

Presbytery Staff  
and Officers  
are here for you:

**Rev. Eric Spoon**  
Stated Clerk  
Statedclerk  
@presbyteryofflorida.com

**Dr. Greg Seltzer**  
Moderator  
Pastorgregnpcpensacola  
@gmail.com

**Christy Williams**  
Dogwood Acres Director  
christy@dogwoodacres.org

**Michael Martin**  
Accountant-Treasurer  
treasurer  
@presbyteryofflorida.com

**Melissa Willis**  
Administrator  
Mwillis  
@presbyteryofflorida.com

**Inside this issue:**

- Ministry of Representation (MR) 2
- Racial Justice Subcommittee 3
- Dogwood Acres 4
- Caring for Creation 5
- Winter Stated Presbytery Meeting 6
- Ministry of Pastoral Transitions (MPT) 7

# The Panhandle Presbyterian

*A monthly publication of the Presbytery of Florida*



Volume 9, Issue 3

March 2026

## Spring brings change for living things—including presbyteries

It seems like only yesterday our journey together started, and now it has been four months and, thankfully, nothing fell apart! That is the great thing about serving in this presbytery – No matter what we do, or do not do, or no matter how well we do it, or do not do it, the Presbytery continues to function.

In these few months that I have been serving as the Stated Clerk, my eyes have been opened to a whole new side of the Presbytery I never knew existed. I thought serving as the Moderator of the Ministry of Presbytery Operations and as a part of the Ministry Coordinating Council, I would be somewhat well-versed in the Presbytery happenings. Little did I know how much this presbytery lives, moves, and breathes because of the living organism that it is. This does not mean that everything is

always sunshine and roses, but the hope I have for the future of this Presbytery is growing stronger with each passing day.

Now, it is no secret that, as we near the beginning of spring, some things will end or cease for new things to be born. As a presbytery, we are working through the Strategic Plan, and we are finding some of it worked, and some of it did not. Some of our ministries are looking at how to better function together. Dogwood Acres is continuing its journey to 501c3 status. And, perhaps most importantly, the search for an Equipping Presbyter/Stated Clerk has begun.

Forms are coming in and being reviewed. Before we know it, someone new will be in this position leading our Presbytery into the future where, through the power of the Holy Spirit, the

**Continues on page 2**

## From our Stated Clerk



By  
**Rev. Eric Spoon**

*“My prayer is that we continue to open ourselves up for what the Lord is doing...”*

What does the Lord require of you?  
**...to do justice**  
and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8  
Responding to Christ's call to ministries of compassion for the world's most vulnerable.

HOPE IS TO FAITHFUL SOUTH AFRICA

**ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING**

**Continued from front**

limitations of our imaginations are our only constraints. But, like I wrote, for new birth and new life, often, something else must finish.

As amazing as this presbytery is, it is not perfect. In our imperfection, we must make the choice to lean on the Lord through this time of transition. We do not know what the future holds, but we do know how we can walk this path forward. We

must give up our desires to make ourselves happy and instead work to please the Lord. We must give up our passion for making others happy to feel better about ourselves. We must give up our idolatrous ways that allows for God to be ultimately and fully glorified. Going forward, everything we do must be about the Lord, not about us.

I do not know how long I will be in this position as Stated

Clerk, because I know change is coming. But I thank you for trusting me, for helping me, and for doing your part to move this presbytery forward. My prayer now is that we continue to open ourselves up for what the Lord is doing, and let's see where the future takes us. Because, from where I sit, the future looks bright to me!

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



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

*“For the Presbytery to provide resources to the congregations ... Presbytery needs volunteers to serve.”*

**Presbytery volunteers make serving congregations possible**

Churches within the Presbytery of Florida have access to a variety of resources that can aid and reflect their needs and enhance effectiveness. This, in turn, helps member churches improve their ability to serve their local communities.

The Presbytery provides essential resources through seven ministries, each focused on supporting different areas of our church life and mission, both locally and presbytery-wide. These are: Congregational

and Pastoral Care (MCPC), Dogwood Acres outdoor ministry (MDWA), Leadership Development (MLD), New Congregation Formation (MNCF), Pastoral Transitions (MPT), Presbytery Operations (MPO) and Representation (MR). Members serving these ministries are drawn from congregations throughout the presbytery.

This is a classic “Catch-22” situation: For the Presbytery to provide resources to the congregations and to



fulfill the essential roles of these ministries, Presbytery needs volunteers to serve. Every church in the presbytery holds the solution. Each church has skilled, insightful and talented individuals. By using the gifts and dedication of church volunteers, the presbytery can provide meaningful support and guidance that can help churches thrive in their communities.

