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Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church



LOOYS



Cheltenham, PA

Rev. Fr. Hakob Gevorgyan, Pastor

Fall 2024-04

And That's A WRAP



Hours of Worship

- Morning Service: 10:00 AM
- Divine Liturgy: 10:30 AM

Church School

- Language Instruction: 10:15-11:15
- Christian Education: 11:20-12:15



Upcoming Events

Read what's been happening at our church and be a part of what's coming up!

Pray Until Something Happens

Contact Information



Holy Trinity Armenian Church
101 Ashmead Road, Cheltenham, PA 19012
www.holytrinity-pa.org

Items for inclusion in the Sunday Messenger or requests for Requiem Services or Special Prayers should be sent to the church office by Wednesday for the upcoming Sunday. For all emergencies, please contact Rev. Fr. Hakob Gevorgyan at the church 215-663-1600 (cell 917-213-8658).

CHURCH INFORMATION

Office Telephone: 215-663-1600
Kitchen: 267-282-4594
Pastor: Rev. Fr. Hakob Gevorgyan
frhakob@holytrinity-pa.org
Church Secretary: Sabrinna Dabney
office@holytrinity-pa.org

REGULAR SUNDAY HOURS OF WORSHIP

Morning Service: 10:00 AM
Divine Liturgy (Soorp Badarak): 10:30 AM
Church School: 10:15 AM

PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS

John Hanamirian (Chair)	215-660-0000
Ralph Arpajian (Vice Chair)	215-518-4159
Don Paretchan (Treasurer)	610-608-1866
Greg Yazujian (Asst. Treasurer)	215-362-6691
Steve Aslanian (Secretary)	201-404-6056
Greg Andonian	330-283-3729
Liz Barone	610-220-9860
Rob Barone	610-529-2178
Larry Der Hagopian	215-489-7116
David Santerian	215-518-2256
Margo Silk	856-425-6565

DIOCESAN DELEGATES

Barbara Harmon	609-605-0489
Emily Terjimanian	734-277-2753

CHOIR

Karinne' Andonian (Director)	609-760-4993
Emily Terjimanian (Asst Director)	734-277-2753
Lorraine Damerjian (Organist)	215-572-8465
Steve Aslanian (Treasurer)	215-757-2622

CHURCH SCHOOL

Yn. Anna Gevorgyan (Co-Superintendent)	215-938-1313
Leslie Movsesian (Co-Superintendent)	215-801-2725

MEN'S CLUB

Michael Paretchan	215-947-4394
Michael Tookmanian	484-351-8663

BOOKSTORE

Gloria Basmajian	215-722-3369
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ACYOA Jrs.

Jessica Badishyan (President)	
Narek Gevorgyan (Vice-President)	
Anita Torcomian (Parent Advisor)	610-547-0227
Alex Yavru-Sakuk (Parent Advisor)	917-603-0407
Instagram:	https://www.instagram.com/htac_acyoajrs

LADIES of HOLY TRINITY

Yn. Anna Gevorgyan (Coordinator)	215-938-1313
Elizabeth Barone (Advisor)	610-449-2236
Lorraine Damerjian (Treasurer)	215-572-8465

INTERCOMMUNAL

Tanya Paretchan	215-947-4394
Emily Movsesian	734-277-2753

COFFEE HOUR COORDINATORS

Berjoohy Murray

ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Nancy Basmajian (Coordinator)	215-722-3369
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Editorial Staff

*Rev. Fr. Hakob Gevorgyan
Jeanette Der Hagopian
Larry D. Der Hagopian
Naomi Mukalian*

Images Provided by

*John Alexanian
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The mission of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church is to preach the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ and to proclaim its message of salvation. This mission is realized through worship, education, witness, service, and a common life in Christ as expressed in the distinctive faith-experience of the Armenian people. All the faithful of the Armenian Church – both clergy and laity – are called to participate fully in this mission.

How We Spend Our Time

Like many other blessings, time is a gift that God has given to each one of us. Time is ongoing, moving from the past, through the present, and into the future. For all of us the time is limited here in this world. For some people time is short; for others, it is long. Smart people value their time and use it wisely, properly, and effectively so that they can be productive and bear much fruit.

I am sure there are good examples of how others use their time in the best way. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ lived on this earth for thirty-three years. We don't know much about the thirty years of His life. But we know that He started His ministry when He was thirty years old, "Jesus was about thirty years old when He began His work." (Luke 3:23). His ministry lasted for three years until His Crucifixion and Resurrection. From the Gospel and from history, we learn that Jesus Christ used His ministry and His teachings to change the world. He enlightened mankind which was living in darkness and taught us how to live our lives. He came to our rescue and to save us sinners.

Now, let us pay attention to how we should manage and live our lives. We should ask ourselves the following question, "Is this life only about the physical and materialistic world or is there something beyond this?". For us as Christians it is clear that after this life we have eternal and everlasting life. "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us" (Romans 8:18).

If we believe that our life continues after this life, then we should use our time not only for our physical needs but also for our spiritual needs. Every day we wake up, exercise, go to work, eat two or three meals, visit each other, cook, clean, go shopping, spend time on social media and so on. All these things are about our physical life.

Our soul also needs time and care. The soul is what gives life to our bodies, the soul is what will continue our eternal journey, but often we forget or ignore this fact. Going to Church on Sundays,

participating in Divine Liturgy and receiving Holy Communion is an extraordinary blessing. But all these will be more meaningful if we have a discipline in our spiritual life. We should always find time to read the Bible; that's how God talks to us. And, of course, we should pray to God at least once a day; that's how we talk to Him.

"Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. So, do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is". Ephesians 5:15-17

With prayers,
Fr. Hakob Gevorgyan



And He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.

