



PResPRes

May 2024

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

“Learning to See Again”

“Why do we fast, but you do not see, Lord?

Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?” (Isaiah 58:3)

I’ve been doing a lot of walking lately. With an electric vehicle and the crazy PG&E prices, I’ve found that there are plenty of places around Novato to park and plug-in for a few hours while I walk over to various coffee establishments to do some church work. Save some money, get some exercise, and get some work done. It’s a win-win-win! (Does that make it a Trinitarian win?)

At any rate...At first, walking was just about getting from one place to another. A minor inconvenience. You see, I’m really busy. My work life, family life, ‘me’ life; it all adds up to something crazy. There’s not a lot of time to waste just walking. So...I’d hurry. Oh no, I don’t run. My knees are not the greatest. But I’d walk about as quick as I could to and from the cafe.

Along my walks I would run into people all the time, some I know, but most I didn’t. I would pass them quickly without a second glance. There was no time for interaction. I’d walk down many streets you all know: Grant, Novato Blvd., Center Rd., all over downtown. Sometimes, when I’d walk along Redwood Blvd in the mornings, I’d notice it was crowded. There were many gentlemen waiting for their rides to get to their respective jobs. And, yes, I’d pass them with hardly a glance too. There are several regulars that sit on street corners begging for food or cash too. Yep, I’d stay away from them too. There were business owners opening up their shops, the regulars making their way to the coffee shops of choice, the employees running late to their work gigs.

They were busy. I was busy. So, we walked on by each other.

Until one day. As I made my way down Redwood, one of the gentlemen waiting for his ride to work collapsed right in front of me. The other men he had been standing with began to squat down beside him checking his pulse, listening for breath. I, too, stopped, and bent down with the group. I’d done CPR training years and years ago and so when they asked if anyone knew CPR I jumped in and offered to help. As I moved closer the man began to stir and even sat himself up, coughing. We all stayed with him for another 5-10 minutes to make sure he was okay. In that time, I met Jorge and Juan, and several other men. When they learned I was a pastor, they asked if I would pray with them and for their friend. And, of course, I did.

Afterwards I wished them all well and moved onto my coffee shop work spot for the morning to begin work on a sermon for the next week; a sermon about faithfulness and discipleship, and about love, and generosity, and sharing good news with the world.

Several sentences in, I stopped. I couldn’t focus. I couldn’t write. I couldn’t seem to do anything.

You see, I'd been telling myself for a while, that my busyness - the countless tasks on my to-do list - were all about Jesus; all about serving the church, sharing the good news with the world, being a disciple, and husband, and parent with all that I am. I was so productive, after all, accomplishing so much.

But God gave me a gift that morning. God made me stop, interrupted my schedule and my plans, to teach me to 'see' again.

As the author of Isaiah writes, "Why do we fast" seemingly do what we think is holy, and right, and faithful, and yet we, at times, do not truly see? Why do we seemingly do all the right things, and yet they stunt our spiritual growth through our own blindness?

Sometimes, with the greatest intentions, we do and do and do...but we can begin to put blinders over our eyes. We can get lost in the 'doing,' even if the 'doing' is centered on being faithful to God, and still develop tunnel vision. We can get lost in ourselves, in our biases, in our preferences, in our patterns of faithfulness, in ways that can blind us from the times God moves us in other directions.

So, for me, my walks became different after that day. They became spiritual walks with God...I spent more time doing the seemingly unimportant, and less time doing all that stuff I thought I had to do. I walk, open to what God might give me, or what I might see, not what I expect to see. I gave up a part of me and my own agenda, so that I might better be a part of God's, making room for the unexpected.

Perhaps in this season of resurrection, we might all take a step back to look, and listen, and learn to see again. God might just show us a whole new spark of new life.

With Hope & Joy,
Adam

The story from this article is an excerpt from Rev. Dr. Adam Smith's Ash Wednesday sermon on February 14, 2024.



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.



CENTER FOR DOMESTIC PEACE is having a fundraiser on May 10th. It will be a fun filled afternoon with inspiring speakers, great food, and warm conversation. See the link for details:

<https://centerfordomesticpeace.org/events/>



Thank you to everyone who has donated groceries for the Center for Domestic Peace. 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.



ALL DRESSED UP MINISTRY sends gently used or new clothing to inmates each month who participate in the California Re-entry Program at San Quentin and are being released to return to society. We are in desperate need of the following durable clothing.

