

MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY  
ST. THOMAS ARMENIAN CHURCH, TENAFLY, NJ  
SECOND SESSION - SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1990

Chairman George Mekenian called the assembly to order at 1:47p.m. Der Arnak Kasparian opened the meeting with a prayer. In answer to a question by Leon Nigohosian the Chairman stated that the procedures described by the Diocesan by-laws would be followed. If the particular situation were not covered by the by-laws then Roberts Rule of Order would be utilized.

At 1:50p.m. there were 57 people, enough for a quorum. The eligibility of the voters was verified by Zaven Poosikian.

The Chairman designated Ron Kenderian, Vice Chairman of the Assembly, as parliamentarian.

The Assembly changed the order of the items on the agenda.

The following motions were made and carried regarding procedural matters: to accept the new order of the agenda; for the various chairpeople to present a commentary on their reports rather than read them; to take a "yes" as well as "no" vote on motions.

Der Arnak said a special prayer for parishioners who were deceased during the past year.

PASTOR'S REPORT: A discussion followed Der Arnak's published report.

Leon Nigohosian asked what was being done to bring back parishioners who had left the parish. He was told by Der Arnak and by Joanne Torigian, Parish Council Chairman, that the Membership Committee members were calling some of these people but there was no organized effort underway. Mrs. Torigian will form a group that will call and visit former parishioners in an effort to reinstate them. It was suggested that Der Hayr should also be calling such persons. Roxy Daghlilian appealed to those people who are staying away because they feel they have been hurt should come to church and try to heal the hurts. Sandra Alpino felt that Der Hayr should initiate contact with people who stay away from church for whatever reason. Der Hayr asked for a list of such people. Eva Yazidjian commended the Parish Council for setting up the new Nursery which has been encouraging young families with small children to come to church.

Sam Demirjian accused Der Arnak of alienating some of the parishioners. He related a specific incident when a parishioner told him they would be leaving St. Thomas because Der Hayr had told them that if they did not like the way he ran the church they could go elsewhere. In an effort to mediate, Mr. Demirjian presented the problem to Joanne Torigian who wrote to both Der Hayr and the parishioner. Der Hayr apologized to the parishioner and the matter was resolved to their satisfaction. Der Hayr explained to the Assembly that the father of the parishioner involved

had been complaining about the way the Badarak was done with the use of English in some parts etc. He mentioned that at St. Vartanantz things were done in the traditional way, upon which Der Hayr told him he should go to St. Vartanantz if spiritually he would be more satisfied. This upset the family and the aforementioned events took place. When Mr. Demirjian wanted to discuss other complaints of this sort, Mr. Mekenian suggested he bring such problems to the Parish Council. The Chair recommended that discussion of this subject be ended now. A motion from the floor to this effect was seconded and all present voted yes except one.

PARISH COUNCIL REPORT: In addition to her published report Joanne Torigian thanked the following people who were inadvertently omitted: Michel Izmirly who with Alice Arzoomanian and Laureen Berberian had prepared the budget in spite of his ill health; Virginia Victoria for diligently overseeing the rentals; the Delegates to the Diocesan Assembly Victor Arzoomanian, George Mekenian and Joseph Kalemkerian and the St. Thomas people who helped the earthquake victims associated with the AGBU/Airlift Project. The following corrections are to be made to her report: ACYOA Seniors - Stephen Mekenian, Chairman & Douglas Martaian, Vice-Chairman; Armenian School - Ani Capan, Director; the Parish Council has designated the Youth Room to be donated by the Women's Guild.

A discussion of the Parish Council report followed.

In reply to Leon Nigohosian's questions on the progress of the Priest Search Committee, Joanne Torigian reported that the committee had had one meeting where they reviewed three names and contacted some people who were not interested in the job. The committee will list the criteria a candidate must meet at their next meeting. When the committee makes their decision they will submit the names to the Parish Council and the Board of Trustees. The process must be a confidential one to preserve the privacy and dignity of the candidates.

Leon Nigohosian moved that there be a person on the Priest Search Committee who is not a member of any administrative body of the church (not elected or appointed); it was seconded. Rose Mekenian suggested that if anyone had a candidate in mind, they should make a recommendation to the committee. Paul Kahaumjian, a former member of the committee, said that the members of the committee were very knowledgeable about the clergy available and should be entrusted with the job. Leon Nigohosian moved to amend the motion to include Frank Avakian-Stoneson as the lay person to be appointed to the committee. Motion to amend was seconded and defeated. The original motion was also defeated.

Leon Nigohosian made a motion that the Priest Search Committee submit the names of three or more clergymen to the Parish Assembly next year to be voted on. Motion seconded and defeated.

