

FIRST *words*

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

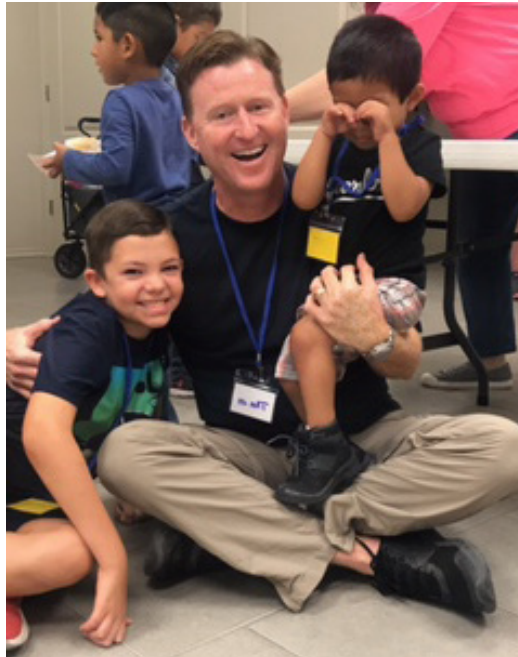
HOPE SHINES HERE: *McAllen Mission Trip*

by *Shona Preston*

Empathy is the capacity to understand and share the feelings of another. As a parent, I have a strong desire to teach my children how to be empathetic with those they come in contact with daily. In order to develop empathy, we must begin to understand what another person is feeling or attempt to understand what you might feel if you were in this person's situation. It is very easy to judge a person and believe if they just worked harder or got a "better" job, their life would be different. How do we as individuals, with so many blessings, teach our children to feel empathy for the child who lives in a dwelling that is about one-fourth the size of a mobile home with seven or eight other people? As we arrived at the home building site in Penitas near McAllen, we began to understand this truly was a child's reality, but as Buckner promises, "hope shines here."

We began bright and early Monday morning at the construction site on Fannie Drive as our entire team was given instructions and safety information to begin our week of service. Then about half the team drove to the Buckner Family Hope Center to begin teaching VBS, while the other members of the team stayed to begin work on building the house. (*Did I mention, we actually built a house?*) Each morning, children arrived at the center to have breakfast and then stayed for VBS. This VBS was similar in many ways to our VBS in Abilene with Bible study, music, drama, crafts, and recreation. Following these activities, the children stayed at the center for

lunch provided by the Buckner staff. I was thankful these children received not one, but two meals each day. One morning, I was surprised to see a mobile health clinic in front of the center when we arrived to set up



for class. I couldn't resist asking for a tour of the mobile clinic and they gladly let me inside to see what was offered. There were two exam rooms equipped to provide women's health services and a lab/walkway in between the rooms for staff. There was a nurse practitioner and physician inside preparing for their day as the women lined up for treatment. I was thrilled to know Buckner saw the need to provide women with healthcare options when they may not have any other resources available. Needless to say, our VBS numbers doubled that day as well.

After VBS, our teaching team would then transition back to the construction site for a group lunch al fresco under the shade of Texas mesquite trees. We would eat out of our brown paper bags as we talked and laughed about our morning experiences. Our children would happily deliver water bottles and Gatorade to our construction workers. The afternoon was filled with so many opportunities at the home site. It was amazing to witness children, youth, and adults working side by side towards one common goal. As the temperature would climb every afternoon, God provided an abundant breeze to keep us cool in the summer sun. I remember thinking one afternoon if it wasn't for the breeze, I might have



words

FOR THE JOURNEY

To quote Hillary Moore, Co-Executive Director of the **Give Hope** Campaign, "In our lifetime we will have four or five significant opportunities to be a part of something bigger than ourselves - to make an eternal difference for the Kingdom of God." By God's grace and leading, we have been given such an opportunity in renovating the First Christian property for City Light, GLO Daycare, and the Ministry of Counseling. It is a vision to transform our city.

The theme, **Give Hope**, captures the transforming purpose of this vision. We are seeking to **Give Hope** to our city, children, and hurting families. Those are two good biblical words for this mission which will change the lives of people who probably will never walk through the doors of our church. **Give Hope** helps communicate the spirit of our church as we look outward and not just inward. Those two words call us to minister to our community and neighborhood. Just think of the hope for brothers and sisters in need of a meal, job training, financial planning, Christ-centered childcare, and help to families who are in crisis.

