

ST. JAMES ARMENIAN CHURCH OF WESTCHESTER

PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1988

The 1988 Parish Council was composed of the following members:

Officers:

Rev. Fr. Karekin Kasparian, President,
Lionel S. Galstaun, Chairperson,
Albert T. Darien, Vicechairperson,
Richard Varadian, Recording Secretary,
Alice Shimshidian, Corresponding Secretary,
Avadis Sakalian, Treasurer,
Mark Derderian, Assistant Treasurer.

Councilors : Ohan Bas, Greg Chamourian, Ed Essayan, Toros Mangassarian, Dan Mushegian.

Meetings were scheduled and held regularly on the third Tuesday evening of the month, with the single exception of the December 1988 meeting, which was held on the second Tuesday. A Special Meeting was held on January 31, 1989 to formulate the proposed Budget for 1989. A quorum was present at all the meetings.

In overview, 1988 was a year of reconsiderations. As was indicated at the Parish Assembly held on February 7, 1988, we were expecting difficulties in accomplishing our objective of securing approval by the Planning Board of the Town of Harrison, to proceed with our plans to build a new church edifice and a cultural center. Prior to the date scheduled for presentation of our plans to the Planning Board, we invited our neighbors and the PEPA (Purchase Environmental Protective Ass'n.) representative to a briefing session where, in the presence of our attorneys and architect, we explained our plans. The reaction was very negative, and it was clear that opposition to our plans would be heavy, and that time consuming and expensive litigation should be expected. At its April 19 meeting, the Parish Council voted to minimize spending money in making presentations to the Board, and to initiate a search for another site. The Building Committee, who will be reporting separately, undertook the task of a search for alternate locations. Suffice it to say that good progress is being made and that if we are successful in reaching acceptable terms, we are completely convinced that we will have a Church and Cultural Center that will be a source of pride to the entire community.

And now, it is our pleasant duty to call your attention to the devoted efforts of many members of our parish. Without their support, we would not

be able to operate. First, we want to highlight Elma Davidian and her continued maintenance of our financial records, even though she asked to be relieved three years ago. Elma, we thought that relief was coming to the rescue, but things got changed! Also, let us call attention to Gale Perzigian who has done a full-time secretary's work on part time, and has consistently declined remuneration. These two women have been a pillar of strength in the operation of the church office.

As in past years, Garo Bashian with the help of Ed Essayan conducted the two annual rug sales, both of which continue to be major sources of funding for the operating expenses of the church. The Bazaar added its good share. The Church owes its continued operation to you, Garo and Ed.

A very successful picnic was held. Even the weather cooperated by giving us a beautiful day. Credit must go to the team that organized the affair, particularly to Al and Rose Darien who not only did an outstanding job, but prepared Carlen Chookhachian to take over the job next year. As usual, Judge Gurahian and Jim Cassidy faced the hot stove all day, but the results were all we could ask. Credit must also go to the many members who stood by to serve food, sell tickets, supervise parking. A rousing thank you to all who helped.

Fundraising activities for the new church and community center were not pressed during 1988. However, the investment instruments of the funds have been changed from CD's and Money Market deposits, partially to high yield Treasury Notes. This change will be covered more completely in the Fundraising Committee's report. We also wish to call attention to the Dinner-dance organized by the committee. It was planned as a social gathering for the members of the Parish and their friends, with no fundraising. It was a most pleasant affair, and succeeded in just breaking even, which was just what was intended.

As most of you are aware, we had a fiercely hot series of Sundays during the last summer. The Parish Council approved the installation of air conditioning units in the Sanctuary. Thanks to George Davidian and his many and devoted helpers, two large wall units have been installed, and will be ready to temper the heat this summer. George also undertook the job of improving the heating system in the Parish House; the up-graded system has worked very well this winter, and will save future repair expenses. The entire Parish is indebted to George and his associates for their devoted technical support. I am sure that all of you have noticed the resetting of the flagstones in the entry walk. This splendid job was undertaken, executed and largely sponsored by Mr. Harry Hartunian, to whom special appreciation is due. Al

Darien corrected a potential hazard by arranging for the cutting of a number of dead trees at the entrances and in the playing fields. Our thanks to all who provided help in the maintenance of the property.

