



PazNaz
April 2015

WELCOME



Welcome to *Transformed Under the Pepper Tree*. In this monthly magazine, you will read stories of how God is changing people's lives at PazNaz, transforming them into the image of Jesus Christ by the power of his Spirit!

You might be asking, "Where can I find information about a specific PazNaz event?" Some information about specific events on campus is found within these pages, but each month *Transformed* is focused on relating stories about what PazNaz is really all about. Rather than programs or events, there are stories about changed lives, stories about people coming in contact with the Savior, and people exploring what it means to become a follower of him. It is exciting to hear what God is doing in the lives of people!

Years ago, Pastor Earl Lee and a group of staff members gathered around a pepper tree located on the northern-most point of what was to become the site for First Church of the Nazarene of Pasadena. They dreamed and prayed that God would provide a place where more people could find power for living through Jesus. What began then has been going on for over thirty years as men and women, boys and girls have come into relationship with Christ in significant ways under the shade of that old pepper tree. The mission of the church hasn't changed. May it continue to flourish as people experience the transforming power of Christ.

Blessings,

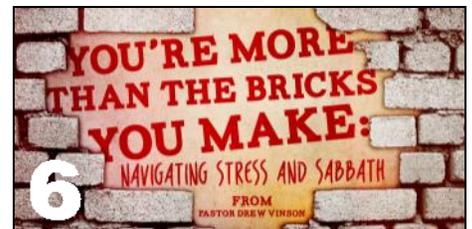
B. Scott Anderson
Executive Pastor

CONTENTS

Gratitude from Generosity	3
from Pastor Keegan Lenker	
You're More than the Bricks You Make	6
From Pastor Drew Vinson	
A Seed that Sprouted into a Desire	10
from Steve Braun	

Transformed is a magazine publication of First Church of the Nazarene of Pasadena (PazNaz). It is designed to highlight the Church's stories of personal transformation. For a complete overview of PazNaz, their beliefs, and ministries, please visit the website www.paznaz.org.

TRANSFORMED
Issue #48—April 2015
The Magazine of PazNaz
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Gratitude from Generosity



Keegan & Jayme Lenker
with Joncee & Kaizlee

In March of 2007, I was sitting at my desk in Murrieta, California and could feel that God was beginning the process of a transition for my family in ministry. So often in my life I have thought that I knew how God's call was going to play out. It's in those times that God reveals he is up to something even bigger.

In that same month I received an email from Pastor Scott Daniels asking where we were at in life and if Jayme and I thought we were up for a transition in ministry to PazNaz. In the past I had jokingly told Pastor Scott I would work for him someday, but I didn't know how or when that would take place. When I approached Jayme about PazNaz she said, "Oh, that place is big. Wait, Pastor Scott is there? We have to look into this."

In of June of 2007, we joined the staff at PazNaz and it was so humbling to think that Pastor Scott and a church like PazNaz would invite us to come alongside them in ministry. We were extremely grateful for the opportunity and belief that was placed in us as we began to explore Youth Ministries at PazNaz.

I was told early on to remember that in a place this size there will be people who will know who you are, but you won't necessarily know who they are. I had been here only ten days when someone from this congregation said hello to me at Target. Again, it was humbling to think about the opportunity extended to my family at PazNaz.

Over the next few years we began to explore and establish our rhythms of ministry with the youth. Some weren't thrilled we had come. Others jumped right in. Still others were surprised we could remember their names. Through the space of Youth Ministry, many parents supported us when we took "that trip they weren't sure about," got nervous about "that particular topic in youth group," or wondered "how youth could find Christ in the midst of the busyness of life." It is with extreme gratitude that I think about the extension of grace and trust given to us as we learned to love the youth at PazNaz.

Not too long after I was hired, Pastor Scott asked this unproven, hyperactive youth pastor to preach on a Sunday morning. The generosity he extended to me in providing that opportunity made me feel very proud... and terrified

at the same time. Trying to follow "the man" in the pulpit in a room full of people with so much experience and education defined fear at its finest for me. Yet, the generosity and support of the congregation when I've had the chance to preach on Sundays has given me greater confidence in my abilities. I am so grateful for your love. I would not be the man I am today without it.

Not too long after we arrived, we began a new journey with our son, Joncee, and his Leukemia diagnosis. We had been on staff all of 8 weeks when our world was turned upside down with this new reality. From financial support, space to be away from the office, bone marrow drives, blood drives, meals in the waiting room, calls, cards, or even sitting in silence in a hospital room with us as we sat with the unknown, PazNaz defined generosity and care. I often dream of what it's like to see the Body of Christ be what it is called to be for one another. PazNaz has been that dream for my family and we're extremely grateful to have been the recipients of such an amazing blessing during this season with our son.