To **give** shares in the very nature of God and message of Holy Scripture, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son." No gift is too small for God to multiply as we remember the little lad who gave his lunch to help feed the 5,000. Our Lord said, "For everyone who has been given much, much will be expected and from one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked." Paul says in Acts 20:35 "...we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" He told the Corinthians not to give reluctantly "for God loves a cheerful giver." The Apostle said, "But just as you excel in everything...see that you also excel in this grace of giving." Giving reflects the natural response of love. What is giving? It is a glimpse of the face of God.

Hope is such a needed word. It has been said, "**Hope is a good thing, and a good thing never dies.**" Yet, people die who are without hope. Can you imagine wondering

where your next meal will come from? What about a single parent making minimum wage searching for affordable childcare which teaches Christian values? Think of the families who are coming apart and looking for a thread of **hope** for an addicted spouse or troubled child. We do not have the space to touch these hurting lives. We seek to give hope to survive the stress of life, but also thrive. Our mission in reaching out beyond the walls of the church is for all to know we have a "Living hope in Jesus Christ."

We will share details about **Give Hope** in the weeks ahead. We will provide you with printed material. Videos are being prepared to share the stories of people we are reaching. There will be home meetings. In October, we will share in a series of Sunday school lessons. All of us will have a chance to participate in this vision for the Kingdom. We don't want you to miss out on the experience of generosity begetting generosity. The invitation to giving is always a call to conversion, which is a new way of seeing, thinking, and acting.

What can you do right now? You can begin to pray about Give Hope. A church will be gauged by the way it prays - not by its worship, campaigns, programs, or attendance. The evil one of confusion loves for us to think it is about us or figuring out finances, instead of depending on the power and promises of God to provide. Begin to pray now that God will open the eyes of your heart to see the way God sees. He is the God who always **Gives Hope**.

A journey which will change your life,

Phil

Continued from page 1

to sneak into the car for thirty minutes of air conditioning. I knew I would have to ask my husband, Matt, for the key so I just said a prayer of thanks for the breeze instead. ***(Did I mention, we actually built a house?)*** So many talented adults would patiently instruct our children on multiple tasks including how to build walls, install windows, run electrical wires between rooms, and construct the roof of the home. In times such as these, you really begin to see God's design of church being a family in action. Other moms from the team would ask us to keep an eye on their child or give them a ride back to the hotel. Even though we began this week as separate families, we ended it as one.

As we drove away from McAllen on Friday, our son, Luke, asked, "May we come back next summer and build another home for a family who doesn't have a place to live?" With that simple question, I knew empathy had begun to take root in my child's life. "Hope shines here" in Penitas, Texas because Buckner has a presence in this place, and they are bringing the good news of Jesus Christ to the lost and impoverished. God calls us to be a light in the darkness. Will you consider serving next summer with your family? I can't promise you it will be easy, but I can promise you it will be worth it. This experience will transform your life. ***(Did I mention, we actually built a house?)***



2019 STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS FOR

GIVE HOPE

CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS:

Hillary Moore, Evan Harris, Callie Harris

CONGREGATIONAL GIFT DIRECTORS:

Harold Preston, Susan Preston, Marty Anderson,
Adrienne Morgan, Sean Morgan

LEAD GIFT DIRECTOR:

Paul Schnitman

INFLUENCERS:

Richard Vandever, Susie Vandever, Marcus Spencer,
Kristian Spencer, Ed Harris, Jill Harris

STUDENT COORDINATOR:

Dana Pearson

SPIRITUAL AWARENESS DIRECTOR:

Gene Hendrix

COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR:

Grant Vandever

WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA:

Jennifer Woodard

GRAPHIC & PRINT DESIGN:

Katie Palmer

VIDEO:

Doug Worthington

CALL TEAM DIRECTOR:

Debbie Langford

PRAYER COORDINATORS:

Louise Gray, Maura dela Cruz

PLACE MINISTRY

By Susan Preston

“Brothers and sisters, you are holy partners in a heavenly calling” (Hebrews 3:1 GW) As we believe in Jesus as our Savior and the King of our lives, we can look at Hebrews 3:1 NIV, which tells us “Therefore holy brothers/sisters who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess as Lord!”

