



PresPress

December 2023

Presbyterian Church of Novato, 710 Wilson Ave., Novato, CA 94947

Loving Yourself

This sermon was preached by Rev. Adam Smith on July 23, 2017 using the Scripture text: Matthew 19:16-26.

A few weeks ago, I was sitting in a coffee shop working on a final paper for one of my D.Min courses, and realized quickly that I had made a mistake. I wanted to sit by the window to get some of that great Iowa sun (while in the air conditioning), and without thinking sat at a table very close to two young women, probably in their mid to late 30's who had just started diving into their large caffeinated drinks and breakfast sandwiches. Now I know you're thinking, what's wrong with that...well let me tell you...the decibel level at which these young ladies were sharing their lives – their personal lives I might add – had my coffee shaking. Don't you remember that scene in Jurassic Park...you don't see the T-rex coming, but the screen zooms in on a cup of water in the car and shows ripples every time there is a "boom" for every dinosaur footstep. That was my cup of coffee on this particular morning!!

Yes, I could have moved, but I would have lost the sun AND I'm not sure there was really anywhere in the shop to escape the two ladies chat anyway.

So, I endured. As you can imagine I got very little done on my paper. Instead, I was a bit a snooper. Not in the creepy sense, since everyone in the store could hear the hour long conversation, but in the anthropological sense. That's the story I'm sticking with anyway. The ladies spent the hour unloading on one another. Each spent time sharing how tired they were; how busy they were; how many ball games, and work meetings, and daily commitments they had: 5 in the morning to 11 at night. They talked about missing the college years, the minimal responsibilities, the fun, the slow boredom.

The more I listened the more I was starting to feel depressed. Just hearing them talk was making me tired and bringing me down to some level of dissatisfaction with my own life. Eventually I decided that I was reaching an all-time low in my self-esteem and needed to leave, but before I got out the door one of the women made the comment, "I just don't love who I've become and who I am anymore." Yep, my day was ruined.

Whether or not the person meant what she said, it stuck with me for the rest of the day and into the next week. It was only a few days later that a church member emailed me a question they wanted to hear addressed in worship: “How can we love ourselves, so that we can love others?”

Jesus tells us the greatest commandment is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, and strength. And the 2nd is just like it, to love our neighbors as ourselves. Oh, it sounds so simple, doesn't it? Love God and love others like we love ourselves. No problem. But what if we don't know how to love God? What if we don't know how to love ourselves? How then can we love others?

If any of you have known a friend or family member who, or if you yourself have, suffered from depression at some point in your life, you may know how hard it can be to love yourself. But even outside of a clinical diagnosis of depression, many of us have wrestled with that feeling of worthlessness, or have felt our own lives overburdened by commitments, responsibilities, self-induced busyness, and other worldly weights. It's hard to love others when we so often neglect ourselves. It's so easy to hear the message of the world that tells us we are not enough without more of this or more of that. We are not enough without the big house, the nice car, the kids involved in every activity under the sun, working so hard that work itself becomes an idol in our lives.

It's no wonder there are so many self-help books and businesses out there.

How do we love ourselves, dear saints? Now I'm not talking about being narcissistic or self-centered, I'm talking about love in the sense that Jesus loves us; that we are of infinite worth and value in this world to God. We are called and chosen, a part of God's royal priesthood, unique, gifted, and the Body of Christ.

Matthew 19 seems to be of no help, because it seems to assume that EVERYONE already loves themselves. When Jesus says, “Love your neighbor as yourself,” he is not issuing an edict to love yourself first, so that you can then love others, the assumption is that all people already love themselves; that all people as children of God want the best for themselves in life. They want to live full, whole, complete, satisfactory lives filled with love, joy, and happiness. And I think this is true in the sense that even those suffering from depression, and those of us who have experienced times where we questioned our self-worth, we still want the best for ourselves, even when we don't know what that ‘best’ is.

The woman in the coffee shop who was questioning her purpose in life, still loved herself as a human being, but wrestled with her identity. In all truth, as life moves and shifts and changes, we are always trying to understand who we are in the midst of it. Sometimes we can feel lost, lonely, and maybe even think we don't love ourselves, but often what we don't love is not ourselves, we are simply dissatisfied with our circumstances, our choices, the curveballs life has thrown at us and how we've handled them.

So maybe the question we should be asking is not so much, “How do we love ourselves,” but rather, “How do we remember that we are loved and see it again?”

