



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 5, May 2026

Step by Step...

Presented by the Trinity Choir with Orchestra
and Special Guest, Amanda Suttle



Ascension Sunday, May 17, at 6 PM

Women's Tea

Saturday, May 9, at 2:00 pm



All women and girls are invited to gather for tea and refreshments on Saturday, May 9, at 2:00 pm in Heineken Hall. Please bring a sweet or savory treat to share (with serving dish, if possible). RSVP to Ann Herring: (909) 380-1710 or aehlaw@gmail.com.

Along with tea and treats, Shelly Rosenkild will lead a painting party. It will be a tea cup themed, acrylic painting on canvas with customizable frame. No art experience necessary; fully guided, free, creative fun!

TLC Choir Concert

Trinity's Choir will present their spring concert on Sunday, May 17, at 6 pm. Don't miss this uplifting concert featuring our choir accompanied by a chamber orchestra! Our special guest will be singer Amanda Suttle. See the article on page 2 to read about the theme of this concert.



*The Lord directs the steps of the godly.
He delights in every detail of their lives. – Psalm 37:23*

Foster Youth Graduation Event



Riverside's annual Foster Youth Graduation Event will be held on June 18, 2026.

This event honors the perseverance, achievements, and bright futures of youth in foster care as they graduate from high school and prepare for what's next. Each year, our church participates to remind these remarkable young people that they are seen, celebrated, and supported by a community that believes in them.

During the month of May we are collecting gift baskets, individual items, gift cards, and monetary donations to help create thoughtful, joy-filled baskets that remind these graduates they are not alone as they step boldly into adulthood. A flyer is on the back table of the sanctuary explaining the types of baskets and items needed. See Kelly Krashin if you have any questions. If you would like to help put gift baskets together, we will be assembling baskets on Sunday, May 31, at 1:00 pm in the Quilting Room.

Apply Now for a Trinity Scholarship!

It's time for eligible students to apply for a Trinity Educational Scholarship. This scholarship is for any student who is a member of Trinity or an active participant in our church and plans to attend a secondary educational institution this fall (community college, university, trade school, graduate school or seminary). There is an application that needs to be completed, along with a letter of recommendation and a short essay. Application forms are available from the church office. Don't delay – the deadline to apply is May 31st!

FAITH *in* MOTION

Walking with God, Step by Step

By Dr. Glenn Pickett, Director of Music Ministries

Walking... it's our most basic way of getting around in life. It's one of the first major milestones we reach – learning how to walk. Somehow, we humans have historically tried to avoid walking as a method of transportation. The invention of the wheel, the riding of animals like camels, donkeys, elephants, and horses were all efforts to avoid it. And then came the automobile...

Yet science tells us that walking is highly beneficial to us physically. According to *Prevention* magazine, walking can:

- Improve our mood.
- Burn calories and maintain a healthy weight.
- Keep our hearts healthy.
- Lower our risk of chronic diseases, such as diabetes.
- Lower our blood sugar levels.
- Help reduce stress.
- Improve our sleep.
- Boost our brain power.
- Alleviate joint pain.
- Delay the onset of varicose veins.
- Stimulate our digestive system.
- Strengthen our immune system.
- Protect our bones.
- Enhance creativity.

These are all good things.

How about walking with God?

If walking physically can bring us a higher quality of life, imagine what walking with God can do – for us, for our community, and for the influence we both give and receive. God can bring us spiritual health when we walk with Him, *Step by Step*.

That's the theme of our music ministry's concert on May 17: walking with God, *Step by Step*. We'll explore the subject as a kind of sermon in song. Our guest soloist is Amanda Suttle, a fabulous singer whose walk with God has called her to teach music at Hillcrest High School. A chamber orchestra will add color and depth to music that is rich with meaning and power.

Come, and bring family and friends to hear about walking with God, *Step by Step* – Sunday, May 17, at 6:00 pm.

Speakin' Deacon Series: Discover the Ministry of Deacons in the Pacifica Synod

In April I had the opportunity to preach a sermon that included a question many people still ask: *What is a deacon in the ELCA?* It reminded me that while many know pastors and congregations well, the ministry of deacons is often less familiar, yet deeply important in the life of the church.

That is why the **Speakin' Deacon Series** on the Pacifica Synod website (pacificasynod.org) is such a meaningful resource. Written by deacons serving throughout our synod, this series offers insight into who deacons are, how we serve, and the many ways God calls us to ministry in the world.

The first two articles in the series are already available. One shares the **call stories of deacons in the Pacifica Synod** – personal reflections on how God led them into lives of service, leadership, advocacy, and accompaniment. Another offers **A Brief History of Deacons**, tracing the roots of this ministry and its continued importance in the church today. It's reprinted on page 5 of this newsletter.

