



**PresPress**

**September 2020**

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

**Adam Smith**

**“A Kaleidoscope of Love”**

I do not like election seasons. It's not that I don't like the debating or the differences in ideas, it's the absence of compassion and love that gets to me. It's the attacking, the misleading, the manipulation, and the half-truths. It's the exploitation of people for political gain. It's the rigidity of thought without the necessary malleability that true relationship warrants – conviction without compassion.

Absence of love tears at my soul and leaves a gaping hole in my being. Do you know what I mean?

“God is love,” is the profession of the epistle writer. I am reminded time and again that, as I look for signs of God around the world, it is in the places where love is present and in the places I choose to love that reveal God. Love is at the heart of the Christian faith, in the grace of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Love is the heart of the law and the gospel. It is the heart of who we are, to whom we belong, and what we do.

And we are stewards of God's love. Whether it's election season, or we're in the middle of a pandemic, or burdened by raging wildfires, the love of God has been given to us, and we in turn are stewards of that love for the world – love that takes on a kaleidoscope of shape and color.

As we enter this election season, in a divided country, in the midst of a pandemic, in a region of the world plagued by wildfires, it is God's love that we all need to hear about, remember, and hold on to.

And so as we jump into the beginning of our program year at PCN, we are beginning a new worship series (Sept. 13 - Oct. 18) called “A Kaleidoscope of Love.” Each Sunday we will be looking at different ways that we are called to be stewards of God's love. We'll talk about listening, storytelling, togetherness, charity, and on the final Sunday of the series (Consecration Sunday, October 18th), a guest preacher will share God's Word with us, someone you may know fairly well: Rev. Kent Webber.

2020 is not the year any of us planned on. It has been full of challenges and trials that no one could have predicted, and it seems to promise much of the same in the months to come. Some people are waiting idly by thinking they will witness the collapse of the world around them; that these challenges will overcome us; that tomorrow only promises more of the tragedy to come.

But this is not us, dear saints. This is not the Church of Jesus Christ. We are a people of hope and grace. We are a people not defined by the calamity of our time, but by the grace of our God. We are stewards of something that can never be destroyed: a story that is everyone's story; a promise that is for the entire world; a love so powerful and so far-reaching that it echoes throughout creation and within the very fabric of our very being.

Through you and me ... the stewards of God's grace ... Christ can and will change the world. In the middle of division, we will sow the seeds of unity. In the middle of half-truths, we will share whole-truth in love. In the middle of others' selfishness, we will give of ourselves for the sake of someone else. When policy and power only serve the rich, we will serve the poor and the outcast. When others yell past one another on their own righteous crusade, we take the time to listen, empathize, and grow together. When people lose hope of finding a vaccine, we will share about God, the great physician. When the world is desperate for light in their lives having been masked in the fog of the storm, PCN will be a beacon of hope shining out for the world to see and become a part of.

Dear saints, we start this program year basking in the love of God ... because love is the answer that the world is looking for.

Grace & Peace,  
Adam



Hello PCN! Hope you all enjoyed Mission Trip Sunday. The kids had a blast doing their parts and the testimonies were very heartfelt. As you heard, instead of going to a far-off location, the mission trip was a week of hands-on local service projects. This approach gave us the opportunity to be together as a youth group for the first time since March and to iron out safety protocols.

On the heels of the successful mission trip at the end of summer break, we went on a high school and a middle school hike on the Big Trees trail. The kids had a great time, as it was nice to get out of our houses and into nature. The picture below is from the middle school hike.



These activities were successful and safe and lead us to be able to launch Youth Group Live. Since the middle of August, we have been having Sunday night youth group in person. In light of the schools starting online, it is nice for the kids to have a safe, in-person opportunity to enjoy youth group and see their friends.

Our Youth Group Site Protection Plan is available for review but we are adhering to the following rules:

1. Masks at all times
2. Youth Group is outside
3. Temperature checks upon arrival
4. Social distancing
5. No re-touching or sharing the same equipment
6. One at a time in the bathroom
7. Thoroughly cleaning bathrooms at the end of each evening

It is a new world and we are navigating it as best we can while still building relationships with the kids. I am excited to continue to minister in an in-person fashion. Safety is our top priority as we learn more about God and have some fun on Sunday nights.

