

Preface to The Following Materials Concerning
The Evangelical Presbyterian Church

The session's charge to the Task Force was to research four possible options for the future of the Presbyterian Church of the Big Wood:

1. Remain in the PC(USA) with no change in current status
2. Remain in the PC(USA) and associate with The Fellowship of Presbyterians (FOP) (soon to be renamed The Fellowship Community)
3. Seek Dismissal from the PC(USA) and join A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians (ECO)
4. Seek Dismissal from the PC(USA) and join The Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC)

The latter two options (ECO or EPC) share many of the same theological and ecclesiastical positions, which prompt some congregations to consider seeking dismissal from PC(USA). Many of their shared theological and ecclesiastical positions and concerns are expressed in the printed materials contained in the ECO notebook. Therefore, they are not reproduced in this notebook.

You are encouraged to read the reproduced-from-other-sources materials in the ECO notebook with an eye for both the many similarities of these two options (ECO and EPC) and for those things which might differentiate them. Give special attention to the printed material in the following tabs:

7(d, e, f and g) – side-by-side comparisons of PC(USA), ECO and EPC reflecting differing sources and perspectives

7(i) - one person's comparisons of ECO and EPC, especially the summary paragraph in the middle of the third page, which rings very true to some of the research and interviews conducted by this member of the PCBW Task Force

11 – a summary of PC(USA) actions from the perspective of the Presbyterian Lay Committee, a very conservative, sometimes contentious, organization

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC)

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Report to Session**

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC)

Overview

1. Size – has 12 presbyteries with 543 churches (as of October 3, 2014) spread over 45 states (many states with only 1 congregation; the largest state being Pennsylvania with 61 churches; strongest region is the South with 220 churches; Idaho has five: Caldwell, Meridian, Parma, Wendell, Hazelton – all former PCUSA congregations)
2. Headquarters – Livonia, Michigan
3. When formed – 1980
4. How many churches – 543
5. How many members – 141,740 (as of December 31, 2013)
6. Trend of churches and membership – The EPC is growing primarily through transition (transfer of churches from another denomination to the EPC), although there is discussion about the need for more transformational growth (through evangelism and church planting).

Theological Beliefs and Tenants vs PCUSA – see the side-by-side comparisons contained as tabs 7 (d, e, f and g) in the ECO (Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians) notebook

What Would Be Involved in Making a Change

1. Physical property ownership – Purchase or transfer must be arranged with the PCUSA (Kendall Presbytery). Thereafter, each EPC congregation “has the exclusive, inalienable right to own and control its own property.”
2. Trends as Regarding Buyout – Each PCUSA presbytery establishes the price to be paid for a congregation to purchase its property. Some congregations have paid as little as a few thousand dollars while others have been required to pay millions.
3. Length of Process – The length of process is undetermined, primarily dependent on the length of the session’s and congregation’s deliberations and the congregation’s interactions with both its PCUSA presbytery and the receiving EPC presbytery. The “Steps Toward Dismissal and Reception” are included as pp. 9-11 in the attached “Information for Inquiring Congregations” document.

Pros and Cons of Belonging to the EPC

1. Pros

- Being part of a growing denomination that has 34 years of history
- Being part of a denomination unified through Scriptural and Reformed theological consensus, not only in theory but in practice
- "Denominational meetings that are much more worshipful and prayerful than in the PCUSA" (two EPC, former PCUSA, pastors)
- "They have a heart for the gospel and missions" (a PCUSA, former EPC, pastor)
- "They've got their culture pretty well identified and its structure provides greater stability than ECO." (a PCUSA, former EPC, pastor)
- The church will own its own building

2. Cons

- EPC seen by some as being very rigid, stringent, related to adherence to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms (one PCUSA pastor; one ECO, former PCUSA, pastor; one PCUSA pastor and member of FOP, who is moving to ECO)
- Many rules and more legalism, as the "EPC is very black and white" (an ECO, former PCUSA, pastor commenting on why a very conservative, former PCUSA, pastor friend is comfortable in EPC)
- "They've got their culture pretty well identified ..." (a PCUSA, former EPC, pastor) (implication is that its culture is circumscribed, restricted within limits)
- "Good luck if you don't toe the line or if you have scruples about any of their beliefs." (a PCUSA pastor who has significant knowledge of EPC)
- The EPC is hostile toward the PCUSA (a PCUSA pastor and member of FOP, who is moving to ECO)
- Although congregations are given the right to ordain women as elders, if they so choose, and presbyteries have the right to ordain women as pastors, a few presbyteries (primarily in the South) have chosen not to ordain women as pastors and in some other presbyteries women pastors do not sense that they are viewed as equal partners
- "The EPC can get very uptight over its own issues. It seems to always be preaching to its critics." (a PCUSA, former EPC, pastor)
- To join EPC, PCBW will need to compensate Kendall Presbytery in some yet-to-be-determined amount in order to retain its property.

Limitations placed on PCBW

- All ministers and active elders must be interviewed and examined, giving full affirmation to all the articles in "Essentials of Our Faith". They must also "sincerely receive and adopt the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Catechisms...as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures", although they may express some exceptions about specific teachings of Westminster, but must support his/her exceptions based on Scriptural understandings.

3. Additional Requirements Placed on PCBW

- Annual statistical and financial reports are made to the denomination
- Attendance at Presbytery and General Assembly meetings (there are no synods) is open to representatives of all churches, but not required.
- Voluntary Per Member Asking to be paid to the General Assembly is, in 2014, \$23 per member per year. In addition, there is a Per Member asking for Presbytery, which is \$15 per member for the Presbytery of the Pacific for 2014. There is the option for congregations to donate to additional mission and partnership opportunities.
- Governance issues – EPC adheres to traditional Presbyterian polity, with which PCBW is familiar

4. Benefits Plans

- Medical, dental, vision, and long term disability insurance – see pages 7 & 8 of the "Information for Inquiring Congregations" document (Tab 5 in this notebook) and the Benefits Plan pages (Tab 4), including the premium rates for 2015. The percentage of each of the premiums paid by the employee and the employing congregation is a determination made solely at the congregational level, not imposed by the denomination. Contributions by both employee and congregation are pre-tax.
- Retirement Plan – there appears to be no pension provided
 - 403(b) – Requirement for each church to contribute on behalf of pastor. See page 8 of the "Information for Inquiring Congregations" document (Tab 5).


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Beliefs

A young, vibrant family of churches, we are seeking to plant churches and challenging our stronger churches to start new daughter churches. Our National and World Outreach ministries seek new ways to spread a great and life changing message, that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life.

As you search through our web site, our desire is that you will find a church that more than anything else wants our members to live missionally, making a difference in the world in which they work, live and interact with their neighbors.

Who is the EPC?

[A New Creation](#): A brief history of the EPC

[Who We Are](#): Distinctives of the EPC

[Frequently Asked Questions](#): 21 questions and answers about the EPC

What does the EPC Believe?

[Essentials of Our Faith](#)

[Westminster Confession of Faith](#)

[Westminster Larger Catechism](#)

[Westminster Shorter Catechism](#)

Position Papers: A Position Paper identifies the positions of the EPC to the world. It requires the approval of two General Assemblies, including a minimum of one year circulation among the presbyteries.

[Abortion](#)

[Divorce and Remarriage](#)

[The Holy Spirit](#)

[Homosexuality](#)

[Ordination of Women](#)

[Problems of Suffering, Death and Dying](#)

[The Sanctity of Marriage](#)

[Value of and Respect for Human Life](#)

Pastoral Letters: A pastoral letter is intended to shine the light of God's word broadly on a general area of concern to the Church and requires the approval of only one General Assembly, it is not as definitive as a Position Paper. The primary purpose of a pastoral letter is to guide churches within the EPC rather than to identify our positions to the world.

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THE ESSENTIALS

All Scripture is self-attesting and being Truth, requires our unreserved submission in all areas of life. The infallible Word of God, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is a complete and unified witness to God's redemptive acts culminating in the incarnation of the Living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible, uniquely and fully inspired by the Holy Spirit, is the supreme and final authority on all matters on which it speaks. On this sure foundation we affirm these additional essentials of our faith.

1. We believe in one God, the sovereign Creator and Sustainer of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. To Him be all honor, glory and praise forever!
2. Jesus Christ, the living Word, became flesh through His miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit and His virgin birth. He who is true God became true man united in one Person forever. He died on the cross a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. On the third day He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven where, at the right hand of the Majesty on High, He now is our High Priest and Mediator.
3. The Holy Spirit has come to glorify Christ and to apply the saving work of Christ to our hearts. He convicts us of sin and draws us to the Savior, indwelling our hearts. He gives new life to us, empowers and imparts gifts to us for service. He instructs and guides us into all truth, and seals us for the day of redemption.
4. Being estranged from God and condemned by our sinfulness, our salvation is wholly dependent upon the work of God's free grace. God credits His righteousness to those who put their faith in Christ alone for their salvation, and thereby justifies them in His sight. Only such as are born of the Holy Spirit and receive Jesus Christ become children of God and heirs of eternal life.
5. The true Church is composed of all persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit are united together in the body of Christ. The Church finds her visible yet imperfect, expression in local congregations where the Word of God is preached in its purity and the sacraments are administered in their integrity, where scriptural discipline is practiced, and where loving fellowship is maintained. For her perfecting she awaits the return of her Lord.
6. Jesus Christ will come again to the earth personally, visibly, and bodily—to judge the living and the dead, and to consummate history and the eternal plan of God. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." (Rev. 22:20)
7. The Lord Jesus Christ commands all believers to proclaim the gospel throughout the world and to make disciples of all nations. Obedience to the Great Commission requires total commitment to "Him who loved us and gave Himself for us." He calls us to a life of self-denying love and service. "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." (Eph. 2:10)

The Essentials are set forth in greater detail in the Westminster Confession of Faith.

*In Essentials ... Unity
In Non-Essentials ... Liberty
In All Things ... Charity*

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Appendix B

Additional Information on “Receiving and Adopting the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms”

At its founding, two doctrinal documents were important to the EPC – “Essentials of Our Faith,” a list of core beliefs essential to the Christian faith, and the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms. At times, “The Essentials” were understood and applied as a minimal doctrinal standard of the EPC, even though the vows for church officers required officers to “receive and adopt the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms...as containing that system of doctrine taught in Holy Scripture.”

The 21st General Assembly (2001) provided a definitive conclusion to these discussions by adding “The Essentials” to the Constitution of the EPC with an explanatory paragraph and adding a vow of adherence to those essentials. At the same time, it codified the process identifiable all the way back to 18th century of American Presbyterianism (The Adopting Act) and Irish Presbyterianism (The Irish Pacific Act) where candidates and ministers could state specific points of the Westminster standards to which they could not subscribe and allow the presbytery to determine whether those exceptions were allowable.

In 2001, the EPC Assembly expressed its understanding of and relationship between the two doctrinal documents as follows:

The Westminster Confession of Faith is a confessional statement of orthodox Presbyterianism. The Westminster Confession of Faith is our standard of doctrine as found in Scripture. It is a positive statement of the Reformed Faith. The Westminster Confession of Faith constitutes a system of biblical truth that an officer of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church is required to believe, acknowledging that each individual court has the freedom to allow exceptions which do not infringe upon the system of doctrine in the Westminster Confession of Faith.

“Essentials of Our Faith” is an irenic statement of historic evangelicalism. The purpose of “Essentials of Our Faith” is to define core beliefs of the Christian Faith. It expresses historic Christian beliefs common to all true believers and churches throughout the world. “Essentials of Our Faith” is not intended to be the exclusive test of orthodoxy for ordination. It is not intended to be used as an explicit standard for minimal core beliefs for candidates, ordination or ministerial examinations. It is not to be construed as a substitute for the Westminster Confession of Faith.

Both the Westminster Confession of Faith and “Essentials of Our Faith” are important documents in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. The Westminster Confession of Faith and “Essentials of Our Faith” are not alternative statements of truth, nor are they competitive statements of truth. They each serve important and harmonious purposes within the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. The Westminster Confession of Faith preserves our commitment to the historic orthodoxy of the Reformed Faith. “Essentials of Our Faith” preserves our commitment to historic evangelicalism.

