

# Hill 'n Vale

Newsletter of the Tomales and Two Rock Valley Presbyterian Churches

Visit us at [tomalespresbyterian.org](http://tomalespresbyterian.org) and [tworockvalleypresbyterian.org](http://tworockvalleypresbyterian.org)

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May / June 2021

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## ***PASTORAL PONDERINGS***

Dear Friends in Two Rock and Tomales,

Last fall things looked good for a while: the Covid-19 infection numbers were down, and we had high hopes that things would be back to normal by Christmas. For eight Sundays, we even worshipped in person at Tomales Presbyterian Church. Then we had another coronavirus surge, and right at the beginning of Advent, we had to go back to having zoom services only.

Things got better again in February, and by the first Sunday in March, we were back to in-person worship in Tomales! It has been a joy to be together in the sanctuary, to see real-life church friends, and to talk after worship face to face; even if we have to keep our masks on the entire time. Of course, we have kept our zoom service going, too; in fact we have had zoom worship, uninterrupted, for more than a year, since March 29, 2020.

Since we opened the doors of the church in Tomales to in-person services, many people from the Two Rock congregation have asked: when will we be back in our sanctuary? Well, the reason for continuing our second worship on zoom has to do with the size of the Two Rock

sanctuary, the size of the Two Rock congregation, and the distancing requirements of the CDC and of our Sonoma County Health Department. Two Rock Elder David Coe took a measuring tape and figured it out precisely: if we follow the 6-foot distance rule, we can only accommodate 21 people in our sanctuary, plus two people in the narthex; even though the sanctuary can hold about 90 worshippers and another dozen singers in the choir loft.

It was disappointing to get David's report and realize that going back to in-person worship would not be as easy in Two Rock Church as it has been in Tomales Church. The session tried to come up with various ideas: what if some people sit in the fellowship hall and listen to the service over our speaker system? Or might some be seated out on the church patio and follow the service through the open door? Is there any other way in which we can accommodate the people who usually attend worship in Two Rock?

In the end, we decided to wait. We will wait until the first Sunday after June 15, when the state of California will allow all venues to open at 100 % capacity. That means that a 6-foot distance requirement between people or households will no longer be an issue. So our first Sunday back in the Two Rock sanctuary will be on June 20! On that day we will start holding two

in-person services, in Tomales at 9:30 am and in Two Rock at 11:00 am. Also beginning on June 20, we plan to videotape our service in Two Rock and post it on our churches' websites and Facebook pages, for those from both congregations who want to continue with online worship.

Of course, we will still need to wear face masks on June 20 and beyond, since we will not be out in the open but in an enclosed worship space. And we will not be able to have a choir or do any congregational singing until further notice; though we will have a lead singer in each church for the hymns and liturgical responses. We will keep modifying our worship as needed, until the pandemic is fully behind us, so that everyone stays safe and healthy.

Being able to return to both of our sanctuaries has been a long time coming, but we are very close now! Thanks be to God for seeing us through these strange and difficult 15 months. We will surely celebrate and rejoice on June 20th!

In faith, hope, and anticipation,  
Pastor Cornelia



## JOYS TO SHARE

**Congratulations to Helen Graham who turned 90 on April 27.**

Helen was born at the old Petaluma Hospital in 1931, the youngest of the four children of the Boysen family of Two Rock; she had two older sisters and one older brother. Her grandparents on her father's side had immigrated from the German Isle of Föhr, her mother's family came from Santa Rosa. Both of Helen's parents were hard workers: her father was a rancher and milked cows every day, her mother ran the household and fed the family and several hired ranch hands seven days a week.

Helen grew up in the house on 2865 Pepper Road where she and Carl, her husband of 71 years, live to this day. Helen went to school in Petaluma, and also began attending church in Two Rock as a teenager. She joined the church, together with her parents, in October 1945, when Rev. Laing Sibbet was the pastor.

After Helen graduated from Petaluma High School, she went to work in San Francisco. That's where she met Carl Graham, a young Marine who was stationed at the Marine Supply Base in the city. After a sweet courtship, the couple was married on July 31, 1949 by Rev. Sibbet. The event took place in the Methodist Church in Petaluma, because Two Rock Church had burned down on July 7th.

Soon Helen and Carl had three children, Ken, Judy, and Don. And for about the first ten years of their marriage, the family moved around the country and lived in several places: first in the Bay area; in Georgia from 1953-55, where Carl was stationed with the

Marines; then for a couple of years on the ranch in Two Rock; and from 1957-61 they lived near Carl's parents in St. Louis, Missouri. For all these moves and trips across the country, Helen and Carl would load up their station wagon with three children, a dog, two cats, and lots of gear and luggage, and no seatbelts yet for anyone. In 1961, the family moved back to Two Rock for good, to help Helen's parents with the ranch.

