

SAINT GREGORY THE ILLUMINATOR ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH
110 Main Street
Haverhill, Massachusetts

1998 Annual Parish Assembly

The 1997 Annual Parish Assembly was held on Sunday, February 22, 1998. The meeting was called to order at 1:00 PM EST by Parish Council Chairperson, Albert Movsesian.

1. Opening Prayer

Visiting pastor Very Reverend Fr. Krikor Maksoudian lead the opening prayers.

2. Quorum

Albert Movsesian read the 1997 dues paying member list for the roll call. Information packages were passed out to the 39 dues paid members in attendance. There were 39 dues paying members present out of the total 78 paid dues members, which constitutes the necessary quorum required to conduct the assembly meeting.

3. Election of Assembly Chairperson and Secretary

Motion from Steve Arthur to nominate Paul Tavitian as Assembly Chairperson, motion seconded, motion passed.

No further motions for Assembly Chairperson were made.

Motion from Twanda McNeil to nominate Janice Mosesian as Assembly Secretary, motion seconded by Richard McNeil, motion passed.

No further motions for Assembly Secretary were made.

4. Minutes of the 1997 Parish Assembly and Special Assemblies

Motion from Steve Arthur to omit the reading of the 1997 Parish Assembly and Special Assembly meeting minutes, and to accept those minutes, motion seconded by Richard McNeil, motion passed.

5. Report of the Nominating Committee

Opening remarks from Nominating Committee Chairperson Sylvia Tavitian who thanked her committee members for their efforts.

Two existing Parish Council members are definitely staying on to finish their term:

Sevan Demirdogen

Harry ~~Kasparyan~~ *Alexanian*

Two other existing Parish Council members may or may not be staying on to complete their term, pending formal notification to or from the Parish Council:

Rafik Papalian

Lou Nicolosi

6. Elections of:

Parish Assembly

a. Parish Council Members (5)

Nominations from the floor were requested for Parish Council.

Motion from Sue Kezerian to nominate Albert Movsesian, motion seconded by Sylvia Tavitian, motion passed.

Motion from Araxie Kasparian to nominate Cindy Kasparian, motion seconded, motion passed.

Parish Council nominations were closed via motion from Sylvia Tavitian, motion seconded, motion passed.

b. Nominating Committee Members (3)

Nominations from the floor were requested for Nominating Committee.

Motion from Steve Arthur to nominate Janice Mosesian, motion seconded by Albert Movsesian, motion passed.

Nominating Committee nominations were closed via motion from Alice Kasparian, motion seconded, motion passed.

c. Auditing Committee Member (1)

Nominations from the floor were requested for Audit Committee.

Martin Aaronian agreed to stay on as Audit Committee member.

Nominations for Audit Committee were closed via motion from Sylvia Tavitian, motion seconded by Alice Kasparian, motion passed.

7. Annual Report of the Pastor

In lieu of a Pastors report by the church pastor, visiting pastor Very Reverend Fr. Krikor Maksoudian was asked to remark by Assembly Chairperson Paul Tavitian:

Very Rev. Fr. Krikor remarked that he was pleased to be among us in peaceful times.

Very Rev. Fr. Krikor explained that both the Business Administration and Liturgical parts of a parish are very important.

Very Rev. Fr. Krikor called upon each ^{of} us to "take action" by bringing our ideas forward and putting our energy into making a contribution to our parish. These actions indicate the Holy Spirit is with us and is reacting through us.

Very Rev. Fr. Krikor recognized the steadfast contributions of the members without whom the Divine Liturgy would not be possible, namely Charles Loosian our Deacon and the contribution of Herman Gennetian and David Tavitian as well. Very Rev. Fr. Krikor volunteered his time to help with instructional training of altar servers who are interested.

The backbone of the Armenian Church are the parishes' woman's groups and St. Gregory's is no exception.

Sad to read in the Mr. & Mrs. Club report that there has been no activity this past year and remarked that it would be nice to see activity come back as the Mr. & Mrs. Club which is another example of an organization critical to the welfare of the church.

Very Rev. Fr. Krikor has been coming to Saint Gregory's since 1986 and noted that the Sunday School is stronger today than he has ever seen it. The church must continue to develop young blood and must strengthen the Sunday School. He offered his assistance to Sunday School development.

Very Rev. Fr. Krikor was encouraged to read that St. Gregory's had an Adults Group and stressed the importance of establishing an ACYOA group at our parish. The ACYOA used to be the most vibrant of organizations. Many parishioners met their spouses at ACYOA events. Unfortunately, there are only six chapters left throughout the diocese. With only three people, either a Junior or Senior group could be established here at St. Gregory's.

Very Rev. Fr. Krikor is glad to be of service, and will continue to help our parish, which he holds close to him for a number of reasons, one being that Saint Gregory's was the first parish he served at after his ordination.

