

**MINUTES OF THE 1998 ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY
ST. GREGORY OF NAREK ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH**

Sunday, February 28, 1999

Opening Prayer and Prayer for Deceased Parish Members

Very Revered Father Simeon Odabashian called the Parish Assembly to order at 1:10 p.m. Fr. Simeon opened the meeting with a special prayer for our deceased parishioners Alex Bagdasarian and Oskey Balderian. He continued by thanking all present for their constant support of the church and their continuing membership. Fr. Simeon reiterated his announcement made at Armenian Christmas that he will very likely be taking on a new position in the diocese sometime before the year 2000.

Welcoming Remarks by Richard Aurslanian, Parish Council Chairman

Richard Aurslanian opened with kind remarks about the current parish council and how smoothly the group has been working together. He also expressed sincere thanks to Fr. Simeon for his spiritual guidance and leadership of the church. He presented Fr. Simeon and each of the Parish Council members restaurant gift certificates as tokens of appreciation.

Verification of Dues-Paying Members

Dr. Todd Russell, Treasurer, conducted the roll call. Forty-eight of the 98 members were present; constituting a quorum since the one-third requirement was met.

Election of Parish Assembly Officers

The Nominating Committee consisting of Nina Setrakian, Jill Maksoudian, Steve Davidian, presented candidates for Chairman and Secretary of the Day. Having no further nominations from the floor, the ballots were distributed. The results follow:

Chairman of the Day

Steve Davidian (elected)
Ara Bagdasarian

Secretary of the Day

Lisa Richardson (elected)
Leslie Bagdasarian

Minutes of the 1998 Assembly

Motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes as presented in the Annual Report. The motion passed.

Election of Parish Council, Nominating and Auditing Committee Members

With three outgoing members of Parish Council (Anita Arpajian, Todd Russell, and Arek Torosian), a minimum of six candidates was required for the election. All three incumbents were on the ballot along with Murad Demirjian, Sandy Aurslanian and Steve Davidian. Lisa Richardson was nominated from the floor. Motion was made, seconded and passed to close the nomination.

Motions were made and seconded to accept the names of the candidates as submitted for the Nominating Committee and the Auditing Committee, respectively. Both motions passed.

Remarks by Richard Aurslanian, Parish Council Chairman

Richard Aurslanian commented that fundraising this upcoming year will not include the rug sale and the Centennial Celebration, which contributed nearly \$5500 and \$3000 to the budget respectively. He noted that the parish needs to find a way to make it up. He noted that the church is no longer renting the parking lot to Amerino Calandra for the Christmas tree, pumpkin and floral sales. He commented that the Parish Council believes that the Church can raise the funds itself if there is enough interest in manning the tree sale at Christmas time. It was suggested that the church only concentrate on the Christmas tree sale, not the spring/summer flowers and autumn pumpkins, since the tree sales were estimated to raise \$4000 a year versus \$500 for each of the other sales. Ara Bagdasarian mentioned that another choice was to contract our current landscaper, who had expressed interest in running the sale. The church would receive a percentage of sales, versus a flat rental rate as was charged to Mr. Amerino. Dr. Setrakian mentioned it was a good idea for fundraising so that we can maintain a balanced budget. He commented that there are a few ways to run it and that we could employ a system of part parishioner help and part hired help. He estimated we could make over \$4,500, especially if we were to be innovative. Cheryl Arslanian commented that it was a good idea since the church location has an established customer base with repeat business. Leslie Bagdasarian suggested we study the potential income some more and suggested that we compare income from charging a percentage of sales from a landscaper who would run the sale to income if the church were to man the event itself. Jack Hacherian indicated that the church has held a Christmas tree sale in the past and that it entailed a lot of work, including long hours (10 am-11 pm). He pointed out that the sale took place over a long time period as well and encouraged the use of High School students. Cheryl Arslanian brought up the issue of security. Alice Hacherian suggested that we need a committee to research it further.

Parish Council Activities and Financial Reports

Treasurer Todd Russell commented that the parish has generated a cash flow of over \$7,000 due to our reducing of expenses and the additional income projected in the budget's "special event" category: the annual picnic, the rug sale and the centennial celebration.

