

TRINITY TRUMPET

Since 1973 Vol. 54 No. 3

MARCH 2026

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



The Wright Angle

Soggy and rain-filled greetings church family,

I was reminded recently of a moment many of us experienced as children. In 1522, during the season of Lent, a group of Christians in Zurich gathered for a meal—and someone served sausage. Now that may not sound dramatic to you, but in those days eating meat during Lent was forbidden by church law. The pastor present that evening was Huldrych Zwingli, and what followed became known as the “Affair of the Sausages.” It helped ignite the Swiss Reformation. (It might be important to note—God used the Swiss sausage but not the Swiss cheese!) To be clear: the Swiss Reformation was not launched by bratwurst. The issue wasn’t culinary. It was theological. Zwingli asked a very simple question: Where has Christ commanded this? If Jesus did not command a 40-day meat fast, can the church bind the conscience of believers to it? That’s a very Presbyterian question. From our Reformed perspective, Christ alone is Lord of the conscience. We obey what He commands in Scripture. We are not bound by the ceremonial laws of Moses, and we are not bound by later church traditions simply because they are old.

Which brings us to Lent. Lent can be meaningful. It can be helpful. It can serve as a 40-day nudge toward prayer, repentance, and renewed focus. But it is not commanded in the New Testament. You are not more righteous if you observe it, and you are not less faithful if you don’t. That’s grace. The one thing that is binding—unmistakably so—is what Jesus said when asked about the greatest commandment: Love the Lord your God. Love your neighbor as yourself. Not “give up chocolate.” Not “avoid sausage.” Not “prove your seriousness by dietary restriction.” Rather, Love God and Love your neighbor.

Now, here’s where we might want to pivot. Even though Lent is not binding, it might still be useful. Forty days is long enough to form a habit and short enough to feel focused. It gives us a defined season to ask some honest questions: Is my love for God distracted? Is my love for neighbor convenient but shallow? Have I drifted into spiritual autopilot? Some people give something up during Lent. If that helps you re-center your heart on Christ, wonderful. But it might be that you don’t need to subtract something. ***You might need to add something.*** Maybe instead of giving up



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Ministerial Staff

Rev. Dr. Craig Wright	Senior Pastor
Rebecca Duque	Administrator
La Mar Owens	Music Director- Contemporary
Wade Patton	Interim Director of Youth Ministry
Wendy Warner	Music Director- Traditional
Marcy Wright	Director of Children's Ministry

Trinity Preschool

Rebecca Duque	Administrator
Cassi Torrez	Director

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.

coffee, you add daily prayer. Instead of giving up dessert, you add generosity. Instead of fasting from social media, you add a weekly phone call to someone who feels invisible.

Adding might be more important to you and to the world than what you subtract—Peter wrote:

2 Peter 1:5-8 For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The 'sausage affair' reminds us of something deeply comforting: our standing with God does not rise or fall with religious observances. We are saved by grace. We are held by grace. We grow by grace. And grace creates freedom—not indifference, but joyful, willing obedience. So, if Lent helps you love God and neighbor more intentionally, embrace it. If it becomes a burden, or a quiet way of measuring yourself against others, you are free to set it aside. Eat the sausage. Or don't. But whatever you do, love well. That's the one command we don't get to skip, during Lent or anytime for that matter!

Blessings,
Pastor Craig

January 2026 Finance Summary Fiscal Year = September 1, 2025 to August 31, 2026

	ACTUAL	
	January	Year to Date
GENERAL FUND		
Receipts	\$55,818	\$386,953
Expenses	\$60,005	\$307,604
Receipts over Expenses	-\$4,187	\$79,349

In January, we received \$55,818 and spent \$60,005, ending the month \$4,187 below expenses. Even with that dip, we're still \$79,349 ahead for the year so far.



A Moment with Marcy

Eggstravaganza

Easter is coming and with it the opportunity to share the Good News that Jesus came, died, and rose again, because He loves us! What better way to celebrate than an Eggstravaganza? We will be opening our campus to the children of our community, Saturday, April 4, from 9:30-11:30 AM. Please invite your children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and neighborhood to join us for games and crafts centered on the resurrection. We will kick the event off with a candy-filled Easter egg hunt—so make sure to come on time!

If you are able to help with donations, we need LOTS of plastic eggs and individually wrapped candy. Our goal is to hide 1,000 candy-filled eggs.



March 2026

We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious

standard. Yet God, with undeserved kindness, declares that we are righteous. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.