At first, everyone did double duty: Carl would work as a carpenter during the day, then come home and do whatever was necessary on the ranch, including bailing hay. Helen raised the three children, and looked after the house and the ranch. As she puts it: we worked hard and often burned the candle at both ends; we had our children young, and grew up together. Helen and Carl took over the ranch when Helen's father passed away in 1964, and they leased the land to other local ranchers a few years later.

After working as an instructor for an adult education program in Petaluma, Helen opened Graham's Country Crafts in 1971. She remembers with joy that her mother still lived to see that happen. The store was a hub of activity for decades, with lots of crafting material for sale and many classes offered. Fifty years later, Helen and Carl are winding things down and are selling their inventory.

Helen enjoys her large family: three children, plus grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and two lively family dogs. For her birthday, there was a lovely gathering and a special meal, organized by daughter Judy. **Happy birthday, Helen,** and may God continue to bless you richly this next year and next decade of your life.

## WORSHIP



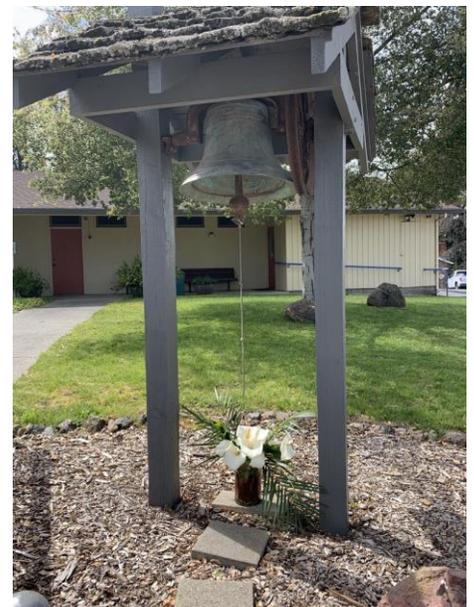
Please join us  
For Sunday Worship

**In Tomales at 9:30 am  
On Zoom at 11:00 am**

Simply contact the church  
office for the zoom link.

**Beginning on Sunday, June 20,**  
we will worship in person in both  
of our churches

**In Tomales at 9:30 am  
In Two Rock at 11:00 am**



Calla lilies and palm fronds for Easter, below the church bell at Two Rock Valley Presbyterian Church, by Mary Lynn Visser

† Beginning on April 18, the third Sunday of the Easter Season, and extending through July 4th, we are focusing on the **Acts of the Apostles in our worship and sermons.** Our sermon series is *Acts of the Apostles: The Church on a Mission.* Please join us as we explore what the earliest followers of Jesus understood their task to be, and also how the apostles went about that mission. We will also ask ourselves: in spite of differences in location, culture, and 2000 years,

what can the mission of the early church teach us, the church, in 2021?

### Alan Roy Wernstrum



Feb. 18, 1944 – March 25, 2021

To each person is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

1 Corinthians 12:7

† Below are upcoming **worship highlights for May and June.**

**May 9: Honoring the Women of the Church** on Mother's Day

**May 30: Memorial Day** Sunday

**June 13:** celebrating the **end of the school year** and honoring the accomplishments of our students

**June 20: Honoring the men of the Church** on Father's Day; and first Sunday of being back for **in-person worship in both Tomales and Two Rock**



### William Richard Studwell

August 21, 1934 - April 23, 2021

I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forevermore

Psalms 23:6

## EDUCATION & LEARNING

☺ Since August 2020, our **Adult Reading Group** has met on zoom most Monday afternoons. We have spent our time reading about racial issues in our nation, about immigration, and we even spent some weeks discussing our US Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Currently, we are reading *"The Warmth of Other Suns. The Epic Story of America's Great*

*Migration"* by Pulitzer Prize winner Isabel Wilkerson.

We meet each Monday from 3:30 pm to 5:00 pm, and anyone is invited to join us. Please contact the church office for the zoom link.

☺ **Earth Day** was first held on April 22, 1970, and has been observed every year since, both in the USA and around the world. For our two congregations, this date presents an opportunity to share with our children and youth the joy and the responsibility to care for God's beautiful creation: the fields and creeks, the trees and flowers, the lizards, birds and all critters. So on April 25, each child in both churches received some plants to care for, together with an Earth Day prayer and a healthy snack.



