



March 23, 2016

Dear PCBW Congregation,

The Session is sending this to help clarify what to some has been a confusing letter sent to the members of the PCBW congregation by the Presbytery of Kendall.

As most of you know, as a result of a poll of the congregation taken this past winter, the Session has been in dialogue with the Presbytery of Kendall about the possibility of being dismissed to a new denomination, ECO: A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians. A negotiating team made up of JoAnn Boswell, Dave Bjerke, Mick Halverson, and George Kirk (chair) was formed by the Session to interact with the presbytery on the Session's behalf.

The negotiating team was aware that part of the discernment process with the presbytery included the sending out of a letter to the congregation. In fact, the negotiating team gave its approval to a printed version of such a letter. However, the letter you received was different from the one to which the negotiating team gave its approval, and in fact was sent to you despite the fact the team expressed concerns about the new version on several levels.

First, the negotiating team and Session believe the letter has information which is confusing, and in some ways, factually incorrect. It could be interpreted to mean that the church has already decided to move to ECO, and that members now need to decide whether they want to stay with the PC(USA) or move to ECO with the church. The letter could also be interpreted to be a new poll, or even the final vote. One member of the congregation who received this letter came to the church today and asked this very thing: "Is this the final vote?" The answer is no. The letter, as originally provided to us, was meant to be an inquiry from the presbytery seeing how many people desire to stay in the PC(USA) if the church were to vote to move to ECO. It is important to emphasize that such a vote has not yet been taken.

The letter you have received will, in addition to seeing how many people desire to stay in PC(USA), be used to inform the presbytery's "deliberations about disposition of property...". As such, it is important that those who previously voted in favor of dismissal, in addition to those who may have voted to stay in PC(USA), again indicate their preference on the response card provided by the presbytery.

Second, because the letter is signed by a member of the PCBW congregation, Barbara Corwin, the Negotiating Committee and Session feel like it is important to emphasize to you that this letter came from the Presbytery of Kendall, and not from PCBW. Barbara was signing this letter not as a member of our church, but in her role as moderator of Kendall Presbytery.



These responses are not something the church is seeking, but something the presbytery is seeking in order to inform their deliberations about disposition of property (the “terms of dismissal”) and to determine how many people might want to stay in the PCUSA should the church as a whole vote to move to ECO. These numbers will be collated by the presbytery, and used by them in the negotiations with the church in regards to the property disposition and terms of dismissal.

So in summary:

1. This letter came from the presbytery, not the church, and came in a form we did not agree to because of what we felt was confusing and even factually incorrect information.
2. This is not a final vote, but merely a means by which the presbytery is able to receive information about church members’ desires.
3. The presbytery is seeking your response in order to inform their deliberations about disposition of property (the “terms of dismissal”) and to determine how many people might want to stay in the PCUSA should the church as a whole vote to move to ECO.

The Session continues in its recommendation to the congregation that PCBW seek dismissal from the PC(USA) and join ECO and encourages you to once again indicate your preference on this issue by responding on the card provided. Most importantly, we also ask that you continue to uphold this process in prayer. And if you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to talk to a Session member or to our pastor.

Peace,

The Session  
Presbyterian Church of the Big Wood