

Minutes of the 1998 Annual Assembly

The Annual Assembly of the Armenian Church of Our Saviour was called to order on Sunday, March 1, 1998 at 11:45 a.m. by Louis S. Mikitarian, Chairman of the Parish Council (Chairman of the 1997 Annual Assembly, George Migridichian, was unable to attend). The opening prayer was given by Reverend Father Aved Terzian.

Election of Assembly Officers

Richard Bedrosian, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, nominated Gary Dodakian as Assembly Chairman. His nomination was seconded by Joan Handleman. No other candidates were nominated from the floor, and nominations were closed. The Secretary cast one vote for Gary Dodakian.

Richard Bedrosian nominated Jay Kapur as Assembly Secretary. The nomination was seconded by Agnes Sahagian. No other candidates were nominated from the floor, and nominations were closed. The Secretary cast one vote for Jay Kapur.

Quorum

The newly elected Chairman of the Assembly, Gary Dodakian, requested a show of hands of dues-paid members to indicate a quorum. 86 members were in attendance at this point of the meeting.

Adoption of the Agenda

The Assembly agenda was presented for review by the Parish Council. Edward J. Bilzerian made a motion to add item 9b. (Old Business) regarding the Pastor's Health Insurance, seconded by Michael Gulbankian. The motion passed. Zarvin Kasparian made a motion to add item 9c. (Old Business) regarding Stewardship, seconded by Seth Bilazarian. The motion passed. Seth Bilazarian made a motion to add item 13d. (New Business) regarding Youth Programs, seconded by Ruth Haddon. Louis Mikitarian asked if there was a specific proposal, as the Assembly would need to know what it was at this point in order to consider the item. Seth said that there was no specific proposal, but that he just wanted to know the status of any diocese or parish youth programs and participation by our parish youth. The motion passed.

John Chicknavorian made a motion to adopt the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Dorothy Surabian. The motion passed. The Chairman called on Richard Bedrosian to present the nominations for the 1998 Ballot.

Nominations for Parish Council

Richard presented the following names of the Parish Council candidates nominated by the Nominating Committee:

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|--------------------|---------------------|
| Katherine Dodakian | Louis S. Mikitarian |
| Marcia Hovenesian | Archie Torosian |
| Mark Markarian | |

Der Hayr indicated that the number of nominees did not meet the Diocesan By-Laws requirements for two times the number of candidates as open positions (6) and requested additional nominations from the floor. Several persons were nominated and respectfully declined to become candidates. They were Kap Maksian, Paul Avakian, Herman Purutyan, Seth Bilazarian, Steven Migridichian, Edward S. Bilzerian, Harry Dodakian, Gladys Andonian, Ruth Haddon, Vahan Pogharian, Louise Toromanian, Richard Bedrosian, John Chicknavorian, Darrin Migridichian, Jay Kapur, and John Sagarian, Jr.

Michael Arakelian was nominated by Herman Purutyan, seconded by Paul Avakian. Michael accepted the nomination.

Der Hayr expressed concern that the ballot was still considered “illegal” according to the Diocesan By-Laws, and would be subject to approval by the Diocesan Council. He mentioned that while we were allowed to present a ballot with an insufficient number of nominees in the past, it was not guaranteed that it would be accepted this time. He said that a parish of our size should be able to put forth a complete ballot, with all positions duly contested. Ruth Haddon said that in order to attract more candidates for Parish Council, we would have to lessen the workload of the Council. Arthur Yagjian asked if we could reduce the number of Parish Council members. Der Hayr said that it would be the decision of the Assembly, and that a minimum of seven and maximum of fifteen members were the only requirements of the By-Laws. Michael Gulbankian was adamantly opposed to such an idea, and said that the number of Parish Council members had to be representative of the number of parish members.

