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# The Panhandle Presbyterian

*A monthly publication of the Presbytery of Florida*



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## From General Presbyter Roy Martin

**O**n April 30, the Presbytery's Coordinating and Planning Commission (CPC) made several decisions I want to share with you here. CPC has the authority to act on matters of presbytery between meetings of presbytery when time is of the essence. They also have the responsibility to determine time, place, and agenda for presbytery meetings.

At their meeting, CPC voted to postpone our May presbytery meeting until June and then to put together, if possible, a virtual meeting of presbytery. CPC recognizes that there is great value to gathering

together in any way possible. Currently, all committee meetings are being conducted on Zoom, an online video conferencing network. It may be possible to conduct an abbreviated presbytery meeting using this tool. If possible, the presbytery meeting will be scheduled for June 16 at 1 p.m. Central time. All commissioners to presbytery will need to have a computer, laptop, or smartphone to participate. If your current elected commissioner does not have that capability, please seek to elect an elder who does.

Because CPC voted to postpone the meeting, there were matters that CPC

used their commission authority to approve. The chair of CPC, the Rev. Sharon Schuler, will report on those actions at the virtual meeting of presbytery in June. As with any commission action, the presbytery can repeal or amend with a 2/3<sup>rd</sup>'s vote a decision made by CPC.

Because of the importance of gathering together, even by electronic means, the Zoom meeting of presbytery will include worship, an educational hour, and an opportunity to hear from congregations and pastors about how things are going. We do not foresee the meeting lasting for more than three hours, and the good news is, you don't have to leave home to participate!

We will be in touch with further information on how to participate in this manner within the next few weeks.

Stay tuned!  
Roy



**The Rev. Dr. Roy Martin**

**LEADERSHIP HARBOR**  
*In Collaboration With*

SMALL CHURCH CONNECTION  
Great Plans

PRESBYTERY PASTORAL CARE NETWORK

**Ministry Leaders Summit**  
**Free event via Zoom**  
Tuesday, May 26 • 9 – 11 a.m. CDT  
*For everyone in paid or volunteer ministry to discuss Crisis Exit Plans and Opportunity for the Church to Find a Clearer Voice*  
**RSVP: <https://www.leadershipharbor.com/events-1/>**  
**[ministry-leaders-summit](https://www.leadershipharbor.com/events-1/)**

## From Our Stated Clerk



*By Jeannie Dixon,  
Fellowship,  
Tallahassee, Elder*

## 224th General Assembly to be virtual and condensed

This year's General Assembly will be one for the history books. For the first time ever, the General Assembly will be held completely online. The 224th General Assembly (2020) was scheduled for June in Baltimore. The conference center in Baltimore has been turned into a field hospital for covid-19 patients. The decision was announced on Tuesday, April 21 after the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) voted unanimously to approve a plan for a reduced assembly gathering that will require everyone involved – commissioners, advisory delegates, corresponding members and staff – to participate in a digital assembly.

In a statement released by COGA:  
*In making these decisions we recognize that these unusual times prevent us from living into the fullness of who we are. Part of the grief COVID-19 has invited into our lives is the inability to be fully ourselves within the parameters of what we can do with what we have in a particular time frame. In other words, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is much more than standing rules, budgets, and elections. As our Stated Clerk recently*



*said, "We are not divorcing ourselves from the work of social justice." We are about justice. We are advocacy. We are theological and we are prophetic. But in these times of a pandemic, this is the necessary response in considering the health and well-being of the hosting community, commissioners, advisory delegates, observers, and staff.*

The current plan is to have a plenary on Friday, June 19, with a Q&A with the moderator candidates. The election of the moderator (or co-moderators) will then follow.

The next activity online will be on Friday, June 26 with opening worship and two plenaries. That will be followed by critical business with three plenaries (including the election of the stated clerk and approval of the budget) on Saturday, June 27. The list of critical items to be considered at the assembly include: Standing rules changes (suspending, approving

temporary rules) Moderator/Stated Clerk elections General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC) nominations Critical business with legal and financial implications The usual assignment of commissioners and delegates to committees also will not happen. The business items will not be referred to assembly committees for consideration before they are taken up in plenary. Each commissioner and advisory delegate will be assigned to one of twelve small groups that will meet electronically in advance of the assembly to share concerns, questions and expectations for the upcoming event.

Training for commissioners and delegates is being planned. In addition, work is underway to have a virtual Poor People's Campaign, as well as other gatherings.

## Committee on Ministry Myth-Busting, Part 2

*This is the second article in a series hoping to share information on the work of the Committee on Ministry and to dispel myths that are typically heard.*

**Myth Buster 4:** “The Presbytery doesn’t care about us until they need money.” Have you ever heard: “The only time we hear from the Presbytery is when they want money”? That may have been true in years past, although it was not for a lack of trying to maintain ongoing relationships. The Committee on Ministry has recruited and provided training for Liaisons to serve as listening ears and hearts to pastors, educators, and congregations. These volunteers are charged to make contacts with their assigned congregations, pastors, and educators on a regular schedule.

