



PResPRes

July/August 2019

Presbyterian Church of Novato, 710 Wilson Ave., P.O. Box 631, Novato, CA 94948

Adam Smith
Changing the Story

"We comprehend our lives not as disconnected actions or isolated events but in terms of a narrative...We think in stories in order to weave together into a coherent whole the unending succession of people, dates, and facts that fill our lives...We use stories to construct meaning and communicate ourselves to another."

-Hebert Anderson & Edward Foley

"What's her story?"

You've probably heard the question before. The idea behind it being that a person is more than just what our senses tell us. A person is shaped by their life experiences: significant events, activities, dates, facts, etc. Not only do we see our own lives in terms of narrative, but we interpret the world around us in the same way. That's how our human brain works!

Experiments in neuroscience have shown that we make sense of the world around us in this sequence: "first, our senses bring us selective information about what is out there; second, the brain constructs its own simulation of the sensations; and only then, third, do we have our first conscious experience of our milieu" (The Art of Possibility, Rosamund Stone Zander). In other words, the world comes into our consciousness as a 'story' already told: a construction of our brain's making. We see a map of the world, but not the world itself. Neurophysiologist Donald O. Hebb says, "The 'real world' is a construct, and some of the peculiarities of scientific thought become more intelligible when this fact is recognized..." (*Science and the World of Imagination*, D.O. Hebb).

So what's this got to do with me, Pastor Adam?

Are you ready for this? Since the stories we fashion to understand our lives and the world around us are constructs of our own making, we have the ability to change the narrative if we so choose.

But, Pastor Adam, why would we want to do that?

So often the narrative we use to interpret our lives begins with our basic, primal needs: survival, understanding danger, determining friend from foe, etc. The story is constructed from a basic 'survival of the fittest' mentality. And while this is great for overall self-preservation, this narrative can so often lead to fear, a sense of scarcity, greed, apathy, and even idolatry of self.

Our default story can prevent us from living whole and full lives as God created us to live.

So ... why don't we change that story?

In Romans 12, the Apostle Paul implores the church in Rome, "Don't be conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you can figure out what God's will is – what is good and pleasing and mature" (Rom 12:2). I think Paul understood that we could change the narrative we use to understand our lives; that through Christ's faithfulness and in our relationship with God, a new story begins to shape who we are: God's story of love and grace. It's a story whose theme moves from survival, fear, and scarcity (survival) to hope, love, and selfless giving (God's got us!)

Oh, my friends, God's story is so much more life-giving than what we have to work with on our own. God has already claimed our lives in Jesus Christ, and we are a part of God's epic love story for creation.

But here's the kicker. Adopting a new narrative doesn't just happen overnight. It's not a once-and-done-decision, much like our faith in Jesus Christ. It's about continually choosing, sometimes against our first inclinations, to let God's story of grace, and love, and hope, become our story too. We see it when churches take a leap of faith spending the last dollars of their endowment to live into God's hope rather than succumb to the fear of death. We see it when we say, "no" to the busyness of life and take time for Sabbath. We see it when, in spite of failing health, people find peace. We see it when people say "no" to war, and "yes" to valuing life. We see it when we give of ourselves to help another.

I think that's what's so powerful about the Christian faith: the story just rings 'true.' Grace fills the gap that our stories lack. God's love bridges a great divide that we've all sensed but couldn't quite put our finger on.

So, dear saints, what do you think? What story is going to shape your life?

Morgan Smith

Next week, youth and adults from PCN will be leaving to head up north to Sonoma County to serve, bless, and love the people who have suffered from the fires.

The question remains: Why do we serve? As Christians, why should we actively be engaged with the brokenness of the world?

Jesus says, in John 17:18, “As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.”

Several reasons came to my mind as I reflected on these questions. The first reason that came to me was one of obedience. We are called to serve others. We are called to love others. As we actively engage the brokenness of the world for Christ, we are living obediently to how Christ has called us to live.

Another reason is that not only are we living in obedience to Christ, but as we serve and love others like Christ, we are pointing them towards Christ. In a world that focuses almost exclusively on self, as we actively serve others, putting their needs before our own, we are a light. People may wonder “why are they living like this?” And in so wondering, they can be drawn to the transformative life that the Gospel brings!

We are a sent people on mission for Christ. Christ sends us into the world to make disciples. Wherever we are, we are sent there. That could be Sonoma County, San Francisco, Juarez, etc. or right here in Novato. Wherever we are, we are sent there. It's not just on a mission trip when we are “sent into the world.” It's always – all the time we are a sent people on mission for Christ. We serve and love others as His ambassadors in the world, shining His light, and proclaiming the good news of the grace, hope, and life that He offers the world.

