

# 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](mailto:fbcla@fbcofla.org)



Volume LXXX

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MAY 10, 2010

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

## CHURCH VISION MEETINGS

*Your input is needed.*

During the month of May, Pastor Rhoden and members of the Council of Ministries are holding meetings to hear your thoughts about our church. The first meeting was held last week, but there are other meetings scheduled this month. Please plan to attend one of these meetings and engage in conversations about the future of First Baptist L.A.

**WE HOPE YOU CAN ATTEND ONE (OR MORE) OF THESE HOME MEETINGS:**

**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

*Please call the church office for more information or to sign-up.*

## HOPE-NET

*"Because none of our neighbors should go hungry"*



The economic challenges throughout 2009 had a direct impact on our local community, and by extension, our Hope-Net food pantries. Beginning in mid-2008, we have seen a dramatic increase in the number of clients coming to our local food pantries for necessary, supplemental food.

In 2008, Hope-Net pantries served 63,098 households and 145,170 persons. In 2009 that number increased significantly to 93,987 households and 253,692 persons. In 2008, Hope-Net provided an amazing 860,710 pounds of food; again that number almost doubled to 1,667,511 pounds of food in 2009.

As always, Hope-Net attempts to provide adequate supplemental food and continues to improve the nutritional content of that food and to remain remarkably cost-effective. The cost per household in 2008 was \$1.34. That was reduced in 2009 to \$0.95.

Clearly the additional number of clients increased the amount of food Hope-Net needed to distribute. Because of this, the money needed to subsidize food distribution also increased. In 2009 Hope-Net spent 17% more on food (and distribution) than it had in 2008.

So far, 2010 looks much like 2009. Our pantries are continuing to accommodate an ever growing number of clients. We have opened a new pantry in Silverlake, and another in Los Feliz/East Hollywood. We remain committed to providing nutritious, quality supplemental food to help our neighbors in need, while realizing its mission is not to provide for their total food needs.

My appreciation to First Baptist for its participation in HOPE-NET's mission with your regular food pantry, as well as your recent project in making sandwiches and bag lunches; and to the dedicated, hard workers in its food pantry on Friday mornings: Aurora Martinez, Hector Martinez, Lee Strand and Vance Smith.

– *Douglas Ferraro*, Executive Director, HOPE-NET

## A PIECE OF ABC HISTORY: LULU FLEMING



Lulu Fleming, born into slavery, became the first African-American commissioned woman missionary (1887).

*Based on research by IM Staff and Dr. Deborah Van Broekhoven, Executive Director, American Baptist Historical Society*

Louise (“Lulu”) Cecilia Fleming was twenty-five years old when she arrived in Palabala, Congo as an American Baptist missionary in 1887. When she entered the Congo, it felt in some ways like the completion of a family circle. Lulu had been born into slavery in Florida. Her father had escaped slavery by joining the Union Army when she was an infant. He died at the end of the Civil War without Lulu ever seeing him. Neither had she ever seen her grandfather. But Lulu knew that her mother’s father had lived near the mouth of the Congo River where he had been captured by a slave trader. When Lulu was accepted for appointment as a missionary in the Congo, she referred to her African grandfather, saying, *“I believe this is the day for which I was born. Can you not see God’s hand in allowing [that sinful deed of my grandfather’s capture, similar to Genesis 37:28], and raising up from that Joseph a daughter who would return to this people with a message of peace?”*

Lulu’s ministry, however, did not immediately take her to the Congo. After graduating from Shaw University, she returned to Florida to teach. But all was not well as she began that work. The happiness she previously enjoyed in her work at home was increasingly overshadowed by her realization of the needs that existed in the land of her ancestors. She concluded, *“The Lord had need of me in Africa.”* Soon, the Woman’s American Baptist Foreign Mission Society of the West recruited her as its first missionary. Although gifted and highly motivated, Lulu Fleming nevertheless found slower response to her educational ministry in the Congo than she had experienced in Florida. In 1889, she reported that the mission school had 49 pupils. Of these, seven had been baptized, two more had asked for baptism, and four were showing an interest in turning to Jesus. Lulu wrote, *“This seems a poor report...and perhaps many may think the work almost discouraging, but to us whom God has given the privilege to labor here it is very encouraging. [It] fills us with unspeakable joy.”*

Lulu seemed unwilling to let herself get weary. She eagerly com-

bined her teaching with weekend evangelistic work in the towns. Within a year she had learned Kikongo and no longer required a translator. When Lulu saw that women needed to be reached, she began making home visits while urging the mission society to send more women. Help came to her in 1890 with the appointment of Nora Gordon, a graduate of Spelman Seminary. Lulu’s young half-sister, Emma Hawkins, also went to the Congo to assist her as a volunteer.

