

Wier Doon

Wier Doon



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 Gulgulian, *M. Div.*

Office Secretary

Elizabeth Barsamian

Website

<http://www.sahagmesrob.church>

E-Mail

Pastor ✉ Hs@sahagmesrob.church

Office Secretary ✉ stsahagmesrob@gmail.com

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
Shahab Minasian	Advisor
Lisa Kailian	Advisor
Steven Keytanjian	Advisor

Diocesan Delegates

Lisa Manookian
George Kodokian
Robin Williams

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Advisors Alene Schreiner

Nominating Committee

Julyet Degirmenci
Sonia Placido
Seta Topakbashian

Auditing Committee

Audrey Klijian Shaw
Edward Sarkisian
Alex Mamourian

Sunday School Superintendents

Sossi Avrigian

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:

We chose the bronze statues of our Holy Translators, St. Sahag and St. Mesrob, by artist Koren Der Harootian for the front cover of this issue of Mer Doon, which we would like to dedicate to our graduates.

Though we have not had our normal Parish activities for months, we felt it was important to publish an issue of Mer Doon in honor of our graduates. As we know, the current pandemic has led to the cancellation of traditional graduation ceremonies. Our community would like to honor our graduates here, within our pages, and what better tribute to them than our Armenian Saints whose prolific work formed the cornerstone of our Armenian literature and Armenian spiritual & intellectual enlightenment. Let us look to our Holy Translators as we celebrate the academic accomplishments of our graduates and recognize the support of their families.

We dedicate this issue of the Mer Doon to our graduates and wish them the best in their future endeavors.

- From all of us here at Mer Doon



THE PASTOR'S CORNER

Who Are We ?

The past few months have certainly been a bewildering time, bearing many challenges and emotions not just for our community, but for the entire world. When the coronavirus pandemic began to make its way into our lives, we prepared ourselves for a difficult time, thinking it wouldn't be too long before we would "get back to normal." People frequently asked, "When will we get back to the way things were? When will we be able to attend Badarak again?" As the weeks passed and our understanding of Covid-19 unfolded, we arrived at the realization that this pandemic will likely shape our lives for the undetermined future, and we are beginning to adjust to what is often referred to as "the new normal."

This pandemic has forced us to take a closer look at our priorities, to reevaluate how we have been spending our time. Before Covid-19, many of us would often run at full speed through our busy lives, thoughtlessly caught up in allowing that which is transitory take priority. This pandemic can be seen as a call to slow down and think about how we have been spending our precious time. Is the focus on the accumulation of wealth and goods, earthly successes and social status where we should be investing our energy? Or should we be allocating more of our attention to the development of our spiritual life and our family life? For us Christians, this pandemic has brought with it a reminder that our life here on earth is temporal, while our spiritual life is eternal. Our riches here mean nothing in the eternal life. We are only truly rich when we focus our attention on our spiritual development, our families, our health.

All the accumulated wealth and possessions in the world will not fit through the eye of a needle. Everything we need to gain entrance through the gates of eternal life is found within each of us. Faith, hope and love; beseeching God for forgiveness for our sins while in turn forgiving others. And though certainly Covid-19 has waged its war on our human family, *nothing* can separate us from our faith – not war, pandemic, genocide or natural disaster. We Armenians know that *nothing* and *no one* can take away our faith, our hope, our love, our resilience.

And so dear faithful, though we have been unable to physically be together to participate in the Divine Liturgy during these past few months, we continue to be united as one blessed family at the Heavenly Banquet of our Lord, Jesus Christ. We will remain strong, hopeful, faithful and loving as our understanding of Covid-19 unfolds because *it is who we are*.

My prayers go out for all who have suffered through Covid-19, for their family members, and for all the health care workers, first responders and front-line people who risk their lives to protect ours. May God bless you and protect you, now and always.

✍ Fr. Oshagan



A MESSAGE FROM OUR PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

It has been nearly three months since our worlds were turned sideways due to the uncertainty, fear and concern surrounding the coronavirus. For many of us, the only things we could be sure about, were that we are in uncharted territory and one way or another, we are all going to be impacted.

Our lives have been changed in many ways as we have had to think about things we have rarely considered. Basic necessities have been treated as luxuries and the things we have taken for granted have become our priorities. Those of us who have been fortunate to work from home have been operating 24-hour schools and businesses, while the essential workers in community have managed the impossible by going to work and managing kids at home, with little access to help. For our senior community, it has been particularly challenging as keeping safe has meant they need to be isolated.

It has been said in many ways that the very thing we as an Armenian Church community are best at, coming together; is the very thing we have needed to avoid so we can keep each other safe. While we may not have been able to come together physically, it is up to us to keep finding ways to be together as a community – whether by phone, virtually, through prayer and in spirit.

We know that no matter what we do, it will be difficult to recreate the fellowship we experience when we are with each other. Yet as a Parish Council with Hayr Sourp, we have been doing what we can to address this challenge and create opportunities for our community to be together. Since the pandemic stay-at-home orders were announced, the Parish Council has held our meetings virtually via Zoom, every three to four weeks.

During that time, we have been focused on four things:

- Providing emotional and spiritual support to members of our community in need
- Making sure Badarak could be celebrated according to the safety guidelines and that it is available to our community, virtually
- Keeping the church financials in order with the anticipated significant reductions in income
- Creating virtual programs to bring us together

Certainly, there is room for improvement in all of these areas. Nevertheless, I am proud to say that each and every member of the Parish Council has taken these areas to heart and our community has stepped up in an incredible way. Parish leaders and other parishioners have supported each other. We have had deacons and choir members come to church regularly in joining Hayr Sourp for Badarak. We have had some very generous donations that have more than substituted the contributions we would have seen during Holy Week and Easter. Finally, we have had three well-attended virtual programs, with more to come.

