2026 DIOCESAN CONVENTION

PETITION

PETITION
Change of Status for Trinity, Sutter Creek

This Petition is addressed to the following officer and bodies of The Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Northern California:

Bishop
Standing Committee
Diocesan Convention

And represents the following:

1. The Petitioner, Trinity, Sutter Creek, was established as a congregation of the then-Diocese of California in 1897 and attained Parish Status in 1979.

2. Petitioner has been without the services of a full-time rector since 2017 and has not called a rector in succeeding years. The time elapsed without calling a rector is greater than the reasonable time for doing so per Diocesan Canon 30, sec 32.9.

3. Trinity is an aging congregation with a 2025 average Sunday attendance of 16 and has requested and received counsel and guidance from the Office of the Bishop since at least 2021. In 2025, a team from the church completed the Capacity Discernment program to guide their future planning.

4. At their 2026 annual meeting, following completion of the Capacity Discernment program, the congregation voted to close the congregation in early 2027. This petition moves the church forward in that process.

5. On August 19 2026 the Vestry of Trinity Church, Sutter Creek adopted the following Petition and authorized its execution and filing by the Senior Warden and Junior Warden.

Petitioner prays that:

Diocesan Convention Change status of the Petitioner to an organized mission by a majority vote, pursuant to Canons 30.12 and 32.12.

Mr. David Hoos, Senior Warden — Date 8-20-26

Jennifer Putnam, Junior Warden — Date 8/20/26

Explanation

Trinity, Sutter Creek is one of the earliest Episcopal churches founded in Northern California, as the short historical outline below shows.

Starting around 2021, church leaders began reaching out to the Office of the Bishop for help with discernment about the congregation's future – they were a small but faithful group, and they were running out of steam.

Over the intervening years, many conversations were had, and in 2025, a team from the church went through the 9-month Capacity Discernment program with a particular eye to next steps. At their annual meeting in January 2026, the congregation voted by a large majority to begin wrapping up the business of the church, looking to the first quarter of 2027 for their final worship together in their building.

Meanwhile, they have begun conversations with Creekside United Methodist Church in Sutter Creek, with whom they have already shared worship in one another's current church homes. It is hoped that this relationship will continue to grow and flourish, especially as The Episcopal Church considers full communion with the United Methodist denomination at the 2027 General Convention.

In addition to the Capacity Discernment program, the diocese has provided a grant for consulting work with the Rev. Katherine Frederick, who is leveraging her work as a hospice chaplain to help churches deal with the grief necessarily accompanying a closure or other major changes.

The impact of Trinity, Sutter Creek on their community is hard to overstate – in the early years of the church's formation, very many of the existing social service organizations in the town were born out of the work of the congregation. In ensuing years, they continued as leaders and compassionate presence in the community. We are so grateful for their many, many generations of faithfulness.

In addition to considering this petition, we ask that you look at this snippet of their history. A fuller version will be presented with next year's petition for closure.

Cn. Julie Wakelee

Historical Snapshot Trinity Sutter Creek (compiled by vestry member Cathy M. Koos)

By January 1896, the small mining community of Sutter Creek had become a thriving town, with families, a school, stores, and a livery stable. On December 11, 1897, group of ladies gathered at Mrs. Ida Herman's home for tea and talk. "What if we started up an Episcopal Mission parish to serve the spiritual needs of the populace?" And thus, was formed the Episcopal Women's Guild.

Carefully recorded notes tell us they charged themselves dues of 25 cents a month, sold handmade goods like towels and dolls, and later had jumble sales to raise the money to raise the walls and roof on new church on Amelia Street. Diligent fund-raising and a small gift from the bishop increased their coffers to $300 – the amount needed to begin construction.

Soon Bishop Anson assigned Mr. C. M. Scott as interim in 1897, soon followed by Rev. Webster Loring Clark to minister to this new flock. These two shepherds were followed over the years by:

Mr. C. M. Scott, 1897
Rev. Webster Loring Clark, 1897-1900
Rev. Dr. George H. Jenks, 1898
Rev. Dr. Griffith M. Cutting, 1899
Rev. William Tuson, 1900-1907
Rev. E. U. Brun, 1907-1909
Rev. John F. Shea, 1910-1912
Rev. C.H. Lake, 1912-1914
Rev. C. A. Verlager, 1918
Rev. D. B. Stewart
Rev. Thomas Maxwell, 1925-1931
Rev. Mockford, 1931
Archdeacon Barr G. Lee, 1930-1935
Rev. John Barrett, 1935-1937
Rev. Edwin Casteldine, 1936-1938
Rev. Rex Barron, 1939-1940
Rev. Dr. Arch W. Sidders, 1945-1954
Rev. Lester V. Wiley, 1951-1952
Capt. Herman Rauh, 1952-1954
Rev. Merill Stevenson, 1952
Rev. Fred Miller, 1953-1959
The Rt. Rev. A. W. Noel Porter, 1953-1959
Rev. Blake Hadlow, 1954-1959
Rev. Wilbur Lear, 1954-1959
Rev. Harry Sorenson, 1959-1962
Rev. John C. Brownfield, 1962-1966
Rev. Eric W. Jackson, 1966-1968
Rev. Walter Whichard, 1968-1970
Rev. Robert Affleck, 1970-1975
Rev. E. Frank Henriques, 1975-1985
Rev. William Cobb, 1986
Rev. William Adams, 1986-2008
Rev. Roger Riggsby, 1990 (Deacon)
Rev. Sandy Honnold, 1996 (Deacon)
Rev. Michael Kerrick, 2007-2008
Rev. Robert Blumenstock, 2009-2010
Rev. Karen Siegfriedt, 2011-2017
Rev. Paul Colbert, 2018-2021
Rev. Craig Kuehn, Supply Priest, 2017-present