



FIRSTWORDS

HE IS RISEN

He is risen indeed

EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 5 | 10:30 AM



FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH ♦ ABILENE

APRIL 2026 ▪ FBCABILENE.ORG

Dear FBC Family,

Another round of firsts for our family in Abilene is about to happen – Holy Week! We are looking forward to spending Holy Week remembering the cross and celebrating the resurrection with you, our church family.

On Easter Sunday, we are beginning a new sermon series called Signs. In the Gospel of John, miracles are labeled as “signs.” The miracle event pointed to something larger God was doing in the world through Jesus – the salvation of our sins through the Messiah. There are seven signs in John, not including the resurrection. We will start with the resurrection on Easter – where all the signs were pointing – and then go back over the next seven weeks to explore each sign and the Savior to whom they point.

After that, we will be doing a summer series called Dreaming God’s Dreams. These will be a series of call stories from both the Old Testament and New Testament. I have never preached a series on call stories and am really excited to dig into these scriptures.

Along with that sermon series in the summer, we are going to be seeking God’s will together through a summer prayer campaign called Your Kingdom Come: Praying for the Next 150. When I came here, I came with a three-step process for organizational leadership in mind. The first was to establish the culture. When you step into leadership of a 144-year-old organization, there is a culture already going! My job was to help accentuate the great parts of that culture and demonstrate how I will show up as pastor here. Our first task as a staff was to choose five values that we will evaluate ourselves

through – Centered (on Jesus), Presence (being with you and God), Excellence (bringing God our best), Loyalty (faithful to each other and God), and Love (the root of all we do).

The next step in my organizational leadership process is visioning. Now we cast our nets wider, and it begins with our summer prayer campaign. Starting in June, each week this summer we will be sending out a topic, scripture, and prayer prompts in order for us all to pray together about what God wants from FBC Abilene over the next few years. We are using the church turning 150 as a marker. What is God inviting us to do and who is God inviting us to be as we approach 150? You will be given a journal to record how God is speaking to you this summer. We will gather at the end of summer to record how God spoke to our church. Then on staff retreat in September, we will analyze the data looking for patterns of how the Holy Spirit spoke to you. We believe that out of that prayer, God will reveal the next steps for how He wants His kingdom to come in Abilene as it is in Heaven.

The third step would then be to devise a strategy based on the prayer results and what God is inviting us into over the next few years. We are going to dream God’s dreams together. I am excited about this process and believe God will bless it and bless you through it.

Grace and Peace,

RAY P. MILLER, DMIN
Pastor, FBC
Abilene, Tx



30th Anniversary: MIKE GREENFIELD

This month, we celebrate the ministry of Mike Greenfield, our Pastor for Administration and Spiritual Development.

The Greenfields moved to Abilene in 1996 from the Houston area where Mike was the BSM Director at San Jacinto College. When Mike began his ministry here he came as Minister of Young Adults and Outreach. Mike and Patti have three children – Katie, Blake, and Brett. Katie is married to Luke Palmer, and they live in Abilene with their four sons. Blake is married to Sarah; they live in Woodridge, Virginia with their son. Brett lives in Brooklyn, New York.

Mike loves to cook. Whether he is cooking for our church or at home, it brings him great joy to serve people through food. In pursuit of excellent cooking, he has attended many cooking school classes and has a professional kitchen at his house! If you've enjoyed BBQ during Round Up Sunday, you have Mike to thank.

Mike has worn and continues to wear many hats during his now 30-year tenure at FBC Abilene. His willingness to learn, adapt and meet the current needs of our church throughout his tenure reflects his willingness to put the church first. Whether you have been here from the beginning or just arrived, help us celebrate our time with Mike. Take time to write him a note, hug his family, and express your appreciation for his great achievement and our great blessing.

On Sunday, April 12, there will be a reception for the Greenfields following the worship service.

We will be receiving a Love Offering for Mike over the next few weeks. You can participate by giving a check, marked Mike's Love Offering or give online through the church giving portal at the link: **Mike Greenfield Love Offering**. We ask that all gifts be in the office on or before Wednesday, April 8.



