

2024
Annual Report



Presbyterian
Church of
Novato

710 Wilson Avenue
Novato, CA 94947

Presbyterian Church of Novato
Annual Meeting of the Congregation
January 26, 2025

AGENDA

10:45 a.m. Gathering music

REGULAR BUSINESS

10:50 a.m. Call to Order and Invocation – Adam Smith, Pastor

Election of At-large Members of Endowment Committee:
George Pilloton (Elder) and Brad Praun (Elder), Bruce Stahley,
John Reuscher, Patty Reed

PCN Membership Report for 2024 – Kathy Takemoto, Clerk of Session

Present Annual Report & Church Budget
(Q&A will be at the end of the meeting)

Pastor's Terms of Call – Personnel/Finance Elders

GOD AT WORK

WHAT GOD HAS DONE AT PCN IN 2024

WHAT GOD IS DOING AT PCN in 2025

Vibrant, Worshipful Music Ministry

Robust & Faithful Youth Ministry

HOW I CAN GET INVOLVED

Q & A

11:45 a.m. Closing prayer and adjournment

11:46 a.m. Closing music

11:50 p.m. Lunch and fellowship

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CHURCH STAFF 2024

Adam Smith	Pastor
Sally Carbonaro	Senior Director of Community Engagement
Sydney Fletcher	Director of Children's Ministry and Communications
Katy Hatfield	Retired, Director of Music for Traditional Worship
Art Maramba	Music Ministry Director (hired Fall 2024)
Bob McBain	Contemporary Worship Pianist
Mark Heims	Interim Contemporary Music Director
Tammi Jester	Office Administrator
Linda Ward	Administrative Office Assistant
Suzanne Schmidt	Finance Secretary
Tammi Jester	Wedding Coordinator
Renee Garza	Nursery Caregiver
Carol Robinson	Nursery Caregiver
Kathy Takemoto	Clerk of Session
Becky Praun	Deacon Moderator

SESSION

Class of 2024

Melodie Baird
George Pilloton
Delane Ramser

Class of 2025

Tonya Church
Sandy Fong
Patty Reed

Class of 2026

Karen Marks
Brad Praun
Greg Smith

Clerk of Session: Kathy Takemoto

Corporate Officers 2024

Brad Praun, President, CEO
George Pilloton, Treasurer, CFO
Kathy Takemoto, Secretary

BOARD OF DEACONS

Class of 2024

Loree Draeger
Cathy Haney
Becky Moser
Kristen Rush

Class of 2025

Marcus Combs
Alan Dunham
Cathy Haney

Class of 2026

Audrey Boland
Becky Praun

Moderator – Becky Praun
Vice Moderator – Sally Jacob
Secretary – Shirley Shanahan and Carolyn Gerrans
Treasurer – Kristen Rush

Pastor

Grace and peace to you, saints of PCN.

2024 was a year where we saw God on the move in ways we welcomed with open arms and in ways we never could have anticipated. We saw our beloved music director, Katy Hatfield, retire from her role at our church in the spring. It was hard to say goodbye, but at the same time, God was moving us to move into a more holistic music program. In November, we welcomed our new Music Ministry Director, Art Maramba. We continue to worship in an authentically PCN way, incorporating the vast and varied elements of worship that make us, us. We continue to live into our new leadership model, focused on equipping more saints in the life and ministry of the church to more specific roles and tasks. We've pushed our way out into the community to make our presence more visible. Our Seekers program for children transitioned into a new, intergenerational program called Grace Generation, a program that began to encompass our middle and high school youth. We saw strong engagement in our newly focused mission relationships, highlighting different mission endeavors each month. Our campus was refreshed and revitalized by our Refresh Team, Property Team, and volunteer support. We said goodbye to some of our beloved members and at the same time welcomed new members into our midst.

It was a busy, beautiful, and faithful year in life and ministry together, and we've seen God do some pretty amazing things at PCN.

For me personally, it was a year of transition. I stepped back from filling the contemporary music director role and have created some new, needed boundaries for work. With growing teens, other important, outside activities, and life changes, time became a precious resource I worked and continue to work to more wisely use both for my family and for me. The second half of the year was a needed period of discernment and spiritual care.

Pastoral Stats for 2024:

- Preached 50+ times during the year and administered communion more than a dozen times in corporate worship.
- Led the Sermon Talk-Backs on Mondays at 9 a.m. via Zoom. Average participation was between eight and ten persons.
- Staff support for Diaconate.
- Organized an Officer Retreat in the summer of 2024 for the purpose of reflection on our PCN Vision & Strategic Plan, adjusting priorities, leadership development, worship, and fellowship.
- Organized and led an All Committee Retreat.
- Met with 15+ indigent persons on behalf of the Deacons and provided support in the form of food or gas certificates.

- Provided 250+ in-person and phone pastoral visits.
- Provided pastoral counseling to four individuals.
- Officiated at five+ memorial services and one wedding
- Staffed the following Session committees: Mission, Personnel, Worship, Stewardship, Nominating, Finance & Administration
- With Personnel, I helped conduct all staff evaluations and participated in staff search processes for a new Music Ministry Director.
- Oriented new Music Ministry Director, Art Maramba.
- Worked with Session to continue to lead from Vision including continued discernment, big-picture thinking and planning, and working toward specific initiatives.
- Participated in the Pastor's Renewal Conference at Zephyr Point in the fall.
- Led weekly staff meetings on Wednesday mornings.
- Began weekly Program Staff meetings.
- Participated in Novato minister gatherings when able.
- Provided monthly articles for each edition of our newsletter.
- Participated in Presbytery meetings when able.
- Helped fill ranks on the Praise Team and PCN choir when needed.
- Developed six new worship series.
- Led four Inquirer Classes.
- Updated and led leadership training for officers and committee chairs.
- Moderated all Session meetings.
- Read 12 books.
- Served on the Presbytery CPM Committee.
- Served on the Permanent Judicial Committee of the Presbytery.
- Served as a consultant with two other churches.
- Created promotional, advent devotion, Stewardship update, sermon, and other various videos.

2025 – WHAT'S COMING NEXT?

As you read through this Annual Report, our teams will be reflecting on their ministry and mission activities from 2024, but they will also begin to talk about what you can expect in 2025. I encourage you to read through the report to get the best sense of what is coming up in 2025.

From my pastor perspective, I'll say this: You can expect the glorious and grace-filled unexpected. What do I mean by that? You see, every year, your leaders faithfully create a roadmap for the life and ministry of PCN. We do so in faithfulness to God as we seek to live into our mission, vision, and values. By and large, we follow that roadmap. But every year, over the course of the journey, God moves us to do things we did not originally plan. Along the way, things change, and we are called to change with them. And the truly amazing and wonderful thing about these unexpected circumstances is

that we have been able to turn on a dime, adapt, and jump into whatever God has thrown our way. We have created a healthy church community that can and does follow after the Holy Spirit along any road or path no matter how much it twists and turns. We are resilient, trusting in our Lord and Savior. That, my friends, is a blessing. YOU are a blessing. Never forget it!

I expect 2025 to be a year of growth; growth that is deep and wide in our fidelity to Christ, but also in our community. We know who we are, and we know our uniqueness in Novato. Now is the time to come alongside our neighbors and to bring them into what God is doing at PCN. This is a year to invite our neighbors to join us in worship, in your community life groups, in our sermon talk back or Sunday school classes. This is the year to invite others to serve alongside us to package meals, to collect clothing, to travel with us as we seek to grow in our faith together.

May God continue to lead us into 2025, bringing us new life here and now, and forever.

With Grace & Peace,

Rev. Dr. Adam Smith, Pastor

Community Engagement

2024 was an exhilarating year for PCN! We continue to involve our congregation in meaningful small groups, increase our involvement in our local community, forge partnerships, and create a path for visitors and new members to thrive at PCN.

Our specific goals in 2024:

1. To involve everyone in our congregation in something, to ensure that everyone finds a meaningful way to get involved. Our small groups have flourished, boasting more than 243 participants across 15 diverse opportunities.
2. To actively engage in and sponsor community events in Novato, establishing PCN as a committed community member, contributor, and faith partner – in most cases, the only faith partner. We are dedicated to reaching out to the wider community to volunteer, support, and truly embody the spirit of the church.
3. To prepare a path for visitors and new members to become an integral part of our community and to have our community become an integral part of their lives.

This report highlights some of the achievements and activities of various programs and initiatives aimed at community engagement and youth ministry.

Novato Community Resilience Team (NCRT)

Our involvement with the Novato Community Resiliency Team (NCRT) fits goal two: actively engaging in the wider community (county) and establishing PCN as a committed community member, contributor, and only faith partner. The County of Marin has developed local CRTs to respond to potentially critical weather, health, and other issues. We are called upon to communicate, educate, and represent our communities. We cover North Marin.

As partners on the NCRT, PCN helps accomplish the team's goals in our PCN community and beyond.