I don't think that Jesus gives us the greatest commandments in the order that he does by accident. The greatest commandment is one that all Jews know well, "love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind..." You see our identity as human beings IS beloved, created by God in love. We are by definition loved from our very beginning and in every moment of our lives and beyond. It is who we are, who we were created to be, how we were created to live. Every time we turn our lives to God, every time we worship, every time we pray, every time we remind ourselves of our true nature, we remember that we are born from love. The very fact that we are here now is because God loved us so much that God gave us breath.

So how do we remember that we are loved, and how can we see ourselves again as beloved, dear saints, in the midst of an often chaotic, difficult, and painful life?

We can turn our hearts and minds to God.

I know, it sounds like the stereotypical "church" answer that every pastor around the globe will give you. And it doesn't sound like a really helpful answer, does it, especially for those that feel no sense of self love?

But is not loving God a whole way of living and being in the world. Is not loving God with every breath we take not what we were created to do? Perhaps the cliché answer that is spending time with God, thinking and dwelling on God's love for us, is the most life-giving. I think when we love God with our lives, grateful for what we've been given, and when we participate in acts of love, we participate in a small part of God's love that reminds us of our identity as beloved.

Inherently loving God, neighbors, and ourselves are all interconnected with one another. If God is love, as first 1 John proclaims, it is in our acts of love that we commune with God AND remember our own identity as beloved. We are not called to first love ourselves and then to love God and neighbor, it is in our loving that our identity is more fully revealed.

I know it sounds paradoxical: in order to love ourselves (to see ourselves as beloved) we have to love others, and in order to love others we have to love ourselves (see ourselves as beloved). So what can we do? The simple answer is this: we can love God with all that we are, and we can love our neighbors. But perhaps it's more helpful if we are a bit more specific about the nature of our love. Here are my 5 tips for remembering our identity as beloved, and for loving God and our neighbor:

Tip #1: Spend time with God. Nurture your spiritual life. So often we learn the stories, we learn the liturgy, we learn what to say and how to say it, and yet neglect our relationship with God. How do we grow in our relationship with Christ? We pray, we read our Bibles or participate in a Bible studies, we take time out of our busy schedules to just be, we participate in worship, we engage in self-reflection.

Tip #2: Rest. I don't think that one of the 10 commandments has to do with Sabbath and resting for no reason. Time to just be, to be with family, to reflect on life, to get away from all the worldly commitments and pressures if not for a short time, is an important spiritual discipline. Maybe you

don't have a whole day, but maybe you take Sabbath time throughout the week. An hour here. 30 minutes there.

Tip #3: Spend time with God in community. Surround yourselves with brothers and sisters in Christ who love you and affirm that you are a beloved child of God. Worship together. Fellowship together. Go on bike rides, go to lunch, share a meal, go bowling. Talk about your faith. Lift each other up in a world that constantly brings us down. Who can you talk to about your faith and about your walk with God? The more you talk about it, the more you reflect through the lens of Christ in your life, the easier it becomes to see that you are beloved.

Tip # 4: Choose love. We can go about our life in all sorts of ways. We can be cynical, pessimistic, rushed, angry, whatever else. Make a conscious decision to choose love. Approach your mornings with love. Wake up with love on your heart and on your lips. Walk into work ready to love. When confronted with a difficult choice to make, choose love. I know, this tip can be so open-ended. "Choosing love" may look different from one person to the next, but walking around life with a sense that love is what it's all about changes your patterns of thinking, and doing, and being. It's not just a spiritual change or an emotional change but can literally change your brain chemistry.

Tip # 5: Go the extra mile for someone else. Choose one person and love them in a way that goes beyond what they need. Try it. Do it again. See what happens.

These are my 5 tips for seeing yourself as beloved. Each tip shows the interconnectedness of loving God, loving neighbor, and loving self. This is not a complete list but a place to start.

As we go into this advent season, where we ready ourselves for God's love that will be born into this world and walk among us, let us let that light illuminate our lives.

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

With Glad Tidings,
Pastor Adam



Where your treasure is, there your heart will lie also. ~Matthew 6:21

Below you will find evidence of the many places where your hearts, time and money are making a difference, both locally and abroad.



Save the date for the North Marin Community Services Sharing Tree. The Sharing Tree will be in the narthex November 26 through December 10. Please pick an ornament with specific instructions on what gift to label and return it to the narthex or office. You'll have your choice of:

- New, medium-sized stuffed animals
- \$25 Target gift cards for teens
- Or go to www.northmarincs.org for specific wish fulfillment.

NMCS PROGRAM INFORMATION

North Marin Community Services has provided PCN with a number of hard-copy fliers that describe their many programs and contact information. The fliers are located in the narthex and on the table in the office entry. Please take them for your car, purse, or backpack to give to the many people we meet along the way who are living on the margins and need more support.

ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS FAIRE

A Christmas Christ Would Recognize

Please join us in-person between services on Sunday, December 10th in Trevitt Hall, or print and mail in the donations order form (see below) postmarked by Monday, December 18th. Note: HALO PRODUCTS MUST BE BOUGHT IN-PERSON ON THE 10TH ONLY. NO MAIL-IN PURCHASES.

2023 Alternative Christmas Faire



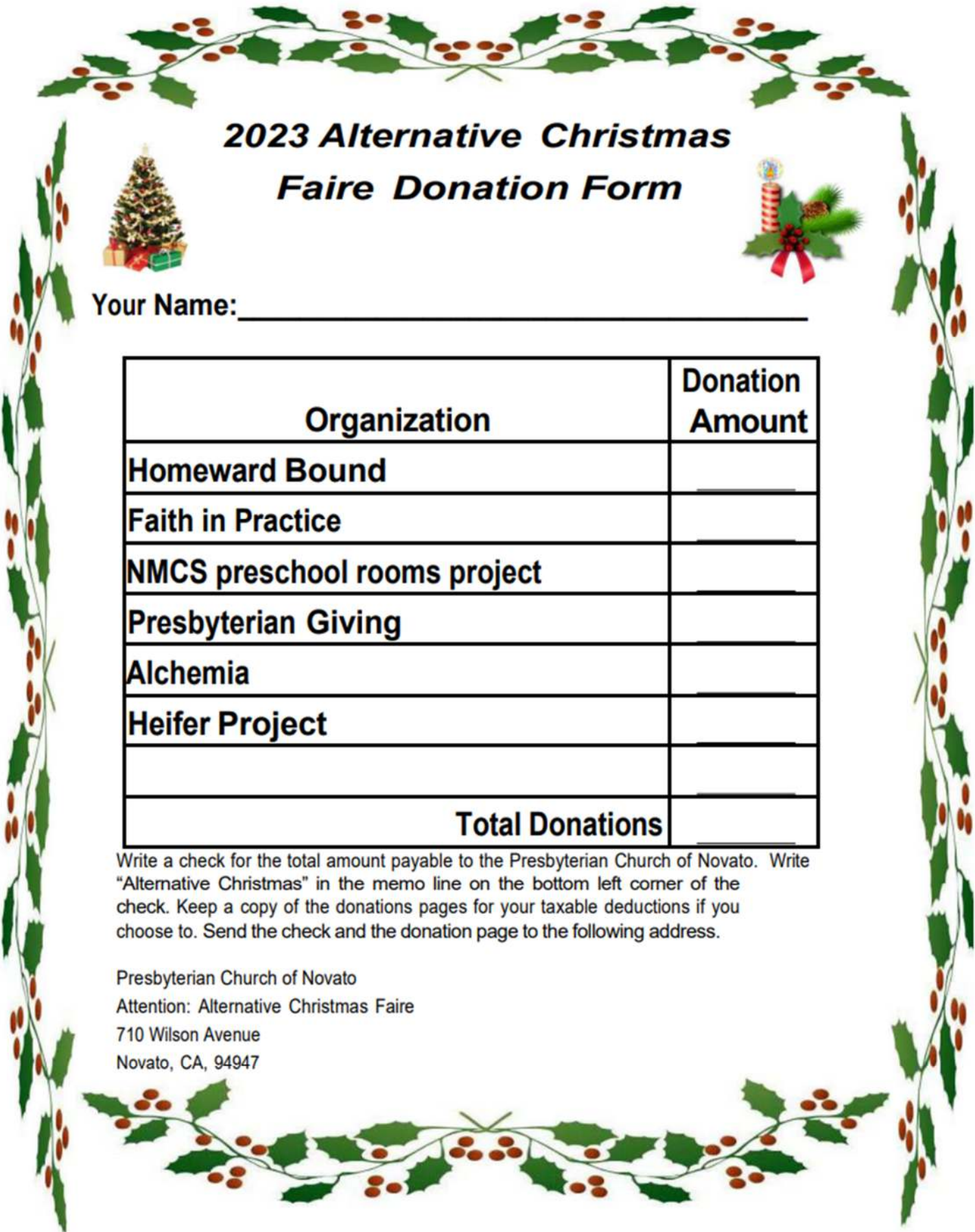


A Christmas Christ would recognize



Your Mission Committee is organizing the annual “Alternative Christmas Faire” event that will be on **December 10th**. This “in-person” event will be between the contemporary and traditional church services. Donations can also be mailed in, postmarked from December 3 through 17. The following organizations are included in the Alternative Christmas Faire -- A Christmas Christ would recognize.