My passion for Intergenerational Ministry began in 2010 as I was feeling discouraged about the lives of youth in the church and many in the history of my ministry who were far from God. It all started over a cup of coffee with Pastor Scott. A cup of coffee that gave me the space to talk about my feelings and dreams for the future. Out of this time came the opportunity for me to explore how PazNaz could become a community of all ages that worship and share life together.

During the 4+ years of this new direction, we tried some things that worked, some things we'd

like to forget about, and sought to educate ourselves by owning up to who we are and creating space to be what God was inviting us into. Through mission trips to Central America, trips with the Senior Adults to Manzanar, classes, and intentional worships services, the generosity of the board and staff to explore together leaves me grateful to be a part of a church that journey's into the unknown. I dream of the day when the DNA of our church communities are reflections of the very generational realities we all deeply know we need.

Because of what PazNaz has been for me, personally, and for my family, we're taking this next step not just as the Lenker Family, but as the Body of Christ extending itself into the lives of the people we are now called to serve in Gig Harbor, Washington. So much of who I am as a pastor has been experienced and lived out because of those that call PazNaz their church family.

Because of the generosity of all of you, there is a church community that has extended the generosity of invitation to us. I'm again grateful for this opportunity and grateful to God for what he has done, is doing, and will continue to do as the narrative of God unfolds through me wherever he leads. Thank you PazNaz.

You are loved.

- Pastor Keegan Lenker

My passion for Intergenerational Ministry began in 2010 as I was feeling discouraged about the lives of youth in the church and many in the history of my ministry who were far from God. It all started over a cup of coffee with Pastor Scott. A cup of coffee that gave me the space to talk about my feelings and dreams for the future.

PazNaz's

EGGS- TRAVAGANZA

2015

VALLEY CENTER CAMPUS
Saturday, March 28
11:00 am - 1:00 pm

PAZNANZ CAMPUS
Saturday, April 4
11:00 am - 1:00 pm



Egg Hunts • Bounce Houses • Petting Zoo
Popcorn • Prizes & Games • Easter Bunny
Hot Dogs and Drinks - \$1 Each



PREPARING FOR LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

*An Interview with High School Senior, Sarah Wright
from Pastor Drew Vinson*

Soon there will be high school students walking across various platforms in the community dressed in long robes and funny-looking hats in order to receive some really important pieces of paper. It's time to cue "Pomp and Circumstance" – graduation season is almost here!

Graduating high school is one of the "milestone moments" that marks a significant transition point in the lives of today's adolescents. Students suddenly find themselves faced with decisions that will help set the trajectories of their lives. Whether they are planning to move away from home, move into a dorm room, or move into a career, this is an important transitional time for these former high school students and their families.

Extensive research from the Fuller Youth Institute reveals that only one out of every seven graduates leaves church youth ministries feeling "very prepared" for college (*Sticky Faith: Youth Worker Edition*, by Kara Powell, Brad Griffin, and Cheryl Crawford, p 165). The research also shows that the less a student feels prepared for life after high school, the less likely they are to hold on to the faith that we adults have worked so hard to instill in them during their childhood and teenage years. "The more prepared students feel—whether that be to make friends or to handle new lifestyle choices—the more likely their faith is to grow" (p 165). How can a church community better prepare students for life after high school?

That is a good question – one that I asked myself a lot last year when I thought about the class of 2015 at PazNaz. This year's group of graduating seniors is near and dear to my heart. I started volunteering with Student Ministries when these students were still freshmen. I have watched them grow and mature into incredible Christ-like leaders. But before I get too teary-eyed about that, let me get back to the question at hand: How can a church community like PazNaz better prepare students for life after high school?

Back in September, Pastor Leslie Moreno and I started a Sunday School class for high school seniors called *Transitions* (an appropriate

title, don't you think?). Once a month, we invited the group of ten to fifteen seniors to a special class that was all about preparing for life after high school. There has been a wide range of topics covered in these last several months: finishing high school well, doing your own laundry, managing your time and finances, attending to your spiritual life, and navigating changing relationships after you leave home, just to name a few. Pastor Leslie and I have tried to create a safe space for these students to wrestle with the hard questions and tough decisions that naturally arise during their senior year of high school. There have even been sessions where parents have been invited to jump into the conversation, because this is just as much of a transition for them as it is for the students.

