

AVEDIS

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St. Hagop Armenian Church

The Good News | October/November/December 2016

*For now we see in a mirror, dimly,
but then we will see face to face.*

*Now I know only in part;
then I will know fully,*

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even as I have been fully known.

Pastor's Desk: Just Do Your Part!

For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. (1 Cor. 13:12)

The apostle Paul, who was given divine revelation, wrote down most of the New Testament and is known simply in Armenian as The Great Apostle, wrote that he knew “only in part.” It goes without saying that if Paul knew only in part, how much more this must be true for us. Paul’s famous phrase reminds us of a principle of the spiritual life; because we only know a very small fraction of what there is to know, humility is always in order.

In the past I have written and spoken on this text to knock each of us down a notch, me first, in feeling prideful about whatever we accomplish in this world, be it success, intelligence or wealth. Here, I want to come from the other direction, not bringing down our puffed-up worldly endeavors, but raising up our humble heavenly endeavors, our worship and service of our Lord at St. Hagop Armenian Church. I think our community needs this, because there is a very strong temptation in church life to judge the work we do by the same measure that we have been trained to judge all accomplishment in our lives—by the numbers, by the appearance and by the applause. In a word, we are trained to judge by the results. This is so engrained in us, that some of you might be asking yourselves, “How else am I supposed to judge something except by its results?” Well, the Gospels show us a different way. Using myriad examples, Jesus tells us that in the work of the kingdom, which is our work at St. Hagop, it is only our part to sow the seed, while it is God’s part to bring forth the fruit or result. As the saying goes, “Do your best and leave the results to God.”

This spiritual advice is so easy to say and yet so hard to do, especially when we care so much about our church, our God and our heritage. With such high stakes, it is often our good, albeit misguided, intention to accomplish church work with perfection. This hymn must be perfectly sung, we tell ourselves, or the banquet must be perfectly decorated or the event must be perfectly attended. There is no problem of course with trying our best, which is in our control, there is however a big problem with trying to be perfect, which tries to control the end and the results. I would go so far as to say that most conflict we have in church is at root decent people fighting to control results, allowing pride to insist that “this program (or event, or purchase, or decoration) must be done like this, not like this.” This struggle for control easily becomes personal, and quickly anger and anxiety choke the fruits of the Spirit from growing as God would have it. But it does not have to be this way. If we learn even a little bit to “Do our best and leave the results to God,” the seeds we sow in and through this church are so powerful that they can change a life, heal a soul and move mountains.

Fred Rogers, of Mr. Roger’s Neighborhood fame, told a story in an interview, which illustrates this humble power. When he was studying to become a Presbyterian minister, he visited a different church each Sunday to learn to preach by watching others. One week he experienced what he thought “the most poorly crafted sermon he had ever heard.” But a friend had accompanied him on this Sunday, and when he turned to her, he found her in tears. Holding back his surprise, she confided to him; “this was exactly what I needed to hear.” Rogers then told his audience, “That’s when I realized that the space between someone doing the best he or she can and someone in need is holy ground. The Holy Spirit had transformed that feeble sermon for her, and as it turned out, for me too.” Beloved St. Hagop parishioners, be very very careful of judging anyone’s efforts, including your own, in this church, for you may find yourself standing in the way of God!

My prayer for all of you who are reading this newsletter is that we all continue to grow in faith and humility by serving our Lord and our beloved St. Hagop Armenian Church. I pray we remember that, this side of heaven, we will never know the people we have impacted through our faithful service because “*Now we know only in part.*” But if we can learn to “Do our best and leave the results to God,” to “trust steadily, hope unswervingly and love extravagantly,” we will be astonished at how God transforms our efforts, our church, our selves into results we could never conceive, accomplish or even imagine.

PARISH COUNCIL REPORT by Michael Shahnasarian, Ph.D.

The lazy days of summer have been far from that at St. Hagop.

Our major efforts, described below, have related to stewardship, church staffing, and church hall improvements. Of course, there are many other initiatives in progress.

