

AVEDIS

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St. Hagop Armenian Church

The Good News | November/December 2010

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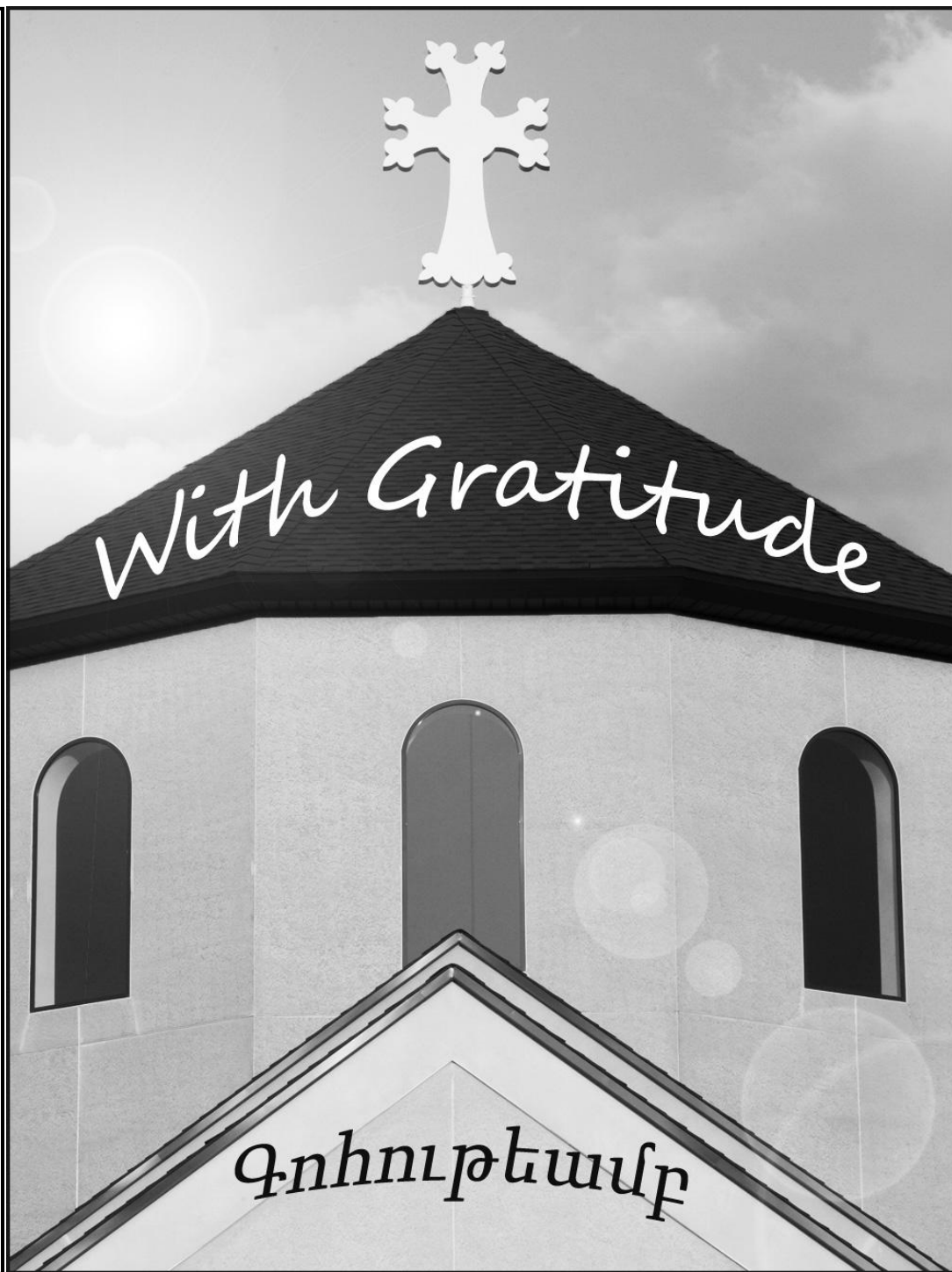
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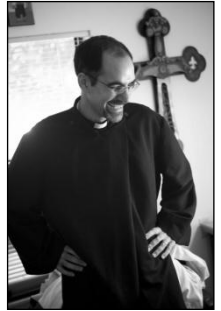
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7 Reasons I am Thankful to Be The Pastor of St. Hagop Armenian Church

This month's issue is dedicated to thanking you, our faithful parishioners, and God, for the great blessings of our community. As Thanksgiving approaches, it is a perfect time to express my gratitude to you all for the privilege of being your pastor. Here are 7 reasons I am thankful:



To Work With Such Great Council Members -Unlike building a business, when we build our church, we build it on the volunteer offerings of parishioner's time, talent and treasure. In my time at St. Hagop I have been inspired and blessed by the selfless dedication of parish council members and church leaders who give their all to help St. Hagop strengthen and grow by the grace of God.



To Be A Part of A Special Family- Many people seek a sense of belonging and roots, especially in the spread-out and transient state of FL. The St. Hagop community is like an extended family, which comes together to worship, to celebrate the joys of weddings and baptisms and mourn losses in funerals, to serve and provide support for each other. The St. Hagop family includes our own families, but extends beyond it, for as Jesus said "my mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it" (Luke 8:21)



To Feel Anchored In Our Armenian Heritage- Our church is full of ancient things, which help to remind us where we came from and what God calls us to be. We use and preserve our language--an ancient branch of the Indo-European language family. We remember our ancestors--a small people amidst super-powers who never should have survived genocide. We remember St. Gregory's call to follow Christ in 301 AD-- and continue on our journey with Him today.



