



# Weekly Newsletter

## Trinity Presbyterian Church, Santa Cruz

November 13, 2025

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### *Featured This Week*

- Pastor's Message
- Stewardship!
- El Salvador Updates
- Announcements
- Presbytery Unity Candle
- Library Corner
- Birthdays
- Opportunities to Serve
- Regularly Occurring Events

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***Come worship with us this Sunday at 10:30 am!***

The Rev. Diane Ford

As we gather for worship, we come with hearts that seek strength for the journey. God meets us here — not to burden us with more to do, but to renew us in love that gives freely. May this hour quiet our striving, awaken our gratitude, and tune our spirits to the movement of God among us.

**Sunday's Scripture:**

Philippians 1:3-11

Luke 10:38-42

### *From Pastor Diane*

#### **Holiday Blues and Awkward Courage**

As we move into “deep fall,” the days grow shorter, the air cooler, and the rain more frequent. Many begin making holiday plans—deciding which side of the family to visit before or after Christmas, or perhaps where to travel *to avoid* certain gatherings altogether. The holidays can be complicated. Grief,

pressure, disappointment, loneliness, and depression all contribute to what many call the *holiday blues*.

How can the church respond when this is happening within and around us? By being a little kinder, a little more patient, and a little more forgiving. In a word—by practicing *grace* toward ourselves and others.

Emotional heaviness and relational awkwardness often go together. When we're sad, anxious, or stretched thin, even small interactions can feel difficult. And during the holidays—when expectations run high—relationships can become the very places where both our tenderness and our courage are tested. These are precisely the moments when compassion and connection matter most.



Author and researcher **Brené Brown** (photo) reminds us that struggles don't disappear during the holidays. Her advice: practice self-compassion, embrace the *mess* of real life instead of chasing perfection, and be grateful for small joys. She teaches that courage and vulnerability belong together. In *Dare to Lead*, she describes living with a “**strong back, soft front, and wild heart**”—grounded confidence and boundaries (the strong back), openness and curiosity (the soft front), and a willingness to live with both fierceness and kindness (the wild heart).

Brown also warns that “guarded backs, defended fronts, and armored hearts” may feel safe, but they close us off from real connection. Staying open, especially when things feel awkward, is the braver choice.

As we move through this season, what friendships or connections might need your attention? Where might a little grace—or a little courage—make room for healing?

“With all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love... Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.”  
(*Ephesians 4:2–3, 32*)

Maybe this year, our best holiday practice is not perfection—but presence, patience, and courage with one another.

## *Stewardship*

Stewardship letters have been mailed including pledge forms for both financial contributions and contributions of time and talents. The forms will also be available in the church entry hall. Please prayerfully consider your proposed contributions for 2026 and, at your earliest convenience, place the completed forms in the offering plate during worship or mail them to the church or email the information to the church. Please address any questions to Michael Christie, Pastor Diane Ford or the church office.

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## *Santa Cruz al Salvador*

### **What is a prayer child?**

You may know that in a couple weeks Trinity will send Chuck and Nancy Cobery, Chad and Rosie Bell and Ron Weaver to El Salvador for our annual delegation representing Santa Cruz al Salvador (SCaS), a coalition of churches in Santa Cruz County dedicated to serving the underserved in two rural communities in that country. This will be the 15<sup>th</sup> delegation from our church in the 30-year history of SCaS. We have dug wells, conducted medical and dental visits, funded construction of compostable latrines, subsidized college tuition, and walked more than a mile in the shoes of hundreds of needy people.

The heart of our program, however, is the SCaS church members' sponsorship of approximately 120 children in grades 1-12 at the Guillermo Ungo School in the hills near Suchitoto. **We call them prayer children** (they refer to us as Godparents), and with a small gift each child receives of school or home items that each sponsor provides through a monetary donation, a sometimes-lifelong connection can be made. As a sponsor, you may maintain contact with your prayer child (Facebook, WhatsApp, even telephone/Facetime if you speak Spanish) and encourage their progress through school as well as knowing your support is helping to change lives.

