

# 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.



Summer 2013

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

Luke 22:26

## Associate Executive Presbyter Jean Silva moves on to new mission

**D**ear Presbytery Family and Personnel Team, It is with a full and grateful heart for this presbytery family that I tender my resignation as Associate Executive Presbyter/Head of Staff for the Presbytery of Florida effective July 31, 2013. I have accepted the position of Executive Director of United Ministries in Pensacola. I will begin this new position August 1.

I cannot fully express my deep gratitude to you all for allowing me to serve alongside you on staff in one way or another since November 2000. Our time together has been marked by transition and transformation. You have given me rich opportunities to grow in faith, experience, and leadership over the years, and for this I am eternally grateful. It is because of you that my faith has greatly deepened over the years as I realize that God has a plan in all of the changes we have encountered and endured together. Just as God has called leaders, such as Abraham, Moses, Joseph and Paul, to leave the comfort of their past for new and transforming futures, so God continues to call the Church, the PC(USA), this presbytery and its leaders through a journey of transformation that forms us into a people God desires us to be.

My hope and my prayer is that you may look to the future with joyful anticipation of what God is doing through you and through Christ's Church. Have faith that

God continues to work in and through you for the transformation of the world into the reign of God. These times are one of great opportunity as it was in the Reformation, and God is in control!



Jean Silva

Two scriptures I leave with you to ponder in the coming days – Ephesians 4:1-16 and Mark 28:12-34. Be of good courage and focus on only those things that build up the body of Christ, as Paul suggests in his letter to the Church at Ephesus, and not on those things that tear it down.

And keep your focus on the greatest commandment in Mark 28 as your core purpose to cling to and be resilient through life's storms, and thrive in spite of them.

This is farewell as a member of the presbytery staff, but not goodbye. As a child of this presbytery and a continued member, I will faithfully support it as I am able. Pensacola may be the furthest point westward, but the presbytery as a whole remains at the center of my heart!

Grace and peace to you,

Jean Covell Silva



## Presbytery welcomes Dixon as stated clerk

**W**ith the departure of Rev. Stephen Yates, who served as the Presbytery's stated clerk until accepting a call in Tennessee earlier this month, Presbytery Moderator John Lown has appointed assistant stated clerk Jeannie Dixon to be stated clerk.



Jeannie Dixon

Jeannie will serve as stated clerk through December 31, 2013. This fall, the specified nominating process (By-Laws, Article V.4) for a Stated Clerk will be implemented to nominate and elect a Stated Clerk to serve a three-year term, beginning January 1, 2014. Jeannie will be a familiar face to many in the presbytery, as she is a past presbytery moderator and council chair, and also is Director of Christian Education at Fellowship Presbyterian Church, Tallahassee.



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## Yates accepts call to serve in Tennessee

**D**ear Friends in Ministry,  
For the past 11 years, I have had the pleasure to serve as the minister for the First Presbyterian Church in Destin. On two different occasions during that same period, I have also had the privilege to serve as the stated clerk for the Presbytery of Florida.



**Stephen Yates**

While I have thoroughly enjoyed both opportunities and hope you feel I have fulfilled my duties as clerk capably, the time has come for me to begin a new stage in ministry. As many of you know by now, after much prayer and thought, I have accepted a call to serve as the minister for the First Presbyterian Church in Tullahoma, Tennessee. While I will miss both the members of First Presbyterian Destin and the many friends I have made within the Presbytery of Florida, I am also looking forward to the new opportunities for ministry that await in Tullahoma.

My last day as the clerk for the Presbytery will be July 21. Jeannie Dixon will then serve as the appointed clerk until the Presbytery can hold an election for my replacement. I have no doubt she will serve you well and faithfully during this period of transition and change. Again, it has been a joy to serve with you, and I wish the Presbytery nothing but the best.

