

FIRSTwords

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

DISCIPLE NOW 2018

I recently searched “discipleship” on Amazon and got back over 20,000 results. After looking at the results on the first page, I gave up reading all the titles and authors. It was overwhelming. This confirmed what I had already been thinking about the significance of discipleship. I had been working to use this spring and the season of Lent to dig in deeper to my own discipleship and for our young people to discover meaningful ways to connect to God. For the Christian, discipleship should be an ongoing process that never really ends. Our formation as a follower of Jesus should always be moving, even in seasons of doubt and darkness. Discipleship is a lifelong journey which requires something from us. The difficulty in being a disciple is why we can find 20,000 results on the subject. We know discipleship is tough and important, which is why each spring we do an event specifically designed to help our high school students grow as disciples.

Disciple Now (February 16-18) is a weekend where high school students will worship together, participate in small group Bible study, and share many fun experiences. What makes this weekend a great opportunity for high school students to grow in their faith is not just the worship services and small group Bible studies, it is the community that is found and relationships which are formed will be the lasting markers on this part of their faith journey. Ultimately, the lessons and sermons will have life-changing impact because of the work of the Spirit in community.

Our theme for the weekend is Unknown.

We will be exploring the mystery of putting our trust in God.

Like Abraham going to a place he did not know, we often are called to walk by faith into darkness and trust the light

will break through. Like Jacob, who encountered God in a dream and realized the Lord was in that place

and he did not know it, we must open our eyes

to see God is at work all around us. The unknown parts of our faith and what we do

not understand about God are not things

to be feared. The mystery of God means there is a depth and future to our faith

we have yet to discover, and a truth and

beauty to God that cannot be fully described.

I hope you will be in prayer for our high

school students, their leaders, and host

families as we go along on the path of

discipleship together.

Grace and Peace,

Cody



FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH • ABILENE

FEBRUARY 2018

FBCABILENE.ORG



words

FOR THE JOURNEY

CONNECTING CHRISTMAS TO EASTER

I received an email from Loretta Fulton who covers religion for the Reporter-News. She wondered if Ash Wednesday, a time of repentance and sacrifice, posed a dilemma for us since it occurs on February 14, Valentine's Day. She wondered about those giving up chocolate for Lent.... She wondered if we were planning anything special to this "quirk in the calendar." I said, "No." We will offer our Ash Wednesday service as we do each year, since it helps us understand love is more than a box of chocolates, a card, or flowers.

Ash Wednesday on Valentine's Day encourages us to get straight about love, since there seems to be a lot of confusion about love in our culture. Love isn't something you fall into like a ditch or out of like a bed. Love is not a feeling. Valentine's Day pictures love as a blindfolded baby with a bow and arrow. Ash Wednesday pictures love as a cross that keeps loving and forgiving in pain.

We have Christmas...and then Easter comes next, right? Even the unchurched world observes Christmas and Easter. In the story of Jesus, what happens in between Christmas and Easter? Our approach to the saving story of Jesus can be like reading the first and last chapter of a book. We know how it begins and ends, but what about the story that can change us? We need Lent to understand the complete story of His deliverance.

I realize the observance of Lent is unfamiliar to many of us. Lent is crucial because it helps us see what happens between Christmas and Easter. Lent is a time to watch Jesus take the journey to Jerusalem and go to the cross to save us. Lent becomes a season to connect Christmas and Easter. Without Lent, Christmas would only be a feel-good holiday and winter wonderland.

The word, Lent, comes from the Latin word which means "spring." It is the forty days of preparation which begins

with Ash Wednesday on February 14 and takes us to the cross on Good Friday. It is a time of spiritual preparation as we travel to the cross with Jesus and the springtime of resurrection. Lent is a time to consider the cost of discipleship and the ways we are following Jesus. It is a time to examine ourselves and come clean about our sin. Lent becomes the reminder of why He came.

The six Sundays of Lent call us to be totally dependent on God's grace. We cannot resist temptation or our own willpower. Only God's grace can help us to overcome. The reason some traditions give up something for Lent is to trust that only God, not caffeine, can satisfy our deepest craving. However, Lent is more than giving up something. It is the six-week journey of giving ourselves and surrendering to Jesus.

***Lent becomes the
season of renewal.
We will never understand
the miracle of Easter without
this journey through the
forty days of Lent.***

I am a romantic when it comes to special occasions, just ask Mary. Back to Ash Wednesday occurring on Valentine's Day. I wonder what might happen to our marriages and relationships if we came to the Ash Wednesday service and left with the sign of the cross on our forehead instead of going out for a candlelight dinner. We might just discover what love is. We might realize we are dust and we will return to ashes. We need to make the most of every moment to love like Jesus.

