

Phyllis Jones

I was blessed to be born into a Presbyterian family and raised with lots of love. Although my nuclear family was just Mom, Dad and an older brother we were very blessed with a LARGE extended family. At one time I had over 150 first cousins, plus many great aunts and uncles! Most of my growing up was done in Austin. After I finished at Texas Tech with a Home Economics Education degree, I lived in San Antonio and worked for Foley's. While in San Antonio I attended First Presbyterian and it was there that I taught Jr. High Sunday School, was on the Youth Group team & got nudges of a call to ministry. I did my best to resist my call to the ministry. I failed. I had to trust this new path God had for me.

I attended The Presbyterian School of Christian Education (PSCE), Richmond VA, graduating in 1985. During the following years I served churches in Florida and Louisville KY. While living in Louisville our prior two denominations came back together and the decision was made to move the headquarters to Louisville. I was one of the first people hired to work in the new "offices," even before the buildings were completed. I answered the "1-800-Presbytel" phone line for over a year, helping folks connect with ministry offices and staff members during the upheaval of having separate offices in New York City, Philadelphia and Atlanta. For several years I edited bulletin inserts and Christian Education materials for the Special Offerings office. Gathering a much fuller understanding of how our denomination works and the vastness of ministry done around the world. This truly enriched my ministry for years to come.

I moved to South Pasadena CA to serve a wonderful multi-ethnic congregation, Calvary Presbyterian, as their DCE. Helping this congregation redevelop their CE program was challenging, but very fulfilling and meaningful. During my time there the Senior Pastor and others continued to encourage me to attend seminary and become ordained. I had several opportunities to preach and do a lot of hospital visitation, both of which helped me get ready to take the next plunge. So back to Louisville I journeyed to attend Louisville Presbyterian Seminary. I graduated in two years, given my education at PSCE, after I completed a summer of C.P.E. at University of Louisville Hospital, a level 4 trauma center.

In Feb. 1999, I was called and ordained as a solo pastor to a small congregation in Murfreesboro TN where I served for 2 years. I then went to First Presbyterian in Clarksville TN as an Associate Pastor for Christian Education. I served there for 4 years. In 2005, I moved back to Texas, to be closer to our parents who lived in Georgetown. I was Associate Pastor for Congregational Care at Hope Presbyterian Church. It was a position I thrived in as I offered care and a listening heart to this congregation. In 2009, my parents died, 45 days apart after 60 years of marriage. A few months later, due to the congregation's financial issues, the position I served was eliminated. It was a very difficult time for me. Several months later I began a year-long chaplaincy residency in Austin. After that year I moved to Nashville to work as a hospice chaplain and an on-call chaplain for a hospital system. I continued to serve in those capacities for several years.

I moved back to Texas in 2017 to be closer to family and friends, beginning the move away from ministry and toward retirement. I have been managing In-Home Pet Care for a company in The Woodlands and surrounding area. I regularly attend Woodlands Community Presbyterian Church and assist in worship at various times. It has been my honor to serve God and love God's people.

Hector M. Rivera-Velez

Hector M. Rivera-Velez: On the day I was born my mother said “Ay Dios mío.” That was her prayer for me. I was 14 years old when the session of a Presbyterian church examined me for membership. The pastor asked me if I had ever considered becoming a minister. I did not know what being a minister was, and I still don’t know.

I finished a BA in psychology at the University of Puerto Rico, then attended Fuller Seminary to complete a Master in Divinity. While at the seminary, I was asked to help a small congregation as their musical director. When the pastor suffered a heart attack, they then asked me to fill the pulpit until the pastor returned. Glendale Presbyterian Church then placed me under their care and assisted me financially.

After graduation and a year of clinical pastor education, I was ordained in 1992. I served as a church pastor in Mission Presbytery. In 1995 I began working for a hospice. I continued my ministry in the presbytery through preaching and serving as moderator for multiple congregations. I served in the multicultural, renovation, church development and redevelopment committee of the presbytery.

As part of my hospice work, I assisted the American Cancer Society with grief support groups, and coordinated the training of professionals as part of ACS Life-After-Loss program. At this time, I also served as the Synod of the Sun representative for the General Assembly Committee on Representation.

After marrying Isabel-who is now serving as Stated Supply at Faith, Baytown- we moved to the New Covenant Presbytery. I recently had the privilege of serving in the Committee on Examinations for my presbytery.

I completed 27 years of hospice service as a chaplain for multiple hospice organizations. My official last day at work was March 31, 2023. I am now proudly serving as choir member and support system for Pastor Isabel at Faith Presbyterian Church.