



The Apostle Առաքյալ

One who is sent forth having been entrusted with a special mission.

Newsletter of St. Sahag Armenian Church
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Fall 2008



From the Pastor

And if you be unwilling to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

Joshua 24:15

Dear Parishioners,

Every four years on the first Tuesday in November, this country makes a choice through the electoral process.

As this issue of the Apostle goes to print, we will be going to the polls to decide who will lead this country, both in the legislature and as the President of the United States of America.

The decisions we make are important because they affect the direction we take as a nation.

As Armenian Christians, we also have a choice that affects us more directly and personally because it hits much closer to home. We choose whom we will follow and whom we will serve in the true battlegrounds of faith - our daily lives.

The Old Testament figure, Joshua, put the question before the children of God as they entered the Promised Land.

“Choose this day whom you will serve”.

We live in a country that, in many ways, is a “promised land” that declares “liberty and justice for all.”

It is called “the land of the free and the home of the brave.” With our liberty and freedom comes choice.

We choose to what extent our faith plays a role in our lives. We are free to choose whom we will follow, the false Gods that claim to be worthy of our attention and adoration or the true God who is the real source of freedom.

In this time of great decisions, as the New People of God, let us take the example from Joshua and reaffirm our commitment and boldly proclaim, “As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

With blessings,

Der Sahak Kaishian

Visiting Pastor



Fifth Anniversary Celebration Concert!

NOVEMBER 8, 2008 ~ 4:00 P.M.

in the St. Sahag Church Sanctuary.

The Armenian Community is proud to celebrate the Fifth Anniversary of the St. Sahag School of Music. Not only are we believed to be the only Armenian Church with a school of music, but it is unique in that Armenian music is known as a prominent course of study.

Stepan (Styopa) Kachatryan, also known as, Maestro Stepan, is the head of the school. His wife, Astghik Alanakyan, and his daughter, Mariam, also teach in the school. Maestro Stepan and Astghik teach piano and Mariam teaches flute and shuvee (Armenian Flute). They are an incredibly musical family. Harut plays classical music, Armenian folk music and modern contemporary music as well. Astghik performs on the piano and is the organist for St. Sahag Armenian Church.

We are blessed to have such a wonderfully gifted family as part of our community. The high quality of their musical performances and the artists born of their diligent tutelage is a

rich cultural gift to us all. Maestro is a teacher who accomplishes miraculous results with his students. At their concerts, it is truly amazing to witness the caliber of the performances these students provide who have been mentored by the Kachatryan family.

In addition, credit is due to those who helped this school get its start. Jackie and Adrienne Hayes piloted the beginning and subsequent growth of the school, advocating for it with the community and the Parish Council. Also, Gregg Dourgarian provided a generous grant to get the school started, and donated the beautiful grand piano which is used in school concerts and other musical events at St. Sahag.

We hope you will join us for a fabulous anniversary event. Refreshments will follow the concert.

Steve Scallen

Parish Council Chairman

BUILDING AND GROUNDS REPORT – OCTOBER 20, 2008

by Terry McGibbon, Chair
St. Sahag Building & Grounds Committee

Projects completed since the last report

Addition of a spray head and garbage disposal unit in the lower kitchen sink. This project was funded by the building improvement fund of ACOM. The addition of this equipment will allow more efficient dish-washing following events.

The west side painting project (lower part) has been completed. Thanks to the donated efforts of Eldar Mollaeav who spent considerable time on scraping, priming and painting. We did need to hire a carpenter to repair the Stained glass window that was falling apart.

Fellowship Hall renovation project: the recommendation from Julia Sandstrom's father regarding the floor, was to cover it with new flooring material. Removing and refinishing the floor would be cost prohibitive.

Repair of ceilings and walls in the upper level rooms has almost been completed. The ACOM office, bathroom and classroom have been painted (paint donated by the Scallens).

The ACOM office has been used for classes during the completion of the classroom. Furniture was donated by the Scallens to provide better meeting and class facilities.



