

The Komitas Choir: More Than Sunday Singing

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Many of you hear the Komitas Choir every Sunday singing the Divine Liturgy, but you may not be aware of the many other activities in which the choir is involved. This article highlights some of the events and social programs the Komitas Choir organizes each year.

Music Theory Classes

Summer 2025 has been a busy time for the Komitas Choir. Deacon Rubik Mailian taught music theory classes for six weeks during the months of June and July. The classes were open to both Komitas Choir members and non-members with an interest in expanding their musical knowledge and skills.

The music class topics included music scales, rhythm, meter, tone, and sightreading, among others. The structure of the classes provided a unique opportunity to learn and build upon the skills developed in prior weeks. All participants left the class with a newfound knowledge of music theory with an emphasis on Armenian traditions. Thank you to Deacon Rubik for volunteering his musical talents and knowledge with the congregation.

Arts of Armenia

Each summer, the Komitas Choir sponsors a week-long Arts of Armenia program for children ages 8 to 12 years old. A total of 26 children participated in the program this year, which included art, music, dance, baking, and crafts, all built around the Armenian Wedding.

The children learned dances typically enjoyed at wedding receptions and songs that are sung during a wedding service. They made wedding pilaf, cookies, lavash bread, and cheese boereg. After learning about Armenian

wedding traditions, students created narods and daros candy. They also created their own designs to decorate material used on bride and groom dolls they made. The program also included a field trip to Greenfield Village and a visit to the Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum to see a traditional Armenian wedding dress, going away doll, and items in a wedding dowry.

The week ended with a wedding service in the sanctuary led by Father Aren Jebejian, during which the children participated. The festivities continued in the Cultural Hall as the children enjoyed the food they cooked and baked during the program and participated in traditional Armenian dancing.

The Komitas Choir thanks all the instructors and volunteers who made the week such a success. This year the Arts of Armenia program welcomed its new Program Chair, Morgan Bell. We thank outgoing Chair, Denise Karakashian, for her many years of dedication and service to the program.

Choir Fellowship and Service

The Komitas Choir is a close-knit community. This past July, members gathered for a summer picnic, enjoying good food and fellowship. Each December, the choir also hosts its annual Christmas party. Over the years, the choir has traveled to Europe and Armenia, singing in Holy Etchmiadzin and in many other Armenian and non-Armenian churches.

As a service to the community, the choir regularly visits Manoogian Manor on major feast days, singing and celebrating with the residents. They also provide hot food service at the church bazaar.

12 Vocations: Variety of Gifts – One Spirit

On Saturday, November 22, 2025, St. Nersess Armenian Seminary will celebrate the vocations of three bishops, seven priests, a deacon, and a lay minister, all of whom received their education at St. Nersess.

Deacon Rubik Mailian, a 1998 graduate of St. Nersess, will be one of the twelve honorees at a gala in Hawthorne, New Jersey. The theme of the gala is "12 Vocations: Variety of Gifts – One Spirit." This event is the third in a series of tributes highlighting the St. Nersess alumni who serve the Armenian Church. The Komitas Choir congratulates Deacon Rubik and his family on this momentous occasion.

Komitas Choir: 100 Year Anniversary

In 2027, the St. John Armenian Church Komitas Choir will celebrate its 100 Year Anniversary. This momentous milestone will feature special programs and events, including a gala reception. We invite you to be part of this celebration by lending your voice and talents. The choir will perform a selection of Armenian folk, secular and sacred songs, and we warmly welcome new and returning members to join us.

For more information and to get involved, please contact Deacon Rubik Mailian, rubik@sjachurch.org, or call 248-286-1057. Stay tuned for announcements about upcoming events and opportunities to participate as we prepare for this momentous anniversary year.