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The Panhandle Presbyterian

A monthly publication of the Presbytery of Florida



Volume 7, Issue 2

February 2024

From General Presbyter Roy Martin

For a little over 40 years, I have written a monthly newsletter article – the first 30 years while pastoring congregations, and the last ten years while serving as a mid-council leader to presbyteries.

This newsletter article will be my last one.

As you may be aware, I am retiring from fulltime ordained ministry beginning March 1. So, for this final article, I want to brag on you for a little bit. Any pastor will tell you that they have the best seat in the house because they get to see and experience all the ways in

which their congregation leans into serving Christ both where they live and beyond.

It is no different for those of us who serve as general presbyters. We get to work with committees who take seriously the ministry that lies before them and with presbytery meetings where important decisions are made for the ongoing ministry of the presbytery. The Presbytery of Florida is truly blessed with excellent Ministers of the Word and Sacrament, Ruling Elders, and church members who devote their time and talents to service, not only in their

congregations, but in their presbytery, as well.

Over my six years with you, I have had many wonderful conversations with presbytery leaders, church sessions, and individual church members who have sought advice or answers to questions, all for the purpose of giving their best to ministry in the name of Jesus Christ. And, as I reflect on those wonderful occasions, I am left with the unshakable belief that this presbytery is poised for exciting ministry for a long time to come.

As for me, I look forward to a time of rest, but I am not going anywhere. My name will still be on the presbytery's pulpit supply list.

May God bless each of you as you continue to serve our savior, Jesus Christ.

Roy



The Rev. Dr. Roy Martin

REPAIRING THE BREACH
— ISAIAH 58

PROVIDING RELIEF FROM NATURAL DISASTERS, FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY, AND SUPPORT FOR THE POOR AND OPPRESSED.

FEBRUARY 14 - MARCH 31, 2024

75 YEARS

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

**From the
Committee on
Nominations
(CN)**

Hodges attends conference to train for service as moderator

Mary Hodges (shown standing at right), First Presbyterian of Tallahassee Elder and Presbytery Vice-Moderator, recently attended the Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.) Moderators' Conference in Louisville, KY, to prepare, along with peers from across the denomination, for her term of service as moderator. She and the other attendees participated in worship, a variety of workshops, and an introduction to practical skills such as parliamentary procedure and other aspects of leading meetings. She also had the opportunity to meet Rev. Bronwen Boswell (shown seated), Acting Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) General Assembly and the first woman appointed or elected to lead the denomination in its more than 300-year history in the U.S. *(Photo courtesy of Mary Hodges)*



Meet me in

WOMEN

"Do everything in love"

**2024 Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women
August 8-11, 2024 • St. Louis, Missouri**

presbyterianwomen.org/gathering

Task Force works to implement Strategic Plan's provisions

At the most recent Presbytery of Florida meeting, the motion was approved to update the presbytery's structure, staffing, and budget based on the Strategic Planning Taskforce report. One of the items of that motion was to appoint "...an Implementation Taskforce... to facilitate the initiation of the new structure for the Presbytery of Florida effective March 1, 2024..."

The taskforce is aggressively working to meet this implementation date. The members of the taskforce are Elder Tim Crawford-Chair (1st, Crestview), Rev Mark Broadhead (Retired), Elder Emily Evans (1st, Lynn Haven), Rev Erin Rugh (Faith, Tallahassee) Elder Karen Weaver (1st, Monticello) Elder Pam Nulty (Northminster, Pensacola) and Elder

Rick Clubb (Gulf Beach, Panama City Beach).

The first order of business of the taskforce has been to review the presbytery's new guiding statements in Our Vision: "To be a presbytery of strong, healthy, energetic congregations advancing the ministries of Jesus Christ," and Our Mission: "To provide guidance, training, and assistance to our congregations." These statements are being kept at the forefront our work as the taskforce moves the presbytery's approved strategic plan forward.

The strategic plan is quite comprehensive; it is a significant departure from the current presbytery structure, making the work quite demanding, especially given the short timeline. Nonetheless, the taskforce is on track to have updated by-laws and a restructured operation manual ready for review and approval at our

winter presbytery meeting on February 20.

