



A Global Movement of Evangelical Presbyterian Churches

## CHURCH INFORMATION FORM

The Ministerial Vocation Committee and the Office of the Stated Clerk of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church are responsible for denominational vocational services. As part of the process of “matching” ministers and congregations, the Office of the Stated Clerk provides resources and advice to both pastors and congregational search committees. To that end, we ask congregations and ministers to complete information forms as an introduction to each other, and a first step in the process of calling a minister for a congregation. For both the individual pastor and the congregation, this is an opportunity for self-study and for evaluation of current ministry and goals. This calls for honesty, effort, and commitment to open communication.

The Church Information Form presents the local congregation’s history, challenges, and goals. It is our hope that this will be of help in facilitating the search process, assisting the church in focusing on future directions and pastors in gaining some sense of the nature and uniqueness of this congregation.

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Please return completed form to:

Evangelical Presbyterian Church  
ATTN: OFFICE OF THE STATED CLERK  
5850 T.G. Lee Blvd., Suite 510  
Orlando, FL 32822

Phone: 407-930-4239  
Fax: 407-930-4247  
E-mail: [info@epc.org](mailto:info@epc.org)





**EPC**

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**Part 1: Church Information**

1. Church Name Stockton Presbyterian Church

Address 53320 Highway 59

Stockton, AL 36579

Telephone ( 251 ) 937-7584 Fax ( 251 ) 937-1342

E-mail stocktonspc@gmail.com Website stocktonchepc.org

2. Presbytery: Gulf South Presbytery

Presbytery Ministerial Committee Liaison Rev. Matt Mitchell

3. Search Committee Chairman Ryan Mitchell

Address 10555 McMillan Road

Stockton, AL 36579

E-mail mitchell.jamesryan@gmail.com

Telephone ( 850 ) 758-8559

4. List all paid staff positions (use additional sheet if necessary)

- |                              |                                    |   |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| <u>Secretary</u>             | <input type="checkbox"/> Full time | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Part time |
| <u>Sunday Nursery Worker</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> Full time | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Part time |
| <u>Custodian</u>             | <input type="checkbox"/> Full time | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Part time |
| <u>Music Director</u>        | <input type="checkbox"/> Full time | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Part time |
| <u>_____</u>                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Full time | <input type="checkbox"/> Part time            |
| <u>_____</u>                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Full time | <input type="checkbox"/> Part time            |
| <u>_____</u>                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Full time | <input type="checkbox"/> Part time            |
| <u>_____</u>                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Full time | <input type="checkbox"/> Part time            |
| <u>_____</u>                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Full time | <input type="checkbox"/> Part time            |
| <u>_____</u>                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Full time | <input type="checkbox"/> Part time            |



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5. List all vacant positions

Position Available Pastor Date of Vacancy 02/2020

Position Available \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Vacancy \_\_\_\_\_

Position Available \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Vacancy \_\_\_\_\_

6. Membership (state approximate numbers and percentages)

	Five years ago	Currently
A. Number of church members	<u>86</u>	<u>86</u>
B. Number of family units	<u>35</u>	<u>37</u>
C. Worship attendance	<u>69</u>	<u>51/28 during Covid</u>

7. Community Growth  Increasing  Static  Declining

8. Profile of church members

A. Age:

10 % 0-11    10 % 12-18    10 % 19-24    10 % 25-34  
20 % 35-49    20 % 50-64    20 % 65+

B. Occupation:

10 % Business    40 % Professional    5 % Trades  
10 % Agriculture    5 % Stay-at-Home Parent    30 % Retired  
\_\_\_\_ % Other (Please Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

C. Educational level of adults

\_\_\_\_ % some high school    20 % high school    60 % college    20 % graduate school

D. Percentage of members belonging to the congregation

Less than one year 10 %  
5 years or less 15 %  
6-10 years 15 %  
10 years or more 60 %



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9. Racial/Ethnic composition of:

A. **Congregation**

\_\_\_\_\_ % African-American \_\_\_\_\_ % Asian 100 % Caucasian \_\_\_\_\_ % Hispanic  
\_\_\_\_\_ % Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

B. **Community** (within 5-mile radius of church)

40 % African-American \_\_\_\_\_ % Asian 60 % Caucasian \_\_\_\_\_ % Hispanic  
\_\_\_\_\_ % Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

