



Presbyterian  
Church of  
Novato

# Celebrating 125 Years of Fellowship

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*Est. 1896*

# Congregation Quasquicentennial Memories

## Carolyn & Art Gerrans

When Art and I had our first child, a baby boy, we began looking for churches in which to baptize him. We inquired about both Catholic and Protestant churches because Art was raised Catholic and I was raised Protestant (Methodist).

We looked at Catholic churches first because Art was divorced and had children who were being raised in a local Catholic congregation. Being a divorced Catholic raising a second family made the Catholic denomination not a good choice for us. We were in the process of visiting Protestant congregations, when Pastor Bob Grove called and, after a pleasant conversation, asked if he could visit me at home.

We quickly got around to the most pressing question for my husband and me. As a Catholic he was used to prohibitions against participation in sacred acts, and Sunday worship, if it was determined that you weren't in good standing with the rules and the priests. He was concerned that if our boy was baptized in the Presbyterian Church of Novato, that he wouldn't be allowed to participate, because he was not renouncing his Catholicism.

I'll always remember Bob's sweet grin and the shake of his head as he told me, "**Mrs. Gerrans, you tell your husband the sacraments belong to him, not the Presbyterian Church.**" I knew **at that moment** that we had found a home where our blended family could raise our child (children) in the family of God. The sense of homecoming is something I've never forgotten, and for which we are both very grateful.

## MY FIRST VISIT TO THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NOVATO

By LaVerda Shaver

I grew up in the Methodist Church and wherever I lived, I attended the Methodist Church. As a young family, we lived for 8 years in the Sacramento area where there was no significant Methodist presence. However, there was a large, active Presbyterian church attended by many families with children, so we “temporarily” defected to the “sister faith.” When my husband transferred to a job at Mare Island in Vallejo, he chose to have us live across the bay in Marin County in the town of Novato. I had every intention of attending the Methodist church there.

However, early on our first morning in Novato, I took my two young children shopping at Roger Wilco grocery store. There was one cashier, and a woman was chatting with him. They kept on talking about a Buckaroo Breakfast and a parade on Grant Avenue. Finally, I interrupted and asked what that was about. The woman was Wilma Ward. She explained the events and also invited us to her Presbyterian church. My children’s eyes looked up at me with excitement.

After church was over, Janet and Alan greeted me with enthusiasm. They exclaimed, “They had the same lessons and papers we used to have.!!!” Thus, we remained Presbyterians as we have for the past 53 years.

## LOVE OF THE CONGREGATION

By LaVerda Shaver

In October 1985, as part of the Stewardship Campaign, I was one of 5 members asked to speak during a worship service on what we liked about The Presbyterian Church of Novato. The following is some of what I said.

I have always felt at home here. I like it when people are greeting one another. I like it when it’s quiet. I like it when we are singing or laughing. I like it when we are praying for someone to get well and when we are sharing in someone’s joy. I like to be surrounded by other believers. There may be some things and some people I do not always see eye to eye with; but even then, I’m happy to be a part of it and to share my church with you.

Recently when a friend and I finished lunch in a Chinese restaurant, we opened our cookies to read our fortunes. My friend’s fortune said:

“Life goes on----while we are busy making plans for the future.”

The thought hit me that that was what happened to us—my husband and I—that while we were having a good time and planning our future and preparing for contingencies, and also planning to get in all the fun we could—life—the real world—came upon us with other plans.

A telephone call from the police informed me my husband, Gene, was critically injured and was hospitalized. A dog had run in front of his bicycle. Gene died the next day. Neither I, nor my family, will ever forget how you, the church members, rushed in to help us. Although others returned to their homes, they noticed and were grateful that the church buoyed me up, lifted my spirits, and reassured me that God is ever-present, that He will look after me, and you are right here for me, too.

I feel a personal closeness to God, and feel I have “the Faith.” But, being the human creature that I am, I need more than my thoughts and prayers, I need the reassurance, companionship, and good humor of friends. I like to think I had a degree of independence and was stalwart and brave, but I don’t always feel that strong. When the crisis came, it meant so very much to have people surround me with honest, caring words, and offers of help. You helped me face the biggest crisis I’ve ever had.

On a recent trip to Illinois and Missouri, I stayed in St. Louis with my sister-in-law, and slept in my niece’s old room. On the dresser was a sign that said:

“Friendship divides grief and multiplies joy.”

That is just what I want to convey to you today. It was the friendship and love of this congregation that lessened my grief and put some joy back into my world, which had come to a sudden halt. This friendship and caring means even more when it comes from people whom you know obtain their source from Christ, the Father.

You have shown this love as a congregation. I hope you and I will see that our Christian spirit of love and caring in this congregation will be carried on. We may have a lot yet to accomplish, but it’s the Christian love in this congregation that has made this church as great as we now are.

October 13, 1985

### **Mary Tofanelli**

The PCN has special meaning for our family members. Our most eventful moments happened here and many are associated with previous members.

Ted Wygant who is not with us anymore helped our group in our endeavour in a class action suit get Mark and other babies to stay in this country. Ted had Dave and I address this issue on KGO radio. Bill Glazner also helped us with the immigration process when Mark arrived.

Mark was baptized in the current social hall shortly after his arrival from Saigon, Vietnam in the baby airlift. Don Rayment was the minister at that time and who in the past had been in charge of the youth in Walnut Creek Presbyterian church where my parents and I were members. Zarina (Kim) arrived when she was almost three years old but couldn't attend PCN for almost one year due to a medical issue. Mark was married in our church to Carie with pastor Kent Webber officiating. Mark and Carie became the God parents to Kim's daughter Zina when she was baptized by Kent Webber and Steve Giordano. Now Zina is part of the church and goes to Sunday school and Seekers. A special thanks to Miss Sally Carbonaro, Carolyn Gerrans and Carol Robinson for being Zina's teachers.

### **Dick and Jo Crocker**

Our family moved from Southern California to Novato in 1970. After visiting PCN only once we decided it would become our home church.

The 1970's were a time of social upheaval which affected all areas of life: families, schools, businesses, and churches. Our former Presbyterian Church split up over policies set by the Presbyterian governing board.

Although Novato was close to the epicenter of the social turmoil, our then pastor Don Rayment, was able to guide the congregation to remember the purpose of the church without falling into contentious actions. The church survived in act, thanks to Don's leadership.

