



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 29, Issue 1, January 2026



Congregational Meeting Sunday, January 25

This year's annual meeting of the congregation will be held in our sanctuary on Sunday, January 25, shortly after the end of the 9:30 worship service (we will have one combined service that Sunday). You can attend the meeting in person or watch online.

The meeting will include a presentation of our annual report and proposed budget, and elections of new council members and other leaders. The proposed budget for 2026 will be available for review and questions on Sunday, January 18.

If you are a ministry leader, please prepare a report on your ministry so that we can include it in the annual report of our congregation. Please send those reports to the church office by Friday, January 16.

If you are interested in serving on our church council or another committee, or would like to nominate someone else, please contact Karyl Robinson, Pastor Kent or Deacon Brenda.

After the meeting, lunch will be served in Heinecken Hall. Be sure to attend worship on January 25 and plan to stay for this important meeting!

The Bells are Ringing Again!

The bells are ringing again from Trinity's bell tower! They aren't real bells, however — we have loudspeakers mounted on the bell tower that play a very good recording of bronze church bells. Our old digital bell system used compact discs, but it stopped working several months ago. We purchased a new solid-state digital player, but it took us a while to get it installed and working. Now, thanks to Mackenzie Lussier, the bells are ringing again. They ring every half hour from 9:00 am to 7:00 pm, and play a seasonal hymn at 12 and 6 pm.

Spices Wanted!

This month we are collecting donations for our food pantry of salt, pepper, garlic powder or garlic salt, onion powder or onion salt, cinnamon, and crushed red chilis. These ingredients will be distributed by our food pantry to help families prepare meals that are nutritious and flavorful.



Quilting Bee

Trinity's Quilting Bee begins meeting again this month. They will "bee" meeting on the first and third Saturday of each month from 9:00 am to 12 pm in the Cooper-Burkhart

Annex. Come and join them! There are many different tasks involved in quilt-making, and you don't even need to know how to sew. Contact Kelly Krashin for more information.

Missionary Support

Help support our missionaries in Japan! Rev. Hitoshi and Satoko Adachi are serving Japanese and English-speaking congregations in Kumamoto, Japan. Consider donating \$25/week for one or more weeks to help us reach our annual goal of \$1,300 in support for these ELCA missionaries. When you make your donation to Trinity, please write "Missionary Support" on the memo line of your check or offering envelope.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations."

Matthew 28:19



Happy New Year!

As the new year begins, we pray for Christ's presence, wisdom and peace to surround you.



With the help of retired CBU drama department head Lee Lyons (shown above) and a work crew provided by the Bennetts, we were able to install our new lighting system just in time to use it for our Christmas choir concerts at Trinity on December 13 and 14. The new lighting added to the impact of the music and will enhance our weekly worship services as well. Thank you to everyone who helped with this project!



Our 5:00 pm service on Christmas Eve included a visit by two animal characters who witnessed the first Christmas — a donkey (played by Linda Ward) and a sheep (played by Brenda M. Lussier).

Thursday Night Bible Study

This weekly Bible study meets online at 7:00 pm each Thursday. If you'd like to participate, let Pastor Kent know. He will email you the weekly 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

January 4: Epiphany Sunday

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

January 11: Baptism of Our Lord

Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 29; Matthew 3:13-17

January 18: 2nd Sunday after Epiphany

Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalm 40:1-11; John 1:29-42

January 25: 3rd Sunday after Epiphany

Isaiah 9:1-4; Psalm 27:1, 4-9; Matthew 4:12-23

February 1: 4th Sunday after Epiphany

Micah 6:1-8; Psalm 15; Matthew 5:1-12



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

- 1/4: Donor Needed
- 1/11: Donor Needed
- 1/18: Donor Needed
- 1/25: Donor Needed



Pastor's Paragraphs

Happy New Year! As we begin a new year of ministry together, my heart is filled with gratitude. I am grateful for the generous financial gift I received from the congregation on Christmas Eve. I am grateful for the other gifts and good wishes my family and I received in December. But most of all, I am grateful for what we have done as a congregation in the past year.

