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# The Panhandle Presbyterian

*A monthly publication of the Presbytery of Florida*



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## Raids violate a sacred role of churches

Please know that what follows is *not a political statement*. Rather, it is a statement of grave concern regarding the sacredness of our sanctuaries.

Recently, reports of Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids targeting church sanctuaries have raised alarming questions about the erosion of our most cherished values: compassion, sanctuary, and religious freedom. Churches have long been safe havens – places of solace for the weary, and refuge for those seeking protection.

In Old Testament times, in addition to being places of worship, if someone was in fear of their life, that person would enter the place of worship and grasp hold of the horns on the altar. While in the sanctuary, a person was considered safe from harm or arrest – receiving “sanctuary.”

The understanding of “sanctuary” has been in place for millennia. Throughout my ministry, I served congregations that provided sanctuary for individuals and families. It was a blessing to do so, especially when someone was escaping persecution

from another country, or seeking protection from a societal issue.

Churches have long stood as beacons of hope in communities where individuals often feel marginalized and abandoned by mainstream institutions. For many, a church is a symbol of unconditional hospitality, love and acceptance and a physical space where the vulnerable can seek refuge. When ICE raids sanctuaries, it sends a stark message: that the very principles of compassion and sanctuary can be overridden by governmental interference.

Such actions turn places of worship into battlegrounds and not havens of spiritual healing. A culture of fear is instilled in neighborhoods that have long relied on the support of their local churches. The very act of raiding a church sanctuary is violating the sacredness of the sanctuary.

It saddens my heart to learn our sanctuaries, our sacred places of worship, places where safety could be found when it could be found nowhere else, can now be raided by government enforcement

**Continues on page 2**

From our  
Stated Clerk/  
Acting General  
Presbyter



*By Rev. Mark  
Broadhead (Ret.)*

*“For many, a church is a symbol of unconditional hospitality, love and acceptance and a physical place where the vulnerable can seek refuge.”*

**Continued from front**

officers. It raises images of similar circumstances in other countries during World War II. To remove at will the protection offered by the Church of Jesus Christ is, at best, awful, and at worst, deplorable.

I believe the Church of Jesus Christ needs to protect the holiness of the sanctuary against the erosion being enacted by governmental institutions. I invite your prayers beseeching God to move in the hearts of our nation, that our leaders will recognize and hold firm the worth of every individual, and that the sacredness of sanctuaries across our nation be held in honor.

I give my heart-felt thanks to all who submitted their congregation's 2024 statistics report! As of this writing, we have a 98% entry rate. Two congregations missed the February 15 deadline, but have assured me they will get statistics to me before the Stated Clerks' deadline. This would then raise the Presbytery of Florida to 100% reporting and keep alive the legacy put in place by Jeannie Dixon, our late Stated Clerk.

On another note: The Book of Order stipulates that every year each presbytery is to review the records kept by the session of each congregation within its bounds. The Covid pandemic of several years ago cause most presbyteries to fall behind in their annual reading. The Presbytery of Florida is no different. Last year hard work was done to get caught up. Several years' worth of records were read, but not all.

Coming up soon will be the opportunity to get caught up. I am working on dates, times, and methods for reading one another's records (session minutes and church registers) so we can get caught up.

So, clerks of sessions, please get ready your minutes book and register book from 2022-2024. I will be sending you a check list of items that must be in your minutes.

I look forward to working with you on this.

Mark Broadhead  
Stated Clerk/Acting General Presbyter



## MPT continues working with churches seeking pastors

The Ministry of Pastoral Transitions (MPT) has been active this year! Currently, we are working with the following congregations:

- 1st, Pensacola – Associate Pastor
- Trinity, Pensacola – Interim Pastor
- Euchee Valley, DeFuniak Springs – Pastor
- 1st, Quincy – Pastor
- 1st, Tallahassee - Pastor

At the February Presbytery meeting, the Presbytery unanimously approved MPT’s recommendation to approve the call of Rev. Hanlim Chae to serve as Pastor of Lafayette Church, Tallahassee. Rev. Chae has been serving



Rev. Hanlim Chae

that congregation as Interim Pastor since January 2024. This is a joyous occasion for church and pastor, and the enthusiastic support of the gathered presbytery body is greatly appreciated!

MPT also requested presbytery grant the status of “retired” for Rev. John Kelsay of Tallahassee. This was granted.

We continue to be updated on edits made to the Church Leadership Connection (CLC) website. CLC is the “dating arm” of the denomination, where churches and pastors who are seeking make application and are matched.

