

PRESBYTERY RESPONSE TEAM REPORT

Orcutt Presbyterian Church, a member church of the Presbytery of Santa Barbara, has requested dismissal from the Presbyterian Church (USA) to ECO: A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians. According to G-3.0301a in the Form of Government, the presbytery has the responsibility and power to dismiss churches.

Church information	Orcutt Presbyterian Church 993 Patterson Road, Orcutt, CA 93455 Telephone (805) 937-4974 Rev. Bruce Lethbridge, Pastor
Presbytery Response Team	Rev. Kent Meads, Chair Elder Ruric Nye Elder Mike Wesner

PROCESS In keeping with the presbytery's "Guidelines for a Process for Reconciliation or Gracious Separation of a Congregation from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)," the following process has been followed:

Session vote to request dismissal	Saturday, May 18, 2013 session meeting (11-1) (Letter from Session, Attachment 1)
Presbytery Council notified by church	May 18, 2013
Presbytery notified by Stated Clerk	September 28, 2013 (Presbytery Consent Agenda)
Church membership rolls received dated	August 29, 2013
Presbytery Response Team (PRT) formed	June 19, 2013
Preliminary questions answered by Session	August 4, 2013 (Preliminary Questions, Attachment 2)
<u>PRT meeting with Session</u>	August 29, 2013

Rev. Kent Meads moderated the meeting, PRT members Ruric Nye and Michael Wesner, Rev. Bruce Lethbridge, Rev. Israel Gonzales, Commissioned Ruling Elder Garry Grant, and Session members Sue Jahnke, Holly Costello, Joe Hughes, Mike Aguillon, Dick Barrett, Bill Anders, Stephanie Wells, Scott Atrosky, Mark McGilvray, Juan Acosta, John Richards and Evy Dykema, Clerk of Session were present. Elder Sharon Henning was absent.

Notification from Session that the church wishes to join ECO	May 18, 2013
PRT report with recommendation to proceed to Presbytery Council	Verbal report at the September 4, 2013 Council

Initial Congregational Gathering

November 3, 2013 at 3:00pm
(Minutes, Attachment 3)

Rev. Warren Einolander moderated the gathering.

Orcutt membership

266 members

Present at this gathering

207 members (77.8%)

There was a presentation on behalf of the PC(USA) and there was a presentation on the Polity and practice of ECO. A ballot vote was taken.

In response to the question

"Do you, as a member, wish for Orcutt Presbyterian Church to be dismissed from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A)?"

the counted ballot vote was 179 YES, 18 NO, 7 ABSTAIN, 1 BLANK

Ballots were counted by Ruling Elders Mike Aguilon, John Richards, Bill Anders, Joseph Hughes from the Orcutt church and Michelle Holmes, Stated Clerk.
(Tellers' Report, Attachment 4)

In the three months following the initial congregational gathering, the Response Team

1. Negotiated the terms of separation with the Session in accordance with the presbytery's guidelines (Terms of Dismissal, Attachment 5).
2. Met with members of the congregation who expressed a desire to remain within the PC(USA) 2/11/14.
3. Communicated with the church's Teaching Elders: Rev. Bruce Lethbridge indicated he wished to remain a member of the PC(USA); Rev. Israel Gonzales indicated a desire to be dismissed to ECO; his dismissal will be processed within 90 days following dismissal of the Orcutt church. Commissioned Ruling Elder Garry Grant indicated he wished to be dismissed with the congregation to ECO; accordingly his commission will end the date the church is dismissed.
4. Determined that there were no members of the congregation preparing for ministry and under the care of the presbytery.

Church records (rolls, registers, minutes, etc) The Clerk of Session was notified that the church's official records (rolls and registers, minutes, etc) become the property of the presbytery upon dismissal (see G-3.0107 in the Book of Order). According to the Office of the General Assembly, if a congregation wants to retain their original records, they can send those originals to the Presbyterian Historical Society who will make archival copies – and return the originals to the church. This is done at the expense of the leaving congregation and in conjunction with any final separation agreement. The church will arrange to send their records and registers to the Presbyterian Historical Society as required.

Second Congregational Gathering

March 2, 2014 at 3:00pm (Minutes, Attachment 6)

Notice for this gathering was sent to all members of the congregation in the February newsletter. In addition to regular bulletin inserts, notice was announced from the pulpit at

regular church services for five Sundays February 2 through March 2. Notice for the gathering was also posted on the church's website.

Committee on Ministry member Rev. Deborah Kehle moderated the gathering.

Orcutt membership (as of 2/11/14) 262 members

Present at this gathering 184 members (70.2%)

There was a presentation on behalf of the PC(USA); a ballot vote was taken. 184 ballots were returned.

In response to the question

"Shall the membership of the Orcutt Presbyterian Church request dismissal as a body by the Presbytery of Santa Barbara to ECO: A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians, another Reformed body in accordance with the terms, including the financial terms as negotiated by the presbytery and Session?"

the counted ballot vote was 168 YES, 12 NO, 4 ABSTAIN.