New projects completed this period:

An irrigation system donated by the Scallens was installed on the grounds in early September. This system will enable us to keep our grounds well landscaped.

Additional venetian blinds were installed in the class room on the second floor.

Der Sahak was the person responsible for the shiny kitchen floors in the main kitchen and the fellowship hall kitchen. Many thanks, Der Sahak.

The old wooden chairs from the second floor have been moved to the basement. If anyone knows someone who would like to have these chairs, please let Der Sahak or Terry McGibbon know. There are between 50 to 70 old wooden chairs, most in reasonable condition.

So far, it has continued to be a very active year for the building and grounds committee. We would like to thank all of you who have helped out with the various projects which would have been difficult to complete without your help.

Projects in the wings:

Painting of the West wall behind the Baptismal Font.

Completion of the painting and redecorating projects on the second floor.

Additional electrical projects planned are to provide outlets on the center column in the lower kitchen and to install switches on the lights in the halls on the first floor, as well as, a permanent dedicated electric line for the irrigation system booster pump.

ST. SAHAG SUNDAY PROGRAM:

The Fall/Winter session of St. Sahag's Sunday School Program is well underway. The focus of this semester has been to study the seven Holy Sacraments of the Armenian Orthodox Church. They have begun with the Sacrament of Baptism.

The Sunday School program for the younger students is led by Margaret Boyer with assistance from her daughter, Emma Kashian. The children in this class have enjoyed making pages each week to their own books about the Seven Sacraments. Children are escorted from class to join in the last half of the weekly church service. This is an opportunity for the young children to learn how to participate with respect and reverence during the community celebration.

The program for the older students is led by Michele Goodspeed. They, too, have been studying and discussing the Sacrament of Baptism. Upon the students' request, this program is held following the Sunday Fellowship. This allows the students to participate in the Badarak.

To help children at both levels build a deeper understanding of the importance of the Sacraments of Baptism, Communion, and Confirmation, Der Sahak presided over an enactment of this special ceremony following the October 26th fellowship.

We are also looking ahead to the Children's Nativity Play, which is scheduled to take place on Sunday, December 14. Practices will be held in the weeks leading up to this special day. All children and grandchildren of parishioners are invited to participate. Please contact Der Sahak to indicate your interest.



ARE YOU LIVING THE DREAM?

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God —what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 12:2

"I am living the dream," says first year St. Nersess seminarian Stan Sheridan. "It's just another day in paradise," he shares, as he continues to describe what it is like being a seminarian at St. Nersess. Stan, for many years, wrestled with the idea of coming to St. Nersess to become a seminarian. He has felt the internal tug to serve the church as an Armenian priest. Stan hails from Racine, Wisconsin, where he was baptized and raised in the St. Mesrob Armenian Church, whose parish priest, Fr. Yeprem Kelegian, is an alumnus of St. Nersess Seminary. Stan Sheridan is now living his dream there, as well.

We all have dreams, goals and aspirations in life. What are your dreams and goals? Have you sought help from God in discerning what your dream is in life? Your mission? Your career? Your vocation? Your purpose?

Today as I prepare this article, I realize it is the first day of autumn, a day that represents change. It is a time when leaves change colors, days become shorter, nights become cooler, air becomes more crisp and we prepare for a greater change ahead during the winter months. Autumn reminds us that everything in our lives involves change. What positive changes are you making presently in your life? God calls us to make changes that will bring us closer to Him.

In the book of Romans, chapter two, we read that we must be transformed by the renewing of our minds to discern God's will. By making changes, to follow His will, we do that what is good, acceptable and perfect. Stan, a graduate of Marquette University, made a change. He left his job as a police officer in Greenfield, Wisconsin, decided to start St. Nersess as a seminarian, and to follow his dream of becoming an Armenian Orthodox priest.

Make the most of your life and listen to God's call closely. He may be calling you to make a career change or to consider coming to St. Nersess when you graduate college. After all, life is not just about working the job to get the paycheck; it is about serving God, mankind, and making a difference in the world we live in. "It is about living the dream."

