

Tomales and Two Rock Valley Presbyterian Churches

Words of Welcome

IT IS AN EXCITING TIME to be your Temporary Pastor! Your congregations are inviting and full of energy. Your love for God and for each other shows in your joy-filled singing and your prayers during Sunday worship. Homemade cakes help to celebrate birthdays and anniversaries, while cards, calls and visits lessen the sorrows. You are truly a family! As the youngest of 6 siblings, I know what it is like to be the newcomer. But, you have welcomed me and made me feel like one of your family. So, I feel truly blessed to be part of your faith community at this moment.

The story of your churches is one of a long history, joined together decades ago as a yoked congregation to make each church stronger. You are Christ-centered churches that love your traditions. Singing *Amazing Grace* in the cemetery in November, carols at the Joint Candlelight Service in December, listening to the Bell Choir in Tomales in January: music is a big part of who you are.

Two Rock's church sign says they are "a friendly church," which you are! But hospitality extends "over the county and through the eucalyptus trees" to Tomales, too. Your hospitality knows no ends. It extends to the community through the Tomales Food Pantry, Founder's Day, Cents-ability donations, and fundraising at the Harvest Festival and the Aebleskiver breakfast. You are small, but mighty churches!



A big part of my role as Temporary Pastor is to keep the ship steady and steer ahead toward the vision of who you want to be. Looking forward also involves knowing where you've been. That's why the work of the Mission Study Committee is so important right now. You are making space for a new pastor, who will guide and lead you in the next leg of your journey. To make space, we stand in the middle of the path – looking backwards at the long road you've been on – and outward toward what's ahead. All along the way, know that God has been with you and always will be.

—Rev. Brook Scott

*"God gives us beauty
and then the gift of
loving beauty."*

From Beneficence by Meredith Hall

We are off to a busy start in 2022. In addition to our two regular monthly meetings, we have had four special meetings, plus annual officer training and the annual meeting with the congregation. It's been hard work, but the feeling of accomplishment is good. Working with our new Temporary Pastor, Reverend Brook Scott, has been a blast. She is smart, well organized, joyful, and she moves us along. Recent big ticket items include:

- Planning multiple projects to come into compliance with a Wildfire Critical Assessment from our insurance carrier,
- Presenting updated bylaws to the congregation that formalize our ability to meet by zoom and to take actions by emails,
- Removing the huge, very dead, very unsafe, pine tree from the edge of our back parking lot,
- Completing the annual statistics report for PCUSA (we have 60 members and an average attendance of 39) and the Annual Church Information Form for Presbytery, and
- Deciding to go back to zoom worship, and then back again to live worship, in order to comply with State and County regulations.



We have also elected Church Corporate Officers, installed, ordained, and trained new Elders and Deacons. We initiated a Homeless Persons focus group to help us establish ways to help, upgraded our heating system, repainted our entry sign to show Brook's name, approved significant emergency funds to help a friend in need with the cremation of her still born baby, and enjoyed Souper Bowl Sunday together!

In accordance with Presbytery guidance, over the next few months we will be implementing employee performance reviews, Sexual Harassment Prevention training, and Pastor Healthy Boundaries Training. We will also be developing, a Safe Church Policy and a Personnel Policy Procedure Manual.

—Clerk David Coe on behalf of your Ruling Elders: Brent Russell, Carol Griffith, Gillian Mahrt, Bruce Carrington, & Kathy Stroke

Mission Study Committees: Finding a New Pastor

OUR MISSION STUDY COMMITTEES ARE MAKING GREAT PROGRESS! Their work is the bedrock of our future church vision. This is the first major step in hiring a permanent Pastor, involves all members, and will define where we have been as a church, where we are right now, and where we want to go. Both churches have formed committees to undertake this critical work in the life of our congregations.

Two Rock has elected Brent Russell to chair the new Mission Study Committee with Margaret Todt, Sue Russell, and Don White participating.

The Tomales Mission Study Committee —Amanda Graves (Chair), Liz Mitchell, Tim Graves, Kip Spragens, Dennis Hansen and Kathryn LeMieux, will help discern the congregation's identity and direction.

Please share your thoughts with these people and fill out the survey online or via hard copy. Your opinions and suggestions are greatly appreciated. If you didn't get one, call the church office (707-762-4924) and they will be happy to send you one. Please respond no later than March 8th (Tomales) and March 20th (Two Rock).

Your feedback and the work of the Mission Study Committee will inform the Ministry Information Form ("MIF") that candidates for the permanent Pastor position will review when assessing their call to the church. Once the Mission Study Committee work is complete, the Session will call a congregational meeting to elect a Pastor Nominating Committee, which will undergo the work of calling a new, permanent Pastor.



