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The Panhandle Presbyterian

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From General Presbyter Roy Martin

'Tis the season of Advent, and I am reminded of the debate I encountered in every congregation I served over whether it is appropriate to sing Christmas hymns during Advent. Every. Congregation. Every. Year. Some think that singing Christmas hymns (or carols, as many prefer to call them) should be sung during Advent to get us in the spirit preparing for Christmas to come. Others, and I include myself in this group, think that because the words of Christmas hymns focus upon the birth of Jesus as a completed event, such hymns should wait for the day of Christmas and the season of Christmas that follows it.

Advent hymns focus upon the preparation for Christ coming; both the first and the anticipated

second coming. And there are such great advent hymns to sing! *Lo, How A Rose E'ere Blooming; O Come, O Come, Emanuel; Of the Father's Love Begotten; Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence*, to name just a few.

One of my personal favorites is the Charles Wesley hymn, *Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus*:

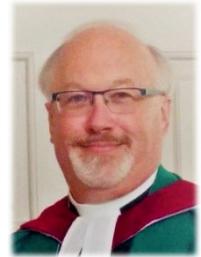
Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus
born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins
release us,
let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth
thou art;
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver,
born a child and yet a King,
born to reign in us forever,
now thy gracious kingdom
bring.

By thine own eternal spirit rule in all our hearts alone; by thine all sufficient merit, raise us to thy glorious throne.

Just two verses, but verses packed with a great theological message about this one we await to come. Wesley based his hymn upon a published prayer, which itself was based upon Haggai 2:7. In this season of Advent, I encourage you to save the great Christmas hymns for Christmas time and sing, even if it is for the first time, the Advent hymns. They are beautiful in their own right.

Roy



The Rev. Dr. Roy Martin

And the Word became flesh and lived among us...
—JOHN 1:14

CHRISTMAS JOY
SPECIAL OFFERINGS
LEADERSHIP: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE
NOVEMBER 27 - DECEMBER 18

COMING SOON TO

Dogwood Acres

SPRING RETREAT OFFERINGS

JANUARY 13-15:
PRESBYTERIAN
CONFIRMATION RETREAT

JANUARY 20-22:
WOMENS YOGA AND
MINDFULNESS RETREAT

FEBRUARY 3-5:
DOGWOOD YOUTH
CONFERENCE

MORE INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND
BY CONTACTING
CHRISTY@DOGWOODACRES.ORG
OR
ERIC@DOGWOODACRES.ORG

REGISTRATION WILL BE AVAILABLE
ONLINE IN MID-NOVEMBER FOR ALL
LISTED RETREATS

Statistical reporting begins this week; workshop Dec. 5

As annual statistical reporting opens Friday, Dec. 2, I will lead a statistical reporting workshop via Zoom on Monday, December 5, at 6 p.m. CST/7 p.m. EST. The workshop is for clerks of session, pastors, office personnel – anyone who'll be submitting a congregation's 2022 year-end statistical data to the PC(USA) Office of the General Assembly.

The workshop will be helpful even if you've entered statistics before, as many questions have been changed this year. Learn more about these changes: [https://www.pcusa.org/news/2022/10/25/changes-](https://www.pcusa.org/news/2022/10/25/changes-coming-to-church-statistics/)

[coming-to-church-statistics/](https://www.pcusa.org/news/2022/10/25/changes-coming-to-church-statistics/).

Workshop registration is required. Register at <https://forms.gle/D8wx9iM5u7F9FhnXA>.

To help you prepare, find answers to frequently-asked questions, as well as links for downloading the reporting workbook in English, Spanish and Korean, at <https://oga.pcusa.org/section/churchwide-ministries/stats/statistical-reporting-faq/>

► The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) has confirmed dates in 2024 for the 226th General Assembly. Under the approved plan, virtual

committee meetings will be scheduled for Tuesday, June 25–Thursday, June 27, 2024. The primary travel day for commissioners and advisory delegates will be Saturday, June 29. Assembly participants will be able to worship in area churches on Sunday morning, and plenaries will begin Sunday afternoon, June 30. The Assembly will conclude on Thursday, July 4.

Find more details at <http://ow.ly/oruK50L13m0>.