Yet, as believers in Jesus Christ as Savior, we cannot fulfill God’s call for our lives on our own. Our calling is to use our individual gifts and talents with others in the Body of Christ to proclaim Jesus as our Savior and Redeemer. So what are our gifts and talents, and how can we use them to spread the Gospel?

First Baptist Church, Abilene has embraced a way to discover, interpret, and connect with others to spread God’s Word and plan for His people. We can work together to discover how to do this! PLACE Ministry can help you find your God given gifts and your abilities!! Please be looking for the date, times, and place to learn more about this great opportunity for growth in our congregation!

PRAYING FOR GIVE HOPE

by Maura dela Cruz and Louise Gray

As Prayer Coordinators for the GIVE HOPE Campaign Steering Committee, we are honored to be a part of this endeavor. The committee and prayer intercessors have just finished a time of Prayer and Preparation during August. We observed Jesus had a time of prayer and preparation just before walking on water to rescue His disciples during a storm at sea. (Matthew 14) What an example to follow! The statement “prayer is the foundation of a Christian endeavor” holds true.

Seeing or hearing about the rampant needs in our city like poverty, mental health issues, and limited child care, makes us ask “How can I be a positive influence in my community?”

Our vision-GIVE HOPE is an opportunity for us to respond not only through prayer, but also through giving. It will be an opportunity for us individually to grow as a person, and grow in our relationship with Him.

We believe God answers prayer and each of us can be God’s instrument of HOPE!

THE WEDNESDAY THING CONTINUES

This past June and July, the ministry to maturing adults piloted a weekly event called The Wednesday Thing. It will start back August 28 and continue through the fall. The idea began with a desire to offer programming which is substantive, informative, and fun, but doesn’t require people to drive at night. With that thought in mind, we began our planning with 5:00 p.m. dinner and worked backward.

Here’s How it Works

The Wednesday Thing will begin each week at 2:30 p.m. with games and other activities. This summer we learned any game worth playing, takes more than 1 hour. There will be occasions when we use the time from 2:30-4:00 p.m. for a field trip or another group activity. Most weeks we will gather, visit, and play games. At 3:50 p.m. we will meet in the Chapel and begin with some hymns and introductions. At 4:00 p.m. we will enjoy presentations such as “Scams and Fraud of the Elderly” by Officer Carey Adkins of Abilene Police Department (August 28), “Understanding Financial Exploitation” by Randy Rowe of First Financial Bank (September 4), as well as programs like Advanced Care planning, Free Advice from an Elder Care Attorney, Taking Care of Your Eyes, and many others. In addition to these, there will be opportunities to study scripture together.

A Word about Dinner

We have a new venture at FBC called the City Light Culinary Academy (CLCA). CLCA is a 12-week program which equips students for employment in food service. We are excited to have the leadership and students of CLCA preparing and serving the evening meals on Wednesdays.

Here’s The Schedule

- 2:30 Gather in the Pricilla and Joy Classes
- 3:50 Meet in the Chapel
- 4:00 Informative Programming, Bible Study, or other programming
- 5:00 Dinner in the Dining Room

WASP MUSEUM TRIP

On August 22 a group of Maturing Adults visited the WASP Museum in Sweetwater followed by lunch at Allen Family Style Meals. The museum tells a beautiful story of courage and selflessness of 1,500 women who served their country during WWII. Many of them were trained as military pilots at Avenger Field in Sweetwater, TX. The museum is worth a visit.

Dudley Longacre in front of a training plane, one of which he flew in during his military service during WWII.



PRAYER PARTNER SUNDAY

On Sunday, September 15, we are planning a time where each Sunday school class can meet their new Prayer Partner class for the 2019-20 year. Prayer partner classes have 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 appreciate meeting their partners earlier in the year so they can put names with faces and feel more connected to the people for whom they are be together for the duration of the year, so we hope getting together will create a stronger bond and more meaningful prayer for each other.

We are asking the partner classes get together 15-20 minutes during Sunday school on September 15 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 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.

