

FIRST *words*

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

UPDATE: FBC CHILDREN'S CAMP @ LAKE BROWNWOOD CHRISTIAN RETREAT

August 2017

Do you know Tique Hamilton? You need to know Tique Hamilton. He is the family minister at FBC Sweetwater. Tique, and his wife Stacy, helped lead the children's camp. The Hamilton's are the real deal. Tique is the real deal. When on stage, he is in his element getting the crowd pumped and going wild for the day's activities. His eyes bounce around with joy and you know something good is about to happen.

Do you know Phillip Thomas? You need to know Phillip Thomas. He is the pastor for Journey in Elgin, TX. Phillip grew up in Sterling City and graduated from HSU (1999). Phillip spoke the truth all week to the kids and I am thankful. "God loves you" and "you were created for a relationship with Him" were his common themes. Enough said. Phillip did good leading worship.

Do you know Laura, Luke, Maddi, Jackson, Brody, Maddox, Ean, Cayson, Reid, Avery, Sydney Faith, Emma, Caleb, Cynthia Grace, and Taylor? You need to know Laura, Luke, Maddi, Jackson, Brody, Maddox, Ean, Cayson, Reid, Avery, Sydney Faith, Emma, Caleb, Cynthia Grace, and Taylor. The children of FBC who attended this year's camp @ Lake Brownwood are awesome. They are full of life and hope and questions and energy. Becky does a wonderful job on the 4th floor with our kids. However, this summer she went above and beyond the 4th floor activities by hosting VBS, children's camp, water park and zoo field trips, welcome to the youth floor swim party, and helped lead the family mission trip to south Texas. BT had a good and busy summer. Parents are noticing. I hope she returns to the Christian Retreat for camp next year.

I was thankful by the end of day one to know that my littles need me, but not just at camp. Laura (age 11) and Luke (age 9) are on their way to becoming responsible teens and then young adults. It did my heart good to hear them say "Dad, I've got this!"

Sincerely,

Matt Preston
Camp Counselor & Dad



words

FOR THE JOURNEY

Dr. Phil Christopher
Senior Pastor

Last Thursday, we spent the afternoon texting and talking with Natalie and Andrew about their plans of leaving Victoria with the approaching Hurricane Harvey. At one time, when the storm was more tropical or a Category 1 Hurricane, it seemed like they might ride it out. As Harvey strengthened and predictions anticipated a Category 3 aimed at Victoria, they decided to leave – mandatory evacuation changes plans. They left late for Austin because Natalie had bus duty at the high school and had to stay until all of the students were gone. We were relieved they were headed out of harm's way.

Natalie sent pictures of Mary Catherine safe and secure in her car seat as they prepared to leave. This was her second road trip. The first picture showed this incredible smile as if she did not have a care in the world. It looked like she could have been going to Disney World. The second picture got me and led me to experience the promises of God. Nestled down in her seat, she held one of her toys. The sight that captured my imagination was her eyes. They were the eyes of such trust. They said, "Even with an approaching storm, I am safe and I have no fear." Sure, you can write this off as the musings of a grandparent about the mind of a five-month old who doesn't have a clue, but what I saw in her trusting and expectant eyes was that with approaching storms comes the promise, "I am safe, even when I don't know where I am going or what is coming." What a hope we have. We experience God when storms come and our lives are flooded with problems. Mary Catherine's eyes of such trust reminded me of Psalm 121: "I lift up my eyes to the hills. Where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth." God whispers through the storms, rain, or thunder, "I am with you."

As I looked into her trusting eyes, I thought about not only the storms we face, but the times when we wonder where God is leading. Like a child, we can trust we are in the hands of a gracious God who guides us through the storms and the next step in the journey.

This fall, would you like to experience God? If you are looking for worship to meet your own needs, you may not find it there. I am amazed at some who say they never get anything out of worship. Should we focus on what we want, instead of what God wants to do through us? Experiencing God comes from a relationship of trust that God is always leading and we wait with the eyes of anticipation of what He will do.

“ No matter the storm, inconvenience, or the future, we trust that God will provide and lead. ”

No matter the storm, inconvenience, or the future, we trust that God will provide and lead. Mary Catherine rested securely in the hands of her parents. Your future is secure in the hands of the Father. We have technology and aircraft that can determine the path and wrath of hurricanes, but we have a God who knows the future and will guide us to possibilities that we never dreamed. This confidence comes not in information about God, but a living relationship with Him. You want to experience God? He calls you to relationship where He is Lord – being obedient to whatever He chooses or wherever the winds blow.

