

MINUTES OF THE 1992 PARISH ASSEMBLY  
ST. LEON ARMENIAN CHURCH  
12-61 SADDLE RIVER ROAD  
FAIR LAWN, NEW JERSEY 07410

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 PM by Chairman Sarkis Souldanian, and was opened with a prayer by Fr. Arshen Aivazian. The Treasurer reported that there were 100 dues-paying members in attendance, which constituted the required quorum.

The first order of business was the election of Assembly officers. The Nominating Committee presented a slate of two candidates for Assembly Chairman, Mr. Charles Pinajian and Mr. Sarkis Souldanian. Mr. Pinajian withdrew his name and Mr. Souldanian, being the only candidate left on the ballot, assumed the Chairmanship. For Assembly Secretary, no nominations were presented by the Nominating Committee. Mrs. Nancy Scicchitano was nominated from the floor. There being no other nominations, she assumed the position of Assembly Secretary.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The following are the persons nominated for Parish Council for a term of two years:

- × Thomas Ashbahian
- Dr. Berdj Feredjian
- × Barbara Hovsepian
- × Robert Ishkanian
- Raffi Jessourian
- × John Nakashian
- × Vasken Ohanyan
- Jan Royland

The following are the persons nominated for the Diocesan Delegate for a term of four years:

- Ara Hourdajian
- Leon Hovsepian
- Rex Kachigian
- Rose Najarian
- Sarkis Souldanian

It was stated that based on our current membership of 195 we are entitled to two Diocesan Delegates. At this point Rex Kachigian withdrew his name from the slate.

The following are the persons nominated for the Auditing Committee:

Olga Chongoushian  
 Leon Hojegian  
 George Kachajian, Jr.  
 Arda Kiljian  
 Charles Pinajian  
 Amy Vartoukian

The following are the persons nominated for the Nominating Committee:

Linda Chagachbanian  
 Noubar Jessourian  
 Linda Paroonagian  
 Paul Pinajian  
 Dovie Tilbian  
 Berdjouhi Varjabedian

Profiles of the above candidates were distributed to all persons attending the Parish Assembly. After all nominations were heard, a motion was made and seconded to close all nominations. It should be noted that Gregory Najarian was contacted to run for the Auditing Committee. However, due to the fact that he is a new member of St. Leon Armenian Church, he was not able to run for said position. It was read aloud that, pursuant to the By-Laws of St. Leon Church, one must be a member in good standing for at least one year to be eligible to run for any office and, at least six months to be eligible to vote. Mr. Najarian had registered as a member only two months ago; thus, according to the By-Laws was ineligible to vote or to run for office.

Clarification for the length of term for Auditing and Nominating Committees was received from the Diocese. Of the three members to be elected, one member is to serve for three years, one member to serve for two years and one member to serve for one year. Thereafter, as terms of office expire, positions will be filled. The highest number will be for a period of three years.

The minutes of the 1991 Parish Assembly were read and accepted.

Mrs. Mary Ann Mozian stated that she did not receive her Annual Report until two days prior to the date of the Assembly. She requested that perhaps the Annual Reports could be handed out to parishioners each Sunday. Mr. Jan Royland stated that he had not received his Annual Report until recently also. Fr. Arshen Aivazian stated that the Annual Reports were mailed out three weeks prior to February 23, 1992, but that they were mailed Third Class. Mr. Leon

Hovsepien suggested that the Annual Reports continue to be mailed out Third Class and that they also be distributed each Sunday to parishioners. Fr. Arshen stated that the booklet could have been mailed out Third Class in early January, but that many of the reports were not handed in on time. Mr. Thomas Ashbahian stated that all of the reports were mailed out two weeks prior to February 23, 1992

