

FIRSTwords

TO REACH PEOPLE FOR JESUS CHRIST & TOGETHER BECOME MORE LIKE HIM

FEASIBILITY TEAM REPORT TO THE CHURCH

Many have asked where we stand in relationship to the 1st Christian Church property. As you know, the church voted to put together a feasibility team for the purpose of investigating all of the possibilities of purchasing the property. The team is comprised of members who have a variety of professional backgrounds, but more importantly, they love our church and want what is best for the future of First Baptist Church.

So, on Sunday morning, April 14, during the Sunday school hour, there will be a presentation by the feasibility for all the Sunday school classes from the youth up. We have already informed each of the teachers and directors of these classes about this important presentation. We firmly believe in Bible study and try very hard to not disrupt the teaching of God's word. However, this seemed the best way to have everyone present in one setting. During the presentation, led by Feasibility Team Chair Larry Smith, you will hear a report about the condition of the property, the current ideas if we were to purchase it, and the long-range possibilities for ministry. Immediately following the presentation will be our wonderful Palm Sunday service. In order to accommodate those who might be out of town Sunday

morning, but more importantly those who teach in our preschool and children's areas, we will repeat the presentation at 4:00 p.m. in the dining room that day. Then at 5:00 p.m., there will be a town hall meeting for the purpose of discussing what was presented that morning and a time to answer any and all questions you might have. In fact, there will be cards available prior to the Sunday morning presentation for you to write your questions on. This will give the team time to make sure all the questions are addressed and answered. Then, if a second town hall meeting is needed, one could be held on Wednesday, April 24, to clarify any outstanding questions. On Sunday, April 28, during the morning worship service we will vote on the proposal. This vote will be by written ballot and we will make arrangements for absentee voting for those who are unable to attend that day.

Please be in prayer for the feasibility team as they finish their work, for 1st Christian Church as they go through this time of transition, and for our vision of what might or might not be as we move forward doing Kingdom work now and into the future.

Report Schedule

Sunday, April 14	Feasibility Team Report to the Church Repeat of Feasibility Report Town Hall Meeting for discussion	9:00 a.m. Sanctuary 4:00 p.m. Dining Room 5:00 p.m. Dining Room
Wednesday, April 24	Second Town Hall Meeting if needed	6:00 p.m. Dining Room
Sunday, April 28	Vote on Proposal by Feasibility Team	Morning Worship



words

FOR THE JOURNEY

William Willimon served as the Methodist Bishop overseeing churches and working with pastors in Alabama. The teenage son of one of his pastors took his life just before Holy Week. Trying to offer comfort to the pastor and his family Willimon asked, "Is there anything I can do for you?" The pastor replied, "Would you come to my church and preach the Easter sermon? I'll be in no condition to preach it myself."

Willimon says, "My first reaction to his request was a huge sense of inadequacy – is it possible to speak a good word in the face of such horror and grief?" He wondered if any preacher is in a condition to preach it by himself or herself. Willimon says, "As I thought about it, I realized Easter is always preaching to a hurting congregation who think death and pain have the last word." So on that Easter Sunday, he told the story. He preached defiantly against defeat, the devil, disbelief, and declaring in the tragedies of life, "**Christ is risen.**"

Every Easter sermon is preached to people who are in danger of thinking death or for some, dementia wins. Those disciples on that Friday were in no condition to preach a word of hope like that grieving pastor who had lost his son. We should not be surprised that a lot of people show up for Easter, but for them, it really isn't Easter.

The Easter message certainly proclaims the hope of the resurrection hymn: "*Jesus has opened paradise.*" The resurrection of Jesus assures us we all will go to heaven. **Yet, have we missed something about the hope of Easter?** Easter is so much more than rescuing us from the enemy of death. Easter is not just about the future, but the "here and now." Read the gospel accounts of the resurrection. He sent them on a mission and encountered people where they lived and worked. He rescues us from having to live with no hope in the present.

I mentioned in a sermon the woman whose husband left her after forty-three years of marriage for another woman.