Stewardship

Stewardship development at St. Hagop has been a major parish council priority the past few years. Our planning has culminated in efforts to convert from a dues membership system to a pledge membership system – an objective we plan to accomplish on January 1, 2017.

Quite likely, you recently received a mailing containing: a) an article describing reasons for the change, b) responses to frequently asked questions, and c) a pledge form. We pray you will review these materials and participate in our conversion by completing your pledge form and submitting it at our October 30th Badarak, which we designated as Pledge Sunday. If you cannot attend church that day, please submit your form another day or mail it to St. Hagop. We need all forms by November 15th so we can order envelopes necessary to begin our pledge system by January 1st.

Our stewardship initiatives have gone well beyond the print medium. Fr. Hovnan's sermons have enlightened us on the centrality of giving and life as practicing Christian Armenians, and parishioners have participated in our membership system conversion efforts. Chris Sasouni and Grace Austin provided testimonials in August and September, and Hagop Mashikian will provide his in October. These inspirational testimonials have addressed beliefs about stewardship and reasons to make an annual pledge to St. Hagop.

Also, as part of our stewardship development activities, John Shamsey, an estate lawyer, and former parish council member and active parishioner, has provided parishioners confidential consultations on their estate plans, inclusive of naming St. Hagop an estate beneficiary. Please contact me or another parish council member if you desire more information on how you can incorporate St. Hagop into your will.

As you pray and contemplate your 2017 pledge to St. Hagop, please be mindful of our command from Hebrews 13:16, *Don't neglect to do good and share what you have.*

Church Hall Enhancements

St. Hagop received a certificate of occupancy for its church hall hours before holding its first function in it – a 2016 New Year's Eve celebration – and has since been growing into the facility. This growth has included enhancements aimed to improve the hall's aesthetics and functionality. A perimeter security system, outdoor lighting, and fine carpentry work has been installed within the past two months. Chandeliers and window treatments are on the horizon; we have also added needed kitchen glassware, utensils, and appliances, along with office furnishings.

Our aim in making these improvements is both to enhance our facilities for St. Hagop's use, as well as to make the hall an attractive venue for members in and outside our church community to lease. It should be noted that monies necessary to fund these enhancements derived entirely from designated parishioner donations; no church operating funds were used.

With a seating capacity of approximately 280, entertainment stage, and large, fully-equipped bar, our church hall facilities also include a well-equipped commercial kitchen and fine audiovisual capabilities. We believe our facilities can attract those in need of the type of venue St. Hagop offers, which by extension provides an opportunity to develop our church hall into a profit center, generating revenue to help fund church operations. Chuck Sarkisian developed a marketing plan to facilitate this objective and, in September, St. Hagop hired a marketing support coordinator/administrative assistant (more information

about our new staff member is below) to promote our facilities to the broader community.

Natella Mouradian and Karen Minassian – interior design professionals in their lives outside St. Hagop - have been especially active in directing our church hall enhancements. Please let Karen, Natella, me, or another parish council member know if you have an interest in contributing to our ongoing church hall enhancements.

Church Staffing

The growth of our parish, as you would expect, necessitates greater demands for administrative time and labor. Fr. Hovnan has, over the years, absorbed much of this work; regrettably, this has encroached on his time to perform ministerial work - a priest's *raison de etre*.

Over the summer, your parish council approved creating a marketing support coordinator/administrative assistant position. After an extensive applicant search, God brought Kelli Pilsbury to St. Hagop Armenian Church to assume this role. Kelli joined our St. Hagop church family in September. Her job responsibilities are twofold: facilitating rentals of our church hall facilities, and providing administrative support for our church operations. Prior to St. Hagop, Kelli worked in comparable positions with St. Stefanos Greek Orthodox Church (2011 – 2015) and Azalea Baptist Church (2008 – 2010).

In addition to being a person of faith, Kelli's character bespeaks values St. Hagop holds dear. She is compassionate, plain-spoken, and principled. On a personal level, I have been particularly impressed by her knowledge of church operations, community resources, and creativity. Kelli will be a valuable partner in our walk together to accomplish what our Lord calls us to do.

