Friends,

Baptist life has been often characterized by a dance between two willful partners: autonomy and interdependence. At times in our history interdependence has been the lead dancer. In these times cooperation is more evident. The formation of Associations such as the Monroe Baptist Association (ABCRGR’s original name) provides evidence of our excellence in interdependence. At other times autonomy has been the lead dancer which has led to congregational strength and has stimulated creative imagination. However, it is the dance between the two that has defined us and fortified us as Baptists.

Unfortunately stress and concern about survival has pushed interdependence almost completely off the dance floor leaving autonomy to do a solo dance. I say that this is unfortunate because this solo dance is limiting, lonely and so unnecessary. So much more can be expressed with two strong partners.

Autonomy limits and weakens us. As your Executive, I must respect the autonomy but am always ready and willing to provide the support and resource of interdependence. I can and will engage with you as much as you like or need, but I must be invited.

In the same way your sister churches would be ready and willing to provide support and resource as they are able, but they too must be invited.

This past weekend at Parsells Avenue Community Church I saw Interdependence return to the dance floor as members of seven congregations came together to support the merger of Christ Community Church with Parsells Avenue Community Church. **Dumpster Day** was reminiscent of the Amish barn raising efforts. Old and young, men, women and children, black and white worked together in reclaiming rooms for sacred service by removing years of clutter and scrubbing off layers of dirt, dust and grime. Around every corner and behind every door were both opportunities and challenges. But by the end of the day, the overall sentiment was hope. Hope reigned the day because so many cared to show up.

Everyone worked hard last Saturday but everyone had a wonderful smiles on their faces. Everyone had found a new brother and sister in Christ.

The Historic Parsells Church will have a few more Dumpster Days. A second interdependent moment will be this Saturday, March 28 at 9:30 am and all are invited. The Historic Parsells Church faces a lot of challenges but it also has a huge field of ministry to harvest. I believe we all would agree that this neighborhood needs this church as an anchor of hope. While we cleaned clutter, 25 children were ferried off on a field trip sponsored by Project Urge. Neighbors noticed the activity and were excited that the Historic Parsells Church rises again. The neighborhood was abuzz with questions about what was happening and met with smiles that people cared about their neighborhood.

Pastor Marlowe Washington and the members of Christ Community and Parsells Avenue invite you to help them do something that they clearly cannot do alone.

Watch for more announcements and if others would like to join the interdependence dance – invite.

