



MARCH 2008  
fbcmodeledo.com

## From Pastor Mike



What does Easter mean to you? Growing up in Stockton, Easter included watching movies about Jesus' life, death and resurrection. I remember

watching these movies with my parents with great interest and emotion but not really understanding what it was all about. And of course there was the annual Easter egg hunt and those wonderful marshmallow bunnies; the yellow ones were my favorite. I usually lost the egg hunt but ate a lot of marshmallows. Year after year Easter came and went without much thought, celebration or change.

Then one evening in December 1976, after a year of wrestling with Who Jesus really is, I came to the end of my life as I knew it and the beginning of a brand new life I'd never known before. I don't remember exactly what I said to God that night but it was a cry for

help from a desperate young adult. The next day I told my roommate, a Christian, what I had done the night before and he told me he sensed a different spirit in the apartment and was thrilled about the news. He had prayed for me and talked to me about Jesus for over a year, never giving up, even in the face of my ridicule and lack of interest.

Another man, who at one time had the job of imprisoning and putting Christians to death, also had a life-changing experience with God. Years later Paul wrote these words, "For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve." (1 Corinthians 15:3-5) These words, written 2,000 years ago, communicate the true Easter message, Jesus is alive!

Beginning March 1-2, we begin a new series called, "Final Days." During these weekend messages we will look at important events

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by Bill & Jackie Tharpe

The death of our grandson Ben the day after Christmas, 2007, really brought home our church's motto, "Life is short, make it count." Perhaps if I tell you a little about Ben, you will understand what I mean.



Ben was a sergeant in the army. He had recently enlisted for a second tour because he completely believed in what he was doing. He had already spent a year in Iraq and understood the risks war brings, he but re-enlisted anyway. His motto was "living the dream so others may live their lives to the fullest." His parents, older brother and friends had tried to talk him out of a second tour but in the end, for Ben, re-enlisting was something he had to do. Entries in his online guest book have stated that he was the bar by which the other sergeants were measured. He simply loved what he did, kept the bar high and lived life each day to the fullest.

Ben married his wife, Michelle, in May 2007. Before Ben left for Iraq on December 15, 2007, he told her that when he returned, they would be going to church and when they had kids they would raise them in church because "my mom and dad did that for me." Ben wanted his kids to share the same faith in God that he had, to know that God had a plan for their lives just like He had for him and Michelle. Ben was a dreamer and a planner. He was organized. He knew how many kids he wanted, when he wanted to start his family (close to the end of his second tour of duty), and what he wanted to do with his life when he got out of the service.

On December 26, 2007, Ben, his captain and their soldiers, along with an Iraqi contingent of soldiers working with them, were sent to the northern end of Mosul to set up a new command post. As they dismounted, an Iraqi soldier's gun misfired. The Iraqi commander then took his men into a building to look for insurgents before the Americans would search the building. Ben and his captain were walking to the building to talk to the Iraqi commander about the misfired gun. As they approached the house, the Iraqi soldiers opened fire, killing Ben and his captain instantly. It turns out the Iraqi contingent had been infiltrated with militant insurgents. At that moment, all Ben's plans and his dreams ended instantly.

As Ben's friends at home heard the tragic news of his passing in Iraq, they began arriving at his parent's house hugging, crying and grieving their loss. They began sharing memories and stories

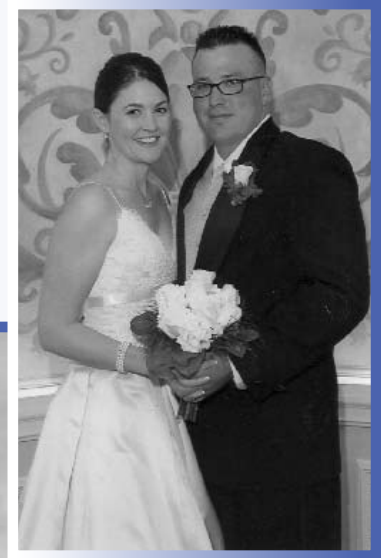
about him. Each memory, so poignant in itself, would bring the phrase “that was so Ben” from his mother. Words like *goofy* and *silly* soon became *loyal*, *courageous*, *unique*, *brave*, *honorable*, *good times*, *genuine* and *accepting*. They flowed like water from an unending, pure clear stream - memories. His life of integrity was his legacy.

