



PresPress

November 2023

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

“Grace & Gratitude”

I originally wrote pieces of this article in December of 2018, and it has been adapted for this month's PresPress.

Grace and gratitude go together like peanut butter and jelly; like bacon and eggs; like pepperoni on pizza. Are you hungry yet?

Well maybe the renowned theologian Karl Barth said it better when he said that grace and gratitude “belong together like heaven and earth. Grace evokes gratitude like the voice and echo. Gratitude follows grace like thunder [follows] lightning.” If the essence of God is grace, Barth explained, then the essence of human beings as God's people is our gratitude or thanks.

The essence of the Christian life is saturated in gratitude. The Apostle Paul says as much in his letter to the church at Philippi: “From now on, brothers and sisters, if anything is excellent and if anything is admirable, focus your thoughts on these things: all that is true, all that is holy, all that is just, all that is pure, all that is lovely, and all that is worthy of praise. Practice these things: whatever you learned, received, heard, or saw in us. The God of peace will be with you.” (Philippians 4:8-9)

As Christians our call is not to wait idly by for Christ to come again, but to live out a life of gratitude focusing on that which is true, holy, just, pure, lovely, and worthy of praise. So often in our world, we focus on what's scarce, all that we don't have. Our consumerist society implores us to want more, and more, and more, never content and never able to appreciate that for which we should already be thankful. We learn to not only forget to appreciate all that we have, but we begin, instead, to fill our lives with a sense of ingratitude. Ingratitude is often marked by a sense of entitlement, envy, complaint, dissatisfaction, and presumption. Ingratitude in and of itself hinders relationship building and can destroy community. In his letter to the church at Rome, the Apostle Paul goes so far as to say that ingratitude toward God is, itself, idolatry (Romans 1:20).

As Christians, we have to reorient ourselves as children of God who are responding in gratitude for the grace of Jesus Christ; grace that defines who we are. Grace is at the root of our existence, our lives, our hope, our salvation. We have to reclaim the essence of our Christian life lived out in gratitude, because it's not just who we are, it's a part of how God changes the world through us. It's part of “the way” of Jesus.

We also learn from leading psychologists that gratitude is linked inextricably to stronger health, both mental and physical. Those who continually are thankful tend to be healthier
(<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/what-mentally-strong-people-dont-do/201504/7->

scientifically-proven-benefits-gratitude). There is something about gratitude that is not just about spiritual well-being, but at the heart of being holistically healthy in all aspects of life.

The esteemed theologian, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, shared with us that we have to practice not just being grateful for the big things, but also the small things. He writes: “We think we dare not be satisfied with the small measure of spiritual knowledge, experience, and love that has been given to us, and that we must constantly be looking forward eagerly to the highest good.... We pray for the big things and forget to give thanks for the ordinary, small (and yet really not small) gifts. How can God entrust great things to one who will not thankfully receive from Him the little things? If we do not give thanks daily for the Christian fellowship in which we have been placed, even where there is no great experience, no discoverable riches, but much weakness, small faith, and difficulty; if on the contrary, we only keep complaining to God that everything is so paltry and petty, so far from what we expected, then we hinder God from letting our fellowship grow according to the measure and riches which are there for us all in Jesus Christ.’

Gratitude is an everyday way of being in the world. And it takes more than continual reminders from family, friends, and our church communities, but intentionally practicing thankfulness for the seemingly small and insignificant things: waking up in the morning, a place to live, a family that loves us, a church family willing to help us grow in Christ, jobs to go to, shoes to wear, a kind word from a stranger, a hug from a friend. The list goes on and on. But the more we practice, the more it becomes a habit, a virtue, and a way of being.

Be thankful, dear saints. Remember time and again that the grace of God has claimed your life with the promise of full life here, and now, and in the age to come. Choose to give thanks each and every day even for those things that may seem insignificant. After all, how can God trust us with the big things if we are not even thankful for the small ones?

With gratitude,
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.



Thanks to Fred Holmes and Chris Smith for their participation in the Redwoods Presbytery Pedal for Protein event. Mission appreciates their efforts and was to hear it was a great event and a great day for a bike ride for the community.



NORTH MARIN COMMUNITY SERVICES

Save the date for the North Marin Community Services Sharing Tree. The Sharing Tree will be in the narthex November 26 through December 10. Please pick an ornament with specific instructions on what gift to label and bring back. You'll have your choice of:

- New, medium-sized stuffed animals
- \$25 Target gift cards for teens
- Or go to www.northmarincs.org for specific wish fulfillment.

