



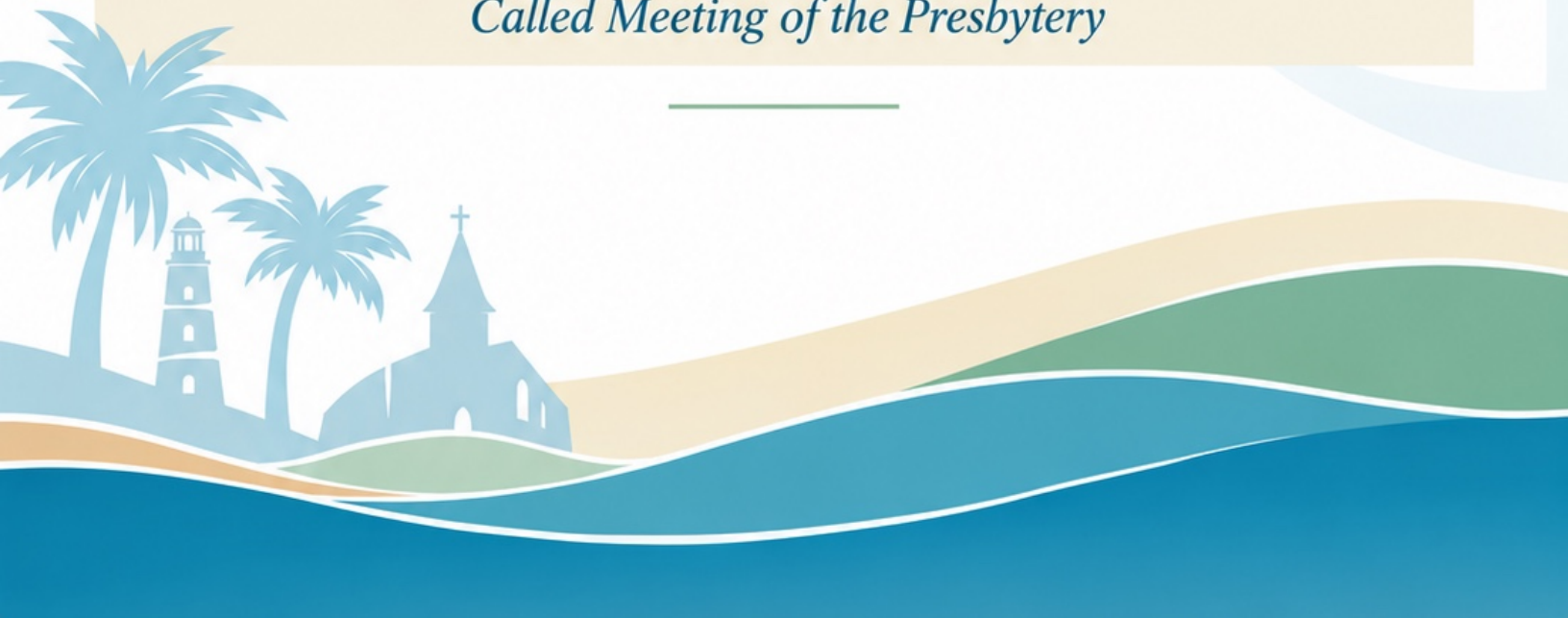
Presbytery of Florida

Furthering the Ministry
of Jesus Christ in Northwest Florida

PRESBYTERY OF FLORIDA Strategic Plan Implementation Report

October 27, 2026

Called Meeting of the Presbytery



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Operations (MPO), and New Congregation Formation (MNCF) were each engaged in important work to clarify responsibilities, strengthen policies, and support congregations.

Among the matters reported were the development and revision of ministry handbooks, improvements to boundary training processes, clarification of temporary pastoral relationships, and revisions to the Presbytery's By-Laws and Manual of Operations.

The Taskforce also acknowledged that the implementation of Years 2 and 3 had been paused by action of the Winter 2026 Stated Meeting while the newly called Equipping Presbyter/Stated Clerk completed his initial orientation and became familiar with the Presbytery's congregations, ministries, and leadership.

Since that report, considerable attention has been given to the foundational work necessary to move the Strategic Plan forward.

