamyan, Mike and Greg Babayan, Mikhail Balasanov, Arsen Mazmanian, Gulchekhra Nasirova, Alex Orman, and Iryna Yatsyshyn, and finally, to the traditional Armenian sounds of Harry Hovakimian, Alex Mazmanian, and Tamara Yesayan, the night's success proved that Armenians never forget.

The benefit dinner succeeded in raising over \$8,000, a large portion of the total amount needed to erect the monument. Still, the goal has not been met and additional fundraising is imperative. The Committee has set an additional date for an event February 19th on *Boon Paregentan* at the St. John's Church Hall. The Baku Memorial Committee of St. John's will continue fundraising in order to make this dream a reality by the summer of 2012.

To contribute, a tax deductible donation can be made by check, payable to St. John Armenian Church with "Baku Memorial Fund" in the memo section. Credit cards and other forms of donation are welcomed and can be made by calling St. John Armenian Church at 248.569.3405. For more information, please visit stjohnsarmenianchurch.org. To stay updated via e-mail or for additional information on this event and all future events, please contact Julia Papiyants at jpapiyan@umich.edu or visit the project's blog: www.thebakuproject.webstarts.com.

-Julia Papiyants

(Choir, continued from page 4)

The early evening's services were extremely well attended and there occurred during the evening a sincere expression among all those present to extend to each other Christmas greetings! It is the hope that this new 'tradition' will grow with even more youth participation.

Fr. Garabed and Dn. Rubik have brought together a group of individuals to form the Komitas Choir Music Guild for the purpose of organizing musical events throughout the year, which will be sponsored by the Komitas Choir. The members are from the choir and friends of the choir.

After a year of preparation, the Choir began the taping in January for a CD of liturgical music, which will be available for purchase later in the year. This will include the full choir as well as soloists.

The Komitas Choir invites any interested members of the congregation who would like to raise their voices with the choir on Sundays to join us. Please contact Dn. Rubik Mailian or any choir member for further information.

-Charlene Apigian & Harry Avagian

In our parish.....

Notice from the Parish Council

The Parish Council would like to acknowledge the service of two of its members and a change in the roles they currently perform.

Paul Yousoufian signed a contract beginning January 1, 2012 to become the Church's first Catering Manager. As such, he resigned his position on the Council to assume his current duties.

Ardis Gregory, serving as the first alternate the entire year, has assumed the vacated position caused by Paul's departure.

Both of these individuals have served their Church with distinction and will continue to do so in their new positions.

Sincerely,

Father Garabed Kochakian

President

John Yavruian

Chairman

Happy 3rd Birthday, "Moms and Manoogs"!

"Moms and *Manoogs*" will be celebrating its third year already in 2012! In that time we've been blessed with the births of three new babies adding to the fun. We also have welcomed a new mom and two more *manoogs*, bringing our group to six moms and nine *manoogs*.

We celebrated Fall with trips to the cider mill and our first Halloween party, held in the church nursery. This winter we will continue the fun with trips to the Henry Ford Museum, The Robot Garage and The Detroit Historical Museum.

Belonging to this group is a wonderful introduction to Church life for young moms and children. It's also a wonderful way to begin new friendships, big and small.

We meet twice a month, usually on Mondays, Wednesdays or Fridays from 10 am to noon. We are flexible in our days and times in hopes to gain new members.

Please contact Kristen Gustafson at 248.765.0471 or email her for more information at: frissy10@hotmail.com

-Kristen Gustafson



In our parish.....

Keep Kef Klub on your calendar!

At the December 16th Kef Klub, the ACYOA Juniors with the help of Lisa Mardigian, Anita Arslanian and parents served a feast of turkey, mashed potatoes, stuffing, green bean casserole, cranapple cobbler and a never-ending sweet table. Ara Topouzian shared his knowledge and musical talents on the *kanun* for our listening pleasure.

Kef Klub in 2012

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



(Choir, continued from page 4)

Fr. Garabed Dn. Rubik have brought together a group of individuals to form the Komitas Choir Music Guild for the purpose of organizing musical events throughout the year, which will be sponsored by the Komitas Choir. The board members are from the choir and friends of the choir.

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-Charlene Apigian & Harry Avagian

The Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure

This popular Detroit event which is scheduled for Saturday, May 26th in downtown Detroit, includes a 5K Run, a 5K Walk and a 1 Mile Walk and supports breast cancer awareness, education and research.

For more information on the Race itself, refer to the web site: <http://www.karmanos.org/raceforthecuredetroit> or contact St. John's chair, Barbara Rupas at 248.643.7666 or troyfam@comcast.net.

The team needs a name, so if you have any creative ideas, feel free to contact Barbara at the contacts above. We look forward to a great team in support of this worthy cause.



ACYOA has shaped me into the person I AM

Karen Dardarian, ACYOA Central Council Vice Chair

Recently I had an interview for a job. I discussed that I would need one weekend off every month because I was involved on a national level with our church youth organization. She looked at me like I was crazy. At the end of the interview she asked me how important my involvement in the organization was and if it meant a lot to me. I gave her that same look she gave me - I thought she was crazy for asking me that. I looked at her and in three words I said, "It's my life."

On the way home all I thought about was my involvement in the ACYOA and what it has done for my life. Since I was a young teenager I have been actively involved in the ACYOA. Throughout the years I have gained memories, achieved many goals, and built long lasting friendships through the ACYOA. Being involved with the ACYOA has shaped me into the person ***I AM***.

In my family, the ACYOA goes back three generations. My grandparents were actively involved when the ACYOA was organized in 1946. My great-aunt and -uncle both served on early Central Councils helping build the structure of the ACYOA. My parents, aunts and uncles followed suit and were active as young adults. My own mother was honored with the Sam Nersesian Award, which is given to an individual who has displayed the Christian values of love, patience, and understanding. Just last year, I was also privileged to receive that award. Following in my family's footsteps is such an amazing and proud feeling.

