

# THE FIRST BAPTIST NEWS



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

## FROM THE INTERIM PASTOR'S PEN

### AMERICAN BAPTIST INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES CALLS NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Board of Directors of American Baptist International Ministries (IM) announced recently that it has voted unanimously to call the Rev. Sharon T. Koh, Senior Associate Pastor of Mission and Community Life for Evergreen Baptist Church of Los Angeles, California, to the position of Executive Director. She will lead the historic mission agency following the retirement of the Rev. Dr. Reid S. Trulson at the end of August.

An ordained American Baptist minister, Koh has deep roots in mission, the cause that brought Baptists in America together in 1814 to launch the agency now known as IM. Of her new calling with IM, Koh says, "I am so delighted to be partnering with people who care as passionately about God's mission as I do. I look forward to working with all of IM, our American Baptist family, and all of God's children to embrace and usher in God's Kingdom on earth. This has long been God's call on my life, and I am eager to share that passion and conviction in this new context." Koh was born to missionary parents in Singapore, where they began a long and continuing career with Cru (known outside the U.S. as Campus Crusade for Christ, International). She grew up in Singapore, the Philippines, Korea and the U.S. (California and Ohio). After completing undergraduate majors in Biology and Religious Studies at Westmont College in Santa Barbara, California, Koh went on to complete two master's degrees at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California: a Master of Divinity that emphasized Youth, Family and Culture; and a Master of Arts in Theology degree that emphasized Global Mission and Hermeneutics. Koh is currently working on a third degree at Fuller, a Doctor of Ministry degree in Leading Change.

Since 2004, Koh has served on the staff of Evergreen Baptist Church of Los Angeles, a vibrant and diverse congregation located in the city of Rosemead, in the heart of the Los Angeles metropolitan area which is pastored by Dr. Ken Fong. She has provided dynamic

leadership especially in the area of cross-cultural mission outreach, both locally and globally, and in nurturing the congregation's growth in discipleship through small groups and teaching ministries. A careful and thoughtful student of the Bible, Koh has a passion to communicate the message of Scripture effectively and to see it take on flesh in the lives of people who are growing as disciples of Jesus. Koh's assignments at Evergreen have also included shepherding a record-breaking capital campaign that found creative ways to engage the entire congregation and leading international teams to walk alongside and encourage the missionaries Evergreen supports.

### WAYS THAT CHRISTIANS CAN CELEBRATE EARTH DAY

Even though we celebrated Earth Day last week (April 22), Biblical Christians know every day is Earth Day. We know this because the Word tells us the whole earth is full of the glory of the Lord (Isa. 6:3). And we're 100% certain that "the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9).

But these facts are little known and little acknowledged in our world today. So we have works of faith, hope, and love to do.

#### **Read God's Books**

John Wesley and other church leaders of the past spoke of "The Book of Nature." God has revealed himself through two books: The Bible and the complex world he created. We learn from both books. They reinforce and don't contradict each other.

Paying attention to God's books, we learn to be good stewards. And it's a cycle: If we care for the trees, we care for the birds. Caring for the birds controls the insects. Controlling insects protects the plants. Thriving plants enrich the soil. Enriched soil yields healthy crops, reducing the need for chemicals. Then we and the trees and everything else flourish.

The Book of Nature is full of such nourishing and re-nourishing cycles—what Wesley called "the wisdom of God in creation."

*(Continued on Page 2)*

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

### **Make It Practical**

Here are some practical steps:

1. Meditate on Genesis 9 and Romans 8. Compare the two passages, for each illuminates the other. Spending a week with these chapters can change your world.

2. Plant something. A tree, a garden, an idea, a song. Something that will grow strong, or maybe be a health-dealing cultural virus. Growing plants and flowers counteract physical pollution, and healthy art and music counteract cultural pollution. But growing things take time.

3. Share your earth concerns with friends. Many people quietly

care about the earth, but a shy silence keeps us from sharing. We can build friend networks of people who care for the earth. For Christians, there are biblical reasons; for non-Christians and those of other faiths, there are benevolence and survival reasons.

4. Go for a walk where you've not been before with all your senses attuned (no iTunes; no Kindle books). If this becomes a habit, a positive addiction, it counteracts Nature-Deficit Disorder.

5. Read a book or essay or poems that offer biblical views on the earth and its place in God's plan and our stewardship.

6. Connect with good resources on creation care.

7. Be an advocate. As with great culture-shaping movements of the past, today's creation-care challenges require building a constituency—people who care enough to act, and people who will support action by governments, churches, and other organizations.

God's Word calls all of us to be stewards. God's gifts call some to be special advocates. Jesus calls us all to be disciples who show the meaning of his incarnation and resurrection for the way we care for the earth.

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 10:31, "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything to the glory of God." This is part of the Apostle Paul's "all things" theme throughout his writings. Today "all things" certainly includes good environmental stewardship.