While we will continue to work on these areas, our priority going forward will be to re-open the church in the safest possible way for our people. We have formed a sub-committee from within the Parish Council to determine how we will implement the guidelines provided by the Diocese, the county and the state, regarding the necessary practices that must be in place for safe re-opening. In the coming weeks, we will plan and communicate these with each of you. In the meantime, please visit our website www.sahagmesrob.church for links to our virtual Badarak, resources and relevant updates to our re-opening plan.

We appreciate the support you have expressed for your church and for each other during this time and we greatly anticipate the day that we can be together again.

Alex Topakbashian
Parish Council Chairman

Contact Alex by email at: alextopak@gmail.com



CONGRATS GRADUATES

Class of

2020

Dear Class of 2020,

Whether you are graduating high school, college or graduate school, you are collectively known as the Class of 2020. And yet you are *so much more*. You are the Class that will be remembered throughout history; the Class the world will never forget.

Graduation has certainly been unrecognizable this year as you have had to sacrifice the pomp and circumstance, the parties with friends, the celebrations with family, and all the accolades that come with this milestone. That has been a hardship for you to bear. Yet even without these customary markers, I want you to remember that you still hold within you all the accumulated knowledge and experience and wisdom to go forward into the next chapter of your lives. No virus can take that away from you. And as your Pastor, I am so very proud of the accomplishments each one of you has attained. Your entire Church Family is. Your accomplishment is an accomplishment for all of us.

There will be a unique unity and identity for the Class of 2020 forever. Your Class holds the moment in our history that we will never forget; the year the world took pause. Remember that graduation is not only the closure of one chapter of your lives, it marks the *beginning* of a new chapter, which is why we also call it Commencement. As you *commence* into your future, I ask you to bring with you your Christian responsibility to serve others. Take with you the words from Hebrews 13:16, “*We will show mercy to the poor and not miss an opportunity to do acts of kindness for others, for these are the true sacrifices that delight God’s heart.*” If your Class of 2020 can take this pause, take these difficult circumstances and use this moment in time to make the world a kinder place, that will be your legacy. The Class of 2020 that graduated during a worldwide pandemic will be remembered for *so much more*.

We honor you; we celebrate your accomplishments; we are proud of all of you. My deepest heartfelt prayers are with each of you, I wish you the very best in your futures and I congratulate you, Class of 2020. May God bless and protect each one of you.

Prayerfully yours,
Fr. Oshagan





HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES



JESSICA ROSE BURG graduated in the top 10% of her class from Highland Regional High School and will be attending Eastern University where she will be majoring in Nursing and has committed to playing soccer for the University Women’s Soccer Team. While in high school, Jessica was a member of the National Honor Society, the French Honor Society, the Science Honor Society and the Health & Physical Education Honor Society. She also played Varsity Soccer, Basketball and Lacrosse all four years. Jessica is the daughter of Lillian (Bidoyan) & Edward Burg and the granddaughter of Rose Bidoyan & the late John Bidoyan and the late Margaret & John Burg.

ANTHONY SOLAKIAN Anthony graduated from Marple Newtown High School, Class of 2020. He has been a vibrant and dedicated student in the Marple Newtown School District since kindergarten. Over the course of his years with Marple Newtown, Anthony has been a very active participant in sports. In particular, Anthony devoted his skills as a baseball player all throughout his undergraduate years, playing Pee Wee Baseball, Little League Baseball and Babe Ruth Baseball. Anthony will begin his college career at Delaware County Community College to attain his prerequisite education while he decides upon his course of study. Anthony is the son of Onnik & Lianna Solakian and the grandson of Mkrtych & Zaroui Kaladjian and the late Karpis & Alice Solakian.



SEVAG YEPOYAN graduated from Friends’ Central School and has accepted a spot in the Class of 2024 at Ursinus College. Sevag is a track enthusiast, an avid soccer player, and served as Co-Captain of the FCS Soccer Team. All four years Sevag was a member of the Business Club and served as the School Newspaper Photographer. He earned his lifeguard certification and worked for the last several years at the Haverford YMCA as a lifeguard. Sevag is the son of Armen & Linda Yepoyan and the grandson of Jhanna Yepoyan & the late Robert Yepoyan and Serop & Roxie Bedeian.

MARK YILANJIAN graduated from Pennridge High School with a final GPA of 4.3. Throughout high school Mark participated in various clubs like Mini-THON (to raise money and awareness for pediatric cancer research and treatment) and SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions). In 2019 he accepted an invitation to attend a weeklong seminar entitled "Future Health Care Leaders of America" held in Lowell, MA. Mark will attend Ursinus College this fall, majoring in Biology on the Pre-Medical track, and has set his future sights on becoming a Cardiologist in the hospital setting. Mark is the son of Peter & Michelle Yilanjian and the grandson of Jacques & Zarouhi Derderian and the late Kirkor & Maro Yilancioglu.





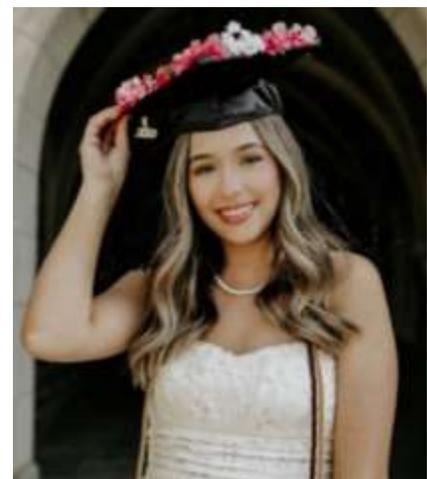
COLLEGE AND POST-COLLEGE GRADUATES

CELINE ARABATLIAN completed her undergraduate degree in two years and subsequently completed her first two years of Pharmacy School (4 years total), earning her Bachelor of Science. After completing her final two years at the University of Sciences in Philadelphia, she will earn her Doctorate of Pharmacy in 2022. During the past four years, Celine has been on the Dean’s List all eight semesters. She was inducted into Rho Chi, an honors society for pharmacy students, specifically reserved for the top 20% of the class. Celine is the daughter of Ohannes & Ronia Arabatlian and the granddaughter of Haroutioun Mentcherian & the late Faris Mentcherian and the late Zvart & George Arabatlian.



