



Trinity Topics

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



Trinity Lutheran Church

Since 1893

Kent Tuohino, Pastor

Volume 27, Issue 10, November 2024

Stewardship: Giving Thanks for God's Blessings

November is a time of year when we are encouraged to give thanks for God's blessings. It's also the time of year when our church encourages our members and friends to think about what it means to be a steward of God's gifts of time, talent, and treasure. God has blessed each of us in different ways and to different degrees, but all of us are responsible for how we manage these blessings. God tells us to use them not only for ourselves, but to benefit our neighbors as well.

As stewards of God's gifts, we are also called to give an offering to God with thankful hearts. As St. Paul writes in 2 Cor. 9:7-8, "Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work."

This month we encourage you to make up your mind about your giving for the coming year. Stewardship commitment cards will be distributed at church on Sunday, November 10, and mailed to those unable to attend worship that Sunday. On November 17, we will celebrate God's generosity toward us by presenting those commitment cards as part of our offering to God. Please prayerfully consider how you will support God's work through the ministry of our church!

It's Piggy Bank Roundup Time!

If you've been saving your change this past year, please bring your piggy banks to church this month! We encourage people to collect their spare change in piggy banks (or another container) during the year for our PIG Project, and then bring it to church in November.

PIG is an acronym for **P**eople **I**n need of **G**roceries, and the change that is collected will help benefit the Hope Pantry at our church and the homeless shelter at the Lutheran center in San Bernardino.



Thanksgiving Food Baskets

Do you know someone who could use some extra help at Thanksgiving? If so, please fill out a Thanksgiving basket nomination form and submit it by Sunday, November 17.

You can also help give others a reason to be thankful by donating food for our Thanksgiving baskets. Copies of a suggested shopping list are available to take with you to the grocery store. Please bring your food donations to the church by Friday, November 22. The food baskets will be distributed on Sunday, Nov. 24.

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. – 1 Peter 4:10

The LifeStream bloodmobile will be at Trinity again from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm on Sunday, November 10.

If you are able to donate blood, please take time to do so that day.



Christmas Concerts

Mark your calendar now for Christmas concerts at Trinity on December 14 and 15, starting at 4:00 pm. The Trinity Choir will be accompanied by a chamber orchestra. Invite your friends and family to attend!



Trunk-n-Treat at Trinity



Lots of families showed up for Trunk-n-Treat on Saturday, October 26.



The cover band "Rock-It" (with Trinity member Stephan Hamilton on drums) entertained the crowd.



Shelly Rosenkild invited children to visit her "Mad Lab."



Sue Rogers' Trunk-n-Treat display included an invitation to donate blood!



Quilt Sunday

On Sunday, October 20, our church was decorated with the 331 colorful quilts that our Quilting Bee made this year. The quilts were blessed, and then boxed up and sent to Lutheran World Relief.

LWR distributes quilts and other items to people suffering from disasters all around the world, including people in the U.S. impacted by recent hurricanes.



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

November 3: All Saints Sunday

Psalm 24; Revelation 21:1-6; John 11:32-44

November 10: 25th Sunday after Pentecost

2nd Corinthians 9: 6-15; Psalm 126; Mark 12:38-44

November 17: 26th Sunday after Pentecost

Hebrews 10:11-25; Psalm 16; Mark 13:1-8

November 24: Christ the King Sunday

Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14; Psalm 93; John 18:33-37

December 1: 1st Sunday of Advent

Jeremiah 33:14-16; Psalm 25 1-10; Luke 21:25-36



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).

Upcoming Flower Donors

11/03 — T. McNulty & Corina Family

11/10 — Carl & Shawn Lowell Family;
Mackenzie & Brenda M. Lussier

11/17 — Goldberg Family

11/24 — Brenda S. Lussier & John Collins



Pastor's Paragraphs

This past week I attended a planning meeting at Luther Glen Farm in Oak Glen. It was a beautiful time to be there, with clear, cool weather and many of the trees turning bright fall colors. Luther Glen is harvesting the last of the summer produce from their gardens. Along with eggs from their hens, much of this bounty is brought to the food pantry at Trinity and distributed to families in need of food assistance. Fall in the community of Oak Glen is also peak season for the local apple orchards to gather their harvest and sell their delicious fruit.

