



**PresPress**

**October 2020**

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

**Adam Smith**



“For such a time as this.” Mordecai, a devout Jew living in exile, writes these words to his daughter who has found royal favor in ancient Persia. He appeals to her to use her position and power to act in an hour of great need, when her people, the Jewish people living as resident aliens in a foreign land, are threatened with extermination. It’s a request that could cost Esther her life. “Who knows?” Mordecai writes, “Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this” (Esther 4:14).

I’ve thought a lot about this exchange of letters between Mordecai and Esther, particularly in these unprecedented times we are in. Today we have a pandemic running rampant, a divided country, businesses closing down and struggling, the needs of our neighbors rising to greater levels. And to top it off, even our church is in a time of transition. We are without a ministry associate. We have a half-time interim youth director. We’re having to learn new ways to be the church in the middle of a pandemic. We’ve discovered that technology is a great tool for connection, ministry, and mission. We have whole ministries of our church that are having to rethink how to do children’s programming, Sunday school, worship, and service. We have new needs in ministry.

We can choose to focus on the challenges and obstacles before us. We can choose to be afraid of what the future holds and let that guide our actions in the here and now. We can worry about our financial future, our staffing short-fall, or any other number of things. We can think we don’t have what it takes to meet this challenge. We can focus on trying to return to the way things were before all this mess.

**YET...**

Perhaps we are in the very place we are supposed to be. Perhaps we have every single thing we need: every tool, every resource, every person necessary to adapt to the crazy circumstances in which we find ourselves. Perhaps this is the time...the opportunity for which we, the congregation of PCN, have been waiting.

Now is not the time to survive, it’s time to prepare for how we will THRIVE! Our time in the wilderness of COVID-19 has given us a chance to pause, to look at our life and ministry as a congregation in the

Body of Christ, and to begin to discern where the Holy Spirit is guiding us...and we've decided...we are going to listen.

"For such a time as this" is a call to discernment and to action. It's a call to be who we are created to be, to see this time as an opportunity to be about God's work in the world as we answer our call. And that is what we are going to take the risk to do as the Presbyterian Church of Novato in the months and the years to come.

## **A SEASON OF DISCERNMENT & REFORM**

It's time for a season of prayerful reflection, evaluation, listening, and reorientation. In this time of transition, we have the opportunity to pause, to pull ourselves up on to the 'balcony' to look at our life and ministry as a congregation and to ask the simple and yet profound question to which we all want an answer: "How can we best live into our call as a church here and now and into the future?"

Whereas this would have been almost impossible to answer only a year ago, our newly articulated call (in the form of mission, vision, and values statements) gives us a unique tool with which to begin to answer this question. And it is this very work that your Session will be engaging in for the next year.

## **A DISCERNMENT TEAM**

Your Session will be commissioning a Discernment Team to look at the overall life and ministry of our church and, using our mission, vision, and values statements, they will work to refashion PCN's ministry, leadership, and staffing structures to better reflect PCN's call in this time and place.

The Discernment Team will be made up of 4 elders, 2 deacons, and 2 congregation members at large. While this group will be the team responsible for crafting newly revised ministry, leadership, and staffing structures, they will not do so in isolation but rather in dialogue with you, the congregation. There will be opportunities for all church members to have a voice and be a part of this process, and it will be the Session and the congregation that approve the final proposal.

This team will be peering through the lens of our newly adopted call taking into account our strengths, weaknesses, hopes, resources, and present-day context to articulate and envision a) PCN's ministry priorities and focus, b) the ministry structure that works toward those ends, and c) the leadership necessary to work within that ministry structure.

## **"WHY" BEFORE "WHAT"**

Living into our call requires answering the question, "Why?" before we answer the question "What?" Right now, I know many of us want to jump into action to fill our vacant staffing positions, but until we

*"Now is not the time to survive,  
it's time to prepare  
for how we'll Thrive"*

answer the question, “Why are we filling them?” we are not ready to do so. In other words, until we flesh out our ministry and mission focus as a congregation, understanding how those staffing positions fit into the overall life and ministry of the church is unclear.

