



First Presbyterian Church Bethlehem
Presbyterians for Unity



RESPONSE TO SESSION: OUR FUTURE GROWTH

THE TRUTH:

FPCB has continued to grow and thrive over the past 32 years as part of the Presbyterian Church (USA). There is nothing in our denominational structure that would prevent the continued growth of FPCB.

THE TRUTH:

FPCB has always been committed to respecting and valuing differences in Biblical understandings and interpretation. This is part of our legacy, core values, and Reformed Theology, and it is why FPCB has attracted both committed Christians and “Seekers” who are new to Christianity.

THE TRUTH:

The PC (USA) has strength in numbers: over 9,800 congregations and 1,600,000 members. It remains the largest and most visible Presbyterian denomination in the USA. By contrast, ECO has only 240 congregations scattered throughout the USA. The closest ECO church to FPCB is 50 miles away.

WHAT OUR FPCB SESSION HAS PUBLISHED:

“The PC (USA) has lost 50% of its members in the past 40 years, becoming an aging and declining institution.” Reference: *“Why the Session Recommends ECO”*

Note: FPCB has continued to grow, despite the fact that all mainline Christian denominations are struggling to retain members. The PC (USA) has significantly more members than ECO (see above) and has a 32-year history as a denomination. ECO has been a denomination for only 4 years.

“We will soon be searching for a new senior pastor, head of staff. We want to recruit and hire from the widest possible pool of candidates aligned with our core theology and vision.” Reference: *“Why the Session Recommends ECO”*

Notes: FPCB has always been able to attract quality senior pastors, heads of staff within the Presbyterian Church (USA) structure. Witness our history.

Presbyterians for Unity **pray that our new senior pastor will listen to, respect and value differences in Biblical interpretation. Diversity of thought has always been present as a core value at FPCB, and has historically been the essence of the Presbyterian Reformed Tradition.**

Christians grow in a culture that both hears and respects diverse views – **our unity is in Jesus Christ.**