



# 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. Gary Schongalla-Bowman, Pastor  
(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

## **ANNUAL FAMILY CHRISTMAS DINNER!**

A Lule Kebab Dinner Cooked by Chef Jim Makoulian!

Enjoy a return visit from the Upper Darby High School Encore Singers,  
directed by **Barbara Benglian**

Sunday, December 10, 2006 ☆ 11 A.M. Worship ☆ 12:30 P.M. Dinner

Reservations **STRONGLY** Recommended

Call Rose Garabedian, 856-854-1967

Lucille Tashjian, 610-793-2548

or the Church Office (Amy), 610-446-3330

Ticket Prices:

Adults: \$15 ☆ Children 10 and Under: \$8

# DECEMBER 2006

### **Christmas Greetings!**

Patricia Arcaro  
Daniel & Nora Babaian, Nareen, David & Sella  
Dorothy Baldadian  
The Rev. & Mrs. L.N. Bakalian, Armen & Sevag  
Mirhan Bakalian & Nao Chuma  
John Benglian  
John & Marge Bogosian & Family  
Edward & Marian Buchakjian  
Rocky Caruso  
Yeprouhie Chopourian  
Nevart Dagdigian  
Tim & Jackie DeMirjian, Jenika, Derek, Caprice,  
and Brielle  
Charles & Diane DeMirjian, Susan & Michael  
John & Florence Devedjian  
Samuel Devedjian  
The Rev. Dr. Peter & Mary Doghramji  
Rose Garabedian  
The Rev. Dr. Eugene & Dorothy Grau  
John & Florence Gulezian  
Araxie Hagopian  
John & Cindy Hamill  
Jerry Jemelyan  
Gary & Carol Jerrahian-Miller  
Mardie Juskalian  
Aram & Shirley Kabakjian  
Ed & Carol Kaiserian, Daniel, Michael & Lara  
Sara Kaiserian  
Rose Kahenza

The Rev. & Mrs. Hovhannes Karjian  
Pauline Karjian  
Dr. Edward & Grace Kavjian  
Ovsanna Keshishian  
Vicken & Jeannette Keshishian  
Sona Kling  
Aram & Barbara Kumkumian  
Edward & Joan Kurkian  
Mary Loiselle  
James & Sona Makoulian  
The John Melian Family  
Ashod & Dorothy Melikian  
Set & Joan Momjian  
F. James Mukhalian  
The Rev. Dr. Soghomon Nuyujukian  
Betty Oolovgian  
Mary Parnagian  
John & Debra Paulson, Janice & Julia  
Mae K. Paulson  
Michael & Liane Paulson, Gwen & Carol  
Paul Paulson  
Linda, Marin & Brandon Preske  
Orla & Sandra Reese, Araxi  
Paul & Tina (Makoulian) Santangelo & children  
Greg & Laurel Sarian, Elizabeth, Christian &  
Grace  
The Rev. Gary & Nancy Schongalla-Bowman,  
Dillon  
Peter & Joyce Stephenson, Christina & Michelle  
Harry & Eileen Stephey  
Jack & Lucille Tashjian  
Martin Tourigian & Virginia Tourigian  
Don & Diane Uber, Danielle & Nicole  
Paul & Dora Vacek  
Denise Van Roy  
Arthur & Greta Yegyan  
Edward Zanzanian & Robert Zanzanian  
Zabel Nedurian Zartarian

**This issue of the Monthly News Bulletin  
Is sponsored by Annabelle Alexanian  
In memory of Victoria Mooradian**



# *FROM PASTOR GARY'S PEN . . .*

## A Meaningful Christmas

I tuned my car radio to B101 a few days before Thanksgiving as I drove to the church and was surprised to hear Christmas carols. It seems that B101 is playing nothing but Christmas carols until Christmas Day. The very first carol played was one of my favorites. As I listened, I became quite emotional!

The truth is that there are no guarantees in life. I assume that there are many more Christmases out there, but you just never know. I was feeling this and decided that I need to make sure I make this Christmas as meaningful as possible. I started making a mental list of the things I need to do to make this Christmas, and every Christmas in the future, meaningful.

