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The Panhandle Presbyterian

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From General Presbyter Roy Martin

As you will see elsewhere in this newsletter, Presbytery will have its Fall meeting on October 24th at First Presbyterian Church, Lynn Haven. It promises to be a very interesting meeting!

For about a year, the Strategic Planning Task Force have been hard at work prayerfully considering where God might be leading the presbytery going forward.

As I reported last year, we have accomplished many wonderful things together. We have created ways to engage congregations to discern their future; we have worked to open up a mission partnership with Presbyterians in Guatemala; we are in the process of searching for

an organizing pastor for a new congregational development; we have created a much healthier process for working with congregations in pastoral transition; and we have continued significant support for Dogwood Acres. And we did all of these things during two hurricanes and a pandemic!

But, in spite of our best efforts, we have not made budget in any year and had to dip into reserves; and we have never had enough people to volunteer to serve on committees of presbytery. Bless the Nominations and Representation Committees for trying to fill positions and being told “no way” more times than being told “yes”.

It was for these reasons

that I asked the Strategic Planning Task Force to be formed, and they have been working steadily for a year.

I do not know what motions they will bring to presbytery to be voted upon, but I am sure they will be well thought-out and based in reality, as well as the faith they hold dear. It is always possible that one or more of their recommendations will be difficult to hear, much less accept. As with any organization, there are stakeholders who may find the stake they are holding will need to change.

As your commissioners come to the meeting, please hold them, the task force, and the presbytery in prayer that, in the end, it is God’s Will that is honored above all.



The Rev. Dr. Roy Martin

Roy

2023-25 Book of Order Workshop With Rev. Dr. Roy Martin

Sunday, November 5

3 pm CT/4 pm ET

1st Presbyterian Church of Lynn Haven

*Register to participate
in person or via Zoom:*

<https://forms.gle/CUoVwiGEWR1zaNfj6>

From Our Stated Clerk



By Jeannie Dixon,
Fellowship,
Tallahassee Elder

Clerks apprised about upcoming reviews and reporting

Clerks of Session: Please report deaths of ruling elders (whether currently serving on session or not) by Monday, October 2. These are for deaths from October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023. They will be included in the necrology report at the October 24 presbytery meeting.

If you have already submitted those names, you don't need to do it again. Submit online at bit.ly/pofnecro or email me at statedclerk@presbyteryofflorida.com.

► A reminder to session clerks, elders, session moderators: The Book of Order (G-3.0106) lists several required items (e.g., sexual misconduct policy,

harassment policy, child and youth protection policy, antiracism policy.) Copies of these policies are to be provided during the session record review. As we worked on the reviews for 2019, 2020, 2021 I noted that very few congregations have these policies.

We (hopefully) will have the 2022 record review in the next few months, so don't forget to provide them when your minutes and records are reviewed. The review includes the session minutes, congregational meeting minutes, lists of members (baptized, active, affiliate members), deaths, registers of ruling elders and deacons, of installed

pastors with dates of service (G-3.0204).

► The annual church statistics will open in December for your 2023 statistics. As soon as the date is announced, emails will be sent to all the clerks (Make sure I have the current clerk's name and email). I plan to have a training for this, but since the General Assembly did not meet this past summer, the statistical questions should not have changed from last year! I would recommend you look at your statistics from last year (Let me know if you need a copy of them) and start updating them on paper for now. That will make your entry into the program much easier.

Dogwood Presents



Reading



Writing



Resting

Who:

Adults looking for a weekend of community and relaxation

When:

November 3rd-5th

Where:

Dogwood Acres
Camp and Retreat Center

How:

\$200 per Person. Covers all food, workshops, and lodging for the weekend

www.dogwoodacres.org/dogwood-retreats/reading-writing-resting-retreat/

Register online now!

Task force works to discern presbytery's future direction

It has come to my attention that some in the presbytery are not aware that the Coordinating and Planning Commission of the Presbytery (formerly known as the Council) put into place back in February of this year a Strategic Planning Taskforce.

