

December 30, 2015

To: Our Church Family

From: Your Session

You are invited to a short informational meeting on January 10, 2016 at 10:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary to bring you up to date on our recommendation to change our Denominational Affiliation.

During these troubling times, our most important priority is to hold our Church Family together so that we can continue to worship in full accordance with the Holy Bible as we have always done. We cannot and will not change our core Christian beliefs and values. These core beliefs and values are the very things which have made us the Church Family that we are.

You are aware that, for the past year and a half, your Session has been struggling with issues related to the appropriateness of our maintaining a relationship with the PC USA in the face of the denomination's clear, public, and continuing pattern of turning away from traditional biblical values. At the heart of our concern has been the growing failure of the PC USA to defend our Constitutional Standards regarding the authority of Scripture. This has resulted in our denomination ordaining new pastors who do not affirm that they believe

Jesus is the Son of God; that he was born of a virgin, that he died a real, physical death on the cross, and that he lived again in a real physical resurrection.

Nor do they require affirmation of John 14:6.

Jesus told him, "I am the Way – yes, and the Truth and the Life. No one can get to the Father except by means of Me.

In addition, we are very concerned by the words of the Rev. Al Gephardt (our Presbytery's acknowledged progressive Christianity leader) who spoke to us on progressive Christianity a few weeks ago. He stated that he does not believe the Bible in its entirety. Rather, he chooses what he determines is truth versus hearsay. He further stated that he does not believe that God was speaking of Jesus when he was preparing his people for the arrival of the Messiah. He believes that Jesus was just an ordinary human being like

the rest of us, although a very special human being who, at times, did great things with God's help.

In 40 years of existence, we at FHPC have never varied from the biblical standards upon which we were founded and by which our life together has been guided. We continue to believe that the Bible is the sole inspired, perfect, sufficient, and authoritative word of God and the only source for Christian doctrine.

After much prayer, discernment and discussion, your Session has come to the sad conclusion that the PC USA has left us to follow a path that diverges widely from what we believe. As a result, we have voted to recommend to you, the members of this Church, that – together – we formally request dismissal from the PC USA.

Please see “Reasons for Dismissal” on the attachment.)

We have also been searching for a denomination within the Presbyterian Church that would most closely match our beliefs and values. We were surprised and excited to find a denomination that is a perfect fit for our Church in every way, and we recommend that FHPC affiliate itself with ECO (A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians).

(Please see “Reasons to Affiliate with ECO” on the attachment.)

We urge you to carefully and prayerfully consider all of the reasons stated on the attachment, and to pray for God's guidance in making your decision on how we must proceed.

Note: The January 10 meeting is for sharing information, and will not be open for questions. If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact an Elder or Pastor Bill.

In God's Name,

Session