-Matthew 22:37

SACRAMENTS

Baptisms

Michael and Victorye Petrossian on September 8, 2024
Son and daughter of Armen and Natasha Petrossian

Lena Karagiannis on November 3, 2024
Daughter of Christos and Anna (Torcomian) Karagiannis

Richard Alex Mukalian on November 10, 2024
Son of Ricky and Nicole Mukalian

Alexander Akopov on December 14, 2024
Son of George Akopov and Katelyn Walton

Weddings

Artem Bayadyan and Kristina Sarkisova
September 7, 2024 @ Holy Trinity Armenian Church

Araik Simonyan and Manishak Bakunts
September 22, 2024

Brian Pennisi and Kelsey Sarkisian
October 19, 2024 @ St. Gregory Armenian Church

Stephen Tyree and Meredith Moore
October 26, 2024 @ Holy Trinity Armenian Church

Funerals

Evgenia Aloyan, funeral on September 3, 2024
Margush Poghosova, funeral on September 11, 2024
Robert (Bob) Keleshian, funeral on October 26, 2024

IN LIEU OF FLOWERS Donations

Shant Kapeghian (New Total: \$2,745)

Gloria and Nancy Basmajian
Jaclyn and Kyle Blalock
Kim and Gena Willard

STEWARDSHIP Donations 2024

New Total: \$14,406.73

Zaruhi Alayan
Albert Aloian
Arthur Baldadian
Liz and Robert Barone
Dr. Garo and Cecelia Garibian
Rev. Fr. Hakob and Yn. Anna Gevorgyan
Tigran Hamazaspyan
John Kash
Don Paretchan
Valerie Santerian
Michael and Suzanne Sherenian
Gina Terkanian



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One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want. Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered.

Proverbs 11:24-25

Parish Council Report

John Hanamirian, Chair

Change. We may change the way in which we deliver the news and messages in the Looy's. It is 2025 and digital publications make sense on many levels. We are considering using the electronic version and at the same time enhancing the content of the Messenger. We will see.

Updates. Our Church population is growing and in particular, our youth are coming of age and taking ownership of their Church home. We are mildly renovating the ACYOA Juniors room to allow for more activities. Having our children invested in the Church physical space is the best thing that can happen for our future. Please support their efforts at fundraising and otherwise.

Balcony. Our balcony renovations are nearly complete. Please take a look when you can. Our new layout allows our Choir to move about more freely and perform in a more suited space.

Giving. By the time you read this, our annual Parish Assembly will be complete. The takeaway from that Assembly is that although we are economically stable, we always need support. Please consider giving whatever you can to assure the future for our children and grandchildren. It is our responsibility to provide a church home for our children. We don't rely on the gifts of others to provide our family with support at home; concluding that others will give, and you don't have to, is no different in the church environment. Our ancestors withstood a Genocide and us giving to support the result of their suffering is not a lot to ask of anyone. Please consider giving.

Parish Council. Thank you for allowing me to serve in this role for these years. It is my 17th year on Parish Council, serving for six years as Treasurer and nine years as Chair. Serving on this Parish Council allows me to honor my grandparents and parents' (and uncle's) sacrifices to provide me with education and sense. Thank you.

“Rejuvenated Song”

By Your Holy Trinity Choir

When we are little, we are taught to not turn around in church so that we don't have our backs to the altar (though we have certainly seen some peaks over our many years upstairs <wink wink>). But the next time you are in the sanctuary, please feel free to take a moment to turn around and look up! If you can't tell from our voices hopefully you can tell from our faces that we are very excited!

Recently, after a couple of generous donations to the choir, we made some efforts to rejuvenate our choir loft space and work towards digitizing our sacred music. There is a fresh coat of paint to make it brighter, a space in the back for choir members to stand (where chairs will be and a railing) to best optimize our acoustic potential of the loft, and iPads to use for our music. But perhaps the most exciting thing is that the space is now ADA compliant! This means, if you are wanting to come up to the loft to either sing with our choir or to witness baradak from above and you need accessibility (meaning you use a wheelchair or a walker) there is now room for you to come up with the elevator and sit with us in front of the organ.



The space is absolutely beautiful and we are so grateful for those who helped make this refreshed space happen. From the creative minds who designed the space, the technical minds who set up the electronics, the logistical minds who made it ADA compliant, the Sacred Music Council who began the process of digitizing the sharagans, the laborers who did the physical work in the loft, Der Hagop who oversaw the renovation with his blessing, and the donors who funded the project, we are so grateful. We hope this means more of you will come up and join us so that we can grow in song and body.

A Reflection on the Passion of Christ

by Deacon Albert Keshgegian

Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?" Pilate replied, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here." Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." Pilate asked him, "What is truth?" (John 18:33-38)

It's different from most paintings of Jesus. Most show a tall, handsome, confident, composed man, perhaps even with a halo as the central feature of the artwork. But this painting, by the Russian painter Nikolai Ge in 1890, entitled "What is truth?," depicts a far different scene.

Jesus is in the background, barely visible in the darkness. But we can see that he looks worn, exhausted, his face dirty, his hair unkempt, with his gaze downwards. It looks like his hands are probably bound behind him. He has just been up all night, being grilled by the Jewish religious council, being declared a blasphemer, spat upon and struck, and being sent to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of the area, to be put to death.

Pilate is the prominent figure in the painting, standing in the light, as opposed to the darkness around Jesus, looking taller, wearing the elegant, imperial, colorful robes of the Roman Empire, confident in his position and authority. At the very moment depicted in the painting, Pilate's right arm is outstretched, palm pointed upwards, making him look even more powerful and arrogant, as he asks Jesus the question, "What is truth?"

