

# FIRST *words*

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

## DECEMBER UPDATE FROM THE PASTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE

Thank you for your patience and encouragement of the Pastor Search Committee for over a year now. It has been quite a journey of seeking God's will and preparing for our next senior pastor.

As a search committee, we began asking the congregation to dialogue about who we are as a church and where we think God is leading us in the future. With that information in hand, we then turned to seeking the individual who can best lead us to fulfill our calling as a congregation.

By God's grace and the diligent work of the committee, we are now approaching the conclusion of the process.

At some point in the near future, we anticipate announcing the date when we will be introducing the individual whom our committee is recommending as our next senior pastor. While we are not quite ready to make a report to the church, we recommend that you don't miss any Sunday worship services in December!

Trusting in God's continuing grace,

*The Pastor Search Committee*

## CHRISTMAS *at* FIRST

When Advent falls on the last Sunday of November, it is hard to talk about all four Sundays of Advent in the December edition of First Words. So, last Sunday was the 1st Sunday of Advent and we saw the children decorate the trees with Chrismons.

December 4 is the 2nd Sunday of Advent and we will celebrate with one of the favorite annual traditions where our children and adults sing "Carry the Light" and we witness the parade of flags, which reminds us of the Kingdom of God made up of all nations.

On Wednesday, December 7, our preschool choir will present their Christmas program in the chapel. This is one of the best concerts of the season as the 2, 3, & 4-year-old children sing with such joy and expression.

The 3rd Sunday of Advent will feature our Sanctuary Choir and Celebration Orchestra presenting "Christmas Changes Everything."

Of course, the highlight of the season are the Christmas Eve services on December 24. The family service starts at 6 p.m. which is designed to be a bit more kid friendly and Becky Tucker loves having all the children present for the children's sermon. Then at 11 p.m. we will have the 54th Annual Candlelight Christmas Eve Service. This service is broadcast live on CW channel.

*Christmas is coming! Are you ready?*



FIRST BAPTIST  
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## ***This year's theme for Disciple Now is Simplify. More info to come soon!***

Be on the lookout, Disciple Now weekend sign-ups will be going live soon! Disciple Now 2023 is the weekend of February 10-12. Grades 6-12 are invited once again this year.

We hope you clear your calendars and join our youth ministry for this important and impactful weekend! Let's learn how to follow Jesus better, together. If you have any questions about what DNOW is or how this weekend works, contact Austen!

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## **COLLEGE MINISTRY**

We had a great time at our college fall retreat discussing what it means to have margin in our lives. Busyness is often glorified in our day and time. It's good to seek progress, but it must not become the sole purpose of our lives. Margin allows us to slow down, take deep breaths, and enjoy life. It also makes us more productive in the times we do work hard. Jesus modeled margin when He went up on a mountain by Himself to pray. He needed to be recharged to fulfill His purpose on earth. If Jesus needed it, maybe we should realize we need it too. May you find rest for your souls and also your bodies as we enter a busy time of year and also as we look forward to the birth of Jesus, our Lord.

The ACU tailgate was cold, but a lot of fun! We handed out 200 cups of hot chocolate and got to meet a bunch of students. The new FBC canopy tent looked good too!





## FRIENDSHIP HOUSE UPDATE

*by Trevor and Gina Allen*

Howdy! It's been awhile! We hope you are well! Some updates on our end include:

Attending a poverty relief conference in Waco where we learned more about serving in their field and how to prioritize relationships above handouts. One way we've enjoyed implementing this is simply having food and conversations whether through a potluck with neighbors, friends and family, or a meal with a neighbor.

We recently had a rich Thanksgiving potluck with tasty food from the Journey class, where neighbors were served a warm meal in an accepting, loving, and peaceful environment.

Other aspects of the FBC Friendship House ministry includes: being a friend to those in mental and emotional distress, supporting a neighbor who is a young mother in her candle making business, and helping neighbors with housework with the help of other neighbors. We've also been able to help neighbors with various transportation needs and were able to help an elderly man with his electrical issues so he can stay warm this winter.

Sometimes this ministry involves events, which is hopefully a way for neighbors to connect with each other in an atmosphere of love and hope, but more so... it's been about the everyday presence and consistency in the neighborhood.

We have been enjoying our time here and the folks we've gotten to do life with as well as how FBC has come alongside to serve and be a part and we are so thankful!

To Him be the glory!



# CITY LIGHT CHRISTMAS STORE 2022

Once again, our church has the opportunity to provide Christmas assistance to families who would prefer to help provide for themselves at Christmas rather than receive presents from a stranger or stand in the line for a giveaway, but they are unable to do so.