## **WHAT IS THE END GOAL?**

To make a long story short, the end result is for us to position ourselves to best live into our call; to be the church God has called us to be. When the process is complete, we will have a clear, concise vision for PCN with the accompanying ministry and leadership structures that can best help the church realize that future. Our focus in life and ministry will be honed. We will work in the months ahead following approval of our new ministry structure to reorient and align our life and ministry around this vision. Each year the Session will establish and work to create measurable short- and long-term goals, so that we can continually be moved towards our vision. As our Presbyterian motto suggests we are, “reformed and always being reformed [by God].”

This is a season of reform...a time for a leap of faith...a time to be who we were created to be. For such a time as this we find ourselves ready, listening, and poised for action.

In the end what could we lose? For we go into this time of discernment with God, peering through the lens of God’s call, BEING reformed by God to better reflect the Body of Christ right where we are. My, dear saints, just imagine what God can and will do through you, and me, and all of us together at PCN. We might just become a “beacon of hope, reviving the world through God’s love’ (PCN vision statement).

With humility and grace,  
Adam



**Gilead House – PCN bedroom refurnished.** This past summer a new mother moved into the bedroom that PCN sponsored through an anonymous donation, so many years ago when GH was being built. Through our local youth mission trip and your mission dollars, the room was thoroughly cleaned, all supplies for the bedroom and full bath were bought, and the room refurnished. The young woman and her one-year-old son are extremely grateful for their new stable home, the first they have ever had together. Below are photos from the event:



A trunk full of everything needed to set up a bedroom and bath.



A special gift from the Eshoff family, going to a new, good home.



Another special gift, a handmade quilt for the baby.

**We're all in it together!**





**Peacemaking Offering and World Communion Sunday** is October 4, 2020. Our donations are used by both synods and the general assembly for peacemaking efforts regionally, nationally, and around the world. Peacemaking is one of the two special offerings in which our congregation designates a portion of the offering to a specific cause. Usually that means a local charity, but this year, in the spirit of ***"We're all in this together,"*** your mission committee has voted to designate 40% to Rev. Ryan and Alethia White, who are among our supported missionaries. The Whites live in Berlin, Germany, but their mission field is to support Iranian Christian refugees. Being an Iranian Christian is a risky life to lead, from subtle prejudices to downright dangerous threats. The people they minister to have taken a huge leap of faith to escape their homeland and make a new life as open Christians in Europe. *Please attend Zoom church on Sunday, October 4 to listen to Rev. and Mrs. White give our sermon and describe the presence of Christ that they see every day. And please give generously and joyfully, as you can. Thank you.*



I can't believe it! We made it through fires and bad air while continuing to endure and survive COVID-19 challenges. We, the church family, are still moving forward with God's love as we meet and beat this 2020 scourge. As we approach 2021 it looks like we will continue with online services as we start the uncertain journey back to onsite worship. Outside fellowship and challenge gatherings will surely help us eventually make our way back into the sanctuary.

It has been a strange year where we have had to stretch our talents and share our gifts in new ways. We will still be worshipping via Zoom on Consecration Sunday, so things will be a little different in how we dedicate our financial gifts dedicated to support our pastoral/administrative staff, property, new technology requirements, and share God's love through support of local and world mission opportunities in 2021.

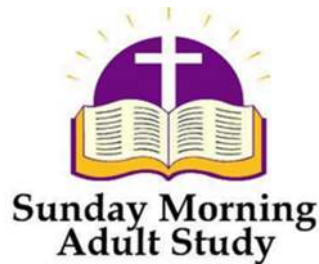
The following provides a summary of what Consecration/Pledge/Stewardship Sunday will look like and ways that you may provide your estimate of giving pledges which allow us to effectively prepare our 2021 budget.