What did Pilate mean by this question? For him "truth" was probably relative. Truth was whatever was most convenient or profitable for him. There was no black or white, only shades of gray. In other parts of the passion story, we read that Pilate knew Jesus was innocent, one version of "truth". But the mob that was outside thought Jesus was guilty and had to be crucified, another version of "truth". Rather than acting on what he knew to be true – the innocence of Jesus – Pilate gave in to the mob's demands and handed Jesus over to the Roman army to be beaten, mocked, and crucified, because it got him out of a sticky situation. It was the most expedient course.

That same attitude is prevalent among people today. Whatever is easy, pleasurable, most profitable or convenient is the right thing to do. It doesn't matter if somebody else gets hurt in the process.

But for the faithful, the truth of Jesus is not relative; it is absolute. Even though it might come from a disheveled, dirty, exhausted looking man, we believe it, because that man is also the Word of God. We believe that Christ's kingdom is not from here. We believe that he came into this world to testify to the truth. At other times Jesus said these things about truth:

"I am the way, the truth, and the life; nobody comes to the Father unless through me". (John 14:6)

"Praying to God the Father for his disciples: 'Make them holy in the truth; your word is truth'". (John 17:17)

"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32)

We believe in Christ's truth because it is fundamental. It comes from the creator of the universe. We belong to Christ; we belong to the truth. We hear his voice, and we follow him to what is true, real, and eternal.



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Our mission is to provide solutions and deliver results. We aggressively fight for individuals and businesses in legal disputes and litigation. We also advise and counsel our clients on business formation, contract drafting and overall strategy.

It is a privilege to be part of the Philadelphia Armenian Community and to continue the legacy of our parents and grandparents. Please contact Garibian Law Offices if we may be of service to you.

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CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

Students Teach Adults

On Sunday, November 3, Fr. Hakob turned to a group of 3rd and 4th graders in our Church School's Christian Education program and said, "You can give a sermon anytime you wish!" He was affirming eight students for their presentation to our faithful on the two large stained-glass windows in our sanctuary.

It was Communion Sunday, usually an opportunity for our children and teens to hear a special message from their pastor and a time for them to interact with him. But Fr. Hakob yielded his time on this day so the students could share what they have learned about the two major feast days depicted in those windows—Christmas and Easter.

The students, ages 8-10, standing on a stool at the podium, spoke one by one with poise and grace. They pointed out the scenes and the symbolism in the windows and their feelings about the significance of the feasts. Afterwards, a few parishioners commented that the students made them "see" the windows in a deeper way.

The students were Lilit Andonian, Anoush Keshgegian, Gabriella and Garik Ohanyan, Harout Semerjian, Elsie Soghomonian, Olivia Torcomian and Nadya Vartanian.

Teachers Nina Asadoorian and Alyssa Santerian, who began team-teaching last year, have worked enthusiastically with their students. They both agreed that the students loved the experience of sharing their knowledge with the adults of our parish.

Christmas Tree Decorating with Der Hayr

After classes on November 17, the Church School Students decorated the Church Lobby Christmas Tree with Der Hayr and Yn Anna! They turned the bare lobby into a beautiful welcoming space reminding all of the advent of Christ's birth and the light of the world!

Church School Goes to Sight and Sound Theater!

"Those who turn many to righteousness, shall shine like the stars forever and ever." Daniel 12:3

What a powerful and unforgettable experience! The marvelous performance of Bible story "Daniel" at Sight & Sound Theatre truly left everyone in awe.

On November 29, nineteen students and their families attended the show Daniel at Sight & Sound Theater in Lancaster, PA. They saw a spectacular portrayal of Old Testament stories about the prophet Daniel and his friends Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in Babylonian captivity under King Nebuchadnezzar and how they upheld their Hebrew identity and faith despite the pressure to worship golden idols and assimilate.

A heartfelt thank you to the Holy Trinity Church school teachers, students and parents who joined us for this special event. It's a show you truly have to see to believe!



Church School Lunch with Santa and Gingerbread House Decorating Party!

On December 8, Church School held a fun-filled Gingerbread House Decorating Christmas Party. The hall was decked out with extra festive decorations, creating a magical atmosphere. We had a fantastic turnout, with a huge crowd of people joining in the fun.

The kids had an amazing time showcasing their creativity while decorating gingerbread houses. The competition was fierce, but the most creative and beautiful houses took home the prize. To top it all off, we had a special visit from Santa Claus, and dancing gingerbread men which thrilled everyone!

There was plenty of delicious food, lively music from the best DJ Robbie Barone, and an abundance of laughter and joy. The event was a true holiday celebration, and it was wonderful to see so many happy families coming together.

Thank you to Yn Anna, and her team of Parents and Parishioners who generously donated and volunteered to make it a magical afternoon.



Armenian Christmas Church School Pageant

Following an afternoon Armenian Christmas Eve Badarak on January 5, the Church School joyfully performed a Christmas Pageant telling the story of Christ’s birth. Christian Balint and Elena Sysoyev played the role of Joseph and Mary followed by a cast of shepherds, a lone sheep and a multitude of angels. There were not only three wise men but four! It was a joyous adaptation of the Christmas story. Raffi Garibian narrated while Karinne Nersisyan and Harout Semerjian sung several beautiful Christmas songs to set the mood. Thank you to Yn. Anna, parents and students for making this a memorable day.



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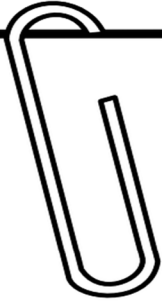
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A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

With mixed feelings, I am stepping down as editor of the LOOYS. After 16 years, I find myself wanting to pursue other interests and spend more time with family and friends.

Sadly, at this time, the status of my beloved LOOYS is unclear. My hope is that another editor or an editorial board can be assigned to resume publication—either in its current hard copy format or something fresh and different.

