

**MINUTES OF THE 1997 ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY  
ST. GREGORY OF NAREK ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH**

Sunday, February 15, 1998

**Opening Prayer and Prayer for Deceased Parish Members**

The Parish Assembly was called to order at 1:05 P.M. by Very Reverend Father Simeon Odabashian. Fr. Simeon opened the meeting with a special prayer for our deceased parishioner Ojin Chakamian.

**Welcoming Remarks by Very Reverend Father Simeon Odabashian**

Fr. Simeon welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Assembly. He made a few announcements regarding upcoming events and asked the parishioners for their support. He also talked about the serious condition of little Alique Topallian and urged the community to consider participating in the blood-testing drive to locate a donor for the bone marrow transplant. Monetary donations may also be made to The Alique Topalian Fund to help offset the costs for these tests.

Fr. Simeon thanked parishioners for attending the various events and supporting activities sponsored by our church. He stated the importance of the Centennial of the Eastern Diocese and invited everyone to celebrate this glorious event with joy. He emphasized the importance of serving the church and stressed the need for us to give serious consideration to serving on the Parish Council and participating in the various functions currently open. He conveyed his appreciation to those who have served in the various capacities and extended special thanks to Dr. Sebouh Setrakian for his dedicated service to Parish Council. As a token of appreciation, Ara Bagdasarian presented Dr. Setrakian with a gift on behalf of the Parish Council and the parish.

**Welcoming Remarks by Dr. Sebouh Setrakian, Parish Council Chairman**

Dr. Setrakian opened his remarks with the statement that he had two items of bad news and one item of good news. He presented the financial situation of the church as the first item of bad news. He reviewed a number of areas wherein expenses could be cut. He felt the new Parish Council should consider implementing the Stewardship Program, which we had discussed in the past. Dr. Setrakian informed us he had been contacted by an anonymous individual who is pledging a minimum of \$5,000 each year for the next three years. This pledge would be in the form of shares of stock. He informed us that Ara Bagdasarian and Papken Maksoudian are organizing work sessions on weekends to help beautify the property and maintain the grounds surrounding the church and cultural hall. The second piece of bad news was that there was only one person who agreed to run for Parish Council. He stated we are losing some of the momentum in the various organizations, i.e., Women's Guild, ACYOA Seniors, etc. He urged the community to be

active and serve our church. He informed us that the good news was that he had only two bad news items to report.

Verification of Dues-Paying Members

Dr. Todd Russell, Treasurer, conducted the roll call. Forty-six members were present. This number constituted a quorum, as total membership is 96. Any member leaving the assembly following roll call was asked to inform the front table to ensure proper count when votes are tabulated.

Election of Parish Assembly Officers

Serop Demirjian and Mona Karoghlanian of the Nominating Committee presented candidates for Chairman and Secretary of the Day. A motion was made and passed to conduct the elections by a show of hands. The results follow:

Chairman of the Day

Russell Arslanian (elected)  
Murad Demirjian

Secretary of the Day

Alice Hacherian (elected)  
Leslie Bagdasarian

Minutes of the 1997 Assembly

Motion was made by Dina Aurslianian and seconded by Sandra Aurslianian to accept the minutes as presented in the Annual Report. Motion passed.

Election of Parish Council and Committee Members

As had been agreed upon at last year's assembly, a single ballot was prepared by the Nominating Committee to facilitate the voting for all positions to be filled. With four outgoing members of Parish Council (Archie Andonian, Vladimir Arutyunov, Ara Bagdasarian and Sebouh Setrakian), a minimum of eight candidates is required. There was only one parishioner, Papken Maksoudian, agreeing to be a candidate for Parish Council and, therefore, the remaining candidates were nominated from the floor. The nominees were Papken Maksoudian, Debra Venditti, Richard Aurslianian, Louise Demirjian, Dina Aurslianian, Murad Demirjian, Vladimir Arutyunov, Jill Maksoudian, Leslie Bagdasarian and Lisa Richardson. Motion was made by Jack Hacherian and seconded by Thelma Bagdasarian to close the nominations for Parish Council. Motion carried.

Motions were made by Jack and seconded by Thelma to accept the names of candidates as submitted for the Nominating Committee and the Auditing Committee, respectively. Both motions passed. Dr. Setrakian reminded the assembly of the change in term of office for the Auditing Committee, which is now three years. The individual receiving the most votes would serve for three years and whoever received second highest number of votes would serve two years. In the future as a result of this rotation system, only one vacancy needs to be filled each year. Nominating Committee distributed the ballots following roll call of qualified voters. At this point, Ara Bagdasarian, expressed appreciation to Dina

*one for one year -*

Aurslanian for the great job she has been doing as editor of the PAROS and she should be commended for accepting nomination to serve on Parish Council.

