

## MINUTES OF THE 1997 ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

The Armenian Church of the Holy Ascension held its Annual Parish Assembly on January 26, 1997. The meeting opened with a scripture reading from St. Matthew 13: 3-18, followed with an invocation by Fr. Untzag Nalbandian. Mark Gavoor, chairman of the 1996 Parish Assembly, opened the business meeting.

Elsie Chaghatzbanian reported that we have One Hundred twenty-one (121) dues paid members for the year 1996. Elsie read the roll and there were 53 dues paid members present - more than the required quorum.

Mark Gavoor and Margaret Azarian were nominated respectively as chairman and secretary for the 1997 Annual Parish Assembly and received the unanimous vote of the membership for these positions.

### MINUTES

A week before the Assembly meeting, the minutes of the 1996 Parish Assembly were distributed to the voting membership. Archie Misakian moved that the minutes be accepted as presented. Sonia Trapasso seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mark Gavoor moved that Der Hyre's report be given to the assembly prior to the election of Parish Council, Nominating Committee and Auditing Committee. Seconded by Connie Kasparian. The motion passed unanimously.

Before beginning his report, Fr. Untzag announced he wanted to show his gratitude publicly to eleven (11) acolytes and Tbirds by handing out Certificates of Appreciation. They are: Armand Dikranian, David Dikranian, Fred Dikranian, Jack Dikranian, Charles Garabedian, Aram Gavoor, Raffi Gulbenk, Hovig Nalbandian, Alex Tokatlian and Richard Varadian, Jr., & Raffi Vartanian.

### REPORT OF THE PARISH PRIEST, REV. FR. UNTZAG NALBANDIAN

First he gave a brief report in Armenian.

Fr. Nalbandian welcomed everyone present in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and expressed his joy and gratitude to them for their continuous support and service, especially to those who made the effort to be with us, attend, benefit, participate, help and be involved in our church's life.

Der Hyre stressed the mission of the church is first to help you and me to find God and bring you and me closer to HIM.

Der Hyre reported that in 1996 he fulfilled his religious and pastoral duties to the best of his ability and time availability. He highlighted some church events and activities, noting the church's full calendar. Also, additional duties carry him beyond the parish, to the Diocese in New York, Interfaith meetings in Connecticut to name two.

Besides the regular church calendar, other events were organized by twelve (12) different committees. These committees were all successful in their endeavors.

With the implementation of the 1997 Pledge Committee and their goal of raising \$50,000.00 with a suggested minimum pledge of \$365.00 from each family, is close to a reality. To date the amount pledged is nearly \$43,000.00 from 106 families. This system will eliminate fund-raising projects excluding the normal picnic, bazaar and anniversary banquet.

The pastor is very optimistic about the future saying we are heading toward a pink dawn  
“Վարդագոյն արշալոյս.”

Der Hyre expressed his appreciation to the Armenian and Sunday School teachers and parents; Women's Guild and their help with coffee hours and dinners, choir, deacons, conductors, organists, acolytes and Tbirds for their weekly service without which "Liturgia" would not be possible; the Junior ACYOA teens, especially for visiting shut-ins and nursing home residents during the Christmas season again, with their advisor, parents and parish council members.

Der Hyre announced eleven (11) events coming up in 1997 involving a menu of spiritual, social and cultural programs thus providing a balance of activities. Also, they plan to start a singles and doubles club.

A continuation of the Needy Fund for here or Armenia was stressed. He cited that as a church and a Church of Christ, who taught us to help our neighbors and especially those who are in need of our help, we must keep our "Needy Fund" active. At this point, Der Hyre expressed his appreciation to Nazareth and

Margaret Azarian for their work with "Mission Armenia." Their efforts produced more than \$11,000.00 in 1996 that they personally delivered.

Our church sent donations to the burned black churches, to the fund for the young Armenian pianist attached in Central Park, NYC, and our "Looma" to Etchmiadzin. Nevertheless, more should be done to the needy around us be it here or overseas. He plans to give some suggestions to the 1997 parish council.

Regarding the new pledge system, Der Hyre suggested that those who don't believe in pledging or do not want to pledge, ideas about keeping the doors of our church open for our future generations are welcome.

The parishioners have supported most of the steps taken by him and the council members during his 13 years at Holy Ascensions and he is hopeful this will continue. Der Hyre stressed that we propose or unveil no event or activity prior to much thought and ground work.

All expenditures in the past 13 years have been carefully calculated. This policy has enabled this church to function, renovate when necessary, and pay off a \$205,000 mortgage. When it is intimated to him that we should be careful with the Church's money or we should start to save, etc. This is exactly what has been done. Der Hyre stressed, "I want to make it perfectly clear to all of you that I never say one thing and do something else. I do what I say and say what I do!"

Der Hyre is formulating some future events about three important dates namely, celebration of the Diocese's 100th birthday in 1998; 2,000th anniversary of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ in the year 2000; and in the year 2001, the Armenian Church will celebrate the 1700th anniversary of Armenian Christianity. The plans will be forthcoming.

