



## PresPress

February 2021

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

I've done it again. I'm pressed up against the PresPress deadline (see what I did there? 😊). I'm writing in a holistic state that can only be described as 'drained.' Sure, I have a myriad of things on my 'to do' list, but the energy seeping away from me seems not to be connected to busyness but linked to everything that's happened and is happening around me.

I'm in a nation so at odds with itself that we create our own truths in order to be 'right,' to 'win,' to prove that others 'lose.' I've witnessed an insurrection at the nation's capital, an attack on the democratic system we all claim to hold dear, and it was all organized and grounded in a lie. Racial tensions, born from a country founded on a racialized past, have never been dealt with and have been allowed to linger and have once again reemerged in the public sphere. A pandemic that was only supposed to last a month or two has now stretched out to 9+ months with the promise of many months to come.

Weighing on me is the loss of members of our congregation who have died this year, as is my inability to visit and offer care as I would like. The real struggle of the homeless, the jobless, the hungry seems closer than ever before. I have not been to see my family in Texas for years now, and I miss them.

I miss...people. I miss togetherness. I miss the slowness of a boring day. I miss corporate, in-person worship. I miss going to restaurants.

I write these words not to seek out your sympathy or for check-in calls; on the contrary, I share this with you because I know that this is also your experience to a lesser or greater extent. I know that I am not unique in feeling the weight that our current context has thrust upon our shoulders. It is a lot! And it is draining. It sucks the life out of us. It makes the world look like a dark place with a bleak landscape doomed to wither away.

It would be a mistake for me to start talking about 'hope' right now before first acknowledging that life is not always roses; that the world is not always a pretty picture to behold and of which to be a part. Right now, this wilderness is scary, and dangerous, and filled with loss. It's okay to grieve, to lament what we've lost. It's okay to admit that things are not great right now if that's how we feel. It's okay for us to pray to God and share our pain, our struggle, maybe even our hopelessness; to admit that we don't have what it takes to get through this on our own.

It's okay to say, "It sucks right now" and even to leave our prayers at that. You have my permission (not that you need it).

Now take a breath. Take another one. And another.

And now I want to say something that some may not be ready to hear, and at times I'm not ready to hear. Life sucks sometimes. Following Jesus isn't a linear path that avoids the brokenness of the world, but it's being in the thick of it. Jesus didn't die to take us away from this world, but to bring

heaven and earth together so that God breaks into where we are. Jesus descends into hell with us, even this hell that we are in, to cry with us, to share our pain with us, to help carry the heavy weight of the burdens we bear, even to carry us from time to time. Jesus walks along side of us, friends...and His love never wavers, never diminishes, always remains. We may not see a way out of our current darkness, but Jesus does, and He will walk with us until, at last, we finally see it too: light so bright that we'll wonder why we never saw it before, light that was always there.

Take heart, dear saints. Trust in God even when you can't see the light in front of you. Remember that Jesus walks with you even in your darkest moments. And it's okay if you feel cruddy, tired, and worn down. It doesn't mean you're weak. It doesn't mean your faith is lacking. But I promise you, Jesus is with you and will never leave your side.

With Hope & Peace,  
Pastor Adam



## PCN – YOU HAVE COME THROUGH AGAIN!

During the most difficult of times with the need for food and housing never higher, our congregation has come through with generous abandon. Always an integral part of our community, the figures below tell exactly where your heart is. Your mission committee thanks you!

*~Where your treasure is, there your heart will lie also. -Matthew 6:21*

**Christmas Joy Offering**     \$2450

**Cents-ability** (formerly 2 cents a meal) \$627.25 (annual)

**Virtual Alternative Christmas Faire:** \$6461 total

NMCS \$985

Homeward Bound \$1551

SF/Marin Food Bank \$1005

Gilead House \$840

Matt 25 Ministries Intl \$1235

Ceres \$845

PCN was also able to help numerous non-profits at the end of 2020 with discretionary funds, including:

Alchemia, Center for Restorative Justice, San Quentin Bibles, Westminster Woods, Zephyr Point, VA Ride Share, Faith In Practice, Vivalon (formerly Meals on Wheels), Becca Lee, LITA, Ceres, Center for Domestic Peace, SF/Marin Food Bank, and Presbytery of the Redwoods.