MELINE AVRIGIAN graduated *summa cum laude* from the University of Scranton with a Bachelor of Science in Occupational Therapy. She will be continuing her education for one more year in the University of Scranton’s Five Year Masters Program in Occupational Therapy. During her four years at the University, she was an active member of the Club Frisbee Team and on the Leadership Board for the Student Occupational Therapy Association Club. Meline is the daughter of Melcom & Sossi Avrigian and the granddaughter of the late George & Marion Avrigian and the late Krikor & Araxie Boyadjian.

CHRISTINA BERNHARDT graduated BSBA *magna cum laude* from West Chester University, where she majored in Business Management and minored in Media and Culture with a concentration in Strategic Communications. She plans to continue her education this fall to complete her MBA. As the President of Sigma Iota Epsilon, the honors society for business management students, she was able to recruit more members, increase involvement, and raise money for Horse Power For Life through fundraisers. Along with academic achievements, Christina participated in creative competitions like West Chester University's short film contest, where she wrote, filmed, edited and acted in film productions. Christina received multiple awards for this work three years in a row. During her junior year, she began a new business – a digital media company and also created a website where she blogged about college life to help other students (<https://ItsChristinaBee.com>). Christina is the daughter of Laurie Alyanakian Bernhardt and the granddaughter of Rosette Alyanakian & the late Leon Alyanakian.





STEPAN CHRISTIAN CANNUSCIO graduated from Boston College’s Carroll School of Management in May. He earned a Bachelor of Science in Management with concentrations in Finance and Information Systems. While in school, Stepan was a Teacher’s Assistant for a class that taught students how to code iPhone apps and was also employed as a Data Analyst for a startup. Stepan has accepted a job as an Operations Specialist with Perpay, a company rated #5 on Inc.’s list of fastest growing private companies. Stepan is the son of Karen & Robert Cannuscio and the grandson of Alice Aznavourian & the late Garo Aznavourian and Alice Postian Cannuscio & the late Albert Cannuscio.

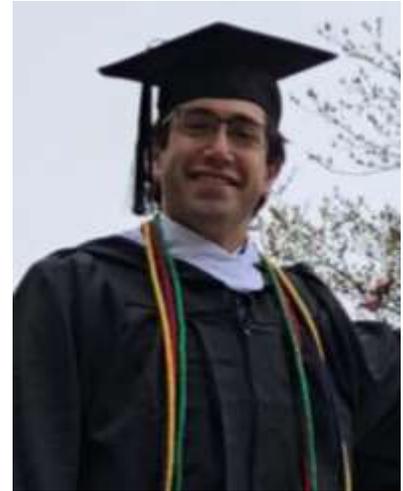
ISABELLA VARTOUHI ETOIAN graduated from Florida Gulf Coast University with a Bachelor of Arts double major in Entrepreneurship and Management. Isabella was a member of the Alpha Chi Omega sorority, serving as the Sapphire for the chapter at FGCU and also as the President of Finance for the chapter. As part of her sorority, Isabella was an advocate for the greater Southwest Florida Abuse Counseling Treatment Center in Fort Myers. She participated in the Leadership Through Service Program at FGCU, was a part of the Emerging Eagles Leadership Group, on the Freshman Year Student Council for all freshman and transfer students, and participated in the Runway Program at FGCU, working one-on-one with local business owners and entrepreneurs to empower young females going into the world of entrepreneurship. As part of her curriculum, Isabella has worked with and shadowed multiple CEOs in the Southwest Florida area. Isabella is currently working with a custom home development company in Naples, assisting with the design and layout of multiple million-dollar properties. She is also a certified trainer in SPIN/cycling and is working on her Personal Training Certification to continue her fitness education. Isabella is the daughter of Sarkis & Diana Etoian and the granddaughter of David & Sybil Ahakinian and the late Toros & Vartouhi Etoian.



NANCY KEYTANJIAN graduated from Temple University’s Fox School of Business, Class of 2020, with a Bachelor of Business Administration in Human Resource Management. During her time at Temple University, she was an active member and Secretary of Temple’s Armenian Students Association and Director of Professional Development in Temple’s Society for Human Resource Management. Nancy has accepted a full-time position with AmerisourceBergen in their Human Resource Department. Nancy is the daughter of Alice & Frank Keytanjian and the granddaughter of Jovia & Charles Keytanjian and Rosemarie Zarzatian & the late Edward Zarzatian.



ALEXANDER KODOKIAN graduated from Drexel University’s Masters Program in Biomedical Science, Class of 2020, following his Baccalaureate Studies from the University of Pittsburgh, Class of 2018. While attending Drexel, Alex continued his work as a tutor and clinical volunteer for the underprivileged community. He volunteered with Project Home, a non-profit organization providing care and shelter for the city’s homeless. Alex was also a Teacher’s Assistant for a Drexel scientific writing course. Alex has worked in the university lab where he conducted research on macrophage markers for angiogenesis to facilitate chronic wound tissue healing. Alex will resume his educational career in the fall of 2020, when he will attend the Temple School of Podiatric Medicine. Alexander is the son of George & Gail Kodokian and the grandson of the late Benjamin & Shirley Tashjian and the late Hagop & Sona Gudukian.



