

MINUTES
ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY
ST. THOMAS - ARMENIAN CHURCH - TENAFLY, N.J.
FEBRUARY 2, 1975

The Annual Parish Assembly of the St. Thomas Armenian Church was called to order by Chairman Andy Ouzoonian at 1:10 p.m. in the church auditorium. Fr. Arnak Kasparian opened the meeting with a prayer.

Chairman Ouzoonian thanked those attending for their interest and the Women's Guild Committee for the afternoon lunch. He stated that the meeting would be co-chaired by himself and Arthur Otchy. He then asked for verification of the eligibility of all voters. Martha Saraydarian, on behalf of the Nominating Committee, supplied the verification which was seconded by Arman Ajamian.

Chairman Ouzoonian asked for nominations from the floor. Since there were none, he asked for a motion to establish the time to close balloting. Shakae Shahinian motioned for 2:00 p.m. There was a second by Vicky Ganan, and the motion was approved.

The minutes of the 1974 Parish Assembly were read by Mary Ann Saraydarian, Secretary. Arthur Otchy made a motion to accept the minutes as read. The motion was seconded by Mike Avakian and carried unanimously.

Fr. Arnak Kasparian then gave the Pastor's Report for 1974.

Parish Council Chairman George Mekenian then presented the Parish Council Report which included an introduction of Parish Council members and a designation of their individual responsibilities. In discussing pledges, Mr. Mekenian added that

\$1,380. was received from 20 members as 1974 delinquent pledges and that our contributions statement system is becoming more workable as the recording of donations other than pledges is made more accurate. He also mentioned that although the responsibility for exterior and interior building and grounds maintenance has been assigned to individual Parish Council members, they all have often worked in committee helping and complimenting each other.

Chairman Ouzoonian thanked Mr. Mekenian for a fine report on behalf of the Parish. He then recognized the Auditing Committee and Andrew Sahagian verified that the books had been reviewed and were in good order.

Edward Bashian pleaded that George Mekenian stay on as a Parish Council member. Anthony Ouzoonian asked that this subject be presented under new business.

Noubar Kazarian gave the Treasurer's Report stating total income and disbursements. He asked for questions on the income summary. Yeretkin Violet asked if there were any stewards in 1974. Noubar said no, but there would be five for 1975, with Vay Najarian in charge of this program. Violet Ouzoonian asked if the \$10,000. difference between budgeted and actual pledges was directly due to pledge deficiencies. Mr. Mekenian answered that it was a combination of three factors; 1) We had not received projected pledge increases when the budget was prepared, 2) Overall response to pledge improvements were less than desired, and 3) Our capability to generate increased contributions was overestimated.

At this point, Chairman Ouzoonian announced that the 2:00 p.m. closing of ballots was approaching and that as chairman of the Nominating Committee, he was retiring as chairman of the Assembly and Arthur Otchy would now take over.

Mr. Kazarian continued with his report. He stated that \$2,500. budgeted for a part-time secretary was not needed due to the volunteer services of Dikris Malool and other Parish members. Edward Bashian asked what figures would be sent to the Diocese. He felt a reserve should be conservative so the Church would not be unduly taxed. Mr. Kazarian said the reserve monies were already earmarked for use. Chairman Otchy asked for a motion to accept the report. Peter Jamgochian motioned, with a second from Vahe Arkell. The motion was passed and the budget accepted.

Chairman Otchy asked for a review of organizational reports. All church organizations (Choir, Armenian Language School, Sunday School, Women's Guild, Men's Club, Avak Society, A.C.Y.O.A.) agreed that the reports contained in the Annual Report were accurate and conclusive.

The next order of business was the approval of the proposed budget for 1975. George Mekenian said that the Treasury had a reserve of \$28,197. However, certain items underway; a sign for \$1,500.; partitions and heater for \$6,000.; repairs on the roof for \$2,000.; ground water and heating plenum for \$500.; a T.V.-tape deck projector for approximately \$1,000.; and Phase I of hall and kitchen expansion and improvement, \$7,500;- account for \$18,500. which will be used from the year end reserve in 1975. Mr. Mekenian carefully reviewed disbursements, capital costs and our four basic sources of income. He stated that St. Thomas was a young parish, just approaching adolescence. He felt memberships were growing with many new families moving into the area. Mr. Mekenian recommended that after meeting operating expenses and reserves, we earmark money for capital costs (items of a lasting and valuable nature to the Church including mortgage payments) and vest this fund with Parish Council and the Diocesan Delegates who will jointly administer the fund.

