



May 2, 2013

Dear College Hill Presbyterian Church Family,

College Hill Presbyterian Church will have a combined worship service, at 10 am, followed by a Congregational Meeting on Sunday, June 2, 2013. At this time, Session will ask the congregation to affirm Session's recommendation to seek dismissal from the Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA) and join the Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians (ECO).

This decision was not an easy one. Many emotions were stirred by the conversations that surrounded the decision to leave the PCUSA. This decision was not made quickly. Much prayer, discussion, and research went into it. Since the Cincinnati Presbytery adopted the Gracious Dismissal Policy in May 2012, CHPC has

- Prayed and sought God's call for our body together.
- Voted to enter into the Reconciliation and Dismissal Policy with the Cincinnati Presbytery (191 for, 14 against).
- Formed a Discernment Team with members of the Presbytery and studied the issues.
- Encouraged teaching and ruling elders to familiarize themselves with the Fellowship of Presbyterians, ECO and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC), by providing information on Essential Tenets, Polity, and position papers. A few elders traveled to Atlanta and Orlando where they participated in Fellowship/ ECO gatherings.
- Offered *Basics Matter* classes during the Foundation Hour to discuss Reformed theology.
- Made denominational information and media available on the church website.
- Solicited questions from the congregation and responded with answers.
- Assembled packets of information outlining our theological differences and history with the PCUSA.
- Asked the congregation to share thoughts regarding which denominational affiliation would best help CHPC fulfill our mission.
- Held a Forum for the purpose of listening to the congregation.
- Invited guests to speak about their experience with the PCUSA, the EPC, the Fellowship and ECO, including those choosing to stay within the PCUSA.
- Received a unanimous recommendation from the Discernment Team to seek dismissal from the PCUSA, which was shared with the congregation in a letter dated March 21, 2013.
- Held a Town Hall meeting for the purpose of answering questions from the congregation.
- Participated in the 777 prayer commitment.

Session came to the conclusion that ECO is the best denomination affiliation to resource and encourage CHPC in the fulfillment of God's mission. We believe that this recommendation and the unity behind it are evidence of the Holy Spirit's powerful movement among us over the last many months. Session is excited to step out in faith and continue the unique, transformative work that God has begun here.

We understand this recommendation may be met with joy by some and disappointment by others. The leadership of CHPC will strive to continue the conversation with compassion and work together toward unity. It is our sincere desire that all who currently attend CHPC will stay with us as God leads us forward; we honor each person as an integral member of this unique and diverse body we call our church family. We will continue to seek to be a church without walls, connecting, serving and celebrating, while making disciples of Jesus Christ.

To see this process to completion we need a quorum, 50% of our active members, to attend the Congregational Meeting on June 2. Of those voting, we need 2/3 to vote yes, affirming Session's recommendation. Our current active membership is 389. Absentee voting is not permitted.

If the congregation affirms Session's recommendation the issue will go before the Cincinnati Presbytery for approval in September. Once dismissed, CHPC will be required to pay a total of \$39,951.75 to the Presbytery over 5 years, in accordance with the Dismissal Policy. (Copies of the Dismissal Policy are available on green paper in the literature rack by the front desk or the Cincinnati Presbytery web site.)

We believe ECO secures us to a solid, Biblical, Reformed foundation and will equip us with tools to tear down the walls between the church and the world so that we can maximize our witness to the love of Jesus. Every Sunday in May, elders will be available in the Fireside Room to talk with you and answer questions. In addition, written information will be available in the Fireside Room, in Hot Off the Press, and at the information desk. On the internet, information about ECO and links to their web site can be found on the church website, chpc.org. Please follow through to the end of this process; finish strong by reading about ECO; by attending the meeting on June 2; and prepare to go forward, engaging in ministry, fully devoted to God and seeking his glory on earth.

"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful." Colossians 3:12-15

Your Session,

Drew Smith
Rob Bechtel
Janet Dumford
Fran Kelley
Cathy Lowe
Galen Warren

Chappie Chapman
Eileen Boyle
Bob Faul
Beth Killian
Chuck Marihugh
Thom Warren

Joe Brooks
Jan Johnson
Charlie Lethander
Terri Strasinger
Greg Winget