### **WOMEN'S MINISTRY RE-LAUNCH**

Thanks to all who attended the Women's Ministry Re-Launch on April 10. There were over 20 women in attendance. The women gathered discussed many ideas and initiatives toward bringing the women of FBCLA together to focus on the spiritual,

emotional, physical and mental well-being of women. Some of these ideas included:

- **Small group ministries for women who:**
  - want to know the Scriptures better (Bible studies)
  - want to be part of a prayer group
  - are seeking the fellowship of other women
    - <sup>a</sup> are new converts
    - <sup>a</sup> are single/single again
- **Support groups for women who:**
  - <sup>a</sup> are going through a divorce
  - <sup>a</sup> are new mothers
    - are mothers of teens
  - <sup>a</sup> are care-givers
  - <sup>a</sup> are single parents
  - <sup>a</sup> are grieving
  - <sup>a</sup> are victims of abuse
- **Fellowship Opportunities:**
  - <sup>a</sup> Aerobics
  - <sup>a</sup> night out (concert, eating out, plays, etc.)
  - <sup>a</sup> neighborhood study groups
  - <sup>a</sup> social opportunities that include spouses
    - <sup>a</sup> Mom's in Touch
- **Women's Health Issues:**
  - <sup>a</sup> Zumba
  - <sup>a</sup> nutrition classes
  - <sup>a</sup> cooking school
  - <sup>a</sup> exercise group
  - <sup>a</sup> walking partners
- **Prayer Activities:**
  - <sup>a</sup> Breakfasts
  - <sup>a</sup> gardens (at home or church)
  - <sup>a</sup> groups
  - <sup>a</sup> partners
  - <sup>a</sup> chains

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The purpose of Women's Ministries is to connect women with gifts with women with needs.

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

One of the first activities of the women will be the formation of a Women's Chorus Ensemble to sing during the Pentecost Worship Service on May 15. If you are interested in singing in this group, please contact Ann Brodie or Nalis Mercier.

### America for Christ Offering

During the month of April, we will continue to collect an offering for "America for Christ" which supports the American Baptist mission and ministry across the United States and Puerto Rico. Through the work of American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS), we can participate with our Lord in serving people in our churches and neighborhoods. The America for Christ Offering is a wonderful opportunity to partner and support transformational mission and ministry that is taking place in every neighborhood where an American Baptist church or Christian center is located. Please help us in reaching our goal of \$1,500.

### Church Nursery Refurbishment Appeal

We are constantly working to make First Baptist a welcoming place for members and visitors. Our Nursery is in need of refurbishing, new cribs, playpens, changing tables, to name some of needed items. We want the nursery to be a clean harmonious place for infants and toddlers to enjoy their time while their parents worship. We want parents to feel comfortable leaving their children in our nursery. An appeal for \$2,500 to be donated during the offering. So far, we have only received less than half of this amount. We will conclude this appeal in May. Please take the time to today to contribute to this worthwhile project. You may write "Nursery" on your envelope. Please help keep the smiles on the faces of our children.

– Ann Brodie, Treasurer

### HAVE YOU DISCOVERED, DEVELOPED & DEPLOYED YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFT(S)?

On May 21, from 11:30am to 2:00pm, the Spiritual Gifts Ministry (SGM) will sponsor a Spiritual Gifts Symposium here at First Baptist where we will explore the biblical basis of spiritual gifts. Refreshments will be served.

A spiritual gift is a special ability that God gives, according to his grace, to each member of the body of Christ to be used for the development of the church.

According to research presented by Charles Schwartz in *Three Colors of Ministry* (ChurchSmart, 2004):

80% of Christians don't know what their spiritual gifts are

20% are not using their gifts in ministry-related tasks

51% are happier after discovering gifts

72% are happier when discovered gifts are applied to concrete tasks within the church

1. Every Christian has at least one spiritual gift.

2. Gifts and call go together.

3. Christians complement each other.

4. Each Christian may have a different "gift mix."

5. There are different degrees of giftedness.

6. There is a difference between spiritual gifts and the fruit of the Spirit.

7. There is a difference between spiritual gifts and universal Christian responsibilities.

### SAVE THE DATES!

#### MAY 2016

#### *May is Asian Pacific American Heritage Month*

**May 15** Pentecost Sunday

**May 22** Korean Fellowship Emphasis Sunday

**May 27** Family Movie night 7 p.m.  
- Robbins Dining Hall

**May 29** Family & Friends Sunday

#### JUNE 2016

**June 11** Men's Fellowship Breakfast

**June 12** Christian Education Sunday and Graduate Recognition



760 South Westmoreland Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90005



**COMMUNION SUNDAY, MAY 1, 2016**

**9:30 a.m.**

Church School Classes for All Ages

**11:00 a.m.**

Worship in the Sanctuary

**“COMMUNION, COVENANT AND COMMITMENT”**

(Please read Mark 14:22-31 in preparation)

**DR. NORMAN BULLOCK**, Preaching



**SUNDAY, MAY 8, 2016**

**9:30 a.m.**

Church School Classes for All Ages

**11:00 a.m.**

Worship in the Sanctuary

**“HANNAH ROSE”**

(Please read I Samuel 1:1-20 in preparation)

**DR. NORMAN BULLOCK**, Preaching