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St. Hagop Armenian Church

The Good News | July/August/September 2013

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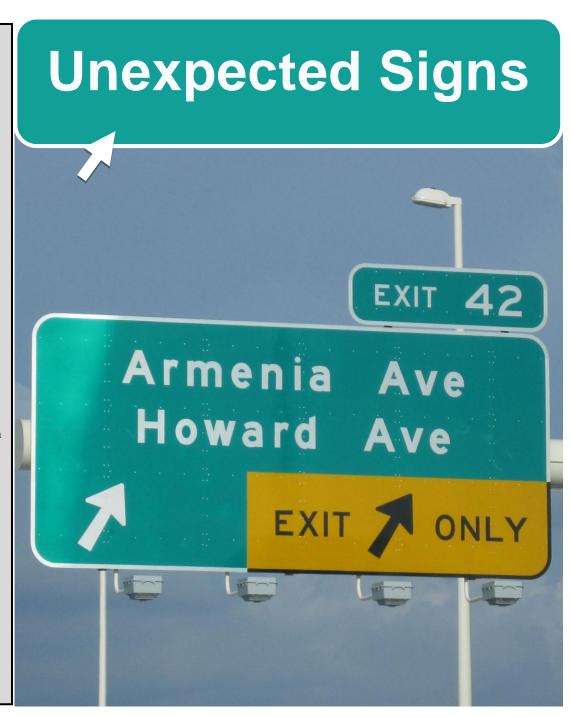
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# PASTOR'S DESK by Father Hovnan Demerjian

# Pastor's Desk: Following The Signs



I still remember when Yn. Anna and I drove through Tampa for the first time in August of 2007. Hauling with us our collected worldly possessions in a small U-Haul truck, we experienced three quick surprises. The first was the huge road sign pointing to Armenia Avenue..."if this isn't a sign that we made the right decision in coming to St. Hagop" Yn. Anna said to me, "I don't know what is."

5 Minutes down the road, we saw something that takes your breath away, especially the first time you see it; the brilliant shining expanse of Tampa Bay as we crossed the Howard Frankland Bridge...."if this isn't a sign that God will take care of us as he takes care of all his vast creation," I said to Yn. Anna, "I don't know what is."

10 minutes further down the road, we missed our exit—It

turned out—that we added another hour to an exhausting day in finding our way back to the parish house. By the time we arrived, it was pouring. After we had been in the parish house less than an hour, the storm knocked out the electricity and the AC. We had no candles and didn't know where anything was..."if this isn't confirmation that things won't always go according to planned here," both of us feared, but did not say, "then we don't know what is."

Life holds so many unexpected meetings, experiences and events, some for better and some for worse. However, in the end, it is for us to decide how we come to terms with life's unpredictability. One way is summarized in the colorful, ornery words of Elbert Hubbard that "Life is just one damned thing after another." Though we don't like to say so, many of us feel this way, at least from time to time, especially when problems mount, things don't go our way, the infirmities of age take their toll. After all, the journey of life seems to be a road to nowhere....offering glimpses of health and happiness, but inevitably ending in decline.

The other way to come to terms with life's unpredictability, the Christian way, is to look for, and follow, the signs. Whenever something unexpected happens in life, for better or worse, the person of faith learns to prayerfully read these events as signs; signs which don't mean so much in themselves, as they point to greater things beyond. Only a fool would stop their car on Interstate 275, beneath the big green Armenia Ave. road sign, and believe they had arrived at their destination, likewise, only a fool stares at the things that make up their earthly life and believes they have arrived at their final destination.

Perhaps the greatest blessing of being a part of the St. Hagop community is the opportunity we have to travel parts of our journey together. Whatever unexpected joys or sorrows life brings on our way, we at St. Hagop Armenia Church are to be Godly signs for each other. Pointing beyond ourselves in care for each other, pointing beyond anything this world has to offer toward "treasure in heaven that will never fail" and "the peace of God, which transcends all understanding."

# PARISH COUNCIL REPORT by Stepan Serpekian



What is new with St Hagop?

