



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!

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,

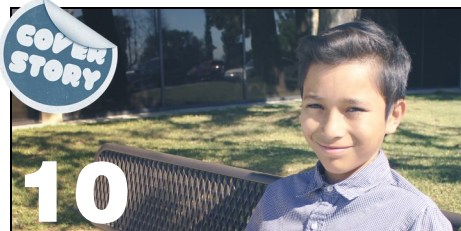
B. Scott Anderson
Executive Pastor

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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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I have never considered myself to be a “retreat” kind of woman. In fact, before becoming involved in PazNaz’s Women’s Ministries several years ago, I never considered myself to be a “Women’s Ministries” kind of woman. Women’s Ministries events and the idea of a weekend retreat just sounded like too much estrogen for me to handle. However, I quickly discovered women at PazNaz who helped me change my perspective. I found women both young and old who were kind, generous, and real. I found women I wanted to get to know on a deeper level; I just had to make the space for it.

In today’s busy world, there are many obstacles that may keep us from going on a weekend retreat. For some, a “women’s retreat” can carry a specific stigma that may be brought on by negative past experiences or assumptions. For others, the idea of putting oneself out there without knowing anyone is the most terrifying and vulnerable idea imaginable. And yet others would love to attend, but obstacles such as money, time, or kids stand in the way.

These obstacles can be very real. However, I believe there are times when we allow them to stand in our way as a means of protecting ourselves from having to bravely step out in faith, and perhaps ignore the very thing God is trying to speak into our lives in a particular season.

Women’s Ministries tries to alleviate some of these obstacles by offering scholarships and creating a weekend that will offer ease and comfort. Hopefully, it just

becomes a question of is God calling you to attend and, if so, are you willing to carve out the time, rearrange your schedule, ask for help, and/or step out in faithful obedience.

This past February, PazNaz's annual spring women's retreat was held at Murrieta Hot Springs with the theme *Be Still: Listening for His Voice*. It was a wonderful weekend full of blessings.

The weather was perfect, high 60s, clear, and sunny. We were also surrounded by the beauty of God's creation. For once I could see lush greenery, granted by the previous months of long awaited rain. A family of ducks walked through the campus. And of course there was the lake, the pool, the Roman spa, and small hot springs to enjoy.

Former PazNaz Pastor Jayme Lenker returned from the Pacific Northwest to be our fabulous speaker for the weekend. Jayme used a variety of teaching methods to remind us that we are worthy, called, capable, and church. Our worship was led by PazNaz's Rosa Ramirez with teams that included women from La Fuente Ministries, teenagers, and working women. The songs "We Need Thee Every Hour," "Hallelujah," and "Christ Be All Around Me" became anthems for the weekend.

The most remarkable blessing of the weekend was simply the individual women who gathered together. There were 72 women ranging in age from 16 to 78. They included four high school students, four undergraduates, and ten mother-daughter duos. There were several mothers of young children, two of whom were pregnant, and three women with their nursing baby boys (including myself). There were working women, retired women, married women, and single women. There were women from PazNaz's La Fuente Ministries and from our Armenian congregation, as well as a handful of women from outside of PazNaz. There were women who have gone on multiple women's retreats before and women who had never attended a retreat in their life.

As I stood in the back of the room

and looked around, I was amazed as I witnessed this diverse group of women worshipping together. Women young and old were standing with arms lifted in praise, swaying and stomping their feet in song. Mothers and daughters were singing arm in arm; mothers and babies were bouncing in the back. In that moment I could see the Holy Spirit working and moving in us. We were gathering as sisters in Christ.

The Spirit continued to move in us throughout the weekend, and I felt like we were truly living as an intergenerational church. Over and over, women of multiple generations organically gathered together to learn, discuss, pray, and connect with one another. We sat with one another to break bread, and took turns holding and playing with babies. I could not think of another time when I had seen women making space for one another like this and forming natural intergenerational relationships. It gave me such peace and joy. This had been my deep desire for the women of our church, and to God be the glory.

Comments from some of the women included:

"The kindness of the other women is helping me to trust him and let go of my fears."

"My soul was refreshed, [and I] met new sisters in Christ."

"I heard God through the ladies."

"We learned from one another's life experiences—each other's commitments, victories, struggles, and how [we] got to where we are as far as our relationship with God. [We] all developed a special bond. [Now,] whenever I see the ladies from the retreat, the hugs and love that I receive from my fellow sisters

mean so much more. What's funny is that when we text each other (we do that whole group texting thing), somebody will always send one out during the week to say 'bless you,' 'love you sisters,' or 'take care.' That's special because even family members don't do that. When I receive those messages, I know that I'm not receiving an empty blessing. We look forward to next year."

