

PASTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR 1974

I count it another privilege and expression of God's love for me that I am here today to speak to you. God has blessed the work of St. John's in so many ways since we last met. We have been able to worship, heal, teach and work together; for this we are grateful.

My report to you will not detail everything that went on in the last year. Briefly, I will give you what I feel are the most significant things that been happening in our community.

Worship and Sacraments

Divine Liturgy was celebrated and sermons were delivered every Sunday except 3rd Sundays of each month, May 5th because of Diocesan Convention and November 24th Folk Fair.

The church sacraments and rites were performed with love and care, geared to the individual needs of the families involved. The following sacraments are recorded; Baptism 5, Wedding 1, Funeral 3.

We are indebted to Harold Aghjian and Georgie Hadjinian serving the altar faithfully every Sunday. Our heartfelt appreciation to Sam Avakian and Jan Avakian serving the church as choirmaster and organist devoutly, edifying our church service.

Pastoral Care

Pastoral duties included pastoral visits to families at homes for Christmas and Easter blessings, sick calls at hospitals, visitation to newcomers has been carried out with love and concern. From time to time we have also held luncheon visits with businessmen. All requested religious and social needs related with pastoral duties were fulfilled, as well as different types of help extended when needed. In all more than 50 visits were made.

Personal and Spiritual Growth

This year we have seen an increasing interest in Christian Fellowship and study the Word of God among all age groups but especially among younger parents and Golden agers. Golden agers organized by Hairabed Kalagian and Der Hayr met once a week for Bible Fellowship. Also young adults were organized to have mid-week Bible Fellowship in neighborhoods.

In our community Christian education is not something left only for little children. We believe that none of us can grow in our faith unless we are engaged in systematic and on-going learning progress. But many people seem to feel that their need for Christian learning stopped many years ago. We don't know how to interest them or help them see their need.

From October 1, 1974 through November 26, Der Hayr took part annual Counseling Seminar-Basic Pastoral Counseling Skills, held at Cardinal Meyer Pastoral Insituta in Milwaukee. By the virtue of his calling and education he is a friend and counselor in time of need. He can give assistance or aid to your life problems: marital, spiritual, hospitalization, bereavement, premarital guidance, a sense of general unhappiness and meaninglessness.

Unfortunately fear rules our Church. Everyone is afraid of what others think or might think. As a result many people try to pretend they are happy all the time. Facing one's problems and seeking help from your Pastor is a sign of strength. It is as logical as going to a doctor for a physical problem or a checkup. It is your duty to inform when you face problems.

Sunday School

Our Church Sunday School family now number 26 children, 3 teachers. Sunday Church School activities were Christmas Eve service, Communion Breakfast, lenten offerings and Sunday School closing program were carried out.

We feel we have a good Sunday School but are disappointed that only 50-60% of our children attend on any Sunday. We also have a problem getting teachers and the consequently use almost anyone we can get. We appealed for teachers and the response was very discouraging to say the least. I feel that our community is presently at the level of being very immature congregation as far as Christian Education is concerned.

Youth

During the Lenten season, Nurture Group(Bible classes) were organized and conducted by Chuck Hajinian and his team associates. This was entirely youth project and they came with flying colors. More than 50 people took part and indeed it was Christian learning experience.

Periodic Volley-Ball and Basketball games were organized with youth groups in the area. Our youth participated, Invitational Sport week-end held in Toronto and were winner Track and Field award. Also participated Primate's Mid-West basketball and volley-ball trophy tournaments; although our teams lost both comperitions. A spiritual lesson learned; to be a winner, you have to practice.

We feel we have responsive but non-committal youth in our parish. To make these youth projects both spiritually, socially^{and} recreationally viable part of the parish program, adult concern and interest is most needed.

Denominational Leadership

In past year attempts were made to bring closer relationship between sister churches in the area. One modest progress has been made by calling joint Ladies Aid meeting, to coordinate parish activities. February 19th there will be a joint gathering in Racine.

By the consent and arrangement of Parish Council, Pastor visits St. Mesrob Armenian Church in Racine the 3rd Sunday of each month to celebrate Divine Liturgy and also meets the spiritual needs of that parish. Also periodically we have visited St. Joachim and Anne parish, presently located Palos Heights upon invitation to celebrate Badarak.

Again this year I attended Hi Camp committee meetings and were in charge of religious program. Books were prepared for worship service and religious instruction. It was delightful week and had enriching relationship with our youth.

We can think of many noteworthy accomplishments within the congregation and the community that made 1974 much more exciting year. The Exhibition of Armenian Manuscripts and Mr. Saroyan's visit to Milwaukee and our parish, as one cultural activity must be mentioned. Through these and many other likewise cultural activities our church has proven to be community minded, progressive and enlightened congregation in the community.

Other noteworthy projects, publication of Milwaukee Armenian Directory; a pamphlet "A Prayer by Nerses Shnorali" used during Lenten services, Continuation of Erevan Dancers led by Lynn Kaishian etc.

As the world plunges in uncontrollable recession, we will become more and more aware our dependence on God. In this wholly mismanaged and misguided society, the church has ever important mission, once for all to set her house into order.

We have to shift our emphasis from trying to cover everything on the waterfront, to being more selective as what a true church suppose to do: Herein will lie our future effectiveness I believe.

Our continued hope is that as the body of Christ, the church must be, Creator of a new life style - new heart, spirit, nature and set of values. The church exists not only when Christians gather for worship or work, but when they scatter to their homes and daily tasks. Through the individual church member, Christ is in the classroom, office or kitchen. It is through Christ-filled congregation that the church becomes relevant in all areas of society.

As we seek to involve youth we must have more action and less talk. We present living models of what serving Christ is all about. Now is the time. Our actions must be direct, our goals must be clear, our directions must be understandable if we want to support of youth today.

The true church of Christ will pave the way, that we might have live and have it more abundantly! May God bless you and yours.

Rev. [Signature]