- **Homeward Bound (HB)** – Provides housing, training and hope to end homelessness. Housing is provided to homeless families, adults, and veterans. Services include mental health counseling, job training, and help with accessing other needed services. Separate from any donations to Homeward Bound; they will ONLY have their Halo Holiday Gift products for sale December 10, the day of the event.
- **Faith in Practice** - The mission of Faith In Practice is to improve the physical, spiritual, and economic conditions of the poor in Guatemala through short-term surgical, medical, and dental mission trips and health-related educational programs. Our mission is based on an ecumenical understanding that as people of God we are called to demonstrate the love and compassion that is an outward sign of God’s presence among us.
- **North Marin Community Services** – Renovation of two classrooms, which includes five upgrades: installation of a new dishwasher in the 3- to 5-year-old room; painting of both the 2- to 3- and 3- to 5-year-old room; new storage cabinets in both rooms and adjacent storage rooms; and patio furniture for the staff, as budget allows for completion. Project completion by Team Pacheco of Leadership Novato: Team Leader Tonya Church, Karrie Coulter, Chris Fiscalini, Lorena Lupercio-Diaz, Patty Lufrano, Steve Ross and Juan Selden.
- **Presbyterian Giving** – the objective of Presbyterian Giving is to connect people as neighbors with others experiencing needs, supporting projects and friendships that grow gardens and generations, bring water and watch for corruption, share education, tools and training, and link each of us more closely with one another and with God.
- **Alchemia** – “Art Without Labels.” Alchemia supports artists who have intellectual and developmental disabilities to share their unique artistic voices. The program offers art and life skills classes to enhance the independence and personal empowerment of each individual participant.
- **Heifer Project** – provides a seed investment of livestock or agriculture, followed by mentorship to help project participants build a business and ultimately gain access to supply chains and markets.



2023 Alternative Christmas Faire Donation Form

Your Name: _____

| Organization | Donation Amount |
|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Homeward Bound | |
| Faith in Practice | |
| NMCS preschool rooms project | |
| Presbyterian Giving | |
| Alchemia | |
| Heifer Project | |
| | |
| Total Donations | |

Write a check for the total amount payable to the Presbyterian Church of Novato. Write "Alternative Christmas" in the memo line on the bottom left corner of the check. Keep a copy of the donations pages for your taxable deductions if you choose to. Send the check and the donation page to the following address.

Presbyterian Church of Novato
Attention: Alternative Christmas Faire
710 Wilson Avenue
Novato, CA, 94947



2023 Halo Holiday

Gifts

Quantity

HANDMADE CHOCOLATE BARK

6OZ. BAG/ \$10

- Dark Chocolate with Dried Cranberry and Pumpkin Seeds
- Dark Chocolate with Peppermint

HALO PRODUCTS

\$10 EACH

- Winter Mixed Berry Jam - 9oz
- Oaxacan Mole Sauce - 16oz
- Sweet Smokin' BBQ Sauce - 16oz

HALO HONEY

\$15 EACH

- Natural and Unfiltered from Our Novato Hives - 9oz

WAGSTER DOG TREATS

\$10/ BAG
OR ALL 3 FLAVORS FOR \$25

- Apple & Peanut Butter
- Banana & Toasted Coconut
- Peanut Butter & Molasses
- 3 pack - One Bag of Each Flavor!

Wagster Treats Gift Box - \$50

- 1 Bag Each: Apple & Peanut Butter, Banana & Toasted Coconut and Peanut Butter & Molasses
- + 6-Pack of Custom Doggie Notecards

All proceeds support Homeward Bound of

Marin Name _____

Phone _____

Sub Total \$ _____ *Total \$* _____





Marla Hedlund, the Development and Community Relations Officer for the Center for Domestic Peace, was our guest speaker on October 1. Unfortunately, our streaming service went down that day and our online community didn't get to hear Marla's talk. Because it was so impactful, we asked Marla if she would send her speech to us. Many of us were surprised by the statistics she shared, but she also shared what we could do to help. Many thanks to Barbara Gildea for faithfully picking up the groceries that are donated and taking them to C4DP, and thanks to all who have generously donated these groceries that are so appreciated. Here is Marla's speech:

Thank you so much for inviting me here today. It's perfect timing as October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

My name is Marla Hedlund, Development and Community Relations Officer. I have been at C4DP for just over 15 years – why? Because it's an amazing organization helping brave individuals find peace in their lives.

So, who are they? Center for Domestic Peace was founded in 1977 as Marin Abused Women's Services (anyone remember MAWS? That's us!). This year is our 46th year of helping hundreds of thousands to build peace in their homes, peace in their families, and peace in our community.

