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God's Word gives strength amid anxious times

Some 2,500 years ago, a Greek philosopher said, "There is nothing permanent except change." Change and transitions are as inevitable as taxes and death. We cannot stop the onward march of our lives even if we want.

As we move through life, some of these changes can be anticipated. How we manage these transitions is important in our emotional and spiritual development.

Some changes are filled with anxiety. Even though we often can't name that anxiety, it is still felt. And it causes us to behave in ways that we don't often understand.

We are experiencing a great deal of change in our society – which sometimes gets reflected in our congregations. Uncertainty is very perplexing as we experience A.P.E. – Anxiety Producing Events. (Gives new meaning to "going ape" doesn't it?)

In times like these, we have to anchor ourselves in something deeper than what is being touted in the news and on social media. Richard Rohr reminds us, "*Mystics and prophets see things as they truly are – not through the lens of fear, but through the eyes of love and truth.*"

It is our task to hold onto God's truth, and to remain

deeply connected to one another. Right now, there seems to be a growing sense of helplessness. But we are not helpless. Our strength comes from holding to the Word of God and striving to further the ministries of Jesus Christ as a body. Wringing our hands does little good.

Perhaps instead of trying to grasp for what seems to be falling away, we can put our trust in God that something deeper is happening. That beyond seemingly losing what we once knew, there is a new birth on the horizon. That even in this time of transition and uncertainty, God's Holy Spirit is at work, preparing us for what we cannot yet see.

As God said through the prophet Isaiah, "Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." We must place our trust in God. And while we do, we do not sit idly by.

Let us even more strongly engage the love of Christ. Show kindness to the stranger. Care for the hungry and the poor. Minister to the stranger at our gate. Let the world know that as followers of Jesus Christ we are alive and well, furthering the ministries of our Lord and Savior – no matter what changes come our way.

From our
Stated Clerk/
Acting General
Presbyter



By Rev. Mark
Broadhead (Ret.)

"Our strength comes from holding to the Word of God and striving to further the ministries of Jesus Christ as a body."

From the Racial Justice Subcommittee



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

“What’s happening? Reprisals on political opponents, threats and attacks on teachers, librarians, and journalists, ICE raids and incarcerations, mass deportations...”

“What’s happening?” has become an urgent question

Some of you may remember a common greeting from the mid-twentieth century – “What’s happening?” What was a slang expression then has become an urgent question now.

In 1935, a fictional novel by Sinclair Lewis was published under the title *It Can’t Happen Here*. The story centers on Berzelius “Buzz” Windrip, a democratically elected president who promises to restore the country’s prosperity and greatness. He characterizes himself as the champion of “the forgotten man” and “traditional” American values. Following his rise to power, he becomes the country’s first outright dictator (an allusion to Adolph Hitler’s rise to power). He reorganizes the government, outlaws dissent, and incarcerates political enemies. Doremus Jessup, a newspaper editor, is Windrip’s most ardent critic, shedding light on what’s happening.

It can’t happen here. But it is happening. What’s happening? Reprisals on political opponents, threats and attacks on teachers, librarians, and journalists, ICE raids and incarcerations, mass deportations, while denying the history of the Tuskegee airmen, the native American code

breakers, and the Japanese American military unit, are today’s answers to the question, “What’s happening?”

Martin Niemöller was a German Lutheran pastor and theologian who was initially a national conservative, an antisemite, and supporter of Adolph Hitler. When he realized what was happening, he came to oppose Hitler and the Nazi regimes, becoming one of the founders of the Confessing Church during WWII.

He was imprisoned in Sachsenhausen and Dachau concentration camps from 1938 to 1945. Following his liberation, he expressed his deep regret for not having done enough to seek justice for the victims of the Nazis. Although there are

various versions, his famous poem contains a cautionary tale for us today:

*First they came for the communists and I did not speak out – because I was not a communist
Then they came for the Jews and I did not speak out – because I was not a Jew.
Then they came for the trade unionists and I did not speak out – because I was not a trade unionist.
Then they came for me – and there was no one left to speak out.*

In light of what’s happening now, will we the members of the body of Christ speak out? Will we speak out when justice is denied? Will we speak out when mercy is withheld?



Tide & Table, our presbytery’s South Walton New Worshipping Community (NWC), is preparing to launch a regular communication! You’re invited to the start of a 7-week journey called “Wisdom Lab: Brave New World Meets Proverbs”.

How Do We Live Differently?

By the end of the study, participants will have:

- ✓ Deeply engaged both Proverbs and *Brave New World* (by Aldous Huxley) to see how wisdom challenges modern culture.
- ✓ Wrestled with our own resistance to wisdom, comfort, and truth.
- ✓ Practiced real-life wisdom experiments that encouraged growth.
- ✓ Reflected on how to engage the world wisely—without being controlled by it.

