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# The Panhandle Presbyterian

*A monthly publication of the Presbytery of Florida*



Volume 6, Issue 1

January 2023

## From General Presbyter Roy Martin

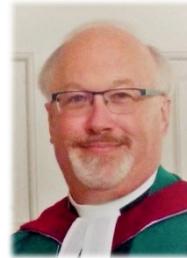
January 18<sup>th</sup> begins the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. We Presbyterians have always understood ourselves to be part of the whole Church of Jesus Christ; that wherever, “the Word of God is truly preached and heard, the sacraments are rightly administered, and ecclesiastical discipline is uprightly ministered” (*Book of Order* F-1.0303), there is the true Church.

Our *Book of Order* further states, “Because the Church is one, it strives to be one. To be one with Christ is to be joined with all those whom Christ calls into relationship with him.” “Division into different denominations obscures but does not destroy unity in Christ. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), affirming its historical continuity with

the whole Church of Jesus Christ, is committed to the reduction of that obscurity, and is willing to seek and to deepen communion with all other churches within the one holy catholic and apostolic Church.” (F-1.0302a)

Our denomination is already in full communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Reformed Church in America, the United Church of Christ, and in covenant relationship with the Korean Presbyterian Church in America and the Moravian Church – Northern and Southern Provinces.

We have also been in



**The Rev. Dr. Roy Martin**

bilateral talks with the Episcopalians since the 1890s and in continuing dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church. Further, we are members of the World Council of Churches, the World Communion of Reformed Churches, the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, Churches Uniting in Christ, and Christian Churches Together. All of this speaks to our desire to deepen communion with other churches and to reduce the obscurity that exists between denominations.

I encourage you individually and as congregations to pray for such unity to develop further under the lordship of Jesus Christ.

Roy

**Save the date!**

**Winter  
Presbytery Meeting**

**Tuesday, Feb. 28 • 9 a.m. CST/10 a.m. EST**

**1st Presbyterian Church of Marianna**

## From Our Stated Clerk



By Jeannie Dixon,  
Fellowship,  
Tallahassee Elder

## Statistical reporting underway; amendments proposed

It is statistics season. The annual church statistics program opened to session clerks on Friday, Dec. 2, 2022. On Monday, Dec. 5, clerks and other staff from 14 of our congregations met via Zoom to go over this year's questions. The statistics close at midnight (Eastern) on Thursday, Feb. 16.

This report does require session approval so be aware of the dates of your January and February session meetings. From January 16 to the close of the reporting period, I will contact clerks who have not yet entered data. The closer it is to the deadline, the contacts will become phone calls and emails to pastors and others.

It is very important to gather this information. The *Book of Order* (G-3.0302e) mandates it; the data is used by various General Assembly agencies and updates existing data used in the "trends" web pages

(<https://church-trends.pcusa.org/>). It is also very helpful for members who have moved who want to find a new congregation and for ministers who are looking at new calls (and responding to a call) to use the data to get a fuller picture of the health of the congregation.

A final Zoom workshop will be held Thursday, Feb. 2, at 6 p.m. CST/7 p.m. EST. Registration will be required, so watch the Presbytery's weekly *eUpdate* for more information on this.

If you have any questions at all while working on this, do not hesitate to contact me! All clerks have my phone number, and you all have my email address, or you may contact the Presbytery office for my contact information.

► At the General Assembly in July, 2022, a number of amendments to

the *Book of Order* were approved. These have been sent to the presbyteries for voting by July 9, 2023. The 133-page booklet of amendments can be found at [www.presbyteryofflorida.net/presbytery-committees/bills-and-overtures/](http://www.presbyteryofflorida.net/presbytery-committees/bills-and-overtures/).

The Bills and Overtures committee (Brant Copeland, Joanne Kublik, Ryan Obay) suggest you review this booklet in preparation for the votes at the February and May meetings of presbytery. During their meetings in January, they will discuss additional ways to provide information on these amendments.

They will split the votes on the amendments over two presbytery meetings, as one meeting is not feasible to handle this much work. Please keep the committee in your prayers as they meet Jan. 3 and Jan. 18 for this very important work.

*You are Invited*  
Trinity's Presbyterian Women's Retreat *Ignite & Inspire*  
Lisa Allen, Retreat Leader  
Proverbs 31 Ministries  
**Saturday & Sunday Morning  
January 28 & 29**  
\$40, early registration begins Dec. 4th  
\$65, registering Jan. 1-22  
Gulf State Park Lodge, Gulf Shores  
Carpooling provided  
Contact Judy Scruggs (850.380.5419)  
or Sandy Edwards (850.776.5182)



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give a gift  
that lasts.**

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GIVING CATALOG

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[presbyteriangifts.org](http://presbyteriangifts.org)



**Book Review: *Subversive Witness: Scripture's Call to Leverage Privilege*, by Dominique Dubois Gilliard (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 2021.**

I have no problem recognizing how blessed I am to live in America, or that I am a descendant of European immigrants. Yet, recognizing that I am an inheritor of privilege is more problematic.

