

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

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 seeking 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

During the first quarter of 2017, we will focus on strengthening our ministries, which will be highlighted in our Ministry Fair on Sunday, January 22 as part of our Annual Meeting. Currently, we engage in the following ministries as a congregation:

Ministries

- Christian Education
- Diaconate
- Prayer
- Evangelism
- Missions
- Worship Arts
- Hospitality
- Community Outreach
- Communications and Media
- Ushers And Greeters
- Affinity Connection Small Groups
 - Sisters of Faith Women's Ministry
 - Men's Breakfast Fellowship
 - Youth Ministry
 - Ebenezer Fellowship
 - Filipino Fellowship
 - Korean Fellowship

There are certainly areas within these ministries where improvement and innovation can take place. We encourage our members to get involved in a particular ministry. The Spiritual Gifts Ministry is available to assist you in assessing, discovering and developing your spiritual gift(s).

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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 22, 2017 at 12:30 p.m.** for the purpose of adopting a budget and hearing the financial report for 2016 and progress reports from the various Ministries.

Following the Annual Meeting, a ministry fair will be held to introduce, inform and recruit members to the various ministries that FBCLA offers.

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FROM OUR INTERIM PASTOR *(continued)*

We will also intentionally engage in discovering the culture of our congregation. A dictionary would define culture as the sum of attitudes, customs, and beliefs that distinguish one group of people from another. Its root meaning is shared with the word agriculture, referring to the soil that has been tilled and by extension a set of traits that have been plowed into a group's way of life. Culture is transmitted from one generation to the next through language, material objects, ritual, institutions, and art. In *Culture Shift: Transforming Your Church from the Inside Out*, Robert Lewis and Wayne Cordeiro write, "The idea of church culture is often ignored, in part because so little material is available about it. Yet we believe culture is to the church what a soul is to the human body. It is an overall life force that the Holy Spirit uses to give energy, personality, and uniqueness to everything a body of believers says and does." (xxi)

Church culture influences everything we do. It colors the way we choose and introduce programs. It shapes how we select and train leaders. "Your culture is the lens through which you view your life. If you change the lens, you change your outlook. Changing the culture, and everything else changes, including the future." (xxi) Nancy T. Ammerman, professor of sociology at Boston University, has researched and written extensively about American congregations and the role of congregational culture. In her essay, "Culture and Identity in the Congregation," she explains what a congregational culture is: "Culture is who we are and the

world we have created to live in. It is the predictable patterns of who does what and habitual strategies for telling the world about the things held most dear. A culture includes the congregation's history and stories of its heroes. It includes its symbols, rituals, and worldview. It is shaped by the cultures in which its members live (represented by their demographic characteristics), but it takes on its own unique identity and character when those members come together. Understanding a congregation requires understanding that it is a unique gathering of people with a cultural identity all its own."

As we reflect on the goodness of God in blessing and sustaining this congregation of committed believers in Christ, we are reminded that the primary purpose of our lives is to glorify God. But glorifying God is not in its essence, the common practice of singing worship songs or thinking mystical thoughts. We glorify God as we reflect his revealed nature through our everyday lives. We reflect Christ as we are transformed in character, values, beliefs, and behavior. This inside out transformation fits our new identity in Christ and makes us authentic. We are becoming who we really are. And as a church, we are becoming who we really are.

I look forward to continuing to partner with you in the journey.

With Hope,



Norman Bullock



NEWS FROM THE MODERATOR

2017 is going to be great year for our Church. On Saturday, January 7th, the Council of Ministries met to develop our vision for 2017. Pastor Bullock gave us insight on urban ministry in city churches. With this information, we used the Call Statement developed last year in establishing goals for each ministry of First Baptist.

This Church Council will be visible in supporting each ministry in its plans. I am asking coordinators to have frequent meetings with their ministry for planning and updating goals.

A full report of the January 7 Planning Meeting will be in the annual report presented on January 22nd at the Annual Meeting. Our budget will reflect the vision we are taking this year in nurturing budget will reflect the vision we are taking this year in nurturing our congregation and for more outreach to the communities in Los Angeles.

One aspect of our vision is to become a praying Church. The power of prayer is phenomenal and I encourage members to join in one of the prayer ministry times listed:

- Sunday Morning 9:15 a.m. in Moore Prayer Chapel;
- or join *Sisters of Faith*, 10:40 to 10:50 a.m. in the Sanctuary;
- Wednesday Morning Tele-prayer at 6 a.m. (call in 323-645-9525) toll free

Read 2 Chronicles 30:27, "The priest and the Levites stood to bless the people, and God heard them, for their prayers reached heaven, his holy dwelling place."

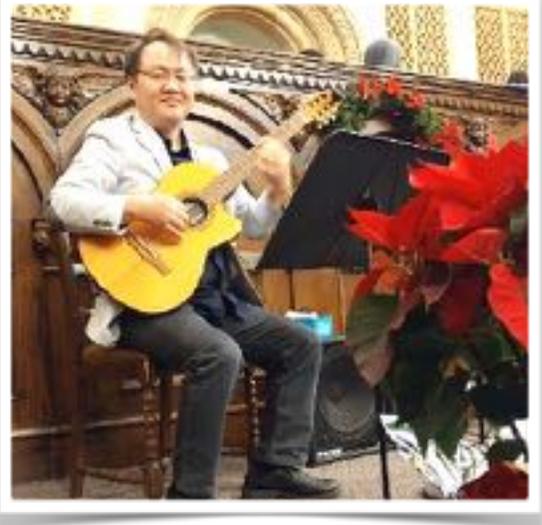
- Ann Brodie, Moderator



Our Worship Arts Ministry Team: Organist/Choirmaster Kyle Irwin with Interim Worship Arts Director Dr. Cynthia Felton.



On Christmas Sunday, December 25, guest guitarist, Young Soo Kim, graced the morning worship service. Mr. Kim is an Assistant Professor of Guitar and Worship Arts at World Mission University in Los Angeles.



On Christmas Day, Helen Lynn received poinsettia flowers delivered by Gerald Gubatan. Poinsettia plants were given to our ill and shut-in members following the morning worship service.

Members and friends also gave flowers in memory and in honor of loved ones: In Memory of Rev. Jung Doo Cho, Mrs. Lillie Davis, Mr. Hyunyong Kim, Mr. Stuart Wood Lapp, Mrs. Hilda McFadden, Rev. Ruth Morales, Mr. Hector Orozco, Mrs. Jacque Smith, Mr. Ralph Tunba and Mrs. Patricia Yeomans, and In Honor of: Dr. Jane Wilson



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PERIODICAL

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SUNDAY, JANUARY 22, 2017

9:30 a.m.

Church School Class for All Ages

11:00 a.m.

Worship in the Sanctuary

“A DREAM DEFERRED”

(Please read Genesis 37:18-36 in preparation)

DR. NORMAN BULLOCK, Preaching

12:30 p.m.

Annual Meeting and Ministry Fair



FAMILY & FRIENDS SUNDAY, JANUARY 29, 2017

9:30 a.m.

Church School Class for All Ages

11:00 a.m.

Worship in the Sanctuary

“YOU WERE BORN FOR THIS”

(Please read Genesis 39:1-6; 20-23 in preparation)

DR. NORMAN BULLOCK, Preaching