

ACYOA Central Council Abridged Meeting Minutes
Saturday, February 1 and Sunday, February 2, 2025 at 9:00 AM EST
St. Nerses Shnorhali Armenian Apostolic Church of Jacksonville Florida

Attendance: Ani Misirliyan (Chair) Jackie Russell (Vice Chair) Andrew Yenicag (Treasurer), Dn. Garen Megrdochian (Secretary), Mara Najarian (Communications), Sarah Tavitian (Ministries and Outreach), Alisha Panthier (Ministries and Outreach), Jennifer Morris (Department of Youth and Adult Ministries Program Administrator)

1. Opening Prayer
 - a. Led by Jenni at 9:20 AM.
2. Adoption of Agenda -Adopted
 - a. Ani reminded all of CC that all documents that they create must be part of the ACYOA Google Drive and ACYOA must be the owner of the document, not their personal drives.
3. Acceptance of December Meeting Minutes - Accepted
 - a. Jenni requested that minutes try to be more of a complete picture so anyone not at the meeting will be in the know. Try to cover each item's overview, discussion, and action items for each item.
4. Review Liaison System and Updates (Jackie)
 - a. Jenni gave a recap of communications between the Wynnewood and Cheltenham parishes. **Jenni will be meeting with Fr. Hakob to further discuss** who should be included in the parish leadership database for the Philly ACYOA.
 - i. Bishop Mesrop is planning to be in Philly for the Armenian Genocide walk, would like to join our meeting.
 - ii. Central Council would like to take a break during their meeting to participate in the Armenian Genocide walk.
 - b. Ani did not hear back from Bayside.
 - c. Sarah appreciates Chicago's thorough responses.
 - d. Andrew mentioned that Shahe has been engaging in ASA's and other college groups
 - e. Garen has not heard back from Hartford. Garen reported that New Britain would like a Palm Sunday visit, **and Ani will look into it.**
 - f. Connecting ACYOA regional chapters
 - i. **Jackie is currently working on this.** She has sent emails asking everyone if it is ok to share their contact information. She will send regional emails this week.
 - g. Liaison Draft - 7_February 2025 - Google Docs
5. Ministries and Outreach
 - a. Christmas Gift Card Exchange Feedback (Jackie)
 - i. The gift Exchange went well, had 28 participants, and only 2 CC Members participated.
 - ii. Jackie suggested offering the participants to send an egift card and card next year.
 - iii. Jenni stated this initiative was started during COVID and is the engagement enough to continue it?
 - iv. We like the pen pal aspect of it. It doesn't cost CC anything but one or 2 people's time to match people up.
 - v. Sarah mentioned an idea to do a prayer pal to pray for someone.