Join Rev. Dr. Nicole Richardson on Zoom beginning April 21st at 7pm CDT. [Sign up to receive the Zoom link.](#)

MPT works with other presbytery ministries to fulfill its mission

The Ministry of Pastoral Transitions keeps active as we serve congregations going through pastoral transition. Currently, we are working with the following congregations:

- 1st, Pensacola, for an Associate Pastor
- 1st Crestview and Laurel Hill, for a Pastor
- Euchee Valley, DeFuniak Springs, for a Pastor
- 1st, Quincy, for a Pastor
- 1st, Tallahassee, for a Pastor

Two of our congregations – Lafayette, Tallahassee, and Trinity Pensacola – have been led to their pastor and interim pastor, respectively, and for that we give thanks to God! Three more congregations are finalizing their calls for a pastor...more great news! We'll share details about those successful calls next month.

While MPT's work is constant and sometimes



quite difficult, one particular point of satisfaction is that we don't work alone. Rather, many times our work coalesces with other ministry teams.

One call we're working with currently involves two other ministry teams: the Ministry of Leadership Development (MLD) and the Ministry of Congregational Health (MCH). Working together enhances the faithful response MPT offers to congregations seeking pastors. I am grateful for the many ways collaborative ministry takes place in Florida Presbytery!

And I am grateful, too,

for the Ministry of Representation (MR), because without MR Moderator Rich Kangas and his servant-seeking team, MPT would not have the wonderful ministry members we have!

It's never easy going through pastoral transition, even when the transition is due to a celebration like a pastoral retirement. But it's a good process when followed with integrity and with both MPT and the search committee working together for the person God is calling. This is holy work, and MPT covets your prayers as we continue to help congregations in pastoral transition.

From the Ministry of Pastoral Transitions (MPT)



By Rev. Lisa Martin, MPT Moderator and 1st, Lynn Haven Pastor

“While MPT’s work is constant and sometimes quite difficult, one particular point of satisfaction is that we don’t work alone.”



PLEASE JOIN US FOR FELLOWSHIP'S ANNUAL

Easter Egg Hunt

SUNDAY, APRIL 20
9:30 A.M.
3158 SHAMROCK STREET
TALLAHASSEE, FL 32309

Children will be collected from Sunday School classes to begin the hunt.
Questions? Please contact fellowshipchurch@comcast.net.



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


Register TODAY

www.JellyBean5K.com

Benefiting Send56 - Trinity's missionary partner in Africa
send56.org

No Greater LOVE

Remembering the Death and Resurrection of Jesus
by Lloyd Larson



Please join us
on April 13th @ 11AM at
Lafayette Presbyterian Church
4220 Mahan Dr, 32308
for our Easter Cantata.

We will have a combined choir with
John Wesley United Methodist Church.
There is a Fellowship Luncheon following the
Cantata, please join us.

For more information go to
www.fountainchurchtallahassee.org



The New Face of Aging
PREPARING LIFE AND LIVES
POAMN

POAMN

Presbyterian Older Adult Ministries Network

2025 CONFERENCE

September 17-19
Boulder, Colorado

MLD encourages embracing identity as resurrection people

In reflecting on the new beginnings of spring in light of our upcoming celebration of Easter, I found that author Kayla Craig had already put into words what was on my heart for our community of faith in season...

A Prayer for Easter:

As we celebrate Your resurrection power, we pray our children would sing and dance in the promise that we are Easter people and we have a living hope in You. May our children bask in the truth that You have conquered sin and death, and may that living hope spill into all they do, all they meet, and all they are.

Inhale: Tune My Heart

Exhale: To Imagine The Impossible
Amen.

(Kayla Craig, Every Season Sacred)

During seminary, I took a class titled “Preaching Through the Liturgical Year”, in which

we were encouraged to think and plan creatively about the proclamation of the word in worship. For the class's final project, we were put into groups; each group was assigned a Holy Week service to plan creatively and lead for the class.

I was assigned Easter, and our group grounded our worship service in the Delta Rae song “Dance In The Graveyards” ([I recommend this arrangement of the song sung by the St. Olaf Chapel Choir](#)). The song expresses a desire to celebrate the joy of living fully, and to do so alongside the saints who came before us and who surround us now. It’s an image that comes to my mind when I consider imagining the impossible.

I wonder what it may look like to honor that desire in our congregations? To embrace our identity as resurrection people in a way which inspires hope and joy... even in the midst of a season or

context which feels like a graveyard.

This Easter season, I challenge you to keep an eye out for budding new life, for slivers of hope and joy in the graveyard, for examples of faith persisting, and Christ’s love shining through.

The Ministry of Leadership Development of our Presbytery has the distinct privilege of nurturing the budding joy of new leaders in our church, walking alongside them and encouraging them in their discernment. We ask that you pray for our team as we do so, and that you pray for all who are discerning what God is calling them to in hope and love.

