

Winter Solstice



V. Rev. Fr. Oshagan Gulgulian, Pastor



ST. SAHAG & ST. MESROB ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH PARISH COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP DIRECTORY

OFFICE

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Pastor

The Very Rev. Fr. Oshagan Gulgolian, *M. Div.*

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Church Office Hours

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Pastor's Hours

10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Sunday Divine Liturgy Services

Divine Liturgy – 10:00 a.m.
Choirmaster – Yn. Angel Metjian

Organists:

Laraine Ballard

PARISH COUNCIL

Alex Topakbashian	Chair
Lisa Manookian	Vice Chair
Laraine Ballard	Treasurer
Rosine Gouveia	Asst. Treasurer
Vicken Bazarbashian	Recording Secretary
Alene Schreiner	Corresponding Secretary
Avedis Boornazian	Advisor
Janet Soghomonian	Advisor
Steven Keytanjian	Advisor
Shahab Minasian	Advisor
Lisa Kailian	Advisor

Diocesan Delegates

Lisa Manookian
George Kodokian
Robin Williams

Mer Doon Advisory Committee

Editor Pamela Mamourian
Advisors Alene Schreiner

Nominating Committee

Julyet Degirmenci
Sonia Placido
Seta Topakbashian

Auditing Committee

Audrey Klijian Shaw
Edward Sarkisian
Alex Mamourian

Sunday School Co-Superintendents

Sossi Avrigian and Teresa Yenovkian

Church Organization Chairpersons

ACYOA Jrs.	Sona Bardakjian
Choir	Laraine Ballard
Men's Club Senior	Haig Geovjian
Men's Club	Krikor Soghomonian & Alex Mamourian
Permanent Endowment Fund	Steve Barsamian
Women's Guild	Nancy DerSimonian
Youth Committee	Sarkis Berberian

Communications/Website

Communications	Pamela Mamourian
Web Designer	Alex Topakbashian
Advisors	Alene Schreiner Noel Krommenhoek

Armenian Heritage Center

Carol Keosayian, *Coordinator*

Facilities Management

Alex Topakbashian,
Grounds & Maintenance Liaisons
Aris Topakbashian, *Coordinator*

Front cover:

Our beloved St. Sahag & St. Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church on the evening of February 19th, 2021, just minutes *before* the first Friday Lenten Service. The church, adorned by the snowy landscape, was aglow beneath the last light of the evening sky. The photograph on the back page, capturing the church at peace beneath the rising moon, was taken just minutes *following* the same Lenten Service.

Photo Credit: Pam Mamourian



THE PASTOR'S CORNER

Where Religion and Science Unite

What is a miracle? And would we recognize one if we saw one? I have recently been thinking about the extraordinary teams of scientists and researchers who worked tirelessly to develop safe and effective vaccines that would put an end to the pandemic's unyielding grip on the world. In a race to save lives from the ravages of Covid-19, these dedicated teams found the answer in record time. *That* is a miracle. It is a miracle of science, human intelligence and fervent commitment, but let us not forget the undeniable origin of this miracle. This miracle was born from the will of God and his infinite design. And it struck me, though we are often made by the media to believe that science and faith in God are incompatible – because that makes a good headline – science and faith can actually complement one another. The discovery of the Covid-19 vaccine is a good example.

In the search for a vaccine, scientists and researchers poured their minds and hearts into the work that would secure protection for humankind. These scientists and researchers were fueled by a type of faith; a faith that with the proper education and the proper resources, their scientific knowledge and their work ethic would yield results. As spiritual leaders, we respect and value these scientists. And though we understand their confidence based in scientific discovery, what we know, as deeply faithful Christians, is that our human achievements are born from the divine and eternal will of God, which surpasses all human understanding. Only God can orchestrate human intelligence, human drive, and allow for the coming together of resources at the right time and the right place for this miracle to come to light. God's divine and infinite, all-merciful power – *that is where our faith lies*. And so we pray. We pray for those researchers and scientists to discover a vaccine. We pray for the souls lost, their grieving families, and for the medical professionals who care for us. We pray for an end to this pandemic. In this way, though we may take different roads, science and religion are compatible, working towards the same goal. Alongside each other, we put our faith and our hope into action. Together we are stronger.

Though religion and science understand life through different lenses, we all share the same human emotions of faith and hope. We believers in the will of God have *spiritual faith* to explain the world around us and beyond, now and always, unto the ages and ages. And science has their type of faith, too. A faith that they will make sense of the world through their scientific study. And whether our faith is born of the mind or the spirit, *we can join together as healers, and together we can do miracles*.

✍ Fr. Oshagan



A MESSAGE FROM OUR PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

2020 was a year that tested us. Whether it was at home with the pandemic or in Armenia and Artsakh with the war, we all experienced an unprecedented set of challenges as a global Armenian community. Though we are beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel of the pandemic, we continue to mourn the losses of our brave soldiers and others who were senselessly killed during this war.

As a Parish, we have done what we can to maintain some semblance of order. Though the difficulties we have all faced have been upsetting and disconcerting at times, they have not shaken our people's faith. Thanks to a few very significant donations combined with many other generous contributions throughout the year, we were able to keep the church finances in order.

It is almost hard to believe that March marks one year for the current Parish Council's term. We have never met in person! During the past year we have heard about the heroic efforts of our healthcare workers. What often goes unnoticed are the heroic efforts demonstrated by the members of our Parish Leadership. I would like to take this opportunity to appreciate every member for their efforts this year and give you all an idea of the types of things they have done. Here is a snapshot of a few:

- **Hayr Sourp**, among the many things he does, day after day he confronts the pandemic to do the most essential work of the church in praying and caring for our people, especially those in need.
- **Laraine Ballard**, as Treasurer and organist, has gracefully navigated one of the most challenging financial years we have ever faced, putting us in position to build a very strong future.
- **Vicken Bazarbashian**, as Recording Secretary, has had an especially difficult job during our virtual meetings and has been a voice for connecting us to what is happening throughout the community.
- **Avi Boornazian** has consistently been in the Narthex each Sunday, guiding worshipers to ensure safety measures are always followed so we can continue to participate in Badarak safely.
- **Rosine Gouveia**, as Assistant Treasurer, has helped to make sure our bills are paid while also spearheading two exceptional food pick-up events to replace our Picnic and Christmas Festival, with more to come.
- **Lisa Manookian**, along with **Lisa Kailian** and **Robin Williams**, have ensured that we have world-class virtual programs to keep our people connected and informed.
- **Steven Keytanjian** has been on the Altar nearly every Sunday and for most Sacraments, ensuring that Hayr Sourp always has the support of a deacon with him.
- **George Kodokian** has provided his experience and wisdom to constantly keep an eye on where we are financially, providing confidence in how we can tackle the complex issues in front of us.
- **Shahab Minassian**, with his medical expertise, has given us confidence to develop the proper guidelines that have ensured church services could continue safely throughout the year.
- **Alene Schreiner** has spearheaded a group of parishioners who have done incredible work to schedule vaccine appointments for those at risk but with no means of scheduling them on their own.
- **Janet Soghomonian** has provided support anywhere she is needed, whether in the Narthex, in food preparation or in being the strongest voice for the people of our parish and those in need.

In addition to the contributions of our elected members, I want to highlight the incredible efforts of several others who kept our church going this year. **Loutfi and Mania Arabatilian**, along with **Noel Krommenhoek** have been present nearly every Sunday to join in the celebration of Badarak. **Pamela Mamourian** has been



unwavering in her dedication to manage the live streaming of all of our church services and in the production of our Mer Doon. They, along with **Ayshe Chakmaklian**, **Elizabeth Barsamian** and **Joe Barnaby** have been the pillars in keeping our church functioning through this pandemic.

