



St Yeghiche Armenian Church Parish
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Cranley Gardens, London SW7 3BB

Annual Report
2016

February 2017

Background

The Armenian Community of Great Britain has been blessed with the availability of three churches. The first is the Holy Trinity Armenian Church in Manchester completed in 1870. The second is the Armenian Church of St Sarkis built in 1924. These two churches have served the religious, cultural and national needs of the Armenian community in Great Britain, without imposing any financial burden on the community through the kind generosity of its benefactors. Both the churches are governed by Trust law.

On the 28th of June, 1965, the Armenians in London elected its first London Armenian Community and Church Council (ACCC). Its first task was to secure a church which it did by leasing the church of All Saints in Finchley which after being demolished acquired the Church of St Peter's, Cranley Gardens, consecrated by His Holiness Vazgen 1st on 8th June 1975. For twenty years the community leased St Peter's Church for a nominal rental from the Church of England. By 1997/98 the church building completed in 1866-7 had aged considerably and needed extensive renovation which the community could not afford.

The community is grateful to the Benefactors, Mr & Mrs Vatche and Tamar Manoukian who purchased the church from the Church of England and renovated it to a splendid standard. It was renamed St Yeghiche Armenian Church and was consecrated on 10th June 2001 by His Holiness Karekin II, and the ACCC continued to provide church services at St Yeghiche since its re-opening.

Mr Manoukian has established a Trust to hold the freehold of the church building and in accordance with his promise when he acquired the freehold; he made St Yeghiche available to ACCC for church services. The Manoukian Trust pays all the maintenance expenses of the church building including heating, electricity, repairs and cleaning costs. However, the ACCC remained responsible for the functioning of the church as a place of worship and associated expenses.

On November 3rd 2013 the ACCC devolved its responsibility of running the church to a newly established St. Yeghiche Armenian Church Parish.

The new St. Yeghiche Armenian Church Parish was established by, members of the community, who registered as members of the Parish of St Yeghiche Church, and the Parish Assembly thus was created. Having adopted the Parish Constitution in accordance with the canons of the Holy Armenian Apostolic Church, the assembled members, elected its first Parish Council which is entrusted with the management of the church. The Parish is grateful to the Vatche and Tamar Manoukian Charitable Trust for allowing the Parish, free use of the

church building and for continuing to pay the full maintenance expenses of the church building.

On 18th November 2013, the St Yeghiche parish council had its inaugural meeting, chaired by the primate, during which the officers were elected.

The Parish Council since its establishment started pursuing a number of objectives such as initiation of FAQs, preparation of weekly Sunday Bulletin and monthly SHOGHK church newsletter, establishing ladies guild, as well as Facebook and website for routine communications with the parish members and community.

In 2016, St Yeghiche Armenian Church Parish served its members and community with all its religious requirements. Helping His Grace Bishop Hovakim Manukyan, were visiting priests Rev Fr Movses Sargsyan, Rev Fr Vram Ghazarian and Rev Fr Arsen Saroyan.

St Yeghiche Armenian Church and its staffing structure are here to serve the UK Armenian Community. We are keen to welcome everyone to our church and increase the attendance and membership of our Parish.

Events and activities held at St Yeghiche Armenian Church 2016

Divine Liturgy is held every Sunday starting at 11:00 am

- 3rd January New Years' Service:

The New Year's first Sunday St Yeghiche Armenian Church was well attended. Divine Liturgy was served by visiting priest Rev Fr Movses Sargsyan. At the end of the service Pomegranates were blessed and distributed to the faithful. This is a new tradition which HH Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians started this year.

- 6th January Armenian Christmas:

Divine Liturgy was served by the community's Primate, HG Bishop Hovakim Manukyan. The service was well attended by a large number of our Community members. His Grace gave a moving sermon and called for Unity and Love to strengthen the Armenian Church. This was followed by Armenian Christmas Lunch event which was jointly organised by St Yeghiche Ladies Guild and ACC Ladies committee.

- 4th February Vartanantz:

For the first time HG Bishop Hovakim served Divine Liturgy at St Yeghiche commemorating the Battle of Vartanantz. HG had invited High Ranking Clergy from sister churches who attended the service. Students from both Armenian schools were invited and took part in the evening service. In his sermon HG emphasized the importance of the martyrdom for the faith and, the act of the soldiers who knowingly accepted the sacrifice for the glory of our Lord.

