

## FROM OUR MAILBOX

*Below is a message written by one of our parishioners, Brian Kamajian, regarding the reopening of our church after the pandemic.*

*Please consider writing down your own sentiments to share with others. You can send your emails to Der Hovhan to be included in our weekly bulletin.*

Hello Der Hayr and Bob,

I just wanted to write this note as a Thank You to you and all the other parish council members and active church members who have worked so devotedly to keep our church running during this pandemic. I attended my first Holy Badarak in over 18 months a couple weeks ago, and I was overcome with emotion on hearing Kavork and Nairi carrying the music all by themselves, and of course you and the altar servers conducting the service. I didn't realize how much I missed it all.

I had a similar, even deeper, experience 30 years ago after Meg and I travelled through Europe, visiting the great Armenian Churches there. In Paris, with its powerful choir in the balcony, London, Amsterdam, Moscow. Then during our year in Armenia, hearing the all male choir at St. Gayane, seeing the ancient churches, and of course Holy Etchmiadzin. We even returned through Jerusalem and had a week in the historic Armenian Quarter.

Back then I also had been absent from our St. James for about 18 months. When we innocently shuffled in, the familiar beauty of our own fine choir sent tears running down my cheeks. I think at that time it was led by Mr. Vart, but Jirair K. was certainly there, as well as the other singers from my parents' generation and a few younger ones. I had returned to my home church, to me more beautiful and magnificent than the iconic churches we had experienced in our travels.

This is also a note to our friends who haven't been able to return to St. James yet. I hope they can all come soon to perhaps have a similar experience as I did, and to reconnect with our community.

You, and the other devoted members of our community, have literally been keeping the faith. And for decades. Many of which I was nowhere to be seen there. Please know that your work and devotion also makes a difference to the sometimes-attendees like me. I thank you for keeping our church going.

See you soon!  
Brian Kamajian

***“Lord, it is good for us to be here.”***  
*Matthew 17:4*