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Nomination for

CORA AND JOHN SPAROWK PRESIDENT'S AWARD

Recognizing that the Cora and John Sparowk President's Award shall be presented at the 2023 Biennial Mission Summit in June 2023, to a person who a) is an American Baptist; b) has over a period of years made an exceptional and outstanding contribution to the life of Christ's Church; and c) in life and service manifests richly the fruits and gifts of the Spirit, I wish to nominate

Rev. Kathryn Choy-Wong
(Name)

I feel that the nominee has made an exceptional and outstanding contribution to the life of Christ's Church because: *(use additional page if needed)*

see attachment

I feel that the nominee in life and service manifests richly the fruits and the gifts of the Spirit because: *(use additional page if needed)*

see attachment

Nominee's Address 450 Br 25th Ave #2 San Francisco, CA 94121

Phone Number 415 519 8872 Church Membership New Hope Castro Valley

Submitted by Katharine Hsiao Phone Number 510 329 4568
(please print)

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PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM ON OR BEFORE September 26, 2022 to:

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Or mail to:

General Secretary Dr. C. Jeff Woods

Cora and John Sparrowk President's Award

Nomination of Rev. Kathryn Choy-Wong

Exceptional and Outstanding Contributions to the Life of Christ's Church and

Life and Service Richly Manifest the Gifts of the Spirit

Rev. Kathryn Choy-Wong ("Katie") has spent a lifetime sharing the gospel - as national ABC-USA staff, as regional staff, as a local church pastor, as an Alliance of Asian American Baptist Churches volunteer and most of all, as a committed Christian. Her impact is so great, it is difficult to capture. Here are some of the highlights.

As the recently retired Senior Pastor of New Life Christian Fellowship of Castro Valley, California, Rev. Kathryn Choy-Wong has been a leader that many have emulated throughout her long and storied ministerial work life. With a passion for evangelism and social justice, a great giftedness in transformative multicultural ministries, and a pastoral heart to serve the whole person, Rev. Choy-Wong is the epitome of a model American Baptist leader. She has made exceptional contributions to the life of the church, nationally, regionally, locally, and internationally.

For her entire career, Rev. Choy-Wong has exemplified all of the qualities of an outstanding servant leader, striving for equality and justice for all persons with her holistic and compassionate witness of the transformational gospel of Jesus Christ. From her ecumenical work as Food Network Director of the Northern California Ecumenical Council after seminary (she served as the first director of the hunger and homeless ministry of the Council and started a cooperative buying program to help individuals access affordable food), to her services as the FIRST full-time National Ministries Director of Asian Ministries, to her work as Public/Justice Ministries and Area Minister at the American Baptist Churches of the West region, to working at the American Baptist Seminary of the West (now BST), to her church leadership, and her continued denominational leadership in retirement, Rev. Katie has led our denomination and its members effectively and efficiently, always exuding grace, humility, professionalism, and a servant's heart. In her many ministry positions, she has never failed to lift up the voices of the

marginalized, the hungry, the frail, the hurting, and those sidelined in their walk by racism, sexism, economic and class differences, or language barriers.

Rev. Choy-Wong has long been a ground breaking leader in the denomination. One of the first nationally recognized ABC ordained women in ministry, she has courageously opened doors for scores of women who were inspired by and followed her lead. She has been the first woman to preach at dozens of churches, and she has been greatly used by God's spirit - humbly accepting preaching at a lower level pulpit - only to be lifted to the regular preacher's pulpit on a return visit. She has been at the forefront of justice efforts at denominational inclusiveness and cross-cultural understanding and competency her entire career and she has served the denomination well in this capacity - fighting for the voices of racial/ethnic minorities in the denomination and empowering churches who might otherwise not have been heard (or might not have joined the ABC). As Asian Ministries Director at National Ministries (serving as the first full-time individual in this position), she worked closely with other leaders representing Asian churches with recent immigrants and Asian American churches with 2nd and later generation congregations - teaching the national, regional and local leaders of the unique cultural/social-economic and language needs of denomination's Asian American congregations, and leading efforts to minister holistically to churches with a wide variety of backgrounds. In this, Rev. Choy-Wong set the blueprint for this work, as she single handedly connected countless new and emerging Asian ministries to the ABC while simultaneously opening the hearts and minds of ABC colleagues to cultures and worldviews new to them (as just one example, Rev. Choy-Wong planned and led the enormously popular Multicultural Festival at the 1993 Biennial in San Jose, California). Throughout the decades (and in retirement), she continues to serve as a guest speaker and leader at national and regional events. Most recently, she has co-chaired the Anti-Asian Racism work of of the Alliance of Asian American Baptist Churches, providing much-needed training and outreach on this topic to our multifaceted diverse Alliance community (where more than 28 languages are spoken in our over 350 churches) and to the larger American Baptist family as a whole (includes five events at the 2021 Biennial). She also serves on the board of the Berkeley School of Theology (formerly ABSW).

As an Area Minister Katie was responsible for 44 churches (most of whom were racial ethnic churches, the majority of them African American) and led the efforts of the American Baptist Churches of the West to integrate faith and justice and addressing community concerns through numerous education and advocacy efforts, as well as holding conferences and setting up joint projects. Each year she planned a major Martin Luther King Jr. day celebration for the region, and included all the churches of the region in this important justice witness. In her area ministry role, she built ABC relationships in her area - eventually every church gave to ABC Missions. Again, because of her dynamic work and witness to the whole person, many churches and leaders became open to women in ministry and several began ordaining women. In her Area Minister role Rev. Choy-Wong also guided many churches through times of transition and crisis; providing a healing and safe nurturing environment while using her exceptional skills at conflict management.

