

THE ST. THOMAS ARMENIAN CHURCH PARISH COUNCIL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR 1969

We have completed another year in which St. Thomas Armenian Church has met its obligations both spiritually and financially. It was a year of hard work, many small successes, and a feeling of pride of accomplishment by the Parish Council, the members of the Church organizations, and our parishioners.

The Parish Council was organized immediately after the Parish Assembly so that there would be continuity and no time lost in managing the affairs of our Church. The Parish Council had meetings the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month. At these meetings which lasted three or four hours, all the business of our Church was discussed and required action taken.

The Parish Council has supported each of our Church organizations through Liaison Officers who were appointed so that there would be no conflicts or misunderstandings between the Council and the Church organizations. This procedure worked out to the benefit of all concerned. It will be continued.

The following members of the Parish Council devoted their time and their efforts during 1969 so that the St. Thomas Armenian Church would be in a better position to benefit you and your family:

Chairman	-	Victor Arzoomanian
Vice-Chairman	-	Arthur Otchy
Rec. Secretary	-	Vincent Shamamian
Treasurer	-	Antranig Ouzoonian
Asst. Treasurer	-	Andrew Sahagian
		Michael Avakian
		Jack Hajinlian
		Ray Kreppel
		Zaven Poosikian
		George Shahinian
		Paul Varjan (on the resignation of Dick Melikian)

Members of the Parish Council were given certain areas of responsibility that were commensurate with their civilian and educational backgrounds. They were as indicated below:

Building and grounds	Ray Kreppel
Co-ordinator of Church Activities	Arthur Otchy
Membership and Pledges	Andrew Sahagian
Worship & Religious Activities	Jack Hajinlian
Ways & Means & Long Range Planning	Edward Bashian
Memorials	Vahan Najarian
Architectural	Vincent Shamamian

Liaison Officers:	Memorials	Antranig Ouzoonian
	Women's Guild	Arthur Otchy
	A. C. Y. O. A.	George Shahinian
	Choir	Andrew Sahagian
	Sunday School	Michael Avakian
	Men's Club	Zaven Poosikian
	Armenian School	Jack Hajinlian

Parish Council Report for 1969 (cont'd.)

We have always felt that no one person or no one organization could take the responsibility of operating the activities of this Church. It takes many individuals and all the Church organizations together to obtain success. We are proud of the many individuals and our Church organizations who have given their best for St. Thomas.

Set forth below is what we have achieved this past year and what we have planned for 1970. You will agree with us that these outstanding results were through a team effort of many of our devoted and dedicated parishioners.

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 as guest celebrants: Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, on the occasion of our fourth anniversary of the consecration of the church; in November, Fr. Carnig Hallajian for an exchange of clergy and choir. Father Arnak Kasparian celebrated Badarak at the Home in Emerson twice, on Armenian Christmas Day and on Maundy Thursday of Holy Week. He also had the Grape Blessing services at the Home.

b) Sacramental Services. During the year 29 baptisms were performed of which 4 were confirmations (compared to 24 last year); 14 marriages were blessed (13 the previous year); 5 funerals took place (7 last year).

c) Administrative. As ex-officio president of all Church organizations, Rev. Arnak Kasparian attended and presided over all the meetings. He directed and advised and, in many cases, he helped in implementing decisions. He attended the Diocesan Assembly in Watertown, Mass. with our delegates: Edward Bashian, Vahan Najarian, Nazar Nazarian, and Richard Turnamian. At the meeting, Edward Bashian was elected a member of the Diocesan Council for a term of 4 years.

d) Teaching. Rev. Arnak Kasparian has continued a fellowship of learning and discussion. Group meetings were held at the home of Mrs. Valerie Simonian once a week, from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. It consists of Bible study and discussion of the Faith of the Armenian Church.

e) Publications. With the help of Yeretzgin Violet, he publishes the Bergen Beacon monthly and puts out the flyers for our various affairs. Mrs. Martha Saraydarian and Mrs. Mary Ann Saraydarian have been most helpful in assisting with typing, addressing, and various other office work whenever called upon. Our heartfelt thanks for their cheerful assistance., Our mailing list has grown to 880 names.

f) Services in our local community. St. Thomas is truly a part of the Tenafly community in spite of the fact that its membership is drawn from a much wider area. Our church was host to the Tenafly World Day of Prayer of the United Church Women; and we were also host for Church Unity Sunday when over 850 persons visited our church, toured it and were told of its origin, history, sacraments, etc. by a most learned group of young men and women of our parish. We are most fortunate to have able and willing parishioners we can call upon. We had joint services with Tenafly churches

Parish Council Report for 1969 (cont'd.)

during the Holy Week; we participate 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 and president of the Tenafly Clergymen's Fellowship. In this capacity he spoke on behalf of all the Tenafly churches at the opening banquet of the Greek Church of Tenafly. He conducts special services at the local Mary Fisher Home for retired professional women.