As we think about what lies ahead, we must maintain our vigilance; both about our health, and in our support of the displaced and grieving families in Armenia. We are proud to have raised \$10,000 during our Christmas Festival pick-up event, but that is not enough. In Philadelphia, we have long been the example for how Armenians of all groups come together. When we do, extraordinary things happen. Our brothers and sisters in Armenia and Artsakh continue to need our support, now it is up to us to come together and create new ways to provide it.

✍ *Alex Topakbashian, Chairman, Parish Council*
office@sahagmesrob.church

A Silver Lining of the Pandemic

It has been well highlighted that there have been many silver linings as a result of the pandemic. Families within the same household are spending more time together. People are stepping up to help each other out in unexpected ways. Traffic has certainly decreased. And many have more time to reflect and pray.

In our parish, we too have experienced a few silver linings during this time – in the form of the upgrades we have been making. With the inability to host any social gatherings, we have been afforded with time to make some much-needed improvements to the facility, starting with Memorial Hall. The kitchen and bathrooms are currently undergoing enhancements that will better



serve events of the future. The hall itself will undergo a major change in décor that will undoubtedly transform the experience of guests attending any event.

While we look forward to the time when we can all be together to enjoy these, we have also begun planning some minor changes to Hayatian Hall that we will be able to enjoy on a more regular basis.

A second major upgrade is one that is less visible, yet as important. With the pandemic limiting our ability to be together to conduct the business of the church, we have moved all of our church membership, donations and accounting processes to systems that will allow us to manage everything online. This upgrade will



dramatically increase our ability to run the operations of the church, conduct outreach and keep you informed, all while connecting directly to our website and social media platforms.

✍ *Alex Topakbashian*



Christmas Pick-Up and Go

The pandemic continually challenges us to create different modes of outreach to our parishioners and local community. While we were not able to physically gather together for our annual Christmas Festival, we had a successful Christmas Pick-Up and Go, co-chaired by Lisa Manookian and Alex Topakbashian. This event not only allowed us to share our talents and delicious food with our community, but also created an opportunity for us to raise funds to assist our brothers and sisters in Artsakh. We also expanded our online ordering capabilities, reaching many of our parishioners and local Main Line community members.

Many thanks to the following: Rosine Gouveia and Julyet Degirmenci, for tirelessly coordinating the food preparation over several months, amidst the challenging guidelines which limited the amount of assistance and resources, due to the necessary consideration of COVID-19 safety guidelines; Lynn Baboujian and her crew, for organizing and filling the take-out orders; John Baboujian and his crew, for cutting, marinating and grilling the meat; our fabulous kitchen crew; and the many volunteers who assisted Rosine and Julyet with food preparation. Special thanks to the Toufayan family, for donating the pita bread and to our parishioners and friends for their continued support in these difficult times. While we missed seeing everyone in person, we hope once the pandemic is over, we can resume our annual Christmas Festival in 2021.

With the success of our event, plus the many donations received, close to \$20,000 was raised. Of this amount, \$10,000 is being sent to Artsakh Outreach, a mission undertaken by the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin to raise support throughout the global Armenian community and deliver aid to the Armenians of Artsakh after the recent war. All money raised through this initiative will benefit individuals and families who have been displaced and in need of financial support. Donations will provide food, shelter, basic necessities and utilities. Due to the request of many, a Spring Pick Up and Go will be held on May 8, details for which will be forthcoming in late March.

✍ Lisa Manookian





St. Sahag & St. Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church ❖ Winter 2021
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BENEFACTORS

Gerald and Robin Williams, in memory of Edward Kazanjian on the 10th Anniversary of his passing

PATRONS

Edward & Margaret Boyajian, in memory of the deceased members of the Boyajian and Sarian Families

Harry & Veronica Hoplamazian

Lisa Kailian, in memory of Elize & Garabed Megerian

Alexander & Pamela Mamourian, in memory of Marcus Mamourian

SPONSORS

Alma Alabilikian & Peter Paone, in memory of the deceased members of the Alabilikian and Tekirian families and in honor of the dedicated health workers

Nurhan & Hilda Antilian, in memory of Suzan & Jirayr Antilian

Mgirdich & Marie Azadian, in memory of Virginia Gulasarian Azadian

Alice Aznavourian, in memory of Garo Aznavourian

Edwig Basil & Garo Teberian, in memory of Aida, Maida and Alfred Basil and Aghavni & Hovanes Teberian

Karen & Robert Cannuscio and Family, in memory of Garo Aznavourian and Albert Cannuscio

Robert & Sara Hagopian, in memory of Arshavir & Victoria Hagopian

Jack & Carol Hoplamazian, in memory of Crosby & Meline Goshgarian and Hagop & Varsenig Hoplamazian

Florence Kazanjian

Nichan & Christine Tchorbajian

DONORS

Alice & Charles Alyanakian

Armen & Maro Arutunian, in memory of Antranik Arutunian and Kadarine Arutunian

Gregory & Christine Arslanian, in memory of Elizabeth J. Seraydarian and John & Elizabeth Arslanian

Bruce & Laraine Ballard

Albert Baltaeff, in memory of Hrant Baltaeff and Aroshiag Baltaeff

Elizabeth Barsamian, in memory of the deceased members of the Barsamian Family

Haig & Sheena Dadourian, in memory of Daniel & Ovsanna Dadourian and Garabed & Asnif Nigohosian

Samuel & Julyet Degirmenci, in memory of Yeremya & Mari Senbag and Sarkis & Dikranuhi Degirmenci

Nancy & Nishan DerSimonian

Alice Dertadian, on the occasion of Erika Yepremian's 40th birthday

Michael Kazanjian, in memory of Mary Kazanjian

Debbie Lussinian, in memory of Krikor Lussinian

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John & Opy Eskandarian, in memory of Mihran & Zabel Eskandarian and Harry & Rose Tourigian
Charles Kazanjian, in memory of Abraham Lincoln
Lisa Kazanjian
Ronald Khachadourian
Berjouhi Kitabjian, in memory of Garabed Kitabjian
Noel Krommenhoek
Charles & Sara Kurkjian, in honor of Manuel & Bertha Takoushian
Jerry & Lucille Mikaelian, in memory of Joe & Mary Hoplamazian
Emasdouhy Odabashian, in memory of Sahag Odabashian
Mary Odabashian, in honor of Mesrob & Grace Odabashian
Sam & Pat Pogharian, in memory of Lori Pogharian Smith
George, Ida, Gracie & Georgina Ramoundos, in honor of Mesrob & Grace Odabashian
Mary Sarkisian, in memory of Robert Sarkisian
Robert & Susan Sarrafian, in memory of Malena Sarrafian and Steve Sarrafian
Albert Seraydarian, in memory of the deceased members of the Seraydarian Family
Arslan Seraydarian, in memory of Gladys (Sivart) Seraydarian
Paul Sevag, in memory of Florence Sevag
William Thompson, Jr. & Molly Maritza Mamourian, in memory of Marcus Mamourian
Aris & Seta Topakbashian, in honor of grandkids; Jacob, Jemma & Joseph

Note from a Good Neighbor

Hi there,

We purchased a delicious meal from you all in December, and I have been meaning to reach out to let you know how wonderful it was and to say thank you! While some of the foods were unfamiliar to us, it was all terrific and enjoyed by all!

We don't attend your church - actually we belong to Redeemer in Bryn Mawr - but many years ago we had an Armenian-German au pair living with us. You all welcomed her into your parish during her short tenure, and she was appreciative. Even though she is long gone (and now is a mom of her own!), we luckily continue to receive your newsletters, which is how we learned about your December 12th event. We hope that your fundraising efforts were successful and wish you a peaceful and happy new year.

Thanks again,
Caroline Manogue





Nativity and Theophany of our Lord Jesus Christ

*Krisdos dznav yev haydnetsav,
Orhnyal eh haydnootiounn Krisdosi!
Tsezi yev mezi medz avedis!*



Our traditional Armenian Christmas remains on January 6th, the date all Christian churches celebrated Christ's birth until the 4th century. St. Sahag & St. Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church began their celebration with a beautiful candlelight Christmas Eve Service on January 5th.

