

MINUTES ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY  
ST. THOMAS ARMENIAN CHURCH - TENAFLY, N. J.  
FEBRUARY 6, 1977

On Sunday, February 6, 1977, the Annual Parish Assembly of the St. Thomas Armenian Church was called to order by Chairman Edward Bashian at 1 p.m. in the Church Auditorium. Fr. Arnak Kasparian opened the meeting with a prayer.

Chairman Bashian warmly welcomed all in attendance, introduced Co-Chairman Caspar Kasparian, who alternately conducted the meeting with Ed and also introduced the officers of the Annual Parish Assembly. He thanked Mrs. Ray Malool and her entire committee of the Women's Guild for providing lunch.

George Mekenian verified the eligibility of all voters. All eligible voters who had not as yet cast their ballots were urged to do so by 1:30 p.m. at which time the balloting would be closed. Requested any nominations from the floor and there were none. Virginia Victoria, alternate secretary, read the minutes of the previous 1976 meeting. Shakaeh Shahinian made a motion to accept the minutes as read. Motion was seconded by Yerezgin Violet and carried.

Next on the agenda, Fr. Arnak Kasparian gave the Pastor's report for 1976. He noted that 1977 is the 20th anniversary of the organization of this congregation which was organized through the leadership of Mr. Haig Markarian. In giving his activities report, the achievements he stressed were harmony and mutual respect. He noted that we are the fifth highest tax parish in the Diocese. Thanked various individuals for their untiring efforts in the endless tasks they have performed throughout the year. Also thanked Mr. Frank Avakian-Stoneson and the entire Parish Council for their fine contribution. He also thanked the Bazaar Chairman, Mr. Edward Bashian, who, through this highly successful bazaar topped his previous record, and also his dynamic co-Chairman, Mrs. Antranig Shahinian.

At 1:30 p.m. Ed Bashian announced the closing of the ballots. He then thanked Fr. Arnak Kasparian for the spiritual guidance and warmth he conveys to our Church.

Parish Council Chairman, Mr. Frank Stoneson was introduced and proceeded to give his report. He thanked all council members for their spirit and contribution to our Church and then proceeded with the Parish Council Report. It was noted that we have dropped 82 members from our Membership list. After a period of discussion, it was clarified. These members were delinquent in their pledges after efforts had been made to encourage them to honor their pledges and since we are responsible to the Diocese to contribute \$17.00 annually per member, it was the decision of the Parish Council to drop them from the current membership list and the year 1976 is concluded with a roll of 349 members. Shakaeh Shahinian advised that the 82 members who were dropped from the membership list will still get all publications of the Church through the mailing list.

Attention was brought to an omission on the Annual Report that Mr. Caspar Kasparian served as a delegate for one day at the Diocesan Annual Assembly.

Also noted was the resignation of Mr. Arthur Otchy during 1976 who was replaced on the council by Mr. Peter Jamgochian.

Chairman Bashian thanked the entire body of the Parish Council, Mr. Frank Stoneson, and Fr. Kasparian for their co-operation and sincerest appreciation.

Mrs. Ara Martin made a motion to accept the Parish Council Report. Seconded and carried.

Mr. Vahan Barsamian of the Auditing Committee reported the books were found in good order.

Yeretzgin Violet questioned whether all records were checked. After much discussion on the subject, Mr. Arthur Otchy made a motion that the Auditing Committee should review accounts of every church organization and report to the Parish Council who should then report on that matter at the next Parish Assembly for fiscal year 1976. Seconded by Mr. Stoneson. Motion carried.

Paul Varbedian was called upon to give the Treasurer's Report. He thanked Michel Izmerly for his able assistance at arriving at these figures.

In reviewing the report, he brought attention to the Financial Summary. He listed 7 recommendations for 1977 as follows:

1. Architectural plans should be made for expansion of our auditorium and kitchen facilities.
2. Initiate a plan to increase pledges, to compensate for continued increases in parish taxes by the Diocese.
3. Improve efforts to maintain our present membership, in addition to solicitation of new members.
4. Establish a better communication between organization chairmen and the Parish Council by quarterly meetings to determine progress of goals and activities.
5. Institute adult religious education programs.
6. Improve housekeeping by hiring of outside services, such as window cleaning, floor waxing, etc.
7. Institute a preventive maintenance program.

Mr. Varbedian noted that the actual disbursements for 1976 were \$82,068 and budgeted was \$90,750. The spending was not accomplished as per budget mainly because the improvement program had been delayed. Proposed budget for 1977 is \$104,450.