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### Matthew 25 Ministries

PCN's Juarez missionary Jeff Pinar's work continues unhindered despite COVID restrictions in Juarez, New Mexico and Texas, even with the USA/Mexico border formally closed. God is touching many lives there as many prayers are answered. Masks are still requested; children's sizes are always needed. Contact **Carolyn Gerrans at 415-897-1504 or [grace624@comcast.net](mailto:grace624@comcast.net) to donate homemade or purchased masks.** Five orphanages, the mental institution, three churches, Tarahumara Indians, Cuban immigrants and many families were blessed in December and Christmas. Although two orphanages had closed due to COVID, both reopened by December with some bleach and elbow grease. Here are a few of the pictures from Jeff's December Newsletter. If you would like to be added Matthew 25 Ministries International Newsletter (Jeff Pinar), just email Jeff at [M25MI.Juarez@gmail.com](mailto:M25MI.Juarez@gmail.com)

## Christmas at the Tarahumara Colonia

We brought special treats for the people of the Colonia to brighten Christmastime. The line started with the youngest children. Each child received a milk box, a giant chocolate bar, yogurt, cucumbers and bakery items. Everyone also received one American dollar.



My plans were for 100 children; however, more like 150 turned out, including adults and seniors. As you can see, it got a little crazy when the toddlers were finished. Social distancing is not a skill the Tarahumaras have embraced too much yet. Fortunately, everything was outside and it was breezy with gusty winds.



In addition to the \$300 that was passed out, disposable masks have been upgraded to K95s and reusable masks are taken to Mexico whenever available.

## Children's Home Resplendor reopens after COVID closure!

All children and adults wear masks at all times. They now understand that if COVID cases come back, the home will close for a much longer period of time. No commercial company to sanitize – just orphans and workers using Clorox. Our coolers are sanitized every time they are inside an orphanage. All orphanages we serve are currently open!



It was a challenging year in Juarez, but a great Christmas for those we helped. We had extra challenges this year, for sure – a lot of extra work and a lot of additional hours. God has been merciful, having gone before and still with us.

Mexican customs was very lenient and supportive of our work during the last several weeks of December. In the end, we were able to pass freely in and out of Mexican despite the border closures and quarantine restrictions. Because of the extreme need, four trips were made Christmas week.

We are thankful and blessed by each and every prayer partner and financial supporter. Special thanks to Albertson's for thousands of pounds of food and general merchandise given to us this year.

I was honored to join the Presbyterian Church of Novato this year. The members are extremely supportive and a huge blessing to me personally.

Our ministry is needed now more than at any other time in my life. By God's grace, He will continue to provide everything we need, "according to the riches of His glory in Christ Jesus." Phil 4:19, "for the least of these." Matthew 25:40. Amen.

**PCN Mission Committee Budget  
Passed by Session 1/20/21**

<b>Recipient</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Liaison</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Subtotals</b>
Missionary Mark & Jenny Hare	Mission Int'l	Bill Cameron	\$6,300.00	
Missionary Bob & Kristi Rice	Mission Int'l	same	\$6,300.00	
Missionary Rev. Sarah Henken	Mission Int'l	same	\$3,500.00	
Missionary Rev. Ryan & Alethia White	Mission Int'l	same	\$3,500.00	
Missionary Revs. Shelvis & Nancy Smith-Mather	Mission Int'l	same	\$3,500.00	
Missionary Rev. Cathy Chang & Juan Lopez	Mission Int'l	same	\$3,500.00	
<b>Subtotal</b>				<b>\$26,600.00</b>
Hands-on Mission International - Juarez	PCN congregants	Becky Praun	\$12,000.00	
Hands-on Mission Domestic (no trip in 2021)	PCN congregants	Bill Walker	\$3,000.00	
Hands-on Mission Youth	PCN congregants	Youth Director	\$12,000.00	
Hands-on Mission grant	PCN congregant	Becca Lee	\$1,500.00	
<b>Subtotal</b>				<b>\$28,500.00</b>
Presbytery/Synod			\$15,000.00	
General Assembly			\$5,000.00	
<b>Subtotal</b>				<b>\$20,000.00</b>
Westminster Woods	Church	Ellen Breazeale	\$1,250.00	
Rise Against Hunger	Church	Youth director	\$3,000.00	
PCN Bible Distribution - general	Church	Mike Robinson	\$250.00	
<b>Subtotal</b>				<b>\$4,500.00</b>