The EPC as a MISSIONAL CHURCH AND DENOMINATION

Our denomination wants to clarify for its member churches who we are and what we do as the United States and many other nations become mission fields that are larger, more spiritually diverse and more antagonistic to the Gospel than ever before.

The term "missional" has become common and therefore highly nuanced. We desire to define missional in a simple and specific way so that each EPC church can commit to a unified, obedient pursuit of the expansion of the Kingdom of God.

1. A missional church grasps that God is a missionary God and that "it is not so much that God has a mission for His church in the world, but that God has a Church for His mission in the world."*
2. A missional church believes that the mission of God is rooted unalterably in the Bible, God's infallible Word. Therefore, a missional church believes that the essence of God's mission is to extend the reign of God and is summed up in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
3. A missional church is a visible community of authentic disciples of Jesus Christ who *gather* for celebration, prayer and teaching and then *disperse* locally and globally as His missionaries to love and serve people. In so doing, a missional church both *pursues* and *welcomes* sinners as they are drawn into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. The greater purpose in all of this is that the earth will be filled with the worship of God.
4. A missional church believes that it is more than just a collection of individuals, but that it is a community called together by God both to love Him and serve Him.
5. A missional church is concerned with more than maintaining programs for existing members; it is called to mobilize its people both individually and as a community to daily self-sacrifice for the hurting world around them. A missional church is both inwardly strong and outwardly focused.
6. A missional church perceives that the essence of these things is the essence of its existence. Therefore, a missional church will constantly seek to reevaluate itself as to whether or not its emphasis, organization, and activity effectively positions the church to partner with God in His mission.
7. A missional denomination
 - a. Believes ministry begins with the local church
 - b. Is made up of local congregations committed to being missional
 - c. Believes that the Presbyteries and General Assembly, being expressions of the larger church, have an important role to play in identifying, equipping and supporting leaders and churches. They are a key link in the principle of mutual accountability toward missional ministry and Biblical standards.
 - d. Constantly examines whether its polity, structures and programs are supporting or inhibiting that missional commitment.

* J. Andrew Kirk, What is Mission? Theological Explorations (London: Darton, Longman and Todd; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), pp 23-37.



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Frequently Asked Questions About The EPC

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1. What is unique about the EPC?

We are unique among American Presbyterians with our self-conscious attempt to balance essential and non-essential matters within a confessional heritage. We are unified in our commitment to the essentials of the historic Christian faith taught in the Bible, but allow liberty of conscience on those matters which are not so plain in or central to the Bible's teaching. [back to top](#)

2. What is the EPC's view of the Bible?

We believe that the Bible is fully inspired by God the Holy Spirit to lead people to a saving knowledge of God and to help them understand their world rightly. By its very nature, the Bible is infallible. For more information, see the "[Synopsis of the EPC Statement on Scripture](#)" on our website or in pamphlet form. [back to top](#)

3. What does the EPC believe?

The EPC is Presbyterian in government, Reformed in theology and Evangelical in spirit. [back to top](#)

4. What does it mean to be "Presbyterian?"

To be Presbyterian is to be governed according to the pattern of elders seen in the Old and New Testaments. We are ruled neither by bishops in a hierarchical model nor by members in a congregational model. Biblically qualified elders are recognized through congregational election and, along



with ministers, rule the church corporately. It also means being connected in mutual accountability and responsibility. Just as individual Christians are connected to one another as members of the body of Christ, so also individual congregations are connected under Christ as the great Head of the Church. [back to top](#)

5. What does it mean to be "Reformed?"

To be "Reformed" means several things. Historically, it means that we trace our roots to the Reformation, when John Calvin and others led the movement to reform the Church according to Scripture. Theologically, it means belief in the absolute sovereignty of God and that the highest good is God's glory. This historical and theological heritage is often expressed in the "solas" of the Reformation—God's grace alone as the only way to be reconciled to God, faith alone as the only means of receiving God's grace, Christ alone as the ground of God's saving grace, Scripture alone as the only infallible authority for belief and God's glory alone as the ultimate purpose for the lives of men and women. [back to top](#)

6. What does it mean to be "Evangelical?"

To be "Evangelical" means to believe in the importance of sharing the good news that through Jesus Christ the kingdom of God has been inaugurated, freeing people from the guilt and power of sin through personal faith and repentance. We express this priority on evangelism by stating it in our governing documents as the first work of the church. This priority is evidenced in our emphasis on church planting and world missions. [back to top](#)

7. Does the EPC believe in missions?

Absolutely! Our World Outreach Committee oversees the sending of over 90 missionaries to over 20 different countries. Some of our best and brightest members are serving with the generous support of our congregations because we believe that the gospel must be proclaimed to all nations. [back to top](#)

8. What is your relationship to other Presbyterian and Reformed denominations?

We lie in the middle area of a continuum of American Presbyterian denominations. The EPC believes in historic Christianity as taught in Scripture, thus looking to the Bible as our guide on moral issues and believing in the reality of sin, salvation and judgment. At the same time, we want to give evidence of what we consider a mark of the true church—loving fellowship—by holding our convictions with charity toward others and charitably allowing a diversity of views within the EPC on non-essential issues. Thus we identify positively with those Presbyterian denominations which hold to biblical authority. [back to top](#)

9. How does the EPC view the gifts of the Holy Spirit?

The EPC believes the Holy Spirit is active today in applying the benefits of Christ's redemption and equipping the Church for service through the granting of spiritual gifts, including the gifts of office (Eph. 4:8ff.). The EPC believes the church should encourage God's people to serve Him with all the gifts the Spirit gives. The EPC consists of churches which believe the charismatic gifts are still given today as well as churches which do not. This would be a prime example of what the EPC believes is a "non-essential."

We believe that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is part of the new birth (1 Cor. 12:13), but that every believer is commanded to be filled with the Holy Spirit as part of the ongoing work of God's grace (Eph. 5:18). For

more on the EPC's view of the Holy Spirit, consult our "Position Paper on the Holy Spirit." [back to top](#)

10. What is the EPC's position on social issues such as homosexuality, abortion and euthanasia?

The EPC looks to the Bible as the rule of faith and practice on such issues. For example, we believe that homosexual practice, like many other things, is sinful. Regarding abortion, we believe the Bible does not distinguish between prenatal and postnatal life, attributing personhood to an unborn child. Our positions on these and other issues can be found in position papers available on our web site or in print from the Office of the General Assembly. [back to top](#)

11. Where is the EPC congregation nearest to me?

You can find out where the nearest EPC congregation is by going to the church locator page on this web site or by calling the Office of the General Assembly. If there is no EPC congregation in your area, we are always interested in talking to viable and compatible groups of people who are interested in church planting. [back to top](#)

12. What is the EPC's view of women in office?

While this is a topic about which many Christians feel strongly, the EPC believes that there can be genuine unity amid diversity on the subject. Each congregation has the right to decide whether to have women officers. The local congregation, subject to presbytery approval, determines whether they will have women as pastors. We believe that, whatever a congregation's view of office, women should be encouraged to serve as God has called and gifted them. For more on this topic, you may obtain our "Position Paper on the Ordination of Women." [back to top](#)

13. In the EPC, who owns the property of a local church?

The congregation has the exclusive, inalienable right to own and control its own property. [back to top](#)

14. Does the EPC have any special programs for youth or women?

The EPC maintains active programs for both youth and women. The Student Ministries program offers a variety of missions and camp experiences throughout the summer as well as ongoing training and support for individual churches. While, the Women In Ministries program promotes local women's ministries, presbytery-wide training, retreat programs, and special missions projects. Both denominational departments have staff members serving these areas. [back to top](#)

15. How are churches represented in the EPC?

Every church has a right to send representatives to presbytery and general assembly meetings. Further, our form of government attempts to achieve a two-to-one ratio between lay delegates (elders) and ministers at those levels. This provision helps keep the EPC from being a clergy-dominated denomination, out of touch with the needs and interests of the average person in the pew. [back to top](#)

16. How big is the EPC?

The EPC consists of approximately 500 churches representing approximately 150,000 members. [back to top](#)

17. Does the EPC have its own colleges and seminaries?

No, the EPC does not own any denominational schools. We look to a

number of evangelical colleges and seminaries across the country, many of whom annually attend our General Assembly and have EPC trustees. [back to top](#)

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18. What is on the horizon for the EPC?

Since our beginning we have felt that we represented a unique move of God. We have been blessed with a fervent beginning, a warm spirit and an uncommon oneness of heart. While the EPC has grown through the transfer of many existing churches, we have a deep desire to see the kingdom of God extended through energetic church planting and evangelism. Our Vision 21 strategic plan through the year 2010 sets ambitious objectives for doing so. Our growth has varied over the years, but has always been positive. We expect our intense efforts in church planting to breed a church planting mentality that will produce significant growth in the next decade.

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19. Where are your denominational offices?

The Office of the General Assembly is located in the Detroit area in Livonia, Michigan. [back to top](#)

20. How can our church become part of the EPC?

The process of becoming part of the EPC begins with getting to know one another. You can start by calling the Office of the General Assembly. We can provide you with regional contacts to begin that process. In general terms, it consists of your congregation voting to affiliate and the EPC presbytery in your area voting to accept you and your pastor(s). If you are currently affiliated with another denomination, you will have to consult with officials there about the process for being released. [back to top](#)

21. How can I help start an EPC church in my area?

You can begin by calling the National Outreach Office of the EPC at the Office of the General Assembly. [back to top](#)



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Benefits

Benefits to benefit you. Whether you are presently covered by the EPC benefits or a potential participant, these resources are here to help you both evaluate EPC's benefits programs and answer your questions.

For 2015, the EPC offers medical, dental, vision, short- and long-term disability, life insurance, and voluntary insurance benefits. In addition, the EPC Retirement Plan is available, a 403(b)(9) defined contribution plan with Fidelity Investments.

Information provided in this web site does not constitute legally binding advice. EPC benefits are subject to the provisions of the Medical Plan and Retirement Plan documents available on this web site or in printed form from the Office of the General Assembly, 17197 N. Laurel Park Drive, Suite 567, Livonia MI 48152-7912; Phone: 734-742-2020 Option 1; Fax: 734-742-2034.



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- 4) [ZIP Codes](#)
- 5) [Plan Options](#)
- 6) [Benefit Enhancements](#)
- 7) [Service Information](#)
- 8) [Employee Notification](#)

1) Open Enrollment is from October 20 through November 14, 2014. **This year we are requiring a full open enrollment, meaning everyone must enroll or re-enroll in their benefits.** Churches with employees not currently enrolled in the EPC Medical Plan may be attracted to the improved coverage. Current Plan participants **MUST** complete an enrollment form. For current and new Plan participants, new rates automatically take effect on January 1, 2015. The age-based rate is determined for each participant on January 1, 2015, and will remain unchanged through December 31, 2015.

Need more information? You can contact the Benefits Administration Office at 877-578-8707, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. EST/EDT. To talk with someone about specific details of the EPC Medical or Pharmacy Plan, contact Highmark at 866-472-0928, Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. EST/EDT (have Reference Code P0090707).

2) EPC Medical Plan. The EPC continues to meet vital Medical Plan goals, as outlined below, with enough churches participating to keep it viable. We are making substantial enhancements in 2015 to create greater value now and to keep our EPC medical plan in the future. Our goals are:

- Access by all eligible employees and dependents
- Coverage options from midrange to comprehensive
- Portable coverage between assignments
- Convenient enrollment, care, and service
- Moral shelter from objectionable contraceptives
- Affordable rates based on cost factors: coverage, location, and age

3) Premium Rates. In 2014 we were able to reduce our insurance rates 22 percent overall. We launched an age-based premium structure that offered lower premiums in 2014. Working with our actuary for the last several months, the Board of Benefits conducted a careful analysis of the Plan's cost trends and reserves. Although we have had to increase our rates by 12.5 percent for 2015, this is still a 10 percent decrease from 2013 rates. [Click here](#) for 2015 premium rates.

4) Zip Codes. There is no change in the zip code listing for 2015.

[Click here](#) for a chart of church region assignments by ZIP code. Your region helps determine the premium rates.

5) Plan Options. [Click here](#) for a summary of main coverage differences between our four Plan options. Benefits provided by the EPC Medical Plan remain generous, and more so than many in the marketplace. These four named Plans depict and quantify how much (estimated percent) of medical costs each Plan covers:

Platinum (91%)

Gold HSA (86% - including employer's required HSA contribution)

Gold (82%)

Silver (74%)

6) Benefit Enhancements in 2015.