To Lead Sunday Badarak -Divine Liturgy, sacraments and preaching are the key human means by which God dispenses His grace in the Armenian Church. Every Sunday I have the privilege of helping to reconcile God and His people by the sacrament of confession and communion and by preaching God's word. I am honored to be a channel through which the grace of God, love of Christ, and peace of the Holy Spirit can be made real to people



To Witness Such Generosity From Our Community – In the pages of this newsletter you will see that our church exists not because of any one individual's efforts, but by the participation and care of hundreds of generous people in our community. This dedication brings honor to the Armenian people and glory to God, and it is a privilege to be a part of.



To Share In Tears of Sorrow and Joy- The priesthood embraces all of life. I share the joy of parents over the birth of a child, as well as the pain of children over the death of a mother or father. I help celebrate at a wedding; I also offer comfort at a funeral. There is an unpredictability that accompanies this ministry -an incredible adventure may begin at any given moment. These are the times when a pastor goes beyond words to stand in the gap for God in the lives of His people.



To Be A Part of Something Much Bigger Than Me - The church is the only institution Christ promised to build and bless. He said, "I will build My church; and the gates of Hell shall not overpower it" (Matt. 16:18). This results in two feelings. First, humility, that no one is indispensable in the leadership of the church, including the priest. Second, confidence that we all have a part to play in God's work of building this church. "And like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house (1 Peter 2:5)."

PARISH COUNCIL REPORT by Stepan H. Serpekian

Gratitude is the memory of the heart, to be grateful we must think with our heart. When we feel with our heart we tend to believe with our soul with faith on what we believe instead of what we see. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today and creates a vision for tomorrow. At St Hagop we do have a lot to be grateful for. Allow me to take you on a historical tour of our gratitude:

In 1988 The Armenian American Society of the Sun Coast recognized the need to provide for the spiritual needs of Armenians in the greater Tampa Bay and St Petersburg. Hence St Hagop was formed with the vision of the few, and by the grace of God; for that we are grateful.

St Hagop's mission continued on, when it was granted mission parish status in 1990. The community was united when the ground breaking ceremony took place in 1997 and the architectural drawings of the church were presented to the community in 1999. The four corners were blessed in 2002. As time passed, fundraising continued for the construction of the church. Finally, in 2007, St. Hagop was consecrated by His Holiness Karekin II. What a blessed day that was! Armenians from around Florida celebrated our joyous occasion. Our gratitude to all those who made the dream a possibility!

This brings me to the subject of togetherness and the acronym TEAM (Together Everyone Achieves More). Our church has achieved so much when it works coming together. Our gratitude to all PC members and community supporters who, over the decades, have actively donated their time and energy, financially and emotionally to St Hagop.

The beauty of our diverse community coming together, reminds me of the art of making our church's sacred oil--*Holy Myuron*. Myuron is made from a base of Olive Oil and a unique mixture of 47 other spices and flowers: (Balsam oil, Carnation, Nutmeg, Sweet Flag, Spikenard, Gooseberry, Cinnamon, Incense, Cyclamon, Crocus, Sweet Marjoram, Hazelwort, Camomile, Violet, Water Lily, Orange flower, Allspice, Laurel Seed, Crystal Tea, Ginger, Mastic, Musk, Orange Flower Water, Rose Water, Aloes, Cardamon, Sandal, Rose, Lavender, Rosemary, Lemon balm, Spearmint, Wild mint, Basil, Thyme, Summer Savory Etc.).

Our St. Hagop sanctuary is like the olive oil base of Myuron, which only becomes fragrant when mixed with the diverse offering and talents of each member our community. Blessed by God, this mixture becomes the sacred miracle of St Hagop. Also like Holy Myuron, a small amount from the previous batch made seven years prior, is added to the new batch. The same is true of our community, where the prior generation's faith and leadership must always be handed on to the next generation.

Remember hard times make good times sweeter. Without challenges, there can be no progress. Without obstacles, there can be no achievement. Let's all be thankful for the opportunities our challenges provide. Our biggest challenge right now is our mortgage. Your support will symbolize your belief in St Hagop.

Jesus recognizes giving as an action of the heart, and as a measure of the heart. People tend to look at the size of the gift or the nobility of the cause, but Jesus looks at the heart of the giver. *For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son...*

By His example, God teaches us to give, setting a standard for unconditional love and sacrificial giving. His desire is that we learn the joy and fullness of life that come from giving with all our hearts. Is St. Hagop in your heart as you are in St. Hagop's? Do you believe in St Hagop's mission? We exist now because of your support. Let us hear again the speaking of your heart.



TREASURER'S LETTER by Chris Sassouni

Dear Parishioners,

This is the first time that I am writing to provide you with a financial status report on St. Hagop Armenian Church. I thought it was important to do this for several reasons. First, the current parish council recognizes that you have made us the stewards of the hard-earned donations you continue to make for our beloved St. Hagop Armenian Church. Second, when it comes to managing the finances of the church, we want to establish a culture of full transparency and accountability. The financial systems and procedures we currently have in place allow us to provide any of you with a detailed accounting of how we are deploying your donations for the operations of the church. We are also in a position to provide everyone with a year-end statement of the donations you have made for the prior 12 months for income tax purposes.

One of the priorities of the newly elected council of 2009, was to analyze the financial condition of the church and the systems it had in place. This analysis led to several conclusions:

1. We needed to upgrade our financial systems so that we were prepared for future growth.
2. We needed to do a better job of communicating our financial condition to the church.
3. We had approximately 30% more construction debt than was healthy for a church of our size and this debt burden was choking our ability to grow.
4. We needed to secure a permanent mortgage in a difficult lending climate, to replace our current interest-only mortgage.
5. We needed to broaden the base of donors in order to service our debt and grow.
6. We needed to finish certain construction projects in and around the church, including:
 - a. An outdoor pavilion where we could hold events.
 - b. Installation of pews
 - c. Installation of permanent flooring

In the last two years, the Parish Council has accomplished the following as it relates to the financial condition of St. Hagop Armenian Church:

1. We upgraded the financial systems of the church to QuickBooks. This provides us with a platform that has the flexibility and the capability to grow with us for years to come. We can now provide anyone with a real-time financial status report on the church and show them how their donations are being deployed. Thanks to Rudy Kimatian, Linda Maslar, and my assistant, Debbie Higgins, for their tireless work.
2. Despite the worst economy since the Great Depression, we were able to raise more than \$400,000 in 2009. This was quite an accomplishment.
3. After seeking mortgage alternatives from more than 30 different financing institutions, we were able to secure a 20 year amortizing mortgage with our existing lender, Whitney Bank. Beginning in May of 2011, we will begin paying down principal on our mortgage.
4. We secured funds to install permanent flooring, pews, and our pavilion.
5. We put on our first ever Kef Time Tampa Bay and raised over \$20,000 from the event.
6. We expanded membership from 112 in 2008 to 133 in 2009.
7. We increased the funds raised from our stewardship campaign from \$13,000 in 2008 to \$36,5050 in 2009.