Though there were no passages read from the Bible by the Sunday School students this year in an effort to maintain safety during the pandemic, the candlelight service was nonetheless quite spectacular. Mania Arabatlian and Noel Krommenhoek sang the traditional and beautiful holy hymns while Deacons Steven Keytanjian and Loutfi Arabatlian served on the altar alongside Hayr Sourp Oshagan Gulgulian.

At the conclusion of the service, candles were distributed to the parishioners while Hayr Sourp called on the faithful to "Come forward to light your candle and take to your homes the light of Bethlehem." This year, Covid-19 refrained us from our traditional "Home Blessing" of the Church, which typically follows in Hayatian Hall.

As is the Armenian tradition, Christmas Day serves as the celebration of the birth of Christ and his baptism in the Jordan River by John the Baptist. Alex Topakbashian was honored after the Divine Liturgy as Godfather of the "Churorhnek" – the Blessing of the Water Service. Hayr Sourp chanted prayers while pouring holy muron into the water from a dove shaped pitcher that symbolizes the Holy Spirit. After this powerful water blessing, the holy water was distributed to the faithful in attendance. We congratulate Alex Topakbashian in his role as Godfather of the Cross, 2021.



PARISH NEWS

WOMEN'S GUILD

Although we are living in times of a pandemic, the executive board has been busy coming up with ideas for our guild.

We have done some volunteering the past couple of years at the Narberth Food Bank located not far from our church. We had decided in 2019 to give back to our nearby community, and after some thought and research, chose this charity to offer assistance. Prior to the pandemic we had a food drive, and also had some members contribute their time at the location, sorting and boxing food. We would like to have another food drive in May of this year to coincide with a Women's Guild picnic that is being planned. As of today, the Food Bank is in most need of canned fruit and fruit cups, canned spaghetti/ravioli, canned chili/beef stew, canned soup (not tomato or chicken noodle), peanut butter, granola bars, crackers, hot or cold cereal, canned green beans, canned corn, canned peas, vegetable broth/stock, and chicken broth/stock. Please know that anyone is able to contribute to this worthwhile event, not just Women's Guild members. If you'd like to drop off your donation prior to the pick up day, please place your donation in the box marked Narberth Food Bank located in the church narthex. Please note that there is no one at church on Fridays, and if you plan on dropping off your donation on another weekday, it would be best to call the office to ensure someone is there at that time. You may also drop off your donation with Rosine Gouveia, 414 Eldon Drive, Broomall, PA, or at my home at 16 Farm Road, Wayne, PA. Please donate only non-expired items.

We hope to kick off the year with a general meeting, followed by the picnic mentioned above, on Sunday, May 16, after church services. We will have a rain date if the weather is uncooperative. This will be the final date for donations for the Narberth Food Bank drive. It will be great to all be together again and catch up on what we've all been up to this past year. We have a couple of women who have offered to help spearhead this day for us, but we'd love more. If you are able to assist, either prior to the event and/or during the actual day, please email me. No prior experience necessary!

I have also received many requests regarding dues for 2021. Thank you for your continued support. Dues will remain at \$15 and are payable to St. Sahag & St. Mesrob Women's Guild. Please mail your check to Rosine Gouveia, 414 Eldon Drive Broomall, PA 19008. You may pay them at any time during the year. We hope we can count on you.

Speaking of dues, we were directed by the Women's Guild Central Council to forgo the collection of dues for 2020. This was communicated subsequent to many already sending in their dues. We reached out to the 2020 members, and provided an option of either carrying over their payment to 2021 or allowing us to donate this money to CASP (Children of Armenia Sponsorship Program). 100% chose to donate the money to this meaningful fund, and we thank you for that.

The executive board is extremely excited about producing another cookbook, as it's been years since our last one was published. This will take a lot of work, but we feel it's a task worth undertaking. I was just looking over a cookbook published decades ago by our church, and it's so nice to see all the names of the women, and men, who submitted recipes and provided some history. It's so important to keep them going. We will need recipes, recipes and more recipes! We all have our favorite go-to recipes that we probably have memorized, so they'd be wonderful submissions. Of course, Armenian recipes are always in high demand, and any other recipe that may be lost, is unique, or a secret one that you might be willing to share would be very welcome. In addition to recipes, we'd love to have a team work on this endeavor, as it will require many minds and hands



to get it done well. If you'd like to be a part of this, please email me. My email is ndersimonian@gmail.com. I wish you all a very Happy Easter!

✍️ Nancy DerSimonian

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Our Sunday School students have continued to learn and grow in their relationship with Jesus and knowledge of the Armenian Apostolic Church traditions. They learned how to make “mas” and then prepared it for the Christmas season. Our Sunday School families came together to prepare a wonderfully moving Christmas program telling the Christmas story by having each family film Scripture reading and all coming together for several songs. The story began with the reading from Luke 1:26-38, *The Birth of Jesus Foretold*, read by the Binnion, Boghosian, Lusk, Djevharian and Bedrosian families. This reading was followed by the singing of “O Come All Ye Faithful.” The second reading, Luke 2:1-7, *The Birth of Jesus*, was read by the Barbouletos and Ramoundos families, followed by singing, “Away in a Manger.” The third reading, Luke 2:8-21 *Angels visit the Shepherds*, was read by the Lusk, Topakbashian, Yacobe and Wanamaker families. We then sang “Silent Night,” partially in Armenian, and “Loor Keeshner.” The final reading, Matthew 2:1-11, *The Magi Visit the Messiah*, was read by the Topakbashian, Yacobe and Yenovkian families. The program finale was all Sunday School students singing “Joy To The World.” It was a beautiful program with our students retelling the Christmas story together. If you didn’t view the program when it aired, you can access it at the following link: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nZeQ-JOyHQ1HZ_AwbHNDjh3bFr5aF4Uu/view

Our students also spread some holiday cheer to some of the shut-in members of the congregation by sending Christmas cards. Our students are learning some wonderful traditions and we are keeping the Armenian Christian faith alive in this next generation. They have been learning about the power of prayer, keeping our Armenian families here and abroad in their prayers.



✍️ Teresa Yenovkian



MEN'S CLUB

Due to the intersection of Covid-19 with the cold weather, Men's Club has not had a gathering during the winter season. We are looking forward to the warmer weather so we can reunite in a Covid friendly manner. Our next gathering will be outside on the patio of Sopranos Restaurant at 7:00 pm on Tuesday, March 16th. We will enjoy the camaraderie of our brotherhood and discuss plans for 2021. Please rsvp to alexmamourian@me.com so I can make proper arrangements. All are welcome!

✍ Alex Mamourian

ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

Our church had been putting its house in order – pre-pandemic – with the creation of an Archives. With the 50th anniversary Banquet having past, the idea of an Archives germinated in Alma Alabilikian's mind. On July 8, 2015, Alma and Linda Babikian went through the space in the Tower just off of the church balcony. They found the room stacked with containers – “floor to ceiling” – filled with items to be sorted. The two would continue to sort materials for the next 5 weeks with rubber gloves! Many papers were immediately and, sadly, discarded due to animal infestations. Hayr Sourp Gulgulian designated the space in the Tower to be the Church Archives. The Parish Council funded the renovation of the space and gave the committee a computer to record all processed materials.

Alma's enthusiasm for this project led her to consult archivists from Arcadia University, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, The Philadelphia Museum of Art and The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. A copy of *The Manual of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission* was given and studied by Linda to analyze archival procedures. It served as the guide for establishing a categorizing system customized for our needs.

A mission statement was created:

-To collect and organize the documents, images, artifacts and memorabilia of the St. Sahag and St. Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church.

-To preserve, conserve, and have available for research all pertinent information.

Generally, materials collected in our Archives should be directly relevant to the Church; however, we also collect data about the Genocide.