Counselor Spotlight:

GAYLA COOK



Over two and a half decades ago, I was a client at the Ministry of Counseling and Enrichment. Last summer, in July of 2025, I returned as a therapist! My journey of service began in all things education for over 30 years. I was a teacher, coach, behavior specialist, teacher mentor, and even a bus driver! My years working with teachers, students and their families were both challenging and fulfilling, and laid a foundation of compassion and service to all people. Then in 2021, I started graduate school, and by 2024 had earned a master's degree, school counselor certification, and professional counselor license. I stayed in education until my fifth, and youngest child, graduated from high school and then I began earnestly seeking where the Lord might lead me. I knew it was time to close the chapter in education and begin full-time counseling. So, I prayed, listened, and walked in faith right back home to Abilene!

As an adult embarking on the second half of life, I have endured some particularly challenging life experiences which have shaped my personal growth in a way that provides a unique level of wisdom, maturity, and support for clients of all ages. Life, death, love, joy, grief, struggle, suffering, resilience, compassion, understanding, growth, and hope have been my greatest teachers and resources of strength over years. As a result, I find myself in a beautiful place and am daily inspired to be a part of other people's healing journey. I am passionate about supporting adults in the second half of life and beyond - those facing life transitions, grief, loss and/or perhaps facing challenges involving life purpose and meaning. I also love working with college students and young adults and the unique challenges that come with building and creating purposeful meaningful lives, marriages, and parenting skills. Couples counseling is another area in which I enjoy investing time and energy - repair and reconciliation in any relationship is at the heart of the Father's work. He is in the business of redemption in every area of our lives. Asking for help takes courage and strength and is the first step in the process of restoration and wholeness. I consider it a privilege, as a humble partner with The Counselor, to come alongside people in their pain, confusion, and disappointment as we confront the past and the present in order to find freedom in the future.

Outside the therapy space, I enjoy spending time with my dog, Rafa, or traveling to visit my children who are scattered around Texas. My favorite activities and self-care practices are hiking, yoga, pickle ball, reading, hanging out in local coffee shops, or just

sitting quietly and mindfully outdoors where I feel the peace and presence of God flowing in and through me. And whenever the opportunity affords, I head to the mountains! My favorite Bible passage is Isaiah 43:18-19 which says:

*Forget the former things: do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness
and streams in the wasteland.*

WOMEN'S night of praise

Thursday, April 16 | Chapel | 7:00 p.m.

As we flip our calendars to this new month of April, we celebrate a new season. Spring brings a sense of newness after a long, sometimes harsh winter. We enjoy the shift in temperatures, fresh garden blooms, and the sweet sound of birds chirping and singing. The promise of longer, warmer days symbolizes a season of new beginnings.

In addition to the newness in nature around us, Spring also symbolizes a fresh start spiritually. Springtime in the Bible symbolizes spiritual renewal. Paul writes of this promise in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" God is faithful and just to make all things new, including us!

To celebrate in fellowship of our renewal, the women of our church will gather for a Night of Praise on Thursday, April 16 at 7:00 p.m. It will be a time of prayer, reflection, and praising God through music. We will hear testimonies from church members Grace Daulton, Sandy Longacre, and Sarah Miller. Join us to celebrate how God has been working in their lives in times of transition!

By Marci Cole

FOUNDATION UPDATE

The First Baptist Church Foundation met on March 22 for their Spring grant review and were able to fund several needed projects. The Youth Ministry submitted a request to upgrade the lighting in the large youth room and centralize the switches, thus enabling Hunter to go to one location and turn on all the lights instead of going to 15 different switches scattered throughout the room!

The office staff will benefit from the addition of a new folding machine which obviously speeds up the process when an all-church mailout is needed, along with lots of other materials which need to be folded. The current machine is about 25 years old and is simply worn out.

Worship will be enhanced by upgrading the monitors at the handicap locations in the sanctuary, along with the monitors in the welcome center, sanctuary foyer, and music suite foyer. The new equipment will also allow us to expand our messaging system throughout the church in the near future.

Finally, the library will get a bit of a facelift as we will paint and carpet the space. There will be a few minor changes to the location of some of the areas in the room and update the user experience.

