

PARISH COUNCIL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1967

We are happy to report that 1967 was a most successful and productive year for the St. Thomas Armenian Church. Our enviable record can be attributed to the effective employment of the members of the Parish Council and the cooperation of our enthusiastic parishioners working as a team for the good of our church.

The outstanding feature of the 1967 Parish Council is its record of thorough organization. Each Parish Council member was given an area of responsibility comparable to his civilian and educational background. Like any profitable business organization, we put the "right man in the right place." The results were most rewarding. We are pleased to inform you of the individuals of the Parish Council who served the St. Thomas Armenian Church for 1967:

Victor Arzoomanian	-	Chairman
Peter Daghlian	-	Vice-Chairman
Arthur Otchy	-	Secretary
George Gavejian	-	Corr. Secretary
Antranig Ouzoonian	-	Treasurer
John Asadourian	-	Asst. Treasurer
Zaven Halejian		
Raymond Kreppel		
Ohon Melikian		
Apkar Omartian		
John Seferian		

The committees designated were as follows:

Building and grounds,		
Maintenance & Rental		Ray Kreppel & John Melikian
Co-ordinator of Church Activities		Arthur Otchy
Membership and Weekly Pledges		Zaven Halejian
Worship and Religious Activities		John Seferian
Mas	Alice Basmajian	
Flowers	Becky Avakian	
Public Relations and Hospitality		John Asadourian
Legal and Constitutional By-Laws		Peter Daghlian
Choir Committee		George Gavejian
Ways and Means & Long Range Planning		Edward Bashian
Memorials		Stephen Ananian
Liason Officers:	Memorials	Apkar Omartian
	Women's Guild	Arthur Otchy
	ACYOA	John Melikian
	Choir	George Gavejian
	Men's Club	John Seferian
	Sunday School	Apkar Omartian
	Armenian School	Antranig Ouzoonian

We are most appreciative to the above members of the 1967 Parish Council. They took their responsibilities seriously and fulfilled their obligation to the utmost.

Parish Council meetings were held the second and fourth Mondays of every month. At these meetings every phase of our church activities were discussed. Chairman of Committees submitted written

Parish Council Report for 1967 (cont'd.)

and/or oral reports, ideas were discussed and recommendations were made for the further improvement of our church. The treasurer, Mr. Antranig Ouzoonian, gave the Parish Council a written treasurer's report each meeting. With this information we were better able to transact actions to meet our obligations. A special note, we were able to reduce our mortgage by \$14,000.

The Church Budget for 1967 is printed on page . The figures speak for themselves. We not only met our budget, but exceeded it. We can all take pride in this extraordinary achievement. We are grateful to all who made this possible. We look forward to 1968 with confidence. With the continued generous cooperation of all our parishioners there is no doubt that we will again exceed our budget.

It is most gratifying to note the feeling of warmth and good-will among our parishioners this past year. The favorable results of our activities can be attributed in large part to this happy and relaxed atmosphere. If there was one accomplishment that we are proud of, this is it.

Since the Parish Council is the responsible body for all church activities, it is our duty to report to you all the phases of our church life. It will include the Pastor's report, the report of the standing committees of the Parish Council and the reports of the church organizations:

The Pastor's Report

a) Worship Services have been conducted every Sunday from 10:30 a.m. to 12 noon, with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and a sermon. During the year we had two guest celebrants, Bishop Torkom Manoogian, on the occasion of our second anniversary of the consecration of the church; and Rev. Mampre Kouzouian of Irvington, N.J. for an exchange of clergy and altar servers. Rev. Arnak Kasparian celebrated Badarak at the Home in Emerson twice, first on Armenian Christmas Day and second on Holy Thursday.

b) Sacramental Services During the year 16 baptisms were performed; 7 marriages were blessed; and 9 funerals took place.

c) Service in our local community We are happy to learn from our Diocesan Headquarters about some comments of the National Council of Churches, stating that among the Armenian churches, St. Thomas stands out at the one which takes an active part in local church projects like Church Women United, joint services with Tenafly churches during the Holy Week as well as Christian Unity Week; Participating in "Living Room Dialogue," a National Council of Churches and Roman Catholic Project. During our social affairs (bazaar, picnics, etc.) we have many local people attending. Fr. Arnak is on a regular schedule to open the City Council meeting with prayer (four times a year). He is a member of the Clergymen's Fellowship of this area. This year he was elected president, with Father Thomas Walsh of Mt. Carmel Roman Catholic Church as secretary.