Ben’s life ended at the age of 27. Ben never thought he would not be coming home, that he would not have time to do the things he dreamed and planned to do.

It struck me that we often make plans of what we will do for God, our family, friends or even ourselves. We think in terms of immortality, that our life on Earth has more tomorrows or years. We live and breathe and go about our lives. We think we have lots of time to do the things we want to do for God and others ... someday.

But we have no guarantee of tomorrow. All we have is today to do the things we want to do. Dreams are good, but actions are better. We never know the time of our departure. Ben certainly didn’t think he would be unable to fulfill his dreams and plans for the future.

What we want to do for the Lord, we need to do today. We may not have another tomorrow, another someday. That is why I am telling you about Ben because life is short and we need to make it count. Today.



# Elevation 2008

God has the power to change any life. In the high school ministry, that's always our belief. It's also the reason we put so much time, money and effort into camps and special events.

There is something about a camp experience that takes us out of

by Verity Zeek

the noise of everyday life and puts us in a perfect place, a

place where we can hear God speak. That was the experience of the 150 students and staff who attended Elevation January 25-27 at Old Oak Ranch. They took the opportunity to meet with God and encountered His power in a personal, life-changing way.

From the moment we arrived at camp, it was clear that many had come up the mountain carrying a variety of burdens. On the first night, everyone was asked to lay their burdens down and surrender them to God. Those who took that challenge found this surrender to be a freeing experience that opened the door for God to work powerfully.

Our guest speaker, Kent Husted, did an awesome job of speaking

the Word into the lives of everyone present. Throughout the weekend, he continued to challenge students to take the next step in their walk with God, whether that meant making a first-time commitment, getting deeper into the Word or stepping out of their comfort zone by reaching their friends for Christ. Many accepted Kent's challenges by making first-time commitments to Christ, rededicating or choosing to follow God's unique call in their

lives.

In addition to God's life-changing presence, campers also experienced non-stop fun and fellowship. Students were surrounded by plenty of fresh snow, perfect weather and a community of fellow believers. With snowball fights, rock-climbing walls, high ropes courses and sledding, there was never a dull moment. Perhaps the most memorable highlight of Elevation was the American Idol Talent Show on Saturday night. The entire group was entertained and amazed as students took the stage to share their particular brand of talent.

Despite the fun memories created at Elevation, it was God's life-changing power that stole the show.



# What Devotion to Prayer Can Do

*Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. (Colossians 4:2-5)*

Paul gave these instructions to the church in Colosse when the church confronted a variety of cultural influences. Are these directives still operative today? Yes—and here is a very real example!

When Blanche Chen began attending First Baptist she began to devote herself to prayer. For one full year she prayed about direction for her personal ministry, asking God to open a door. God kept reminding Blanche of the Mandarin-speaking people in the Central Valley. Her research revealed there were no Mandarin-speaking churches in Stanislaus County. While in the Bay Area, Blanche visited Mandarin-speaking churches to see what God was doing there.

Building relationships with the Chinese in our area, Blanche would simply approach people who could be Chinese. She'd introduce herself and get their name and contact number. After a year of prayer, and with the relationships she had developed, in November of 2003 Blanche invited these folks to a home Bible study.

On that first night, ten people came. Meeting every two weeks, the group worshiped God and studied the Bible together. Not all were believers but they came, and the Gospel was proclaimed clearly. Then they invited their friends.

Blanche continued to pray about finding a regular place to meet. In August 2004, this Chinese fellowship began to meet on the First B campus on Sunday afternoons.

Continuing to develop relationships in the community, Blanche heard of the Chinese Association made up of a large percentage of the Chinese in this area. She contacted the board and learned that

by Claude Terry

the organization was connected in a loose way to a Buddhist association from Taiwan. When they invited Blanche to come on their board, she explained that she was a Christian. They wanted her participation and insisted she would be an asset to the Chinese community. She accepted.