## From the Ministry of Pastoral Transitions (MPT)



By Ed Nickinson, MPT member and Trinity, Pensacola Elder

# DOGWOOD ACRES

Retreat Center and Summer Camp

EXPLORE  
Dogwood  
SERVE  
the community

REGISTER  
NOW!

When?

Saturday April 5th

9:30 AM CT - check-in  
10:00 AM - worship  
10:30 AM - Service Project  
Noon - Lunch  
1:00 PM - Guided camp activities and hikes  
3:00 PM - Depart

Who?

Bring your families, youth groups, and friends- anyone who wants to explore more about the ministry at Dogwood Acres!

How?

Everybody interested can register at [dogwoodacres.org](http://dogwoodacres.org) starting March 1st  
Cost for the day: \$8.00 with a family cap of \$24.00

## From the Strategic Plan Implementation Task Force



*By Tim Crawford,  
Task Force Chair and  
1st, Crestview Elder*

## Presbytery transition's second phase now underway

The past year saw several major changes in our presbytery. The most important came in February 2024, we adopted the new strategic plan seeking to become better stewards of the resources available to us. This effort began in February 2023 with the convening of the Strategic Planning Taskforce. This taskforce over the course of nine months put in tremendous effort publishing their results in October clarifying the presbytery's core values, streamline the way we conduct business, and striving for improved relationships between the presbytery and our congregations. The implementation of the strategic plan is expected to take five years with continuous monitoring and specific goal reviews set at years one, three, and five. The report received approval at the Presbytery of Florida's Fall 2023 Stated Meeting.

With the report complete all that remained was implementation. In early January of 2024, the Implementation Taskforce began the work to establish and normalize the changes recommended by the strategic plan. The implementation report along with a new manual of operations and updated by-laws were unanimously approved at the February 2024 Winter

Stated Meeting.

This brings us to today, as mentioned previously a lot has gone on since the presbytery voted to move forward with the all-important strategic plan. While the date of the first year of transition is complete, work is far from finished as we move into years two and three. No doubt adjustments, changes, and corrections will continue, and essential to keep our transition moving forward.

As we move into the second phase of our transition, "Engage and Utilize". The ministries will continue to identify and standardize their key processes, they will also work to develop and identify our talents and resources throughout the presbytery. This will help find those people best suited to go out into our congregations to aid, assist, encourage, and train people to fulfil all our congregation's needs. Of course, this work would be of little use if our communication efforts were not tailored to get this information out to everyone in the presbytery, so new methods of communication will also be coming during this phase of the transition.

While the presbytery's ministries are completing the lion's share of the work to make the strategic plan a reality,

the Implementation Taskforce continues to be involved providing assistance where needed and reporting on the progress of work fulfilling the expectations of the strategic plan.

Two key statements created by the strategic plan are the Presbytery's 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."

If you have been thinking maybe you have some time to better use your gifts or have been considering ways to make use of your talents, please consider helping make our presbyteries mission and vision become a reality by getting involved in any one of our ministries. To learn more, go to the ["Ministries" page of the Presbytery's website](#) or contact the presbytery office at (850) 535-2335.

**From the  
Ministry of  
Representation  
(MR)**



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

**Several positions available for serving on Presbytery ministries**

If you feel called to serve your Presbytery, the Presbytery's Ministry of Representation (MR) offers several opportunities on various presbytery ministries.

Positions presently available are: Ministry of Dogwood Acres (MDWA), two females from the central area; Ministry of New Church Formation (MNCF), two males, eastern area; and Ministry of Presbytery Operations (MPO), one male from the east area. The Ministry of



Representation also has two vacancies; both should be female from the west area of the Presbytery. The Presbytery's Ministry Coordinating Council (MCC) finds candidates for Ministry of Representation positions, as MR cannot fill their own vacancies.

If you want to serve, but your interests are in other areas, let us know. Every year, the Presbytery has needs for short-term committee members, special event participants and individuals to represent the Presbytery at Synod and, in every even numbered year, at General Assembly. Persons interested in serving with Presbytery ministry should contact me at 850-832-6577 or e-mail kangas265@gmail.com.

**First Presbyterian Church of Milton invites you to**

*Come join us for*

**MomCom**  
a Mom's Community at FPC Milton

**Q: What do moms need more than going to the bathroom by themselves? (Well, almost!)**

**A: A community of moms to laugh with, complain with, and connect with. It can be lonely being a mom!**

Starting Wednesday  
MARCH 12, 5 P.M.

childcare provided. \$5 supper at 6 p.m.

fpcmilton.org



**Winter Stated meeting features racial justice resourcing, amendments, worship**



At left, approximately 84 attendees, including 32 minister members, two commissioned ruling elders (CREs), and 27 ruling elder commissioners from 25 churches, register at the Feb. 25, 2025 presbytery meeting at Grace Presbyterian Church, Panama City.