Romans 3:22-24

Justification and sanctification are big words for little mouths, and big concepts to comprehend. Yet they are important to grasp. So how to simplify it for little ones? The children are embarking on a new unit called "Around the World." We will follow Paul on his missionary journeys and listen in on his teaching. We will learn that justification is not a result of our good works, but rather the atoning sacrifice of Jesus. We are declared not guilty—even though we are guilty—because He took our sin upon Himself. We are justified only through Jesus.

What does that justification bring? Definitely eternal life, but also peace with God, freedom from the power of sin, and joy. They are all benefits of being declared innocent, because the debt has already been paid.

Our justification should result in sanctification—not a one and done, now we are perfect! Rather it results in a growing process, a maturing, as we learn to be more like Jesus.

What funner way to remember hard words than a cheer. Join the children in rejoicing!

- Justification**
- We've been made right**
- Sanctification**
- Grow more like Christ**

Sharing Our Joys and Concerns

Trinity Partner Jeff Chin died on February 17, 2026. Please keep Debbie and their family in your prayers.

Words from Wade

TSM on the Move!!!

Happy New Year from Trinity Student Ministries. Yes, God is on the move and so are we.

Also, I truly appreciate all the hard work the Youth Volunteers and Youth Commission do. This work cannot be done without them.

Camp season is upon us. We have 14 students that signed up and met the criteria to go to camp. What was the criteria? Great question. Each student had to be in Sunday service and Wednesday nights for four weeks. They needed to take notes and turn them in each week. The form was created for them and asked questions like:

1. What were the scriptures used? Who was the speaker?
2. What was your favorite part of the service?
3. What is something you want the volunteer staff to know about you? (You can give suggestions, talk about your week, or give a compliment.)

If you haven't had a chance to look in the youth room, please feel free to come by. There have been a few changes with more to come. So far, the youth are enjoying and asking for more time in that space. This is what we want.

In the coming months, we have plans to implement some speakers from the community, including a financial institution to talk about accounting and banking. We are also starting a Youth Sunday School Starting March 1 at 9 AM in the Youth Center.

Keep praying, God as always is on the move.

Wade

tsm

trinity student ministries



**TRINITY
PRESCHOOL**

Cassi's Corner

Hello There Family and Friends,

"Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins."

1 Peter 4:8

We have been busy, busy, busy entering the new year and have been having fun in between all the learning, growing, toilet training, and activities.

All the classrooms will be having Valentine's Day parties and will be passing out all their cute Valentine goodies.

We have welcomed five new families and will be welcoming more in the future. It is exciting for us to be able to spread our love and share the Word of God with more kiddos and their families.

We are looking forward to continuing to teach all the kiddos their letters, numbers, shapes, colors, and Bible stories.

As always keep the preschool in your thoughts and prayers.

Many Blessings,

Cassi Torrez

Operation Christmas Child

Submitted by Leslie Cooley

Please remember that our collection tote, "Joy in a Box," is in the church office on a full-time basis. You may bring items all year long: baby dolls, dominoes, underwear, socks, bracelets, pencil sharpeners, lovies, and more! As you're out shopping, please look for special deals (Valentine's Day items, Easter items, Back-to-School items, etc.) and bring them to the church office. May God bless you as you bless children around the world!



"How can we hear God's Voice?

God has given us five senses. There are five ways in which we can hear God's voice: through our eyes, our nose, our mouth, our touch, and our ears!

I have decided to spend this season of Lent (between Ash Wednesday and Easter) listening each day to how I can "hear" God's voice through my different senses. Each evening, I plan to enter my findings in my journal. Now that I have shared this plan with all of you, I will have to do it!

Using our eyes to 'hear' God is relatively easy if we have the gift of sight. God displays so much beauty all around us, no matter the weather (even the fog!) and how much do we miss? The challenge may be to 'see' a new message from God!

Using our nose may be a bit of fun to 'see' what God is telling us through our sense of smell on this day! Yesterday the wonderful smell of split pea soup tickled my nose as I prepared to enjoy God's gift of my lunch!

And then the gift of taste amplified that gift of smell! WOW! It was a double gift as the gift of smell and taste often is! When cooking, that double gift is often present!

Using the gift of touch can be a great joy as God delights us with something very soft and comforting! Of course it may also be a warning of danger if something feels too hot!

But, not surprisingly, my favorite is the gift of what we can hear, especially when God speaks to us through music! It might be something soft, and quiet, like God's voice of love and comfort, to soothe our anxious souls. Or it might be Beethoven's 9th Symphony, with

lots of timpani, rousing us to get up and move! (That was me, yesterday!) Or on Easter Sunday when the choir and brass and organ and congregation will sing the Halleluiah Chorus from the Messiah in glorious full voice in exaltation of Christ—Risen from the dead!