It's easy for us to forget that food doesn't come from grocery stores, but from places like this. Seeing these signs of abundance reminded me of why fall is a season for giving thanks. We give thanks for the beautiful world God has given us. We give thanks for the food the Earth provides us and that sustains all living things.

In all places and in all cultures, people take time after a harvest to give thanks to the divine source of life. After all of the work of planting and caring for fields and orchards, praying for favorable weather, and gathering in the food needed for survival, it's only natural to feel the need for worship and to give a thank offering to the source of all good gifts.

In the Bible, Moses gives the ancient Israelites instructions on how they should do this. He says that, when they begin harvesting their crops, they should place some of the first fruits in a basket and present it as an offering at God's temple. As they present their offering, they should remember and recite all the ways God has helped their people and provided for them (see Deuteronomy 26:1-11).

In the New Testament, Paul adapts this idea of giving our "first fruits" for a more urban population. In 1 Corinthians 16:2, he advises believers to set aside a portion of their earnings each week, so that they can present that financial gift as their offering. Instead of giving what's left over after paying their bills, Paul says they should give in proportion to their income.

As stewards of God's gifts, we are meant to take these teachings seriously. Our offerings are a central part of our worship and praise. And whatever we decide to give, we should give with a grateful heart, knowing that "God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7).

Take time during this fall harvest season to count your blessings, remembering what God has done for you. I pray that, when you do so, your heart will be filled with gratitude! — *Pastor Kent*



TRINITY'S GIVING REPORT (1/1/24 through 10/31/24)

Goal for regular offerings to date: \$ 230,415.07

Regular offerings received to date: \$ 237,534.32

Difference: + \$ 7,119.25

Your faithful giving is helping us meet our goal!

Scrip income received in 2024: \$ 815.00

Century Club donations received in 2024: \$ 400.00



Bidden or Not Bidden, God is Present

By ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton

A dear friend gave me a plaque inscribed with the words “*Vocatus atque non vocatus Deus aderit.*” Bidden or not bidden, God is present. It’s an intriguing proverb, thought to have originated from the Oracle of Delphi in ancient Greece and later found in an anthology of Greek and Latin proverbs compiled by Erasmus in the 16th century. Carl Jung, the early-20th-century Swiss physician and psychiatrist, had it inscribed above his doorway and on his tombstone. These are very different eras and very different people, yet all were attracted to this adage. And here am I, in the 21st century, taken with these same words.

I didn’t understand them at first. They seemed almost like a threat: “Like it or not, God is here – deal with it.” Not very comforting, really. And what about invocations? Do we summon God? Do we invite the Spirit into our meetings as if we control access? Do we call on Jesus as if we need to get the Lord’s attention?

But I have come to understand that these words declare a reality and a promise. God is already present, ever present, all in all. Instead of invoking or inviting God into our presence, wouldn’t it be better and more accurate to acknowledge that God is present and to ask the Spirit to open our hearts to that presence? And that presence is pure love and peace.

In his novel *The Wind in the Willows*, Kenneth Grahame describes this presence: “Then suddenly the Mole felt a great Awe fall upon him, an awe that turned his muscles to water, bowed his head, and rooted his feet to the ground. It was no panic terror – indeed he felt wonderfully at peace and happy – but it was an awe that smote and held him and, without seeing, he knew it could only mean that some august Presence was very, very near.”

God is near. God is here. God is not the distant, disinterested and disengaged architect of all things. Scripture shows us that God, who brooded over the waters at creation, and walked and talked with Abraham and Sarah, was the constant companion of the people when Israel was delivered from bondage. We just don’t always realize it.

The story of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus puts us in the middle of an experience of an unrecognized encounter with the Holy. It was the evening of the Resurrection. Jesus joined two disciples who told Jesus about all the strange news they had heard about sightings of the risen Lord. But they were still unaware of Jesus’ presence. How could we ever blame them? If we expect God’s presence to be revealed and felt only in one prescribed way – extraordinary epiphanies – then it is not surprising that we do not recognize God’s presence in everyday, ordinary experiences. “We had hoped” they said.

