

St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Church
Chicago, Illinois

*Minutes of the Parish Assembly
February 4, 1996*

The meeting was called to order at 2:10 p.m. by Mr. Armen Zakarian. Very Rev. Fr. Paren Avedikian led the attendees in prayer.

Roll call was taken by Mr. Zaven Dadian. There were 33 paid members present of the total membership of 101 people. Mr. Zakarian read the by-laws stating we could have our meeting although we were 1 person short of a quorum. According to the by-laws all voting must be approved by a 2/3 majority.

Nominations for Assembly Chairman for the 1996 meeting were opened. Mr. Arnold Koresian and Mr. Armen Zakarian were nominated. Mrs. Linda Zakarian made a motion to close the nominations. An election was held and Mr. Koresian won by 2/3 of the vote.

Mr. Koresian opened nominations for the Assembly Secretary. Mrs. Linda Zakarian and Mrs. Dolores Tootoian were nominated. Mrs. Zakarian won by 2/3 of the vote.

The minutes of the 1995 Parish Assembly were read by Mrs. Marilyn Dadian. Mrs. Dorothy Koresian moved to accept the minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Garo Dadian. The minutes were accepted by a 2/3 vote.

Report of the Pastor

Fr. Paren gave a detailed, inclusive report of his activities at St. Gregory in 1995. The report was accepted by the Assembly.

Report of the Parish Council

In the absence of Parish Council Chairperson, Mrs. Agnes Pedian, Mr. George Nahabedian asked the Assembly to dispense with the reading of the report. He explained that the report was given to Hayr Soorp on December 31. The Assembly approved, and the report was filed.

Reports of the Church Organizations

Ladies' Auxiliary - Ms. Violet Koresian read the report of the Ladies' Auxiliary. A check in the amount of \$3,000.00 was presented to the Parish Council. A copy of the report is attached.

Women's Guild - Mrs. Silva Karachorlu read the report of the Women's Guild. A check in the amount of \$3,837.00 was presented to the Parish Council. A copy of the report is attached.

Nairi Choir - Ms. Michelle Babikian read the report of the Nairi Choir. A check in the amount of \$172.27 was presented to the Parish Council. A copy of the report is attached.

There were no other Organizational Reports.

Report of the Reserve Fund

Mr. Zaven Dadian read the report of the Reserve Fund in the absence of Mr. Haig Padian. The Reserve Fund was \$164,245.00 as of December 31, 1995, which reflected a gain of \$19,568. Mr. Padian's report is attached.

Report of the Auditing Committee

Mr. Armen Zakarian presented the Auditing Committee report and made the following recommendations: 1.) Ledger accounts should be balanced at the end of every month. This is the same suggestion that was made last year. 2.) At the election of the new treasurer, the Auditing Committee should audit the ledgers so the new treasurer can organize his responsibilities.

The Auditing Committee noted a significant increase in income for hall rental and thanked the Parish Council, Fr. Paren, and Ms. Violet Koresian for their efforts.

Mr. Nahabedian moved to accept the Auditing Committee's report, the motion was seconded, and the report was filed.

1996 Budget

The financial report was reviewed by the Assembly and the Parish Council addressed questions concerning the 1996 budget. Mr. Zaven Dadian responded to a question regarding the increased income of the pledge system. He explained that that amount was approved at the 1995 Assembly Meeting and although the budgeted amount was not met in 1995, more effort would be made to meet the amount in 1996. A question of the meaning of a Special Charitable Contribution was made and the explanation was that it was whatever contribution the Parish Council decided it would be within the budget. A suggestion was made that in the future the previous year's budget be attached to the proposed budget. Mr. Dadian commented that the Parish Council proposed an increase to Fr. Paren's salary but that he had declined. A

suggestion was made to compensate him in some way, but he refused. Mrs. Pauline Nahabedian moved to accept the 1996 Budget, the motion was seconded, a vote was taken and the budget was approved unanimously.

Elections

The Nominating Committee presented candidates for Parish Council, Auditing Committee and Nominating Committee. In each case, additional nominations were sought from the floor. Ballots for each election were passed and collected by the Nominating Committee.

