

Presbytery Staff
and Officers
are here for you:

Rev. Eric Spoon
Stated Clerk
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

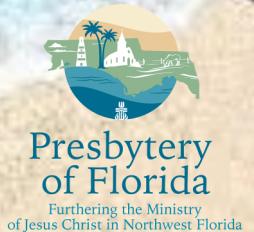
Inside this issue:

Our stated clerk	3
Ministry of Representation (MR)	4
Caring for Creation	5
Ministry of Pastoral Transitions (MPT)	6

The Panhandle Presbyterian

A monthly publication of the Presbytery of Florida

Volume 9, Issue 2



February 2026

From the Racial Justice Subcommittee



By
*Susan Byram,
Subcommittee member
and 1st, Pensacola
ruling elder*

“All campers are enriched by experiencing the rich diversity of all God’s children.”

Subcommittee seeks to fund minority camperships

The Presbytery's Ministry of Leadership Development (MLD)'s Racial Justice Subcommittee has been working diligently over the past three summers on an important project. We strive to share the faith-building experience of attending summer camp at Dogwood Acres with those from minority families.

This creates unique opportunities for individuals who might not otherwise experience the joys of camp and builds relationships that will bear much fruit in the future. All campers are enriched by experiencing the rich diversity of all God's children.

The past three summers, we sponsored campers from Panama City, DeFuniak Springs and Pensacola. In 2025, two Pensacola campers returned to camp, deepening the faith and friendships begun the previous summer.

For 2026, we want to grow this program significantly. And we need your help to do that.

The Racial Justice Subcommittee is starting a fund for Dogwood Acres to offer scholarships to minority campers across the Panhandle. Our challenge is simple: Will you donate to help make this happen? Costs vary a bit depending on campers' ages and whether multiple campers come from the same family, but, in general, camp costs about \$600 per camper. Won't you give to help make a difference? Any amount will make a difference! Our hope is to have funds for at least eight campers this summer.

We will also need your help to recruit minority campers. This is an opportunity to expand or develop relationships in your community with minority

Continues on page 2



Continued from front

families. Ask teachers, co-workers or minority churches. This initiative offers a wonderful opportunity to strengthen relationships.

As someone who had the privilege of growing up with the enriching experience of summer camp, I know firsthand how transformative it can be. Such opportunities are rare for children from minority communities, and

this project allows us to change that—making a lasting difference in their lives while building relationships that will enrich our own.

This initiative is simple but profoundly impactful. I encourage you to take up the challenge of finding children to send to camp this summer.

Building and strengthening relationships is how we can change the world, and this project offers a wonderful opportunity to

do just that while providing children with a life-changing experience. If you or your congregation have wondered how you can make a difference in our world today, please get involved in this project!

Please [contact me](#) for further information on getting involved. Together, we can make a meaningful impact. Learn more about camp at Dogwood Acres here: <https://www.dogwoodacres.org/summer/>

DOGWOOD ACRES CAMP AND RETREAT CENTER PRESENTS

Pause

A Yoga & Mindfulness Retreat for Women

February 27-March 1, 2026



www.dogwoodacres.org/dogwood-retreats/pause-yoga-and-mindfulness-retreat/



Dogwood Acres Retreat Center

Clerk calls for focus on Presbytery mission amid changes

First, let me say “thank you” to each church who has completed their Annual Statistical Report. It is vital that every congregation gets this done by February 20, 2026. If you still need help, please let me know.

Now, it is hard to believe that, only a year ago, the February article written by the Rev. Mark Broadhead was done while looking at the snow in Florida. For a day or two, people could just sit and enjoy one another’s company. And now, as I sit and write my article for the month often dedicated to love, it is 71 degrees outside my office window. The snow is but a distant memory, and people are passing one another with a simple head nod as they go about their way. It is amazing how time flies, the world

changes, and people quickly move on from the real needs of the world.

In Paul’s second letter to Timothy, the elder Paul is doing his best to remind the young Timothy that he needs to stay focused on sticking true to the Gospel and helping others to do the same. In a society where people were openly mocking Christianity, rhetorically asking if Jesus could not save himself, how would Jesus save the world, Timothy was being hit hard with a dose of “Am I really the one who is supposed to be leading the people?”

Paul was continually reminding Timothy that yes, he was that person that the people need. Just because the world was changing around him, he should not throw in the towel. Things will continue to come at

Timothy that will test him, but he should stand true to the Gospel message of loving God and loving one another.