Despite these incredible accomplishments, I would describe the financial status of St. Hagop Armenian Church in medical terms as “critical but stable”. In years past, we barely had money in the bank and were often “passing the hat” just to keep the lights on. Because of all of the hard work of Der Hayr, the Parish Council, and the many dedicated volunteers within our parish and community, we now have a modest amount of money in the bank. However, that does not change the fact that we have a \$1.3 million mortgage which begins amortizing in May of 2011 at a cost that is 43% higher than it has been to date.

Said simply, it requires **\$120,000** per year to service our mortgage and another **\$150,000** in additional expenses to operate the church. As a result, at the beginning of each year, we are faced with the challenge of raising **\$270,000** from you, the parishioners, and the Armenian community of Tampa Bay just to meet the financial demands of operating our beloved church.

We are already hard at work developing plans for the coming year to insure that the church will not only survive but thrive. I cannot express to you how much we appreciate the many sacrifices that you have made in these very difficult times.

What I know is that the Armenian church has always been the centerpiece of Armenian villages and communities in historical and current Armenia, as well as throughout the diaspora. All of these communities have faced hardships at one time or another, but always managed to find a way to keep their churches open and operating with a combination of faith, courage, perseverance, and business savvy. We must follow our forefathers' noble example and do the same.

We have made enormous sacrifices to get to where we are. Many more challenges lie ahead, but I am confident that if we pull our resources and commitment together, we will overcome these challenges to become a thriving beacon for Armenians across the west coast of Florida.

If any of you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the church office. We stand ready to address any of your questions or issues in either a public forum or in private. Shnorhakalootyoon.

SUNDAY SCHOOL by Alysia Ekizian and Adrienne Vartanian Dikranian

Sunday School Hyelights - Fall 2010

- Record registration with 18 students
- Our BBQ picnic on registration day raised \$1000 for our SS program. Thank you to Dr. George Kamajian for orchestrating the team effort.
- Purchased **new** curriculum materials for the K-5th class and the SHARE (St. Hagop Armenian Religious Education)
- Our teachers now include *Mallory Maslar* and *Dr. George Kamajian*. They meet with the SHARE group.
- Did you know? The students receive an hour of lesson and activity time prior to attending church with their class to receive communion and listen to the sermon
- **New** this year Armenian Dance lessons with *Maro Shaldjian* in the Pavilion!
- October's SS Fundraiser is selling Pumpkins
- We will be selling cocktails napkins with "Paree Yegak" for our Holiday Fundraiser
- Our **Community Service** project is going on now. Please help us collect toiletries for the Pinellas Homeless Shelter. We will be taking a group of students to deliver them in November.
- Care Packages to College students! Our SHARE group will be baking cookies to send to St. Hagop members that have a student away at college.

We look forward to seeing you all in Church. We appreciate your support of the St. Hagop Sunday School program!

WOMEN'S GUILD by Debra Kamajian



The Women's Guild will be having their annual Garage Sale on Saturday, November 20th from 8am-2pm under the Tanielian Pavilion. Please drop off all donations at the Parish House.

The next Women's Guild Meeting will be held after Church on December 5th.



Immediately after church on Sunday, December 19th, the Women's Guild is holding their semi-annual bake sale. Enjoy coffee, baklava and choereg and stock up on lahmajun, yalanchi and other Armenian delicacies. Please contact Lori Keshishian, Seta Serpekian, or Debra Kamajian if you would like to donate an item to the sale.

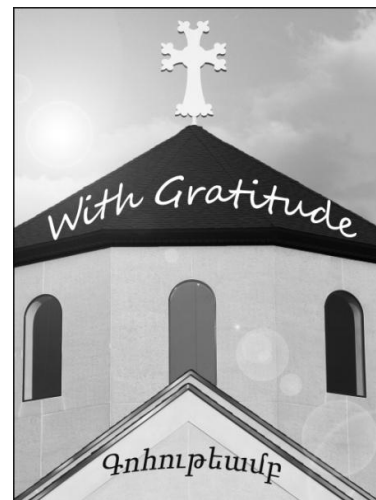
With Special Gratitude For The Dedicated Leaders & Supporters of Our Church

"As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good" --2 Thess. 3

While only God knows the seen and unseen offerings of the hundreds of people who have given their time and treasure to St. Hagop over the decades; we would like to acknowledge individuals who responded to special calls to stewardship at St. Hagop in the following categories:

Founding Families

The following "Founding Families" made substantial monetary contributions to initial purchase of the church property and pre-construction expenses:



Johnny & Charlotte Avazian	Margie & Roxie Baylerian	Antranik & Mary Enkababian	Arthur & Phoebe Gregorian
Margaret Shumavonian Harnischfeger	Hagop & Ardie Janoyan & Family (Church namesake)	Sophie Kaloustian	Anna Mae Kurkjian
Edward & Helen Mardigian	Eva Montgomery	Edward & Priscilla Sarkisian	Leon & Sharon Sarkisian
Elizabeth Shamirian	Carnig & Rose Terzian (& the late Alice Terzian)	Ardavast Unjian	Haig & Louise Yardumian & Family
Hovsanna Terterian	Dr. & Mrs. Kenneth Kelly		