CENTER FOR DOMESTIC PEACE

Working Together to End Domestic Violence

Look at all these groceries! The PCN congregation was so generous this month! It's a continuing giving ethic that I so admire. For technical reasons, the October 1st Peace Giving Sunday service was not broadcast nor is it on Facebook.



Marla Hedlund of Center for Domestic Peace gave such an inspiring talk that I am going to try to have her write it up and hopefully we will have it in the next *PresPress*. The statistics regarding domestic violence in our county are alarming, and the way C4DP is working with the victims and also with law enforcement gives hope. Thank you all for your continued support for the C4DP grocery program through the Mission Committee.

Margaret Mead said, "Helping someone else through difficulty is where civilization starts."

Well done, PCN!

Barbara Gildea, Liaison to C4DP
PCN Mission Committee

2023 Alternative Christmas Faire

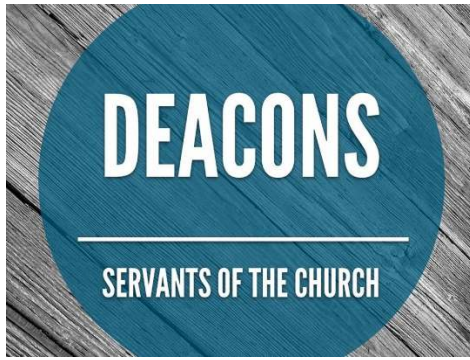


A Christmas Christ would recognize



Your Mission Committee is organizing the annual “Alternative Christmas Faire” event that will be on **December 10th**. This “in-person” event will be between the contemporary and traditional church services. Donations can also be mailed in, postmarked from December 3 through 17. The following organizations are included in the Alternative Christmas Faire -- A Christmas Christ would recognize.

- **Homeward Bound (HB)** – Provides housing, training and hope to end homelessness. Housing is provided to homeless families, adults, and veterans. Services include mental health counseling, job training, and help with accessing other needed services. Separate from any donations to Homeward Bound; they will ONLY have their Halo Holiday Gift products for sale December 10, the day of the event.
- **Faith in Practice** - The mission of Faith In Practice is to improve the physical, spiritual, and economic conditions of the poor in Guatemala through short-term surgical, medical, and dental mission trips and health-related educational programs. Our mission is based on an ecumenical understanding that as people of God we are called to demonstrate the love and compassion that is an outward sign of God’s presence among us.
- **North Marin Community Services** – Renovation of two classrooms, which includes five upgrades: installation of a new dishwasher in the 3- to 5-year-old room; painting of both the 2- to 3- and 3- to 5-year-old room; new storage cabinets in both rooms and adjacent storage rooms; and patio furniture for the staff, as budget allows for completion. Project completion by Team Pacheco of Leadership Novato: Team Leader Tonya Church, Karrie Coulter, Chris Fiscalini, Lorena Lupercio-Diaz, Patty Lufrano, Steve Ross and Juan Selden.
- **Presbyterian Giving** – the objective of Presbyterian Giving is to connect people as neighbors with others experiencing needs, supporting projects and friendships that grow gardens and generations, bring water and watch for corruption, share education, tools and training, and link each of us more closely with one another and with God.
- **Alchemia** – “Art Without Labels.” Alchemia supports artists who have intellectual and developmental disabilities to share their unique artistic voices. The program offers art and life skills classes to enhance the independence and personal empowerment of each individual participant.
- **Heifer Project** – provides a seed investment of livestock or agriculture, followed by mentorship to help project participants build a business and ultimately gain access to supply chains and markets.



Many thanks to our PCN Deacons and memorial staffers for gathering helping hands and providing Jay Wayne's family a fitting celebration.



Many hands make light work, and a few dozen volunteers found out that it makes friendships, too!



We are currently taking sign-ups to have pictures taken for our new online church directory. To make your appointment, go to our website (www.pcnovato.org) and click on the photo appointment sign-up link. Any questions? Please contact Sally at community@pcnovato.org.

PCN Camp Compassion Winter Essentials Care & Share Event

Winter is coming, and the Mission Committee plans to provide our neighbors at Lee Garner Park Camp Compassion essential supplies to help through the cold and wet season. Our contact at Camp Compassion has confirmed that the following items are greatly needed.

1-2 person tents
All-weather shoes and boots
Outdoor sleeping bags

These items can be new or used but should be in good condition. Donations toward the purchase of these items are always welcome. Please drop off items by November 19 at the PCN office.

At noon on Monday, November 20, we will be cooking up chili to bring and serve to Camp Compassion. Join us in the PCN kitchen to cook or help us serve at 3 p.m. at Lee Garner Park when we will also bring all collected winter essentials.