We want to encourage families at Martinez Elementary, GLO Daycare, and City Light this holiday season with our City Light Christmas Store!

The store will be open by appointment only on December 7, 8, and 9 and then again December 12, 13, and 14. Donated toys will be priced at 10 to 15 percent of the retail price. It is a great joy to be able to help these families! If you know a family who could benefit from the store, please contact Melinda at the church office at 325-675-8112.

## HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP:

1. Purchase a toy or toys and drop them off at the church office by Monday, December 5 or donate money and we will be happy to purchase the toy on your behalf tax free. If you donate money, please mark your donation as "Christmas Store". Also, see Amazon link at the bottom. The items will ship to the church from Amazon.
2. Volunteer your time 3 different ways
  - a. Help set up the store on Tuesday, December 6 at 10:00 a.m.
  - b. Help by making cookies that our neighbors will enjoy as they shop.
  - c. Help on a day that the store is open. We will need a few volunteers who can help sack up items and load them in the car and also help greet our shoppers.

Note: There is an Amazon link <https://a.co/5aml5Hi> that you can use to shop and/or share with others. You do not have to stick to this list. You can order what you would like to donate and then when ordering on Amazon use the address:

**First Baptist Church, Melinda Norris, 1333 N. 3rd, Abilene, Texas 79601**

Thank you all for making this time of year a blessing to so many!

## We are adding a new feature to the City Light Christmas Store!

We have had a new donation to City Light! It's a "Sharing Library" and we would like to kick-off its use by asking if you have any slightly used or new children's Christmas books we could add to our sharing library. We will allow the guests of our Christmas Store to choose a book or two for their children to take home and read for the holidays! If you need more information or would like to donate a book, please contact Melinda at the church office at 325-675-8112.



# 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!*

*November 2022*



**6,158 MEALS SERVED**  
Includes MWF meals, Sunday Breakfast,  
Continental Breakfast, Sack Lunches,  
and City Light Market\*



## PERSONAL ASSISTANCE:



**67 HOUSEHOLDS**  
helped with rent and utilities



**167 WALK-INS**  
bus passes, clothing and other



**214 MAIL**  
Delivered and checked



**127 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.



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

## **CBF AROUND THE WORLD: THE BASSES**

If you haven't seen the Bass family recently, they are growing! They are one of the CBF Field Personnel First Baptist Church sponsors! Please continue to pray for them and their ministry in Cambodia, and for their new family!



CBF field personnel Lauren and David Bass alongside their partners, the Cambodia Baptist Union, work to address poverty in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. They distribute rice and food essentials in the name of Jesus to the community.

Lauren and David also work with the Cambodia Baptist Union's church planting efforts, training programs, and economic development. After the COVID-19 pandemic, newly planted churches in Phnom Penh had many congregation members facing hunger. To address this issue, the Cambodia Baptist Union is literally meeting new and old believers where they are with rice, food essentials, and encouragement.



### **More Buckets find their way to Florida all the way from FBC in Abilene, Texas!**

Missions Pastor, John Moore (right) drove 100 buckets 900 MILES from Abilene, TX to Shalimar, FL. Kenny Phillips (left), FL DR will drive another 575 MILES to deliver this precious cargo to Arcadia, FL!

Thank you for your generosity and willingness to help when others are in need! As you can see, the buckets made it to Florida and your gifts were a great blessing to them as they continue cleaning up after hurricane Ian.



## BIG THANK YOU TO SWEETWATER HOUSE OF PEACE!

These new friends came to City Light and helped pack sack lunches for our friends and neighbors! They packed over 500 in one hour! Such a great help and blessing!

## OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD FINAL TALLY

Wow, what a year for Operation Christmas Child! As a collection center, we were able to collect 4,649 shoeboxes! We loaded 318 cartons into the trailer and they are now on their way to Dallas to the processing center. All of this was made possible because of the generous giving of each person who filled a box, manned the collection center, and by the 9 people who helped load the trailer on Monday. Those include: Nicole Wiedemann, John Weeks, Roy Longacre, Steve Clemmer,

Alan Wartes, Sandy Utley, Kelly Utley, Austen Winfrey, and Matthew Broyles. Because we had such a great turnout, we were able to load the trailer in just under 25 minutes!

But, the whole process would not have worked without the excellent and hard work done by Debra Clemmer, who as always kept everything running smoothly and accurately.

