

# THE FIRST BAPTIST NEWS



Published by **The First Baptist Church of Los Angeles**  
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No. 6

MARCH 16, 2015

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

**JOIN US FOR HOLY WEEK,  
MARCH 29 – APRIL 5**



## HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

### **MARCH 29 – PALM SUNDAY**

11:00 a.m. **Worship** in the Sanctuary

### **APRIL 2 – MAUNDY THURSDAY**

7:00 p.m. **Worship** in the Francis Chapel

### **APRIL 4 – EASTER EGGSTRAVAGANZA**

12:00 noon to 3:00 p.m.



and other Activities for the Family

### **APRIL 5 – EASTER SUNDAY**

9:00 am. **Easter Breakfast** (to 10:30  
a.m.) in the Robbins Dining Hall

11:00 a.m. **Easter Worship** in the  
Sanctuary

## FROM OUR INTERIM PASTOR'S PEN

Dear Friends,

As we enter the fifth week of lent, which began on February 18, I invite you to join me in this season of renewal, refocus and revival. Lent is the 40-day period (excluding Sundays) leading up to the crucifixion of our Lord. It is a season in which believers undergo spiritual preparation through prayer, fasting, repentance, benevolent giving, and self-denial. As we journey together as a community for the remaining three weeks through the process of self evaluation, confession, and new or renewed determination as we mark Jesus' journey towards Calvary's cross and triumphant resurrection, I pray that this Lenten season is one of unexpected blessings and transformative spiritual growth for each of you.



Thanks to all of the members who joined us in the recent installment of First Conversations that were led by Dr. Bob Wallace with the sermons that he delivered on March 1 and March 8 and for the facilitation of a successful All-Church Retreat on March 7 which explored what it means to be church – not just to "do" church but to "be" church, exploring our Biblical foundations and its call to a radical newness. We will resume First Conversations following Easter as we plan, prepare and pray for our future.

As we continue our journey towards transformation and spiritual growth as a congregation, I want to remind you that daily quiet time is necessary for spiritual growth. In previous issues of *The First Baptist News*, we began a series of offering four elements of a good quiet time.

- Start with the proper attitudes.
- Select a specific time.
- Choose a special place.
- Follow a simple plan.

(continued on Page 2)

## CHURCH OFFICERS

Moderator: **Shirley Parsley**

Church Clerk: **Gerald Gubatan**

Treasurer: **David McFadden**

Members At Large: **Ann Brodie,  
Richard Rogers, Vance Smith,  
Lee Strand, Linda Zaretsky**

Spiritual Gifts Ministry

Coordinator: **John Sturm**

Members: Kenneth Mercier,  
Santiago Morales, Penny  
Pilkenton and Denie Sturm.

**Note:** Council of Ministries (Board of Trustees) is made up of those in **bold print**. The Council meets the **3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of every month at 7:00 p.m.**; all members are welcome to attend.

## NEWS SCHEDULE

The next issue of the *First Baptist NEWS* will be published **March 30, 2015**. Material and articles for this issue should arrive in the church office two weeks before publication, or **no later than 9:00 a.m. Mar. 16**.

## THE FIRST BAPTIST NEWS

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## FROM OUR INTERIM PASTOR'S PEN *(continued)*

*Here's a conclusion from that series:*

**What if you miss a day?** Don't worry about it if it only happens occasionally. Don't go on a guilt trip. *"There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."* (Romans 8:1, NIV)

**Don't get legalistic** because missing one day does not make it a flop. BUT don't give up. If you miss a meal, it does not mean that you should give up eating because you're inconsistent. You simply eat a little more at the next meal and go on from there. This same principle is true with your quiet time.

Psychologists tell us that it usually takes three weeks to get familiar with some new task or habit; it takes another three weeks before it becomes a habit. The reason why many people are not successful in their quiet times is because they have never made it past that six-week barrier. **For your quiet time to become a habit, you must have had one daily for at least six weeks.**

William James had a famous formula for developing a habit (*Selected Papers on Philosophy*, E. P. Dutton & Co., 2000, pp. 60-62):

- **Make a strong resolution (vow).** You must always start with a strong initiative. If you begin halfheartedly, you'll never make it. Make a public declaration by telling others about your decision.
- **Never allow an exception to occur until the new habit is securely rooted in your life.** A habit is like a ball of twine. Every time you drop it, many strands are unwound. So never allow the "just this once" to occur. The act of yielding weakens the will and strengthens the lack of self-control.
- **Seize every opportunity and inclination to practice your new**

**habit.** Whenever you get the slightest urge to practice your new habit, do it right then. Don't wait, but use every opportunity to reinforce your habit. It does not hurt to overdo a new habit when you are first starting.

- **Rely on the power of God.** When it is all said and done, you must realize that you are in a spiritual battle, and you can only succeed by the power of the Holy Spirit of God. So pray that God will strengthen you and depend on Him to help you develop this habit for His glory.

