



# 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

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*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](http://www.paznaz.org).

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# finding home.

with zac goodspeed



**b**ack in 2012 I was in Flint, Michigan visiting friends and family for the Christmas season. I was sitting in a restaurant booth feasting on chicken tacos with my youth group leaders whom I had known since birth, having been raised in the local Nazarene church. The conversation effortlessly ran deep and simultaneously contained laughter from all the good times we had shared. Three years prior to this lovely dinner, I moved to Hollywood pursuing a lifelong dream of professional acting and filmmaking. No one could have prepared me for what ensued. I was 19 and full of tenacity and passion. There could have been a sign that said, "Attention! There is a new Midwesterner in town and he trusts everyone!" Over those first few years, I found myself in a lot of dark places, not knowing how I landed in them. I would learn later that I need more than just baby food to survive spiritually in a battlefield of art.

Naturally, in between tasty bites of my tacos, my mentors wanted to address their concern for my spiritual journey. This wasn't on my radar, though, because all I wanted to do was complain about the wackiness that were "LA churches" and share how nothing could compare to the glory days of our youth group. God had a different plan. In the heat of my "all is lost for me finding a church home in LA," Jared Field said, "Hey, go to PazNaz." If one could swallow an anvil and feel it drop into his gut, that is how this simple sentence landed in me. Thus began what would be the most transformative time in my life. A time when the Lord's work would bring me to what I know now as home.

Heeding the advice of one of my

most trusted brothers, the first Sunday of 2013 found me sitting in the balcony at PazNaz. The presence of the Lord was overwhelming for me that day and kept me coming back each Sunday. Despite my low income and the almost hour long journey from Hollywood, the Lord kept providing gas money. I was an out-of-work actor having reached the end of my rope. Yet, he kept providing a way for me to be present in this new community. The Lord provided courage when I had to walk away from toxic friendships. The Lord provided strength to press on when friends no longer wanted to attend with me. I felt alone and frustrated that the life I had built in LA was being dismantled. And yet, the Lord gave more grace. The Lord provided new friends in a Sunday School class called *The Band*. Lifelong friendships were forged across generations. I started to understand what “the Body of Christ” meant. I was a rogue traveler and I was embraced with loving arms.

God really blew my mind in 2014. My living situation became unsafe and toxic beyond repair. As shameful as I felt, my heart led me to PazNaz to express my need for rescue. Without even hesitating, members of *The Band* offered to house me for three months giving me time to facilitate my next step. The Lord was rebuilding me, and my understanding of grace kept expanding. Despite my wanderings, the Lord kept inviting me deeper into community and showering me with his love.

Not only has Sunday School been formative, but Men's Ministries also has walked alongside of me fiercely. My first year at PazNaz, they offered me a full scholarship to attend the men's retreat. I found myself hearing the Lord in a new way. One can become so used to

church camp and youth retreats being all about fun and devouring as many sweets as possible. This was different. This was the meat of the Word served all day for the weekend. It was intense. The following year on retreat was even more transformative. For the first time in LA I was given an opportunity to share my testimony. The darkness I had traversed was now being conversed. I was overwhelmed with embarrassment and a fear to share, but the men sat with open hearts, assuring me of the safety of the group. Having shared my shortcomings and trials, I felt like a failure. They surrounded me and laid hands on me and lifted my mission to the Lord. It was an overwhelming experience to know that all those men of God had my back. That weekend gave me a lot of power. This was very new for me. The support of these fine men was a gift and continues to be so, straight from Heaven.

I have had the opportunity to grow deeper with this group of men through attending the midweek Bible study. It is so inspiring to walk with other men, especially men who are much wiser than myself and who have been on this earth longer than I. The prayers these men continually offer on my behalf is humbling. Iron sharpens iron and these men have done exactly that.

As my mission progresses as a man of God in a seemingly forsaken industry, the support of PazNaz is priceless. PazNaz has even given me the opportunity to share my gifts through Christmas and Easter theater productions.

The support runs deep from Sunday School, to Men's Ministries, to the pathway outside of HeBrews. The more I share, the more the Body shares with me. It is a special house of the Lord.

I would be hard pressed to fully describe the extraordinary experience of attending PazNaz the past three years. This I know without a shadow of a doubt: The Lord saved my life by leading me to PazNaz, and he did so in a unique way. He continues to whisper in mysterious ways that I hope others will open themselves to hearing. Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

- Zac Goodspeed

**i would be hard pressed to say that my words can fully describe the extraordinary experience of attending paznaz the past three years. this i know though without a shadow of a doubt. the lord saved my life by leading me to paznaz, and he did so in a most unique way.**

A large chocolate Easter bunny is the central focus, surrounded by a dense field of colorful, individually wrapped candy eggs in various colors including blue, yellow, pink, purple, and green. The bunny has a blue eye and a decorative bow around its neck.