Der Hayr suggested that dues-paid parishioners submit their names for the purposes of completing the ballot, with the understanding that they were not interested in actually getting elected. The Chairman stressed that anyone doing so would be still considered a candidate and that nothing was guaranteed. Der Hayr said that if someone was elected that did not wish to serve, they could resign. Der Hayr said that other churches in the Diocese have used this method in the past in order to complete the ballot. Edward J. Bilzerian asked if there were any dire consequences if we did not present a legal ballot. Der Hayr said that the likely worst-case scenario would be that we would have to hold another Assembly.

Herman Purutyan and Seth Bilazarian expressed concern about Der Hayr’s suggestion, and advised against putting together a “misleading” ballot. Nevertheless, Charles Sharigian volunteered to have his name added to the ballot, seconded by Joan Handleman. Arthur Yagjian also volunteered to have his name added to the ballot, seconded by Edward J. Bilzerian.

Ben Bullock was nominated by Katherine Dodakian, seconded by Vahe Jardarian. Ben accepted the nomination.

At this point, Berjoohie Zakarian made a motion to close the nominations for Parish Council, seconded by Richard Dodakian. The motion passed without objection, and the final Parish Council ballot was as follows:

Michael Arakelian
Ben Bullock

Mark Markarian
Louis S. Mikitarian

Katherine Dodakian
Marcia Hovenesian

Charles Sharigian
Archie Torosian
Arthur Yagjian

Nominations for Nominating Committee

Richard Bedrosian presented the following names of the Nominating Committee candidates nominated by the Nominating Committee:

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|-----------------|-----------------|
| Linda Bullock | Mark Sivazlian |
| Annie Kachajian | Darrilyn Wasiuk |
| Agnes Sahagian | |

Richard indicated that the number of nominees did not meet the Diocesan By-Laws requirements for two times the number of candidates as open positions (5) and requested additional nominations from the floor. Several persons were nominated and respectfully declined to become candidates. They were Seth Bilazarian, Arek Thompson, Barry Bilzerian, Herman Purutyan, Dorothy Surabian, Betty Sheehan, Berjoohie Zakarian, Michael Gulbankian, and Gary Dodakian.

Elizabeth Avakian nominated Paul Avakian, seconded by Mark Markarian. Paul accepted the nomination. Louis Mikitarian nominated Steven Migridichian, seconded by Katherine Dodakian. Steven accepted the nomination.

At this point, Ruth Haddon made a motion to close the nominations for Nominating Committee, seconded by Berjoohie Zakarian. The motion passed, and the final Nominating Committee ballot was as follows:

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|---------------------|-----------------|
| Paul Avakian | Agnes Sahagian |
| Linda Bullock | Mark Sivazlian |
| Annie Kachajian | Darrilyn Wasiuk |
| Steven Migridichian | |

Nominations for Auditing Committee

Richard Bedrosian presented the following names of the Auditing Committee candidates nominated by the Nominating Committee:

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|-------------------|----------------|
| Richard Bedrosian | Jan Mikitarian |
| Richard Dodakian | |

Richard indicated that the number of nominees did not meet the Diocesan By-Laws requirements for two times the number of candidates as open positions (2) and requested additional nominations from the floor. Edward J. Bilzerian declined nomination for this position. Jan Mikitarian made a motion to close the nominations for Auditing Committee, seconded by Ruth Haddon. The motion passed, and the final Auditing Committee ballot was as listed above.

Nominations for Memorial Endowment Committee

Richard Bedrosian presented the following names of the Memorial Endowment Committee candidates nominated by the Nominating Committee:

Seth Bilazarian
John Chicknavorian

Mardieros Mooshagian
Arthur Yagjian

Arthur Yagjian asked why there were two open positions for Memorial Endowment Committee. Der Hayr explained that because Gilbert Markarian was unable to complete his term due to illness, the next available alternate from prior elections, John Sagarian Sr., completed the term for a period of one year. Therefore, the highest vote getter would serve for five years, and the next highest vote getter would serve for four years. Elda Malesky made a motion to close the nominations for Memorial Endowment Committee, seconded by Margaret Belles. The motion passed, and the final Memorial Endowment Committee ballot was as listed above.

