

Pastor's Annual Report for the  
year 1982.

St. Kevork Armenian Apostolic Church  
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Rev. Fr. Terenig Kondralian

## PASTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

The renowned Psalmist, the wise King Solomon, in his Book of Ecclesiastes affirms that "There is a season for everything, a time for every occupation under Heaven."

A time for giving birth,  
A time for dying;  
A time for planting,  
A time for harvesting.  
A time for keeping,  
A time for throwing away.  
A time for keeping silent,  
A time for speaking.

Throughout the past year with the help of the Almighty Lord, we labored and planted our field. Today, at this Annual Assembly is the time for harvesting and the time for speaking. I as your Pastor, servant of God, and the spiritual head of this Church, present to you a detailed account of my work and mission which I have approached with all humility and the understanding given to me according to my calling. The unending race - one where the path is strewn with thorns and trial and tribulation are constant companions - this race that St. Paul the Apostle so often mentions in his letters, I too have chosen to enter. I have found that I am no different from all the other Armenian priests who do their work in this country. I am not exempt or free from the usual criticisms endured by all my brother priests, nor is my pain suffered from cruel accusations very uncommon. After all, "I was never promised a rose garden." Yet, I am strong. My strength comes from God and the love, and encouragement so many of you have so freely given. In spite of unjust and false accusations, damning letters circulated here and in the cities where I labor to organize and assist other Armenian communities, attempts to discredit my name, and moves to oust me as Pastor, I have not faltered nor have I become despondent. Indeed, I am made stronger. I am more resolved than ever to toil even harder for the good of our Church. Reinforced by my commitment to the Church and to the Almighty God, I am armored...protected from all who seek to do harm.

Every February, at the Annual Assembly, our Church marks the conclusion of the accomplishments of the last year and establishes the beginning of the Church's new fiscal year. This year, 1982, abounded with plans and activities for our Church. The credit for the success of these achievements belongs first and foremost to you, the dues paying members of our Church, the Parish Council, and all the organizations of our Church, and last of all, to me, your Pastor.

We began the year 1982 with the Armenian Christmas Banquet and Hantes sponsored by our Armenian School and the Women's Guild. This was the first time our Armenian School participated in the celebration, instilling in the youngsters the ethnic religious/cultural festive spirit of the Armenian Christmas. It was an unexpected and triumphant success and all the participants were enthusiastic about the heartwarming response of the congregation. Since then we have given our main attention to our Armenian Language School. His Eminence, Archbishop Torkom Manoogian wholeheartedly advised us to spare nothing in promoting our school. We did exactly what His Eminence advised us to do. To this day our primary concern has been the development and growth of the Armenian School and its program. Our children are the future Armenians...indeed the very future of this Church. For the first time we now have the most beautiful and fine textbooks which have been printed in use in our classrooms. All our teachers are trained and qualified and several of them have even gone to our Diocese in New York to study teaching methods. We have created an Armenian School Discipline and from the six classes totaling 57 students we average better than 90% attendance each weekend. The Armenian School with her students, teachers, and members of the Board of Trustees offered an impressive number of programs. On February 18, 1982 they presented the Vartanantz Celebration. On May 8 and 9, 1982 the Board of Trustees organized the annual Mother's Day Dance. The entire proceeds from this affair was allocated for use by the Armenian School. The following morning on May 9, 1982 immediately after the Church service, pupils presented a program for the congregation and at the conclusion, carnations were distributed to the mothers as a sign of love and respect. On Sunday, June 5, 1982 at the end of the school year ( 1981-1982 ) the students held a commencement Hantes. In the summer, encouraged by the achievements of the school and the enthusiasm of the students, I did gladly forfeit my annual vacation and organize an Armenian Language Summer School which extended from July 26 to August 14. Three days a week, approximately thirty children came to our school to learn the Armenian language. In the afternoons, the children were taken on field trips. The children ate breakfast, lunch, and dinner at the Church and twice a week slept in the Church compound. The children were ecstatic about the whole experience and constantly entreated us to do more. Their enthusiasm was catching. In light of the success of this program, it is our firm intent to again offer a summer school. The achievements of the Armenian Language School is a result of the labor of many individuals: Mr. Zohrab Tcholakian, Chairman of the Board of Trustees; Mrs. Sirvart Hintlian, Treasurer; Mr. Haigaz Ohanian, Principal; Mrs. Roobina Sahakian; Miss Siran Sahagian, Secretary; Mrs. Arpi Tcholakian, Advisor. I thank them for their determination and dedication and commend them on the marvelous work they have done. I am positive that the present trustees aided by the help of the new school board members: Mr. Toros Deurdulian, Mrs. Sonig Topdjian, and Mrs. Diana Ekizian will continue to advance new and better programs and encourage greater enrollment. It is only fitting at this time that we thank and recognize the teachers of our Armenian School: Mrs. Sirvart Hintlian, Mrs. Hezig Harootunian, Miss Siran Sahagian, Mrs. Arpi Tcholakian, Miss Any Khoubesserian. I would also like to thank Mrs. Zabel Simonian, who because of illness, was unable to continue in her teaching post. They have my deepest admiration for the selfless and involved task they perform. Every Saturday I have taken the responsibility to conduct Armenian Language Lessons to the older students. This teaching is a source of great satisfaction to me and affords me an excellent opportunity to keep close to the young people of our Church. During the summer of 1982, Mr. Yohannes Hekimian contributed a school bus to be used. We are most grateful to him. The Armenian Language School would also like to extend our thanks and deepest appreciation to Mr. Harry Bodour, our benefactor. His generous financial support will enable our Armenian Language School to