Whenever there was an event, Blanche would distribute an informational postcard about the Chinese fellowship. She helped develop a Chinese language link to the FBC Web site.

This small group had an idea to make the most of the 2004 Thanksgiving season: they would invite people to a Thanksgiving outreach. Besides Blanche's contacts at the Chinese Association, they went through the phone book, identifying as many Chinese names as possible. They sent over 200 invitations to the Thanksgiving event. Many in the fellowship went door-to-door introducing themselves to Chinese residents. Blanche visited all the Chinese restaurants, too. In this first outreach, some of these new contacts came. Six people came to know the Lord!

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# What Devotion to Prayer Can Do Continued

In 2006, the fellowship began to meet weekly, continuing to grow. The Chinese Church in Christ—South Valley began to come alongside, helping provide teaching. The first Sunday of February 2008, the fellowship changed their meeting time to 10:45 am so the children could attend Kid Country.

Another milestone occurred on February 24, 2008, as David Yau was installed as the Pastor of the Chinese fellowship here at FBC. David has extensive ministry experience. A retired physicist-engineer with IBM, David has followed Christ for 40 years. He attended seminary and has been involved in all levels of ministry. He recently led a church plant in San Luis Obispo. We are blessed to have him lead this congregation.

One of our values here at First B is *PRAYER FIRST*. Blanche Chen devoted herself to prayer, asked for open doors, built relationships with outsiders, made the most of opportunities - even phone books - and provided a place where Mandarin-speaking people receive the water of Life. In May 2007, Blanche moved to the Bay Area for a new vocational position, but she will to commute to Modesto on Sundays through the summer.

Through her devotion to prayer, Blanche was watchful and thankful. Now we watch what God has done and is doing. We're grateful!

## From Pastor Mike Continued

leading up to Jesus' death and resurrection, and why they matter in 2008, to both those following Jesus and those who will become His followers. Each weekend leading up to Resurrection weekend is designed to help us invite our friends. That's right, you can bring your friends before Easter to hear God's answer to life's most important question.

Join me in asking God to powerfully visit our community this Easter season; to open the eyes of those who have been blinded by the enemy of God; to make us aware of people's needs around us; to take advantage of the opportunities that the Spirit provides to those we love and care about.

Together let's believe God for great things ... the kind of March that brings the greatest glory and praise to God our Father and His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Expect, anticipate, and seize the moment!

What a privilege it is for me to be one of your pastors in these important days!

Pastor Mike

## First Impressions

Have you ever been somewhere where you truly felt wanted and welcome, a place where people cared about you? It's a feeling you never forget and one that beckons you to return. That's the feeling and atmosphere we want to create here at First B. If you can remember a time and place where you felt lost and reluctant to ask for directions, you know how many people feel when they first visit our church. It's a little overwhelming to try and find one's way. Trying to check kids into various rooms in various buildings, then finding the right worship venue can make folks feel uneasy and confused. This can be a recipe for stress! By the time the parents get to a worship gathering, they may feel like they've run an obstacle course.

Yet we want our guests to feel warmth and friendliness, and be able to move about the campus easily. They need to know and feel we want them here. This is why there's a new ministry called First Impressions.

The First Impressions team members are located at key locations around the campus, smiling and welcoming guests and members alike. They provide information about what's happening that morning and where. When necessary they'll use a radio to call another team member who can personally escort our guests to where they need to be. By the time our guests sit down in a worship venue we want their first impressions to be nothing but positive. That way they can relax and focus on the worship and message of the morning, which is all about Jesus.

Guests will look forward to coming again. As they experience the love of Jesus through people, they will be open to learning about Jesus and eventually giving their lives to Jesus. And it all started because of a positive first impression.

If you'd like to serve the Lord on this team, please call the church office and ask for Terry Holliday.

## Building on Purpose News

If you're wondering about the progress of the new multi-purpose building, you can get the latest news on the new blog: <http://buildingonpurpose.typepad.com>.

You can also check out the *Building on Purpose* section of the church Web site for more details on recent and upcoming projects. We're continuing to pursue the vision God's given us to reach our community one life at a time. Find out how you can get involved!