## The Lutzeier Family

We envisioned raising a family in Marin and living a life of faith with a vibrant church, which we found in PCN. The church symbolizes God's presence in the community, and the spirit of love and fellowship is rooted in PCN's culture. We have met a diverse group of people who share a common mission of growing in faith together.

We love Small Group, where friendships are cultivated as we grow through God's word. Over the years, the Supper Club has provided opportunities to engage with many members. So many people are fantastic hosts and cooks! Each dinner is like a special occasion, so it feels like we celebrate life throughout the year.

The sermons, Bible study, and many fellowship opportunities have enriched our lives. We feel connected to PCN's past and feel hopeful about the future—no matter what challenges the future presents.

The first PCN church has become a symbol of Novato, a sacred gathering place. May the traditions continue for years to come.



Gabe Oates and Kate Lutzeier-Oates



Marty and Deanna Lutzeier

**A MEMORY**  
by  
Sylvia Jensvold  
(aka Mrs. Donald Brand)

Today, October 4, 2020, after communion, I was remembering 61 years ago on this World Wide Communion Sunday (as it was called then), when I was baptized and joined the Presbyterian Church of Novato. That was after taking new member classes for an hour once each week for six weeks, a requirement at that time to join PCN. Even people transferring from other Presbyterian churches were expected to take those classes.

How different these two days turned out to be in comparison. In 1959 PCN was still meeting at the old church downtown where the City Hall is now located. I wore a nice dress and dress shoes, as that's what women wore to church back then. Because it was a special day for me, I also carried gloves. Today, in the age of COVID 19, while taking communion with the congregation via Zoom in front of my computer at home, I wore a casual top, capris, and sport shoes!

When the church service ended that Sunday in 1959, a long-time member, Joy Clark, greeted me and asked if I would help teach Sunday school. As a brand new church member, I knew nothing about teaching Sunday School; but not knowing how to say "no" to Joy, I said "OK." In retrospect, that was the best response I could have given. Joy partnered me with Sue Hansen, a well-organized, experienced teacher. We met once each week to plan the next Sunday's lesson, which was very important as we had 45 four and five year olds, including two of my children, in our class.

Serving in that capacity was a perfect way to get acquainted with people and was the first of my many "OKs" over the years with other opportunities for me to serve at PCN with wonderful people.



**THE LATIN CROSS**  
Submitted by Chelta May

The 1971 Junior High Sunday School Class created the Latin cross hanging in the Christensen Room. After studying the symbols of the cross, the class collected a variety of stones from Rodeo Beach and polished them in a homemade rock polisher. The symbols within the circles are depicted by colored tiles and were designed by the students. The entire class was involved and enjoyed both a learning and creative experience.

The following class members made the symbols within the circles:

DESCENDING DOVE (HOLY SPIRIT)	Laura Stanton
LAMB OF GOD	Lynn Shaver
I.H.S. (GREEK NAME OF CHRIST)	Margaret Klein
FISH	S cott Michaels
LAMP (OF THE WORLD)	Steve Chipman
ALTER (SACRIFICE)	Maya Briggs
THE BODY OF CHRIST	Doug Dobler
BACKGROUND	Larry Dacquisto

The class was supported by:

TEACHERS	Chelta May & Ramona Chipman
WOODWORK	George Hayford
STONE POLISHING	Morton May

**First Visit to PCN**  
Dona and Becky Erba

Don and I moved to Novato in December 1962. Don had returned home from 6 months training with the National Guard and we had decided to live in Novato to be closer to our families instead of returning to San Anselmo. We found a very nice granny-unit in downtown Novato (we could walk to church) and found ourselves moving in on New Year's Eve so Don could return to his job at the Division of Highways in San Francisco on January 2.

When it was time to attend church for the first time, we got up, had breakfast, and headed off to church. As we drove down Grant Ave., there were very few cars considering services would soon be starting. We turned up Sherman Ave. and there were even fewer cars; no problem finding a parking space in front of the church. When we approached the church entrance, we saw the sign---

**WE'VE MOVED**  
**To**  
**710 Wilson Ave.**

The following Sunday, (after getting a map to find out the location of Wilson Ave.) we attended our first PCN worship service in Trevitt Hall.

**How The Storage Shed Came To Be**  
Don and Becky Erba

In the early 1980's, PCN had a great need for storage and about the same time, Don Erba's family had a dilemma. Don's grandparent's home in Petaluma had been vacant since the mid-1970's and the city had red tagged it as being a nuisance. Also, at the same time, the Erba's sons Dave & Dennis, who were in the Boy Scouts, needed Eagle projects.

So, after much thought, planning, and prayer, Dave's Eagle project was to organize work parties to carefully dismantle the house and donate the recycled lumber to PCN for a storage shed. Dennis's Eagle project was to organize work parties to prepare the building sight and to build the storage shed. By the end of the summer of 1984, PCN had their much-needed storage shed; and the Erba's continue to be reminded of their grandparent's humble house as it continues to serve our church community.

## Quasquicentennial Memories

Sandy Fong

I have many great memories but one of my favorites is a 4<sup>th</sup> of July picnic at Church around 1988. Garrick and I, along with several others, were setting up tables and decorating them on the patio for the B.B.Q. Lunch that would be happening that afternoon. Bruce Stahley, who was there overseeing the preparations, decided we needed some motivation to get the job done so he put on some John Phillip Sousa music at full volume. It did get us moving and now every time I here a John Phillip Sousa march on the 4<sup>th</sup> I think of that day and Bruce.

Those picnics were great family fun. There was B.B.Q. Chicken, hot dogs and burgers cooked on grills set up along the parking lot outside the Church office and an amazing array of other foods in a wonderful potluck . Three rows of tables were lined up in the Christensen room with every kind of salad, side dish and dessert you could hope for. The kids were encouraged to decorate their bikes and there was a bicycle parade around the median of the parking lot. At least one year, there was a dunk tank where you could try your hand at dunking the Pastor. Don Rayment and Bob Grove each took a turn in the tank and both received a few good dunkings.

Another wonderful memory for me is singing with the Followers of Christ for many years. It was a great group of people and the music was moving and fun to sing.