Godparents

Anonymous Donor	Dr. Garo H. Armen	Ed & Eileen Barsamian Jennings	Arsen & Mary Bayandrian
Gregory & Alysia Ekizian	Gregory & Gina Hagopian	George & Debra Kamajian	Edward & Michelle Kapreilian
Harry & Lori Keshishian	Rudi Kimatian	Noubar & Ann Mahdessian	Hagop & Tobe Mashikian
Aram & Carla Megerian	Ida Merakyan	Vasken & Karen Minassian	Leon & Sharon Sarkisian (honorary)
Alice Tanielian			

Mortgage Angels

Diana Eggleston	Gregory & Alysia Ekizian	Oscar & Adrienne Guendjoian	Teresa Haidarian
Mary Haydostian	Eileen Barsamian Jennings	Dikran & Kim Kalaydjian	George & Debra Kamajian
Ed & Michelle Kapreilian	David & Nancy Kazarian	Dr. Yervant & Ruby Khatcherian	Rudi Kimatian
Noubar & Ann Mahdessian	Hagop & Tobe Mashikian	Aram & Carla Megerian	Papken Megerian
Ida Merakyan	Vasken & Karen Minassian	Hermine Pechjimaldji	Martha Samuelian
Dr. Sirun & Ayda Sarafian	Alice Tanielian	Carl & Ida Varadian	St. Hagop Women's Guild

One Time Mortgage Angel Donations

Karen Anjoorian	Arsen & Mary Bayandrian	Jean-Jacques & Hasmig Demerjian	Leilani Doty
Araxi Dulgeroff	Dr. John Eloian	Harbig & Mary Garabedian	Oscar & Adrienne Guendjoian
Naomi Manougian	Richard & Linda Maslar	Souren & Tina Mesropian	Robert Mirak
Apkar & Florence Omartian	Corinne Parsekian	Christopher & Carol Sassouni	Michael & Jean Shahnasarian
Elizabeth Shamirian	The Keuroghlian Family	Mitchell Topalian Sr.	Arda Unjian

Pastors

Since the inception of our organized community, the following clergy celebrate Badarak or visited our parish:

His Beatitude Abp. Torkom Manoogian	His Beatitude Abp. Shnork Kaloustian (OBM)	His Eminence Abp. Sion Manoogian (OBM)	His Eminence Abp. Khajag Barsamian
His Eminence Abp. Yeghishe Gizirian	His Eminence Abp. Papken Varjabedjian (OBM)	Very Rev. Fr. Haigazoun Najarian	Rev. Fr. Garabed Kochakian
Very Rev. Fr. Ghevont Samoorian	Very Rev. Fr. Oshagan Gulgolian	Very Rev. Fr. Vasken Tatoyan (OBM)	Rev. Fr. Tateos Abdalian
Rev. Dr. Zaven Arzoumanian	Rev. Fr. Diran Bohajian	Rev. Fr. Stepanos Doudoukjian	Rev. Fr. Garen Gdanian
Rev. Fr. Krikor Hairabedian	Rev. Fr. Vertanes Kalayjian	Rev. Fr. Arnak Kasparian	Rev. Fr. Paree Metjian
Rev. Fr. Diran Papazian	Very Rev. Fr. Daniel Findikyan	Very Rev. Fr. Simeon Odabashian	Fr. Karekin Kasparian
Rev. Fr. Vasken Kouzouian	Rev. Fr. Mardiros Chevian	Rev. Fr. Nersess Jebejian	Rev. Fr. Hovnan Demerjian

Please inform the St. Hagop Parish Council of any corrections by contacting 727-545-0380 or info@stthagoparmenianchurch.org.



Thanks to All St. Hagop Donors

Oct 1, 2009 through October 1, 2010

Below we give thanks to all those who gave to our church in the year from Oct 1, 2009 through October 1, 2010. In that twelve month period St. Hagop rased just over \$350,000 from 203 different donors. The total donations below do not include anonymous cash gifts to the collection plate, or tickets for dances or picnics. They also do not include the less tangible, but equally valuable offerings of time, prayer and care.

Donors of \$25,000 & Up

Anonymous	David & Nancy Kazarian	Ida Merakyan
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Donors of \$10,000-\$24,999

Gregory & Alysia Ekizian	Dr. George & Debra Kamajian	Noubar & Ann Mahdessian	Michael & Jean Shahnasarian
Total Anonymous Cash Plate Collections (Sundays & Other)	Total Donations Of One Time Donors To St. Hagop	United Armenian Charities, Inc	

Donors of \$5,000-\$9,999

Aram & Carla Megerian	Vasken & Karen Minassian	Anonymous	St. Hagop Women's Guild
Chris & Carol Sassouni			

Donors of \$3,000-\$4,999

Ed & Eileen Barsamian Jennings	Edward & Michelle Kapreilian	Dr. Yervant & Ruby Khatcherian	Dr. Hagop & Tobe Mashikian
Agop & Victoria Mouradian	Ardavast Unjian		

Donors of \$1000-\$2,999

Drew & Kathleen Anusbigian	Jamie Anusbigian	Charles & Caprice Begian	Leilani Doty
Diana Eggleston	Harb & Mary Garabedian	Steven Ghazikian	Adrienne Guendjoian
Teresa Haidarian	Mary & Janet Haydostian	Health Care Business Advisors Inc. (Chris Sassouni)	Dikran & Kimberly Kalaydjian
Harry & Lori Keshishian	Rudi Kimatian	Robert Mirak	Karen Mouradian
Hermine Pechdimaldji	Martha Samuelian	Dr. Sirun & Mrs. Ayda Sarafian	Noubar & Giselle Semerjian
Alice Tanielian	Ida Varadian	David Reynolds Inc.	Walter & Edith Loebenberg Foundation

