

THE Tower

MARCH 2022

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—AS THIS— ELDER SEES IT

Good afternoon friends,

✓ **My homework is done!**
How about yours?

Approximately six weeks ago the session shared with the Bethel family several denominations for the membership to review as potential future affiliates. As stated in the meeting that morning, in order to transition smoothly from PCUSA we must declare where we are going - a New Denomination. In your packets there were several denominations indicated with a comparison chart, the session was hopeful that you would study for yourselves and provide congregational insight as we make the monumental change.

Every month this article entitled "As This Elder Sees It" is written by a Session member to encourage communication and conversation on the health of our ministry as well as other spiritual matters. The article's primary purpose is to be informative, and communicative. The Session's goal is to maintain an open line of communication with the congregation as we make decisions on your behalf. With that said, when the vote to affiliate finds

its way to Session, this Elder will vote for ECO: A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians.

In my study of the ECO denomination, it is evident to me that ECO doesn't see itself as a denomination, although it certainly is. ECO sees itself as a Christian movement. Their mission is clearly to build flourishing churches that make disciples of Jesus Christ. The reason I believe ECO is the right choice for Bethel is because of their core commitments and for the past 275 years Bethel has made many disciples of Jesus Christ. Months ago, I read an article on ECO during my study of them and I have kept this breakdown ever since. I have shortened it for today's message, but before I share it, it is important to know there is always a message in a name, so what is the message in the ECO name?

Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians

As a church immersed in covenant, the ECO denomination connects its leaders in accountable Christian relationships that foster cooperation and collaboration.

Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians

As a church emerged in order, we profess we are committed to a shared way of life, united in common by a theological core belief.

Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians

As a church emerged in evangelism, we strive to advance the gospel of Jesus Christ through our words, deeds and actions. In doing so we will be planting a seed in every human heart we touch for Christ to grow.

Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians

"Tradition" is a word we all are familiar with. Tradition describes the reformation of our heritage as Presbyterians. ECO works extremely hard to achieve a Christ shaped identity! ECO strives for biblical integrity and a core focused spirituality. The ECO denomination has vitality, velocity and leadership that focuses on unleashing the immense talents and gifts of its membership.

— MATTHEW 4:19 —

*Jesus said to them,
"Come, follow me and I will make you fishers of men."*

Here is ECO's Mission Statement, sounds scriptural, doesn't it?

To build flourishing churches that make disciples of Jesus Christ. This is exactly what the lord expects of us, ***this is exactly what the Lord expects of Bethel!***

When the ECO denomination was formed ten years ago, the purpose wasn't just to form another denomination, the founding members had a transforming purpose, that purpose was to build a movement that recaptures the best of our Presbyterianism. ECO exists to support the church from the church up, not from the denomination down. For me this is a huge deciding factor on where we should go. Churches are built everyday across this nation and the world to share with their friends, neighbors and strangers the gift of love and to express in every action the transforming power of Jesus Christ.

Bethel has served Christ for 275 years in this community, our history has defined us as trendsetters, last week in my sermon to Smyrna Presbyterian Church entitled "What is your job?" I said we are to "sow the seed of the gospel everywhere we tread". ECO believes that the Holy

Spirit scatters us into our communities to plant the gospel. I believe this too! Long ago, I remember a beloved pastor saying grace at every Riverheads High school sporting event. Every time I heard his voice in prayer, I proudly said, hey, that's my pastor! For years Bethel has scattered her spiritual seed into the community, we need to return to the field where the crops grow.

I am a Christian because of the farmers of yesteryear that sowed the seed of Christ's gospel in my heart. I profess my Christianity proudly because I believe in the Holy word found in the Old and New Testament, I believe these words are infallible and authoritative and speak the absolute truth. The words found in scripture are absolutely necessary for us to find our way clear in a tumultuous and sinful world. This is one of ECO's tenants, this is foundational, this is why I lean ECO.

In last week's sermon I also shared that the old method was "build it and they will come", that no longer applies. The modern application is "sow it and they will come, if they come, they will grow". ECO is a mission-oriented denomination. What I can tell you about the mission

fields from my personal experience is this, the fields are where Christ sent us to work and that's where we need to work. Friends, our job is to sow, Jesus Christ will see that the seeds grow.

Finally, ECO believes that the presbytery's purpose is to support and seed churches not for the churches to support and feed the presbytery. As a congregation we need to focus our resources on our individual ministry and grow it from the fields of Augusta County. Our focus should be ministering to our neighbors and friends, not concerning ourselves with how much we are supporting the governance of the church. Houses are built from the ground up, not from the roof down. This is how this elder sees it.

One last thing, if you want to see what tomorrow holds, come on out and take a look at Bethel, be apart of the new horizon, spend some time with old friends, make some new ones while you are reminiscing and do it all in the service of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

In Christ Service,
Derek Almarode, Elder

Ref: eco.pres.org, fpcjax.or

Easter Lilies Orders and/or BERF Donations Form

You may order lilies at a cost of \$12.00 (tax included) each and/or you may make a monetary donation to BERF (Bethel Emergency Relief Fund). The Easter Lilies purchased and the donations made to BERF will be acknowledged on Easter Sunday (April 17th). Please fill out the form below, attach the check or cash and place in the offering plate or mail to the church: Bethel Presbyterian Church; Attn: Church Office; 563 Bethel Green Road; Staunton, VA 24401.