Please pray for our 10 seminarians this year at St. Nersess. If you are interested in learning more about "living the dream" at St. Nersess, or know someone who may be a good candidate for seminary, contact me at vocations@stnersess.edu or call 914-636-2003.

Until next time -- God's blessings always.

Der Stepanos Doudoukjian
Youth & Vocations, Director
St. Nersess Armenian Seminary



THE INDEPENDENCE OF ARMENIA IS A NEW CHALLENGE FOR THE ARMENIAN CHURCH

The most important development of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church was its revival in post-Soviet Armenia, especially during 1991-2001. The first ten years of the independently new born Armenia (est. 1991), are not known as just a period of national revitalization, but, also, as a period of spiritual revival for the Armenian people.

The first official Church of the world (301 A.D.), the Armenian Church was restored to its spiritual and historical role with the appearance of Armenia's greatly-desired independence. The new government of Armenia recognized and appreciated the unique and important function of the Armenian Church and has established a special law regarding its status. In the constitution of Armenia, we read, "The Republic of Armenia recognizes the exclusive historical mission of the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church as a national church, in the spiritual life, development of the national culture and preservation of the national identity of the people of Armenia" (Chapter 1, Article 8.1).

The Church was liberated and began to live and act as

most Christian Churches, without persecution. If, before independence, most of the believers were afraid of going to a church, afterwards they were free and unafraid. Moreover, priests were then free to evangelize and to preach the Word of God. The culmination of this revival was the anniversary celebration in 2001 of the 1700 years of the official adoption of Christianity in Armenia. This celebration symbolized the rebirth and revival of church life following the Soviet era.

After this celebration, the Church formed another very important agreement with the government, which added a new subject to all public education called "History of the Armenian Church". To the glory of God, by these and other initiatives, the church began and continues to re-establish the appropriate conditions and elements of the National and Traditional Christian Church's role and structure.

Deacon Manuk Malkhasyan
Member of the Brotherhood
of the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, Armenia
and Student at the University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, MN

2008 ACYO Pan-North American Retreat From Minnesota with Love

Justin Kalemkiarian ~ Oct. 4, 2008

I've been to Armenian events before, so I had a pretty good idea what to expect from the 2008 Pan-North American Retreat (PNAR) held Sept. 26-28 north of Chicago: little sleep, old friendships renewed, new friendships formed, and copious amounts of eating. What I didn't expect, however, was a rare opportunity to open up about God, faith, and how our tradition-rich church is relevant in 21st century lives.

Our 2005 Pontiac Grand Prix, barely contained the enthusiasm of myself, Mariam Kocharian, Erica Tiffany, and Oktiabrina Mollaeva, as we departed Minneapolis.

Admittedly we were moving a bit quicker than the local constabulary would've preferred, eager to "introduce" our local chapter of ACYOA to the North American ACYO world. Upon arrival at the lovely Techny Towers, we were immediately welcomed, greeted, and handed ridiculously large pieces of authentic Chicago-style pizza. Yep, we were in the right place.

Coming from a non-Armenian background (I was raised in Lincoln, Nebraska, a town certainly not known for a vibrant Armenian community) it never fails to amaze me that simply being Armenian can help forge a connection with a person so quickly. I would suspect that this openness and warmth is the foundation for the vibrant Armenian presence world-wide. You can just...feel it.

Hyperbole aside, the theme of the retreat was "Living the Christian Life 8 Days a Week". Appropriately, Der Stepanos, Youth Vocations Director at Saint Nersess Seminary, opened the event with the classic Beatles song "8 Days a Week" (also appropriately, I refrained from singing along.) All too often we find ourselves attentive worshippers every Sunday, simply to brush it all aside as soon as post-Badarak fellowship ends. As Der Stepanos explained it, we are to live Christ-like lives even after the coffee and boureg are finished.