Landon and Evelyn Costa with their Earth Day plants and prayers

May our gracious God bless our young gardeners and all of our gardening efforts! May we all do our part to keep the soil healthy, conserve water, and plant habitat that supports bees, butterflies, lizards, and bird populations. And may the harvest this fall in each of our gardens be bountiful and tasty!

☺ On **May 30, the Sunday of Memorial weekend**, children and youth from Sunday school will decorate the graves in the Two Rock cemetery; and Scouts from Troop 123 will decorate graves in the Tomales cemetery. Many thanks to Kathy Stroke and Jessica

Briggs for organizing this event in Two Rock, and to Amanda and Tim Graves for organizing the Scout Troop in Tomales .

### Prayer for Earth Day

Dear God, thank you for this beautiful planet.  
Bless it and keep it safe from harm.  
We pray for the protection of the animals, the soil, air and water.  
May we care for all you have made.  
Help us to love the Earth as you do.  
We pray in Jesus' name.  
Amen.

☺ **So much was different this past school year:** first there was only distance learning; then there was hybrid learning for students who chose to add in-class instructions; there were challenges with internet connection, plus screen fatigue and zoom fatigue; and there were difficulties with staying motivated to pursue schooling and learning remotely.

All the more reason to **celebrate the end of this school year!** Please join us on Sunday, June 13 as we honor our students during worship at Tomales Church and on zoom, and celebrate their achievements.

## MISSION & OUTREACH

For the second year in a row, the Tomales congregation **was not able to host its popular Easter Egg Hunt in the Tomales Town Park.** It would simply not have been possible to adhere to covid-related safety precautions with enthusiastic

children running all over the park hunting for eggs.

Elder Amanda Graves came up with a great solution: host an **Egg Hop Drive-Thru** at the parking lot of Tomales Presbyterian Church, so that families from the Tomales and Two Rock communities could drive by and pick up small bags of Easter treats. Amanda and her children Maya, Mickey, and Emma assembled the bags ahead of time, to be ready for an easy, drive-by pick up on April 3. Virginia Campbell created a whimsical bunny outfit on her sewing machine, which Amanda wore, to the delight of everyone.

Thank you so much, Amanda and family, and Virginia, for finding ways to spread Easter joy even in the midst of a pandemic.



Amanda and Maya Graves on April 3 for the Egg Hop Drive-Thru

We also had to skip our beloved **Abelskiver Breakfast on Mother's Day** yet again. It's just too soon to seat large groups of people in the fellowship hall in Two Rock. But after we had to cancel this delicious meal and community event in 2020 and 2021, we hope to be back on

Mother's Day 2022! For those of you who would like to support this fundraiser anyway, please make a donation to our churches' *Abelskiver Fund*; that will benefit people in Tomales, Two Rock, and the wider community with urgent, one-time needs.

Here is some happy news: since the beginning of February, the **Scouts have been meeting again at Tomales Presbyterian Church**. They get together on three Thursday afternoons a month, still observing the covid safety protocols, yet able to be together and do their scouting program. On April 24, they held their annual race car derby, and it was lots of fun!

With our state scheduled to open up fully on June 15, everyone is cautiously optimistic that the Town of Tomales will hold its **Founders Day Festivities** on September 5, Labor Day weekend; and that the Two Rock congregation will host its popular **Harvest Festival** on September 26. Stay tuned for more information as the summer unfolds.

Finally: who would have thought that the **old basketball hoop on the church patio in Two Rock** would attract young people from our neighborhood? On April 22, four young men were shooting hoops at church, after they had been dropped off by the bus and while they were waiting for rides back to the Coast Guard Base, where they live.

How good to know that our church provides not just a water fountain and some benches for weary bicyclists, but also a place for energetic young people to run off that extra energy.

And yes, the young men had brought their own basketball, and Pastor Cornelia invited them to come back anytime.

## ***PROPERTY & FINANCE***

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We continue to be grateful for all the renovations that have been completed in the last three years at both Two Rock and Tomales Presbyterian Churches. And we are happy to report that the **buildings in Tomales and Two Rock** have held up well during these many months of covid-induced hibernation. Now our church buildings and grounds are ready to welcome us back in person, not just for worship on Sunday mornings, but also for coffee hour, church picnics, BBQs, and community events.

We are thankful to the **gardeners and groundskeepers at both churches** for maintaining our grounds and cemeteries with great diligence and love.

Many thanks to **Sheila, Dan and Daniel Thornton**, groundskeepers of Tomales Presbyterian Church, for planting new bulbs along the church patio, rooting cuttings for new hedges, mowing the ground in the cemetery and parking area, and making the area around the church such an inviting place to be.

