

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY OF ST. THOMAS ARMENIAN CHURCH  
SECOND SESSION

Sunday, February 5, 1984

The meeting was called to order by Assembly Chairman Andy Ouzoonian at 1:15 p.m. in the Church hall. The minutes from last year's Parish Assembly were read by Assembly Secretary Sona Damergy. A motion to accept the minutes as read was made by Sam Demirjian and seconded by George Mekenian.

Ed Parseghian verified the eligibility of all voters. Everyone was reminded that balloting was open until 2 p.m. and everyone eligible should exercise his right to vote.

Chairman Ouzoonian called upon Parish Council Chairman Peter Ajemian for highlights of the Parish Council Report. Mr. Ajemian stated that he felt everyone did a terrific job this year and he was proud to have been a part of it. Many important things happened this year like the implementation of a new church bulletin program for churchgoers on Sunday mornings. We have had a new heating system put in and now enjoy a warm church, hall and classrooms.

Under the able direction of Sam Demirjian, our greeters program continues to be successful.

The vandalism of our church was unfortunate, however, Virginia Victoria helped immensely by going back and forth to the Police Department. As a result, the police are now giving us increased surveillance. In addition, Congressman Toricelli came to present our church with a new flag because ours was ruined during the vandalism.

The A.C.Y.O.A. was very fortunate this year to have had the Martaians and Keosayians as advisors.

Der Arnak led a meeting at our church to discuss the situation of the clergy in Jerusalem.

Ara Martaian is our new membership chairman.

As a first for St. Thomas, our office equipment has been updated by the I.B.M. Computer donated so generously by Mr. Rupen Saddler. St. Thomas continues to give grants for our St. Nersess participants and Der Hair has established a volunteer secretary program.

Our intra-church participation this year included the One World Festival and also joint Halloween and New Year's Programs with St. Leon's, Holy Cross and St. Mary's. The proceeds of the Halloween and New Year's programs were donated to St. Nersess.

Virginia Victoria has continued a fine job for our rental program and the St. Thomas junior choir continues to learn Sharagans under the capable leadership of Lillian Kasparian.

We had a successful cotillion with Shakae Shahinian as chairperson.

The car raffle was held during the Memorial Day Picnic with Zaven Poosikian as chairman.

The One World Festival was under the able leadership of Eli Karalian.

Mr. Edward Bashian continues to chair our rug sales.

The Bazaar was under the leadership of Victor Arzoomanian.

Our Stewardship Program is being led by Al Victoria and Douglas Tashjian.

Edward Bashian made a correction that the rug sales are under the direction of Michel Izmirly and Mary Ann Saraydarian.

Mr. Ajemian then presented certificates to deserving parishioners. He called Shakae Shahinian to come forward and asked for a round of applause for a job well done as Cotillion Chairlady.

This year's picnic chairpersons Paul and Marion Kahaumjian were thanked by Der Hair and Peter Ajemian.

Zaven Poosikian was called forward and thanked for the successful car raffle which brought \$12,000.00 to our church.

Lillian Kasparian was called forward and thanked for directing the junior choir.

Joseph Kalemkerian was commended for teaching the Altar service and because he could not be present, his wife Louise accepted with thanks for her husband.

Dikris Malool was thanked for being Der Hair's right hand person and commended for being a fine and giving person.

Eli Karalian was commended for putting in a hard weekend at the One World Festival.

Paul Pinajian was commended for his service to the Parish Council in the past two years.

Sam Demirjian was praised for completion of his term of six years on Parish Council and the fantastic job in the Narthex. Parish Council has appointed Sam Demirjian and Tish Basmajian as permanent Narthex Coordinator and Assistant Coordinator for our church.

Der Arnak said a prayer for the souls of our departed members. At 2 p.m. the polling was declared terminated.

Ardis Kasparian on behalf of the Auditing Committee, reported that everything was in order.

Chairman Ouzoonian thanked the Luncheon Committee made up of Ann Ajemian, Alicia Demirjian, Lucy Nakashian, Anna Zakar, Alyce Parseghian and Violet Kasparian for their help in preparing and serving.