At this time the ballots were cast for the various committees. An attendance sheet was passed around for signatures of attending dues paying members and was reconciled to the number of ballots counted.

8. Annual Report of Parish Council

Remarks from the Parish Council chairperson Albert Movsesian included an update on Der Sahag Kaishian. A Californian parish has inquired about Der Sahag and has accepted him as their pastor. Der Sahag is currently visiting the Californian parish and it's parishioners, including those who are ill.

Albert Movsesian thanked everyone who helped in any way to coordinate today's assembly meeting.

We have a monumental task in front of us to reorganize our church. Each person is being challenged to become involved at St. Gregory's in some way. We have the energy, and the people resources - who bring broad expertise in many different fields.

The message was stressed that now is the time to bond together, or loose the identity of the Armenian people in Haverhill.

What can we easily do to make a difference?

- Each person bring in one other person
- Volunteer for one activity throughout the year
- Come to a church function, even if it's only for 15 minutes

The Lawrence Eagle Tribune ran an article which brought up the interest in having the church be listed on the Massachusetts Historical Register. Lance Kasparian is the key contributor helping to facilitate the investigation of historical registration. Funding may become available through both public and private resources to restore the church steeple.

Albert Movsesian and others such as James Derderian, Paul Tavitian and Joe Tavitian have undertaken various efforts to repair and attend to the church's maintenance, including hall and kitchen upkeep.

All of the above have been positive, upbeat goings on.

Discussion from the floor around concern for potential lost church records, such as those pertaining to weddings and baptisms. Questions around the original master key being returned to the church. Further related discussion was around moneys owed to the Arch Diocese to repay the balance on a loan in the original amount of \$6,000.

Discussion from the floor was taken up to suggest that the people who have left the church, be invited back to join us now that times are peaceful again. Further suggestion to encourage former parishioners to return to the church and will do what we can to make them feel welcome. Suggestion was also made to make an increased effort to welcome newcomers to the church by greeting them warmly and asking how we may be of assistance to them.

9. Annual Report of the Diocesan Delegate

Motion from Cindy Kasparian to accept the Diocesan Assembly Report, motion seconded, motion passed.

10. Annual Report of Parish Committees

In the package which was handed out to the dues paying parishioners, there was a report from each committee enclosed.

11. Annual Report of Parish Organizations

In the package which was handed out to the dues paying parishioners, there was a report from each organization enclosed.

Advice was given around the balances held by certain organizations who are inactive where if the various inactive organizations were to be reactivated, then moneys will be transferred into the newly activated organization accounts.

Election Results were presented by Sylvia Tavitian as follows:

The five newly elected Parish Council members who will serve for two years in order of votes are:

1. Albert Movsesian - 34
2. James Derderian - 29
3. Steve Arthur - 28
4. Elaine Meuse - 28
5. Harry Kasparian - 25

The remaining two Parish Council nominees will serve for the one remaining year left from the term of the two existing Parish Council members who may be resigning if formalized in order of votes are:

Cindy Kasparian - 24
Robert Serabian - 20

The three newly elected Nominating Committee members are in order of votes:

1. Sylvia Tavitian - 35
2. Janice Mosesian - 35
3. Joyce Alexanian - 29
Pauline Harian - 15

The one returning Auditing Committee Member is:

1. Martin Aaronian

12. Parish Council 1997 Financial Report and adoption of 1998 Budget

There was discussion around the 1997 financial report, particularly the \$17,120. owed to the Arch Diocese for 1996 and 1997 Diocesan Assessments and \$4,500. for Clergy Severance.

The church only brings in \$200.-\$500. per week, how will we meet our obligations? The Diocese has been pressuring us or payment, they need our funds to operate successfully. Suggestion was made not to take the money out of savings. Further discussion explained out of the \$50. member dues, approximately \$49. goes to the diocese, along with portions of various other moneys for a total of approximately \$70. per member.

Financial discussions continued

What are the options available to us to resolve our financial issues?

- Bring in new members
- Additional donations
- Hold functions to raise money

Functions bring people together and can be very uplifting.

We need to continue to actively participate, pledge and donate to our church.

The church's fixed costs for heating, electricity, etc. do not decrease whether there are 100 members or 10 members.

Our ethnic situation is declining due to the homogenization of the Armenian community in the USA

What of church merger options?

The attendees of this annual parish assembly are the people who are always here. We are a cohesive and hard working body.

Come to church and bring someone with you.

Support the functions and bring someone with you.

Motion from Cindy Kasparian to accept the 1998 Budget, motion seconded by Steve Arthur, motion passed with one against.

Discussion of the importance of having part-time secretarial assistance. Moneys are not called out in the budget for this needed position.

