

# ST. SARKIS ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH

A 2024 Update



St. Sarkis Church Armenian Apostolic Church, a part of the Douglaston, New York community since 1990

# HAVE YOU VISITED ST. SARKIS CHURCH RECENTLY?

Did you attend a friend's wedding, a child's baptism? Did you come to pray and reconnect with your spirituality? Maybe you follow us on social media?

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St. Sarkis Church provides a vibrant hub that brings the community members of all ages together through worship and events. We also host occasions for many Armenian organizations throughout the year.

Regardless of whether you participate in all of our activities or you haven't visited in some time, we invite you to jump in and join us.

In this publication, we present a quick update about your home parish, St. Sarkis Church – a welcoming place where you can commune with God and find peace while strengthening your Armenian identity.

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HOPE TO SEE YOU SOON!



The sanctuary of St. Sarkis Church 2024

# OUR SPIRITUAL HOME

Christ's final words to his disciples, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" Matthew 28:19, guides the deeply spiritual liturgy and theology of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

This belief forms the basis of the rich heritage of our forefathers and, as a church, we aim to follow Jesus by extending an invitation for everyone to join us.

Within the Armenian Church, faith focuses on the Seven Sacraments of **Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Matrimony, Holy Orders, and Anointing of the Sick**. Through the sacraments, God continues to bestow His grace upon us.



Easter Celebrations Outside St. Sarkis Church 2024

“GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS” - MATTHEW 28:19

We celebrate the sacraments of the **Eucharist** and **Penance** each Sunday during Badarak. These sacraments form the centerpiece of our spiritual life. Sunday Mass or Divine Liturgy, mystically transports us into the room where we share the Last Supper with Jesus and receive atonement for our sins.

The prayers and gestures in Badarak recount the critical points of Christ's incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection. Our deacons, altar servers, choir members, and organists complete the Badarak, making our worship experience more special.



The Marriage of Mr. & Mrs. John Walsh and Nusheg Babikian, St. Sarkis Church, May 2022

The Sacrament of **Holy Matrimony** unites a man and a woman through a sacred bond. At St. Sarkis Church, we unite couples but also provide guidance to those couples on the significance of the union. Our marriage preparation program emphasizes the importance of building a relationship based on the teachings of the Gospel and the Armenian Apostolic Church.

## SACRAMENTS IN THE LIFE OF YOUR FAMILY

Thoughts from  
Der Nareg  
Terterian

Teaching the **Word of God** is an integral part of the Badarak celebration. During my sermons, I focus on interpreting the scriptures in their context incorporating teachings of our early church fathers. My sermons aim to explain the **Word of God** and suggest practical ways to apply it to our everyday lives.

We livestream Badarak each Sunday on Facebook to provide access to all in our community, especially the elderly or those unable to travel to church to experience services. We also archive sermons on YouTube for those who wish to access them. While these digital platforms offer convenience, they cannot replace actual worship in our Sanctuary. By coming to Badarak on Sundays, you enrich your life with **God's Grace**, spiritual nourishment and a sense of belonging to a faith community.

After the formation of new families when couples expand their homes, we invite families to join the Christian family through the Sacraments of **Baptism** and **Confirmation** (Chrismation).

These sacraments serve as a reminder that children are a gift from God and we must remain grateful for this blessing by dedicating our children to God.



The Vitale Family celebrating after the Baptism and Confirmation sacraments, June 2023

The religious ceremony of the **Holy Orders** ordains those with a calling to serve God within the Church. The deacons, sub-deacons, and acolytes who serve on the altar during Badarak commit to serving the church to further their devotion to God.



Srpazan Anoushavan Tanielian, Der Nareg Terterian, music director Armen Ardzvian along with choir, deacons, sub-deacons and acolytes, St. Sarkis Church Name Day, 2024

During the Sacrament of **Anointing of the Sick**, the priest acts as an intermediary through whom Jesus touches the sick to heal them spiritually and physically. Jesus' healing acts signaled the coming of the Kingdom of God, and his core message of healing tells us of his plan to conquer sin and death through His death and resurrection. The sick receive the Holy Spirit's gift of peace and the courage to face their challenges. When a community member falls ill, we make hospital visits, home calls, and telephone check-ins.

