

A Newsletter for Covenant Partners and friends of Trinity United Presbyterian Church, Modesto, California



The Wright Connection

Happy New Year!

There is an odd rumor going around that your pastor doesn't like participating in Vacation Bible School! It is bizarre for me to hear that repeated by a few because nothing could be further from the truth. My most enjoyable VBS times were when I was a participant 15 years ago or so right here at Trinity United. Our VBS programs were always a blast. And they still are! Becky and her team of energetic volunteers are still going strong, putting in long hours to share Christ with others in a fun and loving way. I told the Christmas VBS team this morning "Bigger churches have trouble putting four or five caring volunteers together for a Vacation Bible School, but here we are overflowing with loving helpers. Our volunteers are remarkable!" You may have heard me say this already, but we touch so many children throughout the week, and then the number rises exponentially when we put on these extraordinary programs, programs that have one goal—to preach Christ to the listening ears of all these kids. God is pleased! So am I. Of all the changes this church has experienced, one thing I hope never changes, and that is our passion, to touch children with the gospel. Marcy's life passion is the same: Get God's love and God's word into the hearts and heads of kids. As long as I am your pastor, and certainly as long as I am married to Marcy, I will gladly and wholeheartedly support our efforts at capturing children's hearts for Christ! I want to give a great big shout-out to the Cooleys for their creativity and energy, helping bring this Christmas program together. But the biggest shout-out goes to Becky Pombo for her ceaseless efforts to keep the gospel in front of kids and to let them know how much we care.



The gift-giving season may be winding down, but Christ will never stop giving gifts to the church. In verse 7 of Ephesians 4, Paul says, "He (Christ) has given each one of us a special gift

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SUNDAY MORNINGS
8:30 AM Sunday School
10:00 AM ONSITE AND ONLINE
11:00 AM Fellowship in Telle Center



1600 Carver Road
 Modesto, California 95350
 (209) 529-3228
 Fax: (209) 529-3351
www.tupc.org
 E-mail: tupc@tupc.org
 Preschool
 (209) 578-5625
tupc.org/trinitypreschool
 E-mail: trinitypreschool@tupc.org

Ministerial Staff

Rev. Dr. Craig Wright Senior Pastor
Rev. Les Malakian Parish Pastor
Rebecca Duque Administrator
Becky Pombo Minister to Children
Destiny Robles Director of Youth Ministry
Matthew Little Organist/Director of Music

Trinity Preschool

Cassi Torrez Director
Rebecca Duque Administrator

7 days without God
 makes one weak.

Lisa Traugher Managing Editor
Char Wickman Circulation Manager
Thanks to many Volunteers!



DEADLINE
FOR PUBLICATION
15TH
OF EACH MONTH
FOR THE NEXT MONTH'S
PUBLICATION

Materials are collated
 on the fourth Tuesday
 of each month.

through the generosity of Christ.” Our Lord’s strategy to beat hell was to give each of you the gifts needed for building up His church. I am blown away when I run through the list of people who give themselves in service to Trinity United. Many of you have faithfully served for more than a generation, and some are just getting started. This is how I know we are blessed. This is how I know that God is up to something wonderful because the gifts that are God’s people just keep showing up. Yes, I mean you! You are a gift from God to this church and you are an important part of His plan.

I am ending 2023 and beginning 2024 with deep gratitude for all of you! Together we will touch many souls and plant many seeds for Christ in 2024!

Pastor Craig

November 2023 Finance Summary

Fiscal Year = September 1, 2023 to August 31, 2024

	ACTUAL	
	November	Year to Date
GENERAL FUND		
Receipts	\$ 72,783	\$ 188,246
Expenses	72,976	232,755
Receipts over Expenses	\$ (193)	\$ (44,509)

Basket of Hope Project Update

Donald Jepson Elder, Coordinator

I wanted to take a minute and thank the wonderful volunteers that have supported the Basket of Hope Program this past year. Our church has supplied 750 hours of volunteer labor to make this program a success.