It is so easy for Christians, in this fast-paced world in 2026, to move from one topic to the next, getting bogged down in the politics of the world instead of the living in and for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We want things the way we want them, when we want them, and nothing else matters.

Everyone knows the Presbytery is changing, as we see people come and people go. We are losing friends to other presbyteries, but gaining new colleagues who are moving into town. It is imperative that we not get lost in the mix and changes happening all around us, because this Presbytery still has a mission to carry out, and that is to share the love of Jesus Christ.

I cannot predict the future, much less tell you when it will snow again in Florida. But I know one thing is for sure: God’s love will never end, and we cannot stop doing our part to make that known. As the Presbytery landscape changes, it is time that we truly roll up our sleeves and do our part to make an impact. It is time that we once again do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God. Who’s with me?

From our
Stated Clerk



By Rev. Eric Spoon,
Grace, Panama City
Pastor

“It is so easy for Christians, in this fast-paced world of 2026, to move from one topic to the next, getting bogged down in the politics of the world instead of the living in and for the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”

Save the Date

Winter Stated Presbytery Meeting

@First Presbyterian Church
of Wewahitchka

February

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

23

24

25



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



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

Volunteer to make a difference in the life of our presbytery

Are you interested in making a meaningful impact within our presbytery? The Ministry of Representation is presently seeking dedicated volunteers for three vital ministries, and your unique gifts could make all the difference!

The Ministry of Pastoral Transition (MPT) helps guide congregations and pastors through times of change, offering support and stability during important moments. The Ministry of Presbytery Operations (MPO)

ensures the presbytery operates smoothly, preparing an annual budget, finances, and help congregations in buying or selling church property. Finally, the Ministry of New Congregation Formation (MNCF) focuses on planting and nurturing new worshiping communities, bringing fresh energy and outreach to our Presbytery.

Whether you have experience or simply a heart to serve, there is a

**VOLUNTEERS
NEEDED!**

place for you to grow in faith and leadership. If you feel called to join one of these ministries and become a part of what God is doing in our Presbytery, or would like more information, contact me at kangas265@gmail.com or phone 850-832-6577.

**1st Wednesday
SACK Lunch Conversation
(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

**Feb 4 – Sharing & Writing Policies for
Churches & Presbyteries**

To register: scan the QR Code or visit synodofsouthatlantic.org



Fossil-free funds financially prudent

One of the worries about calling for divestment from fossil fuels is the concern that the denomination will lose money if it removes all its investments from the fossil fuel industry. Here is some good news.

In 2015, First Presbyterian Church, Tallahassee, shifted its entire endowment to the Presbyterian Foundation's New Covenant Trust Fund (NCTF) fossil free fund.

I recently asked how well we were doing. Here is part of the report that I received from our church treasurer:

"First Presbyterian Church of Tallahassee has its funds invested with the New Covenant Trust Company, a subsidiary of the Presbyterian Foundation.

Comparing the main endowment account to the three-year performance of a class-blended benchmark (primarily the Russell 3000 Index) for 2023 through 2025 shows a return for our main equity endowment account was 24.9% compared to the market benchmark return of 22.6%. The performance for all our endowment accounts was 15.6% versus the market benchmark at 14.8%.

Investing in a fossil free fund has been a financially sound decision for First Presbyterian. If

you are interested in this fund, please contact the [Presbyterian Foundation](#).

In case you are wondering how well fossil fuel investments have done, a [2024 report](#) by the Institute of Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) found that fossil fuel investments have had a bad decade. "Disruption and destabilization in fossil fuel commodity markets, competition from renewable energy, the electrification of transport, and growing investor consciousness of climate change's financial risks are driving investors to re-evaluate fossil fuels' place in the portfolio," said Connor Chung, IEEFA research associate and the 2024 report's co-author.

Further, it should be no surprise that climate change and our economy are linked. But it may surprise you how serious the impact of our changing climate is predicted to be on the world economy. A 2025 study by the [Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research](#) found that the world economy is committed to an income reduction of 17% within the next 26 years due to historical carbon emissions and socioeconomic inertia.

This could be worrisome for our denomination's finances, as membership drops, and

our churches and institutions experience rising utility bills with extreme temperatures and incur weather-related damages, increasing maintenance costs and higher insurance bills.

