

First Edition September 2015



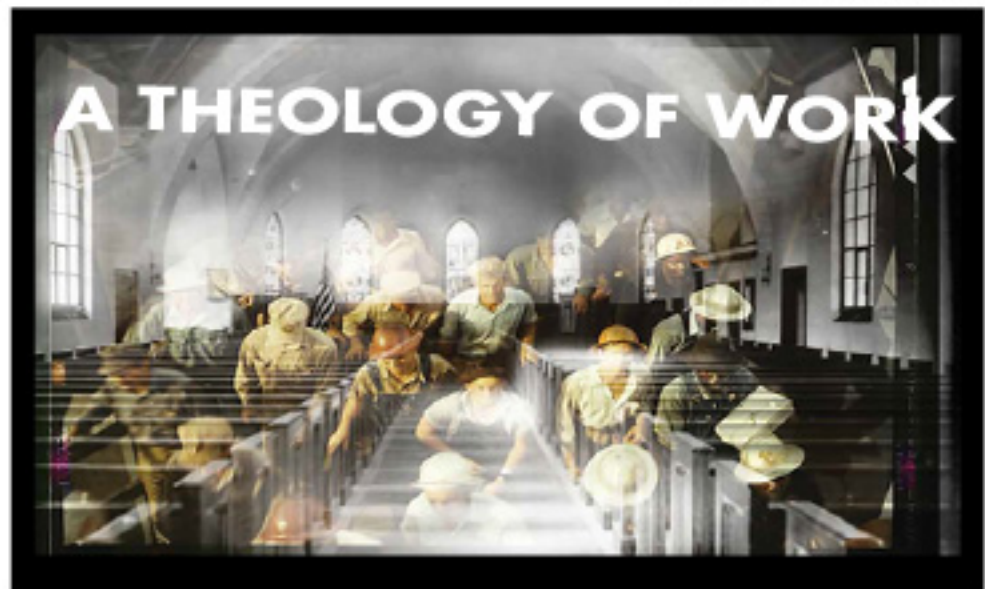
First Baptist Church of San Mateo 2801 Alameda de las Pulgas San Mateo, CA 94403 650-345-1965 www.fbcsanmateo.org

Christians in the Work Place

By Pastor Marc Heinz

A few weeks ago I was reading the latest issue of Western Magazine which is published semi-annually by Western Seminary and is sent to alumni, supporters and friends of the Seminary. The theme of this issue was Christians in the Marketplace, and the goal was to help God's people both think and live more "Christianly" when it comes to the world of work. Western has graciously allowed us to reproduce these articles in this month's First Edition and I hope you find them to be as insightful and thought provoking as I did!

I pray as you read and contemplate these articles that it will help you do to three very important things. First, I hope it helps you to more closely connect your faith and vocation. Second, I hope it helps you see the importance and value that God places on your work. Third, I pray that it encourages you and helps you see your work in a brand new way!



IS WORK JUST WHAT WE DO TO MAKE A LIVING? OR IS IT A PART OF GOD'S ORIGINAL PLAN?

BY DR. GERRY BRESHEARS

From the time God called him to "ministry" at the age of 18, Pastor David's whole life direction had been to do "the Lord's work." Now, however, after two decades of serving as a pastor, he would have to desert God's calling and start work in the secular marketplace, all because he was unable to manage the stress of a growing church.

In desperation he asked Ben, another church leader, to meet him for coffee. Like David, Ben used to be a pastor but had recently entered the workforce. David wanted to find out how Ben was satisfied and fulfilled.

The solid chairs in the retro coffee shop fit David's mood perfectly: hard and dated. The Lord's work, ministry, his spiritual gift of preaching, and his calling were slipping into past tense as he faced transitioning to a marketplace job.

"How can I carry out my calling to do the Lord's work?" David lamented, staring into his coffee cup. "I only have one life and I want to spend it in service of the Lord."

Ben, in his response, wanted to broaden David's understanding of work.