**MARCH 2008**

## **Membership Class**

### **New Five-week Class**

- Begins Sunday, March 2, 9 am
- Pavilion Garden, rm 932
- Taught by various pastors

Membership questions?  
extension 2609

## **Believer's Baptism**

**Sunday, April 27 • 9 & 10:45 am**  
*If you'd like to be baptized, please call the church office*

Baptism questions?  
extension 2609

## **GriefShare**

### **Thursdays**

- Thursdays, 7 pm, 1325 11th st
- Support for men and women grieving the death of someone close

Home Group questions?  
extension 2622

## **Monday Night Church**

### **MNC Service and Dinners**

- Mondays, March 10, 17, 24, 31
- 6 pm, Pavilion Concourse

### **Opportunities to Serve**

- Help with childcare, prayer partners, sign language or food service
- Sign up Sunday on your communication card or call the office

Monday Night Church questions?  
extension 2621

## **First B Saturday Night**

### **Chapel @ 6:00**

- Kid Country programs available birth through fifth grade

## **Sunday Night Teaching Time**

### **The Book of Isaiah**

- Sunday, 5:30 pm, Pavilion Garden

Sunday Night Teaching Time  
questions? extension 2622

## **World Outreach**

### **Night of Prayer for the World**

- Monday, March 3, 6:30
- 1325 11th st

World Outreach questions?  
extension 2622

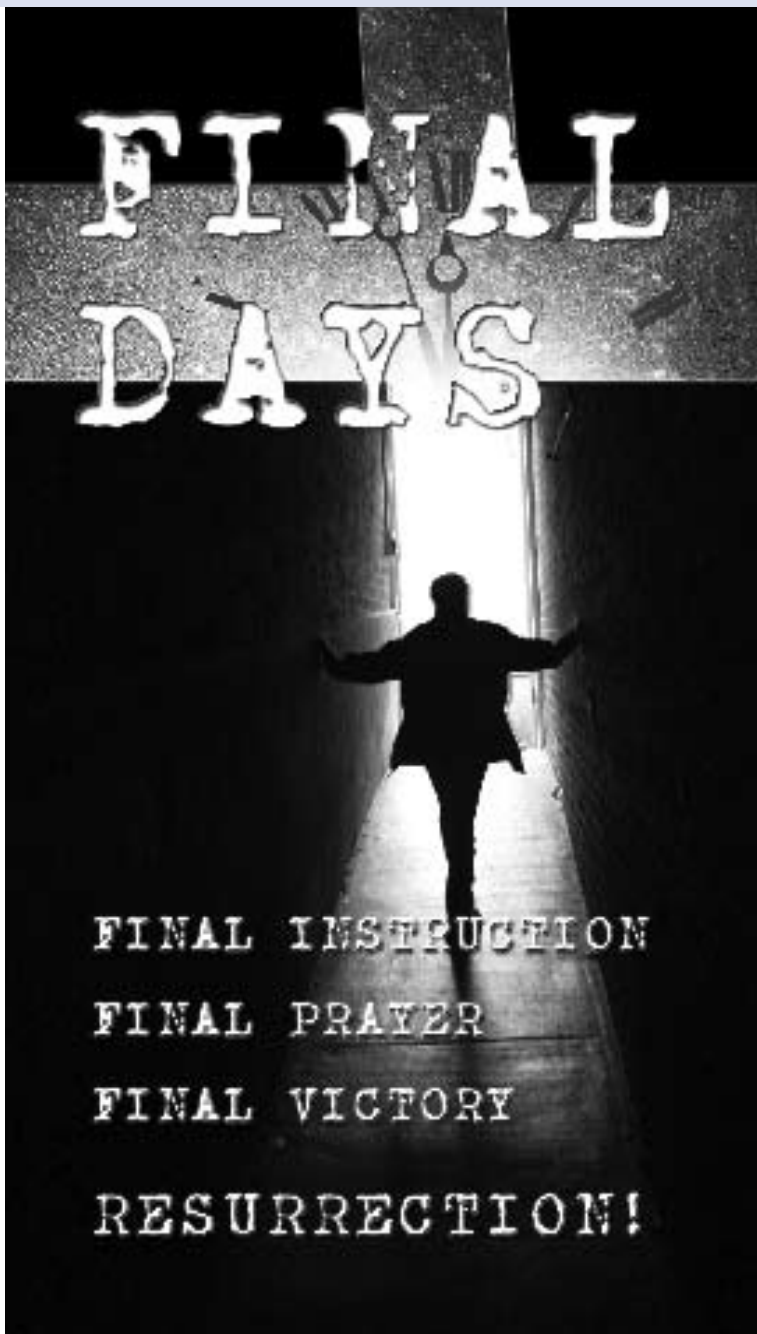
## **Good Friday Service**

**March 21 • 7 pm**

### **Worship Center**

Childcare for birth  
through 3 years old

**Easter invitations available  
Sundays in the street or in the  
church office during the week**



New series  
March 8/9, 15/16, 22/23

## STUDENT MINISTRIES

### Fusion Junior High

#### Sundays

- 9 am, Chapel
- Not meeting Easter, March 23

#### Wednesdays

- 6:45-8:30 pm, Chapel

#### Easter Egg Hunt

- Wednesday, March 19
- 6:45 pm, Chapel

#### Baptism Class

- Sunday, March 16, 12:30-1 pm, Chapel
- Next baptism, Sunday, April 27

#### Check Out Fusion Online

- fusionjrhhigh.com

### High School

#### The Deep End - Sundays

- 9 am, Pavilion Concourse

#### 128/Fuel Groups - Wednesdays

- 6:45 pm, Pavilion Concourse

#### Jared Hall, Illusionist

- Wednesday, March 19, 6:45 pm
- Wrap up our *40 Days* series
