

ST. JAMES ARMENIAN CHURCH OF WESTCHESTER REPORT OF 1996
PARISH COUNCIL

The 1996 Parish Council was composed of the following members:

Officers:

Rev. Fr. Karekin Kasparian, President
Ara H. Ishkanian, Chairperson
Michael Guroian, Vice Chairperson
Lionel Galstaun, Treasurer
Laura Shimshidian, Recording Secretary
Michael Pisani, Corresponding Secretary

Councilors:

Kevork Adourian, Louise Garofalo, Paul Keyishian, Lisa Kouzoujian, Van Krikorian, Richard Papalian.

IN APPRECIATION

Regular meetings of the Parish Council were held on the third Tuesday of each month. Special meetings were called as needed. It has been my distinct privilege to serve as the chair of this Parish Council whose hard work, devotion, and toleration of meetings lasting past eleven p.m. are second to none.

The Parish Council acknowledges, and is grateful for, the crucially important roles played by this church's organizations and membership in meeting the needs of our parishioners and, therefore, our church. Throughout the year successful programs were offered providing members of our church community with opportunities for spiritual growth, cultural knowledge, applicable skills, and socializing.

St. James is fortunate to have as its spiritual leader someone who is as committed, resourceful, and hardworking as Der Karekin Kasparian. Der Hayr has been with us since the inception of our parish, offering encouragement, vision, and inspiration.

THE CHALLENGE

St. James is rippling with change. This is a very exciting time to be an active part of our church. Those who wait by the sidelines, who want to see what will happen and when, will lose out on being a part of that change. They will settle for standing by and observing rather than stepping in and helping to direct that change. Such people are reactive rather than pro-active. We need more pro-active members in St. James.

PARISH COUNCIL GOALS

There were three major goals the Parish Council focused on as the year progressed. First, the Parish Council strove to keep our parish together as we passed through a period of wrenching challenges and change. Our Lincoln Lane property has been sold. We must move by mid-April.

Our second focus was on building our new church. The building project cannot be delayed any longer. This project must move quickly to completion. Disputes over building materials, cash flow problems, the resignation of key people including project directors and the architect, have led to the reorganization of the Building Committee and recent construction progress. Hayik and Vartouhi Tutak's very generous million dollar gift along with the cash proceeds from the sale of our Lincoln Lane property have provided the impetus to move forward again.

Our third focus is on moving out of our present quarters and into both the 1131 North Street property as well as the St. Nerses Seminary where we will hold Sunday services during an interim period. The move must be successful. Extensive planning under the leadership of Michael Guroian and Michael Pisani has been taking place to insure the transition occurs as smoothly as possible.

FINANCIAL REVIEW AND STEWARDSHIP

In 1996 we did not balance our budget. We fell short by nearly twenty thousand dollars. The proposed budget for 1997 is not balanced. It has a deficit. How can we balance the budget and remove the deficit? After hours of careful analysis the Parish Council has concluded that the one place where we can and must improve is in stewardship. We cannot spend day after day, week after week, year after year exhausting ourselves with endless fundraising. We cannot constantly go to the same people to hold sales, dinners, raffles and other fundraisers. We cannot afford to burn out our most committed people. Church must be more than fundraising.

When the Parish Council examined stewardship, it saw some things we would like to share with you at the conclusion of this report.

On behalf of the entire Parish Council, I thank you for giving us an opportunity to serve you.

Fr. Karekin Kasparian (AF)
Rev. Fr. Karekin Kasparian, President

Ara H. Ishkanian
Ara H. Ishkanian, Chairperson

Laura Shimshidian (AF)
Laura Shimshidian, Recording Secretary