



PResPRes

January 2024

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

“Go”

As Jesus is departing this world, his last words leave us with a resounding call to move, to act, to do something. It's not a passive message but a call to action: “Go.” That's right... “Go.” We know the rest. “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them everything that I have commanded you. Remember I am with you always to the end of the age.”

Go to your neighbors. Go into their homes and into their lives. Break bread with them. Meet them where they are. Spend time with them. Seek to be together, to live out our faith with hope and the infectious, contagious love of Jesus.

We're often good at being church in our church buildings, but less so in the places we see and are with our neighbors. Our faith is easily walled up and isolated from the world when we seek to preserve our comfort, our traditions, and our ways of practicing faith; but our very mission as a church is the mandate to go forth to where the people are.

When the people stop coming to us, as has been the Church's approach for generations, then the Church is called to change in order to be faithful to her mission. I've thought and prayed about this over the years because, honestly, I am a product of the old way of being the Church. It is the way of life and ministry in which I grew up, studied in seminary, and participated. And perhaps there is a place for the church that sits and waits for people to come to them, at least in specialized circumstances, but by and large this is not true for most churches.

In Luke 10, we learn a lot about 'going.'

Go without Baggage...

When Jesus sends the 70 out into the world, they go with virtually nothing. No wallet, no bag, nothing. I've always wondered why, but perhaps it's not simply about the material things we carry along with us, but also the baggage we carry internally. How can we go and be present with people if our ideological understandings and even traditional understandings of Church prevent us from being fully present with others? What if our political views limit our ability to embody the grace of God in Jesus Christ? What if they demonize and belittle others? What if they diminish the image of Godness that all of us bear and that blind us to our commonality as God's children? What if our views of how worship is 'supposed' to be done prevent us from seeing that other ways of worship are valid and faithful?

Or what if our firm belief in free market capitalism can, at times, come into conflict with Christ's call to love and care for one another? What if the system, necessarily, requires that some people must be impoverished for the system to work?

The point is, we carry baggage with us wherever we go – ideological baggage we’ve collected over the years that work against our call to ‘go’ to our neighbors. How do we drop our baggage so that we can be present, listen, learn, and share the gospel?

For those of you who have ever been a foreign exchange student or perhaps have done mission work abroad, you know what it’s like to come into a culture not your own. You know there is this awkwardness, and yet this openness to listen, learn, and adapt, by necessity. You have to drop your pretense of superiority and see through your ideological frames to begin to understand and be with your neighbors. In a way, this is the way our Christian mission to ‘go’ should be like...awkward, scary, needing to listen, and learn, and grow. It’s not an option, it’s a part of the gig.

Go to Your Neighbor’s Tables...

"Remain in this house, eating and drinking whatever they set before you, for workers deserve their pay." (Luke 10:7)

We all eat. Everyone. Everywhere. Every culture and family has its own tradition. But to eat with someone else is to be with someone in an intimate, personal way. No, I’m not talking about romance, but rather about entering into someone else’s life in a meaningful way. We don’t just have anyone and everyone eat at our tables. It’s someone worth our time, our attention, and our care.

What if living into the great commission from Jesus meant fewer ‘all church’ potlucks and more meals with our neighbors in their homes? What if it meant inviting neighbors to our homes and our own tables. What if it was less about centralized church initiatives and programs for growing the church and instead about each member and member’s family inviting others to dinner?

When Jesus sends the disciples out with very little in hand, he sends them to see their neighbors not as people to recruit, but those whom they will depend on even for their basic needs. The message is clear, you make disciples with the mutual confession, “You need each other.” The people we go to are not irrelevant, but a necessity.

Well, my friends, what do you think? As we move into 2024 and we live into our vision as a congregation, living as a ‘beacon of hope, reviving the world through God’s love,’ perhaps we each do this through the manner in which we ‘Go.’ And perhaps our ‘going’ might seek to remove our own baggage and to meet our neighbors at the supper table.

Definitely worth some thought and prayer, don’t you think?

Blessings to you, dear saints, as we embark on this new year together.

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.



As we look forward to the new year, it is a time when we want to say thank you to all who have participated in making prayer blankets. We are starting to get requests rather frequently and are happy to send blankets out to our loved ones and friends in need. During the service on November 26, we were blessed to see how many of you were in action tying knots, cutting strips into the fabric, and showing off the finished blanket. Thank you, Sydney, for helping make this special tribute to the prayer blanket ministry.

If you need to request a blanket, please contact Carol Robinson or Tonya Church. We are happy to mail the blanket to those not living close by. Thank you very much to the Deacons for supporting this ministry.

SAVE THE DATE: We are making blankets again on January 6 from 10 a.m. to noon. Please come and join us. You do not need to have any specific skills, and we often pair people new to blanket making with those who have done it before. We provide fabric, sharp scissors, and even donuts. We hope to see you there, as we know many will need to know they are surrounded by our love and prayers in 2024.





The Alternative Christmas Fair was a heartwarming and successful event! The Mission Committee thanks subcommittee members Cathy Haney, Vicki Martinez, Art Plumstead, Barbara Gildea, Becky Praun and Carolyn Gerrans. Also essential to the day were Johnson Kitavi, Jo Richman, Jenna Haney, Peter Gruel, Regina Rus, Suzanne Schmidt, Tammi Jester, Marcus Combs, Brad Praun and those lovely deacons and their coffee!





