



THE NEWS BULLETIN

the monthly publication
of the

Armenian Martyrs' Congregational Church of Philadelphia

(ARMENIAN EVANGELICAL UNION
OF NORTH AMERICA *and*
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST)

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The Rev. G. Schongalla-Bowman, Pastor

The Rev. Dr. G. H. Chopourian, Pastor Emeritus†
(Open), Youth Leader

Ms. Mary Loiselle, Music Director

Mrs. Amy Larchuk, Church Secretary

EDITORIAL BOARD

Mrs. Lucille Tashjian

Mr. F. James Mukhalian Ms. Mary Loiselle

Mr. John Hamill

†Deceased

**This issue of The News Bulletin is dedicated in loving memory of
GEORGE and ELIZABETH Y. JERJISIAN
by their daughters, Gloria Sussman and Carol Churukian**

What Thanksgiving Means ...



T	Treasures in heaven, not on earth
H	Humble before our God
A	Answers to our prayers
N	New life in Christ
K	Kindness to our fellow man
S	Singing praises to our Savior for His mercies
G	Give love generously to our friends
I	Intimate with our Lord, to draw closer to Him
V	Victorious in our walk with the Lord
I	Insight we get as we lift up Christ
N	Necessary to be ever-mindful of God's blessings
G	Glory in the knowledge of God

NOVEMBER 2006

- November
- 2 - Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.
 - 5 - Worship-11 a.m. Sunday School-10 a.m. *22nd Sunday after Pentecost; Rededication Banquet*
 - 7 - *Election Day and Bake Sale*; Deacons Meeting, 7:30 p.m.
 - 8 - Discipleship Group, 7:30 p.m.
 - 9 - Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.
 - 12 - Worship-11 a.m. Sunday School-10 a.m. *23rd Sunday after Pentecost; "Sharing the Spirit" Forum, 8:30 a.m. breakfast, 9 a.m. program*
 - 14 - Trustees Meeting, 8 p.m.
 - 15 - Senior Fellowship, 10:30 a.m., featuring The Newtones
 - 16 - Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.
 - 19 - Worship-11 a.m. Sunday School-10 a.m. *24th Sunday after Pentecost; Thanksgiving Sunday; Congregational Meeting after Worship*
 - 22 - Discipleship Group, 7:30 p.m.
 - 26 - Worship-11 a.m. Sunday School-10 a.m. *25th Sunday after Pentecost*
 - 30 - Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.
- December
- 3 - Worship-11 a.m. Sunday School-10 a.m. *First Sunday in Advent; "Sharing the Spirit" Forum, 8:30 a.m. breakfast, 9 a.m. program*
 - 10 - Worship-11 a.m. Sunday School-10 a.m. *Family Christmas Dinner; Second Sunday in Advent*
 - 17 - Worship-11 a.m. Sunday School-10 a.m. *Third Sunday in Advent*
 - 24 - Worship-11 a.m. AND Worship - 7:30 p.m. *Fourth Sunday in Advent; Christmas Eve*

Important Reminders!

- The Flower Chart has dates available (minimum of \$35.00). The Coffee Hour sign-up sheet has dates available (minimum of \$50.00). Please donate flowers or food and let others enjoy your gift! You can also donate to the Sanctuary Décor Committee, which sponsors the "unsponsored" weeks. Any amount is gratefully received!
- There are plenty of dates available for signing up to be a Nursery School volunteer. Help out Toni!
- We are still collecting Acme sales receipts. The church gets 1% of the total.

Some of the Opportunities for Donation Currently Available at Armenian Martyrs'

- | | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chopourian Christian Education Fund • DeMirjian Music Fund • Sunday School • Stewardship and Missions • Sanctuary Décor/Coffee Hour | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth • School Supplies (for Armenian Children) • Pastor's Discretionary Fund • "Sharing the Spirit" • Monthly News Bulletin |
|---|--|

Deadline for submissions for the December issue of the News Bulletin — Wed., Nov. 15!!

FROM PASTOR GARY'S PEN . . .