I am excited about this exploration of how, and what, God has to say this season. Join me, if you like!

Rev. Wendy Warner
Music Director, Traditional

All Aboard for Paradise

Submitted by Ted Benson

PDA Fundraising Brunch Sunday, March 22, Telle Center 11:15 AM after worship

The numbers barely begin to tell the story.

Over the past decade, Paradise and a number of neighboring communities in Northern California's Butte County have been ravaged by wildfires claiming over 100 lives and destroying billions of dollars in property. While public recall of the dark days up north dims in comparison to the urban holocaust that ravaged Southern California in 2025, wildfire survivors in Paradise and Butte County remember their time in hell as if it happened yesterday.

For those in need of a refresher on the events of November 8, 2018, a few minutes spent watching "The Lost Bus" (released to Apple TV last September, now available on DVD) brings the sheer terror of that morning home in vivid display. The numbers in this story are easier to grasp. They come down to 22 elementary students, one teacher, and one school bus driver, all determined to outrun a wall of flame in the face of overwhelming odds. The story has a happy ending, albeit with a few Hollywood flourishes added to enhance a

All Aboard for Paradise continued on page 6

tale already packing enough drama. The real emotional impact comes from seeing the story unfold visually.

Members of Trinity United's Presbyterian Disaster Assistance team can immediately relate to many of scenes in the movie. We've gone past the now-closed Ponderosa Elementary School many times since 2021 en route to work sites in Paradise and Magalia. For those who've driven Highway 70 through Feather River Canyon, the computer graphics depicting the fire's origin are chilling. The utter frustration of first responders to the blaze is palpable. Given weather conditions that day, it is miraculous that only 86 people perished. Most movies effect viewers emotionally—the impact of "The Lost Bus" is visceral.

The call on Trinity United's PDA team to help rebuild the Paradise area over the past five years has been felt on a similar level. There have been 23 significant fires around Butte County since Paradise in 2018. We haven't just seen them on the news—we've smelled the smoke and seen ash fall on our vehicles. Our PDA team didn't need to fly across the country to lend a hand. All we had to do was drive to Oroville, less than three hours away. Come May 3, we'll be back on the road to the "other Trinity" Presbyterian Church and the next installment in our effort to help to region come back "Butte Strong."

As pioneers in PDA's outreach to Paradise, each year we return with a deep sense of purpose, looking forward to seeing old friends and making new ones as we help communities come back to life. As we prepare for our sixth mission outreach to Oroville, we're excited to keep the good work going forward.

"Your group is amazing and we are so thankful and appreciative of you" our friends at the Tiny Pine Foundation in Oroville wrote after last year's outreach. "We're still giving it our all—we won't give up, promise!" said Ray and

Teanea Bartley, the homeowners in Berry Creek where most of our team worked in 2025. We'll be back at Tiny Pine this year, and look forward to visiting Ray and Teanea during the course of the mission week. Trinity United's PDA team won't give up, either.

This is where the entire Trinity church family can join the cause. Your PDA team is hosting a brunch at church following worship on Sunday, March 22. The event begins at 11:30 AM in Telle Center and includes a brief presentation recapping the 2025 mission, as well as what we anticipate for this year's outreach. In addition to providing a tasty meal and good conversation, we'll be humbly soliciting your prayers and financial support. Most of all, we're excited about spreading the gospel of helping hands and telling the story of where God is leading all of us—out of the fire and into a brighter tomorrow.

We look forward to hosting you on Sunday, March 22. For questions please contact Liz and Ted Benson at 209-522-2390.

Prime Timers

Submitted by Marilyn Sena



Prime Timers to Celebrate "Wearing of the Green"

St. Patrick's Day will be celebrated by Trinity Prime Timers at their March 7 gathering, which will include a corned beef and cabbage lunch with scalloped potatoes, soda bread, and green dessert!! The meal will be served at noon in Telle Center for a \$10 donation. It is open to all Trinity Prime Timers and guests.

Charlie Crane will offer a musical devotion following the meal. Trinity Covenant Partner Jenny Currie will be the guest speaker for the afternoon program and will elaborate on some of her recent adventures.