The goals for 2024 included:

- Emergency Preparedness & Safety Protocols
 - Including extreme weather, fire awareness, our Safe Church Policy and evacuation drills
- Mental Health & Suicide Awareness & Prevention
- COVID Awareness & Prevention
 - Including the availability of test kits and masks
- First Aid/CPR/AED training/NARCAN Training

QPR is a program we considered as a result of the NCRT goals and the county's involvement. It is a nationally known Suicide Prevention Education program. Both Karen Marks and Becky Moser are qualified trainers. They have trained Sydney, Sally, Diane Blalock, and Greg Smith as support for future training. They have trained more than 63 people. We will roll this out to the NCRT and our community in mid- to late 2025.

We continue to participate in the Marin County Suicide Prevention Collaborative. Kara Connors, the program coordinator, and I are working on a separate initiative to unite other faith-based organizations in Marin County in this vital work. This will increase awareness and prepare others to respond to individuals who have thoughts of suicide.

Habitat for Humanity Greater San Francisco

Our involvement with Habitat fits goal two: actively engaging in the wider community (county) and establishing PCN as a committed community member, contributor, and faith partner. Habitat's plan for Novato is extensive.

We have a strong, growing relationship with them. In November, they introduced two programs to North Marin and Novato. The first is a restoration initiative to help low-income homeowners make repairs, enabling them to remain in their homes. PCN hosted this event in Novato on November 9th. This meeting received a very favorable response and has filled the pipeline.

The second is an 80-home build in 2025-2026. More information will be available in January and February, and a 'Novato Newsletter' will be published in April.

Our congregation will have additional opportunities to participate as volunteers are recruited for various activities.

Habitat received grant requests for playhouses in September. They gathered for a 'playhouse build' in Novato in October. We were contacted to receive an 'extra' playhouse. We happily agreed! This playhouse is awaiting a firm foundation, and then we will put it up in our nursery yard. Habitat is considering PCN for a future playhouse build location in Novato. We are incredibly grateful to them for their generous gift of a beautifully crafted playhouse. This wonderful addition to our campus will serve as a vibrant space for our kids and multiple communities who share it, including our local Cub Scouts and BSF, which hosts a nursery program. The playhouse will provide a safe and engaging environment for children to explore and support pretend play, an important part of a child's development.

Leadership Novato

Our involvement in Leadership Novato fits goal two: actively engaging in the Novato community at the leadership level and establishing PCN as a committed community member, contributor, and faith partner.

Since 1990, Leadership Novato has focused on building and connecting leaders in Novato. The program runs from September to May, and meetings are held monthly to hear from Novato executive leaders on critical topics. Each participant is part of a team that chooses a service project to positively impact our community.

Our team's project was creating a Wellness Center at Sinaloa Middle School, the first middle school in Novato to have one. PCN donated \$1000 to the project and was highlighted as a major contributor.

The creation of this center has since encouraged the Novato Unified School District to add Wellness Centers to the other middle schools in Novato.

Sponsorship and Community Involvement

Our presence in our community has helped build relationships, break down barriers, and foster understanding and respect among different beliefs. It invites conversation, allows for sharing core values and Christian teachings, and inspires and encourages others.

We connect with children and families personally. Most families realize there is an emotional and spiritual deficit in our schools. Resilience, stress management, empathy, and empowerment are rarely taught. Whether their faith experiences have been positive or not, they are open to opportunities for their children.

Community involvement gives us an opportunity to promote all the good things happening at PCN in person.

PCN sponsored the following community events in 2024:

- Sinaloa and Good Shepherd Teacher Appreciation Luncheon
- Screenagers
- Michael Pritchard
- Novato Farmers Market (May through October)
- Anti-bullying event at Sinaloa with Will Bullard & Michael Pritchard addressing recent issues at Sinaloa (May and September)
- School Fuel, Tour of Novato
- PCN and Scout Trunk or Treat
- Annual Downtown Novato Tree Lighting Ceremony
- Joint Luminaria Assembly
- Alumni Open House

Visitors and New Members

The Community Life Committee has been working on streamlining the welcoming, follow-up, and onboarding process for visitors and new members. We have discussed a shepherding, mentorship program; entry-level small groups; and fostering connections among members and between members and visitors.

In 2025, our goal is to grow our membership through outreach, personal invitations, and engaging programs reflecting our dedication to sharing Christ's love, hope, and belonging. We challenge each of you to set personal goals for inviting friends to join us for an event, a service, or one of our programs.

Commissioned Ruling Elder Program (CRE)

I applied to the CRE Program through the Presbytery of San Francisco in January. A Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE) is an elder of the Presbyterian Church (USA) to whom The Book of Order grants "a local commission by the presbytery to lead worship and preach the gospel, watch over the people, and provide for their nurture and service."

Approved by Pastor Adam and the Session, I began courses in January 2024. I have completed the following courses:

- Homiletics
- Leading a Multi-Cultural Church
- Comparative Religions
- Organizational Leadership
- Post Colonial Biblical Hermeneutics
- Liturgy Development

As part of the CRE requirements, I completed a series of psychological tests, including an Intercultural Development Inventory, an NEO (Personality Inventory), and an EQ-I (emotional intelligence assessment). The results were shared and discussed in a three-hour psychological interview.

I look forward to completing this program and being commissioned in 2025.

In the spring, Session elected me to serve as one of two Commissioners to the Presbytery of the Redwoods on behalf of PCN.

Director, Youth Ministries

This year, the middle school students moved from Sunday nights to Grace Generation on Tuesday nights, and our attendance tripled. Catherine Marshall-Smith teaches the curriculum 'The Life of Jesus' series – yay, Catherine! I continued to run two game sections before and after dinner.

The high school group continued Sunday night Youth Group from January through June. We invited the 8th graders to join us in May. The curriculum and activities included the following:

- The Physiology of Gratitude
- The Physiology of Stress
- Influence
- Purpose
- Courage: 4-part series by Francis Chan
- Love Does by Bob Goff; 5-part series
- Dinner out
- Movie night

In June, David Mink officially 'retired' from his faithful service as our middle school Sunday school teacher. He has served PCN in so many ways and has been the constant in our youth ministry through many years of transition. He has been deeply missed.

In July and August, we celebrated summer with fun activities: bowling and pizza, mini-golf and Slurpees, disc golf and Baskin Robbins, and trivia night. In August, David Harmon officially 'retired' from our Sunday night youth group. We celebrated him and his service at a spaghetti dinner send-off. He has continued to be involved with the youth and leads worship at Grace Generation on Tuesday nights.

In August, a major bungalow refresh was conducted to prepare a place for the high school students to call home on Tuesday nights. This involved removing three of the six couches, deep cleaning a refrigerator, applying new paint, power washing the outside stairs, installing new motion-detector outside lights, and installing a recently donated large smart-screen TV (thank you, Haneys!). We can now offer this space to BSF (Bible Study Fellowship) as a small group location every Wednesday morning.

We kicked off Grace Generation in September, including a complete Seekers rebranding. This new name is central to our mission and better aligns with and communicates our values. We are attracting a broader demographic, particularly those who resonate with themes of grace, inclusivity, and positivity. It also conveys a new and stronger identity as we include kids of all ages.

This year, we offered a Confirmation Class to our middle- and high-school students. We received an overwhelming response; eight students and their families committed. Robert Coleman, Walt Campbell, Pastor Adam, and I taught two classes each. The curriculum was purchased from the PC(USA) website. The material was robust and engaging. Our Confirmation Class began on October 6 and finished on November 24. All eight students (middle and high school) completed the class. On December 8th, they were confirmed, and five of the Confirmands chose to join PCN. I have since received requests for another class in the coming year!

Both high school and middle school groups actively mentor and lead the younger age groups at Grace Generation and participated in the children's Christmas program this year. We look forward to more intergenerational worship services and activities.

We hope to establish additional leadership this year to expand our programming and activities.

We are most grateful to all of you who have supported this ministry with prayer, volunteering, and meals! Thank you!

Conclusion

In conclusion, 2024 was a remarkable year for PCN. Our efforts ensured meaningful member involvement, active participation in community events, and the integration of new members into our community.

We are grateful for the support of our congregation, volunteers, and partners, whose contributions have been invaluable.

As we look forward to 2025, we remain dedicated to our mission of community engagement, inclusivity, and building membership. We are excited about the opportunities ahead and are confident that we will achieve even more significant milestones with continued support and collaboration in the coming years.

I praise God for all of you and the opportunity to serve.

Sally Carbonaro, Senior Director of Community Engagement

Session

During 2024, Session held 12 monthly stated Session meetings and three special Session meetings. Session meetings were held in person in the Christensen Room and via Zoom upon request.

There were three Congregational Meetings in 2024: January 28, March 17, and June 30. At each meeting, the previous Congregational Meeting minutes were available for review.

Elders participated in a leadership retreat on August 24, 2024.

The Presbyterian Church of Novato was represented at the 2024 Presbytery of the Redwoods meetings by Ruling Elder Commissioners Sally Carbonaro and George Pilloton.

In January 2024, Session approved officers for the 2024 Corporation to satisfy California Nonprofit Corporation law:

Brad Praun: President/CEO

George Pilloton: Treasurer/CFO

Kathy Takemoto: Secretary

A summary of Session meetings, entitled, "Session Highlights," appeared in the *PresPress* throughout the year.