Sarah Wright is a senior at Temple City High School who has regularly been a part of the *Transitions* class. I sat down with Sarah recently to talk about how her senior year was going and how prepared she feels for what's next.

The last time I had talked to Sarah about her plans for after high school, she was deciding between two universities in the Pacific Northwest. Now she's added two more schools to her list that are in Southern California. After we talked about colleges, I asked her the question that every student gets asked at least three times a day during their senior year: *So what are you wanting to do with your life after you graduate?* "If I had a dollar for every time somebody asked me that, I would not have to get a career," Sarah said jokingly. At this time, Sarah says she wants to be an emergency room nurse.

I asked Sarah about what excites her and what frightens her about graduating from high school. She is excited for the freedom and

independence to make decisions on her own. Of course, this independence is something she also worries about. "What if I'm not making the right decisions?" she asked. Sarah is also worried about being away from her home and all of the friends she has known since kindergarten.

The *Transitions* class has helped Sarah navigate through some of these fears. The most recent class session was dedicated to relationships with friends and family and how those relationships change after seniors leave home. Sarah said that this session caused her to think about things that she had not thought about before, like the importance of boundaries and communication. She is thankful for the positive relationship she has with her parents and knows that they will help her during this transition. "I think my parents and I trust each other and respect each other," she said. "When a situation arises, I feel like we'll be able to handle it and talk it out." Sarah said that the *Transitions* class has been really helpful to her and her parents, and that it is good to know that she is not alone during her senior year. "It helps to know that other people have these same concerns," she said.

Let's return to the question I posed earlier in the article: How can a church community like PazNaz better prepare students for life after high school? More specifically, I asked Sarah how the people of PazNaz could support her and other seniors during this year of transition. "Be supportive," she replied. "Any kind of affirmation that we're doing the right thing really helps." Often well-meaning adults (myself included) confuse "being supportive" with "asking intimidating questions" or "giving lots of advice." More questions or advice can overwhelm seniors, who are

already overwhelmed by the pressure that comes with being a senior in today's world. "Students today are faced with different challenges," said Sarah. "Not to say that it's harder or easier than it has been for others, but now it's a different kind of challenge."

One thing we all can do for this generation of graduating seniors is support them through prayer. Sarah said that prayers for guidance are important. "While we think we're doing the right thing, a lot of us don't know and we're not always willing to admit it," she said. "Even if someone can't relate completely, if they say they are praying for me, I love that."

Seniors like my friend Sarah need your help. Believe it or not, they *want* your help. "When we asked youth group graduates what advice they would give youth leaders, the number one piece of advice—by far—was to better prepare graduates for what they would face after high school" (*Sticky Faith*, p 165). Students want to be surrounded by a community that genuinely loves and affirms them during their senior year, not to mention the entire bumpy road of adolescence. What does this support for seniors look like? Maybe you could pray for them in your own quiet time or with them in person. Maybe you could take them out to lunch and hear their stories (and you could even share your own). Maybe you could send them a note of encouragement or a care package of goodies during their first semester at college. All of these are great ways to affirm and support students during a critical transition point in their lives.

God is going to do (and is already doing) some amazing things in and through the class of 2015 and I cannot wait to see the unique ways they will reflect the love of Christ in the world!

- Pastor Drew Vinson

Extensive research from the Fuller Youth Institute reveals that only one out of every seven graduates leaves church youth ministries feeling "very prepared" for college. The research also shows that the less a student feels prepared for life after high school, the less likely they are to hold on to the faith that we adults have worked so hard to instill in them during their childhood and teenage years.

Tenebrae

A SERVICE OF SHADOWS

Good Friday

April 3, 2015

7:00 pm in the PazNaz Sanctuary



The background of the entire image is a close-up, slightly blurred view of numerous colorful Easter eggs in various shades including pink, yellow, green, purple, and orange. The text is overlaid on this background.

EGGS- TRAVAGANZA

Candy Donations Needed!

Bags and bags of candy are needed to fill the 15,000 Eggs-travaganza Easter Eggs! Please donate individually wrapped candy or non-edible treats, such as stickers and small toys. Baskets for donations are located around the PazNaz and Valley Center campuses.



A SEED THAT SPROUTED INTO A DESIRE

AN ARTICLE FROM STEVE BRAUN

I have never been to Heaven. Or maybe I have and I just can't remember. Either way, I am certain that I had never been on a mission trip. The feelings I had in advance of going on my first mission trip to Nicaragua with my daughter, Cambria, was in some ways similar to how I feel about Heaven; no idea what it is really going to be like, eager to meet God, some anxiety, and great expectations.