- vi. Jenni needs to add CC to the Diocesan Canva account
- b. Mission Trip (Jenni)
 - i. Jenni updated that there are 20 participants signed up.
- c. ASP (Jenni)
 - i. ASP Juniors 5 people registered ASP Seniors 3 registered. Global Youth Forum 5 registered. Jenni shared the registered names.
 - ii. **Jenni will create a database of recent CC members, ASP participants, ASP participants who backed out, and suggestions for a global youth forum by Wednesday.** Jenni will assign CC members people to call along with a template on what to say and information.
 - iii. **Jenni will reach out to St. Nersess to see if there are any seminarians to attend the Global Youth Forum.**
- d. Bishop's 5K (Jenni)
 - i. Jenni spoke to Bishop Mesrop about his available dates in the spring and fall and parishes for the Bishop's 5k.
 - ii. 5/31 Milwaukee/Chicago, 6/7 Hartford, 9/13 Holy Cross, 9/20 Wynnewood, 9/27 Cheltenham
 - iii. Everyone weighed their opinions on fall versus summer, the locations, weather, school, and all other factors.
 - iv. We decided to do 1 on May 31st in the Chicago land area and 1 in September in the NY Metro area with the virtual option all summer long. **Jenni will check in with Bishop Mesrop and update the Central Council when a decision is made.**
- e. Palm Sunday (Ani)
 - i. 4 Parishes are interested in having CC members go to a parish.
 - ii. Garen, Andrew, and Alisha are available to travel on Palm Sunday.
 - iii. Ani will reach out to Atlanta to make sure they will be celebrating Badarak.
 - iv. **Ani will connect Garen, Andrew, and Alisha with the parishes.**
 - v. **Jenni will send the Palm Sunday Template.**
- f. Chapter Connections
 - i. Ani did reach out to all parishes and St. John in Detroit, Belleville, and Philly all expressed interest.
 - ii. Jackie agrees that there isn't enough interest and these parishes have enough going on right now, we will reach back out in the fall and connect to parishes through Palm Sunday connections.
- g. Podcast
 - i. Ani spoke to Yn. Lucine and gave an update for future recordings.
 - ii. Lent Prayer Rule (Jackie)
 - 1. Jackie has not had time to edit the recording. **Jenni will ask Mano from the dioceses to help edit.**
 - iii. Jenni made a recommendation to amend the agenda and move the Lenten Daylong Retreat to Sunday morning's meeting when we are fresh with creative minds.
- h. Lenten Daylong Retreat (Alisha and Sarah)
 - i. Review Sessions/Guidebook

1. Jackie suggested taking out the break session for participants because the collage session is like a break with time for chatting, followed by a silent reflection session.
 2. Ani suggested changing the Life Boxes icebreaker from “childhood, high school, college, and future” to ages or something to appeal to people who are currently in college or who did not go to college.
 3. Mara suggested adding a closing time and having discussions to bring us to a conclusion.
 4. The Central Council will need to start collecting magazines and newspapers for the session 3 activity.
 5. We discussed the collage activity and adding a photo or polaroid at the center of the person whose collage it is.
 6. Jackie suggested using different paper sizes for participants to choose from for session 3.
 7. We discussed the session 4 questions, our comfort leading them, and how they might be received in the group.
 8. Andrew suggested having the clergy to seek answers and share things to suggest feedback and how to move forward.
 9. Mara suggested flipping the questions of session 4 to ask how to bring us together.
 10. Jackie suggested using session 4 as a toolbox on how people can find God even if they don’t think they’re loved for their imperurities.
 11. Ani suggested having the same question written in different ways and reading the room when leading the retreat.
 12. Andrew suggested positively doing meditation and helping the participants to feel comfortable.
 13. Jackie asked to consider if your audience is silent and unwilling to share and make sure there are enough appropriate questions for all group types.
 14. Mara reminded the group that this was a learning opportunity and to reflect on why these practices of the church were put in place in the first place.
 15. The group reworked the session 4 questions to be an internal reflection and share if wanted, then build tools on why they’re here.
6. Review Goals
- a. The Central Council reflected on their goals and where they are in achieving them. Everyone voiced their opinions and shared new ideas. We feel we are on track to accomplish all of our goals.
 - b. Jenni suggested connecting to Juniors through the liaison emails.
 - c. We are halfway to our Instagram goal
 - d. The revamp of the website goal will be addressed with the help of Garen stepping in.
7. General Assembly Preparation
- a. Nominating Committee Update (Garen)
 - i. The Central Council nominated 16 people for Central Council.
 - ii. **Garen will reach out to the nominating committee to start calling people and gauging interest.**

