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# The Panhandle Presbyterian

*A monthly publication of the Presbytery of Florida*



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## Transition brings new structure and meeting format

**I**t is no secret that making changes in any portion of our life is difficult. This can be easily seen with the number of New Year's resolutions that are made and how many treadmills, stationary bicycles, and stair steppers get used as clothing racks within the first quarter of a new year.

Change has come upon the Presbytery of Florida. Since March of this year, the new structure that was approved in October of last year was instituted, and with it, the combining of responsibilities into fewer Ministries (formerly Committees), and a few areas of responsibility put on hold until the dust settles.

Yes, there has been a little confusion about which Ministry is responsible for certain items because of the new structure. But a query to the presbytery office, or the moderator of the Ministry Coordinating Council, or me, can typically resolve the matter quickly.

The June 1 meeting of presbytery was the first time we utilized the new format for our quarterly meetings. Even though it was via Zoom (due to harsh weather conditions on the date we had planned to meet at

Dogwood Acres), the new format seemed to flow well. And the meeting only lasted about 1½ hours.

While we did miss a traditionally full worship service (thank you Bill Lamont for an excellent sermon!), and a canceled Resourcing Time due to the rescheduling of the meeting, no information was short-changed. The printed reports submitted by each Ministry provided excellent information. Items for approval were addressed, discussed, and voted on.

I wish to thank everyone for the role you are playing in helping our presbytery transition into its new model. It is no surprise that any change is going to have a few hiccups along the way. In the months ahead, we may find there are some aspects of the new structure that might need to be tweaked or altered.

So, if you find something that simply does not work (and not because it's not the way we used to do it, please), pass it along to Jeannie Dixon, our Stated Clerk/Acting Transitional Presbyter, or Don Mowat, Moderator of the Ministry Coordinating Council, or

## From our Presbytery Moderator



*By Rev. Mark  
Broadhead, Retired*

**Continues on page 3**

## From the Racial Justice Subcommittee



*By Ruth Reynolds,  
Subcommittee member  
and Faith, Tallahassee  
member*

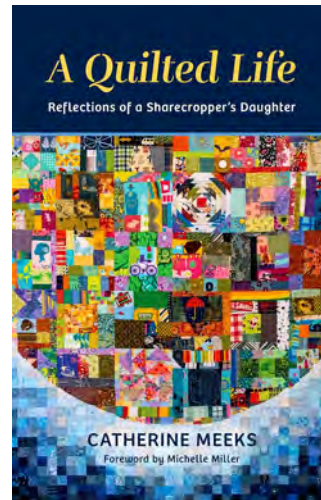
## The Racial Justice Subcommittee recommends ... *A Quilted Life: Reflections of Sharecropper's Daughter* By Dr. Catherine Meeks

First and foremost, Dr. Catherine Meeks, who is a scholar and teacher, is a woman of faith. At 78, she has penned her memoir titled *A Quilted Life*.

Like many of us who have made it into the middle of adulthood or beyond, she recalls moments of harrowing tragedy, humiliation, and harm suffered in various ways. She calls such experiences the “rags” we accumulate in life.

The central metaphor of her book is the traditional way African American women, in particular, saved discarded cloth “rags” so they could cut small, useful pieces to assemble beautiful quilts. Through repurposing, revisioning and gaining wisdom from our troubling experiences we can “be grounded in whatever we believe deep within us can hold us together.” Thus, we discover the author’s road to discipleship found through the lens of her Christian upbringing and lifelong Episcopalian affiliation.

Catherine Meeks’ story is the story of her personal spiritual journey, which becomes a catalyst for us to engage in our own journey. Her ultimate intention is to be a contributor to healing and wellness by helping people to connect with



whatever God has for them to do in their lives for the good of the world.

As she said in an interview, “You know, we get into so much trouble in this world because we don’t realize that *your* story is *my* story and *we* share a human story. If people today would understand this better, we could begin to erase the racism and sexism and classism and able-ism dividing us and causing so much of the tragedy in our world.”

Dr. Meeks shares the wisdom she garnered throughout her life from her father’s sharecropping fields, which she worked in, to experiencing the terror of growing up in Arkansas under Jim Crow, to her academic success and beyond.

