

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

Return Service Requested

PresPress



July 4 – Buckaroo Breakfast
July 12 – Ladies Luncheon
July 20 – Smith family farewell
July 20 – Congregational meeting
July 28-31 – Presbyterian Youth Triennium



PresPress

July/August 2025

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

Gratitude & Hope

I've struggled with composing this *PresPress* article. Knowing that this will be my last as the pastor at PCN has stricken me with a sense of reality and finality. Perhaps the import of this article is no greater than any other article I've written at PCN but there seems to be the pressure to create both some semblance of closure and at the same time the reassurance and hope that PCN carries forward as she follows the Holy Spirit into the future.

But then again, isn't the story of the Church the story of continual transition, rebirth, and resurrection? Isn't the pastor's role always to offer closure and hope time and again throughout the many changes and transitions in life and ministry?

I've realized, over time, that change and transition is pretty much a mainstay when it comes to faithful discipleship. As difficult as change can be, and as resistant as we often are to it, to be a disciple of Jesus IS to be in a continual state of change and transformation. Why? Because we are in a relationship with God. Relationships, necessarily, change us. It's no different with God. God is always working, through the Holy Spirit, to bring us new life; to make us whole; to become more Christ-like. Faith MEANS we are being transformed. To be a Christian is to expect and be ready to go through change at every given moment.

So a pastoral transition is no different. It's the same story.

I look back on my time with PCN with such fondness and gratitude. I know, without a shadow of a doubt, that God led me to shepherd this community. The words from the book of Esther have resonated with me over the years, 'for such a time as this,' did God bring me into the life and ministry of PCN. And together, we navigated the pandemic, spent time in discernment fashioning a sense of identity, implemented a new strategic plan, reoriented our leadership structure, revitalized several of our church spaces, navigated staffing changes, created one worship service that represents the identity of the congregation, began a renewed, intentional focus on community life, etc. With so many unknowns and with such rapid change, we truly navigated a time of wilderness with faithful resolve, careful listening, and no shortage of hope. We said goodbye to old friends, and we welcomed many new disciples. PCN has the same DNA she always had: loving, caring, generous, and grace-filled. But today she is, in many ways, a new community of faith that needs a new shepherd, and I have no doubt that God already has in mind that very person. And for me, God has other plans, and a new community to shepherd.

And so, it is in this mindset that I feel the need to say 'goodbye,' but I do so not with sadness in my heart, but with hope and joy because I have seen the hand of God at work in PCN these past six years, and I know that God will continue that work even after I'm gone. God's got this. God's got y'all!

Blessings to you, dear saints. May God ever be your guide now and forever.

With gratitude & hope,
Pastor Adam



Session

Session Highlights – June 2025

At the June 18, 2025 meeting:

- Session approved Personnel Elders Tonya Church and Greg Smith, and Elders George Pilloton, Art Plumstead, and Kathy Takemoto to serve as the Interim/Transitional Pastor Search Committee. The Session is responsible for commissioning an Interim/Transitional Search Team. The Presbytery will provide guidance and support.
- Session approved the formation of the Nominating Committee to serve from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026, which will seek candidates to serve as Elders and Deacons beginning July 1, 2026. The Nominating Committee will also seek candidates to serve on the Pastor Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee is comprised of two Session Elders, the Vice Moderator of the Deacons, and three at-large members from the congregation. Kathy Botko, Walt Campbell, and E.B. Hanlein will serve second terms as the at-large members. The Elders and Vice Moderator of the Deacons will be determined in the near future.
- The Property Team had two motions:
 - Create a space for those with walkers and wheelchairs in the rear of the sanctuary by removing a pew. This space will contain chairs and space to keep assistive devices close by. This is a temporary change to assess whether it improves the comfort and safety of those using this area. Sitting in this area is optional.
 - Motion to create five handicapped parking spaces west of the power pole. This will eliminate the need to cross the island. A painted crosswalk will be added.

Both motions were approved by Session.

