

October 26, 2007

Dear Sisters and Brother in Christ,

Magistrate John Shoemaker of the Summit County Common Pleas Court ruled against Eastminster Presbytery, rejecting a long-standing principle that all property of Hudson Presbyterian Church is held in trust for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Instead, Magistrate Shoemaker ruled in favor of the faction of the church that wishes to leave the denomination in possession of the church property.

In October, 2006, the Hudson Presbyterian Church session obtained from the court a temporary restraining order against Eastminster Presbytery, a middle governing of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) including the greater Akron, Warren, and Youngstown areas. At the time the presbytery had called a special meeting to consider what response to make to the Hudson session's recommendation to the congregation to end its affiliation with the denomination. On November 5, 2006, the congregation voted 166-61 to unilaterally withdraw from the denomination, an action forbidden by the church's constitution. On November 14, Eastminster Presbytery named the minority wishing to continue as a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregation as the true Hudson Presbyterian Church. Since that date, Eastminster Presbytery has organized regular worship and fellowship events for the congregation in different locations. On June 10, the congregation celebrated the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the chartering of the Hudson Presbyterian Church.

Eastminster Presbytery's attorney is filing objections to the magistrate's ruling because it contradicts the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) which states that all church property is held in trust for the whole church. I am concern is about far more than church property. In this ruling, it appears that the civil court has effectively rewritten the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and interfered in the internal matters of the church. I am also deeply saddened for those church members who wished to continue in affiliation with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), many of whom helped to found the church as a witness to Jesus Christ in Hudson.

With financial assistance from all levels of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Eastminster Presbytery has committed itself to the redevelopment of the congregation it first organized in 1982.

In Christ's service together,  
Dan Schomer