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The Panhandle Presbyterian

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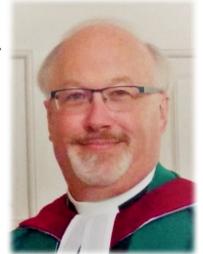
From General Presbyter Roy Martin

The Season of Advent is about to arrive. And, as you are no doubt aware, the word “advent” comes from the Latin “adventus” which means “coming.” It is in this season of the Christian year we wait for Christ’s coming into the world. We tend to think the focus is on Christ’s first coming into the world

because Advent is followed by Christmas, when we celebrate the birth of Jesus.

But I would suggest that advent is really the season we are to focus on the second coming of Christ. That is the advent we await. The scriptures remind us that Christ will come again and there will be no more sorrow or pain

or death, no more war or disease or poverty, and all things in heaven and earth will be made one.



The Rev. Dr. Roy Martin

It is not easy to focus upon that advent in a world that has Christmas decorations out before Thanksgiving and we all rush around trying to get everything in place, both at home and at church, for a celebration of the birth of Jesus so long ago. The present celebration of a past event consumes us.

But I want to encourage you to take a different path for a day or several days during this year’s Advent season. Turn your attention to what it means for you that Christ will come again; this time, not as a baby, but as our risen Lord who says, “Surely I am coming soon.’ Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!” (Revelation 22:20)

Yours in Christ,
Roy

CHRISTMAS JOY
SPECIAL OFFERINGS
LEADERSHIP: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

OUT OF GRATITUDE
WE GIVE

Thanks be to God for this indescribable gift.
—2 Corinthians 9:15

For Our Clerks of Session



By
Jeannie Dixon,
Presbytery Stated Clerk
and Fellowship,
Tallahassee Elder

Clerks are asked to submit online reports

➤ Clerks may begin entering 2019 year-end **statistical reports** online Friday, Dec. 6. Enter statistics and find answers to frequently-asked questions at <http://oga.pcusa.org/section/churchwide-ministries/stats/statistical-reporting-faq/>.

For your church PIN and password, contact the Presbytery office at office@presbyteryofflorida.com or 850-535-2335, ext. 0. For other assistance, contact the presbytery office or email me at statedclerk@presbyteryofflorida.com.

You have until Thursday, Feb. 20, to enter the statistics for 2019, but please do not wait until the last minute. At a minimum, please enter your membership numbers, as this will affect the amount of shared support/per capita your congregation will be asked to pay in 2021.

The session **needs to approve** the report as soon as possible after December 31, 2019. This is a session report and **DOES NOT** require approval at a congregational meeting.

➤ The Committee on Presbytery Administration has asked the Stated Clerk to gather information from each congregation on insurance coverage. I've created a form to facilitate gathering that information. The Google Form can be found at <http://bit.ly/pofins>. You may either complete the form online OR email the requested information to statedclerk@presbyteryofflorida.com.

The requested information includes type(s) of insurance, coverage amount, deductible. Please include the name of the church (including city), name of the person submitting the information and your

position at the church. Please complete the requested information by December 22, 2019.

➤ To facilitate the submission of names for the annual Necrology report, an online form has been created. Information may be submitted throughout the year. Please go to form <http://bit.ly/pofnecro> to complete the information. The receipt of the information via email in October will be requested for those not submitting via the form.

➤ The Presbytery is seeking a host church in the East District for the 2020 Fall Stated Meeting Tuesday, Oct. 27. Please contact me if your congregation might be willing to host. Other 2020 meetings are Saturday, Jan. 25, at First, Pensacola, and Tuesday, May 19, at First, DeFuniak Springs.



THE LAUREL HILL AND CRESTVIEW
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES present

THE LIVING NATIVITY

EXPERIENCE A SPIRITUAL CHRISTMAS JOURNEY AS YOU
CELEBRATE THE BIRTH OF OUR LORD PERFORMED BY LIVE
ACTORS. MEET THE PEOPLE TO WHOM UNFOLDED
"THE GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD"

SATURDAY, DEC. 14 • 5:30-8 pm
FREE • GROUPS WELCOME • REFRESHMENTS
LAUREL HILL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
8115 FOURTH STREET

Shared support provides for the work of our Presbytery

Your Committee of Presbytery Administration is in the midst of our 2020 Presbytery Stewardship season. Meetings for west, central and east have been set to explain our budget and provide materials.