Another critical item being addressed by the taskforce is the approved staffing changes, moving to a part-time general presbyter. This change requires a carefully managed adjustment in the duties of the position. The work for this effort is also ongoing and will be ready in time to begin the search process upon Roy's March 1 retirement.

Of course, approved manuals and new job descriptions do not keep the presbytery moving forward, so the first draft of the operations manual has already been sent to the Committee on Nominations. With this information, they are beginning the process of filling positions on the various new ministries. By this reading, many of you may have already been asked to serve. Agreeing to serve on a new ministry will assure the smoothest transition possible to our new structure.

Also of note, we will no longer be "committee" members, but members of the "ministries" of the presbytery. This change is intentional and designed to transition from "committee work" to "furthering our Lord's ministries."

This is an exciting but challenging time for the Presbytery of Florida. With everyone's help and God's guidance, the work is sure keep our presbytery moving forward.

From the Strategic Planning Implementation Task Force (ITF)



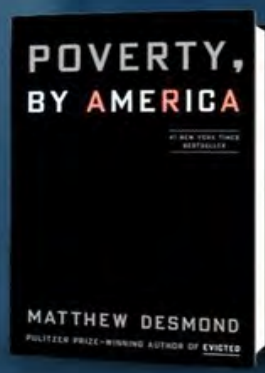
By Tim Crawford,
Chair and
1st, Crestview Elder

PRESBYTERIAN ONLINE BOOK STUDY

Featuring
Matthew
Desmond's
**POVERTY,
BY AMERICA**

<https://hubs.ly/Q02fHCF10>

7:30-8:45 p.m. (ET)
Mondays in February



From Dogwood Acres



*By Christy Williams,
Interim Director*

DWA goes to Montreat, then hosts Confirmation Retreat

This year began with eight members of the DWA staff traveling to Montreat for the College Conference. Six of our contingent were summer camp counselors, along with the Director and Program Director. The theme was “Necessary Risks”, and the keynote speakers and worship leaders all talked about risks we take to live out our faith and live into God’s calling for our lives.

This theme was perfect to also explore ways that we help campers take some guided risks while they are in our care at



camp and how this can lead to feelings of success, acceptance and feelings of God’s presence. We also kept coming back to campers

and volunteers who had an impact on our lives of faith and how we hoped to have an influence on others in our summer camp ministry.

Dogwood Acres
Youth Conference

REGISTRATION IS
NOW OPEN

February 9-11

Join Now

www.dogwoodacres.org

FAITH
FEAR

During the weekend of Jan 12-14, 12 folks from First Presbyterian Church, Marianna came to Dogwood Acres for our Confirmation Retreat. We were privileged to have Lisa and Roy Martin and Brant Copeland as the leaders of the retreat, covering topics including: Facts about the Bible, Church History, Polity and Church Structure, and Worship elements.

The group also took advantage of the activities offered at Dogwood and learned to play ga-ga ball, enjoyed archery, played games on Kelly field and participated in some "Minute to Win It" challenges. At the end of the retreat, through the learning and the playing, each person wrote ways that their faith was affirmed by things they had learned and ways they wanted to participate in their congregation's life. To prepare for our closing worship service, small groups wrote prayers that we could use. Here are the prayers:

Prayer of Thanksgiving:

Dear Lord,

Thank you for all you have done for us. Thank you for loving us and caring for us.

Thank you for giving us the necessities for life.

Thank you for giving us friends and family.

Thank you for life, our church and our mentors and leaders.

Thank you for our time at Dogwood Acres and all the people who have contributed their time to this church group retreat.

Thank you for the life I get to live. Amen.

Prayer of Confession:

Dear God,

We pray that our church community grows. We pray that you watch over our church. We pray that people in our church forgive and have a better relationship with you.

Help us forgive our peers. Lord, please forgive our sins.

Help us become closer to you and worship you more.

In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.

Prayer of Intercession:

Dear Lord,

Today we pray for non-believers, that they will feel your presence.

Also we pray for the poor and homeless families.

We ask you to be with the people who lost their homes in the tornados and that their relatives heal and they all find shelter.

We pray for people in war, that they stay safe and find peace. Amen.