# CANDY DONATIONS!

**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.**



# Dealing With Grief

with Ginny Pedrotti

Grief is a multifaceted response to loss, particularly the loss of a loved one. Although conventionally focused on the emotional response to loss, grief also has spiritual, psycho-social, and other dimensions.

Grief is a natural response to loss. It is the emotional suffering one feels when something or someone the individual loves is taken away. Grief is also a reaction to other kinds of loss. The grief associated with death is familiar to most people, but individuals grieve in connection with a variety of losses throughout their lives, such as unemployment, ill health, or the end of a relationship.

There are many stages of grief. If we deal with grief properly, then we place grief in the right place. We will find meaning and purpose in the pain, and allow ourselves to find hope as we find the right connection with God and others.

In the Spring of 2015, PazNaz started a grief recovery group with Ginny Pedrotti, a retired pastor and missionary, as the teacher. She has experienced much grief through her life and has allowed God to touch her and heal her. The class meets weekly for ten weeks and uses Robert W. Kellemen's book, *God's Healing for Life's Losses: How to Find Hope When You're Hurting*. The class welcomes everyone who deals with life's losses. It is currently held on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 pm.

What follows are stories from some of the class participants. If you are struggling with grief or know someone who is, please check the worship folder for details. This group is open to the community.

- Pastor Darwin Ng

*There are moments in life that become overshadowed by the darkness that comes from a sudden harsh loss. There aren't enough words to describe the immense grief and chaos that erupts from these sudden changes. Life as we know it comes to a sudden halt and, at times, we avoid feeling and acknowledging our current circumstances because allowing these emotions to be brought to life brings acceptance and the process of grief.*

*I can't describe the impact of this class without acknowledging the depth of my sorrow and pain that I have encountered as a result of my greatest life loss. I had lost the life I thought I was supposed to live and, with that, I lost myself. I was living without really living.*

*With heavy burdens and deep*

open wounds, I decided to walk into this class in hopes of finding healing, and that is exactly what I found. Attending these classes has led me into the path of healing and finding God in all things. With each class, I have learned more about the various stages of grief. I discovered the vast difference in grieving with God's presence. I learned about Bible characters who endured much suffering and loss, and how God ultimately redeemed them through it because of their steadfast faithfulness and expectancy in his plans and promises. In addition, I was inspired by the many testimonies that were shared. I found fellowship with others that were experiencing grief in similar ways. Week by week, I looked forward to these classes.

Grieving and acknowledging loss is a process that can be painful, full of unexpected emotions. Yet, with God all is possible!

L.H.

I started going to the Grief class due to the loss of a very close friend. I'm single and older and she was someone with whom I spent time with almost everyday. We were twelve years apart in age, but of the same mind in the love of the Lord. We enjoyed going out to eat and liked the same movies and groups of people. When she died, it was a huge loss to me. It still is.

One of the things I learned from the very good book Ginny is using is that grief doesn't stop. It either points us to God or points us away from God.

I have had many losses in my life and I was using the wrong methods to manage my feelings. I kept myself very busy. I "put on a happy face" and pretended to have it all together. I actually was living a life of quiet resignation, waiting and hoping for heaven to arrive soon. I wouldn't say I was depressed, but I was very much starting to lose hope for the future.

This class teaches about hope and how to grasp it again in a community of others who are also learning how to process life in a way that brings all of us closer to God. I highly recommend it.

Toni Thomas

Ginny is a blessing! I signed up for Ginny Pedrotti's class on grief and loss to help me sort out a few lingering issues as I approached the three-year-mark, post-divorce. Yes, I'd experienced grief with the miscarriage of a child, the death of parents, and the deaths of a younger and older brother to cancer, but this was a bit different. I was not yet done grieving a profound relational loss—the "necessary ending" of my 23-year marriage.

This relationship grief I experienced was more complex. I mourned what was ... what never was ... and a future I thought would be, that never would be. One of our lessons in class centered on the difference between lamenting and complaining. Ginny explained that lamenting is a cry of sorrow and grief, often with strong regret. Complaining, on the other hand, is telling God it's his fault and blaming him. The goal in grieving is lament. That happens by being totally honest with God and not hiding our true feelings, especially the painful ones. God looks for my candor when I talk with him.

The book and class lessons also conveyed that God craves an intimate relationship with me and that begins with truth and trust in all things. All of that led up to one of my favorite and most difficult exercises: writing a personal psalm to God about that crazy, complex, and lingering grief that seemed to be weighing me down and suppressing the joy I knew was still alive inside. Wow! It was both powerful and healing. Every time I re-read it, the weight of the loss lifts a bit more.