In April of last year, we began raising \$50,000 for a professional recording of songs from the musical "Dietrich & Maria." It was a challenging goal, but with donations from our congregation and from many other people outside of our church who wanted to support this project, we surpassed that goal by raising a total of \$50,300 by the end of 2025.

Another challenging project was the installation of a new theatrical lighting system in our sanctuary. After many delays and setbacks, the new lights were finally installed in December, just in time for our choir concerts. I am grateful for the many people who helped with this project.

I am grateful as well for the many meals provided to individuals and families in need by the Hope Food Pantry, BAT, the Thursday Shower of Hope program, and the Hairnet Brigade. I'm grateful for the hundreds of quilts made by the Quilting Bee, the hundreds of toys we were able to distribute at Christmas, the missionaries we help support each year, the children who attend Sunday School, and the talented singers and other musicians who bless our services of worship each week.

There are many things I lament that are going on in the world around us, but I am grateful for the hope that we are able to bring people through the ministries I have mentioned and the other things we do. As we begin a new year, I hope you will take time to think about the things you are grateful for. It will lift your spirits and give you hope for the future.

A final thing I am grateful for is a book that Glenn Pickett recommended to me – *The Widening of God's Mercy*. It's written by a father-son team of biblical scholars, and will be the book we'll be using for our Thursday night Bible study starting this month.

The book looks at the theme seen throughout the Old and New Testaments of God's continuing efforts to widen the circle of people who are included in God's family. It's also a story of human resistance to God's intention, as people erect boundaries meant to keep some people in and others out.

This story plays out in scripture with divisions between Jews and Gentiles, clean and unclean, men and women, enslaved and free. Again and again, God tries to erase those social divisions and bring people together. Based on this biblical evidence, the authors make a convincing case that our current discussions around sexuality and gender identity reflect the same kind of tension between the human tendency to exclude people and God's desire to include them.

If you'd like to join me in our study of this book exploring the widening of God's mercy, I have copies available for \$5.00 each. If you read it, I think you will be grateful for its insights, too! — *Pastor Kent*



**Stewardship
Report**

TRINITY'S GIVING REPORT (1/1/25 through 12/31/2025)

Goal for regular offerings to date: \$315,000.00
Regular offerings received to date: \$344,486.81
Difference: + \$ 43,690.12

Your faithful giving is helping us reach our goal!

Donations for the "Dietrich & Maria" Recording Project: \$50,300.

Good Things are Happening at Trinity!

By Deacon Brenda Lussier

We recently experienced two beautiful Christmas Concerts filled with joy, music, and deep inspiration, followed by meaningful Christmas Eve services celebrating the gift of Jesus through his birth. As we close out 2025, we once again find ourselves leaping faithfully into a new year.

I also want to celebrate an important milestone: together, we reached our \$50,000 goal for recording songs from the musical "Dietrich and Maria," a commitment we set last year. This is a powerful testament to Trinity's generosity and care beyond our walls.

As the new year begins, our attention turns to finalizing a budget that will support both the life of our congregation and the many outreach programs and ministries that serve our wider community. This year, we are facing several significant property-related needs. Because of rising costs, we will need to prioritize these projects and determine the order in which they can be completed. The council is currently discussing which of the following projects to include in the budget up for approval at the annual meeting on Sunday, January 25.

Landscaping Project (Priority One)

Our first priority is a landscaping project. Due to new California water-saving regulations, the City of Riverside is requiring businesses to replace traditional grass with water-wise alternatives. The city is currently offering rebates that would reduce Trinity's final net cost to \$7,841.00.

The initial outlay for this project will be \$32,810.00, paid upfront by the church. Once the work is completed, the city will inspect the project to ensure it meets the approved plan and will then issue a rebate of \$24,969.00. If we delay this work, the cost of turf replacement will fall entirely on the church, so we believe it is wise to proceed while rebates are available. Once the rebate is received, those funds will be returned to our savings reserve.