"How does work fit into the creation story?" asked Ben. "If God has redeemed this world, what are the implications for work?"

Their conversation went on for hours as Ben helped David see how badly he misun-

A SECULAR VIEW OF WORK

David had fallen into the common definition of work as "what we do to earn a living." We work to pay the bills. Americans define work as "what I do to make money so I can do what I really want to do." We work for 40 years in order to retire and be our own boss.

Some Christians spiritualize this limited definition in several ways: by understanding the purpose of work to be the accumulation of wealth for the support of church, missions, etc. or as a way to get access to people, to share the gospel and then see them saved. As secular means to a sacred end, these spiritualized variations still fall short of the biblical view of work.

A THEOLOGY OF WORK

Biblically, work is what we do with God in His sacred space (which is everywhere). God creates humans as His image bearers, speaking blessing to them. Speaking is relational, forming partnership; this makes us covenant partners with God. We are to work with Him to fill and subdue the uninhabited garden, bringing order and beauty to the uncultivated garden. The garden is Temple space where God places man to "abide and shamar." Rather than "cultivate and keep" or "serve and care for," these two words are probably best translated as "worship and obey." Adam was created and placed in the garden to worship God and demonstrate that worship through obedience and fruitful work in partnership with God. (I discovered these points first in *True North* by Mark Liederbach.)

The purpose of work is to take the raw materials of the garden which God provided, the good gold, the aromatic resin and onyx (Gen 2:12) and create beauty, expressing love for God and neighbor.

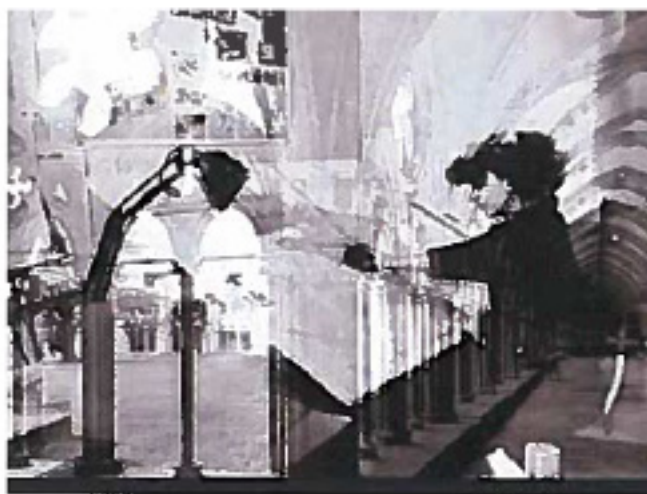
Work is not something done to give God rest, nor is it the result of the curse. Rather, it is a part of God's eternal blessing on humans. The Fall makes work laborious and frustrating. Thorns and thistles now grow alongside the seed-bearing food plants and humans have become instruments of production rather than blessed partners with the God of all grace.

Paul connects the love of all people, minding our business, and the work of our hands in 1 Thess. 4:10-12. No self-respecting Greek would ever see manual labor as an act of love, but the theology of work connects them. Working is an expression of love, of bringing goodness, peace and shalom in the world. Manual labor takes elements of the material world and makes it orderly and livable. Jesus-followers use the creative energy which comes graciously from the indwelling Spirit to create good things, for the benefit of people by bringing order and flourishing.

THE WORK OF THE LORD

For David, "the work of the Lord" was limited to paid pastoral ministry, whereas Scripture broadens that phrase to include every kind of work. Paul addresses 1 Cor. 15:58 to all believers doing all kinds of work, exhorting them to "Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain." Obviously few, if any, of these first century Christians were in full-time employment by the church. Rather, they were doing the Lord's work as they went about their everyday lives.

In the same way, Paul prays asking "God to fill you with the knowledge of His will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please Him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work" (Col 1:9-10). Here, work



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Him by doing righteousness and justice, and looking for provision in the Messiah. David realized that he was fulfilling his calling to ministry by using his gifts in the Lord's work just as he had when he was pastor. He lived out the truth that work is the gracious expression of YHWH's creative energy in service of others to create shalom.



