



# 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 28, Issue 11, December 2025

### Coming Home

Carols & Anthems of the Season  
presented by the  
Trinity Choir with Orchestra  
December 13 & 14 at 4:00 PM

Special Guest: Justin Christian  
Conducted by Glenn A. Pickett



Don't miss these concerts featuring Trinity's Choir accompanied by a chamber orchestra.

Choral arrangements of songs old and new will alternate with the audience singing Christmas carols along with the choir and orchestra. Our special guest, Justin Christian, will sing several songs as well.

Admission is free, but freewill offerings will be gratefully accepted. Invite your neighbors, friends and family to attend one of these special concerts!

For unto us a Child is born,  
unto us a Son is given;  
and the government will be upon His shoulder.  
And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor,  
Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9:6



### Christmas Services at Trinity

Join us for these special services of worship.  
We'll sing beloved carols and read  
the story of our Savior's birth.

#### **Tuesday, December 24**

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 28**

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 collect gifts through Sunday, Dec. 14.



## Poat Parlor Improvements

Thanks to several donations, Poat Parlor had its popcorn ceiling removed, and the ceiling and walls were painted. New window blinds were installed on Nov. 9.



## Thanksgiving Baskets Report

This year we put together 19 baskets of food. They were filled with all kinds of good stuff: turkeys, pies, cool whip, black olives, cranberry sauce, instant potatoes, canned vegetables, celery, sparkling cider, dinner rolls, butter, Jell-O, fruit cocktail, marshmallows, peanut butter, cream cheese, crackers, cookies, oranges and apples, and a small ham.

I would like to thank Sarah Boese for Thrivent grant to help pay for the turkeys, our church families for all of their wonderful donations, and the Hope Pantry for the small hams.

All the baskets were either picked up or delivered on Sunday, November 23rd.

Submitted by Kelly Krashin



## Coffee Hosts Wanted

Here at Trinity, we love snacks(!), good conversation, and getting to know one another better. The coffee break between our two Sunday services is a special time that brings our congregation together. It gives us the opportunity to “meet in the middle,” as members from the 9:30 and 11:00 a.m. services gather to enjoy coffee, refreshments, and fellowship with one another.

To make this time of connection possible, we’re looking for volunteers to provide simple snacks. Please consider signing up in advance – whether as an individual, a group of friends, or a family. A sign-up sheet with dates for the next 4 months (January–April) will be available at church in the narthex. You might even choose a Sunday to celebrate a birthday, anniversary, or other special occasion with everyone at church.

To sign up, add your name at church or contact Kim Root-George with the date you’d like. You can call Kim at home and leave a message at **(951) 683-7716**.

Thank you for helping make this time of fellowship warm and welcoming for all!



## The Advent Wreath

The Advent wreath tradition developed in Germany. The circular shape of the Advent wreath and the evergreens traditionally used to make it symbolize eternal life. One candle is lit each Sunday during the four weeks before Christmas. The meaning given to each candle may vary, but they are usually said to symbolize hope, peace, joy and love. On Christmas Eve, a white candle in the center of the wreath is lit, symbolizing the light of Christ. The candlelight symbolizes the coming of Jesus as “The Light of the World.”



ELCA  
Good Gifts



Looking for a different kind of gift this Christmas? The ELCA Good Gifts program offers more than 50 different gifts that will fight hunger, help 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 online to [ELCA.org/goodgifts](http://ELCA.org/goodgifts).

## Rummage Sale Results

A total of \$1,582 was raised by the rummage sale on November 8. We are grateful for all of the volunteers and the donated goods that helped make it a success! The funds will help support the Hope Food pantry at our church.

## 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 7: Second Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 11:1-10; Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19; Matthew 3:1-12

### December 14: Third Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 35:1-10; Psalm 146:5-10; Matthew 11:2-11

### December 21: Fourth Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 7:10-16; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; Matthew 1:18-25

### December 28: First Sunday of Christmas

Hebrews 2:10-15; Psalm 148; Matthew 2:13-23, 43

### January 4: Epiphany Sunday

Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14; Matthew 2:1-12



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 Sunday morning 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

Please consider signing up to donate the cost of the altar flowers for our Sunday services. The price is \$34 for one bouquet or \$68 for both (make checks payable to Trinity).

### Upcoming Flower Donors

12/7: Mackenzie & Brenda M. Lussier  
12/14 Karen Clarke & Kathy Newlen  
12/21: Case & Cindy Bennett,  
Amber McNulty  
12/28 Sarah Boese; Stephan & Teresa  
Hamilton



## Pastor's Paragraphs

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 are called Chrismons.

