

A New Denominational Home - Welcome to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church

On June 4, 2007 the Elders of Upper Octorara unanimously voted to call a congregational meeting for Sunday, June 24th to vote on disaffiliating from the Presbyterian Church USA and affiliating with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. The Elders reached this decision after a lengthy time of prayer and study. For years the Presbyterian Church USA has been caught up in debate and division over a variety of issues. These debates have included the nature of the Trinity, the divinity of Jesus, the authority of Scripture, the way of salvation, the sanctity of human life, and standards for ordination. Much time, energy and resources are consumed in these debates, which side track the church from fulfilling its mission. Such topics that the Scriptures clearly address have become matters of controversy because there is no clear declaration of the essentials of faith in the PCUSA. This has allowed different interpretations to come into the church. While there is always room in the church for diversity in non-essential matters, the essentials of the faith must be upheld. We believe that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, not one way among many. We believe in the authority of Scripture over matters of faith and life, not allowing experience, emotions or opinion to rule. We believe that the ethical standards of Scripture are to be upheld, not considered as a possibility while each one goes their own way. As long as the Presbyterian Church USA continues to embrace mutually exclusive beliefs, we believe that the conflict and debate will continue.

The Elders reached the firm conviction that the best course of action for the life and mission of Upper Octorara Presbyterian Church *was* to disaffiliate from the Presbyterian Church USA and affiliate with another Presbyterian denomination that expresses and upholds the essentials of the faith. We recognize that there are other congregations and individuals within the PCUSA who hold to the same Biblical values that we do, yet they feel called to stay within their present denomination. We pray God's blessings upon them. As we have sought the Lord, we believe that we are following His call and direction for Upper Octorara. The New Wineskins Association of Churches (www.newwineconvo.com) and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (www.epc.org) *have clear statements* of the essentials of the faith, and we agree with them. Upper Octorara has been a New Wineskins endorsing congregation. At their June 2007 General Assembly, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church approved the formation of a non-geographic New Wineskins Presbytery. The Elders recommended that Upper Octorara affiliate with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church as part of the New Wineskins Presbytery.

At the congregational meeting on Sunday, June 24th, the people of Upper Octorara voted 113 yes and 11 no "to disaffiliate from the Presbyterian Church USA." They also voted 115 yes, 6 no, and 3 abstentions "to affiliate with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church." Not included in the vote totals were 28 letters of intent received from church members who could not be at the meeting. All of the letters were in favor of disaffiliation from the Presbyterian Church USA and affiliation with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

During the days following the vote, the Elders applied for Upper Octorara to join the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. On July 2, 2007, Upper Octorara Presbyterian Church and Rev. William E. Kelly, Jr. were received into the New Wineskins Presbytery of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.