Experiencing God in the Storm,

Phil

ROUND UP SUNDAY

Brett Greenfield

For the first time in several years, I was home for Round Up Sunday. And yes, despite the fact that my home address and church membership have changed, First Baptist Abilene will always be home. So much about that Sunday felt familiar. The brisket still smelled amazing, the people were kind as always, and yet there were noticeable differences. More than the giant inflatable games that were certainly absent from my earliest Round Up days, and outside of being promoted to sous chef during the preparations, there were differences all around me. So often it seems we get caught in a mix of familiarity and difference. It is much easier to cling to one or the other, but allowing yourself to stand in the uncomfortable space where things that are familiar are also different can sometimes help reveal the beauty of what some things really are.

When I arrived at the FLC on Sunday morning to help with the infamous Round Up lunch, I certainly did not expect to experience moments of such profundity. But amidst the chaos of preparation I couldn't help but pause and think about the holy acts I was witnessing. While cooking outside, one of the more experienced chefs checked the propane tanks on the grill to see if they were still full. "A little low" he said. "But it seems like every year we think we'll run out, and always have just enough." Something about that statement struck an immediate chord. I mentally archived years of Bible studies and seminary classes trying to place the sentiment and I eventually remembered the story in 1 Kings 17 when the Lord tells a widow something similar, "For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry.'" Our world looks quite different from Elijah and the widow's, and yet the familiar assurance that God will provide remains the same.

All morning I witnessed familiar sights, but for some reason they caused me to stop and pay attention. The tea being mixed in jugs recalled the story of Jesus' first miracle where He turned water into wine. I noticed the movement of hands mixing coleslaw that could just have easily been kneading bread in preparation for a very different meal. When we think about communion, it can be easy to think only of the monthly practice of the Lord's Supper. It's easy to forget that what we know as the Lord's Supper began with the simple preparation of a meal between friends. Can you imagine sitting down at that table for dinner, doing something that must have felt so familiar, only to have it become something completely different? To me, this is part of the Spirit of communion. A Savior who enters our familiarities and changes everything. The bread and the wine became body and blood, a meal between friends was now sacred, and the lines between heaven and earth were all the sudden much more difficult to see.

I'm not quite sure why, but this Round Up Sunday felt different. For the first time I experienced something so familiar be so completely different, and I think for the first time saw it for what it truly is; a sacred, holy act of communion where believers in Christ share an ordinary meal together, and there was enough for us all.

My prayer is that I, and we, continue to look for the ways Jesus can help us see things both familiar and different, and recognize their goodness. In an ever changing world, the opportunities are endless. The liminal space between familiarity and difference will certainly be uncomfortable at times, but following Jesus was never really supposed to be comfortable. One thing I know, is though our paths may be different, we are all on the same journey. And when your path crosses with others on the journey, don't forget to share a meal.



Brett is the son of Mike and Patti Greenfield and grew up in FBC. After receiving his BA and MSW in Social Work from Baylor, for the past 3 years he has been working for Methodist Children's Home as a Social Worker. This summer, he completed a Master of Divinity from Truett Seminary and will be starting a PhD in Social Work this fall at Rutgers University in New Jersey. Brett was licensed and ordained here at First Baptist and his desire is to develop new ways to integrate faith and practice.



PRAYER PARTNER SUNDAY

On Sunday, September 17, we are planning a time where each Sunday school class can meet their new Prayer Partner class for the 2017-18 year. Partnering the classes has been a successful intergenerational endeavor for the past few years at FBC. We want to provide an opportunity early in the semester for classes to get together and meet each other. Many classes have given us feedback that they would have preferred to meet their partners earlier in the year so they can put names with faces and feel more connected to the people for whom they are praying. The partner classes will be together for the duration of the year, so we hope this experience will create a stronger bond and more meaningful prayer for each other.

During the last 15-20 minutes of Sunday school on the 17th we are asking that classes join with their partner class to meet and pray. Each person in Sunday school will be asked to fill out a basic information card and exchange it with the leader of the partner class. This way, classes will be able to pray for each other by name. There is no program that morning, other than meeting and praying.

We want to spend time doing this and commit to praying for each other, because we believe our whole church benefits when we gather as community across generational lines. Thank you for being flexible, praying for each other, and helping to create more authentic community.

This past week, FBC dropped off 48 bags of school supplies for the teachers at Martinez Elementary to cover all teachers and aides with school supplies. Here is a thank you note we received from Sheila, who works at Martinez Elementary:

I wanted to personally thank you for all that you have already done for our teachers this year, especially the aides. Some of which had tears because they appreciate that someone took the time to care for them.

You are all awesome.

*Thanks again,
Sheila*



CHILDREN'S CHOIR

It's not too late for children (3 year olds - 5th grade) to join one of our choirs. The children will be singing in worship on the first Sunday of every month, as well as presenting Christmas music (December 17) and a musical at the end of the year! Join us as we learn to worship God, along with the wonderful world He has created, using the gift of music.

