

Presbytery Staff
and Officers
are here for you:

Rev. Mark Broadhead
Stated Clerk/
Acting General Presbyter
Statedclerk
@presbyteryofflorida.com

Mary Hodges
Moderator
mary37@comcast.net

Christy Williams
Dogwood Acres Director
christy@dogwoodacres.org

Michael Martin
Accountant-Treasurer
treasurer
@presbyteryofflorida.com

Melissa Willis
Administrator
Mwillis
@presbyteryofflorida.com

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The Panhandle Presbyterian

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MCPC announces new mini-grants for churches

When a congregation within the Presbytery of Florida has fulfilled its ministry in the name of the Lord, the completion of that ministry is celebrated at a time of worship and thanksgiving for the work accomplished. But the influence of that congregation—its assistance and aid to its sister churches—is not completely over, even though its doors have closed.

As is the policy of the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Presbytery is responsible for the disposition of the church property (G-4.0205). Funds received from the sale of the property are used to give witness to the connectional nature of our denomination and further the work of our Lord in our sister congregations and the Presbytery of Florida.

In 2020, the Presbytery of Florida passed the following in order to spread the funds in such a way as to best serve the Presbytery:

“After the equivalent of one half of the current year’s budget is set aside, which can be used to zero-balance the current year’s budget before closing the books for that year,

- 10% of the remainder shall

be set aside for special, unbudgeted Presbytery projects defined by that policy,

- 50% shall be assigned to the Committee on Congregational Revitalization [now Ministry of Congregational and Pastoral Care] to be used as defined by their policy for such funds, and
- 40% shall be assigned to the Committee on New Congregational Development to be used as defined by their policy. Any growth in the Reserve Fund shall be distributed *pro rata*.”

Resources have been assigned to the Ministry of Congregational and Pastoral Care (MCPC) through investments made possible from the sale of the properties of churches whose congregations have concluded their ministries. With the approval from Presbytery, the maximum amount to be invested will be no more than \$650,000, the interest of which will be used to assist qualified projects and requests for support.

The newest grant provided to the Presbytery’s smaller congregations is a

From the Ministry of Congregational and Pastoral Care (MCPC)



*By Linda Lovins,
MCPC Moderator*

“pull quote

Continues on page 3

From the Ministry of Representation (MR)



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

Presbytery team membership offers a new journey

Sometimes, I just want to sit, be quiet and think about all things that are possible when you put forth a little effort. Numerous things come to mind, but they always seem to disappear when the noise starts again. For me, this noise was always my own mind saying, “No way, I couldn't do that, that's impossible, I don't have the knowledge, I'm too old.”

Well, let me tell you my story. I attended several presbytery meetings as an elder commissioner from my church. It was OK. I went to the Presbytery meetings, I sat down in a

sanctuary, listened to some folks talk, raised my hand a few times, voting on this and that, not bad. That was the extent of my experience with Presbytery.

Then, out of the blue, I was asked to be on a committee at Presbytery. Boy, did the excuses come flying – “I don't know anything about this presbytery work, I don't have the time, I'm too old, don't have enough knowledge of religion, I don't know anything about computers”. I had all these excuses down pat, along with four or five more. But I told them I'd think about it.

A few days later, I was

asked if I had made my decision. I said, “Yes, I'll do it.” To this day, I don't know why I said “yes”. My decision to say “yes” was the right one for me. Sometimes this journey has been bumpy, but overall, it's been smooth.

I admit everything in my life has been a journey one way or another, and I believe I've been on my fair share. The bottom line is, don't let the noise win out. There are plenty of ways to participate at Presbytery or at your church. If you are interested in a new journey, being a Presbytery team member could be it.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF WEWAHITCHKA DOIN' GOD'S WORK

Saturday June 7
11 AM CST
GOSPEL SING

Join us for our Building Fundraiser as we celebrate the 150th Anniversary of our beautiful town! We will be selling lemonade and sweets and have live music! All proceeds will go to the church's Building Fund as we restore and rebuild after Hurricane Michael.

*Historic Tours will be provided to learn more about First Presbyterian Church of Wewa!

