



The Gift of Transparency

By Phillip Hayashida, with assistance from ChatGBT

In our Presbyterian tradition, we often talk about stewardship—using wisely the gifts God has given us. We're familiar with the classic trio of T's: Time, Talent, and Treasure. But today, I'd like to propose a fourth "T" that is less talked about, but just as vital for spiritual growth and community life: Transparency.

Now, I know that word can make us squirm. It's personal. It's uncomfortable. But I believe transparency—appropriately practiced—is one of the most powerful gifts we can offer, especially within the life of the church.

In *Harry Potter*, there's a magical item: the cloak of invisibility. It allows Harry to walk unseen. No one knows he's there.

How often do we wear emotional cloaks in church? We smile politely during coffee hour but hide the pain of a broken marriage. We discuss the scripture's surface meaning while avoiding the personal questions it stirs within us.

Sometimes, we even avoid the mirror altogether—we don't want to look closely at the parts of ourselves that need healing, confession, or growth.

But here's the paradox: while hiding feels safe, it's often isolation disguised as protection.

A few times a year, I attend a breakfast where formerly incarcerated individuals tell their stories. What strikes me isn't just the severity of their pasts—it's their honesty. It's vulnerable. It's disarming. And frankly, it's holy.

I've also seen this kind of honesty in the church. Years ago, Trinity had prayer stations. People could come forward to name what they were struggling with—depression, infidelity, job loss, a crisis of faith, immigration fears.

These weren't attention-seeking confessions. They were sacred admissions. When we speak truth aloud, especially to another believer, we bring darkness into

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light. We become more fully known, which is what we all long for—and what the church is *supposed* to be about.

At its core, the church is not just about right doctrine or well-executed liturgy. It's about connection—to God, and to one another. When we are transparent with each other in small groups or Bible studies, when we risk saying, "I'm struggling with this," or "I don't understand that passage," or "I'm angry at God,"—that's where real spiritual formation happens.

Transparency fosters *trust*. And trust builds *connection*. And that's what makes the church not just a place we go, but a body we belong to.

Of course, let me say this clearly: transparency requires discretion.

Jesus himself said, "Do not cast your pearls before swine." Not every truth should be shared with everyone. Transparency is not about oversharing or "performing" vulnerability. It's about discernment—

choosing safe, prayerful spaces and trustworthy companions with whom to share your heart.

That's why well-led small groups and spiritual friendships are so important. They give us a space where trust can grow, and honesty can flourish without fear of gossip or judgment.

I believe the church needs more people who are willing to be real—not perfect, not polished, but honest—with themselves, with each other, and with God.

So yes, continue giving your Time, your Talent, and your Treasure. But also consider offering your Transparency—wisely, prayerfully, and courageously.

This fall, I invite you to take a step into deeper connection by joining a small group or encouraging your children and youth to participate in youth groups. These are places where honest conversations, lasting friendships, and spiritual growth can take root—where we learn to be known by one another, and by God.

Because when we are fully known and still fully loved, we are living the very heart of the Gospel.

Campus Care & Hospitality

Around our Campus

This Summer, the Campus Care and Hospitality team completed sealing and re-striping the parking lot. Repainting the roof eaves above the main entry and repairs to seal the steeple are scheduled to be completed this fall, before winter rains. Many have voiced concern about the condition of the landscaping and what the community sees when driving by or through the parking lot. There are plans for work at the corner of Brittan and Alameda, including removing old plants, improving the soil, repairing or upgrading irrigation, repairing the lights to illuminate the signage, and installing new plants to enhance our image. This is a cooperative effort involving Logan Gerhardt, members of Boy Scouts Troop 321, and the faithful Campus Care ministry team. Work will begin in the fall. We also hope to improve the planted areas alongside the main entry steps to the patio to help make our campus look more inviting.

