

ST. JOHN'S ARMENIAN CHURCH OF GREATER DETROIT

ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY MINUTES

FEBRUARY 13, 1976

The Annual Parish Assembly of St. John's Armenian Church of Greater Detroit began at 8:30 P.M.

Mr. Harry Terzian, Chairman of the Parish Council welcomed the large number of parishioners, which he said indicates that they are interested in the works of the parish. Mr. Terzian stated that he was hopeful that everyone read the Annual Parish Booklet and came prepared to ask questions, and that the Parish Council would answer the questions put to them to the best of their ability.

Then Father Paren Avedikian was invited to open the meeting with a prayer.

Mr. Terzian announced that the proceedings of today's assembly were being recorded on tape to assist the secretary in keeping accurate minutes.

Nominations were opened for chairman of the day. Mr. Edward Korkoian nominated Mr. Art Mardigian. Mr. Terzian said that since Mr. Art Mardigian was a member of the Parish Council, it would not be proper to have a Parish Council member as chairman of the Assembly.

Mr. Paul Hovsepian nominated Mr. Mihran Hoplamazian. Motion was seconded. Mr. Archie Yeghissian nominated Mr. Martin Cholakian who declined the nomination. Mr. Martin Apkarian made a motion that nominations for chairman be closed. Motion was seconded and passed. Mr. Mihran Hoplamazian was then elected Chairman of the day by majority vote.

Nominations were sought for secretary of the assembly. Mrs. Nora Mazlounian nominated Miss Shakey Godoshian which was seconded. Mr. Charles Neffian nominated Mrs. Emma Minasian who declined. Mr. George Keurajian moved that nominations be closed. Motion was seconded and passed. Miss Shakey Godoshian was elected Secretary of the day by majority vote.

Mr. Mihran Hoplamazian and Miss Shakey Godoshian were invited to assume their responsibilities. Mr. Hoplamazian then proceeded with the agenda of Assembly.

Next on the agenda was the approval of last year's minutes which were made available to the parishioners last Sunday, and which were also distributed in the lobby today before the meeting. Mr. Edward Korkoian moved that the minutes of the 1975 Annual Parish Assembly be accepted as presented. The motion was seconded and passed.

Mr. John Bahadurian, one of the auditors, was called upon to give a report at this time. Mr. Bahadurian stated that the ACYOA Seniors financial report was incomplete at this time and that one of the other auditors of the Church, Mr. Ron Keolelian and himself, were still working on the report. He further

explained that when the report is completed it will be mailed to the dues paying parishioners with their pledge statements.

The Nominating Committee Chairman, Mr. George Keurajian, thanked the outgoing Parish Council members, Mr. Souren Aprahamian, Mr. Stephen Boyajian and Mr. Leo Zamanigian. He also thanked the other members of this year's Nominating Committee Mr. Edward Sarkisian and Mr. Harry Zartarian. He then called upon Mr. Zartarian to introduce the candidates for Parish Council who were as follows: Arthur Barsamian, Martin Cholakian, Noubar Dourjalian, Armen Hovnanian, Mike Kaysserian, Harry Kezelian, Richard Norsigian, Armen Safilian, Charles Stambouljian, Harry Terzian, Robert Thomasian and Ashod Torosian. Mr. Zartarian introduced each candidate appropriately.

Mr. Edward Sarkisian was then called upon to present the candidates for Nominating Committee for 1976 who are as follows: George Gargarian, Kora Jamian, Martin Manoogian, Moses Moushmoulian, Charles Neffian, and Simon Tashjian. Mr. Sarkisian introduced each candidate appropriately.

Mr. Sarkisian then presented the only candidate for the Auditing Committee, Mr. Albert Mardirosian, and asked for nominations from the floor. Mr. Hike Semerjian made a motion that nominations be closed. Motion was seconded and passed.

Mr. Sarkisian then announced that Mr. Albert Mardirosian was elected by acclamation as Auditor.

Mrs. Lillian Boyajian made a motion that for the candidates of Parish Council the ballots should contain at least four names or ~~else~~ the ballot should be void. Mr. Papelian seconded the motion. Mr. Art Mardigian stated that the motion was well intended but it is each individuals choice to vote for as many people as the individual thinks are qualified. Motion was voted upon and defeated.

Ballots were passed out and then collected by the Nominating Committee and their assistants.

Mr. Hoplamazian commended the Parish Council for their fine effort in compiling the Annual Report Booklet and for the years activities of St. John's.