This is especially hard for young people who are often pulled in equal directions by the church they've been attending since they were kids and the pressures of school, partying, and tagging pictures on Facebook. This difficult transition was addressed at PNAR through a series of discussions, lectures, and a no-holds-barred question and answer session about religion, faith, and college life. Minnesota native

and St. Nersess Seminarian, Ben Rith-Najarian, led a lecture on how the scripture guides our daily lives, Deacon Matthew Ash led an eye-opening discussion about evangelism and the difficulties in speaking about faith, and Deacon Levon Kirakosyan broke down the Lord's Prayer.

In addition to the lectures, a particularly powerful session was conducted wherein several attendees of disparate backgrounds and walks of faith were asked questions about how religion and faith are strengthened and weakened through young adulthood. All five of the participants discussed struggling with faith in some capacity, alluding to the

challenges facing college-aged adults. I, myself, have faced tremendous changes in my faith over the past five years and I'm still very unsure about many things, but it's comforting to know that I'm not alone and that the Armenian Church is willing and ready to help young adults.

PNAR is as much about forming relationships among the three North-American Dioceses as it is about discussing issues facing the church. All of the 50+ attendees were great and the Minnesota delegation felt welcomed immediately. We hadn't even reached Sunday when Mariam and

Oktiabrina started making plans to go to Detroit, New York, Canada, and the west coast. Having friends all over the world is one of the coolest parts of attending Armenian events. We'll always have a couch on which to crash.

Following Sunday Badarak (and the spectacular one-woman Mariam Kocharian choir), PNAR featured perhaps one of the longest Armenian good-byes in history. Despite the fact that people had flights to catch and long drives to begin, it felt like the weekend just shouldn't end. After a multitude of hugs, promises to meet up in the future, and even some impromptu Armenian dancing in the parking lot, the weekend finally had to come to a close. I guess in the end, however, the whole point is that the weekend should last eight days, not just two.

Editor's Note: This trip was assisted by a grant from the Parish Council from funds provided by the Cafesjian Family Foundation.



(L-R) Mariam Kocharian, Oktiabrina Mollaeva, Lorena Ojakian, Erica Tiffany, Justin Kalemkiarian

OKTIABRINA ON ST. NERSESS SEMINARY



I was very blessed to have an opportunity to spend a week at St. Nersess Armenian Seminary last month. The second I entered the first beautiful Seminary building, it was amazing. All of the 18 students who attended the conference were very friendly and made me feel very welcome and comfortable. I was very excited to meet the director of the conference Father Stepanos Doudoukjan, also, a very welcoming and kind man. Der Stepanos led us all closer to God during our time there.

Everything at St. Nersess felt very different from what I had expected. There were a variety of activities planned for us. Our daily routine would start with breakfast and an opening and closing prayer. Afterwards, we would go to chapel and have a twenty-minute service. During the day, we had Armenian language lessons and Bible studies. Almost every night, we had an opportunity to hear different guest speakers talk about important things in our lives, like friendship, faith, and love.

Along with all the prayers and bible studies, we had a lot of fun. I will never forget our trip to the Jersey shore. It was amazing because all the participants grew closer to one another. Also, we went to an Armenian nursing home where we had a chance to meet some of the survivors of the 1915 Genocide. I can definitely say that spending a week at the St. Nersess Seminary was the experience of my life. It made me look at life differently and changed some of my perceptions and views. I encourage every member of the ACYOA to visit at least once in their life and share the same unforgettable experience I had at St. Nersess.

Oktiabrina Mollaeva

Editors Note: Oktiabrina's trip was supported by a grant from the Parish Council from funds provided the The Cafesjian Family Foundation.



ST. NERSESS

by Leslie Rith-Najarian

Prior to arriving at the St Nersess Summer Conference, I have to admit I was a little afraid of what to expect. I am at a point in my life now where I've been questioning my religious beliefs and God. Although attending the conference seemed like a good idea to help me discover faith, I was afraid that I would be overwhelmed and not fit in.

As it turns out, I couldn't have chosen a better destination. St. Nersess' summer conferences have a brilliant daily schedule. At first, when I looked at the week's layout, I was disappointed that there were fewer cultural and language activities, and the emphasis was heavily on religious discussions and studies. However, following the first day, my disappointment all but vanished. The discussion topics chosen were extremely practical and applicable for everyday life.