offer a daily pre-school program in conjunction with the opening of a day care center. In this manner, every day our children will be able to receive Armenian Language instruction. This is only the beginning...we look forward to the establishment of an elementary school program.

Many significant events took place in the year 1982. After the Christmas Badarak, on January 9, 1982 the magnificent cross on our Church dome was anointed and consecrated. Singing the Hye Mer, the liturgical procession, followed by the entire congregation proceeded to the outside of the Church. The seven foot cross was raised and installed atop our Church dome. For all of us it was an emotion filled moment...for the first time our Church looked complete and majestic...the Armenian cross secure on its lofty peak. I will remember and cherish this moment to the end of my life. This moment was a symbol of our victory. The cross was the gift of Mr. & Mrs. Jalal and Anna Stephan and their son, Berj. Our profound gratitude to them...may the Lord shine His face upon them and bless them always.

Finally came the momentous, glorious day. February 27 and 28, 1982. Saturday and Sunday. Our Primate, His Eminence Archbishop Torkom Manoogian consecrated and anointed our Church. The seventeen Godfathers, symbolic of the twelve apostles, four evangelists, and the main doorkeeper, joined in the service. The Godfathers of our Church are: Mr. Boghos Hekimian, Mr. Harry Bodour, Mr. Stephan Saxenian, Mr. James Boyajian, Mr. Yohannes Hekimian, Dr. Lionel S. Galstaun, Dr. Nishan Tabibian, Mr. Haigaz Ohanian, Mr. Sooren Yeriazarian, Mrs. Emma Hagopian, Mr. Joseph Galoostian, Mr. Vahe Asadourian, Mr. Peter Haig Basralian, Mr. Stepan Nazarian, Mr. Zohrab Tcholakian, Mr. Hampo Hekimian, Mr. David Bray. These are the most fortunate individuals in our congregation for they will forever be remembered in the history of our Church. I think it very appropriate at this time to reconfirm our love and respect for our chief benefactors Mr. Sam G. and Lena Harrison for their munificent contribution which enabled us to erect our Church buildings. During the Sunday Badarak, on February 28, 1982 our Primate ordained Mr. Stepan Nazarian as sub-deacon and then ordained as acolytes Mr. Jeffrey Andonian, Mr. Hampo Hekimian, Mr. Antranig Mavoulian, Mr. Masis Mandani, Mr. Raffi Tcholakian, Mr. David Bray.

This year once again our Diocesan Primate, Archbishop Torkom Manoogian will visit our Parish in the first week of June to consecrate the altars of our Church and officiate at the formal naming of the main hall which will be called the Boghos and Hunazant Hekimian Hall. We are all looking forward to that day.

The task of managing the finances of the building project was headed by Dr. Lionel S. Galstaun and Mr. Stephan Saxenian. Our debt to these two men is great. They worked diligently and ably in this position of great responsibility...and with their combined talent for administration, organization, and keen business sense we saw the completion of our Church buildings. Truly speaking they are worthy to be called heroes. To my knowledge no money was spent carelessly. Gentlemen...I thank you for a job well done. God has blessed us in you.

