

# 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



Christmas is almost here. Can you believe it? It seems like only yesterday we were ringing in the “new” year. At this time every year, we’re exhorted by pastors, books, TV holiday specials, and our consciences to “remember the true meaning of Christmas.” But amidst the hectic pace of holiday preparations, that’s much more easily said than done. Advent is a time of joy, new beginnings, and most of all, expectations. We are now in the middle of Advent, heading into the 3rd Sunday and are eagerly anticipating the coming of the Messiah and the promise that he holds for this holiday season.

For those of us in modern society, mid-December is a time to complete our Christmas shopping as we wind down preparations for the holiday season. It is a time to anticipate the reunion of friends and family and a time to prepare for a joyous season of celebration and reflection. As we continue through this wonderful season of the year, it is also important to remember those who struggle to find meaning in this season, those who live in doubt and hopelessness, those who cannot see the importance of the Messiah and the promise he brings to us all. Please join me as we share the love of Christ during this Christmas season.

With Hope,

Norman Bullock

## SPECIAL CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS – DECEMBER 18 and DECEMBER 25

Please make plans now to join us on Christmas Sunday as we celebrate the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ. Why not invite a friend to join us?

### **Sunday, December 18 – 9:30 a.m., Sunday School Christmas Pageant**

Our Christian Education ministry through the Sunday School will present its Annual Christmas Program in Robbins Dining Hall at 9:30 a.m. Please come and support our children and youth of the church.



We will also be distributing gifts to children in our neighborhood following the Sunday School pageant. Please bring an unwrapped gift for a child on December 11 and place in it the special box in the narthex or consider giving a donation to this community outreach.

### **Sunday, December 25**

Please join us for **Worship** at 11:00 a.m. for our Christmas Worship Extravaganza.



Christmas Sunday will be centered upon the gracious gifts of God. In turn, we shall have occasion to present our own gifts in the special Christmas offering to be received during worship on that day. Measure your gift by others you give at Christmas time. This offering deserves

to be as large as the gift presented to any other friend or loved one – for it is a gift to Christ, our Lord.

### **Some Gifts to Give**

*Some gifts you can give this Christmas are beyond monetary value: mend a quarrel, dismiss*

*(Continued on Page 2)*

## CHURCH OFFICERS 2016-2017

**Moderator:** Ann Brodie

**Church Clerk:** Alma Pineda

**Treasurer:** Shirley Parsley

**Council Members-at-large:**

Gerald Gubatan, Nalis Mercier,  
John Sturm, Marta Torres, Linda  
Zaretsky

**Spiritual Gifts Ministry:**

David McFadden, Coordinator  
James Johnson, Kenneth Mer-  
cier, Santiago Morales, Lee  
Strand

## THE JOY YOU GIVE

"Somehow, not only for Christmas  
But all the long year through,  
The joy that you give to others  
Is the joy that comes back to you.  
And the more you spend in  
blessing  
The poor and lonely and sad,  
The more of your heart's pos-  
sessing  
Returns to you glad."

– John Greenleaf Whittier

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*Guevara, Odos Nabors, Custodians*. Kyle Irwin, *Organist/*  
*Choirmaster*. Sandra Rogers, *Communications Coordinator*. Lisa  
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## CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS (continued from Page 1)



*suspicion, tell some-  
one, "I love you." Give  
something away—  
anonymously. Forgive  
someone who has  
treated you wrong. Turn away wrath  
with a soft answer. Visit someone in  
a nursing home. Apologize if you  
were wrong. Be especially kind to  
someone with whom you work. Give  
as God gave to you in Christ,  
without obligation, or announce-  
ment, or reservation, or hypocrisy.*

– Charles Swindoll,  
*Growing Strong*, pp. 400-1.

**Please use the attached en-  
velope** for your Christmas gift to  
the church and bring it on  
December 21 or mail it to the  
church.

Thank you for generously  
sharing!

## END THE YEAR WITH A BANG DONATE YOUR CAR



The end of the  
year is almost upon  
us and now is the  
perfect time to  
donate your unused  
car or truck to First  
Baptist Church. The proceeds will  
be used to enhance the ministries  
of First Baptist. Please visit the  
website below to make your car  
donation or for further informa-  
tion:

[http://www.cardonatingiseasy.org/  
donate/?CharityID=3957](http://www.cardonatingiseasy.org/donate/?CharityID=3957) . .

You may also call :  
855-500-7433.