Below, at left, Rev. Hanlim Chae preaches a sermon during the morning worship, titled "Who are the Truly Blessed Leaders?", based on Luke 6: 17– 26.

Below at right, from left, Presbytery Stated Clerk/Acting General Presbyterian Rev. Mark Broadhead follows along as Ministry Coordinating Council (MCC) Moderator Elder Don Mowat, at far right, reads a passage in the service to install Elder Mary Hodges, second from left, as Presbytery Moderator and Elder Dr. Greg Seltzer, third from left, as Presbytery Vice Moderator.



Below, at left, from left, Stated Clerk/Acting General Presbyterian Mark Broadhead recognizes Elder Linda Lovins for her certification by the Presbyterian Association of Musicians (PAM). *(Photo courtesy of Grace Presbyterian Church)*


Below, at right, from left, Presbytery Racial Justice Subcommittee members Rev. Dr. Joan Wooten (1st, Pensacola), Ruth Reynolds (Faith Tallahassee), Rev. Dr. Michael Askew (Gulf Beach, Panama City) and Elder Susan Byram (1st, Pensacola) lead a panel discussion about racial reconciliation, followed by a remote presentation and question-and-answer session with Rev. Jermaine Ross-Allam, PC(USA) Director of the Center for the Repair of Historic Harms.





Above, from left, Rev. Harvey Jenkins (Retired), Bethel Presbyterian (DeFuniak Springs) Elder Sandra Macon, with Rev. Dr. Joan Wooten facilitating, and 1st, Tallahassee Pastor Rev. Glenn Hodges share comments and insights during the meeting's resourcing segment.

Below, conversations continue after the resourcing segment concludes.




**APRIL 19, 2025 • 8AM • RUN/WALK**  
TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
3400 BAYOU BLVD

**Register TODAY**  
[www.JellyBean5K.com](http://www.JellyBean5K.com)


Benefiting Send56 - Trinity's missionary partner in Africa  
[send56.org](http://send56.org)

**CHRISTIAN EDUCATION RESOURCES SURVEY**

**WE NEED YOUR FEEDBACK!**



PPC PRESBYTERIAN PUBLISHING CORPORATION



<https://bit.ly/PCUSA-CESurvey>

GA curriculum mandate survey, give your input on the curriculum needs for our denomination!

## From Dogwood Acres



By *Christy Williams,*  
*Director*

## Exploring, serving, praying ... All in a day at Dogwood Acres

**W**hen you think about what happens at Dogwood Acres, you might imagine canoeing in the lake, hiking through the woods, or eating s'mores around the campfire. Those are terrific images of life at Dogwood. But they don't begin to tell the story of all that goes on when you come through our gates! Here are some snapshots of more things to imagine at Dogwood:

### **Snapshot – Warrior Pose being done by 42 women in the Koinonia Building.**

Just last weekend, 42 women gathered at Dogwood for the third annual Pause Yoga Retreat. We worshipped, hiked, did camp activities, got creative with zentangles and vision boards, enjoyed sumptuous food and delicious sweet and savory buffets, developed new friendships, and did LOTS of yoga! This weekend has become something that everyone looks forward to, and about half of participants return each year.

### **Snapshot – High school youth sitting on the floor writing prayers to use in worship.**

Early in February, we host the annual Dogwood Youth Conference for middle and high school students. This year, 12 college-aged students from our summer staff and from UKirk campus ministry provided leadership on our theme, Forever Found. Eight Presbyterian Youth

Council students (high schoolers) were on hand to pitch in as needed. At the retreat's end, the High School Youth, led by their college counselors, wrote these prayers for Sunday's closing worship: **Reflections on the weekend and the scriptures studied:**

*Lamentations reminds us that God's mercies never come to an end; they are new each morning. So let us begin each new day with hope, knowing that in God's mercy, we are loved and forgiven. Let us be filled with joy to know we will never have to shoulder our burdens alone.*

*This weekend we had time to remember to set aside our worries, take a deep breath and truly rest not just in stillness, but in the presence of God, who carries our burdens and fills us with peace. Let us remember to be free from the stress of our everyday lives and seek God in the midst of the chaos.*

*We should all remember that we have the beautiful opportunity to ask God for that comfort and silence even with the booming earthquakes, the blowing wind, and the flaming fire. We are welcomed by open arms*



*surrounded and found by God.*

*After this weekend we were given to rest and reconnect, let us return to our daily lives remembering what refills our souls. Friends, Laughter. Silence. Nature. Let us remember to seek what recharges us and to breathe in God's mercy and breathe out God's mercy to others.*

### **Snapshot – YOU, working alongside adults, youth and children from across the Presbytery to create hundreds of hygiene kits for Caring and Sharing of South Walton.**

Join our first annual Explore Dogwood-Serve the Community event on April 5 from 9:30 AM – 3:00 PM CT. There will be time for worship, serving our neighbors in need, fellowship, food and exploring Dogwood through lots of camp activities. Registration is now open!