The Foundation exists to support the missions and ministries of First Baptist Church. Gifts to the Foundation come in a variety of ways: estate gifts, in honor or memory of someone, or for special projects or needs. The Foundation recently received notice that they were named as a beneficiary in the estate of Dr. Virginia Connally. Dr. Connally left all her mineral rights to HighGround (former Baptist Foundation of Texas) and named FBC Foundation as a 20% beneficiary. In her will, she specified that the earnings be used for "children" and those who knew Virginia knew of her love of GLO. So, the earnings from the mineral rights are being used to help underwrite the budget of GLO, thus taking some of the burden off the church budget. So, her love of GLO continues well into the future leaving a lasting impact on hundreds of children for years to come.

If you have questions about the Foundation, please contact Jeanne Jowers or Mike Greenfield, they would be glad to help.

girls only: MOVIE NIGHT

What do you get when you have candy, soft drinks, popcorn, pillows, blankets, and more than 40 women and girls gathered on a Friday night? You get **GIRLS ONLY: MOVIE NIGHT** at **FBC!**

Our women's ministry invited girls of all ages to join us for a fun evening watching the movie "Parent Trap" on Friday, March 27 in the youth room.

It was a great night to be indoors, watching a movie, as it was cold and drizzling outside. Our ages ranged from preschoolers all the way to those who have not been in school for many years. No matter the age, we enjoyed the time together.

Movie Night is just one more way our church shows how much we embrace all generations, and we will continue to provide opportunities for our women to come together and form wonderful relationships with women and girls of all ages.



Ministry Spotlight:

CITY LIGHT

Community Ministries

SUNDAY BREAKFAST: 515

COMMUNITY BREAKFAST: 404

COMMUNITY LUNCH: 2,199

PRODUCE: 464

VOLUNTEER HOURS: 645

SHOWERS: 175

CLOTHING ITEMS: 281

CALLS AND VOICEMAILS: 433

MAIL CHECKS: 248

FRONT DESK WALK-INS: 1,909

DINING ROOM WALK-INS: 2,380



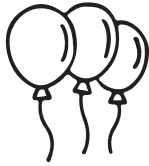
The Sisters' Table

**WE ARE NOT LUCKY...
WE ARE BLESSED!**

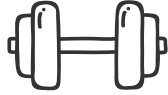


At the Sister's Table on March 9, the ladies gathered for fellowship, a devotional, and a special Irish blessing. It was a sweet reminder that what we experience in life is not simply luck. Luck suggests that things happen randomly, without meaning or purpose. A blessing, however, is intentional. A blessing says that God is involved—that He guides, provides, and protects. The Bible reminds us that nothing in a believer's life is accidental; God's favor and care are always present. So, let's stop calling our blessings luck. You are not lucky—you are loved. You are not lucky—you are chosen. Luck says no one planned this; it just happened. But, a blessing says God cares enough to be involved in your life. Your name is written in heaven, and that sounds pretty blessed to me.

Ministry Spotlight: FLC



41
PARTY
PACKAGES



246
FITNESS
CENTER USE



13
FITNESS
CLASSES



342
SERENITY
HOUSE
INDIVIDUALS



5
FULL BUILDING
RENTALS



867
WALK-INS



13
SPECIAL NEEDS
GROUPS



3
SCHOOL
GROUPS



305
SPRING BREAK
GUESTS

EVENTS: Blessed families night & Holy Week luncheon. Housed a mission group from Fairfield University (Connecticut) who come each year to help the International Rescue Committee.

The Family Life Center opened in 1981. Our mission is to provide family-oriented activities for the church membership & surrounding communities in a Christian atmosphere at an affordable price. Our facility accommodates a variety of groups such as businesses, churches, day care/day camps, private home schools, public schools, individuals with special needs, universities, military, family reunions, residential treatment centers, exercise groups and Fellowship of Christian Athletes to list a few. We host birthday parties, bridal showers, wedding receptions and Family Fun Nights. In addition, we have a full fitness center with lockers, showers and sauna amenities. For those who simply want a place to walk, out of the weather, our track or gym is free to the public.

Sweet Wanda: A LEGACY OF FAITHFUL SERVICE

At City Light, some people don't just volunteer, they become part of the foundation. Wanda Sumner, known as "Sweet Wanda," is one of those people.

