

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE

**The Eliot Church of Newton
Newton, Massachusetts**

Wayne Earl, Interim Pastor

**Southern New England Conference
Metropolitan Boston Association**

April 12, 2024

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*“God is able to provide you with every blessing, so that
having all sufficiency in all things at all times,
you may abound in every good work.”
(2 Corinthians 9:8)*

1. POSITION POSTING

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1a. LISTING INFORMATION

Church name:

The Eliot Church of Newton

Street address:

474 Centre Street, Newton, MA 02458

Phone:

617-244-3639

Supplemental web links:

<https://www.eliotchurch.org>

Additional ecumenical affiliations (e.g. denominations, communions, fellowships):

Conference:

Southern New England UCC Conference

Associations:

Metropolitan Boston Association

UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person (Name, Title, Phone, Email):

The Rev. Alex Shea Will
Area Conference Minister
508-244-4769
sheawilla@sneucc.org

Summary Ministry Description:

The Eliot Church community is seeking to call a warm, personally engaging minister who will help us grow in faith and renew our commitment to each other through vibrant Sunday worship services, through community-building events, and through creative approaches to Christian education for both adults and children. We are a curious and engaged congregation in pursuit of spiritual nourishment, scriptural understanding, and community. We have a long history of mission and social justice work. We are gifted with a versatile building in a great location, a rich music program, a generous endowment, and a committed core membership that is motivated to grow the church. Through discussion and discernment, we have reached a broad consensus about our vision for the future: We envision a church community in which bonds of friendship and care provide the wellspring of energy that enables us to celebrate God's gifts and do God's work in the world. We hope that with these strong bonds in place and our called minister as shepherd, we will also be able to serve our neighbors, attract newcomers to our congregation, and energize current members.

Photographs: 3 images of your church, its people, its parsonage or building or gathering space, etc.



What we value about living in our area:

Newton has beautiful, well-cared-for parks and green spaces, and almost 200 registered historic places. Its residents are civically engaged, and it is a welcoming community for people of diverse religious, ethnic, and economic backgrounds. The City of Newton has 88,000 residents and comprises thirteen villages, each with its own unique identity, which gives the city a small-town feel; however, its proximity to Boston and the fact that it is flanked by Brighton, Watertown, and Waltham means opportunities for ministry and the amenities of a big city abound.

Historically, Newton has had a very strong public school system, and we are confident that the Newton schools will continue to be one of the primary attractions of living in Newton. With that said, the Newton Public Schools experienced a two-plus-week teachers' strike in January/February 2024, in response to understaffing and lack of mental health resources in

schools, as well as calls for improvement to pay and parental leave for teachers and paraprofessionals. This strike caused hardship for many families and created divisions in the Newton community, and has created a need for healing in the Newton community.

Current size of membership:

Eliot has 115 members and friends, of whom 40-50 are active.

Languages used in ministry (*other than English*):

None

Position Title:

Settled Pastor

Position Duration:

Settled – A called position intended for longer-term ministry in which the minister moves his/her/their church membership to the congregation and moves ministerial standing to related association.

Compensation Level (choose one, delete the other options listed):

Full Time

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines?

Yes

1b. SCOPE OF WORK

Eliot Church is seeking a minister able to engage our community and keep forward momentum going after a long interim period followed by a short (15 month) settled pastor tenure. This period included the difficult years of the COVID-19 pandemic followed by the return to in-person worship. (Our recently-departed Settled Pastor left for a unique opportunity in his home country to which he felt called.) In general, the new minister would be pastorally focused, someone who can attract new members and deepen the engagement of existing members by both engaging them personally and by inspiring them to join or rejoin current Eliot activities. In addition, with the worship service being a key centerpiece of our Eliot experience and one treasured by the community, we seek a minister who works collaboratively with our Director of Music Ministry to coordinate a well-crafted worship service that inspires our Christian participation and brings together the community. Because of the short (yet positive) nature of our most recent settled pastor's tenure and our Church's recent history that includes two interim pastor periods, it will be important for the settled pastor to

provide guidance and healing, and nurture the congregation's trust in our church leadership and staff.

Core Competencies:

Eliot wants this skill set in its minister: Excellent liturgical planner and preacher; Sensitive listener and communicator; Effective educator; Strong pastoral care skills; Capable administrator with internet and social media skills.

1c. COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

Salary Basis (from the Call Agreement Workbook, equal to Cash Salary plus Value of Parsonage/Housing Allowance):

The value of the Settled Pastor's total compensation package will be within the range of \$125,000.00 to be \$153,000.00, inclusive of salary, housing allowance, and all benefits. The Pastor may choose how to split salary and housing allowance based on their own preference. Benefits that Eliot Church provides to its Pastor include: Health, Dental, and Vision Insurance; Life & Disability Insurance; SECA Contribution; and Pension/Annuity Contribution.

We base the total value of Pastor compensation on area median income for Middlesex County, MA. We will follow Conference Guidelines: Salary plus Benefits – 4 weeks annual vacation time; 14% of salary plus housing pension contribution; ministry expenses; moving expenses negotiable.

What is the expected living situation for your next minister (e.g., parsonage, living nearby with a housing allowance, living elsewhere to commute as needed)?

We expect the Pastor to live nearby, with a housing allowance. While Newton is a wonderful community with a variety of housing options, our Pastor is not required to live within the city of Newton. For example, Brighton (part of the city of Boston, Watertown, and Waltham are all nearby communities with multiple housing options within a 10-15 minute drive to Eliot Church.

Comment on the residential/commuting expectations for your next minister.

There is no parsonage. Living arrangements are up to the candidate. Church leadership can provide guidance/advice in their housing search. While the Pastor will not be required to live in the city of Newton, we would expect our Pastor to engage in community outreach and activities, and engage with other clergy in Newton and surrounding areas.

State any incentives (e.g., school debt reduction or retention bonus after a certain number of years in position):

In past practice, sabbatical provision after 7 years (negotiable).

Describe peer and professional supports available for ministers in your association/conference:

Newton Interfaith Clergy Association; Mass. Council of Churches; UCC Area Minister; Communities of Practice (UCC support groups). Within the city of Newton and regionally, there are also multiple clergy/interfaith organizations.

If applicable, describe how your church will adopt part-time adjustments in the pastoral schedule to support a minister's bi-vocational employment:

N/A (this is a full-time position).

1d. WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

Describe the ministry goals you envision your next minister co-collaborating with the congregation to achieve.

Building stronger bonds within the present Eliot community: Through our Discernment process, the Eliot congregation has come to realize that in order to become a more vital church we must first build up and strengthen the community we already have. We are seeking a minister who will help us get to know each other better, build up love and trust, identify our shared passions and goals, and grow in faith.

Using this strong foundation to better serve our neighbors and grow our congregation: Eliot has always had a strong commitment to social justice; however, as our numbers have gotten smaller, the energy and person-power necessary to accomplish this work as we did it in the past have waned. We hope that from a renewed community foundation, we will be able to develop a new, appropriately scaled, focused, and energetic approach to our work in the world. And our hope is that this energy will continue to grow as we attract new members in the future.

Re-energize a Christian Education program for both children and adults: With our new staffing model, hiring a separate Christian Education staff person is not possible for the time being. Based on this decision, we are without an assistant pastor or a Christian Education Director. However, we still want a program for the children in the congregation. We expect that our next minister will work with volunteers from the congregation to organize and participate in adult forums and small group ministries, and at the same time help us to continue to expand our Christian Education program in a way that is both manageable within our staffing model, and realistic given our current lack of children's programming.

Based on what you have learned about who your church is, who your church's neighbor is, and who God is calling the church to become, describe four areas of excellence from

The Marks of Faithful & Effective Authorized Ministry that your next minister will display to further equip the congregation's ministry in these areas.

The top four areas of excellence we would want a minister to have are:

- A commitment to lifelong spiritual development and faithful personal stewardship.
- A commitment to the core values of the United Church of Christ: continuing witness, extravagant welcome, and changing lives.
- A commitment to work collaboratively with intercultural awareness and sensitivity.
- A commitment to bring life to sacred stories and traditions in worship, proclamation, and witness.

2. WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME?

Prior to our recent Settled Pastor search, which concluded in 2022, our then-Interim Pastor, members of the congregation, and the Leadership Council spent several months holding a series of small group meetings to determine how Eliot can best approach the future. The results were discussed with and approved by the congregation. The congregation affirmed that these are the Core Components of Eliot Church:

- The centerpiece of our community is our Sunday morning worship service where we both worship God and connect with one another.
- Eliot Church is an interconnected community of believers where each of us grows in our faith, commitment, and joy in one another.
- Eliot Church has a social justice orientation. This orientation manifests itself through work done in the world, education programs within our church, and by dedicating a portion of our church budget both to denominational missions as well as to mission projects sponsored by Eliot.
- Eliot members are committed to lifelong Christian education.

Describe how God is calling you to reach out to address the emerging challenges and opportunities of your community and congregation.

Eliot consistently makes its facility available to groups addressing local community needs; these include Alcoholics Anonymous, a local marriage and divorce counseling organization, and religious groups that need a place to worship.

With respect to our own activities, Eliot Church of Newton has a deep history of social justice and community outreach. Our community outreach related to food insecurity and climate change has remained a constant. The congregation regularly donates food and supplies to the Centre Street Food Pantry and has participated annually in Project Bread's Walk for Hunger for close to 40 years. (in 2021, we were a top 10 donor to the walk.) We have a new "Creation Care" Team dedicated to the issue of climate change. The Creation Care Team has organized educational activities such as a climate-based book group and a plant-based potluck featuring speakers on the health and environmental benefits of a vegetarian diet. We installed solar panels on the church roof several years ago, and we donate electricity to a neighboring church to support their urban ministry. Eliot has made a number of other significant changes to the church building, and we have been given a "Energy Star" Destination from the US Department of Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for our efforts in "greening" the church building.

Housing and Homelessness have also been a focus for Eliot. In recent years we have supported families living in nearby hotels in various ways, and our Mission & Social Justice commission is exploring a partnership with Family Aid to assist with welcoming families to a new shelter slated to open in Newton in Spring/Summer 2024.

Notwithstanding these activities, our community outreach has been reduced in the past five years. The pandemic eliminated "hands on" activities for over two years, but even as most of us have resumed daily activities, its impact lingers. We have an aging church and some people are not comfortable going out into the community as they might have in the past. In addition, we have not attracted enough new members to augment the work of those who have led many outreach initiatives in past years. Re-engaging more actively in community outreach and social justice activities with both re-energized current members, as well as new members, is a priority for us as we search for and bring on a new settled pastor.

3. WHO ARE WE NOW?

a. CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

Describe your congregation's life of faith.

The Eliot community believes that:

- Christ's sacrifice means redemption for everyone.
- We depend and call upon the Holy Spirit for guidance in all things.
- The Bible is to be taken seriously but not "literally."
- All people are worthy and fundamentally deserving of love and forgiveness.
- Human difference (race, gender identity, sexual orientation, neurological and bodily variety) is to be celebrated.
- The environment is God's creation, and it's our responsibility and our privilege to care for it and enjoy it.
- Being a peacemaker means being an agitator for social change and a champion of the oppressed, not avoiding conflict.
- Our language of faith and interpretations of scripture are gender inclusive.
- Scripture is something to be engaged intellectually and not simply blindly followed.
- We have an evangelizing mission to live our faith out in the world, and that will show who we are and draw people to us.

As our mission statement says:

We are growing in faith, living love, and building community.

Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation.

Eliot has a very committed membership with a history of members working with and assisting the pastors in carrying out our core responsibilities. Approximately 30-40 of our members today are actively engaged in working with the staff to carry out specific ministries of the church, including sanctuary care, spiritual life, music, financial oversight, educational programming, social justice activities, and reaching out to members of the community in need. The work today builds on a long history of service and community building, and the congregation is committed to continuing those traditions.

Describe what worship is like when your congregation gathers.

