



June 14, 2012

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

June 24th, 2012 will be a historic day in the life of First Presbyterian Church. You are aware that on March 7, 2012 the Session voted to recommend to the members of First Presbyterian Church *“that we disassociate ourselves from the PC(USA) and seek dismissal to another Reformed Body under the terms and provisions of the Gracious Dismissal Policy adopted by New Harmony Presbytery.”* On April 24, 2012, after attending meetings in Minneapolis and Orlando, the Session voted unanimously to recommend that we join the newly formed denomination, ECO: A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians.

With the increasing theological pluralism which is prevalent in the PC(USA), we are particularly excited about ECO’s commitment to biblical fidelity reflected in their essential tenets, their focus on a missional mindset of the local congregation, an emphasis on smaller and less bureaucratic presbyteries, and the right of a local congregation to own their property. The recommendations to disassociate from the PC(USA) and join ECO were made after considerable study and prayer to discern God’s will for our congregation. We hope you will vote in support of the Session’s recommendation.

According to our Presbytery’s, “Gracious Dismissal Policy”, in order for the Presbytery to accurately assess the views of the congregation, the dismissal policy requires a quorum of at least 50% of our active membership to be present and voting at the congregational meeting, with 75% of those voting to be in agreement with our Session’s recommendation. **Therefore, we are asking you to please make every effort to prayerfully join us on June 24th at 10:00 am, as a strong affirmation of the wishes of the congregation will go a long way toward assisting the Presbytery in the dismissal process.**

Additional information will be sent to you from the Task Force, regarding the specifics of voting, a sample ballot and other details, but please be aware of these times for our June 24th meeting.

- **9:00 am:** Registration begins and you must “sign in” to acquire your ballot. Please do not wait until 10:00 to arrive as you must register to receive your ballot and vote.
- **10:00 am:** The congregational meeting will be called to order.
- **10:20 am:** If the vote has been taken by this time, we will adjourn for coffee and refreshments and will reconvene about 10:50 am to hear the results of the vote.
- **11:00 am:** We will gather for a combined worship service in the new sanctuary.
- There will be no Sunday School on the 24th, but childcare will be provided throughout the morning.
- Absentee ballots will not be allowed

It is the prayer of your Church leadership that our congregation will stand united and that through this entire process God would be glorified as we seek to be faithful to that which we believe God has called us to do.

Since the recommendation of March 7th, we have had six Congregational Information meetings to help explain why these recommendations have been made and to try and answer any questions you have had.

- The first two meetings dealt with the theological issues that have caused so many Presbyterian churches to begin the dismissal process;
- The next two meetings looked at other Presbyterian bodies in which we might seek alignment;
- The fifth meeting was with Dr. Jim Singleton, President of the Fellowship of Presbyterians and one of the organizing pastors of ECO; and
- Our sixth meeting was a presentation by New Harmony Presbytery's PRT (Presbytery Response Team) to present the PC(USA) perspective.

We have appreciated your participation and questions during these meetings and hope these meetings have been informative and helpful as you prepare for your vote on June 24th.

Last year our congregation celebrated its one hundred and fiftieth anniversary; the theme of our celebration was "Celebrating our Past - Building our Future." We celebrated the many ways God has been working in our Church and we looked with expectation to how God might lead our Church into the future. **We are excited about our future!** This "new thing" God is doing requires that we take a bold step of faith, which can be frightening, but we are confident that God will lead us as we take this step.

On a personal note, I want to share with you how very proud I am of your elders. The denominational events that have caused so many churches to seek dismissal have caused confusion and concern for many churches and people. This has not been easy! On the one hand, this has been a difficult and sad process; we are saddened at the direction the PC(USA) is moving. But on the other hand, seeking to discern God's will for our congregation has been a faith building and exciting experience for our elders. They have spent countless hours seeking to be faithful to what we believe is God's calling for our Church family. We will be a stronger Church as a result of this process. It is my prayer that all of our members will see that hand of God at work in and through this process and that our congregation will move forward into a future filled with God's promise and hope.

Thank you for being such a wonderful congregation! It is my privilege to be part of a church family that seeks to be faithful to the call of God. God bless you and see you on June 24th!

In HIS Service,



Barry L. Jenkins
Senior Pastor