This includes:

- **Congregational relationships and pastoral support:** Visiting congregations, listening to leaders, accompanying pastoral transitions, and responding to emerging needs and challenges.
- **Communication:** Developing a more intentional communications strategy, including our website, newsletter, social media, and the sharing of stories and resources across the Presbytery.
- **Administrative and technological infrastructure:** Reviewing staffing responsibilities, cybersecurity, digital collaboration, and the possibility of establishing a centralized database to preserve and share institutional knowledge.
- **Regional relationships:** Developing the proposed Regional Advocate model to strengthen relationships among congregations and leaders in our East, Central, and West regions.
- **Mission and identity:** Clarifying the language through which we describe our calling and considering whether our institutional identity accurately reflects the geographic community entrusted to our care.

These developments represent meaningful progress, although several initiatives remain in planning, review, or implementation.

We have spent considerable time building the foundation. We must now give equal attention to the culture that foundation was intended to serve.

This distinction is important. A new website, database, administrative procedure, or ministry structure may improve how we function. But none of these, by itself, guarantees stronger relationships, healthier congregations, more faithful leadership, or deeper participation in Christ's mission.

Those outcomes require intentional formation, shared responsibility, and continued discernment.

III. What You Have Told Us: The SWOT Process

During the August 2026 Stated Meeting, the Presbytery was invited to participate in a SWOT assessment, identifying our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

This exercise was intended to help us compare the aspirations of the original Strategic Plan with the experiences and perspectives of our congregations today.

We received 42 SWOT responses. The feedback presently compiled and available for this report represents 37 of those responses.

The original responses have been preserved and will continue to be provided to the Implementation Taskforce—**Tim Crawford, Chair; Mark Broadhead; Erin Rugh; and Karen Weaver**—for further review, interpretation, and analysis.

Therefore, what follows should be understood as an initial summary of the feedback, not the Taskforce's final assessment. The remaining responses and the original written reflections deserve careful consideration before comprehensive conclusions are reached.

Nevertheless, several important themes are emerging.

Our Strengths

Our people recognize the faithful leadership, experience, relationships, and ministries already present within the Presbytery. There is appreciation for the care congregations provide one another, the resources available through our shared ministry, and the contributions of ministries such as Dogwood Acres and UKirk.

We have gifts worth celebrating, and many of those gifts already exist within our congregations.

Our Weaknesses

The feedback identifies continuing concerns about communication, participation, trust, leadership development, and the relationships among congregations.

Some respondents describe uncertainty about the Presbytery's purpose and the practical ways it supports local ministry. Others recognize that congregations often operate in isolation, even when neighboring churches face similar challenges.

Our Opportunities

There is significant interest in stronger regional relationships, training for ruling elders and congregational officers, more intentional leadership development, resource sharing, and partnerships that extend ministry beyond the walls of our church buildings.

There is also an opportunity to identify the knowledge, experiences, and resources already present among our congregations and make those gifts available to others.

Our Threats

Respondents express concerns about declining membership, financial limitations, changing communities, aging congregations, difficulty finding new leaders, and the tendency to approach the future from a perspective of scarcity or fear.

These challenges are real. Yet our response cannot be determined only by what we fear losing. It must also be shaped by what we believe God is calling us to do with what we have.

What is especially significant is how closely these emerging themes correspond with the findings of the original Strategic Plan.

In 2023, our congregations asked to be equipped, supported, and connected. In 2026, we continue hearing the desire for relationships, leadership development, practical resources, and meaningful participation in ministry.

This convergence suggests that the original direction remains relevant, even as we continue learning how best to implement it.

IV. Clarifying Our Identity: Our Name, Vision, and Mission

One of the most important developments in our continuing discernment is the effort to articulate more clearly who we are, why we exist, and how we participate in Christ's ministry.

Our proposed identity brings together our name, vision, and mission in a simple and consistent framework.

OUR PROPOSED NAME

PRESBYTERY OF NORTHWEST FLORIDA

Our history matters. We carry the distinction of being the first presbytery established in Florida, and that history deserves to be remembered, celebrated, and communicated to future generations.

