



Schedule of Sunday Services

Morning Service (*Keesheryeen & Aravodyan Jham*) 9:00 a.m.
Divine Liturgy (*Soorp Badarak*) 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, December 20, 2015

Հինգերորդ Կիրակի Յիսնակաց

Fifth Sunday of Advent

Scripture Readings

Isaiah 40:18-31 (Pg. 716) Hebrews 4:16-5:10 (Pg. 198)

Luke 18:9-14 (Pg. 74)

Creed: Armenian

The Legacy of our Martyrs 1915 - 2015

Don't just attend the Badarak. See it, feel it, sing it, pray it, hear it, smell it, touch it, and taste it and see how sweet is the Lord!

Ճաշակեցէք եւ տեսէք զի քաղցր է Տէր:

"Taste ye, and see, for the Lord is sweet." (Adapted from Psalm 34:8)

Der Shnork



The Ancient Date of the Celebration of the Theophany - January 6th

by Fr. Shnork Souin

Throughout my ministry as a priest, many have asked the question; "If Jesus was born on December 25th, then why do we celebrate on January 6th?" For some, today, the date is December 25th, others January 7th, others January 6th and again for others January 19th. So, are there 4 dates for the celebration of Christmas? What gives?

The answer to this question is not as plain nor as obvious as one might at first presume. Yes, while it's true that we really don't know when exactly Jesus was born, the fact remains that He was born, although God's self-revelation in human history makes the actual date of this glorious celebration moot and quite actually besides the point. In fact, during the very early years of the Christian church His birthday was not celebrated at all!! Many early church fathers omit it entirely from their lists of feasts.

Without going into the history of all the pagan window dressing associated with the modern yuletide season, the true celebrations, according to the ancient tradition of the church, was a culmination of events related to God's Incarnation. This was not called "Christmas" but rather Theophany which means "revelation of God," and was universally celebrated on January 6th by all Christendom, hi-lighted by the remembrance of Jesus' Baptism. Although, ironically today, Christmas is a celebration of Jesus' birthday, it wasn't until later that the Nativity was incorporated into the January 6th

celebrations of the Theophany.

The question about dates must be answered in 2 parts. There are actually only 2 dates for the observance of Jesus' birth and not 4. They are December 25th and January 6th. The confusion of the other 2 dates, January 7th and 18th are due to the use of 2 calendars, the Gregorian and the Julian. While most of the known world, such as Canada, is on the Gregorian calendar (named after Pope Gregory of Rome), some Orthodox Christians maintain their liturgical calendars according to the ancient Julian calendar. Thus, the January 7th date actually corresponds with December 25th on the "old" Julian Calendar while January 19th corresponds to January 6th on the Gregorian calendar. Those who observe January 7th which is actually December 25th on the Julian calendar are referred to as "old calendarists." Despite the calendar usage, all these churches observe the Epiphany or the Baptism of Jesus 12 days following the Nativity.

Secondly, the Armenians, who observe the Gregorian calendar except in Jerusalem, maintain to this day the ancient date of January 6th as the dual celebration of Jesus' birth and baptism, where all the major events related to the Theophany are recalled, from the revelation of Jesus as the "Son of Man" the Incarnate Word, to His revelation as the "Son of God" the Prince of Peace and the King of Heaven. Therefore, this celebration includes everything from the Nativity of Christ in Bethlehem, the visitation of the Magi who came to "witness" Him as the Divine Revelation, the infancy narrative...His naming, His presentation in the temple, His circumcision and finally the Epiphany or His Baptism in the River Jordan whereby His formal ministry of redemption was inaugurated by the opening of the heavens, the descent of God the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, and the Voice of God the Father proclaiming that "This is my beloved Son." The dual Theophany/Epiphany was celebrated on January 6th until the 5th century when the Council of Chalcedon (451 ad) formally declared December 25th as the date for the celebration of "Christmas" separating the Nativity from the Baptism of Christ by the "12 days of Christmas" remembered today in the popular Carol.