**Fr. Hovnan Demerjian**: Our beloved Fr. and Yn. Anna received a special delivery from God. Even though the package weighed 7 lbs. and 4 oz. the responsibility and trust weighs a lot more. Welcome baby **NAREK ALEXANDER DEMERJIAN**.

There was no Sunday service on June 23 and will be no Sunday service August 4. Fr. Hovnan was off for vacation and will be conducting the High School "B" Conference at St Nersess Armenian seminary in New Rochelle, NY. The parish council has decided to give our parish these "days off" and encourages you to use this opportunity to take some prayerful rest with your loved ones on the Lord's Day!

<u>Parish Council</u>: We have been working very hard towards creating an event per month so that our Parishioners can have an opportunity to meet each other and celebrate. In March we had the well known South of the Bridge Picnic sponsored by Vasken & Karen Minassian. In April we had the 98<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the genocide under the direction of Chris Sassouni and Dr George Kamajian. In May we had the Wine Tasting at the Tanielian Pavilion sponsored by David Kazarian. Also in May, the Anusbigian family hosted the "last day of the Sunday School" celebration. In June we will be celebrating Father's day and host the ACYOA chapter workshop sponsored by Mallory Maslar and the Maslar Family. Our finances are in line thanks to your generous donations and the diligent work of our treasurer. Let's continue keeping the light of St. Hagop lit for generations to come by your support.

Annual Diocesan Assembly: In May 2 - 4, 2013 we participated in the 111<sup>th</sup> Annual Diocesan Assembly that took place in Boca Raton, Florida. For the first time we had two delegates, in addition to Fr Hovnan and myself, Dr. Hagop Mashikian and Chuck Sarkisian, as well as a representative from the Women's Guild, Tobe Mashikian. This year's theme was "Living the Gospel of Christ". The youth and their success in the church was a concern in all the churches. The bridge that connects the teens to our elderly is gradually disappearing. This age group is between 20 and 40 years old. If you are one of them, please ask yourself what have you done lately to honor your ancestors who gave their life for your Armenian heritage? Next year the Assembly will be in New York.

<u>Fund Raising Events</u>: In addition to the event of the month contributions, we have our Sixth Anniversary Dance scheduled for October 19, 2013. Take a look at the flyer and support our annual fund raiser by purchasing any or all of the supportive venues, dinner tickets, raffle tickets, booklet ad and sponsorship. Please don't forget to tell a friend!

<u>Choir:</u> As we approach our summer months our choir membership will be smaller. Join us, even if you are in doubt that you can contribute to the remaining team. The beautiful Hymns will inspire your life.

<u>The future</u>: Thanks to all of you who came forward with their pledges and contributions. Chuck Sarkisian is leading the church hall fund raising campaign and calling on all of us to participate. If you know anyone who hasn't done their share freely, remind them of the great sacrifices of our ancestors just to keep our heritage alive to this day.

Finally, I would like to thank all those who are keeping the oil burning in the sanctuary so that the light of St. Hagop remains lit to all who need it. It is the spiritual hospital that is healing our broken souls. May the true joy of giving plant your seed in this life.

# CHURCH HALL BUILDING REPORT by Chuck Sarkisian

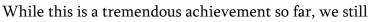
# With Faith We Shall Build | Հաւատքով Պիտի Կառուցենք

We kicked off our Church Hall Building Fund campaign at the annual Parish assembly on February 17, 2013. We set our target building date to begin construction Christmas day 2015. To make this possible, we need to raise \$1 Million before we break ground - and With Faith We Shall Build...Zununpnd ¶huh Կшռուցենք. I am delighted to report that, through faith, we have achieved 58% of our goal in pledges made to date. This is an update report of our collective achievements to date, the challenges that lie ahead and our plans to move forward.