As we actively seek to engage the brokenness of the world, we are joining God in bringing His Kingdom to Earth. We live in a broken and fallen world. Yet God is always in the business of redeeming. We know that one day God will restore all things. Until that day, we join God in bringing His Kingdom to Earth as we work to bring His redemptive power to the brokenness of the world.

Brothers and Sisters, we are a sent people! I pray that in these next months we would live into our calling as sent people, and actively engage the brokenness of the world for the glory of Christ.



SAVE THE DATE

SERVE DAY AT GILEAD HOUSE – Saturday, September 21

Join us for a fun and rewarding day at Gilead House for their fall clean-up day. All hands are welcome for a multitude of tasks: raking leaves, sweeping the patio, pruning shrubbery, sweeping floors, polishing furniture, cleaning leather sofas, cleaning out the refrigerator and kitchen cupboards, washing windows ... right down to:

"How many Presbyterians does it take to change a light bulb?"

Join us for camaraderie, a great feeling of accomplishment, and a fun day besides. Contact Carolyn Gerrans for questions or sign-ups at grace624@comcast.net or 415-897-1504.

A PCN WELCOME FOR A NEW FAMILY AT GILEAD HOUSE

The second week of June a new family moved into the 'PCN bedroom' at Gilead and were provided with all the basics for comfortable living: everything from comforters and pillows to toiletries and the Word of God. Most importantly of all, both mother and children were shown the love of God through PCN. Many thanks to Elinor Lacy for her donation for one of the daughters to attend Vacation Bible School, too!





REAL MOMS

REAL STORIES

In Her Own Words

A personal interview with Gilead House Alumni, Cecilia



I moved from Spain with my son four years ago. Even with a post-graduate degree, a savings account and proficiency in English, life wasn't easy. There were many cultural differences, and the language barrier was difficult. I couldn't find a proper job, and we eventually lost our home.

"It was hard to accept the fact that I was a homeless person."

I was incredibly lucky to learn about Gilead House. It saved me from homelessness. I lived there for a year with my thirteen-year-old son, who transitioned from a sweet, small kid to a tall, quiet teenager.

Life at Gilead House was not easy. We had rules, lived with other families and, occasionally, felt overwhelmed by too much noise and closeness. But it also felt like a family, sharing beautiful moments, knowing we were in a safe place, welcomed and loved, and someone cared.

Gilead House offered needed resources: food, clothes, gifts, aid, and a tutor for my son. We had weekly meetings to improve ourselves and were required to look for a job, and money, and meet goals.

I was paired with a mentor, a wonderful person who was crucial to my growth. We met on a regular basis, and she helped me with everything from paperwork to meetings at my son's high school. My mentor listened to my struggles and was an emotional support.

"My son and I grew more in one year at Gilead House than in our entire previous life."

While at Gilead House, I was referred to the Culinary Academy at Homeward Bound of Marin. I took their three-month course while working on weekends at a winery. Participating in the program opened up new possibilities for me. As a graduate of Gilead House and Homeward Bound, I was able to qualify for a beautiful apartment in Oma Village, where we live now. It is temporary but it enables me to save for my next step of finding my own place.

A few months ago, I decided to pursue obtaining my license as an insurance agent and have changed my career. I have found a full-time job with better pay, and I still work at the winery part-time on the weekends.

"Gilead House was a fundamental part of my success."

I am thankful for their support - the staff, my mentor, the moms, and all the volunteers who helped me in so many ways. I am committed to this community that makes a difference in the world, one family at a time.

"They provide something precious: hope."

Working Together

It is because of your help that Cecilia has found success for her family, but the work is not over! Help us reach more families and change more lives.

To learn more and get involved, visit gileadhouse.org.

Agape International Missions Phil Dougherty

Thanks to our mission-focused church we are making a difference in Cambodia. In 2018, when I made my trip to Sway Pak to the Agape International Missions (AIM) overseas headquarters, I wanted to see and understand firsthand AIM's methods for fighting the unconscionable and pervasive evil of sex trafficking. AIM's four- step process is to combat sex trafficking through *prevention* (through education), *rescue* (AIM Swat teams), *restoration* (intensive PTSD therapy) and *reintegration* (through job training and work programs). Their holistic approach is having miraculous results and catching the attention of organizations and governments around the world. Within these four components are more than a dozen outreach programs run by a staff of 300-plus Cambodians. AIM's focus now includes other types of trafficking (labor, bride, baby, domestic slavery and more) and, in partnership with the Cambodian government, their reach extends beyond their borders, making rescues in neighboring countries and even as far away as Somalia! AIM has not only transformed a community, they are transforming a nation. And in all their efforts AIM is waving the banner of Christ's love and gospel.

