

September 25, 2020

Dear Trinity Friends,

Last spring, we shared the difficult news that the Rev. Matthew Dutton-Gillett had, for a period of years, used church funds for personal spending. We thought it would be helpful to write today to bring everyone up to date on this situation and the ways our congregation is moving forward.

In May, the Diocese of California retained Evidentia Consulting of Redwood City to conduct a forensic investigation into this matter. The investigation, which took approximately three months to complete, confirmed that the Rev. Dutton-Gillett misused more than \$200,000 in parish funds. Although the amount of misused funds is greater than our internal review initially indicated, the discrepancy is due only to the fact that the forensic investigation covered a longer period of time and more accounts than we were able to review before first making this news public. His personal use of church funds began in 2011, shortly after he became our rector. In accordance with our fiduciary responsibilities, we communicated our loss to the Menlo Park Police Department last spring, at which time they opened an incident report; this week, we provided them the results of the forensic investigation.

Based in part on the forensic investigation, an agreement for discipline, called an accord, has been established between Bishop Marc Andrus and the Rev. Dutton-Gillett pursuant to the clergy disciplinary process defined in Title IV of the canons of the Episcopal Church. For the next four years, the Rev. Dutton-Gillett's ministry as a priest of the Episcopal Church will be restricted and he will be under the supervision of the bishop. During the period of restriction, the Rev. Dutton-Gillett will not be permitted to function as a priest or to work in any church capacity that involves the management of funds. At the end of those four years, the bishop may remove him from the priesthood or modify, sustain, or remove the restrictions on his ministry. The accord requires restitution of the misused funds; to date, Trinity has received a check from the Rev. Dutton-Gillett for \$52,000. Separately, our insurance company paid us the maximum benefit of \$100,000 under our coverage for criminal acts.

As we reported in April, this matter came to our attention thanks to increased financial scrutiny we began to implement last year. These same measures, as well as others we have instituted since last year, will help ensure the security of contributions to our common life now and in the future. Thanks to your generosity, annual giving to Trinity is ahead of budget and, with your continuing generosity, our current expectation is that we will end the year in good financial shape.

The Rev. Dutton-Gillett, who had been on paid leave since April 16, was officially removed as Trinity's rector on September 4, and we ceased to pay his salary and pension on August 31. As part of the bishop's agreement with the Rev. Dutton-Gillett and to help ensure his family's well-being, we will pay his family's health insurance through the end of 2020 and they will be allowed to live in the rectory rent-free until January 15 if they choose to do so.

We are extraordinarily grateful to our priest-in-charge, the Rev. Thomas Traylor, for his steady and experienced leadership during this difficult time. We are also thankful for the presence and wisdom of our two Priest Associates, the Rev. Frannie Hall-Kieschnick and the Rev. Dr. Joanne Sanders. In addition, we are appreciative of the support of the Diocese of California during this season.

We have now begun our search for an interim rector who we expect to serve for up to two years in order to help our congregation heal from the betrayal we have experienced and allow us to focus on our congregational life and our ministry in the community. If you have questions about our search or any of the information included in this letter, please contact [Leigh Flesher](#) or [Steve Andrew](#).

We want to thank parish members for their patience during the last few months, and for the steadfastness people have shown under challenging circumstances. It is inspiring to see how Trinity has carried on as a Christ-centered community, caring and praying for one another, worshipping together, and offering leadership and presence even while we are physically apart. We have continued to engage in efforts to address community needs during these critical days, including work to address issues of food security, racial justice, and educational equity. Through each of you and all that continues to move and grow within and through our community, we are reminded that God continues to walk with us, and that we are all invited to participate in Trinity's still unfolding story.

Whether you are a long-time member of Trinity or just beginning your relationship with us, you are a valued part of our community. We hope that you will find ways to connect ever more deeply to our community – through our [Sunday services via live stream](#), and through various other opportunities to connect. For more information on these offerings, please visit our [website](#) or reach out to us anytime.

Faithfully,

[Leigh Flesher](#), senior warden

[Steve Andrew](#), junior warden

[Meg Rorden](#)

[Rhonda Smith](#)

*(the members of the executive committee of the vestry)*