

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

The 1993 Parish Assembly was held in the Agahigian-Sherinian Hall on February 5, 1993. The meeting was opened by an Invocation prayer led by Fr. Untzag Nalbandian at 1:00 p.m.

Mr. Vrej Yapoujian, chairman of the Parish Council, chaired the meeting until a chairperson was elected from those assembled. 1992 Parish Assembly Secretary, Vartan Vartanian acted as secretary until the 1993 secretary was elected.

Vrej Yapoujian called upon Nicky Taraian, Parish Council member, and Maureen Najarian, representing the Nominating Committee, to verify the dues paying members present at the assembly. Voting ballots were distributed to all dues paying members as their presence at the assembly was determined by roll call. Acting secretary, Vartan Vartanian recorded and tallied the number of dues paying members who were present. He reported that there were 104 dues paying members in the parish. There was a quorum of forty-six dues paying members present for the 1993 Parish Assembly. It was announced that a simple majority would carry the voting for each category.

Nominations were solicited for chairperson of the 1993 Assembly. Nominated were Ralph Trapasso and Richard Kalfaian. Mr. Trapasso declined his nomination; Mr. Kalfaian was elected Chairman of the 1993 Parish Assembly.

Nominations were solicited for secretary of the 1993 Assembly. Nominated were Virginia Kalfaian, Annie Ketchian and Sharyn D'Urso. Virginia Kalfaian and Annie Ketchian declined the nomination. Sharyn D'Urso was elected secretary of the 1993 Parish Assembly.

Having elected the officers for the annual Parish Assembly, the business of the meeting was undertaken. Secretary Sharyn D'Urso read the minutes of the 1992 Parish Assembly which were accepted as read.

Chairman Richard Kalfaian called upon Nominating Committee members, Maureen Najarian and Mari Yapoujian, to conduct the 1993 election of members for Parish Council, Nominating Committee, and Auditing Committee. A sample ballot is attached to this report.

By a second roll call, completed ballots were individually submitted for an accounting. Nominating Committee members, Maureen Najarian and Mari Yapoujian, and Auditing Committee members Leo Krikorian, Archie Misakian and Matthew Tokatlian retired to the conference room to tally the votes.

REPORT BY THE PARISH PRIEST

During the interim, Fr. Untzag Nalbandian presented his report to the Assembly. Der Hyre's opening address, in Armenian, reflected the spirit of the report which followed and summarized

the most important events and salient issues before the Holy Ascension Church in 1992. Copies of all reports are appended hereto.

Before giving his report in English, Fr. Untzag Nalbandian asked that each parishioner reflect on where he or she stood as a member of the church community as it celebrated sixty-two years of growth in light of the changes in Armenia including the devastating 1988 earthquake and Armenia's declaration of independence in 1991. The following events and church activities were highlighted by Fr. Nalbandian in his report.

1. EYE WITNESS REPORT A stirring presentation was given by Nazareth (Hoki) Azarian sharing and reflecting about his trip to Armenia in January 1992. Hoki escorted a shipment including medical needs, food and clothing to Armenia and assisted in the distribution of these emergency supplies. He reported his personal witness of continuing deprivation of Armenians in the Motherland.

2. LENTEN SERIES A Lenten Lecture Series was held in the church undercroft. During Lent, six lectures were given by speakers from both within and outside the Armenian community. Fr. Nalbandian emphasized that the Armenian people must not isolate or confine their activities to Armenians. He enjoined parish members to embrace the diversity of the much larger community of our lives.

3. MINI BAZAAR The first annual Mini Bazaar was inaugurated at the church on February 5, 1992, and was both a financial and social success.

4. CULTURAL EXHIBITION AGBU's Antranig Dance Group performed at Trumbull High School. The performance by these talented dancers was a significant cultural event. It was well attended resulting in both financial and social success. Appreciation was expressed to members of the Cultural Committee for the multifaceted success of the performance.

5. TRUMBULL FESTIVAL The Trumbull Festival was not as successful as had been anticipated, however, church members were happy to showcase Armenian foods at the event.

6. MORTGAGE COMMITTEE The \$500.00 Club project reduced the mortgage balance to \$50,000.00. Since its inception over 15 years ago, the Mortgage Committee has overseen the paring of the mortgage principal from \$250,000.00 to \$52,000.00. This special committee was dissolved on January 17, 1993, and a reception given in their honor by the Parish Council. Fr. Untzag Nalbandian thanked all members of this special committee, both past and present, and expressed his gratitude to them on behalf of all church members.