Donors of \$500-\$999

Nishan & Elise Amboyan	Andrew & Theresa Anusbigian	Arsen & Mary Bayandrian	Fr. Hovnan & Yn. Anna Demerjian
Jean Jaques & Hasmig Demerjian	Armen & Peggy Enkababian	France Frankian	Darwin & David Jamgochian
Sam & Bea Kapreilian	Naomi Manoogian	Bernard Przegendza	Dr. George & Marion Rejebian
Dr. Berj & Tracy Sarafian	Tanya Sarafian	Avedis & Anahit Serpekian	Stepan & Seta Serpekian
Rubina Shaldjian	John & Kelly Shamsey	Carnig & Rose Terzian	Charles Vartanian
Admiral Continuing Education, Inc.	Sarkis S & Vicky A Derderian		

Donors of Up to \$500

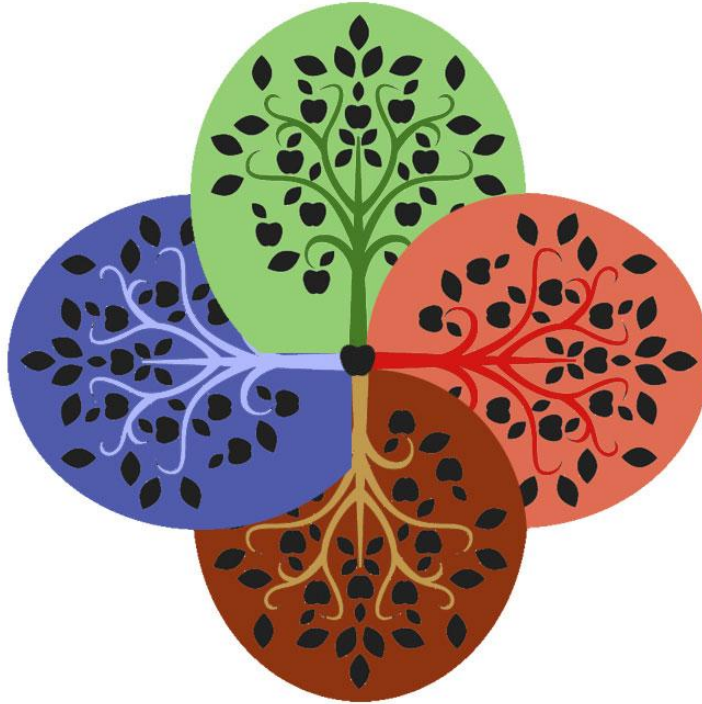
Henry & Anne Abajian	Mardo & Ann Abajian	Angeeneh Adamian	Diana Andonian
Karen Anjoorian	Ryan & Jennifer Anusbigian	Lana & Greta Arutyunyan	Richard & Eileen Austin
George Avadikian	Aram Avedis Avakian	Aram & Meline Avakian	Avak & Mary Avakian
Charlotte Avazian	Art & Mary Avdoian	Arpine Avedikian	Asbed & Erin Avedikian
Bagrad Badalyan	Evelyn Bayandrian	John & Vera Bejikian	James & Cornelia Biggers
Victoria Brawn	Ann Cannon	Rose Giuliani Cappelletti	Alan T. Chopoorian
Aram Chouljian	Greg & Tania Chouljian	Murad David Civan	George & Virginia Cross
Dick Dabagian	Artur Danielyan	Paul & Primrose Demirdjian	Kevork & Marisol Demirjian
Mrs. Helen Derderian	Rose Derderian	Ed & Mary Derian	Fred Dikranian & Karissa Lynch
Jack & Adrienne Dikranian	Anahid Dixon	Edward & Barbara Dorian	Araxi Dulgeroff
Ardavazt & Adrienne Ekizian	Takvor Evrekian	Taline Ferrell	Ed Galoustian
Bill & Kim Gernazian	Stepan Ghadaifchian	Leo & Cheryl Ghoogasian	Richard & Pauline Gilgan
Roger & Ardemis Gregory	Ralph Gurgian	Ara & Sonya Hacet	Gregory & Gina Hagopian
Dr. Antranig & Meline Hazaryan	Aram & Susanna Hovhannisyan	Peter & Agnes Hovsepian	Zvart Jambazian
Dr. Jan & Sara Jamharian	Lucie Jamie	Sultan Jevelekides	Margaret Jonikian
Derek Kamajian	Seda Karamian & Irene Hakim	Sarkis & Irene Kardashian	Stephan & Grace Karougian
Ruzanna & Zbigniew Kasparova	Taisya Kasparova	Leo & Martha-Ann Kassabian	Ed & Florence Kazanjian
Sam & Nancy Kazarian	Harout & Lucy Keshishian	Gregory & Nora Keuroghlian	Melik Keuroghlian
Charles & Judith Koolakian	Robert Koolakian	Sophia Manouljian-Kugeares	Dolores Wengatz Lach
Melinda Lamura	Eileen Lopez	Marian Major	David & Veronica Mardo
Edward & Mary Anne Koshgarian	Avedis & Naira Avagyan Mangasar	Dr. William & Christine Martin	Barbara Maslar
Bobby Maslar	Linda & Richard Maslar	Donna Mason	Elizabeth Mayhanagian
Arthur & Virginia Mekjian	Medo Melidosian	Jack & Virginia Messerlian	Zaven & Berjouhi Milian
Alice Miller	Charles & Yolande Miloian	Ilda Misirliyan	Vahed & Aida Mokhtarians
Krikor & Alice Mouradian	Krikor & Priscilla Mouradian	Madeleine Mouradian	Martin & Nancy Mouradian
Nicolina (Nina) Mouradian	Sarkis & Natalia Mouradian	Tony & Manushak Mouradian	Berdj & Adrienne Movsesian
Aram & Seta Najarian	Armen & Hripsime Nazaryan	Artur Nersisyan & Narine Babanyan	Alex Oganessova
Arnold Ohanian	Reuben & Valentina Ohanian	Apkar & Florence Omartian	Harry & Shirley Omartian
Sima Palakian	Corinne Parsekian	John & Joanne Pehlivanian	Margaret Penerian
George Reizian	Dr. Vahak & Elizabeth Sarkis	Leon & Sharon Sarkisian	Roman Sarkisyan
Edouard Sermanoukian	Aram Serpekian	Michel & Jinev Shahinian	Lexy Shahnasarian
Lizzy Shahnasarian	Haritun Arto Shahrík	Norair & Maro Shaldjian	Elizabeth Shamirian
Daniel & Norma Takoushian	Mariam Tatosian	Neveer Tavoukdjian	Eric & Arlen Thorensen
Mitchell Topalian, Sr.	Allan & Linda Tossoonian	Zorab & Elvira Toutoundjian	Patricia Treib
Levon & Diane Vatan	Kegham & Serpouhi Vizoyan	Dr. Haig & Louise Yardumian	Maurice & Marina Youakim
Armen & Rose Zartarian			