#### Parish Council Activities and Financial Reports

Treasurer Todd Russell noted a few corrections to be made in his report.

Page 28, under column, 1998 proposed, first item 1997 Diocesan Convention should read 100 and last item Special Events to Balance Budget should read 22, 975. Total Income should be \$114,750.

Footnote **\*\*1997 Annual Picnic Expenses** and **Net Profit** should read \$1,273.69 and 3,211.31, respectively.

Page 30, under Expenditures, the item Church Coat Rack should be changed to Church Expenses.

#### Parish Council Activities and Financial Reports

Thelma Bagdasarian questioned what the Parish Council had in mind for Special Events in the proposed budget to raise \$22,000. Russell explained that part of the reason for showing a balanced budget is that the Diocese will not accept an unbalanced budget. If we show more expenses than we do income, that would not be acceptable. Sebouh said we are hopeful of having more income from the annual picnic and also plans are being considered to have a reverse raffle. He was highly encouraged by the anonymous offer of \$5,000 and also optimistic about increased rentals of the cultural hall. He stressed how important it was that we be very careful with expenses so we can cut this deficit. Lisa Richardson suggested we go outside of the Armenian community for fundraising events and possibly solicit donations of food products, etc., as well as monetary donations. This would help ease the financial burden of the church.

Bob Bagdasarian felt the parish should ask the Parish Council to specifically come up with suggestions for fund-raising events in an effort to protect our financial position. He felt we need the support of the entire community to succeed and we should seriously follow through on the Stewardship Program. Chairman Arslanian agreed this should be one of the first challenges of the new Parish Council, i.e., addressing the deficit of \$23,000. Other areas could include expenses incurred in snow removal, landscaping, etc., and possibly increase in receipts from hall rentals.

George Sakian questioned the large variance in projected income of \$20,000 from the Diocesan Assembly. Russell's personal assessment was that this was our first experience hosting the Diocesan Assembly. Contact was made with the Philadelphia parish as a guide to determine possible net income. Their parish realized a lot less profit than originally projected and most parishes tend to overstate what the income might be. This was our first attempt at such a large undertaking and we definitely feel we learned a great deal

from this experience. Jack Hacherian stated the Diocesan Assembly Committee anticipated a better turnout and felt there should have been more community support. However, he thought the donations for sponsorships, etc., were well received and pretty much on target. He personally was of the opinion that ours was one of the finest he had attended and that most comments from the guests were very, very favorable.

Further discussion regarding the Financial Reports and approval of the 1998 Budget was brought to a close when the Chairman entertained a motion for approval by the Assembly. Motion was made by Dina Aurslianian and seconded by Sandra Aurslianian to accept the 1998 Budget as corrected. Motion was carried.

### Election Results

<u>Parish Council</u> - Papken Maksoudian (elected)	Louise Demirjian
Richard Aurslianian (elected)	Murad Demirjian
Debra Venditti (elected)	Leslie Bagdasarian
Vladimir Arutyunov (elected)	Lisa Richardson
Dina Aurslianian (alternate)	Jill Maksoudian

<u>Nominating Committee</u> - Jill Maksoudian (elected)	Serop Demirjian
Steve Davidian (elected)	Mary Arslanian
Nina Setrakian (elected)	Louise Demirjian

<u>Auditing Committee</u>	- Dr. Sebouh Setrakian (3-year term)
	Mona Karoghlanian (2-year term)

Sebouh congratulated all those elected to office. He stated that Ara, Archie and he intend to stay active in the parish and would consider serving on Parish Council again in few years. He reminded us of a saying often quoted by Ara at Council meetings, i.e., "either you are a part of the solution or you are a part of the problem." We all must help.

Lisa Richardson commented that it is the role of the Auditing Committee members to check all numbers for accuracy; it is not their role to determine what is appropriate and what is not. She felt we all owe a thank you to Cindy and Todd Russell for their time and all their efforts in preparing these figures for the reports. She also suggested it would be a good idea to add a little more information in the reports so that the numbers would be more meaningful to the parishioners when reporting the income, expenses, net proceeds, etc. Lisa has worked up a spreadsheet in this regard and is willing to work with the new Parish Council treasurer in setting up a standardized format.

