

# The Pelican

A quarterly publication by the Presbytery of Florida

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Spring 2016

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## Dare to DREAM Ë Apply now!

**M**ay 20 is the deadline for submitting applications to the Presbytery office at [office@presbyteryofflorida.com](mailto:office@presbyteryofflorida.com) to be forwarded to synod for the Developmental, Risky, Experimental, Adaptive Mission (DREAM) Grant. This grant is being offered by the Presbyterian Mission Agency in order to encourage dreamers, risk-takers, pioneers and trailblazers.

The DREAM grant program is designed to encourage the birth of new ventures through congregations and presbyteries, rather than to support the expansion of existing programs within congregations. For the purpose of this grant, new is defined as an initiative that was created no earlier than Jan. 1, 2014.

One Presbytery of Florida *e j w t e j ø u " ð F T G C O ð* become reality through one of these grants from a previous funding cycle. Gulf Beach Presbyterian Church, Panama City Beach, has been approved for a grant for Heart and Hands Respite Care, a new initiative of the caregiver support ministry already in place there.

The new initiative will be a half-day, once a week, adult day care program, providing a safe and enjoyable environment for individuals who needs supervision and perhaps care while a caregiver runs errands, grocery shops and has purposeful, meaningful time for himself or herself. Gulf Beach ruling elder Wanda Griffin-Pflugfelder



*Shown at left, Jeannie Dixon is honored at Fellowship Presbyterian Church, Tallahassee, for her many years of service there as she prepares to retire.*

*(Photo by Sally Smith, Fellowship Presbyterian Church)*

## Dixon doffs one hat, still dons another

**F**ellowship Presbyterian Church, Tallahassee, held a special service and reception Sunday, April 10, to recognize *L g c p p k g " F k z q p ø u* Director of Christian Education. During worship, Fellowship pastor Rev. Mary Vance shared fond *o g o q t k g u " q h " L g c* memories and others expressed appreciation with cards and a commemorative *o w i 0 " L g c p p k g ø u "* book. Grandchildren were there to complete the celebration.

Jeannie plans to retire as *H g n n q y u j k r ø u " F E C* on April 10. However, she will continue

to serve as the Presbytery of *H n q t k f c ø u " u v c v g f " e* correspondence to her as stated clerk should now be sent to [statedclerk@presbyteryofflorida.com](mailto:statedclerk@presbyteryofflorida.com) rather than her fellowship email address, she noted.

*ø K " c o " d n g u u g f " v q* along with all of these *p a l o n g w i t h a l l o f t h e s e s p i r i t s o f G o d { . "* most memorable aspects of the *h q t " v j g " n c u v " 3 9 " { g* ministry she began in 1999 have *o w i 0 " L g c p p k g ø u "* the wonderful folks; the classes and workshops; getting the labyrinth; children's sermons *d g g h e w o n d e r f u l f o l k s ; t h e* never knowing what the *l a b y r i n t h ; c h i l d r e n ' s s e r m o n s* *H g n n q y u j k r ø u " F E C* *e j k n f t g p " y k n n " u c { +*

initiated the program and application process and will oversee this new aspect of Gulf *D g c e j ø u " e c t g i k x g* This grant will be offered as long as resources are available. Download the application form from the main page of the *R t g u d { v g t { ø u " y g d* [www.presbyteryofflorida.com](http://www.presbyteryofflorida.com).

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# Meet the ministers: New pastors and parish associate welcomed

The Presbytery of Florida welcomes the following teaching elders to its rolls and the ministerial staff at three Presbytery churches:



**Rev. Stephen Graves**

**Rev. Stephen Graves** and his wife, Susie, recently joined the church family at Lafayette Presbyterian Church, Tallahassee, where he was installed as pastor Feb. 21, 2016. He previously served as pastor at St. Cloud, FL, and associate pastor at Ormond Beach, FL, Presbyterian Churches.

Ordained in 1979, Rev. Graves has been very active, throughout his ministry, in community service organizations and in the work of the PC(USA), including at the presbytery level.

He has a Master of Divinity from San Francisco Theological Seminary, San Anselmo, CA, and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Eckerd College, St. Petersburg, FL. He also has done doctoral work at Columbia and Trinity Theological Seminaries.

In addition to preaching, teaching and leading worship, Rev. Graves writes Christian music

and enjoys family activities, travel, sports, reading, computers, missions and international exchanges. He also is passionate about campus ministry and Thornwell Home, he said.

