

AVEDIS

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St. Hagop Armenian Church

The Good News | April/May/June 2017

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest.” (Mt. 11:28)

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Weighing Our Baggage as We Journey through Lent

This year, I and some of my fellow clergy were blessed to spend the first three days of Lent together at the Mid-West Lenten Clergy Retreat in Chicago. And as we all packed our bags into a van at the airport, we noticed how a few clergy packed very lightly with the smallest of bags, while others packed heavier with large suitcases. What about you? When you go on a journey, do you pack heavy? Are you a planner and preparer to take care of every possible contingency? Or do you pack light when you travel; going with the flow and confident you already have what you need?

By my nature I am more the first type. I didn't pack that heavily as far as clothes go. I wear my black robe, who cares what else I wear under that! But the baggage we carry is much more than clothes. I had been asked by the Vicar to lead a session for my fellow clergy on the theology and practice of forgiveness; I still needed time to prepare for that. I had to meet with the Archbishop to discuss our new pledge system; I still needed time to prepare for that. I had to meet with the Vicar to finalize the details of our clergy conference here in May; I also needed time to prepare for that. These were important things, and they needed to be done well. Yet the entire point of Lent, and the clergy Lenten retreat is that this time of year is the time to pack lightly; to let go of all our baggage, our preparations and cares, and rely on God to provide. Thankfully, by the end of the next morning's Arevagal (Sunrise) Service, I had mostly put aside my small cares, and put my attention on our great God.

What about you? You have all traveled with me on this journey of Great Lent, and as Holy Week approaches, we are approaching the pinnacle of our journey. What baggage have you been carrying with you on this journey with Christ? Have you been travelling too heavy or too light?

All of us sometimes-and some of us all the time-travel too heavy in our spiritual journey in general and Lent in particular. Jesus has a word for us as Holy Week approaches; the same words he gave to his twelve Apostles when he sent them on their first missionary journey to preach and to heal. "Take nothing for the journey except a staff," said Jesus. "No bread, no bag, no money in your belts. Wear sandals but not an extra shirt" (Mk 6:8-9). For some, the primary challenge of their spiritual journey is not to serve more, give more, or even pray longer. These things are all important indeed. But of primary importance for those who travel heavy through this world, is simply to hear the immortal words of the Psalmist; "Be Still and Know that I am God" (Ps 46:10). As Holy Week approaches, find ways to put down your bags, even if filled with Bibles and vestments, to spend time with the living God who inspires Bibles and vestments. To us who are travelling too heavy through this life, Jesus invites us to "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." (Mt 11:28).

On the other hand, all of us sometimes-and some of us all the time-travel too lightly in our spiritual journey in general and Lent in particular. Jesus also has a word for us as Holy Week approaches, the same words he gave his twelve apostles as their missionary journey continued without Him; "If you have a purse, take it, and also a bag; and if you don't have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one." (Lk 22:36). If you have not paid enough attention or made enough commitment to your Lenten journey up to this point, now is the time to get your things together. Now is the time to commit to come to church for Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Easter, to regular reading of scripture, to redoubled efforts at daily prayer. To us who take too lightly the eternal consequences of our journey through this world, Jesus invites us to "Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; for the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." (Mt 26:41).

As Great Lent comes to its awesome culmination in the passion and resurrection of Our Lord, let us all ponder deeply in what ways we are travelling too heavily, and in which ways too lightly, on our spiritual journeys. Do we trust God enough to put aside our worries and let Him supply our every need? Are we also taking on full responsibility for our calling and growth as Christians? As we weigh our baggage on the final leg of the journey of Lent, let us ready ourselves for the struggle and triumph ahead...and let us remember that journeying anywhere with God is always worth the trip, now and always and unto the ages of ages; amen.

PARISH COUNCIL REPORT by Michael Shahnasarian, Ph.D.

In acknowledgement of their faith and appreciation of gifts from God, Christians often make venerable comments about blessings they recognize have been bestowed upon their brothers and sisters in Christ. Blessings come in assorted forms: sense of humor, wit, athletic skills, good health, family, culinary talent, and good fortune, to name a few. The list of blessings, like God's graces, is endless.

Implicit in the acclimation that one is blessed is the notion that a blessing is something divinely bestowed. That is, it is untenable solely through human effort; its genesis is truly a gift from God. Our challenges as Christians include appreciating our blessings and converting these divinely granted inputs into outputs that benefit humanity and, correspondingly, please our Lord.

