

### What Members of the Nominating Committee had to say about Rachael:

“Rachael brings a deep passion for the church, its present and future. With her compassionate spirit and pastoral heart, she will stand beside us as we move into the future of our Presbyteries.”

-Joe Johnson, chair, pastor,  
Evergreen Presbyterian Church in Dothan, AL

“Rachael’s pastoral gifts, enthusiasm, and energy make her a perfect fit for our two Presbyteries”

-Sally-Lodge Teel, pastor, Ruth Memorial  
Presbyterian Church in Poplarville, MS

“Rachael quickly grasped the new ways we are thinking about this role. She has the energy and creativity to serve well - in addition to being a delightful person!”

-Sue Martino, ruling elder,  
Spring Hill Presbyterian Church in Mobile, AL

“Rachael's people skills; love for the church - it's structure, polity and future; respect for our traditions yet vision for our future; and her willingness to be challenged make her a wonderful fit for our way forward.”

-Susan Sumrall, ruling elder & stated clerk,  
Presbytery of Mississippi

“In our ordination vows, we promise to ‘be a friend among your colleagues in ministry.’ Rachael embodies those words in her ministry both in the congregations that she has served and her deep involvement in her previous Presbytery. She is a trusted leader, faithful pastor, and supportive friend. I am so excited to have her with us!”

-Buz Wilcoxon, vice chair, pastor,  
Spring Hill Presbyterian Church in Mobile, AL



*Rachael, Eric, and Jack (12)*

The Regional Presbyter Nominating Committee  
of the Presbyteries of South Alabama and Mississippi  
is excited to announce our new Regional Presbyter:

## Rev. Dr. Rachael Banzhoff Knoll



### Education

The George Washington University,  
Bachelors of Arts in International Affairs

Columbia Theological Seminary,  
Masters of Divinity

Columbia Theological Seminary,  
Doctor of Ministry in Church and Ministry

### Church Experience

1997-2000, Youth Director, Rehoboth Presbyterian  
Church in Decatur, Georgia

2000-2006, Associate Pastor, Timberridge  
Presbyterian Church in McDonough, Georgia

2006-Present, Associate Pastor, McDonough  
Presbyterian Church in McDonough, Georgia

### Ministry to The Presbytery of Greater Atlanta

Presbytery Council  
Committee on Ministry (secretary)  
Presbytery Visioning Team  
Calvin Center Ministry Team (chair)  
Presbytery Exit Interview Team  
COM Liaison to Churches in Transition  
Search Committee for Assoc. Executive Presbyter

Dear Friends in Ministry,

I am honored to have been chosen as your new Regional Presbyter. I look forward to serving both Presbyteries faithfully and am excited about the many possibilities we will have to be a powerful Christian witnesses and a strong body of Christ in the world.

Grace & Peace,  
Rachael

## Statement of Faith

I believe in the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who is our creator, redeemer and sustainer. I believe God loves all of God's creation and calls it good. God created humans in God's image. God was there in the beginning and is forever with us. As a child of God, I believe I am constantly the recipient of God's grace. God's grace abounds beyond our own understanding and while I am undeserving of this grace I am constantly thankful for God's grace.

I believe in Jesus Christ who is God's only Son who was fully human and fully divine. I believe Jesus Christ was offered as a sacrifice to redeem all of creation through his death and resurrection. I believe Jesus Christ is our example of servant leadership, compassion, grace and mercy. I believe Jesus Christ is God's love for us incarnate. Jesus Christ is the Living Word through whom God is reconciling the world. Jesus blessed children and used them to teach about the kingdom of God. Jesus taught and learned from the least of us: the poor, the weak, the sick. Jesus' life and ministry provides guidance for us on how we are to live and be as Christians. I believe God calls all people to believe in Jesus Christ and then go out into the world to embody Jesus' example in order to further God's kingdom on earth.

