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MPT prayerfully walks with sessions and PNCs

Every MPT meeting begins with a brief devotion, scripture, and prayer. To do the work to which we've been called and elected, MPT members need God's guidance.

We never claim to have all the answers, nor do we promise an easy journey for congregations in pastoral transition.

What we do promise is that we will walk with sessions and search committees from the time a pastor announces his or her impending departure from the church until pastoral leadership is hired (interim or stated supply) or called (pastor or associate pastor).

Our opening prayer goes something like this, *"Direct us, Lord, in all our doings with your most gracious favor. Further us with your continual help, that in all our works – begun, continued, and ended – we may glorify your holy name. Amen."* (from The Book of Common Worship, Pastoral Edition)

Currently, MPT is working with the following congregations:

- Trinity, Pensacola
- First, Quincy
- First, Tallahassee

We're pleased to welcome the Reverend

Rebecca (Becky) Bryan to serve as Associate Pastor of First, Pensacola. Becky's installation service will be Sunday, September 7, at 3 pm Central Time.

Soon we will begin working with two "new" congregations: Parkway, Panama City, and First, Lynn Haven. The Rev. Kim Staveanu is stepping down at the end of September from her role as stated supply for Parkway. Reverend Roy Martin, who has served as Congregational Care Minister at Parkway, concludes his ministry there at the end of August.

My final day of service with First, Lynn Haven is September 21. I have been elected as pastor of Heritage Presbyterian Church in Alexandria, Virginia, and will begin service there on October 15.

It has been my honor to serve Florida Presbytery for these past eight years, first on the Redevelopment Committee, and most recently as moderator of the Ministry of Pastoral Transitions. There has been good collegiality in this presbytery, and I will miss that when I join National Capital Presbytery.

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From the Ministry of Pastoral Transitions (MPT)



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

"We never claim to have all the answers, nor do we promise an easy journey for congregations in pastoral transition."

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



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

*"...September
brings the start
of the Wisdom
Lab: The Art
of Deep
Listening—
A 7-week online
journey ..."*

Tide & Table late summer seed-plantings include online journey

The month of August has been a season of both beginnings and quiet growth for *Tide & Table*, and I am glad to share a few highlights with you.

On **August 1st**, we held our very first *TidePath: Labyrinth by the Sea*. Though the turnout was small, the experience itself was deeply meaningful — a reminder that even in humble beginnings, God meets us in stillness and prayer. *TidePath* will continue monthly through the fall, and I look forward to seeing how this contemplative space on the shoreline unfolds.

I was honored to be invited to share about *Tide & Table* at **First Presbyterian Church of DeFuniak Springs**. It is always a gift to tell the story of this emerging worshipping community and to invite others into the vision of creating sacred spaces beyond traditional walls — at the shore, at the table, and in everyday life.

Another new rhythm that began in August is **Scripture from the Shore and Tide + Time**, two weekly communications designed to keep the heart of this ministry connected with the wider community. *Scripture from the Shore* offers a brief reflection rooted in scripture and inspired by the natural beauty of the Gulf Coast,



while *Tide + Time* provides a poetic musing on timing, rhythm, or seasons of the soul that whets the spirit for the weekly blog.

On **August 25th**, I was privileged to give the benediction at the **Okaloosa County Commission on the Status of Women Hall of Fame** induction ceremony. It was an honor to bless that gathering and to witness the celebration of women whose leadership and service are shaping our communities in powerful ways.

Looking ahead, September brings the start of the **Wisdom Lab: The Art of Deep Listening** — a 7-week online journey pairing the book of Job with Kate Murphy's *You're Not Listening*. We will explore how deep listening can replace judgment with curiosity, how to engage across

differences with grace, and how God might meet us when we pause long enough to truly hear one another.

Meanwhile, the *Tide & Table* Substack blog continues to grow, with more readers discovering the reflections posted there each week. I would be honored if members of the Presbytery would consider subscribing, sharing, or simply passing along the link to someone in your congregation who might be looking for a different way to engage with faith and reflection. You can find it at [here](#).

As always, thank you for your prayers, encouragement, and support. This ministry is still in its early days, but the Spirit is moving — in small turnouts, in quiet reflections, in growing conversations, and in the faithful planting of seeds.

MPT, continued from front

Beginning September 22, Rev. Stacey Kaye White (Freeport) will serve as moderator for MPT; Rev. Blair Beaver (First, Marianna) will serve as vice-moderator and head of the examination team.

Blessings to one and all. If you wish to experience a cold winter with frost, snow, and ice, let Roy and me know; you're always welcome in our Alexandria home!

PC(USA)-fossil fuels relationship not healthy nor sustainable

Once a year, I clean lichens off my mother's and grandparents' tombstones. They are those flat circular pale green growths you see mostly on trees. Have you ever wondered what they are?

They are actually two organisms living together – a fungus and an algae. The fungus provides the home and the algae provides the food through photosynthesis.