Not only that, but it was really enjoyable to have time set aside to simply sit down with the other attendees and listen to and bounce off each other's thoughts. The discussions were the biggest part of discovery at the conference. When I first looked at the topic title, I'd go into a discussion having a pretty good idea of my feelings on the matter. But, by the end of the discussion, so many new thoughts were brought up that had never even occurred to me. I can confidently say, at the close of each discussion, I had learned something new that affected the way I looked at faith, life, and myself.

The conference deserves great credit for picking such useful subjects for people in my age group. One of my favorites was the discussion regarding handling stress. For college students, how much more practical can it get? The whole discussion put emphasis on using faith and spirituality to center your life. When under extreme stress, it's so easy to feel like you've lost a grip on your life. Faith can serve as the firm handhold that will be consistently there, unwavering.

I also thoroughly enjoyed the discussions on doubt and forgiveness. Doubt was an ideal topic for me, especially during my current exploration. During the discussion, a lot of

thoughts began to click and I discovered many new correlations. Doubt doesn't work in one part of your life always, it often can be interconnected. Having doubt in faith can relate to doubting myself and doubting relationships with others. This added more to the sense of necessity to discover a firm faith.

The final topic that really hit home was forgiveness. During the course of the conversation, I began to clearly recognize what a monumental part of life forgiveness should be. It is often taught as a religious lesson, but it is so much more than that. Holding onto anger and not resolving an issue will eat away at you. We must learn how to forgive others, ask for forgiveness, and sometimes even forgive ourselves.

Finally, being at the conference taught me to relax and enjoy godly surroundings. My personality had become extremely organized and I was constantly planning my next move. Prior to my week at St Nersess, I had reached the level where I was planning tomorrow so much, that I forgot how to enjoy today. St Nersess is such a serene loving environment, that no matter how much my mind wanted to resist relaxation, peace eventually over came it. I realized how much I miss out on the day at hand and forget to appreciate it. At the beginning, my roommate had to remind me, "Leslie, just relax, there is time." By the end of the conference, as soon as I felt myself worrying about the little insignificant details, I could finally say, "No, stop it; you're right, there is time."

The day I left St Nersess, I felt a little lighter and much calmer. My mind was much more at ease and I felt more prepared to go out and face a hectic world. There is no question that I will be returning. St Nersess provides firm reminders of what we forget in life and helps get you back on track. The priests, counselors, instructors, and attendees all come together in a special type of family that creates a feeling of overall tranquility. I would recommend attending these conferences to anyone and everyone. No matter where you are in life, you will get something useful out of the experience and you will leave with new ideas and so many new true friends.

ST. SAHAG'S WOMEN'S GUILD

by Julia Sandstrom

The Women's Guild typically meets every third Sunday of the month. On those Sundays, we are taking responsibility for the after-service luncheon provided to the congregation. Reinstating our old tradition, the meal will be served potluck style. All members of the community are welcome and encouraged to share their family's favorite dish. This Sunday, Der Sahak shared his own wonderful homemade yogurt and Deacon Manuk brought some fabulous fried eggplant.

In place of our scheduled meeting on November 16, The Women's Guild is hosting its annual Children's Fair. The event will run from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. and feature various charitable organizations who work in Armenia. We will once again be offering Armenian dance lessons. Anyone able to write in Armenian is encouraged to come and assist with the stamping table, helping children write their names in Armenian. If you are able to help, please contact Dana Nyholm. Please be sure to bring the children in your life to this wonderful event.

The Women's Guild is a fabulous way to share our heritage and talents to all the members of the community. We encourage everyone to join and participate in our events and activities. And please remember, the Women's Guild does not limit itself to the female members of the community!

The Guild meets again on Sunday, December 21 at 1:00 p.m. We will be hosting the potluck. All are encouraged to bring a dish to share.