The thought of actually going on a mission trip started as a seed that sprouted into a desire to go that has grown over time. I have a number of friends from church that have gone over the years and I have only heard good things from their experiences. I have three daughters, presently 17, 14, and 10, and felt it would be a good idea to go on a mission trip with each of them before they graduated high school. So, when my wife and I began talking about the idea of actually making the trip a reality, we probably spent two or three months in deliberations. My girls were all on board with going, but there were a significant number of practical questions that we needed to address; could I get the two weeks of vacation away from work, could we afford the cost of the trip, could we arrange summer schedules around the trip, were disease and safety issues real, were the things that

we would be missing at home worth the trade-off of going, etc. After numerous discussions, family meetings, and prayer, we made the decision that my oldest daughter, Cambria, and I would go.

I have to be honest, there was a part of me that had to rationalize the impact we could make in relation to the expense of the trip, roughly \$1,800 a person. Could one person really make this big of a difference or would it just be better to write a check and trust that it would go to the area it was needed most? In retrospect, I realize how incredibly shallow this thought really was. God works in and through people. Giving oneself to a mission requires faith, obedience, humility, and love among other things. It is an act that says, "Here I am God. Use me." There is no price that can be put on that. Further, the amazing work that God can accomplish through his willing servants is immeasurably more than any monetary transaction. Most importantly, sending money, while noble, can in no way replace the relationships, friendships, and genuine transfer of love that occurs by physically being present.

So... "We're going to Nicaragua!" Cambria and I lugged our suitcases to the PazNaz parking lot and tried to look as chipper as we possibly could at 6:00 am as Joe Halbert, our

fearless leader, gave final instructions to a group of about 35 stoic people who were silently standing in a circle listening to last minute reminders about details of that day's travel arrangements. These same stone-faced people were laughing, hugging, eating, praying, sweating, and working in genuine community with each other within three days. The feeling of community was not limited to our group of 35. It included the people that we came to serve. We were one community, bonded together by the love of Christ.

We experienced a little culture shock. The people in the village had no running water, mostly no electricity and no sewer systems. Their homes were made of scrap wood and corrugated steel sheets for walls and roofs. Most people had dirt floors and many had never seen a doctor. There was no shortage of need.

Our team was divided into three groups; the construction crew, the medical team, and the kids care group. I felt that I would be most helpful on construction and Cambria decided to help in both construction and medical. Very few of the local people spoke English. I had studied Spanish in high school 25 years ago and could struggle through awkward conversations and understand just enough to make communication possible. Cambria's command of Spanish was surprising even to herself. She had never been immersed in the language before without a lifeline and she did quite well. When the native Spanish speakers were unavailable, she became one of the go-to people that helped with translation. It was quite exhilarating for her.

The Church of the Nazarene has a number of churches that have been planted in Nicaragua that have grown over time. The first place we visited was the church in Masaya. Today, this church is a gathering place in the community, but I was told that five years ago it was nothing more than a cement slab where people would huddle under a small tin roof. The goal for our visit was to allow people in the community to see a doctor or nurse, to provide songs and activities for the kids, and to build a wall around the property to

discourage looters from taking items or vandalizing the church.

After the medical area was set up and the kids' tent was in place, the construction crew got to work as well. Missionaries of all ages were digging trenches, shoveling gravel, building forms, cutting and bending rebar, twisting wire, and pouring concrete like serious construction workers. There was a line of local people patiently waiting to see the medical team. Across the way, the kid's tent was full of singing, dancing, and clapping children.

I gravitated to the trenches where there were some local construction workers that were there to ensure that the concrete footing for the wall went into place properly. The real hard work was delivering wheelbarrows full of concrete to the ditch. Thankfully, we had about fifteen young people (ages 15 to 25) that were tireless and kept the flow of concrete coming. I began making small talk with the two locals, Eliezer and Marvin, who were helping in the trench. My Spanish was less than conversational but they were very patient. Within no time I noticed that Marvin, who was actually down in the trench, was wearing corduroy slippers – needless to say it was not ideal footwear for construction, let alone for someone standing in a ditch that was being filled with concrete. That first day of concrete pouring, Marvin's shoes probably came off a dozen times or more.

In Spanish I said to Marvin, "You need boots." Marvin looked at me like I was crazy. So I pressed a little to find out more. It turns out that boots cost more than he would make working full-time as a construction worker for an entire week – approximately 50 U.S. dollars.