LENTEN PREACHING SERIES

On the Road with Jesus

Ecclesiastes reminds us, "For everything there is a season, and a time for everything under heaven." The season of Lent calls us to a time of repentance and renewal as we prepare for Good Friday and Easter – the events that changed the world. We need this time. The season of Lent consists of forty days, or six weeks, before Easter. The word Lent means "spring" or the "lengthening of the days" as we move toward the new life of Easter. It is a season for us to consider how we are following Jesus. Lent becomes a time for us to rely solely on the grace of God to fill our emptiness. Like the coming spring, Lent is a season to discover new life which comes in Jesus.

This year, members of our pastoral team will lead us on our six-week journey to Easter in a Lenten preaching series, *On the Road with Jesus*. Here is the preaching schedule for the Lenten series. You will be blessed each Sunday as our gifted staff calls us to a deeper walk with Jesus and prepares us for the miracle of Easter.

February 18 - Cody Favor
Beginning is Underrated, Mark 1:9-15

February 25 - Meredith Stone
Taking Up the Cross of Christ, Mark 8:31-38

March 4 - Mike Greenfield
Sometimes It Is Not What You Say, It Is..., John 2:13-22

March 11 - Keith Post
God's Glorious Provision, and His Alone,
Ephesians 2:1-10

March 18 - C.V. Blake
We Want to See Jesus, John 12:20-33

March 25 - Phil Christopher
A Different Kind of King, Mark 11:1-11

INFLUENCE OF GODLY GRANDPARENTS

By Roy Jones

My paternal grandparents, D.M. and Orlena Jones, graduated from Baylor in 1897, there were only 17 in their class. George W. Truett was class president and Mama was secretary. He married them right after graduation. Neither ever learned to drive, so Daddy got me a hardship license when I was 14 so I could take Mama and Papa to church every time the doors opened -- Tuesday Bible study, WMU, Hour of Power (Wednesday night services), etc. One summer Wednesday evening, I was in a hurry to pick up my own friends for church. Mama and Papa, then in their 80s, were moving slow. I was impertinent. I asked Mama why she had to go to church every Wednesday. From the back seat she grabbed my ear lobe like a pair of vice grips and painfully directed my attention to the clothesline with that day's wash whipping in the wind.

"Do you see how your Papa put some (windmill) sucker rods between the poles?"

"Yes, Ma'am," I answered.

"Why do you think he did that?" she asked.

"So your sheets wouldn't drag the ground and get dirty?"

"That's right, son," she said, loosening her grip on my ear. "That's why we need to go to church on Wednesday. Between Sundays, our lives sorta' drag in the dirt and need to be lifted up."

That's been more than 60 years, but I remember it like it was yesterday.

Epilogue: Mama and Papa named their first son George Truett. My grandson, Truett Mundy, is the fourth generation of our family to honor the memory of Dr. Truett.

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE: *February 14 – 6:15 p.m.*

With the quirk of the calendar, Ash Wednesday falls on Valentine's Day this year. Could we say it is amusing that Valentine's Day image of love is a blindfolded baby with a bow and arrow? We keep hoping love will blindly find us. You are invited to the Ash Wednesday service where we understand love is a cross of forgiveness. This service provides us with the gift of recognizing we are dust and in need of grace. Our marriages could be transformed on Ash Wednesday as we discover God's Valentine's Day card arrives in a person who has found us and loves us unconditionally.

WOMEN'S RETREAT

by Kathryn Clark

On my first church retreat, in the fall of 1992, I accepted Christ as my Savior. I was apprehensive about going with a group I didn't know very well. I tried to use my Mom's birthday as an excuse not to attend as it was the same weekend, but she said I should go and I did. God used that retreat in a mighty way for sure! Since then I've been going to women's retreats, although a little nervous at times. Will they make me talk? Will I have to pray aloud? What if I don't sound spiritual enough? Will I have anything in common with the other women? These are the kinds of questions that would run through my head. But each time I went, getting a little more out of my comfort zone, I would see God working. He challenged and grew me. I was loved on and prayed for. There was laughter and fun too! Even though I had reservations in the beginning, in the end I was glad I went.

The last few retreats with First Baptist have been memorable for me. I like being able to get away for some girl time. I always meet new people, learn, laugh, sing, and worship. A few years ago, I was blessed to be paired with Ruth Anna Driggers as my roommate. We enjoyed getting to know each other and subsequently staying up late talking! Since then, we've done mission work in McAllen, sung praises to our Lord in choir, been together in a Women's Bible study, and enjoyed fellowshiping over many Wednesday Night Suppers. A wonderful friendship has ensued!