I cannot leave without expressing my deep gratitude to all those who contributed to our humble newsletter, most especially to my son Larry who worked tirelessly and patiently on the production end. Naomi Mukalian for all her proof reading to minimize our mistakes. And to Fr. Hakob, my pastor and friend, thank you for your guidance and comfort when I needed it most.

And finally, to our readers: thank you for your gracious comments and words of encouragement and appreciation through the years

With love and gratitude,
Jeanette Der Hagopian, LOOYS Editor

BLESSING OF THE WATER: A Moving Ceremony

Long-time parishioner, Tom Torcomian, served as the Godfather of the Cross during this year's Blessing of the Water

service celebrated on Sunday, January 12. "I was surprised when Fr. Hakob called to ask that I serve as the Godfather. Of course, I couldn't say no; I was so honored even though I feel unworthy. And it was wonderful having my family present. This means a great deal to me."



The ceremony is traditionally celebrated on January 6 to commemorate the Nativity and Baptism of Christ. The cross is immersed in the water signifying the moment when Christ was baptized. The priest pours Holy Muron into the water from a dove-shaped vessel representing the Holy Spirit. The service affirms that the waters of the world have been sanctified and purified. Following the service, the faithful approach the chancel to receive a portion of the water and venerate the cross held by the Godfather.

You shall serve the Lord your God, and he will bless your bread and your water, and I will take sickness away from among you.

Exodus 23:25

Holy Trinity Providing Meals to Those in Need

In an outreach ministry that began in 2005, thanks to the efforts of Jeanette Der Hagopian, Holy Trinity continues to provide meals to isolated and elderly shut-ins. Working with the “Caring For Friends” organization in Philadelphia, a group of volunteers, including Fr. Hakob and Yn. Anna, came together on Saturday, November 9 in our parish kitchen to prepare almost 200 delicious and nutritious meals.

At the helm of this important project is a new team; Kim Der Hagopian and Liz Barone, working under the guidance of Jeanette, have assumed leadership of this important service project. “I can’t think of a more satisfying way to spend a Saturday morning,” commented Kim, “I was a bit nervous about all the details involved in organizing this day, but we pulled it off! I’m so pleased and thankful.”

The volunteers universally affirmed that they enjoy the fellowship that comes from serving others with others. With his apron and hairnet in place, Fr. Hakob said, “I love the laughter and the voices in the kitchen and being just another volunteer. This is faith in action!”

Fact: The project, currently under the ACE umbrella, has prepared 6400 meals since 2005!

Welcome Back Music and Arts Assembly

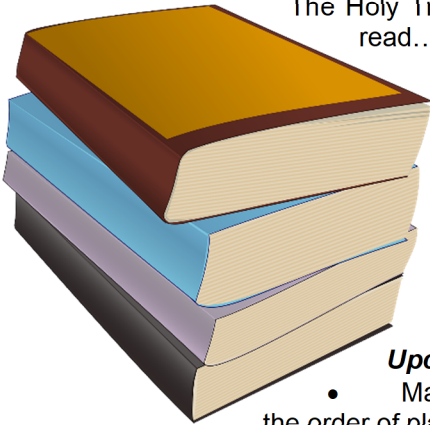
On January 26, the Church School students enjoyed a Music and Arts Service Project Assembly on their return to Church School after winter break. In the first half of the assembly they enthusiastically rang and sang sharagans with Emily Terjimanian. Then they made over 25 Valentine Cards and goodie bags to deliver to the Montgomery County Senior Activity Center in Ambler Pa to hand out to the center’s participants. Brenda Jilajian led the card-making project with support from our teachers Ava Crothers, Nina Asadoorian and Alyssa Santerian. The children enjoyed making music and crafts that would bring joy.

Holy Trinity’s parents and grandparents are encouraged to enroll their children in our Church School, which offers classes in Language Education and Christian Education.

BOOK CLUB NEWS

“Books give a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and life to everything.” Plato

The Holy Trinity Zoom Book Club finished 2024 reflecting on the wonderful selections that were read...



The Boys: A Memoir of Hollywood and Family, by Ron and Clint Howard and *Into the Magic Shop*, by James R. Doty, MD. Our readers continue to experience selections of varied genres and are inspired by the lively discussions throughout the Zoom sessions. We attempt to choose works from different time periods, fiction and nonfiction selections, and topics.

The 2025 January-through-May season looks very promising. Already, the January selection took us to London in search of lost love in the novel *The Lost Ticket* by Freya Sampson. The heart-warming tale was the perfect selection during the holiday season.

Upcoming selections through June are:

- March 6: *The Kitchen House* by Kathleen Grissom: An orphaned, Irish servant girl violates the order of plantation society and unleashes events that expose the best and worst in the people she has come to call her family.
- April 10: *The Only Woman in the Room*, by Marua Benedict: A novel based on the true story of glamour icon and, yes, scientist, Hedy Lamarr whose groundbreaking invention revolutionized modern communication.
- May 22: *The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry* by Gabriella Zevin: An unforgettable tale of transformation and second chances. An irresistible affirmation of why we read and why we love.
- June 26: *Have You Seen Luis Vegez?* by Katherine Ryan Hyde: A heartwarming story with a thought-provoking, encouraging and powerful message for all of us.

Ideally, we try to give our readers a generous amount of time to acquire and read the novels. The Zoom sessions are open to anyone who enjoys reading! You may want to add to the conversations OR just sit and listen to the discussions. All are welcome! If you have difficulty finding the selection, please contact us and we will try to locate a copy for you! For access to the Zoom sessions go to: nancybasmajian@verizon.net.

ACYOA NEWS

FAMILY NIGHT AT PHILADELPHIA UNION GAME

By Tomas Majian

On Saturday, September 28th, the ACYOA Juniors organized a Family Night at the Philadelphia Union game at Subaru Park in Chester, PA. We had a nice turnout with a mix of forty-three parishioners.

