



# Trinity Topics

The Newsletter of Trinity Lutheran Church, Riverside CA  
Sharing God's love, hope and forgiveness since 1893



# December

Trinity Lutheran Church

Since 1893

Kent Tuohino, Pastor

Volume 26, Issue 11, December 2023



## Trinity Christmas Sing

December 9 & 10 at 4:00 pm

You are invited to attend a special concert of Christmas music featuring the Trinity Choir accompanied by a chamber orchestra. The concert will be presented two times: on Saturday, December 9, at 4:00 pm, and again on Sunday, December 10, at 4:00 pm.

Choral arrangements will alternate with the audience singing Christmas carols along with the choir and orchestra. Admission is free (there will be a freewill offering). Invite your friends and neighbors to attend one of these special concerts!



## Christmas Services at Trinity

Invite your family and friends to join us for these special services of worship.

We'll sing beloved carols and read the story of our Savior's birth.

### Sunday, December 24

9:30 am — Fourth Sunday of Advent

5:00 pm — Christmas Eve Family Service

10:00 pm — Service of Carols w/Communion

*Both the 5 & 10 pm Christmas Eve services will include singing "Silent Night" by candlelight.*

### Sunday, December 31

One worship service with carols at 9:30 am



## Christmas Tree of Giving

This month we are gathering Christmas gifts for children in need. Gifts are needed for children of all ages! Please take a tag from the tree in the church narthex, buy a gift, then bring it to church. Please leave the gift unwrapped.

We will take the donated gifts to Lutheran Social Services so that parents can come and select the right gift for their child. We will collect gifts through Sunday, Dec. 17.



## Decorate the Church

Help us decorate the church for the Advent and Christmas seasons on Saturday, December 2. We'll start at 9:00 am and should be done before noon. Bring a lunch or snack to enjoy some time in fellowship after we finish



## Alternative Gift Fair

Riverside's annual alternative gift fair will take place on Sunday, December 3, from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm at First United Methodist Church, 4845 Brockton Ave. This community event offers holiday shopping, music, and food, all in support of local non-profit organizations.





Rev. Scottie Lloyd preached and led worship for our services on November 12 and 19. He is a retired ELCA pastor and former U.S. Army chaplain. He presented a plaque to Trinity on November 12 in recognition of our donations to a scholarship fund for seminary students interested in serving as chaplains.



The RiverSong Threshold Choir, directed by Sandy Rodriguez, sang at the Transgender Day of Remembrance service held at Trinity on November 18. The event was organized by Mackenzie Lussier, who works for the Transgender Health and Wellness Center.



More than 50 members and friends from Trinity attended one of the performances of "Dietrich & Maria" in November. With music by Glenn Pickett and lyrics by David Goodman, it tells the story of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German Lutheran theologian and pastor who was martyred for his participation in resistance to the Nazis before and during World War II.



With help moving furniture from men in the Whiteside Manor addiction treatment program, the carpet in the sanctuary got a much-needed cleaning on Nov. 22 in preparation for our Advent and Christmas services.

"The Advent season is a season of waiting, but our whole life is an Advent season, that is, a season of waiting for the last Advent, for the time when there will be a new heaven and a new earth."

— Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *God Is in the Manger: Reflections on Advent and Christmas*



**Organ Recital at Edén Lutheran Church**  
**Saturday, Dec. 16,**  
**at 3:00 pm**

This concert by organist David Christensen will feature Advent and Christmas music played on a Moller/Allen pipe organ. This is a free concert; refreshments will be served afterward. Edén Lutheran Church is located at 4725 Brockton Avenue.

## Thursday Night Bible Study

This weekly Bible study meets online at 7:00 pm each Thursday and discusses the upcoming Sunday Gospel reading. If you'd like to participate, let Pastor Kent know. He will email you the discussion questions along with a link to the Zoom meeting.

