

# THE FIRST BAPTIST NEWS



Published by **The First Baptist Church of Los Angeles**  
760 South Westmoreland Avenue • Los Angeles, CA 90005 • (213) 384-2151 • [fbcla@fbcofla.org](mailto:fbcla@fbcofla.org)

Volume LXXXIII

No. 24

NOVEMBER 23, 2015

**An American Baptist Congregation Making God's Love Known in Los Angeles Since 1874**  
*International • Intercultural • Ecumenical*

## FROM THE HEART OF THE INTERIM PASTOR



Dear Church Family and Friends,

We have so much to be thankful for. As I reflect this week leading up to Thanksgiving Day on November 26, I praise God for you, the members, families and friends of First Baptist Church. I am thankful for the opportunity given to me to be your Interim Shepherd as you prepare for the call of the next pastor of this historic congregation. God is still working in our fellowship. Though sometimes we cannot see God, feel God or even hear God, God is still moving even now as we are being prepared for what lies ahead for us in the future. As you are reflecting on the goodness of God this week and spending time with family and friends, think about the numerous blessings that God has granted you. I guarantee that you will have little room to complain, but more time to give gratitude and live with an attitude of gratitude. On behalf of the members and staff of First Baptist Church, I wish you a wonderful Thanksgiving Day!

### **Help Me – A Thanksgiving Day Prayer**

O God, when I have food, help me to remember the hungry; When I have work, help me to remember the jobless; When I have a home, help me to remember those who have no home at all; When I am without pain, help me to remember those who suffer, And remembering, help me to destroy my complacency; bestir my compassion, and

be concerned enough to help; By word and deed, those who cry out for what we take for granted. Amen.

(Samuel F. Pugh)

### **Count Your Blessings**

Johnson Oatman, Jr

When upon life's billows you are tempest-tossed,  
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,  
Count your many blessings, name them one by one,  
And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.

*Refrain:*

Count your blessings, name them one by one,  
Count your blessings, see what God has done!  
Count your blessings, name them one by one,  
Count your many blessings, see what God has done.

With Hope, Norman Bullock

### **THE SEASON OF ADVENT**

Sunday, November 29, 2015, marks the beginning of the season of advent. From the Hanging of the Greens, through the lighting of the candles by members each Sunday, to the poinsettias that line the sanctuary to the addition of the Christ Candle to the Advent wreath on Christmas Sunday, Advent enriches the souls of those longing for the light of the world. Advent, the four-week season of anticipation that precedes Christmas, means candles of purple and rose will be lit, wreaths displayed and evergreen boughs will be hung in sanctuaries.

For many Christians unfamiliar with the liturgical year, there may be some confusion surrounding the meaning of the Advent season. Some people may know that the Advent season focuses on expectation and think that it serves as an anticipation of Christ's birth in the season leading up to Christmas. This is part of the story, but there's more to Advent.

The word "Advent" is derived from the Latin word *adventus*, meaning "coming," which is a translation of the Greek word *parousia*. Scholars believe that during the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries in Spain and Gaul, Advent was a season of preparation for the baptism of new Christians at

(Continued on Page 2)

## CHURCH OFFICERS

Moderator, **Shirley Parsley**  
Church Clerk, **David McFadden**  
Treasurer, **Ann Brodie**

Council of Ministries – At Large

**Gerald Gubatan**  
**Alma Pineda**  
**Richard Rogers**  
**Marta Torres**  
**Linda Zaretsky**

Spiritual Gifts Ministry

**John Sturm**, Coordinator  
Maria Juarez  
Ben Marte  
Kenneth Mercier  
Santiago Morales

**Note:** *The Council of Ministries (Board of Trustees) is made up of those in **bold print**. The Council meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of every month at 12:30 p.m.; all members are welcome to attend.*

## PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEE

Zuleima Argumedo  
Daniel Choi  
Gerald Gubatan  
David McFadden  
Shirley Parsley  
Alma Pineda  
Richard Rogers  
Marta Torres

## FROM THE HEART OF THE INTERIM PASTOR *(continued)*

the January feast of Epiphany, the celebration of God's incarnation represented by the visit of the Magi to the baby Jesus (Matthew 2:1), his baptism in the Jordan River by John the Baptist (John 1:29), and his first miracle at Cana (John 2:1). During this season of preparation, Christians would spend 40 days in penance, prayer, and fasting to prepare for this celebration; originally, there was little connection between Advent and Christmas.