1. Nominating committee:
 - a. Serien Keleshian (St. Sarkis, Carrollton, TX)
 - b. Ani Jermakian (St. Mark, Springfield, MA)
 - c. Sevana Mailian (St. John, Southfield, MI)
 - d. Alternates: Celene Phillip (St. John, Southfield, MI).
 - b. Auditing Committee Update (Andrew)
 - i. Outreach has not started. Jenni will forward Andrew what to send out.
 - ii. **Send by March 1st, and respond by April 1st, Andrew will respond to them by April 15 and we will discuss them at our end-of-April/May meeting.**
 - iii. Committee is:
 1. Jackie Ovassapian (St. James, Evanston, IL)
 2. Serop Rea (St. Sarkis, Carrollton, TX)
 3. Yn. Lucine Sabounjian (Central Council)
 4. Alternate: Madeline Ovassapian (Central Council).
 - c. Chapter Report Edits
 - i. Andrew asked to add a question for the Alumni committee.
 - ii. Jackie asked to add a question about engagement with ACYOA Juniors.
 - iii. Andrew mentioned asking how supportive and involved, especially in helping the ACYOA or setting up events.
 - iv. Central Council made changes to the existing questions and added a few. It was reviewed and approved by the Central Council.
 - v. **Ani will send an email out asking for Chapter Reports in March and Jackie will include it in the March liaison draft.**
8. Committee Updates
- a. 2025 GASW Committee Update (Alisha and Sarah)
 - i. Alisha attended their recent meeting and the Saturday venue is no longer available. They still have 2 options to look into.
 - ii. Registration needs to launch by March 1st.
 - iii. They need to work together and delegate, Mara has taken on a lot.
 - iv. Mara shared that the updates at the meetings are what's been done but no one is holding people accountable. The group needs to give each other deadlines.
 - v. Alisha is going to ask for a budget. Alisha will tell the committee that she needs to see the Zeffy before it launches and it needs to launch before March 1st.
 - vi. Alisha asked Jenni to join the next meeting.
 - vii. Jenni shared she has been called with a few questions like buses and insurance.
 - viii. Mara shared they need a meeting agenda. Alisha will tell Lisa to make an agenda. Alisha will provide Lisa with a template.
 - ix. Jenni also added that Sarah and Alisha need to add her to the email thread.
 - x. Jenni shared that the agenda needs to show all future meeting dates.
 - xi. Andrew suggested to meet once a week, not biweekly.
 - xii. Mara asked that Alisha recommend that the Sunday cocktail hour committee and Sunday banquet committee be combined.
 - xiii. Someone from the Central Council needs to be at each meeting.
 - xiv. Andrew said the Alumni Committee is willing to help with the Sunday night cocktail hour. Jenni said local alumni are organizing that.

- xv. Mara will give Andrew the Detroit Alumni Committee's contact info so that Andrew can offer the Alumni Committee's help.
- b. ACYOA Alumni Committee Update (Andrew and Garen)
 - i. Andrew gave an update on Alumni Committee members and that they are looking for their 11th member to complete their ballet.
 - ii. Jenni shared that Fr. Hratch would like to be on all email correspondence going forward. Andrew said he would.
 - iii. Andrew would like to have Bishop Mesrop's blessing and get informed and have Diocesan Council support and to promote this in the future.
 - iv. Andrew gave an update on questions that the Alumni Committee has.
 - v. They had a question regarding the budget. Jenni shared that Der Garabed had questions about ACEF. Jenni shared that the Central Council will vote on removing funds from ACEF only if absolutely needed.
 - vi. The Alumni Committee also had a question regarding fundraising events.
 - vii. Andrew shared that the Alumni Committee would like goals from CC on the purpose of creating them.
 - viii. Jenni suggested the committee's goals are to promote, organize the initiative database, and celebrate the 80th Anniversary.
 - ix. Jenni was able to add Andrew to the Facebook page as an admin. Andrew shared they also have an Instagram. Jenni suggested taking a picture at their next meeting and posting it on social media.
 - x. Andrew shared they had Meetings on December 12th, January 13th, and January 27th and the committee is showing a lot of enthusiasm for it.
 - xi. Mara shared there are a lot of archives at the dioceses and asked if they could be used. Jenni shared that there was a flood and now is not an appropriate time for the archives.
 - xii. Andrew also mentioned Der Garabed asked the question if alumni can attend regional retreats. Jenni answered by saying clergy are always welcome and to keep in mind it is a \$300-500 CC expense for alumni or clergy to attend.
 - xiii. Andrew will create a Gmail and drive account for ACYOA Alumni.
 - xiv. Garen is happy to continue doing the meeting minutes for the Alumni committee. Andrew is willing to stay on as an alumnus during the transition process.
 - xv. Current Alumni Committee Roster
- c. Questions from Committee members
- 9. Treasurer (Andrew)
 - a. 2024 Year-End Report
 - i. Andrew reported on ASP income and it's at \$43,400.
 - ii. The diocese received \$2,000 in that income for ASP Juniors
 - iii. An ASP check was mismarked at Bishop's 5K income in 2024. Since we split the profit with AYO, we have lost money and will need to eat that cost. Fundraising under Bishop's 5K income it's at \$5,880.80
 - iv. Parish Assessment has increased from \$10,000 to \$10,750. Alisha asked Andrew what the Parish Assessment is. An asterisk will be added to the report that the funds have not been received until 2025. 3 parishes are not participating.
 - v. Jenni mentioned moving forward with the 2024 Year-End Report.