The word Chrismon is a combination of *Christ* and *monogram*. Chrismons were first developed by Frances Kipps Spencer in 1957 at Ascension Lutheran Church in Danville, VA. This daughter of a Lutheran pastor and missionary 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 monogram, along with crosses, decorated the first Chrismon tree. As the years went on, different symbols were added representing God and the life of Jesus.

Chrismons are traditionally white and gold. White symbolizes purity and perfection, while gold represents nobility and glory. Another tradition associated with Chrismons is that these ornaments should be made by hand. Most of the Chrismons on our tree were made by members of Trinity in 1969.

Here are a few examples of the symbols on our tree:

- A triangle or 3 intersecting circles represent the Trinity.
- A six-pointed star represents the 6 days of creation. It's 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 Last, the Beginning and the End."

When you come to church this month, spend a few minutes studying the ornaments hanging on the tree in the sanctuary and consider what they teach us about God's mercy and love.

— Pastor Kent



**Stewardship  
Report**

## **TRINITY'S GIVING REPORT (1/1/25 through 11/20/2025)**

Goal for regular offerings to date: \$288,750.00  
Regular offerings received to date: \$307,093.18  
Difference: + \$ 18,343.18

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

Donations for the "Dietrich & Maria" Recording Project: \$48,693.43

## Pacifica Synod Announces a New Assistant to the Bishop for Anti-Racism Coordination

On December 1, the Pacifica Synod of the ELCA announced its newest staff member in the position of Assistant to the Bishop for Anti-Racism Coordination, **Desta Ronning Goehner**.

Goehner is a spiritual director, lay leader, and lifelong Lutheran with nearly three decades of ministry experience across multiple expressions of church. She has served in congregational youth ministry, with Lutheran Retreats, Camps and Conferences (LRCC), the Southwest California Synod staff, California Lutheran University, and Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary.

Most recently, Goehner served as Director of Thriving Leadership Formation, supporting pastoral and lay leaders in leadership and spiritual formation. Grounded in the values of collective belonging, authentic presence, and sustainable change, her approach integrates spiritual practices, relational wisdom, and inclusive leadership. With experience in trauma-informed leadership, conflict mediation, and nonviolent communication, she brings a deeply compassionate and justice-rooted lens to all her work.

"I can't do this work without being in relationship with Black, Indigenous, Latiné, and other people of color and culture in the church and wider community, as well as people who worship and serve in different languages," Goehner said.

"We continue to be committed to the work of anti-racism as a synod and we're incredibly excited to have someone of Desta's caliber stepping into this role," said David Nagler, Bishop of the Pacifica Synod. "I look forward to seeing this work grow and strengthen under Desta's leadership."

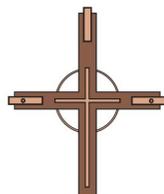
Goehner looks forward to building relationships and trust for culture change with the congregations and leaders across the Pacifica Synod.

*In  
Sympathy*



**Marge Clark** ended her battle with cancer and entered eternal life on November 29. Funeral plans have not yet been finalized. Please pray for Marge's family and friends as they mourn her passing.

*Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live."*  
— John 11:25 —



**Pacifica Synod, ELCA**

**Office of the Bishop**

### Holy Land Accompaniment Pilgrimage: Show Support for Palestinian Christians March 9-19, 2026

The ELCJHL (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land) is inviting the Pacifica and Southwest California Synods to the Holy Land early next year for an accompaniment pilgrimage. Come be with Palestinian Christians and experience the challenges they encounter just trying to live out their faith in the face of enormous structural obstacles. Yes, you'll see the historic foundations of the early Church — Capernaum, the Mount of Olives, the Sea of Galilee, and others — but more importantly, you'll form relationships with those who are building on those very foundations today. Have your faith inspired and your hope challenged.

Find the trip details by going to [pacificasynod.org](http://pacificasynod.org). Click on "News & Events" and then "e-News Archive" to find a link to more information.



### ATTENTION, SHOPPERS!

If you shop at Ralphs or Food 4 Less, please help support our church by enrolling in their Community Contribution Program. It doesn't cost you anything to participate, but after you enroll, Trinity automatically receives a small rebate based on the amount of your purchases. You can register online at [ralphs.com](http://ralphs.com) or [food4less.com](http://food4less.com), or call 1-800-443-4438. The organization number for our church is UT644.