Mr. Jack Kazanjian reported on the Blood Bank which will be held on Monday, April 26, and also reported that it was the 13th year of the Blood Bank. To date, since 1963, the Bank has released 389 pints of blood to our parishioners. Mr. Kazanjian made a plea to the parishioners to sign the donors cards that are available through Mr. Arthur Boudakian and Mr. Jack Kezelian for the drive on April 26th. He reported that last year 63 pints of blood were released for parishioners.

Mr. Martin Manoogian wanted to talk about the budget for 1975. He questioned the budgeted amount for salaries of the clergy and secretaries, and asked why every year the salaries exceeded the budgeted amount. Mr. Hoplamazian explained

that the receipts were budgeted for \$233,500 and \$304,766 was the actual. Mr. Manoogian stated that this income should be allocated for future needs. He also questioned why In Lieu of Flowers money was used for the maintenance of the building. He thought the In Lieu of Flowers money was for capital expenditures or for new constructions.

Mr. Harry Terzian explained that the previous years' budgets contained increases which this year have been eliminated and are part of the actual salaries.

Mr. Terzian also stated that the budget prepared is a guideline to the Council for expenditures that may come up. He explained that the utilities this year exceeded our expectations.

Mr. Martin Manoogian again questioned the In Lieu of Flowers money being used for building maintenance. Mr. Dick Simonian, Auditor, explained that the Apostolic Society agreed that the Parish Council could keep half of the In Lieu of Flowers money for the maintenance of the building, where in the past 100% was turned over to the Apostolic Society.

Mr. Edward Balian asked the position of the Apostolic Society in relation to the Parish Council. Mr. Hoplamazian explained that the Apostolic Society is the owner of the buildings and St. John's parish is the tenant.

Mr. Balian's next question was in relation to the members of the Apostolic Society and whether the names listed on the Apostolic Society letter were the only members. The answer to this question was that there are 21 members of the Apostolic Society.

Mr. Balian asked about the air conditioning system in the Church. Mr. Hoplamazian explained that as the landlord the Apostolic Society installed the air conditioning system.

Fr. Paren further explained that the air conditioning was a major improvement to the Church, therefore, the Parish Council asked the Apostolic Society to pay for the system to which they agreed. Fr. Paren explained that the maintenance and improvements to the building are taken care of by the Parish Council.

Mr. Vahe Papelian reported on the Bingo. Through error of the printer Mrs. Judy Yousoufian's name was omitted from the list of committee members. Mr. Papelian explained that Bingo was budgeted \$15,000 in 1975 and turned in \$25,000. This year's budget for Bingo is \$25,000 of which the Bingo Committee has already turned over \$6,000 to the Parish Council, and hopefully will exceed the budgeted amount for this year. He also stated that 75% of those that attend Bingo are non-Armenians.

Mr. Papelian questioned the \$3,000 budgeted for the Calouste Gulbenkian Armenian School which only has 28 students, and asked whether this was a wise expenditure for only 28 people on Saturday morning.

Mr. Hoplamazian voiced his own opinion on this matter by saying that any amount spent on Armenian School was well worth it. He also stated that only \$1,600 was spent.

Then the Building Committee members, Mr. Armen Hovnanian and Mr. Rick Apkarian were asked to come to answer questions on the building. Mr. Rick Apkarian stated that \$17,356 was lost for 1975 compared to a loss of \$33,271 for 1974. Mr. Apkarian explained that the Church has certain agreements with the Church and non-Church organizations. The Church uses their facilities and they in turn use the building without a rental charge which is a direct cost to our building operation, meaning the hall loses rental income. The Church also has affairs in the building where no rental income is derived from. For example, various dinners sponsored by the Parish Council, Bazaar, New Year's Eve, etc. Therefore, the \$17,000 loss was really a church expense for all usage enjoyed by the church and non-church organizations throughout 1975. Also hundreds of meetings were conducted in the building which were not recorded in detail.

Mr. Apkarian pointed out that there will be a price increase in the rental of the building beginning in March 1976, with the exception of church members, church organizations and non-church affiliated Armenian organizations. Outsiders will be charged new rates to offset the increase in costs.

Mr. Art Artinian questioned the chart showing the hall is available on weekends for our parishioners, and asked why only 14 couples out of the 29 that were married in our church used the hall, and not the other 15. He asked if it was because the cost of the hall was too great. Mr. Apkarian replied that our hall is quite large and not everyone can use a large hall as ours.

