

The Presbyterian Church of Novato
710 Wilson Avenue
Novato, CA 94947

Return Service Requested

PresPress



February 1 – Annual congregational meeting
February 8 – Scout Sunday
February 10 – All-Church Mardi Gras
February 12 – Women's Bible Study luncheon
February 16 – Presidents Day; office closed
February 22 – Jigsaw puzzle swap
February 28 – Chelta May memorial service at 2 p.m.



PresPress

February 2026

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

**“Returning to Our True Self: The Lenten Journey”
by Rev. Dr. Tony Stiff**

I dread going into the garage because it is a constant reminder that many things we thought we needed over the years now sit unattended, unused, unseen. It is also a reminder that the same things we thought we needed are still emotionally attached to us. So much so that, even though they are mere dust collectors, we cannot bring ourselves to give them away or host a garage sale to resell them. I am sure none of you can relate, or perhaps, as I suspect, all of us avoid our garages. What if I told you that, like your garage, there are parts of your soul, parts of your inner life, that you choose not to reflect on. That you choose not to attend to, that there is a particular kind of spiritual self-care that you and I avoid. And that, in the wisdom of God, there is a season each year where God invites you and me to slow down, to walk into the garage of your soul, to behold yourself fully.

Lent is a season in the Christian liturgical calendar that invites you back into the dark, dusty garage of your soul. To see every corner of your being, to tend to those things you have forgotten. Lent is patterned after Jesus’s 40 days of temptation in the desert, and Israel’s 40 years of desert trials. While Lent is commonly associated with acts of self-denial, I believe this association misses the true meaning of the season: that Lent is an invitation to return to our true selves. To slow down, to walk through, and sometimes climb through the garage of our soul. Opening boxes, beholding contents we have long forgotten, helps prepare us so that as we approach Holy Week, Christ’s passion and resurrection, we can give ourselves fully and completely to God. Lent is an invitation to “surrender to love. Fall into goodness. His arms are wide open, waiting to catch you” (Chuck DeGroat, *Falling Into Goodness: Lenten Reflections*).

I want you to consider that Lent is not a season designed to show you how sinful you are, how much vice is hidden away in those cardboard boxes and cloth-draped pieces of unused furniture. ***Lent is not a season to show you your sin; it is a season to show you the glory, dignity, and purpose God has made you for.***

As my friend and first doctoral Advisor, Chuck DeGroat writes,

What if instead of seeing your ‘sinful behavior’ as the big problem, you shifted your focus [during Lent] to your original goodness? What if instead of imagining God’s disappointment in your lack of discipline you imagined God smiling at his very image in you.

I think Chuck is right. The purpose of the season of Lent is not to simply take things out of your life in response to how sinful or broken or needy you are. Rather, these forty days are an invitation to see

your true self, fully and wholly. All the parts of your story – your struggles, your desires – that you and I have left in the taped-shut boxes of our souls. You were made in the image of God: the beauty of that image is enduring; the glory of God is present amidst the boxes that each of us is slow to return to you. Lent is an invitation to fall back into goodness, to behold the beauty of God within yourself, and to grow desirous of seeing the beauty of God within your neighbor.

As we begin the season of Lent with Ash Wednesday on February 18, I want to offer you three Lenten studies to guide you into the garage of the soul. The first is from my doctoral advisor, who oversaw my Doctor of Ministry degree at Western Theological Seminary in Holland, Michigan. Chuck DeGroat wrote a wonderful little Lenten study called *Falling Into Goodness: Lenten Reflections*. It includes daily readings and prayers. The second Lenten study is from Henri Nouwen's musings on Lent, collected in the book *Lent and Easter Wisdom from Henri J.M. Nouwen*. Lastly, for those who want a longer read that includes reflections from a wide array of Christian authors on Lent, I have found the compilation of readings in *Bread and Wine: Readings for Lent and Easter* to be very helpful.

May you return to your true self during the season of Lent. May you behold the love and beauty with which God has filled your story. My dear friends, you were made from dust, but you were made for glory!



Session

Session Highlights – January 2026

At the January 21, 2026 Stated Session meeting:

- Session approved soliciting the congregation for a voluntary Love Offering to thank Tammi Jester for serving as the PCN Office Administrator. Love Offering gifts should be given directly to Tammi and are not tax-deductible.
- Session approved a 2026 Base Budget of \$879,158. Estimated pledge giving is down from 2025. Finance & Administration may change the budget as 2026 progresses based on income received. A year deficit is possible if giving remains weak.
- Session approved the Music Director's request to purchase instruments/speakers and software to replace our musicians' personal equipment, not to exceed \$11,200 and funded by the Operating Reserve. New equipment will be the property of PCN and will be tagged and secured.
- Session approved changing PCN office hours to 9 a.m. to 12 noon, Monday through Thursday.