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

The Pastor wishes to bring to your attention that an examination of this annual report reveals the obvious fact that each of the branches of our church organizations has been rather successful.

During the past year, to say the least, all church activities have been operated and run in a most harmonious manner with a minimum of the friction usually present as a natural part of the operations of a church.

This has been largely due to the type of leadership we have had. All the members and officers of the Parish Council have contributed to making this a successful year.

However, a very special tribute must be paid to the dynamic, intelligent, forceful and untiring efforts of our chairman, Col. Victor Arzoomanian who has shown tact, diplomacy, unsurpassed wit and humor and an understanding of the problems that confronted us during the past twelve months. Without his faithful and guiding leadership we would not have had such a successful year.

REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES

A. Membership. While we are pleased to announce that 71 new members joined our Church we were not elated with the results. We plan in 1970 to make a concerted effort towards increasing our membership. We are confident that we shall succeed in this endeavor. Presently we have 221 families and 436 members.

B. Memorials. The Memorial Committee has made their contribution to St. Thomas through their insight and imaginative ideas. We now have a Baptismal Font which is the envy of all who have had the pleasure of seeing it. It is unique and blends in with the architectural background of our Church. Also installed are the votive candle stands and the eternal lights. The Memorial Committee still has memorials available for individuals who wish to purchase them for a loved one who has passed away. Anyone interested may speak to Mr. Vay Najarian the Committee Chairman who will be more than happy to give you pertinent information on this matter.

We are also happy to note that the Carillon and Chimes, donated by the Tashjian family in loving memory of their mother, Nevart Tashjian, were installed this year and have received many favorable comments.

Parish Council Report for 1969 (cont'd.)

The Parish Council expresses its gratitude to Vay Najarian and his committee for an outstanding effort.

The Memorial Committee Report is attached as Appendix A.

C. Coordinator of Church Activities & Rental of Church Property.

This committee has done an outstanding job for our Church. They have seen to it that no organization conflicts with another as far as scheduling of events is concerned. Mr. Arthur Otchy, Chairman, deserves much praise for his untiring efforts in keeping the Church calendar of events in good order. This year we did not have one conflict of dates among our organizations.

The Parish Council voted to make the rental rates more reasonable for Armenian youth organizations in order to attract them to St. Thomas Armenian Church.

Mr. Otchy ably administers the rental of our Church facilities to individuals and organizations in and outside our Church. This activity demands an individual who has experience, intelligence, and patience. Mr. Otchy has these ingredients and the results are self-explanatory.

D. Building and Grounds. Mr. Ray Kreppel, Chairman, of this important committee deserves much credit for keeping our facilities in an excellent condition. He does this with a minimum cost to our Church and almost no help. We are most appreciative to him for all his accomplishments this year and in the years past.

Snow removal has always been a problem for our Church. We hope we have it solved. We have contracted a local garageman to clean the snow. We feel the cost is negligible compared to the convenience to our Parishioners.

Through the efforts of Ray Kreppel we now have a permanent hat and coat rack in the hallway of our auditorium.

The building has looked clean and neat this past year. This can be contributed to the efforts of Mr. Bill Montero and Mike Ghelberg.

PARISH COUNCIL SOCIAL FUNCTIONS

The Parish Council was responsible for two social events this past year.

1. The Fourth Anniversary Dinner on March 23rd. Again this affair was a joint venture. Each Church organization assisted in making this event a social and financial success. The principal speakers were our Primate, Archbishop Torkom Manoogian and former N.J. Senator Ned Parsekian.

2. The Annual Bazaar, under the leadership of Mr. Arthur Otchy and Mrs. Vicky Ganan, December 6 and 7, was the highlight of our yearly events. We netted over \$10,000 through outstanding leadership and the cooperation of the many committee members.

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3. The Lawn and Garden Sale which profited our church over \$500.00. Dick Melikian was chairman of this sale and deserves a round of applause.

CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS

CHOIR. The Choir, under the able leadership of Mr. Edward Daghlian has performed its duties each Sunday with dignity and beauty. We thank Ed Daghlian and the members of the choir who devote their Sunday mornings so that we may enjoy our Mass with the feeling it requires. While the Choir continues to find new voices, Mr. Daghlian would be more than happy to see new faces. If you can add your voice to our Choir please let Mr. Daghlian know of your desires.