On many occasions Der Hayr has led various groups on tours of the church telling them about the Armenian Church in general and St. Thomas in particular.

Parish Council Report for 1967 (cont'd.)

REPORTS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES

A. MEMBERSHIP The Membership Committee has indicated that 28 new families and a total of 54 individuals became members of our church during 1967. This was noteworthy for no all out membership program was initiated. At the beginning of 1967 we had 182 families, represented by 343 members. During 1967 we lost 4 families, or 8 members (because of death - 3 members; moved away - 4 members; reasons unknown - 1 member). Total membership as of December 31, 1967 is 206 families, or 389 members. 1968 will be a significant year for new members. We shall devote more time and energies toward this most important facet of our church program.

The pastor and Parish Council extend their sympathies to the families of the following members who died during this past year: Mrs. Gulenia Markarian; Mrs. Charles Avakian-Stoneson; Mrs. Alice Kazanjian; and Mrs. Lillian Poosikian.

B. COORDINATOR OF CHURCH ACTIVITIES This new committee was formed to keep the church calendar of events. All church organizations were informed to contact Mr. Arthur Otchy before they set a date for a planned program or activity. This has been most successful and has avoided conflicts of dates between church organizations and Diocesan functions. Our 1968 calendar of events has already been planned and posted on our church calendar.

C. MEMORIALS The Memorial Committee, under the capable chairmanship of Steve Ananian, has made considerable progress in its difficult task of providing proper stained glass windows for our church. After months of discussion, reviewing plans, drawings, colorings, a final decision has been made and contracts have been signed. The first stained glass window is expected to be mounted in March 1968. Other contributions by the Memorials Committee were the two side altar pictures that are framed and installed and the eternal lamps which should be installed in the very near future. The Memorial Committee has many memorial items that are still available. A list will be disseminated in the near future itemizing them.

D. BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS This past year we were fortunate in having both Ray Kreppel and John Melikian chair the Building and Grounds Committee. Considerable work was done either personally by these two, or under their supervision in filling in large areas around the church, supplying topsoil, seeding the grass, cutting down dead trees which developed into a hazard, planting extensive shrubbery, etc.

In order to maintain our facilities it was necessary to stain and varnish all the woodwork in our building.

In order to obtain the maximum potential of our heating unit, all adjustments, automatic vents, valves, return flows, etc. must be finely tuned. The cost of heating our Hall and Church is considerable. Therefore, it was found to be more economical to enter into a service contract and have experts extract the most economical performance from our heating unit, than to attempt to make adjustments by members of the Parish Council.

Parish Council Report for 1967 (cont'd.)

Our caretaker, Bill Montero, has continued to do a good job in keeping the church, hall and kitchen neat and tidy.

This year a Public Address System was installed in the Hall, a gift of the ACYOA.

E. RENTAL OF CHURCH PROPERTY For the first time since the church has been built rental fees have been fixed for the use of the church facilities. It was no easy task to formulate the price for rental for members of the church, non-members, outside organizations, etc. We took into consideration the cost of heating during the winter months, the cost of breakage, and other factors so that our church would not take a loss during rentals. Although the cost may seem high, we feel we have a fair package for those who wish to rent our facilities. We have cooperated with those who have made requests and have realized a small income for our church.

PARISH COUNCIL SOCIAL FUNCTIONS In addition to serving on the Parish Council and serving with other church organizations, the members of the Parish Council were responsible for three very successful events this past year.

- 1) The Second Anniversary Dinner on April 9, 1967, at which Bishop Torkom Manogian, the Primate, was the principal speaker, attended by 273 people.
- 2) The Blessing of the Grapes luncheon in August 1967.
- 3) The Bazaar, under the leadership of Edward Bashian and Mrs. Alice Goulazian, in December, from which our church netted over \$17,000.

Our thanks to Andy Ouzoonian who served a dinner for over 75 members of the Bazaar Committee the week following the Bazaar.

CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS

A. CHOIR Mr. Edward Daghlian accepted the post of Choir Director in October. He has steadily improved the quality of the voices and made the Sunday services even more beautiful.

B. ARMENIAN LANGUAGE SCHOOL An extensive program has been recommended and approved for our Armenian School. The curriculum for the coming year was presented to the Parish Council by Hagop Kasparian who has been designated as Advisor to the Armenian School. The Parish Council not only agreed to it but was elated that it was so well planned. The Armenian School, under the able leadership of Mrs. Queenie Tashjian, continues to teach our children the written and spoken language and some of the heritage of our forefathers. We cannot express our appreciation enough to the teachers and administrators for their contribution in this very important assignment.