Grace Hagopian was called forward to give bottom line numbers on income and disbursements that were on sheets.

The question of A.C.E.F. mentioned on the last line was brought up and explained by Michel Izmirly. It seems an error was made last year, \$6,000.00 from the Tashjian fund went as an income to In Lieu of Flowers. At the end of the year, someone questioned the error and it was adjusted to the Diocese as A.C.E.F.

Louise Kalemkerian asked that the proposed budget for Sunday School be increased because Sunday School would have considerable book store bills. Mrs. Kalemkerian moved to increase the budget to \$2,000.00 from \$500.00. The motion was carried.

Chairman Ouzoonian called for adoption of the budget if there were no further questions or discussion.

Michel Izmirly made a motion to accept the income budget for 1984. It was seconded by George Mekenian.

Paul Murad raised the question of why we had \$232,000.00 and \$207,000.00 on the other side. Michel Izmirly explained that 1983 A.C.E.F. money was the large amount so the surplus for 1984 was brought down to \$211,000.00 for 1984. The Bazaar from 1982 fell to 1983 and thus we had an overlap of monies.

A motion was made to accept the budget. It was voted on and so carried.

Chairman Ouzoonian asked for comments on the following funds and organizations:  
CASPER M. KASPARIAN MEMORIAL FUND:

Yeretzgin Violet Kasparian said the committee should be commended for all the assistance to the youth of our parish.

BUILDING COMMITTEE:

George Mekenian recognized the leadership of Nazar Nazarian, a great leader, through a difficult year of making alterations to existing facilities compounded

by the fact that the architect was changed to retain Edward Luders. All necessary documents have been filed and neighbors have been notified for changes in zoning. Moses Kazanjian asked if he could also participate. He made suggestions as to how to answer questions at the hearing on February 15. Mr. Mekenian also said the Building Committee has decided to press forward with air conditioning the church. They hope to be ready this spring to go forward with the building project.

Chairman Ouzoonian said preliminary plans have been approved by the assembly and now we are hoping for final approval from various government agencies.

The booklet was introduced by George Mekenian about the project. Copies of it and a request for pledges will be sent out to all parishioners. The name of the booklet is "Fundraising Campaign for Expansion Project." Mr. Avakian's preliminary work on drawings have been taken over by Mr. Luters. The plans in the booklet are a concept which is a basis on which we are going for the zoning, but we still need detail work from a contractor.

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE: no comment.

A.C.E.F.: no comment.

TRUSTEES REPORT: no comment.

A.C.Y.O.A. JRS.:

Ara Martaian asked why \$1,000.00 was made at the bazaar and was not included in the figures. Paula Keosayian explained that a transfer of funds has not taken place. Jack Ekizian said money was going to be transferred to the church. Yeretzgin said there was no report of disbursements.

A.C.Y.O.A. SRS.: no comment.

ARMENIAN LANGUAGE SCHOOL REPORT: Michel Izmirly commented that it was nicely done.

AVAKS: no comment.

CHOIR: no comment.

MEN'S CLUB: no comment.

WOMEN'S GUILD:

Rose Mekenian in retyping, omitted one line and should be inserted. On page 21 between "and" and "coffee" please insert refreshments Easter Eve - we are pleased to continue the serving of.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: no comment.

ALTAR SERVERS TRAINING PROGRAM: no comment.

Michel Izmirly made a motion to accept all reprotos submitted, as amended. This was seconded by Sam Demirjian and carried.

RESULTS OF THE BALLOTING:

Lillian Kasparian reported that she would like to thank the nominating committee and Der Hair for their assistance. She also thanked the candidates who accepted to run. There were 134 votes cast and counting went smoothly with the help of the computerized machine. The votes were as follows:

PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS

Peter Ajemian	120	Grace Hagopian	93	Arax Parseghian	85
Virginia Victoria	95	Karekin Bedrosian	66		
<u>Alternate</u> - John Zakar	56				

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Victor Arzoomanian	87	Edward Bashian	73	Sam Demirjian	61
Martha Saraydarian	74	Shakae Shahinian	78		
<u>Alternate</u> - Ara Martaian	59				

