

2022 Pastor Nominating Committee Faith Statements



Shep Bryan

30+ years ago I had an encounter with the Holy Spirit during a Sunday service about forgiveness. He pierced my heart and told me, “Shep, you now belong to Me. Everything you’ve been trying to understand and figure out about me is True.” Warmth flowed through my body as I took in what He’d just said to me, and I knew I would never be the same. I was thrilled to know this Truth and believed with all my heart that I would never doubt Him. This launched me on a journey to get to know Him more intimately and see how I might honor Him with my life. I am still on this journey and am more excited today than I have been for a long time about what He has in store for me.

During the 26 years I have been at Trinity:

- I have had the opportunity to serve as an Elder for one term during a period of transition
- Chaired a search committee for Interim Senior Pastor leading the to call of Dennis Tarr
- Participated in Men’s ministry and helped with Small Group activity, purposeful Discipleship and Retreat execution



Christine Eastwood

I was not raised as a Christian, although I grew up believing in God. I’d heard very little about Jesus—but mostly the impression that I formed was that he was a nice guy who came to a bad end. The resurrection part of the story wasn’t discussed, and it was sort of hazy and unclear in my mind. Truthfully, the whole going-to-church-thing was not high on my list of ways to spend a Sunday. The few times I’d gone, I’d had too many unanswered questions. It always felt like something was missing, but I didn’t know enough to know what it might be. I grew up confining my prayers to God for the “big stuff” so that I wouldn’t wear out my welcome. Basically, I believed in God—and I could only hope that He believed in me.

Fast forward some years later to the time when I learned that my mother had a brain tumor. The prognosis was devastating. They gave her about three months—assuming she lived through the surgery that was now scheduled in a matter of days. In those first days following the news, I felt so lost. I remember telling my husband that I felt like I was drowning, that I needed a rock to cling to. The vivid image that kept replaying in my mind was a violently stormy sea, the wind whipping and lashing waves over me, and I was in the middle of it without a boat. Yet I could see that there was a huge rock sticking up out of the waves, and it was solid and unyielding. And there was a light on that rock. I knew instinctively that it represented safety and life and I had to find a way to reach it. There were only two things I knew for certain at that point: I couldn’t do it on my own, and I needed to find a church.

We started attending a nearby church where I learned about Jesus Christ, and it was as an adult that I decided to accept Jesus as my personal savior and to be baptized. But it was here, at Trinity, some 10 years later, that I really began to understand what having a personal relationship with him actually meant. It was here that I learned the difference between “accepting” and “inviting” Jesus into my life. Since then, I have been growing and rejoicing in each revelation of God’s plan for me. I have stepped out in faith and God has grown me in directions that I could never have begun to imagine. And to the list of things that I now know for sure is the incredible truth that God does indeed believe in me—so much so that He sent his Son to die for me, personally. I am grateful to proclaim that Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior. Hallelujah!

Jessica Gazzaniga



I was raised in a non-denominational church in Massachusetts where both my parents served but I lived outside of that area and had no connection to church life except for Sunday's and the occasional weekly youth event that I rarely went too. As I got older, the pull of the world become increasing more enticing, finally to a point where I could not resist. I did everything under the sun to find satisfaction but instead of satisfaction, I found trouble of every kind. God mercifully gave me the strength to stop drinking and using drugs at 18 (still sober) but my brokenness propelled me further and further into darkness. I had my first son unwed at 19. I met Dave at 27 years old, married him, and moved to Long Island where God opened my eyes to the truth of the gospel in 2001. From that point on my life has been captivated by the love of Christ and I have served the church. Together we have 5 children and still serving.

Don Isbell III



I had the privilege of growing up at Trinity. In the second grade like many others I accepted Christ at Forest Home however it wasn't until my sophomore year of high school that I began to take ownership of my faith through service to Trinity. God worked through my college years by pruning aspects of my life and encouragement to get deeper in his word leading me to discover an interest in a more active service in God's kingdom both at home and abroad. This manifested in me deciding this last summer to pursue a career in missionary aviation.

In the Last 6 Years at Trinity I have:

- Assisted heavily with Children's Ministry Summertime activities
- Spent a Summer as a Children's Ministry Intern
- Participated in both Choir and Bells
- Worked with Tanner the last four and half years in creating and developing the College Group
- Assisting with the current College group leadership transition
- Founded and created the new young adult ministry, with a small leadership team

Lynne Kodzis



My faith began with an invitation to Trinity's youth group in the late 70's. I joined the choir to entice my parents to church and the high school director and my counselor became the first of many mentors I would receive at Trinity. My husband, Kevin, and I returned to Trinity over 20 years ago, became members and have been blessed to grow, engage, serve and lead through many of the ministry opportunities at Trinity. I served as Elder, and have consistently led or participated in Trinity's Evangelism, Discipleship, Missions and Student and Family ministries. Transforming lives through Jesus in our church, our community and beyond is a passion of mine. I feel so grateful for all he has done and excited for what is to come!

Gene Longobardi



I grew up in an Italian/Catholic family in Brooklyn NY, living with my mother, grandmother, and sisters. My father had mental illness and couldn't be a father to us, but I had a father figure – Uncle Gene – who was a very godly man and devout Catholic. I did religious instructions, was an altar boy, and received Holy Communion and Confirmation. Then, without much home role modelling, I walked away from “church”.

