

THE HOLY ASCENSION ARMENIAN CHURCH OF BRIDGEPORT, 1241 BARNUM AVENUE,  
BRIDGEPORT, CONN. 06610

PASTOR: REV. FR. GUREGH KALFAYAN

FEBRUARY 28, 1971

The Annual General Assembly meeting of the Holy Ascension Armenian Church of Bridgeport, Connecticut was held on Sunday, February 28, 1971 in the church hall. Mr. Thomas Altoonian, Chairman of the Parish Council, convened the meeting at 1:40 P.M.

The Assembly was led in prayer by Pastor, Rev. Fr. Guregh Kalfayan. Mr. Thomas Altoonian, Parish Council Chairman greeted those assembled. The church membership list was read by Parish Council Treasurer, Mr. Jack Demirjian. Of 108 paid members, there were 63 present. Since a quorum is present, motions will carry with majority vote.

Prof. James Etmekjian was elected chairman of the assembly and Mrs. Kaye Demirjian was elected secretary. Prof. Etmekjian thanked everyone present and stated "Always speak to the motion; Do not make general remarks, make a motion, and as far as election of officers, plurality counts and nominations need not be seconded.

Minutes of the previous General Assembly were read by Mrs. Kaye Demirjian. Minutes were accepted as read.

Rev. Kalfayian thanked everyone for coming and read his report in Armenian. He advised that the English version would be forthcoming. This report was accepted as read.

The Parish Council Report was given by Mr. Thomas Altoonian, Chairman who stated that 35 meetings were held, 1 Parish Assembly Meeting, Divine Lit. performed each Sunday, 3 baptisms, and 3 funerals, held a Mothers Night Dinner, and held the Annual picnic. He thanked several members of the church for their help in making repairs to the church. Also thanked was Miss Elma Matosian for her years of faithful service as organist. He also stated that a delegation went to visit the Primate, and that the Primate came to Bridgeport for a visitation to discuss problems that had arisen between the Pastor and the Parish Council. In June, Mr. Andrew Tarian was <sup>granted</sup> ~~delegated~~ the authority to vote at future <sup>Parish Council</sup> meetings, and in July, Mr. Harry Magazian resigned as Parish Chairman. He also thanked all organizations of the church for the kind help they gave him, plus all Parish Council Men for their generosity. Questions were asked on the nature of the complaint against the Pastor. Since this question might involve lengthy discussion, it was decided to take it up under new business. Mr. Altoonian's report was accepted as read.

The Diocesan Delegate's Report of the 68th Diocesan Assembly held on May 1 and 2, 1970 at the Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Philadelphia, was read by Richard Kalfayan since Dr. Etmekjian was presiding over the meeting. This report was accepted as read.

The Sunday School Report was read by Mr. John Accashian. He stated that the Sunday School has 52 children enrolled and 8 teachers on their staff. The Sunday School made a total of \$686.91 for the year, their expenses totaled \$489.50 leaving them a total of \$197.41. \$100.00 was transmitted to the Parish Council. This report was accepted as read.

The Chair advised that all reports be put in writing so that information will always be available for further reference.

#### Choir Report

There was no formal report from the choir, but Mrs. Sonia Trapasso made an informal oral report, stating that, although the choir sang regularly, it was not functioning as a formal organization.

#### The Armenian School Report

There are 20 pupils in the Armenian School and they have had an income of \$204.24 of which \$100.00 has been transmitted to the Parish Council. This report was accepted as read.

#### Ladies Guild

The Ladies Guild report was read by Mrs. Martha Khachadoorian. The Ladies Guild held 7 dinners and had 8 business meetings. They have 30 paid members. Their income totaled \$950.60, their expenses \$76.11 giving them a balance of \$874.49. A check of \$850.00 was transmitted to the Parish Council. This report was accepted as read.

#### Mr. & Mrs. Club

Mr. James Kernicky advised that income for the year totaled \$1578.36, expenses totaled \$1471.63, <sup>leaving a net income of \$106.73</sup> of which \$50.00 was transmitted to the Parish Council. He also stated that he would like more members as the membership has dropped this year. This report was accepted as read.

#### Bazaar Report

This report was read by Mr. James Kernicky who proceeded to thank everyone on each committee for their kind help. This affair totaled \$7916.06 less expenses leaving a net of \$4,890.70. Mr. Richard Papazian was Raffle Chairman and Mr. Jack Demirjian was treasurer. A breakdown on the bazaar was asked for and Mr. Jack Demirjian gave out the figures. A special thanks was given to John's Market for their hours of work <sup>meeting our requirements.</sup> This report was accepted as read.