The Chairman proposed that the voting begin as soon as the final ballots are prepared (approximately fifteen minutes), that lunch and voting take place at the same time, and that the meeting reconvene at 1:15 p.m. This schedule was approved by the Assembly.

Louis Mikitarian announced the procedure for vote counts during the Assembly. At the time of ballot voting, blue (“yes”, “for”) and yellow (“no”, “against”) cards would be handed out to dues-paying, voting members of the parish. These cards would be used during the Assembly.

The Chairman reconvened the meeting at 1:25 p.m. The Chairman requested a show of blue (yes) cards to note the number of voting members present. 70 members were counted.

1997 Annual Assembly Minutes

The 1997 Annual Assembly Minutes were reviewed, and the following changes were approved:

Page 4 - The sentence, “He agreed with Zarvin Kasparian that the church should have professional help to audit the books at the end of the year” be stricken.

Page 8 - That “...a list of amounts given by each member be published” be changed to “...a distribution of the amounts given by the membership be published”

Auditing Committee Report

Zarvin Kasparian objected to the terminology used at the beginning of the Auditing Committee Report stating that the report was “prepared” in “accordance with” Diocesan By-Laws. He noted that the responsibility of the Auditing Committee was not to prepare the reports, but to audit the financial records of the church. Richard Dodakian of the Auditing Committee explained that the Auditing Committee reviewed and audited the financial records and results provided by the Treasurer of the Parish Council and the church bookkeeper. Zarvin thereby made a motion, seconded by Edward J. Bilzerian, that the term “prepared” be eliminated from the report. This motion was approved.

Berjoochie Zakarian expressed displeasure that income from her ACEF fund did not show up in any of the financial reports or the Sunday School report. She said that interest from the fund she established in the ACEF was intended to benefit the Sunday School of our church. She noted that there was no acknowledgment of this income in the Sunday School report. Louis S.

Mikitarian noted that on page 75 of the financial reports, there was a notation on the income statement that ACEF interest income subsidized Sunday School expenses. He said that donors are not individually listed because the amount listed is an aggregate total of several donors. He did note, however, that every effort would be made to acknowledge these donors in future reports. Edward J. Bilzerian said that the names of all such donors should also be noted in the Sunday School report, as well.

Zarvin Kasparian questioned why income from New England Region service fees (page 75) was listed as \$1100 when he had canceled checks for \$1200. The Treasurer will investigate this matter and the financial records will be corrected, if necessary.

Scott Najarian made a recommendation that the Annual Report be readily available in the church office, as he had difficulty obtaining one during the week. The Parish Council agreed to make the Annual Report easily accessible in the future. Edward J. Bilzerian made a motion to accept the Auditing Committee Report, seconded by Mrs. Rose Aslanian. The motion was approved. Mr. Bilzerian congratulated the Parish Council on a job well done in handling the finances of the church.

Adoption of 1998 Operating Budget

Edward J. Bilzerian questioned the figure proposed for "Pledges Collected" in the 1998 budget, and whether uncollected 1997 dues were taken into account. Louis S. Mikitarian explained that a big "carryover" in uncollected 1997 dues was not expected in 1998 (as was the case in 1997) because the Parish Council now sends out dues statements regularly. Louis mentioned that "calendar year" dues-paid members rose from 251 in 1996 to 434 in 1997. Mr. Bilzerian also asked whether our Diocesan Assessment should be going down more, since our dues paying membership was significantly less than in prior years. Louis explained that there were several factors that determine our Assessment, and offered a handout for further clarification. Our church paid \$83 per member to the diocese in 1997. Mr. Bilzerian felt that we should be generating more funds per member. Charles Sharigian said that the church should have a membership drive.

Thomas Garabedian suggested that the actual prior year's results be also listed in the Supplementary Budget Analysis pages for comparative purposes along with the proposed budget figures. Thomas also pointed out that a shortfall is projected for 1998 (before capital expense items) and asked how this would be made up. Louis said that if there was an actual shortfall, it would be made up from the church's reserve funds.

