

Hill 'n Vale

Newsletter of the Tomales and Two Rock Valley Presbyterian Churches

Visit us at tomalespresbyterian.org and tworockvalleypresbyterian.org

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PASTORAL PONDERINGS

Dear Friends in Two Rock and Tomales,

Another summer holiday is coming around, and once again most special events are cancelled: No Founders' Day in Tomales this Labor Day weekend; no other big community events scheduled; maybe just some small, socially distant BBQs in people's backyard. Get-togethers for big family reunions or favorite church fundraisers are on hold yet again.

In a sermon earlier this year, Walter Brueggemann reflected on the lack of community gatherings and celebrations during this time of covid-19. Brueggemann, a minister in the United Church of Christ and a retired professor of Old Testament at Columbia Theological Seminary, points out parallels between the time of the prophet Jeremiah and our own time. Jeremiah was active during the rise of the Babylonian empire and its war with the kingdom of Judah, culminating in the siege and destruction of Jerusalem in 598-597 BCE. The prophet noticed that during those months, all weddings were cancelled (Jer. 7:34, 16:9) and even funerals and burials stopped (Jer. 7:32-33), for the whole land was becoming a ruin and a waste, and the people were taken into Babylonian exile

(Jer. 25:10). There were no more joyful gatherings as disaster struck the kingdom of Judah.

As coronavirus cases continue to rise in our area, and as another fire season has begun, it may feel like one disaster after another is striking us hard. In our area, we face flash floods in the winter, fires in the summer, and covid-19 since the beginning of the year, affecting the health and the economic well-being of many people. Big weddings have been postponed or scaled back; often burials are held remotely on zoom; and many business may not be able to reopen even when restrictions are finally lifted.

How do we hang onto hope under such circumstances, how do we find courage for the living of these days? A response to questions like these can again be found in the writings of Jeremiah. The prophet reminds us that, even in the midst of hardship and suffering, God's everlasting love and faithfulness continue (Jer. 31:2-3). God does not abandon us, God does not forsake us; even when natural or human-made disasters strike, God seeks to uphold us. For God desires for us recovery and healing (Jer. 33:6), God seeks to restore and rebuild (Jer. 33:7). God wants to comfort and console us, wants to turn mourning into joy and give us gladness for the sorrows we endure (Jer. 31:13).

And this is exactly how we can encourage one another when we check in with our friends on the

phone, when we connect with our family on FaceTime, when we find ourselves in zoom break-out rooms after worship on Sunday: we can remind one another of the goodness and grace of our God, who is near us and surrounds us with loving kindness. And we can share such love and kindness with one another, as tangible signs of God's Spirit in our midst. And you do that: during the recent Walbridge and Woodward fires in Sonoma and Marin Counties, several of you have opened your homes to evacuees; others have opened your ranches to life stock that was evacuated; Two Rock is giving quilts to those who lost homes; some of you are working at food pantries where the demand for food is ever growing; and many are faithfully donating funds to the Cents-Ability Offering. Thank you, everyone!

Let us continue to encourage one another by word and deed during these strange and difficult times. And let us trust that, by the grace and mercy of God, there will be big weddings again, and large family gatherings, and huge church potlucks, and even singing and dancing (Jer. 33:10-11).

May God bless you and keep you safe,

Pastor Cornelia



THANK YOU'S

Even though we did not hold our annual Abelskiver Fundraiser on Mother's Day this year, people still donated \$ 762 to the **Abelskiver Fund!** This fund is used exclusively to assist individuals or families in our communities with one-time emergency needs. What a generous gift: to make a donation for a meal that could not be prepared and could not be eaten in 2020, so that funds would be available to community members when needed. Many thanks to everyone who contributed!

Great thanks to all who **continue to support our two churches** during this time of coronavirus. Thank you for joining us for zoom worship, for sending in your pledges, for making extra donations, for giving of your time, for praying for our congregations, and for staying in touch with one another. By the grace of God, we'll stay strong together and get through this!

WORSHIP

† Please join us
For Sunday Worship
on ZOOM at 11:00 am
(email the church for the link)
until we can return
to in-person worship.

† Due to the number of covid-19 cases in our two counties, the in-person service we had planned for Tomales Presbyterian Church is on hold. But please remind family and friends that **our churches remain open** and that we gather remotely for worship and most other church activities.