Active Membership Count

As of January 1, 2024	293
Received into membership	+13
Deaths	-4
Moved to inactive membership	-15
Transfer of membership	-1
2024 year-end membership	286

Necrology Report

Joan Blanchard	May 28, 2024
Nelly Wannemacher	July 1, 2024
Frank Woolard	November 4, 2024
Carol Dacquisto	December 12, 2024

Elders

Class of 2025	Class of 2026	Class of 2027
Tonya Church	Karen Marks	George Pilloton
Sandy Fong	Brad Praun	Art Plumstead
Patty Reed	Greg Smith	James Wood

PCN members serving the Presbytery and Synod:

Tonya Church, Treasurer, Synod
Robert Coleman, Synod Commissioner
Susi Lynam, Personnel Committee
Brad Praun, Committee on Ministry
Adam Smith, Presbytery Judicial Committee
Bethany Stahley, Finance Committee
Kathy Takemoto, Representation and Review Committee

Kathy Takemoto, Clerk of Session

Community Life

We have had an exciting year on the Community Life Team! We started our year with seven energetic and fun team members and finished the year nearly doubling our team with 12 great people on our team! We have worked on a wide variety of projects and look forward to expanding them in 2025.

- **Church Pictorial Directory** – Vicki and Greg Smith spearheaded our picture directory, and we are extremely pleased to now have a directory for our entire church. It is also in a format that can be easily updated as new members join our congregation. So much time and attention went into this directory by Vicki, Greg, Sally and Sydney! We will offer directory pictures for new members on January 19th.
- **Mental Health** – This has been our focus for 2024.
 - QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) is our suicide prevention class taught by Becky Moser and Karen Marks. Becky and Karen were certified through PCN this year as trainers for this nationally recognized class. As of year-end 2024 we have had 61 members of our congregation and guests take this class over five sessions. All of these caring people are now recognized as “gatekeepers” by the QPR Institute and can help save lives. These classes will be made available in 2025 to both our church members and the wider community of Novato.
 - We offered five Student & Parent Education Nights in 2024
 - ‘Screenagers’ – Joint offering with Good Shepherd Middle School and families
 - Michael Pritchard on Bullying
 - Beth Daniels ‘Emotions’ for Grace Generation
 - Will ‘Bull’ Bullard on Resilience, Character building, and Anti-Bullying Awareness, one in May and one in September
- **Habitat for Humanity** – We are pleased to be a partner with this stellar organization to provide housing for people in need. Habitat plans to build 80 homes in northern Novato and also assist with the restoration of existing homes. With Sally as the liaison between PCN and Habitat, meetings will be held at our church to facilitate both housing applications and volunteer information and recruitment. The first meeting was held at PCN on November 9th. This is a huge project for Marin County, and we are at the center of this effort.
- **Membership** – We are honing our communications for guests and visitors, ensuring that everyone feels welcomed and valued. We have implemented strategies for engaging members who are not otherwise connected to a small group, recognizing the goal and need for everyone to be involved in something.
- **Life Groups**—We have one new Life Group about to start up in Petaluma! We tallied up the numbers of people involved in ‘small groups’ in general and the total is 243!

Many members and friends already participate in one or more small groups, including choirs, bible studies, supper groups, and committees, among other groups. That said, we are focusing on communication with all group leaders to encourage a 'life group-like' experience.

- **Other Committee Oversight**

- **NCRT**: Novato Community Resilience Team (Bruce Stahley, Michael and Becky Moser, and Sally Carbonaro)
- **Marin County Suicide Prevention Collaborative**
- **Veterans Court**: A Marin County initiative. Kathy Takemoto and Bruce Stahley are point people from the committee.
- **LightFest 2024!** Brought to you by the Community Life Team
- **Community Life Table** following Sunday morning worship
- **Weekly email** highlighting what's happening each and every week at PCN. Our new weekly email connects our church community and is also a fantastic outreach opportunity for new members and guests. It provides church news, fellowship opportunities, and important updates in a timely manner. It has been very well received in the short time we have offered it.

Committee Members: Cindy Amadea, Sally Carbonaro, Karen Carson, Diane Combs, Sydney Fletcher, Glenise Johnson, Karen Marks, Becky Moser, Barbara Sparrow, Greg Smith, Bruce Stahley, Kathy Takemoto

Diane Blalock, Community Life Team Chair

Christian Education

The Christian Education Committee's ("CE") mission is to shepherd children from infancy into adulthood while building the foundations of faith. CE provides policy guidance and secures resources for programs tailored to develop the faith of every PCN age group. The scope of CE programs ranges from infant care in the on-campus nursery to adult education classes offered online or in-person for community members and long-term members. We strive to ensure that all CE activities have elements of Bible-grounded instruction in Christian faith and history, fellowship among peers, and service.

In 2024, CE conformed to a new church leadership model by having non-elder Walt Campbell chair the committee, following elders Sandy Fong and Melodie Baird. A cadre of long-time volunteers and staff members rounds out CE membership and does the "hands and feet" work of its programs. At-large members included Miriam Campos, Virginia Saysette, Barbara Sparrow, and new member Karen Carlson.

Approximately 51 congregants volunteered to teach children's Sunday School, run Vacation Bible School, or support Youth Groups. Staff members Sydney Fletcher (Director of Children's Ministry, Director of Communications, and Safe Church coordinator) and Sally Carbonaro (Senior Director of Community Engagement) also support CE. Sally and Sydney have multiple roles at PCN. This might seem confusing on a traditional organization chart, but for CE this facilitates integration of its programs with communication and outreach efforts to the congregation and the Novato community. The committee met monthly on the second Tuesday of the month during 2024, with exceptions of July and December, to accommodate vacation and holiday schedules, plus seasonal changes in committee workload. The committee meetings are conducted in person or via Zoom, and usually have a duration of 60 to 90 minutes. CE held a two-hour potluck lunch and planning session in August to review its progress on 2024 goals and whether to realign priorities for 2025.

2024 Goals

The committee identified five key goals at its January 2024 meeting:

1. Implement the revised Safe Church Misconduct and Abuse Prevention Policy
2. Seek new ways to inform members of our programs
3. Extend our reach to the community to promote PCN opportunities to connect and grow in faith and fellowship
4. Offer classes that address special PCN and community needs
5. Develop new ways to welcome families

Subsequent sections of the 2024 Annual Report, including reports of the Director of Children's Ministry and the senior Director of Community Life, provide details on individual programs and how they support the 2024 CE goals, as well as the overall mission of PCN.

Walt Campbell, 2024 CE Committee Chair

Sunday Adult Bible Study

The class meets via Zoom Sunday mornings from 8 to 9 a.m. Our local members average eight, and thanks to our online presence, we have three more participants drawn from Texas and Virginia. During 2024, we studied Psalms using the David C. Cook series emphasizing community covenant, life connections to Scripture, Bible exploration, interaction, and life response. The class enjoys a lively discussion with a variety of perspectives. The class is taught by Doris Dooley and Karen Carlson. In 2025, we will welcome back Larry Dacquisto as a teacher.

Larry Dacquisto, Doris Dooley and Karen Carlson, Study Leaders

Thursday Morning Women's Bible Study

As this report is written, we pay tribute to our dear Carol Dacquisto, who continued valiantly teaching our study of Joshua within a few weeks of her passing on December 12, when she went to be with the Lord, the same day as the passing of her beloved husband Larry, four years earlier. Weekly attendees number 12-18 ladies, with a total membership of 28. The group meets Thursday mornings via Zoom from 10-11:30 a.m. Margaret Franz-Costello and Karen Carlson assisted Carol throughout 2024. Carol's spoken plan for the future of Women's Bible study was to pass on leadership to class members, and we have done that by adding Melodie Baird as an additional teaching team member.

At the first 2025 Women's Bible Study, the ladies expressed their favorite memories of Carol: She always wanted the members to have a voice in what we studied; she saved me after my husband died; Carol never met a stranger; she was a friend to all; my first class was 1984; Carol helped me raise my sons – she supported them like a Godmother; I treasured Carol's humbleness and faith in the Lord, her thrill of interpreting the scriptures, and her humor and laughter; Carol always saw the person inside, not their race or ethnicity; if she said she would do something, she did it; she was one of a kind; her organization was beyond measure; you received remembrances in the mail, you never fell off her list of 300 people!

In addition to its studies, the group provides a warm fellowship time before class and opportunities to serve PCN and the wider community. They enthusiastically collect aluminum can pop tabs from friends and PCN members to donate to the Shriners Hospital for Children in Sacramento, which earns money from recycling them. The hospital uses the proceeds to help patients' families with special expenses. The group has also enjoyed acting as PCN greeters at special events, wearing their signature red clothing and "Ask Me About WBS" buttons. They will be a greeting team again for Carol's Celebration of Life in February.

Melodie Baird, Karen Carlson, and Margaret Franz-Costello, Study Leaders

PCN Men's Group

The PCN Men's Group continued to meet weekly at 7 a.m. on Wednesdays. The meetings include 20 to 30 minutes for fellowship, an hour-long study based on a book of Scripture or a non-Scriptural book pertaining to Christian faith. The meetings conclude with prayers for each other, the PCN community, and people facing current challenges as reported in the news. The group has a roster of 25 men, of whom six to eight participate on average. In 2024 the group finished a study of Mark's Gospel and switched to "The Christian Man" by Patrick Morely, a book of 10 issues that men often face during their lives while practicing Christian discipleship and getting along in a secular world.

