



PRESBYTERY OF FLORIDA

STRATEGIC PLANNING TASKFORCE

REPORT TO THE PRESBYTERY

OCTOBER 24, 2023

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STRATEGIC PLANNING TASKFORCE PRESBYTERY OF FLORIDA

REPORT TO PRESBYTERY

October 24, 2023

Members of the Taskforce: Rev. Mark Broadhead – Chair (First-Crestview and Laurel Hill), Elder Susan Coleman (Trinity- Pensacola), Rev. Hugh Hamilton (Trinity- Pensacola), Elder Mary Hodges (First-Tallahassee), Elder Don Mowat (First-Lynn Haven), Rev. Eric Spoon (Grace-Panama City), and Elder Karen Weaver (First-Monticello).

The Beginning

The Coordinating and Planning Commission established a Strategic Planning Taskforce to help determine the future direction for the Presbytery of Florida. The Committees on Representation and Nominations secured a diverse group of individuals in the Presbytery to serve as members of the taskforce. Membership includes representatives from the West, Central, and East districts of the Presbytery.

The taskforce convened for an in-person meeting at Dogwood Acres on February 13, 2023. The meeting materials included copies of the current Manual of Operations for the Florida Presbytery, the Book of Order, sections F (The Foundation of Presbyterian Polity) and G (Form of Government), and sample Holy Cow! Landscape modules. Discussion centered on the anticipated work of the taskforce, highlighting five research areas pertinent to Presbytery, i.e., budget, staffing, property and operations, programs, and comparison to other presbyteries. Our consultant from Holy Cow! Consulting provided a presentation via zoom explaining the Landscape assessment, proposed assessment development, and administration of an assessment for the presbytery. The Coordinating and Planning Commission allotted \$5,000 for the Holy Cow Landscape assessment, which totaled \$3,500.

Information the taskforce gathered from its areas of research and its review of the Landscape assessment results would facilitate its development of a strategic plan to help lead the presbytery forward. The established deadline for completion of the taskforce's report was by the October 2023 meeting of the presbytery.

This report contains background information about the Strategic Planning Taskforce, data collected, its discernment process, proposed recommendations, and implementation timeline.

The Charter:

- Engage in a process of discernment and make recommendations for the Presbytery's structure, staffing, and ministries, being sure we remain in line with the Book of Order.
- Determine if the current Manual of Operations is/will be what is needed by the Presbytery.
- Substantiate any recommended changes, up to and including a complete makeover of the presbytery and show financial support for such.

A Pastoral Word

The Presbytery of Florida was originally formed in 1841, consisting of the congregations in Madison, Monticello, Tallahassee, Quincy, and Marianna. While the Euchee Valley congregation was formed in 1820, it was done so by the Presbytery of South Alabama and welcomed into the Presbytery of Florida in 1845. The main focus of the presbytery at its inception in 1841 was to “provide nurture and resources to assist the charter churches in carrying out their mission” (*150 Years: Frontiers in Faith*).

In 1970 the General Assembly Commission of the Boundaries of Presbyteries and Synods noticed the Presbytery of Florida was not growing as rapidly as needed in order to sustain itself. It was recommended at that time that the Presbytery be divided, half going to the former Presbytery of Mobile and the other half going to the former Presbytery of Suwanee Presbytery. A reprieve was given due to the efforts of General Presbyter Rev. Frank Elvery.

With Reunion in 1983, changes occurred which brought together the “northern” and “southern” streams of Presbyterianism. It was not without its hiccups, some of which are still active today.

God has been actively involved in the life and ministry of the Presbytery of Florida since its inception and throughout its history. Very beneficial ministry has been accomplished. Lives have been changed, pastors have come and gone, congregations have been born and died. Programs have been established, some of which continue, others fulfilled their purpose and came to an end.

In the last few decades, life in our society has been changing drastically and rapidly. With each passing day, the pace continues to escalate.

In February 2023, the Coordinating and Planning Commission established a Strategic Planning Taskforce to help discern the future direction for the Presbytery of Florida. The Taskforce did a lot of listening to the whispers and groans within the Presbytery. These voices expressed how pastors, congregational leaders, and people in the pews are seeking shepherding, care, and tending.

The presbytery has been functioning as a large-scale congregation that spans the whole panhandle. Ministries and programs in place are typical of those in a congregation. There has been little difference in the work of the presbytery and our congregations other than the size and scope of what has been offered.

We have done good works of ministry over the decades. And now, new needs have emerged. Like congregations that want to hold on to past glory days and long for their return, the challenge for our presbytery is to break its long-standing patterns.

A quote attributed to Albert Einstein says, “The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results.” This kind of insanity is devious. It wants to promote the comfort of what is known. In an ever-changing society, people flock to the comfortable and the familiar. A downside of responding to this desire is it keeps us from being truly open to God and God’s leading into a future God has in store.

Not one of us knows the future, but God does. Many, when faced with the unknown, allow anxiety to prompt questions based in fear. “Are you sure this will be better than what we currently do? Are you sure this is the best possible direction? What about ‘my favorite projects where I have expended so much time, energy, money, and emotion? Does that lose its place of prominence?’ What are the consequences of the unknown?”

Unfortunately, the typical way to “fix” this situation is to look for “bigger and better” things to do and the means to do them. The search goes on to find more activities to offer in an attempt to stimulate interest, to garner more participation, and to receive more dollars. Granted, these matters are important, otherwise the Strategic Planning Taskforce would not have been formed to explore what needs to be done.

Our reality is, much of what has worked in the past no longer works today. Society is different. Congregations are different. Expectations are different.

