

FIRSTwords

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

MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE

Listening for the leadership of the Holy Spirit is something we hope to do all the time, but the desire for spiritual discernment is particularly intense in these days of pastoral transition at FBC. We listen for the Spirit in many ways: through prayer, worship, scripture, or that “still small voice” inside. Yet another way we discern the Spirit’s leading is by listening to one another – to the ways God may be speaking through each of us to the rest of the congregation in this interim time. The main venue for listening to one another in this season is through our Congregational Conversations.

In the first conversation last November, we spoke together concerning what we value most about our church. The Pastor Search Committee boiled all the comments we collected from you down to five major values for our congregation, with some elaboration of each one. We presented a summary of five chief values in our Second Congregational Conversation on January 23. These values, which you can find listed elsewhere in this edition of First Words, are a celebration of who we are, and they will become part of the Church Profile we will be developing in the near future.

In the January Congregational Conversation, we also carefully considered several metrics related to our church and community from the perspectives of a “mirror view,” looking at internal church data, and a “window view,” considering data about the Abilene area. Then around the tables, we talked about what all this information means for where our church is focusing its energy and where we should focus in the future. The Search Committee has begun analyzing the valuable comments we collected and will provide a summary report at our last conversation. Much of the data will also become part of our Church Profile.

The third and final Congregational Conversation will be on February 27. In that session, we will discuss the trajectory of our church – where we need to go. Our dialogue will consider the nature of our congregation, our future direction, and what kind of Senior Pastor we need to lead us. We will also be asking the congregation to respond to one or two surveys, as a way to express our ideas to the Search Committee on an individual basis. As you can see, this third conversation is a vitally important way for the committee to hear from the congregation about our future and the sort of Senior Pastor we need. We very much want you to be present to share your perspective.



Here are the details for the the last conversation:

WHAT: Third Congregational Conversation for all FBC Youth and Adults

WHERE: Family Life Center Gym

WHEN: February 27, 2022

4:45-5:30 p.m. – Meal (complimentary)

5:30-7:00 p.m. – Conversation around the Tables

CHILDCARE:

- Infants through Pre-K may be dropped off at the main church nursery starting at 4:45 p.m., and these children must have eaten before they arrive.
- Children who are K-5th grade are invited to enjoy the meal in the FLC at 4:45 p.m. with their families and then move to their activities in the FLC at 5:15 p.m., while adults and youth (6th grade and up) join the Congregational Conversation in the gym.

RSVP: To make your reservation for the meal and conversation contact Debra Clemmer at (325) 675-8116 / debra.clemmer@fbcabilene.org; or [click here](#).

Thank you for your vital participation in the previous church-wide dialogues and for joining us in the upcoming February conversation. We also ask that you continue praying for our church and the Search Committee in these days of discernment. Our Prayer@First emphases will continue in worship and on Wednesday nights, and we ask you to pray for spiritual discernment in your Sunday school classes and small prayer groups. Together we expectantly and prayerfully seek, as St. Ignatius said, “nothing more, nothing less, nothing else” than God’s will for First Baptist Church.

With gratitude for your encouragement and support,

The Pastor Search Committee



THE CORE VALUES OF FBC FROM OUR FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CONVERSATION

In the First Congregational Conversation on November 7, we discussed what we value most about our church. The Pastor Search Committee boiled the discussion down to five basic values of FBC. We presented them at our Second Conversation, but also want to make them available here. Each of the values given below has some brief elaboration. If you would more information please contact anyone on the Pastor Search Committee, or email us at pastorsearch@fbcabilene.org.

First Baptist Church, Abilene is a . . .