After finishing "The Christian Man," the group returned to several Scripture studies: The Epistle general of James, Ecclesiastes, and the Gospel of Matthew. Many members have early-morning work commitments, family-caregiving duties, or other activities that limit weekly participation, even using Zoom.

The group serves as an informal, on-call campus "labor crew" to set up or store tables and chairs for special congregational events in Trevitt Hall or on the patio.

John Reuscher serves as Zoom host, and donates his business Zoom account for group meetings. Walt Campbell serves as overall coordinator and moderates study discussions. The group encourages infrequent attendees to remain connected to PCN and the Men's Group with phone calls and letters.

Walt Campbell, Christian Education Committee Chair

Saturday Great Courses Video Lectures

Walt Campbell continued to coordinate and moderate a program of Great Courses video lectures on a variety of topics in Judeo-Christian and comparative religion history, theology, and spirituality. The program uses materials published by The Teaching Company, which recruits popular university lecturers to videotape series of lectures and prepare associated study guides as an integrated class. During 2024, this program extended its offerings to include the following courses:

1. We began 2024 by finishing “Great Works of Sacred Music,” taught by a professor of musicology from Oberlin College. This 12-week course covered the development of musical forms and performance practices as aids to Christian worship from the late middle ages to contemporary times.
2. “The Dead Sea Scrolls” examined the historical and theological insights about pre-Christian Judaism found in the late 1940s at Qumran, near the Dead Sea. The lecturer was Dr. Gary Gensler, a historian and expert on ancient Hebrew in the Department of Jewish Studies at Rutgers University.
3. “God Against The Gods” gave a comparative religion perspective of differences between polytheism and monotheism as practiced in the ancient Near East. The lecturer was Dr. Robert Garland, professor of classics at Colgate University.
4. “The Book of Genesis” examined key narratives of pre-history, creation accounts, and the life cycles of the patriarchs. This course began in the fall of 2024 and will finish in the first quarter of 2025. Dr. Gary Gensler is the lecturer.

Participants in the Saturday lecture classes have voted on each of these courses, which were nominated either by the group coordinator or participants. Class participants generously contributed funds to defray about two-thirds of the cost of acquiring the Book of Genesis class materials. Each Saturday session runs from 10:30 until noon or 12:30 p.m. This time is devoted to watching two 30- to 45-minute lectures via Zoom, and then taking twenty to thirty minutes to discuss the lectures using prompt questions from the course guidebook or devised by the discussion leader. The Saturday video lecture program has a roster of 29, including attendees from PCN, St. Anthony’s, Our Lady of Loretto and some non-churched individuals. Participants include former PCN members who have moved out of state. Of the 29-person roster, roughly thirteen participate regularly.

Mission

Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.
- Matthew 25:40

The Mission Committee reorganized in 2024 in hopes of increasing local impact while retaining our international support, emphasizing “engagement” by the PCN congregation, and connecting people to each other as we relieve suffering and support the needy.

This shift was expressed in three organizational components:

1. Mission Statement: The committee adopted the following statement: *Helping our Community through Christ-Centered Service and Outreach.*
2. Guidelines: The committee updated guidelines for support of outside groups to increase the focus on *engagement*, and to let money follow, not lead relationships. The criteria for working with a group now include evaluating: 1) local impact of the organization, 2) specific valuable need that PCN can support, 3) opportunity for congregation engagement, 4) opportunity for PCN visibility, and 5) how do PCN funds create/support impact opportunities.
3. The Mission team at PCN: There are three groups that comprise the PCN Mission team: 1) the committee (five members currently), which meets monthly, 2) “Liaisons” (nine), who are the connectors between PCN and various charity groups, supporting those missions with PCN involvement/support, and 3) the congregation and volunteers (yes, the congregation is called to help!).

Each of us at PCN is called to serve, to help relieve suffering and to help those in need. With this in mind, the committee launched the “Mission Opportunity of the Month” as a way to make it easy for everyone to engage and help out and to generate ongoing enthusiasm. We created straightforward easy-to-do monthly opportunities for congregants to engage in our mission relationships. We then promoted them during worship service and in PCN communications channels, posting late in the month for the opportunity to help out in the upcoming month. Our first such call was for the Center for Domestic Peace, for a Mother’s Day food drive (and we included roses!), which proved to be an enormous success (thank you, congregation!). Food drives carry an easy message: it’s easy to pick up some extra groceries or pick from your pantry, but what you do makes a BIG difference to those in need. We continued with six monthly opportunities, including clothing for All Dressed Up, Holiday Share for Gilead, and winter clothing for Camp Compassion. We are pleased and so gratified to report: you all, the congregation, stepped up and made every one of these opportunities a bigger-than-expected success! There is little doubt we have built more engagement, but more than that, we have significantly increased our support for our charities, which is to say, those in need! THANK YOU, KIND SOULS OF PCN!

The committee also decided to work on building a few powerful partnerships, to help our focus, impact, and engagement. The partnerships seem to be centering on Homeward Bound, North Marin Community Services (“NMCS”), and Gilead House. We continue to define and build these relationships, and we look forward to exciting expressions in 2025. Even with renewed emphasis on local impact, we continued to support international causes, including Overseas Missions (missionaries), Hope Opens Doors, and Faith in Practice. On a financial basis, support of these groups was 27% of the total \$80,000 Mission budget.

Our dedicated liaisons worked hard in support of our many wonderful organizations, including:

Organization	Liaison	Support Provided*
Homeward Bound	Art Plumstead	Gifts, proposed events at Marin homeless shelter
Jonathan’s Place	Patty Reed	Monthly meals for Marin homeless shelter
NMCS	Carolyn Gerrans	Grocery drive, holiday gifts
Gilead House	Carolyn Gerrans	Holiday Share, gifts for at-risk women/children
Novato Police Dept.	Carolyn Gerrans	Stuffed animal drive to comfort youth in crisis
C4DP	Barbara Gildea	Grocery drives for women/children
CERES	Barbara Gildea	Funding for ill and elderly care program
All Dressed Up	Mike Robinson	Clothing drive funding for released prisoners
Street Missions	Hilary Kinney	Winter supplies for Camp Compassion
Street Chaplaincy	Hilary Kinney	Program to support local homeless
Overseas Missions	Bill Cameron	Funding international missionaries
Hope Opens Doors	Dotty Fehring	Funding for at-risk persons in Africa
Faith in Practice	Vicki Martinez	Eyeglass collection for needy in Guatemala
Rise Against Hunger	Sally Carbonaro	Packed meals to aid hunger in Vietnam
School Fuel	Sally Carbonaro	Funding for local school programs

**We note that funding was provided to all organizations that requested, in the amounts recommended by the PCN liaisons.*

In addition to all this caring contribution, PCN supports many more through its several special offerings, such as Pentecost and Peace & Global Witness.

We are pleased to report that 2024 continued PCN’s long history of compassionate commitment, as part of the heart and soul of this congregation. We are also pleased to report a year of impact and dynamism.

Thank you to everyone, ensuring that PCN is a beacon of hope, reviving the world through God’s love.

Mission Committee

Patty Reed (co-chair), George Pilloton (co-chair), Jackie Dold, Dotty Fehring, Bill Walker

Fellowship

2024 was an exceptionally good year for the Fellowship Team, bringing events to PCN where we could eat delicious food, celebrate great accomplishments, work together towards a common goal, and most of all connect with each other and have wonderful conversations. Our team members are Audrey Boland, Becky Praun, Kathy Takemoto, Mary Contreras, Patty Reed, and Tonya Church. Here is a list of events we hosted in 2024:

- **Annual Congregational Meeting Souper Lunch** – The local football team was doing well, so we made lunch available for people to stay and eat or to go. We have some great cooks among us, and the tomato soup, chicken tortilla and baked potato soup remain our favorites.
- **Scout Sunday** – The scouts served cakes alongside coffee, and we honored them during coffee hour in February.
- **Palm Sunday Brunch** – We celebrated Palm Sunday with food made by the Fellowship Team and coffee served by the Deacons. It is really fun to hear the buzz in the room when we all get a chance to sit down together and eat.
- **Cinco De Conversation** – This was otherwise known as our Town Hall meeting. We served chicken and vegetarian enchiladas for everyone who stayed.
- **Teacher Appreciation Lunch** – This year we included Good Shepherd Lutheran School teachers as well as teachers at Sinaloa Middle School. Becky made apples (cookies) which were just a hit to top off our enchilada lunch.
- **Father's Day BBQ** – It is always great to have an opportunity to celebrate our dads with a BBQ. It is a pleasure to use our new grills for more than just pancakes.
- **VBS Celebration Week** – The taco truck from Tommy Salsa's served us lunch and we were grateful to celebrate all the kids who joined us for VBS.
- **Buckaroo Breakfast** – Most have forgotten how hot it was, but not the folks wearing the red t-shirts. We served breakfast to more than 900 people. Steve Kinney once again led the team, and we made a \$5,000 donation to Homeward Bound with the help of the Mission Team.
- **Light Fest Lunch** – The Fellowship Team once again served sandwiches and dessert while everyone took a look at the opportunities to get involved in PCN.
- **Second Town Hall Meeting** – A second Town Hall meeting was held in October, with the Fellowship Team providing lunch. We do want to apologize to those that were not able to stay for lunch, as we were not ready so you could take lunch with you.
- **Veterans Day Celebration** – The red and white striped cake was a big hit, and we have so many veterans in our church to celebrate and say, "Thank you for your service."
- **Friendsgiving** – We served more than 30 people this year, and the highlight was Ann Stahley opening the meal with a prayer. Thank you, Bill Bradfield, for bringing the microphone. We had four people join us for lunch from the Gilead House and thank you to Carolyn Gerrans for connecting our community partners.