Mr. Artinian questioned the \$1.00 per person charged for Hokejash. Mr. Artinian suggested that this charge be eliminated. Mr. Apkarian stated that the Parish Council did reconsider its position and for church members it reduced the cost to \$.50 per person which only covers the expenses incurred.

Mr. Jack Kazanjian asked whether we make money on the catering. Mr. Armen Hovnanian explained that the caterer works for the church. Therefore, the caterer charges the church so much a plate, then we charge the customer a different figure. The discount between a parishioner and non-parishioner is a third on the per plate price. The church sets the per plate price. At this point Mr. Kazanjian gave credit to the Parish Council saying that the building was being run properly and efficiently.

Mr. Martin Cholakian asked if the church would be better off if the building was not rented to outsiders. Mr. Hovnanian stated that the loss would be close to \$150,000 per year.

After a long discussion on the Building Report Mr. Hoplamazian commended Mr. Armen Hovnanian and Mr. Rick Apkarian on their fine progress in improving the facilities and making the hall available to the parishioners as many times as possible.

Mr. Hoplamazian brought attention to the note on the bottom of the chart which reads, "As the above table indicates, there is no basis to the complaint of some people that the Church Hall is not available for rent on weekend dates to parishioners and other Armenians."

Mr. Martin Cholakian asked whether the 52 weekend days shown on the chart as available to parishioners for rental were Saturdays or were they only Fridays and Sundays, considering the fact that our parishioners prefer weddings on Saturdays. Mr. Hoplamazian said that since this was the first time such a chart was presented, his recommendation to the committee would be to break the figures down to Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

Mr. Martin Cholakian, Bazaar Chairman gave a two year Bazaar report prepared and audited, for those who would like to look at it. In 1974 gross receipts were \$44,448, gross expenses were \$18,212 and a net revenue of \$26,236. Gross receipts for 1975 were \$72,981, gross expenses of \$31,361, net receipt to the church \$41,620. There is also an inventory of jewelry of \$1,051 which has been written off and is here in the Church to be used for any other Bazaar.

Mr. Art Mardigian was asked to present the Budget for 1976. He explained that last year we had considerable discussion concerning the Diocesan expense for which we budgeted only \$25,000, on the condition that the Diocese would consider and revise the Diocesan dues to be more equal and fair. The Diocesan Council considered our proposal and revised their assessment system, therefore, Mr. Mardigian pointed out that instead of the \$25,000 that was budgeted, the Parish Council cleaned up all that was outstanding with the Diocese and that is why we paid the Diocese \$32,312 in 1975. The figure in the 1976 Budget for the Diocese is \$30,066 and is according to the revised formula. Secondly, we felt that in order to get a qualified administrator to efficiently run the building we had to budget \$20,000 for that position instead of \$10,000.

Mr. Hrant Aginian asked about the \$6,000 budgeted for the rental of the Veterans Building. Mr. Mardigian explained that the rental figure includes the Senior Citizens using the building Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 12 noon to 5:00 P.M., the youth sports activities program which runs Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings from 7:00 P.M. to 11:30 P.M., Project Youth activities, Mr. and Mrs. Society use of the building, and also the Church School. The building is being used five days a week. Mr. Aginian questioned the \$2,000 paid last year versus the \$6,000 budget for this year. Mr. Mardigian explained that the \$2,000 excluded the church providing the Veterans 14 hours of maintenance help a week. The Veterans felt that we were not spending enough time at the Veterans Building, therefore, they felt they would rather take over the maintenance part themselves. Mr. Aginian asked whether they are paying part of the snow removal, parking lot paving, and other grounds maintenance.

Mr. Terzian answered by saying that we are not counting pennies with the Veterans. They provide our youth and our senior citizens a place to go and we are not going to quibble over who gives more than the other. We are the same community and they have expenses to meet such as the wear and tear of their

basketball court, etc. The increase is in man hours that we are saving. We are paying them the difference instead of us paying dollars to hire help.

Mr. Carl Varadian asked about the Diocesan dues. Mr. Mardigian again explained why we paid our Diocesan dues in full. Mr. Varadian stated that the Churches in Wisconsin and Illinois are not paying their Diocesan dues. They are paying less than they are assessed. Secondly, Mr. Varadian felt that we were not getting \$30,000 worth of benefits from the Diocese.

Mr. Harry Zartarian questioned the budgeted figure for 1976. Mr. Zartarian stated that the biggest increase seemed to be in salaries and wages. He questioned the building maintenance wage figure of \$48,490 compared with \$39,316 last year. Mr. Mardigian explained that the \$48,490 included an additional custodial personnel which eliminates the hiring of any additional help for the hall.

