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# The Panhandle Presbyterian

*A monthly publication of the Presbytery of Florida*



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## WWI Christmas ceasefire holds example for today

**D**ear Friends,  
Recently, I was reminded of an incident that occurred toward the end of 1914 during World War I. Battles had been raging along the front with high casualties on both sides. But on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, the fighting ceased.

On Christmas Eve, in the unusual silence, Christmas carols could be heard being sung in the trenches of both allied and German soldiers. As Christmas Day dawned, soldiers on both sides stepped out of their trenches and met with the enemy in no man's land. Some exchanged small gifts with the enemy. At one place friends and enemies met in no man's land to play soccer (the Germans won), and to share bars of chocolate. Down the line, Christmas feasts were shared, and even a joint funeral service was held.

The unofficial truce remained in place the day after Christmas, neither side willing to fire the first shot. The war resumed only when replacements were sent in that had not engaged in the Christmas celebration together. The German high command issued an order

that any further fraternization with the enemy would be punishable by death.

Whenever I reflect on that incident I pause in awe and wonder. Enemies, charged with hunting and killing each other, stopped cold-turkey. Their humanity kicked in and they recognized one another as persons – husbands, fathers, brothers, sons. The recognition of each other's value and their similarities far over-rode the fact that they were "supposed" to be enemies: different, tyrants, depraved, evil. In reality, they were all the same.

I write this the day after the 2024 presidential election. Many around the nation are rejoicing at the results. Others are in deep despair. In our politically and otherwise divided nation, those who are not on "our" side are viewed as "the enemy." That thinking could not be farther from the truth.

Our backgrounds, the points of view we hold, the proclivities we tend to espouse are definitely different. And while ideologies are vastly divergent, as human beings we are all the same. Each

*Continues on page 3*

From our  
Stated Clerk/  
Acting General  
Presbyter



*By Rev. Mark  
Broadhead (Ret.)*

## From the Ministry of New Congregation Formation (MNCF)



*By Rev. Dr.  
Nicole Richardson,  
South Walton  
New Presbyterian  
Worshipping  
Community  
Organizing Pastor*

*“Your presence,  
support and  
feedback are  
what keep this  
vision alive.”*

## NWC gives exciting updates and new offerings invites

As the year winds down and we enter this season of reflection, I wanted to share a few exciting updates and invite you to join me in some new offerings as we prepare our hearts and minds for the holidays:

### 1. Growing our Community on Social Media

Over the past month, I've been diving into social media with renewed energy, learning from some wonderful mentors who have shared invaluable advice on connecting with our audience. You can now find Tide & Table on **Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok**, where I'll be posting updates, reflections, and tips for nurturing a life of intention and balance. If you haven't already, I'd love for you to **like, follow, and share** our content with anyone who might benefit from our message!

[Follow us on Facebook](#)

[Follow us on Instagram](#)

[Follow us on TikTok](#)

Your support on social media helps us grow and reach others who might benefit from what Tide & Table has to offer. Every like, share, and comment makes a difference!

### 2. New Beginnings: Business Structure & Tax ID



In other news, I've started the journey toward formalizing Tide & Table's business structure, which includes applying for a Federal Tax ID number. This is part of a larger process to ensure we're set up for future growth and sustainability (Yes, it's all very official and a little complicated — but it's an important step!). I'll keep you updated as we continue to build this foundation for the future of Tide & Table.

### 3. Advent Devotional + Yoga Practice

To bring some peace and mindfulness into the holiday season, I'll be leading a special **Advent devotional series** that includes a short yoga practice. Each session will be designed to help you slow down, connect, and find moments of stillness amidst the busyness of December.

**How to Join:** You can catch these sessions on TikTok, or if you prefer, simply email me at [nicole.richardson@tideandtable.org](mailto:nicole.richardson@tideandtable.org) to receive the recordings directly in your inbox. Or if you want to be included in current updates and events, send me an email, and I will add you to the contact list.

Whether you're a regular practitioner or just looking for a way to ease into the holiday spirit, I hope these sessions offer you a meaningful way to center yourself.

### 4. Share the Gift of Tide & Table

If you know someone who might be interested in joining our community or participating in the Advent series, please feel free to forward this newsletter to them! You can also share our social media links and encourage friends and family to follow along.

### Wishing You a Peaceful December

Finally, I want to express my gratitude for each of you who've been a part of Tide & Table's journey so far. Your presence, support, and feedback are what keep this vision alive. Thank you for being here, and I look forward to sharing this season with you in new and meaningful ways.