Ballots were counted by Ruling Elders Mike Aguilon, Bill Anders, and Joseph Hughes from the Orcutt church and Ruling Elders Ruric Nye and Michelle Holmes from the Presbytery of Santa Barbara. (Tellers' Report, Attachment 7)

Ten-day period for any person of the unsuccessful side to contest (by a written notice to the presbytery) the regularity of the call for, or the conduct of, or the manner of the request made at the meeting is from March 2 to March 12, 2014.

Presbytery meeting

April 8, 2014

The Presbytery Council and the Response Team will present their report to the presbytery.

From the dismissal guidelines:

The presbytery shall act in response to the congregation's action. Following notice of any request for dismissal, the Moderator will follow the normal procedures for calling a meeting of presbytery, provided that there is not already scheduled a stated meeting of presbytery within 45 days of the congregational request for dismissal. It should be noted that renegotiation of the terms for dismissal through use of amendments from the floor of presbytery would invalidate months of work between the PRT and the congregation. Therefore, the proposal shall be presented as a whole, with the understanding that the final agreement has been reached by good faith negotiations between the PRT and the congregation.

The PRT shall report the results of its meeting with the congregation, and the presbytery shall determine whether the process for requesting dismissal was fair and represents the will of the congregation. If so, the congregation shall be dismissed to another Reformed denomination, subject to any agreements that may be reached regarding the fair treatment of those members who do not wish to leave the denomination. If the presbytery determines that the request for dismissal was invalid, the request for dismissal should be denied, and the congregation shall remain a member of the PC(USA), and, ordinarily, no further action should be taken to reconsider the matter for at least 24 months. (lines 246-262)

The question will be presented to the presbytery as follows:

Shall the membership of Orcutt Presbyterian Church (PIN 00926), located at 993 Patterson Road, Orcutt, CA 93455 be dismissed as a body from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and from the jurisdiction of the Presbytery of Santa Barbara to ECO: A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians, if the way be clear and in accordance with the terms, including the financial terms, as approved by the congregation on March 2, 2014?

There will be opportunity for discussion, but this question may not be separated.

Comments from the Response Team and Presbytery Council:

- 1) “If the way be clear” means that the congregation has been accepted by and we have received a letter from ECO indicating assumption of ecclesiastical authority over the church and their pastors, pending their dismissal from the Presbytery of Santa Barbara (ECO letter, Attachment 8), and that payment is made according to the terms for dismissal.
 - 2) In accordance with the presbytery’s usual voting procedure, the vote will be by voice (or a counted, standing vote) unless a paper ballot is requested.
 - 3) The Response Team will then make a motion that the officers of the Presbytery of Santa Barbara (officers of the corporation) are authorized to execute the necessary property transfer deeds. This motion will be voted on by the presbytery.
 - 4) Dismissal of the congregation will be effective at the adjournment of the presbytery meeting.
 - 5) Pastors requesting dismissal to ECO will be handled by the Committee on Ministry at the same or later presbytery meeting.
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Orcutt Presbyterian Church



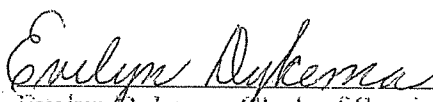
May 18, 2013

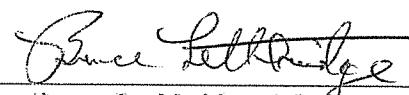
Michelle Holmes
Stated Clerk
Presbytery of Santa Barbara
6067 Shirrell Way
Goleta, CA 93117

Dear Michelle:

At the conclusion of the annual Session Retreat held on May 17 and 18, 2013, an announced Called Session Meeting was held at Orcutt Presbyterian Church with all ruling elders and teaching elders present. After much prayerful discussion to seek the leading of the Holy Spirit, the following motion was made, seconded and carried. Motion: to notify Santa Barbara Presbytery that Orcutt Presbyterian Church wishes to pursue gracious separation from the PC(USA) with the intention of being dismissed to ECO, A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians. Accordingly, we ask the Presbytery to form a Presbytery Response Team to engage the Orcutt congregation per the process outlined in the Guidelines for a Process for Reconciliation or Gracious Separation of a Congregation from the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Thank you.


Evelyn Dykema, Clerk of Session


Rev. Bruce Lethbridge, Moderator

ATTACHMENT 1C

"Becoming a new creation in Jesus Christ"

993 Patterson Road • P.O. Box 2178 • Orcutt, California 93457 • (805) 937-4974 • Fax (805) 937-9525

OPC Session Response to Questions for Santa Barbara Presbytery PRT

1. **Has the Session/staff read and discussed the Gracious Dismissal Policy?** Yes. The Session has met on several occasions to read and discuss the GDP. What we learned and the questions we have are below.

What did Session/staff learn?

- a. In doing this work, the PRT and Session will keep these principles in mind: "consistency, pastoral responsibility, accountability, gracious witness, openness, and transparency. [16, 17]"
- b. We concur that our "preeminent concern is with 'caring for the flock.' [31, 32]"
- c. The Session agrees that by dismissal of a congregation to another reformed body "the unity of the one Church of Jesus Christ has not been diminished. [75, 76]"
- d. The Session must determine the "will of the congregation", who have been informed of:
 - i. the "implications" [90] of leaving the PC(USA).
 - ii. what they are being asked to consider [89], and that this has been rightly discerned and fully and fairly explained and discussed in open forums. [90-92]
 - iii. the "The role of testimony, prayer, discussion, deliberation, and collective discernment of the will of God were, and are, important. [100, 101]"
 - iv. the process and that it "shall respect dissent and should safeguard and provide sufficient time and opportunities so that the will of God can be received by the whole congregation. [103, 104]"

What questions does Session/staff have for the PRT?