4<sup>th</sup> of July Bicycle Parade



4<sup>th</sup> of July Bicycle Parade

Photos from Ralph and Lisa Shanks



Fran DeNino - Paul Zukunft - Lisa Shanks - Art Plumstead - Kent Webber



Small Group Members: Mike and Diane Tarkman - Fran DeNino and Paul Zukunft - Fred and Janalee Holmes - Marty and Deanna Lutzeier - Art and Maureen Plumstead - Lisa and Ralph Shanks

### **Mary Jo Dreosch**

In the summer of 1958 Russ and I were living in San Mateo. We traveled to Novato where Russ was being interviewed for a teaching position. On the way to the interview, we drove by the Presbyterian Church which was then located at 901 Sherman Ave. We thought Novato looked like such a charming little town and we thought we would be happy to be a part of the community. Russ was interviewed by the Superintendent of Schools, Wm. J. J. Smith. He was hired to teach 8th grade at Hill Intermediate School. Bob Patterson was the principal at that time and he and his wife, Libba, took us under their wing and introduced us to PCN. The minister at the time was the Rev. Howard Swartz. We joined the church and attended the Mariners Club, the married couple's group, where we made many new friends and had great times. Our membership has reached 62 years.

**This was written by Lora Lou Smith for the Centennial Celebration**

LATEST CENNTENIAL NEWS FLASH

From the ancient memories of Lora Lou Smith

The Forever Young Mariners of our church really were young – very young – in 1949 and the fifties.

In those years, local social groups for the young and decidedly income limited couples of Novato were nil. And so, with good church leadership and some inherited inspiration and clever ideas from the very active and inventive Mariners of the Redwoods Presbyterian Church in Larkspur, which also encompassed a wide community, the Novato Presbyterian Church Mariner emerged.

Many of the community young couples – no matter what their church affiliation, if any, became members and this special rapport lasted for many years. Mariners soon became the social highlight of the month with great fellowship, services, and fun. Potlucks and programs were unique and hilarious as well as inspirational. Several Christmas exchange gifts of questionable taste circulated for man years with the good-natured pastor usually ending up as the recipient.

But the dedicated service of this group was extensive, especially in the construction of Trevitt Hall, when volunteers working on every possible phase of this new building. I think we were the contractor's main crew. The last job I remember was the painting of all the downstairs Sunday School rooms.

Then, of course, Buckaroo Breakfast became a tradition! And the story goes on...

One more old church special memory that I would like to share with you is of a very special wedding – Tali and Walt's (Sundberg), of course. Pop Raney (retired from the Petaluma Presbyterian Church) performed the ceremony, and he would not, much to Tali's consternation, let her have the music of her choice in the sanctuary, so we took to the street! You've guessed it – BAGPIPES!!!! It was great!

## **A Lifelong Presbyterian**

Kathy Takemoto

My husband, Ray Fisher, and our children, Natalee and Max, moved to Novato in 2000 from San Francisco. I was eager to find the local Presbyterian Church, as I had been raised and baptized at the Union Presbyterian Church, now the Frist Presbyterian Church of Altadena. Church was a big part of the extended Takemoto family life. The Union Presbyterian Church members were primarily Japanese and Japanese Americans. As a child, it was a struggle to sit through the occasional worship service spoken fully in Japanese. The only word I understood was, "Amen."

When we came to PCN, I felt at home with the same style of worship, hymns, and church activities.

I wish I knew more about how my Grandpa Takemoto decided to attend a Christian Church. My cousin Wayne told me they used to attend a Buddhist Temple when they lived in Berthoud, CO. However, one Sunday, Grandpa decided they were going to the Christian church instead. I have an uncle and aunt who died in infancy and are buried in Berthoud. The cemetery records show they were buried with a Methodist service.

With the exception of my mother and one of her brothers, my mother's family are Buddhist. While living in the Salinas area, a Christian minister continued to call on my grandparents, inviting them to attend his church. To get the pastor to stop coming over, my grandma made my mother go to his church where she became a Christian. Her brother, my uncle, became Catholic while the family was interned during WWII in the camp located in Poston, AZ. My mother attended the Christian services while interned.

Ray and I were married at (Donaldina) Cameron House, located in San Francisco's Chinatown, by Presbyterian minister Rev. Norman Fong.



Dallas and Bunny Dodson

December 22, 1979

*Marcia Howard Neary  
and  
Dallas Lee Dodson  
invite you to attend the  
celebration of their marriage  
and  
uniting of families  
December 22, 1979, 2:00 P.M.  
at the  
Presbyterian Church  
Wilson Avenue, Novato, CA  
  
Reception to follow*

*R.S.V.P.  
448 Wilson Avenue  
Novato, CA 94947*



Bunny + Dallas  
Dodson

Love and marriage  
in 1979 at  
the Presbyterian church.



My favorite moment  
at my favorite  
chapel!



Ariel and David Mink  
July 18, 1992



# Bits of PCN History

This rare 1896 photograph depicts the interior of the Presbyterian Church. It was taken on the day of the church's dedication.



A DEDICATION  
This rare 1896 photograph depicts the interior of the Presbyterian Church. It was taken on the day of the church's dedication.

*Records of the Presbyterian Church with a list of its members, a copy of the Holy Bible, together with copies of the Marin Independent Journal and the Sausalito News was carefully sealed in a copper box and laid under the corner stone. The people of Novato witnessed another step of her advancement that can never go back.*

Marin Independent Journal, March 21, 1896

*Articles of Incorporation  
Of  
The Presbyterian Church of Novato  
Marin County California*

*Know all Men by these presents, that on the twenty first (21) day of February in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and ninety six (1896), in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America, an election was duly held by the members of the Presbyterian Church of Novato.*

*The majority of the members of the said The Presbyterian Church of Novato were resent and voted at said election.*

*The result of said election was the following named gentlemen were by a majority of votes elected Trustees of said The Presbyterian Church of Novato: A.D. Scott, Walter Harper, Wm. J. Steele, D.Z. Wright and James Smith. That the officers who conducted said election were – R.W. Reynolds, Judge of election, Miss Eliza L. Riddle, secretary, and James Smith, Elder.*

*And we hereby certify:*

*First – The name of this corporation is and shall be The Presbyterian Church of Novato.*

*Second – The purpose for which it is formed is the holding and conducting of religious worship according to the discipline and government of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America, and acquiring and holding all such property and transacting such business as may be necessary to that end.*