My strong connection with church has been because of my involvement with the ACYOA and has shaped me into the person ***I AM*** and has brought me closer to God and my Armenian community. I also believe it is very important to connect with the older generation. One special individual in my life was a woman named Araxie Andonian, who passed away in 2010. I called her my grandma, my "Foxy Roxy". It all started during our ACYOA Juniors Fish Dinners where we began short meaningful conversations that turned into a grandmother-like bond. From then on, every Sunday after church, we sat together and built a friendship where her wise words spoke to me.

I have learned so much about myself and about my relationship with God during my experiences in ACYOA. I always look forward to the next program or event, not only to see my friends that I have made over the years, but also to build new relationships. Serving on Central Council has blessed me with the opportunity to spread God's love to Armenian youth, bringing them together in conjunction with the life of the church. There are so many factors in the outside world that pull our youth away, but the ACYOA brings the youth back to church. Being on Central Council and setting an example for the youth is very important to me. It is a big responsibility, making decisions and trying our best to improve the organization.

One must take the time to remember and give thanks for the blessings in our lives. I truly do not know what my life would be like without ACYOA. One of my favorite quotes is from Archbishop Sion Manoogian in 1950; "Remember your fore-fathers suffered many persecutions to make possible the Christian privileges and opportunities you now enjoy. Let them not have suffered in vain. Take the torch of your ancestors and strive onward with it. It is a precious heritage." Let's give thanks for our ancestors for they have set an example that has been passed down for many years; they have been an influence in my life decisions.

I'm thankful for what the ACYOA has done for my life; It has shaped me into the person ***I AM***.

I AM ARMENIAN. I AM CHRISTIAN. I AM THANKFUL.

Sacraments.....

BAPTISMS

November 2011

- 26 Talia Irma & Jack Hachig
Children of Larry & Tanya Dadian
Godparents: Lyle Dadian
& Natalie Yaghdjian
- 27 Owen Gregory
Son of Mark & Kathryn Nardell
Godparents: Michael Megerian
& Nicole Matoian

December 2011

- 4 Jahanshah Krikor
Son of Brian & Leah Khaghani-Lutz
Godparents: Adam Garbooshian
& Laura Conn
- 9 Eleanor Zahra
Daughter of Kamo & Annie
Gharapetian
Godparents: Ara Malekian
& Debra Odom
- 10 Kohar Shoushan
Daughter of Gregory
& Nayiri Karapetian
Godparents: Mark & Karine
Shnorhokian
- 10 Minka Barbara
Daughter of Perry & Michelle
Minasian
Godparents: Kelvin Minasian
& Elizabeth Stropp

2012 REQUIEM SERVICES

Requiem prayers—*hokehanksdyan bashdon*—will be offered **every** Sunday with the exception of the following Sundays:

Armenian Christmas—**January 8** • Blessing of Infants—**February 12** • Palm Sunday—**April 1**
Feast of the Resurrection of Our Lord (Easter)—**April 8** • Church School Graduation—**May 20** Pentecost—**May 27** • Feast of Holy Etchmiadzin—**June 10** • Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord—**July 15**
Feast of the Assumption of the Holy Mother-of-God—**August 12** • Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross—**September 16**

Requests for requiems should be received in the church office by Thursday afternoon at the latest.

- 11 Andrea Mahran
Son of Seevan & Anni Awhan
Godparents: Mark & Sally Shina
- 17 Stephanie Grace
Daughter of James & Carrie Vitale
Godparents: Thomas Vitale
& Rebecca Couyoumjian

WEDDINGS

December 2011

- 3 Jennifer Anne Chiroyan & Daniel Robert Scappaticci
Khachyeghpayr: Eric Topelian
Bestmen: Joseph & Michael Scappaticci

FUNERALS

November 2011

- 26 Victoria Ameriguian, 80

December 2011

- 20 Susan Curtiss, 45, Oakland Hills
- 30 George Nishan Godoshian, 90, 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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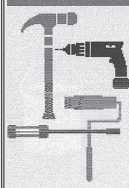
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CONTACT MAY KAFAFIAN
AT THE CHURCH OFFICE
248.569.3405

Save the Date.....

February

- 3-4 Men's Society Retreat (off-site)
- 5 Men's Society Super Bowl Beer Tasting
- 12 Infants' Blessing Service
Men's Society Pancake Breakfast
- 14 Presentation of our Lord - *Diarnuntarach*
- 16 Feast of Vartanantz
- 17 Kef Klub - "Journey to Jerusalem" - Rec Center
- 19 *Boon Barekenda*
Memorial Tea & Program sponsored by
the Baku Memorial Committee
- 20 Great Lent Begins
- 22 Day by Day Afternoon Bible Study
ACYOA Lenten Dinner; Lenten Vigil Service
- 26 Annual Parish Assembly
- 29 ACYOA Lenten Dinner; Lenten Vigil

March

- 4 Men's Society Pancake Breakfast
- 7 ACYOA Fish Dinner; Lenten Vigil Service
- 10 Annual Lenten Retreat Seminar
"Forgiving the Unforgivable"
- 12-15 Midwest Clergy Retreat (off-site)
- 14 ACYOA Fish Dinner; Lenten Vigil Service
- 16 Kef Klub - Rec Center
- 21 ACYOA Lenten Dinner; Lenten Vigil Service
- 28 Day by Day Afternoon Bible Study
ACYOA Fish & Lobster Dinner
Lenten Vigil Service

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

The Torchbearer Staff

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Anna Sarkisian, *Managing Editor, Copy & Layout*; Harry Avagian
Mary Davidson, 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 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