I'm especially happy to be here in person today so I can personally **thank all of you**, and especially **Barbara Gildea** and the Mission Committee for all you have done for us over the years, not only financially with your **grants**, but also some of you may not know, but we are so lucky to be the beneficiary of **groceries** for our transitional housing, something your church has been doing for over two years. These bags go directly to the 21 families, so they don't have to take the bus and go to the food banks, saving them hours of time to focus more on their children and the work they are doing to empower themselves financially and heal from the trauma of domestic violence. I'll tell you more about our programs in a minute, but

A lot of people ask me - how big is the issue of DV in Marin?

Think about this. It's the **number one violent crime in Marin....**

Put in perspective: We are lucky we don't have a lot of homicides, but in one year the Marin County DA may see:

- 18 gang-related acts of violence
- 34 child abuse cases
- 58 sexual assaults

600 cases of reported domestic violence! That is two or three a day! And how many go unreported?

What is DV? It's a pattern of cohesive behavior where one person tries to dominate and control another through threats or acts of abuse. The obvious kind is physical, but it can also be emotional, financial, verbal, sexual and even spiritual.

So who is a victim of DV?

That person is most likely to be a **female**, although men sometimes are victimized by DV.

She is of **all ages**, but most likely to be between 20 and 35 if she enters the shelter.

Sometimes **she is 80** and entering a shelter for the second time in her marriage.

She is a **monolingual immigrant** from the Canal and also a **physician** from Kentfield.

Her husband is **unemployed**, and her husband is the owner of a **luxury car** dealership in Marin.

She has a limited support network, and she is also on the society pages of Marin Magazine.

All of these are **real examples** of who is a victim of DV in Marin.

What is C4DP doing about this? Center for Domestic Peace leads a comprehensive community effort to end the #1 violent crime in Marin County: domestic violence.

We provide transformational services and programs that protect and enhance victim safety, hold abusers accountable, and ultimately engage our community in permanent change.

Our survivor-led, trauma-informed services and programs include a bilingual, 24-hour hotline that receives over 8000 calls a year, an emergency shelter with 30 beds, 21 units of transitional housing, therapy and case management, legal advocacy, prevention and education services, and training and programs to help abusers end their violence.

We work with Marin's youth in our schools and colleges to educate and end dating abuse. Statistics say that one in three young people will experience some kind of dating abuse – and this is not okay.

We work with children and families in a group setting in a program called **In This Together**, to heal the family trauma left by witnessing domestic abuse and help rebuild the family unity.

And our **legal services department** has over 440 cases a year helping with restraining orders, child custody, court accompaniment and more.

What we have always known is that DV is a community problem – that needs a community solution. It is not a private matter.

One **significant impact** C4DP has had in increasing survivor safety can be seen with **our collaboration with law enforcement**. We have been spearheading and refining how we work and educate law enforcement for many years to better serve the needs of survivors – and out of this partnership we have some really great news!

We conducted a study last year of DV calls to law enforcement over the last 13 years, and we are the only county in the state of California to see a 55% decrease in calls for help, and we have a 30% decrease in request for our shelter in Marin. This shows that early intervention, uniform protocol training of officers, and connecting survivors to C4DP earlier on in the process is not only reducing the crime and needs for law enforcement, but saving lives.

So that is an overview of who we are and what we do. I often get asked in my role, so what can we do to help?

First of all, we rely on the generosity of our community to do our important work so **financial contributions** are much needed. Yes, we get federal and state grants, but we need foundations, corporations, individuals, and groups like yours to support us as well. Grants are harder and harder to get, and fewer and fewer to come by, so we rely **deeply** on folks like you to support us financially.

Again – we value and honor your support of us!

But each and every one of you can also help. You can **learn about the issues** of domestic violence and dating abuse, learn the **warning signs** to help a friend or relative. You can go to your companies and schools, and yes, your church, and ask if they have **safety policies** and education opportunities.

Churches are in a unique position to promote our values such as safety, equality, justice, and offer protection, prevention and accountability. You can offer a safe sanctuary for survivors, you can design and offer healing circles, or devote sermons to healthy relationships. Thank you for having me here today! You can **also Vote** for those who support funding for survivors and programs like ours!

Lastly, come to In Celebration of Mothers luncheon in May; go to www.centerfordomesticpeace.org for more information.

Thank you for having me here today and helping spread our message about ending domestic violence now and forever!



We are currently taking sign-ups to have pictures taken for our new online church directory. To make your appointment, go to our website (www.pcnovato.org) and click on the photo appointment sign-up link. Any questions? Please contact Sally at community@pcnovato.org. The deadline to have your picture taken is December 13!