*Third – The place where its principal business is to be transacted is Novato, Marin County, State of California.*

*Fourth – The terms for which it is to exist is one hundred years, beginning on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of February 1896 and ending on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of February 1996.*

*That the number of its Trustees is and shall be five: and the names and residences of those who are elected and appointed Trustees for the first term are:*

<i>A.D. Scott</i>	<i>Novato</i>
<i>Walter Harper</i>	<i>Novato</i>
<i>W.J. Steele</i>	<i>Novato</i>
<i>James Smith</i>	<i>Novato</i>
<i>D.Z. Wright</i>	<i>Novato</i>

*That all of said above named gentlemen are citizens of the State of California.*

*In witness whereof we have hereunto set out hands and seals this 4<sup>th</sup> day of March 1896.*

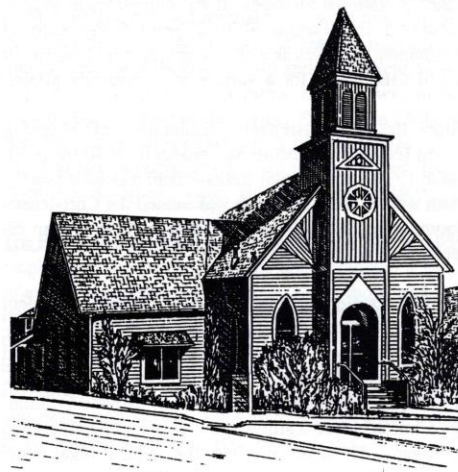
In 1952, the Second and Fourth Articles were amended. The terms of its existence in now perpetual, beginning February 21, 1986.

## History (Taken from the Centennial Booklet)

On February 2, 1896, a group of Novatoans who had been meeting as a Sunday School class was organized by the Presbytery of Benecia as The Presbyterian Church of Novato. This was the first Protestant congregation in North Marin. Early meetings were held in Scott's Hall, a room in the general store of A.D. Scott (This building, erected in 1880 on the southwest corner of Grant and Sherman Avenues, is remembered by some as Johnson's red Barn). Records of the Church Session lists three charter members: Walter Harper, Ella Riddle, and H.F. Blucher.

Less than three weeks after organization, the church officers, Elder and Trustee James Smith and Trustees A.D. Scott, Walter Harper, William J. Steele, and David Wright were authorized to proceed with the building of the church. A building fund of \$412 was raised. The lot on the corner of Sherman and DeLong Avenues was donated and an adjacent lot purchased for \$50. Captain Robert Dollar of San Rafael provided lumber, and church members and local workmen offered their labor. Steele, who drew up the plans, agreed to oversee the construction for \$2.25 per day. When completed, the white frame building, topped by a steeple, was valued at \$1,500. It appears the sanctuary was dedicated on July 19, 1896.

R.W. Reymold, a student at the Seminary, was acting minister during the organizational period of the church and building of the sanctuary. From 1896 – 1915 other Seminary students also assisted with the Sunday Service. The Rev. George W. Hayes and the Rev. Robert Crichton were among the clergymen assigned as stated pulpits during those years. By 1906, our church bell was purchased (for under \$100) and hung in the church steeple.



**The Presbyterian Church Of Novato 1896-1963**  
*Sketched by and used with the kind permission of Robert M. Sebring*



Before Red





## Raising the Bell!

On July 4, 1976, the church bell was moved from Wilson Avenue to the Novato City Hall where it was rung to celebrate America's Bicentennial.

## Moving to Wilson Avenue

- In 1957, three acres of land on Wilson Avenue was purchased from Capt. Charles and Retta Clarkson
- $\frac{3}{4}$  of an acre was purchased from Raymond and Bertha Foster
- Total purchase price of land: \$15,000
- The education building was erected first at a cost of \$164,000

PCN requests Presbytery Approval to:

- ▶ Sell its real property at Sherman and DeLong Avenues to the City of Novato for the sum of \$62,000
- ▶ Borrow \$100,000 to be used for the construction of a new building on property located on Wilson Avenue in Novato and owned by the church.

Special Congregational Meeting, April 15, 1962



Worship in Trevitt Hall



On March 5, 1978 after the call to worship, the congregation proceeded from Trevitt Hall to the new sanctuary.

In 1976 a building campaign raised \$120,000 to begin the sanctuary construction. The construction, furnishings, and landscaping cost \$350,000





This 600 year old oak tree shaded the patio area. The expanse was bricked and the tree died shortly thereafter and had to be removed.



## Sanctuary Stained Glass Windows

By Sylvia Jensvold

Periodically I've been asked various questions about the stained glass windows in the Sanctuary. I was asked to serve as Secretary of the Sanctuary Building Committee. Bill Bell was the Chairperson of the Committee. The following summarizes some of what I know about the windows from those meetings, from later conversations with Bill, and from printed reports following the completion of the Sanctuary,

For the stained glass windows, Bill Bell recommended his friend Bill Cummings of the Cummings Stained Glass Studios located in the east bay. Cummings was the glass fabricator. He worked with a "well-known" female design artist back east. Cummings toured our property and the building. The color of the glass and the artist's work were designed to be compatible with our location, to represent nature, and to enhance the redwood finish and simplicity of the interior of the Sanctuary. The glass in the windows was intended to be darker at the bottom and become increasingly lighter as the pattern went upward.

Before the glass was finished, Cummings was offered an opportunity to go back to Massachusetts, the main location of Cummings Studios, to teach stained glass at a training school. He said if we could tolerate him working from Massachusetts, he would complete the windows and cover the cost of shipping the stained glass out to us.

Cummings asked Bill if he knew of someone who could install the windows. Bill told him he was sure we had church members who could install the glass. Cummings wasn't completely happy with that idea and agreed to hire a member of his team to help some church members install the windows. Cummings designed the crates himself and followed through by shipping the glass to us. He also paid a good percentage of the installation cost. "The windows came in units and it was quite an installation process," Bill Bell said.

Listed in the Building Program Financial Statement, January 15, 1978, under Project Cost:

Stained Glass: Cummings Studios	\$12,678.78
Stained Glass installation	1,000.00

I asked Bill a few years ago if he knew the name of the artist. He did not, but said there's an inscription at the bottom of one of the panels. I searched and found the following:

Design: Hilda Sachs. Fabrication: Cummings Studios, North Adams, Mass., 1978.