I share with you my “to do” list in the hope that you may want to do some of these things, as well.

1. Give thanks to God for all things in my life!
2. Tell the people closest to me that I love them and why. Have a personal conversation with each of them to tell them how important they are to me and how they have blessed me.
3. Risk mending fences where I need to, and ask for forgiveness.
4. Be present to people I know who are hurting, for whom the holiday is painful rather than joyful.
5. Give an unsuspecting friend a perfect gift to say thanks for their friendship.
6. Give to those who are in need.

That’s my list, and I hope and pray that I will get them all done. Thank God for this child Jesus Christ, who brings the love of God into our very midst. I pray that I will experience a meaningful Christmas by bringing that same love of God to those around me.

God bless you this Christmas, and may it be a truly meaningful holiday season.

*Pastor Gary*

## NOVEMBER SENIOR FELLOWSHIP

The last Senior Fellowship meeting for the year was held on Wednesday, November 15, with 39 people in attendance. After enjoying the special (and healthy!) snacks provided by June and Lucille Balukjian, Lucille Tashjian called on Cindy Hamill to offer the devotions, followed by a prayer led by Mae Paulson. We were treated to a wonderful lunch provided by Lucille Tashjian, Rose Snyder, Rebecca Karjian, Jim Mukhalian, and Rocky Caruso.

Our musical guests, The Newtones, provided an enjoyable program. This Kennett Square group has been together for almost 20 years. The singers, attired in Christmas finery, launched our holiday spirit with old favorites and new selections.

We wish you all a wonderful holiday season and look forward to being together again next year in March of 2007!

— Grace Kavjian



**Please plan to attend the  
next  
"Sharing the Spirit" Open  
Forum  
Sunday, December 3  
8:30—Continental Breakfast  
9:00—Presentation & Discussion**

## ELECTION DAY BAKE SALE

Thank you to the many who worked to make our Election Day Bake Sale a success. We had a beautiful array of home-baked delicacies that were snapped up by the electorate who voted at AMCC on November 7. To those who baked, those who helped to set up, sell and clean up, and to those who made monetary gifts, we thank you!

All proceeds are going to a fund to build a house in Armenia. There will be further news on this endeavor in the future.

— Cindy Hamill & Diane DeMirjian, Bake Sale Co-Chairs

## FOOD & WARM CLOTHING DRIVE

The Stewardship and Missions Committee would like to thank all who contributed to our Fall Food and Warm Clothing Drive. The Food Bank of the Interfaith Coalition and the LifeCenter of Eastern Delaware County are the grateful recipients of your generosity.

— Diane DeMirjian, Committee Chair

## LETTER FROM BEIRUT

A student here at Haigazian University recently expressed his frustration to me: "We can no longer wear any color we want, because there are no colors left! Every one of them has been taken by a political party!" Daily life in Lebanon, always fraught with political meaning, has become even more so since the summer war. Every day we awake, expecting to hear about another governmental crisis, or a call to mobilize followers for a street demonstration for or against this or that part of the government. Thankfully, though, our daily lives are continuing more or less normally.

Another couple of students have been relating to me about their experiences in south Lebanon. The university's "Humanitarian" Club has begun a service project in a village close to the border with Israel. They are going to clean up and repaint a school there, and their excitement is not only palpable, but contagious! I wish that I had the linguistic skills to join them. I also wish it were less problematic for an American to venture to those areas.

Other students, as part of the celebration of Lebanon's Independence Day (Nov. 22), are collecting donations in order to purchase books to restock the many school and municipal libraries which have been destroyed in the bombing. At least one local bookstore is doing the same. Considering how the government is deadlocked in the current political crisis, it is a blessing that so many informal groups and non-governmental organizations are acting without waiting for the government to take the lead.