- If you are purchasing a lily, please make checks payable to Bethel Presbyterian Church.
- If you are making a donation to BERF, please make the check payable to Bethel Emergency Relief Fund.
- The deadline is Sunday, March 20th.

*Note: Please fill out the form completely. If you would like to order a lily and make a donation please use two separate forms (one for the lily and one for the donation). Thank you!



Lily Order and/or BERF Donation

Number of Lilies _____

Check or Cash Total _____

Donation to BERF _____

Check or Cash Total _____

In Honor Of : _____

Given By: _____

In Memory Of: _____

Given By: _____

Remember to pick up your lily following worship on Easter Sunday.
There are always lilies that have been purchased and are left behind in the Sanctuary after Easter.
Think about blessing one of our shut-ins or a friend with your beautiful lily instead.

BIRTHDAYS MARCH 2022

Bobby Goodson	March 3	Sam Leonard	March 26
Jim Stout	March 7	Bob Barmore	March 28
Heather Clem	March 8		
Harris Moffett	March 10		
Kay Thompson	March 11		
John Anderson	March 15		
Jim Williams	March 17		
Elizabeth Williams	March 21	Kyle Leonard	April 3
Irene Elliott	March 23	Julie Turner	April 4
Trevor Lee	March 23	Tom Heizer	April 6
Ashlyn Almarode	March 24	Leah Deacon	April 7
John Ludt	March 24	Jake Leonard	April 7

BEGINNING OF APRIL

ANNIVERSARIES MARCH 2022

Derek & Cindy Almarode	March 9, 1996
Billy & Margaret Wade, Jr.	March 21, 1964

March 2022



<i>SUN</i>	<i>MON</i>	<i>TUE</i>	<i>WED</i>	<i>THU</i>	<i>FRI</i>	<i>SAT</i>
		1 9:00 - 3:00 - Church Office Hours 9:00 - Deadline: Bulletin & Announcements <i>(March 6th)</i>	2 Ash Wednesday 9:00 - 3:00 - Church Office Hours 7:30 - Young Life: Club	3 9:00 - 3:00 - Church Office Hours 2:00 - Choir Rehearsal 3:00 - Handbell Choir 6:30 - Bible Study	4 9:00 - 3:00 - Church Office Hours	5
6 1st Sunday in Lent 11:00 - Worship 12:15 - PWCT Meeting	7 Church Office Closed 6:30 - Cub Scouts 7:00 - Boy Scouts 7:30 - Young Life: Campaigners	8 9:00 - 3:00 - Church Office Hours 9:00 - Deadline: Bulletin & Announcements <i>(March 13th)</i>	9 9:00 - 3:00 - Church Office Hours 7:30 - Young Life: Club	10 9:00 - 3:00 - Church Office Hours 2:00 - Choir Rehearsal 3:00 - Handbell Choir 6:30 - Bible Study	11 9:00 - 3:00 - Church Office Hours	12 Private Event (Fellowship Hall)
13 Daylight saving time begins 2nd Sunday in Lent 11:00 - Worship 12:45 - Session Meeting	14 Church Office Closed 7:00 - Boy Scouts 7:30 - Young Life: Campaigners	15 9:00 - 3:00 - Church Office Hours 9:00 - Deadline: Bulletin & Announcements <i>(March 20th)</i>	16 9:00 - 3:00 - Church Office Hours 7:30 - Young Life: Club	17 St. Patrick's Day 9:00 - 3:00 - Church Office Hours 1:00 - PW Circle 2:00 - Choir Rehearsal 3:00 - Handbell Choir 6:30 - Bible Study	18 9:00 - 3:00 - Church Office Hours 9:00 - Deadline: April 2022 Tower	19
20 Spring begins 3rd Sunday in Lent 11:00 - Worship	21 Church Office Closed 6:30 - Cub Scouts 7:00 - Boy Scouts 7:30 - Young Life: Campaigners	22 9:00 - 3:00 - Church Office Hours 9:00 - Deadline: Bulletin & Announcements <i>(March 27th)</i>	23 9:00 - 3:00 - Church Office Hours 7:30 - Young Life: Club	24 9:00 - 3:00 - Church Office Hours 2:00 - Choir Rehearsal 3:00 - Handbell Choir 6:30 - Bible Study	25 9:00 - 3:00 - Church Office Hours	26
27 4th Sunday in Lent 11:00 - Worship & Five Cents A Meal Offering	28 Church Office Closed 7:00 - Boy Scouts 7:30 - Young Life: Campaigners	29 9:00 - 3:00 - Church Office Hours 9:00 - Deadline: Bulletin & Announcements <i>(April 3rd)</i>	30 9:00 - 3:00 - Church Office Hours 7:30 - Young Life: Club	31 9:00 - 3:00 - Church Office Hours 2:00 - Choir Rehearsal 3:00 - Handbell Choir 6:30 - Bible Study		