Ralph Chakerian questioned what is the transfer of the \$13,200 used for. Todd Russell indicated it was used for the purchase the parish car. Ralph Chakerian questioned why the purchase was not included as an operating expense. Todd Russell indicated that while it was foot-noted elsewhere in the report, however it should have been noted in the operating statement as well.

Mr. Chakerian also questioned the Endowment Fund Earnings on the Income Report on page 25 and how the interest total does not match the footnote total below. Todd Russell indicated that the total reflected in the Income report was correct and that the footnote amounts were mistyped. He assured that the earnings did total \$3540 and that the report would be corrected.

Russell Arslanian questioned the discrepancy in the Income report's Hall Income, which does not match the Cultural Hall Report income balance. Todd Russell indicated that Mr. Sakian's report of income doesn't include some related expenses that the treasurer's Report does. Russell Arslanian also commented that the 1998 proposed Pastor's stipend was higher than what was actually paid in 1998. Dr. Russell commented that the 1998 proposed reflected gross wages, and that the actual figure is net of payroll and other taxes.

Mr. George Sakian indicated that the Income report shows net figures for the 1998 Reverse Raffle and Rug Sale and asked that a detailed income statement and report for these events be provided, so that we can improve the financial results if possible. Todd Russell indicated that he has these detailed reports. Mr. Sakian inquired about the rug sale income figure of \$13,177, considering the gross income quite a few years ago was \$102,00. Todd indicated that the actual "gross " income was \$52,000, of which the church was entitled to 20% as income. Expenses for advertising and visa machine, etc. were then split equally with Davidian rugs and the church. Ara Bagdasarian commented that John Davidian was extremely generous in his arrangement with the church.

Mr. Sakian re-iterated a need for the parishioners to have access to the reports of fundraising events and indicated that reports published in the *Paros* would clarify questions before they were raised. Nat Aurslianian brought up the point that the total amount of rug sales should be higher. Dina Aurslianian commented that we shouldn't include detailed financial information in the *Paros* since it is mailed to non-members, and also since it is expensive to print. It was suggested that detailed reports be included in the Minutes of the Parish Assembly that are mailed out to members. Naz Yessayan commented that each member should have access to the information regardless of timing and that they shouldn't have to ask. Papken Maksoudian (PC Secretary) commented that he has all these reports and that anyone can contact the Parish council for copies of these.

It was indicated that while we have invested nearly \$32,000 in the hall during the previous year, hall income is dwindling. George Sakian responded that many of the improvements were donations. On the income side, he indicated that there has been a change in ownership of the catering company and a decrease in the catering business, which will hopefully be temporary.

Cheryl Arslanian made a motion to include in the *Paros* following large fundraisers a detailed financial report to be reviewed by dues paying members. Motion failed.

A motion was passed to close the discussion of the 1998 report. Motion passed.

Lucine Mirakian noted a correction in the Diocesan Delegate's Report referring to the proper name of the Catholicos. It should read "Catholicos Karekin I."

Approval of the 1999 Budget

Hayr Soorp introduced a new program initiated by the Diocese in October. It is related to the influx of other religious groups into Armenia following the Earthquake. This issue was not foreseen and has become quite urgent. The program entails each church in the diocese adopting a sister church in Armenia and supporting it financially through a donation of \$3000 a year. This will assist the clergy and parishioners, who are enduring poor living conditions. Hayr Soorp commented that the Armenian Church should respond considering that raising funds for missionary works has been part of other non-Armenian church regimens. Hayr Soorp indicated that the funds are administered by FAR (Fund for Armenian Relief), and that they are going through FAR's Yerevan office and distributed directly to the churches. To provide additional assurance, a report is generated as to how the funds are used. Jack Hacherian made a motion to adopt the program. Nat Arslanian indicated that we need to determine where the funds will come from. Sebouh Setrakian suggested we elect a person to

be responsible for fundraising relating to this, and that we should not spend or commit without having the income source identified. Ara Bagdasarian mentioned that there is much energy in the church for this task. Dina Aurslianian suggested a Fish Fry during Lent. Ralph Chakerian mentioned that there should be specific donations from those outside of the church. Nat Arslanian indicated that if we keep the program as a separate event outside of the budget that it would not have to be approved as part of the budget. Cheryl Arslanian mentioned her concern for accounting of the funds. Todd Russell reminded everyone that this is an on going commitment and that the \$3000 is an annual contribution. Richard Aurslianian mentioned that the younger ladies of the church have been quite active and could possibly be an organization to undertake this fundraiser. Louise Demirjian questioned whether we could raise funds and purchase the goods here and then send them. A motion was made that the parish would contribute up to \$3000 in the next year from funds raised specifically for the Sister Church Program. Serop Demirjian indicated that the Diocese needs to know that our commitment is only for one year. The motion to make the Sister Parish program a budget item failed.

