



CONNECTICUT DISTRICT

NEW YORK ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Rev. Dr. Alpher Sylvester, District Superintendent

Connecticut District Board of Church, Building and Location

February 7th, 2024

Rev. Kim,

I am apprehensive to approve the request as stated and will suggest the following as the language that sets the parameters of this “Church Conference.”

Please note:

#1. To revise the current Endowment Funds policy, and the other to withdraw the principal of the Preschool Scholarship Fund.

"The current Endowment Policy needs to be revised to eliminate any confusion in accepting and administering bequests and memorial gifts. The board of trustees and the church council are prepared to present the revised Endowment and Memorial Funds policy to ensure that there is no confusion or difficulty in accepting or administering bequests and memorial gifts.

Furthermore, the restriction of the Preschool scholarship fund has not allowed the preschool to grant any meaningful scholarship since its establishment in 2001, because its annual distributions, ranging from \$300 to \$700, are not meaningful amounts to any family who needs such a scholarship. The board of trustees and the church council will propose a resolution to withdraw the principal amount from the Preschool scholarship fund. This will enable the fund to be utilized as per the wishes of its donors, Doris B. and J. Oliver Carson. The current balance within the Preschool Scholarship Fund is \$33,972.61 as of December 31, 2023. We believe that seeking our church members' collective wisdom and guidance in a special charge/church conference is essential for addressing these matters in a manner consistent with our missions and values."

This is approved as requested and limited only to the request as presented.

#2. A vote on a proposed agreement for a 98-year ground lease from Connecticut Housing Partners.

"First, as you know, our church has been negotiating a deal with Connecticut Housing Partners to bring an affordable housing development on the back half portion of the property. The church council and board of trustees are ready to present the proposed 98-year ground lease from Connecticut Housing Partners to the congregation. During the Special Charge/Church Conference, the entire congregation will have the opportunity to discuss the proposed agreement and decide whether to proceed with the 98-year ground lease for the development of affordable housing."

I was under the impression that this type of discussion had already happened before presenting to the CT Board of church building and location. It is what we have asked all churches presenting to the board to do so that the request represents the voice of the membership.

I understand that the reverse is happening in that a discussion is only now to be had with the congregation. I am assuming that had the CT Board of church building and location approved the request; then this discussion would have followed. Please correct my perception.

Please note that any discussion on this issue should highlight the concerns of the New York Annual Conference. It should present the January 18th, 2024 Connecticut District Board of Church, Building and Location Conditional approval to Stratford United Methodist Church which set out a **Tiered approval approach** in response to the Stratford United Methodist Church (SUMC)'s request that the Connecticut District Board of Church, Building, and Location (BCLB), and the New York Annual Conference (NYAC) provide approval for the repurposing of a portion of the operational footprint of SUMC. It should state that only on the condition of acceptance of this proposal will the project be able to proceed.

I am concerned that a church conference's engagement of this issue only exacerbates areas that NYAC leadership and Stratford UMC have not been able to agree on.

Your wisdom and leadership as an NYAC pastor are critical in navigating this issue within your current ministry context.

Your request is affirmed as revised but with concerns.

Blessings,

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Rev. Dr. Alpher Sylvester, D.S.
Connecticut District, NYAC, UMC
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In Connecticut, After God, We Put People First!