- Pants – jeans, waist sizes 36” to 42”, lengths 30” to 36”
- Shirts – Polo shirts, flannel shirts, and sports shirts sizes, large (L) - 3XL
- Hoodies and/or wind breaker jackets – sizes L, XL, 2XL, and 3XL.
- Shoes – sizes 9 to 13

If you have any of these clothing items, in good condition, that you would like to donate to the ministry, please contact Mike Robinson at 415-302-1729 or bring them to the church office.



**Brunch,
Bubbles
& Bocce!**



BRUNCH, BUBBLES, AND BOCCE!

Join us on Saturday, May 18th for an Italian-themed brunch, champagne, live music, bocce games and silent/live auctions to benefit the NMCS mental health program! The event will be held here in Novato at the Margaret Todd Center.

Tickets are \$100 per person, but, keep in mind, NMCS's mental health program is a critical and in-demand program. They are hoping to expand it to serve all those who need it and have applied. If you are unable to attend, think of buying a ticket for a friend to introduce them to the good work being done at NMCS. Go to www.northmarinncs.org/connect/brunch-bubbles-bocce/ for tickets.

Special guests include Mike McGuire, California Senate President Pro-Tempore, and Eric Lucan, Marin County Supervisor for District 5.

Take a Tour!

We invite you to join us for a behind-the-scenes tour of our weekly food pantry. Tours take place the first Tuesday of every month from 9 to 10 a.m. Sign up now for a tour in April, May, or June.

Go to the NMCS website, www.northmarinncs.org to register.



Session

Session Highlights – April 2024

At the April meeting, Session:

- approval of Ariel's ordination worship service on June 2nd at 3 pm at PCN

Kathy Takemoto, Clerk of Session



Do you like to socialize and enjoy coffee?

The Deacons are looking for all and any PCN members who would like to help serve coffee during our prized 'Coffee and Conversation' hour after worship on Sundays. No experience necessary!! Time serving 25 minutes. Youth welcome as well for Community Service hours. Please reach out to Becky Praun/Deacon Moderator if you feel the call to serve in fellowship and fun with your faithful Deacons. Thanking you in advance for your time and consideration.

blessings,
Becky Praun/Deacon Moderator
beckypraun@yahoo.com
415 827 7685

National Day of Prayer is May 2nd

Please join the Deacons in prayers for our Pastor, Staff and Congregants. PCN is blessed with a wonderful Church Family and Community. We are praying for you all.

The PCN Deacon



Incoming kindergarteners through 6th graders are invited to participate! Join us for 5 fun days, from June 17th – 21st, 9:00am - 12:00pm. Take kids deep into an amazing undersea adventure where they'll experience the ever-flowing, never-ending love of God. At Scuba VBS, kids will be immersed in the Word and discover what living water is really all about!!

Registration is \$60 for one child and \$30 for each additional child. Confidential scholarships are available to those in need.

Register Now at: www.pcnovato.org

Middle and High Schoolers – We have a spot for you as well!!

Come join us as a crew leader! We offer community service hours!

The crew leader will lead a small crew of approximately five elementary-aged kids. There's no preparation required but one-hour group training is encouraged. A good crew leader is a friend and helper for the kids and station leaders. They ask questions, take kids seriously, and encourage them throughout VBS.

We need volunteers! There are so many ways to be involved! If you are not available on the VBS dates, you can still help with the preparations! Or you can sign up for just one day! We have a place just for you!

- Decoration Team (Before VBS)
- Registration Table (1st day, 8:30am - 10)
- Station Leaders (8:30am - 12pm)
- Station Helpers (8:30am - 12pm)

If interested please contact, Sydney Fletcher at children@pcnovato.org



Kids Easter Eggstravaganza Was a Blast!

We set up Easter stations with games, crafts, and cookies on our turf field! Over 40 kids from little nursery dudes to middle schoolers took part in the fun! We built a tomb and Ms. Saysette lead groups of kids in acting out the Easter story! Thank you everyone who helped us make it a super fun Eggstravaganza!





COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT



Hi Everyone! How do you decide what to do? Is it timing or cost? Location? What about impact? Cause? Or joining a team?

On Saturday, April 21st, a small but mighty team of dedicated, motivated, and energized people met in Trevitt Hall to Rise Against Hunger! We scooped, bagged, weighed, sealed, and packed 7128 family meals for distribution to needy families. Whew! It was a monumental feat of accomplishment. A special thank you to everyone who supported the worldwide effort to beat hunger!



May 5th is our **Town Hall** immediately following our service. We encourage everyone to join us for lunch (**Cinco de Mayo!**), hear the latest and greatest happenings at PCN, ask questions, and get involved!

Blessings for an aMAYzing May!
See you out there!