Mr. Terzian explained that this year the budget was exceeded by \$50,000 which included two major items, namely, utilities \$6,000 over, secondly, the parking lot cost \$39,000 totaling \$45,000 of the \$50,000. The total savings in 1973 was \$112,000 compared to \$220,000 in 1975, savings have been increased by \$108,000 from 1973.

Mr. Zartarian recommended that the position of administrator be advertised in the Torch Bearer. Mr. Guy Amboian asked if a job description sheet had been prepared for this position. Mr. Mardigian answered that a job description has already been prepared.

Mr. Martin Apkarian stated that if you break down the budget of \$318,000 it comes to \$330 per parishioner, which means that we do not have enough members for our budget. He suggested a membership drive to increase membership.

Mr. Edward Carman suggested that the utilities not be paid until the end of the year and that the \$30,000 be kept in escrow to collect interest.

Mr. Artinian asked whether the \$10,000 budgeted for artifacts would be a budgeted item every year. Mr. Mardigian explained that the Parish Council would budget very year for artifacts because the church should seek artifacts for our own museum.

Mr. Hrant Aginian asked how the Diocese arrived at the figure for our Diocesan dues. Fr. Paren was asked to answer that question since he is on the Diocesan Council. Fr. Paren explained that the deficit of the Diocesan budget is divided in the following manner: 60% of the deficit is applied to all the members of the Eastern Diocese Armenian Church, 5% is applied to the parish priests, 25% to plates, pledges, dues and yughakin, 5% to the number of 4 or more delegates, and the remaining 5% is applied to the sacraments and rites throughout the Diocese.

Mr. Hike Semerjian made a motion, which was seconded, to accept the budget as presented. Motion was voted upon and passed.

Mr. Semerjian voiced his thanks and confidence in the Parish Council for their efforts throughout the last year.

Miss Alice Derderian asked whether a report would be submitted by the Diocesan Delegates. She asked about the question of Unity. Mr. Hoplamazian stated that there is a Unity Committee and that they are working and the question is brought up every year at the Diocesan Assembly.

Mr. Richard Aginian asked whether the Parish Council meetings were open and whether the minutes would be available to the parishioners. Fr. Paren stated that this issue was brought up a few years ago at an annual Assembly and was reported to the Primate at that time, and was ruled out by the Primate and the Diocesan Council.

Mr. Adam Karapetian asked that St. John's being such a large parish, should do something about placing an Armenian Cardinal in the Vatican.

At this time Mr. Art Mardigian asked the parishioners to read the footnote on page 40 of the Annual Booklet which asks the parishioners to use checks whenever possible in making donations to the Church or Church Auxiliary Organizations.

Mr. Cholakian suggested that the proposals that were made in regard to the Unity question at the Diocesan Assembly should be presented to our parish. Mr. Hoplamazian stated that until something concrete is presented to the Diocesan Assembly on this issue it would be a waste of time to go into all the details of this issue.

Mr. Robert Thomasian suggested that we think about what the priorities of this Church are. Money should not be the sole objective, and that the youth should be our priority.

Mr. Harry Mamassian asked whether there were any plans in the future for an ACYOA room. Mr. Terzian stated that it is under consideration and that plans are in the making for expansion of offices, meeting rooms and a room for the ACYOA. The project should get underway in the latter part of 1976.

Mr. Edward Carman felt that anyone becoming 65 years old should be made an honorary member of this church and not have to pay any dues.

Mr. Richard Norsigian, Secretary of the Parish Council, read a letter received on January 9th from the Primate regarding the election of the Diocesan Delegates.

"The election and the number of Diocesan Delegates your parish will be authorized to elect at your Parish Assembly will be governed as follows:

Your previous Annual Report submitted to the Diocesan Office prior to your scheduled election and stating the number of "Church Members," will determine the number of delegates that can be elected at the Parish Assembly.

Example: In the event your parish is scheduled for a Diocesan Delegate Election in 1977, the report submitted in January of 1976 will determine the number of delegates that can be elected as per Article 54 of the Diocesan Bylaws of the Armenian Church of America.

In the future, when official notification is sent from the Diocesan Office stating that an election for Diocesan Delegates is due, the number of the delegates to be elected will also be indicated. This directive should be read at your Annual Parish Assembly."

