

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

A MESSAGE FROM THE INTERIM PASTOR

Dear Friends:

As we continue this interim journey of transformation and preparation, we are reminded in scripture of our role and responsibilities as Jesus' disciples. Over the last two months, the Pastor's Adult Sunday School Class has engaged in discipleship and our role as disciples in the context of the church. Discipleship cannot occur in a vacuum; it is most effectively accomplished in cooperation with other followers of the Lord. The significance of First Baptist Church as a gathering of believers is inescapable. God invites us to engage in developing an intimate relationship with God and thus we can engage in relationship with one another.

Our study in discipleship can be summed up below:

I. The Marks of a Disciple

- Disciples experience a changed future through their acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord (John 3:16).
- Disciples undergo a changed lifestyle that is manifested through Christ-oriented values, goals, perspectives, activities, relationships (II Cor 5:17).

II. How are you doing as a Disciple?

- When you are a true disciple of Jesus Christ, you will bear fruit worthy of a follower of the risen Lord
- There is no single test to definitely ascertain whether you are a true disciple, but God has placed God's Holy Spirit within you to help you to be able to discern such things

III. Why does Discipleship matter? (Matthew 28:19-20; Ephesians 4:11-16; Rom 12:1-2)

- Discipleship matters because Jesus modeled it and commanded it.
- Discipleship matters because it is necessary for the church to become healthy and productive.
- Discipleship matters because we cannot reach our potential without spiritual growth.

- Discipleship matters because we cannot influence the world unless we can demonstrate the transformation that comes by faith.
- Discipleship is about becoming devoted and mature followers of Jesus Christ
- God wants to transform our hearts from focusing on self and the world to focusing exclusively on Him (Rom. 12:1-2).
- Once that transition is underway, He provides ways to use our distinctive qualities for His purposes.

As followers of Jesus, we are reminded that the church is the spiritual and living Body of Christ. Like all healthy organisms, this body, the church, requires numerous systems and structures that work together to fulfill its intended purpose and overall health. Leonard Sweet, professor, pastor, and author says, "we must develop ministries that continually adjust and change with our continually changing culture." In a similar way, a church's discipleship strategy must be structured enough to maintain order, but organic enough to change with the ongoing needs of the church as it grows or it will hinder its growth. I invite you to share with us on Sundays as we continue to engage in what it means to be a disciple making church in light of our transition.

During the just concluded VBS, the Adult Class engaged in an intensive study of Everyday Discipleship with the following topics for each night:

Monday – **"The Meaning of Discipleship"** - John 1:35-51: *The essence of discipleship is relationship.*

Tuesday – **"The Lifestyle of a Believer"** - Ephesians 5:1-2: *Understanding God's love for us empowers us to love others with that same love.*

Wednesday – **"What to Do While Life Is Happening"** - Luke 7:36-50: *Life happens, but we can be grateful for Christ's forgiveness.*

Thursday – **"Ordinary Folks Make Great Disciples"** - Mark 8:27-38: *A disciple learns and applies what Christ says.*

(Continued on Page 2)

A MESSAGE FROM THE INTERIM PASTOR (*continued*)

Friday – “**Handling Your Insecurities**” - Hebrews 6:13-20:
God's promises provide a secure anchor for the soul.

With Hope,



Norman Bullock

NEWS SCHEDULE

The **next issue** of the *First Baptist NEWS* will be published **August 15, 2016**. Material and articles for the August 15th issue should arrive in the church office two weeks before publication, or **no later than 9:00 a.m. August 1**.

THE FIRST BAPTIST NEWS

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10 WAYS TO JOIN THE FIGHT FOR JUSTICE

1. Pray that God will give you the passion to fight for Social Justice
2. Write the mayor's office and the governor's office about reorganizing how police are trained and how they treat people of color.
3. Learn more about community organizing and begin to organize in your neighborhood.
4. Learn more about community policing and volunteer.
5. Register to vote, and become more educated about voting in non-presidential elections.
6. Write your congress person and visit their offices.
7. Become trained and volunteer with the Restorative Justice efforts of your community and stay tuned for the Social Justice efforts that First Baptist participates in.
8. **SIGN THE PETITION DEMANDING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT DO MORE:** <http://www2.policylink.org/e/78532/sign-the-us-need-to-track/3r8kyy/165657904>
9. **SUPPORT THE CALL FOR AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE SHOOTING OF ALTON STERLING** <http://www2.policylink.org/e/78532/sign-justice-alton-sterling-/3r8kz1/165657904>
10. **CHECK SITES THAT PROVIDE UPDATED INFORMATION ON POLICE KILLINGS, SUCH AS:** <http://www2.policylink.org/e/78532/ed-police-killings-us-database/3r8kz7/165657904>

