

Presbytery Staff  
and Officers  
are here for you:

Rev. Dr. Roy A. Martin  
General Presbyter  
Rmartin  
@presbyteryofflorida.com

Jeannie Dixon  
Stated Clerk  
Statedclerk  
@presbyteryofflorida.com

Rev. Michael Askew  
Moderator  
askew.michaelsr  
@yahoo.com

Denise Vandiver  
Treasurer/Bookkeeper  
Dvandiver  
@presbyteryofflorida.com

Ben Powell  
Dogwood Acres Director  
ben@dogwoodacres.org

Melissa Willis  
Administrator  
Mwillis  
@presbyteryofflorida.com

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# The Panhandle Presbyterian

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## From General Presbyter Roy Martin

The strength God has provided our presbytery is its member congregations, congregational leaders, and clergy. They offer the leadership needed for our presbytery to supply support to our congregations and mission outreach beyond our bounds. Virtually everything our presbytery does is organized and managed by those who serve on presbytery committees and those who serve on committees are members and leaders of our congregations and clergy.

I am so grateful for the leadership God has provided and, as we start a new presbytery year on March 1, I look forward to working with the leadership God continues to provide. We welcome new committee chairs: The Rev. Mark Broadhead with the Committee on Congregational Revitalization, Esther Moring with the Committee on Educational Resources, The Rev. Joan Wooten with the Committee on Ministry, The Rev. Raymond Guterman with the Committee on Preparation for Ministry, and The Rev. Michael Askew with the

Coordinating and Planning Commission.

I am thankful, too, for the continuing committee leadership:

The Rev. Bill Lamont with the Committee on Dogwood Acres, The Rev. Luis Ocasio with the Committee on Mission and Outreach, The Rev. A. J. Mealor with the Committee on New Congregational Development, Leslie Yandle with the Committee on Nominations, The Rev. Brad Clayton with the Committee on Presbytery Administration, and Glenn Hodges with the Committee on Representation.

After the Winter Presbytery meeting, we will be blessed to have The Rev. Trinity Whitley as our new presbytery moderator and Don Mowat as our new Vice Moderator.

Additionally, I want to thank the outgoing committee chairs: The Rev. Lisa Martin with the Committee on Congregational Revitalization, Don Mowat with the Committee on



**The Rev. Dr. Roy Martin**

Ministry, The Rev. Trinity Whitley with the Committee on Preparation for Ministry, Roseanna Phillips with the Coordinating and Planning Commission, and The Rev. Michael Askew our outgoing moderator. May God continue to bless you in those ministries to which you feel called in the future.

Also, a big thank-you to all those clergy, elders, and church members who are rotating off of their time of service. Your work has been essential not only to the presbytery but to the congregations and ministries we serve. The Committee on Nominations is always looking for people to serve and, if you are open to God's leading in service at presbytery or know someone who might be, please let us know.

Finally, I am focusing on visiting for worship with every congregation in the presbytery this year. I have already visited a few congregations and have scheduled a few more. I am not asking to preach this time around but remain open to doing so if requested. Otherwise, I look forward to sitting in the pews with you giving praise to Almighty God. See you soon!

Roy

## From the Committee on Educational Resources



*By Hilda Jackson,  
CER member and  
1st, DeFuniak Springs  
Elder*

## Tales of a reluctant Sunday school teacher

The church is a great place to use any talents, skills, or gifts you may possess, even some you didn't know about. I have been blessed with many opportunities to serve in Christian education. I've enjoyed working with Vacation Bible School every summer and youth group during the school year.

I've never volunteered to teach Sunday school because I love GOING to Sunday school. I have enjoyed the adult Sunday school class lead by a great, very knowledgeable teacher. Unfortunately, he is no longer teaching the class.

The Christian Education Committee had to find someone to take on the job. Most people, like me, feel unqualified to teach adults. Then, I opened my big m...I mean, then, I made the suggestion that we find an easy-to-follow curriculum. I was told to find one I liked. Next thing I knew, I was the adult Sunday school teacher. That was not my intention! Seriously.

As with any predicament I get myself into, it becomes obvious to me that I am exactly where I was meant to be. So, I needed to adjust my attitude, pray for guidance, and get on with it.

I decided we should use the adult version of the curriculum used for the children's classes. It

Was. Not. Easy. To. Follow. Each week it was a struggle to make sense of the lesson. I was having to read, re-read, research, and pray, actually beg, for guidance. Miraculously, something in each lesson sparked some pretty great discussions.