† **Our worship during August and September** continues to follow the gospel according to Matthew. We are exploring the tension that can exist between **Conventional Wisdom and Divine Wisdom** and that can be a challenge for us as we seek to follow our Lord Jesus Christ.

On the first Sunday in October, we will observe **World Communion Sunday** with Christians all around the globe. And on October 11, 18, and 25 we will focus on **stewardship** and on our churches' plans for ministry in the coming year.

A big thank you to the many people who lead our zoom services faithfully and creatively every week.

† Each Sunday, we have **two liturgists** for worship, one from Two Rock Presbyterian Church and one from Tomales Presbyterian Church. They serve on a rotating basis and call us to worship, read the Scripture passages, and invite us to share our offering.

† And each Sunday, we have several **people who bring us music.** Gray Foster from the Tomales Church is always part of that group, as are Margaret and Mel Todt and Kay Fish from Two Rock. On a rotating basis, they are joined by Kyle Craft, David Coe, Crystal Miller, Julie Hochstrasser, or Kathy Murphy. We have so many talented musicians in our midst, we are truly blessed!

† And then there is our **technical team** of Kathy Murphy and David Coe. They take turns hosting the zoom meeting, making sure that people are muted much of the time, and playing for everyone the pre-recorded music. Just recently, they have also arranged for us to join break-out groups after worship, so

that we have an opportunity to meet in small groups to talk and share.

Many thanks to everyone who helps make worship special during this special and unusual time. All of us are grateful for our terrific worship team!

† Two Rock Choir director Kay Fish found another piece of music for our **joint choir to sing remotely.** We are grateful for our lead singers in the soprano, alto, tenor, and bass sections; and we are delighted for every voice that is joining in! When all choir members, plus organist Margaret Todt and violinist Kyle Craft, have recorded their separate parts, Kathy Murphy spends time on her computer synchronizing the various soundtracks. And soon during an upcoming zoom worship, we will be able to listen to our remote choir sing *There is a Higher Throne* by Keith Getty and Kristyn Lennox Getty.



† Sometimes we are sad that we are not able to worship in our sanctuaries and see our church friends in person. On the other hand, now that we are worshipping remotely on zoom, we are able to see and welcome people whom we had not been able to reach before. **Because of internet technology,** David Burbank's granddaughter Corinne Bousquet is now joining us from Hawaii; Carl Carter's sister Wenda Paton comes in from Boston; Tomales member Lea Christensen-Morris is in Little

River, CA; and of course local members and friends zoom in from Dillon Beach to the northern edge of Santa Rosa and from vacation homes at Clear Lake to the Sierra foothills. What a wide reach our two little churches have!

EDUCATION & LEARNING

☺ On August 24, we started a **joint book group** that gets together on zoom. Right now, we are reading Austin Channing Brown, *I'm Still Here. Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness*. This reading groups meets on **Monday afternoons from 3:30 to 5:00 pm**. Please join us as we discuss Brown's book and other writings that examine current issues in our church and society.

☺ Now that children, parents, and teachers have settled into remote schooling once again, Two Rock Sunday school teachers Kathy Stroke and Jessica Briggs have a proposal: since we can't have in-person Sunday school, they want to do what worked so well for our VBS program in June. So let's **get together on zoom twice a month on a Saturday morning at 10:00 am** for about an hour. There will be Sunday school lessons, a crafts project, and time for conversation and sharing. Watch for more information in upcoming emails from church. And do join Jessica and Kathy for these fun classes.

☺ Thinking ahead to the end of October: Is there a way to hold our much-loved **Trunk-or-Treat event on October 30th?** Can we have people process in an orderly

way, in family groups and with masks (and costumes, of course), from car to car and collect sweet treats in the parking lot of Two Rock Church? How can we make this a safe and fun evening for our children and their families? Please contact the church with your ideas and suggestions.

MISSION & OUTREACH

Thank you to all who purchased **school supplies for Two Rock and Tomales Elementary Schools**. On the advice of parents, we are bringing them to the school offices now, so that they can be handed out as students pick up instructional material.

With the impact that covid-19 is having on many people's financial well-being, the demand for services at food pantries has risen sharply. **Please continue to contribute to the Cents-Ability Offering** that we collect each month and that supports the food ministry of our churches and Presbytery. We are particularly grateful for some special donations to that fund that were received recently.