It is called a “symbiotic relationship”, and when both species benefit, as with lichens, it is called “mutualism”. However, when one species benefits at the expense of the other, it is called “parasitism”.

I am often an unwilling participant in parasitism with ticks. The tick bites me and gets a meal. I get a long-term itchy bite, sometimes an infection and a course of antibiotics to avoid Lyme disease.

The PC(USA) has a troubling – some might say parasitic – relationship with the fossil fuels industry. We support their products with our investments. Their products hurt us and pretty much all of God's creation causing damages that now exceed a hundred billion dollars a year, along with millions of lives being lost. To read more about this, I refer you to the Fifth National Climate



Assessment <https://nca2023.globalchange.gov/> and the Sixth IPCC Assessment <https://www.ipcc.ch/assessment-report/ar6/>.

This is neither a healthy nor sustainable relationship. It is incompatible with our beliefs that were clearly stated in 1958 by the General Assembly. They read, in part, that the General Assembly “affirms its conviction that neither the Church as the body of Christ, nor Christians as individuals can be neutral or indifferent toward evil in the world; affirms its responsibility to speak on social and moral issues, ...” (1958 Statement – PC(USA), p. 537)

That the church both supports a harmful industry, that refuses to change, even in the face of all the evidence of the damage its products are causing, and at the same time affirms that we cannot be neutral or indifferent to evil in the

world, causes great personal pain for me and other Presbyterians.

As I write this, there was an announcement of a [landmark opinion](#) issued by the United Nations highest court making it clear that the entire world has to curb carbon emissions or risk having to pay compensation to nations impacted by climate change. While this ruling was about emissions and not investments, the question might still be put to our fiduciaries as to whether we might, one day, be called to account for the amount of carbon, methane and plastic pollution our investments have enabled in the name of maximizing assets for missions purposes.

I pray that we acknowledge our serious error before the costs are insurmountable, the physics unfixable and the planet largely unlivable for way too many of our brothers and sisters.

It is past time to get this right. Our money should not be contributing to harm. As followers of Jesus Christ, all parts of our faith should be grounded in the reality of our situation, and in love for our neighbors.

Caring for Creation



By
Pam McVety,
Presbytery
Stewardship
of Creation
Enabler

“The PC(USA) has a troubling – some might say parasitic – relationship with the fossil fuels industry.”

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



*By Rev. Mark
Broadhead (Ret.)*

“There is a fine line between being faithful to the call of Jesus Christ to worship him in spirit and in truth, and doing ‘whatever it takes’ to get more people in the pews.”

Focus on bottom line obscures sight of Church’s mission

I recently heard about a pastor who said to his congregation, “For quite a while, the church infiltrated society. But now, society has infiltrated the church.”

The pastor then went on to explain the ways he saw how worship settings, theological and Biblical interpretations, the focus of sermons, and the like have all been reduced to appeasing people, helping them feel less guilty about the poor choices they make in life, and even encouraging the pursuit of wealth.

He then went on to point out the foibles of many “contemporary” worship services and its supposed “entertainment factor.” Strong opinions? Yes. Judgmental? Yes. A certain amount of truth? Yes.

There is a fine line between being faithful to the call of Jesus Christ to worship him in spirit and in truth, and doing “whatever it takes” to get more people in the pews. Very often focusing on getting more members is an act of desperation for the survival of a congregation than it is of being faithful to the gospel.

This buys into a standard business model that many congregations get sucked into. This

model says more paying customers means more revenue. More revenue means more profits. More profits mean we are successful. And aren’t we proud of ourselves? Let’s beat out the competition!

Is following a business model what the Church is supposed to be about? The finance committee will certainly say there is a business aspect to running a church. True. But when a congregation focuses solely on the bottom line, it has lost sight of its mission. In fact, I seem to remember reading in the gospels how Jesus got very angry when his Father’s temple was turned into an avenue for getting more money.

As Christians and as Presbyterians we are called to 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.

“The Church is to be a community of hope, rejoicing in the sure and certain knowledge that, in Christ, God is making a new creation.

“The Church is to be a community of love, where sin is forgiven, reconciliation is accomplished, and the dividing walls of hostility are torn down.

“The Church is to be a community of witness, pointing beyond itself through word and work to the good news of God’s transforming grace in Christ Jesus its Lord.” (*Book of Order*, F-1.0301)

I wonder what would happen if all Presbyterians – and others – took this as seriously as it is intended?

SMALL AND MIGHTY



A Time to Connect and Equip Leaders in Small Membership Churches

Join Us for a Monthly Conversation on Zoom

**First Tuesday
7-8 pm EDT / 6-7 pm CDT**

Register here:

<https://form.jotform.com/251396018295159>

PYC plans retreat with reflective time to meet peer needs

This month, I have the privilege of introducing you to the 2025-2026 Presbytery Youth Council (PYC): Kate Denny (Faith, Tallahassee); Maya Steen (Christ, Tallahassee); Ford Reeves (Trinity, Pensacola); Penelope Carruth (Gulf Breeze); Tommy Daily (Faith, Tallahassee); Jessi McClure (Trinity, Pensacola); Carter Nee (Faith, Tallahassee); Julie Reeves (Trinity, Pensacola); Melissa Denny (Faith, Tallahassee); Brantley Jones (Trinity, Pensacola); Fenton Smith and Chloe Draper.

