

Community

Philadelphia's Armenian Martyrs Church marks its centenary

by Andrew Kevorkian

PHILADELPHIA — Four hundred congregants, dignitaries, friends, and guests helped the Armenian Martyrs Congregational Church (AMCC) mark its centenary, with a luncheon banquet on December 2.

There were a scant 120-or-so Armenians in this city when a group of Armenian Protestants -- many of them the most distinguished Armenians in the city -- began their plans for a church. Their plans were realized in 1907. After holding worship services in many temporary sites, the AMCC established its home in its own building in 1924. In 1964, it moved to its present home in nearby Havertown.

A major portion of the celebratory luncheon, therefore, was devoted to remembering that past and honoring the clergy and others who had served the congregation.

In his keynote speech, which im-

mediately preceded the "Honoring of the Pastors," former pastor Dr. Peter Doghramji, who was later to receive a plaque marking his service, briefly spoke of the AMCC's history and legacy before he read off the names of the 14 pastors -- seven in the first 50 years, and seven in the second 50 years -- who have served the church.

The ceremony to honor the pastors was conducted by Marge Bogosian and Joan Momjian. The three daughters of Rev. Dr. Giragos Chopourian, who died last year at age 92, received a plaque marking his service. Present to receive their awards were Rev. Dr. Soghom Nuyujukian, Rev. Dr. Eugene Grau, Rev. Gary Schongalla-Bowman, Rev. Hovhannes Karjian, and the current pastor, Rev. L. Nishan Bakalian. Absent was Rev. Jirair Sogomian.

The other keynote speaker was Dr. Tony Campola, who delivered a rousing Evangelical speech on the "Outreach of the Church Universal," laced with humor and inspirational messages.

Look back and say "Thank you"

The program opened with a welcome by Dr. Eileen Stephey, moderator of the church. The invocation was pronounced by Rev. Nuyujukian, who is now pastor emeritus.

Albert Momjian, who as a young attorney was instrumental in the negotiations for the present site of the church, served as Master of Ceremonies. After noting the honored guests, which included clergy and representatives of the other Armenian churches in Philadelphia, he noted the names of senders of letters of congratulations, introduced the members of the anniversary committee, and then introduced and thanked the co-chairs of the committee, John Dvedjian and Charles DeMirjian.

Also speaking at the banquet was Daniel Kaiserian, representing the youth of the church who "are starting the next 100 years by building on the last 100 years."

Entertainment was provided by the AMCC's own choir, under its director Mary Loiselle, which sang "Soup, soup"; "Exultate Deo"; "Surely, the Presence"; and "Yes, Lord." The accompanist was Judy Large. Miss Loiselle also acknowledged all the choir leaders of the past, many of whom were present.

In his closing remarks, prior to giving the benediction, Rev. Bakalian acknowledged the need to look back to say "Thank you."

At the reception before the banquet began, while the people who defied the nasty weather were assembling, entertainment was provided by the Ara DerMarderosian Duo. A nostalgic feature of the reception involved video screens around the large room, on which were shown hundreds of photos of activities and individuals during the past years. The staging and production of the presentation was donated by Visual Sound, which was founded by John Bogosian, a long-time AMCC member, who died earlier this year. The company is now

run by his widow Marge and daughter Karen.

A word is necessary for the remarkable 118-page souvenir Commemorative Booklet what was given to all those present. It contains a concise history of the Martyrs Church by Rev. Doghramji, including photos of the clergy of the past; a list of the church's young members who served in World War II, with a special page for the community's sole casualty of war, John Minassian; donors to the Centenary from 21 states and two foreign countries, and 35 pages of photos of church events and members in various activities.

Copies of the book are available for \$20 from the church office (100 N. Edmunds Avenue, Havertown, Pa. 19083), or by contacting Jeanette Bakalian at (610) 446-3330. A DVD of the event is also available.