Although there are many compelling theories as to the reason for moving the celebration of the Nativity to December 25th, suffice to say that it is generally believed that the date was changed in order to override and subdue pagan feasts and practices dedicated to The Winter Solstice, because at the time Christians also used to continue their observance of these pagan festivities. The pagans called this celebration Saturnalia, in honor of their god Saturn, a festival lasting from the 17th to the 25th of December culminating with the "Birth of the Unconquerable Sun," as the days began to lengthen, because among pagans it was generally believed that the sun who dies during the winter solstice rises from death thereafter. Since the date of the Epiphany or Baptism was more ancient, and was of primary importance as a liturgical feast, it was not possible to move it while the secondary and later addition of the nativity could be moved without great offense.

Armenia however, whose Christianity is of ancient Apostolic origins, did not adopt this change for the simple fact that there were no such pagan practices left in Armenia in the 5th century allowing them to remain faithful to the traditions of their forefathers. To this day, Armenians have continued to celebrate the Nativity on January 6th along with the Epiphany which is crowned, as with other Orthodox Church's, in the observance of Christ's Baptism, with a glorious "Blessing of the Waters" in whose climax a Cross is plunged into the water as a sign of God's Saving mystery in Christ's life from Womb to Tomb. The blessed water is offered

to all as a sign of God's manifestation in the glorious waters of the Jordan from which the Savior was revealed and it becomes possible for humanity to be born again to new life.

I look forward to the many opportunities to celebrate this wonderful season with you, the Christmas Eve Service and Pageant on December 24th, the Christmas Concert on Sunday January 3rd and the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services with the Blessing of the Water on January 6th and finally the Women's Guild Christmas Dinner on Sunday January 10th. Have a very Merry Christmas and God's blessings to all.

Prayerfully,
Fr. Shnork Souin



The Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Luke (18:9-14)

He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others: "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner; I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other for every one who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.'"

Glory to You, O Lord our God!



Response when Kissing the Cross (during the procession):

The **faithful** says:

Յիշեսցիր եւ զիս առաջի անմահ գառինն Աստուծոյ:
Hee-shes-cheer yev zeez a-rra-chee an-mah ka-rinn As-doo-dzo.
(Remember me before the immortal Lamb of God.)

The **priest** says:

Յիշեալ լիջիր առաջի անմահ գառինն Աստուծոյ:
Hee-shyal lee-cheer a-rra-chee an-mah ka-rinn As-doo-dzo.
(You shall be remembered before the immortal Lamb of God.)

Response for the Kiss of Peace:

The **giver** says:

Քրիստոս ի մէջ մեր յայտնեցաւ:
Krees-dos ee mech mer hayd-ne-tsav.
(Christ is revealed in our midst.)

The **receiver** says:

Օրհնեալ է յայտնութիւնն Քրիստոսի:
Orh-nyal eh hayd-noo-tyoo-nun Krees-do-see.
(Blessed is the revelation of Christ.)

Response when Kissing the Gospel (after the Divine Liturgy):

The **faithful** says:

Յիշեսցէ Տէր զամենայն պատարագս քո:
Hee-shes-tseh Der za-me-nayn ba-da-ra-kus ko.
(May the Lord remember all your sacrifices.)

The **priest** says:

Տաղէ քեզ Տէր ըստ սրտի քում:
Da-tseh kez Der usd sur-dee koom.
(May the Lord grant to you according to your heart.)

Participating in the Divine Liturgy: Please follow the prayers and hymns of the Divine Liturgy in the books provided in the pews. The front section contains the Armenian Krapar text and modern Armenian translation, while the latter part gives the English transliteration and translation. Page numbers are illuminated at the upper left and right sides of the main altar. Please sing along with any of the hymns which the choir is singing.

Confession and Holy Communion: Those who are preparing to receive Holy Communion may kneel in the center aisle or remain standing at their pew for the group recitation of the confession (p. 48-49). After the absolution please proceed via the central aisle towards the altar in an orderly manner. Two Parish Council members will be present to assist. Please return to your pew via the side aisles.

