



PresPress

March 2026

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

“A Living, Creative, Spirit-Led Approach to Worship”

by Rev. Dr. Tony Stiff

“Not everything you have heard about Presbyterian worship is true.” That is a statement I have found myself saying to many of the worship staff and volunteer leaders I’ve worked with over the years. There is a notion at Presbyterian churches that every Presbyterian church follows the same worship style, uses the same order of worship, and adopts the same practices for performing individual parts of worship. That is, in fact, not true. *“But Pastor, everyone knows that Presbyterians are the ‘frozen chosen’ who never lift their arms in worship!”* Again, not true...well, maybe the second part is a little true (I hope you can sense my humor).

The Presbyterian Church of Novato is a member of the largest Presbyterian denomination in the country, called the PC(USA). Our denomination has a constitutional document called the Book of Order. It helps define our beliefs and practices. The Book of Order offers responses to several questions about worship. In my experience as a pastor, some long-term Presbyterians believe they know exactly how Presbyterians are supposed to worship, but few have slowed down to read the Book of Order, which outlines the PC(USA)'s approach to worship.

This month let’s look at the Book of Order and explore some of what it says about worship. To do that, I’m going to ask a few important questions and share with you the responses found in the Book of Order’s section on Worship.

Do Presbyterians have a fixed order of worship they have to follow every Sunday?

Great question. A particular section in the Book of Order that addresses this is called “Form and Freedom.” Below is a quote from that section,

W-2.0102: Form and Freedom

Christian worship has always been marked by a tension between form and freedom. Some traditions have emphasized established orders of worship, seeking to be faithful to the Scriptures. Others have resisted fixed forms of worship, asserting our freedom in Christ. We acknowledge that all forms of worship are provisional and subject to reformation according to the Word of God. Fixed forms of worship are valuable in that they offer consistent patterns and practices that help to shape lives of faith and faithfulness. More spontaneous approaches to worship are valuable in that they

provide space for unexpected insight and inspiration. In whatever form it takes, worship is to be ordered by God's Word and open to the creativity of the Holy Spirit.

Did you catch what the Book of Order said about all forms of worship? "**All forms of worship are provisional and subject to reformation**...In whatever form it takes, worship is to be ordered by God's Word and open to the creativity of the Holy Spirit." Some of you might be surprised to hear that Presbyterians are, in fact, not the 'frozen chosen' who never make changes to how they practice corporate worship, but instead are part of a living, creative, Spirit-led worshipping tradition that has been marked by regular changes to the order of worship and to how individual parts of worship in the order are performed.

Are there discernible parts of worship I should expect to experience on a Sunday morning, a wider movement that I'm guided through with others?

Yes, there are. The Book of Order suggests that the larger flow of corporate worship is marked by four kinds of movement: it begins with gathering, moves to the four central practices of prayers and singing, as well as the Word and Sacraments, and concludes with sending. Within these four movements, there is freedom in the order of worship used and how the individual parts of the order are performed. The Book of Order does not provide a complete list of the order's parts because it anticipates creative differences among local congregations. It only encourages the use of a basic pattern of parts (see W-3.0102). See relevant sections below.

W-3.0102 The Pattern of Lord's Day Worship *W-3.0103 The Order of Worship*

The Service for the Lord's Day includes other actions as well: gathering and singing, confession and pardon, prayer and offering, blessing and sending. Through all of these actions, we are drawn into Christ's presence and sent out in the power of the Spirit....

Worship *W-3.0103 The Order of Worship*

The order of worship offered here for the Service for the Lord's Day is rooted in Scripture, the traditions of the universal Church, and our Reformed heritage. In particular, it seeks to uphold the centrality of Word and Sacraments in the Church's faith, life, and worship. This description of the Service for the Lord's Day is presented as one commendable model but is not intended to exclude other ways of ordering worship. Other patterns may be appropriate in the context of a particular congregation or culture, provided that they are faithful to the Word, open to the Spirit, and dedicated to the glory of God.

Did you catch what the Book of Order said here? "This description of the Service for the Lord's Day **is presented as one commendable model, but is not intended to exclude other ways of ordering worship**." The PC(USA) anticipates that within its more than 8,000 churches spread across the U.S.A., each congregation will adopt and follow different orders of worship and use a wide array of worship styles for musical parts. If you visit other PC(USA) churches, you will discover that each church's worship practices and approach are different. A vital part of being faithful to the Word and open

to the Spirit's leading for Presbyterians has been an embrace of creative, living worship practices that have led to changes in the order of worship over time.

Do Presbyterians use only one musical style and instrumentation, and only Presbyterian hymnals for the songs used in worship?