The Choir Report is attached as Appendix B.

ARMENIAN LANGUAGE SCHOOL. The Armenian Language School continues to grow in strength, it has 53 students, and in enthusiasm. We are proud of this Church organization that has contributed so much these past years towards teaching the language of our forefathers to our children. The performance given by the children during our 4th Anniversary Dinner was indicative of the type of teaching they are receiving. It was truly an outstanding job through the efforts of Mrs. Rose Hachadouring, Mrs. Queenie Tashjian and the other teachers of the Armenian School.

In addition to the children's section, we now have adult classes given by Mr. Hagop Kasparian each Tuesday night. Those who are attending can attest to the high type of instruction given by Mr. Kasparian. We are most fortunate in having Mr. Kasparian as a member of our Armenian School teaching staff.

We express our gratitude to the teaching staff and also to the School Board and its members for a most effective year.

The Armenian School Report is attached as Appendix C.

SUNDAY SCHOOL. Each year our Sunday School enrollment continues to rise. This year we have 246 registered. They receive better than average religious training each Sunday through the efforts of our devoted Sunday School teachers. This year we noted more enthusiasm, more desire, and a feeling of wanting to do well by our teachers and the administrative staff. These devoted individuals, under the guidance of Yeretzgin Violet Kasparian, Superintendent of the Sunday School, earned the praises of the parishioners for another year of excellence. The Report of the Sunday School is attached as Appendix D.

WOMEN'S GUILD. The Women's Guild has given another year of outstanding service to our Church. Mrs. Sonia Adams, Chairman, and the Executive Board deserve great praise for their untiring and continued efforts in our behalf.

This year was a series of successes for the Guild. This could only be attained through hard work and dedication. Their contributions to our Church were many. To name a few:

Parish Council Report for 1969 (cont'd.)

The Cotillion under the enthusiastic leadership of Mrs. Alice Shahinian was a tremendous social and financial success. It was one of the most beautiful Cotillions we have had. We have thanked Alice Shahinian and her committee for a great effort and will do it again today.

The Fashion Show, under the chairmanship of Mrs. Alice Goulazian, was another success. A terrific show that was attended by a full house.

The Church always needed the Women's Guild for their support. They have come through with flying colors. We thank Mrs. Sonia Adams, the Executive Board, and the members of the Guild for another successful year.

The Report of the Women's Guild is attached as Appendix E.

MEN'S CLUB. The Men's Club was responsible for two picnics and a Cadillac Raffle. These events were all successes.

Each year the Men's Club has taken great responsibilities and helped the Parish Council meet its obligations. We cannot thank these energetic and devoted individuals enough who also help out in the kitchen and do sundry jobs for events like the Anniversary dinner, the Bazaar, and Communion breakfasts.

The Men's Club Bowling League 1969-70 had over 56 men bowling on 14 teams. On May 25, 1969 a bowling dinner was held at the Westgate Motor Lodge which was attended by over 120 people. This season the bowling league has 12 teams.

A special thanks to Arman Ajamian for his successful Cadillac raffle. Our congratulations to John Seferian and his hard working Men's Club. The Report of the Men's Club is attached as Appendix F.

ACYOA. We are proud of our ACYOA. We have said it before, we will say it again. And we mean it. We were pleasantly surprised to note that although the ACYOA lost some members to college and "old age", they have over 50 active members. What an accomplishment! If you go to one of their meetings you will see "enthusiasm in action." We have no worry about our youngsters, not when you have that able and capable "Aunty" Floraine Halejian supervising the activities of the group.

Last year they donated \$1,000 to the Memorial Committee which they raised through their many social events. They now have two rooms which they call their own. Before long they will own the Church. We thank Mr. Barry Halejian, Chairman, and the members of the Executive Board, and the members of the ACYOA for showing us the way to SUCCESS.

Mrs. Florain Halejian, the Parishioners of St. Thomas owe you a debt of gratitude for your wonderful contributions these past years.

During the past few months, Fr. Arnak has been instrumental in reorganizing an ACYOA Senior group made up of people from all the churches in New Jersey. An executive committee has been selected with two representatives from each church. Our representatives are Susan Shamamian and Robert Stepanian.

The Report of the ACYOA is attached as Appendix G.

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SEVAN DANCE GROUP OF ST. THOMAS. Those who have been fortunate in seeing the Sevan Dance Group of St. Thomas perform will agree with us that they are Professional. This can be contributed to the able leadership, experience, and knowledge of their director and choreographer, Ohan Armoudian.

We cannot forget the man in the background who does so much for this group - Mr. George Shahinian. He is the driving force behind this outstanding dance group. Congratulations and good luck for the future. The Report of the Sevan Dance Group is attached as Appendix B.