CHRIST OUR GOD

You crown your saints with triumph and you do the will of all who fear you, looking after your creatures with love and kindness. Hear us from your holy and heavenly realm by the intercession of the Holy Mother of God and by the prayers of all your saints, especially the holy martyrs who gave their lives during the Armenian Genocide for faith and for the homeland, whom we commemorate today. Hear us Lord, and show us your mercy. Forgive, redeem and pardon our sins. Make us worthy thankfully to glorify you with the Father and with the Holy Spirit. Now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.



TODAY'S REQUIEMS (Hokehankist):

Requiem Prayer

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. O Christ, Son of God, forbearing and compassionate, have compassion, in your love as our creator, upon the souls of your servants who are at rest, especially upon the souls of your servants and maidservants:

- **ARTHUR A. THOVMASIAN JR.** (26 Year Memorial); **ARTHUR A. THOVMASIAN SR.** (36 Year Memorial) - requested by Mrs. Naomi Thovmasian Marsh; Leah, Alex, Ian and Zara Hill; Diana, Tim and Riley Sanginario; Arthur Thovmasian III and Natalie German; Mr. & Mrs. Kachadour Kojoian and Family; Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Bailey; Christopher, Meggan, Katherine and Andrew Bailey; Linda Angell; Natalie Zakarian.

- **ARAKSI TORIGIAN** (27 Year Memorial) - requested by Markrid Torigians.

- **OHAN and MARGARET MEGERDICHIAN; JOHN KOJOIAN; MISAH M. SABOUNJIAN; JULIAN MEGRDICHIAN** - requested by Mr. & Mrs. Peter Megrdichian; Michael & Janice Megrdichian and Family (Colorado); Liz & Jack Sabounjian; Mr. & Mrs. John Megrdichian and Family; Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Megrdichian and Family; James & Erika Megrdichian and Family (Colorado); Michael & Barbara Megrdichian and Family.

- **FELIX GEVORKIAN** (20 Year Memorial) - requested by the Gevorkian Family.

- **EMMA VOSKANYAN** (Armenia) - requested by the Gevorkian Family.

....for whom we are offering these prayers. Be mindful of them in the great day of the coming of your kingdom. Make them worthy of mercy, of expiation and forgiveness of sins. Glorify them and reckon them with the company of your saints at your right hand. For you are Lord and creator of all, judge of the living and of the dead. And to you is befitting glory, dominion and honor, now and unto the ages of ages. Amen.



Welcome and Sunday Fellowship

Welcome Visitors! Please join us for our after services coffee fellowship in the Egavian Hall. Your presence is greatly valued. Please become a regular worshipper. **Note:** Please call the office if you would like to include the name of your family member or friend who is presently in the military in our prayer

Please keep our Christian brothers and sisters in Syria, Egypt and Iraq in your prayers that God Almighty will watch over them and protect them in these uncertain and dangerous times

Please pray for Master Sergeant Richard Moore of the RI Air National Guard who is deployed in Kuwait. May God bless him and keep him safe throughout his service.

Please pray for Haig Yaghoobian, US Army Basic Training at Ft. Jackson. His mailing info.: Specialist Haig Yaghoobian, Alpha Company, 3rd Battalion, 60th Infantry Regiment, 4th Platoon "Ghost Riders," 5500 Marion Ave., Fort Jackson, SC 29207.

PRAYER FOR HEALING - Armenian Book Of Hours (Sixth Hour)

Remove the pains and heal the wounds of your people, O Lord our God, and grant perfect health to us all through your all-conquering cross, through which you eliminated the weakness of the human race and condemned the enemy of our life and salvation.