Dr. Gerry Breshears is Professor of Systematic Theology and Chair of the Center for Biblical and Theological Studies at Western Seminary. In addition to his three decades of educational ministry at Western, Dr. Breshears has taught at numerous Bible colleges and seminaries around the world and has co-authored multiple books.

Restoring a biblical understanding of the role of work has been an area of growing concern for me over the last several years. Having grown up in an entrepreneurial home and worked first in the marketplace and then as a pastor, I have personally experienced the tension that comes from viewing life with a sacred/secular divide. I know how difficult it can be for pastors who want to better serve their congregants operating in the sometimes foreign marketplace world. I also understand how meaningless work can feel for those who work Monday through Friday, but don't see how that connects with their Sunday worship.

With this background, I took over direction of the Center for Leadership Development at Western Seminary, with a special focus on creating resources for Christians whose ministry is lived out in the marketplace.

LEARNING

During this same season, the body of believers at Grace Community Church in Gresham, OR began to address these same issues, discovering that God intended them to work for purpose beyond a paycheck. It began for the entire congregation when the elders and preaching team decided to preach a series of four sermons on work and worship. They preached on work as worship, the limits of labor, work and rest and why work matters.

When the preaching series was over, a number of people expressed a desire for more, so I facilitated an adult class for 10 weeks in the spring and another 10 weeks in the fall, using our newly created Christians in the Marketplace training track. Forty people worked through 20 hours of web-based teaching, covering topics such as the theology of work, the

relationship between theology and economics, and the importance of marketplace mentoring.

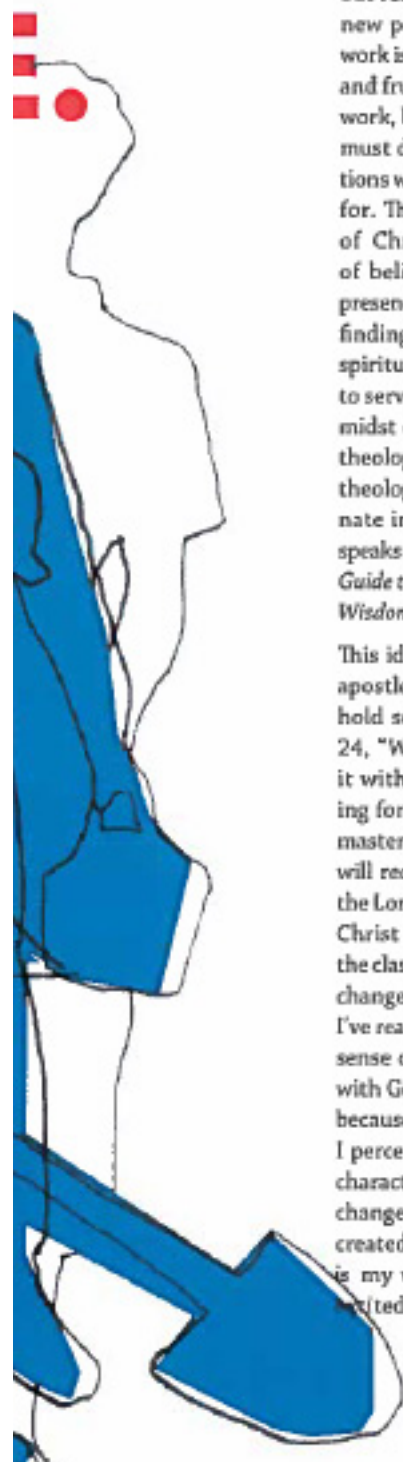
Hardly a week went by that a life-changing story wasn't told. Karen, a RN who coordinates care for special needs children, always felt that the only spiritual part of work was when she could share the gospel or pray for people. After the Marketplace class, she realized her work gave her the opportunity to serve people she never would have come in contact with otherwise, and the work itself—providing resources and support for people navigating complicated systems—was a way to contribute to the care and growth of these people. "As a result of the Marketplace class, I feel like my eyes have been opened and I am able to see God partnering with me to bring flourishing to my workplace. I have become much more excited about going to work because I'm on the lookout for what God is going to do." Her deepened understanding has brought about a renewed dedication to the welfare of her colleagues and patients.