We need names of people who are interested in serving at Presbytery and, in turn, helping their home churches. If you are interested in being a presbytery ministry member, let your pastor know, or contact me by phone at 850-832-6577 or email [kangas265@gmail.com](mailto:kangas265@gmail.com).

**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**

## Church program to expand minority students' camp access

In the aftermath of George Floyd's death, First Presbyterian Church of Tallahassee began a season of deep reflection and faithful response. Under the leadership of Director of Christian Education Christy Williams, an affinity group formed within the congregation to explore how racism is woven into our society—and into our own lives. This group became the Healing Racism Task Force (HRTF).

Over months of intentional learning, the task force read books, watched films, listened to podcasts, and gathered monthly to share insights and wrestle honestly with what they were discovering. One turning point came with the reading of *At First*, a history of FPC written by a church member. Confronted with the realities of racism embedded in the church's own past, the group recognized that learning alone was not enough. Faithful discipleship required action.

After examining both the church's 192-year history and their own hearts, the 12–20 participants crafted what they described as “a prayer, an apology, and an expression of regret for the racism practiced by First Presbyterian Church from its founding until the 1950s.” On January 21, 2024, that

confession took visible form. A plaque acknowledging this history, expressing repentance, and committing the congregation to the work of repair was installed and dedicated on the front of the church's portico in a solemn ceremony attended by church members and members of the wider community.

The work did not end there. Over the next two years, HRTF members continued discerning how best to engage in meaningful repair of historic harms. They entered into conversation with Rev. Anthony Jermaine Ross-Allam of the Presbyterian Center for the Repair of Historic Harms; the Rev. Dr. William Yoo and the Rev. Dr. Martha Moore-Keish of Columbia Theological Seminary; Ted Ellis of Florida State University's Civil Rights Institute; and leaders within Tallahassee's Black community.

One initiative grows directly out of FPC's mission to “make disciples, nurture faith, serve neighbors, and strive for justice.” For generations, youth from First Presbyterian have attended camp at Dogwood Acres. Many point to those weeks away as formative moments in their faith journeys—times of spiritual growth,

belonging, and joy.

Inspired by those experiences, FPC has established the **First Presbyterian Camp Awards**, a program designed to expand access to Dogwood Acres for minority students. Through an ongoing financial commitment, the church will underwrite 90 percent of a camper's week-long camp session. Families also will receive a \$100 gift card to help offset transportation costs and a \$20 stipend for the camper's commissary account.

The hope is that these campers will discover Dogwood Acres as a place of friendship—an outdoor retreat where individuals and groups can grow in faith, enjoy wholesome recreation, and experience Christian fellowship amid God's unspoiled creation.

At present, funding is available to support camp experiences for approximately 16 students from the Tallahassee–Leon County area. Applications will be sought through local churches and community organizations. As this program begins, we look forward to hearing the stories of growth, joy, and transformation that these camp experiences will make possible.

### From the Racial Justice Subcommittee



*By Debbie Gibson,  
Subcommittee member  
and First, Tallahassee  
member*

*“The hope is that  
these campers  
will discover  
Dogwood Acres  
as a place of  
friendship ...”*

## From Dogwood Acres



By Christy Williams,  
Director

## God welcomes all, strangers and friends



At Dogwood Youth Conference (DYC), middle and high school youth share in small Bible study groups and recreation during a beautiful weekend with Presbytery friends and new connections.

People often ask if, when Dogwood Acres becomes a 501c3 (Nope, it hasn't happened yet), whether we will allow groups from other denominations to use our facilities. The answer is a resounding "YES!" AND, we already do! Dogwood's gates are open wide for all our brothers and sisters in Christ even if they don't know who John Calvin is.

We also have non-profit groups from the community use our facility. As long as a group fits with the mission and vision of Dogwood Acres, we welcome folks to come experience the beauty and peace of our piney woods.

Having said that, February seemed to be Presbyterian month! We began the month with the Dogwood Youth Conference, where middle and high school youth explored the

Biblical stories of Jacob, Peter and Thomas as they reflected on their own doubts and anxieties. The Rev. A. J. Mealor, Fellowship, Tallahassee pastor, was the worship leader, and our summer staff returned to lead small Bible study groups and recreation. It was a beautiful weekend, watching young people reconnect with friends from across the Presbytery create new connections, rest and joyfully play – Oh, and the weather was great, too.

