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# The Panhandle Presbyterian

*A monthly publication of the Presbytery of Florida*



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July 2025

## GA applicants, presbytery vice moderator needed

The Ministry of Representation presently has many irons in the fire. First, MR needs to nominate and the Presbytery elect one teaching elder commissioner, one ruling elder commissioner, plus one alternate for each, and one Young Adult Advisory Delegate (YAAD) to the 227th General Assembly. The GA will be held via Zoom June 22 – 24, 2026, and in person in Milwaukee, WI, June 27 – July 2, 2026.

[Guidelines with an application form](#) have been sent to each church in the Presbytery's pastor and clerk of session, as well as posted in the Presbytery's weekly e-newsletter. The deadline for applications is July 13, 2025.

Second, we need a Presbytery Vice Moderator, class 2026. This position is a three-year leadership commitment at Presbytery. You'll serve one year as Presbytery Vice Moderator, one year as Presbytery Moderator, and one year as Moderator of the Ministry Coordinating Council. The selected individual will attend a moderator training class presented by the PC (USA).

Third and fourth, a candidate for class 2027 is needed to serve on the Ministry of New Congregation Formation, and we need an alternate elder commissioner for the Synod. If you are interested or need more information, please contact me by phone at 850-832-6577 or email [kangas265@gmail.com](mailto:kangas265@gmail.com).

## From the Ministry of Representation (MR)



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

*"The GA will  
be held via Zoom  
June 22 – 24, 2026  
and in person in  
Milwaukee, WI  
June 27 – July 2,  
2026."*



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



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

*"Each gathering  
has been a gift,  
a space of  
curiosity,  
shared hope,  
and mutual  
encouragement."*

**Nurture of Gulf Coast new worshipping community ongoing**

**I**t was a joy to lead worship at the May Presbytery meeting. Thank you for the warm welcome and encouragement as I continue to live into the calling of Tide and Table, a new worshipping ministry/community being nurtured along the Florida Gulf Coast.

Over the past few months, I've had the opportunity to share the vision of Tide and Table with several congregations across our Presbytery. I've preached and/or spoken at Gretna and Woodland Churches in Gretna; First Presbyterian, Fort Walton Beach; Euchee Valley Presbyterian, DeFuniak Springs; Christ Presbyterian, Tallahassee; First Presbyterian, Lynn Haven; and Freeport Presbyterian. Each gathering has been a gift, a space of curiosity, shared hope, and mutual encouragement.

Alongside this, I've been facilitating a seven-week online discussion series called *Wisdom Lab*, where we've been exploring the intersections between the book of Proverbs, *Brave New World*, and the cultural questions we face today. These conversations have been rich and thought-provoking, offering space for both challenge and growth as we consider how wisdom can guide us in our rapidly changing world.



Work on the Tide and Table website is in its final stages, and I'm hopeful for a soft launch this July. The Tide & Table website will be a space to **explore, connect, and participate**—offering stories, reflections, resources, and ways to engage the vision in both practical and sacred ways. It will be a **hub for the curious, the weary, and the spiritually creative**—offering gentle structure and sacred space, whether one is local to the Gulf Coast or joining from afar.

Community connection continues to be a vital part of this journey. I've been building relationships by volunteering with several local organizations, including Emerald & Forgotten Coast Adventures, Friends of South Walton Sea Turtles, Caring and Sharing of South Walton, and the Emerald Coast Theatre Company. These partnerships are not only opening doors for ministry, but also helping me better understand the rhythms and needs of the people who live, work, and rest along this beautiful stretch of coastline.

I'm writing each week

at [nicoleattandt.substack.com](http://nicoleattandt.substack.com)—a space where I share stories, wrestle with big questions, and explore what it means to live a rooted, soulful faith in a noisy world. It's tender. It's honest. Sometimes it's a little salty. I'd love for you to follow along.

On a personal note, this season has also brought some family concerns that have required attention and care. I'm grateful for grace in the midst of that and will be taking a vacation July 4–13 to rest and regroup.

I remain deeply grateful for the support of this Presbytery as Tide and Table takes root. If you're curious about this work or would like me to speak or visit your congregation, I'd love to connect ([nicole.richardson@tideandtable.org](mailto:nicole.richardson@tideandtable.org)). Thank you for holding this vision in your prayers. It is truly a collaborative unfolding of God's Spirit among us.