- **Pie Sunday** – One may wonder how long it takes to make so many pies, but after doing the math, Tonya can bake 18 pies at once in her double oven. We had pumpkin, pecan, and chocolate pie for coffee on Sunday to continue the Friendsgiving Celebration on Sunday morning.
- **Advent Afternoon** – The event was a highlight for us as so many of you participated. We offered cookie decorating, swag making, card making and an opportunity to make Christmas blankets. The blankets were delivered to Deer Park Senior Living Home and received with many thanks. We also needed to eat, so Tommy Salsa's taco truck again came to provide us lunch. Thank you to all those participating as it really is something which brings smiles to the faces of many.
- **Christmas Caroling and Chili Dinner** – This year was really exciting as we gathered for a chili dinner before heading out to go Christmas caroling. We had more than 20 people ready to sing, and our new Maestro Art Maramba provided music for us on the piano. It was truly a wonderful time. If you missed this year, make sure you watch for the announcement next year.

As you can see it was a busy year, filled with events for us to eat and converse. These events do not happen by accident, but with very resolute team members who are constantly going the extra mile. We also want to thank all of you who helped at our events, to set up, serve or clean up. We are especially grateful to the Property Team for helping us get another dishwasher that works so great and so fast! As we look to next year, we hope some of you will consider collaborating with us for an event or joining our team. We have a lot of fun, eat dinner together ourselves as we delve into planning the fall season, and celebrate Christmas together as well. There is no shortage of laughter, tasty food, and good drinks, and we always have room for one or two more. Thank you for the privilege of serving you this past year.

Tonya Church, Fellowship Team Leader

Property Team

It has been a busy year for the Property Team (formerly Committee). We miss having Fred Holmes and Bob Clausen on the team. They served the church for many years with their dedication and know-how. We pray for their relaxation and good health.

Fortunately, we had new members join our team in 2024, adding Jay Haney and Becky and Brad Praun. It was also beneficial to have a Finance Committee member on the team, so that property needs were more effectively and quickly funded.

Jay Haney took up the call to improve our campus with a vengeance. Jay started off by leading the shade-structure renovation. After 40 years, it was showing its age, especially the deteriorated shade fabric. Jay and his wife Cathy performed the majority of the removal of the massive quantity of accumulated debris and the torn fabric using a scissor lift and ladders. Brad Praun ably assisted in getting the new fabric installed. Jay also repaired and treated the old structure. I think we're on track for another 40 years with this much-needed and very economical maintenance.

Jay also took the lead in addressing our other landscaping issues. He coordinated with two landscaping contractors to maintain and improve our grounds. He intends to take a more direct role in volunteering to do grounds maintenance at the church during 2025. Jay took the lead on our main parking lot island tree replacement. The tall old trees were deemed a safety hazard and maintenance burden. Jay and Don Erba coordinated the tree removal with a contractor. Jay took advantage of funds available from the Fire District to partially fund some of our tree work in response to a Novato Fire Department Defensible Space Report and their recommendations. The irrigation systems in the island are being renovated to support the newly planted crepe myrtle trees.

The Property Team worked with another team of volunteers coordinated by Becky devoted to improving the aesthetics of our property. This Refresh Team (Patty Reed, Lamona Wood, Melodie Baird, Mary Contraras and Becky) selected flooring and paint to make the Christensen room and church office more appealing. Property coordinated the flooring and painting contractors to get the work done. Jay worked to improve the irrigation of the Meditation Garden, while Becky and Brad, with the help of Dinah Sims and generous donations from church members, worked to improve the landscaping.

Don, Bill Walker and Brad Praun responded to the needs of the kitchen uses to get two new stoves and a commercial dishwasher (contract negotiated by Tonya Church) installed at the beginning of 2024. The dishwasher installation uncovered under-sink leaks that were addressed along with the installation of a new garbage disposal.

Don took the lead on designing, coordinating fabrication and installation of the new handrails on the sanctuary chancel and choir loft with the help of Bill Walker. Don further developed a plan to enhance the stage for better use and safety for music and worship. He is now working with Art to build a space that will enhance the vision for the music program. Don looks forward to taking a step back from the day-to-day maintenance of our facilities while still being involved in the stage remodel. We greatly value his long-time dedication to the church.

I would also like to thank our team members Becky and Brad Praun for the Bride's Room enhancements and the new chair rail installation in Trevitt Hall and all the details that make our place of worship a nice place to be. Oh, and while we are on chair management, Jay coordinated the repair of our broken chair racks with welding and caster replacement. Along with these highlights, the team continued doing the plumbing, electrical/lighting, HVAC, painting and cleaning to keep things going, as well as working with our Safety Team to make critical facility upgrades to ensure our property is safe for our members and visitors.

The Property Team looks forward to supporting the needs of the church and our Good Shepherd Lutheran School partners in 2025. In addition to the stage improvements, we plan to improve our curb appeal with new plantings at the front of the property and improving the safety of our parking lot with a paving plan.

Property Team Members: James Wood (chairperson), Don Erba, Jay Haney, Bill Walker, Becky Praun and Brad Praun

James Wood, Property Elder

Personnel Committee

Staff:

PCN paid staff members:

Adam Smith, Pastor
Sally Carbonaro, Senior Director of Community Engagement
Sydney Fletcher, Director of Communications & Director of Children's Ministry
Katy Hatfield, (resigned as Director of Traditional Music & Organist in April)
Art Maramba, Music Ministry Director (hired November)
Bob McBain, Contemporary Worship Accompanist
Tammi Jester, Office Administrator
Linda Ward, Administrative Assistant
Carol Robinson, temporary Office Administrator
Suzanne Schmidt, Bookkeeper

Contract positions:

Roland Tolosa, contemporary service musician
Dave Formato, sound technician
Meredith Fletcher, sound tech intern (hired December)
Mark Heims, contemporary service musician (served as Interim Contemporary Music Director through November)
Ava Wood, nursery care provider
Miriam Campos, nursery care provider
Annelyse McMickin, nursery care provider
Kaydence Smith, nursery care provider (resigned in September)

2024 Personnel Committee Goals	
Develop standard personnel files and reports	Progress/Continue
Recruit and hire for vacant positions (Music Ministry Dir.)	Progress/Continue
Establish staff appreciation practices and events	Progress/Continue
Update staff evaluation process	Progress/Continue

In addition to the annual goals, the Personnel Committee met monthly, May through December, and addressed various personnel-related and confidential items. Additional meetings were held to conduct the Music Ministry Director search.

- Collaborated with F&A on Pastor's Terms of Call and staff salary adjustments
- Hired: Music Ministry Directory, Art Maramba
- Promotions/salary adjustments: Sydney Fletcher, \$5000 bonus/salary adjustment for 2024
- Completed annual staff 360 team-building exercise, individual evaluations, and self-evaluations
- Collaborated with CE Committee on Safe Church Policies/background checks

- Recommended budget adjustments and COLA (cost of living adjustment) to Finance and Administration/Session for PCN 2025 budget
- Distributed PCN staff appreciation holiday gift cards
- Participated in the Music Ministry Director staff search

We appreciate the dedicated work of the committee members. The 2024 Personnel Committee members are Greg Smith, Tonya Church, Audrey Boland, Diane Kaljian-Combs, and Pastor Adam Smith.

Diane Kaljian-Combs resigned in October. Thank you for all the hard work, Diane!

Goals for 2025

- Update Personnel Policies and Procedures
- Update staff evaluation process

PCN Personnel Committee

Stewardship

During 2024, members and friends of the Presbyterian Church of Novato, blessed with the talents and finances gifted them by our gracious God, continued to be generous and faithful stewards of the church's programs and mission, serving those in need within the congregation, community, nation and world.