- a. What formulas and/or considerations will be used to "rightly dictate fiduciary and connectional concerns, raising general issues of property [G-4.200]?" [29,30]
- b. What is the agenda for the Initial Meeting of the Congregation [151]? What role, if any, will the Session play in this meeting?
- c. How will the PRT "speak on behalf of the PC(USA). [156]" at the first congregational meeting?
- d. How will the PRT "ensure that the members of the congregation have been informed regarding the Polity and practice of the Reformed body to which they may be going [157, 158]"?

2. **What are the primary reasons for wanting to leave the PC(USA)?**

The following form the basis of the OPC Session beliefs:

- a. **Authority of Scripture** – The OPC Session holds firmly to the infallibility of Scripture [John 20:31]. The Word of God alone binds the conscience, and the authority of the Church is subordinate to that of Scripture.

OPC Session Response to Questions for Santa Barbara Presbytery PRT

- b. **Unique Role of Jesus Christ in Salvation** – The OPC Session affirms that “Jesus is Lord” [Romans 10:9]. There is only one way to the Father [Acts 4:12]. This is the creed of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church that we will not deny before men.
- c. **Essentials of Presbyterian and Reformed Faith** – Our Presbyterian heritage as embodied in the Book of Confessions protects our covenant community against the prevalent surrounding culture whose beliefs do not coincide with our faith. It is vital that we clearly define and commit to the essential tenets of our faith.
- d. **Traditional View of Marriage** – The OPC Session embraces the biblical teachings of sexual fidelity in marriage as being between a man and a woman [Matthew 19:4-5] or chastity in singleness.

Because of the PC(USA)’s continued erosion of the authority of Scripture, the rejection of the unique saving role of Jesus Christ by a majority of clergy, a softening of the commitment to the historic confessions, an increased inclination towards the secular culture, and failure to enforce the denomination’s written Polity through Church discipline which honors God, we have elected to seek gracious dismissal to ECO: A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians.

3. **What steps have you taken in this process to determine the will of the congregation so far?**

- a. Per the Book of Order, the session is the body that is authoritative in these matters and our first step was for Session to become prayerfully informed over the past year as to the issues and options. This was accomplished by discussions, handouts, research, Session retreats, and special denominational speakers.
- b. Until recently the majority of the congregation was not particularly aware of denominational issues. The expository preaching and teaching of the Word and the well-being of the body and participation in mission opportunities was the focus of our Church. When it became apparent that the basic theological beliefs at the General Assembly and Synod levels were deteriorating, the Session acted to seek gracious dismissal to ECO.
- c. There have been several all church forums where church history, polity, scripture and cultural pressures upon the denomination were discussed. Information has been disseminated in the monthly newsletters and presented to groups within the congregation.
- d. More information is being gathered and distributed in a number of ways (web site, mailings, phone calls, and town hall and OPC committee meetings) to engage the congregation on the decision to seek dismissal.
- e. The membership rolls of the congregation have been reviewed, an outreach to inactive members has been completed, and the rolls have been updated.

OPC Session Response to Questions for Santa Barbara Presbytery PRT

- f. The Session will make personal contacts to all of the active members asking and answering questions about the proposed move to ECO.
 - g. A series of sermons and small group discussions are planned in the summer and fall based on the tenets of our Presbyterian faith and what it means to us as a church body to make this transition.
4. What plans has the Session proposed/discussed regarding Property and Finance and where you intend to land in leaving the PC(USA)?
- a. We intend to seek dismissal to ECO. Many of our like-minded brothers and sisters in Christ from the Santa Barbara Presbytery are in a similar transition.
 - b. We have remained faithful to the Santa Barbara Presbytery, consistently providing 100% of Mission support for the presbytery. For decades this has been an unquestioned priority of our congregation. We remain committed to continuing a portion of our support, as many of these ministries are dear to our hearts.
 - c. Our hope is that the OPC congregation will keep the property that is our stewardship for the Lord and that we will remain financially viable to continue to serve in the vibrant and growing mission of our God in the Santa Maria Valley.
5. Members in churches have asked “are we still going to be Presbyterian?” How would you, as a Session, answer that?
- a. ECO is a Presbyterian and Reformed denomination informally in fellowship with many in the PC(USA) and formally in relationship with the PC(USA) through their membership in the World Communion of Reformed Churches. ECO’s mission is to build flourishing churches that make disciples of Jesus Christ and the denomination exists to serve the local church. The OPC Session is in agreement with these emphases.
 - b. Two classes on the “Presbyterian Story” are being presented based on the book by Bradley Longfield, Presbyterians and American Culture, to inform the congregation and answer questions regarding the history and beliefs of the Presbyterian Church in this country. The OPC Session believes that we are a reformed Church, always being reformed according to the Word of God and the call of the Spirit, and choose to remain faithful, committed and true to our historic Presbyterian roots.