Edward Bashian appealed for unity among the parishioners and criticized the uneasiness and divisiveness prevailing among some members of the church.



The Chair recommended that since finding a replacement for Der Arnak is such a vital issue , an evening be set aside for everyone to come and discuss their suggestions, concerns etc. Leon Nigohosian made a motion to that effect. It was seconded and passed. Greg Doudoukjian, a seminarian at St. Nersess said that finding a pastor is not an easy job because of a severe shortage of priests. We should enjoy Der Hayr's services while he is here since we may have to go without a priest for a number of years.

Sam Demirjian asked Joanne Torigian about 1) what is being done about increasing revenues and reducing expenditures; 2) not being allowed to attend Parish Council meetings; 3) accuracy of minutes taken at Parish Council meetings. Mrs. Torigian answered that 1) increased revenues would be achieved by increased pledges and more fund raising activities by parish organizations; expenses could be reduced by computerizing most operations. She praised Greg Saroyan who had donated computer equipment toward that end. The Beacon is now being produced by computer which will save a considerable amount of money. 2) According to Diocesan regulations parishioners can attend Parish Council meetings with advance permission of the Parish Council Chairman. Mrs. Torigian granted such permission to Mr. Demirjian as well as other parishioners until the Parish Council felt having observers constantly was interfering with conducting their business. 3) Mrs. Torigian commended the Council Secretary, Joseph Kalemkerian, for doing a fine job with the minutes and stated that any inadvertent mistakes he made had been corrected.

The Chair thanked the Parish Council for the fine job they did last year with special recognition for Arax Parseghian who is leaving the council after six years of service and Alice Arzoomanian who is leaving after two years as treasurer.

**AUDITING COMMITTEE REPORT:** Fred Karagosian reported that the Auditing Committee found the books of the Parish Council and all Church organizations in order.

**FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 1989:** Treasurer Alice Arzoomanian answered questions on the report. Edward Parseghian announced that the exact figure for the bazaar income is \$34,021 not \$35,343 as shown on the report. Mrs. Arzoomanian said that the discrepancy was due to a balance remaining in the bazaar checking account from the previous year left in the account to keep it open and to take care of late disbursements, etc. \$1,500 is in the account right now. Ron Kenderian said the financial report should include an accurate figure for bazaar profits in order to plan a realistic budget. The same also is true for hall rentals. Mrs. Torigian stated that the new computerized system would enable us to analyze the figures more accurately and give us a better picture.

In reply to his question on the Library Fund, Edward Parseghian was told that the \$1,560 listed as actual income for 1989 was the interest earned on a CD.

Haig Varjian questioned the increase in the salary of the Pastoral Assistant from the \$16,500 budgeted to the \$21,500 actual and wanted to

know where the additional money came from. Mrs. Arzoomanian replied that it was a line item adjustment.

Joanne Torigian explained that when the Parish Council decided to increase the Pastoral Assistant's salary by \$5,000 and only \$1,400 of it could be covered by the budget, Nazar Nazarian agreed to subsidize the remaining \$3,600 with the concurrence of the Parish Council and the Board of Trustees.

Sam Demirjian asked if any parishioner could subsidize salaries. Mrs. Torigian replied that in this instance it was done to accommodate Der Hayr's request for the continued service of the Pastoral Assistant.

Leon Nigohosian wanted to know how the salary increase for the pastor had been arrived at. Mrs. Arzoomanian explained that the Diocese provides a formula which was followed.

In discussing the deficit shown on the proposed budget Edward Bashian suggested forming a Budget Committee to work on future budgets.

Paul Kahaumjian proposed that to increase the income parishioners be asked to tithe 0.25% of their income. The chairman said that was a good idea but not a realistic one at this time.

Edward Bashian moved that the interest accruing in 1990 to reserve funds held by the Board of Trustees be given to the Parish Council for operating expenses.

Motion seconded and carried by the majority with 3 opposed. \$15,262 will be added to the income.

In answer to Edward Parseghian's question Ron Kenderian said that at this time we owe \$90,000 to the builder. If litigation is resolved in our favor it would be less.

Following are some of the points raised during the discussions to try and balance the budget. Leon Nigohosian proposed to adopt the actual disbursements for 1989 to the proposed income for 1990 thereby decreasing the deficit.

Thomas Kasparian asked why the amount of the 1990 pledges was lower than the 1989 pledges. Arax Parseghian answered that a number of people have reduced their pledges by as much as a half. It was commented that this could have been due to earthquake relief. Der Hayr called "pledge" a misnomer for "membership fee" and stated that in other churches the two items are treated separately. Of the \$100 per person membership paid in this church \$67 goes to the Diocese.