Session Highlights

At the November 15, 2023 Session meeting:

- Session approved the purchase and installation of carpet tiles in the church office, Christensen Room, and kitchen hallway.
- Approved maintaining the current organization of the Endowment Committee with three year terms of two Elders and three at-large members from the congregation.
- Approved investigating re-offering classes at PCN such as A Matter of Balance which were stopped during COVID.

At the Special Session meeting of November 19, 2023, Session met and welcomed new members Marty Barry, Jack Fuller, and Barbara Sparrow. The congregation welcomed the new members during the 9:30 AM worship service.

Kathy Takemoto, Clerk of Session



PCN honored its veterans during worship on Sunday, November 12th. Thank you to all who have served.

Ray Carlson, Army
 Ramona Chipman, Army
 Bob Douglass, Army Air Corps, Air Force
 Alan Dunham, Naval Reserve
 Jim Emrich, Coast Guard
 Don Erba, National Guard
 Carl Fehring, Army Air Corps
 Garrick Fong, Army
 Jon Hanlein, Navy
 Fred King, Army
 John Marks, Marine Corps
 Janet Morales, Air Force

Michael Moser, Coast Guard
 Gail Penfield, Army
 Art Plumstead, U.S. Public Health Service
 Donald Powell, Air Force
 Mike Robinson, Air Force
 Ray Shanahan, Army
 Greg Smith, Air Force
 Bruce Stahley, Army
 Don Taylor, Naval Reserve, Army
 Bill Walker, Coast Guard
 Bill Wolff, Air Force
 Stan Wood, Air Force



Property Committee Activity

When I joined the property committee at the beginning of this year, I already knew that we have a small group of dedicated servants that do a great job of maintaining and improving our church property. Little did I understand the scope of the work that they have accomplished. Not only are these gentlemen taking care of facilities for our church, but they are also maintaining the building for the use of the Good Shepherd Lutheran School Middle School, a very important source of revenue for our congregation. Several improvement requests were completed as part of the recently renewed lease with the school that were instrumental to the agreement.

Here is a list of what these guys have been up to:

PAINTING FACILITIES

- Sanctuary exterior walls except west wall
- Varnish portions of interior sanctuary
- Sheds exterior
- Parking lot lines, curbs, stops, bump
- Old boiler room
- Portions CE building exterior walls
- Painted manse exterior

SANCTUARY LIVE STREAMING

- Installed Cat 6 internet cable from school server to office & sanctuary
- Pews removed & replaced for contractor to perform their work
- Removed old projectors
- Internet connection contract with GSLS
- Organized console wiring
- Contract for new cameras & lighting

PLUMBING

- Installed 3 handicap toilets & 2 nursery toilets
- Installed dishwasher
- Installed 8 faucet fixtures
- Repaired 8 faucets
- Investigated heating system water leaks
- Repaired toilet leaks & plumbing
- Installed 2 wash basin water heater heaters in GSLS office bathroom
- Repaired kitchen floor heater water leak, repaired concrete & installed floor tiles
- Repaired vandalized girls bathroom wash basin and faucet
- Had janitors sink & urinals unplugged
- Found water leak from the hidden water valves in the Christensen closet that flooded kitchen hall & Christensen room rugs
- Sump pump system installed

ELECTRICAL

- Replaced 11 ballasts in fluorescent light fixtures
- Replaced 36 fluorescent bulbs
- Installed 8 fluorescent light fixtures
- Installed 6 TV's
- Replaced 8 electrical outlets, 4 switches
- Installed 7 new electrical outlets
- Breezeway light timing fixed

CAMPUS MAINTENANCE

- Mowed & weed wacked weeds
- Cut down 7 dead trees & cleaned up debris
- Cut & installed palms for Palm Sunday
- Pruned trees, bushes, plants
- Spread wood chips
- Repaired mower
- Paint and labeled dumpsters
- Purchased new garbage cans with locking hinged lids
- Swept parking lot for GSLS playground safety
- Pulled weeds as needed
- Fixed irrigation system
- Sorting misplaced garbage into the proper dumpster, flatten all cardboard boxes, remove all plastic bags in compost & recycle dumpsters, monitor and clean area adjacent to dumpsters putting the debris in correct dumpsters
- Purchased iron park benches, assembled and placed along walkways

BOILER ROOM CONVERTED TO PRISON CLOTHING MISSION

- Removed old boiler
- Removed water heater
- Capped water & gas pipes
- Repaired walls and painted room
- Installed new light fixture
- Install rods & shelving

NEW HVAC

- Researched heating system options
- Had 7 disconnects installed for inverters
- Received bids for new HVAC system
- Awarded contract
- Maintenance contract purchased

