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# The Panhandle Presbyterian

*A monthly publication of the Presbytery of Florida*



Volume 7, Issue 1

January 2024

## From General Presbyter Roy Martin

As we all know, New Year's Day is a time to make resolutions to improve ourselves in some way. We say things like we want to lose 10 pounds or start exercising more. Some are able to follow through with their resolutions and some, well, will be making the same resolutions next year!

In a way, our presbytery has made some New Year's resolutions, and we are already on our way to keeping them. As you are probably aware, the presbytery voted to cut the budget for 2024 by some \$130,000, reorganize the presbytery committee structure, make the General Presbyter position part-time, and work with the Dogwood Acres Committee to investigate what it would mean for the camp and conference center to

become a 501c3, bringing a recommendation to the October 2024 meeting of presbytery.

Here's where things stand on each one of those projects:

1. Churches are now in the process of making their pledge to the presbytery for 2024. The hope is to have heard from all the churches by mid-January to know what our actual budget can be. Since, going forward, 99.9% of the budget will need to be supported by our member congregations, it is crucial to hear from each congregation what their pledge will be as soon as possible.

2. An implementation Task Force has now been appointed by the Coordinating and Planning Commission and has been trained to begin their work January 1 in putting the presbytery's

decision regarding presbytery structure into place.

3. As part of their work, they will begin the process of securing a part-time General Presbyter. This one may take some time, so they will start working on this immediately.

4. The Coordinating and Planning Commission is in the process of putting together a group of presbyters to work with the Dogwood Acres Committee on the 501c3 issue, and their work together should begin very soon.

I have been thrilled with the willingness of everyone to begin work on all these issues. I have already witnessed a huge level of trust among those tasked to fulfill presbytery's decisions, and I have confidence that these New Year's resolutions will be kept!

Roy



**The Rev. Dr. Roy Martin**

**Save the date!**

**Winter  
Presbytery Meeting**

**Tuesday, Feb. 28 • 9 a.m. CST/10 a.m. EST**

**1st Presbyterian Church of DeFuniak Springs**

## From Our Stated Clerk



*By Jeannie Dixon,  
Fellowship,  
Tallahassee Elder*

## Resources available for fulfilling Book of Order policies mandates

Work continues at the General Assembly level to share sample policies for child protection and sexual misconduct, harassment, and anti-racism as mandated by the Book of Order. The denomination [offers a page](#) that provides helpful information, including a [PDF slideshow presentation](#) on creating child-youth-protection policies.

Many congregations ask why they need a child-youth protection policy when they have no youth in their congregation. You need this to protect any child/youth, (grandchildren, neighbors, scouts, etc.) who may visit on occasion.

► The Annual Congregation Statistics opened Friday, December 1, 2023 and will close for congregations on February 16, 2024. THANK YOU to the two congregations who have already submitted their reports (Yes, I sent them gold stars).

The questions are the same as last year. I would suggest you take your form from last year and update from those numbers. You should have printed a copy of the stats to include in your minutes for the year. If you need a copy of your form, [email a request to me](#). The program includes help on



the questions. To get to that information once you log in to the statistics program ( [Go to the Online Statistics Entry system](#) ), the tabs are “Church” (update church address information), “Clerk” (update the name of the clerk of session), and “Statistics”. That last tab has a set of tasks in a box on the right side of the screen listing each category of questions (membership, congregational life, racial/ethnic, financial). Each of those will give detailed instructions on completing those questions.

Click “Submit” when you have finished entering all statistics and the session has approved this. The system will save each set of questions as you move through them. Once you submit, you indicate no further changes are needed.

**PLEASE NOTE:** The session needs to approve the report as early as possible after December 31, 2023. This is a session report and DOES NOT require approval at a congregational meeting. If you spend

more than five minutes on a question, put it aside and [contact me for assistance](#).

A workshop will be held via Zoom January 18 at 6:00 pm Central/7:00 pm Eastern for any who have questions or need assistance. Watch for information in the Presbytery’s weekly eUpdate, or [email me for registration](#).

► And finally, we need to plan how to get the 2023 minutes read. [Email me your answers](#) to these questions: 1) Are your minutes saved in an electronic format (like Word or Google Docs)? 2) Do you know how to combine those individual files into one document (so all of the minutes for the year are in one file)? 3) Do you know how to print or save that single file to a PDF?

Please [email your answers to me](#) ASAP so we can determine if this would help facilitate the review. And be sure to [notify the Presbytery office](#) and [me](#) if there is a change in your clerk of session for 2024.

## Presbytery churches utilizing CAT for a variety of purposes

The past year was quite busy for the Committee on Congregational Discernment. We had the pleasure and privilege of working with a number of congregations.