Yet Florida today includes several PC(USA) presbyteries, each serving its particular region and context.

The proposed name, *Presbytery of Northwest Florida*, is not intended to disregard our history. Rather, it is an opportunity to affirm once again the particular place where God has called us to serve.

Northwest Florida is not simply where our Presbytery happens to be located. It is the geographic and missional context in which our congregations and leaders participate in Christ's ministry.

The proposed name is therefore more than an administrative adjustment. It is an act of **self-differentiation**, helping us articulate who we are, where we are, and whom we are called to serve.

The name change remains a proposal requiring appropriate Presbytery action.

OUR VISION

Furthering the Ministry of Jesus Christ in Northwest Florida.

The word **Furthering** stands at the center of this vision.

Christ's ministry does not begin with the Presbytery. **Christ is already at work** in our congregations, communities, leaders, and neighbors.

Our calling is not to manufacture that ministry, but to recognize it, participate in it faithfully, strengthen one another, and help it reach further.

This is an important theological distinction. Our congregations are not empty vessels waiting for the Presbytery to bring them vitality. God has already placed gifts, relationships, experiences, and opportunities for ministry among them.

The Presbytery's responsibility is to help recognize, cultivate, connect, and strengthen those gifts.

OUR MISSION

152 *Connecting, equipping, and supporting congregations and leaders to participate faithfully in*
153 *Christ's ministry.*

154 Three words describe how that mission takes shape:

155 **CONNECT • EQUIP • SUPPORT**

156 **CONNECT** — Building relationships among congregations, leaders, ministries, communities,
157 and the wider Church.

158 **EQUIP** — Developing leaders and sharing the knowledge, resources, tools, and practices needed
159 for faithful ministry.

160 **SUPPORT** — Walking alongside congregations and leaders through ministry, transitions,
161 challenges, discernment, and new possibilities.

162 Together, these words provide a practical framework for the work already envisioned by our
163 Strategic Plan.

164 They also provide a common standard by which to evaluate our decisions.

165 **Does this further the ministry of Jesus Christ in Northwest Florida? How?**

166 That question should guide our meetings, ministries, staffing, finances, communications, and use
167 of resources.

168 It should also guide our storytelling. Our website, newsletter, and social media should do more
169 than announce activities or report institutional decisions. They should help tell the stories of
170 where Christ is already at work and how our congregations are connecting, equipping, and
171 supporting one another to participate.

172 Our emerging identity can therefore be summarized simply:

173 **Our name tells where we are called.**

174 **Our vision tells why we exist.**

175 **Our mission tells how we participate.**

176 **Our stories show where Christ is already at work.**

177 This language is offered as a unifying direction for continued discernment and appropriate
178 action, not as a substitute for the Presbytery's established processes of approval.

179 **V. From Structure to Relationships: The Work Before Us**

180 As we approach 2027, the central question is no longer simply whether we have implemented the
181 organizational changes described in our Strategic Plan.

182 The deeper question is:

183 **Are we becoming the Presbytery we discerned God was calling us to become?**

184 The next phase of implementation should focus on several interconnected priorities.

185 **1. Strengthening our regional relationships.** The proposed Regional Advocates can help
186 establish meaningful, consistent relationships with congregations across our three regions. Their
187 primary responsibility should be presence, listening, encouragement, and connection—not the
188 creation of another administrative layer.

2. Developing a network of congregational gifts. The Strategic Plan envisioned a Directory of Talents. We now have an opportunity to develop that concept into a living network of gifts, connecting congregations that possess particular knowledge, experience, and resources with others that might benefit from them.

3. Equipping congregational leadership. We should prioritize practical opportunities for officer training, Session leadership development, regional gatherings, and the sharing of effective ministry practices. This includes helping congregations recognize vitality beyond traditional measurements of membership, attendance, and finances.

4. Strengthening our communications and administrative systems. Our website, newsletter, social media, database, and other tools should serve the purpose of connecting people, sharing resources, preserving knowledge, and telling the stories of ministry already taking place.

5. Making Presbytery meetings opportunities for formation. The original Strategic Plan envisioned gatherings that offer more than necessary business. We must continue developing meetings that include worship, education, meaningful relationships, spiritual encouragement, and practical resources for congregational ministry.

