

The Town Hall concept of congregational conversation was adopted as part of the overall "Plan for Moving Forward as a United Church" at a special congregational meeting in November 2015. This is part of the effort to provide different opportunities to communicate with the congregation as well as to provide congregants and friends an opportunity to give and receive feedback, Facilitator Elizabeth Kent and Mr. Arthur Goto have assisted and collaborated with the summary below as part of this process of informing the congregation of this meeting. It is hoped that with these efforts in this process that more will feel ready to attend one of these meetings to provide their opinions and feel that they have been heard.

Moderator Laurie Hamano

**Town Hall Meeting Summary
Nu'uano Congregational Church
Sunday, March 6, 2016, Noon - 1:40 pm**

The meeting opened with a prayer by Pastor Mary. Approximately 20 people attended the Town Hall meeting.

The first subject attendees discussed was **communication**. A concern was raised regarding planning for membership meetings and a suggestion made that if more input was solicited and there was more communication in advance, then meetings would run more effectively. Moderator Laurie Hamano stated that the omission of the topic "New Business" from the agenda of the annual meeting was an oversight, and that they would do better next time. She noted that her process now would be to request input prior to a membership meeting.

Another item of discussion was the best way to share information. ENews, which has links, is effective for those who have computers but is not effective for those who do not use computers and some people have

trouble with attachments. It was pointed out that the Church admin office does not mail hard copies of the e-news. This issue was left open. There was some discussion about where the gap, if any, was. It was noted that in the past, the moderator shared highlights each month and highlights were included in The Caller. Moderator Laurie Hamano will consider this as she starts her term.

The next subject attendees discussed was **collaboration**. It was commented that everyone wants to be heard, to have their ideas solicited, and have their concerns taken under consideration. Town meetings provide a venue for this. Moderator Hamano noted that her intention for future annual meetings is to a) have a meeting such as the town hall to discuss the agenda and b) place items on the agenda before hand and then to send out the meeting notice to the membership once we figure out the agenda.

There was general discussion about the best ways to reach out and the need for people to inform themselves and stay involved (not a one-way street, but at the same time provide opportunities to be heard and be informed at the membership meeting). The facilitator thought that there seemed to be general agreement among attendees that major work could be accomplished in smaller venues, and that attendees thought the two-hour annual meeting would be more effective if a lot of preparation work is done prior to the meeting. There was some comment that it is easier to talk in small groups than in large groups.

The next subject attendees discussed was the **basis of member's vote as to Part I of the proposed mediation agreement**. (During the discussion the term "Part A" was used in lieu of the label "Part I". The term "Part I" is the correct term and is used by the Facilitator and Editors.) This discussion was energetic and dynamic, and at times, emotional. Many people participated, both in speaking and in sharing their thoughts in writing. Attendees shared their reasons for voting the way they did. Responses included (in no particular order) NCC is no longer a Japanese Church and no longer has

a Japanese speaking membership; the majority of the congregation does not read, speak, or understand Japanese; question the number of people who would be served; everyone understands English; it would be inconvenient and boring to have two languages in one service; a joint service would take too much time; didn't want a joint service; the main function or purpose of a church is to worship, Jesus' Great Commission calls upon us to make disciples of all nations, there is a desire for worship in Japanese in our community, and that has been a mission of the NCC from its inception; prefer a worship service for all; wanted to give it a try; the amount of money that Part I would cost does not justify good stewardship of the congregation's contributions; and if there is a joint service large portions of it would not be understandable and would not be relevant.

The group then talked about the **consequences of the vote**. It was pointed out that the Diaconate recently created a heritage subcommittee and the provisions in the Mediation Plan to honor history and heritage passed. Another attendee pointed out that time could be spent addressing the commission to spread God's word in different ways. One view expressed was that the rejection of Part I meant that there was to be no worship services in the Japanese language at the NCC. Another attendee said that the consequence of failing to adopt that portion brings the status of Japanese language worship services back to what it was before the mediation which was a disagreement as to the meaning of the "Ann Ito motion" passed at the 2014 annual meeting. Another attendee said that it seemed a part-time Japanese speaking minister would satisfy those who want Japanese speaking ministry. A suggestion was made to have some sort of worship after the joint service. Others discussed ways to include everyone who attends NCC.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Moderator Laurie Hamano thanked everyone for attending and participating. Pastor Mary closed the session with a prayer.