Funeral services at St. Sarkis Church remind us of the hope of eternal life that Christ granted us through his resurrection. We offer our prayers for the repose of the deceased and provide comfort and hope to their loved ones.

## SACRAMENTS OF THE HOLY ORDERS AND ANOINTING OF THE SICK

The servants of the church also encourage young men and women to partake in the Badarak through scripture readings during the **Synaxis** (Ճաշու ժամ).

We encourage young community members to participate in church services and, perhaps, consider a vocation in priestly ordination. Seeing the next pastor of St. Sarkis as a young man born and raised in our community would bring us immense joy.



Deacon Razmig Nenejian, Deacon Bedros Kalajian during the Procession of the Bible, Palm Sunday 2024

## Salt & Light

Salt & Light nurtures faith formation in our young adults. Parents and adults from our community volunteer as facilitators to teach and guide more than 80 eager participants. The ministry culminates with an annual weekend retreat that takes place on the feast of the Holy Translators in October. Past events focused on faith, identity, and current events in our Homeland of Armenia. The program uses engaging and interactive activities like biblical teachings, prayers, singing, hiking and celebration of Badarak.



S&L retreat led by Nyrie Bedrossian, Wading River, New York, October 2023

# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT

## Adult Christian Education

Adult education lays an essential foundation in nurturing faith at St. Sarkis Church. Programs such as “Get to Know the Bible in Six Weeks”, provide a comprehensive introduction to the Bible; from Old Testament to New Testament, including the Gospels, Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles. We also organize special events for parishioners, such as the “Redemption on the Cross” workshop. This program focused on typology in the Bible and the Seven Last Words of Jesus on the cross. Attendees left feeling inspired with a deeper spiritual understanding of Holy Week and God’s salvation. Fellowship and agape meals are valued parts of these programs, enabling parishioners to bond over shared learnings and experiences.



Redemption of the Cross workshop, Good Friday 2024

# PONTIFICAL VISIT



His Holiness answers questions at the reception

St. Sarkis Church welcomed His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, for a 2-day event in November 2023. A brief service was held on Friday, and on Saturday, a Youth Conference took place with over 80 attendees. The conference focused on enhancing youth participation in church life and fostering future leadership in the Armenian communities of North America.



The Saturday School welcomes His Holiness Aram I



His Holiness Aram I, the Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia of the Armenian Church with Archbishop Anoushavan Tanielian, Prelate during his visit to S. Sarkis Church, November 2023



His Holiness Aram I and Archbishop Anoushavan Tanielian in front of the altar of St. Sarkis Church with the altar servers, choir and local clergy

## Earthquake Relief for Aleppo



Aftermath of an earthquake that struck Aleppo, Syria, February 2023

We stood in solidarity with the Armenian community in Aleppo, Syria in the aftermath of the earthquake of February 2023. The community severely suffered the impacts of this devastating event. With conviction and determination, St. Sarkis parishioners and friends responded overwhelmingly with generous donations raising over \$48,000 to aid the Armenian community in Syria.

## CHARITY

The Words of  
Christ during  
the Last  
Judgement

*“Say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me’” – Matthew 25:34-40.*

## Garments for Gyumri

A Salt & Light student in our parish requested to use the church facilities to host a clothing drive. The drive aimed to provide clothing to the people of Gyumri, who to this day, still struggle with poverty caused by the 1988 earthquake. Our community generously responded to this appeal by collecting and organizing over 120 boxes of clothing for the effort.



Garments for Gyumri, a fundraiser organized by Andrew Gorgissian, Armenia 2023



## Food Drive for Artsakh



St. Sarkis Food Drive to Benefit Artsakh, September 2023

As the tragic events in Artsakh intensified in 2023, the Pastor, Board of Trustees, and Picnic Committee of St. Sarkis decided to change the annual picnic to a gathering where the community could mourn and pray for the lives lost and displaced in Artsakh. Despite heavy rains, record crowds came and showed their solidarity and support.

As Der Nareg said, *“We are here to support our brothers and sisters in Artsakh and help them as best we can in their hour of need.”* The picnic generated \$8,000 in profits, all donated to displaced Armenians of Artsakh through the Armenian Relief Society (ARS).

