



THE SPIRE

April 2013

MIXON MUSES

In commenting on the Easter texts for this year, David Lose writes, "...when God raised Jesus from the dead God was creating a new reality; overthrowing death, sin, and all that would oppress us; and declaring once and for all that life is more powerful than death and love more enduring than tragedy." A new way of seeing things, a new reality, a new creation, a new thing – God's realm, God's reality, God's creation, God's thing. Sunday we used Isaiah 65 as the text for the Easter sermon – "For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating; for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and delight in my people..." (Isaiah 65:17-19b).

This text is consonant with our theme for this year, "God's new Thing" – "Look! I am doing a new thing; now it sprouts up; don't you recognize it?" (Isaiah 43:17). Sunday I said that, among other things, God's new creation is characterized by liberating freedom, radical hospitality and amazing grace. These are reasons to shout "Alleluia!" and to dedicate ourselves to making God's new thing instrumental in our lives and in the world around us. Following Barth's famous reminder that we should carry the gospel in one hand and the newspaper (or internet?) in the other, I want to just touch on four issues currently "in the news" that I believe need to be addressed in making God's new creation a reality on earth.

The first is marriage equality. Two organizations to which I belong, the Alliance of Baptists and Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists were official participants in a Service of Prayer for Love and Justice held Monday evening, March 25, at the Lutheran Church of the Reformation in Washington D.C. in advance of the Supreme Court hearings in regard to California Proposition 8 and the Federal Defense of Marriage Act. If I had been closer, I would have joined in. It is quite appropriate to pray for wisdom and justice in this matter.

To me, it is absurd for Christians to continue to argue for the sanctity of our current marriage practices as if they were somehow scripturally ordained and ancient. They are neither. Marriage has rarely been a sacred practice throughout history. If you want to read a trenchant commentary on this absurdity, I refer you to an essay by Christian ethicist, Miguel de la Torre on Christianity's struggle to correctly interpret the gift of marriage (www.abpnews.com/opinion/commentaries/item/8304-getting-marriage-wrong).

As I have argued before, a Baptist perspective on God's new creation would not allow us clergy to act as agents of the state (i.e., signing marriage licenses and making proclamations for the state). It would encourage us to bless all sorts of relationships in God's name. It would challenge us as a community to support and sustain healthy relationships among all God's children. It is past time for the church to treat all of God's children equally and fairly, regardless of their God-given sexual orientation or gender identity.

Equally absurd and even more deadly are the specious arguments being used by various firearms advocates to oppose gun control. Twice in Isaiah, the prophet envisions God's holy mountain, a place where "they shall neither hurt or destroy." There is simply no room for assault weapons, large magazines of ammunition and the unmonitored sale of firearms in God's new creation. In fact, "the wolf lies with the lamb" in a sacred image that moves us beyond enmity, the projected need for security and, I suppose even hunting. We may not be ready to become vegetarians and we may feel some need to protect ourselves, our loved ones and our homes from the difficult exigencies of modern living, but reducing the type and amount of weaponry generally available can only move us closer to God's new creation. It is shameful that a powerful gun lobby can hold the nation's leadership hostage when a growing majority of our citizens favor gun control and evidence from all over the "first world" testifies to the effectiveness of gun control.

Immigration Reform is in the news because the president has committed himself to this as a legacy issue for this administration. This week the Associated Press has made a (belated) decision to drop the hateful moniker, illegal immigrant,

from the repertory for its reportage. Just yesterday, I saw on facebook this provocative quotation from Elie Wiesel, “No human being is illegal. Human beings can be beautiful or more beautiful, they can be fat or skinny, they can be right or wrong, but illegal? How can a human being be illegal?” Spoken like a true citizen of God’s new creation, Wiesel has long been one of its key prophets for our times.

