

Hill 'n Vale

Newsletter of the Tomales and Two Rock Valley Presbyterian Churches

Visit us at tomalespresbyterian.org and tworockvalleypresbyterian.org

11 Church Street, P.O. Box 13, Tomales, CA 94971
July / August 2021

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PASTORAL PONDERINGS

Dear Friends in Two Rock and Tomales,

At a joint meeting of the sessions of Tomales and Two Rock Valley Presbyterian Churches on June 22, I announced to our elders my intent to retire. The following day, I mailed out letters to many of you, so that everyone would be informed of my plans. Here is that communication, a bit modified:

This letter is to let you know that, at last night's session meeting, I announced my plan to retire as pastor of Two Rock Valley and Tomales Presbyterian Churches, effective October 1, 2021.

When I arrived as your pastor on June 13, 2006, I was just 50 years of age and full of energy. Fifteen years later, I am almost 66, and in September, I will have reached my full retirement age. Given my heart-related health issues, the medication I need to take, and the fatigue that often slows me down, I have decided not to continue working but to step down this fall.

As I look back on the fifteen years of ministry that we have shared, I am filled with deep gratitude to each one of you. I am thankful for our faithful worship of God, for baptisms, weddings, memorial services, and celebrating two 150th anniversaries, plus our

60th anniversary of being yoked congregations. I have cherished our fellowship: coffee hour after worship, potlucks, getting together in small groups, and visiting you in your homes. I have enjoyed our adult education groups and watching our children mature in Sunday school. It has been exciting to see the renovations of our buildings and grounds, both for our Sesquicentennials and more recently. I have loved our community events and fundraisers and how we are reaching out more deliberately in mission and service. And I am very grateful that we have come through fifteen months of pandemic restrictions and are back to in-person worship and back to all the other things we do as churches of Jesus Christ.

For the next three month, I will continue to serve wholeheartedly as your pastor and fulfill all my usual tasks. At the same time, our two sessions, with guidance from our Presbytery of the Redwoods, will identify and interview candidates for the position of temporary pastor. Three months should be enough time to find a good person who will lead our churches in the next stage of ministry. And we will have three months to celebrate our time together and to anticipate in hope what the Holy Spirit will unfold for the churches in Two Rock and Tomales.

Since June 22, the Tomales session has elected elder Sharon Knudsen,

clerk of the Tomales session, and elder Amanda Graves to be on the Temporary Pastor Nominating Committee (TPNC); and the Two Rock session chose elder David Coe, clerk of the Two Rock session, and elder Kathy Stroke to be on that same TPNC. These four elders will work closely with the Rev. Eric Beene, Mission Presbyter of our Presbytery of the Redwoods, to identify three or four candidates who could serve for about 18 months as temporary pastor. The TPNC will interview each of them, check up on their backgrounds and references, listen to sermons, and eventually select one of the candidates as the temporary pastor of Tomales and Two Rock Valley Presbyterian Churches. The hope is that this person would start on or about October 1, 2021.

In the meantime, we will keep worshipping together, make plans for our fall events and fundraiser, and follow Christ's call to care for one another and for our communities. And we will give thanks that our gracious and loving God guides us in all that we do, and keeps us ever in God's care.

With love and gratitude to each of you,
Pastor Cornelia



WORSHIP

† Please join us
For Sunday Worship

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

Until we reverse our Worship
Times on Sunday, September 12

† On May 15, a new piano was delivered to the sanctuary of Two Rock Church. This lovely baby grand is actually 82 years old and in excellent condition, with a full and rich sound. It was manufactured by Baldwin and was donated by Linda and Paul Wildman of Kenwood.

Many thanks to the Wildman family who gave us this generous gift; to Kay Fish who noticed that the piano was being offered for free; to Gary Foster and Margaret Todt who helped determine that this baby grand was indeed a good fit for Two Rock Church; and to David Coe and Kathy Stoke who organized the move of this new piano to our sanctuary and the move of our old piano to a family at the Two Rock Coast Guard Station.

We are delighted with the new baby grand in our Two Rock sanctuary and invite everyone to come and listen to it being played during worship.