Contact Hilary Kinney at 415-577-8916 or email hilarykinney@yahoo.com.



CAMP COMPASSION WINTER ESSENTIALS CARE & SHARE EVENT

TENTS

1-2 Person NEW or USED

SHOES

Boots, All-Weather

SLEEPING BAGS

Outdoor NEW or USED

CHILI

Cook up chili to be served at
Camp Compassion

DONATE

Donate money for the
purchase of items

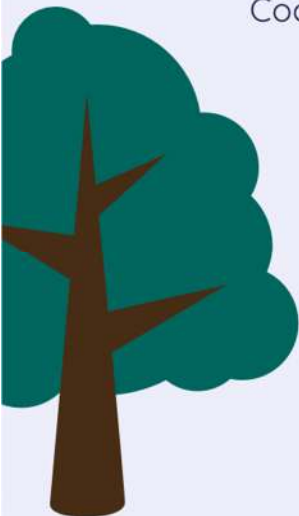
DATES & DROPOFF

Donate items by
Sun, Nov 19
at PCN Church Office

Chili at PCN Kitchen
Mon, Nov 20, noon

Volunteers welcome at Camp
Compassion
Mon, Nov 20, 3pm

CONTACT:
HILARY KINNEY
415-577-8616
hilarykinney@yahoo.com





PCN's Prayer Blanket Ministry is making a couple of little boys very happy and giving comfort to them when it's needed most. Join us for our next blanket-making party on November 4. No special skills required. If you know how to tie a knot, you can make a blanket! Contact Tonya Church at tonya.church@comcast.net or Carol Robinson at carol001@comcast.net if you'd like to participate or have any questions, or if you have someone you'd like to get one of the prayer blankets.



Niko, who is almost four, was recently diagnosed with Juvenile Diabetes. Niko is pictured here with his mother and sister.



Three-year-old Aiden had a kidney transplant and is experiencing many problems. Even though he doesn't feel well and spends a lot of time in the hospital and going to doctor appointments, he is cheerful and takes his prayer blanket with him everywhere – to sleep, eat, play!



Session Highlights – October 18, 2023

At the October 18 meeting, Session:

- Approved PCN Leadership Structure for Deacons
- Approved security camera proposal presented by Good Shepherd Lutheran School (GSLs) with the addition of two cameras, one at the driveway entrance and the sanctuary door
- Discussed additional security requests by GSLs. No decisions were made pending additional information.
- The Mission Committee presented the 2024 Grant Request Form
- Celebrated the news that Ariel Mink passed her ordination exams

Kathy Takemoto, Clerk of Session



Below is a list of PCN veterans. If you are not on this list, please contact Kathy Takemoto at kathy.takemoto@outlook.com or call (847) 274-8276 so she can add you. We will thank our veterans on November 12 during worship.

Ramona Chipman
Robert Douglass
Alan Dunham
Jim Emrich
Don Erba

Carl Fehring
Jon Hanlein
Fred King
John Marks
Michael Mosesr

Gail Penfield
Art Plumstead
Donald Powell
Ray Shanahan
Bruce Stahley

Donald Taylor
Bill Walker
Bill Wolff
Stan Wood



PCN Elder Walt Campbell will lead a “Comparative Religion” video lecture and discussion group using a Great Courses video lecture series of 24 lectures over 12 weeks. The lectures set a framework for thinking about religions (leaders, sacred texts and spaces, and rituals). The lecturer is Dr. Charles Kimball of the University of Oklahoma. The lectures incorporate examples from Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism to illustrate the elements of Dr. Kimball’s comparative framework. Dr. Kimball’s research interests focus on the intersection of politics and religion in the Middle East. The class format consists of watching two 30-minute lectures followed by up to 15 minutes of discussion after each. We will have weekly Saturday morning 90-minute (10:30 a.m. to noon) Zoom sessions that started in October and will finish December 30. The course is free and open to non-PCN members. During the holiday season we will hold classes based on anticipated participant availability. PCN members and 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.



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.

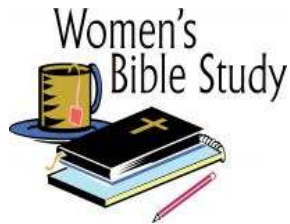
MULTIPLIES THE MINISTRY OF CONGREGATIONS

- 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!

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=VTY4cWFJQWtDTlpUVE9MT0ljL1dHdz09>

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.

The coming quarter (October, November, and December) is entitled "**God's Law Is Love.**" This quarter focuses 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=Yy9ub1pReGdMTHVhbDJPZzhHVVdHQ09>

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!