

**HISTORY OF HOLY RESURRECTION ARMENIAN CHURCH
SO. MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN**

In the year of 1910 five Armenian men arrived in South Milwaukee to work in local factories. By 1912 there were over 100 Armenians living in South Milwaukee. The majority came from Kayseri Province in Turkish Armenia from the villages of Tomarza, Jujoon, Everek, Chomaglou, Sivas and Kharpet. The early emigrants came to this country with the thought of working, saving money and returning to their villages and families for a better life. They lived in groups in rooming houses so they could save more money.

Feeling the need of religious services, a Board of Trustees was established in 1912. Hagop Yelangian; Chairman, Mgerditch Vahradian; Vice-Chairman, and Kaloust Dadian; Treasurer. They made arrangements for visiting clergy and St. Mark's Episcopal Church in South Milwaukee was gracious enough to allow services to be held in their church.

During World War I (1914-18) twenty-one Armenians from South Milwaukee volunteered to serve in the U.S. Army. Thank God, all returned. Some were wounded and gassed but they came home safe. The Armenian community was recognized by the U.S. Government and given a citation for their strong participation in the Liberty Bond program.

After the war, the men realized that going back to their homeland would be futile. They knew that their homes in Turkey were destroyed and their families massacred, sent to unknown lands or lost. They decided that South Milwaukee was their permanent home. Many returned to their homelands to search for their families, others to look for brides for themselves and perspective brides for their friends. The first Armenian family to arrive was Hoogas and Zarouhee Torosian with daughters Roxie, Margaret and infant son, Harry.

In early 1924, with the increase of Armenian population, it was recognized that a church was needed. The Armenian elders called a meeting to organize a Building Committee. Soon after the meeting, the committee purchased St. Luke's Church at 909 Michigan Avenue for \$3,200 and invested an additional \$11,000 to remodel the inner structure to meet Armenian traditional designs. On October 3-4 of 1924, the Church was consecrated by His Eminence Archbishop Dirayr Hovanesian and given the name of Soorp Haroutune Armenian Apostolic Church. The Charter Parish Council members were Apkar Salbashian (Godfather of the Church), Hairabed Kalajian, Ghevont Kamakian, Mihran Hayalian, Vahan Jandegian, Boghos Kachigian, Hagop Samuelian, Hoogas Torosian, Hairabed Vahradian, Hagop Yelanjian and Krikor Zakian. Soorp Haroutune Armenian Church of South Milwaukee was the first organized and consecrated Armenian Church in Wisconsin. The Ladies Aid and Choir was also formed in 1924. Reverend Father Vartan Tavidian was appointed the first permanent pastor. Shnork Mouradian was the first

Deacon. He served officially for forty-one years from 1924-1965. Kaloust Tavidian also served as a Deacon and acting Choir Director until 1947.

With the Armenian-American community growing larger, the South Milwaukee City Council allowed Armenian language classes in the evenings at the High School and also provided teachers to teach English and History so the local Armenians could start applying for U.S. Citizenship.

World War II disrupted the life of the Parish. Approximately eighty young men from the South Milwaukee area served in the U.S. Armed Forces. Three made the supreme sacrifice -- George Mouradian, Charles Baderian and Reuben Markarian. The Church again was recognized by the U.S. Government for participating in the U.S. Bond drives. There also were South Milwaukee Armenians who served in the Korean Conflict and Vietnam War. All returned home safely.

Since the settlement of the Armenians in South Milwaukee, a section of St. Mark's Episcopal Church Cemetery has been used to bury our loved ones. However, there was a desire by our elders that we should have our own cemetery for Armenians only.

The founding Fathers of the Cemetery were Very Rev. Soukias Kalfayan, Tarkis Barsamian, Mihran Hayalian, Kerovpe Balian, Shnork Barsamian, Kazar Barsamian, Simon Tertadian, John Sarian

and Sarkis Dadian. In 1947 the cemetery was established; the first Church-affiliated Armenian cemetery in the United States. In later years Nerses Nersesian and Ronald Lewis volunteered to maintain the cemetery, and, presently, Michael Hayalian and Tony Hadjinian maintain the cemetery with Kerovpe Balian as Advisor. To date, there are 232 loved ones interred.

On February 7, 1960, fire struck and destroyed the Altar area of the Church. In the same year, Parish members voted to construct a new Church. A Building Committee was formed with Harry Nahabedian; Chairman, Barsam Barsamian; Vice-Chairman, Charles Kademian; Treasurer, Kaprel Kaprelian, Jerry Kashishian, Alfred Hayalian, Russell Kaishian and advisors Esahag Haidarian, Arthur Barsamian and Harold Baylerian. Plans and designs were submitted to the congregation and approved. On December 10, 1961, construction began. On April 14th and 15th, 1962, His Eminence Archbishop Sion Manoogian officiated in the consecration and blessing of the new edifice.

During the year of 1960, His Holiness Vasken I, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of all Armenians, was touring the U.S. and came to our Parish on July 1st. After the Hrashapar service, Very Rev. Soukias Kalfayan was bestowed a Pectoral Cross and elevated to the rank of Dzayrakoon Vartabed. Very Rev. Dz V Kalfayan served Holy Resurrection for eighteen years from 1943 until his death in 1961. Also in 1960, Deacon Steven Barsamian, member of Holy Resurrection Parish was ordained

into the priesthood and given the name of Rev. Fr. Arsen Barsamian.

When His Holiness visited Soorp Haroutune Armenian Church which was just after the fire that struck the altar area, His Holiness was saddened at the condition, but was told that there was plans to build a new Church. In 1962, Dr. Sarkis and Dorothy Kash visited Armenia. Dr. Kash had a audience with His Holiness and showed him pictures of the newly constructed Church. His Holiness presented Dr. Kash a Khatchcar as a gift to Holy Resurrection, which now is mounted in front of the altar.

On May 1-3, 1964, Holy Resurrection was host of the 62nd Annual Diocesan Assembly which thirty clergy and one-hundred delegates attended.

In September, 1964, the Divine Liturgy was televised over station WTMJ-TV whose viewing audience covers the State of Wisconsin. Celebrant was Rev. Fr. Guregh Kalfayan, with the Deacon Parsegh Vahradian serving on the altar and Deacon Hovhannes Kasparian (now Rev. Fr. Karekin) directing the Choir.

Holy Resurrection has been serving the South Milwaukee Armenian Community for seventy years, and with God's Blessing will continue to serve in many years to come.

CLERGY SERVING HOLY RESURRECTION FROM 1924 TO PRESENT

Rev. Fr. Vartan Tavidian
Rev. Fr. Yeghisha Ashjian
Very Rev. Dz V Khoren Lazarian
Rev. Fr. Yeghia Kasparian
Rev. Fr. Vartan Tavidian
Apegha Ghevont Arabian
Rev. Fr. Karakin Hovagimian
Rev. Fr. Khoren Manigonian
Very Rev. Dz V Soukias Kalfayan
Rev. Fr. Guregh Kalfayan
Rev. Fr. Krikor Hairabedian
Very Rev. Vasken Keshishian
Very Rev. Arshag Khatchadourian
Rev. Fr. Zenob Nalbadian
Very Rev. Papken Anoushian (visiting)
Rev. Fr. Garabed Kochakian (visiting)
Deacon Serope Aljalian
Rev. Fr. Vahram Hazarian (visiting)