We do not have the authority to declare any of God’s children illegal, unwanted or unwelcome. I know that immigration reform is complicated but that is not a justification for avoiding it. People who come to our shores looking for relief from oppression or just looking for a better life for themselves and their families need to find a welcome. Without delving into economic injustice and inequity, in God’s new creation (as we find on this planet for which God has given us responsibility,) there is enough resource for everyone to live well, without fear of hunger and homelessness. Hymn writer Brian Wren urges us to “Break the bread of belonging. Welcome the stranger in the land. We have each been a stranger; we can try to understand.”

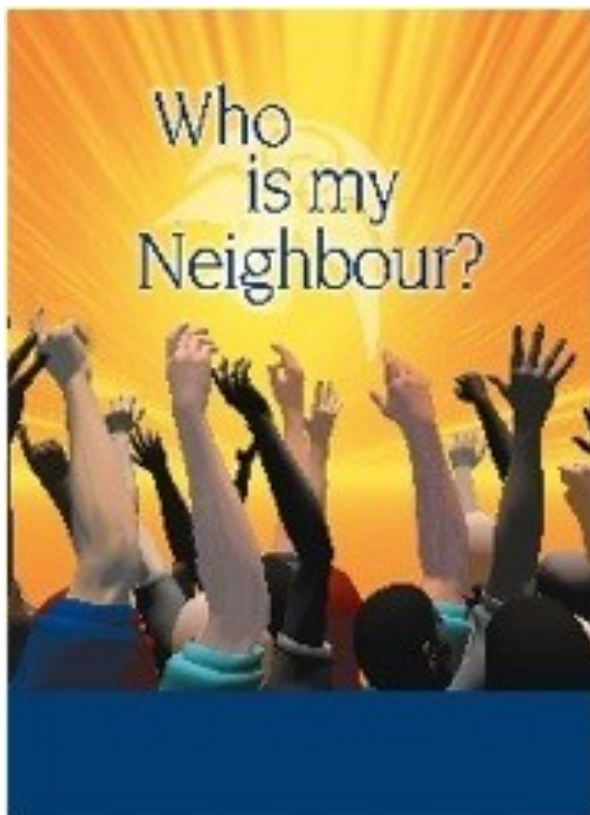
Finally, there is ongoing news coverage of war and threats of war. As we try to scale back our military operations in Afghanistan, there are new threats in Syria, Iran and Korea. Deep-seated, irrational enmity, ancient and new, threatens to destroy the earth and its people. God’s new creation is a “peaceable kingdom” and as followers of Jesus, we have committed ourselves to the Prince of Peace. It becomes vital for us actively to bear witness to and work for peace on earth and good will among all God’s people. As no one is illegal in God’s new creation, neither is anyone enemy. Jesus, himself, taught us that the one we judge to be enemy is actually our neighbor! Somehow we must gain the perspective, believe it and hold on to it that we are all God’s children...everyone of us, regardless of the differences we may want to emphasize. God’s amazing grace extends to and embraces one and all.

In another commentary on Sunday’s text, biblical scholar, Arland J. Hultgren writes, “Easter...marks the beginning of a new creation. It begins with the resurrection of Jesus, and it continues in the passing of time where the gospel is proclaimed and people come to faith.” In the passing of time and in living out the gospel, the

new creation comes closer and becomes more real. Hultgren concludes with a challenge to all of us who would be Easter people, citizens of God's new creation, the living body of Christ. "The church," he says, "at its best continues to be the community of the new creation in a world that is too often headed for dissolution by violence, abuse, death, and destruction. Being people of the resurrected Lord Jesus, the church is in the business of praying for the renewal of the world and seeking to renew it."

This is God's new thing for us, ancient and timeless as God's own being. We are to pray for and to work for the establishment of God's new creation, of God's realm (as Jesus kept proclaiming it) on earth, here and now. It is a challenge and it is a gift to be called to such a life. More reasons to join the chorus and shout, "Alleluia!"