DeFuniak Springs-Bethel has been hard at work revitalizing its presence and ministry in the community. With the assistance of Gulf Beach Presbyterian Church, several young people from the Bethel area were able to attend summer camp at Dogwood Acres. Guest speakers have come to the church to present information on community concerns. Repair and update of the church property continue. Be sure to keep watch for Bethel's continued revitalization efforts.

Congregational Assessment Tool (CAT) engagements were utilized by a number of congregations last year for a variety of purposes.

Tallahassee-Lafayette engaged the CAT as they began their process of seeking a new pastor.

Panama City-Grace used the CAT to kick off their desire to better serve the surrounding community and congregation.

Milton-First did the CAT for a second time because of dramatic changes in the congregation following their first assessment. This congregation is on the fast track for new and



1st, Lynn Haven Pastor the Rev. Lisa Martin purr-fectly spotlights her congregation's 100% participation in their Holy Cow! Congregational Assessment Tool (CAT) survey. (Photo from 1st., Lynn Haven)

exciting ministries developing among its members.

Lynn Haven-First engaged the CAT and had a great time doing so. Rev. Lisa Martin promised that if they had 100% participation, she would wear a cat costume in worship. They did, and she did. Great fun.

Freeport Presbyterian completed the CAT in early December with great anticipation for engaging the revitalization process this coming month.

Congregations that are well into their strategic planning process as a result of their discernment process are making good progress.

Pensacola-Northminster has made strategic decisions which have

brought about promising results.

Panama City-Parkway has been moving forward in their strategic planning, exploring ways to reach out to the surrounding community in even better ways.

We also had several congregations take advantage of our Emergency Repairs Grant and Equipment Grant.

This Committee has done some great work. With the upcoming restructuring of the Presbytery the kind of work and support in this area of ministry will continue.

## From the Committee on Congregational Discernment (CCD)



By Rev. Mark Broadhead (Ret.),  
Chair



## Exploring the Legacies and Lessons of the Civil Rights Movement in the U.S. South

A Pilgrimage to Birmingham, Montgomery, Selma, Jackson, the Mississippi Delta and Memphis

May 28 - June 6, 2024



<https://hubs.ly/Q02619mH0>

**Application Deadline: Feb. 23, 2024**



## WOMEN'S RETREAT

Pensacola Beach Holiday Inn Resort

**Friday, February 23rd, 7-9 PM**  
**Saturday, February 24th until 5 PM**

**DEFINE RETREAT:**

- withdraw
- move back
- a quiet secluded place
- a period of seclusion

**OUR DEFINITION**

- A time for
- discipleship, fellowship and
- FUN!

NEW LIFE CHURCH  
ATLANTA, GA

JANUARY 16-18,  
2024



# THE MATTHEW 25 SUMMIT

AN INVITATION TO INNOVATION



# BLACK HISTORY

*An Essential Conversation*

Join us for an enlightening journey into the foundations of Black American History, where we delve into the essential narratives that have shaped our nation. This seminar series is a celebration of resilience, triumph, and the invaluable contributions of the Black community throughout our history.

**Thursdays, February 1, 22, 29, and March 7**  
**10 AM - 11:30 AM (CST)**

**First Presbyterian Church of Lynn Haven**

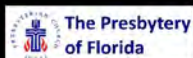
810 Georgia Avenue, Lynn Haven, FL 32444

*(Seminar sessions will also be available via Zoom)*

**Let's Celebrate Diversity and Unity Through Knowledge!**

To register, visit [www.firstchurchlh.org](http://www.firstchurchlh.org) or call 850.265.2051

Presented in partnership with:



## THE CHURCH & THE ARTS | CONCERT SERIES

Benefiting Beach Care Services

ALL PERFORMANCES START AT 6:00 P.M.  
SAME DAY TICKETS \$15 | 2 FOR \$25 (SOLD AT DOOR)

# 2024

CELEBRATING  
**32**  
YEARS

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 7<sup>TH</sup>**  
TODD HERENDEEN

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 14<sup>TH</sup>**  
IN FAITH (BLUE GRASS GOSPEL)

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 21<sup>ST</sup>**  
JANELLE FROST

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4<sup>TH</sup>**  
UKULELE ORCHESTRA OF SAINT ANDREWS

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18<sup>TH</sup>**  
BOBBY VAN DEUSEN

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25<sup>TH</sup>**  
LUCKY MUD

Gulf Beach  
Presbyterian  
Church



[www.pinkchurch.org](http://www.pinkchurch.org)

271 South Arnold (Hwy 79)  
Panama City Beach, FL 32413

Season Ticket Information  
850-867-3770

## CER shares Lenten resources for children and youth

It's hard to believe, as we head into the new year, that Lent is right around the corner! This year, it comes early, with Ash Wednesday on February 14 and Easter on March 31.