*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. — Psalm 119:105*



## Sunday Bible Readings

December 3: First Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 64:1-9; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; Mark 13:24-37

December 10: Second Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13; Mark 1:1-8

December 17: Third Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Psalm 126; John 1:6-8, 19-28

December 24: Fourth Sunday of Advent

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Lk 1:46b-55; Luke 1:26-38

December 31: 1st Sunday of Christmas

Galatians 4:4-7; Psalm 148; Luke 2:21-40

I was glad  
when they said to me,  
"Let us go to the house  
of the Lord!"  
Psalm 122:1



## Sunday Coffee Hour

Volunteers are needed to help with the coffee hour. If you would like to host and serve a simple treat on a Sunday, please sign up or call the church office.

## Altar Flowers

The Flower Chart is posted on the bulletin board outside the church office. Please consider signing up to donate the cost of the altar flowers for a Sunday worship service. The price is \$34 for one bouquet or \$68 for both (make checks payable to Trinity).

### This Month's Flower Donors

12/03 Brenda S. Lussier  
12/10 The Knapik Family  
12/17 Barb Beaver  
12/24 Sarah Boese  
12/31 Available



## Pastor's Paragraphs

As we enter the Advent and Christmas seasons, it's a time when the world around us is filled with bright lights and cheerful music and decorations. The stores are busy with people shopping for just the right gift, and we look forward to special gatherings with family and friends.

When we come to church, we also enjoy the special decorations and the seasonal music that proclaims the promise of a Savior. But our church season of Advent encourages us to think about other things as well. The word "advent" comes from the Latin word "adventus" and refers to the arrival of Christ. While the message of Christmas is focused on Christ coming to us as a baby born in Bethlehem, the season of Advent begins with the promise of Christ returning again in glory.

In our times of worship, carols of celebration and praise are mixed with songs of longing, anticipation, wondering and hope. As we await the coming of the Prince of Peace to a world plagued by war, our prayers for peace, love and joy become more earnest and intense.

In Mark 13, Jesus says that, like servants waiting for their master to return, we do not know the day of his coming. Therefore, we should "keep awake" and watch for the signs of his coming. I think part of what Jesus wants us to learn is the spiritual practice of paying attention.

"The Practice of Paying Attention" is the title of a chapter in Rev. Barbara Brown Taylor's book *An Altar in the World*. In it she describes an attitude of reverence, of paying attention to the world and all that is holy and beautiful in it. She writes, "Regarded properly, anything can become a sacrament, by which I mean an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual connection." When we practice paying attention, it "is as simple as looking twice at people and things you might just as easily ignore... It is one way into a different way of life, full of treasure for those who are willing to pay attention to exactly where they are."

Jesus urges us to be attentive, so that we are prepared for the final and full arrival of the kingdom of God. And when we commit to the spiritual practice of paying attention, we find that we can catch glimpses of God's presence and signs of God's reign each and every day.

So, during this often busy time of year, take time to pause and pay attention to the signs of God's presence in your life. "Stay awake," Jesus says, and look for the ways he is coming to you today.

— Pastor Kent



### TRINITY'S GIVING REPORT (1/1/23 through 11/28/23)

Goal for regular offerings to date: \$ 235,475.52  
Regular offerings received to date: \$ 247,874.67  
Difference: + \$ 12,399.15

*Your faithful giving is helping us reach our goal!*

Scrip income received in 2023: \$ 1,112.13  
Century Club donations received in 2023: \$ 360.00



## Chrismon Ornaments Tell the Story of Jesus

During this time of year, our church is adorned with many beautiful seasonal decorations. There are garlands and wreaths, an Advent wreath and, of course, a beautiful Christmas tree. Many of the decorations we see at church, however, are not designed simply for their beauty. They have a deeper theological meaning that directs our attention to God. The ornaments on the tree in our sanctuary are a good example. They're called chrismons, and they're a collection of signs and symbols that tell the story of Christ.

The word *chrismon* comes from the words *Christ* and *monogram*. Chrismons were first developed by Frances Kipps Spencer in 1957 at Ascension Lutheran Church, Danville, VA. This daughter of a Lutheran pastor and missionary thought that brightly colored Christmas ornaments were not fitting for a worship setting, so she started thinking about a way to reflect the Christian faith through ornaments based on traditional Christian symbols. The first ornament she made was the name of Jesus and His title: Christ. The Greek letters Chi (X) and Rho (P) form a monogram for the Greek word Christos (Christ). Ornaments in the shape of this monograms, along with crosses, decorated the first chrismon tree. As the years went on, different symbols were added that represent God and the life of Jesus.



