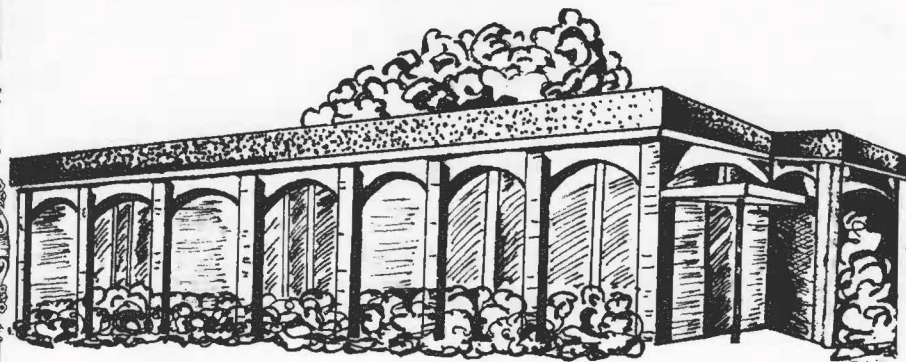


ST. LEON

Armenian Apostolic Church
Fair Lawn, New Jersey

Ground Breaking *of* **COMMUNITY CENTER**



Celebration Banquet

Woodcliff Lake Hilton Inn
Woodcliff Lake, New Jersey

November 9, 1980

Parish Council

Reverend Patee Metjian, President

Charles Pinajian, Chairman

Jacques Tossounian, Treasurer

Edward Torosian, Assistant Treasurer

Dorothy Karamian, Recording Secretary

Dovie Tilbian, Corresponding Secretary

Peter Jesraly

S. Rex Kachigian

Gabriel Kaprelian

Jack Loughead

Jon Najarian*

Alfred A. Voskian

Harry Zoraian

Delegates

Zaven Dadekian

Sarkis Gabrellian

Jon Najarian*

*Deceased

St. Leon Community Center

Executive Building Committee

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Zaven Dadekian, Chairman

Robert Buchakian, Vice Chairman

Vahram Varjabedian, Treasurer

Agnes Voskian, Secretary

Construction Committee

Jon Najarian*

Joseph Basralian**

John Nakashian**

Zaven Dadekian

Sarkis Gabrellian

Fund Raising & Finance Committee

Sarkis Bedevian**

E. George Dabagian**

Robert Buchakian

Noubar Jessourian

S. Rex Kachigian

James Noorigian

Dovie Tilbian

Memorials Committee

Andrew Dabbakian**

Charles Pinajian**

Harry Boyajian

Hagop Demirdjian

Ara Hourdajian

Publicity Committee

Ruth Bedevian**

Mirjan Kirian**

Richard Dabagian

Elsie Donigian

Alfred Ferraro

*Deceased

**Co-Chairman

**Ground Breaking Celebration Banquet
Committee**

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S. Rex Kachigian, Chairman

Ruth Bedevian

Sarkis Bedevian

Lucy Dabagian

Sarkis Gabrellian

Noubar Jessourian

Anne Kachigian

Grace Pinajian

Dovie Tilbian

Agnes Voskian

Alfred A. Voskian

Acknowledgements

Suzanne Jerrahian

Art Work

Mr. & Mrs. Sarkis Gabrellian
Floral Centerpieces



**His Holiness Vasken I
Supreme Patriarch, Catholicos of All Armenians**



**His Eminence Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Primate
Diocese of the Armenian Church of America**



ԱՌԱՋՆՈՐԴՈՒԹԻՒՆ ՀԱՅՈՑ

DIocese OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF AMERICA, 630 SECOND AVENUE, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10016 212 686-0710

Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Primate

MESSAGE FROM THE PRIMATE

It is with great joy that we mark the dedication of this new extension to the St. Leon Armenian Church. It crowns the efforts and embodies the hopes of many dedicated parishioners, symbolizing the spirit of a growing vital community.

The Armenian word for the consecration of a new Church is *navakatik*, a borrowed ancient foreign word, meaning "new" (*nava*) "house" (*katak*). A house can be the locus of many kinds of endeavors, from the raising of a family to the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. For Armenians, though, the words "house" and "Church" are inextricably intertwined, for where God makes His home, in the depths of the human heart, there will all manner of blessings flourish, and family life, cultural life and Church life become as one.

