



I don't know if anyone else is experiencing this, but I've been going into withdrawal since the World Cup ended. My wife, who is not particularly enthused one way or another about soccer (or "football," as the rest of the planet calls it), very patiently endured my insistence that we watch as many matches as possible, and I am thankful for her indulgence.

The sports universe is always a rich environment for finding metaphors for life, and this event provided much to draw insight from. I think I've said this before, but I believe soccer is an excellent illustration of how life together is supposed to flow in a Presbyterian context. In American football, the team is headed up by the quarterback, who is the catalyst for all the action carried out by the other members. The rest of the team respond to the quarterback's direction, who is clearly the guiding force on the field. Church organizations that rely on hierarchical structures resemble a football team, with the heaviest expectation placed on the pastor to lead the team; if the pastor missteps, the whole game goes awry.

In soccer, while each team has a captain, the action is carried out by each member acting both independently and yet in sync with the others. There's a practiced choreography that ebbs and flows with the movement of the ball, and no one is waiting around for the leader of the team to tell them what to do. Even if the team captain falters, the other members almost effortlessly fill the gap, and the team carries on. In the Presbyterian system, if we truly honor the parity of roles between teaching elders and ruling elders, as well as an engaged congregation, a well-run church resembles a highly functioning soccer team, with each member taking responsibility and initiative to carry out the mission of the church.

The World Cup also provided a beautiful view of something universally celebrated among the wildly divergent people groups of our planet. Folks who do not resemble one another and have neither a common heritage nor a common language came together in pure fellowship woven together through love for the game. There was ferocious competition, yes, along with the usual sparks of contention but all came away with a bond that transcended both country and culture. To me that reflects the glimpse of eternity that John foresaw in Revelation 7:9 "And I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb..."

What this means is that when all is done, the nationalities and tribes and peoples and languages endure, but all are one in Christ. What's imperative for Christians now is to model that unity in the present, despite all the things that threaten to divide us, remembering that unity does not demand unanimity. Since we're going to be together throughout all the ages to come, we might as well learn how to get along now. Treasure the bond we have as the body of Christ, and invite others to share the joy that is ours in him and in one another.

Yours in Christ,

Ed

AROUND THE PRESBYTERY

Announcements & Opportunities



Building a More Caring World Stephen Ministries Regional Learning Event

Saturday, September 12, 2026
9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

(Check-in begins at 8:00 a.m.)

Cathedral of Christ the King • Atlanta, GA

Join Stephen Ministries as they celebrate 50 years of ministry with a regional learning event featuring founder Dr. Kenneth C. Haugk and other Stephen Ministries faculty.

Topics include:

Grief and hope

Caring for caregivers

Mental health ministry

Building compassionate congregations

Expanding congregational care through Stephen Ministry

Cost: \$15 per person

Optional Box Lunch: \$12

Space is limited.

Register at: stephenministries.org/celebrateATL



Grow, Connect, and Lead: Register for the Presbytery Leadership Event

Join us on Saturday, August 22, at Friendship Presbyterian Church in Athens from 10:00am-2:00pm for the Northeast Georgia Presbytery Leadership Event. This day is designed to equip, encourage, and connect church leaders through practical workshops, meaningful fellowship, and valuable ministry resources. Registration is \$20 per person and includes lunch.

Participants will have the opportunity to attend a variety of workshops, including “I Signed Up for What?” led by Rev. Steven Barnes, an exploration of the ordination vows of elders and deacons and what they mean for faithful leadership. Whether you are newly ordained or have served for many years, this workshop offers valuable insight into the calling and responsibilities of church officers.

Learn about the School of the Laity with Martie Susie, Director of Mission & Program Advancement for Savannah Presbytery. Discover opportunities for lifelong learning through courses in Scripture, Reformed theology, worship, Presbyterian history, polity, and more. She will also introduce the School’s three-year program for Ruling Elders discerning a call to become Commissioned Lay Pastors.

Rev. Dana Waters will present Project Regeneration on behalf of the Presbyterian Foundation. This program helps congregations strengthen their ministries by assessing financial health, operational practices, stewardship, and future opportunities through consultation and planning.

Clerks of Session are also invited to bring their Session minutes for review with our Stated Clerk, Rev. Jacob Douylliez, and complete this important annual responsibility.

Saturday, August 22, 10:00am-2:00pm
Friendship Presbyterian Church
8531 Macon Hwy, Athens, GA 30606

Register here:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeSiPvZ6zkeyFkZdb7DEi8_hFidKGwZ_YLXQtsv9T8WDuYT9A/viewform

Now Hiring: Director of Christian Education & Family Ministries

Covenant Presbyterian Church in Athens, Georgia, is seeking a half-time Director of Christian Education & Family Ministries. The person in this position will provide creative, collaborative, and dependable leadership as Covenant helps children, youth, and families grow as thoughtful, justice-seeking, and grace-filled disciples of Jesus Christ.