We are always delighted when churches in our Presbytery plan to bring their members out for a weekend. Faith Presbyterian Church, Tallahassee, came out for their annual Family Weekend, and Lafayette Presbyterian of Tallahassee's PW group came out for their annual weekend retreat. We finished up the month with our popular Pause:

Women's Yoga Retreat, where we couldn't fit one more yoga mat in the Koinonia Building! Women came from all over the Presbytery and ranged in age from 20-80. No matter the age or the flexibility, strangers became friends, and individuals became community.

As we welcome all people, we haven't forgotten the men of the Presbytery. We are excited to offer our first [Dogwood-hosted men's retreat](#). The Rev. Dr. Sheldon Steen, Christ, Tallahassee pastor, will be the retreat leader. There will be worship and rest, with time to hike, reflect, build some things and enjoy fellowship. The food will be great, including a low country boil on Saturday night. There may still be spots available for you to register. Don't miss an opportunity to be with us at Dogwood Acres.

## 'Twas the winter of iguanas dropping from trees

**W**e have had such a cold winter this year that South Floridians will remember it not just because it got below freezing, but because thousands of cold-stunned iguanas fell out of the trees. So how do you explain why it is so cold, if the planet is warming?

I always tell my grandboys that two things that seem in conflict can both be true at the same time. Broccoli can be good for you, and not taste good. Our planet can be warming, and we can have record extreme cold winters.

Last year, it snowed in Tallahassee and elsewhere in north Florida. In February of this year, the Arctic cold snap broke the low temperature record in Tallahassee, dropping to 18 degrees F.

There was so much snow in 2025, that our grandboys used cement mixing trays to slide down our hills for days, and our steep driveway, covered in ice was undrivable. This year, we had a light dusting of snow in a few places and lots of consecutive below - freezing nights.

Meteorologists talk about the polar vortex shifting south, allowing the extreme cold weather from the Arctic to move south. What does that mean? The polar vortex is a large band of cold air and strong winds 10 -30 miles above the surface in



Source: <https://www.theatlantic.com/photography/2026/02/photos-frozen-iguanas-florida-cold-snap/685863/>.

the stratosphere. The vortex can be pushed off the pole, becoming weaker or wavy, allowing the arctic air to move south. There are possibly multiple reasons this happens, and they have to do with the extreme warming in the Arctic and elsewhere. Scientists are still investigating what exactly is happening.

So, there is a connection between extreme cold weather to our warming world, and two things can be true at the same time. We can set record high temperatures in the summer and record low temperatures in the winter, and both are related to our planet warming. Note that there isn't more cold, but rather, a redistribution of it. Our winter temperatures are actually warming.

While we were freezing, there were intense heat and wildfires in Australia. Mozambique experienced record heavy rain with weeks of

downpours. Flooding affected at least 650,000 people who were displaced or had their property destroyed or damaged. Crops were destroyed and livestock killed, and the risk of cholera was elevated. So, as our world warms because of our burning of fossil fuels, we can experience extreme heat, polar cold, heavy precipitation and raging wildfires all at the same time.

Wondering what you should do? Stanford University Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering Mark Z. Jacobson's new book, *Still No Miracles Needed: How today's Technology Can Save Our Climate and Clean Our Air*, might be just what you need to read. And, if you live in south Florida, watch out for the falling iguanas in the extreme cold weather.

## Caring for Creation



By  
**Pam McVety,**  
Presbytery  
Stewardship  
of Creation  
Enabler

*"...there is a connection between extreme cold weather to our warming world, and two things can be true at the same time."*

### Small congregation offers huge hospitality at Winter Stated Presbytery Meeting



At left, attendees are warmly greeted upon arrival at the Presbytery's Feb. 24 meeting, hosted by **First Presbyterian Church of Wewahitchka** at neighboring First United Methodist Church of Wewahitchka. Despite being displaced by damage and subsequent repairs to their facility, the meeting hosts offered the utmost hospitality, ensuring every amenity was available for conducting the meeting's business while providing a cordial, connectional setting, including delicious morning refreshments and lunch with delectable homemade salads and desserts.

During the morning worship, below, from left, Rev. Dr. Joan Wooten (Retired) provides beautiful accompaniment as the attendees join together in singing. Gulf Beach, Panama City Beach Pastor the Rev. Dr. Michael Askew preaches an inspiring sermon titled "What Is It That You See?", based on based on Isaiah 42:5-7 and Mark 8:22-26. "Sometimes, we see wrongness and injustice only partially," he said. "Jesus wants us to see fully."