We made it through that book, but decided not to continue with that series. I went to my pastor for advice. We only meet for 30 minutes, so I needed something short, sweet, and meaningful. It should be longer than a devotional, but shorter than a scripted lesson. He suggested The Serendipity Bible for Groups and ordered a copy for me.

I believe it's going to work for us. It includes flexible lesson plans, guided study questions, and background information for every book of the Bible. It should be easy to adapt to our class's needs.

It is true that one of the best ways to learn is to teach. I have challenged myself to learn something new to

share each week. I also have the benefit of learning from my class members. There is a lot of knowledge and wisdom sitting in that room on Sunday mornings.

I feel adult Sunday school is a very important part of Christian education. Bible study from an adult perspective is very different from children's Sunday school, and the camaraderie is priceless. I have found members of my class to be extremely patient and supportive. A friend told me after class one Sunday to quit apologizing, I was doing a good job. Another pulled me aside and thanked me for being willing to share myself. Wow!

God is full of surprises and plans for us that we could never imagine. Sometimes you have to go outside of your comfort zone. Sometimes, you'll go reluctantly, but go because the need is there.

Most importantly, I've learned I can be only as effective as my dependence on God. Prayer will always be the key to success in any challenge.

YOU SHALL BE CALLED  
**REPAIRERS**  
of the **BREACH**

— ISAIAH 58



ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING  
SPECIAL OFFERINGS  
HUNGER • DISASTER • DEVELOPMENT

03.02.22-  
04.17.22

## Faith Presbyterian Church adopts anti-racism initiative

**A**t its January 2021 meeting, the Session of Faith Presbyterian in Tallahassee passed a proposal from the Witness Committee for a 2021 Antiracism Initiative. Their decision was based on a call to action by the 2020 General Assembly, a statement from the Presbytery, and a letter from Ruth Reynolds called "A Call for Reconciliation and Community Building."

The purpose of the initiative generated from the Witness Committee states, "With the increasing recognition of the violence sustained by black, indigenous, and people of color, and with the growing awareness of the church's complicity in racism from our earliest history, the purpose of the initiative would be to educate, discuss, and suggest actions to be taken to support our brothers and sisters of color in whatever way we can."

The proposal was passed, and the Antiracism Task Force was formed. Has the initiative that was established a year ago born any fruit for the building of God's Kingdom?

Several educational opportunities were made available to our congregation and local presbyterian community. "Why Do We Need to Address Racism?" was a six-week study held on



Zoom with over 50 participants registered. Two book studies were offered – first, *The Color of Compromise*, by Jemar Tisby, led by Associate Pastor Trinity Whitley, and *I'm Still Here: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness*, by Austin Channing Brown.

Through the Adults and Families Committee, special trips were planned, including a walking tour of civil rights sites in downtown Tallahassee, a visit to the John G. Riley House Museum (postponed due to Covid), and a bus trip to civil rights museums in Montgomery, Birmingham and Selma, AL, coming up in March.

An adult Sunday School class formed a partnership in January 2021 with Trinity United Presbyterian, the only African-American PCUSA church in Tallahassee, after finding out the racist history surrounding the founding of the church. The two churches continue to meet for Sunday School and study of the Word together on the first Sunday of each month. An event planned to share the story of Trinity with

the Tallahassee Presbyterian community, titled *Telling the Story of Trinity United Presbyterian*, to be held at Faith in late January was postponed, due to Covid.

As a result of these programs and member awareness of the struggles with racial justice and equity that our nation was experiencing, Faith's congregation became involved in related work through the establishment of an ongoing church newsletter article titled, "Social Justice Corner", community cleanups side-by-side with the residents in the Bond neighborhood, and implementation of the church's participation in the Capital Area Justice Ministry, an initiative focused on addressing policy changes to improve social justice in our local community.

So, has the Faith Presbyterian Antiracism Initiative born fruit for the building of God's Kingdom? Educational programs, field trips, community clean-ups, and partnership with the Capital Area Justice ministry are good beginnings. But we have a long way to go.

Perhaps the best fruit is coming together in an ongoing meaningful relationship imbued with mutual respect with our Presbyterian siblings of color at Trinity. By the grace of God, that relationship will continue to grow strong.

### From the "I Stand with You" Task Force



By  
**Ruth Reynolds,**  
*Task Force member  
and Faith,  
Tallahassee, member*

## From the Committee on Congregational Revitalization



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

## CCR seeks revitalization consultants

The Committee on Congregational Revitalization is a wonderfully creative and active group! We are blessed with Spirit-guided ideas and the resources to put those ideas into service for the congregations of Florida Presbytery.