Pastor Tony and the Property Team reported that:

- Expansion of the media booth in the sanctuary is complete
- Window tinting of the sanctuary will be done January 28-30, 2026. The tinting will provide security of property and congregants and enhance lighting for the sanctuary and livestream of worship services.
- A new media switch has been purchased and will be installed when the window tinting is completed.

These three projects were completed under budget.

From the Clerk: 2026 Per Capita

The per capita amount for 2026 is \$40 per member. This money goes to support the Presbytery Staff (three individuals), PC(USA), and the Synod including mission and ministry work. Each member can pay the \$40 directly to the PCN office with a notation of "2026 Per Capita." PCN budgets and pays the total per capita amount even if each person does not or cannot individually pay. However, as each person pays, this can create additional funds for PCN operations, programs, and mission giving. A flyer from the Presbytery follows. It explains how the per capita funds are distributed and used.

Kathy Takemoto, Clerk of Session

2026 PER CAPITA \$40

PC(USA) G.A.

SYNOD

REDWOODS
PRESBYTERY

\$11.26 + \$5.22 + \$23.52



TO EACH IS GIVEN THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SPIRIT
FOR THE COMMON GOOD.
- 1 CORINTHIANS 12:7



Per capita connects Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregations and mid councils with the work of the wider church. Per capita is how Presbyterians mutually and equitably share the costs of moving the church forward in the 21st century.

It is “the tie that binds” — providing the means to strengthen the connections of our work, and build lasting relationships to help all Presbyterians share God’s love through Jesus Christ in mission and ministry.

For more info and resources about per capita, visit: <https://pcusa.org/resources/financial-information/capita>



THE PRESBYTERY OF THE REDWOODS

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www.redwoodspresbytery.org



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.



Relay For Life of Marin County

A Family Friendly Field Event

Noon on July 18 – until 10 AM July 19

Olive School – 620 Olive Avenue – Novato

*** * * FREE Admission * * ***

*Join us as we Celebrate, Honor and Remember
At our “Winter Wonderland” themed event*

More Vendors
and Crafters

Walk Laps in Honor of Loved Ones
Food – Entertainment – Games
Activities – Craft Fair – Prizes

Tommy Salsa Food Truck
LOBO ice Cream

www.relayforlife.org/marincountyca

FUN Winter
Themed
Activities



**BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND:
MIRACLE MULE**

And

ALTERNATIVE MAYHEM (featuring Rock-A-Roake)

Both performing on Saturday afternoon

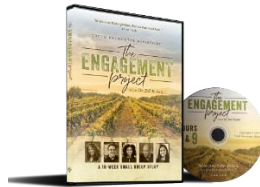


Jigsaw Puzzle Swap

It's been six months since the last PCN Jigsaw Puzzle Swap. Are the *solved* puzzles piling up in your house or garage? At last, you can clear out all those puzzles and get some new ones to solve. Look around the homestead and decide which jigsaw puzzles can go to church with you, to be exchanged for other fascinating challenges. There is a collection box in the church office if you want to drop off puzzles beforehand.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22nd
at **Time for Fellowship**, right after worship

Contact Bill Bradfield at 415.408.3427 if you have questions or would like to help with set-up and take-down.



Ready for the next step?

The Engagement Project is Dr. Del Tackett's next set of small-group worldview tours. This is the sequel to ***The Truth Project***.

**Join us Tuesday mornings in the Christensen room
from 10:00-11:30 for a video followed by inspirational discussion!**

Dr. Tackett has a unique way of helping believers build a comprehensive, systematic biblical worldview. We hope you are able to join us!



Trash Management! By PCN Safety Team

We are leveling up the recycling and composting efforts on our campus! We are committed to environmental sustainability and encourage you to participate in these wonderful efforts.

As shown above, we have installed new waste stations in Trevitt Hall designed to make recycling and composting easier than ever. Whether you are enjoying a treat during coffee hour or on campus for one of our many other activities, please take a moment to check the signs and place your items in the right bin. Let's work together to make our campus more sustainable!