Here are the totals for each organization:

- Alchemia: \$773.00
- Faith in Practice: \$655.00
- Heifer Project: \$880.94
- Homeward Bound products: \$760.00
- Homeward Bound: \$600.00
- North Marin Community Services: \$840.00
- Presbyterian Giving: \$1000.00

The rocks you see below were painted by our PCN community and given out in CERES client holiday gift bags! Special thanks to Marin Landscape and Riley Street Art Supply for their generous donations of supplies to make this project possible.

Many Thanks for Client Gifts

Wow! We received a lot of community support to show our clients care and love through some very special donations for our client holiday gift bags.

Below are staff members Lindsay Katz and Rob Johnson accepting painted rocks. The rocks were painted by the Presbyterian Church of Novato community and the North Marin Community Services youth. PCN's Mission Committee member Barbara Gildea coordinated the efforts for the second year in a row.



Once again, thank you to everyone who donated groceries for the Center for Domestic Peace. C4DP is in need of 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 the office.



 **NORTH MARIN
COMMUNITY SERVICES**

North Marin Community Services' Holiday Share program was a huge success. Thank you all for your generosity in bringing in gifts to the Sharing Tree. 487 children had a Christmas that wouldn't have been possible without the help of neighbors all over Novato, including PCN.





Session Highlights – December 20, 2023

At the December meeting, Session:

- Approved the annual congregational meeting to be held on January 28, 2024 after worship. There will be one worship service at 10 a.m. on this day.
- Approved the 2024 church budget and 2024 Pastor's Terms of Call.
- Moved four members to the Inactive Member list.
- Approved the annual Mission giving to the Presbytery of \$20,000 with 50% from the Mission budget, the remainder to be determined.
- Received thanks from Pastor Adam for their service and accomplishments in 2023.
- Elders who served in 2023: Melodie Baird, Tonya Church, Robert Clausen, Bekah Harmon, Sandy Fong, Brad Praun, George Pilloton, Steve Revere, Jim Rolka, Regina Rus, Catherine Marshall-Snith, James Wood

Kathy Takemoto, Clerk of Session



2023 Marin County Gun Safety Collaborative Summary

by Kathy Takemoto

In 2022, Marin County District Attorney Lori Frugoli created the Marin County Gun Safety Collaborative to educate county residents on safe firearm storage. DA Frugoli was interested in having a faith-based community partner as a member of the collaborative. Session approved Kathy Takemoto to represent PCN. The collaborative is co-chaired by Pellie Anderson.

Currently there are 47 collaborative partners including people from law enforcement, Marin County Health and Human Services, veterans, probation officers, Kaiser health workers, Marin County Office of Education, and community-based organizations including Moms Demand Action. Accomplishments in 2023 include:

- Customized flyers and presentations to school-age children and parent/guardians
- Gun safety restraining order presentations to Marin Health Medical Staff and community stakeholders
- Use of social media to share gun safety information
- Presentation on UCLA Health Survey which revealed:
 - 15% of Marin households have a firearm
 - Teens are fearful of gun violence
 - Veterans and rural dwellers are more likely to own firearms

Contact Kathy.takemoto@outlook.com if you have questions.



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

PCN elder Walt Campbell will lead 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 twentieth 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 forty-four minute lectures followed by up to fifteen 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. We will have weekly Zoom session on Saturday mornings from 10:30 a.m. to noon beginning January 6, 2024 and finishing 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.

70th Anniversary

Congratulations to Lyle and Elsa Borcharding, who celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary on December 12. Their daughters, Bonnie Freeburg and Jan Smith, and grandson, Ryan Freeburg, were on hand to celebrate with Lyle and Elsa and all of us at PCN!





Christ caring for people through people

STEPHEN MINISTRY

Stephen Ministry Training @ PCN!
January 2024!

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



The Stephen Series...

MEETS THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE

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

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

DEFINITION

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

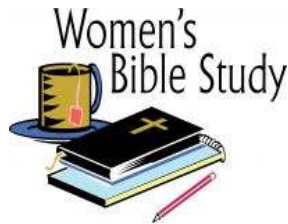
MULTIPLIES THE MINISTRY OF CONGREGATIONS

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

SUPPLIES COMPLETE RESOURCES TO CONGREGATIONS

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

Christ Caring For People Through People



The Gospel of John

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

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

Class will resume January 4, 2024. Spring break will be March 28 through April 4, and our last class will be May 9.

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

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

Here is the Zoom link and passcode:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81284025735?pwd=VTY4cWFJQWtDTlplUVE9MT0ljL1dHdz09>

Meeting ID: 812 8402 5735 Passcode: pcnovato



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

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

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

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

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

Study Leaders:

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

Link for the Zoom meeting:

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

Meeting ID: 884 0194 9220 Passcode: pcnovato



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



WOMEN'S PRAYER GROUP

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

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81107446679?pwd=Yy9ub1pReGdMTHVhbDJpRzhHVVdHQQT09>

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!