In more recent years, Rev. Choy-Wong served as the immediate past President of the American Baptist Churches of the Central Pacific Coast. She was the key leader in enabling the expansion of the Oregon region to include California churches, most of which are racial ethnic churches who had sought a change in regional affiliation. In this effort, she was most careful to keep all of the churches within the larger ABC-USA family.

Rev. Katie also is co-founder of i-Relate.Org, a non-profit that is devoted to developing culturally competent clergy and lay leaders across the broader Christian ecumenical family. Through this endeavor, Rev. Choy-Wong's holistic justice work has impacted numerous leaders and ministries beyond American Baptists, including work with other major denominations and leaders of various independent churches and ministries. In November, 2022, her retirement effort, **Building Lasting Bridges: An Updated Handbook for Intercultural Ministry**, coauthored by Rev. Choy-Wong, Rev. Lucia Ann McSpadden, and Rev. Dale Witherspoon will be published by Judson Press; the work she and her colleagues have co-authored will have a far-reaching impact and is very timely to promote racial healing in our divided world.

In her local church, Pastor Katie was also an extraordinary leader. Her commitment to being a holistic leader who cares about the whole person shone through every aspect of her ministry. She guided New

Life Christian Fellowship (Castro Valley, CA) from being a predominantly Chinese-American congregation into a Pan-Asian, multicultural fellowship that now includes Asians-Americans with more than 8 heritage countries, Latino and Central Americans, African-American, and Euro-Americans and celebrates diversity in every form. Just as significantly, Rev. Choy-Wong has moved the church from one that was predominantly middle class to a truly mixed economic/social/educational background church. The fellowship family embraces those who are homeless and in recovery alongside professionals and wealthy retirees. The church is extremely diverse and yet remains unified in Christ, and was able to serve one another as the family of God because of Rev. Choy-Wong's shining example of holistic sacrifice and service.

While Pastor Katie was Senior Pastor, New Life sponsored more than 10 ministry interns, many of whom have chosen to stay with the church (despite being a church of modest size New Life includes 8 ordained clergy and 2 seminary graduates). Many who have been mentored by Pastor Katie have gone on to be successful ministers in a variety of areas (local churches, regional ministries, national boards, and on our staff), and several are chaplains serving in hospice settings, hospitals, and homes.

Rev. Choy-Wong's ministries also have an international impact. She has provided leadership and guidance to at least six seminary interns from India, Ghana, and Nigeria. Rev. Choy-Wong has shepherded each of them through the ordination process to become pastors and chaplains. Each of them expressed their deepest respect and appreciation for her support and guidance and her example of ministry to the whole person. Her encouragement of this international group of pastors and future pastors have enriched our church spiritually and culturally. The exchange of cultural practices and church customs from different countries gives each person a fuller understanding and relationship with each other. Rev. Choy-Wong was also a recent keynote speaker in India to thousands at a Naga conference co-organized by members of our church - the first time most of these individuals had ever heard a woman preach. Again her compassionate and courageous witness of the gospel of Jesus Christ has broken down barriers around the globe.

Rev. Choy-Wong's own skill and gift of transformational pastoral care to her congregation serves as another example of her gifts of holistic

healing. Though she began her stint as a Senior Pastor during a time of congregational crisis, she quickly brought healing and optimism to our congregation. She is a unifier who brings hope to our members who have a very wide diversity of opinions, backgrounds, income levels, and different spiritual maturities. She has the utmost patience and is quick to listen. When an individual has a need, she will go out of her way to be there for them - physically present and providing tangible assistance (food, clothes, whatever is needed). In this way she has transformed lives of individuals and the whole community. She is a very strong team leader who is nurturing of members of the team and who empowers lay leaders with many opportunities to lead their own projects within the church. She lifts up the congregation when down and is always there sharing the love of Christ so all can do the same.

Rev. Katie-Choy-Wong is a worthy candidate for the President's Award as a transformational leader, a courageous and effective justice warrior, and a compassionate and holistic pastor committed to sharing the good news of the gospel in a hurting world. Through a lifetime of service in many and varied settings, she has consistently witnessed and manifested the gifts of the spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

For all of the above reasons, we respectfully nominate Rev. Choy-Wong for the Cora and John Sparrowk President's Award.

Alliance of Asian American Baptist Churches of ABC-USA

Katharine Hsiao, Caucus Coordinator (Castro Valley, CA)

Rev. Michele Turek, Administration Coordinator (Fresno, CA)

Rev. Sanchita Kisku, Records & Communications Coordinator (Kalamazoo, MI)

Rev. Louis Ao, Missions Coordinator (Edison, NJ)

Rev. Gerald Mann, Finance & Membership Coordinator (San Francisco, CA)

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David Sein-Lwin, Leadership Support & Development Coordinator (Daly City, CA)

New Life Christian Fellowship, Castro Valley, CA

Rev. Karen Yee, Senior Pastor

Rev. Augie Bau, Co-Moderator

Irene Walsh, Co-Moderator