ANGELA KODOKIAN graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology, with two minors in Africana Studies and Music, from the University of Pittsburgh. She will be continuing her graduate studies at Drexel University in the fall in the Master’s Program in Counseling and Music Therapy. Angela has always pushed herself to do more with the culmination of working three jobs at the same time, going to school full-time, and being a member and board member of the Heinz Chapel Choir. She was the Director of Choral Scholars at St. Andrews Church in Highland Park, was a Teacher’s Aid at a nonprofit, underprivileged community children’s center, and was additionally an adjunct musician for Calvary Episcopal Church in Shadyside, Pittsburgh. Angela loved being in the choir at Pitt, most recently working as the Alumni Liaison/Secretary for 2019-2020, and has also worked as the Librarian for 2017-2018 and the Social Chair for 2018-2019. She loved working with the children at the community center where she would help facilitate learning, specifically focusing on development of gross and fine motor skills, which enhanced a healthy and productive environment for the children. Angela is the daughter of George & Gail Kodokian and the granddaughter of the late Benjamin & Shirley Tashjian and the late Hagop & Sona Gudukian.

CARINE MEGERIAN graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a Masters of Public Health. She will be moving to Raleigh/Durham, North Carolina, to work at RTI International as a Research and Data Analyst for an independent non-profit that works for third party clients to make for a better world. She previously received her Bachelors in Sociology from the University of Virginia in 2018. Carine is the daughter of Dr. & Mrs. Garo & Annette Megerian and the granddaughter of Anahid Megerian & the late Papken Megerian and the late Joseph & Betty Schwartz.





JULIANNA HYGOUHI MURPHY graduated from The Pennsylvania State University, University Park Campus, with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Security and Risk Analysis from the College of Information, Science and Technology (IST) with a minor in Psychology. Julianna was an IST Student Diplomat, a member of the Phi Gamma Nu Professional Business Fraternity, and Vice President of the Armenian Student Association. She has been hired as Financial Security Organization Information & Technology Risk Advisory Staff at Ernst & Young in Chicago and will begin full-time in August. Julianna is the daughter of Frank & Anna-Marie Murphy and the granddaughter of Ani & Joseph Chamoun and Gerald & Anna Murphy.



NATALIE ANGELA MURPHY graduated *summa cum laude* from DePaul University College of Law in Chicago, Illinois. Natalie was an active staff member on the *DePaul Law Review Volume 68*, and was a Teaching Assistant for first year law students in Property Law. She also served as a legal extern to the Honorable Judge James M. McGing in the Tax and Miscellaneous Remedies Section, Law Division, of Cook County, Chicago. During her time at DePaul, Natalie received the CALI Award for the highest grade in Torts, First Amendment Law: Free Speech and Free Religion, and Trial Advocacy II. Natalie was hired as a Summer Associate at Hinshaw & Culbertson, LLP and will begin as an Associate in the Personal Injury & Property Damage practice group in the fall. Natalie is the daughter of Frank & Anna-Marie Murphy and the granddaughter of Ani & Joseph Chamoun and Gerald & Anna Murphy.

Joseph Chamoun and Gerald & Anna Murphy.

Emily Shakay Selverian graduated from Penn State University with a Bachelor of Science, majoring in Marketing and minoring in Digital Media Trends and Analytics. She was in the Sapphire Leadership Academic Program and on the Dean’s List for 7 out of 8 semesters. Emily was also a member of the Alpha Kappa Psi Business fraternity, President of the Armenian Student Association, a THON Hospitality Committee member, and a Smeal Marketing Behavioral Research Lab Assistant. She will be working for Vanguard in Malvern as a Client Relationship Associate. Emily is the daughter of Richard & Melissa Selverian, and the granddaughter of Sandra & Stephen Selverian and the late Shakay & Noubar Markaridian.





LUIZA SHIRINIAN graduated *summa cum laude* from Fox School of Business at Temple University with Bachelor of Business Administration, majoring in Business Law with a minor in International Business. Luiza had the honor of being chosen as a commencement speaker. During the spring of 2019, she studied abroad in Rome, Italy. Luiza was a Pre-Law Student Ambassador, President of the Phi Alpha Delta Pre-Law Fraternity, and a competitor and judge of the American Parliamentary Debate Association and American Mock Trial Association. She was also the author of an International Family Law Research article and author of the Pennsylvania Bar Institute’s Eastern District of Pennsylvania Manual. She has accepted a full-time position with a U.S. Governmental Agency. As an aspiring lawyer, Luiza will continue onto law school to become a practicing attorney in business, international and immigration law. Her ultimate goal is to work toward eliminating injustice and the corrupt nature of law, and to reform the law within Armenia. Luiza is the daughter of Gevork & Anahid Shirinian and the granddaughter of Hambartsum & Luiza Shirinian and the late Vartkes & Astghik Mkrtchian.



ALEX TOPAKBASHIAN, St. Sahag & St. Mesrob Parish Council Chairman, has spent the past four years in evening and online classes at Villanova University pursuing a Master’s of Science in Analytics. Having specialized in Analytics and Information Systems during his MBA program a few years ago, Alex followed the growing trends in data science to attain the Master’s of Science in Analytics, his third Villanova degree. In addition to being the Parish Council Chairman, husband to Alexis and father of Jacob, Jemma and Joseph; Alex is a Director at Gap International – a management consulting firm where he has been for 20 years.





Thank you

During the time of the coronavirus pandemic, while our Parish was *restricted from coming to our Divine Liturgy*, I would like to thank those who assisted in *bringing the Divine Liturgy to the Parish*. To those who gave of their precious time and talent during this challenging time, I would like to express my deepest appreciation. Our deacons, Deacon Steven Keytanjian and Deacon Loutfi Arabatlian; our beautiful voices, Arpi Derderian Dilibero, Noel Krommenhoek and Mania Arabatlian; and our live-streaming technical support team, Alex Topakbashian and Pam Mamourian. You generously gave your time during these difficult and unsettling circumstances to stand beside me so that we could bring our Divine Liturgy into the homes of our Parish Family. I am sincerely grateful for your gifts and your willingness to share them. And to all of you who joined in to participate in our Badarak, your spiritual presence was felt and I am wholeheartedly thankful for your uplifting accompaniment.