The Womens' Guild, under the capable leadership of Lygia Petrossian has conducted its share of social events, providing delicious meals for various church functions, prepared by the members. A new program of supporting programs of the Cultural Committee has added a new dimension to these activities. Our thanks go out to them.

George Omartian, Chairman of the Cultural Committee will report separately on the activities of this group of devoted friends of the arts. This, as in the past, has been an active year and we express our gratitude to all of the members.

We do want to call special attention and extend our thanks to the Church Choir, led by Raffi Sevadjan, the Director, and Noem Poulatian, Chairperson. Sunday after Sunday, rain or shine, they attend and perform with devotion, their vital part in the Badarak. It is too easy to overlook their faithful services to the Church.

Both the Senior and Junior ACYOA have had an active year. It is most reassuring to see our young people taking over and managing their projects which included a successful raffle as well as other social activities.

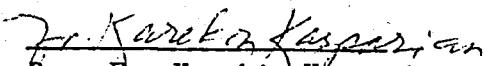
Last, and certainly not least, I want to signalize the work of the Principals and Teachers of the Armenian and Sunday Schools. Though attendance has been low at times, they have persisted in their efforts. Our deep thanks go out to Lillian Boyajian, Anahid Chookhachian and Yeretkin Dawn Kasparian. At the same time, we would like to repeat a request to parents to bring their children to Armenian School on Fridays, and to Sunday School on Sundays. Please remember that for your children to benefit from the programs that the church provides, your participation in bringing them to the church is essential.

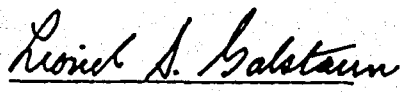
We want to take a few moments to comment on the budget. At the risk of repeating concerns that have been expressed time and time again, we have to say that while our present budget shows a slight increase over 1988, it would be totally inadequate when we have our new buildings. It is inadequate even now because it severely limits the kind and extent of activities that would benefit the Church, now and in the future. It does not cover the cost of a full-time secretary or a part time bookkeeper both of which are needed. We would like to budget more money for these positions in order to attract personnel, but we do not see where the money would come from.

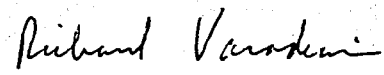
Our major present sources of income are stewardship pledges, the bazaar and rug sales, followed by membership dues and Sunday plate collections. These five sources account for a little more than 70 percent of the budget. Bazaar and rug sale returns have been declining, but hopefully, may revive when and if we move to our new site. We do not think that any further increase in membership dues at this time is advisable or desirable. However, an increase in membership would be all to the good, and should increase Sunday plate collections. By all means, we should try to attract families in the Westchester Armenian community to join us. We have an attractive group of members, and we should make use of this to attract others. With respect to stewardship, it is due to the singleminded devotion of John Boyajian and his Committee, that we have as many stewards as we do, and that they fulfill their pledges. But we need more, and we need larger pledges. We hope that each and every one of you will consider this problem and give it your best shot! To indicate how importantly we regard stewardship, we have asked Avadis Sakalian to co-chair the Stewardship Committee with John, and to give him all possible support in the hope that the combined services of these two stalwart supporters of our church will result in a big increase in the number of stewards.

There is one further source that we have not considered sufficiently, and that is the Endowment. Based on ACEF records, St. James Church has the second largest endowment in the entire diocese, but it is still not adequate if we consider the size of our community and its affluence. We urge all of you to consider making yearly contributions to ACEF, and to provide bequests in your wills. There is no single device that will more certainly assure the continued existence of our St. James Church for as long as a Diocese exists in the U. S.

In conclusion, the Parish Council asks for your continued support, and, to the maximum extent consistent with your other critical needs, a step-up in the level of your committment to St. James Church. The committment may be financial or it may be in contribution of time. Both are needed and both will be deeply and equally appreciated. Thank you.


Rev. Fr. Karekin Kasparian
President, Parish Council


Lionel S. Galstaun
Chairman, Parish Council


Richard Varadian
Recording Secretary