When asked what draws them to Eliot Church for worship, members state that when they enter the church or the sanctuary, they "feel accepted for who I am and for my belief system;" that the service and fellowship "speaks to us in ways that other parts of our life don't;" that Eliot "helps me see my place in the larger world." Eliot's Sunday worship has an intimate feel

- not just because of the number of folks in attendance - but because of the fellowship, tone, and connectedness. And it has a casual feel in the sense that the services are welcoming and the language accessible. Eliot's worship services draw together people who are in different places on the belief spectrum, yet share in their beliefs communally.

Eliot's worship style has a fairly traditional order, but we introduce lots of variety in the resources and genres. We use inclusive language, and worship leadership is committed to minimizing gendered language. We are careful in reflecting the dignity of every human being. We use a variety of Bible translations – NRSV, the Message, etc. We use two hymn books – Chalice, New Century Hymnal. In each Sunday service, congregants in attendance are given the opportunity to offer prayer requests, which is a valued portion of the worship service. Since the COVID pandemic, each Sunday service has been live-streamed in addition to being conducted in-person and on-site.

The typical worshipers at Eliot Church are well-educated; we pursue our spiritual development through intellectual and artistic expression; we appreciate thoughtful, provocative preaching and quality music, for which there is a long tradition here.

Our Music Program has always been anchored by a professional musician, at present a part-time organist/choir director, supported by four section leaders and a small chancel choir. Many choral groups use our sanctuary for rehearsal and concerts, which is acoustically ideal for performance music. We have a 1987 Bozeman tracker-action organ and Steinway piano in the Sanctuary. In addition to numerous concerts and performances throughout the year, Music Appreciation Sunday takes place once per year at Eliot.

Describe the educational program/faith formation vision of your church.

Christian Education is a very important value to Eliot Church, but there's work to be done here. Adult education programs at Eliot convene multiple times per year; these include bible study workshops, lenten study, etc. The children and youth program has become dormant and needs rebuilding in a way that is achievable and manageable within our staffing model. The church basically follows a traditional understanding of CE, being interested in education per se, as well as Christian formation or spiritual development. It is a priority as we move forward to rebuild this program.

Describe how your congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

For a full picture of the life of Eliot church over our previous year, please feel free to review our annual report, which is available upon request. In addition, the bylaws roughly portray the governance structure of the church; however, we'll elaborate further here on the general governance of Eliot Church.

The major votes on the budget, leadership, and the like occur at the annual congregational meeting in June and a follow-up meeting in the fall (if necessary). The direction of that meeting, the coordination of all committees, and general short-term decision-making lie with the Leadership Council, which consists of the Moderator, the Clerk, the Treasurer, and usually 4 at-large members. The council members each serve as liaisons between the leadership council and particular committees and commissions within the church. The council generally meets for 2 to 2 ½ hours once a month and then occasionally calls additional meetings when large decisions need to be discussed at length.

There are eight Commissions set up in Eliot's bylaws. As of this writing, 5 of these commissions are active, and their general functions are described in the bylaws. These commissions are the following, with the amount of time they meet and/or work per month:

- Spiritual Life Commission – One 2-hour meeting per month to advise the pastor and music director about worship, to confer about special events, and to plan special activities like church decoration for Christmas, Easter and special services;
- Christian Education Commission - Currently is not functioning, but the church has a group of committed teachers;
- Commission on Mission and Social Justice Ministries (MSJ) – Monthly meetings during school year for 2 hours; various programs totaling from 20-30 hours/year depending on the year and focus;
- Finance Commission – Meets for 2 hours every other month;
- Facilities Commission – Meets for 2 hours monthly, and works with staff (especially Facility Manager and Office Administrator) on various matters on an on-going basis.
- Music Commission – Meets for up to 1 hour monthly to collaborate with and provide input to the Director of Music Ministry.

There are commissions that are currently not operating as independent commissions; therefore, the work spelled out by these commissions has been absorbed into the general work of the Leadership Council or is fulfilled by staff responsibilities. These commissions are:

- Parish Life Commission – Pastoral care overseen by Leadership Council.
- Membership Commission – Member participation and development and the Stewardship campaign are overseen by Leadership Council.

In addition, there are 3 committees set up in the bylaws, all of which are active at this time.

- Investment Committee – one hour meeting per quarter or as necessary to monitor portfolio performance of Eliot’s endowment.
- Parish-Staff Relations Committee meets on an as-needed basis, which might range from monthly calls to many hours of meetings per month, to provide support and feedback to the Senior Pastor, and address intra-staff conflict or staff-congregation conflict.
- Search Committee – temporary committee dedicated to Settled Pastor search. With the charge of the Leadership Council, The Search Committee will update the Church Profile, work with our Conference to coordinate the Settled Pastor search, and receive and evaluate applications and ultimately make its recommendation to the Leadership Council and congregation.

Communication with the congregation occurs weekly through the e-mail newsletter, “*This Week at Eliot Church*” (TWEC), on Sundays at announcement time at the end of the service, by email and/or snail mail, at congregational meetings, and on the Website and Facebook. These communications originate from either the pastor or the moderator and, when appropriate, from a Commission Chair. They are facilitated by the Office Administrator.

The process for arriving at a vision for the Church involved holding a series of small group meetings and then providing a summary of the results to the Leadership Council for their deliberation and final approval, whereupon the congregation had a chance to make its response at an information session. In past years the Church has also held retreats for leadership and membership to review where the church is and to look to the future.

When it comes to decision-making, how many hours are spent in meetings per month?

This is an approximate summary of meeting times:

- Leadership Council - 1 to 1.5 hours per month
- Mission and Social Justice - 3 hours per month
- Spiritual Life - 2 hours/month
- Music - up to 1 hour/month
- Facilities Commission - 2 hours per month
- Parish Staff Relations - 2 hours, every other month
- Investment Committee - 1 hour per quarter
- Christian Education - no scheduled meetings

Think of a time when action had to be taken quickly, for example when a crisis or disaster occurred. How was that accomplished?

The best, recent example of this is Eliot's response to the rapid onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Adjustments due to COVID had to be made very quickly, of course. Within a couple weeks we had set up pre-recorded Zoom services. At congregational behest, we switched to live online worship by Zoom which permitted worshipers to participate and make their prayer requests. It was an ongoing learning process to make improvements in the production values and in worship leadership. The building was completely closed to staff, membership, and renters, except for the pre-school. The staff shifted to working remotely from home immediately, and just like everyone else, communicated by phone, email, and Zoom. Our Interim Minister, who was focused on the overall transition and keeping the membership connections alive, and a dedicated volunteer working out of the Treasurer's office (keeping operations going) worked regularly in their offices on separate levels of the building. Services and deliveries continued on a limited basis. We were able to maintain Zoom worship throughout the pandemic, and (as mentioned earlier) use our website, newsletter and social media as other ways to keep the congregation connected.

As the pandemic waned, we returned to in-person worship gradually and cautiously. We held worship outdoors during the summer, to which people brought their own chairs and organ music was played through speakers. When the decision was made to resume worship in the sanctuary, modifications were made to ensure safety, including requiring masks, roping off every other pew, installing air purifiers, and changing how offering and communion were handled. Over time we have been able to reduce many of these precautions, though we are prepared to re-introduce them if/when necessary.

Can you provide the next minister with a copy of an organization structure, bylaws and/or annual report to further explain the patterns of the church's activity and governance?

Yes. See Annual Report.

3b. 11-YEAR REPORT

Our 11-Year Report is [available via this link](#), and can be sent to candidates as a stand-alone document by request.

3c. CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Describe those who participate in your church.

		Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)
Number of active members:	55	✓
Number of active non-members:	2	✓
Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):	57	✓

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
More than 10 years:	70%	✓
Less than 10, more than 5 years:	20%	✓
Less than 5 years:	10%	✓

Number of total participants by age: 57

0-11	12-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	
1	3	2	3	5	10	8	16	9	✓

Percentage of adults in various household types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Single adults under 35:	5%	✓
Households with minors:	10%	✓
Single adults age 35-65:	20%	✓
Joint households with no minors:	45%	✓
Single adults over 65:	20%	✓

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
High school:		
College:	30%	✓
Graduate School:	50%	✓
Specialty Training:		
Other (please specify):		

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Adults who are employed:	45%	✓
Adults who are retired:	45%	✓
Adults who are not fully employed:	10%	✓

Describe the range of occupations of working adults in the congregation:

Lawyer; social worker; higher ed. admin; teacher; financial analyst, musician.

Describe the mix of ethnic heritages in your congregation, and the overall racial make-up. Most UCC congregations tend to describe themselves as “diverse.” Yet, the vast majority of UCC congregations are mono-cultural. What does diversity mean in your context?

The background of the congregation is predominantly Anglo-Saxon, and European. It also includes individuals who are Black, So. East Asian, and Hispanic. (Approximately 8%)

Has your congregation recently had a conversation about welcoming diversity, or do you plan to hold one in the near future (perhaps using, for example, the Welcoming Diversity Inventory)? Please note the date. Comment after the exercise:

Eliot Church is an Open and Affirming congregation. People who visit tell us that our inclusive spirit and commitment are what appeals to them. No diversity event as such is planned. However, we are actively offering book-studies and movie discussions related to Black Lives Matter (BLM signs are posted on the front lawn) and indigenous peoples' issues.

3d. PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

Complete the following chart. Please leave blank any fields that are not applicable to your congregation.

Ways of Gathering	Estimated number of people involved in attendance	Who plans each of the listed gatherings? <i>(list any and all worship planners, such as various lay leaders, pastors, musicians, other staff)</i>
Adult Groups or Classes	12	Member(s) of the Congregation
Baptisms <i>(number last year)</i>	0	
Children's Groups or Classes	0	
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	Christmas 2023 = ~50	
Church-wide Meals	40 x 2	Member(s) of the Congregation.
Choirs and Music Groups	6	Director of Music Ministry
Church-based Bible Study	10	Pastor
Communion <i>(served how often?)</i>	monthly	Pastor
Community Meals	0	
Confirmation <i>(# confirmed last year)</i>	0	
Drama or Dance Program	0	
Funerals <i>(number last year)</i>	1	Pastor
Intergenerational Groups	0	
Outdoor Worship	Occasional in Summer (~20 people)	Pastor
Prayer or Meditation Groups	8	Women's Fellowship - Led by Member(s) of the Congregation
Public Advocacy Work	5	Member(s) of the Congregation
Retreats	0	
Theology or Bible Programs in the Community	0	
Weddings <i>(number last year)</i>	2	Pastor
Worship (time slot: 10:00 a.m.)	25-30 in-person 4-5 via stream	Pastor
Young Adult Groups or Classes	0	
Youth Groups or Classes	0	

Other		
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Additional comments:

List all members or regular participants in your congregation who are ordained, licensed, or commissioned ministers. Indicate those with current United Church of Christ standing.

N/A

Three-Way Covenants (i.e., serving in a congregation) or Four-Way Covenants (i.e. serving in a ministry beyond a congregation).

None.

Name	Three- or Four-Way Covenant? <i>(3 or 4 or No)</i>	Ministry Setting	Type of Ministry Role	Retired? <i>(Y or N)</i>

If one or more previous pastors or retired ministers currently hold membership in the church, describe their role(s) in the life of the congregation:

N/A [Lead worship, preach about twice a year - check email]

List all current staff, including ministers. Exclude the position you are seeking to fill. Indicate which staff person serves as head of staff.

Staff Position	Head of Staff?	Compensation (full time, part time, volunteer)	Supervised by:	Length of Tenure for current person in this position
Interim Pastor	Yes	Full-Time	Parish-Staff Relations	Started 1/1/2024

Office Administrator	No	20 hours/week (part-time)	Interim Pastor	Started 11/1/2023
Director of Music Ministry	No	15 hours/week (part-time) for 10 months of the year	Interim Pastor	Started 2017
Facility Manager	No	20 hours/week (part-time)	Interim Pastor	Started August 2021

REFLECTION

Reflection: After reviewing the congregational demographics and activities above, what does this information reflect about your congregation’s overall ministry?