Illness forced Lulu to return to the United States in 1891. But up to the time of her departure, she continued her ministry in the towns, now numbering eight. In the mornings she taught in the town schools, while in the afternoons she made home visits, preached in the villages and cared for the sick and dying.

While recuperating in the U.S., she studied medicine at the Women’s Medical College in Philadelphia, and in 1895 she returned to the Congo as a medical missionary. In this second term, Dr. Fleming was stationed at Irebu, further up the Congo River where she needed to learn a different language. This also proved to be a difficult assignment in other ways, as well. She observed rampant illness and anguish over school children being kidnapped in “native wars.”

The power of Dr. Fleming’s ministry came from her identification with those among whom she served. The Baptist Missionary Magazine described her as “particularly successful in winning the hearts of the Congo people, putting herself in close touch and sympathy with them.” Later, African sleeping sickness again forced her back to the United States for medical care, but it was not effective. In 1899 Dr. Fleming died in a Philadelphia hospital. She was still planning to return to her work, celebrating the fact that “the Lord had need of me in Africa.”

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**JESUS SAID,  
"DO YOU LOVE ME?  
THEN, FEED MY SHEEP."**



We're continuing to face tough economic times. Parts of our economic system seem to be headed in a more positive direction, yet much remains unclear. Pensions are slowly making up lost ground, some homeowners continue to fend off foreclosure, and the national unemployment rate hovers at 10%. It's understandable to focus on what has been lost and be apprehensive about the future. But in the midst of these challenging times, it is important to acknowledge all that God has and continues to provide – and how we use those resources.

So, just how do we feed God's sheep in these days? When you give of your resources – especially in these uncertain times – you demonstrate God's love to a world that is also facing huge challenges. This year, as you consider your contribution to the One Great Hour of Sharing offering, do so knowing that our love of God is manifest in our feeding of his "sheep" – whether in response to the devastating earthquake in Haiti, through livelihood development in Cambodia, or in assisting newly arrived immigrants with legal services – your gifts are feeding God's sheep throughout the year.

First Baptist will take the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering on June 6, 2010. Sharing your resources will change lives – including your own.

## AROUND THE CHURCH

**Mary Hill** and **Pat Yeomans** have been on the "Tennis Circuit" in April and May, playing in three USTA Women's 90 and Over tournaments. First one was on grass April 27-30 at Mission Hills Country Club, Rancho Mirage; #2 at Los Angeles Tennis Club May 5-7 on clay courts and the 3<sup>rd</sup> will be May 14-20 on hard courts at La Jolla Beach and Tennis Club. Mary has a "time share" at the Oasis in Palm Springs and was hostess for six players at the April event. Three Mother/Daughters participated; the mothers played tennis and the daughters drove.

**John and Carol Townsend** are touring Europe with **Sandy and Richard Rogers** during this month. Their trip includes a Rhine River cruise, and time in southern Italy, and France. They will return at the end of May.

**Ruth Morales** was honored at the annual meeting for the Christian Community Credit Union in March for her 17 years of service as a member of their Board of Directors. John Walling, Christian Community Credit Union President/CEO said, *"We are grateful and blessed for Ruth's service with the Board through the years. The dedication, wisdom and perspective she brought have been valuable in our growth as a financial institution. Her work as a minister, a minister's wife, along with her wide scope of involvement in ministry and public life made for a rich contribution to our Board."*



*Above left:* Mrs. Morales with CCCU President/CEO John Walling, receiving a certificate of appreciation for 17 years on the Board of Directors.

*Right:* Mrs. Morales and Board Chairman Robert J. Neill. In addition to a certificate, Mrs. Morales was presented with a lovely watch.



### YOUTH FUNDRAISER LUNCH

**MAY 16, 2010**

Following worship

**\$5.00 per person**

*Burgers, Chips and Soda*

### NEWS SCHEDULE

The **next issue** of the *First Baptist NEWS* will be published **May 24, 2010** and will cover services and events through June 6, 2010.

*Quit griping about  
your church;  
if it was perfect,  
you couldn't belong.*

760 South Westmoreland Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90005



**SUNDAY, MAY 16, 2010**

*9:30 a.m.*

Church School Classes for All Ages

*11:00 a.m. WORSHIP:*

**“A JAILED RESPONSE”**

(Please read Acts 16:16-34 in preparation)

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

*12:30 p.m.*

Youth Fundraiser Lunch in the Robbins Dining Hall



**PENTECOST SUNDAY, MAY 23, 2010**

*9:30 a.m.*

Church School Classes for All Ages

*11:00 a.m. WORSHIP:*

**“CONFUSED BY LANGUAGE”**

(Please read Genesis 11:1-9 in preparation)

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