Pastor Rick



Palm Sunday Images of Worship and Celebration



Maundy Thursday Light Supper at First Baptist Church



Palo Alto



First Baptist and Covenant Presbyterian joined to observe Maundy Thursday with Light Supper and Communion around the table in Fellowship Hall. Then we went to the Sanctuary and visited the Ten Stations of the Cross with scriptures and singing.

Jin & Jane Chin



Christian Education and Family Life

Friends of God,

Well...that was a full month.

March was full to o'er flowing with opportunities for fellowship and prayer (sometimes the two together). I hope you found a way to include yourself in the goings on in Lent. There was much to be enjoyed. The kids put together a little Passion play. There were many, many prayer services with Covenant Presbyterian Church. We were a busy group of people! To that end, however, I'd love to hear from you. What's working for you in what we offer? What could be different? Send me an e-mail at tripp@anglobaptist.org. I would love to know what you would like to see happen here. I'd especially like to know what times of the week are best for you. Don't be shy! Send me a list!

In April we'll spend some time in Adult Spiritual Formation talking about Sonic Theology. That's right. Sonic Theology. I hope you'll join in. At the end of the month we'll begin a new book study, Cathleen Falsani's *Sin Boldly*. Martin Luther, the old German reformer once exclaimed "Sin boldly so that grace may abound!" Cathleen is a journalist and this book is about times that she has witnessed grace...perhaps in unexpected places. We'll spend three Sundays with this book beginning with the last Sunday of the month. Cathleen will join us on Sunday, June 2. Keep your calendars clear!

I know it's hard to believe but summer will soon be upon us. As I write this, baseball season is just under way (my fantasy team is terrible). We'll be in the thick of summer fun before you know it. We've already started planning potlucks for the coming months (Keep May 10 open!). I hope you can join in the fun.

Peace and All Good Things,

Tripp

Christian Education and Family Life Events

Receipt from International Ministries - January Pigs for Kids in Haiti Offering

"You glorify God...by the generosity of your sharing" 2 CORINTHIANS 9:13



INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES
COME. GROW. CHANGE.
www.internationalministries.org

3/15/2013

First Baptist Church
305 N California Ave
Palo Alto, CA 94301-4105

Account #: 507; Receipt #: 58769; Amount: \$1,602.00; Deposit Date: 3/13/2013
Your total year-to-date tax deductible contribution is: \$1,602.00

Thank you very much for your \$1,602.00 gift to the work of International Ministries. (Your gift designations are listed below).

Yours together in Mission,

	Gift Amount:	Non-Deductible Amount*
HAITI/NZUNGA/PIGS FOR KIDS	\$1,602.00	\$0.00
	\$1,602.00	\$0.00

Credited Church:

*Thank you for your
partnership in support of
the Nzunga ministry!*

Celebrating 200 years • 1814 - 2014

Reid S. Trulson

Reid Trulson, Executive Director
INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES

Questions? Please call 800-222-3872, ext. 2323

NOTE: This letter serves as your receipt. Donor did not receive goods or services in exchange for this gift. This contribution is received and accepted with the understanding that International Ministries assumes complete discretion and direction over the usage of this gift. Indicates that item is not tax deductible (*)

American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (operating as International Ministries) began its pioneer mission work in 1814 in Burma and today works in Asia, Africa, Europe, the Middle East and the Americas serving more than 1,800 long-term and short-term missionaries in more than 70 countries. Its central mission is to help people come to faith in Jesus, grow in their relationship with God, and change their worlds through the power of the Spirit.

Friday Fellowship! 6:00pm Let's all come together on Friday, May 10 for a pot-luck dinner. Bring pictures of your mother again! Bring an old letter. Bring a remembrance of her. Heck, if you can...bring your mother! Like last year we'll gather to celebrate Mom and what she means to us. If you can, and this is important: MAKE YOUR MOM'S FAMOUS ___(fill in the blank)___ to share! We're gonna eat your mama's cookin'!