David Mink, Directory of Youth Ministry



## **September is going to be EPIC!**

We are excited to release our new fall program on September 1<sup>st</sup>!

From September through December we will be covering the Fruits of the Spirit, a new one each week.

This program will be very much like Vacation Bible School. A video link will be sent to families each week. At the end of each month we will 'gather together' on Zoom.

We have puppet friends joining us as many of you have seen in our promo videos, and David Harmon will be helping us virtually worship in song.

Just like worship on Sundays we are excited to have kids from past and present programs able to join us as distance is no longer an issue. We have personally invited more than 100 children!

As always, we appreciate your kind words and tremendous support. Please pray we will develop a program God will use to connect His word and love to children everywhere!





## **THE SEX TRAFFICKING PREVENTION WORKSHOP**

The latest from AIM: “Despite all that's happening around the world, AIM is not slowing down. Trafficking hasn't slowed, so we won't either. In addition, COVID-19 has taken away people's jobs and income, and in Cambodia that means no food and traffickers know this. They are preying on the poor. So, we created a Humanitarian Response to provide food and prevent children from being sold for food. Our AIM SWAT team is actively rescuing and our AIM school teachers are delivering quality education in small community-based groups because in-class or online education isn't possible.”

Here is a link to May rescues: <https://agapewebsite.org/swat-may-2020/>

If you want to learn more about AIM, contact Phil Dougherty at [phildou@comcast.net](mailto:phildou@comcast.net) or 415-328-6674.



## Welcome to Gilead House: Meet Christina

*"Since moving to Gilead House, I've realized how much peace and calm God can bring into my life."*

My name is Christina, and I have a six-year-old son named Ruben. I am currently working in Property Management as a leasing consultant. There have been lots of ups and downs during my time at GH and throughout my entire life, but my desire to succeed and now provide a better future for myself and Ruben has always helped me push through the hard times. GH has really reminded me how much I love myself.

I have learned a lot with the classes that have been offered to me in the 18 months that I've lived at Gilead House. I learned to manage my stress during challenging and uncertain times. I have learned and implemented new parenting techniques that have helped me deal with my child's changing behaviors as we struggled to find stability and routine. I've learned job-search techniques that have helped me create a resume and develop interview techniques that will help me find and move up in my career. I have learned how developing a relationship with God can help you find peace. Most importantly, I have learned to manage and save so I can take control of my finances.

"Since living at GH I have been able to accomplish so many of my personal goals. I have held a job for the 18 months that I have lived here. I have paid off 70% of my debt. My credit score has gone up by over 100 points."

My proudest accomplishment while living at GH has been continuing working on my mental health. I see my therapist twice a week. With the stability I have with the housing and support provided at GH, I have been able to continue my relationship with my therapist that I have been seeing for close to three years. I have grown a lot as a person since moving into the GH program.

Ruben has made so many changes since moving to GH. He is more confident in himself and can enjoy just being a kid. He trusts now that we have stability and that has helped him make friends with other children. He enjoys being around others, and he is proud of the relationship we have today. He loves his school and enjoys learning. I am grateful that we can make school and spending time together a priority thanks to the security we have here at GH.

"While at GH I have learned that I am strong and resilient."

My goals for the future are to get my real estate license and manage my own property and sell homes. During the quarantine I have completed my real estate courses and just need to complete the state exam to get my license. I am studying for that now.



My spiritual beliefs have never been a big part of my life but I have always believed in God, though I've never established much of a relationship with Him. Since moving to GH, I realized how much peace and calm God can bring into my life. Working with Ginger weekly has really strengthened my belief in God's plan for me and my desire to have a close relationship with him. I am very grateful for that. Thank you, GH!

### Working Together

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

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Help support Gilead House's mission to help mothers and children by joining in one of their upcoming events. Want to go for a walk or run with your kids as a way to get out of the house and enjoy some fresh air? We have that covered. Tired of eating the same old meal and want to try something amazingly different? How about a virtual cooking class with chefs formerly with the French Laundry?

