



# The Pelican

The Presbytery of Florida is called to serve God using our gifts and skills to **Excite, Encourage, Equip and Empower** our Congregations and Clergy in Mission and Ministry.



July/August 2011

“Let the leader be as one who serves...” (Jesus)

Luke 22:26

## Summer registrations up, fall/winter retreats slated at Dogwood Acres

By Kevin Veldhuisen,  
Presbytery of Florida  
Associate Executive Presbyter for  
Outdoor Ministry  
and Spiritual Development

**D**ogwood Acres has had an amazing summer so far! At the time this article was written, the camp was already experiencing a 27 percent increase in camper registrations over last year’s numbers, and more registrations are expected to come in for the final two weeks of camp.

In addition to this exciting increase, Dogwood Acres also hosted its first camp specifically for children with Asperger’s Syndrome, a form of autism, and found great success in this new ministry outreach. The camp hosted 12 children that week for four days and three nights, and word is quickly spreading throughout the Asperger’s community about the transformative experience each of those children had during their time at Dogwood Acres.

**In the swim**  
Pool time is always a hit at Dogwood Acres

Dogwood has also been hosting other groups this summer when the camp was not in session, including the World Wide

Missionary Movement’s Youth Retreat at the beginning of June. St. Dominic’s Catholic Church returned again this year to host their men’s retreat during the July 4 week, and Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, from Atlanta, spent four days working at the camp on several important projects.

GSPC is hoping to return to Dogwood for a fall retreat during the Labor Day weekend because



their youth enjoyed their time at the camp so much. Two other retreats are in the works for later this winter.

It has been a tremendous and exciting year at Dogwood Acres, and this fall is booking up fast! If you’d like to host a retreat at Dogwood Acres, please call me at 850-535-2695 or email [dogwoodacres@presbyteryofflorida.com](mailto:dogwoodacres@presbyteryofflorida.com) for more information.



## SDOP grant helps Tallahassee non-profit serve needy families

**T**he Presbytery of Florida’s Self Development of People Committee recently received a letter of thanks from the Tallahassee-based non-profit Families Restoring the Home Front. SDOP awarded the organization a \$13,000 grant in February 2010. The grant, along with \$7,000 that FRHF raised, enabled the group to restore a house to serve as its mission outreach, which now houses the FRHF’s office, a meeting place for parenting groups and

storage for a free clothes closet, FRHF Founder Shelia P. Clark said in the letter.

FRHF also sought to become a partner agency with American’s Second Harvest of the Big Bend, but needed a building to properly store food, Clark continued. “We wanted to bring a modicum of relief to those hit the hardest by these economic times.”

After a successful site visit from America’s Second Harvest,

FRHF became a partner agency as of May 21, 2010, said Clark. With Trinity United serving as its distribution center, FRHF has since served 2,000 people over the past year, she added.

“We would like to thank you for your help in making our project to alleviate hunger in our community a mega-success,” she said.



## Acts 16:5 adds more Presbytery churches

A dozen Presbytery of Florida churches are now enrolled in the Acts 16:5 Initiative, a three-year process for transformation and missional endeavor. The following churches are taking part in the process:

1<sup>st</sup>, Crestview  
Laurel Hill  
Gulf Breeze  
Parkway, Panama City  
Fellowship, Tallahassee  
1<sup>st</sup>, Ft. Walton Beach  
1<sup>st</sup>, Havana  
Trinity, Pensacola  
Euclaw Valley, DeFuniak Springs  
1<sup>st</sup>, Milton  
1<sup>st</sup>, Destin  
St. Andrews, Panama City

“We are excited about the benefits for Trinity and hope that the other congregations still pondering the Acts 16:5 initiative will soon commit and sign up,” said Trinity, Pensacola, pastor Hugh Hamilton. “We are already implementing in our session, committee and staff meetings some of the spiritual practices we learned at the Dogwood Acres workshop ...”

Another all-day Acts 16:5 seminar will be held Friday, Oct. 14, 2011, from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. CDT at a location to be announced. Those who would like additional information about Acts 16:5 may contact Associate Executive Presbyter Jean Silva, Church Development and Evangelism Committee Chairman Ruth Mashewske, any CD&E Committee member or a pastor of one of the churches already taking part in the Initiative. “We hope that your church will consider becoming a part of this exciting endeavor to be more faithful and more vital for the sake of Christ’s kingdom,” Jean said.