The St. Hagop Parish Council is working to show total transparency in our expenses and revenues. We are eager to thank you publically for your support, but will keep your name anonymous if so requested.

***Please inform the St. Hagop Parish Council of any corrections by contacting
727-545-0380 or info@stthagoparmenianchurch.org***

Planned Giving

St. Hagop



Including St. Hagop Church In Your Will

Making a planned gift as part of your estate plan is not just for those who have wealth or special financial expertise, but for anyone with a generous spirit who wants to designate their gifts while they are living.

Each time we gather together at church, a dance or picnic, we are reminded of the gifts that were so generously given by the founders of our community.

Bequeathing a gift to St. Hagop's Armenian Church either in your will or in a trust not only honors God, but will leave a legacy that will impact future generations of Armenians with your generosity.

For more information on including St. Hagop in your planned giving contact John K. Shamsey, Esq. at 941-586-8415.

Thanks to Future St. Hagop Benefactors

Leaving A Legacy at St. Hagop Armenian Church...



Ida Merakyan and her husband Horen were hard workers and good savers. Ida has donated her time, talent, and hard-earned treasure to St. Hagop on many occasions. She also has a fixed annuity which she will gift to St. Hagop Church to help pay down our mortgage. “This is just something I want to do, so that I can do my part to leave St. Hagop better off than I found it, and insure that the next generation gathers and worships together as Armenians.”



An anonymous couple affiliated with St. Hagop set up a charitable remainder trust with our church named as 1 of 3 beneficiaries upon their deaths. The couple’s estate lawyer advised them that it would be preferable to dissolve the trust now and distribute the money, rather than later through their wills. This summer, the couple presented St. Hagop Armenian Church with a check for \$64,228, and asked that the money be used to help service our mortgage and however else the parish council saw fit to use it.



Rudi Kimatian entered the Armenian Church community when she married Sarkis Kimatian. Since her husband passed away, she has become a leader and steward of St. Hagop Church. In order to honor the memory of her deceased husband and for the benefit of the church, Rudi has set up a \$50,000 charitable gift annuity, which pays her interest income for life, but transfers the gift to St. Hagop Church upon her death. “This was a great way for me to remain financially secure, and at the same time remember Sarkis and our Church,” says Rudi.

Our St. Hagop Family is Growing Every Week!

A Warm Welcome to Our Newest Parishioners...



Noubar and Giselle Semerjian



Roman Sarkisyan



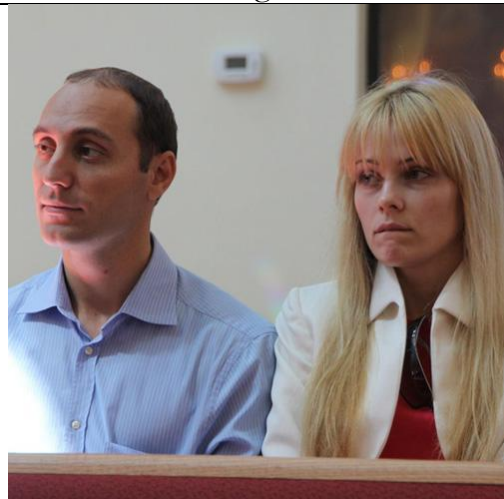
Babken Poghossian



Dr. Manoug and Josette
Manougian



Sandra Maloomian



George and Hanna Kardashian



Bagrad Badalyan



Angeeneh Adamian



The Anusbigian Family

This issue of the Avedis has been sponsored in part by Norair and Maro Shaldjian and Jeanette Der Hagopian – Thank You!

Armenian Orphan Rug Lives up to Its Name

By Tom Vartabedian

July 21, 2010

WASHINGTON—Somewhere inside the White House, stashed away inside an obscure storage room, lays an historic rug.

Not just any rug, but one created by 400 Armenian orphans from 1924-25 in a town called Ghazir, about 40 miles north of Beirut.

This colorful piece of tapestry, which measures 18 feet by 12 feet, lives up to its name: It has remained an “orphan” rug since it passed through the hands of President Calvin Coolidge in 1926.



A close-up of the Armenian Orphan Rug with its intricate detail bearing colorful images of animals akin to the Garden of Eden. The rug was woven in 1924-25 and presented to President Calvin Coolidge. It now lies in storage inside the White House.

The intricacy is woven with a passion unlike others of its kind, containing some 4 million knots made to characterize the biblical Garden of Eden with its collection of animals and other symbolic features.

The big loom was set up for an “Isfahan.” The 400 orphaned girls worked in shifts and spent 18 months on its completion. It was then sent to Washington and presented at a special ceremony to the White House in recognition of the help rendered by the American people to Armenian orphans.

Armenian historians and archivists are looking for a more permanent home, one that will avail itself to tourists and public acclaim. They’d like nothing better than to see this rug on permanent display in the White House, with credit given to Armenian Genocide survivors or, at the very least, have it showcased inside the Genocide Museum, or perhaps the Smithsonian.