Our friends from Church of the Vine who introduced me to AIM and who I traveled with last year made another trip to Sway Pak this year, and from their "feet on the ground" delivered the tons of rice our church purchased for 300 neglected families in brick factory encampments. To include us in their efforts and share their appreciation for our partnership, they sent a photo from one of the brick factories. (see below). (It says: God Bless You Presbyterian Church of Novato.)

To read more about AIM activities and rescues, follow their bog: <https://agapewebsite.org/blog/>

To learn more about AIM's four step process, see AIM founder Don Brewster's Ted Talk:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=35taY1PyEtY>

To learn more about how you can help our church's involvement, please contact me: Phil Dougherty, 415-328-6674 or phildou@comcast.net





2019 Domestic Mission

The Carr Fire burned 229,651 acres (359 square miles) in Shasta and Trinity counties starting on July 23, 2018. The fire started when a flat tire on a vehicle caused the rim to strike the asphalt creating a spark that set off the fire. Fed by strong winds, the fire jumped the Sacramento River, making its way into Redding. More than 38,000 people were evacuated, 1,077 homes were destroyed and eight people, died including three firefighters.

2019 Volunteer Teams

Volunteer teams will travel to Redding October 18-25, 2019 to rebuild lives working with ***Hope City Response Network***, the same group we were with in Middletown the past three years. Individuals or groups may participate for the entire two weeks or just either the first or second week. There is a one-time fee of \$50 to cover team expenses. Transportation will be by personal vehicles and carpooling can be arranged.

Where Will We Stay?

Simpson Bible University has set aside a group of unoccupied student dorm rooms for our use. Each room accommodates four people in single (non-bunk) beds with one shared bathroom (cost per week per person is \$100). Three meals a day are provided by our team at one of the local churches (\$50 per week.) RV parking is being arranged (\$225 per week) or local motels are plentiful starting at \$60 per night.

Who can come?

Anyone over age 16 (youth 12 and older may work if accompanied by a parent). If you know the difference between a hammer and a potato peeler we have work for

you. You do not have to have any particular skills, but there are some tasks in any construction project that may be strenuous or require specialized skills. The majority of tasks can be accomplished by anyone. Usually jobs are reduced to manageable tasks and good instruction is provided.

History

Photos of past trips may be viewed on the First United Methodist Church of Santa Rosa website: www.fumcsantarosa.org. Open the website home page and type "VIM" in the search box.

Join your PCN team for this exciting "hands-on" ministry

Additional Information

There are sign-up forms and brochures available in the church office or contact:

Bill Walker (H) 415-883-5780 (C) 415-726-6733 walkerb1959@gmail.com



Registration will close for our International Mission Trip to Juarez, Mexico on June 30th. Anyone with questions or if you'd like additional information, please contact Becky Praun immediately at (415) 472-1733 or beckypraun@yahoo.com.

This mission opportunity provides a house built in one day for a family that has never had a home, working with school children in after-school activities and joining our host pastor's church service before serving a delicious meal we provide for their congregation.

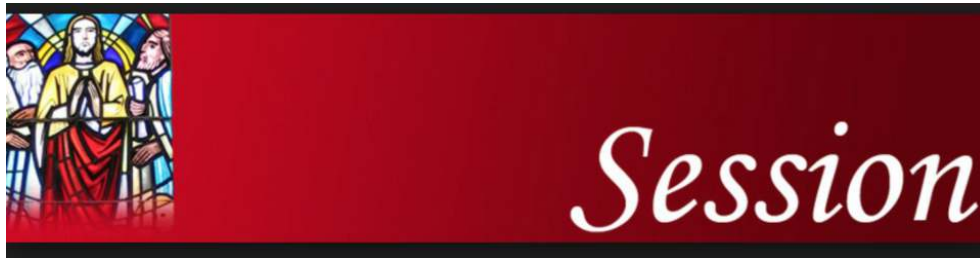
Please prayerfully consider joining us on this life-changing trip.



PENTECOST OFFERING

Thank you for your generosity!

This year's Special Offering brought in \$2,295.00, \$918.00, or 40% of which will be kept locally and given to North Marin Community Services to help fund their before- and after-school food programs. They serve more than 4,000 meals and snacks to children each year and desperately need the money to keep the program funded. Thank you SO much for helping Novato's youngest citizens be well fed.



At the Stated Session meeting of June 19, 2019:

- Ariel Mink announced she has been elected Associate Stated Clerk of the Redwoods Presbytery.
- Session approved the use of the Sanctuary in September for a "Matter of Balance" public workshop.
- Session approved up to \$5,000 for a contract with Brown Church Development Group to create a new website for PCN.
- The Endowment Committee will provide \$25,000 from Betty Doerksen's donation for use by the traditional music program per her request.
- Elders received an update from the PCN Development Implementation Committee's work with Brown Church Development Group. A professional survey of the PCN campus has been completed.