FACEBOOK, WEBSITE & Email

Please visit our beautiful new website at www.sahagmesrob.church where you will find information about our church, news & events, our organizations, how to get involved and much more. Follow us on Facebook at “*St. Sahag & St. Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church*” to read our weekly sermon summary, stay apprised of our news & activities, and view our event photographs.

PLEASE NOTE: Hayr Sourp’s email address has changed to hs@sahagmesrob.church

St. Sahag & St. Mesrob Wish List

We are reaching out to our Parish Family to let you know that we have a project that needs our attention.

We are looking for sponsors- individuals, businesses or organizations- to support our Mer Doon publication. The printing and mailing costs of each issue are considerable. Your name will be recognized in the Mer Doon.

It is our goal to keep our beloved St. Sahag & St. Mesrob home in good condition, and as such, we are in search of angel patrons to sponsor our Church’s needs. Contributions of any size are welcome. Please speak with Hayr Sourp if you feel called as a benefactor to support any of our projects.

As always, thank you for your consideration and continued backing. We are exceedingly blessed to have such a supportive Church Family.

ARTICLES FOR MER DOON FROM YOU

The *Mer Doon* is accepting articles written by our parishioners. Have you celebrated a milestone – a wedding, anniversary, christening or birthday in your family? Have you been somewhere fascinating or participated in a special project? The *Mer Doon* wants to hear about it. Church organizations are strongly encouraged to contribute articles. Submit your articles and photos to hs@sahagmesrob.church. Photos should include the following information: event name, date, and the identity of each individual in the photo.



To My Dear Benefactor,

Hello to my dear Benefactor. My name is Syune. I'm from Armenia, a little town named Agarak. Armenia is a mountainous country. Armenia is the most beautiful and hospitable country for me. It's very difficult for me to speak about my past. I'm seventeen years old now. But when I was only three my father died. It was very difficult time for my family. My brother and I were very little and my mother didn't have job to keep us. Step by step my family began to go ahead. But life was very cruel to us. Seven years ago a very tragic accident happened. Because of a car accident my brother died. My mother, my grandma and I had very serious injuries. Then two years after my brother, my grandfather died. After several months it was found out that my mother had leukemia. She has been operated 5 times. A month ago my grandmother's health was very bad. Thanks God now she is relatively good.

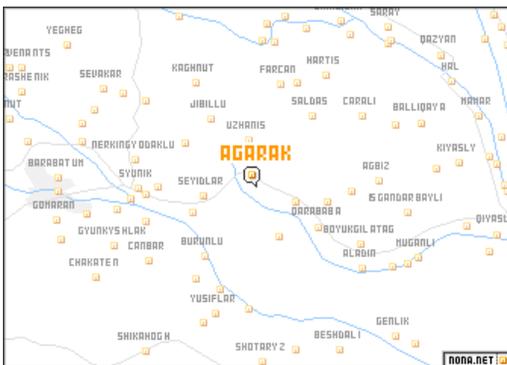


I don't want to speak about sad things. I'm very strong girl. I'm going to become a lawyer. I want to be well-educated, clever, honest. In some months I will pass an exam to enter university. I hope everything will be fine.

Thanks for being with my family and helping my mother.

Wish you all the best.

Syune Vardan Davtyan





PARISH NEWS

LENTEN SERIES

Though a stellar group of speakers was lined up for the 2020 Lenten Series, the program was abruptly cut short due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the need to stop all gatherings as a result. However, we were able to provide two presentations to our community prior to suspending the series.

On Friday, February 28, prolific author and photographer, Hrair “Hawk” Khatcherian, came down from Canada to present his latest work, *Armenia, Heaven on Earth*. The author of over 16 publications, Hawk has been presenting his pictures at exhibits, conferences and lectures, throughout the world for two decades. He began working on his publications shortly after a diagnosis of cancer in 1993, for which he was given only months to live. In prayers to God, he promised that if he survived, he would spend the rest of his life capturing our beautiful Armenia and Artsakh on film. Hawk brought with him copies of several publications, many of which were purchased by attendees. Within days, he left for another adventure to ancient Cilicia, the focus of his next publication. Maro & Armen Arutunian donated this evening’s dinner in loving memory of her sister, Alice Solakian and her parents, Sarkis & Anik Mardirosian.



On Friday, March 6, we were graced with the exquisite storytelling of photographer, Matthew Karanian, who shared from his experiences in preparing his latest publication, *The Armenian Highland*. An eloquent speaker, Matthew had our audience deeply engaged as he shared his many stories. Dinner this evening was donated by Rosine & Clive Gouveia and Berjouhi Kitabjian, in loving memory of Garabed Kitabjian.

The Armenian Heritage Store has limited copies of Hawk Khatcherian’s books and also copies of Matthew Karanian’s books, along with a few from Matthew’s earlier publication, *Historic Armenia After 100 Years*. Hawk’s books are at several pricepoints. Matthew offered his most recent publication to us for \$35/book. If purchased with his prior publication, the cost would be \$50 for both books. Please contact Carol Keosayian at csklian@yahoo.com if interested in purchasing any books.