Zarvin Kasparian asked about other repairs that were needed that were not listed under the capital expenditures, such as refinishing the Dean St. doors, repairing the front steps, and painting the peeling wood window casings. Jay Kapur responded that he is assisting the Parish Council in getting minor repairs done, and that the Council has already approved getting the doors done, as well as other minor paint and plaster work. Louis mentioned that there are many other things that need to be done, but that the Council has had to prioritize by addressing the most crucial items, and that funds would have to be raised in order to make more substantial renovations. He pointed out that the Council is proposing a separate fundraising effort

(consisting, in part, of three-year pledges) that would raise a minimum of \$40,000 per year to cover the major capital expenses.

John Toromanian asked about the Contract Services expense item. Louis explained that this covers outside janitorial and snow removal services. He also said that the Council has budgeted for hiring either a full-time or part-time custodian(s) during the year, and that this accounts for some of the increased expenses. John expressed that a hired custodian needs to be on hand to do basic things. Steven Migridichian suggested that the church have a permanent building & grounds committee to oversee capital expenditures and maintenance related issues and enthusiastically volunteered to serve on such a committee. Steven made a motion, seconded by Agnes Sahagian to form a Building and Grounds Committee. The motion was approved.

Arthur Yagjian made a motion, seconded by Edward Bilzerian to approve the 1998 Proposed Budget, as presented. Herman Purutyan questioned whether this meant that all aspects of the budget (capital expenditures and fundraising) are assumed. The Chairman responded that this was correct. Thomas Garabedian felt that item 13a. (Preliminary Renovation Plans and Fundraising) should be addressed prior to voting on the budget. Louis Mikitarian and Jay Kapur gave detailed background about the status of and plans for replacing the Cultural Center roof.

Richard Maksian questioned the \$14,000 for a new copying machine. Louis said that the church makes 250,000 copies per year and that our existing copy machine has gone through twice its expected life (2 million copies). He explained that copier companies will no longer sign maintenance agreements for our machine because of frequent repairs. The budget figure was based on a demo model that appeared to be a good value. The total cost per copy still works out cheaper if the church owns its own machine.

Zarvin Kasparian felt that special assemblies were needed to address specific capital expenditures as more detailed information became available. Berjoohie Zakarian said that the Assembly should have faith in the Parish Council's judgment, and that no special assemblies were needed because these capital improvements require immediate attention. Der Hayr said that ultimately, it was the Parish Council's responsibility to ensure the well-being and safety of the church, according to the Diocesan By-Laws.

Zarvin Kasparian asked about the duties of bookkeeper and that the issue of "Outside Auditors" (item 9a.) should be discussed at this time. Louis Mikitarian discussed the duties of the church bookkeeper. Kap Maksian said that he pursued the issue of outside auditors by contacting several firms for their fees. All auditing professionals that were contacted were not interested in providing their services to the church because the work would take place in January - a very busy time of the year for their regular clientele. One estimate was \$4000 minimum. Der Hayr stressed that according to Diocesan By-Laws, only elected members of the Auditing Committee are ultimately responsible for auditing the church books.

Herman Purutyan asked about the status of the Youth Director, which was in the budget last year and again this year, but that nobody has been hired. Der Hayr responded that a full-time position was not practical, and that part-time candidates were difficult to find, especially those who are

familiar with our church traditions. However, volunteers like Kap Maksian have helped out tremendously with the youth, and have done a good job.

Thomas Garabedian asked about the approximately \$100,000 that was transferred to the church after the closing of the Bingo Account, and if these funds could be utilized for the capital improvements. Der Hayr explained that the Parish Council agreed, as requested by the Bingo Committee, to create a separate fund for this money, so that the legacy of Bingo would perpetuate into the future.

Edward J. Bilzerian requested that the question on the approval of the 1998 Budget as proposed be moved. The motion was approved.

Old Business

As per previous discussions, the Parish Council reiterated that, at this time, additional outside accounting help was not needed. A motion was made by Scott Najarian, seconded by Kap Maksian to accept the Parish Council's recommendation. The motion passed.