The news that our Pastor of 15 years would retire at the end of September 2021 began a whirlwind process to search for a temporary pastor. A committee was formed with Amanda Graves and Sharon Knudsen from Tomales and from Two Rock, David Coe and Kathy Stroke. This was a great collaboration and we hired our temporary Pastor, Brook Scott.

Members of the church have fully stepped up to ensure a smooth transition, and we continue to be productive as a congregation.

- We have added a chair exercise group, open to the community, on Tuesdays at 10 am.
- The Cub Scouts meet in our fellowship hall weekly, as Covid regulations have allowed.
- Several church members volunteer at the weekly Tomales Food Pantry, which is open on Thursdays at 2pm.
- We had a booth at the Tomales Founder's Day and handed out church magnets and sold zucchini cookbooks.
- We supported Pedal 4 Protein, a group bicycle ride sponsored by the Presbytery of the Redwoods Hunger Task Force. Funds raised are donated to Northern California Food Banks for local food pantries and one international hunger relief project. We collect a Cents-ability offering each month, half of which goes to the Presbytery of the Redwoods for their Hunger Program and half stays here in our local community to aid those with food insecurity.
- We also support Tomales Elementary School by collecting school supplies to donate in August and items for their Christmas Bazaar in December.



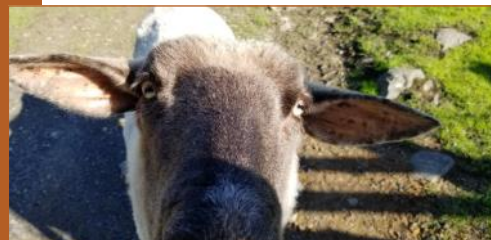
With return to in-person worship, we've welcomed some new faces in church and have resumed our very popular fellowship hour afterward. We are blessed with the musical talents of Gary Foster on the piano and the inspirational and totally relatable sermons from Pastor Brook. Communion is observed on the first Sunday of the month and congregational birthdays are celebrated on the third Sunday of each month, complete with birthday cake. Sunday school is available every Sunday.

We continue to care for our historic church. Those of you in our local community know that we had the church painted and a new roof put on the sanctuary. Two of the sanctuary windows on the south side were replaced due to age and leakage in heavy rains. This was all made possible by a generous bequest.

We look forward to the New Year, and hopefully, seeing you in worship or in the community. May God richly bless you.

— Sharon Knudsen, Clerk on behalf of your Ruling Elders: Rob Campbell, Kathy Murphy, & Amanda Graves

LENTEN STUDY GROUP
MEETS WEDNESDAYS AT 6:30 PM
BEGINS MARCH 2ND OVER ZOOM
CONTACT PASTOR BROOK SCOTT AT
brook.scott@icloud.com



Presbyterian Trivia Quiz

(Answers on back page. No peaking!)

1. The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America "PC(USA) was formed in what year:
 - a. 1673
 - b. 1861
 - c. 1983
 - d. 1991
2. The largest Presbyterian body split at the time of the Civil War (1861-1865) primarily over what issue?
 - a. The authority of Scripture
 - b. Separation of church and state
 - c. Taxation of churches
 - d. Slavery
3. PC(USA) has 12 "Confessions" or confessional statements in the *Book of Confessions*. Select the letter that represents 5 of them:
 - a. Nicene Creed, Westminster Confession of Faith, The Theological Declaration of Barmen, The Scots Confession and the Apostles' Creed
 - b. The Apostles' Creed, The Larger Catechism, The Confession of 1967, A Brief Statement of Faith, and The Calvin Confession
 - c. A Brief Statement of Faith, The Shorter Catechism, The Second Helvetic Confession, The Theological Declaration of Barmen, and The Zwingli Confession
 - d. The Protestant Profession, Westminster Confession of Faith, The Belhar Confession, The Nicene Creed and the Apostles' Creed
4. When we say that the Church is "catholic," we mean that:
 - a. It has the same number of sacraments as the Catholic Church.
 - b. There is only one universal Church.
 - c. It does not include the Catholic Church.
 - d. It is limited to only certain parts of the world.
5. To be a "Reformed church" or to have "Reformed theology" means:
 - a. To believe in the literal interpretation of the Bible.
 - b. It is based solely on what Martin Luther and John Calvin thought.
 - c. That Christian faith needs to be constantly articulated and confessed.
 - d. That we will change our beliefs if that is what we are told to do by the General Assembly.
6. God is referred to in the Bible as:
 - a. A rock, and a redeemer
 - b. A mother, and a father
 - c. A jealous God
 - d. a and c only
 - e. All of the above
7. "Ruling elder:"
 - a. Is a term stretching back to the Old Testament time when elders governed Israel
 - b. Is a term from the New Testament that refers to those with special gifts of governing and ministries in local churches
 - c. Is an English translation of the Greek term "presbyteros" on which "Presbyterian" is based
 - d. Helps the congregation in enacting "the law of love"
 - e. All of the above
8. "Deacons:"
 - a. Is a term that relates to the Greek word "diakonia" which means service or ministry
 - b. Was established early in the New Testament, beginning with Stephen
 - c. Included only one woman, Phoebe, in the New Testament
 - d. Can lead the congregation in concerns for justice and peace, as well as acts of charity
 - e. Remind all church members of their callings to service and care of those in need
 - f. All of the above