Trinity United Family Prayer Calendar

MARCH 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Rose Steele Mike and Loretta Sutherland	2 Kadyn Sutherlin Julia Swager	3 Abel and Terrie Tagre Bev Thomas	4 David and Cindy Tinajero Matt and Cassi Torrez	5 Dwight and Lisa Traugher Tim and Judy Tweedie	6 Alma van Aalsburg Burt and Polly Vasche	7 Geneva Vasquez Chick and Lynda Venturini
8 Connie Vierra Kristi and Rob Warren	9 Char Wickman Judy Wiegman	10 Lynne and Chris Wilkinson Jenny and Ken Willmarth	11 Milly Wing David Witt	12 Margaret Wolfe David and Vicky Wolff	13 Deidre Wolfley Craig and Marcy Wright	14 Adelle and Joseph Yonan Jim Young
15 David and Cindy Zellman Twilla Zellman	16 Bob and Tippy Achterberg Cameron and Stephanie Anderson	17 Jeff and Julie Anderson Randy and Doreen Anderson	18 Ryan and Kate Anderson Twyla Anderson	19 Donna Bakker Diana and David Beal	20 Krista Beal Martha Beasley	21 Rob and Susan Beasley Silvana Beasley
22 Ted and Liz Benson Virginia Berry	23 Barbara Bianchi Joyce Blank	24 Elizabeth Blixt Esther Bradfield	25 Phillip Bravard Clayton and Lacey Bray	26 Dennis and Michele Bray Emily Bray	27 Shirley Brooks Marilyn Brown	28 Grace Brummel Elizabeth Bucknell
29 Jim and Monique Bucknell Lee and Sandy Bucknell	30 Reva Burchett Greg Cash	31 Mike and Barbara Cash Mike and Kim Caskey	<i>We are devoted to love for one another, joyfully welcoming the stranger, eagerly expecting heaven's surprises! (Hebrews 13:1-2)</i>			

- Bethany Christian Services
Sandra Hiatt
- Bethel Ministries International
Bryan Crabtree
- Bethel Ministries International
Ben and Emily Mooney
- Calvin Crest
Tiffany Staman
- Cru
Kelly and Vicki Londoni

- Intervarsity Christian Fellowship
Lo McDermott
- Mesa Global
Todd and Sarah Hunnicut
- Modesto Gospel Mission
Jason Conway
- Modesto Pregnancy Center
Erin Koolhaas
- Operation Christmas Child /
Samaritan's Purse

- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance
Liz Benson
- Reclaim, Bangladesh
Dr. Jay Litchfield
- Rock of Ages
Sidney Stone
- Trinity United Basket of Hope Food Distribution
Jim Bucknell and David Zellman
- Trinity United Guatemala Mission Team
Marcy Wright

- Valley Recovery Resources
Steve Berkowitz
- Vine House
Cheryl Van Horn
- Youth for Christ
Ken Sylvia

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



TRINITY UNITED

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WORSHIP WITH US!

8:30 AM Sunday School

10:00 AM Onsite and Online

Fellowship after Worship in Telle Center

LEADERSHIP

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS COMMISSION:

Tuesday, March 17, 8:30 AM

DEACON MEETING: Tuesday, March 3, 3:30 PM

SESSION MEETING: Tuesday, March 10, 6:30 PM

STEPHEN MINISTRY: 2nd/4th Mondays, 3:00-4:30 PM

TRIP COMMITTEE: Monday, March 2, 10:00 AM

WOMEN'S MINISTRY TEAM MEETING: Tuesday, March 3,
12:00 PM

SERVE

BASKET OF HOPE DISTRIBUTION: Friday, March 20,

9:00 AM-12:00 PM in the North Parking Lot

TUESDAY GROUNDS CREW: Tuesdays, 7:00-8:00 AM

TUTORING: Wednesdays, 4:00-5:30 PM

VBS WORK DAY: Tuesday, March 24, 8:30 AM

WEDNESDAYS UNITED:

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

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

Childcare Provided

STUDY

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL: Sundays, 8:30 AM, Room #502

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL: Sundays, 8:30 AM, Covell #604

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY: Thursdays, 9:15 AM, Room #203

YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL: Sundays, 9:00 AM, Youth Center

PRAISE

COMMUNION: Sunday, March 8

WORSHIP ONSITE and ONLINE: Sundays, 10:00 AM

FELLOWSHIP

CHOIR REHEARSAL: Wednesdays, 6:15-7:30 PM,

CHURCH TRIP-FIDDLER ON THE ROOF: Thursday, March 5,

Bus loads 9:30 AM; Bus leaves 9:45 AM; Oakdale Pickup 10:10 AM

FELLOWSHIP: Sundays, 11:15 AM

PDA FUNDRAISER BRUNCH: Sunday, March 22, 11:30 AM

PRIME TIMERS LUNCHEON: Saturday, March 7, 12:00 PM

TRINITY QUILTERS: Mondays, 12:00-3:00 PM, Telle Center

Electronic Version Online at www.tupc.org

See Online Calendar for changes.

Worship Services are livestreamed on www.tupc.org



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