The connections we make in El Salvador have been enriching – both to the sponsor and the child recipient. There are still a few kids that need a connection, however, **so if you are interested, please contact Chuck Cobery or Chad Bell. We will get you started!**



Chuck Cobery stands next to his prayer child, Kenya, with her parents and her four siblings.

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**Third Monday Book Club, November 17.** Hi Bookies! We will be reading “The Frozen River” by Ariel Lawson in November. We will take December off, but the book for January will be “The Great Divide” by Cristina Henriquez.

Please join us for the last **Trinity Happy Hour** of 2025, at Johnny's Harborside, **Thursday, November 20**. We will meet at 4 pm, with the last call for happy hour prices at 5 pm. Advent gatherings will replace our December happy hour, and we will resume our third Thursdays in January 2026

**December 4, 11, and 18:** Thursday Advent Dinner and Taizé at 5:30 pm.

**December 7:** Congregational Caroling after the 10:30 service.

**December 14: Cantata Sunday at 10:30 am.** Let the spirit and sounds of the season fill your hearts and ears on December 14 during the 10:30 am service! Trinity's own choir, joined by guest singers from choirs here and over the hill, will come together to present our annual Christmas cantata, Kirke Mechem's *The Seven Joys of Christmas*. We will also be treated to very special music by a professional brass quintet led by local trombone virtuoso Scott Wilkinson, including a piece written for brass quintet and organ. It promises to be a spectacular addition to our Advent season, and we look forward to seeing you there. Want more info? Please contact Nicki.



**December 21: Longest Night Service of Hope 5:30 pm.** Not everyone feels merry in December. The Longest Night Service offers a gentle, peaceful time to pause—especially for those carrying sadness, loss, or weariness during the holidays. Through candlelight, quiet music, and prayer, we'll honor the darkness and remember that light still finds us. Come as you are; all are welcome.

**December 24:** Our Christmas Eve Service will take place at 5:30 pm.



This Week's Presbytery's Unity Candle: We pray for Foothill Community Presbyterian Church, with Revs. Andy and Lindsay Wong, and the First Thai Presbyterian Church of San Jose, with Rev. Paul Pansuay.

### **Welcome Nicole Donovan, our new Office Admin!**

Trinity is so thrilled and blessed to have her join our staff. Nicole comes to us with many years of experience in church administrative work, who is currently the bookkeeper and HR manager for the Association of Faith Communities, the non-profit that manages the Faith Community Shelter whose members spend nights at our church.



Nicole has a generous spirit and loves when folks stop by the church office. She is gifted in many ways that create an efficient and well-run office. When you get a chance to stop by the office, please personally welcome her to Trinity!

We are grateful to God for this opportunity to join in this continuing journey of Trinity and growth.

Debbie Bates, Personnel Elder

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## *Trinity Interactive*

Welcome to a new occasional feature of our Weekly Newsletter where we ask YOU to contribute to a topical conversation.

This week's conversation centers on the upcoming PBS documentary series, **The American Revolution, produced by Ken Burns**. The series premieres on Sunday, November 16, 2025 on PBS, and will air for six consecutive nights, ending on Friday, November 21, at 8:00-10:00 p.m. ET. The full series will also be available to stream online at PBS.org and on the PBS App starting November 16.



We invite you to email ([trinitysc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:trinitysc@sbcglobal.net)) a brief response to the question: What did you learn from this documentary or what surprised you most?

This is a great opportunity to share your thoughts, and hear what others found interesting as well. Responses will be published in the newsletter following the series event, and may be lightly edited for publication purposes. Thank you for participating in this pilot event!

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## *Library Corner*

*Our Parish Library open to the public Sundays after worship and Thursdays 10 – noon.*

Last Sunday the Library celebrated the anniversary of founding which was on Armistice day, November 11, 1939. On this Thursday, November 13, we will have a library open house and celebration with extended hours, 9am to 2 pm. In honor of this celebration we will be giving out more custom bookmarks like the ones presented to members of the library league last Sunday. Since we are named after Hazel Nutt (yes, a real person!) we will feature Hazelnut Treats. I will also answer questions about the library's history and future. See you there!