Many thanks to the members of the Women's Guild and the Men's Club who were on hand to help set-up, serve, and clean on both nights. There were numerous program sponsors who gave towards these presentations, many of whom donated for the presentations which we had to cancel, and we thank them for their continued generosity to our Parish: **Alma Alabilikian, Laraine & Bruce Ballard, Elizabeth Barsamian, Steve Barsamian, Jeff & Kim Bedrosian, Robert & Karen Cannuscio, Carol Keosayian, Arpi Mardikian Kilroy, Maral Seeron & Samer Kosta, Grant & Jackie Mazmanian, Richard Melikian, Lucille Mikaelian, Shahab & Joanne Minassian, Levon & Claudia Nazarian, Mesrob & Grace Odabashian, Ida & George Ramoundos, Adam & Alene Schreiner, Robin & Gerry Williams**. Donations for the canceled programs will be applied toward other programs, which the Pastor and Parish Council will endeavor to bring to our community when it is safe for all of us to come together.

✍ Lisa Manoogian



St. Sahag & St. Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church ✦ Winter- Spring 2020
Ս. ՍԱՀԱԿ ԵՒ Ս. ՄԵՏՐՈՊ ՅԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԵԱՅՑ ԱՌԱՔԵԼԱԿԱՆ ԵԿԵՂԵՑԻ





OUTREACH

As is customary, our Women’s Guild (along with friends) lovingly volunteered their time and talent to prepare for Easter coffee hour fellowship. Over 400 delicious choreg were prepared and frozen in the weeks leading up to Easter. I know you can all picture the familiar scene that is played out each year. After a joyous Badarak on Easter Sunday, it’s beautiful to watch our parish youth excitedly partake in an Easter egg hunt on our front lawn. Even more beautiful is the fellowship and love found in Memorial Hall as we all head in for coffee hour...one filled with laughter, the sound of eggs cracking in our beloved Easter egg cracking game and sighs of satisfaction as we all enjoy choreg and cheese.

Unfortunately, given the situation with Covid-19, our church family has been unable to gather together since mid-March. Due to the fluid and uncertain situation, Hayr Sourp and the Parish Council coordinated with Julyet Degirmenci and Elizabeth Barsamian to discuss alternatives for the baked goods so that our community would be able to enjoy the fruits of our volunteers’ labor.

Hayr Sourp personally delivered choreg to elderly, infirmed, vulnerable and shut-in members of our parish. Those who received choreg were pleasantly surprised and most thankful for the thoughtful gesture and to get a “socially distant” visit from Hayr Sourp. He also hand delivered dozens of choreg to the Lower Merion Police Station and Lower Merion Fire Department on behalf of St. Sahag and St. Mesrob Apostolic Church. He extended our sincere gratitude and appreciation for their courage, dedication and continued service during this pandemic.

While this was not the Easter any of us envisioned, and Memorial Hall was not filled with community members enjoying each other’s company, may it offer some comfort to know that the spirit of Easter was alive and well. A different, virtual coffee hour was shared across many households and among our first responders. And above all else, the love of God was shining down on us all.

✍ *Alene Schreiner*



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



OPERATING REMOTELY DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC



Two weeks prior to quarantine, we held our Annual Parish Assembly. There we said goodbye to outgoing council members: Joe Brinker, Julyet Degirmenci, Pam Mamourian, Krikor Soghomonian and Seta Topakbashian as well as outgoing Diocesan Delegate and past Parish Council Chair, Jovia Keytanjian. We welcomed new council members: Vicken Bazarbashian, Rosine Gouveia, Lisa Kailian, Steven Keytanjian and Shahab Minassian, along with George Kodokian and Robin Williams as delegates. While this new group has never met in person, we have been conducting regular Zoom meetings every 3 to 4 weeks – working to keep the operations of our church running smoothly while discussing ways to enhance our virtual services through Sunday Badarak and other educational programs. We have been live-streaming our Divine Liturgy since April 26th. In addition Hayr Sourp and the Parish Council have initiated an evening educational series, where we have hosted several lectures including “The Tradition of Hampartzoum” with Hayr Sourp, "Coping Amid the Stress of COVID-19" with Richard Bedrosian, Ph.D., and "Entering into Phase 2 of the COVID Pandemic " with Dr. Paul Dorghramji.

Certainly, a major topic has been the procedures regarding reopening. Hayr Sourp and the Parish Council have been in regular discussions with Montgomery County and the Diocese regarding the guidelines that are being set forth. As they evolve, we will adjust to meet the needs of our parish while providing the safest environment for us to worship together.

✍ Alex Topakbashian

SUNDAY SCHOOL GRADUATION

On Sunday, June 7, 2020, St. Sahag & St. Mesrob Apostolic Church held their annual end-of-the-year Sunday School Closing Ceremony via Zoom, immediately following Badarak.

Sossi Avrigian, Superintendent, and Teresa Yenovkian, 7th-12th grade Sunday School Teacher, welcomed The Very Reverend Father Oshagan Gulgulian, the Sunday School parents, and the Sunday School students, to a very unusual and special Sunday School Closing Ceremony 2020 via Zoom.



Hayr Sourp began the Ceremony with a prayer, which was followed by an array of beautiful "Drawings and Essays" depicting the love of Christ and Church presented by the Sunday School Students. A heartfelt THANK YOU from Hayr Sourp and the Sunday School Teachers and staff was bestowed upon the participating Sunday School Students: Andre and David Kafalamasian, Arman Keytanjian, Mark and Eliza Krikourian, Angel, Gabriella and Faith Lusk, Milena and Liana Marashlian, Grace and Georgina Ramoundos, Jacob and Jemma Topakbashian, Sophia Wanamaker, Grace and Joy Yacobe and Jack and Aaron Yenovkian.

Mrs. Avrigian emphasized that even through a pandemic, God's Word stays the same and gives us strength, courage, hope, faith, goodness, knowledge, perseverance, and most importantly, LOVE! She then shared with all present, the vision for the future of our beloved Church, as was recently spoken by Bishop Daniel Findikyan, "to Build the Body of Christ." With that said, Mrs. Avrigian continued by thanking the teachers and staff for their consistent dedication to the students each week. In addition, she thanked the parents for encouraging and supporting their children throughout the Sunday Church School year of 2019-2020.