**MPT welcomes new member, shares retirement and installation news**

The Ministry of Pastoral Transitions (MPT) welcomes the **Rev. Stacy Kaye White** as its newest member. We are grateful for her service.

The **Rev. Dr. Hugh Hamilton**, who has served as Senior Pastor at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Pensacola for more than 25 years, has announced his intention to retire on January 26, 2025. MTP approved Hugh’s retirement with thanks for his long service. Presbytery Stated Clerk/ Acting General Presbyter Rev. Mark Broadhead shared a resolution of thanks at the Presbytery’s October 29 meeting.

MTP also approved the call of the **Rev. Jean Homrighausen** as



Associate Pastor at Trinity Pensacola. Jean is a 2020 graduate of Columbia



**Rev. Jean Homrighausen**

Seminary but has previously served the faith in other capacities, including Executive Director of United Ministries in Pensacola, Associate Executive Presbyter of Florida Presbytery, and Director of Christian Education at Trinity. Jean grew up at Trinity, and the church is delighted to have her return home. Her Ordination and Installation service took place at Trinity November 24.

**From the Ministry of Pastoral Transitions (MPT)**



*By Ed Nickinson, MPT member and Trinity, Pensacola Elder*

**Ceasefire, continued from page 1**

individual, bottom line, is a child of God.

That, I believe, is what struck those soldiers during World War I on Christmas Eve and Day so long ago: the reminder of the Christ Child’s birth and all that it meant descended on them that night. Eyes, minds, and hearts were opened to the reality that God came to this earth for each one of them.

That truth is still very much alive today. God came to this earth for each one of us – regardless of whatever worldly conditions or demands might seek to divide us. This Advent and Christmas season, strive to not let your rejoicing or despairing over the election create “enemies” in your mind. Remember that God came to this earth to live among us, sharing God’s truth, love, and grace through Jesus Christ.

Don’t let what divides our nation – even all of humanity – get in the way of what we are called to as followers of Jesus Christ: loving our neighbors as ourselves, being united amid our diversity, seeking justice to roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream, and striving to bring forth the kingdom of God.



**SAVANNAH PRESBYTERY'S**  
47<sup>th</sup> Annual  
**FAITH ENRICHMENT**  
*Conference '25*

Keynote Speaker  
**REV. DR. GRAHAM STANDISH**





**THRIVE**  
Revitalize | Energize | Spiritualize  
**FEBRUARY • 21-22 • 2025**  
**Epworth by the Sea**

Scan the QR Code for more information and the registration link!

## From the Ministry of Leadership Development (MLD)



By Cathy Mooney,  
MLD Moderator and  
1st, DeFuniak Springs  
Pastor

*“... the best part was the individual sharing of the best and funniest things that have happened in our congregations.”*

## Education hour yields a wealth of advent resources

The education hour at the October Presbytery meeting was a time of sharing ideas for advent and worship. Several resources were shared, and the best part was the individual sharing of the best and funniest things that have happened in our congregations.

### Some ideas shared included:

- ▶ Building a manger with the children during the children’s sermon by bringing a new element to the build each week until Christmas Eve, when a baby was found there.
- ▶ At the beginning of the season, before the tree in the Sanctuary is decorated, invite the children or everyone to come and add an ornament as part of worship. After worship, the decorating committee can rearrange as needed to spread the ornaments around the tree.
- ▶ Have the children or

youth Sunday School classes act out the scripture for the morning worship service.

- ▶ Create a quiet, reflective place for the season so those who need reflection and prayer time can retreat to the church for calm in the midst of the season.
- ▶ Include wonderful resources from groups such as [Illustrated Ministry](#) and [A Sanctified Art](#).
- ▶ One church shared the Bible study materials they had from past years. This wonderful idea can allow a congregation with limited resources access to materials that have been useful for others. (What a great idea for Lent. Consider asking for previously-loved material if your church has limited funds for study materials.)
- ▶ Trinity, Pensacola, Pastor Rev. Dr. Hugh Hamilton shared some great resources:

- *An Unlikely Advent: Extraordinary People of the Christmas Story*, by Rachel Billups
- *Advent in Plain Sight: A Devotion Through Ten Objects*, by Jill Duffield
- *STAY AWHILE: Advent Lessons in Divine Hospitality*, by Kara Eidson
- *Under Wraps: The Gift We Never Expected*, by Jessica LaGrone
- *Advent 2016: God is With Us*, by Robin Wilson
- *SENT: Delivering the Gift of Hope at Christmas*, by Jorge Acevedo