By the 6<sup>th</sup> century, however, Roman Christians had tied Advent to the coming of Christ. But the "coming" they had in mind was not Christ's first coming in the manger in Bethlehem, but his second coming in the clouds as the judge of the world. It was not until the Middle Ages that the Advent season was explicitly linked to Christ's first coming at Christmas.

Advent symbolizes the present situation of the church in these "last days" (Acts 2:17, Hebrews 1:2), as God's people wait for the return of Christ in glory to consummate his

eternal kingdom. The church is in a similar situation to Israel at the end of the Old Testament: in exile, waiting and hoping in prayerful expectation for the coming of the Messiah. Israel looked back to God's past gracious actions on their behalf in leading them out of Egypt in the Exodus, and on this basis they called for God once again to act for them. In the same way, the church, during Advent, looks back upon Christ's coming in celebration while at the same time looking forward in eager anticipation to the coming of Christ's kingdom when he returns for his people. In this light, the Advent hymn "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" perfectly represents the church's cry during the Advent season:

*O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
And ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appears.  
Rejoice! Rejoice!*

*Emmanuel shall come to thee, O  
Israel.*

While Israel would have sung the song in expectation of Christ's first

### THE FIRST BAPTIST NEWS

(USPS 194-440)

Annual Subscription Rate:

\$10.00 per year

Published biweekly by First Baptist Church,  
760 South Westmoreland Avenue, Los Angeles,  
California 90005. PERIODICAL POSTAGE PAID  
AT LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to  
First Baptist Church NEWS, 760 South  
Westmoreland Avenue, Los Angeles, California,  
90005.

All copy for the NEWS should be typed or  
written plainly and reach the Church Office no later  
than **9:00 a.m. MONDAY, two weeks prior** to  
publication.

**STAFF:** Norman Bullock, *Interim Pastor*;  
Esther Sanchez, *Administration and Building  
Coordinator*. James Johnson, *Josue Guevara*,  
*Odos Nabors*, *Custodians*. Kyle Irwin, *Organist/  
Choirmaster*. Sandra Rogers, *Communications  
Coordinator*.

**CHURCH PHONE: (213) 384-2151**

**FAX : (213) 382-9669**

VISTA TOWER: (213) 386-2786

**OFFICE HOURS:**

Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

[www.FBCofLA.org](http://www.FBCofLA.org)

**email addresses:**

General: [fbcla@FBCofLA.org](mailto:fbcla@FBCofLA.org)

Norman Bullock: [NBullock@FBCofLA.org](mailto:NBullock@FBCofLA.org)

James Johnson: [JJohnson@FBCofLA.org](mailto:JJohnson@FBCofLA.org)

Sandra Rogers: [SandraBR@FBCofLA.org](mailto:SandraBR@FBCofLA.org)

Esther Sanchez: [ESanchez@FBCofLA.org](mailto:ESanchez@FBCofLA.org)



Filipino American History Month: On October 18, 2015, during the worship service, the church honored Alice Valdevieso Gubatan as its first Filipino member who joined First Baptist Church of Los Angeles in 1956 as a young woman seeking a graduate education at USC and then raised four children who were all dedicated and baptized here. Pictured is Alice Gubatan (center) surrounded by Cora and Ben Marte; Randy Caton, Jr. (grandson); Gerald Gubatan (youngest son); Kaye Mercado (longtime friend); and Terry Gubatan (oldest son).

