

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

YOU ARE INVITED!



On February 12, following worship and Church school, we will have a Valentine Tea. The Tea will be held in the Robbins Dining Hall and will include a brief program along with a luncheon menu of tea finger sandwiches, salad and dessert. Cost will be \$10 per person and reservations are a must, so call the church office (213/384-2151) or email (fbcla@fbcofla.org) no later than Tuesday, February 7.

If you have a china teapot you would be willing to lend for this special event, please bring it to the church office during the week or give to Maxine McFarland or Sandra Rogers on Sunday. Be sure to mark it with your name so we can return it to you.

THE TIME IS FULFILLED!

The time is now!

Have you felt an immediacy about an issue or event? I mean, something that can no longer wait? Perhaps you have put it off and put it off and you can no longer put it off anymore. Time is running out. Fannie Lou Homer is credited with the famous quote, "I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired." It's that type of sentiment I'm referring to in this case. If you go one more moment in a certain direction, you're just going to scream!

As Jesus enters the scene in Mark's gospel a proclamation is made by Jesus. He says in verse 15, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near, repent, and believe in the good news." In other words, Jesus is saying the time is now! The king has arrived and you must act! Not later, not now, but right now! A response to the king is expected from the good news he brings. We see this immediate action to the call of Jesus in Simon, Andrew, James, and John. They drop what they are doing and immediately follow Jesus. There is no hesitation or second thought. They spend no time weighing the pros and cons or mapping out a strategic plan. They act.

In the book, *Blink*, Malcolm Gladwell explains how many people make decisions in the blink of an eye. Gladwell argues that our brains can process enough information, and at such a fast rate, that normally our first reaction in the blink of an eye is the best reaction. In essence, we are built to move right now.

My brothers and sisters, we must act with immediacy again. Next week, at our annual meeting, I, with the full support of the Council of Ministries, will lay out a plan for our future. Essentially, for us, the time is now, as well. We have to respond to the call of Christ with all urgency. We cannot delay, we must act. We are at the threshold of something truly magnificent, but we must respond.

(continued on Page 2)

ENJOY A NICE DINNER OUT AND SUPPORT HOPE-NET

Every Thursday night in February, the Larchmont Grill will donate 20% of their dinner sales to HOPE-NET. The Larchmont Grill is located at 5750 Melrose Ave., just around the corner from Larchmont Blvd. Enjoy a good dinner out while supporting Hope-Net's goal that "none of our neighbors goes hungry."



To view Larchmont Grill's dinner menu online, go to www.larchmontgrill.com. For more information about Hope-Net, go to www.hopenetla.org.

NEWS SCHEDULE

The **next issue** of the *First Baptist NEWS* will be published February 13, 2012. Material and articles for the February 13th issue should arrive in the church office no later than February 1, 2012.

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MINISTER'S MESSAGE: "TEBOWING"

I am not sure if you have heard of Tim Tebow, former Heisman Trophy winner and current quarterback of the Denver Broncos. At any rate, he has caught the attention of the public because of his strong faith and determination. Tim came under some fire because he has admitted his desire to be a role model for young people. Tim Tebow has done nothing wrong and in fact, it seems he has done everything right. People say, as he warms up to play, he sings Christian praise music and tells other players that he'll pray for them.

The reason I'm writing about this young man is because here is a Christian who is unafraid to stand for his beliefs and outwardly hopes others come to know Christ. In recent times, the Christian faith has taken a bit of a black eye. Let us not forget the sex scandals, financial miscues and other allegations that have put the church in a negative light. And here we have a young man who is excelling but still remains the butt of jokes (Saturday Night Live skit). On the sidelines, he puts one knee down in a prayer-like position, and this posture has been labeled "Tebowing."

So I say, let us all Tebow! Here is a young man who wants to be a role-model and express his faith. What's wrong with that?

– Carlton A. Rhoden

BABY GIRL IS COMING!

Maritza Osorio is pleased to announce that her second eldest son, William Corona and his wife, Leslee, will soon celebrate the blessings of welcoming a baby girl.

You are invited to join in the celebration with the young couple: **Baby Shower** to be held in the church Robbins Dining Hall on **Saturday, February 25 from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m.** **Host: Maritza Osorio (213) 447-7769.** (To help the host figure out how much food to prepare, **please confirm your attendance** as soon as possible.)

SERMON (*continued*)

For Simon, Andrew, James and John, they made a change in their lives that resulted in something other worldly. They were invited to walk with our Savior, to share meals and ministry with Christ. But they first responded to the call.

For several years, our church has struggled to attract young families and young people. In order for us to be vibrant and grow, we need young families and young people, but to do that we are going to have to understand that what we do is not about us, that some of the things we are going to do to grow our church, we may not like. In a real way, some have stated that our church is dead and we are being counted out. We are called old, old-fashioned, and clinging to tradition. That's alright. Let the nay-sayers say what they want. We are not defined nor judged by them. We are defined by our response to the call of Jesus Christ and his commands.

We do, however, have to continue to add to what we are currently doing. We need more styles of music in worship, we need to have opportunities and avenues for individuals and families to grow spiritually, and we need to be constantly involved in our mission outreach. That's how we are going to grow. The time is now! That means increased investment from you as a congregation and making room for new ideas and new approaches.