Like churches everywhere, Eliot has been impacted by the cultural drift of an increasingly secularized nation and region over the last 25 years. Outreach and membership development here experienced two strong bursts during Associate Pastor Rev. Wendy Miller’s time (funded through Endowment transfer) and Sr. Pastor Susan Brecht (mainly through liturgical innovation). Despite strong programmatic offerings over the decades and strong membership interconnectedness, membership attrition increased in part related to departures of certain staff. The net result is a church with its strong historic commitments intact, except in a smaller body. Eliot Church recently adjusted its staffing model to align with our smaller size, and it is a priority for lay leadership to partner with our new settled Pastor to attract new members and energize existing members, while carrying forward Eliot’s traditions of fellowship and social justice

3e. CHURCH FINANCES

Current annual income (dollars used during most recent fiscal year)

Source	Amount
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	\$111,735
Endowment Proceeds (<i>as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return</i>)	\$229,000
Endowment Draw (<i>beyond what is permitted by spending policy, “drawing down the principal”</i>)	\$0
Fundraising Events	\$0

Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose	\$0
Grants	\$0
Rentals of Church Building	\$97,886
Rentals of Church Parsonage	\$0
Support from Related Organizations (e.g. Women's Group)	\$0
Transfers from Special Accounts	\$13,658
Other (specify): Carry Forward from Previous Fiscal Year	\$60,000
Other (specify):	\$0
TOTAL	\$512,279

Current annual expenses (dollars budgeted for most recent fiscal year): \$506,149

Below is Eliot's expense budget for fiscal 2024 (7/1/23 - 6/30/24):

Category	Expense (FY 2024 Budgeted)
Administration	\$33,600
Building	\$80,250
Commissions	\$27,800
Pastors Discretionary Expense	\$1,000
Staff Education	\$1,600
Staff Expenses	\$21,580
Staff Salaries	\$292,429
UCC Expense	\$19,232
Transfer to Facilities	\$15,000
Restricted Expense - Music	\$10,900
Restricted Expense – Memorial Garden	\$ 2,758
Total Expenses	\$506,149

Considering total budgeted expenses for the year, compare total ministerial support. What is the percentage?

Total Settled Pastor compensation is 30.4% of of Eliot's annual expense budget.

Has the church ever failed to pay its financial obligations to a minister of the church?

No

Is your church 5-for-5, i.e. does it include each of the following contributions during the church year? (indicate those included during the most recent fiscal year)

✓ **Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM – Basic Support)**

✓ **One Great Hour of Sharing**

✓ **Strengthen the Church**

✓ **Neighbors in Need**

✓ **Christmas Fund**

In what way is OCWM (Basic Support) gathered? If calculated as a percentage of the operating budget, what is that percentage? (recommended 10%)

2020 Proportional Giving is set at 4.25% based on previous method (half of annual outreach budget plus per capita dues paid).

What is the church's current indebtedness?

Total amount of loan debt: 0

Reason for debt:

N/A

Are capital and other payments current?

Yes

If a building program is projected or underway, describe it, including the projected start/end date of the building project and the total project budget.

N/A

If the church has had capital campaigns in the last ten years, describe:

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal	Result	Impact
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2007-2012	Primarily church building, including improving accessibility with an elevator; plus Mission and Social Justice and Membership	\$750,000	\$852,420	Major repairs on building completed, significant increase in MSJ budget, and membership growth
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If a capital campaign is underway or anticipated, describe:

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal	Result	Impact
		\$	\$	

Describe the prominent mission component(s) involved in the most recent (or current) capital campaign.

Approximately \$130,000 of the Capital Campaign funds were directed to Mission and Social Justice. The Commission allocation, based on feedback from the congregation, was a 50/50 split between local projects and international and environmental ones. Examples of local organizations: City Mission (HYPE program addressing teen violence) and CAN-DO (Citizens for Affordable Housing in Newton), Centro Presente and MIRA (Immigration). Examples of international/environmental: Communities Without Borders (Women’s NPO supporting AIDS orphans in Zambia), MassIPL, Water for People, Article 29 Organization (Haiti Relief). We began by identifying target areas for funding and then sent out a grant request to a select group of organizations (local, national, international). The accepted proposals provided funding over a three-year time period.

Does your church have an endowment?

Yes

What is the market value of the assets?

\$5.8 million

Are funds drawn as needed, regularly, or under certain circumstances?

Regularly, according to endowment policy and according to the annual budget approved at the Annual Meeting.

What is the percentage rate of draw (last year, compared to 5 years ago)?

We always draw between 4.0% and 4.5%, calculated on a 3-year rolling average.

Describe draw on endowment, if any, to meet operating budget expenses for the most recent year and the past five years:

\$200,000 - \$250,000 annually

At the current rate of draw, how long might the endowment last?

Indefinitely

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates:

Reserves and Restricted Funds:

\$152,753

Investments (other than endowment):

\$ 0

Does your church have a parsonage?

No

Describe all buildings owned by the church:

The Eliot Church of Newton owns the building in which its parishioners worship. The brick Federal style structure was built in 1957 after a fire destroyed the previous church building. It is often described as a classic New England church building with white pillars, white trim, clear sanctuary windows and a clock tower. The sanctuary contains a center aisle and relatively traditional furnishings and a balcony. It can seat up to 350 worshipers and contains a magnificent organ and a grand piano.

In addition to the sanctuary, the main level of the building has a chapel (which is primarily used as an open space for meetings, receptions, and summer worship), a parlor with kitchenette, four offices and three nursery school rooms. The lower level of the building includes a Fellowship Hall with a stage and three collapsible classrooms, a large kitchen, a Christian Education Resource Room, several offices, and three nursery school rooms. During the week the nursery school rooms are used by a preschool, and other renters, including Cooperative Metropolitan Ministries, occupy several of the offices.

Both levels of the building are wheelchair accessible via outdoor ramps, and inside the church is an elevator. Significant improvements have also been made to “green” the church building, including the installation of a gas-fired hot water heating system, establishment of heating zones, new storm windows, and most recently solar panels on the roof. The building has lawns on all sides, and city-owned parks on two sides of the building. There is also a Memorial Garden for meditation and reflection, as well as a place where members may have their ashes buried.

Describe non-owned buildings or space used or rented by the church:

The Church owns no other buildings.

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs? (worship space, pulpit, fellowship space, facilities, etc.)

The entire building is wheelchair accessible, except for the pulpit.

Re flection: After reviewing the church’s finances and assets described above, what does this information reflect about your congregation’s mission and ministry?

Prior to our last settled pastor search in 2021, Eliot went through a process of “right-sizing” itself, to reduce budget dependence on the endowment, and to make staffing proportional to the size of the congregation. Eliot now has a staffing model (one full-time minister, a part-time office administrator, part time music director and part-time building/operations manager) that is more in-line with our revenue and congregation size. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the church committed more of its endowment to support food needs and social services in Newton and the region.

3f. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Name one to three significant happenings in the history of your church that have shaped the identity of your congregation. Add the most important event in the life of your church in the past 10 years.

Eliot Church was founded in 1845. The founders were abolitionists, which helped to establish Eliot as a socio-politically active congregation. They named the Church in honor of John Eliot, a Puritan minister whose missionary spirit and work among the area Native Americans was “held in reverent memory.” The name Eliot became a symbol and a constant reminder of what the founders, and those who have been members since that time, wished the church to stand for. Following the founding, three events particularly stand out:

Fires: The church building was destroyed by a fire in 1887, rebuilt and burned down again in 1956. Each time the congregation had to decide if they should rebuild. The congregations were united behind the desire to rebuild and maintain their community. As a result, there has been an Eliot Church Building on the same corner for 175 years.

Vietnam War Protest: Following the invasion of Cambodia in 1970, the minister, Harold Frey, was so overcome with events, that he came down from the pulpit and sat in front of the altar. His reaction led to a series of actions by members of the congregation against the war. It also led to the loss of a number of the congregation who did not agree with the actions that were taken. Soon after, Eliot obtained approval to sponsor a family from Vietnam who had been living in a refugee camp. The church purchased and renovated a house in Newton for Bo and Mui Ly and their family with whom we are still in contact.

Open and Affirming Church: In 1999-2001 the congregation undertook a difficult but rich period of study and prayer, forums, and discussions regarding whether to become an Open and Affirming Church. By the end of the process, it led to a nearly unanimous vote to become an Open and Affirming Church, one of the first in the Massachusetts Conference

In 2020, as Eliot Church experienced a change in our ministerial staff and recognized the changing size and demographics of our congregation, Eliot formed a committee that worked with church leadership and the congregation to examine potential operating models for Eliot Church, and recommend a direction. We arrived at the “Vital Family Church” model

In this model, the primary focus of our pastor is to “build up the community” through worship and engagement of our community. This minister’s skillset would be to bring the love of God to each of us and teach us how to love one another and engage with one another as an inter-related caring community. We would expect this to be done through worship, small group ministries, and renewed commitment to working together. Given our budgetary constraints, we’d also ask this minister (rather than a separate CE staff person) to help us create new

ways of approaching Christian education both for children and adults. Day-to-day building management would be covered by a part time building manager in order to have those duties covered by professional staff rather than by lay members. And the church would maintain a part-time administrative staff member to support the full-time Pastor and perform administrative and communications-related duties. We have since implemented this staffing model and are using the “Vital Family Church” model to inform our Pastor search.

Describe a specific change your church has managed in the recent past.

In 2015, the church successfully streamlined its governance apparatus for more effective management. The governance of the church used to be carried out by a Coordinating Council. Members of each of the church’s Commissions served on the Council along with the church’s officers. The result was that the representatives of the Commissions did not always feel they had the understanding or the authority to make decisions regarding the entire church’s operation. As a result, the congregation restructured its governance around an elected Leadership Council, consisting of the officers and up to nine at-large members.

Every church has conflict, some minor, some larger. “Where two or three are gathered, there will be disagreement...” Describe your congregation’s values and practices when it comes to conflict.

The most recent conflicts have been between 1) members of the leadership and staff and 2) between staff (Music Director and Sr. Pastor).

According to the by-laws, for at least a year the Search Committee serves as a Pastoral Relations Committee to support and assist the new pastor and be available for consultation.

Although the by-laws state the roles of the Parish Staff Relations Committee as focusing on personnel matters such as hiring, job descriptions, salary and benefits, a member serving on the Committee suggests that it endeavors also to deal with any conflict situations. They tried, however, not to triangulate situations – always encouraging the person who raised a concern to speak directly with whomever they had the concern. If patterns of concerns came up, then they would endeavor to intervene, clarify, and suggest approaches. They would sometimes offer to facilitate meetings or conversations. In the case of issues between staff, they met with them separately and then together and documented agreements or next steps in writing. The success of these actions depended on how willing each party was to really listen to the other.

According to our current interim pastor, the Pastoral Relations Committee was also instrumental in handling these conflicts. For the most part, these conflicts were not “felt” by the rest of the congregation. Other conflicts that have surfaced at Eliot Church over the years include: hymn selection, styles of worship, and leadership style amongst staff.

After a pastor has been hired, the Pastoral Relations Committee only exists for a year, but that can be extended.

Ministerial History (include all previous ministerial staff for the past 30 years)

Staff member's name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
Herbert Davis	20	yes
Anthony Kill	16	yes
Holly Reed (Minister of Education)	2	yes
Wendy Miller (Associate)	5	yes
Karla Jean Miller (Associate)	6	yes
Debora Carter (Interim)	2	yes
Susan Brecht	6	yes
Rebecca Kavich Girash (Associate)	5	yes
Richard Chrisman (Interim)	3	yes
Domenik Ackermann	1.5	yes
Wayne Earl (Interim)	0.25	yes

Comment on what your church has learned about itself and its relationship with persons who provided ministerial leadership:

Has any past leader left under pressure or by involuntary termination?

No.

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?

No.

Has a past pastor been the subject of a Fitness Review while at your church?

No.

4. WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:39 NRSV)

4a. COMMUNITY VISION

How do the relationships and activities of your congregation extend outward in service and advocacy?

Food insecurity and homelessness have been an ongoing area of community outreach. We provide ongoing support to those in our community who experience food insecurity through our partnerships with the Centre Street Food Pantry and Project Bread’s Walk for Hunger. Our food pantry drives engage most of the congregation, including members who don’t typically attend church. Every year, we have a Walk for Hunger team which raises many thousands of dollars in support of Project Bread. In addition, we will be engaging with families who have been homeless once the new Family Aid shelter opens in 2024.