The seven members of the Strategic Planning Taskforce listened very carefully to what the presbytery had to say. Each committee chair was contacted to give feedback on a series of probing questions about their committee’s work, what was needed to better their ministry, what needed to be let go, and much more. We engaged presbytery leadership in the Holy Cow! Consulting Landscape assessment in which 114 persons in the presbytery responded to give input of their experiences, and their thoughts on the current state of matters in the presbytery. Presbytery staff members were interviewed, seeking their insights, perspectives, and expectations.

The Strategic Planning Taskforce has heard you. The message central to all the conversations, and those who have spoken individually with members of the Taskforce is, “We need to be shepherded. We need to be helped and supported during these tumultuous times of change and decline. We need resources and help in doing meaningful ministry with our congregations and a hurting society. We need more intimacy with God and with each other.”

The Coordinating and Planning Commission granted the Taskforce \$5,000 to accomplish its work. We have remained under budget. We were also given a deadline for our report to be given at the October 2023 meeting of the Presbytery. Individually and collectively the Taskforce has put in hundreds of hours in research, prayer, discernment, discussion, and debate.

What follows are the findings of the Strategic Planning Taskforce and the recommendations for moving forward into a future God has in store for the Presbytery of Florida. You will recognize that the recommendations presented below demonstrate that some areas of work and ministry remain the same, some have radical changes, others have been eliminated.

The Taskforce does not make these recommendations lightly. We truly feel that having listened carefully to the comments and concerns from the presbytery, and having prayerfully sought guidance from God’s Holy Spirit, these recommendations are solid. We are also aware that emotions may run high especially if one feels as though a special project or ministry is being mistreated, maligned, or abandoned. This is absolutely not the intent of this report. What is being presented is offered in love, care, and concern, and with the best intentions for the future ministry of the congregations of the presbytery.

You are invited to prayerfully, compassionately, and openly consider what we present to you.

THE STRATEGIC PLANNING TASKFORCE PROCESS

Several Avenues were employed to gather information on the current manner of ministry.

- We interviewed committee chairs, presbytery staff, and Dogwood Acres personnel.
- We reviewed the Book of Order prescriptions and requirements for a presbytery.
- We reviewed the present presbytery manual of operations.
- We considered structures and operations of presbyteries in our Synod and made personal contacts with leaders and clergy in those presbyteries.
- We reviewed our presbytery finances.
- We reviewed the results of Holy Cow Landscape assessment of the presbytery: 114 respondents.

FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEWS WITH STAFF, COMMITTEE CHAIRS, AND MEMBERS AT LARGE

GENERAL FINDINGS

1. Our lack of unity in a compelling mission statement hinders us prioritizing our committee endeavors. Our present mission statement is too long, too diverse. We do not know it; we do not discuss it. It appears nowhere on our docket. Everything we do has equal weight and priority. We do little strategic planning based on our mission priorities and/or core values.
2. Our lack of unity in a compelling mission limits our awareness, our attendance, and our attitude.
3. All committees struggle to attract and retain enough members to meet their duties and responsibilities. Present members are doubling up on responsibilities.
4. All committees see the need to continue the use of Zoom online meetings in combination with in-person meetings. Travel/Commute times exceed meeting time, hindering member participation at Dogwood Acres.
5. Property matters and congregational property matters need to be clearly assigned, but to whom? PC? CPA? COM? CCD? (All raised that question.)
6. We struggle to secure Elder Commissioners and Clergy to routine, business-focused Presbytery meetings: and little news is shared afterwards at Sessions/congregations. A shift to spiritual growth focused agendas/presentations/workshops may foster better practices in ministries common to all congregations.
7. We need to hear and heed younger voices, and encourage leadership from our young pastors, congregational leaders, members. We need to engage them and try innovative approaches, techniques and tools, social media, styles and forms of ministry that reach, attract, and retain people in today's culture.
8. Changes made to the Manual of Operations and committee structures were not, and have not, been well communicated, causing little "buy-in" on the part of committee members.
9. We heard consistently that congregations need and want assistance in becoming more effective in their local ministries.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FROM INTERVIEWS

1. Refocus Presbytery's Mission Statement

- A. Make our #1 Mission Priority to resource our congregations for our common shared ministries.
- B. Clarify:
 - What are we to be about?
 - Why do we want to do that?
 - What do we need to do to accomplish that?
 - What skills, tools, training, and experiences do we need...
 - 1) from staff, and
 - 2) from volunteers?
 - Who within the presbytery has those insights, resources, and skills to share?
 - Whom from beyond the presbytery may we call on to train us?
- C. We cannot answer our staffing needs until we have our mission and values clarified.
- D. Channel our energies into what presbytery can and will do for all congregations to assist them to being vital in their communities in today's evolving culture. Let us do fewer things and do them well, not myriad things poorly.
- E. To enhance our congregations' ministries will boost their confidence and trust of presbytery and thereby their participation in presbytery.

2. Clarify return on investment: What can congregations expect and receive from the presbytery in return for their investment in presbytery of our finances and volunteer service?

- A. *Rethink how presbytery does business with our congregations.* A new committee structure was put into place in 2018. Now let us help all committees to focus on educating and equipping congregations for their ministries in their local context while conducting the *essential* Book of Order prescribed presbytery ministries.
- B. *Who needs and utilizes Presbytery?* Larger churches seem to expect and use less of presbytery staff, talents, programs, and assistance while smaller and declining churches need more from presbytery. Many are hesitant to ask for assistance.

3. Identify and publish presbytery's Core Values

- What do we value most in our relationships and ministries? What makes us unique? What spiritual underpinnings inspire us to action?
- In today's culture people resonate more with core values than with mission statements.
- What presbyteries publish their core values – from which we can learn?

4. Presbytery Meetings Target presbytery meetings toward educational and spiritual enrichment resourcing. Minimize business matters and focus on resourcing congregations around our essential common ministries. Invite noted speakers and resource people to lead workshops and promote novel resources and guides. Assign taskforces to prepare presentations in the next calendar year rotation.