Kathy Takemoto
Clerk of Session



LIVING YOUR FAITH EVERYDAY

In conjunction with the new sermon series that started June 30, Adam is hosting LYFE (Living Your Faith Everyday) sessions on Mondays at 9 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. in the Christensen room, starting July 1 and running through August 19. This will be a chance to discuss the faith questions from the previous day's sermon and see how they fit into everyday life. They will be less strict Bible study and more about fellowship, enjoying time together, and sharing thoughts and ideas in response to the faith question. No sign-up needed – simply show up and feel free to join in the conversation. Bring your Bible, coffee, snacks, soda, etc. The format is the same for both morning and evening. We hope you can join us!



Blood Centers of the Pacific has a new name, Vitalant. Thanks to our blood drive efforts, the Blood Heroes that participated this year on June 1st supplied 29 units of blood, with only 21 donors! Four of our donors were able to give double blood which counts for 2 units each. Did you know half of the nation's blood supply is collected at blood drives like ours? What a great gift of life!

Special thanks to the volunteers for helping the amazing Vitalant team with set up, registration, donor post-op and clean-up. Brad, Kimi, and Stephanie Praun and Regina Rus.



****Belated Thank You**

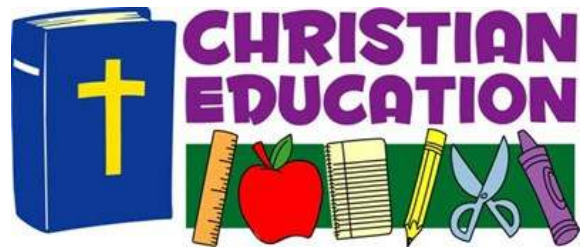
A big belated 'thank you' to our Deacons in Training who skillfully served treats on Mother's Day during coffee hour. Their Sunday School lesson was from Acts 6, learning to serve others. Our young angels were Marilyn Gerrans, twins Josie and Jack Ricketts and younger brother Sam Ricketts. Hugs and peace little ones for a job well done!!

****Meal Train Thank You's**

Thank you everyone who provided delicious and timely meals for the McMickin family after the recent birth of Alouette. Your continued devotion and culinary skills were most appreciated. Audrey Boland, Sally Carbonaro, Tonya Church, Carolyn Gerrans, Elaine Harris, Janalee Holmes, Kay Jones, Tina Maher, Lily Nelson, Sandy Peterson, Priscilla Rudy and Bev Winsor.

****Mar Lancaster Memorial, June 1st**

The Deacons would like to extend a BIG thank you to all the volunteers that made Mar Lancaster's memorial a very special celebration of a life well-lived. Volunteers Melodie Baird, Don Erba, Barbara Gildea, Brad Praun and Bill Walker; salads and desserts provided by, Melody Baird, Jane Bradfield, Becky Erba, Carolyn Gerrans, Ruth Haas, Charleen Kuykendall, Bethany McMickin, Patty Reed, Kathy Takemoto, Diane Orsini-Tarkman, Don Taylor, Kay Walker and Nelly Wannemacher. A very special thank you to the BBQ team of David Mink, Gary Pearce and Chris West.



ROAR! VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Last month PCN hosted a great week of Bible stories, games, drama, music, snacks and crafts for 72 students, both within PCN and the community. Thanks to our many adult, teen, and pre-teen volunteers (too many to list!) who made a memorable week for our children. They were “God-sightings” to all of us every day!















Thank you for your generous giving and patience as we have now added online or electronic giving as a convenient option for PCN's congregation and friends! There are two ways to access the secure giving portal: Go to our website, www.pcnovato.org and click on the "Donate Now" button or download the "Easy Tithe" app on your mobile device from the Apple or Google app stores. Look for the "EasyTithe" Finance (**not** EasyTithe Lifestyle) app, download and open, and then search for PCN at zip code 94947.

Both options have the choice to create an account and select the payment method that works best for you. By creating an account, you can also choose to make recurring donations at the frequency, amount, and type of fund that suits your needs. Leave a note in the comment field for any special giving that you want to designate. As a final note, you can also check the box that would include 2% to help with the cost of processing your donation. If you have any questions, please contact the Finance Secretary at (415) 897-6152, x204.

God loves a faithful and cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:7 ESV). Thank you for your support and generous giving to PCN Ministries!