With gratitude and love,

*Stephen*

## Schuler named interim administrator

**J**ohn Schuler has agreed to serve as the Presbytery of Florida's interim administrator from Aug. 1 through Sept. 30, or until the Presbytery Leadership Team employs a coordinating presbyter. In this capacity, he will serve as head of presbytery staff in implementing the presbytery's policies, strategies and programs and will work with the presbytery's Budget, Finance and Stewardship Team and treasurer to administer and monitor the presbytery's budget and contracts. He also will communicate the presbytery's interests to its churches, synod and General Assembly and will convey teaching and ruling elders'

and Christian educators' concerns to presbytery teams and other PC (USA) councils.



**John Schuler**

John serves as Commissioned Ruling Elder at Navarre Presbyterian Church and has chaired the Presbytery's Budget, Finance and Stewardship and Personnel Teams. He also is married to Rev. Sharon Schuler, interim pastor at First Presbyterian Church of Ft. Walton Beach.



### Gift of gratitude

At right, Presbytery Associate Executive Presbyter Jean Silva admires a beautiful Paul Brent globe presented to her at the April 30 presbytery meeting. Parkway Presbyterian, Panama City, pastor Ric Connor explains that the globe represents the world that God created, the tree inside the globe represents Jean and her talents, and the leaves descending down over the globe are the blessings that God has bestowed on His children through Jean's love, faith and witness. Jean also received a binder full of mementos from presbytery members.



"I want to thank you for your thoughtfulness and generosity expressed in your recognition of me at the April 30 meeting," said Jean. "I will cherish the beautiful gift of the 'Tree of Life' glass orb designed by Northwest Florida artist Paul Brent, as well as the album full of kind and encouraging words in the form of letters, notes and cards. Your gracious acceptance of me over the years makes my remaining time with you bittersweet. I cannot tell you just how much your willingness to allow me to work alongside you over the past decade has meant for me personally. Thank you from the bottom of my heart!"



## Pace shares good news

**P**ace is the place where progress is underway in the church's development and financial matters. After being approved for the Presbyterian Mission Agency's "For Such a Time as This" Program to match new seminary graduates with churches, Pace is now actively receiving Pastor Information Forms, or PIFs.

So far, 11 prospects have submitted PIFs, and the field has been narrowed to four, said Larry Plank, Commissioned Ruling Elder now serving the congregation. A congregation member contributed money to fund a pastoral-resident's full salary for Pace's two-year participation in the program, he said.

Additionally, with former Associate Executive Presbyter Jean Silva's help, Pace was able to stabilize its finances, he noted. Reworking its loan with the Presbyterian Investment Loan Program, or PILP, provided a drastic reduction in the church's monthly mortgage payments, he said. "PC(USA) is definitely willing to work with churches."

Meanwhile, the congregation is experiencing growth, as two new families have begun regularly attending worship and participating in the life of the church, Larry said. "The congregation is upbeat. It's given them a boost."

"For Such a Time as This" is designed to renew and grow small churches and help them to become healthy, missional congregations. The program pairs small, underserved congregations in rural, small town, and urban settings with recent seminary graduates in a two-year pastoral-residency relationship, during which they are supported and guided by a cluster of pastor-mentors. Since the program began in 2009, 22 recent seminary graduates are serving 26 congregations in 10 presbyteries.



### Chillin'

High school youth from First, Tallahassee; First, Quincy, and Fellowship, Tallahassee, join Faith, Tallahassee, youth for the annual "8-5-0 Tallyho" ice cream social, hosted by Faith during the Montreat Youth Conference, Week 5.

### Keeping connected



Liaisons from the Presbyter's Congregational Mission Support Team (CMST) and Ministry Team (MT), along with Presbytery Leadership Team (PLT) members, prepare to visit with church leaders and staff to seek to serve and strengthen churches and their relationships to each other and the presbytery. Shown above, from left, MT chair Mark Broadhead (Teaching Elder, 1st, Crestview), MT members Gene Harris (TE, Freeport), Bill Rumph (Ruling Elder, Grace, Panama City) and Dan Mitchell (TE, Lynn Haven) and CMST member Michael Moore (TE, 1st, DeFuniak Springs) consider how to communicate presbytery resources. Below, from left, MT member Beckie Mooney (RE, 1st, DeFuniak Springs) shares ideas with PLT member/presbytery moderator John Lown (TE, Lafayette, Tallahassee) and CMST members Leslie Kelley (Sunny Hills) and Dru Tyler (TE, Port St. Joe/Wewahitchka).



