

THE ST. THOMAS ARMENIAN CHURCH ANNUAL REPORT

1977

PASTOR and PARISH COUNCIL

THE PASTOR'S REPORT

By the grace of God we have completed a fruitful year. Our thanks go to the church auxiliary groups and special commendation goes to our Parish Council for their fine cooperation and work. Each group has submitted its report separately. I will report to you mainly about the sacramental and pastoral activities of the past year.

WORSHIP SERVICES have been conducted every Sunday from 10:30 am to 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 anniversary of the consecration of the Church; we also had Rev. Artoon Sempadian and Rev. Vertanes Kalayjian. Father Arnak celebrated Badarak at the Home in Emerson twice, on the Armenian Christmas Day and on Maundy Thursday of the Holy Week. On Good Friday we, the seven Churches of Tenafly, had a joint service and procession from church to church. In Nov. we had an Instructed Badarak, explaining the Liturgy. The church was well attended and the program was well accepted.

SACRAMENTAL SERVICES: During the year, 28 baptisms were performed (compared to 19 last year); 18 marriages were blessed (17 the previous year); 14 funerals took place (16 last year). We shall cherish the memories of Nartouhe Hourdajian, George Sarkis Gevrekian, Vahridj Kenderian, who were members of our Parish. We also remember the following whose families are active members of our Church: Asdig Mirijanian, mother of Harry Mirijanian, Artin Jamgochian, father of Peter Jamgochian; Edward Simonian, father of Diran Simonian, Meline Hallajian, mother of George Hallajian, Neritza Bogoshian, mother of Ann and Stephen Bogoshian; Annette Cesario, sister of Raymond Malool, and Nevart Ajamian, mother of Virginia Parseghian.

ADMINISTRATIVE: As ex-officio president of all church organizations, Rev. Kasparian attended and presided over all the meetings. He directed and advised and, in many cases, he helped in implementing decisions. He attended the Clergy Conference and Diocesan Assembly in Providence, R. I. May 3 to May 8.

PUBLICATIONS: Fr. Arnak published the Bergen Beacon monthly and put out the flyers for our various affairs. Each month our Beacon is mailed to our college students residing on campus. Dikris Malool has been most helpful in assisting with typing, addressing, and various other office work whenever called upon. Our heartfelt thanks for her cheerful assistance. Special thanks to Mary Ann Saraydarian for editing, to Bedros and Iris Papazian for setting the type of the Beacon of some special flyers and giving them their professional touch, and to five friends who alternately do the printing. Our mailing list is approximately 960 addresses.

THE ST. THOMAS ARMENIAN CHURCH ANNUAL REPORT

1977

PASTOR and PARISH COUNCIL

THE PASTOR'S REPORT

By the grace of God we have completed a fruitful year. Our thanks go to the church auxiliary groups and special commendation goes to our Parish Council for their fine cooperation and work. Each group has submitted its report separately. I will report to you mainly about the sacramental and pastoral activities of the past year.

WORSHIP SERVICES have been conducted every Sunday from 10:30 am to 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 anniversary of the consecration of the Church; we also had Rev. Artoon Sempadian and Rev. Vertanes Kalayjian. Father Arnak celebrated Badarak at the Home in Emerson twice, on the Armenian Christmas Day and on Maundy Thursday of the Holy Week. On Good Friday we, the seven Churches of Tenafly, had a joint service and procession from church to church. In Nov. we had an Instructed Badarak, explaining the Liturgy. The church was well attended and the program was well accepted.

SACRAMENTAL SERVICES: During the year, 28 baptisms were performed (compared to 19 last year); 18 marriages were blessed (17 the previous year); 14 funerals took place (16 last year). We shall cherish the memories of Nartouhe Hourdajian, George Sarkis Gevrekian, Vahridj Kenderian, who were members of our Parish. We also remember the following whose families are active members of our Church: Asdig Mirijanian, mother of Harry Mirijanian, Artin Jamgochian, father of Peter Jamgochian; Edward Simonian, father of Diran Simonian, Meline Hallajian, mother of George Hallajian, Neritza Bogoshian, mother of Ann and Stephen Bogoshian; Annette Cesario, sister of Raymond Malool, and Nevart Ajamian, mother of Virginia Parseghian.