**Rev. John Wamsley** and his wife, Linda, have made a home at First Presbyterian Church of Marianna, where he was installed as pastor March 13, 2016. They relocated from Orangeburg, SC, where he served as pastor at Grace Presbyterian Church since 2004, through the devastation of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Previously, Rev. Wamsley had been pastor at First Presbyterian Churches of Alexandria, LA; Vernon, TX; Martin and Lott, TX; and Abbeville, CA.

He has a Master of Divinity from Austin Theological Seminary and a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from Louisiana State University. Before entering ministry, he worked at a prison and a state health department. He was ordained in 1982.

In his free time, Rev. Wamsley is an avid hiker, swimmer and baseball fan.



**Rev. John Wamsley**



**Rev. Sheldon Steen and family**

**Rev. Sheldon Steen** began serving Sept. 8, 2015, as Faith Presbyterian Church Parish Associate for Pastoral Care and New Member Shepherd. Previously, he was solo pastor to a small congregation in Jasper, FL.

Rev. Steen has a Master of Divinity and Master of Divinity from Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, GA, and a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy/Religion from Flagler College, St. Augustine, FL. He currently is working on a PhD in Florida State University.

Rev. Steen grew up in Tampa, FL, and lived several years in St. Augustine, where he met his wife, Mary. Married nearly ten years, the couple have three children: Maya, Sawyer and Clara. Rev. Steen enjoys playing with his kids, reading, running and family getaways.



For more Presbytery of Florida news and current events, go to [www.presbyteryofflorida.com/](http://www.presbyteryofflorida.com/) weekly eUpdate

# Highlights from our journeys: 44-year retirement

By Taylor Phillips, Chaplain, Westminster Retirement Communities, Tallahassee

If you can imagine a 44-year retirement, then you have a ink o r u g " k p v q " L g c p " U k e r w o r l d w i d e t r a v e l s . h

When she was 17, Jean worked 10 hours a day, six days a week, in a San Francisco shipyard, where she was often the only girl in sight. She was one of eight women in her entering class of 200 at Stanford Law School, and by graduation day in 1950, she was one of three.

For her first job, she was paid \$1.25 an hour, and from there, she discovered a career opportunity doing legal work for the Air Force. Out of 1,200 lawyers in the department of the Judge Advocate General, Jean rose to become the first female full Colonel in their JAG department. For her service she was awarded the Bronze Star and the Legion of Merit.

Jean fell in love with a U.S. F g r w v { " O c t u j c n n . T r a n s i b e r i a n R a i l w a y a l l t h e w a y ö " Simpson, and they got married. This was a bold step to take in 1969, since L g c p " j c r r g p g f " v q j c r r g p g f " v q " d g " ö f q g u p ø v " t g e c n n " c asked a couple in her tour group if they would take a disc with them to their next stop, Hong Kong. When Jean returned to Sacramento, she p { saw the reports of the Tiananmen ö " u j g " u k o r n { " u { c q k w f . ö S u p e r q u a s s a c r e o n T Y , a n d seeing the story make the news also revealed to her how reporters could

Yet Jean was moving in the right direction. Along the way, she met Supreme Court Justices U c p f t c " F c { " Q ø E q p p Thurgood Marshall.

In her career with the JAG department, Jean was assigned overseas in Tokyo and near London. In Tokyo, she was invited weekly to join a group of lawyers at the Japanese Supreme Court so they could practice their English, and she also climbed Mt. Fuji. Since her husband had a career, too, the day came when she had to decide to retire after 21 years when she was 46

Jean Simpson is shown at right with one many friends she met in her worldwide travels. h

years old. A few years later, Jean, her husband ó c p f " c n u q " I father óall moved from Gadsden County to Westminster Oaks.


Jean has enjoyed a long, active t g v k t g o g p v 0 " U j g degree in Religion at Florida State, and she has traveled the world. She and Nap traveled together for a month through Europe, visiting Geneva, Nice, Florence, Rome, Malta, Frankfurt, Berlin and London.

Jean lost her husband in 2002, but she has gone on to travel on her own. She went on a cruise to Antarctica, held a koala bear in Australia, discovered lost relatives in Ireland, and rode the Transiberian Railway all the way across Russia. In May 1989, she was on a tour in China when the demonstrations erupted in " c p f " P g v k t g o g p v " E q o o w p k Tiananmen Square. "A reporter " carrying on and having fun with active living. r v " asked a couple in her tour group if they would take a disc with them to their next stop, Hong Kong. When Jean returned to Sacramento, she p { saw the reports of the Tiananmen ö " u j g " u k o r n { " u { c q k w f . ö S u p e r q u a s s a c r e o n T Y , a n d seeing the story make the news also revealed to her how reporters could



get news out of China in those days.

