



THE BRAINS FORMED UNDER THE PEPPER

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.

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A portrait of Pastor Min Xiao, a middle-aged man with short dark hair and glasses, wearing a red collared shirt. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with green foliage and sunlight filtering through the leaves.

The PEPPER TREE'S New Branch FROM PASTOR MIN XIAO

On Sunday afternoon, August 2, I had the opportunity to speak to 15 Christian brothers and sisters in Gilmore Hall, South. After a short time of worship through music, I was excited to report to them the plan to start PazNaz's Mandarin Ministries over the next six months. In this issue of Transformed, I would like to ask for your prayers for this important time of growth and foundational planning. I also would like to share with you the nine things we are doing to launch this new, exciting ministry:

1. We are starting a new English as a Second Language (ESL) Course in Room 146, Reed Hall every Thursday from 10:00-11:30 am.
2. There will be a monthly BBQ Party on the last Sunday of the month at Pastor Min Xiao's house.
3. There will be a monthly *Picnic in the Park* on the second Sunday of the month.
4. There will be a weekly Sunday Morning Mandarin Bible Study from 9:00-10:30 am in Room 149B, Reed Hall.
5. There will be a Thursday Evening Ping Pong and Basketball Fellowship in Parker Gymnasium.
6. We are forming a Mandarin Ministries Leadership team.
7. We are forming a Mandarin Worship team.
8. We are developing a collection of Mandarin worship songs.
9. I, Pastor Min Xiao, will be preparing sermons for the next year of the ministry.

Among these important items, the new ESL class is our long-term strategic program which connects us with the community and is a great source for initial contact. Last year two ESL students came to Christ and were baptized at PazNaz and we believe that the Lord will bring more people seeking God to our ESL class.

Our vision for the family of PazNaz is that we can harvest the fields of the greater Pasadena area together just as was described in the Gospel of John (John 4:35), bringing in the Mandarin speaking citizens and visitors. We have heard the Lord's call deep within our hearts to share the Gospel with the Mandarin-speaking community of this

area. Pastor Earl G. Lee, in his book *The Saga of the Pepper Tree*, shared that God's plan for a new church building at its current site was for the PazNaz family to serve the total community of the San Gabriel Valley. In all these years, the Lord has been faithful to PazNaz by leading this church to fulfill his plan and, today, our faithful Lord is moving us again to share the Gospel among the Mandarin speaking residents and visitors in this region. In God's grace, we are responding to his call and have good news to report to you: the Pepper Tree is producing a new branch!

- Pastor Min Xiao

胡椒树长出新枝

“在唱了两首赞美诗之后，现在我想向大家陈述未来六个月在培城第一宣圣会开展新的华语事工的计划”，这是我在八月二日下午在Gilmore South和十五位弟兄姊妹一起分享我们新的华语事工的异像、使命和目标。这里，我愿意藉今年十月《胡椒树下生命的更新》教会月刊，和弟兄姊妹分享我们开拓华语事工需要做的

九件事，并恳请大家在主前为新的华语事工的开展祷告。1) 每周四早上 10:00 - 11:30在Reed Hall 146教室里免费的英语课；2) 每个月最后一个周日下午在肖敏牧师家举办BBQ烧烤派对；3) 每个月的第二个周日下午在公园举办野餐活动；4) 每周日上午9:00 - 10:30在Reed Hall 149B华语主日学；5)每周四晚上在教会体育馆进行乒乓球和篮球活动；6)华语事工领袖团队的建立；7)华语事工敬拜团队的建立；8) 搜集整理教会需要的华语赞美诗本；9)肖敏牧师开始准备未来一年主日华语敬拜的讲道提纲。在以上的所有事项中，英语课程是我们目前最需要开展的一个新的项目。通过英语课程，我们可以与我们传福音的目标群建立一个紧密关系；在教授英语的同时，将基督的爱和福音分享给他们。2014年，两名参加我们教会英语课程的学生信了主并受洗。我们相信主会带领更多的非信徒通过英语课程来到我们教会，在这里经历并接受主的爱和福音。