You are our life and redemption, beneficent and all-merciful God, and you alone can forgive our sins, remove diseases and sicknesses from us. You know our needs, O giver of gifts; grant your abundant mercy to all your creatures, each one according to his needs. And through your gifts may we always praise the all-holy Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and ever. Amen

Prayers of Healing have been requested for:
His Beatitude Abp Mesrob Mutafyan, Patriarch of Constantinople
Boghos and Angela Gulesserian

Prayer Card Ministry

Information about the *Prayer Card Ministry* of Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church is available through the church office. If you would like to request a Healing Prayer Card or a Memorial Prayer Card for a loved one, please call the office (272-7712). Details for this are available on line at <http://www.sstahmes.org/prayercard.shtml>



ANNOUNCEMENTS

TODAY

The *Sunday School* will hold its *Annual Christmas Party* today at 10 a.m. Each student has been asked to bring a gift/toy to wrap at the party to place under the Christmas Tree in Egavian Hall. Gifts will be added to the ACYOA outreach effort. Thanks to all who are participating today !!

Today is the final day to bring in gifts for our *ACYOA Holiday Outreach*.

DECEMBER 21

Senior Citizens - come join us every Monday (at 10 a.m. weather permitting, excluding holidays). Have fun with your friends and neighbors and enjoy with us "coffee and", cards, tavloo, pinochle, etc."

DECEMBER 24

Christmas Eve - Thursday December 24 Service of Carols and Candles at 6 p.m., an English Language service and Nativity Pageant. Carols and Gospel readings for the family.

JANUARY 3

The *Cultural Committee's Christmas Concert* has been scheduled for Sunday, January 3 at 1:30 p.m. in the Church Sanctuary. Featuring the Armenian Chorale of RI, with special performances by Joanne Mouradjian, Gohar Manjelian, Debra Pjojian and The Junior Choir. Donation \$10, including light lunch in Egavian Hall after Divine Liturgy. Reservations for lunch requested by December 30. Please RSVP to the church office.

JANUARY 5

Armenian Christmas Eve - Evening Service 4:30 p.m., Divine Liturgy 5:00 p.m., Family Christmas Fellowship & Music 6:30 p.m., "Cookie Mookie Table" (Caring & Sharing)

JANUARY 6

Wednesday, January 6, Armenian Christmas, *Feast of the Theophany of Our Lord Jesus Christ*. Divine Liturgy 10 a.m., Blessing of Water 11 a.m.

JANUARY 10

Morning Service 9 a.m., Divine Liturgy 10 a.m., Remembrance of the dead, traditional Armenian home blessing 11:30 a.m.

Armenian Christmas Luncheon sponsored by the Women's Guild following services. Stuffed chicken and pilaf dinner including vegetable, salad, dessert and coffee. \$15 Adults, \$7 children 12 & under. Kindly make reservations by contacting Yn. Julie Souin and leaving a message (973-865-9925, or e-mail juliesouin@gmail.com) or call Fran at the church office (401-272-7712, office@stsahmes.org). Open seating, tables can be reserved for groups of 6-8 people. Deadline to reserve: January 6, 2016.

JANUARY 19, 2016

Women's Guild Christmas Dinner - Tuesday, January 19. Basta Italian Restaurant, Cranston, RI. Time- 6:30 p.m. \$35 for members and \$40 for non-members. Secret Santa optional. Contact Lillibeth Kooloian (emkooloian@aol.com or 401-640-2646).

JANUARY 29 & 30

Nazeli Dance Group and Arts Educational Program: Second Semester classes will resume January 29 & 30. For information, contact Chairperson, Janna Guegamian (401-861-3573.)

NOTICES

Retirement party for Chief Justice Haiganoush Bedrosian - Friday, January 8, 2016 at the Providence Marriott Inn. Call or e-mail Lillibeth Kooloian for tickets. (401-640-2646 or emkooloian@aol.com) Cash bar at 5 p.m., dinner at 6 p.m. \$50 per person.

Holiday Outreach - To brighten the lives of our neighbors, the Saint Sahag & Mesrob ACYOA Juniors is supporting its annual *Outreach Program* that will directly benefit needy children and their families during this festive time of year. Gift items must be under the Christmas tree for delivery TODAY.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS - Donations towards the purchase of poinsettia plants for our altar during the Christmas season (now through Armenian Christmas) will be gratefully received. Individuals who wish to make such donations are asked to contact the church office or send in a check (notation: Christmas Flowers). Forms for your use will be available in the hallway by the church office. Gifts received for flowers after today will be acknowledged on Sunday, January 3. Thank you and God bless you for your generosity.

