

RECENT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The following is a summary of FAQs received at Town Hall Meetings since May. Also, these FAQs have been updated to reflect current information as a result of progressing through the Gracious Dismissal Process. For a complete listing of FAQs, please visit our Denomination webpage at www.cpcdanville.org. The dates, subheadings and numerical references noted below correspond to the master FAQs posted on our website.

Your questions are important to us. If you have additional questions please e-mail questions@cpcdanville.org. We will respond to you and continue to build a thorough listing of FAQs. (Throughout these FAQs, the terms “we”, “us” and “our” refers to Community Presbyterian Church (CPC), its pastoral staff, Session, Members, ministries, schools and its counseling center.)

Gracious Dismissal

8/30/2010

10. What is the financial cost of leaving the PCUSA?

The San Francisco Gracious Dismissal Policy identifies two actions departing churches are expected, but not required, to take to help mitigate the impact on the SF Presbytery and allow them to adjust to the churches departing.

1. Commit to pay a declining per capita contribution over a 5-year span. This means 100% of the current per capita in the year the church leaves, 80% the first year after departure, 60% the second year, 40% the third year, 20% the fourth year and nothing in the fifth year. Since CPC is already “committed” to the per capita in the current year, the incremental financial impact would be the amounts paid in year two through five. .

*a. In August 2010, CPC’s Special Committee of the Congregation (SCC) and the SF Presbytery Engagement Team (PET) agreed on the **Terms of Dismissal** to a one-time payment of \$108,640, instead of the declining per capita contribution spread over a 5 - year span.*

2. The second voluntary commitment is to continue on a similar declining scale, to contribute to the mission budget of the Presbytery. The request permits the departing church to directly contribute to specific ministries in the same manner as CPC does today. Currently CPC supports these ministries not because it is required to, but because we consider these ministries to be worthy of our support. This would continue to be the case post departure, so this commitment would not result in a net increase in CPC’s mission expenditure.

Financial Issues

8/30/2010

1. What is the actual financial cost of leaving? Please provide a side-by-side analysis of the costs we will be paying PCUSA and EPC over five years.

The Terms of Dismissal agreed to between the CPC’s Special Committee of the Congregation (SCC) and the SF Presbytery Engagement Team (PET), settled on a one- time payment of \$108,640.

The net cost of leaving the PCUSA and affiliating with the EPC is \$15,000 over 5 years. This is calculated by taking three numbers into consideration:

- If we were to stay in the PCUSA the 5-year cost is \$318,640.
- If we leave the PCUSA the lump sum agreed to payment is \$108,640.
- The EPC 5 year cost is \$225,000.

Therefore, the \$15,000 net cost of leaving is the difference between the \$318, 640 and the combined \$108,640 + \$225,000 = \$333, 640. In the sixth year and beyond CPC will pay approximately \$18,500 less per year.

Process of Change - Voting Process

5-13-10

6. Where does CPC now stand with those in favor of joining the EPC? Are there members who are opposed to leaving PCUSA? Until the vote is formally taken we will not know if any people are opposed to leaving or how many. To date CPC leadership has not conducted any surveys or straw polls on how people will vote. Based upon general feedback it appears that the overwhelming preponderance of members support **dismissal and affiliation with the EPC**. Further, in the fall 2009 survey, 78% of the respondents rated their attitudes as neutral or negative with regards to the PCUSA. A few members seem to feel that by seeking dismissal from the PCUSA we risk becoming exclusive and limiting, to the extent of not welcoming those whose views differ from CPC's. CPC's position about our core beliefs remains the same whether we are with the PCUSA or the EPC. CPC has and will continue to welcome and offer the love of Christ to those with different views to be a part of our congregation.

Pensions and Pastoral Compensation

5-18-10

1. Will there be any impact on pastor's retirement benefits? No. The pastor's retirement benefits accrued to date are fully protected and managed separately. The EPC has its own retirement plan, which our pastors will join. The Session will evaluate the impact of the change and, if needed, make available options that will maintain our pastors contributions at a level equal to or better than the current PCUSA plan.

EPC Beliefs and Theology

5-13-10

16. Does EPC allow divorced and remarried persons to hold any position of authority? Yes. Divorced and remarried persons can hold positions of authority as ordained ministers, Elders and Deacons.

