

FREMONT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Dismissal Agreement
Frequently Asked Questions

(rev. 10/17/12)



1. Why does Fremont have to pay any money to the Sacramento Presbytery?

Fremont's participation in the Presbytery has been an important part of our responsibility as Presbyterians. The Presbytery is designed (among other things) to be involved in local mission efforts, starting new churches and providing support for pastors through its staff and ministries. Fremont's gift to the Presbytery can be seen as a reflection of our commitment to the Presbytery's ongoing work and to cover the expenses related to Fremont's dismissal. The gift is not related to the value of the property nor was it determined in that way.

2. The agreement identifies the option for a cash payment of \$50,000 a year for 10 years or a lump-sum payment of \$325,000 in addition to providing space for a new Presbyterian church (NPC). Does Fremont pay any cash in order to provide space for the NPC?

No. The provision of space to the NPC does not involve any cash. It is a "gift-in-kind" that is valued at \$500,000 for the purposes of the agreement, but doesn't involve any cash payments from Fremont.

3. Does the cash payment amount get paid to the Presbytery of Sacramento or to the NPC?

The cash gift is a payment to the Presbytery. The NPC will be supported by their own contributions and by the Presbytery, but not by Fremont.

4. Will Fremont opt for the cash payment of \$50,000 a year for 10 years or for the lump sum payment of \$325,000?

That is a decision that is ultimately up to the Fremont Session. All things considered, the lump sum payment is an attractive option.

5. When will the Dismissal Agreement be finalized?

Assuming the Fremont congregation votes to accept the terms of the Agreement, the Presbytery of Sacramento votes on November 10, 2012 to do the same. The Agreement is final 47 days after that – on December 28, 2012.

5a. Where and when is the Presbytery meeting on November 10th? Can I attend?

The Presbytery of Sacramento is holding a special called meeting of the presbytery to deal with the issues of Fremont's dismissal and the establishment of a new church development. The meeting will be held at Carmichael Presbyterian Church (5645 Marconi Avenue, Carmichael) at 10:00 am. The meeting is open and any member of Fremont can attend, although only commissioners may vote.

6. How will Fremont pay the \$325,000? Will there be a special campaign to raise the money to pay the cash settlement?

That is a decision that is up to the Session. They will discuss that over the next few months. The amount can be added to the current building loan if decided, or it could be raised in a special campaign.

7. Can someone make a designated donation to help pay for the cash settlement?

Yes. Donations will be received toward the cash settlement. Please note "Dismissal Agreement" on the check or envelope.

8. How many people need to attend the congregational meeting on October 28, 2012 in order for it to be "official?"

A quorum of members (75, per our bylaws) is required for the meeting to be official.

9. What percentage of votes is required for the Dismissal Terms to be approved?

The approval requirement is a simple majority (50% plus one).

10. Will the Presbytery approve the Agreement?

All the members of the Mediation Team involved in the mediation process (from Fremont, from Presbytery and those who wish to remain in the PCUSA) have a strong sense that the Dismissal Agreement is fair, equitable and faithful. The Fremont Session has voted unanimously to recommend approval and the Presbytery Committee on Ministry has voted unanimously to support it. We are all hopeful that the congregation and the Presbytery will do the same.

11. I would like to participate in the voting, but cannot attend on October 28th. Can I vote by proxy?

Fremont's bylaws and the Book of Order allow only active members who are present at the meeting to cast a vote. Proxies are not allowed.

12. Why isn't Dan seeking to be dismissed to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC)?

First of all, Dan fully supports Fremont's decision to seek dismissal to the EPC. The reason he is not seeking dismissal to the EPC as well is because his beliefs make him ineligible for enrollment as a pastor in and for that denomination. The EPC position is that the Bible teaches that people repent and believe in Jesus Christ because God causes them to do so by choosing them to be saved. Dan's position is that the Bible teaches that God the Holy Spirit reveals to people their sinfulness and need for Christ (both of which they would not realize without God's activity), and then they decide either to accept Christ or reject Him of their own free will. The EPC's belief is called Calvinism; Dan's beliefs are called Arminianism, and are not consistent with what the EPC requires of its pastors.