Chrismons are traditionally white and gold, because white is the color for purity and gold symbolizes value, worth and God's majesty and glory. The Christmas tree is an evergreen because evergreens remain that color all year, symbolizing eternal life, and white lights cover the tree, symbolizing Jesus as the light of the world.

The chrismons that decorate our tree at Trinity were made by church members many years ago. When you come to church during this time of year, spend a few minutes studying the chrismons hanging on the tree in the sanctuary and consider what they teach us about God and the mercy and love He shows us. These signs and symbols uniquely serve to turn our attention to Christ, especially at this time of year as we celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus.

Here are a few examples of the symbols used in chrismons:

- A triangle or three intersecting circles represent the Trinity.
- A six-pointed star represents the 6 days of creation. It is also called the star of David and is a symbol for Judaism.
- A fish represents Jesus. Early Christians used the letters of the Greek word for fish (ΙΧΘΥΣ — pronounced "ichthus") as an acronym for "Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior."
- A cross on top of an orb represents Jesus' dominion over the world.
- The letters alpha (Α) and omega (Ω) are the first and last letters in the Greek alphabet, and recall the words of Christ in Revelation 22:13, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End."

## Honoring Mary: A Zoom Discussion for Advent

Monday, December 4, 6:30-8:00 pm



Martin Luther loved Mary, but she doesn't get much airtime in the Lutheran church. Maybe we don't talk about her much because we don't want to appear as though we worship her or allow her to take the place of Jesus.

But she was an amazing woman... peasant girl, mother of our Lord, radical revolutionary, archetypal image of the Divine Feminine, Queen of Heaven, God-bearer (Theotokos) who shows us how to bear God... she is all of this and more. How do you see Mary? What about her means the most to you?

Join Bishop Dave Nagler and Pastor Stephanie Lape for a conversation about this amazing person and spiritual ancestor. Enter Advent refreshed, challenged, and reminded of Mary's earthy and holy wisdom.

This Zoom meeting is open to all and there's no cost to attend. However, you do need to register in advance in order to get the Zoom meeting link. To register, go online to:

[https://reg.learningstream.com/reg/event\\_page.aspx?ek=0017-0011-ca635ada7f214a9b82e6ff5f674a6fd6](https://reg.learningstream.com/reg/event_page.aspx?ek=0017-0011-ca635ada7f214a9b82e6ff5f674a6fd6)

If you have questions or need help with registration, please email Terri Robertson at [terrirobertson@pacificasynod.org](mailto:terrirobertson@pacificasynod.org).

## Council Meeting Summary

The Trinity Council met via Zoom on Tuesday, Nov. 21. Members present: Pastor Kent, Mary Kantola, Mike McMichael, Stacy Wheeler, Gary Goldberg, Wes Krashin, Theresa Husted, and Larry Dodson. Pastor Kent led a devotional from *Christ in Our Home* based on 1 Thessalonians and offered an opening prayer.

### Pastor's Report Highlights

- Pastor Ken Puccio and members of Grace Lutheran Church in Glen Avon on November 5 to present a donation of \$30,000 to Trinity from the sale of their property. Grace will hold a service of holy closure on Saturday, January 6, at 2:00 pm.
- 45 people were served baked potatoes at the Fall Luncheon. Carolyn Bolz shared an inspiring story about giving. It was a good social event, and people enjoyed it.
- The Transgender Day of Remembrance event at Trinity on Saturday, November 18, was a beautiful and moving gathering. Kudos to Mackenzie Lussier for her work in organizing it.
- The Living the Resurrection Workshop that had been scheduled to be at Trinity on Saturday, November 11, was cancelled due to low registration.
- Many members and friends of Trinity attended the performances of the musical "Dietrich & Maria" on the weekend of November 17-19.
- The Christmas tree for the sanctuary will be delivered on Saturday, December 2, and we plan to decorate the church that morning as well. Some decorations will probably go up a few days earlier.
- There will be two Christmas Sing Concerts at Trinity on December 9 and 10 at 4pm.
- The UCR Choir would like to perform another concert at Trinity in March. Approved by council.
- A nominating committee for 2024 elected positions was appointed. The members are Pastor Kent, Mary Kantola, and Stacy Wheeler.