### Worship Resource Sites

- [Advent Sermon Series: Into the Forge](#)
- [Illustrated Ministry](#)
- [A Sanctified Art](#)
- [Advent on the Brain Facebook Group](#)
- [The PC\(USA\) Store](#)

*Echoes of*  
**CHRISTMAS**  
*a blend of carols & seasonal melodies*

Sunday, December 15, 2024  
5:00 pm CDT

First Presbyterian Church  
658 5th Street  
Chipley, Florida 32428

**TRINITY'S 2025 WOMEN'S RETREAT**

Friday, January 31st  
5:30 dinner, program 7-9 PM  
&  
Saturday, February 1st  
9-3 PM, lunch provided

*Following Jesus Into the water,  
Onto the Water, and Out of the Water*  
Led by Pam Avery

REGISTRATION \$75

**Springhill Suites**  
Book your room now  
for special rate of \$159 & \$189  
For questions, contact Ann Copenhaver

TRINITY  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## MR works to fill ministry positions with diverse members

The Ministry of Representation (MR) serves the Presbytery of Florida by providing names of Ministers of the Word and Sacrament, Christian educators, and individuals of our member congregations to serve on presbytery ministries. We have six members, composed of ministers and elders.

Our ministry advocates for inclusion and diversity in the Presbytery leadership. We nominate people to serve in Presbytery elected positions, consulting presbytery members, the Ministry Coordinating Council (MCC) and presbytery ministries to ensure nominations

broadly represent presbytery membership. We want our efforts to enable a broad, deep, diverse cadre of leaders in all ministries of the presbytery.

Once we have a candidate, we contact the person to let them know they were recommended to serve on a specific ministry. If the candidate is interested, arrangements for a phone or an e-mail discussion with the ministry moderator involved will be made to determine if they are a fit for the ministry. If this outcome is positive, then the person's name will be listed as a nominee, and their name is sent forward to the next presbytery meeting for vote. When

candidates are not interested in a particular ministry, other options are reviewed.

Presbytery ministries have unplanned vacancies occurring throughout the year for various reasons, creating a continual need for candidates on presbytery ministries. Presently, the Ministry of Dogwood Acres (MDWA), Ministry of New Congregation Formation (MNCF) and the Ministry of Presbytery Operations (MPO) have vacancies.

If you are interested in serving on a presbytery ministry or want more information, contact me at 850-832-6577 or e-mail [kangas265@gmail.com](mailto:kangas265@gmail.com).

## From the Ministry of Representation (MR)



*By Rich Kangas,  
MR Moderator and  
1st, Lynn Haven  
Elder*





DOGWOOD ACRES

Thanks to your support,  
we had a GREAT Summer!



We appreciate you sending campers,  
supporting counselors, providing scholarships,  
volunteering, and donating generously.

There's more to come at  
Dogwood Acres this Spring!

Pause  
Yoga Retreat  
Jan. 24-26

Dogwood Youth  
Conference  
Feb. 7-9

Come Join us!



**CANDLES &  
CAROLS**  
BY MARK HAYES

SUNDAY  
DECEMBER 15, 2024

AT 9AM  
LAFAYETTE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
4220 MAHAN DR, 32308  
OR  
AT 11AM  
JOHN WESLEY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
1689 OLD ST AUGUSTINE RD, 32301

FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO:  
[WWW.FOUNTAINCHURCHTALLAHASSEE.ORG](http://WWW.FOUNTAINCHURCHTALLAHASSEE.ORG)

**Prepare the Way**  
ISAIAH 40

**CHRISTMAS JOY**  
SPECIAL OFFERINGS  
LEADERSHIP: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

DECEMBER 1 - DECEMBER 22

THE PERFECT GIFT.

## Trees, community and Presbyterians: A triple blessing for creation this Advent Season

Trees, after God and people, are the most mentioned living thing in the Bible and they hold immense significance in Christianity from the creation story to the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. They also play a critical role in our existence as they clean our air, filter our water, prevent erosion and slow up storm surges and flooding. In our heated world, they cool our communities and perhaps most critical of all, they take up carbon dioxide (CO2), the greenhouse gas most responsible for warming our planet. When you visit a place with no trees, their absence is felt.