- Jared uses world class illusions to share the message of Jesus Christ

#### Check Out 128 Online

- 128online.com

### College Ministry

18-20 Somethings

#### IGNITE

- Sundays, 7 pm
- Pavilion Concourse

#### Check Us Out Online

- fbcignite.com

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Student Ministries questions?  
extension 2506/2508

## The Next Level

Post-college age, single young adults

### Tuesday Night Gatherings

- 7 pm., The Point

The Next Level questions?  
extension 2506

## Single Adults

### Single Focus Sundays

- 10:45 am, The Point, downstairs
- *Belief, Help Me With My Unbelief*

### Chocolate Night

- Saturday, March 15, 7 pm
- 2013 Sweetwater Dr, Modesto
- Bring something chocolatey

Single Adult questions?  
extension 2618

## Men's Ministries

### Dirt Bike Ride

- Saturday, March 8
- 8:30 am, leave Pavilion parking lot

### Men's Retreat at Camp Chinquapin

- Friday-Saturday, April 25-26
- Speakers: Dr. Chuck Stecker and Chad Stecker

### Men's Small Groups

- Monday: *Purpose Driven Life, Epistles*
- Tuesday: *12 Ordinary Men, Through the Bible, Romans*
- Wednesday: *Wild at Heart, Acts*
- Thursday: *Open Discussion, God is Closer Than You Think*
- Friday: *James, The Sayings of Jesus, Master Plan of Evangelism, Ephesians, 2 Timothy*
- Saturday: *Man in the Mirror, Disciplines of a Godly Man*

Men's Ministries questions?  
extension 2617

# Park Cafe

## A Great Place

- An opportunity to be a part of a fast-paced hospitality ministry
- Sign up in the Park Café on Sunday

Park Café questions?  
extension 2618

## Young Marrieds & Young Families

### Sundays

#### Love & Respect

- 9 am, The Point, downstairs
- DVD and discussion led by Mike Moran and others
- Get ready for some laughs and great discussion as you learn about understanding your spouse (Is that really possible?)
- Engaged couples welcome

Young Marrieds & Young Families questions? extension 2618

## Kid Country

### Hallelujah Hop Musical

- Sunday, April 13, 6:30 pm
- Pavilion Concourse
- Everyone welcome

### Tweenage Power Company Musical Rehearsals

- Sundays through April 6
- 5:30-6:45 pm, The Family Room
- Saturday rehearsal, April 12  
9 am-3 pm, Pavilion Concourse

