NPC Declaration of New Affiliation: A Vision toward Future Growth and Outreach

We, as duly elected trustees and officers of Newton Presbyterian Church, charged with our responsibility as stated in the By-Laws of the corporation, after engaging in extensive research, open community meetings, and much prayer, and having received input from over 175 of our active members and attendees, believe it is imperative for the future growth and integrity of our mission, and for the peace, unity, and continued existence of this congregation, that we change our denominational affiliation to the Evangelical Covenant Church (ECC). This requires our withdrawal from the PC(USA), effective at this time.

We believe that we were placed on Newton Corner for a reason and purpose that is greater than any of us has yet fulfilled. The last five years in PC(USA) has seen theological foundations eroded and attendance and revenues decline, a trend that is consistent across the PC(USA). The resources needed to maintain our property have also been increasing. Choosing to stay “the way we are” is not sustainable. Thus, many options have been explored to provide a solution that will rekindle growth and renew the energy needed to pursue our NPC mission of transforming lives by living the truth of Jesus Christ.

The solution we recommend – the one we feel a clear call to follow - is to join the growing ECC community, a reformed body that shares our Christian beliefs and welcomes Christians from all backgrounds, including both Calvinist and Lutheran lineages.

A change of affiliation is perceived as hard for some members of any church family. A small percentage of our membership, up to 13%, has expressed a desire to remain affiliated with the PC(USA). We wish to clarify that all of these Christian family members are invited and welcome to continue to worship with us, whether or not they wish to change their personal denominational affiliation. There are also five PC(USA) congregations nearby (Boston, Brookline, Cambridge, Needham, and Waltham) that we expect would welcome them, providing multiple choices. We are also open to discussing other solutions.

We recognize that NPC has been the largest congregation in the PC(USA)’s Presbytery of Boston, and changing our affiliation is likely to impact their budget. We plan to continue to give them our freely pledged per-capita offering of $14,161 for next year. In accord with our Christian faith we have also gone through our books to make sure that we have no debts and have paid all costs, upkeep, insurance, and maintenance on our property and it is fully ours to use for religious purposes as our members wish. If PC-USA can document any debts we owe to them, then we would like to reimburse them. We wish to be thought of graciously by PC(USA), and will also plan to give them a departing financial gift, with the amount and any restrictions on use to be determined at a forthcoming Session meeting.

With this new affiliation, we envision our congregation will again become a thriving, growing church, filled and spilling over with people of all ages. We envision multiple services with different styles, that preserve our warmth and sense of community, with active, growing ministries for youth, young adults, families, and singles of all ages. We envision greater outreach with regular service to our local community and beyond, and greater boldness in sharing the Good News with neighbors and co-workers. We envision a ministry that engages minds, hearts, and hands in knowing the person of Jesus Christ, living the abundant life in Christ, and sharing the Amazing Grace and Love of God with all people.