More articles are on the way, each helping to shine light on this unique rostered ministry of Word and Service in the ELCA.

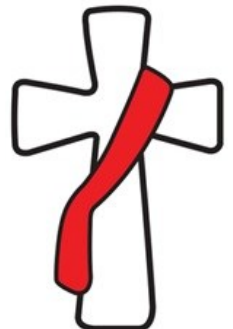
If you want to know more about what Deacons do, how they are called, or how they serve both church and community, I encourage you to take a look. You will discover a ministry of compassion, justice, teaching, and connection that strengthens the church in powerful ways.

Go check it out and learn more about deacons!

– Deacon Brenda

To read the "Speakin' Deacon" series online, go to:

www.pacificasynod.org/news-events/speakin-deacon-1



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

May 3: Fifth Sunday of Easter

1 Peter 2:2-10; Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16; John 14:1-14

May 10: Sixth Sunday of Easter

Acts 17:22-31; Psalm 66:8-20; John 14:15-21

May 17: The Ascension of Our Lord

Acts 1:1-11; Psalm 47; John 17:1-11

May 24: Pentecost Sunday

Acts 2:1-21; Psalm 104:24-34, 35b; John 7:37-39

May 31: Trinity Sunday

Deuteronomy 6:1-7; Psalm 8; Matthew 28:16-20



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

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 sign up to donate the cost of the altar flowers for our Sunday services. Due to rising costs, the price is now \$35 for one bouquet or \$70 for both (please make checks payable to Trinity, or pay online via our website).

Upcoming Flower Donors

- 5/3: Larry & Martha Dodson
- 5/10: Mickey Ouellet
- 5/17: Donor needed
- 5/24: Donor needed
- 5/31: Pastor Kent & Valerie



Pastor's Paragraphs

Our church choir is busy preparing music for the concert on Sunday, May 17. The theme of this concert is "Step by Step," and many of the songs talk about walking with God. "Order my steps in your Word..." "We will walk through the valley in peace..." "I want to walk in the light of my Lord..." , etc.

I have often found walking is a good way to spend with God in reflection and prayer. Walking gets me out into fresh air and sunshine, and helps to clear my head.

Lately, I've been taking walks with our dog, Lula. But when we go for a walk together, she has very different priorities from mine. She starts out so excited that she pulls me along the sidewalk at almost a running pace. But then she suddenly stops to sniff something. Then it's off to the races again, followed by another stop for an interesting smell. Walk, stop, sniff... walk, stop, sniff... the pattern repeats again and again.

Of course, there are other distractions along the way. A dog barks from behind a fence as we walk by. A cat appears from under a parked car. Someone approaches us who is walking their dog. Children are playing in a front yard. All of these things add to the excitement of our journey.

Finally, she begins to slow down as we near the street that leads to our house. By now, she is panting more and pulling less. When we get back home, she drinks lots of water and then plops down in a shady spot in the backyard to cool off.

Such are our walks together, Lula and me. But where is God in all of this? It's hard for me to think deep thoughts or concentrate on prayer when Lula is starting and stopping and reacting to each new smell or sight. But maybe in that is a lesson I need to learn. I know that in my walk with God, it's easy to get distracted by other things. The world is full of things that distract my attention and occupy my mind with matters of no lasting importance. It's more important to take time to nurture my relationship with God, and to seek God's guidance.

So, taking a cue from Lula, I've found that sitting in the backyard after a walk is a good time for me to read the Bible or a devotional book while she stretches out and relaxes in the grass. I think she appreciates the company. And I know that God appreciates that time together, too.

What about you? When do you spend time with God? What things do you do to refresh your spirit as well as your body? If you want my advice, go for a walk. — *Pastor Kent*



Stewardship Report

TRINITY'S GIVING REPORT (1/1/26 through 4/30/2026)

Goal for regular offerings to date: \$115,466.00
Regular offerings received to date: \$89,976.74
Difference: - \$25,489.26

Your faithful giving will help us reach our goal!

A Brief History of Deacons

by John Baynton

In the Christian faith, deacons are relatively unknown, or at best a nebulous mix of different roles of service, but deacons have a long history in the Christian tradition of faith. The word *deacon* comes from the Greek word *diakonia*, which commonly gets translated as *service* or *ministry*. A deacon then is one who does *diakonia*. However, *diakonia* is more than just service—it is about doing the work that Christ does, or as A.K. Ploger says, “acting as God would act if God was a human being” i.e. as Christ acts. In this context, we can see Christ as the first deacon, living out a life of *diakonia*. This is the life we Christians are called to follow as we live out our baptismal vocations.