10. Community Setting (check as many as apply):

Location

Rural     Small Town     Metropolitan     Suburban     Inner City

Function

Industrial     Agricultural     Recreational     Military     College/University

Approximate population of community 2,046. (see p. 13, #2)

11. Church Programming—Worship

A. **Worship Time**

8:30

10:30

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Average Worship Attendance**

10

51/28 (during Covid)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

B. Frequency of communion celebration: 7 per year

C. How are members involved in planning and participation in the liturgy/worship?

Worship Committee, Music Director, Choir, Ushers, Liturgist



D. Style of liturgy used in your worship (e.g., traditional, contemporary, variety)

Traditional

E. Type of music used in worship (e.g., traditional, contemporary, variety)

Traditional

12. Church Programming—Sunday School

A. Average attendance in Church School (under 18 years) 9

B. Average attendance in Adult Education (Sunday) 13

13. Church Programming—Organizations/Committees

List major boards, committees, and organizations that are part of your church and frequency of meetings (monthly, weekly, etc.)

Name	Purpose of Group	Number of members	Frequency of meetings	Leadership Role*
Session & Trustees	See Book of Order	10	monthly	1
Diaconate	See Book of Order	6	monthly	2
Worship Committee	Worship planning	4	as needed	2
Christian Education	Education planning	5	as needed	2
Women - Circles I & II	Bible Study & Missions	30	monthly/9	3
Stewardship & Budget	Financial planning	7	as needed	3
Fellowship, Missions, & Outreach	<b>Missions</b>	6	as needed	3
Building & Grounds	Building and maintenance	4	as needed	3

\*Indicate leadership role expected by using the number below:

1. Pastor takes primary initiative and responsibility.
2. Pastor and laity share responsibility.
3. Laity takes primary initiative and responsibility.



**Part 2: Financial/Church Campus Information**

1. Current annual budget: \$ 188,421 Last year's annual budget: \$ 213,380  
(Attach a copy of current budget)

2. Percentage of income received toward budget: 100 %

3. Amount contributed for year \$27,000 (most recent complete reporting year)

A. EPC Per Member Asking \$ \$25

B. EPC World Outreach Global Workers \$ \$3000

C. EPC Special Projects \$ NA

D. Presbytery Per Member Asking \$ NA

E. Other Missions/Missionaries \$ 10,348

4. Property owned by church

A. Describe buildings and property (other than manse).

Recently renovated Sanctuary and Fellowship hall in Stockton (10:30 am worship and Sunday School programs). Cottage Hill Chapel and fellowship hall (8:30 am worship). An unused annex building with five acres adjacent to the Sanctuary.

B. Are your buildings adequate for your present program?  Yes  No  
If no, please explain:

C. Is a building program projected?  Yes  No  
If yes, describe what, when, and projected cost

D. Does the church own a manse?  Yes  No

Condition:  Good  Fair  Poor # of Bedrooms 3

Pastor's Office/Study:  In Church  In Manse  Not Provided

Other \_\_\_\_\_



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6. Compensation:

A. The salary range we are prepared to offer:

Position: Pastor \$ 36,000-40,000

Position: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Position: Total Package \$ 70,172

B. The average annual increase over the past three years is:

Position: Pastor \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or 2.5 %

Position: Secretary \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or 5 %

Position: Custodian \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or 5 %

Position: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ %

C. Housing

Housing Allowance

Manse Only

Either of the Above

D. Benefits and expenses

10% Pension (minimum 10% gross effective salary)

\$ 10,864 Medical insurance

\$ 1,288 Life insurance

6.20% Social Security

\$ 1,020 Travel/mileage

\$ 250/yr Book allowance

2 weeks Study leave allowance (minimum 2 weeks)

4 weeks Annual vacation days (minimum 4 weeks)

2 Number of worship services per year for which pastor is provided relief (in addition to vacation and study leave)

\$ 5,150 Other (Specify: Manse costs (utilities, TV, Internet, cell phone, yard, pest control))



**Part 3: Church Characteristics**

*Check the box that most closely describes the current congregation characteristics and future goals*

Our congregation...