We cannot be a church without performing acts of mercy and charity. In 2023, the St. Sarkis Church community made charitable contributions to our brethren in Armenia and the Diaspora exceeding \$100,000 – an impressive accomplishment for a parish of our size. We sincerely appreciate all who supported our campaigns in support of devastated Armenian communities in Armenia and the Middle East.

## CHARITY

*“the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me’”*

- Matthew 25:34-40

## Coat Drive for Artsakh

St. Sarkis Church collaborated with Lorens NYC to produce high-quality winter coats in Armenia for displaced Artsakh Armenians. The Armenian Prelacy’s St. Nerses the Great Charitable Organization in Yerevan handed the coats directly to the Artsakh displaced Armenians. Our community’s generosity made this initiative a great success raising \$27,500.00 for 550 coats while bringing manufacturing jobs to Yerevan.

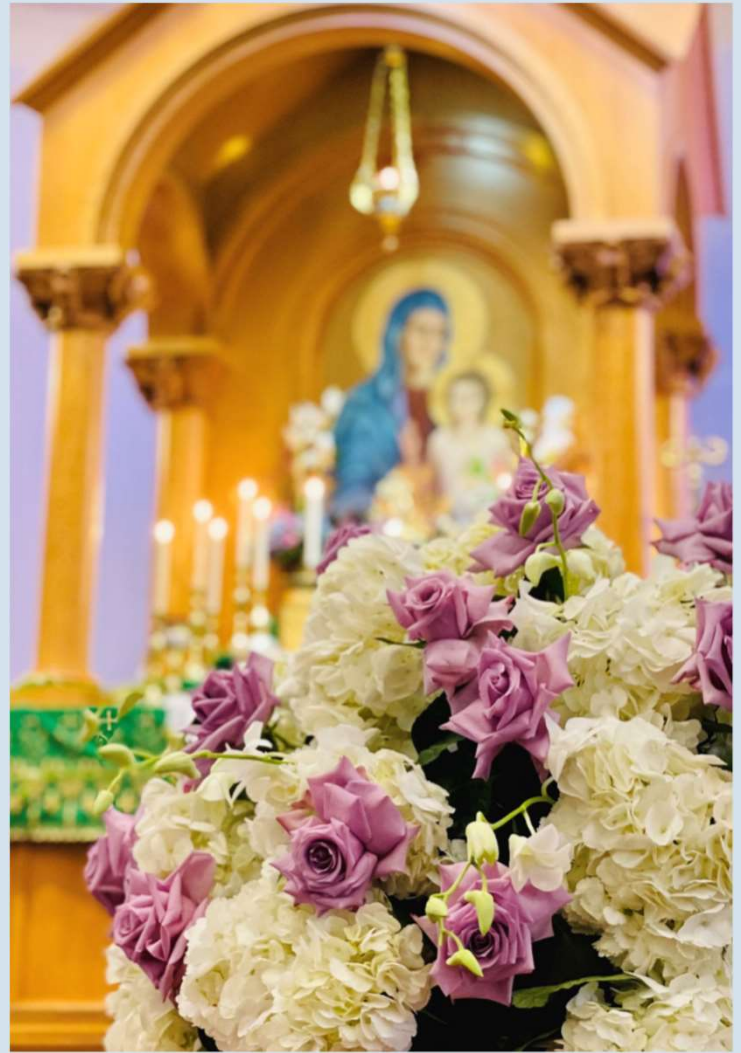


A recipient of a donation from the St. Sarkis Coat Drive, Armenia, February 2024

# COMMUNITY BUILDING

We organize a diverse program of events and activities to help foster a deep sense of kinship across our community. We proudly practice our Armenian Apostolic Christian faith together and celebrate our rich spirituality and heritage as Armenian Christians.

Our various auxiliary bodies play a crucial role in bringing our community to life and making our parish feel at home. We find strength and a renewed determination to grow and thrive in a strong and engaged community.