- Estimate of Giving cards will be mailed to you in early October and will be available for download on the PCN website [www.pcnovato.org](http://www.pcnovato.org).
- **Consecration/Pledge/Stewardship Sunday will be Sunday October 18<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m.**
- The worship service will be on Zoom, streaming on Facebook Live and YouTube from 10:00 to 11:15 a.m.
- **Rev. Dr. Kent Webber** will be giving us a profound message.
- An Estimate of Giving/Pledge parade through our church driveway will be conducted from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Consecration Sunday. Bring your estimate of giving/pledge card and drop it off from your car into our giving basket.
- Share in the Kaleidoscope of Love as we look to stewardship.
- Note: If you are not able to drop off your pledge/estimate of giving card at the church during the parade, it can be mailed or dropped off at the church office or sent via confidential email to our financial secretary Stephanie Monahan at [smonahan@pcnovato.org](mailto:smonahan@pcnovato.org).

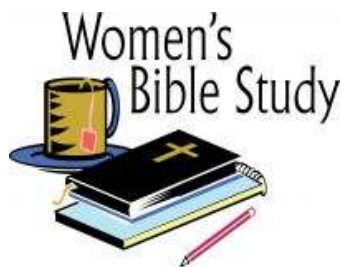
This year has provided us all with challenges and opportunities to meet the needs of the PCN church and our community. Through God's love and support, we look to supporting the church with our time, talents, and financial gifts.

Together we serve Christ,

Bethany (Beth) Flynn, Stewardship Elder



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**

Come share God's word with our friendly and lively ***Women's Bible Study!*** Our class is led by Carol Dacquisto and Melodie Baird, and we meet every Thursday from 9:30 to 11 a.m. on Zoom. In our meetings on October 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29, we will continue our study of the books of First and Second Samuel. First Samuel records the critical transition in Israel from the rule of God through the judges to His rule through the kings. For our October classes, we suggest that you read First Samuel, chapters 1-18, with special emphasis on chapters 15-18. These chapters vividly record the tragic transition of kingship from Saul to David.

All women are welcome to join us at any time. All that is required is a willingness to learn and our study guidebook, which is available for \$6.00. To be added to our Zoom contact list, email Melodie Baird at [melodie.l.baird@gmail.com](mailto:melodie.l.baird@gmail.com) or call her at 415-897-7512 for more information.

Grace and Peace,  
Carol Dacquisto and Melodie Baird



Meal Trains have been running fully occupied and on time these past weeks.

The Deacons would like to thank the following Angels who provided pre-made meals or gift cards to our members recovering from surgery and medical challenges: Audrey Boland, Sandi Class, Annie Clausen, Becky Erba, Cathy Haney, Janalee Holmes, Sylvia Jensvold-Brand, Laurie Dougherty, Loree Dreager, Deanna Lutzeier, Becky Praun, Patty Reed, Adam Smith, and Linda Ward.

Your generous hearts, love and support during these challenging weeks is appreciated more than you can ever know.

Blessings to you all,  
PCN Deacons



Deacons Annual Blood Drive  
Sunday, October 4, 2020  
8 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Just a few spaces left for the Deacons blood drive!  
Never given blood before? Have questions? Concerned about COVID-19?  
Please reach out to Becky Praun/PCN Blood Drive Coordinator with questions  
and suggestions to make this another great opportunity  
to help those who really need it.  
(415) 472-1733/[beckypraun@yahoo.com](mailto:beckypraun@yahoo.com)





## Blood Donors Reflect All Americans

Blood donors reflect the rich diversity of America. That is important for countless patients who struggle with genetic conditions that require blood transfusions over a lifetime. Did you know there are as many as 7,000 rare diseases according to the National Institutes of Health? Blood transfusions are the essential medical treatment for many patients with rare diseases who will rely on generous blood donors their entire lives.

Patients who depend on frequent blood transfusions benefit from precise matching available because blood donors must represent all of us. There is a better chance to find that precise match from a richly diverse blood supply.