Dental: EPC provides two dental plans through Ameritas. Both plans allow you to visit any dentist of your choice; however, you receive the greatest benefit when you visit dentists in the Ameritas network. The Low Plan provides a lower benefit level for a lower monthly premium. The High Plan provides a more comprehensive coverage with a higher annual maximum benefit of \$1,500 per person. Search for an in-network dentist online at www.ameritas.com.

Vision: The Ameritas Vision Plan covers an exam and lenses every 12 months, and covers eyeglass frames every 24 months. Your vision plan uses the EyeMed network of providers. To get the greatest benefit, visit a doctor in the EyeMed network. You can search for a doctor online at www.eyemedvision.com. EyeMed has a few network options, so be sure to select the EyeMed "Access" network when searching.

Teladoc: New for 2015 is medical consultation through Teladoc. Medical consultations are available to employees who are enrolled in one of the Highmark BCBS medical plans. To learn more about Teladoc, go to www.teladoc.com/teladoc.

Voluntary Insurance Options: EPC makes available the following options through Colonial Life: Term Life Insurance, Accident Insurance, and Short-Term Disability Insurance.

7) Service Information. To provide the best and most convenient care and service to you, we are continuing our relationships with cds administrators and Highmark in 2015. We have also enlisted the services of Ameritas to provide the dental and vision plans. We have changed providers of Life, AD&D, and LTD to The Hartford. The Hartford provides the same level of benefits at a lower cost. Finally, we added Colonial Life to provide additional voluntary insurance products for our participants.

8) Employee Notification. All employers are required by the ACA to notify all their new employees about the existence of the Health Insurance Marketplace (i.e. ACA exchange) in their state, plus the employee's possible eligibility to purchase medical insurance and obtain subsidies there.

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EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - 2015 Benefit Plan Premium Rates

Idaho

Age Band	Coverage Tier	Region 1 40 - 44					Region 2 45 - 49					Region 3 50 - 54					Region 4 55 - 59					Region 5 60 - 64				
		Platinum	Gold	Silver	Gold HSA	Total HSA	Platinum	Gold	Silver	Gold HSA	Total HSA	Platinum	Gold	Silver	Gold HSA	Total HSA	Platinum	Gold	Silver	Gold HSA	Total HSA	Platinum	Gold	Silver	Gold HSA	Total HSA
Age Band	Employee	\$335.00	\$245.00	\$218.00	\$186.00	\$340.83	\$335.00	\$245.00	\$218.00	\$186.00	\$340.83	\$335.00	\$245.00	\$218.00	\$186.00	\$340.83	\$335.00	\$245.00	\$218.00	\$186.00	\$340.83	\$335.00	\$245.00	\$218.00	\$186.00	\$340.83
	Employee + Spouse	\$489.00	\$489.00	\$438.00	\$388.00	\$579.67	\$489.00	\$489.00	\$438.00	\$388.00	\$579.67	\$489.00	\$489.00	\$438.00	\$388.00	\$579.67	\$489.00	\$489.00	\$438.00	\$388.00	\$579.67	\$489.00	\$489.00	\$438.00	\$388.00	\$579.67
	Employee + Child(ren)	\$623.00	\$459.00	\$403.00	\$387.00	\$683.67	\$623.00	\$459.00	\$403.00	\$387.00	\$683.67	\$623.00	\$459.00	\$403.00	\$387.00	\$683.67	\$623.00	\$459.00	\$403.00	\$387.00	\$683.67	\$623.00	\$459.00	\$403.00	\$387.00	\$683.67
	Employee + Family	\$1,011.00	\$738.00	\$657.00	\$590.00	\$881.67	\$1,011.00	\$738.00	\$657.00	\$590.00	\$881.67	\$1,011.00	\$738.00	\$657.00	\$590.00	\$881.67	\$1,011.00	\$738.00	\$657.00	\$590.00	\$881.67	\$1,011.00	\$738.00	\$657.00	\$590.00	\$881.67
Age Band	Employee	\$305.00	\$387.00	\$329.00	\$291.00	\$438.83	\$305.00	\$387.00	\$329.00	\$291.00	\$438.83	\$305.00	\$387.00	\$329.00	\$291.00	\$438.83	\$305.00	\$387.00	\$329.00	\$291.00	\$438.83	\$305.00	\$387.00	\$329.00	\$291.00	\$438.83
	Employee + Spouse	\$1,009.00	\$735.00	\$656.00	\$583.00	\$874.67	\$1,009.00	\$735.00	\$656.00	\$583.00	\$874.67	\$1,009.00	\$735.00	\$656.00	\$583.00	\$874.67	\$1,009.00	\$735.00	\$656.00	\$583.00	\$874.67	\$1,009.00	\$735.00	\$656.00	\$583.00	\$874.67
	Employee + Child(ren)	\$930.00	\$687.00	\$605.00	\$540.00	\$841.67	\$930.00	\$687.00	\$605.00	\$540.00	\$841.67	\$930.00	\$687.00	\$605.00	\$540.00	\$841.67	\$930.00	\$687.00	\$605.00	\$540.00	\$841.67	\$930.00	\$687.00	\$605.00	\$540.00	\$841.67
	Employee + Family	\$1,518.00	\$1,103.00	\$987.00	\$883.00	\$1,174.67	\$1,518.00	\$1,103.00	\$987.00	\$883.00	\$1,174.67	\$1,518.00	\$1,103.00	\$987.00	\$883.00	\$1,174.67	\$1,518.00	\$1,103.00	\$987.00	\$883.00	\$1,174.67	\$1,518.00	\$1,103.00	\$987.00	\$883.00	\$1,174.67
Age Band	Employee	\$173.00	\$485.00	\$438.00	\$388.00	\$533.83	\$173.00	\$485.00	\$438.00	\$388.00	\$533.83	\$173.00	\$485.00	\$438.00	\$388.00	\$533.83	\$173.00	\$485.00	\$438.00	\$388.00	\$533.83	\$173.00	\$485.00	\$438.00	\$388.00	\$533.83
	Employee + Spouse	\$1,346.00	\$979.00	\$874.00	\$778.00	\$1,087.67	\$1,346.00	\$979.00	\$874.00	\$778.00	\$1,087.67	\$1,346.00	\$979.00	\$874.00	\$778.00	\$1,087.67	\$1,346.00	\$979.00	\$874.00	\$778.00	\$1,087.67	\$1,346.00	\$979.00	\$874.00	\$778.00	\$1,087.67
	Employee + Child(ren)	\$1,241.00	\$977.00	\$867.00	\$734.00	\$1,025.67	\$1,241.00	\$977.00	\$867.00	\$734.00	\$1,025.67	\$1,241.00	\$977.00	\$867.00	\$734.00	\$1,025.67	\$1,241.00	\$977.00	\$867.00	\$734.00	\$1,025.67	\$1,241.00	\$977.00	\$867.00	\$734.00	\$1,025.67
	Employee + Family	\$2,023.00	\$1,470.00	\$1,315.00	\$1,178.00	\$1,489.67	\$2,023.00	\$1,470.00	\$1,315.00	\$1,178.00	\$1,489.67	\$2,023.00	\$1,470.00	\$1,315.00	\$1,178.00	\$1,489.67	\$2,023.00	\$1,470.00	\$1,315.00	\$1,178.00	\$1,489.67	\$2,023.00	\$1,470.00	\$1,315.00	\$1,178.00	\$1,489.67
Medicare Rollback		\$538.00	\$392.00	\$382.00			\$538.00	\$392.00	\$382.00			\$538.00	\$392.00	\$382.00			\$538.00	\$392.00	\$382.00			\$538.00	\$392.00	\$382.00		
Age Band	Employee	\$423.00	\$308.00	\$273.00	\$244.00	\$389.83	\$423.00	\$308.00	\$273.00	\$244.00	\$389.83	\$423.00	\$308.00	\$273.00	\$244.00	\$389.83	\$423.00	\$308.00	\$273.00	\$244.00	\$389.83	\$423.00	\$308.00	\$273.00	\$244.00	\$389.83
	Employee + Spouse	\$842.00	\$611.00	\$547.00	\$488.00	\$779.67	\$842.00	\$611.00	\$547.00	\$488.00	\$779.67	\$842.00	\$611.00	\$547.00	\$488.00	\$779.67	\$842.00	\$611.00	\$547.00	\$488.00	\$779.67	\$842.00	\$611.00	\$547.00	\$488.00	\$779.67
	Employee + Child(ren)	\$777.00	\$574.00	\$505.00	\$455.00	\$750.67	\$777.00	\$574.00	\$505.00	\$455.00	\$750.67	\$777.00	\$574.00	\$505.00	\$455.00	\$750.67	\$777.00	\$574.00	\$505.00	\$455.00	\$750.67	\$777.00	\$574.00	\$505.00	\$455.00	\$750.67
	Employee + Family	\$1,265.00	\$921.00	\$821.00	\$738.00	\$1,029.67	\$1,265.00	\$921.00	\$821.00	\$738.00	\$1,029.67	\$1,265.00	\$921.00	\$821.00	\$738.00	\$1,029.67	\$1,265.00	\$921.00	\$821.00	\$738.00	\$1,029.67	\$1,265.00	\$921.00	\$821.00	\$738.00	\$1,029.67
Age Band	Employee	\$331.00	\$455.00	\$411.00	\$367.00	\$512.83	\$331.00	\$455.00	\$411.00	\$367.00	\$512.83	\$331.00	\$455.00	\$411.00	\$367.00	\$512.83	\$331.00	\$455.00	\$411.00	\$367.00	\$512.83	\$331.00	\$455.00	\$411.00	\$367.00	\$512.83
	Employee + Spouse	\$1,282.00	\$917.00	\$820.00	\$732.00	\$1,023.67	\$1,282.00	\$917.00	\$820.00	\$732.00	\$1,023.67	\$1,282.00	\$917.00	\$820.00	\$732.00	\$1,023.67	\$1,282.00	\$917.00	\$820.00	\$732.00	\$1,023.67	\$1,282.00	\$917.00	\$820.00	\$732.00	\$1,023.67
	Employee + Child(ren)	\$1,187.00	\$881.00	\$788.00	\$687.00	\$978.67	\$1,187.00	\$881.00	\$788.00	\$687.00	\$978.67	\$1,187.00	\$881.00	\$788.00	\$687.00	\$978.67	\$1,187.00	\$881.00	\$788.00	\$687.00	\$978.67	\$1,187.00	\$881.00	\$788.00	\$687.00	\$978.67
	Employee + Family	\$1,896.00	\$1,383.00	\$1,227.00	\$1,108.00	\$1,357.67	\$1,896.00	\$1,383.00	\$1,227.00	\$1,108.00	\$1,357.67	\$1,896.00	\$1,383.00	\$1,227.00	\$1,108.00	\$1,357.67	\$1,896.00	\$1,383.00	\$1,227.00	\$1,108.00	\$1,357.67	\$1,896.00	\$1,383.00	\$1,227.00	\$1,108.00	\$1,357.67
Age Band	Employee	\$423.00	\$308.00	\$273.00	\$244.00	\$389.83	\$423.00	\$308.00	\$273.00	\$244.00	\$389.83	\$423.00	\$308.00	\$273.00	\$244.00	\$389.83	\$423.00	\$308.00	\$273.00	\$244.00	\$389.83	\$423.00	\$308.00	\$273.00	\$244.00	\$389.83
	Employee + Spouse	\$842.00	\$611.00	\$547.00	\$488.00	\$779.67	\$842.00	\$611.00	\$547.00	\$488.00	\$779.67	\$842.00	\$611.00	\$547.00	\$488.00	\$779.67	\$842.00	\$611.00	\$547.00	\$488.00	\$779.67	\$842.00	\$611.00	\$547.00	\$488.00	\$779.67
	Employee + Child(ren)	\$777.00	\$574.00	\$505.00	\$455.00	\$750.67	\$777.00	\$574.00	\$505.00	\$455.00	\$750.67	\$777.00	\$574.00	\$505.00	\$455.00	\$750.67	\$777.00	\$574.00	\$505.00	\$455.00	\$750.67	\$777.00	\$574.00	\$505.00	\$455.00	\$750.67
	Employee + Family	\$1,265.00	\$921.00	\$821.00	\$738.00	\$1,029.67	\$1,265.00	\$921.00	\$821.00	\$738.00	\$1,029.67	\$1,265.00	\$921.00	\$821.00	\$738.00	\$1,029.67	\$1,265.00	\$921.00	\$821.00	\$738.00	\$1,029.67	\$1,265.00	\$921.00	\$821.00	\$738.00	\$1,029.67

EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - 2015 Dental Rates				
Provider - American				
Employee	Employee + Spouse	Employee + Child(ren)	Employee + Family	Provider - American
\$11.00	\$28.00	\$22.00	\$33.00	\$11.00
\$22.00	\$50.00	\$33.00	\$50.00	\$22.00
\$33.00	\$78.00	\$50.00	\$78.00	\$33.00
\$44.00	\$107.00	\$78.00	\$107.00	\$44.00

EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - 2015 Vision Rates				
Provider - American				
Employee	Employee + Spouse	Employee + Child(ren)	Employee + Family	Provider - American
\$8.44	\$16.88	\$16.88	\$25.32	\$8.44
\$16.88	\$33.76	\$33.76	\$50.64	\$16.88
\$25.32	\$50.64	\$50.64	\$75.96	\$25.32
\$33.76	\$67.52	\$67.52	\$101.28	\$33.76

EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - 2015 Life and AD&D and Long Term Disability				
Provider - The Hartford				
Life	AD&D	Long Term Disability	Life	AD&D
\$22 per \$1,000	\$3 per \$1,000	\$25 per \$100	\$22 per \$1,000	\$3 per \$1,000
\$22 per \$1,000	\$3 per \$1,000	\$25 per \$100	\$22 per \$1,000	\$3 per \$1,000
\$22 per \$1,000	\$3 per \$1,000	\$25 per \$100	\$22 per \$1,000	\$3 per \$1,000

Information for Inquiring Congregations



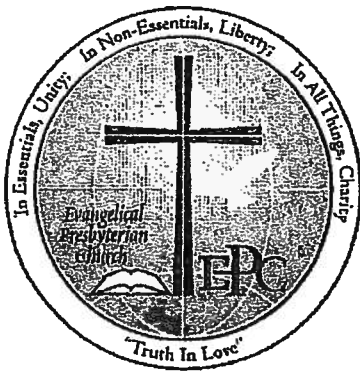
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The Office of the General Assembly
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Process for Inquiring Congregations

*To assist congregations considering joining the Evangelical Presbyterian Church**

The following outline is provided by the Office of the Stated Clerk of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. Its purpose is to assist congregations considering the EPC and to help regional EPC presbytery officials in receiving ministers and congregations. The EPC steadfastly

maintains a position of "response, not recruitment" toward churches in other denominations. While we may express our enthusiasm about your interest, it is not our desire to grow simply by luring congregations away from their denominational homes. However, if a congregation has concluded that it must seek re-affiliation, we are committed to assisting that congregation by becoming mutually acquainted as part of that re-affiliation process. Our desire is for each congregation to be in the place where they can be most fully faithful to their identity and calling under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Inquiry

The first step in considering the EPC is inquiry. You may know a lot or a little about the EPC. It's important to get to know people as well as information. You are welcome to contact a regional presbytery representative or Office of the General Assembly at the time you think appropriate. All inquiries are handled with the degree of confidentiality you request. You may find contact at www.epc.org. You may also contact the office of the Stated Clerk at 734-742-2020 ext. 6940 or epchurch@epc.org.

A wealth of informational material is available on the EPC web site at www.epc.org. Additionally, quality printed copies are available for purchase at cost. Orders may be entered at our web site at www.epc.org/resources/order-epc-materials/, phoned (734-742-2020 ext. 6954), or e-mailed (inventory@epc.org). Among the materials that have been found to be the most helpful are:

- EPC Informational Packet – contains "Who We Are," "A New Creation," "Questions Most Often Asked," "Essentials of Our Faith" and position papers on a variety of biblical and ethical issues. *(The document "Essentials of Our Faith" is part of the constitution of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and every minister, elder and deacon must affirm every part of it without exception.)*

* Out of a desire to be as helpful and true to experience as we can, we invite any feedback on this outline regarding its accuracy and clarity. Please contact jeff.jeremiah@epc.org.

- Informational DVD a "History of the EPC" covering the founding and first 25 years.
- The EPC version of the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms (traditional language version) may be downloaded at www.epc.org/about-the-epc/beliefs/westminster-confession/. *(The Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms are constitutional documents of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and must be subscribed to by all Ministers, Ruling Elders and Deacons. A Modern Language Version of the Confession and Catechisms is available in print from the Office of the General Assembly.)*
- "Book of Order" (including *Book of Government*, *Book of Discipline* and *Book of Worship*) may be downloaded at www.epc.org/resources/download-epc-documents/. *(The Book of Government is part of the constitution of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.)*
- A synopsis of EPC statements on Scripture may be downloaded at www.epc.org/resources/download-epc-documents/.

Meeting together

At the point you deem appropriate, we are glad to send presbytery or General Assembly representatives to meet with you, your session or congregation. We simply ask that a request be provided in writing if we are asked to meet with a session or congregation (e-mail is fine).

The process

In general, joining the EPC consists of two steps – 1) being dismissed from one's existing denomination and 2) being received by a presbytery of the EPC.

Dismissal

The process of being dismissed from one's current denomination is ultimately a matter between your church and that denomination's regional body and is shaped primarily by the polity provisions and practices of that regional body. Some denominations provide for dismissal in their *Book of Order* but do not prescribe the specific process (e.g. PCUSA). In those cases the regional body determines what the process and standards for dismissal will be. For example, though the Article 13 provision of the reunited PCUSA has expired, the process of dismissal it outlined is sometimes used for dismissing churches from that body.

It is worth noting that the EPC is in fraternal correspondence with the Presbyterian Church (USA) by virtue of our membership in the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC). This fraternal correspondence has often been helpful in facilitating communication between presbyteries. The EPC also has direct fraternal relations with a number of other Reformed bodies.

The EPC cannot direct or advise how to go about the dismissal process. We can relate to you the experience of others, especially those who have come to us in the last four years. It is critically important to do everything with integrity and without naiveté (i.e. "sly as serpents, innocent as doves").

We have found that a dismissing presbytery often urges the congregation to slow down its process. The additional time is often used to attempt to divide the congregation or identify a group opposed to dismissal. This can be used by the dismissing presbytery to designate a dissenting minority as the "continuing" or "true" church and thus deny dismissal.

Dismissal with property has often come at a monetary price. Those amounts have been reported publicly and have ranged from more than \$1.4 million to less than \$100,000 in the last few years.

Reception

The EPC *Book of Government* (5-4) provides for the reception of a church into the EPC:

The reception of a church from another body or from independency: When an established congregation desires to become a part of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, it shall petition the Presbytery in which it is located to be received. Such petition should be presented by an authorized delegation from the requesting congregation which indicates that the congregation and its governing body have duly concurred in the request, and have agreed to walk together as a church, based upon the faith and government of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, to be faithful to one another, to the Lordship of Christ, to the support of the whole Church, to be obedient to the order and doctrines of our holy religion, submitting themselves to the government and discipline of the Church, and promising to promote its purity and peace.

The petition shall include a list of the membership and a list of elected officers. Upon approval of the request, either the Presbytery or a duly appointed commission shall meet with the petitioning congregation. If the petitioning congregation does not have Elders, the receiving body shall proceed in the manner described for new congregations in G5-3E. However, if the petitioning congregation comes from a fellowship with similar form of government, the receiving body may declare the officers of that congregation to be duly installed Elders (and Deacons), or it may require them to be prepared for office according to G.12-3, and shall arrange for their ordination and installation. If the petitioning congregation is served by a Pastor(s) and if said Pastor(s) has been duly received by the Presbytery, the receiving body may declare the Pastor(s) duly installed. If there is no Pastor(s), a search committee may be elected by the congregation. In any case, the Pastor(s) serving that congregation must be received by the Presbytery according to the Book of Order for pastors coming from other denominations.

Reception of a church and a minister by an EPC presbytery may be considered using two analogies. The first analogy is of dating and engagement – there is a process of mutually getting to one another and building trust that begins prior to and at later points parallels the formal process.

The second analogy is that of parallel rails on a railway. The process of receiving a congregation parallels the process of receiving that congregation's minister. These processes must be done distinctly, yet usually simultaneously.

Discerning congregational commitment – Sometimes it is easier to know what we are against rather than what we are for. For a congregation which has come to the point of believing it must leave its present denomination, a number of upsetting and disconcerting events must have taken place. However, to be faithful to its calling, a church must also know what it supports and what it is seeking in partnership, support and accountability from like-minded churches. The EPC is not a place to come simply to be left alone – independent church status exists for such congregations.

If a church has grown accustomed to placing distance between itself and its denomination, then there is need for changing expectations to become a full and productive participant of the EPC. This can take time, but the intentions and mutual expectations must be discerned and judged by the inquiring church and the presbytery. Active involvement includes participating in meetings of the presbytery and General Assembly and investing financially in the work of the presbytery and General Assembly. The financial commitment to the EPC is not obligatory, but we believe that being churches in biblical connection means being committed to one another in multiple respects. The EPC *Benevolence Asking* brochure provides more information on the denominational aspect of giving. Each presbytery has its respective expectations regarding financial partnership.

Receiving a congregation – considerations

Educational opportunities – An effective session will lead the congregation in reaching the same conclusion it has regarding re-affiliation. This can be done in a variety of ways and EPC representatives are available to meet your congregation to present the EPC and answer questions about us.

Interviewing/examining officers – One component of receiving a congregation with a Presbyterian or other Reformed background is determining that the active ruling elders (those currently serving on session) can hold to the EPC's officer vows with understanding and integrity. (The vows for elders and deacons can be found in *Book of Government* 14-1-E.)

An examination/interview of active ruling elders by presbytery representatives will attempt to discern that those elders have a genuine, credible profession of faith in Christ and hold to the doctrinal standards of the church. No officer may take exception to any of the articles in "Essentials of Our Faith."

The EPC's third ordination vow – "Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Catechisms of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?" – represents a significant change for an officer coming from a denomination with multiple confessions or virtually no operational confessional standards. Upon a careful reading of the Confession, a ruling elder typically expresses some exceptions about specific teachings of that document. What is critical is that the officer's exceptions or questions about the Confession and Catechisms be based on Scripture. It is the responsibility of the presbytery to determine the acceptability of those exceptions. Subject to the approval of those exceptions, an officer in the EPC "receives and adopts" the confessional standards of the church, not just agrees to be "guided by" them.

The examination/interview process is best described as a "conversation." It is conducted cordially and with an appropriate expectation of content knowledge. An elder is not expected to possess the same extent of knowledge that a minister should, yet an elder must be able to carry out the responsibilities of office according to the standards of Scripture.

It is only necessary for presbytery representatives to interview/examine and approve active elders, not deacons or inactive elders. However, many churches have found it an excellent educational opportunity to ask that all officers – active and inactive, elders and deacons – participate in this process.

Receiving a minister ("Teaching Elder" is also commonly term used in the EPC)

The EPC *Book of Government* 13-5 and -6 speaks to the transfer of a minister:

13-5 The examination of an ordained Minister coming from another denomination: A Minister seeking to become a member of a Presbytery in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church from another denomination from within the Reformed family shall present credentials of education required by those seeking ordination. Further, such person shall be examined on views and beliefs in the same fashion as one transferring from one Presbytery to another within the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. A person coming from any other tradition shall be examined in the same manner as a candidate for ordination. Each person seeking admission shall always be examined on personal Christian experience and progress in spiritual growth.

Presbytery shall not ordinarily receive a Minister seeking to transfer from another denomination while either discipline, inquiry, or charges are pending against the Minister. Presbytery may, however, by three-fourths vote and following careful review of the case, declare pending charges insufficient for refusal of membership.

§13-6 The candidate or transferring Teaching Elder shall provide a written statement of any exceptions to the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms of this Church, and the Presbytery must act to

allow or disallow the exceptions. The Presbytery shall not allow any exception to "Essentials of Our Faith." If the Teaching Elder develops exceptions to the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms after ordination, he or she must report those exceptions to the Presbytery and the Presbytery must act to allow or disallow these exceptions.