Mid-Peninsula Interfaith Support Group CROP Walk and Service of Gratitude

The CROP Walk has been a powerful way to raise both money and awareness for those who are hungry, living in poverty, or lacking easy access to clean water for the past 56 years. It has even been called "the granddaddy of charity walks," as noted by the *Los Angeles Times*.

I've participated in the CROP Walk for 25 years, and I'm excited to announce that our Mid-Peninsula Interfaith Support Group will be part of this year's walk in Menlo Park on **October 26, 2025**, from **1–4pm**. More details will be shared soon.

You can join our team at this link:

<https://events.crophungerwalk.org/crophungerwalks/team/mid-peninsula-interfaith-support-group>

We will also hold our 2nd Annual Community Service of Gratitude this year on either **Sunday, November 23** or **Monday, November 24, at 7pm**. The location is still to be determined.

-Pastor David

Special Worship Dates this Fall

SEPTEMBER:

September 7 - Celebration Sunday!

Your favorite hymns, songs and communion will start the fall off in a glorious direction.

We will have a **Special Mission and Ministry Fair** after worship during Coffee and Conversation Fellowship. Team and board leaders are welcome to host a table with pictures, information, and sign-up sheets about their ministries and missions.

September 14 - Teacher, Assistant, Chaperone, and Family Ministries Team Commissioning

Everyone involved in leading Kids, Youth, Family Ministries, or Small Groups is encouraged to attend and be commissioned during worship.



Families, please look for opportunities for the kids and youth to lead worship each month. Singing, playing, reading, praying, are just some of the ways our young Disciples, of ALL ages, will be encouraged to become more active facilitators of worship in the coming months. May we be

open to experience the freedom of expression and joy that our children bring to our church services.



OCTOBER:

October 5 - World Communion Sunday

Join God's people from all nations, tribes, and languages as we unite as one body in the universal love around the Lord's Table.

October 19 - Bible Sunday

If your child is ready for their next-level Bible, please let Maria know. We typically provide Bibles for the following age groups: Pre-K–1st grade, 2nd–4th grade, 5th–7th grade, and a confirmation Bible for 8th grade and above.

October 26 - Hallowed Eve Sunday

Kids are invited to wear their costumes as we laugh at and scare away evil, remembering the true meaning of Halloween.

NOVEMBER:

November 2 - All Saints' Sunday

We will remember the loved ones we have lost in the past year with the ringing of individual bells at the end of the service, just before we sing *"For All the Saints."* Communion will be served.

November 23 - Stewardship and Thanksgiving Sunday

Celebrate all of God's blessings with thanksgiving and wonderful music, and then join us for a special feast during **Growing Together** at 5pm.

Connections Fall Events

As we move into the fall, we have some fantastic events planned to bring us all together for fun, fellowship, and faith. Mark your calendars and make plans to join us! Visit <https://trinity-pres.org/connect/upcoming-events> for more information. If you would like to join the Connections Team, please contact Jodie at jodie.gerhardt@gmail.com.



August 30 - Giants Game

Let's head out to the ballpark to cheer on the Giants! Game begins at 4:15pm. Please contact Senta at sentacolombo89@gmail.com for details.



September 21 - Worship in the Park

Our annual outdoor worship service is a special time of praise and community in a beautiful setting. Please note the different location, Red Morton Park in Redwood City, and stay for a potluck lunch.



September 26 to 28 - Men's Retreat at Mt. Hermon

Relax, recharge, and build or deepen friendships with other Trinity men while strengthening your faith alongside fellow believers in Christ and those seeking to know more about Him.

October 10 to 12 - Women's Retreat at Mt. Hermon

Take a weekend to recharge your spirit and connect with other women in a peaceful, inspiring location.



October 26 - Trunk or Treat

Get your costumes and cars ready! After worship, Connections is working with the Family Ministries team to host a fun time of decorated cars, candy, and community for the kids.