Their website at <https://www.gileadhouse.org/events> lists more information about the following great events:

Aug. 30 – Sept. 17: Gilead House Virtual Race for Hope  
Sept. 12 at 6 p.m.: Quarantine Kitchen (Black Truffle Risotto)

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### **Redwood Gospel Mission**

Last month members of the PCN Men's Group assembled and dropped off 29 hygiene bags to the Redwood Gospel Mission, which is housing the homeless at Alliance Redwoods near Occidental.





by Sierra Mink

This year was certainly not what I expected. It had its fair share of mess-ups, miracles and mundane moments to be sure. I missed a few trains and had some growing to do in my racial awareness journey; I met new people who showed me the face of God and felt the Spirit guide me in conversations; I learned new recipes and methods of cooking and even what in the world a daikon radish was!

I had the incredible opportunity to work with Living Waters Center of Hope for most of my time as a YAV in Boston. I served coffee, cut and cooked potatoes, and helped folks get the clothes and hygiene items they needed. I learned the power of presence and of showing up every day to listen and acknowledge the struggles of folks who walked in the doors. While COVID-19 caused my time with Living Waters to come to an early end, I wouldn't trade a minute of my time serving the unhoused and vulnerable community of Lowell alongside the funniest, most loving and compassionate volunteers.

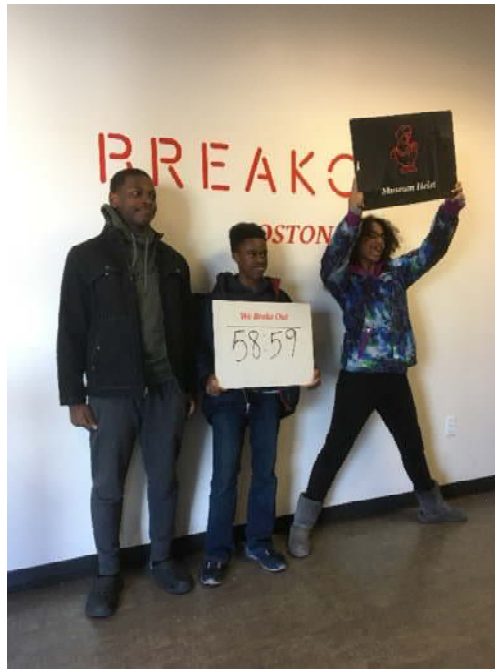


Here's how they're adapting: socially distanced tables where folks can sit and enjoy the food served from the window.

In addition to my time at Living Waters, I also worked at Eliot Presbyterian Church. Beginning work, I felt like there was a "place prepared" before I came to the congregation. My skills and passions were met, developed, and utilized to grow in faith and discern what I wanted to do post-YAV. While I was at Eliot Church, I helped out with the large congregational events like Thanksgiving and even helped lead the MLK Service Sunday where we packaged more than 10,000 meals that went to the local food bank. I also had the most amazing opportunity to work with Eliot's Confirmation students. I had never been so heartened and impressed by a group of young people



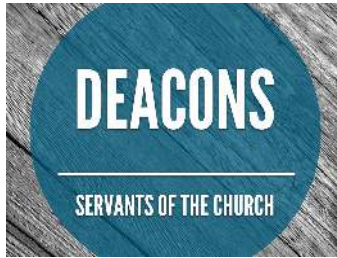
than getting to witness the students' growth throughout the year. I am so proud to have been able to watch them flourish in their faith.



Here are the students showing off their completion time for an escape room at our spring retreat!

From the lessons I've learned from Living Waters and Eliot Church, I have discerned my vocation and education goals. I will be beginning a Master's in Nonprofit Management at Northeastern University and starting work at *common cathedral* in Boston, MA. To learn more about *common cathedral*, click this [link](#) to check them out! I am so blessed to have the support of friends and family (blood relations and church family!) on my side in this new adventure.