Karen's husband, Paul, was impacted in a very different way. As a result of the Marketplace class, Paul concluded that his God-given gifts and skills were not being maximized at his current IT job, to the end of increasing human flourishing. Therefore, he opted to retire early. "Now, I use my gifts to contribute significantly to Grace's partnership with a local elementary school and I use my job skills to help our church move from relief ('doing for') to development ('doing with') in its outreach to the materially poor." Although Karen and Paul's areas of ministry are very different, they are both using their gifts to contribute to those in their sphere of influence in a positive way.

REDEEMPTIC GIVES US WHOLE PERSPECTIV



NEW



WORKING IN A FALLEN WORLD

One of the most thoughtful discussions we had in the class came when I posed the question, "When does work show up in the Bible, before or after the Fall?" For far too many, work is seen as punishment for sin, when it is in fact part of God's beautiful, wonderful original design for creatures made in His image. Sin makes work more difficult, but redemption gives us a whole new perspective. "The world of work is broken, painful, toilsome, and frustrating. We are made for work, but in this fallen world we must do that work under conditions we were definitely not made for. The central daily challenge of Christian life for millions of believers is discovering the presence of God in broken work—finding the meaning, dignity and spiritual satisfaction of working to serve God and neighbor in the midst of toil and trial...a sound theology of work must include a theology of suffering and culminate in a message of hope that speaks to all workers" (*The Pastor's Guide to Fruitful Work & Economic Wisdom* 38).

This idea was not foreign to the apostle Paul, who said to household servants in Col. 3:23 and 24, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving." One of the class members described their change of thinking this way, "As I've read my Bible, I tried to make sense of how my daily life fit in with God's plan. I was frustrated because my reality didn't fit what I perceived as the life of biblical characters. This class completely changed that. Knowing that God created me to work and that He is my work partner makes me excited to tackle my work day."

LIGHT BULB MOMENTS

This shift in thinking, of realizing work is part of God's original plan and not a punishment, is one of several "light bulb moments" I saw our class at Grace have (as well as others I have talked with) as their theology of work develops. Others include understanding there is no sacred/secular divide and that ministry does not just mean working for a church or parachurch organization.

In keeping with the idea of the original Garden, an illustration I like to use is that we all have "gardens," just like Adam and Eve. We are instructed by God to tend them and make them flourish, using our creativity, our ingenuity and our physical strength. I have a garden called "family," one called "neighborhood," one called "work" and one called "church." The question is, are they flourishing as a result of my tending? That doesn't mean they all have to be functioning perfectly, few-if any-farmers have a bumper crop in every season or in every field. Nevertheless, there should be a sense of God's presence in each of these gardens because I hold them as part of my stewardship under God. Similarly, work will always have struggles in this life, there will always be parts that aren't quite right, but as believers our work can, and ought to be, marked with God's presence.

For the members of Grace Community Church, these conversations on the place work has in the lives of Christians were liberating and dignifying. Understanding that work has value because God gave it value can bring great worth to whatever you are doing. One class member commented, "Marketplace Christians challenged how I have viewed the work world. My value is not determined by where I work or the type of work I do; but rather my

work ethic in that I am called to be working in God's strength in any job situation God places before me." Another said when asked the impact of the class, "I saw my daily career in a new light as part of the work of God's kingdom." Armed with this understanding, I hope to see more and more of those in my "garden of care"—at Grace and elsewhere—living lives that are in harmony and full of meaning in light of God's original plan for their flourishing.

How can pastors better serve their congregations? Pastor Gerry Smith of Grace Community Church responds on page 16.



Dr. Jim Hislop is the Director of Western Seminary's Center for Leadership Development. Formerly a pastor, Jim focused on helping churches through leadership transitions.

A PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

PASTOR GERRY SMITH



Gerry is the Community Care Pastor and an Elder at Grace Community Church in Gresham, OR, as well as an alumnus of Western Seminary.

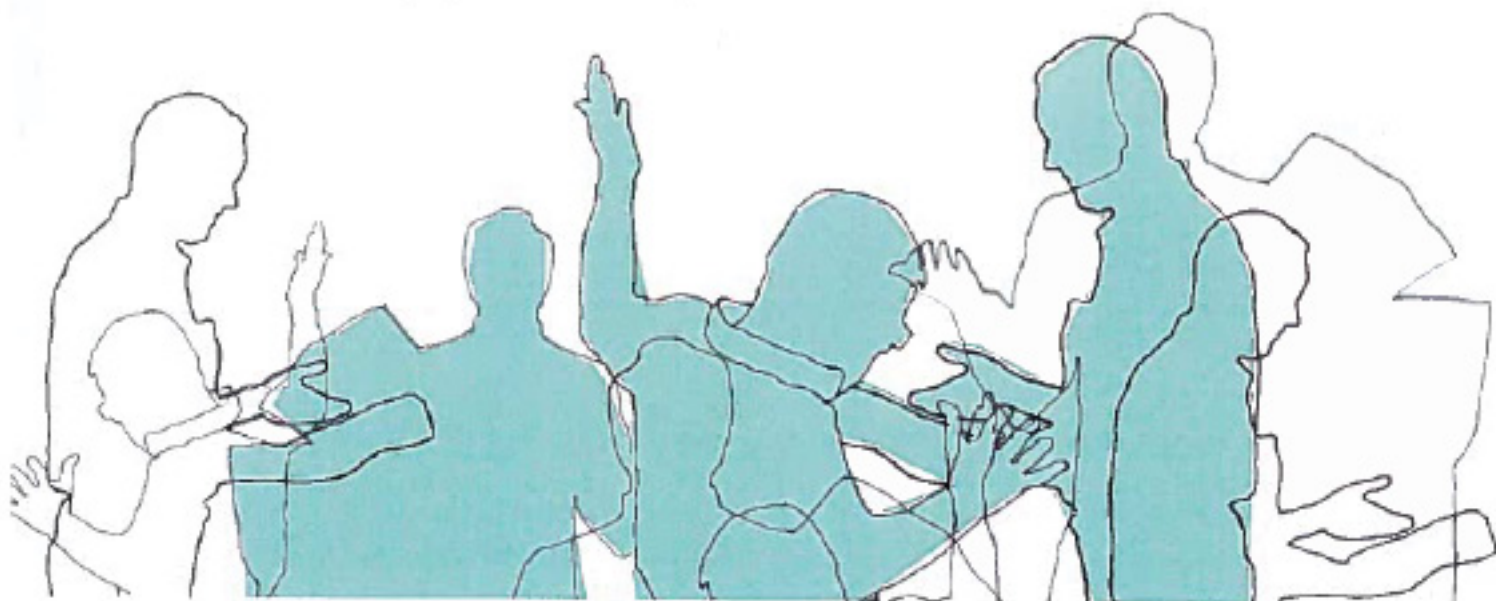
Grace Community Church recently completed a sermon series called *Work and Worship*, followed by a small group study that utilized Western Seminary's *Christians in the Marketplace* track. The church leadership team realized that the congregation was ready and eager to talk openly about this topic. In the past, we had touched on work as worship as it came up in the normal preaching cycle, though I think we were a little surprised that this series was so popular and had such an impact on the congregation. The ensuing class also had a huge impact. We saw the class members go through a transition, from grumbling that they were overworked and underpaid, to rejoicing at all the opportunities they had now to incarnate Christ in the workplace. Their countenances changed as they realized that the work they were doing matters to the kingdom.