The **Food Pantry in Tomales** is still open each Thursday at 2:00 pm. Due to the pandemic, volunteers are placing pre-packed food boxes into people's cars, to minimize contact. All local individuals and families are welcome at the pantry!

The **Redwood Empire Food Bank** received a **\$327 donation from the Two Rock Sunday School**. These are funds that our children, youth, and Sunday school teachers had raised back in February, on Souper Bowl Sunday. With all the shut-downs and changes because of covid-19, it's taken a while to send

off this gift. But funds are always needed at the Food Bank!

Yes, **Two Rock Harvest Festival has been cancelled for 2020**. But that does not mean that you can't still make a special donation to the church. So here is a suggestion: think of the various items that you donate to, or buy at, Harvest Festival in a typical year. Then make out a check to Two Rock Church for that amount! That way, the congregation can still benefit from your extra support, even without a fundraiser this year. Also, the Two Rock Quilters will take **photos of their nicest quilts and post them on the church website** soon. Be sure to have a look online. If you find a quilt you like, you can purchase it by contacting the church.

As happens each fall, many **quilts will be donated** to where they are needed most. This year, the quilters will give some to the Living Room in Santa Rosa which supports women and children who are without a home. Quilts will also be given to the Rev. Linda Powers in Napa, for distribution to people affected by the recent fires.

PROPERTY & FINANCE



It happened: the **sanctuary of Tomales Presbyterian Church got a new roof!** The roofing company's bid was accepted in late February; but because of covid-19, the roofers did not start until Tuesday, August 25. By the end of that week, all roofing shingles and all tarpaper had been removed. When the roof was bare, it became clear that there was some dry rot around the base of the belltower. Those sections of wood have been replaced; and all the wood is now in good shape! In the photo (thank you, Sharon Knudsen!) you can see stacks of roof shingles on top of Tomales Church as the new roof was being installed. How good to get this done and know that the new wood, the new shingles, and the recently sealed wood planks in the belfry will help keep us dry, even in the heaviest rain!

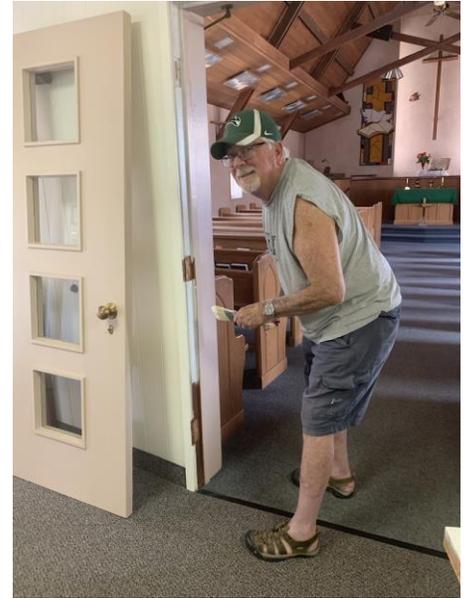


Last year, one of the window panes in one of the windows of the Tomales Church sanctuary broke. It took quite a while to find glass to match the color we needed. And then it took a while for the glazier to come out and install the new glass. That's when we got some not-so-great news: the glazier told us that the wood

of that window is so soft, soggy, and squishy that one could push a screw driver or a pencil through it. There is no fix for that, no patching to be done; rather, we would need to have a new window made. In fact, we found out that **both double hung windows on the south side of the sanctuary** need to be replaced, as they have already been leaking for years in heavy winter storms. So session began to ask around, make phone calls, and put out the word for someone who would be able to build two new double hung windows. This is quite a specialized kind of carpentry, when new windows are built to look like the old ones and are made to fit into the old window frames. Plus, the wood builder has to work hand-in-hand with a glazier, preferably someone who has dealt with church windows and restoration projects before. Many thanks to session members Sharon Knudsen, Rob Campbell, Kathryn LeMieux, and Kathy Murphy who met with various craftsmen and obtained bids, and to Gary Foster who found us the wood builder with whom we are working. Now that we have signed a contract and sent in our initial deposit, the construction of those two new windows is about to begin. Perhaps they might be finished and installed before the start of the rainy season.

Meanwhile at **Two Rock Church**, more painting is going on in the **narthex**. Thanks to Don White, the walls now match the Lily-white color that we have in the fellowship hall, kitchen, Sunday school area, and Fireside room. Currently, Don is in the process of painting three sets of doors that lead off the narthex into the sanctuary, the music room, and to the outside. We are grateful that he has transformed our entryway into a bright room that

cheerfully greets everyone who enters the church building. Thank you so much, Don!