This was my favorite ACYOA-sponsored event so far. It was my first “futbol” game, a sport that I really enjoy, and I was able to enjoy it with friends. It was much better being with a group as I got to share ideas with them about the game.

Our group met outside of the stadium where there were food trucks, various games, and a pet adoption event--we won free items from the sponsors. The pet adoption event was really cute since we were able to play with the dogs. We were invited into the stadium at field level and took a group photo at the player benches.

The game itself went really well. After a slow start, it got exciting when the Union scored, quickly followed by Atlanta United's tying goal. Towards the end of the game, we went to a section where we got autographs from some of the Union players.

My favorite part was being there with people I love, people I care about and hold dear to my heart. I hope our group grows next year since the game day experience is much more fun with a group!

ACYOA JUNIORS FALL SPORTS WEEKEND

By Narek Gevorgyan

This past October, St. Sahag & St. Mesrob Church in Wynnewood, PA, hosted the ACYOA Juniors Fall Sports Weekend over Columbus Day weekend. There were 200 ACYOA members from 15 parishes participating, including 25 Juniors from our parish. We also had five Holy Trinity families who opened up their homes as host families for the weekend, and many families who were present throughout the weekend to cheer us on.

The event was truly an exciting experience--embracing our culture and faith while also competing in sports with our friends. Holy Trinity had two boys' teams and a girls' team competing in basketball, along with two coed volleyball teams. We also competed in individual sports for chess, tavloo and ping pong. Holy Trinity managed to make it to the semi-finals in both basketball and volleyball this year, and Raffi Garibian won the trophy for beginners tavloo!

Each night, there was a dance with various fun activities. Sunday's Awards Banquet was really special since we were treated to live Armenian music from a few familiar faces that included Dave Hoplamazian, Haig Hovnanian and Jake Terkanian. The experience alone was amazing in the sense that it embraced our Armenian culture and allowed us to build and foster new relationships with one another.

I want to thank Nick Terkanian for coaching our basketball teams and helping to run the sports competitions during the weekend, as well as our chaperones, Anita Torcomian and Alex Yavru-Sakuk. Thank you to St. Sahag & St. Mesrob Church for hosting a memorable Fall Sports Weekend, and I hope Holy Trinity can host one soon!

Juniors Host Youth Dance

by Zara Poghosyan

The Holy Trinity ACYOA Juniors hosted their first-ever dance on November 9, creating an exciting and memorable event for their community. To make the evening unique, the Juniors chose a creative “glow” theme, transforming the Holy Trinity hall into a vibrant space illuminated with neon lights, glow sticks, and fluorescent decorations. The theme added an energetic and festive atmosphere, drawing attendees into a night of music, dancing, and fun. With glowing accessories handed out during the dance, everyone was encouraged to embrace the spirit of the theme and light up the dance floor.



The dance marked an important milestone for the ACYOA Juniors, showcasing their teamwork and creativity in organizing a successful event. Parents and advisors also played a vital role in the event's success, volunteering their time and efforts to assist with planning, setup, and supervision, ensuring everything ran smoothly and safely. From planning the decorations to curating an engaging playlist, the Juniors ensured a seamless and enjoyable experience for all who attended. The night brought together friends and families, fostering a sense of community and friendship.



Khrimian Hayrig, (1820-1907) A Voice that Never Weakens

By Lucy Aghazarian

It would not be surprising if in times of strife and division, we looked for a voice to bring us courage and hope. As fate would have it, such a voice did come through for those of us who were at church on November 3, 2024.

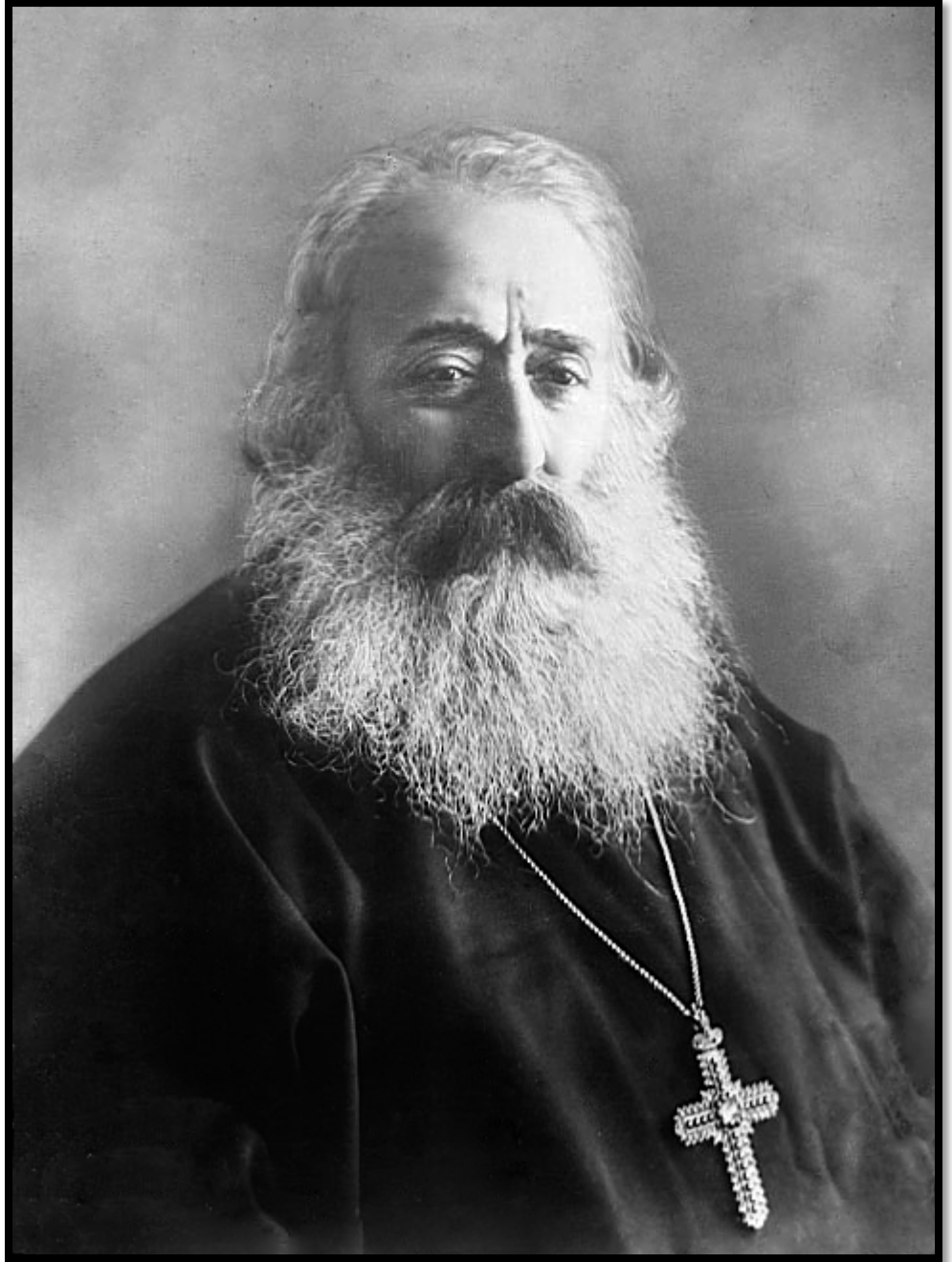
During the Fellowship hour, those who stayed poured themselves another cup of coffee and enjoyed a timely presentation by our Dn. Albert Keshgegian. We watched a short video produced by the Diocese on the occasion of its 125th anniversary. The video depicted scenes from its long history and featured the inspiring and loving words of Khrimian Hayrig, the beloved church father whose letters to his “children” inspired and guided them no matter where they were around the world. Afterwards there was a short but meaningful discussion.