By early 2018, the group was established to meet regularly on Wednesdays, throughout the year, currently in the “Archives Annex.” Alma and Linda were joined by Elizabeth Barsamian, Sonia Garabedian and Pauline Babikian. Together they worked on materials from the Tower, the Conference Room and the Conference Room basement. Haig Goevjian and Peter Paone joined as advisors. By 2019, the materials found in all the mentioned locations were processed. The items that were not pertinent to the church were offered to and accepted by: the Archives of St. Vartan Cathedral, St. Nersess Seminary, Project SAVE, and The Armenian Library and Museum of America.

Also, later in 2018, another component to the Archives was realized: recording Oral Histories of our church elders. The mission statement for this group was created:

-To expand the scope and comprehensiveness of the Archives records.

-To record a series of interviews documenting and preserving first-hand recollections of a cross-section of parishioners and significant others in order to constitute an invaluable historical record of the church.



-To make testaments available as an archival and personal resource to future generations in anticipation of genealogical research.

The Archives Committee's Oral History Project includes Steven Barsamian (interviewer), Raffi Berberian (videographer), Pauline Babikian and Carol Keosayan (co-coordinators). We have put a temporary hold on our Oral History projects due to the pandemic but hope to resume when things return to normal.

We would like to take this opportunity as a reminder that if you have served our church and have notes, membership lists, minutes of meetings, photos, banquet programs, flyers, newspaper articles, etc., the Archives Committee is accepting them. Please bag items or put them in an envelope--not loose--marked, "Archives Committee," **with your name and phone number as a contact person**. Drop off your donation to the Church Office. Photos need the name of the event, date--or approximate year, i.e., circa early 1970's. If you are able to identify people in the photo, please list them on a separate piece of paper. Specify, for instance, "Front Row, third girl from the left....Second Row, etc." Attach the identification sheet to the photo. A reminder: **please do not** write directly on the photos.

Our Archives' inspiration is a Churchill quotation: ***"A nation that forgets its past has no future."***



Archives Committee

Hats of Faith

HATS of FAITH was born when I happened upon an article about an 80-year-old Armenian woman knitting socks for the soldiers of Artsakh. As I read the article of this one woman's humble and beautiful efforts, I realized that we here at St. Sahag & St. Mesrob have the ability right in our hands to do the same to can ensure our soldiers are warm this winter. This one elderly woman so inspired me that I began the campaign, HATS of FAITH, that reached out to our parishioners, enlisting their efforts to knit (or purchase) hats, socks and gloves for our brother and sister soldiers in Artsakh.

We achieved great success. We collected approximately 300 hats, 200 pairs of socks and 150 pairs of gloves. Several of you hand-knit hats for our soldiers, many of you included notes and prayers, and most importantly, all of you who participated gave from the generosity of your hearts. The hats, gloves and socks have arrived in Armenia where they were processed through customs and at the time of this publication are being transported to army barracks in Vartenis, Armenia. I am deeply grateful for the spirit of giving and support you have shown our soldiers in Artsakh and I thank each and every one of you who participated in the HATS of FAITH project.



Fr. Oshagan





Reflections on 2020, the Year of COVID-19

As the extraordinary and arduous year of 2020 drew to a close, the V. Rev. Fr. Oshagan Gulgolian sent a notice to parishioners asking them to take a moment to reflect upon the year of 2020 and to write a paragraph or two detailing experiences. He asked, in part, how has the year affected you, challenged you, changed your life? In the midst of it all, what are you thankful for? The following submissions are responses from our parishioners.

Being a very senior citizen, I have lived through wars, conflicts, and natural disasters. Through it all, we have had our faith to sustain us. Without our faith and belief, we are lost. But this year seems to be one of the worst because of the Covid-19. We Armenians are a very close-knit people and having to be separated from our families and friends is one of the hardest things to endure. Many thanks to Hayr Sourp, the deacons and the choir members who have brought our beautiful Badarak into our homes. Just believe and trust in God that He will lead us through this, for this will pass. And be kind to everyone you encounter. I have learned the kindness you show to family, friends and especially strangers will someday come back to you. Maybe not today or tomorrow, but someday in the future when it is least expected and from a source that will be unexpected. Just be kind and have faith.

✍ *Anonymous*



Եկեղեցւոյ «Մեր Տուն» Պարբերաթերթին մէջ երեւցող կոչին պատասխանելու համար ուզեցի որ թոռնիկներս ալ մասնակից դառնան եւ իրենց պատասխաններն ալ կը ներառնեմ տարիքի կարգով մեր էջին մէջ:

Ինչ խօսք, որ համայն մադկութիւնը ազդուած է այս ոչ բնական ապրելակերպէն եւ պարտադրուած բանտարկութենէն:

Իսկ որպէս հայորդիներ՝ մեր սիրտերը աւելի կը ցաւին հայրենի մեր քոյր եղբայրներուն կորուստներով: Խորապէս կը սգանք կորուստը հազարաւոր երիտասարդներու, եւ վշտակից ենք անոնց հարազատներուն:

Մինչ այդ որպէս չափահաս –կրցածիս չափ որքան որ ալ հաշտուած եմ ներկայ կացութեան հետ, բաւական խճողուած անցեալի առօրեայէս այս հանգիստը կը փնտռեի, սակայն զաւակներուս եւ թոռնիկներուս հետ շատ սահմանափակ հանդիպումները սկսած են ազդել վրաս:

Ամփոփելու համար ըսեմ որ պարտադրուեցանք մենք մեզի աւելի հոգ տանիլ, առողջապահական օրէնքներու հետեւիլ, մէկ խօսքով մենք մեր բժիշկը ըլլալ:

Իսկ ինչ որ մեծապէս կը կարօտնանք մեր ազգային-մշակութային-ընկերային կապին բացակայութիւնն է եւ թոռնիկներու հետ յաճախակի հանդիպումներու արգելքները:



Reverend Father- Asdvads Oknagan Hayr Sourp,

In order to respond to the call in the Church's "Mer Doon," I wanted my grandchildren to participate as well, and I will include their responses following mine, by age.

Of course, the entire world is affected by this unnatural way of life and forced imprisonment. And as Armenians, our hearts ache more with the loss of our brothers and sisters in Armenia and Artsakh. We deeply mourn the loss of thousands of young people and grieve for their relatives. Prior to that, as much as I have reconciled with the present situation, even looking forward to the slower pace of life on a daily basis, the very limited interactions with my children and grandchildren started to affect me. To summarize, this situation has forced us to take better care of ourselves, to follow the health regulations; to sum it up, to be our own doctor. And what we find most difficult is the lack of our national-cultural-social ties, interactions, and the obstacles to frequent meetings with our grandchildren. We miss attending cultural events, church services, and the interactions with our friends and relatives.

Wishing all good health and safe Holidays as we say,

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year - a better one than the year 2020!

Reflections from our Grandchildren:

Alene, 19 years old: I like spending time at home, however, I miss seeing my school friends.

Nareg, 17 years old: I liked how I have a lot of time to play music. I do not like how I cannot see my friends or go to church.

Armen, 15 years old: I like having a break from school! I do not like that we have to do online schooling.

Natalie, 10 Years old: I like that I have more chance to spend more time with my family at home, but I do not like wearing masks all the time.

Patil, 8 years old: I like to be off and with my family, and I do not want to get Covid-19.

✍

Missak & Zarminé Boghosian.



Thank you for the opportunity for having us to reflect and express our experiences during these very difficult and uncharted times. You said it all Hayr Sourp when you said, "This has been a historic year like no other in my life time." Personally, these have been very stressful times for me because of Covid-19 and war in Artsakh/Armenia. The history is repeating and now we are facing even worse challenges as Armenians.

One of the most challenging times for me was being away from my loved ones. I have not seen my mom, my sister and family for over a year now. With my mom being 93, I have been wondering when and if I will ever see her alive again. Of course, not being able to hug and kiss my grandkids. At the same time, I am so grateful about living close to them so I can see them from a distance. I am also grateful about my Church and my work colleagues for their endless spiritual and emotional support.