Other Initiatives

With a church hall capable of featuring events of all sorts, St. Hagop established an event programming committee; this group plans and schedules Armenian Christian and Armenian cultural programs of interest to our congregation and broader community. To this end, the committee has on its drawing board cultural events ranging from an in-house talent show to performances by renowned Armenian performing artists, along with traditional Armenian Christian observances and ecumenical events.

The Women's Guild, under the leadership of Lena Kotchounian, has continued to ensure our Sunday fellowship foods meet the taste of all palates . . . this is no small feat! Everything from Armenian baked pastries and other delicacies to healthy food options are available. Particularly well received have been Armenian cooking classes the Women's Guild has sponsored.

Sunday School began on September 11th. What a heart-warming sight it is to see the children – our next generation of Armenian Christians – participating in Badarak and other church rituals.

Looking ahead, Stepan Serpekian has continued to ably lead St. Hagop in hosting the 2017 Eastern Diocese convention. We expect over 300 clergy, church leaders, and other faithful to participate in events over a one-week period in May 2017, the 115th Eastern Diocese convention!

It is hard to believe our church was built only 9 years ago (yes, we will celebrate the anniversary on Saturday, October 22nd - mark your calendar!). Investments in our infrastructure – stewardship development, church hall improvements, and staffing – we pray, will yield dividends necessary to augment Christian ministries we have pursued and intend to more aggressively pursue.

St. Hagop is at the threshold of securing its foundation and positioning to expand its ministries, allowing us to rise to God's calling. As we evolve to this higher-order calling we are compelled to remember *The son of man did not come to be served but to serve.* (Matthew 20:28) God has and continues to grace St. Hagop Armenian Church. We are, indeed, a blessed community.

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

We are getting into our busy season once again. The events committee has planned several events for our community over the next few months and that means the Women's Guild will jump into action to provide delicious food to complement each occasion. Check out other parts of the *Avedis* to find out what fun events are planned for us. Meanwhile, look at some of what we have done over the past few months. Photos are of our kitchen crew making lahmajoun in our new kitchen. First time ever! See the smiles on everyone's face. They worked hard for the entire day before the next day's luncheon and worked together like a well-rehearsed symphonic orchestra. There are photos of the Father's Day Luncheon where our young adults provided their prep and serving skills. If you like what you see and if you want to be a part of the excitement, want to leave a legacy to your grandchildren and have your photo in the next *Avedis*, please see Lena to sign up for a membership in the Women's Guild today!



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

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

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

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

Signature: _____ **Date:** ___/___/___



Name(s):	
Address:	
Phone/Email:	

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

May the Lord Remember All Your Offerings
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Stewardship Pledge Card

September 15, 2016

Dear St. Hagop Parishioner,

We are writing to invite you to make a pledge to St. Hagop Armenian Church for 2017. As you may have become aware through our communications the past few years, St. Hagop is in the process of converting from a dues membership system to a pledge membership system; we plan to make this conversion on January 1, 2017.

Your participation in our conversion, of course, is essential to sustaining our church and its mission. To facilitate your decision on how to participate and make your pledge, we have sent each of you several documents, including:

- Reprint of an article from the Summer 2016 Avedis describing why we are making the conversion
- List of frequently asked questions and answers about the conversion
- A 2017 Stewardship Pledge Form

We request that you review these documents, and prayerfully reflect on your 2017 stewardship pledge to St. Hagop. Please submit your pledge form on or before October 30, 2016, which we have designated as Pledge Sunday.

Of course, feel free to direct any questions to us. We thank you for your ongoing support and commitment to our Lord's work, and for enabling us to pursue our church's vision statement: To continuously evolve as the bedrock of the Tampa Bay Armenian Christian community, perpetuating our Armenian Christian religion and heritage.