5. Committee Training: All need and want more extensive training and orientation specific to their committees' responsibilities, resources, operations, and finances.

6. Recruitment of Volunteers & Committee Members

A. Improvement of the processes

1. to attract and retain committee members,
2. to lessen attrition loss of members.

B. Where possible, remove representation quotas by gender/district/Minister of Word and Sacrament vs Ruling Elder representation quotas; allow people with interests to serve at will. People shared with us that they *want* to be involved but do not feel matched to where their gifts can best be utilized in presbytery service.

1. Submission of Nominations

- Institute a nominations season and event at which pastors, DCE's, clerks, PW officers, and Sessions intentionally bring names of nominees. The event should be highly publicized and clear instructions given prior to the event.
- Distribute brief descriptions of Committee duties, talents needed, interests needed.
- Provide uniform nomination ballots to be filled out and collectively submitted at Spring or Summer presbytery meeting.

2. Combine the Committee on Nominations and Committee on Representation to be the Ministry of Representation.

- Avoid duplication and confusion of efforts. Have one member of the Ministry of Representation be the ombudsman to secure racial, ethnic, and diverse nominees to committees. That one member serves on a rotational basis.

3. Boost volunteer morale

- Younger members want short-term project commitments, not long term 3-year committee commitments. Older committee members serving long term commitments need to set 2-3 meeting times yearly to organize, publicize, and recruit for project specific volunteers (e.g., Disciplefest, Stewardship, Service/Mission endeavors, seasonal Christian Education programs/resources, leadership development, summer camps and programs). After the project completion the volunteers disperse.

7. Committee Meeting Times and Access:

A. Continue in-person and ZOOM meetings.

B. Change to bi-monthly Committee Meetings. Travel times and workday schedules hinder committee member involvement. Allow committees, task forces, subcommittees to work and report by ZOOM and email, schedule time intensive meetings at presbytery office less frequently.

8. Communications: Continue presbytery newsletter and weekly updates. Share more success stories: Holy Cow! and other efforts are bringing positive results to congregations. We need more sharing of inspiring and engaging stories of what our other congregations are doing that may inspire others to emulate their actions. Share published and online resources to clergy and lay leaders to consider for implementation in their congregations and communities.

9. Budget: Budgetary constraints are the elephant in the room. How can we improve funding overall and still: 1) retain all our presbytery staff, and 2) continue funding Dogwood Acres, and 3) pursue new initiatives crucial to our renewed mission?

FINDINGS FROM THE HOLY COW! CONSULTING LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

Satisfaction Indicator: *55% of assessment respondents are on the fence with feelings of satisfaction.*

Our people feel satisfied when...

- we share a clearly defined and uniting vision statement.
- presbytery recognizes societal trends and provides congregations help to address them.
- people know their concerns have been heard.
- congregations feel strong presbytery support during times of transition.
- presbytery meetings are productive.
- there is strong support of volunteers.

Energy Indicator: *46% of our respondents are on the fence with feelings of strong energy.*

Our people feel energized when...

- there is help building congregational vitality.
- leaders lead.
- the strong message of “we are all in this together” is firmly conveyed.
- assistance is given regarding building stewardship and discipleship.
- people know the policies and committee descriptions and fulfill the work.

We need major changes to regain a significant level of vitality and health.

- We are in a transitional climate: areas of loyalty and strength carry the low performing areas.
- Work to be done: 1) Clarify the mission of presbytery, 2) Clarify mission of staff, 3) Send clear messages about our need for ongoing change, what we suggest be changed, and what to expect.
- Need mutual support: We heard repeatedly that presbytery needs to resource our congregations for their work, and we need to network our talents to enhance our mutual ministries, thereby training and equipping our lay leaders.
- What core values state what is most important to us in our presbytery relationships and ministries? What underpinnings inspire us to action?
- What skills do we need congregational leaders to develop to foster their service a) to congregations, and b) to presbytery committees?

Top Priorities:

The top three priorities identified by the presbytery as to where our energy needs be applied:

1. Equip pastors, officers, staff, and congregants with strategies to reach new members.
2. Give strong emotional, spiritual, and in some cases financial, assistance to struggling congregations.
3. Equip congregational leaders to help members grow spiritually.

Equip - The term “equip” resounded among committee chairs and members, and among Elders. People want to be equipped to...

- build strategies for attracting new members
- grow vital disciples
- address identified community problems and our fast-changing culture.

Assist - Respondents asked for assistance...

- Struggling congregations with pastoral transitions, finances, have on-site stewardship consultants.
- Understanding the presbytery's mission and vision.
- Becoming vital congregations.
- Deepening their spiritual capacity for service and leadership.

Change and Vision Clarity: Our people indicated needs for:

- **Clarity of Vision:** 84% are unclear about the vision/mission of the presbytery. (Once this is established, we will need to communicate clearly and frequently.)
- **Flexibility:** 84% think we stay with established ways of doing things. Our presbytery culture is status quo. Our scores show us less flexible and agile than many presbyteries. People do not have a clear idea of what are the vision or mission of the presbytery.
- **Change Required:** 79% said moderate to large amounts of change is needed. We need to change to address challenges of our times and culture.

Members Are Ready to Follow: 81% of respondents agree, but they are cautious. We are heading the right way, but not with strong confidence and allegiance. We need to bolster trust and awareness.

Engagement and Utilization of Presbytery Life and Resources.

- **Congregations Engaged in the Life of the Presbytery:** 66% believe their congregation is moderately to highly engaged in presbytery throughout the year aside from sending commissioners to presbytery meetings.
- **Utilization of Skills:** 77% of respondents do not know how to plug in to the ministries of the presbytery. They want to help, be engaged, but do not feel matched to where their gifts and interests can best be utilized.
- **Awareness of the Work of the Presbytery:** 88% are moderately to highly aware.