ACTING IN *love*

HEALING HEARTS MINISTRY

by Cherry Curry

On September 8, 2012, Healing Hearts Ministry of FBC Abilene was begun. Our mission is to make handmade items which have been anointed with prayer and meditation for individuals in need of prayer. It is our hope each item will be a reminder of our prayers for comfort, peace, love, blessings, and the faith we have in the power of prayer through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As we begin our eighth year of the Healing Hearts Ministry, we have 7 people who are actively making prayer shawls, throws, fleece blankets, angels, and prayer cloths. We have 4 couriers who deliver prayer gifts for us. We have one person who belongs to another church, yet she is willing to make these items for us. As we make these gifts, we pray for the individual who is to receive them.

As of today, we have given over 3,100 prayer gifts and are making more each day. Approximately one-third of these have been given to people who are not members of our church.

You might think this ministry is only for people who can knit or crochet. However, there are a number of other ways in which you could be a part of this ministry. Several members make “no-sew” fleece blankets for our ministry. We have a need for more couriers to deliver these prayer gifts. If you enjoy scrapbooking, we could use those skills to document our ministry. There is also a need for help with packaging the prayer gifts for delivery. If you don't feel led to become part of this ministry, please consider praying for those of us who are making them and for those who will receive them.

We meet the first and third Thursday of each month for our regular business meetings. During these meetings, we discuss the prayer needs, pray over the prayer gifts, and package them for delivery. On the second and fourth Thursday of each month, we gather to knit hats, crochet or knit prayer gifts, and work on the scrapbook. We would love for you to come and be part of sharing God's love with those in need of prayer.

FLOUR AND SUGAR

Two simple words and two simple ingredients. Both of which can be combined with other ingredients to provide food items which can sustain life. First Baptist Church has been the provider of flour and sugar to the Abilene Baptist Association Social Ministries for as long as I have been on staff, 23+ years! Our contribution of flour and sugar helps Social Ministries be able to provide help to those who find themselves without the necessary items to feed their family. FBC collects the flour and sugar, or monetary donations which they can use to purchase the items as supplies run short, during the months of January and July. We just finished the July collections and we received about 25 sacks of flour and 25 sacks of sugar, plus \$1,865 was given, which will enable them to keep the supplies full. So, thank you for your participation in this very important project of our church.





"Find something you're passionate about and keep tremendously interested in it!"
- Julia Child

Thank you for your continued prayers as the City Light Culinary Academy begins the second class of students on August 26, 2019.

Thailand



Please pray for those who will be traveling to Thailand to work with our missionaries in September!

- Danny Haddox
- Nancy Haddox
- Karen Kemper
- Kelley Messer
- Britney Tucker
- Mike Greenfield
- John Moore
- Becky Tucker

Thank you to the Ten 25 class for leading worship at City Light on a recent Sunday morning!



Also, thank you for being a blessing to several in the community who needed help with yard clean up.

What a blessing!



STAY *connected*



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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH,
ABILENE, TX
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EVENT CALENDAR:

SEPTEMBER

- 2 Church Offices Closed
- 4 Big A Workers' Meeting
- 5 Healing Hearts Meeting
- 8 First Graders & Families Lunch
Personnel Committee
Adult Sunday School Teachers & Directors Meeting
College & Career FLC Night
- 10 Rockin' Moms
- 11 Buildings & Grounds Meeting
- 15 Missions Committee
- 17 Finance Committee
Deacons' Meeting
- 18 GLO Board Meeting
- 19 Healing Hearts Meeting
- 20-21 Ten 25 Lake Retreat
- 20-Oct 2 Thailand Mission Trip
- 22 FLC Board
- 29 Maturing Adult Recognition Lunch

STAFF ANNIVERSARIES

September 1, 4 years
Sheryl Doss
GLO Teacher

September 5, 40 years
Lee Curiel
Custodian

September 6, 3 years
Augustina Rodriguez-Sanchez
GLO Teacher

September 8, 9 years
Merri Roberts
M. A. to Pastor for Worship & Music

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

August 2019

Budget	August	Year-to-Date
Required	\$261,058	\$2,182,179
Given	\$210,745	\$2,106,174

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



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CHURCH • ABILENE

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