Easter Events in the Congregations

April 10th Palm Sunday
Services 9:30am, Two Rock
and 11am, Tomales

April 14th Maundy Thursday
Service, 7pm, Two Rock
(Celebration of the Lord's Supper)

April 16th Easter Egg Hunt
1:30pm, Tomales Community Park

April 17th Easter Sunday
Sunrise Service, 6:30am, Two Rock
Easter Services, 9:30am, Two Rock
and 11am, Tomales
(Celebration of the Lord's Supper)

—Created by Rev. Brook Scott

Two Rock and Tomales – Yoked Since 1953



Tomales
Presbyterian
Church

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED how our two churches came to be yoked, sister churches joined together with one minister? Well, in 1953 Tomales found itself without a pastor. After asking the Presbytery to research candidates that were available, it was determined that their financial situation limited the number of men that were available (yes, it was only male pastors in that day). So Rev. Dr. Pyron McMillen, the Associate General Presbyter, began looking at the geographical area as a whole. He ascertained that Two Rock was doing very well and was happy with their current pastor, the Rev. Hodge, however if Hodge was to leave it would be difficult to replace him given the salary that Two Rock was able to pay.

The total membership of the two churches was about 157 members, representing 80 families. This number of members was actually no more than a normal load for most pastors so it was conceivable that if a working arrangement were made between the two churches, it would lighten the financial burden for both churches, and being able to pay a good salary would enlarge the number of candidates available.

McMillen first met with the officers of the Tomales Church, who recognized the advantages of a yoked situation. He then met with the officers of the Two Rock Church, who also discussed the matter at great length. At first they felt they were getting on quite well and the only reason for such an arrangement was a look to the future, when they would also need a new pastor and might have to turn to student pastors who would leave when they finished seminary or retired pastors who could get along on a sub-standard salary. After much discussion the Two Rock officers agreed the plan had real merit .

The officers of the two churches met together to work out a plan. The first issue was the hours of worship. The solution was to have one service at 9:30 and the other at 11:15 and alternate every six months. It was suggested that the pastor divide his calling time between the two churches and be easily reached by telephone when at home. Salary was discussed and they came to an agreement that actually lowered the obligation that each church was paying while offering a good salary for a pastor.

In an effort for the Tomales people to get to know Rev. Hodge, he preached at Tomales the first two Sundays in September of 1953, with a congregational meeting held in the evening of the second Sunday at each church to vote on the proposed plan. Tomales members were also welcomed at Two Rock as an opportunity to get better acquainted with the situation there. Pyron McMillen made it very clear to the congregations that the officers of their respective churches had fully discussed the situation and stood in support of the yoked proposal. The vote was affirmative from both congregations.

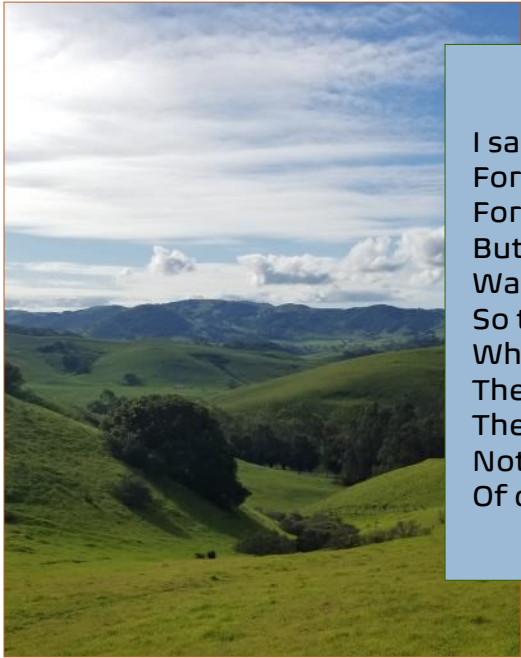
The two churches have now been yoked for nearly 69 years —sharing pastors, church secretaries, treasurers, and this newsletter. They have enjoyed many joint events and have formed lifelong friendships, all while maintaining their separate ministries within their respective communities. Each has had ups and downs over the years, but when one was having trouble the other stepped up to help carry their burden. This has been a good union and God has blessed each church. We can look forward to celebrating 70 years together in September 2023.