CONSTRUCTION

- Repaired fencing posts, boards, gates, wire fencing
- Repaired bathroom ceilings
- Replaced wood bench by roses
- Installed new mail box
- Install electric heaters in church office
- Removed & rebuilt back stairs and railings

- Repaired 3 broken door jambs
- Install 9 new door knobs for GSLS
- Rekeyed 10 door knobs
- Had roof leaks repaired on Sanctuary, CE building, Manse
- Had A/C installed for Manse
- Had car charging stations installed for Manse
- Had safety film installed on GSLS class room windows
- Installed new door between GSLS office bathroom & class room
- Removed 5 old air conditioners & repaired walls
- Installed rain gutter screen guards to keep leaves out of sump pump
- Installed spare door on the Narthex closet with complete hardware
- Leaning banner post fixed (Thanks Bruce!)
- Communion table legs have been repaired and braced

MISCELLANEOUS

- Covid 19, installed touchless soap, sanitizers, & paper towel dispensers
- Worked with GSLS for turf field location & size
- Installed smoke alarms
- Assembled chairs for Christensen & Music rooms
- Prepared & repaired grills as needed
- Power washed breeze ways, brick patio, BBQ's, buildings for painting
- Cleaned CE building rain gutters
- Repaired bathroom stalls
- Numerous trips to Pini & lumber yard for miscellaneous, material and parts
- Helped move Suzanne to new office
- Picked up desk, transported it & set up in church office
- Cord management to improve safety and appearance

IN PROGRESS

- Structural inspection report related to the condition of the patio cover, bell tower & arbor received. Plans to address deficiencies underway.
- Replace flooring in Christiansen Room and Church Office areas.
- Work with the Refresh Committee to improve campus "curb appeal"; particularly related to landscaping enhancement.
- Address recommendations presented in the Fire Prevention Report based on the inspection of the property by the Novato Fire Protection District.

It is no exaggeration to say that the volunteer labor of your Property Committee members has saved PCN more than \$250,000 over the past four years. Please complete those talent surveys. We look forward to including more of you in our efforts to maintain and improve our beautiful facilities for His kingdom purposes. I'm proud to be a member of this great team.

James Wood

Session Property Elders & Committee

Elders: Bill Walker, Don Erba, Dan Rice, Joe Simmons, Bob Clausen, James Wood

Committee: Ron Hune, Fred Holmes



Christ caring for people through people

STEPHEN MINISTRY

**Stephen Ministry Training @ PCN!
January 2024!**

*"Bear one another's burdens,
and in this way
you will fulfill the law of Christ." Galatians 6:2*



The Stephen Series...

MEETS THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE

The Stephen Series equips lay people to provide effective caring ministry to . . .

- the hospitalized
 - the terminally ill
 - the bereaved
 - the elderly
 - the disabled & handicapped
 - those in job crisis
 - the lonely or depressed
 - the inactive in your congregation
 - the shut-in & institutionalized
 - new members in your church or community
 - those in spiritual crisis
- ... and many more

DEFINITION

The Stephen Series is a system of training and organizing lay persons for caring ministry in and around their congregations.

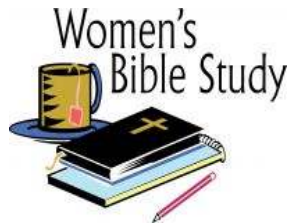
MULTIPLIES THE MINISTRY OF CONGREGATIONS

- Increases significantly the number of congregational members involved in ongoing, caring ministry.
- Gives pastors renewed joy and fulfillment as they equip others and so extend the reach of their own ministries.
- Enables the entire congregation to grow as a warm, loving, nurturing community as the contagious caring of Stephen ministers expands to touch more and more lives.
- People who receive ministry from lay persons in the Stephen Series—
 - receive quality Christian care,
 - deepen their relationship with their Lord,
 - increase involvement in their congregations,
 - willingly accept and value ministry from a fellow lay person.
- Stephen ministers apply caring skills to other important relationships and discover that their whole lives are enriched.
- Pastor, church staff, and lay people form a strong and supportive ministry team to bring God's care to others.

SUPPLIES COMPLETE RESOURCES TO CONGREGATIONS

- A *Leader's Manual*, consisting of training materials along with experiential teaching aids for leaders to use in equipping lay people for caring ministry.
- *Trainee Manuals*, with clear outlines and helpful Reference Notes for use by every lay person trained as a Stephen minister.
- A 12-day Leader's Training Course where leaders are trained to organize, teach, and administer the Stephen Series system.
- An approach to lay training that is easy to understand, yet in-depth—simple, but profound.
- A carefully planned series of steps that the congregation takes to set up a workable and lasting lay caring ministry.
- Free, ongoing consultation with the Stephen Ministries staff to respond to your questions and concerns.
- Enrolled congregations can send any number of people to any Leader's Training Course in any year as part of the one-time enrollment fee. This insures continuity and permanence for your lay caring ministry.