Following the series, we have been working to get rid of language that elevates "ministry" over "work." Phrases like "the work of ministry" are misleading and only serve to illustrate a divide between work and ministry that shouldn't exist. Phrases like "professional ministry" also contribute to this divide. We are working to erase those from our language.

We have also made more of an effort to pray for and bless those who work outside the church. Last fall, we had all those involved in the education of children (private schools, public institutions and homeschool) stand as we prayed for their year: that God would bring His kingdom on earth through their work in our communities. In that same vein, we have also been working with a local school to bless those who teach—very much speaking about working together for our community.

Even now, the class continues to impact our programming. We have started another class made up of our outreach and benevolence teams that is looking at ways to communicate the theology of work—that work is valuable and a part of how God has designed us—to those who come to the church looking for financial help and who are more frequently underemployed or living dependent on the government.

Personally, developing my own theology of work has encouraged me to think broader about my role as a pastor. As the church has grown in size, I am continually confronting the old model that says the paid pastor is the only one reaching out or working for God. I am now calling all to worship God by being trustworthy, hardworking, and fair in their places of employment. As a pastor, I make more of an effort to meet my congregation in their places of employment as well, showing them value in their work contexts. In that same way, I also work to include their voices in the oversight of church ministries. I would encourage all pastors to bring value to the work that their congregations are doing in their communities. Meet them where they work, pray for them corporately, help them apply a biblical theology of work in their work environments and rejoice with them when they get it right.



Hume Lake Christian Camps

"Though you have not seen Him, you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls. 1 Peter 1:8-9

Who are you following? We are all following someone, so who is it for YOU? Are you following yourself, in other words, your flesh? Or are you following your Captain, Jesus Christ? This year at summer camp we were challenged

and confronted with the question of who we are following in our lives. Through examining various biblical stories from the life of Peter, we were challenged to make the decision he made in the end... to follow Christ. Even though he had made many mistakes, gotten off track, misunderstood many things, Jesus still offered Himself to Peter. We had time to share and process the lessons learned and applied them to our own lives. Many of our students took the time and seized the opportunities to connect and hear the Lord speak to them about Who

He truly is, and the changes He wants to make in their lives. Changes that would bring about a deeper relationship with Him and a new life found in Him. Thank you to those who prayed for us and supported those who could not afford to go on their own.

God is amazing and incredible. He revealed Himself in new ways to us all as we sought Him. I'm excited to see how we all will live transformed lives with new purpose and intention in all that we do.



Youth Camp at Hume Lake Celebration



Summer Classes Update

Spiritual Gifts Seminar

Teacher: Doug Andrews

What are spiritual gifts? How has God uniquely gifted you? Where and how is He calling you to serve Him and be a part of His body?

Ever wonder where and how you are called to serve God? Come to this really informative and personally revealing 2 part class starting Sunday, September 20, 12:30 - 3:30 pm in the Chapel. (At this first session we will plan the next class based on your availability. You must attend both sessions.) There is a charge of \$15 for your book and lunch.

Talk with Pastor Doug Andrews if you have any questions.

Pottery

Teacher: Doris Waddell

What a joy it has been to share God's love through the pottery class. The aim has been to relate everything we do to a spiritual truth from God's word and our own experiences in life.

First of all we learned the lesson about staying centered in Christ by seeing how clay vessels can be made in a useable form only by first of all centering the piece of clay in the center of the potter's wheel. Then the vessel will be beautiful and useful.

Next we learned that punching the clay into a styrofoam pad is similar to being molded and formed through the work of the Holy Spirit. And Verta noticed that the mistake she made in decorat-

ing her piece was made right by a second chance, just as God is always willing to give us a another chance if our hearts are right with Him.

Next Wednesday we are making small pumpkins, and we will learn about how God takes us apart (by making us aware of our sin) and then puts us back together in a way that honors Him.

If you would like to join our class, you are welcome as long as you are not needing to be learning in a class other than pottery. We're meeting on Wednesdays Sept. 2, 9, 23, and 30 at 7:00 pm in Room 250.