Prior to the pandemic and the loss of a settled pastor, Eliot offered to the public educational activities related to issues of interest to the congregation. We hosted adult forums on topics such supporting immigrants and homelessness. During the pandemic, we hosted over Zoom a forum about voter suppression. The Creation Care Team has organized educational activities such as a climate-based book group and a plant-based pot luck featuring speakers on the health and environmental benefits of a vegetarian diet. There is a regular column on our website devoted to climate change, including interviews with experts in this area.

Describe your congregation’s participation in meetings, relationships and activities connecting the wider United Church of Christ (association / conference / national setting).

Several individuals have participated as follows: one has served on the Environmental Task Force for many years; another received the Haystack Award in 2016. Another served on the Board of Directors of the Massachusetts Conference and the SNEUCC Unified Fitness Review Committee. Members of the Eliot congregation have attended the annual meeting of the Massachusetts Conference, and members frequently attend the “Super Saturday” conference event.

Many local churches love to tell the story of what they are doing in the community to transform lives. Some have identified certain aspects of their witness into the wider community using language shared with other UCC congregations. (Find more information as desired at ucc.org.) Check any statements below that apply to your UCC faith community.

Accessible to All (A2A)

Creation Justice

Economic Justice

Faithful and Welcoming

God Is Still Speaking (GISS)

Border and Immigrant Justice

Inter-cultural/Multi-racial (I'M)

Just Peace

Global Mission Church

Open and Affirming (ONA)

WISE Congregation for Mental Health

Other UCC designations:

Designations from other denominations

None

Reflect on what the above statement(s) mean(s) to your community. Is your congregation interested in working toward any of the above statements of witness in the near future?

Before the pandemic, Mission and Social Justice identified specific areas to focus our resources: social justice, climate change, and education. In the past few years, Eliot has received a number of awards for its efforts at “greening” the church. This work has continued by providing information on individual responses to climate change and recording interviews with local experts on our website. We have also updated signs and flags at the front of the

church to signal our support for the LGBTX community and Black Lives Matter. (The front of Eliot faces a major city street.) As part of our response to BLM, members of the congregation protested police violence and participated in discussions on how best to reform the city's police department.

Social justice has been a hallmark of Eliot Church. In recent years, however, the momentum for social justice activities has slowed down considerably. While we continue to offer financial support to organizations focused on hunger, homelessness and social justice, the commitment to direct outreach is not borne out by our activities. The pandemic, the lack of a settled pastor and the aging of the church have all contributed to this decline in community outreach. We hope that we can continue and expand our commitment to social justice. It is a deep part of Eliot because it comes out of a biblical understanding, reinforced by our ministers over the years, that we have an obligation to understand what Jesus asks of us and to act on that understanding. We expect that re-energizing Eliot Church's social justice activities, in partnership with members of the congregation, will be a priority of our new settled Pastor.

Describe your congregation's participation in ecumenical and interfaith activities (with other denominations and religious groups, local and regional).

Eliot clergy have always been active in the Newton Interfaith Clergy Association and with the Metropolitan Boston Association (UCC). In previous years, Eliot has participated in interfaith services with other congregations. Within the last year, we have conducted joint services with other Newton-based UCC churches, as well as a shared outdoor summer service with the Newton Presbyterian Church, followed by an ice cream social.

If your congregation has a mission statement, how does that mission statement compare to the actual time spent engaging in different activities? Think of the range of activities from time spent gathering, to governance, to time spent going out.

In the past decade, our Leadership Council took on the work of clarifying what Eliot Church stood for. The result is three simple phrases: Building Community, Growing Faith, Living Love. It is not possible to separate these core values into a time frame. Rather, these phrases declare what we are. They provide a vision or a touchstone for each member to understand and strive for so that these values become the primary reasons why being part of the Eliot community is important to their spiritual, emotional, and workaday lives. We look for inspiration from the words of our pastors, and from the actions and commitments of our

members. We collectively teach each other how to live our values and teach them to our children.

Reflect on the scope of work assigned to your pastor(s). How is their community ministry and their ministry in and on behalf of the wider church accounted for in the congregation's expectations on their time?

This congregation accords freedom of conscience to its ministers and trusts them to apportion their time responsibly to balance the pastoral and prophetic portions of their ministry appropriately.

4b. MISSION InSite

Comment on your congregation's MissionInsite report with data for your neighborhood(s) or area. What trends and opportunities are shown?

While living just outside the cities of Boston and Brookline, Newton's demographics are typical of many older New England suburban cities and towns. Newton has a population of just over 87,000, with 70% of the population living in households. The U.S. Census Bureau provides the following racial breakdown for Newton:

Racial Identification	Newton	Massachusetts
White (not Hispanic or Latino)	73.4%	69.6%
Asian	14.3%	7.7%
Hispanic/Latino	3.6%	13.1%
Black/African American	2.7%	9.5%
Native American/Alaskan Native	0.2%	0.5%
Two or More Races	5.9%	2.7%

The public school district in Newton, Newton Public Schools, as an enrollment of 11,700 students, at 15 elementary schools, four middle schools, and two high schools. Newton's population is projected to increase slowly over time, with the largest growth in residents 65 and older, as the population ages.

Newton is home to a diverse range of religious affiliations, with Catholic as the largest faith by percentage. Newton has a significant Jewish population, estimated at 20%-30% of the total city population.

How do your congregation's internal demographics compare or contrast to a) the neighborhoods adjacent to your church, and b) other neighborhoods with which your church connects?

While somewhat diverse, the congregation does not quite reflect the demographics of the surrounding region. Eliot has always had city-wide outreach, and also serves and has members that live in surrounding communities, including Watertown, and the Allston/Brighton neighborhood of Boston. The Brighton/Allston UCC Church services this area, and it serves a significantly different community: lower-income, more multicultural, more transitory (student population). For many years Eliot has built up a close relationship with the staff and the programs at Brighton-Allston. Members of Eliot have assisted in their community dinners, food distribution, and providing funds to support their community efforts. We also provide the church with the extra credits for electricity generated by the solar panels on our roof.]

What do new people in the church say when asked what got them involved?

People are drawn to Eliot for many reasons - our social justice bent, the preaching, the music, and the fellowship. Eliot is open to new people being on commissions and relatively new members of our community serving on the Leadership Council, and we are typically not shy about asking. People usually say yes when asked to get involved, and we think this is true for a number of reasons:

- People new to Eliot typically tend to feel accepted for where they are on their own spiritual journey.
- Eliot's is a congregation without cliques - If you want to come and be part of the congregation and its activities you are welcome and encouraged.
- Eliot espouses a liberal view of Christianity- not a strict view of what it means to be Christian. We state explicitly that we "take the Bible seriously but not literally."

Eliot Church helps people explore their spiritual life, helping them understand how the spirit is part of their lives, and giving them the opportunity to explore spiritual life and how the life of the spirit relates to justice in society. We think that these elements of our Church culture lend themselves to new members of our community getting involved (in addition to our asking).

5. REFERENCES

REFERENCE 1

From the Rev. Dr. Kenneth F. Baily, neighbor, colleague and covenant partner with the ministry of Eliot.

REFERENCE REQUESTED / PENDING

REFERENCE 2

From Reverend Tom Reid, Newton Presbyterian Church (pastorrevtom@npc-ma.org)

REFERENCE REQUESTED / PENDING

6. CLOSING THOUGHTS

a. CLOSING PRAYER

b. STATEMENT OF CONSENT

c. CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION VALIDATION

6a. CLOSING PRAYER

Include here any prayer or dream for the minister you imagine journeying toward you... a poem, for example, or a Scripture passage or a piece of music that is meaningful to your Search Committee:

Lord during these difficult times, we know you have been with us, helping us. We hope that as we continue our journey through these times that you will remind us of how blessed we are to come together at Eliot Church and to worship in your name. As our search for a new pastor begins, please let us be mindful that we are not searching just for a new pastor, but for someone who will guide us on the pathways we need to follow. In Your Name, we pray.

6b. STATEMENT OF CONSENT

The covenantal relationship between a church and those called by that church to serve as pastors and teachers and in other ministerial positions is strengthened when vital information is openly shared by covenantal partners. To that end, we attest that, to the best of our abilities, we have provided information in this profile that accurately represents our church. We have not knowingly withheld any information that would be helpful to candidates.

As the committee charged with the responsibility for identifying and recommending a suitable new minister for our church, we have been authorized to share the information herein with potential candidates. We understand that a candidate may wish to secure further knowledge, information, and opinions about our church. We encourage a candidate to do so, recognizing that an open exchange of relevant information builds the foundation for continuing and healthy relationships between calling bodies and persons seeking a ministry position.

Which individuals and groups in the church contributed to the contents of this Local Church Profile?

Search Committee:

Peter November, Chair
Thom Theara, Moderator, ex officio
Sangeeta English
Yonder Gillihan
Roberta Goganian
Joseph Holt
Patrick O'Reilly
Margaret Battat Silva

Additional comments for interpreting the profile:



Signed:

Name / Title / Date: Peter November, Search Committee Chair, on behalf of the Eliot Church of Newton Pastor Search Committee

6c. VALIDATION BY CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION

The congregation is currently in good standing with the Metro Boston Association / Southern New England Conference.

Staff Comment:

To the best of my knowledge, ministerial history information is complete.

Staff Comment:

To the best of my knowledge, available church financial information is presented thoroughly.

Staff Comment:

My signature below attests to the above three items.

Signature: 

Name / Title: Rev. Alex Shea Will / Area Conference Minister

Email: SheaWillA@sneucc.org

Phone: 508-244-4769

Date: April 12, 2024

This document is created through support to Our Church’s Wider Mission (OCWM) and is only possible through the covenantal relationships of all settings of the United Church of Christ.

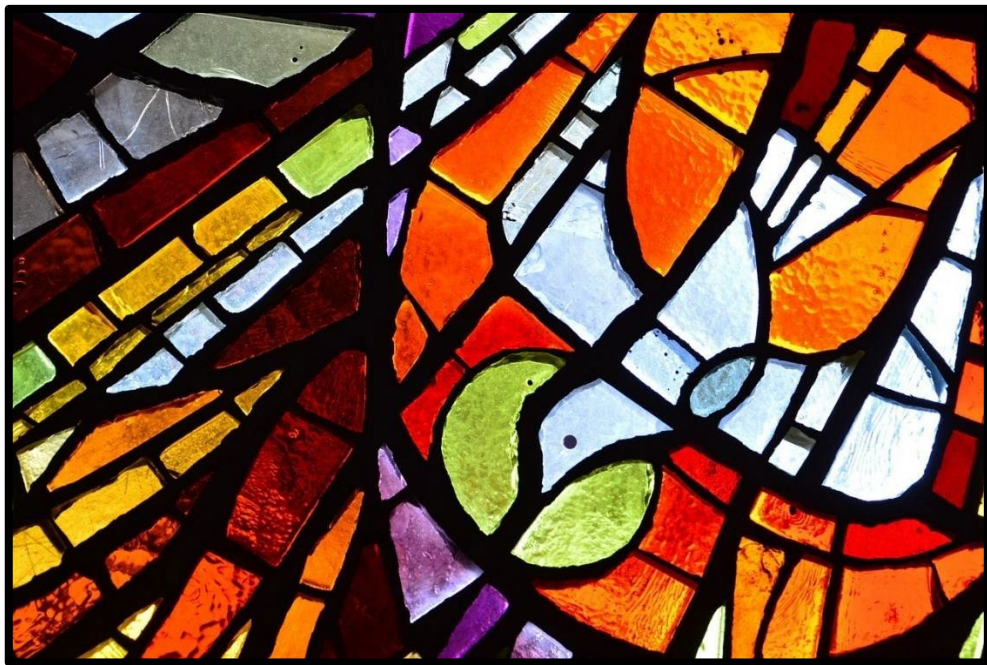
“Jesus answered them, ‘Have faith in God!’” – Mark 11:22

Attachment A: Annual Meeting/Report

178th Annual Meeting

June 4, 2023

The Eliot Church of Newton, UCC



474 Centre Street, Newton, MA 02458

617-244-3639 office@eliotchurch.org

www.eliotchurch.org

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178th Annual Meeting

June 4, 2023

Agenda

Call to order and Opening prayer

Approval of minutes from June 12, 2022 Annual Meeting

Report from the Moderator

Release of those rotating off Commissions

Election of Officers, At-Large members of Leadership Council, and Commissions

FY2024 Budget

Looking Ahead to the Coming Year

Closing Prayer

Vital Statistics

Membership as of May 31, 2022 114

New Members

–By statement of faith 3

Ariel Ackermann

Eben Lenfest

Alison McPherson

Removals

–By Death 3

Gary Hashimoto

Brenda Mason

F. Norman Totten

Membership as of May 31, 2023 114

Rebekah Mitsein

Clerk

Annual Report of the Pastor

Upon the commencement of my call to serve as the pastor here at Eliot Church, it became very clear to me that the Holy Spirit blessed Eliot Church with a solid core of committed members, dedicated to the thriving of our community. I am so grateful to all of you.