Wanda has been serving at City Light since the very beginning of our ministry. She first helped pass out sack lunches at the Family Life Center and has faithfully continued through every chapter of our journey—moving with us to the old City Light building and now serving in our current building. Her presence has been a constant thread of kindness, stability, and grace.

Raised on a farm just outside of Ranger, Wanda learned early the value of hard work and caring for others. Her heart for service led her to become a registered nurse, a calling that perfectly reflected her desire to help people. After retiring from nursing, she didn't slow down, she simply continued her mission at City Light.

Wanda has been widowed twice and is a proud mother of two, with two stepchildren and seven grandchildren. Through every season of life, her faith and compassion have remained steady.

Each Friday, Wanda faithfully serves wherever she is needed. You'll find her in the front office assisting neighbors with mail, answering phones, helping in the clothing closet, and scheduling appointments. When lunchtime begins, she moves to the dining area to serve an

average of 250 meals each day. With a joyful spirit, she serves every plate until each of those 250 meals has been served.

When asked what she loves most about City Light, Wanda shares that it's the people—getting to know our neighbors and meeting their needs as much as possible. Her most meaningful moments come from the relationships she's built with neighbors, staff, and fellow volunteers—truly "enlarging her territory" through connection and service.

Her favorite scripture is Deuteronomy 33:25 "The bolts of your gates will be iron and bronze, and your strength will equal your days."

And that is exactly what we see in Wanda—a quiet, steady strength which shows up week after week, year after year.



We are deeply grateful for Sweet Wanda and the legacy of love, faithfulness, and service she continues to build at City Light.

Volunteer Training = Huge Success!

Our Volunteer Training Meeting was a tremendous success with 51 people in attendance! We were especially excited to welcome six new volunteers who came to learn what City Light is all about – and four of them signed up to begin serving right away!

A heartfelt thank you to Mandy Schuman from Betty Hardwick for joining us and educating us on mental health. Her information was insightful, practical, and incredibly helpful as we continue serving our neighbors with compassion and understanding. We are so grateful for her time and expertise.

To our veteran volunteers – City Light could not run without you. You are the heart and core of this ministry. Your faithfulness, dedication, and love for our neighbors make all the difference.

We enjoyed dessert while Mandy shared (always a sweet way to learn together!), and we left encouraged and grateful for each person who showed up.

**Thank you for continuing to
Do Good Things at City Light.**



SERVING IN ACTION

As an act of worship and service, we are grateful to partner with Habitat for Humanity to help build a home for a family in our community. What begins as simple pieces of wood, becomes something far greater—a place of home, stability, and love as John Moore states. Through this partnership, we are not only constructing walls and a roof, but helping create a sacred space where a family can grow, rest, and experience joy.

We are deeply thankful for the servant-hearted spirit of volunteers who help make this partnership possible. You are a community who doesn't just speak love, but lives it out in tangible ways. Your willingness to put service into action reflects the very heart of service we are called to embody. Because of you, simple acts become powerful expressions of hope, and together, we are making a lasting difference in the lives of others.



May this house stand as a light in the neighborhood, a testimony of faithfulness, and a reflection of what can happen when a community comes together in love and service. Through our partnership, we join God's work of building not just a house, but a foundation of hope for generations to come.

ASHLEY ADAMS

SANCTUARY CHOIR & CELEBRATION ORCHESTRA PRESENT

IN GOD WE TRUST

Sunday, June 28, 6 p.m.

This will be our next opportunity for special guests to join us as we celebrate 250 years of our country. Rehearsal packets are available beginning April 6.



thank you

SO VERY MUCH!

We held our fabulous annual Pancake Supper on Saturday, February 28. This event is now a joint event held by the children and youth of FBC and it was a night filled with very tasty pancakes and bacon, but it was also filled with lots of fellowship and laughter.