On one hand, I would rather not admit that I have received an extra portion of advantages simply because my skin is white. On the other, I experience guilt when I realize that I am indeed a beneficiary of white privilege. While it is difficult to repent for the sins of my fathers and mothers, I am compelled to confess that, more



often than not, I simply accept the privilege which I have inherited, failing to use it for the greater good.

One definition of privilege is “an unfair, often unearned, advantage

or preferential treatment that is exclusively available because of skin color, class, or religion.”

In *Subversive Witness*, ordained minister Dominique Dubois Gilliard provides an opportunity for us to explore how privilege can empower us to bear witness to God’s justice, mercy, and love. By showing how Pharoah’s daughter, Esther, Moses, Paul and Silas, Jesus, and Zacchaeus leveraged their privilege, he invites his readers to grapple with privilege, indifference, and systemic evil. His thesis is that, properly stewarded, privilege can help us see and participate in the inbreaking of God’s kingdom.

Gilliard invites us to acknowledge that privilege is real. Then we have a choice – to exploit it for selfish gain, to allow it to immobilize us, or to leverage it to expand the kingdom and love our neighbors. Mark Lamberton, President of Fuller Theological Seminary, has commented, “[Gilliard] lays out a logical and compelling argument for privileged Christian people to reorder power.” Reflection questions at the end of each chapter make the book ideal for group study.

**From the Racial Justice Subcommittee**



*By Rev. Harvey Jenkins (HR), Subcommittee member*

**2023 THE CHURCH & THE ARTS CONCERT SERIES**  
*Benefiting Beach Care Services*  
 ALL PERFORMANCES START AT 7:00 P.M. **GULF BEACH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
**SUNDAY, JANUARY 8<sup>TH</sup>**  
 TODD HERENDEEN  
**SUNDAY, JANUARY 15<sup>TH</sup>**  
 IN FAITH (BLUE GRASS GOSPEL)  
**SUNDAY, JANUARY 22<sup>ND</sup>**  
 JANELLE FROST  
**SUNDAY, JANUARY 29<sup>TH</sup>**  
 FRANK FLETCHER  
**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5<sup>TH</sup>**  
 BOBBY VAN DEUSEN  
**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19<sup>TH</sup>**  
 WABI SABIS  
**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26<sup>TH</sup>**  
 ARNOLD JAZZ BAND

CELEBRATING 31 YEARS

www.pinkchurch.org  
 271 South Arnold (Hwy 79)  
 Panama City Beach, FL 32413

**GENERAL ADMISSION: \$10.00**  
**Season Ticket Information: (850) 867-3770**

## From the Committee on Nominations (CN)



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

## Presbytery Committee Corner: Looking ahead to 2023

**W**e begin our 2023  
Presbytery  
Committee

Corner series by  
interviewing the Rev.  
Dr. Roy Martin, Jr.,  
General Presbyter,  
Presbytery of Florida.

**In 2022, the Committee on Nominations began highlighting the amazing work of a presbytery committee each month in this column of the Presbytery Panhandle newsletters. Our goal has been to encourage members of congregations to volunteer on committees. From your perspective, why is it important for members, elders, deacons, and clergy to volunteer on a presbytery committee?**

For a long time now, we have described ourselves as a “Connectional Church.” In part, that means that we see ourselves as connected to each other through the councils of the church – namely, the session, the presbytery, the synod, and the general assembly. Those connection are established through the work of individual clergy, elders, deacons, and members.

Unlike some denominations, we don’t have bishops and large staffs to accomplish the day-to-day operations of being the Church; and unlike other denominations, we don’t see ourselves as



independent from one another, focused only upon the ministry of the local congregation. We come together in various ways through our denominational structure because we believe the work of the whole Church is important.

In order for our system to function well, we necessarily depend upon clergy, elders, deacons, and members to volunteer their time and talent to the work of the larger Church which includes the presbytery. But, beyond the polity needs of our denomination, I hear from those that do volunteer to serve beyond their local congregation how much deeper their faith experience becomes, and the personal connections they make with Presbyterians of other congregations within our presbytery and beyond.

**What should potential volunteers consider when deciding on which committee(s) to serve? How do they sign up to volunteer?**

Presbyterians believe strongly that all Christians are called by God to mission and ministry in the world and that God gifts us with talents and abilities to be about that work. We also believe in the inner and outer call to ministry which means a person so attuned to their talents and abilities can discern what God is calling them to do (inner call), and the larger Church may observe talents and abilities in a person that could be put to use effectively in the Church (outer call).