Vahe Arkell asked if the Diocese would have to approve improvements made to the Church. Mr. Mekenian said that their approval is usually limited to major building programs. A Building, Equipment and Grounds Improvement Fund is proposed to set aside funds and generate a movement toward expansion. The Parish Assembly, however, would control all funds and may re-allocate the use of funds. Richard Turnamian stated that he felt that only \$500. proposed for improvements was too minimum an amount. Arthur Azarik asked how the \$14,500 proposed for 1975 Building, Equipment and Grounds Improvement would be spent. Mr. Mekenian said a committee will study needs, effects and long range value to the Church of any improvements.

Mr. Mekenian stated that the amount could be used, for example, to enlarge the parking area to accommodate an additional 100 spaces, or add footage to the kitchen to enhance food preparation and service. He felt the priority of an improvement would be a primary consideration. Edward Bashian thought that the matter should be given to the Parish Council to have a committee to pursue the matter in depth. Mr. Mekenian said the Parish Assembly was not being asked now to vote on any definite plans, only to give the green light to a proposal to establish a Building, Equipment and Grounds Improvement Fund.

Mr. Mekenian then reviewed the entire Expenditure Budget, item by item, to clarify certain questions raised from the floor. Mr. Otchy requested a motion to accept the budget. Mr. Mekenian proposed the creation of a) a Building, Equipment and Grounds Improvement Fund, and b) to transfer \$18,000. from the Operating Fund to the Building, Equipment and Grounds Improvement Fund. Fr. Kasparian clarified that this committee will be created by Parish Council and accountable to Parish Council and not to the Parish Assembly. Vicky Ganan seconded the motion. Violet Ouzoonian asked that the Parish Assembly give final approval on expenditures. Andy Ouzoonian asked that anything over \$5,000. be approved by Parish Assembly. Noubar Kazarian stated that the Parish Council would appoint a committee exclusively responsible to the Parish Council. Mr. Mekenian said that

the Parish Council would come back to the next Parish Assembly with a concrete proposal and rules for the operation of this committee. In the interim, Parish Council will undertake no expenditure, other than monthly mortgage payments, no greater than \$5,000. Martha Saraydarian asked how we had spent the money in the past for such improvements. Mr. Mekenian pointed out that it had not been done before, and that only now with growth and expanded reserves can we begin to do more.

Chairman Otchy asked for a vote on the motion to create a) a Building, Equipment and Grounds Improvement Fund, and b) to transfer \$18,000. from the Operating Fund to the Building, Equipment and Grounds Improvement Fund. (Edward Bashian felt there should not even be a vote and that this was totally a Parish Council matter. Rose Mekenian said that there was no talk of any committee, only of the establishment of a fund. The vote is only to set aside a fund.) Mrs. Victoria asked if an item cost \$10-15,000., would we have to wait a whole year for Parish Assembly to approve. Chairman Otchy replied that special Assemblies could be called. The motion, upon the subsequent vote, was unanimously approved.

Peter Jamgochian moved that the budget for 1975 be accepted as proposed. Masis Parseghian seconded, and the motion was carried.

Chairman Otchy apologized to the organizations for the quick manner in which their business was covered. He stated that they were a vital part of the church machinery and that their work was very much appreciated.

Any Ouzoonian then announced the results of the balloting. There were 101 ballots cast, with 97 recorded.

PARISH COUNCIL

Frank Avakian-Stoneson
Armenag Iskenderian
Michele Izmirly
Peter Mason
Leon Nigohosian
Arthur Otchy
Hagop Kasparian - Alternate

AUDITORS

Vahe Arkell
Andy Ouzoonian
Masis Parseghian

NOMINATING COMM.

Arman Ajamian
Victor Arzoomanian
Edward Bashian
Rose Mekenian
Vay Najarian

1975 PARISH ASSEMBLY

George Mekenian, Chairman

Martha Saraydarian, Secretary

Chairman Otchy asked for the newly elected members of the Parish council to stand. He then asked for any unfinished business. Edward Bashian asked that George Mekenian stay with the Parish Council in any position he desires. He asked for a vote of confidence for Mr. Mekenian, and asked for an immediate reply. Mr. Mekenian then stated that for professional reasons, he doubted that his present decision not to serve would change. He thanked all for their expression of good faith. Chairman Otchy said that Mr. Mekenian has shown the way for the rest to follow, and that we should be grateful for his leadership of the last two years.

Rose Mekenian announced that on February 19, the N.Y.-N.J. Women's Guilds would celebrate St. Hripsime and St. Gayane at a luncheon and worship service at the Cathedral.

Fr. Kasparian announced that the Armenian School children would be heard on the Armenian Radio Hour on Wednesday, February 5 at 9:00 p.m. on 105.9 F.M.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Ann Saraydarian
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Secretary