SUNDAY SCHOOL Announcement: Sunday School students are participating in an outreach project collecting hygiene products. The packages will be given to Mary House as well as to St. Sahag and St. Mesrob Church to distribute as needed. For the month of December we will be collecting shampoo and soap. Thank you for your support in our children's outreach efforts.

PRAYER BOX - There is now a new *prayer box* which replaces the "Gold Box" in the chancel. The new box is located on the table at the entrance of the Sanctuary on the elevator side. The prayer box is donated by Michele Kazarian in loving memory of her father, Michael Halberian.

IMPORTANT REMINDER - PARISH MEMBER DUES We are nearing the end of the year! **Existing members' dues must be received by Dec. 31 2015;** (new members must have been received by June 30 to vote at Parish Assembly in February 2016.) Following the decision of the 2/26/2014 Parish Assembly, membership dues are \$175 (\$125 for seniors). Based on a new Diocesan by-law and as this is the centennial year, dues for members age 18-24 are only \$100. Those unable to give full dues may confidentially approach the Pastor to explain their situation. Parishioners are kindly asked to contribute beyond dues as part of the "*Stewardship Program*." Don't forget to take advantage of the many payment options which can be made on line, by check, credit card, in full, or in part weekly, monthly or quarterly.

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR REMINDER- Remember your non-perishable food donations for Mary House food pantry. Items that move very quickly and are needed the most - **tuna, peanut butter, jelly, soups and rice.** Donations of these food items will be greatly appreciated. They also need personal care toiletries such as tooth paste, tooth brushes, shampoo & conditioner, deodorant etc. As always thanks so much for supporting Mary House. For info., contact Joyce Avedisian (724-3978) or Bertha Mugarichian (351-9276).

VETERANS LIST: We are continuing to update our Veteran's list and will do so on a ongoing basis. Please send an email to Gary Nahabedian at GaryNahabedian@hotmail.com. If email is unavailable please call him at 401-871-8331. Please make sure to leave the veteran's name, branch of service and living, deceased or killed in action. (Rank is optional).

Der Hayr's Prayer List: Please inform the office if you have friends or family who are suffering any physical or spiritual distress and are in need of prayer, and Der Hayr will add them to his prayer list where they will be remembered before the Holy and Immortal Lamb of God during the Eucharist. *You may also use the prayer request cards and place them in the Gold Box.*

POOR BOX – Did you know we have poor boxes for donations to help the needy at entrances to the Sanctuary? Contributions appreciated.

ARMENIAN RADIO HOUR - Sundays 9-10 a.m. WARL 1320 AM

ARDZAGANG - Armenian Television Program-Statewide Cable Interconnect Channel 13 (A):broadcast Thursdays, 8:30-9:30 a.m

CHURCH LIBRARY - Anyone needing assistance to donate or take out books from the Church Library should call the church office at 272-7712.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DECEMBER

- 20 Sunday School Annual Christmas Party 10 a.m.
Bring gifts for ACYOA Holiday Outreach by 12/20
- 21 Senior Citizens, 10 a.m.
- 24 Christmas Eve Service, 6 p.m.
- 25 Christmas Day, Office Closed
- 28 Senior Citizens, 10 a.m.

JANUARY 2016

- 1 New Year's Day - Office Closed
- 3 Christmas Concert 1:30 p.m.
- 5 **Armenian Christmas Eve**
Evening Service 4:30 p.m., Divine Liturgy 5 p.m. and
Family Christmas Fellowship following
- 6 **Feast of the Theophany of Our Lord Jesus Christ**
Divine Liturgy 10 a.m., Blessing of Water 11:30 a.m.
- 10 Women's Guild Armenian Christmas Dinner after Church
- 19 Women's Guild Christmas Dinner, 6:30 p.m. Basta Restaurant