ADMINISTRATIVE: As ex-officio president of all church organizations, Rev. Kasparian attended and presided over all the meetings. He directed and advised and, in many cases, he helped in implementing decisions. He attended the Clergy Conference and Diocesan Assembly in Providence, R. I. May 3 to May 8.

PUBLICATIONS: Fr. Arnak published the Bergen Beacon monthly and put out the flyers for our various affairs. Each month our Beacon is mailed to our college students residing on campus. Dikris Malool has been most helpful in assisting with typing, addressing, and various other office work whenever called upon. Our heartfelt thanks for her cheerful assistance. Special thanks to Mary Ann Saraydarian for editing, to Bedros and Iris Papazian for setting the type of the Beacon of some special flyers and giving them their professional touch, and to five friends who alternately do the printing. Our mailing list is approximately 960 addresses.

We also thank Mrs. Lucy Chakmakian and her helpers from Avak Society who make sure that we have "mahs" every Sunday.

A very special tribute must be paid again this year to the efforts of our Chairman, Frank Avakian-Stoneson. Without his faithful, persistent, and enthusiastic leadership, we would not have had such a successful year.

On this occasion I would like to mention our very successful Bazaar financially and also as a vehicle of good fellowship. We thank Michel Izmirly and his co-chairman Dorothy Otchy for their great achievement.

I want to make a strong recommendation to the officers and especially the Chairman elected for next year's Parish Assembly. The Chairman of the Annual Assembly, during the year, should see to it that the decisions of this Assembly are carried through so that next year when he comes to conduct the Assembly he will be able to ask for complete reports. The elected officers should be notified of their duties during the year.

THE PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

The Parish Council Chairman reports with satisfaction that members of the 1977 Council have served their parish with sincere and earnest regard for its growth and well-being.

Our Church and its facilities, as well as our parish and its activities, have reached a point in time and maturity where decisions regarding their well-being were most time consuming and weighty.

The Council considers its parishioners as a most sophisticated and well-informed group, and with this in mind continually strove for perfection in its accomplishments.

It must be realized by the assembly that there is much yet to be done at St. Thomas, and if the Council met 7 evenings a week, it could not accomplish it alone!

Your support and enthusiasm are necessary ingredients to success. Future councils and their members must be dedicated and have a goal. Each member must carry his share of the load, which is becoming heavier.

I don't mean to frighten anyone running for council, but this fact must be understood and accepted.

Giving of one's self is very difficult in these times when everyone is caught up with the busyness of their own personal lives, but once the obligation of giving service is taken, it must be completed, and the rewards will be endless.

OFFICERS and ASSIGNMENTS for the PARISH COUNCIL

OFFICERS	PARISH COUNCIL MEMBER	ASSIGNMENT	LIAISON
Chairman	Frank A. Stoneson	Administration	---
Vice Chmn.	Caspar Kasparian	Membership	Choir
Secretary	Shakae Shahinian	---	Couples Club
Treasurer	Paul Varbedian	---	---
Asst. Secy.	John Asadourian	Picnics Co-ordinator	Bookstore
Asst. Treas.	Noubar Kazarian	Sacraments	Women's Guild
	Albert Papazian	Pledges/Stewardship	Church School
	Leon Nigohosian	Narthex Co-ordinator	Armenian School
	Virginia Parseghian	Supplies-Purchasing	
		Custodial Service	Avak Society
(Rentals)	Peter Jamgochian	Picnics Co-ordinator	Sr. & Jr. ACYOA
(Memorials)	Albert Victoria	Building & Grounds	Sports Assoc.

DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS

1. PLEDGES and STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM - ALBERT PAPA ZIAN

- A. To develop a follow-up system for pledges to ensure that they are kept current. of \$100
- B. To solicit stewards to donate a minimum a year to our Diocese for purposes of helping our Diocese and to reduce our yearly assessment.

2. MEMBERSHIP - CASPAR KASPARIAN

This entails the development of programs and methods to maintain and increase membership within our parish.

3. BUILDING and GROUNDS/MEMORIALS - ALBERT VICTORIA

- A. To ensure that our total facility is maintained and kept up to maximum standards physically and structurally, including the upkeep of our grounds.
- B. Memorials encompasses soliciting donations for the purchase of items required for our churchard grounds, which will establish a memorial in behalf of a deceased family member, etc.