The EPC recognizes the ordination credentials of churches within the Presbyterian and Reformed tradition. A minister potentially seeking transfer is wise to meet informally with the Ministerial committee or other representatives of the EPC presbytery in order to gauge the theological parameters of the presbytery (see above comments on ordination vows). Each presbytery determines what exceptions to the confessional standards it is willing to approve.

The formal process of reception consists of 1) a request to be received; 2) a ministerial committee oral examination on views and 3) a presbytery oral examination on views, including the approval of any stated exceptions.

Common issues addressed

Experience indicates that the following can be opportunity for diverging expectations between inquiring churches and receiving presbyteries or are frequent questions that are asked.

- Women in office – The EPC adopted its "Position Paper on the Ordination of Women" in 1984. Rather than mandate a position, this paper makes clear that the court of original jurisdiction has the freedom to interpret and apply Scripture. For elders and deacons, the court of original jurisdiction is the session of the church. Therefore, a local church may choose to allow or not allow women to be local church officers. With regard to ministers, the court of original jurisdiction is the presbytery. Therefore, it is up to each presbytery to determine whether it believes the Scriptures limit the office of minister to males only. If this matter is material to an inquiring church, it should ask presbytery representatives to give some indication of the presbytery's position and practice. The EPC is currently voting on constitutional amendments that will ensure freedom of practice for all positions on women teaching elders in our presbyteries.
- Calling of ministers – ministers are called as part of the classic three-part understanding of Presbyterians – congregation, minister and presbytery. EPC presbyteries take seriously their responsibility to guard the office of teaching elder in terms of character and theological integrity. This is why a congregation must consult with the Ministerial committee of their presbytery in order to gauge the suitability of candidates to the presbytery as well as the congregation.
- Confessional subscription – The EPC holds to one set of confessional standards – the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechism. It allows each court of original jurisdiction to determine what exceptions are allowed to

those standards. Often, after years of fighting to preserve the most basic biblical doctrines, a minister and/or congregation can lose touch with the theological heritage of Presbyterians. While the EPC is not a "strict subscription" (i.e. requiring subscription to every article) denomination, it does take its Reformed heritage and identity seriously. Appendix B outlines the history and the position of the EPC on this matter is included at the end of this presentation.

- Presbytery alignment – The EPC currently has ¹²~~nine~~ geographically large presbyteries. Since 2007, the EPC has grown from 185 churches to over 300 churches. This growth raises the possibility of creating additional presbyteries. The General Assembly (which meets annually) has the exclusive authority to realign presbytery boundaries and create new presbyteries. Therefore, boundary changes cannot take place immediately. However, a group of churches in a geographic region could certainly express a desire to form a new presbytery. It is important to keep EPC GA and presbytery leadership informed about this possibility should you pursue it.
- The current Per Member Asking (PMA) for the EPC General Assembly is \$23 as of July 1, 2010. An EPC church's giving goal for the year is calculated by multiplying the total church membership number as of December 31 of the previous year by the current PMA dollar amount. Contributions to Per Member Asking are sent directly to the office of the General Assembly.
- EPC Presbyteries also have a separate per member asking.
- Church support of EPC Benevolence Askings and Missionary Support is separate from Per Member Asking. In the folder back pocket are brochures explaining current EPC Benevolence Askings and Missionary Support opportunities.
- Medical coverage – The EPC offers a denominational group insurance plan which includes medical, term life insurance and long term disability coverage.
 - The medical benefits plan is a conventional PPO program administered by Highmark Blue Cross/Blue Shield. The provider network is the nationwide Blue Cross/Blue Shield network, one of the most – if not *the* most – expansive provider networks in the country. Pastors of member churches (including assistants and associates) are required to participate in the denominational group insurance plan. This mandatory participation requirement does not apply to the following: Ministers who labor in institutional agencies which provide their own group insurance plan, Ministers afforded group insurance coverage as part of retirement benefits from a previous employer, Ministers without call, Ministers who labor less than 20 hours per week in a place of ministry and Ministers whose spouse have group health insurance through their employer, if the Presbytery Ministerial Relations

Committee approves that the coverage through the spouse is acceptable. All ordained ministers are eligible to participate in the plan; eligible church staff members are also welcome and encouraged to participate. The medical plan is also available to eligible retired ministers and staff. Three plan options are available, one with a lower deductible and out of pocket maximum and one with higher deductible and out of pocket maximum, but with the same covered services. In addition, a High Deductible Health Plan with a Health Savings Account is available as an option. The medical plan includes a prescription coverage plan that operates at point of sale and offers additional savings through the mail. Premiums are rated according to family size, plan choice, region and Medicare status.

- Term life insurance in the amount of \$50,000, accidental death and dismemberment coverage up to \$50,000 and a long-term disability plan make up the remaining components in the denominational group insurance program.
- In addition the EPC offers a voluntary Wellness Program which provides an eligible individual with a \$50 award redeemable at over 300 merchants upon completion of a health risk assessment.
- Detailed information about these plans can be found at www.epc.org/benefits
- Retirement plan – The EPC offers a 403(b) (9) defined contribution retirement plan to both ordained and non-ordained individuals. Similar to a 401(k), each plan participant owns the assets in his/her account, including any employer and/or employee contributions. The EPC requires each church to contribute a minimum of 10% of an ordained minister's base salary plus housing allowance to a retirement plan. A 403(b) (9) plan allows retired ministers to withdraw funds under the housing allowance tax exclusion, subject to applicable tax laws. Participants have the option of investing in approximately 30 different investment funds managed by Fidelity investments. In addition a self-directed brokerage account option is available to participants. Such an account allows access to funds not offered through the Plan.
- "Can I lose my pension?" – There has never been, to our knowledge, the loss of any earned pension benefit due to leaving one's denomination for the EPC. It is true that someone who is not fully vested in their current denominational program will not continue to vest past the point of leaving. One's vesting or accrual of points or credit within a defined benefit plan are frozen at the point of leaving. This would be true of leaving one's denomination under any circumstances. However, benefits earned up to the point of leaving constitute a legal obligation and, again, to our knowledge, no one has ever been deprived of such. Call your current pension administrator for further details. You may

learn more about the EPC's defined contribution plan at www.epc.org/benefits.

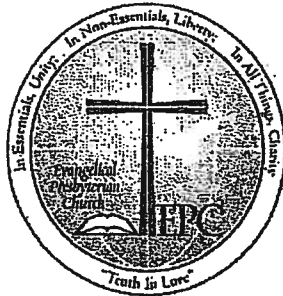
Steps toward dismissal and reception

The following represents a basic chronological sequence for the process of a congregation and/or minister being received into the EPC.

<u>Dismissing regional body (presbytery)</u>	<u>Minister</u>	<u>Congregation</u>	<u>Receiving EPC presbytery</u>
		Session arrives at sense of compatibility with EPC	EPC gives some indication of sense of compatibility with church. This may include informal examination/interview of elders. This may include informal meeting of minister and EPC ministerial committee.
		Session notifies dismissing presbytery of intention to make recommendation.	
Dismissing presbytery gives indication of process to be followed and outcome to be expected, possibly through presbytery-appointed commission.			
		Session calls congregational meeting with recommendation 1) to be dismissed from and 2) to seek to be received by (would include request to be dismissed with property). Should include reading of	

<u>Dismissing regional body (presbytery)</u>	<u>Minister</u>	<u>Congregation</u>	<u>Receiving EPC presbytery</u>
		wording of petition to be received. (Petition & other forms can be obtained from EPC presbytery representatives.)	
	Minister requests reception by transfer of credentials by EPC presbytery.	Church representatives present petition with membership list and list of elected officers to EPC presbytery.	
			Ministerial Committee examines minister on views (include review of exceptions to confessional standards) & makes recommendation to presbytery.
			EPC presbytery votes to accept petition & appoints commission to examine/interview elders. EPC presbytery examines minister on views, including making approval of written exceptions to confessional standards. EPC Presbytery receives minister & approves call subject to reception of church.
			The commission examines/interviews elders. It may act upon the report and/or recommendation of previously-conducted informal examination/interview of elders (see above).

<u>Dismissing regional body (presbytery)</u>	<u>Minister</u>	<u>Congregation</u>	<u>Receiving EPC presbytery</u>
			Commission declares church received (pending dismissal if not yet granted) & minister duly installed.
Declares church dismissed (pending reception, if not yet granted).			

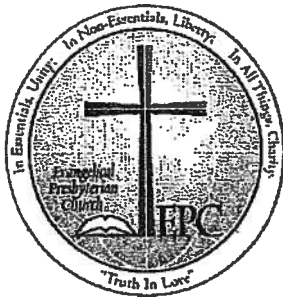


THE RECEIVING PROCESS - PETITION TO BE RECEIVED

When an established congregation desires to become a part of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, it shall petition the presbytery in which it is located to be received, according to the procedures set forth in *The Book of Government*, 5-4. This petition should be presented by an authorized delegation from the requesting congregation stating that this congregation and its governing body, have, by the signing of this petition, agreed in reliance upon God to walk together as a church, based upon the faith and government of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, to be faithful to one another, to the Lordship of Christ, to the support of the whole Church, to be obedient to the order and doctrines of our holy religion, submitting themselves to the government and discipline of the Church, and promising to promote its purity and peace.

This petition shall include a list of the membership and a list of elected officers. Upon approval of the request, the presbytery or a duly appointed commission shall meet with the petitioning congregation. If the petitioning congregation does not have elders, the receiving body shall proceed in the manner described for new congregations (G.5-3E). However, if the petitioning congregation comes from a fellowship with a similar form of government, the receiving body may declare the officers of that congregation to be duly installed elders (and deacons), or it may require them to be prepared for office according to G. 12-3, and shall arrange for their ordination and installation.

If the petitioning congregation is served by a pastor(s), and if said pastor(s) has been duly received by the presbytery, the receiving body may declare the pastor(s) duly installed. If there is not a pastor(s), a search committee may be elected by the congregation. In any case, the pastor(s) serving the congregation must be received by the presbytery according to *The Book of Government* for pastors coming from other denominations.



**THE RECEIVING PROCESS -
PETITION TO BE RECEIVED**

PETITION TO BE RECEIVED

FROM:

Name of Congregation

Address

City, State, and Zip

TO:

Presbytery: _____

DATES:

Request submitted

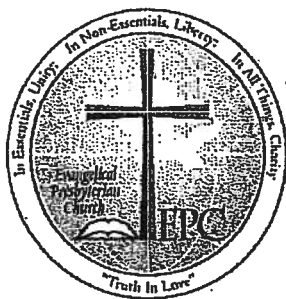
*Signed – Congregational Moderator
or Clerk Pro-Tem*

Presbytery action

Signed - Stated Clerk

Receiving service

Signed - Commission Chairman



**THE RECEIVING PROCESS -
PETITION TO BE RECEIVED**

NOTICE OF RESOLUTION

LET IT BE KNOWN THAT THE SESSION OF THE _____
CHURCH OF _____ BY _____ VOTE HAS CALLED
A CONGREGATIONAL MEETING FOR THE PURPOSE OF VOTING ON MEMBERSHIP
IN THE EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. THIS ACTION WAS TAKEN AT A
DULY CALLED MEETING ON _____,
Month, Date, Year.

LET IT BE KNOWN THAT THE CONGREGATION OF THE _____
CHURCH OF _____ SEEKS ADMISSION TO THE
EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND PROMISES TO OBEY THE
CONSTITUTION OF THE EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. THIS ACTION
WAS TAKEN AT A DULY CALLED MEETING ON _____,
Month, Date, Year.

THIS CHURCH HAS _____ ACTIVE MEMBERS. THE VOTE TO SEEK ADMISSION
WAS _____.