#### REPORTS OF ORGANIZATIONS

**PASTOR'S REPORT:** The Chairman asked if there were any questions regarding the Pastor's Report. Mrs. Rose Najarian asked Fr. Arshen Aivazian to explain the circumstances surrounding the appointment of a new Church School Superintendent to replace Mrs. Barbara Hovsepien. Der Hayr explained that, prior to the beginning of the new academic year in September, he had met with Mrs. Hovsepien to emphasize the importance of the new program of total parish education and family worship Divine Liturgy, and expressed his concern over Mrs. Hovsepien's ability to pay attention to certain aspects of the new program due to her over-commitment and involvement in many other organizations, committees and projects. Der Hayr said that Mrs. Hovsepien had reassured him that she will pay full attention to the Church School and the new program and that she will comply with the guidelines that were mutually discussed and agreed upon. Der Hayr informed the Assembly that, contrary to this, Mrs. Hovsepien wanted to call a Faculty Meeting of the Church School on a Sunday during the same time that the Divine Liturgy is offered. Der Hayr had asked Mrs. Hovsepien not to hold the meeting at that particular time, since it would be contrary to the principles and the spirit of the new program. He had told Mrs. Hovsepien that, as discussed prior to the implementation of the new program, it would be more appropriate to hold the Faculty Meeting after the conclusion of Church Services on Sunday or on a weekday night. Der Hayr said that in spite of this Mrs. Hovsepien went ahead and did hold the meeting during the time the Divine Liturgy was being offered. Later, on the same evening, Der Hayr had called Mrs. Hovsepien to express his disapproval of her action and to discuss the situation. Der Hayr said that following a brief discussion over the 'phone, Mrs. Hovsepien said: "Der Hayr, if you don't like it, get someone else," and hung up the 'phone. Fr. Arshen felt this left him with no other alternative but replace Mrs. Hovsepien, an action which was subsequently approved by the Parish Council.

Mrs. Barbara Hovsepien denied that she had hung up the 'phone, and had only told Der Hayr that she will step aside to pave the way for another superintendent.



Mrs. Jacqueline Basralian praised the talents of Mrs. Hovsepien as a teacher and acknowledged her various contributions to the Church School.

Mr. Leon Hovsepien, husband of Barbara, said that he was at home during the above mentioned telephone conversation and that the conversation was getting repetitive, therefore Mrs. Hovsepien simply ended it.

Dr. Knarig Khatchadurian-Meyer, the Chairperson of the Parish Council, stated that immediately following her conversation with Der Hayr, Mrs. Hovsepien had called her to inform her of what had transpired and that she (Mrs. Hovsepien) told her that she hung up the 'phone on Der Hayr.

Mrs. Rose Najarian stated that regardless of what had happened, Mrs. Hovsepien should not have been replaced since she works so hard and is so talented.

Fr. Arshen further informed the Assembly that his action had resulted after not just one incident, but similar behavior and threats of resignation by Mrs. Hovsepien over the past two - three years. Der Hayr stated that he acted on behalf and in the best interest of the Church School and the parish in general, which was his responsibility as pastor.

Mr. Sarkis Bedevian and Mr. John Nakashian expressed their feeling that the tone of the discussion should be tempered and problems such as these should be dealt with in the spirit of Christian faith.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the Pastor's Report. Motion passed.

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** It was asked what the status was with the money that was raised for Armenia. Dr. Knarig Khatchadurian-Meyer stated that the money had been channeled to the Diocese of the Armenian Church. Yerezgin Sirarpi Aivazian said that food was purchased and distributed to the people in Armenia.

Dr. Knarig Khatchadurian-Meyer stated that there had been a very active membership drive in St. Leon and Dr. Berdj Feredjian encouraged the congregation to welcome all new members of St. Leon Armenian Church. Mrs. Andrea Halejian suggested that cards be placed in each pew in the church for prospective members to fill out if they were interested in joining St. Leon. Mr. Rex Kachigian stated that the church has applications for that purpose

Mrs. Barbara Hovsepian asked if the "My Kinsmen Program" was in existence. It was learned that Fr. Mardiros Chevian is in charge of said program and it has been started.

Dr. Knarig Khatchadurian-Meyer brought to the attention of the Assembly several items of addendum and correction.

Regarding the Editorship of Lradoo, Mrs. Barbara Hovsepian edited four issues this year; Fr. Arshen Aivazian edited two issues.

Parish Council gave several scholarships to children of the church for the St. Nerses Summer Study Program. Camperships were also given to children of the church to attend St. Vartan Camp, directed by Mrs. Barbara Hovsepian under the auspices of the Diocese.

Since January, 1991, \$3,500.00 has been received in memory of Pailak Khatchadourian, (father of Dr. Knarig Khatchadurian-Meyer). An Endowment Fund has been established in his name for the benefit of a recipient yet to be determined.