### Diocesan Delegate's Report

Diocesan Delegate Ara Bagdasarian reiterated Jack Hacherian's comments that those who attended the Diocesan Assembly focused on the positive, that this was a very well

executed assembly. There were many letters complimenting the community on how well it was run. He congratulated the committee as he felt they did a job we should all be very proud of. Jill Maksoudian made a motion to accept the Diocesan Delegate's report. Jeanne Arslanian seconded the motion. Motion carried.

#### Parish Auxiliary Reports

Inquiry was made by Thelma Bagdasarian as to status of payment of assessments due Parish Council. Sebouh informed us results were much better this year, however, there are not too many organizations left with money. Motion made by Dina Arslanian and seconded by Leslie Bagdasarian to accept the auxiliary reports as submitted. Motion passed.

#### Old and New Business

At this time there were no specific items of old business brought up by the assembly.

Under new business the Chairman asked George Sakian if he anticipated an increase in catering revenues for 1998. George indicated that bookings thus far in 1998 are ahead of last years, and he was optimistic that we should see a significant increase in hall rentals throughout the year. George also stated that Ray Pasquale was definitely an asset, much more professional, and would be easier to work with in helping to increase hall revenues. One of the first things Ray suggested was sprucing up the hall to make it more attractive for bookings. He has already distributed 10,000 circulars of advertisement and plans to make distribution of an additional 10,000 in the very near future. George agreed to work very closely with the new caterer this year in an effort to increase our revenues in this area. He also pointed out that Ray donated \$1,000 toward the carpeting and will continue to work with our parish in maintaining the hall to encourage rentals.

Thelma Bagdasarian raised a question as to what the agreement was with the caterer with regard to Sunday bookings. She recalls we had an agreement with them not to be in the hall on Sundays before 3:00 P.M. or later but this was abused many times and conflicted with church organization plans. Sebouh stated the contract with Ray is that he cannot rent the hall before 3:00 P.M., and he cannot make use of the kitchen before 2:00 P.M. As was stated earlier, it is felt that Ray is more dependable and businesslike and will cooperate with the church in this regard. However, Sebouh stated we must realize when they have a special event and need access to the kitchen, and there is no major conflict, we should grant that. We cannot be overly restrictive especially since we do need this source of revenue. Sebouh praised George for his time and effort with regard to the hall.

Louise Demirjian suggested perhaps the next Parish Council could look into the rates we charge our own parishioners for private gatherings since it is sometimes less expensive for a family to make reservations at a restaurant and, in turn, not be responsible for clean-up, etc. In this regard, she thought the parishioners might rent the hall more frequently if the rates were more reasonable. Sebouh stated this point was well taken and would be taken into consideration by the Parish Council. He reminded the assembly that each time the hall is used, an expense of \$60.00 is incurred. This covers cleaning, electricity, water, etc.

Concluding Remarks

Chairman Arslanian complimented the outgoing members of Parish Council Ara, Archie, and Sebouh - for their efforts over the past several years, which have been commendable. He personally thanked them and hoped that each of them again could serve on Parish Council in the not too distant future. He again thanked George Sakian and also Todd Russell for the job he has done as treasurer, which is no small task putting the reports together and keeping track of the books. Russell extended congratulations to the new Parish Council members as well as the Nominating and Auditing Committee members.

Jill Maksoudian asked everyone to mark July 12 on their calendars. This is the date of the annual church picnic. She along with Mona, Papken and Louise are co-chairing this year's picnic. They are making plans to make it bigger and better than in the past.

Adjournment and Closing Prayer

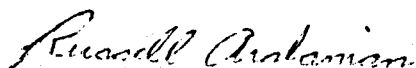
Todd Russell moved to adjourn the meeting and Louise Demirjian seconded his motion. Motion passed.

On behalf of the Assembly, Fr. Simeon thanked Russell Arslanian for doing an outstanding job as Chairman of the Day; also thanked Alice Hacherian for serving as Secretary of the Day. He thanked all the committees which made this meeting possible, especially the Parish Council, Auditing and Nominating Committees,

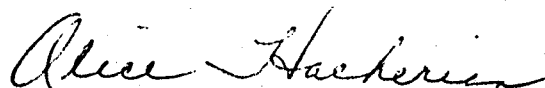
In closing, Fr. Simeon reminded us all that we are one community and that we are brothers and sisters. Probably the greatest contribution to the religions of the world made by our Christian faith is that of forgiveness. That is the one unique factor in our religion, so let us keep that in mind throughout the year and for the rest of the days of our lives. Let us be open minded, tolerant and forgiving of one another as only through the love of Christ within ourselves will we become one unit.

Fr. Simeon led the group in the closing prayer. The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Russell Arslanian  
Chairman of the Day



Alice Hacherian  
Secretary of the Day