The Armenian School Report is attached as Appendix A .

Parish Council Report for 1967 (cont'd.)

C. SUNDAY SCHOOL Our Sunday School continues to prosper and grow each year. Yeretzgin Violet Kasparian has accomplished another remarkable job in planning and executing the many facets of the Sunday School program. The teachers and administrative personnel have done their assigned jobs in a commendable way for the benefit of our children. We ask that you make every effort to have your children attend all Sunday School classes.

The Sunday School Report is attached as Appendix B .

D. WOMEN'S GUILD When the Parish Council was first organized this year the Women's Guild did not have a chairman to guide its activities. Instead, the chairman of the Parish Council assigned Peter Daghljan to chair the meetings until we were able to organize the Women's Guild. We were most fortunate in having its present chairman, Mrs. Dorothy Otchy, volunteer her services to this most important post of our church. This talented lady then sold other capable and willing women into lending a hand as members of the Executive Board of the Women's Guild. The successes of the Guild speak for themselves. You can read it for yourself in Appendix C , the Report of the Women's Guild.

The Parish Council and members of our church thank Dorothy Otchy, her executive board, and the members of the Women's Guild for their many contributions to our church this past year.

E. MEN'S CLUB This has been a busy year for the Men's Club under the vigorous leadership of Richard Papazian. This tightly knit group of men have worked long and hard in the many affairs they have sponsored. In addition, they have contributed to other activities and functions that were the responsibility of other church organizations.

They have sponsored a basketball team for the first time in our church. Under the tutelage of Jack Tatarian, Charles Dadaian and Richard Kabobjian, 14 young boys of our church are learning the fundamentals of a team sport. They have done remarkably well in the short time they have been organized.

Another activity of the Men's Club is the newly formed Dance Group that is making steady progress and will will perform for our parishioners. We thank Dr. Garo Armodian and his brother, Ohannes, for their patience and devotion in passing on their experience and knowledge in this most enjoyable endeavor to our interested members.

The members of the Men's Club completed an extremely busy and highly successful year and have benefited our church both financially and socially. We are most grateful to these wonderful people.

Mr. Arman Ajamian can take another bow for the very successful Cadillac Raffle which realized the Men's Club over \$5,000. We are most grateful to Arman. The report of the Men's Club is attached as Appendix D .

Parish Council Report for 1967 (cont'd.)

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE Our church is continuing to increase its membership. We are certain this trend will continue for many years and our church shall enjoy a very large congregation. When it does happen, are we ready for it? What more have we to offer? Will we have the resources? Will we have the facilities?

These and many more questions must be answered when the time does arrive. We have individuals in our parish with imagination, vision and courage to be part of a Committee to work for the future. We feel we have established a firm foundation on which to build for the future.

RECOGNITION We are most grateful to the large number of our parishioners who worked so hard and diligently to bring us to this position of security and confidence. We shall not thank them by name in this report for we might miss a name or two. We have written personal letters to some and given recognition at dinners to others. However, there are many who stay in the background and work as hard but do not receive just acknowledgment. We thank them with all our hearts. We also thank the Deacons, and the members of the Choir, and our organist, Miss Susan Shamamian. We thank Der Arnak and Yeretzgin Violet for their untiring work throughout the year in our behalf.

Our report for 1967 is factual. If you feel we reported a "rosy" picture, it is because that is just what it is. We know we have areas where we must improve. We shall strive in 1968 to correct these areas or eliminate them where necessary. Time is with us and we have the required ingredients like willingness, courage, and faith to enhance the future of our church.

We conclude this report leaving with you one thought. We rejoice in all our accomplishments, but of all these accomplishments the most important one is the building up of our character, building up a home where the Christian values are the standards, the realization that God is the Lord who has entrusted us with everything we have and no matter what we do in life, it must be pleasing to His sight, and it must be considered an opportunity to praise Him in serving the needs of His people.

May the blessing of God Almighty rest upon us and upon all our work and worship done in His name. May He give us light to guide us, courage to support us, and love to unite us, now and forever more. Amen.

Respectfully submitted,

FOR THE PARISH COUNCIL,

Rev. Arnak Kasparian, President
Victor V. Arzoomanian, Chairman
Arthur Otchy, Secretary