Sally



THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NOVATO

Annual Buckaroo Pancake Breakfast

 **July 4th, 7am - 10am** 

Novato Redwood Credit Union Parking Lot

www.pcnovato.org



Net Proceeds Benefit Homeward Bound



You are invited to the **70th Annual Buckaroo Breakfast!** It is a traditional part of the 4th of July festivities in Novato. Breakfast is served from 7 to 10 am at the Redwood Credit Union parking lot at 1010 Grant Avenue in downtown Novato.

Enjoy eggs, pancakes, sausage, orange juice, and coffee.

Suggested donation: Adults: \$10, Children 5-10: \$5, Free 4 and under.

All our net proceeds benefit Homeward Bound.

Homeward Bound of Marin is the primary provider of Marin County homeless shelters and resources for homeless families and individuals in Marin, California.

Would you like to volunteer to help us serve the Novato community?

Volunteer opportunities are coming soon!



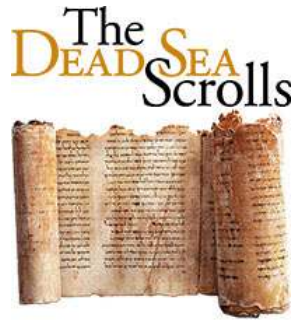
You may have noticed that the front of the property is looking a bit more tidy these days. In response to a voluntary inspection report from the Novato Fire Protection District recommending ways to make our facilities more fire safe, the Property Committee contracted with The Tree Man, LLC to remove vegetation as recommended. The Fire District has matching funds to help pay for this work that we are in the process of applying for. Thanks to Jay Haney for coordinating, and to Don Erba for supervising (while staying busy with the pruners).

Don has also designed a well-integrated platform for the praise band that will extend the chancel and provide better flow and placement for our Praise Band, Choir, Liturgists and Clergy. We look forward to approval and construction of this project this year.

We are also in the final stages of gathering quotes for painting the Office, Lobby, Christensen Room and Hallway areas in advance of the installation of our new carpeting. The committee will use these quotes to determine how much of the work could be done by volunteers and how much we should have done professionally.

We are also looking forward to revamping the Meditation Garden sprinkler system and plantings.

Regular maintenance, such as lighting fixture bulb and ballast replacements, window repairs, yard work (mowing) and rodent prevention continue.



The Christian Education committee is sponsoring a new spring/summer adult learning opportunity: “The Dead Sea Scrolls,” a series of 24 video lectures via Zoom that presents the discovery, translation, and significance of ancient scrolls found at Qumran in 1947.

The videos are produced by The Teaching Company as one of its “Great Courses” series, and feature Dr. Gary Rendsburg, Ph.D., chair of the department of Jewish Studies at Rutgers University.

The scrolls shed light on Jewish culture and theology at the time of Christ and also raise issues about the transmittal of the Biblical record across time. Weekly sessions will cover two thirty minute lectures and discussion led by Walt Campbell. Twelve sessions are scheduled for Saturdays at 10:30 a.m. from March 23 to June 8.

Please see the PCN website or email Walt Campbell at walteracampbell@aol.com to enroll. This opportunity is open to non-members. Participants will receive a weekly email with a pdf document of the course guide pages and discussion questions for the upcoming Saturday session.



Westminster Woods has several camps this summer, including three different sessions of “Camp Soulspring” for ages 8 to 17; The Grove family camp that runs June 30 through July 5; a camp for high schoolers called “Woods to Waves” from July 21-26; and Friendship Camp for adults ages 18+ with developmental disabilities.

For more information, visit www.westminsterwoods.org/summer-camp.



Dear PCN Family,

A majority of significant milestones have occurred with you over my lifetime: I was baptized at PCN, I was married at PCN (ah, the orange carpet!), I became an ordained Ruling Elder, and then a Commissioned Lay Pastor. I had the great, great privilege of serving alongside both Rev. Kent Webber and Rev. Adam Smith before accepting the position as Associate Presbyter and Stated Clerk of the Redwoods Presbytery.

I am delighted to report that I graduate with my Master of Divinity degree on April 27 from the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary.

All of you – my wonderful PCN family - are invited to attend my service of ordination as Minister of Word and Sacrament on Sunday, June 2, at 3:00 p.m. There will be a reception to follow on the patio, hosted by the Deacons.

I am so very grateful for your love, your encouragement, your support, and your prayers.

My love to you all,

Ariel



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.