Sunday School would not be possible without the amazing dedication of our loving teaching staff and volunteers! Thank you to the following people for devoting their time and knowledge on a weekly basis to our youth: Ed Sarkisian, Mary Krikourian, Elda Chamberlain, Valerie Hagopian, Nancy DerSimonian, Lucille Mikaelian, Peter Yilanjian, Arpi Kilroy, Teresa Yenovkian, Sossi Avrigian, Jodi Petrosian, Ida Ramoundos, Talene Metjian, Sossy Amirian, Maral Seroon and Vivi Meguerian. Once again, thank you also to our loving parents. Thank you for bringing your precious children to Sunday School. Lord willing, we will look forward to seeing everyone in September!

✍ *Sossi Avrigian*





SACRAMENTS & GIFTS TO THE CHURCH

Baptism & Chrismation



Raffi Aram Odabashian
Son of Steven and Margarit Odabashian
Baptized on February 15, 2020



Dzabel Degirmenci
Daughter of Mikail and Rita Degirmenci
Baptized on February 16, 2020

Funerals

- Aram Avesyan*
- Marcus A. Mamourian*
- Alma Altoonoan*
- Mary Samuelian*
- Alice Samuelian*
- Mary V. Kehyayan*





Gifts to the Church

General and Memorial Donations

❖ Mr. & Mrs. Vahan and Danielle Gureghian <i>in Memory of Harry and Ann Gureghian</i>	❖ Charles Kazanjian
❖ Haig & Sheena Dadourian <i>for Sunday School</i>	❖ Mary K. Sarkisian
❖ Elizabeth Barsamian	❖ Veronica Torcomian
❖ Zarmine & Missak Boghosian	❖ Ana & Thomas Torcomian
❖ Alice Dertadian	❖ Aris & Seta Topakbashian
❖ Mary Dulgerian	❖ Araxie Tourunyan
❖ Eleanor Gurdikian	TOTAL \$36,215.00

Stewardship

- ❖ Aice Aznavourian
- ❖ Elizabeth Barsamian
- ❖ Florence Kazanjian
- ❖ Elizabeth Manawelian

Thank You

St. Sahag & St. Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church would like to thank **Mary Arabatali** for her donation of this carpet runner in memory of **Melkon Arabatli, Najebah Arteen and Percy Arteen**. May the Lord number their souls in His eternal Kingdom, and grant peace to the surviving members of their families.



Easter Youghakin Donations

❖ Vergine Amadouni	❖ Jovia & Charles Keytanjian
❖ Angele Arutunian	❖ Alex & Pam Mamourian
❖ Alice Aznavourian	❖ Mrs. Lucy and Nora Martayan
❖ Bruce & Laraine Ballard	❖ Yn. Angel Metjian
❖ Elizabeth Barsamian	❖ Mesrob & Grace Odabashian
❖ Beti Torunian Buchanan	❖ Araksi & Hirant Torunyan
❖ Haig & Sheena Dadourian	❖ Gerry & Robin Williams
❖ Jack & Carol Hoplamazian	TOTAL \$1,110.00
❖ Florence Kazanjian	

Pastor's Appeal

❖ Alice Aznavourian	❖ Antranik & Noemi Kordzian
❖ Paul & Jean Bidilikian	❖ Meroojan Mellian
❖ George Boyajian	❖ Dr. Levon & Claudia Nazarian
❖ Ayshe Chakmaklian	❖ Arlene Ounjian
❖ Haig & Sheena Dadourian	❖ Sallee Rush
❖ Christine Droesser	❖ Vergine Amadouni Sertlian
❖ Harry & Veronica Hoplamazian	❖ Stepanian
❖ Rita Khachadourian	❖ Veronica Torcomian
❖ Ronald Khachadourian	TOTAL \$2,770.00
❖ Raffi & Diane Khatchikian	



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 Marcus Mamourian***

- Alexander & Pamela Mamourian
- Robert & Isabel Kurkechian
- Matt Belluardo & Lisa Melian
- Gregory, Joan Q, Joan M Yulduzian
- Michele (Melikian) & Paul Lockwood
- Mesrob & Grace Odabashian
- Jovia & Charles Keytanjian
- Elizabeth Barsamian
- Florence Kazanjian
- Nancy & Nishan DerSimonian
- Robert & Sara Hagopian
- Nina (Bogosian) & Matthew Quigley
- Bruce & Laraine Ballard
- Betty, Brian & Margie Tavakalian

Total: \$ 2,290.00

***In Lieu of Flowers Donations
 In Memory of Almas Altoonian***

- Charles Gary Altoonian, Jr. & Eileen Marie Carr
- Helen & Deborah Kazigian

Total: \$200.00

***In Lieu of Flowers Donations
 In Memory of Diramayr Zabell Kalayjian***

- Zarmine & Missak Boghosian

Total: \$ 100.00

***In Lieu of Flowers Donations
 In Memory of Mary Kehyayan***

- Dr. Vartan & Lisa Igidbashian
- Gloria Keleshian

Total: \$ 125.00





Will

by *Hovhannes Shiraz*

Translated by Shant Norashkharian

My son, what shall I will you, what shall I will you, my dear,
That you may remember me in coming sorrow or cheer?
I've no treasures, what treasure, treasure's the light of my eyes,
Only you are my treasure, you treasure of my treasures.
I want to will such treasure for you as your father that
In any other country to will a father cannot;
I am willing that to you which in our great century
Small men have imprisoned and also chained in the clouds;
I will you our mountain so that you take it from black cloud
And bring it home carrying it with our spotless justice,
So that you may throw my dear, even with your poor small paw,
To our side our mountain that's your justice's sea of strength,
And when you bring it, my dear, take my heart out of my tomb,
And toward the free above rise and take with you my heart,
And bury my heart under the snows of Mount Ararat,
So that in my tomb as well it won't be cold from the fire of longing for centuries.