“Beginning with Moses and the prophets, [Jesus] interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures” (Luke 24:27). The two companions already knew the historical facts, but they did not recognize Jesus. Only when these disciples invited Jesus to dinner – when Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them – only then did they recognize Jesus. Such an ordinary thing, breaking bread. No herald angels, no earthquake, just this simple act of taking, blessing and giving bread – something we do on a regular basis – opened their hearts to the presence of the Lord.

How many times have we been in the presence of the Lord but didn’t realize it? How many times has God’s love been made real to us and we were looking in the wrong place—or not looking at all? Let us notice.

Bidden or not bidden, God is present.

Finding God in the Little Things, by Harry Helbock

The Lord said, “Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.” Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” (1 Kings 19:11-13)

I always enjoy reading this bible passage from the Book of Kings. Unlike other passages in the Old Testament, God here is depicted in a much simpler, calming manner – a whisper. Talking to God does not need some dramatic event to occur such as a strong wind, earthquake or fire. I believe these small, calming moments are when we can find God’s presence the most.

God is always open to show love to all of us unconditionally and knows every detail in our lives, every skill and every imperfection. Even when we make mistakes, and as humans we certainly do, God will never turn away from us. As Father Greg Boyle from Homeboy Industries says, “God is just too busy loving us to have any time left for disappointment.” That is true 24/7 and God will always listen with full attention. You should never be afraid of the Lord, like fear of a strong wind, earthquake or fire. God is so much more and always wants to build a personal relationship with you. So, for all those reading this who want to grow a deeper relationship with God, just like Elijah on the mountain, “What are you doing here?”

Council Meeting Summary

The meeting was called to order at 6:36 pm on October 22 by Gary Goldberg. Members present: Pastor Kent, Larry Dodson, Gary Goldberg, Wes Krashin, Sue Rogers, Peggy Fryc, Brenda S. Lussier, Karyl Robinson. Members absent: Mike McMichael, Cherie Guillow.

Pastor's Report

- More than 40 people attended the progressive dinner on October 12. Kudos to Kim Root-George for organizing this!
- He received a notice that we need to find a new phone service. We currently have 2 land lines for voice and a separate fax line. He suggested that we cancel the fax line, as it is no longer needed. This action was approved by consensus. .

Treasurer's Report

- Brenda S. Lussier noted that savings records are reconciled between the credit union and Quick-Books. We finished September with a net of \$7,344.21 for the month. We ended January-September with a net income of \$47,832.12.

Old Business

- Property Maintenance: Dan's Roofing has not yet responded to the lawsuit filed regarding cracks in the sanctuary roofing material.

New Business

- The proposal prepared by Glenn Pickett to improve the lighting in the sanctuary will be included in the budget proposal for the annual meeting in January. The cost would be about \$45,000.00.
- Rev. Darryl Kozak, an Assistant to the Bishop, will meet with the council on Sunday, November 3 at 1 pm to discuss the possible calling of Brenda S. Lussier as a Deacon after she completes her internship.

The meeting adjourned at 8:27 pm. The next regular council meeting will be on Tuesday, November 19, at 6:30 pm via Zoom.



Thank You, Shawn, Carl, and Ashley! by Carolyn Bolz

One year ago, finding a ride to church on Sunday mornings suddenly became very difficult for me. After my sister fell and severely broke her arm, she couldn't drive me to Trinity anymore. What was I going to do? Despite the fact that our church is only a mile from my apartment, it seemed impossible for me to get there. The nearest bus stop is a half mile further down the street, which made taking public transportation impossible. When I phoned the local Dial-a-Ride and explained my situation, their employee refused to assist me. I also tried using the special bus for the physically disabled, but waiting for almost an hour each way in the hot sun eventually became too difficult for me.

Several helpful Trinity members were able to offer me an occasional ride, but I needed someone who could drive me each Sunday morning. I kept praying, yet after missing church for over a month due to transportation challenges, I was feeling very discouraged. Then I looked at my Trinity directory again to see if there was anyone else who I could ask for a ride.

I barely knew Shawn Lowell, but I had spoken with her parents many times at church. When I texted Shawn, I felt dubious that she could help me since she lived all the way in San Bernardino. To my surprise, Shawn texted back that she'd be happy to drive me. Sure enough, on Sunday morning, she pulled up to the curb in her Ford sedan, helped lift my heavy walker into the backseat, and we were on our way.