Christ Caring For People Through People



The Gospel of John

The PCN Women's Bible study door is open wide, and we are happy to welcome you back to our journey in the Book of John. We meet via Zoom on Thursdays from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Carol Dacquisto's lessons are filled with discovery. Our reunion is a warm sisterhood bonding in Christ. Invite friends and family. We will be glad to help you learn a quick and easy way to hop on Zoom to attend. Study books will be available for \$10 each.

PCN Women's Bible Study would like you to "spread the word" about the Pull-Tabs for Recycling for the Shriners Hospitals for Children, a 22-hospital system providing totally free medical care to any child under the age of 18 with burn injuries, spinal cord injuries or orthopedic problems. By saving your aluminum pull-tabs off cans and bringing them in to the church office, you will be part of a non-profit international effort for children's health care. Keep up the good work!

Mark your calendars for the class vacation schedule: Christmas break December 21-28.
Class will resume January 4, 2024.
Spring break March 28-April 4.
Last class May 9.

If you want a wonderful way to connect to the PCN community and learn about the disciple John with a warm and open group of women contact Carol Dacquisto, lead teacher, at 415-892-2070; Margaret Franz-Costello, assistant, at 415-806-8849 or Karen Carlson at 415-382-9616.

Grace and Peace,
Carol Dacquisto, Margaret Franz-Costello and Karen Carlson

Here is the Zoom link and passcode:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81284025735?pwd=VTY4cWFJQWtDTIpUVE9MT0ljL1dHdz09>

Meeting ID: 812 8402 5735 Passcode: pcnovato



The Sunday Morning Adult Study Group will continue meeting via Zoom (until further notice) at 8:00 a.m. Please sign on to join a wonderful group of adults who are learning more about God's Word. If you want or need materials, please let Carol Dacquisto (415-892-2070) or Larry Dacquisto (415-577-2115) know, and we will see that you have the appropriate materials.

Our focus this quarter is **"God's Law Is Love,"** which centers on God's law as it related to faith in Christ.

Unit 1 draws on the Gospels to show Jesus contrasting empty acts of piety with performing the justice and love of God, interpreting what it means to honor the Sabbath, and showing God is the one qualified to judge a sinner's failures.

In **Unit 2**, lessons from Romans and Galatians contrast the inability of the law to provide justification. Paul says God wants circumcised hearts, and he pleads with the Galatians to hold fast to Christ and not to revert to law-keeping for justification. Faith in Christ makes us heirs to God's kingdom.

In **Unit 3** the Jerusalem Conference shows how Gentiles need not submit to the law because salvation comes through faith in Christ, not the law. In 1 Corinthians and Romans, Paul examines how the law finds its fulfillment in the commandment to love; he contrasts the hollowness of human traditions with the fullness of God found in Christ, and he warns that Christian liberty not become a license for sin.

Study Leaders:

James Baird, Carol Dacquisto, Larry Dacquisto, and Doris Dooley

Link for the Zoom meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88401949220?pwd=QS9MMHJsbU5TVTJ6enVpU1hDL0VNQT09>

Meeting ID: 884 0194 9220 Passcode: pcnovato



REQUESTING A PRAYER BLANKET is easy. Email Tonya or Carol. Give us the recipient's first and last name, address, phone number, and what colors they like. We try to send a prayer blanket that is meaningful for the recipient. Questions? Contact Tonya Church at tonya.church@comcast.net or Carol Robinson at carol001@comcast.net.



WOMEN'S PRAYER GROUP

Spend time praising God for His many blessings through prayer and receive His assurance for you. Together we seek His intimate presence, led by the Holy Spirit and fed by scripture. Meetings are the first Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. Use the same Zoom link each month. Contact Janis West at Janisw99@gmail.com with questions.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81107446679?pwd=Yy9ub1pReGdMTHVhbDJPZzhHVVdHQ09>

Meeting ID: 811 0744 6679 Passcode: pcnovato



MEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Come join us for study and fellowship. We meet every **Wednesday at 7:15 a.m.** via Zoom. All men are welcome. To be added to the Zoom contact list, contact Walt Campbell at (415) 497-5157.



Here's an important number to jot down: (415) 472-0911. This is the **non-injury** lift assist phone number from the Novato Fire Department. If you or someone you know has fallen and you can't lift him/her, the fire department will come help!