

THE ST. THOMAS ARMENIAN CHURCH PARISH COUNCIL REPORT - 1972

We are happy to report that the year 1972 proved to be another successful one for St. Thomas Armenian Church. We were able to meet our financial obligations, maintain and improve our Church property, increase our membership, and continue to serve our Parishioners spiritually.

We are proud of these accomplishments because they were made possible through the combined efforts of the dedicated members of our Church Organization, the Parish Council, Father Arnak Kasparian, and our Parishioners.

Immediately after the Parish Assembly elected the members to the Parish Council for the year 1972, the Parish Council was organized. We would like you to know the members of the Parish Council and the positions they held during the past year.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Elected Office</u>	<u>Liaison To</u>	<u>Chmn. of Committee</u>
Vahan Najarian	Chairman		Memorials
Arthur Otchy	Vice-Chairman		Coordinator of Church Activities
Edward Devejian	Recording Secretary		
Andrew Sahagian	Treasurer		
Edward Fehmian	Asst. Secretary	A.C.Y.O.A.	
Hagop Jebejian	Asst. Treasurer	Armenian School	Fledges
Ara Martin		Choir	
Albert Keusey		Women's Guild	
Zaven Pooosikian		Men's Club	
Peter Mason			Flowers = Worship & Religious Activities
Ray Kreppel			Building & Grounds
Edward Bashian			Ways & Means

Our plans for 1972 were many. We met many of our goals. We did the best we could with the help, money and time available. Our achievements for the past year and our plans for 1973 are published for your information.

PARISH COUNCIL REPORT FOR 1972 (CON'T.)

THE PASTOR'S REPORT

a) Worship Services have been conducted every Sunday from 10:30 a.m. to noon, with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and a sermon. During the year, we had as guest celebrants: Archbishop Terkom Manogian, on the occasion of our seventh anniversary of the consecration of the church; we also had Reverend Paroet Metjian of S. Milwaukee, Wisconsin on Dec. 17. Fr. Arnak Kasparian celebrated Badarak at the Home in Emerson twice, on Armenian Christmas day and on Maundy Thursday of Holy Week. He also had Grape Blessing services at the Home. On Sept. 24, at the Dedication Ceremonies of the new Tenafly High School, Fr. Kasparian offered the invocation.

b) Sacramental Services. During the year, 23 baptisms were performed (compared to 23 last year); 16 marriages were blessed (14 the previous 3 yrs.. In 9 marriages, both partners were Armenian); 11 funerals took place (11 last year. We shall cherish the memory of Khosrof Aljian, who was a member of our Parish.

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 Troy, New York with our delegates. Mr. Edward Bashian serves on the Diocesan Council as Treasurer.

d) Publications. With the help of Yeretzgin Violet, Fr. Arnak publishes the Bergen Beacon monthly and puts out the flyers for our various affairs. Mrs. Martha Saraydarian, Mrs. Mary Ann Saraydarian, and Mrs. Jaime Ohanian have been most helpful in assisting with typing, addressing, and various other office work whenever called upon. Our heartfelt thanks for their cheerful assistance. Special thanks to Bedros and Iris Papazian for setting the type of the Beacon and occasional flyers and giving it its professional touch, and to Anthony Ajemian for his invaluable help in printing. Our mailing list is approximately 890 addresses.

Our Pastor has been reelected as the President of the Tenafly Clergy Fellowship. 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 organization has been rather successful.

During the past year, to say the least, all church activities have been operating and run in a most harmonious manner with a minimum of 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.

A very special tribute must be paid to the untiring efforts of our Chairman, Vahan Najarian, who has shown tact, diplomacy, 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 STANDING COMMITTEES

Membership: Since our last Parish Assembly meeting, 17 new families were added to our Membership list which now totals 245 families. We thank Fr. Arnak Kasparian for his concerted efforts to encourage new families to join our Parish. We encourage all Parishioners to recruit new families personally or to bring to Fr. Arnak's attention these potential new members.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS: 1972 saw considerable activity take place to maintain and enhance our Buildings and Grounds through the efforts of the Parish Council, Mr. Ray Kreppel and Mr. Andy Ouzoonian. Soon after our last annual meeting, leaks were discovered in the Church Dome and the Auditorium roof. After a comprehensive inspection by Luders Associates, our architects, the Parish Council had the Dome recaulked and the tension rings of the Dome tightened. The roof will require extensive work which will cost a considerable sum. He has also recommended a number of things to be done to maintain our complex.

You may have noticed that more than a dozen dead trees were removed from the Church Grounds recently. We are unaware of why they died, but they resulted in a safety hazard to both persons and property and they were unattractive. This made their removal mandatory.