I am reminded that Thanksgiving is soon upon us. I am so thankful for so many things. I give thanks for my family: three sons making their way in life and doing it well, a spouse who is really a soulmate, three lovely and precious granddaughters who are the source of pure joy. I am thankful for a warm home and money enough to cover the basics and then some. I am thankful for meaningful work, my friends up the street, the good books I read, being able to watch the Eagles on a wide-screen TV, and lovely places to go for vacation. I am thankful for the beauty of trees and flowers and even for the deer that roam my yard and eat the flowers. Life is soooo good, and I am grateful and thankful.

Most especially, I am thankful for Jesus Christ being present in my life always, the grounding of my being. In Christ, all is enhanced and deepened! I am especially thankful for the perspective that Jesus brings that challenges and brings meaning to the way I am called to live my life.

To be called a radical today is not a good thing. Being radical puts you at odds with the aims and goals of the dominant culture. But Jesus was radical. Jesus was radical about power. He said: "Whoever would be first must become the last of all and servant of all." (Mark 9:35). How those words turn the norm of our culture topsy-turvy, a culture that focuses on "getting to the top" and values that old mantra that says the one with the most toys wins.

Jesus was a radical egalitarian. Jesus related to women in such a way that his followers were shocked and could not understand. Jesus talked with women and taught them alongside of men. Jesus preceded the women's movement by chiding Martha for not letting the dishes go in order to avail herself of the opportunity to learn and grow as Mary chose to do. Jesus' egalitarian spirit extended to everyone. "In Jesus, there is no more Jew or Greek, slave or free, man or woman, but all are one, all are the same." (Galatians 3:26 -28).

And Jesus was not only a radical, but an extremist when it came to violence. "Love your foes, help those who hate you, praise those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you." (Luke 6:27 and following). Jesus had no room for violence, ever.

What a joy to be shown a picture, such a clear picture, of the power and meaning of the way I am to live. How can I not be thankful?! I praise God for Christ Jesus! And in the midst of my thanksgiving, I pray for the courage to be a faithful disciple!

Happy Thanksgiving!

Pastor Gary

Hear Rev. Nancy Schongalla-Bowman speak at the Rededication Banquet, Nov. 5!

OCTOBER SENIOR FELLOWSHIP

The Senior Fellowship regular monthly meeting was held on Wednesday, October 18, with 20 people in attendance.

Pastor Gary opened the meeting with some passages from Genesis, Chapter 32. Jacob wrestled with the angel and received a new identity. A short discussion followed.

Pastor Gary then offered the blessing, and we all enjoyed a lunch of pizza and tossed salad. Dessert, as usual, was a special treat of homemade cookies and pastries.

After lunch, Lucille Tashjian led a program, "How We Relate to Bible Verses." A bowl of slips containing verses from the Old and New Testaments was passed for everyone to pick from. We randomly read the verse, which led to discussion. It was interesting to hear each other's feelings and experiences regarding the verses.

The next meeting of Senior Fellowship will be on Wed., Nov. 15. The Newtones will be here to present a musical program. (See below for more information on the November program.)

— Grace Kavjian

NOVEMBER SENIOR FELLOWSHIP

All seniors and friends are welcome to join Senior Fellowship on Wed., Nov. 15, 10:30 a.m., for a hot casserole lunch and an enjoyable musical program from The Newtones. The Newtones formed 20 years ago to share their love of singing. They live in the Kennett Square area, performing regionally, and participating separately in various musical organizations.

The November meeting will be the last one for this year. Come and enjoy!

— Lucille Tashjian

**Please plan to attend the next
"Sharing the Spirit" Open Forum
Sun., November 12 (date changed!!)
8:30—Continental Breakfast
9:00—Presentation & Discussion**

WARM CLOTHING DRIVE

The Missions Committee is conducting a drive for warm clothing. Articles needed are: coats, jackets, sweaters, hats, scarves, gloves and mittens. Please bring your donations quickly so we can pass them on to those who need them now that the weather has turned cold.

— Diane DeMirjian, Committee Chair

LETTER FROM BEIRUT

A deafening clap of thunder rolled over the Mediterranean yesterday, heralding the beginning of the rainy season here. Maria and I fairly jumped out of our skins, hearing a sound entirely too reminiscent of the country's recent bombing, reminding us of the tenuousness of the current "peace."

In the past few weeks there have been huge demonstrations, one celebrating "a divine victory," and a few days later, an opposing group commemorating those who died in the Civil War of 1975-90. Last week, thousands of Armenians gathered in the city center for yet another protest against the presence of Turkish troops on Lebanese soil, and a few days later a different group remembered the disastrous end of the Civil War 16 years ago, which heralded the post-war Syrian occupation of all of Lebanon.