Compost correctly:

- Plant trimmings
- All food scraps (meat, bones, dairy, etc.)
- Soiled/small paper waste (pizza boxes, paper towels, napkins, coffee filters, tea bags, shredded paper, etc.)
- NO plastics of any kind, including “compostable” plastics!

Recycle right:

- CLEAN paper and flattened cardboard
- Aluminum cans, trays, foil and tin
- Glass bottles and jars
- Plastic containers
- NO plastic bags!

Can this item be recycled or composted? For more questions, visit:

www.Recology.com/RSMWhatBin.

Christensen Room and Trevitt Hall

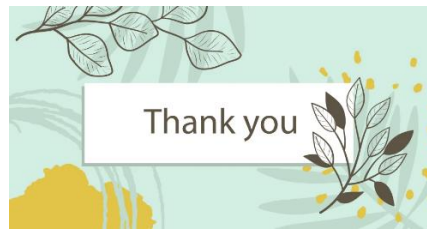
Did you know that our two meeting rooms, Christensen and Trevitt Hall, were named for former pastors? Many congregants think it is the “Christiansen” room, having been so named for Christianity. But it was actually named after PCN’s first pastor, the Rev. Charles Christensen. He was called as our first pastor in 1915. What is now the Novato Police Station was the manse and built for his family. Unfortunately (and embarrassingly!), there is a plaque above the double-doors to the Christensen room that has his name misspelled! We looked back through the Session books and found his signature, and it is indeed spelled “Christensen.”

Rev. Christensen retired in 1935, and the Rev. David Trevitt was called to the ministry. He resigned in 1942 to become a military chaplain and, sadly, was killed in the war.

Just some interesting PCN history for you!



Beginning Monday, February 2, the office will be open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to noon. Tammi will be working through February 10, and Carol Robinson will take over February 11.



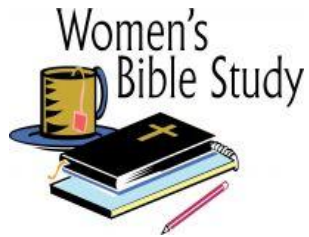
To my beloved PCN family,



Thank you so much for all the calls, cards, notes and hugs that have come my way since I announced my retirement. You make it hard to leave! I am truly so touched by all the love you’ve showered on me. My farewell reception filled my heart to overflowing! How lucky I am to be part of such a warm, loving congregation. My eldest daughter and two best friends from college joined me that morning, and they said they could feel the love, as could I! I’ll still be in church until I get my house packed up and sold, so you’ll be seeing me on Sundays. Meanwhile I leave the office in the very capable hands of Carol Robinson and Linda Ward.

Again, thank you for all you’ve given me the past 8+ years, and especially the past few weeks.

With love and appreciation, Tammi



Women's Bible Study's is back! We continue to meet via Zoom on Thursdays from 10 to 11:30 a.m. There will be time for conversation, fellowship and prayer. The Zoom link is below.

We will continue collecting pop-top tabs. We enthusiastically collect these from friends and PCN members all year to donate to the Shriners Hospital for Children in Sacramento, which sells them to a recycling company. The proceeds are used to help parents with expenses. You can drop off yours in the office.

If you have any questions, call Becky Praun at 415.472.1733 or email beckypraun@yahoo.com.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86913616907?pwd=gsbDqww6cuwPq9qtsmCVMQ2ZE28u6P.1>

Meeting ID: 869 1361 6907 Passcode: pcnovato



All signs point to Jesus! Come join us via Zoom Sunday mornings from 8 to 9 a.m. Your study leaders are Larry Dacquisto (415.577.2115), Karen Carlson and Doris Dooley.

Link for the Zoom meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82970812537?pwd=eGZESUo3dzQ4NXh3WFFNT3AvQmpDdz09>

Meeting ID: 829 7081 2537 Passcode: pcnovato

Ushers & Greeters Ministry

Are you a newer member of our PCN family? Are you looking for a way to meet people and be of service? An ideal solution for you might be to volunteer as a member of the PCN Usher and Greeters Ministry. Be part of the team that is an integral part of each Sunday morning's worship service. For more information, contact Bill Bradfield at 415.408.3427.



REQUESTING A PRAYER BLANKET is easy. Email Tonya Church or Carol Robinson. 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 at tonya.church@comcast.net or Carol at carol001@comcast.net.



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 or email walterlcampbell@aol.com.



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!

IF MOMS MADE CANDY HEARTS...