- **26TH February Theophania 2016 Concert.**

Seven Orthodox Churches in UK under the Auspices of HG Bishop Hovakim Manukyan joined in St Yeghiche Armenian Church to celebrate “The Appearance of God”. This terminology has been used in the early church to reflect the events leading up to Jesus’s Baptism. Choirs from seven different churches (Armenian, Syriac, Moldovan, Russian, Coptic, Maronite and Greek) told the story of Theophania using traditional hymns and music, followed by readings from the Bible, each in their own language. At the end, all the choirs sang together “Gloria in Excelsis Deo”

- **February to March.**

Six Lent Lectures in place of sermons on Armenian Church theology was delivered by Rev Fr. Vram Ghazaryan at St Yeghiche Church every Sunday. Fr Vram who was visiting United Kingdom for a short period also gave the opportunity to the Parishioners to ask any questions about the Armenian Orthodox Church’s stand on every day concerns and its interpretation.

- **Holy Week at St Yeghiche**

Full Holy Week services were held at St Yeghiche between 21st March and 27th March 2016.

- **21st March Palm Sunday:**

Divine Liturgy was served by Rev Fr Vram Ghazaryan. The St Yeghiche Parish Council sent invitation to all the families with children to attend and participate in the children’s procession that Fr Vram arranged in keeping with the triumphant entry of our lord to Jerusalem. The service was very well attended by a large number of our Community members. Fr Vram in his sermon explained about Easter and its fundamental meaning to the Armenian Church and its faith. Traditional palm leaf crosses and olive branches were blessed and distributed to the faithful. Following the service Terenpatz ceremony was conducted where individuals from the congregation were asked to dress up and climb the Alter and open the curtains of the church after prayers.

- **24th March Great Thursday:**

The St Yeghiche Church welcomed the faithful to a whole day of various religious services including the washing of the feet and Evening prayers. His Grace Bishop

Hovakim washed the feet of more than 14 children and our deacons in an act of humble service to God, His Church and to mankind.

- **25th March Good Friday:**

At 4:30 pm the service of Burial took place. This Year St Yeghiche Armenian Church received, from Mr Armen Badalian, our lord's tomb in memory of his Parents and Brother. This was in the shape of the church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. Fr Vram prepared the table with candles and incense and the faithful brought flowers to place on our lord's tomb.

- **27th March Easter Sunday:**

Divine Liturgy was served by His Grace Bishop Hovakim Manukyan. The church was full to capacity with community members and Faithful. His Grace gave a moving sermon about Easter and its fundamental meaning to the Armenian Church and its faith. Traditional coloured and decorated Easter Eggs, which was donated and prepared by the Ladies Guild, were blessed and distributed to the faithful.

- **24th April Special Devine Liturgy for the Centenary of the Armenian Genocide.**

His Grace Bishop Hovakim Manukyan presided over a special Devine Liturgy for the souls of the 1.5 Million Armenian Genocide victims. The service was attended by high ranking clergy, leaders and representatives of various organisations including members of the Embassy of the Republic of Armenia. His Grace in his sermon emphasised that we should joy because our Forefathers and Foremothers who were the victims of the genocide perpetrated by the Ottoman Government in 1915 joined the ranks of saints and martyrs who sacrificed their lives for their Faith and Homeland. His sermon was followed by service of blessing with Holy Meron, the special Icon which was reproduced for the said purpose. Due to the sanctification there were no requiem service prayers but instead the choir sang the special hymn, victoriously and praise their triumph for Faith and Homeland.

At 14:30 the Armenian Community Council commemorated the 101st anniversary with a befitting program of music and poetry.

- **3rd July St Yeghiche Fellowship day:**

The St Yeghiche Parish Council together with Fr Vram, as in previous year, organised an outing after church service for all members of the Choir, Organist, Deacons, Ladies Guild and church Helpers as a thank you for their dedication and service to the church. The group went to the annual Summer BBQ party organised by Armenian Scouts of HMEM.

- **14th August Feast of Assumption of Holy Mother of God:**

Bishop Hovakim led the Devine Liturgy at St Yeghiche. The church was well attended and after the service HG blessed the grapes which were distributed to the

faithful as per our Armenian Church tradition. In his sermon HG explained the importance of the day and the meaning of motherhood in our Christian life.

- **11th September Holly Cross Day:**

Bishop Hovakim led the Divine Liturgy at St Yeghiche. His sermon of the day was based about love your fellow being. The church was well attended.

- **17th September Republic of Armenia Independence day celebration:**

The Armenian Community in UK was invited to St Yeghiche Armenian Church as it has become customary to celebrate Independence Day of the Republic of Armenia which was organised by Armenian Community Council. The guest performers were the famous Alma Jazz Quartet and Mrs Anahid Sahakyan. After the customary speeches the Artists performed to their customary high standard.

- **11th October Holy Translators:**

St Yeghiche church as customary was well attended on the Holy Translators day. As St Yeghiche the Patron Saint of the church was one of the members of the Holy Translators, this feast and date is high on our Parish calendar. This year the school children from K Tahta Sunday Community School attended the service of Divine Liturgy. HG Bishop Hovakim gave his sermon explaining the importance of the translator's work which kept our identity alive and made us stronger in our faith and language. At the end of the service a special memorial service was conducted for our Benefactor's father, Mr Yeghiche Manoukian.