SIGNATURES:

Moderator of Session

Clerk of Session

Date signed

Date signed



THE RECEIVING PROCESS - PETITION TO BE RECEIVED

RECEIVING CHURCH DATA (CHURCH/MINISTER/STAFF)

GENERAL INFORMATION

Name of EPC Presbytery to which application is being made: _____

Name of current denomination: _____

Seeking: ☐ Dismissal ☐ Renouncing/Disaffiliating

Date of congregational meeting for vote to seek dismissal or renounce/disaffiliate from another denomination and apply for membership to the EPC: _____

- Total number of members voting: _____
- Number of members voting to enter the EPC: _____

CHURCH INFORMATION

Name of Church: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP Code: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Website: _____

Worship Address (if different from Mailing Address): _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP Code: _____

If from another denomination:

☐ Dismissed from: _____ Date: _____

☐ Renounced/Disaffiliated from: _____ Date: _____

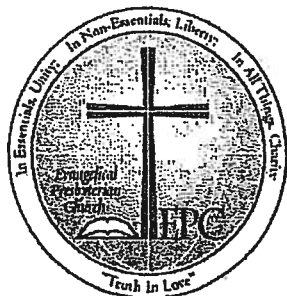
☐ Received by EPC Presbytery of the _____ Date: _____

Federal Employee Identification Number (EIN): _____ - _____

Number of Current Membership: _____ Average Worship Attendance: _____

Number of Session Membership: _____ Number of Mission Committee members: _____

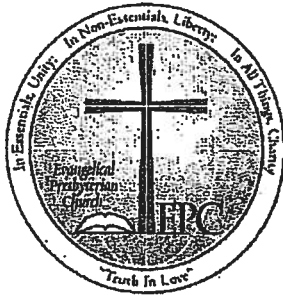
Number of full-time staff: _____ Number of part-time staff: _____



THE RECEIVING PROCESS - PETITION TO BE RECEIVED

CHURCH STAFF/VOLUNTEER CONTACTS

Business Administrator	<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff	<input type="checkbox"/> None
Name: _____ E-mail: _____			
Children's Ministries	<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff	<input type="checkbox"/> None
Name: _____ E-mail: _____			
College Ministries	<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff	<input type="checkbox"/> None
Name: _____ E-mail: _____			
Communications/Publications	<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff	<input type="checkbox"/> None
Name: _____ E-mail: _____			
Men's Ministries	<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff	<input type="checkbox"/> None
Name: _____ E-mail: _____			
Missions	<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff	<input type="checkbox"/> None
Name: _____ E-mail: _____			
Secretary	<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff	<input type="checkbox"/> None
Name: _____ E-mail: _____			
Small Groups	<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff	<input type="checkbox"/> None
Name: _____ E-mail: _____			
Treasurer	<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff	<input type="checkbox"/> None
Name: _____ E-mail: _____			
Women's Ministries	<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff	<input type="checkbox"/> None
Name: _____ E-mail: _____			
Youth Ministries	<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff	<input type="checkbox"/> None
Name: _____ E-mail: _____			



**THE RECEIVING PROCESS -
PETITION TO BE RECEIVED**

OFFICERS ELECTED BY THE CONGREGATION

MINISTERS

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

DEACONS

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

RULING ELDERS

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____

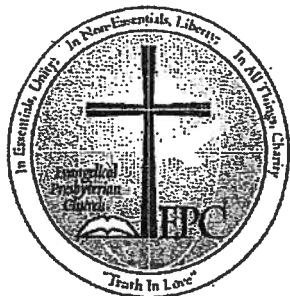
Signature Page

I affirm the "Essentials of Our Faith" of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church without reservation and acknowledge that the Westminster Confession and Catechisms is the sole confessional standard for officers in Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

Use additional page if necessary:

Print Name	Minister(s) Signature	Date

Print Name	Ruling Elders Signature	Date



**THE RECEIVING PROCESS -
PETITION TO BE RECEIVED**

CHARTER MEMBER ROSTER

	<i>Name</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>City, State, Zip</i>
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			
16			

Living Waters Presbyterian Church



*It is time to seek the Lord, that He
may rain righteousness upon you.*
Hosea 10:12

Discernment Task Force Report to Session

April 12, 2012



Living Waters Presbyterian Church

Rev. Jim Keegan, pastor
P.O. Box 218 ♦ 821 East Main ♦ Wendell, Idaho 83355
(208) 536-6270 e-mail livingwaterspc@gwestoffice.net
Fax (208) 536-1643

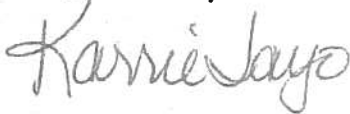
April 12, 2012

We, the Discernment Task Force for Living Waters Presbyterian Church, Wendell, Idaho, have spent the last few months researching our affiliation with PCUSA and trying to discern if this denomination is the best theological fit for our congregation.

Given the recent changes in the Book of Order and history of PCUSA, we find we are not in agreement with many of the decisions that have been made in the past. We find that our perception of the direction that the PCUSA denomination appears to be heading in is no longer consistent with the beliefs held by our congregation.

We desire to remain a congregation in the reformed tradition and have examined other reformed denominations. We believe that the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC) will connect us with like minded believers. Therefore, we unanimously recommend requesting dismissal from Kendall Presbytery and the PCUSA, and affiliating with Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC) denomination upon our dismissal from Kendall Presbytery and the PCUSA.


Karrie Jayo



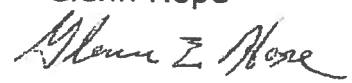
Scott Brown



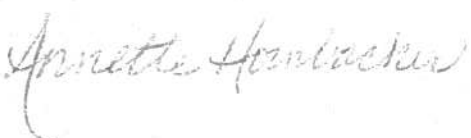
David Hilt



Glenn Hope



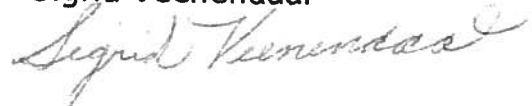
Annette Hornbacher



Dan Kuka



Sigrid Veenendaal



Living Waters Presbyterian Church
Discernment Task Force Report to Session
April 12, 2012

The Living Waters' congregation, at a congregational meeting in November 2011, requested Session to appoint a task force to examine recent actions of the PCUSA and our continued compatibility with the denomination. This Task Force of Scott Brown, David Hilt, Glenn Hope, Annette Hornbacher, Karrie Jayo, Dan Kuka, and Sigrid Veenendaal was appointed and commissioned by Session, for the purpose of making recommendations to Session and to our church congregation regarding our present denominational affiliation with PCUSA and whether there might be a more appropriate denominational "home."

The Task Force took the charge from the congregation very seriously and began to research some of the recent events in the PCUSA. We as a Task Force, are very traditional in reformed theological beliefs and felt we needed to ascertain what the theological position of the whole congregation is. One of our Kendall Presbytery Committee on Ministry representatives suggested we find the "heart of the congregation." We prepared a survey for the congregation to discern what the congregation believes. This was distributed at the end of a worship service on February 19, 2012, with opportunity for the congregation to return surveys over the next two weeks with any comments they wanted to make. Average attendance for worship service in 2012 is 128. This includes regular attendees as well as members. Surveys were mailed to the families that are regular attendees at worship services, but not in attendance the day the surveys were distributed. Response to the survey was very positive and 111 surveys were returned.

The results of the survey confirmed that our congregation strongly believes that Christ is the only way to salvation and that God's Word is true and His truth is relevant for us today. This may be consistent with reformed theology, but we do not see the same commitment for the Presbyterian Church (USA) denomination.

We at Living Waters have been blessed by being a part of a basically unified Presbytery and have not directly felt the effects of denominational politics, as some congregations have. But, our research has found that the PCUSA has become increasingly accepting of a wide range of beliefs about Jesus and the authority of Scripture. There is no longer agreement within the church and its leadership about who Jesus is and what he did. The Book of Confessions has not changed, so we appear, on paper, to have an orthodox faith, but we found a wide range of beliefs about Jesus held and affirmed within the PCUSA, some of which are not biblical. There is increasing emphasis on embracing theological diversity, while failing to clearly define and enforce common essential beliefs. We have reached the point where denominational help is outweighed by denominational hindrance, and it appears for us, it is time to disengage from PCUSA and to seek out more edifying connections. It is our desire to still love our brothers and sisters that remain in the denomination, challenge one another, fellowship together, worship together, and serve together.

Reasons for Leaving

In 2001, The Theological Task Force on Peace, Unity, and Purity (PUP) were directed to lead PCUSA in spiritual discernment of our Christian identity and reach a consensus on four major issues dividing our denomination: Christology, biblical authority and interpretation, ordination standards, and power. The PUP Task Force did not resolve any of the tensions; rather, it urged us to live together with them.

There are examples that bear witness to a significant and persistent shift in views on Christology, soteriology (the doctrine of salvation), Scriptural authority and a growth of

universalism (the belief that all people are or will be saved) and syncretism (the melding of many faiths into one.)

In 1981, our highest church court, the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission, upheld the ordination of Mansfield Kaseman. When Kaseman was asked, "Was Jesus God?" he responded, "No, God is God." Later he explained, "Saying Jesus is one with God is a better way of saying it ... but I, too, am one with God."

In 1993, a conference entitled 'Reimagining God' was held, largely funded and planned by PCUSA personnel at denominational expense. Conference leaders denied the existence of a transcendent God (i.e., who exists outside of our material world) and ridiculed the crucifixion of Jesus: "I don't think we need folks hanging on crosses and blood dripping and weird stuff." Worship leaders offered prayers to the goddess Sophia and replaced communion with a honey and milk ceremony.

The 2001 General Assembly in Louisville, Kentucky, spent a great deal of time considering controversial proposals regarding interfaith relations and worship. Finally, one commissioner offered a motion that the assembly declare "the singular, saving lordship of Jesus Christ." It was defeated, being characterized by its opponents as "disrespectful to other religions." One speaker said: "Religions are like a basket of fruit. Apples and oranges are different, but they are all fruit. Religions are different varieties of the same thing, so they're all equal."¹

But the most publicly prominent and recurrent example of the drift away from Scriptural authority has been in the area of sexual ethics and ordination standards.

In 1996, explicit language was added to section G-6.0106b in the *Book of Order* to clarify this matter. "Those who are called to office in the church are to lead a life in obedience to Scripture and in conformity to the historic confessional standards of the church. Among these standards is the requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman, or chastity in singleness. Persons refusing to repent of any self-acknowledged practice which the confessions call sin shall not be ordained and/or installed as deacons, elders, or ministers of the Word and Sacrament. (G-6.0106b)."²

This amendment was ratified by a majority of the Presbyteries and incorporated into the Book of Order. However, it came under immediate attack and several efforts were made, unsuccessfully, to have the requirement for fidelity or chastity removed. The Peace, Unity, and Purity Task Force of 2001, made a compromise to the ordination standard by recommending that G-6 be retained in the constitution but that the GA could issue an Authoritative Interpretation (AI) that would give presbyteries the liberty to allow individual candidates to declare a scruple. The functional result was something informally referred to as local option. This in effect, establishes the rule, but then allows local body to decide if they want to abide by the rule, and there are no disciplinary consequences. Thus, the PCUSA denomination no longer holds to either its own Constitution, or to a traditional Reformed understanding of the Faith once given to the Saints.

¹ Fowler, Carmen. "The PCUSA 2012: How we got 'Here'." *The Layman Online*, February 16, 2012.

< http://www.layman.org/carmensblog/12-02-16/The_PCUSA_2012_How_we_got_here.aspx >

² *Ibid.*

Instead, it is a climate in which everyone “does what is right in his own eyes” without regard to what God’s Word says.

The issue of integrity has further declined to the point of the General Assembly of 2010 changing the language for ordination removing the requirement for fidelity or chastity. This having been ratified by the majority of Presbyteries, and becoming a part of the PCUSA constitution, is now opening the door for overtures to the 2012 General Assembly to redefine marriage as between two persons, rather than a man and a woman. This seems to be without regard to Scripture. 2 Timothy 4:3-4. “For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.”

The Presbyterian Board of Pensions on March 3, 2012, announced same gender domestic partners of members enrolled for coverage in the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (USA) will be eligible for spousal and child benefits, beginning January 1, 2013. They voted to provide benefits coverage to same-gender partners on the same basis as it does for opposite-gender married partners. The General Assembly, in urging coverage of same-gender partners, authorized the Board of Pensions to increase employer dues by up to 1 percent to compensate for any rise in costs. The Board of Directors of the Board of Pension did not design a “relief of conscience” mechanism, which would have freed congregations opposed to same-gender partner benefits from having to contribute to costs tied to that coverage.