The Stewardship Committee chose to continue using the basic Consecration Sunday Stewardship Program that has been used by PCN for more than 25 years, with a few modifications. The program includes outreach during services and mailing of a letter and Estimate of Giving card to members and friends of the church, which was intended to communicate the church's mission, program successes, and anticipated needs in a way that encourages and challenges each individual/family to search out how Christ is calling them to offer their talents and finances in support of PCN. The Stewardship Program highlights are:

- Stewardship letters highlighting giving status in May and September, with annual donation statement sent out in January for tax purposes.
- Hosted the "Light Fest" Ministry Fair on September 8, 2024, where our PCN ministry teams described and offered service opportunities for our membership to share their God-given talents with our church and community.
- Produced a Stewardship/Finance video shown at our October 6, 2024 service and also available on our church website.
- Consecration Sunday (October 6, 2024) - On Consecration Sunday, we heard from Pastor Adam and considered the importance of our financial gifts and the act of sharing with our larger community.
- In early November, the Stewardship Committee sent a letter to members to provide a status on receipt of Estimates of Giving and also made follow-up contact with members with outstanding EOGs so that we could consider everyone's stewardship gifts in our 2025 budget-planning process.
- As of December 28, 2024, we had received 130 "Estimate of Giving" pledges for a total of \$559,000, with an estimated \$44,000 of outstanding pledges to be received after this publishing.
- While we unfortunately lost pledges due to a few members either moving out of the area or passing away, we also welcomed new members to our church family; the increase in total stewardship pledges was related to these new members' pledges and an increase in the average pledges this year.
- Average pledges equated to \$4,502 per giving unit, an increase of 7.3% from last year.

In total, the fall 2024 stewardship campaign represents a wonderful expression of living the vows we all took as members – "to give of our time, talent and assets." The uncertainty that we are all still feeling this year related to inflation, the aging of our membership, and longtime members moving to new communities to be with family, continues to challenge us, but with new members joining us and the continued faith and support of all our members and friends

we had a very successful 2024/25 campaign which allowed us to reach our ambitious goal of \$600,000. Because of your gifts, PCN will continue to retain the best pastoral and administrative staff and fund our exciting new music ministry, worship, Christian education, youth, fellowship, mission, administrative, property and Community Life outreach needs.

The Stewardship Committee would like to express its thanks to everyone who helped with organizing and conducting the campaign. We would also like to express our thanks to the congregation for strongly supporting Christ's work through His Church. Most importantly, we want to thank God for entrusting us with this treasure, and we pray we are good stewards of all God's gifts.

Brad Praun – Stewardship/F&A Elder, Tonya Church, Sydney Fletcher, George Pilloton, Suzanne Schmidt, Greg Smith, Rev. Dr. Adam Smith and Margie Betts (our artist for the beautiful communications artwork)

Worship Committee

For the Worship Team, 2024 was a year of the unexpected – both the unpleasant-unexpected, and the very pleasant-unexpected – to end the year. In the process we have become more and more like a real team, not just a group of individuals.

There are 10 of us: Pastor Smith, Sydney Fletcher, Bill Bradfield, Bruce Stahley, Art Maramba, Diane Blalock, Catherine Marshall-Smith, Marion Hune, Sandy Fong, and me, Wayne Anderson. Although they are not official members of the team, two others have played and continue to play important roles: Don Erba and Jim Rolka, Don in designing and redesigning the stage area of the church, and Jim in rallying and assigning liturgists to serve, and serving as one himself.

The scope of our mission and duties includes most aspects of the Sunday morning worship service. It includes, foremost, the people who serve to help create a meaningful worship experience on Sunday mornings: musicians, liturgists, ushers and greeters, and the people in the tech booth who tie it all together with clear, effective sound and visuals. A more complete summary of the tech booth work by Sydney Fletcher can be found in her annual report. Not to be forgotten in that work – the minutiae of well-functioning candles and other items that contribute to worship.

Early in 2024 Session gave us a somewhat sensitive task: Combine traditional and contemporary worship music in one service. Along with Session, we believed in the value of doing that and so embraced the assignment, and set out to do it with excellence. To that end, we decided to have some brief instruction to better equip liturgists and ushers and greeters, to do their service well.

Midyear we unexpectedly lost our Director of Traditional Music, who served as Choir Director and Bell Choir Director. This painful loss left a real gap, and Session decided that a replacement should be a Music Director qualified to lead BOTH traditional and contemporary music and began a search for the right person.

Art Maramba was eventually chosen for that position. To my understanding he began serving as Music Director when the children's Christmas program had begun to take shape – a program written by Sydney Fletcher, where she had chosen the many soloists. Art then worked in tandem with her, giving the soloists, and the others, the confidence to sing boldly. Because of the way the program was written, the kids repeatedly led the congregation in worshipful songs! A beautiful reality! Real worship, way above and beyond kids only being appreciated for being cute.

And so Art is not just someone skilled in contemporary and traditional music, but he knows how to work with children (as of course does Sydney) so the children can be full participants

in worship – even to the point of sometimes leading worship. And that is where I'll end this report – with anticipation of where we'll go from here, with children and the rest of us experiencing worship in new ways. It will be on the agenda of our Worship Team meetings in the coming months, hopefully with good fruit to follow not long after that.

Wayne Anderson, Worship Team Chair

Communication/Children's Ministry

Director of Children's Ministry

My guiding verse is still Matthew 19:14: "But Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.'"

My goal is to give children the opportunity to learn about God, to ask questions and to develop their own faith! God is not just for adults; he is for everyone! And he wants to have a personal relationship with EACH ONE OF THEM!

Sunday School

Our Sunday School continues to excel under the guidance of Carolyn Gerrans and Virginia Saysette; they teach our kindergarten-5th grade class using the David C. Cook Gospel Light curriculum. At present, we have 28 regular Sunday School attendees. We are working on a room refresh; I did this by creating a warm and welcoming space in Sunday school and a nursery entryway for parents to wait for their children.

Vacation Bible School

This year's Vacation Bible School theme was SCUBA, "Diving Into Friendship with God." For the first time since before COVID, we had nursery and preschool available!! We had 68 students participate, and 15 teenagers volunteered as crew leaders!

At VBS, we learned that God is a friend who's real, a friend who loves, a friend we can trust, a friend forever, and a friend for everyone! I want to thank our wonderful PCN community who help make VBS possible, every year. You contributed and volunteered in so many different ways!

SEEkers/ Grace Generation.

SEEkers/Grace Generation is an intergenerational program that includes Bible classes, games, worship, and a family-style dinner. We have more than 40 children attending regularly! At the beginning of our fall semester, Sally decided to expand the program. We changed the name from SEEkers to Grace Generation, and we now have high-schoolers join us at Grace Generation! We want every generation there, from birth to 100. The inter-generational aspect is so powerful for our children (and for us; I get more out of these nights than they do!). Our goal is for everyone to have a place to grow their faith, find community, and learn how to live a life of grace.

It takes a PCN village to run this program: teachers, table parents, kitchen support, dishwashers, laundry washers, helpers, and of course, our cook, Tonya Church, who cooks delicious, homemade meals every week for 60 people!

At Grace Generation, we show the kids that God is always there, listening; he wants to hear from each one of you, all the time, about anything and everything!! We pray during classes, during dinner, they can write a prayer down, and at worship, they can voice a prayer. All of

these prayers are sent to our amazing Prayer Warriors team each week! So many of you, the PCN congregation, are a part of that list! This is so powerful for the kids; their faces light up when they hear that warriors are out there praying for them!!

In this new year, we will be expanding the opportunities we offer to include monthly family nights, speakers, and possibly a Children's Palm Sunday Program!! Stay tuned for all the exciting surprises we have in store!

Children's Sermons

At the beginning of the year, I decided to deliver my children's sermons in person instead of through video, the way we had been doing it since COVID-19. The in-person children's sermon gives the children a place of belonging; they have a place in "big church!"

I continued to upload the in-person children's sermons to YouTube; this year, our videos have been viewed 59,288 times, which is a 688% increase compared to last year! Additionally, the thumbnails of our videos have appeared to other viewers on YouTube 778,462 times. We do not know who is watching, but we know that God has brought them to us for a reason! It is wonderful that we have the capabilities to reach kids across the globe!

The Children's Christmas Service

I say this every year, but my favorite thing I do here at PCN is the children's Christmas program!! We had 30 kids participate in the program! When the kids act out the story of Jesus's birth, they learn so much more than they would by reading it. They get to be part of it and feel the emotions that these people went through! Our kids practiced at home and during Grace Generation for several weeks leading up to the service. After the service, the Fellowship Committee organized an Advent Afternoon event with a taco truck. It was great for our PCN community to connect with our Grace Generation families!

Communications

We have an active and vibrant social media presence where I post photos and updates from all our events and programs. Specifically, I posted 45 times on our PCN Kids Facebook page, and it was viewed 847 times. At the Buckaroo Breakfast, I distributed 110 goodie bags containing gifts and our children's ministry flyer to kids. In addition, I sent 75 Christmas cards to our Sunday School, VBS, and Seekers families. I also mailed hundreds of birthday cards, Valentine's Day cards, and postcards to promote upcoming children's events.

Director of Communication

Internal and External Communication

In 2024, I continued to promote our PCN events and programs through various channels such as social media, our website, and with marketing materials. I work with different teams and committees to help promote events and programs, like the Buckaroo Breakfast.

We had more than 300 posts on our PCN Facebook and Instagram accounts, reaching more than 8,000 people. Additionally, I am in charge of designing and managing the PCN website, which has received more than 20,000 views. I continue to manage Ekklesia, the church

management system, and assist our bookkeeper, Suzanne Schmidt, with online giving integrations using Easy Tithe. We sent 200 Christmas cards to our members, regular attendees, and friends of the church!