(Taken from a letter written by Associate General Presbyter, Pyron McMillen to the members of Tomales and Two Rock Churches)

—Sharon Knudsen, Tomales



Two Rock Valley Presbyterian Church



Wait Without Hope

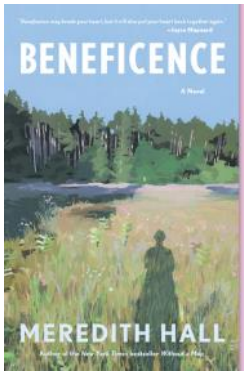
I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope
For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without love,
For love would be love of the wrong thing; there is yet faith
But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting.
Wait without thought, for you are not ready for thought:
So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing.
Whisper of running streams, and winter lightning.
The wild thyme unseen and the wild strawberry,
The laughter in the garden, echoed ecstasy
Not lost, but requiring, pointing to the agony
Of death and birth.

—T.S. Eliot, *East Coker*, Four Quartets

Beneficence

"...happiness requires courage. It requires a willingness to love. A willingness to forgive."

Beneficence is the title of Meredith Hall's remarkable book of place, family, loss, and the sustaining, healing power of love. When they meet in the 1930s, Doris and Tup's love is immediate. They marry quickly and with such joy, commit to a life of working the Senter family farm, where his parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents are buried up on the hill. They are bound in love to the land and the rhythms and reality of nature and the farm, but their growing family is devastated when one is tragically killed.



Grief and blame consume each survivor, and their imperfect struggle toward acceptance and forgiveness is patiently unfolded by the author with compassion and grace. The pacing of the novel is deliberate and her language, precise; Hall withholds judgment of her characters as they wander through the darkness of grief and find their way to "participate in beneficence and goodness. There is no peace outside that."

Listen to my interview with Meredith Hall about her novel *Beneficence* on KRCB's A Novel Idea, airing live on Sunday March 2nd at 10am on KRCB 104.9 FM; streaming and podcasting at <https://norcalpublicmedia.org/radio-programs/a-novel-idea>.

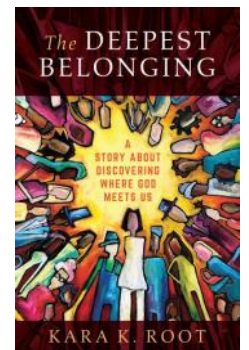
—Suzanne Lang, Tomales

Brook's Book Pick

The Deepest Belonging: A Story about Discovering Where God Meets Us by Kara Root

Where does God meet us in this life? Rooting Christian faith in joy, freedom, and trust that God interacts with us in this life, this book invites readers to walk through surprising doorways--weakness, vulnerability, smallness, rest, and honesty--into a new perspective of the Christian life and the role of the pastor.

This is a book for all pastors and church leaders, as well as for those disillusioned with Christianity and the church and longing for something more real and honest. It explores questions such as: How does God meet us? What is church for? What is a pastor? What does it mean to be truly human? *The Deepest Belonging* is a call to embrace our vulnerability and return bravely to the core of our humanity: our belonging to God and one another.



Express Yourself !

If you have a book that moved or amused you, a poem —by you or a poet of renown, a movie you want to share, or a bit of Scripture that's inspired you, your expression is wanted and welcome. (300 words or less) Please email what you would like to contribute: trtompca@aol.com.

This is who we are...

WITH ALL THE OTHER VISIONING WE ARE UNDERTAKING RIGHT NOW, LET US ALSO RE-IMAGINE A NEWSLETTER that reflects who we are in these changing times and in our ever-evolving congregations. Along those lines, we can expand the ministry represented here and make it available online and further develop our web resources so the interested and curious will know who we are and feel welcome to participate. What can you contribute? (Let us know if you want to continue receiving hardcopies in the mail).

Both churches have deep histories in our communities, in our cemeteries, and our beautiful buildings. This sort of information helps us more richly identify with our houses of worship. The care taken in these sanctuaries is an indication of who we are and some of you have tremendous information to share that could be fun, interesting, and illuminating.

Many of us have been around a *long* time, while others are newer to the church and community. Oral histories, or even a one paragraph remembrance of things past (or hope for something future), can bring connection with others.