**FROM THE HEART OF THE INTERIM PASTOR** *(continued)*

coming, the church now sings the song in commemoration of that first coming and in expectation of the second coming in the future.

**CHOIR APPRECIATION SUNDAY – November 8**

On Sunday, November 8, we gathered as a congregation to affirm, celebration and say “thank you” to the Cathedral Choir for their en-hancement and contribution to the worship experience at First Baptist Church each week. During the worship service, special thanks was given to the choir and its Choir-master/Organist, Kyle Irwin.

*Choir members:*

- |                 |                 |                |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Norman Dilley   | Teresa Negrete  | Richard Rogers |
| Gerald Gubatan  | Marty Nelson    | Vance Smith    |
| Kim Johnson     | Laura Parker    | John Sturm     |
| Noriko Mizuhara | Penny Pilkenton | Erin Wilson    |



We also recognized the long standing service to the choir of Denie Sturm who recently retired after serving for many years in the choir. A reception was held following Morning Worship in Robbins Dining Hall for the choir as well.



*Denie Sturm with her husband, John.*

**NEWS SCHEDULE**

The **next issue** of the *First Baptist NEWS* will be published **December 7, 2015**. Material and articles for the December 7<sup>th</sup> issue should arrive in the church office two weeks before publication, or **no later than 9:00 a.m. November 23**.

**IN MEMORIAM**

The Church Family extends its deepest Christian Sympathy to the family of

**FRIEDA GARRETT**  
*Deceased September 19, 2015*  
 Church Member 1966-2015

— and —

to the family of

**RUTH D. TUPAS**  
*Deceased October 22, 2015*  
 Church Member 1982-2011

**IN MEMORY OF FRIEDA GARRETT**

It is with deep sorrow that my sister and I inform you of the passing of our beloved mother, Frieda Garrett. On September 19, 2015 Mom peacefully passed away at the age of 85 following a brief illness.

Mom rested comfortably in hospice care in my home. Her 2 children, 4 grandchildren and 8 great grandchildren were able to frequently visit her while she was convalescing.

Mom arrived in the United States in 1939 at the age of 9. She attended local schools and graduated from Los Angeles High School in 1948. She met my dad, James Robert (Bob) Garrett, and they wed in 1949. Mom and dad were married 48 years until his passing in 1997. Following our Dad's passing Mom moved across the street from the Church into Vista Towers Apartments. She resided there for 6 years. After that she lived in a senior apartment in Placentia, Ca.

Mom was very active in First Baptist Church activities, was a long time member of the Friendship Class, and sang in the church choir. She was baptized by Dr. John Townsend in 1966.

Mom was also active in community affairs at our local Hoover St. Elementary School PTA, March of Dimes, and United Way.

Being quite busy with many activities never stood in the way of raising her children and her unconditional love for her husband, Bob. She worked full time as bookkeeper and tax preparer. She always found time to read, work TV Guide crossword puzzles, collect famous Hollywood Magazines of the era, collect record albums and copy old Hollywood movies onto VHS tapes.

Our Mom was a wonderful hardworking mother, devoted wife and patriot of these United States.



Respectfully, *Bobby and Darlene Garrett*

760 South Westmoreland Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90005



**FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT, NOVEMBER 29, 2015**

**9:30 a.m.**

Church School Classes for All Ages

**11:00 a.m.**

Worship in the Sanctuary

**“NAMING JESUS”**

(Please read Matthew 1:18-25 in preparation)

**DR. ROBERT WALLACE**, Preaching

– Lighting the Advent Candle of Hope –



**SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT  
COMMUNION SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2015**

**9:30 a.m.**

Church School Classes for All Ages

**11:00 a.m.**

Worship in the Sanctuary

**“NO JUSTICE, NO PEACE”**

(Please read Isaiah 65:17-25 and Luke 1:46-55 in preparation)

**DR. NORMAN BULLOCK**, Preaching

– Lighting the Advent Candle of Peace –