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Inside this issue:

Ministry of
New
Congregation
Formation
(MNCF) **2**

Caring for
Creation **3**

Our Stated
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Ministry of
Representation
(MR) **5**

Dogwood Acres **6**
7

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Meeting to feature special sermon, workshops

The presbytery is in for a treat at the August 12 presbytery meeting in Gulf Breeze. [DeEtte \(de-et\) Decker](#), the Vision and Constituent Service Manager of the Interim Unified Agency of the PC(USA), will preach a sermon entitled, “Innovation Isn’t New—It’s Spirit-Led,” based on Acts 10.

Decker writes: “Innovation isn’t a new idea—it’s the story of the early church. Rooted in Acts 10, this sermon explores how faithful innovation begins by listening for the Spirit, acting with courage, and sharing what God is doing. Drawing on *Leading Faithful Innovation* by Zscheile, Binder, and Pinkstaff, we’ll see how Peter’s unexpected journey to Cornelius’ house invites us to follow the Spirit into unfamiliar but hopeful territory. Innovation isn’t something to fear—it’s how the church has always grown.”

DeEtte will also conduct an interactive educational time during the meeting in her workshop, “**Habits of Holy Imagination: Building the Mindset of Innovation**” described below:

This interactive workshop invites

congregations into a hopeful and honest conversation about change, creativity, and faithful experimentation. Using the Two Loops Life Cycle model of congregational transition, we’ll explore what’s fading, what’s emerging, and how to steward both with courage and care.

Participants will engage in hands-on activities to understand and develop the skills of innovation, including questioning, observing, networking, and playful experimentation—to help uncover new ideas and fresh expressions of ministry rooted in their local context. Whether your congregation is composting or sprouting something new, this session offers practical tools, imaginative space, and shared wisdom to help you discover what’s possible.

After the meeting’s conclusion (approximately 2:30 pm CT), DeEtte will offer an additional workshop entitled, “Planting Seeds of Good Futures: Exploring Social Enterprise in Congregational Life.”

Here is the workshop’s description: Discover how congregations can creatively respond to community needs while building long-term

Continues on page 2

From the Ministry of Leadership Development (MLD)



*By Jean
Homrighausen,
MLD member and
Trinity, Pensacola,
Associate Pastor*

*“Innovation isn’t
a new idea —
It’s the story
of the early
church. ...
It’s how
the church has
always grown.”*

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



*By Rev. Dr.
Nicole Richardson,
Tide and Table
New Presbyterian
Worshipping
Community Pastor*

*"If you've
ever felt
frustrated by
conversations
that become
debates—or if
you're longing
for more
meaningful
dialogue across
political,
cultural, or
generational
lines—this is
for you."*

Tide & Table shares mid-summer reflections, what's new

As summer stretches on, this has been a quieter season in the life of *Tide and Table*, one marked by small but meaningful milestones, a bit of rest, and renewed energy for what's to come.

A major step forward this month was the **launch of the Tide and Table website on July 2**. This new digital home offers updates, blog reflections, and event information, and serves as a front door to those curious about the ministry. I invite you to explore, subscribe, and share with others who might be seeking something new.

In late July, I had the joy of preaching at **First Presbyterian Church of Crestview**. It was a lovely Sunday with a warm and welcoming congregation, and I'm grateful for the continued opportunities to share the vision of Tide and Table across our presbytery.

On a personal note, my husband and I were able to take a much-needed vacation to **Sint Eustatius (Statia)**. This beautiful little island gave me the gift of **14 tank scuba dives**—an experience of deep presence, awe, and reconnection with God through creation. These moments of silence and wonder continue to inform the shape of Tide and Table, where stillness, embodiment, and spiritual curiosity are central values.

Looking ahead, I'm excited to launch



Tidepath: Labyrinth by the Sea, a monthly outdoor event beginning **August 1**. We'll gather near the water for a self-guided contemplative walk, using the ancient tool of the labyrinth to practice prayerful listening and embodied spirituality. Tidepath will run once a month for the next four months as we explore how coastal space can nurture sacred space.

This fall, we'll also begin the **second iteration of Online Wisdom Lab**, starting **September 15**. The new theme is **Wisdom Lab: The Art of Deep Listening – A 7-Week Journey in Engaging Across Differences**. If you've ever felt frustrated by conversations that become debates—or if you're longing for more meaningful dialogue across political, cultural, or generational lines—this is for you.

