

ST. THOMAS ARMENIAN CHURCH
33rd PARISH ASSEMBLY
SESSION II, FEBRUARY 1, 1998

Chairman Leon Nigohosian opened the meeting and asked Madlen Setian and Eugenie Amerkanian to establish a quorum. He asked all those eligible to vote to raise their hands. Mrs. Setian and Mrs. Amerikanian verified that there was a quorum present.

Fr. Papken delivered the opening prayer.

Chairman Nigohosian announced that nominations for office were closed last week (Session I) by a two-thirds vote. Therefore, there would be no nominations from the floor for any office. The procedure for speaking is to hold up yellow voters cards and when recognized give one's name and membership number. He further announced that the Voting Membership List is available for inspection during voting and that said list may be found at the ballot box table and the Secretary's table during the meeting.

Voting is to start at the beginning of recess and continue until 2:00p.m. Anyone on line at 2:00p.m. will be allowed to cast his or her ballot. Nominating and Auditing Committee members are to accept and count the ballots.

Chairman Nigohosian asked for a recess for voting and lunch and asked voters to pick up copies of addendums to the Parish Report.

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The meeting was reconvened at 2:15 p.m. by Chairman Nigohosian who thanked the lunch committee. He asked for reconfirmation of a quorum as voting cards had not been given out earlier. It was re-established that a quorum was indeed present.

Madlen Setian made a motion to close the polls. It was seconded by Mary Sanossian and motion carried.

Chairman Nigohosian asked for any additions, corrections or changes to last year's minutes. Martha Saraydarian noted that on page 3, fifth paragraph, a typographical error was made in that the

amount \$100.00 should read \$100,000.00. Ara Babigian wanted to know why his question concerning the number of St. Thomas members was not in the minutes. Secretary Martha Saraydarian responded that her understanding is that the minutes contain motions, proposals and the essence of topics discussed. Chairman Nigohosian further stated that these minutes are not to be recorded verbatim.

Sylva Torosian made a motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes from 1997. Zaven Halajian seconded and the motion carried.

Ara Babigian had requested a 1997 membership list at Session I of the Parish Assembly the previous week. He asked the status of that request. Hayr Papken responded that we have two membership lists. One contains names and addresses only. The other is a Voting Membership List which is what Mr. Babigian requested. New Jersey Corporations Law, Section 15A : 5-8 states that a Voting Membership List must be produced at the time and place of a meeting. The St. Thomas Voting Membership List was, and is, made available to anyone wanting to inspect it. The law further states that the Voting Membership List may not be taken off the premises. Hayr Papken continued that on many occasions Mr. Babigian had been given the Membership List which the Diocese allows to be distributed. Hayr Soorp produced 8 receipts signed by Mr. Babigian between 1994 and 1996 when he had either been given a copy of the allowable Membership List or inspected the Voting Membership List.

After Session I on January 25, 1998, a Membership List was prepared for Mr. Babigian. He did not take it and insisted he wanted to take the Voting Membership List, which is not allowed to be taken off the premises.

Shake Shahinian asked for further clarification between the two lists. Hayr Soorp explained that the Voting Membership List shows that a member has paid his/her dues and has the right to vote whereas the Membership List gives name, address, and phone number and is synonymous to a mailing list.

Chairman Nigohosian proceeded to the agenda and invited V. Rev. Fr. Papken Dz. V. Anoushian to give his report. Fr. Anoushian stated that as everyone had the written copy he would not read it but would be happy to answer any questions. He thanked Dr. Levon Capan, Parish Council Chairman, Grace Hagopian, Treasurer, Susan Shamamian, Corresponding Secretary, Arpi Arslanian and Ann

Ajemian for their invaluable service. Dr. Capan, Grace Hagopian and Susan Shamamian completed their six years of service.

Ara Babigian suggested a newsletter be sent to parishioners as very often the information in the Nor Tar is outdated by the time it reaches the people. Hayr Soorp responded that an effort will be made to rectify the situation.

