

MINUTES OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF THE HOLY ASCENSION
PARISH ASSEMBLY HELD ON JANUARY 25, 1987.

The Annual Parish Assembly of the Armenian Church of the Holy Ascension commenced at 1:40 pm Sunday, January 25, 1987.

Invocation was given by Der Untzag Nalbandian.

Verification of dues-paying members was made by Dr. Berdj Harabedian. There were 49 eligible voting members present constituting a majority.

Richard Khatchian was elected Assembly Chairman and Diana Goomrigan was elected Assembly Secretary.

Minutes of the 1986 Parish Assembly were read and were accepted after an amendment offered: that Theresa Harabedian was ^{Co} chairperson of the Mt. Ararat Bazaar.

Elections of new Parish Council Members, Auditing Committee Members, Nominating Committee Members, and Diocesan Delegate: Nominating Committee member Peter Kapusuzian stated that he and fellow committee members Sonia Trapasso and Theresa Harabedian had a difficult time locating church members willing to run. He stated: "Many are called...few serve." Most refusals were for parish council nominees and many personal reasons were cited. He further explained that those assembled should vote for three names only and nominations would be accepted from the floor. Mrs. Harabedian implored voting members to vote for the most able candidate and that individual must be totally dedicated to the position and ultimately to the Armenian community. She further asked that we consider the person who would be an asset to our church community.

Ballots were distributed to qualified members by the nominating committee since there were no nominations from the floor; and completed ballots collected for the tally.

Pastor's Report was delivered by Der Untzag. Der Untzag stated that he is beginning his fourth year of service to the community and that in 1986 we were able to involve 107 different people in our Parish life. He reiterated the fact the members of the Church community are many times reluctant to accept responsibility when they are asked to participate in Church-related activities. Church activities were listed as were the fact that Der Untzag participated in over 100 meetings, baptisms, home blessings trips, weddings, dinners, funerals. He listed the topics of his Wednesday evening lecture series and added that these were not well-attended even though they were an important educational forum for the Church Community.

We have 7 permanently active organizations and probably another 6-7 temporary committees to handle religious, cultural, social and fund-raising activities.

After two years of work, two side altars, baptismal font and two paintings were donated. The Sunday and Armenian Schools were reorganized and are thriving with promising regular attendance and total dedication of instructors; the Ladies Guild has been reorganized and the number of choir members has increased. For the first time, an exciting event -- the consecration banquet, was committed by eleven young adults.

A new organization was begun; the Hye-Timers is a tool to bring all of our adults -- singles and married couples, together in good fellowship with regular monthly meetings. The new Parish Directory, including photos of parish members is being completed with an outstanding enthusiasm for this project.

Der Untzag reminded us that the Church Community and the Church building is the responsibility of all of us. He asked that we comply with his common-sense requests: showing polite attention to speakers and at meetings; responding to RSVP's on time; showing interest in church activities, not only by attending but by pitching in and helping when we see that help is needed -- both financial and physical.

Cultural activities are a high priority on Der Untzag's list. We will plan a cultural event in April or May, continue educational lectures, and sponsoring a Spring dance and dinner in June.

Der Untzag closed by thanking personally those who are retiring and/or moving from our parish and also praising the leadership of the council members, and Dr. Harabedian who served a Diocesan Delegate.

In conclusion he stated: "Let us continue to seek God's inspiration and strength as we work together to build stronger our Armenian Christian heritage through the family of the Holy Ascension Armenain Church."

Assèbly Chairman Khatchian thanked Der Untzag and asked for comments. Dr. Berdj Harabedian thanked Der Untzag for his love and guidance. He further stated that the parishoners feel close to their Der Hye and expressed hope that he will continue to be our pastor.

Parish Council Report was given by President Mardy Azarian. He reported that 1986 has turned out to be one of the best years for our parish citing an increase in church attendance, better and more active church organizations and many achievements. Activities sponsored and supported by the Council were listed. A new adult "Hye Timers Club" has been formed, rug sales, installation of a new boiler, consecration and installation of 2 side altars with banquet following, 2 new paintings above altars, a projected wheel chair ramp to accommodate disabled parishioners, a new program to raise funds to adorn our church with 10 large paintings at \$2000.00 per painting were some of the items mentioned. Mr. Azarian praised the untiring efforts of Harry Tashjian as supervisor of the following persons who volunteered to paint the wall behind the altars: the Messers Kalfaian, Avakian, Malkasian, Misakian, Garabedian and Zysk; Dr. Harabedian who is solely responsible for the collecting of church dues; and ended his report with thanks and praise for Der Hye and Yerezgin Seta for their efforts and wisdom.