The way I came to *common cathedral* was nothing short of a miracle. After a few missed opportunities to participate in their programs, I was forwarded the job application with a couple of days left to apply. Reading about the nonprofit more closely, I felt my excitement grow. It was so in line with what I felt called to do. After applying and interviewing, several folks recommended to the nonprofit that I would be a great fit for the position. Soon after, I was offered the job! My sense of a "place prepared" that I started my YAV year with continues to my feeling of being where I'm supposed to be at *common cathedral*. I couldn't be happier with my next chapter of life.



Have you been receiving phone calls, cards, or surprise gifts lately? The Deacons have been busy reaching out to our PCN family to be sure you are doing well.

If you have any needs, shopping, errands or meals, please let your Deacon contact know, or send an email to [deacons@pcnovato.org](mailto:deacons@pcnovato.org). You can always call the church office as well. We are here to help and love serving and caring for our PCN family and neighbors.

*Jesus said, "All men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." ~John 13:35*



Save the Date  
Sunday October 4, 2020  
8 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Online Registration is open NOW!  
Pre-registration is required at [www.vitalant.org](http://www.vitalant.org)

We look forward to seeing you there and helping those in need in our community and in the greater Bay Area. Please donate if you can. Stay well, safe and healthy.

*"A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed." ~Proverbs 11:25*

Together we serve,  
Becky Praun/PCN Blood Drive Coordinator  
(415) 472-1733

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Meal Train for Lisa Lee

Lisa recently had surgery for a broken foot. Her recovery limits her to putting any pressure on her foot for six to eight weeks.

If you would like to provide a restaurant or market 'pre-cooked' meal for Lisa and her family, please go to [www.mealtrain.com](http://www.mealtrain.com) or contact Becky Praun, meal coordinator.

Matthew 25: 44-45



## 2020 PCN Stewardship Update

As I start this update, I am not sure where to begin. What started as a year with plans of “building for the future” where we looked to Jesus to help us discern what the future might look like for the church, we had no way of knowing the horrid COVID-19 was coming/ruling or how quickly we would need to change the ways we worship, connect and serve. But we did change and found a way to effectively worship together, virtually via our phones, tablets, and computers. This way of worshiping did not come without challenges. But with challenges come new opportunities to connect, serve, and grow. Our current situation in this time of COVID-19 will also require changes in how we move forward with stewardship. While plans are still evolving, I will provide a few updates:

- Our stewardship theme this year will be a “kaleidoscope of love.” Adam will focus on the many ways that we can see God’s love and show love during times of challenge and how love provides a bridge to stewardship
- Our fall Ministry Fair traditionally held in September will be virtual. We are working to find ways to use our website to collect signups for several areas where we need volunteers. The ways we volunteer will change, as will the ways to serve. For example, the ways we can provide Sunday School and Seekers will change, but we still need volunteers to help with virtual reach-out. We held Vacation Bible School virtually with the help of all our talented leaders and volunteers. Look for more updates on ways to serve and how to sign up in the next few weeks
- How we pledge will also change. We are looking at setting up an online pledge option on the church’s website, [pcnovato.org](http://pcnovato.org), mail-in options, and maybe a drive-through option, think “car parade.”
- Consecration Sunday will be [October 18th](#). We are very excited to have the Reverend Dr. Kent Webber provide our sermon that day! At this point we anticipate the service will still be online.

This year has provided us all with challenges and opportunities to serve in new and exciting ways. With God’s love and support, we look to support the church with our time, talents, and treasure (financial) gifts.

Together we humbly serve Christ,

Beth Flynn  
Stewardship Elder



### **A "Soft" Reopening at PCN!**

Join a group of 24 of your PCN friends at a Labor Day fellowship event! The Reconvening Task Force has been meeting on a weekly basis to discuss and plan the reopening of our campus. As a first step we have planned an event for a small group on Labor Day.

Please click on or copy this link

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

to find out more and to register to attend. Space is limited. The success of this event will lead to more small gatherings being scheduled.



Mark your calendars for Program & Fellowship's next virtual bingo night, set for Friday, September 18 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Be on the lookout for an email with the link as the event nears. Contact Tonya Church at [tonya.church@comcast.net](mailto:tonya.church@comcast.net) if you'd like extra bingo cards.