Referring to the Calendar of Events, Rose Mekenian asked that the Women's Guild 40th Anniversary Membership Tea on October 15th be added to it. She also noted that between April and June the word May was inadvertently omitted.

Chairman Nigohosian invited Parish Council Chairman, Dr. Levon Capan to give his report. Dr. Capan showed a slide presentation of the church's financial picture comparing 1991 when Hayr Soorp arrived, to the present. Today the treasury has almost 2 1/2 times more than it did in 1991 with a \$85,000 surplus. In this same time period, St. Thomas was able to burn its mortgage and repair the roof. Dr. Capan gave credit for this increase to Hayr Papken, Parish Council members and all the members of St. Thomas Church for their support and expressed appreciation for the economic manner in which church funds were used.

Dr. Capan proceeded to introduce and thank the following Parish Council Members:

Mari Camcikyan	Vice Chairman
Grace Hagopian	Treasurer
Madlen Setian	Assistant Treasurer
Arpi Arslanian	Recording Secretary
Susan Shamamian	Corresponding Secretary
Richard Saraydarian	
Leon Nigohosian	
Onnig Bozian	
Jack Torosian	
Ann Ajemian	

Dr. Capan stated the great pleasure he has had working with Hayr Papken, most especially this past year when their productivity level increased appreciably. He praised Hayr Soorp for adhering to the tenets and canons of the Armenian Church and commented that it is our obligation to turn the church to the next generation the way we received it.

With regard to the 1997 Diocesan Assembly Report, Rose Mekenian stated: "Aware that persons look to the Parish Annual Reports and Assembly Minutes for archival material when they need historical information for the record, I respectfully request the following be added to the Diocesan Assembly Report, page 11, in our Parish Annual Report this year. 'ADDENDUM: At the 1997 Diocesan Assembly, Rose Mekenian completed her four-year term of service on the Diocesan Council. Mrs. Mekenian also has served as a Diocesan Representative to the National Ecclesiastical Assembly and in 1995 went to Etchmiadzin to participate in the election of a new Catholicos.' This is submitted as a motion." Al Victoria seconded and motion carried.

Chairman Nigohosian called upon Grace Hagopian to give the financial summary. He complimented Mrs. Hagopian on the extraordinary job she has done as treasurer. Mrs. Hagopian proceeded to review various corrections: Page 24, the A.C.E.F. Fund, Tashjian, Martin(Sonny) Memorial Fund should read \$8,935.00 because of an additional donation, making the final A.C.E.F. total \$131,005.51; Page 25, Caspar M. Kasparian Memorial Fund , the line stating Total Disbursements of \$1,385.00 was omitted during typing; Page 26, George Shahinian Memorial Fund Balance on hand 12/31/97 should read \$2,114.00 changing the Balance on hand 12/31/97 to \$2,655.02; Page 27, Peter Ajemian Sr. Memorial Scholarship Fund the Principal at ACEF should read \$5,000.00. The \$81.25 is 1993 ACEF interest. The 1995 ACEF interest should read \$312.50 with Balance on Hand 12/31/97 being \$5,000.00 in ACEF and \$631.00 in St. Thomas treasury; Page 16 under Other Income, item Interest on Savings, eliminate computer error +A451. As there were no questions on any of the exhibits, Mrs. Hagopian proceeded to the 1998 Budget.

Mrs. Hagopian noted that under Auxiliary Organizations, Women's Guild, the 1997 Actual is less than the 1997 Proposed because the Guild pre-paid part of their 1997 pledge in 1996. The Avak Society gave \$600.00 during the Bazaar Cake Sale but it was actually part of their pledge for 1997. The Men's Club did in actuality make a payment of \$4,000.00 for 1997.

In reference to Investment Income (pg 21) under Other Income, Mr. Victoria asked if the \$12,000.00 is all from our Smith Barney investments, and if so, that represents only a 4% return. Mrs. Hagopian responded that the entire amount placed with Smith Barney was not invested all at one time at the beginning of the year but was staggered. All our C.D's are yielding 5% or more.