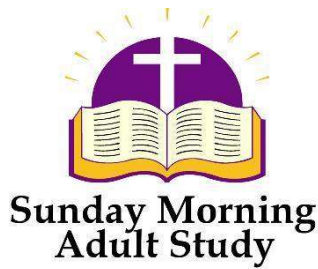


Please make note of the following corrections in the new directories (and be sure to pick yours up from the office if you haven't yet!):

Barbara Gildea's phone number: 415-999-9720

Diane Griffeath's phone number: 415-517-3513

Doug & Virginia Saysette's phone number: 415-793-5098



During the summer, the Sunday Adult Class will learn to develop a clearer understanding as to why our relationship with God through Christ is expressed as a covenant.

Let's face it: human beings have a dismal "credit rating" with God! Old Testament history illustrates that God's people defaulted on promises to their Creator time after time. How can a working relationship ever be forged between God and unreliable signatories?

The first unit of this quarter focuses on the role of Jesus as our guarantor. We come before God with a massive debt to him. A fair look at our "spiritual finances" would yield the inevitable conclusion that we have liabilities that we can never repay. But enter the guarantor!

Gathering with his disciples on the last Passover they shared, Jesus used that reminder of the past to institute a covenant for the future. His very body and blood were to clear our sin-debt, making a relationship with God possible. While we must never assume that our duty to God is trivial or nonexistent, we can know that our guarantor has done what animal sacrifices and ritual actions can never accomplish.

During the summer the Adult Sunday Class will begin on Sunday, June 23rd at 8:30 a.m. and conclude at 9:30 a.m. so that everyone will have time to socialize before the start of the Sunday worship hour. Come and enjoy the amazing Bible discussion and fellowship time with good friends – there is a seat reserved just for YOU!

Grace and Peace,

Carol Dacquisto, Larry Dacquisto and Rosie Nicholas



*Presbyterian Women nurture their faith through prayer and Bible study,
support missions of the church worldwide, and build an inclusive, caring community of women.*

All women who attend The Presbyterian Church of Novato (PCN), please consider becoming an active member of the Presbyterian Women (PW) of PCN ... ALL ARE WELCOME (*invite a friend*)! We currently have two active PW circles at PCN that each meet once-a-month in the Christensen Room:

- (1) **Ruth Circle** usually meets the 4th Tuesday at 2 p.m. (Glenise Johnson, leader)
- (2) **Rachel Circle** usually meets the 4th Wednesday of the month at 6 p.m. (Pat Sullivan, leader)

I have some books available for our 2019-2020 Horizons Bible Study titled “*LOVE CARVED IN STONE, A Fresh Look at the Ten Commandments*,” by Eugenia Anne Gamble. The circle meetings are all presented via a video narrated by the author of the study book, which provides a very meaningful study and discussion among us for each lesson. **I am excited about this Bible Study!!!**

Presbyterian Women Circles are currently on a summer break, but join us for the next circle meeting(s) to begin in October 2019 ... we are saving a chair for YOU. It's never too late to join us!

On Saturday, September 28th, the Fall PW Meeting and Luncheon will be held. Save the date and look for more details in the near future ... ALL are welcome to attend!

Mission Projects


- (1) **Least Coin Offering:** Since 1956, Presbyterian Women have been collecting the Least Coin offering worldwide for evangelism, service, and relief projects.
- (2) **Nickels for Nets:** Each month, our women donate at least \$0.05 for mosquito nets to help stamp out malaria in the world. Even the smallest donation will make a difference in the world when added together.
- (3) **Birthday Offering:** Each spring, we collect at least one penny for each year of our lives. This donation also goes toward innovative mission projects in the United States and worldwide.
- (4) **Thank Offering:** During the autumn months, we collect money for the Thank Offering. The Thank Offering provides food and water, alleviates homelessness, provides educational opportunities, promotes health, and improves the lives of women, children and men throughout the world in many other ways.

(5) Our newest project is providing baby caps and blankets to newborns. **ANYONE with knitting and/or crocheting skills can participate in this program.** A BIG THANK YOU to the women from PCN who have already contacted me and brought me their beautiful knitted handiwork.

If you have any questions about PW, please don't hesitate to contact me: home (415) 897-8759 or cell (415) 717-7635. We always welcome new women interested in becoming an active part of our circles of Presbyterian Women ... **come try us out!!!**


Glenise Johnson, Moderator

con • nec • tion \ ke- 'nek-shen\ *noun*
the act of connecting: the state of being connected:
relationship in fact: a relation of personal intimacy:
a means of communication.




Connection is foundational to our PW ministry, a hallmark of what it means to be Presbyterian Women. And let's face it! Staying connected is also a whole lot of fun! Whether sharing a coffee—or a Facebook post—together we bring God's light to the world!

Stay connected to your PW sisters on the web at www.presbyterianwomen.org, and on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and YouTube.



Like and share our pages with other Presbyterian women to grow the caring, inclusive community of women that we are called to create!



