



Evangelical
Covenant
Order
OF PRESBYTERIANS

ECO is committed
to growing and planting
flourishing churches
that make disciples
of Jesus Christ.

The History of ECO

In the summer of 2010, seven pastors from the Presbyterian Church (USA) spoke of finding new ways to encourage each other in faith, ministry, and mission. They were concerned by the declining membership within their denomination (from four million to two million in 40 years), and they worried that growing denominational disputes over theology and bureaucracy stole focus from their pastoral calling of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ and equipping a new generation to lead. These pastors dreamed of reclaiming a sense of covenanted community among leaders from a Presbyterian and Reformed heritage, and to find new ways for churches to connect, grow, and multiply.

In January 2011, these pastors sent out a letter to PC(USA) pastors around the country, asking if others wanted to join in crafting a new way forward. The response was overwhelming: just seven months later, in August 2011, nearly 2,000 men and women gathered in Minneapolis to dream and pray. This became the birth of The Fellowship of Presbyterians, a ministry association that seeks to equip and connect those in various Presbyterian denominations including the PC(USA). But some pastors and congregations felt God calling them to leave the PC(USA), and many young seminarians were looking for a different context for ordination. As a result, in January 2012, at a conference in Orlando with more than 2,200 in attendance, a new denomination was formed: ECO: A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians.

ECO today is a diverse and fast-growing denomination, with churches ranging in size from 50 members to 4,000 members. In the first year, 80 churches either joined ECO or began the process of joining. 105 people also applied for ordination. In the second year, these numbers doubled and continue to climb into 2014. (Membership as of 7/15/2014: 145 churches with 120 more currently seeking dismissal to ECO, and 221 clergy members) Though ECO was originally born out of the work of The Fellowship of Presbyterians, these organizations exist today as separate entities — ECO as a Reformed denomination and The Fellowship as a ministry association serving multiple denominations — but they remain partners in a common mission: *to build flourishing churches that make disciples of Jesus Christ.*