

# THE FIRST BAPTIST NEWS



Published by **The First Baptist Church of Los Angeles**

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APRIL 24, 2017

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

## EASTER EGGSTRAVAGANZA, SATURDAY, APRIL 15, 2017

Nearly 100 children, youth and their families from the local neighborhood surrounding First Baptist Church, along with church members, young and old, joined the annual Easter Eggstravaganza on April 15, 2017. The church parking lot was transformed into a festive playground of fun activities with arts and crafts, face painting and a dance floor with music played by a disc jockey. Raffle tickets with prizes were sold, and no one went hungry with a food booth offering hot dogs, popcorn and snacks. The day's event culminated with an exciting Easter egg hunt in the "Underground," the church youth center.

Special thanks to all the church volunteers who helped make this year's Eggstravaganza a smashing success: Jamie Barton, Yong Ju Burnett, Diane Carrol, Gerald Gubatan, James Johnson, Angie Loaisiga., Cora and Ben Marte, Santiago Morales, Linda and Odos Nabors, Teresa Negrete, Bri Odom., Lee Strand, Denie and John Sturm, Noah LaRosa, Maxine McFarland, Shirley Parsley, Amy Shellmire, Robert Smith, Lisa Thomas, and the Playmore kids.



## TWO VIEWS OF EVANGELISM

On Saturday, April 8, at the Men's Breakfast Fellowship, Rev. Richard Rogers made a presentation on Evangelism, a priority the group has set on which to focus:

### TWO VIEWS OF EVANGELISM

Evangelism, which involves the spreading of the Good News of the New Testament gospels, has in America traditionally found its heart in John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that every one who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life" (NRSV). This verse is interpreted by traditional evangelicals to include a commandment that each believing person has an obligation to convince non-believers to adopt the good news of eternal life as found by believing in the Son of God. This focus on the reward of eternal life for the individual believer is strong among conservative

Christians. The National Association of Evangelicals identifies 4 beliefs in which Evangelicals must agree: 1) The Bible is the highest authority for what I believe; 2) It is very important for me to encourage non-Christians to trust in Christ as their savior. 3) Christ's death on the cross is the only sacrifice that could reduce the penalty of MY sin. 4) Only those who trust in Christ alone as their savior receive God's gift of eternal salvation.

Progressive evangelicals have a different focus. They accept the reality of their salvation, but that leads them to ask the question, "OK, I've been saved, now what do I do?" They frequently find their answer in Matthew 25:31-40: we are to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, welcome the stranger (alien), clothe those without any clothes, take care of the sick, visit the prisoner. That is, practice a social gospel. A favorite sermon title for Progressives might be "What on Earth are you doing for Christ's Sake?" Note Luke 4:16-19, Christians are to bring good news to the poor. Modern Progressive evangelism can be traced at least as far back as to John Wesley in the 17th Century who wrote "[Salvation] was not barely, according to the vulgar notion, deliverance from hell, or going to heaven; but a present deliverance from sin, a restoration of the soul.... the renewal of our souls after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness, in justice, mercy, and truth." (Quoted in Jim Wallis "The (Un)Common Good" Brazos Press 2014, Page 276.)

## FROM OUR INTERIM PASTOR

As we shift our journey from the resurrection and pivot toward Pentecost, I am reminded by author Macrina Wiederkehr who wrote: "We are called to help others experience Resurrection, to help them break out of their tombs. Of course, that means we'll have to break forth from our own tombs first. We'd look kind of silly preaching from the inside of our tombs, wouldn't we?"

Easter is an uncompromising hope, isn't it? Do we understand the power of that or are we trying to share the good news still stuck in our tombs of not enough, of lacking, cowering in fear? When really, the Resurrection is an uncompromising hope—against every odd, against every perceived failure, against earth's deepest despair. When our imaginations can begin to sense the edges of that uncompromising hope not just on Resurrection Sunday but every day, then, then, we can begin to comprehend Easter's Good News.

During this season of Easter, it is my hope that First Baptist will sense something of an uncompromising hope—despite the challenges you sense and the realities you face. Our God is seeking to make things possible in seemingly impossible circumstances. The greatest act of courage for Peter and the women that first Easter day was to look into the empty tomb. So give it a try. Stare headlong into Easter's empty tomb and what do you see? What does the resurrection look like to you today?

Join us over the next few Sundays as we experience the Grace of God through a series of sermons on Grace. Grace according to the New Testament is God's love in action towards us who merited the opposite of love. Grace means God moving heaven and earth to save sinners who could not lift a finger to save themselves. Grace is God's unmerited favor toward us. Have you experienced God's grace?

With hope,



Norman Bullock

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### NEWS DEADLINE

The next issue of *The First Baptist NEWS* will be published on **MAY 8, 2017**. Material and articles for the May 8<sup>th</sup> issue should arrive in the church office two weeks before publication, by April 24.



### GUEST PREACHER AND MINI-REUNION

Rev. John W. Polite, III (fondly known as "J.P.", *second from right*) served as our guest preacher on April 2, 2017, speaking a-bout "The Greatest Commandment" (Mark 12:28-31) as parishioners continued to prepare them-selves during the Lenten Season in anticipation of Holy Week. Rev. Polite asked, "What would you do if you had only one week to live? What was Jesus doing during his last week?" J.P. previously served as First Baptist Church's Director of Worship Arts and Youth Minister.



Guest violinist Chelsea Sharpe joins Kyle Irwin, Organist/Choirmaster, during the Palm Sunday Worship service playing "Ave Maria," "How Great Thou Art" and "Meditation" from the opera, "Thais."

### QUARTERLY MINISTRY UPDATE, APRIL 9

On April 9, 2017 the congregation gathered to hear a Quarterly Ministry Update from church leaders, including our Diaconate, Worship, Evangelism, Christian Education, Spiritual Gifts, New Members, Men's Fellowship, Sisters of Faith and other Ministries.



### MOTHER'S DAY TEA

The Women's Ministry will host a "Mother's Day Tea" on Saturday, **May 13 at 1:00 p.m.** in the Robbins Dining Hall. Tickets will be **\$8 per person**; everyone is welcome.



You may bring your own tea cup, if desired.

For more information, contact Linda Pineda.





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of Los Angeles

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PERIODICAL

APRIL 24, 2017

## **FAMILY & FRIENDS SUNDAY, APRIL 30, 2017**

**9:30 a.m.**

Church School Class for All Ages

**11:00 a.m.**

Worship in the Sanctuary

**“GRACE FOR THE DISRUPTIVE MOMENTS IN OUR LIVES – PART I”**

(Please read 2 Corinthians 12:1-10 in preparation)

**DR. NORMAN BULLOCK**, Preaching

**12:30 p.m.**

Family & Friends Lunch in the Robbins Dining Hall



## **COMMUNION SUNDAY, MAY 7, 2017**

**9:30 a.m.**

Church School Class for All Ages

**11:00 a.m.**

Worship in the Sanctuary

**“GRACE FOR THE DISRUPTIVE MOMENTS IN OUR LIVES – PART II”**

(Please read 2 Corinthians 12:1-10 in preparation)

**DR. NORMAN BULLOCK**, Preaching

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