

MINUTES OF THE 1996 ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

ST. GREGORY OF NAREK ARMENIAN CHURCH  
CLEVELAND, OHIO

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1997

OPENING PRAYER AND PRAYER FOR DECEASED PARISH MEMBERS

The Annual Parish Assembly was called to order at 1:00 P.M. by Father Simeon Odabashian. He opened the meeting with a special prayer for the deceased members of our church (Marie Bosnoian, Anahis Davidian and Louise Ohanian).

WELCOMING REMARKS BY FR. SIMEON ODABASHIAN

Father Simeon reviewed highlights of the year and thanked Parish Council members for their hard work and dedication. He emphasized unity and encouraged parishioners to participate and serve their church. He stated the importance of the upcoming 1997 Diocesan Assembly sponsored by our parish and encouraged everybody to attend the events. He read parts of his report and shared the joy and happiness that came to him with his ordination.

WELCOMING REMARKS BY DR. SEBOUH SETRAKIAN, PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN

Dr. Setkrakian emphasized the importance of serving the church. He recognized the efforts of volunteers and expressed appreciation. He invited parishioners to serve on committees and work together. He spoke about the financial status of the church and said that more than the church's income is being spent. Dr. Setrakian recommended activities be held to raise money for church use. He gave the activity of the 1997 Diocesan Assembly as an example of a project to raise money and encouraged everyone to participate. He thanked the out-going Parish Council members, Robert Bagdasarian, Mona Karoglanian and Naz Yessayan for their loving service on the Parish Council.

VERIFICATION OF DUES-PAYING MEMBERS

Naz Yessayan took roll call. 52 members were present, constituting a quorum.

ELECTION OF PARISH ASSEMBLY OFFICERS

Dr. Setkrakian invited the Nominating Committee led by Deacon Serop Demirjian to conduct the election of the Chairman and Secretary of the day. The candidates were as follows:

Chairman of the Day  
Jay Bagdasarian  
Alice Bagdasarian

Secretary of the Day  
Anna Karayan  
Mary Arslanian

Jay Bagdasarian and Anna Karayan were respectively elected Chairman of the Day and Secretary of the Day.

Jay announced that the proceedings were being tape recorded to aid the Secretary in transcription of proceedings. He said that only dues-paying members would be able to vote on motions on the floor.

Jay referred to Father Simeon's report, and read an inspirational excerpt to the assembly...

"For all the countless hours spent in negative talk about this one or that one, I challenge everyone who reads my words to redirect that energy in a positive and edifying direction by holding up God's holy name and keeping alive our beautiful and precious unique Armenian tradition for generations to come."

MINUTES OF THE 1996 PARISH ASSEMBLY

An amendment to the minutes was made by Thelma Bagdasarian. She referred to page 8, under the heading "Annual Assembly Minutes", in the last paragraph, the name of "Alan Borazanian" should be replaced with "Richard Arslanian".

MINUTES OF THE 1996 PARISH ASSEMBLY (Continued)

Alice Hacherian moved that the minutes be accepted as amended. Alex Bagdasarian seconded the motion.

By a majority show of hands, the motion was carried to accept the minutes as amended.

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL PARISH ASSEMBLY MEETING HELD MAY 19, 1996

A motion was entertained by Jay to accept the minutes of the Special Parish Assembly Meeting held Sunday, May 19, 1996 regarding the disposition of the Misappropriation of Funds issue. The minutes were mailed to dues-paying members. Anita Arpajian moved to accept the minutes as mailed. Alex Bagdasarian seconded the motion. The motion passed.

ELECTIONS CONDUCTED BY NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Jay said that the Nominating Committee prepared a single-ballot, listing candidates for various offices to be elected. Jay requested permission of the Assembly for this procedure by asking for a motion to accept this one-time vote process, likening the procedure to governmental elections, having a single ballot rather than multiple ballots.

Alice Hacherian suggested that the rule voted on at last year's Annual Meeting be reinforced, specifically, when people leave the assembly after the roll call, they should advise the desk from where the meeting is being conducted. Alice further stated that ballots should not be passed out before names are read. There was discussion. The Chairman concurred with the importance of adhering to the rules as recalled by Alice.