The charter of the Strategic Planning Taskforce is:

- ▶ Engage 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

The seven members of this Taskforce are: Rev. Mark Broadhead – Chair (First – Crestview and Laurel Hill), Elder Susan Coleman (Trinity–Pensacola), Rev. Dr. 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).

Since February, the Taskforce has been working diligently to fulfill its charter. Hundreds of hours have been spent in discerning the current state of the presbytery on emotional, spiritual, and financial levels. We have evaluated methods of ministry employed by other presbyteries of similar size and makeup to our own. We have been prayerfully considering where God is wanting to lead the Presbytery of Florida.

Everything in the life of the Presbytery has been looked at and evaluated, from our current vision and mission statements, to staffing, to Dogwood Acres, to our committees and their responsibilities.

After hearing the financial report of the Committee on Presbytery Administration at the August 22nd meeting of Presbytery and noting the anticipated giving from our congregations will more than likely be 23% less than anticipated (which translates to a nearly \$110,000 shortfall), we have started to look at budgetary matters.

There are no longer any “reserve funds” from which to draw to make up the difference. This may be a painful realization. However, the Taskforce is

working to make the structure of the presbytery such that the pain will be minimized. There is not much “fat” that can be trimmed, so there will more than likely need to be “across the board” percentage cuts in each area of ministry.

Please keep in mind, the recommendations of the Taskforce will have been well thought out and presented with the greatest intent for the ongoing life and ministry of the Presbytery of Florida.

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, who said the main focus of the presbytery is to “provide nurture and resources to assist the charter churches in carrying out their mission” (*150 Years: Frontiers in Faith*).

From the Strategic Planning Task Force



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

From the Committee on Educational Resources (CER)



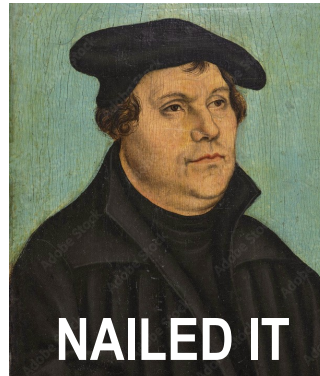
By Hilda Jackson,
CER member and
First, DeFuniak
Springs Elder

Reformation Sunday celebrates “who we are”

October 31 isn't just Halloween, it's also Reformation Day — the anniversary of Martin Luther nailing his 95 Theses to the door of the Wittenberg Castle church in Germany in 1517. His theses challenged the authority of the Catholic Church and sparked the historic split in Christianity known as the Protestant Reformation.

Why is this important enough to us as Presbyterians that we designate the last Sunday in October as Reformation Sunday? As stated by the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. in October of 2017, the 500th anniversary of this event: *“As Christians, our faith began with the followers of Jesus. But the beginning of our Christian faith as Presbyterian is in the Reformation. The Reformation marks something significant for us in this part of the universal church: the coalescence of our focus on the Holy Spirit’s ongoing reform of us as a church and as individuals. Martin Luther helps us to understand and acknowledge that the institution of the church is not equal to God. We are called to worship the triune God alone, to claim Jesus Christ as Lord of the church, and to seek the ongoing sanctification of the Holy Spirit.”*

It's who we are. By studying the writings of



Luther and other Reformed theologians, especially John Calvin, we gain an understanding of how we live and worship together as Presbyterians. It explains why we place so much importance on Christian education for all, communal worship and celebration of sacraments. If you've ever wondered why we have sessions, SO many committees, and congregational meetings, it's because collective discernment of the Bible, the Holy Spirit and the will of God are crucial to the Reformed tradition. We are all equal as children of God and deserve to be included and heard.

Knowledge of at least the basic history of Reformation and the Presbyterian Church is very enlightening and key to our growth as informed, reformed Christians.

So, what do we do to celebrate Reformation Sunday? Here are a few possibilities:

- Promote some of the more recent, relatable

books about the Reformation found on pcusastore.com or countless other book sellers.

- Host a “movie night” featuring one of many movies about The Reformation.