Sunday June 8
11 AM CST
PENTECOST SUNDAY

Wear Red in Wewa as we celebrate this Holy Day of Worship. We invite you to a special music service led by Soprano Neldys Crespo; Pianist Paul Brown, Gene Waldron III on String Bass, and Katie Waldron on Violin

First Presbyterian Church of Wewahitchka
Reverend Dr. Carol Wood
336 Highway 71 South Main Street
Wewahitchka, FL 32465



Lafayette Presbyterian Church & the Presbytery of Florida

Invite you

**to the Service of Installation
for the**

Rev. Dr. Hanlim Chae

Sunday, June 15th at 4 PM

at Lafayette Presbyterian Church

4220 Mahan Drive

Tallahassee, FL 32308

Presbytery clergy are asked to wear red stoles and be seated together.

Reception immediately following the service.

**For more information, please call the church office
at (850) 877-4428**



PMT outlines pastor search process, questions to address

Last month in this space, the Ministry of Pastoral Transitions discussed issues raised in a Holy Cow! webinar relating to preparing a congregation for calling a new pastor. This month, we continue that discussion with a focus on the search process itself.

The process begins with a survey of the entire congregation, which is designed to help the church evaluate itself. The survey helps identify strengths and weaknesses—strengths on which the church can build a better future, and areas where the church may wish to improve the things it does. The survey may also identify areas of disagreement among the congregation, so that some sensitivity (“mutual



forbearance”) will be needed both to avoid unnecessary hurt and to respect minority positions.

Some questions the congregation should address:

► What do we want candidates to know about and be interested in?

► What circumstances do we want the right candidate to be attracted to?

► How do we want the right candidate to lead and to manage change?

► What do we need to do and be to keep the new pastor motivated over the long term?

Pastor searches can take a long time; congregations may become weary of the process or lose interest. Keeping the congregation aware of the process and managing expectations are critical. The Session and Search Committee need to maintain communications with the rest of the congregation frequently and in clear and caring terms.

From the Ministry of Pastoral Transitions (MPT)



By Ed Nickinson,
MPT member
and Trinity, Pensacola
Elder

*“Pastor searches
can take a long
time...”*

Mini-grants, continued from front

Mini-Grant for Worship Enrichment. With priority given to applicant churches in which worship leadership changes from week to week, this mini-grant is intended to help worship committees enrich the experience of worship in small, engaging ways that could have more impact than the dollar amount may suggest. It might be as simple as making or purchasing new paraments or seasonal banners. This grant, currently limited to four awards annually in the amount of \$250 per applicant church, could be the catalyst that breathes a bit of fresh air into your worship as a family of faith.

Are there other grants provided through the ministry of churches gone before? Yes: An **Equipment Grant** for up to \$1,000; an **Emergency Repairs Grant** for up to \$5,000, and a **Pastoral Leadership Grant** in an amount up to ½ of the Presbytery minimum to help small congregations call an installed pastor to serve for up to three years. [Click here to learn more](#) about these four grants and to access the application forms.

Other news from MPT:

We celebrate two new contracted positions in Florida Presbytery:

- Teaching Elder **John Wamsley** will serve as Stated Supply Pastor (part-time) for Euchee Valley, DeFuniak Springs; and
- Ruling Elder **Joanne Kublik** will serve as Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE) for First, Crestview and Laurel Hill.

We give thanks to God for calling John and Jo to these respective positions and pray fruitful ministry with each congregation!

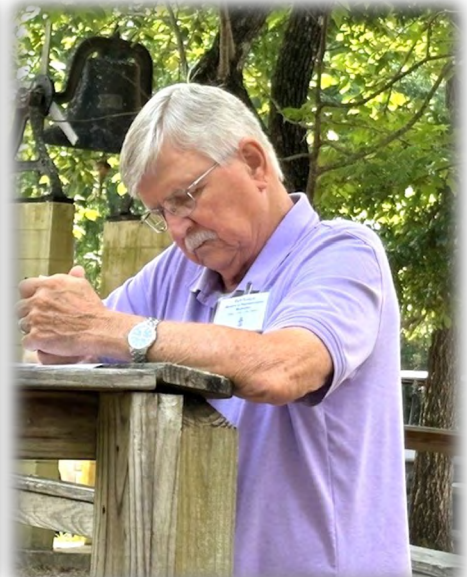
Spring presbytery meeting held amid beauty of creation at Dogwood Acres



Dogwood Acres Retreat Center and Summer Camp treated over 50 registered attendees at the Presbytery's May 17, 2025, meeting to generous hospitality, thoughtful amenities, and delicious food in refurbished facilities, all amid the beauty of God's creation.