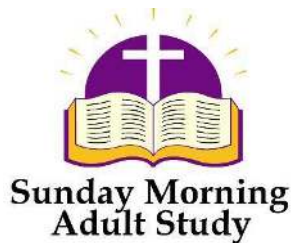
### **Juarez Mission Trip 2021**

The Juarez Mission Trip team is accepting reservations for our trip scheduled October 20-23, 2021!

Plan to join us on a most memorable and humbling experience of being God's hands in mission work.

*'Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.'* ~Galatians 6:9

For more details, contact Brad Praun/Team Member at [bradpraun@yahoo.com](mailto:bradpraun@yahoo.com), or call 415 472-1733.



We would like to invite each of you to the Sunday morning adult Bible study. The group meets via **Zoom** at 8 a.m. every Sunday morning. We have a lively group and great discussions on the Scriptures. Coming next quarter (September through November 2020) the theme will be **“LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER.”** If you would like to join our group, please contact one of the study leaders listed below as we will need your email address to send you the Zoom link/invitation.

### **“LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER”**

God commands us to love one another as God loves us. However, due to our sinful hearts, obeying this command is far easier said than done.

#### **UNIT 1:**

This unit begins with the story of Joseph. The jealousy within Jacob’s family leads to Joseph’s slavery in Egypt, but Joseph’s faith in God and his commitment to love that refuses to hold on to past wrongs helps redeem the tragic situation and unites the family.

#### **UNIT 2:**

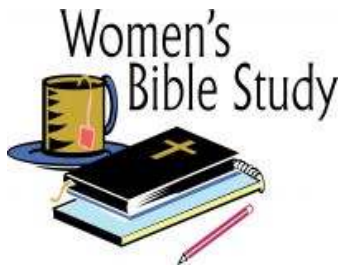
We look at the teachings of Jesus about caring for the poor and needy, loving and embracing the stranger, loving one another, and loving one’s enemies. 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13 explores Paul’s description of love, which depicts the height of human love coming from divine love.

#### **UNIT 3:**

This unit studies how believers love by serving and the love of God that comes from abiding in Christ, the true vine. 1st John shows that the abiding love of God is through the Holy Spirit, who makes it possible for us to love one another. Acts reveals how the early Christians did and did not show love for each other, while James says loving your neighbor is the fulfillment of the law of God.

**Study Leaders,**  
**Carol Dacquisto, Larry Dacquisto, and Karen Rogers**





## 1 & 2 SAMUEL

We are happy to announce that Thursday's **Women's Bible Study** will return to its weekly study of 1 & 2 Samuel via **Zoom** on Thursday, September 10 from 9:30 to 11 a.m. Your Bible study leaders will continue to be Carol Dacquisto, Elaine Harris and Melodie Baird. Each of us is excited and grateful that we will be able to share God's word with all of you again.