13. Old Business

a. Merger

Remarks from Steve Arthur, Chairperson of the St. Gregory Merger Committee. The committee is active together with the Lawrence committee chaired by Mark Kazanjian. They continue to investigate acquiring land for a new site. A joint assembly with both Haverhill and Lawrence is needed together with his Eminence Archbishop Khajag Barsamian to voice the various concerns and opinions.

In order to survive in the Merrimack Valley, it would be a good idea to put aside our issues and go to a neutral third site to combine our community resources. there will be concerns around cultural, social and political differences. The plea was made to give our children the same break that our parents and grandparents gave to us. Apathy apparently is a prevailing attitude towards our culture's future. People do not care, do not want to change or to consider change. We need to get past this, and become enlightened. Granted, money will always be a concern. Let us overcome our differences and think about our future, our legacy 10 to 20 years down the line.

Discussion ensued around what the political issues were. Apparently power is a key factor in terms of who will be in charge of what if a merge was to occur. Additional discussion around the relative worth of the parish owned properties in Lawrence and Haverhill.

Continued discussion around encouragement to preserve our capital, pursue the historical registry which would allow funding to restore our church, and to pursue the merger opportunity as well. Note that the buyer group attracted for purchase of a registered historical site would potentially differ than for those of a general private owner, such as a developer.

b. Steeple

As previously noted, some leaks have apparently been successfully repaired.

14. New Business

a. Membership Development

Remarks from Harry Alexanian emphasized that we must not look at what "we" here need, but what "they" who are not here need. Let us ask what we can do to become attractive to others including:

- Mr. & Mrs. Club former members
- Other former members
- People who have never been affiliated with our church

We need to articulate what we have to offer, what is in it for them.

How can we accomplish new membership?

- We need volunteer people resources
- Bring your ideas and make a difference
- Each person must be made to feel welcome
- Swallow your pride
- Do not criticize, or project a negative attitude

Discussion suggestion to create a "Welcome Wagon" type of service to the community which would include sending literature to people new to the area. Our challenge is to determine who is moving into our community so that we can make contact with them.

b. Massachusetts Historical Commission

Previously noted above.

c. Reducing the Number of Parish Council Members from 9 to 7

Motion from Albert Movsesian to reduce the number of Parish Council Members from 9 to 7, effective in 1999, motion seconded by Richard McNeil, motion did not pass, only 5 members in favor of reduction, the majority against reduction.

Discussion prior to the motion being put to vote included points both for and against reduction. Major points against reduction included:

- members do go away on vacation
- the large amount of work now, and important issues facing future parish Councils
- a larger group brings more perspectives and ideas to the table
- reducing the number of required members is assuming that 9 people cannot be found to server, which in turn, projects the image that they will fail. Let us think positively and give the newly formed Parish Councils of the future a fighting chance to make a difference.

Major points for reduction included:

- Parch Council members who do not attend the meetings create a situation where a quorum is not present to make any decisions which leads to an ineffective Parish Council. Parish Council members must remember this going forward in order for our Councils to be successful.

d. Other New Business

There are elderly people who would like to attend church services but who are unable to find a ride. Suggestion is to form car pools. If you are coming to church, and will be passing an elderly member's home, arrange stop by and pick up as many people as you are able.

Thanks was extended to retiring Parish Council member Ann Drouin for her gift of time and energy in helping over the years.

Gratitude and acknowledgment was given to Sue Kezerian and the choir members and our two organists Sylvia Tavitian and Virginia Tavitian.

Suggestion was made to construct a handicap ramp or elevator for the elderly and handicapped parishioners. The Parish Council is looking into this suggestion.

Announcements:

Joint Sunday School efforts are underway between Haverhill, Lawrence, Chelmsford, North Andover and Salem, New Hampshire with the objective of bringing the children together at social events. These types of events may provide opportunities for new church membership. An event is planned March 21st at Skate Land in Bradford, with a fellowship planned at St. Gregory's church in Haverhill afterwards.

There will be an adults only event where appetizers will be server at ALMA, the Armenian Library & Museum of America in Watertown, Massachusetts. The donation is \$5. please notify Elaine Meuse if you would like to participate.

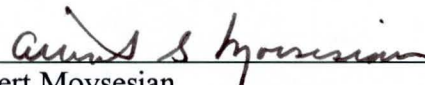
Motion from George Kasparian to close the meeting, motions seconded, motion passed.

15. Closing Prayer

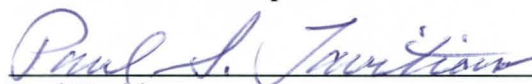
The closing prayer was lead by Very Rev. Fr. Krikor Maksoudian.

The Annual Parish Assembly meeting adjourned at 4:00 PM EST.


Respectfully Submitted,



Albert Movsesian
Parish Council Chairperson



Paul Tavitian
Parish Assembly Chairperson



Janice Mosesian
Parish Assembly Secretary