Response Team Minutes of the Initial Congregational Gathering
Orcutt Presbyterian Church
November 3, 2013 – 3:00pm

The initial gathering of the congregation with the Presbytery Response Team (PRT) was held in the Sanctuary at Orcutt Presbyterian Church, 993 Patterson Road, November 3, 2013. Presbytery Council appointed Teaching Elder Warren Einolander to moderate this gathering.

ATTENDANCE Attendance was taken by sign-in sheet at the door; 207 members were present as verified by the Clerk of Session, representing 78% of church membership.

Moderator Rev. Warren Einolander welcomed the congregation and opened with prayer at 3:07pm. He announced that at least 50% of the church's membership was present and introduced the Presbytery Response Team (PRT): Rev. Kent Meads, chair; Ruling Elder Ruric Nye and Ruling Elder Michael Wesner.

INTRODUCTION OF PRESBYTERY RESPONSE TEAM Presbytery Response Team (PRT) chair, Rev. Kent Meads explained that Session will speak about the reasons for requesting dismissal and Executive Presbyter, Rev. Jan Armstrong, will speak about the presbytery and the PC(USA). Rev. Meads explained that today's gathering is an opportunity for church members to ask questions and at the end of the meeting, there will be a vote on whether or not to proceed with the request for dismissal. If the vote is in the affirmative, over the next three months, the PRT will meet with any members of the congregation who want to retain their PC(USA) membership and what options are available. The PRT will also meet with Session to negotiate the financial terms of dismissal, which will be brought to the congregation for a final vote in 2014.

There was an opportunity for questions and members of the PRT responded.

SESSION PRESENTATION ON DISMISSAL PROCESS Ruling Elders Mike Aguillon, Sharon Henning and Bill Anders spoke on behalf of the Session.

Why the Session voted to move toward dismissal (Mike Aguillon)

- Session's recommendation to go to ECO is an informed decision.
- This conversation has been going on for decades but OPC stayed out of the conversation until it became very loud in the presbytery.
- Session posted documents on church website, giving on both sides of the conversation.
- On 10/27/13, Session posted a document "Our reasoning behind this proposed meeting..."
- Our Presbyterian heritage has, in the past, safeguarded us against the whims of culture: this is familiar to the congregation and is preached from the pulpit each Sunday. These safeguards deal with nature of God, authority of Scripture, and the work and person of Jesus Christ. Reasons for requesting dismissal include Recent actions by the General Assembly and the denomination's PUP Report Current changes to the Book of Order, including the exclusion of the necessity for a profession of faith and no reference to Jesus as the only Savior and Lord.
- Essentials of our faith have been watered down to suit human reasoning.
- Controversies have divided the denomination.
- What we believe vs. what we do: what good are the Book of Order and the Book of Confessions if everyone gets to choose what to believe and what not to believe?"

- PC(USA) is lukewarm, that's why Session is recommending dismissal to the Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians (ECO), which has national standards, underscores the unique saving role of Jesus, and whose Book of Order is binding on the church.

What process Session has taken so far (Sharon Henning)

- May 4, 2013 - the presbytery's dismissal guidelines were approved.
- May 17-18 - Session held their annual retreat and voted to pursue dismissal to ECO
- August 29 - Session met with the PRT
- September - e-mail communication with the congregation; website links were posted, members of Session members were in contact with congregation members; a series of sermons addressed the Essential Tenets
- October - All church meeting with discussion and questions; Rev. Dana Allin from ECO preached and stayed for Q&A; Pastor Bruce Lethbridge and Ruling Elder Mark McGilvary met with those interested in staying PCUSA; two more general meetings were offered to congregation.

Implications for being dismissed for the congregation and its relationship with presbytery (Bill Anders)

- For those in the pew, there will be little change
- The theology of the church and our leadership is not going to change
- Principal tenets of faith will not change
- Scripture is Word of God, Book of Confessions is needed for our religious guidance - that will not change
- Membership will transfer as a church - ordination will be accepted by ECO and active elders and deacons will be asked to reaffirm their ordination vows
- Session will continue to welcome anyone to church who believes in Jesus
- ECO has defined behavioral expectations, ordination vows will be followed
- Essential Tenets follow the Ten Commandments - nothing different from what we believe and practice
- There will be an increased role for deacons and elders with more flexibility for leadership; Session will determine the terms of service for elders
- There is no General Assembly in ECO The church will be able to call an Assistant Pastor
- Strong emphasis on mission will continue

Elder Anders and members of the PRT responded to questions in the following areas:

- The church's relationship with presbytery
- The document "Constitutional Musings"
- Dismissal terms which will include a reversion clause concerning the property
- PC(USA) trust clause and the church's 501(c)(3) status
- Declining membership and the congregation's inability to support the ministry of the church
- Differences between ECO's Book of Order and the PC(USA)'s Book of Order
- Book of Confessions

PRESENTATION ON BEHALF OF THE PRESBYTERY OF SANTA BARBARA AND THE PC(USA)