As in your own church, stewardship is the lifeblood of Florida Presbytery. We depend on your per capita to share the costs that belong to the whole church and exists to hold Presbyterians together. Despite the budget increases, we are holding

the per capita at \$70 per member with a total budget of \$445,527

Our shared support goes to – among other things – education, evangelism, congregational revitalization, Dogwood Acres, new church development, UKirk, DiscipleFest, and expenses to administer the administrative and financial needs to operate Florida Presbytery.

North Florida and many of our congregations survived one of the most devastating storms in

history, but we stood together and continue to rebuild, support and remain connected. That connectivity was most evident in 2019.

Florida Presbytery needs your continued commitment as we share the expenses associated with our shared lives and our congregational connectedness. Please continue your involvement at your local church and participate in your stewardship programs.

Thank you for your involvement in all of the work of the Church.

From the Committee on Presbytery Administration



By William O. Bell, III, Chair, and Faith, Tallahassee Elder

Save the Date:

**Tuesday, December 3, 2019
7:00 PM**

*The Tallahassee Music Guild
Presents the 31st Annual
Sing-Along Performance
of George Frideric Handel's*

“MESSIAH”

Lisa M. Foltz

Music Director and Conductor

**Faith Presbyterian Church
2200 North Meridian Road**

All proceeds provide music scholarships

From the Committee on Congregational Revitalization



By
*Rev. Lisa Martin,
Chair, and
Lynn Haven,
Pastor*

Two-day Holy Cow! consultant training kicks off new year

The Committee on Congregational Revitalization is busy planning for our January 3 and 4 Holy Cow! Consulting training event. We are pleased that the response to Emily Swanson's presentation during the October presbytery meeting was so well-received, and we're eager to introduce Holy Cow! to congregations in Florida Presbytery.

The two-day training for prospective consultants will take place at Camp Dogwood Acres from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. CST both days. What a great way to spend the first Friday and Saturday of the new year: learning the nuts and bolts of Holy Cow's intentional methodology in one of the most beautiful places in the



Panhandle! What could be better?

Beyond implementing Holy Cow! in the new year, CCR is also putting together a "Revitalization Toolbox" of resources that congregations may find helpful. Our goal is to make revitalization a priority for all of our wonderful congregations so that our presbytery may continue to grow healthy and strong! Watch for more news about the "Revitalization Toolbox" in the new year.



A quick tip: If you want an immediate revitalization boost during the Advent and Christmas seasons, make sure that your congregation is truly welcoming, friendly, and seeker-savvy. Take a walk around your facility as if you are a first-time guest. Is the signage clear? Are rooms neat and tidy? Are Advent worship resources for all ages readily available for take-home use? Does the worship bulletin explain the symbols, colors, and meanings of the seasons?

Putting yourself in the shoes of a guest who is being courageous and vulnerable in attending worship or a seasonal function will help you understand what they experience. Welcoming guests in genuinely hospitable ways is key to revitalization during holidays...and every day!

Christmas with the Celts

An uplifting and spirited celebration guaranteed to start your holiday season off right

Sunday, December 15
7 - 8:30 p.m. CST
Gulf Beach Presbyterian Church
271 S. Arnold Rd. (SR 79)
Panama City Beach, FL
General admission: \$10



The Committee on Education Resources recommends ... Confirmation Curriculum – *Big God Big Questions*

<https://www.pcusastore.com/Products/81005/big-god-big-questions-class-kit.aspx?bCategory=PCYWB>

The PC(USA) put out their newest confirmation curriculum in 2018, and I had the experience teaching with it this past year. When a prospective member is presented to a congregation for membership, they are asked four questions.

- Trusting in the gracious mercy of God, do you turn from the ways of sin and renounce evil and its power in the world?
- Who is your Lord and Savior?
- Will you be Christ's faithful disciple obeying his word and showing his love?
- Will you devote yourself to the church's teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers?

These questions are the basis of *Big God Big Questions*. In this curriculum, there are 12 sessions that can be divided further into 24. Included are a teacher's guide, home/mentor guide, dvd, confirmand journals, and infographics.

John's first recommendation: Buy (and laminate) the infographics (\$25 printed



& shipped, \$15 downloaded). If you are considering this curriculum, but are hesitant or cannot afford it all, these will help in many other ways. Most are very well done and can be used in children's ministries, adult classes, or even other new member's classes. They are modern and fresh-looking but offer the age-old information that confirmands need to learn. Laminating them allows you to mark on them with dry-erase markers.

