

## **Rector's Report for January 2026 Vestry Meeting**

A recap of events/activities/goings-on since the report for our December vestry meeting.

**Worship:** I helped lead a lovely memorial service for Matthew Bergquist at Tucker's Grove Park, with music provided by Doug Clegg and his son. // Sarah and I were privileged to do a house blessing rite, at the invitation of Jeannie Christensen, for her new home at Samarkand. // We celebrated Dave Wyman's life in a memorial service on January 10. Diane, who was a long-time member of Trinity's choir, was especially delighted that the choir volunteered to come together to provide the music for the service. // Since last we met, in early December, we've celebrated the four Sundays of Advent (with Advent wreath creation on Advent 1, and Alternative Christmas Market on Advent 2), a Blue Christmas service (special thanks to Tom Joyce and Brian Bargiel for the music, and Carolyn Roberts who led a guided meditation), two very rainy Christmas Eve services, a Christmas Day service, and a Lessons and Carols Eucharist on the Sunday after Christmas. I'm grateful to the Revs. Christine Purcell and Anne Howard who responded so quickly to my cries (texts) for help to fill in for Sarah Thomas and I, since we were stuck in Seattle and Columbus, Ohio (respectively), unable to return to Santa Barbara after the holidays, because our airport was flooded. Christine stepped in to preside, while Anne preached, and Sarah and I made alternate travel arrangements! // And although Advent/Christmas has just ended, we're busy making plans for the upcoming Lenten season, which begins with Ash Wednesday services on February 18.

**Adult Education/Formation:** Given the positive response to the initial 5 Centering Prayer sessions offered on Thursday afternoons in the late fall, the sessions began again after the winter holidays, and will continue until just before Lent begins. // Trinity has the great good fortune to host an evening with Diana Butler Bass on February 4, to talk about her newest book, *A Beautiful Year: 52 meditations on faith, wisdom, and perseverance*. // We're looking forward to our Lenten formation program, taking a deep dive into the psalms. We'll be joined by biblical scholar, Vicki Garvey (who I worked with for several years in Chicago, and who taught at the seminary I attended) for a workshop on Saturday, February 21, which will set us up for further exploration on the 5 Wednesday evenings of Lent, February 25 thru March 25. // A Lenten "daybook," with reflections on the scriptures of Lent written by Trinity parishioners and clergy, will be available for folks to use as part of their personal Lenten practice.

**Pastoral Care / Newcomers:** Over the past weeks since our last meeting, I met with 12 people for pastoral care or newcomer visits. // Coming out of the Invite/Welcome/Connect program, Sarah and Betty and I have instituted a process of reviewing, every other week, the list of newcomers, making contact with and scheduling followup newcomer meetings.

**Financial things:** We've continued to revise and fine-tune the budget for 2026, in advance of the January vestry meeting, where vestry's job is to approve the budget that will be presented to the parish at the Annual Meeting on February 8. // The Finance committee met in person January 18 to review the December (year end) financials, and the 2026 operating budget. Spoiler alert: we ended 2025 "in the black" (that's good!), and are prepared to present a balanced budget for 2026. // Thanks to the Vestry for completing the hand-written thank you

notes to parishioners who have pledged - those personal touches make a difference! // I'm grateful to Jay Casbon, who has stepped forward to offer his leadership on planned giving, and we met last Saturday as a newly re-formed Legacy Circle team to put together plans for next steps in recognizing and thanking those who've already made a commitment to include Trinity in their estate planning, as well as reintroducing this idea to those who may not know about this instrument of giving. // We closed 2025 with two wonderful Trinity fundraisers, including the Trinity Backstage Labyrinth Christmas show, and the Cookie Walk. Besides being financially beneficial (between the Art Auction in September and these 2 December events, we netted over \$22,000), these kinds of events help bring non-Trinity (or former Trinity) folks into Trinity. // I met with an organization that does consulting with churches to help articulate a theological grounding for making financial and investment decisions. I'm reviewing the proposal they recently sent me, and will continue to keep you updated.

**Outside groups/events:** In addition to the usual outside groups using Trinity's space (i.e. AA, Ring Shout, CLUE, Community Atrium, Gradient), some other non-Trinity groups used Trinity's space over the past several weeks, including a Westmont student group doing a film project, SBHS choir, a Ring Shout public concert, spiritual direction sessions, and the Freedom Warming Center.

**Children, Youth, and Young Adults:** The Watershed Young Adult group met in December (presentation by Rev. Art Stevens on his giant mandala which he uses to promote peace and healing) and January (using mood boards to think about resolutions). // If you were at the 4pm service on Christmas Eve, you know about the fabulous pageant that the children presented, made possible by dedicated parents, catechists, volunteers, the CYC (children and youth council), and musicians Kate Wallace and Doug Clegg. // The Youth Group's trip to the La Cobina border shelter has been re-scheduled for mid-February.