Mr. Norsigian then stated that with the approval of the Parish Assembly the Parish Council would like to submit the following amendment to the Diocesan Bylaws, Article 14, Section B.

The Nominating Committee shall nominate candidates by majority vote.

The Nominating Committee, together with the Auditing Committee, shall govern the elections of the Parish Council members, Diocesan Delegates and subsequent Nominating and Auditing Committees during the Parish Assembly.

A motion was made to accept the bylaws amendments as presented. The motion was seconded, voted upon and passed.

Mr. Norsigian then presented a proposal to be submitted to the Primate and the Diocesan Council:

Proposed that the Primate and the Diocesan Council use the means available to them to bring about a change in the present practices of the Armenian Church regarding the Church funeral of individuals who commit suicide.

After discussion a motion was made to accept this proposal. Motion was seconded, voted upon and passed.

Mr. Art Artinian made a motion that the members of the nominating committee be increased from 3 to 5. Motion was seconded. After discussion the motion was voted upon and passed. This rule will be applied starting in 1977.

Mr. Richard Baylerian suggested that minutes or some type of written information should be submitted to the parishioners on the Diocesan Assembly. Mr. Baylerian made a motion that in next year's annual report booklet, a condensed report of the Diocesan Assembly be included. Motion seconded. Mr. Terzian asked Mr. Baylerian to please amend his motion to exclude putting this report in the Annual Booklet because of the cost involved, and rather make this report available for any parish member who wants it. Mr. Baylerian agreed to the amendment.

Miss Emma Hovsepian asked that an amendment be made to that motion to include how each delegate voted on issues. Mr. Hoplamazian explained that most of the voting was done by show of hands and not recorded how each individual delegate voted.

Mr. Richard Baylerian's amended motion without Miss Hovsepian's amendment, was voted on and passed. There will be a mimeographed condensed Diocesan Assembly report available to the parishioners for the next Annual Parish Assembly.

Mr. George Keurajian was called in to give the results of the election. Mr. Keurajian stated that a record was set at this Assembly, 369 ballots were cast.

Those elected for Parish Council were: Arthur Barsamian, Martin Cholakian, Armen Hovnanian, Mike Kaysserian, Richard Norsigian and Harry Terzian.

Those elected for nominating committee were: George Gargarian, Kora Jamian, and Martin Manoogian.

Mr. Harry Terzian made a plea to our parishioners to search their hearts and take another look at what they are giving to the church and to fill out a pledge card and try to increase their pledge.

Father Paren thanked the officers of the day, the nominating committee, the outgoing members of the Parish Council, Mr. Souren Aprahamian, Mr. Stephen Boyajian, and Mr. Leo Zamanigian for the excellent service they rendered to the church for the last six years and also to Ron Keoleian the outgoing Auditor.

Hayr Soorp thanked the Parish Council and Church organizations for the fine work they have done for the betterment of the Church.

At this point Fr. Paren felt that a clarification should be made on a particular point that was brought up previously by Miss Emma Hovsepian, who stated that the Diocesan Delegates that go to the Diocesan Assembly should carry out the wishes of the parish. Fr. Paren stated that as of now the parish does not instruct the delegates on how to vote on any issues, and that the Diocesan Delegates meet with the Parish Council and go over the issues which are to be brought up at the Assembly. Fr. Paren felt that if the parishioners would like to instruct the delegates or inform them of their views before going to the Diocesan Assembly, then this would necessitate a parish meeting before the Diocesan Assembly,

After considerable discussion on this point it was advised that the Parish Council should have an open meeting with the parishioners and the Diocesan Delegates prior to the Diocesan Assembly to discuss issues of the Diocesan Assembly.

Fr. Paren stated that our first priority in this parish is our youth. The following are the areas where we try to provide for our youth: Church School, Armenian School, Sports Activities, ACYOA Seniors, ACYo Juniors Project Youth, and Mr. and Mrs. Society. The responsibility of the parents is to encourage the youth to participate in the activities that the Church provides for them, and if we feel that there are other areas in youth activities which the Church must go into, the Parish Council is ready.

Fr. Paren made a plea to the parishioners to attend the Fund Raising Banquet on Sunday, March 21st for the Relief of the Armenians in Lebanon, to help our fellow Armenians there during this trying time.

At 11:30 Fr. Paren Avedikian gave the benediction and the meeting was adjourned.



Miss Shakey Godoshian
Secretary



Fr. Paren Avedikian
Pastor



Mr. Mihran Hoplamazian
Chairman