

# Armenian Church News

January 8, 2021

Volume 7, Issue 1

Diocese of the Armenian Church of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland

## *Feast of Nativity and Theophany* *Մուրբ Ծննունդ եւ Աստուածյաննութիւն*



*“Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, ‘Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East and have come to worship him.’ And lo, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.” (Matthew 2:1-11, RSV)*

The first week of the calendar is an eventful one for the Armenian church . The celebration begins with the feast of nativity on the 5<sup>th</sup> of January and each year a special evening vigil is held at St. Yeghiche, albeit with a much smaller congregation due to COVID precautions. The next day, the feast of theophany was held on the 6<sup>th</sup>. In Armenian tradition, this feast day commemorates not only the birth of Christ, but also His baptism by John the Baptist. The latter is remembered through the “Blessing of Water” ceremony, which follows the Divine Liturgy on the same day. During the liturgy, His Grace spoke to the faithful about the love, peace, and hope that Jesus Christ’s birth brought and likened it to the current circumstance in Artsakh. Much like Jesus Christ, God is with all and can help even with those vulnerable to marginalization as Jesus was when during his time on earth. As we find out, the might of God overcame the material wealth of King Herod who persecuted Jesus and permitted a path to greater good. In the face of such trials, His Grace urged to community to remain

faithful to the message of Christ as Jesus did to ultimately prevail.

The Armenian Church celebrate the feast of theophany on January 6<sup>th</sup> which differs to other denominations. Even at the time of the Holy Apostles, the traditions in the Christian churches in the different parts of the world were not uniform. In fact, Christmas was probably not observed at all in the very early Church. Later, the mysteries of the birth and baptism of Jesus Christ began to be observed on January 6.

By the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, Christmas in Rome was celebrated on December 25, which coincided with a major pagan feast. The Eastern churches, meanwhile, continued to observe Christmas on January 6. The Armenian Church has maintained that ancient tradition to this day, whereas the Greek-speaking Christian world switched to the Latin tradition at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

## *Godfather of the Cross (Խոսքաւոր)*



The 6<sup>th</sup> of January also symbolises a transition to a new Godfather, which is an honour bestowed upon an elected devout member and for 2021 this will be Grigor Melkonyan. Mr Melkonyan has been a member of the Armenian Church in the UK and Russia for many years and his family contribute significantly to Liturgy each week. Mr Melkonyan's wife sings in St. Yeghiche's choir and his two sons, Garegin and Narek serve as altar boys, you can also see their daughter Anahid at service each week. The bishop welcomed the godfather of the year to the congregation as an exemplary Christian and congratulated him on his newly appointed role in the church.



## *Prayer in the 1st day of the New Year*

On New year eve at 12am the church was open in St. Sarkis to celebrate the Advent of the New year. Bishop Manukyan held the pomegranate blessings, distributed it to the community and noted the symbolism of the fruit. "The

pomegranate has many features that we wish for Armenia, for example its crown or its sweetness to symbolise the sovereignty of Artsakh and the sweetness of peace that we pray for." The bishop ended the blessing by wishing all the congregation a prosperous new year.

The following morning, on New Year's Day there was a special prayer service at St. Yeghiche for the wellbeing of Armenia and further pomegranate blessings. The Bishop praised the faithful on overcoming one of the most challenging years in history from COVID-19 to the war in Artsakh. Furthermore, a special prayer was held for Artsakh and its inhabitants as well as for the brave soldiers who defend them. A live video and more information can be found on the Facebook page.





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## *The Feast of the Naming of Jesus*



On 13th January, the Armenian Apostolic Church celebrates the Feast of Naming of Our Lord Jesus Christ. In the gospel according to Luke, Jesus was named eight days after his birth. Jesus' name was given by the angel Gabriel who came to Mary to provide prophecy and promise of the birth of the Son of the Highest. It was here that the angel Gabriel proclaimed that Mary would name the baby "Jesus". "You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus." (Lk 1:31). The name "Jesus" and "Christ" is given to the Savior, which is a Greek word meaning "Consecrated" and

corresponding to the Hebrew word "Messiah".

On the Feast of Naming of Our Lord Jesus Christ a Divine Liturgy is celebrated in all Armenian Churches. On the eve of the feast, following the evening service a special service is conducted.