Can you imagine the hurt? The same year her forty-one-year-old son was tragically killed in a car accident. She is struggling. Yet she lives caring for others and with such faith. You want proof of the resurrection? It isn't the empty tomb. She is the evidence of the resurrection. Christ is alive. She has been set free in this world as she lives with hope in the "here and now" in the midst of such grief.

Have you ever thought the words, "*Jesus is risen*" can be frightening? He will show up anywhere. The other disturbing words we often miss at Easter is: "**Go tell!**" The

Lord is back and commissions us to do His work. We are now His agents of Easter hope. The real result of Easter is the church, a community of people who are called to "Go tell He is alive and set loose in the world." During this Easter season, we are considering the purchase of First Christian Church. This is a big step. Could it be during this Easter season God is giving us a new opportunity to expand our ministries and "Go tell"? As we approach this decision, I invite you into a season of spiritual discernment. As you consider this proposal, ask: "Is there anything you need to set aside so you can be open to what God wants?" Pray for God's Will and leading in this decision by daily praying: "**Nothing more; Nothing else; Nothing less**" than what God wants for the future of our church. Let us be open to ways we can tell the world the risen Christ is back and at work through us.

Let us "Go tell!"

Phil



Easter is not
just about the
future, but the
"**here and now.**"



Flowering of the Cross

For many years, we have had a tradition on Easter morning of the children coming forward and Flowering the Cross during the morning service. This is such a beautiful depiction of the resurrection and the beauty that it brings to our lives.

When we arrive in the sanctuary Easter morning we will see what many deem an ugly cross, which reminds us of the terrible and ugly death Jesus suffered on the prior Friday. As we look at the ugliness of the cross, we are reminded of the ugliness and sin in our lives which Jesus so willingly died for. During the service, as the children flower the cross, we will see the transformation into a beautiful cross which represents the beauty of Jesus' resurrection and the new life we have because of His sacrifice.

We will continue the tradition of having a cross outside on the front porch of the sanctuary and allowing people to bring their own flowers to decorate. We ask that you bring flowers, bought or from your own garden, to help depict the beauty of Easter in the transforming of the cross. We do recommend that the stems be cut 4"-6" prior to bringing them.

HOLY WEEK 2019

Downtown Churches Lunch Schedule

Monday, April 15

at First Christian Church

Speaker: Phil Christopher, First Baptist Church

Tuesday, April 16

at First Central Presbyterian Church

Speaker: Ben Siburt, Highland Church of Christ

Wednesday, April 17

at Highland Church of Christ

Speaker: Cliff Stewart, First Central Presbyterian Church

Thursday, April 18

at First Baptist Church

Speaker: Felicia Hopkins, St Paul United Methodist Church

Friday, April 19

at St Paul United Methodist Church

Speaker: Susan Payne, First Christian Church

First Baptist Church Maundy Thursday Service

On Thursday, April 18, at 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary we will observe this special day with a drama titled, "Is It I?" This dramatic presentation tells the thoughts and feelings of the disciples as they participated in the Last Supper. The drama will lead into the participation of the Lord's Supper for each one of us as we share communion together. This is a wonderful way to begin our final days towards Easter.



THANK YOU CHURCH FAMILY

by C.V. Blake

On February 24, FBC recognized Shelly and me with a celebration of twenty years of service. I want to thank everyone who had a part in planning the day. Shelly and I were very surprised at all which took place. The celebration included a pretty clever video produced by Doug Worthington, a proclamation from the Mayor's office designating that day as Carl Vance Blake Day, the reading of a letter from an old friend, R.C. Slocum, as well as a standing ovation from members of this church who have loved us so well over the last twenty years. So many nice things were said by Phil, Mike, and others. Even our grandson, Jack was included. We were overwhelmed. We were honored at a reception following the service which was planned by Dana Pearson and a group of middle school girls. So many of you stopped by to express your love for us. I would also like to mention we received a generous love offering to which many of you contributed. What a beautiful gift. I am waiting for the new golf clubs to arrive.

