

THE FIRST BAPTIST NEWS



Published by **The First Baptist Church of Los Angeles**
760 South Westmoreland Avenue • Los Angeles, CA 90005 • (213) 384-2151 • fbcla@fbcofla.org

Volume LXXXVI

No. 3

JANUARY 29, 2018

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

ANNUAL MEETING MINISTRY PROGRESS REPORTS

Interim Pastor's Report

As we continue this partnership between interim pastor and people through this season of preparation and transition, I continue to encourage you to trust God. It has been my pleasure to serve you for such a time as this. We have done some major plowing of the fields to plant seeds for a future harvest in the next chapter of First Baptist upon the calling of the next pastor of First Baptist. We are a historic, urban, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-generational congregation which has served this community for over 143 years.

As we continue to partner together during this interim period, we will continue to strive toward achieving the mission of First Baptist Church as we develop a vision and identity of what will be.

The purpose of the First Baptist Church is to make God's love, as revealed in Jesus Christ known in all that we say and do. Our call statement lays out our purpose and mission as a community of believers in Christ

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

We read in scripture, Proverbs 29:18, where *there is* no revelation, the people cast off restraint. A few years ago, I participated as a fellow with a faith-based think tank. I learned that authentic vision of a congregation can only originate in the membership. Members' aspirations may be clarified in several different ways: through a congregation-wide planning process, through the work of ongoing committees, or through informal conversation among members. As any proposal for future direction takes shape, it will be brought to a congregational vote in order to ensure that it truly represents the people of our church – who we are, what we value, how we understand our future calling. Throughout my three years plus with you, we have had many conversations about the identity, witness and personality of First Baptist now and in the future. Over the next few months as I make my descent as your Interim Shepherd and pave the

way for my successor, your permanent Pastor, I will continue to push the envelope for us to consider the question of "what can be?" and then engage in scenario planning of how we get there.

During 2017, the focus of my leadership was on the following:

- Improving the experience for both our members and guests
- Growing our Christian Education Ministry through leadership development and programming
- Improving and encouraging growth with our Affinity Small Groups

While we made some strides in improving the experience for both our members and guests with more intentionality from our Diaconate Ministry and the formation of our Communications and Social Media ministry, we still have a lot more plowing to do in this area. In 2017, we will build on the accomplishments in this area and focus more on ensuring that our members and visitors who visit us and worship us feel the warmth and love that come from our congregation. Over the last few months, the Church leadership and staff have been engaged in two leadership retreats and planning sessions. In one of those sessions, a participant opined that First Baptist should be the happiest place on earth when we come to worship, praise and serve the Lord. I agree with that assertion wholeheartedly. Our goal of creating a healthy and engaging atmosphere and climate where people will want to visit our worship and return; serve and engage will be achieved through the following ministries:

- Diaconate
- Ushers
- Greeters
- Hospitality
- Communications and Social Media

As it relates to Christian Education, we experienced some gains and losses in 2017. We lost a faithful leader in Linda Zaretsky as our Christian Education Coordinator. She served in this capacity for many years and we are thankful for her service. We did, however call as our Interim Youth and Christian Education Minister, Rev. Woun Kim in June 2017. He has been a blessing to us and I am excited about his vision and plans for 2018.

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MINISTRY PROGRESS REPORTS *(continued)*

The third goal of 2017 of improving and encouraging growth through our Affinity Small Groups continued to take shape and we will continue to invest in this area in 2018. We are thankful for the following Affinity Small Groups:

- Family Care Ministry Groups
- Men's Breakfast Fellowship
- Sisters of Faith Women's Ministry
- Ebenezer Fellowship
- Korean Fellowship
- Filipino Fellowship



Benefits of Affinity Connection Small Groups:

- Opens a new front door to the church through dozens or hundreds of side doors
- Closes the back door of the church by connecting the crowd into community
- Grows the committed core of the church
- People get support and encouragement from their group
- Scalable model for pastoral care (as needs grow, you can't staff to handle all care, but groups can)
- Mobilizes congregation to serve in ministry
- Small groups are natural units for evangelism - multiple gifts, mutual support and accountability

Focus for 2018

- 1) Focus on Relationships – Building them, repairing them, growing them in equipping disciples for ministry and service. These relationships include our relationship with God and one another (Visitation, Church Council, staff, ministry leaders, external stakeholders, etc.)
- 2) Develop and Improve our Lifestyle Stewardship as a congregation
- 3) Growing Our Affinity Small Groups
- 4) Invest in Evangelism by coming alongside the Evangelism Ministry and engaging more in the concept of Servant Evangelism (SE), which connects people to people in a natural, easy, low-risk, high grace way. Who doesn't like to be given a bottle of cold water on a hot day? Especially by someone who is smiling, happy and having fun. SE wins the heart before it confronts the mind. A small act of kindness nudges a person closer to God, often in a profound way as it bypasses ones' mental defenses.

