

# NAPC's Dismissal from the PC(USA) – Findings of the Administrative Commission

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As most of you may know, for the past year and a half our church has been in an Elder led process pursuing dismissal from the PC(USA). Our desire is to communicate as clearly as possible with you, the church body we love so greatly. We are thankful for your many prayers, for your support, and for the privilege of serving Jesus and His mission alongside each of you (Philippians 1:3-5)!

Last Sunday, April 8th, we presented the findings of the Presbytery's Administrative Commission regarding NAPC's request for dismissal from the PC(USA). Below is a summary of that meeting, including the background, findings and future of our congregation.

## Background

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- In October 2014, sensing a growing distance between NAPC and our denomination, the NAPC Session (the elected Elder body of the church) appointed a Denominational Research Committee (DRC) to study the trajectory of the PC(USA) and that of NAPC.
- The DRC conducted extensive research over the span of a year and concluded its work with a report to NAPC session in which it relayed its findings: **there was significant and increasing misalignment between the PC(USA) and NAPC as to both theology and mission.**
- Following a time of discernment and prayer, the NAPC Session voted unanimously to recommend to our congregation that NAPC seek dismissal from PC(USA) and affiliate with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC).
- On November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016, after an educational period for our church, we held a congregational meeting and vote. **87% of those members in attendance voted in favor of seeking dismissal from the PC(USA) and pursuing affiliation with the EPC (185 to 28 actual votes).**
- The NAPC session immediately notified our presbytery, the Presbytery of Scioto Valley (PSV), of our request for dismissal under PSV's own "Policy for Gracious Separation of Congregations from the PSV." The PSV responded in writing that they would process our requested under the Gracious Dismissal Policy and, in February 2017, formed an Administrative Commission (AC) to review the request of NAPC.
- The AC spent approximately a years' time gathering information, conducting 1-1 interviews with our members, and holding an informational meeting. They saw great unity in our church behind our mission of "glorifying God through lives changed by Jesus Christ."
- At some point in 2017, the AC was approached by a group of former attendees who expressed interest in our church building. The former attendees had stopped attending either after the vote to leave the PC(USA) or had left 6 years prior to that, in 2012.

# Findings of the Administrative Commission

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On March 6th, the AC met with the NACP Session to present its findings:

- 1) The AC announced that it was not going to follow its own Gracious Separation policy. Up until this point, we had understood and operated under the idea the policy would be followed.
- 2) The AC believed a “schism” had occurred within NACP, such that there were two factions of the congregation: 1) Our current NACP Congregation of approximately 500 attendees that meet every Sunday and 2) The group of approximately 75 former attendees.
- 3) In its discussions with the two factions, the AC came to the determination that a reconciliation of the two factions is not possible.
- 4) Because of this, the AC found that the faction of former attendees constituted the “true church.”
- 5) The AC found that it was satisfied with the “financial viability” of this faction of former attendees.
- 6) Based on findings 1 through 5 above, the AC found that under Section G-4.0207 of the PC(USA)’s *Book of Order*, it had no choice but to give the church building to the faction of the former attendees.

## Future

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### Process

- These initial findings are just that: initial. The negotiation process has just begun and will likely take months. We are doing everything we can to negotiate for the best possible outcome for our church.

### Contingency

- **No matter what comes, we will continue to worship together on Sundays.** We have contingency plans in place for this to happen, including location and communication plans.
- Regardless of what ultimately occurs with the physical property, during this negotiation time we will continue to worship here at this building.

### Financial Giving/Tithing

- Please continue to give your tithes and offerings during this transition, as a dramatic decrease in giving would severely hinder the current and future success of our mission to glorify God through lives changed by Jesus Christ.

## Staff

- Regardless of what happens with this transition and no matter where we worship, **David and the rest of the staff will continue to lead and serve our congregation.**

### **Most importantly, our God is sovereign!**

- “And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.” – Colossians 1:17
- “He determines the number of the stars; he gives to all of them their names. Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure.” – Psalm 147:4-5
- He knows what’s coming, He goes before us, and we as Elders believe He has a future for us that is greater than we could imagine!

We recognize that there is much to process in this letter and many mixed emotions that may be associated with this as well. We want you to know that there is a plan in place for responding to these findings and planning for what lies ahead, including the formation of three separate committees: Negotiation, Communication and Future Planning.

If you have any questions whatsoever, please do not hesitate to reach out to any of us as Elders.

Finally, we are all in this together! May we as a church be gospel mission minded as we seek to honor God and His word in this time. **Let us not forget the character of the God whom we serve: He is sovereign and good and is leading us through it all!**

In Christ,

NAPC Session

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