#### Building Committee

The Building Committee report was given by Mr. Charles Khachian, who said that the committee had looked over several lots but because of the lack of clearcut directions nothing positive was done. He requested such directions from the Parish.

Mr. Edward Jevanjan stated that the Building Committee was at a standstill. He recommended that a special Parish Assembly be held to elect a new Committee and to give it more specific directions. The report of the Committee was accepted.

#### Auditing Committee

Mr. John Stambolian finds that the books are in good order. This report was accepted.

#### 40th Anniversary Celebration Committee Report

The report of the Fortieth Anniversary Celebration Committee was read by Mrs. Lillian Etmekjian in the absence of Mrs. Theresa Harabedian, the Chairman, who was absent for reasons beyond her control. Mrs. Etmekjian stated that plans were progressing for a gala 40th birthday. This will take place on May 22 and 23 Saturday Evening and all day Sunday. His Grace Torkom Manoogian, Primate of the Diocese of North America has consented to share this event with us. A souvenir booklet is being worked out. Mr. Berj Harabedian will do the Armenian version and Prof. James Etmekjian the English. This report was accepted as read.

#### The Treasurer's Report

This report was read by Mr. Jack Demirjian, Treasurer. A copy of this report was passed out to the Assembly. Questions and answers followed this report. Mr. Harry Krikorian asked that all organizations be accorded a standing ovation for a job well done. Mr. Demirjian proposed that \$2000.00 be transferred from the checking account to the sinking fund. A motion was made to take up the matter under new business. This report was accepted as read.

#### Annual Budget

This report was read by Mr. Jack Demirjian, treasurer. The \$7000.00 expenditure was explained by Mr. Demirjian as repairs that would be done to the steeple, and windows, plus casings to renovate the outside of the church. He explained that the average cost of one coat of paint for the church is approximately \$3000.00, therefore the \$7000.00 cost stands within reason for reducing paint costs for a number of years. Mr. George Maljanian asked if this \$7000.00 worth of repairs could be done in two years' time. Questions followed on how the \$7000.00 could be obtained and Mr. Demirjian answered by saying that special activities created by the Parish Council or by soliciting funds, or by raising funds. Mr. Altoonian asked that once this Assembly approved this \$7000.00 we shall have a proper column for this figure <sup>in the income</sup>. Mr. Leo Malkasian stated that since we have money, we should use it now and get this job done. Mrs. Ginny Kalfaian stated that since Sunday collections are so very meager we should do better next year. Mr. Edward Jevanjan stated that to put \$7000.00 in this building is very bad because the building has a value of \$50,000/00 and we can not get any more for it no matter how much money we put in to improve it. Mrs. Etmekjian stated that the \$2000.00 listed for the sinking fund is a good start, towards this expenditure. Mr. Tom Altoonian stated that we would like everyone's approval on this expense. Mr. Ralph Trapasso stated that he sees this church here for at least another 5 years and that we should spend the necessary money for repairs. He proposed, however, that the \$7000.00 be included in a special category in the 1971 budget. His proposal was put to a vote and approved.

A motion was made by Mrs. Ginny Kalfaian for a 6% increase in the salary for the Pastor. Mr. Edward Jevanjian stated that we are not in a position at this time to grant an increase. After some discussion on the Assembly floor, a motion was made by Mr. Charles Khachian to postpone this motion indefinitely. The motion carried. At this time, a motion was made to accept the budget as presented by the Treasurer with modification as stated above.

#### Elections

##### Election of a Diocesan Delegate

James Etmekjian	50 votes
Berdj Harabedian	5 votes

Parish Council Members remaining in office from previous slate are Jack Demirjian and Harry Magazian. Mr. Leo Malkasian and Mr. Steve Goomrigian requested that their names be removed from slate for Parish Council after giving reasons for same.

##### Election of five (5) Parish Council Members

* Ralph Trapasso	47 votes
* Berch Khachadourian	34 votes
* Richard Kalfayan	33 votes
* Berdj Harabedian	32 votes
* George Maljanian	31 votes
Robert Jezarian	30 votes
Perry Shefirian	29 votes
Edward Jevanjian	26 votes
Amira Dinihanian	16 votes
Vartan Tarpinian	6 votes
Leo Malkasian	2 votes
Steve Goomrigian	1 vote

\* Elected

A question was raised from the floor with regards to eligibility of being a Parish Council member with reference to paid dues. The Chair stated that if a member paid two years back dues he will be eligible to be placed on the slate for nomination according to the by-laws. An explanation, by Mr. George Maljanian of Parish Council duties and responsibility was requested. Clarification of such duties and responsibilities was given by the Chairman of the Assembly, Prof. James Etmekjian. A question was asked by Mr. Richard Papazian why members who resigned from the office of the Parish Council should now be put on the slate for nomination. There was no answer from the assembly floor on this question.