*So, thanks again for making Christmas a joyful experience for 4,649 children around the world.*







# *the Music of Christmas*

**December 4, 10:30 am**

Parade of Nations  
Sanctuary Choir, Youth Choir,  
Children's Choirs & Celebration  
Orchestra

**December 6, 7:00 pm**

Abilene Christian High School Band  
& Choir Christmas Concert

**December 7, 6:00 pm**

Preschool Choir Christmas Program

**December 10, 7:30 pm**

Abilene Christian University Vespers

**December 11, 10:30 am**

Christmas Changes Everything  
Sanctuary Choir, Children's Choir  
& Celebration Orchestra

**December 12, 7:00 pm**

Abilene High School  
Choir Christmas Concert

**December 13, 7:00 pm**

Abilene Christian School Elementary  
Choir Christmas Concert

**December 15, 7:00 pm**

Clack Middle School Orchestra  
Christmas Concert

**December 16, 6:00 pm**

Craig Middle School Orchestra  
Christmas Concert

**December 19, 7:00 pm**

Madison Middle School  
Choir Christmas Concert

**December 20, 7:00 pm**

Craig Middle School Choir  
Christmas Concert

**December 24, 6:00 pm**

Family Christmas Eve Service

**December 24, 11:00 pm**

Candlelight, Carols & Communion  
Christmas Eve Service





# Christmas Poinsettias

The annual celebration of the birth of our Savior—God's word become flesh—is a joyous time for all people. This is especially true for the First Baptist Church Family as we gather for worship during the month of December.

The poinsettia plants will adorn and decorate the worship center during the celebration of Advent. Advent consists of the four Sundays before Christmas during which we prepare ourselves for the coming Christ. The flowers in their design symbolize the star that guided the wise men to the stable. Your gift of a poinsettia will help in our spiritual preparation.

If you would like to provide one or more of the poinsettias in honor of a special person or as a memorial to someone dear to you, please fill in the attached form.

Bring the completed form to the church office or mail it in to the church office with a check to cover the cost of the flowers you plan to provide.

NOTE: Please make your check payable to First Baptist Church and designate the money for poinsettias.

***The deadline for ordering is Wednesday, December 14.***

YOUR NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

I will provide \_\_\_\_\_ poinsettia(s) @ \$15.00 each.

NOTE: Please print the name or names as you wish to have them listed and indicate whether they are given in honor or in memory of.

( ) In honor of: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

( ) In memory of: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Given by: \_\_\_\_\_

( ) I will pick up my poinsettia(s) after the Christmas Eve service.

( ) I will pick up my poinsettia(s) after Christmas Day.

( ) Please use my poinsettia(s) for hospital or homebound ministry.

## FBC SWEATSHIRTS

Looking for a way to keep warm and represent FBC?  
**Get your very own FBC sweatshirt for just \$10.**

Contact Suzanne at 325-673-5031 or  
suzanne.shaw@fbcabilene.org

They are also available in the church library on  
Sundays before and after Sunday school and  
Wednesday evenings before the activities.





#fbcabilene

<https://www.instagram.com/fbcabilene/>



@fbcabilene

<https://twitter.com/fbcabilene>



**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH,  
ABILENE, TX**

[https://www.facebook.com/  
FirstBaptistChurchAbileneTx/](https://www.facebook.com/FirstBaptistChurchAbileneTx/)

# December

## STAFF ANNIVERSARIES

December 16, 20 years

**Todd Wilson**

Pastor for Music & Worship

December 21, 30 years

**Tony Martinez**

Custodian

## STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

November 2022

<b>Budget</b>	<b>November</b>	<b>Year-to-Date</b>
Required	\$265,020	\$2,992,220
Given	\$177,959	\$2,664,387

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



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1333 North 3rd, Abilene, TX 79601  
[fbc@fbcabilene.org](mailto:fbc@fbcabilene.org) | [www.fbcabilene.org](http://www.fbcabilene.org)  
325-673-5031

- 4 Parade of Flags in Morning Worship  
Mission Committee  
Personnel Committee
- 7 CLCM Christmas Store  
Preschool Choir Christmas Program
- 8 CLCM Christmas Store
- 9 CLCM Christmas Store
- 11 Sanctuary Choir &  
Orchestra Christmas Music
- 13 CLCM Christmas Store
- 14 CLCM Christmas Store  
Last Wednesday Night Meal/Activities  
Buildings & Grounds Committee  
Grant-in-Aid Meeting
- 20 Finance Committee  
Deacons' Christmas Party
- 23 Church Offices Closed
- 24 Family Christmas Eve Service—6:00 p.m.  
54th Annual Christmas Eve Service/  
Lord's Supper—11:00 p.m.
- 25 NO Sunday School - Morning Worship Only
- 26 Church Offices Closed
- 1 NO Sunday School - Morning Worship Only
- 2 Church Offices Closed

# January