Though the atmosphere is hardly conducive, schools began their new year last week. The children's excitement was palpable, belying the trauma they endured over the summer. We attended the opening program at one of our Armenian Evangelical schools, filled with speeches from the children about national unity and hard work, singing of spiritual and patriotic songs by the school choir, and finally with a circle dance, a joyful celebration which brought even the youngest ones out in the middle of the church hall. We pray that the enthusiasm these children exude would infect their families, still crushed by the economic tumble out of which they are struggling to climb.

Far from our line of sight, sitting in puddles of rain around makeshift shelters, are the people in the south, who are yet more desperate than these. Engineers are rushing to rebuild, even on a makeshift basis, the electrical and transportation infrastructure, while environmental experts are painstakingly attending to the deadly oil spill which ruined the coastline. One of the most obscenely nicknamed weapons, cluster "bomb-lets," are killing or maiming several children and adults each week.

In all of this, voices of quiet desperation talk about rumors of another war, convinced that this is Lebanon's "fate." Please pray for them, and pray that Christian workers here be able to spread a different message – that of reconciliation and hope.

—Rev. Nishan and Maria Bakalian [15 October 2006]

**36th ANNUAL
ALL CHURCH RETREAT
“REBIRTH AND RENEWAL”**

October 5, 2006, a lovely fall day, found fifty members and friends from our sister churches in our social hall ready to receive new insights from our former Badveli, Dr. Peter B. Doghramji, about our topic, “Rebirth and Renewal,” as he led our 36th annual All-Church Retreat.

Florence Devedjian’s creative touches decorated our tables with Fall accents. After a wonderful continental breakfast, which included Rose Garabedian’s delicious choerag, Diane DeMirjian, chairman of the retreat, warmly welcomed all and invited Pastor Gary to start the day with prayer.

Diane introduced Dr. Doghramji as a theologian, Biblical scholar and author, and as one who initiated our first retreat when he was Badveli 36 years ago; we haven’t missed a year since. She mentioned his rich theological background, which includes his Th.M. degree from the Divinity School of Harvard, his Ph.D. degree, magna cum laude, from Princeton Theological Seminary, and his honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Ursinus College. She also spoke of the many prominent positions he has filled since he left AMCC. His inspirational book, *In Other Words*, was available for purchase and an autograph.



*Retreat Chairman Diane DeMirjian with retreat leader
Rev. Dr. Peter B. Doghramji*

Dr. Doghramji began with the story of Nicodemus, who was an old and respected teacher, and yet he came to Jesus with a burden because he was convinced Jesus was a special teacher sent from God. We don’t know his question, but the answer was, “Unless one is born

anew (or from above), one cannot see the kingdom of God.” (John 3:3). Sometimes we use religious words and we think we know their meanings. We discussed the meanings of “born again,” “being born of the spirit,” “kingdom of God,” “baptism,” and “accepting Christ as our Lord and Savior.” It was a wonderful interchange of ideas and personal testimonies. Dr. Doghramji then had us focus on one Bible verse, John 3:16. What does “For God so loved the world” mean? Does it mean He also loved Romans, Christians, Jews, Moslems, Hitler, terrorists, Turks, etc.? God gave us His only Son to show us that we have to be like a new baby, changing our way of thinking, being reoriented and receptive.

The next Bible verses read were John 1:1-13. Dr. Doghramji felt that too many churches get caught up in doctrines and dogmas and miss this truth: how special we are to be birthed by God and given an opportunity to have an intimate relationship with the Creator of the Universe. We should have such joy that there is someone who cares for us through difficult times, sickness and death.

Our third session focused on renewal, not merely personal rebirth, but the renewal of creation. Our scripture passage was Revelation 21:1-5. “Behold, I make all things new,” says God. Dr. Doghramji said, “A new state of existence for human beings probably baffles you.” Then he explained that God is not just a creator, He is not afraid of making things new. God has the courage to go back to the blackboard, after giving people free will, and see that He needs to renew us. So he sent Jesus to help us with our renewal. Our old relationships were based on race, culture, our different languages and ways of worship. Even our closest relationships with family and friends can go sour. Open your eyes and ears to understand what God is doing in the world. What can we do as Christians in this present-day war of ideologies? How should we react to military solutions? How does the world look at us? What is your priority in life? Your first priority should be to worship God and act as His child.