- **Farewell to Fr Movses,**

By Pontifical blessing of His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians; Rev. Fr. Movses Sargsyan arrived in August 2015 in UK as visiting priest for six months. St Yeghiche Armenian Church was blessed to have him serve Divine Liturgy and get to know its congregation. Before his departure from UK and during his last service Rev Fr Movses blessed the congregation and thanked the Parish Council for welcoming and working with him during his six month stay in UK. After church service the Ladies Guild had arranged a reception as a thank you and farewell for the young Father and everyone wished him well in his endeavour.

- **Farewell to Rev Fr Vram,**

By Pontifical blessing of His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians; Rev. Fr. Vram Ghazaryan arrived in February 2016 in UK as visiting priest for six months. St Yeghiche Armenian Church enjoyed the Divine Liturgy which Fr Vram served at St Yeghiche.

St Yeghiche Armenian Church Parish Council was very sorry to read that Rev Fr Vram after returning from UK has left the brotherhood order and returned to his civilian life. We wish Mr Avedik Ghazarian all the success for the future.

- **Very Rev Fr Torgom Donoyan,**

The Armenian Community in UK was equally pleased to welcome Very Rev Fr Torgom Donoyan from the brotherhood order of the great House of Cilicia who was in UK to further his education in theology and English Language. We were blessed at St Yeghiche to welcome V. Rev Fr Torgom at St Yeghiche and witness his service of Divine Liturgy and hear his sermons. We wish Very Rev Fr Torgom all the success and look forward to welcoming him in the future.

- **Mr Nairy Afrikyan Joins the Parish Council 15th June 2016**

Deacon Nairy Afrikian, the candidate with next most votes at the election, has accepted to become a member of the St Yeghiche Parish Council. This followed the resignation of Mr Sergey Shahverdian.

Sacraments performed at St Yeghiche during 2016

Baptisms	4
Engagement	0
Weddings	4
Funerals	3

Communication Channels

The St Yeghiche Armenian Church Parish operates a website and a Facebook page to communicate with the Armenian Community in UK. These are as follows:

www.styeghiche.org.uk

<https://www.facebook.com/styeghiche/>

[Sunday Bulletin](#)

[Shoghk Monthly paper](#)

St. Yeghiche Pastoral & Church Committee Meetings

The members of the Parish Council held regular meetings with their visiting clergy and HG Bishop Hovakim. During these meetings the council discussed the various aspects of the running of the church its services and its finances.

The St Yeghiche Armenian Church Parish is fully committed to assist and support the Primacy of Armenian Church in United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland and work under one umbrella to the Glory of God and the Armenian Community in UK.

Future Activities

The Parish Council are looking forward to next year 2017 and obviously we like to maintain all the regular Church activities which we undertook last year and where possible improve.

With your support, here are some of additional activities we are considering and wish to implement:

- Encourage house blessing *Doonorhnek*
- Visiting the needy and lonely people
- Visiting the sick at home and hospitals
- Bring the Elderly to church
- Name days and special religious holiday activities
- Biblical Education for teachers in the Armenian Schools
- School children's day. A special *Badarak* for the children.
- Invite and offer Group Blessing, Newlyweds, Baptised children, Scouts, Athletes, etc.
- Continue our own church Bulletin and monthly paper in both printed and electronic version
- Organise Biblical lectures after Sunday service

Availability of full time priest and human resources are key consideration for implementing some or all of the above. We kindly ask for your help and support, so please get in touch and **volunteer** for or **sponsor** any of the above activities and let us FULLFIL together all our Parish activities listed above.

Reminder

The Annual Membership fee for 2017 is now due.

Please make any outstanding Payments for 2015 – 2016 and promptly pay your 2017 dues thus saving your Parish printing and postage costs.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Your kind donations are gratefully accepted:

In order to meet the ever increasing church functioning expenses, The St Yeghiche Parish Council would like to appeal to all members of the community for their annual membership dues and generous donations.

Please complete this form and hand your donation to the members of the Parish Council at the side entrance of the Church. Alternatively please post your cheque to:

St Yeghiche Armenian Church Parish

c/o Dr. Setrag Karanfilian,

13b Cranley Gardens, London, SW7 3BB

Please make your cheque payable to: **“St Yeghiche Armenian Church”**.

Alternatively you can arrange your donation by bank transfer to our St Yeghiche Armenian Church Parish Ltd Account at:

HSBC, Acc.no: 42674432,
Sort code: 40-02-26,
IBAN: GB73MIL40022642674432,
BIC: MIDLGB2106F

I wish to donate £to the St Yeghiche Armenian Church Parish.

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