Worship Production Tech

As with technology, issues seem to arise when you least expect it! This year was no different; we had challenges with programs, lighting, microphones, and cameras, but that did not deter us! With the help of Diane Blalock, we faced every challenge head-on and found a solution! My big focus this year was improving our livestream. Each livestream gives a first impression of our community, and we want the heart of this church to be represented online. Again, with Diane Blalock's help, we refined our tech team by teaching everyone to have a consistent standard of operations. On YouTube, where we livestream our services, we have seen a 30% increase in views and doubled our subscribers. With each livestream, I engage the viewers in the chat; I want them to feel like they are a part of the service, even if they cannot be there in person. One way they can engage is by putting in prayer requests to be prayed for in the service. We have around 30 to 60 viewers watching the service live and then hundreds after the livestream. Our YouTube channel has had 27,240 video views this year, which is a 23% increase from last year! It is wonderful to be able to provide "church at home" for those who could not be here in person.

Safe Church Coordinator

My safety responsibilities continue to change to meet the emerging needs of our church. Due to legislative changes, in addition to all staff, children and youth volunteers, all Elders and Deacons are now required to undergo thorough background checks, including live scan fingerprinting, and to complete training in recognizing and reporting various forms of abuse and mandated-reporter training. These requirements are outlined in our Safe Church Policy. We had 24 individuals complete these requirements in 2024!

I also served as the interim Safety Team chair; you can see our accomplishments in the safety team report.

I am so grateful for the opportunity to serve God through this church in so many different ways! I look forward to 2025 as we follow our call to be a beacon of hope, reviving the world through God's love!

Sydney Fletcher, Director of Children's Ministry and Communication

Safety/Security Team

At the start of 2024, Session created a new stand-alone Safety Team. As the Safe Church Coordinator, I became the interim Safety Team Chair. We meet every two weeks and have been working on our emergency response.

We have developed an evacuation plan and successfully completed a congregation-wide evacuation drill after the worship service on Sunday, March 10th. Everyone reached the evacuation zone in under seven minutes! All the Sunday school areas are equipped with walkie-talkies to be properly notified to evacuate. When planning the evacuation, we found the need for a trained team of individuals able to handle emergency situations; we formed CBERT (Church Building Emergency Response Team). Lead by Bruce Stahley, the commander, it is a group of veterans who are trained to help lead an evacuation.

We purchased the following emergency equipment. For the evacuation, we got safety vests, walkie-talkies, a bullhorn and light sticks. We replaced all the pads in the AED machines and also have infant pads available. Narcan is available by all the AEDs and first aid kits in the sanctuary, Trevitt Hall, nurse, and Christensen room. We have two wheelchairs in the usher closet in case anyone needs assistance getting to the evacuation area. We put safety tape down by door thresholds and taped carpets down to prevent trip hazards. We purchased 10 fire blankets: two were installed in the kitchen, and eight are to use on our grills. We had two storage benches installed next to the evacuation area. These will hold water, first aid kits, emergency blankets/ponchos, wipes, megaphones, headlamps, lanterns, tarps and a camp toilet.

To help us identify our campus's safety issues, we completed a risk evaluation of the PCN campus with a self-inspection safety checklist from our insurance company, Church Mutual. We have been working with the Property Committee to address the issues that arose.

For 2025, we plan to complete the evacuation maps and place them in each room on the campus. We will complete the Emergency Guide and distribute it. We will hold evacuation drills in the spring and fall and address wheelchair and walker safety in the sanctuary. We will continue to identify and address our campus's various safety issues.

Thank you to all our hardworking team members: Melodie Baird, Karen Carlson, Delane Ramser, Walt Searway, Bruce Stahley, Audrey Boland, Marc Combs, Loree Draeger, Beth Flynn, and Diane Orsini-Tarkman. Also, thank you to our CBERT, who made the evacuation possible!

Sydney Fletcher, Director of Children's Ministry and Communication, Safety Security Team Chair

Stephen Ministry

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

The Stephen Ministry program was not very active in 2024. The current relationships have, in a way, turned more into friendships than traditional Stephen Ministry relationships. We did not receive any requests for a Stephen Minister in 2024. I think this was mostly due to the caring, attentive and excellent job the Deacons did, to which I can personally attest. They were so kind and helpful and loving to me this year, which I deeply appreciate. I am so grateful for everything they did for me and my family. It was such a godsend and a blessing. They did a terrific job! But in 2025 we plan to have a Stephen Ministry training class so we may have new Stephen Ministers and regular monthly meetings. Sally Carbonaro will be in charge and leading the class, so we will have a younger group of Stephen Ministers. As most of the active Stephen Ministers are now older, this will be so nice and helpful as the two people in the relationship will be closer in age. Stephen Ministry is a very worthwhile and helpful ministry program, and it all started with Edith Penfield (Gail's wife) taking the training class in Berkeley in 1987.

Ruth Haas, Stephen Ministry Leader

Deacons

“Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.”

-Colossians 3:23-24

As the loving hands and caring hearts of our church, the Deacons continued to deliver love and support for our PCN members, friends, and community in Novato in 2024, reaching out to spread care, compassion and staying connected through the love of Jesus Christ.

‘Above all, keep loving one another earnestly....’ Peter 4:8

Every week, our “Deacons on Duty” connect with church members and friends, offering encouragement, prayer, a note of celebration, or a reminder of care. Throughout 2024, we made hundreds of these connections – through visits, phone calls, cards, emails, and text messages – to lift a spirit, brighten a day, and assure our brothers and sisters that God is with them in all things. Additionally, we provided dozens of rides – for medical appointments, grocery runs, Sunday services, and more – throughout the year. The opportunity to extend God’s love and grace to our church family and beyond is truly a blessing!

‘It is more blessed to give than to receive...’ Acts 20:35

Under the new Church Business Model, the number of Deacons was reduced from 16 to 12 God-loving individuals that provided support for church events, fellowship and outreach.

In addition to our weekly responsibilities, the Deacons supported the following activities in 2024:

- We helped guide and support five memorials and receptions throughout the year, including services for Nelly Wannemacher, Gregory Kesich, Kim Potter, Fritz Haas and Joan Blanchard. In total, nearly 650 people attended the memorials for these much-loved and dearly missed church members.
- We provided financial and production support for the blessing of the Prayer Blanket Ministry. In partnership with Tonya Church, the Deacons and valued volunteers helped make and deliver 57 blankets this year to those experiencing serious life challenges such as disease, injury, illness, or loss.
- The Deacons were honored to host a reception for Ariel Mink to celebrate her completion and ordination in becoming a minister. Praise Jesus!
- The Deacons were honored to play a small part in the marriage of Sierra Mink and Aaron Maynard in October, under the supervision of Sandy Peterson, Patty Bennett, Jane Sime, Nancy Mandell, Elaine Harris and Kathy Takemoto.
- The Deacons gifted our 8th graders, 12th graders and college graduates with monetary gift cards, praising them for their accomplishments and encouraging them to live in the light of Jesus.
- In early summer the Deacons hosted a Ladies Luncheon, provided specifically to honor, celebrate and show appreciation to all the women at PCN for their past and present dedication to our church family and beyond. This event was greeted with much enthusiasm and delight, especially as the ladies were served with smiles and respect

by Alan Dunham, Marcus Combs, Walt Searway and Brad Praun. We hope to continue this type of event in the future.

- The Deacons coordinated six meal trains during 2024 through the guidance of Brook Stahley. Many countless volunteers provided generous and healthy meals to those folks who needed a break during their time of healing and/or grief.
- The Deacons continue to serve before, during and after coffee fellowship hour, following worship each Sunday. (Mother's Day and Christmas Eve services exempt.) Under the supervision of Loree Draeger we provided beverages, simple treats donated by loving hands along with friendship in conversation to both our young and seasoned church family members. Many milestone birthdays and anniversaries were celebrated in 2024!
- The Deacons lovingly support those who come to our church with acute financial needs by funding and supplying gas and grocery gift certificates, which are distributed by Pastor Adam. Please join us as we continue to pray for the healing of these hearts of these children of God.
- Working closely with Vitalant, the Deacons sponsored two highly successful blood drives in 2024 that were open to members as well as the larger Marin community. The drives in January (thank you Janalee Holmes) and June both supplied 50+ red cell units.

'And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus...'
Philippians 4:19

Matters of Money in 2024

Financially, the Deacons' Fund decreased slightly in 2024. We began the year with a balance of \$17,666.77 and ended with a balance of \$15,686.37. However, we are blessed beyond measure for using these funds to bless the needs of those less fortunate and provide for the events offered by the Deacons. We are thankful for the many generous donations throughout the year from our church family and friends.

'In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of our Lord Jesus....' Acts 20:35

In appreciation I'd like to recognize and personally thank each of the Deacons who so lovingly and tirelessly served our congregation throughout 2024: Audrey Boland, Marcus Combs, Loree Draeger, Alan Dunham, Carolyn Gerrans, Cathy Haney, Sally Jacob, Becky Moser, Kristen Rush, Shirley Shanahan and Walt Searway. It's been my pleasure, and a blessed humbling experience, to work with these believers that walk the walk and talk the talk, always shining the light of Jesus and the grace of God. The church should be extremely proud and confident in the knowledge that each and every one of these Deacons will always put their hearts and souls on the line every week on behalf of others.

'Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor...' Romans 12:10

We Deacons look forward to continuing to play a key role in the life of our Presbyterian Church of Novato in 2025, bringing love and light wherever God leads us.

'Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven...' Matthew 5:16

In the future we look forward to encouraging more PCN members to join the ministry of Deaconship, which will offer more opportunities to serve individual members as well as our varied communities and church – including our children, youth, and seniors.

With Him, all things are possible!

Becky Praun, Deacon Moderator

Prayer Blanket Ministry

The Prayer Blanket Ministry continues to bless people within our community and well beyond the walls of PCN and the city limits of Novato. We are excited to see where God continues to lead this ministry in the coming year of 2025. Here are just a few statistics we would like to share with you:

- 57 blankets were given out during 2024
- Blankets are sent by priority mail for the fastest arrival
- A card accompanies each delivery letting the recipient know the blanket was made by the Prayer Blanket Ministry Team, who requested the blanket, that this ministry is supported by the Deacons of PCN, and most importantly that we are praying for you
- Each blanket mailed from the church costs \$5 less than last year thanks to the implementation of using Stamps.com
- On November 2, we made a record 20 blankets in just over 2 hours.
- 62 people have participated in making blankets over the years, with seven new people joining us at the last blanket-making party in November
- Blankets were mailed to family and friends of PCN all over the country from as far away as New York, Wyoming, Alabama, and Kentucky

A special thanks goes to the Deacons for their continued support of this ministry. We will be making blankets again this spring, so watch for the announcement in the update or during the worship service. If you need a prayer blanket, please let one of us know.

Becky Praun and Tonya Church, Your Prayer Blanket Partners

Endowment Fund Committee

The Endowment Fund Committee's (EFC) role is to provide oversight of various investment accounts held at New Covenant Trust (NCT), i.e. the Endowment, Temporarily Restricted, Property Reserve, and Operating Reserve accounts. This role includes responsibility for investment management and grant decisions for use of these funds.

The Endowment Fund Committee confirmed, with NCT, the investment objectives of each of the NCT accounts, and ratified the current "Balanced Growth" long-term investment postures. These balanced growth postures best balance our objectives and offer long-term performance with returns (according to NCT), based on historical long-term performance, in the range of 8% per annum. The reserve accounts are held in money market instruments so that they take no market risk.

The EFC also re-authorized distributions to the operating budget of 4% (per year) of year-end account balances, from the non-reserve accounts for the next year. Most churches make such distributions and support the most common level of 4%. It is our hope that in the coming years we can reduce this percentage to allow for more reinvestment in those accounts.

This year markets were quite positive, with our balances in the permanent accounts (non-reserve) growing approximately 8%, which netted approximately 5% to the ending balances after distributions to the operating reserve and investment fees. We continue to be well-advised by NCT, and our permanent funds in NCT accounts are well-positioned for PCN's future.

As a housekeeping note, the committee voted to rename the "Doerksen/Wylie" account to become "Endowment – Unrestricted." Thus, there are now two endowment accounts, one restricted and the other unrestricted.

The previously approved grant of \$50,000 from Endowment – Unrestricted to the Operating Reserve, to support investment in the implementation of the new complete music program, was not disbursed, pending development of the music plan and hiring of the Music Director. These funds will be disbursed in 2025, allowing PCN to proceed to build its program now outside the constraints of the Operating Budget, which has to-date limited those capabilities. The expectation is that building the music ministry program *now* will enhance our growth and will pay for itself within two to three years.

Special thanks to our members: Elder Brad Praun and Members-at-Large, Bruce Stahley, Walt Campbell, John Reuscher, and Advisor Patty Reed

George Pilloton, Endowment Fund Committee Elder/Committee Chair

Finance and Administration Committee

The Finance & Administration Committee's responsibilities are to manage our church finances to support our ministries and mission vision. This includes working with Session to set and manage the PCN Operating Budget, to coordinate with the Endowment Committee (refer to their report) on securely and prudently investing church funds (Endowment, Operating, and Property Reserves), and to support the Stewardship Committee in communicating to our membership the needs and usage of their generous financial gifts to their church and its mission.

In 2024, the F&A Committee was successful in meeting the aggressive Mission/Vision budget, while minimizing the projected year-end deficit; this included working with Session committees in managing their expenses, while also increasing income initiatives. The spending results for the year came in exactly as budgeted.

In December of 2023, we had our financial processes and practices independently reviewed and received a clean report with no discrepancies or findings. We will do another review the first quarter of 2025. Our financial operation is very sound. Our committee recognizes, with great appreciation, Suzanne Schmidt, our Finance Secretary, for proactively managing the PCN accounting – we are blessed.

The 2025 Operating Budget

The 2025 Operating Budget continues the steps forward toward completing our *ministry discernment vision* as it includes financing a quality complete music program, hiring a Youth Director to continue development and growth of our youth ministry, and provides for growing fellowship, Community Life, and other ministries.

Financially, the 2025 Operating Budget *balances the budget for the first time in six years*, while addressing inflation (including rising utility costs), maintaining staff, and meeting other challenges. Key components include:

- Pledges and Loose Offerings: We projected 2025 pledges based on the pledge cards that were turned in and included possible pledge unit losses (e.g. people moving) and adjusted loose offerings projections for transitions to membership. The overall result is this income is projected to increase about 1%. In 2025, this income will cover about 68% of expenses.
- Other "revenue":
 - Good Shepherd income: We continue to benefit from a renegotiated Good Shepherd Lutheran Middle School lease – a four-year lease with more equitable terms (i.e. higher rents and sharing of utility costs).
 - Interest and Dividend Distributions: We continue to include distributions from the permanent accounts (Endowment, etc.), as do all churches in the Presbytery who are blessed with permanent funds. Over the next few years, we intend to work to reduce this percentage, and ultimately eliminate the distributions.

- Grant from Unrestricted Endowment: the budget includes the previously approved \$50,000 grant, providing investment in the new music program. Similarly, the budget allows for a grant to fund new youth staffing, when approved. The key word here is “investment;” i.e. the program must be successful in expanding membership/pledges to fully pay for itself within three years.
- Staff Pay: The 2025 Operating Budget includes no COLA pay increases from current levels, and no increase in Terms of Call.
- Community Life: We continue to build our Community Life presence and hence spending in this category is increased significantly.
- Mission: The 2025 Mission operating budget has been reduced to \$70,000. While this is a decrease in posted year-to-year budget numbers, the figure represents an increase in actual planned funds allocation over 2024 spending by about 10%.

In sum, 2025 brings us a balanced budget, at last! And 2025 is an “investment” year, which includes the last steps of investment in our ministry discernment vision, i.e. music and youth. Going forward, we will rely on increasing pledges and new members to return these investments.

Looking forward, the goal is to continue to prudently manage our church operating expenses, support growth in membership and the associated income streams; eliminate the need to draw from investment dividends; reduce and eliminate the need for Endowment Fund grants as seed money, and maintain a balanced budget.

Thank you for your support.

George Pilloton and Brad Praun, Finance Elders

F&A Committee Members: Elder & PCN President – Brad Praun, Elder & PCN Treasurer – George Pilloton, members Don Brand, Walt Campbell, Tonya Church, and Greg Smith

Following is the Session-approved Operating Budget for 2025. If you have any questions about this budget or seek information on an area of detail, please contact Finance Elders Brad Praun or George Pilloton. If you would like a copy of the full budget, please contact Tammi in the church office.

PCN 2025 OPERATING BUDGET

	2024 Budget	2025 Budget	Change: \$	%
REVENUES				
Pledges	\$585,000	\$600,000		
Loose Offering	\$75,000	\$65,000		
Total	\$660,000	\$665,000	\$5,000	1%
Facility Use Income	\$92,150	\$92,950		
Other Income	\$4,900	\$5,600		
Investment Distributions, Misc. Int.	\$82,000	\$90,000		
Grant from Unrestricted Endowment*	\$50,000	\$80,000		
Per Capita Receipts	-\$6,230	-\$6,520		
Special Offerings (net)	\$0	\$0		
Novato Comm. Response Team	\$5,000	\$5,000		
Total REVENUES	\$887,820	\$932,030	\$44,210	5%
<i>*these funds for the music program were not distributed in 2024</i>				
EXPENSES				
MINISTRY	\$350,665	\$372,685	\$22,020	6%
ADMINISTRATION	\$161,350	\$163,555	\$2,205	1%
COMMUNITY LIFE	\$1,000	\$7,760	\$6,760	676%
STEWARDSHIP	\$3,625	\$4,525	\$900	25%
PROPERTY	\$121,945	\$124,825	\$2,880	3%
MEMBERSHIP/COMMUNICATIONS	\$43,780	\$48,505	\$4,725	11%
MISSION	\$80,000	\$70,000	-\$10,000	-13%
WORSHIP	\$135,185	\$122,750	-\$12,435	-9%
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION	\$7,225	\$6,700	-\$200	-3%
PROGRAM/FELLOWSHIP	\$5,000	\$6,000	\$1,000	20%
Total EXPENSES	\$909,775	\$928,900	\$19,125	2.1%
NET INCOME (LOSS)	-\$21,955	\$3,130	\$25,085	