I thank you, Hayr Sourp, and appreciate you and all the volunteers who keep St. Sahag and St. Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church alive! Praying for many sunshines to come at the end of this very dark and long tunnel! May God Bless!

✍

Seta Topakbashian





I feel like I have been running through this past year, or perhaps more accurately, running away. As much as possible I've been running away from Covid-19 and its army of constant bad news, running from the restrictions on my freedom, running from the feelings of loss and sadness. I've avoided the feeling of the walls closing in by keeping on the move, outside, in the garden, walking the dog, just.... walking, period. I spent most of the summer at our small lake house in Vermont, where all my family lives. We couldn't see each other, but I kept moving, hiking in the mountains every day. I guess I thought if I just kept on the move, none of the perils, none of the sadness, nor the weight of 2020 would catch up to me. The problem with this method is that it is impossible to keep up. At some point you just have to sit down. And then all the sadness of 2020 is right there, knocking at the door.

My family had beautiful moments in 2020, with two weddings (one pre-Covid and one Covid-restricted) and our first grandbaby on the way. We also endured great losses, the passing of my 96-year-old father-in-law and the passing of my 97-year-old mother. They were giants in my family's life. I wondered, who am I now, without them? I tried to pivot quickly from those feelings of loss, too, but I couldn't outrun them.

I found my respite, my place of calm and extraordinary comfort in the Sunday Divine Liturgy at St. Sahag & St. Mesrob. To be in the beautiful church on Sunday mornings, with my mask on and behind the camera to livestream the service, it settled me down; it calmed my urge to keep running away from this difficult year. The Badarak gave me such a deep sense of security and a steadying strength each week. I am constantly amazed at the power of the Badarak, and how all my fellow Armenian parishioners inherit this centuries-old gift simply by being born Armenian. Don't ever take it for granted. Though I watch as an outsider, being a 10th generation American and brought up Catholic, I reap deep spiritual calm and immeasurable joy from the Badarak. It is on Sunday morning that I found the place in my life where I could stop my running from the adversities of 2020 and enter into a sense of peace that grounds me.



Ram Mamourian



“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times...” - Charles Dickens

Never before has a literary quote so perfectly summed up an entire year. As I sit back and reflect on the past year, my mind keeps coming back to the juxtaposition of the happiness that came along with the difficult times.

I remember following the news in late 2019/early 2020 and hearing about this mysterious illness, COVID-19, and not giving too much thought to it. I never could have imagined how its arrival to the United States would alter our lives so drastically. Even once it was on the scene here, I wasn't too worried. I kept thinking to myself, there was no way a virus could bring us to our knees. Obviously, I was completely wrong.

The week of March 8th I started to get worried. I remember being not too happy that my husband had to take a day trip to Orlando for work, as not much was known about COVID at that point. He thought I was overreacting when I left clean clothes for him downstairs and asked him to change before entering the house when he got home. I had registered my son for a program at our local library the afternoon of March 11th and debated whether I should take him or not. In the end we went, but were one of only a few families who attended. Afterwards we went to my mom's house and had dinner with her, my sister, nieces and nephew. That would be the last time I spent with my family for a very long time.

On March 12th around 2:30 pm it was hurriedly announced that my son's school would be closing for two weeks by order of the Governor. When I picked him up we wished the principal a safe two weeks and said we would see her soon. If only we knew how wrong we were. Seemingly overnight, our world changed, our lives



were halted, and to a large degree, they have been halted since. My son, along with most children in the country, never returned to in person instruction and finished out his Kindergarten year virtually.

We decided as a family to be very cautious as we were nervous, and to be honest, scared by all that we were hearing - the reports on coronavirus and the serious health impacts seen in some of those infected here and abroad were frightening. For the safety of my mother, we told her we wouldn't be seeing her in person and each of our individual family units would quarantine alone. This in itself was a major change to our lives. We are a very close family, so we are not used to restrictions on seeing each other. I was also determined to keep my family safe because I was pregnant. This was not news we had shared with anyone at that point. It was almost surreal to be considered in the high-risk group for COVID. I was terrified the first few times I went for my OB visits after the shutdowns. I never thought I would be walking into a doctor's office masked and with gloves on, but there I was. I also never thought I would need to attend my 20-week scan alone. It felt as if we were being robbed of a special experience, however, at the same time we were happy and so thankful for a healthy pregnancy after a pregnancy loss the year prior.

When I think about all that was lost this past year, I also think about all that was gained. Cancelled birthday parties for both of my older sons turned into the most wonderful birthday parade led by two local police cruisers and eight fire engines. The lack of play dates turned into my older sons truly enjoying each other's company and playing together nicely. Not being able to visit our usual family-friendly weekend spots meant exploring outdoor areas near where we live and hikes as a family. Cancelling our yearly vacation to the beach turned into many fun summer days and nights in our backyard with a blow-up pool and sprinkler. Obsessively wiping down groceries early on meant that I had time to try out new recipes. My husband working from home for the better part of the year meant we actually were able to sit down as a family for dinner most nights. Not having anywhere to go meant having time to connect with old friends on the phone or via zoom. No sports on weekends meant discovering just how wonderful and peaceful day trips to the beach are in the early Fall. And the long period of time when we didn't see family in person made our reunion and time together all the more sweet. I could go on and on.

The happiest moment of the past year was when we welcomed our third son to the world in early August. Pregnancy and delivery during a pandemic are not for the faint of heart. Matthew is almost seven months old now and has only met a handful of people. I mourn the loss of what a normal pregnancy, delivery and infancy could have been, but I know we are blessed beyond measure to have him in our family. Again, if it weren't for the pandemic, my husband would have missed out on some of the early months with Matthew at home. And he has truly been a bright spot for my family during a very difficult year.

It's easy to feel sorry for ourselves and get caught up in anger and despair. It's hard to put things into perspective and remind yourself that this is but a blip in time, and perhaps this year has shown us what really matters most in life. I know I have to make a constant effort to recount all the good things that came out of this - the best of times that came with the worst of times. As we start to see the light at the end of the tunnel, I can't help but feel fortunate that we endured this year, all that it threw our way, and we survived it. There is still a long way to get back to normal, and maybe we won't ever get back to our old normal. But maybe that's not a bad thing.

✍

Alene Schreiner





Zoom Series on Armenia, Artsakh and the Aftermath of the Artsakh War

On January 13, the Parish Council launched its new Zoom series on Armenia, Artsakh and the Aftermath of the Artsakh War. The sub-committee included the **Fr. Oshagan Gulgolian**, Pastor; **Alex Topakbashian**, Parish Council Chair; and committee members **Lisa Kailian**, **Lisa Manookian** and **Robin Williams**.

Our first presenter was **Razmig Arzoumanian**, co-founder of the Armenian Wounded Heroes Fund, a 501(c)(3) organization focusing on humanitarian initiatives, committed to protect, save and rehabilitate Armenian soldiers serving in Armenia and Artsakh. The organization began in 2016 with all administrative costs covered by the founders, assuring that 100% donated focuses on programs and initiatives. In 2020, over \$1.5 million in projects were funded, which included collaborating with the Insurance Foundation for Servicemen (www.1000plus.am), a fund set up in Armenia to which all workers contribute, disbursing funds to wounded soldiers and their families. Front line infrastructure upgrades include Defense Support Units, giving soldiers access to showers, kitchens, a/c and heating, etc. These units are built in Armenia, at a cost of \$15,000 per unit, and are deployed at border patrol posts along the line of contact, the need for which has dramatically increased with the expansion of Armenia's borders. Physical and mental rehabilitation has now become one of Armenia's biggest challenges. The AWHF provides physical therapy, transportation and mobility to the wounded heroes and is also working to secure prosthetics for those in need of limbs. Current and future initiatives include financial support to our heroes and their families, medical and rehabilitative support, educational support via scholarships and training, and continued assistance with the rebuilding of Armenia's and Artsakh's defense forces. For more information on their programs and to donate, please visit their website at <http://www.ArmenianWoundedHeroes.com>.