Dogwood Acres Responses

- Keep Dogwood Acres connected to the presbytery as is: 62%
- Have Dogwood Acres become a separate 501(c)(3): 24%

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE STRATEGIC PLANNING TASKFORCE

PROPOSED VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS

Our Vision:

To be a presbytery of strong, healthy, energetic congregations advancing the ministries of Jesus Christ.

Our Mission:

To provide guidance, training, and assistance to our congregations.

What this would look like:

Guidance:

1. Equip pastors and congregants with strategies to attract and retain new members.
2. Give strong assistance to struggling congregations.
3. Equip congregational leaders to help members grow spiritually.

Training:

1. Build strategies for attracting and retaining new members.
2. Grow vital disciples.
3. Address identified community problems and cultural changes (especially in our post-pandemic society and congregations).
4. Orient all ministry members to their responsibilities, available resources, and presbytery operations.
5. Use all available venues and opportunities for education and hands-on training: Disciplefest, presbytery meetings, committee meetings, clergy/educator lunches, twice annual Convocations of Elders, retreats, continued education, etc.

Assisting:

1. Build solid, trusted, leadership (i.e., Presbytery staff, Ministry members and chairs, Elders, lay leaders)
2. Increase awareness of and present resources of best practices, tools, materials, seminars, webinars, workshops addressing our needs.
3. Offer continuing education opportunities within the presbytery and at every presbytery meeting.
4. Use Dogwood Acres as the central location of presbytery mission orientation and training, quarterly and/or seasonal seminars.
5. Offer emotional, spiritual, and financial aid as appropriate. Stewardship training, peer-to-peer support, supply preachers, pastoral transitions.

PROPOSED TIMELINE

To Engage Immediately: Focus internally to foster trust, and increase participation of church leaders and members. Energy attracts energy; we need each other's enthusiasm and innovation. Once established, focus outward on outreach endeavors.

YEAR 1 (MARCH 1, 2024) SIMPLIFY AND STREAMLINE The Presbytery Structure

Move from static to ecstatic.

- Reduce and eliminate duplication and unnecessary or detrimental efforts.
- Change presbytery meetings to become more educational and supportive in nature by providing expert speakers for seminars and workshops geared for pastors and laity alike to encourage collegiality, connections, resourcing, and support.
- Suggested Format for Presbytery Meetings:
 - Opening Prayer
 - Welcome/Instructions
 - Worship – based on theme for the day/quarter/year
 - Resourcing time: ministry partner reports, resources based on the current theme.
 - Example:
 - *February Winter Meeting:* Spiritual growth practices: resources, programs, skills, and practices in discipleship training. Lent and Easter resourcing.
 - *May Spring Meeting:* Christian Education: Help plan for the new Fall semester: best practices and novel resources in Christian Education for all age groups, Small Group curriculum, addressing social issues/justice, recommended resources, etc.
 - *August Summer meeting:* Stewardship and Volunteerism: new practices and processes to secure volunteers for congregational and presbytery teams; request and submit nomination and suggested persons.
 - *October Fall Meeting:* Worship Arts: Planning Music, Preaching, Drama, liturgical resources, worship arts in your congregation for the Advent/Christmas season and beyond.
 - Items submitted for approval from Ministries
 - Utilize an Omnibus Motion (a motion to approve in one vote items that more than likely do not need discussion) on items in Ministry reports designated “for omnibus motion” by an asterisk. Before the omnibus motion is voted on, any commissioner may ask that an item be lifted from the omnibus motion and discussed independently later in the meeting.
 - Items for Action that need individual attention will be addressed according to the Manual of Operations.
 - Items for information – not already in written reports.
 - Staff
 - Others
 - Closing worship/prayer – brief, quiet reflection.
 - Adjourn.
- Develop an atmosphere more in line of an assembly of pastors, elders, leaders, staff persons, and congregational members. Have meetings be more open to attendance by church staffs and members.

Establish mandated and needed committees.

- What Committees/Functions/Positions are Mandatory per the Book of Order?
 - Committee on Preparation for Ministry
 - Committee on Ministry
 - Committee on Representation
 - Permanent Judicial Commission
 - Stated Clerk

- Recommended Ministry Structure (see descriptions below). Note that most names utilize the word “Ministry” instead of “Committee.” This is an intentional attempt to change a mindset from doing “work,” to serving our Lord by furthering our Lord’s ministries.
 - Ministry Coordinating Council
 - Committee on Ministry
 - Ministry of Congregational Health
 - Ministry of Leadership Development
 - Ministry of Pastoral Transitions
 - Ministry of Dogwood Acres
 - Ministry of New Congregation Formation
 - Ministry of Presbytery Operations
 - Ministry on Representation
 - Permanent Judicial Commission

YEARS 2 AND 3 (2025-2026)

ENGAGE AND UTILIZE

Our Congregations’ Talents and Personal Resources

A new culture in the Presbytery is afoot:

- Develop a Directory of Talents as a resource of persons willing to go to our congregations to aid, assist, encourage, train persons to help meet a congregation’s specific need or desire.
- Broadly convey the new culture within the Presbytery.
- Advertise what our presbytery now “gives to you.”

YEARS 4 AND 5 (2027-2028)

OUR INITIAL MISSION IS FULFILLED

New life is engaged:

- The new structure of the presbytery is in place and working.
- Our congregations have accepted and engaged in the new structure and culture, and have increased their participation and financial support for presbytery endeavors.
- The presbytery has rebounded in its ministry and purpose, being a benefit to all congregations.

