

# THE FIRST BAPTIST NEWS

Published by **The First Baptist Church of Los Angeles**  
760 South Westmoreland Avenue • Los Angeles, CA 90005 •  
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Volume LXXX

No. 9

APRIL 26, 2010

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

***International • Intercultural • Ecumenical***

## MINISTER'S MESSAGE: WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF FIRST BAPTIST, LOS ANGELES? IMPORTANT DISCUSSIONS COMING.

I am reaching toward my fourth full year as the Senior Minister of the First Baptist Church of Los Angeles, a church filled with history and great missional success. I came to First Baptist fresh out of seminary, having a background in community organizing and a degree in social work. Being bright-eyed and full of enthusiasm, I came to undertake the job of revitalizing a dying congregation, without really knowing how to go about that. Now, four years in and having some minor success, I realize that we are in need of deep change. But I, as the pastor, cannot lead this change if the congregation is not willing to go. The question I am putting forth is, *Do you want to survive and thrive or close the doors of the church?*

Today, we have enough money in the bank to sustain ourselves for about two more years. This is really a scary thought: a proud and historic congregation faced with the reality that it may have to close its doors. In order for this congregation to reverse its current trend, we must change in three main areas: worship, stewardship, and mission.

During the month of May, I, along with a few members of the Council, will hold meetings to hear your thoughts about our church. I want to engage you in conversation about the future of First Baptist. Please find a date and location listed that is convenient for you and join us. It is time that we have a tough conversation. My hope is that from these conversations we will all see the blessings we have as a church and choose to continue. I want

us to begin to plan for our 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary and even our 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We do have a future, with the help of God.

–Carlton A. Rhoden

### **PLEASE PLAN TO ATTEND ONE (OR MORE) OF THESE HOME MEETINGS:**

**Thursday, May 6, 2010 • 7:00 p.m.**

*Newman Lounge, First Baptist*  
Ben and Cora Marte, hosting

**Thursday, May 13, 2010 • 7:00 p.m.**

*Home of Dean and Jean Rosenberger*  
130 Sequoia Drive  
Pasadena, CA 91105

**Thursday, May 20, 2010 • 7:00 p.m.**

*Home of Alice Gubatan*  
2510 N. Buena Vista St.  
Burbank, CA 91504

**Tuesday, May 25, 2010 • 7:00 p.m.**

*Newman Lounge, First Baptist*

**Thursday, May 27, 2010 • 7:00 p.m.**

*Home of Ruth Morales*  
4553 W. 132<sup>nd</sup> St.  
Hawthorne, CA 90250

## AMERICA FOR CHRIST OFFERING WILL BE RECEIVED ON MAY 2, 2010



# WITH WILLING HANDS

America For Christ gifts support Christ-centered ministries that are transforming lives across the United States and Puerto Rico—from addressing Children in Poverty initiatives and resettling refugees violently driven from their home-lands to providing evangelism training, developing discipleship resources and leading ministry workshops and conferences.

The 2010 American For Christ theme is *With Willing Hands: Connect. Care. Celebrate.* The scripture text is, “For the love of Christ urges us on. . .” (2 Corinthians 5:14-15). The financial goal for this year is \$2,010,000.

### Youth Build Project: Willing Hands Connect With a Hurting Community

“This week has made me appreciate what I have and where I live,” says Leresean, age 16, from Neighborhood Ministries, Campbell, Ohio.

Sixteen-year-old Jordan from Peoria (Ill.) Friendship House of Christian Service declares, “I am going home with a different mentality, not to take anything for granted.”

In August 2009, 81 American Baptist volunteers from around the United States participated in a week of service in New Orleans. Among the volunteers, more than half were youth. During the week, some of the youth had an opportunity to transform a home by painting and installing laminate flooring, sheet rock, and moldings, while others participated in community service projects, such as working in a homeless shelter and transforming a community center and cemetery by mowing and pulling weeds. All who

participated served with willing hands and hearts as they gave back to the community and those still affected by the 2005 hurricanes. Leresean and Jordan weren’t the only ones changed by their experience. So were 14 others from the five Neighborhood Action Centers that participated in the Ecumenical Work Week. Volunteer Rob James from Union Baptist Church in Mystic, Conn., says, “You have the power to change the world with your hands.”

During the week, the volunteers might not have changed the world, but they did make a difference to those with whom they connected and for whom they cared in New Orleans. National Ministries celebrates your part in such experiences—because it is your America For Christ Offering that makes them possible.

For more information about Volunteer Ministries, including current needs and specifics about how you can get involved, visit [www.nationalministries.org/caring\\_ministries/vim/](http://www.nationalministries.org/caring_ministries/vim/), call 800.222.3872 (ext. 2449 or 2413) or e-mail [victoria.goff@abc-usa.org](mailto:victoria.goff@abc-usa.org).