**Broader church and community:** Trinity hosted the monthly SB Clergy Association meeting in January, where we had conversation with representatives from the SB police department about issues of church/synagogue/mosque safety, including responding to ICE. // We're working on scheduling some interfaith events with the Islamic Society, after the well-received dinner we hosted in the fall. As we have details about when/where, those details will be shared.

**Leadership and Miscellany:** These next few Mondays will be my final meetings with Georgia (as Sr Warden) as she transitions out of that role, and I've been meeting with Brian Bargiel who I've asked to be the new Sr. Warden (the senior warden is chosen by the rector; the junior warden is voted on by the vestry after the new vestry class is sworn in at Annual Meeting) // I hosted the Parish Council for dinner at rectory, for our annual holiday celebration. We recognized those who will be rolling off of Parish Council (Jeff Krutzsch as co-lead of JOC, Mary Gibson as co-lead of CYC, and Jeannie Christensen as Worship chair). // We had the biggest crowd ever (nearly 40 people!) at our annual ornament exchange in early December, including some new-to-the-event who've been converted. // Sarah and I attended a four-day continuing ed workshop on storytelling, and how to incorporate storytelling into our churches to strengthen connections with each other, our community, and our faith. We were invited to participate by

Mark Yaconelli, who presented at Trinity a few years ago. The workshop (called the Austin Story Project) is organized and funded by a Lilly Foundation grant administered by Austin Seminary, and was held in Danville, CA. We'll be spending the next 9 months looking at ways to incorporate what we've learned into Trinity.

**Personal:** I'm happy to have had a chance to catch up with some old friends (college and seminary) over the holidays, as well as my family in Ohio. Other than the difficulties in traveling back to SB (flooded airport), the time away was wonderful. I'm preparing to travel to North Dakota in mid-March, where I've been asked to preach at the consecration of their bishop-elect, my dear friend, Rev. Shay Craig. // I'm excited for some upcoming repair work on the rectory. A carpenter from Ben Ewart's company was at my house last week measuring some windows and a door which are damaged (wood rot) and will be replaced soon, after they're crafted at Architectural Millwork (parishioner Joe Matthews' company). I'm grateful that such skilled parishioners are available to share their gifts to keep this beautiful house in good shape!

Respectfully submitted,  
January 23, 2025  
Elizabeth+

## **Associate Rector Report, January 2026 Vestry Mtg.**

December was full of events, activities, and services connected to Advent and Christmas. Much of my time was spent connected to these. Additionally:

### **Parish Council**

The Parish Council gathered at the rectory for a potluck evening in December. We offered our thanks to those completing their time in the group: Jeffrey Krutzsch (JOC), Mary Gibson (CYC), and Jeannie Christensen (Worship). In our January meeting, we prepped for the Annual Meeting and checked in re our various ministries.

### **Supper Club**

Supper Club returned on Jan. 15th after a two-month hiatus when we waited for the Housing Authority to help us find a way to keep having Supper Club at Vera Cruz Village despite there not being a staff member on site in the evenings. A terrific group of people shopped and cooked and cleaned, and then another group met at the building where we enjoyed the meal with the residents. I am noticing how new relationships are already being formed.

### **Compline**

Our January Compline hit a record with 105 people in attendance. Parishioner Isao Sugano shared a heart-opening story about his Japanese American identity and his journey to Trinity and all of the intertwining threads. The sacristans (behind-the-scenes volunteers) continue to grow into a little community.

### **JOC**

The Justice and Outreach Council is going through a transition as their long-time co-chair Jeffrey Krutzsch is rotating off of leadership after many years in that role. We are taking January off as we step back and assess what is working and what is needed. I will be working with co-chair Ralph Armbruster in leading JOC into this next season together. JOC did a great job with the distribution of our Justice Fund, which is 5% of the pledge income for 2025. For a full list of organizations and amounts given, see the Annual Report in early February, or the Vestry minutes from December.

### **Adult Formation**

I am in touch with author Diana Butler Bass, planning an event in early February for her book tour. I am also working with parishioner Christine Purcell on a Lenten devotional book written by and for the people of Trinity.