	Currently				Goal			
	Agree		Disagree		Agree		Disagree	
1. Supports the pastor.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
2. Readily shares their gifts with the rest of the congregation.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
3. Places a high priority on sound biblical preaching.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
4. Gladly welcomes visitors and new members.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
5. Is involved in local evangelistic ministries.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
6. Is often found living their faith in their communities.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
7. Has a spirit of unity.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
8. Cares about each other.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
9. Looks to its Session for leadership.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
10. Ministers well to members who are hurting.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
11. Uses members' gifts in its worship.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
12. Contains people willing and able to lead the congregation.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
13. Is capable of change when and where appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
14. Is spiritually alive.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4





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15. In what ways does your church participate in ecumenical activities?

Financial and Staffing\* Congregational support: EPC Missionaries, Community Bible School\*, Bay Minette Community Pantry/food drive\*, Community Easter Sunrise Service\*, Presbyterian Home for Children, Very Important Person (VIP) Care Baskets during holidays and special events, Christmas Projects (Samaritans Purse, Christmas Child, White Christmas/needful family adoption, Christmas boxes for Active Duty Service Members\*), EPC Women in Ministry, Brazilian Nursing Home Supply, McKernie Place (domestic violence shelter), Dr. Lightfoot/victory health, Family Promise, Repair Baldwin, Little Zion Food Pantry, Presbyterian Missionary Fund, and the Baldwin Human Trafficking Rehabilitation Program.

16. Describe the strengths of your congregation.

Our dedicated and committed congregation takes ownership in our church mission statement and work. If the community asks, we deliver. We serve the sick and hurting in our church family as well as non-members. Visitations are made to those unable to attend services due to sickness, age, or infirmity, regardless of affiliation economic status. Congregational financial support of those in need of aid. Paid nursery staff supports consistent caregivers, and safe, nurturing environment for pre-schoolers. This fosters attendance from young families with children, enabling their full and robust participation in the full life and leadership of our church.

17. List specific problems with which your congregation struggles.

Teaching Elder vacancy.  
Smaller attendance.  
Member connectivity.  
Unity.  
Biblical Christian education.

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED PAGES FOR FURTHER EXPLANATION.

18. List major goals that the congregation has set for itself.

To call an evangelical pastor. To facilitate courage in Biblical preaching and teaching. To faithfully and humbly grow church leadership and to improve communication between members. To grow together in Christ-like character and in so doing to foster outreach and welcome new members. To be faithful with our God-given resources by availing them to God's church for the sake of the lost, sick, isolated, hurting, and poor in spirit. To attend to our community and continue the many ministries of this church. To improve inter-congregation communication and unity. To support Biblical Christian education for our youth, our membership, and our leadership teams. SEE ATTACHED.



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19. Has there ever been disciplinary action taken against a pastor of your congregation?

Yes     No

20. Has there ever been any disciplinary action against an elder or deacon of your congregation?

Yes     No

If you answered "Yes" to either 19 or 20, please explain.

21. Have you completed a mission statement, vision statement, and/or a strategic plan for your congregation?

Yes     No

If yes, Date completed 2015

If yes, attach copies of each statement or strategic plan the church has completed.



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#### **Part 4: Leadership Expectations**

1. What five key characteristics, gifts, and/or skills should a person bring to the position?

Courage in Biblical Preaching and Teaching, to be a strong voice "...not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek [Romans 1:16]." Stockton Presbyterian Church and Cottage Hill Presbyterian Chapel, being separated by several miles, avail two preaching locations and ministry platforms for evangelizing our community of over 2000 people.

Joy in ministering, having true affection for God's flock, indeed Christian love for all. There are special needs in the ministry to the youth, and in the ministry to the elderly. There is opportunity for growth in and evangelism through the ministries of the church. "I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd [John 10:16]."

Faithfulness in church leadership, exchanging wisdom with the session, diaconate, and supporting church groups who have seen the church remain steadfast through many decades of societal change. The church needs to foster leaders. The church office benefits from efficient management and good use of time, such that "though One, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ [1 Corinthians 12:12]."

Devotion to Christ-like character, such that Jesus Christ is Glorified. For us this means attending to the spiritual health of your family, who can grow along with the church. It means being attentive and loyal to the Lord such that the church are prepared and are not "...tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming [Ephesian 4:14]."