## MPT celebrates incoming pastors, helps other churches' search

**T**he Ministry of Pastoral Transitions (MPT) has been active as we help congregations find new pastors. The journey from a pastor retiring or taking another call to a new pastor beginning always has twists and turns. Yet it's a good journey, one that enables Pastor Nominating Committees (PNCs) to be as thorough as possible, so that the pastor that God calls is the right fit for that congregation (and vice versa!).

In early June, we celebrated with Euclidean Valley, DeFuniak Springs, as they welcomed Teaching Elder John Wamsley to serve as part-time stated supply. John is a familiar face in Florida Presbytery; before serving in Texas, he was pastor of First, Marianna. Welcome back to Florida Presbytery, John (and wife, Linda)!

We also celebrated



with First, Crestview and Laurel Hill as they hired Ruling Elder Joanne Kublik as part-time Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE). Jo's ministry there will provide consistency and encouragement, and for that we – and they – are grateful. Additionally, we celebrated with Lafayette, Tallahassee June 15 as they installed TE Hanlim Chae as their pastor.

We continue to work with 1<sup>st</sup> Pensacola as they seek an associate pastor; Trinity, Pensacola, as they conclude the Holy Cow! assessment and soon begin the search for their next pastor; 1<sup>st</sup> Quincy as they continue their search

for a new pastor; and 1<sup>st</sup> Tallahassee as they search for their next pastor.

MPT is comprised of dedicated, creative members: TE Blair Beaver, TE Hanlim Chae, RE Ed Nickinson, RE Pam Nulty, and TE Stacey Kay White. We are disappointed that RE Joanne Kublik is stepping down from the ministry team, but we wish her well. We're grateful to TE Mark Broadhead for keeping us steered in the correct direction during our meetings!

If you'd like to be part of this satisfying and active ministry team, please reach out to me at [revlwmartin@gmail.com](mailto:revlwmartin@gmail.com).

**From the  
Ministry of  
Pastoral  
Transitions  
(MPT)**



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

*“MPT is comprised of dedicated, creative members...”*

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.*

July 2	Youth Ministry
August 6	Commissioned Ruling Elders
September 3	Small(er) Congregations



To register, follow the QR code or visit [synodofsouthatlantic.org](http://synodofsouthatlantic.org)

Summer  
Suppers  
& 'How to Help' Series

Wednesdays,  
July 16-August 13th, 6 p.m.  
First Presbyterian Church, Milton  
Fellowship Hall, 5203 Elmira  
\$5 per person

<http://www.fpcmilton.org/summer-suppers>

## From the Strategic Plan Implementation Task Force



**By Tim Crawford,  
Chair, and  
1st, Crestview  
Ruling Elder**

*“Together, we are  
building a vibrant  
and faithful future,  
rooted in our  
collective call  
to serve God,  
our congregations,  
and our  
communities.”*

## Strategic Plan ongoing progress continues

The Implementation Taskforce was established with clear direction from the Presbytery of Florida, through the vision “Be a Presbytery of Strong, Healthy, Energetic Congregations Advancing the Ministries of Jesus Christ” and mission “Provide Guidance, Training, and Assistance to Our Congregations.” Using the details found in the Presbytery-approved Strategic Plan, the taskforce continues working to move the presbytery forward in meeting these challenges set through continuous progress of monitoring, assisting where challenges arise, and listening to members of the presbytery. Members of the Taskforce include Rev. Mark Broadhead (Retired), Elder Rick Clubb (Gulf Beach, Panama City Beach), Elder Tim Crawford (First, Crestview) Elder Emily Moss (First, Lynn Haven), Rev. Erin Rugh (Faith, Tallahassee) and Elder Karen Weaver (First, Monticello).

Earlier this year, the presbytery declared the first-year goal of “Move from Static to Ecstatic” was successfully completed, as all ministries are functioning as designed by the Strategic Plan. Certainly, this does not mean everything is perfected and meets all our needs;

improvement continues and on a regular basis. An example of this was displayed during our Spring Presbytery Meeting, held in May, when the name of the Ministry of Congregational Health was approved to update their name to the Ministry of Congregational and Pastoral Health. This change better reflects the critical ministry’s duties and work of supporting the Presbytery’s vision and mission.