These priorities are not a replacement for our Strategic Plan. They represent the continuation of its implementation, informed by what we have accomplished and what our congregations are telling us.

VI. The Continuing Responsibility of the Implementation Taskforce

The Implementation Taskforce has an important responsibility in this next phase.

Its task is not necessarily to develop another strategic plan. We already have one. Rather, it is to help the Presbytery evaluate what has been accomplished, understand what remains unfinished, interpret the feedback we are receiving, and recommend practical priorities for continued implementation.

In particular, the Taskforce is invited to:

- Complete its review of the 42 SWOT responses and report the emerging findings to the Presbytery.
- Evaluate the original Strategic Plan's commitments, distinguishing what has been completed, what is underway, what remains paused, and what may require adaptation.
- Consider how the proposed mission framework—**Connect, Equip, Support**—can guide the work of our ministries.
- Help identify a manageable number of priorities and practical measures of progress for 2027.
- Continue working with the Ministry Coordinating Council, the Equipping Presbyter/Stated Clerk, and our various ministries to ensure that implementation remains coordinated, accountable, and mission-focused.

The Taskforce's continued work will be essential in helping us move from broad aspirations to practical and measurable progress.

VII. Our Invitation to the Presbytery

Our Strategic Plan began with listening. It must continue with listening.

The original plan identified our needs and established a direction. The work of the past several years has begun establishing the necessary foundation. The SWOT feedback now offers an opportunity to evaluate our progress and refine our next steps.

We invite congregations and leaders to continue helping us answer three questions:

1. **Where have you experienced the benefits of our Strategic Plan in the life and ministry of your congregation?**
2. **What additional connections, training, or support would help your congregation participate more faithfully in Christ's ministry?**
3. **What gifts, knowledge, experiences, or resources might your congregation share with others?**

These questions remind us that implementation is not the responsibility of a Taskforce, a staff member, or a ministry committee alone. It is a shared responsibility of our connectional Church.

VIII. Looking Toward 2028

The original Strategic Plan envisioned that by 2027–2028 the Presbytery would be experiencing renewed participation, stronger relationships, and a more effective shared ministry.

That remains our hope.

Yet we must remember that success cannot be measured only by whether a new structure is in place, a website is launched, or an administrative process is improved.

The more meaningful measures will be found in the life of our congregations: leaders who feel equipped, Sessions that discern faithfully, congregations that know and support one another, gifts that are shared, and communities experiencing the ministry of Jesus Christ.

We have made progress. We have more work to do. And we continue to listen.

The goal is not simply to say that we implemented a Strategic Plan. The goal is to become more fully the connectional community of congregations and leaders that Christ calls us to be.

Our direction is clear:

CONNECT. EQUIP. SUPPORT.

FURTHERING CHRIST'S MINISTRY.

Together, we continue **Furthering the Ministry of Jesus Christ in Northwest Florida.**

Respectfully submitted for the continuing discernment of the Presbytery of Florida.

Based on the Strategic Plan adopted October 24, 2023, revised October 29, 2025; the Summer 2026 Implementation Taskforce report; the proposed vision, mission, and identity framework; and the initial compilation of 37 of the 42 SWOT responses received.

SWOT Happens: Listening to the Voices of Our Presbytery

Presbytery of Florida | Congregational Feedback | July 29–August 5, 2026

The purpose of this report is to allow members of the Presbytery to hear what people are actually saying about our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges. Rather than presenting only conclusions or recommendations, we want to make the feedback accessible so that commissioners, pastors, ruling elders, and congregational leaders can recognize the concerns, hopes, and ideas expressed by those who participated. This is especially important as we consider our emerging vision of Furthering the Ministry of Jesus Christ in Northwest Florida and the practical work of connecting, equipping, and supporting our congregations.

The survey contains 37 responses (out of 42 that could not be digitized, but they will be.) These represent individual perspectives, not necessarily the official positions of their congregations or a statistically representative sample of the entire Presbytery.