ALL CREATION SINGS
Let everything that breathes sing praises to the Lord.
Psalm 150:6

FBC BIBLE DRILL

The beginning of the new school year is a very exciting time and this year we are excited in the Children's Ministry to be bringing back Bible Drill. We will be having two classes of Bible Drill on Sunday evenings at 5 p.m. Children in Kindergarten - 2nd grade will be learning Bible Drill skills, while children in 3rd - 5th grade will be preparing for Bible Drill competition.

We are very blessed to have such a great team of leaders this year. Our leaders for the younger children will be Morgan Rains, Alex Sanchez, Emma Carter, and Maddie Cole. Our older children will be led by Lauren & Reed Stafford and Adrienne & Sean Morgan.

During the time Bible Drill is happening, we will provide preschool childcare in the nursery and we will have a time for the parents to join us in the gathering area on the 3rd floor for some coffee, conversation, and community (C3). This will be an informal time to discuss topics such as a scripture passage or maybe what we got out of the sermon that morning.

We are looking forward to a great year and hope you will make this a priority for your children.

SENIOR ADULT BIBLE STUDY: WEDNESDAY NIGHT AT THE MOVIES

Beginning Wednesday, August 30, we will start a series of Bible Studies based on biblical accounts and principles depicted in Classic Movies. The classes will show short clips of various well-known movies, followed by 3-4 Bible Studies based on the principles and accounts in the movie. We will meet in the room formerly known as the Sarah Class, Room 164. The class will start at 6:00 p.m., after our Wednesday evening meal.

Below are the first three movies and topics, spanning 10 weeks:

The Ten Commandments (Weeks 1-3)

1. Freedom and Slavery
2. Identity and the Image of God
3. God's Will and the Law

Les Miserable (Weeks 4-7)

4. Redemption
5. Justice
6. Grace
7. War

Chariots of Fire (Weeks 8-10)

8. Glorifying God with Your Abilities
9. God Honors those Who Honor Him
10. Faith is Like Running a Race

I Hope you will attend. Bring your Bible and something to write with. We may even have popcorn for you!

LLL TIME!

We begin our fall season of Senior Adult activities on September 19 with our traditional monthly luncheon, LLL. This first fall luncheon and fellowship will feature Dr. Scott Hamm, Assistant Professor of Education and Director of Online Education at Hardin-Simmons University. The online staff and academic faculty of Hardin-Simmons have recently added a new focus - to create academic opportunities for people all over the world. Its mission can now extend beyond the physical campus and reach "into all the world." Whether you are a student at home for the summer, or a missionary in residence, online delivery allows the HSU difference to influence, educate, and transform.

As usual, Masonya will provide a great lunch for us as we fellowship with each other, then Dr. Hamm will bring us a very interesting presentation about HSU's initiative to reach the world for Christ through online education.

The Seniors of First Baptist Church are loving and caring individuals with a wide variety of interests, talents, and life experiences drawn together by the common thread of faith in Christ. This is a great place to invite new friends and develop friendships that lead to eternal relationships in Christ. So, mark your calendar for LLL on September 19, at Noon, in the Dining Room of First Baptist Church.

**Thursday,
September 21
6:00 PM
Johnson
Building
HSU
\$15.00
per person**



SENIOR ADULT BANQUET

featuring
PIANO MAN MIKE

Purchase tickets in the Church Office

Messiah
G. F. HANDEL

The Sanctuary Choir and Celebration Orchestra will present Handel's MESSIAH, Sunday morning, December 10. If you cannot regularly sing with the choir, but would like to join us for this special presentation, our MESSIAH only rehearsals are on Sunday nights from 6:00-7:30 p.m. beginning Sunday, September 10. For more details, contact the Office of Worship and Music (675-8118).



MCALLEN MISSION TRIP 2017 FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, ABILENE, TEXAS

Tommy Cunningham

Having never had the experience to participate in a mission trip, I was excited and apprehensive to see what a small group could accomplish in a few short days. Going to McAllen in the middle of July meant temperatures were going to be very hot and make it very difficult for everyone. I was amazed at what our group was able to accomplish working through the heat and the discomfort.

About 20 of us arrived in McAllen on Sunday afternoon to meet and review our mission timeline. It seemed overwhelming. We were divided into two groups. One group was assigned to help finish and paint a home for a family, as well as finishing 10 beds. The other group was assigned to work gardens for two families. Completing the gardens for planting and planting corn for one family. God sent our group to McAllen to help these families and with our Lord this was done in only 5 days. Through God all things can be done.

This miracle would not have been made possible without the two young men I had the privilege to work with, Nathan Moore and Timothy Varghese. The work was hot, dirty, and required back breaking labor almost each day. They did not complain, outpaced some older workers, and did not need much guidance. When the rest of the world sees our children as lazy and surly without moral values, work ethics, or devotion to their Lord and parents, they have not seen these two young men. God's work in their lives is so evident.

