

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 OUR INTERIM PASTOR

STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 13

November 13 is Stewardship Commitment Sunday. At the heart of stewardship is generosity, which is at the heart of Christian discipleship. Stewardship/Generosity is more than just being financially gracious, it is a way of life, a spirit, a grace. Stewardship/Generosity is the way in which Jesus called his followers into the world, pouring out compassion, hospitality, companioning presence, and courageous justice. For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have.

Every day, most of us spend more time than we realize thinking about or making decisions about money. How will we pay the rent or mortgage? Should I look for a new job for more money? Can I buy these sneakers now or do I wait for a sale? Do I need to buy this new cell phone or tablet? Will we get the right price for this harvest? Will the loan come through for another year of college?

As followers of Jesus Christ, we would like to say we consult the Lord about these thoughts and decisions. What if we realize Jesus is the last person we consider when we worry and wonder about that investment, job, vacation, new (or pre-owned) device, gadget, truck, house, etc? Even if we tithe, could it be that cultural expectations, advertisements, the latest travel and home improvement shows or our peers and preferences are driving financial decisions more than our faith?

Sometimes we say, "I give my 10%, so I should get to do what I want with the rest." But, what we do with all is also a reflection of our faith.

In John 6:8-9, we read the story of the boy who gave all that he had. The child gave his lunch to Jesus. He gave his whole lunch, not just part of it. The child and so many others were fed. Did this child know that if he trusted Jesus with all he had for himself, something miraculous would happen? When we give to God, God will take care of us and so many others.

I challenge you to take one week during November to pray over every penny you have to spend. Ask the question of how God would have you use these pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters, dollars, and so on. And as we pay the bills and make purchases, may we dedicate everything to God's purposes. Jesus calls each of us to let go of the prevailing messages of our culture and become generous disciples.

DISCIPLESHIP MATTERS

We continue our series on Discipleship Matters, where we examine the importance of disciple-making in the church. For this article, our focus is on prayer. In looking at prayer, we are directed to the model prayer that Jesus taught His disciples in the gospel of Luke.

Let's look at the first four verses to get a better understanding of what Jesus is sharing with His disciples:

1. **Hallowed Be Your Name.** "Hallowed" communicates: let your name be regarded as holy. It is not so much a petition as an act of worship. The speaker, in his own words, magnifies and praises the holiness of God. This is of first importance (sequentially and spiritually). We are first and foremost to give God glory (this is the purpose of our existence), and we do that in prayer by recognizing and acknowledging His holiness and majesty. It's not "battering Him up" to get what we want, but rather an admission of reality and a subjection to His grandeur. It also signifies an attitude of reverence. We come to Him not flippantly or haphazardly, but with regard to His holiness.

2. **Your Kingdom Come.** Ask that God's values, plans, and ideals come to pass, and that they be honored and applied on earth. It is a genuine concern for God's agenda and gives him preeminence as the king of the universe.

3. **Give Us Each Day Our Daily Bread.** We recognize and acknowledge our dependence on God for daily physical and spiritual provision.

4. **Forgive Us Our Sins, For We Also Forgive Everyone Who Sins Against Us.** Here there is confession, keeping the lines of communication open between God and you. Forgiving others is not a prerequisite for salvation, however, it is clear in Scripture that a person who claims to have received

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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*, Lisa Thomas, *Interim Building Facilitator*, Cynthia Felton, *Interim Worship Arts Director*.

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

email addresses:

General: fbcla@FBCofLA.org

Norman Bullock: NBullock@FBCofLA.org

Cynthia Felton: CFelton@FBCofLA.org

James Johnson: JJohnson@FBCofLA.org

Sandra Rogers: SandraBR@FBCofLA.org

Esther Sanchez: ESanchez@FBCofLA.org

Lisa Thomas: LThomas@FBCofLA.org

FROM OUR INTERIM PASTOR (continued)

God's forgiveness must have this desire to forgive others spring forth from their lives. If not, we must question has that person really received God's forgiveness.³⁴ We can experience forgiveness daily if we engage in frequent and specific confession and repentance.

5. **Lead Us Not Into Temptation.** We ask protection from tempting situations.

There are four major areas we should address when we pray to the Lord:

1. **Preeminence.** God, you are majestic and powerful. I yield my life to you.

2. **Provision.** Lord, give me your guidance in decision-making.

3. **Pardon.** Forgive me for my sins (be specific).

4. **Protection.** Keep me from giving in to the temptations of the world.

Here is another example:

1. Adoration
2. Confession
3. Thanksgiving
4. Supplication

Conclusion

The heart of prayer is expressed by B. F. Westcott: "True prayer—the prayer that must be answered—is the personal recognition and acceptance of the divine will. It follows that the hearing of prayer which teaches obedience is not so much the granting of a specific petition, which is assumed by the petitioner to be the way to the end desired, but the assurance that what is granted does most effectively lead to the end. Thus we are taught that Christ learned that every detail of His life and passion contributed to the accomplishment of the work, which He came to fulfill, and so He was most perfectly 'heard'. In this sense He was 'heard for his godly fear.'