I was so relieved to finally have a ride to church that I burst into tears. "I'm very grateful that you picked me up," I told Shawn between sobs. "Oh, Carolyn," she replied, looking concerned. "Please don't cry! I can pick you up every Sunday from now on, if you want. I drive right past your apartment on my way to church."

True to her word, Shawn has given me a ride almost each Sunday morning since then. Whenever her husband Carl or their daughter Ashley come along, they always assist me with my walker, then move to the backseat of the car so I can sit up front. What a kind and thoughtful family!

Sometimes the backseat is crowded with a car seat and Trinity food pantry donations, but the Lowells somehow always manage to squeeze my walker in and sit there too. As Shawn likes to tell me, "Carl is an engineer. He'll figure it out." Now not only do I have a ride to church each Sunday, I also have three new friends at Trinity: Shawn, Carl, and Ashley. I'm so grateful that they were the answer to my prayers!

November Birthdays

[3] Charlotte Wall; [5] Larry Dodson; [6] Kimberly Bayne; [7] Gary DeFrese; [13] Joe Afflerbaugh, Barbara McCoy, Barbara Morris; [14] Amanda Reza; Adalynn Wheeler; [21] Kim Root-George; [25] Teresa Hamilton; [29] Barbara Harte; Andrew Thompson

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



Sock Drive Report

Thanks to your donations of new socks and dollars to buy more socks, we collected a total of 905 pairs of socks in October. Thank you for your generous giving! The socks will be a great blessing for our Shower and BAT meal guests!



Adoption Day Gift Baskets

Using a Thrivent grant and other donations, Deacon Brenda S. Lussier assembled 5 gift baskets to be given to families celebrating the adoption of a child on Riverside County's Adoption Day, Nov. 2.



Game Fellowship Group

This adult fellowship group 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.



Taizé Service



Several Riverside churches 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 Monday, November 11th, it will be held at:
All Saints Episcopal Church
3847 Terracina Drive

This month's service will be available to view online. For more info, visit facebook.com/taizeriverside or contact Sandra Soares at fccucc@sbcglobal.net.

"Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10)



Lutheran Social Services invites you to join them on **Friday, November 8**, at the historic Mission Inn in Riverside for their 2024 Gala & Awards. Reception from 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm. Dinner and Program starts at 6:00pm. The gala will be a wonderful evening of fun, food and entertainment in support of LSS!

Help Support Trinity with Scrip

We sell scrip cards as a way to help support our church. They are the same gift cards you can buy elsewhere, but when you buy them through our church, a percentage of your purchase is returned to the church. Cards are available for over 700 stores and restaurants. Visit raiserright.com to see all of the brands.

To place an order, see Michael Myers or Judy McMichael on Sunday morning, or contact the church office on weekdays. You can pay when you order or when you receive your card(s); any checks should be made payable to Trinity Lutheran Church. The weekly scrip order is submitted on Sunday at noon, and we usually receive the cards in time to hand out the next Sunday.



RaiseRight™

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.



Christ in Our Home

Copies of the *Christ in Our Home* devotional booklet are available at our church. Pick one up to use for your personal prayer time. If you would like to have one sent to you, contact our church office and we will be happy to mail you a copy or drop one off at your door. A few large-print copies are also available.

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<p>Ministry Staff Kent Tuohino, <i>Pastor</i> • Gary Goldberg, <i>Congregational President</i> Glenn Pickett, <i>Music Ministries</i> • Kathy Newlen, <i>Administrative Assistant</i> Rev. Hitoshi & Satoko Adachi, <i>ELCA Missionaries in Japan</i></p>
<p>Vision & Mission Statements The vision of Trinity Lutheran Church is to provide a community of faith where all people are challenged to reach their full potential in Christ. 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">• INVITING people to know God and His message of grace, love, hope and forgiveness.• ASSISTING people to grow in their relationship with God.• EQUIPPING people to serve Christ's church.• ENABLING people to share their faith through what they say and do. <p>KNOW, GROW, SERVE AND SHARE</p>