Please give as generously as you are able on Sunday, May 2, when First Baptist will receive the America For Christ Offering.

### THE FIRST BAPTIST NEWS

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**WEDNESDAY PROGRAM  
SPEAKER**

Our guest speaker on Wednesday evening, May 5, will be Rabbi Ronald Stern, of the Stephen S. Wise Temple. Rabbi Stern is originally from Morristown, New Jersey. He graduated cum laude from the University of Rochester and was ordained at Hebrew Union College in New York.

Rabbi Stern joined the clergy staff at Stephen S. Wise Temple in 1998 after serving as Associate Rabbi at Temple Ahavat Shalom in Northridge. At the Temple, Rabbi Stern is responsible for implementing two aspects of the Temple's five part vision – Social Justice and Community.

You will remember Rabbi Stern as one of our guest panelists last year when we spent some time during worship discussing "Where Are You, God?"

Please join us on May 5 and make him welcome. Your dinner reservations (\$10) should be made with the church office no later than noon on Monday, May 3.



**VISIT FIRST BAPTIST  
ON FACEBOOK**

You can visit First Baptist's Facebook page by going to our church homepage at [www.fbcofla.org](http://www.fbcofla.org) and clicking on the Facebook link at the bottom. You do not need to be a member of Facebook to view the page. However, if you are on Facebook, you can become a "fan" of First Baptist and look for other First Baptist members. You can also check on special events.

Also, you can find HOPE-NET, our food and housing organization, and our mission partners, Chuck and Ramona Shawver on Facebook and become "fans" of both of those pages.

**HONOR THE EARTH**

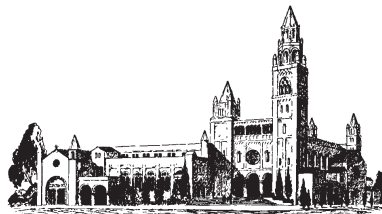
We live in a throw-away society. Some things get thrown along the road, and some get thrown in landfills. What happens then? The U.S. National Park Service has published "disintegration" guidelines. This is how long it takes the following items to "return to the earth."

- Paper: 2-5 months
- Rags: 1-5 months
- Milk cartons: 5 years
- Leather shoes: 25 years
- Plastic containers: 50 years
- Aluminum: 200-500 years
- Styrofoam: never
- Orange peels: 6 months
- Rope: 3-14 months
- Plastic bags: 10-20 years
- Nylon cloth: 30 years
- Soup cans: 100 years
- Plastic rings: 450+ years

As we celebrate Earth Day in April, let us remember that Jesus suggested we have a responsibility as Christian stewards to care-manage on God's behalf all that has been entrusted to us.

**SOMOTO MISSION TRIP**

Those interested in participating in a mission trip to our sister church in Somoto, Nicaragua during the first week of September should let the Missions Ministry know as soon as possible: John and Denie Sturm, Ron Tigerino or Bob Wallace.



**NEWS SCHEDULE**  
The next issue of the *First Baptist NEWS* will be published **May 10, 2010** and will cover services and events through May 23, 2010.

**MOTHER'S DAY TEA**



**SATURDAY,  
MAY 8, 2010**

Robbins Dining Hall

\$8.00 per person

12 noon to 2:00 p.m.

*For reservations, please call the church office (213) 384-2151.*

*Coincidence  
is when God  
chooses to remain  
anonymous.*

**COMMUNITY TRAFFIC  
MESSAGE**



The Los Angeles Police Department–West Traffic Division would like to keep you safe...Safety Tips for Teen Driver Safety:

- Teach safe driving behavior from the beginning. As the parent, you can start modeling safe driving behavior anytime you drive with your kids.
- Talk to your teen about safety and the rules you are setting.
- Explain each one of your rules and the consequences for breaking them.
- Include the most important rules. Examples are: no alcohol, always buckle up, no talking or texting while driving, have the car in the driveway by 10 pm, no more than one passenger at all times.

760 South Westmoreland Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90005



**COMMUNION SUNDAY, MAY 2, 2010**

*9:30 a.m.*

Church School Classes for All Ages

*11:00 a.m. WORSHIP:*

**“IT’S NOT WHAT GOES IN YOUR MOUTH BUT WHAT COMES OUT”**

(Please read Acts 11:1-18 in preparation)

**REV. CARLTON A. RHODEN**, Preaching

– *America For Christ Offering to be Received* –



**WEDNESDAY, MAY 5, 2010**

*6:30 p.m.*

“Space for Grace” Dinner and Program

– Rabbi Ronald Stern, Stephen S. Wise Temple, Speaking –



**SUNDAY, MAY 9, 2010**

*9:30 a.m.*

Church School Classes for All Ages

*11:00 a.m. WORSHIP:*

**“A WOMAN’S WORK IS NEVER DONE”**

(Please read Judges 5:7 in preparation)

**REV. CARLTON A. RHODEN**, Preaching