

General Presbyter Report to Presbytery

February 10, 2026

The presbytery assembly voted last November to change our name from Blackhawk Presbytery to Illinois Prairie Presbytery. That change is in process and will take some effort to modify our website, emails, and various documents. We will notify the bank and vendors and assume all will go smoothly. Some of our congregations may also need to make minor changes to their documents that reference the presbytery name but there is no hurry to make updates. Please contact our office if you have any questions.

I have mentioned in several forums that when God changes the names of people in scripture (think Abram to Abraham or Jacob to Isreal) it is not just to change a name. It is to give a new identity and a new mission. One of our key goals in 2026 is to get more clarity on who we are, who we serve, and what God is calling us to be and do as a presbytery. We look forward to your input as we do this important visioning work that we are continuing with the educational opportunity at today's meeting.

One of the ways we gather information is by presbytery leaders meeting with congregations and pastors. I always look forward to gathering with congregations, sessions, PNCs, and other groups and ministers. I have already made eight in-person visits to congregations in 2026. Please let me know if your congregation would like a visit.

Finally, I cannot submit my report without paying tribute to Rev. Dr. Roy Backus. For those who have not heard, Roy passed away on January 24. Roy was a fantastic pastor who served several congregations in our presbytery (Morris, Waltham, Gibson City, Wilmington). He was active in the presbytery, a frequent visitor to our weekly Cares and Shares gatherings, and a good friend and mentor to many. You may also know Roy though his wonderful music ministry that blessed us at our September presbytery meeting. I encourage you to pray for his wife and six children. May he rest in peace and rise in glory. As Roy would say, grace and peace.

I am grateful to be on this journey with you.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Rev. Eric Heinekamp