



8/3/2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Earlier this year, the Elder Board of Peace Church conducted a review of our relationship with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC). This periodic review of our church's relationship with our denomination is a regular duty of the Elder Board according to our church bylaws.

The question explored in our review process was this: How does our relationship with the EPC impact our ability to fulfill God's calling for Peace Church? The review process included review of EPC policies and procedures, review of recent developments within the EPC, and interviews with our pastors.

On February 2, the elders issued a letter to church members explaining this process and their conclusions. That letter can be found at [peacechurch.cc/independent](http://peacechurch.cc/independent).

In short, the elders came to several conclusions about our relationship with the EPC:

- 1) Our association with the EPC has slowed our ability to integrate new pastors into our church. Currently, only Pastor Adam is considered a pastor by our denomination.
- 2) Our association with the EPC has resulted in theological resistance for our pastors. Our pastors seeking to transfer into the EPC faced significant resistance for holding a theological position that our church affirms as the teaching of the Bible.<sup>1</sup>
- 3) Our association with the EPC has not resulted in a positive return on our investment. While Pastor Adam has invested significant amounts of time and energy into the EPC over the last five years, Peace Church has not experienced any measurable benefit from this investment.

Following our review of the relationship between Peace Church and the EPC, and after much prayer and consideration, the Elder Board ultimately and unanimously concluded that Peace Church would be best enabled to fulfill our calling by becoming independent from the EPC.

The process for becoming independent is outlined in the EPC Book of Order (Chapter 5, Section 10). In accordance with those guidelines, the elders of Peace Church have taken the following steps:

- 1) On January 28, 2020, the Elder Board of Peace Church notified the Midwest Presbytery of the EPC of their desire for independence in writing.
- 2) On February 2, the elders issued a letter to Peace Church members explaining the review process and inviting members to ask questions of their zone elder.

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<sup>1</sup> The position referred to is complementarianism. Complementarians believe God created men and women equal in value, but distinct in role. God has given both men and women extraordinary gifts for ministry but has called men into unique roles of Christ-like leadership in the home and in the church while calling women into unique roles of Christ-like submission.



- 3) On May 17, 2020, elders of Peace Church met with members of the Midwest Presbytery to discuss their desire for independence via Zoom and the recorded video was made available to the congregation. (This meeting was originally scheduled to be an in-person congregational meeting but was moved due to Zoom due to COVID).
- 4) A congregational meeting was scheduled for August 16, 2020 to vote on the request of our elders to become independent of the EPC. Due to COVID, this vote will be taken by mail-in ballot.

The next and final step in the process is a congregational vote to affirm the request of our elders for Peace Church to become independent from the EPC and therefore become an independent, non-denominational church.

As elders, we are incredibly excited about what God is doing at Peace Church! We continue to grow as disciples of Jesus, reach the lost, as well as raise up and send out leaders to preach the gospel. We are deeply thankful for the encouragement, support, and unity we have experienced from all of you throughout this process. We are also thankful for the way the EPC welcomed us five years ago during a period of transition in our church. We depart with nothing but gratitude and prayers for God's continued work through the EPC.

Additional resources about this process can be found at [peacechurch.cc/independent](https://peacechurch.cc/independent).

\*Letter to the congregation, February 2

\*Video of meeting between Peace elders and members of Presbytery, May 17

\*Written responses to questions from members of Presbytery, May 17

\*FAQ (see attached)

If you have additional questions, please contact your zone elder or the church office at [office@peacechurch.cc](mailto:office@peacechurch.cc) or 616-891-8119.