1. Welcoming community who value authentic relationships

- Fostering a sense of belonging
- Serving others within our church family
- Openness to diversity of people and perspectives
- Affirmation of women in ministry

2. Missional community who value outwardly-focused service

- Active response to needs in our community
- Direct involvement in ministry around the world
- Diverse opportunities for personal participation in service
- Sacrificial support of missional projects by the congregation

3. Spiritual community who value intergenerational, lifelong formation

- Growing in Christlikeness through the practices of
 - Bible study and prayer
 - Worship and fellowship
 - Service and stewardship
- Cultivating age-specific discipleship and intergenerational relationships

4. Worshipping community who value depth and reverence in music and word

- Celebration of well-balanced, dynamic music
- Dedication to prayer, scripture, and preaching
- Congregational participation in worship leadership
- Creativity in worship opportunities

5. Traditional community who value heritage, innovation, and progress

- Affirmation of biblical principles and practices
- Significant presence in Abilene
- Creation of innovative ministries to meet community needs
 - GLO, FLC, Ministry of Counseling, City Light Community Ministries, the Hope Center, and others
- Celebration of First Baptist Church traditions



CITY LIGHT UPDATE FOR 2021

by John Moore

Our focus: Focused on meeting crisis needs, feeding the hungry, building biblical community, teaching children, and helping people move out of poverty.

The light of HOPE continues to shine bright in all the ministry efforts in 2021 at City Light Community Ministries. The challenges of 2020 only continued for 2021 and brought out even deeper needs within our community. City Light has changed, adapted, pivoted, and dethawed to meet the needs of this challenging year.

Throughout the year, our doors never closed. The creativity of our staff, board, and volunteers, empowered by the Holy Spirit, allowed us to bring hope to neighbors who were on the brink of losing hope. Being open allowed us to help people pay utilities and rent for the month; it allowed us to worship together and build community around eating lunch and Sunday breakfast; it allowed us to bring fresh produce into the homes of our neighbors; it allowed us to empower people to find better jobs and a better plan for thriving where God has placed them; and it allowed our Abilene friends to find connection through mail, showers, and a hot cup of coffee.

All of this could not have been done without YOU! Together, we have done “Good Things” for the city we love and the city where God has placed us to be His presence. Every time the doors open at City Light, we are given the opportunity to see the goodness of God and the plan He has for each one of us. Thank you for allowing us this great honor of representing God, and for the many ways you have financially supported and prayed for our work, and for all those who come through our doors. As you read this report for 2021, know that each number, meal, pound of food, or dollar, represents a person with whom we have had a divine encounter - because of your support.

We ask that you please continue to pray for our neighbors, volunteers, staff, and board as we seek to represent the God who brings meaning and hope to all.



Some things you might not know about City Light:

We now have a City Light Market!

The City Light Market includes milk, eggs, cheese, apples, green and purple grapes, broccoli, potatoes, other fresh vegetables and fruits, along with shelf stable items, bread, and commercially prepared foods. This allows families to come choose from what is available that week to cook and use at home. We are grateful for the partnership with the Food Bank of West Central Texas which has allowed City Light to provide more meals than ever before in 2021.



Volunteers!

Our amazing volunteers have volunteered close to 6,000 hours for 2021! We would love to have you volunteer too! There are multiple types of opportunities for volunteering with us. Let us know if you would like more information by calling 325-673-6686.

More Stats for 2021:

MEALS SERVED: 68,779

POUNDS OF FOOD FROM FOOD BANK: 218,730

CULINARY PROGRAM: Graduated 9 students

TOTAL SHOWERS: 1,038 neighbors

MAIL DELIVERED AND CHECKED: 3,600 times

PERSONAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE: \$102,512

FIVE PILLARS OF FOCUS

Dining with Dignity

To offer hospitality to a stranger as if they were family.

Community

To do life together as family for all who enter our doors.

Leadership Training & Job Placement

To provide life changes for families through training and opportunity.

Case Management Services

To break family cycles of poverty and homelessness together.

Education/Literacy/Collaboration

Working together to change poverty's affect on families in our community.

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

Did you know...that by giving to FBC Abilene through our budget and Unified Mission Offering that these are some of the areas you helped to be the presence of Christ in 2021!

Thank you for being a church who cares about our city, state, nation, and world!