### **Pastoral Care**

I meet with many parishioners to offer pastoral care at home, in my office, in the hospital, and at coffee shops. The Bouquet Blessings ministry is going well and is back in action after our Advent pause. We are still in search of a new leader for the Prayer Shawl Ministry, as Norma is stepping off after many years of service, but there are still lots of prayer shawls waiting for recipients in the prayer shawl closet. Helping Hands continues to offer meal trains from time to time. I finished up meeting with two Westmont students for spiritual direction in December. The

LEVs (Lay Eucharistic Visitors) haven't been requested much. Anne Roediger and Michael Arnold do the majority of these visits.

### **Miscellaneous**

I continue to attend our Invite/Welcome/Connect steering committee meetings and am working with the team on all the ways we can improve our inviting, welcoming, and connecting.

I am working with one couple with premarital counseling.

I meet with Elizabeth and Tom to plan liturgy every few weeks.

### **Community outreach/justice work**

Elizabeth and I hosted the local clergy association group in January for a lunch at Trinity. A member of the local police department was our guest and spoke to the group about safety and security. I attended an 805 Undocufund rapid response training at UCSB. I attended the Sacred Resistance zoom call to stay updated on immigration justice actions in our diocese. In that vein, I am planning to attend a protest/clergy demonstration in downtown LA on Jan. 23 in solidarity with the coinciding demonstration by clergy in Minneapolis. We will be bringing a bunch of thuribles and incense to create a giant fragrant cloud to represent God's presence in the wilderness.

### **Continuing Education**

Elizabeth and I were accepted as participants in a storytelling conference put on by Austin Theological Seminary and Mark Yaconelli (The Austin Story Project). (We brought Mark out to Trinity a few years ago to teach us about the power of community storytelling). Elizabeth and I spent a week in Danville, CA learning about a new project that we will be bringing to Trinity as part of the grant received by the organization.

I will also be attending a webinar on church volunteer development put on by Princeton Theological Seminary.

### **Personal**

Maddie and Zoe came home for the holidays so it was wonderful to have our house full again. I was able to spend some real quality time with them and it was the best. Also, on January 11th I celebrated my 6th ordination anniversary!

respectfully submitted,

Rev. Sarah Thomas, Associate Rector

## **Senior Warden Report December 2025**

My focus this month has been on completing my term as Senior Warden on the vestry. December was also filled with my ministry of flowers, helping orchestrate the church's Christmas decorations.

### **Passing the Baton:**

- I have been passing along files to the new Senior Warden, Brian Bargiel, and preparing for my final official task: Orientation for the new vestry members.
- Preparing for the Vestry Orientation by planning the agenda, compiling Vestry Binders, and updating calendars, etc.

**Invite Welcome Connect Team Support:** Susan Krutzsch and I are continuing to lead the Invite Welcome Connect Steering Committee. I plan to continue with this commitment after my term ends.

- We held a productive quarterly meeting to help keep us accountable and on track. We reviewed our areas of focus: Invite, Welcome, and Connect, as well as our progress toward our goals. We continue to celebrate our progress and expand our welcome.
- We launched another round of “Together at the Table,” a new program that brings people together for a single-potluck meal at parishioners’ homes. We have five events to choose from over the next couple of months.

### **Other Projects and activities:**

- I have helped shepherd the reformation of Building & Grounds. Chris Mollkoy is working with Elizabeth to expand the B & G team and to get oriented to picking up projects that have been on hold. A new Junior Warden will be elected when the incoming Vestry is installed after the first of the year.

**On a personal note:** Writing my third and final Annual Report gave me an opportunity to reflect on how rewarding my term on the vestry has been. It has been a rewarding three years, marked by new friendships and the joy of meaningful work. I look forward to what the future holds.

Blessings,  
Georgia Noble, Sr. Warden

# Junior Warden Report (People's Warden)

January 2026

## Activities

Invite/Welcome/Connect committee – exploring ideas for clergy welcome video for website as well as researching more ways to extend welcome

Greeter and Welcome Table, congregation packed over 150 shelf stable lunches for our unhoused neighbors

Delivered soup and groceries to older couple with the flu

Shared lunch with 2 couples after church

Pick up Sarah Dobbs from Alexander Gardens for church weekly

Newcomer button was pushed on website so assisted a newcomer as she got to know the church and exchanged many emails

Successful cookie walk raising over \$12,100!

Attended Compline and was so moved with Isao's story

## Saying Goodbye

This month marks the end of the People's Warden position as I am cycling off the Vestry. The People's Warden is described as one with a consistently positive attitude, with a familiarity and experience with the congregation and one who makes meaningful connections with the people of Trinity. I feel I have fulfilled those duties. A new Junior Warden will be voted in by the new Vestry and will be more involved with the Buildings and Grounds committee. Since I am a people person anyway, I will continue welcoming people to Trinity and serving them as needed with the same activities I've been doing. I have loved being your People's Warden!