## MILESTONES



**Patti Bohnsack introduces new son  
Ryan Owen Bohnsack**

• Congratulations and best wishes to 1<sup>st</sup>, Ft. Walton Beach pastor **Rev. Rob Bohnsack** and his wife, Patti. The couple have a new son, Ryan Owen Bohnsack, pictured at right with Patti. The Bohnsacks are preparing to move to Texas, where Rob will begin his first active duty assignment in the U. S. Air Force Chaplain Corps at Goodfellow AFB by Sept. 9.

• Congratulations to **Rev. Michael Moore** upon his June 26 installation as 1<sup>st</sup>, DeFuniak Spring’s pastor. In Rev. Moore’s honor, the congregation collected an offering for the GA’s Theological Education Fund, to aid future ministers.

• Northminster, Pensacola, welcomes **Rev. Dr. Keith Posehn** as its interim pastor as of July 24. A fifth-generation Californian, Rev. Posehn and his wife, Tracy, are relocating to Pensacola from Sacramento, CA. He has been a minister for over 30 years, has authored several books – including a humorous devotional series – and

is founder and director of Heaven Help Me!, which provides consulting for churches. The Posehns have three adult sons.

• Welcome and congratulations to **Benjamin Lynch** and **Hailey Braden Lynch** on their June 30 examination and approval for ordination to serve as associate pastors at 1<sup>st</sup>, Pensacola. Ben will serve as associate pastor for youth and young adult ministry, and Hailey will be associate pastor for education and children’s ministry. Both will be ordained Nov 6 in San Antonio, TX, then will be installed at 1<sup>st</sup>, Pensacola, Nov. 20.

## Challenge to housing allowance dropped

A California federal court case that challenged the clergy housing allowance tax exemption has been voluntarily dismissed. Atheist group Freedom from Religion Foundation, or FFRF, had filed a lawsuit in 2009 that alleged the clergy housing allowance violates separation of church and state. The FFRF asserted that the tax benefit violates the Constitution’s Establishment Clause because it specifically benefits clergy only.

The dismissal is the outcome of a decision the U.S. Supreme Court made earlier this year on the issue of standing. Standing is a legal concept under which only parties that are directly harmed can bring an action challenging the constitutionality of a statute. The FFRF is not directly impacted by Section 107 (the housing allowance exclusion provision in the Tax Code), so the organization lacks standing to challenge the allowance.



# Deputy advises churches about crime prevention measures

In a recent presentation to the Florida Regional PC(USA) Administrative Personnel Association, Palm Beach County Sheriff's Deputy Eddie Nelson discussed potential criminal risks for houses of worship. Criminal threats that churches may face can include burglary, robbery, theft, embezzlement, vandalism, assault – even terrorism, he said.

“Criminals look for the easiest opportunities, so **you** look for and remove opportunities,” he commented. He offered the following insights and crime-preventative measures for churches:

## Safeguard church members and their property

- Florida law divides robberies into two categories, which significantly impact sentencing for convicted offenders, explained Dep. Nelson. More stringent penalties are imposed for an armed robbery than for a strong armed robbery, which does not involve a weapon, but rather, the use of other force (such as purse-snatching), he said. Most robberies occur between a victim's vehicle and a destination, so parishioners and employees should “be alert and aware,” particularly when entering or exiting a building, Dep. Nelson emphasized.
- Dep. Nelson encouraged churches to recruit volunteers to provide parking lot security before and during services, greeting and acknowledging members and visitors upon arrival and monitoring parking lot activity. Parishioners should be reminded to avoid leaving valuables in their vehicles in plain sight, he added.
- Churches should consider securing all but the main entrance for access while church services are underway, so that only one means of entering

the sanctuary from outside the building is available during worship, he continued.

- An employee or volunteer who is working alone on church premises should lock the doors and, if possible, summon another employee or volunteer before granting access to unfamiliar visitors, said Dep. Nelson. Volunteers should avoid one-on-one, unaccompanied contact with those to whom they minister, he cautioned.



- Congregations who minister to populations that tend to include mentally ill or troubled individuals might consider appointing a contact or “cover” person to take charge should a disruptive or potentially dangerous situation arise, Dep. Nelson suggested. That person should be responsible for clearing bystanders from the area while working to calm (or stall until law enforcement arrives) someone who poses a possible threat to him- or herself or others, he said.
- Churches should designate a specific site where parishioners will gather outside, no less than 1,000 feet from the church building, should an evacuation become necessary, he continued. The congregation should not re-enter the building until given permission by rescue personnel, he said.