AUDITING COMMITTEE

Roxie Daghljian	77	Ardis Kasparian	82
Dikris Malool	88		
<u>Alternate</u> - Stephen Jarahian	55		

OFFICERS FOR 1984 ASSEMBLY

<u>Chairman</u>		<u>Secretary</u>	
George Mekenian	89	Mary Ann Saraydarian	96

CONFIRMATION OF MEMBERS OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Edward Bashian, Michel Izmirly, George Mekenian. Yes- unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Peter Ajemian explained that Rupen Saddler is known by almost all parishioners. He is a dynamic man who over the course of the years has done much for our church. He well deserves the following resolution:

Whereas, for his continued active membership since the inception of the St. Thomas Armenian Church, and

Whereas during all this time, his continued physical and material contributions, that were above and beyond the norm helped us maintain our Church, and

Whereas, recognizing his achievements and contributions, the Building Committee, the Board of Trustees and the Parish Council, each at their respective meetings, voted unanimously that Therefore it be resolved that the present St. Thomas Hall be named "The Rupen & Leon Saddler Hall"

Following the reading of the resolution, a standing ovation was given to Mr. Saddler. The resolution was voted on and carried unanimously.

On the issue of the additional \$150,000.00 to update St. Thomas facilities, George Mekenian reminded the assembly that in September of 1982 we approved the idea of adding on to our existing facilities. A budget of \$250,000.00 was approved by special assembly. We see that after 24 years of use of our church and hall these structures need more work than originally brought forth and approved. The following resolution was read by George Mekenian:

Proposed that the budget cap of \$250,000.00 attached to the Building Expansion approved on September 26, 1982 be amended by \$150,000.00 to permit the parish to undertake the additional facilities and improvements such as air conditioning the church and hall as well as the numerous repairs and redecorating to upgrade, beautify and restore our buildings and grounds.

George Mekenian made a motion to increase allocation of \$250,000.00 by \$150,000.00. Al Victoria seconded the motion. The assembly was reminded also that \$300,000.00 of the monies had already been pledged.

Michel Izmirly brought up the question of whether there were enough eligible voters still present at the meeting, "we need fifty voters for a quorum and because of the snow many people have left." The eligible members were counted and 58 eligible members were still present. It was voted on and unanimously carried.

Mr. Edward Parseghian was called upon to speak about a proposal made by The Parish Council to raise the church membership dues. He brought out several points in his report:

The first point was that our church budget comes mainly from fund-raising activities and that our pledges comprise a very low percentage of the budget. It was brought out that our church has been accused of constantly emphasizing the monetary. Local merchants have complained that our rug sales and bazaars have affected them.

The second point brought out was a comparison of our membership dues to that of the sister churches in our area. Our dues have remained \$25.00 since the

inception of our church. A proposal was made by the Parish Council that dues of \$100.00 per person or \$200.00 per family would help cover diocesan dues in addition to having some funds left for St. Thomas.

Mr. Edward Bashian commented that the presentation was done beautifully, however, he said he opposed it. He added that he felt the church would survive from our income from other functions. He suggested not to rush into doing something we may regret later, that if the Parish Council saw fit, perhaps the dues could be raised to \$50.00 per member which would be \$100.00 per family.

Artemis Nazarian made a motion that senior citizens should have a \$50.00 membership rate. Peter Ajemian seconded it.

He went on to say that St. Thomas should not be known as the big boy's church and that everyone should take part. He said he felt it was about time for us to raise our dues and carry ourselves. He reminded the assembly that anyone who could not afford \$2.00 per week per member should just go to Der Hair and no one would ever know about it and those individuals could be voting members.

Chairman Ouzoonian reminded the assembly of Artemis' original motion. In this regard, Der Hair made a comment that in our community it seemed that it is the newly married couples who are really pressed for money and not the senior citizens.

Virginia Victoria stepped forth to say a few words about the minimum dues. She commented that we can all well afford \$2.00 per person a week.