In the Fall, Eliot Church continued to discern how to be a church in the era of a still ongoing pandemic and beyond, both in terms of infrastructure and programs. The Leadership Council decided to embark on the journey to make its sanctuary suitable for Livestream worship. Two cameras have been installed in the back of the sanctuary, in addition to a server computer in the balcony. I am glad that the Council was convinced that the church needs to be open and present to those outside the physical sanctuary, whether due to illness or caution. Likewise, this service will provide an open door to Eliot Church on the web for those who are hesitant to visit a new church for the first time. With the possibility at most other churches in New England to “visit” church online, it is evidently a tool for outreach and openness. Likewise, we hired a contractor to work with us on a new website to improve Eliot Church’s appearance and smooth integration of the livestream, and to establish a better search key within the web that elevates the website’s visibility. I hope this work will finish soon. But all good things take time and patience.

Additionally, we worked on (re-)initiating some programs to assess where the interest of the community lies: We had an Advent dinner, a Stone Soup luncheon, and game nights that provided opportunities to connect. We had some outings with some youths connected with Eliot Church. We commenced Prayers for Peace at the last Wednesday of every month and the Lord’s Prayer Lenten Study, which provided spiritual nourishment. Thanks especially to Yonder Gillihan and our Director of Music Ministry, Monique Weiss-Byrnes, for their leadership and creativity. Finally, the Women’s Spirituality group began to gather again on a regular basis. All these programs were met with enthusiasm, which confirms Eliot’s longing for connection, community, and spiritual enrichment.

Aside from our gatherings in the church and the community-building efforts, Eliot’s social justice orientation stood out as well. In September, a group of people came together to build a coalition of members who are concerned about the climate. This Creation Care team quickly commenced its work, providing resources to the community

and to our church. Through this Creation Care team, we facilitated an EV Day to answer questions about electric vehicles, and we rallied people to protest at Bank of America. We also built a pollinator garden.

All commencement to a “new normal” notwithstanding, I observed and took note of the overall status of the church, its organizational structure, its programs, and its administrative efficiency during my first 6 months in office. My observations confirmed the enthusiasm that I had about Eliot Church during our common discernment prior to my calling. The ideas and vigor about certain topics and values combined with the energy of the people here reveal the possibilities for the road we can take in the next few years. I shall only provide you with enticing appetizers: Conversations and interests show a somewhat strong interest in community-building programs (game nights, open-mics, short trips, etc.), combined with a strong interest in becoming a church that wants to welcome families and young folks. At the same time, I perceive a strong call for this church to become a spiritual Christian voice that wants to address the imminent threat of climate change in as many areas as possible. Thirdly, I perceive a longing for spiritual nourishment in a variety of forms: through spiritually enriching worship, spiritual reflection, and music. To ensure these efforts stay on fruitful ground, we will need to think how we can strengthen these programs and become an inviting community for the outside world in a variety of ways.

These and other observations are the basis for a revitalization process within our community. Together with the new Leadership Council and the formed commissions, I look forward to a leadership retreat in August, during which we discern our road forward to amplify the palpable energy to be the church.

I pray that the planted seeds of the past couple of months will enrich Eliot’s community in the years to come, being one of the many rocks for the foundation of God’s kingdom.

Faithfully submitted,

Rev. Domenik Ackermann

Pastor

Annual Report of the Moderator

This year has certainly been one of changes and new beginnings for Eliot Church. In late summer, we said goodbye to our Interim Minister, Rev Rick Chrisman, who was with us for much longer than we all expected due to the circumstances of Covid. He led our community through the unprecedented time of Covid when each week seemed to be a new adventure. In addition, he guided us through our period of discernment about our vision, which ultimately led into our search for a new pastor. We are all grateful for the vision, calmness and support Rev Rick gave our community and each one of us.

We then welcomed our new Minister, Rev. Domenik Ackermann, in the late summer for the start of our church year. This indeed is a new beginning for us. With our new settled pastor in the pulpit, we now can engage in a period of realizing our discernment process goal of being a “vital family church”. In addition to our regular Sunday services, which I hesitate to call “regular” since we have such excellent preaching and music, we’ve had many opportunities for fellowship and learning throughout the year. We’ve shared receptions and potlucks, including a farewell reception for Rev Rick, regathering and holiday potlucks, the stone soup potluck, game nights, a garden planting, an electric car demo and a reception for Rev Domenik’s Installation. Our religious education has been enhanced through movies and a Lord’s Prayer Lenten educational series. In addition, the youth of the church had a few movie nights and a visit to a crazy “escape room” over winter vacation.

There have been a few physical additions as well. The “Prayground” in the back of the church welcomes families and allows kids to have a special space during worship. On the sides of the sanctuary, we now have cameras for services to be livestreamed to the world. Livestreaming is great both for when members are out of town and want to stay connected or for newcomers that want to “check out the church”.

I want to thank everyone on all our committees, the staff and all other community members for the great year! It takes all of us to make the church successful, whether we just come for Sunday morning, or we are greeters, choir members, coffee hour leaders, readers in the service, or serving on our various commissions and committees. In particular I’d like to thank the Leadership Council that has worked with me this year to help steer the course of the church: Rebekah Mitsein, who serves as our clerk, Yonder Gillihan, Marge O’Reilly, and Vince Maraventano. In addition, special thanks to Mary

Anne Schoonover, who has served as our interim treasurer and has handed the reins to Elizabeth Baker, who agreed mid-year to learn and take over the treasurer position.

Thom Theara

Moderator

Annual Report of the Director of Music Ministry

The Eliot Music Ministry began recharging its ministry this year after the three years of discerning participation during the pandemic. Chancel Choir returned to weekly worship with a different schedule, inviting and welcoming singers to a lesser time commitment to sing with the choir. The Chancel Choir rehearsed on Sunday morning before worship with Thursday evening rehearsals for Christmas, Easter, and Music Appreciation Sunday. The Chancel Choir along with the section leaders supported the worship in singing the service music and a diversity of inspiring choral anthems. The section leaders and Chancel Choir of Eliot sang choral masterpieces from the Renaissance to the Contemporary musical periods throughout the year. Music selections included movements from *The Ceremony of Carols* by Benjamin Britten with harpist for Christmas Eve worship, *The Hallelujah Chorus* for Easter, and *Cantique de Jean Racine* by Gabriel Faure, *O Sacrum Convivium* by Olivier Messiaen, and *Ubi Caritas* by Maurice Durufle accompanied by a string quartet for Music Appreciation Sunday. In addition, a six week class was offered by Yonder Gillihan on The Lord's Prayer with a music portion led by Monique. A variety of choral compositions of *The Lord's Prayer* were sung for worship including two premier compositions by Connor Burke and Monique Weiss Byrnes. We are truly grateful to the return of chancel choir, section leaders, and choral singing to live worship and sincerely appreciate the magnificent space for choral/instrumental/organ music that the acoustically renovated Sanctuary provides. The space is a gift to the musician and listener, opening and balancing the sound in a divine and mystical way. A deep appreciation to the excellence of section leaders: Nicola Santoro, Sianna Monti, Tim Levesque, and Connor Burke and to the marvelous chancel choir members: Elizabeth Baker, Alison McPherson, Aaron McPherson, and Rebekah Mitsetin for their beautiful singing for weekly worship.

Eliot opened its doors to the several choral groups who rehearse and perform in the wonderful space after a three year pandemic. The Joyful Noise Cafe of Eliot returned to their annual performance. Many thanks to Natasha Collins and Guy Burn for their collaborative work on arranging the events for the groups who rented Eliot and for the collaborative work for the Eliot community. Staff welcomed Rev. Domenik Ackermann as the new pastor for Eliot and I am thankful for the gifts that he brings.

Thank you to the Eliot community for their support and love of the music ministry and for their active participation in hymn singing during worship services. Many thanks to the Leadership Council, Spiritual Life, Parish Staff Relations, and Facilities for their

detailed work, attention, and care for the community. May we continue to grow and share the love of music in the Eliot community and beyond. Many blessings, love, and peace.

Musically submitted,

Monique Weiss Byrnes

Director of Music Ministry

Annual Report of the Facilities Commission

FY2023 was a very busy year for the Facilities Commission. Congregation Commission members include Mary Anne Schoonover, Susan Nason, and Rich Stroshane. Staff who participate in all Commission meetings and initiatives include Pastor Dom Ackermann, Office Administrator Natasha Collins and Facility Manager Guy Burn. Vince Maraventano actively served as LC liaison for most of the year with that role recently being taken over by Marge O'Reilly.

Several major building projects were undertaken this year. The biggest project was the restoration of the 65-year-old steeple which included replacement of much of the rotting woodwork, new railing balustrades, painting, and four new urns that are made of fiberglass. The cross on the top of the steeple was regilded with new gold leaf. After that project was completed, Guy did extensive work to patch the columns under the portico. Originally, we were going to paint only the front side of the church, but because we were pleased with the contractor and the good weather held, the entire exterior of the building was painted. After that the sanctuary windows and storm windows were washed inside and out allowing full sunshine to stream into the sanctuary. The elevator was out of commission for a while after an electrical outage in the area, requiring new parts to be installed. It is now working more quietly.

The gradual improvement in the COVID situation enabled us to return to the sanctuary for worship services. Four HEPA filters, proposed by our Office Administrator and made by our intrepid Facility Manager, were installed. Also a "Pray-ground" was set up at the back of the sanctuary. This space with soft floor and seating, quiet toys, books, and drawing materials allows children and families to still be a part of worship. Another major initiative was the installation of equipment and system enabling us to livestream worship services and other events in the sanctuary beginning at Christmas.

Another responsibility of the commission is oversight of contracts that Eliot enters into. Our 20-year contract with T-Mobile for its antenna in the steeple will be up in October 2023 so an attorney was hired to negotiate a new 20-year contract. Negotiations are ongoing. The three-year contract with Republic Services for trash collection ends in June 2023. We obtained a bid from a competitor to compare prices but found that by changing the frequency of our trash pickups with Republic, we could keep costs down and beat the competitor's bid. We terminated our contract with the former cleaning company due to many problems with the services provided. Our

building is now being cleaned every weekday by Total Cleaning Services Pro. Cleaning supplies are now being ordered through the office rather than the cleaning company, resulting in some financial savings.

Use of the building by outside groups increased this past year. We are grateful that Parkside Preschool and CMM continued to operate throughout COVID and now two AA groups, the Indigenous Peoples group and SLAA group are meeting in the building regularly. In addition, our sanctuary was rented by a number of choral groups and the Boston Worker's Circle returned to Eliot to celebrate the High Holy Days.

The Commission also considered a number of proposals related to decreasing our use of fossil fuels. The Mass. Interfaith Power and Light organization conducted a review of the building and made several recommendations. An electric outlet was installed on the outer wall by the back parking lot to enable parishioners to charge EVs. Research about options to replace our heating, ventilation and air conditioning system (HVAC) has begun.

