



FIRSTWORDS

LOOKING AHEAD AT 2025

2025 has arrived and here at First Baptist Church, we are looking forward to an exciting year. We anticipate seeing who God will bring our direction to lead us as our new Senior Pastor. But until then, we are so thankful for Matt Cook and his leadership with the search committee and preaching each week.

There are several exciting events coming up in the new year that you need to know about. On Sunday evening, January 12, we will have an ordination service for the newly elected deacons who have not been previously ordained. Those who will be ordained are: Cherry Curry, Linda Frizzell, Dina Griffin, Cassie Irwin, Jay Patterson, Keathley Roan, and David Spruiell.

Wednesday nights will feature some new adult small groups as well as activities for preschoolers, children, and youth. All of these offerings follow a wonderful meal and time of fellowship in the dining room. So, starting back on January 8, Wednesday night at FBC is the place to be!

And technically not till February, but we wanted you to mark your calendar for February 1-2 as we gather for what we are calling Community Weekend. You can read more about that weekend here in First Words.

2025 looks to be amazing and can hardly wait to see what God has in store for First Baptist!



COMMUNITY Weekend

February 1 - 2, 2025

"Then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind." - Philippians 2:2 (NIV)

Paul often encouraged the 1st century church to work together in unity and love in the midst of their anxieties, difficulties, and struggling to figure out the implications of a life centered on Jesus. 2,000 years later, we still witness just how important it is for a community to serve one another humbly in love and grace. This year, our community at FBC Abilene went through a lot together as a church family, but the story of Jesus is a story of hope. As we continue to focus our spirits on God's heart, mind, and intent for all of creation, we know that it is important for us to pause in a time of reflection and connection not only to grow as individuals, but to deepen our relationship in this community of faith.

At the beginning of February 2025, we invite you...actually, we encourage you...to spend an intentional weekend together as the Body of Christ; learning from each other and growing together in our walks with Jesus in one mind and one spirit. Bring your family too! We believe that growing together means learning from all generations. Childcare will be provided for infants and preschool. Children and youth will also have things to do! On Saturday, February 1, we will have breakout sessions and worship centered around the message of unity and how we may grow to love God with ALL of our heart, soul, mind, and strength. Join us on this day for a missions' fair to learn more about our church and its ministries, and also build in fellowship during a dinner around the table. On Sunday, February 2, we invite you to our annual Intergenerational Breakfast where we come together with our Sunday school classes across the generations. Join us again for Sunday night worship and fellowship so that we can prayerfully consider how God continues to invite us to work together in His Kingdom.

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This weekend, we are excited for leaders in our community coming to lead us in our breakout sessions, and for Dr. Randel Everett guiding us in intentional, community worship. Please place this weekend on your calendar; make it a priority for your year. Your presence matters because together we are the Body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

COMMUNITY WEEKEND SCHEDULE

Saturday, February 1

- 3:00 p.m. - Worship
- 3:30 p.m. - Breakout Session 1
- 4:25 p.m. - Breakout Session 2
- 5:30 p.m. - Dinner
- 6:15 p.m. - Worship

Sunday, February 2

- 9:00 a.m. - Intergenerational Breakfast
- 10:30 a.m. - Worship
- 5:30 p.m. - Worship
- 6:45 p.m. - Coffee, Cookies, & Conversation Meet

Dr. Randel Everett

Dr. Randel Everett currently serves as Senior Fellow for Religious Freedom at Dallas Baptist University after retiring as Founding President of 21Wilberforce. He spent four decades pastoring churches in Florida, Virginia, Arkansas, and Texas before founding 21Wilberforce in 2014 to focus attention on religious persecution abroad and the enduring importance of religious liberty in the United States. Everett acted as Founding President of the John Leland Center for Theological Studies in Falls Church, Virginia and served as the Executive Director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Throughout his career, Everett traveled to nearly 50 countries, meeting with religious and government leaders, and witnessing first-hand the ravages of persecution. He holds a bachelor's degree from Ouachita Baptist University in Arkansas and Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. Dr. Everett also has an honorary Doctor of Divinity from the University of Richmond and Doctor of Humanities from Dallas Baptist University.

Dr. Everett and his wife Sheila live in Waco, Texas. Their son Jeremy and his wife Amy, live in Waco and have three sons: Lucas, Sam, and Wyatt. Their daughter, Rachel, and her husband Eric, live in Orlando with their daughter Klara.

HENDRICK FLU SHOT CLINIC AT CITY LIGHT

City Light Ministries is 0.7 miles away from my desk. It is a thriving place that truly shows the love of Jesus to our city every day. What a pleasure to see Hendrick employees from multiple departments coming together to demonstrate love to those in our city who might have trouble getting a flu shot, some warm clothes, or a note of encouragement. I saw so many smiles today at City Light Ministries, 1441 N 4th. See attached pictures of some of our work group.



31 of our "neighbors" received a free influenza vaccine and many more received love and encouragement. Gift bags included hot hands, hand sanitizer, socks, scripture cards, hats, gloves, and wipes.

"Greater things are yet to come and greater things are still to be done in our city." -Chris Tomlin

GREG YOUNG, RPh., Manager
Hendrick Pharmacy on Ambler



THANK YOU

FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

We are incredibly grateful to everyone who contributed to the City Light Thanksgiving Breakfast. Your generosity and dedication allowed us to serve 240 neighbors and offer them a warm, welcoming meal.