- Reactivation of the Stephen Ministry program and training was proposed. Sally Carbonaro will provide additional information to the Elders for an assessment.
- All congregants are encouraged to provide input on the church's website.
- Coffee service after worship will no longer be handled by the Deacons. As of July 1, 2025, church committees, officers, and Life Groups are asked to sign up for Sundays to provide coffee service. Elders Tonya Church and Karen Marks have obtained a donation from Bunn Coffee Company of two new coffee brewing machines and 15 air pots. This eliminates the need to maneuver coffee urns. Training sessions will be held for all to learn how to easily brew coffee in five to seven minutes into an air pot.
- Session approved the acceptance of voluntary monetary gifts as a Love Offering for the Adam and Sarah Smith family from congregants.

Kathy Takemoto, Clerk of Session



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.



The All Dressed Up Ministry at PCN has been in existence since 2011. We have sent more than 1400 boxes of clothing to inmates who are leaving San Quentin on parole or completion of their incarceration. We send them a notification card when we send the box of clothing to let them know that a box of clothing will be waiting for them when they are released into society.

We often get letters of gratitude from the inmates prior to their actual release date as a response to the notification card that we send to them. We try to share these letters of gratitude with the congregation. I received the following two letters some time ago from inmates that were being released and wanted to express their gratitude. These letters are examples of the thanks that we receive for this mission.

If you have any questions about this ministry or would be interested in helping with the delivery of the clothes, please contact Mike Robinson. You can send an email to Skybird24@comcast.net, or call 415-302-1729.

Dear friends at "all dressed up ministry",

I am overjoyed by the letter I received from you today telling me that ~~I~~ you have sent me a package of dressout clothing to me at San Quentin Prison. My release date is April 5. Thank you so much!

Peace, joy, and blessings to you!

Ken Sargent T56366

San Quentin Prison

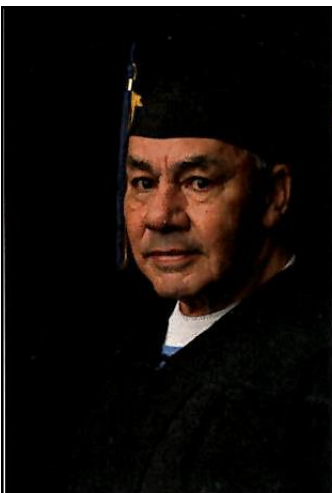
1 Main St.

San Quentin, CA 94974

Ken Sargent

The following letter is an example the determination of an inmate to accomplish their dreams and put their past behind.

JAN. 18, 2025	RALPH CENDEJAS JR. CDC V42381, 1049 CSP- SAN QUENTIN SAN QUENTIN, CA 94964
ALL DRESSED UP MINISTRY	
710 WILSON AVE	
NOVATO, CA 94947	
DEAR PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NOVATO,	
EPHESIANS 5:20 SAYS THAT, ASA CHRISTIAN, WE MUST BE "ALWAYS GIVING THANKS TO GOD THE FATHER FOR EVERYTHING, IN THE NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST." WELL, ON FRIDAY THE 17TH, I RECEIVED YOUR NOTICE THAT YOU HAVE SENT ME A PACKAGE OF CLOTHING FOR WHEN I AM RELEASED, AND I WANT TO EXPRESS TO YOU THE GRATITUDE THAT IS IN MY HEART FOR YOUR GIFT.	
I HAVE NOT YET BEEN TOLD WHICH TRANSITIONAL HOUSING UNIT I WILL BE SENT TO, BUT I HAVE INDICATED TO CDCR THAT I WOULD PREFER TO BE PAROLED IN THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA. I WAS BORN IN SAN FRANCISCO, BUT RAISED IN PITTSBURG, CONTRA COSTA COUNTY; THUS, THE BAY AREA IS WHERE I HAVE THE MOST SUPPORT. I HAD A 36 YEAR CAREER WORKING IN THE BAY AREA AND INTEND TO USE MY SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE BENEFITS WHEN I AM PAROLED. HAVING ALSO WORKED CONTINUOUSLY FOR 22 YEARS WHILE INCARCERATED, I FEEL THAT IT IS TIME FOR ME TO LIVE A PEACEFUL AND QUIET CHRISTIAN LIFE.	
I ACCEPT YOUR INVITATION TO VISIT ON A SUNDAY MORNING AND I WILL DO SO AS SOON AS I CAN. I HAVE ENCLOSED THE PAGE OUT OF THE 2024 COMMENCEMENT PROGRAM THAT HAS MY PICTURE ON IT, SO YOU MAY BE ABLE TO IDENTIFY THAT STRANGE OLD MAN WANDERING AROUND YOUR CHURCH SOMEDAY.	
THANK YOU FOR YOUR GIFT, AND GOD BLESS YOU.	
SINCERELY,	
Ralph A. Cendejas Jr.	