Ushers/Greeters

Teacher: Doug Andrews

Ushers/Greeters Class meets each Wednesday September 2 and 9 in the Sanctuary.

For adults who want to serve in the "first impression" ministry by meeting and greeting those who enter the doors to the sanctuary each Sunday morning, learning ways to become effective, warm welcomers.

If God is calling you to be part of this team of welcomers, to be helpful to show where classes are being conducted, where restrooms are located, etc., talk to Doug about your interest.

Teacher Training Class


This past month on Wednesday at 7pm in the Chapel around 20 adults have been meeting to learn what it means to be an effective teacher of God's Word. Most of those attending are teaching in one capacity or another here at FBC. However, we also have those attending who want to teach their children or grandchildren.

The first week we looked at Teaching Us Learning. We learned that good teaching is not just throwing out information. The kind of biblical teaching that is effective is one that causes the student to learn. Evidence that learning has taken place in the student is in changed behavior. This was always Christ's goal when He taught - life transformation.

This past week we studied the various techniques Jesus used to teach. This included "discovery" learning, object lessons, stories, parables, and illustrations, taking advantage of teachable moments, and questioning. After learning

groups to practice teaching an object lesson. Of all the groups, the one using a "tootsie roll pop" as the object was definitely the most popular.

In the future we will have classes on "Questioning," Lesson Planning, Assessment and Leading a Small Group. Please join us. Even if you are not planning to teach as a teacher in the church, you are influencing others and can learn how to make those contacts



BE **EQUIPPED:**
FBC SUMMER TRAINING

**Wednesdays, 7 p.m. for
the Summer**

**Next Fellowship
Event is Sept.
16, followed by
a short Business
Meeting to vote
on the new By-
Laws.**

**Come, drink
deeply of the
Living Water.**

FBC SUMMER 2015 SUMMARY

Salmon Bake, Sunday, August 19



September 2015

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|--|-----|-----|--|--|-----|-----------------------------|
| SUNDAY MORNINGS: 9:30am Bible Studies for Children and Adults Contemporary Style Worship 11:00am Bible Studies for Adults and All Youth Classical Style Worship | 1 | | 2 7pm Midweek Service Teacher Training Pottery. 8pm Ushers/Greeters 8pm Worship Reh. 7pm Scout Leaders Meeting | 3 3pm Youth Band Reh. 7pm TNT | 4 | 5 8:30am Men's Breakfast |
| Communion | 7 | 8 | 9 6:30 pm AWANAS 7pm Midweek Service Teacher Training Pottery 8pm Ushers/Greeters 8pm Worship | 10 3pm Youth Band Reh. 7pm TNT | 11 | 12 |
| | 14 | 15 | 16 6:00 Fellowship Event & Business Meeting 6:30 pm AWANAS 8pm Worship Rehearsal | 17 3pm Youth Band Reh. 7pm TNT | 18 | 19 |
| 12:30pm Spiritual Gifts Class | 21 | 22 | 23 6:30 pm AWANAS 7pm Midweek Service Teacher Training Pottery 8pm Worship Rehearsal | 24 3pm Youth Band Reh. 7pm TNT | 25 | 26 |
| | 28 | 29 | 30 6:30 pm AWANAS 7pm Midweek Service Teacher Training Pottery 8pm Worship Rehearsal | All Events Are Subject to Change. | | |





First Baptist Church
2801 Alameda de las Pulgas
San Mateo, California 94403



Have you ever considered honoring a loved one by providing a bouquet of flowers for the sanctuary? Several dates are available. Sign up in the notebook on the counter in the narthex. We ask and appreciate a \$40 gift for each arrangement.

The office staff will order your bouquet to be delivered -- so convenient, and so appreciated by your loved

Do you have a prayer request?

The Prayer Box is available in the narthex.

The Pastoral staff will pray for you.



**F
B
C** Consummate
Man

**ATTENTION ALL
MEN:**
Men's Ministry
Monthly Breakfast
Saturday,
September 5,
8:30 a.m.
in the Chapel