Let us look at it like this. We are fully aware of how the story turns out when Andrew, Simon, James and John respond. But can you imagine how the story would have changed if they did not respond? What would have shifted if they had said, "Let's take a few weeks to analyze the situation. Get back to me in a few weeks." No, they saw, heard, and responded. We, too, must respond. The time is fulfilled!

Amen.

– sermon by Carlton A. Rhoden
January 22, 2012

HOW WOULD YOU EXPLAIN WHO GOD IS TO A CHILD?

The Wednesday Bible Study Fellowship did an interesting exercise recently. The idea was how to explain who God is to a child. The overall theme in the conversation has been Christology. Christology is defined as the work and study of the person of Jesus Christ. Christology is very important; how we view Jesus helps us to determine how we act out our faith. Each of the gospel writers have a certain Christological lens with which they tell us about Jesus. So, this simple exercise was to help discover our own Christological lens. I thank Ann Brodie, John and Denie Sturm, Vance Smith, and Lee Strand for participating:

“There is a season (Advent) we celebrate before Christmas that honors the coming birth of Jesus. Jesus is God’s son and a woman named Mary is his mother.

“During this season, we focus on Joy, Hope, Peace and Love. We have **joy** in our hearts knowing God’s son is Jesus and he is our savior. He protects and provides for all needs if we honor him. **Hope** that God will always be with us even when we feel lost and forsaken. **Peace** is what we should always pray for and not fight with others. Jesus was considered a Prince of Peace because of the instructions he gave his followers. **Love** was Jesus’ greatest Commandment, Love yourself and love one another.

“Each day of our lives, if we remember these four words, we know Jesus is alive within us.”

– Ann Brodie

“We cannot see God. But in a wonderful man named Jesus, who lived 2000 years ago, God showed us what He is like. By what He lived and taught, Jesus showed that God loves us. He wants us to do what is right, but is ready to forgive us when we do wrong. He helps us be the best we can be.”

– John Sturm

“The Bible tells us about a baby born in Bethlehem. His name is Jesus. When Jesus grew up, He went around teaching people how to live and to love each other. His teachings were different from those in the temple and therefore, people were attracted to Him because He had a special way about Him that other people didn’t have. He showed them what God is like.”

– Denie Sturm

“Jesus is the go between with broken and dysfunctional family members. He brings us, the children, back to our father.”

– Wm. Vance Smith

“This is an example of sharing the good news with out using religious terms and words. It is important for me as a grandfather to learn to communicate with them. Here is an example:

“The boy in the story is between 8 and 12 years old. The boy’s name is John. The boy went shopping with his mother Jane at the mall. During their visit, he was accused of stealing an iPod and was returned to security. His mother was shocked and did not know what to do. His grandfather agreed to talk to him. He first explained to him that it was stealing when he took something from the store without paying for it. He also said to the boy that he would have to pay \$30 for the item. He started to cry. He told his grandfather he could never pay that back. So the grandfather answered, “Do not worry, I will pay the \$30 for you.” John was relieved and happy when he heard this. His grandfather explained that when Jesus died on the cross, he paid for our sins, just like grandfather paid for the iPod. I am sure that John never forgot what he learned about Jesus.”

– Lee Strand

How would **you** explain God and/or Jesus to a child? You might want to give it a try.

MEETING GOD

There once was a little boy who wanted to meet God. He knew it was a long trip to where God lived, so he packed his suitcase with Twinkies and a six-pack of fruit juice and he started on his journey. When he had gone about three blocks, he met an old man sitting in the park staring at some pigeons.

The boy sat down next to the old man and opened his suitcase. He was about to take a drink when he noticed that the old man looked hungry, so he offered him a Twinkie. The man gratefully accepted it and smiled at him. His smile was so incredible that the boy wanted to see it again, so he offered him some juice. Once again, the man smiled at him. The boy was delighted! They sat there all afternoon eating and smiling, but they never said a word. As it grew dark, the boy got up to leave. Before he had gone more than a few steps, he turned and gave the man a hug. The old man gave him his biggest smile ever.

When the boy returned home, his mother was surprised by the look of joy on his face. She asked him, “What did you do today that made you so happy?” He replied, “I had lunch with God.” Before his mother could respond, he added, “You know what? He’s got the most beautiful smile I’ve ever seen!”

Meanwhile, the old man, also radiant with joy, returned to his home. His son was stunned by the look of peace on his face and he asked, “Father, what did you do today that made you so happy?” The man replied, “I ate Twinkies in the park with God.” Before his son could respond, he added, “You know, he’s much younger than I expected.”

Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.

– from the internet

760 South Westmoreland Avenue
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NEW WORSHIP TIME: 10:00 a.m.

COMMUNION SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2012

10:00 a.m. Worship

“REPUTATION RESTORATION”

(Please read Isaiah 40:21-31 in preparation)

REV. CARLTON A. RHODEN, Preaching

11:30 a.m.

Church School Classes for All Ages



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2012

10:00 a.m. Worship

“RUN TO WIN”

(Please read I Corinthians 9:24-27 in preparation)

REV. CARLTON A. RHODEN, Preaching

11:30 a.m.

Church School Classes for All Ages

12:30 p.m.

Valentine Tea in the Robbins Dining Hall