

**Comparison of Basic Beliefs of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (PCUSA) and
Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians (ECO)**

ISSUE	PC(USA)	ECO
When did the denomination come into existence?	1983	2012
Does the denomination list what it considers to be essential tenets (Foundational beliefs) of the faith?	No	Yes. Its essential tenets are attached
What are deacons, ruling elders, and teaching elders asked in their ordination vows about Scripture?	“Do you accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be, by the Holy Spirit, the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ universal, and God’s Word to you?”	“Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the Word of God, and, inspired by the Holy Spirit, the unique witness to Jesus Christ and the authority for Christian faith and life?”
What are deacons, elders, and pastors asked concerning Jesus Christ as Savior?	“Do you trust in Jesus Christ as your Savior, acknowledge him Lord of all and Head of the Church, and through him believe in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?”	“Do you believe in One God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and do you boldly declare Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and acknowledge Him Lord of all and Head of the Church?”
Is the incarnation (that Jesus is fully God and fully man) upheld?	The PC(USA) has stated this, but not listed in any “essential tenets.”	Yes (included in its essential tenets)
Is substitutionary atonement by Jesus Christ taught?	The PC(USA) has stated this, but not listed in any “essential tenets.”	Yes, in the ECO’s Book of Confessions.
Confessions/Creeds	9 confessions plus 3 catechisms (once Belhar is added)	8 confessions plus 3 catechism)
Are Women Ordained?	Yes	Yes
Position on Marriage?	Between any two people, regardless of gender	One man and one woman
Ordained leaders expected to live in fidelity in marriage and chastity in nonmarriage?	No	Yes
Position on Abortion	Counsels that keeping the baby, adoption and abortion are viable choices	No formal position. FAQ states that all life is sacred
Ownership of Church Property	Held by congregation for the benefit of the PC(USA)	Owned by congregation

Excerpted from “Comparison of Basic Beliefs and Viewpoints of Three Presbyterian Denominations, Office of Theology and Worship, Presbyterian Mission Agency, January 1, 2015

Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians (ECO) Essential Tenets

1. The great purpose toward which each human life is drawn is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.
2. We glorify God by recognizing and receiving His authoritative self-revelation, both in the infallible Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and also in the incarnation of God the Son.
3. With Christians everywhere, we worship the only true God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—who is both one essence and three persons.
4. Jesus Christ is both truly God and truly human.
5. The divinity of the Son is in no way impaired, limited, or changed by His gracious act of assuming a human nature, and that His true humanity is in no way undermined by His continued divinity.
6. The risen Jesus, who was sent from the Father, has now ascended to the Father in His resurrected body and remains truly human.
7. The same Jesus Christ who is now ascended and who will one day return visibly in the body to judge the living and the dead.
8. We are able to confess Jesus Christ as Lord and God only through the work of the Holy Spirit.
9. The present disordered state of the world, in which we and all things are subject to misery and to evil, is not God's doing, but is rather a result of humanity's free, sinful rebellion against God's will.
10. No part of human life is untouched by sin. Our desires are no longer trustworthy guides to goodness, and what seems natural to us no longer corresponds to God's design.
11. In union with Christ through the power of the Spirit we are brought into right relation with the Father, who receives us as His adopted children. Jesus Christ is the only Way to this adoption, the sole path by which sinners become children of God.
12. Having lost true freedom of will in the fall, we are incapable of turning toward God of our own volition. God chooses us for Himself in grace before the foundation of the world, not because of any merit on our part, but only because of His love and mercy.
13. Through His regenerating and sanctifying work, the Holy Spirit grants us faith and enables holiness, so that we may be witnesses of God's gracious presence to those who are lost.
14. In Christ, we are adopted into the family of God and find our new identity as brothers and sisters of one another, since we now share one Father.
15. Within the covenant community of the church, God's grace is extended through the preaching of the Word, the administration of the sacraments, and the faithful practice of mutual discipline.
16. The ministries of the church reflect the three-fold office of Christ as prophet, priest, and king—reflected in the church's ordered ministries of teaching elders, deacons, and ruling elders.
17. Jesus teaches us that we are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind. There is no part of human life that is off limits to the sanctifying claims of God.
18. Progress in holiness is an expected response of gratitude to the grace of God, which is initiated, sustained, and fulfilled by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.
19. As we practice the discipline of regular self-examination and confession, we are especially guided by the Ten Commandments.