

THE ST. THOMAS ARMENIAN CHURCH PARISH COUNCIL REPORT FOR THE YEAR
1971

We are happy to report that the year 1971 proved to be another successful one for St. Thomas Armenian Church. We were able to meet our financial obligations, maintain and improve our Church property, increase our membership, and continue to serve our Parishioners spiritually. This was accomplished during a year in which our country went through an economic recession, where unemployment in our geographic area was severe, and where the population in general reduced its spending in response to the economic uncertainties both at home and abroad.

We are proud of these accomplishments because they were made possible through the combined efforts of the dedicated members of our Church Organization, the Parish Council, Father Arnak Kasparian, and our Parishioners.

Immediately after the Parish Assembly elected the members to the Parish Council for the year 1971, the Parish Council was organized. We would like you to know the members of the Parish Council and the positions they held during the past year.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Elected Office</u>	<u>Liaison To</u>	<u>Chmn. of Committee</u>
Vahan Najarian	Chairman		Memorials
Arthur Otchy	Vice-Chairman	Men's Club	Coordinator of Church Activities
Edward Devejian	Recording Secretary		
Andrew Sahagian	Treasurer		
Edward Fehmian	Asst. Secretary	A.C.Y.O.A.	
Hagop Jebejian	Asst. Treasurer	Armenian School	Pledges
Jack Hajinlian			Worship & Religious Activities
George Shahinian			Sevan Dance Group
Albert Keusey		Women's Guild	
Zaven Poosikian Peter Mason		Choir	
Ray Kreppel			Building & Grounds
Edward Bashian			Ways & Means

Our plans for 1971 were many. We met many of our goals. We did the best we could with the help, money and time available. Our achievements for the past year and our plans for 1972 are published for your information.

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THE PASTOR'S REPORT

a) Worship Services have been conducted every Sunday from 10:30 a.m. to noon, with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and a sermon. During the year, we had as guest celebrants: Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, on the occasion of our sixth anniversary of the consecration of the church; we also had Reverend Vasken Karagazian of Armenia on June 6, Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan on June 13, and Reverend Levon Arakelian on October 10. Fr. Arnak Kasparian celebrated Badarak at the Home in Emerson twice, on Armenian Christmas day and on Maundy Thursday of Holy Week. He also had Grape Blessing services at the Home. On Armenian Christmas we had the Gomidas Choir.

b) Sacramental Services. During the year, 23 baptisms were performed (compared to 21 last year): 14 marriages were blessed (14 the previous two years); 11 funerals took place (8 last year). We shall cherish the memories of Martin Goomrigian, Isabel Kratlian, Armenuhi Tatarian and Khosrof Attarian who were members of our Parish.

c) Administrative. As ex-officio president of all Church organizations, Rev. Arnak Kasparian attended and presided over all the meetings. He directed and advised and, in many cases, he helped in implementing decisions. He attended the Diocesan Assembly in Montreal, Canada with our delegates: Edward Bashian, Vahan Najarian, Nazar Nazarian and Richard Turnamian.

d) Publications. With the help of Yeretzgin Violet, Fr. Arnak publishes the Bergen Beacon monthly and puts out the flyers for our various affairs. Mrs. Martha Saraydarian, Mrs. Mary Ann Saraydarian and Mrs. Jaime Ohanian have been most helpful in assisting with typing, addressing, and various other office work whenever called upon. Our heartfelt thanks for their cheerful assistance. Our mailing list is approximately 890 addresses.

Our Pastor has been reelected as the President of the Tenafly Clergy Fellowship. On many occasions, Der Hayr has led various groups on tour of the church telling them about the Armenian Church in general and St. Thomas in particular.

The Pastor wishes to bring to your attention that an examination of this annual report reveals the obvious fact that each of the branches of our church organization has been rather successful.

During the past year, to say the least, all church activities have been operating and run in a most harmonious manner with a minimum of friction usually present as a natural part of the operations of a church. This has been largely due to the type of leadership we have had. All the members and officers of the Parish Council have contributed to making this a successful year.

A very special tribute must be paid to the untiring efforts of our Chairman, Vahan Najarian, who has shown tact, diplomacy, and an understanding of the problems that confronted us during the past twelve months. Without his faithful and guiding leadership we would not have had a successful year.

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REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Membership: Since our last parish assembly meeting, 9 new families have been added to our Membership list which now totals 239 families. We thank Fr. Arnak Kasparian for his concerted efforts to encourage new families to join our Parish.

Coordinator of Church Activities and Rental of Church Property: The responsibility for this function rests with one individual, who performs it so smoothly and with so little fanfare that his efforts go almost unnoticed. Mr. Arthur Otchy has done another tremendous job for our Church this past year. We express our thanks to him and hope that he continues in this capacity for many years.

Building and Grounds: Improvements made to our Church grounds were primarily the result of the personal efforts of Mr. Ray Kreppel. This year, as in past years, he has worked many hours to beautify our Church grounds. He has delivered many truckloads of fill, leveled it with his bulldozer, and has taken steps to preserve our trees. Dedicated and persevering men such as Ray are rare; our Church is truly fortunate to have him.

The Asbeds of St. Vartanantz have offered to contribute 50% of the cost of draperies for our Church auditorium and the two adjacent rooms. The Parish Council has accepted this generous offer and is moving ahead with plans to buy the draperies. The draperies will certainly enhance the appearance of our Church. They will have the added benefits of improving the acoustics of the auditorium and reducing our heating bills in the colder months.

The Parish Council currently has under review the insurance policy which covers the Church and the parsonage. We seek to know the details of our coverage so that we may determine if it covers the replacement cost of our Church. Based upon our findings, we may increase the coverage in order to protect our investment.