In Faith,

Michael Shahnasarian, Ph.D.
Stewardship Chairman

Der Hovnan Demerjian
Pastor, St. Hagop Armenian Church

9TH CONSECRATION ANNIVERSARY

Fellowship, Wine, Armenian hors d'oeuvres,
Armenian music and dancing

The Tides Beach Club
16650 Gulf Blvd.,
N. Redington Beach, Florida

October 22, 2016
7-10pm
Resort Attire~ Valet Parking



Armenians have a long legacy of wine appreciation, as verified by archeologists at UCLA. They determined Armenians built the world's oldest known winery 5500 years ago!

Please Join Us to Celebrate- Brought Back by Popular Demand!

RSVP by October 18

Jean Shahnasarian: jshahnasar@aol.com, Eileen Barsamian Jennings: 727-543-2384



No Admission Fee- Donations Accepted



Calling All Chefs!

Do you make the best yalanchi? Does your family have the best recipe?

Enter the St. Hagop Yalanchi Cook-off!

Winner will be crowned the Hye Roller of the West Coast of Florida!

Sunday, November 6, 2016

Immediately Following Badarak in the Shahnasarian Hall

For more information and to enter the contest contact Chair Alysia Ekizian asekizian@gmail.com

Deadline to enter is November 2nd

All Parishioners are invited to taste and VOTE for their favorite Yalanchi Suggested Donation \$5

Co-Chairs:

Alysia Ekizian and Carla Megerian

JOIN THE CHOIR!

POSITIONS OPEN: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass – no others need apply.

PHYSICAL QUALIFICATIONS: Must be able to carry light musical notes part way across the church. Must have sufficient vision to see director twenty feet away.

EXPERIENCE: No application accepted from persons who have not sung, hummed or whistled in the tub or shower.

WAGES: Satisfaction and joy in God's service.

FRINGE BENEFITS: Social Security – we promise you the security of social fellowship with other members of the choir.

HOURS: Sunday mornings with occasional opportunities for overtime (at above mentioned wages).

RETIREMENT: No particular age, but it is generally determined by prayer, printed notes getting too small, notes too high, church too hot, (or cold), or organist unable to play the notes you sing.

REHEARSALS: Once a week except in the summer.

APPLY: By attending rehearsal.

Please contact Louise Yardumian (lyardumian@icloud.com or 727-463-1688) for more information.

ST. HAGOP VARIETY SHOW

JOIN IN THE FUN!

SHARE YOUR TALENT!

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2016

Whether you are 3, 30, or 103, everyone has a **SONG** to sing, a **STORY** or **POEM** to tell, a **DANCE** to perform, a **SKIT** to present, or music to play on your woodwind, brass, string or percussion **INSTRUMENT**. Volunteer to be a part of our **ST. HAGOP VARIETY SHOW!** Your selection can be funny, serious or somewhere in between. It can be on the piano or the kazoo! Participate on your own or get together with some friends to do a group song or dance! This event promises to be a delightful combination of talents, so bring friends and family!

This event will take place in **SHAHNASARIAN HALL** during the **COFFEE HOUR** after church on Sunday, Nov. 13th. Each person/group will have up to three minutes to perform.

All those sharing their talents, please fill in the **Participation Form** below and send it to the church office, attention: Yn. Anna Demerjian by November 1, 2016.

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## ***PARTICIPATION FORM***

### **ST. HAGOP VARIETY SHOW**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_ Category: Youth/Teenager/Adult  
(circle appropriate category)

Your Talent \_\_\_\_\_ Length \_\_\_\_\_  
(Dance, sing, recite, etc.)

Name of your selection \_\_\_\_\_

Return this form to Yn. Anna Demerjian by November 1<sup>st</sup>!