On Generations Sunday, we saw examples of how our variety of ages worship, encourage, learn from, and love on each other here at First Baptist Abilene. The upcoming retreat is a great opportunity for YOU to be a part of multigenerational worship and fellowship. I hope you plan to attend. See you there!

Join us for the FBC Women's Retreat at the McM Elegante on February 23-24. Our sessions will start Friday evening at 6 p.m. and we finish Saturday at 2 p.m. We are looking forward to hearing from Mary Stedham and Meredith Stedham Young, both former FBC Abilene members. The theme this year is Transitioning with Hope. You may sign up at any registration table set up on Wednesdays and Sundays, or call Jennifer at 675-8105. We hope you will make plans to join us for a wonderful weekend of fellowship and spiritual growth.

PAPA (C.V.) ON GRANDPARENTING

Psalm 128: 4-6

Yes, this will be the blessing for the man who fears the LORD.

May the LORD bless you from Zion; may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life.

May you live to see your children's children— peace be on Israel.

Larry Baker is a member of FBC Abilene and a professor at Logsdon Seminary. The other day he told me about the day his granddaughter laid her infant daughter in his arms. I instantly thought about my three-year-old granddaughter and how quickly time passes. I wonder if it might be possible for me to be able to see her face one day as she introduces me to her infant child.

We invite you to an evening with Tim Kimmel and other grandparents as we consider our influence on the next generations. He will be with us the evening of February 9 from 7-9 p.m. Cost is \$20 per person. Reservations can be made at www.famlymatters.net/events or in person at FBC Abilene.

You and the parents of your grandchildren are also invited to the Grace Based Parenting Conference the morning of February 10 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Childcare is free for both events, but pre-registration for children is required. Contact Jennifer Miller at (325) 675-8105.

THESE EVENTS ARE FREE TO MILITARY AND FIRST RESPONDERS

ENCORE! SERIES

FEBRUARY - APRIL

SUNDAY EVENINGS

DINING ROOM

5:00 - 6:00 P.M.

Series Title: *Focusing on God*

February	4	The Self-Revelation of God	Psalm 19
	11	The View From the Cross	Psalm 22
	18	Drawing Near to God	Psalm 84:1-12
	25	No Encore this Night	

Series Title: *The Essential Jesus: Pre-Cross Event*

March	4	The Mystery of the Kingdom	Matthew 13:3-46
	11	The Coming of the Kingdom	Matthew 24-1-44
	18	Two Crucial Decisions	Luke 9:18-24
	25	Jesus' Prayer in Gethsemane	Matthew 26-31-56

Series Title: *The Essential Jesus: Cross and Resurrection*

April	1	Easter (No Encore this Night)	
	8	Three Crucifixion Events	Matthew 27:39-53
	15	Jesus - Death and Resurrection (Various Passages)	
	22	Now What? A Look Back	John 17:1-26

CANDY RAINS ON PARENTING

As a parent, have you ever felt like you're at the end of your rope? Maybe your toddler has hit the terrible two's or your teenager continues to make poor choices. There's hope!! Join us for a great weekend which will be full of insight and practical advice on raising your kiddos...no matter their age.

We are so blessed to have Dr. Tim Kimmel, who is the best-selling author of many books including Grace Based Parenting. In this book, Dr. Kimmel offers a revolutionary concept that focuses on the model and guidance provided by God the Father, the ultimate child and family expert. According to Dr. Kimmel, Grace Based Parenting is not another manual full of impossible standards; rather it is a new map for learning to see ourselves and our children through God's limitless tenderness to raise our kids the way God raises us.

The Grace Based Parenting Conference is based on 30 years of experience and is a grace-based, character-driven model to nurture confident and cooperative kids and have a great time doing it! You'll gain a fresh hope for your children's future and the tools to create an environment where everyone is reaching their potential. Parenting is the BIGGEST job you'll ever do. Why not give it your BEST?

So, join us for the Grace Based Parenting Conference on Saturday, February 10 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. We understand your kids would never sit through this, so we are offering FREE childcare for ages birth thru 5th grade when you pre-register at FamilyMatters.net/events.

As a bonus, Dr. Kimmel's daughter, Karis Kimmel Murray, who is the author of Grace Based Discipline will be here on Sunday morning, February 11 at 9 a.m. to share with our 3rd floor Sunday school classes how to:

- Stay calm when staring down the barrel of a loaded toddler
- Customize your discipline to your child's unique personality, age, and needs
- Set rules based on God's priorities, not yours
- Apply consequences which really work.