THE WORK OF THE CHURCH



- ◆ **TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY** is held on **Tuesdays at 10:30 AM** at the home of **Thelma Parodi, 543 South El Monte Avenue, Los Altos**. Anyone interested in studying the lectionary texts for the following Sunday is welcome to attend. Let Pastor Rick know if you need a ride
- ◆ **CHURCH CHOIR REHEARSAL** is held **each Thursday at 7:30 PM** in the parlor. New voices are always welcome to join.
- ◆ **MEN'S BREAKFAST, Every first and third Wednesday at 8 AM**, at **Hobee's Restaurant, 4224 El Camino Real, Palo Alto**. All the men from our Church family are welcome.



- ◆ **WOMEN'S BRUNCH** meets on the **Fourth Thursday, of every month at 10 AM**. Yes it is the third Thursday, so try to be flexible. Some of us can only manage one major event per day. Maundy Thursday is on March 28 and we will be hosting a simple supper and service. All women of our church community are invited. Please join us at **Country Gourmet Restaurant, 2098 West El Camino Real (at Rengstorff)** in Mountain View.



OTHER ACTIVITIES

- **RENEWAL TASK TEAM** meeting, **5:00 PM, Friday, April 5**, in the parlor.
- **THE CIC MINISTRIES JAIL MINISTRY TRAINING** is **April 6, 2013, 9 AM -1 PM** at **Maranatha Christian Center, 1811 S. Seventh St, San Jose**. This is an informational meeting for anyone interested in doing ministry with adults or juveniles in the Santa Clara County correctional facilities. There is no need to register. Rev. Louann Roberts, Correctional Institutions Chaplaincy, 408-957-5822

THE AMERICAN BAPTIST SEMINARY OF THE WEST (ABSW)

invites you to

SEMINARY SATURDAY EXTRAVAGANZA

Saturday, April 13

This will be a morning of workshops led by ABSW faculty and select alumni and students for Pastors, staff ministers, church leaders, laypersons, young adults, current and prospective seminarians. Choose up to three of nine workshops on topics related to biblical studies, social concerns, practical ministry skills, and more – all relevant to ministry in the 21st century. Only \$10 per person or \$60 per church/org. (for 6 people or more). Registration deadline is April 5. A full listing of workshops and descriptions, schedule, and registration information are available at www.absw.edu or call 510-841-1905 x229. ABSW is located at 2606 Dwight Way, Berkeley, CA. or check in the church office.

YOU ARE INVITED - to learn and do the work of God....

"Branching Out, Growing Deep"

April 19-20th - Allen Temple Baptist Church

You don't want to miss this amazing Missions Conference of the new American Baptist Churches of the Central Pacific Coast, featuring:

Reid Trulson - Director of International Ministries; Vickie Goff - ABHMS - missions work in the US; Fela Barrueto - ABHMS - prisoner re-entry and aftercare; Ivy & Emerson Wu - Missionaries to Macau, China; Kent Harrop - FBC McMinnville; Carole Moore - ABW ministries; Rainbow Acres; Seafarers Ministries; Pre-tour of Allen Temple's mission ministries; Missionary Partnership Teams; and so much more!!!!

Childcare available! For Schedule & Registration, contact Pastor Rick or the church office.

- **CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING on Thursday, April 18 at 5:00 PM** in the parlor.



APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Happy Birthday this month to:

Liza Spiridon	April 1
Thelma Parodi	April 5
Dylan Ha	April 9
Laura Garcia	April 13
Peggy Johnson	April 15
Coleen Watson	April 18
Wai Hon Lee	April 29
Ruth Owen	April 29

SENIOR CHAT

*At Covenant Presbyterian Church
670 East Meadow Drive, Palo Alto*

Senior Chat welcomes people who wish to stretch spirit, mind and body, make new friends from other churches, and enjoy light refreshments. We usually meet twice monthly in the Fireside Room of Covenant Presbyterian Church at 10:00. No RSVP is necessary. **Senior Chats are currently on a brief hiatus as its facilitator recovers from orthopedic surgery but will resume on May 10th.** For more information, contact Rev. Dona Smith-Powers at 650-494-3093.