- Explore and enjoy Reformation-related art and music.

- Learn the 5 Solas

- Throw a full-blown Reformation Celebration with activities for the whole church family and community.

- Have fun and enjoy! We have much to celebrate!

Resources:

“Commemorate Reformation Sunday” and “Reformation Resources”
presbyterianmission.org

“Reformation Sunday”
history.pcusa.org

“Teaching Young Children in the PCUSA About The Reformation: It’s Complicated”
layman.org

“How to Have a Reformation Day Celebration”
fivesolasmedia.com

“The Reformation”
history.com

Movies about Reformation
google.com

SDOP is about people investing in people

Our Presbytery's Self-Development of People ministry has been revived. The Committee is now composed and qualified to review and decide on grant applications. Five thousand dollars has been allotted to our presbytery for this cycle.

We are grateful for the docket time we had to present this opportunity at the August 22 Presbytery meeting. That day we received interest in five possible projects. We are open to receiving more before our deadline of February 15, 2024.

Our invitation at this time is for congregations and their leaders to identify additional low-income grassroots groups in their communities who are struggling but want to improve their situations. Please talk with members of your congregation who share these concerns and reach out to people in their networks. You can also Google "service agencies" in your community and/or get the list of United Way recipients and contact these people. Agencies would not be funded, but they can help identify or develop groups that would qualify.

This is a wonderful way for your church to join God in reaching out to neighbors in need.

The three basic criteria are: a) the project is "owned" by the people



PRESBYTERIAN COMMITTEE ON THE
**Self-Development
of People**

who originated it (at least 6 people; ideally 10 or more); b) the funds and operation are controlled by these people; c) the people who originate and control are the people who benefit from the project.

The process includes groups submitting application forms to the committee chair. The Committee will review the application and do an on-site or zoom visit and decide whether to submit the application.

Application forms can be downloaded from www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/sdop/apply-grant. We can provide assistance in completing the forms.

To assist you in reaching out to possible grant recipients, our committee can equip you with a draft of an introductory letter, brochures, info cards and instructions for partnering with us in hosting of a Zoom Community Workshop. We plan to mail these resources to each congregation in October. We will also produce a video describing what you have already done through a previous SDOP project in our Presbytery. The short version can be shared as a

"Moment for Mission" in worship near Thanksgiving. The longer version with further details about developing a current project can be shared with your Session and/or mission committees.

Please call the Presbytery office at (850) 535-2335 or email office@presbyteryofflorida.com for contact information for any of our SDOP committee members. We are eager to hear from you.

Rev. Dr. Michael Askew
(Chair), Panama City

Shelia Clark-Askew,
Panama City

Glenn Hodges, Tallahassee

Rev. Jim Krapf, Pensacola

Sandra Macon,
Defuniak Springs

From the Self Development of People Committee (SDOP)



*By Rev. Jim Krapf
(HR),
SDOP member*

**From the
Racial Justice
Subcommittee**



*By Rev. Greta Reed
(HR),
Subcommittee member*

Send a deserving child to Dogwood Acres next summer

“Dogwood Acres is the outdoor ministry of the Presbytery of Florida. Our mission is to provide a retreat environment in which individuals and groups can grow in faith, enjoy wholesome recreation, and nurture Christian fellowship in a natural and unspoiled part of creation.”

No matter how accurate a mission statement is, it cannot begin to capture the on-site experiences of individual campers, as they enter the woods—and the clearings—that are part of Dogwood Acres’ landscape. It cannot capture the magic of a starlit sky, far enough from major cities to display countless sparkling lights against the dark bowl of a sky. Nor can it capture the adventure of making new friends, the excitement of a ropes course, or of overcoming one’s fear of water and learning how to swim, or the sweet soft sound of canoe paddles dipping into a calm lake. Nor can it capture connecting to a deeper knowledge of the Triune God in the surroundings of our natural world.