The Sanctuary Building Committee was organized and began meeting in 1975. The building was successfully completed on schedule with a formal dedication in early April 1978.

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A San Rafael Independent Journal article in 1972 lists several bay area churches and buildings, and other churches throughout the western United States, where Cummings windows and work can be seen. Cummings Studios ended operation in 2006 and its comprehensive collection was donated to the Rakow Research Library of the Corning Museum of Glass, Corning, N.Y. A stained glass window designed by artist, Hilda Sachs, is in the New York State Senate lobby.



Stated Session Meeting – May 11, 1954

M/2<sup>nd</sup>/C That Session meetings be limited to 10:30 PM.



Leo Mindling, Clerk of Session

Stated Session Meeting June 11, 1962

Session approved the baptism of Robert Eric Sundberg, son of Walter and Natalie Sundberg.



Top Honors Group, 1955  
Bob Buckwalter is in this photo



Captains shake hands before the annual  
Cameron House Game, 1954  
(PCN's year to win)

**Donaldina Cameron** (July 26, 1869 – January 4, 1968) was a pioneer in the fight against slavery as a Presbyterian missionary in San Francisco's Chinatown, who helped more than 2,000 Chinese immigrant girls and women escape from forced prostitution or indentured servitude. She was known as "Fahn Quai," or the "White Devil" of Chinatown, as well as the "Angry Angel of Chinatown." – From Wikipedia





Betty Doerksen



## Betty and Ike's Wedding Party



## Youth Mission – The Next Generation











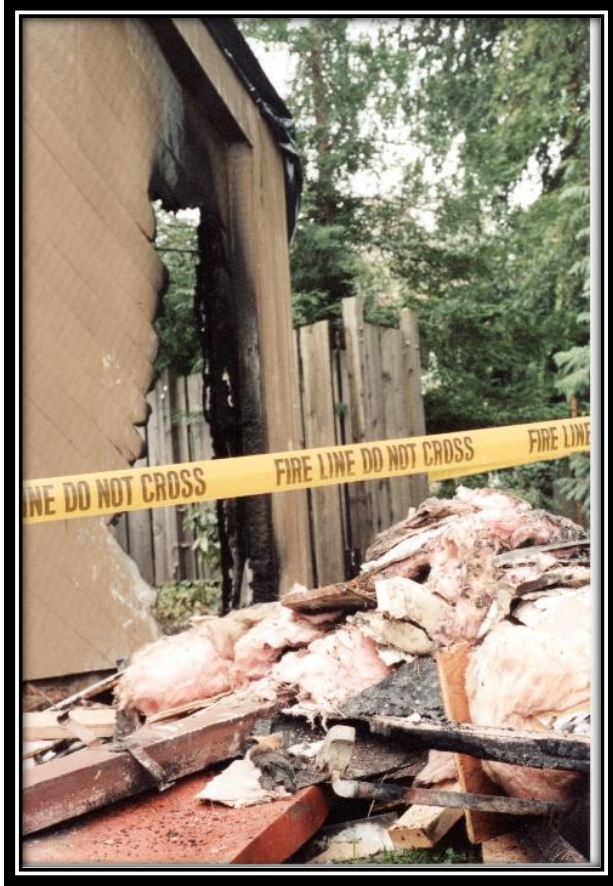


Dear Pastor Mike, Pastor Kent,  
Ms. Webber, and Ms. Stahl,

Thank you for the Bible. It looks  
very nice. I never had one  
before. I was very happy to get the  
Bible. It was a good surprise.

Sincerely,  
Max Fisher

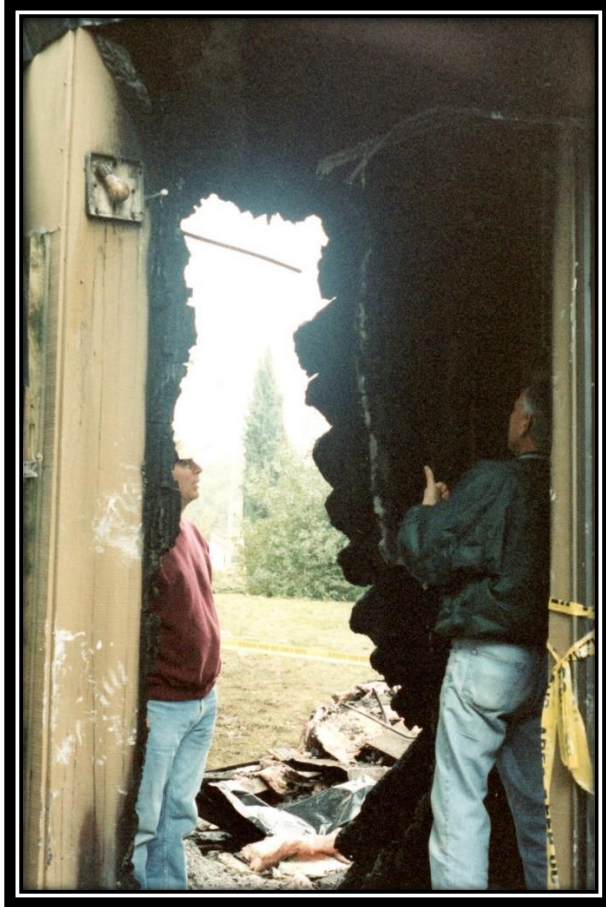
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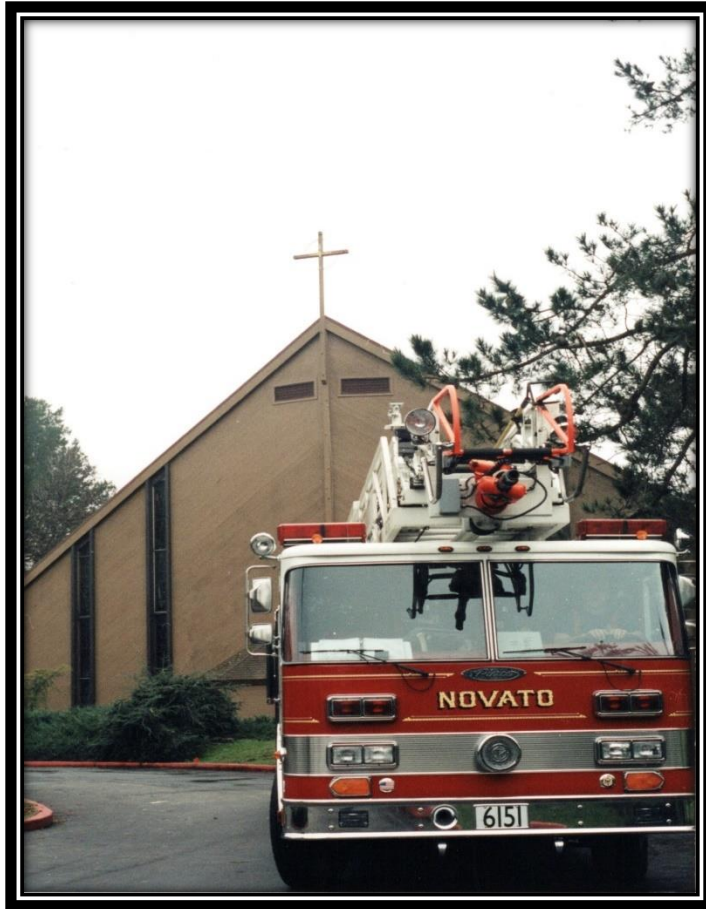


