

# Torrance First Baptist Church the Proclaimer

December 2018

Volume 31 Issue 12



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## Women's Ministries Presents:



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***Monday, December 3, 7:00 p.m.***

All ladies are invited to attend our annual evening of making Christmas Crafts and exchanging our homemade cookies and recipes. We will be making Christmas succulent centerpieces and also homemade Christmas cards. The cost is \$20 per centerpiece.

Bring your family and friends to hear our Worship Choir under the direction of Randy Stager present:

# Christmas Presence

A Gathering of Hope, Peace, and Love

Sunday  
December 9  
6:00 p.m.

Proclaimers are also available for viewing and printing on-line: [www.tfbclife.org](http://www.tfbclife.org)



### *Message from our Transitional Pastor:*

Dear Church Family,

Thank you for participating in our all church C.H.A.T. (Church Health Assessment Team) evaluation. Over 190 of you contributed via the online surveys and the focus groups. Wow! That is more than I expected!!

Some of the news is great. This church is deeply committed to the authority of God's Word. 75% of our people pray regularly in their personal walk with God. Many of you have found the Lord here and have grown in your faith through its teaching and other ministries. Also, 74% believe God is not finished with TFB ... that our best days are still ahead.

However, we have some blind spots that must be addressed. Like the frog in the kettle, these are very slowly, but surely, drowning us. The three largest blind spots are these:

1. We have become **inwardly focused**. 75% of you admitted this. The Apostle Paul put it this way ...

*"To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings"* (I Corinthians 9: 22-23).

For the sake of the Gospel, we need to *"become all things to all men,"* that is, adjust and adapt a little so visitors will feel welcome and loved here and want to come back, and eventually find Jesus as their personal Savior.

2. We don't have a **clear discipleship path**, that is, a comprehensive process or program that takes anyone and everyone from a place of spiritual infancy to spiritual maturity.

3. We, like most churches in America, are guilty of **"missional drift."** We have slowly drifted away from our primary, biblical mission of "making disciples," thus the urgency to win others has waned. This is the "Achilles heel" of most churches today.

But we're going to change all that. The Apostle Paul also wrote, *"I can do everything through Him Who gives me strength."* By God's grace and strength, we have begun addressing those three issues and others. Please pray for our S.L.T. (Strategic Leadership Team) as they revisit our mission and get our church back on track. Pray for us as we design and implement an effective discipleship path. And pray for us as we try to make this church more **"outwardly focused"** and less **"inwardly focused."** I'm sure you have some ideas how we can do that. Please share those ideas with one of our SLT members!

I look forward to great days ahead!

Pastor Alex

## **Reflections**

by Pastor Rog

Dear Church Family,

We have come to that time of year where it's easy to get sidetracked by excessive shopping and an overactive social calendar. In the process, we let these things squeeze out why we celebrate Christmas in the first place. May that not happen to us this year.

Last year at this time, we were just beginning to relocate here in Torrance. I HATE moving! In so doing, we had to downsize, and it wasn't nice. We gave lots of things to others—furniture and other items—that just wouldn't fit in our new home. (Though the home the Lord provided for us is beautiful, it is just smaller.) Other

items we threw away—even some of our cherished Christmas decorations. Really? Yes, really. The move was hard, but we were into our new home by Christmas Eve. We were terribly tired and our home wasn't as decorated as at other times, but it was such a blessing to be where God wanted us.

As Joyce and I sat in our new home, we wondered how it must have been for Joseph and Mary as they journeyed to Bethlehem. What a hard journey it was for them and especially for Mary as she was almost ready to give birth to the Lord Jesus. I wonder what went through their minds as they finally settled into that old stable and



prepared for our Lord's birth. (Please read Luke 2:1-7 here.)

We then thought of the shepherds out in the fields watching over their flocks and the glorious announcement that the angels brought to them (Luke 2:8-14). The angels praising God must have been glorious. Some day, because of God's great grace, we will join those angels as we praise our Savior in heaven.

