

# Church-wide Information Meeting Minutes

April 9, 2017

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## A. Location: Church chapel

## B. Meeting Agenda & Minutes

- a. Meeting started at 1:35 pm. Elder Yuguang welcomed attendees, opened in prayer, and went over the meeting agenda.
- b. Church building expansion update (Elder Yuguang He)
  - i. Studies have been conducted regarding holding multiple services or live streaming worship services to satellite campuses.
  - ii. The Board of Elders is in favor of moving forward with building expansion and will revive the church building expansion team, recruiting team members from across a variety of different church ministries to get broader input from the church.
- c. Senior pastor search update (Elder Yuguang He)
  - i. Pastor Caleb has made a decision to resign at the end of 2018.
  - ii. During the October 2016 Board of Elders meeting, Pastor Caleb's decision was approved and Elder He was assigned to form the search committee.
  - iii. The search process will be similar to the English Pastor Search process:
    1. Form the search committee
    2. Create a job description
    3. Post the job description
    4. Screen applicants
    5. Interview applicants
    6. Recommend a candidate to the Board of Elders
  - iv. Church members are encouraged to connect the search committee with any potential candidates that they know.
- d. Pastors' sabbatical update (Pastor David Eng)
  - i. Pastor Caleb is currently in his first week of sabbatical. He will be on sabbatical from April to September. Pastor David is acting senior pastor and is primarily covering Pastor Caleb's administrative responsibilities. Pastor Steve Chang and Minister Yuegang are handling most of the Chinese Ministry responsibilities
  - ii. Pastor Jen will be starting her sabbatical in July. Minister Stan will cover her responsibilities during that time.
- e. Cross Bridge pastor search update (Elder Bryan Che)
  - i. Rev. Tim Conkling has accepted our invitation to be our next lead Cross Bridge pastor.
  - ii. Rev. Tim Conkling will be moving to the Boston area on July 7 and his first Sunday will be July 9.
  - iii. There will be a question and answer session at 12:45pm on April 23 regarding the transition process.
- f. Mission statement update (Elder Bryan Che)
  - i. The church's vision statement (which was put into place last year) is:  
"To see every person become a disciple of Christ, across all cultures, from East to West, from Greater Boston to the world."
  - ii. The next step is to create a mission statement describing how the church hopes to get to the state described by the church vision statement.
  - iii. Key questions from our church vision that should be addressed by the mission statement:
    1. How will we "see every person become a disciple of Christ?"
    2. How will we work "across all cultures, from East to West?"
    3. How will we work "from Greater Boston to the world?"

- iv. The church mission statement should drive the church's strategy, providing guidance when answering these kinds of questions:
  - 1. What do we already do that we must continue to do?
  - 2. What must we do that we do not do?
  - 3. What do we think is not important for us to do?
  - 4. What is our governing strategy and approach for determining what we do and do not do?
- v. Proposed mission statement:
 

"We are a church in Greater Boston that brings people across all cultures together in Christ to inspire, disciple, and send them to be global disciple-makers"

  - 1. This statement is intended to recognize that our community is diverse with people from around the world and sets a direction that focuses not only on training people to be disciples but also on equipping them to disciple others.
  - 2. The next step is to solicit congregational feedback regarding the proposed mission statement, after which the statement may be revised.
- g. Children's ministry update (Pastor Steven Bowman)
  - i. Nine children's ministries are running smoothly (Sunday school, Nursery, Children's Worship, Mustard Seed, Special Programs, AWANA, Bible Quiz, Vacation Bible School, and Philly). There are over 200 co-workers who serve among the children.
  - ii. There is effort within Children's Ministry to get classrooms, cabinets, closets, etc. organized and decluttered to better provide for teacher's needs.
  - iii. AWANA will conduct its annual AWANA Grand Prix on Friday, April 28.
  - iv. Vacation Bible School (VBS) will be held on June 26-28.
  - v. Please pray for the provision of a Sunday school coordinator and please also pray for our Philly ministry and Philly families.
  - vi. Praise God for improvement in Pastor Bowman's health.
- h. Youth ministry
  - i. April 14 will be a cleaning day focusing on the junior chapel and storage room.
  - ii. Winter Retreats went well. Many students grew in faith; students accepted Christ; senior high student leaders served at junior high retreat
  - iii. The youth ministry will join Chinese Ministry at the Memorial Day Retreat at Nichols College. NYC team will be serving at Memorial Day Retreat with Children's Ministry.
  - iv. Preparations continue for missions trips, with meetings at least once a month with students. Elder Terry Yang is leading the Hopi team. Minister Stan Chang is leading the NYC team. Timothy Harro is leading the Lynn team.
  - v. There will be an outreach night on April 28 in the Chapel. Students are encouraged to invite their friends for a night of connecting and ice cream.
  - vi. Prayer Request: The youth ministry is looking for counselors who are passionate about seeing youth grow in their walk with Christ.
- i. Question and answer
  - i. Elder Timothy Lu has moved to California and is no longer here physically on a daily basis. The bylaws state that when someone moves that they should step down. *(Editor's note: The bylaws do not explicitly state this)*
    - 1. A policy was passed last year in recognition that job transitions and relocation happen frequently. The policy specifies that after a period of one year, if an elder continues to be unable to be physically present in ministry, they will have to step down. The year allows for a period of transition. Elder Timothy still comes back to the area every two weeks, is in communication, serves on worship team, and teaches from the pulpit.
      - a. The policy can be found here:
 