Save the date!

**Winter
Presbytery Meeting**
Tuesday, Feb. 20 • 9 a.m. CST/10 a.m. EST
1st Presbyterian Church of DeFuniak Springs

From the Racial Justice Subcommittee



*By Rev. Harvey
Jenkins (Ret.),
Subcommittee
member*

Black history seminar series offered in February and March

The Racial Justice Sub-committee of the Committee of Mission and Outreach supports the seminar series “Black History: An Essential Conversation.” First Presbyterian Church of Lynn Haven is sponsoring the series, aided by a presbytery Peacemaking grant and resources recommended by [Faith in Florida](#), a 501(3)c organization of Black faith leaders. Seminar sessions will be held on February 22, 29, and March 7 from 10-11:30 a.m. Central Time at the church and via Zoom.

The series will introduce participants to the foundations of Black

American History, helping them better understand history as experienced by and remembered by African Americans. Topics will include “The European Slave Trade: From Africa to North America,” “From Slavery to Civil War,” “Reconstruction and Its Aftermath,” and “A Struggle for Civil Rights: 1800 to 2024.”

I will be serving as presenter and guide for the project. Faith in Florida Research and Policy Coordinator Linda Wiggins, a Presbyterian Ruling Elder, will participate in the February 22 session. Dr. Dinah Crayton, a well-known Bay County

leader from the Black community will speak to us on March 7.

When asked why I am teaching a course in Black History, I responded, “Since the state has legislated standards mandating the teaching of an ideological version of history, I believe that the church has a role in standing with our Black brothers and sisters in telling the truth about what happened.”

You can register for this essential conversation by calling First Presbyterian Church of Lynn Haven at 850 265-2051 or at www.firstchurchlh.org.

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. The seminar is a celebration of resilience, triumph, and the invaluable contributions of the Black community throughout our history.


Thursdays, February 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 or call **850.265.2051**

Presented in partnership with:







Renewable energy cheaper and safer than fossil fuel energy

Not far from where I grew up in Sarasota, Florida, there is a new housing development, Hunter's Point, where homeowners don't pay electric bills. Every home produces more electricity than it consumes. This is almost unbelievable, but it is our future, because renewable energy is not only safer and healthier, it is now cheaper than fossil fuel energy.

When it comes to the [cost of new power generation](#), onshore wind and solar are now the cheapest sources of energy, even less than gas or coal. Onshore wind and solar with storage can cost as little as \$.04 per kilowatt-hour, while fossil fuels can cost up to \$.22 per kilowatt-hour.

Also, keep in mind that fossil fuels cost us in other ways that are not considered when making a decision about switching to renewable energy, and avoidance of these costs and impacts saves all of us money.

There are:

Health Costs: Burning fossil fuels releases pollutants that cause respiratory problems like asthma and reduced lung function, heart disease, premature births and premature deaths. Last year the [Lancet](#) found that air pollution was responsible for nine million deaths per year. And, the American Lung



Association reported that transitioning away from fossil fuels to clean energy could have public health benefits totaling [\\$978 billion in the United States by 2050](#).

Price volatility and Energy Insecurity:

There also are issues of [price volatility and energy insecurity](#) that we have seen play out with the pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which are linked to [energy prices rising at double the rate of inflation last year](#).

Climate Change: The largest cost of burning fossil fuels is climate change which is tied to [increased extreme weather events](#). In 2023 (as of December 8), there were [25 confirmed weather/climate disaster events](#) in the US with losses exceeding \$1 billion each and 482 deaths. These events included one drought event, two flooding events, 19 severe storm events, one tropical cyclone event, one wildfire event, and one winter storm event.

Our future is playing out at [Hunters Point](#), where 86 homes boast solar panels and a 12-kilowatt-hour home battery in the utility closet. For the record, the cost of these homes is beyond most of us, because these are luxury homes built on the coast and are built to be resilient to storms. This type of energy-producing home can be built for less and in safer locations.

One more thing: This kind of community can make the electric grid more resilient for their neighbors. At times when there is plenty of power on the grid and demand is low, a utility can store energy in the homeowners' batteries and withdraw it during peak times to meet demand. This concept is called a "virtual power plant", and there are more than 500 such projects in the U. S. and Canada.