Trinity Softball Team



If you have a passion for playing ball, please consider joining our co-ed softball team. Games are played on Sunday afternoons, 2-6pm, at Burton Park, and the fall season goes from September 7 to November 2. The schedule of games will be available at <https://trinity-pres.org/connect/upcoming-events>. Contact Sabine at sabinedwon@yahoo.com to learn more about this ministry of fun!

Small Groups

Small groups are not just for bible study but also for fun and fellowship.



Pictured is the Hayashida's small group at their Murder Mystery dinner party set in the 1920s! To learn more about

small groups, visit <https://trinity-pres.org/connect/adults>.

Hiking Every Third Saturday

We go on easy, moderate, and hard hikes every third Saturday of the month. On **September 20**, we will likely split into two groups: one group will take a slightly longer and faster hike at Purisima Creek, while the others will do the same shorter hike we did last fall.



We will meet at the church to carpool at 10am, leaving no later than 10:10am. Elevation changes and distances will be announced in the e-blasts as accurately as possible.

Board Games Every Fourth Saturday

We've had so many wonderful Board Game Nights over the



past year, and they will continue regularly this year. The men will play board games at their retreat on September 27, and everyone else will need to decide whether to play that day at the

church. More details will be shared soon. We always have a table for kids 9 and under!



Stewardship

"Where Your Treasure Is . . .

there your heart will be also," said Jesus in *Matthew 6:21*.

As Christians we recognize that everything we have – our possessions, abilities, and time – belongs to God, and as such we are called to steward these gifts wisely and faithfully.

To help our Trinity family grow as wise and faithful stewards, we have established a new Stewardship Team. The team includes, Pat Brown, Deborah Kemper, Jim Gernand, and Holly Hayashida (Chair).

Stewardship is not primarily about money; it is primarily about Christian Discipleship. Stewardship involves helping children and adults to act as "good stewards" of the gifts and resources that God has entrusted to us. As we grow in faith and trust God more, we cling less tightly to our own resources and share more readily with others.

The Stewardship team will be working with Family Ministries and Adult Ministries to consider ways we can all grow as stewards. We also have plans to encourage our members to consider including Trinity in their estate plans, as many have already done. Stewardship begins in childhood and ends with the plans we make for the resources we leave behind at the end of life. You will be seeing more messages about stewardship in the coming months.

Global Outreach

Mission Aviation Fellowship

“God, what do you want me to do here? “

Corinne Woodberry had no idea what it would mean for her when her husband, John, was asked to start a MAF aviation program in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea. God soon made it clear.

Corinne describes her journey, “The morning I asked God what He wanted me to do, a man in urgent need of a doctor was introduced, so we brought him to the Buka General Hospital, where it became apparent what God had in mind. Upon seeing the abhorrent and dismal conditions, I was overwhelmed. ‘What am I able to do here? I have so little,’ I wrote in my journal. And the Holy Spirit responded, ‘You have 2 fish and 5 loaves. I will multiply it.’”

Obvious problems included broken medical equipment, lack of medicines, insufficient supplies, no running water, and infection risks from horrid overflowing toilets and septic tanks.

Corinne continues, “As I shared the needs, donations started to come multiplying the 2 fish and 5 loaves. And now we’re seeing the very beginnings of this hospital transformed, not only with the cleanup, the provision of supplies and equipment, but spiritually as well, as people see what God is doing”. The before and after photo above shows Corinne hard at work.

GOMT members were very moved by this situation and approved a gift of \$5,000 from Trinity’s Future Fund to help Corinne work with this hospital.



Change A Life Ministry (CALM)

Domestic violence can happen to anyone and often has a huge impact on a person’s mental health, living situation, financial stability and family. Trinity’s Change a Life Ministry (CALM) team partners with many local, non-profit organizations, including CORA (Community

Overcoming Relationship Abuse), to provide one-time grants to promote a positive change in a person’s life.