Great thanks also to **Ben Visser**, groundskeeper of the church in Two Rock, for mowing the cemetery regularly and keeping the weeds down across the church property. **Bruce Carrington** is often working with Ben; those two are a good and effective team. And many thanks to **Sue and Brent Russell** for making sure that our church garden is weeded and growing well. We are grateful, too, for the drip system that **David Coe** installed to keep the native bushes and the crepe myrtle trees by the church building and around the cemetery alive and thriving.

Surely all of us are concerned about the low rainfall this winter, the serious draught conditions, and especially the **fire danger in the summer and fall**. So this spring significant work was done to create a fire break all around Two Rock Church. This is not an easy task: not only do we have 18 Eucalyptus trees on the church grounds that present a fire danger, but we also have that hill rising up from Bodega Ave where long grasses could easily catch fire and burn upwards toward the church buildings.

So in March and April Ben Visser, assisted by Bruce Carrington, trimmed all Eucalyptus Trees from the ground up. That meant removing loose bark up to 20 feet from the ground, pruning low hanging branches, and removing fallen leaves and branches from below the trees, so that there would be no fuel on the ground to feed any fires. Ben and Bruce also chipped the bark and branches; these chips will be used to even out dips on the property and hold down weeds.

Our ongoing efforts to **strike a balance between keeping weeds and brush down for fire protection and growing lush habitat** for butterflies, bees, birds and four-legged animals seem to be successful. Right before Easter, a brown hare with long ears was seen outside of the office window in Two Rock, and a small bunny was spied a short time later elsewhere on the property. Since then, the hare has been seen twice — and always moving way too fast to be photographed.

However, deer move more slowly, unless spooked, and at times they almost seem to pose for pictures. So below is a photo

of a young buck that wandered by the church patio in Tomales and out into the cemetery. There is still much green grass and tasty vegetation to be found, and we wish this deer well around the Tomales Church and neighborhood.



A young buck visiting with Pastor Cornelia during office hours in Tomales on April 25

## ***CHURCH CARE & FELLOWSHIP***

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Since it was announced that the State of California would open up fully on June 15, our elders and deacons have discussed not only in-person worship on June 20 at 100% capacity, but also **coffee hour after worship**: Could we have a potluck, a BBQ, a big celebration? Should we bring cakes and pies? How might we make June 20 a happy and memorable Sunday?

It turns out that the leaders in both of our churches prefer a more cautious and gradual approach. Sharon Knudsen summed up the general consensus when she pointed out that resuming the fellowship time after church would feel like a celebration in itself.

So this is what we plan to do: **we will have fellowship time after worship, beginning of June 20**. We will have coffee and tea water for everyone and individually wrapped snacks. And we will set up chairs outside on the patio in Tomales, and on the lawn under the oak tree in Two Rock. That way, we

can sit together and talk where there is good air circulation.

If all goes well, we can have big potlucks and BBQs later in the summer.

## ***SMALL GROUPS AT CHURCH***

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The **Tuesday Coffee Group** meets from 10:30 am to noon each week in the Two Rock fellowship hall. Even though everyone has been vaccinated, the women are still keeping their masks on, except to sip their coffee and munch on some baked goods.

The **Thursday Quilting Group** gets together weekly from 9 am until noon in the Fireside Room in Two Rock. Its participants are also all vaccinated but stay masked when working together, just to be on the safe side. Thank you, ladies, for the lovely and colorful quilts that you keep making, pandemic or not.

## ***PRESBYTERY NEWS***

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† **On May 4th**, we had yet another **Presbytery Meeting** that was held remotely. This was actually the fourth time that pastors and elders gathered on zoom to conduct the business of the Presbytery, with about 90 people participating each time. It works well enough; though everyone is hoping that, when we **meet again on September 18**, we will finally be able to do so in person.

That Saturday, the Presbytery Meeting is scheduled to be held at **Westminster Woods**. It would be terrific if we could actually walk under the redwoods trees and see our Presbytery friends in the flesh. May it be so!

Two Rock Valley/Tomales  
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*“Our soul waits for the Lord; God is our help and shield.  
Our heart is glad because we trust in God’s holy name.  
Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us, even as we hope in you.”* (Psalm 33:20-22)

<b>May 9 -</b>	<b>Honoring the women of the Church on Mother’s Day</b>
<b>May 30 -</b>	<b>Memorial Day Sunday</b>
<b>June 13 -</b>	<b>Celebrating our students</b>
<b>June 20 -</b>	<b>Father’s Day and back to in-person worship in both churches</b>