On January 26, Arda Haratunian, a strategic communications advisor to numerous public and private companies, and a member of the AGBU's Central Board of Directors, joined us to focus on "Misinformation, Disinformation and Malinformation in the Age of Media and Social Media and its Effect on the Artsakh War." She spoke of how misinformation (false information) leads to disinformation (false information *deliberately spread*), and then malinformation (false information *deliberately spread with the intent to harm*) and how rapidly this can escalate, particularly on social media to frame a narrative to the public. Much of this was prevalent during the Artsakh War which resulted in not only the physical loss of much of Artsakh but also the infliction of psychological trauma throughout Armenia, Artsakh and the Diaspora.

On Sunday, February 7, our special guest was Sara Anjargolian, Chief of Staff of the Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs. Ms. Anjargolian's presentation focused on ways of tapping the Diaspora's potential and expertise and inviting that expertise into Armenia; addressing the psychological and physical aspects of repatriation via programs for youth and young adults; convening sector-specific Diaspora professionals from communities across the globe; strengthening communications and the flow of information for a better-informed Diaspora; removing barriers for investors, philanthropists, and other professionals seeking to engage the country, including barriers with respect to repatriation, inflexible laws, and customs/tax issues for Diaspora philanthropists; medical support due to the challenge of COVID, both during the war and post-war; and the challenges Armenia is now facing as a result of the Artsakh war (post-war rehab, prosthetic needs for the soldiers, mental health initiatives, and the rebuilding of Artsakh).

A major initiative of the Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs is *iGortz*, a program wherein Diaspora professionals are invited to work in the government of the Republic of Armenia. There are currently



50 professionals from 17 countries working in 19 state institutions. For more information on these and other programs and initiatives, please visit <http://www.diaspora.gov.am/en>.

As this goes to press, our series will continue with Anna Astvastaturian Turcotte on March 10 (“Researching and Documenting Loss by Artsakh During the Artsakh War”); Rev. Fr. Yeprem Kelegian and Garnik Nanagulian on March 18 (“Fund for Armenian Relief for the Artsakh Refugees and Artsakh”); and Dr. Kim Hekimian on April 8 (“COVID19 in Armenia and Armenian Health Issues”). We will continue to introduce to you/make you aware of other programs and initiatives with respect to Armenia and Artsakh as the year progresses.



Lisa Manookian

An Eternal Expression of Dedication

In February of 2019, our parish community was saddened by the loss of long time choir member, Mary Boyajian. Though she is no longer with us, her dedication to St. Sahag & St. Mesrob Armenian Church now lives in perpetuity. In November of last year, we were notified that Mary, through her estate, left the church a gift of nearly \$190,000 which represents the second largest gift to be bequeathed to our parish. The Pastor and Parish Council determined that this fund, which includes the naming of the main center-stained glass window as well as the Choir Room, will be managed by the Permanent Endowment Fund under the newly established Mary Boyajian Fund. With the exception of a portion of the fund that may be used for renovations to the Choir Room, interest from the fund will be used to support parish operations. On behalf of our entire community, we are grateful for Mary’s generosity to her church and look forward to the difference it will make for the future of our parish for years to come. More details will be shared about this in the next edition of the Mer Doon.

Pastor & Parish Council

Wish List

Our wish at this time is more of a prayer than a wish. A prayer that the vaccine soon becomes widely available for our parishioners and that we may soon be able to safely join together again in person to celebrate our services and enjoy our social and cultural events.

Thank you

I’d like to thank our Parish Leadership for their wise guidance and their creative efforts in reaching out to our parishioners to keep us all connected. And to our dedicated volunteers who support me every week in keeping our church services alive and available for our parishioners at home to participate, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.



Fr. Oshagan





SACRAMENTS & GIFTS TO THE CHURCH



New Arrivals of 2021

Mr. & Mrs. William and Allison Gatter

Blessed with a son on Monday, December 30, 2020

William Michael Gatter III weighing in at 6 lb 3 oz



Mr. & Mrs. Tigran and Gayane Marashlian

Blessed with a daughter on Friday, February 19, 2021

Arianna Marashlian weighing in at 6 lb 4 oz

Mr. & Mrs. Grant and Arpi DiLibero

Blessed with twins on Thursday, February 25, 2021

Anoush Arpi DiLibero weighing in at 6 lb 5 oz

Armen Grant DiLibero weighing in at 7 lb 3 oz



Baptism & Chrismation



Leon Zeron Rosado

Son of Augustine & Lori Rosado

Godfather: *John Baboujian*

December 6, 2020





Funerals

Haig Dadourian

Entered into his eternal rest on December 28, 2020.

Rafael Petrosian

Entered into his eternal rest on December 29, 2020.

Vartouhi Berberian

Entered into her eternal rest on December 30, 2020.

Aslan Seraydarian

Entered into his eternal rest on January 14, 2021.

Gifts to the Church

General and Memorial Donations

Mr. & Mrs. Vahan and Danielle Gureghian
in Memory of Harry and Ann Gureghian
M/M Mikail Bagdasarion
M/M Vahan Gureghian
M/M Garabet Karakelian
Mrs Rita Khachadourian

Mr Richard Melikian
M/M Mesrob Odabashian
M/M Aris Topakbashian

TOTAL \$ 8,525.00

Permenent Endowment Found

Mary Boyajian Trust

TOTAL \$188,744.24

Christmas Youghakin

Mr. Herman Ajamian
Mrs. Alma Alabilikian
M/M Charles Alyanakian
Mrs. Alice Aznavourian
Ms. Linda Babikian
M/M Bruce Baltaian
Ms. Elizabeth Barsamian
Steven P. Barsamian
M/M Edward Burg
M/M Joseph Chamoun
Mrs. Haig Dadourian
M/M Samuel Degirmenci
M/M Antranig Derdrian

Mrs. Rubina DerMartirosian
Mrs. Alice Dertadian
M/M Thomas Digliani
Mrs. Mary Dulgerian
Dr/M Robert Fumento
M/M Clive Gouveria
Mrs. Eleanor Gurdikian
M/M Vahan H. Gureghian
M/M Robert Hagopian
M/M Harry Havnoonian
Mrs. Araxie Ishkhanian
Mrs. Florence Kazanjian
Mr. Michael B. Kazanjian



Ms. Carol Keosayian
M/M R Khatchikian
Mrs. Berjouhi Kitabjian
Mr. Antranik Kordzian
M/M Souren Kurkjian
Dr/M Alexander Mamourian
Ms. Nora Martayan
Mrs. Anahid Megerian
Mrs. Rozaline Meguerian
Mr. George Mesigian
Yn. Angel Metjian
M/M Joseph Michaelian
Ms. Mary Odabashian

M/M Mesrob Odabashian
M/M Zohrab Odabashian
Mr. Peter Paone
Mrs. Sallee Rush
Mrs. Claudette Sarian
Mr. Albert Seraydarian
M/M Aram Setrakian
Mr. Krikor Sghomonian
Mrs. Veronica Torcomian
M/M Hirant Torunyan
M/M Gregory Yulduzian
Mrs. Nauver Zerounian

TOTAL \$ 14,895.00

Stewardship

Mrs. Alma Alabilikian
Mrs. Alice Aznavourian
Ms. Linda Babikian
Ms. Elizabeth Barsamian
Dr./M Donald Bedrosian
Mr. George Boyajian
M/M David Bozadian
Mrs. Ayshe Chakmaklian
Mrs. HaigDadourian
M/M Samuel Degirmenci
Mrs. Alice Dertadian
Mrs. Zivig Devletian
Mr. George Dulgerian
Mrs. Mary Dulgerian
Mrs. Eleanor Gurdikian
M/M Vahan H. Gureghian
M/M George Gurenlian
M/M Robert Hagopian
Mrs. Sonia Hagopian
Mrs. Shirley Hajinian
M/M David Hoplamazian
M/M Harry Hoplamzian
Mr. Charles Kazanjian
Mrs. Florence Kazanjian
Mr. Michael B. Kazanjian
Mrs. Helen Kazigian
Mrs. Rita Khachadourian
Mr. Ronald Khachadourian
M/M Raffi Khatchikian
Mrs. Audrey Klijian