I can truly say I always feel appreciated here. It was nice to have a day to be recognized, but your appreciation is expressed often and authentically even when it isn't Carl Vance Blake Day in Abilene, Texas. I believe you when you tell me you love me. I hope you know how much you are loved by all of the Blakes.

I am grateful God led us here years ago. I am grateful to have been part of the work He has been doing in this church for so long. The confession, "Jesus Christ is Lord" is the truth which leads us on. As I think of you, I agree with Paul as he wrote in Philippians 1: 3-6 *I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*

First Baptist Church, Abilene **"In His Steps" Tour of Israel** April 20-29, 2020

As we prepare for Easter in just a few weeks, imagine next year you could experience actually being at the sites we have read about in scripture.

Putting your foot in the Sea of Galilee, visiting the ancient city of Caesarea, sitting on the Hill of Beatitudes where Jesus most likely gave the Sermon on the Mount, stepping into the Jordan River where Jesus was baptized, exploring the city of Jerusalem and all of the significant sites the city holds, ascending to the top of Masada, and floating in the Dead Sea. These are just some of the exciting things to be encountered on this wonderful trip.

So, if you would like to find out more about the Israel 2020 trip, please contact Mike Greenfield, mike.greenfield@fbcabilene.org or 325-675-8117.

RA/GA RACERS & BAKE SALE

There is excitement in the air as we are preparing and decorating our cars for the annual RA/GA Racers & Bake Sale. Our cars may not be as fast, but for those of us who worked on racers for this event, it is just as exciting as those car races we see on TV. If that is not exciting to you, maybe the smell of the chili we will have with our hotdogs or the aroma of the baked goods in the bake sale will help peak your interest. Whatever it is, I know I am looking forward to Sunday, April 28, at 5:00 p.m. when we will gather at the Family Life Center to enjoy watching our RA's, GA's, their workers, and the staff as they race their newly made wooden cars. This night will not merely have races going on, as we will also have a bake sale with all homemade items, where money collected will go towards helping at a Children's home in Thailand. Some members of our church will be participating in a mission trip this September in Thailand.

The chili dog supper will start at 5:00 p.m. in the cafe at the Family Life Center and the races will follow at 6:00 p.m. The bake sale will be ongoing through the supper and races. Following the races, there will be awards for the fastest cars as well as best decorated, most creative, and most unique. We hope you will join us on Sunday evening, April 28, for this fun night with the FBC community and help us as we support such a wonderful mission project.

“OUR NEW LIFE IN CHRIST”

by Bridgett Gann

Our journey began in November 2018. My husband came home one evening from work and said “Honey we’re going to church this Sunday.” I actually started laughing and replied back “We’re going where on Sunday?” The reason I laughed at my husband is because, getting him to go to church over the years is like getting a child to eat broccoli. We have been together for 27 years and I can count on one hand the number of times I have gotten him to go to church. He said his friend, Jerry Clark, had been inviting him for a while now to visit his church. I asked him what church Jerry was a member of and he told me First Baptist Church of Abilene. I said, oh No! That is the big church downtown. I can’t go to a church that big.

Sunday came, my husband got up and dressed for church, but I didn’t go with him. When my husband returned home from church that Sunday, he was filled with so much joy. You could see it all over his face when he talked about his experience. He told me how welcoming everyone was to him and they knew he was new to the church. He was so excited about the welcome bag he received from C.V. Blake at the end of the service. He told me I would love the music. I was so disappointed now at myself for not going with him, but I was so proud he went. I made sure to be up and ready to go the next Sunday morning along with our 2-year-old granddaughter, Charlotte. Our granddaughter is one of the main reasons we wanted to find us a church home. We are helping our son Robert raise her. We want her to grow up knowing the Lord and be raised in a good Christian home.