Removing our investments from the fossil fuel industry is one small, but morally sound, way we can address the climate crisis and safeguard our investments. We also can shift a portion of our investments to renewable energy. We can join the global energy transition with the installation of solar or wind power with batteries on our facilities and homes. We can buy electric vehicles and support the installation of recharging stations for electric vehicles in our parking lots and communities. We can help our members understand the importance of being part of the transition to renewable energy. There is more, but you get the idea.

Bravo to all of you who have already started moving in this direction!

Caring for Creation



By
Pam McVety,
Presbytery
Stewardship
of Creation
Enabler

"Removing our investments from the fossil fuel industry is one small, but morally sound, way we can address the climate crisis and safeguard our investments."

From the Ministry of Pastoral Transitions (MPT)



*By Rev. Blair Beaver,
MPT Vice Moderator
and 1st, Marianna
Pastor*

"A pastoral transition asks a church to tell the truth about itself, not with nostalgia or anxiety, but with trust."

Between leaving and arriving: Trust the work of the in-between

Pastoral transitions are rarely neat. They arrive carrying uncertainty, hope, fatigue and anticipation, often all at once. For congregations searching for their next pastor, and for pastors discerning their next call, this season can feel like standing on a bridge without seeing the far shore. Yet it is precisely in this unsettled space that some of the most important work takes place.

For congregations, the search process is not simply about finding the “right” pastor. It is a season of discernment that invites honesty and courage. Who are we now? Who are we becoming? What parts of our story still give us life and what are we finally ready to release? A pastoral transition asks a church to tell the truth about itself, not with nostalgia or anxiety, but with trust. When a congregation does this work well, clarity begins to emerge; not only about who might serve them, but about who they are being called to become.

For pastors, the search for a call is rarely about advancement, even when the language of information form and interviews suggests otherwise. At its heart, this season is about

listening. Listening beneath expectations, timelines, and external pressures. A genuine call does more than offer opportunity; it makes a claim on the pastor’s life. It names gifts, but it also asks for patience, humility, and courage. Waiting can feel disorienting, but it often becomes the space where discernment deepens and clarity grows. Not every open door is the right door. Not every good church is *your* church.

What congregations and pastors share in this season is vulnerability. Neither side controls the outcome. Neither side can rush what must mature in its own time. This is not a fault in the process. It is its wisdom. The work of calling and being called resists speed because it is grounded in relationship, trust, and truth.

This is why discernment matters more than certainty. Why listening matters more than impressing. Why faithfulness matters more than filling a position or securing a role. The healthiest calls are ready when we are. They emerge when both church and pastor have done the quiet, faithful work of becoming honest about who they are and attentive to where they are being led.

If you are a congregation searching, take heart. Your story is still unfolding, and the waiting is not wasted. If you are a pastor seeking a call, stay grounded. You are not behind; you are being formed.

Between leaving and arriving, something sacred is happening. May we trust the work of the in-between.

First Presbyterian Church of Pensacola Harbison Lecture Series



Rev. Dr. Sarah Griffith Lund

February 22, 2026

Worship
and Mental
Health





Jelly Bean 5K
APRIL 4, 2026
8AM
JELLY BEAN 5K
TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
BENEFITING MANNA FOOD PANTRIES OF PENSACOLA
manna
TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SAVE THE DATE



FEB. 22
BLUE
SHIRT
SUNDAY

Photo by Rich Cooley

M.A.L.T.
Transitional
Ministry
Education

The Mid America/Lincoln Trails (MALT) "Art of Transitional Ministry" training is not limited to those presently engaged in or inquiring about transitional ministry. Anyone interested in learning how to walk through change alongside your church is invited to join in.

Training
Basic Transitional Ministry Education consists of 60 contact hours plus a practicum that combines reflection on, and experience in, some aspect of interim/transitional ministry.

