



Trinity Topics

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



February

Trinity Lutheran Church
Since 1893
Kent Tuohino, Pastor
Volume 29, Issue 2, February 2026



Congregational Meeting Report

This year's annual meeting of the congregation was held on Sunday, January 25. The budget for 2026 was approved, and includes funding for replacing the turf lawn in front of the church to comply with upcoming water use restrictions. Most of the cost of turf replacement will be returned as a rebate once the project is completed. A separate motion to remodel the bathroom next to the nursery to make it fully accessible was also approved.

The following people were elected at the meeting:

Church Council: Larry Dodson (for a second term), Jackie Letourneau-Wagner & Sandy Rodriguez.

Audit Committee: Chris Brown (second term)

Endowment Committee: Connie Fortier & Gary Goldberg

Scholarship Committee: Peg Bradley, Karen Clarke, Gretta Merwin (renewed terms for all three)

Synod Assembly: Steve Newlen & Sue Rogers

After the meeting, a taco salad lunch was served. Donations totaling \$110 were received at the luncheon to help support Trinity's Hope Food Pantry. During the lunch, the new and continuing members of the church council met to choose officers for this year. The new officers are:

- Kelly Krashin, President
- Karyl Robinson, Vice-President
- Cherie Guillow, Secretary
- Theresa Husted, Treasurer

In addition to the officers and the members newly elected to the council, the council includes Peggy Fryc, Gil Heth, Shawn Lowell, Steve Newlen, Sue Rogers, Deacon Brenda & Pastor Kent. Council meetings are held online via Zoom on the third Tuesday of the month at 6:00 pm.

Valentine Cards

Help us send Valentine cards to children and youth in our church family! A list of their names is available at the church. Please bring your cards to the church by Friday, February 13, and we will make sure they get delivered in time for Valentine's Day.

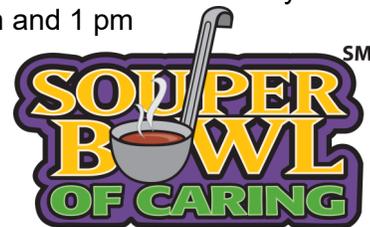


Here's a tip: Valentine cards in classroom sets are available at a low price from Dollar Tree and other stores at this time of year.

Souper Bowl of Caring

It's almost time! The Super Bowl game will be played on Sunday, February 8, so it's also time for the annual Souper Bowl of Caring. We are now collecting canned soups and other non-perishable food items. The donated food will be distributed through the Hope Food Pantry at Trinity and in our blessing bags.

You can drop off donations at church on Sunday morning or between 9 am and 1 pm Monday-Friday. A table will be set up where you can choose which team you want to win the football game. Let's team up to tackle hunger!



Ash Wednesday and Lent

The season of Lent will begin on Ash Wednesday, February 18. We will have a service at 7:00 pm that day, which will include the imposition of ashes and holy communion. Our Lenten theme this year will be "Tell Me Something Good." We hope this series will provide fertile ground for conversation and worship, rooting our hearts and lives in the expansive goodness of God. This Lent, may the teachings of Jesus lead us forward. Let the good news ground us. And let that good news inspire us to take action in a world desperate to hear, see, and taste what is good.

Wednesday Lenten soup suppers will begin on February 25 at 5:45 pm. Volunteers are needed to sign up to bring soup or help with clean-up.



Here are the elected leaders of our congregation who were at the annual meeting on January 25. Pictured in the front row from left to right are Chris Brown, Kelly Krashin, Shawn Lowell, Gil Heth, Karyl Robinson, Connie Fortier, Jackie Letourneau-Wagner, Theresa Husted, Peggy Fryc, Gretta Merwin and Sue Rogers. In the back row are Sandy Rodriguez, Steve Newlen, John Collins, Pastor Kent, Peg Bradley, Karen Clarke, Julie Pickett, Gary Goldberg, Larry Dodson, Cherie Guillow, Helga Stafford and Deacon Brenda.



Apply Now for Winter Cursillo Weekends
Men: March 5-8 and Women: March 12-15

This March, Lutheran Cursillo of Southern California will be holding the 196th and 197th set of retreat weekends since its inception in June 1990. Several Trinity members will be serving on the teams for these weekends.

Cursillo is a three-day, intensive study and experience, intended to help revitalize and support the Lutheran Church and its ministries to society, and to build up and strengthen leaders in our home congregations. You must be an active member of a Lutheran church to attend. If you are married, both spouses are encouraged attend on the same pair of weekends. There is **no cost** involved in attending Cursillo. A sponsor takes care of getting you there and bringing you home, as well as providing you with applications for the weekend.