We'll pair the biblical wisdom of *Job* with Kate Murphy's powerful book *You're Not Listening*, diving into why listening is so difficult—and so transformative. We'll also draw from Kathryn Schulz's *Being Wrong: Adventures in the Margin of Error*, which I highly recommend reading ahead of time.

Together, we'll ask: How can curiosity replace judgment? What does it

look like to stay open when we feel challenged? How can deep listening shift our relationships and communities?

If you're interested in joining this conversation or know someone who might be, feel free to reach out.

As always, thank you for walking alongside this unfolding ministry. Your encouragement, prayers, and interest continue to mean the world.

Continued from front
sustainability in **"Planting Seeds of Good Futures."** This 75-minute interactive workshop introduces participants to the Good Futures Accelerator—a step-by-step, story-rich resource that guides churches through the process of launching social enterprises. Through hands-on activities, practical examples, and open discussion, participants will explore how church buildings, land, and passions can be transformed into ministries that both serve and sustain. Ideal for congregations and mid councils ready to imagine what's next.

Whether you're a commissioner to the August presbytery meeting or not, you don't want to miss DeEtte's sermon, her educational hour offering, and her workshop at 3 pm following the meeting.

Bears are part of God's creation

My earliest experience with bears began with a black and white panda bear, which, after years of loving and hauling around, became more of a black and dirty gray bear. From this experience and multiple encounters in the woods, I have developed an appreciation for bears. So I am troubled that our Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) is proposing another bear hunt. The last one in 2015 didn't go well.

Some would describe the last hunt as barbaric. Not only were nursing female bears killed, leaving orphaned cubs, but some hunters killed cubs directly and used human food to bait bears, which are illegal practices. Three-hundred and four bears were killed in just two days, causing the week-long hunt to end early.

Until I checked, I didn't realize that bears are in the Bible, in both symbolic and literal ways.

They are mentioned in stories like David killing a bear and in Elisha's encounter with bears. In 2 Kings 2:23-24, the prophet Elisha was mocked by young men as he journeyed from Jericho to Bethel. In response, Elisha cursed them in the Lord's name. Shortly after, two female bears emerged from the woods and mauled 42 of the youths – a shocking encounter and certainly not an argument in support of protecting bears.

But the Bible does emphasize respecting all of creation and avoiding unnecessary harm. The key word is "unnecessary". This raises the question whether we really need to hunt bears as part of a management strategy. A majority of folks think the answer is "no".

The FWC staff have done a masterful job of managing both bears and people. Black bears were on the endangered species list, but today, they are not.

Their population is growing even as more and more of their habitat is lost to human development. Where people follow bear safety protocols, like using bear-proof garbage cans, encounters are kept to a minimum. The FWC staff did not request a hunt as part of their management strategy. It came from a governor-appointed commission member.

I don't understand the urge to kill another living thing, especially for recreation, unless a human is seriously threatened or in need of food. Black bears are not known to be aggressive towards humans. I remind myself that whenever I have an encounter with one in the woods and, so far, it is true. The bears usually look at me and walk the other way.

I wish we could learn to live peacefully with all of God's creation. Where humans don't hunt animals, they are not afraid of us, and we can co-exist in mostly peaceful ways. I have had the great joy of experiencing this three times – first in Florida with Scrub Jays, second and third where hunting wildlife is illegal in the Galapagos and in Kenya.

Bears are magnificent animals, they are an important part of our ecosystems, and, most importantly, they are part of God's creation that can be managed successfully without hunting them. We shouldn't have to kill another living creature in order to conserve it.

Caring for Creation



By
Pam McVety,
*Presbytery
Stewardship
of Creation
Enabler*

*"Until I checked,
I didn't realize
that bears are in
the Bible, in
both symbolic
and literal ways."*



Stewardship
Kaleidoscope

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Real Tools for Real Ministry

SEPTEMBER 22 - 24, 2025
NEW ORLEANS, LA



**From our
Stated Clerk/
Acting General
Presbyter**



**By Rev. Mark
Broadhead (Ret.)**

*“Remember,
‘The Church
is to be
a community
of faith,
entrusting itself
to God alone,
even at the risk
of losing its life.’”
(F-1.0301)*

Is the Church to embody Christ, or current culture?