## Wind power a free gift from God

*“A mighty wind sweeps over the waters as God creates the earth.”  
Genesis 1:1-3*

**W**e all take wind for granted, and sometimes, there is too much wind, as in a hurricane or a tornado. Wind also can be a blessing as a free, nonpolluting source of energy.

In 2023, [wind power accounted for 12% of U.S. electricity generation](#) capacity, compared with 11% for solar, 8% for nuclear, 7% for hydro, 16% for coal and 43% for natural gas. It increasingly provides more electrical generation, and the costs have decreased and are cheaper than natural gas. In 2024, [electricity generation from wind established a new record](#) in the United States in April and exceeded coal-fired generation in both March and April, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. It also doesn't cause pollution or kill people like fossil fuels do.

Sadly, one of the Presidential Executive Orders signed recently blocks all offshore wind turbines and any onshore turbines built with public funds or on public lands. This order was followed a few days later with an order suspending permits for all renewable energy projects, including wind.

A commonly heard argument against wind energy is that it doesn't blow all the time. Not heard often enough is that battery storage for wind energy is significantly increasing, and it is becoming more cost-effective, especially for large scale projects.

There also are claims that the turbine blades kill birds. This is true, but the number is at the bottom of the list of human-caused deaths. [Cats are the largest killers](#) of birds in the U.S., followed by collisions with glass buildings and cars, poison, electrocutions, and oil pits that kill more birds than wind power.

And, there are claims that wind turbines hurt whales. This issue is pushed by the fossil fuel interests in hopes of discrediting this industry. They fail to mention how devastating for all wildlife their spills are, including for the Rice Whale population, which was nearly wiped out with the [2010 Deepwater Horizon oil disaster](#). At this point, NOAA reports that there is [no scientific evidence](#) that noise resulting from offshore wind site characterization surveys could potentially cause whale deaths.

In Florida, our slower wind speeds make it difficult to generate wind energy like they have in the Midwest, and Governor DeSantis signed

a bill last year that prohibits wind turbines within one mile of the coastline, on state waters or submerged lands. There have been studies and [pilot projects](#) that suggest that our coastal regions could support wind energy production.

Perhaps, even more important, I once read that the wind energy produced in the Midwest could meet a significant portion of the US energy needs, and that includes Florida's. So let's not say goodbye to wind energy or let the fossil fuel industry [mischaracterize it](#). I encourage everybody to learn more about this viable renewable energy source and support its development, along with the proper safeguards to protect creation.

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

## Caring for Creation



*By  
Pam McVety,  
Presbytery  
Stewardship  
of Creation  
Enabler*

*“... let's not say goodbye to wind energy or let the fossil fuel industry mischaracterize it.”*

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The Panhandle Presbyterian



# DOGWOOD ACRES

Retreat Center and Summer Camp  
Vernon, FL

## SUMMER CAMP 2025



Join us for a week of  
Faith, Friends, and  
Fun this summer.



Register Online  
Now!



### High School Week Rising 9th-12th

High schoolers at Dogwood Acres are encouraged to deepen their faith, build friendships, and develop leadership skills while engaging in outdoor activities. In addition to traditional camp experiences, they will participate in exclusive off-site excursions, including a kayak trip.

June 22nd-27th

### Adventure Rising 6th-8th

In addition to typical camp activities, Adventure campers participate in some more exciting camp offerings, including hikes, canoeing, and some later nights. These middle schoolers are able to learn more about their faith and the journey we are all on as they are immersed in the fun of Dogwood Acres.

July 6th-11th  
July 13th-18th

### Discovery Rising 3rd-5th

Discovery Camp allows young campers to experience Dogwood Acres adventures, traditions, and Bible studies while making new friends. Activities include teamwork challenges, archery, swimming, campfires, and more.

July 6th-11th  
July 13th-18th

### Intro Camp Rising 2nd-3rd

The First-Timers' program introduces new campers to Dogwood Acres through games, swimming, arts and crafts, and outdoor adventures. This 4-day/3-night experience provides a fun and supportive introduction to camp life and traditions.

July 6th-9th  
July 13th-16th

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)