This is an excellent opportunity for someone who feels called to nurture faith, build meaningful relationships, and support families throughout the life of the church.

View the complete job description and application information:

<https://www.covpresathens.org/contact-us/employment/>

Please share this opportunity with anyone who may be a good fit for Covenant’s ministry!

Dear Clerks of Session,

Grace and peace to you!

I am writing to share the procedure for reviewing your congregation's 2025 Session minutes. As you know, one of the constitutional responsibilities of the presbytery is to ensure that the minutes of the councils under its jurisdiction are true and accurate reflections of their actions and proceedings.

This year's in-person review will be held in conjunction with the Presbytery Leadership Event on Saturday, August 22, 2026, at Friendship Presbyterian Church. I will be available throughout the day to assist with the review process, and lunch will be provided at no cost. An additional email with registration information will be sent next week.

I recognize that having only one date available for the in-person review may not work for everyone. If you are unable to attend on August 22, the following three options are available:

1. Express Review

You may email or mail copies of your constitutionally required policies, procedures, and supporting documentation to me for review. At a minimum, please submit:

- The Session Records Review Checklist, signed and dated by both the Clerk and Moderator
- Your congregation's sexual misconduct and harassment policy
- Your child, youth, and vulnerable adult protection policy
- Your anti-racism policy
- Your financial review policy
- A copy of your 2025 budget and 2025 financial review

While not required, copies of your Session minutes would also be helpful in completing the Express Review.

2. Peer Review

You may arrange to meet with another Clerk of Session and exchange minutes for peer review. Both Clerks must submit a completed Session Records Review Checklist attesting to the accuracy of the minutes and the presence of the required policies.

3. Individual In-Person Review

You may contact me to set up a time for me to visit your church and review your records in person.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions. I may be reached by phone at (912) 674-6270 or by email at statedclerk@negapby.org.

Yours in Christ,

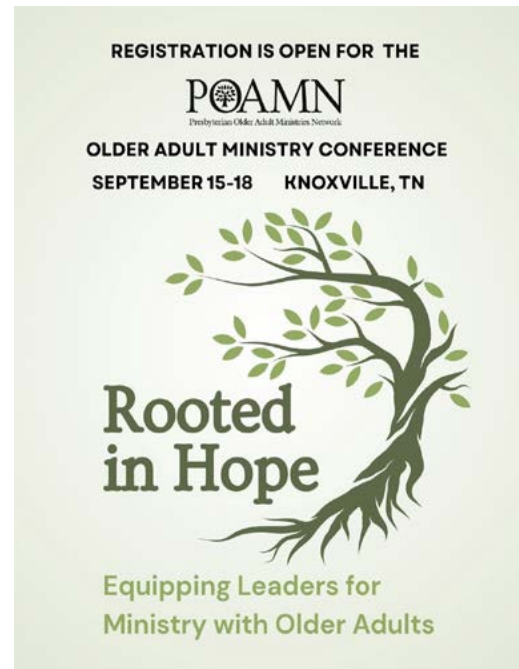
Jacob

Rooted in Hope: 2026 POAMN Older Adult Ministry Conference

September 15-18, 2026

poamn.org/conference

In September, Presbyterian Older Adult Ministries Network (POAMN) will bring together clergy, lay leaders, volunteers, and more in downtown Knoxville, Tennessee, for an inspiring gathering on older adult ministry. The 2026 POAMN conference will focus on spiritual depth, resilience, and continued fruitfulness—themes that matter deeply for leaders walking alongside older adults through seasons of transition. Registration is open for attendees, exhibitors, and sponsors.



You're invited to School of the Laity this October!

Connect with believers from churches across the Savannah Presbytery for a weekend of learning, encouragement, and spiritual growth. Whether you're serving as an elder, deacon, teacher, volunteer, or simply want to deepen your faith, there's something for you.

We can't wait to learn and grow together!

Register here: <https://www.savannahpresbytery.org/sol/>

Next Small and Mighty Zoom Gathering

August 4th

7:00 – 8:00 pm ET / 6:00 – 7:00 pm CT

Topic: Building a Digital Bridge

Description: One in four Americans regularly participates in online worship, but how do churches shepherd these digital disciples? How are they cared for? How is their faith nurtured? Participants in this workshop will learn how cultivate disciples in this digital age. You'll receive practical guidance on how your church can bridge the gap between in-person and online experiences. You'll hear about a young girl who insisted on flying eight hours to be baptized in her church – the one she worships with online. You'll hear about an Australian woman who asked her American church choir to sing at her memorial. You'll hear about church leaders, who chose to embrace online ministry as a fruitful expression of how God is at work. Finally, you'll develop a road map for your ministry area to more fully care for the digital disciples in your community.