One of CORA’s counselors recently reached out to the

CALM team, asking for a grant to assist a victim of domestic violence. This person had experienced physical, verbal, psychological and financial abuse from her ex-partner. In order to deal with this abuse, the victim had to attend various domestic violence court hearings and family court appointments, causing her to miss work, thereby reducing her income and causing her to go into debt. As the sole provider for her three children, this had a significant financial impact on her family. Once the legal appointments were completed, she was able to improve her income by increasing her work hours, but still had to deal with the debt incurred from her temporary work reduction.

After reviewing the grant request and meeting with the grantee, the CALM team approved the grant, enabling this person to get out of debt, improve her financial situation and have a more stable living situation for her family. Thanks to your generosity, we were able to follow God’s commandment to help our neighbors through financial grants that promote positive changes to their lives.



Community Outreach

St. Francis Center

Kate Young, Executive Director of St. Francis Center (SFC) of Redwood City, visited our Sunday worship service on August 17. She expressed gratitude for the ongoing support that Trinity provides to the SFC community, including quarterly financial support, annual support for Siena Youth Center's summer camp, the Holiday Toy Program, and the many Trinity congregation members who volunteer at St. Francis on a weekly basis distributing food, sorting clothing, and tutoring English and other subjects.

If you are not familiar with SFC, they are a holistic social service center in the heart of North Fair Oaks. They serve the community daily through a food pantry (377,000 lbs. in 2024, a 25% increase over previous years), clothing

closet, a small school called Holy Family School with an accompanying parent empowerment program, an afterschool program (Siena Youth Center, serving 150 kids every day), two abundant community gardens, and 268 units of affordable housing in the local neighborhood.

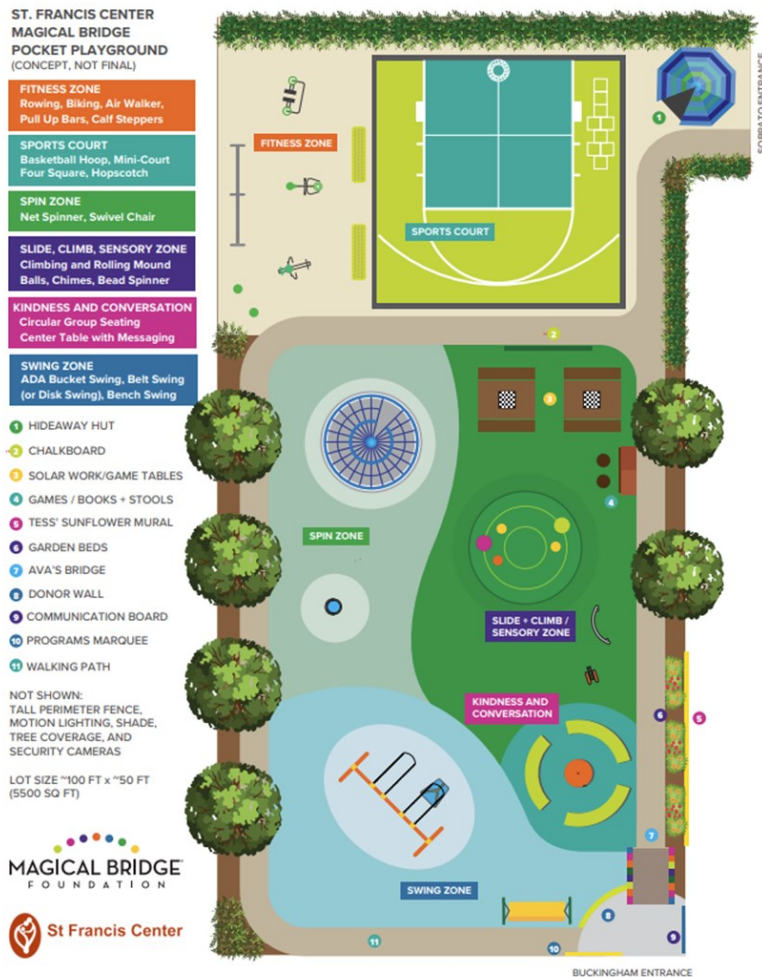
Kate shared, *"SFC is more than just a social service center, it is a village of community and support where we all help each other through life's joys and challenges. We are a village who works together, who stands shoulder to shoulder to look out for one another and nurture our children. We believe in the power of community, and the power of compassion. We believe that we are stronger and better when we work together and when we are grounded in, and operate from, a place of love."*