She will teach us how to be at our best...even when your kids are at their worst!

Trust me, this is a weekend you will not want to miss out on. Invite your family, friends, and neighbors to this conference. Don't forget, it's FREE to military and first responders! Register at FamilyMatters.net/events or call the church office for more information.

ACTING IN *Love*

THE 2018 TENTATIVE DATES FOR SHORT TERM PROJECTS ARE:

June 24-30 El Salvador

Join a team from FBC and Living Water to drill a water well in El Salvador. Our team will use an LS300 drill rig with our in-country drillers and work alongside our hygiene team teaching proper sanitation techniques and Bible stories. You will have the opportunity to make meaningful relationships, experience a slower pace of life, witness the faithfulness of God, and return home transformed. The tentative price will range from \$1,950 - \$2,100. Space is limited and a \$200.00 deposit will reserve your spot.

**July 15-21 Family Mission Trip
McAllen, Texas**

Would you be willing to participate in the third Family Mission Trip along the Texas border? FBC has an opportunity to partner and encourage Buckner's Family Hope Center just outside of McAllen, Texas. This flexible and family friendly mission trip has the opportunity to build a house and work in the Family Home Center. Would you be willing to turn your family vacation or part of your family vacation into furthering the cause of Buckner in this important area of our state? During the month of January, FBC is seeking to find a core group of people to try and see if we can make this happen. For more questions, please call John Moore in the missions' office. The price range for this mission trip will be the cost of transportation, lodging, and meals for each family.

MY GRANDMOTHER

By Patti Walker

My grandmother was raised in a box car which was pulled across Texas while her father worked on the railroad. Her eighth-grade education was the product of multiple schools along the route and her own tenacity. She learned the piano by seeking out church pianists in different towns and learned to read by "shaped notes." She raised five children in a house in one of the poorest parts of town, never owned a car, or learned to drive. Despite her impoverished circumstances, she was rich in everything that mattered. She had a profound influence on my life.

My grandmother was never the "preachy" sort. She just lived a quiet life in service to her Lord. She loved the Bible and quoted scripture all the time as if reading the owner's manual for any problem. She crocheted and sewed gifts for everyone and reached out to those in need. I went with her once to take food to an elderly lady on her street. Even as a child, I was shocked to see that all the lady had was three shriveled potatoes to eat. Another time she spent the night with a neighbor whose husband had died that day. On several occasions, I walked the quarter mile with her carrying mop and bucket to help her clean their little church house before Sunday. In the evenings, we sat outside visiting with the next door neighbors. It did not matter to her that they were a different color and she shared her garden produce with them and many others. I witnessed her talk a teenaged neighbor out of running away from home and watched her hug and kiss an unwed mother who was being ostracized by her own family.

My grandmother never took me anywhere, but in a way we traveled the world. She had a map on the living room wall and we would find the country where the missionaries were serving that she prayed for each day. I spent many nights at her house playing games, listening to her quote long epic poems and stories, learning to sew, cook, and garden. She taught me to love learning, literature, music, and even had her beloved piano moved to my house so I could take piano lessons. I did not realize what a sacrifice that must have been for her until I was an adult.

My grandmother never gave me expensive clothes or toys, but she gave me the priceless gifts of unconditional love, time, and setting an example with her life of how Christians live when Christ's love dwells in them. I give thanks to God for the blessing of Grandma Knight in my life and pray I will be a blessing to my own grandchildren.

FEBRUARY MISSIONARY EMPHASIS

In the month of February, we are emphasizing our missionaries. We would love to flood their mailboxes with encouraging notes from our church family. Each week, we will have a bulletin insert with information about each missionary and something you can write a note on. Also, please keep these families in your daily prayers. Please return all letters to the missions' office by the end of February.

David & Lauren Bass – Phnom Penh, Cambodia:

David and Lauren Bass serve in Phnom Penh, Cambodia as CBF (Cooperative Baptist Fellowship) field personnel. They are partnered with the Cambodia Baptist Union, and work to support the Cambodian pastors by developing theological training programs as well as economic development initiatives and equip Cambodian pastors to help Cambodia's churches go from new and dynamic to deep and sustainable. If you would like to keep up with their ministry, please visit their website at www.davidandlaurenbass.com.

