

March 13, 2026

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Exactly one month ago, our beloved Pastor Toshi, who faithfully served for eight years, was suddenly terminated from his pastoral appointment at Peninsula Hope Church in Redwood City, California. The circumstances surrounding this untimely and painful event have compelled us to reach out to you. We feel called to make known what has happened to promote awareness, transparency and unity within the Body of Christ. We humbly ask that you read the rest of this letter with openness.

In 2024, Peninsula Hope Church had two congregations, an English congregation of roughly 15 attendees (and no pastor) and a Japanese-speaking congregation of approximately 50 attendees. When WestGate, a large multi-site church, offered to plant a satellite church on Peninsula Hope's property site and have the dwindling English congregation join them, the English congregation was excited about the prospect. The Japanese congregation and its pastor, Pastor Toshi, were equally excited because there was talk of WestGate partnering with the Japanese pastor/congregation as well to have greater impact in our city.

But in November 2025, these optimistic notions were dashed when we learned that our conference had entered into two agreements with WestGate without obtaining the written approval of Pastor Toshi and/or Peninsula Hope's board of trustees. In these agreements, the conference gave WestGate, as lessee, exclusive use of the entire church property (even though Peninsula Hope has legal title subject to a trust clause). With this presumed authority given by the conference, WestGate made plans to move onto the property to hold worship services on Sunday mornings. The Japanese congregation was informed that it would have to move its morning worship service to the afternoon (even though the property has two chapels and the Japanese congregation had been meeting for many years in the mornings). Furthermore, WestGate requested that Japanese congregational members not step onto the property to begin preparations for our afternoon service until after 1 pm on Sundays. To make matters worse, Peninsula Hope Church's name was removed from the exterior of our own property!

Naturally, we appealed to the conference to change the agreements and return control of the property back to Peninsula Hope Church (where it rightfully belongs), but the conference would not change course. In desperation, many of us wrote to the Board of Administration at the national level for help, but instead, we received a mere form letter stating that the lead bishop and the local bishop stood by the conference's actions.

Seeing how distraught his congregation was, Pastor Toshi, as the shepherd, put himself in harm's way by seeking a candid conversation with the conference about the agreements. But instead of engaging in a transparent conversation with the hope of reconciliation, Pastor Toshi was let go, having sacrificed his career and reputation to protect his flock from harm.

Obviously, we are distressed by the removal of our pastor. And, we are equally devastated that the conference made these agreements without going through the proper channels, i.e., the participation and/or written approval of the congregation, the pastor, Peninsula Hope's board of trustees, and the congregation's local Board of Administration. We still don't understand why those of us in Peninsula Hope who are most impacted by these agreements were excluded from the process. We are saddened by the lack of transparency of our conference. Of course, we are hurt that in our hour of need, the Board