Mugurditch Khrimian was such a beloved Catholicos that he was and still is called simply “Khrimian Hayrig [father]”. It was during his tenure that our Diocese was founded in 1898, much earlier than many of us think Armenians arrived in this country.

Khrimian Hayrig sent a “letter from home” on that occasion, starting “my dear children” and giving his fundamental words of advice and encouragement: love each other, live together in harmony, help each other, extend a hand, find a job for the poor or newcomer, help the sick and take care of orphans and newcomers. Also, glorify your Father in Heaven, remember who you are and your ancestral faith; you may be persecuted and exiled, but God has never abandoned you. Worldly peace is unstable, but God’s peace is immortal and brings happiness.

In many ways his advice reminds us of the epistles in the New Testament and of Jesus’ command to love one another. Although the words were written over 125 years ago, they are still very meaningful for us today.

Thank you, Dn. Albert, for bringing us these beautiful, inspiring, and much needed words.



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- Bea C. April 2009



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CELEBRATING OUR DEACONS

On December 22 Holy Trinity commemorated the Feast of St. Stephen, the first deacon and proto-martyr. St. Stephen is described as “a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit”. A lovely service following Badarak honored five faithful deacons: Gregory Andonian, Antranig Garibian, Garo Garibian, Albert Keshgegian and Karnig Torossian who, on this occasion, were granted the privilege of wearing liturgical crowns.

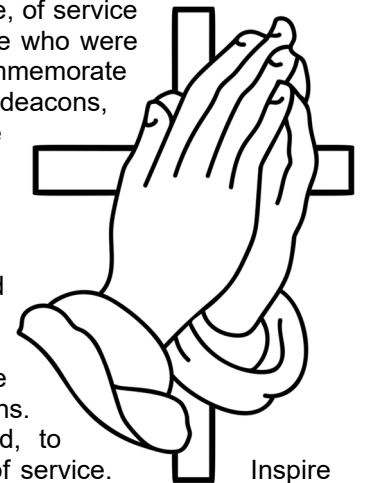
A bountiful Fellowship Hour followed the service. Der Hakob thanked the deacons for their steadfast commitment to service each Sunday, reminding all that Badarak would not be possible without their loyalty. A toast to the attributes of the faithful deacons: obedience, humility and patience, was given by Garo Garibian.

The beautiful day also celebrated the 50th wedding anniversary of senior deacon Albert Keshgegian and his wife Patrice. In his toast, Garo noted the love, patience, understanding and compromise that contribute to a long, happy marriage.

A joyful day of celebration left all in attendance feeling merry and bright!

A prayer written by Dn. Albert Keshgegian especially for the occasion

O Christ, Son of God yet perfect human, you taught us the greatest example of selfless love, of service to others. And you taught us forgiveness, as when you asked your Father to forgive those who were crucifying you. Many have sought to follow you, among them St. Stephen, whom we commemorate today. Stephen also lived a life of service, ordained by the apostles to be the first of your deacons, and asked God to forgive those who were ending his life for his faith in you. Stephen became the first martyr; his earthly life was short but bore much fruit. He joined you in heaven, wearing the angelic crown of martyrdom. And others followed him in proclaiming their faith in you, loving as you do, and serving others and your Church.



Today, as we remember and celebrate St. Stephen, we also honor our own deacons, who, on this occasion, have been granted the privilege of wearing liturgical crowns. Bless them and inspire them, Lord, to continue and build upon their lives of service. Inspire us all to emulate Stephen and all your saints, to love and serve others and your holy Church. For you are the source of love and all that is good, and to you, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit, is befitting glory, dominion, and honor, now and forever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

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We Remember with Love

It was Sunday, January 19; yet in spite of a looming snowstorm, family and friends of faithful who passed away in 2024 participated in our annual “Day of Remembrance.” Following Badarak, Fr. Hakob spoke to the families saying, “Your loss is also a loss for us, your faith community, and we are here to comfort you.” The service was a simple gesture on the part of Holy Trinity to let families know that we share their loss and remember.