The Commission also provided support to the initiative of making a pollinator garden. The area on the south side of the church was cleared and prepared for planting which took place in late April. Thank you to Ariel Ackermann for her leadership of this project and to Robert Young for ensuring that grass and bushes were cleared, soil brought in, and a path through the garden created.

What is on the agenda for the coming year? Cameras or motion sensors will be installed at all doors to increase security. The organ will undergo some much-needed maintenance. There will be focus on researching and evaluating HVAC system options. Wi-fi will be expanded to the lower level of the building. We are also considering hiring a new IT support company to provide more consistent computer assistance.

A big thank you to Eliot's Facility Manager and Office Administrator and our Pastor as well as LC liaison for their contributions in support of the Commission's work.

Susan Nason

Committee Member

Annual Report of the Finance Commission

Pastor Dom's presence with us since the beginning of our program year has reinvigorated life at Eliot. Fortunately, despite turmoil this year in the world and in financial markets, our fiscal picture has remained sufficient for these evolving plans and needs.

In our current fiscal year, income and expenses continue to track favorably against budget, thanks to the generosity of our members and careful stewardship by our staff. Our assumptions for the current year's budget were based on the coming of our new pastor and the departure of our interim pastor at the end of August. We also needed to plan carefully because of the uncertainty about whether previous regular and occasional users would return to the building. We did not budget much for these users, so the fact that some have returned has helped our bottom line. Early pledge payments and consistent payments from some along with pledges from new members have already exceeded our budget for pledges. Interestingly, while contributions to Plate were still down after resuming in-person worship, they have significantly rebounded this year and currently exceed our budgeted amount. All in all, financially, Eliot is currently in good shape.

The congregation should be aware, however, that the next few years may be somewhat leaner. Due to the instability of the financial markets over the previous few years, our income from the Endowment will be less robust, though the draw for the coming year will be much the same as our current one. Inflation may be the factor that puts a damper on financial flexibility. Our Pledge Sunday for the upcoming fiscal year was on April 30. To date, we have received \$66,052 in pledges from 18 households, about 60% of those anticipated. We expect all three of our major tenants, Parkside Preschool, Cooperative Metropolitan Ministries, and T-Mobile, to remain in FY2024.

We owe special thanks to a few people who have kept our financial operation in very good shape this year. First, Bill Doyle agreed to extend his previous term as Financial Secretary for an additional year. David Wood continued as Treasurer through the mid-year, but decided to turn the job over to Mary Anne Schoonover, who has kept the bills paid and all in order since then and, in recent months, has been teaching me the role. All of them have faithfully carried out the responsibilities of their important positions with dedication. Many thanks to all three of you!

Although the Finance Commission has not met for several years due to the pandemic, members continued to check in with each other when needed. On behalf of the commission members Elizabeth Baker, Mary Anne Schoonover, Chris Smith, Rich Strohane, and Thom Theara, thank you to all Eliot members and friends who support our wonderful church home.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Baker

Treasurer and Chair of Finance

Mary Anne Schoonover

recent past Treasurer and Chair of Finance
(and current Treasurer Assistant extraordinaire)

Annual Report of the Investment Committee

The current members of the Investment Committee are Aaron McPherson (Chair), Vince Maraventano, Michael Miele, David Persampieri, and Thom Theara. Vince joined following our last report in June 2022. The Committee meets quarterly to review the performance of our investment portfolio, define any desired changes to our investment strategy, and consider any requests from the church for special distributions.

Investment Performance in the 2021-2022 Fiscal Year

We report that as of the last full fiscal year ended June 30, 2022, The Eliot Church of Newton's investment portfolio had a market value of \$5,372,558, a decrease of \$903,473, or 14%, from \$6,276,031 the year before. During the 2021-2022 fiscal year, a distribution of \$222,264 was made to the church, which was 4.0% of the average of the three prior-year-ending balances (\$5,556,603). As we noted in our last report, the \$6.3 million proved to be a high-water mark for the Endowment, as the market retreated back to about 3% above where it was before the pandemic.

Investment Performance in the Current Fiscal Year (as of March 31, 2023)

The value of the Endowment as of March 31, 2023 was \$5,483,917, for an increase of about 2% above the previous fiscal year end. Performance would have been over 6% had it not been for distributions of \$230,760, which amounted to 4.1% of the prior three-year moving average. Were the Endowment value to remain constant in the last quarter of the fiscal year (between 3/31/23 and 6/30/23), a 4% contribution to the church (using the average of the three-prior year-ending balances) would be \$228,433. Barring a major adjustment in the stock market between now and the end of the fiscal year, the Investment Committee does not expect a 4% FY2024 distribution to be meaningfully different from this amount. Of course, the endowment policy allows some flexibility in the percentage, with the recognition that larger amounts borrow from growth in future years.

As we indicated in last year's report, the Investment Committee did make some substantial changes to the portfolio. The most important was the move to a quarterly ladder of Treasury Bills, which are yielding market-beating returns as a result of the Federal Reserve's rapid campaign of interest rate increases since inflation reached elevated status.

We also took half of our Vanguard Value Index Investors fund and moved it into the

Vanguard Dividend Growth in order to further reduce our fossil fuel stock exposure.

Endowment Policy Task Force

During the fall of 2021, an Endowment Policy Task Force, consisting of Aaron McPherson, Josephine McNeil, Patrick O'Reilly, Don Oppenheimer, and Richard Chrisman, met to create an official Endowment Policy to resolve the following questions:

- Assuming we continue the practice of basing the semi-annual distribution on the 3-year trailing average of the Endowment balances on June 30, what is the appropriate range of percentages to use in the calculation?
- What requirements should there be on the Investment Committee for membership?
- What procedures should be followed for ad-hoc distributions, such as the ones made in 2020 and 2021?
- How should gifts and bequests be handled?

During the annual meeting held on June 8, 2022, the congregation approved a new endowment policy, which is attached to this report as reference (See Addendum 1). The major elements are as follows:

- A new mission statement that clarifies that, while the purpose of the Endowment is primarily to support the operations of the Church, it is also tasked with supporting the mission of the Church, which extends beyond the building to the wider community. This acknowledges the presence in the operating budget of a line item for grants to outside organizations by the Mission and Social Justice committee.
- A specified maximum draw on the Endowment of 5% of the three-year moving average of the fund balances on June 30. There has been an unofficial rule that the congregation can withdraw no more than 4%, but this rule has been modified from time to time in response to short-term budget pressures or strategic investments by the congregation in initiatives such as increasing membership. After financial analysis, the task force felt that, while 4% should continue to be the default, the congregation could go up to 5% with a simple majority vote.

Drawing more than 5% would require a two-thirds vote, as noted below.

- A new requirement that future changes to the endowment policy require a two-thirds vote of the congregation. The task force was concerned that, with membership and attendance at historically low levels, there was a risk that a motivated minority could organize to pass changes to the policy with a simple majority of those attending. Such changes could, for example, divert a substantial portion of the endowment to an outside organization supported by some, but not a majority, of the active membership.
- A new provision for non-budgetary disbursements, such as the one-time COVID- 19 assistance disbursements, we discussed in last year's report. The Endowment must have a value at least ten times greater than the total operating budget for such disbursements to be considered, and if this is true, then any amount over \$30,000 requires a special majority vote of the congregation. This is another provision designed to protect against large disbursements that undermine the ability of the Endowment to support the operating budget of the Church. There is also a recommendation that any such proposals be submitted to the Leadership Council by March 1st, to allow for thorough discussion before a vote (presumably at the next annual meeting, although potentially sooner).
- To go along with this, a triennial review of the policy by the Leadership Council. Since the task force was also concerned that some of the changes might turn out to go too far in one direction or another, it felt it was important that there be a mechanism for reviewing them within the medium term.
- A new rule for handling gifts. Only gifts of over \$100,000 in value will be held in a dedicated fund by the Investment Committee, assuming restrictions have been placed on the gift by the donor. Gifts below this amount shall be sold and reinvested proportionally in the existing asset allocation used by the Investment Committee at the time. This keeps administrative complexity under control while clarifying for donors the rules for accepting gifts.
- A new requirement that all members of the Investment Committee sign a statement certifying that they have no conflicts of interest that would affect their ability to make objective recommendations regarding investments. Since the current investment strategy does not involve purchasing individual stocks or bonds, this is not currently an issue, but could become one in the future.

- In the event of the dissolution of the church, a mandate that the Endowment be distributed to a church or non-profit organization with a substantially similar mission. The policy reflects the legal requirement to work with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Secretary of State, which has laws and regulations concerning such events.

Current Investment Strategy

As shown below, most of the Church's investments are in mutual funds that invest in targeted asset classes. The overall asset allocation is designed to diversify the Church's investments so that losses in one or more asset classes are offset by gains in other asset classes. In addition, by using mutual funds that have low management fees, consistently strong management, and a solid track record, we have been able to maximize investment returns without taking inappropriate risk, providing a baseline of security for the Church going forward. Our portfolio includes a diversified and conservative mix of investments, with a target of 60% in stocks and 40% in fixed income and cash. Actual asset allocations were as follows at the end of March 2023

Asset Allocations (March 31, 2023)

Available upon request.

All questions are welcome and may be directed to the Chair, Aaron McPherson, at aaronmcp@live.com, or to any member of the Committee.

Annual Report of the Memorial Garden Committee

Activity in the Eliot Memorial Garden (EMG) has been quiet again this year, but the garden remains lovely and has been a place of refuge and contemplation for both members and non-members.

Most of our plantings have fared quite well over the winter and early spring despite the uneven, atypical weather. The dwarf lilac is beginning to bloom as are the white azaleas. The other perennials are coming along, and I added a new salvia plant as you enter the garden. Unfortunately, both roses experienced considerable dieback due to the very cold couple of days after leaf buds had formed, but they are survivors and are now producing leaves and new growth. Soon, I will add some annuals for color throughout the season. I have used the EMG budget for plantings for the EMG, for some grasses and lavender for the bed along the south side by the chapel, and for good quality mulch to cover both. Our Weed Team has continued once again in dormant mode, but I hope to reawaken interest this season.

We have not added any bricks for the garden's memorial purpose this year. Sadly, however, last fall we did lose Brenda Mason, the beloved vivacious, humorous soul who was involved with the garden from the beginning, leading the committee for a time and being an inveterate weeder. Eliot will be placing a brick in her memory when it arrives. We are blessed with this memorial space to remember those we have lost and with the comfort and beauty it offers our community and neighborhood.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Baker

Annual Report of the Mission & Social Justice Commission

In the 2022-2023 fiscal year, Eliot Church's Mission and Social Justice Commission ("MSJ") was allocated \$18,000 and used it to support the following organizations:

- Bridge Over Troubled Waters
- CAN-DO
- Centre Street Food Pantry
- Cooperative Metropolitan Ministries
- Ecclesia Ministries
- John M. Barry Boys & Girls Clubs of Newton
- Mass Interfaith Power & Light, Inc.
- Massachusetts Immigration & Refugee Advocacy Coalition
Newton Food Pantry
- Partners in Health
- The Walk for Hunger

During the 2022 holiday season, MSJ coordinated donations for the City Mission Coat Drive and City Mission Christmas Shop. In addition, MSJ organized its third holiday gift drive for teen mothers living at Bridge Over Troubled Waters' Brighton residence.

In September 2022, January 2023 and May 2023, MSJ supported Susan Nason's and Patrick O'Reilly's drive to collect "Kids Bags" for the Centre Street Food Pantry.

In May, 2023, MSJ member Josephine McNeil organized a team for the Walk for Hunger. Other MSJ members who walked were Nadja Young and Roberta Goganian, along with congregants Doug and Chris Stuart. For the second year in a row, Eliot Church was one of the Walk for Hunger's "Top Ten Teams." We raised \$13,097, which included MSJ's \$4,000 contribution.

Respectfully Submitted,

Roberta Goganian

MSJ co-chair

Annual Report of the Spiritual Life Commission

Members of the commission: Carol Brown, Joe Holt, Yonder Gillihan, Rebekah Mitsein, and Reverend Dom, Monique Weiss Byrnes staff participants.