The intent? To provide a listening ear, and to help determine if any assistance is needed, e.g. a pastor or educator is nearing

retirement or feeling led to seek a new call, or if there are family circumstances which call for additional support, or if a pastor or educator is experiencing difficulties from a congregation/session, and visa-versa.

**Myth Buster 5:** “COM just likes to interfere in congregational matters.” No. The Committee on Ministry rejoices with congregations as they follow God’s call to serve our Lord. We rejoice because we are part of a connectional denomination. As part of a connectional denomination there are certain expectations and mandates that need to be followed. In part it falls to COM to make sure certain matters are attended to “decently and in order.”

For example, COM needs to make sure that all

congregations have liability and property insurance (G-3.0112). So, yes, when Session records are read each year, this will be looked for. Another is two policies have been mandated by the denomination to be established in each congregation. These are a sexual misconduct policy and a child and youth protection policy (G-3.0106). COM is charged with ensuring congregations have these two policies in place.

So, COM is not interfering. The committee is just checking to make sure, that as part of a connectional denomination, we are all up to speed on what is expected of us. And when one falls short, a little nudge is given.

Yes, we are from the Presbytery, and we *are* here to *help!*

### From the Committee on Ministry



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

The Pentecost Offering supports our ministries with children and youth.

*Join us!*  
When we all do a little, it adds up to a lot!

APRIL 13 - MAY 31, 2020

**PENTECOST**  
SPECIAL OFFERINGS  
CHILDREN AT RISK • YOUTH • YOUNG ADULTS

Michael Erdelyi



## From the Committee on Congregational Revitalization



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

## CCR offers ideas for continued revitalization efforts

Revitalization is all about relationships! So while our congregations suspend gathering together for worship, how do we continue our efforts at revitalization? CCR met via Zoom on April 21, and we talked about this very thing! Here are some suggestions:

➤ Make use of technology to stay connected. Many congregations have online worship, which may include music or not, multiple leaders or just the pastor, live feed or videoed ahead of time and posted on Sunday mornings or other days of the week. Online worship can be especially helpful for those congregations without pastoral leadership.



➤ Get old fashioned and use the telephone! Call the members and guests of your congregation; check on how they are, what they need, what challenges they face, what joys they want to share. Hearing a live voice can make all the difference, especially for those who live alone. If you want to get really old fashioned, write a note to someone! How much fun it will be for someone to receive a handwritten note of encouragement these days!

➤ Continue your tithing/giving to the church. This spiritual practice goes a

long way toward everyone (you, included) breathing a little easier when the bills arrive.

➤ Make time for personal devotion. Nurture the life of the Spirit within by carving out time for Scripture reading, prayer, meditation, and time in the outdoors. It's difficult to bless others with spiritual water when your well is dry.

CCR remains committed to assisting congregations with revitalization. If you have a suggestion to share, please let me know! Truly – we're in this together, though apart. Blessings to you all!

### Here are just a few ways Presbytery of Florida congregations are revitalizing amid the pandemic.

**Please note:** This list is NOT comprehensive, as the activities underway are far too many to mention all. Please check your church's website, Facebook page, YouTube channel and email communications and the Presbytery's weekly eUpdate for more:

- 1st, Tallahassee, members lead daily morning prayers that are shared on YouTube. For the last two months, masked members also have assisted Second Harvest of the Big Bend with mass food distributions.
- 1st, Crestview, has held a virtual hymn sing on Facebook Live, with viewers commenting the hymns they wanted volunteering choir members to lead in singing. Members also participated in a virtual Bible study via Zoom on April 30.
- 1st, Lynn Haven, pastor Rev. Lisa Martin shares daily "Morning Light" video devotionals on Facebook and virtual Sunday worship on Facebook and the church's website.
- 1st, Fort Walton Beach have been sharing in virtual communion Together. Their pastor, Rev. Sharon Schuler, also offers regular video messages and meditations on Facebook and the church's website.
- 1st, Havana, pastor Rev. Luis Ocasio leads daily Facebook video devotionals, some in Spanish.

## CER recommends ... Zoom games!

**N**owadays, it's hard to find ways to connect with anyone, especially when we can only interact digitally. Here is a list of games that are feasible to play over Zoom. These are aimed at students.

### Silent Karaoke

One person sings a song while muted using very exaggerated and clear mouth movements, while everyone else tries to guess.

### Group "Rock-Paper-Scissors"

It's one versus many. Everyone has 3 lives. Everyone goes at the same time. If you lose to the leader, you lose a life. Last one standing wins.

