

P A R I S H C O U N C I L

Annual report - 1981

February 7, 1982

Under the presidency of our Pastor, Rev. Fr. Karekin Kasparian, and the Chairmanship of Ara Shimshidian, the Parish Council met regularly either monthly or twice monthly and held special meetings when circumstances required.

The Parish Council members for 1981 were:

Chairman	- Ara Shimshidian
Vice Chairman	- Jack Hachigian
Rec. Sec'y	- Edward Essayan
Ass't Rec. Sec'y	- Richard Sarkisian
Corre. Sec'y	- Paul Bashian
Treasurer	- Garo Bashian
Ass't Treas.	- Hagop Cetinkaya
Advisors	- Vincent Gurahian
	Gregory Chamourian
	Bernard Tepikian
	John Wolohojian

Building Committee - This committee continues to work in a consultative capacity in such projects as renovation of the kitchen in the Parish House, repair and maintenance of the Sanctuary and others.

Celebration Banquet - A highly successful celebration banquet was held at Westchester Country Club on December 6, 1981 under the Chairmanship of John Wolohojian. The distinguished speaker was Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan. Our guest artist was Rouzan Barkhoutarian, soprano. Our Pastor made an illustrated presentation of the life of the parish since its inception with the aid of slides.

House and Grounds Management Committee - Under the very active Chairmanship of Gregory Chamourian this committee has met regularly to plan, and with Parish Council approval, execute numerous projects. There are during the course of the year myriad decisions and actions which need to be taken. Some of these may be planned and discussed in advance such as kitchen renovation, pool activation, painting, rental of Church facilities, etc. Unexpected problems, such as failure of well pump, during particularly inclement weather need to be corrected on an emergency basis. Thanks to the devotion and care of Jerry Ksayan, Mike Pisani, and Gino Urbinelli, a very serious problem was solved in very short order recently.

Stained Glass Committee - Under the Chairmanship of Harry Ekizian the Memorials Committee has met numerous times during the year to consider designs of various artists and decide on the most appropriate stained glass window treatment for the sanctuary. A recommendation was made to the Parish Council that Mr. Willie Tourey be awarded the commission. The council established the cost of each window and approved purchase provided that donors are found in advance.

Caretaker - Due to personal reasons Mr. Melchan, our caretaker, left in early fall. After numerous interviews of prospective replacements we were fortunate in obtaining the services of Greg Gallagher, who has proved himself to be a dependable and conscientious person.

All Executive Committee Meeting - The Parish Council invited executive members of various Church organizations to meet with the Council on March 25 and October 20, 1981 to discuss matters of common concern. The thrust of all deliberations was how best to integrate all activities to meet our overall goals.

Raleigh Weekend - June 12 through June 14, 1981 was the fourth annual "Let's Get Away" weekend, once again under the co-chairmanship of Mary Azarian and Grace Cassidy at the Raleigh Hotel in the Catskills. Booking a date becomes increasingly difficult for this affair. Even though June is a month of numerous conflicts, thanks to the efforts of Mary and Grace, the Church benefited financially.

White Plains Festival - Although conflicts at first made it appear that this year we would be unable to participate, thanks to a super effort by Ara Shimshidian, Ana Bas, Ohan and Eliz Bas we did participate in this festival and earn a good profit.

First Annual Ethnic Festival - Under the Chairmanship of Ara Ishkanian our Church had both an ethnic display and a food booth on May 3, 1981 at Westchester Community College and earned a good profit for the Church.

Appreciation Outing - On July 25, 1981 under the sponsorship of the Parish Council and with the Chairmanship of Ara and Alice Shimshidian, an appreciation picnic took place to thank all members of the Choir, Sunday and Armenian Schools and their immediate families for their work in behalf of the Church.

Annual Church Picnic - Under the sponsorship of the Men's Club of St. James Church and Al Darien its Chairman our annual picnic took place on August 23, 1981. Attended by over 500 people, with ideal weather prevailing, this was financially one of our best picnics.

Spring Oriental Rug Sale - Under the Chairmanship of Garo Bashian and through the co-operation of Bashian Brothers, a one day sale of Oriental rugs was held within the Church structure, converted for the day to accommodate the sale. Aside from being a huge financial success this effort fostered identification of and good will toward us in the non-Armenian community in the area.

Bazaar - It was decided to hold our annual bazaar in our own rather than rented facilities this year. This decision necessitated a revised emphasis on what constitutes a bazaar. An oriental rug sale, once again under Garo Bashian's direction was held in conjunction with the bazaar. The overall effort was highly successful.

One World Festival - Our Church and separately, the A.C.Y.O.A., once again participated in the One World Festival at St. Vartan Cathedral Complex on September 9 and 10, 1981. Although the effort involved is disproportionately high when compared to the financial gain, it is felt that this is an important way for us to cooperate with the Diocese and our sister churches in building a proper image of Armenians.

New Year's Eve Party - On December 31, 1981 a party under the auspices of the Men's Club was held in the Parish House. All who attended had a fine time.

Pledge - Once again the annual pledge has fallen short of the budgeted goal. Many, including Chairman Ed Essayan, believe there exist misconceptions in the minds of many parishioners which may be responsible for this shortfall. These erroneous assumptions along with the true facts are given below:

1. "A dollar or two in the collection plate covers the church's expenses."
This is totally unrealistic and simply wishful thinking. A quick penciled calculation will dispel this notion.

2. "The Church has plenty of money. Look at the financial statement, all that money in the bank."
Most of such monies is earmarked for the Building Fund and may not be used for operating expenses.

3. "This inflation hurts. I've got to trim expenses."
The Church also feels the ravages of inflation.

a 4. "The Church did pretty well last year therefore there is no need to either increase my individual pledge or to begin pledging if I've never done so."
Nothing could be further from the truth. We are in a very precarious state when approximately 50% of the budget is being met by rug sales. What happens if orientals fall out of favor with the public or for some other reason we are unable to run rug sales?

5. "There are wealthy people in the parish who can afford it more than I, let them pull up the slack."
No church runs successfully for long where the dependence is on a few individuals. Support for the church must come from all persons, each prompted by his conscience, must give according to his ability. Such persons, the grass roots, are the ones who nurture and sustain the organization. Each individual must accept his role as an integral part of that broad bedrock of support which the church must have if it is to succeed and grow.

Conclusion - The Parish Council appreciates and commends all the church organizations, the chairmen and members of various committees and all contributors for their continuous support and involvement in the progress of our Parish.

Recognized for special service are Elma Davidian and Aida Pisani.

The Council wishes to express its joy at having had the opportunity to render service in behalf of St. James Church.

Respectfully submitted

Ara Shimshidian, Chairman

Edward Essayan, Rec. Secty.