

**Niantic Community Church  
Special Congregational Meeting Minutes  
Hybrid Meeting on July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 10:45 a.m.**

1. Welcome and Call to Order: President Frank Chan called the meeting to order at 10:47 am. 62 people present at the start of the meeting plus 10 on Zoom.
2. Notice of Call (Clerk: Mary Childs)
3. Opening Prayer (Rev. Kaleigh)
4. **Motion** to approve Quarterly Congregational Meeting (4/23/2023) minutes
  - Motion made by Ellen Ashburn, Wendy Neilson, voice vote to approve the April minutes made by voice vote: Approved.
5. **Motion** to approve Special Congregational Meeting (6/11/2023) minutes
  - Motion made by John Whritner and Bette Mahon seconded, vote to approve the minutes made by voice vote: Approved.
6. Governing Board Report: Frank Chan shared updates for weekly attendance for services with the average attendance is about 120 people, we have held five Governing Board (GB) meetings since April with decisions to approve Rev. Kaleigh as an associate pastor as well as the Mezzanine fortification plan, our Congregational meeting included decision on calling a new settled pastor. All major decisions were brought to the Congregation for approval. Brief review of the structure of the Governing Board (GB) and length of terms for its members.

Detailed information regarding NCC becoming a financial sponsor for Pastor Eric's non-profit organization. This agreement protects the Church sufficiently. Frank Chan reviewed the role of NCC as a fiscal sponsor, and noted it has a two-year expiration date. Frank Chan will sign the agreement as the Church President.

**Questions from Members:**

Sue Ferguson asked: What is Eden Tree and if there are advisors? Rev Eric shared a description for what the organization is and what the mission is for this organization. Additionally, he confirmed there is a distinguished board of advisors.

Phil Lombardo: Are there potential risks for our becoming fiscal sponsors? Rev. Eric stated only if NCC mismanages the finances. Frank Chan shared that because the agreement is written in standard plain language and our financial team has agreed to it, we are comfortable with this agreement.

Juanita Durham: Asked if this should be viewed by an attorney who would review the legal aspects? If we can find someone for a small fee, we can have it reviewed. It is a very standard sponsorship agreement.

Joanne Moore: said this is a flowthrough organization where we would not have a risk for us, however would this impact our quarterly reports? Frank Chan shared that we hold the money, Eden Tree makes a request for disbursement to fund activities within the scope of its mission. We review the request to ensure it aligns with the [sponsorship] agreement before making a disbursement to Eden Tree.

Mary Mirecki: When this was presented at the GB meeting a 3% fee was mentioned. Frank Chan explained that this percentage is a good faith payment to NCC for the utilization of our financial staff and other fees associated with the administration of funds.

Keith Neilson: Is this an annual financial obligation by the Church or forwarded to the organization? Frank Chan shared that we will not have a financial obligation and as financial sponsor, we do not have to make any payments to Eden Tree.

Ellen Ashburn: Shared that United Action is a sponsored 501(c)(3) and we often make donations to them without an issue.

Rich Basham: If any of you have been exposed to Rev. Eric's series and podcast would appreciate that this may be a worthwhile project.

Brooke Stutzman: This is how we handle grant administration at the USCGA

Susan Ferguson: Who would be responsible for the audit. Frank Chan stated that we maintain records and based on the quarterly reports, we reconcile the figures.

Liz Buhler: Any expenses associated with administering the agreement will be paid by Eden Tree.

Keith Neilson: How is the content of whatever is released by Eden Tree determined? Frank Chan shared that if we do not agree with the content we can terminate anytime. Rev. Eric shared that there will be no content for a while and Eden Tree will most likely have their 501(c)(3) status before then.

Peter Crizer: Feels this is a unique opportunity for this Church to put our name/stamp on this product and that the seed for that to happen here would be a great thing, especially in that the Church is not financially responsible for this endeavor.

Frank Mirecki: Seeing that NCC has no financial obligation, as far as the product NCC will not be affiliated with the content as a part of this agreement. Rev. Eric shared that individual Church members will determine their participation. When he meets with a sponsor, we would need to get that sponsorship approved by NCC.

Liza Dalrymple: Who is responsible for the thank you letters? Frank Chan stated that NCC would generate a thank you letter as a part of the record which will be created by the Financial Secretary.

Joanne Moore: Is the cashflow coming from the Church? Eric shared that the cashflow would come from outside this congregation.

Kaleigh Rasmussen: shared that her non-profit organization is sponsored by United Way.

Gail SanJuan: shared input from the financial management team regarding our process and obligation.