PROPOSED COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

Ministry Coordinating Council

The Ministry Coordinating Council is composed of the Moderator(s) or Vice-Moderator(s) of each of the Presbytery Ministries, the immediate Past Presbytery Moderator, the current Presbytery Moderator, the current Vice-Moderator and three at-large members. The Council will meet as needed to focus on the specific issues of calendaring, resource sharing, and communication within the Presbytery. The Council is responsible for those duties outlined below and other such duties identified by *The Book of Order*, G-3.0106.

Duties

1. Be granted commission authority.
2. Prayerfully discern the future of the Presbytery of Florida – the congregations and communities within its bounds.
3. Coordinate and communicate the plans and needs of the various Ministries of the presbytery.
4. Facilitate communication throughout the Presbytery.
5. Assist the Stated Clerk with logistics of presbytery meetings, including planning worship and setting a quarterly or an annual theme for education, reflection, and support.
6. Provide a forum, in coordination with the ministries of Leadership Development and Congregational Health, for sharing the needs in congregations and initiatives that will strengthen the ministries of congregations.
7. Provide oversight, review, and evaluation of Presbytery staff, as well as termination and employment when needed.
8. Maintain the presbytery's Manual of Operations.
9. Serve as a forum for interim decision-making between stated meetings of the presbytery, as needed, and reported to the presbytery for its affirmation.
10. Annually in March hold a short, in-person retreat for review of current strategies and planning of the coming presbytery year.
11. Appoint a Recording Clerk and Minute Readers for all presbytery meetings.

The Committee on Ministry

The Committee on Ministry shall have oversight of the Ministry of Leadership Development, the Ministry of Congregational Health, and the Ministry of Pastoral Transitions.

Membership of the Committee on Ministry shall be made up of the Moderator of the Committee on Ministry, a Vice-Moderator of the Committee on Ministry, and the chairpersons and vice-chairpersons of the Ministry of Congregational Health, the Ministry of Leadership Development, and the Ministry of Pastoral Transitions.

The Committee on Ministry and its subordinate ministries are responsible for those duties specifically outlined in the Book of Order and listed in the Presbytery's Manual of Operations, aiding and assisting one another in fulfilling their responsibilities.

The Committee on Ministry shall meet at least every other month, receiving reports from its subordinate Ministries to take appropriate action on matters of record.

A quorum for a Committee on Ministry meeting shall be, at a minimum, the Moderator and/or the Vice-Moderator of the Committee on Ministry, the chairperson of the Ministry of Congregational Health or his/her designee, the vice-chairperson of the Ministry of Congregational Health or his/her designee, the chairperson of the Ministry of Leadership Development or his/her designee, the vice-chairperson of the Ministry of Leadership Development or his/her designee, and the chairperson of the Ministry of Pastoral Transitions or his/her designee, the vice-chairperson of the Ministry of Pastoral Transitions or his/her designee. Other members of these subordinate ministries are invited and encouraged to attend as well.

The Committee on Ministry may have commission authority to take action on behalf of the presbytery as needed and report such actions at the next stated meeting of the presbytery.

Ministry of Congregational Health

The Congregational Health Ministry is a part of the Committee on Ministry and shall have no fewer than six (6) members including the chair and vice-chair. The Ministry is composed of an equal number of ministers and elders in equal classes. The Ministry is responsible for those duties outlined below and other such duties identified by *The Book of Order*, G-2.1103 b, G-3.0303, G-3.0106 and not assigned to other Ministries. The Ministry will regularly report its activities to the Committee on Ministry.

Duties:

1. Identify, support, and guide congregations in times of missional discernment and congregational conflict with appropriate resources.
2. Oversee the work of congregational liaisons.
3. Work in close coordination with the Pastoral Transitions Ministry to perform the initial in-depth examination of Ministers of Word and Sacrament seeking Presbytery membership.
4. Identify and coordinate resources of best practices for congregational health.
5. Plan and hold at least one Pastor Convocation each year for active Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Certified Christian Educators, and Commissioned Ruling Elders.
6. Develop and promote policies that protect the health and welfare of Presbytery's leaders and the children within presbytery congregations and ministries.
 - a. Annually review a Sexual Misconduct Policy, Child Safety Policy, and the Minor Persons and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy.
 - b. Provide interpretation and training for Minister members and congregational leaders for these policies.
7. Provide support for pastors in crisis through available resources and referrals.
8. Coordinate Session Records Review policy and process, in cooperation with the Stated Clerk.

Ministry of Leadership Development

The Ministry of Leadership Development is a part of the Committee on Ministry and shall have no fewer than six (6) members including the chair and vice-chair. The chair will not ordinarily have liaison responsibilities with those under care of the presbytery and will oversee the work of the Ministry. The Ministry is composed of an equal number of ministers and elders in equal classes.

The Ministry is responsible for those duties outlined below and other such duties identified by *The Book of Order*, G-2.06; G-20503a; sections of G-3.0302; and duties not assigned to other Ministries. In exercising these duties, the Ministry will report to the Moderator of the Committee on Ministry those matters that need action by the Committee on Ministry and/or the presbytery as a whole.

Duties:

1. Direct those under care of Presbytery seeking to be ordained as Ministers of Word and Sacrament in preparation for ministry (G-2.06).
 - a. Counsel with pastors and sessions regarding Inquirers and Candidates from particular churches.
 - b. Enroll Inquirers.
 - c. Dismiss Candidates.
 - d. Administer financial assistance to persons under care in Presbytery's specifically designated funds.
2. Provide opportunities for Minister members of Presbytery to receive ministry boundary training
 - a. Work with those entering the presbytery to receive appropriate boundary training.
 - b. Develop opportunities for continued training for Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Certified Christian Educators, Commissioned Ruling Elders serving within the Presbytery.
3. Develop programming for Presbytery leadership summits to the benefit of local congregations (c.f. G-3.0301c) "nurture the covenant community of disciples of Christ").
4. Direct those seeking to be trained to serve as Commissioned Ruling Elders.
5. Propose Ruling Elders and Ministers of Word and Sacrament to be readers of standard ordination examinations (G-3.0302b)
6. Support and encourage the missional endeavors of the presbytery locally, nationally, and abroad when deemed appropriate by the presbytery.