Mr. Antranik Kordzian
Mr. Simon Koumjian, III
Mr. Simon Koumjian
M/M Thomas Kouyoumjian
Ms. Elizabeth K. Manawelian
Mrs. Kayane Mardikian
Mr. David Marshall, Jr.
M/M George Mesigian
Yn. Angel Metjian
M/M Joseph Michaelian
Mrs. Lucille S. Mikaelian
Dr/M Levon Nazarian
M/M Vram Nedurian
M/M Mesrob Odabashian
Ms. Arlene Ounjian
Mr. Peter Paone
Mrs. Rafael Petrosian
M/M George Ramoundos
Mrs. Sallee Rush
Mrs. Anna Samuelian
M/M Albert Seraydarian
Mr. Paul Sevag
M/M Aris Topakbashian
M/M Thomas Torcomian
Mrs. Veronica Torcomian
M/M Hirant Torunyan
Dr/M Gerald Williams
Mrs. Pontish Yeramian
Mrs. Nauver Nerounian

TOTAL \$ 42,560.00



In Memoriam In Lieu Of Flowers

Sincere sympathy is extended by the Pastor and Parish Council to the families of those parishioners who have departed from this life. May God receive the souls of all the departed into His everlasting kingdom and send the heavenly consolation of His Holy Spirit to those who mourn.

In Lieu of Flowers Donations In Memory of Haig Dadourian

Anonymous
Anonymous
Ms. Alma Alabilikian
Ms. Elizabeth Barsamian
M/M Edward Boyajian
M/M Berc Gokberk

Knights of Vartan, Lodge #5
Ms. Lisa Manookian
Mrs. Anahid Megerian

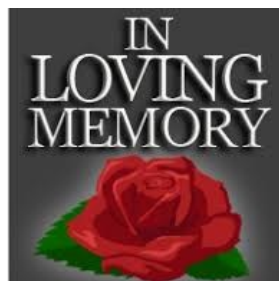
Total: \$ 540.00

In Lieu of Flowers Donations In Memory of Rafael Petrosian

Mr. Chuck Ajanian
M/M Loutfi Arabatlian
M/M Armen Arutunian
Ms. Paulette Aydinian
M/M Boghos Derderian
MM Andrew Derrow
Anthony & Maria Gallagher & Rosie DeSanctis
Margaret King
Eva Kaulbeosunnis
M/M Gevorg Marashlian

Mrs. Anahid Megerian
Mrs. Gohar Merdjanian
Mynaugh Family
Ms. Marcia Pelberg
Mrs. Satenik Petrosian
Mrs. Betty Rechelian
Ms. Carole Trapani

Total: \$ 890.00



*Remember Saint Sahag and Saint Mesrob Armenian Church
In Your Will*



ՀՐԱՇՔ ՅՈՎՀԱՆՆԵՍ ՇԻՐԱԶ MIRACLE NUMBER 1

Hovhannes Shiraz

Translated by Daniel Janoyan

Երագիս մեջ դուռը զարկին
- Ո՞վ է սաի ներսից ես,
Դրսից ինչ որ պառաւ մի կին
Ասաց «Մատաղ լինեմ քեզ»...

Մի կտոր հաց ողորմացիր,
Աղքատ կին եմ, որք, անտեր,
Ու ես իսկույն դուռը բացի՝
Հրաշք... մեռած մայրիկս էր:

Մարտափեցի, բայց գիրկն ընկա,
Մայրս ասաց, «Ես եմ, ես,
Քեզ փորձելու համար եկա,
Հո չի՛ փոխել կյանքը քեզ:

Մութացկանի տեսքով եկա,
Որ աշխարհն էլ իմանա՝
Տե՛ղն է խիղճդ, խիղճդ որդիս,
Թե՛ մեռել է ինձ հետ նա...»

In my dreams my door was knocked at,
"Who is it?" I asked from inside.
Some elderly lady from the outside
Answered and said, "I'd sacrifice myself for you."
"I've come to ask for a piece of bread as charity

I'm a poor orphan woman with no one to support me."
At this point I opened my door immediately,
Only to find a miracle; it was my deceased mother indeed!
I was shocked but fell into her arms;

And my mother said, "It's me, it's me,
I've come to try you and to check on you.
I hope life hasn't changed your spirit and also you?!"
I came in the form of a beggar

So that the whole world can be a witness
To see if your conscience, my dear son,
If your conscience also died along with me?!"

Hovhannes Shiraz
ՅՈՎՀԱՆՆԵՍ ՇԻՐԱԶ
(April 27, 1915 – March 14, 1984)

Shiraz was born Hovhannes Onnig Garabedian, on April 27, 1915, three days after the massacre of the Armenian intelligentsia during the Armenian Genocide. He spent his childhood during these tragic times in deplorable conditions in his native Alexandropol, (now Gyumri).

In 1935, he garnered attention with his first poetic work, Beginning of Spring, which sold out. Novelist Adrbed named the talented poet "Shiraz", because "this youth's poems have the fragrance of roses, fresh and covered with dew, like the roses of Shiraz." (Shiraz was one of Iran's major cities, famous for its roses and poets). After studying Literature at Yerevan's State University, and later at Moscow's Maxim Gorky Literature institute, Shiraz published the first of a three-volume anthology Knar Hayastani (Lyre of Armenia) in 1958. It was followed by the second and third volumes, published in 1965 and 1974. These collections include the best of Shiraz's poetry. Although hailed as one of the best poets of the 20th century, Shiraz is also known for his quartets, parables and translations.

Shiraz was married to famous poetess and academician Silva Gabudikyan. Their son, Ara Shiraz, was a sculptor. Shiraz had seven children with his second wife, Shushanik.

The poet died on March 14, 1984, and was buried at the Gomidas Pantheon, in Yerevan, Armenia, alongside other distinguished Armenians. A school in Yerevan, and a street in Julfa of Isfahan are named after him. Shiraz's House-Museum is in Gyumri.

Gilda Buchakjian (Kupelian)





EASTERN DIOCESE OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF AMERICA

Building up the Body of Christ



Pray *with* our Bishop

Reciting the Lenten Prayer Rule



Bishop Daniel will be reciting the prayer rule live on Vemkar's Facebook page. A communal opportunity for the faithful of the Eastern Diocese to pray together, to unite our concerns as one, to build up the Body of Christ.

**Sat, March 6
9:00 AM (EST)**

• **LIVE ON VEMKAR'S FACEBOOK**



Introducing Holy Etchmiadzin's ARTSAKH OUTREACH Mission

In this holy season of Great Lent, I greet you in the love of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I am writing to inform our leadership about the effort currently underway to help displaced families from Artsakh: a mission of the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin under the auspices of His Holiness Karekin II, the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians.



Called **ARTSAKH OUTREACH**, this critical mission of Holy Etchmiadzin aims to raise support throughout the worldwide Armenian Church, and deliver aid to our brothers and sisters in their time of need.

As we are all painfully aware, in the aftermath of the unprovoked war on Artsakh, Armenia is now a place of refuge for thousands of wounded soldiers, bereaved families, and displaced citizens of Artsakh—all in dire need of financial, spiritual, medical, and psychological support. Some 40,000 Armenians lost their homes in Artsakh, and have no place to return for the foreseeable future. Now settled in Armenia, these individuals and families are struggling with the basic necessities of life—all amid the devastation of a national economic crisis and the worldwide pandemic.