Applications are now being accepted for the next weekends: March 5-8, 2026 (for Men) and March 12-15, 2026 (for Women). Cursillos begin on Thursday evening and end on Sunday afternoon. If you are interested in attending the next Cursillo weekend(s), please contact the church office, Barb Beaver (951-217-5581 or barbara.m.beaver@gmail.com), or another Trinity member who has already attended Cursillo. The deadline to apply is February 22, 2026.

New Administrative Assistant Hired

Fernanda Ruelas has been hired as our new Administrative Assistant, working in our church office M-F from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. Fernanda first came to Trinity as a college intern in 2024, providing support to our weekly shower program. She joined us later that year as the Youth Assistant for our Sunday School program, starting in June 2024. We are happy to welcome Fernanda to her new role in our church office!

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 topic 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

February 1: Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Psalm 15; Matthew 5:1-12

February 8: Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

Isaiah 58:1-9a; Psalm 112:1-9; Matthew 5:13-20

February 15: Transfiguration of Our Lord

Exodus 24:12-18; Psalm 2; Matthew 17:1-9

February 22: First Sunday in Lent

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7; Psalm 32; Matthew 4:1-11

March 1: Second Sunday in Lent

Genesis 12:1-4a; Psalm 121; John 3:1-17



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

- 2/1: Donor Needed
- 2/8: Karyl Robinson
- 2/15: Donor Needed
- 2/22: Sara Mills & Barbara Morris



Pastor's Paragraphs

As I sit down to write this month's column, I am mindful of the events that have been taking place in Minneapolis over the past several weeks. In response to the surge in immigration enforcement there, there have been numerous peaceful protests, both large and small. Protesters have been killed and wounded. An atmosphere of fear has pervaded the city, affecting U.S. citizens and non-citizens alike. Many people are afraid to leave their homes for work or shopping, and their children are staying home from school. Even people who have strongly supported a crackdown on immigration are upset by what's been going on.

But something else has happened, too. People have come together to help their neighbors. Delivering food to people afraid to leave home. Giving rides to and from work and school. Getting to know their neighbors as they organize assistance. Many local residents have said that there is a renewed sense of community and neighborly concern. If there is a silver lining to this situation, then bringing people together to help each other would certainly seem to be it.

In a city where Lutherans are the largest single Christian group, people of all faiths and no faith are working together, inspired by the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." (Luke 6:31)

In a statement issued on January 9, ELCA Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry wrote, "The ELCA is committed to upholding and guaranteeing basic human rights for the safety of migrants and their families. Our church works toward just and humane policies affecting migrants in and outside the United States. We decry language that dehumanizes immigrants who are beloved children of God and escalates tensions between federal agents and communities. Surges of immigration enforcement and violent encounters like we are seeing in Minneapolis — as well as in Chicago; Atlanta; Los Angeles; Portland, Ore.; and Washington, D.C. — have indiscriminately targeted our neighbors, creating fear and uncertainty. This has created conditions where immigrants, those accompanying them, and federal agents are all at risk. Public safety depends upon trust in law enforcement to respect and protect the rights of all."

God calls us to be witnesses of God's abiding love, bringing a message of healing and hope. Please join me in praying for the wellbeing of all of our neighbors, for peace in our communities, safety for immigrants, protesters, and law enforcement officers, and respect for human rights and due process of law. — *Pastor Kent*



**Stewardship
Report**

TRINITY'S GIVING REPORT (1/1/26 through 1/31/2026)

Goal for regular offerings to date: \$28,866.66
Regular offerings received to date: \$24,885.30
Difference: - \$ 3,981.36

Your faithful giving will help us reach our goal!

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

Faithful Living in Fearful Times

Pacifica Synod Bishop David Nagler writes about his recent experience hearing from Palestinian Christians while visiting the Holy Land — and what it means for us here at home.

(Published in the Pacifica Synod weekly newsletter on January 22, 2026)

“There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.” — 1 John 4:18a

Daoud Nassar represents the third of four generations that have owned and farmed a hilltop in the West Bank of Palestine. He shared the story with a group of church leaders of how he has engaged in a 35-year legal struggle to keep the Israeli government from taking away his family’s land. No matter how many documents are requested and provided or how many testimonies and affidavits are submitted, his land remains in jeopardy.