## **Part Two: All-Church Retreat exploring practices for Discernment**



**All-Church Retreat, Nov. 1-2, 2025**

### **Embodied Prayer**

We can pray not only with words and silence, but with breath, gesture, movement or a posture. Our body registers peace, tension, openness, and resistance. Pastor Diane led us in a prayer using our hands, and afterward one of our participants reflected on it as she journaled. Thanks you, Elizabeth, for sharing it with us:

*Hold stress in your hands –  
harsh words, demands.  
Open your hands, let some  
of it go,  
Little then all; let it flow  
Into God's hands so you  
will know  
A way for peace and grace  
to grow.*

~ Elizabeth Bunch, All Church Retreat 2025



8 Daryl Altieri  
Joanne Clever  
20 Jeanne Baker  
Ari Palmer  
Ron Weaver

22 Jill Francis  
Dan Rutan  
24 Erin Sams  
26 Nancy Cobery  
27 Jenny Ye

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## *Opportunities to Serve*

**Quilt Much?** Sweet Pea is the place to be! November 8 & 22. Interested in learning to quilt or looking to get back into it? Grab a sewing machine and join Sweet Peas! They meet in the Youth Room (enter door on Melrose Ave) from 9:30a.m. to 3:45 p.m. every other Saturday and donate to hospitals and shelters.

**AFC Dinners, Every 2nd & 3rd Wednesday.** Looking to contribute to your community through cooking or small donations? Contact Debbie Bates at [debates44@aol.com](mailto:debates44@aol.com) to see what can be provided. The Association of Faith Communities (AFC) is a coalition of congregations serving Santa Cruz County.

**Donating Used Electronics.** The Welcoming Network seeks computers and phones for our neighbors. Donated laptops (PCs up to 10 years old, MacBooks up to 15), iPhones (4G/5G), Androids, iPads, and tablets will be erased, refurbished, and given to those in need. Non-reusable items will be recycled at Grey Bears. If you are able to donate any of these items, contact Karen Wichelmann at (831) 588-9240.

**Urban Works.** Urban Works embraces art and recreation to break through faith, social and economic barriers, to create community for adults with disabilities and their support networks. See Diane if you are interested in volunteering.



## **Regularly Occurring Events at Trinity**

See more on our church Google Calendar via our website

### **Sundays at Trinity**

- ❖ Sunday Worship: 10:30 am in the Sanctuary and streaming live on YouTube and Facebook
- ❖ Coffee Hour: Immediately following our Sunday service in the Magnolia Courtyard.
- ❖ Morning Lectionary School: Sundays, 9 am, Fireside Room
- ❖ Trinity Library is open during coffee hour.
- ❖ Nooners Class: 12pm in the Fireside Room and on Zoom.
- ❖ Board of Deacons: 3rd Sundays (none in July), 12pm, Youth Room

### **Mondays at Trinity**

- ❖ Book Club (Every 3rd Monday) 10am-11am, Fireside Room
- ❖ Monday Night Lectionary Study (weekly) 5pm-6:16pm, Fireside Room

### **Tuesdays at Trinity**

- ❖ Administration Comm. (1st Tuesday, in “odd” months), 4:30pm, Fireside Room
- ❖ Session (every 2nd Tuesday) 5:30-7pm, Fireside Room

### **Wednesdays at Trinity**

- ❖ Association of Faith Communities (AFC) Board, 11am-1pm, Fireside Room
- ❖ Faith Community Shelter, 4pm - Overnight, Fellowship Hall
- ❖ Shower the People, 3pm-6pm, Parking Lot
- ❖ Urban Works Board, 1st Wednesdays, 6-7 pm, Fireside Room

### **Thursdays at Trinity**

- ❖ Librarian Corner, 10 am -12 pm, socialize in the library
- ❖ Bible Study with Pastor, 1-2:15 pm, Youth Room, beginning Sept. 18