Shown above, from left, Tide & Table South Walton New Worshipping Community Pastor Rev. Dr. Nicole Richardson leads the morning worship. Gulf Breeze Pastor and Ministry of Dogwood Acres Moderator Rev. Bill Lamont leads and accompanies the singing of "Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore" during the worship. The worship featured a time for proclamation through individual reflection and journaling, utilizing stones, each bearing a word, which participants were asked to collect earlier in the service.

At left and below, participants take advantage of the gorgeous weather and camp setting to find places for reflection on scriptures, journaling prompts and their "stone words". Afterward, they will release their stones at prayer stations where bowls of water are provided, then join in communal prayer and song.





Above, meeting attendees celebrate Florida Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Network (FLAPDAN)'s 20th anniversary by forming a "bucket brigade" at DWA's Powell Pavillion to assemble containers of disaster cleanup supplies. DWA will store the buckets for future disaster response needs in the region.

At right, Inquirer Ryan Obray joins the meeting remotely to be examined to become a candidate for ministry. Northminster Presbyterian, Pensacola, Commissioned Ruling Elder and Presbytery Ministry of Leadership Development member Dr. Greg Seltzer leads the examination, as Inquirer Emily Bruno stands by. Ryan's candidacy is approved.

As Ryan looks on, Emily Bruno discusses her faith journey during her examination for candidacy for ministry. Her candidacy is approved.

At bottom right, from left, Presbytery Moderator Mary Hodges commissions Ruling Elder Joanne Kublik to serve the First, Crestview and Laurel Hill congregations.



**Stewardship
Kaleidoscope**
ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Real Tools for Real Ministry

**SEPTEMBER 22 - 24, 2025
NEW ORLEANS, LA**



From Dogwood Acres



*By Christy Williams,
Director*

“Unplug & Connect” offers unique new opportunity this summer

Dogwood is buzzing with activity that goes beyond our flying bird and insect friends. As we gear up for our summer camp season, volunteers and staff are working hard to prepare a welcoming and safe environment.

This week, Brant Copeland, ministry member and volunteer, installed three more environmental education signs by the pole barn. Kay Lachat, volunteer, spruced up the landscaping around our buildings and the meditation trail. Sharon Bruner, our kitchen manager, is carefully planning menus for the Florida Diabetes Association’s camp for children learning to live with the disease. Eric Hearn, our program director, is putting the finishing touches on summer staff contracts and training certifications.

This summer camp’s theme is “Total Game Changer: Faith in Action”. Campers will explore how we can live out our faith in a world that doesn’t always make that easy. We will be guided by New Testament letters to churches who also struggled to be faithful to Christ’s teachings. We can’t wait to see how God’s spirit works in all our hearts this summer.

When I think of faith in action, I have images of this past Presbytery meeting and

pastors and elders gathered under the Powell Pavilion, working to create disaster relief buckets for the upcoming hurricane season. We modeled living out Christ’s command for us to love our neighbors.

A year ago, Dogwood Acres built a storage shed for Presbyterian Disaster Assistance disaster relief buckets, and we now have four full pallets of buckets ready to distribute in case of a disaster. Dogwood Acres is also registered as a housing site for lineman and disaster assistance teams. The upkeep of our property is another way we live out our faith so we can offer hospitality and shelter to those who work to help others.

What do you think about when you consider sending a camper off for a week at Dogwood? Hiking our trails? Canoeing in our lake? Making S’mores around the campfire? Stargazing on Kelly Field?

Yes, to all of these things and more – worshipping in the outdoor chapel, making new friends, running, swimming and singing silly songs. Everything we do at camp is designed so that campers can experience God through nature, through friendships and community and through our activities.

This summer season, we have the privilege of leading campers in 8,340 hours of screen-free time to connect to God, nature, and one another. We are inviting you to help us make the most of these faith formation hours by sponsoring an hour – or more – of camp time.

Your gift of \$10 per hour helps campers trade screentime for sacred time. You can go to our website, www.dogwoodacres.org, to give to our Unplug and Connect campaign and join us in making this summer a faith-filled one for all our campers.



Forests a critical part of creation

One of God's most perfect creations is a tree. They are crucial for a healthy planet and our wellbeing. They clean the air and water. They are a home and food for wildlife. They provide recreational opportunities. They combat climate change by absorbing carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas that is causing the planet to warm.