# FIRE

The sanctuary caught on fire on 1/12/2002. A neighbor spotted the fire and called the Novato Fire Department for help.







Fire photos by J. Russi



Rev. Amanda Ayars was the first staff member to be married at PCN. She married Jay Nevin on June 28, 2008.





Amanda and Jay's reception on the church patio

# Letters of Greeting

## Letter to the PCN Congregation for 125th Anniversary

Grace and peace to you, members, and friends of PCN –

As senior pastor of our blessed congregation it is my great privilege and honor to greet you in this 2021 season of celebration. The Presbyterian Church of Novato celebrates 125 years of faithful life, ministry, and service in the Novato community and greater world. Our long and fruitful history bears witness to the grace of God in Jesus Christ at work in life-giving and life-sustaining ways.

I realize that my partnership as pastor with PCN is still in its infancy, yet I feel deeply connected to the legacy that our church has and continues to create as the Spirit leads and guides us together. Even in the midst of a terrible pandemic, I have been amazed at what God does in this place with his people.

Even now we are embarking on a journey of continued discernment looking to see what God has in store for us in the next chapter of our faithful story. We have professed in one voice together that our mission is “to share the love of Jesus Christ, connect with our neighbors, and grow together in worship, faith, and service,” and our vision is “to be a beacon of hope, reviving the world through God’s love.”

Blessings to you all in this season where we celebrate the legacy of Christ’s work in PCN.

With gratitude & hope,  
Adam Smith





1226A SALVADOR AVENUE

NAPA, CALIFORNIA 94558

707-224-5407

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September 2021

Dearest Friends at the Presbyterian Church of Novato,

What a blessing and an honor to be asked to write a note of congratulations for PCN's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of mission and ministry! Billy Graham once said that "the highest form of worship is the worship of unselfish Christian service" - through dedicated and unselfish service PC Novato has certainly been learning to live like Christ. PC Novato has been a light within our presbytery and a beacon of hope to many by supporting deserving organizations through finances and volunteer work, sponsoring and praying for global missionaries, providing vouchers for food and gas for the disenfranchised in Novato, building homes for deserving families, as well as serving up pancakes with a smile at the annual Buckaroo Breakfast. Thank you for your faithful witness and your dedication to be the willing hands and feet of Christ not just in Novato, but throughout the world.

I want to thank you personally as well for the extraordinary support and love that you have extended to me almost my entire life! I was baptized at PCN, participated in God Squad as a youth, got married there (and remember the orange carpet fondly!), and eventually found my way into a variety of leadership roles that stretched me and helped me to discern that ordained ministry as a pastor is in my future. Your love and care and encouragement has been life giving.

Again, congratulations on such a momentous occasion – the legacy that you all have built thus far will continue far into the future, I know!

With love and gratitude,

Ariel Mink, Stated Clerk  
Presbytery of the Re

March 20, 2021

Dear PCN Church Family:

In our world today not many groups endure over a period of 125 years, but with the presence of the Triune God, this Novato church family has not only endured but has borne a compelling witness to Christ in our community and region! I had the privilege to serve as Pastor of PCN beginning in the Fall of 1995, less than a year before the congregation's centennial celebration. As I recall, for that landmark anniversary former Pastors Don Rayment and Clayton Cobb and former Associates Bob Grove and Nancy Wiens were present, along with former Interim Pastor Sue Fleenor. It was an entire weekend filled with a variety of celebratory activities! Not present for that celebration was former Pastor Pete Croughan, who had died a couple years earlier. I know the key ingredient in any church family is the church members, not the pastor. However, since some of you were not acquainted with the installed pastors of PCN since the congregation moved to the Wilson Avenue location, let me briefly share about each of them.

Pete Croughan was pastor when our congregation moved from Sherman Avenue (our current City Hall building) to Wilson Avenue, dedicated our first building, and served seven years as pastor. I had the privilege of meeting Pete when he and Mabel drove to Santa Cruz to attend the memorial service for an old friend and former co-worker at PG&E, Alan Hansen, in 1985. I was thrilled to meet Pete at the time because I had heard many wonderful things about him! Pete was a wonderfully kind pastor who became a therapist and comforted, guided, and cared for many over the years while serving PCN and in the years following as well!

I initially met Don Rayment, when Kim Warner, one of Don's former youth from the Presbyterian Church in Richland, Washington, was serving as Youth Director at First Presbyterian Church in Santa Cruz. Don and Kim planned a joint canoe trip on the Russian River. A couple dozen of us from Santa Cruz stayed overnight at the Novato Church and had a great time with Don and his group! Don led youth backpack trips and the campaign to build a new sanctuary. He was a courageous teacher and offered a class in New Testament Greek for group of interested students! Don was widely respected in the community and served as President of the Novato Rotary Club. Don served PCN for twenty years before retiring.