John's second recommendation: If you can utilize the videos, do so. The questions that go along may not be the best, but they offer real Presbyterians from other places (who may not look like the youth or members of their congregation) giving their thoughts on various topics, as well as real situations for youth to think through. They're

short enough to keep the attention of the youth and offer enough conversation starters for a single session alone.

John's last recommendation: Skip the journals. While they are helpful in some ways, they did not offer much for the group. Instead, you could offer suggested pages for personal perusal, but in the long run, they ended up being more of a nuisance than a benefit.

Overall, I highly recommend *Big God Big Questions*. Most sessions required minimal adaptation and allowed for easy conversation starters. Do yourself and your youth a favor and go for this one (at least get those infographics).

From the Committee on Educational Resources



By
Rev. John Kuper,
Chair,
and 1st, Pensacola,
Associate Pastor

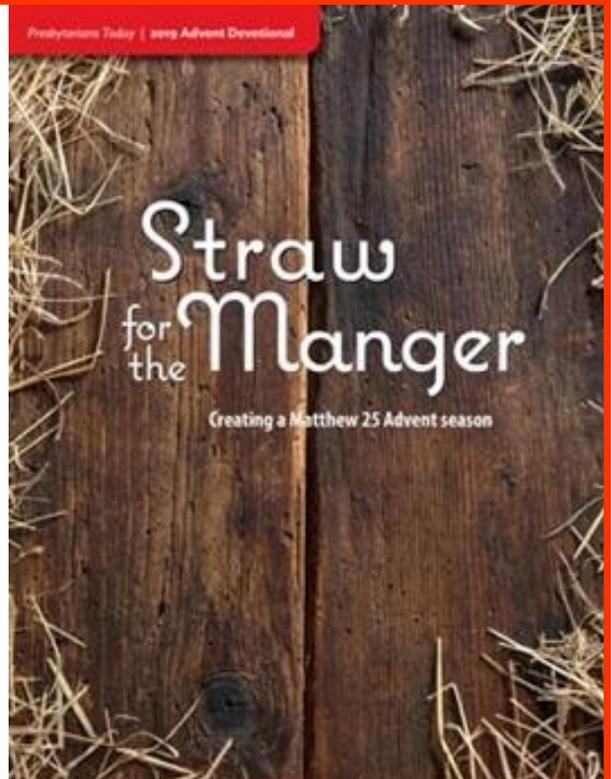
Free 2019 Advent Devotional from *Presbyterians Today*

Fill your Advent days with loving acts of kindness — to follow in Christ's footsteps as he serves "the least of these" (Matthew 25:31-46).

Daily reflections and prayers by Sherry Blackman provide simple, practical suggestions to live out this Advent in a beautiful and fulfilling way.

Download at

<https://www.pcusastore.com/Products/1711619007D/presbyterians-today-advent-devotional-2019.aspx>



*Merry Christmas
and may God's Peace
be with you in the coming year!*



From your friends at the Presbytery of Florida and Dogwood Acres

Overtures address the Climate Crisis

At the January Presbytery meeting, I plan to ask for your support for two overtures that deal with climate change. The first one is the fossil fuel divestment overture, and the second one supports our country staying in the Paris Climate Agreement, as well as reaffirming our denomination's support for going carbon neutral, as passed by the General Assembly in 2006.

I am pretty sure that folks in our Presbytery, after dealing with three dangerous hurricanes over the last three years, understand that the warming waters of the Gulf of Mexico fuel these storms. The waters in the Gulf of Mexico set new record highs this summer as the result of absorbing so much heat from the atmosphere, and will continue to warm as our atmosphere warms.

The first overture asks, for the fourth time, that our money folks divest all our holdings in fossil fuels, because this money supports climate change. We are encouraged to invest this money in renewable energy. Good news: Global trends continue to indicate that investing in renewable energy is investing in a profitable future. In 2018, global renewable energy

investments far exceeded fossil fuel investments.¹ You can read this overture by going to www.fossilfreepcusa.org and typing in "Overture 2020".

The second overture affirms that our denomination wants the United States to remain a participant in the Paris Climate Agreement. It calls for us to sign "We Are Still In' Declaration," which, since its initial release on June 5, 2017, has been signed by more than 3,800 leaders from corporations, government and universities across America, representing more than 155 million Americans and \$9 trillion of the U.S. economy. This overture will be posted on PC-Biz soon. To read the "We Are Still In' Declaration," go to www.wearestillin.com.