### December Birthdays

[2] Brenda M. Lussier, Peggy Muller; [4] Bambi Moyer, Mary Jane Thompson; [5] Mackenzie Lussier; [6] Leisha Garcia; [7] Bill Wall; [10] Chris Tuohino; [12] Stacy Wheeler; [14] Fernanda Ruelas; [15] Bill Nicoletti; [18] Jarett Guillow; [21] Stephan Hamilton; [22] Hanna Rohozhynska; [25] Robbin Johnson, Mark Moyer; [26] Linda Bergen, Amytis Nekoona; [30] Anrianna Rohozhynska; [31] Martha Dodson, Cherie Guillow

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



# Council Meeting Summary

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Karyl Robinson at 6:07 pm on November 18. Members present: Cherie Guillow, Karyl Robinson, Deacon Brenda, Kelly Krashin, Theresa Husted, Larry Dodson, Gil Heth, Shawn Lowell, Pastor Kent. Members absent: Sue Rogers, Peggy Fryc, Steve Newlen.

## Pastor's Report

- A clogged floor drain in the Heineken Hall kitchen was fixed by flushing it out. No other repair needed.
- Rummage Sale on Nov. 8 raised \$1,582. The funds went to the Food Pantry.
- Stewardship luncheon on November 9 – good food and entertainment were enjoyed by all who attended.
- There was another email scam attempt recently by someone pretending to be Pastor Kent. Copies of a flyer with information about what to look out for are available at the church.
- On November 23 we will have a speaker system demo during service to see if it meets our needs. We are just investigating possibilities at this time.

## Deacon's Report

- Truck-n-Treat – Good turn out; had 11 cars participating, fed at least 125 people.
- The rodent problem in Cooper-Burkhart House is getting addressed.
- Janitor supplies – Looking into the best way to address this situation.

## Treasurer's Report

- October books have been reconciled.
- \$19,979.75 in envelope giving, \$7,488.91 in unrestricted income for October.
- \$267,444.89 in savings account.

## Old Business

- **Personnel Change:** The council received information that Kathy Newlen is leaving her position as Administrative Assistant and her final day will be December 12th. However, she will be on leave until that date. Deacon Brenda, other staff and volunteers will cover the office until a replacement can be found.
- **T-Mobile Cell Tower Lease Amendment:** Our current lease is a 25-year contract. T-Mobile wants to

change the terms. Theresa Husted made a motion to have Deacon Brenda continue to negotiate with T-Mobile. Motion approved.

## Property Maintenance

- **Window Blinds for Poat Parlor** – The old popcorn ceiling was removed, and then the ceiling and walls were painted. After that, the new window blinds were installed on November 9. The room looks much better!
- **Sanctuary Lighting Project** – All lights have been ordered; waiting for the final items to arrive.
- **Bathroom Accessibility** – To be included in the budget for the congregation to vote on in January.
- **Turf Removal & Landscaping** – A city representative came out and measured the square footage of the eligible space for a rebate. We will have results within 6 weeks, then we can finalize our plans.
- **Church Immigration Response Policy** – The council approved a policy regarding how to respond if immigration agents come to the church. We will schedule training for all staff and interested volunteers.

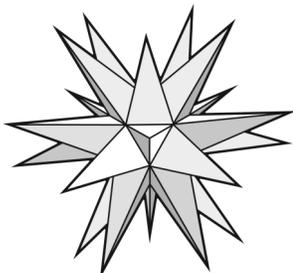
## New Business

- **Christmas Eve Schedule** – We will have two services, at 5:00 and 10 pm. We will survey members at the annual meeting to see if the congregation wants to change the times for next Christmas.
- **Preliminary Budget Proposal** – Deacon Brenda has been reviewing current costs and projects a cost increase of about \$13,000. The goal is to have a budget proposal ready for review by the council at the December meeting.
- **Annual Meeting Plans** – We will have one worship service on January 25 at 9:30 a.m. with the annual meeting held immediately afterward. This will be followed by a baked potato luncheon.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:04 pm. Pastor Kent closed the meeting with a prayer. The next meeting will be on December 16 at 6:00 pm.

## Moravian Star

During this time of year, a Moravian star hangs above the altar in our sanctuary. The Moravian star originated in the 1830's as a geometry lesson in Germany and evolved into a popular Advent and Christmas decoration. It symbolizes the Star of Bethlehem, hope, and the light of Christ. The star's points represent light radiating in all directions, symbolizing God's universal love, while its use during the dark Advent season represents the hope that "the light shines in the darkness" (John 1:5).



## Game Fellowship Group

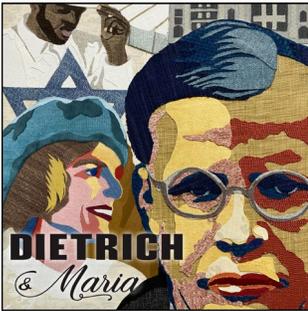
This adult fellowship group meets on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 10 am in Cooper-Burkhart House. All are welcome. Contact Karyl Robinson for more information.



