

ABOUT THE ERPC

In an era of widespread compromise in the Reformed church, The Evangelical Reformed Presbyterian Church stands without compromise or apology for authentic Biblical Christianity.

- We preach the one true Gospel to the exclusion of all false gospels.
- We teach Biblical truth regarding the meaning and purpose of baptism and the Lord's Supper, to the exclusion of all error.
- We conduct worship with Biblical reverence, dignity, and God-centeredness.
- We practice Biblical discipline in doctrine and life.
- We hold to the Scriptures as the fully inspired, fully inerrant, infallible Word of God, and to the principle that Scripture is its only infallible interpreter.
- Following the example of our Lord and his apostles, we do not fear to speak against error.

These are neglected principles in our time. The Evangelical Reformed Presbyterian Church seeks to be, by God's grace, an instrument to bring about a much-needed *new Reformation among the Reformed*.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

THE EVANGELICAL REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

P. O. Box 314
Dresher, PA 19025

Phone 1-888-368-4351

E-Mail Ministry@erpchurch.org

Web www.erpchurch.org

AFFILIATING WITH THE ERPC

A GUIDE FOR PASTORS, SESSIONS & CONGREGATIONS

We welcome local congregations

desiring to affiliate with The Evangelical Reformed Presbyterian Church. We count it a privilege to stand together for the truth, under the supreme authority of the Word of God and the headship of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to work together for His glory. As our *Form of Government* (4.8) states:

It is highly desirable and the teaching of the Word that particular congregations should be associated together with others of like precious faith for mutual fellowship, encouragement, advancement of the cause of Christ, and testimony to His truth.

Our *Form of Government* (5.2) also makes it clear that this relationship is a voluntary one:

Particular congregations need remain in association with The Evangelical Reformed Presbyterian Church only so long as they themselves desire. The relationship is voluntary, based only upon mutual love and confidence, and is in no sense to be maintained by the exercise of any kind of force or coercion whatsoever.

If you desire to affiliate with others who share this Scriptural vision for the church, standing together without compromise for authentic Biblical Christianity, we hope you will prayerfully consider becoming a part of The Evangelical Reformed Presbyterian Church.

The purpose of this guide is to outline the steps involved in affiliating with the ERPC. If you need further assistance, please contact us (see panel at left). We will be glad to help you.

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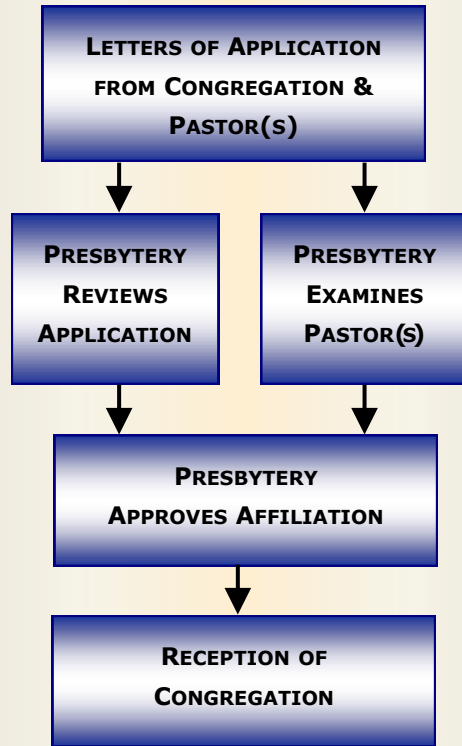
AFFILIATING WITH THE ERPC

A Guide for Pastors, Sessions & Congregations

THE EVANGELICAL REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The process for receiving an existing congregation into The Evangelical Reformed Presbyterian Church is regulated by *Form of Government* Chapter 6, "Concerning Joining and Withdrawing of Congregations." You can view our full Constitution online at our website, www.erpchurch.org. You can also purchase printed copies; see "For More Information" elsewhere in this guide.

The steps in the process are outlined on the following pages. Some can occur in parallel:



Numbers in parentheses on the following pages refer to sections of the ERPC *Form of Government* (FOG).

1 LETTERS OF APPLICATION FROM CONGREGATION & PASTOR(S)

A congregation desiring to affiliate with the ERPC begins the process by sending a letter of application to a presbytery. You may send it directly to the presbytery, or through the session of an existing congregation with which the applying church has been in contact (FOG 6.1-6.2).

At the same time, the pastor(s) of the congregation apply to transfer their ministerial credentials to the ERPC. The transfer process for pastors is described in another guide in this series, *Transferring Your Credentials to the ERPC*.

2a PRESBYTERY REVIEWS APPLICATION

The presbytery appoints an *ad hoc* committee, or the session of an ERPC congregation, to examine the congregation that desires to affiliate. The examination, described in FOG 6.4, covers these points:

- Is it the will of the session and congregation to affiliate with the ERPC?
- Do all of the officers of the congregation fully subscribe to the Constitution of the ERPC, including its Doctrinal Standards, Form of Government, Book of Discipline, and Directory for Worship?
- Are the members of the congregation willing to be governed by the Constitution of the ERPC?

- Are the members of the congregation, both corporately and individually, conducting themselves and the ministries of the church in submission to the Scriptures?

The examining *ad hoc* committee or session presents its findings in writing to the presbytery before it votes on whether or not to receive the congregation.

2b PRESBYTERY EXAMINES PASTOR(S)

The presbytery also examines the congregation's pastor(s) for transfer of their ministerial credentials. Please refer to the companion guide, *Transferring Your Credentials to the ERPC*, for more information.

3 PRESBYTERY APPROVES AFFILIATION

After the presbytery has received the report of the examining committee or session, and has examined the pastor(s) of the applying congregation, the presbytery may then vote on the congregation's application for affiliation. A three-fourths majority is required to receive a congregation into the ERPC.

4 RECEPTION OF CONGREGATION

As soon as convenient after the presbytery has approved the congregation's application to affiliate, the congregation

will be formally received into the ERPC. This is done at the conclusion of a worship service, which usually includes a sermon on the doctrine of the Church and the duties of its members.

After the worship service, the presiding minister appointed by the presbytery will determine that at least half of the communicant members of the congregation who are eligible to vote under its bylaws, are present. He will then call upon the congregation to enter into affiliation with the ERPC by answering affirmatively the following question:

Do you, in reliance on God's grace, solemnly promise that you will walk together as a particular congregation, under the authority of the only Head of the Church, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, according to Word of God, and according to the Constitution of The Evangelical Reformed Presbyterian Church?

Upon the affirmative answer of the congregation, the presiding minister will then say:

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the authority of the Presbytery, I now declare that you are constituted a particular congregation of The Evangelical Reformed Presbyterian Church.

The presiding minister, and the pastor of the congregation, will both lead the people in prayer, and the pastor will pronounce the benediction. Officers and members of ERPC congregations who are present will join in welcoming their brothers and sisters in Christ to The Evangelical Reformed Presbyterian Church.