BUILDING HOMES IN ARMENIA

One of the most beautiful places on earth has got to be the Lori region of Armenia. The mountains there are tree covered and green, and there is snow, even as late as June. This year, Bradley and I returned to the Lori region, to Vanadzor, to again build homes with low-income families. There was no snow on the mountains this time, but we were instead greeted with the beautiful colors of autumn.

We worked with the Fuller Center for Housing in three different areas in Vanadzor and at one home in the Yerevan area. Our first home project in Vanadzor was in Margahovit where we poured cement floors in the home of the Khachatryans. Some of you might remember that we worked there two years ago when we were in Lori region. The village has a population of about 3,000 people.

Our second project was an interesting one and was located right within Vanadzor. The commute was great! Let me give you a little background about this project. In Vanadzor, there is an area in town that is a neighborhood of domiks. These homes sit on city property, and as you may guess, the city wants to clear the property in order to utilize it in a different way. So, near the edge of town, a development of duplexes is being built, and a novel method of construction is being used there. It is called Reinforced Concrete Post and Beam construction and uses recyclable polystyrene (EPS) blocks, concrete, and steel rebar. The buildings are energy efficient and have a minimum R-Value of 20. Because of their style of construction, these homes are able to withstand many types of natural disasters, such as storms, floods, and major earthquakes. Another benefit is that the walls do not absorb moisture and are resistant to pests. It was exciting to be involved in a new construction method such as this! Our task on these homes was to spackle the ceilings and paint the outside eaves on the homes. In all, we spent three days working with several different family members on these duplexes.

Our third home was located about 10 miles from the Georgian border in a town named Tashir. The Abrahamian family there consisted of a widowed woman with her son and some nephews, and then we poured the floors in this home also. It was interesting to watch the young men question our construction engineer's instructions. Eventually they were convinced that he knew his construction techniques and they got to work.

The last home that we worked on was in the village of Voskevaz



which is near Yerevan. At that home, we had several volunteers from the US Embassy join us, so we had about 25 or more volunteers there! We had two different chores there; one was to pour a low porch along the side of the home and the other was to plaster the interior walls. The porch was completed, but we didn't get as much plastering done as we wanted to. I don't know if we met the day's goal for that, but we definitely didn't

meet our personal goal.

I hope to have a presentation soon to show folks who are interested in seeing the sights instead of just reading about them. Watch for announcements. And if you are interested in going to Armenia in 2009 to build homes, let me know. I plan to return to the Lori region next fall to continue the mission with the Fuller Center for Housing. Dates for future trips can be found at www.FullerCenterArmenia.org.



**Rusland, Arpine,
Alberd, Ann Marie Riemers**

For the third consecutive year, our church and community is supporting the building of homes in Armenia for those in need. The UN council estimates that 40,000 families in Armenia live in substandard housing. As Americans with strong ties to Armenia, we are deeply interested in the welfare of our cousins there. Supporting them in their dream of obtaining a decent home is an honorable way to maintain the security and stability of Armenians.

The year 2008 has brought some changes in the organizations that support building homes in Armenia. But regardless of those changes, the poor in Armenia still have the same needs. This year, the 'Fuller Center for Housing - Armenia' was created and is busy at work, helping 125 Armenian families with interest-free home loans and volunteer help. It is through them that we will positively affect the lives of Armenian families.

To contribute, simply send your check to St. Sahag Armenian Church, 203 Howell Street N, St. Paul, MN 55104. You may also pledge an amount payable over the next few weeks by indicating that on a note. Make your checks payable to St. Sahag Armenian Church and note 'FCH Armenia' on the memo line. Your generous donation will go, in its entirety, towards providing a simple, decent, and affordable home for a family in Armenia.

Please send your check or pledge by November 16, 2008. Call Cynthia or Leroy Erickson (651-917-1818) with questions.



MY JOURNEY INTO THE ARMENIAN CHURCH

by Bill Oyler

I offer the following as a written account of my blessed association with St. Sahag Armenian Church:

Up until September of 2003, the only thing I knew of Armenian culture was its music. I had been familiar for decades with the music of Aram Khachaturian, Arno Babajanian, Alexander Arutyunian, Krikor Yeghazarian and Boris Parsadonian and a few other composers. I remember as if it were yesterday, listening to the U.S. Premiere of Aram Khachaturian's Piano Concerto in 1944!