<b>Recipient</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Liaison</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Subtotals</b>
<b>Faith In Practice</b>	<b>International</b>	<b>Vicki Martinez</b>	<b>\$1,500.00</b>	
<b>Matt 25 Min. Int'l</b>	<b>International</b>	<b>Jeff Pinar</b>	<b>\$3,000.00</b>	
<b>Agape Int'l (AIM)</b>	<b>International</b>	<b>Phil Dougherty</b>	<b>\$1,500.00</b>	
<b>Subtotal</b>				<b>\$6,000.00</b>
<b>North Marin Community Services (NMCS)</b>	<b>Local</b>	<b>Carolyn Gerrans</b>	<b>\$7,000.00</b>	
<b>Lynwood Preschool &amp; Learning Together</b>	<b>Local</b>	<b>Carolyn Gerrans</b>	<b>\$1,000.00</b>	
<b>Gilead House</b>	<b>Local</b>	<b>Carolyn Gerrans</b>	<b>\$1,400.00</b>	
<b>Marin Mobile Care/Dwntwn Streets Team</b>	<b>Local</b>	<b>Bill Walker</b>	<b>\$1,600.00</b>	
<b>Mobile Care Snack Sacks</b>	<b>Local</b>	<b>Regina Rus</b>	<b>\$1,000.00</b>	
<b>Love Is The Answer (LITA)</b>	<b>Local</b>	<b>Joe Simmons</b>	<b>\$1,000.00</b>	
<b>Extra Food</b>	<b>Local</b>	<b>Bill Walker</b>	<b>\$1,000.00</b>	
<b>Ceres Community Project</b>	<b>Local</b>	<b>Barbara Gildea</b>	<b>\$1,000.00</b>	
<b>Subtotal</b>				<b>\$15,000.00</b>
<b>All Dressed Up Prison Ministry</b>	<b>Regional</b>	<b>Mike Robinson</b>	<b>\$3,000.00</b>	
<b>Homeward Bound</b>	<b>Regional</b>	<b>Art Plumstead</b>	<b>\$4,500.00</b>	
<b>SFMarin Food Bank</b>	<b>Regional</b>	<b>Carolyn Gerrans</b>	<b>\$3,500.00</b>	
<b>Center for Domestic Peace</b>	<b>Regional</b>	<b>Barbara Gildea</b>	<b>\$1,000.00</b>	
<b>Subtotal</b>				<b>\$12,000.00</b>
<b>Discretionary</b>			<b>\$5,850.00</b>	<b>\$5,850.00</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>				<b>\$118,450.00</b>



## Meal Train for Marilyn Bentley

A most gracious and BIG thank you to the volunteers that have provided meals for Marilyn Bentley this month: Audrey Boland, Sandi Class, Becky Erba, Becky Praun and Kay Walker.

Marilyn is so overwhelmed with the love and support as she heals from her back issues and prepares to ready her life for a move later this year.

God bless you all and your devotion to our lovely PCN member, Marilyn.

Blessings,

Becky Praun/Deacon Meal Coordinator



The Deacons supported the Vitalant blood drive team in another successful blood drive. We had 28 donors and were able to achieve a great 38 units of blood. This is one of the strongest blood drives we have had. Thank you to everyone who participated to the PCN volunteers: Brook Stahley, Bill Bradfield, Linda Ward, Brad Praun, Les and Tonya Church.

My own niece, Mickie Deaton, had aortic heart valve replacement in December. Mickie was in surgery for seven hours and required seven units of blood during her surgery. Without the donations of blood by wonderful people this would not have been possible, even in Iowa, where Mickie resides with her husband Brian. Blood truly is the gift of life, besides our salvation with Jesus!! Amen.