The Centenary luncheon banquet was a well-planned and lavishly executed tribute to the leaders and congregation of the past, as well as setting a challenge to the present generation. #

Bring home the fruits of the homeland – virtually

FRAMINGHAM, Mass. — With several high-profile stories about Armenia and Armenians making headlines this year, the Internet has been buzzing with information to help people understand and appreciate the unique Armenian culture.

For Baykar Dervishian, however, the Internet-age promises to facilitate more direct connections with Armenia, by giving the world easy access to Armenian music, decorative handicrafts – and even food.

Dervishian is the creator and proprietor of "ArmenianVendor.com." An Armenian-American, he has set out to help his countrymen from the homeland share their talents and creativity with the rest of



Baykar Dervishian, creator and proprietor of www.ArmenianVendor.com, an online store specializing in all manner of Armenian products.

the world, while giving the world direct access to all that Armenians have to offer.

"We started our venture by par-

ticipating in few local Armenian bazaars, and set up tables with our jewelry and pictures of Armenia. A year later, we had sold

hundreds of pictures and pieces of jewelry."

Since then their product listing has grown to items ranging from compact discs and DVDs, to home decor, handmade Christmas ornaments, books, games for kids and adults, apparel, concert promotions, and more.

Dervishian insists that "visiting Armenia is the best way to experience all that the country and its people have to offer. However, for those who don't have that opportunity, ArmenianVendor.com aims to bring Armenia to you."

He embarked on his own maiden voyage to Armenia in 2001, and for the first time, saw, heard, and tasted the country with all its history, tradition and culture. Through his

website, he hoped to capture the realities of modern day Armenia and diasporan Armenian art in a single accessible location.

Dervishian is proud of what he calls the site's "cozy interface" which "feels like you just walked into a far off middle eastern store." He now actively seeks out new products to display, and says he's always open to new ideas and requests. Baykar invites people to contact him anytime via e-mail at baykar@armenianvendor.com.

In the meantime – and especially with Christmas around the corner – he tells web-surfers to "kick back, log on, and get your shopping done. Armenia is just around the corner." #

Let us know what's on your mind. Write to us at **letters@reporter.am**

Obstetrics and Gynecology
Ohanes Cholakian
 M.D., F.A.C.O.G., F.A.C.S.
 Diplomate: American College of Obstetrics & Gynecology, American College of Surgeons, American Association of Gynecologic Laparoscopists
 Affiliated: North Shore University Hospital at Manhasset, Long Island Jewish Medical Center
 108-48 70th Road, Forest Hills, NY 11375, Tel: 718-520-1520

NABET G. KASABIAN, M.D., F.A.C.S.
 DIPLOMATE AMERICAN BOARD OF UROLOGY
 ASSISTANT CLINICAL PROFESSOR OF UROLOGY
 MOUNT SINAI SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
 103 East 80th Street (at Park Ave.) New York, New York 10021
 Tel: 212-535-0755 Fax: 212-744-4539
 E-mail: nkasabian@verizon.net

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE for **Students of Armenian Descent** Having Completed One Year of College by June, 2008
 Applications and other information may be obtained from **ARMENIAN STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION** Scholarship Committee
 333 Atlantic Avenue • Warwick, RI 02888
 Tel. 401 461-6114 • Fax 401 461-6112
 e-mail: headasa@aol.com
 Deadline for requesting Application Forms: February 15, 2008
 Deadline for returning completed Applications: March 15, 2008

Ozanam Hall of Queens Nursing Home, Inc.
 Bagdig Baghdassarian, M.D.
 Diplomate, American Board of Internal Medicine
 (718) 423-2000 Beeper (516) 566-1139

ArmenianVendor.com
 www.ArmenianVendor.com
 Artwork, Jewelry, Music CDs, Armenian DVDS, Food, T-Shirts, Games, Concert Promotion & more...
 Baykar Dervishian
 EMail: baykar@armenianvendor.com
 Phone: (508) 667-2980