When Fr. Hakob invited representatives from each family to come forward, they preceded to the chancel and, saying the name of their loved one, lit a candle from a center candle symbolizing Christ—the light of the world. Candles were lit by spouses, children, siblings, and friends of...

Evgenia Aloyan, Kimma Avagimova, Nishan Boyajian, Van Injaian, Robert Keleshian, Alla Mamedova, Frank Murphy, Laura Nerkararyan, Margush Poghosova, Ara Shakarjian, Zevart Shakarjian, Margaret “Maggie” Tandourjian, Gelezar Zouloian

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HOLY TRINITY “GALS” PRACTICING CHRISTIAN HOSPITALITY

By Yn. Anna Gevorgyan

Every Sunday at our church is a time of joy and unity. The day begins with prayer and worship—a moment when you feel transported away from your familiar routine and immersed in a peaceful, spiritual atmosphere. After the service, the celebration continues in a welcoming hall where a long table is set with a variety of beautifully prepared foods, desserts, and freshly brewed coffee. It is a time to enjoy a warm cup of coffee, connect with familiar faces, and even make new friends, creating a perfect space for mental and spiritual relaxation.

This warm and inviting experience is made possible by the dedicated women of Holy Trinity, affectionately known as the HTACH Gals. With love and care, they organize not only the regular coffee hours but also all the delightful banquets, luncheons, and feast days. Their efforts include crafting fantastic decorations and preparing tasty food, all designed to enhance the church experience and bring everyone closer together.

Whether they are helping in the kitchen, cooking and serving at the bazaar, preparing treats like choreg and string cheese for sale, or organizing lively parties on feast days, the women of Holy Trinity pour their energy and creativity into every detail. Their work goes far beyond the practical aspects of event planning. It is a heartfelt service that unites us all around God and creates a warm, joyful space away from the pressures of daily life.

I am deeply grateful to all the women of HTACH for their commitment and passion. Their efforts not only make each event memorable but also help to build a strong, supportive community where everyone feels at home.



Men's Club News

The December 2024 and January 2025 results for the "200 Club" drawings appear below. Also, we are pleased to report that some of the winners have generously made donations back to the 200 Club (to be used towards the 2 CASP children that the 200 Club sponsors each year), or directly to organizations supporting Armenia. (Note: the winners are posted monthly on the HTAC Website under Men's Club.) Thank you!

Dec. 2024

\$500 Brenda & Hank LeCompte #109
\$200 Der Hakob Gevorgyan #200
\$100 Kim & Gena Willard #141
\$100 Lorraine Damerjian #177
\$100 Albert Dandegian #137

Jan. 2025

\$500 Alyssa Worrell #092
\$200 Florence Boyajian #024
\$100 Mary Jamgochian #077
\$100 Der Hakob Gevorgyan #046
\$100 Jeanette Der Hagopian #004

Congratulations to the Winners !!

WHAT THE CHURCH IS...

The Body of Christ
A welcoming community of believers
The children of God
A sanctuary
A house of prayer
The Lord's Home
A loving family
A peaceful haven
A mighty fortress
A safe harbor
Stewardship from the heart
Inclusive



WHAT THE CHURCH IS NOT...

A business
A country club
A cultural organization
An historical society
A building of brick and mortar
A café
A museum
An opera house
A casino
A theater
Exclusive

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Matthew 16:18

A SPIRITUAL EXERCISE FOR THE FAITHFUL

Departing Words from the Surgeon General of the United States

Editor's Note: We encourage our faithful to read this article and the reflection questions that follow, remembering the role of the Church in our lives.

(1) Washington, D.C. – The United States Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy released his Parting Prescription for America, weaving together reflections on his personal and professional experiences having spent six of the last ten years as our nation's Surgeon General.

(2) Throughout his service, the Surgeon General has sought to understand the root causes of pain and unhappiness felt across our country. As a physician, Dr. Murthy believes that health is about more than tests and medications: it includes taking time to listen and focus on the whole person. As America's Doctor, he has taken a similar approach with the nation.

(3) After spending years hearing stories from thousands of Americans, delving into scientific data, and convening researchers, Dr. Murthy has found something deep and widespread ailing Americans: the erosion of our sense of community.

The Surgeon General's Parting Prescription shares Dr. Murthy's recommendations for how Americans can cultivate health, happiness, and fulfillment by rebuilding community centered around relationships, service, and purpose.

(4) "Today, we are faced with a profound choice: do we continue with the status quo, marked by pain, disconnection, and division? Or do we choose a different path—one of joy, health, and fulfillment, where we turn toward each other instead of away from each other; where we choose love over fear; where we recognize community as the irreplaceable foundation for our well-being?" U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy writes, "As I finish my tenure as Surgeon General, this is my parting prescription, my final wish for all of us: choose community."

(5) Dr. Murthy makes the case that relationships, service and purpose create an ecosystem of meaning and belonging that are essential for fulfillment. These three elements form the triad of fulfillment. By contrast, modern culture has become increasingly centered on the triad of success defined by fame, money, power. We need a cultural shift that moves us toward the triad of fulfillment.