The income side of the ledger shows a budget of \$82,000 for 1976 but we had \$99,932 of income. This difference was accounted for mainly by a 10% increase in pledge envelope income and approximately \$7000 increase in bazaar income. The proposed 1977 budget put as \$93,100 leads to a proposed deficit spending program.

Paul Varbedian discussed various budget items upon request of the parishioners.

Leon Nigohosian moved to accept the report as read. Seconded and approved.

At this point, Paul Varbedian was asked to discuss the 1977 budget. He explained that in the 1977 proposal, Disbursements are greater than Income. The differential is about \$11,000. This deficit spending is due to:

1. Work needed to be done on facilities under Capital Improvements, \$10,000.
2. Gas and Electricity - cost is estimated at \$13,000 or an increase of \$3500.

Arthur Otchy made motion to approve the 1977 budget. Seconded and carried.

Chairman Bashian acknowledged all the regular Church committee organizations and their heads. Arthur Otchy commended the Sunday School for their self-sufficiency and surplus. Thanks also to Armen Ajemian for initiating and Zaven Pooosikian for continuing the car raffle which this year surpassed all previous years financially.

Mr. & Mrs. Masis Parseghian introduced as chairmen for the 1977 Christmas Bazaar.

On behalf of the Couples Club, Peter Jamgochian will donate \$1,000 to the Church.

Discussion followed regarding the needs of the Choir which resulted in motion made by Mr. Souren Mekenian to have collection plates passed at Easter and Christmas in addition to the regular plates passed to benefit the needs of the Choir. Seconded and carried.

Under new business, Frank Stoneson proposed that membership pledges of \$15 a year be increased to \$25 minimum per member. Also asked for increased pledge by each working member 18 years and over. Mrs. Bunny Mateosian made motion that the minimum annual membership pledge be raised to \$25. Seconded and carried.

Since there was no Diocesan Delegates Report, Casper Kasparian suggested such report should be included in next year's reporting.

Mr. Joseph Housepian made motion that the "Diocesan Delegates be asked to submit report of 1977 for inclusion in the 1978 Assembly report". After much discussion, Lillian Kasparian amended motion to read "Diocesan Delegates submit their report to the Parish Council within a month after the Diocesan Assembly and publish it in the Assembly report the following year". Seconded and carried.

Chairman Bashian reported that the 1976 Christmas Bazaar was highly successful, very gratifying and harmonious in every way. Praised everyone for working so diligently and thanked his co-chairman, Alice

Shahinian. In appreciation, a dinner was held for all participants which was also a successful, social event.

Co-chairman, Casper Kasparian thanked Ed Bashian. Thanks were also expressed to the entire nominating committee for the outstanding work they had done in the selection of candidates.

Buildings, Equipment and Grounds Committee report given by George Mekenian. Highlighting of his report were the needs for immediate roof repairs and drainage thereof, kitchen improvements, continued landscaping program and air-conditioning. It was recommended that we proceed with the roof repairs as quickly as possible with cost budgeted at \$7000. Motion made to this effect. Seconded and carried.

Parish Council President, Frank Stoneson moved that the Auditing Committee in consultation with the Parish Council devise a Financial Statement format to be used by all organizations hereafter and specifically for the 1978 Financial Report. Seconded and carried.

Becky Avakian asked that the plaques in the pews in the Church be polished. Parish Council will review this.

Mr. Ira Tashjian was recognized as Chairman of the Diocesan raffle. He is being aided by Zaven Poosikian.

St. Thomas Armenian Church commended by Diocese as having good credit.

Mr. George Mekenian on behalf of the Nominating Committee thanked all who offered to serve and announced the results of the election at which 133 ballots were cast:

PARISH COUNCIL: Frank Avakian-Stoneson, Peter Jamgochian, Caspar Kasparian, Leon Nigohosian, Albert Papazian, Virginia Parseghian, and Charles Doudoukjian (Alternate).

AUDITORS: Vahan Barsamian, Artemis Nazarian, Andrew Sahagian, Michel Izmerly-(Alternate).

NOMINATING COMMITTEE: Armen Ajamian, Victor Arzoomanian, Arthur Azarik, Edward Bashian, Zaven Poosikian, Mary Ann Saraydarian (Alternate).

1978 PARISH ASSEMBLY: Antranig Ouzoonian, Chairman, Albert Victoria, Co-Chairman, Rose Mekenian, Secretary, Alin Papazian, Asst. Secretary.

Fr. Arnak Kasparian led the closing prayer and the Parish Assembly adjourned at 4 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia Victoria,  
Secretary

Rev. Arnak Kasparian  
President

Edward Bashian  
Casper Kasparian Co-Chairman