Sam Mirakian asked whether nominations from the floor would be accepted after the ballots are passed out. Jay said yes.

Lisa Richardson moved to accept this one-time voting process. Jeanne Arslanian seconded the motion. A show of 40 hands constituted a majority. The motion was carried

Parish Council Members - On behalf of Father Simeon, the Church and the community Jay thanked the out-going members for their dedication and work

In response to George Sakian's question, Jay said that a review of each slate would be made. The floor was open for additional nominations.

Jack Hacherian moved to close nominations for Parish Council members.

George nominated Dina Arslanian to serve on Parish Council. She declined. Grace Arslanian nominated George Sakian who declined.

The motion to close nominations was seconded by Alex Bagdasarian.

Nominating Committee - Thelma Bagdasarian moved to accept the candidates as submitted. Alice Bagdasarian seconded. Motion was carried.

Auditing Committee - Louise Demirjian moved to accept the Auditing Committee candidates as listed. Carol Ann Ghazarian seconded the motion. The motion was carried.

Diocesan Delegate - Dr. Sebouh Setrakian commended and thanked Jack Hacherian for the fine work he rendered during his 8 years of service as Diocesan Delegate. Haig Arpajian moved to accept the nominations as listed. Paul Arslanian seconded the motion. The motion passed.

ELECTIONS - CONDUCTED BY THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE (Continued)

Regarding the Auditing Committee, Dr. Setrakian pointed out that there is a church-wide change in the by-laws of the committee. To begin the new system of rotation, initially, the persons elected will serve varying terms. The person receiving the highest amount of votes will serve a 3-year term, the person receiving the second highest amount of votes will serve a 2-year term and the one who receives the third highest amount of votes will serve a one-year term. After this year, there will only be one person elected to the Auditing Committee, with only one person going off the Committee. There was discussion regarding the implementation of the new Auditing Committee by-laws.

Ballots were collected. The Nominating Committee departed to tally the votes.

OLD AND NEW BUSINESS

1997 DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY (MAY 1 THROUGH MAY 4, 1997)

(Co-Chairmen: Mona Karoglanian and Eileen Hacherian)

Mona presented an up-to-date report on the progress of the 1997 Diocesan Assembly Committee. She encouraged community participation. Mona said that there will be 200 to 250 Clergy, Diocesan Delegates, Women's Guild Delegates, Yeretzgins, Parish Council Chairmen and friends coming to Cleveland to attend the Diocesan Assembly.

Mona said that an "Armenian of the Year" is yet to be announced by the Diocese, who will be honored at the banquet.

Dr. Kenneth Zahka was nominated as "friend of the Armenians". Mona listed activities that will be taking place, along with announcing the schedules of the 3 business sessions and luncheons, banquet and social activities with a final gathering on Sunday at our church for Divine Liturgy and a delegates/Clergy/community farewell brunch.

The Ritz-Carlton Cleveland and Renaissance Hotels were chosen as the sites for various planned events. There will be sight-seeing activities for all attendees of the Assembly

ST. GREGORY OF NAREK ENDOWMENT FUND

Dick Aurslianian said that instead of sending money elsewhere that a local Endowment Fund be established. He said that anyone who wants to establish an Endowment Fund in their name should bring it to the attention of the group. If there is an interest, a Fund could be setup. Richard explained that whoever sets up a fund would receive the interest income during ones lifetime with the assets going to the church. There was discussion of the tax benefits to the one who establishes the fund. Dina Aurslianian said that the Finance Committee could possibly work on the Endowment Fund concept. Jay said the church could work with the professional financial and legal guidance in conjunction with the Finance Committee and create a format should someone wish to participate in an Endowment Fund. There was further discussion of the proposed Endowment Fund.

Dick Aurslianian suggested the creation of two community groups: a "A Garden Club" and a "Church Visitation Committee". He said that he is circulating information on the proposed formation of the groups.