- Parishioners and employees should take notice and notify law enforcement of suspicious activity, such as a driver who appears to be “casing” the church premises, Dep. Nelson advised. Observe and report as many details as possible, such as a vehicle license plate state/number (complete or partial), make, approximate age, size/body type, color, number of doors, any distinguishing features such as a broken taillight or dents, number of vehicle occupants and driver appearance, he said. Likewise, any church member or employee who is a victim of or witness to a crime should report as many details as possible about the perpetrator, he said. An effective description might include the person's race, sex, approximate height/weight, direction of fleeing, clothing, scars, facial hair, tattoos, eye color, weapon or other distinguishing characteristics, such as missing teeth or a limp, he said.

## Secure your church's building, grounds and property

### *Prevent unauthorized access*

- Inspect your property for any means by which unauthorized persons might gain entry to buildings, such as by doors that can be opened without a key or code. Eliminate or secure these access points, Dep. Nelson said.
- Consider your building's external doors. Both in-swinging and out-swinging types have disadvantages – In-swinging can be kicked in, while out-swinging have outside hinges that can be removed to gain entry. Dep. Nelson suggested installing three-inch screws to reinforce in-swinging door frames and buying tamper-proof hinges for out-swinging doors.
- Install good-quality double cylinder locks on all swinging doors,

*Continued*

he advised. For sliding doors, put a pin in the top and add a “charley bar” to eliminate movement that might allow a potential intruder to remove the door from its track, he added.

- Ensure any accessible windows are securely fastened, and prune vegetation and remove or relocate signage or other objects that might obscure an attempted illegal entry through a door or a window, said Dep. Nelson. Additionally, consider replacing breakable glass with high-impact glass in doors and windows, if possible, he proposed.
- Park your church bus in a well-lit area near the building, locked. If your church’s budget allows, install a monitored alarm system and/or digital surveillance system on the premises, Dep. Nelson said.
- Promptly deposit money collected. If regularly making substantial deposits, alter the schedule and route of your trips to the bank. Install a hidden safe or locking file cabinet on

premises for money not yet deposited. Instead of labeling offices where money is kept as being for “Finance” or “Treasurer,” simply mark them “Private,” urged Dep. Nelson.

- Record the make, model and serial numbers for electronics, computers, sound/musical equipment, TVs/DVRs and other expensive items; if possible, include photos with the descriptions, Dep. Nelson instructed. Law enforcement will need this information to retrieve the items, he explained.

#### *Control authorized access*

- Dep. Nelson strongly encouraged limiting the number of people to whom keys or key/alarm codes are issued. If necessary, change the locks or codes, and notify the congregation; require that the new keys or codes may be issued only to parishioners who present a compelling reason for requesting

them, he said. Maintain a record of keys or codes and to whom and for what purpose they are issued; enact a policy that prohibits key or code sharing or duplication and provides for key forfeiture or code deactivation for policy violations, he added. Designate a person to unlock the church for events, he suggested.

- Enact a two-party check signing process, if your church doesn’t already have one, counseled Dep. Nelson. Require a description in the memo portion of each check and treasurer approval for expenditures, he said.
- Lastly, Dep. Nelson suggested that churches where one or more law enforcement personnel attend might ask whether the officer or officers would be willing to oversee or assist with church security or conduct a crime-preventive audit of the church’s premises and/or procedures.



## **C&SJ awards grants to feed hungry**

The Presbytery of Florida’s Compassion and Social Justice Committee recently awarded three 2¢ a Meal grants.

1st, DeFuniak Springs, received \$2,500 for its Kid’s Closet, which serves infant- through toddler-aged children of needy families, according to the church’s mission statement. The funds will be used to purchase items such as infant formula and food, bottles, toddler food and juices, diapers, bath necessities, baby wipes, clothing and bedding, the grant application said.

CS&J gave \$3,500 to People Helping People of Gulf County, sponsored by 1st, Port St. Joe and 1st, Wewahitchka. The grant will benefit needy Gulf County residents by purchasing food for a food bank, refrigeration equipment for frozen foods and materials for

establishing and maintaining a community garden, stated the application. The organization involves about 12 volunteers and assists approximately 1,200 families per year, the application said.