That evening, like every other, our entire team gathered to listen to a daily message expertly delivered by one of our pastors. We would sing, worship, and pray. Then, we would share stories about the day. I shared the story about Marvin and his need for boots and our group was eager to chip in a few bucks. We collected enough for work boots for Marvin, a nice work belt for Eliezer and a significant number of tools for the Church at Nuevo Horizonte.

Due to logistics, we weren't able to

deliver the boots and work belt until the second to last day of our 11 day trip. Just a few members of our team went back to Masaya to see the pastor, Diego, and his wife, Raquel. I tagged along with the boots and the work belt. When I saw my friends Marvin and Eliezer, I tried in my best broken Spanish to explain that I had gifts from the entire team. I said "Feliz Navidad" and opened the lid to the box that contained the work boots. Marvin's face in that moment is something I will never forget – a mixture of disbelief, gratitude, and genuine joy exuded from his facial expressions. It was the best and most satisfying gift that I've been privileged enough to give. When Marvin mumbled the word "Gracias" with tears welling in the corner of his eyes, the word *gracias* never before had so much depth and meaning.

There were dozens of stories like this one and if I had more time, I would be happy to share them. Not only from my perspective, everyone who was part of the trip had these types of moments; smiles that they will remember forever, handshakes and hugs that were filled with meaning, children that were given medical attention or preventative care that may have saved their lives, and memories that will be cherished for a lifetime. It may have been hard to see the impact we were making moment by moment, but God is at work in Nicaragua and the transformation that has happened over time is incredible. God accomplishes his good and perfect will through people who are willing to say, "Here I am God. Use me," no matter where you find yourself.

It was awesome to be part of the mission to Nicaragua. I am so glad we went. To him be all the glory.

- Steve Braun

Holy Week at PazNaz March 28-April 5

Eggs-travaganza, March 28, at 11:00 am Valley Center Campus

Eggs-travaganza includes multiple egg hunts, a petting zoo, popcorn, games, prizes, and yes, a visit from the Easter Bunny himself!

Palm Sunday Services, March 29

Regular Morning Services at PazNaz and Valley Center

Celebrate this special day with your PazNaz family at 8:00 am and 10:30 am in the PazNaz Sanctuary or at 9:00 am in the Valley Center Sanctuary.

Wednesday, April 1, at 6:30 pm

Grace Church of the Nazarene - 10936 South Normandie Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90044

Come hear Pastor Scott Daniels participate in the *Seven Last Words of Christ* in this special service on Wednesday evening during Holy Week.

Maundy Thursday, April 2, at 7:00 pm

Two Locations - PazNaz's Gilmore Hall and the Valley Center Sanctuary

Maundy Thursday comes from the Latin words "mandatum novum" meaning new mandate. It was Jesus' commandment to his followers to "love one another as I have loved you." This was exemplified by Jesus taking the role of a humble servant and washing the feet of his disciples in the last hours of his ministry.

Join this service of music, readings, meditation, and partaking of the Lord's Supper together.

Good Friday Services, April 3

Tenebrae Service at 7:00 pm in the PazNaz Sanctuary

A one hour liturgical service that tells the story of God's steadfast love, Christ's sacrificial love, and the Spirit's continued work of recreation. Music and worship, Scripture and readings, light and dark, speaking and silence come together to remember the crucifixion of Jesus and prepare the church to celebrate the resurrection.

Eggs-travaganza, April 4, at 11:00 am

PazNaz Campus

Eggs-travaganza includes multiple egg hunts, a petting zoo, popcorn, games, prizes, and yes, a visit from the Easter Bunny himself!

Easter Sunday, April 5

Three Services - 6:30, 8:00, and 10:30 am at PazNaz

Easter Garden (6:30 am) / Sanctuary (8:00 and 10:30 am) / Baptism (9:30 am)

Valley Center Easter Service at 9:00 am in the Valley Center Sanctuary with Pastor Joe Halbert

Keeping with tradition, the celebration of the resurrection of our Lord begins early in the morning as the sun rises in the PazNaz Easter Garden. Two services follow in the Sanctuary, where you can worship with the Celebration Choir and Sunrise Orchestra and hear an inspirational message from Pastor Scott Daniels.

There will also be a special time of baptisms between the services in the Sanctuary.

Easter Breakfast, April 5, from 7:30-10:00 am

7:30-10:00 am in Gilmore Hall, PazNaz Campus

8:00 am in Frazier Hall, Valley Center Campus

Bring the whole family and enjoy a delicious Easter morning breakfast for only \$5 per person. Children five and under are free.