No. Presbyterian churches are not constrained to any one musical style or set of instrumentation, or, for that matter, to only using Presbyterian hymnals or a formal songbook. A helpful section in the Book of Order addressing this question is called 'Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs'.

W-3.0203 Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs

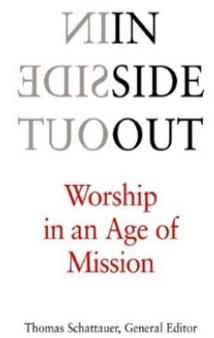
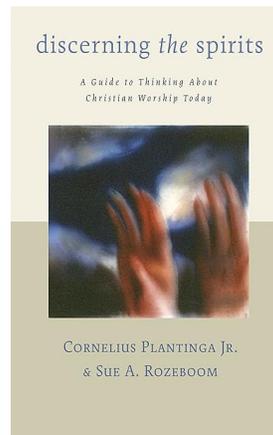
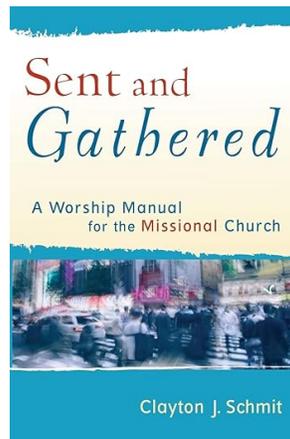
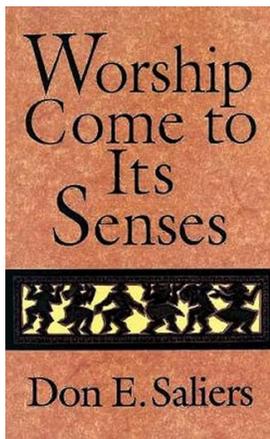
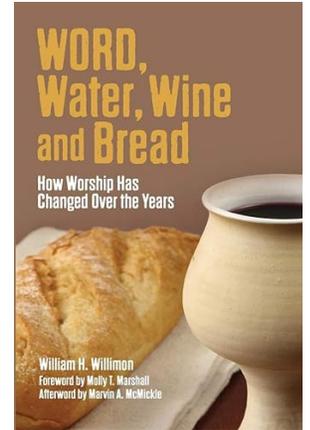
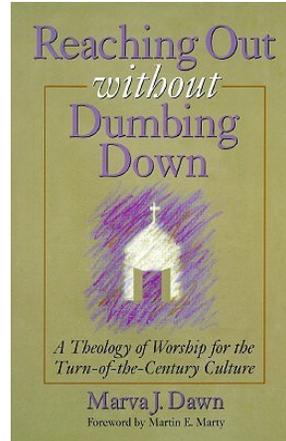
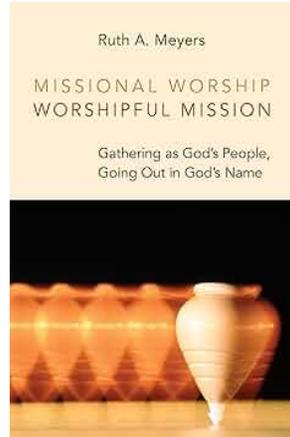
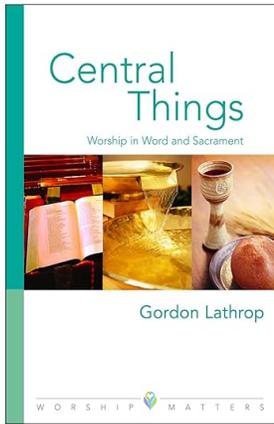
For millennia the people of God have sung psalms as praise and prayer to God. Early Christians continued to sing, pray, and study the psalms, interpreting them in the light of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Singing psalms remains an important part of the Reformed heritage. To the psalms the Church has added other hymns, canticles, and spiritual songs. Through the ages and from varied cultures, the Church has developed many other forms of congregational song, accompanied by a great array of instruments. We draw from this rich repertoire in the Service for the Lord's Day, singing glory to God.

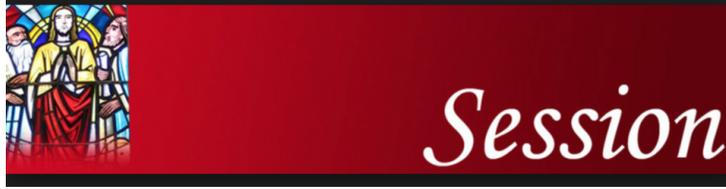
You may not be aware of this, but there is a movement among certain Protestant Christians called the 'exclusive Psalmody movement' that holds that the only songs that should be allowed in worship are the Psalms that appear in Scripture.