Additional Projects (To Be Prioritized)

The next two projects will be prioritized and completed as funding becomes available, with congregational approval.

Accessible Bathroom Remodel

The council proposes remodeling one bathroom in the education wing (next to the nursery) to make it accessible for people who use wheelchairs. While it may seem surprising that we do not remodel a bathroom in Heinecken Hall, doing so would require eliminating one of the two stalls in the women's restroom. Given the consistently high need for restroom access, we did not feel we could remove that stall. The current estimated cost for remodeling the bathroom next to the nursery is \$12,500 but could end up higher due to inflation.

Sanctuary Sound System Upgrade

The third project under consideration is a comprehensive upgrade of the sound system in the sanctuary, including new speakers, microphones, and audio mixing board. The projected cost for the speaker system alone is nearly \$42,000.

This project would include the speakers we tested during our services on November 23, and new microphones to improve sound clarity and consistency. Our current mixing board is also aging and causing issues — something many of you have experienced through intermittent microphone failures and fluctuating sound levels from week to week. Even if we decide to delay replacing the speakers, the mixing board itself will need to be replaced at some point.

These items will be considered at our congregational meeting on Sunday, January 25. Thank you for your continued care, generosity, and partnership as we discern how best to steward Trinity's resources in the year ahead. Together, we continue to build a welcoming, faithful, and sustainable church for all.



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 or food4less.com, or call 1-800-443-4438. The organization number for our church is UT644.

January Birthdays

[4] Darren McMichael; [7] Marilyn Dodson; [9] Mary Nouritabar, Julie Pickett; [10] Kelly Cole; [12] Kelly Krashin; [16] Pastor Kent Tuohino; [19] Elizabeth Lossing; [25] Pete Lussier, Andy Perkins; [29] Marge Bitetti, Debbie Bracey, Michael Myers; [31] Karyl Robinson.

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

Teach us to number our days, so that we may gain a heart of wisdom. — Psalm 90:12



Council Meeting Summary

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order on December 14 at 6:02 pm by President Karyl Robinson. Also present were Kelly Krashin, Cherie Guilow, Theresa Husted, Larry Dodson, Peggy Fryc, Gil Heth, Shawn Lowell, Deacon Brenda, Steve Newlen, Sue Rogers, and Pastor Kent.

Pastor's Report

- The Christmas concerts on December 13 and 14 were very well attended, and many positive comments were received. The new lighting was installed just in time for the concerts and added greatly to the ambiance of the performances.
- The new digital carillon system for the bell tower has been installed, thanks to help from Mackenzie Lussier. It rings on the hour and half hour from 9:00 am till 7:00 pm.
- Elected offices – Chris Brown agreed to run for another term on the Audit Committee. The Endowment Committee will need one new person. We have 10 people on the council presently, but we are allowed to have 12 people. We would like to encourage new and younger members to join the council.

Deacon's Report

- BAT & Showers – Lutheran Social Services has not been coming lately to provide services for those attending the showers. Deacon Brenda is presently looking for other agencies that could help.
- Audit Committee – They are preparing to do the audit for 2024 and 2025.
- Janitorial Needs - A janitorial supply service has been hired to come in once a week and restock. She will evaluate and determine if it's cost effective.
- Fernanda Ruelas is being trained to help in the office for now.

Treasurer's Report

- Offerings received in 2025 are greater than 2024. After the end of December, giving projections can be made for 2026.

