

MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY
ST. THOMAS ARMENIAN CHURCH - TENAFLY, N. J.
FEBRUARY 12, 1978

On Sunday, February 12, 1978, the Annual Parish Assembly of the St. Thomas Armenian Church was called to order by Chairman Antranig Ouzoonian at 1:15 p.m. in the Church Auditorium. Rev. Arnak Kasparian, President, opened the meeting with a prayer. Chairman Ouzoonian introduced the other officers of the Assembly who were present - Albert Victoria, Co-Chairman, and Rose Mekenian, Secretary. The Assembly Chairman welcomed everyone and encouraged the members to express thoughts and ideas for consideration by the parish and the Parish Council.

Zaven Pooosikian, speaking for the Nominating Committee of Arman Ajamian, Victor Arzoomanian, Arthur Azarik, Edward Bashian, Mary Ann Saraydarian and himself, verified the eligibility of voters. There were no further nominations from the floor to the slate submitted by the Nominating Committee. All voters who had not as yet cast their ballots were urged to do so by 1:30 p.m. Yeretzgin Violet Kasparian moved that balloting be closed at 1:30 p.m. Motion was seconded and passed.

The Minutes of the 1977 Annual Parish Assembly were read by Rose Mekenian and the following corrections made. Lillian Kasparian noted that on page 25 of the distributed Annual Report, in her motion re the Diocesan Delegates' report, it should read ". . . submit their report to the parish within a month after the Diocesan Assembly . . ." etc., rather than "Parish Council," as the Diocesan Delegates previously were reporting to the Parish Council. Also on page 25, the statement "Arthur Otchy commended the Sunday School for their self-sufficiency and surplus" was corrected to read ". . . Armenian School . . ." Vicki Ganan moved to accept the Minutes as corrected. Motion was seconded and passed.

Chairman Ouzoonian called balloting closed at 1:32 p.m. An announcement was made by Susan Stoneson re the Lenten Dinner and Service by the Women's Guild and Church School on February 17. The Assembly Chairman thanked Alicia Demirjian and her committee of the Women's Guild for the delicious lunch served prior to the meeting.

After some discussion, George Mekenian made the following motion: "In order to assist the Nominating Committee which also serves as the Elections Committee in completing its time-consuming task of tallying the votes, the Assembly Chairman appoint two members from the floor to help them today." Motion was seconded and passed. Chairman Ouzoonian appointed Hagop Barsoumian and Aren Jebejian to assist with the tallying.

Chairman Ouzoonian expressed appreciation to Father Arnak for his efforts in behalf of our parish during the preceding year and the many years he has been with us and called upon him for his annual report. Father Arnak thanked the members of the Parish Council and all the church organizations, officers, and various parishioners for their contributions to the parish this past year. He then read his report on the sacramental and pastoral activities for 1977 as included in the distributed Annual Report. Chairman Ouzoonian asked if there were any questions or comments on the Pastor's report. Peter Jamgochian noted that Father Arnak conducted services at Camp Nubar one day during the past summer and this might be added to his report.

Frank Avakian Stoneson, Parish Council Chairman, was introduced to give the report of the Parish Council for 1977. Frank thanked the members of the parish for their support and enthusiasm this past year and proceeded to give a comprehensive report of Parish Council activities. He reviewed the responsibilities of the respective Parish Council members and the achievements of the Parish Council in various areas. Under fund-raising and social activities, special recognition was given to Bazaar Co-Chairmen Michel Izmirly and Dorothy Otchy and Car Raffle Chairman, Zaven Poosikian, as well as to all those who had chaired or assisted with the various church events the past year. He reported we have 357 pledging members. More income from pledges was stressed as a continual goal. The Memorial gifts received this past year were mentioned, including an anonymous donation of \$5,000 to be used to benefit our youth. The need to support our youth was emphasized. Reference was made to some of the new programs in our parish this year, including an evening adult Christian Education series, an adult Armenian School, and the organization of an ACYOA Seniors group. Recommendations for the year 1978 were also submitted. The Parish Council report concluded with a grateful acknowledgment of the financial generosity and physical efforts of the parish members and the Armenian community for supporting the 1977 programs and activities of St. Thomas Church. The full report of the Parish Council is in the distributed Annual Report. Chairman Ouzoonian commended the efforts of the Parish Council and asked if there were any comments or questions on the Parish Council report. Vicki Ganan asked for a standing ovation for Frank Avakian Stoneson, our Parish Council Chairman for the past two years, and it was accorded him.