Attentiveness to our community, to the extent of learning our subculture, listening to the symptoms of the church and expressed needs, and so to enhance unity "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deed [Hebrews 10:24]."



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### **Part 5: Church History**

1. What do you consider to be the three most important events in the history of your church?

1. In the early 1980's we moved our affiliation to PCUSA. In January 2013, we voted to move from there into the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

2. Renovation of Church and new construction of fellowship hall and educational wing in 2000.

3. 150th Anniversary Celebration in 1996. (We look forward to celebrating our 175th in 2022!)

2. What do you consider to be the most interesting and challenging event in the life of your church in the last three years?

**COVID 19**

Due to Covid 19, we employed technology in unexpected ways such as Facebook Live, YouTube, and website for sermon delivery. We are proud to say throughout this pandemic, we have not missed one sermon.

**Resignation of Preacher**

Attendance of 39 Congregants at the session meeting following his unexpected resignation.



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**Part 6: Other Information**

1. List the last three individuals who held the position of Pastor

Name	Dates of Service	
<u>Rev. John Cory</u>	<u>02/2017</u>	to <u>02/2020</u>
<u>Dr. Jerry Headrick, part-time stated supply</u>	<u>01/2013</u>	to <u>05/2015</u>
<u>Dr. Michael Mann</u>	<u>03/2006</u>	to <u>12/2010</u>

2. Describe any significant factors about the church not covered in previous questions.

Stockton Presbyterian Church was founded in 1847. Our history is long, our congregation steeped in tradition. We are cautious to change and are not swayed by the societal paradigm shift that seem to be overtaking our country. Although many have family ties going back multiple generations, our area has experienced a great deal of in-migration from overcrowded beaches and bays and flight from complicated urban problems in Mobile. We have welcomed many new and faithful members into our community who share the our values.

Stockton is a quaint, historical community tucked gently among the woodlands in the northern part of Baldwin County, Alabama's largest county by landmass. We are a 30 minute drive from the Mobile, AL metropolitan area and the communities of the Eastern Shore in Baldwin County. In Stockton, we have an abundance of activities for all who love to spend time in the woods or on the water. If a beach trip is warranted, you can have your toes in sand of the Gulf of Mexico with a drive of a little over an hour. The Stockton area has many social groups including a Book Club, The Stockton Five Arts Club, Stockton Heritage Association and Museum, The Daughters of the American Revolution, Fort Mims Chapter, and the Stockton Civic Club. The Alabama Department of Education gave the Baldwin County Schools an aggregate report card score of 82/B last year.

Clerk of Session John L Meyers III Date 11-8-20

Search Committee Chair [Signature] Date 8 Nov 2020

We encourage churches to list their vacancies on the Ministry Staff Opportunities webpage at [www.epc.org/mso](http://www.epc.org/mso). For more information or to send your posting, email [info@epc.org](mailto:info@epc.org)

**Church mission statement:** *Striving to meet the spiritual needs of our congregation and the community by teaching God's word and demonstrating our Christian love.*

## 17. Problems with which church congregation struggles

**Teaching elder vacancy** as the congregation needs the vision, preaching, and gift of a full-time pastor.

**Smaller attendance** because the church can accommodate more visitors and members. This is not to say that small size is itself a problem, for it can be a great blessing. Rather, we recognize the importance of evangelism in the setting of steady population growth. Stockton Presbyterian Church is 32 miles from Mobile and the communities along the Eastern Shore and is near the Gulf Coast. Cottage Hill Chapel is closer still.

**Member connectivity** can be improved and certainly does not rest with the pastor alone. Our flock has been partially scattered with COVID. Further, some members are transient and have jobs, school, or homes elsewhere, while others have health problems which make it hard to attend, and this attendance challenge extends particularly to events on days other than Sunday.

**Unity** is needed such that there is good support for the church's leadership, and good support for all members - 'one body.'

**Biblical Christian education** remains a significant need and we should more fully utilize the Christian Education Building renovated in 2019. We feel it is important to teach church history, and the phenomenal history of this church, now 173 years old. Aside this rich history, the church also needs flexibility and vision going forward. Our youth participation has been limited. The balance of memberships is older and thus we need to use that wisdom! Our youth need preparation for harsh encounters of this world, and the attacks of an increasingly secularized culture. Our membership maturation requires attention, with focus on new members classes, Sunday school, discipleship, bible studies, etc. The elders, deacons, and leaders need equipping for ministry.