1996 ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL ACTIVITIES/FINANCIAL REPORT

Regarding the Parish Council's Annual Report, Thelma Bagdasarian made three revisions which were as follows:

- October 13, 1996 should be deleted, as the whole Cultural Day event took place only on October 20, 1996.
- December 22, 1996 The Church School Christmas Pageant Reception was sponsored by the Guild (not the Choir as is written). Replace "Choir" with "Guild".
- December 24, 1996 to be deleted. There was no observance of Western Christmas Eve Service of Carols.

1996 ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL ACTIVITIES/FINANCIAL REPORT (Continued)

George Sakian questioned the \$5,000 disbursement for the 1997 Diocesan Assembly. Mona Karoglanian explained that the money was borrowed by the 1997 Diocesan Assembly Committee. The \$5,000 will be returned after the convention is over. Dr. Setrakian concurred that the funds are a one-time loan as "seed money." George asked whether a report would be forthcoming at the conclusion of the program. Bob Bagdasarian, Treasurer of the 1997 Diocesan Committee, replied that a detailed and precise report will be prepared for the church and the diocese. He further explained that the money borrowed was necessary as seed money to provide necessary down payments in the planning and securing of facilities for the 1997 Diocesan Assembly.

Bob reviewed that the expected gross for the event is \$80,000, the expenses are projected to be in the \$50,000 area, possibly realizing a profit of \$25,000 to \$30,000.

The Souvenir Booklet is a profitable segment of the event, possibly generating a profit of \$16,000. He said that benefits from ticket sales are nominal.

Sam Mirakian expressed an interest in profit from ticket sales. Bob said the Banquet Dinner will cost \$50, with the church charging \$65. There are fixed expenses. There was further discussion on the structure of ticket sales. Sam asked whether a budget had been set up. Bob said a detailed budget has been set up.

Jay asked whether there was any comparison made with other cities which hosted Diocesan Assemblies? Bob responded saying that Jack Hacherian, Diocesan Delegate, and Mona Karoglanian provided input based on their attendance of past Assemblies. Compared to recent Assemblies, our event has good potential because of Cleveland's excellent facilities and the thorough planning by the committee.

Dr. Setrakian suggested that the discussion should only center on the 1996 Financial Report and the proposed 1997 Budget and that the ticket prices and costs need not be delved into at this point.

Jeanne Arslanian asked about the Pastor's Stipend, why the 1996 Actual listing is considerably lower in amount. Naz explained that the Pastor's withholding taxes got put in the payroll tax line when it was actually part of the Pastor's gross wages. Father Simeon added that he was also away on a 6-week leave of absence.

Jack Hacherian suggested to Jay that he should repeat the question to aid those seated in the back to hear the questions presented.

Cheryl Arslanian suggested that on future Treasurer Reports, that a foot note be shown for large events that shows the gross as well as the net and to show expenses.

Naz Yessayan explained that as an example the income from the ordination was \$15,130.00. \$5,200 was deposited in a savings account in the church's name with two signatures, Father Simeon and Dr. Sebouh Setrakian. These funds will eventually go to Armenia. After all expenses were satisfied, and the savings account opened, a profit of \$1,413.27 was made as a net benefit.

George Sakian asked about the cost of attending Diocesan Assembly events. Mona said the package deal is \$155, the total cost for individual events ticket purchase (a la carte) would be \$165.

Grace Arslanian questioned the electric bill, that the amount is low. Cheryl Arslanian asked whether a comparison was made with last year's bill. Arek Torosian suggested that possibly the change of motor in the sewer system reflected favorably by requiring less electric power. Alice Hacherian noted that the gas bill was comparable to 1995. Deacon Serop added that people are apparently more responsible. Jack Hacherian said that in winter the church must be heated 24 hours per day to prevent freezing of pipes. There was discussion regarding the utilities.

1996 ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL ACTIVITIES/FINANCIAL REPORT (Continued)

Sue Mirakian moved that the Treasurer's Report be accepted as printed. Jack Hacherian seconded the motion. The motion was passed.