## A Scary Option in the Midst of Worsening Weather

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

**Y**ou must have noticed that we are having more and more extreme weather and, in spite of predictions that it will get worse because of our warming planet, Congress continues to deny there is a problem, while at the same time paying more and more for weather-related cleanups. In fact, all of us are paying more.

Now there is an option for breaking the national grid lock of inaction – divest from the fossil fuel companies. Institutions from universities to churches are being asked to get rid of their investments in fossil fuels.

Last year was the hottest year on record, and Hurricane Sandy, fueled by Atlantic Ocean waters that were 5 degrees warmer than normal, caused over \$60 billion in destruction and left tens of thousands homeless. There was a devastating drought in the Midwest, and California and Colorado were on fire! May 31 of this year, a monster tornado with close to 295 mile per hour winds, 2.6 miles wide, hit Oklahoma.

There is this pesky thing behind this extreme weather – carbon dioxide emissions from our burning of fossil fuels. After more than two decades of warnings about the need to lower our carbon emissions, their atmospheric concentration is getting higher – dangerously higher, not lower. May 9<sup>th</sup> of this year, the global CO<sub>2</sub> concentration exceeded 400 parts per million, way above the safe level of 350 parts per million.

Fossil fuels have been an important part of civilization's advancement. They have provided a real social good that has been affordable and convenient. But now, with the proven connection between our changing climate and the burning of these fuels, the fossil fuel industry has become an obstructionist in

preventing us from moving to safe and renewable energy sources that preserve rather than destroy God's creation. Their very successful campaign to stop action to cut our carbon emissions has brought us to a very dangerous place.

Congress refuses to act. Our President is unable to act; all the while our weather gets worse and worse. Every year, more and more Americans suffer property damage. Damage costs are skyrocketing, and insurance companies are raising rates or refusing to insure property owners. Sea level is creeping ever higher, and future damage costs associated with storm surges, in combination with rising seas, are estimated in the trillions.

Talk about deficit being a problem. Think about climate change costs in the trillions.

In response to this, a very low key action begun on a college campus around 2008 has morphed into a campaign that is slowly gaining steam around the country – a campaign to get institutions to divest from fossil fuel companies. Bill McKibben and his organization 350.org are leading it. Their message is:

“If it is wrong to wreck the climate, then it is wrong to profit from that wreckage. We believe that educational and religious institutions, city and state governments, and other institutions that serve the public good should divest from fossil fuels. We want institutions to immediately freeze any new investment in fossil fuel companies, and divest from direct ownership and any commingled funds that include fossil fuel public equities and corporate bonds within 5 years.”

To date, five colleges are divesting from fossil fuels.

Divestment campaigns are underway at 308 colleges, 105 cities and states and with six different religions. Museums, hospitals, foundations and other organizations are divesting from fossil fuels.

To many investors, fossil fuels are an important part of their investment portfolio, and the idea of eliminating them is probably scary. However, a recent report from the Tellus Institute makes the case that a college or university could divest without sacrificing financial performance. Recently, the Associated Press came to the same conclusion, citing analysis by the research firm S&P Capital IQ that showed that by one measure, endowments would have been better off had they divested 10 years ago. Read the Tellus Institute report at: <http://gofossilfree.org/files/2013/05/Institutional-Pathways-to-Fossil-Free-Investing1.pdf>.

Our denomination is one of the six considering divestment. Action for us begins in the pews, and two churches in California are thoughtfully and prayerfully considering this step. In my next column, I hope to share what they have done and where their actions will lead us. In the interim, if you want to read more, about this check out this reading list:

[http://www.aperiogroup.com/system/files/documents/building\\_a\\_carbon\\_free\\_portfolio.pdf](http://www.aperiogroup.com/system/files/documents/building_a_carbon_free_portfolio.pdf)

<http://www.carbontracker.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2012/08/Unburnable-Carbon-Full1.pdf>

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