## 18. Goals set by congregation

**To call an evangelical pastor;** "Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths [2 Timothy 4:2-4]."

**To facilitate courage in Biblical preaching and teaching;** "But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine [Titus 2:1]."

**To faithfully and humbly grow church leadership and to improve communication between members;** "your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path [Psalm 119:105]."

**To grow together in Christ-like character and in so doing to foster outreach and welcome new members;** "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them [Ephesians 2:10]."

**To be faithful with our God-given resources by availing them to God's church for the sake of the lost, sick, isolated, hurting, and poor in spirit;** "For the poor will never cease to be in the land; therefore I command you saying "You shall freely open your hand to your brother, to the needy and poor in your land" [Deuteronomy 15:11]."

**To attend to our community and continue the many ministries of this church;** "Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me [Matthew 19:21]."

**To improve inter-congregation communication and unity;** "There is one body, but it has many parts. But all its many parts make up one body. It is the same with Christ. We were all baptized by one Holy Spirit. And so we are formed into one body. It didn't matter whether we were Jews or Gentiles, slaves or free people. We were all given the same Spirit to drink [1 Corinthians 12:12,13]."

**To support Biblical Christian education for our youth, our membership, and our leadership teams;** "You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work [2 Timothy 3:14-17]."



Mission Projects  
Supported by Stockton Presbyterian Church EPC  
and our members

The Unnerstall family, foreign missionaries  
Presbyterian Home for Children  
Blountstown Hurricane Relief  
North Baldwin Ecumenical Food Bank  
Samaritan's Purse  
Samaritan's Purse, Operation Christmas Child Project  
National EPC Women in Ministry Project  
Brazilian Children's Mission  
McKemie Place  
Victory Health Partners  
Family Promise  
Repair Baldwin  
Baldwin County Literacy Council  
North Baldwin Helping Helps (formerly White Christmas)  
The Gideons International  
Little Zion UMC Food Pantry

Several of these projects are being funded through more than one revenue stream; SPC's General Fund/Mission & Outreach budget, the Presbyterian Women's budget, our annual Soup for Missions fundraising luncheon and designated gifts made by individuals.

Together, we are currently supporting God's work  
with approximately

\$27,000  
in giving.

Plus the immeasurable amount of volunteer time given  
to the many projects and ministries.

*Published by SPC Finance Committee, January 2019*



## A History of Stockton Presbyterian Church

The first bearer of the gospel in the little town of Stockton came in the form of a circuit riding preacher sent from the Mississippi Conference in 1808. This circuit covered some 1,000 square miles. In 1833, James R. Johnston and Neil McMillan were sent by the Presbyterian Church to answer the call and supply the spiritual needs of the people living in the remote area of what was then known as Baldwin County.

In the will of Benjamin Medcalf, recorded April 29, 1843, the sum of \$500 was given and bequeathed "for the purpose of erecting a church at some suitable place near John Gallagher's spring". In 1845 the first church was built in Stockton by members of different faiths; it was called the Union Church. Here both Presbyterians and Methodists joined in worship. The spirit of unity and cooperation among those early Stockton Christians believers has continued from that day until this. As requested in Benjamin Medcalf's will, the location chosen for the Union Church was near John Gallagher's spring. This location was on the east side of Highway 225, less than 1/8 of a mile from the junction of Highways 225 and 59. John Gallagher's spring was located on the west side of Highway 225.

On August 7, 1847, the Presbytery of Mobile (now the Presbytery of South Alabama) chartered the Baldwin Presbyterian Church in Stockton. The very first Presbyterian Church to be organized in Baldwin County, it was one of only two churches outside Mobile which held Sabbath School regularly.

Around the turn of the century, members decided it was time to erect a new church building of their own and began raising funds to accomplish this goal. On May 1, 1902, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas M. McMillan deeded to the Elders of Baldwin Presbyterian Church a piece of land to be used exclusively by the church in Stockton. In view of the gift of land, it was decided to move the location of the church from its Gallagher Springs location to the site of the present Stockton Presbyterian Church. On January 25, 1903, the new building was complete---a beautiful little white wooden church with stained glass windows.