Education - Christian Education and the study of our Armenian heritage - is the cornerstone of the house of every man, the architect of the mind that gets right at the heart in which Our Lord will dwell. We rejoice that this new extension will serve directly the goals of Christian Armenian education which are the most certain insurance of the future vitality of our nation in every land, and of our children's development as compassionate and creative human beings.

The spirit of our Armenian thirst for knowledge is alive in these walls: classes have been held in a trailer, in the Church auditorium, in the vestry, but the people of our parish have continued undaunted. It is not for nothing that the epithet "the Invincible" (Armenian "Anhaght") was applied to an Armenian scholar rather than a general.

Let us continue, to grow and to build new houses of the Lord in our communities and in our hearts. And may the Lord bless us, and grant success to our endeavors to serve Him and to teach our children to serve Him, for the sake of His redemptive message and His Holy Church.

Prayerfully,

atp Torkom Manoogian

Archbishop Torkom Manoogian
Primate

October 1, 1980



ՍՐԲՈՑ ՂԵՒՈՆԴԵԱՆՑ ՀԱՅՑ. ԵԿԵՂԵՑԻ
Տէր Բարի Քհնյ. Մէթճեան, Հովիւ

ST. LEON ARMENIAN CHURCH
Rev. Paree Metjian, Pastor

Հոկտեմբեր 29, 1980

Հովիտին ՊԱՏԳԱՄԸ

Ս. ՂԵՒՈՆԴԵԱՆԵՅ Հայաստանեայց Եկեղեցւոյ Համայնքը իր կարճ պատմութեան մէջ, արժանագրած է բեղուն կեանք ու զործունէութիւն: Իր անդամներու անխնջ ջանասիրութեամբ, ան նասած է մեր ներկայ օրերուն:

Պատմական օրեր է որ կ'ապրինք: Նախ եկեղեցւոյս երկու հաւատարիմ սպասաւորները Սարկաւազութեան կոչումին արժանացան: Անոնք իրենց կեանքով, խոստացան սատարել եկեղեցւոյ նոգեւոր եւ մշակութային առաքելութեանը:

Նրկորդ, մեր տարիներու երազը, որ ունենալ էր Համայնքային Կեդրոն մը իր դասարաններու յարմարութիւններով, իրականութիւն պիտի դառնայ, ձեր քարեսիրութեամբ եւ սրտաբուխ քաջախելութեամբ: Եկեղեցւոյ նովանիին տակ պիտի շողայ Ս. Մեսրոպի ջահր՝ նոգեւոր ու ազգային լոյս ջամբելով մեր մատաղ սերունդին:

Նոր եւ արդիւնաւէտ հանգրուանի մը սկիզբը կը գտնուի մեր համայնքը: Իր պէսզի մեր ապագայի հեռանկարները իրականանան, մեզմէ պիտի պահանջուի զոհաբերութիւն եւ առաւել ջանք: Մեր նուիրումով դէպի լաւագոյնին եւ կատարելագործման պիտի քալենք հետեւելով մեր Պապերու օրինակին եւ յաւերժացնելով իրենց ժառանգը:

Աստուած օրհնէ մեր համայնքը եւ մեզմէ ամէն մէկը որպէսզի կարենանք իրականացնել մեր ապագայի երազները, Իր Փառքին եւ մեր եկեղեցւոյ պայծառութեան համար:

Աղօթարար

Բարի Քհնյ. Մէթճեան



ՍՐԲՈՑ ՂԵՒՈՆԴԵԱՆՑ ՀԱՅՑ. ԵԿԵՂԵՑԻ
Տէր Բարի Քհնյ. Մէթճեան, Հովիւ

ST. LEON ARMENIAN CHURCH
Rev. Paree Metjian, Pastor

October 28, 1980

My Dear Friends:

For most of us, opportunity is a golden moment whose time has come. It is an open door to new adventure, a chance of a lifetime.

St. Leon Community Center is a dream come true for our parish. For years, the community had been anticipating having such a facility. Today, that dream is on the way of becoming a reality - soon, we will witness its growth from brick and mortar to a beautiful edifice.

The fulfillment of this dream will prove to be just the beginning of many blessings that we will benefit from. While the modern hall will provide space for our community's social and cultural activities, the classrooms will create the means of teaching effectively our faith and culture. Once again with these projects, the parish is on a forward move!

I am proud to be a part of this vital and vibrant parish family. Together, we will forge ahead with confidence to a greater heights and achievements.

Rejoice in the creative Armenian Spirit! May we all work for His Glory and to our beloved Armenian Church.