Continued on p. 9

# SONSEEKERS' PAST & PRESENT CHRISTMAS PARTY SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8 ~ 6 P.M.

Join us at the Bundoc's, 23146 Audrey Avenue, in Torrance for dinner, devotional, caroling, and gift exchange. Bring a potluck side and/or a dessert and enjoy Al's meat selections. The cost is \$8 per person or \$15/family with **adult** children. Also bring a \$15 wrapped gift per person.



## Family Christmas Candlelight Service Sunday, December 23 6:00 p.m.

### My Beloved Widows

*"Loving, honoring, and caring  
For God's beloved widows"*



### Luncheon December 14 ~ 12 noon

Widows of any age are invited to meet here at TFB at 12 noon on Friday, December 14. You will be treated to a special luncheon that day. Call the church office or sign up in the patio if you will be able to attend.

### Christmas Card Exchange



The box will be in the foyer beginning December 2 as a courtesy to all who attend TFB. You may put your Christmas cards to other current TFB attendees in the box which will save you the expense of mailing them. Put cards in the slots which correspond to the recipients' last names.

The office will not be able to mail any cards that are not picked up, so be sure and check to see if there are any for you.

### Christmas



*for our Pastoral Staff*

The Deacons have set up a special fund through December 16 for the congregation to show their appreciation to the Pastoral Staff, which includes Alex, Rog, Matt, Karla, and Jay.

Please mark your envelope: *"Pastoral Staff Christmas."*



The new offering envelopes for 2019 will be in the foyer soon. If you don't have any assigned to you but would like some, call the office.

### Altar Flowers for 2019

The Flower Calendar for 2019 is in the foyer. If you would like to celebrate a special event in your life or honor a loved one, please sign up to reserve your preferred date—one sign-up per date, please. The cost is \$70 per arrangement and is **tax deductible**.

Please choose one date per family until all have had an opportunity to sign up. You may make your payment any time before your chosen date. Mark your envelope *"TFB Flower Donation"* to get credit for your gift.



# 4 MINISTRIES & Kids' News

**HIGH SCHOOL**  
*Sunday, December 2*  
*6:00 p.m.*



*& Decorate for Christmas*

**Pizza, drinks, and snacks provided.**



*C4 High School*  
*December 18, 6~9 p.m.*



Wear turtlenecks.

Bring a White Elephant gift to exchange.  
Food and beverages will be supplied.



*For Colossians' Kids*

Our end-of-the-year Christmas Party will take place after the regular Wednesday Night Family Dinner on **December 19**. This will be our last Colossians Kids until January 9, 2019.

*C4 College/Young Adults*

*"White Christmas" Party*

*December 20, 6~9 p.m.*

Dress in white.

Bring holiday dish or dessert to share.  
Bring a White Elephant gift to exchange.



*Family*  
*Christmas*  
*Caroling*

*December 21—6-9 p.m.*

In lieu of Kids' Night Out, we will have a family night with dinner provided.

After dinner, we will go caroling in the neighborhood and then come back to church and enjoy s'mores and hot chocolate.



## *WINTER CAMPS*

Colossians' Kids ~ February 22-24,  
at Forest Home

The other camp dates have not yet been nailed down. This is just to let you know that camps are coming. Parents, you can sign up now with a \$50 deposit. That might be a good Christmas gift for your child.

Congregation, if you'd like to help a youngster go to camp, who could not otherwise afford it, please write "*Camp Scholarship Fund*" on your envelope.



## *Enjoy Time with the Singles' Fellowship*



**Dinner Night ~ Saturday, December 1, 6:30 p.m. [Note date change]**  
~ Meet at Szechwan Chinese Restaurant, 21077 Pacific Coast Highway, Lomita (corner of PCH & Oak).



**Game Night ~ Saturday, December 29, 6:30 p. m. [Note date change because of Christmas weekend]** ~ Meet at Gloria Pedersen's, 817 Amapola Avenue in Old Towne Torrance. Bring drinks and snacks to share.



For additional questions, suggestions, or more information, call Gloria, 562/505-4495.

### TFB Academy

## *Becoming a Community of Disciples*

By Laura Springer, M.Div., Th.M, Ph.D.

