

FAQs on the CPC Disaffiliation from the PC(USA) Process

1. **Can you help me out with all of the alphabet soup in this document?**

Acronym/Term	Description
CPC	Centreville Presbyterian Church
ECO	A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians
NCP	National Capital Presbytery
PC(USA)	Presbyterian Church (USA)

2. **We're disaffiliating from the PC(USA)? What does that mean?**

In November 2014, the Session entered a process by which CPC can leave the PC(USA) and join another denomination. We are now entering the advisory vote stage of that process.

3. **Why are we disaffiliating from the PC(USA)?**

In brief, the Session believes that the PC(USA) is departing from the authority of Scripture, and from the belief that Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation. You can find a more detailed explanation of the reasons for disaffiliation at

<http://centrevillepres.com/resources/denominational-matters/>

4. **I'm new to CPC and/or the PC(USA). Can you give me a quick rundown of the Presbyterian form of government?**

A *church* can be thought of as a voting district in a state. The congregation of a church elects individuals to a board of elders, also known as the *Session*.

A *presbytery* is a collection of geographically adjacent churches, and can be thought of as a state in the United States. Each Session elects individuals to represent it at presbytery meetings. CPC is a member of NCP. NCP elects individuals to a board of elders, also known as the *NCP Leadership Council*.

PC(USA) is the *denomination* to which all 170 presbyteries belong, and can be thought of as the United States. Each presbytery elects individuals to represent the presbytery at the *General Assembly*, which is a week-long event that happens biannually. The General Assembly can be thought of as the Congress of the United States, where laws are enacted that apply to every presbytery and church in the denomination.

5. **What is the advisory vote stage of the disaffiliation process? How does it work?**

The advisory vote stage is when the entire congregation votes on whether or not it wants to leave the PC(USA) and join another denomination, and consists of the following steps:

- a. A congregational meeting is called by NCP, during which the advisory vote is held.
- b. CPC needs a quorum of 60% of its active members in order for the advisory vote to take place (this translates into at least 276 of CPC's 460 active members attending this congregational meeting).
- c. CPC needs at least 80% of those present at the congregational meeting to vote to leave the PC(USA) and join another denomination (this translates into at least 221 active members attending the congregational meeting voting in the affirmative to leave).

6. **Why do you use the phrase *advisory vote*?**

A church does not have the authority to leave the PC(USA); rather, that resides within the presbytery of which the church is a member. The term *advisory vote* is used because the congregation is really voting on whether or not it wishes to officially advise the presbytery of its desire to leave the PC(USA).

7. **What if we don't have 60% of our members show up for the congregational meeting at which the advisory vote is taken?**

The disaffiliation process does not state what happens if this occurs. The Session hopes that the NCP Leadership Council will permit CPC to reschedule the congregational meeting at a later date, which is normally what happens whenever a quorum is not present at a regular meeting of the congregation.

8. **What if we satisfy the 60% quorum, but fewer than 80% of those present vote against leaving the PC(USA)?**

Again, the disaffiliation process does not state what happens if this occurs. If the vote is close, it may be permissible to revisit the vote with the NCP Leadership Council, but this will have to be negotiated separately.

9. **If we satisfy the 60% quorum, and at least 80% of those present vote for leaving the PC(USA), what then?**

At its November 14, 2017 meeting, the NCP will either approve or disapprove CPC's request to leave the PC(USA) and join another denomination.

10. **Why do you keep mentioning the phrase join another *denomination*? Can't CPC just leave the PC(USA) and become non-denominational / independent?**

One of the requirements of leaving the PC(USA) is that a church **must** join another reformed body. That is, a church cannot leave the PC(USA) and become non-denominational / independent.

11. **What's the phrase *reformed body* mean?**

A reformed body is a Christian Protestant denomination whose theology and government are largely based on the teachings of John Calvin. For a detailed explanation of reformed theology and polity, please see John H. Leith's Introduction to the Reformed Tradition (John Knox Press, 1981. ISBN: 0-8042-0479-9).

12. **So, if we leave the PC(USA), which reformed body will we join?**

In 2015, the Session voted for CPC to join ECO, a denomination of former PC(USA) churches and pastors which was formed in 2012 (you can find more information about ECO at <http://www.eco-pres.org/>). The Session's submission of an application to join ECO has been accepted by that body, and it will take effect when CPC has been officially released by the PC(USA).

13. **What's it going to cost us to leave the PC(USA)? Will we be able to keep our building?**

Part of the advisory vote includes accepting the Terms of Disaffiliation which the Session negotiated with the NCP Leadership Council. In brief, in exchange for being permitted to leave the PC(USA) with its building and property, CPC agrees:

- i. To pay NCP a total of \$950,000 in equal payments spread over a seven (7) year period
- ii. That the title to the building and property will revert back to NCP if within fifteen (15) years of leaving the PC(USA) CPC leaves ECO and either

becomes non-denominational / independent or joins a non-reformed body.

14. How did the NCP come up with the settlement amount of \$950,000?

Over the years, NCP has invested in CPC, primarily in assisting CPC with the purchase of land for a church building. Also, NCP stands to lose our yearly per capita payments once we leave the PC(USA). Finally, the constitution of the PC(USA) contains what is called the *trust clause*, which states that all property held by a congregation, no matter what the legal title to that property indicates, *is held in trust nevertheless for the use and benefit of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* The NCP Leadership Council combined the above three factors and came up with \$950,000 as the figure that CPC would be required to pay to leave the PC(USA) with its building and property.

15. How will we afford the payment of \$950,000 over seven years?

As we begin this faith journey, we believe the Lord will provide a number of options available to CPC to pay off this amount. Regardless of which path we take (using existing funds, refinancing, or other), we will in all likelihood have to have a capital campaign (i.e., building drive) to raise the additional funds that we will need that are above and beyond our current budgeted amounts.

16. What other options did we consider other than the \$950,000?

After examining many other available options (including negotiation, arbitration, and litigation), in the end the Session determined that it had to choose between two: the aforementioned \$950,000 figure, or leave the building and property to the PC(USA). Given the costs of purchasing land and constructing & equipping a new building, as well as the cost of renting space in Centreville in the interim, the Session was led by the Lord (through a season of prayer and fasting last spring) to accept the \$950,000 as the most affordable and least disruptive option for the church.

17. What about Pastor Rob? Will he vote to leave the PC(USA) and join ECO?

Pastor Rob is not a member of CPC, but rather, a member of NCP. Thus, he is not permitted to cast a vote in congregational matters. Rather, he has a decision of his own to make, namely whether he will remain as a Pastor in the PC(USA) or seek to have his ordination transferred to ECO. Pastor Rob's submission of an application to transfer his ordination to ECO has been accepted by that body, and it will take effect when CPC has been officially released by the PC(USA).