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USPS 194-440

Annual Subscription Rate: \$10.00 per year

Published biweekly by First Baptist Church, 760 South Westmoreland Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90005. PERIODICAL POSTAGE PAID AT LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to First Baptist Church NEWS, 760 South Westmoreland Avenue, Los Angeles, California, 90005.

All copy for the NEWS should be typed or written plainly and reach the Church Office no later than 9:00 a.m. TUESDAY, two weeks prior to publication.

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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.

As we journey through 2018, preparing and planning for the changes that will take place in leadership, identity and ministry, I am reminded of the acrostic that was shared with the Church Leadership and staff at the October 14 retreat by our facilitator Rev. Michael Mata as it relates to taking responsibility. I will be more intentional and contemplative during my remaining tenure with you in 2018 to take responsibility and invite you to share that goal with me.

- take **R**esponsibility
- use **E**mpathic listening
- be **S**ensitive to different styles
- **P**onder what you hear
- **E**xamine your own assumptions
- keep **C**onfidentiality
- **T**rust ambiguity



With Hope.

Norman Bullock, Interim Pastor



ABCOFLASH LEADERS TRAINING CONFERENCE



Date / Time: March 3, 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Price: \$25.00

Where: Evergreen Baptist Church of L.A.
1255 San Gabriel Blvd, Rosemead, CA. 91770

Schedule:

- 8:30 - 9:00 a.m. Registration
- 9:00 - 9:30 a.m. Opening Session
- 9:45 - 11:15 a.m. Workshop Session I
- 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Workshop Session II
- 1:00 pm. Lunch

Contact / Info: 818-839-6078

MINISTRY PROGRESS REPORTS
(continued)

Moderator's Overview – 2018

We welcome 2018 with trust with faith that First Baptist Church will continue its work in God's kingdom. Each ministry will continue its work in fulfilling our "Call as a Congregation" statement. As moderator, I emphasize the last sentence in the statement: *"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 witness to God's reign through celebrative worship and care for one another."*

Our love of Christ is inspiring leaders to live up to the call. Through the Evangelism Ministry and Diaconate, we are praying for spiritual growth.

Church leaders attended two leadership retreats which empowered us with inspiration and tools to fulfill planned goals in 2018. Each ministry has developed exciting projects for the Church. There will be lot of communication between the leaders and congregation.

Besides sharing our love, we need financial resources. A capital funds campaign is a priority line item in our budget. The goal is \$100,000. These funds will support retrofitting our building ordered by City of Los Angeles, repair of boiler, and completion of sound system. More information will be distributed about the campaign after the 2018 budget is approved.

God's grace will allow us to achieve our goal of enhancing our work in his name.

Blessings, *Ann Brodie*, Moderator

LEADERSHIP RETREAT, JANUARY 13



FROM OUR MAILBAG

Dear friends at First Baptist Church:

"May His love shine on you at Christmas and always," and thank you for the poinsettia flowers and card. Thank you so much for remembering me. May you have a wonderful Christmas.

Love, *Helen Lynn*

NEWS SCHEDULE

The next issue of *The First Baptist NEWS* will be dated **FEBRUARY 12, 2018.**



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of Los Angeles

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PERIODICAL

JANUARY 29, 1018

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COMMUNION SUNDAY. FEBRUARY 4, 2018

9:30 a.m.

Church School Class for All Ages

11:00 a.m.

Worship in the Sanctuary

“GOD USES BROKEN PEOPLE”

(Please read II Corinthians 4:7-10 in preparation)

DR. NORMAN BULLOCK, Preaching



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2018

9:30 a.m.

Church School Class for All Ages

11:00 a.m.

Worship in the Sanctuary

“DO YOU WANT TO BE MADE WHOLE?”

(Please read JOHN 5:1-9A in preparation)

DR. NORMAN BULLOCK, Preaching