4. SUPPLIES-PURCHASING/CUSTODIAL SERVICES - VIRGINIA PARSEGHIAN

- A. This involves the purchasing and inventory control of supplies necessary for housekeeping and food-serving operations used at our affairs.
- B. Custodial services requires a constant surveillance of our housekeeping needs and control over the services of personnel required to maintain these needs.

5. SACRAMENTALS - NOUBAR KAZARIAN

This entails record-keeping and collection of monies for weddings, baptisms, and funerals, and shall include altar flowers and memorial services on Sundays.

6. NARTHEX CO-ORDINATOR - LEON NIGOHOSIAN

This entails the co-ordination of all items necessary for our

religious services, such as council duty roster, candles, mahs, collection, announcements, church attendance and statistics, church service etiquette and special services.

7. RENTALS - PETER JAMGOCHIAN

Scheduling of events and rental of our facilities.

MEETINGS The Parish Council met on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month, totaling 23 meetings held during the year.

Each meeting consisted of an agenda with open discussion about matters related to the religious, social, and physical needs of St. Thomas Church.

We encouraged our delegates, officers, and committee members to attend our meetings or invite us to theirs, the only prerequisite being to give some prior notice as to the topic of discussion or interest.

On May 6, 7 and 8 our delegates and organization representatives attended the 75th Annual Diocesan Assembly in Providence, R. I.

On May 20, a Parish Assembly was called in our auditorium whereby our delegates discussed the events and results of the 75th Annual Diocesan Assembly held in May.

On Sept. 27, a special meeting was held with Parish Council members and St. Thomas organization officers to discuss goals, ideas and the calendar for the year. This meeting proved to be most rewarding and a must twice a year.

On Dec. 17 we were represented by members of the Parish Council and our delegates at a regional meeting of area churches, with Archbishop Manogian, hosted by St. Mary's Church of Livingston, N. J.

PARISH COUNCIL DUTY ROSTER A roster was established so that a minimum of 2 council members were on duty every Sunday attending to the needs of our Badarak and the parishioners. This roster also provided for 2 back-up members to be contacted in the event those on duty were unable to attend.

In addition, the Treasurer and our appointed senior parish member, Mr. Tish Basmajian, took care of monies collected each Sunday.

All council members were expected to serve in church on Palm Sunday, Easter Sunday and Armenian Christmas.

MEMBERSHIP Under the direction of Mr. Caspar Kasparian, a committee of parish members was formed to solicit and contact prospective members on a low-key basis.

A "Pot Luck Supper" was held in November 1977 to discuss the program and inspire new members to join us.

"Greeters" have been assigned to approach new faces in Church on Sunday, which is most important to making newcomers feel welcome.

For the year 1977:	Starting Membership	<u>340</u>
	New Members added	<u>28</u>
	Members dropped	<u>20</u>
Total Members year ending 1977		<u>357</u>

PLEDGES Under the capable supervision of Mr. Albert Papazian, our pledge program showed definite signs of progress during 1977. The following plans and ideas were incorporated into the program:

- a. The quarterly statement was accompanied by a letter encouraging parishioners to keep pledges current.
- b. Introduction of an \$18.00 per capita diocesan tax added to the pledge statement to relieve the treasury of this heavy burden.
- c. Ensuring that all members complied with our 1977 Parish Assembly resolution of increasing the membership amount to \$25.00 per member.
- d. Personal phone and written contact to recover delinquent pledges and to finally bring our pledge list up to date.

I would like to thank Mr. Papazian for his weekly pledge posting efforts which he consented to do on a temporary basis. This action was taken as a means of providing the 1977 Pledge Co-ordinator with a better insight of payment activities and familiarization with parish members.

I feel the activity served a purpose and may have been the inspiration for many 1977 activities.

BUILDING and GROUNDS The interior and exterior maintenance of our facility, including landscaping care has been performed under the careful supervision of Albert Victoria, who, with a minimum amount of expense, has tried to keep our facility in condition.

Most of our financial efforts this year were for the repair of parts of our leaking roof and the replacement of the rotted beam ceiling in our auditorium corridor. This project cost us approximately \$20,000.

It is the consensus of opinion within the present council that before plans are discussed for expansion of our facilities--the present facility must be put in order.

There are serious problems which still exist, such as moisture being carried through our building from the underground heating plenums. This moisture is causing much interior damage, such as the

large cracks in our church ceiling and possible rotting of beams, etc.

It has been decided that a french drain be installed in the rear of our church and auditorium to keep water from seeping under the buildings and up through the heating ducts.