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## *ASF Fundraiser Event*



Join us 5pm, Sunday 10th January via ASF Facebook page

In 2020 ASF was set to celebrate its 10th anniversary. Regrettably, it was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The ASF committee has decided to turn this year's event with the generous donation from St. Sarkis Charity Trust into an online fundraising event. To provide much-

needed assistance to homeless families from Artsakh, who are sponsored by the Armenian Church in Great Britain.

Join us for this fundraiser event on [Armenian Summer Festival Facebook page](#) for a one hour live stream of performances from many special and celebrated guests from Armenia, who have generously agreed to be part of this important fundraiser and messages from diaspora in from the UK.

Please share our event with your friends and family and donate and help support us in celebrating our rich Armenian heritage and in helping the families of war.

How to Donate:

Please click [donate](#) to make your donations

If you would prefer to donate by BACS, cheque or another means please call (07949 810 704) or Email ([info@armenianchurch.org.uk](mailto:info@armenianchurch.org.uk))

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## Thank You For Your Generosity

### Update on Charitable work in Artsakh



The Diocese of the Armenian Church in the UK and Ireland, through the donations of the UK Armenian community, has to date brought essential support to around 100 families from Artsakh. The Mother See's "Support to Artsakh" essential support program is off to a successful start. As a result of the war, many families evacuated from Artsakh settled temporarily in Vanadzor, Gyumri and neighbouring cities. Some of them returned to their homeland after the ceasefire, but the fate of many remains uncertain.

The Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, together with the clergy of other diocesan churches is supporting these families and is committed to doing so if required. Some families consist of as many as 11 members and are facing many difficulties, so by providing these necessities the Church has somewhat eased their worries. Please see the video and photos for transparent evidence of where your support has and will be going!

Thank you to the members of the community for their continuous support and generous donations. Through the ASF online fundraiser at <https://fb.me/e/4N6e3q2HF> featuring performances from many special and celebrated guests from Armenia, we are aiming to continue providing much-needed assistance to these and other families. PLEASE join us, donate generously to help support in celebrating our rich Armenian heritage and in helping the families of war.

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### Scripture of the Week

Jn 1:18-28  
Heb 12:18-27  
Lk 1:39-56

\* \* \*

Lk 4:14-30  
Is 54:1-13  
1 Tm 1:1-11  
Jn 2:1-11

### Prayer of the Week

O Lord, our most merciful God, bless our nation with your spirit of unity and love towards one another. Give wisdom to all decision makers so that they may find ways for the safe and speedy return of our captive brothers. O Christ, our Saviour, give our brothers courage and fill their hearts with hope of freedom. Comfort them, O Lord, that they are not forgotten or ignored and through your grace and mercy they will return safely to their families and homes. Send your angel of peace, O Lord, to comfort all the parents waiting for the return of their sons, and bless them with the joy to see their children.

### Upcoming Saints & Feasts

**13 January:** Feast of the Naming of our Lord Jesus Christ

**14 January:** Birth of St. John the Forerunner

**16 January:** Bishop Peter, Bishop Blaise and Deacon Absolom

**18 January:** St. Antony the Hermit

**19 January:** St. Theodosius the King

**21 January:** St. Kyriakos



## *Armenians are not left alone; Christians in the UK raise their voice to help*



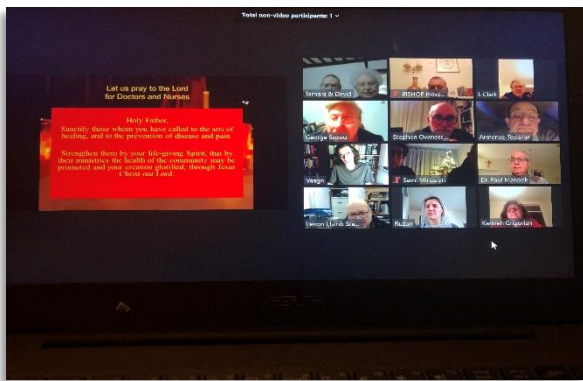
As the population of 150,000 Armenian Christians of Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh) prepare for another Christmas, it is certain this year there is a lot to be said and thankful for. First and foremost, for the soldiers who have bravely defended the land, often at a great cost to their respective families. Also, for the Armenians, both at home and in the diaspora, who have supported them wherever possible. Aspiration for the future has permitted the people of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh to

withstand a pandemic, jihadist militias, and offensives from multiple countries, (often simultaneously) whilst remaining firm in their faith. Yet across the borders, Azerbaijan continues to test this commitment using their vast economic reserves to invest in their military and threaten regional stability. Historically, Armenian regions such as Shushi, the Churches that bear irreparable history are being deliberately destroyed. These actions demonstrate the fact that money can purge the land but not the unmistakable culture that has carved it. “And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister”. 1 John 4:21