September is **Sickle Cell Awareness Month**. Sickle cell is a genetic condition that predominantly affects Black and Hispanic patients but also those with Mediterranean, Caribbean, Middle East and Indian heritage. One of the few treatments for sickle cell disease is blood transfusions.

**Your blood donation is needed and reflects a unique contribution that changes the world for good.**

**All blood donors receive COVID-19 Antibody Testing !**

Testing positive for COVID-19 antibodies is the first step to becoming a convalescent plasma donor to help patients fighting the virus now.

Donors are not charged for COVID-19 antibody tests and costs are subsidized, in part, by The Blood Center Foundation of the Inland Northwest, The Bonfils Blood Center Donor Advised Fund and the Blood Science Foundation.



As part of PCN's desire to share the love of Jesus Christ and to connect with our neighbors, we would like to invite you to our next Inquirer's Class on Sunday, October 25 from 1 to 2 p.m. You can learn more about who we are and how we can grow together in worship, faith, and service. During this class we will explore the following:

- Who is Jesus Christ? How does one become a Christian and sustain an ongoing relationship with Jesus Christ?
- When and where and by whom did the Presbyterian Church begin? How are we similar to or different from other Christians? What do Presbyterians believe and how is the Presbyterian Church governed?
- What do we believe at PCN? Who we are as a congregation? What sort of commitment does church membership involve? What are the benefits of church membership?
- What opportunities exist at PCN for worship, education, fellowship, service, and outreach?

The Inquirers' class is a great opportunity for you to meet others who are new to our community, while giving you a chance to explore what it means to be a member of PCN. While we hope you will consider becoming a member; there is no pressure to join.

Please phone the church office at 415-897-6152 or email [pcadmin@pcnovato.org](mailto:pcadmin@pcnovato.org) for details of the next Inquirer's class to be held via Zoom on October 25 from 1 to 2 p.m.



A small group social gathering has been scheduled for Saturday, October 10 from 10 to 11 a.m. We will open the campus to 24 individuals, randomly placed into three groups of eight. The groups will be spaced apart and within the group chairs will be placed six feet apart. Attendees will be required to wear masks the entire time. Temperatures will be taken upon arrival and those with a temperature above 99 will be asked to leave. All attendees will be asked to take the [COVID-19 Self-Check](#) the day before the event.

Please click on the link below to sign up:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0B4CACAB2AA5FD0-labor>

Below are photos from our Labor Day event.





# *Session*

## Session Highlights September 2020

Approved Personnel's request for additional hours for Sydney Fletcher to complete work in order to launch PCN's new website.

Approved Christian Education and Personnel Committee's recommendation to recruit two 10-hour per week Youth Ministry Interns. Job descriptions have been developed.

Approved Personnel's request to develop a job description and hire an Interim Technology Director.

Learned the Personnel Committee is updating Personnel Policies.

Learned the Worship Committee is updating fee schedule and guidelines for weddings and memorial services held at PCN.

Referred PG&E's inquiry to use PCN's parking lot for future Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS) to the Emergency Preparedness Committee.

Agreed to a special Session meeting on Sunday, September 27 to discuss the use of a financial management company to manage PCN's financial assets and form a Discernment Team to evaluate PCN's Mission, Vision, and Values statements in future programming, staffing needs, outreach, leveraging of other faith-based and community groups in serving others and spreading God's word.

Kathy Takemoto, Clerk of Session

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by Tammi Jester

At the beginning of 2020, before we knew what COVID-19 even was, PCN's Personnel Committee very generously agreed to let me take two weeks off every three months to go see my 86-year-old father. His wife passed away a couple years ago, and he's been very lonely. I was so grateful to personnel for allowing me this gift of time with my dad. Unfortunately, everything changed in March and I had to cancel my first trip that was planned for April. I have since cancelled three other trips. But now I haven't seen my father in nearly a year, so on October 7 I am going to brave getting on a plane! Personnel has once again been very generous to me and is allowing me to take a few weeks off.