Dr. Knarig Khatchadurian Meyer expressed her regret in omitting three very important people in her report. To Mr. Charles Pinajian was thanked for his assistance in making the transition of Chairmanship a smooth event. Mr. Thomas Ashbahian was thanked for his able assistance as Vice Chairman. Father Arshen Aivazian was thanked for his pastorate and leadership.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the Chairman's Report. Motion passed.

At this point, it was suggested that the balloting take place earlier, as many people were anxious to depart. The ballots were handed out at this time.

**ACYOA JUNIORS' REPORT:** Their Advisor, Miss Patti Toofangjian, was present to answer any questions. Mrs. Grace Pinajian stated that several items of the church's possessions were taken during the Sports Weekend and she requested that the Parish Council not allow the Sports Weekend to take place in our church for this reason. Miss Toofangjian stated that all of the above took place on Monday. Mrs. Pinajian felt that there was not enough parental supervision at the Sports Weekend activities this year. Fr. Arshen Aivazian agreed with Mrs. Pinajian. Mr. Jan Royland stated that the parents who were hosting out-of-towners should have been chaperones. Mrs. Jacqueline Basralian commented that only approximately ten per cent of



the children were responsible for the mischief. She also stated that she hosted a party in her home and was pleased to say that all of the children in attendance were well-behaved.

Fr. Arshen Aivazian stated that at last year's Sports Weekend, there was gambling which took place.

Mrs. Regina Ohanyan stated that the Sports Weekend should not be abolished, but to learn from this experience. She also stated that she would be pleased to host any out-of-town children in her home, and that more parents should do the same. It was suggested that counseling and consequences should be made known to the ACYOA Juniors prior to the Sports Weekend and a committee be elected for this. Miss Toofangjian also advised the congregation that the host parents were supposed to be the designated drivers for the entire Sports Weekend's activities.

Dr. Knarig Khatchadurian-Meyer advised the Assembly that a special meeting took place Monday morning, February 17, at 11:00 AM, prior to the departure of the Counselors, Advisors and the Youth Director of St. James Church to discuss the problems which were encountered and possible guidelines were put down to prevent future occurrences of this sort. These guidelines are in the hands of Dr. Khatchadurian-Meyer and should be reviewed by the Committee for future Sports Weekends.

Mrs. Andrea Halejian asked for more involvement among our church community.

A motion was then made and seconded that the ACYOA Juniors' Report be accepted. Motion passed.

**ACYOA SENIORS' REPORT:** Mr. Raffi Jessourian was present to answer any questions. None were asked of him. A motion was then made and seconded that the ACYOA Seniors' Report be accepted. Motion passed.

**ARMENIAN SCHOOL REPORT:** No questions were asked. A motion was made and seconded that the report be accepted. Motion passed.

**CARE & SHARE REPORT:** Mrs. Anita Sarkissians was present to answer any questions. She explained that Care & Share was formed for mothers of children in ages from infancy to 12 years old. Mr. Rex Kachigian asked what the Care & Share group was doing with regard to having new members join. Mrs. Sarkissians explained that a Christmas Dinner was held and a few prospective and new members attended. A motion was then made and seconded that the report be accepted. Motion passed.

**NEWLY-FORMED PARENTEEN ORGANIZATION:** This group will be lead by Mrs. Nancy Scicchitano. The first meeting is scheduled to take place on March 23, 1992. It was explained by Mrs. Scicchitano that this is a new group which will consist of mothers of children ages 12 years to 18 years old and the concept is to informally meet to discuss the present concerns of our children in this age bracket and to share and gain insight from each other. Dr. Berdj Feredjian suggested that the group permit fathers to also attend, as well as mothers. Mrs. Scicchitano responded to Dr. Feredjian's suggestion, saying that it was a good idea and certainly fathers could attend if they desired. Due to the fact that the Parenteen Group has not met formally yet, no report was made.

**CHOIR REPORT:** A motion was made and seconded that the report be accepted. Motion passed.

**CHURCH SCHOOL REPORT:** Mrs. Barbara Hovsepian expressed her feeling that more retreats be planned for the seventh and eighth graders since the one which was held at Camp Nubar last fall was received so well by those children. Yeretzgin Sirarpi Aivazian said that she was planning to have retreats for the eleventh and twelfth graders. Mrs. Hovsepian and Mrs. Nancy Scicchitano suggested that perhaps Yeretzgin Sirarpi could appoint other people to lead the seventh and eighth graders. Yeretzgin Sirarpi then responded that it could be done, however, it could not be done under the Church School auspices. A motion was made and supported to accept the Church School Report. Motion passed.