After building a million dollar Church, and the purchase of a Parish House Rectory, our Church holdings are now valued at approximately two million dollars. However, we still remain in debt to the Northwest Bank for \$70,000. The Parish Council has already made plans to eliminate the mortgage. Mr. Karnig Ekizian has been invited to assist them in this effort. Their deadline for terminating the mortgage is Easter Sunday, April 3, 1982. At this time, following the Badarak, a testimonial dinner will be held in honor of one of our leading benefactors, Mr. Harry Bodour. I have great

faith in the ability of our Parish Council and our Parishoners to meet this challenge. We have succeeded against great odds; we will succeed again. It will be a triumph for us to terminate this mortgage...and an occasion for great joy.

Our Parish Council, under the direction of Chairman, Dr. Lionel S. Galstaun, administer the everyday life of our Church and therefore are the caretakers of our Church. They are the individuals who are concerned with the spiritual and moral growth of our Church. They are confronted with the financial responsibilities of the Church and at the same time attend to all the many detailed tasks that are inherent in the running of a well organized and growing Church community. These are the individuals who come week after week, leaving their homes and families, giving up their spare time to serve this congregation.

In addition to these responsibilities, they have managed to find the time for fund raising. For the first time, with the help of many of our Parishoners, the Parish Council took part in the Houston Main Street Festival, March 19, 20 and March 27, 28. It was a definite success. From this event the Church realized a substantial profit. They also organized the Annual Armenian Festival on June 11, 12, and 13. Their most recent undertaking is the Thursday night Bingo. The Parish Council has now taken on the responsibility to increase the membership and organize a Stewardship Pledge Program.

We must remind ourselves that the Parish Council is elected by the membership of this congregation to oversee and administrate the everyday functioning of the Church. They are separate and apart from a Guild or other Church organization. They are the authority of the Church. However, the welfare of the Church is the responsibility of each and every dues paying member, who by becoming a member, accepts the obligations and the responsibilities of Church membership. We are called to be members of one body...the Church. If that is so, then each of us has a function. It is nonsense to pay \$50.00 membership dues solely to vote at an Annual Meeting. Where is the proof of our active membership? What do the words mean, "a member in good standing"? A Church can not survive on a part-time member, members who are seen only when there is a vote to be cast. Where are they when it comes time to shoulder the burden? Or do they leave the task to a handful of people called "the Parish Council". A Parish Council represents you and me. Everyone must do his share in helping them do this. They must volunteer to assist them with the Membership Drive, Stewardship Pledge Program, as well as give their fair share in work and money. Before we point a finger at the Parish Council, before we voice our complaints and criticisms, we had better question ourselves. I have come to know the Parish Council members personally. They need to be commended and encouraged. At this time I would like to thank: Dr. Lionel S. Galstaun, Chairman; Mr. Vahe Asadourian, Vice Chairman; Mr. Hampo Hekimian, Secretary; Mr. Stephan Saxenian, Treasurer; and the advisors: Mr. Haigaz Ohanian, Mr. Sooren Yeriazarian, Mr. Avedis Hintlian, Mrs. Sonia Shields, Mr. Masis Mandani.

The Youth Group, Hayem experienced difficulties that accompany the organizational problems facing a new group. The early months of 1982 found the executive body of the group divided and unable to successfully implement or fulfill the goals and expectations of the Parish Council. In order to be effective, a Church organization must work in harmony with the Parish Council. In the Spring of 1982, distressed and concerned, the Parish Council met to resolve the question of the Youth Group. It was decided that a new executive body be elected and a program instituted and organized under the direction of the new Chairman, Dr. Nishan Tabibian. The Hayem made a complete about turn and

today is one of the strongest and most active clubs in the Church. The contributions of the Hayem have been considerable. The Hayem organized the April 24th Martyr's Day Commemoration, inviting Dr. Richard Hovhannesian to be guest speaker. On this occasion, the 67th Anniversary of the Martyrs, sixty seven trees were planted on the Church grounds. They organized the 19th Anniversary Celebration of our Church by arranging a dinner and at that time honored Mr. & Mrs. James and Sophie Boyajian for their dedicated service to the Church. The entire proceeds from this function were turned over to the Parish Council for use in the Church. On November 14, the Hayem arranged a welcoming party for our guests from Baton Rouge and New Orleans, Louisiana. On the eve of the Heroes of Hadjin celebration, our guests and members of Hayem shared in good fellowship. On Sunday, December 19, the Hayem sponsored the Professor Dickran Jamgochian Art Exhibit. All in all, the year 1982 has been a year of growth and achievement for the Hayem Organization. The entire Youth Group, Hayem, with their present executive body, must be extolled and admired for their perseverance and accomplishments.