A potential volunteer can start by looking at the definitions of the committees of presbytery on the presbytery website and see where their gifts could be best utilized and then contact me or the chair of the Committee on Nominations to offer their services. Conversely, a pastor or others in the local congregation or someone already serving at presbytery may observe a person’s gifts

and invite them to be open to God's leading in service to the presbytery.

Either way, the important thing is to give the Holy Spirit time to work in you to discover how your gifts can best be used in the presbytery and to be open to something you may not initially see as possible.

**What are some of the ways that the volunteer-led presbytery committees made a difference in furthering the presbytery's mission and ministry in 2022?**

I have had the joy of witnessing our presbytery committees doing great things in mission and ministry over the years! We are working steadily to develop a mission partnership with the Presbyterian Church in Guatemala, start a new worshipping community in

the Hwy. 98/30A corridor, help congregations discover whom God is calling to be their next pastor, offer workshops in all sorts of areas in the life of local congregations, guide congregations and their leadership to discern God's plan for their future, provide space for children, youth, and adults to grow in faith in a camp setting at Dogwood Acres, and nurture candidates for ministry.

All of this is accomplished by clergy, elders, deacons, and members of the congregations of Florida Presbytery. But more help is needed.

**Looking ahead to the New Year, what are your overall goals for the presbytery's committees?**

We will continue to

develop the mission and ministries with which we are engaged. Additionally, we will be seeking presbytery approval to approve the membership of a strategic planning task force to conduct an in-depth study of our presbytery, its mission and programs, budget, staffing, and property to discern what God is calling us to do and be next.

Just like a local congregation, the presbytery can never rest on its laurels. God is not static and, therefore, it is important to be about such discernment from time to time. I think it will be an exciting year to be involved in the work of presbytery and I pray God will lead many in our congregations to serve with us in the coming year!

## Presbytery welcomes new FPC Tallahassee interim pastor



The Presbytery of Florida and First Presbyterian Church of Tallahassee welcome the Rev. Anne Apple as First, Tallahassee's interim pastor. December 4 was her first Sunday in their pulpit. Rev. Apple and her husband, Jim, moved from Memphis, TN, where she served as Associate Executive Pastor at Idlewild Presbyterian Church.

Rev. Apple previously was an adjunct professor at Memphis Theological Seminary, Theologian in Residence at Balmoral Presbyterian Church in Memphis, Designated Pastor at Grace Presbyterian Church, Mobile, AL, and Urban Mission Camp Administrator and Worship Leader at Government Street Presbyterian in Mobile.

Her educational background includes Instructional Design coursework in the University of South Alabama Department of Education PhD Program, a Master of Divinity from Columbia Theological Seminary, and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Rhodes College, Memphis, TN.

**From the  
Committee on  
Ministry  
(COM)**

**From the  
Committee on  
Dogwood Acres  
(CDWA)**



*By Christy Williams,  
Interim Director*

## Dogwood Acres warms up winter with amazing retreats

**Y**ou are invited to join us at Dogwood Acres for some amazing winter retreats in January and February.

If you have middle or high school youth who are considering being confirmed, our **Confirmation Retreat** will enhance that experience by bringing our connectional church to life! Throughout the weekend there will be hands on learning activities and discussions to consider what it means to be a faithful disciple who lives that faith out in a Presbyterian Church. Sheldon Steen, pastor at Christ Presbyterian, Tallahassee; Brant Copeland, honorably retired; and Roy Martin, general presbyter, will all be leading aspects of the retreat.

Need time to reset, renew and relax? **“Pause” a women’s yoga and mindfulness retreat** will

be a weekend aimed at helping women in the Presbytery breathe deeply and consider the New Year with new intentions. There will be time to be still, silent, to hike and to enjoy fellowship, to journal, to practice gentle yoga, to take a class or take a nap! Join Amanda Cannon and Heather Fuselier, both elders at local PC(USA) churches and also instructors and coaches.

**Dogwood Youth Conference** is a winter retreat bound to set faith on fire! Led by college

students at UKirk Tallahassee, middle and high school youth will be invited to consider the Matthew 25 scripture and how it impacts our lives. In between the keynote addresses, worship, small group discussions and artistic renderings will be bonfires, s’mores, field games and hikes. Come one, come all!

Online registrations are up on our website, as are schedules for the weekend and bios on our leaders. Register today at [www.dogwoodacres.org/events/](http://www.dogwoodacres.org/events/).