ABC-USA TASKFORCE ON RACE AND RACE-BASED VIOLENCE

The Taskforce on Race and Race-Based Violence encourages American Baptist local congregations, regional offices, national program boards, associate ministry organizations, individuals and collaborations to answer the call to prayer issued by the National Executive Council AND to actively commit to creating a “Space for Grace” in your context. We can do this by engaging in earnest reflection and extending intentional grace to others in these tension-filled moments. Remember: reconciliation for Christians is not optional, it is imperative: “be ye reconciled” (2 Corinthians 5:20). We invite you to consider the following:

- Consider your own personal (and corporate) explicit or complicit sin in matters of racism and race-based violence; appropriately confess privately and publicly pleading for forgiveness from God and others; and pray for freedom from the bondage of racism and a violence-saturated culture and for the individual and corporate empowerment toward the ministry of reconciliation.
- Create a private “peace-space” for people in your congregation/organization to reflect, meditate, and have heart-to-heart conversations.
- Create a public space, such as a prayer wall, for people to offer their heart's cry.
- Plan a seminar designed to promote cultural and racial understanding.
- Invite local political leaders to share local issues of justice.
- Exchange pulpits with Pastors of another race.
- Sponsor a Racial Justice Sunday in partnership with local activist organizations.
- Select a book around race to study as a congregation.
- Host a Service of Reconciliation with churches of other races and ethnicities.
- Seek and trust God's Spirit to guide you and your community toward creative and transforming inter-relational and systemic practices.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2016

The theme for Vacation Bible School this year was *Cave Quest-- Following Jesus the Light of the World*. It was a very interactive program with rotating stations from music, kids' cinema with a child's story that related to each days lesson, Bible quest lessons, cave café treats that the kids helped prepare and fun arts and crafts and games in Imagination Station. Our daily lessons taught us that Jesus gives us hope, courage, direction, love and power.

We had a great turnout and the kids really learned and enjoyed the experience. We ended the week with the always popular s'mores treats for a celebration.

On Tuesday night, the kids really enjoyed celebrating John Sturm's 80th birthday with beautiful cake provided from Denie.

A huge effort on every volunteer's part made for a truly rewarding experience as we spread the good news to the neighborhood kids. We will follow up with their families through Diaconate outreach and work to keep the fire burning.

My utmost thanks and hats off to all our team:

Cave Rock Singing and Praise – Nalis and Kenneth Mercier

Cave Café – Ann Brodie, Maxine McFarland, Edna and Santiago Morales, Ivette Loaisiga

Stage Decorations – Jose Herrera

Bible Quest Cave Captains leading classes – Angie Loaisiga-Hernandez, Linda Pineda, Alma Pineda, Wendy Morales, Patty Hernandez, Carolina

Imagination Station – Lisa Thomas and Shirley Parsley

Games – Kenneth Mercier, Spencer Hochstein, Noah Thomas, Lisa Thomas

Registration/Passing out fliers – Lara Santos, Nelly Ruiz

Their love and dedication made it all possible.

– Linda Zaretsky, VBS Director



Below: On July 12 at Vacation Bible School, the children helped John Sturm celebrate his 80th birthday. Happy Birthday, John!



Annual Church Picnic on Sunday, August 21, 2016 following the Sunday Worship Service from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Griffith Park–Crystal Springs. There will be food, fun and fellowship. Cost will be \$5.00 per person. More info to come.

Community Block Party and Open House on Saturday, August 27 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. There will be fun, food, and festivities for the entire family. Don't miss out on all the fun!



USHERS AND GREETERS NEEDED!

Are you looking for a way to get involved at First Baptist? We are seeking a few willing people to join our team of ushers and greeters. As an usher you'll welcome members and visitors to worship, and collect the offering. Please contact Esther in the church office if you are interested!

PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEE

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



SUNDAY, AUGUST 7, 2016

9:30 a.m.

Church School Classes for All Ages

11:00 a.m.

Worship in the Sanctuary

“DO NOT BE AFRAID”

(Please read Luke 12:32-40 in preparation)

REV. RICHARD S. ROGERS, Preaching



SUNDAY, AUGUST 14, 2016

9:30 a.m.

Church School Classes for All Ages

11:00 a.m.

Worship in the Sanctuary

*Sermon Series in the book of Joshua about
the People of God in preparation and transition.*

“CROSSING JORDAN, PART II”

(Please read Joshua 4:1-24 in preparation)

DR. NORMAN BULLOCK, Preaching