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# The Panhandle Presbyterian

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## From General Presbyter Roy Martin

On October 25<sup>th</sup>, we Presbyterians will celebrate the Protestant Reformation. It was 503 years ago on October 31, 1517, that Martin Luther posted his 95 theses which argued against the practice of selling indulgences. At that time, the Church was building St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. There was not enough money in the treasury to complete the job, so the pope instructed his bishops to sell to the people letters of indulgence which, in effect, said that all of one's sins had been eternally absolved by the pope and, therefore, one was assured a seat in heaven.

Luther felt this was wrong for several reasons: first, he did not believe that anyone, including the pope, had the authority to absolve sin; only God in Christ could do that. Second, he did not believe that forgiveness of sin could be earned or, in this case, bought; forgiveness of sin comes through Christ and is offered to us as a free gift. Third, he believed that people

would sin all the more because their letter of indulgence had the effect of releasing them and protecting them from the judgment of God.

For us Presbyterians, the reformer we hold most dear is John Calvin, the Swiss reformer. While Luther is often credited with starting the Protestant Reformation, John Calvin gave it a particular direction. At 26 years of age, he wrote what has become his best-known work, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*.

Within these four massive volumes, Calvin spelled out what he considered to be the heart of Reformation theology and doctrine. Subjects such as the importance of scripture, creation, the natures of Christ, and faith are discussed in great detail from the Reformed perspective. Calvin, along with a later reformer, John Knox of Scotland, were



**The Rev. Dr. Roy Martin**

the architects of early Presbyterianism.

And now in 2020, we Presbyterians continue to live our faith under the banner of the Protestant Reformation. The motto of our denomination is "Ecclesia Reformata, Semper Reformanda Secundum Verbum Dei" which means, "The Church reformed, always reforming under the Word of God."

That is to say, what was begun a little over 500 years ago by Luther, Calvin, and others, is not yet finished. Indeed, the reformation of the Church is never complete in this world. Reformation is a process like life itself – always growing, changing, and renewing. Reformation opens our eyes to new visions of the glory of God and what God is doing in our midst.

I pray that on October 25<sup>th</sup>, you and your congregation will take the time to honor the past but seek God's new movement in the present and ask the question, what will God have us do and be in this time and place?

Roy

*Save the date!*



## **Presbytery of Florida Fall Stated Meeting**

**Tuesday, October 27, 2020**

*Watch for details!*



**Presbytery Commuter Volunteer Team**

In partnership with

### **WANTED: Presbytery of Florida Commuter Volunteer Team Members**

Since COVID-19 has changed how disaster preparedness, response, and recovery can be carried out, PDA and Florida Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Network (FLAPDAN) are seeking "commuter volunteers" to travel by car/van with all they need (food, water, PPE, tools) for a day's work in disaster recovery, without the need for overnight lodging.

Because Florida historically has a high number of disaster incidences, and hurricane season is now underway, the need for commuter volunteers is especially urgent.

The typical work includes muck/gut, debris removal, and temporary repairs to stop additional home damage.

If you are interested in more information or would like to register as a presbytery volunteer, please contact Presbytery of Florida Commuter Volunteer Team Coordinator Tim Crawford at (850)651-8029 or [tcrawford@cox.net](mailto:tcrawford@cox.net), or visit <https://www.flapdan.org/commuter-volunteers>.

## From the Committee on Educational Resources



*By Steve Takeuchi,  
Trinity, Pensacola,  
Elder*

## CER recommends ... Generosity/Stewardship Resources

“Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.” 1 Peter 4:10. This quote is taken from the “Stewardship Navigator” page of the Presbyterian Foundation webpage, [www.presbyterianfoundation.org](http://www.presbyterianfoundation.org). The Presbyterian Foundation has a toolbox of great generosity/stewardship resources. Robert Hay, Jr., is the Ministry Relations Officer for Florida and is a great resource, [robert.hay@presbyterianfoundation.org](mailto:robert.hay@presbyterianfoundation.org), 770-289-3884.

► The Ecumenical Resource Center, [www.stewardshipresources.org](http://www.stewardshipresources.org), is an excellent resource for materials

related to annual pledge campaigns. Their mission statement is: “As a Network for Growing Stewards, the Ecumenical Stewardship Center helps the church thrive as it learns to live generously.”

► RightNowMedia is a streaming service of Christian videos, [www.rightnowmedia.org](http://www.rightnowmedia.org). They sell congregation wide subscriptions that are priced based upon the size of the congregation. The subscription gives access to tens of thousands of Christian Bible studies and other video resources, including studies on generosity and Christian finance. If you would like to see the content, please contact Steve Takeuchi for a login, [srtake@bellsouth.net](mailto:srtake@bellsouth.net).

► The National Study of Congregations’ Economic Practices (NSCEP) and the Lake Institute On Faith and Giving, [www.nscep.org](http://www.nscep.org) are excellent online resources.

► The Generous Church, [www.generouschurch.org](http://www.generouschurch.org), has excellent online free materials on generosity and stewardship.

► The Stewardship Kaleidoscope Conference, [www.stewardshipkaleidoscope.org](http://www.stewardshipkaleidoscope.org), is an annual conference that is a collaboration of the Lutheran Church (ELCA) and the Presbyterian Church USA. Under “Conference Resources” there are free video recordings of past conference programs and workshops.



The Presbytery’s Committee on Educational Resources (CER) is developing a network of Presbyterians who can offer advice and share their experience to help congregations with their ministry and mission. As a first step in this process, we are trying to identify the needs in our congregations.