This is not just a legal battle. It is also a physical one. Israeli “settlers” frequently come on his land with clubs and guns, threatening his family and the farm workers with physical harm. If a Palestinian person strikes back or defends themselves, they are arrested and taken to jail, sometimes for extended periods of time. Roads are built on his land that require lawsuits. Trees that have borne olives for decades are bulldozed simply to apply more pressure on his family. It would be understandable for Daoud to become hateful or to give up and leave. Many Palestinians have sought a more peaceful and prosperous life elsewhere. Yet he remains on the land and refuses to hate anyone. He does so as an expression of his Christian faith. You can find out more about his story and how you can help here.

I was deeply moved and inspired when Daoud told us his story, especially as it echoed other stories we heard as we visited people in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL). So many people could articulate the humiliation they had endured and yet, while we heard a lot of anger, no one exhibited any hate. Everyone prayed for and worked for a future where Israelis and Palestinians could enjoy full human rights—a witness the church in the United States needs right now. We can learn so much from these siblings in Christ!

To say we are in anxious and fearful times in America is to state the obvious. The federal government is using fear to try to control the people. This is especially true for people of color, the LGBTQ community, and women. The responses have varied from numbing and avoiding to protesting and posting. The anger is evident everywhere. So is the hate. In scripture, the opposite of love is not hate: it is fear. Fear is the root of anxiety and hatred. It is the tool of the empire, because when people are afraid, they are easier to control. As Nazi propagandist Joseph Goebbels said, “If you want to manipulate a people, keep them afraid.”

Perhaps that is why almost all encounters with angels in the Bible begin with them saying, “Do not be afraid.” In fact, it is often in the command form of the verb, which

would sound more like, “Stop being afraid!” Now just saying that is not super helpful. Whether it comes from a human or an angel, being told to simply stop being afraid can even seem cruel unless it is tied to something more powerful. I believe that anchor is Divine Love.

When Jesus was baptized by John, we read that the heavens opened and a voice proclaimed, “This is my son, the beloved, in whom I am well pleased.” (Matt. 3:17) Before he healed or taught or fed anyone in the gospels, Jesus was a beloved child, already pleasing to God. That identity cannot be taken away by anything. Jesus goes from the waters of his baptism to the wilderness where Satan tries to undermine that identity, but to no avail (Matthew 4:1-11). Jesus has internalized Divine Love, and now he embodies it.

When provoked and slandered, Jesus never retaliates. Instead, he forgives and includes. He teaches his followers that this is the key to living in God’s Kingdom. We too are called to practice embodying and radiating Divine Love. It is also the owner’s manual to faithful living in fearful times.

The people of God have experienced oppression before. In fact, it is more the norm than the exception for marginalized communities. Therefore, those of us who are freaking out a bit right now ought to look to the witness and wisdom of siblings who have been in situations like ours before and have kept their faith intact.

That is what I received from Daoud and so many others on this recent accompaniment trip to the Holy Land. They resist oppression by living faithfully and serving the needs of people in their communities. They measure the vitality of their church not by the number of people who attend on Sunday, but by the number of people from all faith backgrounds that they empower every day. They are literally casting away fear by practicing love.

We are certainly called to show up and protest the dehumanizing actions of our government. We are also called to nurture our relationship with Divine Love and to pour that love out in tangible ways to people around us. The act of loving our neighbor dilutes the fear created by our overly saturated, doomscrolling culture. Want to feel better? Want to be less afraid? Remind yourself that you belong and are beloved, and then simply love someone in a concrete way. Remember that those who want to control us will keep doing things to make us afraid. Let’s remember and practice the truth that Love is the greatest power in the universe, and the only thing that truly matters.

Peace,

+ Bishop Dave

Council Meeting Summary

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:03 pm. Present: Larry Dodson, Peggy Fryc, Cherie Guillow, Gil Heth, Theresa Husted, Kelly Krashin, Shawn Lowell, Steve Newlen, Karyl Robinson, Sue Rogers, Deacon Brenda, Pastor Kent.

Pastor's Report

- **Christmas Eve:** Attendance was higher in the first service than last year, but the second service at 10 pm had very low attendance compared to the past.
- **Synod Assembly:** It will be held online on Saturday, June 20, from 12 to 3 pm. There will be a regional meeting at Trinity on Saturday, May 2, 10 am to 2 pm.

Deacon's Report

- Working on budget details for the annual meeting.
- Working on advocacy locally and with ELCA Advocacy by writing letters to support our neighbors, here in Riverside, our nation and world.

Treasurer's Report

We have \$267,944.36 in our Altura account. For the month of December, envelope giving was \$38,658.63 and the unrestricted income was \$4,063.24. We ended December with a net income of \$7,444.48 for the month.