They seem to think there are political ramifications preventing this rug from enjoying the life of nobility, for which it was intended. “If you bring out the story of this rug, you’re talking genocide, and this country doesn’t recognize the Armenian Genocide,” laments Dr. H. Martin Deranian, a prominent Worcester historian and dentist who has documented every facet of this jewel. “It’ll open up the story of the orphans. I’ve taken responsibility to see this story brought to the surface and its meaning appreciated.”



The Armenian Orphan Rug is viewed inside the White House in September 1984 by activists looking to preserve its identity. (L-R) U. S. Senator Carl Levin (D-Mich.), Dr. H. Martin Deranian, Worcester historian, and Set Momjian, a former ambassador to the United Nations.

Deranian has turned himself into a self-imposed rug ambassador in seeking the cause of justice. By unraveling this mystery, he’s hoping to bring greater credence to the Near East Relief and the scores of orphans saved during the genocide years of 1915-23.

He continues to pay homage to Dr. Jacob Kuenzler, or “Papa” Kuenzler as he was affectionately called, for evacuating thousands of Armenian orphans from Turkey to the relative security of Syria while working for the Near East Relief.

Kuenzler had the idea of starting a rug factory in Ghazir. He thought the girls would learn to weave rugs and go on earning a living this way.

It seemed to him that even on so small an outlay, much good could be achieved for these orphans. With only two looms, he started this rug factory in Ghazir, high up in the mountains. President Coolidge was more than grateful for the rug. In a letter he wrote to Dr. John Finley, vice-president of the Near East Relief, Coolidge was overwhelmed by the gift.

“This beautiful rug woven by children in Lebanon has been received. This, their expression of gratitude for what we’ve been able to do for this country for their aid, is accepted by me as a token of their goodwill to the people of the United States who have assisted in the work of the Near East Relief. Please extend to these orphans my thanks and the thanks of the vast number of our citizens whose generosity this labor of love is intended to acknowledge. The rug has a place of honor in the White House where it will be a daily symbol of goodwill on earth.”



An overall view of the Armenian Orphan Rug, which measures 18'x12'. Armenian activists are trying to have it removed from storage inside the White House and have it showcased.

A “Golden Rule” Sunday had been instituted in the United States. Each year, on the first Sunday in December, people were asked to eat only a one-course meal and contribute the money they had saved to the Near East Relief. Some \$2 million was collected annually.

The presentation of the Ghazir rug to the White House in 1925 was given such widespread publicity that contributions from Golden Rule Sunday doubled. The factory received numerous orders for special carpets and many of the girls ultimately found homes and became brides.

The event was covered in the New York Times, which carried the headline, “President receives rug woven by orphans of Near East and praises work on relief.” Coolidge displayed the rug in the Blue Room under his administration. It remained there until 1928 when he took it to his residence in Northampton, Mass. The orphan rug graced his living room at a place called the Beeches until his death in 1933. From there, Mrs. Coolidge kept the rug inside her home in Northampton until she died in 1957, eventually landing with a son John until he sold his Connecticut home in 1974.

The rug wound up in storage at the Coolidge Homestead in Plymouth, Vt., when it was returned to the White House and added to the collection in 1983. It was placed in storage and not on public view, and has remained there for the past 27 years. Deranian was invited to the White House to view the rug with U.S. Senator Carl Levin (D-Mich.) and Asbed Set Momjian, a former ambassador to the United Nations.

“The curator of the White House collection has indicated that it is highly unlikely the rug would be on exhibit in an official capacity,” said Deranian. “It was an emotional feeling to touch this very rug. These girls with their nimble fingers wove their gratitude to America into every stitch. My interest dates back to my mother. During the deportation, she went through every indignity before ending up in Urfa.”

Call it fate but in 1995, Charlotte Movsesian of North Andover, Mass. observed a color photo in the Lawrence Eagle-Tribune of Hillary Clinton showing off the Blue Room during her husband’s administration. And there was the rug, bright and bold as ever. She recognized that rug because her own mother Vartouhi (Hovsepien) Gulezian was one of those orphaned girls who helped weave it. Mrs. Gulezian was 14 years old and brought to America from Ghazir in 1926 to work at a loom as a demonstration during the sesquicentennial (150th anniversary) celebration of the founding of the United States. She was joined by another orphan, 15-year-old Gulunia Kehyaian.

Movsesian wrote to Clinton and inquired about the rug, never expecting a response. A month later, she received a letter from the White House curator, inviting the entire family to Washington. Together with her husband Albert S., brother Martin, and mother, off they went by train to meet the appointment. They were welcomed not by Hillary Clinton but the White House curator and her assistant. And there was the rug Mrs. Gulezian had made with the others orphans. She recognized it. “A rush of emotion came over me, not so much for the beauty but what it represented,” said Albert Movsesian, who promotes genocide education in local schools with stories of the rug.

“The fact the Near East Relief was responsible for helping so many orphans, including my mother-in-law, deserves our utmost appreciation,” he added. “I got down on my hands and knees and touched every part of the rug. I saw the Golden Rule Gratitude inscription in one of the corners.”

The Movsesians wound up spending 90 minutes at the White House that day, had photos taken by the rug, and off they went, laden with memories of a lifetime. No sign of any president, however. “Very few people know the significance of this rug,” Movsesian brought out. “The story about it has been a well-kept secret in the Armenian community because these orphans didn’t talk about it. After we saw the rug, back into storage it went. It’s been there ever since, simply forsaken. We’re hoping to resurrect it into a place of honor where it belongs.” If and when that might occur, the rug will represent a memorial to those orphans whose sad fingers wove into its warp and weft a permanent remembrance of the depths of Armenia’s blackest hour.

If it could only talk, it would speak volumes.

ԿԵԱՆՔԻ ԳԱՂՏՆԻՔԸ

Վարդգես Տիրկերեան

Եկեք ընկերներ,
Ըլլանք շէն ու զուարթ...
Կեանքի գաղտնիքն է միշտ այդ...