Rev. Jan Armstrong advocated staying in the PC(USA) and encouraged congregation to vote NO. He spoke about how the vote today will potentially have long-ranging consequences. His comments to the congregation included the following areas:

- Book of Confessions and the dialogue that took place at the time of reunion concerning which Confessions to include
- Book of Order and the move to try to simplify the Form of Government in our Constitution: a number of things were taken out and the Book of Order was streamlined to act more like a constitutional document rather than an instruction manual.
- Fundamental sections in the Book of Order: scripture is first indicator of what God is like, what God did
- How Confessions relate to Scripture, and that the Book of Confessions are subordinate standards to the authority of Jesus and the Word of God.
- PC(USA) holds Christ as having all authority
- The churches in the Presbytery of Santa Barbara whose congregations
 - Have covenanted together for almost 100 years to do ministry
 - Need one another to do more than what one congregation can do
 - Support each other, pray for each other, and do mission together
 - Make up a presbytery of mission and vision
 - Support IMPACT and Front Porch Campus Ministry, mission programs that reach young people for Christ
 - Support the presbytery's Lay Leadership Training Program
 - Support a great ecumenical and evangelical Mission Conference each year
- An affirmative vote today will move the church's leadership away from some of the promises made at ordination
- Current literature on denominations indicate that denominations are both dying and becoming more and more irrelevant: people are getting together across denominational lines to do mission and ministry; renewal and redemption of this church is at the cross -- not at any denomination. This is the wrong work - figuring out how holy your huddle can be - our business is to bring Jesus' redemption to the world.
- Other evangelical churches are staying in the PC(USA); they disagree with some things, but they do not believe that they have to leave to do effective ministry.
- There is a limit placed on the national church - the authority not given to the General Assembly is given to the presbyteries; no one can tell you who to ordain, who to marry, no one can tell you who to call as your pastor.

Rev. Armstrong and Session members responded to questions in the following areas:

- Marriage standards in the PC(USA)
- Ordination standards in the PC(USA)
- Authority of the Book of Order
- Membership decline in the PC(USA) and other Presbyterian denominations
- Equality in the church and in our culture
- Civil marriage vs. marriage in the church

SESSION PRESENTATION ON ECO Ruling Elder Mike McGilivray spoke on behalf of the Session and highlighted the following

- ECO's history, with approximately 80 churches at present and projected to be 500 strong in five years; ECO is the fastest growing denomination in the world today; ten churches in the presbytery are in the process of moving to ECO
- ECO's emphasis is on covenant relationships, order accountability, and evangelical witness, with congregations of like-minded believers, adhering to essential truths revealed in Scripture, and bringing the Gospel to the world
- ECO is Presbyterian as defined by theology and governance
- ECO has a three-tiered structure: congregation, presbyteries and a synod (no General Assembly)
- ECO's polity document is 45 pages long, a streamlined polity document
- ECO shares the same Book of Confessions as the PC(USA) and ECO's Essential Tenets are clearly articulated

There were questions for Elder McGilivray and he responded.

The moderator led the congregation and the PRT in prayer and members of the congregation voted. The ballot read:

The Session of your church has requested dismissal from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to the Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians (ECO). The Presbytery's Response Team expects that at least fifty percent of the active membership is present today. This first congregational gathering is to determine that a significant portion of those members present today (estimated at more than 2/3) wish to be dismissed, and to ensure that the members of the congregation have been informed regarding the Polity and practice of the denomination to which they may be going, including any practical considerations this might mean for the congregation. This is **not** the final vote of the congregation, but a preliminary indication of whether or not the presbytery will proceed with the dismissal process.

**Do you, as a member, wish for Orcutt Presbyterian Church
to be dismissed from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A)?**

_____ YES, I am in favor of dismissal _____ NO, I am not in favor of dismissal
_____ I wish to ABSTAIN and understand that my abstention vote
will be counted as a NO

The question was answered in the affirmative by more than 2/3 (two thirds) of those present.

Church membership	266 members
Members present	207 members (78% of church membership)
Ballots cast	205 ballots
Two-thirds of those in attendance	138 YES votes required to proceed with the process
	179 YES
	18 NO
	7 ABSTAIN and 1 BLANK BALLOT

The congregational gathering ended with a closing prayer by Rev. Bruce Lethbridge at approximately 5:11pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Michelle Holmes, Stated Clerk

Members' Report – Congregational Gathering
Initial Gathering of the Congregation

Presbytery of Santa Barbara

"Guidelines for a Process for Reconciliation or Gracious Separation
of a Congregation from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)"

"The PRT expects that at least fifty percent of the active membership will participate in this initial gathering meeting which will be moderated by a teaching or ruling elder appointed for this purpose by the Presbytery Council. The members of the PRT will attend this gathering and will be allowed sufficient time to speak on behalf of the PC(USA). During this gathering the PRT will ensure that the members of the congregation have been informed regarding the Polity and practice of the Reformed body to which they may be going, including any practical implications this might mean for the congregation."

"If the PRT determines that a significant proportion (estimated at more than 2/3) of the attending members wish to be dismissed, a second gathering will be convened. After the initial congregational gathering, at least three months will pass before this second gathering."