There were two statements made after the report: One from Archie Misakian who stated that Ms. Salpi Mavian, artist, did not donate the two paintings above the side altars; and one from Ginny Kalfaian who suggested that to conserve time during the meeting, ballots should be distributed before after the first roll call, making a second call unnecessary.

Women's Guild Report was given by Chairperson Margaret Azarian. All activities were listed, numbering 29 for the year 1986; these included dinners, monthly meetings, trips, coffee hours and bazaar. Mrs. Azarian thanked her Executive Boad, all of whom agreed to serve the next term, and also thanked Der Hye for his help and moral support to our inexperienced board.

The Women's Guild financial report was offered by Treasurer Rose Avakian who stated that the balance as of January 25th is \$261.66. We began with a balance of \$272.00; revenue from dinners, trips ect. was \$4116.66; the cookbook deduction is \$555.00; leaving a balance of \$3561.66 which was presented in the form of a check to the Parish Trustees. The report was accepted as read.

Theresa Harabedian congratulated the Guild for the large amount of money donated to the Council .

Church Choir Report was presented by Chairperson Vrej Yapoujian. The choir has enjoyed a busy year. Membership has been maintained due to the new members who have replaced those leaving. The church choir has sung during each Sunday service, and during special services during Lent and Holy Week. Rehearsals are held immediately after Badarak. The choir participated in special events such as Martyrs Day Commemoration, Fathers Day Program, and the consecration of the side altars and baptismal font. Palm Sunday has been established through tradition, as Choir Day, the only fund-raising day with a special fund-raising plate and dinner following services.

The Choir financial report was given by treasurer Thomas J. Garabedian. Income for the year 1986 was \$978.40; expenses were listed and a check for \$515.81 was presented to the Parish.

The Sunday School Report was given by Thomas Garabedian for Dora Garabedian who was unable to attend. The school is operating using the team teaching approach. There are four class groups, and teachers meet periodically to discuss progress, and plan for the future. The objectives were listed and all educational activities pertaining to religious education in our church are taught. Students attend church on a rotating every-other-week basis. Bulletin boards have been purchased as a teaching aid, and several diocesan periodicals have been subscribed to. School closed in June with a family picnic and opened the school year with a "Super Sunday Celebration" as well as a coffee hour. The total enrollment numbers 31. The school wishes to purchase a tape recorder, as well as provide Bibles to the students on an individual basis. Mandatory teacher workshop training ensures the highest quality education for the youth of Sunday School age.

The closing balance in a passbook savings account is \$402.02.

The Armenian School Report was presented by School Superintendent Marie Yapoujian. Mrs. Yapoujian reported that there are now six grades and classes are held on Sundays at 10:30 am and last 45 minutes. She expressed hope that at a future date there will be a daytime school of at least three hours in length. Extra sessions are held one Friday every month for social activities. A timely program to celebrate St. Vartanantz Day will be presented to the parish which included songs, poems and dances by the students. She urged support from the church community and thanked the teachers and Der Hyre for their cooperation, and the parents for bringing their children on Sundays and on the extra rehearsal days.

The ACYOA Jrs. Annual Report was submitted by Chairperson Linda Kalfaian. There are eight active members in the organization. Fund-raising activities were listed, as were church activities in which the group assisted other church organizations. The treasurer reports a current savings account balance of \$419.87 and a checking account balance of \$ 79.01. A check was presented to the Parish Council in the amount of \$350.00.

The ACYOA Seniors Report was given by Treasurer Debra A. Tashjian. The checking account balance totals \$234.65 and the savings account balance totals \$15.00. Miss Tashjian stated that the amount to be given by the Seniors to the Parish Council has not as yet been decided upon.

The Cultural Committee Report was submitted by Chairperson Ralph Trapasso who reported that the committee was inactive in 1986. The current balance in the committee treasury is \$512.71.

Bazaar Committee Report was presented by co-chairperson Theresa Harabedian. Congratulations were extended to the committee, her co-chairperson Herbert Avakian and treasurer Ralph Trapasso. There were 17 members of the bazaar committee and the fund-raiser was a success, both financially and socially. The bazaar financial report was distributed by treasurer Ralph Trapasso. The net profit is \$12799.87, \$13000.00 of which was turned over to the Parish Council. \$1514.34 was retained in a fund to be held over for the 1987 Bazaar.