At 90, Jean says her days of traveling the world are over. Yet she continues to exercise every day, attend Catholic services several times a week, and join in as many activities as she can on Westminster P g v k t g o g p v " E q o o w p k carrying on and having fun with active living. r v "

Throughout the Westminster Services Communities of Florida are many more stories that reflect long lives well-lived and faith journeys worth sharing. Look for them in upcoming issues of the Pelican. 

**For your calendar:**

Mark these meetings

- ☒ Budget, Finance & Stewardship Team **Fri., May 6,** 11 a.m. CDT, Presby. office
- ☒ Committee on Ministry **Tues., May 10,** 9:30 a.m. CDT, 1st, Chipley
- ☒ Spring Stated Presbytery Meeting **Tues., May 17,** 9 a.m. CDT/10 a.m. EDT, St. Andrews, Panama City
- ☒ Presbytery Leadership Team **Tues., May 24,** 3:30 p.m. CDT, 1st, Chipley
- ☒ Congregational Mission Support Team **Thurs., June 16,** 10 a.m. CDT, Presbytery office

**Other opportunities**

- ☒ Old Philadelphia Day (1st, Quincy) **Sun., May 1** Worship 11 a.m. EDT
- ☒ 1st, Crestview, 100th anniversary celebration **Sun., May 15**

**Presbytery office holiday closings**

- ☒ Memorial Day **Mon., May 30**

## Caring for Creation Notes

# Climate change front and center at General Assembly

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

The 222nd General Assembly in Portland, Oregon, this summer promises to be exciting once again. For the first time ever, caring for creation issues are front and center as multiple overtures ask for new and bolder actions to address climate change. There are, at the writing of this, 23 concurrences with a fossil fuel divestment overture, multiple overtures calling for a fee and dividend on carbon production, a 221st GA-mandated Mission Responsibility through Investment (MRTI) committee report on fossil fuel divestment and a headquarter staff report listing all the actions taken by them on caring for creation for the last couple decades.

Given how serious climate change is and how ineffective and conflicted this country continues to be in combating it, it is exciting and critically important that our denomination consider such powerful recommendations. But there is a lot of intrigue swirling around all of these proposed actions.

Recall that at the last GA, the fossil fuel divestment overture never really got a hearing in committee due to a slick, but legitimate, Roberts Rules of Order maneuver that sent the overture to MRTI for consideration. After two years of review of fossil fuel divestment and 25 or so years of mostly unproductive shareholder engagement with the fossil fuel industry, MRTI wants to spend two more years talking to the industry before deciding on divestment.

Folks in Texas with ties to the oil industry are pushing three overtures strongly opposing fossil fuel divestment. No surprise there, but what is surprising is that they are asking the church to support a fee and dividend program on carbon production. This is a great idea,

because within 20 years, the carbon fee and dividend approach is predicted to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 52 percent below 1990 levels while growing the economy and saving lives. A fee and dividend approach coming from oil country is a surprise because it would move the country off on fossil fuels to renewable energy.

Finally, the staff in Louisville has an inventory of their activities to address climate change and other caring for creation issues. I am pleased that they did this and, if they had just done an analysis of how effective these steps have been, it would be even better. As a close observer for almost two decades, it is clear to me that, as a denomination, we believe in the reality of climate change and want to take steps to address it.

The bottom line is that, the fossil fuel divestment overture is opposed by overtures from Texas and by the General Assembly staff, but has strong Presbytery support with 23 concurrences and more expected before May. This may be a new record for concurrences and shows widespread support by people in the pews for divestment.

The good news is that if we take a critical objective review of what is being proposed, we should



do it all. We can divest. We can continue shareholder engagement because we only need to own \$2000 worth of stocks to have a seat at the table to talk to the industry. We can also wholeheartedly embrace a fee and dividend approach to cut carbon production. We can do it all, and we should, because to-date, no individual strategy has proven effective in moving the country from fossil fuels to renewable energy, but together all these actions will help us switch to safe, clean renewable energy. We should support them all.

I continue to advocate for divestment for a very simple reason. It just is not right that we work as people of faith to combat climate change, while our money continues to fund the industry that is causing it.

All and all it is a good thing, that our GA commissioners will be fully engaged in the climate crisis and how, as a denomination, we can faithfully respond to it. I pray that commissioners will understand that we can and should take all the proposed positive steps and avoid arguing over which one is better.



Input welcomed!

Have an idea, information, comment, question or suggestion?  
Please email [office@presbyteryofflorida.com](mailto:office@presbyteryofflorida.com) or call (850)638-2322

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