From Our Stated Clerk



*By Jeannie Dixon,
Fellowship,
Tallahassee Elder*

Join Us for Christmas Tea
Tuesday, December 6th, 2 PM
 Trinity Presbyterian Church
 3400 Bayou Blvd., Parlor and Sanctuary
 Hosted by Trinity Presbyterian Women

Enjoy an English tea, organ music by Tom Helms, organ recording artist who performs around the world, and the Trinity Learning Center Children.

Bring your favorite tea cup and wear a hat.

Tickets are \$10 and may be purchased by contacting Freddie Prettyman, 850-324-2917 or fprettyman@earthlink.net



Save the date!
Disciplefest 2023

Friday and Saturday,
 March 3 and 4

@ Dogwood Acres
*Theme: Nurturing
 the Garden*

Watch for details!

<https://fb.me/e/29sTmrZYf>

From the Committee on Nominations (CN)



*By Ruth Bedell,
CN member and
Faith, Tallahassee,
elder*

Presbytery Committee Corner: Committee on Dogwood Acres (CDWA)

This month, we continue our series on presbytery committees by featuring the Committee on Dogwood Acres, chaired by Rev. Bill Lamont, Gulf Breeze Presbyterian Church Senior Pastor. This committee oversees short- and long-term planning, management, development, operations and programs of Dogwood Acres Retreat Center and Summer Camp. Christy Williams is Dogwood Acres' new interim director.

What are your committee's priorities for the rest of the year?

Dogwood has just completed a one-year visioning and planning session in November. The committee's priorities are reconnecting with Dogwood supporters in 2023, providing more programming that caters to the needs of the presbytery, and expanding the summer camp program. We have committed to four weeks of summer camp in 2023, with a full week of camp devoted to high schoolers alone. Counselor training will take place one week prior to camp beginning.

What are the top two accomplishments of your committee?

Dogwood Acres Committee has emerged from the pandemic

stronger, better focused and eager to enter a new age in outdoor ministry. We managed to erect a new storage building recently and are in the midst of renovating about half the cabins on site. Our one-year plan is the first step in a five-year plan to see the camp expand its reach and grow its ministry.

What qualities are you looking for in potential volunteers interested in serving on your committee?

Dogwood Acres Committee needs committed volunteers with a business background and/or expertise in social media/website development.

We also need plenty of hands-on volunteers willing to help out with site improvements, trail clearing, and general cleaning/improvements. We will be recruiting a Dogwood liaison from each congregation to help improve communications and connections with our churches.

Christy, what else would you like to share about Dogwood Acres?

Dogwood Acres has long been considered a holy place for children and youth in our presbytery, to experience God's love, grace and acceptance by immersing themselves in

God's good creation and living in Christian community. Indeed, Dogwood is that place. It is also more and more a sacred destination for adults who want these same kinds of encounters with God. Responding to the increasing adult usage, we are in the process of renovating the inside of our cabins, so they are more adult friendly, creating menus that fit adult palates, and increasing our programming for adults in our churches.

As the new Director of Dogwood, I hope to get to each of our presbytery's districts and meet church staff, donors and supporters and folks who want to learn more about our amazing outdoor ministry. We are a connectional church and in North Florida, Dogwood is the place we can journey to for meetings, fellowship gatherings and those welcome retreats. My goal is to find more avenues for increasing our connections in ways that benefit each church and the presbytery as a whole.

CDWA currently has three vacancies. If interested in serving on this committee, please contact Glenn Hodges at ghodges37@comcast.net. See you at the corner next month!

CCR helps congregations discern where God is leading

The Committee on Congregational Revitalization (CCR) is alive and well in the Presbytery of Florida. Currently, six congregations are engaged in the revitalization process and are making great strides determining what future God is calling them into.

Is this an easy process? Sometimes. Sometimes not. Revitalization means taking an honest hard look at where the congregation currently stands in its energy reserves, its flexibility to try new avenues of ministry, and its financial resources.

These three areas (and

more) are what CCR helps a congregation discern. Where the congregation currently stands, plus learning about the demographic needs of the area surrounding the church, are all taken into consideration when it comes to discerning where God is leading.

If your congregation is struggling to determine its future ministry, or if you are a healthy congregation desiring to explore further options for ministry, shoot me an email

minister@fpc-crestview.org

. CCR is able, willing, and ready to help you discern and walk

with you the next path of your journey in ministry.

On a very different note... I had the privilege of attending the latest General Assembly Moderators' Conference for training on leadership. While there I met many of our GA staff. Among many other things learned from the staff, one is they are hiring!