When seeking out resources for liturgical seasons, I appreciate resources that are accessible and adaptable, ones which can be utilized across generations and can be made cohesive across faith formation avenues in worship, education, fellowship, and at home.



# ILLUSTRATED MINISTRY

Illustrated Ministry develops such resources annually. On their website, [illustratedministry.com](http://illustratedministry.com) you can find Lenten resources from past years, each focused on a different theme and offering devotionals, liturgy, family activities and more! Their devotionals can be sent home with congregants of all ages, but also offer a great foundation for youth

and children's programming through the Lenten season with reflections that can be used in Sunday school or small groups.

Keep an eye out in the coming month for their 2024 resources for lent, and be sure to check out their blog too for great tips and tricks for ministry!

From the  
Committee on  
Educational  
Resources (CER)



By Rev. Erin Rugh,  
Faith, Tallahassee  
Associate Pastor  
for Youth  
and College Students

Your Faith



Your Church

## Confirmation Retreat for the Presbytery of Florida

January 12th-14th ·  
Dogwood Acres

This retreat is designed for any middle or high school student currently enrolled in a confirmation class, or recently finished a confirmation class, or about to begin a confirmation class along with their adult mentors, educator, or pastor.

### Who:

Youth from 6th-12th grade

### When:

Arrive Jan. 12th 7pm CT

Depart Jan. 14th Noon CT

Where: Dogwood Acres

### Cost:

\$150 per person

Mark your calendars.

Register at [dogwoodacres.org](http://dogwoodacres.org) today!



## From Dogwood Acres



By Christy Williams,  
Interim Director

## Youth and adult retreats planned in January and February

**D**ogwood Acres staff are gearing up for exciting retreats coming in January and February. Find information and register at [www.dogwoodacres.org/dogwood-retreats/](http://www.dogwoodacres.org/dogwood-retreats/)!

**Confirmation Retreat** for middle and high school students – January 12-14: \$160 per participant-Registration, housing, food, supplies and activities are included. Join us as we walk alongside young people considering confirming the vows taken at baptism. Sessions will include: “Why do Presbyterians do

that?”, Polity, Church History and Worship. Chaperones or confirmation mentors must be Level 2 background checked – so please register ASAP.

**“Pause”, A Yoga Retreat for Women** – January 19-21: \$200 per participant – Registration, housing, food, workshops, and yoga sessions. Back by popular demand, this retreat has multiple sessions of yoga interspersed with hiking, workshops and time to rest – on and off the mat.

**Dogwood Youth Conference** – for middle and high school youth – February 9-11: *Faith over Fear* is our theme for the weekend that will be led by college-aged young adults. \$160 per participant – Registration, housing, food, supplies and activities included. Chaperones must be Level 2 background checked – so please register early.

# Join us for a weekend of yoga and relaxation



**Pause Yoga Retreat January 19-21**

## COP28 called Climate Change Super Bowl

For many of you, the Super Bowl game is the highlight of the football season and brings millions of people together. When the game is over, there is always a winner. The game brings joy to its watchers and something bordering on ecstasy to the fans of the winning team.

A reporter recently said that the December meeting of the COP28 was the Super Bowl of meetings on the climate crisis. In case you are wondering, “COP” stands for “Conference of Parties”, and the 28 refers to the 28<sup>th</sup> meeting of this group of 200 world leaders. It was formed by the United Nations Environmental Program at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio. It brings nations together to find climate crisis solutions and, because of this, we are making progress, but nowhere near the progress needed.

This year, the United Arab Emirate hosted the meeting, and Sultan Ahmed Al-Jaber was appointed COP president. He also is the head of the UAE state-owned fossil fuel company, so even before this meeting began, it was controversial. The meeting also had about 2400 well-funded fossil fuel lobbyists present. That meant that about one out of every 40 attendees opposed phasing out fossil fuels.

There also were

hundreds of delegations representing the medical community, businesses, youth, island nations, indigenous people, faith groups and more. As in the past, the PCUSA sent a delegation.

“Phase Out Fossil Fuels” was the rallying cry for climate justice advocates, but the COP agreement’s first draft failed to call for a phase-out and prompted an outcry from climate-vulnerable countries and others. They demanded stronger language reflecting the true urgency of tackling the climate crisis.

COP28 final agreement highlights included:

- Language to “transition away” from fossil fuels
- A call to phase down the “unabated” use of coal
- A request to triple the global renewable energy capacity by 2030, and
- Creation of a climate disaster “loss and damage fund”

The agreement, disappointingly, did not call for a “phase out of fossil fuels,” which 130 countries supported. Unfortunately, the “transitioning away” language it included is ambiguous. Dr. Friederike Otto, a climatologist at Imperial College London, said: “Until fossil fuels are phased out, the world will continue to become a more dangerous,

more expensive and more uncertain place to live. With every vague verb, every empty promise in the final text, millions more people will enter the frontline of climate change and many will die.”