This year marks the 20th Anniversary of the Women's Guild of our Church. We must recognize and celebrate this occasion with a special program of tribute to the founders of this worth organization. The early struggles to establish a Church necessitated a substantial commitment from our Women's Guild. It was always to these untiring and devoted workers that we turned when moneys were to be raised...Dinners, Luncheons, Picnics, Food Sales..all the labor was admirably handled by these fine ladies. Our Church flourished because of their selfless and determined efforts. However, our needs are changing. We want more women to join the Guild, revitalizing the group with their enthusiasm and new ideas. Women's Guild programs must meet the needs of all our ladies and offer entertaining and educational functions to attract and hold new members. Today there is a well known phrase that most assuredly defines our group..."You've come a long way...I must thank Sadie Jordan, past chairman, and the entire executive body for a very successful year. The Women's Guild sponsored, along with the Armenian School, the Armenian Christmas Banquet. They organized the Mid-Lenten Dinner and for entertainment presented a program of literature and song of the Armenian author, Rafael Badganian. Celebrating the 150th Anniversary of the birth of the artist Badganian, Mrs. Zuvart Minassian played a selection of his compositions on the piano. The Women's Guild helped the Parish Council in organizing the Houston Main Street Festival and the Annual Armenian Festival. They also organized the Blessing of the Grapes luncheon. In November, they began a new annual event, the Christmas Bazaar. Presently they provide and conduct the sale of refreshments for our Thursday Night Bingo. These ladies have performed an outstanding service for the Church and we are most grateful for all they have done.

For the past three years there have been problems finding much needed volunteers for the Choir. People do not appreciate the significance of the Choir. The visitor's first impression of the Church is often decided by the quality of the Choir. The Choir should enhance and enrich the worship service, singing should inspire, but, for that, Choir members must attend rehearsals, practice faithfully, and make a definite commitment to be present at the beginning of the service. In a Church and community whose population is increasing, it is even more alarming and disheartening to note that the Choir has dwindled from twelve members to now only six members...and at times even less. This is a shame on all of us and something must be done to remedy the situation. You do not have to have perfect pitch to sing in the Choir. The most important requisite for Choir participation is your sincere desire to help the Church. If you are willing to commit yourself to a rehearsal schedule, in a matter of a month or two, we will have a beautiful Choir. Our Church Choir is under the direction of Chairman, Mr. Armen

DerMesropian and the Choir Director, Mr. Stepan Nazarian. These two dependable workers must be able to count on you, the members of our Church, to assist them in up-grading the Choir. Please volunteer your time...you will be blessed. At this time I would also like to mention that we have no organist. This makes the job of the Choir even more difficult. Is there anyone who is able and willing to perform this much needed service? I would like to thank our Choir Members: Mr. Stepan Nazarian, Choirmaster; Mr. Armen DerMesropian; Mr. James Boyajian; Mrs. Astrik Bray; Mr. Sarkis Boghossian; Mr. Vahe Asadourian; Mrs. Seta Kyoumjian; Mrs. Dorothy Tashjian; Mrs. Sirvart Hintlian; Mr. Paul Keshishian; Mr. Hovig Frankian; Mrs. Sadie Jordan. I would also like to express my deepest gratitude for our altar help: Mr. Masis Mandani; Mr. Jeffrey Andonian; and our acolytes: Mr. Raffi Tcholakian; Mr. Apraham Keshishian; Mr. Simon Keshishian. My thanks too to Mrs. Zabel Deurdulian for preparing and providing the Maas each Sunday.

With the end of 1982, I concluded my sixth year as Pastor of this congregation. For the record, I now present to you an account of my activities. During 1982, we had 14 baptisms, 9 weddings, 4 deaths. On one occasion I participated in an ecumenical wedding service in Austin, Texas. In my role as Pastor of this congregation, I have counselled newlyweds, conducted wedding rehearsals, met with parents of children who are to be baptized, assisted and counselled for wake services. On 49 occasions I have visited with patients in the hospital...these people have either been members of our Parish or visitors who came to the United States seeking medical care. Throughout the year I have performed 51 Divine Liturgy Service, missing only the Sunday of February 28 when Archbishop, Torkom Manoogian came to consecrate our new Church and again on the occasion of the visit of Bishop Avak Asadourian, Primate of Iraq. I have delivered 55 sermons, some in Armenian, some in English. In February and March during Great Lent, I have conducted the vigil service every Wednesday evening as well as the Sunday Sunrise Service. On April 22, accompanied by Mr. Avedis Hintlian, I paid a visit to the City Hall to our Mayor Kathy Whitmire and received a proclamation on the occasion of the Armenian Martyr's Day.