At its January meeting, CCR voted to send to the presbytery a recommendation that the committee sponsor two new grants for congregations. These grants will be funded through investments made with the Texas Presbyterian Foundation. Note: *All grants, if approved by CCR, are considered to be matching grants up to the amount specified in the policy.*



The proposed grants are:

**Equipment Grant (up to \$1,000)** – In a day and age of electronic communication and learning opportunities, “old fashioned” learning tools do not have much appeal to younger congregations. If just cause can be presented how updating some equipment will play a key role in revitalizing and refocusing a congregation’s ministry, a request for equipment will be considered.

**Emergency Repairs (up to \$5,000)** – There may be occasions when

repairs to church facilities are needed in an attempt to be more visually appealing to potential newcomers to a congregation, as well as for the safety of all. A leaky roof leaving water stains and rotting wood that needs to be replaced and painted are just a couple of examples.

CCR is hopeful that the presbytery will vote to approve these two grants at its meeting on February 22. If approved, the grant application forms will be posted on the presbytery website and highlighted in the monthly newsletter, the *Panhandle Presbyterian*.

## LUNCH & LEARN WITH



## PRESBYTERIAN ASSOCIATION OF MUSICIANS

### THURSDAY, FEB. 17TH

TALLAHASSEE  
UKIRK TALLAHASSEE  
12:00 - 1:00 EST

**Executive Director Kelly Abraham will share about PAM and lunch will be served. All are welcome to this free event!**

Please note, Covid protocols of host site will be followed. Guests will receive an email in the days prior to the event outlining specific Covid protocols.

### FRIDAY, FEB. 18TH

PENSACOLA  
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
12:00 - 1:00 EST

**LUNCH IS PROVIDED.  
ALL ARE WELCOME!**

RSVP BY FEB. 13TH

**RSVP TO [KELLY.ABRAHAM@PCUSA.ORG](mailto:kelly.abraham@pcusa.org)**

## Netflix movie satirizes failure to address climate crisis

There is a large comet headed to Earth with a 99.7% probability that it will be a direct hit in six months. The scientists call it a “planet killer”. The President is happy to hear that it isn’t a 100% certain that it will hit the planet and wants the scientists to “sit still and assess”. The public ignores the warning. The comet hits and the planet is destroyed. This is the storyline in a new Netflix movie entitled, “Don’t Look Up”.

It’s a perfect name because, if you don’t look up or do anything about the impending disaster, it won’t happen, right? The movie scientists warn everybody on national television and in the press. For a short period, it looks like our government will take steps to blow up the comet, but then a wealthy businessman points out all the valuable materials in the comet and, at the last minute the rocket that would have blown up the comet is diverted. It’s that “money thing” taking precedent over the survival of the planet.

Does this sound familiar? It should, because this is a satire about our failure to address the climate crisis. It is virtually certain that climate change will cause great harm and possibly destroy the livability of the planet. Scientists have been warning us for years. But, the “money thing”



keeps us from acting, whether it is the fossil fuel industry largesse to members of Congress or the money to be made off fossil fuel stocks.

Congress still blocks action to address it. World leaders who met at COP26 in December, agreeing that climate change is an existential threat, couldn’t agree to transition off fossil fuels in time to keep the global warming increase at 1.5 degrees C. Last year, legislation passed making it illegal for Florida local governments to ban the use of fossil fuels in their communities.

In the movie, the scientist screams on national TV, “Are we not being clear? We’re all 100% for sure gonna die!”

The desperation felt by the scientist in the movie is how scientists and climate activists feel about the world’s response to the climate crisis. The response of President Meryl Streep to the comet in the movie was a humorous parody of how foolish our elected

officials are behaving.

The world we live in isn’t a movie. It’s real life. It is our reality. Our leaders are not dealing with reality. Our world is breaking down faster than scientists predicted.

At the end of the movie, the scientists participate in a last supper with their family as the planet is engulfed in a fireball. We know what happens in the Bible after the Last Supper. And, in the movie, the actors dusted themselves off and returned to their dressing rooms. It is in our own best interest to act now to address the climate crisis, because I don’t think that we should count on a mass resurrection or a retake.