ADULT SPIRITUAL FORMATION

(11:30 in the Parlor)

Here is the schedule for April. We hope that you will all join in. The conversation promises to be engaging and enriching.

- April 7: Field Notes: Tripp Hudgins, Sonic Theology
April 14: Field Notes: Tripp Hudgins, Sonic Theology
April 21: The Newspaper in One Hand...
April 28: *Sin Boldly*, by Cathleen Falsani

Join us this month as we delve into how music, the sound and the lyric, are a symbol no less than a Byzantine icon. We'll talk about how music is a kind of theological craft, even a form of theological thinking. Then we'll spend a day wrangling with current events. Bring something to share.

Finally, on the last Sunday of the month, we'll begin the first of a three-week series on **Cathleen Falsani's** book, ***Sin Boldly: A Field Guide for Grace***. Cathleen will be joining us the first Sunday of June as a guest preacher and speaker. So, let's be ready to welcome her!

Peace and All Good Things,
Pastor Tripp

NEWS FROM CORINTO

In December, I wrote and asked Ricardo Castillo, pastor of our sister church in Corinto, Nicaragua about the School. I wanted to confirm my translation that they were only offering secondary school for 2013. So this is his reply on Feb. 11, 2013.

“For the educational year 2013, we will not offer a Primary level because of certain difficulties in enrollment. There are very few students enrolled (20) and with that number it is not possible to pay 7 teachers!

We hope that next year will have a better enrollment so that we can continue our education programs. Therefore, we are only promoting and offering secondary level.



A wall was constructed (one of the projects named in January's Spire to enlarge the classroom for secondary). The cost of materials was \$455 and labor was \$100, with the total investment being \$550.

Forgive me for being so late to answer your question, but the work at the beginning of the year has been intense and my fractured right hand has not yet healed completely. (I be-





lieve from his Facebook page that this fracture occurred as a result of an earthquake.)

Greetings to the congregation in Palo Alto. Please accept greetings from our growing, young congregation in Corinto, Nicaragua.

I wish you all the peace of God,”

Ricardo Castillo

Pastor of the Primera Iglesia Bautista
Corinto, Nicaragua

Addendum: Since receiving this e-mail, I received another 2/25 which explained that our \$500 was used specifically for renovation of the electrical system for 5 classrooms, fans for ventilation, and materials for the repair of 120 student desks.



**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
Council Meeting Minutes
March 21, 2013**

Moderator Carolyn Shepard opened the meeting at 5:00 PM.

Present: Dan Cudworth, Jane and Jin Chin, Marilyn Hunwick, Eleanor and Hugh Satterlee, and Moderator Carolyn Shepard.

Carolyn opened the meeting with a short prayer asking for guidance for the meeting.

Pastor Rick was absent from the meeting tending to the needs of his sister's family in Boise on the death of his brother-in-law. He left behind a written report covering his recent activities, noting ongoing Lenten activities, recent visiting at the Terraces, and early stage discussion with a sound engineer looking to improve the church's sound system. Rick has met with what seems a serious contractor regarding the patio improvement. The first preliminary estimate was very high, but there are ways to reduce scope and partitioning the work into smaller portions to be accomplished over time. He noted that attendance at the Lenten events shared with Covenant Presbyterian Church has been disappointing so far. An evaluation will follow.

Rick reports that his recent discussions with Dan Ng, Pastor of the First Chinese Baptist Church in San Francisco indicate that any possible plant in our church is very remote. Rick will explore other avenues with Marsha Patten of Evergreen.