† Now that we are no longer doing a zoom service but are back to in-person worship in both of our churches, we are videotaping one of our services on Sunday mornings. If you are interested in watching the service remotely, check out the YouTube link that is sent out on Mondays, or find the link on our church websites, under "Our Worship". Many thanks to David Coe of Two Rock

Church and Kathy Murphy of Tomales Church for doing the videotaping; several of our members are very grateful!

† On July 4th, we concluded a 12-week sermon series on the Acts of the Apostles. Our themes had been *The Church on a Mission* and *The Church Guided by the Spirit*.

Beginning on August 1st and continuing for nine weeks through the end of September, we will focus on the Gospel According to Mark and ask, *How can it be that the kingdom of God is at hand?* Please join us as we explore what may be the oldest gospel in our Bible.

† While Pastor Cornelia is away on vacation the last three weeks of July, please welcome our guest preachers:

Commissioned Ruling Elder Ariel Mink on July 11

Rev. Dr. Bob Conover on July 18

Rev. Alex Peterson on July 25

Pastor Cornelia will be back at church on Sunday, August 1.

† Below are worship highlights for August and September:

August 22: Celebrating back-to-school and honoring our teachers

September 5: Founders Day Service at Tomales Church for both congregations, with music by Gary Foster and his jazz band. There will be no service in Two Rock that day

September 12: Reversing our worship times, with services in Two Rock at 9:30 am and services in Tomales at 11:00 am

September 26: Pastor Cornelia's last Sunday

† September 12 will also mark the beginning of the choir season in Two Rock Church, with choir rehearsals happening on Sundays after worship, under the able and energetic direction of Kay Fish. Please let Kay know if you want to

join our group of enthusiastic singers, and she will find a place for you!

The Tomales Church Choir may begin earlier, depending on when its members feel comfortable singing together, now that the danger of the Covid pandemic seems to be waning. Gary Foster will direct and accompany the singers from the piano.

EDUCATION & LEARNING

☺ A big thank-you to the children and youth of our congregations and to their parents and Sunday school teachers for decorating the graves of service members for Memorial Day.

In the Tomales cemetery, this task was overseen by the Graves family: Church members and scout leaders Tim and Amanda, while scouts Maya, Mickey, and Emma placed the individual flags.



Scouts Maya, Mickey, and Emma Graves



Four-year-old Emma Graves decorating a grave for Memorial Day

The decorating of graves in the **Two Rock Cemetery** was organized by Sunday school teachers Jessica Briggs and Kathy Stroke, and Mary Briggs and Collin McClelland put flags on the graves of service members. Thank you so much!



Collin McClelland and Mary Briggs



Decorated Graves at Two Rock

☺ After 15 months of distance learning, zoom-learning, and hybrid-learning, celebrating the **end of the school year** held special meaning 2021!

At Tomales Church, we honored our students on June 13 and celebrated that **Maya, Mickey**

and Emma Graves did well this past school year and will all be in school, come this fall.

At Two Rock Church, we honored our students on June 27. Our eight children and youth were **Mary Briggs, Collin and Luke McClelland, Hunter Patterson, Bristol Parisian, and Elizabeth, Nathan and Natalie Young**. They will be in various grades next year from preschool to high school, and one-year-old **Benjamin Young** will be cared for at home.

Congratulations to all of our students and parents for adjusting to challenging circumstances, for enduring when internet connections were spotty, and for persevering when it was difficult to concentrate on hour after hour of zoom instructions. You have made it through this unprecedented year, and each of you has done well! We pray that this coming school year, you will all be back for good in your classrooms, with your teachers and school friends!

☺ In August of last year, a group of people from both our congregations started a **zoom reading group**. We were eager to talk about social issues in our society, particularly the issue of racial justice that was being debated in the aftermath of the killing of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, Memorial Day.

We read about the struggles and **experiences of African Americans** in the writings of Austin Channing Brown, Ibrahim X. Kendi, and Isabel Wilkerson.

We also discussed Jeanine Cummins' *American Dirt* and the challenges faced by **immigrants that come to the USA from Central America**.

In May and June, we focused on **Biblical history**, specifically on the time period between the writing of

the last books in the Old Testament (Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel) and the writings of the New Testament. Kip Spragens provided us with abstract of some helpful history books, we shared maps and charts, and we learned about people, events, and movements that influenced the history of Judah, Galilee, Syria, and Palestine.