(6) In his Prescription, the Surgeon General details each element and how they impact our health:

- Relationships are the connections we build with friends, family, neighbors, co-workers, and others we encounter. Healthy relationships where we feel seen and where we can be ourselves can be a powerful source of joy and support and can be buffers to stress.
 - When we lack meaningful relationships, we can experience loneliness. Currently, a third of adults and around half of young people experience loneliness. Being socially disconnected increases our risk of heart disease, dementia, depression, anxiety, and premature death.
- Service comprises the actions we take that benefit others. Even though service is defined as benefiting others, filling one's life with service can have profound benefits to the person rendering the service.
 - Studies show that sustained service efforts can reduce the risk of hypertension, stroke, early death, depression, cognitive decline, and can make us feel more connected to others.

• Purpose is the feeling of having an overarching life aim that guides and prioritizes our decisions and actions. It's not "what" we do. It's "why" we do it.

• Purpose can be good for our physical and mental health. A high sense of individual purpose may reduce the risk of early death as well as stroke, lung disease, and dementia for some. Research also shows that people with a strong sense of purpose may experience lower levels of depression and anxiety and greater resilience in the face of stress.

(7) As he closes out his tenure as Surgeon General, Dr. Murthy is urging Americans to recenter their lives around relationships, service, and purpose – the triad of fulfillment and the core pillars of community. He calls for a shift in culture, policy, and programs that will strengthen community as the critical path to health, happiness, and fulfillment.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. In paragraph 3, what does Dr. Murthy believe is "ailing Americans?" Do you agree or disagree?
2. In paragraph 4, he describes the status quo as "marked by pain, disconnection, and division." Then he suggests "a different path" which sounds very much like the role of the Church. Do you agree or not? What is his parting prescription, his final wish?
3. In paragraphs 5 and 6, we have a description of the 3 elements which form his "triad of fulfillment." In what specific ways does our parish—our community of faith—offer us opportunities to fill the Surgeon General's prescription? Are we doing a good job through our parish ministries? Are you ready to "recenter" your life around these 3 elements? What would that look like?



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In Her Own Words: An Interview with our Editor

Recently, Nancy Basmajian, the Coordinator of our Adult Christian Education team, sat down for an interview with Jeanette Der Hagopian, also a member of ACE and the outgoing Editor of the LOOYS. We don't have enough space to list all the "hats" Jeanette wears at Holy Trinity. But nevertheless. . .

NANCY: Thank you, Jeanette for agreeing to sit down with me for this piece. I know you're not fond of being the center of attention or receiving awards and accolades for your work in our parish. But I think your community would be interested. I certainly am.

First, how are you feeling? You recently received a cancer diagnosis, which I know from personal experience is a scary thing. But you have been so open with sharing your struggle and transparent about your treatment that I feel I can ask. Would you be comfortable telling us about your health status? How has it impacted your ministry at Holy Trinity, if at all?

JEANETTE: Fatigue is a big issue which is a side effect of my illness. But I'm thankful that this disease is treatable and not nearly as bad as some other ailments. Unfortunately, the illness has restricted my physical work at church (cooking, shopping for supplies, coffee hour, etc.) because of the fatigue factor.

NANCY: You have spearheaded two service projects, which I know are close to your heart—Caring for Friends and the Christmas Shoebox Campaign. Would you explain how these initiatives came to you and then to us? Also, please share some of the stats. I think people will find the numbers amazing!

JEANETTE: When I retired in 2005 from my full-time job, I knew the first project I wanted to undertake was making meals for needy people. And with a small group of ladies, we made a modest number of meals which we delivered to a food pantry whenever we could gather. This past November, a group of 14, including Fr. Hakob and Yn. Anna and members of ACE, gathered to prepare meals for "Caring for Friends," a wonderful organization that delivers meals to home-bound individuals in our area. I've kept stats through the years and discovered that we have prepared 6,400 meals!!

In the same year, Samaritan's Purse was sponsoring the Christmas Shoebox Campaign, and I knew we had to participate. It was just a no-brainer. I'm so pleased that our faithful have supported this initiative—some families involve their children and have donated a box every year since we began the project. 1200 shoeboxes full of goodies is our total to date. Sharing from our abundance and serving the less fortunate is part of our mission as Christians!

NANCY: Who were the biggest influencers and mentors in your church life? A clergyman? A layperson? What drew you to the church?

JEANETTE: As long as I can remember, we went to Church every Sunday. My father was very active with the "business" end of the parish. He served on Parish Council and as a delegate representing our parish at Diocesan Assemblies. My family was usually among the last to leave church on Sundays because my father always had one more thing to take care of. So, I guess things haven't changed that much for me!

I was also influenced by His Eminence Archbishop Vatche Hovsepian who served as our pastor at Holy Cross in Union City, NJ, when I was growing up. I recall that he included me in a group retreat which opened new avenues for me to connect and engage with young people of our heritage. I truly grew up in the church at Holy Cross and joined the choir when I was 12. I feel that the music of the liturgy has been my mainstay for all these years. I love being in church.



NANCY: Let me ask you about a few of your favorite things. Feel free to respond with a single word or short phrase or elaborate as much as you wish.

1 - favorite sharagan [hymn]: Kovia Yerousaghem (Praise Jerusalem); it's an Easter sharagan which I just love. In fact, the hymn was part of the marriage ceremony of each of my three children.

2 - favorite Bible passage: It's from Jeremiah 29:11, and it says: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

3 - favorite church feast: Easter, of course

4 - favorite Armenian word: "herahzyne," which means "telephone"

5 - favorite English word: "commitment," especially as it relates to our church; it's simply making a promise and keeping it

6 - favorite person (living or dead) with whom you would like to dine: I've always enjoyed the beautiful voice of Celine Dion. In fact, Larry and I traveled to Las Vegas to see her act. We didn't dine together, but I was thrilled to see her perform.

NANCY: Finally, and on the lighter side, what makes you laugh?

JEANETTE: The Three Stooges—no, no, I'm just kidding. Actually, I laugh when I hear people share their excuses for NOT attending church.



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