And as you do, know that we will be praying for you too; that in your home and in your congregation, you find time and space to live into the joy and promise of the resurrection, that you breathe in the new life of grace... and dance.

From the Ministry of Leadership Development (MLD)



*By Rev. Erin Rugh,
MLD Vice Moderator
and Faith, Tallahassee
Associate Pastor*

“...keep an eye out for budding new life, for slivers of hope and joy in the graveyard, for examples of faith persisting, and Christ’s love shining through.”



From Dogwood Acres



By *Christy Williams,*
Director



Eric Hearn,
Program Director

DWA share thanks and April 5th Explore Dogwood invitation

A huge THANK YOU to our amazing volunteers! On March 19th, an incredible group of volunteers from First Presbyterian Church Tallahassee and First Presbyterian Church of Quincy come to Dogwood Acres to lend a helping hand — and some paintbrushes.

Because of their hard work, our dining hall and picnic tables have a fresh, vibrant look, ready to welcome all who visit. We are beyond grateful for the time, energy, and love poured into making Dogwood Acres an even more beautiful place for our community.

Want to see all the amazing improvements? Join us at **Explore Dogwood Day April 5th**. We are excited to invite you and your congregation to this unique event combining fellowship, service and adventure, making it a wonderful opportunity for families, youth groups, and church members of all ages to connect, give back, and experience the beauty of Dogwood Acres.

The day will begin with worship and a service project as we partner with Caring & Sharing of South Walton to assemble hygiene kits for those in need. After

lunch, participants can enjoy guided camp activities and hikes, exploring all that Dogwood Acres has to offer.

Event Details:

Date: Saturday, April 5th

Check-in: 9:30 AM CT

Worship & Service

Project: 10 AM – Noon

Lunch Provided

Camp Activities & Exploration: 1 – 3 PM

Cost: \$8 per person
(Family cap of \$24)

Register now at <https://dogwoodacres.campbrainregistration.com/>.



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 starting March 1st
Cost for the day: \$8.00 with a family cap of \$24.00

Microplastics are hurting creation – and you

Human-caused problems facing creation never seem to end. And now, we have another evolving one – microplastics. But, what the heck are they?

It's all that plastic that we throw away that eventually breaks down into smaller and smaller pieces. This includes the single-use plastic straws whose use was previously banned and is being resurrected by the current administration.

So why should we be concerned? Microplastics are a [pressing human health issue](#), according to a Harvard study. "These plastics are showing up everywhere, including throughout our bodies—and even within the human reproductive system, not only in placentas, but also in testes and semen. What is worse, we don't know what the accumulation of these plastics in our bodies might mean for us. Research points to potentially serious issues, including vascular disease, cancers, respiratory disorders, inflammatory bowel disease, as well as dizziness and neurological symptoms."

A March 2025 article in the *Guardian* is entitled, "[Microplastics hinder plant photosynthesis, study finds, threatening millions with starvation.](#)" Scientists are worried about crop losses because of microplastics that hinder plants from using sunlight to grow by damaging soils



Source: NOAA <https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/hazards/marinedebris/plastics-in-the-ocean.html>.

or carrying toxic chemicals.

We think plastics are largely being recycled, but the reality is that only about 9% of the world's plastic is recycled because of the economics or technical issues. The vast majority ends up in landfills, is incinerated or dumped into the environment, especially the ocean, where it moves up the food chain to our dinner plates. Along the way, birds, whales and other wildlife consume these particles or are trapped in them, often dying unseen and unheard by us.

Work began at the United Nations Environmental Assembly in Kenya in 2022 on an international global treaty on plastic pollution in recognition of how serious the plastics problem has become. In a historic move, 175 nations voted to adopt a global treaty, agreeing on an accelerated timeline for implementation. Unfortunately, it has not been finalized.

Plastics are being pushed by the fossil fuel

industry. Writers are calling this "Plan B" for the industry. As the world transitions towards renewable energy, the fossil fuel industry is increasingly focusing on petrochemicals and plastics to maintain profits.

So, here we go again. Another easily avoidable human-caused problem has become a political issue that is quietly hurting much of creation, including humans.

Friends, this is not a hard problem to solve. Don't buy products like bottled water in plastic containers. Carry your own metal refillable water bottle. Use paper, metal or glass straws. Avoid as many products as you can in the grocery store that are in plastic. Bring your own cloth bags to the grocery store. Recycle and push for more recycling. Write your Congressional representatives and senators about the use and recycling of plastics. And, don't fall for the unfolding plastics campaign by the fossil fuel industry.

Caring for Creation



By
Pam McVety,
Presbytery
Stewardship
of Creation
Enabler

"So, here we go again. Another easily avoidable human-caused problem has become a political issue that is quietly hurting much of creation, including humans."

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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)