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**Inside this issue:**

- From our Stated Clerk 2
- Committee on Ministry 3
- Committee on Mission and Outreach 3
- Committee on Congregational Revitalization 4
- Committee on Educational Resources 5
- Committee on Dogwood Acres 6
- Caring for Creation Notes 7
- From our Mission Partner: Thornwell Home 8

# The Panhandle Presbyterian

*A monthly publication of the Presbytery of Florida*



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July 2020

## From General Presbyter Roy Martin

As you may already know, I am currently leading a Bible study on the Book of Revelation on Zoom every Wednesday morning for any and all who wish to join in. A couple of weeks ago, we reviewed those early chapters where John is writing to seven very real churches in Asia Minor, sharing with them what Christ has to say about each one of them.

Some of them are doing well in ministry, and some are not, but all have room for improvement. I am struck by the fact that there is no response from any of those churches to what they are hearing. Come to

think of it, we really don't hear any responses from the churches to which Paul writes his letters, either. If there were any such letters back to John or Paul, we don't have them. Did they ever say, "Yes! We could do better. We should stop this and start that. We should be more faithful and less judgmental." Nor did they argue against the points that were made about them and say, "That's not us! We've always done it that way! Who does John (or Paul) think he is anyway?"

It is reasonable to think the latter was the case since none of those churches exist anymore. But I prefer

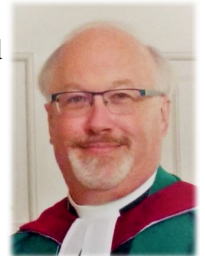
to think that they listened to what was being said with a view to be and do better.

Sometimes, just taking the time to stop and listen to and, more to the point, hear what is being said about us is the first giant step to change for the better. I like to think that those churches did that rather than becoming defensive and argumentative.

There are those voices in our country who are asking us to do just that, to listen, to hear, to change for the better – the better for everyone.

So I invite you, as individual Christians and as congregations of our presbytery to engage with me in a season of listening to those voices who may actually be the voice of Christ inviting us to do better and to live more faithfully with all God's children.

Roy



**The Rev. Dr. Roy Martin**

## Making Sense Out of Revelation

This online Zoom study led by General Presbyter Rev. Dr. Roy A. Martin continues each Wednesday morning July 8 – Aug. 5 at 9:30 CDT/10:30 EDT. Contact the Presbytery office at 850-535-2335 or office@presbyteryofflorida.com to register.

7/8	<i>Seven Trumpets</i>	Ch 8: 2 – 11:19
7/15	<i>Freehand Sketch</i>	Ch 12: 1 – 14:20
7/22	<i>Seven Bowls</i>	Ch 15: 1 – 16:21
7/29	<i>Evens of the End</i>	Ch 17: 1 – 20:15
8/5	<i>The New Heaven &amp; New Earth</i>	Ch 21: 1 – 22:21

## From Our Stated Clerk



*By Jeannie Dixon,  
Fellowship,  
Tallahassee, Elder*

## Looking back at our first-ever virtual presbytery and GA

Many thanks to everyone for a wonderful Presbytery meeting on June 16. We had a few glitches, but nothing too serious. Presbytery Vice Moderator Michael Askew (Pastor, Gulf Beach, Panama City Beach) put together a very meaningful worship service and Brad Thoreson (1st, Lynn Haven, Music Director) did a fabulous job stitching that all together into the recording. This is now on our Facebook page and the YouTube channel for First Presbyterian (Lynn Haven), so be sure to check that out.

