

## Message from Pastor Dana:

I am so thankful for all who came out to the congregational meeting. I know it was a little bit longer of a meeting than any of us expected but we are thankful to have taken that necessary step.

In light of the results of the survey (which I speak about more in a moment) the session has made two important decisions:

1. The session has called for the second congregational meeting, according to the Presbytery's Gracious Dismissal Process, to be held **on April 22nd at 1:00pm in the sanctuary**. This is the meeting in which we will officially **vote on** whether or not to disaffiliate from the PC(USA).
2. The session has voted that if the congregation votes to disaffiliate with the PC(USA) then we would affiliate with the Evangelical Covenant Order of Presbyterians.

Let me speak to each of these:

**First regarding the second congregational meeting:** Question #3 on the survey asked if the congregation felt like God was calling IRPC to disaffiliate with the PC(USA). 90% said that they "agreed or strongly agreed", 8% said that they "neither agreed or disagreed" or "had no opinion", and 2% said they "disagreed or strongly disagreed."

A couple of quick comments about our next steps:

First, Presbytery has asked us to have an additional town hall meeting, where those who wanted to hear the Presbytery's opinion could do so. We were more than happy to oblige. Initially we were under the impression that at the first congregational meeting on January 22 the Presbytery would present their views, but in the week before that meeting they thought a different format would be better. There is no quorum requirement and no vote will be taken at this meeting, but all are invited to attend. The date has yet to be determined.

Second, at the final congregational meeting on April 22nd it is important to know that there is **NO OPTION TO FUNCTIONALLY ABSTAIN FROM THE VOTE**. We will repeat this over and over again. If, for example, there are 200 members signed in and only 150 turn in ballots for dismissal and 50 people don't turn in ballots or write something like "abstain" on the ballot, those ballots are counted as votes to remain in the PC(USA). **In this scenario we would fail to reach the 80% threshold required to keep both properties and would likely lose the Hartman Road property.** I am not trying to be sensationalistic, but rather making sure everyone understands the stakes involved!

Because it is **SO** important for every member who attends to cast a vote, we are going to do everything we can to keep that final meeting to **AN HOUR OR LESS**.

### **Regarding moving to the Evangelical Covenant Order of Presbyterians:**

In our PC(USA) polity, while it is the congregations responsibility to request dismissal from the PC(USA), it is the session that determines which denomination we are dismissed to and the Presbytery must approve that denomination. The session has reviewed information on all of the potential denominations to which we could be dismissed, and has determined the Evangelical

Covenant Order of Presbyterians to be the best place for us to go. As a board member of that new denomination I am, of course, thankful!

I am thankful, however, because those who were at the Orlando gathering saw the information and videos and now have an excitement about the vision, direction, and structure of ECO. We feel as if we are not running away from something, but toward a denominational relationship that is more in-line with our mission and values. I spoke with many pastors of former southern churches and they feel as if by joining ECO they are going back home!

I will be teaching my FAST Track class starting February 7th on the nature, characteristics and vision of ECO. I encourage you to attend to hear more and ask questions. I also encourage you to go to the website for more information!