Let's inspire each other! How are we energized by the land and people around us? What is happening in your life and family? This newsletter is a place to share your joy, prayer, and inspiration.

Email your ideas and musings to trtomp@aol.com with "for the newsletter" in the subject line.



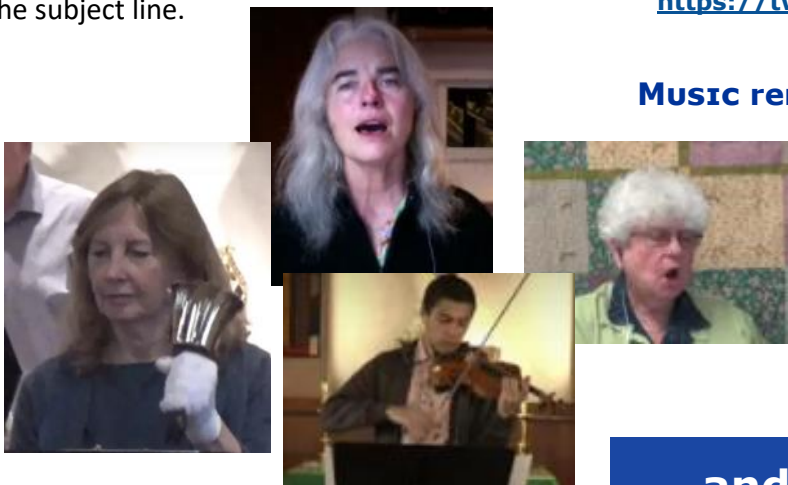
COVID has not slowed down the Cub Scouts in Tomales, seen here with Pastor Brook before a discussion of "duty to God" in the Scouts oath.



Quilting remains a vibrant activity at Two Rock, meeting again the first week of April through July, and the collection of quilts for sale is astounding and can be viewed at the church and online at <https://tworockvalleypresbyterianchurch.org/quilts/>.

Music remains a core value and joy in our worship and our lives, and many have worked to keep it vibrant during our times of remote worship.

Let's gather together and sing and play and rejoice!



...and this is what we do!

Hill 'n Vale —Newsletter of the Tomales and Two Rock Valley Presbyterian Churches

Pastor's Office Hours

Two Rock—Tuesday and Thursday
10:00am—2:00pm
Tomales—Tuesday
2:30pm-4:30pm

Sunday Worship

Two Rock—9:30 am
7093 Bodega Ave, Petaluma 94952
Tomales—11 am
11 Church Street (PO Box 13), Tomales 94971

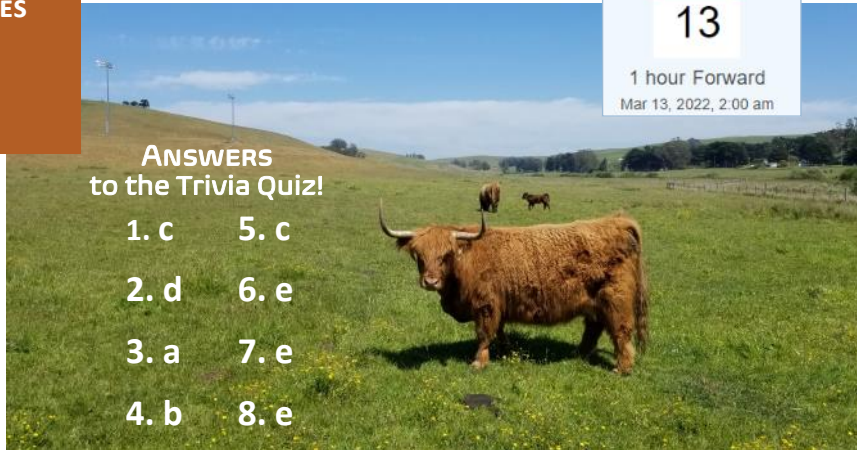


**SEE MORE INSIDE ON
LENTEN STUDY GROUP
EASTER ACTIVITIES
HISTORY OF OUR YOKED CHURCHES
MISSION STUDY
TRIVIA QUIZ AND MORE....**

Daylight Savings Time Begins

March 13th
Spring Forward!

Next change:
MAR
13
1 hour Forward
Mar 13, 2022, 2:00 am



ANSWERS to the Trivia Quiz!

- | | |
|------|------|
| 1. c | 5. c |
| 2. d | 6. e |
| 3. a | 7. e |
| 4. b | 8. e |

Email us: trtompc@aol.com

Call us: 707-762-4924

Visit online at

<https://tomalespresbyterianchurch.org>

<https://tworockvalleypresbyterianchurch.org>



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