Another great part of the class was reading the Book of Job. I was struck by how powerfully God's voice comes through. It's a voice I need to hear when I begin to doubt God's power over my life and circumstances. I also loved that after experiencing all of his suffering, Job was blessed by God even more in the second part of his life. I feel that I am more blessed in this second part of my life, too.

Finally, Ginny's personal story about the crossbow and the wild boar hunt on the Texas ranch, coupled with Ginny's husband Dick's boundary ("I made her get rid of the crossbow before I married her") made me laugh out loud. What a great leader and support team we had in charge of our group! Yes, we even laughed in the class on grief. It was an awesome experience.

Annette Nelson

Through Ginny Pedrotti's teaching and her understanding of living the "masterful life," we were given the opportunity to land in a safe place where we could share our grief.

Romans 12:15 says, "weep with those who weep." Ginny was the kind of facilitator that could relate to others because of her willingness to share her life experience and her walk with God.

We recommend this class for anyone who has suffered any kind of a loss because it will give you the tools to show you that you do not need to go through your loss alone.

"Finding God and experiencing his love, we're nourished and empowered so that we can love others. This was Peter's exact point near the end of his sermon on suffering. The refining fires of suffering purify 'so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.' I Peter 1:22" God's Healing for Life's Losses (p. 101).

Pat and Kim

**With heavy burdens and deep open wounds, I decided to walk into this class in hopes of finding healing, and that is exactly what I found. Attending these classes has led me into the path of healing and finding God in all things.**

**For more information about the Grief Recovery Class, contact Ginny Pedrotti at 760.985.5171.**



**PALM  
SUNDAY**

WELCOME THE KING

*SUNDAY, MARCH 20 | LEE CHAPEL AT 8:00 AM | SANCTUARY AT 10:30 AM*



**MAUNDY  
THURSDAY**

THE LAST SUPPER

*THURSDAY, MARCH 24 | GILMORE HALL AT 7:00 PM*



+

# GOOD FRIDAY

TENEBRAE SERVICE

FRIDAY, MARCH 25 | SANCTUARY AT 7:00 PM



☉

# EASTER SUNDAY

HE IS RISEN!

SUNDAY, MARCH 27  
SERVICES AT 7:00, 9:30, & 10:30 AM

# SEEDS OF HOPE



from Pastor Heather Rickert

I opened my eyes, or at least I thought I had. The dark was overwhelming. I had been startled awake from an otherwise uneventful night's sleep. The problem was that my alarm hadn't gone off. The room was pitch black. I couldn't make out my dresser across the room, or the edges of the bed that held me. I had a hard time even telling whether or not that was my hand in front of my face. Then, slowly, my vision adjusted and the room took on more of a dark purple hue. With the color spectrum change came a growing sense of reassurance that I hadn't suddenly gone blind in my sleep. But then another feeling set in. My mind started running with all the tasks that the morning sunrise would lay on me. This would have been distracting enough to keep me awake for another half hour but my mind wandered further. I thought about the new classes I had started taking. I thought about my search for a job over the last couple of months. I worried about where I would be in a year. I worried about what would happen if I got really sick so far from home. My thinking and worrying slowly started to build into full blown anxiety. I lay in bed feeling as if my world was spinning out of control and I had no ground to stand on.

After moving over 3,000 miles away from my family, my friends, and my home church to pursue a master's program I wasn't even sure I needed, my normal worry and anxiety seemed crushing. I had experienced a great deal of change in a short amount of time; new state, new school, new roommate, new church, new plans for my future. I couldn't take anymore change and lying there in bed I was giving up. I had cried out to God earlier that night asking him to provide a job for me, one that allowed me to pay my bills without continuing to take out student loans. I gave him an ultimatum. I told God that if he didn't provide a way for me to stay in California and support

myself I was going to give up on the Master's program. I was going to move back home defeated. Eventually I fell back asleep, but the anxiety lingered.

I had given up so much in order to pursue this dream. I left a job I loved. I left my home church where I found Jesus and where I was supported in my calling and gifting. I left free housing, even if it was with my parents. I left my immediate family on the other side of the country. I left familiarity and comfort and routine. I felt like I had lost so much and I also felt alone. Where was God? God had given me the scholarship that brought me to California, but why did he abandon me now? Change has a way of causing us to question God's role in our lives. The Bible, while inspiring and hopeful, is also filled with stories of people questioning and doubting God's involvement in changing situations. The Israelites became really good at vocalizing

their complaints to God when things weren't going as planned. Psalms of lament make up a large chunk of the Psalter. Lamenting became an art form for the Israelites. Laments all follow a similar pattern. The song starts out with a few lines extolling the way Yahweh has provided for them in the past, then moves on to the main complaint which usually goes something like "God why have you abandoned us?" The part that might be surprising is that these psalms usually end with a line or two about hope, hope that God will show up, that God will reveal where he has been, and even gratitude for the way God will answer their prayers.