There was considerable discussion as to whether there were sufficient Parish Council members present and on duty on Sunday mornings to fulfill Parish Council responsibilities in the vestibule, in the church, and in the Parish Council office. The consensus seemed to be that the number should be increased. A clearer delineation of tasks appropriate to elected Parish Council members and those which might be performed by former Parish Council members, parish elders, or designated other persons was recommended.

Father Arnak said some persons have asked why his name is not on the ballot for election this year as pastor as they thought pastors are to be reaffirmed every five years, and it has been five years since he was last reaffirmed. Father Arnak reported he has spoken to the Primate on this matter. Evidently there had been a request five years ago that the vote of confirmation be held, but it does not necessarily have to be done every five years. At any time the parish wishes, it can bring this matter up for consideration. Chairman Ouzoonian asked for a standing vote of confidence for Father Arnak, and it was soundly given.

Frank Avakian Stoneson mentioned the reception held the previous evening to express appreciation to the Choir and Deacons, saying that when someone does a job we should express our thanks, and proceeded to thank Dikris Malool, our volunteer church secretary, and presented her with a gift on behalf of the Parish Council.

Louise Kalemkerian remarked that Frank Avakian Stoneson should be commended for a thorough Parish Council report.

Hagop Jebejian asked for clarification about the anonymous \$5,000 memorial donation to be used for future facilities for our youth. Father Arnak replied the person who made the donation had said he would be elaborating more in the future on the use of the funds.

Vahan Barsamian verified that the Auditing Committee consisting of Artemis Nazarian, Andrew Sahagian, and himself had reviewed the Treasurers' books and found them in good order. The Assembly Chairman asked if the Auditing Committee had reviewed the financial records of the church organizations as requested by the previous Annual Parish Assembly. Vahan reported the Auditing Committee had looked at the organizations' books for the year 1976 as requested and found them to be in good order. For this year, the Auditing Committee looked at the Treasurers' records of the Parish Council, Women's Guild, and ACYOA, but was unable to get to the other organizations. Discussion followed on the responsibilities of the Auditing Committee and establishing a procedure for fulfilling these responsibilities. George Mekenian moved that the Auditing Committee review the records of the Parish Council and all church organizations every six months with the guidance of the Parish Council Treasurer. Motion was seconded and passed. Paul Varbedian recommended that if we follow this practice, perhaps we should have four members on the Auditing Committee so that the members can work in teams of two. Rose Mekenian suggested that for this year at least, the Alternate Auditor might fulfill this function. Chairman Ouzoonian asked that the Auditing Committee also follow up on the motion passed at the 1977 Annual Parish Assembly that the Auditing Committee in consultation with the Parish Council devise a financial statement format to be used by all our church organizations to insure uniformity in the annual financial reports.

Paul Varbedian, Parish Council Treasurer, gave the financial report for 1977 at this time. He thanked Assistant Treasurer Noubar Kazarian for his valuable assistance during the year and also the other Parish Council members who helped with the financial aspects this past year. The income and disbursements for 1977 were reviewed. In the 1977 budget we projected income for \$93,100 and our actual income was \$118,697. Our disbursements were budgeted at \$104,450 and actually were \$112,381. Our mortgage balance as of December 31, 1977, was \$149,368 and our bank balance as of that date, \$37,977. Paul noted income went over the budgeted expectations by approximately \$25,000 primarily because of a Building, Equipment, and Grounds Committee transfer of \$7,000, increased Bazaar income, and a \$5,000 donation earmarked for youth facilities, while he also pointed out that the need to spend approximately \$20,000 this past year for further roof and ceiling repairs contributed to the higher disbursements than anticipated. More work on our roof and ceiling remains to be done. Paul informed us the format of the financial statements was reconstructed to conform to the financial reports required by the Diocese. Yerezgin Violet asked where the Church School funds are shown. Noubar Kazarian explained that because of the number of transactions involved in connection with the Church School, a few years ago it was felt that the Church School should have its own treasurer and keep its own records. The Church School financial report should appear with its annual report each year, and Louise Kalemkerian said this would be done next year.