My husband was telling me the “Truth” from the moment we entered the church that Sunday morning. Everyone greeted us with a smile and was so welcoming. The one thing that really stood out to me was at the beginning of the service when they have everyone go around and say good morning to each other. The music sounded so beautiful and the sermon was so well spoken. C.V. Blake made sure I had one of his cards before we left and told me he would like for us all to have lunch or dinner soon. When we picked up Charlotte from her class, she was so happy and telling us all about her morning in Sunday school. The next Tuesday evening, we had dinner with C.V. and Shelly Blake. We had a great visit getting to know one another. The Blake’s are wonderful people. C.V. brought church membership cards with him that evening and left them for us. He told us to not feel pressured, but he wanted us to have them whenever we are ready. Bob and I went home that evening and talked a lot about how we wanted to change our lives for the better. We both felt like God brought Jerry Clark in our life and He led us to First Baptist Church.

We continued to come to church On Wednesday’s and Sunday’s through November and decided we were ready to join the church. On Wednesday evening, December 5, 2018, Bob and I, with the guidance of C.V. Blake, were saved. It happened there at church on the third floor in classroom 316. I will never forget that night. It was a very exciting moment for both of us. Then on Sunday, December 30, 2018, Bob and I were both baptized together by C.V. Blake. There are many people who have helped us along the way of “Our New Life in Christ” and without you we could not have made it this far. Thank you to Jerry and Katherine Clark, C.V. and Shelly Blake, Becky Tucker, Candy Rains, and the Godsquad Sunday school class.

Volunteers Needed on Easter Sunday!



We need 12 volunteers to help with our sweet preschool children in Extended Session on Easter Sunday. If you can help, please contact Jennifer Miller at 675-8105 or jennifer.miller@fbcabilene.org.

ACTING IN *love*

March 7, 2019

Dear John and friends,

Hello. I have wanted to write you for some time as you have been on my heart lately. I spent three years at Abilene Christian University, which was important, but when I remember college, I remember spending time in ministry with each of you. I might even remember it more than my involvement in my own church while in Abilene. God has done and is doing awesome things. I am continually thankful for the experiences I had with each of you.

City Light is indeed a bright spot in my memory and testimony of the last ten years. I'm thankful for the lessons God taught me through those who entered the doors for lunch, those who volunteered, and each of you who serve on staff. It truly was one of the most formative experiences of my time in Abilene.

I have been away from Abilene for about 6 years now, but it feels like yesterday I was able to come alongside my friend, Brock New, us being young college kids who just walked in to City Light and asked if you needed any help. I'm thankful for the next three years of volunteering I was able to do alongside you. God has continued to use me in several roles professionally, in volunteer roles, as well as to my family and friends to join Him in furthering His kingdom.

God has put on my heart to remember each of you, pray over you, and to just give thanks for the time we had together. I don't make it to Abilene too often, but know if I do, I will make sure to stop by First Baptist to say hello.

Just like Paul says in Philippians 1, "I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

God is faithful and good. I know He is active in Abilene through each of you. I pray this letter finds you doing well. Know you are prayed over often by me in Houston.

Blessings,

Payton Giacomarro



INTRODUCING CITY LIGHT CULINARY ACADEMY

City Light Culinary Academy is working to break the cycle of poverty through culinary training for homeless and disadvantaged individuals in Abilene and the surrounding areas.

Classes begin soon! On May 13 we will have our first cohort under the leadership and training of our new Director of Operations/Chef Trainer, Kayleen Mills!

Kayleen comes to us with experience in food service operations, teaching, and management. She has an Associate of Applied Science in Culinary Arts from Le Cordon Bleu - The Cooking and Hospitality Institute of Chicago. We feel very blessed to have her as a part of this ministry!

Summary of Curriculum:

Phase 1 (Weeks 1-4): Gain Food Handler's Certificate, introduce knife skills, equipment and utensils, salad prep, meat and vegetables cutting, bulk entrées, healthy communication, teamwork, and goal setting.

Phase 2 (Weeks 5-8): Product and equipment ID, food prep, knife skills, culinary math, stock, sauces, soup, portioning, entrée prep, customer service, choosing to create a new future, and goal setting.