At my direction, the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America is working through **ARTSAKH OUTREACH** to come to the aid of our homeland and its people. I see this as an intrinsically Christian mission that we as a church should undertake as members of the Body of Christ, responsible to our fellow children of God. Of course, Holy Etchmiadzin is ideally placed to be effective and responsive in such an effort, and especially to ensure that its deep spiritual dimension remains paramount among our people.

In many ways, the establishment of this enterprise resembles the birth of our own Diocese's **Fund for Armenian Relief** some 30 years ago, in response to Armenia's earthquake crisis. I want to note that leaders from our Diocese have been involved with **ARTSAKH OUTREACH** from its inception. It is chaired by my predecessor as Primate of our Diocese, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian. Catholicos Karekin II has asked James Kalustian to assist in this global effort, and I have asked him to be our Diocese's liaison.

Our faithful should be aware that this will be a longterm effort. Initially, the Mother See envisioned an outreach campaign that would last between three and nine months. But it has become clear that the need is far greater than anticipated, and must incorporate not only immediate material relief, but housing, counseling, and job training, among other things. The painful reality is that no one who survived the Artsakh war—whether soldier or civilian—did so without experiencing deep wounds of the spirit. The larger objective of **ARTSAKH OUTREACH** will be to enable the affected individuals and families to eventually stand on their own.

I strongly encourage our parishes and all of our faithful to support this effort. A secure, user-friendly website, ArtsakhOutreach.org, presents details of current and future projects, reports on progress, and promotional materials that you can adapt to the needs of local fundraising efforts.

Donors can make a one-time contribution in any amount, or “adopt” a family on a month-by-month basis. Donations provide food, shelter, basic necessities, and utilities—and can be made online or via check. Whatever avenue you choose, please know that every gift makes a difference in this time of need.

We can all be proud of the way the people of the Eastern Diocese stood tall in support of Artsakh and Armenia in the dark days of war last year. But Armenia and Artsakh still need our help. Let us give **ARTSAKH OUTREACH** our determined moral and material support, as we pray to our merciful Lord for its success.

With my prayers,
Bishop DANIEL
Primate



St. Sahag and St. Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church

630 Clothier Road, Wynnewood, PA 19096-2214

†Phone • 610.642.4212 † www.sahagmesrobchurch.org † <https://www.facebook.com/SSSMAAC/>

Save The Dates

Virtual Presentations

2021 AAA Lecture Series

Wednesday, March 10, 2021

Guest Speaker: Anna Astvatsaturian Turcotte

- *"Documenting Damages Suffered by the Armenians of Artsakh"*

Thursday, March 18, 2021

*Guest Speakers: Rev. Fr. Yeprem Kelegian
and*

Garnik Nanagoulian

- *"Fund for Armenian Relief for the Artsakh Refugees and Artsakh"*

Wednesday, March 24, 2021

Guest Speaker: Christopher Zakian

- *A Modern Man in the Gospel of John:
The Tragedy of Nicodemus*

Thursday, April 8, 2021

Guest Speaker: Dr. Kim Hekimian

- *"COVID-19 in Armenia and Armenian Health Issues"*



All presentations will be approximately 45-60 minutes in length with about 20 minutes of Q&A.

Join us for the our AAA Series on ARMENIA, ARTSAKH & THE AFTERMATH, featuring activists and organizations working to assist our brethren and displaced refugees in Armenia and Artsakh.



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630 Clothier Road, Wynnewood PA 19096 ☎ 610-642-4212
www.sahagmesrob.church



Virtual Presentation

By

**Anna Astvatsaturian
Turcotte**

**Author, Lawyer, Lecturer, Human Rights
Advocate, and President of the recently-launched
Anna Astvatsaturian Foundation**

“RESEARCHING & DOCUMENTING LOSS BY ARTSAKH DURING ARTSAKH WAR”

Wednesday, March 10, 2021 • 7:00 p.m.

The presentation will be approximately 45-60 minutes in length with about 20 minutes of Q&A.

Join us for the fourth of our AAA Series on ARMENIA, ARTSAKH & THE AFTERMATH, featuring activists and organizations working to assist our brethren and displaced refugees in Armenia and Artsakh.

Anna Astvatsaturian Turcotte is an Armenian refugee from Baku, Azerbaijan. She is a lawyer, author, elected official and a businesswoman. Anna has lectured extensively about the plight of Armenians in Azerbaijan in the context of human rights and international law, as well as defending the political rights of Armenians to establish autonomy in Nagorno-Karabakh. She was instrumental in gaining passage by the legislature of the State of Maine of a 2013 resolution recognizing the independence of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic.

Anna is the recipient of the Mkhitar Gosh Medal, the Republic of Armenia's highest civilian honor. She has also received a Gratitude Medal from the President of Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, and other awards in the Diaspora.

Over the past decade, Anna has spearheaded many humanitarian, developmental, cultural, environmental and educational projects in support of Armenia and Artsakh. This first project of her Foundation is a detailed and well-planned initiative to collect empirical data on the displaced and affected population of Artsakh, which will be the main focus of her presentation. For additional information on her many projects, please visit the Foundation's website at <http://www.astvatsaturian.org>.



Dikran Derderian

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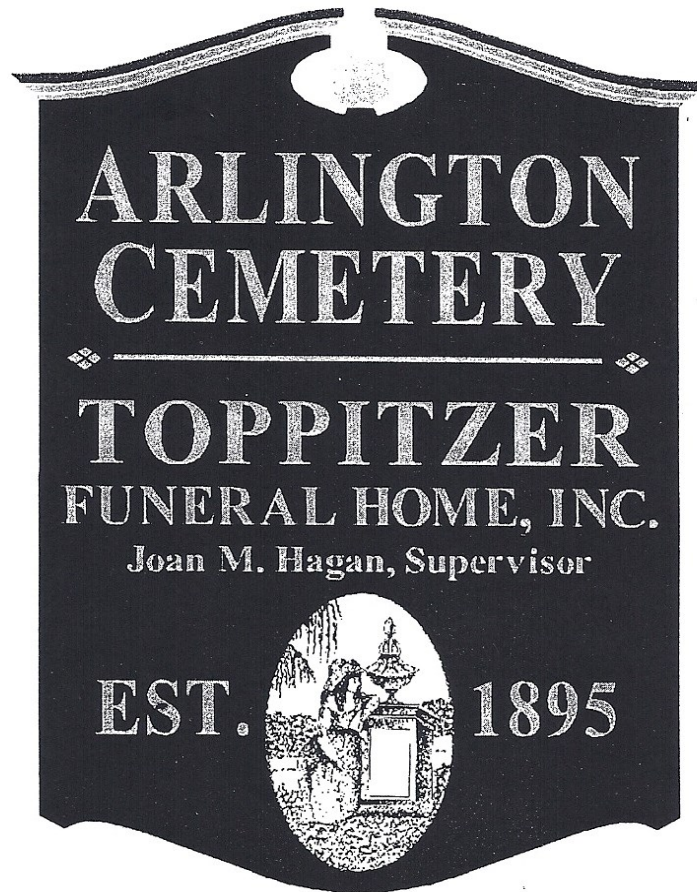
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St. Sahag & St. Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church ✠ Winter 2021

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- | | | |
|---|----------------|---|
| ❖ | March 28, 2021 | <i>Palm Sunday</i> |
| ❖ | April 4, 2021 | <i>Holy Easter</i> |
| ❖ | April 24, 2021 | <i>Feast of the Holy Martyrs of the Armenian Genocide</i> |
| ❖ | May 9, 2021 | <i>Mother's Day</i> |
| ❖ | May 13, 2021 | <i>Ascension</i> |
| ❖ | May 23, 2021 | <i>Pentecost</i> |
| ❖ | May 31, 2021 | <i>Memorial Day</i> |
| ❖ | June 6, 2021 | <i>Feast of Holy Etchmiadzin</i> |
| ❖ | June 20, 2021 | <i>Father's Day</i> |
| ❖ | July 4, 2021 | <i>Independence Day</i> |
| ❖ | July 11, 2021 | <i>Feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord</i> |