

I am always skeptical of grandiose news headlines like, “The Storm of the Century is coming!” It seems that we have all seen a dozen “Storms of the Century” in our lives. So I don’t say this lightly, because I never want to be an alarmist, but the events of 2020 are truly unprecedented for our lifetime. All that is taking place currently will most certainly have long-term implications for the church.

This season has taken a toll on our pastors. One said, “I have been through some crazy session meetings over the last decade, but session meetings over the last three months have been the most divisive and emotionally charged meetings we’ve ever had.” Nevertheless, throughout the past months, our covenant order has been there for each other more than ever. Pastors have dug deeper into their covenant groups. Churches are supporting one another with practical help. Presbyteries are finding new ways to come alongside one another. We have seen phenomenal utilization of national resources. For these reasons, and many others, I am thankful.

Our circumstances throughout 2020 have heightened my awareness of the need to fulfill the vision of our Leadership Development Initiatives, which states that we desire “to saturate our broken and hurting world with the transforming power of Jesus Christ with 1,000 planted, revitalized, and flourishing ECO congregations and micro-expressions by 2030”.

ECO has been able to do some amazing work with each of our church’s annual contribution of 1%, which supports revitalization, planting, lay leadership development, first call pastor cohorts, seminary courses, and more. At the same time, we will need an even greater investment in order to make our vision a reality. The next three years are critical as we build, enhance, and multiply our ministry initiatives. To get there, we are asking each ECO congregation to consider giving an additional 1% to Leadership Development Initiatives as part of their mission giving.

Through the generosity of churches, individuals, and foundations, we hope to raise an additional \$1 million in 2021, above and beyond our congregations’ 1% giving. The goal is to continue to increase support, so that by 2023 we are raising \$3 million, which would double our current budget. The money we raise in the next three years will go toward increasing our capacity for the future.



Donations to Leadership Development Initiatives will specifically fund the following:

- Training **50 new church planters** and helping launch **50 church plants**. (50% of funds)
- Finishing building out seminary or **seminary-like ministry training opportunities** as a way to develop future pastors and Commissioned Lay Pastors. (15% of funds)
- Engaging **100 ministry candidates** in the revised ordination process. (15% of funds)
- Engaging 100 pastors and lay leaders in learning communities that lead to **church transformation** and clarity of vision. (10% of funds)
- Coaching, encouraging and spiritually forming **50 first call pastors**. (5% of funds)
- Starting **100 missional communities**. (5% of funds)

We would love to have your church consider participating in giving through your mission budget, additional funds, and/or presenting the Leadership Development Initiatives to your congregation for special offerings.

We would also welcome the opportunity to have a 15 minute conversation with you and your session for a brief presentation and to answer any questions. To schedule this conversation, please e-mail investinthefuture@eco-pres.org. Since we have talked about these initiatives frequently in the past year, if your congregation has already determined to join us, we would love for you to fill out the commitment form at eco-pres.org/INVESTINTHEFUTURE

I cannot thank you enough for your leadership and support in these extremely challenging times. I am so grateful for our ECO community and how the Lord is reminding us of our need for flourishing leaders that will continue to launch new churches and strengthen already flourishing ones. I consider it an honor to support you as you serve your congregation and community.

In Christ,



Dana Allin | Synod Executive

ECO: A COVENANT ORDER OF EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIANS

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