During my careers I have worked in leadership roles and feel that that I am qualified to speak about the three leaders who accompanied our teams. John, Becky, and C.V. were the epitome of Christian leadership. They worked alongside of us, never pushing, but pulling when needed. They were organized, patient, and loving. They are truly Christian leaders.

This trip will be remembered for the people and for the work we accomplished. I feel the Lord has blessed me in many ways and I look forward to making the trip next year. The families we met and worked with were such a blessing. I felt the Lord's presence every day and I know we were doing His will.

The Buckner organization is a mission driven group with God's guidance. They are making a difference one family, one life at a time by teaching.



Holly DeShazo has been a Big A volunteer for many years, and we asked her what it means to volunteer with Big A. Here is her response:

Twenty or so years ago, I was a young mother wanting to bring my elementary age kids to church as often as possible. We lived on the far south side of Abilene and the trip to church took about twenty minutes. I would take them to choir, RA's, GA's and I would wait in the car because it just took too long to go all the way back home and then come back to pick them up. So I felt the pull to find somewhere at church to become involved. I started with third grade choir and did that for several years, and one year at a choir concert the kids from Big A Club came to watch the concert. I started asking questions about how to get involved, and the next year I was teaching third grade Big A girls.

For those who are unfamiliar with Big A Club, it is a program under City Light which picks up and brings "at risk kids" to the Family Life Center on Wednesday nights. We provide a great meal, then break into small groups and teach a lesson a lot like "Sunday school," and then have a play activity such as bowling or skating. For most of these kids, this is the only time they will hear about Jesus. Most come from broken homes, many have parents in prison, and almost all have poor living conditions. We had one girl last year who was living in a car with her family.

I've lost track of how long I've been teaching at Big A, maybe fifteen years. Big A Club was the vision of David Leyerle and is still reaching children today. I've had three great ladies helping me teach for many years now; Donna Schnitman, Connie Petross, and Sandy Utley. We would all agree that Big A has blessed us more than we ever expected. We've seen children who could break your heart, but we've seen kids accept Christ and were baptized in our church!

My children are grown now, and I no longer need a "job" to do at church while they are at their activities. I keep doing it because I love it, and because I am certain this is what God wants me to do! Big A is a ministry, but it is also a Mission. Reaching young people for Christ!

There are many ways to get involved with Big A Club, and if you're looking for a place to get plugged in, here are a few ways how. Maybe you're like me and are already bringing your family to church on Wednesday nights. High school and college students help with recreation time. Someone of any age can volunteer to just sit at the dinner tables and visit with these kids. Maybe you can drive one of our vans. You can definitely pray for these children and the success of the program.



**Please begin praying to see how
God might use you to minister
to the children of Big A.**

Big A Begins September 6

***We need: Teachers, Assistants, Recreation Leaders,
Van Drivers, Food Servers, and Prayer Warriors***

Please contact Vicki Brady, with any questions
or to volunteer. **673-6686 ext. 118**





HABITAT HOUSE:

Thank you to all of our volunteers who have helped with our Habitat project. Future build days in September are the 9, 16, 23, and 30 starting at 8:00 a.m. at 4317 Congress Street. For more information or to sign up as a volunteer, contact Rebecca Hunt in the missions' office (325) 675-8112 or rebecca.hunt@fbcabilene.org.

EVENT CALENDAR:

SEPTEMBER

- 4 Church Offices Closed
- 7 Sanctuary Choir & Orchestra Banquet
- 10 First Grade Bibles
Personnel Committee
- 12 Rockin' Moms
- 13 Buildings & Grounds Committee
- 17 Senior Adult Emphasis
Prayer Partner Sunday
Missions Committee
- 19 Finance Committee
Deacons' Meeting
- 20 GLO Board Meeting
- 21 Senior Adult Banquet
- 24 Lord's Supper

STAFF ANNIVERSARIES

September 1, 2 years
Sheryl Doss
GLO Teacher

September 11, 6 years
Keith Post
Pastor for Recreation & Senior Adults

September 5, 38 years
Lee Curiel
Custodian

September 12, 5 years
Stacey Collins
Ministry Assistant to Senior Pastor

September 6, 1 year
Augustina Rodriguez-Sanchez
GLO Teacher

September 16, 2 years
Rebecca Hunt
Ministry Assistant to Pastor for Missions

September 8, 2 years
Misty Donald
GLO Director

September 8, 7 years
Merri Roberts
Ministry Assistant to Pastor for Worship & Music

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

August 2017

Budget	August	Year-to-Date
Required	\$254,000	\$2,043,311
Given	\$242,052	\$2,015,338



FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH • ABILENE

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