**MEN'S FELLOWSHIP REPORT:** Dr. Knarig Khatchadurian-Meyer asked Dr. Berdj Feredjian how much money this group was planning to raise for the church. Dr. Feredjian responded that the membership has been very good and that on an average, approximately 35 men have attended the monthly meetings and programs. He assured Dr. Khatchadurian-Meyer that the Men's Fellowship will contribute their resources to the church in various ways such, as undertaking the expense of the church sports team and Food Festival. The next Men's Fellowship meeting is scheduled for March 20, 1992. Mrs. Barbara Hovsepian asked Dr. Feredjian to open the group to everyone when an interesting program was going to be scheduled. Dr. Feredjian agreed with the suggestion. Joint functions with other organizations were also being planned. A motion was made and seconded to accept this report. Motion passed

**SENIOR CITIZENS' REPORT:** Mr. Manuk Capan stated that there were rumors that the money (\$3,000.00) which was raised by Senior Citizens was not being given to the church. He asked where the money went. Mr. Robert Ishkanian responded that a transfer of \$4,400.00 was made to the



Parish Council. Mr. Capan felt that unfair allegations were made of himself with regard to the disappearance of the money. A motion was then made and seconded to accept the Senior Citizens' Report. Motion passed.

**WOMEN'S GUILD REPORT:** Linda Powers was not present to answer any questions. Mrs. Margaret Simonian answered questions in her absence. The Women's Guild was never reimbursed for the Food Festival Raffle, pursuant to Ara Hourdajian. As a result, the Parish Council owes the Women's Guild the money. A special fund account was made. It was suggested that the executive board meeting should be once a month, rather than once a year. A motion was made and seconded to accept the Women's Guild Report. Motion passed.

#### AUDITING COMMITTEE

The next item on the agenda for the Parish Assembly was the Auditing Committee. A comment was made by Mr. Robert Ishkanian that more money needs to be raised at St. Leon Armenian Church. Mr. Thomas Ashbahian pointed out that to his knowledge, the Endowment Fund is the largest in the Diocese. However, we should not rely on that money to support a budget. We should all work harder to make more money for the church. Mrs. Ruth Bedevian stated that the Endowment Fund is not clear with regard to the \$5,000.00 that her family has given. She stated that it should state that the money is in memory of Karnig Shabazian. The Lucy Tutunjian Fund is under the Church School. It provides camperships to students who attend St. Vartan Camp and St. Nerses Seminary each year.

Mrs. Barbara Hovsepien asked if the \$9,000.00 received for Armenia Aid was contributed by the St. Leon Community or the community at large. Mr. John Demirdjian responded that the contributions were from St. Leon parishioners.

With regard to the Budget Committee, Mr. Leon Hojegian asked why the percentage for Capital Improvement was not set aside in 1991. As of February, 1992, there is no allocation for Capital Improvement. Mr. Hojegian then asked if it was a Parish Assembly decision or a Parish Council decision. The answer is that it is a Parish Assembly decision. Mr. Hojegian said that he felt a separate fund should be set aside solely for the maintenance of the Community Center.

Mr. Rex Kachigian wanted a rundown of the receipts of 1991. He suggested that weekly envelopes and plate collections should be separate columns. Mr. Jan Royland wanted to know the difference between "dues" and "offering". All contributions are to go toward the dues.



Mr. Ara Hourdajian suggested that an increase in the membership dues be considered. (See New Business).

Mr. Jan Royland asked for clarification on the \$2,860.00 under "Van Expense." The Treasurer responded by saying that major repairs were made on the church van over and above the general operation.

Dr. Knarig Khatchadurian-Meyer stated that she understood that the Parish Council did not have the authority to use money from the reserves unless it was authorized by the Parish Assembly.

The Parish Council presented the following proposed expenditures as an addendum to the 1992 Budget.