Jeff, Alicia, & Ethan Lee – Skopje, Macedonia:

CBF Self-Funded Missionaries Jeff, Alicia, and Ethan Lee have been serving for seven years in Skopje, Macedonia. The Lees are compelled to join God in ministry among the poor, marginalized, and neglected. They seek to build relationships with Albanians, Macedonians, Turks, and the Roma Gypsies in order to foster meaningful relationships which create lasting change. Learn more on their Facebook page: Partnership Macedonia – Updates from the Lees, or connect by email jeffandalicialee@yahoo.com.

Hunter & Mary – Southeast Asia:

Hunter and Mary serve in Southeast Asia as CBF field personnel serving among a minority people group in their country through education, resourcing, Bible translation, and outreach. For 19 years, Mary and Hunter have formed relationships within this minority group that is feared and misunderstood and with partners who wish to share the good news with these people. In a country where less than one percent of the population is Christian and Christian resources are written from a different perspective, much of the ministry is outreach and creating and providing resources with the appropriate terminology. Please contact John Moore at john.moore@fbcabilene.org for their email.

Laura Ellis – Sanur Bali, Indonesia:

Laura Ellis is serving in Bali, Indonesia with CBF field personnel, Jonathan and Tina Bailey, where the culture is a mix of elements with Buddhist and Hindu roots. The Baileys have spent over 20 years encouraging Christian artists to use music, dance, and art of their native culture to express Christian faith and help remove the walls between communities and local churches. From September to April, Laura will be doing missions in Bali and writing about the creative process and spiritual implications of a major music project. Laura will also be working with international students who come to Bali to learn about its rich artistic culture, prison inmates who use art as a form of expression, and the local Balinese people. To keep up with Laura, please visit her blog: <https://theartbetween.wordpress.com>.

Duane & Sandy Hammack – Potter's Inn, Colorado:

Duane and Sandy Hammack are based in Colorado where they serve leaders, missionaries, and church staff by helping to provide holistic care at The Potter's Inn. The Potter's Inn is an internationally recognized ministry specializing in caring for the souls of leaders. Learn more about the Potter's Inn at www.pottersinn.com or connect with the Hammacks at duanehammack@gmail.com or sandy.hammack@gmail.com.

Venantie Uwishyaka – Kigali, Rwanda:

Venantie Uwishyaka recently graduated from Logsdon Seminary and was ordained at First Baptist Church. Venantie moved back to her home country of Kigali, Rwanda to start the Family Life Ministry. The Family Life Ministry will focus on mentoring, premarital counseling, and therapy. Contact her at Uwiv37@gmail.com.



THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH!

By Becky Tucker

What a wonderful night we had at our annual Pancake Supper. Each week, our RAs, GAs, and Kids on a Mission learn about serving and giving. They had many wonderful opportunities to demonstrate those very things during the supper.

This year I was unable to attend, so I am extra thankful for those who made this event happen. I do not want to leave anyone out who helped and I would if I tried to name everyone. So, here is a huge THANK YOU to the many who cooked, served, cleaned up, bought tickets, ate, and gave donations.

A special THANK YOU goes to Mike Greenfield, Debra Clemmer, Stacey Collins, Rebecca Hunt, & Britney Tucker for helping with the pancake batter and bacon. I especially want to thank Jennifer Miller who led the efforts this year.

We collected over \$2,800 to send to Southeast Asia to help with chicken farming.

STAFF ANNIVERSARIES

February 1, 19 years

C. V. Blake

Pastor for Adults

February 17, 18 years

Debra Clemmer

*M. A. to Pastor for Administration
and Spiritual Development*

February 18, 5 years

Erin Fahrlender

*Insurance Specialist
Counseling & Family Enrichment*



The February LLL luncheon will be held on Tuesday, February 20, at Noon in the Dining Room. Entertainment will be provided by Elise Harden.

Masonry will provide lunch at the cost of \$5 per person. Please make plans to attend for an enjoyable lunch, entertainment, and fellowship.

EVENT CALENDAR:

FEBRUARY

- 4 Personnel Committee
- 9-11 YouthCUE (Youth Choir)
Extreme Grandparenting
Grace Based Parenting
- 13 Rockin' Moms
- 14 Buildings & Grounds Committee
Ash Wednesday Service
- 16 Parent's Night Out
- 16-18 DiscipleNow
- 18 Missions Committee
- 20 LLL
Finance Committee
Deacons' Meeting
- 21 GLO Board
- 23-24 Women's Retreat
- 26-3/2 GLO Book Fair

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

January 2018

Budget	January	Year-to-Date
Required	\$270,803	\$270,803
Given	\$271,469	\$271,469



FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH • ABILENE

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