The Committee awarded \$3,432 to Second Chance of Northwest Florida, Inc., sponsored by Parkway, Panama City. Second Chance will use the money, matched with other donations, to prepare fresh fruits and vegetables in its Kitchen and Cooking Program for a second year, said Second Chance President Sherl Morden. The funds will provide means, in addition to the successful garden the organization’s members now maintain, to more fully meet the food needs of 25 low-income persons who attend Second Chance’s day program,



## **Worship to focus on doing more with less**

Loaves & Fishes: Doing More with Less through God’s Power” is the theme for worship at the Summer Stated Presbytery Meeting Tuesday, Sept. 13, at Lafayette. Presbyterian Church, Tallahassee We invite you to share your stories of “best practices” illustrating how your congregation has done more with less.

Please submit your stories to Jean Silva at the presbytery office at [jean@presbyteryofflorida.com](mailto:jean@presbyteryofflorida.com). Thanks in advance!



# “Minister to the people” recalls four decades of service

If peacemakers are, indeed, blessed, then Rev. Reid Cameron should be in pretty good shape.

During his 40-plus years of ministry, he’s served as the Lord’s instrument for making peace within troubled congregations. He’s made peace amid civil unrest during a turbulent era in our nation’s history. He’s made peace when faced with criticism of his spiritual practices. He’s made peace with his call to minister.

Ordained in 1965, Rev. Cameron has served six churches, including three within the Presbytery of Florida since his retirement in 1990.

Although he now no longer pastors a church, he continues to fill pulpits throughout the Presbytery as needed.

“I’ve had a good ministry. It’s been interesting,” he said. “I cannot say that I have ever been in a congregation that I did not enjoy.”

“Enjoy” might not be the first word to typically come to mind when considering the substantial portion of Rev. Cameron’s ministerial career that has involved working with congregations in conflict. For instance, at one church to which he was called, the previous minister has been asked to leave, the session had been dissolved and the presbytery had assumed original jurisdiction – all unbeknownst to the incoming Rev. Cameron.

“During the exam, a member asked me, ‘Do you think you can work with that difficult situation?’” he recalled. “I was rather surprised and said, ‘What are you talking about?’ and they told me the history. It worked out well, though. I was there for six years.”

Rev. Cameron later served as organizing pastor of a new church development before leaving, at the presbytery’s request, to pastor a church whose minister had made advances toward a 17-year-old church member, he recounted. “It

Since his retirement, from the ministry, Rev. Reid Cameron, shown at right, has pastored three Presbytery of Florida churches. He served Parkway, Panama City; 1st, Wewahitchka; and 1st, Port St. Joe, whose pulpit is pictured in the background. A skilled craftsman, Rev. Cameron created the beautiful wood panels that adorn the church’s sanctuary.

kind of tore things up.... I just listened to people. I listened to them as individuals.”

He ultimately wound up serving that church for eight years, during which the 12 members who attended his first Sunday there grew to around 200 the last Sunday he preached for them, he noted. “I don’t look at churches as ‘problem churches,’” he explained. “I look at them as churches who have a problem. There’s a difference, and you just work through it.”

“God made them better,” he added. “He could’ve well used someone else.”

In preparing for his lengthy – and sometimes, challenging – ministry, Rev. Cameron was fortunate to be guided in seminary by instructors who fostered insightfulness, pragmatism and humor that have been invaluable in his service to the Lord. His account of one professor’s response to his attempts to master the Hebrew language illustrates the levity these teachers employed in the classroom.

As a minister-to-be, struggling to pronounce a psalm in Hebrew in a Dr. Devitz’ class, “I was grunting out each syllable,” he recollected. “He was sitting on the desk and offered me no help. When I finally finished, he looked at me and said, ‘Mr. Cameron, are you, by any chance, anti-Semitic?’”



But another mentor had perhaps the most lasting impact of all for Rev. Cameron. He fondly remembers Paul T. Furman, a French Huguenot professor who was his advisor for two years, as “an extremely educated, brilliant man,” with degrees in language and church history. Rev. Cameron related a particularly striking statement the professor made one morning in his early-1960s classroom:

“He said, ‘I want to tell you, the Lord has revealed to me the Presbyterian Church’s position on the integration issue,’” Rev. Cameron recalled Prof. Furman began. “I went to Decatur (GA). I came to the train tracks. Along came this big, black thing, huffing and puffing, blowing whistles and ringing bells. That is what you call the engine. It is like the government.”