Old Business

- **Sanctuary Lighting Project** – the new lighting has been installed, thanks to many helpers.
- **Bathroom Accessibility** – to be considered for inclusion in the budget for 2026.
- **Turf Removal & Landscaping** - We were approved on December 15th for a rebate of \$24,969. The work must be completed within 180 days of that date to receive this money. The contractor won't be able to start till February or March. The cost to do this work is \$32,460.00; our net cost would be \$7,491. The contractor has given Gil a list of similar landscaping jobs he has done under this program. It takes about three weeks to get the rebate once the job is completed and passes inspection. We need to give the contractor a \$1,000 deposit to reserve a starting date for the work. This rebate program is only offered for 2026; after that we would have to pay the full amount to comply with the new state water regulations.
- **Annual Meeting Plans** – The annual meeting will be on Sunday, January 25, following one worship service at 9:30 am. Lunch will be served after the meeting. We need to gather reports from committees. The proposed budget will be available to the congregation on January 18; one week prior to the annual meeting.

New Business

- **Budget proposal** – Deacon Brenda presented a draft of the proposed budget for 2026. The council will have a special meeting on January 13 at 6:00 pm to finalize it for the annual meeting. We discussed possible raises and additions to the budget; Deacon Brenda will calculate the numbers and present them at the special council meeting.
- **Endowment Committee** – The council approved a motion to request two grants from the Endowment Committee or 2026: \$1,300 for missionary support and \$1,000 for Trinity's Day Camp.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:11 pm. The next meeting will be the special council meeting on January 13 at 6:00 pm.

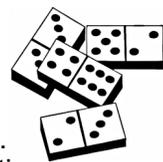
Join the Choir!

The TLC Choir will resume weekly rehearsals on Wednesday, January 14, at 7:00 pm in the sanctuary. New singers are welcome to join the choir! The choir sings at our worship services about twice a month.



Game Fellowship Group

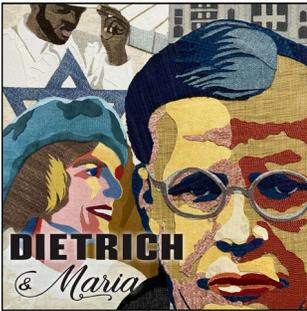
This adult fellowship group meets on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 10 am in Cooper-Burkhart House. All are welcome. Contact Karyl Robinson for more information.



Hope Food Pantry

Our food pantry distributes food from 9:00 to 10:30 am every Wednesday. Volunteers pick up and organize food on Tuesdays, and hand out food boxes on Wednesdays. Contact Larry Dodson to volunteer.





“Dietrich & Maria” Fundraising Goal Met!

In April of 2025 we began raising money to make a professional recording of songs from the musical “Dietrich & Maria.” Written by our Music Director, Dr. Glenn Pickett, and his friend David Goodman, it tells the inspiring story of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German Lutheran pastor and theologian who was martyred for his opposition to Hitler and the Nazis.

We are happy to announce that we have met our fundraising goal! As of December 31, we had raised a total of \$50,300. Our thanks go to everyone who contributed to this special project! We hope it will encourage more productions of this musical. It’s message of faith and courage is still relevant today.



Mim Frantz (shown above) was one of many who received Christmas cards signed by our church members. Recipients responded with many messages of thanks. Mim said, “Thank you for the beautiful card. I appreciate it, and wish everyone a Merry Christmas!”

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!



Tree of Giving Report

Thanks to many generous donations, in December we distributed more than 225 toys to parents who came to the Hope Food Pantry. Thank you for helping us provide Christmas gifts for children in need!

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

PIG Project Report

Each November, we ask people in our church to bring in the loose change they have saved in their piggy bank or other container in the previous 12 months. Each year, it’s surprising to see how much money we collect through this simple practice of saving and giving. This year’s donations totaled **\$847.55**. This money will be used to purchase food for distribution by the food pantry at Trinity.



Inspired by the blue piggy banks that Thrivent Financial distributed for several years, PIG stands for **People In need of Groceries**. Contact the church office if you would like a blue piggy bank to save your change in.

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)

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
5969 BROCKTON AVENUE
RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA 92506

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

A NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
RIVERSIDE, CA
PERMIT # 380

TRINITY TOPICS is published monthly by:
Trinity Lutheran Church, 5969 Brockton Avenue, Riverside, CA 92506

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

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