Anyone with a remotely green thumb is invited to be part of our **Two Rock weeding crew!** This hearty group gets together on the second Saturday of the month to do some weeding, pruning, and garden clean-up. Sue Russell is organizing these weeding events; please let her know if you are able to come from 9:00 am until 11:00 am. Our next dates will be **September 12 and October 10**. Come join us at church, get your hands dirty, and have some fun!

Here is a piece of bright and happy news: The **Crepe Myrtle trees** between the Two Rock parking lot and cemetery and along Spring Hill Road are beginning to bloom! This is truly amazing, since they were just planted in early 2020. The row of 19 trees is quite colorful with rich burgundy blossoms; they blend well with the three white-blooming Crepe Myrtles immediately in front of the church.

Many thanks to Paul Lewis and Sue Russell for deciding on that particular kind of tree; to Peter Karoitamana, Ben Visser, and

Bruce Carrington for planting them; and to David Coe for installing the irrigation system. How lovely to have such lush landscaping around Two Rock Church, with colorful trees, native bushes, and various succulents, all planted within the last year.



CHURCH CARE & FELLOWSHIP

The **Ice Cream Social** we held at our churches **on July 5th** was lots of fun! It gave our members and friends an opportunity to get out of the house and take an afternoon drive to their church in Tomales or Two Rock. We met outside on the church patio in Tomales and on the church lawn in Two Rock, wearing masks except when eating ice cream, and keeping our proper distance. It was so good to see our church friends in person and stay and chat a while.

In fact, we liked it so much that we will do **another ice cream social on Labor Day weekend**. So if you are in town, please join us on **Sunday, September 6, at 2:30 pm in Tomales and at 3:30 pm in Two Rock**. We will again have individually wrapped ice cream, dairy-free fruit popsicles, and sugar-free popsicles. We will also have hand sanitizers and face masks for anyone who needs them. All are invited, so please bring your family, and your

friends and neighbors. See you at church!



SMALL GROUPS AT CHURCH

For the last couple of months, the ladies from the **Two Rock Coffee-and-Crafts Group** have been meeting on the church patio on Tuesday mornings, in person, with masks on, and with people sitting six feet apart. However, the last three weeks have either been so hot or so smoky that the group has taken a break. They hope to be back together next week, after the smoke dissipates and the weather becomes more autumnal.

Feel free to join the crafts ladies on Tuesdays at 11:00 am. Everyone is welcome.

The **Two Rock quilting group** gets together every Thursday from 9:00 am until about noon. All participants wear masks as they work together; and they are careful to take other safety precautions, so that everyone stays healthy. They continue to create beautiful quilts that will be sold as fundraisers for the church or donated to people in need.

Please contact Carol McClarnon, Judy Burton, or Doreen Coe if you want to find out more about this important quilt ministry.

PRESBYTERY NEWS

The next **Presbytery Meeting will be held on Saturday, September**

19, from 10:00 am to 12:30 pm. And it will not be at Westminster Woods as scheduled but will happen virtually on zoom.

We will have a report by our Stated Clerk, elder Ariel Mink; we will confirm the new Hunger Action Advocate for our Presbytery, elder Corinne Quinn; and we will elect our new Transitional Mission Presbyter, Rev. Eric Beene.

This is an exciting and hopeful time for our Presbytery as we transition to new leadership; though always grateful for the service by the Rev. Dr. Bob Conover, who was both our Stated Clerk and our Mission Presbyter for the last 15 years.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST

Did you notice who put up this sign behind Two Rock Church, to discourage other people from filling up our garbage cans?



Thank you, Peter Karoitamana and Paul Lewis, two wonderful saints in our midst! We are grateful for your service to the church, and we love your holy, tongue-in-cheek humor.

Two Rock Valley/Tomales
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“Give thanks to the LORD of hosts, for the LORD is good
for God’s steadfast love endures forever.” (Jeremiah 33:11)

Ice Cream Social: September 6th, beginning at 2:30pm in Tomales and at 3:30pm in Two Rock.
ZOOM services are being held every Sunday at 11:00am. Please email the church for an invitation.
ZOOM book group Mondays at 3:30pm.
ZOOM check-in Wednesdays, 1:30pm.