In my absence, Carol Robinson will be working in the office. Carol has been so understanding of my schedule changes and was very supportive when I asked if she could work for such a long stretch. Thank you so much, Carol!

I will still be doing the newsletter, but Carol will be handling the day-to-day duties of the office including creating the weekly update and assisting the rest of the staff as well as answering the phones, scheduling meetings and keeping the Zoom account current, and responding to emails. Please use the same email to contact her.

I owe a debt of gratitude to Carol, to personnel, and to Adam and the rest of the staff for letting me have this time to visit my beloved father. From the bottom of my heart, I thank you!





To those of you who are in a PCN supper club small group, coordinators Janalee Holmes and EB Hanlein encourage you to begin meeting in an CDC-approved form – perhaps an outdoor picnic or meet at an outside restaurant or winery. For now, you can continue meeting with the already-formed groups. New sign-ups will take place when possible, probably next spring. Any questions please contact Janalee via email at [fredandjanalee@comcast.net](mailto:fredandjanalee@comcast.net) or call (415) 898-8418 or EB at [ebhanlein@hotmail.com](mailto:ebhanlein@hotmail.com) or call (415) 897-7753.



Mark your calendar for Friday, October 16 when Program & Fellowship sponsors another fun bingo night from 7 to 8:30 p.m. More information will be available via emails with the links as well as in the weekly update.



Dear PCN family,

Thank you so much for all the prayers, cards and wonderful meals delivered to me after my broken ankle surgery! They were very much appreciated. Thank you for praying for Becca, too, through her own back pain while she was here trying to help me. This is such a wonderful family and I'm so blessed to have you all. I especially want to thank Becky Praun, Sandi Class, Audrey Boland, Cathy Haney, Deanna Lutzeier, Patty Reed, Loree Draeger and Laurie Dougherty for the wonderful food and desserts and flowers delivered and enjoyed! Broken ankles are no fun, but you all made it bearable!

Much love and appreciation,  
Lisa Lee



### **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!



Greetings from Dave Standafer on behalf of Pedal for Protein. We thought a music video might capture the heart and soul of the Pedal for Protein campaign. Pam and Homer provide a brilliant performance of "We're on the Road Again." If you polled the riders of the event, I'm sure they would agree how much we enjoy riding together and the companionship.

Here's a link to the video on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/Ujt3XX4MR6Q>  
Attached is an mp4.

Let's all go "On the Road Again" with the Pedal for Protein Team! Help support this mission that has such a large impact on our very own communities. Please donate generously. We can make a difference.

Donations may be made on the imathlete Redwoods Presbytery Pedal for Protein webpage:  
<https://www.imathlete.com/#/legacy?url=%2Fdonate%2FPedalforProtein7%3Fz%3D1585867960666>

or mail checks to:  
Redwoods Presbytery  
1226A Salvador  
Napa, CA 94558  
(in the memo of the check note P4P and the fundraising person/church name)

Pedal on....

Dave and the Pedal for Protein Team

# A Quasquicentennial Celebration is Happening in 2021!

What's a quasquicentennial? It's a 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary.  
PCN will celebrate its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2021.

In preparation, please send a memory which can be included in a commemorative booklet for this special occasion. You can write about anything, but here are a few prompts:

- How you came to faith in Christ
- The first time you came to PCN
- Your favorite Sunday school, VBS, or youth group memory
- Fun fellowship activities and church friends
- Mission trips you have attended
- Children can write a poem or draw a picture
- Your wedding at PCN

Everyone is encouraged to participate to create a unique keepsake booklet. Email a Word document, or send your memory in an email to [kathy.takemoto@outlook.com](mailto:kathy.takemoto@outlook.com). Drawings/writings by children can be left in the clerk mail slot in the church office.

Patty Reed and the Program & Fellowship Committee would love to hear your ideas to celebrate this special occasion. Contact Patty at [pdreed@sbcglobal.net](mailto:pdreed@sbcglobal.net).



Drawing of the church bell by Mae Wygant done in 1976