2021 *Bekah Estrada/USC Chaplin
*City Light Christmas Store *Nazareth Evangelical College *CarePacks for AISD Kids *Templo Bautista *CBF Disaster Relief - Hurricane Ida *Texas Baptist Men Disaster Relief - Hurricane Ida *AIM for India *Abilene Downtown Association *Baptist University of Americas Student Scholarship *Martinez Elementary *North Macedonia Food Bank *CBF Global Missions *CBF Texas Border Assistance *Martinez Teacher Appreciation Gifts *Kyle Crim/BSM Sul Ross University *Eunice Chambliss Hospitality House *H.O.P.E. Eternity - Nairobi, Kenya School - Hayley Humphrey *CBF Global Mission Offering *FBC Friendship House *Jeff and Alicia Lee, North Macedonia, *David and Lauren Bass, Cambodia, *Mary, Southeast Asia, *Lesley-Ann Hix Tommey, New York, NY *Mary Hill Davis Offering *Texas Baptist Men Disaster Relief * Texas Baptist World Hunger *Canterbury Apartment VBS *Community Transformation *Baptist World Aid *Lawrence Trott Offering for Associational Missions *Lesley-Ann Hix Tommey - Snack Bag Assistance for Kids *David and Lauren Bass - COVID Relief Assistance with Cambodia residents *Jeff and Alicia Lee- Assistance with Afghan Refugees in North Macedonia



There's been so many good things happening through The FBC Friendship House and we're thankful to the Lord and all of you for an opportunity to serve. Our mission is to simply be a friend and we've made some good ones in our short time here. People we otherwise wouldn't have crossed paths with, but the blessing has been mutual.

To summarize what's been going on - An early morning men's fire has organically happened as we've met gentlemen in need of community.

Through donations from The Paint Center, Baca's Painting, First Baptist, Beltway, individuals and volunteers, we were able to paint an elderly man's home which is 100 years old. Part of the mission of this project was to give some work to neighbors who would then get blessed with many Christmas gifts for themselves and their families.

We had a Thanksgiving potluck with yummy food from a First Baptist Sunday school class which allowed us to give food to hungry people and form a friendship with many.

Our biggest event was the mini-Christmas parade through the neighborhood. And were very thankful for all First Baptist participants! This event also allowed us to build and/or strengthen relationships with individuals, non-profits, and businesses in the neighborhood.

These are the larger endeavors we have embarked on, but throughout the last 6 months many meaningful relationships have begun and continue to grow in just the everyday-ness of life as well as helping neighbors meet needs. In all of this, our hope is to point ourselves and others to our Lord Christ Jesus. We truly have open hands to what God wants to do for this year. Thanks for being a part and sharing in the blessing of serving The College Heights Neighborhood.

The Allens

DISCIPLE NOW WEEKEND 2022 | Woven: Together as One

February 11-13 | Cost: \$50 + some canned food for City Light

We are back in homes this year and we are looking forward to a great weekend studying God's Word together and molding our lives to follow the Lord together.





#fbcabilene

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**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH,
ABILENE, TX**

<https://www.facebook.com/FirstBaptistChurchAbileneTx/>

February

- 6 Personnel Committee Meeting
- 9 Buildings & Grounds Committee Meeting
- 11-13 Disciple Now Weekend
- 15 Finance Committee Meeting
Deacons' Meeting
- 18-21 Men's Ski Trip
- 20 Missions Committee Meeting
- 22 Women's Bunco Night
- 25-26 Women's Retreat
- 27 Lord's Supper
3rd Congregational Conversation

STAFF ANNIVERSARIES

February 1, 23 years

C. V. Blake

Pastor for Adults

February 2, 3 years

Letisia Salcedo

Custodian

February 17, 22 years

Debra Clemmer

M. A. to the Pastor for Administration
& Spiritual Development

February 18, 9 years

Erin Fahlender

MOCE Insurance Specialist

February 18, 3 years

Joe Frush

Director for Pastoral Care

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

January 2022

Budget	January	Year-to-Date
Required	\$292,020	\$292,020
Given	\$278,393	\$278,393

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



FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH • ABILENE

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