13. If Dan's beliefs aren't Calvinist, then doesn't that mean he isn't reformed? And if he isn't reformed, how can he serve a Presbyterian church or any other reformed church?

An old saying goes, "All cows are cattle, but not all cattle are cows." Likewise, all Calvinists are Reformed Christians, but not all Reformed Christians are Calvinists. Dan has plenty of company in the family of Reformed Christians.

14. So is Dan going to stay in the Presbyterian Church, USA (PCUSA)?

No. Dan will be seeking dismissal from the PCUSA to a new reformed denomination called the Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians ("ECO" for short – pronounced "EEK-oh"). Presently, he is in the process of submitting application to that body.

15. If Dan isn't going to the EPC – but Fremont will be – will he be leaving the staff of Fremont and taking a position somewhere else?

Dan feels that God has called him to Fremont (Du feels that same way about her directorship of the Fremont Nursery School). The leadership of Fremont also desires to retain Dan's (and Du's) services. Dan has been assured by ECO that he can be one of their pastors and serve a church in another denomination – in Fremont's case, the EPC. And the EPC has told Dan that there will be no problem with him being an ECO pastor and serving one of the EPC's churches – in this case, that would be Fremont. So the way seems clear for Dan to stay on as a staff member at Fremont.

16. Will either of the pastors lose their pension benefits?

The pension amounts earned by both Don and Dan are secure in the current PCUSA program. They will not lose any benefits. Any minor losses due to the cessation of extended service can be easily covered by Fremont. When they are dismissed from the PCUSA, both Don and Dan will begin participating in new pension programs sponsored by their respective denominations.

17. Will there be any impact on pastors' salary?

No. Pastor compensation is determined by our local congregation so there is no impact from the change to EPC.

18. How will the pastors' health benefits be affected?

The EPC has an array of health plan choices that is broader than what our pastors currently have. Dan's health benefits will be obtained through the ECO denomination. Both pastors should not be adversely affected by the change in health benefits.

19. Does Fremont have any say over who the NPC might call as a pastor?

The determination of the leadership of the NPC will be up to the Presbytery and the NPC.

20. How can we guarantee that Fremont's values, priorities and mission are upheld in any meetings on Fremont's campus?

The License Agreement that is part of the Dismissal Agreement stipulates that Fremont's Facility Use Guidelines will be honored by the NPC. The Guidelines are part of every agreement entered into with groups using Fremont's facilities.

21. Will it be confusing to have two different churches meeting on the same campus?

Fremont has opened its facilities to many different churches over the years. Fremont's representatives will work closely with the representatives of the NPC to make sure that things like portable signage are helpful and clear.

22. How will members of the congregation communicate if they want to stay in the PCUSA?

A joint letter from Fremont and the Presbytery will be sent to all Fremont members following the Presbytery vote on November 10th. Those choosing to drop their membership will be given that opportunity at that time.

23. Will the members who do not choose to leave Fremont be automatically transferred to the EPC?

All current members will be automatically transferred with Fremont upon Fremont's acceptance into the EPC.

24. What will be required of members in order to transfer to the EPC?

There is no examination or additional requirement of members who want to stay at Fremont. They will simply be transferred automatically unless they inform the church otherwise.

25. Will elders ordained in the PCUSA retain their ordination in the EPC?

Elders ordained in the PCUSA will continue to be considered elders by Fremont. If they are called to serve on the Session again or called to serve at Presbytery or the General Assembly, they will then be ordained as an EPC elder. In the meantime, previously ordained elders will be offered the opportunity to serve communion and to participate in the College of Elders gatherings as they currently do. Previously ordained elders will also be given the opportunity to participate in EPC leadership training for those preparing for ordination, should they so choose.

26. What types of changes might we see in Fremont's organizational structure when we affiliate with EPC?

There are no significant changes in the Fremont church structure required to join and participate in the EPC. In addition, the Session does not anticipate changing anything in our organization as a result of this affiliation. The EPC's church governance substantially matches our current structure.

27. 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.