The Main Entry Doors to the Church was another area which required attention this year. The varnish on the Doors had aged and the wood beneath was weathering. These doors were scraped, sanded, stained, and refinished to restore them to their original beauty.

Anyone who had occasion to visit the Parsonage during early 1972 was certain to notice the delapidated condition of the rear steps which made them all but unusable. Aware of this hazard, the Parish Council approved of having them removed, and replaced with a combination raised deck (carport) and new stairs.

Keeping the grounds well groomed in the summer months presented problems again this year. The Parish Council sought new individuals for maintenance in an attempt to improve the appearance of the grounds. We were unsuccessful. Our major problem is finding a dependable landscaper to maintain our large property while keeping the cost within a limited budget.

The Church Auditorium now has the draperies which were in the planning stage at last year's annual meeting. As was mentioned previously, the idea for the draperies and 50% of the cost came from the Knights of Vartan. The Parish Council is pleased with the appearance of the draperies and the warmth that they add to the Auditorium. Our thanks to the Knights of Vartan for their thoughtfulness. Also, the stage draperies were cleaned.

During the year, we had sporadic water problems because of violent storms in the court yard adjacent to our Sunday School class room. On one occasion the Tonafly fire department was called to pump out the water and prevent damage to the building. A new sump pump was donated and installed by Mr. Ara Jilajian to resolve the problem.

As part of our maintenance effort, we have a steady exterminator coming to maintain our property.

Pledges: The Pledge Program continued to make positive strides in 1972 under the capable leadership of Mr. Hagop Jebajian. He has focused his attention upon increasing the pledges and upon following up with gentle reminders to those who were in arrears. The Parish Council feels that his program still has an enormous room for growth. This form of financial support is essential if our Church is to become more financially sound, and less dependent upon special activities to meet its annual expenses. One innovation was the quarterly statements sent to inform our Parishioners of their standing. Mrs. Martha Saraydarian keeps the records and sends out the reports very efficiently.

PARISH COUNCIL REPORT FOR 1972 (CON'T.)

BOOKSTORE: During 1972, a Bookstore was established in our Church for the purpose of selling books about the Armenian Church, and our Armenian Culture and Heritage. The books will be on display in two cabinets in the glass enclosed hallway adjacent to the Church entry. We encourage you to visit the Bookstore the next time you come to Church. This effort is under the leadership of Mrs. Jamie Ohanian.

AVAK SOCIETY: The Avak Society was formed this year for a segment of our Parishoners which in some respects had been neglected. The purpose of this Society is to bring together our Senior Citizens socially so that they can share each other's company at meetings and planned outings. This Society has had a very successful beginning and has attracted many members. Its continued success will come from the plans and programs of its current members and from its ability to attract new members.

BUILDING AND FINANCE COMMITTEE: The announcement of the creation of this committee was made at the last annual meeting. The Parish Council drafted and enacted a Charter for the Building and Finance Committee which became effective on May 1, 1972. The text of that Charter follows:

By resolution unanimously approved, the Parish Council hereby authorized the establishment of a committee to be known as the St. Thomas Armenian Church Building and Finance Committee.

The sole purpose for the formation of this committee is to raise funds for the purpose of assuming the mortgage payments of the Church and Parish House and, if possible, to reduce the principal indebtedness. A sinking fund may be established with a monetary limit of a sum equal to six months of mortgage payments. The committee will also function as the Memorial Committee with the proviso that any memorial requiring additional expenditure must first be approved by the Parish Council.

In order to accomplish its purpose, the committee is authorized to raise Funds either by direct solicitation or by social functions.

Except for the annual anniversary dinner function and the Christmas Bazaar, all other church organizations and committees already in existence with established annual affairs at established times will have priority to continue in the same manner and the same dates as in the past.

Except for the sums required for current operating expenses, the Men's Club is authorized to turn over and the St. Thomas Armenian Church Building Fund Committee is authorized to receive periodically all sums raised by the Men's Club through any of its social and fund raising activities.

The St. Thomas Armenian Church Building Fund Committee shall report annually and at such other times as determined by the Parish Council, its financial position, its receipts, and expenditures.

The qualifications for a committee member shall be the same as for Church Membership.

The Committee shall remain in existence until the mortgage has been entirely satisfied or until sooner disbanded by resolution of the Parish Council.

PARISH COUNCIL REPORT 1972 (CON'T.)

SEVAN DANCE GROUP: After providing many years of enjoyment to its members and performing at many of our Church functions, the Sevan Dance Group became inactive.

THE ST. THOMAS CHORUS: The St. Thomas Chorus is the newest program initiated to provide parishioners with activities in which they can participate. The purpose of this organization is to teach its members to sing in a group and to improve their technique. Under the direction of Mr. Raffi Sevadjan, this group has rapidly grown to 30 enthusiastic members. We look forward to hearing them perform.