We had a really good discussion on COVID-19, with folks sharing links in the chat of the Zoom meeting. I've gathered those here to share with you:

Brant Copeland (Pastor, 1st, Tallahassee) shared a link on wearing masks: <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMc2007800>

General Presbyter Roy Martin shared information on a COVID-19 dashboard: <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/7572b118dc3c48d885d1c643c195314e/>

Mark Broadhead (Pastor, 1st, Crestview/Laurel Hill) shared a link: <https://www.floridadisaster.org/>

We heard good information on hurricane preparedness and response from Kathy Broyard

(Florida Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Network) and Jim Kirk (Presbyterian Disaster Assistance). Sy Hughes (Presbyterian Mission Agency) shared information for contacting him as a mission resource: [Sy.Hughes@pcusa.org](mailto:Sy.Hughes@pcusa.org) and/or 540.458.1869

The entire meeting was held on Zoom and livestreamed to Facebook. The recording of that is also on our Facebook page and currently has 161 views. We had 94 registered for the meeting and a high of 71 attending the meeting.

The Facebook Live was intended for those who would normally be in attendance as guests; looks like we had a lot of interest in the meeting! Having the meeting online meant we were able to welcome two of our members who are serving in the Armed Forces. What a special treat to

have Lt. Col. Steven Schaick (currently serving in the USAF at the Pentagon) and Rob Bohnsack (chaplain in the USAF) be able to attend our meeting.

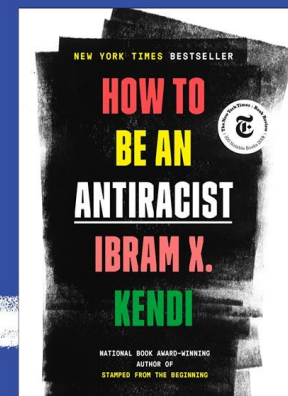
Our commissioners (Rev. Brad Clayton – Faith, Tallahassee, and Elder Joanne Kublik – 1st, Crestview) and Young Adult Advisory Delegate (Ryan Obray – Trinity, Pensacola) to the 224th General Assembly did an outstanding job! The first Friday plenary was continued to the next night. The second Friday plenary extended its time by about three hours! On the last day, Rev. Brad Clayton was recognized several times as he moved several motions. Then he actually appeared on screen calling the question. Our YAAD, Ryan Obray, was seen in the video presentation of thanks to the co-moderators.

We look forward to their report to our October presbytery meeting.

Presbyterian Peace Fellowship

## PPF VIRTUAL BOOK CLUB

Learn more and  
register at  
[www.presbypeacefellowship.org/events/](http://www.presbypeacefellowship.org/events/)



### Presbytery ordains Katherine Kupar in outdoor service



**K**atherine Kupar was ordained to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.) in an outdoor service held at First Presbyterian Church of Milton on Sunday, June 28. With COVID-19 safety precautions in mind, those present practiced safe social distancing while participating in the laying on of hands, as shown above. At right, from left, Committee on Ministry Chair Mark Broadhead asks the constitutional questions.

Katherine serves in a Validated Ministry as United Ministries of Pensacola’s Director of Operations and is the wife of First Presbyterian of Pensacola Associate Pastor Rev. John Kupar. Congratulations, Katherine!



**From the  
Committee on  
Ministry**

### CMO awards two 2 Cents a Meal grants for hunger ministries

**T**he Presbytery’s Committee on Mission and Outreach recently approved two applications for 2 Cents a Meal funds.

CMO granted First Presbyterian Church of Crestview’s request for \$5,000 for its soup kitchen/food distribution services and food pantry, serving primarily lower- or fixed-income individuals and families, as well as a Cold Night Shelter. They are part of a larger community effort that ensures a soup



kitchen is operating each day of the week except Sunday. They also participate with the Okaloosa Walton Continuum of Care organization to provide resources to meet other individual needs.

CMO awarded \$3,000 to First Presbyterian

Church of Pensacola’s Child Discovery Center, which provides subsidized meals and childcare to low-income families in the church’s area. The meal program ensures children receive adequate nutrition, while the childcare allows parents to work and provide for their families.

The grants, provided by Presbytery congregations’ 2 Cents a Meal offerings, are given to applicants within the presbytery’s bounds and sponsored by member congregations.