## Hope Food Pantry

Our food pantry distributes food from 9:00 to 10:30 am every Wednesday. Volunteers are needed to pick up and organize food on Tuesdays, and to hand out food boxes on Wednesdays. (You don't need to help every week.) Contact Larry Dodson to volunteer.





## “Dietrich & Maria” Recording Project

In April we began raising money to make a professional recording of songs from the musical “Dietrich & Maria.” Written by Trinity’s Music Director, Dr. Glenn Pickett, and his friend David Goodman,

the musical tells the inspiring story of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German Lutheran pastor and theologian who was martyred for his opposition to Hitler and the Nazis.

To help complete this recording project, you can make a donation online through our church website or by a check payable to Trinity Lutheran Church. As of the end of November, we have raised \$48,693.43 toward the \$50,000 goal.

## Join the Hairnet Brigade!

On the 3rd Sunday of the month, the Hairnet Brigade provides dinner for the men’s shelter run by Lutheran Social Services in San Bernardino. If you want to help make the dinner or just come to help serve, let Ann Herring know. We’d love to put you to work!



## Exercise Class for Seniors

at Eden Lutheran Church  
Thursdays at 10:15 am



Exercises led by certified trainer Chris Pena, focusing on strength, mobility, and getting better balance. The exercises can be done sitting or standing, and include laughing and socializing! \$8.00 per session, checks or cash only. Meets in the fellowship hall at Eden Lutheran Church, 4725 Brockton Ave. All are welcome!

## Let’s Keep Tabs!



Please save the pull-tabs from drinks and other canned goods and help support the Inland Empire Ronald McDonald House. You can drop the tabs off at the church. — Sue Rogers

## Taizé Services



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

It’s a contemplative style of worship featuring meditative songs, inspiring readings, and prayerful silence.

On Monday, January 12, it will be held at:  
Trinity Lutheran Church  
5969 Brockton Avenue

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

## Waiting with Light

By Deacon Brenda Lussier

Advent reminds us: hope is not only for someday. It is for today and tomorrow. Advent connects us to Hope, Peace, Joy and Love, not as feelings we must, but as gifts we receive.

And as we wait, we mark this season with light. Four small flames to guide our watching: Hope, Peace, Joy and Love, candles we light not to chase away the darkness, but to remind us where God already is.

Hope is steady. It is the discipline of staying awake. It waits, keeps watch, and walks with us.

Peace settles slowly, not by silencing the world’s ache, but by steadying our hearts so we can remain present and brave within it.

Joy flickers where we least expect it, around shared tables, in laughter rising from grief, in the surprise of realizing we are not alone.

Love is gentle and persistent, expansive enough to hold us all, widening the circles of belonging, teaching us how to see one another as God’s beloved.

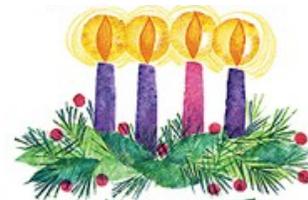
Advent hope is not an idea or a plan. It is not policy, nor guarantee. It is hope in a God who chose nearness, the living embodiment of love, justice, mercy, and welcome.

And so we wait, not with empty hands, but with open ones, ready to speak, ready to love, because the light is already around us.

## The Season of Advent

Advent means “coming.” It is a time of longing, watching, and praying for God’s healing, transformative presence to be ever more vibrantly present in the world. In this sense, Advent is a season in which we focus on that key phrase in the Lord’s Prayer, “thy kingdom come.”

As Christians, the good news we strive to live by and declare is that love is stronger than hate, peace more enduring than war, hope more powerful than despair — and the light of God’s love will dispel forever the shadows of shame cast by violence, suffering, sorrow, and contempt. (from saltproject.org)



○ come • ○ come • Emmanuel

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#### **Sunday Worship Schedule**

9:30 am — Contemporary Service (in person and on YouTube)

9:30 am — Sunday School    11:00 am — Traditional Service

**Church Office Hours:** 9:00 am to 1:00 pm, Monday-Friday

Phone: (951) 682-1350 • Email: [office@trinityriverside.org](mailto:office@trinityriverside.org)

#### **Ministry Staff**

Kent Tuohino, *Pastor* • Brenda S. Lussier, *Deacon* • Karyl Robinson, *Congregational President*  
Glenn Pickett, *Dir. of Music Ministries* • Rev. Hitoshi & Satoko Adachi, *Missionaries in Japan*

#### **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 represent our Lord Jesus Christ in this time and place. We will do so by:

- **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.

**KNOW, GROW, SERVE AND SHARE**