- vi. Jackie, Ani, and Andrew re-categorized many expenses for their May Diocesan Assembly meeting.
- vii. Moving forward, if you are not expensing the full amount, expense it and then make a donation back. Jackie suggested amending this to the treasury guidelines. Jackie also added that she would like the guidelines on how to expense a report written, that each expense should be noted per event, not time of purchase.

b. 2025 Budget

- i. Andrew reported on this year's budget.
- ii. Jackie mentioned that the summary tab has not been updated in the 2025 budget.
- iii. Andrew will update the new spreadsheet to show the 2025 and 2024 budget, not 2023.

c. 2026 Budget

- i. Andrew reported on the 2026 budget.
- ii. The ASP increased by a little more compared to the 2024 income expense report.
- iii. Jenni mentioned that 3 vouchers were submitted for the Dadourian Foundation.
- iv. Andrew asked if the Donation income budget could be lowered from his proposed budget and decided to keep the numbers the same at his proposed \$28,000.
- v. Andrew reviewed the budgeted line items that got increased for 2026.
- vi. Jackie and Andrew discussed the website budget of \$900 and everyone agreed to continue to pay for Apple Podcast.
- vii. Alisha asked what the Standing Committee is.
- viii. Andrew asked if the budget under the standing committee could be enough money for the banquet of the ACYOA 80th Anniversary.
- ix. CC decided to increase the stewardship budgeted income to \$3,500 from the 2024 and 2025 budget of \$2,500.

10. Communications (Mara)

- a. Social Media, E-Blasts, and Website
- b. Mara is updating the Lenten retreat flyer and will send it out this week before the liaison email.**
- c. Mara will add to the global youth forum flyer a description “for more information and to register” above the QR code.**
- d. Mara will post the flyers on Instagram stories and will publish the tag link.**
- e. Mara learned Instagram pushes stories that have engagement aspects to be prioritized to the front of people’s feeds.
- f. Mara is going to post and pin the ASP, Lenten retreat, and Global youth forum flyer on Instagram.**
- g. Mara mentioned that the interview with Grace is posted on our website under their section.
- h. Jenni asked on behalf of Fr. Hratch that we do not send out our E-blast on Tuesdays. Jackie, Ani, Jenni, and Mara agreed they would aim to send it out on Fridays
 - i. Update GASW minutes on the website
 - 1. Andrew asked where our minutes live on the drive
 - 2. Jenni did not think it was appropriate for them to live on the website