亲爱的弟兄姐妹，主耶稣在《约翰福音》4:35让我们看到一幅图画：在一片地里满了等待收获的已经成熟的

庄稼。同时，《约翰福音》4:35的经文也让我们看到一个异像：培城第一宣圣会的兄弟姐妹在一起忙碌地收获圣迦谷这片地里的庄稼。在我们的内心深处，我们已听到主呼召我们在这个收获庄稼的季节参与主圣工的声音。Earl G.Lee在《胡椒树的故事》里向我们讲述了培城第一宣圣会今天这个美丽的教堂是如何建设起来的全部过程。在此书的第六页，Earl G.Lee向我们分享了神对本教会的心意，他说神愿意培城第一宣圣会在现在这个地方建立一个新的教堂是要本教会能够服侍圣迦谷全部社区的百姓。在过去30多年里，我们的主在带领本教会完成他的旨意的过程中，让教会的弟兄姐妹看到了神自己的大能和他不变的信实。今日，我们信实的主仍在继续带领我们，要我们向本地区的华人居民和来访者分享神的爱和福音。感谢主，在他的恩典之下我们已开始回应他对我们的呼召。在这个收获的季节，我们教会的这颗胡椒树正在长出新枝！



THE SUPPORTERS AND CONGREGATION MEMBERS OF PAZNAZ'S MANDARIN MINISTRIES.

Baptism Class

Sunday, October 18

9:30 pm in Room 101, Lower Sanctuary

Baptism Sunday

Sunday, October 25, at 10:30 am



Please contact Melody Bundy for more details at 626.351.2425.



REMEMBERING *Together* from Pastor Leslie Moreno

I've

been reading in the Old Testament a lot recently, which makes sense because the Young Adults group is working its way through the book of Judges. If you want to fully understand the cultural, political, and historical setting of Judges within the Bible you need to go back, way back, to Genesis and a guy named Abraham. This is the Abraham who left the land where his family lived to go to a new land that God would show him.

You may know the story; he went and eventually landed in an area known as Canaan. Abraham had a special son named Isaac, who had a special son named Jacob (whose name was changed to Israel), who had 12 sons and at least one daughter. One of these sons was named Joseph, whose brothers sold him into slavery and was bought by a man who lived in a country called Egypt. Through crazy events and God's provision, Joseph rose from a slave to Pharaoh's second in command. Years later, because of a famine, Joseph miraculously reconnected with his father and brothers and the entire family moved from the land of Canaan to Egypt.

Many years later, a Pharaoh came into power and enslaved the Israelites and for hundreds of years they cried out to God to deliver them. Enter Moses, the man who would lead the Israelites out of Egypt toward the Promised Land. Unfortunately for the Israelites, when you leave a land vacant for hundreds of years, new people tend to move in. When the Israelites got back to the land of Canaan, they had company. The Israelites sent eleven spies to check out the current inhabitants and when the spies returned they convinced the people that it would be impossible to conquer the land. As punishment for their disbelief,

God condemned the Israelites to the desert for 40 years. In the Bible, 40 years is often the same as saying "a generation," the Israelites were going to stay in the desert long enough for the generation of disbelievers to die out before they entered the land.

Lots of things happened in the desert but, if we fast forward 40 years, we find Joshua leading the people through a series of campaigns conquering the land... mostly. By the time we get to Judges, the Israelites have an awesome story.

During the time of the Judges, there was no central government and no temple. Instead, the thirteen tribes (the tribe of Joseph was split into two half-tribes) each had a portion of the promised land, and worked together most of the time. Instead of a king, like all the other nations, the Israelites had Judges. These judges

were from various tribes and lived in various areas around Israel and achieved various feats. There were some who were strong, like Sampson, and there were some who were wise, like Deborah. Some were cunning, like Ehud, and others were pretty wimpy at times, like Gideon. Some have long accounts attributed to them and others have only one verse. For all of this discontinuity, there is one common thread throughout the book of Judges, the people kept coming back to the same thing. Everyone did whatever was right in their own eyes and the Israelites did evil in the sight of the Lord. There is what some call a circle in the book of Judges; Israelites doing evil, God allows an oppressor to come, the Israelites cry out to God, and then the Lord raises up a judge who delivers them. Rinse and repeat.

