

# ST. JAMES ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH

## ՍՈՒՐԲ ՅԱԿՈՒ ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԵԱՅՑ ԱՌԱՔԵԼԱԿԱՆ ԵԿԵՂԵՑԻ

Rev. Fr. Hovhan Khoja-Eynatyan, Pastor

Տէր Յովհան Քհնյ. Խոջա-Էյնատեան, Հովիւ

July 31, 2020

My Dear Good People,

I greet you all from the Holy Sanctuary of St. James of Nisibis Armenian Church.

First, I want to express my gratitude to parishioners who have come to church the last few weeks to worship for adhering strictly to safety precautions (wearing masks, sanitizing hands and keeping six-foot distance). I also want to thank parishioners for respecting the request to NOT come to church if you are feeling sick or consider yourself in a high risk group.

It is the fifth month of our “new reality” when out of love for one other we do not come together in large groups to celebrate Badarak, worship during the week, celebrate important milestones and achievements in our lives or simply enjoy each other's presence in the daily communion of love. For clergy, visiting congregants is the fulfillment of our commitment to serve God’s people, and it is with a heavy heart that I continue to avoid contact with you, including comforting the sick in hospitals or at home. And although in early July we restored church services and sacraments for in-person participation following proper COVID protocols, we continue to livestream the majority of our worship services since many of you continue to avoid public spaces.

I cannot tell you how much it sorrows me that my contact with you remains limited to phone calls, but I would like to offer two ways we can reconnect in person:

1. As long as it continues to be warm, I would love to stop by and spend a few minutes with you outside-- on your sidewalk, in your backyard, on your porch. We can even take a walk in the park! Of course, we will wear masks and socially distance.
2. I can also visit you virtually via Zoom, Facebook or other means of teleconference

If either of these two ways work for you and your family, please call or email me and we can work out the details.

Finally, in two weeks we will be celebrating the Feast of the Assumption of the Holy Mother-of-God. Traditionally, we bless and distribute grapes after Badarak on this feast day. Next week I will share with you details of how we will celebrate this tradition this year.

May the Risen Christ bring the peace and healing that we all need.

With prayers,

Der Hovhan, Your Pastor

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