Mr. Edward Bashian asked how many paid members we have in our church. Ed Parseghian answered that we have 231 families and 69 singles in our parish, out of which 46 families and 11 singles are unpaid, a total of 35% of our parish.

Mr. Parseghian made an estimate and informed that an additional 7 to 8 thousand would come from pledges next year if dues were raised to 100.00 per member.

Mr. Bashian asked that it should be recorded in the minutes that implementation of the new membership dues would have lots of setbacks. He would oppose the idea of \$100.00 per member.

Chairman Ouzoonian reminded him that a motion was on the floor seconded by Peter Ajemian that the annual dues be raised to \$100.00 per member.

Frank Stoneson said he does not object to the motion but wonders whether this is the answer to our problem. He went on to state that 7 to \$8,000.00 per year would not mean that much to our budget. He said that more attention and time should be given to our stewardship program and membership drives. He suggested that we devote more time to devising a system to get new members and educate our members to give voluntarily and not by force.

Paul Kahaumjian asked if we are still required to pay Diocesan dues for people who haven't paid their dues. Chairman Ouzoonian verified that we are at present paying for members who have not paid. Mr. Kahaumjian said we should remove those names from the church list.

Peter Ajemian clarified the meaning of membership after the question was brought up as to why there is a differentiation between voting member and non voting member. Mr. Ajemian said that no one would be denied membership in our church. If one wants to be a voting member however, a person must meet his obligation so the church can meet its obligation to the diocese. If one does not desire to be a voting member, he can be a pledgee and give less.

Alyce Parseghian commented that a \$25.00 member is subsidized by St. Thomas and that even a \$50.00 member would not leave us much to operate after diocesan dues were taken out. She made the point that if more money was raised from pledges, perhaps we wouldn't have to set our goals as high for each fund-raising event.

Artemis Nazarian withdrew her original amendment for senior citizens to pay only \$50.00.

George Mekenian made a motion that college students over 18 should be required to pay only \$50.00.

Chairman Ouzoonian asked if there was any discussion on that amendment.

Virginia Victoria commented that she did not agree on the basis that colleges raise their tuitions and we do not withdraw our children from school.

Louise Kalemkerian asked for a clarification of the words family membership. Peter Ajemian said that family meant Mr. and Mrs. which would be \$200.00. Children 18 years of age must pay \$100.00 also.

George Mekenian reminded the assembly that an exception had been made for students over 18 years of age who were not working to be granted membership as still part of the family. He said he believed it was in 1974 or 1975.



Chairman Ouzoonian called for a vote on the amendment that college students be allowed to pay \$50.00 for membership. He clarified that there is no family membership. It was strictly on an individual basis. A vote was taken on the amendment. The amendment was defeated.

Michel Izmirly asked if we had a quorum. He said he counted and there were not fifty people present. George Mekenian made a point of order that a quorum was needed for procedural items only to start the meeting.

Chairman Ouzoonian repeated the question and called for a vote on raising the annual dues from \$25.00 to \$100.00 per person. The motion was carried.

The next order of business was approval of the payoff of a \$7,000.00 mortgage on the parish house and approval of the payoff of a \$9,000.00 mortgage on the church.

Peter Ajemian explained that the parish house has a balloon mortgage due on October 1983. A consent is needed to pay it off. It is a 13% unit.

The mortgage on the church is a \$9,000.00 mortgage at 9½%. It is due January 1985, but consent from the Parish Assembly is needed to pay it off if the rates fall lower than that. Mr. Ajemian made it a motion and it was seconded by George Mekenian.

The first vote was taken on approval of the payoff of the \$7,000.00 mortgage of the parish house. Approval was voted unanimously.

The second vote was taken on approval of the payoff of the \$9,000.00 mortgage on the church in January 1985. The motion was carried.

A motion to adjourn was made by Peter Ajemian at 3:32 p.m. The motion was seconded by Virginia Victoria and carried.

The assembly adjourned with a closing prayer by Der Arnak.

Sona Damergy  
Sona Damergy  
Recording Secretary

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Antranig Ouzoonian  
Chairman

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Rev. Arnak Kasparian  
President

Approved and Ratified:

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