Maria and I recently went on an overnight retreat with our Union's In-Care students, at the Kchag Conference Center outside the city. Although only one day long, it was an open and encouraging experience, inspiring hope for the work of the Gospel in the Middle East. The leadership needs here are certainly serious, and the number of leaders-in-training are few, but many of them have an exceptional spirit of service, and want to do their part. We have to pray for them, and for others whom God is calling, so that they continue to progress in their discipleship, and catch a powerful vision for Christian service among the Armenian community here.

—Rev. Nishan and Maria Bakalian [17 November 2006]

Do not remove the ancient landmarks that your ancestors built.  
Proverbs 22:28

## 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

Leslie & Laura Button                      George & Carol Churukian

### For the Monthly News Bulletin

Samuel Devedjian                      Edward & Mary Jo Kavjian

Ash & Dot Melikian                      Richard & Gay Mukalian

Philip & Rose Paregian

### In Thanksgiving

Samuel Devedjian

### For the DeMirjian Music Fund

Samuel Devedjian

### In Loving Memory of Howard Garabedian

Pro Equities

### In Loving Memory of Anna Mason

Edward & Mary Jo Kavjian                      Aram & Barbara Kumkumian

### In Loving Memory of Rev. Dr. Giragos Chopourian

Annabelle Alexanian                      Anonymous

Anonymous                      The Bakalian-Keshishian Family

Mary Banecker                      Marie Dagdigian Barnes

John & Marge Bogosian                      Ed & Marian Buchakjian

Leon Buchakjian                      Rocky Caruso

Haig & Joyce Dagdigian                      Nevert Dagdigian

Samuel Devedjian                      Rachel Dohanian

Harry & Alice Dorian                      Eugene & Dorothy Grau

James & Elaine Gulezian                      John & Florence Gulezian

Lynne Gulezian                      Edward Hagopian

Sara Kaisarian                      Edward & Mary Jo Kavjian

Ovsanna Keshishian                      Edward & Joan Kurkian

Khosrof & Grace Pakhtigian                      Mary Parnagian

Manuel & Ellinor Parseghian                      Mae Paulson

Helen Sevag                      Rose Snyder

Peter & Joyce Stephenson                      Jack & Lucille Tashjian

Arthur & Greta Yegyan                      Edward Zanzanian

Robert Zanzanian                      Edward & Barbara Zobian

### For the Chopourian Christian Education Fund in Loving Memory of Rev. Dr. Giragos Chopourian

Daniel & Nora Babaian                      James & Susan Buchakjian

John & Florence Devedjian                      Elaine Farashian

Howard S. Garabedian                      Rose Garabedian

Seb & Alice Gertmenian

Immanuel Armenian Congregational Church

Jerry Jemelyan                      Edward & Grace Kavjian

Aram & Barbara Kumkumian                      Daniel & Eileen Mann

Henry & Arpine Maxwell                      John & Ruth Melian

Der Parez & Angel Metjian                      Gary & Carol Jerrahian Miller

Michael & Barbara Moore                      Helen Scott & Nancy Scott

Bernice Shamlan                      Margo Silk

Jirair & Lorraine Sogomian                      Kenneth & Janice Taylor

## Poinsettias in the Sanctuary

Poinsettia plants will be placed in the Sanctuary during Advent, beginning December 17. \$7/plant.

Call: Florence Devedjian, 610-399-9373

Lucille Tashjian, 610-793-2548

Order deadline: Sunday, December 10

## PHILADELPHIA ARMENIAN-AMERICAN VETERANS

Our eighth annual Veterans' Reunion was held on November 12, 2006, at Holy Trinity Arm. Apostolic Church (Cheltenham). Over 210 Armenian veterans and their guests were in attendance from the tri-state area. Special commendation goes to Sandra Selverian, president of the P.A.A.V.A., for organizing the full program of speaker, entertainment, color guard and memorabilia tables. Pastor Gary Schongalla-Bowman offered the invocation.

Our own Charles DeMirjian introduced our guest speaker, Captain Eli Takesian, U.S. Navy Chaplain, Ret. Chaplain Takesian, who served as chaplain from 1960-1987, is a decorated veteran with numerous awards including the Legion of Merit and Bronze Star with Combat "V" for valor in Vietnam. He spoke of the men and women he served with during the Korean War and through the Vietnam War. He spoke of our service members serving in Iraq and the sacrifices they give each day for our freedom.