Could you please discuss the following questions with your church’s session, leaders, and/or pastor(s)? Responses can be emailed to [office@presbyteryofflorida.com](mailto:office@presbyteryofflorida.com) or mailed to Presbytery of Florida, P. O. Box 7, Chipecy, FL 32428. CER will reach out in the near future regarding these responses.

For what areas of ministry might your church like guidance?

Below are some examples. Would any of these be of interest to your congregation?

- Use of technology in worship ● New ideas for Sunday school ● How to do online Sunday school
- How to run a soup kitchen/food pantry ● Ecumenical outreach ● Financial record keeping
- How to keep those who can’t attend church connected to ministry and mission

Are there other ministry opportunities in which you would like to engage but feel unprepared for?

Are there any areas of ministry for which you think you or a member of your congregation could serve as a resource for others?

Thank you for your timely response. — CER

## From the Committee on Congregational Revitalization



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

## Congregational revitalization not for the faint of heart

CCR is busy formulating policies and procedures for our partnership with congregations that are answering the call to engage in revitalization practices. Congregational revitalization is vulnerable work, not for the faint of heart. As Tim Soerens reminds us, *“We need to be honest with how most people experience the church and wrestle with what its purpose is, what it exists for”* (Everywhere You Look: Discovering the Church Right Where You Are).

Soerens’ word *wrestle*



is appropriate, because active revitalization requires a lot of give-and-take. It is exciting, energetic work, to be sure! Yet, the Scriptures bear testimony to the truth that whenever God is about to “do a new thing”, there is resistance, power plays, and frustrated attempts to turn the status quo into the latest golden calf.

Everybody says they want their church to grow...but do they really?

Everybody says they’ll share the leadership responsibilities...but will they really?

Everybody thinks tweaking a couple of programs will bring new life into their congregation...but will it really?

If you and your session are ready to “be honest with how [your congregation] experiences the church and wrestle with what your purpose is”, then please contact me. CCR will be honored to partner with you in the vulnerable life-giving process of revitalization.

Mark your calendar  
for this virtual conference!

# Rethinking Evangelism

October 12-14, 2020

[montreat.org/rethinking](http://montreat.org/rethinking)

Montreat Conference Center in partnership  
with Theology, Formation, & Evangelism in the  
Presbyterian Mission Agency

## “A Climate Saint” on Climate Change-Inflicted Injustices

This column is short, because I want you to watch a TED talk (link below) by Dr. Cheryl Holder, who describes the health effects of climate change on the poor. She is an internist in Miami dedicated to serving underserved populations. She is on the faculty at the Florida International University Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine, President of the Florida State Medical Association, and Co-chair of the Florida Clinicians for Climate Action.

I first saw her in September when she was a panelist on a program, *The Reality of Climate in Florida*, where she talked about the connection between our rising temperatures, health and poverty. I followed this up by listening to her TEDMED presentation entitled “The Link

between Climate Change, Health and Poverty.” Her presentations brought to life the harsh reality of the life-threatening impacts that Florida’s increasing heat and humidity are already inflicting on the poor and people of color.

The church writes and talks about how the poor and people of color will be disproportionately impacted by climate change, but Dr. Holder eloquently shares stories about her patients that make it clear that the poorest amongst us are already struggling and dying from climate-related problems, such as heat.

As an example, Sandra Mae Twiggs was arrested after fighting with her daughter over a fan and, upon release from jail, coughed for three days and died. The heat exacerbated her health

problems. She desperately needed to be able to cool down, but couldn’t because she was poor.

Dr. Holder says that climate change is causing a health emergency that is bigger than the HIV/AIDS crisis. She is reaching out to doctors, politicians, people of faith and others to work together to address the effects of climate change on the poor and vulnerable.

Her compassion, work and dedication to social justice and healing, make her a “Climate Saint”. I strongly encourage you to watch her TED talk by clicking on this link:

<https://www.tedmed.com/talks/show?id=772448>

Afterwards, I would love your feedback and any stories you have on the health implications of climate change on the poor in your community. [pammcvety@hotmail.com](mailto:pammcvety@hotmail.com)

## Caring for Creation Notes



By  
**Pam McVety**,  
Presbytery  
Stewardship  
of Creation  
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*“Dr. Holder says that climate change is causing a health emergency that is bigger than the HIV/AIDS crisis.”*

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## SHAPING FAITH IN CRISIS PEACE BY PIECE

OCTOBER 27-28, 2020

This virtual event will bring together leaders and experts on aging, spirituality, and pastoral care, as well as leaders from communities of faith, seminaries, academia, and community organizations. The current pandemic has made pastoral care an even greater challenge with the need for SIP (Shelter in Place) and social distancing. As shepherds and faith leaders we still must care for people, many of whom are feeling a rise in loneliness, anxiety, and depression.

### Keynote Speakers



**Why Ask Why? Faith & Lament in Times of Crisis**  
Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Rigby  
W.C. Brown Professor of Theology, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary



**Know My Heart: Pastoral Care While Social Distancing**  
Rev. Sally Wright  
Pastor of Pastoral Care Village Presbyterian Church, Prairie Village, Kansas

### Worship Leader



Dianna Wright  
Interim Director Ecclesial and Ecumenical Ministries Office of General Assembly PC(U.S.A.)

### Presenting Sponsor

**POAMN**

Presbyterian Older Adult Ministries Network

A suggested donation of \$25 includes both days. POAMN is a 501(c)(3) organization.

Funds collected will be given as a donation to  
Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) [www.pcusa.org/pda](http://www.pcusa.org/pda)

**For schedule and registration go to:**

<https://poamn.org/virtual-conference-2020/>