Edward J. Bilzerian asked about the status of the Pastor's health insurance policy, and if anything was done to reduce the cost, such as investigating the use of HMO's, etc. Louis Mikitarian said that during 1997, Der Hayr voluntarily entered the Tuft's Community HMO health plan, which costs just under \$500 per month (including dental insurance), saving the church a considerable amount of money. The Assembly commended Der Hayr and the Parish Council for their efforts.

With regards to Stewardship, Agnes Sahagian and Charles Sharigian volunteered to start a membership drive.

Annual Report of the Pastor

A motion was made by Edward J. Bilzerian, seconded by Dorothy Yagjian, not to read and to accept the Pastor's Report. Scott Najarian expressed that we should encourage our pastor to attend the ACYOA Assembly held during Memorial Day Weekend. Der Hayr said that it was his prerogative whether or not to attend this event, given his busy schedule blessing graves locally during that weekend. The motion passed.

Annual Report of the Parish Council

A motion was made by Edward J. Bilzerian, seconded by Charles Sharigian, not to read and to accept the Annual Report of the Parish Council. Steven Migridichian wanted to recognize the outstanding efforts of Richard Maksian and the Parish Council for bringing back the regular publication of the Messenger. Agnes Sahagian said that she and Steven Sahagian donated the chandelier outside the front of the church. The Parish Council said that the donation would be recognized. The motion passed.

Annual Reports of Church Organizations

A motion was made by Edward J. Bilzerian, seconded by Berjoohie Zakarian, not to read and to accept the Annual Reports of the Church Organizations. Zarvin Kasparian wanted to know why no funds were transacted by the ACYOA Juniors, and why they did not put their money in a checking account that could have earned about \$40 in interest. Kap Maksian explained that although activities were held by the ACYOA Juniors, they did not entail any transaction of funds. In addition, the checking account has no fees and gives no interest. Steven Migridichian noted spelling corrections of donors on page 55 (Memorial Endowment Fund) - Yervant and Janet Annaian, Gladys Zeytoonian. The motion was approved.

New Business:

Preliminary Renovation Plans and Fundraising

Although most of this discussion took place during the budget deliberations, the issue of capital improvements and fundraising was revisited. Agnes Sahagian requested additional clarification on how the funds would be raised. Louis Mikitarian said that the Parish Council's tentative plan is to send out a letter to the parish encouraging separate 3-year pledges specifically for the purpose of building renovations. The minimum goal is to raise \$40,000 per year for three years. It would be a straightforward process, however Louis encouraged other ideas and suggestions. Edward J. Bilzerian made a motion to continue with these plans, seconded by Annie Kachajian. The motion passed.

Diocesan Centennial

Der Hayr spoke of the upcoming plans for the celebration of the Centennial Anniversary of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church. The Catholicos will be attending. There are representatives from the New England churches coordinating the programs, under the direction of the Primate. Zarvin Kasparian was appointed the local chairman of these activities. There will be a Badarak in Worcester on May 17, 1998.

Promotion of Cultural Center

Jay Kapur spoke of the continuing efforts to promote the rental of the Cultural Center for income. Jay said that last spring, extensive renovations were made in the Cultural Center as a result of insurance claims for water damage. Jay said that all of the renovations were made with virtually no additional cost to the church. Jay said that Joan Wakeen, a retired professional interior decorator (and mother of parishioner Diane Strazulla), donated her services and assisted with the decor selections.

Jay said that, with the support of the Parish Council, an aggressive marketing approach has been taken, especially in targeting the bridal market. A professional four-color brochure, designed by Edward Kachajian and Surabian Advertising, was produced and initially distributed at the recent Wedding Expo at the Worcester Convention Center (at which the church had a booth). The church also advertises in the Bride & Groom Magazine. Another general brochure is planned in order to target a broader rental market (i.e. business functions, parties, etc.).