## A PRAYER OF COMMITMENT

*"Lord I commit myself to spending a definite time with You every day, no matter what the cost. I am depending on Your strength to help me to be consistent."*

With Hope, *Norman Bullock*

## Lenten Meditation

Lent is a great time to "repent" — to return to God and re-focus our lives to be more in line with Jesus. It's a 40 day trial run in changing your lifestyle and letting God change your heart. You might try one of these practices for Lent:

**FASTING:** Some people have been known to go without food for days. But that's not the only way to fast. You can fast by cutting out some of the things in your life that distract you from God. Some Christians use the whole 40 days to fast from candy, TV, soft drinks, cigarettes or meat as a way to purify their bodies and lives. You might skip one meal a day and use that time to pray instead. Or you can give up some *activity* like worry or reality TV to spend time outside enjoying God's creation. What do you need to let go of or "fast" from in order to focus on God? What clutters your calendar and life? How

## FROM OUR INTERIM PASTOR'S PEN *(continued)*

can you simplify your life in terms of what you eat, wear or do?

**SERVICE:** Some Christians take something on *for* Christ. You can collect food for the needy, volunteer once a week to tutor children, or work for reform and justice in your community. You can commit to help a different stranger, co-worker or friend everyday of Lent. Serving others is one way we serve God.

**PRAYER:** Christians also use Lent as a time of intentional prayer. You can pray while you walk, create music or art as a prayer to God, or savor a time of quiet listening. All can be ways of becoming more in tune with God.

### First Baptist Church's Council of Ministries At Work

- Fixing the Sanctuary Sound System
- Balancing the Budget
- Identifying Church Ministries
- Recruiting Sunday School Teachers
- Organizing the Annual Summer Picnic
- Tracking Finances: Revenues and Expenses

These are only a few of the issues which the Council of Ministries - our Church Council - discuss, debate, decide on a monthly basis. The Council acts as the church corporation's legal board of trustees chaired by our Moderator (Shirley Parsley) while leading and overseeing programs and ministries in collaboration with our Interim Pastor and volunteer members.

While we have been able to "keep the trains running," the Council has been mindful of the need to seriously prepare our hearts and minds for the calling of a permanent Senior Minister. Hence, the Council has partnered with the American Baptist Churches of Los Angeles,

Southwest and Hawaii (ABCOF LASH) to engage members in a series of conversations and an all-church retreat to reflect upon where we have been and who we are as a community of faith, where do we envision ourselves in the future, and who is the type of person who we should call to lead our flock today and tomorrow.

Recently the Council has deliberately carved out time at its monthly meeting to reflect on the topic of "leadership." Dr. Bullock and Rev. Richard Rogers have rotated assignments of various chapters in the book, "*Lead Like Jesus*" by Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges, and given brief "book reports." We recently discussed barriers to becoming a servant-leader and discovered new meanings to the term, "EGO": are we to "Edge God Out" or "Exalt God Only"? So the Council, too, has engaged in self-reflection.

In March, 2015, we continue our self-reflections and assessments as a congregation. The Church Council invites the active participation of all members in this process - your

input, opinions and perspectives matter. Most of all, we invite your prayers for God's watchcare over the work of the church in Los Angeles, and the leaders and members of First Baptist Church.

- In Christ, *Gerald G. Gubatan*,  
Church Clerk

### First Baptist Church's Christian Education Ministry At Work

Christian Education has a goal to broaden our commitment to the community and neighborhood adults as well as children and youth. We want to continue to teach and nurture young Christian youth to grow in their walk with our Savior. We are sending a group to ABCLA winter retreat and want to expand group activities with other church youth groups. We will continue our VBS and Sunday school holiday programs. Training for teachers is vital to strengthen our programs. We need to involve our young adults who have grown up in the church to carry the torch.

- *Linda Zaretsky*, Chair,  
Christian Education Ministry

## AMERICA FOR CHRIST OFFERING 2015

**Discipleship: A Journey of Grace**  
Titus 2:11-13

During the month of March, we are receiving the "America for Christ" Offering. Your America For Christ offering supports transformational ministries that manifest the grace of God's love to neighborhoods and communities throughout the United States and Puerto Rico.

"Since 1832, American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS) has preached the Gospel in word and deed and has ministered to and with persons on the margins of society. . . We live in a time when polarization and alienation are a commonplace occurrence. Often, persons/groups that hold a diverse perspective in our society are shunned and their voices muted. The America for Christ (AFC) Offering 2015 theme—"Discipleship: A Journey of Grace"—serves to remind our American Baptist family that mission and ministry are rooted in service that manifests and extends the grace of God." (Aidsand Wright-Riggins, III, Executive Director of American Baptist Home Mission Societies)

Thank you for your generous gifts to the AFC Offering 2015.

760 South Westmoreland Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90005



## SUNDAY, MARCH 22, 2015

**9:30 a.m.**

Church School Classes for All Ages

**11:00 a.m.**

Worship in the Sanctuary

**DR. NORMAN BULLOCK**, Preaching



## PALM SUNDAY, MARCH 29, 2015

**9:30 a.m.**

Church School Classes for All Ages

**11:00 a.m.**

Worship in the Sanctuary

**DR. NORMAN BULLOCK**, Preaching