1. What are people telling us?

Across the responses, several themes emerge:

- Relationships matter. People value fellowship, mutual support, and shared ministry, but many want stronger connections between congregations and Presbytery leadership.
- Communication needs to become more effective. Information may exist, but people do not always know where to find it, whom to contact, or why it matters.
- Congregations want practical support. Respondents mention grants, training, pastoral care, leadership development, technology, and help navigating congregational transitions.
- Participation is a challenge. Travel distances, meeting schedules, competing responsibilities, and uncertainty about leadership opportunities discourage involvement.
- Our future requires intentionality. Declining membership, aging congregations, financial pressures, and changing cultural expectations raise serious questions about sustainable ministry.

An important distinction: these responses do not all agree. Some people see our traditions as strengths, while others see them as obstacles. Some want more digital participation, while others emphasize face-to-face relationships. Both perspectives deserve to be heard.

2. Survey results at a glance

Survey responses **37**

Individual respondents: Communication effectiveness **3.5/5**

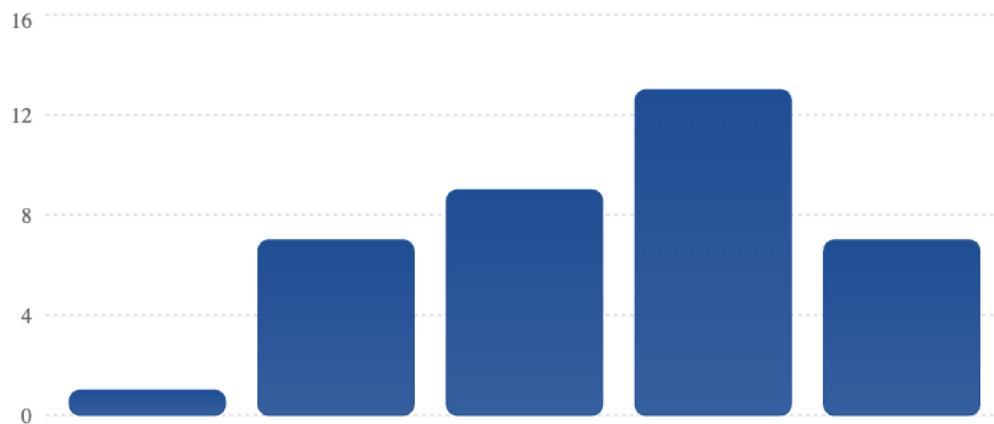
Average respondent rating Preferred email newsletter **32/37** (86% of respondents)

Very comfortable with digital tools **23/37** (62% of respondents)

How effectively are we communicating?

Communication about mission partnerships and upcoming events

37 responses; 1 = lowest effectiveness, 5 = highest.



Although 20 of 37 respondents rated communication positively (4 or 5), another 17 gave it a 3 or lower. This suggests that our communication is reaching some people effectively while leaving others insufficiently informed or connected.

What are people saying about grants?

Have received a Presbytery grant 18/37

Know grants exist but have not applied 7/37

Unsure about their congregation's grant status 10/37

Interested but do not know where to begin 2/37

The survey reveals an important issue: grant availability and grant accessibility are not the same thing. Even respondents whose congregations have received grants describe a lack of awareness, uncertainty about eligibility, and difficulty knowing whom to contact.

How do people want to participate?

Of the 37 respondents, 7 said yes to learning more about serving beyond their local congregation, 14 said maybe, 14 said no, and 2 responded by asking why. This suggests that inviting people to participate is not simply a matter of announcing vacancies. We may also need to explain the purpose, expectations, and value of serving the wider church.

3. The SWOT: What people actually said

The following are selected, representative responses from the survey, grouped by their original SWOT questions. Quotations retain the respondents' language, with minor corrections to obvious text-encoding errors.

Strengths — What do we already have?

Respondents identified relationships, faithful leadership, shared ministries, experience, and commitment to the Gospel.

“Unity amid diversity.”

“Mutual support and encouragement.”

“RELATIONSHIPS.”

“Its people, their faith, and the power of hope and joy.”

“I think we genuinely care for one another. The two things we do best and have for a long time are Dogwood Acres!! and UKirk.”

“The diverseness of the presbytery, people and experiences from all walks of life working together in a common goal.”