- \* \$30,000.00 for Refurbishing the Community Center.
- \* \$15,000.00 for Repair of the Church Roof.
- \* Van Fund Balance (\$4,000.00).
- \* Community Center Provision Fund (\$30,000.00).
- \* These funds will be expended only if raised through donations.

Mr. Sarkis Gabrelian made a motion to spend \$15,000.00 on repairing the church roof. Mr. Thomas Ashbahian concurred that the roof is in dire need of being repaired. The motion was seconded and passed with the money to come from the reserve funds.

Mr. George Sarkissians asked if the Parish Council should spend \$50,000.00 from the reserves to refurbish the Community Center. After discussion it was moved, seconded and passed to expend \$30,000.00 from reserve funds, with the understanding that this money will be replenished through a ten per cent (10%) contribution from Community Center rentals.

It was moved, seconded and passed, amending the 1992 Budget by \$2,000.00 to be added to the Van Fund and \$7,000.00 be added to the Community Center Capital Improvement Fund.

It was moved, seconded and passed to allocate the projected surplus of \$5,000.00 to Repairs and Maintenance, for a new total of \$10,000.00. In addition the projected income from Weekly Envelopes was increased by \$9,000.00, giving a new total of \$54,000.00.

The question of how many times the van was used in a year was brought up. The reason for the van was to pick up parishioners who did not have transportation to attend church. There have been announcements in the Lradoo with regard to calling the church if someone is in need of

transportation to the church, but there have been no responses. Mr. Leon Hojegian stated that we should keep the van, rather than renting one. Mr. James Noorigian suggested that we rent the van. Der Hayr said that the use of the van is necessary. Mrs. Regina Ohanyan stated that announcements should be made in the Lradoo each month with regard to picking up persons who do not have transportation to attend church. It was suggested that a more precise log be kept in the coming year with regard to the amount of time the van is used. A motion was made and seconded to add \$5,000.00 in repairs and expenses. Motion passed.

A question was made about what were the Community Center's expenses. Are we netting only \$50,000.00? The answer was yes.

A motion was made, seconded and passed to adopt the amended Budget for 1992 in the amount of \$229,000.00.

#### NEW BUSINESS

Dr. Knarig Khatchadurian-Meyer made a recommendation on behalf of Parish Council to raise the membership dues to \$125.00 per person annually. A motion was made by Mr. Charles Pinajian, and seconded, to raise the dues to \$150.00 per person annually. Some people thought this was too steep and the motion did not pass. Dr. Khatchadurian-Meyer made a motion to raise the membership dues to \$125.00. This was seconded by Mr. George Sarkissians and the motion passed. Mrs. Grace Pinajian made a motion to increase the Senior Citizens membership dues to \$50.00 per person annually. This motion was seconded but did not pass. A motion was made to increase the Senior Citizens membership dues to \$35.00; motion seconded and passed. Student membership was proposed for any 18- year-old who is currently a full time student and whose parents are members of St. Leon Armenian Church. Mr. Sarkis Bedevian made a motion to set this membership at \$25.00 per person annually; motion seconded and passed.

A comment was made regarding the unsanitary conditions on the side of the Community Center each week. The Men's Fellowship has undertaken to make a concrete foundation in the summer so that the conditions would be more sanitary.



The Nominating Committee reported the final results of the balloting. The following persons were elected for the 1992-1993 term

PARISH COUNCIL

Thomas Ashbahian  
Barbara Hovsepian  
Robert Ishkanian  
John Nakashian  
Vasken Ohanyan  
Dr. Berdj Feredjian  
(Alternate)

DIOCESAN DELEGATE

Rose Najarian  
Sarkis Soultanian  
Ara Hourdajian  
(Alternate)

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Noubar Jessourian  
Dovie Tilbian  
Berdjouhi Varjabedian  
Linda Chagachbanian  
(Alternate)

AUDITING COMMITTEE

Leon Hojegian  
Arda Kiljian  
Charles Pinajian  
Amy Vartoukian  
(Alternate)

The Parish Assembly was adjourned at 5:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Nancy Knar Scicchitano  
Recording Secretary  
1992 Parish Assembly

  

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Rev. Fr. Arshen Aivazian  
Parish Priest  

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Sarkis Soultanian  
Chairman, 1992 Parish Assembly  

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Dr. Knarig Khatchadurian-Meyer  
Chairperson, Parish Council