She briefly shared a new project:

This year, SFC is working with the Magical Bridge Foundation to design and build a Magical Bridge Pocket Park, a small version of the one at Red Morton Park in Redwood City. It's the first of its kind on a small neighborhood lot which SFC owns and will maintain. It

will be the first park in the neighborhood and will be a place to gather and play. Our Magical Bridge Pocket Playground will include accessible play and fitness equipment, a gentle walking path, art, gardens, work tables, and gathering areas, all intentionally designed for all ages and abilities. The gated playground will be used daily by students in our program (it's located across the street), as well as members of the surrounding community. SFC is currently fundraising to make this dream a reality as a neighborhood asset.

To learn more about the Magical Bridge Pocket Park or to contribute, please scan the QR code or visit magicalbridge.org or stfrancistrwc.org.



Family Ministries

As a church, supporting parents is one of the most important things we can do. So whether you are raising toddlers, teens, or any age in-between, our Trinity Family Ministries team wants to come alongside you with encouragement and support as we share the love of Jesus with each other. Know that your children, their friends, and all families are welcome here! I look forward to getting to know each of you even more. My door is always open, so feel free to reach out to me with any cares or concerns you may have.

Maria Sottile
Director of Family Ministries
msottile@trinity-pres.org



Youth Group

Youth Groups will meet monthly starting in September from 6-7:30pm. Meetings will include age-specific Bible study and discussion, learning God's Word and how to apply it to our everyday lives. We will also have skits, games and/or youth band practice. God's light will grow in our hearts and shine through us as we explore our unique, God given gifts.

Mark your calendars!

September 7 - High School, 9-12 grade

September 10 - Elementary, K-5 grade

September 12 - Middle School, 6-8 grade



Kids and youth will start a new curriculum called *Orange Sunday School*. You can learn more about it at: <https://thinkorange.com/252-childrens-ministry-curriculum/>

Weekly Sunday Morning Worship

KidConnect (Kingdom Sprouts Class):

Children 5 years of age and older come together to grow in faith and friendship. After we share in the children's sermon upstairs in the sanctuary, we gather downstairs in Fellowship Hall for a "Kids' Church" experience. Age-appropriate activities including Bible story and lesson, songs of praise, video, craft, prayer and sharing, and ideas about how to love and serve others.

Nursery Care (Kingdom Seedlings Class): For infants through ages 4 or 5. This class meets on the first floor in the Nursery. Adult staff members will care for your little ones while you participate in the worship service upstairs in the sanctuary with the congregation.



Growing Together Nonna Dinners!

Church family and community members, let's gather together

in Fellowship Hall from 5-6:30pm for a shared meal, praise music, sacred scripture, prayer time, simple service projects, crafts, and lots of FUN! Bring your appetite, open heart, and a friend!

**Save the Dates: September 28,
October 19, and November 23.**



Youth Mission Opportunities

Street Life Ministries

All ages on a Wednesday, serve food and/or take part in worship. Or prepare PB&J sandwiches at Trinity.

Second Harvest

12 yrs & up. Distribute food in an outdoor farmers market setting. Dates and times vary.

St. Anthony's Dining Hall

16 yrs & up. Serve a hot meal on a Saturday.

For dates & details visit <https://trinity-pres.org/connect/upcoming-events>

Youth Overnight at Trinity!

Save the date for our younger elementary aged disciples for an overnight "lock-in" at Trinity, **Saturday, November 15, 5pm to Sunday November 16, 10am.**