**From the  
Committee on  
Mission and  
Outreach**

## From the Committee on Congregational Revitalization



*By Rev. Lisa Martin,  
Chair,  
and 1st, Lynn Haven  
Pastor*

## CCR developing “toolbox” to aid in answering COGA’s call

On Juneteenth (June 19), the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) spent a good number of hours discussing the importance of addressing where we are as a nation, especially in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and acts of racial injustice. The discussion, which lasted nearly five hours, resulted in the following motion by the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA):

All Presbyterians are urged to:

- Personal and corporate repentance, spiritual renewal and devotion to the Great Ends of the Church.
- Participate in programs such as Hands & Feet, engaging in communities and supporting the work of the Poor People’s Campaign.
- Get involved in the Matthew 25 invitation through building congregational vitality, dismantling structural racism and eradicating systemic poverty.

One of the defining features of the PC(USA) is that we remain open to our need to change, to be revitalized. “Once Reformed, Always Reforming.”

Given the connectional nature of our denomination, COGA’s motion is meant for local congregations, too, not just for the “higher ups” on



General Assembly level. In what ways do our congregations here in Florida Presbytery participate in repentance, spiritual renewal, and devotion to the Great Ends of the Church? (Do our congregations even know what the Great Ends are?) Can we name the ways that our congregations participate in healing ministries like Hands & Feet and the Poor Peoples’ Campaign? (Again, do our congregations even know what those are?) And have our congregations answered the call of Matthew 25 to build vitality by dismantling racism and eradicating poverty in our neighborhoods?

The Committee on Congregational Revitalization (CCR) is actively creating a

“Revitalization Toolbox” for use in our local congregations. The toolbox will contain resources that may aid local pastors and congregations in our revitalization efforts. It will include information about the Hands & Feet initiative, the Poor People’s Campaign, the Matthew 25 invitation, as well as resources regarding racial injustice and pandemic response. CCR hopes to have the Revitalization Toolbox ready by the Fall presbytery meeting.

Isn’t it wonderful that we are part of a church body that understands the importance of change? Not just for change’s sake, but because we respond as faithfully as we know how to the Spirit of God at work in the world around us.

For more on the actions of the General Assembly, go to [pcusa.org](http://pcusa.org).

### **Celebrating the Call to Serve as a Ruling Elder**

**Webinar with RE Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri,  
223rd GA Co-Moderator**

During her term as co-moderator of the 223rd General Assembly (2018), Vilmarie travelled throughout the denomination and found much to celebrate and share about the call and role of ruling elders in the life of the church. Vilmarie will serve as the speaker as we explore the vital service of ruling elders.



**Monday, July 8 • 6 pm CT/7 pm ET**  
Register at: [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_hPV5puXbRDW5vK44uNpyXg](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_hPV5puXbRDW5vK44uNpyXg)

## CER recommends Racial Justice resources

As our country (and world) engages in the ongoing conversation of racial inequality, churches often struggle to have conversations that need to happen. Our denomination has put together many resources that are of immense value for this topic. Go to [pcusa.org](http://pcusa.org) and look for the red bar at the top labeled “Racial Justice Resources” or type in <https://www.pcusa.org/racial-justice-resources/>

Here you’ll find statements from the denomination, worship resources, policy statements, recommended books, study, training and discussion materials, as well as articles.

A few that I would highlight:

- Service of Lament (Worship Resource – 45-minute video)
- Matthew 25: Dismantling Structural Racism (Worship Resource – 21 Day Racial Justice Challenge)
- Just Worship (Worship Resource – Documentary)
- Belhar Confession & Study Guide (Policy Statement)
- *Good White Racist? Confronting Your Role in Racial Injustice* (Book)
- Matthew 25: Dismantling Structural Racism (Study Material)
- “White-Privilege: One-session adult study (Study Material)
- Another resource list for white people in the journey of antiracism (Discussion Material)
- “Juneteenth in the age of Black Lives Matter” (Article)
- “5 Reasons for Racial Affinity Groups in Anti-Racism Work” (Article)

Talking about injustice, in all its forms, is no easy task, but historically, the church doesn’t stray from it. If we seek to love our neighbors while fighting for liberty and justice for all, we must start the conversation somehow. Hopefully, these resources can get it started.

