



PResPRes

February 2024

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

Can God Really Calm Anxiety?

How often do we worry about things in our lives? How much time do we spend dwelling on things with which we cannot affect the outcome?

We're biologically programmed to do it. When we worry, our adrenaline spikes, our heart rate and breathing increase, our blood pressure rises, and body and mind are kicked into high gear ready to confront what may be coming around the corner. It gives us the best possibility to prepare and react to unknown and dangerous circumstances.

Worry and anxiety are natural. But when that worry and anxiety begin to tear apart our sense of self-worth, our self-esteem, and our quality of life, it becomes the disease we've come to see so readily in our lives. Prolonged worry and anxiety can even affect our brain chemistry, disrupting the emotional processing center in our brain.

Then there are the wide range of effects that anxiety has on us. Moodiness, irritation, insomnia, being constantly tired, withdrawn, quick to violence. It can take the shape of poor self-esteem, hopelessness, a sense of worthlessness. Prolonged and frequent anxiety can affect our quality of life.

So it makes sense that there are no shortages of strategies in psychology to help those who struggle with toxic and overwhelming anxiety. Most strategies focus not on getting rid of worry, but discovering ways to manage it. Anxiety is, after all, natural. You don't make it disappear altogether.

Methods for managing anxiety can range from adding in more time to rest, to meeting with a therapist regularly, to finding ways to create new personal boundaries. It can involve learning new, intentional ways to process information, creating safe places for reflection, and even utilizing meditation.

I help manage my own anxiety with exercise. I hit the gym or ride my bike. I also take a strict Sabbath on Fridays.

There are passages in the Bible like Philippians 4:6 where Paul tells the congregation at Philippi not to 'worry about anything.' And I always laugh to myself. Yeah right, Paul! If only it was that simple. Some theologians have interpreted this passage to mean that Christians should never have to worry about anything, ever. If God's got everything in God's hands, then worry should just disappear. To that end, there are some Christian circles that will tell you that therapy and psychology is a pointless endeavor. All you need is Jesus. Vaccines are a scam. All you need is Jesus. Anxiety is easily fixed with prayer and reading the Bible. No management necessary. Just Jesus.

Try telling a child who watched her parents die of starvation not to worry about her own well-being...that all she needs is Jesus. Tell the parent whose child lies in a coma in the hospital not to

worry. Tell the man waiting on news from his job interview, a job he needs to keep the roof over the heads of his family. Tell him he just needs to go to church.

But I think that misses the point of Paul's words. Paul isn't delusional. He knows that worry is a natural thing, and he also knows the insidious power that worry and anxiety can hold over people. He knows how it can destroy self-worth and fruitful living. He can envision how it can even taint and diminish the church if people let it.

Think about the church today. How many churches have become consumed with worry for their own survival, about their decreasing membership and budgets? How often does that unhealthy worry lead to stagnant ministry, a perpetual feeling of hopelessness? How often does it lead to a doubling down of patterns and forms of ministry that no longer serve, or unrealistic expectations of new pastors?

What Paul knows is the end game. In the end, love wins. In the end, God is working for good. God will not abandon us. All our anxiety and worry will not change who God is and what God is doing. And we are part of what God is doing. In fact, the Church is God's mechanism for sharing good news with the world. It is the Body of Christ.

So bring your fears, your worries, and your anxieties to God in prayer. God cares. And you matter.

Does that make our worries and anxieties go away? No. Not fully. But perhaps knowing that there is someone who loves us, who cares about us, who has shown we are worthy of love and attention helps to frame our understanding of self. It helps us put into perspective all the things happening to and around us. It has the potential to give us both identity and purpose. And it reminds us that we don't handle the craziness of life by ourselves. We don't have to let our worry claim our lives, for we have already been claimed by another who loves us without measure.

With care,
Pastor Adam

MISSION

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.



You're invited to
For the Love of Mothers
Hosted by Gilead House

Sunday
February 18th
at two o'clock for tea, coffee, bubbles and light bites

Ticket \$50.00/person

6 ticket purchase ~ \$275.00
plus ticket fee

Come join us for an extraordinary benefit helping single moms and their children.

hosted at:
Robson Harrington House
237 Crescent Road
San Anselmo, CA

You are born to Blossom

www.gileadhouse.org for ticket information

CENTER FOR DOMESTIC PEACE

Working Together to End Domestic Violence

Thank you to everyone who has donated groceries for the Center for Domestic Peace. Our donation baskets are looking very sad and lonely! C4DP has a new family, and the organization needs donations of non-perishable goods, including specifically rice, pasta, pasta sauce, cans of beans, sugar, flour, chocolate and juice. C4DP serves women and children who are victims of domestic abuse. You can drop groceries off in the office anytime. Questions? Contact Barbara Gildea or call the office.





Session

Session Highlights – January 2024

As of January 1, 2024, PCN has 293 active members.