“Behind it were all these different-colored little things you call ‘cars,’ and they are like the states;

*Continued*

wherever the government goes, the states follow behind,” Rev. Cameron said the professor continued. “On the end is this little red thing you call a “caboose,” and it is like the Presbyterian Church. The only time that d\*\*\* thing gets in front is when the whole mess runs backward.”

Rev. Cameron eventually had the opportunity to personally confront 1960s-era bigotry head-on. After preaching a sermon entitled, “The Brotherhood of All Believers” at a south Georgia church he pastored, the session accused him of preaching an anti-integration sermon, he said. They stated in certain – and racist – terms that they would allow no black visitors in their church, he said.

Soon after, several black members of the community attended a funeral at the church, to the dissatisfaction of some of the white congregation, Rev. Cameron continued. “One of them wanted to close the church to keep them out. I remarked that, if anybody closes the door, I’m going to remain inside, and I will open it.”

In no time, the session informed him that they’d voted in a secret – and invalid – meeting, without the moderator, to ask him to leave if he preached another sermon they deemed inciteful (conveying their intent using a racial slur), he related. After the executive presbyter met with the session and “read them the

riot act,” word about what was happening at the church reached the beleaguered minister’s mentor at the seminary, he said.

Rev. Cameron quoted a letter he received from Prof. Furman: “Dear Reid, I was looking south, and I saw smoke, and I smelled flesh burning. Good for you.”

Having nowhere else to go, Rev. Cameron resigned nonetheless. Then, to his surprise, the entire session, one by one, visited his house the evening of his resignation to ask him to reconsider, which he did, he said. “I didn’t have any more problem there. Sometimes, you’ve got to stand up. You have to say what you believe.”

Rev. Cameron has had to defend his position at other times within his ministry, sometimes unexpectedly. For instance, after he and a minister to students served hamburgers and cokes for a communion service during a summer youth retreat, two other ministers in his presbytery accused him of sacrilege, he recalled. “I was trying to relate what communion was – common, everyday food... When Jesus took the bread – and there was nothing unique about it – and he broke it and said, ‘This is my body, which is broken for you,’ he used common, everyday items.”

The matter was dropped when

another minister in a meeting about the matter confessed that he’d similarly employed hot dogs, Rev. Cameron chuckled.

Although he has stood firm when circumstances have called upon him, one call Rev. Cameron did not initially answer with complete confidence was the call to ministry, he admitted. Educated in engineering at North Carolina State University, he made a pact with God when he entered the ministry, he confided. “I said, ‘I’m going to give this my best shot. If it doesn’t work out, I’ll go back to my old education.’”

In his first church after his ordination, he questioned his ability to minister to the congregation, rather than merely preaching to them, he said. “As I went along, ministering to people as best I could, I heard things like, ‘You really helped me struggle through this ...’ and ‘That encouraged me,’ ...” he said.

“I remembered that passage when Jesus is telling his disciples he is leaving, but, in the same breath, he is telling them, ‘But I will never leave you,’” he explained. “That’s when I realized, he’s right, he’s with me. And that’s what gives me the courage to keep going. I realize that I am a minister to the people, but not of my own making.”



---

## Mark your calendar

**Veterans’ Day**  
Monday, Sept. 5  
Presbytery office closed

**Summer Stated  
Presbytery Meeting**  
Tuesday, Sept. 13  
9 a.m. CDT/10 a.m. EDT  
Lafayette, Tallahassee

**Sabbath Rest Retreat  
for all ages**  
Fri., Oct. 28 – Sun., Oct. 30  
Dogwood Acres

**Fall Stated  
Presbytery Meeting**  
Tuesday, Nov. 8  
9 a.m. CDT/10 a.m. EDT  
Location to be announced

**Disciplefest 2012**  
Friday, Jan. 27 – Sat., Jan. 28  
Edgewater Beach Resort  
Keynote speaker:  
Rev. Carol Howard Merritt

**Winter Stated  
Presbytery Meeting**  
Saturday, Jan. 28  
9 a.m. CST/10 a.m. EST  
Edgewater Beach Resort