RALPH A. CENDEJAS JR.

Getting my AA degree means many things to me. For one, it's something that I've always wanted to accomplish.

This degree has sparked in me an impetus for a lifelong journey of learning. I say

"lifelong" because there seems to be an infinite number of things that fascinate me in this world: mathematics, engineering, astronomy, physics, chemistry, and electricity. My interest in these things have only grown since attending college. I can't learn everything about each of these subjects to the degree that I would like. All I can do is pick and choose opportunities to study things as they arise. That's the way it is in prison. Mount Tamalpais College has been invaluable to me in this regard.

This phrase I've heard comes to mind: "school is a pipeline to society." To me this is a profound statement. School gives us the skills we need to join people together; to realize that we are all, in a sense, brothers and sisters, and that we must live together as one united community, with love and respect for each other.

School helps us to understand that we are a community of interdependent individuals that must come together in peace, not only for human life but for the benefit of all life on this sacred earth.

There is so much to learn; about life, about earth, and about the heavens. To me, college promotes the evolution of thought.



Hello, awesome PCN Music Ministry!

We started our Music Theory class on Tuesday, June 17 and will continue classes on **Tuesdays at 6 p.m.** All are welcome to attend, even non-PCN Music Ministry members! So that everyone is comfortable using Zoom, as I know that some of you have not used Zoom before, I have attached the link to the meeting below.

You will need:

Either a computer, smart phone (iPhone or Android), iPad or laptop AND a smart phone.

You also need to install a metronome app on your smartphone as well as an audio recording app (which you already have installed in your smart phone).

On your smart phone, pull up this email and touch the link below to install it on your phone:

Here is a link to Speak Beat Metronome app for iPhone users:

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/speakbeat-metronome-1-2-3-4/id550244095>

Here is a link to Speak Beat Metronome app for Android phone users:

https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.ionaworks.metronome&pcampaignid=web_share

Again, these recording apps are most probably installed already on your phone. Search for VOICE MEMO for iPhone or VOICE RECORDER for Android phones. But here are the links anyway (pull up this email ON YOUR PHONE and touch the appropriate link):

Here is the link for the recording app for iPhone users: <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/voice-memos/id1069512134>

Here is the link for the recording app for Android users:

https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.media.bestrecorder.audiorecorder&pcampaignid=web_share

Notice that you can rely on just a smart phone to watch the class AND do the homework. However, to watch the class, it is preferred that you watch the class on a bigger screen. All lessons will be recorded and uploaded to YouTube for your review and convenience. That way you can watch the class again, or if for some reason you missed a class, etc. There will be homework EVERY week so please set some time aside to do it. The majority of the lessons will build on previous lessons so it will be critical to keep up with the homework for full understanding.

Here is the link to the Zoom class. Click on this ON THE DEVICE YOU WILL BE USING to view the class.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89185270550>

And here is one more link for you to have. I will be storing all documents, lessons and homework in the link so you can access everything.

[Google drive link for homework and lessons](#)

Thanks for your dedication and efforts! This will be fun! Oh, and spread the word too!

~Art



Pouring Coffee Now (PCN)



After many years of the Deacons providing coffee during fellowship hour, Session has approved to offload that service from them. This will allow the Deacons to continue their focus as our Care and Compassion Ministry. A transition team was formed, but of course! Becky Praun, Greg Smith, Karen Marks, and Tonya Church gathered to discuss what this might look like. The timing was perfect, as a change to the coffee-making process was also needed for the Buckaroo Breakfast.

After much research, and a generous donation to PCN by BUNN coffee company (thank you very much), we now have two brand new coffee makers. These new coffee makers will brew directly into airpots. The best part about this is we can have an airpot of coffee ready in less than 10 minutes. We will be placing multiple airpots on the table, so you can still choose to be served, or bypass the line and serve yourself. We will still have decaf and regular varieties and of course hot water for tea and hot chocolate. We also hope to have some great homemade treats available to eat with your coffee!