Examples of parishioners at St. Hagop applying their blessings to serve their brethren and, by extension, our Lord, abound. These servants perform this rite in an understated, tireless manner. Those who come to mind include: Vicky Mouradian, who arranges the flowers on our altar before Badarak. Bobby Maslar who tends to numerous behind-the-scenes Badarak details, as well as less glamorous basic maintenance work. Teresa Haidarian who cleans our premises. And, Araxi Dulgeroff who very often prepares our fellowship hospitality offerings after mass.

Manifestations of parishioners' recent past, current, and future commitment of their blessings to service at St. Hagop have persisted and are omnipresent. Last month Louise Yardumian continued to demonstrate her many blessings go beyond her musical, culinary, and leadership talents: she organized and led St. Hagop to an outstanding bazaar. Bravo, Louise! Stepan Serpekian's visionary and organizational blessings have intensified with the approach of our 115th Diocesan Convention and Clergy Retreat, which our church is hosting. This 3-year work in progress has inspired many parishioners to lend their talents to a seminal event for St. Hagop. Looking to the future, our recent parish council elections brought 2 returning members (Andy Anusbigian and Dr. George Kamajian) and 1 new member (Hayley Hovanessian) to your church's governance; they have and will continue to include in their alms blessings God has given them. Since his election Andy has been at the church twice a week to help maintain our building and grounds, thanks to Andy and Oscar and David Kazarian for making this possible

Being blessed is not an end state; it is only the beginning of a process culminating in our Christian duty to service. While responding to Pontius Pilate's interpretation of our Lord's insolence during his trial on Good Friday, Jesus, at the threshold of his death, apprised the Emperor that his source of power – in effect, a blessing - emanated wholly from God. This pronouncement was a theme inherent in His preaching throughout His earthly ministry, and reminds us during this paschal season to take stock of our blessings and convert them to actions that would please our Lord. In this vein, Matthew 16:19 succinctly acclaims: *“I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”*

Michael Shahnasarian, Ph.D.

Parish Council Chairman

EVENTS COMMITTEE REPORT by Louise Yardumian

Dear Parishioners and Friends of St. Hagop Armenian Church,

On behalf of the Events Committee, I extend heartfelt thanks to ALL who helped make the St. Hagop "ARMENIAN MARDI GRAS" a wonderful success!

With the assistance of our wonderful Sponsors and fine Volunteers, we were able to greet our guests and share with them our amazing foods, our rich culture, and beautiful campus, including our Church and Shahnasarian Hall. Each one of the people listed below gave of their time, talent and/or treasure. Responsibilities included preparing and cooking food, setting up our Heritage room and Hall, decorating, working at the event selling food and drinks, gathering and selling raffle prizes, Armenian goods, making knitted items, cleaning the hall and patio, barbecuing and other projects "behind the scenes" - to ALL these wonderful volunteers and those who sponsored the Mardi Gras, we owe a great debt of gratitude. You are all appreciated for the part that you played in making this event a great Parish Success! May God continue to bless St. Hagop Armenian Church and her people.

Most sincerely,

Louise M. Yardumian, Event Chair



ARMENIAN MARDI GRAS SPONSORS & VOLUNTEERS

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John and Susan Arsenault
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NEW PLEDGE SYSTEM

We pray that you will submit a pledge card and join our church in its transition from a dues membership system to a pledge system. We are heartened by the responses received to date.

Extra blank pledge cards are available in the Narthex, can be printed below or online. Please call the church office to request one to be mailed to you through the post office. Thank you!

PLEDGED STEWARDS for 2017 (as of March 14, 2017)