Lately, I have found myself wondering if I am an old fuddy-duddy, a traditionalist, just not keeping up with the times, experiencing the older side of the “generation gap,” or perhaps right on track. I’m not sure. By the time you finish this article, you may have formed your own opinion.

When I look at the current practices of a fairly large number of congregations nationwide, personal and corporate interpretations of scripture and theology, individual mindsets on what it means to be a Christian and living the Christian faith, I find myself wondering if this is what Jesus intended when he founded his church on Peter.

Many will say that the church needs to keep up with the times in order to be more relevant and attractive to get people in the door. And yet, does the church go too far in acquiescing to being more “relevant?”

Did you know that the term “Christian” was first used in Antioch to identify those who were following a “new religion?” (Acts 11:26) It was not a term of endearment. It was used as an insult. It seems it is still used that way today.

Historically, there are plenty of scriptural references as to what happened when religious leadership consented to the culture. Solomon watered down the Jewish faith by

incorporating pagan ritual into his own practice of faith – only to appease some of his many wives. The Jewish people were not to marry persons outside the Jewish faith. But during captivity, they did. Many Hebrews were found to have pagan idols in their homes – much to God’s dismay.

History shows that when Constantine legalized Christianity in 313 AD, the only purpose of which was to prevent his mother from being persecuted and to unify a dividing empire, there was a massive influx of people who wanted to become Christian in order to garner favor with the emperor. So large was the clamor that the standard 3-year catechetical process was impossible to maintain. Three years were needed to root out long established pagan practices. Because they were not erased, pagan practices infiltrated congregational life and practice. A Christ-like mindset was never instilled in a great many people.

The scriptures can be used, and are used, to support any side of an argument. Scripture is twisted to find justification for just about any matter – supporting slavery, supporting sexual promiscuity, supporting getting rich, supporting the grab for power.

Where does the church draw the line? When does

the church say, “Enough is enough?” When do the messages of Christ’s teachings outweigh the personal pursuit of pleasure, power, and gratification? When does the individual stop twisting the words of scripture to justify their own personal agenda? When will worship in so many churches turn from entertaining the masses to focus on the glory of God?

Remember, “The Church is the body of Christ. Christ gives to the Church all the gifts necessary to be his body. The Church strives to demonstrate these gifts in its life as a community in the world. The Church is to be a community of faith, entrusting itself to God alone, even at the risk of losing its life.” (F-1.0301)

The past cannot be changed. However, the present and future can be changed by looking at the mistakes of the past. I believe it is time to turn more sincerely to the teachings of Jesus Christ and the guidance of the early Biblical letters to reestablish what Christ intended of his followers.

GA elder commissioner plus presbytery positions still open

These Ministry of Representation ramblings concern our search for General Assembly elder commissioner and Presbytery moderator, ministry and Synod commissioner candidates. The search has gone from warm to hot and back to cold. I'm writing this month to stoke some fires.

We have received interest in the Teaching Elder Commissioner and Young Adult Advisory Delegate to the General Assembly. But there are

no applications for the Elder Commissioner to the General Assembly, yet. Hmm... Wonder why? This is an ideal opportunity to serve the presbytery and larger Church while engaging in worship and fellowship with our nationwide church family.

I know, summer 2026 seems far off, but the various actions required prior to the General Assembly are just around the corner. The General Assembly will be held June 27 through July 2,

2026 in Milwaukee, WI.

On another subject, I surely would like to see some interest in the Presbytery Vice Moderator, Class 2026 position. We also have two vacancies on the Ministry of New Congregational Formation, Class 2027. And we need a commissioner elder, alternate for Synod.

If you are interested or have any questions about these positions, contact me. My cell phone: 850-832-6577; email: kangas265@gmail.com

From the Ministry of Representation (MR)



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

1st Wednesday **SACK Lunch** *South Atlantic Community Knowledge*

A monthly zoom for sharing across the synod!

*Join, learn and share experience, resources,
and best practices on a new topic each month.*

August 6 **Commissioned Ruling Elders**
September 3 **Small(er) Congregations**



To register, follow the QR code or visit synodofsouthatlantic.org

From Dogwood Acres



**By Christy Williams,
Director**

*“Dogwood Acres
is a special place –
a holy place,
a place of welcome
and hospitality
where people
can pause in
their busy lives,
take a deep breath,
and experience
the love of God
in ways they
might not
have expected.”*

“Total Game Changer” season sees 30% increase in campers

We are excited to have finished our biggest camp season in many years. With your help, we had a 30% increase in campers!