The program included the presentation of colors, roll call by each of the military branches, presentation of a memorial wreath honoring our past veterans, and taps. Our entertainment was by the Mumpers, with dance, patriotic songs, and musical selections from World War II to the present.

Special thanks go to Holy Trinity for the use of their beautiful Santerian Hall. Thanks also to many others for the various efforts that made this day so successful. We thank our contributors whose generosity made this reunion possible.

A final plea: please contact me if you know any Armenian who served in the military, especially in Iraq. **This is especially important if they are of Armenian descent but have a non-Armenian last name!** It would be greatly appreciated if you would contact me with that information so that we can invite them to our next reunion.

Mark your calendar now to attend our ninth annual Veterans' Reunion on November 11, 2007. All veterans or widows who have not attended a reunion can place their name on the P.A.A.V.A. mailing list by contacting Howard S. Garabedian at 856-778-5926.

-- Howard S. Garabedian



# “Sharing the Spirit”

“Sharing the Spirit” is alive and well at AMCC, evolving and deepening as we continue to explore the infinite dimensions of sharing our faith in God.

At our October 8 monthly forum, Pastor Gary reminded us that we need to focus on two areas: our core ministries (with worship as our top priority) and serving the community. Building on his challenge to the congregation to find some way to be really engaged in our community by the end of 2006, efforts in the second year of “Sharing the Spirit” will be focused on getting to know our community and how we can be of service. We need to find out what our community really needs (not what we think they need) and how we can help meet those needs.

Prior to the November 12 forum, Pastor Gary obtained demographic information about Havertown and Upper Darby -- two communities with very different needs. Working with the Stewardship and Missions Committee, he also contacted several Delaware County agencies that can help guide us toward useful service opportunities.

There was lively discussion at both fall forums about ways that we can take action in serving our community, including opening our building to be used by community organizations or hosting an event. Some of our members passionately expressed their concerns about the children in our communities, as well as ways to affiliate with existing programs for children and parents.

Tim DeMirjian urged us to begin to take some immediate action, while also pursuing longer-term projects. Plans were set up to provide Thanksgiving dinners for eight families through the Delaware County Community Action Council. Donations of food needed to make up meal packages were gathered from members of the congregation and delivered on November 19.

Our second Bring a Friend Sunday took place on October 1, Worldwide Communion Sunday. The message of the day underscored the importance of getting beyond thoughts about our own needs to think about the needs of our community and our friends around the world. We celebrated the richness of our world’s diversity in music and symbols, including the use of breads from many cultures during communion. Rev. Carol Sarian assisted Pastor Gary in serving communion, and Toni Jackson inspired us with her glorious music.

“Sharing the Spirit” Moments have been offered by Pastor Gary and Mary Loiselle. All are encouraged to share the experience of God in their lives by speaking during worship. Pastor Gary has expanded the STS Moments to include posing a question for members to discuss with each other during worship, providing a more intimate opportunity to speak about spiritual issues in the context of worship.

The Strategic Planning Task Force has continued to work on the STS communications projects, with priority focus on developing our Web site.

We would like to express our gratitude for the commitment and devotion of those who regularly attend the monthly forums. “Sharing the Spirit” calls on all of us to be in action for God’s kingdom. Please join us as we chart a path of service to those in need. As we approach our 100<sup>th</sup> year as a church, what better way to celebrate our blessings than sharing them with others. What will you do to show your gratitude?

-- Karen Bogosian, Mary Loiselle, Harry Stephey and Tim DeMirjian (Strategic Planning Task Force)

**SAVE THESE DATES for UPCOMING  
“SHARING THE SPIRIT” ACTIVITIES!!  
December 3 & January 7 – monthly  
Open Forum (8:30 breakfast; 9:00 program)**

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## BICYCLE COLLECTION

Bicycles you no longer need or trashed bikes you find will be repaired and painted by the New Covenant Ministries in Camden, then distributed to children for Christmas. They appreciate our help each year. If you do not have any, please ask your friends and neighbors. Bring the bikes to the church or contact John Paulson.