### Treasurer's Report

- October was completed with \$21,166.52 in envelope giving and \$5,354.15 in unrestricted income. For the ten months of the fiscal year, we have \$207,818.64 in envelope giving, which is, \$8,851.36 under projections. Regular offerings for the ten months of the fiscal year are \$235,818.64, which are under forecast by \$4,184.70.
- We finished January through October with a net income of \$33,917.38.

### Old Business

- Media/Branding proposal previously presented was tabled in lieu of volunteers updating the website.
- Update on loan from Sandra Hendrick Memorial Fund.
- Property updates: No update on carpet for LSS. Sanctuary Carpet Cleaning will be on November 22. Heat pump installations were delayed due to the weather.
- Audit committee recommendations update: Staff discussions are pending. Discussion continues regarding the process for Sunday offerings.

### New Business

- Identified and appointed a new QuickBooks administrator.
- The Holiday Rummage sale on November 11 raised \$845 and based on a recommendation the council voted to donate the funds to the Hope Food Pantry.
- The council voted to approve the purchase of a television monitor for the sanctuary to be used by the choir for song lyrics.

The next council meeting will be held via Zoom on Tuesday, December 19, 2023, at 6:30 pm.

## Come, Emmanuel: Devotions for Advent and Christmas

Pick up a copy at Trinity of the devotional booklet, *Come, Emmanuel*. It will help you explore the Advent season and celebrate the joy of the twelve days of Christmas and the day of Epiphany. In addition to daily devotions, the book includes household blessings and prayers to enrich your preparations and seasonal celebrations. Join Christians around the world in the Advent tradition of reflecting on brief prayers known as the "O Antiphons." Christians have used the O Antiphons since the eighth century or perhaps even longer.

## December Birthdays

[2] Brenda M Lussier, Peggy Muller; [4] Bambi Moyer, Mary Jane Thompson; [5] Mackenzie Lussier; [6] Leisha Garcia; [7] Bill Wall; [8] Diana Golbaf; [9] Dan Dugan; [10] Chris Tuohino; [13] Stacy Wheeler; [15] Bill Nicoletti; [17] Destiny Clark, Karen Oster; [18] Jarett Guillow; [19] Nick Baroldi; [21] Stephan Hamilton; [25] Robbin Johnson, Mark Moyer; [26] Linda Bergen, Amytis Nekoonam, Brenda Wallior; [29] Bob Powers; [31] Martha Dodson, Cherie Guillow.

If we missed your birthday, please let us know so that we can add you to our list!





ELCA Good Gifts offers more than 50 different gifts that will fight hunger, grow the church, and change lives around the world. To see the available gift options, pick up a copy of the Good Gifts catalog at church, or go to [ELCA.org/goodgifts](http://ELCA.org/goodgifts).

## Piggy Bank Roundup Results

We thank everyone who brought in donations for our annual piggy bank roundup in November. We raised a total of \$1,002.58 for Trinity's PIG Project!

PIG is an acronym for **P**eople **I**n need of **G**roceries, and the money we received will help stock the Hope Pantry at Trinity and the food pantry at Central City Lutheran Mission in San Bernardino.

Start saving your coins for next November's roundup!



## Prison Ministry Christmas Project

Remember the stationery kits we assembled as part of "God's Work, Our Hands" Sunday in September? It's almost time for those bags – along with hundreds more assembled by other congregations – to be packed with other goodies and prepared for Christmas. This year the bag packing party will be held on Saturday, December 9, beginning at 10 am at:

First Christian Church  
109 E Wilshire Avenue (corner of E. Wilshire and Fullerton, CA 92832 Harbor Blvd.)

A build-your-own-sandwich bar, snacks, and beverages will be provided for volunteers. If you plan to attend, please email your RSVP to Linda Barkman at [lindalee\\_free@yahoo.com](mailto:lindalee_free@yahoo.com).