She gained much wisdom through her chronic health condition of rheumatoid arthritis and states that

“Rheumatoid arthritis became my teacher.” With the help of her family, she moved to Los Angeles to study at Pepperdine. When a black teenager was killed by a campus security guard, she awakened to her prophetic voice, and a local women’s group gave her hope that racial healing was possible.

Later, she led a group of students to West Africa, where she met her husband. But her long battle with rheumatoid arthritis severed their relationship, leaving her a single mother of two boys. During this time in her life, she worked tirelessly at Mercer University to expand the African American studies program, all while earning her MSW and PhD.

Quilting together these memories – bitter and sweet, traumatic and triumphant – Dr. Meeks shares her hard-earned wisdom: Learn how to discern the Creator’s work. Listen to the voice that says “yes” to opportunity. Become a wounded healer. Know when to practice silence and when to speak out. If we ask for and receive God’s wisdom, all of our “raggedy scraps” can make a beautiful unique quilt that can lead us to true Christian discipleship.



## From Dogwood Acres



By *Christy Williams,*  
*Director*

## Summertime and the camping is busy

As of mid-June, we already hosted two full weeks of summer camp, one for the Valley Church which is a congregation right in Vernon. They had almost 100 people on site for a week of Bible Camp.

The next week, we hosted the Florida Diabetes Camp for children. This is the

As I write this, we are at the end of a wonderful week of counselor training. Our counselors have been given a short course on Reformed Theology and what impact our tradition has on our goals for camp and our scripture study; detailed training on facilitating canoeing and life-jacket fitting, archery, axe throwing, pool safety, cabin management; the Enneagram and better ways to communicate and respond to challenges and so much more.

Thanks to Marilyn Weinell, from Lafayette Church, Tallahassee; Matt Frease from UKirk Tallahassee; and Sophie Maness, from Westminster Church in Nashville, TN. All three assisted in training our counselors and preparing us all for our season of summer camp. This summer we have four fully certified lifeguards on staff, and all eight our counseling staff have been level 2 background checked and trained in child protection policies, first aid and CPR.

A wonderful respite in a busy week of training was having all our staff participating in the dedication of the Powell Pavilion. We were able to honor the ministry of Ben and Kathy Powell and also thank Trinity Presbyterian Church in Pensacola for their generosity in donating the proceeds from their annual Jellybean Run to fund the construction of the pavilion.

We began the evening with a delicious BBQ dinner and then went to the new outdoor gathering and cooking pavilion for a service. During the service of dedication, Bill Lamont and James Vance provided music, Bill led us in a reflection on Psalm 1, Mary Vance offered prayers and we had special words of thanksgiving from James Vance and two

first time since the pandemic that this organization has been able to host a camp in the North Florida area. Eric Hearn, our program director, lifeguarded and facilitated archery, the low elements challenge course and other camp activities for these campers. Brant Copeland and Anna Barber helped as extra staff in our kitchen.



Our theme this year is **INVITED** to join God's Work in the World. We will spend each week exploring ways that we are invited to see ourselves as children of God, invited to feel God's presence in the world, invited to change, invited to love God and neighbors, invited to rest and invited to share the Good News with others.



counselors: Antha McClure is a child of Trinity and was a camper and counselor during Ben's tenure and Anna Barber grew close to Ben and Kathy as a camper and then program director. We ended the service with a ribbon cutting where the family of Ben and Kathy cut the ribbon with Hugh Hamilton, the pastor at Trinity Presbyterian Church.

## “The Least of These” without protection from Florida heat

Summer heat in Florida can be dangerous, especially for the two million or more people who work outdoors because there are no government regulations in place to keep them safe during extreme heat events.

Miami-Dade County was working on a local heat protection ordinance, when the Florida legislature passed a bill ([HB 433](#)) which the Governor signed into law this summer that prevents cities and counties from writing rules to protect workers who labor in extreme heat. There also are no state rules, and the federal Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) does not have one.

Heat risks have grown dramatically in recent years. Globally, since the 1980s, climate change has made heat waves more frequent, last longer and affect larger areas. The U.S. experienced its hottest-ever summer in 2023, and Florida recorded its hottest ever July and August. The heat index, a measure that incorporates both temperature and humidity, stayed above [100 degrees Fahrenheit for 46 days in a row in Miami](#).

As I write this on June 19, much of our country is experiencing extreme heat.