I believe in the Holy Spirit who is God's presence with us and empowers us to be faithful disciples of Christ in all we do. The Holy Spirit works to unify us all together as God's children and unify us to serve God. The Spirit calls us as individuals and as a community to do works of justice and love. The Spirit guides us and enable us to spread God's love to all.

I believe that the sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, are symbols of the real presence and power of God. Sacraments represent God's promise of grace and seals believers in redemption. I believe that Sacraments are a tangible way to commune with the Spirit. They mark us as people of God who serve God. I believe that Baptism is the sign and seal of incorporation into Christ. It represents the beginning of life in Christ, reminds us of God's grace, and calls us into unity with Christ, the people of God, and the church. I believe in one Baptism because God is and has always been at work in our lives. This gift of God's grace also calls us to respond in repentance, faithfulness, and discipleship. I believe that the Lord's Supper is a sign and seal of communing with the crucified and risen Christ. Jesus modeled the breaking of bread and drinking of wine for us before and after his resurrection as a symbol of his self-offering. When we go to the Lord's Table we are empowered by Christ's life, comforted by Christ's promise of love and presence in our lives, and sealed in God's covenant of grace. I believe that the Lord's Supper reconciles us with God and calls us to reconciliation with one another. Through the Lord's Supper we renew our commitment to love and serve God, one another, and the world.

I believe that scripture is the inspired Word of God, and we trust in the presence of the Holy Spirit to help interpret scripture for today's world. I believe the church is the body of Christ in our world. I believe that though we are sinful and imperfect we are still called to participate in the body of Christ in the world. We are called as a church to embrace the richness and diversity of our gifts to further justice, mercy and peace in our world. I believe we are called to be good stewards of our gifts in order to more faithfully serve God and one another.

## Faith Journey

I grew up in Brandon, Florida a suburb just outside of Tampa and attended the First Presbyterian Church of Brandon. The church has always played an important role in the life of my family. The church was a place where each of us were able to explore our God given gifts and be able to use them to serve God and others in a variety of ways particularly, in the area of missions. Each summer, I would spend a week at Cedarkirk, a Presbyterian camp and conference center nearby. My experiences at summer camp were incredibly formative for my faith journey and relationship with Jesus.

I attended The George Washington University in Washington, D.C. where I received a Bachelor of Arts in International Affairs. During summer breaks, I would return home and work as a counselor at Cedarkirk. In the summer before my senior year, a mentor and Presbyterian minister, suggested to me several times that I should consider whether or not God was calling me to seminary. Like Sarah in the Old Testament, I laughed every time she suggested it because it was my intention to attend law school. However, on my way back to Washington D.C. for my senior year I found myself on the campus of Columbia Theological Seminary and completely enamored with the campus and courses of study.

On June 10, 2000 I married Eric Knoll and on June 17 I began serving my first call as the Associate Pastor of Timberridge Presbyterian Church in McDonough, Georgia. I can attest to the fact, that was a very busy week! I was so fortunate to have a wonderful first call and was blessed to learn so much from their guidance and our growth together. In 2004, Eric and I welcomed a son, Jack Knoll who has been our most fun challenge as we face the teen age years. In 2006, I resigned my position since it became clear to me that the new pastor who had been called intended to explore separating the church from the Presbyterian Church (USA). This was a time of great sadness and I experienced a real need for God's strength.

In June of 2006, I was asked to consider a position at McDonough Presbyterian which is a mere four miles away from Timberridge. Again, I laughed at this idea because it seemed rather absurd at the time. Ten years later, I have been blessed by a wonderfully strong and spiritual congregation. After finishing my D.Min. in May of 2015, I very clearly felt the stirring of the Holy Spirit encouraging me to be open to a new opportunity for ministry. I am very excited about the opportunity to serve both the Presbytery of South Alabama and the Presbytery of Mississippi as their Regional Presbyter. I look forward to new challenges and new things that God will raise up as we are in ministry and service together.