In 1 Corinthians 5:9-11, Paul tells the Corinthians not to associate with fellow Christians who persist in a variety of sins, including sexual immorality, drunkenness, and robbery. If the PCUSA accepts as ordained leaders those who intend to commit what Scripture identifies as sexual immorality, then it seems those of us who uphold biblical values may need to separate ourselves from the denomination that ordains those leaders.

Where Do We Go

The Task Force believes that it is time to align ourselves with a denomination that shares our commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and our mission to make him known throughout this world. The Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC) is the best fit.

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church defines the essential beliefs of the Christian faith and Living Waters is fully aligned with these essential beliefs. Living Waters and the EPC share a common conviction about the person and work of Jesus Christ. These beliefs are identified in the EPC *Essentials of Our Faith* and all elders and pastors are required to affirm these beliefs.

The EPC has also demonstrated that it is committed to preserving its biblical faith and preventing the creeping theological pluralism that has plagued the PCUSA. Its examinations of candidates for ministry are rigorous, assuring adherence to the Westminster Confession of Faith.³ Furthermore, it has demonstrated a willingness to call to account pastors who are not

³ In addition to thorough examinations upon ordination, each year minister members of presbytery are required to file an annual report with their presbytery. On that report is a question asking if you have had any changes in your Positions on Scripture or the Westminster Confession.

faithful to the scriptures in their teaching.⁴ The EPC practices what it preaches, so to speak. By contrast, the PCUSA is so divided theologically that its examination of candidates lacks rigor and rarely are there consequences for teaching things that are in opposition to the Bible and our Confessions.

What we believe and teach about Jesus is of utmost importance. Christ alone defines the identity and mission of the church. Clarity and conviction about Jesus, as well as a commitment to call people to faith in Jesus, are essential for a denomination to be a biblical expression of the Church. Without faith in Jesus as Son of God and Savior of the world, the church is not the Church. We look forward to continuing in our bold proclamation of God's love and grace expressed through Jesus as we align ourselves with likeminded churches in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

The Living Waters Presbyterian Church is in a situation where what we believe does not always align with actions and perceptions of the PCUSA. While LWPC and the PCUSA differ in essential beliefs, LWPC has always embraced those with whom we differ and we will continue to do so. We are commanded in Scripture to love God with all of our heart, soul and mind and our neighbor as ourselves. Our concern is that sometimes we may be viewed as being "guilty by association", and this presents an inconsistent and conflicted witness. LWPC beliefs are much more consistent with EPC in their essential tenets.

There are five key areas in which the PCUSA position or practice conflicts with what we at Living Waters believe to be consistent with scriptural truth. This has led us to conclude that the PCUSA is no longer the most effective path to further Living Waters' mission as it continues to trend away from our mission and purpose.

1. We believe that Jesus alone is the Lord and Savior of the world
2. We believe in the scriptures to be the church's first and final authority in faith and life.
3. We believe in the sacred values and purpose God has for each human life
4. We believe that marriage is an institution ordained of God between one man and one woman
5. We believe ordination standards reflect obedience to scripture and should be observed and not be altered.

⁴ The EPC has dismissed ordained ministers whose views no longer support EPC's core beliefs, and who in good conscience, cannot affirm the "Essentials of our Faith" and the Westminster Confession of Faith. Dismissal, after a time of counsel, is carried out with love, respect, and grace.

LWPC believes that Jesus alone is the Lord and Savior of the world. *"No one comes to the Father except through me."* John 14:6. We believe that Jesus Christ was born of a virgin, fully man and fully God, that Jesus did not sin, and that salvation is the free gift of God, offered only through the grace extended to us through Jesus Christ, not through our human efforts. We acknowledge that all have sinned, and without salvation through Christ, are lost and condemned.

Conflicted Witness	Consistent Witness
<p>PCUSA – Divergent views of Jesus Christ An increasing portion of the leadership and membership of the PCUSA does not believe that <i>"There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved."</i> Acts 4:12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An alarming trend within the denomination is seen in the results of the Presbyterian Panel of 2009 -2010. In answer to the statement: "Only followers of Jesus Christ can be saved", the following represents the breakdown of those who disagree/strongly: members 36%; elders 31%; pastors 45% and specialized clergy 60%. Overall, more than 40% of those surveyed disagree with the statement.⁵ 	<p>EPC- Salvation in Christ Alone <i>"Being estranged from God and condemned by our sinfulness, our salvation is wholly dependent upon the work of God's free grace. God credits His righteousness to those who put their faith in Christ alone for their salvation, thereby justifies them to His sight. Only such as are born of the Holy Spirit and receive Jesus Christ become children of God and heirs of eternal life."</i> (EPC Essentials of Our Faith).⁶</p>

⁵ *Religious and Demographic Profile of Presbyterians 2008*. The Profile reveals results of a survey of 3500 participants in the 2009-2010 Presbyterian Panel. See especially page 6 of the full report at www.pcusa.org/research.

⁶ All quotes and references in this paper and additional information can be found in the body of information in: *Evangelical Presbyterian Church – Beliefs, Position Papers and Pastoral Letters* at www.epc.org/about-the-epc/beliefs/, which include...

- a. Essentials of Our Faith found in the EPC Book of Order
- b. Westminster Confessions Larger and Shorter Catechism
- c. Position Papers
 - i. Abortion
 - ii. Divorce and Remarriage
 - iii. Holy Spirit
 - iv. Homosexuality
 - v. Human Life
 - vi. Sanctity of Marriage
 - vii. Suffering, Death and Dying

2. LWPC believes in the scriptures to be the church's first and final authority in faith and life. *"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness"* 2 Timothy 3:16. We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the inspired Word of God and are true, relevant for us today, and that Scripture is the final authority in all decisions, choices, and actions.

Conflicted Witness	Consistent Witness
PCUSA – Harmony over Truth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – In the 2006 the Theological Task Force on Peace, Unity and Purity (PUP) after 5 years of study concluded that “we who disagree on some matters can learn much from one another as we mine together the scriptures in love”⁷ 	EPC – Consistency Of Scriptures Authority and Interpretation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ “The Church finds her visible, yet imperfect, expression in local congregations where the Word of God is preached in its purity and the sacraments are administered in their integrity; where scriptural discipline is practiced and where loving fellowship is maintained.” (EPC Essentials of our Faith #5)

3. LWPC believes in the sacred value and purpose God has for each human life. *“Your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.”* Psalm 139: 16. We believe that life is sacred from conception to death.

Conflicted Witness	Consistent Witness
PCUSA – Pro Choice Advocacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Since 1970 every statement and resolution coming to the PCUSA General Assembly has supported free and open access to abortion without legal restriction.⁸ □ In 1994 and again in 2001 overtures which expressed opposition to partial birth abortion, were rejected. □ In 2010, the PCUSA was one of 16 signatories to a letter sent to the White House in support of health care reform that does not create new restrictions to abortion. 	EPC – Pro Life Advocacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ “The Evangelical Presbyterian Church is convinced that the Bible strongly affirms the dignity and value of every human life... Scripture teaches that we are not merely to avoid involvement in injustice. God's people are called upon to speak for the oppressed and defenseless. The Scripture passages cited above are evidence that God accords human value and dignity to the unborn child.” (EPC Position Paper on Abortion)

⁷PCUSA Peace, Unity and Purity Report. Page 18. See also Presbyterian Understanding and Use of Holy Scripture Page 3. Position adopted by the 123rd General Assembly (1983) of the PCUSA. The Office of Theology and Worship, Presbyterian Church (USA). For more information see www.pcusa.org/peaceunitypurity/.

⁸ Some of these are: 1972, “Freedom of Personal Choice in Problem Pregnancies”; 1976, “Problem Pregnancies: Toward a Responsible Decision”; 1979, “A Religious Statement on Abortion: A Call To Commitment”; 1983, “The Covenant of Life and the Caring Community and Covenant and Creation: Theological Reflections on Contraception and Abortion.”

4. LWPC believes that marriage is an institution ordained of God between one man and one woman. *"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh."* Gen 2:24. We believe that God created marriage to be the sacred union between a man and a woman.

Conflicted Witness	Consistent Witness
<p>PCUSA – Tolerates Advocacy for unbiblical marriage</p> <p>Within the PCUSA there is a contradiction between the written policy which is aligned with LWPC and the practice which supports same sex ceremonies.</p> <p>Policy</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The constitution of the PCUSA states that "marriage is a civil contract between a woman and a man. For Christians marriage is a covenant through which a man and woman are called to live out together before God their lives of discipleship" W-4.9001</p> <p>Practice</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> In 2008 the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission found that "It is not improper for ministers of the Word and Sacrament to perform same sex ceremonies."</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> In 2008 a same sex couple signed a California marriage license, received a standing ovation and were declared legally wed at a General Assembly dinner.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> In January, 2010, the General Assembly Special Committee report to Study Issues of Civil Union and Christian Marriage provides no clarity to same gender couples who may wish to live in a covenanted and life-long partnership. It concludes that "our unity in Christ supersedes any other claim or argument clamoring for our attention."⁹</p>	<p>EPC – Consistent and unified policy and practice for biblical marriage</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> "Marriage is a covenant between one man and one woman and between the participants and God. (Malachi 2:14-16). In this position paper we seek to think about marriage under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ and God's written Word, the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16). We believe that God has revealed to all people in all cultures at all times a sense of morality in the ordering of human relationships. Therefore, there is a moral imperative, which governs all human relationships, including marriage." (EPC Position Paper on the Sanctity of Marriage)</p>

⁹In the Draft of Preliminary Report of the Special Committee to Study Issues of Civil Union and Christian Marriage to the 219th General Assembly (2010) Presbyterian Church (USA), you will find a very good summary of most of the issues regarding the history of the PCUSA on this subject. However, the report is unable to resolve – it defers to diversity and no clear definite statement in support of biblical prohibitions to same-gender sexual relations.

5. We believe ordination standards reflect obedience to scripture and should be observed and not be altered. Set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. 1 Timothy 4:12b. We believe that God has given authority to both men and women to be Bible teachers and church leaders, that those who are called to office in the church are to lead a life in obedience to Scripture, and that persons refusing to repent of any self-acknowledged sinful practice should not be ordained and/or installed as officers.

Conflicted Witness	Consistent Witness
<p>PCUSA – Permits Unrepentant Leadership</p> <p>The written policy of the PCUSA mirrors LWPC’s position while the practice in one area is towards abandonment of the standard of fidelity in marriage or chastity in singleness.</p> <p>Policy (prior to July 2011)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> └ Those who are called to office in the church are to lead a life in obedience to scripture and in conformity to the historic standards of the church. Among these standards is the requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman or chastity in singleness. Persons refusing to repent of any self-acknowledged practice which the confessions call sin shall not be ordained and/or installed as deacons, elders or ministers of the Word and Sacrament. (G-6.0106b)¹⁰ <p>Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ In November, 2009, The Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly handed down a ruling that upheld the right of an openly homosexual man, to declare a departure from ordinations standards as a “proper exercise of conscience.” □ In February 20, 2010, the John Knox Presbytery in Wisconsin voted (81-25), to ordain a candidate with a departure of the “fidelity-chastity” standard – which requires that ordained officers be faithful in heterosexual marriage or chaste in singleness. The candidate acknowledges being in a long-term same-sex relationship and contends that excluding homosexuals in committed relationships is not Biblical or faithful. □ In November 2009 the San Francisco Presbytery voted to ordain the first openly homosexual minister in the denomination with a departure from the “fidelity chastity” standard to a position of advocacy for overturning that same standard. 	<p>EPC–Prohibits Unrepentant Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Candidates shall provide a written statement of any exceptions to the Westminster confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms of this Church, and the Presbytery must act to allow or disallow the exceptions. The Presbytery shall not allow any exception to “Essentials of Our Faith.” Unrepentant homosexual behavior is incompatible with the ordination vows for the offices of Deacon, Ruling Elder and Teaching Elder. (EPC Position Paper on Homosexuality) □ “All Scripture is self-attesting and being Truth, requires our unreserved submission in all areas of life. The infallible Word of God, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is a complete and unified witness to God's redemptive acts culminating in the incarnation of the Living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible, uniquely and fully inspired by the Holy Spirit, is the supreme and final authority on all matters on which it speaks.” (EPC Essentials of Our Faith)

¹⁰ PCUSA Book of Order 2009-2011, see Form of Government.