This all changed one day in early September of 2003, when my oldest continuing friend, (now for 47 years!) Don Steinmetz, asked me if I'd like to join him in attending Badarak at St. Sahag. Don and I share an interest in theology, liturgy, foreign languages and linguistics. It was thus quite natural for me to be excited about this new discovery. It was a matter of immediate attraction. Knowing intimately both the Roman Catholic and Lutheran liturgies, it was but a short step to familiarizing myself with the Armenian liturgy. The beauty of the Armenian Sanctus never ceases to thrill me. The fact that the Armenian transliteration and the English version appear on opposing pages made the learning easy. It was thrilling for me to join in on the first Sunday in singing the Hayr Mer! This facilitated my assimilation.

But after this initial experience, apart from my theological interest in the Armenian liturgy, why did I stay for these past five years? This was due to a large extent to the warmth and acceptance of the parishioners of St. Sahag. I felt welcomed into the Armenian community at once. Before long, I no longer felt like an odar (foreigner). Indeed, as I was given the honorary title of A.B.C. (Armenian By Choice).

During these past five years, my understanding of the liturgy has deepened as I mastered and memorized more and more of the ritual, adding new Armenian words to my active vocabulary. I have felt honored to have been asked to be a frequent reader of the Gospel lessons. I also cherish memories of Armenian festivals such as Voski Ashoun and Armenian Christmas, not to mention the somber remembrances of the victims of the Genocide, every April 24th, with the splendid musical and evocative narrative programs. Also, never to be forgotten, as I lay near death from Legionnaire's Disease in the hospital in 2006, how I was visited there by Fr. Tavit Boyajian and by several St. Sahag parishioners.

Another feature of my association with St. Sahag cannot be omitted: the rich fellowship that follows after Badarak at the wonderful meals. When I first attended a meal, I exclaimed approvingly and naively: "Why this tastes like Mideastern food!" I was told good-naturedly: "This IS Mideastern food!" I quickly became a fan of missahats and was pleased to contribute my own hummos during potluck meals. Whenever Der Sahak says after the prayer: "Bon appétit", I reply with "Paree Akhorzhakh!"

Another feature of being a part of the St. Sahag community, has been the chance to meet and talk with a wide variety of guest priests from all over America over the years. I cherish especially, theological discussions I had with Fr. Daniel Findikyan from St. Nersess Seminary and swapping amusing anecdotes with then-Bishop and now-Archbishop Vicken Aykazian about visiting Los Angeles' "Little Armenia." But of course, I save for last, my most memorable and splendid experience at St. Sahag, the visit of Vehapar, His Holiness Karekin II on Oct. 25, 2007. It was thrilling to receive a small cross from him as I said: "Asdvadz oghnagan, Vehapar Der!"

In gratitude,
Bill Oyler

ARMENIAN CHURCH YOUTH ORGANIZATION OF AMERICA (ACYOA) MINNESOTA CHAPTER

The ACYOA now has a home in Minnesota. The chapter was initiated by Father Sahak Kaishian in February, 2008. As a community, we definitely needed an official youth group. Establishing our own chapter has allowed us to organize meetings, activities and to use our resources and time towards benefiting our community and making connections with the Armenian youth throughout North America.

We have had seven monthly membership meetings to date. We discuss past and future events, fundraisers, and have food and activities afterwards. Our membership meetings are announced by email and on our Facebook group, ACYOA Minnesota. Our next membership meeting will be on Friday, November 21.

One of our most important events is the ACYOA Bake Sale, which we have organized for two months. They have been very successful. We have raised \$260.00 from the first and \$440.00 from the second. We have been donating half of the proceeds to the Armenian Youth Initiative, which is a charity focused on helping youth in remote areas of Armenia. The members of the community and of the organization donate pastries to sell during a Sunday after Badarak, and the bake sale is usually advertised two weeks ahead of time, by email and the Facebook group.