St. Stephen is commonly listed as the proto (or first) deacon. While never specifically named as such, Stephen is a part of the seven who are lifted up for the role of *diakonia*. Specifically, there was a need in the community; the Greek widows were not receiving their portion of the community food. These seven deacons were lifted up to address that problem, to make sure everyone was fed and taken care of in the community.

The first person in the scriptures named as a deacon is Phoebe. She traveled with Paul, offered her house as a meeting place, and delivered some of the letters Paul wrote. She gave from her abundance and acted as the hands and feet of the church. In 1 Timothy, Paul established the office and expectations of a deacon as well as a bishop. This shows that deacons were already active and had some measure of authority in the early church.

After the narrative story of the Bible ends, we know the office of deacon evolved to fit many different needs. Deacons were doorkeepers, watching to keep the community safe during times of persecution; they were table servants, making sure all were fed and assisting with the meal; and, as in the case of St. Lawrence, they were often stewards of the money.

Around 250 CE, St. Lawrence himself lived into the diaconal call to speak truth to power, challenging assumptions when the Romans came to confiscate the treasure of the church. When asked where the treasure of the church was, Lawrence pointed to the poor and needy and replied, “Here is the treasure.”

After Christianity became the state religion in Rome in 380 CE, the role of deacon morphed again, becoming the eyes and ears of the bishops, and becoming more administrative in nature. This is also around the time when some used the office of deacon as a stepping stone for advancement.

By the early 1200s, St. Francis did not see his office as a deacon as such, though. He wanted to be working with the people, living a life of service in poverty to better live out God’s mission in the world. St. Francis saw his role as steward, to care for everything around him, to let the light of God shine into and through him. The quote commonly attributed to St. Francis that really shows this Diaconal Mission for the world has become famous: “Preach the gospel at all times; use words when necessary.” This shows a dedication to a lived

Gospel, that the mission of God is lived out through the actions of people, not just in our thoughts and prayers.

The role of Deacon does not really change much from this point until the 1800s. There are some diaconal ideas and roles in the Reformation and post-Reformation, but for the most part, the Protestant churches lost the office of deacon.

In the 1800s, with the rise of the industrial revolution, many people moved to cities looking for opportunities, which led to poor working and living conditions. To alleviate these, the role of charity took center stage. With this rise came the Deaconess Mother Houses, able to distribute this charity to those who need it most in society. This revitalized the diaconal role in the church and helped to bring the Church as a whole back to caring for the poor, those in need, the sick, and the hungry. But the resuscitation was short-lived. Through the standardization of helping careers and the rise of non-profit organizations, this role and idea of deacons fell to the wayside in many Christian traditions.

In our tradition, some form of diaconal leader has existed in each of our predecessor bodies. When the ELCA was formed, we inherited all of these. Through the years they have been pulled together and formed into one roster (Word and Service), and in 2019 the ELCA churchwide assembly voted to ordain deacons.

Our ELCA constitution describes deacons in this way: “This church calls and receives onto the roster qualified persons to provide a ministry of Word and Service, exemplifying the life of Christ-like service to all persons and creation: nurturing, healing, leading, advocating dignity and justice, and equipping the whole people of God for their life of witness and service within and beyond the congregation for the sake of God’s mission in the world.” - ELCA Constitution 7.51

Deacons in the ELCA today are leaders doing specialized ministry, such as youth and family, office administration, music ministry, faith formation, and care ministry. Some are leading outreach into their communities by running meal and food programs or by providing care and resources to the unhoused. This is just a handful of the wonderful work deacons can do, living a life like Christ and lifting up and equipping others to live out their baptismal calls.

Through this whole history from the beginning until the present, deacons have been filling gaps. Whether it is making sure the Greek widows are fed, being the eyes and ears for bishops, caring for the poor, or even writing this article. Deacons have seen the need in their communities, have provided for those needs, and have asked others to come alongside and join them in living out this call. Deacons have always been present. We have always been here doing the work. Our invitation remains open to all as it always has. Join us! Come and join us in feeding the hungry, join us in making a joyful noise, join us in advocating for the least in society. Come and join us in living a life like Christ.

John Baynton serves as the Deacon of Care Ministry at Hope Lutheran Church, Palm Desert. He has been ordained since 2025. In his spare time he enjoys listening to audiobooks, playing video games, and painting with his wife, Pastor Emily Baynton.

Council Meeting Summary

The meeting was called to order on April 21 at 6:04 pm by Vice-President Karyl Robinson. Present were Larry Dodson, Peggy Fryc, Cherie Guillow, Gil Heth, Theresa Husted, Karyl Robinson, Jackie Letourneau-Wagner, Steve Newlen, Sue Rogers, Deacon Brenda & Pastor Kent. Members absent were Kelly Krashin, Shawn Lowell & Sandy Rodriguez.