Co-Chairperson Harabedian added a footnote by stressing the advances we have made with reference to the Annual Bazaar since our Der Hyre has been with us. Additionally, a hearty round of applause, led by Eleanor Zysk for Mrs. Harabedian was offered by the assemblage.

Mrs. Harabedian questioned the asterisk concerning the cost of the 1986 Raffle Prize as the last item on the Bazaar Treasurer's Report. Mr. Trapasso explained that the trip has not actually been taken, although it has been claimed. As soon as the prizewinner decides on a date, a check from the committee will be sent to the travel agent to cover the cost of the prize. \$728.00 is being held in escrow to pay for the trip.

The Membership Committee Report was offered by Dr. Berdj Harabedian. Contained in the Committee report were the number of active church members, one hundred and twenty-one during the year 1985 as compared to this year's membership of one hundred sixteen. Dr. Harabedian expressed hope that, due to the many new families moving into our community, that number will increase substantially during 1987. Dr. Harabedian further stated that \$9,523.00 was collected in 1986 yearly church pledges. Mrs. Sonia Trapasso was thanked for her able assistance.

Hye-Timers Report was delivered by Nikki Taraian for Co-Chairpersons Leo J. Malkasian and Nazareth Azarian. This group was formed for the purpose of "bettering the relationship toward one another." Activities enjoyed by the group were mentioned, as were plans for the future.

Highlights of the 84th Annual Diocesan Assembly were presented by Dr. Harabedian. The major event of the Assembly was the re-election of His Eminence, Archbishop Torkom Manoogian as the Primate of the Eastern Diocese. The Primate proposed an internship program for young people of college age who would work with the Diocesan staff. The proposal of the ordination of qualified women to Deacon was passed by the Assembly and will be implemented upon the approval of His Holiness, Vasken I.

Mrs. Harabedian inquired as to the possibility of women being ordained. Der Untzag responded that he had not been notified of any progress in that vein.

The Building Committee Report was given by Richard Khatchian for Edward Jevarjian who was unable to attend. The committee is contemplating making a sizable payment directly on the mortgage principle and donations are expected for this cause. Eight and one-half percent of the mortgage rate is the fixed rate and monthly payments differ because of payment directly towards the principle, not the entire debt. The principle balance due on the mortgage is \$149,294.76 not including \$4,400.00 received in lieu for Hagop Khachadoorian.

Dr. Berdj Harabedian gave the run-down of payments on mortgage. The amount pledged to the building fund was \$103,005.00 and outstanding pledges to be collected are 24,550.00.

The Auditing Committee Report was delivered by committee member Lionel Ketchian. This committee met January 20th, and January 25th. The financial records of the treasurer and all books were declared in order and accepted by the Auditing Committee.

The 1987 Budget was offered by Parish Council member and Treasurer Thomas J. Garabedian. Copies of the 1986 report and proposed budget for fiscal 1987 were distributed to the Assembly and were reviewed by Mr. Garabedian. A discussion followed the presentation: 1) Theresa Harabedian inquired about revenue from the Church publication "Ani." The treasurer replied that they are included in the Special Donations category. Mrs. Harabedian suggested that further reports include specifically the monies collected for the publication of the newspaper. Nazareth Azarian motioned that the financial report be accepted as read and the motion was seconded by Dr. Harabedian.

A general discussion followed the acceptance of the Financial Report with the suggestion by Mr. Nazareth Azarian that the financial report be included in the December issue of "Ani" and in that way the Church membership can peruse the facts at their leisure; and, in addition, Richard Kalfaian offered that while that inclusion might prove difficult, he would suggest, however the inclusion of the list of candidates be included.

Full discussion of the possibilities and advantages and drawbacks of handing out pertinent reports weeks before the scheduled Parish Assembly were discussed. Thomas Garabedian proposed that all reports be distributed before the meeting so that each report would not have to be read by the individuals responsible for the report; but that they be available for questioning during the Old Business portion. The probability of the chairpersons and treasurers simply handing out the reports and not attend the meeting was brought up by Der Untzag. He further added that surely once a year the Parish members should be willing to give up some time to the discussion of church affairs. The reply by Mr. Dabagian was that each individual is not interested in every committee report. It takes one and one quarter hours to give the reports. Mrs. Harabedian suggested that many members will not take the extra time to study each report if handed out or distributed through the mails. Virginia Kalfaian reminded the assembly that in many other parished auxiliary reports are distributed ahead of time. Stephen Goomrigan suggested that, as a time-saving measure, copies of the secretaries report be mailed to members. Der Untzag concurred by but pointed out the danger of the report being ignored by the general parish. Richard Khatachian suggested that the discussion of meeting format be delegated to the Parish Council for consideration. Mr. Azarian suggested that most of the meeting time be focused on New Business. Thomas Dabbakian suggested that since we spend one-half hour reading the list of dues-paying members, perhaps the Pastor would consider our casting the ballots before the meeting.