In 1997, through the efforts of Jay Kapur and the Parish Council, the church generated over \$10,000 in hall rental income (only \$4,000 was generated in 1996). \$17,000 was budgeted for 1998, and Jay reported that, as of the date of the Assembly, he already had bookings equaling all of 1997. Louis Mikitarian thanked Jay for his efforts in this area.

Youth Programs

Seth Bilazarian expressed concern about the lack of participation by our parish youth in Diocese-sponsored programs like St. Vartan Camp and St. Nersess. Seth felt that more personal contact was needed in order to attract youth to these programs. Der Hayr said that a lot of behind the scenes work was done last year to recruit youth for these programs, and that three youngsters attended the St. Vartan Camp. Der Hayr said that five youth would have attended the St. Nersess Summer Studies programs, were it not for summer work commitments and busy activity schedules, in general. Der Hayr suggested that Seth put together a committee to contact prospective youth for this year's programs, and Seth volunteered.

Herman Purutyan felt that we have not spent enough money and effort on the youth. Kap Maksian said that he has spent many volunteer hours working with the ACYOA Juniors, and that they have over fifteen active members that have planned events such as Poon Paregentan, ACYOA Day, field trips, etc. Kap did say, however, that he felt that there was a definite lack of commitment by the parents, who have not encouraged their children to be active and to participate. Kap also pointed out that the Parish Council made every effort to schedule the Assembly on a date that did not conflict with school vacation schedules, but that unfortunately, participation in the Assembly by parents of school-aged children was still minimal. Herman asked what the church can do to reach out to these parents. Rich Maksian spoke of competing activities, such as sports, that are held on Sunday mornings are among the challenges facing Sunday School teachers. Der Hayr said that the situation is the same across the Diocese. Existing programs such as Bible Study (taught by Paul Avakian) and Lenten services and speakers have only been supported by elderly. Seth Bilazarian made a motion, seconded by Hazel Eljanian to form a committee to address youth issues. The motion was approved.

Results of the Elections

The Chairman called on Richard Bedrosian to announce the results of the Elections. A total of 89 members cast votes. Elected to the Parish Council were:

| | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| Michael Arakelian | Mark Markarian |
| Ben Bullock | Louis Mikitarian |
| Katherine Dodakian | Archie Torosian |

The first alternate was Marcia Hovenesian, and the second alternate was Arthur Yagjian.

Elected to the Nominating Committee were:

| | |
|---------------------|----------------|
| Linda Bullock | Agnes Sahagian |
| Annie Kachajian | Mark Sivazlian |
| Steven Migridichian | |

The first alternate was Paul Avakian.

Elected to the Auditing Committee were:

Richard Bedrosian

Richard Dodakian

The alternate was Jan Mikitarian.

Elected to the Memorial Endowment Committee were:

Seth Bilazarian (5 years)

John Chicknavorian (4 years)

The alternate was Arthur Yagjian.

Louis Mikitarian thanked the members of the Nominating Committee for their efforts. Louis also thanked the Assembly Chairman, Gary Dodakian, for a job well done, especially since this was his first time. Louis also thanked Assembly Secretary, Jay Kapur. Louis extended special thanks to Der Hayr for his leadership and guidance throughout the year.

Benediction

Der Hayr expressed his thanks to Parish Council Chairman, Louis S. Mikitarian, for his tireless efforts over the past year. Der Hayr also thanked retiring Parish Council members Marion Aharonian, Michael Gulbankian, and Kap Maksian. Michael served for the maximum of six consecutive years.

A motion was made by Annie Kachajian, seconded by Bizer Simonian to adjourn the meeting. The Assembly was adjourned at 4:45 p.m. followed by the closing prayer by Der Hayr.

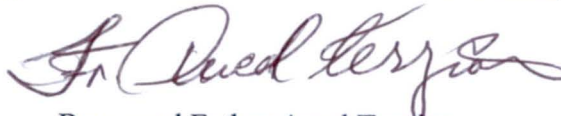
Respectfully Submitted,



Jay A. Kapur
Assembly Secretary



Gary Dodakian
Assembly Chairman



Reverend Father Aved Terzian
Pastor