George & Joan Agnacion, Andrew & Theresa Anusbigian, Artak Apyan, John & Susan Arsenault, Victoria Atamian, Leon & Gloria Atayan, Grace Austin, George Avadikian, Bagrad & Tatiana Badalyan, Margaret Bedrosian, Charles & Lisa Begian, Cornelia Biggers, Sonia Cure, Fr. Hovnan & Yn. Anna Demerjian, Jean Jacques & Hasmig Demerjian, Rose Derderian, Fred Hagop Armand Dikranian, Araxi Dulgeroff, Norman & Adrienne Ekizian, John & Victoria Franks, Harbig & Mary Garabedian, bill & Kim Gernazian, Richard & Pauline Gilgan, Adrienne Guendjolan, Gregory Hagopian, Teresa Haidarian, Berge & Tamar Hajian, Seda & Irene Hakim Karamian, Janet Haydostian, Mary Haydostian, Nazdar Hermiz, Hayley Hovhanessian, Gregory & Stephanie Hovsepian, Shirak Hovsepian, Darwain Jamgochian, Eileen Barsamian Jennings, Richard & Christina Kachadurian, Dr. George & Debra Kamajian, Edward & Michelle Kapreilian, Samuel & Beatrice Kapreilian, David & Nancy Kazarian, Ara & Rita Keshishian, Hannelore Keshishian, Garbis & Mari Kesisoglu, Gregory & Nora Keuroghlian, Geoffrey Korf, Houri Kohian, Richard & Margaret Kratlian, Noubar & Ann Mahdessian, Naomi Manoogian, William & Christine Martin, Hagop & Mary (Tobe) Mashikian, Mallory Maslar, Richard & Linda Maslar, Carla & Aram Megerian, Vazken Melkisetian, Ida Merakyan, John & Virginia Messerlian, Alice Miller, Vasken & Karen Minassian, Vahe & Aida Mokhtarian, Agop & Victoria Mouradian, Bejan & Rebekah Nouri, Florence & Apkar Omartian, Sima Palakian, Margaret Penerian, Bernard Przegendza, Annette Ross, Martha Samuelian, Michael Sarafian, Tanya Sarafian, Vahak & Elizabeth Sarkis, Charles & Eva Sarkisian, Leon & Sharon Sarkisian, Chris & Carol Sassouni, Avedis & Anahid Serpekian, Seta & Stepan Serpekian, Vicken & Courtney Serpekian, Alexis Shahnasarian, Elizabeth Shahnasarian, Margaret & Edward Shahnasarian, Michael & Jean Shahnasarian, Norair & Maro Shaldjian, John & Kelly Shamsey, Robert & Christina Shamsey, Daniel & Norma Takoushian, Anna Tossoonian, Ida Varadian, Charles Vartanian, Charles & Paula Trice Walker, James & Cathy Wilson, Nazley Wilson, Dr. Haig & Louise Yardumian, Maurice & Marina Youakim, Armen & Rose Zartarian

In prayerful consideration of my stewardship of God's resources and my commitment to St. Hagop's mission and programs:

My/Our Stewardship Pledge for 2017 is \$_____ given

() weekly () monthly () quarterly () annually

Yes, please issue me offering envelopes No, offering envelopes will not be needed

Signature: _____ Date: ___/___/___

Name(s):	
Address:	
Phone/Email:	

Please mail this pledge card to the church office, or place in the offering plate by Stewardship Sunday—October 30, 2016. No payment need accompany this pledge form. We ask that 2017 pledge monies be paid by the end of the 2017 calendar year. Payments may be made online through the St. Hagop website. Once you submit this form, you will receive an account number and offering envelopes (if you choose).



May the Lord Remember All Your Offerings
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**Stewardship
Pledge Card**

Dinner & Kef Night Thurs. May 4, 8-11 PM at Innisbrook -\$50



REGISTER ONLINE + sthagopfl.org

Gala & Dance Fri. May 5, 7pm– 12am at Innisbrook- \$115, Dance ONLY \$25



WITH LIVE PERFORMANCE BY

JAQ
HAGOPIAN



MAY 5
FRIDAY

REGISTER ONLINE + sthagopfl.org

WOMEN'S GUILD REPORT submitted by Teresa Haidarian, Recording Secretary

We elected our officers for this year. Lena remains as chair, Co-chairs are Seta and Natalia, Corresponding Secretary Martha, Recording Secretary Teresa, Treasurer and co-treasurer Vicky and Lana.

Araxi retired as kitchen coordinator. After years of dedicated service in preparing foods for coffee hour, she turned in her papers. She is replaced by three guild members who promise to prepare foods with as much care and love as Araxi has over the years.

We continue to serve member of our Parish by making ourselves available for any activity but especially cooking. We have many talented cooks within our guild and all are willing to dedicate a Saturday to preparing their special Armenian delicacies in our kitchen and share them with the congregation. Our next big project is preparing and serving meals for the Diocese Assembly in May. After that, we will rest until our Parish comes up with another project for us and we will respond with enthusiasm and put out another banquet of love and delicious ethnic foods to enjoy.

Teresa Haidarian

Recording Secretary



Holy Week Աւագ Շաբաթ

Join us for the most important and fulfilling worship services of the entire Armenian Church year.



