

Minutes of the Parish Assembly
St. Mary's Armenian Apostolic Church
January 24, 1999

The Parish Assembly was called to order at 12:50 PM. Der Hayr opened the meeting with a prayer. Mr. Saro Kalayjian read the roster and 110 dues paid members were present which constituted a quorum. The Agenda was accepted by the Assembly. It was requested that all non-dues paying members move to the back of the sanctuary and dues paying members move forward to avoid confusion during voting.

The Nominating Committee presented the nominees for the Tivan. By a secret ballot Col. George Juskalian and Mrs. Lucia Magarian were elected Chairman and Secretary of the Assembly respectively, and Mrs. Anahid Ayrandjian was designated as the Second Secretary.

1. Minutes of the 1998 Assembly

Brig. Gen. Al Kaehn commented that the minutes are distributed after a whole year. He requested that this year a draft be sent to each member present within two weeks. The Suggestion was not voted upon. The Chair requested a motion to accept the minutes of the February 22, 1998 as reported, it was seconded and approved.

2. Nominating Committee Report

Mrs. Margie Satian on behalf of the Nominating Committee invited the Nominees as presented in the "Sample Ballot" to introduce themselves. On behalf of Mrs. Evelyn Vartabedian, Mr. J. Vartabedian asked to withdraw her name. Nominations made and seconded from the floor for the W.E. Docter Scholarship Committee were: Mr. Edward Alexander, Mr. Raffi Balian and Dr. Hratch Semerjian but the latter declined. Another nomination made and seconded for the William E. Docter Trustee was Mr. Vartkess Balian.

A parishioner wanted to know why there was no action taken on the St. Mary's William E. Docter Education Fund--Scholarship Committee. Dr. Ara Avedissian responded that he being the only Trustee could not take any action. Another question was the qualification of the nominees for Trustees for a good judgment and election. It was explained that all nominees are good citizens and good parishioners, and we can select the most qualified. The election will be finalized and confirmed through the Virginia Court of Law, that we have a lawyer and with his help this will be handled properly and legally. After nomination from the floor, a motion was made to close the nominations. The motion passed. See final Ballot Attachment #1.

3. Pastor's Report

Der Hayr commented that it is not enough to only read the Annual Report, they should bring their thoughts and ideas to the Parish Council, be productive and be active and not to rely only on the Pastor and the Parish Council. Out of the 66 years of this church, which was celebrated recently, he said he was happy to have served for the past 22 years despite the ups and downs, and that he is celebrating his 39th year of service for the Armenian Church. One primary element that concerns him is the salvation of the parishioners' soul more than any other

considerations. He also stressed the fact that we have fallen behind in educating our parishioners about their financial responsibilities.

He directed their attention to the approximate \$15,000 shortfall in the 1998 fiscal year and stressed the fact that in reality the shortfall would have been closer to \$37,000 if we took into account that two generous parishioners alone have helped the church to meet its obligations. He acknowledged the fact that tithing now has become a line item in our 1999 budget with at least two parishioners practicing it.

Furthermore, he urged that an effort should be made as in "re-inventing" the church organizations to reevaluate their objectives, their mission.

He also reminded the urgent need for organized social services to help families who arrive in this county from Armenia and elsewhere. This cannot continue to remain a one man operation. He commended Mr. Zakar Shahverdian's work in Baltimore and reminded the Assembly that Baltimore community needs our support. He thanked Mr. Raffi Karahisar for without his help the financial report would not have been ready. He also thanked Mrs. June Kavookian for her many long hours of help.

He noted that St. Mary's ACYOA has the largest number of members and it is the most active group in the Diocese and thanked Mr. Saro Kalayjian for his dedication and leadership. The Bible Study Group continues, thanks to the dedication of the Kumkumian Family.

Mr. George Dunyan took the floor and explained that 65 percent of the dues goes to utilities, trash removal, etc. With Der Hayr's and Finance Committee's help he said they will develop an outreach program and ask for financial help.

Der Hayr continued by acknowledging Yeretzgin's untiring and devoted help toward St. Mary's and its different organizations and activities, she is scaling down many of the activities except the ACYOA. Yeretzgin received a warm standing ovation.

Col. George Juskalian acknowledged Mrs. Patricia Shahverdian's help for Armenia for several years. Der Hayr amended his earlier remarks and praised Mrs. P. Shahverdian for her work both in the community of Baltimore and in Armenia through HAVAD group.

A parishioner suggested that we should move to finalize nominations and elections before people leave. Col. Juskalian reminded the Assembly that we gather once a year for the business of the church and we should sit and conduct our task patiently and not leave after elections!

After the Pastor's report was concluded, Dr. S. Simonian spoke as how one family is serving the church, namely the Kalayjian Family; that Yeretzgin has a Master's Degree in Nursing and yet she is donating all her time to the church. There was a standing ovation for the Kalayjian Family. Dr. Simonian further emphasized the support and the appreciation of the

parish for the dedication and leadership that Fr. V. Kalayjian has provided for so many years.

Prompted by these comments Col. Juskalian said "I always maintained that we got two for the price of one. But now I can say with the same appreciation that we got **five** for the price of one!"

Der Hayr's Report was accepted as presented

4. **Parish Council Report**

The Chairman presented the Parish Council Report. He said that with Mr. Nishan Dulgerian's hard work and Dr. Ara Avedissian's donation of the paint, the sanctuary was finally painted. Second point he made was that since 1991 the Reserve Fund has been depleted.

The Assembly accepted the report as presented.