Four of our members participated in a Lenten Retreat in Racine, WI. During the Summer, two members attended Conferences at St. Nersess Armenian Seminary in New Rochelle, NY. We, also, went on a trip to Valley Fair Amusement Park, which has become a yearly tradition for us. In September, four members went to the annual Pan North American Retreat, which was held in Techny, IL. This was one of the first events which enabled us to connect with other chapters. We have planned very interesting activities and trips coming up soon, such as our ACYOA dinner on February 7th, 2009 and the General Assembly and Sports Weekend in NY. If you are interested in becoming a member of this new and dynamic youth group, please contact us by email at acyoa.mn@gmail.com, visit the ACYOA website www.acyoa.org and add our group on Facebook - ACYOA Minnesota.

ACYOA OFFICERS:

President: Fr. Sahak Kaishian
Chairwoman: Mariam Kocharian
Vice-Chairman: Justin Kalemkarian
Treas./Sec'y: Iren Tadevosyan
Publicity Coord.: Nina Papiyeva
Assist.Coordinator: Oktiabrina Mollaeva



NOVEMBER

8 Saturday	4:00	School of Music Fifth Anniversary Concert
9 Sunday	10:30	V. Rev. Fr. Simeon Odabashian, Guest Celebrant
16 Sunday		10:30 Rev. Fr. Mikael Devejian, Guest Celebrant
16 Sunday		1:00 Children's Fair
21 Friday		ACYOA Meeting and Outing

DECEMBER

5 Friday	7:00	Classical Vocal Concert
7 Sunday	1:00	Parish Council Meeting
7 Sunday	1:00	ACYOA Blood Drive
14 Sunday	12:00	Sunday School Christmas Pageant
14 Sunday	1:00	ACYOA Bake Sale
21 Sunday	1:00	Women' Guild Meeting

Please contact Der Sahak with any additional community activities so they may be included in the calendar of events.

PARISH REGISTER FALL 2008

Baptisms: August 10 Serge Oganov Richard Oganov
 William Oganov Vladimir Kazaryan
May the Lord grant His abundant blessing on the newest members of His Holy Church

Hokehankeesd: July 20 Hagop Krikorian Nishan and Gulnaz Ehramjian
 Hagop and Noemi (nee Heboyan) Ehramjian Yetvart Ehramjian
 August 24 Beatrice Ohanessian (*Karasoonek* -40th day).
 September All members of St. Sahag Armenian Church who have fallen asleep in Christ
 Louis Kalajian (*Karasoonek* -40th day).

May God give light to the souls of those who are at rest and grant the comfort of the Holy Spirit to all their loved ones.

ST. SAHAG CHOIR NOTES



The choir continues to beautify the Divine Liturgy. Since the untimely departure of Beatrice Ohanessian, our dedicated Director and Organ Accompanist, Mariam Kocharian and Astghik Alanakyan have offered their talents as director and organ accompanist respectively. Naïry Digris has been designated as the contact person for the choir. Under their leadership the St. Sahag choir keeps getting stronger and stronger. The dedication of all members of the choir is greatly appreciated.

The choir members appreciate wearing the new choir robes and veils donated by Carolyn Ylitalo. We welcome new choir members, Cindy Asaad and Oktiabrina Mollaeva. Additional new singers are welcome. It is a joy to sing praise to the Lord with our ancient, traditional Armenian hymns.

Respectfully,
 Naïry Digris

**ALL ARTICLES FOR THE APOSTLE SHOULD BE EMAILED TO
 CINDY ASAAD: cindyasaad@yahoo.com.**

**All ministries....please submit your reports
 for the next issue of the Apostle
 by January 20, 2009.**





203 North Howell Street
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The Apostle
 Fall 2008

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If you are interested in any of the church committees, you're always welcome!
 To find out more, just call the church office at 651-603-1940 or email:
saintsahag@aol.com. You will be contacted ... and THANK YOU!