After this problem is eliminated, the church ceiling must be repaired.

At the present time, studies are being made to correct the deficiencies of our heating system, such as controls adjustment and redesign, which also includes methods to reduce fuel costs.

If some of the problems mentioned seem to be with us for a long time, it is because the solutions to the problem must be found, analyzed and then solved in the most effective manner, and then plans made to maintain the repair so it does not occur again. Also, the costs are prohibitive, and only one project can be handled at a time on a priority basis.

In December we hired the services of a building-maintenance consultant who made a check-list of items that needed attention and also a maintenance schedule to follow to keep things in order.

This spring we would like to have more effective care of our grounds and repair cracks in our macadam drives and parking lot.

To sum up, all our efforts at present must be to prevent further deterioration and repair those areas that have.

We would like to give special thanks to Mr. Nish Ohanesian, who has been our "in-house" electrician and has been on call at any time we have needed him for any electrical job, big or small.

A special thanks also to Mrs. Virginia (Masis) Parseghian, who again decorated our driveway circle with flowering plants in the spring and lights during the Christmas season.

Mrs. Parseghian, as a council member, was also in charge of custodial duties this year, and the cleanliness which prevails at St. Thomas since last summer is due to her efforts in finding new cleaning personnel and directing their efforts. She also spearheaded getting our stage floor scraped and refinished.

ARMENIAN CHURCHES SPORTS ASSOCIATION This Association is comprised of all Armenian churches in the Metropolitan New York-New Jersey area, regardless of political or religious affiliation.

It serves a definite need to teach our children sportsmanship, as well as giving them a common ground to stand on with other Armenian youth, regardless of beliefs.

This year we had approximately 40 children involved from our

parish. There were 3 teams: 1 Junior Boys team, 1 Senior Boys team, and 1 Girls team.

The expenditure was approximately \$500, a small investment to have 40 Armenian youth together at least 1-2 times a week, feeling their heritage.

The only disappointment was that not one adult or parent outside of Mr. Harry Chakmakian who organized and helped coach the boys team again this year, showed any interest or concern.

Mrs. Mary Ann Saraydarian must be commended for organizing the girls and getting them a coach.

I feel the children in our parish are our most important asset, and yet very little is done to help or motivate them.

Being part of the Association requires each church to have a representative attend a monthly meeting at the Diocesan Center. I believe we were the only parish out of 12 represented that did not have someone there. I am told that if this happens again next year, we must drop out of the Association.

Not only that, but out of 25 boys parents, we can only get one to coach or show any interest.

I feel our youth should not be let down--if the parents are not interested, we, as a parish, must be if for no other reason but our survival.

I think we must talk this situation up and be ready in the fall to start a new season with lots of support and enthusiasm, regardless of the cost.

NEW PROGRAMS AT ST. THOMAS This year we were able to start several programs which had been under consideration:

- A. Bible Study Seminar - by Fr. Kasparian. May 4 to June 8
- B. Evening Adult Education - "The Christian Community" was the theme. Five sessions which began October 12, by Louise Kalemkerian, under the direction of the Diocese.
- C. Adult Armenian School, which began November 14.
- D. ACYOA Seniors - This new group organized itself in the fall of 1977.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES In addition to our religious needs, the church has also become responsible for fulfilling the social needs of our community. In order to comply, we find our calendar of events growing each year with more of the responsibility on the Parish Council.

We were most fortunate and grateful to those members listed below

for chairing some of these outstanding affairs for 1977 and hope others will partake in future years.

Our increasing budget demands other sources of income, especially to compensate for the lack of more pledge revenue, and these social events fill the need at this time.

We give special recognition to Mr. Michel Izmirly and Mrs. Dorothy Otchy, who co-chaired the 1977 Christmas Bazaar, which proved to be one of the most successful affairs, both financially and socially, in the history of St. Thomas.

At the request of the Parish Council and Bazaar Co-Chairmen, a special thank you dinner will have been held on Friday, February 3, 1978 at our church auditorium to honor those parishioners who worked so hard to make our Bazaar the success we all hoped and prayed it would be.

Second to the Bazaar, our largest source of revenue for the year is the Mercedes-Benz auto raffle, which is run single-handedly by none other than Mr. Zaven Poosikian. We give him and his ticket sellers a special tribute.