For those of us fortunate enough to enjoy as a youth the benefits of a week at such a camp, who does not still carry with them indelible memories of singing around a campfire after dark, or



perhaps of being brought to a personal knowledge of Christ that may have been the high mark of your experience?

Members of the Racial Justice Task Force of the Mission and Outreach Committee of this Presbytery are seeking to expand the number of children who can spend a week next summer at Dogwood Acres, but whose families cannot afford to send them. This past 2023 season, we piloted this program with just a few campers. We are now eager to reach out to many more would-be campers. To do so, we want to start early—now—by urging you and your congregations to think about participating the summer of 2024.

Your most important role is to create a fund to

support at least two campers who know each other and are in the same age group—rising second graders to rising eighth graders—so that none of these first-time campers will be overwhelmed by meeting so many potential friends at once. In the meantime, we will be developing a process to help you recruit and support a couple of deserving youth by providing this opportunity for them.

If you or your church are interested in becoming a supporter of two or more first-time campers, please call the Presbytery office at (850) 535-2335 or email office @presbyteryofflorida.com to provide your contact information. Someone from this Task Force will respond.

**Fall Stated
Presbytery Meeting**

Tuesday, Oct. 24

9 am CT/10 am ET

1st Presbyterian of Lynn Haven

Registration begins at 8 am CT/9 am ET

www.presbyteryofflorida.net/presbytery-meetings/meeting-dockets-documents/

From ancient times to modern, people of faith have supported treaties

Did you know that there are 29 verses in the Bible about treaties? In the ancient world, serious agreements were made in the form of covenants and treaties, with covenants being more prominent in the Bible. They were meant to establish a long lasting relationship between parties.

Treaties are agreements between nations and they are binding with legal consequences for breaking them. There is now a global movement amongst faith communities asking our leaders to sign a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Faith communities around the world recognize the moral imperative for humans to move away from fossil fuels to clean renewable energy and are participating in a call for all governments to begin negotiations to develop and implement a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty that has a binding plan to:

- ✓ End expansion of any new coal, oil or gas production consistent with the science.
- ✓ Phase-out existing production of fossil fuels in a way that is fair and equitable.
- ✓ Ensure a global just transition to 100% access to renewable energy

supporting dependent economies to diversify away from fossil fuels in a way that allows all to flourish.

Many faith groups have signed a letter with this request. If you are interested in signing the letter you can read it and learn more about this movement at <https://greenfaith.org/sign-the-multi-faith-letter-for-a-fossil-fuel-non-proliferation-treaty/>.

The facts are that, in spite of all our efforts, carbon emissions are not going down. They are increasing, and we are only 6 ½ years away from the deadline to cut our emissions in half. Fossil fuel companies continue to plan, mine and produce more fossil fuels. They also are spending millions on TV ads to convince you that they are transitioning to renewable energy.

Only one fossil fuel company, out of the 100 plus, has actually changed its business model from fossil fuels to renewable energy. It is the Danish company, Orsted, formerly DONG Energy, and it is now the world's largest developer of offshore wind power.

The Vatican endorsed the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty in July, and Cardinal Michael Czerny, Prefect

of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, said, "The global situation is more desperate today that it was seven years ago. Despite the Paris Agreement, its target of only a 1.5 degree C temperature increase is practically out of reach; the planet is already 1.2 degrees C hotter. Yet new fossil fuel projects are recklessly being initiated, contradicting the call from the International Energy Agency. That's why the proposed Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty is essential, to complement the Paris Agreement and help implement it."

The important point he is making is that the Paris Climate Agreement did not call for the phase-out of fossil fuels, while this treaty does. Unless the world unites and governments call for a phase-out of fossil fuels, the industry will continue to produce fossil fuels.

This is one more way that we as people of faith can demonstrate our love for our brothers and sisters and take action to protect all of God's creation. Hope you will join me in signing the letter.

