**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians (ECO)**

1. **Where did ECO come from?**

In January, 2011, a group of evangelical pastors in the Presbyterian Church (USA) issued a “white paper” that outlined their differences with the denomination, and some possible ways that evangelicals might respond. One of the possible ways forward that was outlined in the paper was the creation of a new denomination that would be evangelical in theology, lean in structure, and outwardly focused in mission. In January 2012, this new denomination was born at a gathering in Orlando, Florida, with over 2000 participants representing almost 700 churches.

1. **How large is ECO?**

At the moment, there are about 45 churches that are actively moving into ECO, including several of the largest churches in the Presbyterian Church (USA). It is expected that this number will grow as many other congregations across the nation enter into or complete discernment processes about their relationship with the PC(USA).

1. **Does ECO support abortion rights?**

No. ECO clearly states that all human life is sacred, from conception until natural death. The ECO medical benefits plan also does not pay for elective abortions.

1. **What is ECO’s position on sexuality?**

ECO is clear that God calls all people either to fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman, or chastity in singleness.

1. **Does ECO allow women to be pastors, elders, and deacons?**

Yes. ECO actively celebrates the ministry gifts of both men and women in all ministries of the church.

1. **How do we know that ECO will not follow in the footsteps of the PC(USA) and become another liberal denomination?**

Every ordained leader in ECO must agree to a list of “essential tenets” that state the core theological beliefs of the church. These tenets form the foundation of all of ECO’s theology and practice.

1. **Will ECO own our church’s property?**

No. In ECO, every congregation retains full ownership of its property and finances.

1. **Does ECO charge a per-capita?**

No. Of course, every denomination needs money to finance its basic operations, but ECO is committed to minimizing structure to maximize mission. ECO requires that each congregation contribute 1% of its annual unrestricted income to support the structure and ministry of the denomination. In our case this would be approximately $4000, compared to an $11,000 per capita apportionment in the PC(USA).

1. **Does ECO have a medical plan for our church staff?**

Yes. The plan is comparable to the PC(USA) benefits plan.

1. **Does ECO have a retirement plan for our staff?**

Yes and no. ECO requires each church to the equivalent of 10% of each pastor’s effective salary into a retirement savings plan of the church’s choice. While ECO does have a retirement savings plan available, churches can use any fund that they feel will best suit their pastor’s needs.

1. **How will our presbytery function with churches spread all over the country?**

At the moment, we don’t know. We do know that we will be in a presbytery of like-minded churches that are committed to encouraging and supporting one another in ministry. Due to the wonders of modern technology, we may end up using video-conferencing to meet until there are enough churches to form local presbyteries within driving distance.

1. **Where can I learn more about ECO’s polity and theology?**

You can download copies of the ECO “Book of Order” and core theological documents at <http://www.fellowship-pres.org/documents/>. From the same page, you can find complete news and updates about the new denomination.

If you don’t have internet access, please call the church office and we will be happy to provide you with printed copies.

You can also go to <http://updates.dunellenpres.org> and subscribe to receive updates throughout our entire dismissal process.