Life on the ground is messy.  
God is Good.

Both of the above statements are true, though sometimes the messiness feels more true than God's goodness. Because of this, we need reminders.

**God is safe.** We need to remind ourselves that God's grace and mercy are always a safe refuge for his people. Our present, future, and end are secure in him. His Word tells us so (John 10:28). As we work together to understand the Bible, putting God's truth into practice in the messy dailies, we grow together as persons-in-community-in-Christ.

**Discipleship is a lifelong process.** Working and growing together is a lifelong process, not a point in time or class we take. Understanding the Bible shapes us for the sometimes bumpy journey of discipleship. Thinking, valuing, and doing, alongside our brothers and sisters, informed by Scripture, and aimed toward Christ, are the means of growth. The point of our thinking, feeling, and doing is to be conformed to the image of Christ, as we train in righteousness (1 Timothy 3:16) and develop our knowledge of God's story, our skill at being his people, and our commitment to expanding his kingdom.

*"Working and  
growing together  
is a lifelong process."*

**We are together in the dailies.** Working together to live more like Jesus in the messy dailies, we look to Jesus, the author and finisher of the faith, journeying in the company of our sisters and brothers and searching the Scripture so we might know who Jesus is and what it means to follow. The whole of Scripture speaks of Christ (John 5:39): his story, his people, and his kingdom. As we learn and live Scripture, both as individuals and as a community, we become more like Christ, more like who we are. We are one body and many members. We bring our individual passions and preferences and together direct them toward Christ and for his glory.

**We have a sure identity.** We have a sure identity in Christ. The Bible shows us what that identity looks like and helps us work out that identity in our context. We are those who live the story. We are God's people, and we are the subjects of the King. We are the church when gathered, and we are the church when dispersed. The connection we make between what God says in Scripture and who we are as persons-in-community-in-Christ will shape who we are being and becoming as a church.

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	Recurring Weekly Events:
							<b>Sunday</b>
2 2:30p Sing at Royalwood 6p H.S. Movie Nite	3 7p Women's Christmas Craft/ Cookie Exchange	4	5	6	7	1 11a Loaves & Fishes 6:30p Singles' Dinner Out	<b>Worship Services:</b> 9:15 a.m. & 11 a.m. Adult Sunday School, 9:15 & 11 a.m. Worship & Witness, 6 p.m. <b>[except 9th &amp; 23rd]</b> Children's Church, 9:15 a.m. Patio Fellowship, 10:30 a.m. Children & Youth S.S., 11 a.m.
9 12:15p SLT Mtg. 6p Choir Cantata	10	11 12n Shut-in Meeting	12	13 7p Beacon Light Mission	14 12n Widow's Luncheon	8 11a Choir Cantata practice 6p Sonseeker's Christmas Party	<b>Monday</b> Ladies' Prayer, 10:00 a.m. King's Karate, 6:30 p.m. <b>[both the above except 24th &amp; 31st]</b> Men's BSF, 6:55 p.m. <b>[except 17th, 24th, &amp; 31st]</b>
16	17 7p FacMan Team	18 6p HS Christmas Party 6p Ministry Teams: Fellowship, GO, Outreach, Worship, Disc. Dev. & Finance 7p Deacon/ess Mtngs	19 Colossians Kids Christmas Party	20 6p C4 College/ Young Adult Christmas Party	21 6p Family Dinner & Caroling	15 8a King's Karate Testing 7p Share & Care	<b>Tuesday</b> C4 High School Leadership, 5:30 p.m. C4 High School, 7 p.m. <b>[both the above except 25th]</b>
23 5:20p Prayer 6:00p Family Candlelight Service	24 Office closed	25 Merry Christmas Office Closed	26 Office Closed	27 Office Closed	28 Office Closed	29 6:30p Singles' Game Night	<b>Wednesday</b> Men's Lunch @ Sizzler, 1 p.m. Family Dinner, 6 p.m. Colossians Kids, 6:30 p.m. <i>Knowing God</i> Small Group, 6:30 p.m. Small Group w/Pastor Alex, 6:30p Jr. High QUEST, 6:30 p.m. Choir Practice, 7 p.m. <b>[all the above except 26th]</b> Open Volleyball, 8:15 p.m.
30	31 New Year's Eve Office Closed						<b>Thursday</b> Ladies' Bible Study, 2 p.m. <b>[except 13th, 20th &amp; 27th]</b> C4 College Group, 7 p.m. <b>[except 27th]</b> 7th Day Baptist Bible Study, 7 p.m.
							<b>Friday</b> Ladies meet @ Denny's for Bkfst., 9 a.m. Small Group @ Greteman's, 6:15 p.m. <b>[except 21st &amp; 28th]</b> <b>Saturday</b> Men's BSF Leaders, 6 a.m. <b>[except 15th, 22nd, &amp; 29th]</b>