Clayton Cobb, my immediate predecessor, was acknowledged by many as a wonderfully gifted preacher! After four years serving PCN he accepted a call to become Pastor of St. Peter's by-the-Sea Presbyterian Church in Rancho Palos Verdes. Later, Clayton then served as the Southern California and Hawaii representative for the Presbyterian Board of Pensions, before retiring to a Presbyterian retirement center in Pasadena. Sadly, he had not been there long when he died suddenly earlier this year.

What I found was true of PCN when I arrived in 1995 and was still true when I retired in mid-2018 was a remarkably warm and caring and fun-loving church family with a wonderful sense of humor! It was my great pleasure to serve among you for those years!

Blessings on your entire church family, on your Pastor Adam, and your staff, as you celebrate this milestone!

Warmly in Christ,

Kent Webber

July 2021

Dear PCN:

Congratulations on yet another milestone in your life and ministry as a community of faith in Novato.

Truly you have been a blessing to generations of families and individuals who have called PCN their home at one point or another. Your ministry has extended throughout many parts of our state and world; in fact, a member of my current congregation has fond memories of PCN when she was growing up in Novato in the 50's and early 60's.

You have been a living witness to the faith you have in Jesus Christ and have faithfully shared that love and grace with your community and the world beyond, through your gracious gifts of time, talents, and treasures. You have been a light to many in the community who needed a place to call home and a place to find the mercy of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

You have exemplified this passage in many ways: "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1-2).

You are the great cloud of witnesses who have gone before and will continue into the future to share the love of Jesus with the Novato community. May you continue to seek Jesus in all you do, looking to Jesus for your direction and hope. May you also know the deep abiding love of God as you continue to run the race of faith with perseverance, hope, grace, and love. May PCN continue to be the hands and feet of Jesus to all who are in need and may you continue to experience the ever present movement of the Holy Spirit in and amongst you as you discern God's will for PCN in this next chapter.

In Christ,

Rev. Amanda Ayars Nevin (2006-2015)

Rev Amanda Ayars Nevin  
7488 E. Dayton Ave. - Fresno, CA 93737  
415-827-8076  
<http://musingsofaministeringmother.weebly.com/>

July 2021

Dear PCN Church Family,

Greetings of our Lord's Grace & Peace to all of you. It is our sincere hope & prayer that this note finds you and your loved ones safe & well.

It is our joy & honor to participate in PCN's Anniversary through this letter of greeting. When we arrived in Novato in 2012, our plan was to quietly retire but Pastor Kent & Katy Hatfield had different ideas. Within months of our arrival Steve was serving as Parish Associate and Carla was enjoying a wonderful time in Katy's choir. To say our participation in the life & ministry of PCN was a blessing would be an understatement. Like yourselves, we discovered much joy, love & renewal serving with the good people who make up PCN.

In closing, we praise God & thank you for your warm & caring welcome during our years with you. Please know that you all will continue to be held in our thoughts and prayers.

Grace & Peace,  
Steve & Carla Giordano

July, 2021

Dear Friends at Novato Presbyterian Church,

Congratulations on your anniversary and rich history of ministry in Novato! I consider myself privileged to have been part of that history, as brief as it was, and will always remember you as my first ordained position.

I write this shortly after passing 17 years since I was ordained on May 1st, 2004 with an unusual first call. I was to be the Interim Associate Pastor and would step in as the Acting Head of Staff during your then Head of Staff and Pastor Kent Webber's much deserved sabbatical. I was a bit nervous to take on such responsibility, but the rest of the staff and the community quickly calmed my nerves with their grace and helpfulness.

I may not have been there long, but my time with you readied me for more responsibility. Because of that, I broadened my search for a permanent call from just associate pastor positions to include solo pastor positions and I ended up a solo pastor just down highway 101 from you!

Even with the temporary nature of my call and the commute from the East Bay, you made me feel like part of your community. I am grateful for all of you and for your church. May your celebration be joyous!

In Christ,

Rev. Matt Gough  
Pastor and Head of Staff  
First Presbyterian Church of Corvallis, OR

July, 2021

Dear PCN Family,

I am excited to know that you are celebrating 125 years of worshipping God, serving one another and loving the city and surrounding community into a relationship with Jesus! I thank God for the opportunity to serve alongside so many wonderful disciples of Christ. I have fond memories of PCN and its faithful servants.

In the midst of a pandemic, I have watched your community of faith thrive as it continues to be the church God has called. While much has changed, and people have moved away and passed away, I love to hear how the Presbyterian Church of Novato is seeking to reconnect to, re-commit to and renew their covenant with God. It warms my heart and soul to know that I had the privilege to work and serve with you.

It is my prayer that God would bless y'all (I just left Texas!) in ways you cannot even fathom. My faith and my call to serve Jesus is encouraged by your faithfulness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I will never forget your generous gift to our family when our home was flooded 3 ½ years ago. Long after we left PCN, your love and mercy to us was a blessing beyond anything we could comprehend. God was at work in you!

Congratulations, Sisters and Brothers! May our Lord continue to do mighty things through PCN!

In Christ's Love,

Rev. Michael Umbenhaur, Associate Pastor 1999-2004

Dear Members and Friends of the Novato Church,

Holy Week 2021

I'm delighted to join in this celebration of this milestone anniversary with you. Thank you for this invitation. I pray these letters from those who have walked with you over the years will be nourishing to you, as you continue to walk with Christ.

You have been especially on my mind, as we come to these sacred days of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem. I have such powerful memories of Lent and Easter with you all—from the quiet, somber weekly fasts and Eucharists to the traditional Sunrise Service with the extended community of Novato, and of course, the extraordinary exclamation of Grace on Easter morning. I remember warm bread on the Communion table, bathed in dim light, with people from 14 to 80 years old, feasting on the Body and Blood of Jesus. Together, on the freezing cold climb of the hillside with Novato's Christian neighbors, we bore witness to the Resurrection in the warming glow from the East, yet again. I'll never forget the brass, timpani, and harmonic voices, which Allen Petker conducted, plus Clayton Cobb's preaching of the Good News, that shaped Easter morning amid hundreds of worshippers. I *knew* in every cell of my being that, indeed, He is Risen.

I've also been re-living the children's sermons with the gaggle of kids we shepherded together. The laughter, the poignancy, and the splendid questions all revealed God's surprising love. I'll never forget sharing about the parable of tiny mustard seed and how it becomes a huge bush. One little boy, who I have stayed in touch with over the 30 years since, nearly came out of his skin with curiosity, "What happens if the mustard on my ham sandwich turns into a huge bush?" Together, we all laughed with joy at this extravagance of God's love. So many of the elders in the congregation spoke to me about those "children's" sermons being for them, giving love and mercy that their hearts longed for. To know a God of playfulness is to heal aching history.