With the first-year goal of the Strategic Plan’s five-year reorganization effort complete, we are now moving toward completing our years two and three goal titled “A New Culture in the Presbytery is Afoot”, where our ministries are engaged with three efforts: 1. To identify members of our presbytery to be resources for interacting with local churches to help “Meet Individual Congregation’s Needs.” 2. Enhance our communications to “Convey the New Culture Within the Presbytery, and 3. “Advertise What Our Presbytery Now Gives to You.”

This phase is the key element to our Strategic Plan and requires everyone to be involved for the plan to be successful. This involvement includes everyone available to

work with and in our ministries. If you are looking for a place to use your talents, contact the presbytery office or me. Should you be asked to join a ministry or be part of a team, say yes! Other things you can do: Continue to support your congregation’s financial pledge to the presbytery; advocate for the presbytery’s vision and mission, and, most importantly, include our presbytery in your regular prayers.

As we continue our presbytery’s journey, challenges to fulfilling the Strategic Plan goals will always be found, but the work and efforts of our ministries and the Implementation Taskforce will endure by relying on the strength that comes from you and our unity as one church and our shared purpose. Together, we are building a vibrant and faithful future, rooted in our collective call to serve God, our congregations, and our communities.

Thank you for your continued support and prayers. Stay tuned for further updates as we continue to move forward with faith and determination.

## It's Per Capita, not a "head tax"

The work and ministries of the presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly are financially supported by what congregations contribute through what is known as Per Capita (Latin = for each head). How does this work?

Through much of the presbytery's history, the Per Capita amount asked for was determined by what the General Assembly and the Synod of South Atlantic required per member, plus a relatively small amount asked to help maintain the "business side" of the presbytery.

A second line item called Unified Giving was used for supporting the missions and ministries of the presbytery. Some congregations gave generously to the Unified Giving, others gave what they felt they could afford, a few gave nothing.

About eight years ago, the presbytery budget was realigned. The two separate lines – Per Capita

and Unified Giving – were combined to form the Shared Support line. This was designed to ask all congregations to share equally, per member, in meeting the requirements of General Assembly, the Synod, and support for ongoing ministry.

Being Presbyterian means we are part of a connectional denomination. General Assembly, Synod, and presbytery needs were all taken into consideration to determine the amount of money needed to meet these obligations. This amount was then divided by the total membership of our congregations in the presbytery. Each congregation was then sent a request for their share to support the mission and ministry of the presbytery and denomination.

Something many do not know: The presbytery is **required** to pay the General Assembly and the Synod their portions of the Per Capita. Congregations are asked, but not

required, to give toward the per capita amounts. What congregations give helps offset those required of the presbytery.

This year, 15% of the per member amount is sent to the General Assembly and the Synod, leaving the remainder for our use. This means that whatever is not covered by congregational giving reduces the amount available for the work, ministries, and mission of the presbytery.

So, where do things stand financially? The bare-bones budget for 2025 is \$339,144. Church pledges for 2025 total \$306,775. Amount required by General Assembly and the Synod: \$50,871. Because not all congregations have made a pledge yet, and because some have pledged less than asked for, there is a \$32,369 shortfall.

The Shared Support line (per capita) is not a head tax (to which I have heard it erroneously referred far too many times). Rather, it is an amount determined to encourage us all to give our share to God's ministry as it happens in and through the Presbytery of Florida.

For the presbytery, the per capita remittance is a requirement. For congregations and individuals, it is an optional privilege to give to the work of God.

I encourage you to give joyfully to the work of our Lord as we continue to move into the future God has in store.

## From our Stated Clerk/ Acting General Presbyter



*By Rev. Mark  
Broadhead (Ret.)*

*"For the  
presbytery,  
the per capita  
remittance is  
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For congregations  
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Board of Pensions  
WELL-BEING RETREAT 2025  
**STRENGTH FOR THE JOURNEY**  
LIVING FROM THE INSIDE OUT  
AUG. 18-20 | MONTREAT, NORTH CAROLINA  
Registration is now open: <https://bit.ly/45EakWS>



## From Dogwood Acres



By Christy Williams,  
Director

*"You can support our ministry and help us provide more campers with unplugged camp time by sponsoring an hour for \$10 or a day's worth of hours for \$140."*

## Diabetes Association group kicks off DWA summer camp season



**D**ogwood Acres is alive with the sounds of campers' laughter, singing and bustling from one activity to another. In our first week of camp, we hosted the Florida Diabetes Association's camp for children learning to live with diabetes. Campers and staff came from all over Florida! Everyone had such a good experience, they are already working to book a retreat this fall!