## VISION STATEMENT

Armenian Martyrs’ Congregational Church will be a church community that is Christ-centered, spiritually alive, growing in worship attendance, Armenian- and community-based, and welcoming all people.

- 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*
  - 5 - Deacons Meeting, 7:30 p.m.
  - 7 - Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.
  - 10 - Worship-11 a.m. Sunday School-10 a.m. *Second Sunday in Advent; Family Christmas Dinner, 12:30 p.m.*
  - 12 - Trustees Meeting, 8:00 p.m.
  - 13 - Discipleship Group, 7:30 p.m.
  - 14 - Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.
  - 17 - Worship-11 a.m. Sunday School-10 a.m. *Third Sunday in Advent*
  - 21 - Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.
  - 24 - Worship - 11 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. *Fourth Sunday in Advent; Christmas Eve*
  - 28 - NO Choir Rehearsal!
  - 31 - Worship-11 a.m. Sunday School-10 a.m. *First Sunday After Christmas*
- January
- 2 - Deacons' Meeting, 7:30 p.m.
  - 4 - Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.
  - 7 - Worship-11 a.m. Sunday School-10 a.m. *Epiphany Sunday; Armenian Christmas; "Sharing the Spirit" Forum, 8:30 a.m. breakfast, 9 a.m. program*

### REMINDER OF ANNUAL REPORTS

Please be aware that Annual Reports are due in the church office by January 15, 2007. Thank you to everyone who has already submitted his or her report.

### 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'

- Chopourian Christian Education Fund
- DeMirjian Music Fund
- Sunday School
- Stewardship and Missions
- Sanctuary Décor/Coffee Hour
- Youth
- School Supplies (for Armenian Children)
- Pastor's Discretionary Fund
- "Sharing the Spirit"
- Monthly News Bulletin

**Deadline for submissions for the January issue of the News Bulletin — Fri. Dec. 15!!**

## REDEDICATION SUNDAY

On Sunday, November 5, the story of Ruth inspired the theme of this year's Rededication Sunday: "Release and Accept." During the worship service, Lara Kaiserian and Nicole Uber joined Pat Arcaro and Denise Van Roy in a dramatic reading of the scripture, which concluded with the choir singing the Song of Ruth. Pastor Gary's sermon led us to consider the things in life that hold us captive, and how our faith helps us to let them go and be free. To symbolize this, each of us blew up a balloon and then released it. The image of colorful balloons in the air set the tone of celebration and joy in releasing our bonds.

Throughout the service, Karen MacKay shared her musical talents and joyful spirit as she led the choir and congregation in singing favorite hymns accompanied by guitar, banjo, autoharp and dulcimer. At the end of the service, Karen and the choir led everyone from the sanctuary to the social hall, singing "Glory Bound." The music continued as everyone sang the blessing "For Love and Friends." While the main course was being

prepared, Karen invited everyone to sing along in a medley of songs. Patti and Alison Cipollone stole the show by accompanying Karen on a variety of percussion instruments and dancing to the uplifting music. Salad, rolls and relishes were followed by delicious lasagna, and cheesecake for dessert. Guest speaker for the day was Nancy Schongalla-Bowman, who posed the question: "To what are we rededicating?" She urged us to listen to our hearts to hear what God is asking us to do. The program concluded with everyone singing "Pass It On" and a benediction from Rev. Nuyujukian.

Thanks to members of the worship planning team for planning the worship service and the banquet; Rose Garabedian and Cindy Hamill for handling reservations; Tim DeMirjian and the young people of our church for serving the meal; and Marge Bogosian for coordinating the donation of the beautiful floral centerpieces from Blake Florists.

-- Mary Loiselle

AMCC will be sponsoring ten CAADC families for Christmas. Please call the office if you can help, 610-446-3330.

Armenian Martyrs' Congregational Church  
100 N. Edmonds Avenue  
Havertown, PA 19083

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