Both of these overtures are significant actions that will help our country take steps to cut carbon emissions, which are the culprit in warming the planet and creating so much misery. You recall that a year ago, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change said that the world had 12 years to cut our carbon emissions by 47 percent to stay under 1.5 degrees F of additional warming. Cutting our carbon

emissions as fast and as rapidly as we can is a high priority for maintaining a safe, livable planet. All the misery we and our neighbors are experiencing is with just 1 degree of additional warming. Already there is enough carbon in the atmosphere to warm the planet for centuries, according to Princeton University-led research.

Important message: Both of these overtures are important, but the divestment overture, in my estimation is a priority because it is an action that only we as Presbyterians can and should take.

Friends, we need to stop supporting climate change. If you have any questions, please contact me at pammcvety@hotmail.com.

¹Renewable energy investment in 2018 hit USD \$288.9 billion, far exceeding fossil fuel investment. UN Environment Program. June 18, 2019.

Caring for Creation Notes



By
Pam McVety,
Presbytery Stewardship of Creation Enabler
(pammcvety@hotmail.com)

"Both of these overtures are significant actions that will help our country take steps to cut carbon emissions ..."

First Presbyterian Church of Milton will present

a "Chosen" Christmas play

Saturday, Dec. 14, at 4 p.m. CST

This religious, fictional account of the birth of our savior will grab children's interest with its reference to a snow princess, at the same time stressing that each one of us was "CHOSEN"

by God for a purpose

All are invited – Free admission

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Commission (CPC)**

The Panhandle Presbyterian

Save the date:

In December

- Tuesday, Dec. 3* 7 – 9 p.m. EST Tallahassee Music Guild's 2019 Sing-Along Messiah, at Faith FC, Tallahassee
- Tuesday, Dec. 3* Giving Tuesday
- Tuesday, Dec. 3* 1 p.m. CST Committee on Presbytery Administration meeting at Presbytery office
- Friday, Dec. 6 –
Thursday, Feb. 20* Churches' annual statistical reporting to the Office of the General Assembly
- Saturday, Dec. 7* 10:30 a.m. CST Committee on Dogwood Acres meeting at Dogwood Acres
- Tuesday, Dec. 10* 10 a.m. CST Committee on Educational Resources meeting
- Saturday, Dec. 14* 4 p.m. CST FPC Milton presenting "Chosen" Christmas play
- Saturday, Dec. 14* 5:30 – 8 p.m. CST Laurel Hill/FPC, Crestview Churches' Living Nativity
- Sunday, Dec. 15* 11:30 a.m. EST Christ PC, Tallahassee's Christmas Mission Market
- Sunday, Dec. 15* 7 – 8:30 p.m. CST Christmas with the Celts, at Gulf Beach PC, Panama City Beach
- Tuesday –
Wednesday, Dec. 24
and 25* Presbytery office closed for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

Looking ahead

- Wednesday, Jan. 1* Presbytery office closed for New Year's Day
- Friday, Jan. 3 –
Saturday, Jan. 4* 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. CST CCR/COM Holy Cow! Consultants' Training at Dogwood Acres
- Sunday, Jan. 5* 7 – 8:30 p.m. CST Worlds of Music, a piano recital, at Gulf Beach PC, Panama City Beach
- Thursday, Jan. 9* 9:30 a.m. CST Coordinating and Planning Commission meeting at Dogwood Acres
- Sunday, Jan. 12* 7 – 9 p.m. CST The Smith Family Southern Gospel concert at Gulf Beach PC, Panama City Beach
- Sunday, Jan. 19* 7 p.m. CST Gulf Beach PC, Panama City Beach, presents the Godby High School Choir
- Monday, Jan. 20* Presbytery office closed for Birthday of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Tuesday, Jan. 21* 9:30 a.m. CST Committee on Congregational Revitalization meeting at Presbytery office
- Saturday, Jan. 25* 9 a.m. CST (Registration at 8 a.m. CST) Winter Stated Presbytery Meeting at FPC Pensacola
- Sunday, Jan. 26* 7 – 9 p.m. CST David Seering concert at Gulf Beach PC, Panama City Beach



Small is Big

How can you fit this much impact into one gift? It's easy when you give through the Presbyterian Giving Catalog. Inside, you'll find small gifts brimming with big potential, like this ox, which reduces manual labor to help make farmers more efficient.

Small Gifts. Big Impact.

**PRESBYTERIAN
GIVING CATALOG**

Give today at smallisbig.gives