

FIRSTwords

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



HOLY WEEK SERVICES

A cooperative venture by four churches Celebrating Holy Week. A tradition in Abilene for over 40 years. Doors open at 11:45 a.m. Program starts at 12:10 p.m. Bring your own lunch. Host church will provide dessert and tea/water. No charge.

**MONDAY,
APRIL 3**

at First Central
Presbyterian

**EAU DE
WORSHIP**

Brandon Hudson,
speaker
Minister, First Baptist
Church

**TUESDAY,
APRIL 4**

at Highland Church
of Christ

DRAWN

Benji Van Fleet,
speaker
Minister, St. Paul
United Methodist

**WEDNESDAY,
APRIL 5**

at First Baptist
Church (FLC)

**ENTROPY OF
THE HEART**

Shane Hughes,
speaker
Minister, Highland
Church of Christ

**THURSDAY,
APRIL 6**

at St. Paul United
Methodist

**BASIN
THEOLOGY**

Cliff Stewart, speaker
Minister, First Central
Presbyterian

MAUNDY THURSDAY | APRIL 6, 2023 | FBC SANCTUARY | 6 PM

GOOD FRIDAY | APRIL 7, 2023

SCRIPTURAL STATIONS OF THE CROSS

FBC SANCTUARY | 11 AM - 6 PM

There will be 14 self-paced stations where you will have the opportunity to participate and reflect.

EASTER SUNDAY | APRIL 9, 2023 | FBC SANCTUARY | 10:30 AM

APRIL 2023



FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH • ABILENE

FBCABILENE.ORG

THE WAY OF THE WORD

by Brandon Hudson

I want to continue to offer thanks to all of you as we continue to grow in love for one another. I was meeting this morning with Greg Jaklewicz, reporter for the Abilene Reporter News. He asked me to reflect on our first eight weeks together. My sincere reply was that I could not think of any way the last eight weeks could have gone better. I said to him, as I have said to many lately, I believe that the deep and intentional prayer experiences of our congregation over the past several years (in addition to a rich history of prayer amongst our members) during the Hope Campaign and the Pastoral Transition has opened all of us up to a fresh movement of the Spirit, a sensation I have felt ever since I began talking to the Search Committee. Thank you for that gift of prayer and openness and the ways you continue to seek God's guidance alongside our staff as we seek to best represent Christ in everything we do.

One of the ways we have framed that desire in the recent weeks of the Lenten season is through our theme of The Way of the Word. The goal in these last several weeks is to further explore our call to be salt and light in the world as we seek to study and imitate the ways of Jesus in our lives. We've read the story of the temptation, of Nicodemus, of the Woman at the Well, of the Man Born Blind, of Lazarus, and of the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem as we head towards Holy Week. I hope you will be able to join as we continue this journey.

During Holy Week, we will have luncheon services with our other downtown churches, exploring John's gospel account of Jesus' time in Jerusalem. On Thursday evening, we will have a Maundy Thursday service. In this service, we will remember the "new commandment" Jesus gives to us to love one another.

We will celebrate communion together in an intimate way, and as we exit the service, those who wish to do so will be able to participate in a service of foot washing in the Welcome Center as we remember our Lord who chooses to wash our feet. On Good Friday, our sanctuary will be open from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. for a self-guided time of reflection on the Stations of the Cross. All of these services will help us to remember the sacrifice of Jesus and the intentional vulnerability and pain He endured that are the necessary path to Easter. If you have questions about any of the services during Holy Week, please call the office or send me an email!

On Easter Sunday, we will gather together to celebrate the Resurrection that brings us all abundant life. Having walked throughout Lent in the Way of the Word, we will come to the empty tomb and remember that the death of Jesus is not the end of the story, but the beginning of our life and the mystery which enables us to continue to be salt and light in the world. On Easter Sunday, we will also have a special televised program which tells the story of Easter and will be shown at 10:00 a.m. on The CW, then at 1:30 p.m. on KTXS. If you have friends who may not yet be following the Way of Jesus, I hope you will invite them to church on Easter (or any Sunday!). If they are uncomfortable coming to church, they may find this televised special a new way of hearing the story of God's redemptive love.

I am so thankful to journey into this Holy Week with you and this season of Eastertide which follows as we live into abundant life. I am blessed to be your pastor!