If you know of someone who would like to consider and be considered for a position with the PC(USA) headquarters, give them this web address; it will list all available positions: www.pcusa.org/careers

From the Committee on Congregational Revitalization (CCR)



By Rev. Mark Broadhead, Chair, and 1st, Crestview/Laurel Hill Pastor



The Living Nativity

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10, 5:30-8 P.M.
LAUREL HILL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
8115 FOURTH STREET

TAKE A MOVING SPIRITUAL JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM AND DISCOVER THE TRUE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS AS PERFORMED BY LIVE ACTORS!
REFRESHMENTS AND FELLOWSHIP FOLLOW YOUR JOURNEY!

Presented by The Laurel Hill & Crestview Presbyterian Churches



*Journey Held Inside if Rain
New Characters for 2022!*

From the Committee on Dogwood Acres (CDWA)



*By Christy Williams,
Interim Director*

Making all things new

Greetings from Dogwood Acres Camp and Retreat Center. If I haven't yet met you at a presbytery meeting or at a retreat, my name is Christy Williams and I am the new Director of Dogwood Acres.

I am delighted to partner in this ministry with the other Dogwood Staff: Eric Hearn, program director; Robert Commerford, property manager; and Cristina Carroll, kitchen manager. Together we are working to create an environment where you can come and renew your spirit, experience God's grace and feel the acceptance of a loving community.

Besides a new director, Dogwood also has a new, state-of-the-art storage building and two renovated cabins (shown above, at right). Thank you to members of Gulf Breeze and Lafayette Presbyterian (Tallahassee) Churches who built our storage building!

Thank you to several folks whose donations have made it possible for us to renovate our cabins with new bathroom areas, new flooring, paint, new outlets and shelves and light fixtures. We currently have funds to complete 8 of our 10 cabins. We hope that by Spring, we can complete all 10 cabin renovations.

Please visit our website to check out the new retreats we are offering for January and February – a confirmation retreat for

youth and their adult mentors, a women's yoga and mindfulness retreat and the annual Dogwood Youth Conference.



We are grateful to all those individuals and churches who have supported this ministry with donations, participation in

events and retreats and with volunteer hours. It is because of your generosity that we are able to affirm that God continues to do new things at Dogwood Acres.

Information with dates, cost and general schedule are noted on our website www.dogwoodacres.org/events/. We also will open our Summer Camp 2023 registration on January 1!



Confirmation Retreat for the Presbytery of Florida

January 13th-15th ·
Dogwood Acres

This retreat is designed for any middle or high school student currently enrolled in a confirmation class, or recently finished a confirmation class, or about to begin a confirmation class along with their adult mentors, educator, or pastor.

Who:

Youth from 6th-12th grade

When:

Arrive Jan. 13th 7pm CT

Depart Jan. 15th Noon CT

Where: Dogwood Acres

Cost:

\$140 per person

Mark your calendars.

Register with your church today!

An Eco-friendlier Christmas

Let's face it, we all generate a lot of waste during the holidays. One source says that we generate enough paper waste that, if placed end to end, would stretch from London to Lapland and back 103 times. There also is lots of food waste. It is tons, and its production involves a lot of water and energy, much of which is wasted if the food isn't consumed or composted.

So, working to avoid waste at Christmas is worth our time and effort. Here are some suggestions from a variety of sources for making your Christmas more eco-friendly.

Reuse your wrapping paper and ribbons or purchase recycled wrapping paper. Try to recycle the paper after Christmas, but as a general rule, paper with glitter or foil is not recyclable. To check, crunch it into a ball. If it stays in a ball, it is recyclable. Fabric ribbon is easily reused year after year.

Purchase recyclable Christmas cards and recycle the cards you receive. We throw away 1 billion cards every year and, as with wrapping paper, cards with glitter or foil are generally not recyclable. In our

household, we cut up the old cards to make gift tags.

Try not to buy plastic gifts, particularly toys. Buy your children books, trees (especially food-producing trees like citrus), bird baths, bird feeders, food, or clothes, or give them an experience. Our grands are going to be surprised with a camping trip this year.

Avoid food waste: Plan simpler meals or cook smaller amounts. Encourage guests to take leftovers home. Freeze leftovers to enjoy later.

Compost the food you can't use. Even meat scraps can be thrown out in the woods for wildlife.