Phase 3 (Weeks 9-12): Knife skills, catering trays and complex presentation, stocks, sauces, thickeners, kitchen brigade and line work, cumulative culinary final, dealing with setbacks, assertiveness, and job readiness.

Kayleen has already had the opportunity to use her teaching skills when the young T.B. Maston Scholars from Texas Baptist Universities visited City Light March 24-25. This visit was in association of the Maston Lectures at Logsdon Seminary. City Light had the privilege of telling our City Light/FBC Abilene story about how we love our city and how we are moving towards empowering people to move out of poverty. Our first step is the Culinary Academy and we'll soon add volunteer case management to go along with our crisis ministry, community meals, and Big A children's ministry. These students were able to take advantage of the knife skill lessons (with no injuries) which our Culinary Academy will soon be teaching and experienced what our students will be learning. Be watching for new cooking classes which will be offered to FBC and our community in the future through our Culinary Academy. Kayleen Mills will help you learn how put some new culinary math into your recipes and cooking techniques. Be watching for more information about these classes. However, what you can do now is pray for our new academy. Pray for the right students to be involved, pray for Kayleen's leadership, pray for our new City Light Board helping to give direction to the new endeavor, pray for people's lives to be different because of this training and investment into their lives, pray for our Abilene restaurants to invest in our students who will be involved in our academy. Thank you for being a church who is willing to think outside the charity box and empower people to make positive changes in their lives.

If you know of anyone interested in this job training program, please contact Kayleen Mills at kayleen.mills@fbcabilene.org or 325-673-6686, ext. 103.



EVENT CALENDAR:

APRIL

- 7 Thailand Mission Trip Info Meeting
Personnel Committee Meeting
The Gap @ Maxx Air
- 9 Rockin' Moms
Women's Fellowship
- 10 Buildings & Grounds Committee Meeting
- 11 Blessed Family Fun Time
- 13 Easter Egg Hunt/Cobb Park
Abilene Philharmonic Concert
- 14 All Youth and Adult SS Classes in Sanctuary
Feasibility Team Presentation
Town Hall Meeting for
discussion of presentation
- 15 Holy Week Lunch @ First Christian
- 16 Holy Week Lunch @ First Central Presbyterian
Finance Committee Meeting
Deacons' Meeting
- 17 Holy Week Lunch @ Highland Church of Christ
No meal/activities
- 18 Holy Week Lunch @ FBC FLC Gym
Healing Hearts Meeting
Maundy Thursday Service
- 19 Church Offices Closed
Holy Week Lunch @ St. Paul UMC
- 21 Easter Sunday
- 24 Hospital Visitation Team
Church Conference
2nd Town Hall meeting if needed
- 28 Vote on Feasibility Team Proposal
Missions Committee
RA/GA Racer & Bake Sale

OPEN POSITION

The Ministry of Counseling and Enrichment is seeking a person to fill the part-time Evening Receptionist position. The position is responsible for answering the phones, scheduling clients, and processing payments. Hours are, Monday through Thursday, 2-8 p.m. If you are interested in the position, please contact Steve Queen, mocesteve@sbcglobal.net or 672-9999.

STAFF ANNIVERSARIES

April 1, 23 years

Mike Greenfield,

*Pastor for Administration
& Spiritual Development*

April 9, 12 years

Paul Irby,

Counselor

April 4, 1 year

Sherry Payne,

Custodian

April 17, 2 years

Mike Brady,

Director of FLC

April 5, 13 years

Jeannie Wesley,

*M. A. to Pastor
for Adults & Director
for Pastoral Care*

April 22, 9 years

Candy Rains,

Pastor for Preschool

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

March 2019

Budget	March	Year-to-Date
Required	\$307,206	\$911,889
Given	\$287,982	\$1,026,146

God continues to bless our faithfulness through the tithes and offerings given to His Kingdom work.



FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH • ABILENE

1333 North 3rd, Abilene, TX 79601
fbc@fbcabilene.org | www.fbcabilene.org
325-673-5031