To serve on the PYC, high school youth who are involved in the Presbytery's ministry are invited to fill out an application where they answer questions about their faith, the gifts they will bring to the council and their desire to serve. Youth who are chosen commit to attending an August PYC planning retreat, serving as leaders for the October's Spiritfest retreat for middle school youth and being assistants at the winter Dogwood Youth Conference. This is no small commitment for young people who are involved in their schools and their local churches.

Regardless of their busy lives, for the past three years I have been awestruck by the hard



work and creativity of the PYC. This year is no different! What an amazing group of young people. This Presbytery should be proud of them. I am humbled by their faithfulness, maturity and authenticity.

At the PYC planning retreat, we study scripture, discuss the present-day needs of youth, and explore creative ways to address social issues. In the end, the group comes up with a theme for October's Spiritfest and a direction for the following February's Dogwood Youth Conference. This year, the PYC talked a lot about their peers' need for downtime in nature, places to be quiet and still. We are weaving that kind of reflective time into our schedule, which is also filled with a lot of energetic, noisy activities.

The youth also felt their peers struggled to experience welcome and acceptance, and it was too easy to judge others rather than opening yourself up to people who seemed

different. Using this lens to study scripture, the PYC landed on the theme **A Seat for All!** They then chose Bible stories of Jesus eating with people and the kind of radical hospitality that he offered. It is going to be a meaningful Spiritfest retreat.

Watching these young people grapple with scripture and brainstorm creative schedule options is pure joy! Here is the church at work! Here are our leaders! What a good thing God is doing here. Thanks be to God.

From the
Ministry of
Dogwood Acres
(MDWA)



By Christy Williams,
DWA Director

*"Here are
our leaders!
What a
good thing
God is
doing here."*

Hospitality, worship and interactive workshop highlight summer stated meeting



Gulf Breeze Presbyterian Church graciously hosted the Presbytery's August 12 Summer Stated Meeting. At left, volunteers Liz Willard and Carol Dewese register the meeting's approximately 50 attendees. At right, Presbytery members and visitors fuel up before the meeting with fresh fruits, sweets, coffee and juice, later enjoying a delicious lunch of sandwiches with sides and an array of delectable homemade desserts.



Above, from left, Gulf Breeze Pianist Ryan Mabry provides beautiful accompaniment during the morning worship; First, Pensacola Ruling Elder Judi Seltzer serves as liturgist during the worship; and PC(USA) Interim Unified Agency Office of Innovation Manager of Vision Integration and Constituent Experience DeEtte Decker, after preaching a sermon titled "Innovation Isn't New - It's Spirit-Led", based on Acts 10, leads a workshop on "Holy Imagination: Building a Mindset of Innovation". Below, DeEtte engages the meeting participants in the morning's interactive workshop.



TidePath: Labyrinth by The Sea**Sept 13, Oct 4, Nov 15 @7:15am****Santa Clara Public Beach Access****South Walton County**

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
Speaker

Dawn Griffin, Florida Trail Association member involved in building and maintaining hiking trails since 2004. She enjoys traveling and learning aspects with Quilts and understanding what yoga she will be speaking on the benefits of walking in the woods on our mental health, forest bathing and mindful meditation with a solar named Poon.



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 (newly) 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.

Cost - \$240

This includes yoga instruction twice a day, a short off-site kayak trip to Cypress Springs, snacks, meals, gathering activities, instruction at two of our ranges (archery, and ax throwing), guided hikes, worship, speakers, campfires and even time for rocking on the front porch of your cabin!

Arrive to settle in on Friday at 6:30 PM CT. Eat dinner before you arrive. Sweet and savory snacks will be served during our evening fellowship time.

Saturday will be filled with time for reflection, yoga, hiking, kayaking, stargazing and more!

Sunday there will be time for yoga, good food, and gathering before we pack up to leave around 11:30 AM CT.

Register at dogwoodacres.org

Save the Date

Celebrating 75 Years Tailgate Party

FSU

vs.



September 20, 2025
@ Westminster House

A Seat For All



SpiritFest 2025

Who:
Middle School Youth
Where:
Dogwood Acres
When:
October 3-5
Cost:
\$175 per participant



Register Now at dogwoodacres.org

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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)

Celebrating 95 YEARS



Remembering Our Past
Shaping Our Future —
Together in Faith, Growth and Community

ALICIA DAVIS
Featured Singer
FOOD • GAMES • DOOR PRIZES
WESTERN ATTIRE

BETHEL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

111 Roosevelt Ave
DeFuniak Springs, FL 32435

SEPTEMBER 20, 2025 | 1-5 PM