The Spiritual Life Commission (SLC) met throughout the year with Rev. Dom and Monique, both in person and in email conversations, to discuss matters of worship, music, and spiritual study in this first year with Rev. Dom as Eliot's Pastor. The conversations flowed back and forth, with Rev. Dom asking about styles and details of worship customary at Eliot and floating many new ideas and spiritual themes for us to consider.

Some of the SLC business concerned finding the best ways to schedule greeters, readers and coffee hour hosts. Other discussions focused on hymns, service music, and flow of the worship service. The SLC also, as in past years, took charge of the arrangement of sanctuary decorations and flowers at Advent, Christmas, and Easter.

In the late fall we discussed the Advent and Christmas services. We liked Rev. Dom's idea of "Reflecting the Sacred" as the Advent theme and the anointing of congregation members at the end of each service. We agreed to have a Taize Prayer Service on December 17 and a single 7:00 Christmas Eve Service with hymns sung in candlelight, in the Eliot tradition. It was decided that the Christmas Day worship service would be pre-recorded and made available on the Eliot website.

We heartily encouraged Rev. Dom to take the week between Christmas and New Years as vacation to travel to see his family in Germany.

In the new year we planned to offer Monique and Yonder's study of the Lord's Prayer during the six weeks of Lent. This well-prepared study of the history and various forms of the Lord's Prayer was a well-received spiritual enrichment as Eliot folks prepared for Easter. An Ash Wednesday service was held on February 22 at 7:00.

Rev. Dom's official installation was on March 5. The SLC members had had a very good experience working with our new pastor so far and this official moment gave us a happy sense of settling in to work together for a strong, spiritually invigorating Eliot Church.

Our conversations about plans for Holy Week led to services on Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday that were similar to those held at Eliot in the past, with variations suggested by Rev. Dom and musical ideas by Monique. The Easter service

began with a joyful processional and ended with our traditional participatory Hallelujah Chorus (we were happy Rev. Dom was all for this Eliot 'must have'!)

Spring proceeded with the Joyful Noise Cafe and the planting and sanctifying of the Pollinator Garden, happy signs of renewed and new vitality at Eliot.

The SLC enthusiastically supported Monique's plans for a French-themed Music Appreciation Sunday service, which was held on May 7. It was a beautiful and uplifting service, highlighting our fine section leaders (with one excellent emergency substitute), our chancel choir, and glorious organ music played by Monique, our esteemed Director of Music Ministry.

The SLC felt that working with Rev. Dom as our new pastor was collegial, lively, and fruitful. As we near the end of this first season with a new settled pastor we eagerly anticipate many good things yet to come at Eliot Church.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Brown

SLC Co-chair

Addendum 1: Endowment Policy
Proposed and adopted at the June 2022 Annual Meeting

Preamble. This Endowment policy is established in order to further the mission and ministries of The Eliot Church of Newton (the “Church”), and a portion of this mission is “to be good stewards of our time, talent and treasure.” This Church wishes to encourage the Christian stewardship of accumulated, inherited and appreciated resources. It is understood that special gifts and bequests should not take the place of faithful stewardship of current income but should be made to enable the Church to continue and extend its mission both to the Eliot community and to the wider Church and community into the future.

Mission statement: We acknowledge Jesus Christ to be our Savior and Lord and accept the Holy Scriptures as our rule of faith and practice; we covenant with the Lord and with one another, and do bind ourselves in the presence of God to walk together in His holy ways. We will strive to be doers of the Word and not hearers only, to be firm in faith, quickened in hope, and constant in charity. And we will consecrate our time, talent, substance, and influence as heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.

I. Name of Endowment: The Eliot Church of Newton Endowment

II. Oversight of the Endowment Policy

The Endowment Policy should be reviewed by the Leadership Council at least once every three years.

III. Transfer of Funds to the Endowment

Transfer of money from Eliot Church to the Endowment will be managed by the Finance Committee at the behest of the Leadership Council. In general, funds transferred from Eliot Church to the Endowment will be co-mingled with Investment funds as non-restricted funds. If directed, the Investment Committee will manage restricted gifts of \$100,000 or more. Each such gift will be managed in a separate account with its own investment policy and disbursement policy.

The disbursement policy or policies will be determined by the Leadership Council.

IV. Investment Committee

The Investment committee is responsible for investing funds for the Eliot Church Endowment as set forth in the Eliot Church By-Laws Article II Section 3A.

The Church shall continue to maintain its Directors and Officers insurance, which covers the members of this Committee.

The Church shall conduct a periodic review of the work of the Investment Committee to ensure compliance with this Policy.

V. Conflict of Interest

Annually each member of the Investment Committee shall be required to sign a statement that he/she nor any of his/her relatives has benefitted from any decision made in the performance of their duties to the church or result in personal financial, professional, or political gain on the part of such persons at the expense of the church or its members, supporters, and other stakeholders. This policy is designed to appropriately manage conflicts in accordance with legal requirements and the goals of accountability and transparency in the management of the Church's endowment fund.

VI. Investment Policy

The Investment Committee shall set an overall policy to pursue an investment objective of maintaining or growing, over time, the balance of the Endowment, net of distributions and inflation, in accordance with guidance from the Leadership Council and consistent with the Fossil Fuel Divestment Resolution voted by the congregation at a special meeting of the congregation on October 18, 2015.

VII. Disbursement Policy

This Endowment policy is established in order to further the mission and ministries of The Eliot Church of Newton, and a portion of this mission is "to be good stewards of our time, talent and treasure."

Standard Budgetary Disbursements

When recommended by the Leadership Council and approved by a Congregational vote, distributions can be used to supplement the regular annual

operating budget or to fund a one-time, non-recurring expenditure. Such expenditures can extend over multiple fiscal years. Each fiscal year, the

Investment Committee will deposit in the Eliot Church operating account an amount specified by the Leadership Council. In the years leading up to 2022, this has been approximately 4% of the three-year trailing average of the fund balance, as determined at the end of the previous fiscal year (currently June 30). This percentage may be increased to a maximum of 5% when recommended by the Leadership Council and approved by a simple majority vote of the congregation at a Congregational meeting that has attendance meeting the quorum requirements of the bylaws of the Eliot Church of Newton, including as part of adopting an annual budget or a budget amendment.

Non-Budgetary Disbursements

In addition to supporting the annual budget, when the total market value of the Endowment is more than 10 times the level of the Church's annual operating expenses, the Church can consider the use of the principal for non-budgetary one-time strategic disbursements to fund initiatives such as (but not limited to):

- **Adding** a new, temporary staff position for a set period of time;
- **Donating** funds to a domestic or international charity addressing a particular humanitarian need;
- **Making** a planned or emergency capital improvement to the building; or
- **Funding** an initiative or program as an investment in the present vitality and experience of the Eliot Church community or as a means to enhance the future strength and sustainability of the Church such as growing the membership or increasing the engagement of the present membership.

Any requests for Non-Budgetary Disbursements shall be submitted in writing to the Leadership Council. If the request is greater than \$30,000, the Leadership Council needs to get approval from a majority Congregational vote. Such proposals should reach the Leadership Council before March 1st, in order to be properly discussed prior to being presented at the Annual Meeting. Such one-time expenditures shall not be counted as regular distributions subject to the 5% limit. Nevertheless, leadership and the congregation shall be mindful that any disbursement will reduce the amount of funds available to the annual operating budget in the annual disbursement calculations. Again, such expenditures are not, in total, to lower the value of the Endowment below 10 times the level of the annual operating expense.

VIII. Distribution due to Dissolution or Merger

In the event the Church ceases to exist through Dissolution, the Senior Pastor (or, if none be serving, the Interim Senior Pastor) and existing members of the Congregation shall identify church(es) or other non-profit organization(s) that have similar missions to the Church and then consult and work with the Attorney General's Office of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to transfer the Endowment's remaining assets to the selected recipient(s) according to the laws of the Commonwealth.

The Conference shall be solicited for advice in the case that a Merger is contemplated.

IX. Amendments

Any desired amendment to this policy must be drafted by the Finance Committee or an ad hoc committee established by the Leadership Council. Opportunities to provide input into the work of the Finance Committee or an ad hoc committee must be made available to the wider congregation. Proposed amendments must be presented to the Leadership Council which will determine if the amendments should be presented for approval by a two-thirds vote at a Congregational meeting that has attendance meeting the quorum requirements of the bylaws of the Eliot Church of Newton.

Revised by Marge on 3/22/22. Formatted by RevRick 4/4/2022

Reviewed by Margaret/RevR on 4/8/22

RevR 5/5/22 as per LC meeting 4/23/22

Rev. 5/24/22 as per LC meeting 5/14/2022

Rev. 6/6/2022 as per LC meeting 6/5/2022

Addendum 2: Minutes of the 177th Annual Meeting

Eliot Church of Newton, UCC

June 12, 2022

Call to Order and Opening Prayer – Moderator Margaret Battat Silva called the meeting to order. Twenty-two voting members were present plus four proxy votes were submitted so there was a quorum. Rev. Rick Chrisman offered an opening prayer.

Approval of Minutes – The minutes from the June 13, 2021 Annual Meeting were approved.

Report from the Moderator – Moderator Silva reflected on the year that has just passed with its many challenges and also looked to the future. She thanked the staff for their hard work throughout the year. She also thanked the Search Committee and shared the excitement resulting from the calling just last week of Rev. Domenik Ackermann to be Eliot’s Settled Pastor.

Election of Officers and At-Large Members of Leadership Council – Clerk Susan Nason presented the proposed slate:

Clerk	Rebekah Mitsein (2 year term)
Fin. Secy	Bill Doyle (1 yr extension)
At-Large LC Members	Vince Maraventano (2 year term)
	Yonder Gillihan (2 year term)
	Thom Theara (1 year ext.)
	Marjorie O’Reilly (1 year ext.)

Susan noted that David Wood would be continuing for another year as Treasurer. Mary Anne Schoonover and Thom Theara also provided assistance for this very big job. During the coming year LC plans to review Eliot’s entire financial set-up and determine if any changes might be needed. She also noted that no one had agreed to serve as Moderator this coming year. She thanked Margaret for her past two years of able service and pointed out that it is especially important to fill this important position as a new Settled Pastor begins. She invited anyone who would like to know more about the position to contact Margaret.

The proposed slate was unanimously approved.

Endowment Policy Proposal – Aaron McPherson, Chair of the Investment Committee, reviewed the proposal history. It was agreed at last year’s Annual Meeting to convene a task force to look at the policies and practices related to the endowment and make recommendations. Task force members included Patrick O’Reilly, Don Oppenheimer, Josephine McNeil, Rev. Rick Chrisman and Aaron. Historically the Endowment has supported the operating budget but there has also

been suggestions that more money could be withdrawn to support other priorities. The level of dependency of the church on the Endowment for the operating budget has increased, currently making up about half of the budget and that is a concern. Last year there were two ad hoc distributions based on proposals and motions from the floor and that also raised the question of what the process should be for such distributions.

The proposed policy, which was developed by the Task Force and reviewed/modified by Leadership Council endeavors to resolve four questions:

- What is appropriate range of percentages to use in determining distribution to operating budget?
- What procedures should be followed for ad-hoc distributions?
- How should gifts and bequests be handled?

Aaron then reviewed the approach that the Investment Committee uses when investing the Endowment money. Allocation is fairly conservative. There has been consideration about further divesting from fossil fuel investments. Vince Maraventano recently joined the Committee and is bringing some ideas related to allocation.

Proposed policy includes policy about maximum distribution to operating budget, process for non-budgetary distributions, and how policy could be amended. There were several questions and comments from the floor including concern about Eliot’s increasing dependence on Endowment, desire for Investment Comm. to continue to work toward having investments be socially responsible and fossil fuel free. Suggestion was made to have group formed in the Fall to further discuss investment options.

Motion was made and seconded to adopt the Endowment Policy as written. A friendly amendment was offered to ensure that the policy include the legal name of the church – i.e. does the name include UCC? It was agreed that that the legal name of Eliot Church will be determined and change the policy if the legal name includes UCC. The amendment was withdrawn.

The Endowment Policy was approved with 25 votes in favor of the policy as written and one abstention.