PARISH COUNCIL SOCIAL FUNCTIONS: The Parish Council had the responsibility of being in charge of two major events this past year. They were as follows:

- A. The Seventh Anniversary Dinner on March 5, 1972. This annual dinner marking the anniversary of our Church is a team effort where every Church organization is involved. As in the past, the Anniversary dinner was a social and financial success. The Chairman of the dinner was Zaven Pousikian. The highlight of the afternoon was the presentation of the St. Thomas Armenian Plaque to Mr. Antranig Ouzonian for outstanding service to our Church. The children of our Armenian School performed for the guests.
- B. The Annual Bazaar was chaired this year by Col. Victor Arzoumanian, and Mr. Nazar Nazarian and Mr. Carl Tashjian accepted the responsibility for the Cake Sale. Under the capable leadership of these stalwards, and the untiring efforts of many of our Parishioners, the Bazaar netted over \$10,000. for our Church.

CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS: The Parish Council graciously acknowledges and thanks the many individuals who have worked so diligently in our Church Organizations. From the organizations' reports that are appended to this publication, you will agree that we have the most intelligent, devoted, and successful leaders and assistants working for the good of our Church. St. Thomas Church depends on its various Church organizations for support. We are happy to state that each of our organizations has made large contributions both in services and in finances during the period of this report. We are grateful to all the groups. The various Church Organizations and the leaders of these organizations are as indicated below:

CHOIR: Choir Master - Mr. Edward Daghlian
Organist - Miss Susan Shamamian
The Choir report is attached on page 12

ARMENIAN LANGUAGE SCHOOL: Superintendent - Miss Sylva der Stepanian
The Armenian School report is attached as page 17

SUNDAY SCHOOL: Superintendent - Yeretgin Violet Kasparian
The Sunday School Report is attached on page 18

WOMEN'S GUILD: Chairman - Mrs. Virginia Parseghian
The Women's Guild report is attached on page 13

MEN'S CLUB: Chairman - Mr. Charles Dadanian
The Men's Club Report is attached as page 14

PARISH COUNCIL REPORT 1972 (CON'T.)

A.C.Y.O.A.: Chairman: Mr. Douglas Tashjian
Adult Advisers: Mr. Martin Tashjian, Mr. Harry Chakmakian,
Mr. Arthur Azarik
The A.C.Y.O.A. report is attached on page 15

ST. THOMAS BASKETBALL TEAM: Senior Advisers: Jack Tatarian, Ara Martin
Coaches - Harry Chakmakian, Martin Tashjian
The St. Thomas Basketball Team report is attached on page 12

BUILDING AND FINANCE COMMITTEE: The Parish Council organized this new committee and charged it with the responsibility of meeting the mortgage payments of this Parish. The nucleus of this committee is our Diocese Delegates. Mr. Edward Bashian was entrusted with the organization of this group. The budget of this committee is attached on pages 9-11

ST. THOMAS CHORUS: Chairman - Mr. Raffi Sevadjan
The St. Thomas Chorus report is attached on page 11

AVAK CLUB: Chairman - Mr. Vahram Parsekian
The Avak Club Report is attached on page 16

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE: We have set forth the following recommendations which we feel should be a guide to the incoming Parish Council.

1. Expand our Membership and Pledge Program.
2. Look into the feasibility of hiring a full time caretaker.
3. Look into the feasibility of professional landscaping.
4. Take the necessary steps to preserve the beauty and value of the church.
5. Appoint a House Committee to oversee janitorial work.
6. Erect a "St. Thomas Armenian Church" sign outside the Church.
7. Look into the feasibility of hiring a part time secretary.

RECOGNITION: Rather than express our thanks to specific individuals and run the risk of unintentionally omitting deserving names, we would like to express our sincere thanks to all of those who have given of themselves in the Service of our Church.

The personal sacrifices of our many parishioners has been the sustaining force for our Church. We hope that in the coming year more people will come forward and experience the joy of working together toward our common goals.

CONCLUSION: Under the capable leadership of Mr. Vay Hajarian, your Parish Council achieved many of its goals towards developing the Church as the focal point of our religious and social activities. This is an enormous task and can be successful only with the active participation of Parishioners. We look forward to the future with confidence and great expectation. We have the momentum, and a harmonious and dedicated group of Parishioners, headed by Fr. Arnak Kasparian. Together, and with the help of God, we will succeed.

Vahan Najarian
Chairman

Edward Devejian
Secretary

Rev. Fr. Arnak Kasparian
President

January 30, 1973

The Auditing Committee has examined the Treasurers' Books and found them in good order.
Vahe Arkell Leon Nighosian Edward Stepanian