Use LED or other low energy holiday lighting. This is pretty much the norm nowadays. Here is the million dollar question: Is it better to purchase a real tree each year or invest in an artificial tree you can use year after year? The Carbon Trust says a real Christmas tree has a much smaller carbon footprint than a similar-sized, artificial tree. Artificial trees are made with plastic, which is a petroleum product. There are other options. We have a feather tree that we use year after

year. It is made with dyed goose feathers so it is organic, which requires it to be stored in a climate-controlled place. They also are pricey because they are handmade, but we enjoy its uniqueness.



You could also purchase a live tree and plant it in your yard or neighborhood after Christmas. Our very first Christmas tree from the 1970s was planted in our old neighborhood, and it is 30 feet tall!

After Christmas, recycle your real tree. Cut it up and recycle it in your backyard, or take it to a Christmas tree recycling site, which some communities provide.

Hope this is helpful. It is one more way that we can share our love and care for God's wonderful creation. Peace and joy to you and your family.

Caring for Creation Notes



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

"... working to avoid waste at Christmas is worth our time and effort."

**PRESBYTERY
OF FLORIDA**

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or 850-535-2440

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Website:
www.presbyteryofflorida.net

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**Committee on Dogwood Acres
(CDWA)**
Rev. William "Bill" Lamont
gbpcpastorbill@gmail.com

**Committee on Educational Resources
(CER)**
Elder Esther Moring
esthermoring@gmail.com

Committee on Ministry (COM)
Rev. Dr. Joan Wooten
joanwooten@fpcpensacola.com

**Committee on Mission and Outreach
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Rev. Hugh Hamilton
hugh@trinitypcola.org

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revmealor@gmail.com

Committee on Nominations (CN)
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Leslie.yandle@gmail.com

**Committee on
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Rev. Dr. Raymond Guterman
dwguterma@gmail.com

**Committee on Presbytery
Administration (CPA)**
Rev. Brad Clayton
brad@faithpcusa.org

Committee on Representation (CR)
Elder Glenn Hodges
ghodges37@comcast.net

**Coordinating and Planning
Commission (CPC)**
Rev. Dr. Michael Askew
askew.michaelsr@yahoo.com

Save the date (or visit <http://www.presbyteryofflorida.net/events-calendars/>)

In December	Looking ahead
Friday, December 2 Annual church statistical reporting opens	Monday, January 2 Presbytery office closed for New Year's Day
Monday, December 5 6 p.m. CST/ 7 p.m. EST Annual Statistical Reporting Workshop via Zoom	Tuesday, January 10 9:30 a.m. CST/ 10:30 a.m. EST Committee on Ministry (COM)
Tuesday, December 6 2 p.m. CST Trinity, Pensacola, Presbyterian Women Christmas Tea	Wednesday, January 11 1 p.m. CST/ 2 p.m. EST Committee on Presbytery Administration (CPA)
Saturday, December 10 10 a.m. CST/ 11 a.m. EST Committee on Representation (CR)	Friday – Sunday, January 13 – 15 Middle and High School Youth Confirmation Retreat, Dogwood Acres
Saturday, December 10 5:30 – 8 p.m. CST Laurel Hill Presbyterian Living Nativity	Monday, January 16 3 p.m. CST/ 4 p.m. EST Committee on Educational Resources (CER)
Monday, December 12 11 a.m. CST/ 12 p.m. EST Committee on Educational Resources (CER)	Tuesday, January 17 10 a.m. CST/ 11 a.m. EST Committee on Congregational Revitalization (CCR)
Thursday – Sunday, December 15 – 18 7:30 p.m. EST A Christmas Carol at Faith Presbyterian, Tallahassee	Friday – Sunday, January 20 – 22 Women's Yoga and Mindfulness Retreat, Dogwood Acres
Tuesday, December 20 January Panhandle Presbyterian submissions deadline	Wednesday, January 25 10 a.m. CST/ 11 a.m. EST Racial Justice Subcommittee
Friday, December 23 – Monday, December 26 Presbytery office closed for Christmas	Thursday, January 26 9:30 a.m. CST/ 10:30 a.m. EST Coordinating and Planning Commission (CPC)

Charles Dickens'
A CHRISTMAS CAROL
A FESTIVAL OF HOLIDAY MUSIC

December 15, 16, 17, and 18, 7:30 p.m. EST
Information and tickets: www.faihtpcusa.org/christmascarol
Faith Presbyterian Church
2200 N. Meridian Rd., Tallahassee