Ministry of Pastoral Transitions

The Ministry of Pastoral Transitions is a part of the Committee on Ministry and shall have no fewer than six (6) members including the chair and vice-chair. The chair will not ordinarily have liaison responsibilities and will oversee the work of the Ministry. The Ministry is composed of an equal number of ministers and elders in equal classes.

The Ministry is responsible for those duties outlined below and other such duties identified by *The Book of Order*, G-2.05, 2.07-2.11 and G-3.0306-3.0307 and not assigned to other Ministries. In certain areas of responsibilities and authority, the Ministry of Pastoral Transitions may function as a commission on behalf of the Presbytery and shall report such actions to the Committee on Ministry, which will report to the presbytery at the next stated meeting of the presbytery.

Duties:

1. Review and approve initial Terms of Call for Ministers of Word and Sacrament.
2. Receive annual reports on ministerial Terms of Call from each congregation.
3. Dissolve pastoral relations when the Minister of Word and Sacrament and congregation concur.
4. Dismiss Ministers of Word and Sacrament to other presbyteries.
5. Approve and review temporary pastoral contracts, including Interim positions.
6. Grant requests from Ministers of Word and Sacrament for release from exercise of ordered ministry with the reasons for such release recorded in the minutes of the Presbytery.
7. Approve calls of Ministers of Word and Sacrament moving within the Presbytery.
8. Grant status of Retired to Ministers of Word and Sacrament.
9. Review, and renew commissions of Commissioned Ruling Elders, pending approval of the Presbytery.
10. Perform the initial in-depth examination of Ministers of Word and Sacrament seeking membership in the Presbytery in conjunction with the Ministry of Congregational Health and the Ministry of Leadership Development.
 - a. An examination will be made by the Moderator or Vice-Moderator of the Committee on Ministry, plus one Minister of Word and Sacrament and one Ruling Elder from each of the Ministries of Congregational Health, Leadership Development, and Pastoral Transitions. Other members of these Ministries are encouraged to participate.
 - b. Upon the satisfactory completion of this in-depth examination, and approval of the call by the Transitions Ministry, a Minister of the Word and Sacrament shall be a member of the Presbytery of Florida (pending congregational approval if an installed position) and introduced at the next Stated Meeting of the Presbytery.
11. Designate Administrative Commissions to install Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Certified Christian Educators, and to commission Commissioned Ruling Elders.
12. Appoint moderators of sessions for congregations without an installed pastor.
13. Designate persons to moderate sessions and congregational meetings when requested to do so by the Moderator of Record.
14. Maintain a Pulpit Supply List.
15. Annually review the status and contracts of members at-large (G-2.0503b) with a report to the presbytery.
16. Establish minimum compensation standards for pastoral calls and Certified Christian Educators within the presbytery (G-3.0303). Annually review the work of all Ministers of Word and Sacrament engaged in validated ministries outside the congregation (G-2.0503a).

Ministry of Dogwood Acres

The Ministry of Dogwood Acres shall have no fewer than six (6) members including the Moderator and Vice-Moderator, is made up of equal numbers of ministers and elders in equal classes.

The Ministry of Dogwood Acres shall provide short- and long-term planning, management, development, operations, and programs connected with Dogwood Acres Camp and Conference Center.

Duties:

1. Assess physical needs and prioritize them including maintenance, landscaping, painting, construction, and safety.
2. Provide for administrative matters such as a website, print material, thank-you notes, inventories, and assistance to the Dogwood Acres staff.
3. Schedule volunteers, promote workdays, maintain a volunteer to-do list, recognize volunteer efforts, and track volunteer hours.
4. Supervise the Youth Council, provide for student service hours, excite and inspire youth to remain engaged and involved with DWA for a lifetime.
5. Provide for summer staff, curriculum, training, scholarships, and program ideas and recruit nurses and chaplains.
6. Greet and orient retreat users, market and sponsor retreats, develop how-to information for retreat leaders and potential retreat leaders.
7. Serve as hosts for Presbytery-wide training events and workshops.
8. Raise funds, develop sponsorships, partner with civic groups, scouts, and business groups.
9. Work toward establishing Dogwood Acres as a 501(c)(3) entity.

Ministry of New Congregation Formation

The Ministry of New Congregation Formation shall have no fewer than six (6) members including the Moderator and Vice-Moderator. The Ministry is composed of an equal number of ministers and elders in equal classes.

The Ministry is responsible for formulating and implementing a comprehensive plan for location, funding, and development of new congregations and worshipping communities within the bound of the presbytery.

Duties:

1. Design and implement a process for determining where and what kinds of congregations or worshipping communities are needed.
2. Design and implement a process for determining pastoral leadership for new congregations and worshipping communities.
3. Design a packet of information and steps useful to those who will be organizing new congregations and worshipping communities.
4. Work with existing congregations and/or individuals who have an interest in seeding a new congregation or worshipping community.
5. Develop and maintain procedures for the use of new congregational development funds.
6. Oversee new congregational development fund.

Ministry of Presbytery Operations

The Ministry of Presbytery Operations shall have no fewer than six (6) members including the Moderator and Vice-Moderator. The Ministry is composed of an equal number of ministers and elders in equal classes.

The focus of the Ministry's work will be supporting the Presbytery in the development of the graces of generosity and stewardship both in our shared ministry and in individual congregations. The Ministry shall function in accordance with *The Book of Order* as outlined in the polity of G-3.0106 and G.30113.

