

FIRST EDITION

Newsletter of First Baptist Church, San Mateo

NOVEMBER 2019

PASTOR'S LETTER

I really like the way Eugene Peterson translates Matthew 5:14-16 in *The Message*. Jesus is speaking & He says: *You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I have put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—**shine!** Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father who is in heaven.*

These verses in Matthew contain some very powerful truths & provide instruction as to how we are to live in this world. They also make the point that while we have a purpose in the world, we are not to be of the world. As Christians we are to be radically different from those who don't know God. That's why our goal shouldn't be to fit in, maintain a low profile, not offend anyone, we are intended to stand out. Yet many who claim to know the Lord are reluctant to share their faith or to let their light shine. There are those who claim to believe, but there seems to be little difference between the way they live & the way those who don't know God live. Others want to minimize the differences between believers & unbelievers, but the differences are so great that Jesus illustrated this difference by contrasting light & darkness.

If you are a believer in Jesus Christ then you have not only been set apart, you have been granted the incredible privilege of having a personal relationship with Almighty God. And that not only makes you different, it demands that you live differently.

PASTOR MARC HEINZ

John Stott had this great insight: *"We serve neither God, nor ourselves, nor the world, by attempting to obliterate or even minimize this difference. Probably the greatest tragedy of the church throughout its long & checkered history has been its constant tendency to conform to the prevailing culture instead of developing a Christian counter-culture."*

Jesus wants to use each of us to impact the world, & bring His light into the darkness. He wants us to spread His truth & show what it means to truly be alive. He wants us to show our neighbors that there is a better way to live. He wants us to be ready to make a defense to everyone who asks us to give an account for the hope that is in us, yet with gentleness & reverence. Which is why it is so important that we don't hide who & what we are in Christ. We dare not be complacent or disobedient! It is our God given responsibility to live in such a way that makes God visible to a world that is blind to Him. As one New Testament scholar says: the good word without the good walk is of no avail.

As incredible as it may sound, you & I really can be used by God to impact & change the world. We can make a difference! But in order for that to happen we must be intentional & choose to live fully for Him. I am confident that if we do that, this church & our community will be blessed! But that's not all, you will also become a blessing to other people. And God will use you as His instrument to bring life & hope to a broken world, best of all, God will be glorified!

Let's join together & pray that God will use us & His Church to bring about a dramatic change in the world. May we seek to let His light shine in & through us!

You Can't Handle the Truth!

Jesus said, "If you abide in my word, then you are truly my disciples, then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." John 8:31-32

Pilate then said to Him, "What is Truth?" and then walked out... John 18:38

Our culture today demands truth and honesty from every area of life. We want it from our politicians, our physicians, our mechanic, our pharmacist, our boss, our employees, and many more. And yet, our culture today does not demand it from God, or at least religion. Truth is something that is understood as absolute and indisputable, except when it comes to personal belief about the Divine. In that arena, our society accepts the idea that all worldviews or belief systems are equally valid. It's become more than just the idea that we all have the personal freedom and right to believe what we choose, that is the correct definition of tolerance. But the *new* tolerance is actually saying that ALL belief systems are valid and equally true, and that if you disagree with that statement, you are wrong and do not deserve tolerance. However, this makes no sense at all. This view collapses in on itself and does not hold logically.

And yet, this is the world in which we find ourselves today. This is the world in which our youth have to

live and interact. In their classrooms they are being taught this false form of tolerance. And as Christians who believe in a logically consistent worldview that coherently and completely explains the complexity of the universe and the nature of mankind with accuracy and relevance, we are called archaic, bigoted, and evil. How are we to live in these times? How are we to strengthen and equip our youth to navigate these turbulent and hostile waters? And how are we to give this next generation the tools necessary to make their way in this lost and dark world?

This is why we have begun to lay a foundation of truth for our young people. On Tuesday nights we have begun our series titled "Big Questions of Life." This is a series that helps youth establish a foundation upon which to really think and evaluate what is actually true in our world. We are examining the deepest questions of origin (where do we come from), meaning (what is the purpose of life), morality (what is truly right/wrong and good/evil), and destiny (where are we headed). Please be praying for God's truth to make it's home in the hearts and minds of our students, and that those who are really seeking truth, will come and join us in this powerful and important series.

WORD OF THE MONTH: LIGHT**φῶς phos**

light (in contrast to darkness); in a transcendent sense, light that illuminates the spirit and soul of humans. As Christ's disciples, we are bearers and bringers of God's light to those around us when we "walk in a manner worthy of our calling" (Ephesians 4:1).