WOMEN'S NIGHT OF PRAISE

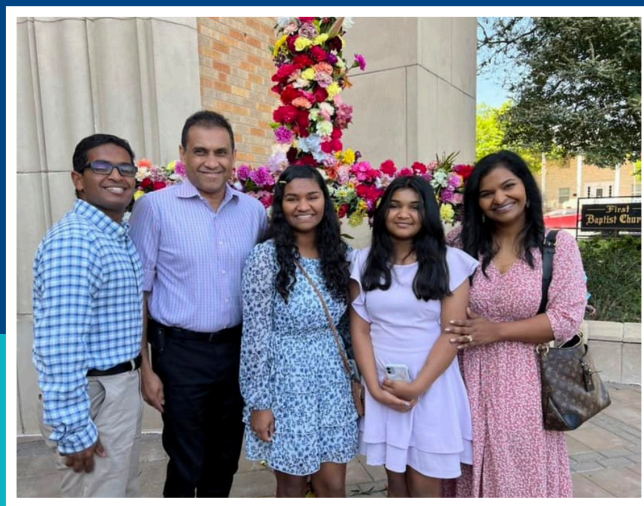
by Jill Hudson

Women of FBC, you are invited to a new event brought to you by the Women's Ministry Team. Sometimes we play BUNCO. Sometimes we retreat. Get ready now for a Night of Praise.

The response to the praise and worship time at our most recent Women's Retreat was overwhelmingly positive. Respondents also said that the testimonies from fellow women of FBC were the highlight of their weekend. And most women came and stayed for the fellowship opportunities. So, let's combine them all together and do it again!

Our first ever Night of Praise will feature testimonies from women of our church who will share about how El Roi, the God who sees, is working in their lives. We will also have time for fellowship so you can hug your friends' neck and make a new friend as well! And most importantly, we will lift our hearts and voices in praise to El Shaddai, our God who is sufficient for the needs of the people, who is redeeming all that is bad in the world and also making all things new!

You will not want to miss this first-time event and it will not be complete without you there! Please make plans now to attend the Women's Night of Praise, Tuesday, April 25, from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. in the FBC Chapel!



FLOWERING OF THE CROSS SUNDAY, APRIL 9

Easter is such a beautiful Sunday as we celebration a risen Savior. One way we celebrate the beauty of the resurrection is through the flowering of the cross. The past couple of years we have asked the families of our children to help us flower the cross during the worship service. Families of the children will be able to meet their child/ren immediately following the "Children's Time" on the west side (organ side) of the sanctuary.

Our preschoolers will also be able to participate as we will have a smaller cross in the Welcome Center for them to flower.

As it has become a tradition we will also have the cross outside on the front porch of the sanctuary to allow 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 the stems be cut 4" - 6" prior to bringing them.

The Flowering of the Cross is such a beautiful depiction of the resurrection and the beauty it brings to our lives and we hope this is a blessing to each of you.

DISCIPLE NOW

by Austen Winfrey

Disciple Now weekends have always focused around two values. We have an opportunity to show students what God's love means for their lives, and we get to show students how following God is done together. Even though this is a basic formula, this is always what Disciple Now has been about.

We are over a month out from our Disciple Now Weekend. Church family, I'm happy to report that Disciple Now 2023 was a huge success. We got the opportunity to serve a great group this year which consisted of 40 students, 7 Bible Study leaders, 10 Host Home Leaders (5 different host homes), a great band put together by Tyler Daniel and Flourish Music, and Scotty Swinger who was our Guest Preacher for the weekend (Scotty is the Associate Pastor for Students at Sugarland Baptist Church). I am beyond grateful for how well our students responded to the weekend. We had a great opportunity to celebrate joy during D-NOW Weekend and I think we did just that!

The weekend's theme was Simplify. In our world of busy schedules, agendas, and excess, have you ever thought about what the Bible says are the essential things our lives need to thrive? How do we "Simplify" our lives to live well? We need an answer of what we really need in life and luckily for us, God speaks on this! Our students studied all through Scripture (specifically focusing on John 15:9-17) about how Jesus teaches that our lives need to be connected with His to thrive. Every person in the world needs three things in their lives; other than the essential things like air, water, and a heartbeat. First, you need to know you are loved by God. You need to know that God cares for you deeply, regardless of your past mistakes or your feelings of insecurity. God loves you. Secondly, you need to have a purpose. You need to have something you are working towards in your life. This gives your life meaning. Third, and finally, you need to be a part of something bigger than yourself, you need to



be invested in a group. If we “Simplify” our lives to focus on these things, we will thrive in a life purposed for living with Jesus.