7. PRIMATE'S VISIT The Primate made his first visit to the parish speaking at the 62nd. Anniversary Banquet. He celebrated the Liturgy and preached a sermon. The Primate honored the church membership by presiding over the celebration banquet which followed.

8. AGAHIGIAN SCHOLARSHIP Scholarships were offered for the first time in the history of the church. These grants were made available by the generosity and through the vision of Dr. and Mrs. Harry Agahigian. This scholarship fund was established in their names in June 1991.

9. LAND SURVEY The Land Survey is almost complete and will allow the church to have greater versatility with any future plans for the property.

10. TESTIMONIAL A testimonial dinner honoring Judge Aram Tellalian was a success. This event was planned by a committee of mostly new, young adult members of the church.

11. PLEDGES There is a need to increase pledges in order to support the church and its program of activities. This year, pledges were 7,000-8,000 Dollars less than 1991. Dr. and Mrs. Harry Agahigian contributed \$5,000.00 to the church which allowed the treasurer to close the books in the black. The Agahigian's were thanked for their generous gift to the church. Fr. Nalbandian commented that support should come from everyone in order to guarantee the success and growth of the church community.

12. SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT During the year, Fr. Nalbandian reported that he was active in attending regional diocesan, clergy and interfaith committee meetings. Der Hyre has also been a guest lecturer. He expressed his thanks to all parish members for their continuing support and encouragement. At this point in his studies, Fr. Nalbandian has finished his courses at Sacred Heart University and is preparing for his Comprehensive Examination in April. In this endeavor, Fr. Nalbandian enjoys broad support from church members. (Note: The congregation appreciates his personal commitment to advance his studies--the benefit of which extends beyond Der Hyre's personal enrichment to benefit the church and its membership.)

13. BUILDING MAINTENANCE Building Maintenance, a new hot water heater was installed in the boiler room, the driveway was repaired, in part, and the pastor's office was redone.

14. THANKS AND GRATITUDE Fr. Nalbandian expressed his sincere gratitude and appreciation to all members of all church organizations and committee members for their dedicated service.

15. ATTENDANCE AND WORSHIP Attendance at church and Sunday liturgy. Fr. Nalbandian asked everyone present to consider making it a priority to attend Liturgy on Sundays, and to become involved with the Armenian community. He emphasized that we cannot cut

ourselves from our Motherland without losing a great deal of who we are as an ethnic Armenian community.

16. REPORT CONCERNING ARMENIA The commitment of the church membership to Armenia is reaffirmed by its outreach to the Motherland. Inspired by Der Hyre and church members, a new committee, HELP ARMENIA! has been established. Nazareth (Hoki) Azarian is chairman of this group, the purpose of which is to provide humanitarian assistance to Armenia. While the deprivation of food, shelter and clothing continues, Armenians are cold and starving. In many instances, families are unable to bury their dead in wooden caskets because there is wood.

While there is no heat, work or school in Yerevan and other parts of Armenia, Azerbaijanis are bombing the towns along the southern border. Although there are one million Armenians in the United States, Fr. Nalbandian reports that it was the Azerbaijanis who were able to meet with President Clinton to explain their situation and ask for consideration. Der Hyre suggested some ways we could become involve: (a) a letter campaign both within and outside our ethnic community to inform the public about conditions, political and otherwise, in Armenia, including Karabagh; (b) establish a political committee to lobby Congress; (c) invite and encourage church members to become involved with the issues confronting our people especially in Armenia.

Fr. Nalbandian concluded his report by expressing appreciation to Lisa Misakain, editor of ANI newsletter and to the collating group members for assisting with the publication. The "Mahs" makers and all the volunteers for building and grounds maintenance were offered special words of gratitude. Der Hyre also extended his thanks and appreciation to Connie Kasparian, diocesan delegate to the annual meeting, held this year in Boca Raton.

Parish council members were thanked by Der Hyre for their leadership and commitment to the church community: Vrej Yapoujian, chairman, Garo Garabedian, vice chairman, Shavarsh Papazian, treasurer, Connie Kasparian, assistant treasure, Herbert Avakian, secretary; also Thomas Dabakian, Richard Najarian, Nicky Taraian, and Carmen Fuchs.

Shavarsh Papazian and Herbert Avakian were honored for six years of service on parish council and presented with a Khatchkar from Armenia.

Der Hyre concluded his report with a Blessing and final expression of appreciation and gratitude to all who have served the church with a quote from Matt. 20:25-28, in summary, "if you want to be first or great, you must set an example by serving".