Visit the PW website for resources, announcements, and the PW shop.
www.presbyterianwomen.org

Share stories, photos, news and events and connect with other Presbyterian women on Facebook.
www.facebook.com/presbyterianwomenpcusa

Stay up to date with announcements and current events on PW's Twitter feed!
www.twitter.com/pwpcusa

Have photos or ideas to share? Visit the PW Pinterest site to find inspiration.
www.pinterest.com/pwpcusa

PW has a YouTube channel! You will find videos on the history of Presbyterian Women, Offering videos, Gathering speakers and Bible study authors introducing the PW/Horizons Bible study.
www.youtube.com/presbyterianwomen

HZN19210



MEN'S BIBLE STUDY

The Men's Bible Study group meets Wednesday mornings at 7:30 a.m. We are studying ACTS. Join us for this one-hour mid-week boost and share great fellowship with brothers. And no homework!



If you are interested in being part of the Prayer Quilt/Marian Stitchers ministry, mark your calendars for the second Wednesday of the month at 10:30 a.m. You don't have to know how to quilt to participate and help!



If you would like to listen to a copy of the Sunday sermon, you don't need to request a CD. They are now being posted on a PODCAST at <http://www.buzzsprout.com/218646>. They are usually available by the Tuesday following the service. Thank you to Jim Rolka for making these available!



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!

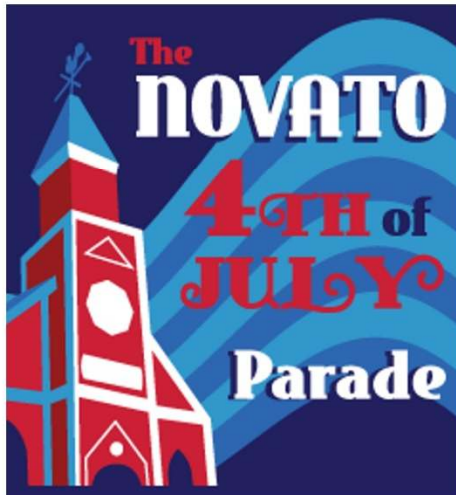


It's back by popular demand! The Deacons have a notice sheet for jobs wanted, jobs needed and life needs. Check it out in the narthex (wall near the handicap restroom in the sanctuary). See Deacon Jo Richman for information on posting and employment opportunity details. Contact: email: jpr216@yahoo.com, phone: 415 897-8545.



THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NOVATO

66th ANNUAL BUCKAROO BREAKFAST



"Out of this World !"



**Redwood Credit Union Parking Lot
Redwood and Grant, Novato**

July 4, 2019, 7:00 -10:00, Before the Parade

Pancakes, Eggs, Sausage, Orange Juice, Coffee, Milk
FREE...SUGGESTED DONATION

Adults: \$7, Children 5-12: \$5, Free 4 and under



Rotary Books and Art Around Town

Free Art and Reading projects for the young

NET PROCEEDS TO

**NORTHMARIN
COMMUNITY SERVICES**

Formerly: Novato Youth Center and Novato Human Needs Center



Guatemala Medical Mission 2019 – Part Two

Vicki Martinez Blogs and photos

Medical Mission Day 4

“The purpose of human life is to serve and to show compassion and the will to help others.”

- Albert Schweitzer

Yesterday was a great day! We saw 612 patients and scheduled 70 for surgeries. The dentists removed 156 rotten teeth, and the audiologists fitted 20 people with hearing aids. They used to be solar only but now they give a year's batteries which are more available. Pediatrics, general, ENT and gynecology stayed super busy all day helping the suffering.

Many of the patients have cataracts and pterygiums (growths on inner eyes) due to the intense sun exposure and lack of eye protection. No less than 50% of the people suffer effects of the sun on their eyes. I brought many sunglasses with me, and I am always preaching to wear sombreros to protect their eyes. Our surgical teams are able to remove cataracts but wait until they are quite advanced due to such need. Another condition not sun-related is presbyopia, or older age inability to see up close. Every year I bring hundreds of reading glasses donated by my church and friends so people can read or do their craftwork. We take such minor conditions for granted but what a difference they make to people!

Living in Guatemala is a hard life. People lack common creature comforts we expect such as comfortable shoes, beds, temperature-controlled homes, safe drinking water, flush toilets, 24-hour markets, and even Tylenol or ibuprofen to ease their pain. All of our patients are incredibly grateful for any help we give them. They give us hugs, kisses and blessings from God.

Today we end two days in Totonicopan. To celebrate, we formed a huge circle with the American and Guatemalan volunteers where we were given thanks by the village director, and we presented pencils and school supplies to them. We packed all the trunks and loaded them onto the trucks to take to the next village. Our team there consists of no Indians and no chiefs. We all help each other to get the work done.