<https://www.cbcbg.org/sites/default/files/document/cbcbg/operations/policy%20or%20procedure/EldersandDeaconsParticipationPolicy.pdf>
  - ii. What if we cannot find a senior pastor before Pastor Caleb's resignation?
    - 1. The church has faced this situation in the past. Even now, while Pastor Caleb is on

sabbatical, his responsibilities are being shared across various church leaders in the congregation. If a senior pastor is not identified before Pastor Caleb's resignation, the burden of the senior pastor responsibilities will be shared by others, and the church will continue.

- iii. What is the current balance?
  - 1. Without checking directly with the finance committee, the total of all church accounts is somewhere between \$1 million and \$2 million.
  - 2. In the past decades, the church has planted churches in Metro-West and Metro-South. A church plant is being explored in Metro-North. There is also church building expansion. The church will find ways to use the money for the service of God.
- iv. The Bedford fellowship groups propose to use money from the church's projected large general fund surplus to support Syrian refugees, either through World Vision or through local churches in Syria.
  - 1. Elder Yen has in the past exhorted the church to give money, prayer, and ourselves to mission. As a large church, there are many ministry priorities to balance, and we will continue to seek to find ways to use the money that God has given us for the purpose of God's kingdom, along with our prayers and ourselves.
- v. Can the Board of Elders share from the Lord the vision for our church?
  - 1. Elder Tsai started the process of creating a church vision a few years ago. The Board of Elders met regularly in prayer and discussion and arrived at the church vision last year which Elder Bryan alluded to earlier. If you examine the vision closely, you can see that it is a reflection of the Great Commission of our Lord in our context.
- vi. How do we make disciples in the church beyond just transferring knowledge?
  - 1. The mission statement that Elder Bryan just presented emphasizes the importance of discipleship. Once the mission statement is finalized, the church will focus on developing specific strategies for implementing the mission statement in which discipleship is a key focus.
  - 2. Different ministries have different training programs for the purpose of growing disciples. Evangelism Explosion, Stephen Ministries, Sunday School, and community outreach ministries are examples of these training programs.
- vii. Follow-up question: Training programs are different from discipleship. To be trained to serve is not necessarily the same thing as following Jesus. The Board of Elders is encouraged to consider what it means to be a disciple and to make disciples of all nations.
  - 1. The community outreach committee is considering using Evangelism Explosion not just for visiting newcomers but also as a means to strengthen discipleship.
- viii. In reading church minutes from the last two months, there were a few confusing statements. Can someone clarify statements made about: 1) Partnering with Chinese Bible Church of Greater Lowell in North Andover; 2) Renting an apartment in Malden for student outreach; 3) Buying a van or car to help out the North Shore fellowship and supporting food expenses
  - 1. Our sister church (Chinese Church of Greater Lowell) has proposed partnering with our church to plant a church in North Andover. There are prayer meetings ongoing to discern whether there is opportunity to build a church there.
  - 2. City Outreach Ministry has been looking for a place to use in Malden to do ministry. They see Malden as strategic as there are many Chinese in that area. God gave them an opportunity to rent an apartment in Malden which is undergoing light renovation to allow for fellowship meetings.
  - 3. The North Shore fellowship is part of our campus ministry led by Elder David Ho. We are supporting this fellowship because they are mainly Chinese students from mainland China. Right now, we are not providing money for food for their fellowship, but they still need transportation support. They are currently borrowing an absent church member's old mini-van, but the van requires maintenance. The church has invested in the city among students with the City Outreach Ministry. However, there are still many students in the suburbs. While the Board of Elders will not support the cost of food,