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

## Caring for Creation Notes



By  
Pam McVety,  
Presbytery  
Stewardship  
of Creation  
Enabler  
([pammcvety@hotmail.com](mailto:pammcvety@hotmail.com))

*The world we live in  
isn’t a movie.  
It’s real life.  
It is our reality.  
Our leaders are not  
dealing with reality.*

**PRESBYTERY  
OF FLORIDA**

Mailing address:  
P. O. Box 7  
Chipley, FL 32428

Physical address:  
3320 Harmony Rd.

Phone: 850-535-2335  
or 850-535-2440

E-mail:  
office@presbyteryofflorida.com  
Website:  
www.presbyteryofflorida.net

**Committee on Congregational  
Revitalization (CCR)**  
Rev. Lisa Martin  
revlwmartin@gmail.com

**Committee on Dogwood Acres  
(CDWA)**  
Rev. William "Bill" Lamont  
gbpcpastorbill@gmail.com

**Committee on Educational Resources  
(CER)**

**Committee on Ministry (COM)**  
Don Mowat  
dmowat@bellsouth.net

**Committee on Mission and Outreach  
(CMO)**  
Rev. Luis Ocasio-Torres  
luisjocasio@gmail.com

**Committee on New Congregational  
Development (CNCD)**  
Rev. A. J. Mealor  
revmealor@gmail.com

**Committee on Nominations (CN)**  
Leslie Yandle  
Leslie.yandle@gmail.com

**Committee on  
Preparation for Ministry (CPM)**  
Rev. Trinity Whitley  
trinity@faithpcusa.org

**Committee on Presbytery  
Administration (CPA)**  
Rev. Brad Clayton  
brad@faithpcusa.org

**Committee on Representation (CR)**  
Glenn Hodges  
ghodges37@comcast.net

**Coordinating and Planning  
Commission (CPC)**  
Roseanna Phillips  
roseannacpc@gmail.com

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

**In February**

Tuesday, February 1 10 a.m. CST/ 11 a.m. EST	Committee on Mission and Outreach (CMO)
Tuesday, February 1 2 p.m. CST/ 3 p.m. EST	Presbytery Committee Chair Training
Sunday, February 6 7 p.m. CST	Gulf Beach, Panama City Beach, "Church & the Arts" Concert Series: Wabi Sabis
Wednesday, February 9 11 a.m. CST/ 12 p.m. EST	Committee on Educational Resources
Wednesday, February 9 1 p.m. CST/ 2 p.m. EST	Committee on Presbytery Administration
Thursday, February 10 2 p.m. CST/ 3 p.m. EST	Committee on Congregational Revitalization
Saturday, February 12 10 a.m. CST/ 11 a.m. EST	Committee on Representation
Thursday, February 17 11:30 a.m. EST	PAM Luncheon at UKirk Tallahassee
Thursday, February 17	Statistics entry deadline for churches
Friday, February 18 12 p.m. CST	PAM Luncheon at FPC of Pensacola
Sunday, February 20 7 p.m. CST	Gulf Beach, Panama City Beach, "Church & the Arts" Concert Series: David Seering
Tuesday, February 22 9 a.m. CST/ 10 a.m. EST	Winter Stated Presbytery Meeting, Faith Presbyterian, Tallahassee
Wednesday, February 23 10 a.m. CST/ 11 a.m. EST	"I Stand with You" Task Force
Sunday, February 27 7 p.m. CST	Gulf Beach, Panama City Beach, "Church & the Arts" Concert Series: Ken Sizemore

**Looking ahead**

Tuesday, March 1 10 a.m. CST/ 11 a.m. EST	Committee on Mission and Outreach (CMO)
Wednesday, March 2	Ash Wednesday
Tuesday, March 8 9:30 a.m. CST/ 10:30 a.m. EST	Committee on Ministry
Wednesday, March 9 11 a.m. CST/ 12 p.m. EST	Committee on Educational Resources
Wednesday, March 9 1 p.m. CST/ 2 p.m. EST	Committee on Presbytery Administration
Saturday, March 12	<b>DiscipleFest</b>
Tuesday, March 15 10 a.m. CST/ 11 a.m. EST	Committee on Congregational Revitalization
Sunday, March 27 10:30 a.m. EST	Lafayette, Tallahassee, 75th Anniversary Celebration
Wednesday, March 30 10 a.m. CST/ 11 a.m. EST	"I Stand with You" Task Force

**Don't miss it!**

**WINTER STATED  
PRESBYTERY  
MEETING**

**Tuesday, February 22  
9 a.m. CST/  
10 a.m. EST  
(Registration begins  
1 hour before)**

**@ Faith  
Presbyterian Church  
2200 N. Meridian Rd.  
Tallahassee**