The region of Nagorno-Karabakh has been Armenian-Christian for over one thousand seven hundred years all the way back to the grandson of the first Armenian patriarch, Gregory the Illuminator. The area is therefore vital to Christian identity and this has unified people internationally to push for justice and protect this sacred land. For instance, in the UK The Lord Bishop of Southwark, The Right Reverend Christopher Chessun implored UNESCO to take more comprehensive measures to protect the cultural heritage of the region, especially those sites that have since come under Azerbaijani control. In his recent communications with Bishop Hovakim, Bishop Christopher, Bishop of Coventry has expressed his solidarity with the Armenian people and assured him of his prayer for peace in the region. He has released a short [video message](#) to his faithful inviting them to pray for our brothers and sisters in Artsakh during the Christmas festive season. John Eibner has brought to the attention of English faithful the fact that “the PM’s pledge to protect vulnerable Christians does not extend to Armenian Christians” in his article for the church Times ([Losers in the 21st-century Great Game,18 December 2020](#)) . Furthermore, the Barnabas Fund has consistently documented the uncertain situation that the Christians are facing in Artsakh and have provided an avenue to a reliable source of information for the international faithful. Elsewhere, fundraisers and generous donations from sister Churches have helped to improve the living conditions of those affected. Help for the first Christian nation has come in many forms from Christians around the world and for this we are grateful.

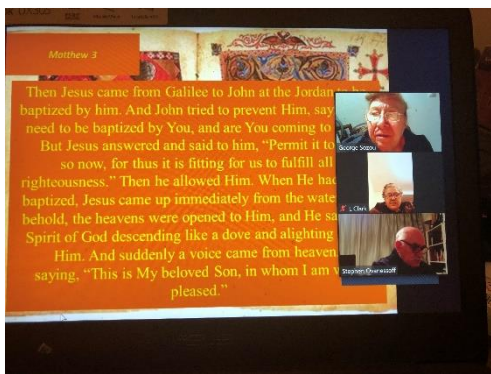
In our weekly newsletter, we will start to update our constituency on the situation in Nagorno Karabakh with articles from internationally recognized sources. Please follow and share them with friends.

# Armenian Spirituality Online: Learn, Watch, Pray



We organize a variety of events throughout the week, please follow us on Facebook [@ArmenianChurchoftheUKandIreland](#) or [@ACYOLondon](#), on Twitter [@ar\\_churchuk](#), telegram <https://t.me/UKArmChurchNews> and subscribe via email to receive our weekly newsletter, to find out about what is happening in the Armenian Church in the upcoming weeks.

## Online Bible Studies



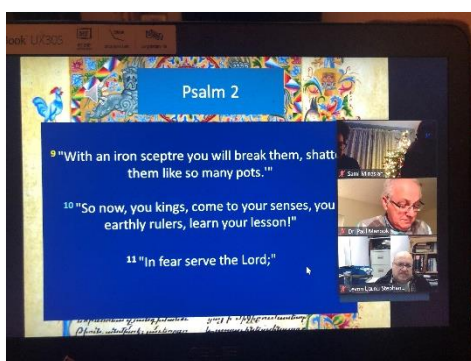
The Primates continues to hold online Bible studies. The Bible studies are not academic discussions but are weekly meetings in which The Primate, together with clergy, leads study sessions for everyone who is in search of a deeper understanding of their faith and Christian fellowship.

### *How can I get connected online?*

You will need to have computer internet access with a microphone, speakers and a camera installed. Alternatively, you can use a tablet or even a Smartphone which has all of these capabilities built in.