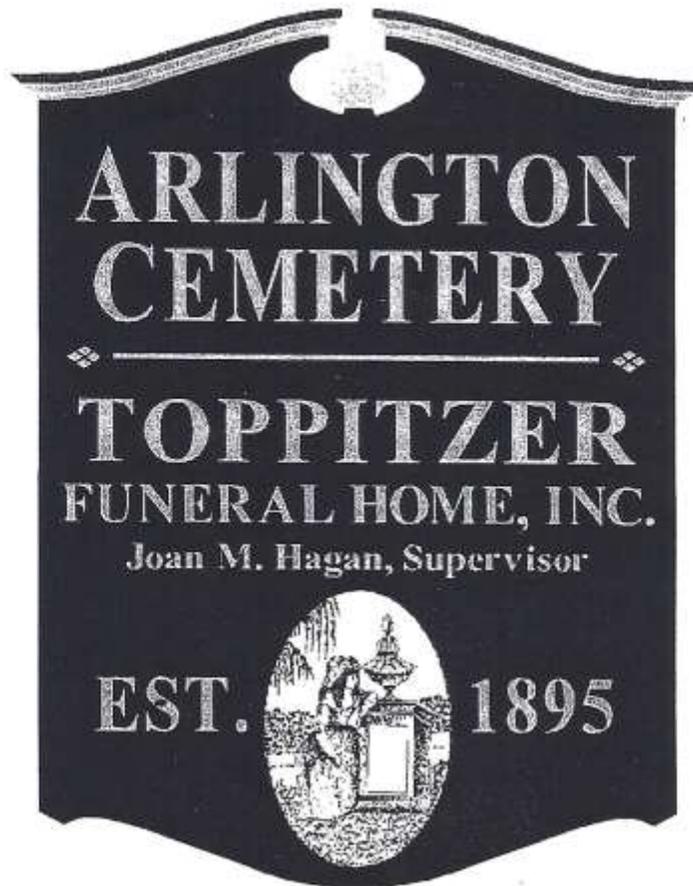
.....
I will you Mount Ararat, that you may keep forever,
As our language and also as your father's home's pillar.

ԿՏԱԿ

ՅՈՎՀԱՆՆԵՍ ՇԻՐԱԶ

Որդիս, քեզ ի՞նչ կտակեմ, ի՞նչ կտակեմ, իմ բալիկ,
Որ ինձ յիշես վշտի մէջ, թէ խինդի մէջ քո գալիք.
Գանձեր չունեմ, բայց գանձն ի՞նչ, գանձր յոյսն էր ասքերիս,
Դու ես միակ իմ գանձը, դու ես գանձը գանձերիս:
Քեզ այնպիսի գանձ կ'ուզեմ ես կտակել հայրաբար,
Որ չի կարող կտակել ուրիշ երկրում ոչ մի հայր, -
Ես քեզ այն եմ կտակում, որին այս մեծ մեր դարում
Փոքրիկ մարդիկ են բանտել ու շղթայել ամպերում.
Քեզ մեր սարն եմ կտակում, որ դուրս բերես սեւ ամպից,
Որ տուն բերես շալակած արդարութեամբ մեր անբիծ,
Ու կը բերես, իմ բալիկ, թեկուզ քո խեղճ թաթիկով
Մեր սարն այս կողմ շուռ կը տասս՝ արդարութեանդ ուժն է ծով,
Ու երբ բերես, իմ բալիկ, սիրտս էլ շիրմից կը հանես,
Կը բարձրանաս ու սիրտս ազատն ի վեր կը տանես
Ու կը թաղես իմ սիրտը ձիւների տակ Մասիսի,
Որ շիրմում էլ՝ դարաւոր հուր կարօտից չմրսի:
.....

Քեզ Մասիսն եմ կտակում, որ դու պահես յաւիտեան,
Որպէս լեզուն մեր հայոց, որպէս սիւնը քո հօր տան:



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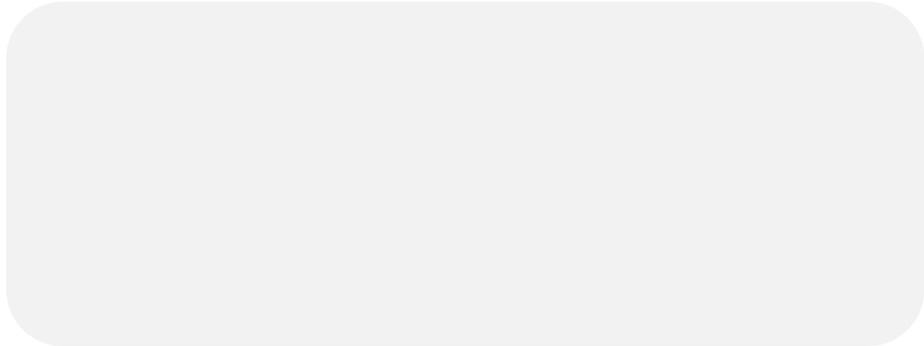


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WINTER-SPRING 2020

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TIME VALUE – DATED MATERIAL

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------|---|
| ❖ | <i>July 4, 2020</i> | <i>Independence Day</i> |
| ❖ | <i>July 19, 2020</i> | <i>Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord</i> |
| ❖ | <i>August 16, 2020</i> | <i>Feast of the Assumption of the Holy
Mother-Of -God (Grapes Blessing)</i> |
| ❖ | <i>TBD</i> | <i>Annual Church Picnic</i> |
| ❖ | <i>September 13, 2020</i> | <i>Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross</i> |
| ❖ | <i>September 21, 2020</i> | <i>Armenian Independence Day</i> |
| ❖ | <i>September 27, 2020</i> | <i>Feast of the Holy Cross of Varak</i> |