Prayerfully yours,

(Rev.) Paree Metjian

PROGRAM

National Anthem Sung by Assembly
Piano Accompanist - Lucy Dabagian

Invocation His Eminence, Archbishop Torkom Manoogian

Welcome Rex Kachigian
Banquet Chairman

Dinner

Remarks Charles Pinajian
Chairman, Parish Council

Greetings Louis Raffiani
Mayor of Fair Lawn

Violin Selections Anahid Ajemian
Assisted by Jacqueline Schweitzer

Remarks Zaven Dadekian
Chairman, Building Committee

Financial Report Sarkis Bedevian
Fund Raising Co-Chairman

Violin Selections Anahid Ajemian
Assisted by Jacqueline Schweitzer

Remarks The Reverend Father Parea Metjian
Pastor, St. Leon Armenian Church

Address His Eminence, Archbishop Torkom Manoogian

Benediction

“If the Lord does not build the house, the work of the builders is useless.”

Psalm 127:1

They shared hope. They believed in God, themselves and each other. They had learned well their lessons from childhood, their heritage handed down to them through the centuries. Those early parishoners, the Armenian faithful, are remembered fondly today.

The modest beginnings of the St. Leon parish can be traced from as early as 1880 from Union City to Paterson to Fair Lawn. At first, Armenians living in New Jersey attended Holy Cross Armenian Apostolic Church in Union City. Until 1930, the Armenians of Greater Paterson occasionally received visiting clergy who celebrated Divine Liturgy and administered the sacraments.

In 1932, St. Luke Episcopal Church on Bloomfield Avenue, in Paterson was purchased. Despite depression years, the faithful gave generously. The entire mortgage was paid within two years! Extensive renovation costs were also covered during that time.

Plans to build a new church to accommodate the growth of the parish were in progress by the 1950's. The present three acre property on Saddle River Road was purchased in 1958. The original plan called for the building of the Community Center followed by the construction of the church. Priorities were later reversed. The Armenian faithful, who had survived the 1915 genocide, and who were struggling to preserve their heritage, recognized the role of the church in nourishing the spirit.

The vision, wisdom and leadership of the clergy sustain the people. The dedication of the people, in turn, sustains the church. “If the Lord does not build the house, the work of the builders is useless.”

Since the consecration of St. Leon Armenian Church in Fair Lawn in September of 1965, the parish has continued to expand. It is a parish faithful to tradition; it is active, vibrant, healthy. Weekdays and nights the church is engrossed with the activities of the Parish Council, Choir, Women's Guild, Sunday School, Armenian School, Senior Citizens and ACYOA.

Again growth stirs the parish to make plans for the future. On June 6, 1980, a special parish assembly authorized the Building Committee to proceed with construction of the Community Center and the conversion of the existing church hall into classrooms. The Community Center will encourage more and varied functions. Classrooms will safeguard the religious and cultural education of the youth.

Worldwide uncertainty foreshadows the 1980's. The energy crisis and inflation threaten. However, those early parishoners, the Armenian faithful, have gently handed down their courage and hope. Their spirit walks with us.

1898	First Divine Liturgy Celebrated by Bishop Hovsep Sarajian, first Primate of the Armenian Diocese of America.
1932	Purchased Paterson Church.
October 5, 1941	Consecration of St. Leon Armenian Church, Bloomfield Avenue, Paterson. Archbishop Karekin Hovsepian, Primate.
September 22, 1963	Ground-Blessing Ceremonies of the Fair Lawn site by Archbishop Sion Manoogian, Primate.
September 19, 1965	Consecration of St. Leon Armenian Church, Fair Lawn by Archbishop Sion Manoogian, Primate.
February 9, 1975	St. Leon parishoners celebrate burning of mortgage.
November 9, 1980	Ground-Blessing for St. Leon Armenian Church Community Center by Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Primate.

Pastors of St. Leon Armenian Church

*Reverend Father Hovhannes Kavookjian	1936-1938
*Archbishop Mampre Calfayan	1939-1941
*Reverend Father Vahan Jelalian	1941-1947
Patriarch Shnork Kaloustian	1948-1951
Reverend Father Arten Ashjian	1951-1952
*Archbishop Mampre Calfayan	1953-1954
Reverend Father Vartan Der Assadourian	1955-1957
Reverend Father Carnig Hallajian	1958-1972
Reverend Father Arten Ashjian	1972-1975
Reverend Father Pree Metjian	1975-

**Deceased*

In Memory
of
Jon J. Najarian
who faithfully served his beloved church

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