“Total Game Changer” was our theme for the summer. Throughout the week, we explored NT letters to the church, recognizing that the early churches’ struggles are our own! With so many people living together, we had some challenges, but we also experienced joy, unity and the peace that comes from knowing that we are loved by a God who calls us to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Some of the Game Changers we are giving thanks for are those volunteers who gave their time to make our summer season possible, and wonderful! Our nursing staff: Sandy Kuhn (Lafayette, Tallahassee), Nancy Replinger (Christ, Tallahassee) and Denise Pentecost (Lafayette, Tallahassee). Our chaplains: Emily Bruno (FPC-Tally), Erin Rugh (Faith, Tallahassee) and Brant Copeland (Retired Minister).

Brant preached the following sermon the Sunday following his week

as camp chaplain. If you want to know what a week is like, read his Dogwood Diary:

Dogwood Diary

I just returned from a week of camp at Dogwood Acres, the outdoor and retreat ministry of the Presbytery of Florida. Dogwood Acres is situated on 480 or so acres of piney woods near Vernon, Florida. It was founded back in 1966 to be a place where children and adults could enjoy the wonders of God’s creation and learn how to live more faithfully in Christian community.

Begun as a summer camp for Presbyterian children and youth, Dogwood has grown over the years into a year-round retreat center that welcomes not just church folk, but people from all backgrounds, races, and faith traditions. About 70 percent of the folks who come to Dogwood in a given year are adults.

Dogwood Acres is a special place – a holy place, a place of welcome and hospitality where people can pause in their busy lives, take a deep breath, and experience the love of God in ways they might not have expected.

Dogwood is also a rarity these days. Across the country, church camps and conference centers like Dogwood are being shut down and sold off as the congregations that used to support them are aging, tightening their budgets, and reordering their priorities.

That trend is a source of great sadness to me. And, I firmly believe, it reveals a lack of appreciation for how church camps and conference centers change lives and bear witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ.

I came to Florida Presbytery in 1985 to become pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Tallahassee. Since then, I have served as a chaplain at Dogwood for at least 30 summers – maybe more. (I haven’t been keeping track). I hope that by sharing a little of this past week at Dogwood, I might convey to you why I love that place so much, and why you should rejoice that, as a congregation of the Presbytery of Florida, you are a vital part of that vital ministry.

[So, here is my Dogwood Diary...](#)





Reset

An adult retreat to restore and refresh
September 12-14, 2025

As we welcome the season of autumn, take a step back from the busyness of daily life to reset your mind, body and spirit.



Meet our Leaders!



Dawn Griffin Keynote

Dawn Griffin, Florida Trail Association member involved in building and maintaining hiking trails since 1984. She enjoys creating philanthropy projects with Quilters Unlimited, reading and yoga. She will be speaking on the benefits of walking in the woods on our mental health, forest bathing and mindful meditation with a bear named Pooh.



Amanda Cannon Yoga Instructor

Amanda Cannon is an experienced and certified yoga teacher who is trained in many styles of yoga. She has been teaching in the Tallahassee community for over 10 years. Currently she teaches in her small Restorative Yoga studio inside her home, at Premier Health and Fitness Center, Westminster Oaks and at Faith Presbyterian Church.



Sheldon Steen Worship Leader

As a (nearly) lifelong Presbyterian, Sheldon has been working in ministry for eighteen years, earning a Master of Divinity and Master of Theology from Columbia Theological Seminary. He received his PhD in Religion from FSU in 2023. He was called to Christ Presbyterian Church in June, 2020.

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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)

See you at the Presbytery Meeting!

Tuesday, August 12
Gulf Breeze
Presbyterian Church



August 12

You're invited to

WORKSHOPS AT PRESBYTERY:

"Holy Habits of Imagination:
Building a Mindset of Innovation"
(during the educational hour after worship)

"Planting Seeds of Good Futures:
Exploring Social Enterprise in Congregational Life"
(after the meeting at approx. 2:30 pm CDT)

Meet DeEtte Decker!

DeEtte is the manager of
Vision Integration & Constituent
Experience in the Office of
Innovation at the Interim Unified
Agency of the PC(USA).



Presbytery Worship Sermon Title:
"Innovation Isn't New - It's Spirit-Led," 9 am CDT

GULF BREEZE PC

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