Presenting a Consistent Witness

Because of these conflicting views of scriptural interpretation, the PCUSA has created a **conflicted witness to the world** and, by extension, to the local churches of the PCUSA. Churches like LWPC are continually called to explain that they are not like other parts of the denomination that embrace non-orthodox positions. This defensive posture reduces the impact of LWPC's ministries and mission. The Task Force believes it is time to align ourselves with a denomination and family of churches which will allow LWPC to provide a **consistent witness** to His Word and Truth, locally and internationally. We believe the EPC is that denomination.

APPENDIX

EPC Essentials of Our Faith

All Scripture is self-attesting and being Truth, requires our unreserved submission in all areas of life. The infallible Word of God, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is a complete and unified witness to God's redemptive acts culminating in the incarnation of the Living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible, uniquely and fully inspired by the Holy Spirit, is the supreme and final authority on all matters on which it speaks. On this sure foundation we affirm these additional Essentials of our faith:

1. We believe in one God, the sovereign Creator and Sustainer of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. To Him be all honor, glory, and praise forever!
2. Jesus Christ, the living Word, became flesh through His miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit and His virgin birth. He who is true God became true man united in one Person forever. He died on the cross a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. On the third day He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where, at the right hand of the Majesty on High. He now is our High Priest and Mediator.
3. The Holy Spirit has come to glorify Christ and to apply the saving work of Christ to our hearts. He convicts us of sin and draws us to the Savior. Indwelling our hearts, He gives new life to us, empowers and imparts gifts to us for service. He instructs and guides us into all truth, and seals us for the day of redemption.
4. Being estranged from God and condemned by our sinfulness, our salvation is wholly dependent upon the work of God's free grace. God credits His righteousness to those who put their faith in Christ alone for their salvation, thereby justifies them in His sight. Only such as are born of the Holy Spirit and receive Jesus Christ become children of God and heirs of eternal life.
5. The true Church is composed of all persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit are united together in the body of Christ. The Church finds her visible, yet imperfect, expression in local congregations where the Word of God is preached in its purity and the sacraments are administered in their integrity; where scriptural discipline is practiced, and where loving fellowship is maintained. For her perfecting, she awaits the return of her Lord.
6. Jesus Christ will come again to the earth-personally, visibly, and bodily-to judge the living and the dead, and to consummate history and the eternal plan of God. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." (Rev. 22:20).
7. The Lord Jesus Christ commands all believers to proclaim the Gospel throughout the world and to make disciples of all nations. Obedience to the Great Commission requires total commitment to "Him who loved us and gave Himself for us." He calls us to a life of self-denying love and service. "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." (Eph. 2:10).

For Further Study

Christology: Our Belief about Jesus Christ

Christology is our belief about Jesus Christ – who he is and what he did. Our belief about Jesus is the most important and defining characteristic of the Church.

At Living Waters, we embrace a biblical view of Jesus Christ that has been affirmed by the Church throughout the ages. We believe, as it says in the Apostles Creed, “in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; he will come to judge the living and the dead.” We believe that “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12) It’s all about Jesus.

The PCUSA has become increasingly accepting of a wide range of beliefs about Jesus. It appears that the church is being reformed by society’s standards, rather than being “salt and light” to a world that needs a Savior.

Evidence of a Creeping Tolerance of Divergent Beliefs about Christ:

- According to a recent survey by the Research Services of the PCUSA less than half of PCUSA members, elders, and pastors believe that Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation.¹
- └ In June 2008 the General Assembly encouraged common worship between members of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. This exhortation only makes sense if the uniqueness of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ is replaced by a generic understanding of God. The scriptures teach that true worship of God is through Jesus Christ (Jn 14:6).²
- └ Due in large part to the divergent beliefs within the PCUSA, the denomination has refused to define the essential beliefs of our faith. The Peace, Unity, and Purity Report of 2006 shied away from defining these essential beliefs in favor of embracing the diversity of belief within the denomination. **The PCUSA only has a governance structure holding it together, rather than common belief and mission.**³
- The church is not exerting discipline of those who embrace and advocate for non-biblical beliefs about Christ, failing to follow our governmental process for preserving an orthodox faith within the PCUSA.

¹ *Religious and Demographic Profile of Presbyterians 2008*. The profile reveals results of a survey of 3500 participants in the 2009-2010 Presbyterian Panel. Full report at www.pcusa.org/research

² c 2008 218th General Assembly full report at www.pcusa.org

³ d Theological Task Force of Peace, Unity, and Purity, sec. 3 to the 217th General Assembly 2006

Regarding nFOG 2011

The PCUSA has sought to embody the love of God to all people in its doctrine and practices of inclusiveness and diversity to the extent that it appears it has weakened and even abandoned some of the distinctiveness of the Reformed faith. This is not a balanced view of God, but has minimized the reality that God is a just God, and a jealous God.

This is not a problem unique to the PCUSA in the 21st century. Paul on multiple occasions penned warnings to "guard yourselves and God's people." as "Even some men from your own group will rise up and distort the truth in order to draw a following (Acts 20:28, 30). In his first letter to Timothy, chapter 6, Paul warns "³ Some people may contradict our teaching, but these are the wholesome teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. These teachings promote a godly life. ⁴ Anyone who teaches something different is arrogant and lacks understanding. Such a person has an unhealthy desire to quibble over the meaning of words. This stirs up arguments ending in jealousy, division, slander, and evil suspicions." And continuing on, "... ²⁰ guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, ²¹ which some have professed and in so doing have departed from the faith."

Even as we look forward to the return of Christ to claim believers, we have warnings and admonition given to remain strong and show mercy to those whose faith is wavering, "but with great caution, hating the sins that contaminate their lives" (Jude 23). While we can love people we do not agree with, and seek to bring them to the knowledge of God's saving grace, we cannot embrace the sin that without forgiveness and repentance separates us from God, and so we must defend the faith that God has entrusted once for all time to his holy people.

If we at Living Waters are to continue to abide by the word of God, our church must heed the many warnings of Scripture to guard ourselves against that which puts itself against the knowledge of God as found in His Holy Word, and apply it with regard to our denominational affiliation. The violations of Christian faith as found in God's word and departure from the traditions of the Reformed faith continue to accumulate in the PCUSA with no sign of correction or reversal.

The new form of government (nFOG), adopted in July, 2011, has demonstrated a shift in the theological basis of Christianity and understanding of the Church and her mission. It has shifted from

A covenantal theology (God covenants with people, God is faithful despite unfaithfulness of people, God sent Jesus Christ to meet the needs of the covenant that we could not meet, that Jesus died for our sins, rose and is coming again, that repentance is necessary, forgiveness is a gift of grace, and grateful obedience is our response) to **liberation theology** (Jesus came to set the oppressed free, give sight to the blind, heal the sick [usually with this list "seek and save the lost" is included but is excluded from the nFOG]) (F-1.01 as opposed to G-3.0101a and b, G-3.0102) There is a huge difference between F-1.0205 and G-3.1002. The nFOG has the subtle shift from salvation for believers in Jesus Christ to "all." "All redeemed--All transformed." (F-1.01)

It understands the unified Church as "others (with a) deep life of worship, prayer, fellowship and service" instead of "demonstrating by the love of its members for one another and by the quality of its common life in the new reality in Christ; sharing in worship, fellowship and nurture, practicing a deepened life of prayer and

service under the guidance of the Holy Spirit." There are many "others" of non-Christian affiliation who have a deep life of worship, prayer, fellowship and service. Though I appreciate their service in the world, they are not part of the unity "in Christ."⁴

PCUSA has not clearly defined Essential Tenets of faith, and thus, has left the door wide open for varying interpretations of what the Church believes. The new Form of Government, adopted in 2011, moves even further from defining essential beliefs. The new Book of Order now includes a new section on "The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity." It is in these foundations, that some of the distinctiveness of the Reformed Tradition is lost.

While much of the language of the new Book of Order draws from the previous Book of Order, there are subtle, yet significant differences in what is embraced as the church. The Five Solas of the Reformed Faith: 1-Sola scriptura ("by Scripture alone"), 2-Sola fide ("by faith alone"), 3-Sola gratia ("by grace alone").4-Solus Christus or Solo Christo ("Christ alone" or "through Christ alone"), 5 Soli Deo gloria ("glory to God alone") are no longer a foundation. Rather, in the effort to provide diversity, a member no longer needs to hold to the reformed tradition, or even be considered as a requirement for governance in the church.	
Current <i>Book of Order</i> 2011-2013 (nFOG)	Previous <i>Book of Order</i> 2009-2011
<p>F-1.0403 Unity in Diversity "As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:27-29). The unity of believers in Christ is reflected in the rich diversity of the Church's membership. In Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God unites persons through baptism regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sex, disability, geography, or theological conviction. There is therefore no place in the life of the Church for discrimination against any person. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall guarantee full participation and representation in its worship, governance, and emerging life to all persons or groups within its membership. No member shall be denied participation or representation for any reason other than those stated in this Constitution. (emphasis added)</p>	<p>G-4.0400 4. Diversity and Inclusiveness G-4.0401 Variety of Forms The church in its witness to the uniqueness of the Christian faith is called to mission and must be responsive to diversity in both the church and the world. Thus the fellowship of Christians as it gathers for worship and orders its corporate life will display a rich variety of form, practice, language, program, nurture, and service to suit culture and need. G-4.0402 Openness to Others Our unity in Christ enables and requires the church to be open to all persons and to the varieties of talents and gifts of God's people, including those who are in the communities of the arts and sciences. G-4.0403 Full Participation The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall give full expression to the rich diversity within its membership and shall provide means which will assure a greater inclusiveness leading to wholeness in its emerging life. Persons of all racial ethnic groups, different ages, both sexes, various disabilities, diverse geographical areas, different theological positions consistent with the Reformed tradition, as well as different marital conditions (married, single, widowed, or divorced) shall be guaranteed full participation and access to representation in the decision making of the church. (G-9.0104)</p>

⁴ <http://www.presbycolalition.org/Friz-Langer1.pdf>

<p>The important role of Christ as part of the God head made incarnate, and our redeemer through his sacrificial death and resurrection is not made clear. It is also not clear that it is Jesus who came to seek and save the lost, nor that our assurance over sin and death is through Christ. The establishment and extension of Christ's Kingdom is the basis for evangelism and is no longer included in the Call of the Church.</p>	
<p>F-1.0202 Christ Calls and Equips the Church Christ calls the Church into being, giving it all that is necessary for its mission in the world, for its sanctification, and for its service to God. Christ is present with the Church in both Spirit and Word. Christ alone rules, calls, teaches, and uses the Church as he wills.</p>	<p>G-1.0100b Christ Calls the Church Into Being Christ calls the Church into being, giving it all that is necessary for its mission to the world, for its building up, and for its service to God. Christ is present with the Church in both Spirit and Word. It belongs to Christ alone to rule, to teach, to call, and to use the Church as he wills, exercising his authority by the ministry of women and men for the establishment and extension of his Kingdom.</p>
<p>F-1.0205 Christ Is the Foundation of the Church In Christ all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through Christ God reconciles all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of the cross (Col. 1:19–20). In Christ's name, therefore, the Church is sent out to bear witness to the good news of reconciliation with God, with others, and with all creation. In Christ the Church receives its truth and appeal, its holiness, and its unity.</p>	<p>G-3.0102 God in Christ God was incarnate in Jesus Christ, who announced good news to the poor, proclaimed release for prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, let the broken victims go free, and proclaimed the year of the Lord's favor. Jesus came to seek and to save the lost; in his life and death for others God's redeeming love for all people was made visible; and in the resurrection of Jesus Christ there is the assurance of God's victory over sin and death and the promise of God's continuing presence in the world.</p>

These are just a few of the areas that seem to be a departure from the Christian Reformed Tradition that has been our heritage and important part of our foundation. This small sample demonstrates that "tolerance" is a higher priority than "truth" in the PCUSA. In Paul's discourse on love in 1 Corinthians 13, he states "Love does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth." (1 Corinthians 13:6) At Living Waters, we desire to welcome all to hear the truth as we have it in the Scriptures.