Every Sunday morning the tolling of the church bell reminded all that it was the Lord's Day. The old bell was brought from Scotland (the old country) to Scotland, Alabama and on to Stockton by the McMillan Family.

In 1912, the Boy's Club was erected directly across from the church. The concrete blocks used for the Boy's Club were hand made. Sunday School classes began being held in what affectionately was known as "The Annex" after the dissolution of the Boy's Club.

From the time of its organization until 1923, the church had been known as the Baldwin Presbyterian Church, but on April 22, 1923, the name was officially changed to the Stockton Presbyterian Church.

1920 marked the beginning of the Cottage Hill Presbyterian Church. Although no accurate record of the actual beginning of the Sunday School is available, Mr. John M. McMillan, Sr. remembered his father driving a horse and buggy to Cottage Hill around 1916 for these classes. On April 8, 1934, it was decided by both the Session and members of the Cottage Hill Presbyterian Church that, for many reasons, it would be advisable to dissolve the church as an organization and to make it an outpost of the Stockton Presbyterian Church. Thirty-five members requested their membership be transferred to the Stockton Presbyterian Church. The beautiful, quaint chapel continues to be the worship place of many dedicated Christians.

In 1947, a set of chimes were given in loving memory of "Captain John" McMillan by Bacon-McMillan Veneer Mill. The chimes were probably installed in time for the church's Centennial Celebration that was to be the following year. The chimes have since been updated twice through donations and memorials. Three times a day they continue to ring out age-old hymns to the community, for all to be reminded of God and His magnificent work in the town of Stockton.

Blessed by God, the Stockton Presbyterian Church continued to grow, indicating the need for a larger sanctuary. On May 29, 1955 the congregation voted to build a new church on its current site for \$52,183. Dedication services for the new brick church were held on October 28, 1956, with Reverend Peter A. Blair officiating.

According to records of the Women of the Church, a library project was undertaken in 1965. Memorial gifts for the library were received by the circles, relatives and friends. A room in The Annex was renovated for the first church library. The library was later moved into the church's east wing, after the Sunday School classes moved from The Annex.

After the 150th anniversary of the church, members began to see a need for a larger Christian Education Building. In May 2000, planning and fundraising efforts officially began for this building. The dream was realized in 2002 with the construction of a new educational building that included a fellowship hall, commercial kitchen, church office, and Ladies' Parlor.

In 1865 the Stockton Presbyterian Church became part of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS). In 1983, after 122 years of separation, the PCUS denomination reunited with the northern church to form the Presbyterian Church (USA). The congregation of the Stockton Presbyterian Church voted to join the reunited denomination. In 2013, after nearly thirty years of affiliation with the Presbyterian Church (USA), the session and congregation decided the needs and beliefs of the Stockton Presbyterian Church would best be served by the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC). The Presbytery of South Alabama (PCUSA) gracefully dismissed the congregation with its assets to join this denomination. The transition into the EPC went smoothly due to the mutual admiration, respect and Christian love demonstrated between the South Alabama Presbytery and Stockton Presbyterian Church.

In March 2014 the Session appointed a Renovation Committee to plan and conduct a total renovation of the church building and sanctuary. This renovation included new wiring, heating and cooling systems, insulation, sound systems, refinished pews, recovered pew cushions, sheetrock ceiling replaced, new wood molding added, new wallpaper and interior painting, windows re-glazed, new lighting, new flooring (tile, carpet, wood), bathroom fixtures replaced, flower room cabinets updated, new front doors, all original brass door hardware polished, chimes reinstalled, west parking area paved, and exterior painting and wood repair on both the church and education buildings. During the renovation the church continued with its work and conducted the weekly worship services in the Fellowship Hall. It took a year to complete the renovation and it was finished on budget. In 2019 the Christian Education Building, built in 2002, was updated with new flooring, painting, building repairs and other improvements. The renovations for both the Sanctuary and Christian Education Building were paid for from contributions from the congregation.

It is only appropriate to praise God and give thanks for the 173 years of blessings to the Stockton Presbyterian Church with the closing words from the minutes of the very first Session Meeting. "Truly the Lord hath done great things for us, thereof we are glad."