Daniel, a member of First Presbyterian Church in Tallahassee, is a resident at Independence Landing, a new residential community for adults with intellectual and/or cognitive disabilities. He invited a small group of us and our minister to join him and his family in blessing his new residence. His place is beautiful and inviting, as is the rest of the facility, with a swimming pool, dining area, craft room and many more amenities. But the grounds around the complex have few trees.

We visited on a warm sunny day and, as Daniel gave us a tour, the only way to avoid the sun was

to be indoors. It was obvious that this facility needed trees – lots of trees – and so an idea for a creation care project was born.

Debbie, chair of the Compassion and Social Justice Committee at First Presbyterian Church, created a project to plant lots of trees at Independence Landing. She worked with their Board of Directors to get their support. She asked our local Native Nurseries to draw up a plan to plant native trees that would provide color, flowers, food and shade.

She arranged for Sustainable Tallahassee and the Community Carbon Fund to pay for the trees. All Pro, a landscaping company that maintains the right of way in Southwood, has agreed to auger the holes for the trees. She is reaching out to neighbors in Southwood, at John Paul Florida High School, and to members of our church to join in a tree planting next year. She also is working to get this project designated as the City/County Arbor Day 2025 event. Residents will help with the planting and be taught how to maintain the trees.

Wow! What a win for God's people and his



### Caring for Creation



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

creation. There will be more life-sustaining trees and another small but important step will be taken to address the climate crisis. The beauty of Independence Landing and the comfort of its residents will be enhanced. The business community, volunteers young and old, and Presbyterians, will join together to help their neighbors. Trees are doing all this for us!

Thanks to everyone who is making this happen. It truly takes a village to make something like this a reality. Most importantly, it gives me hope for our collective future this Advent Season.

If you have any projects that enhance creation, please let me know at [pammcvety@hotmail.com](mailto:pammcvety@hotmail.com). I would love to share your story.

*“What a win for  
God’s people and  
His creation. ...  
Trees are doing  
all this for us!”*

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All views expressed in this publication are not necessarily endorsed by the Presbytery of Florida as a whole, as we remember "God alone is Lord of the conscience." (F-3.0101)

## Cultural movement hijacking Christian faith

History records countless attempts to hijack the Christian faith -- recall German National Socialism in the 1930's and '40's or more recently, apartheid in South Africa. Now, the populist cultural movement called Christian Nationalism is doing the hijacking.

Referring to Christian nationalism in his recently published book *The False White Gospel*, Jim Wallis puts it like this, "Jesus has become the victim of identity theft." Often that identity theft includes the racist doctrine of white supremacy, which makes it of grave concern to members of the Presbytery's Racial Justice Subcommittee.

Along with Christians around the world, we Presbyterians confess Jesus to be Savior and Lord, both of individuals and of the world. We have chosen to follow Jesus, taking him at his word when he claims to be "the way, the truth, and the life." The Jesus way is a way of compassion and reconciliation. Also, we profess the biblical values of "faith, hope, and love" and have chosen to love God and neighbor -- actively demonstrating our love in word and deed.

While Christianity is a movement based on love, Christian nationalism is based on control. Its tenants are not sharing but greed, not peace but conflict, not reconciliation but retribution, not forgiveness but judgement, not harmony but separation. In the words of Texas state legislator and Presbyterian seminarian James Talarico, "Christian nationalism is an

oxymoron . . . . Christian nationalism is not about the way of Jesus."

Jesus' way is loving the neighbor without exception -- "Just as you did it to one of the least of these . . . you did it unto me." [Matthew 25:40] Although he taught us to bear witness to his Gospel, he was clear that we should not force it on anyone, telling his disciples simply to move on if people were not interested. [Matthew 10:14] He rejected the temptation to use power and authority, reminding us to worship the Lord our God, and serve only him." [Luke 4:8] He told his followers, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." [John 8:31]

Truly, there is nothing Christian about Christian nationalism. It flies in the face of Scripture, of Jesus' teachings, and of God's Spirit, and it fits the biblical definition of "idolatry."

That said, it is tempting to go along with this deceptive religion, blind to its distortion of true Christianity. It is tempting to avoid discerning how this idolatry has influenced our thoughts and actions. It is tempting when we recognize the threat to the integrity of Christian faith to decline to address the danger.

Here's the thing -- Real Christianity is about faithfulness to the God's word -- written and incarnate. Real Christianity is about living in the Spirit. Real Christianity is about challenging all who follow Jesus to be champions of love in a world defined by anger, fear, greed, division, and the hunger for power.

## From the Racial Justice Subcommittee



By Harvey Jenkins,  
Subcommittee member  
(Ret.)