Far from agreeing with this movement, the Book of Order speaks in as wide and inclusive a language as possible, saying, "**To the psalms the Church has added other hymns, canticles, and spiritual songs. Through the ages and from varied cultures, the Church has developed many other forms of congregational song, accompanied by a great array of instruments.**" The songs used in weekly worship, for as long as the Church exists, will include new music and instrumentation, from new, yet unforeseen musical styles and approaches. Simply put, "to the psalms the Church has *added*." We are still adding to this very day.

While some of us who have worshiped at the Presbyterian Church of Novato may have well-worn assumptions, perhaps they could even be called 'expectations' about the kind of order of worship followed on Sunday and the kinds of musical instrumentation and songs sung. It appears from what I shared above that Presbyterian worship is full of surprises.

Presbyterian worship is living, creative, and Spirit-led while remaining rooted in Scripture, the traditions of the universal Church, and the Reformed heritage. If you would like to explore the wider discussion of Christian worship, below are a few of my favorite resources.





Session Highlights – February 2026

At February 1, 2026 Annual Congregational Meeting:

- Bruce Stahley was elected to a second term on the Endowment Fund Committee, Class of 2029.
- Attendees had the opportunity to ask questions about the 2025 Annual Report.
- Pastor Tony reviewed the process for calling a new installed Pastor and the importance for PCN being ready to welcome a new pastor.
- After the meeting, a soup lunch was served by the Fellowship Committee.

The February Session meeting will be held on Thursday, February 26, 2026, 6 PM.

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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redwoodspresbytery@gmail.com



www.redwoodspresbytery.org

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.



SAVE THE DATE!

"For the Love of Mothers"

Gilead House's 2026 Fundraising Event
Saturday, April 25th ~ 2:00-5:30pm
at West Wind Wines in beautiful Nicasio

Join us for Art, Wine, Music and Heart — Supporting Single Moms and Kids
Mark your calendars... more info coming soon!



Hope in Full Bloom

Tuesday, April 28, 2026
11:30AM - 1:00PM
680 Wilson Avenue Center in Novato



Dear Friends at Presbyterian Church of Novato,

Spring is in bloom, and so is hope. [Tickets are now on sale](#) for NMCS's Spring Luncheon, *Hope in Full Bloom*. Join us on Tuesday, April 28th at our 680 Wilson Center in Novato for a meaningful afternoon rooted in community, resilience, and impact. We hope you'll be part of this special gathering. In gratitude, *Cheryl Paddack*



Mission Study Team Update

Greetings to the PCN Family from your Mission Study Team. The Team is made up of Karen Marks and Greg Smith, serving as co-chairs, ably accompanied by Robert Coleman, Delane Ramser and Becky Moser.

Many in the congregation are familiar with, and most likely participated in, prior Mission Studies in PCN's past. For those who may not have, let's review what a Mission Study is and the purpose it serves during this season of transition.

A Mission Study is a prayerful process that considers all the following:

Looking in the Mirror – Who We Are & How We Got Here

- Review our history, strengths, and challenges
- Identify congregational demographics
- Evaluating our current program offerings and the needs they fill
- Detailing our finances – budget, endowments, etc

Looking out the Window – Where We See Ourselves Moving Forward

- An in-depth evaluation of our broader community demographics, how our church is currently perceived, and other relevant data to surface where our greatest opportunities for growth and outreach exist
- Hear firsthand from all PCN members, through written surveys and listening sessions, their hopes and dreams for our future together in this place. This work will most likely be in the April timeframe.

We will continue to provide you with monthly updates of our progress and would ask you to pray for wisdom as we listen for God's leading together.

Christian Education Team March Events!