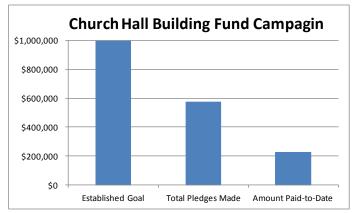
# Our key successes to date

Faith has inspired 49 distinct donors/families to pledge \$535,000 to the effort to be paid in various installments by the end of next year. This is an average pledge of \$11,000 per donor. In addition, we have collectively raised about \$40,000 from various events/functions bringing our total pledges to \$575,000. So far, the actual paid donations received (cash in the restricted account) is over \$225,000 or about 40% of the pledges made.

The great news is that we achieved 58% of our established goal in less than six months. There has been a lot of energy and enthusiasm among the donors. The matching contribution program has received a lot of positive feedback and generated an additional \$58,000 (please refer to the March Avedis or ask any PC member if you have any questions on how the matching contribution program works).



have a long way to go and many challenges ahead to achieve the \$1Million goal.



# Our challenges ahead

As mentioned earlier, we reached a significant milestone in pledges of 58% of our goal. This was made possible by the generosity of only 6% of the 800 donors/families on our mailing list. Many other parishioners are actively engaged supporting the campaign in various ways and are ready for the challenges as we move forward.

- 1. Engaging everyone in the campaign While the majority of our parishioners have not pledged their financial commitment yet for various valid reasons such as the uncertain economic conditions, need for financial planning, evaluation of their tax considerations, etc., we encourage all who have not made their pledge to do so prayerfully and from the heart, regardless of the amount. Every Dollar will make a difference for our parish for years to come. Again, this is our Church and our Hall and our goal is 100% participation.
- 2. Ensuring all pledges are paid as originally planned We encourage everyone to review their commitments to ensure their payments are caught up with their original pledged payment frequency and to catch up on any missed payments. It is energizing to witness over time the paid amount bar graph approach the amount pledged.
- 3. Accepting non-cash donations With the improving economy, the surge in the stock market and the recovery of the real estate market, we would like to remind everyone that St. Hagop is set up to accept donations of appreciated stock and real estate donations. Donating such assets might have more beneficial tax implications to the donor(s) than cash donations. If you are considering making such a donation and need financial advice, we will be glad to refer you to an independent advisor to help you in such evaluation. Please contact Chuck Sarkisian for assistance and referral.

We are \$425,000 away from achieving our goal. Just like running a marathon, the last 4 or 5 miles are the most difficult but the feeling of elation and celebration propels us to the finish. We are trying to make the fund raising process easy for all. Now, you can also make your donation online with a few clicks from your computer or mobile phone. Just go to our Church's website sthagoparemenianchurch.org and select Church Hall under "Make a Donation" and follow the instructions. The pledge card is also available on line.

# **Next Steps**

Our next major phase is to start our mailing campaign this summer to reach out to every household on our mailing list. We will ask you to submit your pledge if you have not already done so. Our mailing campaign will be followed by calls to ensure full participation. We need volunteers for this effort. Please contact Chuck Sarkisian if you are willing to contribute your time and your talent.

We will stay focused and energized because:

"If God be for us, who can be against us." --Romans 8:31

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



We have had a busy few months where our members have prepared their finest recipes for a bake sale, mixed secret ingredients together for the yalanchi throwdown, and provided mezza for our genocide commemoration. Thanks to all those who donated their time and culinary expertise to help make these events successful.

Tobe Mashikian was our diocese conference delegate, our first representative we have had in recent memory. She reported back an important new focus for the women's guild. Members should devote some of their time to spiritual matters

such as forming a prayer group or volunteering at a hospice as well as preparing delicious foods for parishioners at church events. We at St. Hagop have been doing just that. Some of our members volunteer regularly at a local hospice. If you would like to join them, bring it up at the next meeting or ask Martha or Sima on any Sunday when you come to Church as to how you can become a volunteer at hospice. If you have any other suggestions for service work, bring your ideas to the next meeting on August 4, 2013. We already form a loosely knit prayer group that prays for the individuals listed in the Sunday bulletin. If you have other ideas for our prayer group, let us know at the next meeting.

Save the date! Tobe Mashikian is working on details for a fundraiser for our church hall. Please refer to her invitation with more information to follow when plans are finalized.