Having been spiritually empty for more than 20 years, life and the Lord got my attention. While I can remember believing in Jesus as a young boy, I did nothing related to “church” from 6th grade until age 32. I had a wonderful wife, Babette (39 years now!), two young daughters, a home, and a good job, but I felt there was something significant missing in my life, robbing me of true joy and peace. I now know this was the prompting of the Holy Spirit, informing me of the “God-shaped hole” in my life.

Around end of 1988 Babette and I were invited by our best friends Kathy and Nathan Dotson to a Christmas handbells and choir celebration. It was beautiful – not what I thought of “church”! Then, around May of 1989 we were invited to a high school musical and that tipped us over the edge – we wanted our daughters to grow up like those “kids”. (Those “kids” were people like Rob Blaney, Ashley Sparks, Jeff Wagner. . .!) At that point I was coming to Trinity “for my kids” but God soon showed me that he was seeking my heart through my kids. Not long after, I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior and committed my life to Him at the Enquirer's Class at Trinity.

From early men's group formation in 1991 with mentors like Scott Hendry and George Munzing, my faith grew and my involvement at Trinity did also. I have served as a Sunday School teacher for 24 years, helped form and run Confident Kids support program, and have been active in youth and men's ministry leadership. I have enjoyed serving on three capital campaigns, the discernment committee, and other leadership teams. As an elder in the mid-90s I led the Community Outreach committee where I discovered a passion for serving some of the lost and least of our community.

More than half of my life has been walking with Jesus now. I couldn't imagine life without the Lord in my life and I want to follow Him more closely and serve Him more faithfully the rest of my days. I believe God has gifted me with a passion for love, laughter and leadership and I want to use those gifts to glorify God, make disciples for Christ and serve the church I love, especially at “such a times as this”.

Karen McBrien



One of my earliest memories (I was five years old) is kneeling beside my bed and asking Jesus to forgive my sins and come live in my heart. My relationship with Him became real that day, and now, fifty years later, that same faith guides my daily life. I can't imagine going through life without knowing that God is in control and has my life and the whole world in His hands. Jesus is even more real to me now as I seek His wisdom, study His word, and trust in His promises. His love, strength, comfort, and guidance, fill my life with peace and joy. The sacrifice God made as He gave up His son for my sins is a gift I will never fully comprehend, until I meet Him face-to-face. His mercy and His grace fill me with awe as I realize more and more how He works, loves, and cares. I'm so blessed to have

family, friends, and a church who have encouraged, supported, challenged, invested in, and prayed for me over the years. Trinity is a glorious gift to me and to many.

My husband, Brendan, and I joined the church in 1993, and our three children grew up at Trinity. I have been blessed to be a part of many ministries over the years. Some of these include: MOPS, handbells, teaching Sunday School, participating in VBS, serving as Elder for Student and Family Ministry, being a part of an APNC, growing through women's Bible studies, Crown Ministries, Alpha, and co-leading many anchor groups and other small groups with my husband. Trinity has many rich ministry opportunities and I'm so thankful for the opportunities I've been given to grow my faith.



Dave Ujifusa

My parents started attending Trinity around 1966 and I grew up in the church. My wife Anne is British and after living in Europe for 10 years we returned in 2004 with our 3 kids Emma, Daniel and Sarah. All of them went through the Trinity programs as well. Emma is going to grad school at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, Daniel is a Senior at Concordia Irvine and Sarah is a Senior at Foothill High School.

I've been involved in a variety of Trinity Ministries and roles over the years - High School Group Counselor, 5th Grade Sunday School Teacher, Deacon Moderator, Adult Discipleship Elder, Nominating Committee, Delivering Cookies to visitors with the Doorstep Ministry, Teaching the Bible for Beginners class, Small Group Leader and Home for Refugees Liaison.



Lars Walton - Chair

I grew up in an agnostic household in Northern California, rarely attending church aside from occasional instances when visiting my grandmother in Pennsylvania. After moving to Southern California in my mid-20s, I felt my life lacking a significant purpose and began attending Mariner's Church with friends. It was during this time that I recalled my childhood visits to my grandmother's church and asking my cousin about how I could become a Christian and what was God's plan for me. I vividly remember my cousin walking me through the simplicity of asking God for forgiveness and accepting Jesus as Savior. Fast forward to my journey now and the meaning of God's love for his children has been amplified as my wife Tracie and I have grown our family with our children, Oliver (8) and

Maggie (5). Tracie and I began attending Trinity just after having Oliver and have furthered our spiritual journeys and engagement with the church since joining. I have been involved in Pastor Doug's L3D program, volunteered at the Southwest Service Center and Homes for Hope in Mexico, helped grow the Men's Friday Fellowship program and participated in a Men's small group for the last three years. As I deepen my relationship with Christ, I realize there is no perfection to be found in this relationship and each day I am thankful for what He has provided in my life, both the blessings and the challenges. As the world and our community has been challenged during 2020, I see it as an opportunity--both big as the entirety of the Christian faith and small as a church on the corner--to expand our influence through new methods of communication. Just as we have seen the breakout of churches going 'digital' we've also seen the fundamental need God has placed in us for face-to-face communication. I'm excited to be considered to lend my talents to Trinity at this time and am hopeful the future during these uncertain times.



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