Our future with renewable energy looks great, and we are getting there faster than most of us realize.

Caring for Creation Notes



By
Pam McVety,
Presbytery Stewardship of Creation Enabler
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"... onshore wind and solar are now the cheapest sources of energy, even less than gas or coal."

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The Panhandle Presbyterian

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

| In February | | Looking ahead | |
|--|--|---|---|
| Thursday, Feb. 1 9 a.m. CT/ 10 a.m. ET | Committee on Mission and Outreach (CMO) | Friday, March 1 5-7 p.m. CT | Trinity Presbyterian, Pensacola |
| Thursday, Feb. 1, 22, & 29 10 a.m. CT/ 11 a.m. ET | Black History Seminar Series @ 1st Presbyterian of Lynn Haven | Saturday, March 2 7 a.m.—1 p.m. CT | Rummage Sale |
| Sunday, Feb. 4, 18 & 25 6 p.m. CT | " Church and the Arts " Concert Series @ Gulf Beach Presbyterian, Panama City Beach | Monday, March 4 10 a.m. CT/ 11 a.m. ET | Self Development of People (SDOP) Committee |
| Monday, Feb. 5 10 a.m. CT/ 11 a.m. ET | Self Development of People (SDOP) Committee | Tuesday, March 5 12 p.m. CT/ 1 p.m. ET | Committee on Educational Resources (CER) |
| Tuesday, Feb. 6 12 p.m. CT/ 1 p.m. ET | Committee on Educational Resources (CER) | Wednesday, March 6, 13, 20 & 27 8 a.m. CT/9 a.m. ET | Strategic Plan Implementation Task Force |
| Wednesday, Feb. 7, 14, 21 & 28 8 a.m. CT/9 a.m. ET | Strategic Plan Implementation Task Force | Thursday, March 7 9 a.m. CT/ 10 a.m. ET | Committee on Mission and Outreach (CMO) |
| Thursday, Feb. 8 2 p.m. CT/3 p.m. ET | Committee on Presbytery Administration (CPA) | Thursday, March 7 10 a.m. CT/ 11 a.m. ET | Black History Seminar Series @ 1st Presbyterian of Lynn Haven |
| Friday—Sunday, February 9-11 | Dogwood Youth Conference (DYC) | Sunday, March 10 | Daylight Saving Time begins |
| Monday, Feb. 12 1 p.m. CT/2 p.m. ET | Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) | Tuesday, March 12 9:30 a.m. CT/ 10:30 a.m. ET | Committee on Ministry |
| Wednesday, Feb. 14 | Ash Wednesday | Thursday, March 14 2 p.m. CT/3 p.m. ET | Committee on Presbytery Administration (CPA) |
| Thursday, Feb. 15 11 p.m. CT/ 12 a.m. ET | Statistical Reporting closes for congregations | Tuesday, March 19 10 a.m. CT/ 11 a.m. ET | Committee on Congregational Discernment (CCD) |
| Sunday, Feb. 18 | Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Blue T-Shirt Sunday | Tuesday, March 19 1 p.m. CT/2 p.m. ET | Committee on New Congregational Development (CNCD) |
| Tuesday, Feb. 20 9 a.m. CT/ 10 a.m. ET | Winter Stated Presbytery Meeting @ 1st Presbyterian of DeFuniak Springs Registration begins an hour ahead | Wednesday, March 20 | Mr. Rogers Day |
| Friday & Saturday, Feb. 23 & 24 | Trinity Presbyterian, Pensacola Women's Retreat @ Pensacola Beach Holiday Inn Resort | Sunday, March 24 | Palm Sunday |
| Wednesday, Feb. 28 10 a.m. CT/ 11 a.m. ET | Racial Justice Subcommittee | Wednesday, March 27 10 a.m. CT/ 11 a.m. ET | Racial Justice Subcommittee |
| | | Friday, March 29 | Good Friday |
| | | Sunday, March 31 | Easter |
| | | Monday -Thursday, April 8 -11 | NEXTChurch National Gathering @ Falls Church, VA |