



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.



November/December 2011

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

Luke 22:26

Disciplefest 2012 offers exceptional experience for all

By *JRoanne Bergman*,
Training and Retreats Committee member

Disciplefest 2012 is going to be amazing! On January 27th and 28th, we will once again gather at Edgewater Beach Resort in Panama City with all the amenities open to us – the gorgeous Gulf of Mexico beach for walking and/or beachcombing, hot tubs and the golf courses, to name a few.

For walkers, there are lovely landscaped paths to meander. For those who are unable to walk, golf carts are available to transport you to the meeting place or to the beach from your condo.

We realize the room rates might look expensive at first glance. However, if you consider roommates, your stay becomes no more costly than a less expensive, and not as nice, motel.

When you look at the cost of rooms, think of it as split in half for a two-bedroom, or in thirds for a three-bedroom. Six “friendly”

singles can split a three-bedroom six ways!

I can vouch that the rooms are awesome and well fitted with everything you need in the kitchens. If you can't find someone with whom to share a condo from your church, contact the churches near you and ask if they have someone looking for a roommate. Encourage that church to send attendees.

It's also a good way to meet people and fellowship with new friends. Many and various workshops, with excellent workshop leaders, will be available, as well as a superior keynote speaker and meaningful worship. The Presbytery's Training and Retreats Committee works diligently year-round to provide the very best retreat possible. From the location to the educational workshops, from the spiritual worship to the interaction with others, we provide an exceptional experience for

Rev. Carol Howard Merritt,
Disciplefest 2012 keynote speaker and workshop leader



everyone. I cannot encourage you strongly enough to attend.

See you in January 2012! Start your year getting closer to God! Disciplefest packets are being distributed to each Presbytery church and also are available on the Presbytery's website at www.presbyteryofflorida.com/Events-Calendar.html. A \$5 per person Early Bird Discount is offered for registrations with full payment postmarked by Jan. 13.



Edgewater Beach Resort's spacious golf villas are situated among beautifully landscaped trails for walkers or golf carts. Beachside condos also are available at the resort.

Pace Presbyterian Church is seeking musicians and singers, especially from the Pensacola area, for a special service, followed by a covered dish luncheon, the 3rd Sunday of each month. Singers or musicians available to participate may contact Larry Plank, CLP, at (850)995-4553 or butterflyncoyote@earthlink.net

What would it look like for the kingdom of God to come to the Presbytery of Florida?

By Jean Silva,
Presbytery of Florida
Associate Executive Presbyter
for Church Development

At a recent seminar with Brian McLaren, author of *Everything Must Change*, I heard a story about a priest in Peralta, Costa Rica, who could afford to take only one seminary course at a time. Because his commute was four hours one way, he studied his one textbook backwards and forwards, a book by Rene Padilla, entitled, *The Local Church, Agent of Transformation*. And because of the long commute and the focus being on one course, the young seminarian came to know this book backwards and forwards. When he began serving a congregation of 20 in the town of Peralta, he taught them what was in this book about living out the Christian faith.

The question that the young pastor posed to his little church was, “What would it look like for the kingdom of God to come to our neighborhood?” The result was in that town of Peralta, this tiny church launched a campaign to address the most pressing need of the community – a functional

Shown from left are
Brian McLaren,
author of
*Everything Must
Change*, and
Denise Moore,
Director of the
*Quest for
Social Justice*, of
Mobile, AL, who
hosted the seminar
featuring McLaren



sewerage system. They discovered that a lack of a sewerage system caused a variety of illnesses and death. So house by house, this church dug and installed septic fields for each of the 4,400 households in less than two years. That would mean that they averaged installing over 183 septic fields a month, or six a day – for two years!

Now of course, the 20 parishioners did not undertake this feat alone. The town learned what the church was doing, and they joined in the project. While the church didn't grow by 4,400 households, all the townspeople considered him their “pastor sent *from* the church *to* Peralta”.

When I heard this story, I

went on Amazon to order Padilla's book that so inspired the church at Peralta. It was \$937.50! Luckily, I found it on another website for eight English pounds. I can't wait for it to get here! I assumed the book was written long ago, and this story happened decades ago – Wrong. The book was published in 2004, so it happened just a few years ago. God is at work in the 21st Century!

What is your community's greatest need? How would you go about finding it out? What would it look like if your church launched a campaign to meet that need? What would your community look like if your church fully lived into the kingdom of God?



Awards recognize congregations having new, effective ministries

Is your congregation doing innovative ministry? Each year, Union Presbyterian Seminary awards Congregational Leadership Awards to congregations who have shown leadership in developing new and effective ministries. Each of the eight awards carries a \$1,000 prize to support the congregation in its ministry.

Since 1991, 94 churches in 28 states have received these awards. The eight awards recognize

congregational efforts such as early childhood education programs, ministries of outreach and social concern, involvement in the empowerment of older adults, hospitality to developmentally disabled persons, youth ministries, creative meeting of vital Christian Education needs of older adults or in the church or community and engagement in the care of the frail elderly. Additional information and application materials for one of the

UPSem Congregation Awards, may downloaded at www.upsem.edu/leadership_institute/congregational_leadership_awards/ or you may request an application by sending an e-mail to April Swofford at aswofford@upsem.edu or calling 1-800-229-2990, ext 231. The application and instructions are only available electronically. The deadline for applying for the 2012 Awards is Feb. 12.