## PLAY MORE

Play More, our partnering  
non-profit organization, is in  
need of volunteers to canvass  
our neighborhood and distribute  
flyers promoting Play More  
Community Activities on Satur-  
days here at FBCLA. This is our  
community center program to  
keep children safe, off the streets  
and engaged in sports, crafts,  
and special projects. The hours  
of operations are 11:00 a.m. to  
4:00 p.m. in the church gym on  
Saturdays. In addition to offer-  
ing a healthy environment to  
flourish and grow, we serve  
lunch each week.

If you are available to distri-  
bute flyers, please contact the  
church office at (213) 384-2141.



## ADVENT PRAYER

Almighty God, whom once  
the nations worshiped under  
the names of fear, but Who has  
revealed the glory of Thy love in  
the face of Jesus Christ, and  
called us by Him to live with  
Thee as children: as we enter  
into this season of wonder and  
joy at His birth, fill our hearts,  
we beseech Thee, with the  
gladness of this great redemp-  
tion. Lead us day by day into a  
new consciousness of the  
sweetness of this great story.  
Breathe into our hearts the  
spirit of Jesus that we may be  
led to Thee in trust and  
obedience, and be sent out to  
live among men in brotherly  
love and sympathy. Amen.

– Albert H. Babcock  
Associate Minister  
1963-1979

**A MESSAGE FROM OUR MODERATOR**

Welcome to the Advent Season. We are in the season of the “the coming” (birth) of Jesus. This is an exciting time for Christians looking forward to the birth of Christ. In anticipation of the Blessed event, four Sundays before Christmas Day, we light a candle with emphasis on Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. The Candle of Hope was lit on Sunday, November 27<sup>th</sup>.

HOPE for many to seek discipleship with us; PEACE within our World; JOY of being brothers and sisters in Christ; and LOVE each other as Jesus loves us.

I pray for a Blessed Holiday season for all. Let us look forward to an exciting new 2017 church year.

– Ann Brodie, Moderator



**POINSETTIAS FOR WORSHIP**

Traditionally our church decorates with Poinsettia plants during the Christmas season. If you would like to place a plant in memory of or in honor of a loved one, please send a check for \$8.00 per plant payable to “First Baptist Church.” Please designate “poinsettia” on your check. You are welcome to purchase plants in memory or in honor of loved ones. Please indicate those names with your check. The plants will be given to our ill and shut-in members and friends following the service.



**2016 TOWNSEND AWARD FOR OVER 30 YEARS OF SERVICE TO FIRST BAPTIST**

The Townsend Award was established on behalf of our senior minister, Dr. John H. Townsend. The award highlights his exemplary service for over 35 years at First Baptist Church. Our recipient has many stories that she tells about her life when she joined under his ministry.



As a teenager she became a member in 1970. She participated in all youth activities, developing her leadership skills. Later she served as President of College and Career Council, Co-principal of the Primary Department of our Church School, and Social chairman of the Youth Council. She performed an excellent job as Social Chairman and has a wealth of stories and tales from those years.

Later as an adult, Christian Education became her focus. She served on the Board of Christian Education which is still a part of her Christian life. In her role as a Vacation Bible School leader and Church School teacher, her natural talent of getting the children to sing and share their stories during worship has brought joy to the Church. In 2007 she re-

ceived the Arlo R. Reichter Award for her dedication to Christian Education.

Singing is her passion so she has participated in the choir, praise teams and the Gospel ensembles throughout her time at First Baptist. In 1982 she married her husband, Kenneth and out of this union, one son, Kenneth, Jr., was born. He is also a member of First Baptist.

First Baptist is proud to honor and acknowledge Nalis Mercier as the 2016 John H. Townsend Award. We thank and appreciate her for the work she’s done in the past. Following her retirement in June as a teacher from L.A. Unified School District, she now has more time to work in the ministries in which she is currently involved.

– Presented on November 20, 2016

**THANK YOU FROM THE WOMAN OF THE YEAR**

Thank you for selecting me for this year’s recipient for the 2016 Dr. John H. Townsend Award! Dr. Townsend was an important presence in my years and growth at First Baptist and it is an honor to have been recognized.



I will continue to serve First Baptist Church just as he would have wanted. Thank you again!

– Nalis Mercier



### THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT, DECEMBER 11, 2016

**9:30 a.m.**

Church School Classes for All Ages

**11:00 a.m.**

Worship in the Sanctuary

**“WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?”**

(Please read Matthew 11:2-11 in preparation)

**DR. NORMAN BULLOCK**, Preaching

– *Lighting the Advent Candle of Joy* –



### FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT, DECEMBER 18, 2016

**9:30 a.m.**

**Christian Education Christmas Program**

in the Robbins Dining Hall

**11:00 a.m.**

Worship in the Sanctuary

**DR. NORMAN BULLOCK**, Preaching

– *Lighting the Advent Candle of Love* –