Sitting under a shady tree is a place of peace. They provide important building materials and food. They also are beautiful in every sense of the word. It is not an exaggeration to say that humans are deeply dependent on trees for survival.

And, trees do something remarkable that you and I cannot and never will be able to do. They use sunlight, carbon dioxide and water and convert them to food and oxygen. This process is not magical, but nearly so.

In the late 1800s, because of excessive logging, President Benjamin Harrison signed into law the Forest Reserve Act of 1891, which established our national forests. We have three in Florida, including one in our backyard – the Apalachicola National Forest. National Forests were created to conserve forests for multiple uses, including to protect the trees and watersheds, to



provide resources like timber, water, and recreational opportunities, and to support wildlife.

One of the many executive orders issued from Washington, DC, declares that there is an emergency situation on America's National Forest system lands. The Forest Service is commanded to dramatically increase the amount of logging on these forests by at least 25 percent.

The stated emergency is that we are having severe wildfires, insect and disease outbreaks, invasive species and other stressors, whose impacts have been compounded by too little active management. Environmental protections also are removed from lands proposed to be timbered.

Back in my January column, I promised you the truth. Here it is: The biggest cause of increased fire on our forests is the increase in temperatures,

and the biggest infestations of insects, the pine bark beetle, is directly tied to our warming climate. This amount of cutting of our national forests will make climate change worse, because mature forests are the best way to sequester carbon. Logging, when conducted without environmental protections, can exacerbate fire risk, lead to pollution of watersheds, and degrade forest ecosystems, which harms wildlife and eliminates recreational opportunities.

The real emergency is the climate crisis, and it requires us to cut carbon emissions, not trees. Yes, more selective thinning, which was already underway, to reduce some of the wildfire risk is needed. But as long as the temperatures rise and the forests dry out, there will be more and more wildfires.

Trees are part of God's gift of creation, and he expects us to take care of them and to use them wisely. Our national forests serve us multiple ways, and the role of trees in absorbing carbon dioxide is critically important. To expand logging as proposed into our National Forests is improvident.

Caring for Creation



By
Pam McVety,
*Presbytery
Stewardship
of Creation
Enabler*

“The real emergency is the climate crisis, and it requires us to cut carbon emissions, not trees.”

PRESBYTERY OF FLORIDA

Mailing address:
P. O. Box 7
Chipley, FL 32428

Physical address:
3368 Harmony Rd

Phone: 850-535-2335
or 850-535-2440

E-mail:
office@presbyteryofflorida.com
Website:
www.presbyteryofflorida.net

Ministry Coordinating Council
Elder Don Mowat
dmowat@bellsouth.net

Ministry of Congregational Health
Elder Linda Lovins
jartsedlin@gmail.com

Ministry of Dogwood Acres
Rev. William "Bill" Lamont
gbpcpastorbill@gmail.com

**Ministry of Leadership
Development**
Rev. Cathy Mooney
cathymooney@yahoo.com

**Ministry of New Congregation
Formation**
Rev. A. J. Mealor
revmealor@gmail.com

Ministry of Pastoral Transitions
Rev. Lisa Martin
revlwmartin@gmail.com

Ministry of Presbytery Operations
Rev. Eric Spoon
gracepcpastor@gmail.com

Ministry of Representation
Elder Rich Kangas
kangas265@gmail.com

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)





DOGWOOD ACRES

3320 HARMONY RD. CHIPLEY, FL DOGWOODACRES.ORG




UNPLUG AND CONNECT YOU CAN MAKE THIS POSSIBLE!

This summer, Dogwood Acres will offer 8,340 hours of screen-free, sacred time to children and youth.

Instead of sitting in front of a screen, campers will:

- Dive into hands-on Bible study
- Practice archery, swim, and play games
- Hike woodland trails
- Sing around a campfire, cook s'mores, and stargaze
- Canoe the lake
- Discover animals and native plants
- Worship under the trees
- Be still, be present, and grow in faith



YOUR GIFT MAKES THIS POSSIBLE!

Just \$10 sponsors one hour of life-changing, unplugged camp time. Give one hour or one hundred, every moment matters. Your generosity helps campers unplug from screens and connect with faith, friends, and God's creation.

Scan to Give!