MILESTONES

- Presbytery of Florida Associate Executive Presbyter of Outdoor Ministry and Spiritual Development **Kevin Veldhuisen** was ordained as a teaching elder Sunday, Nov. 20, at Sioux Falls, SD.
- **Benjamin and Hailey Lynch** were installed as associate pastors Sunday, Nov. 20, at First, Pensacola.
- **Bethel, DeFuniak Springs**, celebrated an exciting new chapter in its ministry with the installation of ruling elders Sunday, Nov. 20, at 3 p.m. CST. A reception followed the worship and service.
- Grace, Panama City, welcomes **Rev. James Black** as Interim Pastor.
- The grand opening for the new **Dogwood Acres Nature Center** will be held Saturday, Dec. 10.
- **Rev. Randy Jackson**, of First, Pensacola, welcomed a new grandchild, Samuel Moore Homer, born to Stan and Betsey Homer at 7:30 a.m. Nov. 8., weighing eight pounds, four ounces.

Parkway, Panama City, hosts Fall Stated Meeting



At left, Parkway volunteers Jeanette Davis and Connie Schuller greet and register attendees at the Presbytery's Nov. 8 Fall Stated Meeting. Other volunteers assisted with meeting set-up, lunch money collection, parking and clean-up. Shown below, those gathered enjoyed a delicious catered lunch of chicken and trimmings, provided by the Presbyterian Women. The Presbyterian Men furnished coffee and morning refreshments.



Churches encouraged to budget for APA membership fees

*By Nancy Fine,
Membership Chair, Florida Region
of the Administrative Personnel
Association of the Presbyterian
Church (USA)*

In November, we spend time thinking about those things in our lives for which we are thankful be it family, friends, colleagues and God. But are we showing our administrative staff how thankful we are for everything that they do for our church?

Show your administrative staff how grateful you are for everything they do for you, your staff and your members. Include in your 2012 budget the membership fees for them to join the Administrative

Personnel Association of the Presbyterian Church (USA), as well as continuing education funds to attend APA conferences. For a small fee (\$75 for the membership dues and approximately \$500 to attend a conference), they can become part of this great organization, recognized in the Book of Order G-2.1101 – G-2.1102. The Presbytery affirms the skills and dedication of these certified lay employees by providing recognition at Presbytery at the time of their certification and by inviting these employees to Presbytery meetings, granting them the privilege of the floor.

By attending APA conferences, your administrative staff will improve the quality of professionalism in the offices that are usually the first points of contact with congregations, governing bodies and agencies of the PC(USA). They will learn the importance of efficient office procedures and develop a deeper commitment to and understanding of the issues, policy, history and theology of our church.

For more information about the APA and how it will benefit your administrative staff, contact Barbara Prieto, Florida Region President, at 305-666-8586 or rivierachurch@bellsouth.net.



Stewardship of Creation Notes

Jesus said, “Love your neighbor” – But do we?

By Pam McVety, Presbytery
Stewardship of Creation Enabler

Sadly, some of our elected leaders in powerful positions in Washington feel the need to erode clean air and water laws, and some even want to abolish the Environmental Protection Agency. Why do these folks *whom we elect* no longer see the need for a clean and healthy environment as being important to our quality of life and health?

We keep hearing in the news that these environmental regulations kill or prevent jobs from being created. When I first started in the environmental business almost 40 years ago, at the beginning of the environmental movement, that argument was often made.

Over the intervening years, study after study has shown that this was not the case. In fact, the opposite is true. Protecting the environment creates jobs, and polluting the environment costs jobs and increases health risks and deaths. *Time Magazine* had a

recent article entitled “How Chinese Babies Pay the Price for Chinese Pollution”. It can be read at: <http://ecocentric.blogs.time.com/2011/10/19/how-chinese-babies-pay-the-price-for-chinese-pollution/>.

We have lost our way from Jesus’ two greatest commandments to love God and to love our neighbors. In Matthew 22, verses 34 through 40, Jesus responds to the Pharisees’ question about which commandment in the law is the greatest? He said, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

There is nothing neighborly about removing mountaintops for coal, destroying God’s trees and streams, or burning coal that releases mercury that makes its

way into our food chain, when we have other options.

The EPA estimates that as many as one in 12 American women of child-bearing age have enough mercury in their bodies to put a baby at risk. That means that every year, more than 300,000 babies could be born at risk of serious disabilities caused by mercury poisoning. This is surely not following Jesus’s greatest commandments.

At Disciplefest Friday evening, January 27, there will be a workshop on Toxic Pollution and Our Children. I hope you will plan to attend to learn more about the toxins in our environment and how they are affecting our children. There will also be a group discussion on steps we can take to do a better job of following Jesus’ two commandments.

As always, if you have any questions or comments, please contact me, but use my new email address – pammcvety@hotmail.com.



Dogwood Acres improvements, increased attendance reported

At the Presbytery’s Nov. 8 Fall Stated Meeting, Mission for Dogwood Acres Chair Christy Williams and Associate Executive Presbyter Kevin Veldhuisen reported the following improvements are recently finished, underway or planned at Dogwood Acres:

- Forestry program a great success. Planting of new pine seedlings next fall
- With forestry program, the entrance road has been sand-clay based and graded with a pull-behind roller, purchased used for road maintenance

- Air conditioners were a hit this summer camp
- Work on Nature Center in progress
- Upgrades to Craft Hut underway to make it more usable all season
- Berris Building has new chairs, tables, trim paint, carpeting
- More volunteers are helping with camp projects
- New chairs for dining hall ordered
- Property to be posted with “No Hunting” signs

- New camp signs also ordered to aid campers in navigating the grounds

Increased registrations also were reported:

- During October, eight groups with a combined total of over 345 guests visited the camp.
- By year-end, Dogwood will have hosted 21 new groups, churches or organizations that haven’t previously participated in the camp’s ministry or haven’t visited in several years.
- Since summer camp, over 80 volunteers have worked on various projects at the camp.