Below, from left, Presbytery Ministry Coordinating Council Moderator Elder Don Mowat, Presbytery Stated Clerk Rev. Eric Spoon and outgoing Presbytery Moderator Elder Mary Hodges lead a service of installation for incoming Presbytery Moderator RE Greg Seltzer and Vice Moderator TE Erin Rugh. Mrs. Hodges places a silver PC(USA) cross pendant on Dr. Seltzer upon his installation. Dr. Selzer then presents a boxed silver PC(USA) cross pendant to Mrs. Hodges in appreciation for her service as prior moderator.



## PMT shares in experiencing time of change

The Ministry of Pastoral Transitions is, itself, in transition. We recently said “goodbye” to our former moderator, the Rev. Stacey Kaye White, who moves on to other responsibilities, and former vice moderator, the Rev. Blair Beaver, who accepted a call to a church in Arizona. Following Rev. Beaver’s departure, the Rev. Dr. Ted Land will serve as pulpit supply until Easter at First Presbyterian

Church of Marianna, where Rev. Beaver was pastor.

MPT welcomes our new moderator, the Rev. Hanlim Chae, of Lafayette Presbyterian Church, of Tallahassee. We also welcome new ministry members the Rev. Mark Broadhead (Retired) and Michelle McDonald, First, Quincy, Director of Christian Education, Mission and Outreach.

Meanwhile, our pulpit supply list is continuously



updated. We encourage all who currently are on the list to review it periodically for potential update needs, and those wish to be listed, to contact MPT member Pam Nulty at [prnulty@gmail.com](mailto:prnulty@gmail.com) or by calling 850-450-5880.

## From the Ministry of Pastoral Transitions (MPT)



*By Ed Nickinson, MPT member and Trinity, Pensacola Ruling Elder*



Above, from left, in a presentation of two climate-related overtures for presbytery consideration for concurrence, First, Tallahassee Pastor Rev. Glenn Hodges offers theological foundations for the overtures. First, Tallahassee Elder and Presbytery Caring for Creation Enabler Pam McVety gives details about the drafting of the two overtures and what they’re intended to do.

At left, during a tour of First Presbyterian Church of Wewahitchka’s sanctuary as it undergoes repairs, the congregation’s pastor, Rev. Carol Wood, shares history and heartfelt sentiments about the beloved Carpenter Gothic structure. It was built from locally-sourced cypress and heartwood pine, consecrated in 1903 as St. John the Baptist Episcopal Church, then purchased in 1943 to become First, Wewahitchka, she said.

At the tour’s conclusion, Dr. Greg Selzer led the group in prayer for First Presbyterian of Wewahitchka.



**PRESBYTERY OF FLORIDA**

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

Physical address:  
3368 Harmony Rd

Phone: 850-535-2335

E-mail:  
office@presbyteryofflorida.com

Website:  
www.presbyteryofflorida.net

**Ministry Coordinating Council**

Elder Mary Hodges

mary37@comcast.net

**Ministry of Congregational and Pastoral Care**

Elder Linda Lovins  
artsedlin@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. Hanlim Chae  
pastorchaehl@gmail.com

**Ministry of Presbytery Operations**

Rev. Dr. Ted Land  
tedland46@gmail.com

**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)

**What if...**

Falling was standing?  
Stumbling was finding?  
Dying was rising?

**What if...**

We stopped our black and white in and out value judgement living? And we began to experience life as it is, as we are.

**Register Now!**



dogwoodacres.org



**DOGWOOD ACRES**

Retreat Center and Summer Camp  
Chipley, FL



**Rev. Dr. Sheldon Steen**

Sheldon is the pastor at Christ Presbyterian Church in Tallahassee. He and his wife parent five children and are co-owners of Amicus Brewing Ventures where he serves as the head brewer. Sheldon is an avid reader, camper, and yoga enthusiast, and in recent years has begun to rely on meditation and centering prayer as spiritual disciplines.

Saturday -  
Building Project

Saturday Night -  
Low Country Boil!

**"BECOMING"**  
A RETREAT FOR MEN

"The first half of life is writing the text, the second half is writing the commentary on that text."

Richard Rohr,  
Falling Upward

March 6-8 | \$180

Join us for a weekend centered in worship and reflection with plenty of hiking, resting, serving/building projects, eating and enjoying the beauty of Dogwood and the fellowship of others.



**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.presbysmusic.org/conference>