After reviewing his comments in Armenian, Der Hyre thanked the parish council for providing leadership in 1996, namely Maureen Najarian, Chairperson. Maureen is organized, works hard, is Christ-centered and ready to learn. "You cannot teach if you do not learn. Teaching is learning"; Darwin Jamgochian, Treasurer; Heather Tarpinian, Secretary; Richard Najarian, Co-Chairperson; Gary Donoian, Asst. Treasurer; Richard Kalfaian; Elsie Chaghatzbanian; Sharyn D'Urso and Kim Kasparian, outgoing members.

Der Hyre concluded with the words of John the Evangelist 13:34.

## **ELECTIONS**

Nominating Committee members were Herbert Avakian, Connie Kasparian and Nicky Taraian. Parish Council member, Elsie Chaghatzbanian, read the roll for ballot distribution.

Connie informed the assembly that the slate for Parish Council needed two more names. Also, a rotating system for the Auditing Committee starts this year, i.e.,

most number of votes	-	elected for three years.
2nd	-	elected for two years.
3rd	-	elected for one year.

Solicitations for parish council names were requested from the floor. Archie Misakian and Herbert Avakian were added to the ballot to complete the slate of eight nominees.

Connie introduced the nominees present and each spoke a few words about themselves.

The completed ballots were collected by roll call; members of the nominating committee retired to tally the votes. The voting was done by secret ballots. The meeting continued with the Parish Council Chairman's report.

## **PARISH COUNCIL REPORT**

Maureen Najarian, Parish Council Chairman, thanked the Parish Council for their help, dedication, advice and counsel.

Maureen commented on the year being successful. Mainly, \$22,000.00 was collected from pledges and the church membership increased. The land sale was resolved and is almost settled. The Parish Council

participated in the anniversary banquet; the Armenian Alphabet monument project was completed; the April 13th appreciation dance was held; maintenance problems were resolved, i.e., the kitchen, pantry, windows and floors were cleaned, etc. The church picnic raised apx. \$3,000.00. The bazaar raised \$11,000.00. The Parish Council worked on items such as: scholarship decisions, Interfaith meetings, car bids, church hall rental, parish house septic system and our young people were polled for suggestions to improve their interest in church. Discussions on how to increase our income, caretaker responsibilities, how to resolve the church water problem, fixed lavatory pipes, worked on parish house lease, and is now working with financial advisors for ways to increase our resources.

Now mortgage free, Maureen stressed that the church can focus on resources to additionally put the church on better financial ground. Some financial decisions for attaining stability are: (a) raise the requested pledge to a dollar a day minimum from each family; (b) invest securely the land sale proceeds of \$200,000.00, (c) hold at least three money making projects a year; i.e., church anniversary, picnic, and bazaar; and continue renting the church hall and parish house.

Maureen concluded confidently that with God's blessings we will accomplish the goals set for 1997, but emphasized the importance of the parishioners doing their part as servants of Christ to carry on the church mission.

### **AUDITING REPORT**

The 1996 Auditing Committee consisted of Mardy Azarian, Mark Gavoor and Matthew Tokatlian. Mark Gavoor spoke for the committee expressing that the committee audited the church books with the treasurer, Darwin Jamgochian. The members of the committee all agreed that the Treasurer properly recorded all transactions, and that these reports accurately reflected all the 1996 financial transactions of the church. He expressed a job well done. Archie Misakian moved to accept the report as given. Seconded by Leo Malkasian. Motion passed unanimously.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Darwin Jamgochian submitted a proposed budget for 1997 showing income and disbursements for 1996.

He recommended an increase in the pastor's stipend, noting Der Hyre's reluctance for it, but the Parish Council is requesting an increase of apx. 7% for this year that amounts to approx. 11% in the past three years.

Nazareth Azarian raised a point of information about the \$12,500.00 spent on the church waterproofing, namely, do large expenditures have to be approved by the parish assembly and is there a limit on the dollar amount. Der Hyre responded (a) yes, if not an emergency, (b) no, if an emergency. One example of a non-emergency, was the renovation of the church hall which was brought to the Assembly and was approved. On the other hand, two years ago approx. \$10,000.00 was spent on the parish house without holding a special assembly. Der Hyre further explained the emergency condition (a very recent flood in the church hall, one of many throughout the years) necessitating this expense. Under new business they could suggest a discussion on an expenditure caps.

Other general budget discussions followed. Archie Misakian moved to accept the treasurer's report as given. Seconded by Sara DerMegerdichian. Vote: One abstention, Motion passed.

### **INVESTMENT COMMITTEE**

Maureen Najarian announced the members of the newly formed Investment Committee, namely Mardy Azarian, Paul Boghosian, John McGann, Maureen Najarian and Gary Donoian. John McGann reported on the Investment Committee's policy presented and accepted by the Parish Council, i.e., they will invest the church funds in the following manner: (1) 70% will be invested in bank CD's and or Money Market

Funds, Treasury Bills, which represent no risk to the principle. (2) Up to 30 % will be invested in low capital risk Mutual Funds. An example of the portfolio for the \$200,000.00 investment is \$140,000.00 in number one and \$60,000.00 in number two.