This first year of the Basket of Hope Program was a big success as we made up and distributed 1000 food baskets to 600 families who were in need of food stuffs this past year. The Basket of Hope program has grown very fast over its first year in existence. Our first month of operation, we distributed 17 baskets to 12 families. Now we are distributing over 100 baskets each month to over 60 families.

The Basket of Hope program is reaching out to our neighborhood, our congregation, and partnering with a non-profit hospice group.

Again, I just want to say thank you for your prayers, support, and your hard work to make Basket of Hope a successful community outreach that is bringing Christ’s love to our community in need.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



More from Les

Antisemitism On A Rampage

This morning's news talked about the college presidents from MIT, Harvard, and UPenn being called in to meet with Congress about the tremendous upsurge in antisemitism on the college campuses. Not only is this happening, as you well know, on college campuses but throughout our country. I don't know how to say this more emphatically but to say, "There's NO room for racial prejudice in the lives or on the lips of those who call themselves Christians!!" Growing up in Fresno, CA as an Armenian I know all too well the pain and suffering caused by such prejudice. In Matthew 22:37-40 and several other places in the Bible, we are taught to "love others" and living a life of prejudice is a contradiction of this Biblical teaching! Please, when you are tempted to pre-judge someone for whatever reason, put it out of your mind and say to yourself "Jesus died for this person as well as for me."

God bless you and have a blessed Holyday Season!

Pastor Les

Matthew 6:33

Farewell and God Bless You

Dear Trinity United family and friends. Please join us on Sunday, January 7, 2024 in worship as we acknowledge and thank Matthew Little for his gifts and talents in serving God and us as Music Director. Feel free to bring cards of encouragement for Matthew and his wife Kristen as they embark on a new chapter of their lives by moving to San Antonio, Texas in seeking God's will as a couple. A celebration with cake will be offered in Telle Center following worship.

New Adult Ed Class

January 7, 2024

This class will be a study of the fascinating book of Daniel. Daniel served as a prophet of God during the years of the Babylonian/Persian exile. He was also a member of the ancient magi in Babylon, as were his friends: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. This class will study the man Daniel, the historical context for the book of Daniel, the story of God's people in exile in Babylon/Persia, and Daniel's amazing prophecies. Most class sessions will have three parts:

- 1) "What?" (what does the text say?)
- 2) "So what?" (what does it mean?)
- 3) "Now what?" (how will we respond?)

The book has 12 chapters, so after a week of introductory information we'll take on one alluring chapter each week.

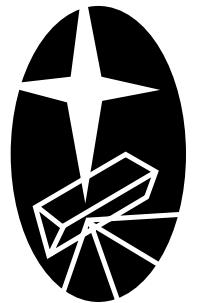
Come and join us and be blessed!

Dr. Dale Pederson and Tara McDonnell

Bethel Bible Series

Beginning January 7, 2024

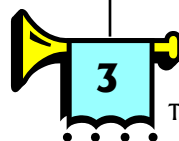
Praise God, you have another wonderful opportunity to take a Bethel Bible Series class. Regardless of how many Bible studies you've been in unless you've taken this unique overall study approach, you aren't adequately informed! To enroll in this series of classes intended to study the Bible in this "overview" approach is truly an opportunity you should NOT miss. We are grateful to have a veteran teacher, Dennis Bray, who is willing to offer this class again. Instead of giving you all the details now, I suggest you attend the first class on Sunday, January 7th so you can learn all the "ins and outs" of this GREAT study.



Put this on your calendar of things to do in 2024 and you will be blessed!

Pastor Les

Psalm 119:105





Dates with Destiny

My Beloved Trinity United Church Family,

I am overflowing with gratitude as I express a heartfelt thank you to each one of you who took the time to pray for me during my academic journey and, more recently, during my graduation and trip. Your prayers, like a comforting embrace, have been a source of strength and encouragement.

As I write this, I find myself reflecting on the night of my graduation, a moment captured in the photos I've just received.