**Upcoming January Events:**

- 1/1 ~ Office closed ~ Happy New Year!
- 1/5 ~ Loaves & Fishes
- 1/9 ~ Family Dinners, Children's Ministries, Jr. High & Bible Studies resume after the holidays
- 1/12 ~ Singles' Dinner Out, 6:30p
- 1/13 ~ SLT Meeting, 12:15p
- 1/18 ~ Kids' Night Out, 6p
- 1/26 ~ Singles' Game Night, 6:30p
- 1/27 ~ Annual Meeting & Potluck, 5:30p



**2018**



This month we are featuring the Iheonu family pictured above, r. to l.: Ugo Iheonu, Sr., his wife, Pat, and their adult son, Ugo, Jr.

**Ugo, Sr.** has been attending Torrance First Baptist Church for 2 years. He attends the 2<sup>nd</sup> service where he serves as one of the ushers. Ugo, Sr. participates in the 9:15 a.m. Sunday School class taught by Gale Lee that meets in the Friends in Christ Room. The class is currently studying the book of Luke and is discussing it chapter-by-chapter. Ugo, Sr., who has lived in Torrance for the past 14 years, also attends the Thursday evening Small Group led by Pastor Rog.

Ugo, Sr. declared Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior 40 years ago. His favorite Bible scripture is Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength."

In 1982 Ugo, Sr. immigrated to the United States from his native country of Nigeria for the purpose of continuing his higher education. He achieved a Bachelor of Science degree in teaching as well as an additional degree in Business Administration with a minor in accounting. Ugo, Sr. is self-employed in the field of accounting.

He considers himself a very friendly and outgoing person who enjoys witnessing and sharing the Love of the Lord. His hobby is reading all types of books.

**Pat Iheonu** attends the 2<sup>nd</sup> service with her husband, Ugo, Sr., and has been attending TFB for 2 years. Pat also participates in the 9:15 a.m. Sunday School class taught by Gale Lee. In addition, she attends, with her husband Ugo Sr., the Thursday evening Small Group led by Pastor Rog. She has called Torrance home for the past 14 years, but the family has lived in the South Bay for over 30 years.

Pat's favorite Bible scripture is Psalm 19:11, "Thy word have I hidden in my heart that I might not sin against Thee." The activity that brings her the most joy is serving others.

Pat immigrated to the United States in 1985 from her native home in Jamaica to further her education. She is an attorney and practices both Family and Civil Law. After Ugo, Sr. and Pat both immigrated to the United States separately, their Life Paths crossed and they met when they were working at the same company. They have been married 34 years and have a son, Ugo, Jr. and a daughter, Chidimma who is married. Both Ugo, Sr. and Pat are looking forward to becoming grandparents in the future.

Pat's hobbies include: reading, gardening and cooking Jamaican food—with her specialty being curry chicken.

**Ugo, Jr.** -- who is single -- also attends the 2<sup>nd</sup> service with his parents Ugo, Sr. and Pat, and has been coming to TFB for the past 2 years. He has lived in the South Bay for over 30 years where he grew up in Redondo Beach and attended Redondo Union High School. He has lived, along with his parents, in Torrance for the past 14 years.

