

# 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 LXXXIV

No. 2

JANUARY 18, 2016

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

***International • Intercultural • Ecumenical***

## FROM THE HEART OF THE INTERIM PASTOR

As we start the third week of the new year, I invite you to continue to join me in prayer for our spiritual renewal as a congregation of committed believers in Jesus Christ. We all are in constant need of continuing spiritual renewal. Spiritual renewal comes through commitment and cleansing, and expresses itself in celebration. I like how David illustrated this in his prayer, *"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."* (Psalm 51:10) The Psalms are great to read for prayer and spiritual renewal. David asks God to renew a steadfast spirit within him. This is a spirit that isn't easily shaken; a spirit that allows only God's truth to guide it; a spirit that can't be moved, regardless of what is going on around it. It is a confident spirit that allows God's Word to be the final authority. This scripture is a reminder to trust God no matter what we face.

We live in times that are exciting, challenging, and sometimes frightening. Many days have unknown elements, but each moment is cemented with our Heavenly Father. It is comforting to know that like David, we can seek God to renew our spirits, to give us the courage to face our day head on and to trust that He will get us through. When our lives are filled with uncertainty and when we have to learn to go with the flow of our limits, we should remember to celebrate the strength that God has placed within us. The Lord will never fail to uphold us and help us. Amen!

Here are some suggestions as we continue to pray and seek God's direction for the life and future ministry of FBCLA:

- We are called to pray, seeking to praise God for His glory and majesty, and to thank Him for His overflowing grace, mercy, and providential care.
- We are invited to pray, seeking to align our personal and congregation lives with the will of God.
- We are instructed to pray, seeking God's blessings upon His people, and thanking God for gifting us with one another in the Body of Christ.
- We all need to pray, seeking stronger unity and deepened fellowship in our congregation.
- We are urged to pray, seeking God's forgiveness for our personal and corporate failings.

- We are summoned to pray, seeking divine direction and discernment of God's vision.
- We are encouraged to pray, seeking renewed commitment and empowerment to carry out God's mission.
- We are challenged to pray, seeking God's direction in calling the next Pastor of FBCLA

I want to extend a special invitation to you to pledge your attendance and participation at the First Baptist Church Congregational Annual Meeting to be held after our morning worship service on Sunday, January 24, 2016. Reports will be presented from ministry leaders highlighting the events and accomplishments of 2015 and the 2016 congregational budget will be considered. Following the Annual Meeting, a luncheon will be provided in Robbins Dining Hall (for a requested donation of \$8) in conjunction with our Focus Groups that will take place following the Annual Meeting that will dig deeper into our Call as a Congregation.

### ***Our Call as a Congregation***

*We are called to be a community of faith, a welcome table, that celebrates the rich diversity of its membership as it serves and honors the diverse cultural and ethnic nature of Los Angeles and surrounding communities. We are called to be deeply grounded in the Word and Witness through the power of the Holy Spirit, being a prophetic voice for justice, healing and transformation. We are called to manifest the love of Christ as we share our various sources of capital with the community as well as being a witness to God's reign through celebrative worship and care for one another.*

With Hope, Norman Bullock

### **FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH CELEBRATES OUR CULTURAL DIVERSITY**

First Baptist Church is known for its cultural diversity. As we continue in this transition, with a goal of unity and fellowship, there will be opportunities provided for celebrating our cultural diversity including African

*(Continued on Page 2)*

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

American, Asian Pacific American, Hispanic and Latino American, and American Indian cultures. During the month of February, we will celebrate African American History Month with a special worship celebration on Sunday, February 28 during our Morning Worship experience at 11:00 a.m. The dlw Chorale will provide the music for this Worship experience. This choral organization is made up of people of all ages, ethnic and religious affiliations who unite in a common effort to present the cultural diverse musical art form of choral singing. The Chorale has performed at the Mormon Tabernacle in Utah and twice for the Korean Multiethnic

Messiah performance. The Chorale is dedicated to the performances of music by minority composers and their extended compositions that are not usually performed by church choirs during worship services (Oratorios, Cantatas, Anthems, traditional Gospel Music). After worship, a luncheon will be provided featuring soul food, in Robbins Dining Hall.

### FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual meeting of the Congregation and Corporation of the First Baptist Church of Los Angeles, shall be held at 760 South Westmoreland Avenue, Los Angeles, California on Sunday, **January 24, 2016 at 12:30 p.m.** in the Robbins Dining Hall for the purpose of adopting a budget and hearing the financial report for 2015 and progress reports from the various Ministries.

### THE MISSIONAL CHURCH and REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

As we engage in further discussion and focus groups over the next several weeks exploring our call as a congregation, it is important to have a basic understanding of the “missional church,” from which our call statement reflects. Just prior to the turn of this century, a term was coined by missiologist David Bosch with the intention of giving a title to an emerging mental model of the church. The term “missional church” has since gained wide acceptance among both mainline and evangelical groups. A missional church is an authentic community of faith (authentic in that the relationships are not superficial; community in that individuals who respond in faith are connected with the communal triune God and with each other; faith in that it is a response to the living God revealed in Jesus Christ) that primarily directs its ministry focus outward (the church is called to be engaged in the mission of the kingdom of God. Mission is the church’s primary purpose, and that mission is to be participated in as the primary function of the faith community. As such, the church exists for the well-being of others and creation and not for self-serving purposes) toward the context in which it is located and to the broader world beyond.