This image brings a smile to my face as it vividly captures and makes me recall the emotions I experienced walking the stage to receive my Master of Divinity—in fact, it brought forth a whirlwind of emotions I had not fully anticipated.



As I gazed down at the engraved words on my graduation rings, marking the date and degree, I felt the weight of the journey and

the closing of a significant chapter in my life. The shaking hands, rapid heartbeat, slowly breathing in and out, and the shared triumphs of fellow graduates created an atmosphere of celebration and accomplishment.

Then a classmate turned to me with a smile and asked, “Are you ready for this?” With a deep breath and a nod, I responded, “Let’s go.” The journey of a thousand steps began with that single stride, and as I walked, I reminded myself not to rush, to savor each step, and to take delight in the fact that I was, indeed, doing this.

I had expressed my anticipation for this moment in a previous article, but nothing could have prepared me for the overwhelming joy that washed over me as I received and proudly wore a first-generation medal around my neck. Being the first in my family to attend college, graduate, and earn a master’s degree (now two master’s) is a testament to the grace of God and the unwavering support of this church community.

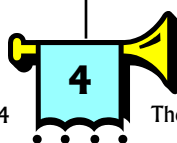
So, what is next?

Well, first of all—I want to extend an invitation for the whole church to celebrate with me on Sunday, January 21st after church in Telle Center. Join me for cake and goodies as we rejoice together in this milestone.

Secondly, as I enter a season of ordination and continue to learn and grow, my immediate plan is to embrace the gift of time. Breathing more deeply, counting life’s little blessings, and finding beauty in the seemingly mundane... are my priorities. I recently shared with a friend here of my intention to savor a hot cup of coffee, a simple act often overlooked in the busyness of my life as I typically choose an iced coffee as to not scorch my tongue or end up drinking a lukewarm coffee as I rush to accomplish the next thing (I know, yuck!).

May this season of a new year also be a time for all of us to learn the art of slowing down, finding rest, and embracing the rhythms of life.

Blessings,
Destiny Robles





Cassi's Corner

Hi Family and Friends,

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” —Jeremiah 29:11

As we enter a new year, we have much to reflect on from this past year. We had a great turnout for our annual Christmas Pageant that was held in the sanctuary. Every pew was filled with an excited parent, loving grandparent, or happy relative or friend. Thank you to those who came and supported the preschool. It was a fun-filled night singing about our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The new year brings us new families joining the Trinity Preschool Family. We are excited to care for these new families and share the love of Jesus with them. Looking forward to a great year ahead and we are so excited to see what God has in store for us!

As always please keep the preschool in your thoughts and prayers.

Many Blessings and Happy New Year,
Cassi Torrez



Mariners Luncheon

January 6, 2024

12:00 Noon, Telle Center

Happy New Year luncheon, devotional, and program. Please RSVP to Char Wickman at (209) 523-6570 by Wednesday, January 3rd for food preparations.

All Trinity United adults and guests are invited and welcome. Lunch cost is \$10.00 per person and please bring your own table service. This is a good time to visit and fellowship with others!

Happy New Year!

**We'll Join Together Again Beginning
January 10, 2024**



WE HAVE PROGRAMS FOR ALL AGES:



WEDNESDAYS 5:30-7:30 PM

Dinner together in Telle Center at 5:30pm



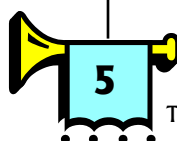
“To all Trinity Families....doesn't a bowl of delicious chili sound good on a cold January evening? Yes! It's Chili Cook Off time! Please join us for fun and laughter as we vote for the best chili in Modesto (well...the best chili on Carver Road)

This All Church event is being hosted by the Cruisers. We'll gather on Saturday, January 20th at 5:00 PM in The Telle Center. We'll be serving chili with all the fixings.

Childcare Pre-K and under will be provided. A donation of \$5.00 per person is suggested.

If you would like to enter your chili in the competition, please talk with one of the Cruiser Team members:

- Ted and Liz Benson
- Walt and Leslie Cooley
- Don Jepson
- Bert Lippert
- Tony and Chris Ott
- La Mar Owens
- Mike and Paula Sherman



Moment for Mission

Submitted by Elder Bob McGrew

Jesus' Heart Can Be My Heart Also!