APPROVAL OF THE 1997 BUDGET

Alex Bagdasarian moved to accept the 1997 budget as submitted. Jack Hacherian seconded the motion. The motion was passed as submitted.

DIOCESAN DELEGATES REPORT (Page 16)

Jack Hacherian, Diocesan Delegate, corrected the typing errors in his report as follows:

- In the last paragraph, second sentence, the figure "\$3,500.00" should be \$3,500,000.
- In the last paragraph, the last sentence, the final figure should read \$1,242,000.

PARISH AUXILIARY REPORTS

Choir Treasurer's Report - Thelma Bagdasarian said that the church plate offering from one of the Sundays when the feast of the Assumption was observed had not been received by the Choir. She said traditionally, this money is used as the Choir's Dues to the Choir Association. Thelma asked the amount of the plate collection of Sunday, August 18 (Observance day of the feast) and the amount of the check that was forwarded to the A.A.C.C.A. (Association of Armenian Church Choirs in America).

Grace Arslanian questioned the bank fee expense item of \$90. Deacon Serop Demirjian, Treasurer, explained the entry. He said that the bank fees were going to be removed and adjusted, but since the record showed the charge, the Treasurer's report had to reflect the actual status of the account.

Sam Mirakian said that with the exception of the choir report questions, he moved to accept the Auxiliary Reports as submitted. Louise Demirjian seconded the motion.

Alice Hacherian said that of all the auxiliary organizations, the only group that paid the parish council assessment was the Social Club. 60% over \$500 in treasury assets are assessed by the parish council. The Social Club paid their assessment in a timely fashion. Bob Bagdasarian clarified the procedure by suggesting that at the end of the year a check should be written by the organization's treasurer turning over the assessed funds to Parish Council along with their annual report.

At this time Naz Yessayan, Treasurer, responded to Thelma Bagdasarian's earlier request. He said that on September 23, 1996, a check was sent to the A.A.C.C.A. in the amount of \$102. Naz commented that he recalled in the past that when the Treasurer's report was turned in for auditing, the assessment check was also provided. He said that the only group which paid their assessment timely was the Social Club.

Dr. Setrakian said that "reminder letters" will be prepared for mailing to auxiliary organizations, except the Social Club, for their forwarding their treasury assessments to the Parish Council.

Bob Bagdasarian made a motion that when a church organization submits their year-end report that a check should be stapled to their report so that it is all handled at one time. Naz Yessayan seconded the motion. The motion was carried. Thelma suggested that at the end of the year when reminders are sent to organizations about their reports being due, that at that time there could be an additional reminder of the need to submit their assessment when their treasury reports are submitted.

Jay amended the motion adding "...when the year-end reminders go out to the various organization treasurers, to state that they need to include their assessment with their reports to the Parish Council." Jack Hacherian seconded the amendment. The amended motion was passed.

PARISH AUXILIARY REPORTS (Continued)

ACYOA Juniors - Annual Activity and Treasurer's Reports -Ara Bagdasarian said that everyone should read both these reports. He said that it is encouraging to read about their fellowship and spiritual growth. He commended Father Simeon and Alice Patina on their guidance and leadership.

Thelma moved to accept the auxiliary reports as submitted. Alice Bagdasarian seconded the motion.

ELECTION RESULTS

The nominated candidates and election results were as follows:

PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS

<u>Arek Torosian</u> (Elected)	Meschac Aruslanian
<u>Anita Arpajian</u> (Elected)	Paul Arslanian
<u>Dr. Todd Russell</u> (Elected)	Alex Bagdasarian

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

<u>Mona Karoglanian</u> (Elected)	Nina Setrakian
<u>Mary Arslanian</u> (Elected)	Sonia Elloian
<u>Serop Demirjian</u> (Elected)	Jeannette Aurslanian

AUDITING COMMITTEE

<u>Richard Arslanian</u> (Elected) - 3-Year Term
<u>Murad Demirjian</u> (Elected) - 2-Year Term
<u>Lisa Richardson</u> (Elected) - 1-Year Term

Grace Arslanian  
Louise Demirjian  
Andon Yeranossian

DIOCESAN DELEGATE

Ara Bagdasarian

DIOCESAN DELEGATE ALTERNATE

Russell Arslanian

Jay Bagdsasarian thanked the Nominating and Auditing Committees for their work in tallying election results.