After a number of adjustments, an amended budget was accepted with the majority of those present voting "yes", 4 voting "no" and 2 abstaining.

The revised adopted budget of \$243,566 for 1990 is attached.

Puzant Torigian suggested this budget be worked on for the next several months to come up with more realistic numbers.

Ara Pekmezian suggested that quarterly reports be generated using the computer and checked against the proposed budget.



Haig Varjian moved to appoint a committee of five to examine the budget to determine where increases and decreases can be made based on more realistic numbers and present it to the Parish Council. Motion was seconded and defeated.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPORT: The discussion centered around our mortgage obligations. \$50,000 (\$40,000 from the Parish Council and \$10,000 from Nazar Nazarian) was paid toward reducing the mortgage. In the absence of a member of the Board of Trustees who could answer the questions about the mortgage, the Chair proposed that the Parish Council ascertain the exact figures of the mortgage and send a letter to the parishioners within 30 days. This proposal was accepted.

BUILDING COMMITTEE REPORT: In answer to Yeretzgin Violet's query about the status of pledges to the building fund still outstanding, Mrs. Torigian said that Der Arnak had been calling some people who have not paid yet, but no figures are available at this time.

MEMORIAL FUNDS REPORTS: Caspar M. Kasparian Fund: Sam Demirjian raised the issue of the anonymous donation of \$150,000 to the fund which was discussed during the 1989 assembly. He wanted to know what had become of the \$41,000 in interest generated by the donation and why it was not reported before 1989. At this time George Mekenian temporarily relinquished the chair to Ron Kenderian due to his involvement in the Fund. Mr. Kenderian told Mr. Demirjian that since the money has been reported and disbursed as discussed in the Kasparian Fund report no issue remains; that the donation had not been reported before because it was a contingent gift.

ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS: The Chairman commended the officers of the various organizations for the splendid job they did and asked for comments on the reports.

WOMEN'S GUILD: Chairwoman Adrienne Tenbekjian made the following corrections: Yeretzgin Violet Kasparian, Rose Mekenian, Alyce Parseghian and Roxy Daghlian as chairwoman of the Women's Guild attended the Diocesan Women's Guild Assembly as delegates. Fish and Chips dinner chairman was Dikris Malool.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: Vahan Soukiasian questioned the thrust of the Sunday School. Chairman Mekenian answered that Der Hayr, the Parish Council Liaison and the Director of Christian Education would take his concerns into consideration when planning their program.

NEW BUSINESS: Leon Nigohosian made a motion that the minutes of this assembly be made available within 30 days. Motion seconded and carried.

Sam Demirjian recommended having two or three more meetings between assemblies. Ron Kenderian re-iterated the Diocesan by-laws which direct any one group of 10 or more who want to have a meeting to present it to the Parish Council for approval and scheduling.

Yeretzgin Violet proposed that the Parish Council send a letter to the Diocesan Assembly asking them to decrease their disbursements so they

can lower the assessments of the parishes, thus lightening the heavy burden placed on parish budgets.

Alyce Parseghian proposed increasing the annual pledge to \$125. After discussion George Mekenian recommended this be made a voluntary rather than mandatory action.

Leon Nigohosian moved to end discussion of New Business and announce the election results. Motion seconded and passed.

**ELECTION RESULTS:** Zaven Poosikian, Chairman of the Nominating Committee announced that 152 ballots had been cast and the following (given alphabetically) were elected;

Parish Council - Suzanne Daghlian, John Derderian, Ara Martaian, Ara Pekmezian and Garabed Yazidjian; first Alternate: Virginia Victoria, second Alternate: Richard Keurajian.

Nominating Committee: Victor Arzoomanian, Eileen Barsamian, Edward Daghlian, Arax Parseghian, Edward Parseghian; Alternate: Albert Papazian.

Auditing Committee: Charles Amerkanian, Artemis Nazarian, Ardis Waldron; Alternate: Charles Doudoukjian, Sr.

Diocesan Delegates: Victor Arzoomanian, George Mekenian, Shakae Shahinian; Alternate: Arthur Azarik.

Officers of the 1991 Assembly: Chairman - Ronald Kenderian  
Secretary - Rose Mekenian

The Assembly was adjourned at 5:55p.m.

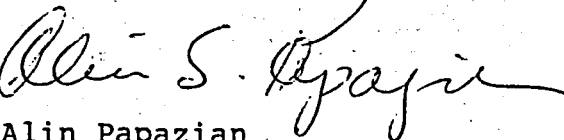
Respectfully submitted,



Rev. Arnak Kasparian  
President of the Assembly



George Mekenian  
Chairman of the Assembly



Alin Papazian  
Secretary of the Assembly