What this tells us: Our people and shared ministries are significant assets. We do not need to begin from nothing; we need to strengthen the connections that already exist.

Weaknesses — What needs attention?

Respondents repeatedly raised communication, trust, low participation, limited understanding of Presbytery, and difficulty building relationships.

“There is a lack of trust across the presbytery.”

“We don't know each other, welcome each other. We don't know what Presbytery stands for.”

“We don't engage the way we should. We don't listen/read/connect with each other well. We leave it to the same 6 people to manage almost everything.”

“We don't know how to simplify so we just create another committee, acronym, etc.”

“Low participation at the presbytery level from congregations in our ministry and work.”

“Our geography - 2 time zones.”

What this tells us: The challenge is not simply sending more information. People want clarity, belonging, accountability, and accessible ways to contribute.

Opportunities — Where could we grow?

Respondents suggested regional gatherings, resource-sharing, leadership training, collaborative ministry, more personal visits, and intentional community-building.

“Relationship first, collaborative vision-casting, equipping ministry teams with knowledge and community, support with things like policies—why should each church reinvent the wheel?”

“Sharing what is working in similar size congregations.”

“Experts mentor congregations.”

“Encourage more Ruling Elders to become Commissioned Ruling Elders.”

“Provide better opportunities for younger members to participate in presbytery functions and activities.”

“Rather than looking inward, look outward towards working together to support ministries we already have and develop new ministries.”

What this tells us: Many of the proposed opportunities align naturally with connecting, equipping, and supporting congregations. There is an appetite for practical collaboration rather than simply creating more structures.

Threats — What should we prepare for?

Respondents described aging and declining congregations, financial uncertainty, changing cultural attitudes toward organized religion, polarization, and difficulties sustaining pastoral leadership.

“Biggest concern is dwindling congregations.”

“Aging membership living on fixed incomes and churches unable to afford full time pastoral care.”

“Lack of shared support and ability to balance the Presbytery budget.”

“Smaller pool of PCUSA pastors willing to come to the Florida panhandle.”

“Not being able to meet our youth where they are will stagnate our growth.”

“More and more fragmentation.”

What this tells us: Respondents recognize that the environment in which our congregations serve is changing. The question is how to prepare faithfully while continuing to support existing ministries.

4. Complete feedback: Let people read for themselves

I have organized the complete open-ended responses from all 37 participants into a separate document, rather than limiting the material to selected quotations.

SWOT Happens — Complete Survey Feedback

The document retains critical comments, positive feedback, and expressions of uncertainty. That matters because we should not present only the responses that support our current direction.

5. How does this feedback inform where we go?

The following connections are my interpretation of the survey, not additional statements from respondents.

What people are asking for	How it relates to our emerging direction
More personal relationships and trust	Connect: Regional Advocates, congregational visits, and intentional fellowship
More accessible training and resources	Equip: Leadership development, policy education, CRE training, and practical resources
Greater care for congregations and pastors	Support: Pastoral care, transition assistance, and shared ministry resources
Clearer information and greater transparency	Website, newsletter, communications strategy, and accessible information
A stronger sense of shared purpose	Vision, mission, and clearer understanding of our identity
More accessible participation	Regional gatherings, hybrid options, and opportunities for younger and working leaders

6. Questions worth carrying into our strategic work

The survey gives us an opportunity to ask some important questions together:

1. How do we move from being a Presbytery that primarily conducts business to one that intentionally builds relationships?
2. How do we make existing resources easier to understand and access before creating new programs?
3. How can congregations experience the Presbytery as a partner in ministry rather than primarily an administrative or regulatory body?
4. How will we know whether our efforts to connect, equip, and support congregations are actually making a difference?
5. How do we make room for congregations and leaders who have not historically participated in Presbytery leadership?

The central message I would offer the Presbytery is this:

Our SWOT survey does not suggest that we lack faithful people, ministries, gifts, or opportunities. It suggests that we need to become more intentional about connecting those gifts, communicating their availability, equipping people to use them, and supporting congregations as they respond to changing realities. The survey also reminds us that a strategic direction must be more than an attractive statement. It must be experienced by our congregations through relationships, accessible resources, shared ministry, and trustworthy leadership.