The Sanctuary of St. Sarkis Church adorned with blossoms, 2024

Armenian School



Christmas Hantes 2023 at St. Sarkis Church led by co-principals Nayiry Injoyan and Aleene Voskerijian with assistance from school staff and the Church Educational committee and chairperson Vicky Hagobian

The Suzanne & Hovsep Hagopian Armenian Culture and Language school holds classes on Saturdays during the school year. A warm and nurturing environment helps students learn the Armenian language, history, religion, and music while make lasting friendships.

The Ladies Guild of St. Sarkis plays an integral part in our community. This creative, dynamic, engaged, dedicated, resourceful and multi-generational group takes the initiative to organize fundraising and community-building events



Ladies Guild St. Sarkis Church, June 2023

including tea parties, bake sales, and international cuisine nights. Their efforts bring people together to celebrate our heritage and culture.



Sunday School led by co-principals Lara Bardizbanian and Pamela Keshishian

Sunday School provides a spiritual introduction for young parishioners. Our students learn about the bible and attend Badarak to attain a better understanding of our Armenian Apostolic Christian Faith in a fun and supportive environment.



Summer Camp 2023 led by a passionate staff of adults and Counselors-in-Training, St. Sarkis Church

St. Sarkis Summer Camp takes place over two weeks in July every summer. Camp offers various fun and exciting activities, educational programs, and outings. Whether learning church doctrine, Armenian history and language, creating crafts or having water wars, summer camp provides a rich Armenian cultural atmosphere where children enjoy warm summer days making lasting memories.

# COMMUNITY BUILDING

## Sages of All Ages

Specifically designed for people over 60, Sages of All Ages provides the group with a space for social activities, cultural programs, and fellowship. What a great success! This popular monthly gathering allows our Sages an opportunity to celebrate together: Winter Brunch, Valentines Day, Bingo!, with more to come.



Sages led by Zepiur Ardzivian, Lena Felice, Hilda Gorgissian, Sonya Nenejian, Yn. Annie Terterian, 2024



Der Nareg and Yn. Annie Terterian host a Young Adults discussion, 2023

through faith as Armenian Christians. Our young adults network with each other sharing professional experiences and expertise with one another.

Designed to establish a space where young adults can feel heard, strengthen their relationship with God and develop friendships. The Young Adults group includes formal bible study sessions and informal discussions focused on building a fulfilling life

## Young Adults Group

## Book Club

Our Book Club bibliophiles meet regularly to discuss selected books. This initiative brings together people with shared interests. Recent selections included: “The Fool” by Raffi; “My Name is Aram” by William Saroyan; “Open: An Autobiography” by Andre Agassi; “The Gardens of Silihdar” by Zabel Yessayan, and “The Human Comedy” by William Saroyan.



Members of the inaugural year of the Book Club, started by Ardemis Zobian, with their readings

Sunshine Care focuses on creating a welcoming Armenian community both within and beyond the walls of the church. The Sunshine team keeps busy conducting outreach to the elderly and infirm, driving people to the doctor or pharmacy; preparing and delivering food to the homes of people in need; providing friendship and prayer support in person and by phone, writing personal condolence cards and welcoming new married couples and families into the church family. Their important work positively impacts the lives in our community.



The St. Sarkis co-ed Starters Basketball team with their coaches and general manager, 2023

Players have fun learning basketball skills and developing a love of the game in a safe and supportive environment. The program includes Junior Boys and co-ed Starters teams. We welcome new players and hope to form Senior Boys and Girls teams in the future.

St. Sarkis Church launched a scholarship program for college students in the 2023-2024 academic year. Generously funded by a longtime parishioner of the church, the Scholarship Committee evaluates applicants based on academic performance, financial need, and involvement within the St. Sarkis Church, Armenian and non-Armenian communities.