Pledges: The pledge program made positive strides in 1971 under the capable leadership of Mr. Hagop Jebajian. He focused his attention upon increasing the pledges and upon following up with gentle reminders to those who were in arrears. The Parish Council feels that his program still has an enormous room for growth. This form of financial support is essential if our Church is to become more financially sound, and less dependent upon special activities to meet its annual expenses.

PARISH COUNCIL SOCIAL FUNCTIONS

The Parish Council had the responsibility of being in charge of two major events this past year. They were as follows:

- A. The Sixth Anniversary Dinner on March 7, 1971. This annual dinner marking the anniversary of our Church is a team effort where every Church organization is involved. As in the past, the Anniversary dinner was a social and financial success. The Chairman of the Dinner was Zaven Poosikian. The principal speakers were our Primate Archbishop Torkom Manoogian and Victor Arzoomanian. The highlights of the afternoon was the presentation of the St. Thomas Armenian Church Plaque to Victor Arzoomanian for outstanding service to our Church, and the presentation of the Primate's Commendation to Mrs. Floraine Halejian for outstanding service to the A.C.Y.O.A.

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- B. The Annual Bazaar was co-chaired by Mr. Albert Keusey and Mrs. Dorothy Stchy. Under the able leadership of these two individuals, the Bazaar netted over \$11,000. for our Church.

During the year the Parish Council sought new ways to bring our Church community closer together. The following steps were taken:

1. The Men's Club, Women's Guild, and A.C.Y.O.A. meetings were held on the same evenings, with a joint activity following the individual meetings.
2. Dick Barnett of the New York Knickerbockers Basketball team spoke to a large group of fathers and sons in our Church auditorium in May.
3. A "Get to know your fellow parishioners" Cocktail Party was held in October.
4. Coffee and cake has been served after Church services.
5. A concert was held in our Church in January with talented Armenian artists performing.
6. A monthly dinner program has been established by Sonia Keusey and Yeretzgin.

The Parish Council has under consideration other activities which we hope will be equally well received.

CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS

The Parish Council graciously acknowledges and thanks the many individuals who have worked so diligently in our Church Organizations. From the organizations' reports that are appended to this publication, you will agree that we have the most intelligent, devoted, and successful leaders and assistants working for the good of our Church. St. Thomas Church depends on its various Church organizations for support. We are happy to state that each of our organizations has made large contributions both in services and in finances during the period of this report. We are grateful to all the groups. The various Church Organizations and the leaders of these organizations are as indicated below:

CHOIR: Choir Master - Mr. Edward Daghlian
Organist - Miss Susan Shamamian
The Choir report is attached as Appendix A.

ARMENIAN LANGUAGE SCHOOL: Superintendent - Miss Sylva der Stepanian
The Armenian School Report is attached as Appendix B.

SUNDAY SCHOOL: Superintendent - Yeretzgin Violet Kasparian
The Sunday School Report is attached as Appendix C.

WOMEN'S GUILD: Chairman - Mrs. Virginia Parseghian
The Women's Guild Report is attached as Appendix D.

MEN'S CLUB: Chairman - Mr. Masis Parseghian
The Men's Club Report is attached as Appendix E.

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A.C.Y.O.A.: Chairman - Mr. Richard Malajian
Adult Advisor - Mrs. Virginia Malajian
The A.C.Y.O.A. Report is attached as Appendix F.

ST. THOMAS BASKETBALL TEAM: Senior Advisor - Jack Tatarian
Coaches - Harry Chakmakian, Ara Martin, Martin Tashjian
The St. Thomas Basketball Team Report is attached as Appendix G.

Building and Finance Committee: The Parish Council organized this new committee and charged it with the responsibility of meeting the mortgage payments of this Parish. The nucleus of this committee is our Diocese Delegates. Mr. Edward Bashian was entrusted with the organization of this committee. The budget of this committee is attached as Appendix H.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE:--

We have set forth the following recommendations which we feel should be a guide to the incoming Parish Council.

1. Develop a formal Membership Program. Have one individual in charge as a permanent chairman.
2. Work towards getting the newly formed Building and Finance Committee off the ground.
3. Continue the program to increase the pledges and develop a follow-up system to promote collections.
4. See that the plans to A) erect a "St. Thomas Armenian Church" sign outside the Church, and B) install the draperies are achieved.
5. Complete a booklet about St. Thomas Armenian Church to include the story depicted in our windows.
6. Looking into the feasibility of hiring a full time caretaker.
7. Look into the feasibility of hiring a part time secretary.

RECOGNITION:

Rather than express our thanks to specific individuals and run the risk of unintentionally omitting deserving names, we would like to express our sincere thanks to all those who have given of themselves in the Service of our Church.

The personal sacrifices of our many parishioners has been the sustaining force for our Church. We hope that in the coming year more people will come forward and experience the joy of working toward our common goal and thereby lighten the burden for those who have carried it for so long.

CONCLUSION:

Through positive thinking and actions we were able to meet many of our goals this past year. The Parish Council sacrificed their time and energies so that our Parishioners may gain. We are proud of our accomplishments.

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One of the most important accomplishments achieved during this year and the past five is that we have more harmony among our Parishioners and the Parishioners with the clergy. In that atmosphere, we worked better and were in a more relaxed and happy mood to work for our Church. This took patience and understanding on all levels. We are confident this harmony will continue, for without it we could not succeed.

Each year our commitments become harder to meet, but we seem to overcome all obstacles because of our positive thinking and desire to do well. 1972 is no different. We will meet our goals with your continued support.

Vahan Najarian
Chairman

Rev. Fr. Arnak Kasparian
President

Edward Devejian
Secretary

January 30, 1972

The Auditing Committee has examined the Treasurers' Books and found them in good order.

George Mekenian
Vincant Incecian
Harry Sanossian