REPORT FROM PARISH COUNCIL

Vrej Yapoujian reported as chairman of Parish Council. While referring to the mortgage reduction of approximately \$50,000.00, he

emphasized the difficulty in maintaining the church and making improvements without financial resources, especially without funds specifically designated for this purpose. Chairman Yapoujian cited the Land Survey as an improvement which would render the church property more marketable. The land may be sold at a later date.

Stating that a primary goal for the coming year was to increase funds, Vrej Yapoujian called for a more serious commitment toward pledging. He suggested that viewed as an extension of our home and family, each member's contribution to the church might be more substantial, while the additional burden of financial support, made more tolerable in this light.

Chairman Yapoujian complimented Der Hyre for his ability to meet all difficult situations with strength and a pleasant disposition. He thanked everyone for their dedication of time and effort in service to the church community.

REPORTS FROM THE TREASURER AND AUDITING COMMITTEE

Archie Misakian, representing the Auditing Committee presented the Committee's report. The report was accepted by the assembly. Treasurer, Shavarsh Papazian gave the treasurer's report to the parish assembly. The 1993 budget was presented to the assembly and passed by unanimous vote.

ELECTION RESULTS

The Nominating Committee and the Auditing Committee returned to the parish assembly to present the election results as follows:

Parish Council

Shavarsh Papazian	45 votes	Elected
Richard Najarian	44 votes	Elected
Thomas Dabakian	40 votes	Elected
Gary Donoian	40 votes	Elected
Carmen Fuchs	29 votes	Elected
Richard Kalfaian	26 votes	Alternate

Nominating Committee

Sonia Trapasso	37 votes	Elected
Sharyn D'Urso	23 votes	Elected
Salpi Tokatlian*	21 votes	Elected
Carlotta Garabedian	20 votes	Alternate

Auditing Committee

Matthew Tokatlian	39 votes	Elected
Richard Noreiks	20 votes	Elected
Mark Gavoor	20 votes	Elected
Nazareth Azarian	17 votes	Alternate

Salpi Tokatlian declined her nomination after the vote, however, her declination, was refused for procedural reasons.

NEW BUSINESS

The assembly discussed the following new business:

Operation Winter Rescue is a project recently established through the Diocese to bring humanitarian aid to Armenia. Church members, Nazareth Azarian, Nicky Taraian, Sonia Trapasso and Vrej and Mari Yapoulian are members of this committee. The committee at our church will be a standing committee, providing ongoing assistance to Armenia. The immediate purpose of the group will be to collect food, medical supplies and donations for our people in Armenia. A coffee hour is planned in the near future to explain, in detail, the work of this committee.

Comments from the Secretary Maureen Najarian, secretary for Fr. Nalbandian, asked that everyone with an original mailing list in their possession to submit a copy to her. She reminded the assembly that she is the pastor's secretary. Any typing that needs to be done should be channeled through him. Mrs. Najarian asked that reports be submitted timely and, if possible, that they be typed.

Christmas Celebration The fact that Christmas was celebrated on January 10, 1993, instead of the actual day was a subject of serious discussion. Fr. Nalbandian informed the assembly that the decision to celebrate on January 10th was a decision made by the parish council.

Many people stated a strong preference for celebrating on the actual holy day as opposed a relevant Sunday. Mrs. Helen Misakian commented that celebrating Armenian Orthodox Christmas on any other day sends the wrong message to our children (if we do not celebrate on January 6th).

Some people commented that attendance is poor unless January 6th falls on a weekend. In responding to this concern, Rita Chaghatzbanian stated that "if you want to celebrate on the 6th, it doesn't have to be a problem with either work or school".

Der Hyre said that he is very willing to celebrate on the Armenian Christmas if that is what the church members want. He invited all parish members to consider this important issue, and for a trial of one or two years, promised to celebrate Christmas on the day.

Sunday Service Herb Avakian made a suggestion that service be moved to 9:00 a.m. from 10:30 a.m. The suggestion did not immediately meet with widespread approval.

25th Anniversary In May we will celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the first cathedral of the Church of Armenia in North America. A bus trip may be scheduled. The assembly was asked to keep this in mind.

The 1993 Parish Assembly was adjourned At 3:48 p.m.

Sharyn N. D'Urso
SHARYN N. D'URSO, SECRETARY

Richard D. Kalfaian
RICHARD KALFAIAN, CHAIRMAN

Fr. Untzag Nalbadian
FR. UNTZAG NALBANDIAN, PASTOR