Pastor's Report (Highlights)

- The Bonner Singers concert was well attended, and a freewill offering of \$1,040 was received.
- Rummage sale is Saturday, April 25, 8 am to 12 pm; Luke Hamilton's recital is that same day at 4 pm. Mary Kantola is organizing refreshments.
- The Pacifica Synod Inland Regional Gathering will be held at Trinity on Saturday, May 2. We are expecting about 80 people. It will start at 10 am and end at 2 pm. We need volunteer helpers.

Deacon's Report (Highlights)

- We are no longer using the Cintas janitorial service to supply paper products. We will use volunteers to purchase necessary items.
- She preached at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Banning on April 19, followed by a forum to answer questions about the ministry of deacons in the ELCA.
- Day Camp will be July 13-17.

Treasurer's Report

- \$24,376.32 in envelope giving received in March.
- \$6,171.63 in unrestricted income received in March.
- \$270,199.97 in savings as of the end of March.
- We finished March with a net of -\$687.73 for the month, and a balance of \$37,183.60 year to date.

Old Business

- **Council Retreat Follow-up**

*We need more ushers, counters, and lay readers.

*Fellowship – We need more people to sign up to host the Sunday coffee hour.

*We need to plan more fun activities. Sue Rogers is investigating some ideas.

• **Property Maintenance**

*Turf Removal & Landscaping: It is presently in process. We need to decide how we are going to maintain it once it is completed, and what to do for the side yard on Rubidoux Avenue.

*Church Workdays: The one we had on April 18 was well attended. The next one is scheduled for Saturday, June 27.

*Carpet in Poat Parlor: Kim Root-George is leading this project. She recommended replacing the current carpet with commercial grade 24" slate gray carpet squares at an estimated cost of \$1,995.

New Business

- **T-Mobile:** Deacon Brenda is authorized to negotiate a new agreement with T-Mobile that will update the lease for cell phone equipment on Trinity's bell tower. The agreement will need to come to the council for approval.

- **Planning for Summer:** We will have one worship service starting at 9:30 am during the month of July. Pastor Kent and Deacon Brenda are planning congregational activities that will take place after those services.

- **Missionary News:** One of the ELCA missionaries we support will be spending time in the U.S. this summer. Pastor Kent has invited her to visit, and she will let us know if she can arrange it.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:32 pm. Pastor Kent closed the meeting with a prayer. The next council meeting will be on Tuesday, May 19, at 6:00 pm via Zoom.

Underwear Drive Report

Thank you for your generous spirit of stewardship and care for our neighbors. Our April Underwear Drive was a wonderful success! Because of your compassion and faithful giving, we collected 194 pairs of underwear, 88 pairs of socks, and \$355 in donations which will be used to purchase more underwear for the Thursday shower program.



These gifts will make a real difference for those in our community who are experiencing hardship. Thank you for living out Christ's love in such practical and meaningful ways. Together, we continue to be a blessing to our neighbors.

May Birthdays

[1] Ann Herring, Shannon Minter; [4] Patricia Bayne; [7] Sheryl Heth; [8] Lou Pfeifle; [9] Lynn Baggett, Glenn Pickett; [11] Gretta Merwin; [14] Danielle George, Miranda George, Seth McKeehan; [26] Mo Nekoonam; [30] Rande George; [31] Abby Brunka, Christopher Gallego, Mark Ramos, Juliette Rodriguez.

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





Birth Announcement

Jordan Hernandez was born on April 14. Jordan is the 6th great-grandchild of Bill Nicoletti & Elizabeth Lossing.



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.

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.



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, May 11, it will be held at:
Eden Lutheran Church
4725 Brockton Avenue

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

Congratulations, Graduates!

Patrick McKeehan — graduating from Canyon Springs High School in Moreno Valley.

Chris Tuohino — graduating with a DO degree from Western University of Health Sciences in Pomona. He will begin his medical residency this summer at Loma Linda University Medical Center.

Please let us know of an other graduates so that we can include them in next month's newsletter!



Rummage Sale Results

Our rummage sale on April 25 raised a total of \$930 which will help support ministries at Trinity. Our thanks go to Kelly Krashin and the other volunteers who helped organize and run the rummage sale, and everyone who donated items to sell!

Day Camp at Trinity, July 13-17

We have scheduled a week of day camp at Trinity in July, led by camp staff from Lutheran Retreats, Camps and Conferences (LRCC). Day camp is for kids entering Kindergarten through 6th grade this fall.



Watch for registration forms soon, and share them with families you know.



The next get together for fellowship and fun over a game of bunco will be on **Saturday, June 13**, at 3 pm in Cooper-Burkhart House. Contact Sue Rogers for more information.

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.



Christ in Our Home

Copies of the new *Christ in Our Home* devotional booklet are available at our church. If you would like to have one sent to you, contact our 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.



TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
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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