Disciple Now cannot happen without the help of this church family and many faithful leaders. Your tithes and offerings go towards the ministry budget so we can plan a ministry of empowering youth through the love and grace of Jesus Christ. Our Bible study leaders sacrifice their personal time to share the weekend with students and teach them from the Bible. Host Home Leaders volunteered their weekend and their entire homes for the benefit of our students. We had a faithful guest preacher and guest worship leaders who encouraged our students to live into the love God has given to us. We had great volunteers who served our students out of the love in their hearts.

I am grateful to serve at FBC Abilene and the wonderful students we have here. I am proud of how they live out their faith in God in unique ways. I find joy in their friendships and in the ways they look after one another. I am encouraged that God is leading us on this journey together. Let's all strive to live our lives following in the ways of Jesus, for the glory of His Kingdom.

Your friend,
Austen



EST 1975
SINGING MEN
OF TEXAS
—  —

**Singing Men of West Texas &
Panhandle in Concert**
Thursday, April 20, 7:00 p.m.
First Baptist Church, Abilene
Featuring the First Baptist Church
Celebration Orchestra

FBC MISSIONS: **ACTING IN** *love*



FRIENDSHIP UPDATE

At the FBC Friendship House, we've been hosting monthly potlucks for our neighbors to get to know one another, and at our February one we made homemade pizzas and it was SO fun. Watching kiddos & adults create a pizza with whatever toppings they wanted and take some home was a joy – and it allowed us to get to know a lot more neighbors.

As we get to know more people, it's sometimes a challenge to become friends and watch them move or pass away. But, even in that we've learned to live open-handed and love the people God puts in front of us, no matter how long it'll be. We've been challenged also to pray more before acting – our job isn't to be people's savior, but to point to the only Savior and to pray with them and walk alongside them.

Our neighbors serving neighbors outreach is a way for neighbors to serve neighbors who are unable to help themselves (like lawn care or house work). In return, we try to help meet some basic needs of the neighbors serving.

Coming up is our backyard Bible club in the summer and we're looking forward to the kids hearing about the good news & having a blast!



WHAT'S HAPPENING AT CITY LIGHT

We are, as always, focused on meeting crisis needs, feeding the hungry, building biblical community, teaching children, and helping people move out of poverty!

February 2023



8,431 MEALS SERVED

Includes MWF meals, Sunday Breakfast, Continental Breakfast, Sack Lunches, and City Light Market*



414 VOLUNTEER HOURS



26 ROCKIN MOMS

PERSONAL ASSISTANCE:



53 HOUSEHOLDS

helped with rent and utilities



300 WALK-INS

bus passes, clothing and other



253 MAIL

Delivered and checked



124 SHOWERS

WHEN PEOPLE CAN RECEIVE HELP

Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays

Office Hours: 9:00 a.m.-Noon, 1:30-3:00 p.m.

Showers: 9:00-11:20 a.m. | **Lunch:** 11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

In addition:

Sunday Breakfast: 8:15-9:00 a.m. **Worship:** 9:00-10:00 a.m.

Second Tuesday of Each Month: Rockin' Moms: Noon-1:30 p.m.

April

- 2 FBC Foundation Board Meeting
Personnel Committee Meeting
- 3 Holy Week Lunch
@ First Central Presbyterian
(Brandon speaking)
- 4 Holy Week Lunch
@ Highland Church of Christ
- 5 Holy Week Lunch
@ FBC Family Life Center
No Wednesday Night Meal/Activities
- 6 Holy Week Lunch @ St. Paul UMC
Maundy Thursday Service
- 7 Church Offices Closed
Stations of the Cross in sanctuary
(11 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.)
- 9 Easter Sunday
- 12 Buildings/Grounds Committee Meeting
- 16 Mission Committee Meeting
- 18 City Light Board Meeting
Finance Committee Meeting
Deacons' Meeting
- 20 Singing Men of West Texas and
Panhandle Concert
- 23 Lord's Supper
- 25 Women's Night of Praise
- 26 Church Conference

STAFF ANNIVERSARIES

April 1, 27 years

Mike Greenfield

Pastor for Administration
& Spiritual Development

April 5, 17 years

Jeannie Wesley

M. A. to the Pastor for Adults &
Director of Pastoral Care

April 9, 16 years

Paul Irby

Counselor

April 17, 6 years

Mike Brady

Director of FLC

April 22, 13 years

Candy Rains

Pastor for Preschool

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

March 2023

Budget	March	Year-to-Date
Required	\$ 261,060	\$ 814,180
Given	\$ 174,811	\$ 678,013

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



FIRST BAPTIST
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