After he graduated from high school in 2005, he attended the University of California at Riverside where he received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology / Pre-Law. He went on to further his education with a Master's Degree in Social Work from the University of Southern California. He has been working full time for the County of Los Angeles as a Children's Social Worker for the past 3 years.

He meets with other young adults in the 30 to 40 year old range at the Parsonage on Wednesday nights at 7:00 p.m. for a Bible study which is led by Pastor Alex. His favorite Bible scripture is Ephesians 2:8, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God."

He is proud to be an African-American who has two diverse ethnicities: Nigerian and Jamaican.



*Working at a Mission  
by Jerry Rilling,  
Executive Director*



*TFB Mission Outreach*

“Hey Jerry,” a friend asked, “why do you work at that mission? What’s there that makes you want to go to work? Don’t you just get tired of trying to help people who don’t seem to want help? I just can’t visualize myself doing what you do.” I have heard these questions many times before and the answer is always the same. “I love working with the homeless people.” Yes, there are days when I don’t

feel like going to work, but it’s not because of the homeless persons I get to talk to every day. It may be something more administrative such as writing a manual, looking for repairman to do an emergency repair when we need him, or finding out that the oven broke last night and the repairman has to order out parts for it which may take a week or so. These are really the frustrating times, but it is not because of the homeless. What is frustrating in the administrative end is that we can’t do more for the homeless because resources are just not available. Housing, being one of the greatest needs, is extremely hard to find, particularly housing for people with special needs such as this one that came to our attention [recently]. A young pregnant homeless girl gave birth to her baby and originally wanted to give it away. But Laura and Board Member, Lila, ministered to her on numerous occasions and encouraged her to keep the baby. After the child was born and the new mom begin breast-feeding the child, she realized how important it was to be a mom to this child. The frustration begins when we try to locate a place that will take on a mom with a brand-new child. There are places in Los Angeles that would lovingly take in a new mom and a child, but they are filled to capacity too. So Laura and Lila will spend hours on the telephone trying to find a place for this new little family.

...My friend asked, “When you get people who are druggies, thieves, liars, alcoholics, mental cases, etc. that are coming into the mission, how can you befriend someone like that?” “Dignity,” I replied, “we treat them with dignity.” We like to begin treating them in a way that is not the norm—meaning that we will go out of our way to be as friendly and generous as we possibly can. In the world of missions, this starts from the top down, that means with me. I must lead by example and set a code of conduct which is really a code of expectations from our staff members to treat everyone with dignity and respect. We do this by choosing people for leadership positions who have the right heart to work in an environment that can be challenging along with many great rewards. Not everyone who wants to work in a mission is cut out to do this type of work. It takes the right person to engage our guests with love. God’s Word says that He is love (1 John 4:8 and 4:16). If He is love and we are to be like Him, then we should love. Sometimes it’s a challenge to love our homeless guests but the Scripture tells us that we must love no matter what and work with them to the best of our ability. Working at a mission is more than a job; it’s a calling. It takes more than meeting the job requirements to care for someone who is genuinely in need. It calls for great patience while dealing with the multiple personalities that come through our doors with all their hurts, habits, and hang-ups and understanding they are lost, lonely, and need a friendly face in whom they can trust and confide. Working at a mission means that you must smile even when there’s nothing to smile about, and communicate with a voice that exudes compassion, care and a willingness to listen and help while tears attempt to expose themselves on your cheeks because we are working with involved hearts—theirs and ours. We love to treat our guests with the same type of dignity that we like to receive, because after they leave, they may not experience being appreciated in a dignified manner until they return the next time. Our joy comes from the little victories that we get to see on a frequent basis—victories such as someone accepting Christ for the first time in their life; a person’s first Bible as they handle it tenderly and lovingly; the man or woman who got keys to their own place after waiting many months while sleeping on our sidewalks and in our alleys; a certified birth certificate that makes a homeless person a someone; a job; new free glasses; a painful abscessed tooth being pulled at no cost; new clean clothes and a fresh shower; make up and other feminine needs; a donated blanket, tent, shoes, jacket, hygiene kit, and food to give them hot balanced meals; and so much more. It’s like every day is Christmas here at the mission as we give to those who are in need because you gave first. The day you decided to donate, you began to give a person temporarily experiencing homelessness, dignity. We love to pass it on.