Caring for Creation Notes



By
Pam McVety,
*Presbytery
Stewardship
of Creation
Enabler*
(pammcvety@hotmail.com)

"Faith communities around the world recognize the moral imperative for humans to move away from fossil fuels"

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The Panhandle Presbyterian

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

In October

<i>Sunday, October 1</i>	World Communion Sunday
<i>Sunday, October 1 6 p.m. ET</i>	Faith Presbyterian, Tallahassee Pumpkin Patch Kickoff
<i>Monday, October 2 10 a.m. CT/ 11 a.m. ET</i>	Self Development of People (SDOP) Committee
<i>Monday, October 2 1 p.m. CT/ 2 p.m. ET</i>	Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM)
<i>Tuesday, October 3 12 p.m. CT/ 1 p.m. ET</i>	Committee on Educational Resources (CER)
<i>Wednesday, October 4</i>	Board of Pensions' Employer Agreement Deadline
<i>Wednesday, October 4 9 a.m. – noon CT</i>	Memory Loss Workshop , 1st Presbyterian, Lynn Haven
<i>Thursday, October 5 9 a.m. CT/ 10 a.m. ET</i>	Committee on Mission and Outreach (CMO)
<i>Friday – Sunday, October 6 – 8</i>	Spiritfest middle school retreat @ Dogwood Acres
<i>Saturday, October 7 1 – 3 p.m. CT</i>	Retirement reception for the Rev. Mark Broadhead, Crestview
<i>Sunday, October 8</i>	1st Presbyterian of DeFuniak Springs 100th Birthday of the Sanctuary
<i>Tuesday, October 10 9 a.m. CT/10 a.m. ET</i>	Committee on Dogwood Acres (CDWA)
<i>Tuesday, October 10 5:30 p.m. CT</i>	1st, Milton " Love & Lights " Fundraising Dinner
<i>Thursday, October 12 2 p.m. CT/3 p.m. ET</i>	Committee on Presbytery Administration (CPA)
<i>Tuesday, October 17 1 p.m. CT/2 p.m. ET</i>	Committee on New Congregational Development (CNCD)
<i>Tuesday, October 17 5 p.m. CT/6 p.m. ET</i>	Committee on Nominations (CN)
<i>Saturday, October 21 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. ET</i>	Christ Presbyterian, Tallahassee, Fall Festival
<i>Tuesday, October 24 9 a.m. CT/ 10 a.m. ET</i>	Fall Stated Presbytery Meeting, 1st, Lynn Haven Registration @ 8 CT/9 ET
<i>Wednesday, October 25 10 a.m. CT/ 11 a.m. ET</i>	Racial Justice Subcommittee
<i>Sunday, October 29</i>	Reformation Sunday

Looking ahead

<i>Friday – Sunday, November 3 – 5</i>	Reading, Writing, Resting Retreat @ Dogwood Acres
<i>Sunday, November 5</i>	Daylight Saving Time ends
<i>Sunday, November 5 3 p.m. CT/4 p.m. ET</i>	Book of Order Workshop with General Presbyter Roy Martin @ 1st, Lynn Haven
<i>Thursday, November 2 9 a.m. CT/ 10 a.m. ET</i>	Committee on Mission and Outreach (CMO)
<i>Monday, November 6 10 a.m. CT/ 11 a.m. ET</i>	Self Development of People (SDOP) Committee
<i>Tuesday, November 7 12 p.m. CT/ 1 p.m. ET</i>	Committee on Educational Resources (CER)
<i>Thursday, November 9 2 p.m. CT/3 p.m. ET</i>	Committee on Presbytery Administration (CPA)
<i>Tuesday, November 14 9:30 a.m. CT/ 10:30 a.m. ET</i>	Committee on Ministry (COM)
<i>Tuesday, November 14 3 p.m. CT/4 p.m. ET</i>	Committee on Dogwood Acres (CDWA)
<i>Tuesday, November 21 10 a.m. CT/ 11 a.m. ET</i>	Committee on Congregational Discernment (CCD)
<i>Wednesday, November 22 10 a.m. CT/ 11 a.m. ET</i>	Racial Justice Subcommittee
<i>Thursday & Friday, November 23 & 24</i>	Presbytery office closed for Thanksgiving

