

Frequently Asked Questions About the St. Hagop Armenian Church Pledge System

1. When will the new pledge system begin?

We request that you return your pledge form by October 30, 2016, which St. Hagop has designated as Pledge Sunday. After St. Hagop receives your pledge form, you will receive a box of pledge envelopes before December 31, 2016; our new pledge system will begin on January 1, 2017. We encourage you to use your pledge envelope to make your gift; the envelope will have your account number on it, allowing us to credit your gift towards your pledge.

2. How do I remain/become a member of St. Hagop Armenian Church?

The St. Hagop stewardship committee adopted the following definition of membership:

Members of St. Hagop Armenian Church are baptized Christians, committed to incorporating our Lord's teachings in their lives, and have made a monetary gift to support the church.

After January 1, 2017, those who meet these criteria are members of St. Hagop Armenian Church, no longer is membership determined by a yearly "due" of \$125.

3. Shall I no longer give my \$125 dues payment per person?

We hope that for the majority who are able, your \$125 payment will become just a part of your yearly pledge. For those who can afford to give \$125 a year or less to St. Hagop, we are equally grateful to God for your pledge and you qualify as members.

4. What about Diocesan Dues & Assembly Voting?

In obedience to Diocesan bylaws, which assess an annual \$85/person dues to parishes, St. Hagop will pass on the first \$85 given by all individuals to St. Hagop in the calendar year for Diocesan dues (excluding ticketed items). This money supports the mission of our Diocese and world-wide church, and grants eligibility to vote and run for office in that year's parish assembly.

5. What benefits does pledging to St. Hagop provide?

Of course, gifts to God cannot and should not be made from the perspective of seeking a return on investment. We are told in Luke 6:38 *Give and it will be given to you.* Your pledge gift is vital to St. Hagop; without its parishioners' financial support the church could not exist. Above all, your gift enables St. Hagop to sustain its mission to perpetuate Armenian Christian practice and Armenian heritage.

6. Can my family make a pledge as a unit; or, does every family member need to make an individual pledge?

Both individual and family pledges are welcome. If making a family pledge, please identify on your pledge form the names and ages of any children.

7. If I choose to make plate contributions rather than an annual pledge, is that option available?

Yes, we will continue to pass the plate at the end of Badarak. You can make your contribution either via a pledge envelope or in cash/check, without a pledge envelope. To have your pledge account credited, however, you will need to identify your gift.

8. How much should I pledge?

The amount you pledge is a personal decision, to be determined by prayer and in accord with your means and financial commitments. St. Hagop advocates the notion of proportionate giving; that is, giving proportionate with your capacity to give. Some parishioners apply, as a guideline in determining their annual pledge amount, a percentage of their weekly income to give. To this end, the chart below identifies weekly pledge amounts with respect to weekly income and corresponding giving percentages.

Weekly Income	3% per week	5% per week	7% per week	10% per week
\$300	\$9	\$15	\$21	\$30
\$500	\$15	\$25	\$35	\$50
\$1,000	\$30	\$50	\$70	\$100
\$1,500	\$45	\$75	\$105	\$150
\$2,000	\$60	\$100	\$140	\$200

9. How will I make my pledge payments?

The option is yours: you can make your payment weekly, monthly, quarterly, or annually. You need not make your payments at regular intervals (although this is helpful in managing our cash flow). For example, if you are traveling and out of the area for an extended period, you can make arrears payments upon your return, if this is more convenient for you. Your obligation, however, is to pay your pledged amount by December 31, 2017.

10. How will I be kept apprised of my pledge status?

St. Hagop will send periodic notifications of your giving status. You can also contact our stewardship committee members or church office as questions arise.

11. Do I need to be in church to pay my pledge?

No. You can mail your payment to the church office. Online payment by credit card is another option.

12. Why are we converting from a dues membership system to a pledge membership system?

This question was addressed in detail in an article published in the summer 2016 *Avedis*. For your reference, a copy is attached.

13. What if, for some unforeseen reason, I am unable to pay my entire pledge?

St. Hagop believes all pledges are made in good faith, and a church membership pledge equates to a covenant with our Lord. At the same time, we appreciate that events beyond our control can cause unexpected financial difficulties. If you experience an event that imposes undue hardship in fulfilling your pledge, we request that you bring this to the stewardship committee's attention as early as possible so we can make necessary adjustments to St. Hagop's budget. St. Hagop, of course, is sensitive to special circumstances that can arise and cause its members hardship in fully paying pledges.