- Week I - Introduction to Transitional Ministry
- Week II - The Practice of Transitional Ministry

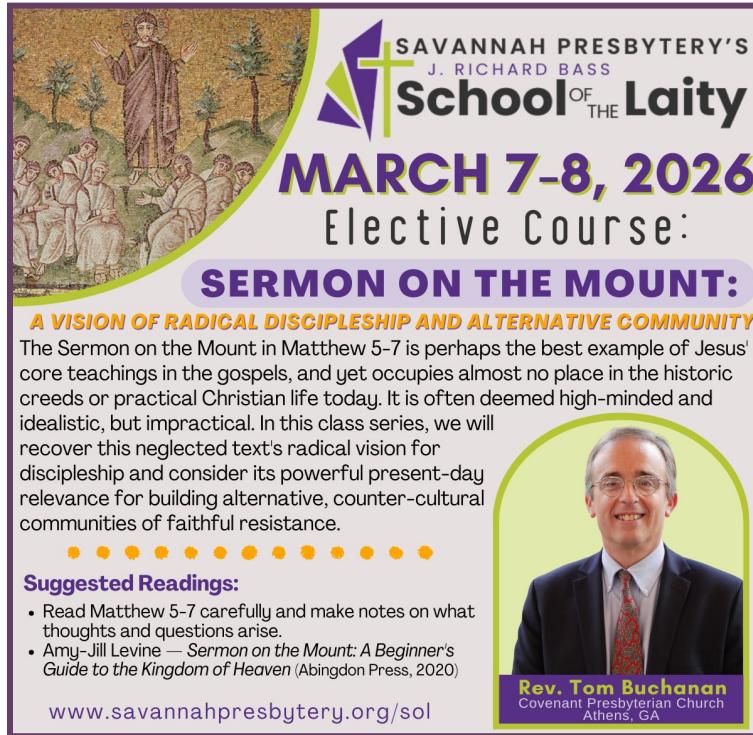
Participants must complete Week I and all practicum assignments before taking part in Week II.

Faculty

Rev. Dr. Deborah Boucher-Payne
Executive, Synod of Mid-America
Rev. Dr. Tassie Green
Team Leader
Rev. Laura Sherwood
Rev. Mason Todd
Rev. Dr. Barbara Wilson

Register today at synodma.org/registration

SOMA
SYNOD OF LINCOLN TRAILS



SAVANNAH PRESBYTERY'S
J. RICHARD BASS
School of the Laity
MARCH 7-8, 2026
Elective Course:
SERMON ON THE MOUNT:
A VISION OF RADICAL DISCIPLESHP AND ALTERNATIVE COMMUNITY

The Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7 is perhaps the best example of Jesus' core teachings in the gospels, and yet occupies almost no place in the historic creeds or practical Christian life today. It is often deemed high-minded and idealistic, but impractical. In this class series, we will recover this neglected text's radical vision for discipleship and consider its powerful present-day relevance for building alternative, counter-cultural communities of faithful resistance.

• • • • •

Suggested Readings:

- Read Matthew 5-7 carefully and make notes on what thoughts and questions arise.
- Amy-Jill Levine — *Sermon on the Mount: A Beginner's Guide to the Kingdom of Heaven* (Abingdon Press, 2020)

www.savannahpresbytery.org/sol


Rev. Tom Buchanan
Covenant Presbyterian Church
Athens, GA



Celebrating a Legacy of Faith and Service

You're warmly invited to honor

Pastor Joan Hedrich Wooten
Retirement from FPC as the Parish Associate.

Sunday, February 8, 2026
10 AM

After worship, join us for a potluck lunch. Please bring along your favorite vegetable, salad, or side dish to complement the delicious meatloaf and rice with gravy.

Scan the QR code to submit your RSVP.



First Presbyterian Church Sanctuary
33 E. Gregory St. Pensacola, FL 32502

**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@presbertyofflorida.com
Website:
www.presbertyofflorida.net

Ministry Coordinating Council
Elder Don Mowat
dmowat@bellsouth.net

**Ministry of Congregational
and Pastoral Care**
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. Stacey Kaye White
staceywhite37@outlook.com

Ministry of Presbytery Operations

Ministry of Representation
Elder Rich Kangas
kangas265@gmail.com



**Presbytery
of Florida**
Furthering the Ministry
of Jesus Christ in Northwest Florida

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)

SUMMER CAMP 2026 REGISTRATION OPEN!

SUMMER DATES!

High School Week
June 21-26

Intro/Discovery/Adventure
July 5-10

Intro/Discovery/Adventure
July 12-17



REGISTER AT DOGWOODACRES.ORG



Worship & Music Conference

Presbyterian Association of Musicians



WHO'LL BE A WITNESS?

PRESBYTERIAN ASSOCIATION OF MUSICIANS

2026 WORSHIP & MUSIC CONFERENCE

JUNE 21-26 & JUNE 28-JULY 3

<https://www.presbymusic.org/conference>