Under Operating Expenses, Shake Shahinian questioned Rental Coordinator, stating that in the past it has always been a function of the Parish Council to rent out the hall. Dr. Capan answered that in keeping with the Parish Council's duty to operate the hall rentals as profitably as possible, they felt profits could be increased with a coordinator who is given a percentage of the hall rental. He further stated that, in fact, the amounts have increased from \$30,000.00 in 1995 to \$60,000.00 in 1996 to \$85,000.00 in 1997. The Parish Council decision was made in March/April of 1997 and was made retroactive to January 1, 1997.

Al Victoria questioned the authority of the Parish Council to spend more than \$5000.00 on a single item without the approval of the Parish Assembly. Dr. Capan responded that it is not a flat fee but is on a contingency basis. Therefore, there is no way to tell beforehand if, in a given year, the amount will be more or less than \$5000.00.

Violet Ouzoonian expressed concern that the facilities not be left unattended when they are rented. Dr. Capan explained that very often when renting to very large groups or to clients we do not know, either the coordinator or a Parish Council member is present.

Moving on to Church Building Expenses, Mrs. Hagopian stated that last year on corrections to the budget, we had decided to increase Repairs Church & Halls to \$8,100.00. Only \$6,500.00 appears because \$1,600.00 was placed under Repairs Building & Grounds as expenses occurred for that category.

Under Church Building Expenses, Insurance, Andy Ouzoonian asked if the parsonage is included. It is. He commented on the huge difference between Proposed 1997 and Actual 1997. Mrs. Hagopian responded that we are dealing with a different company and that the Actual figure represents three-quarters of the year because of the change in companies. She also stated that our umbrella policy covers us for all and every hall rental and activity.

Shake Shahinian commented that there is no money appropriated for St. Nersess Seminary. The response was that the Casper Kasparian Memorial Endowment Fund allocates some monies for that purpose, but there is not a separate item in the budget for that purpose.

Virginia Victoria made a motion that a line item be included in the budget in the amount of \$1,000.00 to be used all or in part for any disasters that may occur in the world. At the end of the year, any

unspent monies would go to a charity in Armenia to be decided by the Parish Council. Varoujan Aslanian seconded. Motion carried 23 for and 19 against.

Violet Kasparian made a motion that the Parish Council make a commitment to continue the sponsorship of our three CASP children until they are 18 years of age. Shake Shahinian seconded. The motion was defeated.

Dr. Capan made a motion that parish members be asked to pay, on a voluntary basis, \$5.00 per person to be used for "world wide charities" (i.e., the line item of \$1,000.00 added to the 1998 budget). Hovsep Taktajian seconded and motion carried.

There ensued a great deal of discussion about the pros and cons of the three motions described above, after which Natalie Capan made a motion to rescind the motion made by Virginia Victoria to add \$1,000.00 to the budget for charitable purposes. Sylva Torosian seconded. Motion carried. Dr. Capan withdrew his motion for a \$5.00 voluntary contribution by parishioners.

Chairman Nigohosian called upon Sirvart Demirjian for an Auditing Report. On Christian Education Treasurer's Report, the beginning balance was omitted during typing, however, it was submitted to the auditing committee during review. An addition error appears in the Expenses column. The figure for Total should read \$6,182.66 and the Ending Balance should read \$609.52. Concerning the Men's Club Treasurer's Report, she noted that there is a discrepancy of \$3083.00 in both the income and expense columns. However, the ending balance is correct. Mrs. Demirjian then stated that the auditing committee examined all financial records of all church organizations, including the St. Thomas church balance sheet, and found no discrepancies. The written report was submitted and signed by herself, Arpi Cankar and Diana Bozian.

Dr. Bedros Yavru-Sakuk made a motion to accept the proposed 1998 budget with an allowance of plus or minus 10%. Hovsep Taktajian seconded and motion carried.