God calls us to not only be in relationship with him, but to be in relationship with each other. He works through us; he uses us to bless others, to help others grow, and to see his love and faithfulness. So, while I know it can be difficult to both carve out the time and put ourselves out there, it is worth it and necessary to spend time connecting with other sisters. My hope in this next year is for the women (and men) of our church to continue to stretch themselves by both making space for, and reaching out to, one another in new ways.

I would like to publically thank all of those who served and helped make this year's retreat such a blessed experience, especially Barbara Fields, Rosa Ramirez, Jayme Lenker, Margie Blum, Gayle Theilacker, Heather Handley, and Sarah Edgbert.

- Megan Marsh

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New to PazNaz?



Sunday, July 9, at 9:30 am
Bride's Room, Lee Chapel Foyer

Are you new to PazNaz and want to find out more about this church community? Are you looking to connect and become involved in the life at PazNaz? Then *Coffee Talk with a Pastor* is for you! You are invited to come the second Sunday of the month to meet with one of the pastoral staff and have your questions answered in a small intimate setting.

Contact Pastor Julie Keith for more information at jkeith@paznaz.org or 626.351.2485.



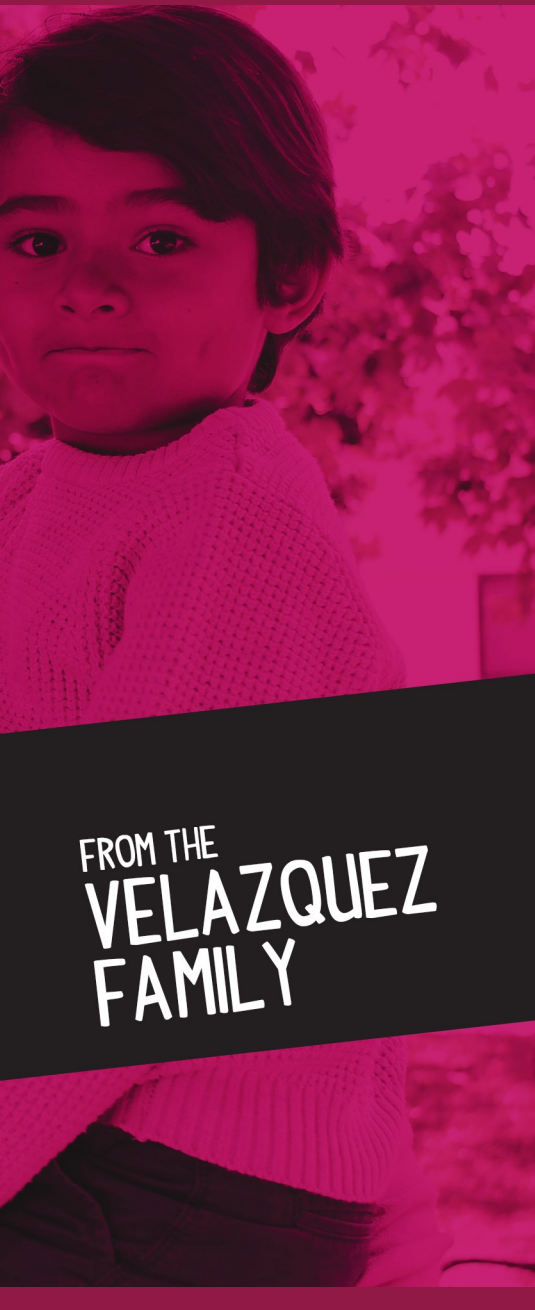
STEPPING OUT OF OUR COMFORT ZONE

PazNaz's Special Needs Ministries' annual fundraiser, *Love Walk & Roll*, is just around the corner. Each year this event raises money to send special needs families to a summer retreat, provides funding for the PazNaz Wheels basketball program, and funds scholarships for siblings and parents to attend events.

Over the years, *Love Walk & Roll* has impacted many people, both those with special needs and those without. It has been a dream of mine to see individuals and families from the PazNaz community go beyond the walls of the church and tap into their own community connections. I believe this is important for a couple of reasons. First, it helps spread the word about the mission of PazNaz's Special Needs Ministries. Secondly, it gives people not directly connected to PazNaz an opportunity to contribute.

My family has seen this impact personally over the years as friends and colleagues of my husband, Jeff, have given to our son Dade's fundraising campaign. These individuals have seen the importance of what the funds provide and want to make an impact in the lives of those we are blessed to serve. Jeff and Dade started their original fundraising campaign with the slogan, "Dollars for Dade." Jeff challenged friends, family, and colleagues to give just a dollar. It really is true that \$1 can make a difference. Many people gave a \$1 while others contributed more.