So, this climate Super Bowl wasn’t the win the world needs, but it conveyed a clear message for the church. When the majority of world leaders say it is time to “phase out of fossil fuels”, and they all say it is time to “transition away from fossil fuels”, it is time for the denomination to stop supporting the fossil fuel industry with our investments. This is what thousands of Presbyterians have been asking of our denomination for nearly a decade and will once again ask at next summer’s General Assembly.

## Caring for Creation Notes



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

*“Until fossil fuels are phased out, the world will continue to become a more dangerous, more expensive and more uncertain place to live.”*

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**The Panhandle Presbyterian**

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

<b>In January</b>	
Monday, January 1	Presbytery office closed for New Year's Day
Tuesday, Jan. 2 12 p.m. CT/ 1 p.m. ET	Committee on Educational Resources (CER)
Wednesday, Jan. 3 8 a.m. CT/9 a.m. ET	Strategic Plan Implementation Task Force
Thursday, Jan. 4 9 a.m. CT/ 10 a.m. ET	Committee on Mission and Outreach (CMO)
Sunday, Jan. 7, 14 & 21 6 p.m. CT	"Church and the Arts" Concert Series @ Gulf Beach Presbyterian, Panama City Beach
Monday, Jan. 8 10 a.m. CT/ 11 a.m. ET	Self Development of People (SDOP) Committee
Monday, Jan. 8 1 p.m. CT/2 p.m. ET	Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM)
Tuesday, Jan. 9 9:30 a.m. CT	Committee on Ministry (COM)
Thursday, Jan. 11 2 p.m. CT/3 p.m. ET	Committee on Presbytery Administration (CPA)
Friday-Sunday, Jan. 12-14	<a href="#">Dogwood Acres Confirmation Retreat</a>
Monday, Jan. 15	Presbytery office closed for Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday
Tuesday, Jan. 16 10 a.m. CT/ 11 a.m. ET	Committee on Congregational Discernment (CCD)
Thursday, Jan. 18 6 p.m. CT/7 p.m. ET	Statistical Reporting workshop with Stated Clerk Jeannie Dixon via Zoom
Friday-Sunday, Jan. 19-21	Dogwood Acres "Pause" Women's Yoga and Mindfulness Retreat
Wednesday, Jan. 24 10 a.m. CT/ 11 a.m. ET	Racial Justice Subcommittee
Thursday, Jan. 25 9:30 a.m. CT/ 10:30 a.m. ET	Coordinating and Planning Commission (CPC)

<b>Looking ahead</b>	
Thursday, Feb. 1 9 a.m. CT/ 10 a.m. ET	Committee on Mission and Outreach (CMO)
Thursday, Feb. 1, 22, & 29 & March 7 10 a.m. CT/ 11 a.m. ET	<a href="#">Black History Seminar Series</a> @ 1st Presbyterian of Lynn Haven
Sunday, Feb. 4, 18 & 25 6 p.m. CT	"Church and the Arts" Concert Series @ Gulf Beach Presbyterian, Panama City Beach
Monday, Feb. 5 10 a.m. CT/ 11 a.m. ET	Self Development of People (SDOP) Committee
Tuesday, Feb. 6 12 p.m. CT/ 1 p.m. ET	Committee on Educational Resources (CER)
Wednesday, Feb. 7 8 a.m. CT/9 a.m. ET	Strategic Plan Implementation Task Force
Thursday, Feb. 8 2 p.m. CT/3 p.m. ET	Committee on Presbytery Administration (CPA)
Monday, Feb. 12 1 p.m. CT/2 p.m. ET	Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM)
Tuesday, Feb. 20 9 a.m. CT/ 10 a.m. ET	<b>Winter Stated Presbytery Meeting @ 1st Presbyterian of DeFuniak Springs Registration begins an hour ahead</b>
Friday & Saturday, Feb. 23 & 24	<a href="#">Trinity Presbyterian, Pensacola Women's Retreat</a> @ Pensacola Beach Holiday Inn Resort
Wednesday, Feb. 28 10 a.m. CT/ 11 a.m. ET	Racial Justice Subcommittee
Monday -Thursday, April 8 -11	<a href="#">NEXTChurch National Gathering</a> @ Falls Church, VA



NEXT CHURCH NATIONAL GATHERING

**ON THE GROUND**  
FALLS CHURCH, VIRGINIA  
APRIL 8-11, 2024