Elder Class of 2024	Elder Class of 2025	Elder Class of 2026
Melodie Baird	Tonya Church	Karen Marks
George Pilloton	Sandy Fong	Brad Praun
Delane Ramser	Patty Reed	Greg Smith

Session approved:

1. The following individuals to serve as 2024 church officers to comply with State of California non-profit guidelines:
 1. Brad Praun, President/CEO
 2. George Pilloton, Treasurer
 3. Kathy Takemoto, Secretary
2. Serve communion on the first Sunday of each month during worship.
3. Election of Kathy Takemoto as Clerk of Session for 2024.
4. Sally Carbonaro’s application to enroll in the Commissioned Ruling Elder program through the Presbytery of San Francisco.
5. The 2023 Annual Statistical Report.
6. Up to \$5,000 to clean, paint, get new blinds, and organize the Christensen room prior to the installation of new carpet tiles.
7. Up to \$5,500 for the purchase of two new stove/ovens and a 10-minute-cycle dishwasher for the kitchen. Last week the ovens emitted smoke and no longer hold oven temperature. The dishwasher in the manse has broken; the current kitchen dishwasher will be moved to the manse and a new one purchased for the kitchen.

Two or more Elders called for a special Session meeting to be held January 24 at 6 p.m. The agenda for this meeting is limited to discussion and action on the following topics:

- Leadership Model
- Worship: two services, contemporary and traditional
- PCN Music program
- Mission budget emphasis for 2024. Note: Session did not approve the Mission 2024 budget at the Jan. 17, 2024, Session meeting.
- Community Engagement
- Elder engagement with Committees

Kathy Takemoto, Clerk of Session



Winter 2024 PCN adult learning opportunity: The Great Works of Sacred Music

PCN elder Walt Campbell is leading a video lecture and discussion group on sacred music, using the Great Courses series entitled “The Great Works of Sacred Music.” The lecturer is Dr. Charles E. McGuire of Oberlin College, Ohio. The 16 lectures cover Western Christian music from the Middle Ages to the early 20th century. The lectures include commentary on how musical forms evolved with changes in Christian theology and church institutions, as well as the larger society and sources of church and secular patronage to support composition and performance. The class format consists of watching two 44-minute lectures followed by up to 15 minutes of discussion after each. Works discussed include compositions by Palestrina, Bach, Handel, Beethoven, and Elgar. Some background in music will be helpful but not essential. The weekly Zoom sessions are held Saturday mornings from 10:30 a.m. to noon through February 24. The course is free and open to non-PCN members. PCN members or non-members can register on the PCN website or by contacting the course leader by email, text or phone:

Walt Campbell walterleecampbell@gmail.com; phone (415) 497-5157.

Participants will receive a weekly email reminder with a Zoom link, a pdf document of relevant pages from the course study guide, and suggested discussion questions.



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.

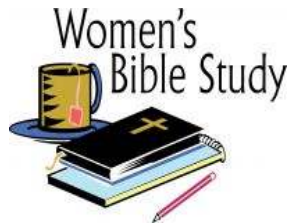
MULTIPLIES THE MINISTRY OF CONGREGATIONS

- 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

Women's Bible Study invites all women to know Jesus better and in a personal way as we study the Gospel of John – God's love letter to the world.

The first 12 chapters focus on the signs/miracles that Jesus performs. Presently we are in Chapter 13 where Jesus is exclusively with His disciples explaining the difficulties looming ahead: betrayal, parting words, the Lord's Prayer, condemnation, crucifixion and resurrection.

In class we discuss that Jesus knew who He was, where He was from and what power and authority He had.

Join us on Zoom Thursdays from 10 to 11:30 a.m. with Carol Daquisto leading the study, using the NavPress "Life Changes" study guide. Our next study will be Joshua.

Our dedicated project for more than 40 years is Tabs for Kids – collecting pop tabs from aluminum cans from PC members, friends and neighbors. They are donated to the Shriners Hospital for Children in Sacramento which sells them to a recycling company. Proceeds are used to assist parents' families with care expenses.

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=VTY4cWFJQWtDTlpUVE9MT0ljL1dHdz09>

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 share what they are learning about God's Word. The link to sign on is at the end of this article. If you want or need materials, please let Carol Dacquisto (415-892-2070) know, and we will see that you have the appropriate materials.

The coming quarter (March, April, May) is entitled "***Examining Our Faith.***" In this quarter, we will explore the fullness of faith as a response to God's desire to be in relationship with us. To be faithless is to turn away from God – to put trust in something, or someone, other than God. The lessons of this quarter ask: Is your faith steadfast? Are you contending for the faith? What can today's Christians draw from these ancient accounts that will help us grow more deeply in faith?

Unit 1 has lessons drawn from Jude, Second Corinthians, First Peter, Acts, and Mark that invite learners to turn the challenges of life into opportunities for nurturing a vibrant faith instead of giving up, turning away from God, or rejecting faith. It includes the Easter lesson.

Unit 2, lessons from Luke and Matthew discuss the range of Christian faith.

The lessons in **Unit 3** from Romans encourage believers to continue standing in the faith.

Study Leaders,

James Baird, Carol Dacquisto, Karen Carlson 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!