## From the Committee on Educational Resources



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

**Registration now open**

*Why do people respond to stress in different ways? We each develop a dominant survival pattern when our stress response is triggered. This one-hour webinar will explore these patterns as well as offer helpful ways to respond to and support each pattern.*



## Understanding Survival Patterns in Response to Stress

**Thursday, July 23, 2020, 2-3 p.m. ET**

**Learn more and register:**

<http://www.pensions.org/your-path-to-wholeness/lifelong-learning-through-board-university/webinars/>

## From the Committee on Dogwood Acres



By  
**Ben Powell,**  
*Dogwood Acres*  
**Director**  
*and 1st, Quincy, Elder*

## DWA offers “Family Camp” during last two weeks of July

As most of you know, the pandemic has forced DWA to cancel traditional summer camp for 2020. Instead, Dogwood Acres will hold two weeks of “Family Camp” during the last two weeks of July.

We will open DWA for “families” to rent a cabin for a week. Actually, a parent or guardian may invite other kids to stay in their cabin with their family, as long as one guardian takes full responsibility for all those in their cabin. DWA will offer very limited programming; daily activities will be the choice and responsibility of each family. We will have lifeguards on duty, a chaplain holding daily devotionals, a volunteer to lead craft activities, and of course, the kitchen staff.

We are asking the families to practice reasonable health and safety measures, especially considering the COVID-19 situation. We will offer guidelines to help families be respectful of others in the camp and to help keep their family safe.

Each air-conditioned cabin has four bunk beds (a total of 8 beds per cabin; one is full-sized) and two complete bathrooms. All DWA amenities will be at your disposal, including the pool and lake.

There will be new safeguards in place, but we will do our best to retain the integrity of Dogwood Acres. The registration process will be similar to registering for Summer Camp and will all be handled online. Registration is open, so please check our website ([www.dogwoodacres.org](http://www.dogwoodacres.org)) soon if you are interested. Check the “Retreats Tab” on our website for an idea of how the camp operates and what items to bring.

The cost will be \$500 for a cabin for the week, plus the cost of meals at a reduced rate. Kids 5 years and under eat free, and

meal cost for all others will be charged at the following per person, per meal rates: Breakfast, \$6.50; Lunch, \$7.50; and supper, \$9.00.

We are also offering tent camping in our newly completed “Tent Camping Area.” We have constructed ten 12’ x 12’ “tent pads” and a new fire-ring. You must supply your own tent and camping gear, but may eat in the Dining Hall or use pick-up and take-out from the kitchen. The cost per tent pad is \$35 per night.

We’ll miss summer camp, but are excited to have Family Camp!

The Outdoor Ministry of the Presbytery of  
Florida

JULY 19-24  
OR  
JULY 26-31



COME VISIT US  
THIS SUMMER!!

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**REGISTER TODAY AT  
WWW.DOGWOODACRES.ORG  
CONTACT US: 850-528-3575**

## Springs are crying out for our help

People have been drawn to Florida's springs for thousands of years. It is even thought that the Spanish explorer, Juan Ponce de Leon, was in 1513 looking for a spring which legend called the "fountain of youth".

Springs have served as Spanish mission sites and tourist attractions and have even given birth to towns, such as DeFuniak Springs. Many of us growing up in Florida used springs for swimming, wildlife watching and even cave diving. They were a refuge from the summer heat before we had air conditioning. They were thought to have restorative properties. They were mysterious clear waters in shades of blue that invited us to jump in because they seemed bottomless.