Six common characteristics are emerging among those who hold this mental model. (1) Missional churches view their context as a constantly changing mission field. (2) They engage in and support mission. (3) Their mission includes both the Great Commission and the Great Commandments. Evangelism thus entails calling people to follow Jesus into God’s mission as it did for the early disciples. (4) They treat all, including the faith community, as both the “subject” (actors) and “object” (recipients) of mission. (5) They participate in holistic personal, systemic, and cultural transformation, and (6) they multiply missional faith communities, including missional teams and new churches, in order to participate in the expanding mission of God. The degree to which individual faith communities emphasize each characteristic varies according to theological and biblical traditions and perspectives.

Nevertheless, the common missional ingredients seem to be as listed above. The task of a missional church leader and his or her faith community is to envision how their community of faith can live out these characteristics within their own community and beyond. Generally the first shift churches make in moving toward a missional posture is that of the first characteristic: missional churches no longer view themselves as existing in the heart of static Christendom.

As we celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day on January 18, we have a unique opportunity to understand and appreciate the relationship between the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., an American Baptist ordained minister. To further

### NEWS SCHEDULE

The **next issue** of the *First Baptist NEWS* will be published **February 1, 2016**. Material and articles for the February 1<sup>st</sup> issue should arrive in the church office two weeks before publication, or **no later than 9:00 a.m. Jan. 18**.

### 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)

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

appreciate this connection, I would like to share an interview conducted with Troy Jackson, author of *Becoming King: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Making of a National Leader* by Rev. Dr. Ronald Carlson, Missional Church Strategist, ABC-USA. The question posed to Jackson appeared as an article "MLK and the Missional Church" in the *Christian Citizen: Voices for Biblical Justice*, Vol 3, 2008:

If Martin Luther King, Jr. were alive today, what would he say to the growing missional church movement?

First, I imagine Dr. King would say, "Well done." Throughout his ministry, King called the church to be socially engaged. As a 19-year-old seminary student, King wrote, "On the one hand I must attempt to change the soul of individuals so that their societies may be changed. On the other hand I must attempt to change the societies so the individual soul will have a change. Therefore, I must be concerned about unemployment,

slums, and economic insecurity. I am a profound advocator of the social gospel."

Throughout his adult life, King called for a missional church engaging all of the ills and challenges of society. Second, I think King would say, "Don't view social justice as merely an evangelistic tool." All too often advocates of the missional church movement seem to be excited about the social engagement primarily for its evangelistic possibilities. From books such as *unChristian* (David Kinnamon and Gabe Lyons, Baker Books, 2007) church leaders know that young people will not consider Jesus if the church is not engaged in the biggest challenges facing our world today, including poverty, disease and violence.

But the call for social engagement and social change is not only a means to preach an individualistic gospel; it is good news to the poor. In July 1954 King told his Dexter Avenue congregation, "We can talk

all we want to about saving souls from hell and preaching the pure and simple gospel, but unless we preach the social gospel our evangelistic gospel will be meaningless."

The social and personal gospel are both essential for the church to live out the Matthew 28 mission of the church (the Great Commission) while also living out the Matthew 25 mission of the church (I was hungry and you gave me something to eat).

I imagine, finally, King would say, "Move from social services to social transformation." The church has come alive to serving the poor over the past decade. Short-term mission trips, urban ministries, and HIV/AIDS clinics overseas are testimony to the renewed passion for Christian service.

How missional is First Baptist? King would challenge us to think first about the welfare of our community rather than the size of our congregation the next time someone asks how our church is doing.

**SAVE THE DATE: EQUIP 2016**  
**SATURDAY-MARCH 5**  
 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.  
**ABCOFLASH Regional Resource Center**  
 209 N Louise St Glendale, CA 91206

Pastors, Church Leaders, Sunday School teachers, youth workers, deacons, trustees, mission leaders, church board members and all church leaders are invited to come and be equipped to build thriving local church ministry.

Workshops in these areas:  
 • Youth Ministry • Children's Ministry • Evangelism  
 • Young Adult Ministry  
 • Church & Finance Administration  
 • Church Boards - Deacons - Elders  
 • Missions and more...  
 Cost: \$20 per person

**MORE INFORMATION TO FOLLOW IN THE NEW YEAR**

**APARTE LA FECHA: EQUIPAR 2016**  
**SABADO-5 DE MARZO**  
 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.  
**ABCOFLASH Centro Regional de Recursos**  
 209 N Louise St Glendale, CA 91206

Pastores, Líderes de la Iglesia, maestros de Escuela Dominical, líderes de jóvenes, diáconos, administradores, líderes de la misión, ejecutivos de la iglesia y todos los líderes de la iglesia están invitados a venir y ser equipados para construir un ministerio de la iglesia local que prospera.

Talleres en las siguientes áreas:  
 • Ministerio de Jóvenes • Ministerio de Niños • Evangelismo  
 • Ministerio de Jóvenes Adultos  
 • Iglesia y Administración Financiera  
 • Ejecutivo de la Iglesia - Diáconos - Ancianos  
 • Misiones y más...  
 Costo: \$ 20 por persona

**MÁS INFORMACIÓN VENDRA EN EL AÑO NUEVO**

760 South Westmoreland Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90005



**SUNDAY, JANUARY 24, 2016**

**9:30 a.m.**

Church School Classes for All Ages

**11:00 a.m.**

Worship in the Sanctuary

**“A MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH ON THE ROAD TO JERICHO”**

(Please read Luke 10:25-37 in preparation)

**DR. NORMAN BULLOCK**, Preaching

**12:30 p.m.**

**Annual Meeting and Focus Groups** in the Robbins Dining Hall



**SUNDAY, JANUARY 31, 2016**

**9:30 a.m.**

Church School Classes for All Ages

**11:00 a.m.**

Worship in the Sanctuary

**“LIVING IN THE ‘WHAT IF MOMENT’”**

(Please read Romans 8:31 in preparation)

**DR. NORMAN BULLOCK**, Preaching