**Save the date!**  
**DISCIPLEFEST 2023**  
Friday & Saturday, March 3 & 4  
@ Dogwood Acres

*Theme: Nurturing the Garden*  
[Watch for details!](#)

# Pause

**A Yoga & Mindfulness  
Retreat for Women  
January 20-22, 2023**

**Who:** Any women interested  
**When:** Evening January 20th  
Afternoon January 22nd  
**Where:** Dogwood Acres Camp and  
Retreat Center  
**Cost:** \$200 (Includes all activities,  
lodging, and meals)

For it was you who formed my inward parts;  
you knit me together in my mother's womb. I  
praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Psalm 139: 13-14

## Take a hike!

**H**appy New Year! My New Year’s wish for you is to go outside and enjoy natural Florida. This is the best time of year to do it. Go for a hike. And, if you do, here are some must-do hikes, in part, from an article by Catherine Armstrong in [Only in Your State](#).

They say that people who spend time outdoors understand better the imperative to protect our natural resources. Studies also show that being outside in nature is relaxing and good for our heart health. It also makes us happy, so go take a hike!



Source: <https://www.onlyinyourstate.com/florida/only-5-hikes-you-ever-do-fl/>

**Yellow Blaze Trail in Big Shoals State Park** is located on the Suwannee River and offers more than 20 miles of hiking trails. It also is the only place in Florida, that I am aware of, that has river rapids. The rapids aren’t always flowing, so check with the park before visiting. But, when they are, it is fun to watch the kayakers.



Source: <https://www.onlyinyourstate.com/florida/only-5-hikes-you-ever-do-fl/>



Source: <https://floridahikes.com/florida-trail-shepherd-spring>

**Sinkhole Hike at Devil’s Millhopper Geological State Park.** As freshmen at the University of Florida in 1966, we used to slide down the side of this giant sinkhole to get to the bottom. Today, there are steps, and you can stay clean and dry. The bottom is a mystical place of water, coolness and ferns. It is located in Gainesville.

Near Tallahassee is the **Cathedral of the Palms**. It is a beautiful part of a popular hike in the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge that is a remnant of what Florida looked like along the coast before we brought in the bulldozers. When you look up and see these magnificent palms, be prepared to be amazed. There also is a third-magnitude spring – Shepherd Spring – on this hike.

## Caring for Creation Notes



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

*“... being outside  
 in nature is  
 relaxing and good  
 for our heart  
 health.”*

So, please “take a hike” and enjoy what God has created. It is through his creation that we are most directly connected to him.

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OF FLORIDA**

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**The Panhandle Presbyterian**

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

**In January**

Monday, January 2	Presbytery office closed for New Year's Day
Tuesday, January 10 9:30 a.m. CST/ 10:30 a.m. EST	Committee on Ministry (COM)
Wednesday, January 11 1 p.m. CST/ 2 p.m. EST	Committee on Presbytery Administration (CPA)
Friday – Sunday, January 13 – 15	Middle and High School Youth <a href="#">Confirmation Retreat</a> , Dogwood Acres
Monday, January 16	Presbytery office closed for Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday
Tuesday, January 17 10 a.m. CST/ 11 a.m. EST	Committee on Congregational Revitalization (CCR)
Friday, January 20	February Panhandle Presbyterian submissions deadline
Friday – Sunday, January 20 – 22	"Pause" Women's Yoga and Mindfulness Retreat, Dogwood Acres
Wednesday, January 25 10 a.m. CST/ 11 a.m. EST	Racial Justice Subcommittee
Thursday, January 26 9:30 a.m. CST/ 10:30 a.m. EST	Coordinating and Planning Commission (CPC)
Saturday – Sunday, January 28 – 29	Trinity, Pensacola PW "Ignite & Inspire" Women's Retreat, Gulf Shores Lodges, Gulf Shores, AL

**Looking ahead**

Thursday, February 2 6 p.m. CST/ 7 p.m. EST	Statistical Reporting Workshop via Zoom
Friday – Sunday, February 3 – 5	<a href="#">Dogwood Youth Conference</a> (DYC), Dogwood Acres
Wednesday, February 8 1 p.m. CST/ 2 p.m. EST	Committee on Presbytery Administration (CPA)
Thursday, February 16	Statistical reporting portal closes for churches
Monday, February 20	March Panhandle Presbyterian submissions deadline
Tuesday, February 21 10 a.m. CST/ 11 a.m. EST	Committee on Congregational Revitalization (CCR)
Wednesday, February 22	Ash Wednesday
Wednesday, February 22 10 a.m. CST/ 11 a.m. EST	Racial Justice Subcommittee
Tuesday, February 28 9 a.m. CST/ 10 a.m. EST	<b>Winter Stated Presbytery Meeting</b> Registration begins one hour prior to the meeting
Friday – Saturday, March 3 – 4	<b>Disciplefest 2023, Dogwood Acres</b>

South Walton NWC  
WE ARE HIRING A  
**CHURCH  
PLANTER**

SOUTH WALTON, FL 32459



**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!