##### Nominating Committee Elected

Paul Jamgochian	43 votes
Richard Papazian	41 votes
Andrew Tarian	33 votes

## Auditing Committee Elected

Stanley Zysk	30 votes
Tom Altoonian	29 votes
Vahan Hovey	26 votes

## Armenian School Committee

Berch Khachadourian  
 Berdj Harabedian  
~~B.~~ James Etmekjian

## Old Business

No old business.

## New Business

## Guidelines for awards for service to the Church.

Mr. Thomas Altoonian explained the guidelines for awards. Questions and answers followed his explanations. The assembly voted to accept the guidelines and submit them to the Primate and Diocesan Council for approval.

## Youth Group

Miss Jo Ann Dinahanian spoke on the youth group. The ages of this group are 12 to 18. Sixteen members are involved. This group meets on the first and third Friday of the month. Mr. Andy Tarian spoke on the Youth Group by asking who had sanctioned it and whether it was associated with any group in the Diocese. Mr. Altoonian stated that since there is no active ACYOA here in Bridgeport and that many attempts were made to bring the ACYOA group together but to no avail, ~~that~~ we should let these young group of boys and girls form this social organization. Mr. Jack Demirjian asked if this group is operating alone or with the ACYOA. Mrs. Eleanor Zysk stated why not give the children a chance to do what they want to do and not get involved in organizations. Motion was made by James Kernicky as approving and supporting the newly formed youth group and was carried.

## Building Committee

Mr. Thomas Altoonian spoke of the Building Committee approaching the Parish Council and that they have found property. Three meetings were held. Mr. Demirjian spoke to owners of the property and it was not accepted. Chairman was told and nothing more was done. It was moved and seconded that a special Parish Assembly be called to elect a new committee and to give it more specific guidelines. The motion carried.

## Sinking Fund

Questions and answers followed on whether the \$2000.00 should be transferred to the sinking fund. The matter was put to a vote and the \$2000.00 was voted to be transferred to the sinking fund.

Mrs. Virginia Kalfaian raised a question as to why the Pastor should not be paid weekly on a given day and should be kept waiting for his weekly salary. Mrs. Martha Khachadoorian also asked as to why matters of this kind should be known to the General Assembly when this is a matter for the Parish Council and the Parish Priest. Mr. Jack Demirjian, stated that the Priest has always been paid on a required weekly basis. It has only been on two occasions that the Priest did not receive his salary on schedule. Mr. Demirjian explained to the Assembly that this was caused by a personal misunderstanding between the Priest and himself. Mr. Demirjian apologized to the Assembly and the Priest.

Mr. Thomas Altoonian, chairman of the Parish Council was asked to reread that portion of the Parish Council Report which referred to the visit of that body to the Primate. Mr. Altoonian did so. After some discussion, Mr. Thomas Merjanian asked whether the Parish Council has the right to recommend that a Priest be transferred. In answer to the question, Mr. Etmekjian read articles 35 and 41 of the Diocesan By-Laws. Article 35 states "Any dispute arising between the members of the Parish Council and the Parish Priest must be submitted to the Primate and the Diocesan Council for settlement. Their decisions shall be final." Article 41 states: "The Priest of a Parish shall be elected for a term of five years and may be re-elected. He may resign, or he may be removed from his office, by the decision of the Primate and the Diocesan Council. A Parish Priest may be removed from his office also by a decision of the Parish Assembly, provided such decision is confirmed by the Primate and the Diocesan Council." Mr. Etmekjian felt that even after reading these provisions of the By-Laws he could not answer the question with certainty.

Mr. Tom Merjanian asked if it was possible for him to make a personal visit to the Primate with regard to the same question. The Assembly voted to elect a committee of three to obtain the answer of the questions in a personal visit to the Primate. Ultimately four persons were elected, the fourth one being added in order to make possible for a new member of the parish council to join the group.\* It was moved and seconded that the committee report by letter the outcome of the visitation with the Primate to all voting members of the parish. The motion carried.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:00 P.M. with a prayer by Der Hayr.

President  
(Rev.) Joseph Kallayan

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman of Assembly  
James Etmekjian

Kaye Demirjian, Secretary

Kaye Demirjian

\* The members of this committee were: Tom Merjanian, ~~Virginia Kalfaian~~, John Stambolian, Betty Dinikianian, and Berdj Harabedian.