The new year is traditionally a time to make resolutions. You know, to lose weight or to do more exercise—those kinds of things. Worthy goals, but generally we try to do those resolutions for a month or so before they get lost in the busyness of life.

A more productive alternative to those resolutions may be to start thinking about what motivates our thoughts and actions. After all, without the proper motivation, we'll never follow through on any resolution to change our habits.

In Biblical teaching, it's clear what determines our thoughts and actions: our hearts! When the Bible speaks of the heart, it is not speaking of our emotional life only, but of the central animating center of all we do, the center of who we are. Our heart defines and directs us. (See 1 Samuel 16:7, the story of God choosing David to be king).

My recent resolution has been to align my heart with Jesus' heart. I was surprised to find out that Jesus talks about His heart only once in the Bible. What He said challenged me: 'Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Live life together with me, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.' —Matthew 11:28-29

Jesus is not proud or demanding with us. Instead, He is humble, gentle, tender, open, welcoming, accommodating, understanding, and willing to meet us where we are. That is His heart for us! In turn, He calls us to live life with him, so that we can share that same gentle and lowly heart in how we treat those around us.

That is simply all Christian missions are about. Serving the people around us brings us joy when we're living life with Jesus and sharing His heart. It restores our souls. Whether

it's your neighbor who needs a listening ear, or a person coming to 'Basket of Hope' for food, or kids coming to our Vacation Bible Schools, or something else—serving them with the heart of Jesus is the best way to live!



**PRESBYTERIAN
DISASTER ASSISTANCE**

OUT OF CHAOS, HOPE

Oroville Mission Trip

**PDA Oroville, California
April 14-20, 2024**

2024 New Year's To-Do List:

- Put away Halloween decorations...
- Toss out left-over Ambrosia from Thanksgiving...
- Sign up for Presbyterian Disaster Assistance mission trip.

It's that time of year...

PDA Organizational Meeting

Sunday, January 7, 2024

11:30 AM after worship and fellowship

Telle Center #503

See you there!

Paradise, Chapter Four

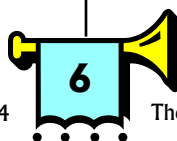
Fundraising Brunch

Sunday, March 10, Telle Center

11:30 AM after worship

Trinity's Presbyterian Disaster Assistance team is returning to Oroville for the fourth time, continuing the wildfire relief work that began in the Paradise community in 2021. Join us for a tasty, informative presentation outlining our ongoing effort to help our neighbors in northern California.

Save the date—details to follow in the February Trumpet.



Trinity United Family Prayer Calendar

JANUARY 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 Clay and Cindy Smith Sookie Smith	2 Nancy Speltz Rose Steele	3 Joe Stephenson Mike and Loretta Sutherland	4 Kadyn Sutherlin Julia Swager	5 Abel and Terrie Tagre Bev Thomas	6 David and Cindy Tinajero Matt and Cassi Torrez
7 Dwight and Lisa Traugher Tim and Judy Tweedie	8 Alma van Aalsburg Burt and Polly Vasché	9 Geneva Vasquez Chick and Lynda Venturini	10 Connie Vierra Dick and Judy Wakeman	11 Char Wickman Judy Wiegman	12 Jenny and Ken Willmarth Milly Wing	13 David Witt Margaret Wolfe
14 David and Vicky Wolff Deidre Wolfley	15 Lynne and Chris Wilkinson Craig and Marcy Wright	16 Adelle and Joseph Yonan Jim Young	17 David and Cindy Zellman Twilla Zellman	18 Miriam Acevedo Bob and Tippy Achterberg	19 Cameron and Stephanie Anderson Jeff and Julie Anderson	20 Randy and Doreen Anderson Ryan and Kate Anderson
21 Twyla Anderson Donna Bakker	22 Diana and David Beal Krista Beal	23 Martha Beasley Rob and Susan Beasley	24 Silvana Beasley Ted and Liz Benson	25 Virginia Berry Barbara Bianchi	26 Joyce Blank Elizabeth Blixt	27 Esther Bradfield Phillip Bravard
28 Clayton Bray Dennis and Michele Bray	29 Emily Bray Shirley Brooks	30 Marilyn Brown Grace Brummel	31 Elizabeth Bucknell Jim and Monique Bucknell			

- | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|------------------------------------|
| 1. Advancing Vibrant Communities
Michael Douglass | 6. IDEAS, Bangladesh
Dr. Jay Litchfield | 11. The MomCo
Jenny Currie | 16. Servant Partners
Liz Heim Fung | 21. Vine House
Cheryl Van Horn |
| 2. Bethany Christian Services
Sandra Hiatt | 7. Intervarsity Christian Fellowship
Lauren McDermott | 12. Operation Christmas Child
Liz Benson | 17. Shalem School
Pastor Helcias Reyes | 22. Youth for Christ
Ken Sylvia |
| 3. Bethel Ministries International
Ben and Emily Mooney | 8. LOVE Modesto
Jeff Pishney | 13. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance
Sidney Stone | 18. Trinity Preschool | |
| 4. CRU Zimbabwe
Kelly and Vicki Londoni | 9. Modesto Gospel Mission
Jason Conway | 14. Rock of Ages
Sidney Stone | 19. United World Missions
Todd and Sarah Hunnicut | |
| 5. Guatemala Trinity United
Mission Team: Marcy Wright | 10. Modesto Pregnancy Center | 15. Samaritan's Purse | 20. Valley Recovery Resources
Steve Berkowitz | |

Pray for one of our supported Mission Families each day of the month.

WORSHIP WITH US!

8:30 AM Sunday School

10:00 AM OnSite and Online

Fellowship after Worship in Telle Center

LEADERSHIP

DEACONS: Tuesday, January 2, 5:30 PM Meeting and Soup Supper

SESSION MEETING: Tuesday, January 9, 6:00 PM

STEPHEN MINISTRY: 2nd/4th Monday, 4:00-5:30 PM

STEPHEN MINISTRY TRAINING: Tuesdays, 3:00-5:00 PM

WOMEN'S MINISTRY TEAM: Thursday, January 11, 3:00 PM

WORSHIP COMMISSION: Tuesday, January 16, 6:30 PM

SERVE

BASKET OF HOPE DISTRIBUTION: Friday, January 19,
10:00 AM-12:00 Noon in the North Parking Lot

PDA MISSION TRIP MEETING: Sunday, January 7, 11:30 AM-12:30 PM

TUESDAY GROUNDS CREW: Tuesdays, 7:00-9:00 AM

WEDNESDAYS UNITED

5:30-6:00 PM Dinner in Telle Center

6:00-7:30 PM Bible Study Programs for everyone!

Childcare Provided

NO Wednesdays United on January 3

STUDY

SUNDAY SCHOOL: Sundays, 8:30 AM, various locations on campus

PRAISE

COMMUNION: Sunday, January 14

WORSHIP ONSITE and ONLINE: Sundays, 10:00 AM

FELLOWSHIP

B.L.A.S.T. and JOURNEY: Wednesday, beginning on 10th, 2:00-5:30 PM

CRUISERS ALL-CHURCH CHILI COOK-OFF: Saturday, January 20, 5:00 PM

FELLOWSHIP: Sundays, 11:15 AM in Telle Center

MARINERS LUNCHEON: Saturday, January 6, 12:00-2:00 PM

THE MOMCO: 1st/3rd Wednesday, 5:30-7:30 PM

MUSIC REHEARSAL: Thursdays, 6:00-7:00 PM

TRINITY QUILTERS: Mondays, beginning January 8th 12:00-3:00 PM,
Telle Center

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED: January 1 and January 15, 2024

Electronic Version Online at www.tupc.org

See Online Calendar for changes.

Worship Services are livestreamed on www.tupc.org



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