Richard Najarian motioned to accept the Investment Policy as presented. Seconded by Heather Tarpinian. Motion passed unanimously.

**LAND SALE**

Gary Donoian reported that the Parish Council signed a contract in April 1996 and we received \$25,000.00 option payment to hold land until 11/29/96. Contact allows for additional six month extensions at \$5,000.00 per extension. In October of 1996, DIL Development (the buyer) received approval for the requested zoning change and the wetland approval. In accordance with the extension clause, we received \$5,000.00 in December totaling \$30,000.00. The closing date is expected to be within the next two months. A discussion followed. Lisa Misakian asked that the interest from the \$200,000.00 be defined; i.e., reinvested or used for church operating expenses. Gary Donoian explained that we don't have the \$200,000.00 in hand yet, but in the 1997 operating budget under interest and dividends, a conservative figure is in place. Der Hyre added that \$12,500.00 of the \$25,000.00 was borrowed to pay for the waterproofing and that two other future projects (prob. in 2-3 years) are in sight:

- 1- sewer connection
- 2- paving the driveway and parking lot.

Discussion followed about the use of the \$25,000.00 plus and interest earned from the \$200,000.00 principle. Maureen Najarian moved that the assembly approve \$25,000.00 plus to be used as operating expenses and have the Parish Council payback this money as funds become available. Motion passed with one opposed.

**ELECTION RESULTS**

<b><u>Parish Council</u></b>	<b><u>Elected</u></b>	<b><u>Votes</u></b>	
	Gary Donoian	47	
	Sarkis Kalfayan	36	
	Richard Kalfaian	34	
	Mirijan Kochian	28	
	Harry Magazian	23	- Alt.
	Vartan Tarpinian	23	- Alt.
<b><u>Nominating Com.</u></b>	<b><u>Elected</u></b>	<b><u>Votes</u></b>	
	Nicky Taraian	36	
	Pearl Khachadoorian	27	
	Salpi Tokatlian	26	
	Sharyn D'Urso	25	- Alt.
<b><u>Auditing Com.</u></b>	<b><u>Elected</u></b>	<b><u>Vote</u></b>	
	Matthew Tokatlian	32	
	Nazareth Azarian	32	
	Mardiros Azarian	24	
	Nicky Taraian	23	- Alt.
	Michele Spence	23	- Alt.

Instead of voting again for the auditing tie, they tossed a coin and the three-year term goes to Matthew Tokatlian and the two-year term goes to Nazareth Azarian.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Marie Yapoujian moved to have a line item in the budget specifically for orphans in Armenia. Sharyn D'Urso seconded. Matthew Tokatlian explained that the budget is specifically for the operating expenses of the church. They suggested that the motion be rescinded. Marie and Sharyn D'Urso agreed. They rescinded

the motion. Der Hyre advised the matter will be considered.

Connie Kasparian motioned that the Parish Assembly change the number of Parish Council members from 9 to 7. Her reasoning is that it gets more difficult every year to find willing people to run for the office. If passed, a written notice will go to the Diocese and next year it can be put in place. Margaret Azarian seconded. Discussion followed. Vote - majority opposed, four voted yes. Motion not carried.

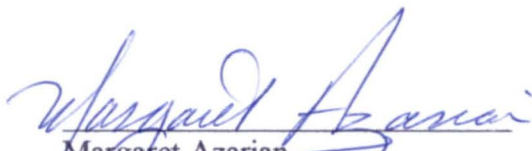
Darwin Jamgochian proposed we do something with the parish house because it is in disrepair. Should we sell the house, make improvements etc. Discussion followed.

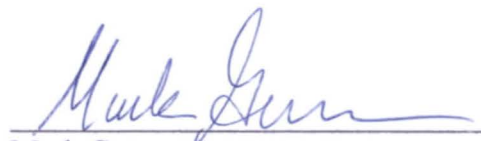
Darwin moved that the Parish Council appoint a committee to review this matter and report back to the 1998 parish assembly. Sharyn D'Urso seconded. Passed unanimously.

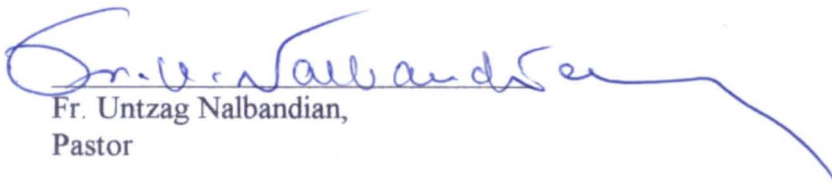
Archie Misakian moved to close the assembly. Seconded by Connie Kasparian. The motion passed unanimously.

The benediction was given by Fr. Untzag Nalbandian at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Margaret Azarian,  
1997 Parish Assembly Secretary

  
Mark Gavoor  
1997 Parish Assembly Chairman

  
Fr. Untzag Nalbandian,  
Pastor