This stimulating retreat ended in prayer as we thanked God and sang our hymn for the day, “We Praise Thee, O God.” The closing line was “Hallelujah! Thine the glory; revive us again.” It was a day filled with fellowship, with being enlightened and certainly shown steps to take for our personal rebirth and renewal.

— Ruth Melian

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

It is our tradition to extend Christmas greetings to our church friends and family, not through individual cards, but through a special page in the December issue of the News Bulletin. Just donate an amount of money commensurate to what your expenditure for cards and stamps would be. Make your check payable to AMCC and designate Christmas Greetings in the corner. Please give all checks to Lucille Tashjian. The proceeds this year will go to the Deacons' Fund for current and future needs. Deadline is Sunday, November 12.

— *Lucille Tashjian*

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL BOOKLET

Prepare ye...

Two years ago, the Editorial Committee prepared an Advent Devotional Booklet. As a reminder, it is used as a daily means of setting time aside each day to prepare our hearts for the coming of Jesus Christ. It was so well received, we are planning another. It will contain contributions of favorite inspirational writings/readings, poetry, special experiences, and family traditions. Perhaps you are willing to share your own personal "God moment."

We are hoping each family will participate by submitting a contribution to this endeavor. The size of each page is approximately 5x8. Email yours (by November 1) to amcchavpa@yahoo.com with "Devotional Booklet" in the subject, or place it in the church office in the box marked "Advent Devotional Booklet" on top of the file cabinets. If you have questions, see Lucille Tashjian, or call her at 610-793-2548.

We look forward to another successful Advent Devotional Booklet, which will be distributed to the congregation on the first Sunday of Advent.

— *Lucille Tashjian*

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 19
BUDGET AND ELECTIONS!

FOOD FOR THE HOMELESS

Most food banks are in short supply after the rush of giving during the holiday season, but "hunger knows no calendar."

The Missions Committee would like non-perishable food and monetary donations only, please. "Sharing the Spirit" can come in a variety of forms, including food donations.

— *Diane DeMirjian*

THANK YOU FROM KENYA

Armenian Martyrs' Congregational Church:
We greet you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We thank Him always for the gift of life. We, the family of Rose Kahenza, are very grateful to you all for the wonderful loving care of our daughter. When we saw her, we were grateful to God and to you. We pray the good Lord to repay you for your generosity and hospitality that you showed to her. We were full of joy after so many years. Our daughter is healthy. We couldn't understand some of her words since we do not speak English. We thank you that it is because of your kind gesture that we are able to see our daughter alive. May the Lord meet the desires of your hearts, your families' and all the members of your congregation. Even the words "thank you" are not enough to express the happiness in our hearts. We are short of words. The joy we have cannot be expressed on this paper.

We will keep praying for you and your families. As Rose returns to the U.S., it is our prayer that you will continue praying for us because we are now old. But when we trust in God, he will continue blessing us. We will also keep on praying for you. God willing, we will meet.

God bless you all.

*Rose's Family, Mr. & Mrs. Joash K. Aluda
Chamakanga, Kenya*

THANK YOU

To Pastor Gary and the members of the AMCC congregation, I would like to thank everyone for their prayers, get well cards and phone calls during my illness. I would especially like to thank Pastor Gary for his visits and prayers. Also, thanks to Senior Fellowship for their card. I am now on chemotherapy treatment and recovering.

Sincerely, Jerry Jemelyan

Poinsettias in the Sanctuary

Poinsettia plants will be placed in the Sanctuary during Advent, beginning December 17.

Details forthcoming. Call:

Florence Devedjian, 610-399-9373

Lucille Tashjian, 610-793-2548

Order deadline: Sunday, December 10

THE REVEREND GIRAGOS H.
CHOPOURIAN, PhD, 1914-2006,
PASTOR EMERITUS

The Reverend Dr. Giragos H. Chopourian died on October 11, 2006, in his home in Havertown, PA. He was born in Adana, Cilicia (Turkish Armenia) on January 15, 1914, into the Haroutune and Victoria (Kalaydjian) Chopourian farming family. Following the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1918 and the pronouncement of the "Turkey for the Turks" policy of Mustapha Kemal Pasha around 1920, the family left their homeland, ending up as refugees in Larnaca, Cyprus, in 1921. Determined and energetic, Giragos, oldest of the five children, surmounted all hurdles that refugee life posed and achieved a stellar international reputation.