# The Women's Guild and ACYOA of St. Hagop Armenian Church

cordially invites you to

# SILVER HIGH TEA & FASHIONS

on Saturday, January 18, 2014 at two o'clock p.m. at Pasadena Yacht & Country Club in Gulfport.

# This very elegant afternoon is planned as a fund-raiser for the new kitchen.

As you can see, the Women's Guild is a very active part of St. Hagop Church. If you would like to join us, see Karen Minassian or just come to our next meeting on August 4, 2013 after Badarak. All meetings are held at St. Hagop Church.

One more thing! Our refrigerator is showing its age. We need to get a new one and are looking for donations to cover the cost. Anyone interested in donating toward the purchase a new refrigerator, please talk to Karen Minassian.







# **Armenia Avenue Anyone?**

# The Story of Armenia Avenue in Tampa Bay, Florida

By Dr. George Kamajian-posted on FLArmenians



Tampa Bay, FL - Florida, our 3<sup>rd</sup> largest state, has long been underrepresented when it comes to organized Armenians. Sure, there have been Hye's basking in the Sunshine State for decades. The traditional Interstate-95 corridor from Boston to Miami sprouted numerous colonies of Armenians from Jacksonville to Ft. Lauderdale. Churches soon followed in Miami and Boca Raton with a smattering of a few mission parishes when the Armenian populations were deemed too small to support a church. Although Armenians have made their

presence known in Florida business and sports (think Garo Yepremian from the undefeated 1972 Miami Dolphins) for years, their numbers are still anemic when compared to Philadelphia, Boston or Detroit.

When the western part of the state opened up with Interstate-75 a funny thing happened. There was an Armenian imprint in Tampa that went beyond anything their brothers and sisters could brag about up north. There, in the middle of downtown Tampa was the landmark Armenia Avenue with a sign as big as any on Interstate-75. A familiar name welcomed weary tourist from up north. How? Who was this powerful, rich or politically connected Armenian that made this happen?

Unfortunately, according to the local historical society Armenia has nothing to do with the name of a road in Tampa.

"Armenia Avenue was actually originally called Armina Avenue," said Rodney Kite-Powell, Curator of History at the Tampa Bay History Center. Kite-Powell says cigar factories used to line this avenue. There are a lot of streets named after the cigar factories that they were near," Kite-Powell explained. "And so, the Armina cigar factory was right along Armenia — or Armina — Avenue."

So how'd we get from A-r-m-i-n-a to A-r-m-e-n-i-a?

"Somewhere along the line, either a sign painter messed up, or somebody just kept consistently messing up the pronunciation, and Armina became Armenia," Kite-Powell said.

Now for the good news....it's going to stay Armenia Avenue forever.

# 2013 Graduates



Michael Sarafian graduated from St.Petersburg Collegiate High School Magna Cum Laude with an Associate degree in Arts from St. Petersburg

College. He will be entering USF to study Biomedical Sciences.

**Lexy Shahnasarian** graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Florida State University. After completing an Israeli pilgrimage with the Armenian Church in June, she will begin her graduate work at Wake-Forest University in

Winston-Salem, North Carolina in July.



Ms. Seda Hakopian announces with great pride the graduation of her daughter **Dr. Leana Garibova** from Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine with the degree of Doctor of Medicine. Leana has been accepted to the Neurology Residency program at Albert Einstein -

Philadelphia. Leana is honored to follow in her grandmother's footsteps.

Angela Ghazikian, a genocide survivor, who was a Neurologist in Armenia.

Cristine and Diane Oganesova along with their cousin Arman Mouradian graduated

from Osceola HighSchool. All with be attending St. Petersburg College for two years and then on to USF to complete their Degrees.

Thanks to all who responded to share the good news of their graduation with our St. Hagop Armenian Church family. We hope to hear from even more of you next graduation season!



"Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." –Isaiah 40:31

# A NOTE OF THANKS: From Yn. Anna, Fr. Hovnan & Narek

Our son Narek Alexander is already 2 months old! He is growing by the day and is about 12 lbs now, which is when doctors say babies start sleeping longer hours during the night. From their mouths to God's ears!