Of course, there are many others who have similar stories of reaching



**FROM THE
VELAZQUEZ
FAMILY**

out to friends, family, and neighbors to share the message about PazNaz's Special Needs Ministries. One such story is that of the Velazquez family. I was so encouraged by their story from last year's Love Walk & Roll that I wanted to share it with you.

We are overjoyed at how God used our family to help raise money for PazNaz's Special Needs Ministries through their annual Love Walk & Roll. Led by Pastor Julie Keith, this ministry is dedicated to the spiritual, physical, and emotional needs of God's unique children, adults, and their families. It is designed to provide an environment of acceptance and belonging.

We have been participating in PazNaz's Love Walk & Roll with our sons for the past two years because we feel that raising money and taking part in this event is not only a great way to help out an amazing ministry, but it is also a way to teach our children about people with special needs. The Love Walk & Roll has been a place where we have been able to meet and interact with some of the families in this ministry, and our hope is that our kids will be more accepting and compassionate people because of it.

Last year we had something really special happen to us. As the weekend of the walk approached, we realized that we hadn't put very much energy into collecting money for it. Honestly, I think everyone struggles with asking others for money. We had already donated personally and our usual family members had donated a little, but we did not have much more than that. I was thinking and praying about how we could do more. I just kept picturing the families we were doing it for. And then God spoke to my heart and gave me the idea to write a simple, friendly letter explaining the ministry and then put it in a few of our neighbors' mailboxes with a donation form.

A few days before the walk, we dropped the letters off as we were taking our boys to school. When we returned home, we found an envelope with a check from one of our neighbors for \$1,000. Initially, we thought we had read it wrong or that it was a mistake, but it was written out, "one thousand dollars." I walked over to our neighbor's house to thank him for the generous gift. As it turns out, our letter arrived at the perfect time for him! Our neighbor had been reconnecting with God at this time in his life and started praying about his sick dog. He felt his prayers were being answered as his dog

was starting to get better. He was so happy and thankful that when he got our letter in the mail, he felt it was a sign and an opportunity for him to give back. So he was moved to write that check for Special Needs Ministries.

For us this was a great testament to God's provision and timing, as well as another lesson and reminder for us to step out of our comfort zone and let God take over. We had already experienced the beautiful things that can take place when you let go and trust in God when he led us to become foster parents through Child S.H.A.R.E. four years ago that eventually led to the adoption of our wonderful son. This was just one more awesome example of how God works in us through his perfect timing.

**- The Velazquez Family
Victor, Keri, Ithiel,
and Immanuel**

I am so thankful for stories like this one from the Velazquez family. As this year's Love Walk and Roll approaches, I encourage you to plan to walk or roll to raise funds, serve at the event, and/or pray for the impact it will have on those with special needs and their families. What story will you have to tell? I can't wait to hear it and see all that God is going to do once again through the faithfulness of his people as we seek to know Christ and join him on mission in our local and global neighborhoods.

- Pastor Julie Keith



LOVE WALK AND ROLL 2017

This event creates community and helps raise funds for the Special Need/In His Image Ministries of PazNaz. Special Needs families, individuals, and community partners can walk or roll on Saturday, October 7, at 10:00 am in the lower parking lot. For more information or to sign up to be a part of the team, contact Pastor Julie Keith at jkeith@paznaz.org or 626.351.2485.



Living THE Mission

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS IN JULY

6:30-8:00 pm | Lee Chapel

Join Jerry Romasco as he continues to lead PazNaz through a vulnerable exploration of the power of story. This month will feature a night of "No Secrets" on July 5, followed by three nights of exploring the stories of others.



right where you are.



Mentoring the Future

with Jerry Romasco & Oswaldo Martinez
from Pastor Marcos Canales



La Fuente Ministries is a community of Christ-followers committed to connecting and honoring generations for the sake of discipleship. La Fuente Ministries believes that the transference of faith from one generation to the next is not a one-directional movement of information from the older to the younger generation. Instead we believe that multiple generations mutually impact and transform one another, so God invites the church to create spaces of intersection and learning between the generations. At La Fuente Ministries, we believe that God has called us to not only have multiple generations sitting next to each other during worship, but also to intentionally connect generations through mentoring relationships. At times these relationships spring up organically, such as the time when a retired school administrator and a mother with a special needs child navigated together, advocating for the child's educational plan and support. At other times, these generations are intentionally brought together to sharpen and deepen each other's faith. For example, the mentoring experience told in this article sheds light upon Jerry Romasco and Oswaldo Martinez's mentoring relationship.