Chairmain Nigohosian made a point of clarification on the Auditing Committee. Diocesan rules call for three persons to be elected on a staggered basis so that every year one of those three people will be coming up for re-election. Thus, Arpi Cankar's term of office expires in 1999, Diana Bozian's expires in 2000 and today's winner's term expires in 2001.

As there was no Old Business, the Chairman proceeded to New Business. Dr. Capan stated that because the church places its monies in various investments, the Parish Council feels that the time has come for these investments to be managed by professional and/or experienced people in order to maximize our income. He made a motion that an Investment Committee be formed consisting of Richard Saraydarian, Ara Arslanian and Gregory Amerkanian. This Committee will report to Parish Council with their advice but will have no independent investment authority. The actual investments will still be made by Parish Council. Grace Hagopian seconded. Susan Shamamian made a motion to amend Dr. Capan's motion in that the name of the Committee be changed to Investment Advisory Committee. Dr. Capan and Grace Hagopian accepted the ammendment.

Albert Victoria expressed reservations feeling that the concept is too open ended and risky. Chairman Nigohosian explained that as it stands now, the Parish Council acts as a fiduciary body and invests the church's money as it sees fit. Further, this Committee would not have any independent investment authority but would merely advise Parish Council, which may or may not take its advice as it sees fit.

Andy Ouzoonian called the question. Motion carried by two-thirds majority. The motion to form an Investment Advisory Committee carried.

Dr. Capan made a motion that the Architectural and Facilities Management guidelines be amended to include the following: Inside the church (sanctuary), any and all structural and other additions, renovations and changes should be done according to the faith, tradition and cannons of the Armenian Church and with the sole approval of the pastor. Any provisions to the contrary in the guidelines of the Architectural Committee shall be considered null and void. Dr. Yavru-Sakuk seconded the motion. Motion carried.

A question was raised as to why St. Thomas does not have an A.C.Y.O.A. SR. group. Violet Ouzoonian suggested a group similiar to that in St. Stepanos for young people be formed. Hayr Soorp responded that a list of names in that age group has been compiled and the formation of a group is being worked on.

Vahan Soukiassian remarked that the church should do its utmost to teach the Bible to the next generation and John Bashian remarked upon the importance of maintaining the customs and traditions of the Armenian Church, while Rose Mekenian stated that we need to try and respect one another.

There were no questions on any of the Organization Reports.



The Chair called for a motion specifying next year's Parish Assembly meetings. Shake Shahinian made a motion that the 1999 Parish Assembly meeting, first session, be held on the last Sunday in January subject to inclement weather and that the second session be held on the first Sunday in February subject to inclement weather. The motion was seconded by Betty Zoraian and carried.

Chairman Nigohosian invited Ms. Bezjian to announce the results of the election. She stated that 138 ballots were cast. The winners are: For Parish Council: Ann Ajemian, Seta Yavru-Sakuk, Avak Pashalian, Hovsep Taktajian, Tavit Cakirdas, Alternate Gregory Amerkanian. For Nominating Committee: Shake Torigian, Eugenie Amerkanian, Lucy Piligian, Mary Zokian, Lucy Ezgilioglu, Alternate Aram Setian. For Auditing Committee: Gregory Amerkanian. For Diocesan Delegate: Dr. Levon Capan, Dr. Haroutune Mekhjian, Gregory Saraydarian, Dr. Bedros Yavru-Sakuk. For Parish Assembly Chairman: Leon Nigohosian. For Secretary: Mary Ann Saraydarian.

The Chairman congratulated the winners and thanked the Nominating and Auditing Committees.

Andy Ouzoonian made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mary Sanossian. The motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned with a closing prayer by V. Rev. Fr. Dz. V. Anoushian.

  Respectfully submitted,
Martha Saraydarian Leon Nigohosian V. Rev. Fr. Papken
Secretary 1998 Chairman 1998 Dz. V. Anoushian
Parish Assembly Parish Assembly Pastor and President
1998 Parish Assembly