I woke up the next morning to light coming in from my bedroom window, but the darkness of the night before seemed to follow me. My main lament of the day was not my doubt that God was able to answer my prayer, but I was starting to lose hope that God wanted to answer my prayer. While I knew it didn't make sense for God to provide this wonderful opportunity and then leave me high and dry, the stress of needing a job was starting to crowd out my faith. In my prayers throughout the next week there were elements of the psalms of lament. Some of my prayers were reminding God and myself of all the good things he had already provided for me. Later, I would go back to complaining, but on rare occasions I would find myself thanking God for a job I didn't even have. Hope was still present, still working its way through the muck and mire of my doubts and fears. Then the miraculous happened, I received a phone call asking for an interview. Then a second interview. And finally a start date. I had a job!

You may be saying, "I'm glad that God answered your prayer, but I wouldn't quite call it miraculous to

get a job for which you applied and were qualified." This was a job I had applied for four months ago. This was a job for which I had been passed over. This was a job that hired someone else. But God moved, and worked, and created a place for me where there wasn't one. This was definitely a miracle. The extra blessing was that my paycheck from this job was the exact amount I had asked for in my prayers to cover all my bills. When I had made my ultimatum to God I had worked out a budget and added it on as a caveat. I know that making ultimatums to God isn't the most faithful response, and adding stipulations seems even more ungrateful. However, God works with us in our ungratefulness. God's graceful answer to my lament was the community of PazNaz.

I started working as the front desk receptionist and Women's Ministries administrative assistant five years ago in January of 2011. My relationship with PazNaz has grown and changed over that time. Working with Women's Ministries, College Ministries, and, for the past three years, Student Ministries, I've gotten to know many of you. This last year however has been the toughest. This community has gone and is still going through a tremendous amount of transition. Our staff and congregation have gone through a lot of change. The hardest part of all this change is loss. With any change comes an element of loss and that loss needs to be grieved, needs to be lamented. Change also brings growth and can, if embraced, bring new life. So by its very nature change brings both loss and life. The changes over the last year may, on the surface, seem to have brought only loss, but if you look deeper there is space for new life to grow. I encourage you to cultivate that space. Where we may be

tempted to leave empty the space for someone else, pour on some soil, plant a seed, be willing to water the seeds already here. PazNaz is your community, it's your church. God is here.

So in your prayers for PazNaz and the search for a new senior pastor, feel free to lament. Remind yourself and God of all the wonderful things he has done for this community. Let out your complaints to God at how things aren't what they once were or how they aren't what you wish they were, but don't forget to be hopeful. I will caution you to move through all the stages of lament. It is very easy to get stuck in the complaint mode and never move on to the hope. But without the hope, lamenting is never truly healing. What good is it to bring up old wounds if we are not motivated to move on to greater things? God is still working, he is still moving. We do not know when the miraculous will come, when the answer to our prayers will come, but we know it will. We know God will act because that's who he is. God is compassionate and answers the prayers of his people. I, for one, don't want to be caught complaining when the answer to our prayer is arriving. We must cultivate the seeds of hope.

**- Pastor Heather Rickert**

The changes over the last year may, on the surface, seem to have brought only loss, but if you look deeper there is space for new life to grow. I encourage you to cultivate that space. Where we may be tempted to leave empty the space for someone else; pour some soil, plant a seed, be willing to water the seeds already here. PazNaz is your community, it's your church. God is here.

# HOLY WEEK 2016

## AT PAZNaz & VALLEY CENTER



### **Palm Sunday Services, March 20**

**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.



### **Maundy Thursday, March 24, at 7:00 pm**

**PazNaz's Gilmore Hall with Dr. Brad Strawn**

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, March 25, at 7:00 pm**

**Tenebrae Service in the PazNaz Sanctuary with Dr. Kevin Mannoia**

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 come together to remember the crucifixion of Jesus and prepare the church to celebrate the resurrection.



### **Eggs-travaganza, March 26, at 11:00 am**

**Two Locations: PazNaz Campus & Valley Center Campus**

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



### **Easter Sunday, March 27**

**Two Services - 7:00 and 10:30 am at PazNaz**

**Easter Garden (7:00 am) / Baptism (9:30 am) / Sanctuary (10:30 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. A full service follows in the Sanctuary, where you can worship with the Celebration Choir and Sunrise Orchestra and hear an inspirational message. There will also be a special time of baptisms between the services in the Sanctuary.



### **Easter Breakfast, March 27**

**8:00-10:00 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.