Currently, our reading group is on summer break until **Monday, August 2nd**. We will reconvene that afternoon, decide whether to meet in person or on zoom, and determine what to read and discuss in August and September.

MISSION & OUTREACH

Each summer, our congregations collect **school supplies**; and with students gathering in schools and classrooms again, we do want to continue this tradition!

Thank you, Amanda Graves, for being in touch with Erica Beltran, Administrative Secretary of Tomales Elementary School, and sharing with us her email to you:

We are always low and going through the following items quickly:

#2 pencils

Expo Markers and erasers

Glue sticks

Composition notebooks

Spiral notebooks

Colored Pencils

Colored Markers

Kleenex boxes

All friends of **Tomales Elementary School** are urged to pick up some of those items on their next shopping trip! We will collect your donations at church and deliver them to the school office in August, right before the beginning of the new school year.

Please watch your bulletin for information about school supplies for **Two Rock Elementary School!**

Here is some happy news: the town of Tomales will host a **Founders Day celebration on Sunday, September 5, Labor Day weekend.** There may not be a parade, but a party is being planned in the town park! Local groups will have booths, and the **Tomales Scouts** will definitely sell lemonade as a fundraiser for their troop and its activities. **Tomales Presbyterian Church** plans to have a booth to sell our famous zucchini cookbook, show a photo display about our congregation, and share some goodies with the community.

And more exciting news: the **Two Rock Harvest Festival is on for Saturday, September 25!** We are truly delighted to be able to host this beloved community event again, after having to skip it in 2020 because of the Covid pandemic.

We will have our **chicken BBQ**, though we are still wondering if it will be pre-orders and take-out only, or if people may order as they arrive and eat at the church. We'll determine that in early September.

We will have lots of **quilts** for sale and other **handicraft items**, plus our **baked goods**, all packed and sealed safely.

We will also have our ever-popular **raffle**, with tickets available beforehand or on September 25, and with lots of lovely prizes.

And do check out our **Silent Auction** with some unique items, gift cards, and themed baskets.

Please join us for **Harvest Festival 2021**, help us celebrate

as our community gathers again in person, and do bring your family!

PROPERTY & FINANCE

Sunday, June 20th, was the first time in 15 months that the Two Rock congregation worshipped in its sanctuary. Everyone was happy to leave zoom services behind and gather in person at the church! We even had coffee hour after the service, with individually wrapped cookies and other snacks, and we talked with one another through our masks. It was great!

And then the news came around 5 pm that there was **a fire near the church.** It turned out to be a vehicle fire, right below Two Rock Church on Bodega Avenue!



A pickup truck was pulling a motorhome, and apparently the chain between the two vehicles was dragging, heating up on the asphalt, and causing sparks to fly. And then the propane tank caught fire, and both the truck and the motorhome were soon engulfed in flames.

Saill White took these photos of the burning vehicles right after she called 911; we are so grateful that she noticed this incident and responded immediately! By that time, the propane tank was burning so hot that it exploded and parts of it flew into the Mahrt ranch across Springhill Road and started two grass fires. One big section of that propane tank ended up in the Two Rock cemetery, though nothing caught fire there. One can only imagine the amount of heat that turned that propane tank into such a forceful projectile.

How fortunate that we are located so close to the Two Rock Volunteer Fire Department and the Two Rock Coast Guard Base with its firefighting unit. Thanks to their prompt intervention and thanks to the fast action of Ingrid Mahrt's ranch workers, the fire was extinguished before it reached any structures.



Photo by Mel Todt

In these two final photos you can see what was left of the pickup truck and the motorhome: both were total losses.

Thanks be to God that nothing worse happened; no one was hurt

and no structures caught fire. Thanks be to God for alert neighbors like Saill, for rapidly responding fire fighters, for quick-acting ranch workers, and for everyone else who helped extinguish this vehicle fire and the two grass fires.

The pickup truck and motorhome were towed into town; we trust that the driver made it home safely later that night. And we are deeply grateful that we are able to continue using our church building after June 20, 2021.