Duties:

1. Build, monitor, and manage an annual budget and stewardship plan for the Presbytery's shared work.
2. Assist congregations with matters of property and in the development of sound financial practices, including the review of proposed congregational loans for recommendation to the Presbytery for its consideration.
3. Document financial best practices to share and provide training for congregational treasurers.
4. Assist Administrative Commissions in matters of finances and property.

Ministry of Representation

The Ministry of Representation shall have no fewer than six (6) members including the Moderator and Vice-Moderator. The Ministry is composed of an equal number of ministers and elders in equal classes.

The Ministry shall function in accordance with *The Book of Order* as outlined in the polity of G-3.0103 and the principles of F-1.0403 and F-1.0404 and is responsible for the following duties. In exercising these duties, the Ministry acts on behalf of the presbytery and will report its actions to the next Stated Meeting of the presbytery.

Duties:

1. Advise the Presbytery regarding implementation of principles of unity and diversity.
2. Advocate for inclusion and diversity in the presbytery's leadership, including:
 - a. Plan and promote cooperative efforts among Presbytery Ministries to enhance full participation, fair representation, connections, and communication among all people, congregations, and communities.
 - b. Identify and implement efforts to enable a broad, deep, and diverse cadre of leaders in all committees, including those from racial, ethnic, and immigrant communities, younger adults with new perspectives, and older adults with experience and wisdom.
 - c. Because there are no longer any dividing districts, care should be taken to recruit from as wide an area as possible, seeing the presbytery as a whole, and not limited to geography.
3. Engage the process for nominating persons to serve in Presbytery elected positions, in consultation with presbytery membership, the Ministry Coordinating Council, and the Ministries of the presbytery, to ensure that nominations are broadly representative of presbytery constituency and are in conformity with the presbytery's commitment to unity in diversity.
4. Consult with the presbytery, especially with and through its Ministry Coordinating Council as needed, on the employment and termination of Presbytery staff and personnel.

Permanent Judicial Commission

The purpose of the Permanent Judicial Commission is to consider and decide judicial matters presented to the Presbytery in accordance with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), as set forth in *The Book of Order* under “Church Discipline.”

The Permanent Judicial Commission shall:

1. Have a membership nominated by the Ministry on Representation and approved by presbytery,
 - a. Composed of at least seven (7) members (D-3.0101c),
 - b. Having no more than one member elected from any one congregation (D-3.0102)
 - c. Elected to serve for six years in three classes in number as equal as possible, and one class completing its term every two years, (D-3.0201)
 - d. Understanding that no person who has served on the Permanent Judicial Commission for a full term of six years shall be eligible for reelection until two years have elapsed after the expired six-year term (D-3.0203b).
2. Meet at least annually.
3. Elect from its members a Moderator and a Clerk (D-3.04).

RECOMMENDED PRESBYTERY STAFFING

The Presbytery of Florida is blessed with a well-qualified staff, and we continue to appreciate the quality and qualifications of our current staff. At the same time, budgetary constraints present extreme challenges to sustaining our current model. A major shift noted below is to change the position of General Presbyter from fulltime to parttime.

Recommended Staff Positions

- General Presbyter - Parttime
- Stated Clerk – Parttime
- Administrator – Fulltime
- Treasurer – Parttime

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DOGWOOD ACRES

It is agreed the ministry of Dogwood Acres is invaluable to the life and ministry of the Presbytery of Florida. It is agreed the impact of the ministries provided at Dogwood Acres is life-long for children, youth, and adults. It is agreed that the setting is beautiful and well maintained. The new Dogwood Acres staff is performing well with inspiring results, showing a good prognosis, increased usage by community groups, and new revenue streams. Latest reports from its Interim Director and the chair of the Committee on Dogwood Acres show a reduction in their operating deficit and an increase in campers as well as user groups well into 2024.

Given the current financial circumstances facing the Presbytery of Florida, and in its desire for the work, ministry, and influence of this vital ministry to continue, the Strategic Planning Taskforce recommends the following:

- Move forward to make Dogwood Acres its own 501(c)(3) organization* with the Presbytery providing continued financial support as able.
- Special provisions:
 - contribute the property and facilities to Dogwood Acres as a 501(c)(3), with a reversionary clause (if for some reason in the future Dogwood Acres would cease to exist),
 - ask that a Board of Directors be composed of persons of whom at least 66% are members of a Presbyterian church within the bounds of the presbytery to maintain a missional relationship with the presbytery,
 - that the board of directors provide regular updates to the Ministry Coordinating Council to present to the presbytery.
- That continued financial support for Dogwood Acres be given as they pursue self-sustaining status and after it is attained.
- Maintain a strong connection with Dogwood Acres by utilizing the facilities as the major hub for the presbytery's educational, training, and skill development workshops, seminars, and other endeavors.

* A 501(c)(3) organization is commonly referred to as a charitable organization under IRS Code. Such organizations are eligible to receive tax-deductible contributions in accordance with IRS Code section 170.

- A great benefit for Dogwood Acres becoming a 501(c)(3) organization would be its access to funding and grant opportunities not readily available through the Presbytery of Florida. Additional funding from other sources, beyond the funding provided by the presbytery, will help Dogwood Acres to sustain and further its work and ministry.

BUDGET OVERHAUL

The approved provisional budget for 2024 is \$451,857. The requested amount from our congregations is \$451,857.

Just as congregations have experienced declines in offerings in recent years, those declines have transferred to the presbytery as well. While anticipated giving from congregations has been listed as \$451,857, the Committee on Presbytery Administration believes the amount to be received is closer to \$320,000. This is approximately 30% less than the current provisional budget.

Unrestricted reserve funds have been exhausted, therefore there are no additional undesignated reserve funds available to supplement income. The only realistic course of action available to the presbytery is to cut expenses.

What follows is the recommended budget to be utilized within the proposed structure.

