



DIocese OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF AMERICA
ԱՌԱՋՆՈՐԴՈՒԹԻՒՆ ՀԱՅՈՑ ԱՄԵՐԻԿԱՅԻ ԱՐԵՒԵԼԵԱՆ ԹԵՍԻ

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate

Թի 2165
Սեպտեմբեր 14, 1995

Նորին Սուրբ Օծութիւն
Տէր Տէր Գարեգին Առաջին
Ծայրագոյն Պատրիարք եւ Կաթողիկոս Ամենայն Հայոց
Մայր Աթոռ Սուրբ Էջմիածին.

Վեհափառ Տէր,

Հէյվըրհիլ Մասսաչուէցի Ս. Գրիգոր Լուսաւորիչ Եկեղեցւոյ Հոգեւոր Հովիւ Արժշ. Տ. Սահակ ԲՅՈՂ. Բէյիշեան նամակով կը տեղեկացնէ թէ՛ տարւոյս Հոգտեմբեր 29-ին պիտի նշուի Եկեղեցւոյ 50-ամեակը, եւ Ծիսական Խորհուրդին անունով փափաք կը յայտնէ դիմել Ձերոյ Սրբութեան եւ Հայրապետական Կոնդակ մը խնդրել:

Որոշուած է այս առթիւ յիշատակի գրքոյկ մը հրատարակել եւ Ձերոյ Վեհափառութեան Կոնդակը տպել անոր մէջ:

Հաճեցէք ներփակ գտնել Հէյվըրհիլի Ս. Գրիգոր Լուսաւորիչ Եկեղեցւոյ եւ համայնքի ամփոփ պատմութիւնը:

Մեծապէս շնորհակալ պիտի ըլլամ, եթէ Ձերոյ Սրբութիւնը բարեհաճի ընթացք տալ ներկայացուած խնդրանքին:

Մատչելով ի համբոյր Ձերոյ Վեհափառութեան Ս. Աջոյն
Խոնարհաբար

Խաժակ Արք. Պարսամեան
Առաջնորդ

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH IN HAVERHILL

The first Armenians settled in Haverhill during the years 1890-92. They were only about fifteen in number, but the greatest tragedy in the long history of the Armenian people, the 1915 massacres, was just around the corner. Armenians who had miraculously survived that nearly mortal blow had to seek new homes in foreign lands. Thousands of Armenians migrated to the United States, and an Armenian community was formed in the City of Haverhill. At the present time, there are about 300 Armenian families in the greater Haverhill area.

These early pioneers recognized the great need for a spiritual home and were instrumental in getting Armenian priests to visit the community to perform church services from time to time. The solid basis for Armenian community life began, and soon it took on a more organized form with the establishment of a Board of Trustees and Ladies' Aid Society.

Previous to the establishment of an Armenian Church in Haverhill, several priests visited the parish periodically to celebrate the Divine Liturgy, which was held in Trinity Episcopal Church, and to encourage the parish to establish a church in the community. They were Very Rev. Khoren Lazarian, Rev. Yeghishe Kasparian, Very Rev. Ghevont Martoogesian, Rev. Khoren Mamigonian, Very Rev. Ghevont Arabian, Rev. Mattheos Hekimian, Very Rev. Terenig Poladian, and Rev. Hovhanes Kavookjian.

In the absence of an Armenian Church in our community, many Armenians attended Trinity Episcopal Church. When it was learned that the two Episcopal churches in Haverhill were planning to unite and that St. John's Episcopal Church would be available for purchase, immediate steps were taken to negotiate for its purchase. Through the co-operation of Rev. Charles O. Brown, pastor of Trinity Episcopal Church, who was a true friend to all Armenians, the purchase of this church was realized on July 6, 1943.

The edifice has a 300-year history. It was originally erected in 1641 by the Unitarians, who were settlers from England. They had originally settled in Ipswich, but after passing a winter there, they settled in Haverhill, which they called Pentucket, and built the first church in this town. In 1847, the church was destroyed by fire and rebuilt in 1848-49. Thirty years later, in 1880, the church was renovated, and the facade which previously faced the Merrimack River was then redesigned to face Main Street. In 1926, the Episcopalians purchased the building, and it remained St. John's Episcopal Church until 1943 when we acquired the building.

After a major renovation program to conform with the regulations of the Armenian Church, the Church was consecrated on December 23, 1945 by His Eminence, Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan, who was Primate of the North American Diocese at that time. The Godfather of the Church was Edgar Movsesian, who named it St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Church, Godfather of the Altar was Kaspar Asadoorian, and Godfather of the Baptistery was Aram Aramian.

In 1952, a major renovation program was completed in the church hall, and it was named Rayissian Hall.

In 1959, the Haverhill High School Annex, adjacent to our Church, was destroyed by fire with resultant extensive water damage to our Church. Once again, a major renovation program began which included a new roof, new aluminum siding, new pews and the rebuilding of the pipe organ.

In 1965, negotiations were entered with the city officials for the purchase of the former Annex land for the future expansion of our Church facilities, and this purchase was realized on April 4, 1966.

In 1967, another renovation program of the church hall was completed, and modern lavatories were installed, the hall was repainted, and the floor beams were strengthened.

On June 25, 1970, as a result of the foresightedness of the Parish Council, our Church took a positive step and purchased a single family house at 9 Buttonwoods Avenue in Haverhill which will be used as a parsonage.

The pastors of our Church have all shared in its history, and each pastor has left his own personal mark of achievement. We have had capable leadership, spiritual guidance, establishment and strengthening of the church organs, development of the choir, and the establishment of the Armenian and church schools. As a result, our Church has flourished, and our sincere gratitude is extended to all the pastors who have served our Church: Very Rev. Hmayag Intoyan, Very Rev. Hrant Khatchadourian, Very Rev. Mesrop Semerjian, Rev. Mamigon Osganian, Rev. Vartan Asadourian, and our present pastor, Rev. Michael Buttero.

The administration of our Church is the prime responsibility of our Parish Council. Through the history of our Church, these members have dedicated themselves and have worked tirelessly and diligently to maintain and strengthen the life of the Armenian Church in our community. The present members of our Parish Council are: Michael Der Boghosian, Chairman; John Tatian, Vice Chairman; Sarkis Chobanian, Secretary; Zaven Gostanian, Treasurer; and Edward Basmajian, Edward Der Bogosian, Anthony Devejian, Simon Hamalian, and Hagop Kasparian, Advisors.

The delegates who represent our parish at the Annual Assemblies of the North American Diocese of our Church are James A. Derderian and Michael Der Boghosian.

It would be remiss not to mention that many of our parishioners have loyally served our Church in many ways throughout its history. Although their names are not recorded in the annals of our Church, they continue to serve silently and faithfully. It is truly in order to pay a special tribute at this time for their unfailing devotion to the Armenian Church.