Dr. Hratch Semerjian observed that even though the number of members is growing, we are financially declining. Also, that there is some strain and stress in this community, that we should be happy when we leave the church and not stressed out. He urged that something must be done and that this will not go away by itself. The matter was referred to the Parish Council and to the Outreach Committee.

Dr. Ara Avedissian rose to make a comment regarding a widely-disseminated anonymous letter. The Chair declared the subject out of order. However, Dr. Avedissian did manage to inject the statement that the Parish Council had nothing to do with the letter.

5. **Diocesan Delegates' Report**

Dean Shahinian, Esq., briefly highlighted several items of the report, also that the Diocesan Budget is approximately \$3.5 million annually and The Armenian Church Endowment Fund exceeded \$40 million as of December 31, 1997. He presented the Proposed Bylaw Amendment requiring the Diocesan Council to notify the Diocesan Delegates 90 days in advance, instead of 30 days in advance, of the nominees for the office of Primate for an upcoming Diocesan election. He moved to accept this proposed amendment, motion was made, seconded and voted upon. This will now go to the Diocesan Assembly adoption on two consecutive years before it becomes law. Attachment #2.

6. **Finance Committee Report**

In the absence of Mr. Ed Onanian, Mr. Souny Kodjanian presented the report and reminded the Assembly that at the last Assembly, it was approved that the Finance Committee report to the Parish Council. The Committee had four independent meetings and two meetings with the Parish Council. He pleaded and urged for prompt dues payments and also to increase the contributions.

7. **Parish Council Treasurer's Report 1998 and Proposed Budget for 1999**

Mr. Steve Evereklian presented the financial report. He highlighted a few items specially the large difference between income and expense related to the Shnorhali publication. The item 22 on the Operating Expense for 1999 was deleted. Discussion ensued on the 1999 Proposed Budget. An issue was raised on the reduction of Der Hayr's Bonus from the \$2,500 figure of 1998. Many objections were voiced. The main point of argument was Der Hayr's Bonus which was reduced to \$1,000. Many parishioners objected to this amount and a discussion ensued. A motion was made then seconded to restore Der Hayr's \$2,500 Bonus plus a COLA. An amendment was made to have the total stipend to be \$60,000 for the year 1999. The motion passed.

There was a suggestion that the New Parish Council and the Finance Committee to form an ad hoc Committee to pursue fund-raising and raise membership. Mr. George Dunyan as a member of the Finance Committee stated that such a plan was in the making. There was also suggestion to raise the Parish dues again but this was not acted upon, instead, the urgency to have organized fund-raising was stressed. Also stressed to go out and make many more of the community members as voting/dues paying members.

Addressing the issue of the depletion of the Reserve Fund, Der Hayr reminded the Assembly of the fact that in the past several years when the church needed major improvements and repairs, instead of going to the people for funds, the Parish Council chose to dip into the reserve fund because that was easy money.

Motion was made to accept the budget for 1999 as amended at a total of \$186,800, it was seconded and by unanimous vote it was accepted.

8. **Auditing Committee Report**

Mr. Raffi Karahisar thanked Mrs. June Kavookian for her outstanding work for the Treasurer; the record-keeping system has improved due to new computer software. Mrs. June Kavookian received a round of applause.

9. **Reports from Church Organizations**

(A) Mrs. Rosemary Arcane presented the Women's Guild report with an added activity on October 25, celebrating the Centennial. There are 100 members but 60 dues-paying only at \$15.00 each. (B) Mrs. Queenie Avedikian presented the Choir report adding that carpeting cost will be between \$6,000-7,000. The Choir hosted the New Year's Eve party and has collected \$5,500. (C) Mr. Saro Kalayjian gave the ACYOA report and made an appeal to the Assembly to participate in their activities. They had two activities for free and a very poor showing. He felt that if they host affairs after church service, they have more participation. Serpazan was presented with three projects by the group and two of them have been acted upon. (D) Dr. Greg Kumkumian presented the Board of Stewards' report.

All reports were accepted as presented and published.

10. **Announcement of Election Results**

The election results are shown on Attachment #3. The amendments presented by the delegates appear as Attachment #4.

11. **Old Business. None**

12. **New Business--Proposals and Amendments**


Two Resolutions concerning the election and tenure of The Trustees and Scholarship Committee for W. E. Docter's Educational Fund were voted upon and approved. See Attachment #5.

13. **Benediction--Adjournment**

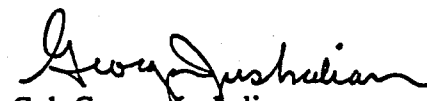
Der Hayr referred to a parishioner's earlier comment about the strain and stress in the church and said it is time to start the healing process and move on. He said that he was deeply touched and in tears this Sunday when, after a long absence, one such parishioner in the spirit of reconciliation, was at the altar to serve with him. We must put an end to this stupid situation he said and go the Christian way. He apologized if he had unknowingly hurt some outgoing and incoming Parish Council members. He wished a new life in this community and not to be under stress any more.

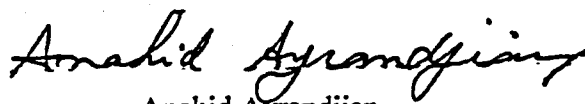
Der Hayr expressed appreciation to the Tivan (Chairman and Secretaries), to the outgoing Executive members and welcomed and congratulated those elected and wished them well. He asked the Assembly to join in singing the Hayr Mer and closed the meeting with a prayer. Meeting adjourned at 5:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted


Rev. Fr. Vertanes Kalayjian
Pastor/President


Lucia Magarian
Secretary


Col. George Juskalian
Chairman


Anahid Ayrandjian
Second Secretary