



# Savannah Presbytery

## June 2021 Newsletter

### Transitional General Presbyter's Corner

#### **Build back better Build back different, or, Build back the same?**

*“When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests in their vestments and with trumpets, and the Levites (the sons of Asaph) with cymbals, each were taking their places to praise the LORD as prescribed by David King of Israel. With praise and thanksgiving, they sang to the LORD: ‘He is good; his love toward Israel endures forever.’ And the people gave a great shout of praise to the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid. But many of the older priests and Levites and family heads, who had seen the former temple, wept aloud when they saw the foundation of the temple being laid. No one could distinguish the shouts of joy from the sound of weeping because the people made so much noise. And the sound was heard far away.”*

Ezra 3:10-13 (NIV)

Upon returning from their exile in Babylon, one of the first desires of the children of Israel was to rebuild the Temple of God. Unfortunately, not all agreed as to what the Temple should look like or how it was to be built. The eldest in the group who remembered the grandeur of the temple built by Solomon, wanted to replicate it upon the same old foundations.

The ones who were born in Babylon or were children during the exile, wanted to lay a new foundation. There was much fervor over this, and the generation with youth on its side took the lead. With shouts of joy, they laid a new foundation. Equally loud, the elders cried and wailed for memories long gone. So loud were the sounds, that they could not be distinguished one from the other. Opposition rose its head several times, halting the work. The new temple was built but not without passionate rebellion and discord.

We are returning from an exile due to COVID-19. Thus, we are in the midst of determining how we will rebuild our Church/churches. As in the case of the early Christian church, we have discovered that, while not ideal, we can be the Church without having a building. We can continue ministries without having “places”. We are in a pivotal moment in the historic life of the church. It is time to build back, so what do we want our church to look like?

Far be it for me to suggest that we do anything radical (after all, that’s unpresbyterian). I am suggesting that now is a good time to reflect on where God is leading us. Do we try to build back on the old foundations? Or do we re-examine what it means to be the Church in a post pandemic age?

It is a time for soul-searching questions:

As ruling and teaching elders, were you satisfied with the direction and ministry of your church before COVID? What things did God teach you about being the Church in exile? Do

you build back better, build back the same or build back differently as we enter a new era in a changed world?

In a recent webinar by Tod Bolsinger, Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology at Fuller Seminary, and Presbyterian minister, this summary statement was made based on a survey:

**“No one cares if your institution survives, they care if they think you care about them.”**

However your congregation chooses to build back, will you do it in such a way that the community around you knows, without a doubt, that you care about them? Can you reflect the love of Christ at the possible cost of being comfortable resting upon the old foundation?

Blessings, Peace and Gratitude,

**Rev. Alan Baroody**  
*Transitional General Presbyter*

## From the Desk of the Stated Clerk

Thanks to all who made our last presbytery meeting run so smoothly! There was a lot of planning, videoing, pushing of buttons and sharing of files that made that meeting possible! Thanks especially to our Moderator, Doty Dunn and chair of the Council Deanie Strength. Thanks too, for Andy Meeker and Jaclyn Beeler for stepping in the technology slot as Marty Susie was away following the death of her mother in law.

I participated recently in a ZOOM meeting of the leadership from the Synod of South Atlantic. Here are a few tidbits I picked up:

- *Pandemic* means “all over!” Presbyteries just like ours and churches just like yours are all struggling to discern the kairos and chronos of resuming in-person gatherings. If you are wondering, there is no consensus! There are as many variations of future worship styles and schedules as there are sand gnats in Savannah! Don’t feel like the *Lone Ranger!*
- At this last meeting of presbytery there was wide discussion of what the word *virtual* is all about. I learned that many presbyteries are using the word *digital* to describe their future. That might be more appropriate. I did not hear anyone say that post-pandemic would be a return to 100% in person everything! COVID has taught us that regardless the quality of a meeting, a 1-3 hour drive back home afterwards kills the buzz! ZOOM and its variants are now a permanent part of our existence. I may even have to learn how to host a meeting!
- Savannah Presbytery has officially entered a season of serious discernment for its future form. The Council and Transition Team will now begin focussed discussions on the physical profile of a *Savannah Presbytery*. A physical office, a staffing paradigm, presbytery gatherings, and retention of records are all on the table for discussion. If you would like to be an active part of that discussion contact Ben Beasley or Deanie Strength. My meeting today confirmed that many of the presbyteries in our synod are in the same discussions!

We grieve the loss of Mary Lott Walker, Clerk of Session at Blackshear Presbyterian Church. She was quite a character: *Don’t email me, I don’t have a computer or cell phone!*

I do hope my Clerks of Session are working on reading their partner’s minutes! Deadline: October 1, 2021.

Holler if you need me!