### Home Scavenger Hunt

Come up with a list of

objects with point values attached. Give everyone the list at the same time. Whoever brings the item first gets a certain amount of bonus points.

### Location Finder

Using Zoom backgrounds, put famous (or local) locations up. Have students guess where you are. Give clues if needed.

### Counting to 10

Have everyone with the mics on. You must as a group count to 10 without anyone speaking over another. No patterns.

### One-word story

Going in a specified order, have the students tell a story one word at a time. This can be a Bible story or any story.

### Deaf Jam

Give students three songs

to which you could be jamming. Mute your mic and play one of those songs while jamming and dancing as hard as possible. After 30 seconds or so, have people guess which one it is. Keep points until exhausted.

### Fun facts

Have everyone send you a fun fact others may not know. Shuffle them up and read them out loud to group while the group guesses who it could be.

### Animal guessing

Look up an image of an animal, but don't share it. Have students ask yes or no questions about the animal. When the group is comfortable, they have one guess to get it right.

### What am I holding?

Have students go around their house and get something they can hold (keep it off camera). Have the group ask yes or no questions about the object they grabbed until they're confident they know what it is.

### Pictionary

Students are messaged a word, then draw it on paper. Markers work best, as pen(cil) won't show up well.

While these are aimed at students, they could be just as fun to play with adult groups, as well. Give them a shot!

## From the Committee on Educational Resources



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

6:30PM ET Sunday June 7, 2020

# BRIDGE TO CAMPUS

zoom NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION

WWW.PSCUGA.org/BRIDGE  
REGISTER BY SUNDAY MAY 31, 2020

With Students & Campus Ministers from

UNIV. OF GEORGIA, EMORY, GEORGIA STATE,  
FLORIDA STATE, AUBURN, ALABAMA, CLEMSON,  
NC STATE, TENNESSEE & MORE!

UKIRK



### From the Committee on Dogwood Acres



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

## July camp plans and improvements underway at DWA

First, a short message about Summer Camp 2020. The Committee on Dogwood Acres met this week (virtually, of course) and had a thorough discussion on what is hope and what is realistic. Monday, I plan on sending a detailed letter to all campers and supporters of DWA, but, for now, this is how we are leaning: The most probable scenario at this time is we will compress Summer Camp into the last four weeks of July, starting the week after the Independence Day holiday weekend.

There will be many new precautions taken and a new sanitation policy enacted. Please know the health and welfare of the campers and all involved is the very highest priority when we course these

uncharted waters.

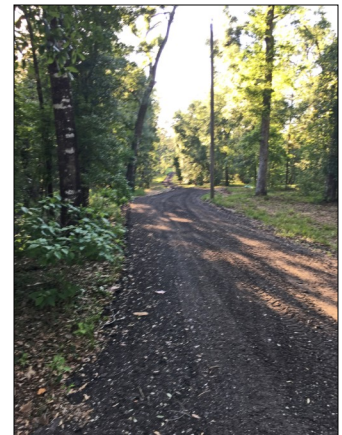
We will reevaluate on May 15 and again on May 31. So, I encourage you to register your campers online (a simple process) and know your deposits are fully refundable if we cancel. I promise to keep you informed. Pray for us, and we will pray for you and your children!

Now for some good news! Life is different, life is slower, but life goes on at Dogwood. Thanks to great volunteers, things are moving forward in this time when scheduled activities are at a standstill. The Elvery House has received a much-needed new coat of paint, there is new landscaping, complete renovation of four RV sites are complete and ready for use, the road from the office to Kelly

Field (we have named the "Elvery Road") has been reshaped and milling applied to the surface, and we are well on our way to completing ten tent pads in the new Outdoor Tent Camping area!

Because of neighbors loving neighbors, and the obvious love of God for us all, your outdoor ministry is alive!

Please be safe, and God bless us all!



**"Elvery Road" newly-named, reshaped and milled**



**New tent pads are ready**



**Landscaping completes the picture**



**DOGWOOD ACRES 2020  
SUMMER CAMP  
REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!**

**CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE:  
[www.dogwoodacres.org](http://www.dogwoodacres.org)**

## The Coronavirus and Caring for Creation are linked

**O**ur lives certainly have changed quickly with the coronavirus. My husband and I have been self-quarantined since March 9, and we are doing fine. Our enforced slowdown has given me plenty of time to think and read about the virus and its relationship to how we treat the environment.

Did you know that one of the drivers of zoonotic disease (diseases that can be transmitted from animals to people) are land use changes and – yes – climate change? For example, bat-associated viruses, which the coronavirus appears to be, emerged due to the loss of bat habitat from deforestation and agricultural expansion. Another example is the Ebola outbreaks in West Africa which are the result of forest losses leading to closer contacts between wildlife and humans.

