

Pastor Charles W. Echols, Jr. was born in Lakeland, Florida and grew up as a young boy in Tallahassee, Florida. He attended Evergreen High School, Evergreen, Alabama and received his diploma in May of 1967. He received his Bachelor of Arts Degree in 1971 from Belhaven College, Jackson, Mississippi, and his Master of Divinity Degree from Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, Mississippi, in 1975. He accepted a call to the Troy/Rives, Tennessee Associate Reformed Presbyterian (ARP) churches, and was ordained by Mississippi Valley Presbytery on August 17, 1975.

He ministered at these two churches until August 24, 1978 when he entered the United States Air Force by direct commission and became a pastor wearing a blue suit in the Air Force for the next 26.4 years. He served stateside assignments in Florida, South Carolina, Ohio, Alabama, and Illinois. His overseas assignments were in Germany, Korea, and Japan. He was selected to attend Air Command and Staff College in-residence and completed the course in June, 1988. He completed Air War College in October 1995. During his Air Force career he was sent to some pretty exotic places on temporary assignments and came to the conclusion that "There's no place like home in the USA!" He had different jobs in the Air Force including Flight-line Chaplain, Protestant Chaplain, Senior Protestant Chaplain, Air Command and Staff College Chaplain, Wing Chaplain, and Deputy Command Chaplain. He rose in rank from First Lieutenant to Colonel and received the Meritorious Service Medal with seven devices, the Air Force Commendation Medal, the Air Force Achievement Medal, and the National Defense Service Medal.

While on active duty he left the ARP church after 17 years and became a Presbyterian Church (USA) pastor in September of 1994. He honorably retired from the Air Force on December 31, 2004 and accepted a call to Bethany Presbyterian Church beginning January 1, 2005. Life at Bethany has been both a joy and blessing as he and his wife, Kathleen (Lane) Echols, have become part of a dynamic and loving church family. Their dream while in the Air Force was to return somewhere near Kathy's hometown of Blountville, Tennessee and God, who is so gracious, made that dream come true! Pastor Chuck and Kathleen have three children; Wendell, Rebecca, and William.