Key Verse: Matthew 5:14-16

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

FALL & WINTER YOUTH EVENTS

Turkey Bowling

Tuesday, November 20 · 7:00–9:00 pm (Part of FBC Youth Tuesday)

Fun night of games, food, and thanksgiving worship and message. Great event to bring your friends.

Thanksgiving Eve Service

Wednesday, November 27 · 7:00 pm

Don't miss this special night of worship, youth baptisms, and dessert.

Thanksgiving Day Flag Football

Thursday, November 28 · 9:00–11:00 am

Meet us at Aragon High School. All are welcome!

Christmas Fun Events

Tuesday nights in December · 6:30–9:00 pm (Part of FBC Youth Tuesday)

Youth Christmas Party

Tuesday, December 17 · 7:00–9:00pm (Part of FBC Youth Tuesday)

Bring a friend and a funny gift (less than \$5) for exchange. Christmas games and celebration with worship and message.

Youth Winter Retreat

January 1–4

Fun in the snow, sledding, ice-skating, snowy adventures, games, and growing in God. This 3-day retreat that will be tons of fun and change your life! (Cost TBD)



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WEEKLY YOUTH EVENTS

Youth Service

Sundays, 11:00 am–12:15 pm

Games, fun, worship, and studying the Word. Our next teaching direction will focus on Exploring God's Word and integrating knowing Christ into our daily lives.

College/Young Adult Fellowship

Alt. Sundays, 12:30–2:00 pm

Growing in God through His Word. After spending a year examining the evidence for God, we are now spending time each week studying God's Word. As always, we have great discussions about the passage we are studying. Lunch provided.

Youth Group (Junior High & High School)

Tuesdays, 7:00–9:00 pm

In our "Big Questions of Life" series, we've been examining fundamental questions about origin, meaning, morality, and destiny. We begin from a purely scientific and philosophical approach, looking at the evidence for a theistic worldview.

MEN'S RETREAT AT MOUNT HERMON

CLAY MINTER

As always, it is so wonderful to see how our great God does His thing in our lives. For the mens' retreat, His works were on full display for all of us who attended to see, feel, enjoy, and take home with us. His provisions in the ability to attend through the kindness of others, the perfect weather, beautiful scenery, lodging, and personal nudging to those who needed it. God also gave us a dynamic speaker, Richard Dahlstrom. His message most definitely spoke to all of us, as we told each other that we needed to hear what he said. Richard spoke on the constant journey of transformation, using the elements of wine (capacity to bless), bread (source of satisfaction), vine (source of fruitfulness), and fish and fire (strength to fulfill calling), all found in the book of John.

It was especially good to be with 243 brothers in Christ. I believe we all had occasions to talk with others outside of our group. Speaking of our group, we had some adventurous souls take advantage of the canopy tour that included many zip lines; all survived. There was a special time involving Javier when Pastor Richard prayed for him and 15-20 men out of the audience came forward to lay hands on him. One guy said, "we just witnessed a beautiful moment right there!" It was truly touching. Javier was a celebrity the next day with so many asking Javier how he was.

All in all it was a perfect weekend with time to be with God reflect on just how perfect He is. Time to commune with Him and grow our relationship with Him, as well as our knowledge of Him who is The King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, our beautiful Saviour. All glory and thanks be to Him!

WOMEN'S MINISTRY

SANDY MURRAY

Fall is here, although in California it seems more like summer. Fall is the time we celebrate my favorite holiday, Thanksgiving. For the world it means turkey and football, but for those of us who are believers it is a time to reflect on God's grace and mercy lavished on His own through His Son's death and resurrection. The Women's Ministry would like to say thank you to all the women at FBC who have served and participated over the years. We have loved together, cried together, worked together and prayed together. Mostly we have grown in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior together. We look forward to more growth in the coming year.

I also want to thank all those who helped out with the garage sale. We are sending a check this month for \$500 to Teen Challenge to cover the cost of their Thanksgiving dinner for all the women and children living at the Center in Alum Rock. Thank you all for your generosity. Love, Sandy

NOVEMBER EVENTS

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Bible Study Begins

Wednesday, November 13 · 6:30 pm

Men's Breakfast in the Chapel

Saturday, November 23 · 8:30 am

Thanksgiving Eve Service & Dessert Social

Wednesday, November 27 · 7:00 pm

Nov. 11 Denise Jalilie

Nov. 16 Aihua Li

Nov. 16 Janet White

Nov. 19 Dave Shelton