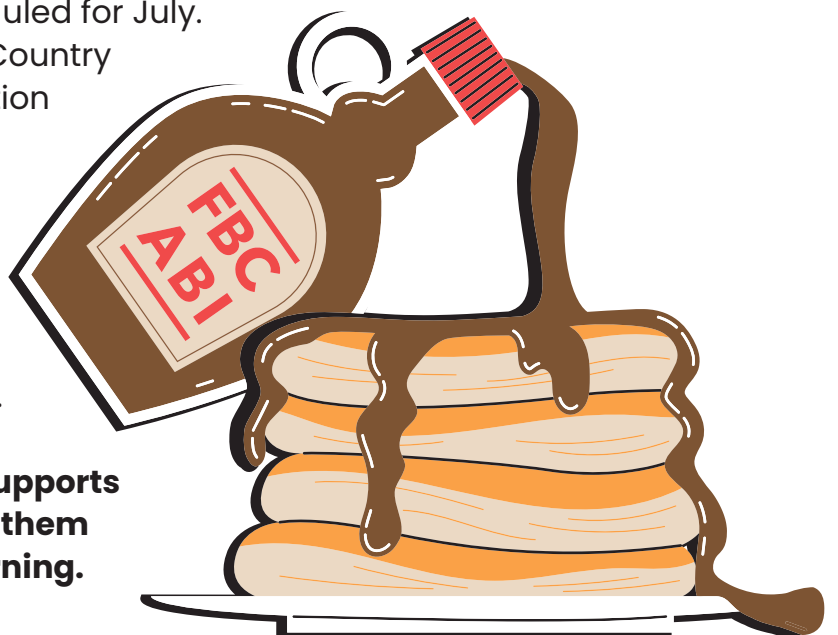
On Wednesday nights, we have been talking about sharing the love of Christ with others. One of the ways we can show love is by serving others with joyful hearts. There were many wonderful opportunities to demonstrate the love of Christ during the supper as the children waited on tables, got extra servings for those who wanted more, cleaned up trash, as well as just offering to help others. Our youth were able to demonstrate this love by cooking and serving our food as well as pitching in wherever needed. Both children and youth not only demonstrated love to others, but did a fabulous job as they served and cooked!

We are blessed and so very thankful to have so many who helped make this event happen, whether it was cooking, serving, cleaning up, buying tickets, eating, or giving donations. A special THANK YOU goes to Susie Vandever, Britney Tucker, Hunter Brown, Ashley Adams, Beth Young, Mike Greenfield, & Debra Clemmer for helping in early preparation for this event. As always, our custodial staff goes above and beyond to help make this event happen. They set up and tear down the tables, but most importantly they set up the griddles where we can cook without tripping breakers. We are very thankful for such a wonderful team who helps us at all our events.

We collected over \$3,200, and that money will go towards the youth mission trip scheduled for July. The youth are planning to go to the Hill Country where they will be working on construction projects.

We look forward each year to hosting this wonderful event where our children and youth can be a part of raising money which helps as we continue to emphasize missions at FBC.

Thank you for being a church who supports our children and youth and allows them to put into practice what they are learning. We are very blessed!





STAFF ANNIVERSARIES

April 1, 30 years

MIKE GREENFIELD

*Pastor for Administration
& Spiritual Development*

April 3, 1 year

CHELSEA KOCHER

GLO Teacher

April 5, 20 years

JEANNIE WESLEY

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

April 17, 9 years

MIKE BRADY

Director of FLC

APRIL

- 2** Maundy Thursday
- 5** Easter Sunday
- 8** Buildings & Grounds
Committee Meeting
- 12** Reception for Mike Greenfield

Personnel Committee Meeting
- 16** Men's Ministry Brown Bag Lunch

Women's Ministry Praise Night
- 18** Habitat Build/1225 Plum
- 19** Missions' Committee Meeting
- 20** CLCM Board Meeting

Finance Committee Meeting

Deacons' Meeting
- 22** Hospital Visitation Team Meeting
- 26** Lord's Supper

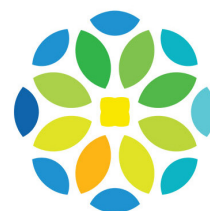
Next Steps Luncheon
- 27** MOCE Board Meeting
- 28** GLO Board Meeting
- 29** Church Conference

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

March 2026

<u>Budget</u>	<u>March</u>	<u>Year-to-Date</u>
Required	\$317,100	\$843,300
Given	\$302,262	\$824,539

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



FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH • ABILENE

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