- they do recognize the need to support outreach to these students.
- ix. All Christians can be disciples of Christ. Discipleship does not necessarily have to be through the church. It also does not require everyone to go overseas. The church should be a spiritual home for all.
    - 1. When the church seeks to make disciples around the world, what we do in the local community is important just as what we do in the world is important. The mission statement notes that we are a church in Greater Boston. We are rooted in Boston and we expect most of our activities to be in Boston.
    - 2. There are three key words in the mission statement: inspire, disciple, and send.
      - a. We envision everyone here to have a vision that people everywhere will become disciples. We want to inspire people with the vision of disciples being in Boston to the ends of the earth.
      - b. We also want to equip people to disciple others. Some may not know how to share the Gospel whether it be with those in the same context or those in a different context.
      - c. Our church has a tradition of sending missionaries overseas. While the church hopes to continue this, the first part of the mission statement is indicative that ministry locally in Boston has and will continue to be critical to our church.
  - x. How does the Board of Elders measure the health of our church and what is the current health of our church?
    - 1. The Board of Elders regularly reviews church ministries in order to measure the health of these ministries.
    - 2. Comment from congregation: Two years ago, the Chinese congregation had a Sunday School teaching from a book called "10 ways to make sure the church is healthy". It was suggested to leverage the principles in this book to answer this question.
    - 3. While none of our ministries are perfect, church co-workers are faithfully serving to the best of their abilities. All of our church ministries can improve and we hope that we will continue to grow as a church.
  - xi. Can the church ask our existing pastors whether they wish to be senior pastor before looking outside the church?
    - 1. The search committee has met only once but will consider candidates both internal and external. The committee has to evaluate the current state of the church and the current needs and direction. Every time a church grows to a certain threshold, there are struggles and the church needs to identify who will lead our church at this point in time.
  - xii. What is the current state of the mission fund? How does the budget impact current and future plans for long term and short term missions funding?
    - 1. Before answering the question:
      - a. Jesus never called us just to be church-goers but to be disciples. To be a disciple is not a choice for a Christian but a mandate.
      - b. Boston is strategic because of the number of international students and immigrants. Church members are exhorted to look around their neighborhood and workplaces as the world comes to us.
    - 2. The church's mission policy states that if you are a church member who has been accepted and approved to go on a short term missions trip, the church will support up to 1/3 of the trip cost. Church members are required to raise independent support from brothers and sisters and self support for the remainder.
    - 3. Based on the most recent data and current giving and expenses, the missions fund is positive again and stable.
    - 4. The committee is encouraged that church members continue to go into the missions field, like sister Petek Altug.
  - xiii. Can the church spend more time in singing during Chinese worship service, particularly during Easter or Christmas? Also, is it possible to integrate Easter choir performances into Sunday worship?

1. There are time constraints during worship service. If more time is spent singing, less time will need to be spent elsewhere in the worship service. These factors have to be weighed.
  2. The choir preferred to keep this year's Easter choir performance as a smaller fellowship event, but if there is interest, the church may promote it further as a church-wide event.
- xiv. The senior pastor search committee is encouraged to keep two things in mind: 1) The senior pastor is the pastor for the entire church, including Cross Bridge, Youth, and Children's ministry. 2) The church needs a younger, more energetic senior pastor who has the vision to transform the church and lead the church to higher ground during the next 10-15 years.
1. The Board of Elders and committee will take this advice into account during the search process.
- xv. Elder Yuguang noted that prayer meeting attendance has fluctuated between 30-50 people the past few years and encourages church members to attend and prayer together.
- xvi. Can church members can support missionaries (long term or short term) through the church in a tax-deductible manner? Can individual funds towards specific projects be created so that church members can donate towards specific missionaries or short term projects?
1. The mission committee agrees that the church needs to be strategic in what areas of the world they focus. The missions policy prioritizes unreached people group. The missions committee also prioritizes ministry towards Muslims.
  2. For short term missions, church members can designate the missions project in the check memo. For long term missions, church members can donate through the long term missionaries' organizations.
- xvii. It has been more than six years since the church building expansion was passed. Can the church re-vote on the church building expansion?
1. The vote six years ago was not specific with respect to design but with respect to moving forward with the project.
- j. Community Outreach Committee (Deacon Shanchuan Zhao)
- i. Deacon Shanchuan provided an overview of the Community Outreach committee, including its purpose which is "to fulfill our Lord's Great Commission and Great Commandment in the Greater Boston area and its vicinity."
  - ii. The committee is currently focused on Mandarin Gospel Meetings, Evangelism Explosion, and suburban campus ministry. The committee also supports parachurch co-workers, pre-evangelism, and the NEWS camp which reaches out to Chinese students in New England around Christmas time.
  - iii. The Community Outreach Committee will seek to promote discipleship making through Evangelism Explosion.
- k. Elder Bryan closed the meeting in prayer, and Elder Yuguang closed the meeting at 3:30pm