When I was a child, I always thought that this cycle happened quickly. The Israelites would do something evil one week and then the next week some bad guy would come in. The following week a conquering hero would save them, and then Israel would return to their evil ways the week after. Now, despite the fact that I may not have been the brightest child, it is easy to see why I felt this way. The book of Judges only hits the highlights. Judges 3 has over 130 years packed into 24 verses. The cycle happened, but it didn't happen as quickly as the book may make it seem if you aren't paying attention. Throughout the book, there are often notes of time passing. Sometimes it is a note about the length of the time the people were oppressed, and others it is a note of the time the Israelites had peace in the land. It does not always happen, but often, these time periods are given in generational language: 20 years (half a generation), 40 years (a full generation), or 80 years (two generations). What I learned from this is that these were not the problems of

a single generation. This is not a story of how one generation couldn't seem to get it together. It's a problem that each generation struggled with. You would think Israel would have remembered the things God had done for them. But they forgot.

A biblical generation before today, there was no such thing as a movie called Star Wars, rap was something you did to presents, and the internet was a sci-fi storyline. I was born in the 1980's so I can't know what the world was like 40 years ago if someone doesn't tell me. If I never hear the stories of previous generations, I might come to the conclusion that God stopped being active in the world somewhere around AD 70.

A study conducted by Fuller Seminary's Youth Institute found that when they asked 20 high school students to articulate their parents' faith story, none of them could do it. Further, most of them had never been asked to articulate their own faith. These findings came from all over the country and from several different denominations. We are forgetting. I don't think this is happening intentionally, but I do think we live in a world where watching a Netflix marathon is more appetizing than hearing a story about "when I was your age."

The reluctance to share stories might be partly because the younger generation knows that sometimes those stories come with a heavy dose of youth bashing. It might also be partly because the older generation knows that sometimes those stories are received with a heavy dose of eye rolling and phone checking. The book of Deuteronomy reminds us to continually remember, and the way to do that is to keep telling the story.

Listen, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. And you must commit

yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates In the future your children will ask you, 'What is the meaning of these laws, decrees, and regulations that the Lord our God has commanded us to obey?' Then you must tell them, 'We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt, but the Lord brought us out of Egypt with his strong hand. The Lord did miraculous signs and wonders before our eyes, dealing terrifying blows against Egypt and Pharaoh and all his people. He brought us out of Egypt so he could give us this land he had sworn to give our ancestors. And the Lord our God commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear him so he can continue to bless us and preserve our lives, as he has done to this day. For we will be counted as righteous when we obey all the commands the Lord our God has given us.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 20-25

Each generation in Israel kept going back to the same mistakes. They kept getting swayed by the gods of the culture. There is no such thing as the good ol' days or the perfect generation. Each generation has its own very real struggles and each generation needs the others. I need the generation before me to remind me that God was present in the world before I got here and I need the generation after me to remind me that God hasn't left. The faith stories of our children are important and we need to give them opportunities to learn to articulate those stories. The faith stories of our parents and grandparents are important and we need to know those stories. Our stories are important. We can't forget. We need to remember together.

- Pastor Leslie Moreno

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♥ A Special Luncheon presented by Pasadena PrimeTime ♥

Celebration of Marriage

Saturday, October 24
12:30 pm in Gilmore Hall



Marriage requires patience, hard work, and grace. This special luncheon will honor those couples married 45+ years. You are invited to this time of fun, food, and fellowship.

**The cost is \$12 per person, but is free to couples married 45+ years.
Sponsor a table of 8 for \$100**

**Sign up at HeBrews on Sundays or contact Sylva Hekimian
at shekimian@paznaz.org or 626.351.2426.**

Adopt a Grandparent

You know you want to...

Sunday, October 4

12:30 pm in Gilmore Hall

Luncheon Cost: \$8 per person



Younger people and families will be paired up with a PrimeTime member and encouraged to share life in the coming months. Ideas will be provided on ways to share life intergenerationally.

Sign up at HeBrews on Sundays or contact Sylva Hekimian at shekimian@paznaz.org or 626.351.2426.



Say *Hello* to
 the Longson family
 from Pastor Doug Ravasdy

Coming to PazNaz to be the Children's Pastor after being part of the congregation for 20 years has been a surreal experience. One of my larger fears was how I was going to be received by the current families and core volunteers of PazNaz Kids Ministries. It didn't take long for me to realize that I would be received with support and love. That's PazNaz! The Longson family has been fantastic in welcoming and supporting me and my family as we continue to dive into the world of Children's Ministries. I've asked Erin Longson to share a bit of their story.