“Never before have so many opportunities existed for pathogens to pass from wild and domestic animals to people,” says United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) Executive Director Inger Andersen. “Our continued erosion of wild spaces has brought us uncomfortably close to animals and plants that harbor diseases that can jump to humans.”

The message is clear – ecosystem health is inextricably tied to human health. If we keep our ecosystems healthy and functioning sustainably, it will be harder for pathogens to jump from animals to humans.

Our church has been writing and appealing to us to care for the environment for decades, but in the main, we have ignored this and now it seems we are getting a deadly wakeup call. This virus is killing us, weakening our economy, dismantling families, seriously damaging our social network and keeping us from church. And, tragically, it will be with us a lot longer than any of us like and other pathogens will follow.

Protecting ourselves against future pathogens requires a strong commitment to protect natural systems. We must respond seriously to God’s call to care for his creation. It is time. We have dithered and ignored this call for way too long. In 1990, the 202<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly adopted a report, “Restoring creation for Ecology and Justice”. Read it. Study it and take it seriously. It says that God calls the Presbyterian Church to respond to the cry of creation, engage in protecting the

environment, not only for reasons of prudence or survival, but because the endangered planet is God’s creation.

In the midst of all the virus misery, some really instructive things have happened to the environment. Air pollution has dropped dramatically in major cities. Wildlife is returning to our communities. A mountain lion was seen napping in a tree in a Boulder neighborhood. Fish and dolphins are swimming in the Venice canals which are now clear. Mountain goats are walking down main street. Carbon emissions may drop.

When we largely remove ourselves from the environment, it can heal without us. But there are 7.8 billions of us living on this planet and we will go back to our old ways of burning fossil fuels, clearing lands, poisoning our environment and destroying wildlife habitat.

Unless...we learn to live in harmony with all other life on the planet. Protecting ourselves against future pathogens and the climate crisis requires a strong commitment to protect natural systems. Will you and your church make a commitment?

As always, please send any comments or questions to me at [pammcvety@hotmail.com](mailto:pammcvety@hotmail.com).

### Caring for Creation Notes



By  
**Pam McVety,**  
*Presbytery  
Stewardship  
of Creation  
Enabler*  
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*“Our continued erosion of wild spaces has brought us uncomfortably close to animals and plants that harbor diseases that can jump to humans.”*

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## Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction to Strengthen Immune Systems and Manage Stress

Many people are experiencing stress and anxiety from not being able to leave their homes or rely on their tradition support systems. It is with this in mind that Fellowship Presbyterian, Tallahassee, are offering a class led by Pamela Chamberlynn via Zoom.

The contemplative practice of mindfulness restores our natural God-given ability to live spaciouly from moment to moment in every area of our lives. Medical and behavioral research shows that mindfulness practice is a highly effective way to manage stress and does indeed strengthen our immune systems, in addition to other significant health benefits, especially with chronic health conditions.

Developed as a secular, complementary stress management and relaxation practice at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center in 1979, Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction is now recognized around the world as the gold-standard of mindfulness training and practice. Originally derived from a contemplative practice, mindfulness in the western world can also be a strong support for your own prayer and spiritual practices.

This workshop will include training, practice, and plenty of time for questions and answers. Feel free to invite others to join!

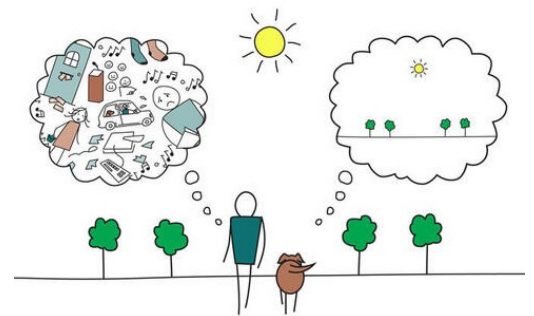
**Saturday, May 9, 2-3:30 p.m. EDT**

<https://zoom.us/j/92102974005?pwd=aWRneWxBZldHeGY0c3NrL2RKRDNnZz09>

**Meeting ID: 921 0297 4004**

**Password: FPCstress**

*Pamela Chamberlynn, MSW, NBC-HWC is a graduate of Duke Integrative Medicine Center at Duke University as a Mindfulness Professional and Certified Integrative Health Coach Professional. Pamela is also a National Board-Certified Health and Wellness Coach, and a Professional member of the American College of Lifestyle Medicine.*



# Festival of HOMILETICS

The Festival is now **ONLINE...**

and **FREE!**

**Join us May 18-22, 2020 for a synchronous streaming  
experience of preaching and spiritual renewal.**

**Reserve your spot:**

<https://www.festivalofhomiletics.com/register/>