In mid-June, we continued our counselors' training. Counselors arrived having completed their lifeguard certification, CPR/First Aid and child protection training. During our week of training, we spent time reviewing safety protocols, planning daily activities and delving into the Bible study resource "Total Game Changer: Living Our Faith".

Special thanks to these folks who assisted with our training: Marlyn Weinell (Lafayette, Tallahassee) - Waterfront safety/canoe protocols and archery training

Sheldon Steen (Christ, Tallahassee) - Being Presbyterian 101  
Doug Walters (former DWA Director) - Cabin Management

High School Week began June 22 with double the number of campers we had last year!! We've looked forward to exploring our connections to God, each other and creation.

We have already provided over 4000 hours

of screen-free, nature-full hours for campers. You can support our ministry and help us provide more campers with unplugged camp time by sponsoring an hour for \$10 or a day's worth of hours for \$140. You can be part of our Unplug and Connect campaign by [visiting our website](#) and donating to a camper's hours at camp.





### UNPLUG AND CONNECT YOU CAN MAKE THIS POSSIBLE!

This summer, Dogwood Acres will offer 8,340 hours of screen-free, sacred time to children and youth.

Instead of sitting in front of a screen, campers will:

- Dive into hands-on Bible study
- Hike woodland trails
- Canoe the lake
- Worship under the trees
- Practice archery, swim, and play games
- Sing around a campfire, cook s'mores, and stargaze
- Discover animals and native plants
- Be still, be present, and grow in faith

### YOUR GIFT MAKES THIS POSSIBLE!

Just \$10 sponsors one hour of life-changing, unplugged camp time. Give one hour or one hundred, every moment matters. Your generosity helps campers unplug from screens and connect with faith, friends, and God's creation.

Scan to Give!



## More on the importance of trees...

I don't like sharing distressing information with you. But the more information you have about what is happening to creation, the better you are able to make decisions and to understand what is happening to it.

Last month, I wrote about how important trees are to human survival and that one of their important functions is to remove carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas from the atmosphere. Here is more on why that is so important and how it might be in jeopardy.

It begins with a troubling finding that was highlighted in a [Washington Post](#) article in April. Carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas, accumulated in 2024 at the fastest rate in recorded history. It was a 30 percent increase, resulting in the highest level of accumulation in the atmosphere in at least 3 million years. Why did this happen? Are we burning more fossil fuels or is something else going on?

As an aside, 3 million years ago, during the [Pliocene epoch](#), the Earth was significantly warmer, with the global average temperatures around 2-3 degrees centigrade warmer than today, and sea levels were at least 82 feet higher. The Arctic was ice-free and green. And, yes, most of Florida was underwater.

And if you are wondering why, if carbon dioxide levels are as high as they were 3 million years ago, the temperature and sea level are not also higher. The short answer is "thermal inertia". Oceans absorb a large amount of the excess heat from rising CO2 levels, delaying the immediate warming of the atmosphere.

But back to the main point: Most of the atmospheric carbon dioxide comes from our burning of fossil fuels. But a recent study suggests that the 2024 dramatic increase in carbon dioxide may be the result of the deterioration of rainforests and other land

ecosystems because of soaring temperatures. If this is proven to be correct, this is scary. Oceans and trees take up much of carbon dioxide that we emit. But last year, with the extreme droughts and raging wildfires, huge amounts of carbon were released from forests, effectively cancelling the amount that oceans and trees absorb. [Forests and other ecosystems take up about 30 percent of the carbon emitted by humans.](#)

The significant point here is that climate change may be having a weakening impact on natural systems that take up carbon dioxide. Trees are important carbon sinks, sucking up billions of tons of carbon through photosynthesis, and it is locked away in wood or buried in the soil. We depend on forests to buffer our emissions, but they are being hurt by our warming temperatures and resulting droughts and wildfires.

We simply cannot afford, as proposed recently, to so dramatically increase the amount of timbering in our national forests, because these trees once removed will no longer take up carbon.

Just remember that last time it was this warm, Florida was underwater. For now, thank God for creating the oceans and all that they do for us.

## Caring for Creation



By  
Pam McVety,  
Presbytery  
Stewardship  
of Creation  
Enabler

*"We depend  
on forests to  
buffer our  
emissions ..."*



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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)



## 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.