Jin reviewed the Treasurer's report, indicating that is still too early to determine how things will turn out, but noting that no funds have yet been needed from Special Funds. \$1,000 has been received from the Balasore Technical School for disbursement by Mission and Outreach. Otherwise, things are proceeding per plan.

Jane reported for Finance. She presented a motion from Finance authorizing Carolyn, as Moderator, to sign papers related to the sale of the Annex on behalf of the church.

Moved that the Council as the governing board of the First Baptist Church of Palo Alto:

- 1) Reaffirms the traditional responsibilities of the church's Moderator and the traditional signature authority of that office
- 2) Agrees to pay on behalf of the First Baptist Church of Palo Alto the \$1,000 deductible for insurance in the unlikely event that legal action should be taken against the Moderator.

Jane reported that the Lundquist savings fund has benefitted by the recent growth in the stock market as over \$37,000 profit has become available for use by the church in conformance with Lucile Lundquist's will.

Hugh distributed a statement regarding who should vote in church business meetings. After discussion it was agreed that the statement should be published in the Spire to complete a task assigned from the Annual Business meeting. The Council considers that it is best that voting be limited to those present,

Task Teams: The need for a Facilities Task team was discussed. Someone needs to be a spokesperson in Council meetings. Possible candidates were suggested. It was noted that the flower committee needs new leadership.

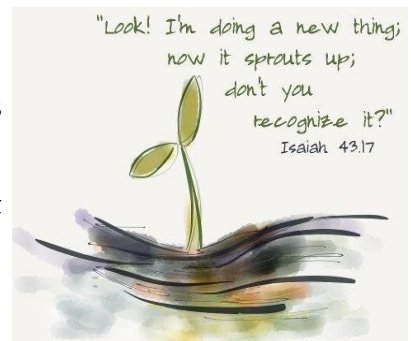
Patio: See above

Mission: Carolyn reported news in a recent email from Corinto which will be reported in the Spire. We have received word about our contribution to the Kids for Pigs project from Herb Rogers of IM staff who visited Haiti recently. Two books on peacemaking by Dan Buttry, our targeted missionary, are in the church library.

The next Council meeting will be held on Thursday, April 18, at 5:00 PM. The first Quarterly Business meeting is scheduled for April 21, 2013.

Carolyn closed the meeting with a short prayer at 6:54 PM.

Submitted: Hugh Satterlee, Clerk



AMERICAN BAPTIST NEWS

Latest News from Dan and Sarah Chetti:

Dan and Sarah serve at the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary (ABTS) in Beirut, Lebanon, where Dan teaches theology, coordinates graduate studies, and mentors students. Dan also ministers to the Sudanese Congregation that meets at Fanar Baptist Church, Lebanon, and the Chettis are involved in the International Church in Beirut.

While Sarah works on the development and management of the ABTS library, she has also been involved in ministries among the maids who are locked up in a local prison. She takes fresh fruits and vegetables to them and brings their letters to be mailed and also contacts their employers for assistance to bail them out of prison.

After 7 years of ministry among the maids Sarah is launching INSAAF – an Integrated Center for the Ministry among the Maids. She asks for prayers that the harassed, discriminated, suffering maids from several Asian and African countries will find a safe haven where someone listens to their stories and ministers to their needs. Please pray for people to help Sarah, to convert the building creating counseling and work stations, and for money for the renovation work.

Lebanon is overwhelmed by more than 200,000 refugees due to conflicts in neighboring Syria and Iraq. Families are living in difficult situations including unfinished buildings open to the elements in the cold winter season. Many refugees are Christian minorities, and the students of the Seminary identify with the refugees and are deeply disturbed by these changes in society. Join Sarah and Dan and their students in praying that Lebanese churches will reach out to the refugees and minister among them, and for churches & donors in the US who would like to participate in this ministry.