Special thanks to those who brought casseroles—38 casseroles in total—and to the numerous volunteers who gave their time and hearts to make this event possible. Together, we shared not only food but also compassion and community spirit.

Thank you for reminding us that a grateful heart is a giving heart. We couldn't have done it without you!



CITY LIGHT CHRISTMAS STORE BRINGS TO FAMILIES IN NEED

joy

This year, our church's Christmas Store was a tremendous success, serving 42 families and 104 children in need. Together, we extended love and care to single mothers, children with incarcerated parents, grandparents raising grandchildren, and even a family who lost their home to a fire. The gratitude expressed by these families was truly overwhelming.



None of this would have been possible without the generosity of our church family. The abundance of donations filled my office with the spirit of Christmas, bringing tears of joy on many occasions. A special "thank you" to Surprises Gift Shop for providing beautiful Christmas decorations for each family to select, and to Debby Brown, whose delicious homemade Christmas cookies added a heartfelt touch

to the event. Brenda, Toni, Trisha, Karen, and Marilyn, thank you for loving these families while they shopped.

The day was filled with shared stories, hugs, and heartfelt moments. One determined lady even hiked back up three flights of stairs to ensure she didn't miss out on an extra Christmas cookie! Each family was warmly invited to attend our Christmas Eve services, continuing the spirit of community and celebration.



After all the appointments were completed, we extended an invitation to the members of Templo

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Bautista and employees GLO Day Care to come to the store to shop. We were able to provide a few additional items for the GLO classroom centers that the teachers will use to support the children, making an even greater impact for the children.



Thank you, church family, for your incredible support and love, making this Christmas unforgettable for so many.



BETH YOUNG
Missions Ministry
Assistant

FBC FOUNDATION

Grant Request Forms Are Available

Forms are available in the office.
Deadline to return the form is noon,
Friday, February 7.

JANUARY FLOUR & SUGAR DRIVE

It is time once again for the January Flour & Sugar Drive. The need is growing as the strain of meeting the needs of those less fortunate increases. Our goal is 7,800 lbs. of flour and 6,200 lbs. of sugar. The funds donated to this drive should be designated for the ABA Social Ministries Flour and Sugar Drive. Donations can be made in Sunday School Departments, the church office, or in the boxes located at the church entrances. Funds are preferred as they can be used over the next six months to purchase additional amounts as needed.

MINISTRY SPOTLIGHTS:

CITY LIGHT Community Ministries

MEALS:
4,704

VOLUNTEER HOURS:
516

WALK-INS:
498

MAIL CHECKS:
338

SHOWERS:
256



PRAYER WORKS

PRAYER REQUESTS:
78

PRAYERGRAMS MAILED:
93

EMAIL & PHONE REQUESTS:
10

FLC Family Life Center



PARTY PACKAGES:
48

FITNESS CENTER USES:
372

NEW FITNESS MEMBERS:
6

FITNESS CLASSES:
12

SERENITY HOUSE:
243

FULL BUILDING RENTAL:
8

WALK-INS:
165

SCHOOL GROUP:
1

SPECIAL NEEDS GROUPS:
2

YOUTH IN DECEMBER

What a great month it has been! For students, school in December can be one of the busiest stretches of the year along with all the Christmas parties, concerts and our fun events happening at church. Thankfully, the advent season reminds us of our need to pause and reflect on the great things God has done, is doing, and will do.

We started this month with a Youth and Parent Potluck Breakfast during the Sunday school hour on December 1. Along with some amazing food and a wonderful time of fellowship, our youth band led us in singing some Christmas carols and we played a great round of Christmas Jeopardy. Thank you to everyone who brought food to share and participated in our time of ministry for parents and students.

On December 18, we had our Youth Christmas Party. With delicious snacks, party games, and a guest trombone player named C.V. Blake, the youth floor was filled with laughter and excitement. While this may have been the last Wednesday of the year, we spent it together with joy and the anticipation of the coming year. Merry Christmas everyone and a Happy New Year!

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

- Hebrews 10:24-25

HUNTER BROWN
Pastor for Youth



JANUARY

STAFF ANNIVERSARIES

January 1, 17 years

JOHN MOORE

Pastor for Missions

January 7, 29 years

BEVERLY WARREN

Pianist

January 8, 1 year

MARIA GUTIERREZ

GLO Teacher

January 28, 6 years

KAYLEEN MILLS

*Director of Operations/
Chef Trainer*

- 1** Church Offices Closed
- 5** Personnel Committee Meeting

5-9 College Ski Trip/Glorieta

- 8** Wednesday Night Meal/
Activities start back
Buildings & Grounds Committee Meeting

- 12** Budget Committee Meeting
Personnel Committee Meeting
Deacon Ordination Service

20 Church Offices Closed (MLK Day)

- 21** Finance Committee Meeting
Deacons' Meeting
Hospital Visitation Team Meeting

FEBRUARY 1-2

Community Weekend

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

December 2024

Budget	December	Year-to-Date
Required	\$436,666	\$3,743,376
Given	\$840,000	\$3,846,482

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



FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH ♦ ABILENE

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