A motion was made and passed to approve the 1999 budget.

Approval of Diocesan Delegate Report

No questions were raised as to this report and a motion to accept the report was passed.

Approval of Parish Auxillary Reports

No questions were raised as to these reports and a motion to accept these reports was passed.

Old and New Business

Nat Arslanian moved that Parish Council appoint a 3-member committee, which includes the Parish Council Chairman to study the ways of raising the \$3,000 for the Sister Parish Program. Papken Maksoudian said he believes the motion is not necessary since the responsibility automatically falls on the Parish Council. Father Simeon said that the funds will come and that he will be taking the initiative for this program. Ralph Chakerian announced his donation to the program of \$1,000. The motion failed. Sebouh Setrakian reminded everyone about the Stewardship Program and asked that everyone make his or her pledge for 1999. George Sakian questioned the status of the new Divine Liturgy books. Father Simeon indicated that they will be ready for purchase this summer and that the Ladies Auxiliary has set aside \$2,000 for the purchase of such.

Jeannie Arslanian questioned how the issue of a new pastor will be addressed and commented that she would like to see that a wide range of people be involved with the selection process. Dick Aurslianian mentioned that the Parish Council has not formally acted on this issue, but will do so as soon as an announcement is made regarding Fr. Simeon's new position. Ara Bagdasarian mentioned that a list has been submitted to the Parish Council of eligible clergy to replace Fr. Simeon. Naz Yessayan asked if a formal committee has been formed. Hayr Soorp mentioned that he hopes to have a definite word regarding his future plans within a week or two. Jack Hacherian indicated that forming a committee may be beneficial since the procedure takes so long. Sebouh Setrakian said that anyone interested in serving on a committee to find a new priest should contact the Parish Council chairman. Ara Bagdasarian re-iterated that same point and said that anyone interested should please come forward since this is such a large task. Mrs. Sakian questioned whether we need to appoint a committee

since the Primate may appoint a priest anyway. Jeannie Arslanian said that we need to assure that those on committee properly reflect the church and that a representative from all groups should be included in the process. Ralph Chakerian said that this process is the Parish Council's responsibility since they are our representatives. Louise Demirjian commented that there is a shortage of priests and that this task will not be easy. She stressed the benefit of our showcasing Cleveland during the Diocesan Assembly.

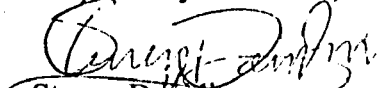
Election Results

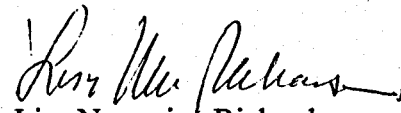
Parish Council	Anita Arpajian Arek Torosian	Todd Russell Lisa Richardson (alternate)
Nominating Committee:	Nina Setrakian Louise Demirjian	Jill Maksoudian
Auditing Committee:	Cindy Russell	

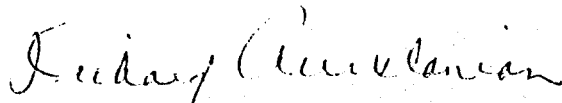
Adjournment and Closing Prayer


A motion was passed to adjourn the meeting. Thanks were given to Steve Davidian as Assembly Chairman of the Day and to Lisa Richardson, Secretary of the Day. Fr. Simeon led the group in the closing prayer. The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Steven Davidian
Chairman of the Day


Lisa Nersesian Richardson
Secretary of the Day


Richard Aurslanian
Parish Council Chairman


Fr. Simeon Odabashian, Pastor
President of the Assembly