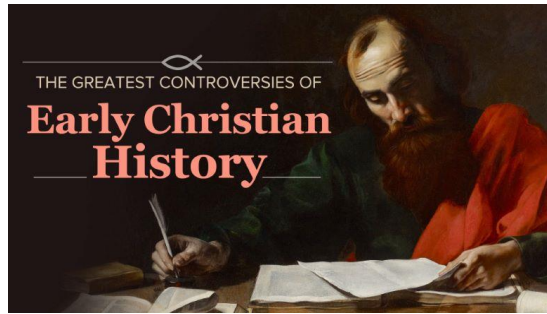
Of course, with a transition comes an opportunity. If you are a part of a team, committee, Life Group, Bible study, or just want to have the fun of making coffee, we will be conducting the training and scheduling all committees and groups for the upcoming months. (Two teams will share each month.) If you and your team prefer a particular month, please contact Karen Marks. The schedule is being put together as we speak!

We are excited to make such a big part of our Sunday morning so much easier. Please say thank you to the Deacons (past or present) for their service to us over many decades. The new coffee service starts on Sunday, July 6. See you on the patio.

Becky, Greg, Karen, and Tonya



Many thanks to everyone who came out on Saturday, June 21 to clean up the campus grounds. The Property Team would like to thank Don Erba, Garrick Fong, Jay Haney, John Marks, Wilder McMicken, Brad Praun, Bruce Stahley, Cyrus Wood and James Wood. Strong work, gentlemen! Our beautiful grounds are looking even better!



Summer 2025 Adult Education Class
"Greatest Controversies of Early Christianity"
PCN Christian Education Committee

PCN Elder, Walt Campbell, is leading a new Great Courses video lecture series via Zoom on "Greatest Controversies of Early Christianity" on Saturdays from 10:30 a.m. until noon. The course will run over 12 Saturdays, finishing August 2.

The course will address several misconceptions/conspiracy theories about the early church that should debunk the "Da Vinci Code" plot:

- Emperor Constantine's role in compiling the New Testament.
- Was Mary really a virgin when she gave birth to Jesus?
- Did Jesus have a twin brother?
- Did Mary Magdalene and Jesus have a romantic relationship?
- What information did Judas communicate to betray Jesus and what motivated him?

The lecturer is Bart Ehrman from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. He is an author, editor and university lecturer. He earned his PhD from Princeton Theological Seminary.

To participate, contact Walt at walterleecampbell@gmail.com or call 415.497.5157.

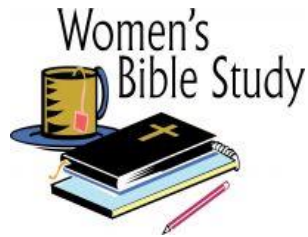


SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, July 12th ~ 11:30am - 2pm

Ladies 2nd Annual Gratitude Luncheon at PCN

Sponsored by the Presbyterian Women, Women's Bible Study, Deacons and Fellowship Team. No fee luncheon celebrating all ladies, from young to seasoned for a delightful luncheon. Contact Becky Praun for any questions or more information at 415.472.1733 or email: beckypraun@yahoo.com



Women's Bible Study's is on summer break and will resume meeting September 11 to continue our study of Joshua followed by a new N.T. Wright study book on Mark later in the year. WBS meets Thursdays from 10 to 11:30 a.m.

In addition to its studies, our group provides a warm fellowship time before class and a service component involving the collection of 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. We also enjoy acting as PCN greeters at special events, wearing our signature red clothing and "Ask Me About WBS" buttons.

To learn more about our group and receive the link to our Zoom class, please contact:

Margaret	415-806-8849	allaboutchoices@yahoo.com
Karen	415-382-9616	kcarlson39@icloud.com
Melodie	415-897-7512	melodie.l.baird@gmail.com



All signs point to Jesus! Come join us via Zoom Sunday mornings from 8 to 9 a.m. The summer study is about risk-takers – Noah, Joshua, Rahab, David, John the Baptist and Stephen.

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 Becky Praun. 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 Becky at beckypraun@yahoo.com.



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!