ST. THOMAS BASKETBALL & TRACK TEAMS. Our Teenage boys are fortunate in having Jack Tatarian and Dick Kabobjian devoting their extra hours in organizing the St. Thomas Basketball team. The team practices every Thursday evening and plays its games in the Metropolitan Armenian Sports League each Sunday.

This year St. Thomas has a well organized and experienced team. They are exciting to watch. We should support these boys and be present when they are playing. They need our support.

The St. Thomas Track Team participated in the 1969 track meet in Long Island, on June 8, 1969. Jack Hajinlian coached the team consisting of young men from our Church. We thank Jack Hajinlian and the boys who were on the team for a job well done.

The Report of the Sports Association is attached as Appendix A.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE:-

We feel that the next Parish Council should be familiar with items that have not been completed this year and also be given guidance in areas that require action if we are to continue to improve and prosper. Listed below are the items and recommendations:

- a. Organiza a Membership Program.
- b. Continue the program to increase pledges until pledges meet at least 50% of our annual expenses.
- c. Have Church organizations plan a family luncheon one Sunday each month following Church services.
- d. Draft up plans and complete erecting a "St. Thomas Armenian Church" sign on the outside of the Church.
- e. Recover chairs that are in need of repair.
- f. Put a light inside of Church illuminating the stain glass windows on north side of building.
- g. Complete a booklet about St. Thomas Armenian Church to include story depicted in our stain glass windows.
- h. Complete payment of \$3000 to Dadourian Fund. This will complete payment of our long standing debt.
- i. Organize a Sports Club for all sports-minded individuals in our parish who wish to participate in sports.
- j. Appoint a chairman for New Year's Eve Dance at our Church.
- k. Appoint a chairman for Memorial Day Picnic.
- l. Appoint a chairman for Fall Picnic.
- m. Get Women's Guild to appoint a chairman of 1970 Cotillion.

Parish Council Report for 1969 (Cont'd.)

RECOGNITION:

We met our goals this past year through the all-out efforts of our Parishioners. Again, it could not have been accomplished without a coordinated and dedicated effort. This was another team effort. We congratulate you.

We take this opportunity to thank Mrs. Lucy Chakmakian who so faithfully makes the Mass throughout the year; we thank Mrs. Rebecca Avakian for being responsible for the Altar Flower donations; and we thank Mr. Tish Basmajian for always being in church early and seeing to it that everything is in order.

Our Parish is most fortunate in having as our spiritual leader Father Arnak Kasparian. In his quiet, unassuming manner he does more than his share for us. He not only effectively meets the religious requirements, but also manages the complex facilities we own. In addition, his friendly manner has gained many friends for St. Thomas in the community. We at St. Thomas are thought of highly in the community because Fr. Arnak helped to make it that way. We are most appreciative to Father Arnak for his efforts in our behalf.

Our thanks to our Deacons, the members of the Choir, and our organist, Miss Susan Shamamian, for making our Sunday Services most pleasant.

Yeretzgin Violet Kasparian continues to be the "triple threat" of our Church - Superintendent of our Sunday School, Assistant Editor of our Church paper, the Beacon, and unofficial secretary of our Church. This wonderful person does all these duties efficiently and with dispatch. We are indeed fortunate in having her on our team. Yeretzgin Violet we thank you.

To our hard working and devoted Parish Council, Chairmen of Committees, and the many Parishioners who worked behind the scenes without any fanfare, we are deeply indebted to you. You ALL helped make 1969 a memorable and another outstanding year for St. Thomas.

CONCLUSION We are proud of our accomplishments this past year. We set our goals high and we met many of them. We worked hard, we worked long, and we never took a negative attitude.

The Chairman has one criticism that he feels he should air and that is the difficulty he had in getting Chairmen for Committees. This was brought to your attention in the Chairman's Message in the Beacon. Let us make 1970 a more fruitful year for St. Thomas. Accept the chairmanships when they are offered to you. Look at it this way, if you did not qualify you would not have been asked. We need your support in this important area - cooperate.

With the guidance of the Diocese under the leadership of His Grace Archbishop Torkom Manoogian and the delegates of our Church, we were better able to accomplish our work knowing it was right and we had their support. Without which we could not have achieved our successes this past year. We are grateful to them.

The year 1970 presents another challenge for St. Thomas. We are most confident that we will meet them all and that the year 1970 will be most rewarding for us. With your continued support, we will succeed.

Rev. Arnak Kasparian, Pres. Vic. Arzoomanian, Chmn. Vincent Shamamian, Secy.