Today, things have changed for most of our springs. Sulfur Springs, where I swam in college, is surrounded by a high fence with a "No Swimming" sign. Kissengen and White Springs, both popular

swimming holes, have pretty much dried up. The Ichetucknee River spring run, which was Florida's premier tubing site, has been transformed from a flowing clear wonder to an uninviting algae-ridden run. The stunning photographs [below] of John Moran, a Florida artist and photographer, tell the story of Ichetucknee Springs. How could this have happened to such magnificent natural features of Florida – features that everybody loved? In brief, we did this. We did it in our lifetime.

Our septic tanks, our lawn fertilizers, our coal-fired power plants and our agricultural field runoff have, year after year, sent nutrients into these springs. These excess nutrients have led to increased growth of algae, which have smothered native plants and depleted oxygen levels, killing fish and wildlife. Our growing thirst for water is lowering spring flow. Water bottlers are asking for outrageous

amounts of spring water, and our government is giving it to them.

We have an attitude problem about natural resources. We think it is OK to use them without limits. This is the exact opposite of the biblical mandate to care for creation. The first two chapters of Genesis describe the right relationship of humans to their Creator and his creation. God put people in his garden "to till it and to keep it". *Tilling* is what we do to draw sustenance from nature and *keeping* means tilling with care and protecting creation so that the whole living world, not just humans, with all its intricate, interacting systems upon which all life depends, may flourish.

It couldn't be clearer that failing to care for creation leads to problems. Damaged springs are symbolic of our failure to protect God's creation. It's not too late to help them. Chances are that there are springs near you that could use your stewardship and there is much that your church and its members can do to help them. Adopting a spring would be an excellent local mission project for all age groups. Think about it. If anyone is interested in learning more about a local spring and what is needed to help it, let me know, and we can start a conversation about how to proceed.

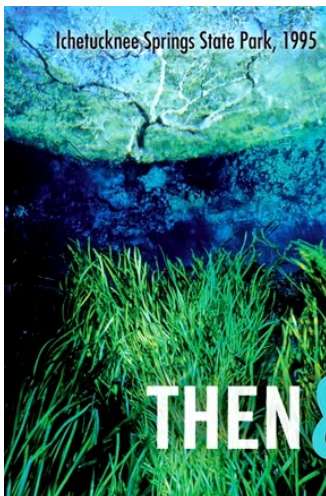
As always, if you have questions or comments, please email me at [pammcvety@hotmail.com](mailto:pammcvety@hotmail.com).

## Caring for Creation Notes



By  
**Pam McVety**,  
*Presbytery  
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*"How could this have happened to such magnificent natural features of Florida – features that everybody loved? In brief, we did this. We did it in our lifetime."*



**THEN & NOW**

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**From our  
Mission Partners:  
Thornwell Home  
for Children**



***By Bonnie Thompson,  
Thornwell  
Advancement Officer –  
Florida***

**Thornwell thankful for churches' generosity**

**F**or nearly a century-and-a-half, Thornwell has met the call to help some of society's most vulnerable — it's children and families in need.

Today, we continue with the same spirit of hope and healing, because we believe in a world where everyone belongs to a thriving family! We are thankful for the generous spirit of the churches in the Florida Presbytery, who have inspired a community of support that's taken the

heart of Thornwell into cities across the Southeast!

Check out our newest edition of *Thornwell Life* (<https://thornwell.org/thornwell-life-2020-volume-2/>) to see how we are serving as an extension of the local church, empowering thousands of people to join our mission to prevent child abuse and neglect, build up and reunite families, and support healthy communities in the name of Jesus Christ.



**COVID-19:  
Support for Mental  
Health, Bereavement  
and Grief**

**WEBINAR**

**July 14, 2020  
2 p.m. ET/1 p.m. CT**

**CDP** Center for Disaster Philanthropy

Find information and register at <https://disasterphilanthropy.org/event/covid-19-support-for-mental-health-bereavement-and-grief/>