### Opportunity to Serve Children

- Change a child's life, call for details

Kid Country questions?  
extension 2307

## Home Groups

### Home Groups – a place to belong

- Connect with other adults
- Call or go to [fbcmdesto.com](http://fbcmdesto.com)

Home Group questions?  
extension 2609

## Worship Ministries

### Easter Worship Choir Opportunity

- Thursdays, 6:30 pm, The Point
- Singing: Saturday, March 15, 22 and Sunday, March 16, 23
- High school and up welcome
- Childcare by reservation only

### Worship Orchestra • Thursdays

- 7 pm, Worship Center
- High school and up welcome
- Childcare provided

Worship questions?  
extension 2113

## Family Dynamics

### Marriage • Family • Parenting

### Sundays

- 9 am, Pavilion Garden  
*Parenting: When good intentions go south*
- 10:45 am, Pavilion Garden  
*Considering This Thing Called Family: What you may not have considered*

### Coming Up ...

- *Going Counter Culture as a Parent: what you think is important may not be*
- *Trying to be a Friend to Your Child: When respect disappears faster than a magician's rabbit*

Family Dynamics questions?  
extension 2618

## Pacesetters

### Gleanings For The Hungry

- Monday-Friday, March 3-7, \$60
- Leave First B parking lot at 8:30 am

### Soup and Movie

- Friday, April 11, noon,
- CE Bldg, rm 318
- Showing: *Amazing Grace*

### Potluck and

### Guest Speaker, Dr. Chuck Stecker

- Thursday, April 24, 5:30 pm
- Social Hall (then move into Chapel)

Pacesetters questions?  
extension 2617

## Women's Ministries

### Small Groups

Call for times and locations

#### Sunday –

- Sisters *There is a Season*
- Sisters 2 Acts

#### Monday – encouragement and prayer groups

- Perfect Gifts moms of children with special needs
- Grandmoms in Touch

#### Tuesday – childcare for morning groups

- *Do You Think I'm Beautiful?, Living Beyond Yourself, The Temple, Breaking Free, Men of Faith, Women of the Bible, The Book of Nehemiah, The Patriarchs, Deuteronomy, Discerning the Voice of God, Living Your Life as a Beautiful Offering*

#### Wednesday

- *Sermon on the Mount*

#### Thursday

- MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers) First and third Thursday; Bible study every second Thursday; childcare provided

#### Encouragement & Prayer Groups

- Various groups, call for details
- *Ladies in Waiting* – deals with infertility call 521-4143 for details

Women's Ministries questions?  
extension 2306

## Church Blood Plan

### Information Available

- Call the church office or sign up at the local blood bank

Blood Plan questions?  
extension 2621

## World Outreach

### Night of Prayer for the World

- Monday, March 3
- 6:30, 1325 11th Street

### Chinese Fellowship • Sunday

- 10:45 am, The Point, upstairs

### Laotian Fellowship • Sunday

- 10:45 am, 1325 11th Street

### Cambodian Fellowship • Sunday

- 10:45 am, CE Bldg, rm 336 & 340

World Outreach questions?  
extension 2622

## Recovery In Christ Ministries Support Groups

Substance abuse, dysfunction and dependency

Thursdays, 7 pm  
Pavilion Garden

Childcare provided, birth-sixth grade

Various groups available for men and women. Our recovery ministry is designed to help people work through difficult issues that cannot be worked through alone.

### Lifeline

- For women dealing with depression
- Thursdays, 7 pm
- Pavilion Garden, rm 931

Recovery In Christ questions?  
extension 2621

## Welcome New Members

*Jason Conway • Ron Edwards*  
*Brandon Harrington • Terra Lambert*  
*Mabel Olsen • Arizona Rojas*  
*Paul Wall • Sandy Wall*  
*Lena Williams*

## Share Your Faith Class

### **New Class Begins**

- Tuesdays, beginning March 4
- 6:30-9 pm
- The Point, upstairs
- 15 weeks
- Sign up in the street Sunday, March 2

Share Your Faith questions?  
extension 2621