Then there are the mission trips and sand volleyball court and Deacon's service to our beloved ones in need and the budgets and car washes and Stephen's ministry trainings and Sunday School curriculum decisions and vulnerable marital struggles and tender hospital visits. In each and all, you let me journey with you, bringing my gifts and limitations. I learned where I had something to contribute and where I needed to ask for more help.

One grace, in particular, I want to describe is because of our recent and surprising loss of Clayton Cobb. This year, I mark 30 years of ordained ministry. I have become a clergywoman whose ministry focuses on healing and wholeness through Christ's grace, especially at times of transition and vulnerability. I credit Clayton for teaching me how to be utterly present when leading a memorial service. He taught me how to sit with a family and beckon forth the stories of their loved ones. He modeled how to relate the mountain top moments as well as the back ally gutter ones—all through the lens of the One who is Love. He showed me how to speak of death with utter dignity and reverence. So, people have come to trust that I can go with them to the joys of new babies and the traumas of abuse. I learned these ways among you, and I cannot be more grateful to have had Clayton tutor me in them.

I pray you, each and all, the grace to embrace where God is leading you through Adam's ministry. I trust the Way of Christ to help you experience the Kindom of God already among you. Abiding with you in Hope, happy anniversary!

Nancy S. Wiens, M.Div., Ph.D.





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CITY OF NOVATO  
CALIFORNIA  
*Proclamation*

**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NOVATO  
125<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

WHEREAS, the Presbyterian Church of Novato was incorporated on February 21, 1896, with charter members Walter Harper, Ella Riddle and H. F. Blucher, who originally met at Scott's Hall located at the southwest corner of Grant and Sherman Avenues; and

WHEREAS, the Presbyterian Church of Novato purchased a lot for \$50 at the corner of DeLong and Sherman Avenues and completed the foundation of a church building on March 21, 1896, as witnessed by merchants, citizens of Novato and church members, becoming the first Protestant congregation in North Marin; and

WHEREAS, the Presbyterian Church sold the original church buildings to the City of Novato for \$2,500 to be used as a civic center, began construction of a new church on June 10, 1962 at 710 Wilson Avenue, and reset the church bell in the original church steeple which was rung in celebration of the Nation's 200th birthday on July 4, 1976; and

WHEREAS, through worship, faith and service the Presbyterian Church of Novato shares the love of Jesus Christ by connecting with their neighbors and by supporting the world through international missionaries, Rise Against Hunger and Faith in Practice; and

WHEREAS, they support Marin County through the work of Homeward Bound, Gilead House, North Marin Community Services, Downtown Streets Team, Boy Scouts of America and sponsors the July 4th Buckaroo Breakfast; and

WHEREAS, the Presbyterian Church of Novato supports Novato residents through vibrant youth and children's' ministries, adult Bible study, and inter-generational worship services.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the City Council of the City of Novato, on behalf of the residents of Novato, do hereby commemorate 125 years of **The Presbyterian Church of Novato** with best wishes and sincere appreciation for their significant contributions, and looks forward to many more years of continued success.

Pat Eklund  
Mayor

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Senator Dianne Feinstein  
Washington, D.C.

July 1, 2021

Presbyterian Church of Novato  
710 Wilson Avenue  
Novato, CA 94947

Dear Friends:

It is with great pleasure that I congratulate you on the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first service of the Presbyterian Church of Novato. This is a tremendous milestone.

The Presbyterian Church of Novato's dedication, hard work, and outstanding service over the years is truly inspiring. Your partnership with the local food bank, support for homeless families and individuals through Homeward Bound and Downtown Streets, dedication to California's Re-Entry Program through the "All Dressed Up Ministry," and mentorship of children through the Lynwood School Reading Program is a testament to your faith and passion to serve. All of your contributions have enriched the lives of many in Marin County.

As a United States Senator representing the people of California, I commend the Presbyterian Church of Novato for your many contributions. I wish you a wonderful 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration and continued success in the years to come.

Sincerely,

Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator

DF:ab

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# *Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition*

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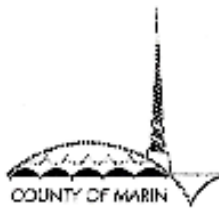
## *Presbyterian Church of Novato*

In recognition of your quasiquintennial anniversary. Since opening its doors in 1896, the Presbyterian Church of Novato has offered a sanctuary for its parishioners built on peace and compassion. The clergy's commitment to bringing people together to worship, celebrate, and reflect has uplifted the spiritual well-being of congregants while benefitting the community at large. By extending its fellowship to help people in need, including by building homes for families abroad and rebuilding homes for fire victims here on the North Coast, the Presbyterian Church of Novato has set an exemplary legacy of service. As a treasured pillar in the community, the Church will no doubt continue to make a positive impact for many more years to come. Congratulations on this momentous occasion.

**125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**  
**Sunday, September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Jared Huffman".

THE HON. JARED HUFFMAN  
CALIFORNIA'S SECOND DISTRICT  
UNITED STATES CONGRESS



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July 1, 2021

Presbyterian Church of Novato  
c/o Kathy Takemoto, Clerk of Session  
710 Wilson Avenue  
Novato, CA 94947

Dear Kathy,

This may be the first quasquicentennial anniversary I've ever had the privilege to commemorate!

Congratulations to the Presbyterian Church of Novato on your 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary; what an incredible presence you have had in Novato since the church was formed and incorporated in 1896.

The Presbyterian Church's commitment to allocating 20% of your budget to support local organizations in Novato including Gilead House, Homeward Bound, and North Marin Community Services in addition to home building in Juarez, Mexico and Presbyterian Missionaries working worldwide is commendable.

Your church not only provides social and educational opportunities for its members but for the community at large. My guess is there aren't many Novato residents that haven't enjoyed the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Buckaroo Breakfast before the annual parade. Your dedication to community is exemplary.

Many blessings to all of you. Your church is a valued asset in the community. Congratulations again on 125 years of service.

Sincerely,

Judy Arnold  
Marin County Supervisor