Mr. Martin Abezetian was elected to the Auditing Committee.

The following individuals were elected to serve on the Parish Council:

Zabel Abezetian (25)
Charles Babikian (26)
Steve Tootooian (23)

The following individuals were elected to serve as the Nominating Committee for 1996:

John Paklaian (27)
Pauline Nahabedian (26)
Michelle Babikian (24)

Old Business

Mr. Koresian opened the floor for old business. Mr. Abezetian asked if any progress had been made to unite St. James in Evanston and our St. Gregory's Churches. Mr. Nahabedian explained that St. James and St. Gregory had a joint meeting on January 25 and another is scheduled for March 13. A Financial Feasibility Plan will be presented at that time. It was also explained that before any action is taken, the Parish Council must present additional information to a Special Meeting of the Parish Assembly. The Parish Council is not permitted to proceed with anything beyond gathering more information. Mr. Nahabedian explained to the Assembly that clarification was made to St. James that we didn't have to sell our church and could sustain ourselves financially at this time. Mr. Koresian read a letter from St. James endorsing the gathering of additional information and the dates of future meetings.

New Business

Mr. Charles Babikian announced that the Co-Chairmen of the 1996 picnic are Armen and Linda Zakarian.

Ms. Violet Koresian asked to speak about Fr. Paren's salary. He adamantly refused this discussion. It was decided that the Parish Council would discuss this at a later time.

Mrs. Dorothy Koresian asked why we encourage new members to join our church if they only pay dues and do not support the church in other ways. Mr. Koresian explained that we need new members in all organizations and we hope they will become involved at some point.

Mrs. Rose Tootooian asked why statements aren't sent out to remind people to pay their dues. Mr. Dadian explained they were sent out, and in 1996 they will be sent out quarterly with our new system.

Fr. Paren led the Assembly in a requiem prayer for all members who passed away in 1995.

Closing

Father Paren thanked the officers of the 1995 Parish Assembly. He acknowledged Mr. Kaz Kazarian and Mrs. Nancy Weiss for their service on Parish Council and congratulated Mrs. Abezetian, Mr. Babikian, Mr. Tootooian, Mrs. Nahabedian, Ms. Babikian, Mr. Paklaian, and Mr. Abezetian on their elections.

Father Paren proceeded to read a prepared statement to the Assembly explaining that January 31 would be his 18 month anniversary at St. Gregory's. He continued to explain that there must be a change in the church and expressed his concern for our church. He emphatically stated the need for the two churches to merge and submitted his resignation in order to prevent the "hindering" of the merge. He explained that St. Gregory's should not search for a new priest or visiting clergy. He encouraged us to work with the priest of St. James parish to build a united church in a new environment.

Mr. Nahabedian, in his role as vice-president of the Parish Council, moved not to accept Hayr Soorp's resignation. Mr. Zaven Dadian seconded the motion. Hayr Soorp explained that he had already discussed his decision with the Archbishop. There was much discussion that followed. The Assembly voted unanimously not to accept Fr. Paren's resignation.

Mrs. Dorothy Koresian asked Fr. Paren if he wanted to resign for reasons other than those he stated relating to the merge. He stated there were no other reasons.

Mr. Nahabedian moved that based on Hayr Soorp's attempt to resign, we withdraw our decision to discuss the merge of the two churches. That motion was seconded. He then asked Hayr Soorp if he would withdraw his resignation

since the Assembly voted not to accept it. Fr. Paren explained that the merger is a "must" for the church to survive. Discussion followed. Mr. Nahabedian withdrew his motion.

Mr. Nahabedian moved for the Secretary of the Assembly to send an letter informing the Primate of St. Gregory's refusal to accept Fr. Paren's resignation. That motion was seconded by Mr. Zaven Dadian.

Mr. Nishan Babikian moved to adjourn the meeting. That motion was seconded by Mr. Garo Dadian. The meeting was adjourned at 6:30p.m. with a closing prayer led by Fr. Paren.



Fr. Paren Avedikian
Assembly President



Linda Zakarian
Parish Assembly Secretary



Arnold Koresian
Parish Assembly Chairman