Guatemala Medical Mission Day 5

"The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is an attribute of the strong."

The days are long on mission trips. Each morning we rise at the crack of dawn for a team meeting at 5:45 and breakfast before departure. Today's village is another indigenous enclave called Pologua. I find it totally amazing that a team of our size and scope can unload equipment into a never-before-seen school, set up our clinics in classrooms and be up and seeing patients within 30 minutes! The local volunteers were there long before we arrived and had been putting trunks into appropriate rooms for us. Over these 17 years with Faith in Practice, I have seen this organization grow into a highly efficient, four-star charity powerhouse for care delivery!

Our team was at this very village and school exactly five years ago. A massive thunder and lightning storm had poured hail, collapsing the protective tarps on our patients, and we had all crowded together in the classrooms until it passed. Our luck held out today and the rain did not begin until the clinic had ended.

Pologua is rural and poor. Hundreds again lined up and were waiting to see us at 7:30 a.m. when we arrived. They were cheering and clapping for us! I felt like a rock star! There is a central courtyard filled with chairs where they sit and are protected from the sun by a tarp after they are triaged to an appropriate clinic.

A nearly universal complaint is stomach pain "gastritis." The people have good reason to complain. In addition to the widespread parasites that we treat them for, there is a very high incidence of infection with *Helicobacter pylori*, the cause of stomach ulcers. It is a bit trickier to treat, with complex and expensive antibiotic regimes needed to eradicate it. Fortunately, most will get symptomatic relief with relatively inexpensive acid-blocking medications we carry such as omeprazole and famotidine. We also carry a great portable ultrasound that gets plenty of use screening for gallbladder stones that are treated surgically.

My memorable patient today was a young woman whose cornea was terribly scarred from previous trauma. Her only option for sight in that eye would be a corneal transplant, which is out of the question in this country due to price and complexity. The miracle she had hoped for did not materialize, and she was devastated. My wonderful translator from this country, Manuel, the patient and I all shed tears for her sadness.



Guatemala Medical Mission Day 6 – Final Clinic Day

Forgiveness has been the topic of the morning devotionals. Here is today's quote from a Marin County author:

"Not forgiving is like drinking rat poison and then waiting for the rat to die." -Anne Lamott

There are hundreds of beautiful Guatemalans in their brightly colored clothing waiting for their final chance to be seen by the American medical team. Overall, they are medically unsophisticated and completely trusting of whatever we can do for them. Sadly, many of the local medical practitioners take advantage of the poor, often prescribing unnecessary medications and treatments that they cannot afford anyway. The vast majority of our patients have suffered the effects of a physically hard life and very poor living conditions. We have treated most with albendazole to clear their parasites, dispensed thousands of tablets of Tylenol and ibuprofen to ease their pain, given out scores of custom wheelchairs to the infirm, allowed the deaf to hear with hearing aids, pulled hundreds of rotten teeth, treated countless medical conditions and scheduled hundreds for surgeries. These gentle people give us hugs, a touch on the shoulder and utter 'Via con dios' or 'Go with God.'

During the last two days we have seen more Ki'Che Mayans requiring translation from their dialect to Spanish. These languages have slicks and shushing noises that are completely unlike Spanish as they developed a continent away. My last two patients were Ki'che Mayans, and they brought me to tears. A tiny Indian woman in her mid-50s led her husband into my corner. He was clearly blind with dense cataracts in both eyes, developed from years working in the sun. Her only complaint was 'my hands and feet hurt' from working the fields to support them. To my delight, I could tell he was a perfect candidate for cataract surgery, which was then scheduled for the surgery team that will follow us. Faith in Practice will give him his sight and the two will have their lives back again! This, my friends, is why I come back to Guatemala year after year: to make a difference in someone's life.

The thunder roared, the lightning flashed, and the rain started as the last patients were seen on this final clinic day. We packed our trunks, loaded the trucks and said thank you and farewell to our Guatemalan volunteers. Thank you, friends and family, for being with us in spirit and supporting this mission!!



moments & memories

(Fourth in a series of stories about PCN by long-time member Tali Sundberg)

“I’m coming, Mom. No, I didn’t forget the place settings. Dad’s going to pick up the four of them. Yes, I think I have everything. Yes, I even have the chart.”

That’s what it sounded like way back in 1957 when Mom, Dad and I were leaving for the Open Door Club. Yes, once a month, rain or shine, we were off to the church for what was then the one big social event of each month for all of the “older” citizens of Novato, regardless of religious affiliation. We had only two churches in town, ours and the Catholic Church.

