

PRESBYTERY REFLECTION

By Sheppards and Lapsley Vice-Moderator, Jothany James

AUGUST 2026

HOST: FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, TUSCALOOSA

Highlights of the August Presbytery meeting



Ministry within our Presbytery

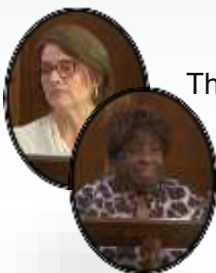


The worship service was led by Rev. Michael Bailey, who spoke on the topic of Pentecost.

Worship was followed by an update from Dr. Yolanda Page, President of Stillman College, about the wonderful and innovative happenings at the college.



The first part of the enrichment series consisted of a presentation by the Foot Soldiers about the Bloody Tuesday march in Tuscaloosa. This was followed by a time of reflection and interaction. The second part of the enrichment series was held at the First African Church after the Presbytery meeting.



The Commission on Ministry presented four action items, all of which were approved:

1. Dissolution of the relationship between Rev. Joe Scrivner and Brown Memorial Presbyterian Church and dismissal of Rev. Scrivner to Hudson River Presbytery.
2. Approval of the 2026 Minimum Terms of Call (the same as 2025).
3. Examination of Elder Sharon Stewart and commissioning her to serve as Commissioned Ruling Elder at Carbon Hill Presbyterian Church.
4. Approval of the 2026 Terms of Call for Installed Pastors.



Rev. Rachel Matthews presented a Living River “Good News” moment consisting of planned events for the coming year. She also announced Director Jenny Thagard’s retirement at the end of the year. Living River is also in need of a van if anyone has one to donate.



The Presbytery is a Matthew 25 Presbytery pledged to encourage congregational ministries to embrace the following areas of focus:

1. Building congregational vitality; dismantling structural racism; and eradicating systemic poverty.
2. Keeping track of the impact of these ministries and sharing our stories with each other and throughout the denomination.



The GA Commissioners’ Report was presented by Joe Genau, Rick Atkerson, and Darryl Love.

Ministry Within our Presbytery



Elder Bill Barret of First Eufaula presented the Living Waters for the World Report, highlighting that even Alabamians do not have clean water and the need for help in eradicating this toxic problem.



Keenan Rodgers for the Board of Pensions reported that United Health Care will replace Humana next year and provide greater benefits at the same cost.



Joe Genau reported that the Legacy Fund for Enduring Witness wants to hear about projects or ideas that connect to new church development or new worshipping communities' plans designed to enhance vitality and growth.



General Presbyter Mark McCormick shared a "Good News" moment with praise to God for the continued good work and the enrichment event led by the Anti-Racism Committee, the renewal of life and energy in Wilcox County and the Annie Manie initiative. Also, Linda Burrowes has again decided to step down and seems to be serious this time.



Ralls Coston reported that Annie Manie is progressing on schedule, that the Congo Pentecost has received \$6,000 and that Habitat for Humanity is planning a build in Birmingham.



Doug Marshall reported that the Presbyterian Home for Children has much to be thankful for the many good things happening including successful stories of the children living there.

Stated Clerk Marilyn McKelvey Tucker-Marek will be offering polity training for Commissioned Pastors, non-PCUSA pastors serving our congregations, and clerks of session.

Adjournment with prayer .

Vice Moderator Jothany James

Additional Highlights from the Meeting