Some final thank-you's: the vehicle fire occurred just about where the church mailbox is located, and the mailbox got so hot that it no longer closed properly. Many thanks to Bruce Carrington for finding us a new one and installing it, and many thanks to Carl Carter for sweeping up pieces of broken glass and molten metal from the road.

Meanwhile at **Tomales Church**, Sharon and Eric Knudsen got back in touch with Coy Brown Painting, the company that had painted the outside of the church sanctuary last fall; **we needed a bit of follow-up and touch-up of the paint job.** Here is what Sharon wrote on June 30:

Yesterday [June 29] Coy Brown Painting sent out a guy to fix and touch up the flaking spots on the church. We showed him the [southeast] corner, downspout, spots on the north side, another spot on the south side, and also asked him to clean up the marks left by the Christmas wreaths on the doors. When we went up to put the paint and ladders away, we were pleased with the results. We couldn't locate exactly where the spots were on the north side, and the corner and the down spout looks great.

Many thanks to the dedicated craftsmen at Coy Brown Painting, and many thanks to Sharon and Eric Knudsen for overseeing this task.

A big thank-you to Two Rock member Bruce Carrington, who has begun to **custom-build a couple of wall cabinets** for the hallway at Tomales Church.

CHURCH CARE & FELLOWSHIP

Everyone is invited to
Pastor Cornelia's and Carl's Open House
Saturday, August 14, 1:30 to 4:30
834 Stillson Drive in Petaluma
Please come for a visit
and afternoon treats

We now have **coffee hour after worship** again in both our churches. We are still a bit cautious and have mostly pre-packed snacks, but are enjoying coffee and conversation as we did before the pandemic.

Many thanks to the **Two Rock Deacons**, who visited several older adults in June. And many thanks to **Nan Leavell of Two Rock and Suzie Harms of Tomales** for sending out birthday cards to our members.

The **Women's Coffee Group** meets each Tuesday at Two Rock Church from 10:30 am to noon.

The **Two Rock Quilters** meet each Thursday from 9:00 am to noon in the church's fireplace room. Feel free to join them!

PRESBYTERY NEWS

† The next **Presbytery Meeting** will be held at Westminster Woods

on Saturday, September 18, 2021, from 10 am to 3 pm.

† **Our annual, Presbytery-wide fundraiser, Pedal for Protein**, is back in person this year! As always, the ride will begin the day after the fall Presbytery meeting, on Sunday, September 19, and will conclude on Saturday, September 25. This is the route the cyclists will take:

Sun, Sept 19 - Westminster Woods to Pt. Reyes Presbyterian Church
Monday, Sept 20 - Pt. Reyes PC to Novato Presbyterian Church
Tuesday, Sept 21 - Novato PC to St Andrews PC in Sonoma

Wednesday, Sept 22 - Sonoma to First Presbyterian, St Helena

Thursday, Sept 23 - St Helena to Cloverdale

Friday, Sept 24 - Cloverdale back to Westminster Woods

On Saturday, **September 25**, there will be a **one-day ride for people of all ages**. It will be based out of Knox Presbyterian Church in Santa Rosa. Details will follow.

You may support this **fundraiser for local food pantries** by donating on behalf of individual riders, or by putting money into the offering jars on our tables in the fellowship halls. Our two sessions voted to support **P 4 P** by donating funds for the riders' dinner and breakfast on September 19 and 20, while they are in the Pt. Reyes area.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Tomales Regional History Center is opening its doors again to all visitors! Starting Sunday, July 4th, the Center will be open on **Saturdays and Sundays from 1 pm to 4 pm**. Everyone is invited to stop in and view its permanent and temporary exhibits. The History Center is located at 26701 Highway One in the town of Tomales.

Two Rock Valley/Tomales
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“May the LORD watch between you and me, when we are absent one from the other.”
Genesis 31:49

August 22 -	Back to school celebrations and honoring our teachers
September 5 -	Joint Founders Day Worship at Tomales Presbyterian Church and Founders Day festivities in Tomales town park. There will be no service in Two Rock on September 5th.
September 12 -	Reversal of worship times, with Two Rock services at 9:30am and Tomales services at 11am
September 25 -	Two Rock Harvest Festival from 10am to 3pm
September 26 -	Pastor Cornelia’s last day