Howard Swartz was the pastor, and he came to my mom and dad and asked if they would head a group, sort of like the Mariners, that would be for the “older” members of the church and town. I remember Mom and Dad talking about this, talking about how they didn’t feel “old” enough, but maybe the “older” people didn’t have the energy, and it would be answering the call of the church so they said they would. That began a journey of love and commitment that involved our whole family. Mom worked on the programs months in advance, and the week before each program, the intensity at our house would build. Then would come the evening of the get-together, and there would be a period of relaxation after the meeting for about a week. Then we would begin gearing up for the next meeting. The programs were varied and not always centered on religious themes.

One notable program involved Jack LaLanne as speaker. Ask the senior members why he was well-known. He walked into Trevitt Hall where we were all consuming wonderful homemade Presbyterian potluck food, stood at the head of the table, waved his hand over the food, and in a large voice said, “GARBAGE!” Yes, he was one of the first health-food and exercise gurus of that age, well-known in San Francisco. He delivered his program advocating juicing, vegetables and exercise, then left without saying anything to anyone.

As we were talking one evening soon after the club started, the folks were concerned because while the meetings were going well, attendance was picking up, and people from all over Novato were coming, the club seemed to lack something. It really lacked a project. Out of the evening's discussion came the seed of an idea. The name of the club was the Open Door Club, so named because it was open to everyone, regardless of denominational affiliation, creed, or anything else that might separate people. It was open to all and all came. It was the one event where both single and coupled "olders" could gather.

The church was dreaming ... lofty dreams ... dreams of the day we would have a new church, a larger church where more than 98 people could sit in the sanctuary ... and suddenly the idea was born. What more appropriate project could there be for the Open Door Club than that it buy the doors for the dreamed-of sanctuary? And so the chart was made. Mom and Dad contacted the architect and asked for an estimate on the cost of the front doors of a church. They took that figure, \$500, and I plotted it out with each block worth \$5.00. The sill was priced at \$35.00, and I believe that Mary Anne Boone bought that. I know there was a little dissension over who was first to speak for the sill. People bought squares as they felt they could, or in memory of a friend or relative, or to commemorate an occasion. I bought a square the night my folks announced my engagement at the Open Door Club meeting. And before we knew it, the doors were paid for. That money rested in a special savings account until the sanctuary was built and the doors were installed. It was then turned over to the church. So remember this when you pass through those doors, purchased so long ago by the members of the Open Door Club. But the story does not end there.

When those doors were bought, the club needed a new project and so another chart was made. On it were *all* of the doors in the education building: every cabinet door, every closet door, every classroom door, every outside door was itemized, and the club paid for all of them in the same way. And there are people in this church today who can recall that the first doors of that building to be purchased were the doors to the stalls in the women's restrooms. Presbyterians are a practical people!



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 9:00 Morning Prayer 9:00 LYFE class 2:00 Balance class 6:30 LYFE class	2 8:00 Stephen Leaders	3 7:30am Men's Group	4 <i>Happy 4th of July!</i> <i>office closed</i> Buckaroo Breakfast 	5	6
7 8:30 Adult Bible Study 10:00 One service - contemporary 11:15 M&O	8 9:00 Morning Prayer 9:00 LYFE class 2:00 Balance class 5:30 Finance Cmte. 6:30 LYFE class	9 6:30 Personnel Cmte.	10 7:30am Men's Group 10:30 Prayer Quilters/ Marian Stitchers 5:30 Mission Cmte. 6:30 Deacons	11 2:00 Singles Coffee Creekside 6:00 Brown Consulting Implementation Team	12 2:00 Balance class	13
<div> <i>July 7-13</i> ← <i>Youth</i> <i>Mission</i> <i>Trip</i> → → </div>						
14 8:30 Adult Bible Study 9:00 Choir rehearsal 10:00 One service - traditional 6:00 Youth Group	15 9:00 Morning Prayer 9:00 LYFE class 2:00 Balance class 2:00 Mill St. meal p/u 6:30 LYFE class	16 7:00 Stephen Ministry Supervision	17 7:30am Men's Group 6:00 Session dinner 6:30 Session meeting	18 2:00 Singles Coffee Creekside	19 2:00 Balance class 5:00 Mingling Singles Pizza Night 	20
21 8:30 Adult Bible Study 10:00 One service - contemporary 1:30 Creekwood 6:00 Youth Group	22 9:00 Morning Prayer 9:00 LYFE class 2:00 Balance class 6:30 LYFE class	23	24 7:30am Men's Group	25 2:00 Singles Coffee Creekside 6:00 Brown Consulting Implementation Team	26 2:00 Balance class	27
28 8:30 Adult Bible Study 9:00 Choir rehearsal 10:00 One service - traditional 6:00 Youth Group	29 9:00 Morning Prayer 9:00 LYFE class 2:00 Balance class 6:30 LYFE class	30	31 7:30am Men's Group			

2019



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2019