A PRAYER FOR DISCIPLESHIP

God of love,
source of mercy and compassion,
weave your dream for the world
into the fabric of our lives.

Remove the scales from our eyes
and lift the indifference from our
hearts,
so that we may see your vision –
a new reign of justice and
compassion
that will renew the earth.

Transform our lives,
so that we may accomplish your
purpose.

Anoint us with your spirit of love
that we might bring good news to
the oppressed,
bind up the brokenhearted,
and proclaim release to the captive.

Give us a new urgency
and a new commitment
to feed the hungry,
clothe the naked,
shelter the homeless,
and visit those who live in isolation.

Help us to reach out to those
whom no one else will touch,
to accept the unacceptable,
and to embrace the enemy.
Surround us with your love,
fill us with your grace,
and strengthen us for your service.

Empower us to respond to the call
of Jesus –
to deny ourselves,
to take up our crosses,
and to follow.
Make us your disciples.

Amen.

(© 2010 Kurt Struckmeyer)

Norman Bullock

MARK YOUR CALENDARS WITH THESE NOVEMBER DATES

November 13 – Stewardship
Emphasis Sunday

November 19 – Diaconate
Meeting and Church Leader-
ship Mini-Retreat

November 20 – Thanksgiving
Sunday and Luncheon

November 27 – First Sunday in
Advent



SHOW YOUR THANKFULNESS

For Christians, thanksgiving is an everyday way of life. The reason is not hard to find! Christians are those who have glimpsed the bigness of God's heart and who act to show it to others. The "showing" often occurs as gratitude is expressed – gratitude for life, love, material blessings, and all good things.

The Church is one of those good things. Thanks be to God for the fellowship of His people! Thanks be to God for the First Baptist Church of s, its influence, its potential. Gladly, we who are a part of this particular fellowship share in underwriting its financial needs; that is our opportunity again at this Thanksgiving time. Contributing together, we can achieve many more good things.

Your thanksgiving offering may be presented on Sunday, November 20 during worship, or sent to the church by mail. This further evidence of your gratitude will be in keeping with the faith which claims us and the heart of God which blesses us!

SUNDAY SCHOOL EMPHASIS

No church can grow without an effective Sunday Church School. Throughout the month of November, we will engage in evaluating our Sunday School and invite your input and suggestions to improving our learning and small group experience in Sunday School and Christian Education as a whole. As many of you know, we are also in the process of recruiting a Youth/Christian Education Minister to provide support to our Christian Education Ministry. We invite your prayers, input and support in this search.

You are invited to join us each Sunday at 9:30 a.m. We have classes for all ages. Throughout history, the Sunday School has been the foundation for a church's spiritual growth and renewal. Our mission is to encourage and promote the teaching and studying of the Bible. As we apply the wisdom of the Bible, we will be able to lead others to Christ and grow spiritually. Below are five reasons why Sunday School is important:

- Sunday School improves your Bible knowledge.
- Sunday School assists your spiritual growth.
- Sunday School provides a place to belong.
- Sunday School helps you build meaningful relationships.
- Sunday School gives you opportunities to serve and minister.

We look forward to seeing you next Sunday at 9:30 a.m. for Sunday School. Better yet, join us for prayer in the Moore Prayer Chapel at 9:15, to get a jumpstart on your spiritual journey for the day.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEE

The Pastoral Search Committee is available to provide status updates and answer questions during the coffee fellowship hour following the close of the morning worship services. Please do not hesitate to ask questions of any PSC Member: Gerald Gubatan, Chair; Zuleima Argumedo, Daniel Choi, David McFadden, Shirley Parsley, Alma Pineda, Richard Rogers and Marta Torres.

WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Our Women's Ministry – "Sisters of Faith" – will officially launch with an event on Sunday, November 13 following Morning Worship at 12:30 p.m. in Robbins Dining Hall. All women are invited to join us.



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 the witness to God's reign through celebrative worship and care for one another.

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of Los Angeles



STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2016

9:30 a.m.

Church School Classes for All Ages

11:00 a.m.

Worship in the Sanctuary

“TRUE DISCIPLES GIVE”

(Please read 2 Corinthians 9:6-15 in preparation)

DR. NORMAN BULLOCK, Preaching



THANKSGIVING SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2016

9:30 a.m.

Church School Classes for All Ages

11:00 a.m.

Worship in the Sanctuary

“THE THREE INGREDIENTS TO THANKSGIVING”

(Please read Philippians 4:4-9 in preparation)

DR. NORMAN BULLOCK, Preaching

– Thanksgiving Offering Received –

12:30 p.m.

Thanksgiving Luncheon in the Robbins Dining Hall