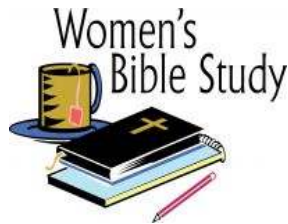
MULTIPLIES THE MINISTRY OF CONGREGATIONS

- 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



And the walls came tumbling down.... Join the new Women's Bible Study with the book of Joshua (\$10) on September 12 when the WBS resumes study after the summer break ending class on May 2.

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

God raises up Joshua who is a second Moses, faithful & strong, leading the Israelites. God promises to be with them. He promises the same to us, today.

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 book of Joshua 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=VTY4cWFJQWtDTlplUVE9MT0jL1dHdz09>

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 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 faith-less 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 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.



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>

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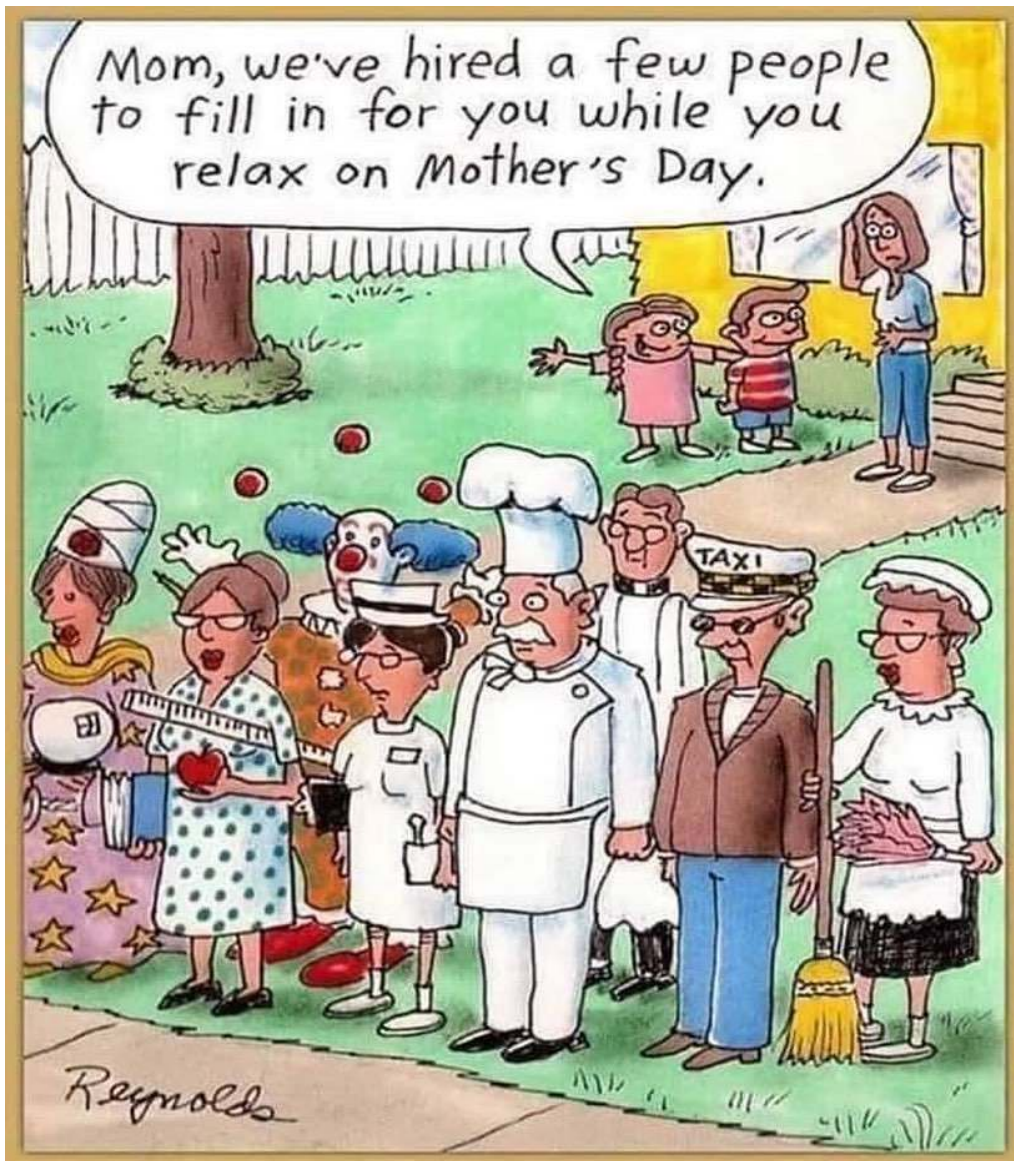


MEN'S BIBLE STUDY

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!



Happy Mother's Day