From a recent IM prayer letter and their newsletter, Beirut Buzz. We support the Chettis through our budget and the World Mission Offering.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Council Considerations on the Vote

The Council's Decision Regarding Who Should Vote

Our constitution currently requires that anyone who wishes to vote in the church's business meetings must be present for the vote. This requirement, coupled with our small size, led the church to adopt a revision to the constitution establishing a subset list of "active members" to be the basis of the voting quorum. "Active members" are those members who attend church, participate in church activities, live locally, provide support to the church and are competent to assist in decision making by the church. Various alternative ideas were offered in active discussions including "voting by proxy" and "absentee voting by mail or email."

The Council has discussed these options and decided that it is best to continue with the current policy for the following reasons:

- Voting by mail would make it possible for local members to vote should they be absent on vacation, ill and at home or some other reason. However, where is the line to be drawn between such persons and persons who are church members and live elsewhere? Some of these may be somewhat knowledgeable of issues, but how to determine who is knowledgeable and who isn't? The Council believes it best that knowledge be first hand, obtained locally rather than the brief accounts in church publications or by means of information or opinions provided by those closer to the issues.
- Voting by proxy is the process by which one person gives another the power to cast his own vote. This process is used in stockholder meetings for big companies. It enables eligible voters to cast a ballot even though the meeting may be on the other side of the world. It relies on fixed positions for each faction of the voters. The Council deems this practice unwise for our church because it depends on factions. The Council believes that each member should individually cast a vote on the basis of actual participation in discussion and activities with knowledge of the local feelings.

The April Mission Offering Goal for Student Scholarships is \$750



Hobart Hall

The American Baptist Seminary of the West (ABSW) is a charter member of the Graduate Theological Union (1962). ABSW was founded in 1871 and is the center of American Baptist ecumenical theological education in the far western United States. The seminary is affiliated denominationally with ABC USA and the Progressive National Baptist Convention. ABSW admits students from a variety of denominational traditions. ABSW is described on Twitter as Multi-Cultural, Multi-Ethnic, Evangelical, and Ecumenical.

Hobart Hall, the heart of ABSW's campus, a four-story brick Tudor Revival building designed by one of California's most famous architects, Julia Morgan, and dedicated in 1921, is a California state landmark.

ABSW offers its students resources through the largest partnership of seminaries and graduate schools in the United States. ABSW students may take classes at 9 other GTU seminaries, and have access to one of the finest theological libraries in the world, a faculty of distinguished scholars, and the resources of UC Berkeley. Through the GTU, students can pursue ABSW degrees as well as Ph.D., Th.D., and M.A., and two joint Ph.D. programs with UC Berkeley.

On April 12 ABSW is sponsoring *Seminary Saturday Extravaganza* for both clergy and lay leaders. Through nine presentations, opportunities will be provided to receive fresh ideas for ministry, to upgrade leadership skills, and to experience contemporary seminary scholarship. For more about this program, and other news and information, see www.absw.edu.

Our church has many connections with ABSW: Tripp Hudgins is currently enrolled at ABSW as he works on a PhD degree at the GTU. Our pastor is a graduate of ABSW, as are Dona Smith Powers and Lynn Hunwick. Pearl Pe's father was a visiting scholar from Burma. On May 18, 2013, ABSW Commencement will be held at the Burmese Mission Baptist Church, Oakland, (formerly Oakland First Baptist Church).

Our goal of \$750 for the April Mission Offering for scholarships will be matched by the ABC Home Mission Society up to \$750. We encourage you to give generously and continue the long-standing support to students by First Baptist Church, Palo Alto.

Marilyn and Lynn Hunwick

Minister: Rev. Randle (Rick) Mixon
650-327-0561; FAX 650-327-1562
Email: fbc-paloalto@sbcglobal.net
Web Site: www.fbc-paloalto.org

The April 2013 Special Offering
American Baptist Seminary of the West
Goal: \$ 750

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF PALO ALTO
305 N. California Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94302-4105

Address Correction Requested

HE IS RISEN!