In other business, Archie Misakian suggested raising the dues from \$25.00 to \$50.00 per membership. He made a motion to increase the dues and was seconded by Theresa Harabedian. Discussion followed with Dr. Harabedian explaining that he had already collected 1987 dues from many parishioners. He would rather not have to ask for more at this time, and also offered that this increase may cause a decrease in pledges. Ralph Trapasso asked if the membership realized that the Diocese takes \$ 34.61 for each church member, which in itself is a good reason for an increase. Der Untzag mentioned two rationales for the increase: 1) the Diocese is charging more, and 2) Most of the parishes are collecting more than \$25.00. Many collect \$100.00. He further suggested raising the dues once instead of raising it every 2 years by \$10.00.

The motion to raise the dues to \$50.00 in 1987 was voted on by hand count. The motion was defeated by a count of 17 pro and 19 against. Ralph Trapasso motioned that the dues be raised in 1988. The motion was seconded by Dr. Berdj Harabedian and passed by unanimous vote.

At this time, voting results were presented by nominating committee members. The following were elected:

<u>Parish Council</u>	<u>Auditing Committee</u>	<u>Nominating Committee</u>
Mardy Azarian	Lionel Ketchian	Peter Kapusuzian
Shavarsh Papazian	Ralph Trapasso	Sonia Trapasso
Stephen Goomrigian	Matthew Tokatlian	Nikki Taraian
Herbert Avakian, Alternate		

Diocesan Delegates
Dr. Berdj Harabedian

New Business matters were discussed as follows:

Mardi Azarian announced that the present custodian is not maintaining the condition of the church in the manner we wish to see continued. As of March 1st his services will be terminated and his rent raised to \$900.00 per month. Mr. Azarian asked for the cooperation of the church community in contributing towards the general cleanliness and neatness of the church building and grounds. We will hire a professional cleaning service. Ms. Taraian volunteered that the cost of professional maintenance would be about \$1000.00 per contract year. Theresa Harabedian inquired as to whether the present custodian has a lease to the house on the church property; a dwelling he is presently renting at a substantial discount. Mr. Azarian replied that he does not have a rental contract and the house will be rented, after considerable refurbishing, to someone who will not have custodial responsibilities. Difficulties are anticipated, but the parish has no other choice considering the unworkable circumstances. The house will be rented for \$900.00. Peter Kapusuzian questioned the renovating expense on the house which will be quite large. Mr. Azarian said that this is anticipated but unavoidable.

Marie Yapoujian commented on the celebration of Christmas. There are many parishioners who would like to celebrate Armenian Christmas on that specific day instead of the closest Sunday.

Der Untzag reminded the parish that many people work during the week, but he would be happy to celebrate on January 6th if there were enough response. Hoagy Azarian thought that, as a point of order, this subject should not be discussed at this meeting. Der Untzag wanted to discuss this subject at this time and asked who would attend on a work day. Mrs. Harabedian reminded the assembly that five people attended the Armenian Christmas Eve Services. Sonia Trapasso suggested that we should indeed celebrate on the correct date, but hold the services that evening. Der Hyre replied that there are certain canons which must be considered: if we celebrate in the evening, it will be considered a new day by the church and so we will be celebrating on the 7th. It was decided that the problem will be taken under advisement.

In other New Business, Der Untzag reminded the members that we will be sponsoring a dinner-dance June 6th. It will be a costly project which will include dinner, hall-rental, music, etc. If we organize well, there should be 200 attendees. He asked our help to make the project a successful one, both socially and perhaps, financially.

Peter Kapusuzian suggested that the membership committee offer church membership to our teenage population.

Der Untzag concluded the meeting with congratulations to the newly elected and thanked all who participated in this meeting.

A motion of adjourn was made by Berdj Harabedian and seconded by Archie Misakian.

After the Benedication, the meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Goomrigian
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Assembly Secretary