## Living Lutheran Magazine Moving Online

The rise of online media along with the rising costs for printing and postage have challenged many magazines. The ELCA's *Living Lutheran* magazine is no exception. Beginning in 2024, *Living Lutheran* will no longer publish a printed edition and will be available online only.

Sign up now to receive the free *Living Lutheran* e-digest to stay informed about the many ways Christ is at work in congregations and members of the ELCA. Articles will be sent directly to your email inbox. You can pick your favorite topics and the frequency of delivery – weekly, bi-weekly or monthly. Sign up at [livinglutheran.org/subscribe](http://livinglutheran.org/subscribe).



## Taizé Service

Several churches in Riverside take turns hosting a Taizé service on the 2nd Monday of the month at 7:00 pm.

It's a contemplative style of worship featuring simple but beautiful songs, inspiring readings, and prayerful silence. On December 11, it will be held at:

First Congregational Church  
3504 Mission Inn Avenue

The service will also be available to view online. For more information, visit [facebook.com/taizeriverside](https://facebook.com/taizeriverside) or contact Sandra Soares at [fccucc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:fccucc@sbcglobal.net).

## Daily Devotions

Copies of the *Christ in Our Home* daily devotional booklet are available at Trinity. Pick one up at church, or contact the church office and we will be happy to send one to you. A few large-print copies are also available.

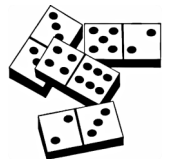


## Rummage Sale Report

The holiday rummage sale on Saturday, November 11, raised a total of \$845 to help support the Hope Food Pantry at Trinity. Our thanks go to all of the volunteers and the donors of used Christmas items for helping to make this rummage sale a success!

## Game Fellowship Group

This monthly fellowship group for adults meets on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 10 am in Cooper-Burkhart House. All are welcome. Contact Karyl Robinson for more information.



## Eyeglasses Wanted

We make used eyeglasses available to those who cannot afford them. If you have readers or prescription reading glasses you do not need, please bring them to church and place them in the donation box in Heinecken Hall.



## Hope Food Pantry

The Hope Food Pantry is open at Trinity from 9:00 to 10:30 am every Wednesday. Volunteers are needed to help with the food pick-up on Tuesdays and food distribution on Wednesdays. (You don't need to help every week.) Contact Larry Dodson to volunteer.



**TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
5969 BROCKTON AVENUE  
RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA 92506

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| <p>TRINITY TOPICS is published monthly by:<br/>Trinity Lutheran Church, 5969 Brockton Avenue, Riverside, CA 92506</p>  |
| <p><b>Sunday Worship Schedule</b><br/>9:30 am — Contemporary Service (in person and on YouTube)<br/>9:30 am — Sunday School      11:00 am — Traditional Service<br/><b>Church Office Hours:</b> open 8:00 am to 12:00 pm, Monday-Friday<br/>Phone: (951) 682-1350 • Email: <a href="mailto:office@trinityriverside.org">office@trinityriverside.org</a></p>  |
| <p><b>Ministry Staff</b><br/>Kent Tuohino, <i>Pastor</i> • Mary Kantola, <i>Congregational President</i><br/>Glenn Pickett, <i>Director of Music Ministries</i> • Michael Myers, <i>Administrative Assistant</i><br/>Rev. Hitoshi &amp; Satoko Adachi, <i>ELCA Missionaries in Japan</i></p>   |
| <p><b>Vision &amp; Mission Statements</b><br/>The vision of Trinity Lutheran Church is to provide a community of faith where all people are <b>challenged</b> to reach their full potential in Christ.<br/>Our mission is to <u>represent</u> our Lord Jesus Christ in this time and place. We will do so by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>INVITING</b> people to <b>know</b> God and His message of grace, love, hope and forgiveness.</li><li>• <b>ASSISTING</b> people to <b>grow</b> in their relationship with God.</li><li>• <b>EQUIPPING</b> people to <b>serve</b> Christ's church.</li><li>• <b>ENABLING</b> people to <b>share</b> their faith through what they say and do.</li></ul> <p><b>KNOW, GROW, SERVE AND SHARE</b></p> |