Washing of the Feet/"Votniva"
Thur. Apr. 13 | 7 PM



"Khavaroom" (Passion of our Lord)
Thur. Apr. 13 | 8 PM



Good Friday Burial Service
Fri. Apr. 14 | 7 PM



Easter Eve "Jragalooys Badarak"
Sat. Apr. 15 | 7 PM



Easter Divine Liturgy
Sun. Apr. 16 | 10:30 AM

Easter Stewardship Drive 2017 Իղազիւն

Yes! We would like to support St. Hagop Armenian Church with a special Easter offering over and above my regular support, participation and prayers:

\$5,000 \$1,000 \$500 \$100 \$50 Other\$ _____

Make Checks Payable To: St. Hagop Armenian Church
 7020 90th Avenue N., Pinellas Park, FL 33782

You May Also Give Online at: www.sthagopfl.org

Did you know? It is an ancient tradition of the Armenian Church that during Easter we make a special Իղազիւն | Youghakin donation (yough=oil) to keep the church lamps burning—thereby supporting the mission of the church!

Remember your Church during this Holy Season
Respond with your Easter Donation!

Office Hours: 9:00am-4:00pm

Monday – Friday

Worship Hours: Sunday 10:30am

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Avedis Newsletter is a publication of St. Hagop Church in Pinellas Park, Florida.

Submissions are welcomed and should be sent to the church office. All text should be electronic format, preferably Word. Editorial board reserves the right to modify or reject any submissions. All material must be received no later than the published deadlines below:

Issue	Submission
July/August/September 2017	June 10th
October/November/December 2017	September 10th

It costs over \$1,100 to print and send each issue of Avedis. We would like to communicate as often as possible with our parishioners. Will you help defray some of the costs? Please send your check memo: Avedis Newsletter 1/2 issue (\$550); 1/4 issue (\$275) or other (\$) amount.

The *Avedis* is grateful to accept business ads, which help us, pay for our newsletter and help you reach your customers. Please notify Becky Beall at office@stthagopfl.org if you are interested. Make checks payable to St. Hagop Armenian Church.

Rates are per issue:
\$50 for a business card,
\$150 for a half page and \$300 for a full page

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

****Divine Liturgy & fellowship take place every Sunday from 10:30-12:30 unless noted below**

Sun. Apr. 2	Lenten Divine Liturgy Sunday School Lenten Sermon Series	10:30 AM 11:00 AM 11:30 AM
Sun. Apr. 9	Divine Liturgy- Palm Sunday Sunday School Opening of the Doors Service	10:30 AM 11:00 AM 12:00 PM
Thurs. Apr. 13	Washing of the Feet/Votnlva Vigil/Khavaroom Service	7:00 PM 8:00 PM
Fri. April 14	Burial Service	7:00 PM
Sat. April 15	Easter Eve/Jragalooys Divine Liturgy	7:00 PM
Sun. April 16	Divine Liturgy-Easter Sunday School Children's Easter Egg Hunt	10:30 AM 11:00AM 12:30 PM
Tues. April 18	Parish Council Meeting	6:00 PM
Sat. April 22	St. Hagop Clean Up Day	12-4 PM
Sun. April 23	Divine Liturgy- New Sunday Sunday School	10:30 AM 11:00 AM
Sun. April 30	Divine Liturgy- Green Sunday Sunday School	10:30 AM 11:00 PM
May 1-3	Annual Clergy Conference Hosted by St. Hagop	
May 4-7	115 th Diocesan Assembly Hosted by St. Hagop	
Thurs. May 4	Diocesan Assembly Dinner & Kef Night	8-11 PM
Friday, May 5	Diocesan Assembly Gala Banquet Post Gala Dance	7-10 PM 10-12 PM
Sun. May 7	Divine Liturgy- Red Sunday Sunday School Diocesan Assembly After Church Fellowship	10:30 AM 11:00 AM 12:30 PM
Tues. May 9	Parish Council Meeting	6:00 PM
Sun. May 14	Divine Liturgy- Mother's Day Sunday School Last Day of Sunday Blessing-Special Fellowship	10:30 AM 11:00 AM 12:30 PM
Sun. May 21	Divine Liturgy	10:30 AM
Sun. May 28	Divine Liturgy	10:30 AM
Sun. June 4	Divine Liturgy-Pentecost	10:30 AM
Sun. June 11	Divine Liturgy	10:30 AM
Tues. June 13	Parish Council Meeting	6:00 PM
Sun. June 18	Divine Liturgy- Feast of Holy Etchmiadzin	10:30 AM
Sun. June 25	Divine Liturgy	10:30 AM

Please note that by canon law of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church, no Requiem Services may be held on the following major feast days of the church; Christmas, Palm Sunday/Easter, Pentecost, Transfiguration & Exaltation of the Cross)

St. Hagop Armenian Church
Parish of the Gulf Coast of Florida

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The Rev. Fr. Hovnan Demerjian, Pastor

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