5-13-10

17. Under what circumstances is divorce & remarriage accepted by the EPC for the ordained as well as church members? The EPC believes marital unfaithfulness for which there is no repentance and is beyond remedy, are circumstances when divorce should be considered. This standard is based on The Westminster Confession which states unfaithfulness can be physical or spiritual. Although EPC's position paper quotes Matthew 5:31-32 and 19:3-9 "marital unfaithfulness" as the sole grounds for divorce and remarriage, the EPC believes unfaithfulness applies to all sexual sin (and not just adultery), including ongoing physical abuse and attempted murder. The EPC's position paper (page 7) further notes, "...divorce and remarriage, serious though they are, are not unforgivable sins, but, as with all other transgressions, are covered by the blood of Christ."

5-17-10

18. a. How do the EPC requirements for those seeking Divorce and Remarriage compare to PCUSA and CPC?

EPC's position on divorce and remarriage is very similar to that of CPC. When considering divorce or remarriage, the EPC recommends Christian guidance and counseling for accountability to biblical standards and continued attempts to reconcile towards healing of relationships. Considering 2nd marriages fail at a 60% rate, the EPC seeks to protect church members as well as ordained leadership by guiding them through thorough counseling towards Godly decisions and lives that reflect the holiness of Christ. CPC affirms EPC's position paper on Divorce and Remarriage and we currently offer or have offered programs, classes and seminars consistent with the EPC. Our Position Statement [Witness for Biblical Morality](#) outlines CPC's beliefs as do the transcribed sermons of Sermons On Sexual Intimacy which is available online at <http://cpcdanville.org/pdf/sexsermons.pdf> Although the PCUSA follows the same Westminster Confessions of Faith on this topic, it does not have a policy for accountability to biblical standards for ministers, Elders, Deacons or church membership.

b. Will CPC have to change our process for considering Divorced and Remarried men and women as ordained church officers? No, CPC will not change. The EPC concurs divorced and remarried persons in accord with biblical principles (physical and spiritual infidelity) can serve as church officers. The EPC defers to local Church Session to make these decisions by embracing a decentralized form of government vesting in the local church broad authority and autonomy to manage its affairs in the way that is consistent with God's leading for the individual church. CPC will continue our criteria and standards for ordained leadership. We will continue to employ our long-standing process of a nominating committee, comprised of diverse representation from the ministries and body of CPC, to discern those called to leadership positions. [Click here](#) to view a letter from Cathy Burkholder, CPC Associate Pastor, responding to this question.

Women in Leadership

5/13/10

37. What scripture verses support women as ordained pastors, Elders and Deacons? The best answer to this question is the accumulation of passages that represent the role of women in the New Testament. In the formation of the church at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out on women and men alike, predicted long before the coming of Christ (Joel 2:28, Acts 2:18). Women as well as men exercise prophetic and priestly functions (Acts 2:17-18, I Corinthians 11:4-5, I Peter 2:9-10). Further, the Spirit bestows gifts on all members of the New Community sovereignly, without giving anyone preferential treatment based on gender (Acts 2:1-21, I Corinthians 12:7-12). Every believer is to offer his or her gifts for the benefit of the body of Christ (Romans 12:48, I Peter 4:10-22). To prevent believers from using their spiritual gifts is to quench the work of the Spirit.

8-8-10

48. Can CPC ordained women Teaching and Ruling Elders be received by the EPC? Yes. All current Teaching and Ruling Elders (men AND women) are examined by the EPC in order to transfer to the denomination. EPC resources are given to help prepare for examination. At this time some of EPC Presbyteries require women to complete an additional step of including an essay statement about their call to ministry. The Presbytery of the West practices quality of process and does not require this additional essay statement from women.

8/8/10

51. Explain how local churches can ordain women pastors yet the EPC does not favor ordained women?

The EPC does not take a position on ordaining women as Teaching Elders; Ordination of Pastors is overseen by the presbytery and ordination of Ruling and Teaching Elders and of Deacons is conducted by the local church. Within the EPC there are six (6) of the nine (9) presbyteries, which represent churches affirming women as Teaching Elders - 66% of presbyteries. The decision to accept ordained women as Teaching Elders (pastors) lies with the local church where the local church has the liberty to call a woman as a pastoral candidate. The affiliated Presbytery examines and approves the candidate for ordination. The EPC's steadfast requirement is "unity" in the "Essentials of Our Faith."

September 2, 2010