## 7. Reports to inform the Congregation

- Financial Reports – information only (Liz Buhler) behind in pledging, behind in all other, behind in loose offerings, expenses are over, on track for Outreach, expenses for insurance are paid ahead, payroll is right on, shared details for the restricted funds status, a \$20,000 treasury bond was purchased as additional seed money for the roof replacement, the earnings on the investments is much higher this way. \$10,000 in I-bond is inflation protected, \$64,000 in 1-year treasury bills (yields 4.9%) is the safest investment.
- Ministry Team Report – Financial Management (Gail SanJuan) shared an update regarding the last three months work with Eden Tree, investing finances to higher percentages, working on suggestions from the off-site retreat, named members and are looking for an associate leader.
- Holy Land Pilgrimage Update (Rev. Dr. Eric Elnes) 1/20-2/2/2024 This promises to be an amazing tour and pilgrimage to see where Jesus read scripture as well a prominent locations from the Bible, sites like the Dead Sea, Roman encampments, Egypt, Giza and Cairo will be stops on this trip, as well as Mount Sinai, comfortable accommodations will be included, \$6750 (\$6500 if before October 1st) all flights, all taxes, all meals (except lunches), all buses, deluxe accommodations, limited to 35 participants. Does not include shrines, tourist markets, uncomfortable accommodations, bad food, unlimited participants. Information can be emailed out for interested people next week. If the price point is above your comfort level, there are alternative tours available. Apply for a passport now if you intend on going.
- Stewardship Campaign Update (Pam Stevens) Pam Stevens shared an update for the timeline for Stewardship. Two to three members will share how their pledges positively impact their lives. Please see Pam to volunteer for speaking.
- Status update on settled pastor search (Settled Pastor Search Committee) Peter Crizer shared an update from the nine-member search committee. Please fill out the survey before 7/21/23.
  - Craig Holt asked if the survey is posted on the website? It is not on the website as it is not open to the public. It is sent every week as a part of the Wednesday note. If you need a printed copy, please inquire with Theresa in the NCC office.
- Ministry Team Report – Property Management and Technology (Craig Woody) Shared that lighting has been replaced in the dining hall and will also be replaced in the NCCCC rooms as well, plants have been relocated or vinegar was used to remove weeds that were blocking the air conditioning units, CE office will need attention regarding air conditioning, fascia boards and covers will need to be replaced as well as the gutters when we redo the roof, need to replace the double doors by the children's area, the technology team has done a great job in turning the sanctuary into a sound stage.
- The Narthex area needs to be addressed. Currently the storage space above the ceiling of the Narthex is not up to code. We need to update the supports to bring it up to code

by reinforcing this area. We are not aiming to change the look of this storage area, and the area will be more safe. The railing option will need to be selected. The cost of this project will be \$0 as all of the materials and labor will be donated.

- Keith Neilson: 30 years ago the floor space was proposed to go over the Bride's Room, is that part of this plan? No
- Neil Passman: The image of open railings would allow for a view of storage. Craig Woody said we will select a barrier that blocks the view.
- Craig Holt: Do we have estimates for the roof yet? Not specifically but the range looks to be between \$50,000-70,000 (of which we have \$30,000 set aside and invested).
- Sharon Kittel: asked about the pile of wood chips in the parking lot? Craig Woody reported that those were purchased by the NCCCC and are currently being placed in a variety of places, but are mostly extra.

**8. Motion** to approve Narthex Mezzanine Floor Reinforcement Proposal

- Joanne Moore made a motion, Kathy Leindecker seconded the proposal for the Nathex replacement.
- Jeannette Woodworth: would like us to acknowledge Rich Thomson as our benefactor for this project
- Rich Basham: asked when this project would occur? Craig Woody responded that we are not sure as we need to procure material.
- **Vote by show of hand 58 voted yes to approve the project, none opposed, Motion carries.**

**9. Voices of the Congregation**

- Linda Helvig: Corrected the statement and shared that the wood chips shipped were more than was ordered and that NCCCC is coordinating a return/pick up of the material.
- Liz Buhler: Donation for UMC in Vermont will be accepted through the week
- Mary Mireki: from the search committee: Reminder to complete the search committee survey for a new settled pastor.

**10. Benediction (Rev. Eric)**

**11. Motion** made by John Whritner and seconded by Judy DeVey to adjourn the meeting.  
Adjournment at 12:23 pm

Next Quarterly Congregational Meeting 10/22/2023

Respectfully submitted by Mary Childs NCC Clerk