2024 PROPOSED BUDGET ALIGNMENT FOR PROPOSED PRESBYTERY STRUCTURE

Receipts:

Shared Support	320,000
Other Income	0
Amount From Reserves	0
Building Our Presbytery	0
Revenue from Dogwood Acres	0

Total Receipts	320,000
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Disbursements

Per Capita

Per Capita - General Assembly	43,502
Per Capita - Synod	6,659

Total Per Capita	50,161
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Committee on Ministry (COM)

Ministry of Leadership Development (MLD)

Campus Ministry (Ukirk Tallahassee)	10,000
Equipping Leaders	5,000
<i>CLP Support, Workshop Leaders, etc.</i>	
Annual Consultation with Candidates	100
Candidates' Aid	220
Moderator Training (online)	100
FLAPDAN Membership Dues	1,750
Guatemala Partnership Development	1,000
Racial Justice Subcommittee	500
Disaster Relief	500
Ministry Expense	100
<i>Subtotal MLD</i>	<i>19,270</i>

Ministry of Congregational Health (MCH)

Minister's Emergency Assistance Fund	600
Church Liaison Expenses	800
Resources (Holy Cow/MissionInsite)	1,700
Ministry Expense	100
<i>Subtotal MCH</i>	<i>3,200</i>

Ministry of Pastoral Transitions (MPT)

Ministry Expense	100
<i>Subtotal MPT</i>	<i>100</i>

Total COM	22,570
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Ministry of Dogwood Acres (MDWA)	60,100
Total MDWA	<u>60,100</u>

Ministry of New Congregation Formation (MNCF)	
Ministry Expense	100
Total MNC	<u>100</u>

Ministry of Presbytery Operations	
Equipment Fund	500
Equipment Service	200
Postage	350
Office Telephone	3,500
Electricity	4,100
Internet	1,680
Property Maintenance	520
Supplies & Expenses	1,330
Copier Lease	3,000
Insurance & Bonding	9,000
Memorials/Flowers	150
Bank Service Charges	350
Publications/Resources	54
Financial Records Review	500
Ministry Expense	100
Total MPS	<u>25,334</u>

Ministry Coordinating Council	
Staff	
General Presbyter Salary	42,000
GP IRA	0
GP Housing	11,000
GP Utilities	0
GP Mileage Reimbursement	4,000
GP Continuing Ed and Books	500
GP Other Travel & Business Expense	2,000
GP BOP	0
GP SECA	4,055
<i>Subtotal General Presbyter</i>	63,555

Administrator's Salary	38,445
Administrator's Annuity	720
Administrator's Medical Insurance	10,225
Administrator's Travel	4,600
Administrator's Continuing Ed	1,000
<i>Subtotal Administrator</i>	<i>54,990</i>
Treasurer Salary	13,873
Treasurer Mileage	800
<i>Subtotal Treasurer</i>	<i>14,673</i>
Stated Clerk Salary	15,870
Stated Clerk Travel	2,000
<i>Subtotal Stated Clerk</i>	<i>17,870</i>
Recording Clerk	2,000
Staff Payroll Taxes	5,484
Salary Adjustments (Prop 2% increase)	1,363
Workers Compensation Insurance	900
<i>Total Staff</i>	<i>160,835</i>
Presbytery Meeting Expense	600
Ministry Expense	100
Total MCC	<u>161,535</u>
Ministry on Representation (MR)	
Ministry Expenses	100
Total MR	<u>100</u>
Permanent Judicial Committee (PJC)	
Ministry Expense	100
Total PJC	<u>100</u>
Total Budget	<u>320,000</u>
Balance	0

CLOSING REMARKS

It has been an intimidating but tremendous privilege for us to serve on this Strategic Planning Taskforce. The input from all levels of the presbytery has been very enlightening and helpful.

One item of note is that what we are recommending to the presbytery is nearly the same language stated by the presbytery founders in 1841. The main focus of the presbytery at its inception was to “provide nurture and resources to assist the charter churches in carrying out their mission” (*150 Years: Frontiers in Faith*).

We believe the same. The responsibility of the presbytery is to assist our congregations in bolstering their ministries! It is our opinion that the recommendations presented herein will bring forth the best practices in our congregations and for the Kingdom of our Lord.

Therefore, we place before the presbytery as one motion for approval the following items:

1. That the report of the Strategic Planning Taskforce be received.
2. That the Vision Statement be approved and implemented.
3. That the Mission Statement be approved and implemented.
4. That the recommended structure of the presbytery be approved and adopted.
5. That the recommendation that Dogwood Acres begin the process of becoming a 501(c)(3) organization be approved, along with the provisions:
 - that the presbytery contribute the property and facilities to Dogwood Acres as a 501(c)(3), with a reversionary clause (if for some reason in the future Dogwood Acres would cease to exist),
 - that a Board of Directors be composed of persons of whom at least 66% are members of a Presbyterian church within the bounds of the presbytery to maintain a missional relationship with the presbytery.
 - that the board of directors provide regular updates to the Ministry Coordinating Council and to take to the presbytery.
 - that the presbytery continue financial support for Dogwood Acres as it is able as Dogwood Acres pursues self-sustaining status and after it is attained.
 - That the presbytery maintain a strong connection with Dogwood Acres by utilizing the facilities as the major hub for the presbytery’s educational, training, and skill development workshops, seminars, and other endeavors.
6. That the recommended staffing configuration be approved.
7. That the proposed budget adjustments be forwarded to the current Committee on Presbytery Administration for consideration and be presented to the presbytery for approval.
8. That the Strategic Planning Taskforce be dissolved.
9. That an Implementation Taskforce be appointed as soon as possible, but no later than January 15, 2024 to facilitate the initiation of the new structure for the Presbytery of Florida effective March 1, 2024, and that it compose the necessary modifications to the Bylaws and Manual of Operations.