Grace and Peace,  
**Proctor Chambliss**  
*Stated Clerk*

## Strengthen a Presbytery Committee!

We carry out our work through active committees and these have found new energy through the use of Zoom technology (which has also eliminated the need to travel hours to meetings!). The Nominating Committee is working to fill 1-2 vacancies on each of the following committees and would appreciate hearing from persons willing to serve. Please contact Chair Rev. Jamil el-Shair at [elshairj@gmail.com](mailto:elshairj@gmail.com) or call (404) 839-6241.

- Presbytery Council – Deanie Strength, Chair
- Committee on Ministry – Jean Vernon, Chair
- Committee on Preparation for Ministry – Annie Franklin Arvin, Chair
- Mission Committee – Barbara Conner, Chair
- Stewardship & Finance Committee – Deanie Strength, Chair
- M.K. Pentecost Ecology Fund Committee – Ed Torgersen, Chair

---

## Welcome to the Presbytery!

### **At its Spring Stated Meeting, we received new minister members:**

- Rev. Jim Jackson, Honorably Retired from Foothills Presbytery, who is making his residence on St. Simons Island and is available for pulpit supply.
- Rev. Janice West, from Albany Presbytery, who is beginning her work as Interim Pastor for First Brunswick

---

## Presbyterian Women

After a year of meeting on zoom we met in person for the first time on March 27, 2021. We welcomed Synod of the South Atlantic's PW representative, Molly McCarthy our as our guest. Barbara Riddle was installed as Vice Moderator for a one year term and Katie Hogan was installed as representative for District 2. Some other news to take note of:

- We helped collect used Horizon books that have been delivered to Mission Haven. They are excited to be celebrating 70 years of service this year at Mission Haven.
- The Altama Presbyterian Women are in the process of regrouping so please keep this group of women in your prayers.
- The committee decided to not have our annual gathering this year and instead provide the women in the churches a collection of facts about their work. It was compiled by Marti Stein and Charlotte Keenoy with help from all the committee members. If you have not seen this document, check with your church office.
- In the year of 2021 we work to support Columbia Friendship. Each year 4 scholarships are given and your pledges help with this project, thank you.

## News from our Churches

**Richmond Hill Presbyterian  
Church**

Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church is seeking an Administrative Assistant for 15 hours per week. Please contact Rev. Kathi Parchem for more information, [klparchem@yahoo.com](mailto:klparchem@yahoo.com)



## Henry Memorial Presbyterian Church

Henry Memorial Presbyterian Church will soon be celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of its sanctuary on Bellevue Avenue in Dublin. The first worship service there occurred on June 19, 1921. On June 20, 2021 the congregation will welcome a former pastor, Rev. Dr. Proctor Chambless, as the guest preacher. Worship will

be led by the Interim Pastor, Rev. Dr. Ricky Porter. Special music by the choir, a display of items significant to the history of the church, and a celebration lunch after the worship service are planned. During the worship services on the Sundays leading up to the celebration date, a church member will read a short passage highlighting an interesting part of the church history in the past 100 years. A local historian, Scott Thompson, will feature the church in a local newspaper article that weekend.

Henry Memorial Presbyterian Church was originally named Dublin Presbyterian Church and was founded by 13 dedicated Presbyterians in 1897. They met for two years in the Masonic Lodge in Dublin while the first church building was being planned and constructed. Much of the planning of the construction and financing of the church building was due to the tireless efforts of Captain Robert C. Henry. The first worship service in the original building occurred on 1899.

Sadly, Captain Henry died in 1900 after an extended illness. He was buried in Northview Cemetery in Dublin. Soon after his death, the name of the church was changed to Henry Memorial Presbyterian Church in his honor. His wife, Louisa Henry, remained in Dublin for a number of years and continued to be an avid supporter of the church. She was instrumental in helping to finance the construction of the present-day sanctuary on Bellevue Avenue, and continued her support and interest even after she moved from Dublin to North Carolina. When she left Dublin, she had Captain Henry's body moved to a cemetery in North Carolina. Louisa lived to be 95 years old, and was laid to rest beside her beloved husband in North Carolina.

Submitted by,  
Barbara Riddle

## National Black Presbyterian Biennial Convention

**Registration is open NOW for the 46th Biennial National Black Presbyterian Caucus Virtual Convention.**

The Mission of the National Black Presbyterian Caucus is to serve Jesus Christ, and enrich the black Presbyterian congregations and their communities, through

our commitment to congregational enhancement, advocacy, social and racial justice; and challenging the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) when it fails to take seriously the needs of the poor, oppressed, and disenfranchised.

"Then the LORD said I've clearly seen my people oppressed in Egypt. I've heard their cry of injustice because of their slave masters. I know their pain" -Exodus 3:7 (CEB)

The National Black Presbyterian Caucus

46<sup>th</sup>  
BIENNIAL  
VIRTUAL  
CONVENTION

The Black Family, Congregation  
and Community in the Presbyterian  
Church USA: Navigating Identity,  
Equity and Economics

Rev. Dr. Thomas H. Priest Jr., President

JUNE 24-26, 2021  
Charleston, SC

Savannah Presbytery | [savannahpresbytery.org](http://savannahpresbytery.org)