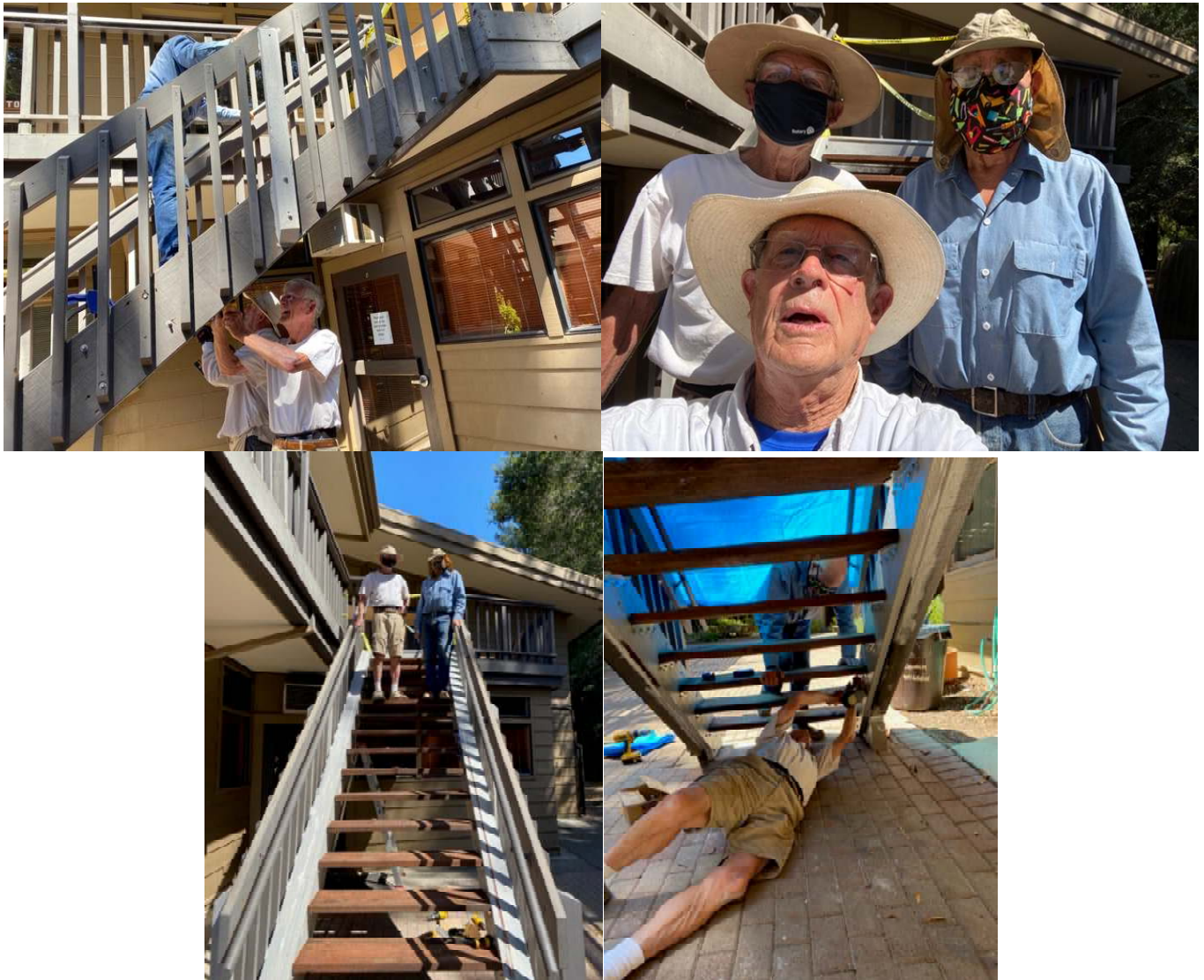
1st Samuel recounts the history of Israel at a very crucial stage of its existence. The crucial development in the nation was its unwillingness to have God as its only king. When we left our studies in March, we found that Samuel's efforts to convince Israel that a king was not the answer to its problems had fallen on deaf ears. When Samuel recognizes Saul as God's chosen, he anoints Saul as Israel's king, and when the spirit of God comes upon him, Saul is transformed into a new person (1 Samuel 10:9). This September, we return to find Samuel making his farewell address to his beloved nation, which he truly believes has made a terrible mistake.

For class September 10, it will be helpful to have read 1 Samuel 8-15, with emphasis on Samuel's farewell address found in chapter 12:1-25. We will summarize and share our understanding of Samuel's main points (for details, see *Saul's Rise* found on page 44, #13 of the class study guide).

Please feel welcome to join us each Thursday morning from 9:30 to 11 a.m. on September 10, 17, 24 and 30. *We have only one requirement - we need your email address so that we can officially invite you to join our meeting.* 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.



Many thanks to our property members and friends for their COMPLETE REPAIR, over the summer, of the back stairway that leads from the patio to offices and the youth room. The stairs are now solid and good-looking ... just like our hard-working benefactors pictured here. The staircase is now ready and waiting for us all when we can return.





## MEN'S BIBLE STUDY

The Men's Bible Study continues to meet virtually Wednesday mornings at 7:30 a.m. Join us for this one-hour mid-week boost and share great fellowship with brothers. And no homework! 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.



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



Here's an important number to jot down: (415) 472-0911. This is the **non-injury** lift assist phone number from the Novato Fire Department. If you or someone you know has fallen and you can't lift him/her, the fire department will come help!

# 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