Church **Orcutt Presbyterian Church**

Date: **November 3, 2013**

Time: **3:00pm**

Current Membership ~~267~~ ²⁶⁶ 1/2 (50%) of current membership ~~134~~ ¹³³

Number of members in attendance 207 Is this at least 50%? yes

2/3 (two-thirds) of those in attendance 138

- 1) All ballots that indicate a preference are taken into account in determining the number of votes cast
- 2) Blank ballots and abstentions do indicate a preference, and are counted as NO votes
- 3) Unintelligible ballots, or ballots with more than one choice are treated as *illegal ballots*. They are counted as votes cast, but are not credited to one side or the other.

Total number of votes cast 205

Number of YES votes 179

Number of NO votes 26

18 NO - 7 ABSTAIN

1 BLANK

Is the number of affirmative (YES) votes at least 2/3 (two-thirds) of those in attendance? yes

Michelle Holmes
Signature

Michelle Holmes
Print your name

[Signature]
[Signature]
[Signature]
[Signature]

Miguel Aguillon
John Richards
Bill Anders
Joseph Hughes

Terms for Dismissal of the Orcutt Presbyterian Church

The Presbytery Response Team for Orcutt Presbyterian Church (hereinafter OPC) met with Session's financial elders and negotiated the terms for dismissal. The following were considered during these negotiations.

Presbytery debt The presbytery has, over the years, voted to purchase property for the Grover Beach and Paso Robles churches, and to assume liability for the ministry at Front Porch/Casa Veranda; these liabilities were included in the negotiations:

Grover Beach GA site mortgage	23,547.07
Grover Beach GA bldg mortgage	58,468.45
Paso Robles GA site mortgage	342,474.28
Casa Veranda Synod loan	500,000.00
Casa Veranda presbytery loan	<u>414,592.49</u>
TOTAL PRESBYTERY DEBT	\$1,339,082.29

This is \$176.52 per person based on the presbytery's recorded 12/31/12 membership of 7,586

In addition, the presbytery voted to guarantee repayment of debt assumed by several of our churches. These liabilities were not included in the negotiations:

Moorpark GA loan	144,282.32
Pismo Beach mortgage	1,177.75
St. Andrew's PILP loan	135,129.05
Newbury Park PILP loan	759,114.94
Grover Beach PILP loan	259,113.04
Moorpark PILP loan	2,396,508.33
El Montecito PILP loan	671,610.43
Solvang PILP loan	<u>2,430,694.21</u>
TOTAL GUARANTEED DEBT	\$6,797,630.07

This \$6.8 million debt was not included in OPC's share of long-term debt liability.

The church's last verified congregational membership as of 12/31/13 was 263 members. This is 3.47% of the presbytery-wide membership as of 12/31/12. This percentage was taken into consideration when the Response Team looked at OPC's share of the presbytery debt. OPC's share of the presbytery debt is \$46,424.81 (263 members x \$176.52).

On-going support of the presbytery budget With the possible departure of 10 of our 32 churches, the viability of the presbytery budget, staffing and ministry support for the next two years is seriously compromised. OPC has paid their 2011, 2012 and 2013 Ministry Share in full. Projected Ministry Share for 2014 and 2015 was calculated at \$36,820.00.

Other specific or unique factors: The Session at OPC has committed to the support of Front Porch Campus Ministry for \$25,000 over 5 years and to the support of IMPACT for \$5,000 over 5 years.

Consideration of the value of the congregational property for the use and benefit of the PC(USA) The Response Team considered the following:

Current tax assessor value of real property (2013/2014 assessor's statement)	\$1,676,700.00
Current tax assessor value of personal property (2013/2014 assessor's statement)	20,000.00
Current value of all net cash position (not including endowments)	225,000.00
Known original investment by denomination for this church development	none

SETTLEMENT MEMO OF UNDERSTANDING between the Presbytery Response Team (PRT) of the Presbytery of Santa Barbara (SBP) and the Session of Orcutt Presbyterian Church (OPC) as approved by the congregation on March 2, 2014:

Financial Terms:

1. OPC agrees to a maximum of \$87,219.00 to settle costs of dismissal. Although these funds may be allocated in any manner as desired by the PRT between the Ministry Share, debt calculations, and property considerations, the following formed the basis for this agreement:

2014 & 2015 Ministry Share =	\$36,820.00
Share of presbytery debt =	46,424.81
Property and other considerations	30,974.19
SUBTOTAL	\$114,219.00
Less continuing mission support Front Porch	-25,000.00
Less continuing mission support Impact	-5,000.00
SUBTOTAL	\$84,219.00
Plus \$3,000 for PRT costs	3,000.00
<u>TOTAL DUE FROM CHURCH UPON DISMISSAL</u>	<u>\$87,219.00</u>

2. Amount due \$87,219.00 from OPC may be paid over five (5) years at market interest rates. First payment due upon dismissal and then on the anniversary of dismissal until paid in full.
3. At OPC's choice, OPC may make a one-time, discounted payment of \$78,497.00 as payment in full for dismissal upon the Presbytery vote.