3. **Jenni will upload the 2022-2024 GASW Minutes to the google drive. Then Garen will update them on the Website.**
 4. Garen will update the sports weekend reports on the website.
 5. Andrew asked Mara if the new website could be published. Mara said yes.
- i. ACYOA Day Promo Video?
 - i. Mara would like to bring the history of the ACYOA and our ministries in a video.
 - ii. Jackie asked Mara if she wanted pictures requested from the liaison emails.
 - iii. Jenni suggested a Google Drive link for people to upload to.
 - iv. Jackie will create the folder link and put it in the February email. Deadline of March 1st for pictures.**
 - v. Jackie will also ask for juniors' pictures.
 - vi. Mara will finish the video by the middle/end of March.**
 - j. Mara asked when we wanted Prayer Pals to be launched.
 - k. Everyone agreed it was ready. It can be posted at any time.
 - l. Jackie will add prayer pals to the February Liaison email.**
 - m. Garen will update the virtual ministries page on the website.
 - n. Mara will post ACYOA forums on Monday. And Lenten retreats later this week.**
 - o. CC provided feedback on the form for the prayer pals.
 - p. Events Calendar - Discuss Subscription Renewal (Feb 21) vs. Google Calendar Integration
 - i. Andrew brought to the attention that we have the subscription renewed for the events calendar. Andrew shared that he does not think it is worth the investment since he can link the Google Drive calendar to it. Jenni would like to try for one more year to see if use it.
 - ii. It is Garen's job to add events to the website. If CC sees an event, share it with Garen to add to the website.
 - iii. Garen will add ASP, Lenten Retreat, Mission Trip, GASW, and any other chapter events to the calendar.
11. Fundraising Initiative - ACYOA Apparel Store (Ani)
- a. Ani asked if Andrew had gotten the check yet.
 - b.
 - c. The apparel store was just a Christmas thing, how do we want to proceed with it in the future?
 - d. Jackie suggested not doing it now and launching it after sports weekend for bishop 5k so that GASW could fundraise right now.
 - e. Andrew said he thinks it's a good way to get alumni engaged. Andrew will ask the alumni committee to design alumni apparel and future ACYOA member apparel. We want this in the next 6 weeks.
 - f. Mara asked that the site be cleaned up a little bit. Ani shared that it is different on each device.
 - g. The store will open for Easter time. The store will be launched by March 1st and it will close on April 1st, with orders being received by April 20th.
 - h. Ani will ask about the check because she has to email Lauren anyway.**

12. New Business

- a. Fr. Garabed Kochakian - CC Clergy Advisor Interest
 - i. Andrew asked on behalf of Der Garabed that there is always a clergy present at Central Council meetings, since Fr. Mesrop is only available once a year.
 - ii. Jenni stated that it is not for us to decide and it would need to be appointed by the Bishop.
 - iii. Fr. Hratch is currently in that role and it would require 25 more hours from another clergy.
 - iv. Andrew will respond to the inquiry appropriately informing him of Fr. Hratch's role.

13. Upcoming Dates

- a. Tuesday, February 25th Lenten Meeting 7 pm EST/6 pm CST
- b. March 8-22nd ACYOA Lenten Retreats
- c. April 12th, Palm Sunday
 - i. Ani said she spoke to the Atlanta contact and that Sunday's is mostly Sunday School-aged kids. They would like Saturday night to be older kids and also speak on Sunday at church to families and kids.
 - ii. Jenni will speak to Rema that they will not rent a space out.
 - iii. Ani said they do not have a visiting clergy that weekend. We may consider other weekends.
 1. Alisha is also available 4/19-20
 - iv. Ani will connect Garen and Andrew to their respective parishes.
- d. April 25-27: ACYOA Central Council Meeting at Holy Trinity Cheltenham, PA
 - i. Where to Stay?
 1. Andrew suggested a few families and so did Mara.
 2. Andrew will drive and Jenni will rent a car.
 3. **Mara will ask one more family before Ani proceeds with looking for a hotel.**
- e. May 23-26: GASW at St. John Armenian Church, Southfield MI
 - i. Reminder to take off work for Friday GA.
 - ii. Your portion of the room is covered.

14. Andrew asked if anyone needed any checks written.

15. Closing Prayer