**SEE YOU AT THE VARIETY SHOW!**





## SAVE THE DATE

Wednesday, December 7, 2016

**St. Hagop Advent Dinner**  
7pm at The Shahnasarian Hall

**Join your St. Hagop Family for a Candlelight Advent Dinner  
and hear speakers with testimonies of Faith, Hope, Love and Joy.**

This will be a Potluck Dinner. Please look out for the potluck sign-up sheet beginning October 1

**~ Հաւատք, Հոյս, Սէր եւ Ուրախութիւն ~**

## Save the Date! **FEBRUARY 25-26, 2017** **St. Hagop Armenian Festival**



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

**Worship Hours:** Sunday 10:30am

**Contact Information**

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

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

| Issue                       | Submission    |
|-----------------------------|---------------|
| January/February/March 2016 | December 10th |
| April/May/June 2016         | March 10th    |

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

The *Avedis* is grateful to accept business ads, which help us, pay for our newsletter and help you reach your customers. Please notify Carla Megerian at [cmegerian@gmail.com](mailto: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

**Parish Council**

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**Women's Guild**  
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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

|                     |                                                                                    |                      |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Fri Sept. 30</b> | Fr. Daniel Findikyan Presentation                                                  | 7:00 PM              |
| <b>Sun Oct. 2</b>   | Divine Liturgy                                                                     | 10:30 AM             |
| <b>Sun Oct. 9</b>   | Divine Liturgy                                                                     | 10:30 AM             |
| <b>Thur Oct 13</b>  | Parish Council Meeting                                                             | 6:00 PM              |
| <b>Sat Oct 15</b>   | Theology on Tap-Adopt a Mile Clean-up                                              | 12:00 PM             |
| <b>Sun Oct. 16</b>  | Divine Liturgy                                                                     | 10:30 AM             |
| <b>Sat. Oct. 22</b> | Consecration of St. Hagop 9th Anniversary<br>Tides Beach Club, N. Reddington Beach | 7-10 PM              |
| <b>Sun Oct. 23</b>  | Divine Liturgy<br>Hye Baby Playgroup                                               | 10:30 AM<br>11:00 AM |
| <b>Sun Oct. 30</b>  | Divine Liturgy-Stewardship Sunday                                                  | 10:30 AM             |
| <b>Sun Nov. 6</b>   | Divine Liturgy<br>ACYOA Jrs.-Adopt a Mile Clean-up<br>Yalanchi Contest             | 10:30 AM<br>12:30 PM |
| <b>Thur Nov. 10</b> | Parish Council Meeting                                                             | 6:00 PM              |
| <b>Sun Nov. 13</b>  | Divine Liturgy                                                                     | 10:30 AM             |
| <b>Sun Nov. 20</b>  | Divine Liturgy                                                                     | 10:30 AM             |
| <b>Sun Nov. 27</b>  | Divine Liturgy-First Sunday of Advent<br>Hye Baby Playgroup                        | 10:30 AM<br>11:00 AM |
| <b>Sun Dec. 4</b>   | Divine Liturgy<br>Gingerbread Contest-ACYOA & Sunday School                        | 10:30 AM             |
| <b>Wed Dec. 7</b>   | Candlelight Advent Dinner-Shahnasarian Hall                                        | 7:00 PM              |
| <b>Sun Dec. 11</b>  | Divine Liturgy                                                                     | 10:30 AM             |
| <b>Thur Dec. 15</b> | Parish Council Meeting                                                             | 6:00 PM              |
| <b>Sun Dec. 18</b>  | Divine Liturgy<br>Hye Baby Playgroup                                               | 10:30 AM<br>11:00 AM |
| <b>Sun Dec. 25</b>  | Divine Liturgy                                                                     | 10:30 AM             |
| <b>Sat Dec. 31</b>  | New Year's Eve Dance-Shahnasarian Hall                                             | 8PM-12AM             |
| <b>Sun Jan. 1</b>   | Divine Liturgy                                                                     | 10:30 AM             |
| <b>Thur Jan. 5</b>  | Eve of Theophany (Jrakalooys) Badarak                                              | 6:30 PM              |
| Sun Jan. 8          | Divine Liturgy<br>Blessing of Waters (Theophany Observed)                          | 10:30 AM<br>12:00 PM |

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

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

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727-545-0380 Fax 727-549-0500

The Rev. Fr. Hovnan Demerjian, Pastor

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