The proposed budget of \$118,600 for 1978 was presented by Paul Varbedian, who then answered questions on the budget. Paul explained it was felt by the Parish Council the current status of our Reserve Funds permits projecting a deficit budget of \$8,400 for the coming year. Income is projected at \$110,200. He said the last item on the disbursements page of the proposed budget for \$19,000 under Building, Equipment, and Grounds is the key difference between the 1977 and 1978 budgets. In response to an inquiry about Building, Equipment, and Grounds Committee funds, Noubar Kazarian stated there is approximately \$8,000 in that account. It was suggested a Building, Equipment, and Grounds Committee report be made available to the parish through the mails. Chairman Ouzoonian thanked Paul Varbedian for his outstanding work as Parish Council Treasurer for several years. Louise Kalemkerian moved that the proposed budget for 1978 be approved. Motion was seconded and passed.

The report of our Diocesan Delegates was then accepted as included in the distributed Annual Report. It was noted that the Diocesan Delegates presented a report of the 1977 Diocesan Assembly to the parish at a Special Parish Meeting in May as requested last year. Appreciation was expressed to our Delegates.

Chairman Ouzoonian then recognized the chairman or a representative from each of our church organizations which submitted reports to the Annual Parish Assembly as included in the distributed Annual Report. He thanked all of our church organizations and officers for their efforts this past year.

The results of the elections were announced at this time. There were 131 ballots cast. Those elected were, in alphabetical order:

PARISH COUNCIL: Victor Arzoomanian, Vahan Barsamian, Samuel Demirjian, Charles Doudoukjian, Albert Victoria, with Jack Bendian as alternate.

DIOCESAN DELEGATES: Victor Arzoomanian, Arthur Azarik, Caspar Kasparian, George Mekenian, with Joseph Kalemkerian as first alternate and Hagop Jebejian as second alternate.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE FOR 1979 ASSEMBLY: Arman Ajamian, Harry Chakmakian, Ara Martin, Rose Mekenian, Zaven Poosikian, with Peter Mason as alternate.

AUDITORS: Michel Izmirly, Artemis Nazarian, Andrew Sahagian, with Henry Hagopian as alternate.

OFFICERS OF 1979 ASSEMBLY: George Mekenian, Chairman; Joseph Kalemkerian, Vice Chairman; Alin Papazian, Secretary; Eugenia Amerkanian, Assistant Secretary

Congratulations were extended to those elected and thanks given to all who were willing to have their names placed in nomination. Appreciation was also expressed to the Nominations and Elections Committee.

The proposal submitted by the Parish Council that the chairmen of all church organizations be members of St. Thomas Armenian Church was explained by Frank Avakian Stoneson. There was considerable discussion on this item interspersed with various motions. Caspar Kasparian moved it be resolved that "This Assembly recommend to each organization within the church that at least the chairman of that organization be a member of St. Thomas Church." The motion was seconded. Victor Arzoomanian moved that this resolution be tabled and the Parish Council review this whole matter. The motion to table was seconded and then defeated. Caspar Kasparian later amended his motion to the following: "This Assembly directs the Parish Council to inform each of the bodies of this church that the Parish Assembly recommends that the chairman of all organizations be a member of St. Thomas." The motion was seconded. George Mekenian proposed an amendment to this motion to delete the word "recommends" and substitute "directs that beginning with their next election". The amendment was seconded and passed. The final amended resolution which read "This Assembly directs the Parish Council to inform each of the bodies of this church that the Parish Assembly directs that beginning with their next election, the chairman of all organizations be a member of St. Thomas," was voted upon and passed.

A proposal by George Mekenian that the Nominating Committee shall obtain the consent of all candidates prior to submitting a slate for election was put into the form of a motion, seconded, and passed.

Joseph Kalemkerian made the point that it was inappropriate to schedule certain events during Lent, and we should remain cognizant of this.

There was a motion by Arthur Azarik to end the meeting. The Assembly was adjourned with a closing prayer by Father Arnak at 4:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose Mekenian

Rose Mekenian
Secretary

Arnak Kasparian

Rev. Arnak Kasparian
President

Antranig Ouzoonian

Antranig Ouzoonian
Chairman