FY2023 Budget – Thom Theara gave a PowerPoint presentation about the proposed FY2023 budget. It was noted that the difference between anticipated expenses and income be made up from “surplus” cash. It was noted that although this approach would enable us to have a balanced budget during the coming year, it is not a long-term solution. It was also noted that the funds from the Endowment now makes up over 50% of income which is not healthy. Also pledging units are down from 37 last year to 21 so far this year (Note: Several more pledges came in after the meeting).

It was suggested that the FY2024 Stewardship Drive include more information about recommended pledge levels.

Concerns about decreasing membership and worship attendance were raised. But there was also excitement about welcoming a new pastor in August. It was noted that although everyone agreed that it will be wonderful to have a Settled Pastor, he won't be a “magician” and it will be very important for the congregation to support and be involved. It was noted that there were 50 people in the sanctuary last Sunday for Candidating Weekend and that Eliot is a giving congregation.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the FY2023 budget as proposed. The vote was unanimous.

Looking Ahead to Next Year – Moderator Silva pointed out that Rev. Ackermann has clear idea of where Eliot stands as a congregation. The Search Committee ensured that candidates were provided with an honest assessment about the church. She noted that we anticipate that it will be an exciting year and hope is that folks will be engaged and active in helping Eliot move forward.

Robert Young offered a closing prayer. The meeting was adjourned at 1 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Nason

Clerk

Addendum 3: Statement of Operating Activities vs. Budget {Summary}

Eliot Church of Newton, UCC

July 2021 through June 2022

	<u>FY22 Actual</u>	<u>FY22 Budget</u>	<u>% of Budget</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense Income			
CONTRIBUTIONS - BUDGETED	133,487	119,000	112%
CONTRIBUTIONS - NOT BUDGETED	8,022		
RENTAL INCOME	<u>91,902</u>	88,600	104%
Total Income	<u>233,411</u>	207,600	112%
Gross Profit	233,411	207,600	112%
Expense			
ADMINISTRATION	31,212	35,700	87%
BUILDING	103,878	101,900	102%
COMMISSIONS	17,192	26,600	65%
PASTORS DISCRETIONARY EXPENSE	700	500	140%
SPECIAL COLLECTIONS EXPENSE	1,909		
STAFF EDUCATION	540	1,600	34%
STAFF EXPENSES	11,206	14,200	79%
STAFF SALARIES	221,704	250,800	88%
UCC EXPENSE	<u>14,900</u>	13,700	109%
Total Expense	<u>403,241</u>	445,000	91%
Net Ordinary Income	(169,830)	(237,400)	72%
Other Income/Expense			
Other Income			
Employee Retention Credit	13,833		
Contingency Add'l Endowment	0	41,100	0%
J Humphrey for Section Leaders	4,000	4,000	100%
Interest Income - Bank Unrestr	21		
Transfer To/ From Investments	<u>222,264</u>	219,200	101%
Total Other Income	240,118	264,300	91%
Other Expense			
Transfer To/From Facilities	<u>22,000</u>	22,000	100%
Total Other Expense	<u>22,000</u>	22,000	100%
Net Other Income	<u>218,118</u>	242,300	90%
Net Income	<u>48,288</u>	4,900	985%

Addendum 4: Statement of Operating Activities vs. Budget *{Detail}*

Eliot church of Newton July

2021 through June 2022

	FY22 Actual	FY22 Budget	% of Budget
Ordinary Income/Expense			
Income			
CONTRIBUTIONS - BUDGETED			
Plate	6,501	10,000	65%
Pledge Payments FY2023	1,000	0	100%
Pledge Payments FY2022	125,687	109,000	115%
Pledge Payments FY2021	300		
Total CONTRIBUTIONS - BUDGETED	133,488	119,000	112%
CONTRIBUTIONS - NOT BUDGETED			
Gifts & Memorials	6,037		
Miscellaneous Offerings			
Coffee Hour Donations (Cash)	60		
Total Miscellaneous Offerings	60		
SPECIAL COLLECTIONS			
Our Church's Wider Mission Christmas Fund	810		
Disaster Relief	25		
Neighbors in Need	1,040		
Total Our Church's Wider Mission	1,875		
SPECIAL COLLECTIONS - Other	50		
Total SPECIAL COLLECTIONS	1,925		
Total CONTRIBUTIONS - NOT BUDGETED	8,022		
RENTAL INCOME			
LEASEHOLDERS			
CMM	7,200	7,200	100%
Parkside Preschool	34,800	34,800	100%
T-Mobile	40,637	39,500	103%
Total LEASEHOLDERS	82,637	81,500	101%
REGULAR USERS			
12 Step Group AA Saturday	0	900	0%
12 Step Group AA Sunday	0	700	0%
12 Step Group OA Monday	0	100	0%
12 Step Group OAT Tuesday	150	400	38%
12 Step Group OA Wednesday	50	200	25%
12 Step Group OA Thursday AM	0	200	0%
12 Step Group OA Friday	0	100	0%
12 Step Group SLAA Thursday	0	200	0%

Cappello Clausura	1,200	400	300%
Commonwealth Chorale, Inc.	1,660	1,400	119%
Marchant (Women in Ministry)	0	100	0%
Peretz School	300		
Seraphim Singers	1,200	600	200%
Wednesday Meditation Group	0	200	0%
Young Parkinsons	0	300	0%
Total REGULAR USERS	4,560	5,800	79%
OCCASIONAL USERS			
Concerts and Recitals	0	1,300	0%
Misc. Rental Income	4,015		
Weddings and Baptisms	690	0	100%
Total OCCASIONAL USERS	4,705	1,300	362%
Total RENTAL INCOME	91,902	88,600	104%
Total Income	233,412	207,600	112%
Gross Profit	233,412	207,600	112%
Expense			
ADMINISTRATION			
Accounting			
Acctg - Kate Leahy	7,119	9,800	73%
Total Accounting	7,119	9,800	73%
Admin and Office Supplies	1,011	1,000	101%
E-mail Communications	193	200	97%
Insurance			
Insurance - Commercial Liab	12,900	13,200	98%
Insurance - Workers Comp -5995	2,000	3,000	67%
Total Insurance	14,900	16,200	92%
Legal Services	3,033		
Misc. Service Fees			
Bank Fees	0	500	0%
Broker Fees	202	0	100%
Finance Charges/ Late Fees	77		
Vanco Fees	593	800	74%
Total Misc. Service Fees	872	1,300	67%
Office Expenses			
Copier Lease	534	3,600	15%
Postage	538	500	108%
Total Office Expenses	1,072	4,100	26%
Telephone	2,820	3,000	94%
Webpage Maintenance	193	100	193%
Total ADMINISTRATION	31,213	35,700	87%
BUILDING			
Audio Visual	985	200	493%

Building Services-MEP	806	700	115%
Building Supplies	3,474	800	434%
City Inspectional Services	247	50	494%
Cleaning - Monthly	31,966	31,000	103%
Cleaning - Special	1,214	5,000	24%
Computer and Network	3,308	3,000	110%
Elevator - Inspection and Test	250	450	56%
Elevator - Main! Fee Qtrly	3,872	3,800	102%
Electrical	1,335	4,200	32%
Fire Alarm System & Extinguish	2,297	2,200	104%
Furniture & Fixtures	0	300	0%
Handyman Services	200		
HVAC and Boilers	675	2,000	34%
Janitorial Supplies	742		
Kitchen Equipment and Repair	0	100	0%
Landscaping	6,292	6,300	100%
Licenses and Permits	100		
Misc. Services and Repairs	925	500	185%
Painting	0	2,500	0%
Pest Control	2,832	2,700	105%
Piano-Organ	2,091	1,300	161%
Plumbing	2,550	500	510%
Roofing	1,000	500	200%
Security Alarm Monitoring	276	300	92%
Security Alarm Repair	0	100	0%
Snow Removal	17,608	16,000	110%
Telephone System	238	100	238%
Trash Removal - City Recycling	450	800	56%
Trash Removal - Dumpster	3,071	3,100	99%
Utilities - Gas	12,760	10,600	120%
Utilities - Water and Sewer	2,315	2,800	83%
Total BUILDING	103,879	101,900	102%
COMMISSIONS			
Anniversary Committee	0	1,500	0%
Education			
Childcare Expense	0	3,300	0%
Other Education-Related	0	2,000	0%
Youth Group	0	500	0%
Total Education	0	5,800	0%
Membership	1,684	1,500	112%
Memorial Garden Committee	500	500	100%
Mission and Social Justice			
MSJ Discernment	12,000	12,000	100%

Total Mission and Social Justice	12,000	12,000	100%
Music			
Guest Soloists	1,540	2,200	70%
Music Supplies	789	1,300	61%
Total Music	2,329	3,500	67%
Parish Life			
Coffee Hour Supplies	40		
Parish Life - Misc.	176		
Special Event	35	1,000	4%
Total Parish Life	251	1,000	25%
Search Committee	44		
Spiritual Life	384	800	48%
Total COMMISSIONS	17,192	26,600	65%
PASTORS DISCRETIONARY EXPENSE	700	500	140%
SPECIAL COLLECTIONS EXPENSE			
Our Church's Wider Mission			
Christmas Fund	810		
Disaster Relief	25		
Neighbors in Need	970		
Total Our Church's Wider Mission	1,805		
Rick's Farewell	54		
SPECIAL COLLECTIONS EXPENSE - Other	50		
Total SPECIAL COLLECTIONS EXPENSE	1,909		
STAFF EDUCATION			
Dir. of Music Ministry	280	300	93%
Interim Senior Pastor	260	1,000	26%
Office Administrator	0	300	0%
Total STAFF EDUCATION	540	1,600	34%
STAFF EXPENSES			
Payroll Fees	1,192	1,400	85%
Guest preachers	600	800	75%
Payroll Taxes	8,609	8,500	101%
Reimburse Interim Dir. CE	0	1,000	0%
Reimburse Interim Sr. Pastor	805	2,500	32%
Sabbatical Fund	0	0	0%
Total STAFF EXPENSES	11,206	14,200	79%
STAFF SALARIES			
Dir. of Music Ministry			
Salary	27,028	27,000	100%
Dir. Music Add'l	1,600	1,800	89%
Total Dir. of Music Ministry	28,628	28,800	99%
Facility Manager	25,879	28,600	90%
Interim Director CE	11,185	14,900	75%

Interim Senior Pastor			
Dental Insurance	536	300	179%
Retirement Contribution	10,633	5,300	201%
Salary	75,950	38,000	200%
SECA Allowance	5,811	2,900	200%
Vision Insurance	100		
Total Interim Senior Pastor	93,030	46,500	200%
Office Administrator			
Admin - Health Ins. Reimb	2,700	0	100%
Retirement Contribution Office	1,242	1,300	96%
Salary	40,227	38,400	105%
Total Office Administrator	44,169	39,700	111%
Pastor			
Dental Insurance	0	500	0%
Health Insurance	0	2,600	0%
Housing Allowance	0	25,200	0%
Life and Disability Insurance	0	800	0%
Retirement Contribution	0	7,700	0%
Salary	0	30,100	0%
SECA Allowance	0	4,200	0%
Vision Insurance	0	100	0%
Total Pastor	0	71,200	0%
Section Leaders	16,570	18,400	90%
Sunday Sexton	1,744	2,300	76%
Summer Music	500	400	125%
Total STAFF SALARIES	221,705	250,800	88%
UCC EXPENSE			
Proportional Giving MBA	1,200		
Proportional Giving SNEUCC	13,700	13,700	100%
Total UCC EXPENSE	14,900	13,700	109%
Total Expense	403,244	445,000	91%
Net Ordinary Income	(169,832)	(237,400)	72%
Other Income/Expense			
Other Income			
Employee Retention Credit	13,833		
Contingency Add'l Endowment	0	41,100	0%
J Humphrey for Section Leaders	4,000	4,000	100%
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Other Expense			
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Total Other Expense	22,000	22,000	100%

The Eliot Church of Newton FY2023 Annual Report

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Net Income	48,286	4,900	985%

Eliot Church of Newton 5/12/2023