In Florida, our leaders ignore the primary cause of climate change, the burning of fossil fuels which release heat trapping



City worker Glen Peterson wipes the sweat from his face as the feel like temperature exceeded 100 degrees while working in Lake Worth Beach, Florida in 2023 – Gregg Lovett/*The Palm Beach Post*.

gases, that push up average temperatures. And, now when local governments try to protect their workers from the deadly impacts of our warming planet, our state leaders block them.

Workers have a basic human right to be safe. They have a right to have breaks, water and access to shade when temperatures are high. And, if not local protection, then state protection is in order.

As people of faith, we should all be concerned and seeking ways to make our state more compassionate and caring for the least of these. We should also pay close attention to how our denomination is responding to the climate crisis at General Assembly.

By the time you read this, the General Assembly will be nearly over, and the fate of another overture ([ENV-02](#)) on removing investments and

subsidies in fossil fuels will be decided. This is the fifth time we have asked our denomination to remove its investments from the fossil fuel industry. We are joined by [seminary professors](#) from around the country who recognize the importance of taking this step and have signed onto a letter of support. The overture also is supported by 14 Presbyteries, representing thousands of Presbyterians.

The message in ENV-02 is pretty simple. It is time for moral leadership. Continued funding of an industry causing such widespread misery and which refuses to take responsibility for the impacts of its product is not an industry from which we should be profiting.

As always, if you have any comments or questions, please let me know: [pammcvely@hotmail.com](mailto:pammcvely@hotmail.com).

### Caring for Creation Notes



By  
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*“As people of faith, we should all be concerned and seeking ways to make our state more compassionate and caring for the least of these.”*

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**The Panhandle Presbyterian**

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

<b>In July</b>	<b>Looking ahead</b>
<i>Monday – Thursday, July 1 – 4</i> General Assembly in-person @ Salt Lake City, Utah continues and concludes	<i>Monday, August 5</i> Synod of South Atlantic "Sabbath by the Pool" for women in vocational ministry
<i>Tuesday, July 9, 10 a.m. CT/ 11 a.m. ET</i> Ministry of Pastoral Transitions	<i>Tuesday, August 6, 13, 20, 27, 1 p.m. CT/2 p.m. ET</i> Transitional Presbyter Search Committee
<i>Tuesday, July 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, 1 p.m. CT/2 p.m. ET</i> Transitional Presbyter Search Committee	<i>Wednesday, August 7, 8 a.m. CT/9 a.m. ET</i> Strategic Plan Implementation Task Force
<i>Wednesday, July 3, 8 a.m. CT/9 a.m. ET</i> Strategic Plan Implementation Task Force	<i>Wednesday, August 7, 11 a.m. CT/noon ET</i> Synod of South Atlantic 1st Wednesday Sack Lunch via Zoom Topic: Campus Ministry
<i>Wednesday, July 3, 11 a.m. CT/noon ET</i> Synod of South Atlantic 1st Wednesday Sack Lunch via Zoom Topic: Peacemaking	<i>Thursday, August 8, 2 p.m. CT/3 p.m. ET</i> Ministry of Presbytery Operations
<i>Thursday, July 4</i> Independence Day – Presbytery office closed	<i>Monday, August 12, 1 p.m. CT/2 p.m. ET</i> Ministry of Leadership Development
<i>Sunday – Friday, July 7 – 12</i> Dogwood Acres Intro, Discover & Adventure Camps	<i>Saturday, August 24, 9 a.m. CT/10 a.m. ET</i> Summer Stated Presbytery Meeting @Northminster, Pensacola Registration begins an hour ahead
<i>Monday, July 8, 1 p.m. CT/2 p.m. ET</i> Ministry of Leadership Development	
<i>Sunday, July 14, 4 p.m. CT</i> Service of Installation for Rev. Blair Beaver @ 1st, Marianna	
<i>Sunday – Friday, July 14 – 19</i> Dogwood Acres Discovery & Adventure Camps	
<i>Sunday – Friday, July 21 – 26</i> Dogwood Acres Discovery & Adventure Camps	
<i>Wednesday, July 24, 10 a.m. CT/ 11 a.m. ET</i> Racial Justice Subcommittee	
<i>Thursday, July 25, 9:30 a.m. CT/ 10:30 a.m. ET</i> Ministry Coordinating Council	
<i>Sunday, July 28, 4 p.m. ET</i> Service of Installation and Ordination for Glenn Hodges @1st, Tallahassee	




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