1977 CALENDAR OF MAIN EVENTS

DATE	AFFAIR	ORGANIZATION	CHAIRPERSON
Feb. 6	Annual Parish Assembly	Parish Council	Edward Bashian Caspar Kasparian
Feb. 19	Valentines Day Dinner/Dance	Women's Guild	Victoria Ganan
April 3	20th Anniversary Church Dinner	Parish Council	Zaven Poosikian
May 8	Mother's Day Dinner & Play	ACYOA	Jean Asdoorian
May 14	20th Annual Cotillion	Women's Guild	Yeretzgin Violet Kasparian
May 22	Armenian School Hantes & Luncheon	Armenian School	Mothers Comm.
May 30	Memorial Day Picnic	Parish Council	Peter Jamgochian John Asadourian
Sept. 10	One World Festival Participa- 11 tion Diocesan Center	Parish Council	Vahan Barsamian
Sept. 18	Get-Together Picnic	Parish Council	Samuel Demirjian George Hallajian
Sept. 24	Kef Nite III	Women's Guild	Susan A. Stoneson
Sept. 30	Chinese Auction & Card Party	Couples Club	Adrienne Tenbekjian
Dec. 3, 4	Annual Christmas Bazaar	Parish Council	Michel Izmirly Dorothy Otchy
Dec. 31 (Jan. 2)	Mercedes-Benz Auto Raffle	Parish Council	Zaven Poosikian

1977 MEMORIAL DONATIONS and GIFTS

1. Mrs. Lucy Chakmakian donated a large oil painting of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob painted by her late husband, Mr. Dikran Chakmakian.
2. Mr. & Mrs. Michael Avakian donated a "kshots" (fan) in thanksgiving.
3. Mr. & Mrs. Raymond Malool donated a "kshots" on the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of St. Thomas Parish.
4. Mrs. Grace Karsian donated a pair of candleholders in memory of her parents, Martin and Mary Hagopian.
5. Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Stepanian and Mr. & Mrs. Charles Doudoukjian donated a pair of candleholders in thanksgiving.
6. Mr. James Oettinger has made and donated 4 hot-roll steel candleholder stands in memory of Haiganoush Dabbakian, mother of Mrs. Lucy Oettinger.
7. Mrs. Siranoosh Mangurian created and donated a ceramic cross for our altar in memory of her brother, Vagharshak Shahinian.
8. Mr. & Mrs. Nazar Nazarian and Mr. Rupen Saddler have donated \$1000 each toward the purchase of new furniture for our lobby and corridor.
9. Mr. Michael Fuhrmann has been contributing toward the care and landscaping of the Helen Fuhrmann Grove.
10. An anonymous donation of \$5000 was made, to be used for future facilities for our youth.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 1978

The following is meant for use as a guide for the next Parish Council.

1. Plans should be made to remodel our kitchen and appliances.
2. Hire the services of a custodian who will supervise and institute a maintenance program at our facility.
3. Allocate funds for maintenance and refurbishing of our grounds.
4. Continue to improve efforts to maintain our membership and solicit additional members.
5. Continue efforts to increase pledges in ratio to the increase in our budget.
6. Stronger effort to make all church organizations an integral part of our church network. Recommend council meetings with organization officers every 6 months.
7. Continue adult education programs.
8. Institute the post for a Publicity Co-ordinator for all church activities and reporting.

SUMMARY

The Parish Council gratefully acknowledges the financial generosity and the physical efforts of its parish members and the Armenian community for supporting 1977 programs and activities of St. Thomas Church.

May the 1978 Council have the strength of its convictions and also the good fortune to have the full support of our parish. May God Bless you all.

Frank Avakian Stoneson Shakae Shahinian Rev. Arnak Kasparian
Parish Council Chairman Secretary President

AUDITING COMMITTEE'S REPORT

The Auditing Committee has examined the Treasurers' Books and found them in good order.

Vahan Barsamian
Artemis Nazarian

Andrew Sahagian

- 1. The following is a list of the items which were audited:
- 2. The books and records of the Treasurer and the Parish Council.
- 3. The financial statements of the Parish Council for the year 1977.
- 4. The financial statements of the Treasurer for the year 1977.
- 5. The financial statements of the Parish Council for the year 1976.
- 6. The financial statements of the Treasurer for the year 1976.
- 7. The financial statements of the Parish Council for the year 1975.
- 8. The financial statements of the Treasurer for the year 1975.