Alternatively, launch zoom from here <https://us02web.zoom.us/join> and join using the following details for the Bible study meeting in English Meeting ID: 673 335 005, Password: 545396

## Friday evening online prayer



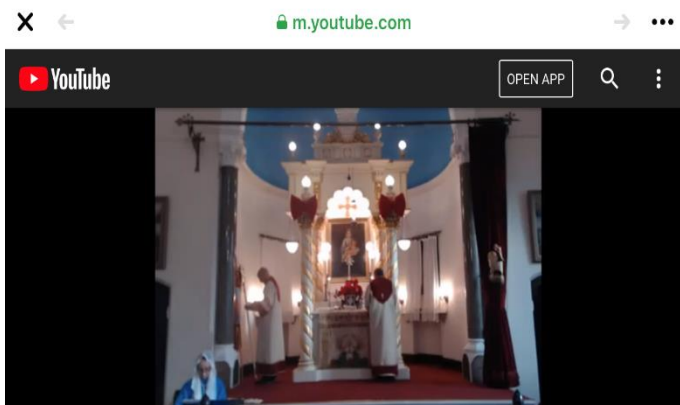
The distance between us at this time prevents the faithful from physically coming together to pray. In order to maintain our community's togetherness, The Bishop and clergy have led a unique online prayer service on Friday evenings 8:30 pm and the faithful have had a chance not only to read the confessions of Nerces the Gracious (Catholicos XII century) and pieces of Armenian spirituality, but to pray. Furthermore, it is an occasion both to practice and learn about Armenian spirituality. These prayers are held on Zoom, just click CTRL+

double-click on this hyperlink below and follow instructions to Open into the session.

Evening Prayer - Zoom Meeting: Alternatively, launch zoom from here

<https://us02web.zoom.us/join> and join using the following details for the Evening Prayer meeting.

Meeting ID: 885 4270 0750 Password: 606088



Christmas Day Service 06/01/21

Holy Trinity Church <https://www.facebook.com/groups/340444669390361/> For more information please also visit: [armenianchurch.org.uk](http://armenianchurch.org.uk) And <https://www.facebook.com/ArmenianChurchoftheUKandIreland/>

## *Follow Church Services online*

The faithful can access these services on the Facebook pages of our parishes in London; these broadcasts can be accessed via the links below:

St. Yeghiche Church

<https://www.facebook.com/StYeghiche/> St.

Sarkis Church

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/SSCPLondon/>



## *Leaving a lasting gift or legacy to the Armenian Church*

For many people, leaving a gift in their will is a final opportunity to make a lasting gift to God. Leaving a gift in your Will to The Armenian church is one of the most valuable and lasting ways to not only celebrate your love of God but

also continued support of the mission and ministry in your community. Please contact the Armenian Church for more information via email below:

[Info@armenianchurch.org.uk](mailto:Info@armenianchurch.org.uk) or call: 020 8998 9210

## *Important*

Further to recent lockdown announcement by the Government, we wish to inform you that according to the released Guidelines, Churches will remain open for Communal Worship during the Lockdown. Therefore, we are pleased to inform you that Churches within our Diocese will remain open and continue to offer services as previously announced including 5th and 6th January 2021.

Please ensure compliance with social distancing and safety measures when attending the church.

Below is the link to the Government Guidelines <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home>

**Editorial:** The main objective of the diocesan e-newsletter is to serve and reach out to Armenians throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland. The community members and organisations are welcome to send their announcements for the e-newsletter, including information not only about public events but also about important family events such as christening, matrimony or passing away.



# Worship Services in the Armenian Churches

**London:** Services are held every Sunday

**Manchester:** Services are held on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month.

For further details, please contact the parish nearest to you:



**Holy Trinity Armenian Church**

229 Upper Brook Street  
Manchester, M13 0FY  
Tel: 0161 273 1074

[www.armenianchurchmanchester.org](http://www.armenianchurchmanchester.org)

1<sup>st</sup> SUNDAY OF THE MONTH



**St. Sarkis Church**

Iverna Gardens  
Kensington, London, W8 6TP  
Tel: 020 7937 0152

[www.stsarkisparish.co.uk](http://www.stsarkisparish.co.uk)



**St. Yeghiche Church**

13b Cranley Gardens  
Kensington, London SW7 3BB  
Tel: 020 7373 8133

[www.styeghiche.org.uk](http://www.styeghiche.org.uk)

**Birmingham:** St. Peter Church, 208, High St, Walsall, WS3 3LA

**Republic of Ireland**

**Dublin:** [info@armenians.ie](mailto:info@armenians.ie); Tel. +353 1 451 5087, [www.armenians.ie](http://www.armenians.ie)

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