The next scheduled Deacon blood drive is Sunday, June 6th in Trevitt Hall from 8 a.m. to noon. If you can make it – great! If you can give earlier all the better. God bless you all and keep pumping that iron!

Most sincerely,

Becky Praun/Deacon Blood Drive Coordinator





Dearest PCN Family,

It has been my pleasure these past six years to serve in the ministry for the Deacons. I have come to learn more about a lot of you and have had the pleasure to work side by side with some of the most gracious and caring people on this planet!

I would like to thank the devotion and encouragement of Janis West and Kay Walker for setting the stage of how to be a 'Moderator' for the Deacons. Their constant action and direction made it possible for me to move forward with the board of Deacons over the years.

This past year has proved to be challenging and yet a blessing in how the Deacons have connected with our PCN family. Many new friendships have come out of our pandemic, which is God's loving way of giving us a silver lining for the ups and downs we have all endured.

I hope and pray that this energy will continue under the strong leadership of Brook Stahley and Audrey Boland. I leave you in the most capable of hands and love.

Thank you for your prayers, support and kind words. God is good and God is love and I have felt that from all of you. Bless you all, I will always be with you all!!

Most humbly,

Becky



Are you interested in learning more about membership at PCN? If so, please join us for a new members class on Sunday, March 7 from 1 to 2 p.m. We will be meeting via Zoom. The class will be led by Pastor Adam Smith. Learn what it means to be a member of the Presbyterian Church of Novato. RSVP to [pcnadmin@pcnovato.org](mailto:pcnadmin@pcnovato.org) or call 415-897-6152.



**JIGSAW PUZZLE SWAP** Last month's PCN jigsaw puzzle swap was a huge success. More than 100 puzzles were available. At least 25 folks participated. Our next puzzle swap will be Saturday, Feb. 20<sup>th</sup> from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. If you want to drop off some puzzles, the donation box is in the office.



The Sunday morning adult Bible study class is meeting via Zoom from 8 to 9 a.m. All are welcome to join! If you are interested in attending, please contact Larry Dacquisto at (415) 577-2115 or email [larrydacquisto@gmail.com](mailto:larrydacquisto@gmail.com).



**First and Second Samuel**

**Thursday morning Women's Bible Study** has resumed its weekly study of 1 & 2 Samuel via Zoom from 9:30 to 11 a.m. Bible study leaders will continue to be Carol Dacquisto and Melodie Baird. To be added to our Zoom contact list, email Carol Dacquisto at [dacqmom@aol.com](mailto:dacqmom@aol.com) or call her at 415-892-2070 for more information.



**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 6:30 p.m. The Zoom link is a series that runs through 2020; the same link can be accessed each month. Contact Janis West at [Janisw99@gmail.com](mailto:Janisw99@gmail.com) with questions. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81107446679?pwd=Yy9ub1pReGdMTHVhbDJpRzhHVVdHQ09>  
Meeting ID: 811 0744 6679 Passcode: pcnovato



## MEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Come join us for study and fellowship. We meet every **Wednesday at 7:30 a.m.** via Zoom. We have started a new study called "Old Testament Characters." The author writes "It is my prayer that we might be better participants in the shaping of God's drama today by our careful reflection on the successes and failures of the men and women who have gone before us." All men are welcome. To be added to the Zoom contact list, contact Phil Dougherty at (415) 328-6674 or email [phild@dhis.com](mailto:phild@dhis.com) for more information.



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!



If, during this unprecedented time, you find yourself in need of someone to talk to, the Stephen Ministers are here to listen, and all conversations are confidential. Please contact Jane Sime at (415) 497-5158 or Gail Penfield at (415) 897-7929 for more information.



## Community Outreach for PCN

We would like your help in spreading the word about PCN's online activities during this time of sheltering in place. Please share PCN info on your social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram, NextDoor, etc.). Share links to the music videos, worship services, children's sermons, etc. This will help broaden our outreach. With everyone having to shelter in place, it's a good time to get the word out about our congregation and what God is up to through us!