Շատերն կըսեն ես «գիտեմ».
Բայց գիտեն թէ չեն գիտեր...
Կեանքի գաղտնիքն է միշտ այդ...

Խնդանք ու կատակենք,
Ցնծանք, ուրախ պարենք...
Կեանքի գաղտնիքն է միշտ այդ...

Բնաւ մի խոստանար,
Երբ կատարել չես կրնար.....
Կեանքի գաղտնիքն է միշտ այդ....

Թախիծը մերը չէ,
Խնդուք թող հնչէ.
Կեանքի գաղտնիքն է միշտ այդ...

Մի գովեր դուն, անծո.
Ուրիշներ թող գովեն, «գանձո».....
Կեանքի գաղտնիքն է միշտ այդ...

Նախանձն ընկեր չունի,
Համեստը կը սիրուի...
Կեանքի գաղտնիքն է միշտ այդ...

Եկեք Սիրենք զիրար,
Ջերմ ու եղբայրաբար...
Հայու գաղտնիքն է միշտ այդ...

Չիրար չը բանբասենք,
Ճշմարիտը ըսենք...
Կանքի գաղտնիքն է միշտ այդ...

Հայ քոյրեր եւ եղբայրներ,
Շինենք Հայկեան բոյներ...
Հայ մնալու գաղտնիքն է միշտ այդ...

Երբ յարգուիլ կուզես,
Նախ դուն պետք է յարգես...
Կեանքի գաղտնիքն է միշտ այդ...

Տան մէջ մեր գաւակներուն,
Խօսինք մեր Սուրբ Հայ լեզուն...
Հայ մնալու գաղտնիքն է միշտ այդ...

Մի պարծենար խօսքով,
Ապացուցուր գործքով...
Կեանքի գաղտնիքն է միշտ այդ...

Մերոպ Մաշտոցի գիտն Հայ գիրերուն,
Հայ ԵԿԵՂԵՑԻՈՅ մէջ փրկեց հայ լեզուն...
Հայ մնալու գաղտնիքն է միշտ այդ...



Reminder-Stay Current On Your Dues

For your convenience, we have provided a list of all those whose dues are paid for 2010, current as of October 10, 2010. If your name is not on this list, please send in a check to the church office with “membership dues” in the memo at your earliest convenience.

Membership dues for 2010 are \$125 for general membership and \$80 for full-time students.

St. Hagop Armenian Church 2010 Dues Paid Members as of October 24, 2010:

Anusbigian	Andrew		Keshishian	Lori		Pechdimaldji	Hermine
Agnacian	George		Keuroghlian	Gregory		Przegendza	Bernard
Anusbigian	Ryan		Keuroghlian	Nora		Reizian	George
Anusbigian	Jamie		Kimatian	Rudi		Samuelian	Martha
Anusbigian	Drew		Koolakian	Bob		Sarafian	Ayda
Avernian-Thorensen	Arlen		Major	Marion		Sarafian	Sirun
Bronleben	Brandi		Manoogian	Naomi		Sarkis	Vahak
Cannon	Ann		Martin	William		Sarkisian	Leon
Chouljian	Aram		Mashikian	Hagop		Sarkisian	Sharon
Dabagian	Dick		Mashikian	Tobe		Sarkisyan	Roman
Danielyan	Arthur		Megerian	Aram		Semerjian	Noubar
Demerjian	Jean-Jacques		Megerian	Carla		Semerjian	Gisele
Demirdjian	Natalie		Mekhitarian	Vahe		Serpekian	Avedis
Dixon	Anahid		Merakyan	Ida		Serpekian	Anahid
Doty	Leilani		Messerlian	John		Serpekian	Aram
Dulgeroff	Araxi		Miller	Alice		Serpekian	Seta
Eggleston	Diana		Millian	Zaven		Serpekian	Stepan
Ekizian	Alysia		Millian	Berjouhi		Shahnasarian	Eddy
Ekizian	Greg		Minassian	Karen		Shahnasarian	Jean
Frankian	France		Minassian	Vasken		Shahnasarian	Lexy
Garabedian	Martha Anne		Mouradian	Sarkis		Shahnasarian	Lizzy
Haidarian	Teresa		Mouradian	Natalia		Shahnasarian	Michael
Haydostian	Mary		Mouradian	Agop		Shamsey	John
Jamgochian	Darwin		Mouradian	Victoria		Terzian	Carnig
Johns-Ghoogasian	Cheryl		Ohanian	Arnold		Unjian	Arda
Kassabian	Leo		Palakian	Sima		Vartanian	Charles
Keshishian	Harry						

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St. Hagop Church n 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
January/February	December 1
March/ April	February 15

Currently it costs about \$500 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 (\$300); 1/4 issue (\$150) or other (\$) amount.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

NOVEMBER	Tuesday	2	Parish Council Meeting	6:00 PM
	Thursday	4	Breath of God” Study Session #5	12 Noon
	Sunday	7	Divine Liturgy	10:30 AM
	Thursday	11	Breath of God” Study Session #6	12 Noon
	Sunday	14	Divine Liturgy	10:30 AM
	Thursday	18	Breath of God” Study Session #7	12 Noon
	Friday	19	November Dance – hosted by ACYOA	8:00 PM
	Saturday	20	Women’s Guild Garage Sale	8AM -2PM
	Sunday	21	Divine Liturgy	10:30 AM
	Sunday	28	Divine Liturgy	10:30 AM
DECEMBER	Sunday	5	Divine Liturgy	10:30 AM
	Tuesday	7	Parish Council Meeting	6:00 PM
	Sunday	12	Divine Liturgy ACYOA Blood Drive	10:30 AM 12:30 PM
	Sunday	19	Divine Liturgy Women’s Guild Holiday Bake Sale	10:30 AM 12:30 PM
	Sunday	26	Divine Liturgy	10:30 AM