Join us on March 1st Immediately following our Worship Service for

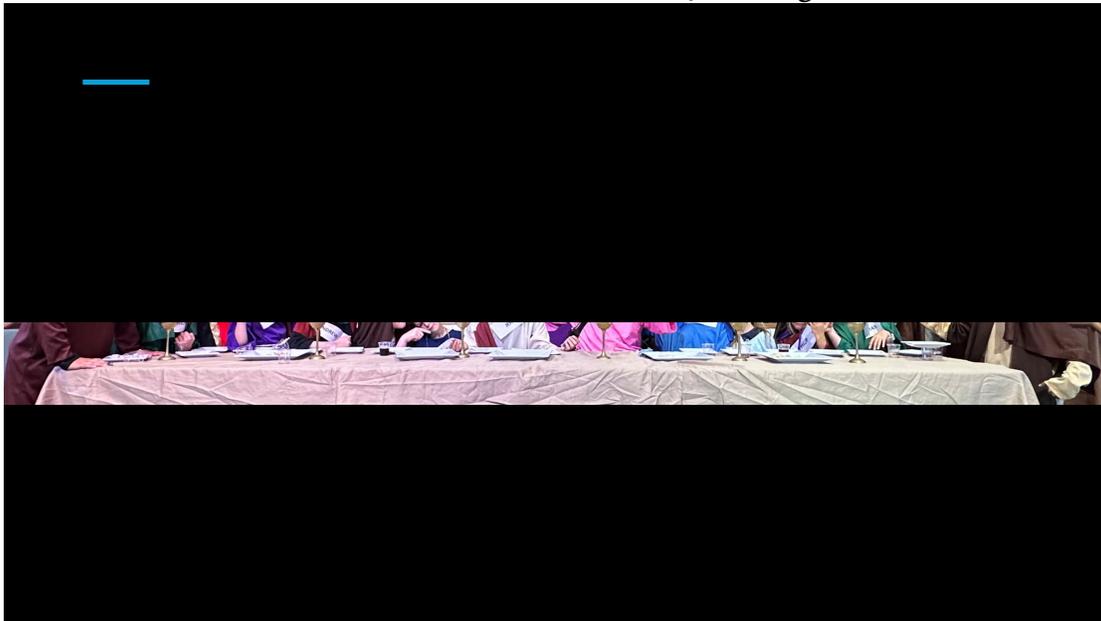
Table Talk with Pastor Tony

A light lunch will be served with a side of all the questions about the bible you've always wanted to know the answers to!



Save The Date!
March 29th

Children's Palm Sunday Program



ALL CHURCH MARDI GRAS PANCAKE SUPPER



Thanks to all of you who attended PCN's Mardi Gras pancake supper and Lenten worship. It was a fun event for all ages. We made masks, had pancakes, sausage, blueberries, hot chocolate with whipped cream, and king cake! We ended the night with a homily from Pastor Tony, worship music from Art and we burned our hurts/ worries to give them to God!

We look forward to seeing you next year!



Without the steadfast help of dozens of volunteers, Mardi Gras would not have happened. Please thank them when you see them.....

Wayne Anderson
Bill Bradfield
Miriam Campos
Sally Carbonaro
Tonya Church
Rachel DeFilippis
Carl Fehring
Garrick Fong
Pastor Tony Stiff

Sandy Fong
Carolyn Gerrans
Art Gerrans
Janalee Holmes
Marion Hune
Tammi Jester
Penny Kuroki
Art Maramba
Kathy Takemoto

Annie McMickin
George Pilloton
Brad Praun
Becky Praun
Delane Ramser
Walt Searway
Greg Smith
Bruce Stahley



PCN Emergency Guide



Safety Team Serving Coffee on Sunday Morning! (Delane, Melodie, Nancy, Sam, Sydney & Walt)

The Safety Team is happy to announce that we have completed our PCN Emergency Guide install! This Guide provides protocols to ensure a timely, organized response to emergencies or crises affecting PCN. It also includes quick reviews of basic first-aid procedures, such as how to find and use our AED devices.

The guide has been installed in every room on the campus! Look for a red binder by the door when you are on campus next!

If you would like to view the guide, click here: [PCN Emergency Guide](#)

Your Safety Team! (Sydney Fletcher (chair), Melodie Baird, Audrey Boland, Karen Carlson, Beth Flynn, Nancy Gill, Sam Gill, Delane Ramser, Walt Searway, Bruce Stahley, Diane Orsini-Tarkman, and Roland Tolosa.) We'd love to welcome you as a member too!

Community Life Team Looking Ahead



SAVE THE DATE!
MARCH MISSION OPPORTUNITY
Saturday, March 14 @ 1:00-3:00

**Join us as we package 10,000 meals,
feeding 10,000 families around the world!**

This intergenerational experience is fun for all ages!
Our total meals packaged and sent after this event will exceed **100,000!**
Sign up online [Rise Against Hunger Sign Ups!](#)
or contact Sally @ community@pcnovato.org

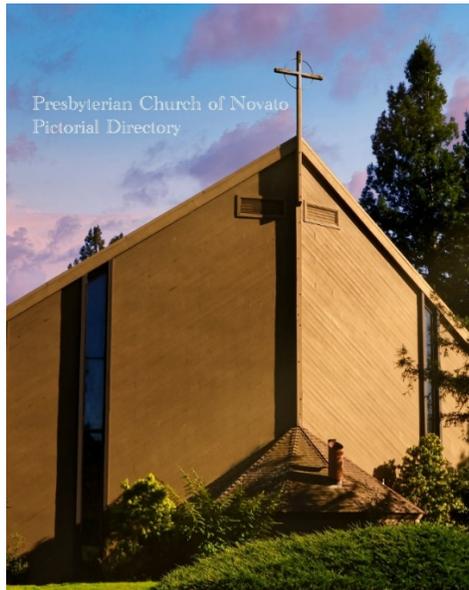
New to the Presbyterian Church of Novato? Get To Know Us!