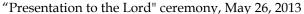
If you came to St. Hagop to worship on Sunday May 26th, you witnessed a short ceremony of Narek's "Presentation to the Lord", which can be done when babies are 40 days old, just as baby Jesus was presented to the temple according to tradition.

On behalf of Narek, thank you to our beloved St. Hagop community and to all our friends far and close for countless well wishes, cards, gifts, and, most importantly, prayers. We are so blessed, and thank God for the gift of our little Narek. What a miracle!

With gratitude,

Yn. Anna, Fr. Hovnan and Narek







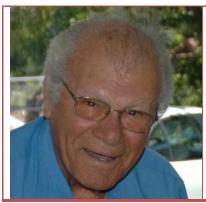


# Bless Those Who Have Included St. Hagop Armenian Church In Their Wills

# THANKS TO PAST BENEFACTORS...



An Anonymous Couple set up a charitable remainder trust naming St. Hagop as 1 of 3 beneficiaries upon their deaths. The couple's estate lawyer advised them of the advantages of distributing the money while they are living, rather than through their wills. In the summer of 2010, the couple presented St. Hagop 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.



France Frankian was a long-time parishioner and dedicated parish council member of St. Hagop Armenian Church who went to his eternal rest on April 5, 2012. France left a fixed sum in his will of \$3,000 for St. Hagop Armenian Church which the church received on October 5, 2012 and has added to its maintenance reserve fund.

# THANKS TO FUTURE BENEFACTORS...



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."



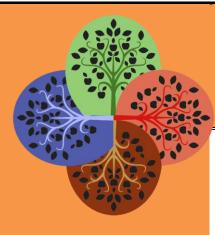
Rudi Kimatian entered the Armenian Church community when she married Sarkis Kimatian. Since her husband passed, she has become a leader and steward of St. Hagop Church. In order to honor the memory of her deceased husband and benefit the church, Rudi set up a \$50,000 charitable gift annuity, which pays 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.



Michael & Jean Shahnasarian give thanks to God for the blessings they have been fortunate to receive. They believe it is their Christian duty to ensure that resources they acquired during their lives on earth will be applied to do God's will when they transition to life after death. The Shahnasarians have chosen to make a bequest to St. Hagop Church as one means to accomplish their aim.



**Ardavast Unjian** is one of the founding members of St. Hagop Church and has celebrated many occasions with his extended St. Hagop family, including his recent 100<sup>th</sup> birthday! Ardavast has always supported the church with his time, his talent and his treasure and has made a bequest to St. Hagop as the natural extension of his decades of service and support.



**B**equeathing a gift to St. Hagop Armenian Church either in your will or trust not only honors God and His church, but leaves a legacy that will impact future generations of Armenians through your generosity.

**F**or more information on including St. Hagop in your planned giving, or to notify the Church of a bequest you have already planned, please contact committee chair Michael Shahnasarian at 813-264-9310 or John K. Shamsey, Esq. at 941-586-8415.

June 20, 2013

Dear St. Hagop Armenian Church,

Thank you so much for the opportunity to travel to the Holy Land on the Eastern Diocese's Young Adult Pilgrimage earlier this month. I was humbled to make this journey and represent St. Hagop. My time in Jerusalem, walking in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, was a life changing experience. It was surreal for me to physically be in places that I had read and studied about in the Bible. This trip not only deepened my faith in Christ, it turned the peers with whom I set out on this pilgrimage - once strangers- into lifelong friends, and instilled in me a strong sense of Armenian pride, seeing the large role Armenia has played in Christendom.

I am forever thankful to St. Hagop Armenian Church and the parish council for selecting me as a youth representative, and to our Diocese for helping make the trip possible. Thank you for the overwhelming support you have given me. I hope I am able to give back to our church a fraction of what this pilgrimage has given to me.

Faithfully,

Alexis Shahnasarian



(Top Left)-With the Archbishop Nourhan Manougian at the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem located in the Armenian Quarter in the Old City. (Top Right)- A few of us in the Jordan River where Jesus Christ was baptized. (Bottom)-My favorite part of the trip- attending 4 AM Badarak at the Holy Sepulchre- the place of Jesus's crucifixion and resurrection.



