



## **EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERY**

Synod of the Covenant-Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
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*General Presbyter*

META S. CRAMER  
*Stated Clerk*

May 29, 2008

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

On May 27 we received the disappointing news that Judge Mary Spicer, Court of Common Pleas of Summit Co., had largely sided with the Hudson Presbyterian Church and against Eastminster Presbytery and the Ohio Attorney General's Office. While Judge Spicer affirmed a number of Eastminster's objections, her order concurred with the decision of Magistrate Shoemaker that the Hudson Presbyterian Church controls the property.

So what is at stake here? It is far more than property. The *primary* issue continues to be whether or not the civil courts may rewrite the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Do congregations hold all property in trust for the sake of the mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)? Should the answer to this question be decided by the church or by the civil courts? At this point, in the state of Ohio, the answer that is being given is, "the civil courts." I find that disturbing.

But there is more. The Presbyterian Church of Hudson, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), is a displaced congregation. With funding from the General Assembly, Synod, and Presbytery, and with the Rev. Sue Tinker as their new pastor, we are looking for this small but mighty congregation to grow spiritually and in numbers. This congregation is largely composed of charter members of the Hudson Presbyterian Church whose prayers, gifts, and perspiration made the dream of a Presbyterian Church in Hudson a reality in 1982. Each time we have received a disappointing ruling from the courts, I picture the faces then and now of fellow Presbyterians in Hudson.

It's not property with which I'm concerned. I'm concerned about *principle* and *people*. At the special meeting of Eastminster Presbytery on June 10, 2008, at 7:15 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church in Warren, I hope the presbytery will vote in the affirmative to appeal Judge Spicer's ruling to the State Court of Appeals.

In Christ's service together,  
Dan Schomer