In June 1945, he simultaneously received a B. A. degree in History, with honors, from the American University of Beirut and a B.A. in Religious Education, with distinction, from the Near East School of Theology. Following graduation, he married a fellow student, Yeprouhie DerBoghossian. The couple returned as teachers at the American Academy in Larnaca, where their three daughters were born. His favorite sport was tennis, and he was a finalist in the Open Cyprus Tennis Tournament. Additionally, he was forever involved with youth as a scoutmaster, Sunday school teacher and lay preacher.

In 1956, Giragos brought his family to the United States. After completing his M.A. in Religious Education he received his ordination in June of 1956 at the Haverhill, MA, and Lawrence, NH, churches. The Armenian Martyrs' Congregational Church of Philadelphia extended him an invitation to their pastorate in 1958, where he served the congregation, increasing membership substantially, and relocating the church to a beautiful campus in Havertown, PA. He later received a Ph.D. from Temple U. while pastor at AMCC. In January 1969, he was called to assume the position of Executive Director of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA). He served in this capacity for the next eighteen years, where during his tenure the organization grew in scope and stature nationally and internationally.

After his retirement from the AMAA, he became its Executive Director Emeritus. He was also Pastor Emeritus of the Armenian Martyrs'

Congregational Church and served as board member and President of the Jinishian Foundation of the Presbyterian Church.

In his capacity as author, co-author, and editor, his numerous publications include: *Our Armenian Christian Heritage*, 1962; *Armenian Evangelical Reformation: Causes and Effects*, 1972; *Practical Implications of the Armenian Evangelical Reformation; Blessings in Bitter Cups*, 2004; *Armenian Missionary Association News*, 1969-1987; *American-Armenian Outlook*, 1973; and *A Brief History of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (1918-1995)*, 1998.

This remarkable man, who touched so many lives with his wisdom and strength, is survived by his wife Yeprouhie, brother Garo, sister Azadouhie Black, his three daughters Eileen (Harry Stephey), Vera (Tom Bailey), Vicki (Tom Gehrt), seven grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren and many nieces and nephews.

A celebration of Dr. Chopourian's life was held on Saturday, October 28, 2006, at Armenian Martyrs' Congregational Church. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Reverend Dr. Giragos and Yeprouhie Chopourian Endowment Fund, c/o The Armenian Missionary Association of America, 31 W. Century Road, Paramus, NJ 07652.

WITH THANKS

To strengthen the ministry of our church and to help nurture faith, stewardship and a deeper sense of mission, we welcome the following gifts with thanks:

For Armenian Martyrs' Congregational Church

Richard Tashjian

For the Monthly News Bulletin

Lawrence & Jeanette Der Hagopian

Zabel Zartarian

In Honor of Ed & Grace Kavjian's 55th Wedding Anniversary

John & Marge Bogosian

In Loving Memory of Anna Mason

Doris Bedrossian Bobb

The Carey Family

Dan & Joyce Carroll

Richard Diradourian

Sally Ann Grande

Karen Kludjian & Wm. Kozel

Raymond & Margery Lattanzio

Harold & Madeline Tilton

Tuesday, November 7, Election Day
Please contribute to our Bake Sale
either by donation of baked goods
or "buy" purchase!
Thank you for your support,
and Thank You for Voting!

AMCC's Annual Rededication Banquet

Sunday, November 5

Guest Speaker:

Rev. Nancy Schongalla-Bowman
Wife of our own Pastor Gary!

Musical Guest:

Karen MacKay

Karen has become a familiar face at AMCC, having previously performed in worship, at our choir concert and at a Senior Fellowship gathering. She learned her craft studying with the elders of West Virginia, who taught her banjo, guitar, dulcimer, fiddle and autoharp, as well as their distinctive style of singing. Also a composer of many songs, Karen is a trained clinical psychologist, whose passion is sharing her music with everyone.

**Call the church office for your reservations,
610-446-3330.**

Armenian Martyrs' Congregational Church
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Havertown, PA 19083

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