The current PazNaz building had not yet been completed. It was the early 1980's and the gymnasium was almost finished. It was a Sunday morning, declared as Children's Day. The church was celebrating the children and they had a gift for every child that came to church that day. With great anticipation, the children were sent to the unfinished gym to pick a plant to take home with them. They had plants of every size and, of course, I ran in and chose the largest tree I could find. That afternoon, my dad and I planted the tree in our front yard on Davric Drive in Hastings Ranch. I no longer live there, but every now and then I drive by that house to see my tree. It is a reminder that I was loved and that I grew in Christ over the years.

This is what Children's Ministries is about, being loved and growing in Christ.

We are the Longsons: Kenn, Erin, Rett (6th grade) and Wenn (4th grade). We are here every Sunday and Wednesday, and also whenever there is an activity where we feel like we can lend a helping hand. Ministry is important to us. My husband is an ordained minister in the Nazarene church. He served at Newhall Church of the Nazarene as Children's Pastor, so we understand the need for volunteers.

As you can see from my story, I am not new here and neither is my family. People sometimes think we are visitors because we do not attend the "big" service very often. Every Sunday and Wednesday we are downstairs helping out with children's ministries. My husband and I also lead the adult Sunday school class called, "The Well." It is for parents with special needs children. We have a heart for them since we also have a son with special needs.

Many are not aware of what happens below the Sanctuary. "The Cave" is the kids' area. It has fun décor and is a place for our children to worship. Children's Ministries is more than just someone watching children so that parents can have the freedom to worship. It is an active place, where children are given the opportunity to meet God themselves. There is an altar, prayer, and an active worship time. I love watching our children jump, do motions, and sing to the Lord. Jesus himself said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." Children's Ministries is a place for training the future leaders of our church.

This is why it is so important to have faithful volunteers.

The Children's Department needs adults who are willing to be downstairs. People who are willing to invest in the lives of children, so they can see and know God. We need baby rockers, Sunday school teachers, Wednesday night leaders, camp counselors, VBS volunteers, craft helpers, children's church volunteers, and even prayer warriors willing to invest in the future generation of our church.

"Our church" is not just PazNaz, although there is a need right now for these types of volunteers. "Our church" is the collective body of Christ. What happens after these kids leave this church and venture out into the world? It is our duty as the adults in this congregation to make sure that they are prepared to take a stand for Christ. Not only are the children the future of the church, but they are also the doorways into the community.

Having a vital and active children's department is important. Children are natural missionaries. They go to school, play in neighborhoods and friends' houses where there are unbelievers. They will invite their friends to church on Wednesday night and then to church on Sunday mornings. Soon their friends will bring their parents. This is how we reach our communities and families around us. This is what Christ called us to do. Children do it naturally.

There is research that shows if a child does not come to know the Lord by the age of 13, then they most likely will never make the decision to be a Christ follower. This is why programs like vacation bible school, camp, Upward, Wednesday nights, and children's church are so important. This is

why my husband and I serve every week downstairs. We want children to come to know Jesus. We want them to know that Jesus loves them and wants a relationship with them. The exciting thing is watching some of our youth come back and volunteer with the kids. My son, Rett, now helps the 1st-3rd graders during children's church. He helps with crafts or transition time. Rett enjoys playing with the younger children and building relationships with them.

The best part about Children's Ministries is the relationships. It is always fun when you see the kids outside of church. Kenn and I ran into a few kids at the Monrovia Street Fair not too long ago. They all wanted to know what we were doing there and what kind of things we would shop for at a street fair. Our hearts were filled with joy. Pastor Doug "Rav" Ravasdy is wonderful at building relationships. Our son, Wenn, loves playing the Wii Mario Kart. Pastor Rav always makes sure to play at least one game with him. Yes, that is how you do church with kids; you play video games or maybe ask them about the stuffed animal they are carrying with them. It is not hard to love kids.

The Longsons are not alone in children's church downstairs; there are a few other faithful families who are there every Sunday or at least once a month. But, there is always room for more. We need people who are willing to invest in the future of Children's Ministries. We need people who are willing to just love children and help them grow in Christ.

- Pastor Doug Ravasdy

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In His Image presents



LOVE

WALK AND ROLL™

**Saturday
October 3
10:00 am**

This event creates community and helps raise funds for the Special Needs/*In His Image* Ministries of PazNaz. Special Needs families, individuals, and community partners who wish to be involved can pre-register to walk or roll.

**Online registration is now open at: www.paznaz.org/online-forms/love-walk-and-roll
Contact Pastor Julie Keith at jkeith@paznaz.org or 626.351.2485.**

First Church of the Nazarene of Pasadena

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