**Thank you!**

Thanks to your generosity, the picture above shows the amount of food we collected and gave to help with the pantries at Love INC, Stillman Sawyer (Salvation Army), and Beacon Light Mission.

The picture on the left shows a trunk-load of shoeboxes on their way to the drop-off center. The total was 256 shoeboxes!

**YOU ARE AWESOME!!**



*Missionary  
Christmas  
Offering*

Each year we take an offering to help 2 of our missionary families at Christmas. This year the Missions Team has chosen the Lowerys with International Ministries and the Hardys with Frontiers. If you’d like to give towards this, please mark your envelopes “*Missionary Christmas.*”



# Reflections continued from p. 2

We had missed a lot family time because of the move, but we didn't let go of one of our favorite family traditions. Every night we would turn on the Christmas lights and sing Christmas carols to Jesus. Last year the lights were far fewer as were the decorations, but that's not Christmas. Jesus is what Christmas is all about! We didn't concern ourselves with how we sang for we sang more from our hearts than with our voices. In the quietness and with tear-stained cheeks, we worshiped the One Who had forever changed our lives. Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 9:15 came to our minds:

*"Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift."*

There was no big tree beautifully decorated and very few gifts adorned with beautiful paper and bows, but what we had for Christmas was the best. We had Jesus. Praise Him!

This year as we prepare for this glorious time of celebrating our Lord's birth, may we joyously celebrate Him with all of our hearts. We know many of you carry heavy concerns, but our prayer is that you will sense His presence, love and grace in a special way as you worship Him.

And so from our home to yours, we wish you a glorious Christmas and a blessed New Year. May this be your best Christmas ever as you celebrate Him Who brought to us life, love, joy, and peace.

Praising Jesus alone,  
*Pastor Rog & Joyce*



2018

## Committee REPORTS

**ATTENTION ALL COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND GROUP LEADERS:**

Your reports are due on or before **January 13, 2019**, so they can be included in the 2018 Year-End Report that will be made available to the congregation at the Annual Meeting which will be held on January 27, 2019.

## TFB Tithes & Offerings



Thank you for giving approximately \$64,567 in the month of October.



At this difficult time, please pray for the following families who have lost a loved one:

Bob Crutchfield lost his sister, Betty, and Dorothy Morgan's nephew, Wayne Ferrin, passed away



Please pray for the following who need continued prayer:

Barbara Ashcraft, Bob Baker, Michael Banfield, Nancy Christensen, Julie Cochran, Tom Cochran, Mary Crutchfield, Ruth Easley, Dutchess Gattis, Janet Graves, Mary Jacobsen, Barbara Johnson, Bill Johnson, Helen Kessenich, Joan Kindt, Joy Moore, Bill Morgan, Joy Pierson, Darlene Purdom, Penny Rahmeyer, Jean Rayner, Connie Reimer, Barbara Rudé, Edna Hazel Ruth, Claudine Schultz, Mary Schultz, Jo Standifer, Bill & Gerri Stoodley, Tammie Wakefield, Gertie Wissinger, and Art Zeller.

*Have you seen me?*



A few items are missing from the church kitchen including two punch bowls and several utensils. Please check your own kitchen to see if any hitch-hiked to your house and, if so, bring them back.



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*“A merry heart does good, like medicine” (Proverbs 17:22, NKJV).*

*The Proclaimer is a monthly publication of the First Baptist Church of Torrance, California, located at 2118 West Carson Street (6 blocks east of Crenshaw). Sunday services: 9:15 a.m. Worship Gathering (Contemporary Service); 11:00 a.m. Blended Service (with Sunday School for all ages); and 6:00 p.m. Evening Service. Mid-week events for children and students: C4 College; C4 High School; C4 Jr. High Quest; and Colossians Kids for children.*

*For more information, contact the church office: 310.328.5030 or tfbc@pacbell.net. Or visit us on the web at www.tfbelife.org*