CELEBRATING THE **6TH** ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONSECRATION BY
HIS HOLINESS KAREKIN II

# ST. HAGOP ARMENIAN CHURCH PRESENTS SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2013

# Jaq JQ Hagopian

PERFORMING LIVE AT THE HILTON ST PETERSBURG CARILLON PARK



# **DINNER AND DANCE**

DINNER 7:00PM - 8:30PM DANCE 8:30PM - 12:00AM

# **TICKETS**

ADULTS \$65.00

CHILDREN (6-12) \$20.00 CHILDREN UNDER 6 FREE

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WWW.HiltonHotelStPete.com

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Raffle Tickets for I-pad and 50/50 \$25.00 each or 5/\$100.00

Sponsorship opportunities

Booklet Contributions Full Page \$200.00, Half Page \$100.00, Business Card \$50.00

FOR INFORMATION AND TICKETS, RAFFLES, BOOKLET SALES CALL STEPAN H SERPEKIAN (813)817-3757

TICKET SALES DEADLINE (Due To Hotel Setting)

**SEPTEMBER 29, 2013** 

Office Hours: 9:30am-5:30pm

Worship Hours: Sunday 10:30am

## **Contact Information**

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The Rev. Fr. Hovnan Demerjian

# **Managing Editor**

Carla Megerian

### Contributors to this Issue

Rev. Fr. Hovnan Demerjian, Stepan Serpekian, Yn. Anna Demerjian, Chuck Sarkisian, Dr. George Kamajian, Teresa Haidarian, (photos) and Alexis Shahnasarian

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

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

Issue	Submission
October/November/December	September 10th
January/February/March 2014	December 10th

With our new digital format, it still costs over \$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 (\$250); 1/4 issue (\$125) or other (\$) amount.

The *Avedis* is grateful to accept business ads which help us pay for our newsletter and help you reach your customers. Please notify Carla Megerian at cmegerian@gmail.com if you are interested. Make checks payable to St. Hagop Armenian Church.

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

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## Women's Guild

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# **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

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

Sun June 30	Divine Liturgy	10:30 AM
Sun July 7	Divine Liturgy—Transfiguration	10:30 AM
Tue July 9	Parish Council Meeting	6:00 PM
Sun July 14	Divine Liturgy	10:30 AM
Sun July 21	Divine Liturgy	10:30 AM
	Sunday School Meeting	12:30 PM
Sun July 28	Divine Liturgy	10:30 AM
Sun Aug. 4	No Divine Liturgy at St. Hagop Armenian Church (Fr. Hovnan Directing St. Nersess)	
Sun Aug. 11	Divine Liturgy	10:30 AM
	Women's Guild Meeting	12:30 PM
Tue Aug 13	Parish Council Meeting	6:00 PM
Sun Aug. 18	Divine Liturgy—Assumption of Mary	10:30 AM
	Blessing of the Grapes Picnic	12:30 PM
Sun Aug. 25	Divine Liturgy	10:30 AM
Sun Sept. 1	Divine Liturgy	10:30 AM
Sun Sept. 8	Divine Liturgy	10:30 AM
	1st Day of Sunday School—Opening Day Picnic	12:30 PM
Tue Sept. 10	Parish Council Meeting	6:00 PM
Sun Sept. 15	Divine Liturgy—Exaltation of the Cross	10:30 AM
Sun Sept. 22	Divine Liturgy	10:30 AM
Sun Sept. 29	Divine Liturgy—Holy Cross of Varag	10:30 AM
Sat Oct. 19	6th Anniversary of the Consecration of St. Hagop	7PM-12
	Dinner & Dance w/JAQ Hagopian	Midnight
	At the Carillon Park Hilton, St. Pete	

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

7020 90<sup>th</sup> Avenue North, Pinellas Park, Florida 33782 727-545-0380 Fax 727-549-0500 The Rev. Fr. Hovnan Demerjian, Pastor www.sainthagoparmenianchuch.org

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