Deed Considerations:

1. OPC accepts a reversion deed (property would revert to SPB) of 10 years' duration.
2. Reversion clause could be triggered by one of the following events:
 - a. OPC's failure to fulfill financial obligations to SBP.
 - b. OPC ceases to operate as a church in the reformed tradition.
 - c. The property ceases to be used as an asset dedicated to a church of the Reformed tradition.
3. OPC, at dismissal, desires to become a part of ECO. Should ECO fail to operate as a Reformed denomination within the 10 year period, OPC may satisfy the requirements of membership by affiliating with a denomination of the Reformed tradition as defined by the PC(USA) and recognized by the WCRC.

Response Team Minutes of the Second Congregational Gathering
Orcutt Presbyterian Church
March 2, 2014 – 3:00pm

The second gathering of the congregation with the Presbytery Response Team (PRT) was held in the Sanctuary at Orcutt Presbyterian Church, 993 Patterson Road, Orcutt, CA 93455 on March 2, 2014. Committee on Ministry member Rev. Deborah Kehle moderated this gathering; the Moderator introduced herself, convened the gathering and opened with prayer at 3:03pm. A quorum was present.

Advance notice for this gathering was mailed to all members of the congregation in the February church newsletter (Attachment A) and announcements were included in the church bulletin (and made from the pulpit) at regular church services on the five Sundays February 2 through March 2, 2014. In addition, the meeting was posted on the church's website.

Current church membership was verified by the Clerk of Session at 262 active members. All deletions and additions of active members of the congregation since the initial congregational gathering were reviewed by the PRT and determined to be appropriate.

ATTENDANCE Attendance was taken by sign-in sheet at the door; 184 members were present as verified by the Clerk of Session, representing 70.2% of the membership of the church.

Presbytery Response Team (PRT) chair, Rev. Kent Meads introduced himself and thanked the church's leadership for the open and fruitful discussions with the PRT. The other members of the PRT, Elder Ruric Nye and Elder Michael Wesner, introduced themselves. Committee on Ministry member Elder Mickey Stueck and former Stated Clerk Elder Michelle Holmes were also present. Rev. Meads explained the purpose of this second gathering and asked those present to stay for the entire presentation. There were no questions from the congregation.

REMARKS FROM SESSION, PROPOSED TERMS OF DISMISSAL AND SESSION

RECOMMENDATION Ruling Elder Sharon Henning spoke and asked if everyone had taken advantage of the many opportunities to ask questions about the request for dismissal. She expressed Session's gratitude that the church would remain in partnership with the presbytery through the presbytery's IMPACT and Front Porch ministries. She spoke about the reasons why Session recommended moving to ECO and the sense of excitement about that denomination's future. She also spoke about the terms of dismissal (Attachment B) which had been distributed to the congregation in the February newsletter and today when church members registered for this gathering. There were no questions from the congregation.

PRESENTATION ON BEHALF OF THE PC(USA) Jerry Tankersley's *"Report on the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) – My Personal History as a Presbyterian"* had been made available to the congregation two weeks prior to the second gathering. The PRT asked Elder Mickey Stueck to speak on behalf of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Elder Stueck posed four rhetorical questions to the congregation:

Do you, as a member, think that leaving the PC(USA) will result in increased membership at Orcutt Presbyterian Church?

Has anyone, any committee, any agency of the PC(USA) kept you from preaching the Gospel here at Orcutt Presbyterian Church?

Does leaving the PC(USA) help the presbytery?

Do you believe the new denomination will be pure, Biblically and socially?

She responded to each of these questions in the negative, and advised the congregation that answering NO to these questions meant it was not time for Orcutt Presbyterian Church to leave the PC(USA). She reminded the congregation that regardless of the vote today, it was the hope of their brothers and sisters in the Presbytery of Santa Barbara that together we can work to fulfill God's commandments and to continue to focus on making disciples of all people. There were no questions from the congregation. Ms. Stueck advised the congregation that she is Moderator-elect of the presbytery, and look forward to being with them in the future, to talk about common mission goals. There were no questions from the congregation.

PRESENTATION ON ECO Ruling Elder Sharon Henning reminded the congregation that there had been an open forum several weeks ago on ECO and asked if there were further questions; there were none.

There was an opportunity for open discussion by members of the congregation, and there were no comments or questions.

Following prayer by the Moderator and a reminder that only active members of the congregation were entitled to vote, the congregation proceeded to vote. The ballots had been distributed as members checked in at the door, and read:

"Shall the membership of the Orcutt Presbyterian Church, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), request dismissal as a body by the Presbytery of Santa Barbara to the Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians, another Reformed body in accordance with the terms, including the financial terms as negotiated by the presbytery and Session?"		
_____ YES	_____ NO	_____ ABSTAIN

The ballots were counted twice by three elders from the congregation and two representatives of the presbytery.

The question was answered in the affirmative by more than 2/3 (two-thirds) of those present.

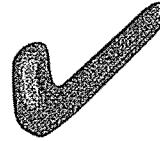
Church membership	262 members
Members present	184 members (70.2% of church membership)
Ballots cast	184 ballots
Two-thirds of those in attendance	123 YES votes required to request dismissal
	168 YES
	12 NO
	4 ABSTAIN

With a closing prayer by the Moderator, the congregational gathering ended at 3:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Michelle Holmes, Minute Clerk

TWO IMPORTANT DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR!