Join us for a light lunch and discussion following worship on March 15th.



Our Directory Needs You!

If you are not in our Directory, please join us in April and we'll take your picture (or you can provide one). It's time for an update and we want you included! Stay tuned for more info!



If you don't have a Directory and want one, please stop by our office and pick one up!



It's Sunday morning and you might be going out the door to attend the PCN worship service in person. Or you might be sitting down in front of your TV or computer to worship with your PCN family online. It is time to praise the Lord, pray together, enhance our understanding of God's Holy Word, or share in the feast of communion.

The Worship Team at PCN is deeply involved in what you experience during that worship service. The work of the Worship Team is continuously evolving as it looks for ways to make the worship service more meaningful to all of the PCN family.

The Worship Team is responsible for overseeing the PCN worship experience during the calendar year. Special focus is put into the worship services for Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, All Saints' Sunday, the four Sundays in Advent (which includes the annual decoration of our sanctuary), and Christmas Eve.

Each worship service at PCN has a distinct order of worship which is overseen by the Worship Team. Different groups are responsible for the different elements of the service. Here is a breakdown of those groups and their coordinators:

- ❖ Preparation of the pews for the worship service (Sandy and Garrick Fong)
- ❖ Music (Art Maramba)
- ❖ Communion (Marion Hune)
- ❖ Children's Message (Sydney Fletcher)
- ❖ Ushers and Greeters (Bill Bradfield)
- ❖ Liturgists (Marion Hune and Pastor Tony)
- ❖ Tech Booth (Sydney Fletcher and Diane Blalock)
- ❖ Sermon (Pastor Tony)
- ❖ Announcements (Sydney Fletcher and Linda Ward)

The Worship Team also oversees this worship program during times of transition (e.g. interim between installed pastors) and times of crisis (e.g. the recent pandemic). The team is also involved in implementing elements of the Session's plans for the church's future, both in its growth and sustainability.

Should you have any questions or input, please reach out to any member of the Worship Team. Better yet, consider joining the Worship Team. We always welcome new members to the team.

Thank you, Bill Bradfield member of the Worship Team

Fellowship

Celebrating 90th birthdays for Ruth Haas & Carl Fehring



Scout Sunday

Scouts and their families from Boy Scout Troop 200, Cub Scout Packs 85 and 186 welcomed PCN congregants for worship Sunday, Feb 9th. During worship the leaders presented their Charters and a Scout led a Scout Law inspired prayer.

They also shared activity boards depicting their photos and memorabilia from the past year and served Scout themed cakes during Fellowship hour.



Our own Jenna Haney has her art work on display!



The kiosk is by Copperfield's Bookstore on Grant Ave. The poster will be up until April.

The following is a write up posted on the Novato Website:

Jenna Haney is a San Francisco born, Novato based artist who has been creating since preschool, inspired by color, nature and the joy of making others feel happy. Working primarily in drawing and colored pencils, her artwork has flowers, animals, butterflies, and cheerful springtime imagery. Her art has been shown throughout Marin and Sonoma Counties. Jenna hopes her bright, playful artwork brings warmth joy, and kindness into people's homes.



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

www.relayforlife.org/marincountyc

FUN Winter
Themed
Activities



**BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND:
MIRACLE MULE**

And

ALTERNATIVE MAYHEM (featuring Rock-A-Roake)

Both performing on Saturday afternoon

Walk a lap with Darth Vader or a Storm Trooper, take a photo with Luke and Leia, learn how to use a light saber. It’s all happening at Relay!



Beginning Monday, February 2, the office will be open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to noon.



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. "Women's Bible Study on Numbers: God and Man in the Wilderness" New study starts Thursday March 5th. 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>

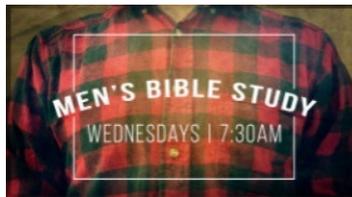
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Ushers & Greeters Ministry

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!