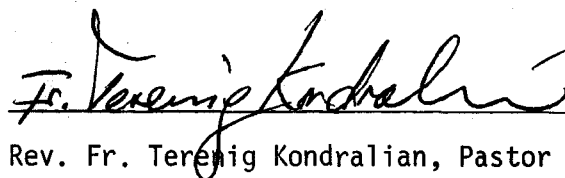
As in the past I have endeavored to remain in close touch with our sister Parishes in Dallas/Fort Worth, San Antonio, Austin, and for the first time, the Baton Rouge and New Orleans, Louisiana Community. As a result of my visit to the Louisiana Armenian Community, these good people came to support and participate in our events. When I visit these locations, I administer the communion, perform religious services, bless homes, counsel families and individuals, and strive to encourage them in all ways. We here in Houston are most privileged to have a Church...it is our moral obligation to provide, as best we can, for those who are not so fortunate.

Here in Houston, on 101 occasions, I have made official visits to families of our Parish, and on request, blessed their homes. On 44 occasions I have counselled members of our Parish who are depressed, suffering marital problems, bereaved, unemployed, suffering financial insecurity, in need of immigration assistance, or experiencing family discord. I have attended 17 family receptions, anniversaries, and farewell gatherings. On 25 occasions I have conducted rehearsals for the Armenian School Programs and the Church Choir. On Memorial Day, upon request, I have visited and blessed gravesites. On 366 occasions I have conducted or attended organization and business meetings relating to the Church. I have participated in the Westheimer Clergymen's Association and the Eastern Orthodox Clergy Association. I have established a communication between our Church and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Houston, thus securing a rental contract for the use of the Church Hall by St. Justin's Parish. In New Orleans

on September 4 and 5, I attended and represented the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America at the General Assembly of the Episcopal Church of America.

Today our Church office is functioning smoothly and efficiently. We are able to respond to the demands of our growing Parish and the increase in detail and paperwork that is the result of this flourishing Armenian Community. We are in the process of equipping the office with machines that will enable us to do the necessary work. We were indeed fortunate and most grateful to receive from St. Justin's a copy machine, and only last week, we started to put it to good use. We must also thank Dr. Lionel S. Galstaun for donating a telephone answering machine to the Church Office. If I am away from the office, callers are now able to leave their message on the recorder and I am able to return the call. With the help of Mr. Harry Bodour, our offices are furnished with nice furniture and we can all be proud of the appearance of our Church Office. At this time I would also like to announce that I do personally oversee all the administrative and written transactions of the office. I prepare Armenian Christmas Bulletins, Easter Bulletins, in English and Armenian, as well as handle the letter setting in Armenian and English of all our mailings. This past year we have written hundreds of thank you letters, and handled all the detailed work of purchase orders. Topics of interest, scholarship announcements etc. are posted on the Church Bulletin Board. Events in our Parish are recorded and noteworthy occasions are written up and sent for publication in several Armenian Newspapers throughout the country. I would like to thank publically Mrs. Audrey Ohnikian and Mrs. Sirvart Hintlian, who volunteer their time working in the Church Office. After six years in this Parish, I finally feel like a Pastor, working with people who share the same commitment to Parish responsibilities.

As in the past I still extend a helping hand to each and every Armenian who come and seek the assistance of the Church. I look to the year 1983 with confidence and anticipation. Our job as a Church has just begun...we must first and foremost rid ourselves of this burdensome mortgage. This year we will make plans to beautify and landscape the Church grounds, improve our kitchen facilities, and establish an Armenian Daily Pre-School and Child Care Center. Arrangements will be made to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of our Church. I conclude my annual report saying: I close last year's accounts and reaffirm my love, dedication and undivided devotion to Christ, to our Church, to you my people and for all that the Armenian nation stands.

  
Rev. Fr. Terenig Kondralian, Pastor