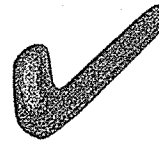
Sunday, February 16
1:00PM - Sanctuary



All Church Forum on Gracious Dismissal

Your chance to ask questions of our church leadership and express your thoughts on the financial and other aspects of the Gracious Dismissal Process in preparation for the upcoming final vote.

Sunday, March 2
3:00PM - Sanctuary



Special Congregational Meeting & Vote

Hear from representatives of Session and the Presbytery. The final vote of our congregation will be taken this afternoon to be dismissed from the Presbyterian Church [USA] into ECO, A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians in accordance with the Terms of Gracious Dismissal.

50%+ of the membership of the congregation must be present and 66%+ of these must vote to affirm the Terms of Gracious Dismissal for this vote to count.

TERMS FOR GRACIOUS DISMISSAL
ORCUTT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Total Cost	\$ 114,219
[Ministry Share, Presbytery Debt Calculations, Property Considerations]	
Less: Continuing Mission Support	<30,000>
[Front Porch \$25,000 over 5 years / IMPACT \$5,000 over 5 years]	
Plus: Presbytery Processing Costs	3,000
[staff time, travel, legal, financial expense]	
Total Due From Church Upon Dismissal	87,219
Less: 10% Discount for Cash Payment	<8,722>
Grand Total	78,497

Tellers' Report – Congregational Gathering
Second Gathering of the Congregation

Presbytery of Santa Barbara

“Guidelines for a Process for Reconciliation or Gracious Separation
of a Congregation from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)”

“There shall be at least 1/2 (50%) of the current active membership in attendance.
An affirmative vote of at least 2/3 (two-thirds) of those in attendance is required in order to
further the dismissal process.”

“The ballots shall be counted by two elders from the congregation and two representatives of the
presbytery. Only ballots clearly legible shall be counted. In case of ambiguity, the ballot will be
counted as “No.” Abstentions count as “No” votes. The ballots shall be counted twice and the
results shall be announced at the meeting...”

Church **Orcutt Presbyterian Church** Date: **March 2, 2014**

Time: **3:00pm**

Current Membership **262** 1/2 (50%) of current membership **131**

Number of members in attendance 184 Is this at least 50%? yes

2/3 (two-thirds) of those in attendance 123

- 1) All ballots that indicate a preference are taken into account in determining the number of votes cast
- 2) Blank ballots and abstentions do indicate a preference, and are counted as NO votes
- 3) Unintelligible ballots, or ballots with more than one choice are treated as *illegal ballots*. They are counted as votes cast, but are not credited to one side or the other.

Total number of votes cast 184

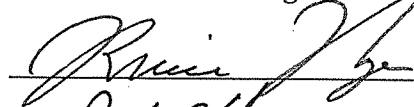
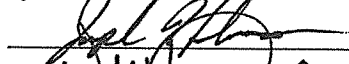
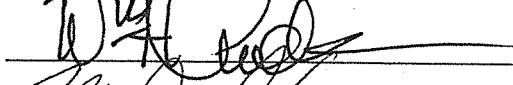
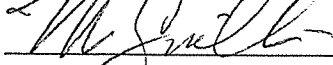

Number of YES votes 168

Number of NO votes 12 + 4 ABSTAIN

Is the number of affirmative (YES) votes at least 2/3 (two-thirds) of those in attendance? yes

Signature

Print your name

RURIL NZE
Joseph Hughes
Bill Anderson
Miguel Aguilon
Michelle Holmes



The Presbytery of the West

February 28, 2014

RE Michelle Holmes
Stated Clerk
The Presbytery of Santa Barbara
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Re: Orcutt Presbyterian Church, Santa Maria, CA (the "Church")

Dear RE Holmes,

We are pleased to inform you that, pursuant to the constitution of ECO: A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians ("ECO"), ECO Presbytery of the West has agreed to assume ecclesiastical authority over the Orcutt Presbyterian Church, Santa Maria, CA, and their associate pastor, Rev. Israel Gonzales, pending their dismissal from the Presbytery of Santa Barbara.


It is our understanding that one additional pastor, Rev. Charles B. Lethbridge, is planning to maintain his ordination in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Rev. Lethbridge has already been accepted as an Affiliate Pastor within ECO. It is our understanding that Rev. Lethbridge will continue to serve the Orcutt Presbyterian Church provided he receives permission to work outside the bounds of the Presbytery of Santa Barbara.

We agree to assume such authority immediately upon the Presbytery of Santa Barbara's dismissal of the Church and their pastor from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to ECO.

It is our understanding that Rev. Gonzales will continue his service to the Orcutt Presbyterian Church of Santa Maria, CA. He has already completed his application and interview process with ECO Presbytery of the West, in order to facilitate the transfer.

I truly appreciate your gracious cooperation through this process. Please contact me if any questions or concerns arise.

In His Service,


Rev. Rory A. Gillespie
Stated Clerk, Presbytery of the West
First Presbyterian Church
P.O. Box 958
Lamar, CO 81052

To build flourishing churches that make disciples of Jesus Christ