Old Business:

a. Church Directory: The goal is to have the new directory ready to hand out by February 15th.

b. Property Maintenance:

- **Narthex Windows:** Working on getting an estimate for installing security film.
- **Turf Removal & Landscaping:** We need to get the Worker's Comp info from the contractor. Gil will contact them. Once we get the OK from the congregation at the annual meeting, we can proceed. The cost for this has been included in the budget. During the budget presentation, we will explain the details to the congregation. Once the budget is approved, we can give the landscaper a \$1,000.00 deposit. We will still need an ad hoc committee to work on the details of this project, i.e., what kind of plants and rocks to use, whether to remove any trees, etc.

c. Annual Meeting Plans:

- **Nominations:** The names of nominees for council and other elected committees were shared by Pastor Kent. The council approved the list of nominees (see page 1 of this newsletter for their names).
- Steve Newlen and Sue Rogers volunteered to represent our congregation at the online synod assembly on June 20, and at the regional gathering at Trinity on May 2. Their names will also be on the

ballot at the annual meeting. All council members are encouraged to attend the regional gathering on Saturday, May 2.

- **Budget for 2026:** Ready for presentation at the annual meeting. It includes funding for the turf replacement project.
- **Bathroom Remodel Proposal:** This proposal will be presented to the congregation, explaining that we would use money in the savings reserve to pay for this. The congregation will need to approve this proposal separately, as it is not included in the budget.
- **Audio System Upgrades:** We will table this item until later due to budget constraints.

New Business

a. Christmas Eve Service Times: The council discussed changing the times of our Christmas Eve services in order to increase attendance.

b. Lenten Services: Ash Wednesday will be on February 18 this year and Easter Sunday will be April 5. Both Eden and Trinity will have Wednesday soup suppers. Eden will host a "Meal in the Upper Room" and communion service on Maundy Thursday, and Trinity will host the Good Friday service. Easter services at Trinity will be at 8:30 am and 11:00 am, with a pancake breakfast served in between.

c. Bonner Singers Concert on April 19: The council approved having the Bonner Singers perform at Trinity on April 19 with a freewill offering.

d. Administrative Assistant Position: The council authorized Pastor Kent and Deacon Brenda to have a formal interview with Fernanda Ruelas to decide whether to hire her for this position. (She has been working in the office on an interim basis.)

e. Endowment Committee: The council approved a request from the Endowment Committee to give a \$1,000 grant to Global Refuge (a Lutheran organization that helps immigrants & refugees in the U.S.).

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 pm. Pastor Kent closed the meeting with a prayer.

The next regular meeting of the council will be on Tuesday, February 17, at 6:00 pm.



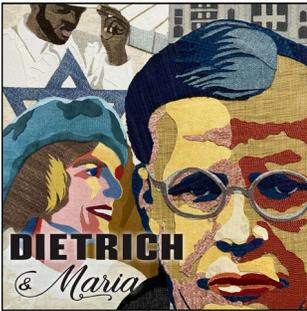
February Birthdays

[4] Scott Taylor, Steve Newlen; [11] Ruta Raterman; [12] Tim Ward; [16] Addison Garcia; [19] Kathy Newlen; Julie Santos; [23] Julie Root-Almond; [26] Helen Ramos; [27] Amanda Pitts.

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





“Dietrich & Maria” Update

Written by our Music Director, Dr. Glenn Pickett, and his friend David Goodman, the musical “Dietrich & Maria” 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 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! The individual recordings of all the singers and musicians are now being mixed together for the finished recording, a process that Glenn hopes will be completed before the end of March. We hope it will encourage more productions of this timely musical!

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Spice Drive Results

Thank you for your donations of spices and cooking oil during the month of January! We received a total of 909 containers of spices and seasonings, plus 7 bottles of cooking oil. These items will be distributed along with boxes of food by our food pantry to help struggling families and individuals prepare nutritious and flavorful meals.



Join the Choir!

The TLC Choir rehearses on Wednesdays 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.



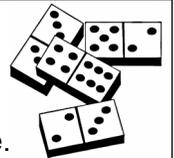
Hope Food Pantry

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.



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.



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!

Quilting Bee

Trinity’s Quilting Bee meets on the first and third Saturday of each month from 9:00 am to 12 pm in the Cooper-Burkhart Annex. Come and join the fun!

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.



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



Get together for fellowship and fun over a game of bunco on **Saturday, February 14**, at 3 pm in Cooper-Burkhart House. Bring a loved one! Contact Sue Rogers for more information.

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, February 9, it will be held at:
Madison Street Church
3991 Madison Street

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



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



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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* • Kelly Krashin, *Congregational President*

Glenn Pickett, *Director of Music Ministries* • Fernanda Ruelas, *Administrative Assistant*

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