Scholarship recipients for 2022, Mr. Aren Bedrossian (left) and 2023, Ms. Margaret Sakar (right) blessed by Der Nareg on Graduates Day with Karnig Alajajian and Board Chairperson Annita Nerses, St. Sarkis 2023

WE APPRECIATE THE  
OPPORTUNITY TO  
SUPPORT SISTER  
ORGANIZATIONS IN  
THEIR ENDEAVORS

**WE OFTEN HOST JOINT EVENTS WITH THESE ORGANIZATIONS  
SINCE THEY PLAY A PART IN KEEPING ARMENIAN CULTURAL  
TRADITIONS AND HISTORY ALIVE IN OUR CHURCH.**

# SISTER ORGANIZATIONS

AYF New York Hyortiks



Hyortiks after their Winter Vernissage for Artsakh, St. Sarkis 2023

Hamazkayin of NY



Movie Screening in Pagoumian Hall, 2023

Homenetmen NY



Homenetmen champion volleyball team at the Montreal games, 2023

ARS Erebouni



Armenian Relief Society Erebouni Chapter, St. Sarkis, 2023

ARF Armen Garo



ARF New York Armen Garo Gomidehutyun, Pagoumian Hall 2023

Homenetmen Scouts



Toros Aledjian leads the Scouts at St. Sarkis, 2024

Nor Yeraz Dance



Hamazkayin Nor Yeraz Ensemble led by Maria Bechirian and Tigran Dumanyan, 2024

THE ROAD AHEAD  
IS NOT WITHOUT  
CHALLENGES

**FINDING WAYS TO MAINTAIN WHAT WE HAVE WITH AN  
EYE TOWARD THE FUTURE**



# CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

As we move forward as a church, we face challenges and opportunities. We pray for the patience to overcome any obstacles that come our way and the wisdom to learn from them. We also pray for the astuteness to recognize opportunities and the fortitude to pursue them.

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## RENOVATIONS

Pagoumian Hall underwent extensive renovations in 2023, updating the kitchen, floors, appliances and furniture. The hall transformed into a more modern, versatile event space.

The staff office, located just within the church's main doors, underwent updates in 2023 adding much needed storage and working space for our staff.

The Ladies Guild storage closet, located outside the kitchen, went through a total redesign adding more functional space for equipment.

## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Inflationary pressure affected St. Sarkis Church by increasing our operating expenses across the board. To mitigate the impacts of inflation, we underwent rigorous examination of our financials and expenses. We identified cost-savings and took financial action to ensure we could still host affordable programs and events for our parishioners.

We took prudent action such as establishing tax-exempt accounts, moving cash reserves to a low-risk money market fund and opening a business credit card. We revised the hall rental contract agreement and started advertising hall rentals as a means of additional income for our church. Finally, we made legal changes to the Union Turnpike properties to mitigate future risk.



A view from the renovated kitchen of Pagoumian Hall, 2024

WE CANNOT DO IT  
WITHOUT  
YOU

**WE ASK FOR YOUR SUPPORT**

# FORMING NEW COMMITTEES TO ADDRESS OUR CHALLENGES

St. Sarkis Church aims to expand its mission to serve the community as a vibrant spiritual and cultural home. To achieve this, the church plans to deepen its mission through various programs. Four new committees will help with this effort. The new committees, comprised of leaders with diverse talents and capabilities from our community, will focus their efforts on:

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## FINANCE AND INVESTMENT

This committee concentrates on the Church's short-term and long-term financial health. Finding opportunities to employ best practices and evaluating investment opportunities.

## MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

This committee aims to foster a growing and thriving parish community with a robust leadership pipeline and ample opportunity to find community service and fun activities. The group focuses on developing the next generation of leaders – crucial to the church's longevity. We encourage participation and actively seek suggestions and help in organizing events and activities.

## INFRASTRUCTURE & TECHNOLOGY

This team creates and implements sustainable plans to address the current and anticipated needs of our parish in terms of operational maintenance, physical improvements and technology architecture. Immediate plans include the upgrade of the church website and reorganization of data storage in an effort to improve operations management and infrastructure.

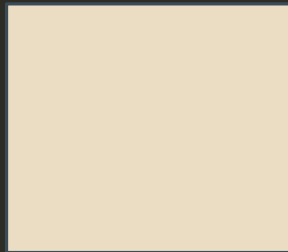
## PASTORAL COUNCIL

This council supports the pastor in his mission to develop and improve activities and programs that promote spiritual enrichment for parishioners of all ages.



The entry of St. Sarkis Church, 2024

IF YOU HAVEN'T  
VISITED ST. SARKIS  
CHURCH IN A  
WHILE...



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**WE WOULD LOVE TO SEE YOU, BADARAK EVERY SUNDAY AT 10:30AM**