La Fuente Ministries is very thankful for the ways in which Christ continues to meet both of these amazing men through their conversations, stories, and experiences of faith. Part of the amazing movement of God in this mentoring relationship is that the Spirit had been stirring in both Jerry and Oswaldo the need to connect, hang out, and get to know each other better. When I approached Jerry to have him consider mentoring, God had already been prompting him to walk alongside a younger leader in our congregation. When I spoke with Oswaldo, God had been calling Oswaldo to be a pastor, but he also knew that he needed someone to help him process what this calling meant. Thus, I immediately considered that a mentoring relationship between Jerry and Oswaldo was the necessary step for mutual transformation and for discerning God's leading in their respective

lives. La Fuente Ministries has seen that providing intentional spaces in which generations can connect generates a Spirit-led posture of listening, learning, and service for God's kingdom. Mentoring relationships can be the catalyst and sustaining force for Christ-like disciples to struggle in community with faith doubts and questions, as well as to deepen the understanding of grace over legalism.

- Pastor Marcos Canales

On Mentoring:

Jerry: *Oswaldo and I have known each other for over a year. In June of 2015, the Lord began to lay on my heart a desire to develop a mentor relationship with Oswaldo. I suppose the Lord was doing the same for Pastor Marcos, since he asked me to consider doing that. Oswaldo and I talked to see if that was something he desired and would appreciate. After a couple months of initial conversations and figuring out how it would work, we began a mentor-mentee relationship in August of 2015. Most of his initial thoughts and questions revolved around God, being a Christian, and why we believe what we believe. He already has a deep passion to know God, and there are some really amazing leadership qualities emerging that are obvious in his constant desire to serve others. He is a much-needed part of La Fuente Ministries. Below are some questions we talked through:*

How did you connect with La Fuente Ministries?

Oswaldo: *It was sort of an accident, really. A friend invited my grandma to a Hispanic service at a church, and we decided to go. We actually got a little confused about where the church was and ended up at PazNaz and found our way to the La Fuente Ministries service. When we realized we were in the wrong place, we decided to stay. We immediately loved being there and*

planned to come back because of how much we enjoyed it.

What does it mean for you to be part of La Fuente Ministries? How is it meaningful?

Oswaldo: *It means that I get to be a part of church and be connected to others. It's really meaningful to me that they are training a new generation to be connected to La Fuente, to be a part of the church, and to serve. It's also really great because it's connecting generations to each other. I love that it feels like I'm part of a big family.*

What have you learned about God this past year?

Oswaldo: *That God is good. I've learned a lot this year ... let me think ... God wants you to forgive others because God desires peace. I've learned a lot of God's stories and what God has done on the journey with his people. I've learned what God wants and what God's son died for. Also, God will always be there for you, and he is always going to be by your side no matter what. I've learned that you can always trust God because he won't let you down.*

How are you growing within La Fuente Ministries?

Oswaldo: *I've been getting involved a lot. I really want to be a pastor, so I'm preparing for that. I will be preaching at some point, so I'm getting ready for that.*

How are you serving within La Fuente Ministries?

Oswaldo: *Often I get to read Scripture in service. I really like helping others hear the Bible. We've helped at Church in the Park. I just want to help others in every way I can. I want to show people the Word of God. I also like that I get to do it with other generations.*

What are your dreams for the next stage of development of La Fuente Ministries?

Oswaldo: *I want us to grow and for more people to know God. I want to preach alongside Pastor Marcos. I also want other kids to feel what I do in having a mentor and to be supported. Every kid should have a mentor because they're always there for you.*

What would you like to say to other people?

Oswaldo: *No matter how down you get, always rely on God. Sometimes it seems no one is by your side, but if you reach out to God and ask for help, he'll be there. It's like God is your friend. You can rely on God no matter what.*

- Jerry Romasco

I've learned a lot of God's stories and what God has done on the journey with his people. I've learned what God wants and what God died for. Also, God will always be there for you, and he is always going to be by your side no matter what. I've learned that you can always trust God because he won't let you down.

SIGN UP NOW

PLAY WITH PURPOSE

BASKETBALL CAMP



MENTALLY



ATHLETICALLY



SPIRITUALLY



SOCIALLY



Summer Basketball Camp

Cost: \$100 **Dates:** July 10-13

Morning Session: 8:30 am-12:00 pm | **Afternoon Session:** 1:00 pm-4:30 pm

Camp is open to kids entering first grade through sixth grade

Register at: www.paznaz.configio.com

Contact League Director, Doug Ravasdy, at dravasdy@paznaz.org or 626.351.2456.