



December 14, 2015

Dear PCBW Congregation,

As you know, **PCBW has been going through a season of discernment** regarding our denominational affiliation with the Presbyterian Church, USA. It officially began some eighteen months ago when your Session, in response to congregational members who expressed some deep concerns with the PCUSA, formed a task force. This task force was charged with researching and gathering information about these denominational issues, as well as about possible courses of actions so that the Session might have real information from which to begin to prayerfully consider our future. After receiving this report and taking months to prayerfully consider it, their conclusion, which was made known to you this past summer, was to recommend to the congregation that PCBW pursue changing our denominational affiliation from the PCUSA to the Evangelical Covenant Order of Presbyterians (ECO).

**Following this recommendation came a series of discernment meetings.** First there were two “town hall” presentations in which the congregation heard the Session’s reasons for their recommendation, asked questions, and gave feedback. The Session then hosted a prayer meeting where we did not discuss issues, but simply sought God’s direction in prayer. The Session also hosted an evening where representatives of both the PCUSA and ECO helped the congregation understand more about each denomination. Finally, the Session hosted a question and answer time with the pastor, where Mark responded directly to specific questions from the congregation.

After taking some time to process all these events, **the Session continues to believe as strongly as ever that pursuing a move to ECO is the right path for this congregation.** The Session is excited about the possibilities for a future in ECO. It sees ECO as a natural fit - the best fit - for our church.

However, as deep is the conviction that the church should pursue moving is the conviction that this has to be a congregational decision. Because of this, the Session believes the right **next step is to hear from the congregation through a non-binding straw poll** where the congregation will be asked to “vote” for what they think is the right direction for the church to move. Because this is a “for information only” vote, members, affiliates and regular attenders are being asked to participate.

**Enclosed in this mailing** you will find three things besides this letter:

1. A **“Frequently Asked Questions”** handout which answers in brief the most common questions asked
2. A **“Side by Side” comparison** of the beliefs and practices of PCUSA and ECO.
3. Finally, you find a **straw poll ballot**, together with an envelope in which to return it.

Here’s what we are asking you to do:

1. **Study:** Take some time to read through the materials in this packet - they have been condensed for easier digestion. If you want to go deeper, go to the discernment tab on our website - the Session saw the “Five Solas” piece and videos by John Ortberg and Dana Allin as particularly helpful to them.
2. **Ask:** If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to speak to one of our Session members or to our pastor, Mark, who would be happy to help give you their perspectives on whatever issues or concerns you might have.
3. **Pray:** Through it all, we encourage you to seek God’s direction for our church. Ask Him to lead you. Ask Him to work in this process. Pray for God’s best for this congregation.
4. **Vote:** When you are ready, please vote as God leads, print your name, sign the ballot, seal it in the envelope, and either mail it back to the church or return it to the ballot box which will be outside the office. Please have every voter fill out and sign their own individual ballot.

Know that the Session continue to be in prayer for our congregation.

On Behalf of the Session

JoAnn Boswell  
Clerk of Session

Mark Inouye  
Pastor, Moderator of Session