Richard Arslanian suggested that there be some kind of a "Grievance Committee" in the parish to settle differences between people and groups. He said if there is an interest, he would put a group together.

Anna Karayan commented that the "Grievance Committee" could help the Membership Committee--when church membership is proposed to a prospective member, reasons are given for not joining the church. Perhaps, the "reasons" could be reviewed and resolved by the Committee.

Lisa Richardson suggested that Father Simeon should be involved in this group to insure that there is a spiritual element. Richard Aurslanian said that over the years some of the complaints have been directed toward the clergy. He said that he would prefer to have the group consist of lay people of the parish. He added that the group could be a "buffer" between the clergy and the community should any problem arise.

Jack Hacherian reflected on the years of his service and how he was involved in delicate issues regarding the clergy, the church and the community. He said that the Diocesan Delegate should be involved in such a group. Jay added that perhaps the Diocesan Delegate represents the "buffer" to which Richard referred.

Jay thanked Jack for his admirable service as our Diocesan Delegate over the past 8 years.

Sam Mirakian wondered whether a "legislated" committee is needed. He said that "knowing Armenians," that complaints would be heard and that problems will get resolved. Sam complimented Richard's idea, but said

ELECTION RESULTS (Continued)

that rules and regulations are already in place to resolve problems. Jay added that the Parish Council is always open for comments and suggestions. Also, that Father Simeon, from experience, is open to any concerns that anyone has. Jay commended the Parish Council and Father Simeon for the time and love they have for the church.

Ara Bagdasarian thanked Jack Hacherian for the work he did as Diocesan Delegate saying that he, as the newly elected Delegate, would call upon him for guidance and words of wisdom.

Ara thanked the following who put behind us the "misappropriation of funds" issue and restored credibility to the office of Treasurer, and to the church by accounting for every penny: Naz Yessayan, Cindy Russell, and Jay Bagdasarian. He thanked Father Simeon and Dr. Sebouh Setrakian for aiding and allowing the community to put those happenings behind us. Ara also commended the Parishioners who bounced back from the depth of concern, restoring credibility. Jay Bagdasarian also noted Archi Andonian's key role in this regard.

Jay requested the membership to again read Father Simeon's message which encompasses and reinforces many of the ideas and goals presented.

Concluding Discussion

Dick requested to know the consensus of the assembly regarding a "Grievance Committee". The response from many members was an audible agreement saying "do it". Dick said he would take care of it by forming a small group. He added that he will keep the Parish Council advised of their activities.

Alice Hacherian commended Jay Bagdasarian on his fine handling of the meeting and Anna Karayan who served as Secretary of the Day.

Jay said that Father Simeon made an administrative point, showing Jay last year's meeting notes that we voted to mail the minutes to all dues-paying members within 30 days rather than waiting until the next annual meeting. He asked whether the membership would want to revert back to historical methods of handling the minutes? Anita Arpajian made a motion to remain in the spirit of what was decided last year because it helped everyone--to mail the minutes to dues-paying members within 30 days of the Annual Assembly Meeting. Mona Karoglanian seconded the motion. The motion was passed.

ADJOURNMENT AND CLOSING PRAYER

Mona Karoglanian moved to adjourn the meeting. Grace Arslanian seconded the motion.

Prior to adjournment, Grace asked that the out-going Parish Council Members be commended and recognized. Jay again expressed appreciation to the Bob Bagdasarian, Mona Karoglanian and Naz Yessayan.

Father Simeon closed the meeting with a prayer. The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Jay Bagdasarian 3/12/97  
Jay Bagdasarian Date  
Chairman of the Day

Anna Karayan 3/17/97  
Anna Karayan Date  
Secretary of the Day